**Inciting Difference and Distance in the Writings of
Sakiyama Tami, Yi Yang-ji, and Tawada Yōko**

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The candidate confirms that the work submitted is her own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.

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Abstract

This thesis presents a reading of borders, difference, and translation in selected fictional writings by Sakiyama Tami, Yi Yang-ji, and Tawada Yōko. Each of these three writers is typically considered within distinct sub-genres of Japanese fiction: Okinawan, resident Korean (*zainichi*), and border-crossing, respectively. While each of these categories prescribes certain characteristics and aesthetics, the narrative works discussed here frequently subvert those expectations. In particular, in terms of narrative and writing strategies each shares a commonality of interest and approach as yet unearthed, crucially, in the challenge each poses to standard Japanese as a narrative language through their uses of other vernaculars, multiple voices, and fragmented narratives. These analyses are foregrounded by a critical consideration of border-crossing literature whose emphasis on overcoming inequalities and focus on the fluidity of passage has been celebrated amid the return of cosmopolitanism. By contrast, Chapter One presents strategies of hybridity and polyphony in Sakiyama's 'Kuja' narratives that incite hidden memories of the past and terrorise the Japanese language. In Chapter Two, the protagonists in Yi's *Kazukime* and *Yuhi* enact a similar violence against the text and their own bodies to leave irreducible gaps of absence and silence. Chapter Three focuses on Tawada's *The Travelling Naked Eye*, wherein the protagonist's linguistic displacement is accompanied by the fragmentation of her vision, bringing questions of sight and blindness to bear on the preceding focus on language. By tracing shared concerns with voice, silence, female bodies, memory, and colonial experience, this combined study reveals the ways in which the texts discussed here cast linguistic and spatial borders as rupture, loss, and irretrievable distance. Although such strategies are precarious, I argue that these narratives empower through their conscious engagement in struggles with difference and distance vis-à-vis a hegemonic Japanese national/linguistic centre: struggles that an emphasis on "crossings" threatens to overlook.

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Notes

Translations of Japanese-language materials are my own unless otherwise indicated.

Japanese titles are followed by English translations in parentheses and the English

translation is used thereafter in the main body of the thesis. In English titles the first

letter of every major word is capitalised and in Japanese titles only the first word is

capitalised. This thesis uses the Harvard system of referencing. Author names are cited

with the given name followed by the family name. However, in the case of Japanese

authors of Japanese-language texts, those names are cited according to Japanese

convention with the family name followed by the given name.

Introduction: On borders and bordering on

An elusive, hazy, fluid relationship. A relationship wherein it is uncertain who is connected to whom. A relationship where, always, in twos, they tell tales about the remaining one.
—Tawada Yōko, "*Sannin kankei*" ("Three-person relationship")

Imaginary borders. Un imaginable boundaries.
—Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictee*

From the mid-2000s, within Japanese literary criticism there appeared a movement to foreground 'border-crossing' (*ekkyō*) as a buzzword that might express the emergence of multilingual and multinational writers onto the scene. Notable among the influences that seemed to necessitate this new concept were the publication of Mizumura Minae's *Nihongo ga horobiru toki* (*When Japanese Goes to Ground*) (2008), which foretold from Mizumura's perspective as an academic working in the US the precarious future of the Japanese language amid the increasing dominance of English, and the literary successes of non-native writers whose significance was highlighted when Yang Yi, a writer born in Harbin, became the first 'newcomer' also in 2008 to receive the Akutagawa Prize for her novel, *Toki ga nijimu asa* ("A Morning When Time Blurs"). The model of 'border-crossing' in Japan is traceable back to such early 1990s texts as Imafuku Ryūta's *Kurerōru-shugi* (*Creolism: The Heterology of Culture*), which witnessed acts of cultural '*ekkyō*' as "bringing about great changes within hitherto fixed principles of 'place', 'territory' and 'boundary'" (Imafuku, 1991, p. 105).[1] Seeking to build upon these cultural theories, 'border-crossing literature' (*ekkyō bungaku*) reframes literary works vis-à-vis the

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[1] Opening with a consideration of the Mexico-US border, Imafuku's essay belongs to a wider strategy of reinvigorating border sites and peoples frequently left to the margins. Writing directly to *Borderlands/ La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* by the Chicana feminist writer and thinker, Gloria Anzaldúa, Imafuku concludes by proclaiming a new programme of activity in the borderlands: "The cultural map of the world is divided up spectacularly by the demands of all systems and power for integration and purity. Our aim now must be to allow the borderlands to ooze powerfully from within the gaps on that map and transform the world into a colourful rainbow under the name of 'creole'" (Imafuku, 1991). Anzaldúa's work is discussed in detail in Chapter One.

linguistic and geographical boundaries that such writers apparently transgress, and the

spatial movements of travel and translation undertaken by the protagonists of their texts.

In the first scholarly volume dedicated to this critical field entitled *Ekkyō suru bungaku*

(*Literature that crosses borders*), Tsuchiya Masahiko asserts that, "[b]order-crossing is

deeply rooted in the essence of literature"(Tsuchiya, 2009b, p. 12). Literature regularly

crosses borders through its translation into other languages. Seeking to highlight these

movements, *Literature that crosses borders* embraces writers whose goal is to "demolish

the national view of language" through their acquired "foreignness (*ikyōsei*) and

postmodern attitudes" in order to establish a connection between such literature and

the present context of global migration (Tsuchiya, 2009b). Tsuchiya therefore offers a

long list of genres and characteristics by which *ekkyō* might be defined and deemed

eminently enabling:

> Literature that steps across borders is not only concerned with the spatial
> movement of travel, movement, voyage, migration, exile, or pilgrimage; it
> also includes the mixing and confusion, and hybrid experiences that are
> formed under postmodern and postcolonial conditions. Literature that
> crosses borders depicts those circumstances as an interactive process
> between culture and individual consciousness, and pays heed to the
> theoretical construction of the cosmopolitan experience. (Tsuchiya, 2009b, p.
> 8)

As the nod towards the cosmopolitan suggests, this perspective is tied to the recent

reinvigoration of "world literature" (*sekai bungaku*) as a means to "transcend the

territories of national literatures" (ibid.).[2]

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[2] Tsuchiya's definition of world literature is unspecified. However, his language recalls the recent Euro-centric model reinvigorated by studies of David Damrosch's *What is World Literature?* (2003), which argues in favour of the cross-cultural study of literature in translation, and a special issue of *New Left Review* that this spawned featuring articles by Franco Moretti, and Pascale Casanova. Numano Mitsuyoshi, a colleague and contributor of Tsuchiya, cites Damrosch's arguments explicitly in a separate article, entitled "Toward a New Age of World Literature: The Boundary of Contemporary Japanese Literature and Its Shifts in the Global Context" (Numano, 2009).

Tsuchiya's contextualisation of border-crossing therefore focuses primarily on the central place of movement within such fiction. To illustrate this agenda, Tsuchiya's edited volume presents analyses of fiction and writers from contexts as wide-reaching as Martinique-born writer Edouard Glissant's *The Fourth Century*, Chicana and Chicano writings, Hungarian fiction, and Middle-Eastern poetry. The book also discusses Japan-born writers who have written 'exophonically' or outside of their mother tongue and non-native writers of Japanese prose. The volume therefore recreates the global context it hopes to describe, while ensuring a position for Japanese writers and texts within these cosmopolitan flows.[3] However, in celebrating the borders crossed by literature and the variety of writing that results, the refusal to distinguish between the reasons behind these literary crossings, and the themes and aesthetics unique to each work appears immediately problematic. Moreover, by identifying writers through the languages in which they write, the structure of *Literature that crosses borders* arguably reinscribes the same spatial boundaries that it seeks to overcome.

For example, one of the prominent writers featured within Tsuchiya's volume and its sequel *Hankyō suru bungaku* (*Literature that reverberates*) (Tsuchiya, 2011) is Tawada Yōko (b. 1960), a bilingual writer of Japanese and German prose whose fiction will be discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis.[4] Owing to Tawada's bilinguality, her texts are

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[3] For example, Numano argues that world literature "simply means 'foreign literature' usually excluding Japanese literature" (Numano, 2009, p. 198).

[4] *Literature that reverberates* cites its aim to reappraise the efforts of the earlier volume while more consciously seeking to preserve tropes of otherness, difference, and the indeterminacy of identity. Refining its intention as a desire to connect "postcolonial literature to world literature", this new volume looks towards the "reverberating world literature" opened up after "national literature" (*kokumin bungaku*) has been dismantled, and presents an attempt to "decode, re-read and rediscover intertextualites and interculturalities" between texts who view national language as the "Other within" (Tsuchiya, 2011, pp. 10, 11). The shift from 'border-crossing' to 'reverberation' names this more politicised framework in which the languages crossed between might be seen to echo back through one another. This second volume therefore highlights the "violence" and "wars" (ibid., p. 13) that accompany many acts of border-crossing. However, as it fails to interrogate the nature of the borders crossed and promotes an equivalent selection of literary works and angles, including a second chapter

described as "Japanese-language literature" (*nihongo bungaku*) (Tsuchiya, 2009a, p. 223), a category that demonstrates Tsuchiya's recourse to divide the transnational context of border-crossing in order to facilitate discussion. "Japanese-language literature" names the coterminous emergence of two groups: "foreign" (*gaikokujin*) writers of Japanese prose such as the US-born novelist Levy Hideo and Swiss-born poet David Zoppetti; and Japan-born writers who hold "deep experiences of foreign cultures (*ibunka*)" such as Mizumura and Tawada (ibid.). However, by juxtaposing these two movements as somehow oppositional, Tsuchiya and his contributors betray the linearity of the border as that which axiomatically sits between and separates languages as distinct from one another. Despite the explicit intention to give as much significance to writers deemed "mainstream with a capital 'M'" as to writers who have experienced postcolonialism and imposed exile (ibid.), and the fulfilment of this promise with respect to literary contexts beyond Japan, there is a glaring omission of marginalised, subaltern, or minor writers of Japanese prose whose texts inscribe linguistic differences through dialects and vernaculars that are not immediately separable as 'foreign' languages.

There is therefore a need to interrogate more critically the borders that define 'border-crossing' itself. For example, in his ironically titled essay "How do we count a language?" Naoki Sakai refutes the notion that languages exist in isolation from one another, and in so doing, critiques the image of the border that appears to lie between. Rather than simply denoting a static line, Sakai reframes the border as an active process that unfolds through his arguments as the "analytic of bordering":

> At the same time that it recognises the presence of borders, discriminatory regimes and the paradigm of classification, the problematic sheds light on the process of drawing a border, of instituting the terms of distinction and

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dedicated to Tawada Yōko's fiction, *Literature that reverberates* reaches similar limits to its predecessor.

discrimination, and inscribing grids in the striated space of the social. What is required in the "analytic of bordering" is to take into account simultaneously both the presence of the border and the drawing or inscription of it. (Sakai, 2009a, p. 71)

By shifting our attention to the processes through which borders are inscribed, Sakai's concept of bordering reveals that the divides between languages are neither essential nor natural, but are rather consciously constructed in order to tie languages neatly to distinct national identities. If the world is seen to be constituted through a plurality of languages, then the means through which to differentiate between languages is to resort back to national divides. It is into this impasse that the presiding formulation of border-crossing literature has fallen, and of which Sakai's analytic of bordering enables an effective criticism.

Notably, the process of bordering is intrinsically bound with the figure of translation. Despite its focus on multilingual movements and inclusion of texts from diverse literary contexts, the term 'translation' is conspicuously absent from the framework defining border-crossing literature. Indeed, since the movement of crossing appears itself uninterrupted, the chapters of *Literature that crosses borders* arguably render invisible the acts of translation that enable their critical analyses, in a manner emphasised in Lawrence Venuti's *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (Venuti, 1995).[5] Such an omission betrays an allegiance to translation as a form of "bridging" between two (national) languages that exist as discrete entities on either side of the border.[6] Yet it is arguably following this premise that Japanese critics have resisted comparing the

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[5] The same criticism might be launched at the Anglophone framing of world literature. Although such a critique lies beyond the scope of this project, I highlight the significant interventions made by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalisation* (2012), Emily Apter's *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability* (2013), and the essays featured in the inaugural edition of Damrosch's new journal, *Journal of World Literature* (2016).

[6] Translation as "bridging" recurs in several key essays by Brett de Bary (de Bary, 2009, 2010). With particular reference to how this approach has dominated appraisals of Tawada Yōko's fiction, de Bary relates "bridging" to the "interlingual translation" valorised by Roman Jakobson as "translation-as-proper" (de Bary, 2010, p. 7). Sakai has also reiterated this connection to Jakobson.

writing of a "border-crosser" such as Tawada to that of minority writers in Japan (which would include Sakiyama Tami and Yi Yang-ji), whose vernaculars are not seen to constitute a properly distinct language from Japanese (de Bary, 2010, p. 42). As a way to challenge these divisions, Sakai's analytic of bordering suggests translation as a heterogeneous and even disruptive act. Sakai's "heterolingual" approach to language and translation, which will be explored in more detail in Chapter Two, therefore overrides the assumption of translation as a process predicated on smooth and successful communication. This reframing suggests translation as a means of troubling the seemingly essential borders between languages and literary contexts, while inscribing its own gaps, ruptures, and differences.

The figures of the border, of bordering, of translation, and of difference name the central terms and ideas that run throughout this research. The fictional works discussed are commonly positioned within the borders of specific sub-genres of Japanese literature: specifically, Okinawan literature, resident Korean (*zainichi*) literature, and border-crossing literature. For this reason, they have not previously been considered in a single study. However, the themes, motifs, and written strategies that each deploys speaks to significant commonalities that run throughout these texts. In particular, each text incites borders in mutually resonant ways that might be read as a challenge to the restrictive tendencies with which each of these literary sub-genres attempts to contain them. Such an approach does not wish to overlook or deny the cultural and historical specificities that separate these works. Indeed, as it is against the effacement of difference that such fiction writes, the readings that follow repeatedly lead back to those respective concerns. Rather, by attending to key textual commonalities such as polyphony and liminality that inscribe difference in literal and figurative ways, and which

interrogate the nature of borders to assimilate and contain, my goal is to elucidate aspects of these literary works that a preoccupation with fixed categories of identification might preclude, and that moreover might risk a level of essentialism.

The desire to seek a language through which to narrate these commonalities departs from a degree of discomfort with regards to the sub-categories to which each work has typically been assigned. Categories always manage to generate specific expectations about what they contain. As Joan E. Ericson highlights in the case of "women's literature" (*joryū bungaku*) in Japan, such a term not only can be used ambiguously and inconsistently within literary criticism; it also often leads to the "conflation of literary aesthetics with far more pervasive and deeply rooted social attitudes towards gender differences" (Ericson, 1996, p. 74). The same might be said of the ethnic, linguistic, and cultural stereotypes that accompany the categories of 'Okinawan', '*zainichi*', and even 'border-crossing' fiction.

In challenging the existing borders through which their textual identities are defined, these texts foreground translation in literal, figurative, expanded, and intriguing ways. Translation is an inevitable concern of these readings given that I am a non-native speaker of Japanese and each act of citation and interpretation requires that I translate. This is especially the case given recurrent textual strategies comprising multiple scripts, fragmented narratives, and temporal and spatial shifts. Yet the protagonists of these texts are also translators, not only between languages, but of repressed stories of the past that might challenge dominant historical narratives in the present. Such translations are undertaken across different material registers of the voice, the body, and written text. Moreover, as they frequently inscribe moments of silence, wordless gaps, and

bodily wounds, these acts of translation are predicated not upon the smooth act of bridging, but rather foreground disruption, fragmentation, plurality, and even pain. The result is a series of texts that continually push at the boundaries of legibility and translatability, whose connectedness hangs paradoxically on the trope of disconnection. As they disrupt and defer the means of their own communication, these characters put the reception of their narratives at risk. Yet in so doing, they open up potentially empowering strategies whereby their stories cannot be easily assimilated, choosing instead to emerge only from the gaps that lie within, and between, these texts. As a preface to each of the readings that constitute the main chapters of this thesis, and to redress any unevenness that might lie between the familiarity of these three writers and their previous appraisals, this Introduction will now outline these contexts while delimiting the concerns of my specific approach.

Sakiyama Tami (b. 1954) is a writer of predominantly short fiction and literary essays. Her debut short story, "*Machi no hi ni*" ("A Day in Town"), appeared in *New Okinawa Literature* in 1979 and received an honourable mention among the journal's annual literary awards. . The richness of her body of work comes from the witty and astute social criticism that infuses her texts and the particular interplay of Okinawan dialects and voices through which those stories are told. A line runs throughout all of this writing that problematises issues of memory, transmission, and responsibility. Sakiyama's stories from the 1980s and 1990s follow predominantly female characters who find themselves displaced from the island communities (*shima*) of their roots yet are forced by some occasion to return.[7] There, Sakiyama's protagonists must negotiate their

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[7] Okamoto Keitoku, a pioneer within the academic study of Okinawan literature, writes that the Japanese word *shima* ('island') simultaneously signifies 'one's community' in the Okinawan dialect. For Okamoto, the *shima* acquires significance in Sakiyama's early narratives as it focalises the dilemma

identities vis-à-vis the uncanny, defamiliarised geographical spaces and cultural practices

of their former homes, and the suppressed memories unleashed by these encounters.

Such texts include the two works for which Sakiyama received consecutive Akutagawa

Prize nominations: "*Suijō ōkan*" ("Passage across the Water"), published in *Bungakkai* in

April 1989, and "*Shimagomoru*" ("Island Retreat"), which appeared in the same journal

in December 1990.[8]

More recently, the topological settings of Sakiyama's fiction have shifted from the

smaller, peripheral islands of the Okinawan archipelago to hidden suburbs of the main

island and the shadows of the US military base town. It is a movement that reflects the

writer's own: Sakiyama spent her early years in the Yaeyama islands until her family

relocated to Miyako when she was 12. Since moving to Okinawa Main Island (*Okinawa*

hontō) in order to enrol at the University of the Ryukyus, she has resided in Koza, a

former base town that was once the playground of US military stationed at the nearby

Kadena Air Base.[9] Some have therefore traced the movements within her fictional

narratives as quasi-autobiographical accounts (for example, Suzuki, 2002).[10] However,

Sakiyama's writing deliberately eschews this trend. Even in her essays written from a

first-person perspective, inverted commas and slippages (such as inconsistencies in

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faced by Okinawans of the postwar generation about whether to stay on or leave the region in pursuit
of the greater opportunities promised by the mainland (Okamoto 1996).

[8] "Passage across the Water" was awarded the Kyushu Art Festival Literary Prize for an "outstanding
work" in 1988.

[9] The name Okinawa can designate both the island prefecture and the central island of the archipelago,
which has been recently renamed by the full title '*Okinawa hontō*'. This thesis will include the words
"prefecture" or "main island" to point to a specific geographic region where necessary. Alone,
"Okinawa" should be read as a generic term for the entire region.

[10] In his socio-literary approach to "Passage across the sea", Suzuki Tomoyuki reads the sense of
unfamiliarity experienced by the protagonist Akiko as she returns to the island where she grew up as
an expression of Sakiyama's own experiences. Specifically, Suzuki attempts at length to identify the
specific islands between which Akiko and her grandfather travel. The latter is one example of a trend
among some readers to wish to locate Sakiyama's writing in the real world. By contrast, this thesis
suggests ways in which Sakiyama's landscapes resist such attempts at pinning it down.

naming the island on which she was born) suggest the unbridgeable gap between the

writer and the narrators of her work.

Such a gap also arises between the quasi-Okinawan space that emerges within

Sakiyama's writing and the actual prefecture that names the category of 'Okinawan

literature', a sub-genre of Japanese fiction that has come to define the prose fiction,

poetry and plays produced by writers from the region.[11] Indicative of this gap the name

'Okinawa' typically appears in Sakiyama's writing in *katakana*. This phonetic script

defamiliarises the geographical region from its fictional portrayal. It moreover recalls

travel-agent posters keen to create tourist demand by exoticising the islands as a

domestic sub-tropical paradise. The commodification of Okinawa has become endemic

in recent decades among Japanese tourist and media industries seeking to capitalise on a

sudden surge of interest that emerged in the late 1990s. Within this so-called "Okinawa

boom", Okinawa became synonymous with its photogenic landscape, the exotic sounds

of the *sanshin* (a three-stringed instrument regarded as the predecessor of the

shamisen), and the cheerful figure of the laidback islander, who were all depicted under

taglines that celebrated these "healing islands" (*iyashi no shima*) cocooned in "blue seas,

blue skies" (*aoi umi, aoi sora*).

The 'boom' has accordingly been criticised for the underlying quasi-orientalist gaze that,

perhaps tinted by nostalgia for a Japan untouched by technological and economic

development, objectifies the Okinawan Other as exotic, rural, and backward.[12] Such

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[11] The 18 volumes of the *Okinawa bungaku zenshū* (*Collected Works of Okinawan Literature*) published during the 1990s include as a notable exception works by the Yokohama-born writer Shimao Toshio, who explored the cultural ties between Japan and Okinawa in his essays on *Yaponesia* and set some of his fiction in the adjacent island group of Amami.

[12] One of the most comprehensive early critiques of the 'boom' and the Okinawan image it perpetuated can be read in Tada Osamu, Tanaka Yasuhiro, & Iwabuchi Kōichi, eds. 2004. *Okinawa ni*

images conceal the more troubling narratives of the region's history, and the difficult

socio-political conditions that Okinawa still faces as an occupied territory. Within

Sakiyama's fiction, the foregrounding of Okinawa's suburban areas and military base

towns, and the incorporation of the diverse sights and sounds of the peripheral islands

of Miyako and Yaeyama present a critique of this commodified, homogenised portrayal.

Such shifts reveal the heterogeneity of Okinawa's geographical, cultural, and linguistic

terrain. They also carve out spaces wherein alternative stories effaced from the picture-

postcard tropicana might be told: of the battle that devastated the region at the end of

the Pacific War in which one quarter of the civilian population lost their lives; the social

volatility experienced during almost three decades of US postwar occupation; the

infrastructural and psychological upheaval that marked Okinawa's 'homeland reversion'

(*sokoku fukki*) to Japanese administration on 15th May 1972; and the ongoing problems

associated with an extended military presence across the islands even today.[13]

In contrast to the prescribed images of the 'boom', Sakiyama's fictional narratives unfold

under the shadow of darkness, positioning at their heart motifs of trauma, spectral

hauntings, and loss. As Davinder Bhowmik demonstrates in her mapping of literature in

Okinawa, these efforts to subvert and resist replicating landscapes, plotlines, and

characterisations expected of the region's writers cause Sakiyama's writing to occupy

both an "unsettled and unsettling position in the genre of Okinawan prose

fiction"(Bhowmik, 2008, p. 178). Indeed, the desire to pigeon-hole Sakiyama's work

within a singular regional context is made more problematic by the expectations that

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tachisukumu: daigaku o koete shinka suru chi (Transfixed on Okinawa: knowledge going deeper beyond the university). Tokyo: Serika Shobō.

[13] Approximately 75% of all US bases stationed in Japan are concentrated in Okinawa, an area that amounts to a mere 0.6% of the total land mass of Japan. The debate surrounding this disproportionate burden continues to dominate in ongoing negotiations between Okinawa's local politicians and the central Japanese government.

follow her gender. In a rare direct comment on gender debates made to the literary critic

Koshikawa Yoshiaki, Sakiyama criticises the valorisation of Okinawa as a particularly

female space.

> Okinawa is held up and feminised in a peculiar way. I feel a strong resistance
> against it. I mean, what is happening when the culture and history of
> Okinawa itself is held up and praised as feminine? It is only to supplement
> masculine power. When women are made to take the place of men, the
> same power structures prevail. (Koshikawa & Sakiyama, 2005, n.p.)

Sakiyama's comments point to the essentialist thinking that positions the natural

landscape and wartime victimisation of Okinawa in binary opposition to the aggressive

fast-pacedness of Tokyo, and projects onto these opposing images certain gendered

characterisations. Yet these concerns might be further extended to the label "Okinawan

woman writer," which risks producing a 'triple bind' for reading her work, and has been

bemoaned by Sakiyama for equating her with the figure of the elderly Okinawan *yuta* or

shaman (Bhowmik, 2008, p. 243).[14]

The characters of Sakiyama's texts satiricise such gendered prescriptions. Female

narrators tend to dominate these fictional landscapes, the men frequently absent or

debilitated through old age (a social commentary on the higher-than-average male

suicide rates and popular discourses on Okinawan longevity). Yet the shamanistic role of

women as the bearers of language, tradition and stories is repeatedly problematized

through disjointed narratives and the distinctive languages of these texts. Sakiyama's

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[14] This particular notion of a 'triple bind' originates from Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Woman, Native Other* to
describe the "woman of colour who writes" (Trinh, 1989, p. 6). As Trinh elaborates, "She who
'happens to be' a (non-white) Third World member, a woman, and a writer is bound to go through the
ordeal of exposing her work to the abuse of praises and criticisms that either ignore, dispense with, or
overemphasise her racial and sexual attributes". Such a writer must always wrangle with the question
over where to place her loyalties: as a writer of colour, woman writer, or woman of colour (ibid.). In
repeating the idea here I am aware of the distinction between Trinh's women of the Third World and
Sakiyama's positionality as an Okinawan woman. However, I argue that there are parallels with the
marginalised status of Okinawa on account of ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences from Japan.
The same goes for Yi and Tawada, in the latter case when one recalls Tawada's position as an Asian
writer in Germany.

literature is significant for its polyphonic tongues that destabilise and disrupt the expectations of Japanese prose. These terroristic strategies are many and are not necessarily consistent throughout a single text, much less across her oeuvre overall. Yet they include: abstracting generic terms such as 'person' (ヒト), and 'island' (シマ) by transcribing them in *katakana*; the phonetic transcription of "island words", Sakiyama's term for the multitude of Okinawan languages and dialects, without providing any *kanji* to indicate meaning; and the inclusion of *furigana* glosses that overwrite Japanese vocabulary with Okinawan accents and pronunciation. Such strategies defamiliarise the Japanese language from itself by challenging the axiomatic logic upon which it relies and by imposing unexpected rhythms onto the text. As they draw not upon a singular Okinawan dialect but the wealth of vernacular from across the archipelago, these linguistic strategies further deconstruct the foundations on which such categories as 'centre' and 'periphery' are built.

Chapter One departs from this unstable footing to present a textual analysis of seven short works known collectively as the 'Kuja' stories that were serialised in the literary journal *Subaru* between 2006 and 2008. The history, geography, culture, and languages of Okinawa form a central backdrop to 'Kuja', However, these stories repeatedly break from the essentialist portrayals of the region by presenting landscapes and narratives riddled with gaps, fissures, and borders. From their starting point within the decaying military base town, these texts tell the individual stories of Okinawa's wartime and occupation that official histories threaten to forget. Moreover, they adopt a critical stance towards indigenous identities that fail, or refuse, to remember their own pasts. When these voices falter, it is ironically the hybrid tongues of the mixed race children conceived between Okinawan women and US military personnel who, despite being too

young to have experienced its traumatic past directly, are entrusted with transmitting

the individual stories of the town. This analysis thus pursues these questions of memory

and responsibility as they are engaged within interwoven tropes of spatial heterogeneity

and textual polyphony. The multiracial narrators of these stories embody the hybridity of

these textual spaces and languages, yet such hybridity forecloses any attempt to reduce

one to the terms of the other. Rather, the gaps that remain open forge a new space out

of which the stories that haunt the past might emerge.

Spectral liminality and the hybrid body are also central to the fictional writing of Yi Yang-

ji (1955-1992). Yi's earliest novels draw upon episodes of private loss and disruption

particularly associated within the context of family. In her first work, *Nabi taryon*

("Lamentation of Butterflies", *Gunzō*, November 1982), the protagonist Aiko's (or

possibly Eja, to use the Korean reading) parents are embroiled in bitter divorce

proceedings, while the premature and traumatic loss of siblings, particularly brothers,

features as a second frequent plot device. Similarities between Yi's familial background

and those of her protagonists have led some critics, as Tracey Gannon observes, to read

Yi's fiction "through her biography" (Gannon, 2003, p. 160).[15] Others have risked

conflating Yi's personal life with that of her characters, reading these novels as a way to

uncover the author within. This desire to read fictional works as confessional narratives

follows the well-established traditions of the 'I' novel (*shisōsetsu*) in modern Japanese

literature, and the propensity is particularly evident with regards to writing by women.

However, in appreciating Yi as a writer of powerful literary fiction, I remain wary of such

a move. While one surely cannot deny that themes of private tragedy and marital

breakdowns such as Yi witnessed among her own family have influenced the stories of

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[15] Yi's parents were involved in a drawn-out, acrimonious divorce, during which time Yi lost her two older brothers prematurely to illness: Tetsuo, the oldest, died of a sudden brain haemorrhage in 1980 aged 31. In the following year the family's second son, Teppu, succumbed to meningitis aged 30.

her creation, an autobiographical reading distracts from the possibility of other

interpretations (Gannon, 2003, p. 160). It might be further argued that this approach,

most evident among the criticisms of Yi's work written by Japanese men, reveals an

unconscious desire to unveil Yi as an example of that unknowable, thus unassimilable

other, the *zainichi* Korean woman.[16]

Within *zainichi* literature, as her writing is most commonly defined, Yi's work apparently

forms a logical bridge between the work of Ri Kaisei, whose Akutagawa Prize-winning

novel from 1971, "*Kinuta o utsu onna*" ("The Woman Who Fulled Clothes"), posits the

Korean homeland as a romanticised place of longing tied to the mother, and Yu Miri,

whose work plays with stereotypes of *zainichi* Korean communities in Japan.[17] In line

with her commitment to her Korean identity, Yi's earliest writing tentatively posits Korea

as a haven to which her Japan-bound characters might escape. Her novels frequently

speak of *bokoku* and *urinara*, the names for 'motherland' in Japanese and Korean

respectively. However, the duality of these terms suggests their fragmented status in her

texts. Unlike Ri's figurative conflation of mother/Korea, the maternal in Yi is more

abstract, blurring the significance of mother and father in turn. Yi's fiction is not devoid

of the abstract associations bonding mother-father-Japan-Korea. Yet marred by tensions

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[16] This suspicion relates to the broader problem inherent in the tradition of Japanese literature whereby mainstream, male critics comment on fiction by women and/or minority writers in round-table discussions and critical afterwords that regularly follow a novel in its printed volume. To cite a specific related reference, with respect to the motifs of water and spirituality in Yi's novel *Kazukime* (discussed in Chapter Two), the author, translator and critic Ōhashi Kenzaburō states that, "To be honest, we [*bokura*, the male first-person plural] don't really understand that part well. I did think that it perhaps means something to a Korean native (*chōsen no nētivu*), but there was something about that part that I personally couldn't digest"(Kanno et al., 1983, p. 281).

[17] Yu has rejected attempts from others to label her and her literature as *zainichi*. By including Yu in this context, my wish is not to pigeon-hole her work but rather to acknowledge its complex engagement with this identity category, which extends to her own refusal to naturalise to Japanese nationality and her insistence on producing her family name in the Korean way as opposed to the Japanese readings Yanagi/ Yū.

between warring parents and drifting generations, these categories offer Yi's individual characters little to rely upon.

As such, Yi's fictional characters portray the acute pain of encountering discrimination due to their social minority status within Japan whilst being unable to put their faith in Korea as a promised homeland. In considering Yi's relationship to the categories of *zainichi* and *zainichi* literature, I follow scholars including Melissa Wender (Wender, 2005) and Carol Hayes (Hayes, 2005) in attesting to the significance of Korean cultural identity in Yi's work. Yi herself has described as impossible the task of narrating her individual history as something distinct from Korea's modern history and colonisation by Japan. Echoing Audre Lord's maxim that the personal is political, she has said in interview: "To narrate a person is as trying a task as to narrate the history of humankind" (Yi & Ichi, 1989, p. 82). However, such words do not simply equate the individual to her context. Any approach to Yi's work predicated solely on the writer's ethnicity must be wary of essentialising both the category of *zainichi*, and Yi herself. As she insists, "ethnic identity is but one facet of any person's make-up" (ibid., 81).

Indeed, gender and sexuality claim equal prevalence to ethnicity in Yi's writing. As Melissa Wender remarks, it is her works' attention both to Korean womanhood and to the sexual experiences of women that sets Yi apart from her predecessors (Wender, 2005, p. 138). Comparing the literary themes in Yi's novels to those of Ri Kaisei & Kim Kakuei, Takeda Seiji even questions whether Yi should be called a "*zainichi* writer": citing a reference to menstruation in the 1984 novel, *Koku*, to Takeda's mind she is rather a "'woman' writer" (Takeda, 1983, p. 296). The inverted commas around the word 'woman' (*josei*) are Takeda's own, yet his effort to diversify readings of Yi's fiction beyond her

ethnic background falls into an equivalent trap that restricts it to the female body.

Although Yi's texts do seek to reclaim the body as a mode of expression, their methods

to not pander to gendered expectations. Following the publication of *Yuhi* in the

November 1988 issue of *Gunzō*, Yi was awarded the 103rd Akutagawa Prize, the first

zainichi Korean woman to do so.[18] The above commentaries suggest the double-edged

nature of being labelled in such a way. On one hand, the media attention and

celebrations focused upon Yi following her award made her presence more visible within

a hitherto more universal, i.e. male, conceptualisation of *zainichi*.[19] On the other, it also

implied the inescapable bind of gendered and ethnic otherness against which Yi's work

was juxtaposed.

Chapter Two presents a reading of two novels by Yi that gesture beyond this restrictive

framework. *Kazukime* (1983) and the Akutagawa Award-winning *Yuhi* (1989) both

feature protagonists in constant struggle with their identities as women living amid

patriarchal conventions, as ethnic Koreans living in Japan, and as adopted/step-

daughters within the family. Trapped in positions viewed as illegitimate and even

threatening to the hegemonic dictates of society and the household, these women

experience themselves as the 'Other' within. Thus placed, they take on the highly-

wrought challenge of negotiating themselves vis-à-vis plural definitions of gender,

ethnicity, language, and the body, inscribing themselves anew through tropes of

ambiguity, androgyny, and rupture. The reading here focuses upon silence, which in

these texts is as plural and polyphonic as the hybrid tongues of Kuja, and its 'translations'

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[18] The full list to date of *zainichi* Korean recipients of the Akutagawa Award reads: Ri Kaisei, for *Kinuta wo utsu onna* ("The Woman Who Fulled Clothes", 1971 [1986]); Yi Yang-ji for *Yuhi* ("Yuhi", 1988); Yu Miri for *Kazoku shinema* ("The Family Cinema", 1996); and Gen Getsu for *Kage no sumika* ("A Dwelling in the Shade", 1999).

[19] The announcement of Yi's Akutagawa award led to an increase in interviews within literary journals and popular publications such as the Asahi Journal and AERA in the subsequent months.

into the self-destructive languages of the hysterical body and text. The two novels by Yi discussed here were written six years apart as apparently distinct works. However, this reading traces tropes of bodily violence in *Kazukime* before uncovering their subliminal echoes in the narrative of *Yuhi* that inverts those visceral excesses to hang instead on the aporia left by its absent protagonist.

The shift from hybridity in Chapter One to hysteria necessitates a more solid engagement with psychoanalytical discourse, which is only referenced peripherally within existing appraisals of Kuja. However, there is an apparent symmetry between the outwardly disruptive, terrorising strategies of Kuja and its protagonists, and the inwardly targeted violence of Yi's characters. Moreover, as the subjective splitting that characterises hysteria appears indelibly connected to the doubled yet divided nature of Yi's *zainichi* characters, the juxtaposition of these two readings suggests a latent hysterical layer within the hybrid body that connects these separate texts.

At first glance, Tawada Yōko's literary oeuvre appears to sit at odds with the above framework. Unlike the conditions of linguistic, cultural and ethnic difference that appear to marginalise Sakiyama and Yi's characters with respect to mainstream constructions of Japanese identity, and the specific experiences of enforced linguistic and cultural assimilation that has sought to eradicate those differences, the 'exophonic' approach of Tawada's bilingual writings in Japanese and German potentially promises a more liberating and liberated textual context. As Chapter Three will elaborate, Tawada's writing proposes the term 'exophony' to name the practice and experience of living and writing in a language not native to oneself. It thus describes the context in which Tawada's writing has developed since her move to Hamburg in 1982. Her first bilingual

anthology was published in 1987, entitled *Nur da wo du bist, da ist nichts* (*Only where you are is there nothing*), followed by the publication in German of her first novel, "Das Bad" ("The Bath") in 1989.[20] Since then, Tawada has produced a seemingly inexhaustible number of short stories, mid-length novels, play scripts, and essays in both German and Japanese. As a testament to the extent to which this productivity has been celebrated in both countries Tawada's works have received numerous accolades, the most prestigious among them being the 108th Akutagawa Literary Prize in 1993 for "*Inu muko iri*" ("The Bridgegroom was a dog"), the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize in 1996 given to non-native writers of fiction in German, and the Goethe Medal in 2005.[21]

Tawada's writing bears the traces of a dizzying range of influences that span geographically and historically distinct literary traditions, including Greco-Roman mythology, Japanese folklore, classical texts of modern European fiction, and postcolonial fiction by African and Asian writers. These intertextual allusions speak not only to works of literature, cinema, and theatre; they also evoke images and concepts from classical, psychoanalytical, and deconstructive theory.[22] Particularly with regards to the latter, Tawada's texts frequently exhibit a desire to deconstruct language in order to

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[20] This anthology contained Tawada's Japanese poetry accompanied by German translations by Peter Pörtner. The first edition of *Das Bad* was co-translated by Tawada and Pörtner.

[21] A comprehensive list of awards appears on the writer's public homepage: http://yokotawada.de/?page_id=5. Other notable Japanese literary awards include the Izumi Kyōka Prize for Literature in 2000, the Ito Sei Prize for literature and Tanizaki Prize in 2003 and most recently the Murasaki Shikibu Prize for Literature in 2011.

[22] These influences are too numerous and intricate to list, however examples wherein Tawada's fiction explicitly rewrites canonical texts include her theatrical reworking of Anton Chekhov's The Cherry Tree, entitled "*Sakura no, so no nippon*" (That Japan of the Cherry Blossom) (Tawada, 2010b), and "The Babel of Animals" (*Dōbutsutachi no baberu*) (Tawada, 2014) in which she satiricises the biblical myth as a polyphonic dialogue among different breeds of animal. This new text arguably also speaks to Derrida's deconstructive critique of the myth in "*Des Tours de Babel*" (Derrida, 1985) . Of the more literarily allusive references, one might point to the psychologist within "Missing Heels" who resembles Freud, and the peripheral figure of 'Walter' who ultimately commits suicide in *Brother-in-law in Bordeaux* (2009) and bears resemblance to Walter Benjamin. Walter's sister 'Dora' also echoes the name of Benjamin's wife, while suggesting a link to the pseudonym of Freud's patient in his famous case history and study on hysteria.

uncover hidden connections and qualities that might in less contrived contexts be overlooked. Her 1991 novel "*Kakato o nakushite*" (*Missing Heels*) closes on the image of a squid (*ika*), a pun that articulates the protagonist's sense of alienation through its homophonic equivalent meaning 'defamiliarisation' (異化).[23] The more recent novel *Bōrudō no gikei* (*Brother-in-law in Bordeaux*) (Tawada, 2009) deploys a thoroughly radical approach as its protagonist, Yuna, sees the world as dictated to her through written script. Thus, she categorises horses (馬), birds (鳥), and fish (魚) together on account of their each possessing "four legs" (Tawada, 2008, p. 109), while elsewhere she literally dismantles written Japanese to reorganise the radicals that form one set of *kanji* (渚　苺　者) into new combinations (海　箸) (ibid., p. 110).[24]

On the surface, such wordplay can appear quirky yet somehow frivolous. Hence Nishi Masahiko commends the "blithe prose that offers a taste of being able to relive her travels, both distinctive characteristics of Tawada" (Nishi, 2014, p. 150).[25] Yet given the alienation felt by her characters, Tawada's texts also belie a more critical dimension that highlights the divisions between written and spoken language, and between real life and its textual representations. As the rearranged text above can only be illustrated by reproducing the Japanese script, such play is moreover untranslatable. At its most pointed, mirroring the recurring figure of the traveller/translator who appears displaced

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[23] "Missing Heels" was awarded the Gunzō Prize for New Writers in the same year of its publication.
[24] This attention to the text's visual appearance extends to its published presentation. As the narrative unfolds in short discrete paragraphs intended to infer the protagonist's diary, each section is headed by a singular *kanji*. These *kanji* appear untranslated in the German text, *Schwager in Bordeaux* (Tawada, 2008), which also includes separate pages on which other *kanji* are printed in colour overlapping and falling apart. Apparently to create a similarly alienating effect, in the Japanese version these *kanji* headings are flipped about a vertical axis as *kagami moji* ("mirrored text").
[25] Nishi is referring directly to Tawada's essay volume, *Exophony*, which he names as a "very pleasurable book" (Nishi, 2014, p. 150). *Exophony* is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

within the forebodingly strange backgrounds of her fiction, Tawada's writing centralises the inherent alienation within all language as a foreigner unto itself.[26]

Tsuchiya's positioning of Tawada's texts within critical appraisals as "*nihongo bungaku*" ("Japanese-language literature") stems from a desire to acknowledge the multilingual situations to which her characters are exposed, as well as the bilingual context and practices through which her writing comes about (Tsuchiya, 2009a, p. 223). This label is intended to denote its apparent resistance to literature marketed under the rubrics of "*bokokugo*" ("mother tongue") and "*kokumin*" ("national people") as axiomatic constructs, which it achieves through the defamiliarising strategies outlined above (ibid., p. 224). For Tsuchiya, this renewed approach affords a perspective on Tawada's writing that reveals parallels with "minor literature" (Tsuchiya later invokes Deleuze and Guattari's thesis on Kafka explicitly), "creole literature" (ibid.), and even places it upon a "new horizon of postcolonial literature" (ibid., p.251). Yet as identified above, the weakness of this approach emerges through the mixed terminology that Tsuchiya and his contributors bring together apparently without question. In fact, the range of these terms betrays a more complicated flow of ideas. Moreover, by foregrounding the multilingual aptitudes of border-crossing writers, such an approacharguably threatens to obfuscate a second dimension of such writing that simultaneously frames the border as a barrier.

In particular, if Tawada's bilinguality risks conflating that image with her fictional portrayals and assuming that her characters' movements are invariably fluid, her writing

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[26] Susan C. Anderson highlights an equivalent "hyperattentativeness to form and literality" within Tawada's German prose. As Anderson argues, the process of "hyperliteral or surface translation" in those texts ultimately empowers the translator/narrators of Tawada's fiction as it provides "a means of avoiding both assimilation and marginalisation" through which ideas of 'native' and 'foreign' are broken down (Anderson, 2010, p. 50; 51).

is as much beset with friction, splitting, tensions, and ambiguities as the other literature

considered here. In fact, although Tawada's characters are ostensibly positioned 'on the

move', the silence and darkness that shade the night-trains on which they travel suggest

rather inertia and the surreptitious desire to stay hidden. For those characters who first

appear already removed from their homes, their narratives reveal the discordance,

isolation, and even fear of being the foreigner within one's surroundings. As Douglas

Slaymaker argues,

> The experiment of this fiction focuses on the non-bounded body, of testing
> the boundaries, such as how much of a body or character can be ambiguous
> without completely destroying comprehensibility. (Slaymaker, 2010a, p. 323)

As their displacement in terms of geography extends to their language and physical

sense of self, Tawada's characters articulate their struggles through narratives

punctuated by stammering and silent pauses, while their bodies are imbued with a

spectral ambiguity that renders them doubly present and absent, alive and dead, thus

allowing them to remain half-hidden within new, alien spaces.

As they pertain not only to the divides that are presumed to exist between national

regions, languages, the gap between speech and writing, and the outlines of the physical

body, the borders within Tawada's work are inherently viscous, multiple, and

problematic. Hence as a supplement to the focus on the "ludic" elements of Tawada's

writing, Brett de Bary echoes Sakai's notion of bordering when she proposes how these

texts might

> gain power when we read them as thematising the violent process of
> boundary *production* itself, rather than as individual parables of 'crossing'
> that thus reinscribe those same boundaries. (de Bary, 2012, p. 12)

Through aberrations of the body, voice, and language, Tawada's writing aggravates the

boundaries delineating classical binary thinking while inciting new divisions that allow

alternative textual associations and identities to emerge. As such, these concerns extend

deeper than the surfaces of her textual wordplay. For one, the ambiguous portrayals of

her characters' bodies suggest a queering of gendered and sexual distinctions that

mirrors her deconstructive incitement of language.[27] However, as de Bary observes,

there has been a striking omission in scholarship on Tawada to historicise the broader

projects of translation within her writing, especially given ongoing debates over war

responsibility in both Germany and Japan against which so much of her writing is staged

(ibid.). Indeed, as the practice of peeling back layers of the body and of language

excavates the "latent yet hitherto unseen" lines through which both entities are

constructed (Tawada, 2003, p. 9), it reveals a critical historical dimension that a focus on

purely spatial borders threatens to conceal.

Chapter Three therefore focuses upon Tawada's novel *Tabi o suru hadaka no me* (*The

Travelling Naked Eye*) as a work keenly embedded within historical metanarratives. This

first-person narrative of a Vietnamese girl forced to reside in the shadows of the Parisian

cinema situates the terms of travel and bilingualism within an explicitly postcolonial

context marked by precarity, stasis, and loss that undermines the utopian image of

border-crossing. The linguistic displacement that this unnamed protagonist experiences

brings to the foreground melancholic tropes that bubble beneath the landscape of Kuja,

while the struggles through which she seeks to (re)locate her own voice develop through

concerns of silences and psychical instability to be found within the analyses of Yi's

stories. As inferred by the reference to the 'naked eye' in its title and the centrality of

the cinema to this narrative, the novel enables a reading that moreover builds upon

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[27] In this regard, Keith Vincent reads Tawada as a "queer writer", a term that does not refer literally to the sexuality of her characters (although many are inscribed with homosexual and bisexual desires) but rather describes the "infinite deferrals" through which her characters resist any bounded notion of identity (Vincent, 2004, p. 188).

issues of language, voice, and body established in the preceding chapters through tropes of vision, visibility, and blindness. Although the structures that govern language cannot be transposed wholesale to those which organise the visual realm, the two are complexly intertwined in *The Travelling Naked Eye* as the linguistic displacement experienced by its protagonist is accompanied by indications of her visual delusion and her efforts to keep her marginalised presence as an illegal immigrant out of sight. While it uncovers a dimension that has been overlooked within critical appraisals of Tawada's Japanese prose thus far, such a reading moreover suggests hidden intertextualities both with the narratives explored in the preceding two chapters and beyond.

The structure of the following three chapters therefore foregrounds a critical analysis of each text individually, while alluding to connections that speak through the selection as a whole. As this approach aims in the first instance to attend to text-specific contexts and themes, it establishes the need to ground each analysis within its own methodological framework. Respectively, these readings incorporate discussions of linguistic terrorism that relates primarily to Gloria Anzaldúa's engagement with the borderlands, and to motifs of hysteria and melancholia. As suggested by the movement from postcolonialism to psychoanalysis, these readings cross their own theoretical and contextual borders. In particular, my readings of Yi and Tawada's fiction especially integrate feminist and postcolonial re-readings of Freud's original studies. Just as the texts at the heart of this research actively resist either neat closure or categorisation, then the separate readings founded upon these methodological backgrounds do not strive towards absolute equivalence. Yet these central figures provide the points through which the broader narrative of my argument can be woven, to outline interrelated strategies between these texts of translation, rupture, and difference. It is through their imaginative and

subversive refiguring of these tropes that these texts find their empowerment, re-presenting narratives and voices that have been ignored within official histories and the mainstream structure of Japanese literature and yet which resist assimilation and containment within those homogenising, hegemonic discourses.

An attempt to overcome categorical borders while attending to the lines of division and difference inscribed within these texts therefore characterises the readings within this thesis. If this overriding theme can be attributed to any single methodology, then it is to the "spatial approach to identity and difference" developed by Susan Stanford Friedman in her book, *Mappings: Feminism and the cultural geographies of encounter*, which centres the "locations of identity formation within the mappings and remappings of ever-changing cultural formations" (Friedman, 1998, p. 19). This new geography, which Friedman crystallises in her theory of "geographics," is a "move from the allegorisation of the self in terms of organicism, stable centres, cores, and wholeness to a discourse of spatialised identities constantly on the move." This movement is further qualified, for it is "not the ordered movement of linear growth, but the lack of solid ground, the ceaseless change of fluidity, the nomadic wandering of transnational diaspora, the interactive syncretisms of the 'global ethnoscape,' or the interminable circuitry of cyberspace" (ibid). The strength of Friedman's ideas for my purposes is their ability to articulate the different sites, trajectories, connections, and distances upon which the textual identities of the fiction explored is based, without privileging any one. Identity is treated in terms of a dialectic that occurs in "the spaces of dynamic encounter—the 'contact zone,' the 'middle ground, the borderlands, *la frontera*" (ibid).

Crucially, Friedman points out that borders are not only a point of connection; they "have a way of insisting on separation at the same time" (ibid., p. 3). The influence of *Mappings* upon this research therefore lies in its suggestion of a means of connecting commonalities without effacing difference, while attending to the necessarily multiple, multi-layered, and contradictory presentations of the border that run through these texts and my readings both as a static line and active process. If my approach modifies that of Friedman in any way, then whereas *Mappings* claims the recent prevalence of "border talk" as enacting a shift *away* from silence and invisibility the texts discussed in this thesis proactively inscribe both. Moreover, its spatial configuration must be expanded to incorporate temporal and material dimensions that connect back to the past and its ghosts. It is in these radical ways that the writings of Sakiyama, Yi, and Tawada incite difference and distance, for the border that runs through their narratives places them invariably close to their erasure through silence, absence, and even death. Yet precisely because they border on the cusp of such precarity without fully crossing the line, these texts ensure their survival and significance, as the following discussions hope to reveal.

Chapter One: Hybridity, Polyphony, and Spectrality Sakiyama Tami's 'Kuja' Stories

1.1 Introduction: The terror of hybridity

> So, if you really want to hurt me, talk badly about my language.
> —Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

> Now, I-woman am going to blow up the Law: an explosion henceforth
> possible and ineluctable; let it be done, right now, *in* language.
> — Hélène Cixous, *The Laugh of the Medusa*

Within the writings of Sakiyama Tami, language is more than simply the means of

transmitting the narratives of her characters; it simultaneously plays a role that

destabilises and surprises in a bid to defer that communication. The methods by which

her prose deploys these functions of language constantly evolve throughout her texts,

yet the clearest articulation can be found in the witty yet polemic essay, "'*Shimakotoba'*

de kachāshī" ("Stirring up with 'island words'") (Sakiyama, 2002).[28] That which is to be

"stirred up" is named immediately as the Japanese language (ibid., p.159). Yet

Sakiyama's essay does not merely express this desire; it performs it. The title already jars,

written in spiky *katakana* barring the connecting grammatical particle '*de*'. The two

terms that this particle joins are moreover not standard Japanese. 'S*himakotoba*' is

defined as a collective term for all of the dialects from "in and around Okinawa"

(*Okinawa atari*), an area that spans from Amami in the north to the Sakishima islands in

the prefecture's far south (ibid.).[29] *Kachāshī* names a "frenetic dance" (*ranbu*) marked by

its fast tempo and irregular rhythm that is traditionally performed at celebratory events

in Okinawa. Yet it also writes in *shimakotoba* the verb *kakimazeru*, meaning "to stir up".

In Sakiyama's text this Japanese term is written in *hiragana*, enabling a pun based on the

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[28] As a background to the terrorising strategies of "*Shimakotoba*" to which this section attends,
Bhowmik has specified this essay as Sakiyama's first publication following the terrorist attacks of 9.11
(Bhowmik, 2008).
[29] The Amami islands today fall under the administration of Kagoshima prefecture, although the
southern islands once belonged to the Ryukyu Kingdom together with the other islands of Okinawa.

homophonic verbs 掻く and 書く that moreover stirs up specifically through writing.

Emblematic of this desire to incite the Japanese language is the diligence with which the word *kotoba* is written only in *katakana* across Sakiyama's texts. The Japanese '*kotoba*' is problematic to translate for it can signify everything from a single word to the schema of language at large. Unlike '*tango*' that suggests words as the fundamental units (*tan'i*) of language, or the more academic '*goi*' ('vocabulary'), *kotoba* are at once singular and plural, oral and written. Through its lack of distinction between one and many, '*kotoba*' offers an alternative conceptualisation to the insistence on the "countability" and "unity of language" problematised by Naoki Sakai (Sakai, 2009a, p. 73). Rendered exclusively in *katakana*, *kotoba* describes language, and thus itself, as an abstract sign set apart from codes of meaning. It also bypasses the hierarchical distinctions inferred by the term *hōgen* (dialect), which in regular parlance reduces the many languages of Okinawa to a single vernacular whose status is inferior to the official, national language of Japanese.[30]

Sakiyama's argument for challenging Japanese as a standard language and elucidation of how her texts might do this is divided into two halves, and opens by criticising efforts to standardise Okinawan languages throughout history. This accusation points to the reforms for linguistic assimilation imposed by Japan upon the region's dialects, most notably the Standard Japanese Enforcement Movement (*hyōjungo reikō undō*) implemented in 1939 and the strict language curriculum that was enforced upon Okinawan schoolchildren following reversion in 1972. While the former sought to create

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[30] This analysis follows Kina Ikue's discussion of the particular significance of Sakiyama's 'kotoba' in the second footnote to her translation of Sakiyama's short essay "A Landscape of Words" (Sakiyama, 2012a). Although the languages of Okinawa are almost invariably discussed in Japanese as '*Okinawa hōgen*' or '*Okinawa-ben*', there is an ensuing debate over whether they should be rightly called 'languages' or 'dialects'; many linguistic studies favour the former. Throughout this thesis, I follow Kina in translating Sakiyama's use of the word '*kotoba*' with the English 'words' and '*shimakotoba*' with 'island words'.

imperial subjects who could be mobilised for war through a common language, in both

cases the aim was to instil in Okinawan subjects a firm sense of loyalty for Japan and its

central, patriarchal authority. Such compliance was moreover essential in order to

strengthen the impression of Japanese as a singular, authoritative language throughout

the nation. As Alan Christy writes of the prewar language reforms,

> Japanese language education in the prefecture tended to reduce the
> multiplicity of Okinawan languages to one Okinawan language (or a series of
> dialects constituting a subset) which could then be corresponded to one
> Japanese language. That, it seems to me, is the whole point of 'cultural
> assimilation'; it functions to homogenize the culture that is established as the
> standard as well as the culture which is compelled to change. (Christy, 1993,
> p. 631)

The debate on Okinawan dialects thus apparently states a double bind. On the one hand,

as the focus upon education suggests, Okinawan languages have been judged

throughout history as proof of Okinawans' ignorance and backwardness, providing a

continued source of discrimination from the mainland that justifies the need for reform.

Yet as with the essentialist images that have fuelled the more recent Okinawa 'boom',

which itself arises as a contemporary re-expression of a prejudicial trend towards

identifying one's others, dialects have also provided an internal cultural and linguistic

Other against which Japan has strengthened its own sense of self.

Sakiyama's essay highlights a distance that stands between what it calls "standard-like

Japanese" (*hyōjunteki nihongo*)—inferring a derisory attitude towards the official

sanctioning of the Tokyo-based dialect as *hyōjungo*—and "Okinawan words". As this

distance renders mainland readers unable to comprehend the regional dialect without a

translator, it forces them (in a manner echoed in Tawada Yōko's writing strategies) to

"stumble" (*tsumazuku*) (Sakiyama, 2002, p. 160). The criticism of Sakiyama's essay,

however, extends towards the forebears of Okinawan fiction who have sought to bridge

this gap by injecting "local colour" into their works while pandering to the hegemonic demands for communicability in the national language. To illustrate, Sakiyama's essay highlights the representation of speech in Yamagusuku Seichū's novel "*Kunenbo*" ("Mandarin Oranges", 1911) that only appends Okinawan inflections onto otherwise Japanese grammatical constructions, as in the given example "*sore ja nihonjin de wa aran sa ya* (*nainda ne*)" (Sakiyama, 2002, p. 166, Sakiyama's emphasis in bold; translation in parentheses by Sakiyama). For Sakiyama, the effect is an "Okinawan language-esque dialogue" (*okinawa kotoba-fū kaiwatai*) whose meaning remains plain to Japanese readers (ibid.).

Her strongest criticism, however, is targeted at Ōshiro Tatsuhiro's *Kame no kō baka* ("Turtleback Tombs", 1966). "Turtleback Tombs" makes its focus on language explicit in its subtitle appended by Ōshiro as a "*jikken hōgen o motsu aru fudoki*" ("a topographical record of experiments in dialect"). However, Sakiyama's reading of selected sections of dialogue emphasises how Ōshiro transcribes these spoken words into a "literary" (*bungoteki*) language:

> "*Oi, bāsan, teppō da. Ikusa **do**.*"
> "*Ō, kuru **te yo**. Hayaku nige**n to**. Kodomotachi wa **hā**.*"
> "*Bāsan. Antara, doko nigeru **te**. Issho ni ika**reiyō**.*" (Sakiyama, 2002, p. 167, Sakiyama's emphasis in bold)[31]

Although Sakiyama concedes that Ōshiro is successful at transmitting the nuances of Okinawan words "to a certain extent", she argues that by only changing the suffixes of words the "aural sense" (*onkan*) of these dialogues is abstracted. As a result, these passages sidle up to standard Japanese expression, "opening themselves to the *danger*

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[31] Ōshiro's novel describes an Okinawan family who, trying to escape from the encroaching war, take cover in their family tomb. The novel takes its name from the particular style of tomb that can be found across the Okinawan landscape whose shape shares a physical resemblance with a turtle's shell. In Steve Rabson's translation, entitled "Turtleback Tombs", the passages cited by Sakiyama read thus: "Hey, Grandma, gunboats. It's the war!" "Yeah, we've got to get out of here. Where're the kids?" "Grandma! Where're you going? Please, take us, too!" (Ōshiro, 2000, p. 113; 114; 116).

of being appropriated (*kaishū*) and *stabilised* (*antei*) by standard-like Japanese"

(Sakiyama, 2002, p. 168, Sakiyama's emphasis).

As the first Okinawan writer to receive an Akutagawa Prize, Ōshiro remains a highly

prolific and influential figure within the postwar shaping of Okinawan literature.[32] In a

round-table discussion among their contemporaries, the eminent Okinawan literary

scholar Nakahodo Masanori commends Ōshiro for reintegrating dialect into Okinawan

literature amid mainstream demands for communicable language (*kyōtsūgo*) (Ōshiro,

Nakahodo, Shima, Isa, & Shima, 1998). However, Sakiyama's critique reveals how this

desire to be legible to Japanese readers has led these literary works to impose their own

standards of grammar and transcription upon Okinawan words. In Sakiyama's view, this

movement has led ironically to the threat of commodifying Okinawan words and

literature as "*haikara*": that is, as the desirable 'in thing'. In so doing, it reveals that the

structure ordering both languages replicates the geopolitical power relations between

Okinawa and Japan, wherein regional dialects must occupy a "supplementary position

vis-à-vis conservative Japanese" (p.169).[33] As a counter-example, Sakiyama's essay

commends Higashi Mineo's *Okinawa no shōnen* ("An Okinawan Boy", 1972).[34] For

Sakiyama, the appeal of Higashi's prose lies in its *furigana* glosses (つね、つねよし、起
ウ
きれ、起きらんな！) that retain the oral/aural quality of Okinawan speech, and

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[32] Ōshiro's oeuvre covers short and long stories, playscripts, *kumiodori* (a comic performance genre related to Noh and Kyogen), travelogues, and nonfiction essays. To my knowledge, he is the only Okinawan writer to have his own collected works, the *Ōshiro Tatsuhiro zenshū*, whose 13 volumes stand impressively alongside the 20 volumes of the *Okinawa bungaku zenshū* (*Collected Works of Okinawan Literature*). Born in 1925, at the age of 91 he continues to produce new works, his influence among Okinawan literary circles still present.

[33] Given Ōshiro's stature and influence, Sakiyama's criticism can be perceived to be highly provocative. Yet it also provides a counter-critique to Ōshiro's own criticisms of "young writers" who he argues include dialect "not freely but under duress (*muri shite*)" (Ōshiro et al., 1998, p. 19).

[34] "An Okinawan Boy" was the second novel by an Okinawan author, following Ōshiro's "Cocktail Party", to win the Akutagawa Prize.

katakana interjections (肝がホトホトしてきて、ヒィーッヒィーッヒィーッ) that punctuate the text according to Okinawan rhythms. As these strategies arguably bear the influences informing her own written style, for Sakiyama they suggest a "breath-taking (肝ホトホト)" language that can be neither simply appropriated by standard Japanese nor seen as a straightforward approximation of the regional dialect it transcribes (Sakiyama, 2002, p. 176).[35]

Sakiyama's motion to incite through 'island words' thus seeks to overcome the "deep, deep ditch" (*fukai fukai mizo*) that separates the sounds and rhythms of Okinawan languages as they are lived and spoken, and their crystallisation into Japanese text, even while resisting the demand to present either language as unified or complete (Sakiyama, 2002, p. 164).[36] Sakiyama's essays, especially in the collection *Kotoba no umareru basho* (*The Place Where Words Are Born*) (Sakiyama, 2004a), attest to her familiarity with the many languages spoken throughout Okinawa as a result of listening to them throughout her childhood, and reveal a desire to represent those sounds in written syllabary. However, whereas Ōshiro states an explicit desire to make Okinawan literature "bilingual" (Ōshiro et al., 1998), betraying his belief in the isolation of Okinawan and Japanese as distinct languages between which his "experiments in dialect" seek to bridge, Sakiyama's turn to forgotten languages does not seek to resurrect a single, pure form of dialect in opposition to Japanese. As "*Shimakotoba*" continues,

> I had a fervent desire to write literature by considering how to dismantle the
> position of Okinawan words that have had no choice but be swept up

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[35] Sakiyama is here paraphrasing the cited passage of Higashi's text. Although unglossed here, the Okinawan reading of the *kanji kimo* (肝) is *chimu*. While *kimo* refers exclusively to the bodily organ of the liver, *chimu* denotes an abstract emotional quality much like the Japanese *kokoro*, as in the expression *chimuyami* that denotes heartfelt anguish. *Chimuyami* recurs in Sakiyama's writing including "Twilight Phantasms" discussed below as a description of excessive worrying and trauma.

[36] Sakiyama's texts deploy unexpected rhythms to disrupt contemporary Japanese prose. The importance given to rhythmic *difference* can be traced to the Okinawan poetic tradition of *ryūka* whose 8-8-8-6 meter is distinct from the 5-7-5-7-7 pattern of Japanese *waka* (Sakiyama, 2002, p. 162).

(*kaishū*) within standard-like Japanese. I was not attempting to assert some regional identity or other by latching dialect onto Japanese like a tailfin. I simply wondered, reckless as it may be, whether or not it was possible to erect a relationship between heterogeneous (*ishitsu na*) languages while keeping that heterogeneity intact, and to conceive of that as the distinctive language of my literature. (Sakiyama, 2002, p. 169)

Although Sakiyama's writing takes its central energy from the interplay of 'island words', it also pushes to decolonise those languages from unequal power structures. Its challenge is to find a means of fixing these languages in writing so that they do not die out while also sustaining the inherent plurality and fluidity that permits their continuous transformation.

Just as Christy's analysis implies the need to eradicate the plurality of Okinawan languages as they might constitute a threat to the imagined unity of the Japanese nation, then the move towards their survival not only resists homogenisation but also disrupts the authority of Japanese as a national language. Sakiyama's "incitement through 'island words'" subjects Japanese to an equivalent violence of former impositions of linguistic assimilation by forcing it to accommodate the heterogeneity that those dialects provide. The second half of Sakiyama's essay reveals the full radical extent of this agenda accordingly, setting out a "writing strategy" (*sakusen*) equivalent to planting 'island words' into the "heart of the Japanese language" like "bombs".[37] In Sakiyama's hands, the diversity of Okinawan dialects is transformed into a branch of artillery that, when tactically deployed, is able to interrupt and terrorise the monolithic standing of the Japanese language. This call to "guerrilla warfare" is clearly written with Sakiyama's hybrid tongues firmly in cheek. However, this keen wit included, the inventive and reinventive strategies deployed in Sakiyama's writing harbour a revolutionary potential

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[37] Of the two choices with which the *saku* of *sakusen* ('strategy') may be written, the character used here is also that which begins the word *sakka*, 'writer' (作戦); *sen* on its own means 'battle'.

that can at once create, destroy, and even self-destruct. [38]

The final section of Sakiyama's essay is given over to this new kind of writing as it personifies Japanese and 'island words' and stages a parodic battle between the two. Presented as the "victim and aggressor of a predestined suicide bombing" these two characters appear "both in tatters, battered, and on the cusp of death" (p. 177). This latter phrase, *shinigatagatā* (死にガタガター), is itself an example of language that 'incites'.[39] These two languages seek solace on the shore of an "island that may or may not exist in this world", from where they enter into a dialogue. However, as the Japanese "Rī-chan" (日ちゃん) finds its speech slowly conforming to the patterns of the Okinawan "Shima-chan" (シマちゃん), an unstoppable "bloody conflict" of words breaks out with neither side "knowing when to stop" (p. 178). The essay closes on this short allegory, "told in jagged words". However, whether such words can be transmitted, and whether their fragmented story can "gain currency in the world as a Japanese novel", are questions that in its final sentences "*Shimakotoba*" leaves up to the reader (p.180).

The visceral evocations of blood, fighting, and the effect that leaves neither Japanese nor island words unscathed is keenly suggestive of "linguistic terrorism", a strategy for

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[38] Sakiyama's call to violence resonates with the writing of her contemporary, Medoruma Shun (b. 1960), most keenly in his short story-cum-manifesto "*Machi-monogatari Koza—Kibō*" (translated by Steve Rabson as "Hope") wherein the narrator claims, "What Okinawa needs now is not demonstrations by thousands of people or rallies by tens of thousands, but the death of one American child" (Rabson, 1999, p. n.p., translated by Steve Rabson). Like Sakiyama, Medoruma's prose also seeks to defamiliarise language with the use of dialect words as "foreign objects" (*ibutsu*) (Medoruma, 1998). However, unlike the varied tongues at work within Sakiyama's texts, Medoruma's stories are written in his own dialect of Nakijin to the north of the main island, lending them a locality in keeping with his cited influences such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and William Faulkner (Sakiyama & Medoruma, 2000).

[39] In the Shuri dialect the verb suffixes '*gata*' and '*gatā*' translate to the Japanese '*shisō*' in the sense of something being 'about to' happen, although usually only one would be used at a time. The repetition thus invokes an additional adverb, g*atagata*, that describes "the emittance of an unstable sound"("Okinawa-go jiten ", 1998). Such hybridising of standard Japanese with multiple, overlapping Okinawan terms epitomises the strategies described in Sakiyama's text.

decolonising the hybrid tongues of Chicana/o minorities associated with the pluralistic

space inscribed by Gloria Anzaldúa's work. In *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

(Anzaldúa, 2012), the borderlands offer a site of collective belonging for marginalised

peoples wherein a lack of fixity forms the basis of connection and affiliation, and

multiplicity empowers through its efforts to resist the impositions of colonial control.

Anzaldúa's text writes against the specific history of the US-Mexican border and the

illegal encroachments of land made during the nineteenth century that created the

southernmost United States and deterritorialised the local population who were turned

into "foreigners" overnight (ibid., p.28). As it sets out to inscribe a new homeland for

these displaced peoples, it also carries Anzaldúa's specific voice as a Chicana, lesbian,

feminist, daughter, and writer seeking to carve her own place of belonging.

Juxtaposing the deeply personal within wider concerns of community, history, and

theory, *Borderlands* opens a space for alternative versions of history that official

narratives do not allow, writing "the myths in me, the myths I am, the myths I want to

become" (Anzaldúa, 2012, p. 93). Gesturing not only to the past but to the future, this

space also reaches beyond its specific geographical parameters towards new

connections, resonating with the spirit of this thesis overall. It does this by weaving

together multiple narrative forms including political calls to action, poetry, traditional

storytelling and historical accounts. The languages that narrate these texts are equally

diverse as English is disrupted by Spanish, Chicano Spanish and Tex-Mex slang. As

Anzaldúa writes, "we are a complex, heterogeneous people, we speak many languages"

(Anzaldúa, 2012, p. 77). Such multilinguality is central to the legitimacy of the

borderlands and its peoples. It creates the only language capable of rewriting the history

of linguistic assimilation into the narrative of colonial subjugation. The resulting hybrid

text retaliates against that violence with a counter-attack that imposes its own agenda

onto its readers:

> Until I am free to write bilingually and to switch codes without having always
> to translate, while I still have to speak English or Spanish when I would rather
> speak Spanglish, and as long as I have to accommodate the English speakers
> rather than having them accommodate me, my tongue will be illegitimate.
> (ibid., 81)

The borderlands are therefore not merely a background; they are a battleground upon

which textual hybridity incites hidden histories of invasion and assimilative practices.

Despite the clear geographical and linguistic distances between them, there is a clear

affinity between these writings by Anzaldúa and Sakiyama. This connection has been

highlighted by Kina Ikue, whose recent scholarhip juxtaposes Sakiyama's most recent

fiction against the approach set out in *Borderlands* in order to resituate those texts

within a more global, decolonising framework (Kina, 2011b).[40] Although Sakiyama's texts

deploy the three written scripts of Japanese to afford more visual variation than italics

alone can in Anzaldúa's writing, there are similarities between the looks of both works.

Commonalities resonate between these distinct historical contexts of colonial struggle

and appropriation, their attendance to the female voice and body, and the strategies

with which they strive towards resistance and legitimacy vis-à-vis patriarchal hegemonic

power.[41] As two texts built around a decidedly terrorising strategy of language, both also

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[40] Kina's analysis critiques the reductive category of Okinawan literature as it has led to the institutionalisation of fiction by Okinawan writers within a minor sub-genre of Japanese literature, and demands of such writing evidence of Japan's multiculturalism. As she writes, "[t]he acceptance of Okinawan literature as a legitimised part of the literary institution, however, does not necessarily emancipate Okinawan voices from their marginalised position in both social and cultural institutions" (ibid., p.15). Kina's argument also reveals how these criticisms might extend to the presentation of Okinawan texts in English translation. As she remarks, although the anthology *Southern Exposure* (Molasky & Rabson, 2000) has enabled works by Okinawan writers to reach new, international audiences, the framing of its texts as "Modern Japanese Literature from Okinawa" suggests that "Okinawan literature can never cross national literature borders" unless as a "variant" of Japanese literature (Kina, 2011b, p. 15).
[41] Scholarly and intertextual connections between writings from the Chicana/o and Okinawan contexts run curiously deep and arguably deserve greater investigation as they suggest alternatives with which

suggest a precarious balance between the need to express their resistance against easily comprehensible (thus assimilable) language, and the risk of obliterating sense entirely.

In her reading of *Borderlands*, the feminist literary critic Takemura Kazuko foregrounds the interrelated problems of spoken narrative (*katari*), namely the telling of "individual experiences and memories through the writer's individual voice", and its textual transmission (*dentatsu*), which "can only occur through a historically-constructed, imagined commensurability" between the writer and her readers (Takemura, 2012, p. 162).[42] The paradox that Takemura reveals is that such commensurability is simultaneously created and yet "continually under-mined" (*horikuzusu*) by the representative and performative elements of the narrator's language Narrative hangs upon a tension, requiring both the "chance individuality" of the storyteller and the shared, discursive frame of reference that allows her stories to be read (ibid.). Individual narratives thus require transmission in order to be seen to exist. In order to be representable within any frame of reference, however, they must ultimately become subordinate to the language of the dominant majority (p. 163).

Rather than comply with these demands, *Borderlands* explicitly writes against the flows of linguistic imperialism and resists the will of the dominant language. Integrating Anzaldúa's own poems into its prose structure, such writing unfolds through "[t]hought shifts, reality shifts, gender shifts" that engage in a dialogue between the writer and the

to heterogenise the presumed dominance of Anglophone research in both fields. Alongside Kina's studies, the books and essays by the Okinawan poet and cultural anthropologist Imafuku Ryūta stage a steady engagement with Chicano/a writings including Anzaldúa's work, as will be discussed below.
[42] Many prominent works of feminist and postcolonial theory from recent decades have appeared in Japanese through Takemura's translations, including Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and Trinh T. Minh-ha's *Woman, Native, Other*. The collections of her writings cited within this thesis, all of which were compiled and published following Takemura's death in 2011, engage directly with these theories. Her work therefore bridges between non-Japanese theories that inform my readings of these literary texts, the reception and rephrasing of those theories within Japanese scholarship, and the Japanese-language contexts in which the literary texts discussed here might be produced and read by others.

world that seeks ultimately to alter both—or rather, render both as being in a constant

state of flux (Anzaldúa, 2012, p. 92). As such, *Borderlands* reverses the stability

presumed of a symbolic order, predicating itself instead on semiotic fluidity. Seeking

alternative ways of thinking beyond those permitted by hegemonic grammar, writing the

borderlands is moreover a deeply "sensuous act" to be found in the process of "[p]icking

out images from my soul's eye, fishing for the right words to recreate the images." As

these words finally sprout in "plumes" onto the page from her fingertips, the tangibility

of this imagery overlaps with the writer's corporeality.

> From the fingers, my feathers, black and red ink drips across the page.
> *Escribo con la tinta de mi sangre*. I write in red. Ink. (ibid., p. 93)

While it echoes the "white ink" through which women might write their bodies, itself an

allusion that suffuses the mother's language with mother's milk in the imagery of Hélène

Cixous's *Laugh of the Medusa* (Cixous, 1976, p. 881), Anzaldúa's "red. Ink" suggests a

bodily connection coloured instead by a blood-stained colonial past, the disruption of

that violence articulated simultaneously by the unexpected full stop.

Borderlands thus antagonises the divisions between prose/poetry and

personal/historical account. Yet these strategies and the visceral imagery that they

produce threaten to disrupt the opportunity of the text's own reading even while it

foregrounds a desire to transmit narratives that have been overlooked by official

historiography. Thus, Takemura asks,

> how can we arbitrate (*chōtei*) or sublate (*shiyō*) the antagonism between the
> individual (*watashi*) who is expected to possess narrative and the
> indispensable collective (*watashitachi*) at the time when narrative is read—
> that is, when narrative comes into existence—and, in particular, when that
> narrative objects to the collective authority of language? (Takemura, 2012, p.
> 163)

Takemura's line of questioning brings under scrutiny what she terms "the mechanics of being read/not being read" as they play out in Anzaldúa's text. If narrative is expected to bridge between the narrating individual and the collective who receive that narrative as readers and listeners, what happens when the transmissibility of that language is already intercepted and forestalled? If the existence of narrative is only validated through its transmission, what happens when that transmission is caused to fail, and "what kind of future are '*watashi*' and '*watashitachi*' cast into?" (ibid.).

As a work that centres around such questions both of the simultaneous (dis)connection between the individual body and collective space, and of disrupted narrative transmission, this chapter focuses upon a series of seven short stories by Sakiyama that were published intermittently between January 2006 and March 2008 in the journal *Subaru*, and might collectively be termed as the 'Kuja stories' or 'Kuja series'.[43] A full list of these titles reads as follows, the Japanese scripts included to highlight the specific orthographic choices in each case:

> 「孤島夢ドゥチュイムニ」 *"Kotōmu duchuimuni"* ("Monologue of an Is(olate)land Dream") (January 2006)
> 「見えないマチからションカネーが」 *"Mienai machi kara shonkanē ga"* ("And so it goes in an Invisible Town") (May 2006)
> 「アコウクロウ幻視行 」 *"Akōkurō genshikō"* ("Passage through Twilight Phantasms") (September 2006)
> 「ピンギヒラ坂夜行」 *"Pingihira zaka yakō"* ("Night Flight from Pingihira Hill") (January 2007)
> 「ヒ△グル風ぬ吹きば」 *"Figuru kaji nu fukiba"* ("When the Ⓟiguru Winds Blow") (May 2007)[44]

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[43] This collective name follows the title "*Kuja rensaku shōsetsu*" that was initially assigned by Kina Ikue's critical discussions of Sakiyama's texts (Kina, 2008), and which has been adopted in subsequent Japanese scholarship.

[44] The first character of this title initiates a double-take as it is written as a *katakana* '*hi*' with a triangle to its top right where one would expect to see a *dakuten or handakuten.* The pronunciation is therefore unclear, or rather, indicates an Okinawan pronunciation that cannot be approximated through Japanese script, as per a desire keenly expressed in Sakiyama's essay "'*Oto no kotoba*' *kara* '*kotoba no oto*' *e*" ("From the 'language of sounds' to the 'sounds of language' (Sakiyama, 2004b). Following the phonetic system of Romanisation used by the *Dictionary of the Okinawan Language* ("Okinawa-go jiten ", 1998), Sakiyama's orthography most likely transcribes the sound '*hwi*'. In order

「マピローマの月に立つ影は」 *"Mapirōma no tsuki ni tatsu kage wa"*
("What Shadows Stand in the Midday Moon") (November 2007)
「クジャ奇想曲変奏」 *"Kuja kisōkyoku hensō"* ("Variations on a Kuja Fantasia") (March 2008)

Aside from the seventh story that reads explicitly as a return to the first through a recurring protagonist and the use of narrative flashbacks, the individual Kuja stories do not follow sequentially. They are instead linked thematically and through the literary topos that they share in common, referred to within the texts as Kuja. Kuja first and foremost names the military base town (marked in most stories as the '*machi*') against which each story is juxtaposed, yet during the series it comes to be shaped by the cultural traditions and dialects from throughout Okinawa prefecture as far as Miyako Island to the south. In all its guises, Kuja is a space caught in the shadows that subverts the tropical image of Okinawa into its black-and-white negative form, and plays upon seedy underworlds and ghostly otherworlds that lie bubbling beneath its surface. As in all of Sakiyama's writing, these seven stories cast light and darkness upon the themes of death, the past, memory, and responsibility.

The centrality of language and its potential to disrupt is already evident in the titles of these seven stories that combine Okinawan and Japanese terms through unconventional orthographic choices and even create new forms of script. The challenge to communicability that these titles make, however, extends to the problem of articulating a critical discussion that attends to the themes, landscapes, and literary motifs of 'Kuja' that are layered upon one another through these texts, and by the demand for each story to be read at the same time both individually and as one part of the series as a

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to create a similar effect to Sakiyama's text, my translation replicates this triangular shape in the top of the capitalised 'P'. However, given the difficulty of reproducing that script, the main discussion will hereafter cite the title as 'Figuru', wherein 'fi' is also an unrepresentable sound within the three standard Japanese scripts.

whole. Indeed, Kuja's five intervening stories seem paradoxically connected only through

their lack of connection, which extends to the glaring absence of a single volume

publication of the 'Kuja' series.[45] With these problems in mind, and in keeping with the

practice of deferral extant within Sakiyama's writing, this chapter will forestall entry into

specific textual analysis by first attempting to locate 'Kuja' and outline the implications

that extend across the series within its name, place, and space.

1.2 Locating 'Kuja'

As a literary topos, the name 'Kuja' initially infers the Koza and Goya wards of Okinawa

City that flourished during the 1960-70s with bars and entertainment quarters while

catering to American forces stationed at the nearby US military base at Kadena. In *The

American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa: Literature and Memory*, Michael Molasky

(2001) traces the history of Koza as both actual geographical space and literary topos

within works of Okinawan fiction. Koza has continued to change shape, quite literally, in

recent decades. To mark the Japanese reversion, the city's council merged Koza with the

former municipality of Misato in 1973 to form what is today Okinawa City (Molasky,

2001, p. 53). In fact, when the decision to rename the city was made, "Koza" received

the most votes. While theories suggest that Koza's name came about when the original

town name of Kujaa was mispronounced by US military troops (ibid.), the phonic changes

from 'u' to 'o', and from 'j' to 'z' suggest the correction of sounds common to Okinawan

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[45] According to personal conversations with Kina Ikue and Motohama Hidehiko, discussions were apparently begun between Sakiyama and the publishing house of *Subaru*, Shūeisha, with the aim of producing a single volume. However, when Sakiyama refused to follow Shūeisha's requests to revise her prose to make it more accessible for a mainstream Japanese readership, such plans became gridlocked. The project has since been abandoned and Sakiyama has instead produced several new works. Although the details of the specific revisions demanded of Sakiyama are unclear, the idea that her Japanese publisher sought to tame the wilder experimentations of her texts suggests the ensuing desire that can be traced back through Okinawa's regional history to assimilate local dialects and appropriate their narratives. It also underscores the antagonistic potential of Sakiyama's literary voice.

speech in order to bring them in line with standardised Japanese pronunciation.[46] In

addition, 'Koza' had been unique as the only area name in Japan to have been recorded

formally in *katakana*, creating an "orthographic distinction" that as Molasky argues,

reflected its hybrid roots. That the steering committee of 1973 chose "Okinawa City" as

the town's official moniker thus infers their desire to clean up Koza's mixed-up origins

and inscribe a new identity upon a city that has been heavily bound through its history

and its "bastardised" name to the narratives of US occupation (ibid).

Coterminous with the 'Okinawa boom', hybridity has been celebrated in Okinawa as

presenting a potential melting-pot of cultures, most popularly in the invocation of

chanpuru bunka that takes its name from a regional dish most similar to a stir-fry.

However, Koza's naming and history attest to the inherent divisions and fissures created

by such mixing. Throughout its history, the place of Koza has been fatigued with

fragmentation and discordance. During Koza's most volatile years under occupation,

street fights were common between GIs who would trespass unwelcomed across the

boundaries that separated the "white zones" from the "black zones" within the licensed

districts. The greatest of these tensions, however, erupted between Okinawan civilians

and the US military authorities in the Koza riot (*Koza bōdō*) of 19th December 1970.[47]

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[46] I thank Kyle Ikeda for making this observation in response to an early presentation of this paper given at the AAS conference in Chicago on 28th March 2015. As I was reminded by the discussion that ensued, a similar slippage between Okinawan and Japanese sounds and the drive to correct the former is central to a key scene in Chinen Seishin's theatrical *tour de force*, *Jinruikan* (1976), wherein the 'Okinawan man' mispronounces the words, "*tennō heika banzai*" ("Long Live the Emperor!) as "*tennō heika banjai*", despite the Japanese ringmaster's repeated and increasingly infuriated demands for him to enunciate the words properly. A similar issue appears in Yi Yang-ji's *Kazukime* discussed in Chapter Two, which alludes to the trend to force *zainichi* Koreans to pronounce the phrase '*ichien gojissen*' as a means of identifying—and discriminating against—them.
[47] The Koza riot took place during the night of 19th December 1970 after a car driven by a US soldier hit an Okinawan citizen. Although the victim's injuries were minor, when the Military Police (MP) decided to release the driver they ignited an already volatile setting that was made more fractious by the reminders of a fatal collision only three months earlier that was never brought to trial. As crowds gathered, a warning shot was fired by the MP to disperse them. However, it instead instigated violent clashes between Okinawans who set fire to cars bearing US registration plates in protest, and the

While racial segregation no longer formally divides the town's centre, military presence,

linguistic variety, the sex trade, immigration, growing numbers of mixed race children,

and its shifting representation in official discourse, all symbolise Koza as a site of

tremendous power struggles. As Molasky writes, "Koza provides a convenient metonym

of occupied Okinawa" through themes of foreign occupation and sexual subjugation that

have afforded a "landscape rife with allegorical possibilities" (Molasky, 2001, p. 55).[48]

This terrain is moreover intrinsically gendered as the bodies of Okinawan women

provide a metaphor for the colonised territory of Okinawa, and a generic object of

colonial and sexual desire for occupiers and native men alike (Molasky, 2001, p. 55).

The appearance of Kuja within Sakiyama's stories on the one hand writes back through

both Koza's history and its earlier literary depictions to its alleged origins as Kujaa.

Although time has apparently moved forward, traces of the past remain in Kuja's faded

bar signs, blown-out neon bulbs, and gossiping *juri-gwa*, an Okinawan term for

prostitutes and entertainers. Even this stagnation, absent from earlier depictions of the

base town's former vibrancy and volatility, appears informed by the decline of Koza in

real life, brought about through new regulations imposed upon military personnel to stay

within the base confines, general economic downturn, and the increasing tendency for

Japanese tourists to favour the hotels and shopping malls of the island's more tourist-

friendly resort spots (Nelson, 2013).[49] Yet like the image and sign of Okinawa itself that is

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military who sought to control the rioters with tear gas. In total, approximately five thousand civilians fought against three hundred armed MPs between midnight and six o'clock in the morning, leaving widespread destruction in their wake (Rabson, 2012, p. 38).

[48] Molasky's textual analysis of Koza in literary representation focuses on Higashi Mineo's *An Okinawan Boy*, the same text that Sakiyama praises for its realistic rendering of Okinawan dialect. See note 34.

[49] In this sense, Sakiyama's portrayal of the *machi* is keenly reminiscent of the *roji* (back-alleys) Nakagami Kenji's fiction, whose depictions in terms of of squalor, abjection, and moral decline satirise the commonly-held prejudice against *burakumin* communities as being unclean. Indeed, Kuja is occasionally described within these texts as a *roji*, suggesting a conscious intertextual nod to Nakagami's oeuvre.

always already defamiliarised within Sakiyama's writing, the name Kuja constitutes a play

on words with the mimetic term "*guja guja*" ('mashed up') that disrupts the specific

topography of the base town to incite settings beyond.[50] As Sakiyama explains in a rare

commentary on these works, Kuja

> came about because I feel there lies a deep trench between Koza and
> Okinawa City. It is not that I simply wanted to embed the historical
> vicissitudes peculiar to this regional city. Rather, I wondered whether I could
> bring 'Koza' to life in these short stories as a word (*kotoba*) loaded with a
> more universal breadth. (Sakiyama, 2011, p. 12)

Kuja is therefore clearly related to the physical space of Koza, yet it is also an abstract

image that exceeds such regional specificity (Kina, 2011a, p. 187).[51] This is clear as the

fictional setting moves around the archipelago within the subsequent 'Kuja' narratives.

By restoring the former, uncorrected pronunciation of Koza, Kuja reinscribes the

individual stories of the base town back onto its landscape and, paradoxically, resurrects

a town that "officially… no longer exists" (Molasky, 2001, p. 69). A ghost town that is

itself a ghost, in Kuja temporalities are interchangeable, the voices and narratives within

able to "transform the past into now; now into the past" (Sakiyama, 2007, p. 198). For,

as Sakiyama's reference to *kotoba* suggests, Kuja is a space intimately related to the

terrorising strategies of her "island words". As Sakiyama's texts invoke comparisons with

Anzaldua's linguistic terrorism, however, the desire to counteract the inertia and

exorcism that accompanies the figure of the ghost and her/his narrative, strays into

strategies underscored by more literal incitements of extreme activism. In a *zadankai* on

the dystopian fictional representations that belie Okinawa's popular imagery, Sakiyama

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[50] *Guja guja* is apparently Sakiyama's coinage suggesting an Okinawan variant of the Japanese *gocha gocha*. The term describes the linguistic strategy of the central narrator of Kuja's stories, Takaesu Maria ("Monologue", p. 174).

[51] As Kina writes, on one hand, 'Kuja' might be "the linguistic sign of 'Okinawa' that has been boiled down until it is accompanied by a sense of materiality". However, even though 'Kuja' recalls the actual space of Koza, since the two never fully coincide Kuja may also be "no more than a constructed sign" (Kina, 2011a, p. 187)

bemoans the contrast between the tangible violence that she witnessed during the Koza

riot and protests during the 1970s, and the apathy of today wherein the control that

SOFA (the Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement) wields against Okinawa's inhabitants is

becoming "increasingly everyday" (Sakiyama, Kurosawa, Kina, & Okamoto, 2007, p. 178).

Only within the space of literature (the discussion focuses upon the writings of

Medoruma Shun in particular), it seems, can a level of activism comparable to the pre-

reversion days of Koza still be traced. Speaking within this context, Sakiyama thus goes

so far as to ask whether "amid this political reality, for Okinawa, is terrorism not the only

option?" (Sakiyama et al., 2007, p. 182).

In acknowledging strategies that resonate with Anzaldúa's 'linguistic terrorism' in

Sakiyama's writing, such comments highlight the need to simultaneously consider the

wilfully provocative and destructive implications of this term. For even against the

specific context of war, military occupation, and the incumbent violence that these both

continue to wreak upon Okinawa and the lives of its people, amid the ever-increasing

terror, fear, and suffering that marks the post-9.11 world Sakiyama's comments are

acutely provocative, if not deadly dangerous. The use of the term 'terrorism' to describe

a central trope in the analysis presented here is therefore sensitive to the volatile and

challenging connotations that the word carries. For one, to speak here of 'terrorism'

requires greater justification than its explicit occurrence in Sakiyama's own writing, but

also to understand what that terrorism actually *does.*

In fact, recalling Anzaldua's writing, the strategies of linguistic terrorism offered in

Borderlands ultimately reside in their textual inscriptions of a writing body and practice

already scarred by ongoing colonial and patriarchal violence. Likewise, the narratives,

characterisations, and plotlines of 'Kuja' nuance Sakiyama's explicit calls for direct action elsewhere through the figures of polyphony and racial hybridity that provide as much an outward challenge towards hegemonic discourse as they articulate the internal struggle and external wounds of Kuja's landscape and its inhabitants. It might therefore be more appropriate to speak not directly of "terrorism" here in order to consider 'Kuja', but rather to borrow a term used by Takemura in the chapter that foregrounds her analysis of Anzaldúa's work, that focuses on "the terrorist-like body that is not a terrorist's body" (*terrorist no shintai de wa naku terorisuto-**teki** shintai*) (Takemura, 2012, p. 155, original emphasis).[52] Although defected from the direct terrorist cause and ambitions of the terrorist group with which s/he might have once been affiliated, the "terrorist-like body" beholds a hybridity and "peculiarity" (*kimyōsa*) that gives off a "frightful, abhorrent, or horrifying allure" (ibid.). As the following analysis hopes to demonstrate, such allure is palpable Kuja's principle narrator, Takaesu Maria, whose racial hybridity and polyvocal stories captivate her audience and readers and force them (us) to heed the suffering to which they attest.

The Kuja stories unfold through references to Okinawa's past experiences of war and occupation, and the present scars left upon its characters and landscapes by those legacies of violence, trauma and abandonment. Told primarily through the women of the base town, these narratives moreover foreground the structures of sexual politics through the incidents of prostitution and rape that accompany this broader history. As the last story loops back to the first, these individual narratives appear to be ordered

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[52] Takemura posits this term within her reading of Hyacinth, the protagonist of Henry James's *The Princess Casamassima* (1886), as a means of articulating the position of the terrorist who seeks to defect from the terrorist group and yet survive (Takemura, 2012, p. 155). Although this context is far removed from the concerns of this thesis, as noted above, Takemura's review of *Casamassima* ties in neatly to her development of the themes of terrorism and the "terrorist-like body" in her reading of Anzaldúa in the chapter directly following.

within a cyclical (rather than linear) structure and hence attest to the continuity and repetition that define Kuja and the history to which it bears witness. Yet as this site breaches the border between the living and the dead, it also reveals a site of rupture from wherein the ghosts of the past, believed to have been forgotten, might emerge to narrate alternative histories. Kuja is thus a shifting border-landscape that carries the multiple voices of its past. To recall the title of Sakiyama's collection of essays, Kuja names that "place out of which words are born" (Sakiyama, 2004a). Out of its multiple linguistic and narrative roots, such a space is always already plural, constituted through the shifting descriptions that overlap, contradict, and intersect between each text.

Yet 'Kuja' names not only the landscape but also the wordscape that arises through the chorus of ghosts and uncanny phantasms that haunt these texts. Thus, having established this space of 'Kuja' as the textual illustration of the 'abyss', this analysis will focus on specific narrators of these stories whose spectrality embodies the shadowy landscape. The narrative strategies of these stories resist any simplistic or singular naming. This reading, however, tentatively favours the term 'polyphony' following Mikhail Bakhtin's reading of Dostoyevsky's novels. Although Bakhtin offers no plain definition of his term, the polyphonic text is that which constitutes a "*plurality of independent and unmerged voices and consciousnesses*" (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 6, italics in the original). Given that such writing presents a "genuine polyphony of fully valid voices", what unfolds therein is

> not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a *plurality of consciousnesses, with equal rights and each with its own world*, combine but are not merged in the unity of the event. (ibid., italics in the original)

The stories that comprise the Kuja series similarly constitute their own worlds that remain set apart even while combining to form a unified text. Crucially, these narratives

gain voice through the presence in the opening text of its narrator Takaesu Maria.

Maria's narration opens a space without dominating it, wherein Kuja's heterogenous

voices, experiences, and opinions can emerge in dialogue with one another. As this

dialogic mode of narration forms the second condition of the polyphonic text, it is

inscribed in Sakiyama's fiction through the ironic naming of Maria's narration as a

"monologue" (*duchuimuni*).[53] Moreover, the indeterminacy and resistance to closure of

this competing chorus nods to what Bakhtin calls the "unfinalizability" of this dialogic

polyphony (ibid., p. 53).

The polyphony of Takaesu Maria's narrative voice is accentuated by her complex

vernacular that seems to articulate her multiracial body as the child of a Filipino-

American and Okinawan. This reading will therefore also focus on the mixed race

children of the base town who alone appear to possess the hybrid tongues and bodies

that might ironically ensure that Kuja's stories are passed on. The hybrid inscription of

these figures is crucial as it harks back to the condition of Okinawan difference through

which the region and its literature have been exoticised and commodified. Yet as this

hybridity is constituted within the many layers of performance, language, body and

space within Kuja, it suggests an altogether more ambivalent quality that parodies and

subverts those earlier discourses. As such, the hybridity reimagined in Kuja recalls the

context of colonialist desire and colonial mimicry outlined in Homi Bhabha's work,

wherein the

> display of hybridity—its peculiar 'replication'—terrorises authority with the
> *ruse* of recognition, its mimicry, its mockery. (Bhabha, 1994, p. 115, original
> italics)

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[53] A standard Japanese translation of *duchuimuni* is *hitorigoto*, which names the act of either speaking to, or speaking by, oneself. As *muni* literally derives from the Japanese *monoii*, it also carries that word's critical or objectionable tone which reveals itself through Maria's fierce tirade.

For Bhabha, the performance of hybridity creates a space in which to oppose official narratives and histories of imperialism who demand their discourse to be "*non-dialogic, its enunciation unitary,* unmarked by the trace of difference" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 115, original italics).

However, in this figuring the trace of difference provided by the Other is only predicated upon its being absorbed into the colonialist discourse, a process of anchoring which Bhabha's critics have suggested risks essentialising the hybrid Other and fixing its meaning into a singular form. As Rumi Sakamoto argues, "[i]dentity cannot be totally indeterminate and open if it consists of a part of the symbolic order, whose purpose is to fix some meaning over the chaos of the real" (Sakamoto, 1996, p. 122). In evoking the potential of Bhabha's hybridity, it is necessary to highlight the qualitative differences in how that hybridity plays out in Kuja. For whereas Bhabha's work writes a "third space" that collapses boundaries between the Self and the Other, Kuja continually inscribes new boundaries as uncrossable rifts that ensure that such difference remains unassimilable. As the ever-changing landscape of Kuja itself reveals, such hybridity is not merely a static, spatial condition; rather, it unfurls as an ongoing process of simultaneous creation (of new narratives and readings) and destruction (of the means by which those stories might be appropriated elsewhere).

The racial hybridity of Kuja's narrators therefore reveals a perpetually dynamic force that furthers the disruption wreaked by their polyphonic narratives. Foreshadowing the conclusions of this reading based on the figure of translation, such hybridity moreover serves to deconstruct the dichotomy of original/copy and question the demands for

semblance through the intervention of an irreducible difference.[54] The cacophony of

Kuja's voices suggests the urgency with which their narratives seek to be told. However,

as they frighten and disturb Kuja's other inhabitants and even Sakiyama's Japanese

prose, these stories suggest a more terrorising insurgency against the language of official

histories and the private and public amnesia that it has perpetuated within the text's

literary topos. Irreducible tropes of polyphony, hybridity, and spectrality thus drive this

textual analysis as they interplay with the problems of memory and responsibility. As the

stories of Kuja emerge from the gaps and deferrals incited within these texts, they also

ask significant questions with respect to the demands placed upon language and

narratives by conservative presumptions of legibility, transmissibility and translatability.

1.3 Entering the 'abyss': "Monologue of an Is(olate)land Dream"

> But too often we forget. We no longer know how to call. We speak silence.
> Our tongues are unbreathable. The names go out. In the darkness things no
> longer pass. Our tongues are deserted. We live there no more. We forget
> ourselves. And all of the gardens become phantoms.
> —Hélène Cixous, *Vivre l'Orange/To Live the Orange*

> I listen to the frenzied, distant voice bearing its chain of ghastly images in the
> hope of the first light of dawn that, unnervingly, never reveals so much as a
> glimmer.
> —Sakiyama Tami, *"Monologue of an Is(olate)land Dream"*

The first text of the Kuja series, *"*Monologue of an Is(olate)land Dream*"* (hereafter

*"*Monologue*"*) follows a freelance photographer from the Japanese mainland referred to

only by the generic first-person pronoun, Ore.[55] The narrative opens with Ore caught in a

dream sequence in which he is crawling desperately through long grasses as though

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[54] Bhabha describes this hybridity in terms of the "*Entstellung*", that is, the effect through which the raw triggers of the dream are distorted into its content by the Freudian work of dreaming (Bhabha, 1994, p. 115). As will be discussed in further detail in the main analysis, Kuja has already been read in terms of the Freudian 'dream-work. However, the reference to this distortion here seeks to draw attention to its inference in both the cyclical repetition of the Kuja stories and Kuja's constant displacement throughout the stories, to which the following analysis will attend.
[55] My full translation of "Monologue" follows in Appendix 1 of this thesis.

answering the call of a "war cry erupting from a throat ripped open" (p.85). With this cry "clung about his neck", Ore awakes with a jolt, and ascertaining his whereabouts as a run-down theatre he proceeds to trace how came to be there. Initially in a flashback, we learn how Ore has travelled to '*Okinawa*' (オキナワ) in search of the *fuchi*, a term commonly translated as the "abyss" and that shares the English word's dual signification of an area of deep, stagnated water and an inescapable bind. Ore's intention is to produce a monochrome album of photographs of the abyss. However, once inside he becomes suddenly aware that, "in fact, I was being watched by the landscape" (p. 87) and is thus unable to view and photograph it himself. Ore boards a bus headed for Cape Hedo, a scenic outlook at the northern tip of the island. But after passing an endless stretch of base land like "a giant tiger leaning back for a nap after dining on human prey" (p. 87) the bus takes an unannounced detour and Ore is instead transported to the deserted town of Kuja. In the town, he is enticed into a small theatre by a mysterious flyer advertising a show by a theatrical troupe also named 'Kuja'. Although his patience is tried and his suspicions aroused by the almost empty venue, the curious presence of a young girl casually smoking a cigarette on stage holds Ore's attention. When suddenly the girl interjects Ore's first-person narrative with her own greeting of welcome in Okinawan ("*gūsōyō*"), her words transfix Ore in his seat (p.89).

The girl is Takaesu Maria, the daughter of an Okinawan woman and Filipino-American soldier. Told in language that switches at speed between standard Japanese and Okinawan dialects, Maria's narrative conjures up stories from Kuja's past, of the roles played by the local military bases in the "bogged-down ditch-mud guerrilla war" of Vietnam and the impact on the town of the U.S. occupying forces. Assailed by the torrent of Maria's narrated memories, Ore feels a "line of shadows" and "mud-water in which

hangs the stench of death" (p.93) wash over his eyes like waves and pull him once more

into an uneasy sleep. In a bid to remain conscious he reaches for his camera, but Maria's

piercing gaze upsets his sense of perspective, forcing him to miss his shot and fall to the

floor. By the time Ore regains focus, Maria has disappeared from behind the lens,

whereupon Ore "sinks dizzily into the world behind the black curtain that had suddenly

descended" (p.95). When Ore finally awakens in the empty theatre clutching the original

theatre flyer, it is "as though the performance by 'Kuja' had never even happened". Yet if

no evidence of Maria's performance remains in the theatre, then the closing image of

"*Monologue*" threatens to remove the traces of Ore's detour into the town entirely. For

as the faces of the former performers of the troupe 'Kuja' appear to become animated

and float up from the page, Ore is suddenly as though transported to Cape Hedo where,

amid the rising wind and sea spray he feels "at last my field of vision stretched out

indefinitely" (p. 96) and the sense that something is about to begin.[56]

"*Monologue*" introduces the image of Kuja that will preside over its subsequent

(re)incarnations within all seven stories. Mirroring the "isolated island" (*kotō*) evoked by

Sakiyama's title, the town into which Ore haphazardly stumbles is a dark and lifeless

space.

> Although it was right in the middle of the day, the town was dully dark,
> mournful, the reek of decay muddied with the stench of mould and the smell
> of earth in a murderous mood, drifting in from some other place.
> This was Kuja.
> Amid the confusion of the occupation period in the immediate post-war,
> people came from the outlying villages and islands and settled in this hollow
> in the peninsula, and the town was formed. It was a backwater town in which

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[56] This reading highlights the fact that Maria is a performer, however the image of the former cast of 'Kuja's eponymous theatre troupe offers the reading that the entire series is performed. Kina also makes this connection when she writes, ""above all, [Kuja] is no more than a stage, the characters no more than actors performing as real people" (Kina, 2011a, p. 189). The implications of this twist go beyond the reading I wish to make here, however it points to potential interplays with works of Okinawan playwright Chinen Seishin, who wrote several plays in the 1960s-70s that were set and performed in Koza.

occasionally throughout history, the various smells that float about the surface would become exactly like the town's body odour, retreat into the depths, and blow out from the alleyways, roofs, and walls. (p. 91)

Kuja is juxtaposed between the squalor and stagnation of its present, and the shaded inference of the bars, brothels, and foreign military presence that inhabit its past. Even through its position on the page, Kuja bridges these two manifestations. The sense of foreboding thus emanates from Kuja, suggesting the stories yet to be carried in by subsequent texts. For now, however, these are only intimated through the corporeal stench that lingers in the air, and the mimetic sounds "*sozororo*", "*dorororo*" that permeate the text with Ore's "muddied dreams" as though to suggest the melancholic tales of loss and trauma bubbling beneath the town's surface. By 'melancholic', I mean to draw upon the "mournful" nature of the town in Sakiyama's prose. Yet, as the sounds '*sozororo*' '*dorororo*' infer the flows of black mud (*doro*) and slime that force Ore into a dream-like state, they also allude to the 'black bile' (*melaina kole*) after which melancholia is named, and the "open wound" associated with this depressive state as discussed by Freud (Freud, 1917, p. 253). As this condition disturbs the sufferer's ability to sleep, it is as if Kuja itself is a melancholic subject unable and unwilling to overcome the suppressed trauma and losses of its past.[57]

Focalised through Ore's first person perspective, it is these dreams that structure the narrative of *"Monologue"*, and create the space out of which the forgotten backdrop to Kuja can potentially emerge. In one of the few studies to discuss Sakiyama's story in detail, Watanabe Eri thus reads *"Monologue"* as a "time-space wherein the repressed is awakened" (Watanabe, 2006, p. 183). Watanabe focuses on the process of oscillation

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[57] The connection between narrative interruption, translation, and melancholic aporia is explored in Chapter Three, but is signposted here to highlight this commonality between the Kuja stories and Tawada Yōko's *The Travelling Naked Eye*. In particular, this discussion is tied to tropes of vision and visuality in Tawada's novel, which relate to the existing criticisms of Kuja outlined below.

that Ore undergoes through his repeated slumber, comparing it to Freud's concept of

"dream-work", in which the essence of the dream is not its latent content but the work

that transforms that content into manifest psychical images (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2006,

p. 125). Following Freud, for whom dreams appear as a "translation" of the unconscious

or repressed, Watanabe argues that in *"Monologue"*, "dreams work on Ore so that he

can mediate the repressed voices and memories of Okinawa" and "bring them into a

Japanese-language discourse"(Watanabe, 2006, p. 183).

Despite this evocation of language, ultimately Watanabe's reading is predicated upon

specific subversions of the structures of visuality within the text through which Ore's

evolution can be ascertained: namely, his transition from photographer to object of the

landscape's own gaze, and his increasing inability to discern illusion from reality.

Similarly, Onaga Shihoko cites the work of Rey Chow in order to reiterate the binary of

'seer/seen' within a postcolonial problematic (Onaga, 2014, p. 38). As Watanabe

highlights, Ore's desire to capture the Kuja landscape on film suggests the "anonymous,

uneven" gaze cast over Okinawa by the capitalist and tourist ventures promoted from the

Japanese mainland (Watanabe, 2006, p. 187). Such a desire would appear to define Ore's

own intentions to take Kuja as his photographic object, his position as a generic Japanese

man gesturing towards the same quasi-colonial, quasi-Orientalist dynamic of the boom.

Yet as Watanabe also concedes, Ore's desire to capture '*Okinawa'* (in *katakana*) as the

"landscape of the abyss" betrays a greater "ambivalence" to his surroundings (ibid.). For

in contrast to his "photography mates who brag endlessly about being experts on

'Okinawa'… to [Ore], no matter how many times I come here, it is just an elusive group of

isolated islands" (p. 86). Ore's position thus provides a counter-example to the desire to

know that has been presumed within the act of photography.[58] Rather, for Ore, the

attraction of this 'Okinawa' lies in the elusion and ambiguity that lead to its definition as

an "abyss within the abyss" (*fuchi no fuchi*): that is, the "epitome of the abyss".

The 'abyss' redoubles Kuja's figuring as a place inscribed in terms of its difference from

any real space of Koza, and its inversion of the binaries of day/night, past/present, and

dream/reality. The parody of Ore's search for the 'abyss' amid the famously idyllic resorts

and azure seas of Okinawa and the text's repeated descriptions of black, muddy water is

immediately explicit. Such descriptions explicitly contradict the tropical stereotype

celebrated by the 'Okinawa Boom'; indeed, the distinctly monochrome portrayals within

each of the Kuja stories infers that sunlight is either absent, or else something

"aggressive" from which the town's residents wish to hide ("Twilight Phantasms", p.240).

Ore further disrupts this image when he describes the abyss as

> the place that rises up between two sceneries at odds with one another… the
> rupture into which the abandoned ones of the world sink, the pit of the
> world, a border from which one gazes back at the world (p.86).

Ore's definition of the abyss echoes the earlier desire of Sakiyama's 'island words' to

counter their appropriation by Japanese "by inciting the relation between these two

heterogeneous languages as the language of heterogeneity itself" (Sakiyama, 2002, p.

169). Hence, Kuja emerges as a site of irreconcilability not only through its subversion

(and submersion) of Okinawa's more popular image into the dark waters and shadowy

aporia of the abyss. It is also inscribed textually through the linguistic strategies of

Sakiyama's prose, and specifically through the one-woman narrative performed by

Takaesu Maria.

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[58] Both Watanabe and Onaga cite from Susan Sontag's essays to articulate this point. For example, in "On Photography" Sontag argues that "[t]o photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge–and, therefore, like power" (Sontag, 1979, p. 4).

1.4 The hybridity of the 'half-breed'

> Takaesu Maria. Was it her real name or an artistic pseudonym? Here was an actor whose very name emanated perfectly the smell of Kuja, the military base town. (p. 91)

Inferred to be the last remaining member of the theatre troupe 'Kuja' which, as suggested by its name shares a "deep bond" with the town, Takaesu Maria has the pivotal role of giving voice to the stories of Kuja. Yet as she demands the attention of the small theatre audience, Ore, and the readers of Sakiyama's text, Maria's performance contradicts the presumptions of smooth communication to instead engender the most powerfully disruptive force through her hybrid tongues. Thus, after deferring the beginning by merely smoking and fidgeting on stage for twenty minutes, much to Ore's frustration, Maria's begins to speak in a "foreign language [that] casts a dazzling punch": "*Chūyā, hēpē to kara mensōchi utabimisōchi, makkutu, nifēdēbiru*" (For coming so early today, truly, thank you) (p. 89). This is the *duchuimuni* of the story's title, a 'one-person narrative' or 'monologue'. Given that the story begins with Ore telling his own story in the first person, the sudden interjection of Maria's "monologue" marks the moment in which she seizes narrative authority within the text.

As Maria's narrative begins to "spew forth", from within it emerge the lives of Kuja's women, including Maria's grandmother (*Obā*) who fell pregnant soon after arriving in the town to some "*yakuza*-man"; and her mother, *Obā*'s "fatherless daughter" who got involved with a soldier and gave birth to Maria, only to run off and leave this daughter behind. Maria thus positions herself within a purely maternal lineage. However, since her grandmother was killed by a cruising car following the post-reversion implementation of a new traffic lights system on "730" (*Nana-san-maru*), Maria is also an "abandoned child"

raised by the "cold eyes of the world that made me the undefeatable person I am today"

(p. 94).[59] Maria also recalls a girl that she encountered as a child, whose silent shaking

attested to some unspeakable traumatic experience that had befallen her, but which

Maria can only imagine now in adulthood.

> But, but you see, even though this and that kind of thing happened every
> single day, at night when the soldiers and local girls from the town would
> tangle up together there was no end to the fighting. Right, not until that
> mud-slime war came to an end… *Hai*, that's what kind of a town it was here,
> shameful as it is. (p. 91-2)

In Kuja, such tragedies are evidently commonplace. Yet as Maria learned that in the "cold

eyes of the world" to continue to weep and mourn is to approach madness, Maria has let

her "tear-tank" run dry, the force of her anger and pain instead fed into the narrative

with which she remembers these women.

In this way, Maria's highly charged mix of tongues churns up the forgotten backdrop to

Kuja: memories that refuse to die completely and a cultural legacy forever shaped by a

continued foreign military presence. As the force of this heterogeneous speech arrests

Ore in his seat, it casts over him a veil of sleep that disrupts his vision of the present:

> In Kuja, it was as though the memories that refuse to die, of soldiers who
> fought in field battles in that age, were hung in the air. It was as though the
> thoughts of those people hung up on the cause and effect of those memories,
> of drinking mud and gnawing sand, were coiling around me. Or else it was as
> though the smell of the darkness oozing up slowly from beyond the bounds
> of people's memories was weaving an endless dream of ditch-dirt mud. (p.
> 93)

The prevalence of dirt and slime does not simply evoke the town's contemporary

squalor; by recalling the muddy sites of former land battles it also challenges the idea

that war and occupation have ceased. As the narrator of this land, Maria appears as the

"corporeal embodiment of memories accumulated through the ages in Kuja" (Kina, 2008,

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[59] Under US occupation, roads in Okinawa followed US convention with cars driving on the left-hand side. "730" marks in shorthand the date of 30th July 1978 on which the new road regulations were enforced and Okinawan drivers began to drive on the right in keeping with the rest of Japan.

p. 60). Yet like this landscape that has turned its gaze back onto Ore, Maria upturns the expected visual dynamics of performer/spectator by commanding in her eyes "a wilful yet unspecified spirit of resistance" that counters Ore's own blurred focus (p. 95). Like Medusa, Maria's gaze causes Ore to freeze, and strikes "a zap of lightning" through his fingertip causing it to miss the camera trigger. When he recovers from his failed attempt, Maria is gone. As Maria seems able to remain as elusive to the camera lens as the external abyss her body is, as Matsushita Yūichi suggests, not only corporeal but also ethereal (Matsushita, 2010, p. 114). Maria thus embodies not only Kuja's memories but the abyssal landscape itself; or rather, the landscape as it is constituted by the amorphous mud-like materialisation of those memories.

In this way Takaesu Maria embodies both Kuja's memoryscape *and* its irreconcilable difference. Hers is a name and body inscribed by her multi-ethnic roots as a "*Pinā*", a derogatory name for her Filipina heritage that she now reclaims. While the physical landscape of Kuja is portrayed almost without colour, cast in monochrome shadows and muted darkness, the stories contain strong vocabulary pertaining to skin colour. While some terms might be perceived as more standard and neutral (*kokujin*), others carry a heavy burden of racial discrimination, such as *kuronbō* used by Uchi, the narrator of "Invisible Town", and the "crossbreed" (*ainoko*) with which the young girl viewed with "repugnance" in "Pingihira Hill" identifies herself. On the other side of this prejudicial tone, however, the inhabitants of Kuja demonstrate a desire to reclaim these words for themselves, as with the young man, Hiroshi, who introduces himself as "mixed blood" (*konketsu*) in "Figuru Winds".[60] This redeployment of the language of race almost comes full circle when in her attempt to bridge the gap between Hiroshi's outward appearance

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[60] The desire to reclaim prejudicial terms, witnessed among many racial and sexual minorities, is in actual evidence among the post-reversion generation of English-speaking mixed Okinawan identities affiliated to the base, as discussed by Uehara Carter (2014).

and his "perfectly fluid…almost too faithful Japanese" that story's narrator embraces this

figure before her as "a mixed-blood *manchā*" (混血のヒト），an Okinawan term signifying

'hybridity'/'jumble' ("Figuru Winds", p. 147).

As an ironic result of constant migration and the fact that according to Maria, "*Amerikā*

have come [here] one after another" (p. 90), it is this younger multi-racial generation

who seem to form a new 'native' community of Kuja for whom blackness, and

militarisation are inextricably connected. For example, Mitzi Uehara Carter's work

exposes the gap between the proliferating celebration of multiracial people in popular

Japanese discourse and the individual experiences of actual "mixed Okinawans" (Uehara

Carter, 2014). Within the '*hāfu* boom' of the early twenty-first century, mixed race

identities have been idealised as "'bridge people'" capable of traversing linguistic and

cultural boundaries, and suggestive of a new futurity. Yet by contrast, owing to the

militarised space of Okinawa and the mobilisation of mixed races therein, mixed

Okinawans find themselves bound to the rhetoric of national security that justifies the

base burden in Okinawa, and "interpellated" into those spaces in ways not experienced

by mixed race Japanese (Uehara Carter, 2014, p. 649). As a constant reminder of a

foreign military presence, mixed Okinawans have had the sites of war and occupation

superimposed onto their bodies, including the crimes committed by US troops and their

affiliates. As Uehara Carter reveals, some mixed Okinawans thus fear the potential that

their body has to "trigger intense war memories or ostracism" (ibid., p. 651). Far from

providing a 'bridge', mixed Okinawans possess an "obscure in-betweeness" (sic.) through

which they are "aligned to the base shadows" (ibid., p. 654).

In the first part of a newly serialised essay entitled "*Hāfu-burīdo*", the Okinawan poet

and cultural theorist Imafuku Ryūta offers a strategic redefinition of the term 'half-breed'

(Imafuku, 2014a). 'Half-breed' denotes the mixed-race *metis* children of American Indian

and white parents in a sense that bears connotations of "cross-breed, bastard, abject"

that register pollution and fragmentation on one hand, with "provocative and

polysemous semantics when used in the first person" on the other. In a parodic entry

cited from a fictional *Guntō goi shin-jiten* (*New Dictionary of Archipelago Vocabulary*)

with the publication date "2040", the term 'half-breed' also offers a poetic intervention

that seeks to empower such people with the "potential of freedom and tolerance born

out of border-invasion, exchange, in-betweenness, and hybridisation" (Imafuku, 2014a, p.

236). Like Kina's approach cited above, Imafuku's work engages with the writing of

Chicana/o poets and theorists.[61] Like the collective community and space constructed

within *Borderlands*, Imafuku's engagement with linguistic devices and poetry returns his

readers to languages and identities of people living in the lands of the *mestiza*, with

which he phonetically glosses the Japanese *konketsu* (混血).

In line with the expectations raised by the '*hāfu* boom', Maria initially presents herself as

a bridge between the narratives of Kuja and the collective audience that the act of telling

presumes. Yet she also embodies the shadows and the more painful realities of her

gendered and racial otherness in a militarised space, willingly deploying the ability of her

multiracial body to trigger that past.

> That's right, a *Pinā* is what you call a Filipina. Look at this dear jet-black hair
> of mine. My circular eyes that go round and round. My full-fleshed lips that
> make me look like a good kisser so that old men from all over the world seem
> to sense in them a special sex appeal. And look here, at this firm butt (she

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[61] At the time of submitting in March 2016, Imafuku's essay has amassed nine parts with potentially
more to follow. Part Three (Imafuku, 2014b) deals with Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* explicitly. This
discussion is most interested in Part One.

twisted a little and stuck her bottom out to the side). Above all else, the colour of my skin is *soo* beautifully tanned but I'll stop you right there and whatever you're dreaming of just now. No way am I like those *Japayuki* entertainer girls who you longed for in the olden days. That was a shame, yes yes yes yes (she clapped both hands, *pan pan pan*). (p. 90)

Maria's knowing appeal to her physical differences and the sexualised body they produce bring to the fore the commodification of mixed race bodies and the post-occupation reality of Okinawa wherein the majority of prostitutes are no longer local girls but Filipinas (Molasky, 2001, p. 68).[62] The onomatopoeia of her clapping reinforces her point, recalling the figure of the wartime *panpan* girl. Maria thus evokes the proximity of the base town to issues of prostitution and rape, yet in her refusal to be assimilated to that image, she also exposes the perils of conflating the colonised and occupied space of the base town with her female body, and of superimposing her femininity back onto that space.

Thus as Maria's narrative picks up pace she takes aim at the desire to know and undress her. As she does, the text of her speech becomes more radical; by way of illustration, both the original text and my translation are cited:

> ——ピンポーンピンポーン。そ、そ、そーでぇす。あなたが今想像して
> いるのは、ご名答でぇす。何を隠そうアタシは、フィリピン系米国人
> の落トゥシングゥだってば。あなたのお見かけどおりアタシはピナー。
> あ、でもピナーは見かけと出自だけでアタシの中身はそうじゃないっ
> て言っておかなければコトは正しくないのですハイ。
> 　だってホラあなたさアタシのこのニッポン語のしゃべくり、いちお
> う理解できるでしょ。それがなによりの証拠だってばアタシがニッポ
> ン人であるという。ニッポン語だからニッポン人？ああ、なんか、ス
> カスカな感じするねこの文脈。ま、それはそれとして。
> 　さッてもさッても。グソーヨー。

> —*Ping-pong, ping-pong*. Yeh, yeh, yeess. That what you're imagining now, that's the one. As a matter of fact I'm the offspring of a Filipino-American soldier. Before your very eyes, I am a *Pinā*. Ah, although it would be wrong of me not to add that *Pinā* applies only to my looks and my roots. What's inside is a different matter, *hai*.

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[62] The name *Japayuki*, literally 'Japan-bound', is another slang term for these women.

> I mean look, you can more or less understand this Japanese dialogue of mine, right? That's what I am saying is the proof above all else that I am a Japanese. I speak Japanese therefore I am Japanese? Hmm, it seems pretty pithy in this context, no? Maybe I'll leave that aside.
> Anyway, *aa*nyway, *gusōyō* (p.93).

Maria's hybridity is multi-faceted. It inscribes itself through the linguistic differences in her speech whose switches between Japanese and "Kuja-speak" (*kuja-go*) are echoed in the text's use of multiple orthographies and in the nature of this performance as a *shabekuri*, an unrelenting speech that evokes overtones of multiple voices in competing dialogue (recalling Bakhtinian polyphony) through its contemporary association with *manzai* comedy. As an actress, Maria's utterances are overlain with a second layer of performance that further destabilises any attempts to know her. Maria's self-identification as a *Pinā* thus suggests an alternative mixed race identity, one that itself derives from cutting the full name of her Filipina nationality in half.

Maria's persistent dialogue/diatribe corrupts the name of Japanese directly as a ludic hybrid of *katakana* and *kanji*. It is a gesture that resembles what Hyon Joo Yoo refers to in *Cinema at the Crossroads: Nation and the Subject in East Asian Cinema,* as the "contamination that colonial hybrid speech causes in imperial grammar" which threatens to make naming and categories impossible in generic speech (Yoo, 2012). Yet in targeting the name *Filipina* in the same way Maria's speech refuses to allow any dimension of her identity remain unscathed. Maria's hybrid 'half-breed' existence undermines and crosses (out)—literally with a hyphen—the borders that define fixed categories of language and identification. Instead, she represents the lived experience of postcoloniality and assimilation, not in mere abstract terms but through rifts and fissures that inscribe themselves upon her body and in her language. As in earlier fictional portrayals that feminise the base town as a "no-man's land" (Molasky, 2001), the Kuja that Maria

narrates appears emasculated since the soldiers have now departed. However, while there is an obvious parallel between Maria's mixed race heritage and polyphonic speech and the geographical ambiguity of Kuja, the inherent hybridity in both this space and this fictional character resists repeating old colonial tropes by ensuring that as much as each may represent the other, their relation is equally defined through non-equation and their refusal to adhere to any singular representation.

In introducing the figure of Ore, *"Monologue"* thus in fact reveals the relationship between Kuja and its inhabitants, and the interdependence of its histories upon the new mixed race generation. As a site of 'difference itself', the Kuja abyss comes to life in the multiracial body and polyphonic voice of Takaesu Maria that narrate it. Fittingly, therefore, it appears to be less Maria's stories themselves than the "wild illusions that bubbled up out of the gaps in Maria's narration" that entrance Ore and lead him in the story's final sentences to hear and see the landscape differently.

> The landscape at the cape began to tremble restlessly. The wind had come up. Having lost the power of the sun the surface of the sea was beginning to change into colour. It rose into a crest of spume and alternated between flashing glimpses and hiding the bellies of the waves. At last, my field of vision stretched out infinitely. The dense smell of water arose. It came neither from the sea nor from the rain. It was the smell of a shroud of darkness arising from between the cracks under my feet. (p. 96)

As a shift away from these points of (dis)connection that nonetheless continues their dominant themes, it is now to the individual Kuja stories that bubble out of the gaps in this landscape that this thesis turns.

1.5 The voice of resignation: "And so it goes in an Invisible Town"

The first voice unleashed from the cracks opened up within "Monologue" is that of Uchi, the anonymous first-person narrator of "And so it goes in an Invisible Town" (hereafter

"Invisible Town"). With the ferocity of Takaesu Maria's opening monologue, Uchi's

narration dominates this entire second story of Kuja from her first utterance: "Mama's

died. Late last night. So, come. Now, in haste" (p. 130). The proprietress of a bar popular

among GIs in the 1960s heyday of the base town (in this text referred to generically as

the *machi*), Mama had taken in Uchi to work for her after Uchi ran away from home. To

Uchi, Mama came to be a surrogate mother figure whose "big-hearted" nature

contrasted that of Uchi's own biological parents. After being taken under Mama's wing,

Uchi spent the rest of her life caring for Mama in return. Mama's passing is therefore a

significant event, the curt phrasing of Uchi's opening words inferring the urgency with

which she conveys the news down the telephone.

The recipient of Uchi's message is Anta, an informal and anonymous second-person

pronoun that mirrors the way in which Uchi refers to herself. Anta also worked in the bar

alongside Uchi, but six months after the reversion of 'Okinawa' (written in *katakana*) to

Japan ('*Yamatu*'), Anta married a man from the mainland and left for Tokyo. After thirty

three years, the occasion of Mama's death enables Uchi to regain contact with Anta,

beckoning her to return to the bar in order to pay Mama's last respects. When Anta

arrives, the women's reunion provides the impetus for Uchi's memories to unfold, of her

life spent in the bar alongside Mama, and of the other girls who passed through that

space: girls such as Fumiko, who found romance with Jim, one of the few soldiers to be

known for his kindness; and Satchan, an underage worker who emigrated with her

serviceman boyfriend to New Orleans. Despite the promise of escape within each of

these memories, Uchi's narration goes on to reveal the precarity that shaded these

women's relationships. Jim was never again heard of after being despatched to Vietnam,

leading Fumiko to marry a Japanese man whose business collapsed into largescale debt.

As for Satchan, her fate is cast into uncertainty in the wake of the "recent hurricane" that has left New Orleans "utterly upturned".[63]

Like the narratives within Anzaldúa's borderland, the passing references to actual events situate the stories retold by Uchi against locatable, historical moments, demonstrating the interplay between the personal and the historical. As actual events connect these women's individual stories within a broader historical context, they also foreground tropes of disconnection, loss, and death within those lives. Accordingly, we learn that as a young woman, Mama herself came to the bar having been forced to flee her home on the island of Yonaguni after a local female shaman (*yuta*) foretold that she would bring dishonour on her high-status family. Even Anta, who in Uchi's recollection believed that marrying a Japanese man would allow her to "live without having her body abused" (p. 143), is revealed to have suffered years of violence at her husband's hands, before being killed over a decade ago. After suggestions of Anta's "increasing pallor" and the uncanny speed with which she has returned to the bar at Uchi's behest, the revelation that she is already dead comes less as a surprise than as an explanation for the tension that hangs across the text of "Invisible Town". Yet the disclosure of Anta's death brings one further confession from Uchi for she is also no longer living, and so is as guilty as Anta for having left Mama alone. The narrative thus closes having reunited all three women in death, with Uchi and Anta setting about the preparations to send off Mama "together, before the sun breaks in" (p. 144).

"Invisible Town" is on one hand, a simple yet powerfully narrated tale of female relationships set within the volatile surroundings of the base town and one of its bars.

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[63] "Invisible Town" was published approximately eight months after Hurricane Katrina struck the US Gulf Coast causing widespread devastation across the region including New Orleans on 29th August 2005.

What binds these women is not biological, but rather shared experiences. Indeed, unlike the family to whom Uchi feels "no sense of affiliation" (p. 133), the bar offers an alternative sorority in which "mothers and sisters who like us are not connected by blood" live and work together (p. 132). For Uchi, the idea of family is itself arbitrary: "As for relations among people, don't they just repeat a cycle of making connections while those involved aren't aware?" (ibid.). However, the sense of female solidarity suggested within this space is simultaneously enhanced and undermined by Uchi's memories of women competing with one another over their looks and abilities to snare the best patrons. In fact, despite Uchi's performance of daughterly affection, Mama is also transcribed through the orthography 女将 as a proprietress, suggesting not a purely maternal figure but a woman complicit with the edifices forcing these girls into such work. The all-female environment within the bar, therefore, does not subvert the dictates of patriarchy beyond; instead, it repeats them. As these structures manifest in jealous rivalries, they are most tangible in the increasing derision with which Uchi addresses Anta, who even after leaving to become the wife of a "*yamatū*", a pejorative dialect name for Japanese mainlanders, remained the one "Mama loved most" (p. 132). Presented with Anta's gifts of expensive silk blouses and kimonos bought in metropolitan department stores, Uchi's sensibilities are affronted and she mocks Anta for having become assimilated to Japanese standards: "But hey, why must you try to solve everything in a Yamato way? That's what I don't like, that feigned Yamato air (*yamato kabure*). Ah, I'm sorry, have I gone and insulted you again?" (p. 135).

That Anta has become for Uchi an "'outsider' inside and out" (p. 136) through her adoption of such affectations alludes to the complex historical relations between Japan and Okinawa. As Uchi's monologue speaks out from an Okinawan 'interior' ('uchi' also

means 'inside'), her words invert Okinawa's past as a colonial subject by positioning Anta

conversely as the Other within. In this regard, the timeframe of Anta's move is culturally

symbolic, not simply because it shortly follows the date on which the town "'reverted' to

the mainland".[64] As Uchi notes wryly: "33 years, that's how long it would take for a dead

person to become a god" (p. 135). The irony of this timeframe is that homeland

reversion has signalled not a rebirth but the death of the town, and it has not been a

redemptive passing. Rather, as its invisibility infers, the town is now a ghost town with

"crazed soldiers (*purimun hētai*) and spirits" haunting its backstreets.

> Far from the flashy neon signs of back then, there isn't so much as a speck of
> light. Recently, you know, people have stopped going out, and apparently,
> there is no point in having lamps to light up streets that nobody passes
> through, but even saying that, I've been living here all along and so it's
> obvious that I should walk about the town both day and night. Even so, there
> is not a single lamp. At night, every single place is pitch-*blaack*, so that when
> you live here, as the sun goes down you feel just as though you are sinking
> into hell. (p.134)

The town has been deserted, prompting Uchi to blame Anta for leaving her "all alone in

the world", a phrase whose pronunciation the text overwrites as *duchui*: 天涯孤独. The

name of Mama's bar, *Shonkanē*, alludes to this sense of resignation and despair as it

derives from the Okinawan pronunciation of the Japanese expression '*shō ga nai*' ('it

cannot be helped'; 'there's no other way').

Yet from within the shadows of the 'ghost town' that the *machi* has become, Uchi's

reminiscences conjure up its former vibrancy. Indeed, if the present-day town's isolation

finds its echo in Anta's eerie silence, Uchi's incessant narrative gives voice to the image

of the bar as it was in the past. Mama's bar was located within the "black quarters"

(*kuronbō-gai*) at the heart of these volatile surroundings. Hence Uchi recalls how with

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[64] Uchi's inverted commas suggest her cynicism with respect to the term 'reversion' (*fukki*) given that
Okinawa only became part of the modern Japanese state following its annexation in 1871.

few exceptions, "those we hooked up with were not whites but mostly blacks" (p. 139).

Uchi's slang verbalises her individual prejudices and speaks to the racial divisions of the

town, thus fleshing out the conflicts against which the mixed race bodies of Maria and

Kuja's other multiracial children are inscribed. Moreover, owing to *Shonkanē*'s lack of an

"A-sign"—a stamp of official approval by the US military that created a further

distinction among the bars in the base town—it suffered from a shortage of "quality

patrons" (*jōkyaku*), becoming filled instead with "guys who, with that air distinctive

among *Amerikā,* had no other ability but to threaten others, and would run amok inside

the bar enacting one violent act after another" (ibid.). Overall, Uchi's monologue

portrays the contrast between the streets ruled by male, military-led violence, and the

feminised space of the bar in which more complex rivalries are constantly at work. It

moreover serves the role within the Kuja series of inciting the distance between Japan

and Okinawa by placing the moment of sovereign unity conversely upon the threshold of

death.

Yet as Uchi's narrative begins to fragment, in its gaps it also tells a more complex story

about the difficulty of keeping these memories of the past alive. Given its persistently

reproachful tone towards Anta and its unbroken first-person narration, "Invisible Town"

appears a relatively straightforward text by comparison to Kuja's other texts, including

"Monologue". That is not to say, however, that Uchi's voice is singular or monovocal. On

the one hand, Uchi's memories and the specific past she shares with Anta bring her

individual past into sharp relief. Yet at the same time, the nature of the generic pronoun,

deployed in texts by all three writers discussed in this thesis, is to suggest both a specific

enunciating subject at the same time as it makes that subject less identifiable. Indeed,

Uchi repeatedly insists that "a fool like me cannot find the words" (p. 131), as though her voice is always already other.

> However I try to tell it, in the moment of telling I grow confused over whether I am talking about myself or about Mama, or describing the feelings of sisters from back then, and I get the feeling that the words emitted from my mouth are transformed in no time into the voice of somebody else (p. 142).

Unlike the conviction with which Maria's voice narrates, Uchi's voice thus grows inherently confused and ultimately, Uchi never comes into focus within her story. Rather, it is the silent others—Mama, Anta, and the other girls long gone—whose shadows, ghosts, and silhouettes are gradually revealed through her narration.

Uchi's stories reveal the violence of Okinawa's wartime perpetuated throughout the US occupation and even in the oppression it has faced following reversion through Japan's cultural and political hegemony, of which the domestic violence enacted by Anta's husband appears somewhat symbolic. They also underscore the violent rewriting of that history into a singular grand narrative of the kind that has sought repeatedly since the occupation era to reaffirm Okinawa's continuity with Japan as a means of recuperating regional loyalties and rewrite historical tensions. As such revisionism erases the smaller conflicting narratives from history, it risks, to paraphrase Marukawa Tetsushi, "placing 'the dead' once again on the 'precipice of death'" (Marukawa, 2004, p. 194). That is, not simply to lose the dead from our lived present, but also to lose them from our past, to erase them from history as though they had never existed at all. Conversely, by reframing reversion as a point of death Uchi's narrative revises the official line to reinstate breakage into Japan and Okinawa's postwar history. Like the gaps in Maria's narration, it is out of this moment that the invisible town's stories become briefly visible.

As a story of silence and of ghosts, Uchi's narration might be termed what Katsukata= Inafuku Keiko designates as that of "life unborn" (*mishō no sei*) (Katsukata=Inafuku, 2006).[65] Influenced by Tillie Olsen's *Silences* (1978), which revises women's absence as presence and silence as voice, Katsukata=Inafuku reads the "stories of life unborn" as "those stories that perhaps might have been" (Olsen, quoted in Katsukata=Inafuku, 2006, p. 184). For Katsukata, it is by bringing such stories to language that we might rectify "the limitless 'silence' of 'Okinawan women'" within the margins (Katsukata=Inafuku, 2006, p. 194). Yet, given that a story that can be told will presumably already have been, the contradiction narrated by "stories of life unborn" is that of a story that cannot be put into words. As such stories are bound by the dark, the challenge to bring their silence to language is paradoxically to "show darkness as 'darkness itself'". That is, "to peer at that which is invisible to oneself" in order to catch a "glimpse" of the story that might fleetingly emerge therein (ibid.).

Uchi's narration inhabits this paradox. For while darkness risks obliterating the stories of marginalised peoples from view entirely, within the borderlands it is also imbued with the potential to shelter those narratives from appropriation. With Mama's death, there is nobody left living to carry on the memories of the "invisible town". And yet, as it approaches death this darkness appears as the condition through which Uchi's spectral echo can be heard. As in Anzaldúa's text, darkness is redeployed in order for the conflicting temporalities, jealousies, and sexual subjugation of the base town bar scene

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[65] Throughout *Okinawa josei gaku no kotohajime* (*The Launch of Okinawan Women's Studies*) Katsukata=Inafuku seeks a positionality and voice for Okinawan female identities through recounting her own experiences of moving to Tokyo interspersed with critical readings of Okinawan and international fiction. Hers is not only an academic project, but one that that she practices on a personal level. The use of an equals sign in her name is a case in point. At the time of her marriage it was compulsory by Japanese law for women to adopt their husband's family name, yet this would have meant throwing away her Okinawan family name, Inafuku. She thus forged a double-barrelled name, choosing an equal sign over the more usual hyphen to indicate the equal significance of both names within her identity.

to re-emerge. As the story of that darkness, Uchi's narrative becomes embedded within these other stories as they interplay between private and collective tragedy, past and present, connection and disconnection. The result is a polyphonic narrative language that speaks out in protest, all the while cutting into the communicative function of language itself. The desire to finish Mama's preparations "before the sun breaks in" thus extends to the story that Uchi narrates as a means of protecting those voices by conversely ensuring that they remain in the dark.

1.6 Embodying the borderland: "Passing through Twilight Phantasms"

This darkness ensues in the third Kuja story, "Passing through Twilight Phantasms" (hereafter "Twilight Phantasms"). Told in a series of short sections that reveal fragmented and conflicting images, "Twilight Phantasms" begins by following a first-person narrator (*watashi*) as she (or possibly he) departs down "that road of my memory" into a "town exposed to the sun's (*tiida*) aggression" (p. 240). Therein, "out of the abyss of distant memories from before I was five years old, the fragments of one memory crawl out at this instant", as though summoning the narrator back (p. 241). The town is set within the licensed quarters, while its backstreets follow Kuja's model as a site of difference, set "within a hollow (*hekomi*) of the peninsula that seemed to have spread out across the bottom of a jagged space carved into the coral reef" (p. 241). By day, there is rarely a person in sight in the town, but it erupts into activity each night when it is overcome with "the cloudy fermented stench" of alcohol, bodily fluids, and mould; and the shrill sounds of cackling, sirens, shrieks, and group riots (p. 241).

Whereas "Invisible Town" unfolds through the polyphonic narration of a single enunciating subject, in "Twilight Phantasms" *watashi*'s narration is soon interrupted by

the bitching and gossiping of women that is carried in on the "mouldy breeze" bringing

tales that

> begin in whispers before spreading out unhesitatingly; tales laid bare that
> burst out of the belly of the backstreets that cannot contain them, curl back,
> and cause the air throughout the town to tremble (p. 242).

The subject of their gossip is "that woman", the rumoured daughter of a notorious *juri*

(the Okinawan word for prostitute) who made money from "Shuri samurai and Japanese

soldiers" and later American soldiers in the "American days" in the former red-light

district of Chiji. Yet as the women's stories begin to fragment into competing versions of

exactly who "that woman" is, they layer onto this figure the identity of a mysterious

"mud woman". The name prompts the narrator to recall encountering this woman (女<ruby>女<rt>ヒト</rt></ruby>)

in childhood and being captivated by her appearance that made one question "whether

or not she was real" (p. 245). With this return to the narrator's childhood memories, the

narrative continues to shift between different first- and third-person perspectives and by

the conflicting gossiping voices of the backstreet.

As these voices spread layer upon layer of rumour onto the woman's existence, she

herself remains silent, her expressions limited to a rhythmic refrain ("*yōi yōi yoi yoi; hōi*

hōi hoi hoi hoi") transcribed in an untranslatable mixture of phonetic scripts (ヨぉーい

ヨぉーい、ヨイヨイヨイ; ホぉーいホぉーい、ホイホイホイ), and a dance that

oscillates between movement and stasis, as though she were alternately solidifying into

a clay statue. Removing her *yukata* robe, the woman continues to circle the small room

as though "winding both the performer and the viewer into the depths of their selves" (p.

251). The child feels herself "frozen into a sense of isolation that forces her to back away

to the doorway, yet her gaze remains fixed upon the woman as though it is what she

must do (p. 252). The story closes with the child transfixed by the woman's "curiously

slimy" silhouette that flickers in the darkness leaving the impression that for an instant,

she was passing into "another space" (p. 252). There, the narrator waits, for "the

darkness, which rains down upon the streets at ever-increasing speeds, to mount unseen

stories onto inaudible voices and begin to tell them *futsu futsu futsu*, begin to sing them

hōi hōi" (p. 252).

"Twilight Phantasms" is a short and dense text that stays within the underbelly of the

town, yet also returns its former vibrancy, not at a distance but with the semblance of

present vitality. Although the back streets draw similarities to the base town inhabited

by the other Kuja texts, this town is identified as Chiji, the former licensed quarters of

Naha that provided the background setting to the play and subsequent cinematic

adaptation of *The Teahouse of the August Moon* (1956). The text inscribes this space as a

point of intersection by the Okinawan name Chiji that derives from the Japanese *tsuji*

(辻), meaning crossroads. Yet as the entry into the world of prostitution, Chiji also

indicates as a point of no return. In Sakiyama's text, Chiji is thus described through

"narrow zigzagging alleys that intersect, connect and disconnect, and run into dead ends"

(p. 241).[66] Like the ghostly "invisible town", Chiji is also a spectral incarnation: the

Okinawan term a*kōkurō* names a liminal space 'in-between' as it comprises the opposing

terms for 'light' (*akarui*) and 'dark' (*kurai*). Unlike other names for the twilight, a*kōkurō*

moreover carries a particular sense of "unease (*fuan*) that accompanies nightfall"

(*"Okinawa-go jiten* ", 1998).

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[66] I credit the translation of *oitsumeru* as "dead ends" here to Kina Ikue's published translation under the title of "Passing into Twilight Alley", in which she renders the same passage thus: "The narrow zigzaging [sic.] alleys intersected, connected, dead-ended"(Sakiyama, 2012b, p. 177). The idea relates to my 2007 MA dissertation, entitled "Dead Ends: Dystopian borderlands in three novellas by Sakiyama Tami", in which I interpreted the space of Kuja in three stories from the series, including "Twilight Phantasms", as 'dead ends' that straddle the border between life and death.

True to this definition, the darkness that is foregrounded elsewhere in Kuja looms large.

Yet where the invisible town is steeped in a stagnant blackness, the shifting light of the

twilight infuses that darkness with more fluid qualities that "drip" and "trickle". In

particular, the text's unstable narrative blurs the distinctions between the narrator's

reality, dreams, and past memories. It also allows itself to be disrupted further by

incoherent fragments of the women's gossip that speak over it in tongues, as in one

particular interaction between an anonymous town resident who calls out nonsensical

strings of sound into the street (*"jirijirijirijirijirijiri… yah…..yah…."*), and the neighbour

whose nerves are irked by the racket.

> "Can't you stop already? 'Cos that *jirijiri* of yours isn't your problem alone.
> So, try telling me why you *jiri jiri*."
> "………………"
> "What happened?"
> "I can't say it, not to anyone." (p. 247)

Through the griping yet witty protests of the first speaker, the cause of unspeakable pain

is revealed as a trauma (*chimuyami*) that has resulted from the second speaker's

recurrent dream of "killing men one after another". It is an act, in the eyes of the

frustrated onlooker, of "indiscriminate terrorism" suggestive of a "latent grudge" (p.

247). Yet when the sufferer of these dreams does not comprehend the diagnosis,

repeating the words "latent grudge" in phonetic script devoid of meaning, the advice

s/he receives is plain:

> Oh, anything goes, so you needn't get so strung up (*chimuyami*) about every
> little thing. Men (*ikiga*) are, well, if you want to kill them then you should go
> ahead without restraint. After all, it's only a dream." (p. 248)

To say that it is "only a dream", however, conceals the significance of dreams throughout

Kuja, highlighted above by Watanabe's reading of "Monologue", as the undercurrent of

repressed tales and latent unconscious that flows beneath the textual landscape. In fact,

told within the strategies with which Sakiyama's prose actively seeks to terrorise the Japanese language, the desire to kill one man after another implies a more visceral mode of terrorism that is not, as the text suggests, "indiscriminate", but rather is explicitly targeted against patriarchy and logocentrism. Attesting to this play with symbolic meaning, Sakiyama's text glosses the term 'dream' (*yume*) with its Okinawan pronunciation as *imi*, in which echoes the Japanese word for 'meaning': 夢 (イミ). This coincidence is then reiterated by an omniscient narrator's description of this "conversation whose meanings and circumstances have been obscured" (意味故事不明 (イミクジ) の会話) (p. 248). With this, the interjection of this street argument is abandoned with no attempt to overcome the incomprehensibility of either the scenario or its position within the text overall. Yet in the implied violence projected back onto men and the suggestions of unspeakable pains set within the scene of the red-light district, this textual 'aside' rather centralises the unspoken violence that Chiji's women experience, and which might lead to their despising of men. Simultaneously it tests the borders between narratability, silence, and sense.

More so than in the previous stories, "Twilight Phantasms" harnesses the deafening violence of the shrieks, explosions, and yelling that threaten to submerge the base town and forces them to give way to memories that "crawl *tsuku tsuku* up the walls of [the narrator's] dream" (p. 241). By mobilising language and sounds to "offset" (*zurashi*) a space out of which memories might emerge, the text suggests not only the ways in which "Twilight Phantasms" figures as a point of connection but, as has been seen before, how that figure pushes at the spatial, temporal and narrative boundaries that seek to contain it (one could add here citing Kina's argument, the boundaries that define

Okinawan fiction as a literary sub-genre). The narrator's encounter with the mud woman further articulates this idea. Rumoured by the gossips to be the daughter of "that monster *juri* woman" the mud woman's identity remains uncertain. Through her earthy stench and resemblance to a "clod of dirt" (*tsuchikure*), she embodies the squalid, physical terrain of the base town, while her dual manifestation as both motionless statue and moving dancer recalls the spectral ambiguity of the twilight. As the encroaching darkness obscures the woman's image as though attesting to its untranslatability, the final scene compounds the contradictions of "Twilight Phantasms", and creates tension in the child's anticipation as she "waits with eyes and ears open wide, for the signs of stories that might be" (p. 252).

In Anzaldúa's *Borderlands*, it is the statue of the Aztec goddess Coatlicue (literally "snake skirt") who represents the contradictions of the borderland by embracing a "synthesis of duality". To paraphrase Anzaldúa, "frozen in stasis" as a "prelude to crossing", Coatlicue symbolises "activity (not immobility) at its most dynamic stage" (Anzaldúa, 2012, pp. 68-70). As a possible answer to the question that she puts to Anzaldúa's text, namely how one might read across the antagonism that lies between the individual narrator and the collective audience of that narrative, Takemura suggests that "[p]erhaps the means for individual memories to connect to collective history, for the story of 'I' to be read widely by 'we', lies in the paradoxical attempt of bringing that most individual of things, the body, into language" (Takemura, 2012, p. 163). For Takemura, Anzaldúa's invocation of the Coatlicue statue embodies precisely this struggle, as

> her voice multiplies within her, and excavates the historical layers of herself, or else gives birth to as-yet unseen new layers of herself, and the layers of earth that are scooped out and returned transform her voice not into a hollowly resounding echo, but into a whispering, undulating, live clod of earth (*tsuchikure*). (ibid., p. 176)

Like the image of Coatlicue, Sakiyama's mud woman brings the shifting layers of Kuja's

language and the histories hidden within its landscape to bear upon the body. Her

appearance like a "lump of hardened shadows" (p. 244) tests the limits of both presence

and absence in a way that embodies the inherent duality of Kuja's borderland.

As the narrative closes around this spectral body's flickering in the dark, the mud

woman's wordless performance expresses stories as yet untold, or in

Katsukata=Inafuku's words, "stories of life unborn". It may be too literal to see this

suggestion in the rounded curve of the mud woman's stomach that she reveals to the

child, yet as this image echoes the tales barely contained within the "belly of the

backstreets" (p. 242), the inscription of her body as a site of potential narratives is

confirmed in the tension of the story's final pregnant pause. As the mud woman appears

in the child's peripheral vision to be on the point of crossing into "that other space"

without ever fully breaching it, the stories and voices within her are infinitely deferred,

foreclosing their entrance into a more translatable language but therefore remaining

resistant to appropriation into a dominant narrative. The "light-dark" landscape and

wordscape of *Akōkurō* synthesise such points of duality and contradiction, yet they

simultaneously create a space that actively incites divisions by disrupting and deferring

that synthesis. As the text closes on the moment of irreconcilability and silence in the

mud woman's halted performance, it instead reveals a space in-between the shadows

wherein a well of stories on the cusp of being told, of connections yet to be made, are

left to whisper indeterminately.

1.7 The voice of response/ability: "Night Flight from Pingihira Hill"

"Night Flight from Pingihira Hill" (hereafter "Pingihira Hill") also begins with an

anonymous narrator whose words bear the thick dialect of the twilight gossipmongers

while her conversational tone reveals a certain relish in her task, especially when it

comes to the mysterious movements of a certain Pisara Anga.

> There was never a day when Anga's being did not come up as the subject of
> their gossipy lectures. Why? Why do you think Anga continued to be the
> source of the people's interest for so long? You know, if we follow what Anga
> does and says when she hobbles out of the town at night, even that will
> naturally come to light. (p. 67)

Anga is a former brothel madam with apparent shamanistic capabilities who hobbles out

of the town every night in order to listens to those spirits who cannot rest, having died

or lived in "unusual" circumstances: namely, those who were murdered or committed

suicide due to being bullied, raped, or abused. The town by Pingihira Hill is beset by such

tragedy, the most memorable incident in recent history being the brutal rape, murder,

and disposal of a six-year-old girl by American GIs some fifty years ago. For those who

choose suicide in Pingihira, the options are few. One could drown in the seas, although

there is no guarantee where one might end up. Hence most of the townspeople hang

themselves in the woods at the top of the hill that lies between the town and the sea;

the same place where Anga goes to listen. With the exception of Anga, "once one had

climbed up that hill, there was no other way but to end up in both body and spirit as

someone from over that side" (p. 68).

On this night, the vision of a young girl (*shōjo*) disturbs Anga. Wearing a white t-shirt that

conceals her small breasts and with a bald head and no eyebrows, the girl cuts an

androgynous "nun-like" figure that redoubles her spectral liminality. Anga's *modus*

operandi as a "listening person" (*kiku hito*) is to mediate the stories of the ghosts who

present before her, and the girl reveals that she was born fifty years ago and died at the age of fourteen, to the horror of Anga who had put her age at closer to twenty four. Yet the girl soon enforces a reversal of roles, her eyes carrying a message that "refuses to be read" (p. 70) as she demands instead that Anga recall her own past. Increasingly anxious, for spirits must be heard before sunrise in order to go peacefully to the "other place," Anga tries to speak. However, her use of a stiff classical form of dialect and archaic impenetrable honorific forms ("*Unju ya, tā ya misē ga*") clashes with the "contemporary youth-slang" of the girl, who demands that the only way forward is for Anga to start speaking "normally" in language that is free of the "traces of harsh discipline from the imperial red-light district" and does not replicate the "hierarchical structures of the human world" (p.73).

The two figures thus find themselves at an impasse as Anga seems unable or unwilling to remember her past, and the girl refuses Anga's demands to explain their relation, stating only that "if you say we're connected, we are; say we're not, and we're not" (p. 76). As they describe the "chain reaction" that may or may not bind the two women, these words incite precisely the cyclical toing-and-froing between their mutual pleas, the chaotic re-emergence of Anga's suppressed memories, and the narrator's own flashback memories of the town that further disrupting the narrative flow. Anga attempts to recall the links of the chain that bind her to the young girl. The narrative conjures vague memories of several young women including a mixed race child entrusted to Anga by its mother, a young woman who worked at Anga's bar and ultimately took her own life, and Anga's own biological daughter. Yet despite the suggestion that she, too, is one of the "daughters" (*musume*) of the bar, the identity of the girl standing before Anga now remains obscured from view. Having failed to listen to the girl's voice and recall the

memories of her own past, Anga realises that she cannot return to the town. Untying a

belt from around her waist, she hangs herself from a branch in the forest on the hill.

As the literary topos of Kuja is wont to shift and travel across geographical space, then

Pingihira is a space inhabited by outsiders (*yosomon*) who have been passing through

only to never leave.

> Those who got off the tourist bus on a whim having seen the blue sea from
> the window and end up shacking up for the next thirty odd years with some
> girl they met randomly in the town; groups of siblings who left home unable
> to bear the poverty or parental abuse…; those fleeing debt; women on the
> run from male violence; eloping couples; hitmen with shady pasts… (p.66)

In the kinds of people who end up in Pingihira lies a clear social critique against the trend

to perceive Okinawa in popular imagination as a space of healing, and of the

mainlanders who have relocated to the islands in order to escape their realities at home.

Yet like the previous corners of Kuja, Pingihira is a dead end, sat on the border between

life and death, prompting the critic Hiyane Kaoru to compare it with *Yomotsu hirasaka*,

the hill believed to connect heaven and the underworld in Japanese mythology (Hiyane,

2006). Pingihira arguably resists such mythologizing. However, as it suggests a spatial

continuity with death from which no return is permitted, it tests the frontiers of the

borderland. This contradiction is further inferred by its ironic naming after the Okinawan

verb *hingiyun*, meaning to escape: 逃げ込む場所 (p. 67).[67] Despite the promise that

Pingihira holds from the viewpoint of the tourist bus window, it is a terrain traumatised

by occupation: the US military being the other 'outsiders' of the town.

In particular, the foreign military presence in Pingihira leads to the foregrounding of rape

within the text. As a backdrop to Anga's nightly mission to hear the town's ghosts, gossip

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[67] The shift from the 'h' of 'hingiyun' to the 'p' in Pingihira is a characteristic of the Miyako and
Yaeyama dialects.

in Pingihira is fuelled by sightings of the ghost of a young girl (*shōjo*) who regularly

appears in a white dress. The girl is known to have been raped and murdered by a GI at

the age of six, in an incident fifty years earlier that caused widespread mourning among

the townspeople who would shout out in strings of dialect and even wander the streets

"as if to say that they were themselves the girl" (p. 69). The turn in this text to an actual

incident of rape stands out against the preceding narratives haunted by the shadows of

prostitution, and underscores the latent stories of sexual subjugation concealed within

the Kuja landscape. It moreover reinstates the very real problem of rape that has

recurred throughout Okinawa's postwar as the "truth of history" that this narrator insists

"cannot be learned from history textbooks" (p. 69).[68]

The rape of the young girl in Sakiyama's text clearly references the "Yumiko-chan

incident" (*Yumiko-chan jiken*) named after the six-year-old girl whose mutilated body

was discovered in the town of Kadena adjacent to the US airbase. The unpredictable

appearance of the spectral figure in Pingihira then reminds that this history has been

repeated (and most likely will be again), most notably in the rape of a 12-year-old

schoolgirl in 1995 that instigated island-wide anti-base protests. This is also not to

overlook preceding literary representations, particularly Ōshiro Tatsuhiro's Akutagawa

Prize-winning novel "The Cocktail Party" (1967) that presents the story of an Okinawan

man whose daughter is raped by an American soldier. However, in contrast to the public

unrest witnessed in Okinawa after these real crimes, the recurrence of such incidents in

the intervening years in Pingihira appear to have left the townspeople apathetic, the

ghosts who return to haunt them now "accepted as run-of-the-mill, and no longer

regarded with apprehension" (p. 69).

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[68] For example, Shinjō Ikuo has problematized the omission of Okinawan and Korean comfort women
in historical accounts and other narrative representations of Okinawa's wartime history, despite the
prevalence of stations across the island (Shinjō, 2007).

The agitation that the young girl on the hill causes to Anga is therefore conspicuous. As the whiteness of her t-shirt overlaps with the dress of the other young girl in town it infers a connection between the two. However, as the colour of a blank page, whiteness also suggests a critique of the ways in which experiences of female rape in Okinawa have been publicly rewritten by politicians into a metaphor for the figurative rape of the region that has risked losing sight of the individual victims involved. For example, Linda Isako Angst has criticised those responses in 1995 that appropriated the girl's individual narrative for their own agenda, conflating "the rape (*her* rape)… with the rape of the body politic" (Angst, 2003, p. 139). As Angst's argument highlights, the move to frame Okinawa's plight in the image of a sacrificial victim (itself indicative of an "inherently patriarchal outlook") relies on the purity and chastity of these victims (Angst, 2003, p. 152). That is to say, the sex workers of the base town brothels, "the real prostituted daughters of Okinawa are excluded" from the discussion (ibid.). As a colour symbolic of purity, the white clothing worn by the two girls in Pinghira (all the more conspicuous within a narrative set against amid darkness) arguably challenges the motions that cause some crimes to capture political attention over others. Overlapping but never touching, the images of the two girls extend this critique in the contrast between the public mourning for the six-year-old and Anga's refusal to remember the *shōjo* standing before her.

As elsewhere in Kuja, memory forms the site of struggle in "Pingihira Hill". Anga's ability "not only to see but to listen" allows her to communicate directly with the dead, yet she knows the act of narrating to be "accompanied by danger" (p. 72). When she recalls the vision of girls she once knew with "white skin, black skin" and the "cross-breed" (*ainoko*)

baby that was abandoned to her for whom she could not hide her repugnance, the

danger of remembering and Anga's desire to forget is revealed to be deeply rooted

within matters of race.

> アンガは思い出した。これがあの子供……。やしが（けど）、とアンガ
> が呟く。彼ぬワラバーや、クロンボーだった。……思び出さらん。
> ―汝や……
> ―アンガが肝心なことを思い出せないのは、アンガの記憶が抑圧され
> ているからだよ。
> ―よくあつ、云じや、ヌーやが。
> ―思い出したくない事を記憶から追い出してしまうことさ。忘れてし
> まいたいことを忘れたふりしているうちに本当に忘れてしまうことよ。
> うまくいけばとりあえずは楽になるからね。でも、さ、アンガ、ずー
> っと忘れたままってわけにはいかないんだよ。
> ―ウチは、何を、忘れているというのかね。

> Anga remembered. This was that *warabi… yashiga* (but), Anga mumbled.
> That *warabā* was a black…. I won't remember.
> —You…
> —The fact that you, Anga, can't remember something essential is down to
> your memories being repressed.
> —*Repressed*? By which you mean?
> —Like, driving out memories of the things that you don't wanna remember.
> In the middle of pretending that you've forgotten something you wanna
> forget forever, *actually* forgetting. If things go to plan you'll feel better at
> first. But, *hey*, Anga, you can't remain in the state of forgetting forever.
> —What is it that you think I am forgetting? (p. 77)

Through this re-inscription of race into the spectral body before her Anga is forced to

recall the young girl left behind after the Americans had gone, who she had put to work

in the bar. When she begins to doubt her memory, however, like the "chain reaction"

against which she is forewarned, the floodgates of her memories are opened. Thereupon,

Anga is assailed by the memories of her own family tragedies, and the guilt at not

providing responsibly for the girls once in her care.

Despite her seemingly innocuous first appearance, the young girl has within her the

power to summon Anga's repressed memories. It is a power that moreover appears

connected to her doubly in-between status as a ghost and 'half-breed'. In Imafuku's

essay cited above, no figure "internalises the latent potential of fierce hybridity" more

than the *shōjo* (Imafuku, 2014a, p. 240). Multiracial and androgynous, the young girl in

Pingihira is divided yet plural. This hybridity is then redoubled by her spectral

absence/presence. Unlike the mud woman, the young girl does not embody the

landscape through a material corporeality. Juxtaposed against narratives of sexual

violence, her body appears liminal as though out of necessity. Rather, her eerie

spectrality and uncanny familiarity to Anga carry the disruptive potential to blast open

the space within Anga's memory and lead Anga to suicide. Anga's suicide brings a degree

of finality to the end of "Pingihira Hill" that contrasts with the deferred movement of the

mud woman's closing dance. However, as it foregrounds tropes of self-violence and

suicide in Yi Yang-ji's novel *Kazukime* as the means through which women might write

their own bodies (Cixous, 1976, p. 883), such finality might be tempered for it implies a

more successful attempt by Anga at narrating herself where her stilted language has

failed. As the intermediary and intervening shield between the town and its ghosts,

Anga's suicide also potentially puts the apathetic townspeople into a precarious situation,

where they will now be called upon directly to answer the ghosts who will return from

the dead.

1.8 The voice of (un)translatability: "When the Figuru Winds Blow"

"When the Figuru Winds Blow" (hereafter "Figuru Winds") begins with a "cold dry sound"

beckoning from within an apparent dreamscape and stroking the back of the narrator's

ears: "*sara zara, sara zara*" (p. 140). As winds "invade" the half-light of her small

apartment, the narrator senses that she is being watched by someone or some*thing* (モ

ノ) (p. 141). She awakens with a start, yet under this "haughty" gaze the narrator's own

vision is obscured as though a "black curtain" has fallen. Therein a polyphonic voice

transcribed in multiple scripts suddenly calls out.

> ……あが、イーッ。もぉそとは、こーんなにあかあかーと明^{アカ}がってるサ
> イガヨッ。ピスマから、そんな所でゴロゴローとしてるなんて、ハぁ
> ーッ、じっつに、犯罪的行為サイガッ。
>
> ……*Aga, eeee*. Outside it's already this *briiightly*-light, *saiga yo*. Rolling
> around in this place from the middle of the day, *haah*, to be honest it's a
> criminal act *saiga*. (p. 141)

Its source unknown, this voice implores the narrator's laziness as a crime punishable by

"at least three years imprisonment". As though "swallowed up by the breaths of this

saiga saiga", an interjection in the Miyako dialect similar to the Japanese *ja nai ka* ("isn't

it?")), the narrator finds herself increasingly tormented within her home.[69] Caught

between this relentless verbal scalding and the uncanny sense of an indecipherable

presence, the narrator is forced to get up. Yet as she goes to the window, the cause of

her unease strikes her: she lives on the second floor of an apartment block with no

balcony on which any person could stand.

Despite the narrator's admission to being a "recluse" (*hikikomori*), she is "seduced" by

these verbal interjections of "*saiga saiga*" and ventures outside. In contrast to the

harassing noise inside her apartment, the town in which the narrator finds herself is

eerily silent. Although her home for some time, it is also uncannily strange: the cinema

building that she once knew is no longer there, while in the park adjacent to a *mori* (杜),

a spiritual setting for traditional rituals, there now stands an unfamiliar white tower with

---

[69] Likewise, the word *pisuma* means 'daytime' in Miyako dialect. From "Figuru Winds" onwards, the 'Kuja' stories contain increasing pointers to Miyako's particular dialect and traditions. This trend continues into Sakiyama's texts written since 'Kuja', including the mid-length work, *Tsuki ya aran* (It is Not the Moon) (Sakiyama, 2012c), but can also be traced back to references to the effects of a "contagious disease" in "Passage across the Water" (Sakiyama, 1994), which allude to the postwar malaria epidemic across Miyako and the outerlying Yaeyama islands. The significance of Miyako clearly demands further attention. However, as '*miyako*' historically also names the site of the imperial court, repeated allusions to this peripheral island arguably suggests another means by which Sakiyama's prose de-centres Japanese imperial authority.

a triangular roof "like a church" (p. 143). The narrator then realises that she is being watched from a viewing platform inside the park by a young black man wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a brightly coloured necktie. As he greets her first in standard Japanese ("*Konnichi wa*") and then with the same words first heard by Takaesu Maria ("*gusōyō*"), the narrator finds herself literally dumbfounded by this "'foreigner' (*gaijin*) who handles Japanese with customary ease" (p. 145).

Introducing himself as Hiroshi, the young man declares that he has someone he wishes the narrator to meet. As her words are reduced in the text to speechless ellipses, the narrator appears unable to protest Hiroshi's command to follow him, yet her curiosity is also piqued by a "manuscript" (*sasshi*) that he carries in his hands on which she can only ascertain "a misty script not written horizontally" (betraying her surprise that this "*gaijin*" might be able to read and write in Japanese also) (p. 146). Entering a rather "unreliable space... like a confessional booth without being a religious space" (ibid.), Hiroshi presents an old lady who is "neither black nor white. If one had to choose, hers was a rounded face with age spots suspended upon the dusky skin of an islander (*shimanchū*)" (ibid.). The woman is Hiroshi's "Grandma Hide" (*Hide Obā*), aged ninety yet with "a sparkle in her eyes like a young girl (*musume*)" from which the narrator "cannot escape" (p. 147). Here, Hiroshi reveals his purpose in bringing the two women together:

> In truth, Grandma Hide cannot speak (*kuchi ga kikemasen*). One day she suddenly became that way. It's been thirty odd years and Grandma Hide has not spoken a word. She was already unable to read and write, but now Grandma desperately wants to tell us something. (p. 147)

Wishing "by any means to recover Grandma's lost words," Hiroshi thus promises to his grandmother that the narrator will listen to her story (p. 149). However, as Hide's narrative and Hiroshi's apparent efforts to intercept it (*uketoru*) remain silent, the narrator's perplexity grows.

As the story reaches its climax Hiroshi finally speaks out, in words thickly accented with the Miyako dialect:

「我
バ
ンタガ、アタラサヌ 女
ミドゥンファ
 子
バ
、我ンヌパナスゆ、聞キトゥラシ、ス
ス
キトゥラシよー」

"I am an important girl. Please listen, please listen to my story" (p. 150)

Despite the strangeness of Hiroshi's sudden shift in language, the narrator is remarkably unperturbed by this speech for it replicates the "voice I remember from my dreams". As Hide's story begins to be told, however, the words strangle the narrator almost to the point of breaking her bones, causing her to shout out: 「オバァ、骨
ブニ
ヌ、折りッティう
ブ
ーサイガッ」. Thus, the narrator discovers that her own words have been "contaminated" (*osen sareta*) by the "dream-voice". As this contagion suggests that Hiroshi is no longer needed to mediate, the narrator begins to speak to Hide in these accented "dream-words", opening a space in which she might embrace Hide's own "stop-starting" (*togire togire*) voice that "carries in on the wind to tickle my ears… *futsu futsu futsu*" (p. 151).

As the fifth story of 'Kuja', "Figuru Winds" calls back through various tropes to the preceding narratives. The mimetic "*futsu futsu*" recalls the "inaudible voices" anticipated at the close of "Twilight Phantasms", while Hiroshi's "white, short-sleeved shirt" is reminiscent of the white t-shirt worn by the *shōjo* on Pingihira Hill. Indeed, Hiroshi's racial identity also connects him both to this "crossbreed" young girl and to Takaesu Maria, particularly in his desire to reclaim his hybrid identity on his own terms, even replicating the latter's language in the way he presents himself:

> Before your eyes, I am mixed-blood. Grandma's former lover was black,
> which makes me a quarter. But I was born in this town and raised by my
> Grandma—I'm no *Amerikā*. (p. 147)

If Hiroshi's multiracial body 'bridges' him to the other similar figures within the 'Kuja'

stories, then his ability to switch languages, between Japanese and Okinawan, and even

the dialect of Miyako, further inscribe this connection. Yet like Takaesu Maria's hybrid

tongues, the switches within Hiroshi's language are equally disruptive. For while the

narrator appears in awe of Hiroshi's surprisingly (to her mind) competent handling of

Japanese despite the colour of his skin, the phrase she uses—"*nihongo o futsū ni*

konasu"— could also be translated as "casually smashing up Japanese": a more sarcastic

reading arguably afforded by the fact that *futsū* here is written in *katakana*.[70] The

combination of Hiroshi's appearance and his fluency in Japanese already disrupts the

essentialist presumptions of linguistic and national identity. Thus, as the narrative

proceeds his voice becomes for the narrator increasingly associated with "his usual tone

in which his nationality was unclear" (*rei no kokuseki fumei no chōshi*) (p. 151).

Grandma Hide's silence initially appears in contrast to Hiroshi's polyphonic tongues that

invade the narrator's own speech. Just as her grandson's portrayal resonates with the

other mixed-race children of Kuja, Hide evokes the previous silent women of the town.

Her silence moreover appears inextricably tied to the specific history of the town:

despite the narrator's apparent amnesia, Hiroshi (who evidently knows the town better)

informs her that the "church-like" structure was built "around sixty years ago"; while

Hide has never uttered a word for "thirty-odd years". If the 'present day' of this text is

read to be contemporaneous with its publication, or at least set within the timeframe of

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[70] As should be clear by now, Sakiyama's frequent use of *katakana* calls into question the accepted
symbolic meanings of Japanese vocabulary. The effect of this on the reader might be likened to
quotation marks used to infer a sense of doubt or sarcastic tone with respect to the language, similar
to the added phrase 'so-called'.

the 'Kuja' series as it is established within "Invisible Town", then these markers point respectively to the Battle of Okinawa and the event of homeland reversion. Although "Figuru Winds" makes no explicit reference to either war or occupation, much less to the direct impact of either period on the town's people, the almost incidental mentioning of these timings and the narrator's casual remark that despite his race Hiroshi bears "no apparent connection to the military", reveal how these legacies have infiltrated the local landscape and mindset. Against this backdrop, Hide's silence appears to indicate 'unspeakable' traumas associated with this past.[71]

The tension of "Figuru Winds" thus derives from Hide's story 'as yet untold', and the inferred framing of the narrator as the unlikely recipient of that narrative. Indeed, before she is persuaded by the "orderly tone" of Hiroshi's request, the narrator dismisses his strange demand to "listen to a lost voice in order to revive that lost voice" as a "tautology" (p. 148). Hiroshi's willingness to assist his grandmother in transmitting the story she needs to tell contrasts with the antagonistic ways of the *shōjo* in "Pingihira Hill". However, while the *shōjo*'s proximity seems to block Pisara Anga's access to her own memory recall, for Hiroshi, there is an alternative danger, for while Hiroshi can hear Hide's "voice that does not become voice" perfectly, by being *too* close to her he can do no more than repeat it "parrot-fashion" (*ōmugaeshi*):

> Although I can trace her voice, I am unable to give it meaning, to interpret it, to transpose it into different words. It's not so much a matter of linguistic ability, but when I listen to Grandma's voice, I end up becoming her. And then, Grandma ends up becoming me. (p. 148)

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[71] The perceived "unspeakability" and "unrepresentability" of the traumatic event here is influenced by Cathy Caruth's readings of Freud against literary and cinematic representations in *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, narrative, and history* (Caruth, 1996). Although Caruth's argument has been developed since to accommodate the possibility of 'working through' (as in, for example, Kaplan, 2005), the connection it makes between trauma, silence and the demands of narrative are persuasive for an understanding both of this text by Sakiyama and commonalities it shares with the fiction presented in Chapter Two.

Clearly for Hiroshi, in order to revive Hide's voice it is not to enough to reproduce it mechanically; rather, the task requires a certain difference that only the narrator can provide. Indeed, the irony of repeating a silent voice "parrot-fashion" suggests only more silence; without some transformation that might mark Hide's voice as individual and unique, her story risks remaining as ethereal and transparent as the wind upon which it is carried.

As the narrator's task is predicated upon repeating the same voice/narrative while simultaneously altering it as a means of ensuring its survival, it recalls the notion of 'iterability' wherein every iteration also engenders an alteration, and which describes for Jacques Derrida the very essence of writing. In "Signature Event Context", Derrida defines iterability as that which "structures the mark of writing itself, no matter what particular type of writing is involved" (Derrida, 1972, p. 7). It is iterability that enables a text's survival since "a writing that is not structurally readable—iterable—beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing" (ibid.). To put it conversely, the iterable/readable text will remain even in the absence of its receiver. In Sakiyama's text, it is therefore the curious "manuscript" held by Hiroshi that infers the potential for transcribing Hide's narrative, yet while retaining this necessary difference. And, just as Derrida's work accommodates writing of any particular type, the manuscript's status as a text is emphasised by the description of its contents as "Grandma-letters" (*obā-moji*).

> Grandma couldn't read or write and so this is what you might call 'Grandma-letters', but perhaps it's just a load of gobbledygook. (p. 151)

The manuscript therefore recreates the intangible quality of Hide's silent voice by means of an invisible script that nonetheless introduces difference through its transcription into a new, equally unassimilable text. Through the conscious allusion to written script, the potential readability of Hide's story is assured. Yet as its contents are never directly

revealed within Sakiyama's fictional narrative, and may only amount to nonsense at any rate, Hiroshi's manuscript tests the very limits of the structure and nature of this text as writing.

The significance of written script ascribed within the narrative therefore recalls the title of "Figuru Winds", whose unique orthography resists attempts to pronounce, Romanise or define it.[72] At its close, the narrative adopts a more unsettling manoeuvre wherein Hiroshi reveals himself and Hide to be no more than characters awaiting to be inscribed by the narrator, whose "desire to write" Grandma Hide perceives:

> Me and Grandma are only what figments have crept into your thoughts: you, who desire a story. So me and Grandma are you. You are me, and Grandma is you, and that's why you're the only one who can decipher (*kaidoku*) this Grandma-script.
>   *Aah*, but don't look so confused. This is what Grandma wanted to tell you, because it's more important than anything else. (p. 151)

If the manuscript pushes against the boundaries of legibility, then this announcement of the narrator's true role as the full narrative's writer creates a context out of which the manuscript's contents might yet be unveiled. The positioning of Hide's narrative as something yet to be written repeats the recurrent theme of 'stories unborn' that paradoxically haunt Kuja simultaneously from its past and its future. By inscribing such a story here not through voice but through the motif of a physical text, the narrative moreover ensures the survival of Hide's story through its essential iterability. As Derrida has written elsewhere,

> A text lives only if it lives *on* [*sur-vit*], and it lives *on* only if it is *at once* translatable *and* untranslatable… Totally translatable, it disappears as a text, as writing, as a body of language [*langue*]. Totally untranslatable, even within what is believed to be one language, it dies immediately. (Derrida, 1979, p. 102)

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[72] Although Sakiyama's word choices favour ambiguity and the potential for multiple meanings, *figuru* here most likely derives from an Amami dialect word meaning "cold", as alluded to in the text's opening sentence that describes the "dry chill" (*hiyayaka ni kawaki*) of the wind blowing into the narrator's apartment (p. 140).

Within this complex yet distinctly readable text Hide's narrative quivers on these lines

between silence/audibility, absence/visibility, translatability/untranslatability, life/death.

Although the narrator herself appears not to recall her fictional creation, as she is called

(back) to Hide's text she confirms its iterability through her new position as the reader

and decoder (*kaidoku*) of that seemingly indecipherable text.

The particular narrative of "Figuru Winds" therefore stands out against the other 'Kuja'

stories, for it foregrounds the significance of text and writing amid a work so far centred

on matters of the voice. The problems of an invisible text and silent narrative here

foreshadow the textual analysis of Yi Yang-ji's *Yuhi* in Chapter Two. Within 'Kuja', the

appearance of the text—both its emergence and its physical look—further builds up the

tension of this narrative series, reintegrating concerns of literary intertextuality and

restoring the question of sight from which Ore's arrival into the abyss departed.

1.9 The voice of accusation: "What Shadows Stand in the Midday Moon"

Repeating a now familiar pattern, "What Shadows Stand in the Midday Moon" (hereafter

"Midday Moon") opens with a narrator being pulled through a dark dreamscape before

awakening to an August night in the town. Posters protest the destruction of the coastal

areas and demand the protection of the coral reef below.[73] In the absence of shouting

protesters, these written words (*kotoba-tachi*) adorning pylons and notice boards

themselves carry the traces of that vocality as they emerge "stammering… as though

spat out from a dried up throat that has screamed out endlessly for so long" (p. 198).

Leaving those words that have "grown polluted in mist, shattered all around, twisted,

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[73] These are both clear allusions to very contemporary debates surrounding the US military's desire to build a large helipad facility at the northern coastal spot of Henoko, and ensuing campaigns against this further expansion especially on the grounds of safety for Okinawan civilians and environmental damage (particularly the destruction of coral reefs that provide the natural habitat for the indigenous dugong).

turned over" behind, the narrator crawls up onto a "tetrapod" block (a breakwater-style

fixture found around Okinawan coastlines) from where he senses something grate

(*zaratsuki*) against his field of vision as the "wall of my memories sounded out (*sawaida*)"

(p. 198). Named only as *watashi*, this narrator is a "senile man in the early years of old

age who appears to have entered the domain of wandering at night", an insomniac

condition that has positioned him moreover on the "verge (*kyōchi*) of madness" (p.199;

p. 198).

Within this precarious state of mind, the narrator is suddenly called by "Yuki's narrative

(*katari*)" that "confuses now with then, then with now".

> *Hā*, you've done well to keep that dirty body alive, *na*? *Haya haya*,
> unthinkable *sa*, unbelievable *sa*, that even though you'd do such a thing as
> that and *stiiiill* you're up for holding onto the frivolous thread of life,
> unthinkable *sa*, unbelievable *sa*, that you'd so such a thing as that, with your
> face as though it never even happened (p. 199).

The voice belongs to Nikawadori Yuki, whose name represents "a proper noun that had

been engrained into my memory, and was now floating up as though to assault me" (p.

199). As Yuki's voice grows increasingly critical of the apparent injustice whereby

watashi has "hurt and killed people yet alone managed to survive", she warns that "I'll

never forgive you (*yurusandō*), for *what* you did to me" (ibid.). However, despite Yuki's

unflinching accusations, *watashi* claims not to remember, his "madman" (*purimun*)

image providing an apparently convenient cover from which to question how this name

and voice are connected to him (ibid.).

Within the "fragments" of his memory, *watashi* recalls meeting Yuki as a skinny child

being dragged along while bearing a three-stringed *sanshin* on her back. A famous singer

and *sanshin* performer, Yuki was blind. As such, she conjures conspicuous overtones with

Shunkin, the heroine of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's 1933 story, *Shunkinshō* ("A Portrait of

Shunkin"), who having lost her sight in childhood becomes a masterful shamisen player

and teacher.[74] Tanizaki's canonical work centres around this character, portraying the

rise of Shunkin's talents and reputation, and centring in particular upon her relationship

with Sasuke, Shunkin's pupil and servant who becomes her lifelong carer, sexual partner,

and even successor after mastering the *shamisen* himself. Sasuke's dedication to Shunkin

and her ruthless treatment in response betrays the sado-masochistic nuances that

characterise this relationship between student and master, and that are extant

throughout Tanizaki's writing. The epitome of this comes within the novel's climactic

scene, in which an intruder breaks into Shunkin's room one night and pours a kettle of

boiling water over her face. To avoid witnessing the extent of her scars and

disfigurement, Sasuke pierces the pupils of both of his eyes with a needle, following

Shunkin into blindness. At least, this is the preferred account offered by the text's

anonymous narrator, who builds his story around excerpts of a volume entitled *The Life*

of Mozuya Shunkin and the differing recollections of the couple's former servant who

now tends to their graves in her old age.

"Shunkin" is therefore a fictional text told after both central protagonists have died in

the guise of a historical account. As a narrative built around multiple perspectives and

ambiguous portrayals, Tanizaki's story therefore evidently carries greater intertextual

significance for reading "Midday Moon" than the similarity between Shunkin and Yuki

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[74] "A Portrait of Shunkin" provides an unexpected yet significant intertext for a number of fictional
works discussed in this thesis. The absence of Shunkin's own voice foreshadows the dominant
narrative device of Yi's *Yuhi* (discussed in Chapter Two) whose eponymous protagonist remains always
already outside of her text, her story told only through the recollections of her two Korean hosts.
Most striking of all, Sasuke's act of self-blinding haunts the climax of Tawada's *The Travelling Naked
Eye* wherein the protagonist suggests that she should poke out her own eyes with the second hand of
a clock (see Chapter Three).

alone.[75] Yet unlike Shunkin, who is the "dazzlingly fair" daughter of a "respected family" (Tanizaki, 1996), Yuki is the offspring of a mother who was raped by a Japanese army deserter while seeking shelter from the war in one of the island's caves.[76] Like the other children of the base town, the illegitimate circumstances of Yuki's birth force her into a position wherein she simultaneously belongs yet remains other; a position reinforced by the "mother-*like* figure" (*hahaoya rashiki mono*) (p.200, emphasis mine) who escorts her between performances. However, whereas the 'difference' of Kuja's narrators elsewhere converges in their multiraciality, Yuki's is articulated through her disability.

From the memories into which *watashi* is drawn emerge two scenes that "have been connected by the fact of their not being connected" (p.201). In the first, *watashi* recalls walking home from an event held inside the military base and observing the soldiers "delirious" with the temporary freedom of being released from duty (ibid.), before calling into one of the town's bars. There, his drinking is interrupted by the sound of the *sanshin* and a voice that seems to "flow in from the darkness of a distant land" (p. 200). It is seven or eight years since he first heard Yuki sing, yet *watashi* instantly recognises "Yuki's song" and runs through the streets to find her. When his search comes to no avail, *watashi* fears that it was all a mere hallucination (p. 202). In the second memory, *watashi* has ended up alone by the sea, ruing the fate that has forced him to forego university and seek employment within the military base. As night falls, he hears raised voices and a scream that suggests some "ghastly sight", yet his curiosity is soon oppressed by his wish not to become involved. *Watashi* knows about the "daily" (*nichijō*

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[75] This point might be emphasised by reference to Stephen Dodd's critical discussion of the ways in which "A Portrait of Shunkin" highlights the constructed and intertextual processes through which both literary and history are written, and blurs the line between the two (Dodd, 2012). A similar attitude that extends towards an accusation of the unreliability of historical metanarratives is evident throughout the 'Kuja' stories, and indeed all of the works discussed in this thesis.

[76] All references and direct citations of Tanizaki's story in this thesis are taken from Howard Hibbett's English translation (Tanizaki, 1996).

sahan) occurrences of rape that go unreported to the MP, yet as a base employee reliant upon salaries provided by the *Amerikā*, he also knows that he cannot speak out against these injustices. Despite his refusal to "become a witness to such a crime" (p. 205), *watashi* sees a "white man" emerging from the thicket. When a second figure enters his view, *watashi* once more "turns his eyes to look in an unrelated (*aranu*) direction", justifying himself by the thoughts that there is "no proof that anything shady took place, much less that that shadowy figure was Yuki" (p. 205-6).

While *watashi* shies from connecting the excitable soldiers who are free to run wild off-base with the rape he inadvertently witnesses from a distance, Yuki's voice begins a narrative (*katari*) that "strikes into [his] chest" (p. 206). At *watashi*'s behest Yuki had entered a music contest that day. However, despite his promise to accompany Yuki to the venue, *watashi* had kept her waiting until the contest was surely over, leaving her with a pain that had remained unspeakable until now.

> You wanted to get rid of a girl like me. That was the *deeeep* reason you urged me to enter the 'contest', and that fact, I, without doubt, knew it, back then....*ha...hi, puo, porrr...popopopopo*....(p. 209)

As Yuki finally vocalises the agony that she has carried for so long, her voice fragments until it has "ceased to become words". Yet amid strings of strange sounds, rhythmic syllables and an endless scream, Yuki's polyphonic "*duchuimuni*" continues (p. 210). In a bid to stop the pain that Yuki's voice incites within him, *watashi* demands Yuki to tell him what he did to her that was so unforgiveable. Ultimately, despite his pleas for Yuki to reveal herself, like Pisara Anga *watashi* realises that he has failed when Yuki's voice has disappeared.

> From the edges of the *duchuimuni* that recklessly spilled over, memories are swallowed up in undulating waves. My past flows away in the water. I disappear. All that remains is the act of listening to Yuki's story. (212)

Having made the promise to listen to Yuki's now silent story and recount every detail of his own actions towards her, *watashi* builds a raft and rows out into the sea.

Like "Pingihira Hill", "Midday Moon" hangs upon questions of relationality and responsibility. As Yuki's stories find their voice, *watashi* claims their relation to him to be an "unsolvable mystery" (p. 206). However his reliability is undermined by his explicit resistance against connecting himself to Yuki's past, and the painful "lump" (*katamari*) brought upon by Yuki's voice that plagues his chest as an apparent symptom of guilt. Moreover, when *watashi*'s frustration at Yuki's refusal to explain leads him to ask of her, "supposing that it was you I saw in the shadows of the *adan* and I fled, what connection has that to what I did to you?" (p. 206), his denial of any involvement paradoxically seems to incriminate him. This potential accountability is not limited to his running away from Yuki and leaving her vulnerable to attack—which, crucially, is only inferred by *watashi* and never explicitly narrated by Yuki. Rather, in the oblique suggestion of "what I did to you", *watashi* unwittingly opens the possibility that it is he who took advantage of the girl's blindness and attacked her himself.

Ultimately, the relation between Yuki, *watashi*, and what he may have witnessed from the shoreline remain ambiguous. Yuki's voice articulates neither *watashi*'s specific crime nor what happened to her while she waited. Rather, as in the rest of Kuja, her story is only inferred through *watashi*'s memory fragments and the gaps between these narrative juxtapositions. However, if the shift from 'narrative as continuity' to 'narrative as gap' indicates a strategy that defines the entire 'Kuja' series, then the move towards inversion is particularly stark in "Midday Moon". Thus as the town (*machi*) upturns binaries of sun/moon and night/day as a place where "the moon shines brightly... like

the midday sun" (p.199), Yuki's polyphonic narrative confuses past/present, and most

crucially, blindness/seeing. For "Midday Moon" hangs upon two distinct problems of

sight: firstly, Yuki's actual blindness; and secondly, *watashi*'s decision to turn a blind eye

from the crime he witnessed. Accordingly, the narrativisation of *watashi*'s responsibility

and his relatedness to Yuki are inextricable from these questions of vision and visibility.

In his struggle both to uncover and suppress his memories, *watashi* is unable to shake off

Yuki's gaze. Indeed, in recalling their first meeting it is not Yuki the person, but her eyes,

that stand out:

> Yuki's eyes.
> The deeply sunken double-eyelids were sat in the middle of her gaunt,
> dark-skinned face. Emanating a wispy blue hue, they bore blind pupils that
> shut away within them a perpetually tense, condensed set of emotions.
> Having suspended their focal point mid-air those elusive eyes would cause
> the heart of anyone they met to stop cold. (p. 206)

With their gaze deferred like her untold narrative Yuki's "elusive" eyes epitomise her

intangible and multi-layered ambiguity, quite literally in the "two layers" (*futae*) of her

eyelids. Yet this uncertainty extends to the functioning of these eyes, for despite

watashi's insistence to the contrary, Yuki's own narrative recollection of listening to

watashi's inept excuse-making after arriving late betrays the idea that she does indeed

see:

> Nowhere did I have the strength to voice how I felt, and so I kept quiet.
> Silenced, I simply watched (*miteita*) the feigned innocent, contemptuous look
> on your face. (p. 209)

Prefiguring themes upon which the reading of Tawada Yōko's *The Travelling Naked Eye* is

centred in Chapter Three, Sakiyama's text highlights the potential for deconstructing the

act of (not) seeing. For while *watashi*'s eyes appear to function healthily, his refusal to

see what lies in front of him reduces him to a somewhat blinkered being. In a reversal of

seeing/blind, onlooker/looked upon already enacted in the citation above, Yuki

noticeably never reveals herself. Despite watashi's requests for Yuki to "show yourself" (*sugata o misete kure*), she remains forever out of sight (p. 212). Under the 'midday moon', it is not light that illuminates the past but the shadows cast within it.

"Midday Moon" thus follows the 'Kuja' series thus far by expanding on its established trajectory, from a preoccupation with aural registers of voice and silence to matters of readability of the physical text and ultimately visuality. Within this development, it continues to inscribe notions of inversion, (dis)connection, and the polyphonic narrative whose telling is always deferred and disrupted, and which emerges from the unassimilable gaps within the text rather than any form of narrative continuity. As the fifth of five individual stories embedded within the middle of the 'Kuja' series, "Midday Moon" also reaffirms how the inclusion of these separate works serves to replicate such formulations at the level of the series' overall structure. It is with the task of articulating this structure in mind that this thesis now moves into a discussion of 'Kuja's final text, which brings the series 'full circle' (well, almost) with a return to Ore and Takaesu Maria.

1.10 Translating the abyss: "Variations on a Kuja Fantasia"

After his absence from the central five narratives of Kuja, it is with the seventh, "Variations on a Kuja Fantasia" (hereafter "Variations") that Ore returns and the structure of the series is revealed. The Japanese word *hensō* usually refers to variations in a musical sense, and this story develops the previous narrative of "Monologue", which identifies itself as a "prelude" (*zensō*), (*"*Monologue*"*, p.89). As a continuation and adaptation of the first Kuja story discussed above, this seventh and final Kuja story is most distinctive as a work in and of translation. In "Variations" it is now Ore's seventh day in Kuja, inferring the six days—or six stories—that have passed. Ore recalls his arrival

in Kuja, but his wandering is no longer led by his photographic desire. Rather, he is resigned to his inability to capture his surroundings on film. As a result, the landscape is now fully alive and he is drawn "into the abyss that I cannot see… with the sense that something is calling me furtively out of the town's night" (p. 169-70). Then he remembers Takaesu Maria's "tumultuous monologue" and her voice whose "echoes have never disappeared" (p. 170). In those polyphonic echoes, Kuja begins to reveal itself to Ore as he stumbles upon tens of small grave-like mounds beneath the grass amid a scene that seems shut off from the rest of the world. As before, the mounds of earth look back at Ore whose wandering brings him to sense "a breath, that invites this here outsider (*yosomon*) into the memories of Kuja's darkness" (p. 171).

Thereupon Ore is distracted by the call of a small woman with green trousers, a lilac shirt, and a "strangely non-human air". In this new vision of Kuja, the black "mud-slime" and half-lit shadows of the preceding six stories have dissipated to allow interjections of colour into the scene. In his interaction with the woman, Ore realises that he is able to translate her "thickly accented words" but is not able to speak back in kind. Only when a younger redheaded girl arrives to assist the woman does a dialogue unfold to which Ore can listen. The women's gossip incites echoes of the previous stories in the redheaded girl's abandonment as a child. Caught within this mixture of accented tongues, the story takes an increasingly fantastical turn. Ore transforms into a banyan tree as he continues to listen, and the space slowly is taken over by a "*yunkui*": in Ore's interpretation, "their own ceremony for righting the world" (p. 181).[77] Words such as *shinka/shinakanuchā* (both terms denoting "friends" or "relations") and practices such as *utōrī* (a custom of toasting whereby the same cup is taken, refilled, then passed from one person to the

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[77] The *yunkui* is an actual ceremony held in Okinawa and Miyako that is intended to redress imbalance in the world and restore former prosperity (from the Japanese 世の乞い).

next) mark this sacred site with the dialect and cultural traditions of Miyako, despite the fact that Ore appears only to have travelled on foot.

Soon around twenty *shinka* have gathered yet the ceremony itself eludes Ore. As chants fill the air, Ore is "unable to translate the meanings of the words", catching only the nuances and sounds yet gradually he is accepted into the *shinakanuchā*'s circle. Amid mounting rhythms, the community members begin a collective frenetic dance (*sōbuyō kachā*), and Ore senses that the "*hoh-hoh-hoh* rhythm" enables a means with which the *shinka* can "cast out the grievances in their chests, or rather, in the wild dancing and raised voices they recover closed-off, oppressed memories" (p. 183). As Ore listens on, he moreover learns to translate once more: "Whispered like a game of word association, they were a series of private confessions. Some that reached my ears were translatable…" (*ore no mimi ni todoita, hon'yaku kanō na ikutsu ka…*) (p. 184). In this way, the narrative voice changes to represent the community's multiple confessions that shift, split, and overlap with one another resonating only in the struggle they share in recalling their traumatic memories of wartime atrocities, most prominently of the so-called 'mass suicides' (*shūdan jiketsu*) during the Battle of Okinawa.

While Maria's stories cast an accusatory finger at the US military, these new confessions play into contemporary debates over historical responsibility and remembrance. Many have expressed how inadequate the term "mass suicides" is to describe the great numbers of Okinawans who killed their own family members before taking their own lives by jumping off cliffs and procuring whatever weapons or implements they could find. These civilians were compelled and often directly ordered to do so, by Japanese forces who distributed grenades and spread the fear that capture by the Americans

would lead to rape, torture, and inevitable slaughter (Rabson, 2012, p. 130).[78] Caught

between not remembering and not wanting to remember, these memories narrate both

the voices of children who "died at the hands of my own father" and the painful

confessions of those who had to kill their own:

> …the truth is not that I saw them, but that it was I who played the ringleader
> that brought such a fate upon them, no other but I, in other words it was I
> who killed them, or was it? (pp. 186).

These lengthy confessions surge with a force and polyphony parallel to Maria's first

monologue, yet while that incites the experiences of Kuja's women in a base town under

occupation, the narratives that Ore now hears present more visceral accounts of the

island's history during wartime.

Yet when the voice heard by Ore follows his confession by asking "was I not forced?" his

memories moreover invoke the controversies of the history textbook debate wherein

right-wing revisionists have repeatedly sought to remove this culpability from Japanese

troops.[79] Just as history textbooks are dismissed in "Pingihira Hill" as being worthless in

the pursuit for the "truth" of history, the testimonies of the *shinka* conclude that "it

makes no difference, there is no meaning in such debate" (p. 185). Through his practice

of listening, in the end Ore learns to repeat the ceremonial dance himself, a process that

unlocks the way to recall his own forgotten past. Yet the ceremony is halted when a

"legion of bulldozers" tear into the ceremonial space and the community demand Ore to

act. Although he struggles to find the right language, his voice initially failing, in the text's

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[78] Rabson also highlights the influence of indoctrination through education that implored children from primary school to sacrifice themselves without question for the nation and emperor, a fact which recalls the issues raised in my introduction regarding the need to create a united and loyal populace through linguistic assimilation (Rabson, 2012, p. 130).

[79] Although ongoing in fact for approximately thirty years, this controversy reached a peak again during the time of Kuja's publication. In 2008, a very brief sentence was reinstated into textbooks that had been revised, to the effect that "Many local residents were driven to commit mass suicides because of the Japanese military's involvement". The issue has ignited further debate since with regards to how textbooks in Japan are written, revised, and approved (Asahi Shimbun Editorial from 27 December 2007, cited in Masaaki, 2008)

final sentence, Ore curls his body into "the shape of a bullet… opens his blocked throat, and lets rip" (*tsumatta mama no nodo o, haretsu saseta*) (p.189). On this silent scream the novel, and series, end.

At the end of "Variations" it appears that Ore's transformation that began with his entrance into the abyss of "Monologue" is complete. Although originally somewhat blinkered by his attempts to capture the landscape in a photograph, the new perspective afforded by his experience of listening to Takaesu Maria's polyphonic monologue allows him to see beneath that surface. No longer driven by a need to take photographs Ore is embraced by the landscape that once resisted his gaze, and by listening he is able to join in this new community's ritual dance. Through this process, the foreboding onomatopoeia of muddy dreams that once flowed underfoot is released as the hybrid tongues of ghostly narrators and stories from the tens of burial mounds in the ceremonial space. As a result, Ore learns to translate, ultimately allowing him to save the *shinka*'s sacred space from destruction. Temporally "Variations" thus appears as the 'after' to the 'before' of "Monologue", itself like a translation to its original. This ordering has prompted existing appraisals to read both the text and the series it closes as testaments to the significance of transmission and transmissibility be that in terms of "sympathetic relay" (*kōkan*) (Kina, 2008, 2011a), "delivery/receipt" (*haishin/jushin*) (Matsushita, 2010), or "reception/receptivity" (*kanju*) (Onaga, 2015). Although the variation in these terms is indicative of the different approaches taken by each textual reading, each suggests in its own way how one might read within Kuja the *passage* of voice and narrative.

For example, the idea of "sympathetic relay" evoked by Kina is taken from Noda

Kenichi's *Kōkan to hyōshō: Neichā raitingu to wa nani ka* (Sympathy and Representation:

What is Nature Writing?) (2003), as the "representation of an endless relation that

occurs between 'I' and the shadow that is inseparable from 'I'" (Kina, 2011a, p. 185). This

relay wherein binaries are dissolved, Kina suggests, can be seen in Kuja's texts that

endeavour to "foreground the shadows and channel language towards dismantling the

border between 'I' and my shadow" (ibid., p. 186). Such emphasis is appealing given the

ways in which the first and seventh Kuja stories mirror one another. Yet, how does the

notion of closing gaps sit with the structure of the 'Kuja series', wherein individual

narratives continually interject the bridging suggested by the pairing of the first and last

with their own narratives of silence and unspeakability? To recall Takemura's earlier

question, can we arbitrate the antagonisms of a text that derives precisely from the gaps

and fragmenting of body, voice, language, and narrative structure, while still leaving

open a space from which its objections to the collective authority of language might be

heard/read? (Takemura, 2012, p. 163). The matter is moreover gendered: while Kina

closes her discussion on the female body and voice called up by Kuja, both Matsushita's

focus upon the call of the transmission to be received and Onaga's emphasis upon Ore's

new-found ability to "translate" the songs of the *shinkanuchā* shift the onus onto Ore

and ultimately leave Maria in the dark. Given the verve with which Maria pushes forth

and disrupts her dialogical "monologue", what are the implications in demanding its

reception in this male Japanese tourist from the mainland?

In fact, returning to the structure of these texts, Ore's cry does not simply provide a

point of breakage as its finale, but enacts a folding-back onto the opening scene of

"Monologue" and the series as a whole by echoing the "war cry" that pervades Ore's

first nightmarish vision:

> A war cry (*otakebi*) erupting from a throat ripped open, like the distant roar
> of a crazed monster—*uaaawh, aaawh, cawcawh, aaw-eeh, aaaawh, aaw-*
> *eeh*. I feel a sensation as though someone, somewhere, is struggling to make
> their imprisoned whereabouts known, aimlessly facing the empty sky,
> tortuously flailing their snake-like arms. If I listen closely, there is a mournful
> sense of separation in that cry. A crazed spirit, searching for his corpse that
> one day suddenly vanished from sight, scratching and plucking at the dark,
> empty sky, screaming with the full might of his throat. (Sakiyama, 2006, pp.
> 84-85)

From the onset of the Kuja stories, therefore, Ore appears already dead, chasing his own

disembodied voice, which in turn "scratches and plucks" at the darkness in search of the

body to which it once belonged. In this distinctly uncanny move, Ore's cry seems to call

out to himself as an Other within, to the Others of his subconscious and of his past, thus

confirming the dismantling of his identity as a mainland Japanese male into a plural,

heterogeneous non-body wherein the alternative and repressed (hi)stories of Kuja are

set into motion. The paradox is therefore that Ore ends the narrative as he had already

begun it: as divided, doubled, fragmented, and conflicted as the visions and memories

that beckon him deeper into the abyss.

The figure of the 'abyss' is thus suggestive of the ways through which these seven

individual stories might form and resist their framing as a whole. As they spiral 'en

abyme', Kuja's narratives speak to and through one another without ever completing the

circle. Kuja thus names a text (and texts) whose reading cannot be resolved, but it is

precisely this irreconcilability that ensures their survival, what Derrida (1979) has called

"living on" as something that is neither opposite to nor equal to living, nor dying: the

ultimate "ghost story". Derrida's essay winds around two similarly (dis)connected texts,

"Living On" and "Borderlines" that flow in tandem across the page haunting one another

yet never touching. Like the dividing line that separates these texts, Ore's scream is a similar point of ambivalence. To take Derrida's term, Ore's scream "arrests" the closing scene of Kuja, pressing pause just in time to keep the bulldozers and the devastation that they seek at bay.[80] They may never retreat but, as long as his scream holds out, neither can they encroach closer—rather, as it calls back to the beginning of the series Ore's scream also ensures that the cycle will begin again, yet with the promise that with each renewal, a slightly different text (and reading) will be produced. The movement that this describes in poetry and writing that complicates itself by "inscribing itself on itself indefinitely" is precisely "an abyss" (Derrida, 1981, p. 265).

Hence, in Kuja, the 'abyss' that "rises up between two sceneries at odds with one another" describes not merely the landscape setting of these stories nor the language through which it is inscribed, but the structural interplay and network of conflicting narratives that thread through, supplement, and are revenant throughout them. For just as the last story emerges through what remains of Ore, following the journey and transformation initiated in the first, the opening narrative in turn has already been darkened by a shadowy remnant or trace of something yet to come that haunts uncannily, calling back upon Ore in his dream. That trace, I wish to argue, is Takaesu Maria.

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[80] In "Living On", Derrida stages a mutual reading of two apparently distant texts, Percy Bysshe Shelley's unfinished poem, *The Triumph of Life*, and Maurice Blanchot's novel, *L'arrêt de mort*. For Derrida, "survival and revenance" hang on the "*arrêt*" of Blanchot's title, which he reads as an arresting sentence (of death) that suspends itself on the ridge, *arrête*. It is this "*arrête* with two 'r's [that is] indeed that which orders the *arrêt* (stopping/decision), but the *ar(r)ête*, as a noun, is also that sharp dividing line, that angle of instability on which it is impossible to settle, to *s'arrêter*. Thus this dividing line functions also within the word and traces in it a line of vacillation" (Derrida, 1979, pp. 108-109).

Although Maria's performance has long since ended by the time that "Variations" begins, her spectral presence remains within Ore's psyche in the "echoes" of her monologue told in her distinctive "*manchā-speak*" (*manchā-go*), a language that as it recalls Hiroshi's description in "Figuru Winds" appears bound to the hybridity of her multiracial body. As this language "moves in constant flux from Japanese to Kuja-speak and back, mashing up (*guja guja*) each one as it goes" (p. 174), it evokes the continuum of transformations that language in translation undergoes according to "The Task of the Translator" (Benjamin, 2004). In Benjamin's essay, translation is a mode that does not aspire to absolute equivalence. Rather, the post-dated temporal and linguistic contexts in which translations are produced necessarily inscribe small differences onto the text, and it is these transformations that ensure the original's survival into its afterlife. The significance of such transformations is that both the language of the original and that of the translation are mutually imbricated. Nothing like the "sterile equation of two dead languages", translation names the literary form "charged with the special mission of watching over the maturing process of the original language and the birth pangs of its own" (Benjamin, 2004, p. 18). As it oversees this simultaneous interplay of different languages, translation therefore offers an albeit "somewhat provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages" (Benjamin, 2004, p. 19).

This is not to invoke translation as a means of passage between two equal points of stasis, however. Recalling its echo in Derrida's argument that every language is inherently foreign to itself (Derrida, 1998), Benjamin's essay opens up an approach towards translation that permits the gaps that would let those foreign elements breathe: one predicated on heterogeneity and contamination over homogeneity and purity (Niranjana, 1992, p. 120). As Ore's uncanny scream hangs across the edges of Kuja's texts

it enacts a doubling that echoes this disruptive mode of translation. As above, this does

not simply impart stasis. Between these two intersecting points the other stories of Kuja

intervene, constantly haunting and disrupting one another. The readings above reveal

how these texts do this not only through recurring figures of language, narrative, and

space, but across shifting temporalities that interweave private/individual and

public/communal memories with the questions of historical 'truth' and remembrance. As

a ceremony tied to the repeated regeneration of the *shinka* community in "Variations"

and their future survival, the *yunkui* seems to summarise the cyclical continuity that

defines the Kuja series. When Ore asks "whether the only means to burst out (*toppa*

suru) of this present moment of crisis was this peculiar ceremony they called *yunkui*", his

question resonates in the manner through which repressed memories disrupt and propel

this cycle.[81]

In "On the Concept of History", Benjamin asks: "Is there not an echo of those who have

been silenced in the voices to which we lend our ears today?" Through his journey

deeper into the abyss of Kuja, propelled by that initial encounter with the impassioned

performance by Takaesu Maria, Ore learns to open his ears to the voices of the dead that

have been ignored, not only by the larger historical narratives, but even by members of

their own community. And just as Benjamin warns that events of the past will come to

claim those of us living in our time, in Kuja, the literal and figurative ghosts of the past,

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[81] The notion of "translation as disruption" stems from Tejaswini Niranjana's postcolonial reading of Benjamin and Derrida (Niranjana, 1992). Delineating how translation "produces strategies of containment" that have led historically to asymmetry and inequality between peoples and languages in the colonial context, and to the construction of a knowable colonial subject, Niranjana's aim is to redeploy translation by "deconstructing it and reinscribing its potential as a strategy of resistance" (ibid., p. 6). Her project is not without criticism. As Rey Chow argues, the articulation of Niranjana's goal to rescue translation for the purposes of resistance while criticising its use by the culturally dominant in colonial situations imposes a judgment upon how it might be used correctly/incorrectly, which reduces translation to an idea (Chow, 1995, pp. 190-192). However, the idea of translation that takes its energy from inciting difference rather than sublating it has ostensible value for reading the textual practices of Sakiyama's writing, in particular as it connects linguistic movement with questions of colonial history.

once silenced and forgotten, have now returned to demand to be remembered in the present. As elaborated by Lisa Yoneyama, in her combined reading of Benjamin's work on history and on translation that builds on Niranjana Tejaswini's *Siting Translation: history, post-structuralism, and the colonial context* (Niranjana, 1992), the task of the translator as a critical historiographer might be defined as transferring the memories of the past to future generations, even when she has no direct experience of the event herself (Yoneyama, 2003). In both Benjamin's work and Sakiyama's 'Kuja' stories, this act of translation does not assume that the translated text will automatically reach a universal audience. However, remembering responsibly and lending an ear to the ghosts that echo around her is a duty to which the translator is perpetually called. For the community of Kuja, the *yunkui* provides a space in which the relations between the past and the present, the living and the dead are evoked and negotiated. Only with this balance restored can the community have a chance of continuing into the future, of which Ore's attempt to delay the bulldozers from tearing through the ceremonial space is symbolic.

In contrast to Ore's transformation, which sees him materialise from the possessor of an abstract and failing gaze into the physical landscape itself, Maria's multiracial corporeality all but gives way, reducing her by the time of her reappearance in "Variations" to the spectral echo of her earlier monologue. Were it not for the reminder of her name on the theatre flyer, it is as though she had never been there. Yet the impact of her language, a language always already in the flux of translating, in dialogue with others and with the past, fixes Ore into the position from which he might receive and retranslate her stories. As a translator engaged with the stories of history, Maria forces Ore to encounter the backdrop to Okinawa that is foreign to him. Yet as her language incites the dreams that awaken the echoes of his own flailing corpse, it also

exposes Ore to his own innate foreignness to himself. Furthermore, as Maria's polyphonic language is also an extension of her body and the space of the abyss itself, the stories it tells are also already a translation which she now entrusts to Ore, a generic Japanese man from the mainland.

The significance is that from the position of control that Maria has over her own narrative, she suspends Ore into the passive role of the receiver; in so doing, she forces her polyphonic narrative into his patriarchal tongue. In the early pages of "Monologue", Ore observes somewhat tellingly that "the most thought-provoking abyss in this world is the one that stands between two people". Inverting the effects of silencing and effacement that linguistic assimilation and colonial occupation have had on Okinawan voices, Maria uses Ore to blast open his own language in order to make her words, her body, her land, Kuja, potentially legible.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted a reading of the Kuja stories, a series of short narrative works that through complex textual and intertextual strategies, and a densely interwoven, spiralling structure test the limits of legibility. Set within a subverted Okinawan landscape situated on the 'abyss', these stories foreground spaces of irreconcilable heterogeneity: a condition that evokes the strategies of language and text articulated through Sakiyama's growing body of writing, which are likened to a form of linguistic terrorism. The individual stories of Kuja deploy this disruptive practice by inscribing deferrals and discrepancies into narratives, paradoxically, as a precondition of their potential to be heard. The resulting chorus of voices oscillate in the distinction between noise and silence, offering glimpses of small stories as yet untold, and raising

questions about the larger narratives that have dominated official understandings of Okinawa's wartime and occupation history.

Like the stories they narrate, the bodies of Kuja come in and out of focus through an uncanny spectrality. Ghosts and revenants, they silently haunt the peripheries of Sakiyama's texts until, with the disruptive potential of the terrorist-like body, they burst onto the scene to make their voices heard. The spectral inhabitants thus resonate with the "new mestiza" put forth in Gloria Anzaldúa's writings, their physical liminality and multiplicity reinforced through the skin colour that marks them as the mixed race offspring of the base town. Yet if Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* writes a space in which the new hybrid collective might reinstate their claim in the present to the languages and territories of their past, in Kuja the need for synthesis is less clearly defined. Rather, echoing Okinawa's history in which successive administrative changes are narrated in terms of changing "worlds", the new generation of Kuja seek their connection to the past and re-integration into history through symbols of the division and breakage that they embody.[82]

The overall structure of the Kuja series continues this theme, as it creates a cycle that is connected by a point of disconnection. Ore's visceral yet silent scream out of "a throat ripped open" embodies in a single image the entire series, namely as an aporia that simultaneously speaks nothing and yet unleashes each and every story that is inscribed

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[82] The image of the "world changing hands" is how in "Monologue" Maria describes the administrative change from US to Japanese rule, of which the reversal of road lanes that led to the death of her grandmother known colloquially as '730' was symbolic. The idea is perhaps best crystallised in a saying whose origins are unclear, cited within the song "*Jidai nu nagari*" ("The flow of time") by the traditional Okinawan singer Kadekaru Rinsho as follows: "*Tū nu yu kara yamatu nu yu, yamatu nu yu kara amerika yu, amerika yu kara yamatu nu yu; hiramasa kawataru, ku nu uchinā*" ("From the world of Tang China to the world of Japan; from the world of Japan to the world of America; from the world of America back to the world of Japan; it changes like a whirlwind, this Okinawa").

within Sakiyama's work. A generically named Japanese man, Ore's scream carries within it the shadow of his future self, a foreignness to which he is exposed by the words of Takaesu Maria. As the embodiment of Kuja's hybridity, Maria is herself a battleground upon which Kuja's competing narratives unfold. The 'strangeness' of her hybrid body suggests a destabilising potential and uncanny allure that exceeds the other figures of Kuja, while her narrative-in-translation terrorises the Japanese language by contaminating it with the hybrid tongues of her individual "Kuja-speak". Yet as this language tests the limits of comprehensibility and communicability, she imposes it upon Ore, forcing him to undergo a translation himself from outside onlooker to a participant within the Kuja scene. Kuja thus oscillates in the tension between these two figures, the specific female, and the generic male, both of whose echoes remain long after the narrative's close.

The motifs of terrorism and the terrorist-like body suggests the ways in which Kuja's polyphonic strategies lash out at the domination of hegemonic language and narrative. True to Sakiyama's strategy to disrupt her texts with wordless gaps and enunciations that defy written representation, there is no way of knowing what sound or language emerges from Ore's ripped open throat. As this point of rupture interplays with the gap out of which the abyss of Kuja rises, Ore's silent scream comes to signify the heterogeneous languages and polyphonic narratives of Kuja that even while defying representation, make their claims for the need to remember their ghosts, and the perils of closing one's ears. As stories that mutually incite each other through the linguistic desire to derail communication, Kuja presents a complex narrative of stories and figures in translation, much as the series itself.

As these narratives are structured around the image of the abyss, they hark back to the closing of Benjamin's essay in which meaning in translation "plunges from abyss to abyss until it threatens to become lost in the bottomless depths of language" (Benjamin, 2004, p. 23). As each Kuja story resincribes the same set of themes that define the work as a whole—of memory, of forgetting, of responsibility—that the message of each narrative is never fully transmitted but only hovers in the closing moments of deferral suggests a similar mise-en-abyme of translations. However, as these moments of deferral are crystallised in Ore's silent scream, their tension contradicts any accusation that their meaning might be about to unravel. Rather, each Kuja narrative hangs upon an arrest or 'hold' which, like the "stop"(*Halten*) within this process offered by Benjamin, suggests not the descent into meaningless but rather the preservation of some intrinsic significance that cannot be easily disregarded.[83] In fact, by resisting a homogenous language that might be easily appropriated, Maria's narrative and the Kuja stories it tells ensure their survival within this unspoken gap. This thesis now turns towards a fleshing out of the figure of silence and its echoes within an alternative language that is inscribed even violently upon the body, within the writing of Yi Yang-ji.

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[83] Although this thesis refers to Harry Zohn's translation of Benjamin's "Task of the Translator", which translates the noun *Halten* as a "stop", my awareness of the potential ambiguity of Benjamin's phrasing was raised by Sigrid Weigel's feminist reading in which she states her preference for the "'hold' which in English also includes the suggestion of 'holding' as 'arresting'" (recalling Derrida's essay cited above) and "the sense of 'having something to hold onto', which prevents the plunge into the abyss" (Weigel, 1996, p. 176).

Chapter Two: Silence, Violence and Absence in Yi Yang-ji's *Kazukime* and *Yuhi*

2.1 Introduction: The violence of 'not telling'

> It is in wanting to know that one is often deceived. I presage: then I seek to translate into words what is being written in fevers, in heartbeats, in luminous songs. I wonder what it is called.
> —Hélène Cixous, "From the Scene of the Unconscious to the Scene of History"

In a short essay, entitled "Entering the rhythm of *sanjo*" (Sanjo *no ritsudō no naka e*), Yi Yang-ji describes her personal response to the high-profile murder trial of Lee Deuk-hyun, a *zainichi* Korean who had been imprisoned for murder since 1955, and his ongoing incarceration. "*Sanjo*" references a rhythmic style of Korean music, attesting to the significance of the distinctive rhythms of traditional dance and music for Yi, and offering a subtle link to similar allusions in the title of Sakiyama's essay introduced in Chapter One, "*Shimakotoba de kachāshī*". Named after the delivery company where Lee had worked, the Marushō Case (*Marushō jiken*) had seen Lee charged with murder after what many supporters considered to be an unfair trial dictated by anti-Korean prejudices.[84] The Marushō Case affected Yi profoundly not least since Lee's trial had begun in the year of her birth, his sentence amounting to her own lifetime. *Sanjo* articulates the extent to which this injustice impacted her personally. For the Marushō Case was

> not a straightforward case of false accusation. Rather, the vortices of a jet-black power swallowed up an individual man and seized away the breadth of emotions, time, and various possibilities encapsulated in his way of life.

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[84] On 12th March 1955, the body of a female manager of the Marushō delivery company was discovered; she had been strangled to death. Lee Deuk-hyun and his colleague, Suzuki Kazuo, who both worked as drivers for the firm, were arrested. Lee protested his innocence throughout, yet despite a lack of definitive evidence and Suzuki's claims that he had been coerced into confessing by means of torture under interrogation, both suspects were found guilty of burglary and murder. Suzuki was given a custodial sentence of fifteen years, however Lee was labelled the principle offender and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Following Suzuki's release in 1974, Lee was eventually offered parole in 1977 but his demands for a retrial were rejected. Groups in both Japan and Korea, including the Marushō Case Rescue Movement (*Marushō jiken kyūen undō*) in which Yi participated, felt that the discrepancy in Suzuki and Lee's sentences belied an inherent prejudice against *zainichi* Koreans in the courts, and instigated various protests in support of Lee throughout the late 1960s.

> Through the Marushō Case, I was made aware of the 'enormity' of this Japanese power. (Yi, 1993a, p. 600)

In 1976, Yi was therefore moved to carry out a hunger strike in protest at Lee's continued imprisonment. She visited Lee in prison and even nursed him following his long-sought parole in 1977.

In its conclusion, "*Sanjo*" expresses regret that the general rhetoric of pro-*zainichi* campaigns including her own hunger strike ultimately lost sight of Lee's personal plight, and placed *zainichi* identity into a binary structure wherein self-definition was only possible in opposition to Japan (ibid., p. 592). Yi's account of these encounters and her responses bring *zainichi* issues into stark definition. In particular, the delicate tone of the essay infers the smallness of the individual—of the imprisoned Lee and the protesting Yi—against the enormity of national power. And yet, Yi's refusal of food also demonstrates an early desire to interrogate the limits of language by centring the body itself as a site of protest. The deployment of the body as an outlet for expression pre-empts the recourse of many of her characters towards music, dance, and self-harm as alternative modes of language.

This questioning of the failures of language, and the potential and perils for the gendered body that might counter them, resonates deeply within an essay by Lee Chonghwa (1998), entitled "*Tsubuyaki no seiji shisō*" ("The political thought of the murmur").[85] Lee's essay presents a feminist critique of the deep-seated notions that the

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[85] I am indebted to Andrew Mendoza for introducing me to Lee's work at the AJLS 2013 in Chicago. Lee is currently a Professor of Politics at Seikei University, Tokyo. Her foremost recent publications develop the concerns and postcolonial approach of *Tsubuyaki* to interrogate the politics and demands of telling within the social and cultural context of Asia. The essay cited here is one of six contained in a volume of the same name. See also: *Zanshō no oto: 'Ajia, seiji, āto' no mirai e*, Iwanami shoten, 2009, a volume edited by Lee that pays particular attention to artistic production in Okinawa; and *Motome no seijigaku: Kotoba, haimau shima*, Iwanami, 2004. The latter has just been translated into English by

colonies are female while considering the empire as unequivocally male, as proven by

the common narratives of rape and violence under ensuing military presences (both US

and Japanese) in Korea and Okinawa, the prevalence of domestic violence in postwar

society, and the enforced sexual slavery of Korean women by Japanese troops during the

Pacific War.[86] What these instances share is the imposition of silence from official,

patriarchal authority. Yet since Kim Hak-soon in 1991 became the first Korean woman to

testify publicly about her experiences in the military comfort stations of World War II,

scholars such as Yoshiko Nozaki (2005, n.p.) have shown how social demand has

increased for women in particular to come forward and tell their stories. How then, asks

Lee, might we be able to tell (*kataru*) our stories (*monogatari*) without deferring to a

language of binaries that situates the powerful against and above the oppressed? What

dynamics are at play when the prevalent structure demands as "proof" stories that are

shocking, provocative, or difficult for the speaker to tell? What is at risk in the act of

"telling"? What does it mean "not to tell" (Lee, 1998)?

As a means of resisting the compulsion felt by living people to relay our memories, Lee's

work envisages a language of "existential ambiguity" (*sonzaiteki ryōgisei*) predicated on

silence and alternative expressions of the body. Thus, she considers the power of silence

as an affirmative withholding of speech:

> However, there is the option of daring not to speak, or rather to have lived
> on without speaking, or else of continuing to live in the now-present without
> speaking a word.
>   Conversely speaking, through such a practice any given event, any given
> matter, could not fail to exist within the living person as a secret, and that
> leads to the ability to equate to the act of continuing to live. Herein lies the
> precarious place between telling and not telling. (Lee, 1998, n.p.)

Rebecca Jennison and Brett de Bary, under the title: Lee Chonghwa (ed.) (2016), *Still Hear the Wound*,
Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

[86] Lee also cites the perpetuation of prostitution through the employment of the mixed race children
of sex workers, an example that resonates with the Kuja Stories discussed in Chapter One.

Lee's own writing is playful and poetic, lacking page numbers and direct references to, or

quotations from, other theorists. However, within the sense of a "now-present"

(*imagen*) one finds the imprints of Benjamin's *Jetztzeit* and Derrida's concept of "living

on".[87] Like both of these theoretical predecessors, Lee advocates a way forward in which

something untranslatable, uniterable, remains; a way in which silence might lead to

preserving the sacredness of the secret. Preservation, that is to say, as an avoidance of

having one's stories appropriated or carried off elsewhere:

> Memories that cannot be told. Memories that cannot be historicised, that
> resist historicisation. Memories like fragments. Memories that persist, that
> are bound to the act of living of those who bear them. In other words,
> continuous life in the here-and-now embracing not a process of becoming
> proof, of becoming history, but the fragments of memories that cannot be
> historicised…

> In the afterwards of having told everything, everything disappears, or else it
> is lost again, or else conversely, there is release in the sense of a transference,
> of being released and transferred to a newer dimension (ibid.).

Echoing the 'death of the dead' that threatens Sakiyama's fictional landscapes, herein

lies the inherent risk of divulgence. On the one hand, one might be unburdened through

the act of telling, just as Freudian psychoanalysis proposes itself as the "talking cure".

However, the release is a two-way exchange. Memories, once told, are also uncoupled

from the speaker; as testimony and as proof they take their place in the public domain,

their value and meaning irreversibly changed.

For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the recourse of subaltern women towards bodily

violence (in that case, self-immolation) is famously told in terms of the urgency with

which to find a voice that might speak and be heard beyond their marginalised positions

(Spivak, 1988). However, for Lee—and as we shall see, for the protagonists of Yi's

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[87] The term 今現 (the term might alternatively be read *kongen*) is a non-standard compound
comprising the characters, 'now' and 'the present'. As such, it denotes more than simply 'now', and
may be more comparable to Benjamin's *Jetztzeit*, often translated into English as 'here-and-now' and
into Japanese as '*ima no toki*'.

fiction—silence is not simply aphasia; its significance is plural. It may also signify a conscious subjective desire not to speak, to remain inaudible, a challenge to those who listen, and moreover a desire to survive. As Trinh T. Minh-ha writes, the ambiguous nature of silence suggests it as an alternative language in itself that, as deployed by women, may even constitute a strategy of resistance:

> Within the context of women's speech silence has many faces… silence can only be subversive when it frees itself from the male-defined context of absence, lack, and fear as feminine territories. On the one hand, we face the danger of inscribing femininity as absence, as lack and blank in rejecting the importance of the act of enunciation. On the other hand, we understand the necessity to place women on the side of negativity and to work in undertones, for example, in our attempts at undermining patriarchal systems of values. Silence is so commonly set in opposition with speech. Silence as a will not to say or a will to unsay and as a language of its own has barely been explored. (Trinh, 1998, n.p.)

Trinh's stance is comparable to Lee's as she endorses difference as an ambiguous and potentially empowered state that "is not opposed to sameness, nor synonymous with separateness" (ibid.) If the testimonies of comfort women from the early 1990s was recognised as a means of "challenging normative historical views" (Nozaki, 2005), Trinh's words echo Lee's in allowing for an alternative structure in which the refusal to speak and the silence that replaces enunciation may themselves have the power to undermine the hegemony of patriarchal and imperial narratives. Such hegemony works at "levelling out differences", reducing humankind to a "simplicity of essences" and set of "dualistic oppositions" defined in "the master's terms" (Trinh, 1998, n.p.). Silence, therefore, becomes audible as a language unto itself and an alternative, heterogeneous form of address that, like Lee's existential ambiguity avoids, exceeds, and is irreducible to the hegemonic discourse of binary oppositions.

Especially in the case of the oppressed, silence becomes a means of avoiding having one's memories "summarised" (*yōyaku sarete shimai*) in Lee's terms, reduced to

"essentialisms" to borrow Trinh; that is to say, appropriated. Cixous's description echoes

such language when she terms silences as "voiceless rebellions" (Cixous & Clément, 2008,

p. 95). However, the strategy of silence comes with its own set of dangers, especially

because it risks being misheard as a lack of voice. The practices of telling and not telling

construct an impasse. Hence together, the desire to speak, the danger of speaking, and

the danger of not-speaking propel Lee to embrace the body as an alternative mode of

language to the voice.

> Memories that the body remembers but cannot tell, memories for which the
> desire to tell has been carried off. In either case sickness calls upon the body.
> The sense of despondency after telling under duress becomes a somatic
> sickness caused by self-awareness. That being said, the somatic sign that
> visits when the body refuses even the act of telling. (Lee, 1998)

The lyrical, elliptical ending to Lee's sentence inscribes the mode of writing that tapers

off into silence. Lee's evocation of a body language exempt of the rules of hegemonic

grammar is somewhat limited here, focusing exclusively on physical symptoms and

leaving other potential "somatic signs" hanging. Yet in their own terms, what Lee speaks

up for is not only the heterogeneity of silences but also the many vocalities of the body.

Such observations will become pertinent in this reading of certain fictional works by Yi

Yang-ji, whose female protagonists must likewise navigate from having their own speech

denied and distrusted (from both inside and out) towards more visceral and bodily forms

of expression and ultimately silence. Yi's writing of the body has garnered previous

attention, most notably in those works that feature scenes of frenzied dance as a

potentially liberating mode of expression not confined by the rules of national language.

This use of dance is reminiscent of certain of Sakiyama's earlier fiction also, yet the body

that appears most interesting for this approach to Yi's work is more problematic,

resisting the enjoyment of cultural heritage in favour of physical pain and harm.[88] The

themes of anguish and silence are precarious, especially within the case of *zainichi*

female characters whose voices have been noticeably absent, even violently erased from

hegemonic discourse. Yet departing from the work of Lee and Trinh above, this approach

asks whether such tropes may nonetheless reveal a more empowered and empowering

appraisal of these literary texts. A critical attention to silence within Yi's oeuvre also

serves as a reminder of the aporia left by her premature death, most palpable in the

fragments of her last novel which she left uncompleted, *Ishi no koe* ("Voices of Stone")

(Yi, 1993a).

This reintegration of the body into language as a means of making silences heard

resonates with the valorisation of semiotic female language and its revolutionary

potential evident in the writings of Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous. Crucial to both is

the figure of the hysteric and her many tongues, which Kristeva and especially Cixous

both revisit and reinscribe from the Freudian diagnosis of unresolved trauma, madness

and weakness. Although most commonly associated with Western psychoanalysis, by

tracing hysteria's theoretical development, critiques, and intertextual allusions, I

propose it as a valid critical means of multiple signification through which to reappraise

Yi's writing beyond the prevalent '*zainichi* female' paradigm, yet one that nonetheless

speaks to the specific themes, contexts, and imagery within her work.[89] Indeed, the

splitting and fragmentation of the hysterical body evokes an otherness that is always

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[88] Dance is another trope that binds especially the earlier writings of all three authors. In particular, there are clear parallels between the climactic portrayal of dance in Sakiyama's Akutagawa Prize-nominated *Shimagomoru* ('Island Enclosure') (*Bungakkai*, December 1990) and Yi's *Nabi taryon*; while the dancer protagonist of *Yōgisha no yakō ressha* ('Suspect on the Night Train') (2002) embodies the physical and spatial movement that underpins Tawada Yōko's 'exophonic' literature.

[89] While one cannot assume to what extent Yi engaged directly with such theory, some familiarity the term is evident in *Kazukime*, discussed next, and in the essay "Sanjo" which refers to the "hysterical voice" (*hisuterikku na koe*) of a former colleague at a traditional inn ("*Sanjo*", p. 594).

already underscored by the ethnic and linguistic hybridity of Yi's *zainichi* protagonists. However, in seeking to move beyond existing work focused solely on this ethnic difference, and in order to connect this reading to the other works discussed in this thesis, the hysteric's ability to revolutionise language through her body (Cixous, 1976; Cixous & Clément, 2008) mark her as a highly potent, heterogeneous, and thus significant model with which to explore the themes of gender, sexuality and language extant within Yi's fiction. Although critics have accused Cixous of biological essentialism in their respective works, it will become clear that hysteria as envisioned within Yi's fiction likewise resists any privileging of the female form.

In Chapter One, Sakiyama's portrayal of peripheral characters such as shamans, prostitutes, and mixed-race children, and the ghostly, liminal quality with which she shades these figures, has presented one expression of living in-between akin to Lee's "existential ambiguity". The revenant epitomises an existence between living and dying, departing and returning. The dualistic nature of the bilingual traveller/ translator in Tawada Yōko's fiction will present a further example in the next chapter. The two novels by Yi Yang-ji discussed in this chapter are also home to ghosts: of second-generation *zainichi* Korean women, a status that doubly locates them in the either/or, or neither/nor of existence. Unlike Kuja's ghosts who are wont to answer back in polyphonic choruses, however, the protagonists in these two works by Yi are always already in exile. Much less written than on the cusp of being written *out* of their narratives, these characters hover on the outskirts of their texts casting little more than uncertain, uncanny shadows. The resulting effect is an aporia violently opened up by absence and silence.

This chapter centres upon two of Yi's novels: *Kazukime* (1982), and *Yuhi* (1988). Although set six years apart, both works are notable for repeating a crucial device, namely the absence of the central protagonist. The discussion of Yi's novel, *Kazukime* focuses on the protagonist's demise through a series of self-destructive behaviours such as bulimic purging, self-harm, alcohol abuse, and finally suicide. Specifically, I propose a reading of the body/language of Yi's displaced heroine vis-à-vis a model of the hysteric. In line with Cixous's reinvigoration of the hysteric as an embodiment of "incompatible synthesis" (Cixous & Clément, 1996, p. 8), I read the viscerality of the body and its languages in *Kazukime* as a refusal and rejection of patriarchal norms through which the protagonist ensures her enunciation in history even in death. The unflinching materiality of the body as depicted in *Kazukime* contrasts starkly with the spectral absence of the protagonist of *Yuhi*, Yi's last completed novel. Denied a position within her story except in fleeting ghostly visions the eponymous protagonist, Yuhi, is presented (or absented?) through the memory of her voice and an unread manuscript alone. There are connections to be drawn between hysterical motifs in *Kazukime* and Yuhi's silences, her inability/refusal to speak Korean, her bilinguality, and her stammering. Yet there is an important contrast between the somatic symptoms portrayed in the former and the shift towards bodies of text in the latter. This chapter is therefore guided by questions of absence, silence, and violence, and the ways in which these central motifs incite one another in these two works of fiction: questions that my conclusion will attempt to relate back to the broader notion of translation.

2.2 *Kazukime*

> Then something different, not a word but pure pain, clear as water, an
> animal's at the moment the trap closes.
>
> —Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing*

> Anyone can swim, but the one who can drown is only she who knows that water has no form.
> The one who can drown is only she who knows that the body has no form.
> —Tawada Yōko, "*Kyōzō*" ("Reflections")[90]

Yi's mid-length novel *Kazukime* first appeared in the April issue of *Gunzō* in 1983, five months after her debut work, *Nabi taryon*, was published in the same magazine.[91] The story presents a young woman known throughout the text mainly as *kanojo* ('she'), but occasionally *onēsan* ('older sister') and *anoko* ('that girl'). *Kanojo* is a second-generation *zainichi* Korean. Since her mother's remarriage to a Japanese man, *kanojo* has lived with his family wherein her difference of bloodline and ethnicity create a source of tension: first, in the form of jealousy and resentment in *kanojo*'s stepsister, Keiko[92]; and, more alarmingly, in repeated instances of rape by her stepbrothers. Although *kanojo* is academically bright, school brings no salvation. As the novel opens, *kanojo* calculates that her class will soon reach the page in the social studies textbook featuring the word "Korea", a realisation that sends her into a debilitating spiral of paranoia and fear that her ethnicity might be publicly outed. After her plans to skip the lesson fall through, *kanojo* attends school but soon begins to feel nauseous. Excusing herself from the classroom she runs back home and collapses on the front porch of her house. As *kanojo* is brought back to consciousness by the incantations of a local priestess, this scene

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[90] The image of a girl in Tawada's poetic fable crouching down only for the ground beneath her to crumble and send her tumbling into a body of water uncannily reflects an early scene in *Kazukime*. As with the protagonist of *Kazukime*, the girl in "Reflections" ultimately drowns. The translation in this epigraph is mine. A full English translation of "Reflections" appears in Susan Bernofsky & Yumi Selden (trans.), *Where Europe begins* (New York: New Directions Pub), pp. 59-66.

[91] My full translation of *Kazukime* is included in Appendix 2 of this thesis.

[92] The reading of *kanojo*'s stepsister's name is actually unclear since the Japanese characters (景子) could be read either Keiko or Kyōko (there are other less common variants as well). While phonetic glosses are occasionally provided in such cases, I have found none in any of the versions of the novel or secondary material. Although Melissa Wender's reading (Wender, 2005) refers to "Kyōko", in a private correspondence she could not recall why. With Wender's encouragement this discussion therefore uses 'Keiko' as the reading with which I am most familiar.

merges into a second escape attempt, this time from her home, thus establishing their routine occurrence and the apparent instability of this young woman.

In the second chapter, the narrative jumps forward to Keiko who is clearing out the last belongings from her stepsister's apartment. Through Keiko's reflections, we learn how *kanojo* ran away from the family home on the day after her mother's funeral several years earlier, stealing with her a large amount of money from her stepfather's business. She had been just eighteen at the time, but in the scandal's fall-out, *kanojo*'s name became a "forbidden word" within the home and the two stepsisters became long estranged. It was the approach of Keiko's 'coming of age' ceremony—the traditional Japanese entrance into legal adulthood—that spurred her on to contact *kanojo*. After her telephone calls went unanswered Keiko gained entrance to her sister's apartment only to find *kanojo*'s body in the bathtub, apparently having committed suicide. As this backstory arrives at the present scene it is thus Keiko, burdened with memories of the cruelty and envy she felt towards her stepsister, who is charged with packing up *kanojo*'s apartment and wondering what happened to her during their lost years.

These two opening sections set into motion a pattern wherein the eight chapters that constitute the novel alternate their narrative focus between the two stepsisters. While each chapter is narrated in the third person, in the first, *kanojo*'s inner turmoil is recreated through non-linear temporal shifts between her home, classroom, and escape attempts; and through free indirect discourse, a narrative form that as Rey Chow highlights is itself "lingually plural" owing to the way that it alternates between

descriptions of her state focalised through third-person narration and interior

monologue.[93]

> Rambling fluidly, she lay immersed in a strange sensation that pressed upon her body from every angle. I am now, in the middle of the water… (p. 65)
>
> The grass sounded faintly against the tip of her nose. How much time could have passed?" (p. 66)

The successive 'odd-numbered' chapters follow in the same vein, depicting *kanojo*'s

bingeing and purging in response to parental quarrels at the dinner table and the

inappropriate advances of her maths teacher (chapter 3); revelations of her repeated

rape by both stepbrothers that result in pregnancy, and her mother's implied blind eye

to this fact (chapter 5); and finally, recollections of the last days of her mother's life in

the hospital that segue, via *kanojo's* graphic memories of giving sexual favours to men

for money, into the preparations for her own death (chapter 7).

While an undulating, ethereal quality characterises the many shifts of temporal order,

narrative focus, and background setting in these sections, the interpolating chapters

centred about Keiko offer a much more straightforward plotline. Transitions between

chapters emphasise this contrast, wherein the dreamlike imagery of *kanojo*'s psyche in

the past gives way to the grey mundanity of Keiko's present (and vice versa):

> There was a frog croaking from the sole of her sports shoe. Had it gone in when she fell into the muddy water, or had it gone in as she was walking through the rain? Gingerly she braved one more step. *Croak*, the sound resonated from beneath her foot. *Croak, croak*. Flying up in the air she hurriedly took off both shoes and hurled them into the road. But all that fell from the sports shoes was a trickle of water. The cosmos petals adorning her sports shoes spun around and around as they were left to roll across the gravel that lined the tracks.
>
> Chapter 2

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[93] Chow compares this linguistic plurality to Foucault's enoncé and, in a connection to Kuja's narratives, to polyphony and dialogism as described by Bakhtin (Chow, 2014, p.55).

> As she finished undoing the last clasp from the rail and bundled the curtains up into both arms, the heavy fabric cast up a cloud of dry dust. Huffily, Keiko held her breath and shoved the curtains into a black vinyl bin bag. The mountain of bin liners piled up in the front doorway looked like a gelatinous mass of rock twisting its stony surface and fanning out its base. (p. 67)

Having forged Keiko's place within the novel as the caretaker and focaliser of *kanojo*'s posthumous affairs, the alternate, even-numbered chapters then proceed along a more linear trajectory dictated by three telephone numbers that Keiko discovers in *kanojo*'s address book.[94] Keiko meets with the first two figures in turn: Ichirō Morimoto, *kanojo*'s ex-boyfriend, who describes a feisty young woman capable of initiating orgy-like scenes with his friends yet whose vulnerability leaves her prey to inconsolable fear and tendencies to self-harm (chapter 4); and Kayo, a former neighbour who grew increasingly concerned following *kanojo*'s confession of her abortion, her desire for a hysterectomy and, in the wake of *kanojo*'s leaving town, rumours of her prostitution (chapter 6). Although Keiko dials the third number, the novel closes when she hangs up the telephone just as the other receiver is picked up (chapter 8).

The multi-layered structure of *Kazukime* complicates any brief summary of its plot, while attesting to the equal significance and interdependence that both story and narrative organisation carry within the novel. In both of these interweaving threads, references to psychosomatic symptoms including bulimic purging, panic, and self-harm, abound. The resulting portrayal is that of a turbulent young woman struggling to deal with traumatic experiences of prejudice and abuse, apparently borne out of her Korean ethnicity and female gender. Yet if *kanojo* risks being read as a pathetic figure then the various narrative perspectives also reveal her to be powerfully defiant and resourceful, as the theft of her stepfather's business profits illustrate. As Morimoto recalls of an argument

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[94] In fact, the address book contains five decipherable numbers but while at the first number Keiko dials, "the voice on the tape could be heard saying that this number is no longer in use… the person at the second number hung up abruptly, insisting that there was nobody there by that name" (p. 35).

between *kanojo* and his friend, "she had a force that suggested she was addressing a challenge to something, as though she was trying to break through something" (p. 79). Other acts of rebellion—specifically her promiscuity and heavy drinking—are more troubling to appraise. However, juxtaposed with intimations of incestuous rape and abuse elsewhere in the novel, these actions incite questions of subjective agency vis-à-vis social expectations, especially with regards to *kanojo*'s Korean, female body. Mirroring the novel's structure, *kanojo* thus emerges as a character marked by profound depth, contradiction, and complexity.

And yet, any attempt to describe or 'grasp' *kanojo* is further forestalled by a number of gaps and interruptions throughout the text. For the oscillating shift between the eight distinct sections exposes a rupture between the novel's past and present and between the layered accounts of *kanojo* that surface through its multiple narrative levels that, crucially, do not include any direct narration from the protagonist herself. In other words, just as the varied narrative perspectives appear to build an image of *kanojo* as the central figure of the text, they reveal a painful aporia that results from the absence of that character's voice and the sense of unknowability therein. The story told through gaps folds back onto the reading of Kuja in Chapter One. Yet as it relates to the critical analysis below, one might also read *Kazukime* itself as a hysterical body marked by textual splitting and aphasic gaps. The interplay of absence and presence has already received attention as a significant literary device in writings by women. In the early pages of *Sexual/ Textual Politics*, Toril Moi writes of Virginia Woolf's fiction that the attendance to "*absence* as much as presence [as] the foundation of meaning" reveals "a deeply sceptical attitude to the male-humanist concept of an essential human identity" (Moi, 2002, p. 9). While the context in which Woolf was writing seems irrecoverably

detached from that of Yi, it is notable that similar devices such as "playful shifts and changes of perspective" in Woolf's work likewise play out in *Kazukime* to similar effect. If Woolf's writing suggests that "the search for a unified individual self, gender identity or indeed 'textual identity' in the literary work must be seen as drastically reductive" (ibid., 10), then the displacement of *kanojo* through her deathly silence and the shifting narrative structure of *Kazukime* similarly resist presenting any vision of her based upon one facet of her identity.

Foreshadowing an effect of Yi's later novel, *Yuhi*, whose protagonist is exiled beyond the narrative space from the first page and to which the second half of this chapter will attend, the interlocking chapters of *Kazukime* cohere only long enough to build a precarious image of *kanojo* as a subject who, like a 'diving maiden' as the novel's title translates, repeatedly rises into and disappears from view. Although this continual movement ultimately makes *kanojo*, her past, and her motivations, infinitely difficult to ascertain and risks losing sight of her altogether, it also occludes any attempt to pin its protagonist down in essentialist terms. Through constant deferral, the novel's structural mechanism affords *kanojo* a radical heterogeneity seen recurrently as a powerful and prevalent strategy in the fiction of Sakiyama and Tawada. In short, *Kazukime* is a novel predicated on ambiguity and irreconcilability that attends as much to absence as it does to presence in the formation of individual and textual identity.

2.3 Shame, shamanism, hysteria

Melissa Wender's analysis of *Kazukime* in *Lamentations of History* centres around the overarching thematics of pain and loss in Yi's fiction (Wender, 2005). In many ways, the novel's structure emphasises these themes, which may be why Wender hears therein

the "voice of the dead" (ibid., p. 132). As a means of communicating with the other side, it seems fitting that Wender frames *kanojo*'s experience against a Korean shamanistic tradition, drawing on key themes from the novel including *kanojo*'s libido and her spiritual awakening that in turn is induced by the presence of a priestess. Like the *juri-gwa* prostitutes and mixed-race dwellers of Sakiyama's base towns, and travellers and translators in Tawada's fiction, the shaman may be deemed a peripheral figure, and like the shaman, the "hardships" that *kanojo* faces appear as "nearly a prerequisite" for her to undergo her transition (ibid., p. 139). Yet the belief in the shaman's privileged audiences with the gods also offers the promise to "elevate" *kanojo*, allowing Wender to venture a portrait in which she gains empowerment through her apparent epiphany (ibid., p. 134). Wender's approach reminds us of the need to remain attentive to the specific cultural background that informs Yi's fiction, yet as she readily concedes, the novel is entirely "set in Japan and lacks any direct reference to Korean music, dance, or shamanism" (ibid., p. 131). Wender's question of how to interpret Yi's manipulation of shamanism is then left open-ended. It would therefore appear that *Kazukime* resists a neat tying between *kanojo*'s *zainichi* identity and a particularly Korean cultural heritage, and thus exposes the limits of textual interpretations based on these presumed relations alone.

The alternative reading of *Kazukime* proposed here departs from broader themes of mental illness, trauma, and self-directed violence within the novel. Indeed as Wender notes, there are certain parallels in scientific analyses between the peculiar characteristics of shamanistic possession and psychiatric conditions (ibid., p. 138). The novel alludes to a similar connection when Morimoto likens *kanojo* to a priestess (*miko*) (p. 44) before recalling his friend's identification of her "tick, like a symptom typical of

hysteria" (*hisuterīshō tokuyū no shōjō rashiku, chikku*) (p. 48). A second medical label is then advanced in the penultimate chapter when following a long existential debate with *kanojo* the female doctor attending her dying mother asks pointedly, "Aren't you a little neurotic?" (*Anata wa, sukoshi noirōze nan ja nai?*) (p. 92). This reference to neurosis appears to reiterate hysteria as an alternative trope against which to read *Kazukime*.[95] Underlying motifs within the plot seem to encourage such an experiment. Given hysteria's perceived relation to the instability of the womb, for example, it is remarkable that *kanojo*'s is led to the extreme of choosing between undergoing a full hysterectomy and taking her own life. There is a further womb-related motif in her mother's illness, uterine cancer (*shikyūgan*).

Kanojo's portrayal in *Kazukime* conjures myriad references to neurotic and psychosomatic symptoms, including bulimic purging, excessive alcoholic consumption, fainting, panic, fear, hallucinations, and self-harm. As Ritchie Robertson contends, "[p]sychosomatic illness could be a way of internalising the oppressive restrictions of the bourgeois household, but also a means of manipulating the rest of the household" (Freud, 2013, p. xvi). Certainly, *kanojo* finds herself trapped within a conventional Japanese family to which her Korean mother is at pains to conform, and as the illegitimate Korean daughter of the Japanese state (*kokka*, literally 'national household'). Through reckless acts like stealing her stepfather's money and her refusal to act the 'good woman', *kanojo*'s instability clearly shakes the foundations of both her immediate household and the traditional gender roles ascribed within Japanese society of what Lee

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[95] Although strictly speaking, in Freud's terminology hysteria is but one form of "purely neurasthenic" neuroses, hence the two are not interchangeable, I draw this analogy between the two in line with my approach here that is one of textual analysis rather than psychoanalysis (Freud & Breuer, 2004, p. 80)

Chonghwa critically calls the *ii onna* ("good woman") (Lee, 1998).[96] Though troubled,

these acts may be read similarly to *kanojo*'s displays of sexual desire, and the feisty

retorts that constitute a forceful "challenge" to Morimoto's mind. Hysterical motifs in

Kazukime thus appear to constitute a means of disrupting and resisting the private and

national family structure through *kanojo*'s inscription of her suffering onto her body.

The novel also provides various incidents that might be interpreted as triggers for

kanojo's sickness: incestuous rape; her teacher's untoward advances; her stepfather's

heavy drinking that would result in domestic violence against her mother; and pervading

it all, the shame of being other. Wender's work suggests the implications of Korean

history and identity within the *zainichi* context as a plausible genesis for *kanojo*'s

psychosomatic symptoms (Wender, 2005, p. 134). To be sure, *kanojo*'s repeated rape by

her stepbrothers reads in parallel to the history of Korean comfort women within Japan's

wartime history; a point emphasised as *kanojo* feels resigned to the role in order to

protect her younger, ethnically Japanese stepsister, Keiko.[97] The psychoanalytical

temptation undeniably arises, therefore, to draw causal relations between these

traumatic events and the symptoms with which *kanojo* presents.[98] However, the

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[96] For Lee, the 'good woman' is dutiful and compliant within the expectations of patriarchal society. The epitome is perhaps the *ryōsai kenbo* ('good wife, wise mother'), an idealised figure of maternal domesticity whose image continues to linger since its promotion in the early modernising decades of the Meiji period (1868-1912).

[97] *Kazukime* never confronts directly the comfort women issue. However, this thematic overlap arguably deserves greater attention than the scope of this research affords. While the novel predates Kim Hak-sun's public testimonial in 1991, survivor stories appeared during the 1970s and early 1980s in both Japan and Korea. These included Noh Su-Bok's account, released through the Korean media in 1982, the year before *Kazukime* was published and the year of Yi's first visit to the country. See: Bang-Soon L. Yoon (2010). In related studies, Melissa Wender has explored the role of comfort women in the writings of Yu Miri. See "Private Traumas, Public Therapies" in Wender (2005, pp. 157-188).

[98] There are uncanny moments of intertextuality between *Kazukime* and the studies of hysteria made by Freud and Breuer. Freud's account of Frau Emmy von N. makes numerous references to the bath, as both a cause of discomfort and a prescribed treatment (Freud, S. and Breuer, J. (2004), *Studies on hysteria*, p.58; p.58). Both narratives also reference a curious amphibian presence: after falling into a river, *kanojo* becomes paralysed with the fear that a squeak in her shoe is caused by a frog that has become trapped inside (it turns out to be no more than water); Frau Emmy von N. recalled under hypnosis having been rendered mute for hours after discovering a toad beneath a stone (ibid., p.57).

disrupted narrative flow complicates any attempt to draw direct correlations between the two.

In *Hystories: Epidemics and Modern Culture*, Elaine Showalter traces hysteria's various manifestations from the cases articulated by Freud and Breuer to widespread epidemics among which she includes medieval witch trials and contemporary phenomena such as PTSD and alien abductions (Showalter, 1998).[99] Like the condition it seeks to define, Showalter reveals the "histories of hysterias" to be "plural rather than singular, cyclical rather than linear […] scatters of occurrences" (ibid.: 15). Throughout these histories, hysteria has been embroiled with the question of gender: initially deriving from the Greek word for the 'womb' (*hyster*), the term became established in describing various ailments that presented themselves in women, such as loss of voice, dizziness, and physical pain, whose cause was ascribed to the movement of the uterus within the female body (Bowlby, 2004, p. xx). The psychoanalytic treatment of hysteria gave rise to the equation of the female with something devious and neurotic, in direct opposition to the regular and Oedipal male who was to become the leading subject within Freud's work (ibid., p. xix). Of course, hysteria is not a solely female malaise: Freud's own writings allow for the presence of male hysterics, while Showalter's work has latterly incorporated conditions most typically ascribed to men such as Gulf War Syndrome into her 'hystorical' narrative. Nevertheless, these multivalent interpretations notwithstanding, the public image of hysteria has never been fully uncoupled from the Freudian perception of femininity as subordinate and not quite fully formed with respect to men (Bowlby, 2004, p. xx).

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[99] Showalter's work faced criticism by those who felt that connecting the multifarious phenomena it covers potentially undermined the traits specific to distinct medical and psychological conditions, especially in the cases of CFS and Gulf War Syndrome. Showalter addresses these criticisms in the preface to the edition to the paperback version printed in 1998.

In the "Preliminary Statement" to their Studies of Hysteria, Freud and Breuer set out the

"psychical mechanism" that defines hysterical phenomena. Most immediately the

product of "[a]ny experience which gives rise to the distressing affects of fright, anxiety,

shame or psychical pain" (Freud & Breuer, 2004, p. 9), hysteria results when the subject

is unable to reconcile the effects of this traumatic event by pushing all ideas related to it

out of her conscious thought. However, this does not destroy the traumatic memory.

Rather, kept within her unconscious mind, these ideas have the latent potential to

inscribe themselves upon her body. Internalised like a foreign body, they split the

subject's psyche into two: the unconscious memory of the past, intolerable event; and

the normal, waking conscious present wherein the symptom manifests itself. There are

thus three interlocking processes at work: first, the conversion of the traumatic event

from a mental memory into one or more psychosomatic symptoms; second, the "jutting"

into waking life of ideas exiled into the unconscious (ibid.); and third, the re-emergence

of a repressed past into the hysteric's present.

If these three conversions within hysteria suggest movements akin to translation, it is

notable that Freud's treatment was predicated on the notion that traumatic memories

could be abreacted from the patient's psyche through hypnosis, and most significantly,

the act of telling: in his words, "to drain away through speech" (Freud & Breuer, 2004, p.

19). By talking, the patient is granted access to the earlier memory that lies at the root of

her symptoms' cause. Once unlocked, the specific traumatic image or event then

"crumbles" and blurs until it ultimately vanishes. Freud returns to the metaphor of

speech and its power to dissolve hysterical symptoms when he later writes, "[t]he

patient is, as it were, clearing [the traumatic memory] away by converting it into words"

(ibid., p.282). It is significant that Freud and Breuer privilege talking as the means for curing a condition frequently marked by aphasic and aphonic complaints including stammering, coughing, verbal clicks and ticks. Moreover, it draws attention to the eloquent transliteration of these sessions. Opening his infamous case notes on Dora, Freud wrote, "we must translate the language of dreams into a means of expression comprehensible in the terms we normally use to express thoughts" (Freud, 2013, p. 11).[100] Working to fill in the gaps and make the fragmentary and discontinuous appear coherent and compatible is thus a feature of Freud's approach both when treating and relaying hysterical narratives, even when his interpretations may belie Freud's own latent biases and even perversions.[101]

Among several contradictions within Freud's accounts, his approach appears to overlook and even correct an aspect of the hysterical conversion that he terms the "hysterical style of defence", wherein the splitting of consciousness is "deliberate and intentional, or at least it is often initiated by an act of volition" (Freud & Breuer, 2004, pp. 123-124). Through this defensive strategy, the hysteric seeks to suppress the traumatic memory, yet unable to banish it completely her symptoms begin. Yet while the Freudian stance saw the need to remedy this splitting, the case history of Fraulein Elisabeth von R. suggests a context in which it is in fact desired.

> [T]he patient put up a strong opposition to the attempt to produce an
> association between the separate psychical group and the remaining content
> of her consciousness, and when in spite of this they were brought together,

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[100] It should be pointed out that Freud did not see a susceptibility to hysterical symptoms as a sign of mental weakness, instead asserting the intelligence of his patients even as he undermined that intellectual capacity.

[101] Freud has been criticised for his insistence to impose his own interpretation of events, especially in his discussion of Dora. Freud's attribution of the cause of Dora's symptoms to the girl's sexual deviance and her manipulative ways, it is argued, belies his evident dislike of his patient, his motivation to repudiate blame from either of the dominant male figures–Dora's father and his friend, Herr K.–around her, and even his own erotic feelings towards her. Elaine Showalter pointedly summarises thus: "the narrative illustrates the doctor's hysteria rather than the patient's" (Showalter, *Hystories: hysterical epidemics and modern culture*, 1998: 85).

> she experienced great psychical pain. […] The move was that of defence, the reluctance on the part of the whole self to tolerate this group of ideas (ibid.: 169).

If psychical splitting enacts a hysterical defence, then a second takes place when the hysteric refuses to overcome this division. For Freud, the patient's apparent motivation is to spare herself from the emotional pains of rejoining herself to the "intolerable idea". Yet this refusal is equally intolerable for Freud. Considering Freud's therapeutic emphasis on talking, the hysteric must choose between having one's words and stories appropriated elsewhere or protecting her silent monologue amid the associated struggle of madness and pain. When considered along these lines, Freud's studies rephrase the overriding questions of this chapter: what does one risk in refusing to tell, and can there be a female language capable of resisting the efforts of men to summarise and synthesise?

Hysteria is therefore not intended here as a means with which to *diagnose kanojo*. Rather, it is foregrounded as a critical model against which we might read through numerous hysterical motifs—that is, the many metaphors and themes pertaining to the womb *and* neurosis—as they inscribe themes of instability, rupture and fragmentation that articulate her experiences of gendered, ethnic, and linguistic otherness. While the popular equation of hysteria to a particular female form of madness has historically provided a means with which to discredit women who speak out either in political protest or private testimony, hysteria was valorised among second-wave feminist intellectuals after 1970 as a potentially revolutionary *body language* against patriarchal oppression (Showalter, 1998, p. 9). Thus from its early endorsement as a condition that both arose from and gave birth to psychoanalysis, hysteria has evolved within various discourse from a debilitating disorder into an affirmative form of expression, and even as

a celebrated form of attack. As a result, the term today is laden with literary, metaphorical, and intertextual ties that in the case of *Kazukime*, enrich the text in the manner suggested here. Following the feminist intervention epitomised by *The Newly Born Woman* (Cixous & Clément, 2008) the hysteric offers a figure akin to the shaman that constitutes a paradox of structural oppression and scapegoating vis-à-vis the possible means to resist, reject and even escape that structure. Such a reading also makes way for an additional characteristic of the hysteric as a vessel through which the (hi)stories of the repressed might break forth. Given that the act of speaking, its perils and possibilities, are implicated in both of these strands, the hysterical figure also stands for two modes of translation: of past traumas into present symptoms; and unconscious ideas into the language of the body (and back).

2.4 Hysteria repeating

While traces of *kanojo*'s mental and physical anguish surface throughout *Kazukime*, it is through her former boyfriend's reminiscences in the fourth chapter of the novel where that agony is most viscerally depicted. Having been contacted by Keiko days earlier, Morimoto agrees to meet in a café and tell her about her sister. Although it is two years since they parted ways, the emotional impact of *kanojo*'s death upon Morimoto is apparent.

> Since I received your telephone call, all kinds of things like memories of the year we lived together, have come back to me with ferocious momentum, and although they flash up in an instant, they won't go away. Unable to vanish, they smoulder on, their tendrils like claws. (p. 76)

Despite his confession that "[to] tell you everything in order from the beginning is beyond my capabilities just now," Morimoto's voice commands the first-person narrative for the remainder of the chapter. As his torrent of memories ensues,

Morimoto's portrayal repeats the imagery of earlier scenes, such as *kanojo*'s binging.

While the description focalised through a teenaged *kanojo* in the preceding chapter

witnesses her "mechanically chew[ing] each mouthful of food only a few times then

hurriedly gulp[ing] it down" (p. 71), the scene recalled by Morimoto is more urgent and

raw: "she strained to cram the food into her mouth as though she were under threat,

coughing as she gobbled it down" (p. 79). If Morimoto's unflinching turn of phrase brings

a tension to bear between *kanojo*'s wilful persistence and physical discomfort, then his

subsequent memory of her self-harming wherein "[h]er calves and thighs were covered

with bruises, and the gauze and bandages on her wrists and chest were soaked in blood"

(p. 81), depicts more starkly this body as a locus of pain.

The graphic recollection of *kanojo*'s bleeding body resounds with the repeated

pronouncements that she makes to Morimoto, namely that "I can die any time…" (p. 80).

However, as the "tendrils" of his memory unfurl, her apparent vulnerability takes on

added signification. After bathing together, Morimoto discovers *kanojo* lying limply on

the bathroom tiles, her arms propped on the edge of the bathtub. Wrongly believing

that she has collapsed with the heat, Morimoto (to whom *kanojo* refers as 'Icchan', a

petname that shortens his given name, Ichirō) soon realises that a mild earth tremor has

triggered in *kanojo* a spiral of fear and paranoia linked to episodes of self-harm and

zainichi persecution.

> "Icchan, if another massive earthquake like the Great Kanto Earthquake
> strikes again, I suppose more Koreans will be slaughtered. Perhaps they'd be
> forced to say *ichien gojissen*, *jūen gojissen*, and be stabbed with bamboo
> spears. But I don't think that would happen next time. Things have changed
> in the world since then. Most of them can now pronounce words almost the
> same as the Japanese. Hey, Icchan, even if I was to be killed, would you say I
> was your lover and hug me tightly, and say that you would be together with,
> with me? No, next time we will definitely not be slaughtered. But in that case
> we'd be in a bind. You'd have to kill me. I'd make a run for it, and some crazy
> Japanese would chase after me brandishing a bamboo spear or a Japanese

sword. I'd be unable to outrun them, and thuck, they'd stab me in the back
and stab my chest and I'd thrash about covered in blood. Icchan, it hurts you
know, really… The other day, Icchan, you gripped hold of a sharpened kitchen
knife. It made my body overcome with a tingling excitement, it made me feel
just as I do when we are having sex. I came to realise why I have never liked
cooking. I'm frightened by it, and I couldn't bear that tingling sensation.
That's why I tried to cut my wrists and chest with the kitchen knife. It hurt.
And the blood, it really spewed out. I wanted to see what would happen if I
plunged the blade in, but I grew scared when I imagined that even more
blood would gush forth … This time, I tried hitting my legs with a hammer.
That hurt too. You know, Icchan, I could be massacred, but then, what would
happen, if they didn't kill me, would I be Japanese? But really it's so painful,
you know, with all that blood pouring out."

    She shrunk her body out of terror and suddenly clenched her fists tightly,
all the while repeating this wild rambling. (pp. 81-2)

If the ability to die appears on the one hand to describe the apparent recurrence of

kanojo's suicidal tendencies and her conviction towards carrying them out, then the

unpredictable danger of earthquakes and their possible implications for *kanojo* as a

resident Korean suggest a threat that exceeds her individual body.

Ichien gojissen denotes the monetary value one yen and fifty sen (1 sen equals 100th of a

yen), but since native Korean speakers were stereotypically presumed unable to recreate

the voiced consonants of the Japanese language, they would be expected to pronounce

the phrase as *ichien kochissen*. Sonia Ryang thus claims that phrases like *ichien gojissen*

served as a "shibboleth", a means of discerning Koreans from Japanese through their

lack of linguistic mastery where physical appearances could not (Ryang, 2007). Although

there are only unofficial, "folklorish references" of this term being used, Ryang identifies

ichien gojissen as a symbolic threshold between life and death. It illustrates how one's

tongue could divide the two, since "mispronunciation […] was tantamount to declaring

one's killability" (ibid.). Thus, in two words *ichien gojissen* delineates the interconnected

problems of translatability and mortality with specific reference to the historical context

of Koreans resident in Japan. By recalling the phrase here and asking whether history

might repeat itself and have her slaughtered, *kanojo* positions herself likewise on this threshold; a position from where she re-enacts that violence upon her own body.

The preceding chapter discussed the ways in which Sakiyama Tami's fiction seeks to overcome the public amnesia through which memories deemed threatening to the image of contemporary Japanese society might be permanently erased. In particular, Sakiyama takes aim at the omission of mass suicides during wartime Okinawa from official history textbooks. By inscribing memories of a past that implicates Japanese citizens as aggressors towards Korean communities, this scene similarly functions to restore a traumatic past incident into the narrative present. However, while the narrator of Sakiyama's "Pingihira Hill" (2007) mockingly dismisses the relevance of history books, *kanojo*'s social studies textbook has the power to terrify. *Kanojo*'s palpable fear of official narratives belies her angst that if her Korean identity is discovered she might be scapegoated as before. Language is at the heart of this fear and discrimination as shown in the violent impact of the printed word "Korea" within the sanctioned narratives of the school textbook. Yet the scene also points to the violence of authorised language in speaking, as a means of catching out society's others.

Were such things quantifiable, it might be argued that *kanojo*'s trembling, rambling, and acts of self-harm in this scene present the novel's closest textual parallel to Freud's formulation of the hysterical mechanism. Morimoto notes this directly: "Her left jaw began to spasm. According to Kōji's brother, she had a specific symptom of hysteria (*histerīshō*) called a 'tick' or something, but she didn't begin to appear odd until after that" (80). If hysteria fits the description of *kanojo*'s symptoms, then this scene also uniquely posits a potential psychical trauma as the hysterical cause, namely the Great

Kantō Earthquake of 1923.[102] In the immediate aftermath of the quake, mass panic, fear,

and frustration soon led to extensive persecution and the massacre of approximately six

thousand Korean residents, which is what *kanojo* seems to recall here.[103] However, the

widespread panic and scapegoating of Koreans that followed the earthquake—itself

exemplary of what Showalter (1998) terms "mass hysteria"—is problematic as a valid

associative trigger since it predates *kanojo*'s lifetime. Freud did allow for hysterical

causes not restricted to reminiscences of actual incidents, shifting his focus later onto

"fantasies" born out of unconscious, especially sexual, desires (Bowlby, 2004, p. xxvi).[104]

However, it is surely impossible to attribute *kanojo*'s reference to the 1923 Korean

massacres either to hidden desire or mere hallucination. Rather, this scene in the novel

entrusts an actual social memory into *kanojo*'s individual figure, thus positioning her as a

transmitter through which this past traumatic event might re-enter the present.

As well as converting past traumas into the narrative present, *kanojo*'s self-harm thus

articulates her Korean ethnicity and body in a language that refuses to fit neatly into the

official line. Through the doubled association of the knife as dangerous and arousing,

kanojo's actions recall the "more or less violent processes" through which the psychical

excitations underlying hysteria are discharged, tied to their "most powerful source",

namely the sexual drive (Freud & Breuer, 2004, pp. 201, 203). At once destructive and

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[102] The earthquake struck the Kanto region on September 1st; early on the morning of September 2nd, local police stations began to be inundated with accusations of crimes being committed by Koreans. The plethora of alleged offences ranged from arson to gang rape to poisoning water supplies. However, the bodies that began to appear in the streets were Korean, not Japanese, whereas the perpetrators were not only civilians but also Japanese military and police officers. See Sonia Ryang, (2007), "The Tongue That Divided Life and Death. The 1923 Tokyo Earthquake and the Massacre of Koreans," in *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus*.

[103] The scapegoating of minorities following large-scale disasters is not unusual. Following the 1995 Great Hanshin earthquake that struck the city of Kobe and surrounding areas, and more recently the Tōhoku disaster of 2011, rumours of crimes committed by Koreans (and other foreign residents) were rife.

[104] In particular, Freud was concerned with 'deviant' sexual practices including bisexuality. Bisexuality as a metaphor for bilinguality is a recurrent theme of Tawada Yōko's fiction.

resistant, *kanojo*'s self-cutting and its recurrence through the memory she recounts to Morimoto translate the ever-present, internalised fear of being targeted as the Other into an unflinching, bodily expression that is both violent attack and sexual *jouissance*.

As a celebration of sexual difference that informs Cixous's broader political strategy of *écriture féminine*, woman's excess to her own body is most marked in at the level *jouissance* (Cixous & Clément, 2008, p. 82). While Freud's theories of sexuality assign women to a position that lacks, the Cixousian feminine libidinal economy reinscribes female sexuality as a site of *diffusion*, freeing women to exceed their own bodies in a way that men, bound to their anatomies, cannot. If this release, like hysterical splitting, appears perilous then Cixous reimagines *jouissance* as the fulfilment of female unconscious desires, namely as woman's "way of self-constituting a subjectivity that splits apart without regret" (Cixous & Clément, 2008, p. 90). Far from being a mental condition of the few, the psychic fragmentation that marks the completion of hysteria for Freud is in Cixous's eyes common to every woman, particularly she who finds herself displaced and homeless within the structures of patriarchy (ibid., p. xvi).

There are obvious dangers in pursuing a programme of attack that simultaneously takes aim at the self, and to uphold hysterical figures as positive heroines is problematic for some. Sarah French is critical of Cixous's privileging of the female body over the voice as the "central conduit" for women's internalised memories (French, 2008, p. 255). While the vocalisation of memories cures the hysteric by expelling the traumatic memory into speech, symptoms released through the body fail to convey those memories' content in a sufficiently comprehensible manner (ibid., p. 256). Catherine Clément reiterates this concern when she writes, "[r]ather than incompatible syntheses and imaginary

transitions, let us go toward real transitions and compatible syntheses, a status that is not contradictory" (Cixous & Clément, 2008, p. 57). While the critiques of French and Clément are predicated on what they perceive to be Cixous's reliance on biological essentialism, their reading is arguably too reductive for it ignores the finely nuanced and deliberately playful strategy with which Cixous develops her argument. Yet their concerns do outline the difficulty for women to find a language that resists and subverts phallogocentrism while still enabling their stories to be heard through the hysterical body. As Clément nonetheless accedes of the hysterical attack, in "going the way of violence, self-punishment, crime against others or against oneself [it] achieves satisfaction" (Cixous & Clément, 2008, p. 17).

Rather than condemning women to silence, as does Freud's privileging of the voice and verbal divulgence, hysteria retold through Cixous's intervention promotes the (female, maternal) body as a site of memory and naked expression. Thus even as they enact a flirtation with death, read against this model of hysteria and the *jouissance* it arouses, *kanojo*'s actions unleash a comparable feminine language that, hitherto suppressed within the female body, now opens out to raise a powerful insurgence against the walls that house her: an escape that is also an attack. To be sure, without *kanojo*'s verbal explication of her actions to Morimoto, it would be difficult to derive meaning from her outburst, thus restricting her to the role of an essentially damaged figure who in French's terms might be "too unstable to achieve a satisfactory subject position from which to speak and act" (ibid., p. 259). By refusing to disclose in language that can be easily appropriated, *kanojo* protects her stories but at her own risk. As a kind of semiotic phrasing, the hysterical attack in *Kazukime* goes both ways. For, cutting into her flesh, *kanojo* inflicts pain upon herself while rejecting the pressure to conform as a good

woman. Yet this act of self-inflicted violence also reclaims her body from the sexual demands and bullying of her stepbrothers, as well as the anti-Korean scapegoating that haunts her ethnic past.

The positing of mental illness as subversive is inherently controversial and, even when applying hysteria as a purely literary model with which to interpret *Kazukime*, *kanojo*'s self-destructive tendencies appear to provide a case in point. Yet rather than depicting a completely pitiable figure, *kanojo* appears imbued in these scenes, as she does in her suicide, with a sense of subjective resolve. Within the oppressive structure of patriarchal Japan, *kanojo*'s self-cutting witnesses a transition of the *zainichi* female form from a contained, idealised figure to something in excess of that image: wilder, open-wounded, and bleeding. As an act of feminine writing, *kanojo*'s literal inscription of past traumas upon her skin's surface sees *kanojo*'s attempt to break out of her corporeality so that she might learn to speak and write herself in an alternative body/language that cannot be appropriated and moreover denies biological essentialism by marking the female form not only with pleasure but with pain. Given *kanojo*'s tangible suffering, this choosing of her body as the central site of her struggle is clearly problematic. However, the confrontational strength of *kanojo*'s actions in front of her Japanese boyfriend as told through Yi's graphic prose is hard to deny. It is at this juncture that I turn, through further engagement with Yi's language, to a second return to the body within the novel that leaves behind themes of violence and manifest physical presence in favour of fluidity, ambiguity, and absence.

2.5 Water, semiosis and the fluidity of meaning

Kazukime (潜き女), is an old Japanese term still in use in some coastal areas to denote women who dive for fish and seafood. Although the character, 潜, is more usually pronounced *moguru*, the reading *kazuku* shares the former's meaning, of the verb "to dive", especially with the purpose of catching fish. Melissa Wender nods to this sense in her translation of the title, "Diving Maiden." However, recalling strategies found in Sakiyama and Tawada's writing, Yi's title is written in *hiragana*, arousing an ambiguous and dualistic effect through the shadow of a second verb, *kazuku* (被く). Following the same etymological root, from the idea that in diving one's head becomes covered with water, this second sense of *kazuku* means "to wear, to don," but also carries the meaning of shouldering responsibility or loss (*Kōjien*, 5th edition, 2008). Other dictionaries, such as the *Nihon kokugo daijten* (2006) also permit the meanings "to be deceived," and "to be injured". The potentially liberating image conjured by diving is thus doubled and contradicted by a latent signification of being trapped, the way out under the surface undermined by a suffocating burden up to the neck.[105] Through this subtle homonym, Yi's title sets the scene for a narrative of potential and peril present in the work of all three authors discussed in this thesis.

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[105] The doubled meaning of the work's title, and indeed its subject matter, is reminiscent of the Margaret Atwood novel, *Surfacing* (Atwood, 2012). Both works are shaped around unnamed female protagonists patently uncomfortable with their subaltern identities and prescribed gender and social roles, as they strive beneath the legacies of colonisation (in *Surfacing*, it is the environmental impact of US cultural imperialism in Canada) and the shadows of an absent yet lingering patriarch. Most significantly, the climactic moment when the anonymous narrator of *Surfacing* dives rebelliously and unaided into the lake in search of her father's body echoes the *jouissance* felt by *Kazukime's* focal character, likewise beneath the water. Focused analyses of literary works not written in Japanese is beyond the scope of this thesis, but it is my hope that in revealing the threads that run between selected texts of Japanese fiction, this research might also be seen as reaching out towards other stories in other languages that share similar concerns in their own distant, distinct contexts, with the fictional works that this study foregrounds.

The diving figure offers many allusions to metaphorical themes of submerging and surfacing that pervade Yi's novel. When Morimoto describes elsewhere in his account how his friend "dove" (*mogutta*) under the bedcovers at *kanojo*'s invitation, it very subtly evokes *kanojo*'s promiscuity and rumoured prostitution. Its strongest ties are made, however, with respect to the novel's manifold motifs of water. The riverbed where *kanojo* finds herself having truanted from school in the opening chapter is particularly rich in imagery.

> Resting her right foot on a rock wedged in the earth, she rolled up her skirt. As she lowered her underwear and crouched down, she felt the tips of the grasses against her buttocks. The sensation tickled and caused her to shift her body slightly, when suddenly the rock supporting her right foot dislodged itself from its foundation and rolled down the bank. Losing her centre of gravity, she lunged forward and slid towards the direction of the river. The stagnant river basin was deeper than she had thought, and she came to standstill with her legs cocooned knee deep in muddy water. The moment she breathed a sigh of relief, warm urine trickled down the inside of both legs and flowed into the muddy water. (p. 66)

The association of water and the abject, especially in connection with the body as seen in the mix of the river flow and pee, is later repeated in depictions of *kanojo*'s bulimic purging over the toilet bowl. As rain begins to fall, the pathetic fallacy reinforces *kanojo*'s portrayal as a girl trapped within abject surroundings. This depiction gives way, however, when *kanojo* throws her school briefcase "containing her ruler and coloured pencils and whatnot down into the river basin" (ibid.). With the requisite tools of her formal education discarded, *kanojo* now enjoys the rainfall to express her freedom from the dominant teachings she fears: "She tried holding both hands up to the rain. With her entire body sopping wet, the sense of washing away made her feel fulfilled" (ibid.).

The purifying quality of water in this riverbank scene echoes the priestess's ceremony that brings *kanojo* round after her she has fainted. As the priestess chants, banging a *gohei* (a wand adorned with rectangular pieces of white paper used in Shintō

ceremonies) above her chest, *kanojo* feels a searing surge of light scorch her eyeballs

before her body freezes, shutting out "all sound as though closed up with water" (p. 65).

The next thing she hears is a low drawling voice:

> "Get out, get out into the water"
> The same phrase was repeated three times. She made out the words
> perfectly, and mulled them over. Without warning, the white veil suddenly
> lifted. For a while, her vision stayed blurred and distant. At last her focus
> settled and she was able to trace every single grain in the ceiling. The fever
> began to abate. The throbbing in her vein slowly quietened, and she fell into
> a coma.
> Soft and expansive, she lay immersed in a strange sensation that pressed
> upon her body from every angle. I am now, in the middle of the water——.
> The space around her slowly grew brighter. Her body was slowly pulled
> upwards. Focusing all of her strength in order to pull out her feet from the
> water that shackled her ankles, she turned to face the surface of the water
> and stretched out her body. (ibid.)

It is this moment that Wender interprets as an epiphanous awakening to *kanojo*'s own

spiritual capabilities, since traditionally the ritual for curing an undiagnosed illness

doubly served as an initiation into shamanism (Wender, 2005, p. 134). Yet *kanojo*'s fever

and auditory hallucination might also recall the psychosomatic symptoms of hysteria.

Yi's prose echoes this scene in the novel's penultimate chapter, when Kayo recites

kanojo's admission that upon turning twenty, the age of majority in Japan, "I went to the

hospital and ordered them to remove my womb and ovaries" (p. 89). Intended as her

"own take on the Coming of Age ceremony", a voluntary hysterectomy rejects the legal

and sexual maturity that this landmark symbolises. Unable to bear the repeated denials

of her request, *kanojo* only finds solace when it occurs to her to commit suicide. *Kanojo*'s

drowning in the bath establishes the over-arching implication of water in the novel as

related to death, yet unlike the violence of her self-harm also performed in the

bathroom, *kanojo*'s suicide evokes rather feelings of freedom and inner calm.

> But in saying I would die, I noticed an unascertainable, unfeasibly large
> presence. It was a completely sudden flash. I swallowed my breath. That

large presence even knew inside and out the writhing of every overwhelming agony I had experienced up to that point. Thereupon those things that had continuously festered all the while within me vanished in an instant. Inside the water---Inside the water where there is neither wind, nor sound nor colour, nothing, reminiscent of a complete void, and I felt as though I was immersed. (p. 90)

This time with her body actually immersed in water, *kanojo* recalls the "growling voice" (*unari goe*) that called to her earlier as it once more recites, "get out, get out into the water". Yet now it goes on, urging her first "to sink her body into the bathtub, then sink her head" (p. 94). At peace with the sensation of submerging herself, *kanojo* is transported to the shores of Saishūtō, the place her parents left to come to Japan and to where her father has by now returned. As Wender observes, Yi renders Saishūtō phonetically in *katakana*, permitting an alternative reading as "the final island" that connotes the resting place of death with a return to the father (Wender, 2005, p. 143). Yet compared with the noisy, muddied water of the river, the clear water of the bathtub is also distinctly "womblike" (ibid.). If the geographical topos is doubly marked as both a return to the father and dead end, the evocation of the peaceful security of amniotic fluid suggests an alternative, figurative return to the mother that transforms the space of the bathtub from the site of *kanojo*'s death to a place of healing and rebirth.

As an abstract place that can be both "situated yet has no axiomatic form", this ethereal, watery space functions in a similar way to what Julia Kristeva terms the "semiotic chora" (Kristeva, 1997, p. 35). With its roots in Plato's *Timaeus* where it denoted a receptacle, in ancient Greece the chora signified a "space, area, or land" (ibid., p. 24). Kristeva then transfers this term onto the "rhythmic space" wherein the process of linguistic signification occurs (ibid., p. 36). Kristeva formulates this process as an oscillation between two modalities: the pre-lingual babble of the semiotic that provides the kinetic energy to drive the subject towards language; and the rigidly ordered grammar of the

symbolic that gives that babble comprehensible meaning in language. Neither realm can

exist without the other nor can they ever overlap. In order for signification to take place

they must meet in the middle in a simultaneous moment of unification and separation,

or *thesis* (ibid., p. 43). The contact that takes place at the point of *thesis* offers the latent

desires that constitute the semiotic a structure within which to find their voice. As the

principal site of this thetic break, the semiotic chora is a significant and signifiying space

marked by a constant cycle of "rupture and articulations" (ibid., p. 35), wherein semiotic

drives find symbolic form, and language (and thus subjectivity) is produced.

Within this construction, the semiotic necessarily precedes the symbolic as a

precondition for the latter's existence (Kristeva, 1997, p. 36). It then follows that this

relation raises the symbolic to a privileged status over the semiotic in phallogocentric

laws, as the bringer of structure and stability to what was fragmented chaos. This fact

reveals a paradox within Kristeva's theory, since the very act of naming the semiotic

chora is to represent it in symbolic language, even while it designates a space inherently

pre-symbolic. As Tina Chanter asserts,

> The symbolic lends legitimacy to the semiotic, conferring upon it the status
> of existence. Without the capacity for symbolic representation, the meaning
> of the semiotic cannot be articulated, but as soon as the semiotic is afforded
> representation, named, or posited, it is also misnamed: it is no longer what is
> was. (Chanter, 2000, n.p.)

Left unnamed, the semiotic risks never being recognised, yet the gesture of naming

forces the semiotic to reside within the symbolic: a realm of representation wherein it is

simultaneously undermined and even erased. Bringing the same issue to bear on Yi's text,

it is striking that *kanojo* remains unnamed. Known only as the generic third person, 'she',

kanojo occupies a more transient and potentially shifting position vis-à-vis the other

named characters that emphasises her unknowability beyond the establishing of her

female gender. As already suggested in the works of Lee Chonghwa and Trinh T. Minh-ha, any commitment into language is accompanied by alteration and loss, especially when it is the stories of colonial women that are (mis)translated into the regulated grammar of male, imperial authority. The Kristevan paradoxes of naming and discourse, and the dilemma of telling are thus intertwined. However by perceiving poetic forms of language that refuse to adhere to one singular meaning, that is, in Kristeva's terms wherein the semiotic "irrupts" the symbolic (ibid.: 50-1), *kanojo*'s lack of name seems complicit with the moves elsewhere in the narrative to remodel and even undermine the symbolic order.

As the epitome of this strategy, which Kristeva denotes as 'revolutionary language', the recurring phrase, "get out, get out into the water" (*dete ike, mizu no naka ni dete ike*) appears counter-intuitive, combining the command "to go out, to exit" (*dete ike*) with a marker of inward direction: "*mizu no naka ni*" translates literally as "into the middle of the water". Such a phrase circles so as to recall the contradictions of the young girl in "Pinghira Hill" ("if you say we're connected, we are; say we're not, and we're not"). This effect is emphasised when Morimoto recalls a tirade on language and "dialectics" (*benshōhō*) that his companion launches against *kanojo*. While the story of *Kazukime* is less engaged with language itself than Yi's later novels, *Yuhi* (discussed below) and *Ishi no koe*, this reference to dialectics is striking, and made more so with *kanojo*'s retort that apparently reiterates Kristeva's linguistic discourse:

> All of it is a repeated layering of continuity and discontinuity, a cyclic recurrence, an endless metabolism (*shinchintaisha*), it's obvious. (p. 78)

The contradiction within Yi's phrasing disrupts the expectations of standard grammar at the same time as it signifies a two-directional movement. The combined effect reveals that *kanojo*'s sinking beneath the water is not simply an exit or retreat into death; it also

enacts a re-entering into the cycle, a return to the beginning. Kristeva's emphasis on the ongoing vacillation between the semiotic and the symbolic allows the former infinite future chances to exert influence over the latter as the result of transgressions (ibid., p. 54). Moreover, like *kanojo*'s "endless metabolism" this motion is not linear but enacts a 'revolution', so that language and the subject it brings about are never fixed but are constantly in formation. The repeated call, "get out, get out into the water", enacts this continuous discontinuity precisely in language that disrupts and destabilises, turning in on itself as it strives towards but forever eludes a perfect meaning.

As a *zainichi* woman, *kanojo* is by her very nature banned from fully entering the symbolic realm of both patriarchal society and the family headed by her Japanese stepfather since she exists only as a negation and deferral of either system. Although assimilative practices and other compliances might offer *kanojo* provisional access, her entry is fraught with the conditions of patriarchal imperialism in which her female, Korean body is exiled and exploited. Self-targeted violence as a means of resisting this appropriation implies a return to the body marked by danger, fear, and horror. Yet as an alternative way out, *kanojo*'s return to an abstract womb-like space releases her into a figural body tied to a fluid, non-physical space ordered by the m/other's body. For Kristeva, the chora symbolises a position of alterity that is maternal and nourishing (Kristeva, 1997, p. 42).[106] This defaulting to the female body has led some to criticise Kristeva's work as succumbing to biological essentialism. Perhaps most famously, Judith Butler has argued that positing the chora as the site of the pre-lingual risks replicating the paternal structure wherein women are equated with nature, opposed to and

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[106] Kristeva's specific sense of alterity follows from the formation of the subject in Lacanian theory, which takes place at two junctures. First, at the mirror stage, the child begins to perceive in his reflection his individual self as something distinct to his mother. This process of severance is then completed by the realisation of castration, after which the mother becomes wholly other to the child's sense of self.

hierarchically beneath the masculine domain of culture (Butler, 1989). However, in Yi's work (as it is for Kristeva and Cixous), it is important to read this maternally ordered space as a purely strategic position that not only elucidates this structure as the target of criticism, but also challenges patriarchal expectations of women as daughters, wives, and mothers.

In *Kazukime*, the overtones of the mother's body that characterise *kanojo*'s free-floating in the water cannot be read simply as valorising that above the absent father figure since motherhood and maternal tropes are repeatedly rejected throughout the novel. Just as Yi's wordplay writes Saishūtō ambiguously as both final destination and the land of the father, the conflicting images attached to the womb deny the mother as a wholly positive alternative, not least following her mother's renunciation of all things Korean (p. 56). There is a poignant role-reversal here in terms of colonial relations, by aligning the father with a contested Korean territory and the mother with Japan. However, the ambiguity in each framing reveals that *kanojo* privileges neither. Firstly, any reading of the womb as inherently nourishing is undermined through the uterine cancer that renders the mother's womb as diseased. Secondly, through *kanojo*'s abortion (of, it is implied, her brother's child), and later her desire to have her own reproductive organs removed, her figurative return to the womb is completely detached from her desire to bear her own child. If a woman's ability to procreate is one of the underpinnings of society, then the rejection of maternity offers a route out of this structure of oppression (Lee, 1998). *Kanojo*'s promiscuity and pleas for a hysterectomy may be thus read as attempts to find a way out.

The latter also relates to *kanojo*'s overwhelming fear of state oppression, as is evident in

the conviction that she divulges to Kayo, that Japanese doctors "especially in obstetrics

and gynaecology, would remove the womb and ovaries so that Korean women could not

reproduce" (p. 89). Kayo dismisses this claim as an extreme example of paranoia.

However, its implications are stark. While motherhood within patriarchy is traditionally

the expected role for women, *kanojo*'s Korean ethnicity makes it for her a critical

impasse. Although the desire to undergo the surgery as a private celebration for

reaching adulthood suggests a drastic means for *kanojo* to exercise her individual agency,

it also conforms to what she rightly or wrongly perceives to be an inevitable ordeal

within her social status.[107] Even in resisting its maternal expectations, the body is

therefore a precarious outlet of expression within a female, *zainichi* context. Yet these

dangers notwithstanding, within the interlocking layers of text, metaphor, and narrative,

the many permutations of the womb in *Kazukime* reveal not a purely biological space but

a conceptual and heterogeneous locus with a privileged relation to the poetry of

semiotic language from wherein to challenge and subvert the monolithic structure of

phallogocentrism.

Echoing the constant deferral that inhabits Yi's prose, the shifting structure of

Kazukime's narrative and the shadow cast by the early revelation of her suicide both

function to place *kanojo* in oscillation between life and death as a dynamic and

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[107] While there are testimonials by comfort women who experienced forced abortions and illegal hysterectomies among their ordeals, I have not been able to uncover any similar claims by *zainichi* Korean women that they have been biologically sterilised by force in Japan as a matter of practice, or evidence of this practice as fact. However, it has been argued that certain actions of the Japanese government point to a policy of 'social sterilisation', including the Treaty on Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea formed in June 1965 that denied *zainichi* residents affiliated to the DPRK the right to apply for Japanese citizenship, forced repatriations that began in 1959, and the denial of citizenship rights to children born after the 1965 treaty until 1990. Thus *kanojo*'s paranoia may express in extreme form questions pertinent to *zainichi* women at the time of *Kazukime*'s publication, namely national belonging and reproductive rights, the latter debate having been stoked during the 1970s by outspoken feminist opponents of abortion such as Tanaka Mitsu and the emergent 'women's lib' movement's demands to legalise the birth control pill.

heterogeneous subject alternately coming into and vanishing from the text. *Kanojo* thus functions in the narrative as a liminal, semiotic subject-in-process. As the ungraspable other within the presiding structure, she cannot be fully integrated. However, nor can she be properly severed from that symbolic structure since it is her position of alterity within those very confines that enables her to disrupt and shake the master's house. Although *kanojo* initially dreads being exposed as Korean, indicative of her desire to pass into Japanese society and her family unnoticed, she begins to embrace her otherness by gradually rebelling against the pressures to perform as a good woman through her unstable behaviour, madness, rejection of maternity, and finally suicide. This strategy is deadly problematic as in Kristeva's argument, to expose oneself too fully to the disruptions of the semiotic without the symbolic is to succumb to the dangers of silence and psychosis. However, the responses of her stepsister and former acquaintances suggest the extent to which *kanojo*'s life and the stark means of her death have disrupted the structure of her family and perceptions beyond. Moreover, her absence creates an unknowability that renders her as fluid, as polymorphic, and as heterogeneous as the chora-like water into which she (sub)merges.

2.6 Foreshadowing *Yuhi*

The final of the eight chapters comprising *Kazukime* fills less than two pages of the eighty-three that comprise the full novel.[108] It is the day of Keiko's Coming of Age ceremony yet she is no longer interested in the intricately decorated kimono that she collected on the day she discovered her sister. Instead, her mind is distracted by her sister who suddenly emerges as a small insect inside her chest: "Keiko could not yet ascertain the true identity (*shōtai*) of the bug, but the more she

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[108] This page count refers to the 1983 Kodansha version of the novel.

thought of her sister, the more this tiny bug eluded her grasp, and the more it ached" (p. 95). Keiko dials the number of the third name recorded in *kanojo*'s telephone book but when her call is unexpectedly answered, Keiko hangs up the receiver.

Insects occur as a frequent linguistic metaphor in Japanese since a number of emotional and physical conditions such as hunger and ill-temper were traditionally attributed to the movement of an insect within the body, not dissimilarly to the derivation of hysteria from the presumed movement of the womb. Yet the sudden appearance in the context here is too jarring to appear insignificant despite and owing to the lack of any other references in the novel. For one, it suggests a strong link to the second novel discussed here, *Yuhi*, in which the focal character (mirroring Keiko's role here) develops a pulsating lump in her throat while she attempts to recover the truth of the absent protagonist, Yuhi. As a representation of Keiko's emotional frustration and upset the insect (*mushi*) easily embodies Keiko's inability to swallow the reality of *kanojo*'s death, a foreign body that unsettles like the hysteric's traumatic memory. Yet most significantly, as a metaphor for the "latent conscious" (*senzai suru ishiki*) out of which one's thoughts and feelings develop (*Kōjien*, 5th edition, 2008), this insect is perceptibly tied to the semiotic and unconscious realms. Deemed by Keiko to be "ungraspable" (*tegotae ni tsukamenai*), the insect symbolises the unknowability of *kanojo* in her absence while serving as an irrepressible reminder of her former existence. It is notable, therefore, that the word *mushi* when spoken in Japanese could also mean "not dead".

Haunted by this insect/memory of *kanojo*, this short final chapter attests to a transformation within Keiko. Her loss of interest in the ceremony and entrance into adulthood that it represents is illustrated in her strewn kimono and wish to ignore the

laughing voices outside. By hanging up the receiver to the third informant on *kanojo*'s

life, Keiko moreover seems to reject the idea of a knowable, unified self and affords

meaning to the irreconcilable aporia left in *kanojo*'s wake. Recalling the act of deferral by

which the stories arising from within the abyssal gaps of Kuja ensure their own survival,

as a fluctuating text that refuses to reduce its protagonist to a single, unified entity,

much less the prescribed figure of "*zainichi* Korean woman", *Kazukime* makes room for

kanojo's afterlife, affording her ongoing effect on those she has left behind despite her

conspicuous silence. This section has attempted to read into these silences and other

potential languages of the body through the model and motifs of hysteria. As a critical

interjection into previous discourses wherein the hysteric has been assumed to be

silenced through her own defective speech, the Kristevan semiotic provides one means

of reading recurrent motifs of the womb and womb-like spaces throughout the novel

instead as suggesting a potential means of escape from the confines of a restrictive

linguistic structure. However, owing to *kanojo*'s distinct bodily presence throughout the

novel, the feral pain and peril of her implied hysterical neuroses and self-destructive

tendencies cannot be ignored, problematizing any appraisals that wish to see *kanojo* as

becoming fully liberated and empowered.

It is therefore interesting to read Yi's final completed novel, *Yuhi*, in parallel with

Kazukime. Awarded the Akutagawa Prize in 1989, this latter novel is perhaps the better

known of the pair, yet deals with similar questions of silence, violence, and absence.

Unlike *kanojo* whose portrayal develops through images of self-harm that narrate the

excess of her body to herself, Yuhi is placed in an irretrievable exile from her narrative

and defined only through her complete, physical absence. The second half of this

chapter will therefore turn to a reading of *Yuhi* while tracing the uncanny echoes between the two texts, before venturing my overall conclusion.

2.7 *Yuhi*

> But what does it mean to write—stealthily and secretly, in a corner, like an insane person or a recluse muttering to herself? To write for a time when everything of these places is destroyed and nothing remains, of me at least, except these scribblings in an abandoned notebook whose author, in her turn, will be . . .
> —Assia Djebar, "Burning", *The Tongue's Blood Never Runs Dry*

> She does not exist, she can not-be; but there has to be something of her.
> —Hélène Cixous & Catherine Clément, *The Newly Born Woman*

Yi Yang-ji's mid-length novel, *Yuhi*, first appeared in the November 1988 issue of the literary journal *Gunzō*. In January 1989, it was awarded the 103rd Akutagawa prize, making Yi the first female *zainichi* Korean writer to receive the accolade; it was also the last novel that Yi completed before her untimely death from myocarditis in 1992, at the age of 37. The novel develops around its eponymous protagonist, who like *kanojo* in *Kazukime* is a young, second-generation *zainichi* woman. Yuhi is a student of Korean language at the prestigious "S University" in Seoul. Preferring a homestay to the university dormitory, Yuhi has stayed for the past six months in the suburban home of two Korean women: an aunt (*Ajumoni*, as the Japanese transliterates the Korean term in *katakana*) and niece (*Onni*).[109] However, the novel itself opens with Yuhi's parting telephone call from the airport to Onni, announcing that she has abandoned her studies and will return to Japan. Palpably derailed by Yuhi's sudden departure, it is Onni who speaks the "I" (*watashi*) of the first-person narrative, tracing through her own memory and engaging in conversations with her aunt to recall the period of Yuhi's stay and its

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[109] Catherine Ryu transliterates this Korean name more properly as 'Un'ni' (Ryu, 2006; 2010). Here I use the term Onni, however, to reflect my knowledge only of the Japanese text. Retaining the Romanised Japanese naming also functions as a reminder that in this reading, Onni's Korean narrative, and thus she herself, have been translated.

impact upon them. Structurally, the temporal space of the novel is thus framed within this first evening without Yuhi, while the women's shared reminiscences evoke episodes that cast back over the previous six months of Yuhi's homestay.

While this oscillation between past and present recreates the sense of loss and shock shared by both Korean women, it also reveals a fragmented portrayal of a young woman struggling to adjust within the society and language of her supposed ancestral home. This striving reaches its peak, in Onni's recollections, when the noisy surroundings force Yuhi to abandon a shopping trip into town, and later, when Onni discovers Yuhi drunk yet attempting to study during the night. Alongside questions of ethnic roots, language and national belonging, Onni's memories also allude to gender-related issues: most notably, the two spectral patriarchs of Yuhi's father, who rejected his Korean homeland and settled in Japan, and the aunt's late husband, who was vehemently anti-Japanese; and allusions to Yuhi's abuse by the sons of her previous host families. These concerns of gender and ethnicity connect back to threads that run throughout *Kazukime*, yet in place of the fear of being exposed that haunts *kanojo* within Japanese society, Yuhi must face directly the struggles and alienation of a Korean descendant returned to her purported roots, and more generally as a foreigner abroad.

In drawing comparisons between Yuhi and *kanojo*, the practices of naming in both novels deserve brief attention here. Whereas all of the characters in *Kazukime* are properly named barring the protagonist known only as *kanojo* ('she'), this strategy is inverted in *Yuhi*, which posits a single, named protagonist against an otherwise anonymous cast. If the third-person pronoun, *kanojo*, highlights that character's shifting position within *Kazukime*'s narrative while emphasising her gender, the full name 'Yi Yuhi' (p. 10)

explicitly labels its referent in terms of her Korean roots.[110] As with *kanojo*, however, the familial markers 'Onni' and 'Ajumoni' (and the corresponding terms for the peripheral male characters) in *Yuhi* plot the gender roles and structural relationships between these characters. The Korean terms moreover serve to 'other' the two female hosts within the Japanese text. As a result, even while holding the narrative voice, Onni is bound to remain in the shadows of the aunt in whose home she resides, the foreign language of Japanese, and of the absent protagonist who nevertheless names the text. In this paradoxical sense, Yuhi's position in the text in many ways looms largest, despite her narrative absence.

However, if the overriding narrative of *Yuhi* appears resonant with the diasporic theme of pursuing lost roots already extant within the broader genre of *zainichi* literature, this reading is undermined by the crucial twist of the novel's opening, namely that Yuhi is absent and her narration is entrusted entirely to the Korean niece. Since Onni openly perceives Yuhi's departure as an act of both failure and betrayal, this decision to give to her the voice of narration complicates any critical analysis of the plot that ignores Onni's positionality vis-à-vis Yuhi and her aunt, whose independent observations frequently challenge Onni's own. This tension is exacerbated by 448 pages of handwritten Japanese that Yuhi entrusts to Onni over the telephone. Onni is unable to read Japanese–a fact of which Yuhi is aware–thus the manuscript's presence reverberates with the initial violent

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[110] This sole reference to Yuhi's full name appears to conflate Yi, the author, and her protagonist, and many have read the novel as an autobiographical account of Yi's experiences as a student in Korea. Yi's essays and interviews do suggest that writing *Yuhi* was a personal, perhaps even cathartic process, in helping to overcome the complex experiences and emotions of being zainichi (Yi & Kawamura, 1989, p. 266). However, it is important to note that the story is written not from Yuhi's perspective (in the same interview, Yi claims to have initially attempted to write the manuscript that Yuhi left and failed) but from Onni's: a conscious move by Yi to find a more "objective" perspective (Yi & Kawamura, 1989). Moreover, in Yi's admittance made in a separate interview that she considered all three of the novel's female characters as alter-egos, one can see a preference for plurality over singularity, and the need to move beyond an autobiographical approach that perceives Yuhi simply as a thinly-veiled portrayal of her writer (Yi & Ichi, 1989, p. 81).

shock Onni experiences at Yuhi's departure.[111] This manuscript and Onni's repeated

attempts to approach it serve as the catalyst for the cycle of memories through which

the novel is constituted. With its contents never disclosed, the manuscript doubles the

aporia opened by the lack of Yuhi's own narrative voice, placing absence as a means of

disrupting communication at the heart of the novel.

The earliest discussions of *Yuhi* published largely in Japanese literary magazines

frequently place Yuhi as a borderline figure caught between Japan and Korea. Kawamura

Minato exemplifies this trend when he claims that Yuhi's inability to settle in Korea

derives from witnessing the difficult and disappointing reality of her radically unfamiliar

"parental land" (*fubo no kuni*) with respect to the "country of the other" (*tanin no kuni*)

from where she hails (Kawamura, 1992, p. 163). If Korea and Japan present to Yuhi two

opposing points of arrival (*kichakuten*), then on account of those "aspects of her that

have become Japanese" (*nihonjin-ka shita bubun*) despite her Korean ethnicity, Yuhi is

suspended in oscillation between the two nations without ever fully belonging to either.

Similarly, Takai Yūichi (Takai, Aono, & Tomioka, 1988) identifies Yuhi's desire to become

a "fully-fledged Korean" (*kankokujin ni narikiru*) and her anguish at remaining alienated

(*najimenai de kurushimu sama*) as the crux of the novel, thereby also stressing Korea's

failure to become the promised motherland of Yuhi's expectations.

Kankoku Shimbun (Korea Press), the Tokyo-based newspaper of the Korea Residents

Union of Japan were less sympathetic. Describing Yuhi as "an oversensitive narcissist,"

their critical review continued: "The way she abandons her studies in Seoul and goes

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[111] The novel is careful not to define Yuhi's writing in any specific means. Onni's discovery refers rather to the "brown envelope" in which the pages are contained, while later scenes speak most frequently of "Yuhi's writing" (*Yuhi no moji*). While I try where possible to replicate the vagueness of Yi's prose, I use the term "manuscript" for clarity, as opposed to "text" which usually refers to the novel itself and its written effects.

home to Japan is tantamount to nothing other than her fleeing from reality. It is not a

tragedy. Rather, it is excessive self-centredness" (Anon., 1989). While it is too simplistic

to compare alternative "Japanese" and "Korean" readings of the novel, particularly

based on these samples alone, these responses demonstrate an over-arching trend to

position Japan and Korea as two fixed points of identity between which Yuhi is able or

obliged to choose, and to rue her inability to fully transform into a bona fide Korean self.

Presenting both countries as axiomatic and directly opposed, these critical reviews belie

an implicit prejudice that reduces the psychological complexity and heterogeneity of

zainichi into a paradigm comprising the Japanese Self and its differential Other.

As Catherine Ryu argues, this deferral to "reductive binary paradigms" is a recurrent

stance vis-à-vis the terms '*zainichi*' and '*zainichi* literature', which denies the reality of

polyphony and heterogeneity among *zainichi* Koreans (Ryu, 2006, p. 315). Thus recent

interpretations of *Yuhi* exhibit a shift of focus away from ethnicity instead to matters of

language (Ryu, 2006; Ueda, 2000) and gender (Okano, 1997; Ryu, 2010). Perhaps as Ryu

suggests, this urge to dichotomise in previous readings of *Yuhi* emerges from a critical

fixation with the overlying 'mystery' of the text: What compelled Yuhi to abandon her

studies in Korea and return to Japan? (Ryu, 2010, p. 148). The question overlaps with

Keiko's search in *Kazukime* to understand *kanojo*'s suicide. However, Yuhi's absence

from the onset leaves this question unanswered, even unanswerable, much to the

apparent frustration of scholars such as Takai Yūichi who, in a Joint Literary Review in the

December 1988 issue of *Gunzō*, states: "Yuhi occasionally shows a dependent (*amaeta*)

side, but in the end, she makes no effort to open herself up (*kokoro wo hirakō to shinai*)"

(Takai et al., 1988). Moreover, while *kanojo*'s death is certified with the discovery of her

body, Yuhi's whereabouts remain unknown. Although Yuhi's safe return to Japan would

bring about narrative closure, and is widely assumed in the hopeful imaginations of Onni,

Ajumoni, and most existing critical discussions, nowhere does the text announce her

arrival. Thus through what Tracey Gannon (2003) names as Yuhi's "unknowability", the

greater ambiguity of the character and her referential novel emerges.

It is this ambiguous sense of knowing yet not knowing that arguably creates the lasting

effect of the novel and Yuhi's haunting presence/absence within it. Ryu acknowledges

this ghostly motif when she defines Yuhi as an "ever-present spectre" who appears in

the hallucinatory recollections of the niece (Ryu, 2006, pp. 164-165). However,

spectrality as a theoretical construct has not been explored in terms of the effect it

creates throughout *Yuhi*. That is, an engagement with spectrality in the sense with which

Derrida speaks of 'hauntology', or as what Frédéric Regard terms an

> injunction to preserve the other, to preserve otherness and safeguard the
> presence/absence of what or who no longer exists in the flesh, but in fact
> does not yet exist, the almost unnameable which pushes at the boundaries
> of language and thought, and whose mystery writing aspires to attend to.
> (Regard, 2013, p. 267)[112]

While the recurrent motifs of death and suicide within Yi's oeuvre might have

subconsciously stirred this spectral approach, it does not follow that Yuhi's spectrality

implies her literal demise. She has, rather than *is*, departed. Yet without any physical

presence within the text, the fact that Yuhi only emerges through uncanny

materialisations of her voice and gaze renders her an undeniably ghostly figure that

preserves her irreducible heterogeneity by remaining distant and unknowable. The

shadow cast by this absence allows her to "live on" through the narrative in the

Derridean sense explored in the previous chapter. That is, Yuhi's spectral figuring affords

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[112] The best known articulation of Derrida's hauntological approach comes from *Spectres of Marx* (Derrida, 1994). Hauntology replaces ontology, whose pronunciation is almost identical especially in French, so as to shift emphasis away from states of being and presence towards the haunting figure of the ghost, whose liminality means that s/he is neither present not absent, neither dead nor alive, and thus unknowable.

her a position wherein she can remain as other in a state neither opposite nor equal to living, nor dying; wherein her survival is ensured by the text's irreconciliability.[113]

Echoing this spectral plot device that pushes at the boundaries of language are various textual manoeuvres that problematise communication. While *Yuhi* is predominantly a Japanese text, several passages mirror Yuhi's own bilinguality by incorporating occasional words and phrases written in hangŭl. As Onni recalls discovering Yuhi attempting to study while drunk in the middle of the night, Yuhi's outburst appears on the page thus:

オンニ
어니

チョヌン ウイソンジャイムニ ダ
저 는 위 선 자 입 니 다

チョヌン コジンマルジャンイイムニ ダ
저 는 거 짓 말 장 이 입 니 다

（オンニ

私は　偽善者です

私は　嘘つきです）(p.319, bold emphasis in the original)

Juxtaposing Korean, phonetic Japanese *katakana* (superscript gloss), and *kanji* (in parentheses), Yuhi's enunciation is once more untranslatable: "Onni, I am a hypocrite, I am a liar". Mimicking the apparent pain of her revelation, this splitting of Yuhi's speech is then mirrored in Yuhi's notebook filled with drunken scrawls of the word "mother country", again fractured into three scripts:

ウ リ ナ ラ
우리나라

（母国）(ibid.)

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[113] The notion of difference as it pertains to survival is taken from Jacques Derrida's "Living On/ Borderlines," as explicated in my earlier analysis on Sakiyama Tami's Kuja Stories and the abyssal narrative. See (Derrida, 1979)

Many commentaries cite this passage as an emblematic expression of Yuhi's "emotional guilt" (*zaiakukan*) at being unable to love her homeland (Ueda, 2000, p. 133). Yet as Atsuko Ueda states, this simplistic reading misrecognises translation as "a transparent act" (ibid.). The focus on textual appearances above meaning—a strategy that Ueda goes on to identify in Onni's 'reading' of Yuhi's manuscript—moreover ignores the effect brought about by the inherent paradox of confessing to being a liar, a paradox that lies at the heart of this novel in which the protagonist's own narrative is irreparably interrupted and deferred.

For in a second critical matter of language, in Yuhi's absence the voice of this predominantly Japanese narrative belongs to the Korean niece, a shift that appears impossible given her admission of having a very limited ability in Japanese. In other words, *Yuhi* is a novel whose narration is always already translated. Moreover, the voice of its female Korean narrator has been rewritten into the language of her former colonial oppressor. More than her struggle to fit in, Yuhi's spoken and written words express in double-tongues the duplicity of her bilingual condition, much like the foreign narrator of Tawada's fiction in the following chapter. Moreover, they attest to the violence inherent in the act of translation: an act that tears meaning from form, and reinscribes one's language into an alien, possibly enemy, tongue.

This effect is redoubled by the countless voices that penetrate the written text. As Yuhi's two female hosts retell their impressions to one another, Onni's memories are repeatedly driven and disrupted by Yuhi's bilingual utterances that interject the text in Korean and Japanese. In addition to the frequent recurrence of terms such as 'Japanese language', 'voice', 'words', that might be expected in a text explicitly concerned with

language, the prose repeatedly uses expressions containing the *kanji* '*kuchi*' (口), literally meaning 'mouth' but with many idiomatic and metaphorical connotations including 'speech', 'taste', and 'opening'. Thus Onni finds herself "stammering" or "dumbfounded" (*kuchi gomori* 口ごもり; *kuchi o tozasu* 口を閉ざす), Ajumoni's oppositional opinions "interject" (*kuchi o hasamu* 口を挟む), while Yuhi "loses her voice" (*kuchi o kikanai* 口をきかない). Speaking, too, is rendered idiomatically rather than the more usual '*hanasu*' as 'giving voice [to]' (*kuchi ni dasu* 口に出す) or '[words] leaving the mouth' (*kuchi kara deru* 口から出る), the latter endowing Yuhi's speech with an apparent agency of its own. Other 'mouths' abound: slander (*waruguchi* 悪口), vocal cadence (*kuchō* 口調), verbal debate (*kōron* 口論), and often when '*kuchi*' is conspicuously added or alternative terms exist, as in 'sleeve opening' (*sodeguchi* 袖口), 'entranceway' (*genkanguchi* 玄関口), 'doorway' (*doaguchi* ドア口), and 'regrettable' (*kuchioshii* 口惜しい). In effect, Yi's prose beckons open-mouthed.

Scattered with these ideographic 'gaps', *Yuhi* presents a polyphonic text that simultaneously swallows speech as it gives voice to Yuhi's silences, plural, which act strategically against the colonisation of her language by Korean, Japanese, or the dictates of her Korean host sister-cum-language tutor. In *Yuhi*, silences do not appear as the opposite to language but, like the wounds in the narrative of *Kazukime* and spaces within Kuja, they tell a story of their own. Epitomised by the unreadable text that Yuhi entrusts to Onni after her departure, this story of silence is moreover endowed with the ability to enact violence against those who would speak for her. Yuhi's absence opens her up to multiple misreadings to which she cannot answer back, risking even her erasure through being forgotten. Yet this manoeuvre also affords Yuhi an unreachable position from which to assert her heterogeneity and resist appropriation and

assimilation by others. Neither absolutely knowable nor unknowable, as a spectral

apparition Yuhi refuses possession by and of another and instead haunts her narrative as

a trace of something past with the impending promise of future return. Moreover, by

replacing Yuhi's physical body with a body of *text*, *Yuhi* might be seen to develop the

concerns with silence, violence, and absence that are evident within *Kazukime*, a text

written six years earlier, while removing the problematic motif of that novel, namely

kanojo's psychosomatic pain.

Yuhi continues to evoke the irreconciliability of hysterical motifs that pervade *Kazukime*,

which perhaps explains the overriding psychoanalytical bent of appraisals that first

sought to diversify earlier critiques based on dichotomies and national oppositions. For

example, reading Yuhi as "first and foremost a psychoanalytic drama of Language" (Ryu,

2006, p. 315), Ryu seeks to understand Yuhi's "unrepresentable" language as an example

of the "Lacanian real" (Ryu 2006: 319). Preceding Ryu's engagement with the novel,

Yukie Okano interprets these linguistic devices vis-à-vis the semiotic, after Kristeva's

development of Lacanian theory explored in the discussion of *Kazukime* above. Jacques

Lévy similarly names Yuhi's language as "pre-lingual" (2000, pp. 114-115). Following the

critical approach towards *Kazukime* above, I am also convinced of the significant insights

that psychoanalytical theory can bring to a reading of *Yuhi*. However, despite accepting

Yuhi's arrival in Japan as a given, a focus upon Yuhi's "pre-linguality" based upon her

struggles with the Korean language suggests a failure to recognise her native fluency in

Japanese implied in the lengthy manuscript she writes, and her collection of Japanese

books. In short, if these psychoanalytical models highlight Yuhi's psychological conflict as

stemming from a linguistic lack predicated only with respect to her Korean as the ethnic

mother tongue, then here I offer a more deconstructive approach in order to interrogate

the tensions brought about at the level of text as they exemplify pervasive themes of spectral absence, bilinguality, and especially translation.

This move from psychoanalysis towards a reading of *Yuhi* based on deconstructive thought reflects the shift that takes place between *Kazukime* and *Yuhi*. While both novels share a resistance to commensurability, as suggested in the move from the 'hysterical body' to interlocking 'bodies of text', I argue that irreducibility in *Yuhi* comes instead through the model of translation, especially as elucidated in the work of Naoki Sakai. By juxtaposing both novels it will become possible to demonstrate significant links between hysteria and translation, both actions and products, that should further reinvigorate appraisals of Yi's writing. For Walter Benjamin whose work informs Sakai's, the act of translating leaves behind an untranslatable trace of the original that haunts the resultant translation (Benjamin, 1999). Likewise, Yuhi's spectral presence/absence within her own novel is the enduring remnant of her irreducible heterogeneity. This ghostly effect is then doubled since the niece's Korean narrative voice has been transposed into Japanese by an invisible translator. Guided by Sakai's view of translation and its influences in Derridean deconstructive practices this section will bend an ear to the silences within *Yuhi* in order to build upon existing interpretations of language, heterolinguality, and difference in the text. My aim here is to trace Yuhi's ambiguity in terms of the spectre and of (un)translatability in order to posit Yuhi as a figure in and of translation.

2.8 The spectre of unknowability

> The instant I hung up the telephone call from Yuhi, I lost my sense of composure.
> The top of my desk was piled up with telegrams and materials needing to be filed. However, I could not bring myself to work at all.

> Meanwhile, my wristwatch pointed to 4 o' clock.
> I looked up and saw that the company clock was showing the same time.
> After a while I set upon my remaining work, and at shortly before 6 o' clock I made an immediate start at preparations to wind up work for the day. At 6 o' clock exactly, I left the office.
> I flagged down an empty taxi that had come speeding towards me and jumped in. As the taxi set off in the direction of home, as though suddenly reminded, once again I lost my grip. Yuhi's voice from the telephone encroached upon me just as vividly as though she was speaking to me now. With each time the taxi slammed its brakes before a set of traffic lights, Yuhi would appear on the inside of my flinching eyelids, only to recede from view once we set off again. (p. 246)

The opening passage of *Yuhi* is masterful for its immediate enactment of rupture and shock that will reverberate until the novel's end, exemplified in the telephone call made by Yuhi from the airport to Onni's workplace. The telephone is already familiar in theory, as in life, as a symbol of interruption, disruption, and unfamiliar disturbance.[114] In both psychoanalysis and deconstructive thought, the telephone has emerged as a telepathic medium with which to contact the dead, while the etymology suggests speaking (*phone*) from a distance (*tele*). As *Yuhi* is a Japanese text, the specificity of the term, *denwa* (電話) might warrant attention. While the second character refers to speech in an echo of the Greek, *phone*, the first character is not a measure of distance but of time. *Den* (電) standing alone signifies lightning, and by modern extrapolation, electricity. A literal rendering might therefore be "lightning speak," which captures the swift, aggressive, and shocking effect that Yuhi's telephone call has upon Onni. Yi's prose reflects Onni's instability, indenting each sentence as though the start of a new paragraph. Evoking a shortness of breath, these opening sentences refuse to flow, but hang upon tenterhooks while Onni fights to reclaim her composure and the continuation of her narrative.

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[114] I take my lead here from two deconstructive discussions of the telephone and its significance in conversations between Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous: "Teleanalysis" (Bennington, 2013) and "Crossing Lines: Jacques Derrida and Hélène Cixous on the Phone" (Prenowitz, 2008).

As a point of continuity between the two textual analyses in this chapter, Onni's hanging up of the receiver picks up from the point at which Keiko replaces hers at the end of *Kazukime*. Yet both scenes also enact a disconnection in the image of Keiko "cutting off" (*kitta*) her final telephone call and the exact same act that is replayed by Onni. Within this attempt to bring both works of narrative fiction together, the telephone, or rather of the line cut dead, in both the closing sentence of *Kazukime* and the opening line of *Yuhi*, therefore suggests a deep textual dis/connection. As the opening scene of *Yuhi* unfolds, it becomes apparent that Onni has been opposed to Yuhi's sudden decision to give up her studies in Korea and leave. Although Onni had arranged to take the afternoon off to accompany Yuhi to the airport, her anger compels her to rethink. In the end, Onni announces to her boss that she no longer needs to leave, and remains at work the full day in clear protest against Yuhi's defiance. In replacing the receiver, Onni not only ends the conversation but also cuts off Yuhi. With the ties between them severed, Yuhi is cast out into the space beyond the text.

The medium of the telephone reiterates Yuhi's spectrality, allowing her to intercept the text while being simultaneously present and absent yet fully neither. Her presence irreparably deferred, Yuhi's ghostly figure embodies the spectral quality of the trace, which for Derrida "is constituted by the double force of repetition and erasure" (Derrida, 2001, p. 284). Even after Yuhi has left for Japan, the telephone allows her re-entry into the narrative and Onni's consciousness while emphasising her position elsewhere, from whereon her she repeatedly re-appears and disappears.

> On the road in front of the house there was not a soul to be seen, nor was there any sign that any person or car might appear from around the corner. I could no longer hear the rumble of the taxi, which was by now out of sight.
> The voice of Yuhi in my memory pierced into my back. The movement of a gaze too, steeped in that voice itself, materialised before me. Lured by this voice and this gaze, I turned around. Yuhi was standing beside me. (p. 247)

Yi's prose plays with ambiguity, as for a moment it seems that Yuhi has returned and

appears now before Onni, when in fact, the image has been conjured by Onni's memory.

Yet Onni is clearly unnerved by the uncanny nature of this return, which is reinforced by

the lonely atmosphere and the sudden rising up of a voice and gaze as implied by the

verb *tachiarawareta* ("materialised"). Overlain with Yuhi's gaze, Yuhi's voice is detached

from the telephone and beckons Onni to retrace the period of her stay.

However, Onni's recollections belie the higher status from where she may cast judgment

on Yuhi, especially vis-à-vis her progress in her Korean studies. Having assumed the role

of Yuhi's tutor, Onni is wont throughout the narrative to highlight the imperfections in

Yuhi's Korean, with its "incorrect pronunciation that bore nothing if not a Japanese

accent" (p. 259). Later recalling Yuhi's greeting on her first introduction, Onni notes

further: "Her pronunciation was awkward and inelegant. I felt as though it was closer to

a Gyeongsang-do accent than to a Japanese accent" (p. 271). Here, Onni marks Yuhi's

speech not by her Japanese voice but by a Korean, yet no less 'other' point of reference.

As a former province of the Joseon Dynasty (1392 – 1897) and the site of modern-day

Busan, the reference to Gyeongsang-do situates Yuhi's language in a lesser position as

both out-of-date and provincial with respect to the metropolitan Seoul.[115] This

impression of otherness lingers with Yuhi's androgynous appearance.

> She wore a white V-neck pullover with a navy polo shirt underneath, and a
> pair of the same navy-coloured trousers. Her baby-face made it hard to think
> of her as a university student no matter how you looked at her. With her
> petite frame, the swell of her hips, and the air of her walk, one could finally

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[115] Why Yi might have chosen Gyeongsang-do province above all others is uncertain. Parts of
Gyeongsang-do, the confederacy of Gaya especially, were rumoured to have been kept under
continuous rule by Japan. Although this is now commonly refuted, the issue of whether Gyeongsang-
do is part of Japan or part of Korea ensues today. It is therefore a question that resonates with the
paradox of *zainichi* identity. As the majority of Korean prime ministers have hailed from the province,
Gyeongsang has also benefited from successive, favourable distributions of wealth and industry that
place it in a slightly rivalrous position vis-à-vis Seoul akin to Onni's stance towards Yuhi.

see that she was a girl, yet still there was something androgynous about her. Even her voice gave that impression." (pp. 271-72)

Falling between genders as "both a young boy and a young girl" (p. 274), and between generations as childlike despite her 27 years (p. 275), Yuhi's looks make her difficult to define, her liminal appearance echoing her spectral being yet not-being. Yuhi's in-betweenness, and the difficulty of ascertaining her age and gender, recalls the radical hybridity of the *shōjo* who haunts the text of "Pingihira Hill". Seen by Onni, whose responsibility as Yuhi's tutor is to correct her student's imperfections, such aberrations permeate through to Yuhi's Korean-speaking voice, characterising it as flawed and inferior. With Yuhi no longer present, Onni's reflections reveal her ambivalent feelings towards Yuhi that she has tried to suppress, and that now return to haunt her in the form of Yuhi's voice.

The novel's opening ties Yuhi to her voice, yet rather than the telephone conversation itself it is a solitary word spoken within a different memory, of Onni and Yuhi gazing up at the rocky mountain ridge that lies beyond the approach to the house soon after Yuhi's arrival, that now resounds.

> --- 바위 (岩)
> 由熙の声を思い出し、その発音を真似るようにして私は呟いた。ウィの音を強調し、ことさら正確に発音しようとしていた由熙の、かえってぎこちなく聞こえたその声が蘇った。

> --- 바위 (岩)
> I recalled Yuhi's voice, and muttered as I tried to imitate her pronunciation. Stressing the ui sound in an attempt to pronounce it exactly correctly, the resurrected voice of Yuhi's sounded all the more awkward. (p. 248)

Paui describes the mountain ridge that serves as a recurrent motif within the novel. It was these mountains and their beauty that Yuhi confesses as having led her to seek out an estate agent in the area, and thus led to her staying in Ajumoni's home (p. 292). Yet

despite her admiration of the ridge, Yuhi declines every invitation to join Ajumoni on her

regular ascents. Onni likewise refuses to accompany her aunt, and so the rocky

landscape, like Yuhi's voice, remains forever at a distance.

Catherine Ryu observes that Onni's focus upon Yi's pronunciation here particularises

Yuhi's voice, acting not only as a reminder of Yuhi but also of her otherness through her

foreign accent. Onni's attempt to recreate this pronunciation therefore expresses a

"desperate attempt to fill Yuhi's absence" by evoking that unique voice (Ryu, 2006, p.

321). Yet in Yi's prose this voice is tripled in translation, appearing thus: 바위 (岩ᵇᵃʷⁱ). The

first characters written in hangŭl are glossed with their Korean pronunciation written in

katakana, the default Japanese script used for loanwords from other languages and thus

widely read as a marker of foreignness. The Japanese *kanji*, pronounced *iwa*, follows in

parentheses allowing readers of Japanese to comprehend the word's meaning, 'rock.'

The fragmented nature of Yuhi's voice bestows upon it a unique force, as Onni recalls:

> That voice had a curious quality. The tone was on the slow side but there was
> an air of something frenetic caught within the breathing, perhaps one should
> say fractured (*bunretsu shita*), something restless that made one sense the
> uncertain. It was neither high-pitched, nor certainly not low-pitched, and one
> could not really say that it was a wholly pleasant voice, but therein, causing
> the start and end of every word uttered to appear to graze past each other,
> there was a faintly audible yet powerful strength. (p. 279)

In the specific word, *paui,* this powerfully strong voice epitomises the untranslatable,

since no English rendering can fully satisfy the conditions and significance of the original

text. Even within Yi's prose, Yuhi's voice is in excess of itself since her Korean cannot be

read (heard) without the echo of its Japanese translation; there can be no original voice

since that, like Yuhi's spectral being, has been irretrievably covered over and deferred by

repeated layers of translation. Onni's attempt to 'resurrect' this voice must therefore fail

since it cannot bridge the gap between *paui* and *iwa*, nor between the phonetic and

ideographic scripts—and nature—of the text. Despite her attempts, the aporia conjured

by Yuhi's enunciation cannot be filled.

In *Translation and Subjectivity* (1997), Naoki Sakai delineates the relation between

enunciative address and communication as of "aim" and "strike;" the former being a

performative act, the latter anticipating its accomplishment (Sakai, 1997, p. 4). Likewise,

Yuhi's single utterance, isolated from a specific context of meaning, speaks without

saying what it means. Yet its translation attests to its significance, casting off the

assumption of what Sakai terms the "homolingual address" that presumes

"'communication' is guaranteed and to be taken as anterior to 'address'" (Sakai, 1997, p.

5). Instead, Yuhi's enunciation of the one word, *paui*, constitutes a "'heterolingual' mode

of address," which demands

> the addressee to act to incept or receive what is offered by the addresser.
> That is to say, what is addressed to the addressee is not automatically
> delivered precisely because of the disparity between addressing and
> communicating, of a disparity that also expresses the essential distance not
> only of the addressee from the addresser but also of the addressee of
> addresser from himself or herself. In the heterolingual address, therefore,
> the act of inception or reception occurs as the act of translation, and
> translation takes place at every listening and reading. Whereas translation is
> necessary only between the interior or a homogeneous medium and its
> outside in the case of the homolingual address, it is upheld in the
> heterolingual address that, in principle, translation occurs whenever the
> addressee accepts a delivery from the addresser. (Sakai, 1997, pp. 8-9)

Given how Yuhi's irreducible heterogeneity is demonstrated through her spectrality,

from her doubly deferred position as Other not only to Onni but within the framework of

her own narrative, the voice that now embodies in her absence enunciates in a

heterolingual mode. Like her unexpected telephone call, Yuhi's address demands to be

intercepted in order to be heard. While Onni's repetition facilitates Yuhi's

communication by continuing her echo after she has gone, it is only with the invisible

translator that the significance of this sound, *paui*, can be received as *iwa* (rock). By smashing this one word into the play of three scripts shown in the text, the translator successfully refigures the echo of Yuhi's voice into a bilingual utterance in which both Japanese and Korean implicate one another.[116] But most significantly, since this translator satisfactorily constitutes neither the speaking 'I' of the text, nor the 'you' to whom it is addressed (Sakai, 1997, p. 12), this interception disrupts Onni's attempt to appropriate Yuhi's voice and speak in her stead.

Yuhi's heterolingual enunciation, *paui*, returns the reader to the mountainscape beyond the two women's house that is formed emphatically by "rocky mountains" (*iwa-yama*). Yet it also foreshadows a physical lump that develops gradually in Onni's throat, only to "burst" and "throb" whenever she recalls given events and Yuhi's expressions (p. 293). As the narrative progresses and Onni is assailed by one memory after another, this lump comes to embody Yuhi, even adopting her name.

> That day six months ago, was it not the case that I should have noticed more, and thought more about Yuhi. Coming to this realisation now, I felt the sharp, pricking pain of a small lump called Yuhi deep within my chest. (p. 308)

The earthy connotations of this lump appear to be the uncanny materialisation of Yuhi's voice, which is inextricably bound to the mountainous landscape. As this image constricts Onni's chest, this lump is also clearly comparable to the ungraspable *mushi* (insect) that Keiko senses within her throat in *Kazukime*, hinting that it could be a similar manifestation of Yuhi's unknowability.

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[116] On the translator's positionality, Sakai writes that she "has to enunciate for an essentially mixed and linguistically heterogeneous audience. In order to function as translator, she must listen, read, speak, or write in the multiplicity of languages, so that the representation of translation as a transfer from one language to another is possible only as long as the translator acts as a heterolingual agent and addresses herself from a position of linguistic multiplicity: she necessarily occupies a position in which multiple languages are implicated within one another" (Sakai, 1997, p. 9).

2.9 The violence of the silent text

Coming at the centre of the novel, Onni's most vivid memory recalls a shopping trip the

two make into the city in order for Yuhi to buy a permanent desk (to replace the aunt's

collapsible one) for her studies. Although Yuhi initially seems enthusiastic and more

familiar with the districts of suburban Seoul than her host and guide, she is soon

overwhelmed by the cacophony of the teeming crowds until her "voice suddenly failed

her" (p. 300). Despite Onni's suggestions to postpone the venture Yuhi insists on

perservering, relying on Onni to drag her through the throngs, yet the toll taken upon

her is clear.

> Unblinking, she dropped her eyeline to a point on the pavement, and with
> her gaze unflinching, Yuhi continued mumbling so that she could not hear my
> voice. It was Japanese. Like a doll hardened out of wax her cheeks remained
> motionless, only her lips were moving faintly. To me, with absolutely no
> knowledge of Japanese, Yuhi's mumblings sounded like a curse. (p. 302)

Amid the backdrop of shouting, a blaring radio, and a knife seller's attempts to solicit the

two women's custom, Yuhi's body grows limp and unable to hold firm against the other

swaying passengers, whereupon Onni forces Yuhi to return home just one stop short of

their destination.

The changes in Yuhi and especially her speech recalls the hysterical motifs explored in

the first half of this chapter. With only a liminal physical presence, however, Yuhi's

transformation manifests not through bodily violence but in her voice that stumbles and

shrivels until it is almost imperceptible. Moreover, while this "mumbling" suggests on

one hand Yuhi vulnerability, the "curse" that she mutters is clearly emboldening, making

her increasingly impenetrable to Onni's instructions.

> ---What's the matter? Please say something, if you don't talk to me then I
> cannot know.

> I spoke earnestly into her ear. Yuhi could surely hear me. That much I knew.
> But even though she could hear me, the sense was conveyed that she was
> rejecting the sound, and throwing aside my voice. (p. 304)

The two women's voices are suddenly placed in combat, with Yuhi successfully blocking

and defeating Onni's own. Only then does Yuhi return to speaking Korean, but as her

glasses become "clouded by tears and breath" her speech is stuttered and fragmented:

"Onni, go, desk, want to buy" (p. 306). As their duel intensifies, just before the two

women alight from the bus Yuhi breaks out of her silence with even greater vigour, her

voice engulfing the entire aural melee: "Yuhi let out her voice and cried. The thundering

traffic and the voice of the street pedlar were no longer audible, yet as I crouched down

all I could hear was Yuhi's low-pitched crying voice" (p. 306).

As an apparent symptom of her failure to cope in this foreign environment, Yuhi's

aphonia suggests a return to the Freudian discourse of hysteria outlined in the discussion

of *Kazukime*.[117] Yet Yuhi's ability to silence Onni and the Korean soundscape with her

Japanese tongue also bears a mark of empowerment that derives from her refusal to

conform among the streets of Seoul, and a criticism of common behaviour she witnesses

there such as hand-holding. Thus Yukie Okano writes, "[c]onfronted with this spectacle

considered 'everyday' to Korean people, Yuhi is assaulted by a breed of hysteria. Can we

not therefore read this scene as an abstract depiction of Yuhi's rejection (*kyozetsu*) of

what we might term the violent incursion of language?" (Okano, 1997, p. 86). Although I

am wary of Okano's diagnostic tone, the point implied is that Yuhi's recoiling is not

merely a physiological response to the foreignness of a city and people among which she

aspires, and subsequently fails, to belong.

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[117] In an account that resonates with Yi's text, Freud wrote of Frau Emmy von N., "She speaks as if it were arduous, in a quiet voice that is occasionally interrupted to the point of stuttering by spastic breaks in her speech" (Freud & Breuer, 2004, p. 51).

Later, Yuhi admits to Onni:

> ---At school and in town, the Korean that everyone speaks cannot help but
> sound to me like a tear gas bomb. Caustic, bitter, superior, just hearing it
> makes it hard to breathe. No matter which homestay I went to, they all
> spoke a Korean that I didn't like. (p. 334)

The idea that Yuhi is critical only of Korean in opposition to Japanese is contradicted

when she elsewhere expresses her affection for the language spoken by the aunt and

her niece. Rather, the official settings of school and town that Yuhi cites demonstrate

that, as Okano continues, Yuhi's rejection is a more general refusal of all symbolically

structured language in favour of the fluidity of expression described by the Kristevan

semiotic (Okano, 1997, p. 86). Just as Ore's "war cry" irrupts into Sakiyama's quasi-

Okinawan abyss, Yuhi's "letting out" of her voice interrupts the surroundings by which

she is overwhelmed. In addition to silencing the crowds, Yuhi's cry pits a pre-lingual

mode of appeal against symbolic language represented by Onni, who finds herself once

more "unable to search for the words to say" (p. 334).

Yuhi's cry is not her only weapon with which to counter the "tear-gas bomb" of Korean,

however; she also deploys Japanese. From Onni's perspective, Japanese is the language

of her former colonisers, imposed during Japan's invasion of Asia in the 1930s as a key

assimilative policy in the creation of loyal Korean subjects to the Japanese Emperor. This

historical background creates a tension between Onni and her attempts to read Yuhi's

writing. It fuels Onni's distrust of Yuhi's Japanese books, which she regards to be the

greatest hindrance to the successful development of Yuhi's Korean skills (pp. 296-7).

Moreover, through Onni's awareness of groups in Japan affiliated to the communist

North, Japanese represents a vehicle through which "dangerous" ideologies might be

imported into her aunt's house (p. 268). Onni's reactions reveal her prejudices and belief

in the absoluteness of national categories, and the significance of language in their

formation. The fact that Onni is unable to read and thus monitor the content of Yuhi's

books thus serves to heighten her fear, as the presence of these foreign, unreadable

texts within her home threatens to blur these axiomatic divides.

As the language that she is in Seoul to actively study Korean is more explicitly tied to the

symbolic structures of grammar than Japanese within Yuhi's present environment.

Rather than a hindrance to her learning of Korean, Japanese thus provides Yuhi with an

escape from the imposed rules of language and their aural reminders on the streets.

Viewed in this way, Yuhi's apparent inability to master those rules within her university

assignments suggests instead a wilful reluctance on her part. As with Yuhi's mutterings in

Japanese, her resistance to the rules of Korean frustrates Onni. After appointing herself

Yuhi's tutor, Onni vacillates between encouraging Yuhi and critiquing her efforts, for

example when Yuhi fails to master the spacing between words that is present only in

Korean, not in Japanese:

> Yuhi, despite all that you've said, why can you not separate your words
> (*tiosugi*)? Look, here in this passage and in this one, surely you know that you
> have to leave wider spaces. Here's another, and another. Space out your
> writing to the extent you think the space might be too wide. You have to get
> the hang of *tiosugi*, and quickly. You must not let your writing ramble along
> like Japanese. You know that, don't you, that you're not writing in Japanese?
> Just looking at this report of yours I feel disgusted. If this was an answer
> sheet, it's possible that nobody would even read it. (p. 297)

In her self-appointed educational role, Onni is charged with safeguarding the Korean

grammar in the hands of her disobedient protégé, and from the invading influences of

Japanese. Thus, while her handling of Yuhi's panic in the town belies Onni's concern for

the wellbeing of her charge, her scathing corrective methods reveal a deeper-seated

criticism and distrust of Yuhi's language, that is both as the enemy's tongue of Japanese

and as a confusion of that and Korean.[118]

Japanese thus becomes a tool through which Yuhi resurrects historically-rooted

antagonisms and challenges Korean. Yet like her spectrality that places her between

presence and absence, Yuhi's bilinguality also blurs the presumed borders between

these national languages; an effect that Onni finds unsettling, even threatening. This

uncertainty of language is revealed in the sole direct example of Yuhi's Japanese voice

within the novel: the words *ii nioi* ("smells nice") transcribed in *katakana* so as to 'accent'

her native Japanese as somehow foreign (p. 250). On first impressions, Yuhi's Japanese

here is no longer "*nihongo*" but a foreign language ("*gaikokugo*"), set apart from her

other utterances that are filtered through the (Onni's) Korean (Ueda, 2000, pp. 140-141).

However, while Ueda's discussion is the only one to refer explicitly to the opacity of

translation (ibid.), this reading overlooks the additional act that translates Onni's Korean

narrative into Japanese. Read as a translated text, this *katakana* in fact highlights the

alien sound, devoid of meaning, with which Yuhi's Japanese words meet Onni's non-

comprehending ear. Moreover, without additional glosses, Yuhi's Japanese appears here

to be monolingual, unlike her fractured Korean voice. As a purely phonetic script,

katakana renders this utterance in a form that is as detached as possible from textual

meaning, that is, as a sound almost as intangible as the smell it describes.

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[118] As a further example that supports this interpretation, during a conversation over Korean writers, Yuhi ventures Yi Sang (1910-1937), an avant-garde novelist who was arrested in Japan for deviant thought; a choice of which Onni approves. However, when Yuhi also expresses her appreciation of Yi Kwang-su (1892-1950), a well-known *Shin-nichi-ha* or collaborator with the Japanese Imperial rule, Onni's disapproval is apparent. In other words, while Yuhi's stance allows her to admire both writers, Onni's judgement follows a question of either/or pertaining to one's national loyalties; a discomfort that is exacerbated by Yuhi's gaze which appears to "bore into" (*kuiiru yō ni*) her while they talk (pp. 284-5).

Aside from this solitary instance, however, the Japanese that Yuhi speaks and writes

defies symbolic representation within the text. Nowhere is this more evident than in the

manuscript that Yuhi entrusts to Onni in her final telephone call:

> --If something happens and it gets lost, I won't mind. Just because I've asked
> you to take care of it, there is absolutely no need for you to feel burdened by
> it, Onni. I'm sorry to ask this of you so suddenly. I didn't know what to do. I
> couldn't throw it out or burn it, nor did I feel like taking it to Japan… To tell
> the truth, it's something I've been writing since I began living in the house. I
> couldn't throw it away… Onni, please dispose of it if you can. You don't have
> to keep hold of it so please throw it away.
> Yuhi seemed to twitch, and shook her voice as she spoke. (p. 260)

Although the manuscript's significance initially appears small, Yuhi's indifference is soon

undermined by her trembling voice and confessed inability to discard of it herself. Yet

the true burden placed upon Onni as carer of this manuscript is increased when she asks

whether she should refrain from reading it, only to be told by Yuhi, "…but Onni, I don't

expect you'll be able to read it. It's in Japanese" (ibid.). In this nonchalant manner, Yuhi's

manuscript is introduced within the narrative, yet given Onni's inability to read Japanese,

its contents remain sealed off. This aporia is made more conspicuous given that the

novel's narrative voice has been entirely translated into Japanese. Rather than give

access to Yuhi's writings, this layer of translation only translates the gap within Onni's

narration. Echoing the unseen manuscript generated by the unspoken narrative of

Grandma Hide in "Figuru Winds", what lies within Yuhi's writings remains untold

throughout the novel.

In the absence of disclosing the contents of the text itself, the novel returns repeatedly

to Onni's attempts to locate, open, and ultimately read Yuhi's writing. Yuhi's voice and

gaze flit uncannily through these scenes, ironically making its owner more tangible than

the recollections told from Onni's third-person stance. Thus when Onni first places the

brown envelope in which the pages have been stored on her lap, she is haunted by their

author:

> Yuhi was still in this room. Some sense definitely remained, and I couldn't
> escape the feeling that it was detaining me from trying to get away, rooting
> me to my seat. (p. 262)

Given Onni's distrust of Japanese and fear of the script that she cannot read, it is

unsurprising that she approaches Yuhi's writing with trepidation (*obie*) (p. 258, p. 263).

Yet this fear is compounded by the violently disarming blow cast by Yuhi's act itself,

registered in Onni's hesitancy, her ongoing suspicion that Yuhi is somehow still present,

and the familiar recurrence of the small lump in her throat.

To testify to the tension brought about by this manuscript, it takes a further 48 pages

(based on the 1997 Kodansha bunkobon edition; slightly under half of the novel's full

length) before Onni is able to begin tracing Yuhi's Japanese. On this first encounter,

however, Onni becomes entranced as

> the expressions of the characters became etched, seared, their sounds
> becoming a voice within my memory, as though to begin shaking that small
> lump at any time now. あ, い, う, え, お. I knew these sounds. (p. 311)

Onni's recollection of the phonetic Japanese characters, "a, i, u, e, o" contradicts her

purported lack of ability, bringing her closer to Yuhi's own bilinguality. Yet this proximity

between both women is quickly reversed as Yuhi's writing pulls Onni in, arousing her

desire for Yuhi's quick adjustment to Korean life that is now "betrayed by Yuhi's

Japanese script" (p. 312). While Onni's longing for Yuhi to settle in Korea suggests her

desire for her protégé to find peace, it also implies a burden for Yuhi. For in order to

"come to think of all her grievances with respect to this country, as though each aspect

of it were her own" (ibid.), Yuhi must assimilate, an option that Yuhi's irreducible

otherness endlessly resists. Thus, while this distance grows smaller it can never be fully

overcome. Rather, as the conversations with her aunt reveal another aspect of Yuhi that Onni had never encountered, Onni is forced to accept that there is a part of Yuhi that must remain forever out of reach. This "Yuhi that has become text" (*moji ni natta Yuhi*) (p. 324) then mirrors this unknowable aporia left by Yuhi's departure by refusing Onni's attempts to be read. Emphasising Yuhi's resistance to being known and contained, the manuscript casts a retaliatory blow at Onni through the memories that assail her and the recurring echo of Yuhi's voice.

As the site where Yuhi penned her pages and where Onni now returns to decipher it, the desk symbolises writing, engagement, and memory. Describing the palimpsestic attributes of the mystic writing pad, Freud wrote, "[it] provides not only a receptive surface that can be used over and over again, like a slate, but also permanent traces of what has been written" (Freud, 1997, p. 211). While Yuhi's text evades Onni, resisting her comprehension, the presence of the desk suggests the possibility that Yuhi's writing has become imperceptibly engraved beneath her pages. No amount of endeavour will ever reproduce Yuhi's writing from the desk. Yet, just as Freud wrote that, "[w]e need not be disturbed by the fact that in the [desk] no use is made of the permanent traces of the notes that have been received; it is enough that they are present" (ibid.), the same may be said of Yuhi's desk. Like Yuhi's spectral shadow, the now empty desk hints not only at the absence of the protagonist's chance to speak; it is moreover a symbol imbued with the latent potential for this narrative voice to emerge. Yuhi's mission to buy a new desk no longer seems an arbitrary choice. Yet nor does her failure to do so, since this enables her to keep (re)tracing over the same grooves, turning the old desk into a store of memories that serves as the novel's guiding momentum.

The scenes that close the novel mirror the opening images of Onni's attempts to replicate Yuhi's enunciation of *paui*. Here again, Onni hears Yuhi's voice as something uncanny, reaching from beyond the sounds of the outside rain and Ajumoni's telephone call to her daughter, "just as though Yuhi was walking towards me" (p. 353). As Onni strives towards reconciliation with this voice within her memory, she finds herself "from a distance" now able to listen and understand Yuhi's Korean words. Attempting to enunciate once more, Onni mutters the sound, 아 ア, comprising the equivalent "a" sounds in both Korean (아) and Japanese *katakana* (ア) (354).

> A great crack ran down one of the rocks from its summit. Before my eyes, the tear grew wider, split the rock into two, and smashed it into scattered pieces.
> I gasped. I felt the lump deep inside my chest also split and scatter around. A dull throbbing flowed through my blood and spread throughout my body...
> I clutched my raised elbows tightly and constricted my chest so as to round up the shattered fragments and return the lump to its original form. The feeling of numbness slowly subsided. However, fragilely, the danger that another rupture could open up at any moment, continued to pain the depths of my breast.
> It felt as though Yuhi was near. (pp. 354-55)

Imbued now with the same fragmented quality with which she criticises Yuhi's voice, Onni's own voice now also begins to fragment. Having created a heterolingual utterance of her own, Onni witnesses the recurrent motifs of the novel—the mountain ridge and the lump in her chest—split, splinter, and scatter all around. It is after Onni's attempts to gather the fallen shards that Yuhi finally appears to draw near. Yet as the precarious fragility of this unity strikes at Onni's chest, it appears that far from occupying a certain form that can recall Yuhi's true being, it is the fragile and temporal nature of the lump and its constant threat to disperse and reform that is most evocative of Yuhi's self.

At the novel's climax, Onni once more attempts to enunciate the same single sound, only

for the emotional hurt of Yuhi's loss to be replaced with a deeply visceral agony inside

her throat.

> The small lump tumbled, ruptured, and Yuhi's face drifted up.
>
> --- 아ア
>
> Slowly I blinked, then muttered.
> Yuhi's writing appeared before me. Overlain with Yuhi's Japanese writing, Yuhi's handwritten hangŭl floated upwards.
> As though I had had my crutch snatched away from me, unable to walk, I froze at the bottom of the staircase. Yuhi's two forms of writing became fine needles and pierced my eyes, the sharp points as though ready to gouge into the depths of my eyeballs.
> Next, nothing came.
>
> Only the resonance of 아 stuck inside my throat, but whatever sound
>
> followed 아 would not come.
> As I scrabbled for this sound, trying to turn this sound into voice, my throat was gored by a bundle of writing needles and burst into flames. (pp.361-62)

Existing appraisals of Yuhi have witnessed in this closing passage Onni's successful

embracement of Yuhi's subjectivity. Repeating a shamanistic nuance seen in

interpretations of Yi's fiction elsewhere, Ryu reads the text's hold over Onni as a form of

"spirit possession". Thus possessed, Onni comes to share Yuhi's "agony of languages",

which leads her to embrace Yuhi's irreducible otherness without judgment (Ryu, 2006, p.

327). While it is tempting to witness this same "change of heart" (ibid.), such a reading

places the focus of agency on Onni as the presumed narrator of the novel. However,

even in the role of tutor, Onni is not unambiguously supportive of Yuhi. Rather, as

revealed through their shopping trip and Yuhi's bestowing of a Japanese body of text,

the two women's shared relationship is ruled by a more mutually antagonistic dynamic

that Yuhi frequently exploits.

Yuhi repeatedly resists Onni, be it her efforts to console on the bus or her attempts to

decipher her Japanese. While Onni's linguistic agony may bring her closer to

understanding Yuhi's own, it also represents the unrepresentable irreducibility and distance of Yuhi. While Yuhi is most commonly perceived to be silent within the novel vis-à-vis the constant flow of Onni's narration, in fact the opposite is true. For while Onni finds herself steadily lost for words until it is too painful to even enunciate one sound, Yuhi's voice draws increasingly nearer. As a form of expression that defies textual representation, Yuhi's voice presents a superlative form of her ambiguity and refusal of appropriation by either Onni or the novel itself. As the representative of ungrammatical, semiotic expression, it is frequently able to silence Onni, who stands for symbolically ordered language. This powerful device is then echoed in the unreadable manuscript that serves as the textual medium and translation of that spectral voice.

There is another problem in trying to conclude any correlation between the two women's experiences of language when one attends to Yuhi's bilingual status and to the translated nature of the text. As already discussed, a reading predicated on Yuhi's difficulty to learn Korean denies her presumed native fluency in Japanese as an alternative medium of language and risks forgetting that these struggles are only narrated through Onni, whose apparent frustration and sense of betrayal arguably make her viewpoint biased. Furthermore, the fact that the novel takes place entirely in translation arguably complicates any interpretation that is predicated on Onni providing the narrative voice. Yi did write occasionally in Korean, hence the fact that *Yuhi*, her only novel set entirely in Korea, first appeared in Japanese appears to be far more than a simple quirk of the text. Put differently, *Yuhi* as a Japanese text contains another layer of paradox to Yuhi's unknowability as a central yet absent protagonist. It is to this paradoxical layer that the text draws direct attention when it announces, "Onni, I am a hypocrite, I am a liar" (p.319).

In other words, the single act of translation that reshapes the entire narrative of *Yuhi*

serves to fundamentally disrupt any attempts by Onni and Ajumoni within the text, and

readers positioned outside of the text, to *know* Yuhi. As a radically heterogeneous figure

in and of translation within a heterolingual text, Yuhi occupies the ambiguous status of

being other akin to Sakai's allocation of the foreign within translation:

> If the foreign is unambiguously incomprehensible, unknowable, and
> unfamiliar, then translation simply cannot be done. If, conversely, the foreign
> is comprehensible, knowable and familiar, translation is unnecessary. Thus,
> the status of the foreign is ambiguous in translation. The foreign is
> incomprehensible and comprehensible, unknowable and knowable,
> unfamiliar and familiar at the same time. (Sakai, 2006, p. 73)

This ambiguity of the foreign reiterates the significance of Yuhi's spectrality as outlined

in the introduction to this section, as "an injunction to preserve the other [and]

safeguard the presence/ absence of what or who no longer exists in the flesh". Yuhi

embodies this spectral figure of translation as she vibrates constantly between absence

and spectral presence within the text. Just as the act of translation leaves behind an

untranslatable trace of the original, Yuhi's spectral presence/ absence haunts her own

novel-in-translation as an enduring remnant or revenant of untranslatability herself.

However, as a bilingual figure situated in the society of her second, non-native tongue,

Yuhi is not only a figure in translation but is a translator herself. As shown in the scenes

described above, the text draws attention to the bilingual nature of Yuhi's utterances in

phonetic glosses (*paui*: 바위〔バウイ〕) and the use of *katakana*. Even Onni identifies Yuhi's

translatory skills when she bemoans the awkward quality of her written Korean that

"seemed as though she was translating directly (*chokuyaku*) from Japanese" (p.295).

However, if previous commentators have read this awkwardness (*gikochinaku*) as

evidence of Yuhi's failed attempt to master standard Korean, then a focus on the

deliberately disruptive qualities of translation in Sakai's work gives Yuhi a level of agency

over how she communicates, if at all.

> Ineluctably, translation introduces a disjunctive instability into the putatively
> personal relations among the agents of speech, writing, listening and reading.
> *In respect to the addresser/addressee structure, the translator must be*
> *internally split and multiple, and devoid of a stable positionality. At best, she*
> *can be a subject in transit,* first because the translator cannot be an
> "individual" in the sense of individuum in order to perform translation, and
> second because she is a singular that marks an elusive point of discontinuity
> in the social, whereas translation is the practice of creating continuity at that
> singular point of discontinuity. (Sakai, 1997, p. 13, emphasis mine)

By seeing Yuhi as a translator, one is able to reappraise her appearance as infinitely

fractured and isolated so that her textual ambiguity affords her an agency of her own.

Apparently co-conspiring with the Japanese translator of the novel, Yuhi resists both

appropriation and assimilation by refusing to give away more of herself than she can

afford.

As simultaneously both translated figure and a translator in her own right, Yuhi is placed

within a dialectic that makes her position indeterminable. This position is then blurred

further by the other 'translations' of Yuhi: namely the manuscript which Onni comes to

name "Yuhi as text", and the novel, *Yuhi*, itself. As a protagonist who is everywhere yet

nowhere, written *out* more than she is written, Yuhi and her textual echoes open up a

critical aporia and insurmountable, untranslatable distance. Just as Onni's attempts to

know and speak for Yuhi stumble onto silence, through these heterolingual strategies

more than the story itself, *Yuhi* as a novel successfully deflects any attempt to pin its lead

down. Beyond the reaches of those who would appropriate her, Yuhi's unknowable

absence endows her with a radical instability, paradoxically placing her in a position from

which she can never be fully erased.

2.10 Conclusion

Although there is nothing to suggest that *Kazukime* and *Yuhi* share any special connection among the novels within Yi's oeuvre, a reading of both works in conjunction reveals many similarities so that the latter appears to rewrite the former. Both feature characters whose identities are in oscillation, never fully ascertainable. This is ensured in the undulating structure of both works: while *Kazukime* does this through distinct, alternating chapters, the singular narrative stream of *Yuhi* shifts back and forth between Onni's actions in the present and the past memories that flood back in turn. The attempt to pin down both characters is moreover made by an older sisterly figure: *kanojo*'s stepsister, Keiko; and the Korean niece, Onni, respectively. While both of these women depart from an apparent desire to engage with and understand the 'truth' of the younger 'sisters' they have lost, *kanojo* and Yuhi repeatedly block these respective attempts. Thus, Keiko cuts off the third and final acquaintance that might shed light on *kanojo*, while Onni's speech is gradually destabilised by the heterolingual echoes of Yuhi's voice. The direction of violence is therefore what marks the biggest difference between these two novels. For while a hysterical reading of *Kazukime* sees *kanojo* take aim at herself through a kind of bodily expression that might avoid the hegemonic entrapments of language, the translated nature of *Yuhi* witnesses an outward retaliation against Onni's tutorly efforts to impose the constraints of symbolic grammar.

Is it therefore possible to relate these two distinct models, of hysteria and translation, as they emerge within these two novels by Yi? Translation "is the work or process of re-writing and re-stating, but at the same time is the text which emerges as a result of passing through this work or process" (Sakai, 2009b). Hysteria within Freudian

terminology repeats this double meaning, as the mechanism of psychical splitting that

follows a traumatic event or idea as well as the instability that results. Both translation

and hysteria are defined through this gesture of separation and rupture: as hysteria

attempts to force out the unconscious from the conscious mind, translation uncouples a

word's sense of meaning from its body in one language, into the form of another.

Moreover, as the hysterical conversion leaves a remnant of the traumatic memory that

cannot be fully exiled from the patient's psyche, the act of translation gives birth to the

trace element of untranslatability (Sakai, 2006, p. 75). As comparable processes and

effects, hysteria and translation function in Yi's two novels in related ways by inciting

difference out of incommensurability (that is, rather than erasing that difference), in

order to resist the homogenisation of either protagonist or the appropriation of their

narratives.

At the centre of the hysterical reading of *Kazukime* the hysteric provides a model which,

aided by Cixous's strategic re-imagining, can turn the psychosomatic attacks that

beleaguer her into targeted strikes against the symbolic walls within which she is

contained. In committing harm against her bodily structure, *kanojo*'s redemption is

deeply problematic even—and especially—in death. Although *kanojo*'s suicide

culminates in a more peaceful form of body language, this return to a womb-like,

semiotic space conjures the full range of ambiguous possibilities and perils that inform

Lee Chonghwa's dilemma to tell or not to tell. As both the intermediary between

addresser and addressee, however, the translator echoes the liminal, in-between

position of the hysteric. As Sakai writes, "since [the translator] is an addressee for whom

communication is not rigidly assumed, then the in-between translator stands in as both a

connector between addresser-address-addressee and as a site of rupture in the centre of

this formulation" (Sakai, 1997, p. 12). Just as the hysteric oscillates between her two states of consciousness, refusing to occupy a linear, subjective position, so the translator reveals an indeterminate figure that refuses to be designated simply as either "I" or "you" (ibid.).

It is this shared motif, I argue, that binds these novels as two discontinuous yet connected works within Yi's oeuvre, and reveals a successful development in *Yuhi* of the central concerns of *Kazukime* that speak back all the while, through multiple haunting silences, to Lee's existential ambiguity. As a novel that repeatedly eludes any efforts to pin down the intertwined levels of plot, character, and motif, *Yuhi* displays a more critically attuned development of the themes within *Kazukime* without the recourse to bodily harm and certain death. Yuhi suffers, stammers, and stumbles; yet with only a spectral body-in-absence, the means of her departure allows for her possible return denied to *kanojo*, not only physically but through the haunting remnants of her voice and written text. In this shift from *kanojo*'s body/language to the bilingual enunciations of Yuhi's voice and untranslatable text, this reading also identifies a turn between the two novels, whereby the violence that *kanojo* enacts upon her own body is translated into the attacks that Yuhi mounts against symbolic language and Onni as its closest guardian. After all, it is not Yuhi but rather Onni who is ultimately rendered silent at the novel's close.

The irreducible layers of Yuhi (the character), *Yuhi* (the novel), and the manuscript "Yuhi as text" exhibit the power of language and bodies (of flesh and text) to derail and assail, revealing a commonality with the terroristic strategies that weave through the abyssal structure of Kuja. As the reading in Chapter One ultimately closes upon the gaps within

those polyphonic narratives, the wounds opened up within the hysterical bodies of text

discussed here unleash traumatic stories told through polyphonic silences. The inversion

of cacophony into silence is, however, not merely incidental. For while Sakiyama's

narratives position the Japanese male as an Other within his text, Yi's narratives derive

from the already marginalised position of *zainichi* female experience within both

Japanese and Korean society. The experience of ethnic, postcolonial, and linguistic

otherness are threads that flow into Chapter Three. In particular, Yuhi's fragmented

speech, the heterolingual echoes within her enunciative address, and the psychical

instability that marks the bilingual subject in and of translation, will prove pertinent for

considering the writings of Tawada Yōko.

Chapter Three: Blindness, Duality, and Duplicity in Tawada Yōko's *The Travelling Naked Eye*

3.1 Introduction: Travelling, mis-seeing and the exilic double

> To lend an ear to silence; to peer into the dark: the everyday grammar of the senses that demarcates the beginnings of recognition always departs from here.
> —Imafuku Ryūta, *Usuzumi-iro no bunpō* (*The Grammar of Grey*)

> I quickly boarded the train, nestled myself in a corner of the compartment, and closed my eyes.
> —Duong Thu Huong, *The Paradise of the Blind*

While the fiction considered in the two preceding chapters has tended to draw associations with categories deemed subaltern and marginal, that is to say, trapped *within* the margins of Japanese literature, then the 'exophonic' approach of Tawada Yōko's writing has been lauded for promising a more transitional, even transcendental movement *across* borders and boundaries. Although the term 'exophony' is not Tawada's but rather one she first heard at a literary symposium in Dakar in 2002 (Tawada, 2003, p. 6), the notion it carries has become inseparable from the writer's literary practices since the publication of her book-length essay, *Exofonii: Bogo no soto ni deru tabi* (*Exophony: A trip outside the mother tongue*).[119] The term apparently appealed to Tawada as a means of navigating through the plethora of writing in the world without being bound by the distinctions implied by 'migrant literature', 'border-crossing', 'creole', 'minority', 'translation', and yet in a manner most suited to her own lifestyle of constant travel. As the single-page foreword that opens the book poetically describes, the exophonic writer is a fish who "perswimbulates (*oyogiaruite*)" the seas in order to "feel the linguistic situation of various lands with my scales" (Tawada, 2003, p. i).

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[119] In a round-table discussion entitled "The Poetics of Translation", Nozaki Kan cites the work's "especial importance" to critical readers of Tawada's writing (Tawada, Shibata, Ono, & Nozaki, 2007, p. 117). Similarly in English-language scholarship, Marjorie Perloff introduces Yōko as a "leading practitioner of… *exophonic* writing" (Perloff, 2007, p. vii, original italics).

Presented as a quasi-travelogue that anchors various debates on language to cities

apparently visited by the writer, *Exophony* provides the fundamental context for

situating Tawada's bilingual publications, an increasing field of multilingual translations

and academic research on her writing, and her calendar of public readings and writer-in-

residencies that she conducts around the globe.[120] Lexically, Tawada's title and the

accounts therein invoke a new kind of "symphony" through which the alternative

musicalities of other languages might be heard (ibid., p.6). With motifs of borders and

translation featuring prominently, *Exophony* appears complicit with the cosmopolitan

project of "border-crossing literature" that might embrace the literary productivity of all

transnational writers, so-called, irrespective of their geographical and linguistic

background.

However, whereas for scholars such as Tsuchiya "*ekkyō*" serves as an umbrella term for

an inherently productive field forged through apparently seamless literary crossings, as

outlined in this thesis's Introduction, *Exophony* simultaneously confirms and denies the

desirability of border-crossing as a literary practice.

> I thought: I do not wish to cross the border; I want to live inside it. In the
> moment of hesitation in which one is able to sense the border, I feel
> something more important than language… That moment is important, in
> which there is a thickening of some strange regionality that exists only in that
> space. That is precisely the reason that I felt inclined to cross the national
> border. (Tawada, 2003, p. 35)

Here, *Exophony* presents an ironically ambivalent intention. This gesture of self-

contradiction mirrors the antithetical propositions offered by Jacques Derrida's

Monolingualism of the Other; Or, The Prosthesis of Origin as it writes, "1. We only ever

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[120] Tawada's official homepage provides news regarding upcoming publications, translations and
public appearances, and records of past events (http://yokotawada.de/).

speak one language; 2. We never speak only one language" (Derrida, 1998, p. 7).[121] Yet

crucially, Tawada's text distinguishes between the "border" and the "national border". In

the former instance, the desire to remain within the border suggests the practice

whereby her writing blurs the outlines of the body and the space it inhabits, thus making

it resonant with the fiction of Sakiyama and Yi. Although Tawada's latter statement

appears initially problematic, it actually compliments this project since the desire to

cross national borders only arises in the moment when "regionality" becomes

"thickened", that is, when fluidity is put at risk. In either case the crossings proffered by

Exophony do not posit a unifying process predicated on the ease of transport and

transmission, but rather a necessary tactic with which the writer and her texts might

engage with ambiguity as a means with which to resist fixity and assimilation.

Rather than inscribe a harmonious space of belonging, and therefore containment,

Exophony (like *Monolingualism*) foregrounds the condition of displacement as something

innate within *all* language and writing.[122] Although the place names that head each

section list an enviable path of globe-trotting, this continual movement constantly defers

the idea of a destination, while the lack of representations of the cities themselves make

the act of naming them almost arbitrary.[123] Such settings emerge devoid of the

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[121] As an autobiographical exposition of his relationship to the French language in Algeria, the thrust of Derrida's essay writes against the imposition and enforcement of the coloniser's language, and to remind of the violence of this monolingual assimilation.

[122] As Rey Chow's reading of *Monolingualism* emphasises, the coloniser is no more in possession of the language he enforces than the colonised: rather, the origin is always already prosthesis. Although for Derrida, "colonialism is a specific instance of the appropriation of language by the use of force or cunning; at the same time, *all* practices of language involve such appropriation" (Chow, 2014, p. 28). Tawada's writing inscribes a similar notion when she unveils the "original lie" of Japanese, as below.

[123] Both Tawada's fictional novel, *Yōgisha no yakō ressha* (Suspect on the night-train) (Tawada, 2002) and the essay compilation *Tokeru machi sukeru michi* (Dissolving towns, transparent roads) (Tawada, 2007d) adopt this structure, with each section headed by an international city. Douglas Slaymaker's reading of the former text highlights how these physical places become secondary to the events of that novel (Slaymaker, 2010, p.323). Such an interpretation also holds when reading both the latter and *Exophony*.

materiality of actual travel or place. Against this backdrop, the narrative voice of

Exophony moves as if within a "virtual" sphere not bound by her physicality (Kraenzle,

2007).[124] The separation of body and voice alludes to the intrinsic foreignness of the

exophonic writer to her surroundings. Since this spatial dislocation is inevitably

accompanied by the linguistic displacement that *Exophony* narrates, this alienation is

mapped back onto her language. As suggested in a separate essay collection entitled

Katakoto no uwagoto (*Stumbling Ramblings*), in the exophonic encounter it is not "I"

who leaves the mother tongue behind; rather, it is the mother tongue that leaves "I"

(Tawada, 2007c, p. 11). The movement of exophony is therefore also doubled, as

rendered in the ambiguous '*no*' of its subtitle whose usual translation might be

supplemented by a second: not merely "(the subject's) step outside the mother tongue",

but also, "the mother tongue's step outside (of itself)".

Tawada's writing narrates this condition by which the encounter with another language

results in othering the native/mother tongue from both the speaker of language and

language itself. The sub-section of *Exophony* headed "Beijing" highlights the abundance

of Japanese vocabulary that derive historically from a series of mistranslations of Dutch,

German, and other tongues whose origins are now hidden by their common usage. For

Tawada, these *gairaigo* ("words of foreign origin") expose "the original lie" whereby

"countless Japanese words that I met as a child were a singular kind of migrant into

Japan" (Tawada, 2003, pp. 105, 107). A separate essay entitled "*Kanji no uragiri*"

("*Kanji*'s betrayal") describes how the move into a linguistic sphere ordered by a

phonetic alphabet alerted Tawada to the ideographic meanings of *kanji*. Upon unpacking

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[124] Since the modes of travel favoured by Tawada's characters (trains, aeroplanes) convey little sense of movement, transporting their passengers across borders in ways often hidden from view within the text, Christina Kraenzle defines their movement as "virtual". Reading Tawada's German prose from within that linguistic and cultural context, Kraenzle highlights the parallel between this movement and the double meaning of *ubersetzen*, as both 'to translate' and to 'carry across' (Kraenzle, 2007).

the "uncanny" traces of culture and history embedded within language, the article

narrates Tawada's realisation that her language has been historically constructed by

authority figures in ways complicit with their own agendas (Tawada, 2010a, p. 75).[125] The

preoccupation of many of Tawada's narratives and characters with excavating literal

meanings beneath codified forms of written language thus belies a broader project to

uncover those semantic components that have been hidden beneath the surface of the

text, and to restore those repressed textual histories in all of their disruptive capacities.

It is this deconstructive approach towards language that makes Tawada's writing

pleasurable to read, but it also invigorates "the power of language to destroy itself"

(Tawada, 2000, p. 38) akin to the other texts presented here. If the exophonic writer is to

presume the conventional stance of a mediator/translator between two distinct

linguistic and cultural contexts, then as the notion of "betrayal" in Tawada's title asserts,

this is a task charged with exposing the duplicity of what has been deemed native and

essential, thus challenging the presumptions of a coherent Japanese linguistic identity.[126]

And yet, to factor in the frequently troubled condition of Tawada's protagonists is to

reveal these deconstructive incitements also as indicative of the trauma of geographical

and linguistic dislocation itself. This is especially the case in the movement between two

different orthographies, whereby the relation between things and their symbolic textual

representation is irrevocably displaced.

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[125] Tawada's article credits this awakening to *Mojirojii* (Textology), a study of semantic roots in *kanji* by Shirakawa Shizuka, a scholar of classical text (*kanbun*).

[126] The translator as traitor follows from the idiomatic expression "*traduttore, traditore*" that highlights the shared etymological roots of both words. In *Not Like a Native Speaker*, Rey Chow expands on the mediatory role of the translator who must be, "in particular, a traitor to one's native culture. That is to say, if the agency of the postcolonial intellectual (native speaker, writer, thinker, educated person, professional, culture worker) is defined as the capacity to act among and across languages/literacies, such agency also places such an intellectual in the position of a cultural translator/arbiter. The task of this cultural translator/arbiter is not faithfulness to the original (the colonised native culture) but rather than of an explicit betrayal: the disavowal and intercepting of the original as out of sync and out of place is now deemed a sine qua non for the native culture's survival" (Chow, 2014, p. 69).

Here lies a source of tension, therefore, for while Tawada's dismissal of the essential

nature and inherent purity of the mother tongue undermines the idea that languages

exist as singular, bounded entities (the same article concedes that the constructed

nature of language might be "universal" (Tawada, 2010a, p. 78)), the linguistic

encounters foregrounded by her texts display nonetheless a specific attachment.

Although "*Kanji*'s betrayal" describes the impression left by alphabetic scripts at large,

an interview with the literary critic Yoshikawa Yasukazu names the German language

whose "invasion with increasing vigour into my being" Tawada recalls as an "incredibly

unpleasant and exhausting sensation" (Tawada & Yoshikawa, 1997, p. 85).[127] In

admitting the attentiveness of Tawada's writing to historical and social contextualisation,

the intriguing yet invasive particularity of the German language infers a power relation

vis-à-vis Japanese that extends to the "latent inferiority complex" that, *Exophony* argues,

was exhibited among Japanese consumers from the 1980s who sought to buy their way

into an exploitative yet captivating Eurocentrism from the outside (notably, Tawada

moved to Hamburg in 1982) (Tawada, 2003, p. 12).[128] The dedication with which her

writing interrogates both the lexical layers of Japanese written scripts and the axiomatic

acceptance of those conventions in common speech, likewise suggests the uniqueness of

that language in her textual imagination. Given this context it seems telling that, despite

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[127] This interview's title, "*Kotoba ni sumu doragon no gekirin ni furitakute*" ("I want to ruffle the feathers of the dragon who resides within language"), quotes a statement that Tawada makes therein. Recalling the scaled skin of the exophonic writer, this desire to "rub language the wrong way" finds a conspicuous echo in the sentiments of Sakiyama's 2002 essay "*Shimakotoba de kachāshī*". Tawada's language may not be as audibly violent as Sakiyama's, the silent aporia of the wound replacing the blast of the grenade, yet it suggests an equally critical stance vis-à-vis the Japanese language. For a discussion of the specific significance of the dragon itself, see Margaret Mitsutani's chapter, "Missing Heels, Missing Texts", in Slaymaker's edited volume (Mitsutani, 2007).

[128] The idea that a power relation may exist between Japanese and German within Tawada's prose was first highlighted by my supervisor, Dr Irena Hayter. The task of critiquing this power relation is taken within the subsequent section of *Exophony*, entitled "Berlin", that engages questions surrounding Nazi ideals of national purism and myths of otherness against a reading of Mori Ōgai's *Daihakken* (*A Great Discovery*).

the multiple translations of Tawada's other writings and the specific impact that its title

and contents have had among scholarly readings of her work in all languages, *Exophony*

is conspicuous for having remained an exclusively Japanese text.[129]

Tawada's literary practices beyond *Exophony* reveal two movements that extend from

language towards the visceral and the visual. On the one hand, as Tawada's writing

deconstructs linguistic and symbolic conventions it inscribes this fragmentation onto the

surface of the body and its accoutrements. The short essay entitled "Japanese language

as clothing" inverts the logic of linguistic essentialism by reframing language as an

outward appendage in contrast to the "essence of the skin" (Tawada, 2007b, p. 110). Yet

as this process then strips back the skin itself, it conjures a more violent imagery

whereby the narrators of Tawada's texts appear wounded. Thus, the narrator of *Moji*

ishoku (*Transplanting Letters*, 1993)*,* whose original title *Arufabetto no kizuguchi* (*The*

Wound in the Alphabet) is borrowed from the German short story by Anne Duden

entitled *Der wunde Punkt im Alphabet* that the narrator is attempting to translate,

suffers from a skin condition that appears somehow connected both to the process and

subject of her translation.[130] Likewise, the translator protagonist of the bilingual

publication *The Bath/ScaleSkin* experiences dry skin that flakes off in large, bloodied

shards. This latter example, particularly, parallels the image of the writer as a scaly fish in

Exophony's foreword. However, the doubling of this narrator's portrayal in a second

female figure that died in a house fire casts a more foreboding shadow onto that image

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[129] During a round-table discussion including the author of this thesis at a symposium held at Tōyō
Eiwa University, Tokyo, on 6th June 2010, Tawada admitted that while she had been approached by
several willing translators, she felt that *Exophony* was written specifically with a Japanese readership
in mind, as a provocation to those readers to see the ways in which their experiences might be
structured through the hegemonic dictates of the Japanese language. On these grounds, although she
was expressly encouraging of any attempts to translate these essays, Tawada's position was that their
translation would either be impossible, or would result in a radically different text to account for the
specific contexts of each target language (Tawada, Suzuki, Yonaha, & Young, 2010).
[130] Dennitza Gabrakova's reading of *Transplanting Letters* highlights the textual and bodily wounds
that are opened up by translation in this text (Gabrakova, 2010).

suggestive of the potential for the moment of border-crossing to corrode the body altogether and bring the subject closer to the border with death.

A contradiction therefore arises between the virtual crossings of Tawada's narrators that suggest the detachment from their physicality, and the sharply visceral allusions to their damaged bodies. As a result, these characters appear at once caught between images of physical pain and haunting absence, an ambivalence that unsettles the visual frame of her narratives. This liminality coincides with Sakiyama and Yi's protagonists, revealing a commonality of approach towards irreducible ambiguity across all the fiction discussed in this thesis. Indeed, the pairing of female figures in "The Bath" echoes the relationship explored in Chapter Two, between *kanojo*'s viscerality in *Kazukime* and Yuhi's bodily absence. However, whereas that reading is suspended across two of Yi's literary texts, the narrator of Tawada's novel and her ghostly shadow present rather a simultaneously divided yet doubled vision within a single text.

Although vision is distinct from language, the displacement from one's native tongue that defines Tawada's characters is frequently accompanied by a disturbance of sight. Such is the disorientation felt by Yuna upon her arrival into Bordeaux station, where the unfamiliar cacophony formed by the "trundling of suitcases and clattering of dishes in the café merges with the spluttered consonants of travellers" to create a dysphoric "sound-cloud" (響雲) above the crowd's heads (Tawada, 2009, p. 4). The "diary" that Yuna writes in France then reveals her literal readings of both the German and Japanese languages as they are written, including her belief that fish and birds have four legs on account of their representation in *kanji.* Like Tawada's deconstructive strategies above, Yuna's writing reveals a way of looking beneath the codified surfaces of text. Yet by

narrating the split between sign and meaning, these texts also betray the effect that linguistic displacement can have upon the speaker's visual perspective that is originally mediated and governed by what can be named and recognised in language (Mamula, 2012, p. 40).[131]

In the second section of her exposition of the geographical, linguistic, ethnic and gender frontiers of the 'boundary event', entitled "Other than myself, my other self", Trinh T. Minh-ha ponders the continually shifting persona and position of the traveller. Trinh's chapter actually opens with her translation of a poetic passage by the Moroccan writer Tahar Ben Jelloun (b. 1944) written in his second language, French, which describes the "disorder" of imagery, sound and movement around the train station similar to that experienced by Yuna in Bordeaux (Trinh, 2011, p. 27). As Trinh writes that "[e]very voyage can be said to involve a re-siting of boundaries" the travelling self not only moves physically between places but also must negotiate mentally between the divides that set home from abroad, native from adopted culture. Trinh's argument foregrounds the condition of "double exile", a status that echoes the increasing impermeability of foreign frontiers amid global fear, and the "doubly strange" figure of the "*other* foreigner" who succeeds in crossing yet "doesn't *speak* or look like the rest of us" (Trinh, 2011, p. 1). As Trinh identifies, this is a split that once enacted cannot be undone for, "if it is problematic to be a stranger, it is even more so to stop being one" (ibid., p.34). Since travel causes an interminable repositioning of the boundaries against which one might anchor one's identity and difference, each crossing, even when it entails a crossing *back*,

[131] Tijana Mamula's work, broadly speaking, points to the "centrality of vision in the experience of linguistic displacement", as in her full-length book, *Cinema and Language Loss* (Mamula, 2013). Although primarily a work of film scholarship, Mamula's framework builds upon discussions of language loss in the writings of Freud and Kristeva, in particular, Kristeva's developments of the "relationship between language, displacement, and melancholia" that is expressed across Freud's writings (ibid., p. 10). Such ideas have provided significant insight for the aim of this chapter to relate tropes of linguistic movement and visual disturbance that emerge in tandem within Tawada's writing.

sparks the mutation and multiplication of identities through which the migrant subject is repeatedly hybridised.

In Tawada's writing, it is most commonly an Asian female protagonist who must negotiate her new position within a strangely European context: a situation that seemingly carries liberating potential yet also makes her conspicuous as a racial and linguistic other. Such characters are therefore caught between a critical awareness of their own visible difference, while they experience their own field of vision as displaced. As such, they oscillate between two positions that Trinh defines as the 'Traveller', the privileged seer/knowledgeable observer who sees only what s/he chooses, and the equally blinkered 'Tourist' (p.40; the capitals are Trinh's and imply her critical stance). The distinction made here between the Tourist and Traveller is not only predicated on the politics of how and what each sees, however, but upon how each represents her/himself in the foreign land. Thus, the Tourist blindly consumes the cultures s/he encounters there, while the Traveller attempts a performance of imitation as a means to blend in. If the former suggests a commodifying bent, Trinh's critique takes equal aim at the latter's performance. Referencing the mark of a bad translation in Walter Benjamin's famous thesis cited in Chapter One, Trinh warns against the imitative gesture of the Traveller who faithfully reproduces meaning without being profoundly altered her/himself (ibid., p.41).

Trinh's essay instead restages the act of travel as a "detour with myself", a mode of becoming "via an other" (ibid.). Only then can travelling "turn out to be a process whereby the self loses its fixed boundaries—a disturbing yet potentially empowering practice of difference" (ibid.). In order to combat touristic myopia and the selective gaze

of the informed Traveller, Trinh promotes the state of being as a "non-tourist-real traveller" who sits unsteadily between heightened senses and a "diminished sensorial acuity":

> On the one hand, s/he develops a highly refined ear and eye for close readings, but remains oblivious to the landscape and the 'built environment' which make the traveller-seer's activities possible and communicable. On the other hand, deliberate mis-seeing is necessitated to bring about a different form of seeing. (ibid., p.41)

In its final analysis, Trinh's writing articulates a radically new travelling self who might look and speak differently. Recalling the reading in Chapter Two in which the character of Yuhi emerges simultaneously as both a practitioner and product of translation, Trinh's "traveller-seer" offers a doubly transformative and transformed subject position that oscillates "between critical blindness and critical insight" (ibid.). As Trinh reminds us, "[t]he seer is seen while s/he sees" (ibid., p.40). Thus it is only through the fragmentation of sight entailed by 'mis-seeing' that the travelling migrant or diasporic subject can begin to undo the privileged structures of seeing that seek to contain her.

The thematic interplay of vision, language, and difference activated by Trinh's strategy of mis-seeing presents a highly relevant framework in which to situate the reading of Tawada Yōko's narrative fiction that follows. In particular, through their association within the context of Tawada's oeuvre with questions of sight, displacement, and loss, these themes evoke the peculiar 'unknowable' gaze and linguistic displacement of the melancholic. Like hysteria, melancholia has been posited by Freud and Kristeva as a debilitating psychical fragmentation that ultimately ought to be overcome. Moreover, most theoretical and cultural discourse has typically privileged the status of the creative male melancholic whose pain only heightens his artistry and genius, unlike the female

sufferer for whom the lack of symbolic grammar is but a normative state.[132] However,

following the attempt in Chapter Two to read hysterical tropes as they infer a political

practice of resisting narrative appropriation, the attention here to the theme of

melancholia aims to suggest a comparable mode of resistance, based around what

Kristeva names as melancholia's "space of a necessarily heterogeneous subjectivity"

(Kristeva, 1989, p. 100), that might connect Tawada's novel both to the preceding

discussion of Yi's fiction, and to the melancholic aporia inferred in the latent "mud-slime"

that flows beneath the Kuja abyss.

The female protagonist in *Tabi o suru hadaka no me* (*The Travelling Naked Eye*) (Tawada,

2004), which forms the centre of this discussion, is a young Vietnamese girl (*watashi*)

akin to Trinh's 'traveller-seer' who arrives in Paris. Displaced from her home and mother

tongue, *watashi* finds in the cinema of Catherine Deneuve a means through which to

negotiate her position within the margins of the big city vis-à-vis the language and values

of this foreign space. While the cinema offers a visual substitute for *watashi*'s lack of

fluency in the alien tongue of her new surroundings not dependent on language alone,

her apparent identification with this major screen icon of her former colonising power

places under scrutiny what *watashi* actually sees. *Watashi* 'mis-sees' in a way that

oscillates between parodic blindness to the realities witnessed by those around her, and

an over-determined reliance upon the cinematic image. Inversions of sight have already

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[132] This is the central argument put forth by Juliana Schiesari in *The Gendering of Melancholia* (Schiesari, 1992). However, there have been various more recent efforts to delineate more empowering readings of melancholia within feminist and postcolonial contexts. Of these, the most significant influences upon my thinking towards Tawada's writing are Ewa Plonowska Ziarek's "Towards a Feminist Aesthetics of Melancholia: Kristeva, Adorno, and Modern Women Writers (Ziarek, 2010), Frances Restuccia's "Tales of Beauty: Aestheticizing Female Melancholia" (Restuccia, 1996), the work of Tsu-Chung Su in "An Uncanny Melancholia: The Frame, the Gaze, and the Representation of Melancholia in Albrecht Dürer's Engraving *Melencolia I*" (Su, 2007a) and "Writing the Melancholic: The dynamics of melancholia in Julia Kristeva's Black Sun" (Su, 2007b), and Nouri Gana's *Signifying Loss: Toward a poetics of narrative mourning* (Gana, 2011). Of these, both Ziarek and Restuccia depart explicitly from Schiesari's criticism of the "notable absence of women" in melancholic discourse (Schiesari, cited in Restuccia, 1996, p. 353).

been seen in Sakiyama's 'Kuja' Stories presented in Chapter One, in particular "Invisible Town", "Midday Moon", and the all-consuming darkness of the Kuja abyss that invites Ore's gaze to look beyond the landscape and see (and hear) the histories repressed within. With film and the act of viewing placed at its centre, *watashi*'s narrative as a displaced Asian female traveller and illegal immigrant foregrounds questions related to visuality and visibility through its titular 'naked eye', particularly as they are interwoven with the problems of language, memory, and otherness. As Deneuve's cinematic repertoire overlaps with *watashi*'s memories of her Vietnamese past, *watashi*'s 'mis-seeing' comes to betray her longing for an idealised motherland and mother tongue, opening up within her a melancholic aporia represented by the climactic piercing of her eye.

As *watashi*'s geographical and linguistic displacement to Paris exemplifies the loss of her homeland and native tongue, her narrative that unfolds between these tropes of loss and disavowal is distinctly melancholic. If the discussion of hysteria in Chapter Two has enabled a reading of the particular languages and silences of the body, melancholia is intended to suggest a related means of reading *watashi*'s exophonic alienation with respect to bodies of language and text. Indeed, as Ewa Plonowska Ziarek points to the writing of melancholia within modern texts by women as entailing "multiple migrations of pain, crossing uncertain thresholds between the inside and the outside, political and aesthetic, past and present, subjects and objects" (Ziarek, 2010, p. 446), then my attention to it here seeks to address inscriptions of melancholia above all as a literary trope that appears deeply resonant yet widely overlooked within Tawada's exophonic writing at large. This chapter therefore frames its consideration of *watashi*'s alienation and longing vis-à-vis paradoxes of vision and blindness within her melancholic gaze, and

the uncanny 'double vision' that emerges from the gaps both within this Japanese text and between its parallel versions and doubles in translation. Culminating in the image of the open-wounded eye, these gaps provide a space in which *watashi* might articulate an identity not confined to the symbolic mastery of either visual or linguistic representation, but which favours less containable modes of definition through tropes of duality and difference.

3.2 *The Travelling Naked Eye*

> I was nearsighted, but I lacked blindness. I would indeed have liked not to see. It was impossible. The anguish of my fellow people pierces me. I was struck, wounded, marked, scarred.
>
> — Hélène Cixous, *Stigmata*

The Travelling Naked Eye (hereafter, *Naked Eye*) follows a high-achieving Vietnamese student who has travelled to East Berlin in 1988, one year before German reunification. Nicknamed by her teachers as "the student with the iron blouse" and in possession of a voice that "carries as well as that of a crane", this girl known only as '*watashi*' has been selected to represent her school at an "All Nation Youth Conference" as the "raw voice" of victims of US imperialism. Upon arrival in Berlin on the night before her presentation, however, the words of her script are no longer familiar.

> Somehow I could not recall a single line of it and I grew uneasy. I tried once more to read it through out loud. Having brought them to this far-away country, the words that I had written no longer appeared reliable. (p. 13)

Going instead to the hotel restaurant, *watashi* is approached by a young German man named Jörg who plies her with vodka before kidnapping her to his hometown of Bochum in West Germany. Awakening in Jörg's bed *watashi* is initially panicked, but when Jörg insists that she must stay because she is pregnant with his child, her protests to be allowed to return home sound "like a lie" (p. 21). As if to confirm this duplicity, she writes to her parents falsely claiming that she has been awarded a surprise scholarship

that has allowed her to remain in Germany. However, *watashi* is largely left in solitude,
or expected to reciprocate Jörg's demands for sex when he is home. As the toll of this
existence begins to reveal itself through unstable hallucinations and dreams that mar
watashi's visual perception, *watashi* schemes to steal aboard a carriage of the Trans-
Siberian line that passes through Bochum, from where she can head eastward in order to
reach Moscow, and then Vietnam.

On the night when *watashi* decides to carry out her plan, she witnesses a mysterious
female figure throw herself before the train, stopping it on the tracks. Inside the sleeper
compartment she comes face-to-face with Ai Van, a Vietnamese woman uncannily
similar in appearance and in age to herself who tells *watashi* that she is in fact bound for
Paris; a revelation that causes "everything before my eyes [to turn] black" (p. 50).
Arriving in the French capital an illegal immigrant, *watashi* initially finds shelter in the
basement apartment of a woman she meets on the street. A later chance encounter
reunites her with Ai Van, who invites *watashi* to live in the apartment she shares with
her husband, Jean. At the couple's request to pay her way and rectify her illegal status,
watashi finds work in a dubious clinic where her duties extend to donating increasing
quantities of her own blood. Later a second Vietnamese expatriate, Tuon Linh, offers to
take her to Thailand to marry in order to return to France on a legitimate visa. However,
when *watashi* attempts to pass through Charles de Gaulle airport in possession of a fake
Japanese passport, she is stopped at border control. Awaking apparently detained in a
hospital, *watashi* escapes once more only for Jörg to kidnap her back to Bochum.

Tawada's novel is split into thirteen chapters, each of which denotes a year of *watashi*'s
life from 1988 to 2000 inclusive. This linear narrative is then supplemented by the titles

of films starring the French actress Catherine Deneuve and the years of their initial

cinematic release, arranged in the non-chronological order in which *watashi* watches

them.[133] Without money, family, or legal status, it is Deneuve's film repertoire that

sustains *watashi* emotionally and gives her story structure. In Chapter 1 (1988/ *Repulsion*,

1965), *watashi*'s narrative is interpolated with Roman Polanski's early psychological

thriller, revealing a psychical instability that mirrors the madness and murderous

tendencies of the film's protagonist, Carole Ledoux (Deneuve). In the second chapter,

which marks *watashi*'s arrival in Paris in 1989 and her discovery of the cinema, she

moves into the basement apartment of Marie, the name of Deneuve's character in

László Szabó's 1974 arthouse production, *Zig-zig*. When *watashi* confesses of *Zig-zig* that

"I was never able to see this film" (p.62), however, it suggests a complex intertwining

between her own life and Deneuve's cinematic appearances.

Watashi's burgeoning obsession with the cinema and particularly Deneuve's presence

within it, unfolds through a narrative that uncannily replicates the plots, images and

characters on screen. *Watashi*'s blood donations to the clinic are framed against the

vampiric themes of Tony Scott's *The Hunger* (1983) in chapter 4, while the mounting

tension of her life in hiding shadows Deneuve's roles as an imprisoned mother (*Si c'était

à refaire*, 1976), a theatre actress attempting to hide her Jewish husband in Nazi-

occupied France (*Le dernier Metro*, 1980), and as a jewellery trafficker suffering from

alcoholism (*Place Vendôme*, 1998). While these films propel the plot forward, they also

allude to tropes of gendered, sexual and ethnic difference that delineate *watashi*'s

position within Paris. In particular, Deneuve's depictions of female homosexuality (*Zig-*

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[133] The full chapter list flows as follows: 1, 1988/*Repulsion*, 1965; 2, 1989/ *Zig-zag*, 1974; 3, 1990/ *Tristana*, 1970; 4, 1991/*The Hunger*, 1983; 5, 1992/*Indochine*; 6, 1993/*Drôle d'endroit pour une recontre*, 1988; 7, 1994/ *Belle du jour*, 1966 8, 1995/*Si c'était à refaire*, 1976; 9, 1996/*Les Voleurs*, 1996; 10, 1997/*Le dernier Metro*, 1980; 11, 1998/*Place Vendôme*, 1998; 12, 1999/*Est-Ouest*, 1999; 13, 2000/*Dancer in the Dark*, 2000.

Zig; *The Hunger; Belle du jour*, 1996; *Les Voleurs*, 1996) awaken a latent desire within

watashi. In the only film to refer directly to Vietnam (Chapter 5, 1992/*Indochine*, 1992),

these homoerotic overtones are moreover inflected through problems of history,

memory, colonialism, and the impossible yearning for a mother and motherland.

As the novel draws to its climax, *watashi*'s plight of being recaptured by Jörg is mirrored

within the life of quasi-imprisonment of a French family who seek repatriation to Russia

after the Second World War, depicted in *Est-Ouest* (Wargnier, 1999). Deneuve appears

as the actress on whom the family place their only hope for freedom. However, such

salvation elides *watashi*, who is left frustrated by the film's "overly literal" language and

the prolonged wait for Deneuve in what transpires to be a fleeting cameo role.[134] When

Deneuve does appear, *watashi* realises that it was she who stopped the Trans-Siberian

train for her eleven years earlier. Amid her desperation to erase her memories, *watashi*

concludes that she must poke out her eyes with a clock needle. The novel then enacts a

final, abrupt shift both geographically to the US and narratively into a third-person

register. Re-enacting the setting of Lars von Trier's 2000 musical film *Dancer in the Dark*,

the narrator introduces a Czech immigrant named Selma who meets a nameless blind

woman of "European appearance" who claims, incredulously to Selma's mind, to be

Vietnamese. The old woman moreover reveals that she lost her sight while attempting to

save a "young, foreign girl" who died after being stabbed by youths in Berlin's

Alexanderplatz in 1988, marking exactly the year of *watashi*'s arrival and proximity to

where she was kidnapped by Jörg. By suggesting that *watashi*'s entire narrative may be

reread as that of a ghost, and by raising uncanny overlaps between the blind woman and

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[134] One might also argue that, since Moscow and Russia hold a semi-aspirational status both due to *watashi*'s communist sympathies and as the city to which she first intended to head when she boarded the Trans-Siberian railway line, *Est-Ouest*'s brutal portrayal of Stalinism also causes *watashi* to dislike the film.

both *watashi* and Deneuve, this short coda brings the novel to a close amid myriad uncertainties.

Naked Eye thus presents a challenging and complex narrative web. On its surface, the narrative articulates *watashi*'s physical and psychical alienation as a young woman away from home. However it also paves the way for a deeper dialogue that touches upon psychoanalytical and postcolonial questions of spectatorship and identification by inflecting, if not inverting, *watashi*'s gendered, ethnic, and colonial otherness in the image of a major French cinematic icon. Moreover, as this story of *watashi*'s ostensible life in Paris is always already doubled by the uncanny shadow of her death, it mimics the doubled status of the text itself as Tawada's "first truly bilingual book" (Tawada & Bernofsky, 2009, "Translator's Note").[135] Mirroring the displacement of their protagonist, the two languages in which Tawada's novel was first published, German and Japanese, supplant the Vietnamese and French languages that might tell this narrative directly. Yet rather than being incidental, they manage to weave connected historical arcs into *watashi*'s narrative: namely, the fall in 1989 of the Berlin Wall that had symbolised the division between East and West; and the difference marked during the 1980s-90s between the image of affluent Japanese tourists visiting Europe and 'other' Asians from former communist nations and colonial territories in the wake of the Cold War. It is therefore necessary to highlight certain differences between existing scholarship on the two 'original' versions in German and Japanese, in order to better frame my own critical contribution.

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[135] The translator of an English version based on the German text, Susan Bernofsky's "Translator's Note" makes this claim since all of Tawada's works prior to *Naked Eye* were written in one language and then translated by a separate translator. By contrast, Tawada wrote *Naked Eye* in both languages simultaneously, moving back and forth between the German and Japanese versions as dictated by the order in which ideas came to her. Bernofsky adds that this process of "translating in both directions" produces a "linguistic indeterminacy [that] beautifully reflects the situation of the novel's narrator" (Tawada & Bernofsky, 2009, "Translator's Note").

3.3 Critical Appraisals: Insights and Blind Spots

Amid the wealth of scholarship engaging with Tawada's fiction, there is relatively little

critical discussion of the Japanese version of this novel. Foremost among these studies,

Nakagawa Shigemi departs from *watashi*'s encounter with the refracted gaze of

Polanski's heroine that opens the narrative to trace the "ambiguity" of vision depicted by

the text up to *watashi*'s self-blinding (Nakagawa, 2007, p. 1049). Informed by media

studies and historical discourses on cinematic technologies, and Jacques Derrida's

Memoirs of the Blind (1993), Nakagawa's study posits the "ambiguity of vision" (*shikaku*

no fumeisei) and the "'blindness' of language" (*kotoba no 'mōmokusei'*) to name the

paradoxical relationship between vision and language narrated in the text. Is it possible,

Nakagawa asks, to represent in language what can only be recognised through sight (and

in the absence of sight); and, is it possible for the subject without language to represent

the information obtained by seeing through visual images? (Nakagawa, 2007, p. 1050).

Seeking to diversify Japanese scholarship on Tawada's writing that has been occupied

predominantly with concerns of translation and language, Ono Erika's more recent study

builds upon Nakagawa's analysis of visual ambiguity to present a more postcolonial

reading of *watashi*'s subjectivity as a Vietnamese subject in France (Ono, 2012). Ono's

discussion focuses particularly on *watashi*'s viewing of *Indochine*, in which her

infatuation with Deneuve's image suggests a desire to be embraced by the Western

mother (Ono, 2012, p. 168). The opposition between *watashi*'s Asian roots and

communist leanings that span the novel and the connections of Deneuve's image to

Western capitalism, however, traps *watashi* within a binary paradigm that is troubled by

her infatuation with the cinema icon. As *watashi*'s narration becomes increasingly hazy

over whether what she sees is on the cinema screen or real life, the act of self-blinding (which Ono accepts unambiguously) offers "the only remaining means of resisting the binaries of 'communism/capitalism' and 'East/West', and of crossing the border (*ekkyō suru*) into the space of the other (*ikūkan*)" (Ono, 2012, p. 161). These two appraisals therefore depart from similar concerns as my own, while Ono's postcolonial approach is particularly resonant. However, there are significant differences since neither framing of *watashi* as a spectator accounts for her female gender and colonial position. As shall be seen, while both identify the significance of (visual) ambiguity within the text, the conclusions of both readings also reconcile this to some degree, thus overlooking the novel's distinctly uncanny final image.

Naked Eye was the first novel by Tawada to be published simultaneously in German and Japanese, that is, not within the schema of an original and its translation, but as two versions "written in parallel" (Tawada et al., 2007, p. 132). Unlike the focus of sight/blindness that guides the Japanese criticisms cited above, scholarship on the German text has tended to incorporate more intertextual links that develop the motifs of travel and displacement common throughout Tawada's oeuvre. Petra Fachinger (2010), for example, positions the text as an intricate reworking of Tawada's first German novel *Where Europe Begins* (*Wo Europe Anfängt*, 1991) and reads it within the tradition of the picaresque novel whose elements "humorously subvert colonial ideologies and common assumptions about East and West, self and other, and reality and fantasy" (Fachinger, 2010, p. 298). Julia Genz's intermedial approach (Genz, 2012) compares the usurpation of *watashi*'s vision by cinematic texts with Yuna's literal comprehension of the written

word in *Schwager in Bordeaux* (2008).[136] Such scholarship reveals *Naked Eye* to be

abundant with motifs of language, travel, and translation that have characterised

Tawada's writing elsewhere. Reading the novel as being "ultimately… about writing"

(Adelson, 2015, p. 116), Leslie A. Adelson pursues the parallel lines of the novel's rusty

rail tracks as a literary metaphor evocative of the disruptive spaces "between the lines"

in Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator" that configure translation both throughout

the novel and Tawada's travel narratives elsewhere. As Adelson suggests, these lines

converge not only within geographical space but also across a historical and keenly

political expanse. It is "a tale of mobility and multilingualism embedded in palimpsestic

spatial and temporal metanarratives of postcolonialism and postcommunism" (Adelson,

2015, p. 117).

What is striking is that, despite the foregrounding of the eye in Tawada's German title,

Das nackte Auge, and the English translation of *The Naked Eye* (Tawada & Bernofsky,

2009) based upon it, within these German and English-language criticisms it is largely

alluded to in passing, only as the instrument of vision enabling *watashi*'s relationship to

the screen. Only Julia Genz suggests the semantic connection between the German title

(and its English translation) and the notions of 'naked truth'/'naked facts' (Genz, 2012, p.

196).[137] For Genz, the 'naked eye' suggests *watashi*'s potential to act as an uncensored

eyewitness to history. This is a role that *watashi* rejects, however (ibid., p.197). As Genz

cites from the text, despite the historical significance of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the

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[136] *Where Europe Begins* has not to my knowledge been published in Japanese. The English title is that of Susan Bernofsky's translation (Bernofsky & Selden 2002). The Japanese publication of *Borudō no gikei* was published in 2009, the subsequent year to the German book. Although there has been a French translation, *Le voyage à Bordeaux*, based on the German text, there is no English translation yet to my knowledge.

[137] My thanks go to Dr Till Weingärtner for his patience in helping me to read and translate Genz's study over one long Saturday afternoon.

impact it might have had on this devoted communist student, *watashi* does not see the event because "I don't watch television. It has nothing to do with me" (p.108).

Despite the naturalness of Bernofsky's English title, both Tawada's German and Japanese titles offer more unusual expressions: *das nackte Auge/hadaka no me*.[138] When translating the English 'naked eye' (back) into Japanese, the common equivalent would be *nikugan*, in which *niku* denotes 'meat' or 'flesh'. In contrast to Genz's interest in *watashi*'s eye as a historical witness, the Japanese discussions above address the figure of the eye more theoretically. The replacement of *nikugan* with *hadaka* might suggest the stripping away of the eye's corporeality. However, this gesture is contradicted by Tawada's orthography that writes the eye here as 眼 rather than the more simplified 目. Whereas 目 denotes the abstract opticality of the eye within many idiomatic extrapolations related to 'sight' and 'vision', 眼 connotes the physical organ as it appears in biological and medical contexts, such as the 'eyeball' (*gankyū*, 眼球) and *nikugan* (肉眼) mentioned above.[139] Thus for Nakagawa, 目 represents the "opaque biological function of the eye which actually reflects our own desires as perceived by the interior unconscious, represented by 眼" (Nakagawa, 2007, p. 1049). The bareness of Tawada's neologism thus suggests less a stripping off of the flesh than a stripping back of the lexical layers of the Japanese *me* that reinstates the eye's physicality above its abstract and theoretical implications. As Nakagawa argues, Tawada's gesture reveals how (Japanese) language has been appropriated by its symbolic, visual properties (ibid.), in line with her linguistic strategies elsewhere.

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[138] The standard German adjectives are *bloßen* (bare) or *unbewaffneten* (unequipped).
[139] This difference is reinforced by the orthographical root of 眼 which combines 目 as a radical with 艮, a character derived from a second 'eye' that symbolises the shape of the human eye (that is, its physical attribute) to add emphasis and clarity to the *kanji*'s intended meaning (*Shinkangorin*, 2nd Edition).

Since the cinema is equally prominent within the German text, the omission of any close

consideration of vision and visuality within its critical readings is striking. However, this

discrepancy might in part be attributable to the visual presence of the eye on the surface

of the Japanese text, to which the above discussion of orthography already alludes. As

Julia C. Bulloch observes, there is an abundance of Japanese expressions pertaining to

"interpersonal communication" that employ the character for 'eye', 目 (Bulloch, 2010, p.

53). In the *Kōjien 6th Edition* the *kanji* appears in 125 separate entries. While these

entries frequently refer to the physical eye, its attributes, and related paraphernalia,

many adopt the character's idiomatic second definition as an "opening" or "crevice"

(*ana, sukima*). One notable example here might be the 'rip' (*sakeme*) with which *watashi*

comes to define vision in the novel's final chapter. In a move reminiscent of the open-

mouthed text of Yi Yang-ji's *Yuhi* that uncannily replicates the aporia of the silent

mouth/*kuchi* therein, the visual prevalence of the orthographic 'eye' not only suggests

the centrality of visual tropes to the novel. It also gives Tawada's Japanese prose the

impression of peering back at the reader in a manner not possible in its German and

English versions.

The reading offered here deals solely with the Japanese version of Tawada's novel. Yet in

order to build upon these previous appraisals and more critically develop their concerns

with both linguistic and visual representation, particularly by highlighting the strategies

that Tawada's writing uses to subvert both, it also hopes to actively and purposefully

recall the status of this text that is always already shadowed by its double in translation.

Indeed, as the process of repeated translation brings to bear countless alterations and

absences within Tawada's text, it mirrors the multiple movements of the work's

protagonist and the uncanny patterns of doubling evoked within her narrative, in particular in her apparent identification with the many varied screen personas of Catherine Deneuve.

Deneuve's appearances within the body of work viewed by *watashi* are many, often portraying neurotic and bisexual women who blur and subvert the ideal female image with which her physical beauty is otherwise associated. The branch of star studies dedicated to Deneuve's celebrity accordingly invokes her image as a polysemous sign. The existence of a body of scholarship around her moreover suggests how Deneuve's star persona exceeds her individual cinematic performances. A star in the sense presented within Richard Dyer's work, Deneuve's on-screen and off-screen roles have forged an image that is "extensive, multimedia, and intertextual" (Dyer, 1986, p. 3). Deneuve's longevity as a star is accredited to her multiplicity across historical, avant-garde, and experimental film genres. Perhaps more than anywhere, the shifting sign of Deneuve emerges in her queerness; what Andrew Asibong terms Deneuve's "lesbian transformations" accented through portrayals of "'perverse', paradoxical, or somehow *blank* heterosexualities" (Asibong, 2007, p. 145). As Christina Johnston reflects, "there is a far greater variety to be found across her roles, a diversity that is rendered more complex still by the ongoing dialogue between the on-screen and off-screen 'Deneuves' of the last decade or so" (Johnston, 2007, p. 137). In particular, Deneuve's image has attained national symbolic status as the 'grand dame of French cinema', the face of major French fashion houses including Chanel and L'Oreal, and most literally in 1985 when she was selected as the model for the female embodiment of the French republic, Marianne. Crucially, Deneuve fulfilled this iconic role until she was replaced by Inès de La Fressange in 1989, the year of *watashi*'s arrival in Paris.

Deneuve's significance within the text is therefore clearly not arbitrary. Yet nor is the cinematic arena that simultaneously makes her appearance possible while concealing *watashi*'s illegal presence in Paris. As Katō Norihiro states in his review of *Naked Eye*, the cinema is "a rare world wherein the foreign existence also has, at least for now (*ichiō*), the right to exist" (Kawamura, Akiyama, & Katō, 2004). For *watashi*, with little income and the constant fear of having her illegal status revealed, the cinema provides a haven in which her own visibility is masked.

> I entered the cinema to escape the hustle and bustle (喧騒). I can stay at length for little money, and since it is dark inside, I have no worries about being under constant surveillance by the police. (p.71)

As the darkness of the cinema also presents a 'womb-like' space, *watashi* further relates this protection to the maternal figure that she dubs "*shinemā*" from her transliteration of the French *cinéma* in which she emphasises the final syllable.

> In the darkness of the cinema my body was finally protected from the gaze of others. The "*mā*" of cinema wrapped me up within her membranes. She protected me from the violence of the sun: a violence called visibility. (p.204)

As the only French word to appear within the Japanese narrative, the name *shinemā* and space it denotes stands out, suggesting its absence from *watashi*'s consciousness and vocabulary until her arrival in Paris. As it provides a cloak of invisibility, *shinemā* also shields *watashi* on the streets where, in contrast to the ostensibly Japanese window-shoppers, "the fact that I had no right to be in this town would be immediately exposed" (p. 66).[140]

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[140] In *Cinema at the Crossroads* Hyon Joo Yoo elucidates "a dimension of resistance in the politics of the invisible" that resonates with Lee Chonghwa's arguments regarding silence outlined in Chapter Two (Yoo, 2012). For Yoo, "[a]lthough the state of being invisible has been heavily coded to signify the state of being the subaltern in colonial social relations [the politics of the invisible] carves out a space of the imaginary and visual beyond identity politics and its scopophilia… that seeks to contain the ways of seeing within the discursive limit of rights, particularly the minority right to visibility." Yoo's work derives from a Lacanian and Foucauldian framework rather than Freudian psychoanalysis as my ideas do here. However, it offers scope for developing further *watashi*'s desire to remain invisible, and indeed the darkness that shades all of the works discussed in this thesis.

The implied contrast between *watashi* and other Asian passersby suggests an awareness of the distinctly uncanny nature of her presence in Paris, as a trace of France's repressed colonialist history that ought to remain secret and hidden from view. Yet as a protective space, the cinema as *shinemā* is an ambiguous site. "*Shinema* is made up of *shine* and *mā*" (p.126), hence the cinema's representation as a quasi-maternal space is subverted by deathly allusions of *shine* that confer the potential (*shineru*) and imperative (*shine*) forms of the Japanese verb 'to die' (*shinu*). The cinema presents another echo of Kristeva's pre-lingual chora, like the ambivalence of the bathtub in which *kanojo* commits suicide in *Kazukime*. For in the pull of this "*mā*, whose arms are always spread wide open to embrace me" lies the trace of a deathly drive that resounds within *watashi*'s imagined disappearance inside its dark interior.

In seeking to build upon existing appraisals in a manner in keeping with the preceding chapters of this thesis, the semiotic cinema space, the image of Deneuve's quasi-maternal figure, and the drive to return to these thus map out a distinctly melancholic framework in which to read *watashi*'s narrative. Indeed, *watashi*'s disinterest in her social reality and steady withdrawal into the fictional worlds played out on the cinema screen appear strongly suggestive of the "painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, [and] inhibition of all activity" that Freud attributes to the melancholic (Freud, 1917, p. 244). Moreover, the displacement from her mother tongue that leads *watashi* to gravitate towards the cinematic image and eschew communication with those around her, parallels the rupture between language's meaning and affect which to cite Julia Kristeva's observation, exposes the melancholic as a "foreigner in the maternal tongue" (ibid., p. 53). As with hysteria, the recourse to

melancholia draws upon its roots as a psychical disturbance, here associated with the

distinct trauma of loss and its interminable mourning. Yet following the intervention of

feminist and postcolonial scholarship into this psychoanalytical discourse, melancholia

arises foremost as a trope that consciously ties the linguistic gaps and blind spots to

watashi's narrative experience as the doubly strange foreigner vis-à-vis Deneuve's

reflection, and as a displaced colonial other.[141] It is to specific articulations of these

themes as they are dispersed throughout *watashi*'s viewing choices that this thesis now

turns.

3.4 Identification and the melancholic gaze

Naked Eye opens with an eye-catching deferral of the first-person narrative that

describes a cinematic scene.

> A projected eye, attached to an unconscious body. It sees nothing. The
> power to see has already been seized by the camera. The camera's nameless
> gaze licks around the floor like a detective who has lost his grammar. A doll,
> another doll, a stuffed toy, a vase, a cactus, a television, an electric cord, a
> basket, the corner of a sofa, the corner of a mat, biscuit crumbs, sugar cubes,
> an old family photograph. A young woman is projected staring hard at an
> upwards diagonal into empty space. The eye is projected to become
> increasingly bigger, whereupon it blurs, becoming like a blot on paper.
> Someone looking upon it afterwards would possibly not know that it had
> been an eye. The camera drops back. Were one to look at the spectacle of
> this room turned to ruin, the upturned sofa, the fallen chest of drawers next
> to it, one would not know what had happened.
>
> This was the first film in which I saw you. (p.8)

Presented out of context this scene momentarily blindsides the reader who must

struggle to interpret the chaos, just as the narrating voice suggests. However, as inferred

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[141] For example, Ewa Plonowska Ziarek follows Butler and Kristeva's work on how the melancholic's internalisation of crises such as colonialism, imperialism, and war, provides a substitute for engaging in external political struggles to combat those crises. As such, melancholia seems "more likely to strike those gendered and racialized peoples who are excluded from the hegemonic subject positions determined by heteronormativity, whiteness, and Western imperialism" (Ziarek, 2010, p. 445).

by the chapter's title and the suggestion of a camera, the scene describes the closing

scene from Roman Polanski's 1965 film, *Repulsion*.

In Polanski's film, Deneuve plays Carole Ledoux, a young Belgian woman who shares an

apartment with her sister in London. Carole is visually uncomfortable and detached from

her gendered and social roles from the start. She speaks little, her eyes often staring into

blank space, while out on the street she appears nervous and withdrawn. When her

sister takes a trip with her husband leaving Carole home alone, Carole's awareness of

her own vulnerability with respect to the male gaze causes her fragile grip on reality to

shatter completely. The film narrates Carole's psychological disorder and isolation within

her madness both aurally, through discordant background music and jerky noises, and

visually, through upside-down shots and shaky camera work that capture terrifying visual

hallucinations of cracks opening up into walls, corridors aligned with grasping hands, and

her rape by an imagined intruder.[142] By the end, Carole has murdered two men, and

retreated under her bed. The passage from Tawada's novel describes this chaotic scene

to which Carole's sister and her husband return. As the husband picks up Carole's limp

body from the floor, the camera pans away from her vacant gaze to the rest of the room,

where it rests upon a family photograph predominantly obscured by shadow save for a

young girl glaring out to one side.

The full story of *Repulsion* is missing from *watashi*'s description that itemises only the

final camera sequence before moving swiftly to recount her time spent in Bochum and

her escape to Paris. Yet despite its omission from the narrative, the significance of

Polanski's film is clear in the way that *watashi*'s memories of her former life appear to

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[142] Caputo (2012) considers in detail how Polanski's cinematography documents Carole's breakdown.

parallel and then emulate that of Carole. Such links are initially tenuous, as *watashi* discovers a souvenir replica of Mannekin Pis, the infamous statue of a urinating boy located in Brussels, embossed with the name "Belgium" that indicates Carole's nationality. Yet confined within Jörg's apartment, an isolated situation that mirrors Carole's own, *watashi* begins to exhibit a similarly disturbed state of mind. In the long hours she spends alone, her vision appears to fragment in ways similar to those depicted in the film. Thus, amid the encroaching evening darkness wherein "I could not see inside the room" *watashi* grows fearful as "the shadows of the cars that lick the white walls inside the room as they pass cause me to shudder" (p. 24). The afterglow of the headlights moreover "causes the unevenness of the walls to float upwards, making their surface resemble pubescent skin covered with acne, and marking it with countless tiny boils." The play of black shadows against white bedroom walls appears explicitly borrowed from one of the film's devices used to portray Carole's increasing instability, while the latter half of *watashi*'s vision recalls the grotesque chalky appearance of hardening face masks in the close-ups of Carole's beauty salon customers. *Watashi*'s narrated experience of what she sees therefore strangely mirrors Carole's hallucinatory visions depicted on film. As *watashi*'s instability ensues, she moreover imagines herself enacting similar crimes to those by Carole, as in a dream wherein in response to one of Jörg's repeated demands for sex she smashes the back of his head with a metal candlestick, the same weapon with which Carole bludgeons a male admirer to death (p.31).

Although categorically a work of narrative fiction, *Naked Eye*'s introduction of *watashi* foremost as a spectator of Deneuve's films has led previous appraisals to consider her position while engaging with theories of film spectatorship. Hence Nakagawa (2007)

draws upon Christian Metz's *The Imaginary Signifier* (published in French in 1973), while

Ono takes her lead from Ōsawa Masachi's syntheses of Laura Mulvey's "Narrative and

Visual Pleasure" (1975) and Gavlyn Studlar's "Visual Pleasure and the Masochistic

Aesthetic" (1985), in order to articulate *watashi*'s pleasure as a viewer between sadistic

desires (Mulvey) and masochistic tendencies (Studlar) (2012, p. 165). However, these

readings decline from probing the implications of *watashi*'s gender in articulating her

spectatorial position, especially as it might relate to her apparent over-identification

with Deneuve's image.[143]

Developing Mulvey's pivotal and provocative essay that ascribes the pleasure of

cinematic viewing to the scopophilic desires of a particularly male gaze, in "Film and the

Masquerade" Mary Ann Doane traces back the "eviction of the female spectator/auditor"

to Freud's lecture on 'Femininity' (Doane, 1982).[144] Doane reads in Freud's lecture an

inferred closeness between "the image of woman and the hieroglyph", which appears

deficient in symbolic terms since its ideographic nature reduces the gap between

representation and meaning (ibid., p.76).[145] The woman's image projected onto the

cinema screen is similarly coded, and it is this problem of being "too close to herself"

through which she is denied the position of the gaze (ibid.). Since patterns of

spectatorship conform to these unequal structures of sexual difference and distance, the

female reader/viewer cannot be theorised simply by inverting these binaries. That is,

"identification on the part of the female reader or spectator cannot be, as it is for the

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[143] Ono acknowledges in a footnote that gender should play a factor but only suggests a future need to reconsider her reading while bearing *watashi*'s femininity in mind (footnote 12, Ono, 2012, p. 175).
[144] I thank my supervisor Dr Irena Hayter for introducing me to the wealth of scholarship of feminist film theory, particularly by Doane and Friedberg (see footnote 144), which enabled the consideration of problematic female spectator positions articulated in this section.
[145] The narrowed gap between representation and meaning brought about by the literality of the hieroglyph recalls Tawada's concerns outlined in this chapter's introduction with respect to *kanji* which, by contrast, present a highly codified script that her writing strategies seek to strip back.

male, a mechanism by means of which mastery is assured" (Doane, 1980a, p. 30). Denied a gaze of her own, the only options for the female spectator are to cultivate a narcissistic desire for herself or to adopt a male seeing position in a form of transvestitism. In the process of becoming the object of her own desire, however, the female spectator risks an over-identification that collapses the gap that distances her from her Other, beckoning madness (ibid.).

Doane's formulation therefore calls back to Freud's early commentaries on identification that draw a link between the assimilation of the other and "mental contagion", and posit the ability of the unconscious to accommodate more than one identification at any time as the cause of hysterical symptoms (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2006, p. 206). While Freud's early discussions remain ungendered, Doane's work reveals the complicity between the languages of psychoanalysis and narrative cinema that marginalise the female spectator position. Doane therefore concludes by asserting a link between female identification and masochistic wounding that is in turn suggestive of the hysterical symptom. The return of hysteria here suggests how *watashi*'s visual hallucinations might resonate with the psychical fragmentation of *kanojo* in *Kazukime*, especially as each inscribes their protagonists' ethnic and colonial difference to their surroundings. *Naked Eye* does not stage the same degree of violence as *kanojo*'s self-harm.However, the masochistic tendency anticipated by Doane's arguments is ultimately realised when *watashi* threatens to blind herself. Importantly, as Lisa Downing notes, Carole also "embodies alterity" through her geographical displacement and the disjuncture between her frigidity and the sexual revolution of 1960s London, while the uneasy juxtaposition of her physical beauty and her murderous desires marks her as a "locus of ambiguities"

(Downing, 2007, pp. 20, 26). To suggest *watashi*'s 'hysterical identification' is therefore also to acknowledge her affinity to an ambiguous and hysterical figure.

That *watashi* appears to identify so strongly with Carole might, however, be seen to stem not only from her sense of dislocation within her new surroundings, but from the loss of a homeland that this movement infers. As *watashi* declares herself to hail from "Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon" (p. 7), the different temporalities and spaces to which these two names refer suggest the absence of a fixed point of return. As she makes no attempt to contact her parents beyond writing a letter that she concludes was never sent by Jörg (a suspicion by which she is ultimately unbothered), this assumed homeland only flickers within her memories. The image of a stable homeland upon which to ground her identity is further denied when *watashi* recalls that the paternal namesake of that city, Ho Chi Minh, died three years before her birth, meaning that "my ears never heard his real voice" (p. 23). In addition to having been uprooted from Vietnam, this gap signifies the lack of a symbolic father(land) with which she might have identified before leaving for Berlin. It is on these grounds that one might therefore be able to read *watashi*'s internalisation of Carole's mental instability not merely with respect to her position as a spectator, but as a means of compensating for the absent symbolic fatherland.

Although in the book's first chapter it is specifically Carole who dominates *watashi*'s imagination, by recalling that Deneuve represented the French nation as Marianne until the year 1989, just when *watashi* arrives in Paris, it is possible to read within her incorporation of Carole's psychical fragmentation a desire to internalise Deneuve's image as it embodies her former colonial motherland. For Kristeva it is the inability to

accept the original loss of the "maternal Thing" above all else that leads to the abnormal state of mourning that melancholia defines. In repudiation of that maternal loss, the melancholic therefore incorporates the "Thing" in order to protect it.[146] Yet to internalise the object of loss is to deny its articulation and naming within the symbolic. Thus *watashi* is unable to name Deneuve, despite her centrality within the narrative, addressing her only as *anata* (you). Many of Tawada's texts are narrated from this second-person position.[147] However, given the propensity for Tawada's writing to name poets, playwrights, and theorists directly, and the unmistakeable allusions to Deneuve's cinematic oeuvre, the refusal to name the actress directly is conspicuous. Indeed, *watashi*'s beckoning to a 'you' who cannot reply reveals the collapse of the dialogue that is necessary for syntactical organisation to be completed (Kristeva, 1989, p. 41).

The similarities between *watashi*'s psychical fragmentation and the destabilised subject of melancholia also suggest an impact in reading watashi's gaze. Freud declares that "one cannot see what absorbs" the melancholic (Freud, 1917, p. 246). 'Melancholic' is therefore precisely the term for the "hard stare" cast by the young girl in the photograph on which Polanski's film closes. In particular, there is a striking similarity between this image of the girl and her gaze (Fig. 1), and the portrayal of the winged, female figure in Albrecht Dürer's engraving from 1514, entitled *Melencolia I* (Fig. 2). As Tsu-chung Su

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[146] Since what the melancholic mourns is not a fully separate entity but appears incorporated to some extent within the subject, in Kristeva's terminology it is "not an Object but the Thing" defined as "the real that does not lend itself to signification, the centre of attraction and repulsion, seat of the sexuality from which the object of desire will become separated" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 13).

[147] As Tawada explains in "The Poetics of Translation", *anata* is "the superlative nobody" (*ichiban, nanimono de wa nai*) (Tawada et al., 2007, p. 128). As an inscription that bears this gap created by the absent subjectivity of "nobody", Taniguchi Sachiyo highlights the inclusion of *ana*, or 'hole' (Taniguchi, 2010, p. 275). Slaymaker's reading of this pronoun in other of Tawada's narratives shows how "anata" pushes at the boundaries of comprehensibility, not least since these characters call into question who is being addressed: "Is the main character named 'You' or is it that 'you' (i.e. 'me', the reader) is being addressed?" (Slaymaker, 2010a, p. 323). Within *Naked Eye*, however, *anata* is conspicuously identifiable as Deneuve even while *watashi* refuses to name her. In this scenario, the aporia of "no-one" suggests rather the actress's emergence as a polysemous sign through multiple, ambiguous roles.

describes the latter, her "gaze shines forth from her darkened face, directed upward at

something or at nothing, out of the frame, emitting something uncompromising,

emanating something ghostly, unknown, unfamiliar, uncanny or unhomely" (Su, 2007a, p.

160). Set against the recurrent figure of Carole's vacant stare throughout the film (the

first eye, which "sees nothing" in *watashi*'s description), the vehemence of the girl's

stare is uncannily chilling.[148] The whiteness of her eyes appears piercing within the

shadowy scene, as she gazes on an upwards diagonal into an undetermined, unknowable

"empty space".

If *watashi*'s attempt to identify with Deneuve's portrayal of Carole infers the

internalisation of the two eyes projected in the closing shots of Polanski's film, then this

raises a fundamental paradox wherein *watashi* looks on at Deneuve yet with an averted,

unseeing gaze. Indeed, the ambiguity with which she declares that "it sees nothing. The

power to see has already been seized by the camera" might refer equally to the eye on

screen as it could her visual ability. It is through this inference of *watashi*'s blindness that

the text departs, paving the way towards reading her melancholic gaze as simultaneously

blind to her social reality (as her hallucinations would suggest) yet unerringly focused on

Deneuve's image.

The shift from film theory to melancholia therefore suggests a means of comprehending

watashi's attraction to Deneuve that bears full witness to her linguistic and geographical

displacement from Vietnam to Paris, her apparent ambivalence towards a symbolic

father(land) and mother tongue, and her peculiar gravitation towards this French

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[148] One can read this scene with the view that the girl is Carol casting an accusatory look at her father (whose face is half-obscured behind shadow), suggesting former abuse as an attributable cause of her hysterical visions and fear and loathing of men in adulthood. However, Polanski's film is also consciously ambiguous and the connections between the girl and Carol, and the girl and the man, are left for the viewer to suppose.

cinematic icon. In fact, the process of melancholic identification, whereby the subject incorporates an object that has been lost, resonates with the classical psychoanalytical theorisation of cinematic viewing itself, which posits narrative closure and the homogenised female image as the means to defend against the male viewer's fear of castration.[149] *Watashi*'s averted melancholic gaze indeed reactivates the absence of a female spectator position, appearing to define her in terms of a lack of visual mastery. However, through overtones that account for *watashi*'s former colonial status, melancholia also attends to her displacement and dislocation, and the attachment that remains to Deneuve as a symbol of her former imperial power.[150]

On the one hand, such a gesture enables *watashi* to reinscribe her presence into the broader history of French imperialism in Vietnam, making visible once more connections between the metropole and its colonial past. However, by displacing Vietnam as the maternal origin with Deneuve's image, *watashi*'s apparent identification is underscored by this unbroachable colonial difference between the two women. Since identification is always bound up in the notion of identicality that strives towards homogenisation and equivalence, then *watashi*'s staging opposite Deneuve calls up a relationship founded on

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[149] Such film theory, of which Mulvey and Doane's studies are emblematic, derive from the Freudian notion that the fear of castration initiates a drive to simultaneously resolve and deny the lack it infers by suturing narrative fragments into a seamlessly continuous story, and by presenting the female image as a fetishized substitute for the missing penis (Freud, 1927). Anne Friedberg highlights the similarity between the introjection and projection within identification, and the oscillation between the acknowledgement and disavowal of sexual difference in fetishism, (Friedberg, 1990, p. 39).

[150] Nouri Gana's book, *Signifying Loss: Toward a poetics of narrative mourning*, reads melancholic tropes in postcolonial fiction by writers such as Jelloun and Jamaica Kincaid in light of the "[m]elancholic affective disposition of the postcolonial subject (which is *historically* produced) rather than solely in terms of melancholy identifications (which is *constitutive* of ego-formation at large)" (Gana, 2011). As Gana elucidates this problem in the literary works of his study, "the economy of mourning originates in an insistent *identification with* an allegedly lost object whose *identification*, identity, or location in narrative historiography, perennially eludes the mourning subject" (italics in the original).

difference and multiplicity through which *watashi*'s identity is perpetually deferred.[151] As

a term whose "definition fluctuates" even for Freud (Freud, 1917, p. 243), and as

demonstrated by the focus on the irreducible network of gazes that open the novel,

melancholia offers an unstable and heterogenous trope through which to develop

existing appraisals of *watashi*'s confused visual perception as a film viewer (after all, the

narrative does not unfold only in the cinema) and tie back into the postcolonial

approaches of Chapters One and Two.

3.5 Displacement, asymbolia, and the unreadable text

Watashi's displacement with respect to language is first palpable upon her arrival in

Berlin, when she takes out the script that she has written for her speech and discovers

that, despite having practiced reading it for a full week with her teacher "somehow I

could not recall a single line of its contents." Although Russian is a second language to

her, the "unease" she feels is attributable rather to the fact that "having brought my

writing to a distant country, it no longer looked like something that I could trust" (p. 13).

However, the more traumatic event of her kidnapping after which she wakes up in

Bochum, or "the West" (p. 20), reveals this movement to have violently separated her

body and voice as though the geographical border she has crossed is now internalised

within her:

> the crying voice of a siren began to ring out around my ears. It took me
> several seconds to realise that it was my own voice. (p.21)

As a theme common throughout Tawada's oeuvre, movement and displacement lead to

a divided sense of self in the absence of the mother tongue and the organic unity that it

presupposes between language, body and voice. However, when *watashi* encounters Ai

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[151] Laplanche and Pontalis define identification as the "[p]sychological process whereby the subject
assimilates an aspect, property or attribute of the other and is transformed, wholly or partially, after
the model the other provides" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 2006, p. 205). In this reading of *watashi*, the
homogenising force of inferred identification as an assimilative process is of key importance.

Van on the train, this opportunity for reunion with the mother tongue is recalled in

purely violent terms: "The woman was also surprised and immediately struck up

conversation with me. But that language assaulted me, swallowed me up, and in an

instant its meaning had penetrated my brain cells" (p. 49). Just as her own Russian script

alienates *watashi* as something now unfamiliar, *watashi*'s mother tongue can no longer

provide comfort either. Rather, its aggressive immediacy invades her body like a foreign

object, reinscribing the violence of her original exophonic displacement, and exposing

her own foreignness with respect to language.

When Ai Van's language conveys the news that the train *watashi* has boarded is not

headed for Moscow but will arrive instead the next day in Paris, the impact is such that

"[e]verything before my eyes turned pitch-black".

> The carriage that trundled along with a heavy noise suddenly sped up as
> though, I felt, to tease me. Moscow vanished on a distant, invisible horizon.
> The names of Parisian buildings tumbled out pleasurably from Ai Van's
> mouth, but they did not reach my ears. Paris was a famous city, and the
> French Revolution was a revolution of sorts so I suppose it could be worse.
> But there was nothing for me to do in Paris, and it was a depressingly
> (*zetsubōteki*) faraway place. (p. 50)

Watashi's reaction registers her shock and despair upon realising that she is only

travelling further away from home. Yet it also articulates the ensuing displacement of

both her language *and* vision, apparently as a result of the proper nouns of Paris's

famous buildings that are unable to reach her ears. In her attention to the significance of

language and loss in Marguerite Duras's melancholic film *India Song*, Tijana Mamula

notes how the referents of common adjectives and nouns are malleable to change

within the different contexts through which the speaking/seeing subject migrates,

whereas the thing named by the proper noun remains fixed in one specific location

(Mamula, 2012, p. 41). The proper nouns of Paris's famous buildings are therefore

unspeakably foreign to *watashi*, who is arriving in the city for the first time. And yet,

French rule oversaw the erection of various works of colonial architecture across

Vietnam, including a replica Cathedral of Notre-Dame. In contrast to Mamula's

presumption, therefore, the proper nouns cited by Ai Van potentially have colonial

doubles in Vietnam. As such, they are not purely incomprehensible but rather assault

watashi through their displaced familiarity, and as reminders of Vietnam's colonial

vestiges that continue to mark its landscape and language.

Watashi thus ends up unable to visualise both these buildings recontextualised within

their original yet foreign Parisian cityscape, and the vision of Moscow that has now

disappeared from her view. If the loss of words with which to articulate this state

appears as an effect of this shock, however, then *watashi*'s speechlessness also recalls

the appropriation of her Vietnamese tongue through the encounter with the word "Paris"

and the country it represents, as the cause of her visual disturbance. *Watashi*'s

movement from Vietnam to Paris in fact retraces directly the colonisation of her

homeland which forcibly moved it under French jurisdiction, as she herself recalls in a

memory of being handed a copy of Honoré de Balzac's *Séraphîta* by her grandmother.

> "A long time ago, our country was a part of France," so my grandmother told
> me. Although I was only small, I replied: "In that case, if I had been born
> earlier Paris would have been a part of my country. How pleasing!" My
> grandmother laughed as I spoke. As I remembered that, I felt myself grow a
> little calmer. (pp. 51-52)

While this memory assuages *watashi* through its nostalgia, its more significant comfort

arguably comes from the naivety of her childhood self that inverts the direction of

colonial invasion from West to East, thus reframing her movement towards Paris as one

fully within her rights. Moreover, within this suggestion lies the potential means for

watashi to displace Vietnam as her former motherland, opening the way for Paris

instead to occupy that position within her imagination.

Watashi arrives in Paris alone, the disorientation of this foreign environment

compounded by crossroads that cause her to "lose all sense of which way should be

straight ahead" (p. 54). As if to highlight her vulnerability as a solo female traveller,

watashi senses eyes everywhere; even the windows of the buildings around her appear

"blackened like the circles under a tired person's eyes" (p. 55). Hoping to find

accommodation, *watashi* is drawn to two women, a blonde and a brunette, wearing

"mosquito-net tights", and a man wearing a hunting cap pulled "down to his eyes

(*mebuka ni*)" who pays the brunette a handful of banknotes before walking off together.

Misguidedly believing that the women are merely being paid to source guestrooms for

the night, *watashi* decides to carry out a similar negotiation using "the language of

bodily gestures (*miburi-go*) alone" (p. 57). Waving a banknote under the nose of the

blonde woman, who surveys her face with evident curiosity, *watashi* is led to the

woman's basement apartment.

Inside the apartment, the language of gestures takes on a more deeply intimate meaning.

Despite not recalling ever having learned English, *watashi* "lines up" the few words she

has heard to request, "o*nrī fō mī*" (only for me) (p. 58). To *watashi*'s mind the blonde

woman appears fearful, reminding her of her great aunt who was plagued by

hallucinations of being on fire to which "words brought no comfort" (p. 59). Yet as

watashi lets the blonde woman begin to stroke her fingers across her back "as though

reading braille" she takes an increasingly sexual pleasure in her inability to understand.

> For some reason the woman suddenly opened the zip of her dress, stepped
> out, and unhooked her bra. Then she took my hand and pushed it against her

> nipple. It was hard like the pad of a cat's paw. Looking intently at its tip, I could see countless tiny cracks. I couldn't remember whether my own nipples looked the same. The woman seemed to read have read my thoughts entirely, and unfastened my blouse with trembling hands. Not only my nipples, but my entire breasts were closed flat, with no sign of any cracks. At first, there were none. But as she spoke to me using her fingers, the cracks began to appear: not only in my nipples, but all over my body. (p. 60)

Unlike the violence of "comprehensible language" that *watashi* is later "unable to stomach" (*imi no wakaru gengo wa i ni kotaeru yō ni natteita*) (p. 81), the language of gestures afforded through her encounter with the blonde woman heightens *watashi* to a state of ecstatic pleasure. The innumerable gaps and fissures that the blonde woman's fingers inscribe upon her body moreover mark *watashi* with as a site of absence, each tiny crack as though representing the words now lost, and the scars of her country's colonial past that she seeks to internalise and repair within.

Yet as inferred by *watashi*'s initial description of the blonde woman as someone who "should have been a film actress" (p. 57), the announcement that "the woman's name was Marie" (p. 62) confirms her to be the character played by Deneuve in a second film, *Zig-Zig*. *Watashi*'s ability to physically interact with Marie exceeds the proximity witnessed in her identification with Carole described above, and radically blurs the distinction between *watashi*'s social reality and the scenarios that have happened on film. Given *watashi*'s claim that she "was never to be able to see this film" (p. 62), her ability to replicate scenes from within it is distinctly uncanny. However, as these cinematic images come to constitute an increasing role within the text, like the language of gestures, they reveal a second alternative set of signs through which *watashi*'s narrative might unfold. Although this potential to compensate *watashi*'s loss of language is evident in her increasing obsession with the cinema *per se*, a gift by Marie of the French film magazine *Ecran* (*Screen*) highlights this substitution. As its thickness

resembles the school books that *watashi* recalls using in Vietnam, she adopts the magazine as a "textbook" with which to learn French, citing a desire to graduate from university and rise up the ranks of the Communist Party (p. 74).

However, *watashi*'s immediate interaction with the magazine is not based upon language, but rather with the "many faces" of Deneuve that it contains.

> The many faces you possess melted into one another and formed one face within me. That singular face was different to any face one would see in the street. In other women's eyes, it had no power with which to draw in people, and although the nose had a fine shape that appeared to have been stuck on artificially, while the mouth looked as though thrown in for free. When I say "other women", I am forgetting to include myself among them. Inside the cinema I would become a blazing retina that reflected the screen, while the rest of my body would vanish. The woman named "I" would no longer be. I have come to feel as though no other woman exists apart from you. (p.70)

Faced with Deneuve's image, *watashi*'s own identity melts away. This, too, is in keeping with the melancholic who must kill this maternal figure if they are to demonstrate their acceptance of the original loss and separation, while denial results in killing the self. Kristeva thus speaks of the "death-bearing mother" whose appearance forces the melancholic to decide between the two destructive modes of either matricide or suicide. *Watashi*'s inability to see anyone but Deneuve thus represents her refusal to relinquish that image, sacrificing her own identity in the process. However, if this scene marks *watashi*'s potentially deathly erasure, then just as Douglas Slaymaker reads the novel through *watashi*'s desire to be the camera as a cyborg that transcends the material body (Slaymaker, 2010b), the invocation of a "blazing retina" suggests *watashi*'s belief in her potential longevity merely as the gaze that bores onto the screen.

As *watashi* scans the pages of *Ecran* further, however, the radically heterogeneous face

of Deneuve gives way to a more fragmented assemblage of photographed objects that

watashi itemises in turn.

> Two show windows, a mirror, a bicycle.
> A piano, a bed, a wheelchair.
> A doll, a wine glass, an empty sky.
> A dining table, the wind, a pistol. (p. 71)

Much like the closing camera pan-out of *Repulsion*, *watashi*'s 'reading' of these images

constitutes less an attempt to describe a complete scene than a list of individual items

that appear disconnected from one another. Yet, helped only by a Russian-French

dictionary, this is precisely the way in which *watashi* goes on to translate the

transcription of an interview between two people (one of whom is presumably Deneuve)

that accompanies these film stills.

> "Question, very, original, because, start. How long, you, started, films? You,
> fifteen, X, I think." (p. 74)

Without a more formal grammar textbook, *watashi*'s translation is laboured and literal,

foregrounding fragmentation over unity. Such a process of translation mimics strategies

used by the translator-cum-narrators of Tawada's fiction elsewhere.[152] By comparison to

sentences in those other texts, whose visceral depictions of wounded bodies correspond

to the destruction that this style of translation enacts upon them, the transcriptions from

Ecran are clinical and mundane. Yet, as *watashi*'s double translation via Russian severs

each word from its signifying context, the result is an asymbolic muddle akin both to the

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[152] For example, Tawada's earlier novel *Transplanting Letters* (1993) opens with the narrator's attempt
to translate a passage of Anne Duden's short story, *Der wunde Punkt im Alphabet*.: "…in,
approximately, ninety percent, the victims, almost all, always, on the ground, lying, shown as,
desparately raising, heads, on displays, are, attack weapons, or, the points of, in their throats, or…"
(Tawada, 2007a, p. 109, translated by Margaret Mitsutani)*. As Dennitza Gabrakova writes of this
opening passage, its effect is to "literally create an 'opening' right that the start of the novel. The
heavily punctuated paragraph by its very speckled syntax conveys the sense of tearing apart, which is
reflected in the violent piercing of 'attack weapons' and the choked narration of the stabbed 'throats'"
(Gabrakova, 2010, p. 385).

fragmented speech of Yuhi seen in Chapter Two, and the rift that defines her

melancholic relationship to language.

The condition of asymbolia threatens the melancholic's ability to speak, and must be

overcome for mourning to be completed and normality to be restored. As Kristeva writes

of the loss of meaning that asymbolia engenders: "if I am no longer capable of

translating or metaphorising, I become silent and I die" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 42). *Watashi*'s

inability to translate either the text or imagery of *Ecran* exposes how detached from the

coherence of language and imagery she has now become. In neither transcription can

the reader gain a sense either of the full original image, nor of the interviewer's original

question. Not only is its order jumbled, but grammatically, the multiple translations of

this sentence (from French through Russian to the Japanese of the novel and then my

own English translation) render it lacking the vital components through which

comprehension could otherwise be assured. The letter 'X' stands out as a marker of this

unknowability.

The scattered, broken appearance of *watashi*'s translation attests to her stuttering

silence, which is reminiscent of Yuhi's own aphonic breakdown on the congested Seoul

bus. Just as Yuhi rejects Onni's support in that context, using *Ecran* as a makeshift

textbook for learning French enables *watashi* to shun real, social interactions with Ai Van

and her husband, Jean, into whose apartment she moves after a chance reunion in the

street at the beginning of the story's third chapter. Despite her studying of the text,

watashi's French does not seem to improve. Yet her desire to consume Deneuve's image

remains, in the cinema that she can now visit freely thanks to small amounts of "pocket

money" handed to her by Ai Van. *Watashi* thus returns to the cinema with increasing

regularity: "in the case of books, as a child I would re-read them countless times until they fell apart in tatters, and so it is with the cinema, I thought, I want to watch until the screen has begun to fall into tatters" (p. 89). In light of *watashi*'s inability to comprehend French, her fascination with the cinema intrigues Ai Van, who to *watashi*'s annoyance claims herself to be a "film studies student".

> "If you can't understand the language, how on earth do you watch the films?" I wanted to reply that Tristana can speak using her own invented sign language and so has no need for a tongue, but I remained mute (*damatte shimatta*)." (p. 89).

Like her reading of *Ecran*, the cinema also leads to *watashi*'s silence. Yet if Deneuve's image is always the object of *watashi*'s address, referred to exclusively in the second-person, then the cinema offers the promise that she might speak back. For as Tristana "speaks to the blind boy using only her lips and her fingers, there is no doubt that Tristana can also speak to me" (p. 87).[153] It is due to the possibility of shattering the screen that divides them that *watashi* is compelled to return to the cinema.

Watashi's reading and translation of *Ecran* reveals her ability to perceive language and imagery as having become fragmented and distorted. Yet it also inscribes within her text—indeed, the novel—the divides and conflicts internalised within her identity that is caught between a dead symbolic father and a former colonialist mother, and the desire to compensate for her Vietnamese mother tongue with the 'adopted mother' tongue personified in the words and image of Deneuve. If, in Kristevan terms, *watashi*'s preoccupation with the cinema and *Ecran* project risk *watashi*'s silence and deathly erasure, then they also suggest less a new 'at-home-ness' within this state. That is to say, that while the drive that pushes *watashi* to repeatedly return to the text, and to the cinema, risks losing sight of herself, it also affords her a position in which to deny

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[153] In *Tristana* (dir. Luis Buñuel, 1970), Deneuve plays the eponymous title role, an orphan who is adopted by Don Lope before, unable to resist her beauty, forces her to become his wife.

grammatical fluency and symbolic meaning through more radical, asymbolic forms of

which the fragmented text, Tristana's sign language, and the locus of ambiguities that

lies within Deneuve's image that multiplies with every role.

3.6 Desiring the colonial mother(land)

Up to now, the attempt within this chapter to read *watashi*'s attraction towards

Deneuve as a lost mother figure has been supported by the juxtaposition of both

women's nationalities that conjure a former colonial relationship, and by reading

watashi's obvious displacement as it inscribes tropes that parallel melancholia, which for

Kristeva derives from the loss of an "essential object" that is "in the final analysis, my

mother" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 43). If these associations have seemed overprescribed, then

this is in anticipation of *watashi*'s encounter with Wargnier's *Indochine* that arguably

constitutes the most significant film selection by *watashi*, for it explicitly portrays the

French occupation of Indochina through the figure of Éliane (Deneuve) who personifies

that period as the adoptive mother to a young Vietnamese girl, Camille.

In *Indochine* Deneuve plays Éliane Devries, a wealthy 'Asiate' born in French Indochina

and the inheritor of her father's vast rubber plantation. When her friends are killed in a

plane crash, Éliane adopts and raises their young daughter Camille as her own. Although

early scenes portray their familial affection for one another, this blissful rapport is

disrupted when Camille falls in love with Jean-Baptiste, a naval lieutenant with whom

Éliane has been conducting a secret affair. After Jean-Baptiste is redeployed to the north

at Éliane's request, Camille escapes to join him and both lovers end up on the run,

hidden by a communist travelling theatre troupe. Ultimately, Camille is captured by the

French authorities and imprisoned, but Jean-Baptiste escapes with their newborn son

back to Éliane in whose home he dies: his apparent murder framed as a suicide so as to

retain his silence. Éliane continues to seek Camille's freedom, but her fight is rejected by

Camille herself who upon release joins the revolutionary fight for regional independence.

As the colonial era is clearly reaching its demise, Éliane leaves for France with her

adoptive grandson who, in the absence of being able to track down Camille in his

adulthood, tells Éliane, "You are my mother" (*Ma mere, c'est toi*).

On the one hand, *Indochine* portrays the violent oppression of the French ruling regime

through the torture and captivity of its dissenting colonial subjects. Yet these episodes

are relegated to a backdrop against which the mother-daughter relationship between

Éliane and Camille and their love triangle play out (Norindr, 1996, p. 137). The colonial

narrative is reframed in a highly stylish manner through sweeping shots and the

impeccable, high-fashion costumes worn by Deneuve, all of which cultivate a "collective

cultural nostalgia of a former colonial power for its past" (Cruz, 1995, p. 1215). These

"colonial blues", as Panivong Norindr terms them (1996, p. 133), might account for

Indochine's great commercial and critical successes, including its Academy Award for

Best Foreign Language Film. Allegorising the occupation of French Indochina through the

metaphor of family, it positions Éliane as both a matriarch to her workers and as the

maternal embodiment of the colony itself, clearly drawing on and subverting Deneuve's

associations to Marianne (Harris, 2007). However, Éliane's errant behaviour upsets the

model purity of the national icon, disrupting its preserved image of femininity as she

oscillates between masculine employer who is unflinching while whipping her staff,

elegant woman about town, affectionate maternal figure, and guileless lover. The film

has thus been credited with adding a gendered dimension into portrayals of the empire

(Murray, 2002, p. 236). Conversely, *Indochine* introduces the dimension of colonial

legacy into *watashi*'s female gaze upon *anata*/Deneuve.

Indeed, the colonial situation incites significant theoretical overlaps with modern

discussions of spectatorship outlined above, as in Panivong Norindr's analysis which

reads the region known as Indochine as a "colonial phantasmatic", a romantic fiction

that structured French colonial desire (Norindr, 1996, p. 16). Although an "imaginative

territorial assemblage *calqué* (traced, copied, translated) from the boundaries fixed by

the French government" (ibid., p.17), Indochine presented the necessary spectacle on

which such desires could fixate, yet in this capacity and in order to efface the violence of

its creation, the region was necessarily reinscribed as an empty space to be filled. The

formerly hyphenated name "Indo-chine" symbolises the transformations imposed on the

region as disparate territories were conjoined under a single administrative term, and

reinvented with a new "stable and unified identity based on a lack, the absence of a

proper name, and [supplemented] with a colonial phantasmatic" (ibid., p.20). For

Norindr, Wargnier's film repeats the appropriating gesture of this former colonial

expansion by recreating a "coherent vision" of Indochine through a linear historical

narrative, and the titular use of this imaginary yet evocatively powerful name (ibid.

p.133-34). As the focal point therein and embodiment of this land, Éliane provides the

"chief object of audience identification" through whose presence "the spectator is

sutured into a colonialist perspective" (Norindr, 1996, p. 135).

Watashi's viewing of *Indochine* in 1992 brings the first coincidence of the film's

cinematic release and the temporality of her narrative. However, whereas Norindr's

interpretation presumes a French/European audience for whom the film's narrative

continuity, Deneuve's image, and the name 'Indochina' itself are perceived to assuage

the lack represented by this former colonial territory and its demise, for *watashi* the film

only exacerbates the loss and displacement that has foregrounded her narrative up to

now. Echoing Norindr's criticism, Indochina is also an unknown entity to *watashi*, who

"had never seen a country by the name of Indochina anywhere other than in a Parisian

cinema" (p.116). It is only the name of Deneuve as it floats up out of the sea during the

opening credits providing the "breath-taking climax of the film", and the voice that

narrates the backdrop, that affords any sense of legitimacy to this setting: "The narrating

voice is yours. Even though I do not know what you are saying, I know that it is you"

(ibid.).Although *watashi* cannot recognise Indochina, then Deneuve's voice is

unmistakeable.

Yet as Deneuve's role is seen to be the embodiment of this colonial landscape, then the

gap in *watashi*'s comprehension speaks once more to a kind of asymbolia in which

language and body are detached within the cinematic scene. Indeed, *watashi*'s

recollection of the opening scene of *Indochine* repeats now familiar patterns within the

narrative, of her blurred vision that is "covered by the muddied surface of the sea" on

screen, and the fragmentation of language that is exposed in the "frictional movements"

(*sureai*) of Deneuve's disembodied voice. However, just as *watashi*'s mode of reading

favours splitting and dispersal over coherence and continuity, the pleasure of Deneuve's

voice comes precisely from this friction that surpasses any demands to comprehend its

meaning, and countermands the lubricating effect of the script it narrates.

> Exactly because I do not know what you are saying, I can feel the voice itself
> build up, sink, breathe, grate, trickle sighs, heat, while [the narration]
> proceeds silkily, majestically on. (p.117)

The effects of Deneuve's voice go beyond the auditory realm to almost tangibly envelop *watashi* within its warm, rasping breath. The space that this voice creates thus resonates with the function of the maternal voice in cinema that Doane describes as a "'sonorous envelope' which surrounds the child and is the first model of auditory pleasure" (Doane, 1980b, p. 34). Hence *watashi* takes pleasure solely in the form of this voice devoid of meaning, whose fluidity is replicated in the image of the sea on which it appears to be carried. Yet this semiotic affect also carries a sense of loss, as *watashi* recognises that Deneuve's voice "is telling the story of someone who died before the film began" (p.117). In fact, the funeral procession against which this voice rises is that of Camille's parents, although the appearance of Éliane dressed in black within it foreshadows the demise of colonial Indochina itself.

Now linked to *watashi*'s own historical and cultural specificity, Deneuve's portrayal presents another point of connection, alluded to through *watashi*'s gradual recognition of herself within the opening scene.

> It is inconceivable that Éliane and the girl are mother and daughter. The girl's face reminded me of someone. It is hard to believe but, somehow, she seemed to look like me. The more I looked, the closer her resemblance to a childhood photograph of myself. (p.117)

Watashi's resemblance to Camille displaces Deneuve/*anata* as the potential object of identification that is stressed by Norindr. Yet the possibility of identification with Camille is also displaced by *watashi*'s rivalrous desire for the motherly attention that she receives from Éliane, especially when *watashi* recalls that her own parents may by now be dead. Faced with the image of her own likeness being tended to by this adoptive mother, *watashi*'s desire is therefore accentuated with a regressive maternal longing that crystallises in the image of Éliane feeding Camille mango with a spoon, leading her to plead to be fed the same. She moreover disputes the legitimacy of Camille's claim to

be Éliane's daughter, noting that Camille's "face was no longer as youthful [as it had been], yet she did not resemble Éliane" (p. 119).

If such protests expose the contradiction within *watashi*'s desire given her own confessed resemblance to Camille, however, *watashi* chooses to remain oblivious. Rather, she begs to be fed even though before Deneuve her words—"Please give me some" (*atashi ni mo sukoshi chōdai*)—inevitably (*itsumo*) amount to "baby-talk" that "crumbles apart and scatters all over the floor" (p. 120). As this collapse of language mirrors Deneuve's own grating, incomprehensible voice, it conveys an apparent symmetry between the two. Yet here *watashi*'s desire goes so far as to initiate a collapse of the boundaries that keep her and Éliane apart: namely, the screen, and the borders of her own body.

> My voice grows eerily high-pitched like the trill of a bird. You tilt your eyelashes to follow intensely the movements of my lips, and move your lips faintly as though to repeat my words. Perhaps you are dubbing my voice. As you place a piece of juicy mango upon my tongue, it fills my mouth and in an instant I am speaking in French; even though I don't understand it at all. (p. 120)

Watashi thus experiences a embrace within her adoptive mother tongue. This move precariously imposes upon herself a linguistic assimilation that parallels the imposition of French in colonial Indochina. The adoptive mother tongue therefore metaphorises the inherent otherness of native language and the violence with which it is imposed, that Tawada's texts persistently inscribe. The paradox is that for *watashi*, the violence of assimilation is reframed against the nourishment of ripe mango, a fruit native to her home. Moreover, it creates a distance from symbolic language by enabling her return into an incomprehensible, semiotic babble.

For *watashi*, the French spoken by Deneuve/Éliane therefore paradoxically signifies the same resistance of symbolic grammar against which other tropes of her linguistic displacement have been read. In *Indochine*, this desire for an alternative, non-communicative language presents itself most explicitly in the body language offered by the tango that Éliane and Camille perform twice within the film. In the first, a private rendition that illustrates the strength of their bond, the two "stumble" and collapse into a fit of giggles, leading *watashi* to conclude that "mis-stepping is fun" (p.118). In contrast to the playfulness of this rehearsal, however, the main event performed to entertain guests in Éliane's home is a far more formal affair. Staged with an eroticism that belies their mother-daughter relationship and a tension that appears heightened by the jealousy following Éliane's discovery of Camille's love for Jean-Baptiste, this second dance crystallises Camille's cultural appropriation by Éliane through her Western fashion and performance within this colonial European setting, and the network of desire revealed through the two women's partnership as Jean-Baptiste gazes on. Hence *watashi* relates this scene, highlighting the intense movements in a characteristically literal fashion.

> Perhaps the tango is a contract between a man and a woman. A contract exchanged between a man whose warm muscular thighs are palpable through the thin fabric of his trousers, and a woman who is turned inside out as she dances like a white, silk glove. A contract between a woman who casts out a forceful stare and a man whose thin lips would never crumble into a smile. There are also other kinds of tango. (p.118)

However, as "tango" is written in *katakana*, it incites homophones in the Japanese word *tango* that means 'word' or 'language'. Hence Tawada's prose is doubled by a latent second translation:

> Perhaps *language* is a contract between a man and a woman. A contract exchanged between a man whose warm muscular thighs are palpable through the thin fabric of his trousers, and a woman who is turned inside out

as she dances like a white, silk glove. A contract between a woman who casts out a forceful stare and a man whose thin lips would never crumble into a smile. There are also other kinds of *language*.

The image of the white silk glove turning inside-out repeats a specific performance that Tawada has included in her own public readings. Asked of the significance of this gesture in an interview with Bettina Brandt, Tawada explains the literal meaning of the Japanese word for translation (*hon'yaku*), the first ideogram of which "suggests a slightly dramatic and romantic gesture, which means 'to turn over' or 'to flip over'" (Tawada, speaking in Brandt, 2008, pp. 20-21). Like the chaos of Éliane and Camille's "stumbling", which recalls the related strategy by which Tawada's prose seeks to trip itself up, the image of the inverted glove "makes it possible to show the flipside of something in an unexpected way" (ibid.). By hanging this image onto the ambiguous term *tango*, Tawada's prose performs the potential inversion that it describes. If dancing suggests one alternative means of language, then rendered phonetically this *tango* presents an alternative language within language in which form inscribes multiple ambiguous meanings, allowing it to become as foreign as the South American dance.

Watashi therefore remains fixated upon Éliane's face, whose ambiguity offers an antidote to the "aggressive clarity" of symbolic language as it "flees from the violence of the image to create a new space beside the story that draws me in" (p.134). When Camille rejects Éliane with the blow that "Indochine is already… dead" (p.135), *watashi* is torn between her desire to know and her fear of comprehending those words; when she hears their translation from Ai Van, *watashi* feels Éliane crying within her. Through this act of mourning, *watashi*'s daughterly longing for Éliane is thus for the first time matched with her expressed internalisation of her object of desire. *Watashi*'s internalisation of Éliane's pain provides the most explicit attempt to re-appropriate her

former mother(land) in an act of cultural mourning. It also privileges the voice/

enunciation/aporia over language/narrative/communication. As *watashi*'s pain appears

unending, exacerbated through repeated visits to the cinema, it passes into the sphere

of melancholia. Framed within melancholic terms, *watashi*'s tangible grief echoes this

ambivalence. On the one hand, *watashi* must let go of Éliane as the reproachful tears she

internalises are those shed by Éliane at the loss of her daughter, Camille. Yet the desire

to cling to *anata*'s ambiguity remains, as the means for *watashi* to refuse her compliance

with the symbolic violence of the film's narrative grammar and imagery.

3.7 Melancholic translation

Although *watashi* has not had contact with her own family since her arrival in East Berlin,

the sense of loss conveyed by the fictional ending of *Indochine* has the greatest impact

upon her. She becomes more accepting of the need to secure legal citizenship, taking up

the offer of Tuon Linh to marry in Thailand. Yet as the legal imposition to belong focuses

upon her visible presence, her condition grows increasingly precarious. Out on the

streets she can "see nothing but headlights like eyeballs… and human eyes" (p.140). In

turn, this paranoia foregrounds her hospitalisation, and the further fragmentation of her

"own language" to a set of "breakables" (*kowaremono*). If this instability appears

exacerbated by her failed attempt to pass through border control at Charles de Gaulle

airport, then the greatest breakdown follows her transportation back across the border

from Paris to Bochum in the penultimate chapter. Unlike the other male characters who

inhabit the sidelines of *watashi*'s narrative like extras in a film, Jörg's appearance is

evidently the one she fears most. However, despite the violence of this second drugging

and abduction, *watashi*'s anger is instead targeted at the provinciality of Bochum itself

which is unable to satisfy her cinematic cravings: *Ecran* is not on sale, while the only film

starring Deneuve to be screened, *Est-Ouest* (East-West, 1999), leaves her disappointed

owing to its "overly unambiguous visual language" (p.249), and the time taken for

Deneuve to arrive on screen "[e]ven though I have been waiting for you who I know so

well" (p.250).[154]

It is when Deneuve finally does appear on screen that *watashi* recognises her as the

woman who stopped the Trans-Siberian train and enabled her escape to Paris eleven

years prior. Despite her frustrations with *Est-Ouest watashi*'s compulsion to return to the

cinema therefore ensues, leading Jörg eventually to question her whereabouts.

> Your thoughts are still floating somewhere different, aren't they? Where had
> you been, today? Jörg let out a sigh. The film. How do you watch the same
> film a hundred times? I don't know. You still haven't found any new shoes,
> have you?
> So, what is it?? You should take a bit more care in your appearance to others.
> Those,
>
> dirty, worn-out sandals made from tyres. What are they? You yourself,
>
> I guess you already know, but that was nothing other,
>
> than misery itself,
>
> that was all it was,
>
> a wretched deception, first realise that,
>
> and then,
>
> forget,
>
> those images that have passed. Yes, I'll forget. But in order to do so I must
> poke out my eyes with the second hand of a clock. (p.258-59)

The transition into this dialogue feels rather clunky in comparison to the shifts that

structure the rest of the novel. However, its violence also replicates the usurpation of

watashi's narrative that has been entirely addressed to *anata* by Jörg, who now speaks

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[154] This second epic directed by Wargnier also won an Academy Award nomination in 1999 for Best
Foreign Language Film, but unlike *Indochine* it did not win.

to *watashi* using the more vulgar second-person pronoun, *kimi*. This abrupt interjection

of Jörg's voice also gears up the narrative towards its most climactic point. For as Jörg

pushes *watashi* to answer, the to-and-fro relay of their conversation gets lost in the text

that punctuates its own rhythm, only to be reclaimed by *watashi*'s language that is now

irrevocably shattered. The suggestion to pierce her own eyes then redoubles the

spectacle of this broken language by inferring the irreversible destruction of her sight.

The suggestion of watashi's self-blinding evokes for an almost eerie second time in this

thesis Tanizaki's "A Portrait of Shunkin". In Chapter One, Nikawadori Yuki, the blind

sanshin player in Sakiyama's "Midday Moon" recalls Shunkin herself. Yet here, watashi's

actions infer the character of Sasuke, Shunkin's student and lover, who blinds himself

after Shunkin is scalded with boiling water and suffers severe facial burns.[155] In Tanizaki's

story, Sasuke's self-blinding is portrayed as a means both of preserving within his mind

the image of Shunkin before her attack, and of fully entering "the world my teacher lives

in" (Tanizaki, 1996, p. 75). Sasuke's apparent delight—"at last I have reached it!" (ibid.)—

betrays a desire to identify with his teacher and mistress that appears arguably

comparable to that which defines *watashi*'s relationship to Deneuve's cinematic

image.[156]

However, although the "portrait" of Shunkin derived from the narrator's compilation of

multiple pre-existing and differing accounts is somewhat ambiguous (see the discussion

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[155] Ono (2012) also makes this connection in her reading of *Naked Eye*. However, her consideration of this intertextuality is curiously confined to existing scholarship only based on the film adaptation rather than Tanizaki's written work. Furthermore, although Ono's reading highlights the association of blindness with male castration anxiety (ibid., p. 173), it sidesteps the issue of watashi's female gender or ethnic otherness within the specific context of Tawada's text.

[156] It is also interesting to note that Tanizaki's text proposes a pertinent intersection with the cinematic themes of both Tawada's text and its exploration in this chapter, following Margherita Long's description of "A Portrait of Shunkin" as "an incisive piece of film theory" that conveys multi-layered ideas on the "lure, the look, and the gaze" (Long, 2009, p. 104).

of "Midday Moon" in Chapter One), the presentation of Sasuke's perspective is inherently singular within Tanizaki's narrative. Thus, it appears that the image of Shunkin that Sasuke preserves, too, is singular. In contrast, since watashi is persistently drawn to the ever-shifting image of Deneuve, as becomes apparent in the closing section of *Naked Eye* entitled "Dancer in the Dark", her self-blinding seeks not to preserve a single image, but rather to facilitate the ongoing movement of that image's inherent multiplicity and ambiguity. Moreover, just as Dodd argues that the trope of blindness in "Shunkin" articulates a "fanciful impulse to step outside of history" (Dodd, 2012, p. 161), the amnesia promised by watashi's inferred self-blinding appears to echo a key construct of Tanizaki's text that construes blindness as an alternative or "enhanced" (ibid.) mode of being and seeing. Such tropes might be illustrated through Sasuke's substitution via this self-blinding of an "inner vision in place of the vision he had lost", and his claim that "[n]ow that I'm blind, it's as if nothing happened to you (Tanizaki, 1996, p. 75; 76).

Although Tawada's narrative refrains from confirming *watashi*'s self- blinding, the suggestion of this violent act of self-harm reiterates the question that hangs across the entire narrative, namely what does *watashi* 'see'? For despite establishing *watashi*'s role as a viewer through whose eyes we as readers are able to 'view' the cinema screen, this closing scene infers the deception ('wretched' or otherwise) of what has passed and makes visible the possibility of her blindness throughout. Indeed, if blindness has been connected with castration since Freud, then *watashi*'s body is already inscribed with multiple inferences of lack through her gendered and ethnic otherness. The use of a clock needle, however, also binds *watashi*'s (lack of) vision to memory, positing the necessity of blindness for forgetting. This gesture therefore suggests a desire to be cut off from the past. However, the clock hand suggests that it is not history that *watashi*

rejects. Rather, it is a traumatic wounding in time *by* time, the aporia of the pierced eye

replicated in the hand-less clock that becomes suspended in time. Moreover, it points to

the past in which *watashi* has always been suspended, as indicated by the revelation

that on her feet have always been a pair of worn "sandals made from tyres" otherwise

known as "Ho Chi Minh sandals" (Tawada & Bernofsky, 2009).[157]

In *Not Like A Native Speaker*, Rey Chow seeks to articulate a discussion of melancholia

centred around lost objects beyond the classical approach that might frame themselves

within the "postcolonial, postmodern cultural scene" so as to "(re)claim their share of

epistemic legitimacy" (Chow, 2014, p. 70). Chow's work is inspired by Judith Butler's

"eminently enabling" application of Freud's melancholia onto the imposed loss of the

homosexual/bisexual love object in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of*

Identity (2007). Since Butler opens up a time and space in which new applications might

be sought for the acting-out of the melancholic symptom, Chow thus seeks to consider

the colonial subject who has been required to identify with the language and culture of

the coloniser in equivalent terms.

Since linguistic and cultural assimilation stand at the forefront of the colonial experience,

Chow's argument quickly turns to translation. Citing the works of scholars who have

engaged with colonial issues through this "melancholy turn", Chow argues for

considering contemporary theory "as a type of translation" in itself, wherein melancholy

frequently emerges within the pursuit for "justice on behalf of the vanished original":

> although it is not possible to overcome the mainstream culture that has
> defeated us, this quest implies, and although the grounds of the original's

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[157] Bernofsky's English translation of the German text gives this term 'Ho Chi Minh sandals', following the nickname popular among American troops during the Vietnam War.

> legitimation might have been destroyed for good, we can at least be
> melancholic. (p.71)

The wo/man who turns towards melancholy might therefore, in Chow's reading, be
compared to a translator. Such an endeavour means rewinding in slow motion, going
back into the past, restoring attention to native experiences before the imposition of
heterosexuality or the coloniser's tongue. In so doing, the melancholy turn brings "the
task of the translator up to date. No longer a traitor, this transactor of untimely native
remains now reemerges as a faithful melancholic" (p.72). Having integrated a
melancholic sense into the act of translation, Chow's discussion paves a way for
considering the form of translation that melancholia undertakes. Indeed, recalling the
figure of hysterical translation presented in Chapter Two, which rejects the conventional
demands to 'work through' the hysterical symptom by telling a singular narrative in
favour of the heterolingual enunciations of both language and body, as an open-ended
process melancholic translation suggests a similar movement away from the pressures to
overcome the object of loss by remaining in the perpetual state of mourning.

Watashi's viewing of *Indochine* reveals her to be in mourning, both through the grief she
has inherited by internalising Éliane's suffering, and for the loss of Éliane herself. Yet her
fixation with *anata* and attachment to her native rubber sandals throughout the novel
suggest that this mourning has no end, nor has she any desire for closure as her refusal
to relinquish her hold on Éliane/*anata* attests. Through the image of the rubber sandals
and the first expression of this grief, *watashi*'s colonial past is central to this process. Yet
watashi's behaviour from the novel's beginning resonates with Freud's symptoms, as her
obsession with the cinema fundamentally inhibits her ability to engage in any other
activities, her interest in all others usurped by her obsession with Deneuve. As such
behaviour for Freud culminates in the expectation of punishment, *watashi*'s self-blinding

moreover appears to fulfil this wish in a masochistic act. Indeed, the pierced eye echoes

Freud's description of melancholia itself as an "open wound" (Freud, 1917, p. 253). If

mourning is the process that comes to an end, then as a metaphor for translation it

suggests the healing of gaps.

Although *watashi*'s ability to see is always under question from the text's opening

suggestion that it "has already been seized by the camera" the act of poking out her eyes

would confirm her blindness definitively. Yet rather than foreclose *watashi*'s identity, the

open wound of this blinded eye also suggests a melancholic form of translation that will

not be healed but will remain an open wormhole to allow transport between the present

and its unseen links to the past. In contrast to translation-as-mourning which seeks

equivalence in order to heal its pain, translation-as- melancholia permits difference as a

revolutionary process through which the subject of translation is repeatedly (re)inscribed.

3.8 (Not) Seeing Double

In the novel's short closing chapter the violent suggestion of *watashi*'s self-blinding shifts

the narrative into the third-person register and introduces Selma, a Czech immigrant

residing in Berlin. Selma is asked by a blind woman who is often seen walking her dog

around the neighbourhood to help her read some letters. Selma accompanies the

woman home yet the large pile of letters she finds in her apartment, including some

adorned with French stamps, remains unread. Rather, the scene follows Selma's desire

to learn about this curious woman whose ambiguity is provoked by the "fragrance of

southern tropical (*nangoku*) fruit" pervading the apartment, the "faint accent" in the

woman's speech, and the revelation that she lived in Paris for ten years "although it

wasn't my fault" (p. 264-65). As these myriad references cast back over the preceding

narrative to suggest the woman's similarity to *watashi*, the full ambiguity of this figure

follows when, despite her "grey hair streaked with blonde" (p. 262) and a "face that

could only appear European" (p.264), she claims to be ethnically Vietnamese.

The cinematic intertext for this final section is Lars Von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark* (2002),

in which the Icelandic singer Björk stars as Selma, a Czech immigrant to the US who, out

of fear of losing her menial position in a washbasin factory, must attempt to conceal the

genetic degenerative eye condition that will result in her going blind. Deneuve appears

as Kathy, the colleague and confidante who covers Selma's mishaps at work and

accompanies her to the cinema where she maps out the performances into the palm of

Selma's hand. When a neighbour exploits Selma's condition and attempts to steal the

savings she has hidden for an operation to save her son's sight, Selma shoots him at his

behest, and is hanged for the crime.

Tawada's text writes back through Von Trier's film: Selma's fate on screen is

foreshadowed in the ominous statement that her namesake within the text will go on

from Berlin to seek exile in America "where she [will be] sentenced to death" (p. 262).

The blind woman then refers to her friend Kathy, whose presence neither she nor Selma

can ascertain, yet who accompanies the woman to the cinema and "translates the film

into the movements of her fingers and taps them onto the palm of my hand" (p. 266).

Aside from these narrative coincidences, *Naked Eye* resonates thematically with *Dancer

in the Dark* through the metaphors of blindness and vision, and *watashi*'s

characterisation that mirrors Selma's portrayal as an obscure subject who appears

"[b]oth visible and invisible" within the film (Wohl, 2015, n.p.). However, as Selma's

depiction on screen is divided between both the blind woman and Selma in Tawada's

text, this splitting is overlain with the similar inability to wholly equate the blind woman with *watashi* who has narrated the main body of the novel.

As the blind woman's image conflates dimensions of both *watashi*'s history and Deneuve's outward appearance, she presents an uncanny and unknowable figure. While Ono (2012, p. 170) perceives her therefore to be*watashi* transformed into Deneuve (2012, p. 170), this conclusion is more ambiguous. As Nakagawa points out, while the blind woman appears to be *watashi* "after transmigration" (*tenseigo*), the invisible figure of Kathy might equally be she (Nakagawa, 2007, p. 1058). Yet there is a second overlooked ambiguity since the woman is blind as the result, so rumour has it, of fending off attackers who stabbed to death a "young foreign woman" near Alexanderplatz in 1988 (p. 263). It is this detail that confirms the possibility, hitherto only inferred through *watashi*'s ghostly existence within the city's shadows, that she was killed even before arriving at her hotel next to the "statue of a giant onion bulb [whose] sphere glimmered like the roof of a Thai temple": as the check-in receptionist confirms, this is a "television tower", most likely the Berliner Fernsehturm that overlooks the square (p. 12).[158] If the effect of this section is to enact a breakage within the narrative, then more than staging *watashi*'s sudden transformation it also reveals the rift that always already lies within the heart of the text. Overshadowed at all stages by the suggestion of *watashi*'s death, the narrative's return to Berlin raises the possibility that *watashi* has remained there all along and only her eye has travelled.

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[158] The suggestion is backed up by the receptionist's added detail that this tower stands "forty-four metres higher than the Eiffel tower" (the Fernsehturm's height is recorded at 368m, the Eiffel tower at 324m). The way in which Tawada's text plants and codes these clues for the reader to notice is almost reminiscent of detective fiction.

The closing section of *Naked Eye* therefore foregrounds ambiguity and mystery. However, the desire for resolution is one that the blind woman, and her appreciation of the cinema, clearly rebuts.

> I can't see the faces of the dancers, but then, not being able to see does not mean the sense by which policemen ascertain one's face, you know. I already have no interest in the types of faces portrayed in passport photographs. I like dance, that movement of the human body that has no meaning. (p.267)[159]

The need to ascertain and identify is to appropriate, as the legal requirement for passport photographs and border control symbolises. While *watashi*'s tense existence in Paris as a foreigner is underscored by the need to remain hidden, the blind woman's philosophy offers a more liberating alternative predicated upon a different kind of seeing. Thus, the blind woman explains further:

> You see, vision is something akin to a fracture (*sakeme*). It isn't that you are able to see through that fracture but rather vision *is* fracture. That is precisely why you cannot see it. (p.265-66)

The ambiguous nature of such a schema of vision is underwritten by the blind woman's use of the word *sakeme*, a rupture that has the eye inscribed within it (裂け目). As the epitome of such a notion, the act of piercing the eye therefore might be re-read not as a simple foreclosure of vision, but of the opening up of new modes of seeing.

Yet just as *watashi*'s uncertain vision is implicated within the displacement of her language, this new visual perspective predicated paradoxically on blindness also seeks to problematise the demand for narrative coherence.

> It suits me to be blind. However, it troubles me that there are some people who, upon knowing that I am blind, try at length to tell me stories about their own lives. I no longer have any interest in the life stories of others. Music, or rather, cacophony (*zatsuon*), is what I like. (p.278)

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[159] This is ostensibly a reference to the climax of Von Trier's film, a musical number entitled "I Have Seen It All" that is staged within the court during Selma's trial. Despite using 100 cameras to film the sequence from all possible angles, Björk's face manages to evade capture, appearing inevitably out of shot, blurred, or masked by another figure or prop.

As Doane defines noise as an "undifferentiated presence which always threatens to disrupt representation" (Doane, 1981, p. 28), cacophony signifies a refusal of narrative linearity in keeping with the inherent plurality of Tawada's text. Like the polyphonic narratives of Kuja's ghosts, and the heterolingual echoes of Yi's writing, noise privileges unknowability and ambiguity over harmony and containability. The blind woman's disdain for narrative exposition enables her to safeguard her identity so that her story only adds to the confusion sparked by the visual contradiction of her appearance. Yet as her Western looks are, by her assertion, inseparable from her Vietnamese roots, then the blind woman embodies the preceding narrative of *watashi*'s hidden existence in Paris.

Far from dismissing the significance of the preceding narrative, the blind woman incorporates the doubled, divided, and fragmented qualities of the central text and crystallises them within a singular, 'noisy' image. Yet this image also has its uncanny shadow in her "close friend" Kathy.

> Well, I don't know where she is now. But whenever I go to the cinema she
> will always be sitting beside me. (p.267)

The inclusion of Kathy duplicates the blind woman's unknowable image yet in opposite terms: absence/presence, seeing/blindness. As such, she hints at the text's own shadows in multiple translation. Unlike Tawada's other novels that consciously inscribe her bilingual knowledge into the surface of the text, through punning and wordplay that only work in one language or the focused deconstruction of foreign terms, *Naked Eye*'s linguistic and narrative intertextualities remain hidden beneath its surface.

3.9 Hidden intertextualities: *The Paradise of the Blind*

In tracing the central themes of Tawada's novel, this discussion has focused primarily

upon the intertwining of narrative and thematic connections between *watashi*'s story

and the films of Catherine Deneuve. Just as *Naked Eye* enacts a shift in its final section,

the closing coda to this chapter follows from an inquiring look at the aliases used by

watashi in order to incite a more radical intertextuality hidden beneath the surface of

her narrative, and in particular through the name she writes on her visa application to

study in Paris: "Thu Huong". Apparently no more than "a false name that I had not used

yet" (p.151), the fleeting appearance of "Thu Huong" (rendered in the Japanese text as

秋香) suggests its arbitrary choosing.[160] Yet among the consistently generic references

to *watashi* and *anata*, and deliberate coincidences between film characters and the

text's own cast, the name 'Thu Huong' demands further attention when *watashi* signs

this alias on an application form to enrol at the local language school and muses,

"[w]hen I wrote 'Thu Huong', I had the feeling that I was writing about someone else"

(p.176).[161]

Indeed, this pseudonym as it appears within the context of this reading leaves a trail of

uncanny coincidences to the Vietnamese writer, Duong Thu Huong (b. 1947), especially

her novel *Những thiên đường mù* (*The Paradise of the Blind*) (Duong, 1994). Published in

1988, the year in which *watashi* embarks upon her journey to Europe, *The Paradise of*

the Blind tells the story of Hang, a bright young Vietnamese woman studying in Russia.

When a telegram arrives summoning her to join her sick and demanding Uncle Chinh in

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[160] My Romanisation of this name has been checked against Bernofsky's English translation based on
the German (Tawada & Bernofsky, 2009).
[161] Bernofsky's translation of the German text emphasises this notion: "I wrote down the name 'Thu
Huong' and felt as if I was doing this *for* some other person" (italics mine). Although the ambiguous
Japanese phrase "*tanin no koto o kaiteiru*" can also be read in this manner, my rendering presents the
more natural interpretation of this Japanese unclouded by knowledge of the German text and its
translations.

Moscow, Hang is forced through the sense of obligation to her mother, Chinh's only

sibling, to make the journey. As she boards the first connection train into the night, Hang

reminisces about her childhood in Vietnam and the Land Reforms (1953-56) that tore up

both her country and her family.

In its twelve chapters (one fewer than *Naked Eye*), *The Paradise of the Blind* has a less

convoluted structure and plot than Tawada's novel although it shares a non-linear

narrative interpolated with memories told through the eyes of its protagonist. Blindness

in Duong's novel describes beggars on the street and blind soothsayers with the

paradoxical gift of 'seeing'. It also refers to the delusion brought about by political

propaganda, and as in Tawada's text, the blindness of amnesia and the eye averted from

history. This intertextual coincidence gains in significance within the background to

Duong's publication. Although a former Communist Party member, by the 1980s Duong

became increasingly disillusioned with the corruption and elitism she observed within its

leaders.[162] *The Paradise of the Blind* is her third novel, and was the first Vietnamese

novel to appear in translation in the US. However, the work's depiction of the Land

Reforms was deemed so scandalous of that it was withdrawn from publication (Blodgett,

2001, p. 33). In 1989 Duong was expelled from the Party, and in 1991 was arrested and

imprisoned without trial under the charge of smuggling secret documents (McPherson,

1994, pp. 269-270). Following intervention from Amnesty International, Duong was freed

after seven months, and in 1994, she travelled to Paris to be awarded the Chevalier de

l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. Although offered political asylum in France, Duong

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[162] For a more comprehensive biography of Duong's life and career, see Harriet Blodgett, "The Feminist Artistry of Vietnam's Duong thu Huong," in *World Literature Today*, 75(3/4), 31-39 (2001). Nina McPherson's "A Note About the Author" in the novel's English translation also provides some context (2001, pp. 268-270).

refused and returned to North Vietnam. However, her passport has since been withdrawn and there remains a ban on publishing her novels in the country.

Watashi's use of the name Thu Huong as an alias to cover her illegal status therefore glosses the life of the literary namesake she adopts, even as this connection remains apparently unbeknownst to her. When *watashi* is handed a fake Japanese passport on which to exit France from where she intends to marry a fellow expatriate and return legally, a space is also created through which Duong's novel might write back, in Hang's observation that, "Japanese: The name alone was like a certificate of respectability, a passport that opened all the doors in the world to them" (Duong, 1994, p. 229). Within a text that alludes to blindness and visibility at every turn, *watashi*'s pseudonym not only reveals a poignant yet deeply hidden intertextual trace. It also affirms the barely perceptible yet significant difference between *watashi*'s identity as an Other with respect to the Japanese nationals who can be seen on the Parisian streets; a difference that crystallises in *watashi*'s failure to deceive passport control.

Although there are clear limits on the comparisons to be drawn between both novels, brief moments of textual coincidence suggest Duong's novel as an intriguing parallel to Tawada's that briefly brings into view those scenes and spaces left outside the frame of *watashi*'s account: namely the Vietnam that she left behind and her missed arrival in Moscow. The narrative strands and central figures of Duong's novel speak of Vietnam's former oppressions by its foreign colonisers and national leaders alike. As such, they offer literary examples of the "raw voice of victims of US imperialism" that is demanded of *watashi*'s intended speech in Berlin, and which she ultimately fails to provide. As the name 'Thu Huong' passes over its surface, Tawada's novel opens up these lines of

connection that appear inadvertent yet somehow predetermined. In many ways, *The Paradise of the Blind* therefore presents an uncanny echo that precedes Tawada's text, yet which speaks through the gaps of *watashi*'s narrating voice.

3.10 Conclusion

The Travelling Naked Eye marks, in many ways, a departure from the works of fiction discussed in the previous two chapters of this thesis. While the protagonists and narrative backdrops of Kuja and Yi's two novels carry undeniable traces of their Okinawa and *zainichi* contexts respectively, the focus in Tawada's novel on a Vietnamese girl who finds herself in Paris appears at odds. Whereas Tawada's bilingual ability enables a playful attention to language that has become characteristic of much of her writing, *Naked Eye* moreover presents a more plot-based narrative with fewer passages that isolate and deconstruct words and turns of phrase. However, while this novel's articulation of the painful and disruptive effects of exophonic displacement resonates within her larger oeuvre, the specific colonial encounter arguably imbues that narrative with a greater political acuity. For more than narrating a general tension associated with the movement from home to abroad, and even between the constructions of East and West/Asia and Europe, *watashi*'s sense of displacement in Paris hints at something both inescapable and incommunicable: the unchanging state of otherness to which her female colonial identity is tied, and the stagnancy of melancholic longing that haunts the ongoing cycle of deconstruction.

Ironically, *watashi*'s displacement across each geographical border only exacerbates the fragmentation of her language that exposes the melancholic aporia at the heart of the text. In fact, her travels are never narrated but only revealed through imagery that

imbricates visual distortions within disruptions of sound and voice, and vice versa. The cinema therefore presents itself as a complex medium that on one hand provides images not tied to any language that might substitute for her lack of knowledge of French, yet which relies upon vision that for *watashi* is already contested. Moreover, as the selection of films that she watches inevitably condense onto the figure of Catherine Deneuve, the potential of these cinematic images to compensate for *watashi*'s detachment from her mother tongue is confounded by the appearance of this actress who symbolises the lost colonial motherland itself. Most explicitly, as the historical epic *Indochine* places Deneuve's body within the colonial past of *watashi*'s homeland, the unfamiliarity of this representation redoubles her sense of loss and displacement.

Naked Eye is therefore a text predicated upon absence and invisibility. Despite being the dominant narrator for all but the last section of the text, *watashi*'s shadow flickers uncertainly, gaining its greatest form only when it appears superimposed or tangled with the image of Deneuve. The closing section then reveals the plurality of this figure, through inferences to her death that opens up the possibility of a second text hovering beneath the surface of the primary narrative, and the interwoven identities of *watashi*, Deneuve, and the protagonists of *Dancer in the Dark*. Von Trier's title might offer a suitable metaphor for *watashi* who emerges more in the interstices between the many cited cinematic intertexts than through any linear narrative. Yet the in/visibility of this character plays into the schema of vision adopted by the novel itself, wherein vision is not 'seeing' but rather the fractures and fissures that obscure vision. This notion moreover repeats the defining paradox at the heart of cinema, which emerges not only in the images provided by individual frames, but also in the gaps between them (Mamula,

2013, p. 1).[163] Indeed, if cinema is a work of "montage" that reveals its "capacity to deny visibility as much as to indulge it (ibid., p.2), then *Naked Eye* re-enacts that medium in text, producing a work that even more ironically emerges only in the narrative articulations of images as its protagonist sees (or mis-sees) them.

Naked Eye therefore might appear to come from an alternative perspective to the stories by Sakiyama and Yi, yet my reading here has sought to find a point at which all of the works discussed in this thesis might meet in the middle. Indeed, while *watashi*'s fragmented grasp of language initially appears as a traumatic and unsettling condition that she might need to overcome, as the narrative progresses it begins to harness that destabilising potential for more subversive and empowering purposes. Following the most traumatic shift expressed in the novel, the appearance of the blind woman crystallises that potential within her philosophy that valorises need for disruption and multiplicity above unity and coherence. One might arguably suggest that had *Naked Eye* been written by Sakiyama or Yi, it might not have included a final section such as "Dancer in the Dark", choosing instead to hang tensely on the infinite deferral of *watashi*'s self-blinding that is inferred yet never confirmed. However, as the possibility of this section is only opened up by the melancholic wound that foreshadows it, Tawada's novel does not conclude on a vision of unity, but rather, incites innumerable points of difference that project retroactively onto the preceding narrative and uncover the invisible traces of its own multiplicity in translation. Like the other texts discussed in this thesis, fragmentation, doubling, and ambiguity lie central within Tawada's novel. Such strategies position its protagonist within a radical irreducibility that lingers, like its own

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[163] Mamula's phrasing here draws on the consideration of the Lithuanian-American avant-garde director Jonas Mekas that opens her book.

melancholic gaze, beyond the frame of the text, and look towards new and hitherto

unseen points of intertextuality.

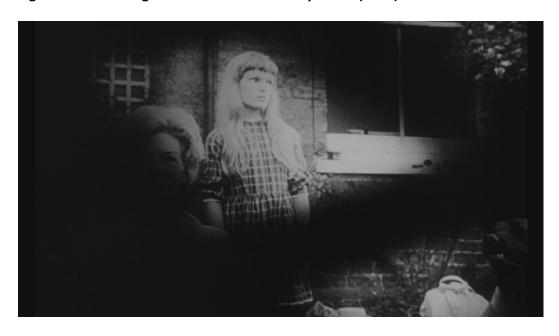**Fig. 1: The final image of Roman Polanski's *Repulsion* (1965)**

Fig. 2: Albrecht Dürer's engraving *Melencolia I* (1514)

Conclusion

In her introduction to a special issue of *Public Culture* on the question of translation in a global market, Emily Apter asks:

> When the problem of a globalising mass culture and public culture is approached from the perspective of translatability, new and important questions of cultural commodification and, thus, ideology arise. How do some works gain international visibility, while others do not? (Apter, 2001, p. 2)

The literary works discussed in this thesis have traditionally been tied to sub-genres that illustrate this dynamic in the context of Japanese fiction. Celebrated within border-crossing literary criticism for stepping 'outside' of the Japanese language, Tawada Yōko's writing has accrued an increasing field of international scholarship in recent years. By comparison, the fiction of both Sakiyama and Yi that has been tied to sub-genres marginalised within Japanese literature appears to have warranted less critical attention. A narrow observation of these differences might infer the universal appeal of Tawada's writings across national and linguistic borders—that is to say, its translatability—in contrast to the more particular contexts and characteristics of Sakiyama and Yi's works. However, by examining these texts in one study, this thesis has demonstrated striking commonalities in both strategy and approach in the fictional texts produced by all three writers. In particular, as these texts seek actively to write against the tendency within literary criticism to narrow categorisations, they deploy narrative and textual strategies that foreground irreducible differences and distances that are not so easily contained.

In this regard, the sub-genre of 'border-crossing' literature presents an enigma, for in seeking to transcend the trappings of a prescribed national literature and give Japanese fiction a platform from which to participate in the globalising market of world literature, border-crossing ultimately reinscribes those very same limits. By borrowing the focus of

world literature on translatability, border-crossing in the Japanese context risks

homogenising its contents, allowing the literal movement of its texts between languages

to obscure the tensions and divisions that undermine that apparent smoothness and

coherence. Most troublingly, the perceived unity and completeness of Japanese as a

literary language leaves marginalised vernaculars such as the languages of Okinawa, and

ostensibly untranslatable texts written in hybrid scripts, all but absent.

In the first instance, the selection of texts considered in this thesis has sought to navigate

across the boundaries of these categories in order to elucidate commonalities between

fictional works whose relationship has ordinarily been deemed to be distant, if it exists at

all. The intention has not been to (re)appropriate these texts into an equally rigid new

context. Rather, this framework has intended to follow the objectives of the texts it

describes, resisting a singular grand narrative in favour of tales told through fragments of

gossip, body language, psychosomatic wounds, gaps in the cinematic frame, and silences.

Such expressions are not based upon whimsy but find their roots in the painful

experiences of their protagonists, of rape, shame, and exclusion. Yet as these

experiences are born of their difference vis-à-vis hegemonic society's patriarchal

demands, the narrators of these texts disrupt the flow of their Japanese prose and

challenge its dominance as a national and narrative language. These strategies are

frequently dangerous, foregoing smooth communication potentially to the extent that

the sense of their own stories will be lost forever. However, the irreducible traces left

within these texts ensure their ultimate survival.

Translation provides a metaphor for the disruptive processes through which these

stories are transmitted. As it crosses not only linguistic but also material, spatial, and

temporal boundaries, translation also highlights the border as an inherently problematic construct by revealing its presence not as a single axiomatic borderline that demarcates literary sub-genres and languages from one another, but as a network of multiple conflicting divisions that texts can actively inscribe upon themselves. This plurality of borders can be seen cutting through the many layers of narrative, character, language and space within these literary works. By attuning my critical analyses to these literary devices, this thesis has therefore mapped a new network of intertextualities, while the equal emphasis on connection to disconnection asserts that this is but one arrangement that might easily be retold in different language through different texts.

Without the structure of containment, the effort to incorporate works by three writers into this thesis presented a potentially unending selection of texts. This was accompanied by the risk of repeating the weaknesses of border-crossing fiction and rendering meaningless the critical individual value of each text. The selections made here, however, reflect a real experience of *déjà vu* that remained after first reading these works, and a desire to explore those uncanny echoes. Making selections from within Tawada Yōko's prolific output proved the greatest challenge. The inclusion of Tawada's writing was strategic, as the popularity and apparently wide circulation of her fiction offered a crucial contrast to the lesser-known texts by Sakiyama and Yi. However, as the field of scholarship concentrated on her work matched the escalation of her original works during the years since beginning this research, it exacerbated the difficulty of articulating an innovative perspective. The framing of tropes of fragmentation and displacement in Tawada's fiction in terms of melancholia in Chapter Three presents what I believe to be an original contribution to this existing scholarship. There is a need

beyond the thesis, however, to return to Tawada's oeuvre with this problematic in mind, in the hope of further fleshing out the arguments in Chapter Three.

Epigraphs and the introduction of Thu Huong Duong's novel seek to emphasis the ways in which these texts do speak beyond the borders of Japanese literature and present opportunities for future research. Yet the particular dynamics between Sakiyama, Yi, and Tawada are not exhausted. The dystopian parodies of an "undying island" within Tawada's writing since the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident that continue to wreak devastation across Japan's northeast coast, exhibit strong echoes with Sakiyama's 2003 novel, *Yuratiku yuritiku* (*To-ing and Flow-ing*), which satirises an aging, isolated community in the absence of its departed younger generation. As Sakiyama's first fictional work written after "*Shimakotoba*", whose significance Bhowmik (Bhowmik, 2008) has related to the terrorist attacks of 9.11 one year earlier, these textual overlaps might further reveal a way past a recent tendency to isolate fiction written since Fukushima, including Tawada's 'post-Fukushima' narratives, by interrogating commonalities among disaster-themed texts from alternative contexts. The radical fragmentation of language in these texts is also epitomised in Yi's unfinished final work whose title "Voices of Stone" recalls Yuhi's heterolingual enunciation of "*paui*", and whose literal attendance to language suggests interesting resonances with Tawada's *Brother-in-law in Bordeaux*.

These as yet unexplored intertextual links hope to suggest potential for other connections both within and beyond a Japanese literary framework. In the spirit of Friedman's 'geographic' approach and the textual expanse of the borderland that it adopts from Anzaldúa's work, the gesture towards unexplained terrains emphasises the

reality that the borderland is always shifting. The readings presented here might shift within the terms of an alternative set of texts, while attendance to other tropes might map out a different network. Just as a range of texts and discussions have cohered within this single thesis, then this collective framework has also facilitated the original analyses of each text that form the heart of this work and its scholarly contribution. For even amid the surge in interest in Tawada's fiction, *Naked Eye* has remained comparatively overlooked. The studies of Yi and Sakiyama's fiction likewise hope to elevate the profile and interest in these vital and fascinating texts. The two literary translations in the appendix reaffirm this intention.

In seeking to reach out to a wider field of scholarship, however, the borders of this research have foregrounded texts that dismantle the border as a bridge and look to the open spaces beneath and between: the tension of a deferred movement about to take place (Sakiyama), the barely perceptible revenant who oscillates between presence and absence (Yi), and the constantly rotating inversion between two uncertain points of identity (Tawada). Like the border that is never simply continuity, the gap is never simply breakage. Rather, reading and translating through the gaps, shadows, and silences that these texts inscribe, this thesis attests to the empowering nature of these works of fiction that an emphasis on border-*crossing* threatens to overlook, while simultaneously gesturing towards potential new commonalities, solidarities, and intertextualities beyond the frames.

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Appendix 1

Monologue of an Is(olate)land Dream

The dead black-dyed surface of muddied ditch-water quivers. A night steeped deep beneath the water's surface drinks in the light, which steals in from nowhere so as to break a pale dawn. This light does not pierce but breaks in like a night burglar, its body cloaked in black clothing, *sozororo*. Against the constant rustling, I form a single flow. The pits of my feet tickle as I climb upwards. From lying on my back, I shift to crawl on my side, where the faint warmth of something rustling traces the nape of my neck, the back of my ear, then suddenly pierces the top of my head. *Sozorororo*, it tiptoes towards—*uoaawh, aaawh, aaaawh*. A sudden shriek from the mud-water surface. A war cry erupting from a throat ripped open, like the distant roar of a crazed monster—*uaaawh, aaawh, cawcawh, aaw-eeh, aaaawh, aaw-eeh*. I feel a sensation as though someone, somewhere, is struggling to make their imprisoned whereabouts known, aimlessly facing the empty sky, tortuously flailing their snake-like arms. If I listen closely, there is a mournful sense of separation in that cry. A crazed spirit, searching for his corpse that one day suddenly vanished from sight, scratching and plucking at the dark, empty sky, screaming with the full might of his throat. That's what it seems like. I listen to the frenzied, distant voice that bears a chain of ghastly images in anticipation of the first light of dawn, which unnervingly never reveals so much as a glimmer. Just then, the sudden gush of falling water...

As if running water was rapidly filling my ears, instinctively I bolted upright in my chair.

It seems that I'd dozed off for a moment. The cry from my dream clung about my neck. What had brought on such a muddied dream? To refrain from babbling aloud, I shook my head. I turned my eyes to face forward. Then it dawned on me, this place in which I'd been napping was not my usual one-room apartment.

Of course! For some reason or other I was on a trip and had been watching some kind of theatre play.

I say 'play', but something about it wasn't quite right. I could say the same about the stage, too, for it had been furnished with a shabby set akin to a 24-hour *manga* cafe. On a bookshelf were crammed the tattered, mould-emanating covers of Ohayashi Ashinori's series, "The Puerile Principle of Me,"[164] that is rumoured to have at one time exhibited a murky sales trend among comic-book nerds. In front of it there was a table in which was embedded a games console. A girl was hugging the gaming unit. Her face carried a south-pacific aura about it and from a distance she seemed young, yet her body lay limply strewn, weighed down with the accumulated tiredness of life. Was her face bare or made-up? Given that this was a play, I don't suppose that she would appear bare-faced, but in any case, at a glance this girl looked wild. With an expression that had remained absolutely unchanged since just before I nodded off, she sat jiggling her knees.

The girl's large black eyes circled round-around impatiently. Therein was harboured a wilfully defiant nature that would startle anyone she looked at. Abruptly, she relaxed her gaze and, as if to announce I'm gunna get sick of this game, stifled a wide yawn. She nodded her neck back and forth once, twice, recrossed her legs, rearranged them to rest one foot on the edge of the gaming table. As she rested her foot down a sound, *gikkon*, resonated in time like a broken xylophone being struck. A brief pause. Then immediately

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[164] The title, '*Suttoko dokkoi washizumu*', is a spoof of *Washizumu* ('The Principle of Me') by Kobayashi Yoshinori (b.1953), an anti-American conservative manga artist who began to garner acclaim in the mid-1990s. *Suttoku dokkoi* is a conventional slang term signifying idiocy.

emboldened again, she replaced her brandished foot to the floor. In sync, another *gikkon*. As her foot spun down, a comic *gikkon* interjected the scriptless scene. Again and again it sounded repeatedly. I felt as though I was slumping downward once more into a ditch-slime dream. Having just awoken from sleep, I too found myself swallowing a wide yawn.

It had been this way ever since curtain-up. There was no sign that the scene was going to develop, and no other characters had appeared on stage but for the same one girl as before. The audience had been presented with nothing other than the girl's growing impatience towards an object that we could not perceive. Unbelievably, it went on for close to twenty minutes. It was a bewilderingly long time and I felt exactly as if I was midway through suffering penance. Meanwhile, the girl had been enacting a shift in the flow of her movements. Up to that point she had been clutching her dark-skinned arms as though holding herself in, but now she gently unfolded them and stretched one across the gaming table. On the table lay flung a small box of Seven Stars. She took them into her hand and slid one out. She pushed out her chest through the collar of her sleeveless shirt whose buttons lay mostly open to display glimpses of her cleavage, and, giving her hips a wiggle, she fumbled for the pocket of her jeans. She took out a lighter, lit a flame. The noise, *gachigachi*, was no sound effect but the real grinding of a lighter. The tip of the cigarette glowed red. With an air of disdain she stuck out her chin and began to puff, *sup-pah*, *sup-pah*. She kept up this puffing noise a while longer, *sup-pah*, *sup-pah*. After the bored expression she had shown at the game console, she seemed to have no other stock artistry to put on show but drawing on a cigarette. From her persistent smoking, a series of floaty white doughnut rings swam through the dusky space.

This sequence of behaviour by the girl gave the impression of an actor who has completely forgotten their entire script and timing, their mind suddenly gone blank as they clutch their head, an actor who does not withdraw offstage but instead turns the tables and acts as though she couldn't care less, dumbfounding her audience. Yet despite this, there was not a stir in the audience seats, nor did any hostile mood hang overhead. There arose no jeering or such shouts of what-the-hell-dyuh-think-you're- doing-trying-to-make-a fool-of-people? There loomed in that space a feeling more than mysterious, rather uncanny, wherein unable to find a chance to stand up I stayed in my seat.

A freelance photographer: that's the position I adopt whenever the need arises to hold myself up to strangers. Incidentally I'm thirty-nine this year. Single. I take and sell photographs in monochrome of what I call 'The Landscape of the Abyss'. Mind you, I have never sent an album of my photographs out into the world. Of course, I go by no name. As far as my works are concerned, from time to time I receive this kind of sarcasm-filled appraisal from my friends: Monochrome landscape shots are rare nowadays, aren't they? It's like, conversely, they give off something fresh. But no matter what anyone says about my work, their words become my stimulation—the stimulation to continue taking photographs.

The abyss is the place that rises up between two sceneries at odds with one another. It is the rupture into which the abandoned ones of the world sink, the pit of the world so to speak, or else a border from which one gazes back at the world. That is the image that I take as the subject of my photography. Although even in making such conceptual claims, all I really ever end up taking pictures of are the emptied out convenience stores left standing around town, fishing boats stranded out at sea on the verge of decay, a strange crag in the shape of someone peering their head out from the bottom of a dam, cloud trails tearing through rusted autumn skies, volcanic crater mouths, rocky hollows, ship tracks, and other nationally-limited landscapes. The void and darkness that the light

and shadow bring about as they pour into those places is what I photograph as I go about my travels. I never photograph people. That's probably down to cowardice. Because I sense that the most thought-provoking abyss in this world is the one that stands between two people. But that's how I roll, so when I began to think that it was time to do an album of my photographs, I made up my mind to head for Okinawa.

Okinawa. With its bright appearance yet heavy humidity, its performance of great tragedy and foolish sincerity, feigned simultaneously with an act of apparent loquaciousness that clams up into stubbornness in crucial situations, that sissy of an Island. I know a few people among my photography mates who brag endlessly about being experts on Okinawa. But to me, no matter how many times I come here, it is just an elusive group of isolated islands. In any event, I decided to take a picture of Cape Hedo at the northern edge, as one frame of the abyss. No, actually, as the epitome of 'The Landscape of the Abyss.'

Cape Hedo: a northern abyss standing on a southern island. Though I intended to head to Hedo, I carelessly boarded the wrong bus line. Realising that I would have to sit being shaken on this bus for close to three hours including a transfer, I looked out from the window of the northbound bus I was on. As I sensed the smell of the damp sea breeze vanish and the air become dusty, I saw the bus had slowly climbed a hilly terrain. Soon on the left side appeared a fence beyond which the base stretched endlessly. It made me think of a giant tiger leaning back for a nap after dining on human prey. The bus sped past and turned to the east, leaving the road we'd been on that followed the coast and entering the inner realm of the island. I knew immediately that I was on the wrong bus. But, thinking maybe that's fine too, I decided to let things take their course. These things often happen when travelling. And on a trip taken for the purpose of photography, it is better to leave the destination up to chance. I'll take photographs of the land just as it invites me, of its expressions just as it reveals them to me. It may not be perfect, but that's the modest manner or ethical view I keep in calling myself a photographer. It was back when I had just hit on my individual purpose to take out my camera and continue photographing some place that in my own words I had labelled "The Landscape of the Abyss." That was when I became aware that, in fact, I was being watched by the landscape. I was poised ready to shoot, when the eyes of the landscape saw through my ambitions and bore into me. The landscape was rejecting my attempt to take it. So when I dare to say that I'll take photographs of the land just as it invites me, of its expressions just as it reveals them to me, then that is the secret excuse that I make for myself when I feel that I am being rejected by my photographic object and yet cannot abandon the desire to shoot.

Having taken the wrong bus, I tentatively alighted in the middle of the day at a deserted bus stop in town. Standing there aimlessly, the rain came down: a sudden first downpour of the southern autumn rains.

I stood in front of an audio shop with my photography equipment on my shoulder and a travel rucksack on my back, gazing at the rain as it soaked the town. Although I had passed through it so many times, this was my first time to set foot in the town, and even if there had been some tourist guide-like information its unfamiliarity layered over my despair at being rained on. So, what to do? With no idea in particular I turned to face the display window and looked at the thickly-pasted array of various notice pamphlets. From jazz to a *shimauta* 'island-songs' show; from an operatic concert piano recital to a public performance of comedy; a local arts theatre... I twisted my neck to look through them, whereupon my field of vision blurred and the sheets of pamphlet papers began to heave like crashing waves. In the undulations, the thickly decorated faces of singers, pianists, actors, theatrical performers jumbled and overlapped together and surged towards me.

In a fluster, I turned my eyes to the street. At that moment, did the actual buildings standing on this side, the pavement, bridges, people, and cars, not billow and swell towards me? The space of the town was swaying distortedly in my eyes. I did not even have my camera braced in my hand, and yet, was this town not already rejecting my gaze? There seemed to be no way to get along with the outside world.

In an attempt to reach some reconciliation I turned back once more to the audio shop. By now my field of vision had ceased its swaying, and in it caught a solitary tattered pamphlet. It was a single sheet of A4 on which were lined up only monochrome characters that had clearly been written by hand. From within a flood of loud and gaudy colour, this sepia-hued world of paper floated up in silence. Therein was a message, brazenly written as though to shout, *Oi*, look at me! "Do you remember, those days? Please remember, that town, those people." A feeling akin to pitch-black nostalgia fluttered and welled up inside me. I cannot fathom the source of that emotion.

The pamphlet was for a public performance by the theatre troupe, 'Kuja'. The performance date read, Day X, Month Y, 200Z: Today's date. It was seven or eight minutes before one pm. Forty or so minutes later, I was standing in the dimly lit entrance of a public theatre. Although the performance was due to begin in thirty minutes, there was not a soul in the venue. In the building's entrance the stench of cement powder and mould pierced my nose. Directly in the front had been placed a sofa the burnt umber colour of black tea; covered in a layer of fine dust it revealed white cotton frays.

Bang in the middle of a by-now completely deserted backstreet. There, indolently, stood this former adult cinema. Left there, unclaimed since falling into bankruptcy some years ago and with no signs of anyone knocking it down, it was a skewed, dangerous shit-hole to look at. Looking up, one could see rusted iron rods bearing through the gaping cement wall. The performance by 'Kuja' that I was watching inside matched perfectly. It was a small theatre-house that had penetrated a heap of abandoned rubbish and been set up inside it.

I took a seat near the entrance on the left-hand side towards the back that allowed an almost full view of the venue.

Come to think of it, on renewed reflection, you might say that the reception area was rather odd. A long table on which had been taped some paper scrawled with untidy, rounded letters in blue magic-marker: Enter freely. Above that, a small box of change for admission fees that read, Admission fee 5 dollars, yen conversion 500 yen, etc. One might interject the criticism that it was impossible to distinguish whether this was intended for American visitors or there purely in jest. A thin wad of guide pamphlets was set out face up. Given the absurd, sparse setting, it was curious that I didn't think of it as weird or akin to extortion at the time, but.

The scattered audience members looked to be of the type that would hide themselves from public view and look at adult things in secret.

But never minding that, the span for which the girl held the cigarette between her lips was too hasty. In the gaps in which she blew out the tobacco smoke, the expression on her face was bitter. It seemed like she was enduring something piercing up from inside her hollow stomach. Embracing tumultuous emotions whose origins were unnarratable, the girl was just there.

Since the curtain rose, a glass of iced coffee had been sitting on top of the gaming table. I supposed that the heat from the lights was heating the stage up considerably. During the twenty minutes of this silent play, the ice-cubes had completely melted. The liquid inside the glass, now separated into white and blackish-brown, blended with the girl's jerky movements and sloshed about sluggishly.

—I feel like *ssshit*.

Here, finally, the script intervened. However, it was no more than a frivolous sentence. Otherwise there was the usual *supaa supaa* puffing and the jiggling of knees, and the occasional reverberation of a *gikkon*. Like *ssshit*. The hollow voice that made the exclamation lingered like grit in my ears. It even sounded like its owner could not get into character for trying. Even after she spat out the words, like *ssshit*, the girl's only action was to hold her posture hugging the gaming table, from which she repeated this indecipherable *gikkon*. In an eerie way, the sporadic-spasmodic rhythm of this *gikkon* soon came to carry some sense of compulsion. I began to feel urgently that the oddity of the stage direction lay in the girl's performance, which prohibited a stiff script yet hacked through the space by means of her actions alone. In time with the jostling of the girl's knee, the lower half of my body was rattle, rattle-rattling with the shakes. What a mess. Crap, was I falling for this? Then, just as I muttered some gibberish and tried to tear my eyes from the stage, the girl stopped dead the ankle she had been shaking all this time and sprang to her feet.

The girl stood, with the bookshelf housing the spines of "The Puerile Principle of Me" and the gaming table behind her.

Almost centre-stage. She swept her fingers through her dishevelled hair that hung down to her shoulders and purposefully drew in her resolve, causing her dark blue shadow to throb vigorously. She came dangerously close to the audience seats, spread both feet wide as she planted them down, and opened her arms wide in gesture.

—Well, well, *gusōyō*, one and all.

Wow, unconsciously I leaned my body forward. As if to strike a dazzling blow with this sudden foreign tongue, her speech was steeped in a thick dialect and accent. Somehow, the resonance of *gusōyō* stuck in my chest.

—*Chūyā, hēpē to kara mensōchi utabimisōchi, makkutu, nifēdēbiru* (For coming so early today, truly, thank you).

Having cut to the chase, the girl circled her eyes around the audience seats to check their reactions (to my count, there were only ten people). *Fuu*, she let out a breath. Placing both hands on her hips, as if to burst open the floodgates she began to let out her voice. As though to replace endless stream of smoke that she had been continuing to exhale, this was the prelude to the girl's monologue that was beginning to be spewed forth.

—Well, well, *gusōyō*, one and all.

You guys over there and you girls over here, and the slightly plump granny rolling back in her seat over there. And yes, you over there who just woke up from a daydream, rattle-rattling on the end although it's tricky to tell whether you're old or young (saying this, the girl's finger pointed directly at my face), well, well, open your peepers nice and wide. Next, the holes in your ears, right, for now that you've made the effort to come here *gusōyō*, the time has come for you to hear exactly why I am here and feeling this agitated. Starting now, I'm going to indulge in narrating my own monologue. Well, well, listen well to me, and look hard at me. You'll see nothing with those bleary eye-eyes, you must open them waa-ide!

The beans that are thrown hap-haphazardly, blind-recklessly, to cast out demons. A summer rain-shower that falls suddenly with no signs of stopping. The heightened, uninterrupted, continuing rhythm of rap music. That was the way that the girl's taunting voice rained down in front of me.

—Yup, just as it's reflected in your wide-open eyes, I'm a *Pinā*. Ah, do you know what a *Pinā* is? Oh, no need to pull such a difficult face. I'll feel bad if you pull a face like that on me. There's nothing in it so whether I say the word *Pinā* or someone says it to

me, I'm not the kind of weakling to be wounded so easily.

That's right, a *Pinā* is what you call a Filipina. Look at this dear jet-black hair of mine. My circular eyes that go round a-round. My full-fleshed lips that make me look like a good kisser so that old men from all over the world seem to sense in them a special sex appeal. And look here, at this firm butt (she twisted a little and stuck her bottom out to the side). Above all else, the colour of my skin is soo beautifully tanned, but I'll stop you right there and whatever you're dreaming of just now. In no way am I like those *Japayuki* entertainer girls who you aspired to in the olden days. That was a shame, yes yes yes yes (she clapped both hands, *pan pan pan*).

You see, owing to circumstances before I was born, or what I mean to say is, for reasons for which I cannot take responsibility, these are the looks I was born with, but the truth is, and it's bad of me to tell you this but I was born and raised in this town. Yes, this town in which you are now. *Ha-sah*, you *sa*, whatever anyone says, this town tries to hide it but, no-no, it cannot hide the fact that if truth be told, both now and a long time since, the fact has never changed that in this town *Amerikā* have come one after another, swapped places with one another, come and gone.

The town where I was born and raised—the town that this girl was narrating out on the stage was the one into which I had currently strayed. Although this was right in the middle of the day, the town was dully dark, mournful, the reek of decay muddied with the stench of mould and the smell of earth in a murderous mood, drifting in from some other place.

This was Kuja.

Amid the confusion of the occupation period in the immediate post-war, people came from the outlying villages and islands and settled in this hollow in the peninsula, and the town was formed. It was a backwater town, in which occasionally throughout history, the various smells that float about the surface would become exactly like the town's body odour, retreat into the depths, and blow out from the alleyways, roofs, and walls.

As the name implied, this backwater town Kuja and the theatre troupe 'Kuja' seemed to share a deep bond, for 'Kuja' was an acting troupe formed by those who dragged around the corporeal odour of Kuja in their own physical bodies. Fact: the town had risen up as a result of having been violently forced to shed the memories of bygone days wherein the islands that had flowed so free-and-easy, and whenever 'Kuja' staged its show there it apparently received handsome reviews. Fact: when the winds of the era that floated up from the bubble boom carried a "bright darkness" into the gloomily earth-reeking town of Kuja, many came to turn away from the 'Kuja' stage on which the actors' actual bodies shone darkly, saying, well they too are down to the winds of an era. This collected information about 'Kuja' came from the wad of pamphlets that I had picked up by the time the doors opened.

The girl on stage performing her one-woman act with an imbued air of festivity was Takaesu Maria. Hers alone was the only actor's name printed on the pamphlet. The pamphlet did not even give any staff names.

Takaesu Maria. Was it her real name or an artistic pseudonym? Here was an actor whose very name emanated perfectly the smell of Kuja, the military base town. Perhaps she was the last remaining troupe member of Kuja'. Perhaps once the other performers had been forsaken by the era and their means to a living cast aside, and one then two had dropped out until in the end she was the only member left, perhaps then Maria had thought up this play while trapped amid feelings of isolation. Like a final firework. I sensed that was how it had been. This monologue of Takaesu Maria, who I could even

imagine had begun her performance on some desperately torn-up whim, was finally taking on a tone that meant business.

—*Hiiyaasaasa*, *ha*, *iyah*, that's what it is, right? This thing called life. What do I mean, you say? Surely that, my dear, is something everyone has to imagine for themselves.

But then, you already know that. You know, that period of war when the strongest empire in the world and poor Asian guerrilla fighters fought in the swamps. That's right, that's right. A bogged-down ditch-mud guerrilla war. Ahh, even now there's apparently another war just the same going on tirelessly in the West. Hey, you, did you know that that war and this war both have a *deeeep* connection to this wizened town? Yup, in order to go off to that war and to this war too, the empire's soldiers took off on their dashing departures from *aaaall* around there (spreading both arms wide she spun once around, apparently to demonstrate *aaaall* around there). Huh, so you have no interest and no connection to that kind of thing? Ahh, you see, but setting aside your "no interest, no connection", I have my circumstances and you see, I would like to say a little bit about this matter, yes I would.

So, it's a case of please listen up *gusōyō*, yes.

As I was saying about that era, these back alleyways were overflowing with *Amerikā* troops coming and going from the war into the centre of town. If you thought the town was crude by day, once night fell, this place was a rest and recuperation area to get tangled up with local girls. I mean here contractors ordered to kill people by the state, *haya*, with no place to escape and apparently frenzied at killing and being killed, who would appear in the light of the town's dark night and well, what can I say? I guess what I could say, *haiiyaaiiyaa*, is that it was what you might call the state of affairs. Almost every evening they would fling out this eerie shriek, like an army of ants assembling in the night-town.

What with the situation being as it was, these kinds of incidents happened about the town all the time. There were incidents in which groups of soldiers fighting over a local girl, would create a diversion and get stuck into violent brawls. It happened countless times in the space that was neither the middle of the night nor the break of dawn, where men looking like black panthers would jump out in front of the blaring sirens and stumble into the scenes of bloody fights. How do I know these things? That's because as a kid I lived in a rented house behind one of those shops that supplied local girls to partner those *Amerikā* soldiers. That's as far back as I can remember, mind you. So the wheres and wherefores of those incidents were deep-dyed into my body like a dream. Ah, if I try really hard to remember now, something else happened. If I'm right, I think it was a hot and humid summer evening. Even though I was a child, I had a habit of coming home after the sun had gone down, and on that day, I came across an older girl of about middle-school age crouching and trembling in the back alleyway. When I looked closely, her clothes were ripped in tatters, her face was blue, her lips also trembled deathly blue, and no matter what I asked her mouth stayed clamped shut. Being only 4 or 5 at the time I didn't know what to think, but I could sense that she had experienced something so *terrible* that she couldn't even put it into words. I sat beside this older girl as she just trembled. Adopting the same pose as I her, I stayed there. I don't know why I did that, I just sensed that that's what I had to do. You know, even now on occasion I wonder whatever became of that older girl after that. It was a considerable time later before I became able to imagine the nature of the terrible experience she had suffered.

But, but you see, even though this and that kind of thing happened every single day, at night when the soldiers and local girls from the town would tangle up together there was no end to the fighting. Right, not until that mud-slime war came to an end.

And that's how in this town the soldiers and local girls became submerged deep within the shit and rubbish that were spewed out from the war, and ended up sucking their own lifeblood out of the mire. *Zurururu—zururururu-u*. *Hai*, that's what kind of a town it was here, shameful as it is.

    A shudder of thick black water passed by my eyes. My legs were seized by this muddied water as amid the suffocating hot air I saw shadows cross the humid, boggy wetland. It was a line of shadows writhing tremulously across a stagnant pile of dried-up leaves. A shudder crawled along the ground, swam through the sky, turned into a black-green wet clod, and with a gluey sense of oppression, besieged me. Twisting my body unable to breath, I looked up, where above my head loomed an eerie thundercloud. In a blink it changed into a black cloud, and what suddenly splattered down was a heavy rainfall of semen. I retched at the forceful decaying stench as my shoulders shook intensely. Thereupon, the waves of shadow began to crawl up my back, *dororororo*, and slid over the mudwater from which emanated the stench of death. As I continued to watch, as it slid it noisily gulped up the drenched-black water and bulged out. It formed the undulation of a giant snake beyond my eyes, twist-turn-twist-turn. There it went, *gogogogogogoh*, the hurtling sound of a clapped-out Caterpillar at the same time as whorls of torrential, spewing sands. I close my eyes...

    I was entranced by wild illusions that bubbled up out of the gaps in Maria's narration. It was a muddy dream that had been seizing me every now and then since I entered this place. In Kuja, it was as though the memories that refuse to die, of soldiers who fought in field battles in that age, were hung in the air. It was as though the thoughts of those people hung up on the cause and effect of those memories, of drinking mud and gnawing sand, were coiling around me. Or else it was as though the smell of the darkness oozing up slowly from beyond the bounds of people's memories were weaving an endless dream of ditch-muddiness.

    I open my eyes. Maria's voice, poured down with the brilliance of a sun shower.

    —*Ping-pong, ping-pong*. You've got it. I'm the offspring of a Filipino-American soldier. Before your very eyes, I am a *Pinā*. Ah, although it would be wrong of me not to add that *Pinā* applies only to my looks and my roots. What's inside is a different matter.

    I mean look, you can more or less understand this Japanese dialogue of mine, right? That's what I am saying is the proof above all else that I am a Japanese. I speak Japanese therefore I am Japanese? Hmm, it does seem pretty pithy in this context.

    Anyway, aanyway, *gusōyō*.

    Did you know that this town saw an age in which it was owned by neither Mister American nor Sir Japanese? Long ago there was a time in the islands that surround this town that was relatively peaceful given that all the people were poor. Back then, my *obā*, the woman who gave birth to my mother, drifted into this town in the struggle for something to eat. If she was alive today, she would be over a hundred years old, an *obā* of super longevity, but she already died a good many years ago. In the days when this *obā* of mine had only just shown up in this town, she got caught up with some *yakuza*-man and gave birth to a fatherless daughter, and that single girl she bore, well she was to be my mother, but then that single girl also got involved with a soldier and gave birth to a child, and well, that was me, and after some or other chain of events that mother left me behind and I was an abandoned child, and so it came about that *obā* treated me, the abandoned grandchild left by her daughter, as though I was more important than even her own life. So you see, I was born into these circumstances and, since the moment of that realisation I have been exposed to the cold eyes of the world, although I was happy to be free from abuse. The fact that I've managed somehow to make it this far is, you've

got it, all thanks to my *obā*. But, you know, I do suspect that those cold eyes of the world made me the undefeatable person I am today.

Anyway, *obā* brought me up while doing all the tough jobs here and there that nobody else wanted to do in this town of Kuja, right up until I turned thirteen. That's why when *obā*, the one person to whom I owed everything, stepped out onto the crossing at a red light and died from being hit by a cruising car, I wept inconsolably to the point of wringing myself out. I shed so many tears that my body that had only just become womanly was in danger of drying out. I'm so alone, so-lone *obā*, left here dripping my salty tears, wringing myself out as I weep. I just couldn't understand why *obā* had to die. I mean, all she did was try to cross the road. But when our world changed hands, or whatever the expression, the rules about crossing the road suddenly came to be strongly enforced and *obā*, with her easy-going island upbringing, would have been clueless about what that red light meant. When she didn't respect the traffic lights, *obā* must have been thought an idiot. So I lost *obā* in death. Incomprehensibly, that's how my only *obā* was taken away from me, and since I had no idea about what I should do, all I could do was cry. And because, like a fool, I spent every day wringing myself out without so much as a grain of rice passing my lips, someone in the neighbourhood who was not even a relation said to me, *haa*, how can it be that such a child has lost her mind with loneliness? In no time, you'll be treated as a madwoman and hospitalised. After that, no matter what sights I beheld, I never shed another tear. Many things have happened since then, but after coming through all of that I found myself caught up in performing plays. I call myself an actor, however thanks to the past there are no things that I am worse at than acting and watching the tragic scenes in a play. It's as though my tear-tank is completely bone-dry.

It was around this part that Maria's voice stopped reaching me as it rained down from the stage.

The sound of water.

I can hear the merciless sound of time ticking away, the low continuous beat of water dripping against the wall of stagnant sensation, *ton ton ton ton to to to to to to to*. As I keep listening it almost sounds as though I can hear the mischievous, continuous open-string plucking of the 'male' bottom string of a *sanshin*. The dull chain of rhythm beats repeatedly against my eardrum as its monotony forces my unguarded consciousness into a rapid descent, causing the energy needed to make a run for the outside world in search of some ghostly light to wither. Soon, the drips of water that had fallen into the depths of my consciousness began to tickle the heart of my sleep. *Kosokoso, kosokosokosokosokoso*. It was too ticklish to bear and I felt myself on the verge of bursting into laughter. However, in the course of enduring it I suddenly found myself cocooned within a membrane of the continuously dripping water. I was inside a transparent hemispherical glass bowl. I was on the bottom. All the while, the watery globe was expanding little by little, whereupon *poh-wan*, it flew up into the air. It floated upwards, quivering *poa poa*, until several metres from the ground it burst, simultaneously scattering a great volume of water that sprayed above my eyes...

With a splash, a single droplet of water landed on my cheek and my eyes opened.

Once again, it seems that I'd drifted into a fleeting sleep.

By now Maria seemed to have finally hit her stride in the monologue she had set for herself, and as a mysterious shadow began to cloud her facial expression my eyelids succumbed helplessly to an encroaching drowsiness that was impossible to fight. The tone of Takaesu Maria's relentless monologue made it seem as though she was being forced repeatedly to relate tales of the misfortunes that had befallen her. To say that I was bored by it would be a lie.

Between this sudden sleepiness and the move I made to face Maria and unconsciously ready my camera, there was a connection. But in the moment I noticed this, I was seconds away from falling asleep. As her talking got into the swing, Maria's eyes, in which was now clearly visible a wilful yet unspecified spirit of resistance, flickered sporadically so as though to pierce me. The reflection of my fingertips in her eyes removed the lens cap with a motion practised through habit. I pressed my cheek up against the finder through which Maria's gaze peered, and the time came when I thought I had captured one instant of her unremittingly ever-shifting expression. A shiver ran through my fingertip. I felt a spasm as though I had been struck by a zap of lightning. My focus was already blurred, and the sight of Maria simply vanished from the lens. I felt my whole body become apprehended by an uncomfortable warmth that cast down lightly from the top of my head to my shoulders like a wave of black light. A black curtain descended suddenly and blinded, I sank into the world within.

When I finally came to, the stage curtain had been lowered. The audience were all gone. Not one remained.

During one of my fleeting slumbers, Takaesu Maria's monologue must have come to an end. All was silent, as though nothing had happened. There was no sign of anything, exactly as though the public performance of 'Kuja' had never even existed from the beginning. As for me, I felt an utter fool. I had been rolling around inside this sprawling building covered in faint darkness and dust. I was not on a sofa or the audience stalls but immediately inside the theatre entrance. I had curled my body on the cement floor, my rucksack as a pillow. I had found myself, thrown out by the abyss of the world. Through isolation and laziness, the will to ascertain my situation lay dormant for several moments.

Lifting my rucksack onto my back, I slowly made my way out. The entrance appeared exactly as when I had gone in. The small box of change and pile of pamphlets were still left waiting on the long table.

It was evening and the rain was lifting as I stood at the cliff edge at the farthest tip of Cape Hedo. After that, I had boarded a different bus, but having taken almost two hours to reach it, there was not a soul at the cape either. With my camera hanging by my side, I strolled around the tourist route, but I could not rouse the inclination to point my camera at the landscape.

Beneath the waning sun. From the face of the cape, I gazed across the sea. In the distance, I could see an island whose name I do not know float small and faintly. I rested my elbows on the barrier erected in order to prevent accidents and opened the pamphlet of 'Kuja'. I gazed at the back cover. On it were printed a group of monochrome headshots of all eight members lined up, from the days back when the troupe was enjoying its peak (according to the summary, it was around 1975).

Although it had an ancient look, the expressions displayed by the troupe members harboured a curious movement. As I stared at each face in turn, I had the eerie sense that they were floating up in the flesh. The frizzy hair and round face in the third picture had something droll about it. He had the air of a man of the sea with his varnished, black-brown skin that seemed distinctly at odds. A woman's face defined by heavy-black eyes and brows and taut cheekbones, a faint shadow stolen across it, her eroticised husky voice; a delicately made blonde-hair-and-blue-eyes with deep glimmering pupils who enjoyed gossip and bitching; a pudgy, roly-poly red-face with a habit of shaking his shoulders to hide his embarrassment; an eagle-nosed man who was always chewing gum. They all had an occidental smell about them, but from each of them emanated doubly an abysmal brightness and a leaden darkness. They looked as though they had

formed their group simply for want of a place to go, but when they stood on that stage they must have overwhelmed their audiences with the aura of their dark physicality.

The landscape at the cape began to tremble restlessly. The wind had come up. Having lost the power of the sun the surface of the sea was beginning to change in colour. It rose into a crest of spume and alternated between flashing glimpses and hiding the bellies of the waves. At last, my field of vision stretched out infinitely. The dense smell of water arose. It came neither from the sea nor from the rain. It was the smell of a shroud of darkness arising from between the cracks under my feet.

Appendix 2

Kazukime

1

Across the far-reaching embankment there was not a soul to be seen. The air about bowed powerlessly to the ground; there was not even a flicker of wind. Owing to hunger, tiredness, and the traces of fever that remained in her convalescence, she swayed as she walked. The egg-shaped sun flickered between the fragments of clouds, and even as she lowered her eyes to the riverbed there were only stagnant muddied waters that had forgotten to flow on.

Before her a cluster of cosmos flowers were in bloom. She crouched down before the cosmos. Half dozing, she felt the wind whirl up as though bathing her back in icy water. She gazed upon the cosmos that bent back their long stems to stroke the echoes of the wind. Without so much as extending her hand to snap one, she simply fixed her eyes upon the flowers. As though caught on a whim she rolled up the hem of her skirt and stuck out the sports shoes she wore on her feet. The sports shoes that she had only put on for the first time that morning, were as dusty as she having worn herself out from walking, so that the colours of the cosmos petals that were printed on them appeared dull. A weight fell around the nape of her downcast neck. Tiredness, together with the drowsiness that crept stealthily into the corners of both eyes, paralysed her entire body. She stood up, parted the cluster of cosmos, and crossing over the grass made her way down the embankment. The thickly grown grasses on the gentle slope chilled her back; in no time she was purring, sound asleep.

It was on the Monday of the previous week when she had collapsed, crashing her body onto the stone shoe stand in the entrance of the house. In the middle of the lesson held during third period at school, her mind had begun to cloud over, she had lost all control over her eyelids, and her arms and legs had begun to shake. As sweat poured down her brow, she could no longer support the weight of her heavy head and had ended up dropping it down onto the desk with a thump. The teacher in charge came running to her and put his hand to her head. "Let's get you to the medical room," he said, but as he tried to pick her up she knocked away his hand. "I'll just go home," she spluttered, rising to her feet, and without another word she left the classroom. In her manner she seemed so oblivious to those around her. Her teacher and the other pupils could only watch her leave with dumb amazement. She felt the atmosphere in the classroom and its whispered voices refract through the drifting current and gradually fade away. As she stepped outside the school gate and followed the path in the direction of home, she had to pause time and again in order to lean against lampposts or crouch down by the side of the road like a puppet whose strings have been cut. The thing that picked her up and walked her home was an internal strength that she had only discovered on that day for the first time.

Already since more than two weeks earlier, she had been cursing the lecture that would come in fourth period on that day. In fact, her uncertainty had begun to sway since the day when she advanced to the fourth year of primary school and was handed her new Social Studies textbook. But it was after observing the personality of the teacher, Mr Sakai, and calculating his pace that she confirmed that they would be studying from that page in two weeks on Monday, and that is when the knots began to twist inside her petite frame.

The spread of an epidemic to close down the school, the occurrence of a great earthquake, lightning in the middle of the night setting the school building ablaze, Mr

Sakai being struck down by sudden illness..... She went over these various ideas, but such dreams based outside of reality only sent her into a deeper sense of despair. Even if that Monday lecture did go away, that page could always be turned to. There was no doubt that the most assured way was for her to develop her own vague illness. However, when she thought of the pain of spending a full day at home in bed, her small body would stop short like a post driven into the ground.

Her stepfather, that lump about the size of a table tennis ball protruding from beneath his left chin, started to yell at her mother and throw blows. Sometimes her mother would silently and passively take it; other times, she would shriek and bawl and fight back against her stepfather. If she were to feign some illness to stay at home, she would have to witness her stepfather and mother carry on like that, and there was nothing to guarantee her stepfather not using her as an excuse for a fight.

On that page in the Social Studies textbook, the word "Korean" was printed a countless number of times with a rough map of the Korean peninsula. Before she made it to the written content, the echo of that word, Ko-re-a, had already brought fear into her heart. She did not expect that her classmates knew of her origins, for she had just moved to the school the previous year following her mother's remarriage. Yet every day, a shapeless sense of anxiety and suppression continued to swell inside her and coiled itself around her as tenaciously as a spider's web.

She had the sense that she could read the feelings of most adults just by looking at how they appeared from behind. Albeit faintly, she knew that not every adult was all superior, that there were differences of character and ability among the grown-ups too. This was why she saw in her teacher's every move just another adult, and would even daydream about the teacher in his home life. In her eyes, it was her class peers who bore the more frightening presence. The unexpected nature of their sudden strikes and retorts, bitching and jealousy, were impossible to read no matter how she tried. On Monday, fourth period, I will be wedged in between Sakai and my classmates... She trembled as she drew in her mind how she would look on the day.

Monday came. From morning the whole house was buzzing, the sounds of people's footsteps and yelling coming to the boil. Sleeplessly, she had decided to feign illness and take the day off, but now her spirits were dampened and she stared into space. They were erecting the framework that day of the apartment that was to be built on the vacant plot to the back of the house. Her stepfather was the owner of an engineering firm and his workers had already begun the planning and actual construction, leading him to be in unusually high spirits. Her mother was moving busily about the kitchen, joined by another housewife from the neighbourhood. She felt awkward about saying she was ill, on this fine day for building facades. In the kitchen her mother was dashing about busily with one of the neighbourhood housewives. Faced with no other choice, she hauled her satchel onto her back.

No matter how much she thought about it, it was an unusual thing to suddenly run a fever and not make it to the fourth lesson of the day. The stone pillar outside of the school gate flickered faintly in the sun's haze and disappeared. At a bend in the road she slumped limply to the ground. Although she tried to rouse herself in a bid to get on her feet, she was cowed by the uncanniness and chance occurrence of a certain power concealed somewhere inside her body. She eventually walked as far as the point in the road from where on the right hand side, the gate of the house came into view, and lost consciousness. How she had made her way to the entrance and opened the sliding door, she could not recall. Lying collapsed on the shoe stand, she felt someone's hand give her shoulder a shake. From that time on, she had no way of distinguishing what was a dream.

After the doctor had gone home, having admitted to not knowing the cause and administering a shot of aspirin, her mother called for the old priestess. It was a misfortunate date for constructing the frame, the apartment toilet and entrance faced an unlucky direction; to her mother's wailing her stepfather had no choice but go along. She watched as the paper strips that the old woman held aloft leaped above her body like white animals. Occasionally in the cries of the old woman's voice, a strange sound, *ki, ki, ki*, stabbed her heart becoming intertwined, and each time she felt herself sink to the bottom of a hard-bubbling pan. She writhed to pull herself up. Yet her voice would not come out, and with her arms and legs feeling as though they were stuck down fast she could not move an inch. The old woman peered into her face and mercilessly banged the white bundle of slips against her chest and head.

There was a surge of light, and suddenly she felt a pain as though her eyeballs were being scorched. The old woman's face and the figures of her family standing vigil around her vanished. A perfectly white veil was draped over the front of her eyes and it began to shine with a brilliance that pierced through her eyeballs. Unable to blink she kept her eyes wide open and froze her body. The veins from the tips of her toes began to throb in waves, as her inner ears began to shut out all sound as though closed up with water. She could hear a low moaning voice coming from somewhere. Each time that drawling voice emanated, the white veil across her eyes fluttered faintly and cast a shadow in sync with the voice's dynamic shifts.

"Get out, get out into the middle of the water"

The same phrase was repeated three times. She made out the words perfectly and mulled them over. Without warning, the white veil suddenly lifted. For a while, her vision stayed blurred and distant. At last her focus settled and she was able to trace every single grain in the ceiling. Her fever began to abate. The throbbing in her vein slowly quietened, and she fell into a coma.

Rambling fluidly, she lay immersed in a strange sensation that pressed upon her body from every angle. I am now, in the middle of the water——. The space around her grew gradually brighter. Her body was slowly pulled upwards. Focusing all of her strength in order to pull out her feet from the water that shackled her ankles, she turned to face the surface of the water and stretched out her body.

There was nobody by the bedside. That extremely high fever had subsided like a lie, and with a cleared head she lay for a while gazing up at the ceiling. Rousing her body, she looked around the futon. An ice pack lay by her pillow. The ice had melted leaving lukewarm water that wobbled in her hand with the soft sensation of rubber. The cluttered room made her realise that nobody from the family had been to check on her condition for a long time. She replaced the sweat-sodden bedsheets, changed her night clothes, and climbed back into the futon. She felt as though she could sleep forever. When she closed her eyes, that low groaning voice that she had heard in a dream sprang to life again about her spine.

She had been absent for the full week from school and today, a Monday, as she folded up her futon she decided to leave home. The day before, she had pleaded for a pair of sports shoes printed with a pattern of cosmos flowers. It was the first time she had ever begged for something.

The grass sounded faintly against the tip of her nose. How much time could have passed? Finding herself lain out across the embankment, she raised herself up and dusted off the tips of grass blades and crumbs of soil that clung to her damp clothes. As she crawled up the embankment clutching at the grasses, a thick grey cloud spread out above her head. Wondering whether she had walked all the way up here, she began to trace her memory, whereupon she remembered the desire to pee and descended back

down the hill. Resting her right foot on a rock wedged in the earth, she rolled up her skirt. As she lowered her underwear and crouched down, she felt the tips of the grasses against her buttocks. The sensation tickled and caused her to shift her body slightly, when suddenly the rock supporting her right foot dislodged itself from its foundation and rolled down the bank. Losing her centre of gravity, she lunged forward and slid towards the direction of the river. The stagnant river basin was deeper than she had thought, and she came to standstill with her legs cocooned knee deep in muddy water. The moment she breathed a sigh of relief, warm urine trickled down the inside of both legs and flowed into the muddy water.

Cautiously she climbed up the embankment and stuck her head out into the side of the road. In the far distance up ahead she could see a thickly-wooded forest of cypress pines. All around the cypress forest, pitch-black clouds concealed and shrouded every sound. The uncanny gloom created by the cypress trees and the clouds were reminiscent of the insane baying of a great tsunami. After staring a little while at the cypress forest, she did not make to return in the direction from where she had come, but set off towards the great tsunami that would empower her with a bottomless strength.

A raindrop splashed onto the end of her nose. In no time, rain began to pour all across the dried out embankment. She walked on without a care about getting wet. She had already discarded her satchel into an old well at the front of the embankment but now she threw the fabric briefcase containing her ruler and coloured pencils and whatnot down into the river basin. She tried holding both hands up to the rain. With her entire body sopping wet, the sense of washing away made her feel fulfilled. The cypress trees sat haughtily as ever, their gaze cast down. However the road did not head towards the cypress trees; with a small wooden bridge as its border it curved off to the right. She looked back in the direction of the great tsunami countless times as she walked on through the rain.

Around the point by which she had neared the deserted railway crossing, the rain had been completely sucked up into the sky. She looked upwards at the bright sky, now clear again, and breathed a heavy sigh. Perching herself on a low wooden post by the edge of the rail crossing she wrung out her skirt. It was almost comical how much water squeezed out, it gave her a thrill. What is more, her sports shoes had been washed by the rain so that the cosmos petals floated up as vividly as they had when she put them on that morning. Her feelings of tiredness and hunger were gone.

Beyond the rail crossing she could see a small hill. Perhaps the station lay behind it. She stood up and began to walk. However after two or three steps she suddenly stopped dead. Her feet halted and her breathing froze. She tried to take another step. At the sheer shock of it, her voice failed. A frog was croaking. There was a frog croaking from the sole of her sports shoe. Had it entered when she fell into the muddy water, or had it entered as she was walking through the rain? Gingerly she braved one more step. *Croak*, the sound resonated from beneath her foot. *Croak, croak*. Flying up in the air she hurriedly took off both shoes and hurled them into the road. But all that fell from the sports shoes was a trickle of water. The sports shoes spun the cosmos petals around and around as they were left to roll across the gravel that lined the tracks.

2

As she finished undoing the last clasp from the rail and bundled the curtains up into both arms, the heavy fabric cast up a cloud of dry dust. Huffily, Keiko held her breath and shoved the curtains into a black vinyl bin liner. The mountain of bin liners piled up in the front doorway looked like a gelatinous mass of rock twisting its stony surface and fanning out its base.

A bookcase without books, a futon without a mattress, kitchen cupboards empty of crockery. Neither in the wardrobe nor in the kitchen cabinets was there anything to be found. Keiko was quietly surprised with herself for now being able to look around her older sister's apartment. At first she had felt only an increasing sense of apprehension and had been clueless about where to begin. She had cursed her bad luck at having this task fall upon her. Every time she locked up the room she thought she could hear the faint trickle of a running tap, leading her to leap out of the door on numerous occasions. By the time she had flung open the door and started tidying little by little, it was already almost noon. Every single dent in the wall and mark on the furniture, each individually hammered-in nail, every trace of oil and stain on the gas stove evoked the image of her sister, down to the way she breathed and the movement of her fingertips. Keiko felt a relentless piercing sensation in her chest, but swallowing her breaths she finally succeeded in cleaning the place up.

Clutching two black bin liners in each hand at a time, up and down the stairs she went again and again. Once she had tidied all of the bin liners into the deserted plot in front of the apartment, Keiko swept the rooms and went about wiping down the tatami and furniture with a cloth. Outside the window, now devoid of its curtains, the clouded sky emanated a lonely glow that wound its way noiselessly around the centre of the neighbourhood. For a January day, it was reasonably warm, thought Keiko. After finishing with the cloth, she opened the wardrobe and cabinets once more, and just as she was surveying the room to check that there was nothing still to be done, through the open front door peered the face of the caretaker.

"Somebody's been hard at work, haven't they?"

The caretaker spoke as though talking to himself as he entered the apartment. Keiko had not noticed the first time she saw him, upon taking a closer look she saw that the hair on the caretaker's head was a wig.

"If I sell the furniture on to a second-hand trader, what should I do with the money?"

Feeling disgusted at the blatant indebtedness within her voice, Keiko spoke.

"Please do as you see fit, Mr Caretaker. After all, my sister caused a great deal of trouble for you."

"Now, now, think nothing of it."

Although the caretaker had anticipated Keiko's response, with his hand rested apologetically on his head he immediately set his gaze on valuing the furniture. Keiko made her way across the kitchen and opened the door to the bathroom that stood next to the fridge. Wisps of smoke from a stick of incense she had left in the narrow bathroom trailed out towards her. Keiko thought again about what the caretaker had told her, that in the course of the previous day he had only managed to clean the bathroom. I should have shown him how grateful I was. I really could not have roused the courage to clean the bathtub on my own———. A static scene like a single photograph flashed across Keiko's eyelids. The trickling sound of a tap that played tricks on her ears was lain over it. Keiko held her breath and brought her hands together in front of her chest.

"I'll be off now."

Quietly she shut the door to the bathroom and picked up her coat and bag. The caretaker returned a perfunctory greeting then fixed his gaze as before onto each of the pieces of furniture in turn.

A calm twilight bereft of any wind was closing in. Keiko set off down the deserted sloping path in the direction of the station. She felt the exhaustion suddenly come to the boil within her. On reflection, it had been only three days earlier when she had climbed

this slope for the first time.

That day, Keiko had headed into Tokyo to pick up some wooden sandals that she had ordered to coordinate with her finest kimono to wear at her Coming of Age ceremony, whereupon she had immediately dialled her sister's apartment. Her sister seemed to be out. Before going to the department store, Keiko decided to call in and boarded the train. Glancing in turns at the map drawn for her at the police box by the station and the names of the many houses that lined the way, she had climbed up this hill. The dusting of snow that had fallen during the morning had slowly melted and flowed away to leave a quiet early afternoon that hung languorously. Having finally found it, she climbed the steps to the apartment that she had been searching for and stood before the door inscribed with the number 2C, only to find that numerous bundles of newspapers were crammed into the opening to the letterbox with the morning edition of that day, unable to fit, dropped in front of the door. Keiko felt a sense of futility as she pushed the buzzer over and over again. No response came from inside the apartment. At that point, Keiko could not suppress the curiosity that welled up within her. She went to the caretaker's office and, having lied that she had been told by her sister to wait in her apartment, she lingered behind the caretaker, heaving her chest as he jangled his set of master keys and opened the door.

Her older sister was the child of the stepmother who her father had remarried immediately after Keiko's mother had died in a road accident. That both her stepmother and Keiko were Koreans was a fact made known to Keiko as soon as they arrived at the house. Yet Keiko had felt neither dissatisfaction nor preference towards her stepmother. Her stepmother, who could not help but remind Keiko of a working ant, only ever wore Japanese clothes and acted exactly like a housekeeper. Moreover, above all else, her stepmother spoiled Keiko more than she did her older sister. When her sister was eighteen Keiko's stepmother died from cancer, and on the day after the funeral her sister had stolen a great sum of money from their father's company and left the house. Keiko's sister attended a night-time high school and helped out at their father's office by day. However, when her stepmother was admitted to hospital her sister was entrusted with the kitchen work, hence she knew all there was to know about the whereabouts of any money kept in the house. Her father stamped his feet complaining that his hand had been bitten by the dog he had been feeding, while her elder brothers cursed their sister as though they were talking about something unclean. From that day on, it became wholly unbearable to hear of this and that rumour that would come to Keiko's ears about her long-lost sister. Her sister's name became a forbidden word. Soon she was ignored as though she had never been in the house in the first place, and she was gradually flecked away from the memories of those who lived in the house.

Her sister was beautiful, and her grades were good. All throughout primary and middle school, Keiko was continuously compared to her sister by the teachers.

"Your sister used to fill in her answer sheets so neatly. Her grades were good too."

That day, after the teacher on whom she had held a secret crush had spoken thus, Keiko went so far as to say that she was going to leave school, much to the worry of her father and stepmother. Using spite to offset the inferiority complex she harboured towards her older sister, Keiko vented the facts that her sister came from another family and that she was Korean. Her older sister learned simply to take it. Without defending herself, she looked upon Keiko with pleading eyes. It was a look that subtly caused Keiko to become all the more cruel.

When that same sister suddenly turned up at her dormitory, it was just after Keiko had enrolled at university. Where are you nowadays, she grilled, albeit slightly stalling her words, to which her sister held out a boxed fountain pen and a paper bag containing

clothes.

"Something to celebrate your enrolment with. Use them if you like them."

With these words, she stood and left as though making an escape. Keiko did not hear a word after that and was almost on the verge of forgetting about her sister, when she suddenly appeared again. That was just as the end of the year was approaching, about one month or so ago.

One night, Keiko received a message from the dormitory porter and went down to the lobby to find her sister sat curled in the corner of the sofa. Seeing a figure with her shoulders drooped, at first Keiko did not recognise who it was. Her sister looked at Keiko and rose to her feet. Her gaunt, lifeless cheeks were twitching oddly.

"I just had the sudden urge to see you, dear Keiko."

Tailing off her words with a faint quiver, her sister quickly cast down her eyes. Then, holding out a paper packet just as she had two years earlier, she picked up the coat that was lying on the sofa. All the while, her left cheek twitched tremulously. Keiko stopped her sister as she tried to leave and invited her to a coffee house near the dormitory. As she pushed the door to the coffee house that stood in front of the bus stop, she heard a voice murmur behind her.

"It's our secret that you've seen me."

As she turned around, Keiko saw her sister's white face distort amid the darkness. Gazing at that expression that seemed to tremble as though fearing a telling-off, Keiko's chest began to ache. On that night too, the neighbourhood was as dark as this, and her sister's face was just as white… That night, a young Keiko had been sitting on the dining table watching television. When her sister admonished her to get down on the grounds that it was a dining table, Keiko created a ruckus that her sister was bullying her. Her sister was hit mercilessly by her stepmother, and tied to a pillar in the hall. On her way to bed, Keiko grew curious and went to peek into the hall. Having detected the sound of footsteps, her sister raised her drooped head and stared hard at Keiko. Then suddenly a savage wind roared and they saw the bamboo groves in the garden to the back of the hall reel, casting uncanny shadows. Keiko had ran out in the direction of the lounge.

Sitting either side of the table they ordered coffee whereupon, apparently out of consideration for Keiko who sat bored to silence, her sister opened her mouth. Feeling remorseful at the way she had treated her sister in the past, Keiko was startled and watched the mouth closely.

"Keiko, are your studies interesting?"

Relieved, Keiko drank from the coffee that had been brought to her. Once more she returned her gaze to her sister. At the perfectly aligned, white set of front teeth and that feminine expression with lips that curled slightly as she spoke, Keiko hauled up again that competitive spirit of her past.

"They're so-so. I do what suits me."

Having answered with a clear lack of interest, Keiko took the plunge to speak up.

"Sister, what are you doing with yourself now? Where are you living? I swear I will not tell anyone at home so tell me. Just tell me."

"…………………"

"Don't you see that if nobody close to you knows, there could be all sorts of problems if anything happens?"

Her sister's downward-looking, hollowed profile, and her lifeless, pallid skin, turned the sense of inferiority within Keiko curiously into something close to sympathy.

Just at the point after her sister began attending a night-time high school when Keiko believed she had been finally freed from her inferiority complex, her sister had stolen a great sum of money and ran away from home. Keiko took pleasure in the

dishonourable rumours that would pass one after another through her ears, yet inwardly she felt cowed by the impudence that had lain, buried deep within her older sister. That brazenly competitive spirit she had felt back then, when Keiko wondered if she would ever be able to beat her sister, now began to simmer inside her again.

"If you don't tell me your address, I'll tell Dad and the others that you came to my dorm, because to them it's still not water under the bridge. That seriously damaged the family. The only reason they didn't report it to the police was because you're family. Do you understand? That's why you're going to tell me your address, and I promise to keep it a secret."

She even surprised herself at how effortlessly the words came out to pierce her sister's weakness. Tasting the bitter sensation that spread throughout the inside of her mouth, Keiko persisted in pressing her sister. Helplessly, her sister took a pen and notebook from her bag.

"I plan to move out of here too. Before long I won't be here…"

Her sister spoke powerlessly, and slowly tore out a page from her notebook.

Keiko made her way down the hill and walked to the other side of the wide suburban street, which took her out onto a road busy with cars. She opened the door to the first café her eyes fell upon. Releasing a sigh, she quietly sat down on a chair. For the past three days, a small insect had begun to make its appearance known, and it carried a relentless aching deep inside its chest. Keiko did not know the true form of this insect, and her frustration at her own lack of comprehension was causing that insect to ache more than it could bear.

In the palms of her hands, she recalled the lightness of her sister's white urn that she had buried in her stepmother's grave the day before. Her sister was a lost soul so perhaps it was fitting that she should be buried. When the waitress came and turned to her to take her order, Keiko noticed that the air inside the café was hot from the heater and took off her coat. She pinched the corners of her eyes and tried to close them. A mere ten years had passed between her stepmother and sister's arriving at the house and their departures, she realised. For her stepmother, and for her sister, what on earth had those ten years meant? Before she knew it, tears had collected in the corners of Keiko's eyes. Keiko could not tell what the tears were for. All she knew was the deep aching in the chest of that small insect. She focused the nerves of her eyeballs on the back of her eyelids. A searing pain numbed the centre of her brow and pierced through the top of her head.

3

She moved her mouth compulsively, extending her chopsticks over the plates and dishes of food that lined the table. Taking everything that her hand fell upon, she placed the hot morsels in her mouth, sipped soup, and picked at the rice. Mechanically, she chewed each mouthful of food only a few times then hurriedly gulped it down, before hastily extending her chopsticks again. She had been moving her jaw for some time now without pause. The television in the living room had been left on mute, so that as soon as the sound of chewing subsided, the atmosphere around the dining table revealed itself as though it were pushing its way through the stillness. This frightened her, and so she simply kept on eating.

Around the table, her stepfather maintained a disgruntled silence and straight across from him sat her eldest brother, Toshihiko. On the same side as her, Keiko and the second brother sat beside each other eating their meal. Keiko stared in astonishment at the sight of her devouring avariciously, and subconsciously cast a contemptuous glare.

Although she was aware of this, she pretended to not to care in the slightest and continued to jab her chopsticks into the various dishes, and to move her jaw. The manner in which she gorged was entirely reminiscent of a starving beggar faced at long last with something to eat.

It was the summer of the year in which Toshihiko had twice failed the entrance exam for the national university of his ambition, and had reluctantly enrolled at a private university. Toshihiko was a vain character, but when he was unable to attend school straight away, he had begun spending his days and nights playing mah-jong, and other forms of gambling. Just as they would begin to wonder how many nights he had been staying away, Toshihiko would walk in through the front gate with some girl dressed in flashy clothes, and when he caused an accident that left some damage to her stepfather's car, trouble between Toshihiko and her stepfather become a daily occurrence.

Toshihiko turned to face her mother.

"Hey, *wife number two*"

With this he stuck out the palm of his hand. Her mother would hand over money whenever Toshihiko asked her, so whenever Toshihiko was out of sight it was her mother who would take the brunt of her stepfather's scolding in his place. Her stepfather with his pomegranate nose would lose his temper with drink, whereupon the lump below his left jowl would flush dark red and swell up to twice its usual size. His face would then pass through deformity to awaken a figure reminiscent of a monstrous red demon.

Why her mother remarried to such a man, from a small age she had not been able to comprehend. The drinking and wielding mindless violence were the same as her first dad.

"Your dad has gone back home to an island called Saishūtō."

One day, her mother had said this to her.

"So what you're saying is that he originally had a family in Saishūtō."

As she muttered innocently her mother gazed back at her in surprise.

It was impossible to comprehend what her mother felt, having suffered all that beating and kicking and yet ending up married to another man much the same. Whenever her stepfather began to lose his temper, she seemed to revert to the habits she acquired when she lived with her father before, sobbing loudly and clinging to her mother's back.

However, on one night as the fighting from the living room became audible, upon seeing Keiko –who only showed any weakness at times like this– fall to pieces in tears, she felt a solitary feeling that she had continuously harboured within her now flesh out into a clear form. The feeling gradually lifted her engorged and hardened emotions, yet at the same time, she also began to regard with fear the self that could dream up such a thing.

It dawned on her that the desperate way in which she clung to her mother while her mother was being beaten by her stepfather was nothing more than a foolish act that exposed her ill-fated position as the other child brought in by the second wife. If she was able to emphasise and complain about this poor fate of hers, the pain brought on by her stepfather kicking her to the ground was no big deal. The same went for the gestures she made to protect her mother, which she felt obliged to do lest much to her dread, people think she had lost her childish nature, which would implore her to break down into tears and plead with her stepfather.

As they huddled in the narrow room pricking their ears up to hear, she felt as though herself and Keiko amounted to nothing more than small props for the provision of a play. These props that breathed, props with expressions, props that must have

seemed so childlike to the adults… She felt intensely moved by Keiko and squeezing her arms tightly as she held her close, she waited to see when the grand performance of fighting next door would end.

At the dinner table that evening, Toshihiko, who had stayed out for the past three nights, came face-to-face with her stepfather, and at any moment the situation looked set to erupt. After a while, Keiko set down her chopsticks and stood up.

"Thanks for dinner."

From the far end of the living room, Keiko turned back.

"Sister, why don't you pace yourself? You look just like a beggar."

As though Keiko's voice had brought him back round, her stepfather blinked and looked across at her as her jaw continued its munching. Her stepfather was under doctor's orders to stop drinking, hence he could not borrow his usual brand of courage; what with the tension between Toshihiko and him he appeared fidgety. Then her stepfather relaxed his expression.

"You'll upset your stomach if you eat all that."

Gauging her stepfather's real intent, she gave a laugh.

"But it's really tasty!"

As she spoke, she made as though heading for the kitchen and left the living room. As slowly as she could, she walked along the hallway as far as the kitchen before leaping into the toilet. Facing the toilet bowl, she vomited the food she had eaten. Once she had hunched for a while in front of the latrine and caught back her breath, she returned to the table. With her chopsticks extended, she began to fill her mouth with everything she could lay her hands on. She poked and stirred her rice and soup.

"It's undignified for a beautiful girl to eat in such a way. Now just take your time."

For a change, her stepfather's vocal tones sounded jocular so she flashed a quick glance in Toshihiko's direction. Even though he had his face down, Toshihiko glimpsed her in the corner of his field of vision and let out a chuckle.

Bata bata, something made a flapping noise. She held her breath and looked up at the black shadow moving above the table. Then impulsively she pushed her face onto her stepfather's lap, whereupon causing him to twist his legs under the table. Even then, the convulsions raging her body would not cease. Toshiyuki jumped up, grabbed the huge spider in his bare hand, and hurled it out from the veranda.

"She's a coward, this one. Fancy all that fuss over a spider."

Realising that the knees that pushed against her cheeks belonged to her stepfather, for a moment she felt an unidentifiable bitter-sweetness swirl throughout her body.

"Hey, the spider's gone now."

Toshihiko peered under the table to tell her, and her stepfather stroked her head. It made her happy that this episode of a spider suddenly jumping in had managed to break the silence a little. However, due to the shock of that instant, even now she could feel the contents of her stomach rising up, as though they were about to spill out from her mouth.

"Thanks for the meal."

Rising to her feet, she finally found her voice and left the living room. Holding both hands over her mouth she ran into the bathroom and lay herself down by the toilet. She clawed aggressively at the back of her throat, causing waves to surge and break in her stomach. Her face flushed and swelled, tears filled and streamed from her eyes. Why did she have to keep doing this, the question flitted through her mind. But beyond that, she had no desire to consider the question any further.

Bent over the toilet bowl, a voice came to her ears.

"Arse-kisser."

The vision of a group of schoolboys running down the corridor outside the classroom, or of a group of schoolgirls whispering secretly in a corner of the classroom, flashed through her mind. The events of that afternoon rose to her mind.

In the year she advanced to the second year of middle school, a teacher by the name of Sato had transferred to the post of maths teacher at her school. Sato was in early old age with a receded hairline, but on top of his unrefined appearance he spoke with a thick Tohoku accent, hence the students immediately gave him a nickname with which to rib him.

In the fifth period on that day, she had had a maths class. Most of the students considered it to be a time for a post-lunch nap and lay face down on their desks, while a smaller number including her took notes. As soon as the end of period bell began to chime, even though Sato had not finished speaking, the students who had been sleeping stretched their arms in the air yawning, before making a big show of packing away their books and notes. Sato managed to cut his speech short and without another word, he began to walk towards the classroom door. Purposefully, she rose to her feet and ran towards Sato who was standing in the doorway. She truly wanted to show her appreciation to Sato. Pointing at the part of the question that she had already prepared, she asked him about it, whereupon as expected, Sato's face beamed and he brought his thick glasses closer to her notebook. She recoiled at the dreadful stench of Sato's breath. Then she detected something quite opposite to her own intentions in the manner with which Sato, as a man, approached her, his female pupil. Incensed at her own naivety, she forced her eyelids rigid in a bid to keep her tears at bay. It was then, as her body began to blaze with shame. A group of schoolboys spat words at her back before running away, while the group of schoolgirls in the corner of the classroom cast daggers at her.

She feared that her entire innards might fly out as she clawed with three fingers at the base of her tongue. A bitter liquid wove and entangled through her throat. Enduring the unpleasant uncertainty over whether or not to cough, she twisted the doorknob. With all of her might she spat hard into the flow of water in the toilet bowl.

4

Ichirō Morimoto showed up precisely at the time he had promised, at a café that he himself and chosen. Although the finer aspects of his features and build did not correspond, Morimoto was not a million miles away from the image that Keiko had drawn in her mind after hearing his voice over the telephone. Keiko got up from her chair and bowed to greet Morimoto in the entrance. Morimoto spotted her immediately and approached Keiko's table.

Morimoto sat down and took a cigarette from his coat pocket. Looking at the cigarette packet, Keiko was reminded of the same navy-coloured packets of Short Piece cigarettes that were strewn about her sister's room.

The address book in her sister's handbag did not have so many telephone numbers written in it. Sometimes the name section would contain a single letter of the alphabet, or a bold line would be crossed horizontally through it, so that in the end, there were only five people or contacts that could be clearly understood. Keiko noted the five telephone numbers down onto a sheet of memo paper and tried turning the dial. On her first attempt, the voice on the tape could be heard saying that this number is no longer in use, while the person at the second number hung up abruptly, insisting that there was nobody there by that name. Ichirō Morimoto had picked up at the third number that Keiko had tried calling.

With a cigarette stick held between his lips, Morimoto waited to light up and opened his mouth.

"Was it suicide?"

Despite the fact that she had spent her time waiting for Morimoto chewing over what to say in response, Keiko was overcome by a strange awkwardness that threatened to scramble her words, and she stuttered.

"…No, it was an accident. They said it was heart failure. Brought on by drinking then getting in the bath. The tap was still running."

"…………"

"I discovered her body. It really was a coincidence, but she'd only told me her address one month earlier. Before then, I didn't know where she was or what she was doing. …..The day I found her, I just decided that I'd like to visit her apartment and thought I'd give her a surprise."

Hearing Morimoto's voice lost for words, Keiko broke off for a moment.

"I'd like to know about my sister. Mr Morimoto, were you a friend of hers?"

Morimoto did not answer.

"Where is the apartment where she died?"

"It's ten, no, more like a fifteen minute walk from S station. Did you not know it, Mr Morimoto?"

Again, Morimoto refused to answer, but silently lit his cigarette.

The waitress put a cup of coffee down in front of Morimoto. In response to the rough way in which she slammed down the cup, Morimoto appeared offended, and Keiko also felt oddly as though her nerves had been rubbed the wrong way. Morimoto twisted and stubbed out his cigarette in the ashtray.

"Let's find another café. This place is too noisy."

With these words, he stood up and without giving Keiko the chance to nod, Morimoto headed up to the counter. Somewhere in Morimoto's tall, thickset build, emanated the impression of instability. Keiko noticed then that it was due to the way his right leg dragged slightly as he walked.

One hour later, Keiko lowered her eyes while listening to Morimoto's story. The ice in the glass of Coca Cola sat before her had melted, and it had turned into a flat, sugary solution.

"Really, thank you for letting me know."

Morimoto had broken off his story mid-flow a number of times to say this. Keiko was aware that the bloodshot look that glazed Morimoto's eyes was down to more than inebriation alone. All the while the whisky continued to go down, the tone of his voice showed no change at all.

Now and then, Morimoto jutted out his lower jaw and sat dumbly, and as though remembering something, he nodded his head.

To tell you everything in order from the beginning is beyond my capabilities just now. Since I received your telephone call, all kinds of things, all kinds of things like memories of the year we lived together, have come back to me with ferocious momentum, and although they flash up in an instant, they won't go away. Unable to vanish, they smoulder on, their tendrils like claws.

It's been two years since we split up. I got married in June of last year. It must have been around summertime, but I suddenly received a call from her. She was wondering how my right foot was. I hadn't heard her voice in a while, but I was relieved at how well she sounded. When I told her that I had married, she kept telling me, "Congratulations," and then she hung up. By that time, I thought that our life together was in the distant past, and while being newlywed may have had something to do with it, I really felt like my relationship with her was over. But it's odd. From then on, not a day went by when I

didn't think of her. Why on earth would that be, and why now again…? I didn't have time to think about the reasons as the memories of her came back to me, and then I desperately wanted to meet her. I couldn't help myself because of this pain in my chest, just as though I was falling in love for the first time. I even faced my wife and called her by *her* name. I regretted that I should have at least asked where she was or where she worked. Even when I went to work, like today it passed my mind that I might get a call from her, and so I left the house expectantly. Days and months went by but no matter how long I waited, the call never came. I suppose it's not surprising. It was tasteless of me to tell her that I was married. I should never have said that I was married. That's what I ended up thinking, and at times, I took it out on my wife.

It's ironic. My wife has absolutely no idea about what goes on inside my heart, and this girl who is somewhere I don't know could surely not even imagine that I was tormenting myself in that way. I felt miserable at how burdensome, how bitter, how cruel the human heart is. Whereupon it all rebounded onto my side: how much had I understood her feelings? I knew that she was struggling with something. But whatever it was, it swirled boldly around inside her and in the end I could find no way in. She knew that, and instead all she asked from me were tolerance and protection. I'll tell you straight, I reached a point where I couldn't handle her any more. I even grew bored. In the end, before I brought it up myself, she had already disappeared.

I'm a chef. I dropped out of university and since then I've worked on board tuna ships in Africa and Brazil. If I hadn't met her, I suppose I'd be on board a tuna ship right now.

Now when was it? There is a good friend of mine I have known since high school, called Kōji, and the three of us –Kōji, Kōji's older brother and I– went for a drink to some regular bar of his. She was working there. She said that it had only been a few days since she had started working there, but that instant I was smitten. Kōji was the same way, and so when after a while I told him my feelings, he gave a wry smile and said that he should never have taken me there.

I do remember that it was an incredibly humid day. I invited her back to my place and the four of us drank there. Until that time, although it was always in the bar, I ended up talking with her often, and if I ever heard rumours about her from the other customers I'd joke that there was no way with a face like hers, and shrug them off. Ever straight to the point, Kōji would insist in all seriousness that she was definitely not that type of girl, and as for his brother, well, him being him, he would feign a look of utter disinterest while inwardly appearing to be inconsolably curious. As regards what we felt about her, we were each of us to our own. It was I who suggested having a party. Kōji went up to the counter and said, "Next Sunday, Morimoto's going to cook something. Won't you join us?" At his invitation, she said OK straight away. I was pleased, but seeing how she jumped at the chance so easily, it made me wonder whether the rumours were in fact true, and I felt a little let down. I made an escabeche, which she said she liked and, being a talented player, Kōji entertained her on his guitar. His brother liked to keep saying, "I'm bored, I'm bored," so he sat grinning and listening on the sidelines while Kōji and I actively worked our charms.

That night, Kōji's brother screamed at the top of his lungs, "language, language, language," like giving a speech, but no, that was no speech. He bored his eyes into her and began lecturing her on dialectics in full force; he was really laying into her. Thrusting his hand into her long hair, he ruffled and tugged the locks while assaulting her with his diatribe. This play of deception was what Kōji's brother's turned to when he was bored, and Kōji and I knew this. But we also knew that he always said that she was the sassiest of girls and that this was his best attempt at picking her up, and so deep down I felt

peeved and thought that if his lecture was going to go on endlessly I would lose my temper and head home. She nodded patiently at Kōji's brother's spiel while drinking her drink. She showed no particular interest in his verbosity, and the naturally frank demeanour with which she fended it off gradually allowed the exasperation I felt within me to subside.

"All of it."

Up until then she had been silent, hence when she opened her mouth everyone stared at this girl's face.

"All of it is the repeated layering of continuity and discontinuity, a cyclic recurrence, an endless metabolism, that much is obvious."

Whoa, let out Kōji's brother, and he propped up one elbow and rested his chin in his hand. It seemed that he believed that she had been hooked by his own lecture.

"Come to think of it, someone did say it had the air of a ghost story, and I can accept that but… It's maybe more terrifying to accept it not with the head but with the body. I too think it's terrifying."

"Ghost story?"

"………………….."

As though reluctant to continue speaking she suddenly clammed up and twisted her face.

Into the restored silence of the room, Kōji began strumming on his guitar with the same power with which one would throw in a grenade. For some reason, I could not take my eyes away from her face.

In no time it was the middle of the night and it was decided that she would stay over. So we agreed that she would take the bed, while we would lay out a couple of futons lengthways in the clear space, and find a spot for ourselves there to sleep. All four of us were fairly drunk. Having finished the washing up, she sat down on the bed and silently began to undress. Everything. I was still sat at the table drinking whisky and Kōji was lying on his back on the futon, smoking a cigarette. Without a stitch on, she walked across to the door and turned off the light, before pouncing and throwing herself onto Kōji. In the dim light of the room, her white body—and it really was white—wrapped itself around him. When his brother came out from the toilet, for a moment he seemed about to shout out, but he and I--- how can I put it?--- we were overwhelmed by some extraordinary force that rendered us speechless. Of course, Kōji's brother knew that I had taken a liking to her, so he looked at me as though he didn't know where to put himself, before frantically casting off his clothes and diving under the blanket.

"Icchan, come on!"

I realised that she was by Kōji's side, looking up at me. I averted my eyes and didn't respond. My complex feelings had put me on edge. Then she jumped up from Kōji's futon and layered herself on top of Kōji's brother. Soon the two of them were groaning loudly.

But I felt as though I was watching a scene of a play. Each of our actions and feelings were scattered, even though they connected they were scattered, for example whether it be jealousy or envy or hatred, it might have been alright had we had a clash of crude emotions such as those. But there was absolutely no emotion that could provide that sort of closure. I've known countless women who have been desperately starved and happily slept with any man, yet I never sensed that same bleakness in her. Nor did she have the air of caprice or play. Rather, she had a force that suggested she was addressing a challenge to something, like she was trying to break through something.

"Come on Icchan!"

She was caressing her hands around Kōji's brother's stomach, and once more called

over to me. There was a glint in her long, narrow eyes. With her voice a little husky and agitated movements, I thought to myself, "She's just like a shamaness" (*miko*), and as I did so, I felt a sensation as though my arms and legs were painlessly tearing loose from the trunk of my body.

After thinking long and hard, I stood up. It was getting too much to stay seated. When everything is strewn about in chaos, then there needs to be some kind of order even within the chaos. With that thought, I went to leave the room.

"Don't go, Icchan."

The moment I opened the door, I heard Kōji's voice behind me. As I turned around, Kōji flipped his body over to face her as she stroked his brother's hair.

"Select as-you-like please."

Unintentionally I turned to look at her. Awkwardly, Kōji's brother took away her hand, whereupon she took a drag from a cigarette and began fiddling with the edge of the blanket.

"Select As You Like Please."

Kōji repeated the same words with more emphasis than before, pausing between each one.

My temper rose. What are you doing, teasing her like that? Do you need closure that desperately? I shouted, putting my own feelings aside and feeling a strong urge to hit Kōji. Even so, I also understood far too well what Kōji was feeling. He really thought a lot of her. But at that moment, I thought it was nothing but an insult to her to carry on like that. In a flash, she twisted her face and cast a firm glance back at Kōji, before pouncing onto his body in defiance. Even with her gagging his mouth, Kōji repeated those words again and again. I went outside. I can remember the way that window of the primary school across the road glimmered in the moonlight. Still standing, I masturbated on the spot and for the first time in a long while, I shed tears.

A few days later, she brought a small number of bags and came to live with me. In order that we could spend our nights together, she quit the bar and found a part-time job at a nearby bookshop. She claimed not to like cooking so that task was made mine, although she would tell me it was delicious and ate well. However, there were many mealtimes when I couldn't believe that she knew what the food tasted like, certainly not to the extent that she asserted it was good. Those were times when she strained to cram the food into her mouth as though she were under threat, coughing as she gobbled it down. Because she tended to begin talking the moment a thought popped into her head, the dining table would end up an amazing sight with the things that scattered from her mouth.

"Stop eating so sloppily!"

One day I snapped, and shouted at her.

"Please just eat slowly. Slowly."

I rephrased myself to try to appease her but she collapsed into floods of tears. Her mouth kept chewing relentlessly while she broke down in tears, making me feel as though I was watching a child and I took her in my arms. From that day on, she never ate in the same way again. Some days later we were lying in the futon and she cupped my face in her hands and said,

"Thanks to you, Icchan, I've learned an important lesson."

When I asked what she had learned, she replied,

"When I don't feel like laughing, it's okay for me not to laugh. When I don't feel like talking, it's okay if I don't strain myself to talk… It doesn't bother anyone."

With the futon pulled over to hide her face, I felt intensely in love with her and without thinking, hugged her tightly. It was that night when I learned that she was a

Korean. I simply brushed off the fact and talked about my colleagues from the tuna ship and a girl I'd fallen for when I was on holiday in Korea. That's when she said,

"Icchan, I'll give you my virginity."

And so, at her insistence, that night we did a certain… a certain act at which she had previously played with Kōji.

It was soon after the start of the new year. Her left jaw began to spasm. According to Kōji's brother, she had a tick that was a specific symptom of hysteria, but she didn't show signs of anything being odd until after that. I came home from the late shift at around eleven at night but she was nowhere to be seen. I wondered if she had popped out somewhere but then I saw her, curled up beside the washing machine on the veranda, completely naked. It was in the late hours on a bitterly cold mid-winter night so I hurriedly opened the sash and put my arms around her to help her up. She appeared to be frozen in that huddled pose, just like a block of ice. I was completely at a loss, but in the end I lay her down in the futon, swaddled her head and shoulders in a blanket, and rubbed her cheeks as hard as I could. Once she was able to get up I asked her why on earth she had done such a thing, but no matter how I asked she wouldn't give an answer.

She had a habit of going to bed with her socks on. I'd tell her that's weird, stop it, but before I knew it, she would inevitably be wearing her socks.

"It's so I can die at any time. Isn't it true that if you're wearing straw sandals, you can pass into that world?"

She laughed as she spoke. Mind you, she also said that she had the sense that there was a frog stuck to the underside of her foot. I can die any time… The words she said then hinted at what she was going to do afterwards.

One day I arrived home just as she was sleeping. Her pallor was so pale that I tried asking her whether she had a cold but she said that she was merely tired. With the power that alcohol bestows upon someone, I pulled her close. Suddenly she screamed out in pain. Shocked, I suppressed my surprise, rolled up the futon and stripped off her nightwear. Her calves and thighs were covered with bruises, and the gauze and bandages on her wrists and chest were soaked in blood.

"Who did this to you? Where the hell were you hurt?"

Jumping to conclusions, I grilled her. She kept her mouth clammed shut. I did it myself. That's all she let slip and for one thing, I was shocked, but that tick I told you about had worsened so I never pursued the wheres and wherefores.

There were many recurrences of that sort of thing. We hadn't been living together for a year when I started to grow tired of the arrangement. Then on one particular night I decided to separate, although she had left before I tried to tell her as much.

That evening, she was in the bath. I got out first and was watching television while drinking a beer. After a short while I thought I'd rinse her back for her and peered into the bathroom, whereupon she was strewn limply on the tiles, both arms propped on the edge of the bathtub. I could only think that she was dizzy with the heat and helped her up, but then she turned her bloodshot eyes to face me and as though out of sudden relief she called out,

"Icchan, Icchan."

The tears were streaming down. To be honest, I thought, not again. I put her to bed and cooled her head, but as I did I felt annoyed.

"There was an earthquake just before, wasn't there Icchan?"

"It did shake a little, now you mention it."

Not knowing what to say that's how I replied, then she started to speak again.

"Icchan, if another massive earthquake like the Great Kanto Earthquake strikes

again, I suppose more Koreans will be slaughtered. Perhaps they'd be made to say 'one yen and fifty sen', 'ten yen and fifty sen', and be stabbed with bamboo spears. But I don't think that would happen next time. Things have changed in the world since then. Most of them can now pronounce words almost the same as the Japanese. Hey, Icchan, even if I was to be killed, would you say I was your lover and hug me tightly, and say that you would be together with, with me? No, next time we will definitely not be slaughtered. But in that case we'd be in a bind. You'd have to kill me. I'd make a run for it, and some crazy Japanese would chase after me brandishing a bamboo spear or a Japanese sword. I'd be unable to outrun them, and *thuck*, they'd stab me in the back, and stab my chest and I'd thrash about covered in blood. Icchan, it hurts you know, really… The other day, Icchan, you gripped hold of a sharpened kitchen knife. It made my body overcome with a tingling excitement, it made me feel just as when we are having sex. I came to realise why I have never liked cooking. I'm frightened by it, and I couldn't bear that tingling sensation. That's why I tried to cut my wrists and chest with the kitchen knife. It hurt. And the blood, it really spewed out. I wanted to see what would happen if I plunged the blade in, but I grew scared when I imagined that even more blood would gush forth… This time, I tried hitting my legs with a hammer. That hurt too. You know, Icchan, I could be massacred, but then, what would happen if they didn't kill me, would I be Japanese? It really is so painful, you know, with all that blood pouring out."

She shrunk her body out of terror and suddenly clenched her fists tightly, all the while repeating this wild rambling. After a short while she left the room. She had given no warning but I knew intuitively when I saw the note she had left behind.

"Icchan, I had a go at making an escabeche. I doubt it's as good as yours, Icchan, but please try some."

That was what was written.

5

Violent storms rattled the windows. Every time the noise heightened, the room closed in as though it might crush her from all directions. Sometimes only the floor moved; at others, both sides of the wall crept inwards. She thought that she heard a dull, metallic sound of something flying in through the window with the outside wind, when the ceiling and floor simultaneously closed in, her body almost becoming squashed flat. With no signs of relenting the lashing storms repeated their illusion of infinite torture, and she almost lost consciousness many times.

So as to cancel out the fear of this torture, she concentrated on her auditory senses and held her breath. Her intention was to count how many times the rain would strike against the window pane while she was holding her breath. Mixed with the rain that hurled in sideways she could sense countless tiny raindrops scatter before reaching the window. More than the number of raindrops, she began to imagine the expression and sensation of each one.

Suddenly, mingled within the sounds of the rain she heard a boorish, indistinct noise. Gradually it began to beat unreservedly against the glass. Restored to reality in a shot, she drew a gasp as her body froze. Raising the bottom of her eyes, she stared in the direction of the window. Both the door and the window of the apartment were locked - she had checked them over again, so she told her trembling self. The window glass continued to rattle. The voice to cry out for help would not come. Her opposition knew this about her and continued to strike against the glass impassively with a self-assured strength. Giving up, she raised herself up and drew the curtains. But outside of the window there was not a soul to be seen. Thinking anew that she must have been

entranced by some curious hallucination she let out a relaxed sigh and opened the window. At once, the wind and rain streamed together into the room.

It happened as she rested her hand on the rim to close the window. Somebody's hand stretched out from the side and seized hold of the rim. No sooner did she notice that a man was stood looking up at her face. The man flung down the raincoat he had been wearing into the middle of the room and with a lightness of movement had leapt in. She had expected it to be Toshiyuki. She would never have dreamed that Toshihiko would be rapping against her window. The power slipped away from her entire body and with her back against the wall she slithered her way down to sit on the tatami floor. Once the window was closed and the sound of the rains subsided, she fell unconscious as though in their pursuit. More roughly than Toshiyuki would, Toshihiko pushed her legs apart.

Toshihiko grabbed his raincoat and disappeared through the window. His expression fixed in contempt, she had not been able to catch the words that Toshihiko had spat at her. But she already knew what he would have said.

She crawled along the tatami, trying to get as far from the futon as possible. Shrinking into the corner of the room she clutched both of her knees. She tensed her shoulders to fight down her sobs. But from one to the next, the tears overflowed, gushing down her cheeks. She caught the tears in her mouth and crushed them with her teeth. The tears intensified her agony as they ran down the back of her throat. As she bit painfully through every tear, she taught herself to know herself, and forced herself to accept everything that she had seen and everything that her body had happen to it.

The realisation that she was pregnant came not much later. Her mother was convinced that the father was an employee named Kōshi. Kōshi was a young man the same age as Toshihiko who had been working for her stepfather since around one year earlier. Even though she surely had taken a liking to him, he was not the type that she could easily express those feelings verbally or transfer them into actions. Even so, there were two occasions in a row in which her mother could not help but decide it so.

On a night one month earlier on her way home from school, she had bumped into Kōshi quite by chance on the station platform. While laughing at the coincidence of boarding the same train, the two of them walked to her home together. After calling into a coffee shop and chatting about everything under the sun, it was 11 o' clock by the time they arrived home. As she went to slide open the door, she noticed that the indoor light was on but the door was locked from the inside. Kōshi lived in the apartment to the back, and just as he started to go to his place he was called back by her and span into the back door. The back door, too, was shut. As she and Kōshi were tapping on the sliding door to the entrance, from the other side of the frosted glass the living room door slid open and her mother appeared to unlock the latch. I wonder who locked it, her mother said with a dubious smile. As she was about to take off her shoes, Toshiyuki's face appeared through the rails midway up the stairs.

"You two lovebirds are back home late. Did you get sidetracked by something on the way?"

A depressed look on his face, Kōshi cast a glare back at Toshiyuki and without saying a word he left the apartment. No sooner had a few days passed by when the same thing happened again.

"Try just talking to your old mum here, I promise I won't tell you off."

Her mother gripped her arm tightly and kept talking.

"In this world the only one you share a bloodline with is me... I suppose it's Kōshi's?"

That her mother's tone of voice was free of thorns was because if Kōshi was the father of her child, she would force them to marry almost immediately. Knowing this

made her all the more silent. With the hand that she had clenched around her arm, her mother began to rub her knees. Chubby at the joints, her mother's fingers moved across her black stockings. A violet-coloured ring and a diamond ring cut into her mother's middle and fourth fingers, and flashed a hazy light into her eyes.

Her mother definitely seemed to be happy now. So she thought as she gazed at her mother's hand. At one time, her stepfather's drunken rage at being refused alcohol was going back to how it had been, but as far as her mother was concerned, perhaps that was not such a terrible hardship. Her mother was a Korean, on top of which she had a child from her former marriage, but she overcame this burden in her own way. Always dressed in Japanese garb, nobody would discern that her mother was a Korean. In the end, her stepfather seemed to become entirely reliant upon her hard-working, long-enduring mother. There was no doubt that right now in her heart, her mother was gazing back on her father who had returned to his home on Saishūtō.

"I've washed my hands of Korean people. I would never be with another again."

Those were her mother's words as she had drew her small daughter close on the night after she first introduced her to her stepfather. Pretending to be asleep, she had listened intently to her mother's mutterings.

From the recesses of her mind she recalled the last day she had ever seen her father. The lights were out in the houses round about and all was still, so it must have been the middle of the night. She had been crying under the futon as she listened to the rage that her mother and father cast against each other, until she jumped up with a shudder. Her mother's voice could not be heard. As she leapt to her feet harbouring an ominous premonition, only the huddled figure of her father in the kitchen.

Striding across the spaces between scattered fragments of china and shards of glass, she went outside. Breathlessly she scaled the steep gradient to the top of the sloping road, whereupon she could see her mother's small figure down below. With her bedclothes billowing, her mother's wailing voice, *aigo*, *aigo*, tore through the night's wavelengths and resounded in her ears. In a flash her mother vanished around the corner. Sitting curled into a ball, she gazed vacantly towards the corner where her mother disappeared.

When she awoke, she found herself lying cuddled into her father's lap. She looked across at the bed but her mother was not there. Her father's chest was so warm that she forgot the sense of fear with which she had always regarded him and drifted back to sleep. Her father placed his broad, rugged palms to cover her eyes.

Her mother's hand, its rings gleaming, continued to rub her knee. She gazed back upon her mother's face. Her mother had managed to find her luck. In that case, so be it.

"You're a knave, aren't you? What's that look for? I'll tell your father all about this, I'll have to get Kōshi to call him and make arrangements."

Her mother rose to her feet; she looked up at her mother.

Her mother, no matter how sad she felt or how tough things got, would likely never again cry out *aigo, aigo*. That hard, jagged chin, the big, red nose flushed with alcohol, the spittled breath of a drunkard, penniless from drinking binges, no saving graces – that was her father. She closed her eyes and dropped her head. Her father's broad, rugged hands were unbearably yearning as they clenched her chest. She spoke in a murmur.

"It's brother Toshiyuki's."

After a few minutes had passed, upon hearing her mother and stepfather's voices bickering from the living room she came back to. Toshiyuki's shrieking voice crashed to a halt and was swallowed up. She felt the tatami on which she was sitting suddenly begin to fall in, and her body plummet down. In no time Toshihiko was standing there. Toshihiko crouched down before her and vigorously shook her shoulders.

"Oi, don't you dare say anything at all about me, you got that? I mean nothing."

She gagged at Toshihiko's bodily stench and turned her face away. That rainy night, too, she had turned her face away and stared at the raincoat that had been flung to land in front of her. Reflecting drops of rain into the darkness, the raincoat seemed to be huddling to conceal its breath like a small animal.

Without giving so much as a nod, was she remaining silent out of nervousness, Toshihiko began to rub his hands together.

"Hey, I'm begging you. This is how it goes."

Unable to bear the stench of his body finally, she nodded; seeing this, Toshihiko left the room.

She stood up and quietly walked to along the shadow of the living room's sliding doors.

"You bastard, do you know no shame, huh? Look what you've done to this family."

Toshiyuki's glum groaning could be heard overlain with Toshihiko's voice. Toshiyuki began to cry.

"It's not mine! It's Kōshi, I saw her doing it with Kōshi. It's not mine!"

Toshiyuki sniffed to stop his nose from running as he shouted through convulsive sobs.

"What the hell? Why have you got that Korean's back? Dad, you dragged in this mother and daughter as though you were waiting for mum to die… it stinks! I'm leaving this stinking house."

Toshihiko, her stepfather, and her mother remained silent. She tentatively returned to her room. She spread out her futon and dove beneath the cool covers. She thought about Keiko who was currently at school. If she were ever to not come back to this home, Keiko would be forced to shoulder the role assigned to her. Although the adaptation might be different, there was no doubting that the same argument as today would have happened there sooner or later.

Toshiyuki's voice could be heard howling in the distance. She closed her eyes. She wanted to empty her head and fall asleep as quickly as possible.

6

Inside the telephone box, Keiko viewed the mirror that was stuck above the yellow telephone. Perhaps because she had not been sleeping, her eyes were bleary, and her cheeks were bloated and rough. With her finger Keiko began to trace over what felt like a scab. She heard someone tap against the telephone box door. Brought startled back to herself, Keiko grasped her handbag and stepped outside. Picked up by a sudden gust, the sheet of notepad paper flew off in the wind. Keiko's gaze chased the paper as it danced above the street and disappeared between two cars that crossed past each other. Only a moment ago, she had dialled the number written next to the name, Kayo, and decided the time and place to meet. As for the one remaining number, since yesterday she had tried to make the call countless times, but nobody ever answered. As arranged, Keiko headed for U Station.

The story she had heard from Ichirō Morimoto the night before had been too raw for Keiko to take. But now that she looked back from the distance of a day, her sister remained as hazy as ever. Morimoto narrated exactly the version of her sister that Morimoto had seen, in which Keiko had pursued a distilled image of her sister. But relentlessly the final vision of her sister would pass across her eyelids and upset Keiko's reluctant imagination. There was no questioning that Morimoto held more memories of her sister than he was able to say. And nobody but her sister had the ability to understand Morimoto's love for her.

Having alighted at U Station, Keiko walked towards the ticket gates. She recognised that the wide river that she had seen from the carriage window of which over half was grassland, was Arakawa, and Keiko came to feel that she was undertaking a short trip. Below the platform at U Station, a cityscape that looked like an arrangement of colourless pigments unfolded blandly.

Kayo was already waiting, hovering at the ticket gate. She called for Keiko, who nodded no more than a greeting in return before accompanying Kayo as they crossed the vast pedestrian crossing before the station. Kayo entered the coffee shop and set herself down in a booth in the corner. Perhaps on account of her thick eyelids and drooping eyes, Kayo had an air of gloom about her.

"It sounds awful. I don't really know what I should say…"

Removed of her coat, Kayo's body seemed to swell in three stages, at the breasts, the stomach, and the hips. Compared with the thickness of her trunk Kayo's limbs appeared as thin as bones; her tobacco-stained teeth and sagging cheeks gave the impression of someone disheartened at life.

Keiko ran through the events in order since she discovered her sister's death.

"Keiko-san, how old did you say you are?"

"Twenty."

"Right, so there were three years between you?"

"Yes."

"… So you'll be having your coming of age ceremony?"

Kayo caught her tongue as though she had just remembered something. Keiko began to feel affection towards Kayo's manner of pronouncing each syllable with emphasis. Contrary to her initial impression, the Kayo that she witnessed up close was surprisingly gentile; the whites of her eyes were unclouded.

"She did tell me a little bit about you, Keiko."

It was the same when she had met Morimoto, but when Keiko heard that her sister had spoken about her she had shuddered. The reason was that the guilt at never having been affectionately close to her sister now turned to regret and bubbled up inside.

"I'm very grateful that you told me."

Kayo, like Morimoto, said this many times. Apparently ashamed of her bulging stomach, Kayo rearranged herself to sit at a sideways angle, propping her slender elbow on the back of the chair to support her inclined head with her hand. The rays that beamed through the window ravaged havoc upon the rough skin of Kayo's cheeks.

Where do I, I mean, I have no clue as to where I should begin. In the half-year since she disappeared, I have on numerous occasions had cause to recall that girl. I did think a girl like that, she must be doing well, but I'd heard a few rumours that made me feel uneasy.

The girl worked in a bar that I often used to frequent on my way home. We grew close because having spent so many years alone I held dear the fact that age-wise she could have been my daughter. Since she lived so close to my apartment, we would head home together after the bar closed and sometimes she would stay over at my place.

She was unbelievably grown-up and wise. Yet despite that, she had a childish quality about her. She was terrified of insects; when it rained, she would caw with laughter as she ran about outside, yet she would immediately clam up at any delicate matter. She was attractive, good-natured, and so I once asked her, why don't you look for a daytime job? Her answer was plain.

"Because I like to drink."

The truth was, she really did drink a lot. Another reason why the bar really valued her

was the furious quantities of drink she got through. But one day, having seen her come back to my place looking distressed any number of times, I let out all these thoughts that I'd been bottling up inside.

"What is a young girl like you doing drinking as much as that? It's bad for your body, and its degrading."

I couldn't stand to watch it any more. She spoke in fits and starts as with a pained expression she sputtered out her breath.

"When I drink, I feel as though I might be able to get along with God---Usually out of spite I am my own goddess, but when I drink myself flat out to console myself, it's as though it raises God's spirits."

In no time she was asleep.

The next day I tried asking her.

"Do you believe in God?"

"Whether I believe or not, God is there, definitely somewhere."

As she spoke she let out a long sigh. Looking at that girl then, I made a decision. I thought I would take her along to one of the get-togethers of my religious group. I knew that the religion had received a little criticism from society and some of my work colleagues would make fun of me or keep their distance, but ignoring her protests I forcibly dragged her along to the meeting. For a short while after that, that girl stopped speaking to me. After becoming so close, naturally I felt lonely at being treated in that way, and so one Sunday I went to her room to apologise.

"I'm not bothered about that."

That's what she said, making no bones about it. Also that she held no preconceptions. With nothing to say, I stayed quiet.

"Kayo-san, what on earth does conversion mean?"

That's what she asked me. Given that I'd taken her along to the meeting, I leapt to the conclusion that she had perhaps started to take an interest in religious affairs.

"It's a way of exorcising the bad spirits and bad teachings that cling to people, and leading those people to good, correct teachings. When bad spirits cling to people, misfortune and accidents and the like befall them. So you exorcise them through your faith. You conquer them. Then, that in turn will lead to helping others."

I started to explain slowly to her so as to persuade her. But suddenly I came to pause.

Keiko-san, do you know that particular type of look in her eyes, or should I say rather a gaze, that she had from time to time? That gaze that she would suddenly throw on a given beat? How can I phrase it? At a glance, her eyes appear to be looking with cynical disdain, but it's something deeper, as though in her eyes is a lump of despair that has seeped like a custom into her body. That gaze only lasts an instant then expression immediately returns to normal, but conversely that gentle expression that follows shoots through a person's heart. The light of scorn that one would expect to be directed and released towards the exterior were swiftly refracted and aimed towards her own interior, that's how I read that momentary gaze. So when I had to catch my breath on that occasion, it was due to seeing that gaze of hers. But no sooner did I notice it than her face seemed as kindly as always.

I deliberately never asked about either her past or her family. It seemed that such topics were the ones she liked least. But that's because it was after almost another year had passed before I came to understand a little about what you might call her circumstances, or what lay at her core.

That day I returned home late having done some overtime, when I noticed that the light was on in her apartment. She should have already been at the bar by that time so it struck me as strange, and when I went to her apartment I found her quivering inside her

futon, her face flushed red. She had caught a cold. She had a terrible fever. I immediately cooled her brow, made her swallow some medicine, and contacted the bar. Late in the night her temperature finally came down which made me relieved, but when I awoke in the morning the fever had returned and she was tossing and turning as though in pain.

"Today, how about making a visit to the doctor? You can't go on like this…"

I said this to her, but made fierce by her woozy state she retorted angrily,

"Stop sticking your nose in, would you? Just go home."

Even so, I suppose because she had no strength in her, her voice immediately left her and eventually she began to sob. I was clueless as to what to do and could only look on in confusion, but in any case I tried everything to calm her down, still she wouldn't stop crying. In the end I took the day off from work, and although that girl said that she was fine and that I should go home, I was concerned so tended to her for the full day. Whether she was all cried out, she slept soundly until the evening. Finally her fever began to subside and she managed to drink some milk. That evening, she talked to me about all kinds of things. For the first time to me she seemed relieved.

That girl told me that she had fallen pregnant during high school, although I didn't hear as far as the father. Since then, she seemed to have developed a fear of doctors. That was when I learned for the first time that she was Korean, but according to her, if a Korean patient presented themselves the Japanese doctors had conspired to kill them in a way that could be disguised. Be it internal medicine or the surgical department, but especially in obstetrics and gynaecology, they would remove the womb and ovaries so that Korean women could not reproduce, or so she said.

"What kind of idiotic things do you think up? You've got a victim complex, I'm not joking."

As I was listening, without thinking I lost my temper with her. But she was resolute.

"Now let me tell you something. You can't say things like you're going to die or you're going to be killed lightly. What if just at that time, God was watching for His chance and you drew closer to death? You have to get a stronger grip, or else I'll tell you something that'll make you think."

When I said that, she gave a little chuckle. That made me also feel a little relieved, but when I heard the next part of the story, I felt the colour drain from my face in a flash.

"Kayo-san, I decided. I was twenty at the time. I went to the hospital and ordered them to take away my womb and ovaries. I intended for the operation to be my own kind of Coming of Age ceremony but no matter which ob-gyn clinic I went to I was refused. If it's contraception you're after there are other methods, they would say, and would not communicate with me. I went to any number of ob-gyn clinics but it was no use. One time I could no longer bear being consumed by this thought, so I thought I might be better off dying and considered the different methods of suicide. But in saying that I would die, I noticed an unascertainable, unfeasibly large existence. It was a completely sudden flash. I swallowed my breath. That large presence even knew inside and out the writhing of every overwhelming agony I had experienced up to that point. Thereupon those things that had continuously festered all the while within me vanished in an instant. Inside the water--- Inside the water where there is neither wind, nor sound nor colour, nothing, reminiscent of a complete void, and I felt as though I was immersed. All manner of things that I, too, had girdled about myself, just---Now I see, that's how it is, I felt as though I was able to nod quietly in return, as though I could stare back holding my eyes at the same level, without shrinking back or cowing down, no, with room to spare I even felt able to smile."

I looked again and again at the misty gleam in her feverish eyes. There were not crying. They emitted the sense of a repressed, bottomless desire. Impaled, you might say, and when I looked at those strangely gleaming eyes, I was at a loss for words.

Not half a year had passed after that when that girl suddenly disappeared. I don't know when she hauled out her things but her room was like an empty husk. The bar owner was livid letting out this and that rant, and I firmly decided not to believe a word of it, but then other patrons at the bar said similar things, and so that girl… it seemed that she had been a prostitute all along. People are given to exaggerate those kinds of rumours, but at the time several people came forward who had seen her stand in the street and solicit men. I read the scriptures for her every day. I came to give up hope of ever seeing her again, and finally we come to the present day.

7

The intention had only been to stretch out across the bed, but in no time she appeared to have fallen asleep. Feeling a chill from her neck to her chest she awoke with her own sneeze, but for the considerable time it took her to realise that the cause lay in the wind that was blowing in from a gap in the window, she lay floating in a shallow sleep. She watched the curtain hooks flap in the wind before getting up and closing the window. The narrow sliver of sky that was blocked by next door's roof bled into the colour of dull copper. For a moment, she could not tell whether it was dusk or dawn and so looked at the clock. Not even one hour had passed since she had fallen asleep.

She drew a cigarette from the packet that lay on the kitchen table and pursed it between her lips. On the table were lined up today's spoils. Three tins, tomato juice, Coca Cola, and a small drum of boneless ham. She lit the cigarette and as she slowly exhaled the smoke, gathered up the paper parcel that lay beside the goods. She opened out the parcel and took out a small pair of shoes. The sports shoes, upon which were printed a floral design, looked even now like they might begin to walk across the palm of her hand.

This afternoon as she had wandered around the market, she had stopped her feet in front of the window as she passed by a children's clothing boutique. Overwhelmed by nostalgia, she inadvertently cried out. The little girl mannequin was wearing sports shoes adorned with flowers. The pattern was not of cosmos flowers, but they were identical to those sports shoes of her memory, from back when she was very small. Nowadays she had all but lost her habit of sleeping with her socks on, but she could still clearly recall the instability with which she had thrown her sports shoes into the road that time.

She placed the sports shoes on the floor and gazed at them while she began to drink whisky. Letting out a sigh she blinked repeatedly. She felt as though the sports shoes were gradually growing bigger. As she blinked to look closer, the sports shoes were lined up in the same place and the same size. Yet, even so, they definitely appeared to be getting gradually bigger. Her thoughts suddenly hit upon something, and she downed her whisky. The bitterness of the whisky scorching her throat recalled the fever that inhabited her body that day, and the lukewarmth of the muddied waters that tangled below her knees.

Had all of her life up to now not been signalled by the events of that day as a child, when she had mistakenly perceived water to be a frog?

Memories began to pass through her in rapid succession.

She was sat before the yellowed, cotton curtains. Between her and the curtain was the bed in which her mother was sleeping, and yet with every other memory the bed and her mother would disappear so that only she and the curtain remained in a stand-off. On the other side of the curtain a woman was making slurping noises while she ate her meal. So deeply asleep that it made her hesitate to wake her, her mother's shrunken body appeared and vanished with every other one. Her mother, who had begun to emit a putrid smell from her genitals, had already progressed to too late a stage when she was transported to hospital. The name of her disease was uterine cancer. As she gazed at the curtain, she stifled the increasing anguish within her chest. The smell in the sick room was

unbearably horrid. But, she must watch over her mother's final days, she told herself and clenched her teeth to endure the awful stench.

Her mother drew her breath. That time, again, the woman in the neighbouring bed slurped noisily as she ate her meal.

Memories hauled up further memories.

An amiable-looking female doctor persuaded her persistently to reconsider.

"In that case, I won't ask deeply about the situation. But you know, tough though it may be, there are many women who manage to raise a child properly. I can introduce you to a nice nursery school anytime. People don't know when they might meet someone wonderful so you can't just give up on yourself in a time of despair. What on earth do you intend to do when someday you find a nice man and decide that you want to have his child? Aren't I right? Because you're still young…"

The coaxing of this overly helpful doctor would not end.

"Life is important, the future is important."

The female doctor repeated these words at the breaks within her talking, and they tore up the tabs of her ears. She raised her head.

"Doctor, what on earth is life? People can create life, right? If that was the case, then surely it would be possible to breathe life into that pen stand, or that medicine box, and the ceramics on that shelf, or even that chair. It should be possible to give them life. Why is it not possible? They say it's possible to give life, so why can't they…"

"Aren't you a little neurotic?"

She looked at the female doctor, who held the rim of her glasses to peer at her as she spoke, and she stood up.

The whisky coiled in her throat and she began to cough. Even after drinking some water, the coughing fit would not cease. She doubled over her body and huddled onto the floor. She tried placing the sports shoes on the palm of her hand. The sports shoes definitely appeared to have grown in size. She rose to her feet, opened the door to the bathroom, and turned on the tap. The water sounded loudly as it splashed off the bottom of the bathtub. Looking in the mirror of the sink unit, her face was aglow from the flush of whisky and coughing.

The reddened faces of the men overlapped with her reflection as they passed through the mirror.

After taking the cash and slowly unfastening their trousers, all it took was for her to put their genitals into her mouth before the men would let out a moan and blush. As the tip of her tongue and saliva excited the men further, their genitals would thrust mercilessly into the back of her throat. While she calculated the men's excitement from their facial expressions, she would throw herself into stimulatory mode and lurch back in her own dizzying sense of pleasure.

In that instant, when her innards writhed as though set alight and her physical power burst out from every single follicle---that was the instant when she recalled the masochistic excitement of those times in which her former self would stand over the toilet bowl, three fingers clawing at the base of her tongue. The men would cry out and, forgetting the act of genital penetration, the deed would be done.

She did not permit sex either for herself or the other party. Having denied her sexual organs, the act of sex and the pleasure that could be obtained from it, was strongly forbidden to her. The only one with whom sex was permitted was Ichirō Morimoto.

One night after the act, she said to Morimoto.

"Icchan, please have a vasectomy."

"No way! Why would you suddenly bring up such a thing as a vasectomy? We're being careful so everything will be fine."

"That's not true. It's that…"

Her words choked. You're delusional, the greatest delusion into which all of mankind falls, the great universal delusion, illusion---.

"I mean, is there no way?"

"It makes me feel uneasy. There's no way."

Next, Morimoto jumped up as though he had just remembered something, and picked up the wine bottle from the table.

"Do you fancy trying something fun?"

Just as Morimoto had taught her, she extracted the cork from the bottle. Morimoto let out a wild cry and peered into her vagina. At that moment, a sudden rage rose within her and she grabbed the bottle from Morimoto's hand. She flung the bottle which made several dull thuds as it rolled across the floor. When she came back round, the arch of Morimoto's right foot was soaked with blood.

Her reflection in the mirror closed its eyes. She could not remember Morimoto's face. All sorts of faces of men whose names she did not even know appeared and disappeared, but she could not even ascertain the outline of Morimoto's face. She closed the bathroom door and sat down at the table. She drank some whisky. Whereupon the last face to appear, that of a young man, caused her to gasp and she rested her head face down on the table.

It happened only last night. On her way back to her apartment from the station, in the back alley that ran parallel to the railroad she had heard the sound of footsteps approaching her from behind. Wedged between the pallid trees around the shrine and the railroad, the back alley was almost pitch black unless a train passed by, its width only enough to allow two adults to walk side by side. With a fright her spine stiffened and she swallowed her breath.

Perhaps something would happen to her, or she might be killed. Her feet froze to the spot. The footsteps grew gradually louder. A train was on the approach. She dared herself to turn around. Amid the flow of light that scattered from the train's windows floated the face of that person.

There stood a boy with a rounded face and short, shaven hair. The boy's eyes where set dreadfully far apart from one another and the bridge of his nose lay flat. Only his nasal wings flared widely while his lower lip was thickly moist. The boy's eyes had an extreme squint that appeared to be looking at her although their focal point was unclear. The train passed by and all around fell quiet once again. And yet, to her eyes that had adjusted immediately to the darkness, the boy's demeanour was clearly visible.

"I am young Toshio. Did you hear me? Young Toshio."

The young man held out something that resembled a travel pass that was tied to the belt of his trousers with a chain.

"Shall we walk together?"

"Yes."

Standing under the streetlight before the shrine gate, she spoke to the boy.

"You said you were the young one."

"Yes, I am Young Toshio."

The same way as before, the boy held out something that resembled a travel pass. She looked at the identity card branded with a small photograph of a face. Something pierced her chest and the corners of her eyes burned. The boy turned the corner in front of the shrine.

"Young one, you take care on your way home."

She called towards the young boy's back.

"Lady, I am Young Toshio. Farewell…"

The boy turned around and raised his hand.

Assaulted by the boy's appearance, she stood vacantly, rooted motionlessly to that spot. Young Toshio. The words that the boy had repeated with a lisp sounded in some way to her like, young *toshiyori* (elderly), and they pounded relentlessly against her head.

That reeking human stench within her---.

In time with her releasing the hands that wrapped around her head, the glass toppled and whisky spilled out. Staring at the whisky as it dripped onto the floor, she suddenly began to laugh. She felt a splintering crack run through her body. The crack tore her throat and split open her head.

What might have been had she removed her sexual organs? Her laughter would not cease. Clutching her sides she coughed as her laughter flowed. …Young Toshio, who had dropped out of someone's womb.

While she continued to laugh, her face suddenly stiffened. She dropped her shoulders, whereupon she fixed her gaze blankly onto the pair of sports shoes.

"Human stench. Human…"

She began to undress. Then, fully naked, she opened the bathroom door. Water was trickling over the side of the bathtub.

"Get out, get out into the middle of the water."

From deep inside her head, that low growling voice flooded back. As though urged by that voice, she sank her body into the bathtub, then submerged her head.

Within her ears she could hear the sound of waves crashing against the rocky skin of Saishūtō. She dove in between the waves that roared and swelled. The shattering sound of the surface of the sea grew distant, and she unleashed her body into the middle of the water. Both hands and both feet began to claw for the sensation of the water. A mental peace that she had never tasted since her birth immersed its way through the depths of her body, and she flickered forever more in the middle of the water.

8

It was the day of the Coming of Age ceremony. In her room at home, an intricately-patterned kimono with the traditional swinging sleeves was awaiting Keiko's return. However, to Keiko now the long sleeves and fur shawl held no interest at all. The bag and sandals were also still as they had been left since she picked up from the department store.

Keiko sat herself down on a bench along the bank of the moat. Mild sunrays that made one think of the start of spring spilled down onto one side from the crisp, clear sky, while its pale blue hues spread high above. Now and again she would hear animated voices and turn her head, whereupon young women would pass by all decked out and with their hair done up.

For all the while that she had been sitting there a small bug had continued to ache inside Keiko's chest. She could not yet ascertain the true identity of the bug, but the more she thought of her sister, the more this tiny bug eluded her grasp, and the more it ached.

The child's sports shoes that she had found in her sister's apartment reflected in the surface of the moat. They were perfectly new sports shoes bearing a flowery design. Keiko recalled her sister suddenly turning up and leaving a present behind. Perhaps her sister had been intending to give those sports shoes to a child somewhere. Keiko stood up and began to walk along the footpath. Then she opened the door to a telephone box. She had called the sole remaining telephone number countless times before today so that in no time she had come to know it by heart.

Coincident with the dialling tone beginning to ring, another vision of her sister flashed across the back of Keiko's eyelids like a photograph. Her sister was sinking inside

the bathtub. Water was trickling over the side. The telephone was ringing right beside her with the call that Keiko had made that day from the station. The same sound that she was hearing now was echoing in time with the ringing that day.

The receiver at the other end of the line picked up. Before she knew it, Keiko had cut the line dead.