

Ethics of Emotion in Nineteenth-Century Japanese Literature:

Shunsui, Bakin, the Political Novel, Shôyô, Sôseki

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## ABSTRACT

Ethics of Emotion in Nineteenth-Century Japanese Literature: Shunsui, Bakin, the Political

Novel, Shôyô, Sôseki

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This dissertation investigates how textual negotiations of “human feeling” and its ethically disruptive potential fundamentally shaped the production of literature in Japan over the early modern-modern divide well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Human feeling” (Jap. *jô*, Chin. *qing*) was a loaded term in traditional Confucian discourses that subsumed amorous sentiment and sexual desire. It was seen as both a powerful force that could reinforce important societal bonds (such as the one between husband and wife) and as transgressive and ethically suspect. While traditional literary discourse, reaching back to the “Great Preface” of the Chinese *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*), defined poetry as a medium that could channel potentially unregulated emotions and desires, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward a strong awareness of “human feeling” started shaping the production of a broader spectrum of Japanese genres, such as *jôruri* puppet plays and, especially from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, narrative fiction. I argue that the necessity to represent and write about potentially transgressive feelings and desires lies at the heart of major genres in 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan. At the same time this engendered the often conscious impulse to regulate these feelings ethically, for instance, through the specific dynamics of gender and plot. I define negotiations of “human feeling” as the simultaneous impulse in writing not only to represent but also to ethically and socially regulate and control feelings and desires. Precisely because the representation and negotiation of “human feeling” define the very essence of Japanese poetic writing and, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, increasingly that of narrative writing as well, I

argue that negotiations of “human feeling” are central to the broader emergence and formation of modern literature in Japan.

My first chapter examines selected *ninjôbon* (“books of human feeling”) by Tamenaga Shunsui (1790-1843) and Kyokutei Bakin’s (1767-1848) long narrative *yomihon* (“books for reading”) cycle *Nansô Satomi Hakkenden* (*Eight Dog Chronicle of the Nansô Satomi Clan*, 1814-42). I examine how both *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* writings explore the deep opposition as well as the implicit affinity between “human feeling” and the sphere of Confucian ethics. My second chapter investigates a variety of novels (*shôsetsu*) written in the “long” decade of the 1880s: the translated novel *Karyû shunwa* (*Spring Tale of Flowers and Willows*, 1878-79), political fiction, and Tsubouchi Shôyô’s (1859-1935) rewriting and reform of political fiction at the end of the decade. I for instance examine how these novels – such as Suehiro Tetchô’s (1849-96) *Setchûbai* (*Plum Blossoms in the Snow*, 1886) or Shôyô’s *Imo to se kagami* (*Mirror of Marriage*, 1885-86) – allegorically negotiate both transgressive sexual desire and chaste spiritual love within a teleological plot structure of democratic reform and heroic activity. My third chapter turns to Meiji-period fiction after 1890, in particular to texts that thematize the new medium of art as well as the figure of the artist or the literary writer. I argue that these texts – Kôda Rohan’s (1867-1947) *Fûryûbutsu* (*The Buddha of Romance*, 1889), Mori Ôgai’s (1862-1922) German trilogy (1889-90), or Tayama Katai’s (1871-1930) *Futon* (*The Quilt*, 1907) – continue the ethical negotiation between transgressive sexual desire and spiritual feelings within an implicitly allegorical plot structure that points back to 1880s political fiction. My fourth chapter largely focuses on the diversity of Natsume Sôseki’s (1867-1916) early literary oeuvre, including various genres of poetry, so-called sketch writing (*shaseibun*), and novels. I argue that Sôseki’s literary experimentation, for instance in *Kusamakura* (*The Grass Pillow*, 1906), with various non-novelistic genres stems from the desire to devise an alternative regime of literature that

mediates the representation of “human feeling” in a more detached manner than that of the novel. At the same time, Sôseki’s novel writing – as I demonstrate through my reading of *Sorekara* (*And Then*, 1909) – brings back a non-detached focus on “human feeling” that profoundly echoes the earlier attempt in 19<sup>th</sup> century fiction to reconcile transgressive feelings with the telos of a heroic and ethically driven plot.

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One:	
Ethicality and Transgressive Love: The Ambiguity of “Human Feeling” in Tamenaga Shunsui’s <i>Ninjôbon</i> and Kyokutei Bakin’s <i>Nansô Satomi hakkenden</i> .....	25
Chapter Two:	
Renegotiating “Human Feeling” and Heroism in the Novel of the Long Decade of the 1880s: Marriage, Political Allegory, and Sexual Desire.....	83
Chapter Three:	
Spirituality and Sexual Desire in the Meiji Novel after 1890: Female “Visions,” Art, Nature, and Political Allegory.....	147
Chapter Four:	
Cold Detachment and Warm Ardor: Genre Experimentation, Nature, and Natsume Sôseki’s Literary Writings and Theory in the 1900s.....	206
Epilogue.....	267
Bibliography.....	277

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## Introduction

In *Shōsetsu shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*, 1885-86), his seminal treatise on the novel, the literary critic, translator and novelist Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935) defines the fundamental objective of the genre as follows: “The main focus of the novel is on human feeling (*ninjō*). The depiction of social manners (*setai*) comes next in importance.”<sup>1</sup> This famous and often-cited sentence has been read as the programmatic formulation of a new and inherently modern understanding of the novel, focusing on human emotions, interiority and psychology as well as on the mimetic and realist representation of “social customs.” At the same time, it is striking that the pair of terms that Shōyō chooses to define the focus of the novel – “human feeling” (*ninjō*) and “social customs” (*setai*) – also refers back to premodern discourses on literary and poetic writing. Andō Tameakira’s (1659-1716) and Motoori Norinaga’s (1730-1801) treatises on the *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*) both use, albeit with differing objectives, the terms “human feeling” and “social customs” to specify the content of the early 11<sup>th</sup> century literary classic, and it is significant that Shōyō in *Shōsetsu shinzui* quotes at length from Norinaga’s work in his own discussion of the novel.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, since the “Great Preface” (“Daxu,” written by the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD) to the Chinese *Classic of Poetry* (*Shijing*), Confucian discourses both in China and Japan repeatedly identified “human feeling” as the driving force behind the composition of poetry. Poetry, as a medium of expression of “human feeling,” was seen as capable of channeling the potentially unregulated emotions of its composers or listeners. Poetry could also aid a ruler in his government of the realm by providing him with the knowledge of his subjects’ feelings as well as with the knowledge of their “social customs.” In premodern discourses, the emphasis on the

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<sup>1</sup> Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Shōsetsu shinzui* 68.

<sup>2</sup> Andō Tameakira’s treatise is titled *Shika shichiron* (*Seven Essays on Murasaki Shikibu*, 1703). Motoori Norinaga’s treatises on the *Tale of Genji* are titled *Shibun yōryō* (*Essentials of the Tale of Genji*, 1763) and *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi* (*The Tale of Genji, A Little Bejeweled Comb*, 1796).

emotionality of poetic or literary writing thus essentially underscores the social and political function of literature in regulating potentially transgressive emotions and in building human communities.<sup>3</sup> Shôyô's emphasis, in *Shôsetsu shinzui*, on "human feeling" and "social customs" in the novel also coincides with an emphasis on the novel's social "benefits," i.e. its ability to elevate and civilize its reader's feelings and to rid them from potentially devastating sentiments and desires.<sup>4</sup>

This project has two major goals. First, it postulates and describes a discursive continuity between premodern discourses on literary writing and poetry and Meiji-period discussions of the novel and literature more broadly. I argue that the common concern of these ongoing discussions – one major common denominator – resides in the association of poetry and later the novel with "human feeling" as their intrinsic object of representation. Second and most importantly, this project aims at investigating the complex textual dynamics around "human feeling" in Japanese literary writings, particularly of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. My analysis not only pays attention to the fact that literary texts can discursively engage in theoretical reflections on "human feeling" and its (ethical) control. I also argue that, more fundamentally, ethical negotiations of "human feeling" profoundly underlie and shape Japanese literary texts until the end of the Meiji period. The writings that this dissertation investigates negotiate "human feeling" because, on the one hand, they often represent "human feeling" as a potentially dangerous and socially disruptive force (for instance as excessive amorous sentiment or sexual desire) but they also, on the other hand, attempt to exercise the ethical or social control of this force. The ability of literary writings to

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<sup>3</sup> For this assumption I follow Peter Flueckiger's recent argument (in Flueckiger 2011). See also my acknowledgement of Flueckiger's research in subsequent footnotes.

<sup>4</sup> Shôyô argues that, besides its "direct benefit" (*chokusetsu no rieki*), which is to give aesthetic pleasure to its readers, the novel also has several "indirect benefits" (*kansetsu no hieki*). These include the novel's ability to elevate the readers' mind by diverting it from uncivilized sexual desire (thus fulfilling a function similar to "reason") and to help the reader engage in self-reflection (*hansei*) about good behavior to emulate and bad behavior to shun. For Shôyô, it is precisely the novel's representation of feelings and social customs that propels the process of ethical self-reflection within the reader. See *Shôsetsu shinzui* 82-97.

demonstrate the ethical integration of potentially transgressive feelings and desires points to the discursively stated political function of literary texts. At the same time, the writings that I investigate, especially from the mid-Meiji period onward, also often dramatize the impossibility of reconciling “human feeling” with ethical impulses, while still – and this is most significant for my argument – continuing the complex negotiation between these two poles. This project explores these textual negotiations involving, among other aspects, the intricate dynamics of gender and narrative plot.

While discursive reflections on poetry as a medium of “human feeling” in East Asia date back as far as the *Shijing*’s “Great Preface,” this dissertation primarily investigates discourses and textual negotiations surrounding “human feeling” from the early 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. from the late Edo-period (1600-1868) to the end of the Meiji-period (1868-1912). This historical focus is related to the fact that the notion of “human feeling,” which until the 18<sup>th</sup> century had been largely confined to discourses on poetry, becomes increasingly appropriated by debates on vernacular narrative writing around the turn to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This discursive development also coincides with the emergence, in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, of new genres – such as the *ninjôbon* (“books of human feeling”) or the lengthy *yomihon* (“books for reading”) – in which ethical negotiations of “human feeling” reach an unprecedented degree of complexity and sophistication. I argue that the Meiji-period novel (*shôsetsu*), which often exhibits a strong intertextual awareness of both *ninjôbon* and *yomihon*, extends these negotiations in variegated ways. Textual negotiations of “human feeling,” however, do not remain confined to narrative writing or to the novel but, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, extend to non-narrative and poetic genres as well. The end of the Meiji period – as I show in particular with regard to Natsume Sôseki’s (1867-1916) literary work – witnesses complex textual investigations into the emotional mediality of poetic and narrative genres.

## A Discursive Pre-History: Defining “Human Feeling”

Since the “Great Preface” to the *Shijing*, “human feeling” (Chin. *qing*, Jap. *jō*) appeared in Confucian discourses as an ambivalent term that could relate to both ethical and unethical behavior. The “Great Preface” identifies “human feeling” as the psychological force, which, when stirred by external stimuli (such as the moral nature of political government), is “moved” and by virtue of this movement generates the composition or recitation of poetry.<sup>5</sup> When stirred by good government human emotions and the poetic (or musical) “tones” that these emotions generate are “peaceful” and “happy”; the emotions and poetic “tones” produced by morally degenerate government, however, are “bitter” and “angry.” The “Great Preface” as well as the subsequent Mao tradition of poetic commentary programmatically define the emotions expressed in *Shijing* poetry – whether “happy” or “angry” – as ethically correct.<sup>6</sup> Even the so-called “mutated” poetry produced under the impact of degenerate governance, according to the “Preface,” is not immoral but, because it was composed by virtuous officials (the “historians of the states”) lamenting the decline of governance, it still contains ethical qualities that regulate the negative emotions expressed by the poems. By emphasizing the ethical character of the entire corpus of *Shijing* poetry, the “Great Preface” leaves largely untouched the transgressive power of “human feeling.” In the “Record of Music” (“Yueji”), however, a contemporary compilation, which otherwise displays a strong textual affinity to the “Great Preface,” the ethically problematic force of

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<sup>5</sup> For a meticulously annotated text and translation of the “Great Preface,” see Owen 1992, 37-49.

<sup>6</sup> The “Great Preface” thus not only refers to “human feeling” as the psychological origin of poetic composition but also to human “intent” or “will” (*zhi* 志), which is more unambiguously ethical than “human feeling.” See the famous sentence in the “Great Preface”: “The poem is that to which the intent goes. In the mind it is intent; coming out in language, it is a poem.” (Owen 1992, 40, with minor modifications). For a study of the Mao tradition of poetic commentary, see Van Zoeren 1991.

human “desire” (Chin. *yu*, Jap. *yoku*) is more explicitly explored.<sup>7</sup> “Desire” is more unambiguously immoral in comparison with “human feeling,” but it also is similar to “human feeling” insofar as it is equally receptive to stirrings through exterior stimuli that generate inner movement and outward expression.<sup>8</sup> The “Record of Music” states:

A human being is born calm: this is his innate nature endowed by Heaven. Stirred by external things and set in motion is desire occurring within that innate nature. Only after things encounter conscious knowledge do likes and dislikes take shape. When likes and dislikes have no proper measure within, and when knowing is enticed from without, the person becomes incapable of self-reflection, and the Heaven-granted principle [*tianli* 天理] of one’s being perishes. When external things stir a person without limit and when that person’s likes and dislikes are without the proper measure, then when external things come before a person, the person is transformed by those things. When a person is transformed by things, it destroys the Heaven-granted principle of that person’s being and lets him follow all human desires to their limit. Out of this comes the refractory and deceitful mind; out of this come occurrences of depraved excess and turmoil.<sup>9</sup>

In the “Record of Music” as well as in the “Great Preface,” it is – strictly speaking – not poetry but music and ritual that bring “proper measure” to potentially unbridled desires and emotions.<sup>10</sup> However, poetry also constitutes the medium through which the stirrings of “human feeling” are expressed and which, because of the affinity of “human feeling” to

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<sup>7</sup> The “Record of Music” is a chapter of the *Record of Rites (Liji)*, which was compiled by the first century AD but largely assembled earlier materials. For an annotated translation of the relevant passages from the “Record of Music,” see Owen 1992, 50-56.

<sup>8</sup> For the difference between “human feeling” (*qing*) and “desire” (*yu*) in early Chinese discourse, see also Huang 2001, 28: “As for the relationship between *qing* and *yu* in this antithetical scheme, the latter tends to be viewed with even stronger suspicion, and there is often a subtle hierarchical pattern of moral valorization implied when these two concepts are juxtaposed. In a favorite metaphorical comparison, Zhu Xi compared nature [i.e. the inborn moral nature of humans; Chin. *xing*, Jap. *sei* 性] to the tranquility of still water, *qing* to the flow of the water, and *yu* to the waves. ‘Violent’ waves (*yu* or excessive desires) will cause the water to overflow (to burst the dam and damage everything, to use Zhu Xi’s words). [...] Compared with *qing*, *yu* is even more ‘active,’ even further ‘removed’ from *xing* (which is supposed to be absolutely tranquil and good), and therefore more dangerous.” See also Yu 1997 (in particular chapter 2) for a discussion of *qing* in early Chinese philosophical and moral discourse as well as Wong 1969 for the role of *qing* in traditional Chinese poetry criticism.

<sup>9</sup> Owen 1992, 53-54, with minor modifications. It should be noted that the text of the *Xunzi* (3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) similarly offers one of the most systematic early discussions of the problematic force of “human feeling” (*qing*) and “desire” (*yu*) and of the need to socially regulate them through ritual (see in particular Xunzi’s chapter on “Ritual”). For a discussion of the *Xunzi* text in this respect, see Yu 1997, chapter 2.

<sup>10</sup> The “Great Preface” doesn’t mention music as a means to regulate the emotions but instead the “righteousness” and “propriety” of the historians of the states. Also, while the “Great Preface” doesn’t mention the category of “desire,” the “Record of Music” doesn’t discuss poetry.

“desire,” has a potentially unethical dimension. At the same time, poetry also participates – as an extension of music and ritual – in the normative regulation of “human feeling” and “desire.”<sup>11</sup> It is precisely the ethical ambivalence of poetry, residing in its simultaneous potential for transgression and normative regulation, that comes to the fore in East Asian poetic discourses and also shapes the subsequent textual negotiations of “human feeling,” which this project examines.

Subsequent discourses in China and Japan continue to explore the ethical ambivalence of poetry in variegating ways. Neo-Confucian views on poetry, for example, acknowledge the capacity of poetic writing (including the *Shijing*) to be either moral or immoral, i.e. to either conform to the Confucian Way or to be removed from it. The moral ambiguity of poetic writing, according to these views, stems from the fact that poetry originates from ethically unpredictable emotions and desires.<sup>12</sup> Neo-Confucian discourses therefore span a seemingly contradictory spectrum of positions, ranging from the total rejection of poetic writing as useless and harmful to the view that poetry could serve as a medium to teach the Way by providing examples for good behavior to emulate and for bad behavior to avoid, i.e. the view that poetry could “promote good and chastise evil” (*kanzen chôaku*).<sup>13</sup> The 18<sup>th</sup> century in Japan, moreover, witnesses the emergence of a new type of discourse that marks a departure from earlier Neo-Confucian views insofar as “human feeling” in poetry becomes valued as intrinsically positive, regardless of the ethical or

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<sup>11</sup> In the “Great Preface,” the regulatory power of poetry is most explicitly explored with regard to its communicative power, i.e. its ability to both “influence” (the people from above, i.e. from the perspective of the ruler) and to “criticize” (the ruler from below, i.e. from the perspective of the people). This argument is reinforced by the fact that the terms “to influence” and “to criticize” (*feng* 諷) as well as the word “airs” (*feng* 風; i.e. the most important and ethically ambivalent genre of poetry in the *Shijing*) are homonymous.

<sup>12</sup> The most prominent Neo-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), in his *Shijing* commentary (titled “Shijizhuan” 詩集傳 or “Collected Transmissions of the *Shijing*”), precisely draws on the “Record of Music” from the *Record of Rites*, which emphasizes the potentially harmful aspect of emotions and desires. See Flueckiger 2011, 42-43, for a discussion of Zhu Xi’s appropriation of the “Record of Music.”

<sup>13</sup> See Flueckiger 2011, chapter 1 (in particular pp. 43-51), for a concise discussion of the philosophical and metaphysical premises and implications of Neo-Confucian discourses on poetry and literature. See also Nakamura 1975, chapter 1.

unethical character that a poem might have. As Peter Flueckiger has argued, however, the new valorization of “human feeling” in the writings of 18<sup>th</sup> century Confucian thinkers such as Itô Jinsai (1627-1705) and Ogyû Sorai (1666-1728) also has a strongly social and political dimension. In the discourses of these writers, poetry – by virtue of its emotional quality – tends to be viewed as a medium that can provide knowledge about the experience of other human beings and thus, for example, aid a ruler in better knowing and governing his subjects (which in the end also implies a more efficient regulation of their emotions).<sup>14</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> century theoretical discussions thus focus less than prior Neo-Confucian discourses on the moral dangers inherent in human emotions and poetic writings, but they still emphasize the ethical role of poetry in bringing about greater social cohesion and control.

Motoori Norinaga’s (1730-1801) nativist discourse on Japanese *waka* poetry and the *Tale of Genji*, while professedly anti-Confucian, certainly exhibits – as Peter Flueckiger shows – a strong affinity with previous Confucian discussions insofar as it equally aims at the normative construction of community.<sup>15</sup> The social and political community that Norinaga envisions is not regulated by the morality of Confucian virtues but by the emotions associated with the established poetic topoi of classical Japanese literature especially from the Heian period, which provide the norms to mold and define a Japanese proto-national

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<sup>14</sup> See for instance Flueckiger 2011, 30: “I approach the emphasis on human emotions among the Tokugawa figures I discuss as fundamentally a social and political concern. This social aspect to their interest in emotionality meant that they did not simply value emotions as experiences of individuals, but saw it as important that the particularity of individuals’ emotions be mediated in some way with universal social structures that transcend the individual. For these thinkers, poetry was valuable for how it brought emotions out of the sphere of an isolated subjectivity, and into an interpersonal space where the communication of these emotions could inspire empathy in others, thus providing rulers, for example, with the knowledge of their subjects needed to enact effective policies [as in Ogyû Sorai’s view], or giving ordinary people the sensitivity to others’ feelings that would make them behave ethically in their everyday social interactions [as according to Itô Jinsai’s view].”

<sup>15</sup> For Peter Flueckiger’s arguments about Norinaga’s literary discourse, see the sixth chapter of his book (Flueckiger 2011).



community in the present.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, I think that Norinaga's programmatic emphasis on the topical universe of Heian-period *waka* and the *Tale of Genji*, which pushes away from the valorization of *kanshi* poetry in prior Confucian discussions, also opens up new discursive terrain. In fact, one of the significant consequences of Norinaga's discourse is the semantic reduction of the spectrum of "human feeling" to the emotionality of "love" (*koi*) and sexual desire, which is one of the major topical components of *waka* poetry while absent as a topos from most of the poetic composition in classical Chinese.<sup>17</sup> This semantic reduction also leads to the need for Norinaga to discursively acknowledge the transgressiveness of "human feeling," which, as illicit amorousness, is not only a major plot component of the *Tale of Genji* but also an important aspect of the topicality of "love" in *waka* poetry. In his treatises on the *Tale of Genji*, Norinaga likens the immorality of illicit love to the (as such) undesirable muddy dirtiness, which the lotus flower – allegorizing the valued poetic sensitivity produced by "love" – however needs as a natural environment to grow. It is true that Norinaga thus deftly downplays the immoral scandalousness of "human feeling" or "love" in the *Tale of Genji* and in *waka* discourse by highlighting the alternative value system of poetic sensitivity, which allegedly transcends Confucian or Buddhist standards of morality. I would argue, however, that Norinaga's revalorization of licentious "love" as the privileged breeding ground for poetic sensitivity is also indicative of and to a certain extent perhaps even triggers the emergence of increasingly complex and sophisticated

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<sup>16</sup> The topoi (*dai*) of classical Japanese *waka* poetry were either seasonal or related to "love" (*koi*). Many seasonal topoi, however, were also closely linked to the theme of amorous longing and desire. For a comprehensive study of seasonality and seasonal topicality in pre-modern Japanese literature and culture see Shirane 2012.

<sup>17</sup> The semantic content of "human feeling" in prior Confucian discourses often remains unspecified. It should be noted, however, that the *Record of Rites (Liji)* broadly defines "human feeling" in the following way: "What are the feelings of men? They are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, and liking [or desire]. These seven feelings belong to men without their learning them" (translation by James Legge, in *Li Chi* I, 379).

explorations of amorous sentiment and sexual desire in literary writings from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century onward.<sup>18</sup>

### **Ethical Negotiations of Human Feeling from Late Edo to Meiji: An Outline**

The first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Japan witnesses the emergence of new vernacular and narrative genres whose increasingly complex textual negotiations around “human feeling” define the fundamental paradigms for subsequent literary writing – in particular for the Meiji-period novel – well until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This dissertation first concentrates on two early 19<sup>th</sup> century genres (or works) in particular: Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjôbon* (“books of human feeling”) and the *yomihon* (“books for reading”) written by Takizawa Bakin, especially the long narrative cycle *Nansô Satomi hakkenden* (*The Eight Dog Chronicle*, 1814-42).<sup>19</sup> Shunsui’s *ninjôbon* writings – as the genre name coined by Shunsui himself indicates – consciously appropriate Norinaga’s discourse on emotionality and love in *waka* poetry and the *Tale of Genji* by transferring it to the lowly sphere of the pleasure quarter and to sentimental as well as sexual “love” (*koi*) between courtesans and their male customers. While Shunsui thus brings down to a “vulgar” (*zoku*) level the discourse on “human feeling” that had hitherto been monopolized by the elite genres of classical Chinese and Japanese poetry and highly canonized texts such as the *Tale of Genji*, his discursive appropriation also constitutes an attempt to socially elevate vernacular fiction,

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<sup>18</sup> Martin Huang discusses a similar semantic reduction of “human feeling” (*qing*) for the late Ming-period in China where *qing* – while covering a much broader semantic spectrum in earlier Confucian discussions – became largely reduced to meaning the kind of sentiment and desire that is “between a man and a woman” (see Huang 2001, chapters 1-3, as well as Huang 1998). See also for the so-called “cult of *qing*” in the late Ming-period, Ko 1994, 68-112, Li 1993, esp. chapters 2 and 3, Mowry 1983 as well as Santangelo 2000; see also the relevant sections in Starr 2007. The question to what extent the late imperial Chinese novel from the late 16<sup>th</sup> century onward – for instance the *Jinpingmei* (*Plum Blossoms in the Vase*, late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century), which is repeatedly cited and acknowledged in 19<sup>th</sup> century Japanese writings – would anticipate and even trigger the dynamics that my dissertation examines remains open for further exploration.

<sup>19</sup> The full title in English would read *The Eight Dog Chronicle of the Kazusa Satomi Clan*. (Haruo Shirane translates *The Chronicles of the Eight Dog Heroes of the Satomi Clan of Nansô*; see Shirane 2002, 887). From now on I will abbreviate the Japanese title as *Hakkenden*.

an attempt that subsequent Meiji-period novel discourse, even though under partially different premises, continues to pursue.<sup>20</sup> As my subsequent reading of *ninjōbon* demonstrates, the textual negotiations around “love” in Shunsui’s writings also echo earlier discourses both about the emotionally transgressive dimension of literary writing (i.e. poetry) and the capacity of literature to socially regulate the emotions. While representing “love” as a sentimental and sexual force that can lead to the danger of aggressive and socially disruptive behavior, *ninjōbon* writings also didactically illustrate the possibility of ethically channeling and redirecting this force.

Another type of discourse that fundamentally shapes early 19<sup>th</sup> century literary negotiations around “human feeling,” in particular in Takizawa Bakin’s *yomihon* writings, centers around the paradigm of *kanzen chōaku* (“promoting good and chastising evil”). As noted earlier with regard to Neo-Confucian discourses on poetry, the notion of *kanzen chōaku* relates to the idea that the representation of moral and immoral feelings and behavior in literary writings can trigger a process of moral self-reflection in the reader. In Japan, particularly from the Edo period onward, this idea becomes appropriated by discourses on the benefits of narrative fiction. A good example would be Andō Tameakira’s early 18<sup>th</sup> century treatise on the *Tale of Genji*, which argues that the “human feelings and social customs” (*ninjō setai*) in the tale can serve as an “indirect teaching” (*fūyu*) of ethical behavior. Andō states:

“This tale [i.e. the *Tale of Genji*] portrays human feelings and social customs, and presents the manners and mores of the upper, middle and lower ranks of the aristocracy; by means of a love story and without proffering words of praise and blame, it lets the reader decide about the good and the evil. Its main intention [*ōmune*]

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<sup>20</sup> I would think that Tsubouchi Shōyō’s attempt in *Shōsetsu shinzui* to socially elevate the genre of the novel through a discourse on “human feeling” can be seen within a discursive continuum that points back to Shunsui’s *ninjōbon*. See Suzuki 2008, 244-249, for a discussion of Shōyō’s reappropriation of *ninjōbon* discourse in *Shōsetsu shinzui* within the context of his reception of Victorian poetic discourse, esp. by Matthew Arnold (1822-1888).

is thus to educate women indirectly [*fūshi su*], but as a matter of fact it also contains a lot of lessons for men.”<sup>21</sup>

It is also noteworthy that Andō qualifies as “promoting good and chastising evil” (*kanzen chōaku*) the indirect teachings that can be gained from the representation of “human feelings and social customs” in the *Tale of Genji*.<sup>22</sup>

Partially through the impact of discourses surrounding the production of Chinese vernacular fiction, the notion of *kanzen chōaku*, from the 18<sup>th</sup> century onward, also increasingly becomes appropriated by discussions of vernacular fiction of much lower social status than the *Tale of Genji*. As critics such as Hamada Keisuke have pointed out, until the advent of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the notion of *kanzen chōaku* largely remains a matter of discourse – perpetrated by the prefaces and postfaces appended to vernacular works – whose aim for instance was to avert censorship by feigning serious moral intentions.<sup>23</sup> According to these critics, only with the crackdown on the publishing industry and individual authors during the Kansei Reforms between 1787 and 1793 and the emergence of Bakin’s *yomihon* production in particular does the notion of *kanzen chōaku* start to shape and define more seriously the actual practice of literary writing. While I remain hesitant with regard to the question to what extent *kanzen chōaku* as a structural paradigm doesn’t also affect the writing of earlier texts, it is certainly true that Bakin’s *yomihon* from the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – and most exemplarily *Hakkenden*, which I discuss in this dissertation – engage in representations of (and negotiations between) “good” and “evil” with an unprecedented degree of complexity.

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<sup>21</sup> Andō Tameakira, *Shika shichiron* 218. My translation is partially adapted from Patrick Caddeau’s English rendering in Harper and Shirane’s unpublished *The Genji Reader*. Andō subsequently goes on to illustrate his point by several examples from the *Tale of Genji*. The Kiritsubo emperor’s infatuation with a lady-in-waiting of low rank (Genji’s mother) and his disinterest for political affairs could thus serve as an example for what an emperor’s behavior should not be like. Similarly, Andō discusses the Kokiden lady’s insensitivity toward the emperor’s grief upon the death of Genji’s mother as an example for unsuitable female conduct.

<sup>22</sup> See *ibid.* 220.

<sup>23</sup> See for overviews on *kanzen chōaku* discourse with regard to Edo-period vernacular fiction (and partially theater) Hamada 1983-85, Hamada 1993 as well as more recently Ôya 2006. For antecedents of *kanzen chōaku* discourse in Chinese vernacular fiction and for its impact on Japanese discourse, see in particular Hamada 1993. For an annotated selection of Bakin’s own critical remarks with regard to *kanzen chōaku*, see Ukai 2000, 91-99.

Insofar as certain “good” acts produce exemplary results and “evil” acts disastrous results, fueling the dynamic plot movement of texts such as *Hakkenden*, it is possible to argue that Bakin’s *yomihon* inscribe or internalize the notion of *kanzen chōaku* into their very plot structure.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, it is important to note that moral qualities in Bakin’s oeuvre are also closely interlocked with specific aspects of “human feeling.” On the surface, Bakin’s texts tend to link sexual desire in particular and to a lesser degree amorous sentiment to evilness and crime – *Hakkenden*’s evil figures, both female and male, conspicuously indulge in sexual desire – and chastity predicated on the absence or suppression of desire becomes representative of virtue. At the same time, however, Bakin also dramatizes the ethical ambiguity of “human feeling” by demonstrating, for instance, how virtuous figures are receptive to transgressive sexual desire and sentiment and, rather than being incommensurably different from the evil protagonists, are ambivalently related to them. Attributes of virtue and transgression, chastity and desire, good and evil are in fact not only closely intertwined but also ambiguously resurface under different guises and in different characters in *Hakkenden*, thus producing complex and ethically ambivalent interconnections throughout its long plot. I argue that Bakin’s narrative profoundly complicates plot structure based on the *kanzen chōaku* paradigm while still operating within its discursive parameters.

Both *ninjōbon* and *yomihon* of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century perform complex negotiations around “human feeling” that oscillate between ethical transgression (or even moral evil) and virtue. At the same time, *ninjōbon* and *yomihon* writings also constitute highly antithetical genres that negotiate the ethical ambivalence of “human feeling” in radically differing representational formats. Whereas Shunsui’s *ninjōbon* focus on sentimental and sexual relationships between unmarried partners in the pleasure quarters and

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<sup>24</sup> See Tokuda 1994 for a discussion of the plot-generating devices in *Hakkenden* with regard to *kanzen chōaku* and the Buddhist principles of karmic cause and retribution (*inga ohō*). Tokuda also discusses Bakin’s own critical terminology as well as his reception of Chinese critical discourse on the vernacular novel (for the latter see also in more detail Tokuda 1987).

thus programmatically highlight “human feeling” (*ninjô*) as male-female “love,” Bakin’s *Hakkenden* primarily depicts male heroic exploits that converge toward a political telos, i.e. the restoration of the Satomi house – a political telos that is also largely absent from *ninjôbon* writings. Paradoxically perhaps, male-female sexual desire and amorous sentiment (i.e. “human feeling”), while fundamentally underlying the dynamics of Bakin’s monumental plot, at the same time are also not its main focus. Paying attention to the almost antithetical representational regimes of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* genres enables us to see that the Meiji-period novel (and also critical discourse on the novel) from the late 1870s onward integrates and synthesizes these two representational regimes in new and complex ways. I argue that it is precisely the integration and merger of the representational regimes of the *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* genres that shapes the emergence of the subsequent Meiji novel and that also produces new textual dynamics or negotiations around “human feeling” that partly continue but also push away from earlier negotiations.<sup>25</sup> On the one hand, discourse on the novel (*shôsetsu*) in the late 1870s – as epitomized by Narushima Ryûhoku’s (1837-1884) famous “Preface” (“Daigen”) to the translation *Karyû shunwa* (*Spring Tale of Flowers and Willows*, 1878-79) – conceptualizes the new genre of the novel through its representation of male-female love relationships in the vein of the earlier *ninjôbon* genre.<sup>26</sup> *Karyû shunwa* also

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<sup>25</sup> While the term “novel” (*shôsetsu* or *haishi*) was by no means new in the 1870s and had previously been used primarily to designate either the vernacular Chinese novel or *yomihon*, I would argue that with the translation *Karyû shunwa* the novel nonetheless emerges as a new genre in Japan (to be differentiated from both *ninjôbon* and *yomihon*) for precisely the reasons that I give. See Suzuki 1996, 16-19, for a concise account of premodern notions of the term *shôsetsu*. See also Yamada 2009.

<sup>26</sup> *Ôshû kiji: Karyû shunwa* (*A Strange Story from Europe: Spring Tale of Flowers and Willows*) was the abridged translation, by Oda (or Niwa) Jun’ichirô (1851-1919), of Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s (1803-1873) novel *Ernest Maltravers* (1837) and of its sequel *Alice* (1838). For Narushima Ryûhoku’s preface see Oda Jun’ichirô, *Karyû shunwa* 3; Schamoni 2003 provides a carefully annotated translation into German. Ryûhoku uses the word “human feeling” (*jô*) 21 times in this short preface and thus humorously underlines the importance of the term for the understanding of the translated Western novel. Ryûhoku argues that human beings are above all characterized by their human feeling and that even the people in the West – often mistakenly thought to be only concerned with “financial profit” (*jitsuri*) and “gain” (*jitsueki*) – in fact have the same amorous feelings as the people in Japan (Ryûhoku claims that he witnessed this fact while traveling overseas). This reasoning also allows Ryûhoku to read *Karyû shunwa* as *jôshi* (“love story” 情史), which was a word that, while in the strict sense designating stories about “human feeling” written in classical Chinese, was often used synonymously

mirrors Ryûhoku's discourse insofar as it focuses on love – sentimental and sexual (or chaste) – between unmarried partners. On the other hand, the translated novel *Karyû shunwa* is also groundbreaking insofar as it integrates the representational focus on “human feeling” into a teleological political plot structure. In this plot structure sexual desire in particular constitutes a problematic force that detracts the (male) protagonist from realizing his political goals while chastity (or chaste love) becomes a facilitator for his political success. In such a fashion *Karyû shunwa* extends and continues the plot dynamics of the *kanzen chôaku* paradigm that were characteristic of Bakin's *yomihon* and that were predicated on specific ethical views of sexual desire and amorous sentiment. I argue that, though *Karyû shunwa* was a translation, it brings to the fore an unprecedented textual format that inscribes itself into existing genre conventions and discourses (related to the *ninjôbon* and *yomihon*), which are rearranged in new fashion.

The Meiji political novel (*seiji shôsetsu*) of the decade of the 1880s – written under the impact of the so-called People's Right Movement and its pro-democratic political activism – further extends and systematizes the integration of a direct representational focus on male-female love relationships with a political telos. In political novels like Toda Kindô's

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with *ninjôbon*. It is noteworthy, moreover, that Oda Jun'ichirô, in his translator's postface to *Karyû shunwa*, designates his translation as a “novel” (*shôsetsu*) that is different from texts like Tamenaga Shunsui's *Shunshoku umegoyomi*, which, according to Oda, only “vainly excite base desires (*chijô*) in their readers” (*Karyû shunwa* 109). While not denying that *Karyû shunwa* focuses on “human feeling,” Oda claims that the kind of “human feeling” represented in his translation doesn't excite sexual desire in its readers. Oda thus interestingly anticipates Tsubouchi Shôyô's ideal of civilized “human feeling” devoid of “base erotic desires” (like Shôyô, Oda also uses the word *chijô*).

Yamada 2007 also sees Ryûhoku's preface from 1878 as an important watershed that marked a discursive revalorization of love as a narrative and literary topic in the wake of the topic's rejection by Japanese enlightenment discourse of the early 1870s. Yamada's essay is particularly valuable for providing an understanding of the discursive environment within which Ryûhoku's preface needs to be situated. Another still very useful contribution is Schamoni 1975 who, partly relying on Yanagida 1965, provides a succinct overview of the Japanese discourse on the novel (*shôsetsu* or *haishi*) in the 1870s. Schamoni also sees Ryûhoku's preface along with Fukuchi Ôchi's (1841-1906) theoretical writings as an important turning point toward a new valorization of the novel in the wake of the anti-literary discourse of the enlightenment decade. I argue that the translation *Karyû shunwa* – and to a lesser extent Ryûhoku's preface – is an important turning point because it appropriates and integrates for the first time the *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* traditions in a way that fundamentally shapes the subsequent development of the Meiji-period novel. For the complex period of transition between late Edo and early Meiji see also Okitsu 1960 and 1973, the essays contained in Maeda 1989a, the relevant chapters in Ochi 1984 as well as, more recently, Yamada 2009.

(1850-1890) *Jōkai haran* (*Stormy Waves on a Sea of Passion*, 1880) or Suehiro Tetchō's (1849-1896) *Setchūbai* (*Plum Blossoms in the Snow*, 1886) this integration becomes instituted by what I describe as an allegorical economy of sexuality in which the achievement of democratic reform – the political telos of the plot – is predicated on the political activists' chaste and therefore ethical love relationships with women. Sexual desire, on the contrary, becomes associated with the autocratic Meiji oligarchs that oppose political reform. This economy of sexuality is allegorical insofar as the activists' chaste marriage in these novels symbolizes the telos of reform as epitomized by the opening of the Meiji Diet. Moreover, I argue that Tsubouchi Shōyō's attempt to reform the genre of the novel in the second half of the 1880s – often seen as the beginning of the modern novel in Japan – consists in a radical rewriting and deconstruction of the allegorical economy of sexuality in the Japanese political novel. In his novel *Imo to se kagami* (*The Mirror of Marriage*, 1885-86), for example, Shōyō integrates a focus on ethically problematic and uncivilized sexual desire – which he subsumes under the category of “human feeling” (*ninjō*) – into a heroic (and implicitly political) teleological plot structure. In its attempt to reconcile sexual desire with an ethical telos, Shōyō's novel not only consciously rewrites the genre conventions of Japanese political fiction but also radicalizes the merger between the *ninjōbon* and *yomihon* traditions within the new Meiji novel.<sup>27</sup>

In Meiji political novels such as *Jōkai haran* and *Setchūbai* chaste love allegorically facilitates the fulfillment of the text's ideological telos, i.e. democratic reform. In Shōyō's rewriting of the political novel, however, the male protagonist's heroic goals fail because of his indulgence in sexual desire. While Shōyō's novels such as *Imo to se kagami* are no longer explicitly allegorical political novels (their content is no longer explicitly political), their

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<sup>27</sup> This complexity is also mirrored by Shōyō's theoretical discourse in *Shōsetsu shinzui*, which not only discusses the novel as a medium of representation of “human feeling” – including sexual desire – but also as a textual medium that is capable of elevating and civilizing society.



writing of the failure of ethical heroism nonetheless implicitly carries an allegorical and political meaning in line with the political novel tradition, which hints to the historical breakdown of the democratic People's Rights Movement in the second half of the 1880s. I argue that the subsequent Meiji-period novel continues to carry and dramatize this implicit allegorical and political meaning. The texts by Kôda Rohan (1867-1947), Mori Ôgai (1862-1922), Tayama Katai (1871-1930) and Natsume Sôseki (1867-1916) that I discuss in this dissertation – texts written from the early 1890s to the 1900s – continue to negotiate in different ways between chaste love, unethical (or uncivilized) sexual desire and a heroic narrative telos of social (and implicitly political) advancement and success. These texts often consciously extend but also rewrite and subvert the allegorical plot paradigms associated with the earlier Meiji political novel or with *Karyû shunwa*. The Meiji novel, from Shôyô's reform of political fiction in the second half of the 1880s onward, often does not – or cannot – represent the successful integration of “human feeling” into the teleology of a heroic or political plot; on the contrary, it dramatizes how such an integration, because of the problematic transgressiveness of sexual desire, fails.<sup>28</sup> While the genre of the novel thus fails to participate effectively in the social regulation of feelings and desires, it nonetheless – even by demonstrating the impossibility of such a regulation – continues to negotiate the ethical and social potential of “human feeling” and thus reaches back to and complicates earlier textual negotiations and discourses.

Since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, narrative writings (including the Meiji-period novel) perform increasingly complex and sophisticated negotiations around “human feeling,” but

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<sup>28</sup> In his discussion of Shôyô's novel *Imo to se kagami* Asano Masamichi points out that Shôyô, by didactically demonstrating the socially disruptive effects of sexual desire, participates in the ideological effort of the Japanese government to regulate the people's emotions and feelings in the aftermath of the breakdown of the People's Rights Movement and to unify the country as a newly emerging nation state (see Asano 2009a). While I agree with Asano that Shôyô's didacticism could be read as an extension of the political novel's ideological attempt to regulate its readers' emotions and desires, it would be important to note that the later Meiji-period novels that I discuss in this dissertation generally lack the didacticism of *Imo to se kagami*. I would argue that these novels, by forsaking an explicitly didactic stance, complicate the role of literature as a textual medium capable of regulating feelings and desires but at the same time these texts also still continue to be aware of and to negotiate that role.

poetry also remains, throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, an important textual medium in which emotions and desires are represented and expressed. In this dissertation I examine poetry primarily in texts from around the late 1890s and 1900s, those that witness an increasing awareness of the capacity of poetic writing to mediate “human feeling” in more detached and indirect fashion than the novel. This fact is related to the emergence, at around the turn of the century, of landscape description as a new theme for literary experimentation, both in new and traditional poetic genres as well as in prose genres. Natsume Sôseki’s (1867-1916) early work in the 1900s probably offers the most sophisticated reflection on new experimental literary writing as an alternative medium of “human feeling.” Sôseki’s early experimental “sketch writing” (*shaseibun*), for instance, humorously deconstructs both the love-related and the heroic themes characteristic of the novel and explores various poetic genres and nature description as more detached alternative media of “human feeling.” Sôseki’s theoretical writings, in particular *Bungakuron* (*Theory of Literature*, 1908), also investigate and theorize the emotional quality of various types of literature (including the novel and poetic genres) and thus discursively complement the negotiations around “human feeling” in his literary experiments. Sôseki’s novel writing, however, often brings back a non-detached focus on “human feeling” and again dramatizes, similarly to earlier Meiji novels, the impossibility to successfully reconcile “human feeling” with an ethical and heroic (as well as an implicitly political) plot. The complexity of Sôseki’s literary production highlights the continuity and breadth of textual negotiations around “human feeling” as a phenomenon that spans various literary genres and practices and thus more broadly underlies the production of literary writing in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Japan.

## State of the Field

Studies of modern Japanese literature, in particular of the Meiji period, have with few exceptions been predicated on the premise of a fundamental epistemological break that irrevocably separates literature emerging in the Meiji period from prior modes and practices of literary production. This premise has become the foundation for studies of various aspects of Meiji literature.<sup>29</sup> In the area of inquiry most relevant to this dissertation – i.e. sentiments, emotions and sexuality – academic studies have described the emergence of new conceptions and practices of love in Japanese texts around 1890 in relation to the translation and reception of Western discourses. Saeki Junko’s research, for instance, pitches the new Meiji concept of “spiritual love” (*ren’ai*) – predicated on Christian ideals of chastity – against more eroticized premodern notions of love as epitomized by the terms *iro* (“erotic desire”), *koi* (“erotic longing”) or *nasake* (“amorous sentiment”).<sup>30</sup> Saeki argues that Meiji authors negotiate between the ideal of a new discourse based on Western translation and the tenacity of prior conceptions and practices that are often inscribed into their own aesthetic sensibilities. From a different perspective of inquiry, Atsuko Ueda has also described an epistemological shift that, in the second half of the 1880s and in Tsubouchi Shôyô’s writings in particular, lets “love” emerge as the new content and ideology of literary production and

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<sup>29</sup> For recent productive studies that are explicitly or implicitly predicated on the idea of a such an epistemological break I would like to mention Satoru Saito’s book on the detective novel as a fundamental literary paradigm from the 1880s onward (Saito 2012) as well as Indra Levy’s work on the emergence of the *genbun itchi* style in relation to the eroticized exoticism of Western translation (Levy 2006). Groundbreaking and highly influential, however, for arguments about an epistemological shift at the origin of modern Japanese literature was (and still is) Karatani 1980 or, in English, Karatani 1993.

<sup>30</sup> For the difficulty to translate these terms see Levy 2011, 73-74 as well as 95-96. For Saeki’s argument see Saeki 1998 and 2008; Levy 2011, 73-101 provides an English translation of Saeki’s chapter on Tsubouchi Shôyô (from Saeki 1998). For a representative argument about the emergence of a radically new concept of love in the Meiji novel see also the study by Noguchi Takehiko (Noguchi 1987). For “love” as a translation idiom and for a concise overview of the newly emerging discourse on “love” in Japan around the year 1890 – propounded by Iwamoto Yoshiharu’s (1863-1942) journal *Jogaku zasshi* (“Journal of Women’s Learning”) – see Yanabu 1982 (chapter on “love”).

discourse.<sup>31</sup> Ueda argues that this shift correlates with a “concealment” of politics (and ethics), which was the subject matter associated not only with the Meiji-period political novel but also with the ongoing *yomihon* tradition (as epitomized in particular by Bakin’s work) in the early Meiji years. Other recent studies – such as James Reichert’s and Keith Vincent’s work – have also stressed the heteronormative aspect of the new literature and ideology of “love” emerging in the Meiji period, which they view as predicated on the repression of prior practices of male-male love or the relegation of such practices to an irretrievable “lost” past.<sup>32</sup>

A growing, albeit still highly limited number of studies highlight specific continuities in representations of and discourses on sentiment and love from late Edo-period writings to the Meiji-period novel that complicate the idea of a radical epistemological break. Takahashi Osamu, for instance, points to the continuous impact of what he calls the “*ninjōbon* love discourse” on the Meiji novel, i.e. on texts such as the translation *Karyū shunwa*, Shōyō’s *Imo to se kagami* and Futabatei Shimei’s (1864-1909) *Ukigumo* (*Floating Clouds*, 1887-89). Takahashi argues that, while these novels continue to reiterate the “genre memory” of the *ninjōbon* (as epitomized, for instance, by the idea of a male protagonist surrounded and loved by several women figures), they also subvert or parody this memory and thus contribute to the emergence of new dynamics of love.<sup>33</sup> Jonathan Zwicker, in his book *Practices of the*

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<sup>31</sup> See Ueda 2007 and, in more condensed fashion, Ueda 2005. The expressions “epistemological shift” and “love” belong to Ueda’s terminology.

<sup>32</sup> See Reichert 2006 and Vincent 2012. Pflugfelder 1999 also offers an important overview of the shifting discourses on male-male sexuality from the early Edo to the postwar periods.

<sup>33</sup> See Takahashi 1993. According to Takahashi, *ninjōbon* “love discourse” (*ren’ai no disukūru*) mainly centers on the emotional “frustration” (*guchi*) brought about by the genre’s typical plot structure in which several (at least two) women vie for the affection and attention of the same man. With regard to Futabatei Shimei’s *Ukigumo*, Takahashi for instance argues that the “genre memory” (*janru no kioku*) of the *ninjōbon* is preserved in the desire of the male protagonist Utsumi Bunzō to receive the protection of the heroine Osei, especially after his dismissal from office. But, according to Takahashi, this memory is also parodied insofar as Bunzō’s desire remains a vain illusion because Osei ultimately turns her affection to the social climber Noboru who also dismissively labels Bunzō a “Tanjirō of the Meiji period” (*Meiji nendai no Tanji*). For a slightly similar (although less sophisticated) argument about the coexistence of “early modern love” (*kinseiteki ren’ai*)

*Sentimental Imagination*, describes a “long nineteenth century” held together by the continuity of a sentimental and melodramatic aesthetic. Offering close readings of late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century *ninjōbon* (such as Shunsui’s *Shunshoku umegoyomi*) as well as two late Meiji-period novels, Zwicker argues that “sentiment” in these texts is produced by complex but also inherently redundant melodramatic plots – often pitching the virtue of (female) love against the evil force of money – that elicit strong emotional responses (“tears”) from both the texts’ protagonists and readers. He supports his argument about a 19<sup>th</sup> century sentimental aesthetic with statistical evidence, which suggests that *ninjōbon* – for Zwicker the epitome of melodramatic literature – became one of the genres that were most intensely circulated and consumed by early 19<sup>th</sup> century readers, thus initiating a trend that would endure until the end of the Meiji period.<sup>34</sup>

While I don’t disagree with scholars such as Saeki Junko regarding the importance of new discourses in the Meiji period, for instance on “spiritual love,” I argue that these new discourses often do not supersede earlier negotiations of “human feeling” but, on the

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predicated on the *ninjōbon* tradition and modern “Western love” (*seiyōteki ren’ai*) in the Meiji novel see the corresponding chapters in Koyano 1997. It should be noted, moreover, that Yamada Shunji (in Yamada 2007) has offered a useful overview of ongoing discourses on *ninjōbon* and “love” in the 1870s and early 1880s (Yamada, like Takahashi, ahistorically uses the term *ren’ai* in the broadest sense possible). Unlike Takahashi, Yamada however mainly concentrates on discourses as critical pronouncements in a variety of writings such as prefaces and readers’ letters to the editor in newspapers. While pointing to the continuity (and discontinuity) of discourses on *ninjōbon* and “love” in the early Meiji period, this overview unfortunately excludes the “views on love” (*ren’aikan*) in the writings of Tsubouchi Shōyō and Futabatei Shimei, which Yamada postulates as radically different from the earlier 1870s discourses that he discusses. Moreover, Yamada also doesn’t discuss late Edo-period discourses, which might have been helpful to further strengthen his argument about a discursive continuity (and discontinuity). For readings of various works of Meiji and Taishō-period (1912-1925) literature through the lens of Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjōbon* see also Maruyama 1994.

<sup>34</sup> See Zwicker 2006. Zwicker postulates two fundamental shifts that historically encircle the 19<sup>th</sup> century sentimental aesthetic, which is the subject of his book: on the one hand, the decline of so-called “books of wit” (*sharebon*) and the rise of *ninjōbon* sentimental fiction in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and on the other hand the transition from a melodramatic fiction of “compromise” to a non-melodramatic fiction of “betrayal” in Japanese novels (for instance by Natsume Sōseki) at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Zwicker defines melodrama by its conservative impulse to resolve complicated plots in scenarios of ethical reconciliation and compromise that often implicitly reinforce dominating ideological positions (for instance of the shogunal government). It should also be noted that Zwicker interestingly relates the purported importance of plot in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Japanese melodramatic aesthetic to the increasing importation of Chinese vernacular fiction in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, which – as Zwicker argues – with respect to its emphasis on a well-wrought plot has often a greater affinity to the Western novel than to earlier Japanese literature (see in particular chapter 3).

contrary, become appropriated and incorporated by them in complex ways. My approach also differs from Jonathan Zwicker's in that I show that textual negotiations around "human feeling" are not narrowly restricted to melodramatic plots but underlie a much broader variety of 19<sup>th</sup> century texts and genres, including poetry and narrative fiction. Far from defining "human feeling" as a kind of melodramatic sentiment that elicits "tears" from rather naïve readers, protagonists, and perhaps authors, I show that 19<sup>th</sup> century Japanese texts from late Edo to Meiji – in particular narrative fiction and poetry – tend to be highly self-reflexive, often to an ironical extent, as media of the representation of "human feeling," i.e. male-female love and sexual desire. I argue that the necessity to represent and write on potentially transgressive feelings and desires (i.e. "human feeling") lies at the heart of major genres in 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan, but this at the same time engenders the often conscious impulse in texts to regulate these feelings and desires ethically, for instance through specific dynamics of gender and plot.

## Chapter Overview

My first chapter focuses on the two important late Edo-period genres *ninjōbon* ("books of human feeling") and *yomihon* ("books for reading"), which both constitute a major intertextual reference for later Meiji-period literature and, at the same time, are profoundly embedded in early modern Sino-Japanese literary culture. I closely examine Tamenaga Shunsui's *ninjōbon Shunshoku umegoyomi* (*Spring Color Plum Calendar*, 1832-33) and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* (*Spring Color South-East Garden*, 1833-35) as well as Kyokutei Bakin's monumental *yomihon* cycle *Nansō Satomi Hakkenden* (*Eight Dog Chronicle of the Kazusa Satomi Clan*, 1814-42). I highlight how these texts depict and dramatize the deep opposition as well as the implicit affinity between "human feeling" and the sphere of Confucian ethics. I argue that, while establishing a moral binary according to

which ethicality would relate to chastity and sexual desire to transgressive immorality, these texts (Bakin's *Hakkenden* in particular) also problematize and deconstruct this binary, thus pointing to the complex interconnection of the two poles.

My second chapter moves to the Japanese novel of the 1880s and examines the translation *Karyû shunwa* (*Spring Tale of Flowers and Willows*, 1878), the political novels *Jôkai haran* (*Stormy Waves on the Sea of Passion*, 1881) and *Setchûbai* (*Plum Blossoms in the Snow*, 1886) as well as Tsubouchi Shôyô's novel *Imo to se kagami* (*A Mirror of Marriage*, 1885-86). I argue that the 1880s Japanese novel, in particular political fiction, generates what I call an allegorical economy of sexuality linking the textual figure of a chaste marriage to the fulfillment of democratic reform within the historical context of the People's Rights Movement and linking sexual promiscuity to political oppression. I show how Tsubouchi Shôyô's attempt to reform the novel and to overcome political fiction at the end of the decade deconstructs the political allegory of a chaste marriage by resexualizing the plot structure of democratic reform and ethical activity more broadly. At the same time, however, Shôyô's texts – such as his novel *Imo to se kagami* – also dramatize their incapacity to reconcile ethicality with sexual desire, thus opening up, unlike the late Edo-period *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* genres, an aporia that remains unsolved. I also show that both the allegorical economy of sexuality in 1880s political fiction and Shôyô's deconstruction of it are intertextually predicated on the novel *Karyû shunwa*, which promotes both sexual love as a valuable feeling and the figure of a politically relevant chaste (and therefore ethical) marriage. I argue that *Karyû shunwa* is thus foundational for the new negotiations and aporias around “human feeling” in subsequent Meiji texts.

My third chapter examines texts from the middle to the end of the Meiji period that thematize the new medium of art as well as the artwork and the figure of the artist or the literary writer: Kôda Rohan's *Fûryûbutsu* (*The Buddha of Romance*, 1889), Mori Ôgai's

*Utakata no ki* (*Froth on the Waves*, 1890) and *Maihime* (*The Dancing Girl*, 1890) as well as Tayama Katai's *Futon* (*The Quilt*, 1907), to give the most prominent. I argue that the artwork and the artist in these writings are presented as sites that are, paradoxically, both sexualized and chaste (i.e. ethical) and thus extend Tsubouchi Shôyô's previous attempt to reconcile sexual desire and ethicality in the novel. I also show how these texts, through their intertextual rewriting of 1880s Japanese fiction, continue to reflect allegorically on the political demise of the People's Rights Movement on which the emergence of art and the artist in the late Meiji period is predicated.

My fourth chapter centers on the early oeuvre of Natsume Sôseki. Examining a broad range of Sôseki's writings such as *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (*I am a Cat*, 1905-6), *Kusamakura* (*Grass Pillow*, 1906) and *Bungakuron* (*Theory of Literature*, 1908), I show how Sôseki's theory of "literature" (*bungaku*) and experimentation in various non-novelistic genres (such as the so-called "sketch" prose or poetry in the classical Chinese style) in the early 1900s is predicated on an intellectual movement that constantly investigates and problematizes the quality of literary texts as media that represent "human feeling." This investigative movement is motivated by the desire to devise an alternative regime of literature – often related to landscape and nature evocation – that mediates the representation of "human feeling" in a more detached and distanced manner than the novel. I argue that Sôseki in such a way continues and extends earlier negotiations over the ethically disruptive potential of "human feeling." Sôseki's ethical concern becomes particularly explicit in his own novel writing from 1907 onward, which – as I demonstrate with regard to the novel *Sorekara* (*And Then*, 1909) – intertextually reiterates Tsubouchi Shôyô's attempt to reconcile the transgressive power of "human feeling" with ethical discourse.

Throughout these chapters, I define "negotiations" of "human feeling" the simultaneous impulse in writings not only to represent but also to ethically and socially



regulate and control feelings and desires. Precisely because the representation and negotiation of “human feeling” defines the very essence of Japanese poetic and, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onward, also increasingly narrative writings, I argue that negotiations of “human feeling” are fundamentally central to the broader emergence and formation of modern literature in Japan.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Literary discourse in the Meiji period also increasingly defines the new concept of “literature” (*bungaku*) through the lens of “human feeling.” A late but important example for this trend is Natsume Sôseki’s *Bungakuron (Theory of Literature, 1908)*. For a meticulous outline of the semantic, discursive and institutional history of the concept of “literature” (*bungaku*) in Japan, see Suzuki Sadami’s work, in particular Suzuki 1998 and 2009a as well as in English Suzuki 2006. Suzuki’s studies, which primarily focus on discourses surrounding the concept of “literature” in Japan, largely ignore the negotiations of “human feeling” in literary writings, which my project investigates.

## Chapter One:

### Ethicality and Transgressive Love: The Ambiguity of “Human Feeling” in Tamenaga

#### Shunsui’s *Ninjôbon* and Kyokutei Bakin’s *Nansô Satomi hakkenden*

This chapter constitutes the attempt to gain a more precise understanding of the ethical status of “human feeling” (*ninjô*) in late Edo-period – i.e. early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century – literature, in particular Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjôbon* (“books of sentiment”) and Kyokutei Bakin’s *Nansô Satomi Hakkenden* (*The Eight Dog Chronicle of the Nansô Satomi Clan*, 1814-1842). My argument revolves around the idea that “human feeling” – mostly in the more narrow sense of male-female love – in these texts is often ambiguously represented as both ethical and transgressive, and I attempt to show how this ethical ambiguity is dramatized, albeit in very different ways, in both Shunsui’s and Bakin’s texts. On the one hand, “human feeling,” which is often (but not exclusively) associated with the female gender, is conceived of as profoundly ethical and almost synonymous with virtues such as chastity and faithfulness as well as a behavior of self-sacrifice. On the other hand, however, it also connects back to carnal desire, aggressiveness, competitiveness, jealousy, resentment, crime and even moral evil. I argue that the ethical double-sidedness of “human feeling,” which in such a way simultaneously points to both extremes of the moral spectrum, fundamentally complicates the ethical and normative binary of “promoting good and chastising evil” (*kanzen chôaku*), on which Shunsui’s and Bakin’s texts (the latter in particular) discursively rely.

My analysis starts with a brief discussion of Motoori Norinaga’s influential reading of the *Tale of Genji* as presented in his treatise *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi* (*The Tale of Genji: A Little Bejewelled Comb*, 1796). Norinaga’s interpretation is relevant to my argument insofar as it reduces, unlike prior Confucian discourses, the broader semantic scope of

“human feeling” to “love” (*koi*), which was a major topic of composition in classical *waka* poetry and referred to both amorous sentiment and sexual desire. Norinaga argues that although Genji’s illicit love affairs constitute crimes from a Buddhist or Confucian point of view, they are nonetheless intrinsically valuable insofar as they relate to “deep feelings,” which should be valued higher than conventional ethical norms. I argue that the linkage, which Norinaga thus establishes between ethical transgression and “love” (as a valuable feeling) discursively anticipates the morally ambiguous plots revolving around “human feeling” in Shunsui’s and Bakin’s slightly later texts.

Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjôbon Shunshoku umegoyomi* (*Spring-Color Plum Calendar*, 1832-33) and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* (*Spring-Color South East Garden*, 1833-35), which I discuss next, are predicated on the idea that female “human feeling” constitutes an inherently aggressive force. This force is encapsulated by the two terms *iji* (or *ikiji*, i.e. “strong-willed elegance”) and *tatehiki* (“competitive spirit”), which are closely related to the courtesan culture of the Fukagawa unlicensed pleasure quarter. The aggressiveness of female “strong will” and “competitive spirit” comes to the fore, for instance, in the heroines’ *guchi* (“silly complaints” or “frustration”), which is a word that Shunsui uses to characterize their behavior and words motivated by the love-related feelings of jealousy and resentment and which is also a key term in his own discourse on “human feeling” (*ninjô*). Through intertextual references – in particular to the Rokujô Lady of the *Tale of Genji* and the Oiwa figure in Tsuruya Nanboku’s (1755-1829) contemporary play *Tôkaidô Yotsuya kaidan* (*Tôkaidô Ghost Stories at Yotsuya*, 1825) – Shunsui’s texts, moreover, point to the possibility of a breakdown of ethicality through an excess of aggressive resentment, but this intertextual potential doesn’t become realized. I argue that the aggressive force of *iji* and *tatehiki*, which characterizes the potentially transgressive emotions of jealousy and resentment, becomes rechanneled instead and then comes to drive the most intrinsically ethical acts of Shunsui’s

heroines, mostly directed toward the men they love. An important metaphor for the ethical power of love in the *Shunshoku* series consists in the figure of the “chivalrous woman” (*onnadate*). While “chivalrous women” in late Edo-period fiction are generally not women in love but martial heroines, Shunsui precisely superimposes the motive on the love theme to emphasize the ethical power of his heroines’ feelings. This then leads to a certain empowerment of female love vis-à-vis the male gender – an empowerment, which, however, also again ambiguously contrasts with the potentially unethical aggressiveness of “human feeling.”

Whereas sexual desire and amorous sentiment in Shunsui’s *ninjōbon* aren’t seen as necessarily immoral, Bakin’s *Hakkenden* appears to be predicated on the idea that desire and amorousness relate to transgression and moral evil while virtue is predicated on the transcendence of “human feeling.” I show, however, that Bakin’s text also ambiguously negotiates between these seemingly irreconcilable spheres – i.e. sexual desire, amorous sentiment and virtue – by staging what I would call ethical hybridity, a quality that is often not only morally but also physically inscribed into its figures.<sup>36</sup> Ethically and physically hybrid protagonists in *Hakkenden* are for instance the dog Yatsufusa and the human princess Fusehime whose unequal union stands at the beginning of Bakin’s monumental plot. Although the dog could be viewed as an allegory of (evil) sexual desire and the princess as an embodiment of virtue, their union fundamentally complicates the boundaries between both spheres. On the one hand, the transgressive Yatsufusa, through the princess’s influence, but significantly also through inborn qualities, participates in human understanding and ethicality. On the other hand, the marks of his animalistic carnality also become ambiguously inscribed

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<sup>36</sup> Bakin, unlike Tamenaga Shunsui, doesn’t prominently use the word “human feeling” (*ninjō*) in *Hakkenden* and he also doesn’t explicitly theorize the term. I would argue, however, that the dynamic of ethical ambiguity or hybridity in *Hakkenden*, which intertwines the spheres of sexual desire, amorous sentiment and virtue, relates to the problematically ambivalent ethical status of “human feeling,” which I see in other late Edo-period writings. See also Hattori Hitoshi’s essay “Bakin to ninjō” (in Hattori 1997) as well as Mizuno Minoru’s “Bakin bungaku no keisei” (in Minoru 1974) for a discussion of the uses of the word *ninjō* in Bakin’s writings more generally. See also the relevant chapters in Minamoto 1969.

onto Fusehime's virtuous body, in particular as symptoms of pregnancy. Although the trace of Yatsufusa's transgressive sexuality later on appears to be dormant in the eight "dog-warrior" (*kenshi*) protagonists of Bakin's text, I show how it repeatedly resurfaces in other ethically hybrid male figures. Female sentiment in *Hakkenden* is also often represented as ethically ambiguous and hybrid insofar as it both connects to chaste virtue and potentially depraved sexual desire. I show how particularly the female emotion of "resentment" (*urami*) mediates between both of these spheres by, on the one hand, morally elevating sexually lewd and criminal heroines (such as Tamazusa) and, on the other hand, by sexualizing the seemingly chaste love of virtuous female figures. I argue that lineages of female "resentment" in *Hakkenden* – connecting protagonists as ethically opposed as Tamazusa, Hamaji's criminal mother Ayame and Hamaji herself – as well as the phenomenon of ethical hybridity fundamentally complicate the surface discourse of "promoting good and chastising evil" in Bakin's narrative while still operating within its parameters.<sup>37</sup>

### **1. The Transgressiveness of "Human Feeling" in Motoori Norinaga's *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi***

In his discussion of the "larger purposes" (*ômuné*) of *The Tale of Genji*, presented in the first chapter of his *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi*, Motoori Norinaga defines the nature of "human feeling" (*hito no kokoro*, given as the reading gloss for *jô* 情) as often, if not inevitably, transgressive morally. Norinaga writes:

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<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of *kanzen chōaku* in *Hakkenden* see Thomas Walley's dissertation (Walley 2009), in particular chapter 4. I should also note that, in my argument about ethical hybridity in *Hakkenden*, I fundamentally disagree with Walley's claim that Bakin, while blurring and violating socially established binaries of gender, species and class (see especially his chapters 5, 6, and 7), nonetheless maintains "the one great distinction that unifies *Hakkenden*, and that *Hakkenden* proclaims to be, alone, inviolable: that between good and evil" (Walley 2009, 8). For an informative discussion of "good" vs. "evil" (also with regard to the different manifestations of "evil") in Bakin's work, see also *ibid.*, 159-185. For Walley's argument on gender see also more recently Walley 2012. It should be noted that Walley 2009 also provides an excellent bibliography of representative scholarship on *Hakkenden*.

The purpose of tales [*monogatari*, in particular the *Tale of Genji*] consists in understanding sensitivity [*mono no aware*], and it often happens that this purpose conflicts with the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism. When human feeling [*hito no kokoro*, i.e. *jō* 情] is moved by something [*mono ni kanzuru*], be it good, bad, right or wrong, this may produce feelings that contradict reason and that it is improper to have; but emotions [*kokoro* 情] are sometimes moved despite one's own will [*kokoro* 心] and they grow into feelings that are naturally hard to suppress. With regard to Prince Genji one could say that his falling in love and having affairs with women such as Lady Utsusemi, Lady Oborozukiyo or the Fujitsubo Consort would have been a most abominably sinful and immoral act from a Confucian and Buddhist standpoint and, whatever good things Genji could have otherwise done, it would then be certainly impossible to consider him a “good person” [*yoki hito*]. However, the tale doesn't focus so much on his sinfulness and immorality and instead repeatedly emphasizes the depth of his sensitivity, and in such a way Genji on the contrary becomes the model for the “good person,” and the whole range of possible good attributes are also assembled in him. This is the larger purpose of tales, and their concept of “good” and “evil” [*yoki ashiki*] therefore conspicuously differs from the notions of ethicality [*zen'aku*], which one would find in Confucian or Buddhist writings.<sup>38</sup>

Norinaga here points to the ethically transgressive nature of “human feeling,” which tends to be in conflict with “reason” (*kotowari*) as well as Confucian or Buddhist notions of “good” and “evil” and which, in Genji's case, even challenges the ethical and political foundations of the imperial state. Norinaga, however, relativizes the potentially immoral quality of “human feeling,” and more specifically “love” (*koi*), by positing it as inherently valuable because of the “depth of sensitivity” that it produces.<sup>39</sup> He also semantically dissociates the categories of “good” and “evil” (*yoki ashiki*) – terms that he takes from Genji's discourse on fiction in the “Hotaru” (“Fireflies”) chapter – from any potential ethical context to redefine them emotionally and aesthetically in relation to a person's ability to “understand human sensitivity.” Norinaga's discourse is interesting because it attempts to radically validate “human feeling” while also acknowledging and discussing its potentially transgressive and

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<sup>38</sup> Motoori Norinaga, *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi* 198. I consulted Thomas Harper's translation in Harper 1971, 187-188.

<sup>39</sup> Norinaga repeatedly emphasizes that “love” is the feeling that most genuinely produces the kind of emotional sensitivity (i.e. *mono no aware*) that he values. See for instance *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi* 174.

unethical nature.<sup>40</sup> Norinaga's argument thus points to the moral ambiguity that lies at the core of the concept of "human feeling," which both Shunsui's and Bakin's slightly later texts dramatize in different ways.

In the passage, which immediately follows the one translated above, Norinaga illustrates the problematic ambivalence and tension between the posited positive value of "human feeling" and its potential lack of ethicality by the organic metaphor of the lotus flower that needs an environment of mud and dirt to prosper. While the dirt metaphor clearly indicates that Genji's illicit love affairs – especially his transgression with the Fujitsubo consort – are morally condemnable infractions, Norinaga also argues that the muddy water of crime and excess provides the indispensable "fertilizer" (*ryô*), which the "flower of human sensitivity" (*mono no aware no hana*) needs in order to bloom. At the same time, however Norinaga ambiguously concedes that this fertilizing dirtiness should by no means be approved in itself.<sup>41</sup> In his positive evaluation of "human sensitivity" Norinaga almost exclusively focuses on Genji's male perspective and he mentions female emotionality only with respect to the women figures in the *Tale of Genji* who in their feelings mirror the elegant and gentle "sensitivity" of the shining prince: i.e. figures like Fujitsubo, Utsusemi and Oborozukiyo. Norinaga's discussion conspicuously omits those female protagonists in the tale – in particular the Rokujô Lady – whose more aggressively jealous and resentful emotionality could perhaps question and complicate his positive view of "human feeling," especially from an ethical point of view.<sup>42</sup> As I will argue in the subsequent section, the

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Flueckiger argues that Norinaga's acceptance of "socially disruptive" emotions "in poetry and monogatari is premised on their being fictional" (Flueckiger 2011, 190). He also writes: "The *Genji* is fiction, however, and Norinaga is not suggesting that people behave like *Genji* characters in their real lives. What he wants them to do is to cultivate their emotional sensibilities, including a sensitivity to the emotions of others, by reading the *Genji*, which will then lead them naturally to behave properly." (ibid., 190).

<sup>41</sup> See *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi* 199.

<sup>42</sup> It could be argued that Norinaga's omission of the Rokujô Lady in his discussion of the *Tale of Genji* constitutes an inheritance of prior Confucian and Buddhist readings of the tale that rather focused on Genji's

ethically problematic aggressiveness of female “human feeling” constitutes an important dramatic component in Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjôbon*.

## 2. The Aggressiveness of “Human Feeling”: Transgression and Ethicality in Tamenaga Shunsui’s *Shunshoku umegoyomi* and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono*

### 2.1. Shunsui’s Discourse on “Human Feeling” and the Aggressive Force of Female Love

Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjôbon Shungyô hachimangane* (*The Hachiman Shrine Bell of Parting at Spring Dawn*, 1836) contains a famous statement on “human feeling” (*ninjô*), which has been used by scholars to ascertain the author’s conception of the term, even pertaining to slightly earlier works such as *Shunshoku umegoyomi* and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono*. This definition, which reveals a certain affinity to Norinaga’s literary thought, reads:

What does human feeling [*ninjô*] mean? It does not only stand for love as an elegant and poetic feeling [*koiji no koto*]<sup>43</sup>, and I would say that only somebody who doesn’t sneer at the everyday silly laments [*gûnaru nageki*] of men and women and their futile sufferings and at the running astray through love [*mayoeru*] of the ordinary people in the world, only somebody who empathizes with the feelings of different people [*sono omoi moi no hito ni narete*] and who intimately and wholeheartedly knows to be moved by them [*shitashiku jitsui ni aware o shiru*], only such a person can be said to truly understand human feeling. If one doesn’t read my writings with this in mind it will be hard to understand them.<sup>44</sup>

While Shunsui’s emphasis on “love” (*koi*) as “suffering” and “going astray” betrays a proximity to the elegant topical discourse of *waka* poetry and to Norinaga’s neo-classical position – thus pointing to the intrinsically noble and elevated nature of “human feeling” in whatever context it might appear – he also emphasizes its vulgar and everyday nature. In this

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illicit love affairs than on the problem of female jealousy and resentment. See for the reception history of the *Tale of Genji* Harper’s and Shirane’s *The Genji Reader* (unpublished manuscript). However, the omission of the Rokujô Lady also seems to be a programmatic one insofar as her resentful emotionality doesn’t match Norinaga’s elegant vision of *mono no aware*.

<sup>43</sup> I understand *koiji no koto* to refer to “love” as defined by the topical canon of the classical tradition of *waka* poetry as opposed to Shunsui’s more “vulgar” (*zoku*) understanding of human feeling.

<sup>44</sup> I cite this passage from Nakamura Yukihiko’s appended note (*hochû*) in *Shunshoku Umegoyomi* 1971, 444. On the interconnection between Shunsui’s *ninjôbon* and Norinaga’s discourse on “human feeling” see also Maruyama Shigeru’s essay “*Umegoyomi to Genji monogatari tama no ogushi*” (in Maruyama 1978).



respect Shunsui programmatically departs from Norinaga who still envisioned “human feeling” and *mono no aware* as normatively molded by the courtly poetic tradition and literary classics such as the *Tale of Genji*. Shunsui, moreover, not only distances his conception of “human feeling” from the tradition of *waka* poetry but he also thinks the term in opposition to the contemporary or slightly earlier *sharebon* (“books of wit and fashion”) genre, which also staged an aesthetically highly codified world, namely the one of the pleasure quarter. *Sharebon* flourished in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century especially in the city of Edo and scholars generally trace the origins of the *ninjô*-oriented literature of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century back to them. In the following authorial statement in *Shunshoku umegoyomi*, Shunsui, for instance, claims:

The author remarks: Since this book is mostly about the depiction of the feelings [*ninjô*] of Yonehachi and Ochô, its goal is not to dig out flaws [*ugachi*] in the pleasure quarter.<sup>45</sup> I have never been familiar with courtesan houses and therefore I can’t really talk about them. For this reason this book shouldn’t be judged in the same way as a *sharebon*.<sup>46</sup>

Shunsui’s (at least partial) distancing from the classical tradition of *waka* poetry on the one hand and from the generic conventions of the *sharebon* on the other hand allows him to formulate a notion of allegedly “true” and authentic “human feeling” that doesn’t have to respond to the topical or aesthetic codes inherent in both of these genres.

Key terms in Shunsui’s definition of “human feeling” in the above-translated *Shungyô hachimangane* passage are the words “silly laments,” “futile sufferings” and “running astray.” A more concrete idea of how Shunsui conceives of these terms can be gained, for instance, from Yonehachi’s words and behavior in the famous eel restaurant scene in *Shunshoku umegoyomi* (chapter 7) where she jealously confronts her lover Tanjirô

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<sup>45</sup> The “digging out” (*ugachi*) of “holes” (or flaws) in the behavior of pleasure quarter customers or courtesans constituted one important objective of *sharebon* literature. For scholarship on *sharebon* in Western languages see still Araki 1969, Schamoni 1970 and Kornicki 1977.

<sup>46</sup> Tamenaga Shunsui, *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 68. Woodhull 1978 also provides a complete translation into English of *Shunshoku umegoyomi*.

and his young fiancé Ochô. The scene stages Yonehachi's unsuccessful attempts to disrupt the burgeoning intimacy between the two lovers who have just before unexpectedly run into each other on the street after a long time of separation. The narrator first summarizes Yonehachi's thoughts and anxieties, which underlie the scene, in the following way:

Yonehachi thought that since Ochô had been Tanjirô's fiancé and also used to be her own master's daughter [at the Karakotoya house in Yoshiwara], there was a danger that her man could be taken away from her [*otoko o torareru*] if she acted in an imprudent way. And because Tanjirô also really liked this girl she couldn't afford being off guard. The best would certainly be to speak frankly and to suppress the hearts of both by obligation [*giri de futari ga kokoro o toriosae*]. Her calculation was that whatever Ochô might think, if she didn't hide anything, there could be a way not to fall behind [in their competition for Tanjirô's love].<sup>47</sup>

What Yonehachi concretely means by "speaking frankly" and "suppressing the hearts" of Tanjirô and Ochô by "obligation" becomes clear in the subsequent dialogue with Ochô where Yonehachi not only talks about the long-standing relationship she has had with Tanjirô – a relationship that comes close to the bond of "husband and wife" (*myôtonaka*) – but also states that she supports him financially. Yonehachi even offers financial support to Ochô who has gone through numerous hardships since the death of her parents. When the latter, however, with the "strong will of someone in love" (*koi no iji*), refuses to accept this offer and even voices her determination to help Tanjirô herself, Yonehachi realizes that her "calculation" hasn't worked out. She reacts with "contemptuous laughter" (*sagesumiwarai*) and the obstinate demand that Tanjirô move even closer to her; and later she also angrily pinches Tanjirô in his arm.

Yonehachi's colleague Umeji thereupon criticizes her friend for her "jealousy" (*jinsuke*), the emotion that would be typical of an "amateur" (*shirôto*) but inappropriate for a *geisha* or courtesan.<sup>48</sup> Umeji's comments humorously relativize Yonehachi's feelings from an emotionally uninvolved outsider's standpoint, but they also illustrate how Shunsui's text

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<sup>47</sup> *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 98-99.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.* 100.

here programmatically departs from *sharebon* conventions by depicting courtesans' "authentic" feelings such as jealousy, which alienate them from the sophisticated behavioral codes of their profession. The narrator labels Yonehachi's desperation – caused by her inability to undermine the growing intimacy between her lover and her rival – as "inelegant" (*yabo*), but he concedes that precisely this "inelegance" is characteristic of a "woman in love" (*horeta onna*). Moreover, "being in love" (*horeru*) leads to "silly complaints" (*guchi*), especially if the feeling of jealousy is involved. After Tanjirô and Ochô have left the restaurant, Umeji remarks to Yonehachi: "There is no way to become so jealous of just such a baby [i.e. Ochô]! You are not yourself anymore. Every time you come to deal with Tanjirô you truly make these silly complaints. Stop doing this."<sup>49</sup> Later on the dialogue between the two women continues in the following way:

Yone: "[...] This is really embarrassing, but how was it possible that I could lose myself in such a way [*naze konna ni mayottarô*]?" Ume: "I don't want to talk about this any more. Stop it, that's enough!" she says and laughs. Ume: "Truly, even if selling your body is not your profession, you might think that you have everything under your control, but when you're truly in love [*shinsoku horeru to*] you can't help becoming really stupid [*koke ni naru yo*]." Yone: "Ah, in the past I used to laugh at other people, but when you truly feel so frustrated and helpless [*jirettaku naru*] then it's because of that Way [*kono michi*, i.e. Love]."<sup>50</sup>

This dialogue, which (as Nakamura Yukihiro also points out in his note)<sup>51</sup> seem to outline Shunsui's conception of "human feeling" and "love," illustrates the extent to which Yonehachi emotionally "goes astray" (*mayou*), unlike a professional courtesan. At the same time, it is important to note that her "silliness" and jealous "love" also possess an aggressive dimension that comes to the fore in her competitive behavior toward Ochô and her anger with Tanjirô. This aggressive aspect of "love" is mostly elided from Shunsui's discourse on "human feeling" that focuses more on the idea of suffering and, in Norinaga's vein, on the

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 101.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 101-102.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 102, note 2.

emotional qualities of sensitivity and empathy. However, it is precisely the competitive disposition to fight, also physically, against female rivals – best exemplified by the three terms *iji* (“strong will”), *hari* (“competitiveness”) and *tatehiki* (“competitive spirit”) – that characterizes Shunsui’s heroines throughout the *Shunshoku* series.<sup>52</sup> Yonehachi’s aggressive competitiveness also indirectly gestures toward the possibility of a loss of control and even excess. This possibility would become realized, for example, if her jealousy and anger grew to the extent of metamorphosing her into a vengeful and murderous ghost – a scenario, which of course doesn’t come to life in Shunsui’s texts. However, as my following discussion will show, the apparition of jealous ghosts – even if suppressed and relegated to the text’s margins – nonetheless powerfully lurks at the intertextual horizon onto which the *Shunshoku* series is inscribed.

## **2.2. Shunsui’s Unrealized Intertexts and the Suppressed Danger of Female Jealousy**

Shunsui’s series of *ninjōbon*, which starts with the publication of *Shunshoku umegoyomi* in the years 1832-33, inscribes itself into an intertextual horizon, which evokes the potentially excessive and transgressive dimension of “human feeling.” Three intertextual references in *Shunshoku umegoyomi* and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* that all in different ways relate to the emotion of female jealousy and resentment are relevant to my discussion: the *Tale of Genji*, Tsuruya Nanboku’s contemporary *kabuki* play *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan* as well as Shunsui’s own *Teisō onna hakkenshi* (*Chronicle of Eight Virtuous Women*, 1834-1847), a parodic rewriting of Bakin’s *Hakkenden*, which, as its most striking characteristic, reverses the

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<sup>52</sup> For Yonehachi’s *iji* and *tatehiki* as a geisha see for instance *ibid.*, 207. *Kōjien* 2005 defines the word *tatehiki* as the act of “competing by firmly carrying through one’s will or duty” (*giri ya ikiji o tatetōshite hariau koto*) and also as the “fight” (*kenka*) itself, which results from this competition. See also Maeda Ai’s discussion in “‘Iki’ to Fukagawa” (in Maeda 1989b).

gender of the latter's eight male protagonists.<sup>53</sup> Although references to these works do not necessarily abound in the *Shunshoku* series, they are nonetheless explicit and indicate an important potential horizon of reading and interpretation within and *against* which Shunsui's series positions itself.<sup>54</sup>

An intertextual reference to the *Tale of Genji* can be found, for instance, at the beginning of the third chapter (*shutsu* 齣) of *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono*. The reference takes the form of a “Kamigata song” (*Kamigata uta*) sung by an unknown girl practicing somewhere close to the restaurant where the geisha Adakichi and her lover Tanjirô secretly meet and where they also overhear the song. The song relates to Murasaki Shikibu's tale only indirectly through the mediation of the *nô* play *Aoi no ue* (*Lady Aoi*), which it partly quotes. The quoted passage in *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* reproduces the ghostly voice of the Rokujô Lady – conjured up by a female shaman in the *nô* play – who reminisces about her excessive jealousy of Genji's marital bliss with his wife Aoi. The passage reads:

Kamigata song: “Riding the three carts [of delusion] on the Way of the Buddha's Law, the broken cart at the dwelling of the Yûgao Lady – oh, I am ashamed at my appearance conjured up by the swinging tip of the shaman's catalpa bow! Look, look at this sight from a time long ago, which I cannot forget: the love of husband and wife [Genji and Aoi] inseparable like the butterfly on the rapeseed. Seeing this makes me full of jealousy and envy; I am forlorn like the solitary plover on the beach!”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The writing of *Teisô onna hakkenshi* was taken over by Shunsui's disciple and collaborator Kyôsentei Shunshô (Somezaki Nobufusa, 1818-1886) after the former's death in 1843. For a more precise account of the background of this text see “Kaidai” in *Teisô onna hakkenshi*. For Shunsui's adoption of a more yomihon-esque style in his later Tenpô-period (1830-44) *ninjôbon* see also Jinbô Kazuya's essay “Ninjô yomihon ron” (in Jinbô 1964).

<sup>54</sup> In his essay “Monogatari no omokage, kashin no in'yô” (chapter 7, Inoue 2009) Inoue Yasushi provides a useful discussion of references to the *Tale of Genji*, *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise monogatari*, ca. 947) and classical *waka* poetry in Shunsui's *ninjôbon* writings, in particular in *Harutsugedori* (1837). Inoue convincingly outlines the relatively strong classical intertextual awareness in Shunsui's *ninjôbon*, which he demonstrates especially with regard to motives such as amorous longing and separation. He also shows that, while relatively easy classics such as the *Tales of Ise* were mostly read in the original, knowledge about the linguistically much more difficult *Tale of Genji* was generally mediated by educational primers and digests that often used the *waka* poetry contained therein as an entryway to the tale. For more in-depth recent scholarship on the variegated media and practices of reception of the *Tale of Genji* in the Edo period see in particular Shirane 2008 and Emmerich 2013.

<sup>55</sup> Tamenaga Shunsui, *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* 260.

As Nakamura Yukihiko points out in his corresponding note, this quote sets the tone for the content of the chapter, which focuses on Adakichi's feelings that are expressed in her dialogue with Tanjirô. These feelings mostly consist of resentment (*urami*), anger (*kanshaku*) and jealousy (*jinsuke* or *yakimochi*), triggered by Adakichi's awareness of Yonehachi's closeness to Tanjirô who is the lover of both women. Adakichi's situation also particularly resembles the one of the Rokujô Lady vis-à-vis Genji and Aoi insofar as the relationship between Tanjirô and Yonehachi, which started long before the Adakichi affair, has come close in status to the one of husband and wife. As Tanjirô also bluntly states, owing to existing "obligations" (*giri*) – toward Yonehachi but most probably also toward his "true" later wife Ochô – it will never be possible for him to see Adakichi as his "wife" (*nyôbô*) however intimate their relationship might have become.<sup>56</sup> Unlike his long-standing and somehow official relationship with Yonehachi, his liaison with Adakichi is merely an affair that needs to be kept secret. This secrecy is underscored by the rather dubious surroundings, the unnamed "restaurant" (*ryôriya*), where the lovers clandestinely meet. Adakichi's insecure status is also underlined by the fact that she can be discarded so easily in the end – somehow

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<sup>56</sup> See *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* 262. Tanjirô ambiguously muses that, because of Adakichi's sincere affection for him (*jitsu o tsukushite kureru kara*), if Yonehachi were to commit some "adultery" (*uwaki*), there might perhaps be a chance to get rid of her and marry Adakichi instead. In the end, however, he comes to the conclusion that this would be against the "commonsense of the world" (*ukiyo no narai*) and therefore impossible – a realization that allegedly makes him cry alone at home. Yet ironically, even Yonehachi's status as a "wife" is highly unstable vis-à-vis her rival Ochô as becomes clear in the eel restaurant scene (*Shunshoku umegoyomi* 97-103) where Yonehachi insecurely boasts: "Even when I was still living in the Yoshiwara quarter I had already been deeply involved with the young master, and also now after having become free [as an independent Fukagawa *geisha*] it goes without saying that, even if I am not with him all the time and also see other customers in the teahouse, in our hearts we are inseparable from each other like husband and wife (*hanarenu myôtonaka*)" (ibid. 99). These words then trigger the narrator's following dry explanation: "It seems that the reason why she spoke in such an obstinately exaggerated way (*wazato aburakkoku iu ha*) was to crush the still nascent feelings [for Tanjirô] in Ochô" (ibid. 99). Yonehachi's social status as a *geisha* indeed wouldn't allow her to become Tanjirô's true wife unlike Ochô who belongs to the same *bushi* class as him and also has been his official fiancé (*inazuke*) since childhood. These social differences indeed play out in the end where Yonehachi is assigned the position of Tanjirô's second wife (after Ochô), which is presented as an extraordinary favor given her status as a *geisha* and justified only by her exceptional moral integrity.

similarly perhaps to the Rokujô Lady whom Genji simply stops visiting – once Tanjirô officially regains his hereditary status and wealth.<sup>57</sup>

While Adakichi's position as an outsider vis-à-vis the "married couple" Yonehachi and Tanjirô is thus comparable to the one of the Rokujô Lady in the "Kamigata song," which subtly expresses the jealousy and resentment that Adakichi harbors, the devastating implications of the cited intertext – i.e. Rokujô's murder of her female rivals carried out by her ghostly alter ego – remain unrealized in Shunsui's text, which instead, as I will discuss later, stages a more ethical scenario. This is also true for another perhaps slightly less obvious instance of *Genji* intertextuality in Shunsui's work, which obliquely refers to the Yûgao episode.<sup>58</sup> The passage at the end of chapter 7 of *Shunshoku umegoyomi* depicts the first moment of intimacy (holding hands etc.) between Tanjirô and his fiancé Ochô in a deserted back-alley as the two are on their way back from the eel restaurant where Yonehachi intruded into their conversation as a jealous rival. While the couple is immersed in "talk about many subjects" – i.e. *chiwa* 千話, which is a pun on the homonymous *chiwa* 痴話 ("lover's talk") – in a "luckily deserted" road, a street peddler suddenly interrupts their intimacy by offering his goods for sale in a loud and vulgar voice. This is reminiscent of the scene in the "Yûgao" chapter where Genji and his young lover frightfully listen to the unsettling and unintelligible voices of merchants and artisans outside on the street after having spent the night together in the deserted cottage where Rokujô's ghost is about to

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<sup>57</sup> Even when Tanjirô hears from Yonehachi about the hardships that Adakichi has gone through after their breakup, he appears rather unmoved and decides to stay away from her owing to his stronger marital "obligations" (*giri*). He ultimately only sees her again after Yonehachi has pleaded for her former rival whom she now considers as her "sister" (*kyôdai dozen*; see *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* 427). In a similar vein, Adakichi also secretly retires once she becomes aware of her pregnancy to give birth to Tanjirô's child far away from the latter's "family" to which she doesn't belong, "probably out of consideration for Yonehachi's feelings" (*Yonehachi he taishi menboku naku ya omoiken*; see *ibid.* 431). For a reading of *Shunshoku umegoyomi* and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* that primarily focuses on their intricate "melodramatic" and "sentimental" plot see Zwicker 2006, 109-124. I should remark, however, that the negotiations around "human feeling" and sentiment that I investigate in Shunsui's writings are largely independent from plot.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. for my subsequent discussion *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 103.

appear. It goes without saying that Yonehachi's shadow of jealousy hovers over the happy couple's "lover's talk". Moreover, as if to tempt the resentment of the absent and potentially ghostly rival, Tanjirô even exclaims that he has found "a girl ten times cuter and more beautiful than Yonehachi." However, as before, the intertextual reference to the *Tale of Genji* here also remains unrealized. Although Yonehachi's vengeful ghost never appears to take hold of and kill her female rival Ochô, the possibility of this excess of jealousy and breakdown of ethicality nonetheless intertextually lurks at the horizon of this scene and of Yonehachi's female emotionality.

An important contemporary intertext against which Shunsui's literary project probably had to consciously position itself is Tsuruya Nanboku's play *Tôkaidô Yotsuya kaidan*.<sup>59</sup> The play is referred to, for example, in the sixth chapter of *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono*, which depicts one of Tanjirô's and Yonehachi's typical "lover's quarrels" (*chiwa genka*). Shortly before the dialogue section, which I translate below, Yonehachi in somehow theatrical manner threatens to kill herself. The lovers' dialogue reads:

Tan: "[...] I won't let you say something as selfish as that [i.e. killing yourself]. With all due respect, according to the tattoos that we made for each other, Tanjirô is the owner (*nushi*) of Yonehachi's life and for my body it's the same: my owner is Yonehachi. It's not that easy!" Yone: "That's precisely why I want to die. But I won't die alone." Tan: "With whom are you going to die?" Yone: "I will die taking my owner with me." Tan: "Am I master Iemon on whom resentment [*urami*] has been piling up? This is the voice of Oiwa indeed!"<sup>60</sup>

The self-reflective reference to Nanboku's play in the above dialogue between the lovers is humorous, but it again points to the unrealized possibility of a breakdown of ethicality and an inversion of love into horror. This inversion is epitomized by Oiwa's transformation into a female ghost possessed by jealousy and by the horrible vengeance that she enacts upon her unfaithful and evil former husband Iemon. The key emotion, which links Oiwa's vengeance

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<sup>59</sup> For a recent study of this play see Shimazaki 2009, also for a history of female ghosts in Japanese literature and theatre (chapter 1).

<sup>60</sup> *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono*, 286.



to Yonehachi's feelings for Tanjirô and which is also shared, in different gradations, by all female protagonists in the *Shunshoku* series, is resentment (*urami*) and especially the resentment connected to jealousy.<sup>61</sup> It should be noted that another intertextual allusion to *Tôkaidô Yotsuya kaidan* in *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* also refers to female resentment. In the scene in question in chapter 7 Adakichi self-consciously, and more bitterly than humorously, labels herself as “vindictive Oiwa” (*shûnenbukai Oiwa*). She also points to the proverbial “excessive attachment of the evil woman” (*akujo no fukanasake*) in order to voice her determination to “cling to” (*tsukimatotte yaru*) Tanjirô even while being aware of the inappropriateness of her behavior, especially vis-à-vis Yonehachi.<sup>62</sup> Resentment appears to be an ambiguous and problematic emotion in late Edo-period writings insofar as it can lead, for instance as “excessive attachment,” to the breakdown of ethicality as demonstrated by the female ghosts in Nanboku's play or the *Tale of Genji*. At the same time, however, it also participates in the sphere of “human feeling” (*ninjô*), which Shunsui and Norinaga affirm to be intrinsically valuable. Resentment ultimately also relates to the heroic and ethical – although perhaps not entirely uncontroversial – affect of anger that, in Bakin's *Hakkenden* for instance, drives dog-warriors like Inuyama Dôsetsu or Inusaka Keno to avenge the murder of their fathers and families.

A humorous and perhaps parodic transposition of the heroic kind of resentment unto the one of female jealousy connected to “love” (*koi*) takes place in the scene (*Umegoyomi* chapter 20) where Yonehachi is about to waylay Adakichi who is on her way to the nocturnal Benten festivities in Susaki. Yonehachi plans to do so because her rival has allegedly “beaten and humiliated her before the eyes of others” at some prior point. When Yonehachi is about

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<sup>61</sup> The word “resentment” (*urami*) is omnipresent in the *Shunshoku* series; for Ochô's “resentment” see for instance *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 88, for Adakichi see *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* 264. It should be noted that “pain” (*tsurami*) and “anger” (*kanshaku*) are also related emotions named in the text. The words for “jealousy” most frequently used by Shunsui are *jinsuke* (apparently Fukagawa slang), *rinki*, *yakimochi* and *shitto*.

<sup>62</sup> See *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* 392.

to “take revenge” (*shikaeshi*) upon her rival, she is pulled back by Tôbei, a rich Kiba merchant (“Chiba” in the *Umegoyomi* text) and Yoshiwara sophisticate, who suddenly appears out of the dark.<sup>63</sup> Tôbei’s words in the ensuing dialogue, which I translate below, contain two important intertextual references:

Yone: “Oh, aren’t you Tôbei-san? How is it that you are here?” Tô: “You must have been certainly surprised but I have heard about your quarrel [*kenka*]. And Yonehachi, even if this is painful for you, just try to calm down a bit right now and listen well to me. Titles like *Keisei Suikoden* [*Courtesan Water Margin*] and *Onna hakkenshi* [*Chronicle of the Eight Virtuous Women*] are in vogue right now, but fighting with another woman [*onna no kenka*] makes you unattractive [*iroke ga nê*]. Whatever might have happened till now, you are not somebody where I could just pretend to not see or hear anything. Well, tonight please just act as I will tell you. And this is not at all about trying to seduce you as I usually did before. If you really want to be with and care about Tanjirô to whom you have been devoting all your heart, then just leave all your strong will [*iji*] and competitive spirit [*tatehiki*] of a geisha to Tôbei [i.e. me]!”<sup>64</sup>

Tôbei used to be a regular and intimate customer of the courtesan Konoito in the Karakotoya house in Yoshiwara where Yonehachi was employed before she succeeded, through Konoito’s support and Tôbei’s money, in establishing herself as an “independent geisha” (*jimae geisha*) in Fukagawa (“Futagawa” in the *Umegoyomi* text). The above passage alludes to the fact that Tôbei repeatedly attempted to seduce her under the pretext of her financial “obligation” to him, but it later turns out that he did so only in order to test the sincerity of her affection for Tanjirô at the request of the high-ranking samurai Honda no Jirô who is an intimate friend and colleague of Tanjirô’s father.

Shunsui’s *Teisô onna hakkenshi* – the text that Tôbei refers to along with Bakin’s *Keisei Suikoden* (1825) in the above dialogue – does significantly not stage jealous women in love fighting with or enacting revenge upon one another. On the contrary, the text depicts strong female protagonists (so-called “chivalrous women” or *onnadate*) who, similarly to the dog-warriors in Bakin’s *Hakkenden*, fight for a high cause such as avenging their fathers’

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<sup>63</sup> See *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 206-207 for my subsequent discussion.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 206-207.

murder.<sup>65</sup> Tôbei's intertextual superimposition of Yonehachi's revenge that takes place within a context of female competition and jealousy upon Shunsui's *Teisô onna hakkenshi* is therefore humorous. But while the type of resentment and revenge for a high cause as in *Hakkenden* or *Teisô onna hakkenshi* would have been founded on a ground of ethicality, Tôbei's humorous twist precisely implies that Yonehachi's revenge induced by jealousy could lead to a breakdown of ethicality and loss of aesthetic appeal (cf. his words "fighting with another woman makes you unattractive"). As with the female ghosts that appear to be lurking at the intertextual horizon of the *Shunshoku* series, Tôbei's humorous remark again alludes to the possibility of a dangerous excess of emotionality and physical violence that, not only because of Tôbei's fortunate intervention on the precincts of the Susaki Benten shrine, is mostly elided from Shunsui's text.<sup>66</sup> At the same time, however, Tôbei's reference to *Teisô onna hakkenshi* also points to another important movement in the *Umegoyomi* series, which consists, as I argue, in the moral and heroic sublimation of female "human feeling" through its metaphorical superimposition on the "chivalrous woman" (*onnadate*) motive and the ethical channeling of its aggressive and potentially subversive force.

### **2.3. Aggressive Love as Ethical Force: The *Onnadate* Metaphor and its Gender Dynamics**

While intertextually pointing to the potentially subversive dimension of female jealousy and resentment, Shunsui also presents the theme of "love" within the context of a

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<sup>65</sup> It should be noted that Shunsui's *Teisô onna hakkenshi*, although partly conceived as a parody of Bakin's *Hakkenden*, is a predominantly serious text, which in its tone shows a close affinity to the *yomihon* genre. See Itasaka Noriko's essay "Somanjin to Bakin. Kusazôshi ni okeru hiroin-zô no henshen" (in Itasaka 2010) for a concise and very informative account of the rising importance of strong and martially competent female protagonists from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onward in *gôkan* ("bound booklets") and *yomihon* writings. Shunsui's parody can most probably be seen as an extension of this tradition.

<sup>66</sup> *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* contains descriptions of physical fights between Yonehachi and Adakichi (see for example pp. 346-347), but the text concludes with the reconciliation of the two figures as "sisters" united by a strong homosocial bond.

metaphorical discourse that ethically elevates his female protagonists to martial heroines of love. In his authorial comment, which is appended to chapter 9 of *Shunshoku umegoyomi* (i.e. the chapter that ends with the allusive reference to the first sexual encounter between Tanjirô and Ochô), Shunsui makes the following statement:

The author humbly remarks: If I fill my book with such [erotic] scenes it would seem as if my intention was to teach lewd behavior to women and children and this would be most despicable. Ah, but this is not the case! A man of Antiquity [Confucius] once said: When I look at the behavior of three different men, there will be one who can be my teacher.<sup>67</sup> A proverb says: Examining the way a different person acts can help one mend one's own ways. Since my books are generally written for women readers, they tend to be badly done and vulgar. However, the women I depict only seem to be lewd, but in truth they all possess the deep feeling of chastity and virtue [*teisô setsugi no shinjô*]. I don't depict women that would have intercourse with different men, be stirred by sexual desire for the sake of money, behave immorally or be deficient in the Womanly Way of virtue. Although my books contain numerous erotic words [*engo*], the intent [*kokorozashi*] of the men and women in it is clear and unclouded, and its four heroines [*joryû*] Konoito, Chôkichi, Oyoshi and Yonehachi, although they all have different characters (*fûshi*), are without exception faithful and courageous [*teiretsu isagiyoku shite*], and in no way could they be shamed by any male hero [*masurao ni hajizu*]. At the end of the book you will see how each of them protects her man with female virtue and proves peerless in such a way.<sup>68</sup>

Shunsui's statement appears to aim at a kind of didactic camouflage whose objective it would be to legitimize the presence of "erotic words" and scenes in his book and to avert the censors' attention from them, and it would be undoubtedly fair to assume that Shunsui intended such a camouflage to a certain extent. At the same time, I would argue that Shunsui's heroic elevation of his female protagonists, much beyond the mere logic of didacticism, also reconfigures the love theme ethically in perhaps unprecedented fashion.

In his *Shunshoku* series, Shunsui appropriates and merges two distinct literary stereotypes with regard to female virtue and morality: on the one hand, the stereotype of the faithful loving wife or courtesan who keeps faith with her husband or customer even despite his social and financial downfall and, on the other hand, the stereotype of the "chivalrous

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<sup>67</sup> See Confucius, *Analects*, VII.22 (*Analects*, 71).

<sup>68</sup> *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 148.

woman” (*onnadate*) whose martial exploits equal or even surpass her male peers and be relevant to some high cause that isn’t necessarily connected to the “love” theme.<sup>69</sup> In the preface to the second fascicle (*kôhen*) of *Shunshoku umegoyomi* Shunsui summarizes the story of the faithful wife Mengguang – originally contained in the biography of her husband in the *Houhanshu* (*Later Han History*, 432 A.D.) – and thus inserts the classical Chinese cliché of female faithfulness into the interpretative horizon of his text. He writes:

Now as in times past the gentleness [*yasashiki*] of the human heart outweighs the power of money. Especially in women one would expect a disposition toward gentleness, in good times as well as in bad ones. When the house is thriving and there are no other sorrows, it wouldn’t be hard for anyone to live with beautiful intentions and without showing a resentful face or indulging in futile complaints, but when the house falls down and one becomes poorer and poorer it is possible to see the true heart [*makoto no kokoro*] of a person. When a man and a woman share their first pillow in the bedchamber they swear to grow old together and to be buried in the same grave, but once the man’s fortunes have fallen, the promises that they happily made for each other when they were intimately and fervently exchanging pledges for the lives to come scatter like the crimson leaves and fade away like the withering autumn grasses, which all is very sad indeed! In the past there lived a woman called Mengguang in China. Although she was a daughter of wealthy and high-born parents, when her husband Ling Bochun by and by lost his standing in the world and finally had to retire to Baling to become a monk and as they had to live there under the most dire circumstances, Mengguang didn’t become depressed at all and instead she followed her husband to plough the fields and to cut grasses with him, and even though she had to weave garments with her own hands and to do lowly work for other people she always served her husband with the utmost courtesy [*reigi o atsuku otoko ni tsukaete*] and she served him in all earnestness [*makoto o tsukushite*] without begrudging the wealth and high status of others. Ah! The young girls of today aren’t even able to protect their virtue half as much as Mengguang did. They turn their back to their obligations and to the Womanly Way and they wear nice clothes only to boast about them. [...].<sup>70</sup>

Mengguang’s story indeed mirrors the kernel of the plot of *Shunshoku umegoyomi*. Through the machinations of two evil clerks, Tanjirô who is the adopted heir to a thriving Yoshiwara

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<sup>69</sup> The cliché of the faithful courtesan whose “true love” doesn’t allow her to abandon an intimate customer even if his fortunes dwindle is well illustrated in the *ninjôbon* by Hanasanjin (1790-1858) for instance. See Langer 2002 for a discussion of Hanasanjin’s texts written in the 1810s and 1820s. Sara Langer’s book also provides an appendix with detailed and useful plot summaries for the discussed texts. A very useful recent handbook for the development of the *ninjôbon* genre prior to the publication of Shunsui’s *Shunshoku* series is Kokubungaku kenkyû shiryôkan (eds.) 2010, which moreover provides an excellent bibliography on *ninjôbon* editions and scholarship.

<sup>70</sup> *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 92.

courtesan house business has lost his social status and wealth, and he has to live in seclusion under financially precarious circumstances. Despite his social and financial downfall his two later “wives” Yonehachi and Ochô remain loyal to him and continue “serving their man with the utmost courtesy.” Both women thus conform to the stereotype of the faithful wife or (in Yonehachi’s case) the truthful courtesan. This stereotypical plot kernel notwithstanding, it is however important to note that Shunsui does not merely reiterate the pattern of rather passive and gentle female faithfulness as provided by the Chinese story but he also transcends this pattern by empowering his heroines with a high degree of agency, mobility and aggressive force. This force allows the heroines to “serve” their husband Tanjirô in a perhaps unprecedented way.

One important aspect of female empowerment in the *Shunshoku* series consists in the translation of the ethical categories of heroism – in particular of the stereotypical heroic attributes of the “chivalrous woman” (*onnadate*) – into the sphere of female “love” (*koi*). It goes without saying that categories and terms such as *kokorozashi* (intent, will), *magokoro* (sincerity, truthfulness), *giri* (sense of duty, dutifulness), *isagiyoshi* (courageous, brave) etc., which Shunsui uses to characterize his female protagonists and their exploits related to “love,” were originally gendered male. Only subsequently, in the tradition of texts centering on martially strong women that – according to Itasaka Noriko – started flourishing at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, did these concepts undergo a gender reversal and were “translated” into the chivalrous *onnadate* motive.<sup>71</sup> Although Mengguang as the stereotype of a virtuous wife participates in a certain kind of heroism related to “love” through her ability to resist the hardships and psychological temptations of material loss – another comparable

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<sup>71</sup> See Itasaka’s essay “Somanjin to Bakin” in Itasaka 2010. It should be noted, moreover, that the stereotype of the “chivalrous woman” is deeply rooted in the East Asian literary tradition of female martial exploits and “knight-errantry” (Chin. *xia* 侠). For highly insightful discussions of the motive of female knight-errantry and its inherent gender dynamics and cultural implications, particularly in early modern Chinese vernacular literature, see Lean 2007 (chapter 1) as well as Zeitlin 1993 (chapter 4). On the related topic of self-sacrificing “virtuous women” (*retsujô*) both in the Chinese and Japanese literary context see also Tokuda 2006.

stereotypical form of female heroism would consist in the virtue of “chastity” (*misao* or *teisô*) – her heroism is nonetheless not chivalrous insofar as she remains rather immobile and passive in following or “serving” (*tsukaeru*) her husband. The love-driven female protagonists in the *Shunshoku* series, on the contrary, combine the active chivalrous qualities of the *onnadate* with Mengguang’s faithfulness. In such a way the aggressive and potentially subversive force of their love (as jealousy and resentment) can become reappropriated and rechanneled, thus reemerging as an intrinsically ethical force. This rechanneled aggressiveness also directly relates to these heroines’ relatively high degree of agency, power, mobility and independence in “serving” and – as we shall see – in even “rescuing” their husband.

The love of Shunsui’s female protagonists Yonehachi and Ochô is “chivalrous” insofar as it drives them to be mobile and independent professionally in order to support their “husband” Tanjirô who remains financially dependent and confined to spatial seclusion in his house. Ochô, moreover, decides to become an *onnadate* of love – as it were – at the instigation of Oyoshi who is the only true *onnadate* figure in Shunsui’s text. Ochô who was born into a wealthy household as the mistress’s daughter of the Karakotoya house in Yoshiwara undergoes a series of hardships – including attempted rape and robbery – after the death of her parents and the collapse of her house’s business. She is then miraculously rescued by the *onnadate* Oyoshi who treats her like a younger sister and offers her shelter in her house. When Ochô dreams of the hardships of her fiancé Tanjirô one night and thus becomes aware of them, Oyoshi urges her to sell herself into a two-year contract and to become a *jôruri* chanter in order to provide Tanjirô with financial support. Ochô’s decision to do so is spurred in particular by Oyoshi’s following words:

“To rescue [*sukuu*] Tan-san from the hardships under which he is now suffering would be a means to show him your faithfulness [*misao*] and the truthfulness of your

heart [*kokoro no makoto*]. Wouldn't this now be a good opportunity to make up your mind?"<sup>72</sup>

This statement is interesting insofar as it combines the idea of the *onnadate* who heroically “rescues” other people in peril (in Oyoshi’s case predominantly, but not exclusively, women) with Mengguang’s wifely virtues of “faithfulness” and “truthfulness.”<sup>73</sup> Ochô’s decision to sell herself into a *geisha* contract leads to dependence, confinement and also new suffering as particularly the plot involving her aged greedy mistress Okuma reveals. At the same time, the young girl also reaches the metaphorically martial and chivalrous determination to “rescue” her lover by providing him with financial support. The same is in fact true for Yonehachi. Through the kind assistance of her fellow courtesan Konoito and the latter’s wealthy customer Tôbei who ransoms her from her contract in the Yoshiwara quarter, Yonehachi is able to establish a business of her own as an “independent geisha” (*jimae geisha*) in Fukagawa. She thus acquires a new degree of mobility and agency that she would have never possessed as a Yoshiwara courtesan. It is also significant that the only reason why Yonehachi asks Tôbei (through Konoito’s mediation) to ransom her from the quarter is to gain the mobility necessary to regularly meet and support her lover Tanjirô.

Oyoshi who is the only truly martial *onnadate* figure in *Shunshoku umegoyomi* conspicuously differs from both Yonehachi and Ochô. Like the latter two heroines, Oyoshi is also a woman in love who because of her amorous feelings chooses to give up her work as a courtesan. Unlike Yonehachi and Ochô, however, Oyoshi becomes a hairdresser for women

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<sup>72</sup> *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 114. It should be noted, however, that Oyoshi also shows a certain hesitation in urging Ochô to sell herself because she is aware that advising her young protégé to engage in a “service that stains the body” (*hadami o kegasu yô na tsutome*) could damage her own reputation as a virtuous *onnadate*. Moreover, negotiating with the late owners of the Karakotoya house in order to free Ochô from her obligations to the house was apparently also one of the favors that Oyoshi performed for Ochô in addition to rescuing her from her kidnappers, and Oyoshi muses that urging the girl to sell herself would imply a contradiction with her prior efforts to rescue her (see *ibid.*).

<sup>73</sup> At some later point in *Shunshoku umegoyomi* Ochô is also likened to the female protagonist Okaru in the *jôri* play *Kanadehon chûshingura* (*The Storehouse of Loyal Retainers*, 1748) who sells herself to a brothel in order to provide her husband with the financial means to participate in the vendetta for his deceased lord En’ya (see for this reference *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 120). Ochô, however, not only sacrifices herself by selling her body like Okaru but also attempts to actively support and “rescue” her fiancé in the *onnadate* vein.



(*onna kamiyui*) and a martial *onnadate* not in order to financially support her husband in spite but to preserve her chastity for the man whom she loves.<sup>74</sup> This man is Tôbei whom Oyoshi has temporarily lost but hopes to find again. When she unexpectedly meets Tôbei again after many years of separation, Oyoshi significantly addresses him with the following words:

Yoshi: “Since I was looking forward to seeing you [Tôbei] in Edo again as you said we would [when we last parted from each other], I instantly decided to become an independent chivalrous woman [*kimama no isamihada* 侠客]. And although in my heart I felt a bit ashamed about it, the reason why I threw away my *shamisen* and became a hairdresser for women once I returned from the trip [where I had met you] was because of my strong determination not to be engaged in any light business [*uwaki na shôbai*], let alone to please any other men [as a geisha], if I were ever to meet you again. Even if my chastity might sound conceited to you [*unubore sugita misao*], please bear this in your mind.”<sup>75</sup>

Although Oyoshi’s decision to become an “independent chivalrous woman” is thus triggered by her love and ethical desire for sexual purity, once in her new role she martially fights with the goal of rescuing other people and her love doesn’t play any fundamental role in her truly chivalrous existence any more. Interestingly, however, once Oyoshi meets Tôbei again she completely abandons her chivalrous independence and instead adopts more genuinely feminine gender attributes such as gentleness, helplessness and dependence on male emotional and financial support.<sup>76</sup> In this way, Oyoshi’s double identity or character incongruity – oscillating between *onnadate* chivalry and gentle femininity – fundamentally

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<sup>74</sup> For Oyoshi’s and Tôbei’s unusual backgrounds and stories see *ibid.* 164-169. Maeda Ai provides an interesting discussion of the specific local roles of hairdresser shops (*kamiyuidoko*) in the city of Edo. Hairdressers usually had their shops strategically in front of the gates of urban districts (*machi kido*) and they thus fulfilled basic policing and administrative functions similarly to the district’s gatekeeper, in addition to following their trade. By virtue of their intimate intercourse with the urban clientele, moreover, hairdressers were often intimately involved in communal decision-making and local control, for instance with regard to the organization of local festivities or weddings (see Maeda’s essay “Bokutô no kakureya” in Maeda 1989c, in particular pp. 12-15). With this information in mind, it is perhaps not difficult to imagine that Shunsui’s female hairdresser Oyoshi can simultaneously act as the head of a band of martially “chivalrous women” who precisely perform basic policing duties such as the prevention of robbery and abduction.

<sup>75</sup> *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 165. On some implications of the linkage between female knight-errantry and “sexual purity” in the Chinese literary tradition see also Lean 2007, 39-40.

<sup>76</sup> For Oyoshi’s character transformation see *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 172. Thanks to this metamorphosis Shunsui is also able to juxtapose Oyoshi again with the unambiguously feminine heroines Konoito, Yonehachi and Ochô.

differs from figures like Ochô and Yonehachi who, while not actively acting as *onnadate*, are nonetheless metaphorically chivalrous in and through their love and the way in which they “rescue” their lover. It is the metaphorical chivalrousness of their feelings that leads to their empowerment as women, i.e. their gain in independence, mobility and power.

The profoundly ethical and metaphorically chivalrous love of Yonehachi and Ochô also implicitly leads back to the aggressive and potentially subversive and excessive force of “human feeling.” The point of conversion between both spheres – i.e. ethical love and potential transgression – in Shunsui’s texts lies in the key terms *iji* (or *ikiji*, i.e. “strong-willed elegance”), *tatehiki* (“competitive spirit”) and *hari* (“competitiveness”). These related categories, which frequently recur in Shunsui’s texts to characterize his female protagonists’ aggressive disputes and homosocial rivalries, at the same time significantly constitute the driving force that motivates their most ethical acts. All three terms are closely linked to the culture of the unlicensed Fukagawa pleasure quarter, especially in opposition to the culture of the licensed Yoshiwara quarter.<sup>77</sup> This fact is reflected by the respective typologies of the female protagonists in *Shunshoku umegoyomi*. Shunsui in fact carefully depicts Konoito as a high-ranking courtesan (*oiran*) of the Yoshiwara quarter, not only by linguistically distinguishing her from the other female figures through her characteristic Yoshiwara speech but also by highlighting her gentler character disposition that conspicuously lacks the qualities of *iji* and *tatehiki*. The more aggressive and strong-willed heroines, on the contrary, are the Fukagawa *geisha* Yonehachi and Adakichi. Ochô who is representative of the “amateur” (i.e. non-*geisha*) and naïve *musume* (“well-to-do daughter”) type nonetheless also

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<sup>77</sup> Maeda Ai provides an insightful discussion of the culture of *ikiji* in the unlicensed Fukagawa pleasure quarter. While originally gendered male, the aesthetics of *ikiji* – encompassing the domains of dress code, music, body performance etc. – came to be appropriated by the more independent Fukagawa *geisha* whose freedom precisely consisted in transdressing and behaving in more male competitive fashion (it should be noted that the names Yonehachi and Adakichi are also male names). See Maeda’s essay “‘Iki’ to Fukagawa” in Maeda 1989 b. See also the essays assembled in Takada 1987, which more generally provide rich material on the cultural history of Fukagawa, as well as Inoue 2009, chapter 5. For various perspectives on the culture of the Yoshiwara pleasure quarter see Seigle 1993, Seigle 2004 as well as the essays assembled in Swinton 1995.

possesses the qualities of *iji* that not only give her the force to resist Yonehachi's strategic attacks (such as in the eel restaurant episode) but also to sacrifice herself by selling her own body for the sake of her fiancé's wellbeing.<sup>78</sup> Oyoshi then is only characterized in terms of *iji* as long as she acts as a true "chivalrous woman" and she conspicuously loses her martial and competitive force once she transforms back into a gentle woman in love.<sup>79</sup> It should be noted, moreover, that all major female figures in the *Shunshoku* series, with the exception perhaps of Adakichi, are repeatedly characterized as "intelligent" or "clever" (*hatsumei* or *rihatsu*). I would think that this not only qualifies them for the kind of *iji*-driven competition but also for the forceful ethicality implied by this quality.

Although the metaphorical chivalrousness and the competitive "strong will" in Shunsui's female protagonists empower them to a certain degree vis-à-vis the male figures in the text, the dynamic and power balance between both genders in *Shunshoku umegoyomi* and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* remains ambiguous and complex. On the one hand, female empowerment leads to a – partly playful – dynamic of gender inversion in which the traditionally female role becomes reassigned to the male figure (especially Tanjirô) and vice versa. This is obvious from the very first chapter of *Shunshoku umegoyomi*, which could be read as the inversion of a *Genji* scene in that its male protagonist Tanjirô like some half-forgotten Heian lady lives in a hidden dilapidated house (*wabizumai*) that needs to be visited

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<sup>78</sup> Yonehachi, throughout *Shunshoku umegoyomi* and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono*, is characterized in terms of *iji* and *tatehiki*. See for instance *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 50 where she voices her desire to become a Fukagawa *geisha* in order to make the life of her lover Tanjirô more comfortable (cf. her words: *omahan no mi o sukoshi mo raku ni sasemôshitê ne*); the narrator then qualifies her determination to help Tanjirô as "a woman's strong will in which truthfulness was apparent" (*shinjitsu mieshi onna no iji*). For Ochô's "strong will characteristic of somebody in love" (*koi no iji*) in the eel restaurant scene see *ibid.* 99; see also *ibid.* 115 where Ochô, after her dream about Tanjirô's hardships, chivalrously decides to sell herself as a *jôruri* singer to provide her fiancé with financial support. Moreover, when the narrator describes how Ochô, the next morning, hurries to Tanjirô's house to tell him about her decision, he defines the two fundamental forces that motivate her decision as "love" (*koi*) and "strong will" (*ikiji*). For Ochô as representative of the *musume* type, also with regard to the expectations projected on her by her female readers, see Jinbô Kazuya's essay "*Shunshoku umegoyomi o megutte*" in Jinbô 1964, in particular pp. 88-89.

<sup>79</sup> For Oyoshi's "strong will" or *iji* as a "chivalrous woman" see *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 171.

by the female protagonists who provide him with emotional and financial support.<sup>80</sup> Tanjirô – whom Yonehachi once even terms a “male concubine” (*otoko mekake*)<sup>81</sup> – could thus be described as an immobile, passive and somehow negative center around which the female figures and their activities gravitate. Tanjirô’s passivity and absence also enables them to develop a strong agency as love-driven chivalrous heroines and to engage in homosocial bonding (especially toward the end of *Umegoyomi* and *Tatsumi no sono*), which could be seen as another important medium of female strength. At the same time, however, female agency also appears inherently limited in Shunsui’s texts, especially in comparison with the type of masculinity that is embodied by Tôbei. Chiba no Tôbei, a rich lumber merchant, fundamentally differs from Tanjirô in that he is not only good looking but also possesses a degree of agency and power that always exceeds the one of the female figures. This not only becomes clear when he removes Adakichi as Yonehachi’s rival but also when he ransoms Ochô from her self-made contract as a *jôruri* singer and thus brings about, in *deus ex machina* fashion, the auspicious ending of Shunsui’s plot. Tôbei is also the only male figure in both *Shunshoku umegoyomi* and *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* characterized in terms of *iji* and *tatehiki* and he is moreover, unlike Tanjirô, described as a “chivalrous man” (*kyôkaku* 侠客, glossed as *kishô*).<sup>82</sup> Tôbei’s chivalrousness also directly relates to his physical strength, which by far exceeds the one of Tanjirô.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Maeda Ai argues that the spatial setting of Tanjirô’s place of hiding in the outskirts of Edo (in Nakanogô in Koume) symbolically removes the scene both from the *chônin* world of Edo (and its moral constraints) and from the Yoshiwara quarter. He argues that it is precisely this unprecedented staging of a hitherto unexplored spatial setting, which makes the new kind of romance and gender dynamic in Shunsui’s *Shunshoku umegoyomi* possible. See Maeda 1994, 422, as well as Maeda 1989a, 29-30.

<sup>81</sup> See *Shunshoku umegoyomi* 182.

<sup>82</sup> For Tôbei’s *iji* and *tatehiki* see *ibid.*, 219 and for his characterization as a “chivalrous man” see *ibid.*, 195. See also *ibid.*, 175 where Tôbei humorously remarks about himself: “Under a surface of despicable rowdiness I possess a rare uprightness.” Tôbei, like the male protagonist Chôga in Shunsui’s *Harutsugedori* (*The Cuckoo or Harbinger of Spring*, 1837), represents a type of “erotic man” (*irootoko*) that radically differs from Tanjirô through his financial power and connoisseurship of the pleasure quarter. For a brief but insightful discussion of the Tôbei figure see Inoue 2009, 91-93. Inoue points out that Tôbei’s name intertextually refers back to several

Tanjirô neither physically nor psychologically possesses Tôbei's male chivalrous qualities and thus facilitates a gender dynamic where the female figures around him assume a chivalrous stance toward him through their love and care. This dynamic, however, doesn't necessarily lead to his disempowerment and loss of agency. On the contrary, the power dynamics between Tanjirô and his lovers or "wives" remains notoriously complex. This complexity comes to the fore, for instance, in the dialogue between Tanjirô and Yonehachi in *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono*, which takes place after Yonehachi finds out about his secret meetings with Adakichi and furiously stamps on a coat (*haori*) that Adakichi made for her lover. In a long moving monologue Yonehachi argues that, if Tanjirô weren't to refrain from meeting her rival as openly as he did before, her honor and pride would be offended, and she asks him to stop doing so. But she also refrains from asking him to stop seeing Adakichi altogether and she tries to advocate a compromise solution. Shunsui writes:

Yone: "[...] Since it must offend your male pride if people were to say that you only broke up with her [Adakichi] because I told you to do so, I will not ask you to break up with her! But having suffered this much already, it would also be deeply frustrating for me if people were to say about me that I can put up with everything. So please, Tan-san, listen carefully to me and just grant me this one thing! Since I won't ask you inconsiderately to stop seeing her, in return please by all means do this favor for me [i.e. don't meet her that openly any more as you did before]! [...]. And please give Adakichi all my apologies for having thus maltreated the *haori* that she specially made for you to wear. If you understand and agree with me I won't repeat this over and over again like now, but if you go again to Masakichi's house or to the Chiyomoto restaurant [to meet Adakichi] then it'll be hard for me again to stay silent. I know that it won't be that frightening or strange for Adakichi or for you to see me in a furious state, but this is my only wish, so please don't let me lose my face, for the sake of the kindness that I've shown you, and even if it's only for somebody like me! Tan-san, please!" So far for the soft technique [*yawara*] of the shrewd [*rihatsu*] Yonehachi. For Tanjirô, however hard he might try, there was indeed no way to find a defect in this forceful reasoning; and although he still didn't despise Adakichi in his heart, when he heard Yonehachi speaking in this way, he couldn't but secretly praise her in his heart and he thought that she was a most remarkable woman with some

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*sharebon*, for instance by Shikitei Sanba (1776-1822), and that the figure in *Shunshoku umegoyomi* subtly rewrites the *sharebon* protagonist. It should be noted, moreover, that Shunsui's Chiba no Tôbei figure is also generally seen as modeled on the author's wealthy merchant patron Saiki Tôbei (or Tsunokuniya Tôbei, exact dates unknown) who is the protagonist of Mori Ôgai's historical chronicle *Saiki Kôï* (1917).

<sup>83</sup> In contrast to Tanjirô, Tôbei is able to physically subdue the evil clerks Kihei and Matsubei who have come to blackmail and extort money from Oyoshi and Ochô (see *Shunshoku umegoyomi*, chapter 19).

weakness in her beauty [*utsukushii uchi ni yowami ga atte*] and born with such cleverness [*rikô ni umarete*]! But then he said in a deliberately light tone: “Why all this talk about ‘understand me’ and ‘apologize for me’? There is nothing to worry about, Yonehachi! Very soon I’ll make sure that everything will be the way you like it, so there is really no need to talk in this way and to worry. Calm down a bit – I’ll make sure that you will feel totally relieved!”<sup>84</sup>

This passage shows how Yonehachi’s feelings waver between a threatening and reconciliatory stance, vacillating between the threat to transform into a furious, resentful and perhaps even vengeful persona (if Tanjirô were to ignore her request) and her determination to engage in compromise, empathy and ethical behavior. Although Yonehachi ironically and perhaps resignedly relativizes her own potential to be “frightening” (*kowai*) it is still noteworthy that she inscribes this potential into the horizon of her being. It goes without saying that, in the end, Yonehachi’s profound empathy and ethicality are emphasized in Shunsui’s plot, especially when she “rescues” Adakichi from the harassments of the usurer Onikurô and provides her former rival with financial and emotional support.<sup>85</sup> Another important aspect of the above-translated passage also lies in Tanjirô’s reaction to Yonehachi’s monologue, which shows the extent to which female emotionality, while being perceived as potentially threatening to a certain degree, can also be depotentialized by the male gaze. Tanjirô’s thoughts thus vacillate between praise, admiration as well as a certain amount of awe and fear for Yonehachi’s cleverness and “forceful reasoning” (*rizume*) and a determination to put her down in a deliberately light manner and to view her as “weak” in an erotically pleasing way. Given the tone of Tanjirô’s response, Yonehachi indeed subsequently muses that Ochô’s presence and availability must have given him the self-confidence to answer her in such a light manner and she then decides to remain as vigilant as possible as she is unable to fully understand her lover. Tanjirô’s thoughts and reactions,

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<sup>84</sup> *Shunshoku tatsumi no sono* 368-370.

<sup>85</sup> See *ibid.* 416-423.

while acknowledging Yonehachi's potentially threatening (or even ghostly) force and power, thus also tame and contain this power at the same time.<sup>86</sup>

While the metamorphosis into a vengeful ghost would constitute the most radical means of female empowerment that by all means is avoided in the *Shunshoku* series, the force of female *iji* and *tatehiki* still retains a residue of aggressive and transgressive power, which is however mostly channeled and mediated in ethical fashion. As the gender dynamics in Shunsui's writings reveal, this channeled force never fundamentally threatens the sphere of male predominance and its power appears rather limited and tamed (Yonehachi's and Ochô's spatial mobility or financial independence thus never jeopardize male interests). It is nonetheless important to note that Shunsui constantly stages an ambivalent movement that conjures up the potentially transgressive power of (female) "human feeling" while at the same time demonstrating the need to control, channel and contain this power ethically. The following section of this chapter examines Takizawa Bakin's long contemporary *yomihon* cycle *Nansô Satomi Hakkenden*. Although its aesthetic format radically differs from Shunsui's *ninjôbon* I argue that Bakin's text is equally driven by complex negotiations between the seemingly incommensurable spheres of Confucian ethics and transgressive "human feeling." While amorous sentiment certainly comes to the fore in these negotiations, we shall see that *Hakkenden* – unlike Shunsui's *Shunshoku* series – particularly dramatizes the fundamentally problematic force of sexual desire.

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<sup>86</sup> In his recent innovative readings of Shunsui's *Shunshoku* series, Inoue Yasushi highlights the important dimension of "performance" (*engi*) through which love and emotionality are often dialogically staged and negotiated in *ninjôbon* writings. He argues that this "performance," instead of being melodramatic and tearful as has often been claimed, in fact has a highly playful and humorous aspect that rather extends than supersedes the *sharebon* world (see as representative for the opposite position Zwicker 2006). Inoue also shows how the performativity of emotional expression in Shunsui's *ninjôbon*, in particular as a skillful manipulation of the eroticized linguistic interplay in dialogue, especially becomes the prerogative of the male "erotic man" (*irootoko*) while it was associated with the female courtesan in prior *sharebon*. See in particular chapters 2, 3 and 4 in Inoue 2009. While I agree with Inoue's argument, my reading highlights and describes Shunsui's ethical negotiations of female feeling as a potentially threatening and transgressive force.

### 3. Encompassing Good and Evil: Ethical Hybridity, Sentiment and Sexual Desire in Bakin's *Nansô Satomi hakkenden*

#### 3.1. *Hakkenden*'s Primal Scene and the Ethical Ambiguity of Human Feeling

The *Urszene* or primal scene, which lies at the origin of Bakin's monumental narrative plot in *Hakkenden*, revolves around a moral impasse or ambiguity discussed by two contending positions or voices. On the one side stands Tamazusa who is the lewd and sexually alluring former lover and later wife of the defeated usurper and treacherous vassal Yamashita Sadakane. Tamazusa's contender is Kanamari Takayoshi who presides the tribunal, which has been erected to convict and execute her as well as the former henchmen of Sadakane.<sup>87</sup> Tamazusa who is known for her beauty and extravagant lifestyle was formerly the concubine of Jin'yo Mitsuhiro, the former lord of Takita castle in Awa. She is accused of having induced her former husband and lord to moral laxness and of having been actively involved in his assassination by Sadakane.<sup>88</sup> When Sadakane murdered lord Jin'yo and usurped his power, he in fact took Tamazusa – his lover even from before the regicide – as his wife and kept indulging in licentious debauchery with her. Sadakane, however, is subsequently slain by lord Yoshizane, the head of the Satomi clan, who also takes Tamazusa as his prisoner and puts her on trial for her involvement in Sadakane's crimes. Tamazusa's tribunal scene is the only moment in *Hakkenden* where the woman is given a voice, and this voice shrewdly challenges the accusations that Kanamari Takayoshi brings up against her. Tamazusa's intelligent and charismatic self-defense, the wickedness of her ulterior motives

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<sup>87</sup> Takayoshi presides the tribunal together with lord Satomi Yoshizane who is the heir and leader of the Satomi clan. Kanamari Takayoshi was a loyal subject to lord Jin'yo Mitsuhiro and went into hiding when Yamashita Sadakane assassinated Jin'yo and usurped his position. It is at Takayoshi's instigation that Satomi Yoshizane slays Sadakane. For a convenient summary in English of the entirety of *Hakkenden*'s plot see Walley 2009, 37-64, as well as for Bakin's life and broader oeuvre Zolbrod 1967.

<sup>88</sup> Bakin's text doesn't provide precise information about Tamazusa's life and crimes prior to her imprisonment and trial. The major bulk of information on her is contained in Takayoshi's accusations (see *Hakkenden* I, 64 and 108-109).



notwithstanding, also contrasts with the rather clumsy mutual accusations of Sadakane's male henchmen whose trial immediately precedes hers.<sup>89</sup>

The trial scene juxtaposes and opposes the two contending positions of Takayoshi and Tamazusa in dialogic fashion. Takayoshi summarizes his charges against Tamazusa in two main points. First, he accuses her of having, in her role as a concubine, “bewitched” (*torakashi*) her former husband Lord Jin'yo into a behavior of sexual exuberance and laxness as a ruler and contributed to the political downfall of loyal ministers by scheming against them. In Takayoshi's view such a behavior constitutes an interference with politics, which is most inappropriate for a concubine. His second point of accusation relates to Tamazusa's adulterous affair (*mitsû*) with the usurper Sadakane. Against these charges Tamazusa deftly responds:

What you say is hard for me to accept. Women in all respects are weak and in all three [Buddhist] realms [of the past, the present and the future] they don't have a house of their own and they only call their husband's house their own. Isn't it therefore true that all their pleasures and sufferings depend on somebody else? And this was even more so the case with me since I wasn't the principal wife of the former lord. When Mitsuhiro died, I had nowhere to go and was then unfortunately desired [*omowarete*] by Lord Sadakane who took care of me in his harem and shared the dream of a second night with me [i.e. made me a wife for a second time]. That I should have become a prisoner so quickly again must be karma from a previous existence! Moreover, your accusation that since the beginning of my service at court, I meddled in political affairs [*watakushi ni matsurigochite*], harmed loyal ministers and started having an affair with Lord Yamashita could never be true and it all stems from your envy! Look at lord Jin'yo's old and young retainers for example, even those who were receiving a high salary, did they not all serve two lords without being ashamed about it at all? And even you [i.e. Takayoshi], when you secretly absconded from our lord, followed the Satomi clan instead and helped them defeat the castle of Takita, could this ever have been for the sake of our former lord?<sup>90</sup> As you can well see, everybody serves one lord or another merely for the sake of one's own profit [*eiri no tame*]. This is even true for men. And women often have to remarry. When you

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<sup>89</sup> Cf. for both trial scenes *Hakkenden* I, 105-115.

<sup>90</sup> Takayoshi was a former retainer of lord Jin'yo, but since his remonstrations weren't heard by his ruler, he absconded from the latter's court and went into hiding in order to gather military forces that would help him crush the evil forces in the state.

therefore blame me for something that is true for so many more people than just me, your charges must be a most hateful and untrustworthy distortion of the truth!<sup>91</sup>

Tamazusa's morally depraved character and thinking certainly lurks behind her intelligent rhetoric. Not only does she endorse a reality in which the opportunism of choosing one's lord "for the sake of one's own profit" outweighs a virtue like loyalty. But Tamazusa also plays down her own active responsibility in having (sexually) corrupted her lord and therefore the state by stylizing her position, as well as womanhood more generally, as passive and helpless. Takayoshi thereupon furiously denounces Tamazusa's duplicity by calling her a "bodhisattva in outward appearance and a demon at heart." Against her accusations he also makes it clear that he only "absconded" from his lord in order to gather military forces (such as the Satomi ones) and to execute his "intent" (*kokorozashi*) of slaying lord Jin'yo's enemies and in particular Sadakane. He also differentiates between himself and those of lord Jin'yo's former retainers who "forgot righteousness for the sake of profit and by following rebellion [i.e. Sadakane] made evil increase."<sup>92</sup>

While Tamazusa's moral depravity undoubtedly motivates her discourse and lends her rhetoric a deceitful quality, her words also ambiguously lend voice to a dimension of legitimacy and truth that tends to be suppressed in Bakin's text. What Tamazusa states about marriage and female dependence on male power, for instance, points to a resentment that could have been the motivation for her immoral acts and that a morally exemplary woman might have been supposed to suppress. (As I will discuss later, Bakin's virtuous heroines in particular often express resentment, thus problematically realigning themselves with Tamazusa and her emotions.) Moreover, a similar kind of moral legitimacy and truth also appears to shine through Tamazusa's subsequent plea through which she briefly succeeds in

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<sup>91</sup> *Hakkenden* I, 109. It should be noted that Walley 2009 provides a complete translation of the first fourteen chapters of *Hakkenden*. Brief excerpts have also been translated by Chris Drake and included in Shirane 2002.

<sup>92</sup> *Hakkenden* I, 111.

gaining lord Yoshizane's sympathy and pardon. This is a significant moment in the text that has repercussions on the entire *Hakkenden* plot and also fundamentally shapes its dynamics of moral ambiguity. Tamazusa replies to Takayoshi's diatribes and further accusations in the following way:

In truth, my sin is deep. However, lord Satomi is a benevolent ruler [*jinkun*]. I have heard that he not only at Tōjō castle but also here made rewards heavy and punishments light and that he didn't even kill his enemies' soldiers when they surrendered to him but instead used them. Even though I have sinned, since I am a woman I certainly won't count that much! If his lordship granted me the wish to be pardoned and to return to my home district that would be an indescribable joy to me! Master Hachirō [i.e. Takayoshi], although there is a difference between a man and a woman, we both used to serve together in the Jin'yo house. For the sake of our old friendship, please intervene for me now!<sup>93</sup>

In the passage that immediately follows this plea Bakin's narrator qualifies Tamazusa as a morally depraved "state-toppling beauty" and metaphorically likens her erotic allure to the smiling and yet tearfully afflicted appearance of "an aronia bush in the rain." Her black hair also has the tempting attractiveness of "drooping spring willow leaves beckoning one closer."<sup>94</sup> Tamazusa's deceitful physical allure thus hides the heart of a demon behind the outward appearance of a bodhisattva. In a similar fashion, her discourse also appropriates Confucian terminology and thought – the idea of Yoshizane as a benevolent ruler who "makes punishments light" and forgives his enemies' soldiers – in order to circumvent the execution that would be appropriate for the extraordinary amount of evil and depravation, which she embodies. It would therefore seem appropriate to conclude that Yoshizane, in his reaction to Tamazusa's plea and particularly in his demand that her life be spared, succumbs to the "state-toppling woman's" discursive and physical deceptions and thus commits an unpardonable mistake as a ruler. This interpretation also seems backed by Bakin's narrative,

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<sup>93</sup> *Hakkenden* I, 111.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* For the characterization of Tamazusa as a "state-toppling woman" (*keikoku no bijo*) see Takayoshi's words see *ibid.* and also *Hakkenden* I, 114.

which positions the account of Yoshizane's feelings and thoughts directly after the evocation of Tamazusa's deceitfully alluring beauty.<sup>95</sup>

I would think, however, that Yoshizane's spontaneous reaction not merely constitutes a mistake, but also partakes in the Confucian ethicality of benevolence and compassion and thus points to the dimension of legitimacy in Tamazusa's plea. From the standpoint of Yoshizane's benevolence as a Confucian ruler, it would certainly be appropriate to pardon the pleading Tamazusa, regardless perhaps even of her immoral deceit and crimes. Yoshizane's reaction is thus neither mistaken nor correct but ethically overdetermined insofar as it probably mirrors both his benevolence and compassion as a ruler and his personal erotic attraction to the "state-toppling" beauty.<sup>96</sup> In such a way, the spontaneous reaction that Tamazusa triggers in Yoshizane constitutes a complicated and not entirely transparent emotional mixture including moral condemnation (Takayoshi's position), compassion as well as sexual desire. I would think, moreover, that not only through Yoshizane's compassion but also already through her own plea the moral status of Tamazusa, which originally was unambiguously defined by sexual depravation and evil, has become ethically ambiguous as well. Tamazusa isn't absolutely evil any more and instead has started to partake in the ethically ambiguous sphere of "human feeling."

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<sup>95</sup> Bakin summarizes Yoshizane's feelings and thoughts in the following way: "He thought Tamazusa pitiful (*fubin*) as she, [physically] flawless as a pearl, appeared to be regretful of her sins and was pleading for her life, even despite the mistakes that she had committed. He thought that he wanted to pardon her [...]" (*Hakkenden* I, 111).

<sup>96</sup> It should be noted that the early Confucian thinker Mencius (probably 4<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC) grounds the ethical virtues of a ruler in specific emotions, which are spontaneous and therefore an anthropological given. The emotional breeding ground or "germ" for benevolence (Chin. *ren*, Jap. *jin*), which is the ruler's most important quality in Mencius' eyes, is the "heart of compassion." Mencius famously writes: "My reason for saying that no man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others is this. Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on the verge of falling into a well. He would be certainly moved to compassion, not because he wanted to get in the good graces of the parents, nor because he wished to win the praise of the fellow villagers or friends, nor yet because he disliked the cry of the child. From this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of the heart of compassion is not human [...]. The heart of compassion is the germ of benevolence; [...]" (*Mencius*, 38). Yoshizane's decision to spare Tamazusa is a spontaneous reaction to her plea and thus corresponds well to Mencius' analysis of an inherently human morality. At the same time, however, Yoshizane's compassion and benevolence as a ruler are also fundamentally complicated by his potential erotic attraction to the "state-toppling beauty."

The moral legitimacy of Tamazusa's plea also seems to be the condition of possibility for her subsequent "resentment" (*urami*) and for her metamorphosis into a vengeful spirit once Yoshizane revokes his promise to grant her pardon. This revocation, again, is brought about by Takayoshi who argues that pardon would be inappropriate given the fact that Tamazusa was involved in lord Mitsuhiro's murder, a crime that he argues is incommensurable to reprove. Takayoshi, moreover, claims that if Yoshizane were to pardon the "criminal woman" (*zaiifu*) he would gain the reputation of having succumbed to her erotic appeal (*sono iro ni medete*) and of having been biased in his judgment. Confronted with these arguments, Yoshizane takes back his decision and admits having "committed a mistake." This incites Tamazusa to utter a resentful curse. She exclaims:

"How this fills me with resentment [*urameshiki kana*]! Kanamari Hachirô [i.e. Takayoshi], if you turn down the order of your lord who wanted to grant me pardon and execute me, not only will you cover a blade with the rust of your own blood soon, but your entire family will also become extinct. And no need to talk about Yoshizane! Having not even finished his order to pardon me, he already changes his mind because of Takayoshi's opinion and in such a way he plays with the lives of other people. This stupid general doesn't live up to his reputation! If you want to kill me, kill me! But your descendents until the generation of your grandchildren will follow the Way of Beasts [*chikushôdô*] and they will become dogs of the passions of this world [*kono yo kara naru bonnô no inu to nasan*]!"<sup>97</sup>

The strong emotion or affect, which lets Tamazusa utter this curse and metamorphoses her into a female ghost haunting the entire subsequent plot of *Hakkenden*, consists in "resentment." Resentment as the emotion of anger, which arises when a figure's honor is slighted or his/her legitimate wishes are not granted, generally has a morally justifiable reason, and I would think that intrinsically evil motivations (such as greed or pure sexual lust) are not compatible with a resentful emotionality. Despite her originally evil nature in Bakin's typological setting, Tamazusa is significantly able to feel "resentment" and it is precisely through the lineage of this emotion that she connects to later virtuous and resentful

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<sup>97</sup> *Hakkenden* I, 114. For an examination of Tamazusa's curse, its literary antecedents and its repercussions (or lacking repercussions) in the subsequent *Hakkenden* plot see Ishikawa Hidemi's essay "Tamazusa juso no shatei" in Suwa 2008. See also Shinoda 2004, 1-64, for a discussion of the Tamazusa episode that takes into account of the rich visual materials (woodblock illustrations etc.) available for the analysis of Bakin's text.

female figures in *Hakkenden*, in particular Hamaji who equally transforms into a ghost. At the same time, lord Yoshizane who is otherwise presented as an unambiguously virtuous ruler also straddles the ambiguous ethical grey zone that encompasses both compassion – for Mencius the emotional condition of possibility for a ruler’s moral benevolence – and sexual desire. In the following two sections I examine how lineages of both male and female figures in *Hakkenden* continue to negotiate and dramatize the ethically ambiguous divide but also the linkages between virtue, sentiment and (immoral) sexual desire.

### **3.2. Allegorizations of Sexual Desire and Ethical Hybridity: The Dog Yatsufusa and his Male Lineage**

The dog Yatsufusa, born shortly after Tamazusa utters her curse, can be viewed as an allegory of sexuality and sexual desire. As the reincarnation of Tamazusa’s resentful spirit he keeps haunting the Satomi clan and forces its descendents to follow the “Way of Beasts” (*chikushôdô*), which, contrary to its ethically more elevated correlate, the “Way of Humans” (*ningendô*), directly evokes sexuality and lust.<sup>98</sup> Yatsufusa’s carnal nature comes to the fore in the narrative sequence where he not only desires to marry the human princess Fusehime but also violently enforces lord Yoshizane’s promise to give him his daughter as wife.<sup>99</sup> After receiving the princess, Yatsufusa abducts her to a solitary cave in the wilderness of Toyama Mountain, most probably with the intention to sexually consummate the marriage there. Although Fusehime, upon becoming his wife, under the threat of stabbing him with her blade, succeeds in making the dog swear not to lustfully approach her, the wildness of the animal’s canine desires still seems ominously inscribed into the wilderness and isolation of the

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<sup>98</sup> The raccoon dog (*tanuki*) that temporarily rears Yatsufusa after the death of his dog mother is also identified as a reincarnation of Tamazusa. See *Hakkenden* I, 217.

<sup>99</sup> For the entire narrative sequence involving the marriage of Fusehime and Yatsufusa, their life in the Toyama cave as well as their death see *Hakkenden* I, 150-254.

mountains surrounding the cave. Bakin summarizes Fusehime's actions and thoughts upon arriving at the Toyama Mountain cave in the following way:

When the dog stopped there [i.e. in front of the cave], bending his front legs and lying down, the princess understood his intent, and she quietly descended from his back and looked around her. She could see that the cave must have been inhabited in the past since a worn-out mat was lying on the ground and the remaining ash from a campfire could also be seen. She said to herself: "I am not the only one who, leaving the world and being left by it, chose to live here deeply in the mountains," and when she thereupon entered the cave and sat [on the mat], the dog was still standing close to her. Since leaving Takita Castle she had been holding the eight scrolls of the Lotus Sutra in her hands as well as paper and an ink stone, and in her fear she stayed awake throughout the night by intoning the sutra under the moonlight. She was also still wearing the crystal bead necklace around her neck, which En no gyôja had given her, thus responding to her parents' prayers. The only protection she now had was to rely on the gods and the buddhas. Although she was convinced that this beast [*chikushô*] was able to understand human language, what if it had led her to the depths of this mountain only to deceive her? And even if this was not the case, should sexual desire [*jôyoku*] suddenly awake in him he would surely forget about his original vow [not to consummate the marriage]! But if he were to approach her with lustful thoughts [*tawakeki kokoro*] he would commit the sin of acting against the wish of his master [i.e. Fusehime]. If such a thing should happen she was determined to kill him with one stroke of her blade, and thinking this way she was able to calm her mind. Untying the laces of the bag in which she was carrying the blade and holding it tight in her right hand, she continued reading the sutra. Since he probably understood what this meant, Yatsufusa didn't dare to draw closer, but he still, enraptured [*horebore to*], stared at the princess's face while sitting or standing next to her. His tongue was also hanging out of his mouth and saliva dropping down from it, and when he licked his coat or his nose his incessant panting could be heard.<sup>100</sup>

This scene is pervaded by an ominous tension. Fusehime has become the object of Yatsufusa's lustful gaze, which is cast upon her body in the lonely cave and reinforced by other markers of his animal desire such as his dripping saliva or his panting. The text also casts light on Fusehime's doubts about the trustworthiness of the dog's vow not to consummate the marriage, and we learn that she counterbalances these doubts by her firm determination to protect herself with her knife and through sutra readings. The potential doom of this scene, however, becomes to a certain extent mitigated in the subsequent narrative. Bakin's description of the unequal couple's life in the cave in fact illustrates the exemplary depotentialization of Yatsufusa's sexual desire through Fusehime's chaste virtue

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<sup>100</sup> *Hakkenden* I, 208.

and religiosity that powerfully resist and finally defeat the beast's immoral inclinations. The key phrase, which summarizes this process, also suddenly appears on Fusehime's magical crystal beads: "In such a way the beast becomes enlightened to the Buddha's heart" (*nyoze chikushô hotsu bodaishin*).<sup>101</sup> Through the "auspicious power" (*iriki*) of Fusehime's readings of the Lotus Sutra, Yatsufusa is able to forsake his sexual desire (*jôyoku*) and to learn the joy of listening to the sounds of the holy text, which Fusehime keeps intoning not only for her own protection but also for the sake of the dog's salvation.<sup>102</sup> It could thus be argued that the overcoming of Yatsufusa's sexual desire and of his animality through Fusehime's religious devotion prefigures the teleology of the later *Hakkenden* narrative, which constantly stages the eight dog-warriors' and other figures' reiterated attempts to defeat Tamazusa's curse and the legacy of her lewd sexuality through good acts.

However, Yatsufusa's sexuality does not entirely disappear through the power of Fusehime's virtue but it ambiguously returns by inscribing its mark onto the princess's body. She becomes pregnant with the dog's puppies even without (allegedly at least) sexual intercourse with her animal husband. Shortly after realizing that her menstruation has stopped, Fusehime also discovers that her head as mirrored back by the river water has taken on the shape of a dog while, a moment later, the mirror image oscillates back again to its original human shape.<sup>103</sup> An explanation for this highly ambiguous resurgence of Yatsufusa's canine nature and sexuality in and on Fusehime's body is provided by the divine flute-playing and ox-riding woodcutter boy – a manifestation of En no gyôja – whom the princess meets in the wilderness of Toyama mountain after becoming aware of her pregnancy. When

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<sup>101</sup> This phrase already ironically appears on Fusehime's beads when Yatsufusa kills Yoshizane's enemy Kagetsura, which seals his marital claim (cf. *Hakkenden* I, 170-171). The phrase is later again replaced by the characters of the eight Confucian virtues, which had originally been written on the beads (see *ibid.* 222-223). The eight virtues are: benevolence (*jin*), righteousness (*gi*), courtesy (*rei*), wisdom (*chi*), loyalty (*chû*), fidelity (*shin*), filial piety (*kô*) and fraternity (*tei*).

<sup>102</sup> Cf. *Hakkenden* I, 208-209.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. *Hakkenden* I, 210.



Fusehime in her bewilderment asks the boy how it could have been possible to become pregnant “without a husband” he laughingly replies to her in the following manner:

“How can it be true that you don’t have a husband? What else would Yatsufusa then be who was wed to you by your parents?” When the boy rebuked her in that way Fusehime changed her expression and said: “You only know about the beginning [of my relationship with Yatsufusa] and not what happened later on. For such and such reasons my parents weren’t able to do anything about it and so I had to shamefully pass months and days in the company of this housedog [*kaiinu*] in the deep mountains. However, thanks to the protection of the holy sutra, my body fortunately hasn’t been sullied and Yatsufusa’s only pleasure was to listen to the sutra readings. Although I don’t have any proof, my body is pure and undefiled. Only the gods might have an answer, but merely asking how I could possibly have become pregnant from this Yatsufusa who belongs to another species already fills me with disgust and repulsion. Talking to a silly child about this makes me feel bitter!” she said angrily and her eyes were filled with tears. The boy, however, laughed more and more and said: “I can see everything very clearly and I also know about the details. But you only know one thing and don’t know about the rest. Therefore let me clear up your confusion! The mystery of the mutual attraction between things [*butsurui sōkan*] cannot be fathomed by an ordinary intellect. [...]”<sup>104</sup>

According to the boy’s subsequent explanation, “mutual attraction” in nature can occur between unanimated objects like stones or trees and then lead to the production of offspring even without sexual intercourse although sexual pleasure is sometimes involved. Some of the learned historical references, which the boy cites to illustrate his point, are indeed obviously obscene and ironic.<sup>105</sup> As the boy’s subsequent discourse reveals, however, the “mutual attraction” between Yatsufusa and Fusehime also implies a strong emotional bond that leads to the princess’s unexpected pregnancy. His explanation continues in the following manner:

It is true, your body wasn’t sullied by the dog. And now Yatsufusa also doesn’t have any sexual desire [*yoku*] for you any more. But you were married to him and this is

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<sup>104</sup> *Hakkenden* I, 215-216.

<sup>105</sup> For instance the story of the consort of the king of Chu from China who enjoyed rubbing herself against a steel pillar and then gave birth to a block of iron (see *Hakkenden* I, 216). Maeda Ai argues that the idea of a “mutual attraction between things” (*butsurui sōkan*) should be seen as encapsulating the inherently animistic and magical logic that pervades Bakin’s narrative. Maeda for instance sees this logic at work in Bakin’s dramatizations of language, which in *Hakkenden* has the magical power to transform other beings and things (as in the scene where Fusehime’s sutra incantations bring Yatsufusa to enlightenment) and thus presents a radical counterfoil to the linguistic regime of modern realism (see Maeda’s essay “*Hakkenden* no sekai. ‘Yoru’ no aregori” in Maeda 1989a, see in particular pp. 68-70). While Maeda’s argument is valuable to a certain extent, I would think it necessary to also emphasize the irony and humor in Bakin’s use of the formula *butsurui sōkan* to obliquely point to the dimension of sentiment and desire, which is otherwise elided from *Hakkenden*’s seemingly unambiguous moral discourse.

why he brought you to these mountains, and he had obtained you [from your father] and this is why in his heart he thought you to be his wife. Since he loves you [*on-mi o mezuru yue*], he enjoyed listening to your intonations of the sutra, and when you saw him embracing the Buddha’s Law, you felt compassion for him [*awaremi tamau*] as if he weren’t different from you. Through these feelings [*jô*] you became attracted to each other [*sude ni ai-kanzu*] and even if your bodies didn’t come together [*ai-yoru koto nashi to iu tomo*], why shouldn’t this suffice to make you pregnant? As I can see it now, there are eight children in your womb. But since your attraction [to Yatsufusa] didn’t become material [*jitsu narazu*] and since these children were made through an immaterial contact, they don’t yet have a body. They will be born in this place without a bodily form and after being thus born they will be born again [i.e. as the eight dog-warriors with a material body]. This is an effect of your karma [*shukuin*] and also a result of your good deeds [*zenka*]. What was the cause [*in*] of this all? In his former body Yatsufusa was a woman with a perverse character [*saga higameru fujin*, i.e. Tamazusa]. Since she felt resentment [*uramuru koto aru o mote*] for your father the *ason* Yoshizane, she became an angry ghost [*enkon*] and transformed into a dog in order to bring shame to you and to your father. This was the cause of karma. What then was the result? Yatsufusa obtained you as his wife, but without sullyng your body, through the auspicious effect [*kudoku*] of your Lotus Sutra intonations, he was able to dispel his resentment and to become enlightened to the Buddha’s heart, and this is why he left these eight children with you. The number eight refers to the character “eight” [*yatsu*] in Yatsufusa’s name [which was given to him because of the eight patches on his coat], and it’s also the number of scrolls of the Lotus Sutra.<sup>106</sup>

Although Yatsufusa is here described as having been able to forsake his “sexual desire” (*yoku*), which is explicitly connected back to Tamazusa’s “perverse nature” and her resentful wish to bring shame upon Yoshizane and his daughter, the woodcutter-boy’s explanation also points to the ethically ambiguous emotional bond that developed between the two married partners. Yatsufusa, on the one hand, listens to Fusehime’s sutra invocations because of the loving feelings that he harbors for her. On the other hand, the princess – “with deep compassion in her heart, and unconsciously responsive to the dog’s vital energy” (*awarebu kokoro fukaku shite, shirazu shite sono ki o kanji*)<sup>107</sup> – also develops an “attraction” that is strong enough to bring about her womb’s ambiguously “immaterial” pregnancy with Yatsufusa’s puppies. It should be noted that the concept of “vital energy” (*ki*) in Neo-Confucian discourses was precisely seen as the force that could disrupt the immovable

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<sup>106</sup> *Hakkenden* I, 216-217.

<sup>107</sup> These are Yoshizane’s words (see *Hakkenden* I, 234), but the content is similar to *ibid.* 216-217.

ethical ideality of “principle” (*ri*) and produce the problematic movement of emotions and desires.<sup>108</sup> The fact that Fusehime is “unconsciously responsive to the dog’s vital energy” problematically relativizes her immutable virtue and also rationalizes her pregnancy, which, merely from the standpoint of that virtue (i.e. “principle”), must indeed remain incomprehensible.<sup>109</sup> I would thus argue that, while presenting a surface discourse of desexualization through virtue in which Yatsufusa’s (alias Tamazusa’s) sexualized “resentment” becomes replaced by “enlightenment to the Buddha’s heart,” Bakin’s text also obliquely and ironically brings back the theme of amorous sentiment and sexual desire. Sentiment and desire not only shine through the mutual affection between the dog and the princess but are also inscribed as a trace or mark – i.e. as the sexualized mark of pregnancy – onto Fusehime’s body. Implicitly sexualized inscriptions, moreover, abound in Bakin’s text. The peony-shaped birthmarks of the eight dog-warriors constitute almost imperceptible traces of Yatsufusa’s original animal nature and sexuality. The dog character (*inu* 犬) in their names or the implicit allusions to the writing of “Yatsufusa” (八房) in the names of other

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<sup>108</sup> For a discussion of the interrelation of the concepts of “vital energy” (Chin. *qi*, Jap. *ki*), “movement” (Chin. *dong*, Jap. *dō*) and “human feeling” (Chin. *qing*, Jap. *jō*) in Neo-Confucian discourse see Huang 2001, 27. See also for the broader philosophical implications Metzger 1977, esp. chapter 3. Huang writes: “*Xing* (nature), *li* (principle), *tian* (Heaven), and *jing* (tranquility) belong to the metaphysical realm; *qi* (ether [or vital energy]), *dong* (activity), and *qing* belong to the experiential realm. Although Zhu Xi and other Neo-Confucian thinkers never intended the distinction between the two realms to be rigorously dualistic, the implied view that evil becomes possible only in the experiential realm is unmistakable and suggests a dyadic pattern of moral valorization (the metaphysical realm is absolutely good, whereas evil often arises in the experiential realm)” (Huang 2001, 27).

<sup>109</sup> In a recent article and also in his dissertation, Glynne Walley argues that the representation of Fusehime in *Hakkenden* as exceedingly virtuous challenges contemporary Edo-period assumptions about the female gender as less capable of ethical behavior than the male gender. Walley also shows how, as a consequence, Fusehime’s unambiguous ethicality leads to an ambiguity of her gendering as both female and male (one example of Fusehime’s gender ambiguity, according to Walley, is her association with the Dragon King’s daughter in the Devadatta Chapter of the Lotus Sutra who metamorphoses into a man upon reaching enlightenment). While I agree with Walley’s insights into the blurring of gender categories in *Hakkenden* (which, however, as Lean 2007 or Zeitlin 1993 show, is nothing unusual in early modern representations of virtuous women), I argue that Bakin’s text more fundamentally also blurs the ethical stability and identity of almost all of its figures, including Fusehime. Walley’s point, however, is that the ethical dichotomy of good and evil remains the only unchallenged one in *Hakkenden*. For Walley’s argument about gender see Walley 2012 and Walley 2009, chapter 5.

male protagonists weave a net of similar canine traces throughout the long narration of *Hakkenden*.<sup>110</sup>

What, however, is the moral status of these marks and perhaps of sexual desire more generally in *Hakkenden*? Do they only point to the depravation of Tamazusa's "perverse nature" that needs to be overcome and silenced or is their status more ambiguous, i.e. neither good nor bad but both at the same time in more complex fashion? Yatsufusa, as an allegorization of sexual desire, is in fact never unambiguously characterized as evil in the way other human or supernatural beings in Bakin's text are.<sup>111</sup> This is significantly the case even before his conversion to Buddhist enlightenment through Fusehime's sutra readings. The "strange story" (*ayashiki monogatari*) of his birth and early upbringing by the raccoon (*tanuki*), a reincarnation of Tamazusa's angry spirit, is loaded with an unspecified atmosphere of "suggestive ambiguity" (Glynne Walley), which is certainly not auspicious but also not utterly frightening or horrifying either.<sup>112</sup> The dog's story, throughout, is ethically ambiguous. For example, when the raccoon "had realized that this puppy didn't have a mother, she forgot about the enmity [between the two species] and, in nurturing him with her

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<sup>110</sup> Bakin himself theorizes the naming of the figures in his works under the label of *myōsen jishō* 名詮自性 ("the name reveals the true nature"). He for instance writes: "The character 'fuse' [伏] in Fusehime [伏姫] means 'to follow a dog [犬] while being a human [人].' Was it that her disastrous fate was thus fixed already when she was a baby? This must be seen as a case of 'the name reveals one's true nature'" (*Hakkenden* I, 166). As Bakin's explanation clearly puts it, Yatsufusa's canine nature is already inscribed as an ineluctable trace into Fusehime's very name, which underlines the ethically hybrid quality of her "nature." See for a discussion of the phenomenon of *myōsen jishō* in *Hakkenden* Maeda 1989a, 70-75, in particular with regard to the allegorically animalistic names of the many evil characters in the text. For a discussion of *myōsen jishō* as a structural and narrative device in Bakin's writing and literary thought see Nakamura Yukihiro's essay "Takizawa Bakin no shōsetsukan" (in Nakamura 1975) as well as for more detailed information Hattori Hitoshi's essay "Myōsen jishō kō. Bakin no meimeihō" (in Hattori 1997).

<sup>111</sup> Other figures in *Hakkenden* like the shape-shifting monster Ikkaku or the human (although implicitly animalized) murderess Funamushi for instance are associated with a type of sexuality that is unambiguously evil.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Walley 2009, 259 and *Hakkenden* I, 137-140. It should be noted that not only Yatsufusa's but also Fusehime's birth and early upbringing are overshadowed by Tamazusa's resentful spirit, which underlines the strong affinity between the dog and the princess. As a result of Tamazusa's possession, Fusehime is continuously crying and wreaking havoc as a baby (similarly to Yatsufusa's later transgressive behavior) until her parents let her make a pilgrimage to the ascetic En no gyōja who provides her with the string of magic beads as a token of her future enlightenment and goodness. For a reading of *Hakkenden* and particularly of the Fusehime episode through the lens of the En no gyōja figure see Suwa Haruo's essay "*Hakkenden* no sekai" in Suwa 2008.

milk, seemed to be close to the Way of mutual love (*ken'ai no michi*)."<sup>113</sup> This is surprising as the raccoon, which as Tamazusa's reincarnation should evoke an evil kind of supernatural power, here displays a behavior of ethicality and strong emotional affection toward the puppy. After Yatsufusa is taken home by lord Yoshizane he also, far from showing any particularly evil traits, develops into a likable creature deeply "loved" by Fusehime and by her father. Moreover, after he has captured the head of Yoshizane's enemy, which in itself could be seen as an ethical act that saves the lives of his lord and the entire garrison, he displays the wildness of his animal nature only when Yoshizane doesn't keep his promise of giving him Fusehime as wife. While Yatsufusa's wildness could be viewed as an expression of the violence of his sexual desire, its transgressiveness – like before Tamazusa's resentment – also points back to a legitimate cause and thus radically differs from the crimes and atrocities, which the truly evil figures in *Hakkenden* commit. Yatsufusa's character therefore ambiguously oscillates between ethicality and transgression while never being fundamentally evil, and his moral nature is ambiguous and hybrid. This ambiguity is also literally inscribed into his physical body whose eight patches, while being animalistic manifestations of his canine desire, also symbolically mirror and replicate the eight holy scrolls of the Lotus Sutra.

Although Yatsufusa's sexuality and transgressiveness appear to be merely dormant or latent within the canine birthmarks of the eight dog-warriors and don't affect their otherwise impeccably ethical behavior, they interestingly resurface in other male protagonists in *Hakkenden* whose names allude to Yatsufusa and who thus belong to his broader male lineage. Two interesting figures who, through the writing of their names, could be seen as later reincarnations of the dog in Bakin's long narrative are Obayuki Yoshirô (or Yasuhei)

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<sup>113</sup> *Hakkenden* I, p. 139. The raccoon, however, later on in *Hakkenden* reappears as the shape-shifting nun Myôchin who is an unambiguously evil figure.

and Yamahayashi Fusahachi.<sup>114</sup> Their stories, which both stage ethically problematic transgressions, point back to the moral ambiguity that lies at the heart of Yatsufusa's nature. The lowly samurai Obayuki Yoshirô, through an illicit sexual relationship with the woman Otone, fathers the twin sons Rikijirô and Shakuhachi who are born at about the same time as the rest of the dog-warriors. Yoshirô, thanks to the intervention of the pregnant wife of his master Inuyama Dôsetsu (the father of the dog-warrior Inuyama Dôsetsu and of Hamaji), escapes capital punishment for his transgression, is banned and spends the rest of his life in repentance as a fisherman at the Kaniwagawa river. The woman Otone is kept in the Inuyama household where she becomes the wet nurse for the master's son Dôsetsu. As an old man, Yoshirô, together with his two grown-up sons Rikijirô and Shakuhachi, assists the four dog-warriors Shino, Sôsuke, Genhachi and Kobungo in fighting back their enemy at the Kaniwagawa riverbank. This enemy is the same as the one that was responsible for the elimination of the Nerima house to which Yoshirô, despite his exile and loss of position, still feels loyal.<sup>115</sup> After the defeat of the Nerima clan, Otone as well as the two wives of her sons (named Hikute and Hitoyo) have escaped to a solitary hut at the foot of Mount Arameyama in Shinano province, and Yoshirô and five of the eight dog-warriors (including Dôsetsu) rejoin them there after the Kaniwagawa battle. Within the context of a highly melodramatic

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<sup>114</sup> The name Yoshirô 世四郎 alludes to Yatsufusa insofar as it is identical in sound with the name of the housedog, which Shino kept as a boy and which was a reincarnation of Yatsufusa. The surname Obayuki 姨雪 has canine connotations through the proverb "Snow (*yuki*) is the aunt (*oba*) of a dog," (see Dôsetsu's explanation in *Hakkenden* III, 75 and 188). The characters in the names of the two twin sons of Yoshirô, Rikijirô 力二郎 and Shakuhachi 尺八, in complicated fashion also rearrange the characters in the name Yatsufusa 八房 (see for an explanation *ibid.*, 75). The name Fusahachi 房八, moreover, is merely the inversion of Yatsufusa 八房. For the meaning of the surname Yamahayashi 山林, which doesn't have any canine connotation, see Fusahachi's own explanation in *Hakkenden* II, 296. See also my previous footnote on Bakin's theory of *myôsen jishô* ("the name reveals one's true nature"). For a discussion of Bakin's digressive mode of writing and narrative construction, which often pushes away from the eight dog-warrior protagonists and instead focuses at great length on a plethora of seemingly secondary figures, see Itasaka Noriko's essay "*Nansô Satomi hakkenden no kôsô*" (in Itasaka 2010), which is insightful in particular with regard to the Rikijirô and Shakuhachi episode.

<sup>115</sup> For the account of the battle at the Kaniwagawa riverbank see *Hakkenden* III, 61-68. Yoshirô's former master Inuyama Dôsetsu was a loyal retainer of the Nerima clan, which was exterminated at the battle of Ikebukuro (where Dôsetsu was also killed).

succession of scenes, which take place during one night in the solitary mountain hut, the two ghosts of the twin brothers Rikijirô and Shakuhachi who died at the Kaniwagawa battle appear. Without identifying themselves as ghosts, they beg Dôsetsu – the son of Dôsaku, Yoshirô’s former deceased master – to rehabilitate their father in view of his loyal deeds, and it also becomes clear that they not only died in battle in order to avenge their former lord but also to rehabilitate the honor of their father. Dôsetsu who is profoundly moved by what he sees and hears ultimately pardons the transgression of Yoshirô and Otone, urges the old couple to officially marry and also presides their belated wedding ceremony.<sup>116</sup>

Yoshirô’s and Otone’s illicit sexual affair, a punishable transgression, is expiated by the ethical behavior and self-sacrifice in battle of Yoshirô’s twin sons Rikijirô and Shakuhachi. A similar oscillation between transgressiveness and ethicality can also be found in the story of Yamahayashi Fusahachi whose seemingly transgressive and evil deeds are in fact profoundly ethical. The boatman Fusahachi, the husband of Kobungo’s sister Nui and the father of the youngest of the eight dog-warriors Shinbei, is introduced as a “chivalrous man” (*kyôkaku*) with great physical strength. But allegedly because he lost against the dog-warrior Kobungo in a wrestling competition, he repeatedly and highly aggressively provokes Kobungo and thus displays a type of behavior that seems to qualify him as evil. However, in a melodramatic succession of scenes, which take place during the span of one night in the house of Kobungo’s father Bungobei in Gyôtoku where Kobungo is hiding the ailing Shino (sought after by the evil magistrate) and where Fusahachi’s wife Nui and their young son Shinbei are also present, it turns out that Fusahachi’s violence in truth had a profoundly ethical motivation. That night, Kobungo and Fusahachi fight in Bungobei’s house. After having been deadly wounded by Kobungo, Fusahachi admits that his “true intent” (*honshin*) in provoking him was to get killed so that his severed head, which incidentally exactly looks

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<sup>116</sup> For the entire sequence of scenes that takes place in Otone’s Arameyama mountain hut see *Hakkenden* III, 112-202.

like Shino's, could be used to deceive the evil magistrate and to thus save Shino's life. Fusahachi also says that his blood (as well as the blood of his wife Nui who has been killed by Fusahachi in an outburst of strong aggression) should be used to heal Shino's lockjaw infection (*hashôfû*).<sup>117</sup> Fusahachi, moreover, reveals that the even deeper motivation of his self-sacrifice is to rehabilitate the honor of his grandfather Somaki Bokuhei who formerly attempted to kill the evil usurper Yamashita Sadakane but was tricked into attacking and murdering his lord Jin'yo Mitsuhiro instead. In his unsuccessful attack Bokuhei also killed Nanako Shichirô who was lord Jin'yo's loyal retainer and the younger brother of Kobungo's father Bungobei.<sup>118</sup> Through his suicidal self-sacrifice for Kobungo and Shino Fusahachi is ultimately able to lift the shame that originated with his grandfather's mistake and that had been hovering over his family since.

While both Yoshirô and Fusahachi thus participate in Yatsufusa's transgressiveness, their nature in the end turns out to be profoundly ethical. Their stories are melodramatic generational narratives of transgressive sin and expiation through virtuous deeds and they seem to constitute miniature *mises en abyme* of *Hakkenden*'s broader narrative telos of desexualization, demonstrating the extent to which Yatsufusa's originally transgressive nature has become ethically pacified. While canine transgressiveness thus appears to have ultimately verged on ethicality, it nonetheless also, unsettlingly perhaps, keeps pointing to the sphere of the unambiguously evil. Obayuki Yoshirô in fact, through the symbolism of his name, has a canine *Doppelgänger*, Awayuki Nashirô, who is the adulterous lover of Nabiki

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<sup>117</sup> According to medical wisdom handed down in Kobungo's family – and more precisely from Kobungo's uncle Nanako Shichirô who was killed by Fusahachi's grandfather Bokuhei – drinking a high amount of blood taken from a young man and a young woman together could heal a lockjaw infection. For the memorable scene in which Fusahachi kills both his wife and his son Shinbei see *Hakkenden* II, 290-291. Shinbei, however, miraculously comes to life again as one of the dog-warriors marked by a canine birthmark and provided with a bead (in *Hakkenden* II, 319-320).

<sup>118</sup> For the entire Fusahachi episode see *Hakkenden* II, 222-324. For Fusahachi's background see *Hakkenden* II, 223. For his retrospective narration, which reveals his "true intent" and also provides an account of the story of his grandfather Bokuhei, cf. *Hakkenden* II, 291-302.



(the second Hamaji's foster mother) and the unscrupulous murderer of Yorogi Mukusaku (her foster father). While Yoshirô embodies the humaneness linked to amorous transgression and the possibility to expiate transgression through ethical deeds, Nashirô epitomizes the utterly evil and criminal dimension of sexual desire. Both figures are later reincarnations of the dog Yatsufusa in the *Hakkenden* narrative. Taken together, they point to the opposite extremes of the moral spectrum and thus demonstrate the dramatic extent to which sexuality – and “human feeling” more broadly, which includes sexuality – tends to be ethically ambiguous in Bakin's text. As I will discuss in the following section, this ambiguity also shines through Bakin's representation of female resentment, amorous sentiment and sexual desire.

### 3.3. Female Lineages of Resentment, Amorous Sentiment and Sexual Desire

Bakin's text generally seems to qualify female love as virtuous only insofar as it is not primarily sexual. On the one hand, all virtuous young women in *Hakkenden*, such as the married women Hikute, Hitoyo or Hinakinu or the quasi-married Hamaji, are presented as sexually inactive, at least at the moment when the narration takes place, because their husbands are either dead, absent or sexually abstinent for ritual reasons. In this respect Bakin's narrator can indeed assert that Hamaji's “love” (*renbo*) was “not about lewd pleasure” (*tanoshimite insen to ni arazu*).<sup>119</sup> On the other hand, sexuality and sexual desire are associated with evil and moral depravation. In one of the rare sexually explicit scenes in *Hakkenden*, Bakin depicts the illicit pleasurable intercourse between the evil adulteress Nabiki (the wife of Yorogi Mukusaku and the foster mother of the “second” Hamaji) and Awayuki Nashirô who subsequently murders Mukusaku.<sup>120</sup> The murderess and female arch-

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<sup>119</sup> See *Hakkenden* II, 87.

<sup>120</sup> See *Hakkenden* IV, 171.

villain Funamushi is also shown as indulging in sexual activity with a man whom she is not married with and whom she has deceptively seduced.<sup>121</sup> Unlike Bakin's virtuous and faithful young widows Hikute and Hitoyo, Funamushi also remarries several times after the successive deaths of her husbands. Another evil heroine in *Hakkenden* who displays sexual attractiveness and promiscuous behavior is of course Tamazusa whose adulterous relationship with the usurper Yamashita Sadakane leads to the murder of her husband and lord Mitsuhiro.

While, in this scheme, sexual desire appears to be devoid of ethicality and virtue opposed to sexual desire, I would argue that Bakin's virtuous heroines also problematize this binary and create an ethically ambiguous gray zone. In a "personal note" (*jihyō*), which is inserted into his narrative, Bakin in fact writes:

In this personal note I, master Kyokutei, affirm: The wives and female relatives of the eight dog-warriors such as Hamaji, Nui, Hinakinu, Hikute or Hitoyo, although their chastity and virtue are highly outstanding, all tend to die an early death and are unable to happily age together with their husbands. There are certainly reasons for this, but I cannot give them here. I am sure that, by the end of this book, the reader will understand himself. Among the above-mentioned women, Nui, Hinakinu, Hikute and Hitoyo, although they weren't able to take care for their husbands for a long time, they nonetheless did share the mandarin duck's quilts with them, and the friendship of the Pan and Yang families wasn't in vain for them.<sup>122</sup> Only for Hamaji this was not the case. Although the red ropes of engagement [*sekijō*] had been tied around her feet, the rites of marriage [*gōkin*] couldn't be performed for her. Murdered by a villain, she had no other choice than to take up the wife's broom in the underworld. Who wouldn't feel pity for her! For this reason there is another Hamaji in this story who will ultimately become Shino's wife. Although these two women in one body – one a ghost and the other a living being<sup>123</sup> – seem to be not the same, the former and the

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<sup>121</sup> See *Hakkenden IV*, 109-112, including the illustration. In this scene the captive Funamushi sexually seduces her captor Komiyama Ittōda Yoritsura – the murderer of Inusaka Keno's father Aihara Tanenori – in order to reduce his vigilance and escape. After the defeat and death of Funamushi's former husband (the monster Ikkaku), Ittōda was assigned the duty to take her in custody and to bring her to Shirai Castle so that she could be sentenced and punished.

<sup>122</sup> The family of the Chinese poet Pan Yue (247-300 AD) and the Yang clan into which his wife was born shared the practice of marrying into each other for generations. Both of the literate Chinese allusions that Bakin here uses refer to the sexual consummation of marriage.

<sup>123</sup> When the "former" dead Hamaji appears to Shino as a ghost she temporarily occupies the "later" Hamaji's living body in order to physically enter Shino's room (see *Hakkenden IV*, 128-129).

later Hamaji aren't in fact different. This constitutes a conscious artifice [*kôchi*] of the author and he has been thinking of this from the very beginning. [...].<sup>124</sup>

In this passage Bakin makes an important distinction between Hamaji and the rest of his virtuous female protagonists with regard to their sexuality. Hamaji is the only heroine whose marriage couldn't be consummated whereas all other women are sexually active before their death or the death of their husbands. Bakin for example explicitly states that Hikute and Hitoyo, the widows of Yamahayashi Fusahachi's two chivalrous sons Rikijirô and Shakuhachi, were able to spend at least the one night of their wedding together with their husband (the day following the wedding night the Nerima battle occurs and both husbands die). Hinakinu's marriage was also consummated although she hasn't had sexual intercourse with her dog-warrior husband Inumura Daikaku for three years when she dies since Daikaku has been ritually abstinent owing to the sickness and death of his foster parents (who are Hinakinu's biological parents).<sup>125</sup> The sexuality of Bakin's virtuous heroines, except for Hamaji, is thus significantly ambiguous. While extremely reduced (to the span of one night for instance) and relegated to some prior point in the past – and therefore almost entirely elided – it is nonetheless existent and ambivalently cohabits with their virtue. This is significantly different for Hamaji who couldn't marry Shino because of his early departure and absence and also because of her own premature death. I think that this fact propels the emergence of Hamaji's resentful emotionality, which ties her back, despite her oft-emphasized virtue, to Tamazusa's revengeful feelings and also to the ghost theme (only Tamazusa and Hamaji reappear as resentful female ghosts in *Hakkenden*). Hamaji's resentment is also the reason why Bakin – as he explains in his “personal note” – creates a

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<sup>124</sup> *Hakkenden* IV, 151.

<sup>125</sup> For Inumura Daikaku's sexual abstinence see *Hakkenden* III, 409-410. Bakin doesn't provide any explicit information about the sexuality of Yamahayashi Fusahachi's wife Nui except for the fact that she has given birth to her son Shinbei and that intercourse therefore has taken place. However, the fact that Fusahachi stabs his wife in order to gain the rehabilitation of his grand-father's honor seems to indicate that sexuality is not a primary component in this relationship either.

second Hamaji who consummates the marriage on behalf of the first and thus appeases her resentful spirit.

Even before her death, however, Hamaji's emotionality is characterized by "resentment" (*urami*). This resentment is directed toward her fiancé Shino who, instead of consummating their marriage, departs from Ôtsuka village in order to fulfill his heroic mission, which consists in delivering the magical sword Murasame to the Ashikaga shogun Motouji in Koga castle. The night before Shino's departure Hamaji clandestinely enters his room and reproachfully confronts him. This famous scene reads in the following way:

Hamaji slipped out of her bed. Having no other means to give expression to her unvented resentment [*urami*], she was anxious in her heart to see Shino whom she had been kept away from [by her parents]. Her parents were snoring in the next room [and she wanted to see him before they would] wake up. When, afraid lest her footsteps could be heard, she stepped through the door – the barrier's threshold that she wasn't supposed to cross – her knees were trembling and, sensing the unreliability of life in this floating world, she felt despondent [*ajikinaku*], sad [*kanashiku*], bitter [*tsuraku*] and resentful [*urameshiki*]. When she was approaching his pillow, Shino was aware that somebody had come into his room, but when he unsheathed his sword, stood up abruptly and shouted "Who is this?" there was no response. Suspecting this to be some villain who had come to stab him during his sleep he was on his guards, but when he directed the lantern in the direction [from where the footsteps had come] and watched intently he saw that it was Hamaji. She was crouched down behind his mosquito net and didn't move forward, silently choking with tears and complaining about the sufferings in her heart. Although Shino was a strong man [*masurao*] who didn't show fear even when surrounded by powerful enemies, he now had to calm down his pounding heart. He came out of the mosquito net, tied it up, put his bedding aside and said: "Hamaji, what reason is there for you not to be asleep in the middle of the night and to come here to me? Don't you know the proverb 'Don't put on your shoes in the melon field or adjust your hat under the apricot tree'?"<sup>126</sup> When he thus scolded her, she resentfully [*urameshige ni*] wiped away her tears, raised her head and said: "A marriage where I can be so coldly [*yosoyososhiku*] asked for the reason why I've come cannot be but a marriage in name that hasn't been bound yet completely by ceremonial ties and therefore your words are not entirely unreasonable, but aren't we still husband and wife that were engaged to each other by our parents' very words? Whatever our relationship might have been before, it wouldn't have been shameful for you to come over to tell me that tonight would be our last parting. But that you shouldn't even say a tiny little word to me until leaving and look like as if

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<sup>126</sup> Both putting on one's shoes in a melon field and adjusting one's hat under an apricot tree could arouse the suspicion that one's intention could be to steal either the melons or the apricots. The proverbial expression can be traced back to an "old *yuefu*" (Chin. *guyuefu*, Jap. *kogafu*) poem in the *Wenxuan*.

there wasn't anything to say, this is cruel [*nasakenashi*] and insensitive [*kokorotsuyoshi*] of you!"<sup>127</sup>

Although Hamaji is still alive in this scene, her appearance, which is clandestine and silent and therefore gives Shino the false impression that an assassin has entered his room, is already a bit ghostly and prefigures Hamaji's second appearance to her fiancé as a ghost. Hamaji's anger and resentment in this scene are predominantly directed toward Shino's refusal to treat her appropriately as his married wife, i.e. to take leave from her personally and probably also to sleep with her the night of their final parting.<sup>128</sup> The reason why Hamaji later on, four years after their initial parting, reappears to Shino as a ghost lies in her wish that he finally marry the "second" living Hamaji. Hamaji's spirit appears to Shino in a lonely winter night in Kai province where he is staying in the cottage of Yorogi Mukusaku, the foster father of the living Hamaji, who wishes to keep the itinerant dog-warrior in his house as long as possible with the design to finally marry him to his daughter.<sup>129</sup> Hamaji's ghost explains:

"[...]. When, four years ago in the summer, I was murdered by Samojirô's unscrupulous blade my body was buried in the circular fire hole of the Buddhist ascetic [i.e. Dôsetsu, Hamaji's half-brother]<sup>130</sup> and even my bones didn't remain. However, since then my spirit [*konpaku*] from morning till evening has been clinging [*matsuwari*] to you [Shino] because there is something I wish to tell you. The paths

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<sup>127</sup> *Hakkenden* II, 81-82.

<sup>128</sup> Slightly later in the same scene, Shino explains that his coldness aimed at estranging Hamaji from him because he wanted to comply with the wishes of her foster parents, the evil Hikiroku and Kamezasa, whose greedy plan it is to marry Hamaji to a more lucrative man than Shino (see *Hakkenden* II, 86). Their choice first lies on Aboshi Samojirô, Hamaji's later murderer, and then on the powerful military governor (*jindai*) Hikami Kyûroku. Both men are highly repelling villain figures.

<sup>129</sup> Hamaji's ghost interestingly appears in an intertextually rich moment when Shino is reading passages from the *Taiheiki* (*Chronicles of Great Peace*, ca. 1368-1379), which are about the final parting of lovers (or married partners) through the exchange of *waka* poetry. Shino defines the *Taiheiki*'s thematic content as both covering the "love between husband and wife" (*fûfu no jôtai*) and the "fidelity of friendship" (*hōyû no shinfushin*). When Hamaji appears he is both longing for his five dog-warrior friends (at this point in the narrative Shino has only met five of them so far) and for his deceased fiancé Hamaji. See *Hakkenden* IV, 127-128.

<sup>130</sup> Dôsetsu possesses a magical knowledge of not being harmed by fire. When he first meets Hamaji he travels the countryside and feigns to be a Buddhist ascetic, burning himself in fire holes seemingly for the sake of gaining enlightenment. In truth, however, Dôsetsu does so in order to obtain money from the crowds that gather to watch the spectacle of his burning – money that he needs to execute his plan of revenge for his murdered father Dôsaku.

of the dead and the living don't often intersect, which is the reason why I have been unable to tell you my intent [*hoi*] so far, and time thus has uselessly flown by. But since the name of the daughter of the master here not only is the same as mine, but since it is also your karma [*shukuin*] to be married to her, I was able to borrow her form and to finally tell you my feelings [*koto no kokoro* 事情]. You have said that, because of me, you would never marry a woman again, and these words truly fill me with gratitude, thankfulness and joy! However, if it always will be as you say and you don't forget about me, then let things be as they are and marry this girl, always thinking that she is the same person as me! And even if the god of bad fate is wreaking havoc and hinders you from fulfilling your wishes in this respect, in the end the flowers of good luck will unexpectedly bloom and bring forth their fruits for you. Therefore don't hurry on your way and stay in this house!"<sup>131</sup>

These lines show that Hamaji's resentment, which has transformed her into a restless "clinging" ghost, crystallizes in the desire to become Shino's wife. While Hamaji's "clinging" underlines the strength of her emotional attachment to Shino, it also ultimately points to her desire that her marriage be sexually consummated.

In the famous scene of parting from Shino, Hamaji's resentment, however, is significantly not only directed toward her husband and the (sexual) incompleteness of their marriage but also toward the fact that she doesn't possess any means to find out about her true (i.e. biological) parents.<sup>132</sup> Hamaji's obsessive thoughts about her parents in this scene could certainly be interpreted as an expression of her filial piety. As the later uncovered story of her mother suggests, however, these thoughts also indirectly point back again to the theme of sexuality, transgression and crime. Hamaji is finally told the truth about her origins when she, deadly wounded by the villain Aboshi Samojirô, miraculously meets her half-brother Inuyama Dôsetsu who kills her abductor and murderer.<sup>133</sup> Hamaji then learns that her mother

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<sup>131</sup> *Hakkenden* IV, 128-129.

<sup>132</sup> See *Hakkenden* II, 82-83.

<sup>133</sup> For the story of Hamaji's mother Ayame see *Hakkenden* II, 145-148. According to the plan of Hamaji's evil foster parents, Aboshi Samojirô was to become her husband instead of Shino, but he is later turned down in favor of the evil "military governor" (*jindai*) Hikami Kyûroku who has fallen in love with the beautiful girl. Samojirô thereupon abducts Hamaji who – reluctant to marry the governor – is about to commit suicide in her foster parents' garden. When Hamaji, however, also vehemently resists Samojirô's advances, he inflicts lethal wounds upon her with his sword. For the broader plot surrounding Hamaji's marriage see *Hakkenden* II, 99-172; for Hamaji's abduction and death see *Hakkenden* II, 115-151.

Ayame was a murderess who poisoned, out of “jealousy” and “resentment,” Dôsetsu’s mother Ozehi and also attempted to kill Dôsetsu himself. Because of this crime, Ayame was executed and her daughter Hamaji given away to adoption into the household of the greedy Hikiroku and Kamezasa, Shino’s uncle and aunt. It is important to note, however, that Hamaji’s mother Ayame was not evil and criminal from the beginning. She in fact only became jealous and resentful when her (seemingly) virtuous husband made an ethically problematic decision that obliquely mirrors and repeats lord Yoshizane’s fateful decision to revoke Tamazusa’s pardon. Both Ozehi and Ayame had originally been Dôsaku’s “concubines” (*mekake*) while his main wife had died early and childless. Although Dôsaku doesn’t intend to remarry, he “in jest” (*tawamure ni*) – like previously Yoshizane – declares that he intends to promote the one of his two concubines to his principal wife who bears him a son. Although Ozehi has entered Dôsaku’s household later than Ayame, she bears him a son (Dôsetsu) while Ayame only gives birth to a daughter (Hamaji). Dôsaku accordingly elevates Dôsetsu’s mother. When Ayame because of her resentment attempts to kill both her female rival and the son of her rival, the future dog-warrior Dôsetsu, the latter can survive thanks to the miraculously protective power of En no gyôja’s bead while his mother dies. After Ayame’s trial and execution, Dôsaku decides to cut the bond to his infant-daughter Hamaji by giving her to foster parents.

In the dialogue with his half-sister Hamaji shortly before her death, Dôsetsu muses that her sufferings in this existence must have been a karmic result of the “evil crimes” (*akugyaku*) of her mother, and he also expresses his confidence that her virtue will produce “good results” (*zenpô*) by extinguishing the bad karma of her mother’s transgressions.<sup>134</sup> However, not only a logic of karmic retribution and compensation but also a female lineage of resentment closely links Hamaji to her mother (as well as obliquely to Tamazusa) and

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<sup>134</sup> See *Hakkenden* II, 147-148.

blurs the moral binary between good and bad acts that Dôsetsu's discourse professes. On the surface, Ayame seems to be identified as evil and criminal and her daughter as virtuous, but Bakin is nonetheless careful to point to the fact that Ayame's crime originated in a somehow legitimate resentment for which Dôsaku's arbitrary and ultimately immoral decision was responsible. Moreover, both Ayame's crime and Hamaji's anger, independently of each other, tie back to the dimension of amorous sentiment and sexual desire, which not only adheres to intrinsically evil women figures but also characterizes the resentment of virtuous women like Hamaji. At the same time, the lineage of female resentment, amorous sentiment and desire, which links Hamaji to her mother and indirectly to Tamazusa, also questions the absolute virtue of the virtuous heroines by gesturing back to transgression, depravity and crime.<sup>135</sup>

Another virtuous woman in *Hakkenden* who confronts her husband with resentment is Hinakinu. As already noted, Hinakinu's marriage with Inumura Kakutarô was sexually consummated but, owing to her husband's ritual abstinence, she hasn't slept with him for three years at the moment of the narration. Like Fusehime, however, Hinakinu starts showing symptoms of pregnancy without having had intercourse after she inadvertently swallows her husband's magical bead. For this reason, Kakutarô's stepmother Funamushi and his evil father Ikkaku – in truth a shape-shifting monster, which killed Kakutarô's true father and usurped his bodily form – accuse Hinakinu of having had an illicit affair outside of her marriage. Although Kakutarô is aware of the falseness of these accusations, he divorces his wife and becomes a monk. He also refuses to listen to Hinakinu's complaints when she, filled with "resentment" (*urami*) towards the unjust divorce, comes to his hut to give vent to her

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<sup>135</sup> A similar argument about ethical indeterminacy could also be made with regard to the male figures involved in this episode. Although Inuyama Dôsaku, the father of the dog-warrior Dôsetsu, is presented as an exemplarily ethical figure, he treats Hamaji's mother Ayame in an irresponsible and unethical way and thus brings about her fatal resentment and criminality. His mistake not only indirectly restages Satomi Yoshizane's treatment of Tamazusa but also obliquely gestures to the kernel of transgression, desire and even crime that potentially lurks behind the ethicality of the dog warriors.



feelings and assert her innocence.<sup>136</sup> After Hinakinu attempts to commit suicide by drowning herself, Funamushi and Ikkaku feign to forgive her for her transgression and they also offer to take the young couple back to their house. However, it turns out that they only did so in order to perversely ask the filial Hinakinu to stab herself because the monster Ikkaku needs the blood of a young pregnant woman to heal his wounded eye.<sup>137</sup> When Hinakinu finally stabs herself, Kakutarô's bead flies out of her seemingly pregnant belly and kills the morally depraved monster. Kakutarô's bead thus has both sexualized and profoundly ethical qualities. It is ethical insofar as it kills the depraved monster, which is one of the most repellent figures in Bakin's text. However, it is also sexualized and phallic as it inscribes symptoms of an illicit pregnancy onto Hinakinu's body. Moreover, through the sufferings it creates for the young couple, it perversely reenacts and perpetuates Tamazusa's curse. Through the phallic power of the bead, Hinakinu's virtuous body has become sexualized in an ethically problematic way by insinuating an illicit love transgression. It is telling that Bakin's narrator further emphasizes Hinakinu's erotic allure by likening her to the mythical femme fatale Mama no Tegona.<sup>138</sup> This allure also erotically colors the strongly emotional and resentful discourse with which Hinakinu aggressively confronts her abstinent monk-husband. It is obvious that Hinakinu's resentful discourse, which simultaneously denounces the injustice done to her but also carries her alluring female attractiveness, obliquely points back to *Hakkenden's* primal scene of Tamazusa's curse. Although Hinakinu and her discourse are presented as virtuous and Tamazusa's curse is qualified as evil, Bakin's narrative also consciously connects these heroines through a lineage of resentment, amorous sentiment and

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<sup>136</sup> See *Hakkenden III*, 399-411 for this episode. See especially *Hakkenden III*, 402-405, for Hinakinu's highly emotional discourse.

<sup>137</sup> Ikkaku's eye was previously shot by the dog-warrior Inukai Genhachi (see *Hakkenden III*, 384-385).

<sup>138</sup> See for the Mama no Tegona reference *Hakkenden III*, 399 where Hinakinu first enters the stage while the dog-warrior Inukai Genhachi is peeping at her. It goes without saying that Genhachi's peeping strongly eroticizes the scene and also points to his own desire.

erotic desire, which encompasses both chaste virtue and murderous crime. The emotional, ethical and often physical ambiguity and hybridity inscribed in these female protagonists echoes the ambiguity inherent in Yatsufusa's male lineage and fundamentally complicates the discursive moral surface binary between good and evil in Bakin's text.

## **Conclusion**

Although Tamenaga Shunsui's *Shunshoku* series and Bakin's *Hakkenden* belong to radically different genre formats, both of these texts written in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century explore and negotiate the ambiguous spectrum of "human feeling," which potentially ranges from self-sacrificial ethicality to criminal excess and even moral evil. Shunsui's *ninjôbon* primarily focus on male-female sentimental and sexual "love" (*koi*). While pointing to the implicit danger of transgressive excess and unethical behavior, in particular with respect to the force of female sentiment and sexuality, Shunsui's writings also illustrate the need and the possibility to ethically channel and redirect this force. In Bakin's *Hakkenden* the discourse of *kanzen chôaku* ("promoting good and chastising evil") links amorous sentiment and particularly sexual desire to moral transgressiveness and evil while virtue is predicated on the control or the absence of sentiment and desire. At the same time, however, Bakin's text constantly complicates and deconstructs this binary by dramatizing for instance how virtuous figures, both female and male, are responsive to sentiment and desire and thus, instead of being radically different from the evil characters in the text, are also ambiguously connected to them. A good example for the ethical indeterminacy and fluidity of "human feeling" in *Hakkenden* can be found in the theme of female resentment and ghostliness, which is developed through a genealogical lineage that links both criminal and virtuous heroines. This theme also directly connects back to Shunsui's *ninjôbon* where the potentially devastating jealousy and resentment of the female protagonists constitutes the ethical

antipode of their virtue while both – resentment and virtue – are firmly predicated on the force of their amorous sentiment and desire. In the following chapters, I explore how Meiji-period literature, particularly the new genre of the novel (*shōsetsu*), appropriates and complicates both the *yomihon* and *ninjōbon* traditions and their ethical negotiations of “human feeling.”

## Chapter Two:

### Renegotiating “Human Feeling” and Heroism in the Novel of the Long Decade of the 1880s: Marriage, Political Allegory, and Sexual Desire

One important aspect of the complex process of transition from late Edo to Meiji is the emergence of the genre of the novel (*shōsetsu*), partly under the impact of Western translation, from the late 1870s onward.<sup>139</sup> While it could be argued that the novel in the Meiji period in many respects constitutes a new literary form, critical discourse on the novel from the very beginning also appropriates the notion of “human feeling” (*ninjō*) to define the genre, thus pointing back to prior literary traditions in Japan such as the *ninjōbon* or even classical poetry. A good example for the discourse on the novel in the early Meiji period and for its reappropriation of “human feeling” is Oda Jun’ichirō’s (1851-1919) afterword to his translation of Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s (1803-73) novel *Ernest Maltravers* (1837) and its sequel *Alice* (1838). This translation was published in Japanese under the title *Ōshū kiji: Karyū shunwa* (*A Strange Story from Europe: Spring Tale of Flowers and Willows*) in 1878-79. In his afterword Oda writes:

The twenty chapters of Lytton’s novel [*shōsetsu*] in detailed fashion examine the human feelings [*ninjō*] of old and modern times and record the different customs [*izoku*] in distant and close places. They allow the reader to see clearly the joy and sorrow as well as the right and wrong in the human world. They, however, differ from those books in our land like Tamenaga Shunsui’s *Plum Blossom Calendar*, which vainly excite the readers’ lewd desires [*chijō*]. This book generally relies only on true facts and isn’t one of those writings, which fictitiously depict the pleasure quarter and

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<sup>139</sup> To my knowledge no in-depth study has yet been devoted to the complex topic of the emergence of the novel in the Meiji period, including its connections to prior literary traditions in Japan. In addition to the titles listed in my Introduction, see for recent scholarship on the literary production of the early Meiji period (i.e. the 1870s) Miller 2001 with regard to “adaptations” (*hon’anmono*) from Western literature, Marran 2007 with regard to the trope of the transgressive “poison woman” (*dokufu*) in serial (*tsuzukimono*) fiction, Yamada 2002 with regard to the impact of the new newspaper medium on serial fictional production, or Fraleigh 2005 with regard to *kanshibun* literary culture. For the continuity of late Edo-period literary practices, genres and texts in the early Meiji years see for instance Kornicki 1981 and 1982 as well as, more recently, the articles assembled in the special issue of the journal *Edo bungaku* in 1999 (vol. 21).

feelings [*ninjô*] that cannot exist. For this reason the words in this book are sincere and its feelings [*jô*] deep. [...].<sup>140</sup>

Oda's afterword, which despite its brevity anticipates in important ways Tsubouchi Shôyô's later discourse in *Shôsetsu shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*, 1885-6), defines the focus of the translated novel *Karyû shunwa* primarily in terms of its representation of "human feeling" – a term that here unambiguously stands for male-female love.<sup>141</sup> While this definition of the novel echoes Tamenaga Shunsui's *ninjôbon* discourse whose main emphasis was equally on "love" (*koi*), Oda also hastens to clarify in moralistic fashion that his translation doesn't "vainly excite the readers' lewd desire" as Shunsui's *Shunshoku umegoyomi* allegedly did. Oda in fact combines his programmatic emphasis on the novel's representation of "human feeling" with an emphasis on its didactic intent to teach the reader the "right and wrong in the human world." The moral categories of "right" and "wrong" in Oda's discourse also closely correlate with antagonistic aspects of "human feeling," which in itself remains an ethically ambivalent category. While "lewd" sexual desire is condemnable and "wrong," chaste love must be inherently valuable and "right."

This chapter argues that the Meiji-period novel from *Karyû shunwa* onward, especially in the decade of the 1880s but also beyond, integrates and synthesizes the representational regimes of the late Edo-period *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* genres in new and complex ways. On the one hand, as the translator's afterword by Oda discursively presages, the Meiji-period novel's representational focus is on "human feeling," i.e. on male-female

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<sup>140</sup> Oda Jun'ichirô, *Karyû shunwa* 109.

<sup>141</sup> Oda refers to "human feeling" in conjunction with "social customs" and thus not only foreshadows Shôyô's famous later formula in *Shôsetsu shinzui* but also reiterates the terminological binary in earlier discourses in Japan (see my Introduction). As I will point out later in this chapter, "human feeling" in the Meiji context became connected to "social customs" insofar as the manifestation or regulation of specific aspects of "human feeling" (in particular sexual desire in opposition to chaste or spiritual love) came to be seen as indicative of the level of civilizational advancement of a society or place. Narushima Ryûhoku's (1837-84) famous preface ("Daigen") to *Karyû shunwa*, which also emphatically underlines the dimension of "human feeling" in the novel, however differs from Oda's afterword in that it doesn't differentiate between "lewd desires" and more ethical chaste feelings. It is this differentiation as well as the view of Shunsui's *ninjôbon* as immoral that anticipates Tsubouchi Shôyô's later discourse.

love, like in the *ninjôbon* tradition. On the other hand, however, this *ninjôbon*-esque focus of the novel also becomes complicated by specific ethical views of sexual desire and amorous sentiment, which are characteristic of the *kanzen chôaku* (“promoting good and chastising evil”) paradigm in Bakin’s *yomihon*. The Meiji novel also integrates its representational focus on “human feeling” into a teleological *yomihon*-esque plot structure, which is directed toward the male protagonist’s attainment of heroic and often political goals. In this plot structure sexual desire in particular tends to be seen as a problematic force, which detracts the protagonist from the attainment of his heroic mission while chaste unconsummated love becomes a facilitator for heroic success. In my subsequent readings of novels of the “long” decade of the 1880s, I examine how negotiations of “human feeling” – including both sexual desire and chaste amorous sentiment – within or against the framework of male ethical heroism shape the dynamic of these texts. I also argue that Tsubouchi Shôyô’s reform of the novel in the second half of the 1880s – often seen as the origin of the modern novel in Japan – needs to be understood within the context of these negotiations of “human feeling.”

I start this chapter with a discussion of Oda Jun’ichirô’s translation *Karyû shunwa* (1878-79). This novel is foundational for the literary production of the 1880s insofar as it negotiates in unprecedented fashion a representational focus on “human feeling” as male-female love within a heroic teleological plot, which centers on the career of its male protagonist Ernest Maltravers as a literary writer and politician. The ethical or heroic negotiation of “human feeling” in *Karyû shunwa* is multilayered and complex because the novel’s hero Maltravers is involved with different types of women: on the one hand, the uneducated and socially low-standing Alice whose sexually consummated love, while seen as valuable, problematically keeps him away from social advancement and, on the other hand, the aristocratic and educated heroines Valerie and Florence whose chaste love facilitates his career. I argue that *Karyû shunwa* thus constitutes an important pre-text for both the kind of

allegorical marriage in the subsequent Meiji political novel, which stages the male protagonist's union with a high-ranking and educated heroine, and for the deconstruction of the allegorical mode and the renegotiation of sexuality and heroism in Tsubouchi Shôyô's writings.

In the following section I turn to two political novels written in the 1880s: Toda Kindô's (1850-1890) *Minken engi: Jôkai haran* (*A Story about People's Rights: Stormy Waves on the Sea of Passion*, 1880) and Suehiro Tetchô's (1849-1896) *Seiji shôsetsu: Setchûbai* (*A Political Novel: Plum Blossoms in the Snow*, 1886). Both novels culminate in the marriage of their male protagonist, who allegorically embodies the Japanese people, with an educated (and in *Setchûbai*'s case upper-class) heroine personifying the people's democratic rights. The marriage allegory prefigures the opening of the Meiji Diet at the end of the decade and the possibility of (or hope for) popular political participation. At the same time, the allegory also empowers the male political activist – the “Japanese people” – to heroically correct the oligarchic Meiji Restoration by bringing about a “Second Restoration” (Christopher Hill) along democratic lines. Both *Jôkai haran* and *Setchûbai*, through the figure of marriage, also define what I would call an allegorical economy of sexuality in which the marital union of the novels' protagonists becomes politically successful only if it is predicated on the ethical monogamous control of sexual desire (as in *Jôkai haran*) or even erotic abstinence (as in *Setchûbai*). This allegorical economy also includes the immoral promiscuity of the autocratic Meiji oligarchs who uninhibitedly fulfill their desire with low-ranking prostitutes and mistresses. The narration of *Setchûbai* also links its marriage allegory to a discourse of social difference, which is intimately tied to the context of the late stage of the People's Rights Movement, i.e. the violent radical uprisings associated with the Liberal Party (Jiyûtô) in the early 1880s:<sup>142</sup> only through a union of the intellectual political activist

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<sup>142</sup> For a concise discussion of the historical and political context see Vlastos 1989.

class with the propertied classes – as exemplified by the marriage of *Setchûbai*'s male protagonist Kunino Motoi with the educated and upper-class woman Oharu – can the People's Rights Movement succeed. Radical pro-socialist activism, however, which implies the political empowerment of the unpropertied and uneducated classes, must necessarily lead to a political catastrophe.

It is precisely within this historical and discursive context that the gradual deconstruction of the strictly allegorical mode, as epitomized by the figure of a politically relevant marriage, takes place in Tsubouchi Shôyô's (1859-1935) writings of the second half of the 1880s. In the third section of this chapter I first investigate Shôyô's still strictly allegorical short piece *Fûkai: Kyô waranbe (A Satire: The Capital Braggart, 1885)* and then his longer novel *Shinmigaki: Imo to se kagami (Mirror of Marriage, 1885-86)*<sup>143</sup>, which in many respects takes up and rewrites motives of its short allegorical predecessor. *Kyô waranbe* radically inverses the representational scheme of *Jôkai haran* and in particular *Setchûbai*. The text's hero Nakatsu Kunihiko fails to marry the highly educated princess Toshiko who is the allegorical embodiment of his political "rights" and he instead sinks into an abyss of sexual lust, which exemplifies the failure of the People's Rights Movement as radical activism. The narration of *Imo to se kagami* centers on the marriage of the male protagonist Misawa Tatsuzô with the low-class, unpropertied and uneducated heroine Otsuji, who is intertextually modeled on *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice. The novel thus significantly resexualizes the marriage motive. Misawa's wife Otsuji is also neither a licentious oligarchic prostitute or mistress nor a high-ranking and chaste heroine as the potential personification of people's rights but she stands between these antagonistic poles. With regard to *Imo to se kagami* I then argue, first, that by representing a morally ambiguous love and marriage,

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<sup>143</sup> I haven't yet been able to ascertain the exact meaning of the pre-title (*tsunogaki*) *Shinmigaki* 新磨 of Shôyô's novel and I therefore leave it untranslated here. For the reading I consulted *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten*.



which are both sexualized and ethical, Shōyō fundamentally challenges and deconstructs the strictly allegorical mode, which relied on an ethically unambiguous economy of sexuality (opposing chastity to unethical promiscuity).<sup>144</sup> Second, I argue that, through the figure of an ethically ambiguous sexualized marriage, the narration of *Imo to se kagami* radicalizes to an unprecedented degree the synthesis of the *yomihon* and *ninjōbon* traditions. It does so by transforming the heroic mission of the protagonist Misawa – allegorically made possible by his marriage – into the vaguely sexualized duty of ransoming a pleasure quarter courtesan whose family had been wronged by his sexually licentious oligarchic father. The novel thus almost parodically reduces the originally political and truly heroic plot structure of bringing about a “Second Restoration” into a heroic history that is ambiguously sexualized and therefore doomed to failure. I argue that this radicalization of the synthesis between the *ninjōbon* and *yomihon* traditions in *Imo to se kagami* results from Shōyō’s attempt to reform the novel, theorized in *Shōsetsu shinzui* and elsewhere, into a genre that depicts “human feeling” (*ninjō*) – including sexual desire – and ethicality (*dōri*) as well as the conflict between these two forces.

### **1. “Human Feeling” in *Karyū shunwa* and the Production and Reduction of Ethical Ambiguity**

Niwa Jun’ichirō’s translation *Karyū shunwa* was probably the first novel in Japan that thoroughly juxtaposed a heroic or political plot with the theme of “human feeling.”<sup>145</sup> *Karyū*

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<sup>144</sup> As I will discuss later, the ethical renegotiation of “human feeling” in Shōyō’s writings is also closely connected to a contemporary civilizational discourse, which viewed sexual desire as indicative of an uncivilized state of societal and cultural development while chaste love was seen as inherently civilized. Misawa’s ethically ambiguous love and marriage in *Imo to se kagami* are in fact half-civilized according to this discourse.

<sup>145</sup> Maeda Ai argues that *Karyū shunwa* was the first novel centered on the theme of social advancement in Japan and thus largely exceeded the expectations of contemporary readers, which were directed toward a more traditional *ninjōbon* format. Maeda reaches this conclusion through a deft analysis of contemporary advertisements of the novel (see Maeda 1972). As a study of the Meiji-period ideology of “social advancement” (*risshin shusse*) Kinmonth 1981 is still useful; more recently, see also Kimura 1998. The only extended discussion in English-language scholarship to date on *Karyū shunwa* is to be found in Mertz 2003, pp. 104-12.

*shunwa*, however, more perhaps than its *seiji shōsetsu* successors, also brings to the fore the ambiguities or the rift inherent in the fusion of the political and the romantic by presenting differing and even contradictory models of “human feeling.” These are connected to the different types of female figures with whom the protagonist Ernest Maltravers engages, but the novel doesn’t necessarily privilege one model over the other. *Karyū shunwa*, on the one hand, stages Maltravers’s sexually consummated and therefore ethically problematic love for the low-born and uneducated Alice Darvil, an infatuation, which inhibits his political career. On the other hand, he engages in chaste relationships with the aristocratic and educated women Valerie de Ventadour and Florence Lascelles who encourage him to pursue his ambition and his career, first as a public writer and finally as a politician. While *Karyū shunwa* thus seems to echo Tamenaga Shunsui’s *ninjōbon* by focusing on its male protagonist’s romantic interaction with several female characters, the novel also significantly differs from its late Edo-period counterpart. It recasts the continuous erotic competition between Shunsui’s female figures into a *Bildungsroman* plot where each of the three heroines with whom Maltravers engages, at least seemingly, corresponds to a distinct phase in his ongoing apprenticeship or education. This education evolves from Maltravers’s ethically most problematic love for Alice, which must be overcome and replaced, to increasingly appropriate relationships. His infatuation with Valerie still appears ethically questionable owing to her status as a married woman although her refusal to enter an illicit affair with him precisely triggers Maltravers’s ambition to become publicly active as a writer. His subsequent involvement and marriage plans with Florence, who is an intelligent rich heiress, constitute the cornerstone for his successful career as a politician, which seems to be the ultimate goal of the novel’s *Bildungsroman* plot. At the same time, however, the teleological trajectory of *Karyū shunwa* also remains ambiguous because Maltravers’s marital union with Florence fails owing to the evil schemes of his political rival. This failure then brings about

his reencounter and marriage with his former lover Alice at the end of the text. Bulwer-Lytton's original *Ernest Maltravers* (1837) tends to reduce complexity by differentiating between its protagonist's true love for Alice and his respect (rather than true love) for the aristocratic women Valerie and Florence.<sup>146</sup> I would argue that Niwa's translation *Karyû shunwa*, on the contrary, produces complexity and ambiguity by leveling this hierarchization of feeling and by equally validating as "love" both Maltravers's infatuation with Alice, however ethically ambiguous it may be, and his ethically more appropriate and less ambiguous feelings for the two aristocratic women (especially Florence).<sup>147</sup> It is important to note that *Karyû shunwa*, while thus producing ambiguity as a whole, nonetheless, in its microstructure, also vacillates between the representation of ethically more ambiguous (Alice) and less ambiguous "love" (esp. Florence). My subsequent reading seeks to examine in more detail the production and reduction of ambiguity in the novel, which will both significantly impact subsequent literary developments in the decade of the 1880s in Japan.

The narration of *Karyû shunwa* qualifies Maltravers's sexual relationship with Alice, unlike his subsequent chaste infatuations with the two aristocratic women, as a deplorably unethical transgression, which the protagonist needs to overcome in order to fulfill his social and political mission. However, the text also, through variegated strategies, constantly elevates Maltravers's love for Alice to the status of an inherently valuable feeling. This

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<sup>146</sup> With regard to Maltravers's feelings for Valerie in Bulwer-Lytton's *Ernest Maltravers* see for instance p. 95: "He looked in his heart for the love of Valerie, and he found there the love of Virtue." The strong outburst of passion that Maltravers has for Valerie (see Book 2, Chapter 4) thus turns out to be merely temporary. For the ambiguous feelings that Maltravers subsequently develops for Florence see *ibid.* 307-308: "He had obeyed an impulse, irresistible perhaps [to propose to Florence], but one with which *the conscience of his heart* was not satisfied. A voice whispered to him, 'Thou hast deceived her and thyself – thou dost not love her!'" This radically differs from the words, which Maltravers previously utters to Alice ("Alice, dear Alice, I love thee," *ibid.* 32) and which express the abiding affection that he will harbor for her throughout the novel. The Japanese translation tends to downplay or elide this differentiation between true "love" and mere respectful veneration in the English original.

<sup>147</sup> The words for "love" in *Karyû shunwa* are variegated. Maltravers's feelings for Alice are labeled as *renchaku* 戀着 and Alice's feelings for Maltravers as *kenren no jô* (眷戀ノ情, glossed as *kogaruru no jô*; see *Karyû shunwa* 14 and 15). Maltravers's subsequent amorous infatuation with Valerie is characterized for instance as *renbo* 戀慕 or *renjô* 戀情 (*ibid.* 26 and 58). The later relationship between Florence and Maltravers is equally defined by the emotionality of *renjô* (*ibid.* 82).

ambiguity already comes to the fore in Maltravers's characterization as a hero in the first part of the novel, especially in the narrator's emphasis on his penchant for "eccentric" (*kii*) things. It is Maltravers's eccentricity, which motivates him to give Alice an education and, by extension, to start a sexual relationship with her. *Karyû shunwa* reads:

Maltravers' character was eccentric and different from other people. He would shut himself up in his room for months to read books and he would avoid having intercourse with people. Also, when he was still [a student] in Germany he would defend the idea of constitutional monarchism and only with difficulty did he avoid being lynched or killed by the republican students there and manage to set out on his journey home where he was to encounter Alice. Not sharing the penchant for calm reflection characteristic of most Englishmen he liked indulging in the extravagant side of things [*jibutsu no kii o yorokobi*] and didn't care whether people would slander him or smile. This [i.e. his eccentricity] was the reason why he was pleased by Alice's simplicity and also by her ignorance of evil, which was a result of her illiterateness, and he wished to give her an education in letters [*bungei*] in order to transform her into a god woman [*ryôjo*].<sup>148</sup>

This passage shows the extent to which Maltravers's idea, or more precisely, his whim to live together with Alice and to give her "an education in letters" derives from an eccentric delight in the "extravagant side of things." This "eccentricity" marks Maltravers as a potential *ninjôbon* hero because it points to his leisured socioeconomic position as the second son born into a wealthy house, which allows him – like Chôga, the principal male protagonist in Tamenaga Shunsui's *Harutsugedori* (1837) – to indulge in a life of luxury without the need to assume the responsibilities of a household heir.<sup>149</sup> The ethically problematic side of this eccentricity is accentuated by the private and somehow shady setting, which Maltravers creates for his lessons with Alice: a sequestered country cottage, which was formerly built by a rich merchant to house his "beloved mistress" (*aishô*) and which utterly isolates the couple

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid. 10.

<sup>149</sup> For Maltravers's socio-economic background see *ibid.* 10: "Since he was the son of a rich house he didn't have any difficulty to pay for his tuition [while studying abroad in Germany]. He also wasn't bound by any restrictive rules and he was able to realize all his wishes immediately."

from the social and political outside world.<sup>150</sup> While these references constitute pointers to an erotic *ninjōbon* plot, Maltravers' "eccentric" decision to live with Alice also derives from an uncompromising and intrinsically ethical social aloofness, which marks him as an exceptional man of talent (or a potential *yomihon* hero). Maltravers is thus not only attracted to Alice's "ignorance of evil" but he also haughtily disregards the petty conventions of the social world or even the vulnerability of his own physical body.

Ethical ambiguity also permeates the medium, which originally produces Maltravers's and Alice's love for each other: i.e. writing and "literature" (*bungaku*), the primary content of Maltravers's education for the girl. While the highbrow medium of "literature" elevates and legitimizes the emotional intimacy between the unequal partners, it also becomes a problematic means for transgression. This complex dynamic comes to the fore in the sixth chapter of *Karyū shunwa*. This chapter closes with the hero's climatic declaration of love ("I truly love you" – "*Yo jitsu ni kei ni renchaku su*")<sup>151</sup> but also significantly starts with the following discourse on the education of "literature" and its most preferable methodology:

Literature [*bungaku*] does not merely consist in the reading of books but it can also be learned through watching and listening. Although a long time hadn't yet elapsed since the beginning of Alice's education, as she was sitting every day close to Maltravers and listening to the bequeathed words of the ancient sages and inquiring about the conditions of ancient and modern times the swiftness with which she made progress in her studies couldn't be compared to ordinary beginners. Maltravers was also much encouraged by Alice's nimbleness in mastering the way of singing and playing music and as he wished to extend her achievements to other fields as well there wasn't a day when their ordinary conversations wouldn't be filled with the subject of literature. If, in parallel to all one's daily activities, one continuously listens to texts [*bunji* glossed as *yomikaki*] then one will learn much faster than somebody who has been merely sent to school at the wish of his parents. As ancient writings are concerned there is no need to read them but nothing is better than intently listening to them. The ancient Athenians, for example, would learn from directly listening to Aristotle's lectures.

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<sup>150</sup> See *ibid.* 10. The isolation of this setting from the outside social world is later on dramatized in the plot by the news of the sickness and imminent death of Maltravers's father, which forces him out of his romantic isolation and also abruptly ends the lovers' idyll (Alice is also abducted by her own criminal father shortly after Maltravers leaves).

<sup>151</sup> This corresponds to "Alice, dear Alice, I love thee" in the English original (see *Ernest Maltravers* 32).

And the way Maltravers was now teaching Alice in this humble hut of grass was exactly the same as the origins of birds and beasts, grasses and trees, of the sun, the moon and the stars as well as of the humans and gods were once taught at the ancient Academy.<sup>152</sup>

Maltravers was pleased by the fact that Alice was studying with all her heart and he was guiding her progress by teaching her old poems [*koshi*], which were particularly excellent, or by himself composing poetry and prose [*shibun*] that were not too difficult to understand. Alice also, every day, besides cleaning the library and watering the plants in the garden, was diligently studying her readings and instruments and she came to the library every morning at eight o'clock to receive her lessons. Her appearance was enticing but not lewd [*en ni shite in narazu*]. Her half-open lips were smiling, her words were softly spoken, there was sweetness in her eyes and her attention didn't waver [when studying]. She was truly a beauty unparalleled in this world! It is not hard to understand indeed why Maltravers who at the beginning had limited the time of his lessons to only one hour was finally prolonging them to three or four hours in order to encourage her in her studies.<sup>153</sup>

This passage is interesting because it highlights the ambivalent role of the medium of “literature” within the context of the growing intimacy between Maltravers and Alice. On the one hand, “literature” is here presented as the sum of classical learning and universal knowledge (or science), associated with Aristotle’s lectures and the highly prestigious Athenian Academy. It also pertains to the elegant sphere of poetry composition and music (presented here akin to the world of *kanshibun* culture), which, together with the above mentioned references to Western and universal knowledge, elevate Maltravers’s pedagogical project and also the “love” that this pedagogy produces. In such a way the referencing to “literature” and its cultural capital in this episode of the novel serves as a textual strategy to morally legitimize and stabilize the newly emerging sphere of “love” as a serious theme. On the other hand, however, the text somehow surprisingly emphasizes the desirability of oral transmission and direct communication in the teaching of “literature,” which implies a physical proximity (a “sitting close” to each other) between Maltravers and his beautiful pupil. This emphasis almost ironically indicates a subtle shift in the meaning of “literature”

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<sup>152</sup> In my translation I omitted the brief explanatory glosses, which Oda appends to the terms “Athenians,” “Aristotle” and “Academy” as “translator’s notes” (*yakusha iwaku*).

<sup>153</sup> *Karyū shunwa* 13.

toward the media of poetry and song that, more fundamentally oral and ambiguously erotic in nature, facilitate the growth of an emotional bond between the two protagonists. In this sense Alice also defines the function of “poetry” (and perhaps, by extension, “literature”) as a medium of unmediated emotional and erotic communication:

“If I master the composition of poetry [*shiika*] then I will be able to tell you my heart through the recitation of my verses. I don’t know with whom the composition of poetry began but I know that it was someone who wanted to communicate the feelings in his heart.”<sup>154</sup>

Alice’s words point to the ambiguous status of poetic language both as elevated cultural capital and as an ethically problematic medium for amorous communication. As with Maltravers’s eccentricity, which is simultaneously ethical and transgressive, the moral value of literary writing remains inherently unclear (thus perhaps also implicitly offering a meta-reflection on the ethical status of *Karyû shunwa*’s textuality itself). The status of love in the opening episode of the novel, which revolves around Alice, also mirrors this ambiguity. While the innocence of Alice’s love, although sexual, is seen as inherently valuable and positive, for Maltravers the sexual dimension of his infatuation constitutes an ethically problematic transgression and sin.<sup>155</sup> This is significant because the ensuing episodes of the novel – those revolving around Maltravers’s encounters with the high-ranking women Valerie and Florence – reduce the ethical ambivalence inherent in literary writing and love by reconfiguring them into the facilitating media for political advancement and social success.

Maltravers’s relationship with Valerie de Ventadour – the highly educated wife of a high-ranking French “aristocrat” (*kazoku*) whom the protagonist encounters while traveling

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<sup>154</sup> Ibid. 15.

<sup>155</sup> The morning after Maltravers first kisses and also sleeps with Alice it seems to him “as if he had committed a sin so great that Heaven and Earth could never forgive him” (ibid. 14). The narrator also explicitly qualifies Maltravers’s relationship with Alice as a “mistake” (see ibid. 14). Takahashi Osamu argues that Oda’s Japanese translation deemphasizes the naturalness (and natural innocence) of Alice’s love and sexuality, an idea that is strongly stressed in Bulwer-Lytton’s original (Takahashi 1984, 14-15). See for an investigation of the intellectual and philosophical premises of Bulwer-Lytton’s novel, in particular its indebtedness to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s idea of an original “state of nature” Yamamoto 1984.

in Naples after his separation from Alice – is also potentially transgressive given Valerie’s status as a married woman. However, Valerie’s ethical refusal to enter an affair with Maltravers, which runs counter her own strong feelings for him, also triggers the reconfiguration of love into a medium and *conditio sine qua non* for social and political advancement. When Maltravers declares his “love” (*renbo*) to the unhappily married Valerie, in words similar to those previously spoken to Alice, the aristocratic woman significantly “suppresses” (*seishi* 制し) her unethical desire and rejects the temptation of courtship with the following words:

“When I was three years old my parents promised me to my present husband but I saw him for the first time only one month before our wedding. According to the customs in France, only the parents have the right to marry their daughter while a girl cannot choose her husband as it pleases her. [...]. For generations the men in my family have been serving the state [*kokka*] while the women, unswerving in their chastity for their husband, have been overseeing the household. How could I, merely for my own personal benefit, sully the name of my family and bring shame to my parents? These are the customs of France. When I think about the good and bad, right and wrong of things [*mono no zen'aku seija*] in this light, there will be certainly no happiness for a woman who gives her heart to a lover and has secret intercourse with him. [...]. If, just because your love for me is so fervent [*kimi warawa o aisuru jō setsu ni shite*], you destroy all this [i.e. my adherence to the customs of my family and country] you are not my lover [*jōjin*] but my enemy. Please pity me with your love [*aijō*] and don’t let me go against the Way. Let me preserve my faithfulness and be your friend [*shin'yū*] so that we both can be saved. [...]

<sup>156</sup>

This passage shows the degree to which Valerie’s ability to control her emotions and sexual impulses not only stems from her education – her knowledge of notions of moral behavior and national customs, for instance – but is also tied to her consciousness of family and social status. This strongly differentiates her from Alice whose more problematic morality consisted in her “innocence,” which, as a result of her lack of education, let her enter an intimate affair with Maltravers “naturally,” without necessarily the mediation of sexual desire.<sup>157</sup> Whereas Maltravers in the Alice episode indulges in “days of bliss” (p. 15) from which the social

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<sup>156</sup> *Karyū shunwa* 28.

<sup>157</sup> See for Alice’s innocence *ibid.* 14-15.



world is excluded, Valerie's words trigger an awakening of the protagonist's "ambition" (*kokorozashi*), which is inherently social and political. This ambition, moreover, arouses Maltravers's actively ethical nature that had been dormant before. After listening to Valerie's above discourse Maltravers accordingly exclaims:

"[...] Now seeing a virtuous woman before me, even an unworthy fellow like me must arouse his ambition [*kokorozashi o tatan to su*]. I must leave from here as soon as possible to learn about the good in humanity [*jindô no zen*]. [...]. If people in the world were to praise me in the future then you should know that it was the effect of your high admonition, which made me reform my behavior. What is regrettable, though, is that we won't see each other any more to live out our lives together in happiness."<sup>158</sup>

In this episode of the novel the discourse of ambition is not only introduced through Valerie's "high admonition" but also by a letter, which is written by Frederic Cleveland, a mentor figure and close friend of Maltravers's father. In this letter Cleveland exhorts Maltravers to give up his life of idleness in Italy and to arouse his "highflying ambition" (*seiun no kokorozashi*) through study and enterprise as would be appropriate for an Englishman.<sup>159</sup> Also, at a slightly later point, after Maltravers has left Naples and the scene of his infatuation with Valerie, he is again urged by his gentleman-friend Montaigne to raise his "highflying ambition," especially toward a career in parliamentary politics. However, all these "male" exhortations notwithstanding, it is significant that *Karyû shunwa* presents the inner turning point of its hero – the origin of his "ambition" and social advancement – primarily as the effect produced by the "high admonition" of a "virtuous woman," which also

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid. 28. It should be noted that the discourse of ambition is entirely absent from the corresponding passage in the English original although "ambition" certainly remains a key term in Bulwer-Lytton's novel as a whole. See *Ernest Maltravers* 92-96. In his detailed discussion of the Valerie episode in *Karyû shunwa*, Takahashi Osamu argues that male "ambition" (*kokorozashi*) in the Japanese translation becomes configured as the medium to control and rechannel "human feeling" (*jô*), which denotes illicit amorous desire in the text. He also insightfully shows how this echoes Valerie's (female) discourse, which opposes "reason" (*ri* or *dôri*) and "human feeling" (*jô*, again used in the sense of adulterous sexual desire). Takahashi also rightfully points out that Valerie's discursive binary foreshadows Tsubouchi Shôyô's later discourse in *Shôsetsu shinzui* or *Imo to se kagami*. See Takahashi 1984, 18-26.

<sup>159</sup> See *Karyû shunwa* 26-27. For background information on Cleveland and his relationship to Maltravers as well as to his father see *ibid.* 18.

transforms the dangerous intimacy of illicit love and potential adultery into the ethically appropriate and desexualized emotionality of friendship.

Maltravers's inner conversion leads him to the start of a career as a public author. This triggers the radical reconfiguration, which the meaning and function of authorship and writing undergo in the Valerie episode by pushing away from the ethically ambivalent role of poetry and "literature" at the beginning of the novel. In chapter 37 of *Karyū shunwa*, which relates the incipient stage of Maltravers's career as a writer, the nature of writing in general and Maltravers's literary production more in particular are characterized in the following way:

Writings [*sho*] should above all propound true things [*shinjitsu no koto*] and contain upright words [*seigi no gen*]. If one were to write about empty and fictional events that hardly occur in reality then one's skill in writing might be praised but this is something one should not do. This is also the reason why authors [*choshoka*] have been often rejected by their readers. However, Maltravers's books only talked about true things and presented them with upright words and he never recorded anything that he hadn't seen or heard himself. He also never wrote about events that hadn't personally moved him [*kangai sezaruru no koto*].<sup>160</sup> This is the reason why, when his books were published, all gentlemen in the country were eager to buy them and there was nobody with some scholarly achievement who wouldn't read them. This is the first important task that an author should fulfill. Although Maltravers was still a young man he never wrote about anything he hadn't carefully thought through or reflected about. Moreover, he was highly erudite and knowledgeable and discussed things in their most minute details. He also never used beautiful words to vainly decorate his phrases. His only concern was the profundity of his arguments [*ronsetsu*]. This is the reason why books are written in the world and it is the second important task that an author should fulfill.<sup>161</sup>

This vision of writing in its emphasis on factuality, ethicality and soberness greatly contrasts with the role that "literature" played in the production of intimacy between Maltravers and Alice. In the above discussion, "writing" – and Maltravers's writing more in particular – is not only decoupled from the language of poetry, which the narrator implicitly criticizes for its "vain" ornateness, but also from its function as an oral medium of communication that

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<sup>160</sup> The verb *kangai suru* 感慨 ("to be moved by" or "to emotionally react to") here rather stands for Maltravers's emotional reaction to public events, not so much for his private emotions such as love.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. 52.

intimately transmits the feeling of love.<sup>162</sup> Through this decoupling from the spheres of poetry and love writing strips off its ethical ambiguity and instead, also owing to its ability to reach “all gentlemen in the country,” advances to become a medium for “high-flying ambition” and social advancement. Through his writing Maltravers achieves a “reputation resounding through the ages” (*bansei no kōmei*), which becomes the cornerstone for his future public and political career.<sup>163</sup>

The reconfiguration of writing into a de-eroticized and ethically appropriate medium for success in *Karyū shunwa* is paralleled by the integration of love into the sphere of the social and political, which again reduces the ethical complexity that adhered to the feeling in the Alice episode. However, in the *Bildungsroman* plot teleology of *Karyū shunwa*, the educational stage, which Maltravers reaches through his encounter with Valerie, is yet incomplete and needs to be transcended. While Valerie’s love was merely able to propel Maltravers’s career as an author but not yet as a politician, the coupling of love with politics as the culmination of his career only becomes realized through his encounter with the third heroine of the novel. This is Florence Lascelles, a beautiful and unmarried wealthy heiress, who is predestined to become Maltravers’s wife. The latter’s debut in active politics is in fact triggered by an anonymous letter, which Florence sends to him. In her letter the highly educated and politically conscious woman confronts Maltravers with the following exhortation:

A woman addresses this letter to Sir Maltravers. Although I haven’t had the honor yet of your personal acquaintance, when I read your books my mind was excited and my heart confused and I couldn’t help sighing several times. Unable to restrain my feelings of longing [*aibo no jō*], I am sending you this letter – despite my being a woman and without shame for my clumsy writing – to address you directly. Please give it a glance and don’t disregard my request. This is what I humbly think about

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<sup>162</sup> See *ibid.* 38 for another discussion of writing that emphasizes the need for a “good writer” (*zenchōsha*) to depict “human emotionality” (*ninjō*), i.e. “the six human feelings of joy, anger, sadness, happiness, fear and hope.” This discussion, however, doesn’t refer to the writings of Ernest Maltravers and constitutes an authorial digression that seems to reflect more broadly Niwa’s theoretical assumptions about the novel as a genre.

<sup>163</sup> See for Maltravers’s rising reputation as a public figure *ibid.* 53.

you. While you were born into a wealthy house, possess the talent to govern the realm [*keizai no sai*] and are very widely read, you live in vain seclusion and merely curb your body amid the dust of your books. You thus waste your talent among writings and manuscripts while it should be actively employed. This is not only a bad course of action to take but it is probably also against the will of God. If you don't want to end your days as a poet [*shijin*] you should immediately arouse your high ambition and give your ability to the realm so that the people can live in peace through your policies. Although I am merely a woman I have read your books, and even if I am yearning for you from a remote place my heart will be standing at your side. My only goal is to exhort you to realize your high ambition through dutiful service [each day] from morning to night. I have never met you and I also do not desire to meet you. This is because I don't love you as a person [*sono hito o kowazu*] but I love you for your ideas [*sono i o kou*]. However, you will probably think: as a woman she communicates her amorous feelings [*shinjō*] in such a way, and doesn't she also have a good reason to do so? But I am rich, ten times richer than you, and I am also still young and don't have to be ashamed of my physical appearance. This is why the sons of the wealthy are vying to flatter me and princes and aristocrats are longing for me. But only vulgar people [*zokujin*] show an appreciation for wealth and status and I have no interest in such things. Never have I indulged in my wealth and status and thus forgotten about you. How could there be any other reason for my to send you a letter [except for what I already explained to you before: namely, my wish that you arouse your ambition and offer your talent to the government of the realm]? [...].<sup>164</sup>

In the plot of *Karyū shunwa*, the arrival of Florence's letter and her request that Maltravers arouse his "high ambition" and enter a political career instead of wasting his talent through a secluded life devoted to the mere writing of books – or even worse: poetry – coincides with the end of his career as an author, which is caused by a nervous breakdown.<sup>165</sup> Although Florence elsewhere concedes that writing can equally well contribute to the "government of the realm" (*tenka no keizai*),<sup>166</sup> in her above-cited letter she stresses the ethically problematic dimension of literary pursuits, especially poetry. It could be argued that, even though writing in *Karyū shunwa* became reconfigured into a medium for "highflying ambition" through Valerie's virtuous admonition, it nonetheless retains a residue of ethical ambiguity, which

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<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 68-69.

<sup>165</sup> Immediately before Maltravers reads Florence's letter his doctor diagnoses a nervous fatigue due to excessive writing. The doctor advises him to immediately abandon his career as an author in order to preserve his bodily health (see *ibid.* 68).

<sup>166</sup> See *ibid.* 81.

Maltravers, through his abandonment of it, finally transcends.<sup>167</sup> The ultimate reduction of ethical ambivalence in Maltravers's ongoing apprenticeship and his political career are thus predicated on the elision of "literature" and writing.

Another aspect of Florence's letter lies in its de-eroticization of love, which is reconfigured in terms of the more spiritual emotionality of (male) friendship whose goal is to spur the partner in his political ambition instead of seeking sexual pleasure. Moreover, Florence posits this de-eroticization of love – as "love" for Maltravers's "ideas" and not for his person – as possible only under the condition of her aristocratic status, wealth and education. Florence's socio-economic position not only allows her to approach Maltravers on equal (or even superior) terms as a friend, giver of advice or even financial sponsor but it also places her in a position that is diametrically opposed to Alice's former erotic dependence.<sup>168</sup> Maltravers and Florence, despite their mutual (also ambiguously erotic) attraction, pledge friendship (*shin'yū no yaku*) when they finally meet each other in person. It is true that the text, subsequently, ironically questions the possibility for a "beautiful man and a beautiful woman" to "merely engage in friendship" instead of becoming lovers, and Maltravers and Florence indeed soon become engaged to each other.<sup>169</sup> However, I would nonetheless argue that the reconfiguration of love through friendship in this episode (as well as in the preceding Valerie episode) reduces the feeling's ethical ambiguity and also transforms it into a facilitator for political activity. Moreover, it is this reduction of the ethical ambiguity of love through its de-eroticization, which not only prefigures the allegorical economy of sexuality

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<sup>167</sup> It was however also Maltravers's writing, its soberness and lack of sensuous ornateness notwithstanding, which first attracted Florence to him and initially mediated the love relationship, which is about to unfold between the two partners. A similar observation could be made with regard to Florence's anonymous letters, which also ambiguously carry both a moral and an erotic dimension.

<sup>168</sup> Maltravers's social status is in fact inferior to the one of Valerie and Florence. See *ibid.* 22, where the British legate, at a diplomatic reception in Naples where Maltravers for the first time encounters Valerie, derogatively remarks that he doesn't belong to the high aristocracy (*kazoku*) but is merely a "wealthy man" (*fujin*). See also p. 16 where Maltravers's status is defined as belonging to the warrior (*bushi*) class intimately tied to the lands that it owns and whose ancestry is said to stem back to the Norman invaders.

<sup>169</sup> For the citations see *ibid.* 80.

characteristic of subsequent political novels but also produces the allegorical potential inherent in Maltravers and Florence themselves. Although this potential is not yet actualized in *Karyû shunwa*, the marriage between the two partners seems to anticipate the allegorical union between the “Japanese people” (Maltravers) and their female high-ranking “political rights” (Florence) in a later *seiji shôsetsu* context.

It is important, however, that *Karyû shunwa* does not end with this potentially allegorical vision of Maltravers’s and Florence’s matrimonial union. Their marriage in fact fails owing to the malevolent schemes of Lumley Ferrers who is Maltravers’s political rival and selfishly desires to wed Florence himself in order to advance his political goals through her status and wealth. Maltravers then ambiguously returns to Alice whom he accidentally reencounters and marries after Florence’s death. Maltravers’s return to Alice is ambiguous insofar as it ultimately reinstates, even if through a legally sanctioned marriage, an ethically problematic relationship, which he already seemed to have transcended. I would argue that Maltravers’s return to Alice also reduces the allegorical potential for *Karyû shunwa* as a whole since their relationship, because of its ethical ambiguity as both transgressive and valuable, ultimately resists the allegorical economy of sexuality characteristic of subsequent political novels. This fact is important for the intertextual impact of *Karyû shunwa* on the dynamics of allegorization and de-allegorization in the long decade of the 1880s, which this chapter partly seeks to retrace. Whereas novels such as *Setchûbai* politically allegorize the type of relationship between figures like Maltravers and Florence, the intertextual referencing to Maltravers’s ambiguous love for Alice in Shôyô’s novel *Imo to se kagami* also reinforces the deconstruction of the strictly allegorical mode. In such a way *Karyû shunwa*, most probably unintentionally, produces a complexity of (ulterior) reading for which Bulwer-Lytton’s original doesn’t allow. As I argued before, Maltravers’s return to Alice in *Alice* (1838), the sequel to *Ernest Maltravers*, could be read as the hero’s eventual sanctioning of

his true love and the ultimate fulfillment of his course of apprenticeship. The ambiguous validation of Maltravers' feelings for Alice and Florence both as love in the translation *Karyû shunwa*, however, not only problematizes the text's *Bildungsroman* structure but also propels the novel to its key position within the literary history of the 1880s: namely, as a reference for both the construction and the demise of a strictly allegorical mode of literary representation.

## 2. The Allegorical Economy of Love and Sexual Desire in the Meiji Political Novel

A series of novels from the decade of the 1880s seem to follow in the footsteps of the translation *Karyû shunwa* by allegorizing some of the core components of its plot within the political context of the People's Rights Movement (*jiyû minken undô*), which considerably gained momentum in the late 1870s and early 1880s. These novels confront a male protagonist, who stands for the Japanese people (i.e. the movement's activists vying for political representation), with the choice between two allegorized female figures or types. These types are, on the one hand, a politically conscious and (in the case of *Setchûbai* and Shôyô's *Kyô waranbe*) a wealthy and high-ranking heroine who allegorically embodies the people's rights and, on the other hand, a socially low-standing female figure (often a prostitute) who detracts the male protagonist from his political goals mainly through the allure of sexual lust. Moreover, as in *Karyû shunwa*, a powerful male rival vies against the protagonist for the love of the politically conscious and high-ranking heroine. This rival then allegorically stands for the desire of the Meiji oligarchic government or of pro-government groups to usurp the people's rights from their legitimate possessors. While the high-ranking heroine is reminiscent of *Karyû shunwa*'s Florence, Alice could perhaps be seen as the vague model for the second female type that sexually detracts the male protagonist from his career. However, Alice in *Karyû shunwa* was an ambiguous figure that possessed intrinsic worth

despite her ethically problematic sexuality. The second woman type in the above plot scenario, which is exclusively defined by lewd sexuality, then rather constitutes Alice's allegorical reduction into an unambiguously negative detractor of political success through base sexual allure.

My following discussion focuses on two structurally comparable texts that allegorize core components of *Karyû shunwa*'s plot. I first examine Toda Kindô's short and purely allegorical piece *Jôkai haran* (1880), which belongs to a relatively early phase of the People's Rights Movement and was published even before the imperial decree of 1881 that granted a constitution and the opening of a Diet for the year 1890. I then turn to Suehiro Tetchô's novel *Setchûbai* (published in August and November 1886), which can be seen as a further elaboration of the plot pattern of *Jôkai haran* but within the very different ideological context of the late People's Rights Movement postdating the violent incidents (*gekika jiken*) between the years 1882 and 1885.<sup>170</sup> Tsubouchi Shôyô's short and still purely allegorical piece *Kyô waranbe* (discussed in section 3.1) exhibits strong structural affinities to *Setchûbai* while radically inverting the content of its plot. Shôyô's male protagonist in fact fails to marry the female personification of his political rights and instead sinks into an abyss of sexual lust. *Kyô waranbe*, which also provides the plot kernel for Shôyô's subsequent novel *Imo to se kagami*, thus allegorically prefigures the demise of the purely allegorical mode of representation characteristic of the Meiji political novel.

### **2.1. Sexual Desire and Erotic Restriction in Toda Kindô's *Jôkai haran***

Toda Kindô's *Jôkai haran* schematically confronts its male protagonist Wakokuya Minji ("People of the Country Japan") with the choice between the two geisha Sakigakeya Oken ("Progressive Rights") and Hikutsuya Yakko ("Slave to Servility"). The rich and

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<sup>170</sup> For the historical context in English see Vlastos 1989.



powerful Kokufu Masabumi (“Proper Documents of National Government”) also vies for the love of Oken but is rejected.<sup>171</sup> Kindô’s story, among other contents, depicts intimate scenes of dialogue between Minji and Oken where the latter explicitly expresses her preference for the “People of the Country Japan” over the “National Government.” The reader also witnesses Masabumi’s repelling schemes to win the affection of Oken as well as Minji’s undecided wavering between the two geisha. The narrative seems to conclude with the marriage between Minji and Oken (the people and their rights), under the auspicious protection of Masafumi (the oligarchic government) who has finally given up on Oken and now hosts a banquet (*kaiseki*) as the go-between for the newly wed at a restaurant in Ryôgoku. The words *Ryôgoku* and *kaiseki* juxtaposed also auspiciously produce the term *kokkai*, i.e. “parliament.” In the end, however, it unfortunately turns out that all was dreamed by Oken who was asleep on a pleasure boat on her way back from the Yoshiwara quarter.

Oken, unlike Valerie and Florence in *Karyû shunwa*, is neither wealthy nor of aristocratic descent but an ordinary Yanagibashi geisha. By virtue of her chastity, her morally upright character, which lets her stand out as a “tiger among the rest of the cats” (i.e. the other geisha), and her historical and political self-consciousness, Oken however also shows a certain affinity with the highly educated and high-ranking heroines with whom Ernest Maltravers engages in the second half of *Karyû shunwa*.<sup>172</sup> Oken’s ethical self-consciousness can be gauged most clearly from the following intimate dialogue that she exchanges with her lover Minji after both have returned to the brothel at night from a *kabuki* performance:

The erotic man [*irootoko*] Wakokuya Minji thus spoke to his beloved Oken: “We have been all day enjoying ourselves at the theater together and now, having returned to your place, we are about to conclude our company in pleasure and happiness. However, you belong to the profession of falling flowers and flowing water [the

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<sup>171</sup> See for partly alternative translations Mertz 2003, 141. Masafumi is also assisted by the two *taikomochi* Nenpachi and Jôkichi who allegorically represent the sycophantic government bureaucracy. For the allegorical significance of the figures in *Jôkai haran* and their names see also the brief discussion in Yanagida 1935 II, 106.

<sup>172</sup> For Oken’s morally upright character, see Toda Kindô, *Jôkai haran* 10.

geisha profession] and tomorrow you will certainly be enjoying yourself with another lover. Thinking about all the pangs this causes me I cannot but feel a bit resentful.” He hadn’t even finished speaking these words when Oken fixed her eyes on Minji’s face and, after watching him intently for some time, she despondently said: “My dear, how can you utter such words? Even if you just spoke these words to make fun of me, hearing them gives me no pleasure. Don’t you know this is the age of civilization and enlightenment [*bunmei kaika*] that has come with many new discoveries? I but wish there were a camera that could copy the truthfulness in my breast so that I could prove to you that I don’t have two hearts! You are talking about yourself when you say falling flowers and flowing water. Your fickleness is truly hateful!” She wanted to say more but remained silent. Instead she wrote the characters “Yakko” on his knees, and, folding her hands, smiled at him from the side. Minji responded: “[...]. That I don’t have a heart for anybody else I swear to you and Heaven will know this to be true!” Oken said: “If your words were as pure as the light of the shining sun I would be truly happy, and even if I had to die now I could do so without regrets!” [...].<sup>173</sup>

Oken’s pledges of truthfulness in the above scene are reminiscent of the trope of the faithful courtesan in Edo-period *ninjōbon*, the works of Hanasanjin for instance.<sup>174</sup> At the same time, they also radically push away from the Edo-period context through the historical awareness in which they are couched. In her reference to the “age of civilization and enlightenment” Oken in fact alludes to a historical moment – the present – which promises to produce the technology (a camera of her soul) through which the truthfulness of her inner heart could be seen. Moreover, her inner heart itself, in its desire to remain monogamous and to restrict sexual promiscuity, appears to be the very product of this age. This historical awareness is also inscribed into Oken’s name and her allegorical nature as the embodiment of the people’s rights, which are the product par excellence of enlightenment thinking.<sup>175</sup> Although *Jōkai*

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<sup>173</sup> Ibid. 15-16.

<sup>174</sup> See Langer 2002.

<sup>175</sup> I here disagree with John Mertz who describes Oken not only as “a representative for political rights” but also as “a lover of Japan’s governed masses (*min*), and as a member herself of that population” and who concludes that Oken, while labeled as “symbol of ‘rights’” by Kindō, “functions much more convincingly as a synecdoche for Japan itself.” Accordingly Mertz also argues: “In a way, the character of Oken can be said to hijack Kindō’s narrative by upstaging the allegorical function of its male hero Minji” (Mertz 2003, 146). While Mertz’ reading is interesting I would nonetheless question the appropriateness to read *min* here as a signifier for “Japan’s governed masses” – i.e. the totality of the Japanese nation – and I would instead argue that *min*, especially at the early moment of the People’s Rights Movement when *Jōkai haran* was published (i.e. 1880) and when totalizing visions of the nation were rather unstable (if existent), would more appropriately stand for the highly restricted and elitist group of political activists, which Minji allegorically represents and to which

*haran* doesn't develop a political plot per se, it is through her implicitly allegorical nature that Oken, like Florence in *Karyû shunwa*, can assist the male protagonist Minji in his future (political) pursuits. Her rival Yakko, on the contrary, detracts him from these pursuits through the excitement of vain, i.e. politically inconsequential sexual desire.

What comes to the fore in Oken's and Minji's above-cited dialogue is therefore the double telos inscribed into the *Jôkai haran* plot scenario in which the allegorical appropriation of the people's rights by the political activist is predicated on the necessity to enter a monogamous marriage and to abandon a life of sexual promiscuity and pleasure. (In order to gain Oken, Minji in fact has to give up on Yakko even though, as the end of chapter 4 demonstrates, he also still strongly desires her and is torn between the two women).<sup>176</sup> I would argue that this leads to the configuration of an allegorical economy of sexuality also characteristic of later political novels, which implies a control of sexual desire as the condition for the "people's" access to their political rights. It is true that Minji and Oken engage in sexual intercourse and the above-translated dialogue scene indeed concludes in *ninjôbon* fashion with sexually explicit references. However, the couple's sexuality is also predicated on the prospect of a monogamous marriage and can only continue if Minji gives up on Yakko.<sup>177</sup> At the same time, the allegorical economy of sexuality in *Jôkai haran* also

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Kindô himself belonged. I would therefore also read the figure of Oken more exclusively according to the interpretive key provided by the text: namely as a strictly allegorical representation of the abstract concept of people's rights, which political activists like Minji/Kindô would need to obtain in order to challenge the oligarchic government in its power position. (In his preface to *Jôkai haran* Toda's former colleague Miwa Shinjirô (1854-1943) also likens Oken to the female figure of liberty on American banknotes, which is also a purely allegorical representation of an abstract concept; see *Jôkai haran* 6).

<sup>176</sup> See *ibid.* 22 where the narrator (and implicitly Minji's gaze) likens Oken's "fresh elegance" (*seiso kaitatsu* 清楚快達, glossed *iki na fi*) to a plum blossom and Yakko's "deep sensuousness" (*kôen kenbi* 濃艶妍媚, glossed *adeyaka*) to a pear flower. The narrator then concludes: "Were one to look into Minji's heart one could see that although he deeply loved the fragrance of the plum blossom, he also wasn't yet able to forget about the hue of the pear" (*ibid.* 22). This scene of indecision immediately precedes the shift of focus toward the Ryôgoku banquet (i.e. the opening of the parliament), which climactically concludes Oken's dream.

<sup>177</sup> See *Jôkai haran* 16 for the erotically explicit ending of Minji's and Oken's dialogue. The Kanayomi shinbun newspaper article, in which Minji reads about his affair with Oken (and which also spurs his decision to finally give up on Yakko and to marry Oken), also specifies that Oken has the reputation to be a paragon of

implies the association of sexual promiscuity not only with uncivilized and unenlightened “servility” but also with the practices of the government, which is personified by Kokufu Masabumi. About Masabumi the narrator explicitly states that he “selfishly did only what he liked, was madly infatuated with flowers and willows [i.e. prostitutes] and loved spending his days under the red lamps and in the wine houses of the pleasure quarter”.<sup>178</sup> Masabumi also desires “to ransom [Oken] all at once with the power of gold in order to make her into a parrot in a cage or a flower in a vase.” Were this to happen, the narrator surmises, Masabumi’s “despotism would fill with sorrow all people alike.”<sup>179</sup> Allegorically, the oligarch’s wish to tyrannically usurp the “rights” from the people is thus superimposed onto his erotic desire to make Oken into a concubine who is sexually available without monogamous restriction. As a rich merchant, Minji would probably be able to buy a concubine in a similar manner. In order to differentiate himself from his governmental competitor and to gain access to his political rights, he must control his sexual desire. Despite the overall affinity of *Jōkai haran* to the *ninjōbon* genre, this control of sexual desire also constitutes a heroic element that qualifies Minji as a potential *yomihon* hero.

## **2.2. Allegorizations of Political History, Social Class and Sexual Desire in Suehiro Tetchō’s *Setchūbai***

Suehiro Tetchō’s novel *Setchūbai* (1886) stages an allegorical plot, which in its essence is comparable to the one of *Jōkai haran*. At the same time, the novel also, in new and much more nuanced fashion, alludes to the historical context of the relatively late stage of the People’s Rights Movement (i.e. the time postdating the violent incidents of the mid-1880s)

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chastity. She only recently started to sleep with her customer Minji, very much against her reputation (see *ibid.* 21-22).

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* 19.

and to the specific ideological framework of Tetchô's political thought. The novel, moreover, couches especially its romantic plot in a much more "realistic" mode of representation, which has been often read in opposition to its allegorical dimension.<sup>180</sup> My following reading, however, seeks to examine the significance of the allegorical coupling of chaste love, sexual desire and politics in Tetchô's novel.

*Setchûbai*'s male protagonist Kunino Motoi ("Fundament of the Nation"), unlike Minji in *Jôkai haran*, is a student (*shosei*) whose education towers above the average. While able to read both English and classical Chinese and proficient in *kanshi* composition, Kunino is also in serious financial difficulties and needs to make ends meet through translations. However, he still barely manages to pay the rent for his lodging (cf. chapters 3 and 4). As a student Kunino, moreover, belongs to a social group whose main characteristic could be defined by its social and political ambition, especially within the context of the mid-1880s, which marked the point of climax and subsequently the decline of the People's Rights Movement.<sup>181</sup> Kunino participates in political gatherings at a political society called *Seigisha* or "Society of Righteousness." He has already made his reputation as a particularly eloquent and talented orator, which destines him – within the specific teleological timeframe of the novel (which I will discuss in more detail below) – to successfully prepare the nation for the opening of the Meiji Diet in 1890 and the advent of democratic governance in Japan (the narrated time of *Setchûbai* more or less corresponds to the year of the novel's publication, i.e. 1886). This of course also marks the allegorical promise inscribed into the protagonist's name. The female protagonist of *Setchûbai* and Kunino's object of romance is named Tominaga Oharu ("Spring of Eternal Wealth") who, like Florence in *Karyû shunwa*, is a rich

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<sup>180</sup> See Yamada 2003, 553-5, for an assessment of such scholarly readings of *Setchûbai*; see also Maeda 1974.

<sup>181</sup> In her analysis of Tsubouchi Shôyô's *Tôsei shosei katagi* (published from June 1885 to January 1886, i.e. slightly prior to *Setchûbai*), Atsuko Ueda offers a brief but helpful discussion of students and schools in the period in question, especially by differentiating between "private schools (*shijuku*) affiliated with the Freedom and People's Rights activists" and "government-supported schools (*kanritsu gakkô*)." See Ueda 2007, 118-120. The text of *Setchûbai*, however, doesn't explicitly state at which kind of school Kunino studies.

heiress and highly educated woman, able to read fluently both English and classical Chinese texts. Her ultimate role is to financially and morally assist Kunino in his political quest. Kunino and Oharu were formerly promised to each other when Oharu's father, in recognition of his exceptional talents, chose the young man to become his heir. Owing to false accusations, however, Kunino was forced to go underground even before he had the chance to meet Oharu in person and the novel starts with Oharu's pledge to remain unmarried for another two or three years in order to wait for the return of her unknown prospective fiancé.<sup>182</sup> In the meantime, Oharu – in her conviction that “women need to know about politics a bit in order to assist the men and make [Japan] on a par with the countries of Europe and America”<sup>183</sup> – starts frequenting the *Seigisha* gatherings and listens to Kunino's speech without knowing about his actual identity (Kunino speaks under a different name). Only through a coincidence do both find out about their true relationship to each other. After successfully braving the schemes of Kunino's political rival Kawagishi Hyôtsui (“Floating Weeds at the Riverbank”), who also desires to marry Oharu, they are finally able to celebrate their betrothal.

The protagonists' names in *Setchûbai*, like in *Jôkai haran*, are indicative of their allegorical predestination. The more precise historical meaning and significance of the allegory in Tetchô's novel, however, becomes disclosed in Kunino's long speech at the *Seigisha* (chapter 2) in which he exposes his political thought and his analysis of the historical situation to which the plot of the novel also refers. Kunino's speech is framed by the temporal metaphor of a journey – a *mise en abyme* of both real history and the novel's plot – in which the present or narrated time, i.e. approximately 1886, is set against an

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<sup>182</sup> That Kunino and Oharu were formerly promised to each other but then had to separate owing to adverse circumstances needs to be allegorically read as alluding to the promise of democracy tied to the “first” Meiji Restoration of 1868, which only becomes fulfilled with the “second Restoration” of 1890 (allegorically doubled by Kunino's and Oharu's marriage).

<sup>183</sup> Suehiro Tetchô, *Setchûbai* 371.

immediate past (the beginning of the journey) and an immediate future (the journey's end). The immediate past consists of the time frame of the last "seven or eight years," starting with the first peak of the People's Rights Movement in the late 1870s, the imperial decree from 1881 (granting a constitution and a Diet) and the foundation of political parties in the aftermath of the declaration. The immediate future of Kunino's vision corresponds to the projected opening of the Diet in 1890 (Meiji 23), which institutes the timeframe and telos that not only Kunino's metaphorical journey but also the plots of *Setchûbai* and its sequel *Kakan'ô* (*Warblers Amid Spring Flowers*, 1887) allegorically need to fill and fulfill. In this historical construction, moreover, the immediate past extending up to the present moment is described as a history of decline that led from the hopeful beginnings of the imperial decree and the foundation of political parties – Kunino, among others, mentions the Liberal Party (*Jiyûtô*) and the Constitutional Reform Party (*Rikken kaishintô*) – to a time of crisis in the years 1883 to 1886.<sup>184</sup> These years are marked by violent uprisings, the dissolution of the parties and general dissent that fundamentally oppose the people to the government and also jeopardize the unity of the nation. The urgency of the present crisis according to Kunino's speech lies in the danger that his metaphorical journey as well as the national and democratic goal of 1890 could fail. It is then the role of the novel's plot – its own intrinsic futurity – to lead history out of this crisis and to bring about a future of national unity and enlightened political utopia as epitomized by the year 1890.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> For these precise dates see the "opening chapter" (*hottan*) of the novel (in particular *Setchûbai* 326).

<sup>185</sup> The "opening chapter" of *Setchûbai* in fact frames the novel from the year Meiji 173 (2040) in which two old gentlemen reminisce about the time of crisis of the years 1883 to 1884 and about the advent, in 1890, of a history (which is in a sense the end of history) of ideal governance, progress and prosperity that has extended up to their future present. The fundamental problem that one of the gentlemen raises with regard to the temporality of the novel and which the plots of *Setchûbai* and *Kakan'ô* are set to resolve is the following: "As I heard from my grandfather when I was little, around the years Meiji 13-14 [1880-81] several frictions occurred between the government and the people, and from the years Meiji 16/17 [1883/4] to Meiji 18/19 [1885/6] society was greatly stagnating and all political thinking [because of the dissolution of the parties and government oppression] had practically died, and texts like *The Future Record of the Year 1890* [*Nijûsannen miraiki*, written by Tetchô himself and published in 1886], written like the revelation of a dream, would show the true state of politics and society and predict the advent of a very unsatisfactory Diet. How could it be that the situation so

A major part of Kunino's speech consists in the analysis of the reasons that produced the political crisis in the present moment of history and of the measures, which need to be undertaken for the crisis to be resolved. Rather than in the brutal government crackdowns on the democratic movement, which he euphemistically labels as "policies temporarily implemented by the government," Kunino more conservatively sees the true reason for the breakdown of the movement and the current crisis in the shortcomings of "the men of purpose among the people" (*minkan shishi*) themselves. The first "shortcoming" that Kunino mentions lies in what he labels the "empty theories" (*kûron*) of the activists, i.e. their allegedly purely philosophical and therefore unrealistic demands based on their superficial understanding of Western thinkers such as Rousseau and Spencer. These demands are for "natural rights" (*tenpu no kenri*), the "freedom of equality" (*byôdô no jiyû*) or the abolition of "government interference" (*seifu no kanshō*).<sup>186</sup> The reason why these notions or demands are "empty," however, not only lies in their philosophical nature but also in their radical and violent potential, which Kunino broadly identifies as the second "shortcoming" responsible for the movement's current crisis. He argues:

Their [i.e. the activists'] discourses and actions have been fierce and violent, which led to a feeling of danger in the middle class of society [*chûtô shakai*]. This is the second reason for the recent decline in political thought. One of the methods, which politicians have used, was to stir up the lower social classes [*katô shakai*], to direct their minds on politics and to rely on their support in order to increase their [i.e. the

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radically changed and society became so happy [*medetaki*] thereafter? Since this is a story from a long time ago I cannot understand this at all" (*Setchûbai* 326). Hill 2008, 163-171, provides a revealing analysis of the complex temporality in *Setchûbai*, especially with regard to the question of how this temporality contributes to the writing of a "second Restoration" through the staging of a plot of "national allegory." Hill, for instance, writes: "The frame and the story thus establish three temporal continua: a known past up to Meiji 19, an unknown past between Meiji 19 and 23, and an age of progress that begins in Meiji 23 and continues to the gentlemen's present. The unknown middle continuum is Tetchô's readers' near future and the gentlemen's past. Its events are filled in by the novel within the novel, through what is prolepsis from the perspective of the reader but for the gentlemen it is the recovery of a source-based history [in the frame of the novel the very text of *Setchûbai* is treated as a historical document uncovered from the distant past in question]. In a circular manner, the gentlemen's impressive world is 'proof' of the veracity of history, which we discover is ultimately a political argument on how to achieve just such a golden age. The position of the gentlemen in the future thus establishes the authority of the novel's assertions about the present political impasse. Note, moreover, that by giving the date of the frame as Meiji 173, Tetchô connects his happy future to the originary date of Meiji 1, through the second beginning of Meiji 23" (Hill 2008, 166). See also Hill 2007.

<sup>186</sup> See *Setchûbai* 339-340.



politicians'] own influence and power. However, the interests of those with property and the working classes [*rôryoku shakai*] are different. Those with education and those without knowledge don't share the same feelings. When you therefore gain the approval of one of these groups you will necessarily be opposed by the other. This is the natural course of things. These stalwart and hot-blooded people, who preach about natural rights, liberty and equality, merely base their assumptions on two or three European thinkers and, without even presenting them for discussion, claim that, in view of the opening of the Diet, political institutions should be determined only according to their ideas. If one were to follow the hopes of these people, universal suffrage would be implemented in our country today and one would have to grant political rights to people from the lower classes without property and education. I shiver at the idea which impact the implementation of such an excessive reform would have on the middle class of society and higher. Among the people who propound such ideas there are also some who clandestinely support the principles of the socialist party and who vociferously attack the upper classes and claim that it would be the most natural thing in the world to divide up all property [among the people]. Although the lower classes would be certainly happy about this, those with property and education would not only feel displeased but would also openly come to resist this [the democratic movement]. But this is not the only harmful consequence. Through their actions [the stalwart activists] not only scare the general public but also, because they have recourse to violence and are ultimately bound to failure, they cannot help but become criminals according to the law. The mature gentlemen [*rôsei no shi*] therefore hate these people like the pest and it could happen that, only because they reject the actions of a very small number of activists, they also come to reject the doctrine of liberty as a whole. This is why I firmly assert that fierce and violent discourses and actions have been one reason for the recent decline in political thought.<sup>187</sup>

In line with the conservative ideological stance of the Constitutional Reform Party (*Rikken kaishintô*), Kunino here rhetorically associates the violence of the recent historical uprisings (*gekika jiken*) with the specter of socialism and the political participation of the non-propertied and uneducated classes.<sup>188</sup> He also demands slightly later on in his speech that the “mature gentlemen” of the propertied and educated middle classes should be reintegrated into the democratic movement. This ideological stance also motivates the love-related allegorical plot in *Setchûbai* – Kunino's romance and marriage with the upper-class woman Oharu – through which the narration symbolically overcomes the present political crisis and

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid. 341-342.

<sup>188</sup> For the political thought of Tetchô who was a member of the Liberal Party (*Jiyûtô*) but at the same time sympathetic to *Kaishintô* ideological views see Yanagida 1935 II, 444-480.

anticipates the fulfillment of the year 1890 as well as the advent of national unity and democratic government in Japan.

It becomes clear that Kunino's and Oharu's betrothal at the end of *Setchûbai* allegorically marks the reintegration of the propertied and educated classes into the democratic movement, which thus becomes backed by the economically relevant elements of society.<sup>189</sup> Logistically this union also provides Kunino, originally a poor student, with the financial means necessary to realize political measures that need to be undertaken in view of the year 1890, in particular the unification of the democratic movement itself whose crisis had also been a result of its pernicious factionalism and the harmonization between the movement (i.e. the "people") and the Meiji oligarchic government.<sup>190</sup> But the union between Kunino and Oharu, most importantly for my argument, also participates in and even radicalizes the allegorical economy of love and sexuality, which already came to the fore in *Karyû shunwa* and *Jôkai haran*. Kunino's and Oharu's union at the end of *Setchûbai* in fact consists in a conscious act of sexual restraint, which defers the consummation of the couple's

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<sup>189</sup> With regard to Kunino's and Oharu's betrothal Christopher Hill also writes: "We can find at least three meanings in the betrothal, its interruption, and restoration, which each support Tetchô's vision of Japanese democracy on the English model. Haru's move into public life would be unnecessary but for the state persecution that forced Kunino underground and out of touch with her father. When her resources are back in his hands, the natural coalition between intellectuals and the propertied classes blocked by the state is restored. In this sense the betrothal figures as a class alliance. In addition to such a figure of union, the betrothal marks exclusions in two different directions that indeed make the union possible. Inasmuch as the political alliance is directed against what Kunino calls 'the unpropertied and ignorant lower classes,' the betrothal functions as an argument regarding the masses, who are to be governed rather than to govern. Moreover, Haru's impending disappearance from public life [in the plot of *Kakan'ô*] mirrors the position of democratic moderates that women should be excluded from the franchise regardless of education or property. [...]. The passing of Haru from her father to Kunino shows both the containment of the masses and women and the means by which they are to be contained, a moderate liberal party" (Hill 2008, 169).

<sup>190</sup> This constitutes the content of the plot of *Setchûbai*'s sequel *Kakan'ô*, which covers the crucial time period between 1886 and 1890 (for a gist of the plot of *Kakan'ô* see Yanagida 1935 II, 519-522 as well as in English Hill 1999, 273-275). While Kunino stands for moderation and for the desire to unify the democratic movement, his friend Takeda Takeshi, whose name implicitly carries martial connotations, espouses radical socialist views that sanction violent action. Kunino's scheming rival Kawagishi Hyôsui who is the leader of the *Seigisha* represents the movement's problematic pro-government faction.

marriage until the time of the opening of the Meiji Diet in 1890.<sup>191</sup> This contrasts with Kawagishi Hyôtsui, the pro-government schemer as well as Kunino's political and romantic rival, who is defined through his erotic desire, sexual promiscuity and monetary greed.

Kawagishi's views on women and marriage are the following:

“I had been married to my previous wife at the will of my parents when I was still living in my home province, and since she was rather the dregs of a wife, which means extremely ugly and countrified, I finally sent her home. I then ransomed a girl called Omon from the Yanagibashi pleasure quarter and set her up as a mistress. She even bore me a child and I entertained thoughts to make her into my official wife, but with the progress of the customs in our society the power of women has increased and recently they've begun frequenting even official events. At the time of the restoration, when the morality of the warrior class was in disarray, it was still possible for a woman from the mud [of the pleasure quarters] to mingle with the ladies of high society. But soon Western customs will prevail and a wife from an inappropriate background will certainly face exclusion in the circles of high society so that it would be disadvantageous to make a *geisha* into your main wife. Since I have the ambition to have intercourse with [high-ranking] gentlemen from within the country and abroad I need to choose as my wife somebody who understands a bit the currents of our time. Since that woman [Oharu] doesn't have vulgar manners, is educated and even has the reputation of high proficiency in English learning it would certainly be advantageous to have her as my wife. And as she even seems to be in possession of a fortune from her parents all the better!”<sup>192</sup>

This quote suggests that Kawagishi does not primarily consider Oharu as an object for sexual desire but as a source for wealth and as a medium for his personal social and political advancement. Oharu, however, also functions as the replacement – necessary in a more civilized time characterized by the progress of Western customs – for a Yanagibashi prostitute with whom Kawagishi has probably entertained a primarily sexual relationship. This demonstrates the extent to which Kawagishi's desire for social advancement, which is fundamentally contrary to Kunino's political ambition, is originally linked to the fulfillment of sexual lust. Kawagishi's immoral sexuality indirectly also shines through his attempts to

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<sup>191</sup> See again Christopher Hill who sees in Kunino's and Oharu's sexual restraint a fourth possible reading for the couple's betrothal: “Allegorically, the betrothal figures a moment of national unity and awakening, but the element of self-restraint extends from Kunino and Haru to the nation as a whole and introduces an element of futurity – deferred desire – to the closure of a narrative that is already framed by a conceit set in a distant age” (Hill 2008, 169).

<sup>192</sup> *Setchûbai* 409.

sexualize both Kunino and Oharu and to thus destroy not only their romantic but allegorically also their political union. He in fact not only oversees the publication of a newspaper calumny against Oharu, which represents her as a sexually promiscuous woman, in order to alienate Kunino from her. But he also organizes a rendezvous between the otherwise chaste activist and the prostitute Umekichi, the only figure in *Setchûbai* who is reminiscent of Hikutsuya Yakko in *Jôkai haran* or, by extension, *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice. Kawagishi stages this potentially erotic encounter because Kunino apparently once had an affair with Umekichi while still in his home province. It is significant that Kunino, during a brief moment of crisis, indeed seems to be led astray by an erotic attraction for Umekichi and doubts about the trustworthiness of Oharu, which are triggered by Kawagishi's calumny.<sup>193</sup> Once this crisis is resolved, however, Kunino is able to embark without ambiguity on his true romantic as well as political mission.

### **3. The Demise of the Strictly Allegorical Mode and the Renegotiation of “Human Feeling” and Heroism in Tsubouchi Shôyô's Writings**

#### **3.1. Political Failure and Sexual Desire: The Allegorical Inversion of *Setchûbai* and the Production of Sexualized “Human Feeling” in Shôyô's *Kyô waranbe***

Shôyô's short piece *Kyô waranbe*, published two months prior to the first part of *Setchûbai* in June 1886 by the publisher Hino shoten, stages an allegorical plot, which refers to a historical and political situation almost identical to the one in Tetchô's novel. Shôyô's text does so, moreover, from an ideologically comparable vantage point. The major difference between the two texts, however, is that Shôyô's allegorical hero Nakatsu Kunihiko (“Hero of the Middle Land,” i.e. Japan) fails in his marital quest for the refined, intelligent and highly educated Toshiko who is the personified embodiment of his political “rights.”

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<sup>193</sup> See for this moment of crisis *ibid.* 415-416.

Kunihiko is instead diverted by his “base sexual desires” (*retsujô*), which make him frequent the pleasure quarters and lose all his financial resources. He finally turns to the lowly prostitute Ajisai and exchanges a marriage pledge with her.

Similarly to *Setchûbai*, *Kyô waranbe* is also set in an allegorical time frame, which starts with the “first” Meiji Restoration of 1868, continues to Meiji 19 (1886) as a moment of crisis and open political possibilities, and culminates in the year Meiji 23 (1890), the anticipated moment of a “second Restoration” along the lines of democracy and people’s rights, which fails in Shôyô’s text. Kunihiko and Toshiko, both originally of high-ranking *daimyô* descent and related by kin, were in fact promised to each other by their parents even before the Meiji Restoration. However, after the death of Kunihiko’s father, his fortunes dwindle and the relationship to Toshiko’s household is cut so that by the time when he has become a student (*shosei*) in Tôkyô, he has almost forgotten about his chance to become Toshiko’s husband. Toshiko, in the meantime, has been living with her brother Toyohara Masao, who allegorically stands for the “nation Japan.”<sup>194</sup> Despite his great wealth, Masao has been experiencing increased financial difficulties owing to his penchant for pleasure quarter visits, and rumors have it that a bridegroom is sought for Toshiko to replace Masao in his function as the head of the Toyohara household. Kunihiko, who is nineteen years old at the time of the narration (i.e. 1886), is a talented and diligent student. He is at first indifferent to the attraction of the pleasure quarters, but because of the inherent inclination of his “human nature” (*sei* 性) and because of the negative influence on him of metropolitan life his sexual desire suddenly becomes aroused. Faced with the financial burden of buying “sexual pleasure” (*iro*), he suddenly remembers Toshiko and the old matrimonial promise as an

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<sup>194</sup> See the editors’ preface, p. 2, in *Shôyô senshû bessatsu* (vol. 1), which cites a brief commentary by Shôyô himself on the allegorical meaning of the protagonists in *Kyô waranbe* (I have been unable to locate the original medium of publication for this text). According to the interpretational key that Shôyô here provides, Toyohara Masao allegorically represents the “nation Japan” (*Nihon-koku*), Toshiko “the rights to govern the Japanese nation” (*Nihon kokusei o tsukasadoru kenri*) and Nakatsu Kunihiko stands for the “Japanese people” (*Nihon kokumin*).

“easier means” to satisfy his desire. Well read in Western books as a result of his education, Kunihiko is also aware that he can manipulate the judicial vocabulary of “rights” (*kenri*) to realize his goal. He argues his case with Agatai Kanbei, who is the steward (*karei*) of the Toyohara household and the allegorical representative of the prefectural governor class. Agatai is indeed unable to reject Kunihiko’s demand. Agatai, however, is also backed by the rich and powerful Hagino Hayato who is the personification of the Meiji oligarchic government. Hagino is equally eager to obtain Toshiko’s hand, and on behalf of Toyohara Masao – the “nation Japan” – he deftly devises a marriage contract for Kunihiko, which contains the following words:

First: The marriage shall be concluded in five years, i.e. when you [Kunihiko] have reached your 23<sup>rd</sup> year [i.e. in Meiji 23 or 1890].

Second: Until that year you shall have bought a house with land, become the true head of a household and made a fortune sufficient to support an entire family.

If you accept these two conditions there shall be no deviation from the former marriage contract. However, if the second condition is not fulfilled the first one will become void as well. Without sullyng my aristocratic name, I [Toyohara Masao] cannot give my sister to a person without property.<sup>195</sup>

Kunihiko agrees to the contract and at the beginning is also determined to fulfill its conditions. Unlike Kunino Motoi in *Setchûbai*, however, he doesn’t have the patience to wait five years for the consummation of his marriage since his desire for Toshiko “is not based on the longing for the princess’s refined character or her inborn intelligence” but merely stems from his sexual “spring feelings” (*harugokoro*).<sup>196</sup> His indomitable “lust” is also the reason why Kunihiko conceives of the “criminal plan” (*michi narazaru kokoro* or *akui*) to kidnap Toshiko from her brother’s residence in order to shorten his contractual waiting period. This

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<sup>195</sup> Tsubouchi Shôyô, *Kyô waranbe* 264. According to *Shôyô senshû bessatsu* I, preface, p. 2, Hagino allegorically stands for the “Satsuma-Chôshû clique” (*Satchô-batsu*), i.e. the Meiji oligarchy, and Agatai Kanbei represents “all the prefectural governors” (*kaku-fuken chiji*). Yanagida Izumi also points out that Masao’s (or rather Hagino’s) unwillingness to give Toshiko to “somebody without property” anticipates the desire of the Meiji government to restrict political participation after 1890 to the propertied classes (see Yanagida 1935 II, 77).

<sup>196</sup> Shôyô also repeatedly uses the terms *retsujô* (“base desire”) and *chijô* (“blind lust”) to characterize the primarily sexual driving force behind his hero’s acts.

plan, however, fails because Kunihiko not only mistakes the lower-ranking daughter Omichi of the household steward Agatai for her mistress Toshiko, but also because he gets caught and beaten up by a religious man called Etô Hôin in front of whose house he attempts to kidnap the girl. The name of Kunihiko's opponent here allegorically alludes to the High Court (*kôtô hôin*) that was instituted for the trial of the radical *Jiyûtô* activists involved in the "violent incidents" of the mid-1880s, beginning with the famous Fukushima Incident in 1882. Kunihiko's failure to kidnap the (wrong) girl thus comes to stand for the activists' wish to obtain their people's "rights" in a premature and criminal manner.<sup>197</sup> In his brawl with Etô Hôin, moreover, Kunihiko loses 3500 Yen in government bonds, which he had still owned and been carrying with him that day. The number allegorically alludes, as Shôyô himself explains, to the population of the Japanese archipelago. Although Kunihiko manages to free himself from Etô Hôin, he subsequently sinks into a degenerate life of pleasure quarter visits and accumulated debts. The final scene takes place five years later when Kunihiko has reached the age of 23. In this scene, the oligarchic Hagino declares that Toshiko and Kunihiko who has of course been unable to fulfill the conditions of the marriage contract should be married only in name without the right to sexually consummate their union. Both are made to live in his household where the prostitute Ajisai to whom Kunihiko has pledged himself in the meantime is to become a chambermaid.

Like Tetchô's *Setchûbai*, Shôyô's *Kyô waranbe* is written in line with the ideological stance of the moderate and conservative Rikken kaishintô position according to whose view the radical *Jiyûtô* activism was not only politically immature but also "criminal."<sup>198</sup> This immaturity not only comes to the fore in Kunihiko's attempt to kidnap Toshiko but also in

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<sup>197</sup> See *Shôyô senshû bessatsu* I, preface, 2, for the allegorical meaning of Etô Hôin. See also Asano 2009, 48, for a brief discussion of the historical significance of the Meiji High Court (*kôtô hôin*) and for further bibliographic references on the topic.

<sup>198</sup> For Shôyô's political and ideological affinity to the Kaishintô position see Yanagida 1935 II, 23. For an in-depth study and further materials on Shôyô's early life and political (as well as literary) thought see also Yanagida 1984.

his manipulation of the vocabulary of “people’s rights,” which precisely constitutes the rhetorical abuse that Kunino Motoi in *Setchûbai* condemns as the pernicious “empty talk” (*kûron*) of the radical activists. Shôyô’s text thus allegorically demonstrates, pessimistically, that the “Japanese people” are not yet ready for political participation in view of the year 1890 and the opening of the Meiji Diet.<sup>199</sup> On the contrary, the work that Tetchô’s hero in *Setchûbai* and *Kakan’ô* accomplishes, backed by his allegorical marriage bringing together the propertied and intellectual classes, consists in bringing about, more optimistically, the conditions for political participation of the “Japanese people” by the year 1890. Moreover, Tetchô bases the success of his protagonist’s political work on the control and deferral of erotic desire as epitomized by a betrothal without sexual consummation. In *Kyô waranbe*, however, Kunihiko’s failure to marry the educated and refined female personification of “rights” and to thus allegorically participate in the country’s government is a consequence of his “base sexual desires” (*retsujô*) and “blind lust” (*chijô*), which he is not able or willing to control. *Kyô waranbe* thus still seems to participate in the allegorical economy of sexuality where the hero’s chastity was the condition for his political success and became contrasted with the sexual promiscuity of his oligarchic competitors. It is therefore not surprising that Hagino Hayato, the personification of the Meiji government in *Kyô waranbe*, indeed indulges in the presence of three concubines and a principal wife. Hayato also in repugnant fashion pledges to “discard” his wife as soon as he would be able to replace her with Toshiko, i.e. after Kunihiko would have been discredited as a suitor.<sup>200</sup> At the same time, however, it is important to note that Kunihiko’s desire is not identical to Hagino’s sexual promiscuity, which Shôyô’s narrator does not characterize in terms of *retsujô*, *chijô*, *harugokoro* or *koi* (“love”). These terms all exclusively refer to the erotic desire that motivates Kunihiko’s

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<sup>199</sup> For Shôyô’s intention to allegorically stage, in *Kyô waranbe*, the “idea that the ‘Japanese people’ are not yet ready for the opening of the Diet” (*kokkai shôsô-ron*) see *Shôyô senshû bessatsu* (vol. 1), preface, 2.

<sup>200</sup> See *Kyô waranbe* 264.



transgressive acts. While Hagino's sexuality allegorically points to the unambiguously immoral nature of his political position, the allegorical signified for which Kunihiko's desire emerges as the signifying correlate – i.e. the political discourse of “rights” and “freedom” that has turned into violent and criminal action – is not merely condemnable but ethically ambivalent. That is, the idea of people's “rights” still remains valuable but through the violent transgressions of the Liberal Party radicals it has also turned – to use the English epithets, which I chose for my translation of Shôyô's terms *retsujô* and *chijô* – “base” and “blind.”

I would argue that Kunihiko's ethically ambiguous desire radically complicates the political novel's allegorical economy of sexuality and also relates to Shôyô's theorization of sexualized “human feeling” (*ninjô*) or “middle-class love” (*chû no koi*), which both stand outside of or even collapse this economy. In an authorial digression inserted into his novel *Ichidoku santan: Tôsei shosei katagi* (*Reading it Once and Sighing Thrice: The Types of Present-Day Students*), which appeared between June 1885 and January 1886, Shôyô programmatically divides the domain of “love” (*koi*) into three “classes” (*kaikyû*): “high-class love” (*kami no koi*), “middle-class love” (*chû no koi*) and “low-class love” (*shimo no koi*).<sup>201</sup> He explains that the highest and most elevated category of “love,” which is not primarily sexual, describes relationships where the partners “love each other by fusing their spirits” (*iki ai-tôjite ai-ai suru*) and thus display the “grandeur of their will” (*kigurai no takaki*) and the “exceptionality of their character” (*kokorobae no hibon naru*). Shôyô,

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<sup>201</sup> For this discussion see Tsubouchi Shôyô, *Tôsei shosei katagi* 358-359. It should be noted that the three categories of “love” that Shôyô here theorizes also refer back to discourses on civilizational development, which were en vogue in particular among contemporary Christian intellectuals. As Tomi Suzuki points out, in his essay “Fujin no chii” (“The Status of Women”), published in the journal *Jogaku zasshi* in 1885, the Christian educator Iwamoto Yoshiharu (1863-1942) also distinguishes between “three stages of civilization: the first stage was the barbarous time of lust, the second stage was the half-civilized time of foolish passion, and the third stage was the civilized time of love, of spiritual companionship between man and woman” (Suzuki 2008, 278, footnote 7). Suzuki, moreover, provides a concise discussion of Shôyô's literary theory within the context of contemporary civilizational discourses and Victorian discussions of sexuality, which are relevant for the above typology (see Suzuki 2008, 244-249). Saeki Junko also provides helpful references to contemporary discourses and sources (see Saeki 1998, chapter 1, and in English Saeki 2011).

moreover, illustrates this “high-class love” through the relationship between Nina and Rienzi, the protagonists in Bulwer-Lytton’s historical novel *Rienzi* (1835).<sup>202</sup> In *Rienzi*, which describes the eponymous protagonist’s fight for the independence and “rights” of the Roman people against unscrupulous aristocratic oppressors, the love of the aristocratic Nina indeed spiritually embraces the political activism and ideals of her lover. Shôyô’s highest “class” of love thus pertains to the type of chaste feeling – as exemplified by the bond between Maltravers and Florence or Kunino and Oharu – which makes possible political activism as a successful and valuable enterprise. “Low-class love,” on the contrary, exclusively consists in “carnal pleasure” (*nikutai no kairaku*), which Shôyô posits as equal to the “desire of birds and beasts.” He explains that this type of “love” occurs when a “gentleman from the countryside” (*inaka shinshi*) or a “bearded patron” (*hige no danna*), i.e. representatives of the propertied classes or the Meiji bureaucracy, satisfy their erotic desire with “cats” (prostitutes) for an insignificant amount of money. “Low-class love” is the sexual promiscuity through which the bureaucratic villain figures in the political novels examined earlier – Kokufu Masabumi in *Jôkai haran*, Kawagishi Hyôsui in *Setchûbai* or Hagino Hayato in *Kyô waranbe* – relate to their mistresses and replaceable wives.

While both Shôyô’s “high-class love” and “low-class love” are thus presented as either unambiguously positive or negative (as ethical or unethical, or as civilized or uncivilized), his “middle-class love” emerges as an ambiguous category, which simultaneously points to both the sublime spirituality and to the sexual baseness of its more and less elevated peers. Shôyô writes:

So-called middle-class love is what follows [high-class love]. This [love occurs when] a man and a woman love each other [*ai-ai suru*] in such a way that, when alive, they ride their rickshaw together and, when dead, they live on the same lotus altar or, if possible, fly together in one body as the bird of matrimony or fuse together as the lovers’ branch. [This love occurs when] she says: “I want to be your respiratory

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<sup>202</sup> Shôyô himself translated the first part of *Rienzi* under the title *Kaikan hifun: Gaisei shiden (A Book Provoking Indignation: Biography of a Man of Purpose Lamenting his Age, 1885)*.

machine [*kokyûki*] and cover your lovely mouth;” and he says: “I want to become your sash buckle and hold your sash belt, which otherwise would open so easily;” and she says: “If this were to contribute to our being together, I wouldn’t mind living in destitution and doing lowly handiwork such as sewing and spinning – it’ll be for you, my beloved one, whose wife I will be until I die!” This is the love where inexperienced young people, however strong-willed they may look, lose their way [*mayou*]. The people who sink into this middle-class love don’t have the objective to fuse their spirits together [*iki ai-au*], but they ultimately seek pleasure [*iro*] and this is why, although at the beginning their feelings are strong, after one or two months of intimacy they become aware that their spirits aren’t in unison and their feelings for each other must fade and their relationship become cool. [...]. Truly this middle-class love is a relic of uncivilized times and belongs – if one were to give it a bad name – to the way of beasts [...]. Moreover, it’s a strange custom to use the expression “to start seeing somebody” [*misomuru*] when one wants to convey the meaning of “to fall in love” [*koisomuru*]. When the men and women in our country therefore say that they yearn for each other, they in fact do not yearn for the other person, but they merely yearn [visually] for his or her eyebrows, pupils, facial appearance or the form of his or her hips. Isn’t this extremely off-putting?<sup>203</sup>

In this discussion of “middle-class love,” Shôyô seems to argue that the ultimate driving force for this type of “love” consists in the desire for sexual “pleasure” and is thus identical to its “low-class” counterpart. It is nonetheless often unfortunately mistaken by “inexperienced young people” for its “high-class” version, namely a spiritual “yearning for the other person” instead of a mere “yearning” for the erotically loaded visual surfaces of the partner’s body. Although Shôyô thus didactically establishes a seemingly unambiguous hierarchy between truth (sexual desire) and illusion (“high-class love” or fusion of spirits), I would argue that it is the tension between these two dimensions inherent in “middle-class love” that points to its ethical complexity and ambiguity.

Although the narration of *Kyô waranbe* describes the driving “desires” of its hero Kunihiro in utterly negative terms, his sexuality, which emerges as the allegorical correlate for his ethically ambivalent political failure, gestures toward the equally ambiguous phenomenon of “middle-class love.” Moreover, the ambiguity of this category of “love” – oscillating between elevated spirituality and animalistic sexual lust – also characterizes the concept of “human feeling” (*ninjô*), which Shôyô, most prominently in his treatise *Shôsetsu*

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<sup>203</sup> *Tôsei shosei katagi* 358-359.

*shinzui* (*Essence of the Novel*, 1885-86), programmatically defines, together with “social manners” (*setai*), as the privileged object of representation for the “true novel” (*makoto no shōsetsu*).<sup>204</sup> It is then in *Imo to se kagami*, the “true novel,” which Shōyō starts serializing immediately after the writing of *Kyō waranbe*, that the ambiguities of “middle-class love” are more fully explored, especially within the context of the novel’s complicated attempt to renegotiate the synthesis of ethicality (or heroism) and sexualized “human feeling.”

### 3.2. *Karyū shunwa* Intertextuality and the Demise of the Strictly Allegorical Mode in Shōyō’s *Imo to se kagami*

Shōyō’s novel *Imo to se kagami* is a complex text that consciously elides the dimension of a concrete allegorical signified while still reproducing, performing or even parodying multiple potentially allegorical signifiers on its textual surface.<sup>205</sup> It could be argued that the novel paradoxically performs the emergence of “middle-class love” (*chū no koi*) or “human feeling” (*ninjō*) as the allegorical substitute for a transgressive and failed people’s rights discourse while simultaneously eliding the allegorically political origins of “human feeling” and also distancing or deconstructing the tradition of political allegory itself. This dynamic already comes to the fore on the level of the novel’s plot, which conspicuously reproduces, at least to a certain extent, the plot structure of its allegorical predecessor *Kyō waranbe*. At the same time, *Imo to se kagami* also complicates the possibility of reading this plot according to a strictly defined allegorical paradigm. In *Imo to*

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<sup>204</sup> Tomi Suzuki characterizes the overdetermined breadth of the *ninjō* concept in *Shōsetsu shinzui* in the following way: “In *Shōsetsu shinzui*, *ninjō* refers to ‘human feelings’ or ‘human psychology,’ one of whose main forms is ‘affection or love [*airen*] between man and woman.’ According to Shōyō, ‘affection’ should be the ‘central topic of the true novel [*makoto no shōsetsu*] because it dramatically reveals human psychology [*shinri*].’ Shōyō’s *ninjō*, however, also had a narrower, specifically negative dimension, denoting ‘vulgar, obscene desires.’ [...] The ‘true *shōsetsu*,’ Shōyō argued, should depict *ninjō* in a wider sense, incorporating both negative and positive aspects of *ninjō* and treating the ‘conflict between vulgar, obscene desires and reason or morality.’” (Suzuki 1996, 21).

<sup>205</sup> *Imo to se kagami* appeared in 13 separate booklets from the publisher *Kaishin shōoku* between 1885 and 1886.

*se kagami* the male protagonist Misawa Tatsuzô is an educated, attractive and therefore highly promising young bureaucrat in a government ministry. He falls in love with the illiterate Otsuji who is the daughter of a fishmonger, and he plans to marry her despite their status difference. But after Misawa's deceased mother appears to him in a dream and attempts to dissuade him from this socially inappropriate match, he suppresses his desire for the girl by cutting all ties with her. He also subsequently becomes attracted to – and secretly starts entertaining the desire to marry – the highly educated and beautiful Nanjô Oyuki who is the daughter of a powerful senior Meiji bureaucrat. At a New Year's Eve invitation, however, he accidentally meets Otsuji again as a guest in the Nanjô mansion – it turns out that her mother had formerly been the wet nurse of the influential bureaucrat's daughter – and he overhears a conversation between the two girls in which Oyuki claims to despise Misawa as her potential husband. Although Oyuki is in reality attracted to the male protagonist and only hides her true feelings for him out of shame and a fear of malicious gossip, Misawa's eavesdropping experience distances him from her and rekindles his original affection for Otsuji. Only a short time later, he then marries Otsuji. (Oyuki in turn becomes the wife of the obsequious and slimy social climber Tanuma whom she truly despises as a husband.) The novel's narrator didactically describes Misawa's socially inappropriate marriage with Otsuji as the biggest “mistake” in his life. Indeed, shortly after his marriage, a series of unfortunate misunderstandings, rumors and incidents – also related to the nature of his marriage – lead to his dismissal as a ministerial bureaucrat and to the cooling of his affection for Otsuji. Threatened by the prospect of a divorce from her husband, Otsuji commits suicide at the end of the text.<sup>206</sup>

The plot of *Imo to se kagami* invites, at least superficially, an interpretation according to the allegorical paradigm defined by the textual lineage of political novels examined so far,

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<sup>206</sup> For a more detailed discussion and analysis of the second part of *Imo to se kagami* see section 3.3 of this chapter.

including Tetchô's *Setchûbai* and Shôyô's own *Kyô waranbe*. Misawa's inability to wed the educated and high-ranking – not to mention beautiful – Oyuki could thus be allegorically read as the intellectual activists' failure to reach out to the propertied classes (the "mature gentlemen" in Kunino Motoi's words) and to secure their political rights. Misawa's marriage with the illiterate and low-ranking Otsuji, moreover, points to another important and explicitly stated motive in Kunino's political discourse: his fear of the radical activists' and socialists' desire to bring, through the implementation of universal suffrage, the "people from the lower classes without property and education" to political participation and rights. In such a perspective, the subsequent failure of Misawa's marriage would point, in allegorical and didactic fashion, to the political immaturity of the ideological stance of the radical activists. In Shôyô's *Kyô waranbe*, which – unlike Tetchô's *Setchûbai* – pessimistically illustrates the senselessness of immature political activism and "empty talk," the young protagonist's failure to secure his people's rights is furthermore allegorically correlated to "blind lust" and "base desires." It is then precisely this uncontrollable sexuality, which again drives Misawa – at least according to the repeated didactic assertions of the *Imo to se kagami* narrator – to marry the fishmonger's illiterate daughter.

An important difference between *Imo to se kagami* and *Kyô waranbe*, however, is that Misawa does not, like Nakatsu Kunihiko, seek to satisfy his desire through the vulgar lust of prostitutes, which would correspond to "low-class love" in Shôyô's categorization scheme. Instead Misawa marries a heroine who, despite her low rank and lack of education, is nonetheless not a prostitute and therefore not exclusively defined by her base, unethical and uncivilized sexuality. Otsuji in *Imo to se kagami*, on the contrary, is presented as the intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice who precisely constituted an ethically ambiguous and overdetermined heroine both as the object for Maltravers's problematic sexual desire and for his elevated love. Misawa's ultimate decision to marry Otsuji and to

disregard the exhortation of his dead mother is significantly mediated by his reading – in English – of Bulwer-Lytton’s *Ernest Maltravers*, which here emerges as an important intertext that, in ambiguous fashion, both excites the protagonist’s erotic desire and his elevated love. Shôyô’s narrator describes this process in the following terms:

Spring had passed by like a dream and the gloomy season of the fifth month rains had arrived. The loneliness was already poignant and made even more insupportable by the knocking sound of the falling plums and the view of the swallows building their nests in the eaves. Misawa Tatsuzô was hunched over his writing desk at the open Southern window and intently reading a Western book. The book was the novel *Maltravers* written by the renowned English master Bulwer-Lytton (there is a partial translation by Mr. Oda entitled *Karyû shunwa*). The plot of this book is the following: A student named Maltravers, on his way back from Germany, unexpectedly encounters a girl called Alice. Thanks to her sincerity he manages to escape from a dangerous situation and taking her with him on his journey he lives with her for some time like a husband with his wife. Lamenting the fact that she hasn’t obtained any education and is utterly unlearned, Maltravers kindly teaches and instructs her every day and thus gradually educates her. This and other details are very delicately described in the novel. Misawa Tatsuzô had for a long time pursued the study of Western learning and was therefore soundly knowledgeable in the practical sciences, but since he had never studied literature or poetry [*bungaku shiika*] he until this day had rarely read any novels [*haishi shôsetsu*]. Since this novel fit his own illusion [*kûsô*] particularly well and left a deep impression on him, he read through it with much emotion and was hardly able to put down the volume. Nothing could be done about the fact that his delusions became thus excited, but – ah! – was it the fault of the reader or was it the fault of the author? When Lytton wrote his novel he was aware of the lesson that he wanted to teach. The history of Maltravers might not be entirely unlike the love stories by the authors of the Tamenaga school, but if one looks at its deep meaning it becomes undeniably clear that it is incommensurably different. While Tamenaga sees the essence of human emotions [*ninjô*] in the erotic pleasure of the body, Lytton differs significantly from him and not only depicts emotions and social customs but also shows the most ardent of all emotions, love [*aijô*]. It would be a great mistake to think that Lytton depicted love in a way that was identical to obscene animalistic lust! A reader with sharp eyes would be able to gain an understanding of the depths of human feeling and of the mysteries of social customs from Lytton’s novels and his benefits would be indeed numerous, but that Misawa Tatsuzô could become deluded to such an extent by the reading of this book was a result of the fact that his eyes from the beginning had been dull. In a critique of the *Jinpingmei* someone once said that the sin lies with the reader and is not the responsibility of the book. In such a way this critic came to the author’s defense. The *Jinpingmei* is a depraved work and it is hard to reach such a conclusion if art and morality are the criteria of one’s judgment, but this critic nonetheless claimed that even the *Jinpingmei* was without sin. Novels have to be read with the utmost precaution! They are like morphine: one cannot but love them but one also must fear them.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> Tsubouchi Shôyô, *Imo to se kagami* 194-195.

Shôyô's narrator here conflates sexual desire with the desire to read novels, a conflation, which also temporarily annihilates (at least from the reader's point of view) the difference between otherwise incompatible texts such as Bulwer-Lytton's *Ernest Maltravers* and the *Jinpingmei*. He also alleges that Misawa's reading of the English novel is in fact a misreading (motivated by the protagonist's inherent sexual desire) through which the depiction of elevated "love" in the text of the novel merely excites the "animalistic lust" in the reader. My previous discussion of *Karyû shunwa*, however, revealed that Maltravers's love for Alice was both motivated by sexual desire and elevated feeling. Misawa's sensuous excitement while reading the novel would therefore make sense and be directly relatable to its content, contrary to the assertion of Shôyô's narrator.<sup>208</sup> At the same time, it is important to note that Misawa, through the reading of Bulwer-Lytton's novel, not only experiences erotic excitement but also comes to acknowledge his feelings for Otsuji as elevated "love."

Misawa in fact reflects:

"The gentleness of Otsuji's character and the softness of her manners indeed resemble the character of Alice and her truthfulness in every respect equals that of Alice as well! [...]. What tightens the bond between husband and wife is love [*airen*] and nothing else! When one loves each other, even if there are some little things that one doesn't like [such as Otsuji's lack of education] it isn't hard to pardon them. What worries are there that should make me hesitate in my decision to marry Otsuji?"<sup>209</sup>

Misawa also exclaims in English "Tsuji, Tsuji, I love thee" and thus exactly repeats Ernest Maltravers's charismatic words ("Alice, dear Alice, I love thee") in Bulwer-Lytton's

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<sup>208</sup> While Shôyô's narrator discursively differentiates between the *Jinpingmei* as a "depraved work" and Bulwer-Lytton's *Ernest Maltravers* as a text that depicts elevated spiritual love, it is significant that the distinctive lines between both texts also become blurred in Misawa's reading experience. Misawa's alleged misreading points to the fact that *Karyû shunwa* – like the *Jinpingmei* – indeed represents sexual desire, and it also demonstrates the extent to which the difference between both texts, with regard to their representation of "human feeling" and sexuality, is not incommensurable but gradual. The above passage also hints at the complexity of Shôyô's intertextual horizon, which not only includes *Karyû shunwa* but also the tradition of the vernacular Chinese novel as exemplified by the *Jinpingmei*. It should, moreover, be noted that the scene of Misawa's reading of *Ernest Maltravers* also subtly references the "Hotaru" ("Fireflies") chapter of the *Tale of Genji* and Tamakazura's eroticized reading of tales (*monogatari*) therein. Genji's discourse on fiction in the "Hotaru" chapter, which also revolves around the moral worth of tales and their problematic erotic appeal, thus subtly frames the narrator's discourse on the novel in *Imo to se kagami*.

<sup>209</sup> *Imo to se kagami* 195.



novel.<sup>210</sup> Whether Misawa's "delusion," produced or intensified by his reading of the English novel, consists in base sexual desire or "love" (an interpretive rift indeed seems to have opened here between the narrator's discourse and the protagonist's self-perception), it is the oscillation between both poles in the text that renders Misawa's feelings ambiguous and also points to the phenomenon of "middle-class love" (*chû no koi*). Otsuji herself, also, embodies this ethically ambivalent "middle" position. She in fact, unlike the purely sexualized and therefore "low-class" prostitute Ajisai in *Kyô waranbe*, symbolically stands, through her relations of sisterhood, between the other female protagonists in the text who each represent an ethical and social extreme. On the one hand, Oyuki entertains a sister-like intimacy with the educated, highly civilized and ethically exemplary Oyuki who was nursed by Otsuji's mother (as noted before, this was also the reason why Misawa was able to reencounter Otsuji in the Nanjô mansion). On the other hand, however, Otsuji's biological sister is Oharu, the prostitute and oligarchs' mistress whose unambiguous baseness and immorality ultimately contributes to the tragic ending of the novel's plot.<sup>211</sup>

The question, however, remains to what extent Misawa's ambiguous "middle-class love" still retains a political and allegorical significance. It is relevant to note that Misawa's love also becomes linked to signifiers associated with people's rights discourse. A brief excerpt of Misawa's inner monologue in the wake of his reading of *Karyû shunwa* thus reads:

"According to customs that have been in place since ancient times, it has always been the norm that parents would interfere [*kanshō*] with the marriages [of their children]

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<sup>210</sup> See *ibid.* 191 as well as *Ernest Maltravers* 32, for the respective references. Although the intertextual reference is here clearly to Bulwer-Lytton's English original, Takahashi Osamu also convincingly shows that the actual intertext for *Imo to se kagami* is the translation *Karyû shunwa* (see Takahashi 1985, 123-124, footnote 1). I also consider *Karyû shunwa* to be the most relevant intertext for Shôyô's novel.

<sup>211</sup> For Oharu see my discussion in section 3.3 of this chapter. Otsuji's ethicality can also be gauged by her unwillingness, thwarting the plans of her aunt and father, to climb the social ladder by becoming the "mistress" (*shō*) of a powerful or rich man. Instead she desires to more honorably become an official wife, however lowly the social position of her husband might be. See *Imo to se kagami* 186. Otsuji's resistance against her father's base design is also a conscious intertextual gesture to *Karyû shunwa* where Alice equally refuses to become a prostitute and thus resists the command of her criminal father.

so that people would often stare at you and think it to be inappropriate if you chose your partner yourself. [...]. If she loves me and I love her and we receive the parents' permission to become officially married [only after we have made the decision ourselves], then this would be true freedom [*shinsei no jiyū*] and even resemble the political customs of England!"<sup>212</sup>

This quote shows the extent to which, in *Imo to se kagami*, signifiers such as “[government] interference” or “freedom,” which in Kunino Motoi’s political discourse stood for the “empty talk” (*kâron*) of the radical Jiyûtô activists, have acquired a primarily metaphorical quality. Misawa’s love for Otsuji resembles “true freedom” because it, like the activists’ violent actions, transgresses social customs and hierarchies as epitomized by the exhortations of his deceased mother. In a similar fashion, Misawa’s eavesdropping not only distances him from his socially appropriate match Oyuki (which is desired by his deceased mother) and rekindles his desire for the lowly Otsuji. The eavesdropping motive, more significantly, also replaces the politically transgressive act – i.e. Kunihiko’s premature attempt to abduct his “rights” – which, in *Kyô waranbe*, leads to the hero’s political and matrimonial failure and to his allegorical reduction to a life of base sexual lust. That the eavesdropping motive indeed carries a strong political subtext is made explicit, although in slightly ironical fashion, by the discourse of Shôyô’s narrator himself:

There is nothing more sinful in the world than eavesdropping. Talking about it in abstract terms, [eavesdropping occurs when] someone clandestinely spies out the important secrets of somebody else without that person’s consent. Even if [an eavesdropper] doesn’t become a criminal according to the letter of the law he nonetheless is a thief in a moral sense. In our world in which one is free [*jiyū*] to do as one pleases as long as one doesn’t infringe upon the rights [*kenri*] of others how can it be tolerated that people point their fingers to one’s own most private affairs? While it is different for people in foreign countries who live in strongly built stone houses with well-locked doors, the people in our land live in houses with thin walls and cramped rooms and sliding doors that cannot be tightly locked up, so that everyone with the intention to eavesdrop can easily gain a knowledge of the private affairs of others. Since the people in our country are not all wise gentlemen or saints one never can be relaxed and always has to fear that somebody might be listening and it can be hard to even think aloud. Since we are living in an enlightened holy reign, there is certainly no danger to become a political criminal [*kokuji no zainin*] if one’s private thoughts were to be spied out, but what would our fear be like if this were the dynasty of the

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid. 195.

Bourbons? Since an architecture that doesn't even allow you to talk in your sleep produces such useless worries, the building of houses indeed has something to do with people's rights [*jinken*]!<sup>213</sup>

In this discussion, eavesdropping is qualified as a transgressive act or an infringement upon the “rights” of other people. The ultimate intent of Shôyô's narrator in this passage is to didactically make sense of the chain of misunderstandings and failures (such as the series of events leading to Misawa's marriage with Otsuji or his ultimate bureaucratic dismissal), which, brought about by eavesdropping and other similar acts, precipitate the tragic ending of the novel's plot.<sup>214</sup> The above discussion also obliquely and perhaps ironically superimposes the eavesdropping motive to signifiers such as “freedom,” “people's rights” or the tyranny of the French Bourbons, which, through texts such as Miyazaki Muryû's (1855-89) translation *Jiyû no kachidoki* (*The Battle Cry of Liberty*, 1882-83), had become intrinsically linked to the violent uprisings of the People's Rights Movement and their failure.<sup>215</sup> At the same time,

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid. 241.

<sup>214</sup> Another transgressive act, which is similar to eavesdropping and also infringes on somebody else's “rights” (in this case Misawa's), is Otsuji's opening of the letter, which the courtesan Wakazato sent to her husband (see *ibid.* 223). See also Satoru Saito's insightful discussion of the intrinsic linkage of eavesdropping and “tragedy” in *Imo to se kagami* as a strategy to overcome what Saito terms the “paradox of the novel”: i.e. the novel's need to literally spy or eavesdrop on its characters' private lives in order to disclose their interiority. The novel (or the novel's narrator) thus unwillingly commits an immoral act while it is precisely Shôyô's wish to overcome the immorality inherent in the novel's narration. Saito argues that “[by] telling a story in which the various acts of eavesdropping lead to misinformation and ultimately tragedy, the narrator positions himself to explicitly criticize such acts and the invasion of privacy that they represent, thereby retaining his moral high ground all the while suggesting his difference from the eavesdropping characters in the story. [...] The eavesdropping characters assert, albeit negatively, the privileged position occupied by the novelist in the age of reason” (Saito 2012, 41). See in addition Saito 2010.

<sup>215</sup> For a discussion of Muryû's *Jiyû no kachidoki* within the context of the People's Rights Movement see Ueda 2007, 67-79. In his thought-provoking analysis Asano Masamichi argues that the political signifiers (*kigô*) in *Imo to se kagami*, on the “rhetorical level” (*shûjiteki na jigen*), bring about a “semantic opening” (*tagiteki na hirogari*) of Shôyô's *ninjô* concept, which underlines the social and political significance of the newly emerging genre of the novel much beyond the mere depiction of “love between husband and wife.” According to Asano, Shôyô's constant didactic emphasis in *Imo to se kagami* on the need to control and limit potentially transgressive and dangerous emotions (in the relationship between husband and wife, parents and children etc.) should be ideologically understood within the context of the consolidation of the Japanese nation state in the second half of the 1880s and its need to overcome the political rift among the people that had been produced by the violence of the People's Rights Movement. These social and political “origins” of Shôyô's concept of “human feeling” – later elided in narratives of literary history – would precisely shed light on the necessity of the emergence of the modern novel at this critical juncture in Japanese history (see Asano 2009a, in particular pp. 50-51). For a discussion of the significance of “allegory” in Shôyô's *Shôsetsu shinzui* and *Imo to se kagami* see also Asano 2009b.

these signifiers also provide a political subtext – a political metaphoricity as it were – to a novelistic plot about love and marriage, which seem otherwise devoid of the allegorical meaning structure of the political novels discussed earlier.

What is then the relationship of these political signifiers, in addition to their metaphoricity, to Misawa's "love" in Shôyô's novel? I would think that they point to traces of the allegorical origin of "love" in the political sphere. In Shôyô's *Kyô waranbe*, the ethically ambiguous political failure of the radical Liberal Party activists was allegorized by the male protagonist's (Nakatsu Kunihiko's) indulgence in "base" erotic desire. In *Imo to se kagami*, Kunihiko's mere sexual indulgence becomes complicated by Misawa's ethically ambiguous love and marriage, which are both "high-class" (ethically valuable/civilized) and "low-class" (transgressive/uncivilized) at the same time. The intertextual references to *Karyû shunwa* and especially to the figure of Alice in *Imo to se kagami* are particularly relevant because Alice's (as well as Otsuji's) ambiguous "middle-class love," in implicitly allegorical manner, mirrors the political failure of the radical Jiyûtô activists.<sup>216</sup> At the same time, however, Alice's and Otsuji's "middle-class love" also eschews the allegorical economy of sexuality of the political novel, which coupled chastity with democratic reform and sexual desire with the undemocratic authoritarianism of the Meiji oligarchs. It would thus seem that the political signifiers in *Imo to se kagami*, as traces of the allegorical mode, dramatize, perhaps as the expression of a fundamental epistemological break, the emergence of non-political love – love per se or even modern love – out of the sphere of political discourse. However, an originally heroic meaning structure, exemplified in particular by the figure of marriage as the allegorical facilitator for political success, also powerfully keeps haunting this love in *Imo to se kagami*.

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<sup>216</sup> The political activism and ultimate failure of the Jiyûtô radicals is ethically ambivalent because their democratic ideals are inherently valuable while their radicalism is, at least in Tetchô's and Shôyô's eyes, transgressive, uncivilized and even criminal. In *Imo to se kagami* Misawa's social failure, in implicitly allegorical manner, replaces the political failure of the radical activists of the Liberal Party.

In his famous essay “Ensei shika to josei” (“The Disillusioned Poet and Women,” 1892), the poet and critic Kitamura Tōkoku (1868-1894) differentiates between a “world of ideals” (*sōsekai*) and the “real world” (*jissekai*). Tōkoku states that young men, by their inborn nature, not only possess reason (*risei*) but often also a “proclivity not to be content with the present world” (*genzai ni amanzearu seishitsu*). This leads them to the “world of ideals,” which highly differs from the conditions in the “real world.” Tōkoku also writes:

As soon as thought [*shisō*] awakens in the life of a human being it is only natural [for such a human being] to yearn for the beautiful and to despise the ugly. But when a young heart that is still inexperienced and doesn’t understand the deeper mechanisms of the world comes to see the disharmonies and the adversities of human life, it will feel its own ideals strongly in conflict [with these adversities] and it will be much put off by the phenomena of the real world. A young man – whose [idealistic] knowledge is thus contradicted by his experience [of the real world] and whose [idealistic] delusions and [real] perceptions conflict in such a way – must necessarily come to mistrust the human world [*ukiyo*] and despise it.<sup>217</sup>

Tōkoku doesn’t explicitly state what “the disharmonies and the adversities of human life” (*jinsei no fuchōshi futsugō*), which let an idealistic youth suffer and loathe the “real world,” concretely mean. From the historical context but also from Tōkoku’s own biography, it can be surmised, however, that they stand for the repression of the high political “ideals” of the People’s Rights Movement through the Meiji government and also for the movement’s ultimate failure.<sup>218</sup> Using a vocabulary that conjures up the violent atmosphere of the People’s Rights Movement, Tōkoku then argues that “love” (*ren’ai*) constitutes the “citadel, which gives refuge to the defeated general of the world of ideals from the battles between the world of ideals and the real world.”<sup>219</sup> In this argument “love,” in its new ideality, comes to substitute the defeated ideals of political discourse out of whose ashes it triumphantly

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<sup>217</sup> Kitamura Tōkoku, *Ensei shika to josei* 86. See also Satoru Saito’s brief discussion of Tōkoku’s essay within the context of his argument about the alienation of the intellectual class after the repression of the People’s Rights Movement (Saito 2012, 120-121).

<sup>218</sup> For Tōkoku’s early life, his involvement with politics within the context of the People’s Rights Movement and the beginnings of his literary activity see for instance Schamoni 1983.

<sup>219</sup> *Ensei shika to josei* 84.

emerges, as it were, as a sturdy “fortress.” However, while love thus functions as a “consoler” (*irôsha*) that gives hope back to the youth disillusioned by the disappointment of political and social defeat, Tôkoku also states that it is again through the institution of marriage – i.e. the union through love of a man and a woman – that “society” (*shakai*), the “real world” and perhaps even the sphere of the political reemerge at the heart of love. This process again transforms the idealist and loving youth, i.e. the “poet,” into a “captive of the real world” and also fundamentally alienates him from his “love.” Tôkoku writes:

To use the vocabulary of those aficionados of taste [*fûryûka*]: marriage renders people vulgar. But this vulgarization is also what allows them to stand on a stable ground, and the duty [*gimu*] toward God, the duty toward men, and also ethicality [*tokugi*], which the people of yore once compared to a blooming flower, can only emerge from such a stable ground. Therefore, the vulgarization through marriage renders people sober [*majime*], decreases their delusions and increases their thoughts directed toward the real [world]. This vulgarization is the fundament that allows them to enter the zenith of life [*jinsei no shôgoki*].<sup>220</sup>

The “zenith of life,” which a man only enters through matrimony, points to the ethos of political activity, social advancement and heroism for which marriage had been the fundamental signifier in the literary tradition from *Karyû shunwa* to the Meiji political novels examined earlier. The perhaps tragic paradox (at least for the “disillusioned poet”), which Tôkoku’s analysis here uncovers, therefore seems to consist in the observation that love, while as such transcending the “vulgar” “real world,” nonetheless through the figure of marriage continues to be bound to the sphere of potentially “vulgar” social, political and heroic activity.

In a similar vein, Misawa Tatsuzô in *Imo to se kagami*, through his ambiguous “middle-class” love for Otsuji and also through his failure to wed the socially and politically appropriate “high-class” match Oyuki, transcends the mode of either unambiguously positive or negative political allegory. He instead seems to have transformed into a new type of hero primarily characterized by his apolitical and non-allegorical love. As my subsequent

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<sup>220</sup> Ibid. 90.

discussion will reveal, however, Misawa also, conspicuously after his marriage, displays the heroic qualities, which Tōkoku defined as the outcome of the “vulgarization” produced by marriage – namely “duty” and “ethicality” – and he thus enters, as it were, the “zenith of his life.” Misawa, moreover, acts out these qualities within the context of a plot structure and historical temporality, which profoundly mirror the allegorical telos of the political novels examined before, i.e. their writing of a second Meiji Restoration as a democratic correction of the first oligarchic restoration. In *Imo to se kagami*, however, this plot structure is stripped off its explicitly political and allegorical meaning. Instead it becomes transformed into what I would call a sexualized heroic history in which Misawa ambiguously acts both as a profoundly ethical and as a problematically sexualized hero.

### **3.3. Marriage and Sexualized Heroic History: Renegotiating the *Ninjōbon-Yomihon* Synthesis in *Imo to se kagami***

Shōyō’s *Imo to se kagami* is a novel whose historical consciousness and detail in many respects mirror its *seiji shōsetsu* peers. The novel’s plot is couched in a historical temporality, which spans the period from shortly before the Meiji Restoration – when its protagonist Misawa Tatsuzō was born – to the narrated present, which is set in the year 1880 (Meiji 13). But Misawa’s age of 23 at the beginning of the text also in an implicitly allegorical manner again points to the year 1890 as the hidden temporal culminating point of the text.<sup>221</sup> The historical depth of the plot of *Imo to se kagami* first comes to the fore in a long retrospective narration (chapter 2), which recounts the politically loaded history of Misawa’s parents (and grandparents) and his birth shortly before the Meiji Restoration. In

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<sup>221</sup> For the year 1880 (Meiji 13) as the narrated present, i.e. the year in which Misawa marries Otsuji and also encounters the old woman Sawae (in whose retrospective narration the date appears) see *Imo to se kagami* 207. Misawa is 23 years old at the beginning of the narration (see *ibid.* 171), which starts the year before the protagonist’s marriage. Misawa would therefore, according to the traditional *kazoedoshi* age count, be 24 years old in 1880 although this age isn’t mentioned in the text. The novel ends in August 1881 shortly after Otsuji’s suicide (see *ibid.* 247).

this narration, Misawa's grandfather Ryônoshin is presented as a powerful and trusted retainer (*kirimono*) of Ii Naosuke (1815-1860), the well-known Hikone domain lord and great elder (*tairô*) of the Edo *bakufu*. It is, moreover, significant that Ryônoshin as a loyal vassal is also present at the crucial historical turning point of the Sakuradamon Incident of 1860 when his lord becomes assassinated by anti-reformist Mito loyalists for signing the infamous unequal treaties with the Western powers. When loyally attempting to secure the chopped off head (*shirushi*) of his slain lord, Ryônoshin is deadly wounded by the assassins and shortly later dies. Owing to Ryônoshin's unswerving loyalty and high merits, his first son and heir Yoshinobu (Misawa's father), still a young man at that point, immediately becomes promoted to the same exalted position within the domain hierarchy that his father occupied before his death. In 1868, furthermore, Yoshinobu highly distinguishes himself at the punitive expedition against the Aizu domain (one of the last bastions of pro-*bakufu* resistance) by the newly formed army of the Meiji government, which the new lord of Hikone backs. As a consequence of his exploits, two or three years after the Restoration, Yoshinobu becomes promoted to an exalted ministerial post in the new government. He thus enters a life of much wealth and power in the new imperial capital, and it can be surmised that he occupies a position close to or even within the inner circle of the Meiji oligarchy.<sup>222</sup> However, in Meiji 6 (1873), probably because of his proclivity for excessive pleasure quarter spending, Yoshinobu is dismissed from his ministry. This reduces him to a life in debts and destitution, and shortly later he dies.

The narrator of *Imo to se kagami* only provides scarce details with regard to Yoshinobu's political career, the content of his ministerial duties or the exact reasons behind his bureaucratic downfall. Yoshinobu is instead defined by the history of his oligarchic sexuality, which is fundamentally immoral and characterized by his promiscuity and his

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<sup>222</sup> For an account of Yoshinobu's lifestyle as a powerful bureaucrat in Tôkyô see *ibid.* 174-175.



“unfaithfulness” (*fujitsu*) toward his wife and son. (Shôyô’s narrator significantly does not define Yoshinobu’s sexuality – unlike Misawa’s erotic desire later on in the text – by the ethically more ambiguous terms *retsujô* or *chijô* but instead mostly by the unambiguously negative epithets *fujitsu* or *fugiri*, i.e. “undutiful.”)<sup>223</sup> The retrospective narration of *Imo to se kagami* also specifies that Yoshinobu, physically attractive, intelligent and well educated, grew up as a spoilt youth who later as a young adult – like Kawagishi Hyôsui, the oligarchs’ collaborator in Tetchô’s *Setchûbai* – selfishly divorces his first wife, wed to him by his parents, because of her physical unattractiveness. After his divorce, Yoshinobu becomes attracted to and starts an affair with the orphaned Omiki – Tatsuzô’s future mother – who is the uneducated daughter of a lowly foot soldier (*ashigaru*) and, as a distant relative, has been taken into the Misawa household as a maid. When Omiki finally becomes pregnant with Tatsuzô, Yoshinobu’s parents grudgingly acquiesce in their son’s socially inappropriate marriage with the low-standing girl. However, Yoshinobu soon grows tired of Omiki because of her lack of education and “elegance” (*fûryû*).<sup>224</sup> Moreover, as soon as he embarks on his career as a powerful bureaucrat in Tôkyô, he starts living with a beautiful young mistress who, as it later turns out, is Oharu, the unethical and vulgar biological sister of Otsuji.<sup>225</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> One exception would be *ibid.* 208-209, where Yoshinobu’s attachment to the *geisha* Kouno is defined as “blind lust” (*chijô*) but since this passage reproduces Misawa’s inner monologue it could be argued that the term here is rather a reflection of Misawa’s own ambiguous “blind desire.” For the terms *retsujô* (“base desire”) and *chijô* (“blind lust”) see also my earlier discussion of *Kyô waranbe*. For a characterization of Yoshinobu as *fugiri* see for instance *ibid.* 205.

<sup>224</sup> As a gifted and spoilt young man, Yoshinobu is proficient in the refined “ways of perfumed flowers, the tea ceremony, Chinese poetry and comic linked verse” as well as in “martial arts and literary scholarship” (*bugei gakumon*). See *ibid.* 171.

<sup>225</sup> Oharu is an interesting character who first briefly appears in the text as Yoshinobu’s deceptively beautiful mistress (*ibid.* 174-175). Oharu, however, is ultimately disfigured by a disease and reduced to almost demonic ugliness, which renders her similar to the frightful *kabuki* heroine Kasane and thus reveals her true ethical nature (see *ibid.* 222 and 244-245). Oharu’s immorality and criminality becomes manifest through the later revelation that she stole items from Yoshinobu’s household after the latter’s downfall in the bureaucracy. Later on in the text, her second oligarchic patron – a man named Kasuya from the same prefecture (probably the former Satsuma or Chôshû domains) as Oyuki’s powerful father – also dismisses her as his mistress for some immoral or criminal act (probably theft) that the narrator doesn’t further specify.

Until his bureaucratic downfall, Yoshinobu financially neglects his wife and son (Tatsuzô), whom he leaves behind in his home prefecture.

Shôyô's omniscient narrator provides the above retrospective account about Misawa's father at the beginning of the novel. The subsequent climax of Yoshinobu's sexual history, however, only becomes revealed to the reader as well as to Misawa himself after his marriage with Otsuji. This happens when Misawa, shortly after his wedding, is on a business trip to Ôsaka and coincidentally encounters an old woman whose name is Sawae. In a retrospective narration, Sawae discloses to Misawa his father's involvement with the courtesan Kouno who was her daughter. Kouno was financially ruined by Yoshinobu's unethical behavior and died as a consequence of her misfortune (chapters 8 and 9). According to Sawae's account, in the autumn of the year Meiji 5 (1872) Yoshinobu traveled to Ôsaka on official business for his ministry. As an avid pleasure quarter aficionado and "self-proclaimed connoisseur" (*jishô tsûkaku*), he soon becomes attracted to the beautiful and extremely successful courtesan Kouno who, widely known as a "man-hater" (*otokogirai*), adamantly resists all his sexual advances and attempts to buy her services through his prodigious wealth. Kouno's resistance, however, even more strongly excites Yoshinobu's "vanity" (*unubore*). This "vanity" shines through the following self-reflection, which is inserted into Sawae's account:

"I am Misawa Yoshinobu. Can I return to the capital without breaking this flower? The reprimands of my pleasure companions will make me feel guilty. Nowadays where bank notes are the go-between, even ugly men or boors are able to get their way and to toy with the love of state-toppling beauties! How much more should this be true for somebody with my taste and connoisseurship!"<sup>226</sup>

Through an artifice Yoshinobu finally succeeds in buying the services of Kouno who still exclaims that "to untie my sash merely for money would be something that only a courtesan-

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid. 203.

prostitute [*nimai kansatsu no geiko*] would do.”<sup>227</sup> Yoshinobu, even more excited by Kounu’s “stubbornness and strong will” (*kataiji o hari no tsuyoi*), considerably neglects his official duties in the subsequent months. He also accumulates a considerable amount of debts through his pleasure quarter visits, which he is unable to settle upon his return to Tôkyô in the spring of 1874. Kounu, in her deeply ethical feeling of responsibility for the spending of her patron and in her desire to save his reputation, offers to take over his debts in her name without letting him sign an official bond. Although Yoshinobu promises to return the money, in the end he never does so (he also becomes dismissed from his ministerial post shortly after his return from Ôsaka, which plunges him into utter poverty). As a consequence Kounu deeply sinks into the abyss of debts and soon has to face the harassments of moneylenders, which not only reduces her popularity as a courtesan but also, through the sufferings she experiences, brings about her physical and mental deterioration and finally her death.

Sawae’s account of Yoshinobu’s misdeeds refers to a past that is situated about 8 years before the present of *Imo to se kagami*’s narration, but it also continues into this present. Kounu’s younger sister Oshimo in fact, shortly before her older sister’s death – in order to settle Kounu’s debts but also to mitigate her family’s dire financial circumstances – sells herself into the Nezu pleasure quarter in Tôkyô where she has been living and working as a “slave of the world of lust” (*shikikai no dorei*) under the courtesan name Wakazato. This connection to the past is important as it is through the continuation of Wakazato’s sufferings, originally caused by Yoshinobu’s “lack of duty” (*fugiri*), that Misawa’s work as a hero, which attempts to correct and redeem his father’s prior misdeeds, begins. After listening to Sawae’s long narration, Misawa indeed becomes aware of his own “duty” (*giri*). His new ethical self-awareness, for instance, finds expression in the following reflection:

“Although this doesn’t seem to have anything to do with me, because he was my father and I am his son how could there be any shame if I assumed the responsibility

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid. 204.

for his faults and acted on his behalf? And it is Oshimo – Kouno’s younger sister – who is truly to pity! When asking about the reason why Oshimo fell into this dreadful world of suffering [i.e. the pleasure quarter] and shamefully became a prostitute, why she had to be innocently buried in the world of mud for seven years, become a slave in the world of lust, fodder for animalistic lust, why she had to transform into a cow or a horse, I still have to ask: whose fault has this been? If I didn’t know about all this I wouldn’t be able to do anything about it, but since I now do know, how could I not feel ashamed if I pretended that this weren’t my business! [...]. On my father’s behalf I will return the amount of 200 yen, which he had borrowed from this daughter [i.e. Kouno] and her mother and in such a way his sullied name will be cleansed and he will certainly feel relieved [in his grave] and my own conscience [*ryōshin*] will also feel lighter! Yes, this is what I will do!”<sup>228</sup>

Misawa’s reflection indicates the extent to which he, in an exemplary way, feels bound by “the shackles of morality” (*tokugi no sokubaku*) and the duty to cleanse the “sullied name” of his father. However, it is also Misawa’s subsequent attempt to carry out his resolution to ransom Wakazato, which, in the second half of the *Imo to se kagami* plot (i.e. after his marriage with Otsuji), produces the series of misunderstandings, suspicions and rumors that not only cause his dismissal as a bureaucrat but also the failure of his marriage, i.e. the projected divorce from Otsuji and her suicide. Misawa, who has never sought the service of courtesans before in his life, suddenly starts frequenting the Nezu quarter, pretending to be a real customer. Although he manages to identify himself to Wakazato and to reveal his true intentions to her, she nonetheless, at least at the beginning, suspects him of harboring an erotic desire. She also politely rejects his offer to ransom her by claiming that she already is intimately tied to a “lover” (*mabu*). This suspicion subsequently becomes replicated not only by general rumors that Misawa, despite his former reputation of “prudence” (*kinshin*), has started to frequent the pleasure quarter and to neglect his wife but also by Oharu’s slanderous gossip, which presumes that Misawa is planning to ransom Wakazato in order to make her into his mistress (*mekake*). Oharu’s gossip, moreover, profoundly undermines Otsuji’s trust

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid. 209.

in her husband and excites her jealousy.<sup>229</sup> The misconception of Misawa as a lust-seeking pleasure quarter customer, who is frustratingly rejected by the courtesan that he desires to make into the replacement of his wife, is of course also replicated by the newspaper calumny, which, written after Oharu's fatal visit to Wakazato, causes his ultimate bureaucratic downfall and dismissal. Misawa unjustly suspects the jealousy of his wife Otsuji to not only be the origin of the slanderous rumors but also the cause for the publication of the newspaper article, and it later turns out that the eavesdropping newspaper reporter in the Nezu quarter in fact mistook the disfigured Oharu to be Misawa's jealously ranting wife. Misawa, deeply angered, confronts Otsuji with his intention to divorce her. This triggers Otsuji's suicide and the final breakdown of Misawa's marriage.

The series of misunderstandings and suspicions that bring about the ultimate failure of Misawa's work as a hero mirrors the fundamental ambivalence inherent in his mission and in his marriage, which are simultaneously ethical and sexualized. This ambivalence also relates to the fact that the narration of *Imo to se kagami* consciously echoes but also fundamentally rewrites the political novel tradition, in particular as exemplified by the plot structure of Suehiro Tetchô's novel pair *Setchûbai* and *Kakan'ô*. On the one hand, Shôyô's novel indeed vaguely replicates Tetchô's historical temporality spanning the dates 1868 and 1890 as well as his fundamental plot pattern of writing a second Meiji Restoration as a correction of the first oligarchic one, which was made possible by the allegorical marriage between two social groups. On the other hand, however, *Imo to se kagami* also profoundly

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<sup>229</sup> For the slanderous rumors surrounding Misawa's pleasure quarter visits see *ibid.* 229-230. For Oharu's slander of Misawa in front of Otsuji see *ibid.* 236-237. For insightful discussions of the function of gossip and eavesdropping in *Imo to se kagami* with regard to the problem of (psychological) interiority and its exterior mediation in the modern novel see Maeda 1980 as well as, more recently, Saito 2012, chapter 1. Takahashi Osamu, moreover, points to the fact that the breakdown of the channels of reliable information transfer through the problematic interference of gossip and eavesdropping leads to the impossibility for Misawa to see Otsuji's emotional "truthfulness" (*magokoro*). Takahashi, who is one of the few scholars addressing the intertextual significance of *Karyû shunwa* for Shôyô's novel, argues that it was this "truthfulness" on which Maltravers's and Alice's relationship relied. Misawa's failure to see Otsuji's "truthfulness" owing to the interference of untruthful information (provided by gossip and eavesdropping) accounts for his ultimate inability to reiterate Maltravers's relationship with Alice despite his initial desire to precisely do so. See Takahashi 1985.

perverts this structure. Not only – as I discussed in the previous section – does Shōyō’s novel sexualize Tetchō’s chaste betrothal and invert its class composition and allegorical significance, but *Imo to se kagami* also ambiguously camouflages Tetchō’s political plot and reduces it to what I would call a sexualized heroic history. In this history the first Meiji restoration of 1868 becomes the story of the unethical sexual transgressions and misdeeds of Misawa’s oligarchic father.<sup>230</sup> These sexual transgressions subsequently need to be corrected and redeemed by the heroic work of his son, which vaguely corresponds to the second democratic restoration of 1890. Misawa’s work, despite its ethical intent, also continues to have an ambiguously sexualized dimension insofar as it consists in the ransoming of a pleasure quarter courtesan. It is this sexualized component that triggers not only the suspicion of the courtesan Wakazato herself but also of the entire world surrounding the novel’s protagonist.

I would argue that the sexualization of the political plot in *Imo to se kagami* as well as the play of sexualized misunderstandings that render Misawa’s heroic work profoundly ambivalent constitute an attempt to break up the originally allegorical linkage between chaste “high-class love,” marriage and heroism in the political novel tradition and to instead renegotiate the relationship between “human feeling” (*ninjō*) and heroism (or ethicality) as both the privileged and necessary spheres of representation for the novel (*shōsetsu*) as the reformed genre that Shōyō envisaged. This then also leads to a radicalized attempt to resynthesize the *ninjōbon* and *yomihon* traditions. This resynthesis is epitomized by Shōyō’s vision of “middle-class love” (*chū no koi*) or “human feeling” (*ninjō*) as both ethically chaste

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<sup>230</sup> Shōyō’s sexualized history thus in a sense radicalizes the allegorical economy of sexuality inherent in the political novel tradition. Other, even if minor, oligarchic figures in *Imo to se kagami* are similarly characterized by their immoral sexual promiscuity. One example is the unnamed powerful bureaucrat who is affiliated with the same home prefecture as Oyuki’s father and who temporarily expresses his desire to marry her (see *Imo to se kagami* 213 and 216). Shōyō also indicates, in a gloss appended to his narration (ibid. 203), that the scandalous story of Yoshinobu and Kouno is an adaptation from a Yomiuri shinbun *zappō* (“miscellaneous”) column (dated February 1884), which further hints to the oligarchic identity of Misawa’s father. See Saito 2012, 35-39, for a discussion of the role of *zappō* journalism in *Imo to se kagami* and Maeda Ai’s essay “Mishima Michitsune to Rokumeikan jidai” (in Maeda 1989b) for contemporary newspaper reportages on sexual scandals involving oligarchic figures such as Itō Hirobumi.

(or civilized) and sexualized (uncivilized). The series of misunderstandings in the second half of *Imo to se kagami* also makes it possible to read Misawa simultaneously as both a *ninjōbon* and a *yomihon* hero. That Misawa could indeed be, at least potentially, a *ninjōbon* hero becomes clear, for instance, in Oharu's following assessment:

“He is young and attractive. And because he is also intelligent, courtesans as well as normal women [*shirōto*] and young girls will all like him alike, so you [Otsuji, as his wife] really can't be relaxed about it! I am now an old hag, but if I didn't have such a face disfigured by illness I would still go to him, hiding a knife, and threaten to kill myself if he weren't to fulfill my wishes, like in a play. Hahaha!”<sup>231</sup>

This view of Misawa as an “erotic man” (*irootoko*) resembling, for instance, the male protagonist Tanjirō in Shunsui's *Shunshoku* series, however, greatly contrasts with Misawa's following self-assessment and his repeated assertion that all his actions are motivated by “righteousness” (*gi*) and “duty” (*giri*):

“I merely wanted to fulfill my duty [*giri*]! ...Ah, since even Wakazato had doubts about me I can understand if you [Otsuji] doubted me as well. But I still have a format different from these vulgar men that appear in the Plum-Blossom Calendar or in *kusazōshi* booklets! Honor or one's reputation is what counts, and even if in my heart I think stupid things my morality [or reason (*dōri*)] won't acknowledge these!”<sup>232</sup>

Misawa here indeed emphasizes the “morality” that underlies his heroic mission to ransom Wakazato and he consciously dissociates himself from the intertextual association of his person with the “vulgar men” in Shunsui's *Shunshoku* series or in *kusazōshi* love stories. At the same time, however, this conscious and somehow aggressive dissociation also indicates the extent to which Misawa, by thinking “stupid things” in his “heart,” has also internalized the *ninjōbon* protagonist who is then, subsequently or simultaneously, controlled by the “morality” or “reason” of his *yomihon* self. In such a way it could be argued that the rumors and suspicions surrounding Misawa's pleasure quarter visits also justly point back to his own erotic transgressiveness and sexual history, which includes his inappropriate sexualized

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<sup>231</sup> *Imo to se kagami* 227.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.* 227.

marriage with the low-ranking Otsuji. Misawa's history indeed to a certain extent significantly mirrors and repeats the sexual history of his father.<sup>233</sup>

Misawa's internal conflict (but also the conflict between his self-assessment and other people's misunderstandings), which oscillates between "morality" on the one hand and "stupid" desires on the other hand, echoes the following famous passage in *Shôsetsu shinzui* – in the section "Shôsetsu no shugan" ("The Main Focus of the Novel") – where Shôyô states:

Since human beings are animals of lust, it rarely happens that even wise men or paragons of virtue are exempt from lust. Since both wise men and fools, without distinction, are subject to lust, what then distinguishes a wise man from an insignificant person [*shôjin*] and what makes a virtuous man different from a depraved man is their ability to suppress their lust through the strength of their morality [*dôri*] or the force of their conscience [*ryôshin*] and to thus chase away the dogs of their deluded desires.<sup>234</sup>

The conflict between "lust" and "morality" or "conscience," which Shôyô here identifies as the object of representation for the novel, undoubtedly extends into the *Imo to se kagami* plot. Atsuko Ueda, in her analysis of *Tôsei shosei katagi*, argues that a similar conflict between the "desires" and the "reason" (Ueda's translation for *dôri*) of its male protagonist Komachida Sanji also comes to the fore in Shôyô's slightly earlier novel. However, *Tôsei shosei katagi* also fundamentally differs from *Imo to se kagami* in that Sanji is not an ethically (and economically) active hero. Unlike Misawa, Sanji is still a student without an income and thus belongs to a socioeconomic position, which Misawa overcomes by graduating from school and starting to work as a bureaucrat slightly before the narration of *Imo to se kagami* starts. Sanji also doesn't consummate his love for Tanoji through marriage and there is no heroic

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<sup>233</sup> Yoshinobu's marriage with Misawa's mother also constituted a socially inappropriate union, which was primarily motivated by sexual desire and disapproved by his parents. The lack of education of Misawa's mother is one of the reasons that Yoshinobu quickly tires of her, and Misawa himself is later similarly repelled by Otsuji's illiterateness. It is significant that Misawa repeats only limited aspects of the transgressive sexual history of his father while his other endeavors are driven by ethical (chaste) motives.

<sup>234</sup> Tsubouchi Shôyô, *Shôsetsu shinzui* 69. For materials on *Shôsetsu shinzui* I in particular consulted Yanagida 1966 and Kamei 1999.



work or mission for him to accomplish except for – as Ueda argues – inactively “evading action,” i.e. avoiding through his intellectual “reason” the fulfillment of his “desires” or love for Tanoji and therefore also avoiding marriage.<sup>235</sup>

I would thus think that Shôyô in *Imo to se kagami*, through his recourse to (and rewriting of) the tradition of the political novel and its heroic activism, resolves the ethically problematic inactivity of Komachida Sanji and produces in Misawa Tatsuzô a hero who, while consummating his “base desires” through marriage, also has the format to control and redeem them ethically through his heroic activity, which is equally made possible by his marriage. Marriage, which in the political novel tradition constituted the allegorical precondition for the success of political activism and heroism, in *Imo to se kagami* strips off its immediately political dimensionality and instead turns into the ambiguous chiffre for both transgressive sexualized “human feeling” and for its heroic control through ethical duty. At the same time, however, this radicalized fusion of both spheres – of the *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* worlds – through the prism of marriage also produces a fundamental, almost tautological reduction. This reduction could be described as the loss of a broader political or social telos (for instance, of a second democratic restoration), which confines the ethical or heroic work of the hero – as well as the novel’s plot – to a mere history about the redemption or control of sexually transgressive behavior. It could finally be asked to what extent this almost parodic reduction of ethical heroism to an ambiguously sexualized work also ironically produces the figure of failure: not only as the series of failures through which, in somehow dreamlike and retributive fashion, Misawa’s ethical mission is continuously

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<sup>235</sup> See also Ueda 2007, 139: “Sanji’s interiority, his internal conflict with his ‘illusory love,’ thus appears to transcend his political, economic and social positions. It is not a coincidence that Sanji’s internal struggle remains the same throughout the work: a simple conflict between his desires and his reason. His suffering, in other words, is fixed; there is nothing but his attempt to suppress his ‘base impulses.’ As long as his internal struggle revolves around separating himself from Tanoji, he does not have to act upon the obstacles that shape their relationship, and his socioeconomic positionality will not become an issue. This interiority, therefore, can be maintained only by evading action. The space of interiority, the new space of the *shôsetsu*, is a realm of internal struggle that sustains itself by evading action.”

(sexually) obstructed, but also as an indicator for the difficulty of the genre of the novel in reconciling as its objects of representation the contradictory spheres of “human feeling” (including sexual desire) and heroic activity.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter argues that the Japanese novel from the late 1870s onward performs a synthesis of the late Edo-period *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* traditions. This synthesis is predicated on the integration of the *ninjôbon*'s direct representational focus on “human feeling,” including amorous sentiment and sexual desire, into a teleological heroic and (and in the Meiji context) often political plot, which is constitutive of the *yomihon* genre. One of the fundamental problems that the early Meiji novel negotiates as a result of this synthesis is the proclivity of “human feeling” and in particular sexual desire to detract the male protagonist from his heroic mission and to thus jeopardize the ethical or political telos of the novel's plot. This problem partly stems from prior *yomihon* views of “human feeling” and desire as problematically opposed to virtue and male ethical and heroic achievement. I argue that the attempt to control and regulate potentially transgressive feelings and desires thus lies at the heart of the Meiji novel's plot. The translation *Karyû shunwa* and, more systematically, political novels written in the 1880s such as Toda Kindô's *Jôkai haran* and Suehiro Tetchô's *Setchûbai* largely succeed in regulating “human feeling” by instituting what I call an allegorical economy of sexuality. This economy relegates problematic erotic desire to repelling villain figures that allegorically represent the autocratic Meiji government whereas “human feeling” becomes ethically integrated into the heroic plot of democratic reform through the male activist's chaste love, which facilitates his political mission. The idea of a regulation of “human feeling” through chastity is also replicated by early Meiji critical discourse on the novel. Texts such as Oda Jun'ichirô's afterword to *Karyû shunwa* or

Tsubouchi Shôyô's *Shôsetsu shinzui* emphasize the novel's need to overcome erotic desire, which is often negatively associated with the *ninjôbon* tradition, and to represent "human feeling" (*ninjô*) as ethical and civilized chaste sentiment. Shôyô's novel writing in the second half of the 1880s, however, fundamentally challenges the idea of "human feeling" as chaste sentiment as well as the political novel's allegorical economy of sexuality. In his novel *Imo to se kagami*, Shôyô problematically reintegrates sexual desire (or sexualized "human feeling") into the teleology of a heroic plot. As a consequence of this reintegration, which also produces a radicalized resynthesis of the *ninjôbon* and *yomihon* traditions, the successful regulation of transgressive feelings and desires – as well as the heroic mission of the text's protagonist – fails, which precipitates the tragic ending of the novel's plot. The breakdown of heroism in Shôyô's rewriting of the political novel is highly significant because the subsequent Meiji novel, as my next chapter shows, often continues to dramatize the unsuccessful attempt to reconcile chaste sentiment (as the potential facilitator for spiritual heroic advancement) with the problematic transgressiveness of uncivilized erotic desire.

### Chapter Three:

#### Spirituality and Sexual Desire in the Meiji Novel after 1890: Female “Visions,” Art, Nature and Political Allegory

Tsubouchi Shôyô's novel writing in the second half of the 1880s leads to a demise of the explicitly allegorical modes of representation characteristic of the Meiji political novel. In Shôyô's novel *Imo to se kagami* (1885-86) the heroic and spiritual goals of the male protagonist fail because of his indulgence in sexual desire. Shôyô thus pushes away from Meiji political novels such as Toda Kindô's *Jôkai haran* (1880) or Suehiro Tetchô's *Setchûbai* (1886) where chaste love serves as an allegorical facilitator for the protagonists' political goals, which consist of the implementation of democratic reform. The content of Shôyô's novels is also no longer explicitly political and mostly eschews an immediate ideological or allegorical reading. At the same time, Shôyô's writing of the failure of heroism in *Imo to se kagami* also implicitly carries a political and even allegorical meaning, which refers back to the breakdown of the People's Rights Movement in the decade of the 1880s. This chapter argues that the subsequent Meiji novel from the late 1880s onward continues to dramatize this implicit political meaning and to negotiate potentially allegorical signifiers that obliquely refer back to 1880s political fiction and to Shôyô's rewriting of it. An important signifier that constantly resurfaces in novels of the second half of the Meiji period is the contrasting juxtaposition of two opposed female types. One of these two types is the uneducated woman who becomes the object for male amorous sentiment and sexual desire and who problematically detracts the male protagonist from the pursuit of his heroic and spiritual duties. This type is often intertextually modeled on Alice, the famous heroine of the early Meiji translation *Karyû shunwa* (1878-79). The other potentially allegorical female type, which is opposed to the first one, is the educated woman who becomes the object for

chaste, spiritual and civilized love and implicitly constitutes the emblem for male social, civilizational and even political advancement. In my subsequent readings of Meiji-period fiction, written from the early 1890s to the 1900s, I examine the ongoing negotiations between chaste love, erotic desire and heroic (and implicitly political) advancement, which are closely linked to the staging of these contradictory female types.

I first investigate three texts written around the year 1890, shortly after Tsubouchi Shôyô's reform of the political novel and the breakdown of the People's Rights Movement: Kôda Rohan's (1867-1947) *Fûryûbutsu* (*The Buddha of Romance*, 1889) and Mori Ôgai's novellas *Utakata no ki* (*Froth on the Waves*, 1890) and *Maihime* (*The Dancing Girl*, 1890).<sup>236</sup> These three texts all center, in different ways, on an initially powerless and uneducated heroine who is, like *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice, in danger of being subjected to prostitution and who becomes the object for the male protagonist's love and erotic desire. Unlike in previous Meiji-period novels, however, these heroines start to undergo a process of transformation and subjective growth that enhances their education and also, at least potentially, their socio-economic position. In such a manner, they come to resemble or even, in the case of *Fûryûbutsu*, to miraculously transform into the type of the chaste, high-ranking and educated woman who in the political novel tradition was the facilitator for male heroic success and empowerment. Male empowerment, however, doesn't become realized in Rohan's and Ôgai's texts as the heroines, in the process of their transformation, either disappear or die. It is then significantly as a substitutive "vision" of the lost heroine that the artwork – as sculpture, painting or literary text – becomes produced by the male protagonists, who are artists or turn into artists through the experience of losing their female partner. The artwork or literary text in Rohan's and Ôgai's stories represents or writes about an inherently

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<sup>236</sup> For Ôgai's awareness of the 19<sup>th</sup> century German "novella" (Novelle) genre on which his so-called German trilogy, including *Maihime* and *Utakata no ki*, is modeled see Kobori 1969, 422-428, who also cites the relevant primary sources.

contradictory female figure and thus ambiguously carries both erotic and heroic subtexts. I argue that the artwork, as envisioned by these stories, thus extends Tsubouchi Shôyô's problematic attempt to reconcile eroticized "human feeling" and heroism in the novel and continues to encode the political experience of the People's Rights Movement.

I subsequently turn to Tayama Katai's (1871-1930) literary production in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I first examine Katai's story *Jokyôshi* (*The Female Teacher*, 1903), whose male protagonist, a literary writer, is married to an uneducated woman who vaguely replicates the figure of *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice. Unsatisfied with the non-spiritual and uncivilized erotic nature of his marriage, he longs for an educated female partner as a medium for spiritual friendship and literary exchange. However, when he encounters such a woman in the eponymous "female teacher," the eruption of adulterous sexual desire in both partners fundamentally problematizes their allegedly chaste and spiritual relationship. I then briefly turn to Katai's story *Jûemon no saigo* (*The End of Jûemon*, 1902) where the implicitly political meaning of erotic desire comes to the fore more clearly than in *Jokyôshi*. In this text, which has predominantly been read in terms of Katai's naturalist reception of Zolaism, the sexualized criminal acts of the eponymous protagonist Jûemon also refer back, in obliquely allegorical fashion, to the radical activism of the People's Rights Movement. The implicitly political and allegorical signifiers in Katai's oeuvre, however, are most complexly dramatized in the author's most famous work *Futon* (*The Quilt*, 1907). Like *Jokyôshi*, Katai's *Futon* centers on a male literary writer, Takenaka Tokio, who is married to an uneducated ("old-fashioned") woman and therefore seemingly longs, in his "loneliness," for a more spiritual and educated female partner. This spiritual partner then also appears under the guise of Tokio's "modern" and fashionable but also erotically alluring young student of literature Yoshiko. I argue that spirituality, as epitomized by the ideal of civilized chaste love, while an important theme in *Futon*, largely becomes reduced to a discursive medium, which is

problematically manipulated by the text's protagonists in order to camouflage and control sexual desire. While Tokio uses the discourse of spiritual love to exert control over his own erotic desire and, more importantly, Yoshiko's sexuality, Yoshiko also relies on the same discourse to camouflage her immoral sexual activity. This dynamic of spiritual camouflage and control points to the fundamental inversion (or perversion) of the plot and meaning structure of the political novel in *Futon*. This inversion is epitomized by the transformation of Tokio into an oligarchic (but still powerless) suppressor and "guardian" and by the regressive metamorphosis of the seemingly chaste, educated and spiritual heroine Yoshiko into an unethical, uncivilized and "old-fashioned" prostitute figure. I argue that this symbolic inversion is indicative of an ideological operation that radically forecloses the hope for male spiritual advancement, which literary writings, including Katai's own texts, in the aftermath of Shôyô's reform of the novel still continuously upheld. While seemingly extending Shôyô's attempt to reconcile and negotiate sexual desire and heroism in the novel, *Futon* in fact also pessimistically dramatizes the deconstruction of this attempt.

## **1. The Writing of Female "Visions" and the Production of the Artwork around 1890**

### **1.1. Mori Ôgai's Collection *Omokage* and Translation Poetry as Eroticized "Vision" of Nature**

An important subtheme in this chapter, which also extends into the discussion of my following chapter (chapter 4), is landscape and nature. As previously stated, my subsequent analysis in this section centers on dramatizations of the artwork in texts by Kôda Rohan and Mori Ôgai as substitutive male rewritings or "visions" of a lost contradictory heroine. At the same time, it is important to note that these "visions" are often inscribed into natural signifiers that, similarly to the artwork, negotiate both erotic and heroic, or sexualized and spiritual subtexts. I in fact take the term "vision" from the famous collection of

translation poetry *Omokage* (*Visions*), which was compiled by Mori Ôgai and a group of his collaborators in 1889, i.e. at approximately the same moment when Rohan's *Fûryûbutsu* and Ôgai's German trilogy were written and published.<sup>237</sup> Before discussing these narratives, I first examine the staging of eroticized female figures as lyrical “visions” of nature through the highly experimental medium of Ôgai's translation poetry.

The seemingly cryptic title of Ôgai's collection *Omokage*, which could be translated as “vision,” “remembrance,” “shadow” or even “simulacrum,” is explained in two short classical poetic lines that precede the anthology as mottos. The two verses are, respectively, a *waka* poem by the otherwise unidentified *Man'yôshû* poetess Kasa no Iratsume and a classical Chinese couplet by the famous Song-period poet Su Shi (1037-1101). They read as follows:

陸奥のまの々かや原とほけども	Although the reed plains of Mano
	in Michinoku are far away
おもかげにして見ゆとふものを	They can still be seen as a vision.

岷峨天一方雲月在我側  
 The Min and E mountain peaks [in Sichuan] are far away on one side of the sky,  
 but the clouds and the moonshine [the same ones that are covering and shining on  
 these peaks] are [wandering with me] on my side.<sup>238</sup>

Kasa no Iratsume's *waka* is probably a love poem. It implies that, while the far distant plains of Mano can be seen as a lingering “vision” (*omokage*) – perhaps even through the poetess's very verse – her lover, the famous poet and *Man'yôshû* compiler Ôtomo no Yakamochi (~717-785), cannot be seen and should be reproached for his fickleness. The poem's meaning within its original context of an elegant amorous exchange is elided in *Omokage*. Its semantic

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<sup>237</sup> *Omokage* was originally published in the “summer supplement” (*kaki furoku*) of the 58<sup>th</sup> issue of the journal *Kokumin no tomo* in August 1889 under the name “S.S.S.” standing for Mori Ôgai's literary group Shinseisha (“New Voice Society”). A slightly revised and expanded version of the collection became published as “appendix” (*furoku*) to Ôgai's first anthology of his collected works *Minawashû* in 1893. See Bowring 1979, 36-44, as well as Kobori 1982, 345-357, for concise introductions to *Omokage*.

<sup>238</sup> I cite, also graphically, both poems from Mori Ôgai et al.: *Omokage* 107, where the *waka* poem is rendered in two consecutive lines and the *kanshi* couplet in one single line. For an alternative meticulously annotated edition of *Omokage* I also consulted Keiô gijuku daigaku kokubungaku kenkyûkai 1985.



focus instead shifts toward the idea of “vision” as a medium that can represent and make one see a landscape, which is far distant and absent. Kasa no Iratsume’s *waka* doesn’t specify how the “vision” of a far distant land is mediated, but Su Shi’s couplet provides a solution by pointing to the “clouds and the moonshine” as a mediating source of light, which radiates over and thus connects both the distant mountains in Sichuan and the first-person speaker of the poem. Whether the poem’s speaker – Su Shi himself – actually sees the distant peaks thanks to the clouds’ and the moonlight’s lightness or more grandly imagines the moonlight as the connecting mediator between himself and an otherwise unreachable landscape is less relevant for my discussion. Of more importance is the idea of the moonlight as a medium of “vision,” which in its dimness – different perhaps from the sunlight that only shines on present objects – represents and resurrects, in ghostly fashion, far distant and absent realms.

Both the *Man’yôshû* verse and Su Shi’s couplet can be read as metonymical *mises en abyme* of the *Omokage* project as a whole, which, as a translation anthology, aims at rendering accessible far distant (i.e. foreign) poetry through the medium of Japanese verse. The theme of distant territories, separation, travel and even exoticism indeed leitmotivically pervades the selection of poetic texts that are included in the collection. Travel from a Northern European country such as Germany or England to Italy and the longing for the unknown (but also for home) are important motives in a series of poems in the anthology. Another translated piece, an “adaptation” (*iyaku*) in *kanshi* form, also stages highly exoticizing scenes from the Arabian desert.<sup>239</sup> Travel and the bridging of distances, as a negotiation between home and the foreign in different cultural and historical settings, is thus certainly an important recurrent theme in *Omokage* as well as a meta-reflection of the collection’s “visionary” translation enterprise. At the same time, however, the idea of “vision”

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<sup>239</sup> See “Tôkyôkô” (“Ballad of the Chivalrous Bandits”), Ôgai’s adaptation of Wilhelm Hauff’s (1802-27) “Die Karawane” (“The Caravan,” 1825) under the format of classical Chinese old-style verse. It should be noted that another old-style verse adaptation in *Omokage*, the poem “Kikaigashima” (“Demon Island”), also stages the famous episode in the *Heike monogatari* (*Tales of Heike*, mid 13<sup>th</sup> century) about the exile and death of monk Shunkan (d. 1179). For a detailed discussion of the “adaptations” (*iyaku*) in *Omokage* see Kobori 1976, 23-53.

also points to another major theme in the anthology, which is love. Love-induced “visions” in *Omokage* are often mediated by the peculiar lightness of the moon, which like in Su Shi’s couplet not only spatially bridges far distant territories but also illuminates absent female figures and thus emphasizes the hallucinatory quality of love and of the poetic medium.

Ôgai’s translation of Nikolaus Lenau’s (1802-1850) poem “Das Mondlicht” (“Moonlight,” 1827) under the title of “Gekkô” stages a love-induced “vision,” which is mediated by the light of the moon. But this “vision” is also mediated by the highly experimental lyrical form of the poem. Ôgai’s translation reads:

Dein gedenkend irr’ ich einsam  
 思汝無已孤出蓬戸 (汝の無きを思いて已に孤り蓬戸を出で)  
 Diesen Strom entlang;  
 沿岸行且吟 (岸に沿いて行き且つ吟ず)  
 Könnten lauschen wir gemeinsam  
 安得俱汝江上相聚 (安んぞ汝と俱に江上に相い聚い)  
 Seinem Wellenklang!  
 聞此流水音 (此の流水の音を聞くことを得ん)  
 安得俱汝江上聯袂 (安んぞ汝と俱に江上に袂を聯ね)  
 瞻仰天色開 (天色の開くを瞻仰することを得ん)  
 時自前岸平野之際 (時に前岸の平野の際より)  
 明月徐上来 (明月徐かに上り来る)  
 光彩飛散其色銀白 (光彩飛散して其の色 銀白)  
 依約凝架虹 (依約として凝りて虹を架く)  
 虹也千丈中斷湖脉 (虹や千丈 湖脉を中斷し)  
 遙達幽樹叢 (遙かに幽樹の叢に達せり)  
 [...]  
 吾所希眼波一揺耳 (吾が希う所は眼波の一揺のみ)  
 何日能得償 (何れの日にか能く償うを得ん)  
 思汝無已嗟汝何似 (汝の無きを思いて已に嗟く 汝の何ぞ)  
 吾夜之月光 (吾が夜の月光に似たるかを)  
 [...]  
 逢汝時又看李花面 (汝に逢いて時にまた李花の面を看れば)  
 明月将失妍 (明月も将に妍を失わんとすも)  
 生路流水如箭如電 (生路の流水は箭の如く電の如し)  
 嗟奈其瞥然 (嗟 其の瞥然たるを奈んせん)<sup>240</sup>

<sup>240</sup> *Omokage* 113-115. Ôgai appended the wording of Lenau’s original poem only to the first four verses of his translation in order to demonstrate the metric and tonal correspondence between the German and the Sino-Japanese texts. This type of translation corresponds to Ôgai’s category of “metric and tonal translation” (*chôyaku*), discussed by Kobori 1976, 111-141. It should also be noted that the *kundoku* transcription was added by the *Meiji Taishô yakushishû* editors and not by Ôgai. My translation is the rendering of Ôgai’s *kanshi* text

Thinking of your absence I left my hut / To roam along this stream and to recite my verses. / Could we but meet at this stream / And listen to the sound of its flowing water together! // Could we but fold our sleeves together at this stream / And see how the color of the sky brightens up / And how, from the edge of the plain on the other side of the river, / The bright moon slowly rises. // Its bright light spreads out and its silvery beam / Softly stretches an iridescent bridge [over the stream]. / Iridescently it bridges the river over a thousand feet / And touches the dark copse on the other side. // [...] // I only wish I could catch a glimpse of your eyes! / When will I be compensated [for my loss of you]? / Thinking of your absence I sigh and you seem to have become / The moonlight of my nights! // [...] // I have thus found you and watch your bright peach-like complexion / But the bright moonlight is about to lose its splendor. / The flowing water of the stream of life passes by like an arrow and like lightning. / Ah! it but lasts for a second!

Both Ôgai's "Moonlight" translation and Lenau's original poem repeatedly emphasize the absence of the male speaker's female lover and his loneliness. While the reason for the lover's absence remains unspecified, it could be surmised, from the obviously irretrievable character of her loss, that she has died.<sup>241</sup> At the same time, the first-person speaker also strongly expresses his desire to be reunited with his lover. This desire comes to the fore through the interlocutory character of the poem whose addressee is the absent beloved (i.e. *nanji*, "you"). The male speaker's implicit motivation to "recite [his] verses" in fact is to conjure up, in incantatory fashion, his absent lover. His lover then indeed appears in and as the speaker's "vision" and as superimposed upon the moon's bright light. The moonlight, which is likened to the eroticized "peach-like complexion" of the girl, "compensates" (償) the speaker for his original loss by means of a "visionary" substitution. The highly experimental form of Ôgai's translation medium also echoes the uncanny content of the

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and not of the German original, which, for the above-cited lines, reads: "Dein gedenkend irr' ich einsam / Diesen Strom entlang; / Könnten lauschen wir gemeinsam / Seinem Wellenklang! // Könnten wir zusammen schauen / In den Mond empor, / Der da drüben aus den Auen / Leise taucht hervor. // Freundlich streut er meinem Blicke / Aus dem Silberschein / Stromhinüber eine Brücke / Bis zum stillen Hain. – // [...] // Daß doch mein Geschick mir brächte / Einen Blick von dir! / Süßes Mondlicht meiner Nächte, / Mädchen, bist du mir! // [...] // Wenn du über seinen Wogen / Strahlest zauberhell, / Seh ich sie dahingezogen, / Ach! nur allzuschnell!"

<sup>241</sup> While Lenau's original poem explicitly genders the absent lover figure as female (by designing her as "Mädchen"), Ôgai's translation doesn't. I would, however, think it permissible to read into the pronoun of address *nanji* 汝 ("you"), which in *kanbun* contexts stands for interlocutors of either equal or inferior social standing, a gendered quality that seems even graphically underlined by the character's writing with the "woman" radical.

poem. While seemingly a *kanshi* composition the “Moonlight” poem in fact disobeys the prosodic rules of classical Chinese poetry. In order to reproduce the iambic alternation of German long and short syllables and also the verse length of Lenau’s original, the poem alternates Chinese characters of the level and deflected tones, which would have been impermissible in classical prosody. Ôgai thus refunctionalizes and alienates classical Chinese prosodic elements, which are turned into substitutes for German poetic diction. The highly alienating or ghostly quality of the translation medium also powerfully colors the male speaker’s voice. In order to yield its rhythmic effect, the “Moonlight” poem would have to be read in Chinese pronunciation. A Chinese voice is in fact superimposed onto a German one but the text remains poetically (i.e. rhythmically) unreadable in Japanese. In *Omokage* only the otherworldly “Ghostly Spell” (*mago*) of the spirit conjured up by Manfred’s incantation (see my brief discussion below) is translated by means of the same linguistic medium, which thus possesses a truly ghostly and “visionary” power.<sup>242</sup>

Another poem in *Omokage*, titled “Once in the past” (“Aru toki”), stages a “visionary” and ghostly female voice. The poem reads:

おくつきの前にふたり立ちぬ / にはとこの花は香ににほひて / 夕暮の風  
 に草葉そよぐ / 乙女はさ々やぐ聲もほそく / 我身はこの世をさりたる後  
 / よみにし歌のみ猶ながらへ / 君はひろき世にとり残され / 共にかたは  
 らん友もなくて / 思ひ寝の夢にわれを見なば / にはとこの花とさうびの  
 花 / かこめるおくつき音信来て / みどりの草葉をしとねにかへ / にほ  
 ひよき花の一束をば / おのれに手向て給はりなば / なれし足音に目をさ  
 まして / 静にしのびてなれなれしく / 心をへたてずさ々やがまし / と  
 もに世にありし時のごとく / 過ぎ行く人々おもふならむ / にはとこの花  
 をいとすかにか / ゆるやかにそよぐ夕かぜぞと / 世にあるごとくに何事  
 をも / きかせ給はらはおのれもまた / 夢みし事をば物語らむ / その時  
 たがひに心おちる / 目をさますほしに心づきて / さらばといはましいと

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<sup>242</sup> Another translation in *Omokage*, which also stages a ghostly female “vision” by means of an alienating poetic form, is “Reed Song” (“Ashi no kyoku”) whose original is also a poem by Lenau. In this composition the male speaker stands in front of a dark pond at dusk and expresses his “longing for a far distant lover” (*harukeki sora naru hito o shinobite*). At the end of the poem the lover appears as the “starlight” (*hoshi no kage*), which breaks through the leaves of the reed plants. The poetic format is an alternation of eight and seven Japanese syllables, which alienates and disrupts the five-seven rhythm of traditional Japanese poetry.

しずかに / 君はかづき夕まぐれに / かへり給ふらむおのが家に / おの  
れはふたたび花のそこに<sup>243</sup>

Together we stood in front of a grave. / The scent of the syringa flowers was in the air / And the grasses and leaves were trembling in the evening breeze. / With a faint voice the girl whispered: / When I will have left this world / And only the songs, which I once sang, live on / And when you will be left alone in this large world / And have no friend to talk to / And when you will only see me in your dreams of longing: / And if then you come to my grave / Surrounded by syringa trees and roses / And bring me a bouquet of fragrant flowers / I will wake up at the well-known sound of your footsteps / And quietly and intimately / We will whisper to each other without any distance between our hearts / Like in the time when we were still together in the world. / The people coming by [my grave] / Will certainly think [our conversation] to be the evening breeze softly rustling / Very quietly through the syringa trees. / If you then tell me everything as if I was still in the world / I will also / recount to you the things that I saw in my dreams. / Then we will both feel happiness in our hearts / And when we see the stars awaken / We will say good bye to each other. And very silently / You will, cheered up, in the evening dusk / Return to your house / And I to my bed of flowers.

“Aru toki” starts with the words of a presumably male speaker who briefly describes the scene to which the poem refers – a couple standing in front of a grave at dusk in spring – and who also introduces or quotes a female speaker (“the girl”) whose long monologue fills the remainder of the poetic text. In her uninterrupted discourse, which is addressed to the former male speaker who has now turned into a silent listener, the “girl” hallucinates her future relationship to her lover after her own (apparently imminent) death. She envisions this future relationship as a “visionary” conversation between her dead buried self and her living lover standing in front of her grave. The introductory lines of the poem that are spoken by the male lover seem to suggest that the girl’s words are uttered by her still living self and envision the future after her death. However, the fact that the poem’s original scene is narrated in the past

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<sup>243</sup> *Omokage* 143-145. The poem is a translation of Eduard Ferrand’s (1813-1842) poem “Einst” (“Once in the past”). The German original reads: “Wir standen vor einem Grabe, / Umweht von Fliederduft; / Still mit den Gräsern des Hügels / Spielte die Abendluft. // Da sprach sie bang’ und leise: / Wenn von der Welt ich schied, / Und kaum mein Angedenken / Noch lebt in deinem Lied; // Wenn du auf weiter Erde / Verlassen und einsam bist, / Und nur im Traum der Nächte / Mein Geist dich leise küßt: // Dann komm zu meinem Grabe, / Von Flieder und Rosen umlaubt, / Und neig’ auf die kühlen Gräser / Das heiße, müde Haupt. // Ein Sträußchen duftiger Blumen / Bringst du wie sonst mir mit; / Mich weckt aus tiefem Schlummer / Dein lieber bekannter Schritt. // Dann will ich mit dir flüstern / So heimlich und vertraut, / Wie damals, wo wir innig / In’s Aug uns noch geschaut. // Und wer vorübergeht, / Der denkt: es ist der Wind, / Der durch die Blüten des Flieders / Hinsäuselt leis und lind. // Und wie du lebst, das Kleinste / Berichten sollst du mir, / Und ich will dir erzählen, / Was ich geträumt von dir. // Und wenn der Abend gekommen / Und Stern and Stern erwacht, / Dann wünschen wir uns leise / Und Heimlich: gute Nacht. // Du gehst getröstet nach Hause / Im Abenddämmerchein, / Und unter meinen Blumen / Schlaf’ still ich wieder ein.”

tense (“together we stood” or *futari tachinu*) – a temporality, which is also underlined by the poem’s title “Once in the past” – insinuates that the girl has already passed away. Her voice therefore rather speaks within the male speaker as his memory of the past, i.e. as the hallucinated “vision” of his already dead beloved. The poem thus deftly produces an ambiguity, which is further intensified by the poem’s lack of closure or of narrative framing at the end. Such a framing could have connected back the girl’s monologue to the original scene and to the discourse of the male speaker, but it is significantly absent in the poem. The absence of closure at the same time produces an effect of “presentist” immediacy through which the poetic medium merges with the girl’s disembodied voice. The girl’s voice, while thus displaying a guise of naturalness and immediacy, is also unnaturally mediated by the poem’s experimental alternation of eight and six syllables, which mirrors the meter of the German original.<sup>244</sup> This again produces an effect of foreignness and estrangement from traditional Japanese poetic diction. The tension or ambiguity between effects of immediacy and mediation in the “Aru toki” poem in fact points to the role that is ascribed to the poetic medium in *Omokage*. This role is to function as the (eroticized) substitute for an absence, which creates the effect of a presence while still self-reflexively emphasizing the process of mediation and therefore the absence of the represented.

The texts of “Moonlight” and “Once in the past” evoke the ghostly presence of an absent or dead female lover as her moonlit “vision” or as her hallucinated voice. Both poems realize the fulfillment of a male “dream of longing” (“Aru toki”) and thus significantly eroticize or sexualize the medium of poetry. The function of poetry is therefore not merely to represent love as a content or as a theme, but poetry is presented here as a medium of incantation (almost in the religious sense) through which love can be magically “envisioned”

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<sup>244</sup> The “Aru toki” translation corresponds to Ôgai’s category of “metric translation” (*kuyaku*). See Kobori 1976, 53-80 for a discussion of this category.

and experienced, at least in virtual or hallucinated fashion.<sup>245</sup> In the following sections, which focus on Kôda Rohan's *Fûryûbutsu* and Mori Ôgai's novellas *Utakata no ki* and *Maihime*, I show how the new medium of the artwork (including the literary text) comes to be dramatized as "visionary" in these contemporaneous texts. I argue that hallucinated "visions" of absent or dead female lovers that are embodied by the artwork are also the locus into which Tsubouchi Shôyô's earlier negotiation between heroism and eroticized "human feeling" becomes reinscribed and extended.

## 1.2. Sexualization and Chastity of the Artwork and Artist in Kôda Rohan's *Fûryûbutsu*

Kôda Rohan's story *Fûryûbutsu* centers around the young artisan Shuun who is a highly gifted sculptor of Buddhist icons. Out of longing for his absent lover Otatsu, he carves her imagined or hallucinated image into a female nude figure and thus creates the first modern artwork in Japan.<sup>246</sup> Like the male speakers in the translated poems of *Omokage*, Rohan's protagonist Shuun also brings to life through his fantasy an eroticized "vision" and the term *omokage* ("vision") lies at the heart of his artistic project. The moment when the young Shuun conceives of the idea to carve a female statue is described in the following way:

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<sup>245</sup> Ôgai's translations from Lord Byron's (1788-1824) *Manfred* (1816-17) are also particularly interesting in this respect. Ôgai translates both Manfred's summoning of the spirits (verses 1-49 in Byron's original) and the disembodied "incantation" (*magô*) that a spirit utters in response to his summoning (v. 182-261). See *Omokage* 146-153. Unlike the male speakers in "Moonlight" and "Once in the past," Manfred doesn't summon his ghostly "vision" out of mere eroticized longing. His summoning is rather motivated by an interiorized "dreadful force" and "dreadful thoughts." Although their specific nature remains unspecified these probably refer to Manfred's incestuous feelings for his now dead lover Astarte. As another passage of Byron's drama later reveals (this passage is not translated by Ôgai), one major objective for Manfred in summoning the spirits is to gain, by their help, "forgetfulness" (v.136) and "oblivion" (v. 145) of his amorous transgression. The "Seventh Spirit," which appears together with other spirits in response to Manfred's summoning, however, has "the shape of a beautiful female figure" who is most presumably Astarte herself. Her subsequent "incantation," which is translated by Ôgai," also, far from providing "forgetfulness," only more powerfully inscribes the curse of his sin into Manfred's mind. Astarte's apparition and her curse also point to Manfred's lingering sexual desire, which as a "dreadful force" continuously reaffirms itself. The two *Manfred* translations in *Omokage* thus equally eroticize the medium of poetry and transform it into the substitute through which an absent lover figure can be summoned and, virtually at least, experienced (i.e. brought back to life).

<sup>246</sup> *Fûryûbutsu* first appeared in the third volume of the series *Shincho hyakushu* published by Yoshioka shosekiten (Yoshioka Publishers) in September 1889. See Suzuki 2009b, 257-258, for a discussion of Rohan's relatively early awareness of the new concept of "art" (*bijutsu*) in *Fûryûbutsu*.

As he [Shuun] was leaning against the pillar [in his cabin] and gloomily reflecting about various things, his eyes naturally closed and he could clearly see the figure of Otatsu [*Otatsu no sugata*]. Wait! But when he reached out his hand and tried to catch her by her sleeve – how vainly! – the illusion [*maboroshi*] had already vanished in the air and only his resentment [for the fact that Otatsu had left him] remained. At this moment he made the resolution to at least reproduce her vision in reality [*sono omokage* 面影 *utsutsu ni todomen to omoitachi*].<sup>247</sup>

Hallucinations or “visions” are a recurrent theme in Rohan’s narrative, which hinges on the hallucinatory disposition of its male protagonist. Even when Shuun initially falls in love with Otatsu, which happens early on in the narrative when she visits his inn lodging as an itinerant peddler of salted flowers, he has multi-sensory “visions” or “illusions” (*maboroshi*) of her that assail him in his bed at night. When he closes his eyes, Shuun not only hallucinates the “vision” (*omokage*) of Otatsu herself but also of the salted flowers that she sold. Through a sensuous chain of associations, he even hears the sound of bees sucking the flowers’ nectar. Ultimately he envisions Otatsu sitting on a “beautiful illusory flower garland” as an awe-inspiring white-robed Kannon figure with an aureole.<sup>248</sup>

Shuun’s early “vision” of Otatsu as Kannon statue is later realized almost identically as the first version of his sculpture of the girl. The statue is vaguely eroticized through its flowered robe, which exudes “the coquetry of the peach blossom and the sensuous appeal of the cherry” (*momo no kobi sakura no iro*).<sup>249</sup> However, Shuun subsequently cuts off all the flowers. The flowered robe that envelops the girl in fact needs to be destroyed in order to uncover and produce the nude and sexualized female body as the essence of the (modern) artwork, which is the second and final sculpted version of Otatsu. The first version, which was the flowered *Kannon* figure, would have gained Shuun a “wage for his workmanship” (*saikuryō*) as a market commodity and served a religious purpose as a

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<sup>247</sup> Kōda Rohan, *Fūryūbutsu* 206-207.

<sup>248</sup> See for this scene *ibid.* 177-178. Terms such as *omokage* (“vision”), *kagebōshi* (“shadow image”) or *maboroshi* (“delusion;” also written *genzō* 幻像) frequently recur in the narration of *Fūryūbutsu*.

<sup>249</sup> See *ibid.* 178.



Buddhist icon. It would also have been subjectively detached from the producing artisan. The nude *fûryûbutsu* statue as artwork, however, is the private hallucinated “vision” of the artist’s absent female lover. It is “exclusively the product of his excessive longing” (*tada koishisa ni amarite no waza*) and doesn’t serve any religious or economic purpose. The metamorphosis, which Shuun undergoes from a sculptor-artisan to an artist, coincides with the sexualization of his sculpted work, which itself undergoes the transformation from a religious icon to an artwork as the private eroticized substitute for the artist’s absent lover. The production of the *fûryûbutsu* statue also significantly follows Shuun’s erotic encounter with Otatsu in a dream, which is “even more fulfilling than usual” (*tsune yori mo ureshiku*). As a result of this dream Shuun destroys the robe of flowers and transforms his sculpture into a nude figure. Shuun in fact has become aware that “the sculpted Otatsu was highly inferior to the person in his dream and that the numerous flowers covering the [sculpture’s] body were a nuisance.”<sup>250</sup> Because Shuun sees his beloved in a dream as a naked woman and at least virtually has sexual intercourse with her is he able to cut off the statue’s flowered robe. This process culminates into Shuun’s creation of the nude “Buddha of romance” as true artwork, which like his dream illusion is a substitutive sexualized “vision.”<sup>251</sup>

Its eroticized quality, however, is not the only attribute of the *fûryûbutsu* artwork. The ambiguity of its nature is already inscribed into the oxymoronic neologism of its name “Buddha of romance”, which points to love and desire but also to the spiritual transcendence

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<sup>250</sup> See *ibid.* 209-210. The dream scene, in *ninjôbon* fashion, first depicts a lovers’ quarrel between Otatsu and Shuun and culminates in their reconciliation and obviously sexual “intimate intercourse” (*mutsumajiki naka*), which is interrupted by the calling of Otatsu’s father in the dream. In reality it is the cawing of the crows at dawn.

<sup>251</sup> In the penultimate chapter of *Fûryûbutsu* Shuun’s statue in Pygmalion fashion comes alive, talks to and even embraces the artist. The text ambiguously leaves open the question whether the protagonist’s hallucinations have turned into a ghostly reality or if the real Otatsu has miraculously returned (see *ibid.* 220-224).

of these.<sup>252</sup> Shuun's *fūryūbutsu* statue in fact constantly oscillates between delusion and truth or sexualization and purity. This ambiguity also pervades the medium through which the *fūryūbutsu* appears as a "vision," which is the light of the moon. In the climactic scene of Rohan's story, Shuun's statue – either as hallucination or as ghostly apparition – seems to come alive through the spectral luminance of the moonlight. The scene reads:

[Shuun:] "[Otatsu's voice that emanated from the statue] must have been the trick of this shadow image [*kagebōshi no shiwaza*]. Ah! how annoying! I should now try, with all my determination, to renounce my worldly encumbrances and my attachment of love [*bonnō aishū!*]" While [Shuun] made this decision in his mind, there was still a lingering feeling of desire [*miren*] left in him and in his longing he stared at the sculpture. At this moment the clouds [in the sky] dispersed. The sun had set and the room at the Eastern window had become quite dark. Everything had turned a faint charcoal color except for Otatsu whose white skin seemed to be floating [in the room]. Her vivid appearance [*ikiki toshita sugata*], in the light of the misty moon night [*oborozukiyo*], looked like a real human being [*makoto no hito*]. And it seemed as if she would respond if one were to call her.<sup>253</sup>

The dim moonlight in this scene, which foregrounds the "vivid" whiteness of Otatsu's eerily floating skin in the otherwise dark room, mediates the hallucinated "vision" of an ethically problematic object of desire, i.e. Shuun's "worldly encumbrances and attachment of love." At the same time, however, the moon here also, in line with Buddhist iconography, points to the idea of Truth as the opposite of erotic delusion. This idea is metaphorically reinforced by the image of the dispersing clouds, which stands for the attainment of enlightenment or truth as epitomized by the full moon's light. The moonlight thus ambivalently participates in both the realms of purity and truth and "visionary" sexualized delusion.<sup>254</sup> The same ambiguity also pervades the *fūryūbutsu*'s essence as a (modern) work of art. In a narrative subtitle

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<sup>252</sup> I would argue that the ambiguity of the *fūryūbutsu* artwork fundamentally complicates readings that see Rohan's work as illustrating the emergence of pure spiritual (and even Christian) love in opposition to ethically problematic and "earthly" eroticism. See for such a reading Noborio Yutaka's essay "*Fūryūbutsu ron*" (in Noborio 2006). Noborio also links the (alleged) emergence of spiritual love to the emergence of art (vs. mere artisanship) in Rohan's story. For a recent discussion of *Fūryūbutsu* with regard to Christianity and also with regard to its Buddhist references see Okada 2012, chapter 3.

<sup>253</sup> *Fūryūbutsu* 222-223.

<sup>254</sup> For the "misty moon" as an emblem of enlightenment and delusion in classical Japanese poetry and literature see the references (for instance to specific *nō* dramas), which Sekiya Hiroshi cites in his commentary to the *Fūryūbutsu* text (see *ibid.* 223, notes 7 and 8).

Rohan's narrator writes: "By tightly molding delusion he arrives to the realization of the highest Truth" (*kataku môsô o desshite jikaku myôtai*).<sup>255</sup> Shuun's *fûryûbutsu* is thus presented as the product of both delusion and truth. In this subtitle Rohan's narrator, playfully alludes to the Buddhist (Mahayanist) doctrine that delusion and enlightenment are ultimately identical. At the same time, however, such a rhetoric also ironizes the modern Western discourse of Art in which the mimetic copy of the nude female body constitutes the quintessential representation of truth (as naked nature) while it is also an eroticized delusion or "vision" of desire. In such a fashion, Buddhist discourse and Western discourse of Art in *Fûryûbutsu* are ironically superimposed.

The ambivalent quality of Shuun's *fûryûbutsu* as both pure (chaste) and deluded (sexualized) has also significant intertextual implications. Rohan's *Fûryûbutsu* in fact intertextually references the early Meiji translation *Karyû shunwa*, especially with regard to the plot that centers on the female protagonist Otatsu.<sup>256</sup> When Otatsu first appears and makes an impression on Shuun as a destitute itinerant vendor of salted flowers, she almost is an intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice. The way Otatsu is treated by her uncle Shichizô, who brutally abuses her and plans to sell her as a prostitute in order to satisfy his monetary greed, is reminiscent of Alice's relationship to her criminal father Darvil in *Karyû shunwa*. Moreover, Otatsu is depicted as an inherently ethical and gentle figure. In her attempt to honestly sustain herself and her uncle by working hard as a salted flower peddler she also certainly doubles Alice. Through a coup de théâtre in the *Fûryûbutsu* narration, however, Otatsu abruptly becomes the high-ranking daughter of a powerful and wealthy Meiji bureaucrat, the viscount Iwanuma. Otatsu's father, whose identity had been unknown

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<sup>255</sup> See *ibid.* 210.

<sup>256</sup> I haven't yet come across discussions of the intertextual significance of *Karyû shunwa* for Rohan's story. Sekiya Hiroshi interestingly discusses the plot pattern of *Fûryûbutsu* with regard to stories of daughter-father separation and reunion, which were in vogue in the first half of the Meiji period (Shôyô's *Tôsei shosei katagi*, published in 1885-86, would also belong to this pattern). Often these stories were also about fantasies of social mobility. See Sekiya's essay on *Fûryûbutsu* in Sekiya 2006 (chapter 4).

to her since her birth, suddenly reappears and abducts her when she is about to marry the artisan-artist Shuun. In such a fashion, Otatsu miraculously strips off her intertextual identity with Alice and instead instantaneously transforms into a socially elevated and educated heroine akin to Florence Lascelles in *Karyû shunwa*, Oharu in *Setchûbai* or Oyuki in Shôyô's *Imo to se kagami*.<sup>257</sup> Through this social metamorphosis, which predestines her to facilitate male heroic advancement and success, Otatsu suddenly becomes unavailable as a marriage partner for the low-ranking artisan Shuun. Despite his inherent chastity and ethicality, which are repeatedly emphasized in the text and which would predestine him to be a truly heroic hero, he cannot realize a potentially chaste betrothal with the now high-ranking Otatsu. The possibility of social and (implicitly) political advancement is also precluded for him. The *Fûryûbutsu* narration in fact presents Shuun, despite his hallucinatory disposition, as a fundamentally chaste and sexually inexperienced hero who initially even rejects Otatsu as a bride.<sup>258</sup> Except for the early hallucinatory scene where Shuun sees Otatsu as a Kannon figure, his erotic desire for her also only retroactively erupts after her disappearance and within the context of his creation of the *fûryûbutsu* as artwork. I would argue that although Shuun is an artist and not a political activist, he implicitly reiterates, as an initially chaste and ethical protagonist, the allegorical economy of sexuality of the political novel, which would predestine him for social and heroic advancement. Shuun's heroic predisposition, however, becomes frustrated by Otatsu's sudden disappearance and unavailability as a marriage partner, which coincides with her abrupt rise in social status.

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<sup>257</sup> Even as flower peddler Otatsu appears to have received an elementary education and to be able to read. However, after her abduction it becomes one of her father's primary objectives to give her a thorough education in "higher knowledge" (*gakumon*) by hiring a private tutor (see *Fûryûbutsu* 200). See also *ibid.* 191 where the narrator specifies that Otatsu, while able to do needlework, has had no education in "higher knowledge and music" (*gakumon ongyoku*). In this passage Otatsu's lack of education is also interestingly contrasted with and relativized by her physical beauty.

<sup>258</sup> See for instance *ibid.* 192 where Shuun refers to "my pure heart" (*keppaku no waga shinjû*) to explain his decision not to accept Otatsu as his bride. Shuun's promiscuous rival – the supposed new husband of Otatsu in her new social position, the marquis (*kôshaku*) with the revelatory sobriquet Narihira – embodies the unethical sexual debauchery of the Meiji oligarchy and thus reiterates the allegorical economy of sexuality characteristic of the political novel tradition (for Narihira see *ibid.* 215).

The frustration of Shuun's heroic (chaste) empowerment also transforms him into an ambiguous hero who – like Misawa Tatsuzô, the protagonist of Shôyô's novel *Imo to se kagami* – is sexualized and chaste (ethical/civilized) or deluded and pure at the same time. I would think that this fact points to the fundamental affinity that links the *Imo to se kagami* and *Fûryûbutsu* narrations and their respective literary projects. As I argued in the previous chapter, Shôyô's novel *Imo to se kagami* resexualizes the marriage motive of the political novel through the union of its protagonist not with a high-ranking heroine but instead with the object of his “love,” the ambiguously sexualized and still ethical Otsuji who is an intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice. I showed how in such a fashion Shôyô's novel performs a complex renegotiation between sexualized love and chaste heroism. Rohan's protagonist Shuun, who is, unlike Misawa, unable to marry the intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice (Otatsu), instead creates an artwork (his *fûryûbutsu*) as the “visionary” sexualized substitute for the marriage partner and thus equally, implicitly, resexualizes the marriage motive. At the same time, moreover, the artwork is not only sexualized (deluded) but also chaste and pure. I would thus argue that in *Fûryûbutsu* the complex negotiation between sexualized love and chaste heroism, which was characteristic of Misawa's paradoxical marriage and work as a hero, becomes transferred into the very essence of the artwork and into the sexualization and chastity of its creator (the artist). As a hallucinated eroticized “vision” and virtual substitution for the absent real lover, the artwork is both sexualized and chaste – unethical and ethical (or uncivilized and civilized) – at the same time. In similar fashion the artist Shuun, while subject to erotic desire and sexually active virtually in his dreams, nonetheless remains “pure in his heart” and thus doesn't jeopardize the uncontested virginity of his body. I would think that, in such a way, the *fûryûbutsu* artwork mediates, extends and simultaneously fulfills the contradictory desires that have been frustrated by Otatsu's disappearance, i.e. a desire for social and heroic advancement on the

one hand and a desire for sexual fulfillment and love on the other hand. Through the creation of the artwork Shuun in fact heroically and chastely advances to become an artist, which is a new social position of national significance that defies the oligarchic power position of Otatsu's father.<sup>259</sup> At the same time, however, the artwork as a merely virtual substitution and eroticized object also constantly gestures to the frustration of heroic advancement and disempowerment on which its creation was predicated.

### 1.3. The Production of Art and Literary Writing in Ôgai's *Utakata no ki* and *Maihime*

Mori Ôgai's so-called German trilogy of novellas, written and published shortly after *Omokage* and *Fûryûbutsu* in the year 1890 after the author's return from a four-year stay of study and extensive reading of literary texts in Germany, in many respects marks the beginning of a new and epoch-making consciousness of literature, art and language brought about by the experimentation with Western and in particular German notions of literary writing, genre and style within a Japanese (linguistic) context.<sup>260</sup> However, Ôgai's trilogy also, similarly to Rohan's *Fûryûbutsu*, continues to negotiate "human feeling" and heroic signifiers that intertextually point back to *Karyû shunwa* and extend Shôyô's project of novelistic reform. Ôgai's texts appropriate these signifiers within the context of his new consciousness of art and literary writing. This is particularly obvious in *Utakata no ki* and *Maihime*, which both dramatize the production of the new artwork or literary text as the

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<sup>259</sup> In this respect the allegorical "denouement" or "final scene" (*dan'en*, pp. 224-5) of *Fûryûbutsu* is significant where Shuun and Otatsu (as *fûryûbutsu*), enveloped by a radiant aureole and riding a white cloud, are seen throughout the nation by representatives of all social classes. This allegorical scenario of the expansion of Art throughout the new nation state also correlates with Shuun's new self-consciousness and pride as an artist. See *ibid.* 203-204 for Shuun's reasoning that as an artist – a position that equals him with Michelangelo in the West – it would be certainly appropriate for him to be Otatsu's husband. See also Sekiya Hiroshi's essay on *Fûryûbutsu* (in Sekiya 2006) for an interesting analysis of the significance of nationalism in Rohan's story.

<sup>260</sup> For a discussion of the importance of translation in connection to German notions of literature as well as of the multi-faceted function of language in *Maihime* see Suzuki 2013. See also Bowring 1979, 1-87, and in particular Kobori 1969 for detailed contextual information on the young Ôgai and discussions of the German trilogy and related textual materials.

“vision” of a lost female lover through which heroic and erotic (or love-related) impulses are negotiated and contained.<sup>261</sup>

In *Utakata no ki*, it is the female protagonist, the German woman Marie, who embodies and merges several contradictory female personas associated with the previous literary tradition, in particular with the translation *Karyû shunwa*. Like Otatsu in *Fûryûbutsu*, she undergoes a striking metamorphosis, which transforms her from a destitute flower peddler and intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice into an educated woman.<sup>262</sup> Through her fundamental transformation in time Marie comes to fuse, broadly speaking, two contradictory female personas. She first appears, mediated by Kose's recollection, in a past that is situated six years before the present of the narration and that corresponds to the artist's first brief stay in Munich (where the plot of *Utakata no ki*'s occurs). At that time Kose encounters Marie – similarly to Shuun's first encounter with Otatsu in *Fûryûbutsu* – as a beautiful but destitute thirteen-year-old violet peddler who barely makes a living in the cafés and streets of the big city. Although the encounter between Marie and Kose remains brief and is followed by a separation of six years, her eroticized “vision,” in hallucinatory fashion,

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<sup>261</sup> *Maihime* was first published in the “New Year supplement” (*shinnen furoku*) of the journal *Kokumin no tomo* in January 1890 and *Utakata no ki* in Ôgai's literary journal *Shigarami sôshi* in August 1890. The third piece of Ôgai's trilogy – the novella *Fumizukai* (*The Messenger*) – was first published in the series *Shincho hyakushu* in January 1891. *Fumizukai* interestingly differs from its two predecessors in the trilogy in that its female protagonist is an aristocratic young woman (the German lady Ida von Bülow) and thus doesn't undergo a process of social advancement and subjective growth like the heroines in *Fûryûbutsu*, *Maihime* and *Utakata no ki*. The theme of sexual desire is also more implicit or less developed than in the aforementioned stories. At the same time, *Fumizukai*'s plot focuses on the heroine's renunciation of marriage in an aristocratic society where a love-match is refused to her. The impossibility of a marriage between her and the Japanese male protagonist (and first-person narrator) Kobayashi is therefore the major implicit theme in the novella. *Fumizukai*, by staging a high-ranking and educated heroine as a potential marriage partner, certainly participates in the broader intertextual dynamics that point back to *Karyû shunwa* and the political novel tradition. The text, however, doesn't negotiate sexual desire (mostly associated with low-ranking women) and heroism with the same complexity as *Maihime* and *Utakata no ki*. I therefore haven't included it in my analysis.

<sup>262</sup> See also Swann 1974, 270-272, who points to the similarity between Marie as flower-peddling girl and the heroine Nydia in Bulwer-Lytton's popular novel *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), which was translated, in abridged form, into Japanese by Oda Jun'ichirô in 1879-1880. It should also be noted that the complex nature of Marie in *Utakata no ki* has been related to the fact that Harada Naojirô (1863-99), the painter model for Kose, was involved with two highly different women in Germany: on the one hand, the highly educated and talented Caecilia Pfaff who felt an unrequited love for the Japanese painter, and on the other hand, a lowly woman called Marie with whom Harada temporarily lived together (see Swann 1974, 268-270 and Kobori 1969, 568-570).

powerfully seizes his imagination and also becomes his privileged, if not exclusive, subject for painting. Kose describes this process in the following way:

“This face and these eyes will forever stay in my memory. [Almost immediately after encountering Marie in Munich] I went to Dresden and obtained the permission to copy the paintings in the gallery. But whatever picture I faced – be it Venus, Leda, Madonna or Helena – the figure of the violet peddler always like [floating] mist strangely obtruded itself between me and the paintings. I became anxious that the progress of my work could be impeded in such a way and I even sometimes shut myself up on the second floor of my hotel, laying there and wearing out the sofa [not knowing how to deal with this situation]. One morning, however, I assembled all the courage and force of will that I had [*daiyû môshin o furuiokoshite*] and decided to transmit, with all my strength [*waga aramu kagiri no chikara o komete*], the figure of the flower-peddling girl to eternity.<sup>263</sup>

Like in *Fûryûbutsu* the subject for painting or more generally art is here also the eroticized “vision” of an absent female figure as object of desire that fills the artist’s imagination. As I shall argue, the emergence of Marie as hallucinated painterly “vision” is inscribed into a complex dynamic of empowerment and disempowerment that underlies the narration of *Utakata no ki*.

What first strikes Kose upon encountering Marie as a flower peddler are her “gentle and compassion-inspiring” (*yasashiku itôshiige naru*) weakness and helplessness. Kose witnesses how Marie, in an unfortunate accident, loses all her violets (her daily income) at once and faces the heartless indifference of the surrounding world. The girl’s helplessness in this scene empowers Kose and allows him to actively rescue her by offering the sum of “seven or eight Mark” as a substitution for the loss of her flowers. Kose’s act of giving money to Marie primarily derives from compassion but also confirms him in a position of financial superiority. The act, however, implicitly also gestures to the phenomenon of prostitution and to Kose’s desire to reify Marie as a sexual commodity, which resonates with Marie’s intertextual doubles in Otatsu (*Fûryûbutsu*), Otsuji (*Imo to se kagami*) and of course Alice (*Karyû shunwa*) who all at some point face the danger of being subjected to

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<sup>263</sup> Mori Ôgai, *Utakata no ki* 42. The translations from *Utakata no ki* are my own but I consulted Bowring 1974.



prostitution.<sup>264</sup> At the same time, however, Kose's act of giving money also, paradoxically, produces a dynamic of female empowerment, which facilitates Marie's subsequent psychological growth and financial as well as educational independence. Marie's empowerment and growth are also prefigured by Kose's painterly "vision." In his artistic fantasy Kose doesn't see Marie as a helpless and vaguely eroticized flower peddler but as an alluring femme fatale. Kose describes his artistic hallucination in the following way:

"[...] the flower peddler's eyes, which I saw [in my mind], did not joyfully glance at the waves of spring nor did they dreamingly bid farewell to the evening clouds. It also wasn't appropriate for me to represent [my vision of Marie] amidst Italian ruins and with flocks of white doves fluttering around her. In my imagination I instead decided to place her on top of a cliff at the shores of the Rhine, holding a lyre in her hands and singing with a tearful voice. Seated on a little boat floating down the stream below, I was raising both my arms towards her and showing her an expression of boundless love [*kagiri naki ai*]. Around my boat countless mermaids and nymphs were raising their bodies out of the waves and teasing me."<sup>265</sup>

As Kose shortly later explains, the woman "on the banks of the Rhine" is the nymph and femme fatale Loreley who, most notably in Heinrich Heine's (1797-1856) famous eponymous poem (1824), leads the boatmen on the river astray by her alluring song. Kose's eroticized vision of Marie, which also blends in with other iconographic references to mythological beauties or femme fatale figures in the text (Venus, Leda, the Madonna and Helena), considerably empowers the originally helpless flower peddler. This empowerment, moreover, while inspiring Kose's artistic work, also fundamentally threatens to impede it. Only by calling up all his "courage and force of will" as well as his "strength" and under the condition of making Marie into the object of his painting can he actively keep working as an artist although his masterpiece, not only at the above point in the narration but also by the end of *Utakata no ki*, still remains unachieved.

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<sup>264</sup> Prostitution is an important motive in *Utakata no ki* as well as in *Maihime*. After the death of her parents, dishonest people attempt to fool Marie into meeting a potential customer. Her first rowboat excursion to Lake Starnberg in fact takes place with this customer whose sexual assault she escapes by jumping into the lake. Honorable fishermen rescue her. Marie's death scene (part 3) therefore interestingly resonates with this earlier scene.

<sup>265</sup> *Utakata no ki* 42.

Marie's erotic empowerment in Kose's artistic hallucination, however, only vaguely prefigures the profound transformation, which she undergoes in reality during the six years that elapse between Kose's first and second stay in Munich. Marie not only grows in age and turns into a mature woman, but she also gains an education and even, at least indirectly, rises in her social status. In her autobiographical account to Kose (part 2 of *Utakata no ki*) Marie reveals that she is in fact the daughter of the deceased but formerly highly influential and successful Bavarian court painter Steinbach. Owing to the death of her parents and other unfortunate circumstances, she was forced to make a living as a flower peddler and even faced the danger of prostitution. Fortunately, however, she could eventually grow up in honorable (albeit humble) circumstances and also received an education.<sup>266</sup> Kose reencounters Marie as a waitress in the Café Minerva in Munich, which serves as a place of gathering for the artistic bohème in the Bavarian capital.<sup>267</sup> Although the young art students assembled in the café treat her with inappropriate familiarity and even disdain, Marie in turn, owing to her consciousness of social and educational superiority, positions herself above them. Marie's new persona of superiority becomes manifest in the opening scene of *Utakata no ki*, which takes place in the Café Minerva. In this scene Kose (who doesn't know of Marie's identity) incidentally narrates, to the assembled art students, his recollection of the unforgettable former encounter with the young and destitute flower peddler. When Marie recognizes herself in Kose's narration, she openly reveals her identity and also rewards the Japanese man for his former generosity with a "kiss" (*seppun*) on his forehead. Her bold kiss not only elicits the surprise – she has never been seen kissing a man before or, as a painting

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<sup>266</sup> Marie explains that it was only after the death of her parents, probably caused by the illicit infatuation of the "mad" Bavarian king with her mother, that she fell into destitution and became a flower peddler. Thanks to luck, however, she soon came to live with poor but honest fishermen at Lake Starnberg where she also received an education by the governess of a British aristocratic family living nearby. Her education is eclectic and consists in the reading of, for instance, Goethe's and Schiller's poetry, Taine's writings on art, picture volumes of the Louvre and Dresden collections, etc. (see *ibid.* 48-52).

<sup>267</sup> See Schamoni 1981 for a discussion of the topographical references related to Munich in *Utakata no ki*.

model, exposed her naked body – but also the jealousy from the other young men in the room who ironically voice their desire to be kissed as well by the beautiful woman. Marie furiously retorts that for those “without courtesy” there would be also an “appropriate kiss,” and she spits water on the students. In this scene Marie also undergoes a further iconographic transformation, which relates to her new persona of “authority” (*igen*) and “noble pride.”<sup>268</sup>

Ôgai’s narrator explains:

She forcefully stood up and with beautiful eyes from which lightning seemed to flash she glared for a while at the assembly [of students]. Shocked and bewildered, Kose had been watching the scene, and it now seemed to him as if the figure of the young woman didn’t resemble the flower peddler or the Loreley any more but was instead the Bavaria on top of the Victory Gate [in Munich].

The young woman now picked a glass that was next to a cup of coffee someone had probably just emptied, took the water in her mouth and spat it out in one stream. “Stepchildren! Stepchildren! Who of you is more than a stepchild of art?<sup>269</sup> Those of you who study the Florentine school are mere ghosts of Michelangelo or Da Vinci! Those of you who study the Dutch school are mere ghosts of Rubens or Van Dyck! And even if you study Albrecht Dürer of our own country you are rarely more than just the ghost of Albrecht Dürer! When you manage to sell two or three studies that are hanging in the art gallery you fancy yourself to belong to the Pleiades, the Ten Masters or the Twelve Apostles! How can Minerva’s lips touch such rubbish? Content yourself with this cold kiss instead!” she shouted.<sup>270</sup>

Marie’s self-stylization as “Minerva,” the Roman goddess of wisdom, learning and the arts, correlates to her display of art-historical knowledge and to her self-awareness as the daughter of the once famous Steinbach. This self-identification also allows her to reject, not only from a moral ground but also from the perspective of artistic qualification, the courtship of the other young artists in the room where only Kose turns out to be the chosen suitor. Kose also associates Marie with the allegorical “statue of the goddess Bavaria” on Munich’s Victory Gate (Siegestor), which is significantly described in the opening passage of *Utakata no ki*.

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<sup>268</sup> After describing Kose’s encounter with Marie in the Café Minerva the narrator explains, from Kose’s viewpoint, that her “behavior naturally had a noble pride [*onozukara kedakaki tokoro arite*] and didn’t seem to belong to an ordinary person” (see *Utakata no ki* 37).

<sup>269</sup> When Marie kisses Kose on his forehead, the students in the café jealously criticize Marie for treating them like “stepchildren” (*mamako*) in comparison with Kose. Marie here in turn cynically challenges this criticism.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid. 44-45.

Through Marie's association with Bavaria, the above scene also acquires an obliquely political and heroic subtext. As Bavaria Marie in fact not only allegorically embodies the Bavarian state but also the Bavarian people and perhaps even their people's rights. It is significant that Marie, in her new vaguely allegorical authority and heroism, doesn't mark or choose as her potential marriage partner – by the symbolism of her “kiss” – any of the other artists but the Japanese protagonist Kose. While neither Kose nor the young artists are political activists, the political symbolism, which ambiguously pervades this scene, still points to the continuity that links *Utakata no ki* and its male protagonist to earlier political fiction in Japan.

The potentially political subtext in *Utakata no ki* in fact reaches a climax in the scene where Kose and Marie are assailed by the “mad” Bavarian king Ludwig II on the shore of Lake Starnberg. In this scene, the king, in a fit of insanity and excessive sexual desire, attempts to abduct Marie and kills her, thereby also drowning himself, because of her resemblance to her dead mother whom Ludwig has continued to desire in an unrequited and violent way. Although an allegorical reading of this scene along a political code of signification would be possible – namely, as the usurpation of the people's rights (Marie) through a monarchic and tyrannical government (the king) leading to the failure and incapacitation of democratic reform (Kose) – several factors in the text also fundamentally complicate the possibility of such a reading. An important factor for this complication is the prominent theme of madness in *Utakata no ki*. Although Ludwig's sexual desire for Marie seems to be interpretable as a metonymic substitution for the king's immoral political oppression in line with the allegorical economy of sexuality in the political novel, it is significantly complicated by madness. This madness, moreover, problematically connects the king to Marie who, as haughty Minerva or Bavaria disdainfully spitting at the young artists, has gained the reputation of a “madwoman” (*kyôjo*) as well. As Marie's following words to

Kose reveal, the theme of madness in fact deeply relates to but also alienates the notion of heroism in *Utakata no ki*:

“I have now intercourse with artists [*bijutsuka*] and live a pleasant life. At the same time, what Gustav Freytag says is absolutely true. There is nobody as depraved as artists in the world, and as I mix with them just being on my own I have to be careful all the time. Always alert not to let them come to close to me or touch me, I have become – as you just inadvertently witnessed – a strange fellow [*fushigi no kusemono*]. Sometimes I even doubt whether I am not mad [*kyôjin ni wa arazu ya*]. This is perhaps also a bad effect of my readings at Leoni, but if that’s the case everyone who is called a “doctor” must be mad! Those artists who abuse me by calling me a madwoman must lament the fact that they are not mad themselves. In order to know that to become a great hero [*ei-yû gôketsu*] or a famous master [*meishô taika*] some madness [*kyôki*] is necessary you don’t even need to read Seneca or Shakespeare. Just look at the breadth of my learning! How sad to see that those whom one would wish to be mad are not mad! And how sad at the same time to hear that the king who has no need of madness has turned into a madman!”<sup>271</sup>

In this passage, “madness” is not only seen as the product of (female) learning and education but also as the condition for political heroism and artistic greatness. By virtue of his madness, king Ludwig is not only a more heroic but also a potentially more artistic hero than the painter Kose – not to mention the other artists at whom Marie contemptuously spits – and he is therefore the only male figure in the text equal in format to Marie.<sup>272</sup> This equality is perhaps also reflected by the fact that Ludwig, in however problematic and “mad” a fashion, actively and heroically attempts to abduct Marie while Kose merely passively accompanies her to Lake Starnberg “like a small child led by his mother.”<sup>273</sup> While both Marie and the king exhibit the attributes of mad heroism or heroic madness, Kose who initially would seem to be the predestined hero appears strangely debilitated and non-heroic. In such a way the signifiers of prior Meiji-period fiction are problematically reconfigured in *Utakata no ki*. Instead of facilitating Kose’s advancement as a hero, Marie’s heroic growth into a potentially

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid. 53.

<sup>272</sup> King Ludwig was famous for his deep commitment to the arts, which is reflected by his grandiose architectural activity, his interest in Wagner’s music etc.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid. 54.

allegorical emblem (for instance of people's rights), in connection to her madness, produces a dynamic that disempowers Kose while ambiguously realigning the heroine with the king.

"Mad" heroism also problematically relates to sexual desire, not only in the case of the king but also Marie. In the following scene, Marie's sexuality problematizes her heroic and allegorical potential as Bavaria figure. The scene focuses on the moment when Kose and Marie, shortly before the king's attack on the shore of lake Starnberg, ride a horse carriage together while a thunderstorm rages around them:

[Marie] threw away the cap she had been wearing, and when she turned to [Kose] it was as if warm blood was pulsing in her marble veins. Her golden hair, blown in the wind, seemed to have transformed into the mane of a swift horse that was neighing while tossing its head. "Today! Today! What is the value of yesterday? Tomorrow and the day after tomorrow are also empty words, hollow sounds!"

At that moment, two or three raindrops, thick like grains, hit the clothes of the couple sitting on top of the coach. The rain swiftly intensified, and when the spray across the lake was whipping over them and Kose could see how it was hitting the young woman's rosy cheeks, he felt utterly enraptured. The young woman stretched forward. "Driver! I will tip you well! Ride faster! Whip once more! Once more!" she shouted, embraced Kose's neck with her right hand and, bending her head back, looked upwards. Resting his head on the girl's shoulders, which were as soft as wool, and merely watching her as if in a dream Kose could see again the goddess Bavaria on top of the Victory Gate.<sup>274</sup>

This scene illustrates, through Kose's gaze, another transformation of Marie into the allegorical statue of Bavaria on the Victory Gate. Marie's body is synecdochally reduced to the "warm blood" that is "pulsing in her marble veins" or her "golden hair blown in the wind," which resembles "the mane of a swift horse." In this description the girl's body is animated and eroticized, but at the same time it also ambiguously exhibits the sculptural qualities of the "marble" goddess whose movements are lifeless and cold. Similarly there is a paradoxical tension in this scene between an acceleration of movement (epitomized by Marie's "mad" desire to ride faster in unison with the raging thunderstorm) and the sculptural immobility of the allegorical horse cart on the Victory Gate into which Kose's carriage has already transformed. Both the acceleration of movement and the sculptural immobility in Kose's

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<sup>274</sup> Ibid. 57-58.

perception of Marie relate to her sublime heroism, which simultaneously inspires awe as well as erotic fear and distance. Marie's heroism, however, is again predicated on her "madness," which could be described as a deregulation of the heroic having turned into a desire for excess and thus also gesturing to sexual desire and its ultimate consequence: death. The problematic fusion of heroism and sexual desire is indeed dramatized in the continuation of the above scene, which leads to the climax of the erotic, if not sexual intimacy between the two lovers:

The rain fell ceaselessly and it began to thunder. The path now entered a copse and although it was still a time of day when the summer sun should be high in the sky in this country, the road under the leaves of the trees had become dark. The scent of the grasses and trees steamed by the summer sun and moistened by the rain now wafted into the cart and the two [lovers] absorbed it [avidly] like a thirsty man drinking water. In the intervals between the thunderclaps, seemingly without fear of the frightening weather, a nightingale warbled with its crystal voice, like a traveler on a forlorn road singing his song. At that point Marie put both her arms around Kose's neck and pressed her body against him, and lit by the lightning that flashed through the dark trees, they looked each other into their face and smiled. Alas! the two had already forgotten themselves, forgotten the carriage on which they were riding, and also forgotten the world outside the carriage!<sup>275</sup>

The ambiguities in this scene are interestingly mirrored by the natural landscape that envelops the couple. While the gentle and "crystal" song of the nightingale, in seeming contradiction to the "frightening weather," produces a romantic and amorous subtext, the continuous thunderclaps and the lightning gesture to the theme of heroism alienated by madness, which also prefigures the imminent appearance of the Bavarian king. The rain, moreover, implicitly points to sexual desire and its consummation. As in the previous passage where Marie's allegorical body – the marble body of the goddess on top of the Victory Gate – appeared to Kose in animated and eroticized fashion, this scene also dramatizes a fundamental incongruity or deregulation, which is the superimposition of erotic signifiers upon the heroic theme. I would argue that "madness" in the context of *Utakata no ki* should be read as the chiffre for this superimposition (or merger) that fundamentally

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid. 58.

alienates the idea of chaste heroism in the political novel tradition. In *Utakata no ki*, the king's obsessive desire for Marie is mirrored by the sexualized "madness" of Bavaria (Marie), which fundamentally alienates her allegorical potential, i.e. her potential to empower Kose heroically. This problematic incongruity is solved, on the one hand, by the death of both Marie and the king. On the other hand, it also produces a fundamental regression on Kose's side, i.e. his sexual anxiety vis-à-vis Marie as Bavaria but also his return, after her death, to her previous identity as the vaguely eroticized flower-peddling girl and Loreley figure, which he hallucinates through the medium of his painting. The final scene of *Utakata no ki* in fact significantly shows Kose kneeling in front of his painting and working on it.

The artwork in *Utakata no ki* could be defined as the product or embodiment of conflicting male desires: erotic desire and amorous feeling on the one hand and the desire for heroic empowerment on the other hand. As an eroticized flower peddler and Loreley figure Marie is on the cusp of her heroic growth, which Kose facilitates (by his money) in order to produce the potentially allegorical figure that will facilitate his own growth and empowerment. At the same time, Marie's actual growth into Bavaria is complicated by sexual desire, which produces "madness" and the ultimate catastrophe of Marie's death. This then leads to Kose's debilitation, i.e. the frustration of both his erotic desire and his desire for heroic empowerment.<sup>276</sup> The production of the artwork is therefore predicated on this double frustration while it also continues to mediate and contain the contradictory impulses that led to the frustration. In such a fashion the artwork in *Utakata no ki* extends Shôyô's paradoxical sexualization of the theme of heroism or the fatal contraction of the two contradictory trajectories in *Karyû shunwa*'s narration: namely, sexualized love as the detractor of political advancement and heroic or political advancement. A comparable dynamic is also discernible

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<sup>276</sup> Kose is a weak or debilitated hero even before Marie's death. I would think that Marie's "madness," which merges her potential heroism and sexual allure, produces an erotic anxiety that debilitates Kose sexually by reducing him to the status of a child. Marie's death thus merely marks the finality of Kose's disempowerment, which is both erotic and heroic.



in Ôgai's contemporary novella *Maihime* to which I turn next. In *Maihime* the artwork is not a painting but *Maihime*'s first-person narration itself that recounts its own genesis out of conflicting erotic and heroic impulses and of their frustration.

*Maihime*, like Rohan's *Fûryûbutsu* and *Utakata no ki*, intertextually references the novel *Karyû shunwa* and with even greater detail and explicitness reappropriates its content and storyline. The main plot of *Maihime* centers on the encounter and subsequent relationship of the male protagonist Ôta Toyotarô with the uneducated and working-class German girl Elis (or Elise, "Erisu" in *katakana* script) whose name phonetically echoes her famous intertextual antecedent, Ernest Maltravers's lover Alice.<sup>277</sup> The intertextual cross-references between both works, beyond the similarity of their heroines' names, are indeed numerous enough to allow a reading that describes – as I will do to a certain limit in my subsequent analysis – the significance of the literary project of Ôgai's *Maihime* in its similarity to but also divergence from *Karyû shunwa*. Already the first encounter between Toyotarô and Elis in the streets of Berlin is predicated on this intertextual connection. When the encounter occurs, Elis is on the brink of being forced to become the mistress of her patron in the theater where she is working as a dancing girl (owing to her inability to finance the funeral of her father who has just died and also, more generally, to make a living after her father's death). While thus sexualized through the lascivious desire of her patron and also through her "lowly profession" (*iyashiki waza*) as a dancing girl, it is her desire to remain unsullied and to avoid the fate of prostitution, which lets her cry on the street and catch Toyotarô's attention. It is then also the ambiguous quality of Elis to be both sexualized and ethical – the expression of her eyes, while "pure" (*kiyora nite*), exudes an enticing "erotic

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<sup>277</sup> Studies that emphasize the intertextual proximity between *Maihime* and *Karyû shunwa* are surprisingly scarce given *Maihime*'s canonical status in literary scholarship. See for instance Chiba 1997, 38-72, and Kimura 1972, 397, for discussions of the intertextual relationship between both works, which extends to the names of their heroines.

charme” (*bitai*) – that profoundly attracts Toyotarô.<sup>278</sup> It goes without saying that Elis’s affinity to prostitution and her (ethical) innocence resonate with the character of *Karyû shunwa*’s Alice as well as with the subsequent lineage of her intertextual doubles Otsuji (*Imo to se kagami*), Otatsu (*Fûryûbutsu*) and Marie (*Utakata no ki*). It is also again through a financial gesture – by giving Elis, similarly to the way Kose acts in *Utakata no ki*, “two or three Marks” – that Toyotarô symbolically initiates her subsequent education and growth while simultaneously reifying her as a potential sexual commodity.

In a fashion exactly reminiscent of *Karyû shunwa*’s plot, Toyotarô, briefly after his initial encounter with Elis, starts giving her an education and it is through the mediation of their “teacher-disciple relationship” (*shitei no majiwari*) that a sexual intimacy and feelings of “love” develop between the two partners. Ôgai’s first-person narrator describes this development in the following way:

Until this point my relationship to Elis had been purer [*seihaku*] than it might have seemed from the outside. Because of the poverty of her father she hadn’t been able to receive a sufficient education and, in response to an advertisement from her dance teacher, she had had started learning this lowly profession from age 15 onward. After completing the “Kursus” she entered the Victoria Theater and now had advanced to the second rang in the establishment. But there is no position as precarious as the one of the dancing girls, which the poet Hackländer once called the “slaves of our age.” [...]. For this reason [because of their economic hardships], it was not rare for [dancing girls] to fall into the lowliest of all professions [i.e. prostitution]. That Elis had been able to avoid this fate was because of her gentle disposition [*otonashiki seishitsu*] but also thanks to the protection of her proud father [*gôki naru chichi no shugo*]. Since her childhood she had enjoyed reading but the only books that she could get into her hands were those vulgar novels from the book-lending stores called colportage. After meeting me, however, she learned to read the books that I was borrowing. She also gradually acquired a good taste [*shumi*], mended the dialect of her speech and, not after long, the spelling mistakes in her letters to me had also disappeared. In such a way, a teacher-disciple relationship first formed between the two of us. [...]. Alas! There is no need to give further details here, but it was around that time that my feeling of love for her [*yo ga kare o mezuru kokoro*] suddenly became strong and that our relationship reached a point where it became difficult to part.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>278</sup> For the words *kiyora nite* and *bitai* see Mori Ôgai, *Maihime* 10 and 13 respectively.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid. 15-16.

The narration of *Maihime* in this passage shows an obvious awareness of the morally problematic dimension of sexuality – for instance with regard to prostitution – and it also values the chastity or “purity” (*seihaku*) that initially characterized the relationship between Toyotarô and Elis. At the same time, the sexual intimacy that soon develops out of their “teacher-disciple relationship” is also valued or legitimized as “love.” In this fashion, *Maihime* closely replicates the ambiguous relationship between Maltravers and Alice in *Karyû shunwa*, which is presented as morally problematic (because of its sexual nature) but simultaneously also as valuable owing to the couple’s reciprocal “love.” That Toyotarô’s “love” is indeed problematic can be gauged from the fact that he loses his bureaucratic position and stipend shortly before he enters a sexual relationship with Elis (and ultimately because of his “love”). As Maltravers’s career is momentarily suspended owing to his sexual intimacy with Alice, Toyotarô’s social advancement is impeded by his relationship with Elis. This also coincides with his inner awakening to his, at least alleged, “true self” (*makoto no ware*), which facilitates and ultimately culminates in his relationship with Elis.

The immense literary-historical significance of *Maihime* has traditionally been seen in the work’s questioning of the ethics of social advancement and in its valorization of Toyotarô’s bureaucratic dismissal as connected to his discovery of a “true self” and the individuality of love.<sup>280</sup> At the same time, however, the plot structure of social advancement is also profoundly inscribed into the narration of *Maihime*. Toyotarô ultimately abandons Elis in order to return to Japan and resume his career. In this respect, *Maihime* again follows the

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<sup>280</sup> Toyotarô’s discovery of his “true self” predates his encounter with Alice and is also predicated on the shift in the academic fields, which he decides to study at the university: i.e. the shift from law and politics to literature and history. At the same time, these prior inner developments culminate in his subsequent relationship with Elis and would be meaningless without the latter. Tomi Suzuki shows that, while seemingly establishing unambiguous dichotomies of valorization (such as love vs. bureaucratic advancement or literature vs. law, etc.), *Maihime* however also subtly blurs these distinctions and invalidates their semantic clarity (see Suzuki 2013, section 2). In this sense it is indeed ultimately impossible to determine what Toyotarô’s alleged “true self” exactly refers to. For an alternative reading that examines the production of Toyotarô’s subjectivity through the experience of urban space see Maeda Ai’s essay “BERLIN 1888: *Maihime*” (in Maeda 1989c, available in English in Maeda 2004). See also Komori Yôichi’s more structural reading, which retraces the formation of subjectivity through the text’s written format as first-person recollection (cf. Komori’s “Ketsumatsu kara no monogatari: *Maihime* ni okeru ichininshô” in Komori 1988).

plot of *Karyû shunwa*, but it does so in a significantly divergent manner. While Maltravers leaves behind his lover Alice in order to move on to other chaste relationships with high-ranking and educated women who facilitate his literary and political career, Toyotarô merely leaves his lover behind without engaging in socially and politically more appropriate relationships. Moreover, a subtler but nonetheless even more fundamental difference between both texts is that Elis – unlike Alice in *Karyû shunwa* – undergoes a process of growth or subjectification as a result of the education that she receives from Toyotarô. She takes on a new social persona by acquiring “good taste” and by mending her dialectal speech as well as the spelling mistakes in her writing. Instead of turning, like Maltravers, to new relationships with different heroines that facilitate his career, Toyotarô, while seemingly facing one and the same woman, starts engaging with an altered heroine that has undergone an education and, at least symbolically, acquired the potential to socially rise. In this respect Elis also mirrors and replicates the social metamorphosis (and double-nature) of the female protagonists in *Fûryûbutsu* (Otatsu) and *Utakata no ki* (Marie).

Under the guise of her new persona, Elis conspicuously asserts herself as a marriage partner for Toyotarô, and she does so primarily through her letter writing, which, as a medium, emphasizes her newly acquired educated status. Elis’ writing of letters occurs in the “winter of the year Meiji 21 [1888].” This date frames the second half of the *Maihime* story, which starts with the arrival of count Amakata in Berlin and ends with the catastrophe of Toyotarô’s separation from Elis. Toyotarô, during that winter, assists the count on a diplomatic mission to St. Petersburg, which already marks the incipient alienation between both lovers. While separated from Toyotarô, Elis expresses her subjective and emotional state in numerous letters, which are addressed to him and quoted in the narrative. One of her letters reads:

“No [*ina*]! I now have become aware of the depth of my longing for you [*kimi o omou kokoro no fukaki soko*]! You said that you didn’t have any reliable relatives at

home [*furusato*] and since there are good opportunities to make a living here as well, how can you not stay here [with me]? And how could I also not bind you here with my love [*waga ai mote tsunagi tomede wa yamaji*]? But even if that didn't help and you were to return to the East, although it wouldn't be a problem for me and for my mother to go with you, from where should we take the money for the trip? I always thought that I could stay here while doing some kind of work and wait until you would have advanced in the world [*kimi ga yo ni idetamawan*], but even for the last 20 days since you left on this trip about which you said that it would be brief my longing for you has become worse daily! My initial belief that a separation would merely be a momentary suffering was an illusion! The condition of my body [i.e. my pregnancy] has finally become fully visible, and since there is this new circumstance, whatever might happen, never leave me behind! I violently fought with my mother but since she could see how much I was determined, unlike my former self [*waga mi no sugishi koro ni wa nide*], she had to give up. She said that, if I were to travel to the East, she could stay with distant relatives, farmers near Stettin. If, as you wrote, his Excellency the minister were to heavily rely on you, there will be money for my trip as well! But for the time being, with all my heart I am waiting for your return to Berlin!"<sup>281</sup>

In her letter Elis displays an unprecedented determination of will or even authority, which not only allows her to overcome her mother's resistance but also to envision a lifelong union with her lover Toyotarô that would "bind" him to her through the force of her "love" (*ai*). This lifelong bond, which for Elis is conceivable for a life both in the West and in the "East," although not explicitly labeled as such, is probably marriage. Elis, moreover, doesn't see this union in opposition to Toyotarô's social advancement but on the contrary predicates it on her lover's (or potential husband's) ability to make a name in the world or to be heavily relied on by the count. In such a way Elis's growth and subjectification – like Marie's metamorphosis into Bavaria in *Utakata no ki* – seems to transform the heroine into a potential facilitator or mediator for male advancement and success through marriage. At the same time, however, Elis's subjectification is also predicated on her sexuality, which comes to the fore most visibly in her advanced pregnancy and connects to the illicit nature of the couple's relationship. The "winter of the year Meiji 21," as the moment of crisis and catastrophe in the *Maihime* memoir is thus marked not only by Elis's growth and

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<sup>281</sup> *Maihime* 25-26.

subjectification into a potential marriage partner and facilitator for male success but also by the foregrounding of her sexuality through her illicit pregnancy.

Elis's subjective growth and her sexualization in combination produce a threatening quality, which not only surfaces as the heroine's desire to "bind" her lover by the power of her "love" but also, more fundamentally, in her "madwoman" (*kyôjo*) allure that closely links her to the female protagonist Marie in *Utakata no ki*. Although Elis's madness is presented in the text as a result of the shock that she experiences upon learning about Toyotarô's decision to leave her, it could also be asked if it is not already prefigured by the distinctive voice in her letters and her obsessive and threatening desire to "bind" her lover by marriage and by her love.<sup>282</sup> I would ask, moreover, if madness in *Maihime*, in the same fashion as in *Utakata no ki*, could be seen as a chiffre that ambiguously superimposes both a male desire for heroic (and political) empowerment and sexual desire, in a fashion that is necessarily bound to result in failure. The memoir of *Maihime* closes with the eruption of Elis's madness, thus marking the end of Toyotarô's intimacy with her and the ultimate preclusion of his heroic advancement.<sup>283</sup> It is also as a consequence of Toyotarô's double incapacitation, which is both erotic and heroic (or political), that the artwork emerges in *Maihime* as the literary first-person memoir written by Toyotarô. This memoir not only transforms Toyotarô into a

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<sup>282</sup> Tomi Suzuki argues that despite the fact that Elis's language, both spoken and written, is seemingly mediated and "translated" by the opaque and linguistically idiosyncratic medium of Toyotarô's first-person male memoir, it still constitutes a distinctive and powerful voice that cannot be entirely elided. Suzuki also asks if Elis's subjective speech couldn't be seen as constitutive of the linguistic medium of Toyotarô's memoir (see in particular Suzuki's discussion of the peculiar exclamation "ina" or "no!", which recurs both in Elis's and in Toyotarô's writing). See Suzuki 2013, section 2.

<sup>283</sup> I think that Toyotarô's return to Japan and resumption of his career, which was interrupted by his relationship with Elis, is in fact radically opposed to heroism. I in this respect also agree with Tomiko Yoda who argues that Toyotarô's decision to break up with Elis and to return to Japan does not constitute a reaffirmation of his earlier desire for social advancement and success as a politician. Yoda sees in Toyotarô's realignment with his friend Aizawa and count Amakata his ultimate subjection as a "citizen-subject," which precludes his class-bound and pre-national "aspiration to bring honor to himself and his family." This aspiration, according to Yoda, initially motivated Toyotarô's desire for social advancement. Yoda writes: "Toyotarô's regaining of elite Japanese masculine status, therefore, comes at the cost of submission to the authority that is in some ways more rigorous than before. It is precisely his recognition of human freedom and autonomy [through his love relationship with Elis] that drives him into a deeply internalized mode of subjection." (Yoda 2006, 299).

literary writer, but also produces a “vision” of Elis as an absent lover figure. Moreover, Toyotarô’s writing self-referentially reflects the process of his own debilitation, which ultimately leads to the memoir’s production.

Two important attributes shape the production of the *Maihime* memoir: first, its self-awareness as a new and unprecedented kind of textuality that differentiates itself from previous genres of writing; and second, the emotionality of “resentment” (*urami*) on which the emergence of this new kind of textuality is predicated. *Maihime*’s narrator in fact explains his literary project in the following way:

Ah! Since we left the port of Brindisi, twenty days have already passed. Normally I would have – as everyone does on such sea journeys – befriended even strangers in order to while away the boredom of the trip, but that, feigning a slight indisposition, I spent my days in my cabin and barely talked to my fellow passengers was because a resentment [*urami*] known to nobody was torturing my brain. At the beginning this resentment merely scratched my heart like a cloud, preventing me from seeing the mountains of Switzerland and distracting my heart from the ruins of Italy. Later it made me despise the world, convinced me of the futility of my existence and gave me a pain as if my entrails were turned around every day. Now, it has hardened like a clot at the bottom of my heart and become merely a shadow, but every time I read a book or watch something, look at my mirror image or listen to the echo of my voice, a boundless longing for the past [*kagiri naki kaikyû no jô*] always makes my heart suffer. Ah! Is there a way to eliminate this resentment? If it were a different kind of resentment I could compose a Chinese-style verse [*shi*] or a Japanese poem [*uta*] and my heart would certainly feel lighter. But this [resentment] is so deeply engraved in my heart that [composing poetry] would be to no avail. However, since tonight nobody is around and there is still some time left until the boy comes to turn on the electric light, let me try to produce an outline of it [*sono gairyaku*] in this piece of writing [*fumi*].<sup>284</sup>

The first-person narrator here defines the textuality of his memoir, rather generically, as “writing” (*fumi* 文) and differentiates it from other genres – such as Chinese or Japanese-style poetry and, in an earlier passage, diary (*niki* [sic!]) and travel writing (*kikôbun*) – which aren’t appropriate to convey the “resentment” from which he is suffering. While the textual genre of this “writing” remains unspecified, it is however defined by its ability to mediate the narrator’s “resentment.” I would argue that “writing” here emerges as genuinely literary or

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<sup>284</sup> *Maihime* 4.

artistic writing, i.e. the only kind of textuality that suitably mediates the “resentment,” which is produced by Toyotarô’s double debilitation or frustration, heroic and erotic.<sup>285</sup> In a similar fashion, the production of the artwork in *Fûryûbutsu*, which as a nude female body was incommensurable to any kind of previous artistic practice, was equally predicated on a double frustration: the artist Shuun’s inability to rise socially by becoming Otatsu’s husband and his erotic frustration induced by his lover’s disappearance. I would argue that it is in this double frustration – which produces “resentment” – that the significance of the *Karyû shunwa* intertextuality in the writings examined so far (*Fûryûbutsu*, *Utakata no ki* and *Maihime*) lies. All three texts present female protagonists who undergo a significant transformation: from the intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*’s Alice (as object for sexual desire and love) to an educated and potentially, if not truly, high-ranking heroine as the potential facilitator for social advancement and also political or heroic activity (akin to *Karyû shunwa*’s Florence Lascelles). While the merger or superimposition of both female personas or representational spheres (love and heroic activity) is dramatized as an impossibility on the real level of the story and leads to the disappearance, incapacitation or death of the heroine, it also produces the artwork or literary text as the substitutive “vision” of this double-faced heroine that continues the negotiation of this merger and also carries “resentment” as the energy of frustrated but nonetheless still virulent erotic and heroic (political) desire. In such a fashion the new medium of art in Ôgai’s and Rohan’s writings in complex ways extends Tsubouchi Shôyô’s sexualization of the political novel and his aporetic synthesis of the

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<sup>285</sup> Christopher Hill who discusses *Maihime* – after Jameson 1986 – as a narrative of “national allegory” describes Toyotarô’s “resentment” as a “symptom” of the trauma of his national subjectification, which is predicated on the loss of Elis as a lover and the end of Toyotarô’s cosmopolitan (and inherently non-national) lifestyle in Berlin. Hill thus argues that “resentment emerges as a constitutive characteristic of the national subject: not a secondary malady but, rather, what makes the formation of such a subject possible.” (Hill 2002, 366; see also p. 384). While I do not fundamentally disagree with Hill’s reading or with Tomika Yoda’s similar emphasis on Toyotarô’s “subjection” as a “citizen-subject,” I would think that the artwork as the mediator of erotic and heroic impulses also constitutes a site that continually resists complete subjection or national subjectification. The artwork ambiguously mediates both the experience of frustration and disempowerment (or subjection/subjectification) and the persistence of the contradictory impulses or desires that led to that frustration.



heroic and erotic spheres. Tayama Katai's writings in the last decade of the Meiji period, which I examine in the following section, equally appropriate but also radically reverse the intertextuality of *Karyû shunwa* and the political novel tradition.

## 2. Nature, Sexual Desire and Spiritual Advancement in Tayama Katai's Literary Production of the 1900s

### 2.1. "Visionary" Nature, Spirituality and Sexual Desire in *Jokyôshi*

This section investigates Tayama Katai's writings in the 1900s – especially his stories *Jokyôshi* (1903) and *Futon* (1907) – which extend the intertextuality of the *Karyû shunwa* plot into the last Meiji decade with a degree of intertextual awareness that even surpasses Rohan's and Ôgai's stories. By sexualizing the Christian (and civilizational) ideal of spirituality or chaste spiritual love, Katai's texts moreover point to Shôyô's project of literary reform while – especially in the case of *Futon* – also radically rewriting it and thus reconfiguring its meaning and significance. In *Jokyôshi*, which is written in the format of a first-person letter to an unnamed friend, the narrator and "literary writer" (*bungakusha*) Hirose – like the author-protagonist Takenaka Tokio later in *Futon* (1907) – is married to a woman who, although not entirely illiterate, doesn't have a "taste for literature" (*bungaku no shumi*). All of Hirose's attempts to teach "literature" to his wife fail. This leaves him with the desire for a different woman who, "even if not reading the clean copies of my manuscripts, would at least be able to enjoy novels, to compose the colorful *waka* poetry of the New School and to give her husband consolation for his sufferings [related to artistic creation]."<sup>286</sup> It is important to note, however, that the writer Hirose, in the same fashion as Misawa Tatsuzô in *Imo to se kagami*, originally married his wife out of "love" (he both uses the words *koi* and *ai*). Hirose writes:

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<sup>286</sup> Tayama Katai, *Jokyôshi*, 470.

Of course, when I was very much in love with her [i.e. my later wife; *kanojo o koi suru ni atatte*], I didn't examine in detail whether she had a taste for literature or not or whether she was a woman with a modern education [*tôseiteki saigaku*]. And although, once I had married her, there was nothing to do about the fact that she didn't have such a taste, I felt extremely desperate once I discovered that this was the case.<sup>287</sup>

Hirose is thus married to another intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*'s Alice who is the object of a "love" that transcends the desire for social or civilizational advancement as epitomized by a "modern education" or "literature." His wife's lack in "literary taste" and Hirose's subsequent failure to teach her this "taste" and to contribute to her subjective growth, however, soon lead to a cooling of his affection and to "desperation" (*shitsubô*). Hirose also conspicuously labels this "desperation" a "loathing of the world" (*ensei*).

In his famous essay "Ensei shika to josei" (The Disillusioned Poet and Women, 1892) Kitamura Tôkoku defined the poet's "loathing of the world" as a result of the fact that, through marriage, the "rules" (*kisoku*), "rituals" (*gishiki*) and "duties" (*gimu*) of the "real world" (*jissekai*) assail the "ideal world" (*sôsekai*) of love and thus transform the poet into a "slave of the real world." While Hirose's "world loathing" could indeed be seen in connection to his family "duties" – his "duties" as a father and husband etc. that tie him to a banal and non-idealistic "real world" – I would think that the emotionality of *ensei* also refers to the sexuality inherent in marriage, which precludes the ideality of a chaste love and also, as an extension, the ideality of political and social advancement (which in the political novel tradition was predicated on chaste love).<sup>288</sup> In *Jokyôshi* the ideal of chastity, social advancement and also political activity is never explicitly discussed but it is inscribed into the narrator's practice of "literature" that stands in stark opposition to his marriage predicated merely on sexualized and therefore non-heroic and non-social "love." In an earlier text by

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<sup>287</sup> Ibid. 469-470.

<sup>288</sup> While Tôkoku doesn't render this aspect explicit it is clear that marriage as the institution, which sanctions sexual relations among the married partners, destroys the ideality of pre-marriage love, which necessarily remains chaste. See also my discussion of *Ensei shika to josei* in the previous chapter.

Tayama Katai, the first-person narrative “Shôshijin” (“A Minor Poet,” 1893), “literature” or “poetry” are in fact defined by their chaste spirituality. Katai’s narrator writes:

I started to think that nobody is more pitiable than a poet who has obligations to the world [*yo ni keirui aru shijin*]. A poet is at least somebody who sings the beauty of the universe [*uchû no bi*] and who has the responsibility of being a comforter to society [*shakai no ishaha taru no sekinin*].<sup>289</sup>

The “obligations to the world” that prevent a “poet” from assuming his responsibilities as a “comforter of society” refer to the existence of a wife and family and, on a more fundamental level, also to the consummation of sexual desire. Only through his chastity is the poet able to fulfill the greater ethical and civilizational duties that are associated with literary writing. It is noteworthy that literary writing is here defined as a medium with a social significance, which extends, within the context of the decade of the 1890s, the political and civilizational ethos in previous political novels.<sup>290</sup>

In *Jokyôshi* the ethical and civilizational ideal associated with literature is projected onto the idea of a chaste and purely spiritual friendship with an educated poetess – the eponymous “female teacher” Watanabe Kuniko – who seems predestined to liberate the male poet from his “obligations to the world” and to help him fulfill his greater responsibilities toward society. *Jokyôshi* here replicates the plot of *Karyû shunwa* insofar as the protagonist-narrator Hirose leaves behind his wife – the intertextual double of Alice – in order to associate himself with a more educated woman who could potentially facilitate his advancement as a writer and as a “comforter of society.”<sup>291</sup> At the same time, however,

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<sup>289</sup> Tayama Katai, *Shôshijin* 146.

<sup>290</sup> See Indra Levy’s discussion of the significance of Christian discourses of spirituality and romantic love for Katai’s early oeuvre (see in particular Levy 2006, chapter 4). It was also Levy’s analysis that initially directed my attention to Katai’s narratives *Shôshijin* and *Jokyôshi*.

<sup>291</sup> It is true that Maltravers is not married to Alice when he leaves her and also doesn’t feel discontent with her as Hirose with his wife, but the fact that Maltravers subsequently associates with high-ranking, educated and chaste women undoubtedly facilitates his career as a literary writer and politician. I would think that, despite the obvious dissimilarities between *Karyû shunwa* and *Jokyôshi*, both texts belong to the same intertextual lineage. Hirose’s “loneliness” with or vis-à-vis his wife – the text uses the words *sabishii* or *ronri* (“lonely”) – intertextually refers back to Gerhard Hauptmann’s (1862-1946) drama *Lonely People* (*Einsame Menschen*,

Katai's text also ironically deconstructs the ideality of literature and male-female spiritual friendship by unequivocally pointing to the dimension of sexual desire in the relationship between the male writer and the female schoolteacher.<sup>292</sup> While both protagonists in their interactions pretend to act according to the ideal of a chaste friendship, in their thoughts they are well aware of their erotic desire and adulterous sentiments.<sup>293</sup> In such a fashion, Katai's *Jokyôshi* again extends and restages Shôyô's problematic negotiation between the spheres of chaste (or heroic) spirituality and erotic desire.

Katai's *Jokyôshi* is also interesting by the way in which it projects this problematic negotiation on the theme of nature and landscape. The author-protagonist's (Hirose's) encounter with the literate woman Kuniko occurs in a countryside setting, more precisely in a village in the Iruma-district (on the Musashino plain) where the poet has moved in order to pursue his literary activity in a context that is divorced from the bustle of the metropolis Tôkyô. The narration of *Jokyôshi* only provides very scarce information about the specific content of Hirose's literary writing but one of the genres that he produces or at least shows a strong interest in consists in nature "sketches."<sup>294</sup> Even before he encounters Kuniko, Hirose is intrigued by the landscape of the Iruma countryside, which later provides the background for the emotional entanglements narrated in Katai's story. From a young man – a poet and

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1891), which describes a male intellectual's alienation from his uneducated wife and his attraction (both sexual and intellectual) to an educated and emancipated female student. However, Hirose – as later the protagonist Tokio in *Futon* – also uses the word *ensei* ("word-loathing") to characterize his dissatisfaction with his marriage, a word that unambiguously evokes Tôkoku's famous essay "Ensei shika to josei." For a discussion of how Tôkoku's arguments about the poet's "word-loathing" can be connected back to *Karyû shunwa* and the political novel tradition in Japan see my discussion in the previous chapter.

<sup>292</sup> It should be noted that the narrator also uses the word *ren'ai* ("love") to denote a strong amorous feeling that includes sexual desire. See for instance *Jokyôshi* 521.

<sup>293</sup> In his diary Hirose openly admits his desire for Kuniko while the latter confesses her desire in a retrospective letter addressed to Hirose (see *ibid.* 512 and 527).

<sup>294</sup> We also learn that Hirose is a successful *kanshi* poet and he soon gets involved with local *kanshi* circles in the Iruma district after his arrival from Tôkyô. For the significance of *kanshi* poetry in connection to landscape and "human feeling" see in particular my following chapter. Hirose is also writing a novel entitled "The Suffering of Death" (*Shi no kutsû*). See *ibid.* 511.

pupil who is the son of a rich local landowner (*gônô*) – Hirose learns about the elementary school where Kuniko (the object of his subsequent desire) teaches, but the school first merely appears as a small spot in the larger landscape and it is separated from the landowner’s house by a large lake. When Hirose learns that his young pupil himself was formerly a student at the elementary school and had to board a ship to go to school every morning, he starts the following conversation with his pupil:

[Hirose:] “So, every day you had to cross [the lake to go to school]?”

[Young man:] “Yes.”

[Hirose:] “This sounds quite poetic [*shishu ga arimasu nâ*].”

[Young man:] “Yeah, it was quite fun [*omoshirokatta desu*]! At that time one boat was specially reserved to ferry over all the children of the village, and at 8 o’clock in the morning all the pupils came together at the pier that you can still see today. We were waiting there and playing all kinds of pranks! Just in the same way as students in Tôkyô would be pushing each other at the school gate before it opens. Then, at 8:30 the boatman blew a shell, which sounded like a gong and everybody, including the latecomers, jumped onto the boat. Yeah, this was quite fun! And the boatman was quite a funny [*omoshiroi*] old man too, always bragging in front of us about the time when he was a sea captain. We truly believed him and always urged him to tell us his stories when we saw his face.”

[Hirose:] “This is quite poetic [*nakanaka shiteki desu ne*]. You could make a short piece of writing [*shôhinbun*] out of this!”<sup>295</sup>

The type of “poetic” writing that Hirose here refers to – the genre of *shôhin* (“short pieces”) – is similar to the “sketches,” which were en vogue in Japan at the turn of the century until the 1910s and often represented seemingly insignificant but “funny” or “interesting” (*omoshiroi*) human events within a larger natural landscape setting.<sup>296</sup> At the same time, the landscape in *Jokyôshi* also obliquely and metonymically points to and contains the female figure Kuniko who becomes the object for Hirose’s spiritual desire for advancement but also erotic desire. That Kuniko is in fact strongly associated with the lake becomes clear in a later scene where the narrator observes how she boards the boat, rowed by the same old boatman, together with the schoolchildren and traverses the lake in direction of Hirose’s house from

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<sup>295</sup> *Jokyôshi* 480-481.

<sup>296</sup> See Fink-von Hoff 2006 for a comprehensive study of the *shôhin* genre around 1910. See also my more detailed discussion in the following chapter of this dissertation.

where the latter overlooks the scene. This scene also underlines the significance of the natural landscape – here in particular the lake water – as a medium of “vision”:

[Kuniko’s] grayish umbrella was glittering in the light of the sun that had already started to sink, and as she was approaching this side of the lake, her figure [*sono kage*] was particularly bright and mirrored upside-down by the clear surface of the lake’s water. I was enraptured in my heart by this vision [*sono omokage*] that was reflected [by the lake water] together with the forms of the white clouds and the birds.<sup>297</sup>

The lake water and its surface here function as an almost proto-cinematic medium that contains and reflects Kuniko as a “vision.” I would think that its “poetic” quality is in its ability to contain and mediate Hirose’s desire, i.e. to realize a “visionary” mediation of human affairs and in particular of Kuniko’s apparition.

The “visionary” medium of the natural landscape as well as the “poetic” medium of literature in ambiguous fashion both relate to chaste spirituality and erotic desire. In another scene of *Jokyōshi*, Hirose pays visit to Kuniko’s lodging during a beautifully moonlit night and, after a conversation about the spirituality and “mystery” (*shinpi*) of “love” (*koi*) in her room, the two protagonists leave the house to walk through the moonlit night, which since Ōgai’s *Omokage* is the medium par excellence for romantic “visions.”<sup>298</sup> The first-person narrator (Hirose in retrospective) writes:

As we left the narrow path between the whitewashed warehouses, our shoulders barely touching each other, the moonlight was beautifully seeping through the leaves of the zelkova trees and, between the trees, the fields were stretching out widely,

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<sup>297</sup> *Jokyōshi* 510.

<sup>298</sup> The term “mystery” (*shinpi*) is a key term in Yosano Akiko’s (1878-1942) early love poetry, especially as contained in her collection *Midaregami* (*Tangled Hair*, 1901), which Hirose and Kuniko frequently recite together. I would also like to draw attention to the complexity of the lighting in this scene. While Hirose and Kuniko’s conversation on the “mystery” of love takes place indoors under electric lamplight, the broader scene is enveloped by the natural light of the full moon outside, which later mediates the protagonists’ “visionary” communication. It should also be noted that *Futon* contains a similar scene of intimate literary reading under electric lamplight, which the protagonist Tokio reminisces at the beginning of the narration (cf. chapter 1, Tayama Katai, *Futon* 29). A major difference to *Jokyōshi* in the *Futon* scene, however, is the preponderance of unambiguously erotic references (such as “the scent of perfume, the scent of flesh, the scent of woman”), which radically reduces the dimension of “literary” spirituality in the scene. This reduction of ambiguity in the *Futon* scene toward an unambiguous predominance of sexual desire over spiritual impulses is also paralleled by the absence of the romantic or “visionary” medium of landscape as well as of the full moon light in the text of *Futon*. See my section 2.3 in this chapter for the broader implications of this dynamic in Katai’s *Futon*.

enveloped in thin mist, like in a dream. My breast was jumping, my brain was lucid and I felt a truly indescribable excitement (*kyō*).<sup>299</sup>

While Hirose's "excitement" in this scene appears to point to his erotic desire for Kuniko, it also occurs after his experiencing how "deeply" (*fukaku*) their "souls" (*reikon*) had touched each other in their previous conversation about "love." In this sense, the moonlit landscape provides both partners with the medium to experience each other immaterially or spiritually as "souls" that are made visible by the eerie and "visionary" light of the moon. Landscape, while undoubtedly eroticized, thus nonetheless also remains tied to a discourse of spirituality and chastity, which is underlined by its specifically "visionary" or spiritual mediality that contains sexual desire but always also preserves a distance and never allows for the unmediated consummation of desire. In *Jokyōshi* landscape – like poetry and literature – is thus also conspicuously differentiated from "nature" (*shizen*), a term that Hirose exclusively uses to characterize his wife and her sexualized and nonetheless valuable being.<sup>300</sup> At the same time, the narrative of *Jokyōshi* also dramatizes the extent to which landscape and "nature" are ambiguously connected through the idea of sexual desire.

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<sup>299</sup> *Jokyōshi* 500.

<sup>300</sup> For the characterization of Hirose's unnamed wife in terms of "nature" (*shizen*) see for example *ibid.* 466-467: "My wife until the end unconsciously [*muishiki ni*] possessed this great spirit that resembled nature [*shizen ni nita yō na ōkina seishin o motte ita*]." See also *ibid.* 470 for the "natural character" (*shizen-rashii seishitsu*) of Hirose's wife that is opposed to any kind of "artifice" (*jinkōteki no mono*). It is noteworthy that "nature" as one of the core concepts of naturalism is here appropriated to characterize the sexualized and nonetheless valuable being of Hirose's wife who is an intertextual extension of *Karyū shunwa*'s Alice. See also *ibid.* 497-8 for Hirose's conceptual differentiation of his former sexual infatuation with his wife from the more spiritual feelings that he has developed for Kuniko: "Although with my first love [*saisho no koi*] I probably also had sufficiently deep feelings [*boku ha jūbun no mune o hiraita ni sōi-nai no de aru ga*], there is no comparison [with this new relationship]. When I first loved, I only, obsessively and blindly, sought to firmly get into my possession what I desired [*etai to omotta mono o ichizu ni tsukamitai to bakari omotte ita*]. But now [owing to my feelings for Kuniko], a calm, serene and quiet pathos insistently wells up in my breast and it is as if tears from the sincere bottom of my heart were rushing forth when I sit alone calmly."

## 2.2. Landscape, Spiritual Advancement and Sexual Desire: The Polyvalence of “Nature” in *Jûemon no saigo*

Another text by Tayama Katai, *Jûemon no saigo*, published one year before *Jokyôshi* in 1902, further complicates the polyvalence of “nature” (*shizen*) by not only connecting it to landscape description and to the theme of sexual desire but also by associating the concept with a more explicitly political subtext that points back to both the earlier Meiji-period *seiji shôsetsu* tradition and to Shôyô’s rewriting of it. The narrative’s main protagonist is the eponymous Fujita Jûemon who, because of a biological deformation – his unnaturally large scrotum – is ostracized by the community of his village (called Shioyama) in the mountains of Shinshû (Nagano). As a consequence he takes revenge on the villagers by burning down their houses in terrorist fashion. Jûemon, moreover, is associated with intense sexual appetite and labeled a “child of nature” (*shizenji*) by Katai’s first-person narrator who expresses sympathy for the unruly protagonist and his sad “end” (Jûemon is finally massacred by the village inhabitants). He also muses how 6000 years of human history, customs and civilization have led to a deplorable domestication of “nature.”<sup>301</sup> The narrator thus sees “nature,” which he associates with “desire” (*yoku*) and “sexual potency” (*seinô*), as uncivilized but nonetheless as positive. What is striking in Katai’s narrative is that Jûemon’s acts of terrorism, induced by his abnormally increased sexuality and “nature,” also implicitly carry a political significance or energy that gestures back to the allegorical acts of sexual unruliness of Tsubouchi Shôyô’s protagonist Nakatsu Kunihiko in *Kyô waranbe*. Like in *Kyô waranbe* where Kunihiko’s sexual desire allegorically substitutes the violent transgressions of Liberal Party (Jiyûtô) activism, in *Jûemon no saigo* sexual appetite is intrinsically linked to terroristic acts that are ultimately doomed to failure.

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<sup>301</sup> See for a discussion of Jûemon’s sexualized “nature” within the context of the reception of Zolaist naturalism in Japan in the 1900s Suzuki 1996, 79-83.



The implicitly political dimension of Jûemon's acts is also inscribed into another valence of "nature" (*shizen*) in Katai's narrative, which is the sublime mountain landscape where the village of Jûemon and of his murderers is situated. Unlike *Jokyôshi* where "landscape" (*fûkei*) was differentiated from "nature" (which was predominantly associated with Hirose's wife and the sexualized quality of their relationship), in *Jûemon no saigo* "nature" and "landscape" are intrinsically interlocked, through the expression "landscape of nature" (*shizen no fûkei*) for instance.<sup>302</sup> What is significant here is that this "landscape of nature" not only produces Jûemon's sexualized and terroristic "nature" but also another group of protagonists who are – similarly to Jûemon – associated with "discontent" (*ikidôri*) but, instead of turning to terrorism, challenge the village community by leaving it and seeking advancement in the capital Tôkyô (or previously Edo). It is in fact with the description of this group of young men that the narrative of *Jûemon no saigo* starts as the narrator initially feels drawn to them in a Tôkyô school where they all study English and classical Chinese together. The friendship between the narrator and the young "discontented" men from Nagano, more precisely, also relies on their common delight in *kanshi* (classical Chinese-style) poetry, which they compose and recite together and which also serves as the privileged medium of expression for the youths' "heroic effort" (*funpatsu*) and for their "high-flying ambition" (*seiun no kokorozashi*) to achieve "advancement in the world" (*risshin shusse*). *Kanshi* poetry and "high-flying ambition," moreover, are also intrinsically connected to the mountain "landscape" (*fûkei*) of Nagano whose "sublimity" (*sô*) and "beauty" (*bi*) inspires the narrator with classical Chinese verse and also, indirectly, nurtures and encourages the youths' "heroic effort" in achieving advancement and success.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> See Tayama Katai, *Jûemon no saigo* 64.

<sup>303</sup> *Funpatsu* ("heroic effort") is a highly recurrent keyword in the narrative of *Jûemon no saigo* and refers to the youth's decision to "vent their discontent" (*ikidôri o hasshite*, *ibid.* 101) by seeking social advancement and success in the capital far from their home village. See for the "beautiful nature" (*utsukushii shizen*) of the

Jûemon's excessive sexuality and terrorism on the one hand and the village youths' chaste "high-flying ambition" and love for *kanshi* poetry on the other hand are in fact deeply connected and constitute two sides of the same coin, as it were. This is also underlined by the statement that "Shioyama village since old times often produced odd characters [*kawarimono*]" – a category that subsumes both Jûemon and the discontented and ambitious youths.<sup>304</sup> While Jûemon's "nature" is excessively carnal, aggressive and destructive, the youths' "ambition" is spiritual and chaste but both groups of "odd characters" are metonymically related to the sublime "landscape of nature" of the Nagano mountains as their breeding ground. I would argue that Katai's *Jûemon no saigo* thus carries political subtexts that reactivate and link back to different (or even contradictory) literary alternatives in the *seiji shôsetsu* tradition: for instance, Shôyô's sexualization of the politically subversive and terroristic act in *Kyô waranbe* but also the spiritual ambition and desire for political reform predicated on chastity that is characteristic of the protagonist of Suehiro Tetchô's *Setchûbai*. It goes without saying that the ambitious youths in *Jûemon no saigo* are not political activists but rather seek success through business and monetary ventures, but I nonetheless think that their chaste "ambition" for advancement could – in the same way as Jûemon's sexually motivated burning of houses – be read as a reference to (or extension of) the political energies that produced political fiction in the 1880s in Japan. At the same time, the political subtexts of *Jûemon no saigo* also shed light on the political energies inherent in the narration of *Jokyôshi*. Both Hirose's spiritual love and sexual desire for Kuniko in *Jokyôshi* possess a socially subversive potential that implicitly points to a political energy underlying the narration. While an adulterous sexual relationship with Kuniko would be an unethical

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Nagano mountains that the narrator evokes in a highly ornate style akin to *kanshibun* diction *ibid.* 76. For a study of the ideology of *risshin shusse* in the Meiji period see Kinmonth 1981.

<sup>304</sup> This statement comes from an old man who lives in a neighboring village. The man also explains that the "odd characters" from Shioyama sometimes "amass fortunes" (*shindai o koshiraeru*) because of their success in the world but also sometimes are "failed people" (*komatta ningen*) like Jûemon. See *Jûemon no saigo* 67.

transgression akin to Jûemon's criminal acts and an unambiguous offense to societal norms, even the spirituality of chaste love or friendship – as an intimate encounter of “souls” – constitutes a challenge that defies general expectations about gender relations and arouses suspicion in the village and among Kuniko's colleagues.<sup>305</sup> That Hirose and Kuniko ultimately opt neither for a sexual relationship nor for a chaste friendship but for the weak (but nonetheless moral) solution of a complete breakup, however, also shows that in *Jokyôshi* – contrary to *Jûemon no saigo* – the politically subversive potential remains largely unrealized and frustrated. I argue that Katai's later narrative *Futon* (1907) more ineluctably dramatizes the disempowerment of potentially subversive political impulses through an unprecedentedly radical inversion of signifiers of the political novel.

### **2.3. Spirituality as Discourse and Camouflage: The Inversion of Shôyô's Inversion of the Political Novel in *Futon***

In *Jokyôshi*, nature as landscape is a “visionary” medium that ambiguously points both to spirituality – chaste love or friendship – and sexual desire and it is thus similar to the artwork, which was simultaneously an eroticized and heroic hallucination in Mori Ôgai's and Kôda Rohan's writings. However, in *Futon*, published four years after *Jokyôshi*, landscape almost entirely disappears as a narrative content, thus leading to a naturalistic reduction of the term “nature” (*shizen*) to the meaning of sexual desire.<sup>306</sup> This reduction coincides with the radical transformation of the structure of desire in *Futon*, especially in comparison with *Jokyôshi* but also with Ôgai's and Rohan's texts. In *Jokyôshi* the desire for spiritual advancement, as epitomized by the desire for an educated woman who could understand

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<sup>305</sup> See *Jokyôshi* 514-517.

<sup>306</sup> The term “nature” (*shizen*) frequently recurs in *Futon*, for instance in the expression “the irresistible force at the ground of [human] nature” (*shizen no soko ni wadakamareru teikô subekarazaru chikara*, *Futon* 146). See also Suzuki 1996, 83-84, for a discussion of the terms *yokubô* (“desire”), *seiyoku* (“sexual desire”) or *seishoku no chikara* (“reproductive power”) in *Futon*, which underline the impact of contemporary Naturalist discourse on Katai's writing.

“literature” (*bungaku*), was still a fundamental driving force for the protagonist’s interest in the female teacher Kuniko. Sexual desire undermines this ideal of spiritual advancement only retroactively. In *Futon*, however, the ideality of spiritual advancement is profoundly perverted which is all the more obvious because the initial plot structure in *Futon* is identical to the one of *Jokyôshi*. Like in *Jokyôshi*, the protagonist of *Futon*, the literary writer Takenaka Tokio, is married to an uneducated (or, in the language of *Futon*, an “old-fashioned”) woman for whom he initially felt “love” (*koi*), both spiritual and sexual. This “love,” however, has cooled and transformed into ennui and discontent.<sup>307</sup> *Futon*, through its protagonist’s “love” for an intertextual double of *Karyû shunwa*’s Alice (i.e. an uneducated woman), points to the plot pattern of Shôyô’s *Imo to se kagami*. However, *Futon* also differs from Shôyô’s novel – as well as from *Jokyôshi* and the texts examined earlier in this chapter – insofar as Tokio’s discontent with his uneducated wife does not lead to a desire for spiritual advancement or heroic activity. Instead Tokio’s discontent with his wife only flatly fans his desire for a “new love” (*atarashii koi*), which is the desire to replace his “old-fashioned” wife with a younger and more fashionable modern-day woman. This woman soon appears under the guise of his young pupil Yoshiko.<sup>308</sup> Katai’s narrator writes:

At least [Yoshiko’s arrival] had brought Tokio’s lonely life to an end. His former lover [*koibito*] was now his wife. But although there was no doubt that he had formerly loved his wife, the times now had changed. With the rise of women’s education in the last four or five years, the establishment of women’s universities, and the new fashion of *hisashigami* and *ebichabakama*, girls ashamed at walking the street together with a man had now completely disappeared. In a world like this, it had become unbearable for Tokio to content himself with a wife who wore an old-fashioned *marumage*, walked like a goose and had nothing else to offer besides obedience and faithfulness. Seeing those young men on the street walking in harmony together with a beautiful and stylish [*imayô no*] wife or thinking of those young wives who were able to fluently converse in English when paying visit to a friend together with their husband, and comparing those cases with his own wife who not only didn’t read the novels he had written under much pain but who was also indifferent to this

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<sup>307</sup> See *Futon* 146-147 for Tokio’s reminiscing of the intensity of his former “love” for his wife.

<sup>308</sup> See *ibid.* 127-128, where the narrator states that Tokio, whenever he sees a “young and beautiful woman” on the street, is filled with the desire for a “new love” (*atarashii koi*).

pain and didn't have any other desire than to raise her children, Tokio couldn't but lament his loneliness. Like Johannes in *Lonely People* he couldn't but feel the meaninglessness of a housewife. This loneliness had now found an end through Yoshiko. Who wouldn't feel excited to be called "Sensei! Sensei!" by a fashionable, modern-day and beautiful female student [*haikara na shinshiki na utsukushii onna-monkasei*] who looked up to one like to some distinguished person in the world.<sup>309</sup>

Tokio's longing for a "modern-day" woman certainly gestures to a desire for spiritual and civilizational advancement, which is allegorized by the desire for a woman with a new education able to understand "literature" (*bungaku*). At the same time, however, Tokio's spiritual and civilizational ideals also undergo a radical flattening in *Futon* and turn into vaguely eroticized signifiers of fashion. That Tokio's longing is only seemingly spiritual but in truth directed toward external eroticized attributes such as female beauty and stylishness, which would also include a wife's "Westernesque" ability to converse in English, perhaps comes to the fore most conspicuously in his musing that women interested in literature cannot be attractive. Tokio also significantly concludes that, even if talented, an "unattractive" (*fukiryô*) woman would never interest him.<sup>310</sup> The external attributes of modern-day stylishness and beauty are emptied or flattened signifiers for civilizational ideals, including romantic love, which Yoshiko wears rather than embodies. These signifiers are also intrinsically connected to the production of sexual desire, which ceases to be directed toward Tokio's "old-fashioned" (*kyûshiki*) and therefore "unattractive" and deeroticized wife.

The flattening of spiritual ideals in *Futon*'s male protagonist, however, does not lead to a demise of spirituality as such, which still fulfills an important function in the text. I would argue that the function of spirituality in *Futon* is primarily discursive. As a discourse, which is constantly mouthed and reiterated by Tokio and Yoshiko, spiritual and literary ideals (for instance the ideal of chastity) possess a powerful agency in the narrative. Instead

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid. 131. I also consulted the translation by Kenneth Henshall (Henshall 1981).

<sup>310</sup> See *Futon* 129. "Westernesque" is the term coined by Indra Levy (in Levy 2006) to characterize the exotic and eroticized allure of Japanese literary heroines like Yoshiko in *Futon* (or Osei in Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo*, written in 1887-89) who evoke the civilizational and cultural high status and appeal of Western letters and translation.

of constituting positive or covetable objectives in themselves, however, these ideals rather negatively serve as an impeding or obstructing force that repeatedly interferes with and defers the fulfillment of sexual desire (at least for Tokio). It is true that particularly Tokio thus appears to be a protagonist who is torn between his chaste spiritual ideals and his mostly unacknowledged “dark” and “ugly” carnal instincts.<sup>311</sup> While I don’t entirely disagree with such a reading, I would like to emphasize the oppressive dimension of the spiritual and literary discourse in *Futon*, which most clearly comes to the fore after Yoshiko confesses to have a lover. Initially Tokio’s spiritual discourse (in particular in the chapters 2 and 3 of *Futon*, which are retrospective) mostly functions as an instance of ethical self-censorship that prevents him from fulfilling his erotic desire for Yoshiko. After she starts having a relationship with her young lover Tanaka, however, Tokio’s discourse of spirituality turns into a medium of oppression through which he seeks to prevent the young lovers from sexually consummating their relationship. In such a fashion, Tokio also transforms into an educational “custodian” or “controller” (*kantokusha*) whose motives, while discursively justified by the idealistic need to promote female “freedom” (*jiyū*), which is allegedly predicated on chastity, and to protect Yoshiko’s “sacred spiritual love” (*shinsei naru rei no koi*), in truth point back to “jealousy” (*shitto*) and frustrated sexual desire. At the same time, however, Yoshiko has also internalized Tokio’s spiritual discourse and she strategically repeats it in order to keep seeing Tanaka and engaging in sexual intercourse with him. For Yoshiko, spiritual discursivity thus turns into a medium of strategic camouflage. In this perspective, Tokio is not merely the “custodian” but he ironically also turns into the

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<sup>311</sup> Tomi Suzuki also argues that this conflict in *Futon*’s male protagonist leads to a deconstruction of romantic love as a spiritual ideal. She writes: “Tokio’s desire takes shape under the perception that such desire is ugly and improper and should be concealed and suppressed. Indeed, this almost exaggerated emphasis on base and ugly carnal desire sharply separates *Futon* from earlier Meiji literary works [such as Katai’s own *Jokyōshi*], which, although dramatizing the incompatibility of love and marriage, do not deny the ideal of romantic love itself so much as reinforce the longing for this ideal as something unattainable in Japanese society. By contrast, *Futon*’s discourse of Tokio’s hidden, carnal desire not only dramatizes the fundamental discrepancy between his literary ideals and the reality to which he is blind, it also demystifies and diminishes the ideal of romantic love in the face of ‘uncontrollable, dark force of nature’” (Suzuki 1996, 86).

“protector” (*hogosha*) of Yoshiko’s “sacred love,” which in truth implies a sexual liaison with her lover. Tokio thus, throughout the text, ironically oscillates between the two (only seemingly) contradictory roles of “custodian” and “protector.” In both cases, however, both as a medium of oppression and as a medium of camouflage (or protection), the discourse of spirituality and chastity in *Futon*, which includes the Christian discourse of romantic love, interestingly transforms into a tool that allows to exercise power and that is manipulated by both Tokio and Yoshiko for differing and even opposite ends.

This perversion of the discourse of spirituality and chastity into the contested medium of a power conflict in *Futon* should also direct our attention to the underlying plot structure of Katai’s narration, which in turn could be described as the perverted or inverted version of a plot constellation that is typical of earlier Meiji-period novels, for instance Tetchô’s *Setchûbai* or Shôyô’s *Kyô waranbe*. I would think that *Futon*’s male protagonist Tokio, like Hirose in *Jokyôshi* or the artist figures in Ôgai’s and Rohan’s stories, can be seen as an extension of the political activist or male student figure in prior Meiji fiction, which is also underlined by Tokio’s love-induced marriage with an uneducated woman of the type of *Karyû shunwa*’s Alice. As a protagonist Tokio indeed repeats Misawa Tatsuzô’s ambiguous “love” – both spiritual and sexual – for the illiterate Otsuji and gestures to Shôyô’s rewriting of the political novel through a resexualized hero. Tokio is similar to Shôyô’s (as well as Ôgai’s and Rohan’s) protagonists who are characterized by a sexual desire that impedes the realization of chaste spirituality. But Tokio also fundamentally differs from prior protagonists because he is ultimately not driven by spiritual and heroic impulses, which in *Futon*, while not inexistent, are externalized (as it were) into the hero’s internalized discourse but do not constitute an authentic motivational force any more.<sup>312</sup> Instead Tokio’s spiritual discourse

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<sup>312</sup> Even Nakatsu Kunihiko, the protagonist of Shôyô’s *Kyô waranbe*, although seemingly driven exclusively by sexual desire, originally appears to pursue spiritual goals, for instance the goal to study hard and to thus secure the hand of Toshiko who is the allegorical embodiment of his popular rights. At the same time, I would also agree with an interpretation that sees Kunihiko as practically devoid of heroic impulses and exclusively

turns into a medium of oppression that vilely camouflages the actual or true presence of “ugly” or immoral sexual needs. In the narration of *Futon* Tokio, while originally an extension of the (at least potentially) ethical hero, surprisingly also assumes the role of an oppressive “custodian” who obliquely points to the role of the oligarchic villains in prior Meiji-period political fiction who were driven both by unethical sexual desire and the desire to exert autocratic control.

What then about Yoshiko whose name – perhaps only coincidentally – resonates with the name of the allegorical personification of the people’s rights in *Kyô waranbe*, which was Toshiko? I would argue that Yoshiko is a complex figure who in ambiguous fashion mirrors multiple heroine types in prior Meiji-period fiction. First, in her function as Tokio’s much younger – as well as beautiful and vaguely eroticized – female pupil, Yoshiko appears to constitute another embodiment of *Karyû shunwa*’s Alice, a figure that could also be compared – all the apparent differences notwithstanding – to Elis in *Maihime* or Otatsu in *Fûryûbutsu*. I would think this comparison to be valid particularly insofar as Yoshiko as a young female pupil also seems to possess the inherent potential to learn and to grow and to thus possibly transform into an educated woman as the facilitator for Tokio’s male spiritual advancement. Yoshiko indeed seems to grow in her role as Tokio’s disciple, which her ability to internalize and repeat Tokio’s discourse of spirituality and enlightenment seems to underline.<sup>313</sup> The ultimate paroxysm and proof of her spiritual growth, then, is her allegedly chaste and “sacred love,” which discursively crystallizes the sum of all possible spiritual, civilizational and literary ideals. (It should be also noted in this context that the discourse of

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characterized by sexual desire (which is the reason for his failure to secure Toshiko’s hand). Accordingly it could also be argued that Shôyô then felt the need to create a more complex hero with Misawa Tatsuzô, the protagonist of *Imo to se kagami*, who is ambiguously driven by both heroic (spiritual/chaste/civilizational) and sexual impulses. However, Kunihiko, despite his lack of heroic or spiritual motivations, never turns into an oligarchic oppressor or “custodian” and he thus differs from Takenaka Tokio in *Futon*.

<sup>313</sup> At the same time, Yoshiko has also, to a certain extent, internalized the spiritual discourse even prior to encountering Tokio through her Christian education. This education also seems to qualify Yoshiko to be an inherently “modern” and spiritual female partner like the female teacher Kuniko in *Jokyôshi*.



“sacred love” in *Futon* is exclusively produced by Yoshiko with regard to her relationship to Tanaka and isn’t used to describe Tokio’s attraction to Yoshiko, which from the beginning is seen in a more unambiguously sexual and therefore immoral light.)<sup>314</sup> While Yoshiko thus discursively fashions herself almost as the allegorical embodiment of spirituality and civilizational achievement, she also manipulates – as I argued before – the discourse of spirituality in order to conceal the fundamental truth of her sexual activity and desire, which is ultimately revealed by Tokio’s detective-like acumen. In her third letter addressed to Tokio, which is quoted in the narration of *Futon*, Yoshiko significantly casts her confession in the following terms:

“I am a fallen female student [*daraku jogakusei*]. I used your [Yoshiko here uses the word *sensei* to address Tokio] kindness to deceive you. My sin is so big that however much I apologize it cannot be pardoned. Sensei, please pity me by thinking me to be a weak being. All the duties of the new Meiji woman [*atarashii Meiji no onna toshite no tsutome*] that I learned from you I haven’t been able to realize. In fact I am a woman of the old kind [*kyûha no onna*] and I haven’t had the courage to realize the new ideals [*atarashii shisô*]. [...]”<sup>315</sup>

What is noteworthy in this excerpt from Yoshiko’s letter is the fundamental regression that lurks behind the façade of her spiritual growth, which was seemingly made possible by Tokio’s education and his discourse about the “new ideals” and “duties of the new Meiji woman” who would be “free” (*jiyû*) only through her chastity. In her letter, Yoshiko ultimately reveals herself to be a “woman of the old kind” who, instead of living up to the “new ideals” of chastity and spirituality, in truth is driven by sexual desire and fundamentally unethical as well as uncivilized and pre-modern impulses. Yoshiko thus radically differs from the female figures examined so far – Elis in *Maihime* or Kuniko in Katai’s own *Jokyôshi*, for instance – insofar as her seeming growth and education in fact camouflage a non-development and even regression. This regression ultimately brings Yoshiko back to the

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<sup>314</sup> See for instance *Futon* 136, where the expression “sacred love” for the first time appears in the narration of *Futon*.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid. 186.

type of the unambiguously base prostitute in prior Meiji-period fiction which, like Hikutsuya Yakko in *Jōkai haran* allegorized unenlightened sexual “encumbrances.” In this respect it also makes sense that Yoshiko, formerly a “beautiful” and spiritual heavenly creature in Tokio’s imagination, suddenly falls or regresses to the status of a “prostitute” (*baijo*) that he can transform into the immediate object for his oligarchic fantasies of erotic possession.<sup>316</sup> What is important to note here is that Yoshiko, instead of undergoing (like Elis in *Maihime*) a movement of growth from a state of sexualization (that was associated with prostitution) to education and potential spirituality, performs an opposite and regressive movement from apparent spirituality to vile or even criminal sexuality.

The scene in *Futon* that most explicitly recalls (and again inverts) the plot structure of previous Meiji-period political fiction is the climactic moment toward the end of the text (still prior to Yoshiko’s confessional revelation of her loss of virginity) where the narration’s main protagonists – Tokio, Yoshiko, Yoshiko’s father and her lover Tanaka – are assembled in Tokio’s house to discuss the future of the young lovers’ relationship and in particular the possibility of their marriage. The dialogic scene quite explicitly gestures to the allegorical meaning structure previously encountered in political novels, especially Shōyō’s *Kyō waranbe*. A possible allegorical reading of the scene in *Futon* could be the following. While Tokio, as argued above, would allegorically stand for the oligarchic interest in sexually possessing Yoshiko – the personification of “rights” – her father, conspicuously a rural notable (*gōnō*) and prefectural deputy from the provinces, could metonymically stand for the nation Japan as a whole. In this scenario, the young Tanaka would then represent the group

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<sup>316</sup> See *ibid.* 184. It should also be noted that Yoshiko embarks on the path of “literature” (*bungaku*) primarily in order to have intercourse with men – she writes letters to male students instead of novels – in the same way as her lover Tanaka moves from Christianity to “literature” not primarily to become a literary writer but in order to have a pretext to stay together with Yoshiko and to continue his sexual relationship with her in Tōkyō. This perversion of the status of “literature,” which was initially a medium of spiritual advancement and is now turned into a medium for erotic encounters, is symptomatic of the broader textual dynamic in *Futon*.

of intellectual activists vying for the “right” to possess Yoshiko.<sup>317</sup> Furthermore, the scene in *Futon* also seems to replicate Shōyō’s *Kyō waranbe* with regard to the question of a possible marriage between Yoshiko and Tanaka. Yoshiko’s father, as the figure invested with the authority to decide over the lovers’ future and backed by the power of Tokio as Yoshiko’s “teacher” (*sensei*), addresses Tanaka in the following way:

“The question now is not whether to give or not to give you permission [to get married]. You are not yet financially independent, you are still a student [*shūgyōchū no mi*], and I therefore cannot trust you when you say that the two of you will be able to live an independent life together. For this reason I think that both of you should still study for another three or four years. If you are earnest [*majime*] then you must understand what I have just said. You will be dissatisfied with the idea that I could deceive you and give Yoshi as a bride to somebody else in the meantime. But I swear to God and I also declare in front of Sensei [i.e. Tokio] that I will not marry Yoshi to anybody during the next three years. [...]. I cannot promise you now to give you Yoshi in the future. I cannot agree at present, because I think that this affair as it is right now doesn’t accord with the will of God. I cannot predict if, after three years, a marriage will be in accordance with God’s will, but if you are truly earnest and truthful in your heart, it certainly will be in accordance with God’s will!”<sup>318</sup>

In the words of Yoshiko’s father – like in Nakatsu Kunihiko’s marriage contract in *Kyō waranbe* – the possibility of a future marriage between Yoshiko and Tanaka is predicated on the condition that Tanaka gain financial independence and prove his ethical truthfulness and sincerity, which would make him into a worthy candidate for the girl’s hand. Moreover, the waiting period of three to four years in which Tanaka needs to prove his worth as a potential husband again gestures to the allegorical timeframe and waiting period in political fiction. In *Kyō waranbe* the four to five year waiting period culminating in 1890, i.e. the year of the opening of the Meiji Diet, precisely defined the timeframe within which democratic political reform should to be realized. At the same time, Yoshiko father also foresees the possibility

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<sup>317</sup> The narrator significantly notes that Tanaka takes on “an air as if he had the right to freely make Yoshiko his own” (*Yoshiko o jibun no jiyū ni suru kenri o motte iru to iu fū ni miete iru*, *ibid.* 178). A further parallel to prior Meiji-period political fiction can also be seen in the respective ages of the protagonists. While Tokio’s age is 34 or 35, Yoshiko is 19 years old and Tanaka 22. We should remember that the numbers 19 and 23, in texts like *Setchūbai* and *Kyō waranbe*, had a central allegorical significance insofar as they pointed to the years 1886 (Meiji 19) and 1890 (Meiji 23), which stood, respectively, for the People’s Rights Movement’s political struggle and for the opening of the Meiji Diet.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* 180.

that Tanaka, like Nakatsu Kunihiko (the hero of *Kyô waranbe*), will be unable to fulfill the conditions of the marriage by continuously clinging to unethical sexual desire, which isn't "in accordance with God's will."

The configuration of this climactic scene in *Futon* demonstrates the extent to which Katai's text radically inverts Shôyô's rewriting and deconstruction of the political novel. Not only has the initial student figure and male protagonist Tokio turned into an oligarchic "custodian" who manipulates the discourse of spirituality in order to camouflage his erotic desire. Yoshiko also merely performs the ideals of spiritual chastity on the surface while in truth behaving like a promiscuous and uncivilized "prostitute" (*baijo*). Furthermore, as Tokio later muses, Tanaka's belief to possess the "right" (*kenri*) to become Yoshiko's husband is ultimately predicated merely on his previous sexual possession of the girl but not on any intrinsic quality or true "right" (such as Kunihiko's birthright in *Kyô waranbe*).<sup>319</sup> What is then the significance of these regressive transformations and shifts in *Futon* that, while pointing to the allegorical meaning structure of the political novel tradition, also profoundly alienate and pervert it? I would argue that these transformations – Tokio's metamorphosis into an oppressive "custodian" or Yoshiko's regression into an "old-fashioned" prostitute – dramatize the extent to which the possibility for male spiritual advancement and (political) empowerment is seen as foreclosed in *Futon*. All the texts in the wake of Shôyô's reform of the political novel – beginning with *Kyô waranbe* and *Imo to se kagami* but also including Ôgai's and Rohan's "visionary" evocations of the artwork and Katai's *Jokyôshi* – posited the impulse for spiritual advancement and growth in conflict with sexual obstructions, as it were. *Futon*, however, by alienating the ideal of spiritual chastity into a malleable and manipulable discourse, radically deconstructs and forecloses the possibility of spiritual growth. This

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<sup>319</sup> See *ibid.* 183. It is precisely Tanaka's attitude of having the "right" to marry Yoshiko that gives Tokio, who here reasons like a detective, the indication that the young man must indeed have had sexual intercourse with the girl.

foreclosure is even more strongly reinforced by Tokio's only seemingly paradoxical ethicality, i.e. his ultimate adherence to the discourse of spirituality, which prevents him from sexually assaulting and finally marrying Yoshiko and to thus truly transforming into an oligarchic villain according to the plot code of political fiction. The oligarchic villains in *seiji shōsetsu* works – as we saw earlier – tended to discard their legitimate wives in order to enjoy the intercourse with young mistresses and prostitutes, but while this is an option that Tokio fantasizes about he significantly never realizes it. Tokio's adherence to ethical chastity, however, instead of empowering him spiritually, rather transforms him into a pathetic, pitiable and even sympathetic figure – an image that would have been fundamentally shattered had he sexually taken advantage of Yoshiko – and I would argue that it is precisely Tokio's paradoxical sexual powerlessness (i.e. his ethicality) as an oligarchic “custodian”, which renders the foreclosure of his heroic empowerment and advancement ineluctable and complete.<sup>320</sup>

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<sup>320</sup> Satoru Saito, in his discussion of *Futon*, reaches a similar conclusion when he points to the paradoxical nature of the figure of the allegedly “successful” writer Tokio. Tokio, on the one hand, through his chastity is presented as an “ordinary man” who is morally superior to the “truly successful” (i.e. the Meiji oligarchs well known by their sex scandals) but who also, on the other hand, embodies the gaze of state authority and ideology as a detective spying out Yoshiko's sexual secret and crime. Through his analysis Saito describes the “ideological operation” at work in *Futon*, which consists in depotentializing the idea of advancement and success (*risshin shusse*) in the aftermath of the breakdown of the People's Rights Movement where the possibility for young ambitious but alienated intellectuals to turn into criminals (like Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*) constituted a danger (cf. Saito 2012, 151-155). Saito also argues that by gendering the ambition for success as female – namely by positing the young woman Yoshiko as an individual seeking advancement through her writing – and by criminalizing her through her sexuality, Katai's *Futon* further reinforces the ideological neutralization of the potentially dangerous desire for *risshin shusse*. Saito writes: “The historical developments of 1890s Japan must have augmented the potential dangers facing Meiji students in becoming another Bunzō or Raskolnikov, as the path to success through education became harder and harder to navigate yet the desire to do so was being actively fueled through the expansion of the middle-school system, which enabled many more students to at least stand at the start line. But whereas Raskolnikov commits the crime because he fails to rise in the world, Ushimatsu [the protagonist of Shimazaki Tōson's *Hakai*, 1906] and Yoshiko fail to rise because of their crimes. Thus, we have a reversal of cause and effect, the primary mechanism by which the two representative works of Japanese Naturalism sought to tackle and neutralize the dangers that were becoming clearer by the day in the realities of Meiji society. If *Crime and Punishment* suggested the potential for intellectuals as a whole to turn criminal in a later-developing [and one should add: politically authoritarian] country like Russia and Japan where contradictions between social ideals and realities were particularly vivid, then *Hakai* and *Futon* function to connect the failures of Ushimatsu and Yoshiko to their ‘criminal’ secrets – made so by the prejudices of society – to affirm their tragic existence and experience, in turn, as marginal in nature” (ibid., 150).

## Conclusion

Kôda Rohan's, Mori Ôgai's and Tayama Katai's writings, which I examine in this chapter, more or less directly reference discourses of romantic or spiritual love that were influential in Japan from the decade of the 1880s onward. While related to new notions of freedom and individuality, the discursive idea of romantic love was also predicated on ideals of civilizational advancement, ethicality and even democratic reform that implied the need to control potentially transgressive feelings and desires.<sup>321</sup> In the texts discussed in this chapter, however, the eruption of uncontrollable sexual desire fundamentally problematizes and deconstructs the notion of spiritual love as well as the civilizational, ethical and political telos associated with it. Moreover, new signifiers such as literature, art and nature emerge in these texts as ambiguous sites that carry both spiritual impulses (as allegorized by the ideal of romantic love) and transgressive erotic desire. In this chapter, I argued that the failure of the Meiji novel to integrate and reconcile these antagonistic poles (i.e. spirituality and immoral/uncivilized sexuality) allegorically points to the democratic failure of the People's Rights Movement in the decade of the 1880s. I also showed that the implicitly allegorical meaning, which is inscribed into the novel of the second half of the Meiji period, relies on rewritings of the plot paradigms of earlier political fiction and extends Tsubouchi Shôyô's project of novelistic reform. At the same time, the attempt of the novel to more generally participate in the spiritual and social negotiation and regulation of sentiments and desires also – even if this attempt often remains unsuccessful – indicates the extent to which the genre of the novel until the end of the Meiji period participates in ongoing negotiations around the ethical and social potential of “human feeling” and thus links back to earlier (pre-Meiji) textual negotiations and discourses.

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<sup>321</sup> For the discourse of “romantic love” (*ren'ai*) in Meiji Japan see Saeki 1998 and 2008 as well as Yanabu 1982 (chapter on “love”). For the discursive linkage between romantic love and individuality see for instance Mori Ôgai's *Maihime* where the male protagonist's discovery of his alleged “true self” is the precondition for his love. In *Futon*, moreover, Tokio discursively links spiritual love to “freedom” (*jiyû*).

## Chapter Four:

### Cold Detachment and Warm Ardor: Genre Experimentation, Nature, and Natsume

#### Sôseki's Literary Writing and Theory in the 1900s

The genre of the novel (*shôsetsu*) in Meiji-period discourse and literary practice was closely associated with the idea that it would represent “human feeling,” i.e. amorous emotions and desires, most often within the context of male-female love relationships. The Meiji-period novel and literary discourse often attempted to regulate the ethically and socially transgressive potential of “human feeling” by negotiating, for instance, the conflict between uncontrollable sexual desire and spiritual feelings and the heroic telos of civilizational advancement or political reform. The feelings and desires that the Meiji novel staged, both transgressive and spiritual, were also often immediate, strong and sometimes melodramatic – a fact that has led Ken Ito to label the novel’s turn-of-the-century in Japan as an “age of melodrama.”<sup>322</sup> The same historical moment around 1900, however, also witnessed the emergence of an alternative regime of writing – epitomized by the terms *shasei* (“sketch”) or *shaseibun* (“sketch writing”) – which challenged the genre of the novel and its emphasis on strong emotions. One important premise of “sketch writing” in fact consisted in emotional detachment as an alternative mode of negotiating “human feeling” – a mode that would be different from the strongly emotional quality of the contemporary novel.

“Sketch writing” also explored new subject matters seemingly unrelated to “human feeling” such as landscape and nature. Karatani Kôjin has argued that the “discovery of landscape” around 1900 was predicated on the demise of premodern “figural” modes of landscape representation such as “famous sites” (*meisho*) and produced a new mode of

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<sup>322</sup> See Ito 2008. In my own discussion I avoid the term “melodrama” as I don’t see the literary negotiations of “human feeling,” which this dissertation investigates, as primarily melodramatic. For a theoretical discussion of the melodramatic aesthetic, which often relies on the staging of stark ethical antagonisms, see Ito’s introductory chapter. See also Zwicker 2006.

realistic representation. Karatani also links the “discovery of landscape” to the “discovery of interiority” as the subjective agency that was able to transcribe reality as it appears, independently of these earlier “figural” modes.<sup>323</sup> My following analysis, however, reveals that the emergence of landscape and nature as a new subject matter for “sketch writing” was also significantly predicated on a reappropriation of traditional poetic forms such as *kanshi*, *waka* and *haiku*, precisely those genres that Karatani labels as the premodern vehicles of the “figural.”<sup>324</sup> I argue that this reappropriation can be explained by the fact that these genres relate to “human feeling” in a more indirect and detached fashion than the modern novel. Emotions in traditional Japanese verse in fact often tended to be represented through the mediation of seasonal imagery or nature-related tropes instead of being directly expressed. While *waka* poetry developed an elaborate discourse on “love” (*koi*) and longing based on associations with natural imagery, *kanshi* nature poetry was often read allegorically as an expression of the poet’s moral or political feelings and social criticism.<sup>325</sup> These valences of emotionality underwrite the emergence of landscape around 1900, allowing for the possibility of a more indirect representation of “human feeling” through nature. I argue that “sketch writings” and poetic (or poeticized) landscape descriptions thus self-reflexively explore their simultaneous affinity to and distance from the novel, i.e. the realm of male-female love and “human feeling.”

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<sup>323</sup> See Karatani 1980, esp. chapters 1 and 2; see also in English Karatani 1993.

<sup>324</sup> Kôno 2003 also shows how an appropriation of traditional and new genres (both in poetry and prose) occurred within the context of the establishment of youth magazines such as *Shônen sekai* (founded 1895) and *Chûgaku sekai* (founded 1898) in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War. These magazines published texts in traditional Japanese and Chinese styles together with English writings as well as landscape and travel descriptions (so-called *kikôbun*), often as stylistic exercises that reflected the new reformed middle and high school curricula. The institutional and media-related developments to which Kôno points are certainly an important precondition for the emergence of the *shaseibun* phenomenon around the turn-of-the-century.

<sup>325</sup> For the emergence of “love” (*koi*) as an independent *waka* topic in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century *Shinsen Man'yôshû* and early 10<sup>th</sup> century *Kokinshû* McCullough 1985 is still useful. For an account of hermeneutical practices in China with regard to poetry see van Zoeren 1991. For a comprehensive study of nature in pre-Meiji Japanese literature and culture see Shirane 2012.



This chapter primarily focuses on the early literary and theoretical work of Natsume Sôseki (written between 1905 and 1910), which is interesting for its self-reflexive and experimental exploration of “sketch” prose and various poetic genres as alternative media of “human feeling.” In order to situate Sôseki’s early oeuvre within the broader turn-of-the-century aesthetic of “sketch writing” and emotional detachment, however, I first discuss Kunikida Doppo’s (1871-1908) *Musashino* (*The Musashino Plain*, 1898), which critics like Karatani have discussed in connection with the “discovery” of landscape and realism in Japan. My reading of *Musashino* focuses on the multiplicity of intertexts, both poetic and non-poetic, which Doppo inserts into his landscape description and which in indirect and detached fashion point to subtexts of “human feeling” that are otherwise elided from the text. I then discuss Natsume Sôseki’s early *shaseibun* experiments *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (*I am a Cat*, 1905-06) and *Shumi no iden* (*The Heredity of Affection*, 1906). These texts stage narrators and protagonists who, while emotionally uninvolved, are also ambiguously drawn to strong feelings, both amorous and heroic. A similar dynamic also comes to the fore in Sôseki’s perhaps more complex *shaseibun* text *Kusamakura* (*The Grass Pillow*, 1906), to which I turn next. *Kusamakura* differs from previous “sketches” in that it highlights various poetic genres such as *haiku*, *kanshi* and English verse as textual media that convey “human feeling” but also produce detachment from it. One of the fundamental narrative movements in *Kusamakura* is a self-reflexive and often ironic investigation into the emotionally loaded quality of poetry and landscape, and I show that this investigative movement uncovers and dramatizes the relative proximity and distance of the poetic medium in relationship to the more undiluted emotionality of the novel. In this context I also discuss Sôseki’s early critical writings, in particular *Bungakuron* (*Theory of Literature*, 1907) and *Sôsakuka no taido* (*The Attitude of the Literary Writer*, 1908), which theorize the emotional quality of various types of literature, including the novel and poetry, and thus complement the *Kusamakura* project in

significant ways. I finally examine Sôseki's novel writing in the late 1900s, which significantly brings back a non-detached focus on "human feeling." Through my analysis of *Sorekara (And Then, 1909)*, which historicizes the phenomenon of detachment as an aspect of the crisis of civilization resulting from the Meiji Restoration, I show how Sôseki's novelistic production ties back to previous Meiji fiction and its often problematic attempt to reconcile "human feeling" with heroic and ethical plot narratives as well as with social and political reform.

### 1. Landscape and Poetry as Emotionalized Media in Kunikida Doppo's *Musashino*

Several layers of intertextuality, memory and time complicate the textual fabric of Kunikida Doppo's *Musashino* and the subjectivity of its first-person narrator.<sup>326</sup> The text starts off with the following quote from an unidentified Bunsei-period (1818-1830) map, which cites an even older account from the *Taiheiki (Chronicle of Great Peace, ca. 1340s-1371)* and also serves as one of the initial triggers for the narrator's interest in the topic.

The traces [*omokage*] of Musashino now merely survive in the Iruma district. [...]. Kumegawa on the Kotesashi plain [in the Iruma district] was an ancient battlefield. The *Taiheiki* says: "On the eleventh day of the fifth month of the third year of Genkô [1333], the Genji and the Heike forces fought over thirty times. As evening fell, the Heike withdrew three miles and built a camp at Kumegawa. In the morning the Genji forces attacked the camp at Kumegawa." This quote must refer to the region [where the traces of Musashino still survive].<sup>327</sup>

The double intertextuality of this quote in which the author of the Edo-period map is citing the much older *Taiheiki* entry underlines the fact that, for the Bunsei-period text through which Doppo's narrator opens his account, Musashino is already a textually mediated "vision" (*omokage*). The word *omokage* has a semantically ambiguous quality here. While it refers to the material traces of a presumably real landscape that has radically changed and only

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<sup>326</sup> *Musashino* first appeared in two installments in January and in February 1898 in the journal *Kokumin no tomo*.

<sup>327</sup> Kunikida Doppo, *Musashino* 89.

survives as “trace” in a specific district, the word also suggests that the landscape of Musashino is now predominantly a poetic “vision.” This poetic “vision” is mediated by artistic media such as paintings and poetry and has become, as “Musashino of the past” (*mukashi no Musashino*), part of the narrator’s poetic “imagination.”<sup>328</sup> The poetic quality of this Musashino “vision” is also underlined by the *Taiheiki*’s reference to the ancient battlefield site, which enriches the place name with an additional layer of cultural and historical memory.

Musashino as a “vision,” moreover, possesses “beauty” (*bi*) and triggers “poetic excitement” (*shishu*), which are both qualities that fan the desire of Doppo’s narrator to actually write about and see the “present Musashino” (*ima no Musashino*) as real landscape.<sup>329</sup> However, this intertextually produced desire to see soon produces new layers of quoted intertexts. One of these intertexts is a long and slightly amended quotation from Doppo’s own diary *Azamukazaru no ki* (*Truthful Records*).<sup>330</sup> The quoted excerpts span the period from the autumn of 1896 to the spring of 1897 when Doppo lived in Shibuya, which was part of the Musashino Plain. The diary excerpts also reflect Doppo’s attempt to model his perception and description of the Musashino woods on Futabatei Shimei’s translation of Ivan Turgenev’s (1818-1883) short story “The Rendezvous” – rendered as *Aibiki* in Japanese – of which he subsequently offers lengthy quotations in *Musashino*.<sup>331</sup> Further quoted intertexts are two letters of differing length from a (probably fictional) male friend and a

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<sup>328</sup> See *ibid.* 89. This “imagination” also refers to one *waka* by Kumagai Naoyoshi (1782-1862) and one *hokku* by Buson (1716-1783), which are both quoted in *Musashino* (see *ibid.* 95 and 101).

<sup>329</sup> *Shishu* could be translated, slightly more accurately, as “poetic flavor,” but I decided to translate the term as “poetic excitement” in order to highlight its emotional dimension.

<sup>330</sup> Doppo’s diary *Azamukazaru no ki*, which covers the time between February 1893 and May 1897 (i.e. also the development and collapse of Doppo’s relationship with Sasaki Nobuko), was posthumously published in two installments in 1908 and 1909.

<sup>331</sup> “The Rendezvous” appeared in Turgenev’s collection *A Sportsman’s Sketches* (1852). Futabatei’s translation of “The Rendezvous” first appeared in the journal *Kokumin no tomo* in two installments in July and August 1888 under the title *Aibiki*. A revised version of *Aibiki* appeared in 1896. In *Musashino*, Doppo cites from Futabatei’s first translation.

strophe from the poem “The Fountain” (1799) by William Wordsworth (1770-1850), which is cited in English.

These inserted quotations seem to open up the narrator’s vision for Musashino as a real landscape, pushing away from the topical poeticity of “Musashino of the past.” This becomes clear, for instance, when the narrator states that the predominant type of vegetation in Musashino now consists of oak trees that have replaced the pampas grass (*suga*) that was associated with Musashino as a traditional poetic place name (*utamakura*):

It’s been handed down that Musashino of the past displayed an indescribable beauty with its landscape of unending fields of pampas grass, but today’s Musashino consists of woods. In fact it wouldn’t be a mistake to say that woods are the particularity of today’s Musashino. The trees are mainly oak trees [...].<sup>332</sup>

The shift in vegetation from pampas grass to oak trees is significant as it enables the narrator, in his perception and description of the Musashino landscape, to activate Futabatei’s intertext in which the Russian vegetation consists of another variety of broad-leaved trees, namely birches. This new broad-leaved vegetation, in Futabatei’s translation as well as in *Musashino*, also institutes a new regime of sounds – sounds that traditional Japanese vegetation such as pine trees or pampas grass couldn’t produce – in which nature, in somehow anthropomorphic fashion, speaks to the human ear. In the passage from *Aibiki* cited in *Musashino* the first-person narrator – a hunter – describes how he is sitting in a copse and listening to the autumn leaves’ “murmuring voice” (*sasayaki no koe*), which is “so quiet that it is barely audible.” He also adds: [this voice] “was neither the ripple of amused laughter typical of the beginning of spring, nor was it the easygoing rustling or the never-ending conversational voice [*hanashigoe*] of summer; it also wasn’t the somehow fearful and lonely chatter of late autumn.”<sup>333</sup> In a consciously similar vein, Doppo’s narrator then equally explores, in the passage following his long *Aibiki* quote, the quasi-human sounds, which emanate from the

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<sup>332</sup> *Musashino* 92.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.* 93. I translate from Futabatei’s translation as cited by Doppo. See also Karatani 1980, chapter 2.

Musashino woods. He listens to the “murmur” (*sasayaki*) of the autumn rains on the oak leaves or to the “shouting” (*sakebu*) of the cold wind, thereby reproducing verbatim some of the sounds and personifying metaphors in Futabatei’s translation. Sensitized by the *Aibiki* intertext, the narrator has become aware of a new subjectivity of nature, which speaks to and through him.<sup>334</sup>

While Futabatei’s translation seems to allow for radically unprecedented possibilities of experiencing nature in *Musashino*, a more traditional regime of poetic intertextuality also shapes the seeing and writing of the Musashino landscape. A closer reading of *Musashino* in fact reveals that what Doppo’s narrator hears and sees are often the well-known poetic tropes of the *waka* tradition: the late autumn or winter showers (*shigure*) or the late autumn or winter wind (*kogarashi*), for example. The passage quoted above, which stated that the predominant type of Musashino’s vegetation had metamorphosed from pampas grass fields to oak copses, also continues in the following way:

The trees are mainly oak trees that lose all their leaves in the winter, and the change when in the spring small drops of young green are sprouting occurs at the same time in the fields that lie within a radius of ten miles east of the Chichibu mountains. The charm [*myō*], which this landscape displays through spring, summer, autumn and winter – in the spring mist, under the summer rain, under the moon light, blown through by the wind, in the autumn haze, under the winter rain or in the snow, when the leaves are fully green and when they have turned crimson – all this can hardly be understood by somebody from Western or Northern Japan.<sup>335</sup>

Although the narrator here emphasizes the fact that the Musashino landscape is unique and differs from the landscapes of Western and Northern Japan – Doppo himself partly grew up in Yamaguchi and Hiroshima and spent time in Hokkaidō as well – he also superimposes the rather universal catalogue of seasonal *waka* tropes, ranging from spring to winter, onto his vision of Musashino. The “charm” emanating from this vision of nature in fact primarily

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<sup>334</sup> See also *ibid.* 94 for “the fluttering of the birds’ wings and their chirping; the wind’s trembling, chiming, roaring [*usobuku*], shouting,” etc.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.* 92-93.

derives from the old *waka* tropes, which poeticize, as it were, the broad-leaved oak forest – an as such unsuitable topic for traditional *waka* composition.

The influence of traditional poetic seasonality is particularly striking in Doppo’s retranslation of Futabatei’s nature observation in his diary, parts of which are incorporated in slightly refashioned form into the *Musashino* text (section 2). A pivotal concept in Futabatei’s *Aibiki* translation was “change” (*henka*), as referring to the swift alternations between rain and sunshine, light and shadow in Turgenev’s autumn copse. Although Doppo is to a certain extent sensitive to these momentary transformations of the natural landscape in his diary excerpts,<sup>336</sup> his writing of “change” in nature mostly follows the paradigm of seasonal progression – a *waka* theme par excellence – which in *Musashino* covers the period from early autumn to late spring. These excerpts, which are written, contrary to the rest of *Musashino*, in a literary Japanese idiom, are also replete with references to traditional *waka* topics: the autumn moon (*tsuki*), haze (*kiri*), twilight (*yūgure*), Mount Fuji etc.<sup>337</sup> Classical poetic references also, far beyond Doppo’s diary excerpts, constantly reappear throughout the *Musashino* text and profoundly shape its narrator’s vision.<sup>338</sup> It could thus be argued that “Musashino of the past” constantly reinscribes itself – as a textually mediated knot of poetic tropes and associations – into the vision of “Musashino of today.” This has important consequences not only for the narrator’s vision of the Musashino landscape but also perhaps for the specific emotional quality that is inherent in the terms “beauty” (*bi*), “charm” (*myō*) or “poetic excitement” (*shishu*). I would think that the old Musashino trope (*utamakura*) and its poetic associations constitute an experiential and emotional kernel, which is subsequently

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<sup>336</sup> See for example his first entry for the seventh of September.

<sup>337</sup> See *ibid.* 90-91.

<sup>338</sup> See for instance also *ibid.* 99.

projected onto the cluster of the more recent intertexts and onto the “Musashino of the present.”

Another emotional and experiential kernel or meaning, which speaks through *Musashino*'s landscape and finds expression in terms like “beauty” or “poetic excitement,” is Doppo's love for and brief unhappy marriage with Sasaki Nobuko (1878-1949), which fell apart approximately one year before the text was published at the beginning of 1898. Although the affair is not mentioned in *Musashino*, its sixth section uses material – either from Doppo's memory or mediated by his diary – that is connected to his former lover and wife. The entry in Doppo's *Truthful Records* for August 11<sup>th</sup> 1895, which relates the couple's “clandestine” train excursion to Tamagawa jôsu in Koganei, remarkably starts with the statement “This was an unforgettable day in my memory” and thus underlines the day's strong emotional impact on Doppo's memory.<sup>339</sup> The same excursion to Koganei is indeed referred to in *Musashino*, but the lover has been substituted by an anonymous male friend there. Moreover, it is also striking that the passage in the diary almost entirely neglects the description of the surrounding landscape and instead focuses on the “dream of love” and the emotional uncertainties in the relationship between the diarist and Nobuko. These uncertainties were negotiated between the lovers within the woods and fields of Koganei, which then make up the subject for the landscape description in *Musashino*.

As Sasaki Masanobu shows, the memory of Nobuko is not only relevant for the entry of August 11<sup>th</sup> 1895 but it also pervades the period between autumn 1896 and spring 1897 to which the diary excerpts in section 2 of *Musashino* refer.<sup>340</sup> While the quoted excerpts in *Musashino* entirely elide the Nobuko affair and only reproduce those (rather sparse) passages, which the diary devotes to the evocation of the plain, in the diary Doppo's life in

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<sup>339</sup> See Kunikida Doppo, *Azamukazaru no ki* 383.

<sup>340</sup> See the essays “‘Musashino’ o yomu: mazu ni, san-shô o megutte” and “‘Musashino’ o yomu: rokushô o megutte” in Sasaki 2005.

Shibuya and his vision of Musashino (also as his future literary and “poetic” project) are rather closely intertwined with the author’s memory of the Nobuko relationship.<sup>341</sup> The aestheticized and emotionalized vision of the landscape of *Musashino* therefore constitutes a metonymical extension of Doppo’s amorous feelings related to the Nobuko affair. I would argue that the diary excerpts in section 2 could thus be equally read as a metonymical condensation of the entire fall and winter 1896/97, which was still filled with a strong feeling for Nobuko. The quoted intertexts in *Musashino*, beginning with the excerpts from Doppo’s *Truthful Records* but also other poetic citations, thus constitute traces, which hint at an emotionality and subjectivity whose origin has been otherwise elided from the text. Landscape and nature in Doppo’s text thus carry a meaning beyond the immanence of their immediate visibility, and their poetry – including the *waka* tropes projected onto the Musashino landscape – functions as a medium through which the narrator’s (and author’s) disavowed emotionality is implicitly conveyed. At the same time, this dynamic also points to the important movement of genre transfer in *Musashino*, which dilutes the melodramatic emotionality of Doppo’s Nobuko affair – the stereotypical material for the plot of a novel – into the emotionally detached but nonetheless ambiguously emotionalized media of poetic (or poeticized) landscape evocation and “sketch writing.” A dynamic of genre transfer also comes to the fore as a broader tendency in Doppo’s contemporary literary production. In *Wasureenu hitobito* (*Unforgettable People*, 1898), for example, Doppo’s first-person narrator programmatically predicates his writing of landscape “sketches” (*suketchi*) to a stance of emotional distance toward the people, which he encounters in the landscapes that he chooses to describe. The narrator’s “unforgettable people” are precisely those who lack any

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<sup>341</sup> See for example the entry for October 26<sup>th</sup> (1896) in *Azamukazaru no ki*, in which Doppo reflects on his vocation as a poet and also announces *Musashino* as one of his most important future “poetic topics” (*shidai*). Shortly later in the same entry, Doppo also claims that Nobuko, through her unfaithful behavior, provided him with a knowledge of “human feeling” (*ninjō*) and a “sentimental education,” which produced “poetry” (*shi*) in his heart (see also Sasaki 2005, 12-13). In the entry for November 2<sup>nd</sup>, Doppo qualifies “love” (*koi*) as “beautiful” (*bi*), a term that is then repeatedly used as an attribute for nature and landscape in *Musashino* (see also *ibid.* 15).



individualized personality and thus do not affect him emotionally. Doppo's narrator thus self-reflexively and ironically explores his writing's affinity to but also distance from the genre of the novel.<sup>342</sup>

## **2. Detached Narrators and their Emotional Involvement: Heroic and Amorous Subtexts in Natsume Sôseki's *Wagahai wa neko de aru* and *Shumi no iden***

In his essay "Shaseibun" (On Sketch Writing), which was published in January 1907 in the Yomiuri newspaper, Sôseki defines the narratorial attitude of the "sketch" author as one of emotional detachment toward the "human affairs" (*jinji*) that are depicted in his texts. Whereas the novelist is strongly affected by feelings such as "love" (*koi*) in his novels (*shôsetsu*), the "mental stance" of the *shaseibun* writer is, on the contrary, one of "curious" (*omoshiroi*) and ironical detachment.<sup>343</sup> Sôseki thus claims that the main difference between novel and "sketch writing" does not lie in the represented subject, which for both genres could be the same (namely "human affairs"), but instead consists in the respective "mental state of the author" (*sakusha no shinteki jôtai*), either emotionally detached or involved. In the following analysis I examine the status and representation of specific emotions, in particular moral or heroic feelings and love, in Sôseki's early "sketches" *Wagahai wa neko de aru* and *Shumi no iden*.<sup>344</sup> Although genuine emotions in these texts often seem absent, they tend to resurge as powerful subtexts. While depotentialized and contained through

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<sup>342</sup> A short essay, which could perhaps serve as an important bridge between Doppo's and Sôseki's writings, is Masaoka Shiki's (1867-1902) *Jojibun (On Narrating Events, 1902)*. The essay advocates a mode of describing landscape and "human events" (*jinji*) in an unadorned and unmediated (*ari no mama*) fashion. Shiki thus postulates the *jojibun* observer and narrator as someone who must directly "experience" (*jikken*) the landscape or the things that he describes (instead of reactivating the tropes of the poetic tradition). I would argue, however, that the landscape descriptions, which Shiki cites as exemplary *jojibun* texts, are also eroticized in a very indirect way by pointing to certain references in the Japanese poetic tradition and thus suggesting a more complex and ambiguous narrator position and subjectivity.

<sup>343</sup> Sôseki also famously compares the *shaseibun* writer's stance toward the figures in his text to the attitude of a parent toward his or her child. See Natsume Sôseki, "Shaseibun."

<sup>344</sup> *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (from here on abbreviated as *Neko*) was first published in 1905-06 in the journal *Hototogisu*. *Shumi no iden* was originally published in the journal *Teikoku bungaku*.

distancing techniques such as parody, feelings threaten to destabilize the narrators' stance of detachment as well as the overall emotional economy of their texts.

In his 1907 essay Sôseki defines the stance of the *shaseibun* narrator toward the "human affairs" (*jinji*) in his narration as one of "leisurely detachment" (*yutori* or *yoyû*). Yet one important aspect of the humor and pleasure that the genre provides consists in a play with the limits of representation through which the detachment and leisure of the narrator's position is repeatedly questioned and destabilized. This is especially the case when the narrator is identical with the protagonist of the narration and his distance toward the narrated world of "human affairs" is reduced. The probing of the limits of narrative representation, in texts like *Jitensha nikki* (*Bicycle Diary*, 1903), *Neko* (1905-6) or *Botchan* (1906), often operates through a play with the grotesque representation of the narrator-protagonist's body, the potential or real infliction of physical harm on it, bodily and moral humiliation, shame and – in the case of *Neko* – even death.<sup>345</sup> At the same time, the narrator also tends to elevate his own position through a stance of moral supremacy, which he also often deconstructs by techniques of grotesque and ironical self-representation. The narrator of *Botchan* for instance stylizes himself and his morally upright peers as "gentlemen" (*kunshi*) who, like Confucius, undergo shame and even bodily harm in times of social and political decline. Bodily deformation and ridicule, as in the case of the protagonist's unhappy colleague Uranari, thus become markers of slighted moral uprightness.<sup>346</sup> The cat in *Neko* repeatedly elevates itself and its feline peers over the human genre, and *Jitensha nikki* – interspersed with learned

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<sup>345</sup> In these instances, narration and narrated experience sometimes collapse and produce moments of a presentist immediacy. See for instance the cat's death scene in *Neko*, which ends the narrative, or the moment when the narrator of *Botchan* is hit and loses consciousness (end of chapter 9). While most of the narrative in the longer texts such as *Neko* and *Botchan* is in the past tense, the nature of the retrospection, which oscillates between the closeness of a diary and the distance of an autobiographical stance, remains ambiguous. The texts *Jitensha nikki* and *Botchan* were first published in the journal *Hototogisu*.

<sup>346</sup> See Natsume Sôseki, *Botchan* 108. The *Botchan* text is interspersed with explicit Confucian vocabulary and references to classical Chinese sources relating to the idea of moral uprightness, for instance the Boyi biography in the *Shiji* (see *ibid.* 164).

references to the *kanshibun* tradition – could be read as a comical allegory of the Confucian scholar’s sufferings in times of degeneracy. While moral or heroic feelings thus appear on the surface of these texts, the theme of love or erotic desire, which Sôseki in his 1907 essay on *shaseibun* associates with the novel, seems rather absent. As my subsequent analysis reveals, however, the love theme also often powerfully structures Sôseki’s *shaseibun* writings. I would think that heroic and amorous feelings alike tend to destabilize the emotional economy of these texts and also complicate and perhaps undermine their narrators’ stance of detachment. Sôseki’s “sketch writing” often paradoxically conjures up and approaches strong emotions only in order to defer and contain them in almost the same move. In the following section, I discuss in more detail *Neko* and *Shumi no iden*, which in different ways dramatize this movement of conjuring up and deferring feelings.

In *Neko*, the cat narrator describes the emotional stance of his “master” (*shujin*) Kushami toward one of his pupils (Buemon) in the following way:

The reason that at this moment I was fascinated [*omoshirogaru*] by Buemon, by my master, by his wife and by lady Yukie [Kushami’s niece] was not the fact that external events had bumped into each other and that this bumping had produced ripples moving in weird directions. But it was rather because this bumping had caused quite different reactions in the hearts of these people. First, my master was rather indifferent [*reitan*] toward these events. He wasn’t moved [*odorokanai*] at all, however harsh the reaction of Buemon’s father would be or however badly his stepmother would treat the boy.<sup>347</sup> There was no reason to be moved. Even if Buemon were to be expelled from school, this would be entirely different from [Kushami] losing his job. If about one thousand pupils were to leave school together, this might cause a teacher to experience difficulty in making his living, but however much the fate of this one Furui Buemon was to change, this wouldn’t have any impact on the life of my master. And where there is only a small impact, compassion [*dôjô*] naturally remains small. To wrinkle one’s brows, to blow one’s nose or to heave a sigh for somebody one doesn’t even know is certainly not a natural behavior. And it would be really hard to believe that humans should be animals with such deep feelings [*nasakebukai*] and consideration [*omoiyari*] for others. But as a tribute to the fact of having been born into this world, for the sake of social intercourse one sometimes sheds some tears or shows an expression of concern on one’s face. This would be an expression of deceit, which certainly constitutes an art demanding quite a

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<sup>347</sup> Buemon was induced by his fellow students to sign a fake lover letter and is therefore about to be expelled from school. This is of course another instance of the often indirect and ironically mediated manifestation of the love theme throughout *Neko*.

lot of effort. Those who are good at this kind of deceit could be called people with a strong artistic conscience [*geijutsuteki ryōshin*] and they are highly respected in the social world. This is why there is nobody as suspect as respected people. This can be easily put to the test. In this respect my master rather belongs to the category of those who are clumsy. And because he is clumsy he isn't respected. And because he isn't respected he openly shows his inner indifference without making any secret. [...]. But you readers shouldn't dislike someone as worthy as my master simply because of his indifference. Indifference is an original quality of humans and those who don't make any effort to hide this quality are honest [*shōjiki*] people. If you expect more than indifference in such situations, I must say that you overestimate the human kind. To have higher expectations in a world in which even honesty is rare is quite a senseless and futile hope unless you are able to pull Shino and Kobungo off Bakin's novels so that the world of *Hakkenden* would move directly into your neighborhood.<sup>348</sup>

According to the cat narrator's analysis, in the social world in which his master lives compassion and deep feelings for others are a function of materialist and egoistic concerns in such a way that Kushami would only become emotionally involved with his pupil's well-being if his subsistence as a teacher were in jeopardy. Moral sincerity, which is associated with Bakin's textual world and the ability to harbor strong feelings for others, here is downgraded to the courage to openly show one's indifference or "coolness" (*reitan*) in a social world in which the hypocritical feigning of emotions is a highly respected art. Kushami's "sincerity," however, is not primarily an openly acknowledged lack of feeling but rather a refusal to participate in social calculation and hypocrisy. We also learn earlier on in the text that Kushami in fact harbors a deep emotional attachment ("love") toward his former student Mizushima Kangetsu:

Although this master was a man made up by a rough and stubborn character, he was still very different from these cold and unfeeling products of civilization. [...]. For the daughter [Kaneda Tomiko] he felt neither gratitude nor resentment, but Kangetsu had been a student for whom he felt more love [*ai*] than he would have felt for his own younger brother. If, as Suzuki said, they both [Kangetsu and Tomiko] had mutual affection for each other, it would be inappropriate for a gentleman [*kunshi*] to be an obstacle to their relationship, even if only indirectly. – And Kushami sensei in fact considered himself a gentleman.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>348</sup> Natsume Sōseki, *Wagahai wa neko de aru* 462-464.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid. 164-165. Suzuki is another former student of Kushami's who entertains social relations with the wealthy Kaneda family. Tomiko is the daughter of the Kaneda household and the alleged lover of Kangetsu.

Kushami thus participates in emotional bonds, which are characteristic of Confucian homosociality. His exterior roughness and lack of sophistication, which paradoxically emphasize his inner moral worth, also reinforce his self-conception as a “gentleman.”

While Kushami’s emotional stance ambiguously oscillates between social indifference and moral responsibility and uprightness, his behavior also sometimes gestures toward heroic feelings, which point to Bakin’s *yomihon* while also being subject to parody. This could be said about the passage where Kushami fights against the students of a nearby school (the *Rakuunkan* 落雲館) who are instigated by the repellent Kaneda household to harass Kushami (cf. chapter 8). In the context of this “war” Kushami entertains anger (*kanshaku*) and a desire for vengeance (*katakiuchi*).<sup>350</sup> These affects, however, are immediately translated into acts of Quixotic comicality that remain utterly ineffective. Kushami’s angry and vengeful feelings are also fueled by his profound dislike for the monetary entrepreneurism of the Kaneda family. While the Kaneda household and the students, which are an extension of the Kaneda world, seem to embody the translation of Bakin’s evil figures into a modern time, Kushami’s anger, far from producing any heroic effects, remains utterly impotent. Heroic impotence and vain anger in *Neko* ultimately lead to Kushami’s “cool” indifference, which ambiguously oscillates with his (at least parodically) entertained aspiration toward higher moral feelings and action.

A similar kind of cool aloofness, mixed with parodic references to the warm and high feelings of Bakin’s world, also characterizes the cat narrator. In the episode, which revolves around the sufferings of Kushami’s student Buemon, the cat analyzes the women’s laughter, i.e. the amusement of Kushami’s wife and his niece Yukie, which Buemon’s tears

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<sup>350</sup> See *ibid.* 330. The narrator surmises that the reader would tend to associate the word “war” with place names such as Ryojun or Mukden (famous through the Russo-Japanese War), with Achilles’ dragging the dead body of Hector in front of Troy or with Zhang Fei’s (166-221) heroic fending off Cao Cao’s army at Changban (as described in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, chap. 42). Kushami’s “war” against the students, however, is of course a parodic and humorous reduction of these heroic references.

induce. According to the cat, this laughter takes the suffering of others as a legitimate means of entertainment and also doesn't acknowledge any need for moral qualms and self-reflection. The women's pleasure in the comic (*kokkei*) even tops Kushami's aloof indifference but also isn't categorically opposed to it because of its "cool" lack of compassionate involvement. At the same time, this indifference also characterizes the stance of the cat, which like the women pleasurably eavesdrops on Kushami's plight from behind a closed door. While the most negative interpretation of this position, offered by the cat itself, would be to liken it to the stance of the detective (*tantei*) who spies and eavesdrops on others in order to fulfill a "cold" desire for knowledge and self-entertainment, the cat-narrator also parodically elevates his position by referring to the high feelings of Bakin's universe.<sup>351</sup> The humoristic tension between both poles – the detective and the *yomihon* hero – is particularly well staged in the scene where the cat decides to spy on the Kaneda household in order to "help" (*tasuke o ataeru*) Kushami's former student Kangetsu. (Kangetsu was allegedly wronged at the instigation of Kushami's wealthy entrepreneur neighbor.) The cat explains:

If I didn't enter with all my determination [*funpatsu shite*] the fortress of the enemy to find out what the situation there is, this would be highly unjust [because Kangetsu, wronged by the enemy side, lacks any other assistance]. [...]. For such an adventure I still have enough chivalry [*gikyōshin*] in the tip of my tail. I don't owe Kangetsu any gratitude [*on*] personally, but this isn't also an outburst of passionate rage [*kekki sōkyō*] for the sake of an individual only. Grandly put, it is the heroically beautiful act [*appare na bikyō*] through which the will of Heaven, which favors Justice and loves the Mean [*chūyō*], will become realized.<sup>352</sup>

In the lines that follow the narrator exclaims that he would "give up his life for the sake of the Way" (*michi no tame ni ichimei mo suteru*), and he also states that "righteousness" (*seigi*) and "humanity" (*jindō*) are worth dying for even if a recompense cannot be gained.<sup>353</sup> In this scene, the *yomihon* rhetoric perhaps masks in euphemistic fashion the cat's position as a

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<sup>351</sup> For an insightful discussion of the broader narratological and structural implications of the prominent eavesdropping and detective motive in *Neko* see Saito 2012, chapter 4.

<sup>352</sup> *Wagahai wa neko de aru* 123.

<sup>353</sup> See *ibid.* 123-124.

detective who in truth is filled by cool indifference and the desire to be entertained by the private lives and sufferings of others. It is noteworthy, however, that both *Neko* as a text and its cat narrator repeatedly, almost to the point of obsession, gesture back to the warm heroic subtext of the *yomihon* genre while it remains unclear to what extent this subtext is translatable into a modern (i.e. late Meiji-period) context.

Another emotionally ambiguous subtext in *Neko* is the love discourse, which is produced by the figure of the *shintashi* poet Ochi Tōfū and dramatized by his parodic double, the romantic anti-hero Mizushima Kangetsu. Tōfū's rather simplistic discourse redefines the cat's "will of Heaven" (*ten'i*) by claiming that it can only be fulfilled by "art" (*geijutsu*) and heterosexual "love" (*koi* or *ai*) combined with marriage.<sup>354</sup> Kangetsu who is ironically dubbed by Kushami's friend, the "aesthete" Meitei, as the "Qu Yuan of the Meiji-period" or the "Werther of this century" participates in musical soirees as a violin player and is thus associated with an atmosphere of romance.<sup>355</sup> The romantic plot running through *Neko* revolves around Kangetsu's alleged marriage plans with Kaneda Tomiko, the daughter of Kushami's wealthy entrepreneur neighbor. This plot, however, parodies not only Tōfū's discourse but also, more broadly, ironically alienates the narrativization of the love plot. Kangetsu's feelings are always imbued by an atmosphere of dreamlike "mystery" and *nazo* is a keyword that is constantly associated with him. Love is repeatedly inscribed into an aesthetic of the absurd and macabre, which is connected to an interest in ghostliness and telepathy.<sup>356</sup> The plot surrounding Kangetsu's love and music is, moreover, characterized by

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<sup>354</sup> See *ibid.* 493.

<sup>355</sup> For Meitei's comments see *ibid.* 490. The reference to suicide in both the Qu Yuan and the Werther motive is highly relevant for Kangetsu's love story. For Kangetsu's musical activity see *ibid.* 26-27.

<sup>356</sup> See the episode of Kangetsu's alleged spiritual communion with Tomiko and his subsequent suicide attempt on Azuma bridge. This episode is also closely juxtaposed with Meitei's macabre account of the "strangling pine" (*shimekukuri no matsu*), which, similarly to Tomiko's alleged voice from within the Sumida River, invites people to end their lives by hanging themselves from its branches (see *ibid.* 69-75). Another instance where the

dreamlike non-fulfillment, vainness and continuous deferral.<sup>357</sup> This temporality comes to the fore in the long passage toward the end of *Neko* where Kangetsu narrates his attempt to buy a violin in the countryside, the instrument that Tôfû associates with the image of romantic poetry and love.<sup>358</sup> Kangetsu's narration is noteworthy for its recurring moments of narrative breakdown and monotonous repetition where the attainment of the desired object is constantly deferred. This is the case for instance when the sun repeatedly doesn't sink so that Kangetsu cannot buy his instrument at dusk. This fact engenders a temporal vacuum, which destroys the possibility of narration. Moreover, once the instrument is bought a new narrative chain, equally absurd and monotonously interrupted, revolves around Kangetsu's attempt to place it in a secure place which would hide it from the malevolent gaze of the countryside people who scorn romantic artistic endeavors such as violin playing (this was also the reason why Kangetsu had to buy the instrument at dusk). Kangetsu enters the violin shop at dusk after having undergone temporal hiding in a peasant cottage in order to avert the malicious gaze of the countryside people. In the shop he is wearing a hood (*zugin*), which prevents the clerks (four or five young men) from recognizing his face while they are silently staring at him. An atmosphere of doom and tension pervades the scene while the most trivial acts, such as handing over the money for the instrument and leaving the shop door, are ominously slowed down and loaded with an emotional intensity that would suit the narrative tone and readerly expectations of the *yomihon* genre.<sup>359</sup> In warped and parodic fashion, Kangetsu's narration thus juxtaposes fragments of the romantic with fragments of the heroic.

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theme of love is closely associated with the macabre is Meitei's absurd story about his own "romantic disappointment" (*shitsuren*) in connection to the bald daughter of the snake-catching old man (ibid. 244-248).

<sup>357</sup> The same is also true for Kangetsu's scientific endeavors.

<sup>358</sup> See for this episode ibid. 483-524.

<sup>359</sup> See ibid. 508-509.



Sôseki's parodic treatment of love and of its narrativity doubles and supplements the comic re-appropriation of Bakin's high feelings in *Neko*. Both emotional regimes constitute targets toward which the text obsessively points while consistently depotentializing them through techniques of parody and deferral. How much are the narrator and the figures that he observes attracted to the stronger feelings that are available only through the distancing medium of parody? Does their stance of "humor" and "coldness" tend to be threatened by the radicality and exclusivity of the high feelings, which still seem to powerfully lurk from beyond the veil of their ironizing and parodying costumes? A shorter narrative, which perhaps provides a clearer answer to these questions is *Shumi no iden*, written in 1906 when Sôseki was still working on *Neko*. The story is significant for my discussion in that its first-person anonymous narrator, in a fashion partly similar to, yet also different from its cat counterpart, ambiguously oscillates between strong emotional involvement with the figures and events (the "human affairs") that he describes and a stance of detached and "cool" curiosity. Both positions alternate or are even momentarily superimposed at significant junctures in the text, thus highlighting the complicated dynamic between both stances and also the ambivalence of the narrator position vis-à-vis and within the narrated world.

The immediate motivation to write down the *Shumi no iden* text arises for the text's first-person narrator when he catches sight of a young sergeant who is among the troops that are triumphantly welcomed in front of Shinbashi station together with their general (modeled on Nogi Maresuke) who victoriously returns from Manchuria at the end of the Russo-Japanese War. The young sergeant reminds the narrator, who describes himself as a "scholar" (*gakusha*) and "privatier" (*itsumin*), of his friend Kawakami Kô who died in the previous year at the siege of Port Arthur.<sup>360</sup> The narrator has been an intimate friend (*shin'yû*) of Kô's

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<sup>360</sup> See for the narrator's self-identification as "scholar" and "privatier" Natsume Sôseki, *Shumi no iden* 190-191 and 215-216. In his discussion of his status as *itsumin*, he writes that his main occupation consists in reading books without any need to be concerned with the external world (including the war) except through the occasional mediation of the newspapers.

and well-acquainted with his family since High School. In his imaginary account of Kô's death in the Manchurian trenches, which follows as a result of the associational chain set in motion by his encounter with the unknown sergeant and which is based – as the text later on reveals – on excerpts from Kô's diary, the narrator displays a high degree of affection and emotional involvement with the fate of his deceased friend. He writes:

When I was talking to Kô-san, with the brazier sitting between us, he always seemed tall to me. He was a good-looking man with lightly tanned skin and a thick moustache. When Kô-san had opened his mouth and was absorbed by the story that he was telling, there could only be Kô-san in the mind of the person sitting opposite to him. Forgetting about today, forgetting about tomorrow, and forgetting about myself who was enrapturedly listening, I had totally become one with Kô-san. Kô-san was a great man [*idai na otoko*] in such a way!<sup>361</sup>

In this passage, which is about the time before Kô went to battle, the narrator expresses a strong attachment to his friend, which seems to betray homoerotic attraction.<sup>362</sup> At the same time, however, the imaginary battle descriptions in *Shumi no iden* also reveal a certain distance as the narrator's gaze never closely focuses on the figures involved (i.e. the soldiers including Kô) but instead only follows the events from afar. This gaze rather emphasizes the absence of the friend throughout the narration and also points to an emotional vacuum, which complicates the narrator's explicitly affirmed affection.

A comparable emotional ambiguity also lies in the narrator's stance toward Kô's mother who cries over her son's death every time that he pays her a visit:

I wouldn't necessarily resent a little crying either. I am of course not made of wood and stone and I am very well able to express some compassion [*itteki no dôjô*] for the misfortune of others, but since unfortunately my mouth has not been made for this [the comforting of others], it's hard for me to deal with her [crying]. When she is sobbing "please listen to me!" I just don't know how to react. And when I force myself to appear nice and to conform to her ways, all the compassionate affection [*ishateki kôï*] I have had not only disappears like foam, but sometimes this also

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<sup>361</sup> Ibid. 200.

<sup>362</sup> For a recent analysis of the homoerotic dimension in *Shumi no iden* see Vincent 2012, 123-128.

produces unexpected results and brings her to a boil. Then she must even doubt whether I have come to offer her consolation or to stir her anger.<sup>363</sup>

In his essay “Shaseibun” Sôseki postulates that, contrary to the novelist, the “sketch” author shouldn’t be affected by the crying of the figures whom he observes. In this respect it is noteworthy that the tears of Kô’s mother produce unease in the narrator and destabilize his emotional state to the point of making him lose his “compassionate affection” and instead turn to a “cooler” stance. Contrary to Sôseki’s ideal *shaseibun* narrator whose position is one of emotional stability and “ease” (*yoyû*), the first-person voice in *Shumi no iden* appears less stable. The narrator’s emotional ambivalence comes to the fore particularly well when he encounters a mysterious young woman at Kô’s grave in the Jakkôin temple in Komagome. After this encounter he undergoes a psychological transformation that turns his initially “compassionate” (*dôjôteki*) attitude toward Kô and his mother into a “purely detective-like stance” (*junzen taru tanteiteki taido*) of unaffected curiosity. At the beginning of this transformation, however, stands the extremely strong sensational impact on the narrator’s “nerves” that the young unidentified woman in the Jakkôin graveyard produces. He is not only stunned by her beauty but also by the elegance of her clothing style that utterly contrast with the atmosphere of decay and solitude that strongly pervades the temple precincts (this atmosphere is produced by the dark colors of the temple buildings, the aged trees etc.). This experience triggers a long reflection, inserted into the narrative, on the aesthetic effects created by “oppositions” and “contrasts” (*taishô*), in the real world as well as in literary texts. According to the narrator’s theory, most contrasts – the examples which he provides relate to young attractive women set in or against depressing or oppressive natural environments (such as the autumn rain or the Hakone volcanoes) – succeed, rather positively, in emphasizing the woman’s beauty or in mitigating the sadness or oppressiveness of the environment (and therefore also in reducing the intensity of the aesthetic contrast). In the case of the woman

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<sup>363</sup> *Shumi no iden* 207.

encountered in the Jakkôin precincts, however, the effect of contrast unexpectedly produces a considerable intensification of the aesthetic impact of the scene, which the narrator then scientifically theorizes in terms of the “inertia” (*dasei*) of the Jakkôin atmosphere through which the contrastive element – the beauty and elegance of the young woman – only amplifies the original “feeling” (*jôsho*) of decay and solitude and thus renders it even more “frightening” (*osoroshii*).<sup>364</sup> In this case the effect of contrast also disappears, which leads to the “fusion” (*yûwa*) of the two originally contrastive elements (the young beauty and the Jakkôin precincts) and metamorphoses the woman into an element of the world of death and decay, thus aligning her with the three generations of the male members of the Kawakami family that lie buried together in the grave.<sup>365</sup> A paradoxical dynamic unfolds in this scene where an extremely strong sensation and breakdown of distance affects the “nerves” (*shinkei*) of the narrator while the fusion of the young woman with the scene (and also, metonymically, with the Kawakami family) makes her unavailable as a romantic object and thus produces an unbridgeable distance between the narrator and the “human affairs” of the narrated world.

The production of distance then leads to the transformation of the narrator’s psychological stance. This transformation occurs so abruptly that he reflects on it in the following way:

To tell the truth, at that time [i.e. when the narrator questions Kô’s mother about her son’s past marriage plans, a conversation which takes place after his visit to the

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<sup>364</sup> According to the narrator, this effect of intensification and amplification of “feeling” (*jôsho*) occurs especially when the elements that constitute the inertia of an atmosphere are particularly “strong” or “intense” (*môretsu*) such as the atmosphere of decay at the Jakkôin temple. The narrator writes: “The stronger the constitutive elements of the inertia are the more the inertia itself displays a tendency that, unshakable, it cannot be changed or removed.” (ibid. 217) The literary example, which the narrator subsequently provides to illustrate his point (and which is also discussed by Sôseki in *Bungakuron* IV.6), is the scene in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (act II, sc. 2-3) where a humorous and relieving effect cannot be produced by the porter’s joke on the scary door knocking in the aftermath of Duncan’s murder. The atmosphere of doom and horror in the *Macbeth* play (i.e. its “inertia”) is in fact so strong that it prevents the porter’s joke from producing a comic and soothing effect and instead lets it contribute to an intensification of the original feeling of horror.

<sup>365</sup> This is of course relevant for the theme of “heredity of affection” (*shumi no iden*) since the young woman at the Jakkôin graveyard – a daughter of the Onoda family, which before the Meiji Restoration served, like the Kawakami family, the lord of the Kii domain in his Edo residence – has “inherited” the “affection” of her grandmother for Kô’s grandfather who lies in the grave next to his grandson.

Jakkôin graveyard] I wasn't thinking at all about Kô-san or about his mother. My head was only filled by the wish to find out about the identity of the strange woman and about her relationship to Kô-san. My "I" [*yo*] that day was not the compassionate animal [*dôjôteki dôbutsu*] that I usually was. Instead I had totally transformed into a being that you could call a cool beast of curiosity [*reisei na kôkijû*]. Humans can become many things from one day to the other. After having been an evil person [*akunin*], the next day one can become a good man [*zennan*], and while having been a small-minded person [*shôjin*] at noon one can turn into a gentleman [*kunshi*] at night. [...]. That I who had always thought that there wasn't a profession more vulgar than the one of the detective and who had made public this opinion without any restraint, that I should have come to face things with a purely detective-like attitude [*junzen taru tanteiteki taido*], this phenomenon leaves me speechless.<sup>366</sup>

The erotic desire, which the encounter with the beautiful woman instills in the narrator – a desire that, however strong, has to remain unfulfilled given the woman's unbridgeable distance and her "inherited" affiliation with and "affection" for the dead world of the Kawakami family – subsequently becomes translated into the "cold" curiosity of the detective and the "vulgar" wish to produce knowledge (instead of seeking erotic fulfillment). Although, as a detective, the narrator still displays "excitement" and emotional involvement with his figures, his state increasingly calms down and an additional amount of distance between him and the narrated world is gained when his stance finally turns into the "honorable" perspective of a scholar.<sup>367</sup> After his discovery that the riddle of the young woman's identity can be solved by scientific deductions on the "heredity of taste" (through an analysis of Kô's wartime diary and the interview of an old retainer from the Kawakami family's former domain), the narrator becomes more relaxed and also more "intellectual." His involvement with the narrated "events" (*jiken*) is now purely based on his "ideas" (*omoitsuki*) rather than on physical "actions" (*kôdô*) in the narrated world (such as tracking down the young woman in the labyrinth of the city), which belong to the domain of the

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<sup>366</sup> Ibid. 224-225.

<sup>367</sup> See *ibid.* 235.

detective.<sup>368</sup> But while the narrator's self-esteem and self-satisfaction are resurrected through this shift from physical engagement to intellectual calculation, his attitude of emotional detachment hasn't fundamentally changed. After hearing about the sad fate of the grandmother of the young Jakkôin lady who was once forced to give up her love for Kô's grandfather and to marry another man, he writes:

Although I said "I am really sorry for her!" I was extremely happy since it turned out that my hypothesis was correct. Seen from this angle, even if this is all about the tragedy of the death of one's close friend, if one's predictions get fulfilled one can perhaps still be happy! If one urges somebody to wear something in order not to catch a cold and if this somebody is doing very well despite ignoring one's warnings, this makes one feel uncomfortable and one would almost wish that this other person catch a cold! Humans are egoistic in such a way and it doesn't make sense to blame me for this.<sup>369</sup>

Although the narrator's initial emotional involvement with Kô's fate thus appears to have entirely turned into a detached and "egoistic" stance, his position remains ambiguous until the end of the narrative when he – oxymoronically – sheds "clear cool tears" (*kiyoki suzushiki namida*) at the sight of the intimate harmony between Kô's mother and the Jakkôin lady who have finally been able to meet through his mediation.<sup>370</sup>

In *Shumi no iden* the distance of the narrator's position vis-à-vis the narrated world is thus inherently problematic. Although the narrator, especially after transforming into a detective-scholar, assumes the stance of "cool" (*reitan*) detachment, which Sôseki postulates as necessary for an author writing in the *shaseibun* genre, he adopts this position only after having been strongly affected – almost overwhelmed – sensationally and emotionally by the realm of "human affairs" as epitomized by the Jakkôin encounter. This illustrates the emotionally ambiguous stance of the *shaseibun* narrator who in *Neko* is also constantly

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<sup>368</sup> See *ibid.* 237 for the opposition of *omoitsuki* and *kôdô*. See also *ibid.* 227 where the narrator likens the attitude of the detective to the one of a thief (*dorobô*) and also disparagingly remarks that the atmosphere of mystery that has pervaded the story so far (with regard to the obscure identity of the woman, the short encounter with her carriage in the streets etc.) is "novel-like" (*shôsetsuteki*).

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.* 241.

<sup>370</sup> See *ibid.* 246.

drawn to strong feelings while depotentializing them through irony and parody. A similarly ambiguous narratorial stance, which is both emotionally detached and indirectly involved, also characterizes Sôseki's "sketch" *Kusamakura*, which I discuss next.

### 3. Poetry, Landscape and "Romanticism" in Natsume Sôseki's *Kusamakura*

#### 3.1. The Discourse on Poetry and Nature in *Kusamakura*

*Kusamakura*, while a *shaseibun* experiment, differs from Sôseki's earlier writings discussed so far in that it not only centers on "human affairs" but also reinserts nature and landscape into its textual universe.<sup>371</sup> *Kusamakura* also links the *shaseibun* writer's detached attitude toward "human feeling" to the experience of "nature" (*shizen*) and to the media of poetry and painting. Sôseki's first-person narrator – a young "painter in the Western style" (*yôgaka*) from Tôkyô who embarks on a trip to the countryside of Kyûshû – provides detailed reflections on poetry and painting (or on "art," more generally), which make up a major part of the *Kusamakura* text. One major assumption of these discursive reflections, which have been read as poetological theory that complement Sôseki's other critical

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<sup>371</sup> *Kusamakura* was first published in the journal *Shinshôsetsu* in 1906. "Nature" as well as "human affairs" constitute independent categories of "literary content" in Sôseki's *Bungakuron*. In the third chapter ("The Classes of Literary Content and their Relative Rank of Value") of the first section ("The Classes of Literary Content") of *Bungakuron* Sôseki differentiates between four different classes or categories of "literary content" (*bungakuteki naiyô*) or "F": "sensory F" (*kankakuteki F*), "human F" (*jinji F*), "supernatural F" (*chô-shizen F*) and "intellectual F" (*chishiki F*). He also explains more concretely that the material of "sensory F" consists in the "natural world" (*shizenkai*), the material of "human F" in "the drama of the human emotions mirroring good and evil, joy, anger, sadness and delight" (*ningen no shibai, sunawachi zen'aku kido airaku o kagami ni utsushitaru mono*), the material of "supernatural F" in religious content, and the material of "intellectual F" in "the concepts relating to the problems of human life" (*jinsei mondai ni kansuru kan'nen*). Since the fourth category ("intellectual F") is most often not accompanied by particularly strong emotions or feelings (*jôsho* or *f*) – which is necessary for a content to qualify as "literary" – its relative value as "literary content" is rather low; and although Sôseki emphasizes the importance of religious themes particularly in the Western literary tradition and discusses possible reasons for this importance in detail (cf. the latter section of *Bungakuron* I.3), he also expresses a lack of comprehension for the fact that the religious could become associated with any strong emotive value. As the following chapters of *Bungakuron* further demonstrate, the categories of literary content that are most emotionally loaded for Sôseki and that therefore also rank highest in their ability to qualify as genuinely "literary" are "sensory F" and "human F" – a fact that is also particularly relevant for my subsequent discussion of the poetic intertexts in *Kusamakura*.

writings,<sup>372</sup> is that poetry and nature (as landscape) are intrinsically linked. This conflation of art and nature, furthermore, leads to the promise that by composing landscape poetry or by traveling, like the *Kusamakura* narrator, through the mountain landscape in a poetic mood the emotional “suffering” brought about by a strong involvement with the realm of “human affairs” can be transcended. Sôseki’s narrator states:

When I walk through the mountains and approach objects of the natural landscape [*shizen no keibutsu*], all that I see and hear is interesting [*omoshiroi*]. It merely is interesting and no pain whatsoever arises. [...]. But why is it that there is no pain involved? This is because I see the landscape [*keshiki*] just as I would see a scroll of painting or read a volume of poetry.<sup>373</sup>

The ultimate result of this distantiation from “human feeling” and human suffering – mediated by a landscape that is experienced as “art” – lies in *omoshirosa* (“curious detachment”), which resonates with the allegedly uninvolved stance of the *shaseibun* narrator. “Curious detachment” also defines the attitude through which the *Kusamakura* narrator approaches “human affairs,” including his own attraction to the mysterious and alluring woman Nami whom he encounters in the hot spring resort Nakoi. He affirms his agenda:

I intend to treat the human beings whom I will encounter – farmers, village people, the clerks at the village office, old men and old women – without exception as staffage in the big landscape of nature [*daishizen no tenkei*]. [...]. It is my design to observe the people whom I will encounter with leisure from a high vantage point so that there will be no electric current of human feeling [*ninjô no denki*] between both sides.<sup>374</sup>

The narrator then asserts that, with a distance of three feet between him and the “figures in the painting” – including the alluring woman Nami – he will not incur the danger of becoming emotionally affected. However, as in earlier *shaseibun* writings by Sôseki, *Kusamakura* often ironically stages the danger of becoming involved and affected, physically

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<sup>372</sup> See for instance Turney 1985, 170.

<sup>373</sup> Natsume Sôseki, *Kusamakura* 8.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid. 12-13.



and psychologically, by the landscape and its inhabitants.<sup>375</sup> In this respect, the text gestures toward the deconstruction of its own aesthetic and ideological discourse.<sup>376</sup> In the following sections, I will ask how landscape and poetry relate to “human feeling” and emotional involvement in *Kusamakura*. While both are seemingly detached media, which Sôseki in Orientalizing fashion relates to an “Eastern” tradition of emotional distantiation, poetry and landscape also serve as the privileged means for lyrical and – as we shall see – “romantic” expression. It is my aim to gain a more precise understanding of this seeming contradiction or ambiguity in *Kusamakura*.

### 3.2 Objectification vs. Subjective Voice in *Haiku* and English Verse

A central idea in *Kusamakura* with regard to emotional detachment is “objectivity” or “objectification.” Sôseki’s narrator develops and enacts this idea especially in relation to *haiku* poetry. He asserts that an originally frightening experience or any other strong feeling can be turned into poetry or painting and thus emotionally distanced if it is viewed “objectively” (*kyakkenteki ni*). If represented “objectively” and thus severed from the poet’s immediate experience, strong feelings such as “frustrated love” (*shitsuren*) can be transformed into an appropriate topic for painting because the initial suffering inherent in the feeling has been excised and only its “gentle” (*yasashii*) aspect and less violent feelings like

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<sup>375</sup> In chapter one, for instance, the narrator’s aesthetic ruminations are interrupted by his stumbling over a stone on his path, which not only marks the irruption of narrative time into an otherwise timeless discourse but also, ironically, the physically hurtful reminder of the potential impact of a world that this very discourse seeks to depotentialize as mere aesthetic artifact. On the physicality of the body and its movements in *Kusamakura* see Ôtsu 1990. See also, more recently, with regard to the body as a site of “subconscious” movement and resistance Ubukata Tomoko’s chapter “*Kusamakura* – ‘undô’ no hyôshô” in Ubukata 2009.

<sup>376</sup> Atsuko Sakaki, for instance, argues that the narrator’s highbrow poetic and artistic discourse becomes challenged by other more prosaic and colloquial discourses in the text (for instance those pronounced by the local people), which infiltrate hybridity into an otherwise monologic narratorial stance. Although the narrator, according to Sakaki, acts as an “anthropologist-nativist” whose position resembles the one of a colonizer watching “native” people, his gaze is also reverted and returned by the local people who, instead of letting themselves be objectified, playfully usurp the colonizer’s position and thus paradoxically objectify the objectifier. Sasaki also diagnoses a “feminist resistance to male narrative authority” with regard to the reversed power relationship between the narrator and Nami who often playfully subverts his discourse and Ophelia fantasies (in the same way as she returns and “corrects” his *haiku* in chapter 4). See the chapter “Unmaking the Tableau: Natsume Soseki’s *Kusamakura* and Gender/Genre Politics” in Sakaki 1999.

compassion or sorrow remain. The night when he arrives in the Nakoi hot spring resort in chapter 3 the *Kusamakura* narrator confronts the following scene: Nami, in order to tease him, hides in a dark corner of the garden and uncannily intonates a *waka* allegedly composed by a madwoman who once inhabited the place.<sup>377</sup> Under the influence of Nami’s “frightening” (*kowai*) performance, the narrator composes (among others) the following *haiku* poems:

春の夜の雲に濡らすや洗ひ髪

Dampened by the clouds of the spring night: the woman’s freshly washed [and untied] hair!

春や今宵歌つかまつる御姿

This spring night I see a lady humbly offering a poem [to me].<sup>378</sup>

In the above poems, the narrator’s feelings – his erotic attraction for Nami as well as his fright at her apparition – are encapsulated in expressions such as “freshly washed hair” (*araigami*) and “a lady” (*onsugata*), which point to the aspect of “human affairs,” i.e. the danger of emotional entanglement and suffering, in the poems. At the same time, these faintly eroticized pointers to “human affairs” are also merged with natural imagery such as the “clouds,” which – through elegant poetic superimposition – seem to fuse with and dampen the woman’s hair. The objectification of feeling through poetry, as theorized by *Kusamakura*’s narrator, consists of this merger of “human affairs” (and their emotions) with specific objects of landscape – a merger that also reduces the emotional intensity inherent in “human feeling” and thus renders it “gentle” and even elegant. However, while poetry thus becomes a medium of emotional detachment, the narrator’s discourse on “objectification” as

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<sup>377</sup> The poem is the only *waka* quoted in *Kusamakura* and was allegedly composed by the mythical “Nagara maiden” (*Nagara no otome*) who committed suicide because she was unable to decide between two suitors. The poem is from volume 8 of the *Man’yōshū* and reads: あきづけばをばなが上に置く露の、けぬべくもわは、おもほゆるかも (“When autumn comes, dew settles on the leaves of the pampas grass. It seems to me as if I should vanish [i.e. die because of my unhappy love] in the same way as this dew”, quoted from *Kusamakura* 25). This love poem also couples “human affairs” and natural imagery in an exemplary manner. The gendering of the poetic quotes in *Kusamakura* – with Nami reciting a *Man’yōshū waka* and the narrator English poetry and *kanshi* – is an interesting phenomenon. Both partners, however, participate in *haiku* composition, and the fact that Nami playfully corrects and rewrites the narrator’s poems (see the beginning of chapter 4) could be seen as a challenge to the gender hierarchy.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.* 36. It should be noted that the expression *onsugata* in the second *haiku* is slightly ambiguous and could also be read as a honorific personal pronoun (“you”).

well as his poetic compositions at the same time self-consciously and ironically highlight *haiku* composition as a medium that carries and conveys “human feeling.”

The dynamic of ironic and self-conscious emotional objectification becomes even more amplified in the quotation of English poetic intertexts in *Kusamakura*. A good example is George Meredith’s (1828-1909) poem “Sadder than is the moon’s lost light,” which first appeared in Meredith’s novel *The Shaving of Shagpat: An Arabian Entertainment* (1856). In *Kusamakura* the first two strophes of the poem are cited in the English original after a scene in which the narrator has unexpectedly encountered Nami’s seductive gaze.<sup>379</sup> After this brief moment of intense communication the narrator reflects in the following manner:

Suddenly what came to my mind was the following poem:

Sadder than is the moon’s lost light,  
Lost ere the kindling of dawn,  
To travelers journeying on,  
The shutting of thy fair face from my sight.

If I was in love [*kesô shite*] with the woman wearing the *ichôgaeshi* hairstyle [i.e. Nami] and wished to meet her at all costs and if, shortly before being able to meet her, I had to part from her with this one glance that, so overwhelmingly unexpected, would fill me with joy and regret, I think I would compose exactly such a poem. And I would have probably also added these two lines:

Might I look on thee in death,  
With bliss I would yield my breath.

Luckily I already left behind me the realm of what’s called longing or love [*koi to ka ai to ka iu kyôgai*], and even if I wished to feel this kind of suffering I couldn’t. But the poetic intensity [*shishu*] of the incident that just occurred now for a brief moment is very well captured in these five or six lines. Even if there wasn’t such a painful longing between me and the *ichôgaeshi* woman, it would still be interesting [*omoshiroi*] to match our current relationship to the content of this poem. Or it would also be pleasing to interpret the meaning of this poem with our case as illustration.<sup>380</sup>

In this scene, an “objectification” dynamic, similar to the one that was possible with the *haiku* poetry in chapter 3, unfolds. Strong feelings that could potentially develop between the narrator and Nami are transposed into and contained within the poem so that the real relationship remains playful and “interesting” (*omoshiroi*). Whereas the *haiku* poems

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<sup>379</sup> See for this scene *ibid.* 48.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.* 49-50.

“objectified” their composer’s feelings by reducing their intensity and rendering them “gentle,” Meredith’s poem stages a strongly subjective first-person voice – absent in the *haiku* – that intensifies the feeling of “longing” and “love,” not only by dramatically staging a determination to die but also by producing an intense dialogue between the male speaker and his imagined female interlocutor.

This aspect resonates with Sôseki’s “theory of literary distance” (*kankakuron*) in *Bungakuron* where he asserts that, in “lyrical poetry” (*jojôshi*) the main function is to “sing feelings” (*jô o utau*) and the speaker should be the “I” of the poet. Sôseki states:

If one wishes to sing one’s feelings in poignant [*tsûsetsu*] fashion, then the one who sings [in the poem] must be oneself [*jiko*]. This is because there is [no speaker] who possesses feelings [*jôsho*] as poignant as one’s own. For this reason lyrical poetry starts with “I” [*yo*] and ends with “I.” “I” should be the composer of the poem, and if this cannot be the case then it should be the poem’s protagonist with whom the composer has become one. This is why, with a lyrical poem, we [as readers] are always able to enjoy the flavor of poetry with the least amount of distance possible.<sup>381</sup>

In order to illustrate his argument Sôseki also cites and compares two English poems by Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74) and Robert Burns (1759-96), which both thematize the shame and resentment of a young girl betrayed by an unfaithful lover.<sup>382</sup> Sôseki argues:

If I asked, after thus citing both poems, which of them is most apt to move [*ugokasu*] the reader and if a reader answered that both poems are moving in the same way, there would be no room for further discussion. If he answered that Goldsmith had a stronger appeal to our poetic sensibility [*shijô ni uttauru koto setsu nari*], I would say “that’s fine” and nothing more. But if he inversed his judgment and instead made the claim that Burns had the stronger appeal and that the other couldn’t match the former, I would ask again: why is it that Burn’s appeal is stronger? If the reader didn’t know what to answer and had difficulty in giving order to his impressions in the flat medium of language, I wouldn’t refrain from providing him with the following

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<sup>381</sup> Natsume Sôseki, *Bungakuron* II 207.

<sup>382</sup> I here quote both poems as cited in *Bungakuron* II, 202-205. Goldsmith’s poem goes: “When lovely woman stoops to folly / And finds too late that men betray, – / What charm can soothe her melancholy, / What art can wash her guilt away? // The only art her guilt to cover, / To hide her shame from every eye, / To give repentance to her lover / And wring his bosom, is – to die.” Burn’s poem reads: “Ye banks and braes o’ bonnie Doon, / How can ye bloom sae fair! / How can ye chant, ye little birds, / And I sae fu’ o’ care! // Thou’ll break my heart, thou bonnie bird, / That sings upon the bough; / Thou minds me o’ the happy days / When my fause Luv was true. // Thou’ll break my heart, thou bonnie bird / That sings beside thy mate; / For sae I sat, and sae I sang, / And wist na o’ my fate. // Aft hae I rov’d by bonnie Doon, / To see the wood-bine twine; / And ilka bird sang o’ its love, / And sae did I o’ mine. // Wi’ lightsome heart I pu’d a rose, / Frae aff its thorny tree; / And my fause luv staw the rose, / But left the thorn wi’ me.”

perhaps superfluous explanation and from exposing the strengths and weaknesses of both poems. Goldsmith's poem is cold [*reisei*] and his treatment of the desperate sorrow [*kyūshū*] of the girl is as unauthentic as the dancing of a man made of wood or the crying of a stone-woman would be. Burns' piece, on the contrary, is full of desperation [*hiai*] and nothing more. It spills over with regret [*kaikon*] that could fill days and months and penetrate the landscape of mountains and rivers. This is the difference of the impact that both poems had on me. My argument has to depart from this difference. Departing from this difference I will have to search for the objects [*taishō*] in both compositions that produce this difference. With this task in mind, I'll answer: first, Burns' poem talks about birds, plants, rivers and roses and is thus full of sensory materials [*kankakuteki zairyō*]; second, Burns' poem exclaims "ye banks!" or "thou bonnie bird" and it thus uses projective expressions [*tōshutsugo*]; third, Burns' poem mentions the harmony of the birds' singing and gazes at the grasses on the river bank and, by opposing these to the lonely sorrow and the hidden tears of the girl, it well conforms to the "law of amplification" [of the emotional effect, *kyōseihō*].<sup>383</sup> Goldsmith's poem doesn't display these three points, and this fact would already be sufficient to decide which of the two pieces is superior. However, even leaving these three points aside, there is something more that would allow making the decision at one quick glance. This is the fourth point: Burns' poem conforms well to the "law of distance" [between the reader and the text, *kankakuhō*]. The one who composes the song is Burns, but the one who actually sings is the young girl. Since the young girl and the author are standing next to each other and become one and the same in this poem, the reader is able to cross the fence which the poet usually builds around [his figures], and, instead of gazing at the young woman from afar, he can directly face the unhappy girl. In Goldsmith's poem, however, the reader cannot face the doomed girl directly in the poem, and he only learns about her recent fate through the cold mediation of the poet. That such a poem should lack in tears and desperation is self-evident.<sup>384</sup>

Sōseki's comparative analysis of the two poems by Goldsmith and Burns in *Bungakuron* is helpful to evaluate the "poetic intensity" (*shishu*) of Meredith's poem in *Kusamakura*. In Sōseki's analysis, two main factors determine the degree of emotional intensity of a literary text: the mode of representation of natural imagery (a point that I discuss in the following section) and the relative distance of the text, depending on the degree of subjectivity inherent in the speaker's stance. Rather than any third-person speaker, a first-person voice, as in Burns' or Meredith's poem, is the most authentic medium for conveying a strong subjective stance and for reducing the distance between the reader and the text.

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<sup>383</sup> Terms like "projected expressions" and "law of amplification" are discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of *Bungakuron* ("The Interrelations of Literary Contents") of which "Theory of literary distance" ("Kankakuron") is a subsection. See also my discussion in the next subsection of this chapter.

<sup>384</sup> *Bungakuron* II 204-206.

In *Bungakuron*, Sôseki defines the ability of a text to impact the reader as the power of literary “illusion” (*genwaku*), which could be further characterized as the means through which the reader becomes subjectively and emotionally involved with the text. Because of the strongly subjective first-person voice in Meredith’s poem, the literary “illusion” it produces is strong and lets poetry come to the fore as a privileged medium for producing effects of emotional immediacy. However, Sôseki’s narrator in *Kusamakura* also self-consciously and ironically highlights the power of poetic expression as an emotionally loaded medium only to neutralize it again through his discourse. The ambiguous oscillation between subjective expression and emotional non-involvement that surfaces here is even more complex with regard to the quoted *kanshi* intertexts in *Kusamakura*.

### 3.3. Human Feeling and Nature: “Romanticism” in Sôseki’s Theory of Literature

In *Bungakuron* Sôseki argues that the juxtaposition of natural imagery with “human affairs” (*jinji*) in a literary text leads to the intensification of the text’s emotional impact on the reader. Sôseki offers a detailed discussion of this phenomenon in the fourth section of his treatise, which is entitled “The Interrelations Between Literary Contents” (*Bungakuteki naiyô no sôgo kankei*) and devoted to the “means” (*shudan*) by which literary “illusion” (as emotional impact of a text on its reader) is produced. The fundamental argument is that literary illusion and the emotional quality or impact (“f”) of a text in most cases become amplified if two “contents” of different kinds – most often a “human” content and a “natural” one – are combined, partly as the result of addition.<sup>385</sup> Both “f” and its literary illusion would

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<sup>385</sup> In *Bungakuron* Sôseki broadly defines “literature” as the product of the combination of a content-related “idea” (labeled as “F,” probably standing for “focus”) and an “emotion” (*jôsho*) associated with that idea (labeled as “f,” probably standing for “feeling”). See for this definition *Bungakuron* I 31. See also Komori Yôichi’s discussion of “F” and “f” in his article “Bungakuron” in Komori 2010. Although Sôseki’s theory of emotionality relies on contemporary Western psychological and scientific research and discourses, which are widely acknowledged and cited in *Bungakuron*, I would argue that the initial necessity for Sôseki to theorize “literature” within the parameters of “human feeling” is anchored in the larger historical negotiations and dynamics, which my dissertation describes. For Sôseki’s appropriation of scientific and psychological discourse

be reduced if only one content was the focus of the text as with the so-called “realist method” (*shajitsuhô*), which is generally used to depict “human affairs” exclusively.

A particularly interesting “interrelation” between different “literary contents” occurs in what Sôseki terms the “harmonizing method” (*chôwahô*) where two different contents are juxtaposed and therefore “harmonized” in one and the same text.<sup>386</sup> The example that Sôseki cites to illustrate this technique is the following couplet excerpted from Bai Juyi’s (772-846) “Song of Everlasting Sorrow” (*Changhenge*, composed in 806):

玉容寂寞淚闌干	Her [Yang Guifei’s] beautiful face looked desolate, and her
	tears were streaming down,
梨花一枝春帶雨	The bough of a pear tree in flower under the spring rain. <sup>387</sup>

Sôseki argues that the strong effect of this couplet – its pathos as it were – consists in the visual juxtaposition of the human image of the beautiful palace lady in tears with the natural imagery of a blooming tree under the spring rain. The aesthetic effect is heightened because both “materials” – the human and the natural one – are not metaphors for each other but are amplified mutually by their co-presence in the text.<sup>388</sup> Sôseki explains:

When human material [*jinjiteki zairyô*] is matched with sensory material [*kankakuteki zairyô*] or when sensory material is juxtaposed to human material, they naturally fuse in the text, prevent monotony, and make the text livelier. This fusion also produces an

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see LaMarre 2008 and Murphy 2008. It should also be noted that Sôseki’s *Bungakuron* has recently become subject to increasing scholarly attention, including a complete annotation by Kamei Shunsuke in 2007 (for the edition of *Bungakuron*, which I use), the publication of a partial English translation and a growing number of articles in both English and Japanese. See Natsume 2009 as well as the articles in the special issues on *Bungakuron* in *Japan Forum* 20.1 (2008) and *Bungaku* 13.3 (2012).

<sup>386</sup> In “The Interrelations between Literary Contents” Sôseki also defines other “means” (*shudan*) through which a human content can become combined with a non-human one: for instance, the “projective method” (*tôshutsuhô*) through which a poet expresses a non-human content by using personified metaphors, or the “injective method” (*tônyûhô*) through which a human content is exemplified by non-human similes. Sôseki additionally discusses “associations separated from the self” (*jiko to kakuri seru rensô*), which are associations between non-human contents; “comical associations” (*kokkeiteki rensô*), the “harmonizing technique” (see my discussion above), the “oppositional technique” (*tairitsuhô*), and finally the “realist technique” (*shajitsuhô*), which is the only literary technique that relies on the representation of merely one literary content.

<sup>387</sup> *Bungakuron* II 83. Sôseki only cites the second verse in the Chinese original (while omitting the character 春) and then paraphrases the first one.

<sup>388</sup> To illustrate the additive emotional effect brought about by this juxtaposition of two different literary contents (F and F’) and their emotional correlates (f and f’) through the “harmonization technique” Sôseki also employs the mathematical formula “f+f’=2f or 2f’”. See *ibid.* 94.

emotion [*jôsho*], which is much superior to the one that these materials would have produced separately. [...]. A scholar of Chinese letters [*kangakusha*], in a critique of a poem, once remarked that “both the human feelings and the natural landscape are exquisitely executed” [*jôkei kenchi*], which means that he was praising the fact that the harmonization of human materials with sensory ones in the poem was particularly successful. Japanese people have always had an innate love for nature, and since ancient times *kanshi* and *waka* poetry as well as literary prose [*shiika bibun*] couldn’t be composed without this harmonization. As the background for human affairs there always had to be nature, and the foreground for nature necessarily consisted in human affairs. The people of the West don’t have a particularly strong delectation for the natural landscape and the fact that they don’t think this harmonization to be a necessary ingredient in their literary compositions is indeed a noteworthy phenomenon for somebody from the East.<sup>389</sup>

Sôseki argues that the harmonizing technique is representative of the Japanese (or Eastern) poetic tradition while it is rather rare in English literature. In this vein he also criticizes Samuel Richardson’s (1689-1761) novels for treating only one single kind of “material” – namely the human one – in order to produce pathos and to move the readers. The emotional effect that Sôseki associates with the Japanese or Eastern literary tradition is of a different kind and is crystallized in expressions such as “taste” (*shumi* 趣味), “poetic excitement” (*shishu* 詩趣), and “poetic mood” (*shikyô* 詩興). The emotional impact linked to these poetic effects appears less intense (and vulgar) than Richardson’s regime of undiluted pathos, but it nonetheless creates a literary “illusion” (*genwaku*), which Sôseki qualifies as stronger than the one produced by Richardson’s novels or by the “realist method” (*shajitsuhô*).

At the end of his chapter devoted to the “realist method,” which concludes Sôseki’s discussion of the different “means” through which literary “illusion” is produced, he subsumes all “combinatory” methods – i.e. the ones bringing together different types of literary content in a text – under the label “idealist” or “romantic” and he opposes these to the “realist” method, which uses only one type of literary material (“F”) and also only possesses one type of literary emotion (“f”) attached to this material. In a numeric chart Sôseki also shows that, owing to the amplificatory effect brought about by the combination of different

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid. 84-85.



contents and their emotions, the “amount of emotion” (*jôsho no bunryô*) produced by “romantic” texts is necessarily higher than the one produced by “realist” texts.<sup>390</sup> About the relative merits and demerits of these two kinds of methods, which are fundamentally different in their way to approach literary representation, Sôseki also writes:

The strength of the realist school [*shajitsu-ha*], despite the fact that it became placed at the bottom of the chart [representing the amount of emotion produced by texts belonging to the romantic and realist schools respectively], is that it is close to natural representation, that it doesn't lie about the real world, that it is unpretentious [*mujaki*] and does not seek to show off literary skill, and finally that it can reach unexpected depth despite its bland [*heitan*] way of representation. In all these respects the realist school can well face up to the romantic one. However, its weakness is its tendency to sink down to the banal and tasteless as well as to lack force and elegance [*fûkaku*]. The strength of the romantic school [*roman-ha*] or of the idealist school [*risô-ha*], on the other hand, is its ability to be full of strong stimulations [*shigeki tsuyoki ni ari*], to be original and innovative, to abound in limitless tones and rhymes, to be full of vitality and tension and to vitalize and stimulate the reader as well. The shortcomings of this school, however, are numerous as well. There are the dangers of unnaturalness, bad taste and immaturity, and there are ridiculous ambition and random eccentricity.<sup>391</sup>

Although Sôseki does not explicitly relate the romantic or idealist school to a specific genre, it becomes clear from the majority of the cited examples that “romanticism” – as a regime of representation in which human and natural contents are combined to form an aesthetically “stimulating” linguistic nexus – is associated with poetry, both English and Japanese. The “realist” method, on the other hand, is the representational regime most suited to the aesthetic of the “novel” (*shôsetsu*), which does not represent the human realm with ornate language and natural imagery but instead depicts reality in its unadorned triviality (*heibon*) and in everyday (i.e. non-poetic) language. Literariness – i.e. the ability of a text to produce “literary illusion” – is thus primarily associated with “romanticism” and the language of poetry. Despite the fact that Sôseki mostly cites from English literary sources, the kernel of the chapter “The Interrelations of Literary Contents” – and thus the kernel of Sôseki's

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<sup>390</sup> See *ibid.* 189.

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.* 190.

conception of “literary illusion” and “literature” (*bungaku*) more broadly – points back to the aesthetic format of Japanese *waka*, *kanshi* and *haikai* poetry, which “harmonizes” human “foregrounds” with natural “backgrounds” in the same poetic text.

Romanticism, as the regime of representation that links human content to natural imagery in the emotionally loaded medium of poetic language, also refers back to a specific subjective mode in which human emotions (*jō*) are expressed and represented symbolically through natural imagery. A theoretical text by Sōseki that discusses “romanticism” as a genuinely “subjective” (*shukanteki*) stance in literary production is Sōseki’s essay *Sōsakuka no taido* (*The Attitude of the Literary Writer*), which was first presented as a talk in February 1908.<sup>392</sup> In this essay, Sōseki broadly differentiates between two fundamental attitudes toward the world in general and literary texts more in particular: whereas the “objective” (*kyakkanteki*) attitude, which is the one of the scientist or merchant, principally seeks to gain knowledge about the things in the world (regarding their form, market value, etc.), the subjective attitude, belonging to the artist, attempts to “savor” and “enjoy” (*tanoshimu* or *ureshigaru*) these same things without relationship to knowledge or material gain.<sup>393</sup> Both these fundamental attitudes reiterate themselves on different levels of complexity that shape the representation of knowledge as well as the composition (and reception) of literary texts. While, on its most basic level, the objective attitude attempts to ascertain the “perceptual” properties of an object (such as color or form), the corresponding subjective stance describes the same object using “similes” that liken or compare it to other objects. On a more elevated level of complexity, the objective knowledge becomes “conceptual” and metaphorical substitution (replacing the use of similes) is the corresponding technique of representation on

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<sup>392</sup> For a more detailed account of the background of the talk see Komori Yōichi’s explanatory note to *Sōsakuka no taido* (in *Sōseki zenshū*, vol. 16, 690-691).

<sup>393</sup> The example, which Sōseki provides to illustrate the difference between the objective and subjective attitudes on their most fundamental level, relies on the opposition between the sake merchant who tastes an alcoholic beverage in order to check its suitability as a market commodity and the connoisseur who tastes the same beverage with only the goal of pleasure in his mind. See Natsume Sōseki, *Sōsakuka no taido* 186-188.

the subjective side. The most complex kind of objective attitude is ultimately reached through the mathematical regime of representation, which organizes and orders phenomenal objects in abstract symbolic fashion. The corresponding most elevated degree of subjectivity or “romanticism” consists in what Sôseki terms “symbolic” substitution.<sup>394</sup>

In this context Sôseki introduces the concept of “mood” (*kibun*), which he defines as a “subjective content” (*shukan no naiyô*) originally linked to and produced by specific situations or configurations in the exterior world (*higa no sekai*). These original situations, however, are often irretrievably lost and as the “mood” also becomes more complex a difficulty arises for the “I” to relate back the different components of its “mood,” in their entirety, to the corresponding objects in the exterior world. This then leads to a fundamental separation or gap between the subjective state – or “mood” – and the possibility of its objective representation, which can trigger what Sôseki defines as an “infinite longing” (English in the original with Japanese translation *mugen no shôkei*) for this lost state of representation. Out of this situation the need for “symbolic” subjective expression finally arises. Sôseki writes:

It thus happens that you suffer and would like to give expression to this suffering but that this is just not possible. If you leave it that way then that’s of course it, but if you wanted to give at least one tenth of it expression, be it in an incomplete manner, then you would have to have recourse to symbols [*shôchô*]. You don’t express the ten parts of it – “don’t express” would be the wrong wording: you *cannot* express them; and so inevitably you leave it to one tenth. Of course, if you only wanted to express your mood [*kibun*] as mood, then you could merely say “I am very sad” or “I am a bit happy” and there wouldn’t be any need to discuss the possibility or impossibility of expressing it fully. However, if you attempted to find the object of this somehow deep, broad and complicated mood in the objective outside world [*kyakkanteki naru higa no sekai*], then you would have to substitute the ten parts of your mood with a form [*keisô*] that only corresponds to one tenth of it and the remaining nine parts would be merely alluded to [*omoiokosu*] by this symbol. But since this is something difficult to do even for the one who has the mood, for somebody else it becomes even more difficult to understand. It sometimes happens that you only hear one part and then know the ten parts of it as well, but this only works if you are somebody who is able

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<sup>394</sup> See *ibid.* 200-202. Sôseki differentiates between metaphor and symbol by defining the metaphorical relation between two objects as a rather arbitrary one that needs to be made explicit while the symbolic relation between two things is natural and immediate.

to see one part and then to feel the whole ten parts. And even if you see one tenth and then feel ten tenths, this doesn't necessarily mean that you feel exactly the same as the one who made the expression. What you can use as symbols belongs to the exterior world, but what these hint at [*anji suru tokoro wa*] is the mood of the self [*jiko no kibun*]. It is *my* mood, and to say it very clearly, it is *not* the mood of somebody else or the mood of an outside object.<sup>395</sup>

The “forms” (*keisô*) of the “outside world” through which the “mood” of the first-person subject (“*my* mood”) becomes, even if only incompletely, expressed and hinted at most often are natural objects of landscape. Nature constitutes the privileged medium through which feelings can gain material form in poetic language. The emotional quality of the “mood” in Sôseki’s theory, moreover, interestingly remains unspecified and thus turns into a potentially overdetermined receptacle for different emotional or affective types. In *Sôsakuka no taido*, Sôseki differentiates between different types of feeling that belong to the “subjective attitude”: namely the feelings (*jôsô*) associated with the beautiful (*bi*), the good (*zen*) and the sublime (*sô*). The “good,” i.e. the feeling related to moral judgments, also often subsumes the emotions of “love” (*ai*) and “hope” (*kibô*).<sup>396</sup> All these different feelings could potentially determine the poet’s “mood.” At the same time, however, Sôseki leaves the strong subjectivity of this romantic “mood, which is” subjective to the point of being nearly incommensurable to communication and objective representation, unspecified with regard to its content.

#### **3.4. Subjectivity, Nature and “Romanticism”: The *Kanshi* Poetry in *Kusamakura***

In the sixth chapter of *Kusamakura* Sôseki’s first-person narrator, before composing and writing down a *kanshi* poem, similarly analyzes his subjective “mood” (*kokochi* or *mûdo*), which allowed for the production of the poem. In this discussion, the narrator

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid. 203-205.

<sup>396</sup> See *ibid.* 213-214. Sôseki concedes that these categories are not entirely discreet so that the feelings associated with the beautiful could, for instance, also be related to the “good” and the “sublime,” etc.

describes his mood as “hard to grasp” (*toraegatashi*) and difficult to represent through the medium of either painting or poetry. He states that this subjective “feeling” (*waga kanji*) has not come to him from the exterior world and is also not reducible to a specific object in the natural landscape (*keibutsu*). At the same time, the narrator is also aware that, in order to express and represent this mood, he has to symbolically substitute it with natural imagery. He defines this challenge in the following way: “The only problem is which kind of landscape and human feeling [*keijō*] I should bring into my poem in order to copy [*utsusu*] this broad and somehow indistinct inner state.”<sup>397</sup> And although this state is highly subjective and individual – the narrator repeatedly points out that he is seeking the representation of only his “own mood” (*jiko no kokochi*) – it remains “abstract” (*chūshōteki*) and affectively unspecific. Out of this “mood” the following *kanshi* poem emerges:

青春二三月	In the second and third month of spring
愁随芳草長	My melancholy follows the long fragrant grasses.
閑花落空庭	The quietly blooming flowers have fallen in the empty courtyard.
素琴橫虛堂	A silent zither is lying in the deserted hall.
蠨蛸掛不動	A spider is hanging down motionless,
篆烟繞竹梁	Incense smoke is curling around the bamboo beams.
独坐無隻語	I sit alone, not saying a word,
方寸認微光	In my heart I perceive a small ray of light.
人間徒多事	The world of men is full of useless sorrows,
此境孰可忘	But who could ever forget this state [I am in right now]?
会得一日靜	Having by chance earned this one day of peace,
正知百年忙	I now know exactly what a hundred years of restlessness mean.
遐懷寄何處	Where is it that I could direct my deep feelings?
緬邈白雲鄉	I'll send them high up to the realm of the white clouds. <sup>398</sup>

This poem is “romantic” – following Sōseki’s own definition – in that it couples “human affairs” or feelings with natural phenomena so that the feelings relate to or speak through the

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<sup>397</sup> *Kusamakura* 78.

<sup>398</sup> Cf. SZ III, 79-80 (*Kusamakura* volume); I however quote the poem from SZ XVIII, 201-204 (annotations by Ikka Tomoyoshi). In *Kusamakura* the poem is presented as a genuine production of the first-person narrator, but it was actually composed by Sōseki himself in March 1898 while he was teaching in Kumamoto. In later editions of Sōseki’s works the poem became anthologized under the title “Sitting quietly on a spring day” (*Shunjitsu seiza*). Cf. also Yoshikawa 2010, 73-76.

landscape. The poem also contains a subjective (first-person) stance that expresses an affectively unspecific “mood” through the “symbolic” forms of natural imagery. This happens in the first and last couplet of the poem where the “vastness” of the speaker’s “melancholy” and “deep feelings” is underlined and materially extended by the movement through the landscape: in the first couplet in the vast expanse of the spring grasses, and in the last two verses in the limitless space of the sky. The speaker’s “mood” and his feelings seem emotionally loaded, and a certain ambiguity permeates the tone of the poem. The setting, on the one hand, suggests a psychological state of peacefulness and equilibrium, which is underscored by the natural imagery: for instance, the stillness of the spider’s webs or the quiet movements of the smoldering incense smoke in the poet’s hut that are replicated by the peaceful posture of his own sitting. On the other hand, however, this very peacefulness also makes the poet intensely aware of the underlying tensions and the restlessness of his life in the social world beyond the ephemeral idyll of the hut, thus producing an atmosphere of unease and almost aggressive resentment.

The poet’s “melancholia” and “deep feelings” could be read as signifiers for discontent that resonate with strands of the classical Chinese poetic tradition, in particular eremitic verse. In his early essay *Eikoku shijin no tenchi sansen ni taisuru kannen* (*The Conceptual Attitude of English Poets toward Heaven and Earth, Mountains and Rivers*), which was written in 1893, five years before the *kanshi* poem translated above, Sôseki defines “naturalism” (*shizenshugi*) or “romanticism” (*rômanchishizumu*) as the 18<sup>th</sup> century English literary movement that sought to leave behind the poetic conventions and the court-centered life of classicism. Instead poets would leave the cities, go to the mountains and woods, and seek a mode of expression – often in nature poetry – that would reflect their true “natural self.”<sup>399</sup> What, however, fundamentally motivated the poets to leave their life in the

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<sup>399</sup> Natsume Sôseki, *Eikoku shijin no tenchi sansen ni taisuru kannen* 23.

city and seek a “truer” and more subjective mode of expression was their “discontent” (*fuhei*), which, depending on the poet, might have originated in different motivations. While Oliver Goldsmith (1728-74) resented society for rather economic reasons, William Cowper (1731-1800) felt a religiously motivated discontent with the vanity of the people, and Robert Burns (1759-96) was driven by the egalitarian desire for social justice.<sup>400</sup> Sôseki’s essay is particularly interesting in that it appropriates a major motive in the classical Chinese poetic tradition – discontent with the social world and the conventionality of court-centered literary culture and the renouncement of a social career in favor of an eremitic life amid the “mountains and rivers” – to deftly merge it with English romanticism.

Another *kanshi* poem, which was composed by Sôseki at the same moment as the two poems quoted in *Kusamakura* – in March 1898 – but not included there, brings to the fore, in a much more radical and drastic manner, the close interconnection between “romantic” subjectivity, the “naturalist” representation of landscape, and the motive of social or political discontent. The untitled poem reads:

吾心若有苦	My heart harbors pain.
求之遂難求	But trying to examine it closely, it is hard to examine.
俯仰天地際	When I look up at the expanse between Heaven and Earth,
胡為發哀聲	Why do I let out this plaintive cry
春花幾開落	The flowers of spring: how often have they bloomed and then scattered?
世事幾迭更	The affairs of the world: how often have they undergone change?
烏兔促鬢髮	As sun and moon make their rounds my hair becomes white.
意氣輕功名	But my ambition looks down upon fame in the world.
昨夜生月暈	Yesterday night a halo surrounded the moon,
颯風朝滿城	And a whirlwind was blowing through the town in the morning.
夢醒枕上聽	I woke up in my dream and on my pillow I could hear
孤劍匣底鳴	My solitary sword emitting a scream at the bottom of its chest.
慨然振衣起	With stern determination I shook my robe and stood up,
登樓望前程	And I climbed up the tower to watch the way ahead of me.
前程望不見	But the way ahead of me I couldn’t see.

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<sup>400</sup> See *ibid.* 46-47.





gradually reduces the possibility of political participation; and through the parallel structure of the couplet the flowers are also explicitly associated with the “affairs of the world,” i.e. with the realm of the political.

A major related theme that seems to, indirectly at least, permeate this poem is youth as the period in life when political participation and activism is possible if not mandatory. The *kanshi* poem, which Sôseki quotes in chapter 12 of *Kusamakura*, in fact explicitly mentions this theme. The second part of the poem reads:

孤愁高雲際	My solitary grief extends to the fringes of the high clouds.
大空斷鴻歸	On the vast sky a lonely goose, separated from its flock, flies home.
寸心何窈窕	My heart feels deep and calm.
縹渺忘是非	In its limitlessness it has forgotten about true and false.
三十我欲老	I am thirty years old and about to turn old,
韶光猶依依	But the spring colors are still young and fresh.
逍遙隨物化	I wander around and follow the transformation of things.
悠然對芬菲	With a calm mind I face the fragrant spring grasses. <sup>404</sup>

This poem undoubtedly displays a more detached and reconciliatory tone than the one translated before, but the original passion and strength of the speaker’s political and social ambition are nonetheless still recognizable in the grandiose and cosmic dimensionality of the first couplet. The poem also makes it clear that the feeling of intense grief – as well as its appeasement through Zhuangzian “wandering” and an acceptance of constant transformation (in the previous poem precisely the origin of grief) – is intrinsically connected to the speaker’s youth, i.e. his age of thirty years, which was approximately the age when Sôseki composed the poem and which is exactly the age of *Kusamakura*’s narrator.<sup>405</sup> Youth is a particularly relevant motive in that it not only relates to the heroic theme but also to another fundamentally romantic one, namely love, which is especially the case for *Kusamakura*. Because of the unspecified nature of the poet’s “grief” or “mood” in the above *kanshi* poems,

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<sup>404</sup> *Kanshibun* 194-198; see also Yoshikawa 2010, 66-70. The poem is untitled in *Kusamakura*; the title “Spring Feelings” (*Shunkiyô*) was added in later editions.

<sup>405</sup> See for the narrator’s age *Kusamakura* 4.

especially the ones quoted in *Kusamakura*, it is in fact possible to read these along the lines of the feeling of love as well, namely, to take up Sôseki's ideas about the subjective attitude in *Sôsakuka no taido*, as an intrinsically transcendent and unspeakable emotion, which can only find expression through symbolic (i.e. "naturalistic") mediation. In both of the chapters where *kanshi* poetry is composed in *Kusamakura*, the presence of Nami is indeed particularly important: in chapter 6, for instance, the narrator's process of poetic composition is interrupted by her eroticized *furisode* dance, and the preceding ruminations about his "mood" (*kokochi*) could perhaps be interpreted as pointing to a transcendent and yet unspecified feeling of erotic desire.

It should be emphasized again, however, that while the *kanshi* poems in *Kusamakura* could point to specific feelings such as political discontent or even love, these references, in the end, also remain rather indecipherable. Although it is clear that the poems' speaker suffers from a certain kind of discontent, the more concrete content of his feelings remains vague. In *Sôsakuka no taido* the lack of specificity in the emotional content in literary texts – the content remains unspecific because its complexity defies full linguistic representation – also constitutes the highest and most enigmatic form of subjective expression. Because the emotional content can no longer be attached to any concrete feeling or sign in the text, this lack of specificity may also lead to some form of detachment and emotional distance. In such a scenario, "romanticism" in the form of *kanshi* nature poetry leads to a form of detachment in which and through which the textual signs (of landscape) and poetic language are emptied of their original emotional value and meaning while the poetic form merely remains as the emotionally loaded medium.

All the poetic intertexts in *Kusamakura* – *haiku*, *kanshi*, and English verse alike – can, for different reasons, be qualified as particularly "literary" in accordance with Sôseki's own definition in *Bungakuron*, i.e. suited to affectively move the reader and to thus produce

“literary illusion.” Meredith’s passionate love poem, by staging a first-person lyrical voice that “sings its feelings,” produces an effect of affective immediacy that reduces the distance between reader and text and enhances “illusion.” The *haiku* and *kanshi* poems, while obviously less lyrical or non-lyrical compositions, nonetheless also produce a high amount of literary “illusion” by juxtaposing (or harmonizing) natural and human literary contents and by conforming in such a way to Sôseki’s definition in *Bungakuron* of “romantic” writing. The *haiku*, *kanshi* and English intertexts in *Kusamakura* – all their fundamental differences notwithstanding – also converge in their quality as either “romantic” or particularly “literary” writing that fundamentally distances them from the genre of the novel, which exclusively focuses on “human affairs” and presents human feeling in more direct and sometimes melodramatic fashion.<sup>406</sup> While the emotional content, i.e. love, could be seen as largely identical for both the novel and the poetic genres, it is the poems’ more detached and indirect mediation of “human feeling” that qualifies them as “romantic” and more genuinely “literary” along the *Bungakuron* definition.

One of the fundamental intellectual movements in *Kusamakura* as well as in Sôseki’s theoretical writings is a constant investigation into the emotional quality of literary writing, which could be seen as a source of anxiety underlying Sôseki’s literary production. *Bungakuron* analyzes the criteria that enhance or reduce the “amount of feeling” (*jôsho no bunryô*) in a text. In a similar fashion, *Kusamakura* self-consciously and ironically explores its poetic intertexts as media of representation of “human feeling” – a dynamic, which produces effects of detachment that alienate the narrator from the emotions (or his emotions)

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<sup>406</sup> It would seem that Meredith’s poem, which stages a melodramatic emotionality, doesn’t fundamentally differ from the aesthetic regime of the novel but I would argue that the lyricism in Meredith’s poem, which pushes away from the unadorned “triviality” and linguistic blandness by which Sôseki defines the novel (cf. *Bungakuron* II 190), also radically differentiates it from the aesthetic of the novel.

mediated by the poems.<sup>407</sup> It is highly significant that both *Kusamakura* and *Bungakuron* through this investigative movement conjure up a “romantic” regime of “literature” in the mid-1900s, i.e. a “romantic” regime of representing and mediating “human feeling” that differs from the regime of the novel. I would argue that the broader renegotiation of “human feeling” through the reappropriation of traditional poetic genres, “sketch writing” and landscape evocation – also in the contemporary literary work of Masaoka Shiki and Kunikida Doppo – ultimately stems from an ethical concern over the morally disruptive potential of “human feeling” associated with the novel. At the same time, however, Sôseki’s “romantic” theory and literary experimentation, which builds on Doppo’s and Shiki’s slightly earlier “sketch” aesthetic, is also an ethical negotiation that extends and continues the earlier negotiations around “human feeling,” mostly in novels, which I analyzed in previous chapters. That Sôseki’s ultimate motivating force is an ethical one can well be gauged from his own novels, which prominently bring to the fore moral discourses that problematize and question human feeling. It is significant that Sôseki from 1907 onward starts producing novels and largely abandons the writing of “sketches” (although not the writing of *kanshi* and *haiku* poetry).<sup>408</sup> My subsequent reading of the novel *Sorekara* (*And Then*, 1909), including its sequel *Mon* (*The Gate*, 1910), sheds light on Sôseki’s non-“romantic” literary production and examines how these texts continue the negotiation of “human feeling” from a more explicitly ethical and novelistic perspective, which reaches back to Tsubouchi Shôyô, the political novel and even, indirectly, to Bakin’s textual world.

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<sup>407</sup> Saitô Mareshi remarks that Sôseki’s *Kusamakura*, while seemingly still belonging to what Saitô describes as the “sphere of Chinese-style literacy” (*kanbunmyaku*), also demonstrates the extent to which Chinese-style literacy is already fading in the late Meiji period. It is certainly true that the movement of self-reflection and irony in Sôseki’s text produces an alienating distance toward the poetic tradition. At the same time, Sôseki also appropriates the poetic tradition – in fact not only the “sphere of Chinese-style literacy” but a broader spectrum of poetic genres – as an alternative literary regime of mediating human feeling and Sôseki’s movement of irony as a renegotiation of “human feeling” thus has implications that reach beyond a mere deconstruction of the poetic tradition. See Saitô 2007, 212. For an insightful analysis of Sôseki’s novel *Gubijinsô* (*The Poppy*, 1907) with regard to its relative distance from “Chinese-style literacy” see also Saitô 2011.

<sup>408</sup> It should be noted that Sôseki’s later collections *Eijitsu shôhin* (*Spring Miscellany*, 1909) and *Garasudo no uchi* (*Inside my Glass Door*, 1915) can still be considered as “sketch writing.” See for these texts Marcus 2009.

#### 4. Historicizing Detachment: Love, Heroism and the Novel's Vocation in *Sorekara*

Sôseki's novel *Sorekara* (*And Then*) situates the emotionally detached regime of the *shaseibun* narrator and of "romantic" literary production within a historical temporality and mode of narrativity that echoes the genre of the political novel.<sup>409</sup> In *Sorekara*, detachment and "coldness" (*reitan*) are the expression of a deep crisis of emotional and ethical authenticity that allegorizes the Meiji period and that also implicitly points to the political crisis, which was the subject matter of prior political fiction. The plot of *Sorekara* consists in the attempt to overcome this crisis of emotional coldness through the warm authentic feeling of spiritual love and a new heroism, which is predicated on love. However, insofar as the love of *Sorekara*'s protagonist is adulterous and his spiritual heroism bound to catastrophic failure, the novel also perverts the meaning structure of prior political fiction to which it obliquely refers. While Suehiro Tetchô's sequel *Kakan'ô* illustrated the heroic implementation of democratic reform, which was predicated on the spiritual and chaste love of *Setchûbai*'s protagonist, Sôseki's sequel *Mon* illustrates the ultimate impossibility of heroic or even social activity as the consequence of (*Sorekara*'s) transgressive love.<sup>410</sup>

The implicitly allegorical dimension of *Sorekara*'s plot is, as in previous Meiji fiction, intimately tied to the historical temporality of the Meiji Restoration, which the life of the father of Nagai Daisuke, *Sorekara*'s male protagonist, closely replicates. The earliest events described in the novel date back to the year 1864 when Daisuke's father, a young man of

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<sup>409</sup> *Sorekara* was initially serialized in the *Asahi shinbun* in 1909. Its sequel *Mon* was serialized one year later in the same newspaper. For a useful overview of the history of academic scholarship on *Sorekara* see Ubukata 1998.

<sup>410</sup> I argue that the structure of meaning that links *Sorekara* to its sequel *Mon* – i.e. the allegorical linkage between love and heroic activity – intertextually echoes the way in which Tetchô's *Setchûbai* and its sequel *Kakan'ô* as well as the first part and second part of Shôyô's *Imo to se kagami* relate to each other. See my second chapter for my more detailed argument in this respect. An alternative sequel to *Sorekara* could be Sôseki's highly idiosyncratic *shaseibun* text *Kôfu* (*The Miner*, 1908), which equally starts off with an unpardonable amorous transgression and literally descends into the darkness and void – as allegorized by the mine – that results from the transgression.

*samurai* descent, was 17 years old.<sup>411</sup> At that time he still goes under his childhood name Seinoshin 誠之進 (“advancement of sincerity”) and he entertains an intimate bond with his older brother. The degree of affective intimacy that underlies the relationship between the two brothers is described in the following way:

Daisuke’s father had one older brother. His name was Naoki [直記] and he was only one year older than him. Besides being a little smaller than [Daisuke’s] father, his facial complexion and features resembled him so much that people who didn’t know them often mistook them for twins. At that time the name of [Daisuke’s] father wasn’t yet Toku [“gain” or “profit”]. He still went under his childhood name Seinoshin [“advancement of sincerity”]. Naoki and Seinoshin weren’t only similar to each other in the way they looked but also through their personality they were true siblings. Except when having other commitments, they always clang together in the same place and spent their time doing the same things. When they went to their lessons they left the house and returned home at exactly the same time, and also when studying at home their intimacy was such that they would usually share the same lamp.<sup>412</sup>

It is in light of this fraternal intimacy that the earliest events in *Sorekara*, dating back to the year 1864, take on a peculiar significance. In that year Daisuke’s father Seinoshin, in a sword fight, saves the life of his brother Naoki who is attacked by a drunken fellow *samurai* and the two brothers eventually kill the attacker. Killing a fellow *samurai* was a transgressive and punishable act, and this is why the two brothers, after returning home from the brawl, make arrangements for their suicide. Seinoshin also plans to assist his brother in committing suicide and then to kill himself. However, through the intervention of a powerful family acquaintance the lives of the two brothers are eventually spared. Although Seinoshin’s motivation to die seems merely predicated on the ritualistic “custom of that time” (prescribing a *samurai*’s suicide as punishment for the murder of a peer) and his personal or inner feelings aren’t revealed, given the intimacy of the homosocial bond between the two brothers Seinoshin’s emotional involvement in the affair must have been considerable. Seinoshin’s desire to commit suicide could be seen as a self-sacrifice, which is performed for

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<sup>411</sup> For precise indications concerning these dates and the father’s age see Natsume Sōseki, *Sorekara* 49-52.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid. 49-50. For my translations from *Sorekara* I consulted Norma Field’s translation from 1978.

the sake of his brother and sanctioned by the emotional and ethical bond between the two siblings, thus transcending the mere ritualism of *samurai* “custom.” The subsequent moralistic discourse of Daisuke’s father that obsessively emphasizes the need to sacrifice oneself for others originally derives from this emotionally and ethically “sincere” brother relationship, which predates the Meiji Restoration and significantly finds an end with the Restoration’s advent.

The profound shift that the year 1868 of the Meiji Restoration produces in the life of Daisuke’s father is described in the following passage whose paratactic terseness contrasts with the symbolic importance of the events described:

Three years later [in 1867], his elder brother was killed by a masterless *samurai* [*rōnin*] in Kyōto. Four years later the Meiji era began. And five or six years later, Seinoshin brought his parents from the provinces to Tōkyō. He also took a wife and changed his name to Toku [“profit”].<sup>413</sup>

This short passage is significant in several respects. It symbolically associates the advent of the Meiji Restoration with the death of Seinoshin’s brother Naoki and the end of the fraternal intimacy as a strongly emotional and ethical bond. The Restoration also produces a profound change in Seinoshin’s life, which is materialized by his spatial movement to Tokyo, the new capital and center of the Meiji state (as well as the symbolic antipode to the old capital where Naoki died). Moreover, Seinoshin’s new life shifts to new family relationships as epitomized by his marriage to Daisuke’s mother. The most significant transition, however, lies in his symbolically loaded change of name from Seinoshin (“advancement of sincerity”) to Toku (“financial gain”), which allegorizes the political, social and moral transformation brought about by the Meiji Restoration. Toku’s close ties to the new Meiji government are underlined by the fact that he – like Misawa Tatsuzō’s oligarchic father in Shōyō’s novel *Imo to se kagami* – participates in the Boshin War at the time of the Restoration, which consolidated the power of the new Meiji regime and wiped out the last strongholds of Tokugawa

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<sup>413</sup> Ibid. 51-52.

resistance. After a brief interlude as a bureaucrat, he soon enters the “world of business” (*jitsugyōkai*) and probably thanks to his opportune connections to the Meiji regime “naturally” becomes a “person of considerable wealth.”<sup>414</sup> While Misawa Yoshinobu – Misawa Tatsuzō’s father in Shōyō’s novel – allegorizes the Meiji regime in his function as a powerful oligarchic bureaucrat (before his ultimate downfall), Daisuke’s father Toku is a successful businessman with close ties to the oligarchic state.

It is also within the context of his business career that Toku formulates his problematic moralistic discourse, which replicates on a small scale Meiji-period public discourse. Toku repeatedly refers to “sincerity” (*seijitsu*), “fervor” (*nesshin*) and “warm ardor” (*nessei*) as the ethical qualities upon which his “success” (*seikō*) as a businessman is grounded. At the same time, Daisuke’s analysis fundamentally deconstructs the validity of his father’s discourse. According to Daisuke, the “altruism” (*rita hon’i*) propagated by his father in fact only conceals and camouflages his “self-centeredness” (*riko hon’i*) and exclusive orientation toward private financial gain. Daisuke’s analysis follows the following logic:

[Toku] had received an education centered on ethics [*dōgi*], which was typical for the warrior class in pre-Restoration times. This type of education put the norms of one’s feelings and acts in a place that was far removed from the self and, quite impractically, ignored the more immediate truth of concrete events. Bound by the fetters of custom, his father still clung to this education. However, he had also been pursuing a career in business, which was particularly prone to be affected by fierce life appetites [*gekiretsu na seikatsuyoku*]. And in truth, his father had been consumed by these appetites throughout his life until the present moment. For this reason there had to be some big incongruity between his former self and his present self. But his father didn’t acknowledge this fact. Instead he always declared that his former self, relying on its former understanding, had accomplished all his business enterprises. Daisuke however was convinced that it wasn’t possible to continuously satiate the life appetites of the present without also restricting the scope of an education whose validity was confined to the feudal age. If an individual wanted to stick to both at the same time, this individual would necessarily suffer a great amount of pain because of the contradiction between the two. If somebody felt the inner pain with only the awareness of the pain but without an understanding of the reason for the pain, this person would be an inferior being with a dull brain. Whenever Daisuke was facing his

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<sup>414</sup> See *ibid.* 31.



father, he couldn't help but think that he was either a hypocrite who was concealing his inner self or an idiot with insufficient understanding.<sup>415</sup>

Daisuke's analysis uncovers the disjunction between his father's ethical discourse and his ulterior self-centered motives, which are either ignored or hypocritically camouflaged by his discourse. At the same time, Daisuke's reasoning also points to the emotional void, which results from the fact that ethical discourse cannot relate any more to authentic and strong feelings for another person but merely serves to advance the private interests of the egoistic self. In Daisuke's analysis, the disjunction between ethical discourse and profit-oriented goals (as well as the absence of "sincere" emotions) not only characterizes his father as an individual but also Japanese post-Restoration society as a whole. The type of "ethical education" (*tokugijō no kyōiku*) that Daisuke received from his father is in fact identical to the one that he received at school – a type of education that anachronistically camouflages the true essence of Meiji Japan, which is crystallized by "fierce life appetites." The problematic metamorphosis of Seinoshin into Toku allegorizes the Meiji Restoration, which reduces ethicality to a discursive medium of camouflage and severs the original linkage between ethical behavior and strong "sincere" emotions as epitomized by Seinoshin's pre-Restoration fraternal intimacy. The narration of *Sorekara* – or more precisely Daisuke's analytical discourse – thus posits the Meiji period as a moment of crisis and decline.

In the plot of *Sorekara*, the telos of Daisuke's heroic work is precisely to overcome and solve the crisis brought about by the Meiji Restoration and allegorically exemplified by his oligarchic father. At the same time, Daisuke himself is also not unaffected by the crisis. Whereas his father reacted to the loss of emotional and ethical "sincerity" through a new orientation toward "gain" reinforced by a hypocritical moralistic discourse, Daisuke's reaction consists in emotional "coldness" and cynical detachment. But Daisuke's emotional history also, like his father's, starts off from a past – constantly referred to as *mukashi* in the

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid. 142-143.

narration – that is characterized by strongly emotional homosocial bonds.<sup>416</sup> Daisuke’s emotional history, on a denser and more reduced chronological scale, in fact replicates and – and as we shall see – corrects the emotional history of his father and thus implicitly reallegorizes the history of the Meiji Restoration and the crisis that it produced. Daisuke’s previous homosocial bonds, while perhaps indicative of a lost “homosexual past” (Keith Vincent), are certainly the locus for strong ethical feelings, but they are also the breeding ground for the protagonist’s heterosexual love through which he later problematically overcomes the crisis of his “cold” (*reitan*) emotional detachment.<sup>417</sup> One of Daisuke’s past homosocial bonds is with his former – and soon to die – schoolmate and close friend (*shin’yū*) Suganuma who is the older brother of the woman Michiyo, the subsequent object of

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<sup>416</sup> Daisuke’s “past” is situated about three to five (or even seven) years before the present of the narration, which is in the year 1909. The last three years up to this present are accompanied by subtle developmental shifts such as the beginning of Daisuke’s nervousness, which Naomi Mariko points out in her analysis. For a reading, which pays attention to the complex layering of time in Sôseki’s narration, see Naomi 2012, chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>417</sup> Sôseki’s *Sorekara* in many respects conforms to what Keith Vincent defines as “two-timing homosocial narrative.” Vincent writes: “In Japanese two-timing homosocial narratives, love between men is not so much repressed as it is contained within the past as an always early chapter in a tale of its own obsolescence through maturation and modernization [that lead to heteronormativity]. In these narratives, moreover, the personal and national pasts tend to be superimposed upon each other such that the achievement of heterosexual ‘normality’ on the part of the protagonist doubles as a kind of modernizing national allegory. In most cases, however, far from unsettling or threatening the normative future of the individual or the nation with a ‘return of the repressed’ or a revelatory ‘coming out,’ the homosexual past could be made to function much as ‘tradition’ does in relation to modernity: as an inert and unthreatening heritage ready for preservation in the museum of progress” (Vincent 2012, 34-35). Sôseki’s *Sorekara* could thus be labeled a “homosocial narrative” insofar as it relegates strong homosocial and potentially homoerotic bonds to the “past” of the protagonist’s adolescence and dramatizes his problematic heterosexual “maturation” out of this “past.” The strongly allegorical dimension of Daisuke’s maturation process, which doubles the history of modernity, would also well conform to Vincent’s argument. It would, moreover, seem that the triangular relationships in which Michiyo is involved – i.e. the triangles Daisuke-Michiyo-Suganuma and Daisuke-Michiyo-Hiraoka – indeed point to her role, in an increasingly heteronormative environment, as female mediator of male-male desire that lacks the inherent ability to constitute a desirable object in itself (cf. Vincent’s analyses of the mediation of male-male desire through the female protagonists in Sôseki’s *Kokoro* as well as in Mori Ôgai’s *Gan*). However, while I don’t fundamentally disagree with Vincent’s point, I would nonetheless argue that the primary emotional value of homosocial friendship in *Sorekara* (as well as earlier in the fraternal bond of Daisuke’s father) lies in its capacity to constitute a locus for ethical feelings (a locus for the potential to act for somebody else), regardless of its possible queer dimension. Moreover, as the narration of *Sorekara* reveals, Michiyo is indeed the object of a strong feeling (labeled as “love”), which has been gradually produced by the triangular intimacy between Daisuke, Suganuma and Michiyo and which significantly excludes Hiraoka. I would therefore think that, rather than merely constituting the empty medium that is necessary for the production of Daisuke’s and Hiraoka’s homoerotic feelings, Michiyo in fact possesses her own emotional value as a “love” object, which precisely makes Daisuke’s “sacrifice” meaningful as an inherently ethical act. See also for an analysis that is similar to Vincent’s (with regard to Sôseki’s novel *Gubijinsô*), Ito 2008, 205-206.

Daisuke's love. The narrator describes the dynamics of Daisuke's bond to both Suganuma and Michiyo in the following way:

After Michiyo had arrived, the relationship between her older brother and Daisuke became closer. It wasn't even clear to Daisuke who had pushed the friendship [*yūjō*] to develop. But after the older brother had died, he couldn't help but find a certain meaning in their intimacy [*shinmitsu*] every time he was looking back to those days. The brother until his death didn't say anything openly and neither would Daisuke mention anything explicit. In such a way their mutual thoughts had been buried as their mutual secret. Daisuke also didn't know whether her brother had ever privately divulged this meaning [*sono imi*] to Michiyo while he was still alive. Daisuke could merely sense something specific in the way Michiyo acted and spoke.<sup>418</sup>

The unspoken “meaning” in the male homosocial “intimacy” between Daisuke and Suganuma most probably refers to the older brother's desire to tie Daisuke and Michiyo closer together as future marriage partners.<sup>419</sup> It is also under the premise of this unexpressed “meaning” that the emotional intensity of the triangular relationship between Daisuke, Michiyo and her older brother increases. It could perhaps be argued that, in the relationship between Daisuke and the two siblings, the woman (Michiyo) primarily serves as a medium to bring the two male partners closer to each other and to facilitate a homoerotic male union (by also precisely camouflaging the structure of male-male attraction). However, it is also important to see Suganuma's role in facilitating Daisuke and Michiyo's heterosexual union as the ultimate underlying “meaning” and fulfillment of the triangular relationship. This reading would also be backed by the fact that Michiyo – despite her apparent passivity that seems to destine her to become the object for a “traffic in women” between males or the medium for male-male desire – is in fact throughout the narration of *Sorekara* depicted as the owner of strong individual agency striving toward the fulfillment of her own (heterosexual)

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<sup>418</sup> *Sorekara* 276.

<sup>419</sup> I here disagree with Komori Yōichi who reaches an opposite conclusion, based on different textual evidence, arguing that Suganuma's objective is to prohibit the intimacy and marital union between Daisuke and Michiyo. This fraternal prohibition would also explain Daisuke's role in facilitating the future marriage between Michiyo and Hiraoka. See Komori 2010, 153-165. The unexpressed “meaning” in the intimacy between Daisuke and Suganuma could perhaps also be read as the signifier for a suppressed homoerotic attraction between the two men. I, however, think that Daisuke's reflection on whether Michiyo could have been informed of this “meaning” by her brother rules out this reading.

feelings for Daisuke and the emotional legacy of her brother.<sup>420</sup> I would therefore argue that the feelings generated by the triangular relationship between Daisuke, Suganuma and Michiyo are essentially overdetermined and could be described as simultaneously heterosexual, homosocial and potentially homoerotic. At the same time, while the triangulation perhaps blurs the boundaries between these categories, it also produces an intensity of emotional attachment, which – likened by Sôseki’s narrator to a spinning *tomoe* circle – increasingly acquires a potentially all-consuming and ineluctable force.<sup>421</sup>

It is this intensity of emotional attachment that Daisuke (in his own words) “sacrifices” when he acts as the go-between between his friend Hiraoka Tsunejirô and Michiyo after the sudden death of her brother. Daisuke’s “past” is in fact also marked by the strongly emotional friendship with Hiraoka who has been Daisuke’s classmate since middle school.<sup>422</sup> Unlike the triangular relationship to Michiyo and her older brother, however, the intensity of the emotional bond between Daisuke and his friend Hiraoka is described in primarily ethical terms:

Daisuke and Hiraoka had known each other since their middle school days but especially after their graduation from school, for about a year, they almost became as close to each other as two brothers [*hotondo kyôdai no yô ni yukiki shita*]. At that time the greatest pleasure for them was to tell each other everything [that was in their hearts] and to reassure each other that they would always help and assist each other. And since it also often happened that this pleasure turned into concrete action [*jikkô*],

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<sup>420</sup> See Ken Itô’s discussion of the anthropological concept of “traffic in women,” originally borrowed from Claude Lévy-Strauss, with regard to Sôseki’s novel *Gubijinsô* (Ito 2008, chapter 4). Michiyo in *Sorekara* undoubtedly becomes the object of an exchange or “traffic” between males: first as the marriage partner promised (implicitly at least) to Daisuke by her older brother Suganuma, then as the marriage partner that Daisuke hands over to Hiraoka, and finally as the object of “love” (and potential adulterous remarriage) that Daisuke takes back from Hiraoka. However, it is important to note that Michiyo also repeatedly resists her object status, for instance by refusing her sexual availability to Hiraoka or by consciously confronting Daisuke with tokens of their “past” (such as the white lilies, her *ichôgaeshi* hairdo etc.) and thus accelerating the adulterous affair. Ishihara Chiaki in his discussion of *Sorekara* also pertinently points out that Michiyo’s willingness to die for her “love” and with Daisuke points to options of agency and discourse that are foreclosed to the male protagonist who, at least in Ishihara’s view, is primarily bound by notions of morality that “nostalgically” tie him to the ideology of the “household” (*ie*). See Ishihara 1991.

<sup>421</sup> See *Sorekara* 277.

<sup>422</sup> See for a still highly useful and insightful study of Meiji-period school (especially Higher School) culture and male homosocial bonding Roden 1980.

they both strongly felt that in all the words that they said to each other there was not just pleasure but always also a certain sense of sacrifice [*gisei*]. They also didn't realize the banal truth that the nature of pleasure can suddenly turn into pain if such a sacrifice is instantaneously made. After that year Hiraoka got married.<sup>423</sup>

In his relationship with Hiraoka Daisuke reiterates the emotional (and one should also say: ethical) history of his father. As Seinoshin was ready to commit suicide out of a feeling of “duty” that was reinforced by fraternal intimacy, Daisuke “sacrifices” his emotional attachment out of a sense of ethical “chivalry” (*gikyōshin*) towards Hiraoka by acting as the go-between for the latter's marriage with Michiyo.<sup>424</sup> That the emotionality attached to this “chivalry” – embedded in the bond of friendship – at least equals or perhaps even exceeds Daisuke's feelings associated with Michiyo becomes clear in a climactic conversation between Daisuke and Hiraoka toward the end of the novel where the two friends reminisce about their past mutual feelings.<sup>425</sup> The emotional value of male homosocial friendship is here defined by the possibility of “dutiful” behavior, i.e. by the possibility to fulfill the partner's desire while “sacrificing” one's own emotional attachments. The emotionality produced by homosocial ethical bonding, predicated on self-sacrificing “chivalry,” thus

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<sup>423</sup> *Sorekara* 19.

<sup>424</sup> See for the word *gikyōshin* *ibid.* 330.

<sup>425</sup> See *ibid.* 328-329: “[Hiraoka:] ‘It was at night when we had just passed through Ueno and were walking down the hill in Yanaka. It was just after the rain had stopped falling and the paths down in Yanaka were in a bad condition. We had been talking to each other since passing by the [Ueno] Museum and when we arrived at that bridge, you were crying for me.’

Daisuke remained silent.

‘I've never felt as fortunate to have a friend [*hōyū*] as in that moment. Because I was so happy that evening I couldn't sleep at all. Since it was a moonlit night I stayed up until the moon was waning.’

‘Me too, I was happy [*yukai*] at that time’ said Daisuke as if speaking in a dream.

‘But why then did you cry for me at that time? Why did you then pledge to me to get Michiyo for me? Since you were going to do something like this anyway [i.e. committing adultery with Michiyo] why didn't you just nod to me and leave it that way. I don't remember having done anything so bad to you that would merit your deep enmity to this extent.’

Hiraoka's voice was trembling. On Daisuke's pale forehead lay pearls of sweat. And then he said in an almost accusatory tone:

‘Hiraoka, I had loved Michiyo [*Michiyo-san o aishite ita*] even before you did.’

Hiraoka was stunned and watched Daisuke's suffering.

‘At that time I was somebody different from today. When I listened to your wish I thought that it was my duty as your friend [*tomodachi no honbun*] to fulfill your desire even if I had to sacrifice my own future for it. This was a mistake! If I had been as mature as I am today there might have been a way to see things differently, but since unfortunately I was still young I had too much contempt for nature. [...]’”

perhaps, at least in Daisuke's "past," exceeds the emotionality of love, which is not so much defined by ethicality than by "nature" (*shizen*), i.e. the spontaneous or egoistic drive to fulfill one's own desire.

Hiraoka's subsequent betrayal of Daisuke's "chivalry" produces a profound crisis in the protagonist, which is marked by the dissolution of their friendship.<sup>426</sup> This crisis, besides making Daisuke "cold" and cynically detached, is significantly also a crisis of ethical "motivation" (*dōki*) and heroic "action" (*kōi*). Unable to produce like his father egoistic "life instincts" strong enough to motivate his actions, Daisuke defines "action" primarily as "chivalrous," i.e. as intrinsically heroic. However, as there is no outside incentive to motivate his actions any more, Daisuke's crisis finds expression in a tautological reduction that problematically merges his "motivations" and "actions":

Daisuke's original activities [*jiko honrai no katsudō*] had become his original purposes [*jiko honrai no mokuteki*]. He was walking because he wanted to walk and walking had thus become his purpose. He was thinking because he wanted to think and thinking had thus become his purpose. [...]. Therefore, Daisuke's existence until that day had been such that, as soon as a wish or a desire popped up in his brain, he made the fulfillment of this wish or desire into his purpose. [...]. To put it in a nutshell, Daisuke's actions had as their purpose activities that would usually be considered purposeless. And he was convinced that, insofar as there weren't any lies involved, this was also the most ethical [*dōtokuteki na*] way to act.<sup>427</sup>

This tautological conflation of motivation and action allows Daisuke to circumvent the hypocrisy of Meiji discourse and to still act "ethically" without being "chivalrously" and emotionally involved. His strategy of conflation is "ethical" insofar as it sincerely acknowledges a lack of commitment to ethical goals and it is "cold" and detached for the same reason. Daisuke's discourse also opposes "warm ethical ardor" (*nessei*) to "coldness" (*reitan*), which is the emotional stance resulting from the disillusioning insight into the

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<sup>426</sup> When Daisuke, shortly after Hiraoka and Michiyo's marriage, bids farewell to the couple at Shinbashi station (Hiraoka is about to start working for his bank's branch in the Kyōto-Ōsaka region), he discerns an inappropriate "boast" (*tokui no iro*) in his friend's eyes, which suddenly lets Daisuke loathe him (see *Sorekara*, ch. 2).

<sup>427</sup> Ibid. 176-177.

impossibility to entertain or execute high-flying heroic goals.<sup>428</sup> While emotional detachment and analytic insight allow for ironizing distance and a certain relief from suffering, Daisuke's tautological indifference also leads to an unbearable state of depressed "ennui" (*ensei*). It is then Daisuke's rediscovery of his love for Michiyo, which provides the "method" (*hōhō*) to realign high-flying ethical goals with warm and heroic "ardor" and to allegorically overcome the ethical and emotional crisis brought about by the Meiji Restoration.<sup>429</sup>

Daisuke's decision to turn down the financially motivated marriage proposed by his father and instead to follow his "natural love" (*shizen no ai*) for Michiyo propels him into an "active life" (*sekkyokuteki na seikatsu*), which brings an end to his "ennui" and to the tautological paralysis of his motivational structure.<sup>430</sup> His "active life" is predicated on a new heroism related to qualities such as "courage" (*yūki*), "determination" (*kan'i* 敢為), "sincerity"

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<sup>428</sup> Daisuke's detachment is in fact predicated on his insight into the impossibility to reconcile his "vulgar" actions and motives with the "warm ardor" (*nessei*) inherent in truly ethical goals. See *ibid.* 248-249: "Daisuke was jealous of the people of the past [*mukashi no hito*] who, because of their dim intellectual capacities, were able to weep, to feel or to be agitated – firmly believing this to be for the sake of others while in truth just acting for their own profit – and to thus bring other people to act in the way that they desired. [...] People and particularly his father would call him [Daisuke] a man lacking in warm ardor [*nessei*]. According to his analysis the truth was this: Human beings normally didn't possess any motives or didn't engage in actions lofty, earnest and pure enough to be executed with ardor. They were in fact more vulgar beings [*katō na mono*]. If a person were to treat his lowly motives and actions as worthy of ardor he would be either an idiot with an indiscriminating immature brain or a charlatan merely feigning ardor to elevate himself. Therefore, Daisuke's coldness [*reitan*], even if not bringing humanity to a higher stage, was at least the result of a better dissection of human beings. After closely examining his own everyday motives and actions, he knew how wily, insincere and often how full of deceit they were. Therefore he didn't feel in the mood to execute them with warm ardor. That this was indeed so was his firm belief."

<sup>429</sup> See for the word "method" (*hōhō*) *ibid.* 178.

<sup>430</sup> For Daisuke's entering a new "active life" see *ibid.* 253. It should be noted that one major plot line of *Sorekara* centers around the marriage for Daisuke, which is proposed by the members of the main Aoyama household (of Daisuke's father, his elder brother and the latter's wife). Daisuke's father wishes him to marry the daughter of a man called Segawa who is a descendent of the high-ranking domain official who saved his life and the life of his older brother by preventing them from committing *seppuku* in the aftermath of their manslaughter. In his discussion of *Sorekara*, Ishihara Chiaki argues that the ethical discourse in the novel is connected to the ideology of the "household" (*ie*). Ishihara points out that the character *sei* 誠 (or *makoto*, i.e. "sincerity"), a key term in the novel, is inscribed into a genealogical household lineage of inheritance through the names of *Seinoshin* 誠之進 (Daisuke's father), *Seigo* 誠吾 (Daisuke's elder brother) and *Seitarō* 誠太郎 (Seigo's firstborn son) from which Daisuke as *Seinoshin*'s second-born son is excluded. Ishihara also argues that Daisuke's attempt to restage his father's discourse on *makoto* and *nessei* ("warm ardor") in his adulterous love with Michiyo constitutes a "nostalgic" attempt to reconnect to the world of the "household" and the lineage of the firstborns. For Ishihara's argument about Daisuke's "nostalgia for the 'household'" (*ie' e no kyōshū*) – a nostalgia from which Michiyo is significantly free – see in particular Ishihara 1991, 204.

(*makoto*) and “responsibility” (*sekinin*) – qualities that allow him not only to reject his family’s marriage plans but also to openly admit his feelings for Michiyo.<sup>431</sup> Daisuke’s new awareness of “responsibility” for Michiyo, i.e. of the necessity to support her in the aftermath of her projected divorce from Hiraoka and remarriage to him, propels him to give up his financial dependence on his family and to instead search for an employment of his own. This sense of responsibility also motivates Daisuke to “fight” (*arasou*) heroically not only against the members of his family and Hiraoka but also against “society” (*shakai*) as a whole, which in his view doesn’t show any “understanding for the freedom and personal circumstances of the individual.”<sup>432</sup> This new heroism is predicated on his “love,” which comes to provide the ultimate motivation for Daisuke’s ethical behavior:

[Daisuke] hadn’t been able to confront the customs of society with an ethical attitude [*tokugiteki na taido*] before. However, he didn’t desire the existence of even a grain of immorality [*futokugi*] in his motives [*dōki*] toward Michiyo. He so much loved [*ai-shita*] Michiyo that there was no room left for acting in a vulgar manner.<sup>433</sup>

Daisuke’s ethical heroism and “fight” against social customs also leads to a new chaste spirituality that contrasts with his former attitude of “cold” detachment, which didn’t exclude the “vulgar” gratification of sexual desire with prostitutes and courtesans (*geisha*).<sup>434</sup> While Daisuke’s former regime of emotional and ethical “coldness” correlates with aesthetic and sexual ephemerality and sensuousness (as epitomized by the figure of the courtesan), his subsequent “love” for Michiyo is predicated on chaste “simplicity” (*kantan*), “soberness”

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<sup>431</sup> For Daisuke’s new awareness of “courage” see *Sorekara* 286: “Daisuke was surprised by his own courage [*yūki*] and fortitude [*tanryoku*]. Until this day he had seen himself as a prudent and even-tempered gentleman [*taihei no kōshinshi*] with a dislike for passion [*netsuretsu*] and a disinclination for any kind of danger and strife. Although he hadn’t committed any ethically serious act of cowardice yet, he hadn’t also been able to overcome his self-perception of timorousness.”

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.* 286.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.* 273.

<sup>434</sup> See *ibid.* 199: “Daisuke had chosen the *geisha* as the emblem [*daihyōsha*] for those denizens of the big city whose aesthetic sensibility was most developed and whose access [to beautiful attractions] was most unrestrained. Didn’t *geisha* exchange their lovers multiple times in their lives? And weren’t the denizens of the big city, to a lesser extent, all *geisha* themselves? For Daisuke those people who still talked about everlasting love [*kawarazaru ai*] were hypocrites of the first grade.”



(*soboku*) and even “austerity” (*genshuku*). The narrator also consequently describes the communication between the adulterous lovers as a dialogue that spiritually “transcends the senses” (*kannô o tôrikoshite*) and in direct unmediated fashion reaches the “heart” (*kokoro*).<sup>435</sup>

Sôseki’s *Sorekara* interestingly reinstates the allegorical economy of sexuality of the political novel insofar as it posits the protagonist’s movement from sexual and aesthetic promiscuity to spiritual chastity as the precondition for his newly gained heroism. Through his spiritual chastity, Daisuke also reacquires an authenticity or “sincerity” of feeling that allows him to heroically overcome and solve the crisis, which originated in the Meiji Restoration and was exemplified by the hypocrisy of his oligarchic father. At the same time, however, Daisuke’s love, by challenging moral, social and even civilizational norms, is also profoundly transgressive and criminal. Daisuke’s transgression, whose ultimate legitimation – despite its chaste spirituality – lies in “nature” (*shizen*), reiterates in different fashion the anti-social and uncivilized transgression of Tayama Katai’s sexualized hero Jûemon who is, not incidentally, like Daisuke ambiguously labeled a “child of nature” (*shizenji*). Daisuke’s spirituality, because it is paradoxically predicated on “nature,” fails in regulating and channeling “human feeling.” His corrective fight against post-Restoration society – a fight, which is ethical and criminal at the same time – is thus ineluctably bound to the failure (i.e. the lack of success) of heroism.

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<sup>435</sup> About Daisuke’s and Michiyo’s climactic dialogue at the end of the novel in which the lovers confess their mutual feelings Sôseki’s narrator writes: “Daisuke’s words didn’t contain the sweet patterns [*amai aya*] that normal lovers would use. His attitude and words were simple and sober. They almost verged on the austere. It is true that his calling Michiyo under the pretext of urgent business only to tell her [his confession] belonged to the category of frivolous poetry [*omocha no shiika*]. But Michiyo was a woman who could understand urgent business dissociated from the vulgar [*zoku o hanareta kyûyô*]. Moreover, she also didn’t have much interest in the juvenile rhetoric that one would find in ordinary novels. The truth was that Daisuke’s words didn’t bring anything flowery to Michiyo’s senses. It was also the truth that Michiyo didn’t thirst for anything like this. Daisuke’s words passed by her senses and directly reached Michiyo’s heart” (ibid. 279). For a similar passage see also ibid. 200. It is noteworthy that Daisuke’s confession is couched in a rhetoric of detachment, which here however stands for the highest degree of chaste spirituality and “sincerity” of feeling.

## Conclusion

The phenomenon of “sketch writing” around the turn-of-the-century as well as Sôseki’s literary experiments and theoretical discourse in the 1900s stand for the attempt to explore detached regimes of “human feeling.” At the same time, this attempt also constitutes a renegotiation of literature through the experimentation in genres and modes of writing that are intellectually detached and more self-reflexive of “human feeling” than the genre of the novel. As Sôseki’s novel *Sorekara* shows, however, the attempt to regulate the vicissitudes of “human feeling” through ironical and self-reflexive (i.e. highly intellectualized) detachment, which corresponds to the stance of the *shaseibun* narrator, also leads to a loss of emotional authenticity (“sincerity”) on which ethical and heroic action is predicated. This loss necessarily engenders new suffering and “ennui” insofar as a longing for genuine ethical activity – as I would think – still fundamentally underlies Sôseki’s literary production. The attempt to solve the crisis of emotional authenticity and heroism, which in *Sorekara* is also historicized as a crisis of modern civilization, through a recourse to “nature” and “human feeling” (i.e. love), however, leads to criminal and uncivilized transgression. Insofar as heroism, spirituality and chastity are problematically predicated on “natural love” (*shizen no ai*) in *Sorekara* they paradoxically come to facilitate the transgression of civilizational norms. It is significant that amorous transgression in Sôseki’s novel constitutes the attempt to realize a heroic, ethical and emotional correction of society that profoundly echoes the plot structure of democratic reform in the Meiji political novel and Shôyô’s subsequent attempt to renegotiate “human feeling” and ethical heroism in his rewriting of political fiction.

Sôseki’s oeuvre more broadly, as we have seen in this chapter, continuously negotiates between “human feeling” and (heroic) ethicality through an experimentation in various genres of literary writing or *bungaku*, which as a medium carries both emotional and ethical impulses. Sôseki’s literary negotiation problematically oscillates between the highly

intellectualized and self-reflexive detachment of the *shaseibun* mode, which is largely devoid of ethical possibilities, and genuinely ethical and heroic authenticity, which is predicated on the spirituality of love – a love, which in the novel *Sorekara* turns transgressive and criminal. In both cases, the ethical regulation or channeling of “human feeling,” like in prior Meiji novels, remains problematic and incomplete, thus again implicitly pointing to the failure of the People’s Rights Movement and democratic reform. At the same time, the complexity of Sôseki’s literary production, which spans various poetic and prose genres and practices of writing, also highlights and dramatizes the continuity and breadth of the historical negotiations around “human feeling” that more broadly underlie the production of literature in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Japan.

## Epilogue

In Shiga Naoya's (1883-1971) short story "Seibei and the Gourds" (Seibei to hyôtan), which was published in 1912 in the Yomiuri Newspaper, the young protagonist and future painter Seibei doesn't know who Kyokutei Bakin is and provocatively declares that the type of gourds whose name is the same as the late Edo-period author (i.e. "Bakin gourds") is not "interesting" and merely "clumsy-looking." Contrary to the older generation of his father and of his teachers at school who cherish the eccentric-looking elongated "Bakin gourds," Seibei has an obsession with gourds that look "ordinary" (*heibon*) or "pretty normal" (*goku futsû*) and that prefigure his idiosyncratic aesthetic taste as a soon-to-rise young artist.<sup>436</sup> In such a way, Shiga Naoya's short text allegorizes a generational shift, the emergence of a young generation of writers and artists around the year 1910 who, owing to their educational backgrounds, new aesthetic concerns or broader socio-cultural changes, seem to experience a disconnection with (or simply ignore) previous traditional regimes of literacy and cultural production in Japan. My aim in this epilogue is to examine more distinctly the nature of this shift, which I argue leads to a demise of the ethical negotiations of "human feeling" that I examined in this dissertation. In my following discussion I investigate this demise through the lens of the critical readings of Natsume Sôseki's novels *Sorekara* (1909) and *Mon* (1910) by two young newly emerging authors who both start their literary career around the year 1910: Mushakôji Saneatsu (1885-1976) and Tanizaki Jun'ichirô (1886-1965). While focusing on key aspects in Sôseki's novels such as nature and love, which are particularly relevant for their own literary projects, Mushakôji's and Tanizaki's readings also appropriate and redirect these concepts in ways that push away from the historical negotiations of "human feeling," which still fundamentally shape Sôseki's writing.

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<sup>436</sup> See Shiga Naoya, "Seibei to hyôtan" 505-506.

In his critique “On *Sorekara*” (*Sorekara ni tsuite*), which perhaps not incidentally appeared in the first issue of the new coterie journal *Shirakaba* in April 1910, Mushakôji Saneatsu defines the main intellectual or ideological idea in Sôseki’s novel as “worship of nature” (*shizen sùhai*) and he accordingly characterizes *Sorekara*’s protagonist Daisuke as a “worshipper of nature.” The antipode of “nature” is “society” (*shakai*), i.e. the knot of human relationships that are bound together by the rules of “conventional morality.” For Mushakôji, the “main objective” (*shui*) of *Sorekara* was therefore to represent the dilemmatic conflict between the “power of society” and the “power of nature.” The “power of nature,” moreover, is predicated on love. Mushakôji writes:

[In *Sorekara*] the method to represent the power of nature is love [*koi*]. Mr. Sôseki also clearly knows the difference between love and lust [*jôyoku*]. He lets Daisuke say that Hiraoka’s [i.e. Daisuke’s friend and Michiyo’s husband] love is not love. Daisuke thinks that there cannot be love if a man starts fooling around once his wife has fallen sick. Hiraoka’s love is what the Naturalists [*shizen-ha*] call love. It is a love that is eighty percent lust. The love of Daisuke for Michiyo is eighty percent spiritual love [*ai*]. Mr. Sôseki’s design was to represent the power of nature through Daisuke’s love. And I think that he succeeded in showing how strong the power of nature is. However, Mr. Sôseki didn’t desire to let Daisuke’s actions for Michiyo be motivated exclusively by love.<sup>437</sup>

In this passage Mushakôji interestingly shows an awareness of the ethical difference between “spiritual love” and “sexual lust” by pointing out Sôseki’s awareness of the difference. At the same time, however, Mushakôji’s interest doesn’t primarily relate to this difference through which traditional discursive and textual explorations of “human feeling” up through Sôseki were often articulated. His primary concern lies elsewhere, namely in the representation of the “power of nature” as such, which he thinks – be it spiritual or sexualized – opposed to the oppressive “power of society” and its merely “conventional” morality. Mushakôji sees in *Sorekara*, which succeeds in “showing how strong the power of nature is,” an important anticipation of his own literary project, and it therefore makes sense for him to reduce the “main emphasis” (*shuchô*) of *Sorekara* to a “worship of nature” or – in the words of Sôseki’s

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<sup>437</sup> Mushakôji Saneatsu, “*Sorekara ni tsuite*” 20.

novel – “natural love,” which is opposed to the “power of society.” At the same time, however, Mushakôji’s fundamental criticism of *Sorekara* also is that Daisuke’s actions are not “motivated exclusively by love” or, in other words, that “nature” in *Sorekara* is not yet natural enough.<sup>438</sup> As examples for the multiple artificial “arrangements” (*dôgudate*) that Sôseki’s novel makes in order to let Daisuke and Michiyo approach each other – but significantly not “exclusively through their love” – Mushakôji lists the death of Michiyo’s child with her husband Hiraoka, her sickness as well as Hiraoka’s debts and sexual debauchery, among other points. All these additional plot factors, which are superfluous in Mushakôji’s eyes, allegedly only trigger Daisuke’s compassion as a secondary emotional incentive for his actions for Michiyo and contribute to the weakening of the “power of love” (*koi no chikara*) in Sôseki’s novel.

I would argue that the significance of Mushakôji’s criticism is that it programmatically rejects the elements in Sôseki’s novel, which symbolically point to the ethically problematic quality – the atmosphere of foreboding and even moral punishment – that hovers over Daisuke’s “natural love.” Plot elements in *Sorekara* like Michiyo’s disease, far from merely bringing the adulterous lovers closer to each other (as Mushakôji argues), also allegorize the morally and socially condemnable quality of their love as well as the logic of ethical breakdown and punishment that adheres to their transgressive feeling. Relating back to the Meiji political novel and even to Bakin’s literary universe, love in *Sorekara* has an allegorical dimension, which is inscribed into the telos of a heroic, ethical and implicitly political plot. As I argued in my previous chapter, Daisuke’s paradoxically adulterous and spiritual love enacts the attempt to recover heroism and “chivalry” in the face of the civilizational and moral crisis of post-Restoration Japan. Daisuke’s strong emphasis of and

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<sup>438</sup> Mushakôji famously likens the dimension of unnaturalness that he diagnoses in *Sorekara* to a man-made canal, which differs from a natural river. It goes without saying that Mushakôji prefers the natural river over the canal. See *ibid.* 16-17.

recourse to “nature” (*shizen*) is necessary because of the inherent corruption of modern civilization, but this recourse, while allowing for the reenactment of ethicality and heroism, also renders Daisuke’s love transgressive and uncivilized. Sôseki’s *Sorekara*, like other 19<sup>th</sup> century Japanese writings, thus negotiates love (i.e. “human feeling”) within the parameters of ethicality and transgression. *Sorekara* dramatizes the ambivalence of “human feeling” by on the one hand presenting spiritual love as the allegorical “method” (*hôhō*) to recover chivalry while also, on the other hand, hinting at the catastrophic effects of unregulated “natural love” as a failure of heroism. The historical significance of Mushakôji’s critique of *Sorekara* precisely lies in its ignorance of the ethical dramatization of “human feeling” in Sôseki’s novel. For Mushakôji, love, i.e. the epitome of “nature,” has an inherently positive and unproblematic value, which all the more comes to the fore when presented – as in his own literary experiments of the early 1910s – as adulterously transgressive and opposed to the reprehensible moralistic norms of society.<sup>439</sup> Mushakôji therefore sees in Daisuke’s adulterous “natural love” a potential, which is highly relevant for his own literary project but which in Sôseki’s novel is only realized in a frustratingly “weakened” (*yowamerareta*) and for him unsatisfactory form. He however fails to see that precisely the “weakened” mode of representing love in *Sorekara* – i.e. the dramatization of love’s morally problematic and ambivalent quality – constitutes the locus for complex negotiations of “human feeling” that

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<sup>439</sup> In his story “Umarekuru ko no tame ni” (For the sake of the child to be born), which was published in August 1910 in the journal *Shirakaba* and which is generally seen as modeled on *Sorekara* (in a sense as the literary version of his *Sorekara* critique), Mushakôji stages an adulterous love that is similar but in important respects also differs from Sôseki’s novel. One important difference is that Mushakôji lets the child live, which is born out of the male first-person narrator’s adulterous “love” affair – a fact, which makes sense in light of Mushakôji’s critique of the death of Michiyo’s child in *Sorekara* as a particularly artificial and unnatural plot device. As Yamada Shunji in his discussion of the story and of its intertextual relationship to *Sorekara* points out, the life of the child symbolically reinforces the inherently positive and morally unproblematic quality that both love and nature, even if adulterous, have for Mushakôji’s narrator. “Umarekuru ko no tame ni” attempts to represent like *Sorekara* the struggle of an adulterous “love” against the moralistic repression of society, but in Mushakôji’s story this struggle fundamentally differs from Sôseki’s novel in that it is linked to the optimistic outlook on the ultimate victory of this “love” over society. Precisely because it is adulterous, Mushakôji’s “love” can be shown in its inherently positive value vis-à-vis society. See Yamada 1994, 35-37, for a helpful discussion as well as Takita 2006 in more detail for Mushakôji’s *Sorekara* reception.

tie Sôseki's novel back to traditional discourses and textual practices from which Mushakôji's discourse is already largely disconnected.

In his essay “*Mon o hyô-su*” (A Critique of *Mon*), which was published in September 1910 in the literary coterie journal *Shinshichô*, Tanizaki Jun'ichirô criticizes Sôseki's novel *Mon*, the sequel to *Sorekara*, for its artificial idealism and for its “lies” (*uso*) in representing reality and truth. Tanizaki's critique starts off from the observation that the plot of *Mon* describes the life of the adulterous lovers Sôsuke and Oyone (modeled on Daisuke and Michiyo in *Sorekara*) after their transgression as sustained by an abiding conjugal love (*koi*). This love endures even despite the fact that the couple is ostracized from society and afflicted by disease, poverty and childlessness, which allegorize the moral retribution for their crime. Tanizaki's criticism of the – in his eyes – unrealistic and idealistic quality of this plot is largely twofold. First, he questions the capacity and interest of modern society in morally ostracizing and sanctioning the adulterous lovers to the extent described in Sôseki's novel. He asks:

But does contemporary society [*genkon no shakai*] really have a moral conscience [*ryôshin*] that is sharp enough to sanction these two sinners so severely? Isn't the retributive agency of the social world [*yononaka no inga ôhô*] in fact more negligent and loose? Or is it cruel enough to at least take away their wealth, their health and also their three children? I cannot help but have doubts in this respect. The social world must be richer in more complicated and ironical truths.<sup>440</sup>

By questioning modern society's “moral conscience,” Tanizaki at a deeper level also questions the truthfulness or realism of Sôseki's ethical meaning structure, in which adulterous love must be sanctioned and punished by society or even, more abstractly, by moral retribution. In the same move, Tanizaki also questions the capacity of transgressive love itself to produce devastating results, which in *Mon* include the protagonists' poverty, poor health and childlessness. As my previous discussion has shown, however, in Sôseki's novels as in prior literary dramatizations of “human feeling” catastrophic results necessarily

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<sup>440</sup> Tanizaki Jun'ichirô, “*Mon o hyô-su*” 24.



result from the failure to regulate transgressive feelings and desires. Tanizaki's second point of criticism, moreover, more in detail relates to the peculiar nature of Sôsukey's and Oyone's "conjugal love" (*fûfu no aijô*). Tanizaki argues:

[...] Sôsukey and Oyone lead a kind of romantic life that is rare in our time [*tôsetsu ni mezurashii romanchikku na seikatsu o okutte iru*]. That Daisuke who received a new education should enact the type of love [*koi*] that *Sorekara* describes doesn't strike me as improbable. But that somebody like Sôsukey who was also exposed to new currents of thought should have clung – however great the sacrifices that were necessary to realize his love – to a hysterically sick wife and for six years not have awoken from his sweet youthful dream of love despite a dreary life in a family without children and money seems a bit hard to believe.<sup>441</sup>

Tanizaki also opposes the idealistically "romantic" and spiritual love of Sôseki's adulterous protagonists – i.e. their "eternally abiding love" (*eigô kawarazaru aijô*) – to what he calls "real love" (*jissai no aijô*), which has the propensity to easily cool down when confronted with the vicissitudes of social life or new objects of desire.<sup>442</sup> Tanizaki also ironically argues that because of their abiding love, which makes Sôsukey and Oyone an enviably blissful couple, the kind of moral retribution that was carried out on them in truth must only serve them as highly convenient. For somebody as morally idealistic and spiritual as Daisuke the most painful and "true retribution" (*shin no hôfuku*) for his transgressive sin would have been instead to be confronted with "real love," which would easily cool down. Tanizaki also points out that love for Sôseki is predicated on morality (*dôtoku*) and on an inherently didactic impulse. According to Tanizaki, *Mon's* didactic teaching is to "show us that the only way for us today to lead a happy life in our degenerated reality, which is devoid of objects of faith and moral foundations, is to live in conjugal affection eternally held together by true love."<sup>443</sup> Seen from Tanizaki's perspective, Daisuke's attempt in *Sorekara* to idealistically solve the crisis of Japanese post-Restoration society and civilization through an adulterous

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid. 24.

<sup>442</sup> See for this distinction *ibid.* 25.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid. 25. Tanizaki also argues that Sôseki's aim is to didactically demonstrate that love should be "sincere" (*majime*) and "noble" (*tôtoi*).

love, despite the retribution of social ostracism and a life in poverty and poor health, is ultimately crowned with success in *Mon*, at least from the standpoint of spirituality as “eternal love.”<sup>444</sup> At the same time, however, it is precisely this spirituality, i.e. the idealistic “romanticism” of Sôseki’s love, which for Tanizaki’s “youth of today” (*konnichi no seinen*) whose life is “devoid of objects of faith and moral foundations” cannot be but an utter “illusion” (*kûsô*).<sup>445</sup>

Tanizaki’s critique in the final analysis describes Sôseki’s ethical negotiations of “human feeling,” which ascribe an allegorical meaning to love within a plot structure of heroic social reform, as obsolete within the context of the contemporary world and for its new generation of young writers. Tanizaki’s critical discourse also makes sense in view of his own literary production, which starts to gain momentum in the early 1910s. In his early stories “Shisei” (The Tattoo, 1910) and “Himitsu” (The Mystery, 1911), for instance, the inscription and transformation of bodily surfaces through the acts of tattooing, transdressing or mask wearing produces erotic excitement as well as the constantly deferred desire to explore the truth or identity, which is presumably hidden beneath these surfaces. Once, however, this truth is discovered, which for example is merely the banal and meaningless everyday face of a young woman in “Himitsu,” the discoverer’s erotic desire cools down and becomes directed toward new sources of excitement, thus enacting a never-ending search for

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<sup>444</sup> I would argue, however, against Tanizaki that the success of Daisuke’s/Sôsuke’s spiritual reform of society through transgressive love in the plot of *Mon* is only partial and highly problematic. While spirituality, as Tanizaki argues, can be upheld and secured in *Mon* through the figure of an “eternally abiding love,” it is at the same time predicated on the loss of heroism as social action, which for Daisuke was an important aspect of his social and emotional reform. That Tanizaki only concentrates on the love plot in *Mon* and ignores the problematic loss of heroic possibilities, which Sôseki’s novel pessimistically and ironically dramatizes, exemplifies the extent to which Tanizaki lacks interest in ethicality and heroism as social action and also as a subject matter for literary writing.

<sup>445</sup> See *ibid.* 25. Tanizaki also ironically adds that a life of the type of Sôsuke’s would be highly enviable for the “youth of today,” but because it is a romantic “illusion” it sadly remains unrealizable. It should also be noted that Tanizaki’s view of *Sorekara* is more positive than his view of *Mon*, which stems from the fact that *Sorekara* through its ending seems to open up the potential to let follow, in a possible sequel, the representation of what he calls “real love,” i.e. an unidealistic love that would correspond to the contemporary socio-cultural conditions. The sequel that *Mon* offers and on which Tanizaki understandably focuses, however, is frustratingly conservative in that it didactically presents an “illusionary” idealism that contradicts the “real” life conditions of the “youth of today.”

surfaces of inscription into which desire can be projected.<sup>446</sup> Tanizaki's writing of desire and of its production in the early 1910s – like Mushakôji Saneatsu's contemporary writing of love – already stands outside of the framework of meaning, which negotiated between the poles of ethical or heroic spirituality and moral transgression. While erotic desire is not necessarily seen as socially transgressive and problematic in Tanizaki's stories, it also doesn't allegorize an ethical meaning. Tanizaki's writing rather uncovers the processes of production of desire as the search for always shifting and deferred origins, which are in themselves meaningless surfaces of inscription and which perhaps fittingly epitomize a “degenerated reality devoid of objects of faith and moral foundations.” Mushakôji's writing of love in the early 1910s, while differing from Tanizaki's writing of desire, also pushes away from traditional dramatizations of “human feeling.” In Mushakôji's story “Umarekuru ko no tame ni” (1910), for instance, love can be highlighted in its inherently valuable and unproblematic quality precisely because it is transgressive and immoral (namely as an adulterous affair). The social transgressiveness of the love of Mushakôji's narrator only emblemizes its positive naturalness, and it is also predicated on the optimistic hope that it will eventually triumph over oppressively moralistic social rules.<sup>447</sup>

Both Tanizaki's and Mushakôji's literary writing and discourse in the early 1910s in such a fashion, even though by means of different ideological objectives and aesthetic sensibilities, mark a demise of the negotiations of “human feeling,” which not only shaped Sôseki's early oeuvre but also Japanese literary writings throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century and even before. This demise also, more broadly, correlates with other important epistemological shifts and transformations around the year 1910, among them – and perhaps most notably – the

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<sup>446</sup> Tanizaki's “Shisei” was published in the journal *Shinshichô* and “Himitsu” in *Chûô kôron*. It should be noted that in “Shisei” the story's interest doesn't primarily lie in uncovering the identity or truth beneath the young woman protagonist's tattoo. At the same time, however, the story dramatizes the extent to which it is precisely the tattoo as bodily inscription – the tattoo represents a “jorô spider” (*jorôgumo*) – which produces the female protagonist's identity as a femme fatale.

<sup>447</sup> For Mushakôji's story “Umarekuru ko no tame ni” see my previous footnote in this Epilogue.

demise of Chinese-style (*kanshibun*) literacy and learning as an active field of cultural production.<sup>448</sup> This demise is relevant for my analysis insofar as negotiations of “human feeling” were closely tied to a continuity of discourses and textual practices leading back to diverse strands of classical Japanese, Chinese or Sino-Japanese literacy such as, for instance, traditional poetic discourse or the vernacular Chinese novel.<sup>449</sup> At the same time, the demise of ethical negotiations of “human feeling” in literary writings and discourses of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century also opens up questions about the broader historicity and historical significance of these negotiations and of “human feeling.” One important question that underlies my project relates to the modernity of discursive and textual explorations of “human feeling” in Japan. As my dissertation demonstrates, explorations and dramatizations of the ethically ambiguous potential of “human feeling” acquire a largely unprecedented complexity and intensity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – especially within the context of narrative genres – and they also centrally contribute to the emergence of literature as a cultural practice in Japan. It would thus make sense to ask to what extent the writing of “human feeling” in Japanese 19<sup>th</sup> century literary texts might correlate to a broader and more global trend of modernity – and of modern literature more in particular – to be sentimental or to be defined by specific modes of sentiment.<sup>450</sup> At the same time, however, “human feeling” (*ninjō*) is also a largely traditional

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<sup>448</sup> I agree with Wiebke Denecke who, in her review of Atsuko Sakaki’s *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese Polarity in Japanese Literature* (Sakaki 2006), points out that Tanizaki’s fetishistic appropriation of China in the narratives, which Sakaki discusses in the epilogue of her book, isn’t culturally grounded any more in the “Sino-Japanese polarity” or in traditional modes of Japanese, Chinese and Sino-Japanese literacy (see Denecke 2007, 368). As my own discussion attempted to highlight, Tanizaki’s oeuvre, which is representative of a “generation of intellectuals for whom Chinese learning and *kanbun* literacy was no longer defining” (ibid. 368), constitutes the site of significant shifts, also with regard to the demise of textual negotiations of “human feeling.”

<sup>449</sup> See my Introduction for a discussion of the continuity of discourses and textual practices around “human feeling” and its ethical ambiguity, especially with regard to the relevance of traditional poetic discourse.

<sup>450</sup> In her book *Public Passions* (Lean 2007), which examines the linkage between sentiment and modernity in China, Eugenia Lean also more broadly contextualizes her problematic with regard to the European context in the following terms: “Modern Europeanists, for example, have been among those starting to take emotions seriously as a subject of historical inquiry. Challenging the long-standing assumption that sentiment was antithetical to the Enlightenment project, these scholars have demonstrated its crucial role in articulating the transition from an older aristocratic world order to a modern order. Leaving behind the earlier stratification of

category with a long discursive history in East Asia, and I would ask what significance the continuation and intensification of long-standing traditional discourses and textual practices could indeed have for the emergence of modernity and modern literature in 19<sup>th</sup> century Japan, including both the late Edo and the Meiji periods.<sup>451</sup> The question about the relevance of ethical negotiations of “human feeling” for the study of Japanese modernity and modern literature is moreover complicated by the demise of these negotiations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. What is the significance of this demise for the historicity of sentimental modernity in Japan? Does an earlier kind of sentimental modernity – the kind examined in my dissertation – become superseded by new and less traditional regimes of sentiment, desire and/or affect in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? While it is impossible to provide a definite answer to these questions at this point, they underlie my project in important ways and highlight the centrality of negotiations of “human feeling” for the study of modern literature in Japan, both with regard to its complex appropriation and continuation of traditional regimes of literacy and with regard to its place in broader and more global contexts of modernity.

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society by class and bloodlines, the modern era, they argue, sees the fundamental truth of emotional experience as the moral basis of bourgeois individuality. [...]. The rise of the sentimental novel and the cult of domesticity in the eighteenth century were also linked with the history of sexuality (i.e., gender difference), the rise of middle-class bourgeois identity, and the carving out of the public/private spheres” (Lean 2007, 19). It should be noted, moreover, that the linkage between modernity and sentiment in the European context, which Lean here describes, is not limited to the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its cult of sentimentality. As the recent scholarship of Martin von Koppenfels outlines, a specific “politics of affect” – namely one that deals with affective “immunity” and coldness – also marks the rise of modernist fiction (von Koppenfels examines the work of Flaubert, Proust, Céline, Duras and Imre Kertész) as well as discourses such as psychoanalysis (Freud). See Koppenfels 2007. See also Luhmann 1994 for an investigation of sentimental modernity from the perspective of sociological theory as well as, for the continuing (although shifting) relevance of the topic, Terada 2001 who examines the ambiguous centrality of “feeling” in post-structural philosophical discourse.

<sup>451</sup> Eugenia Lean who in her book (Lean 2007) investigates the role of a specifically traditional kind of emotionality in China – namely filial piety – within the context of the emergence of a modern public sphere mediated by mass media provides an interesting analytical trajectory for tackling this question. With regard to the role of sentiment in the context of non-Western modernity she also writes in her Introduction: “The historical significance of sentiment in the making of modernity was not specific to the modern West. If we consider some other works on sentiment and non-Western modernity, we can identify a global pattern among non-Western societies of the strategic employment of pre-existing, ‘traditional’ forms of virtue and sentiment in their creation of modern societies. This complicates previous interpretations of the ‘importation’ of modernity from the West to other parts of the world” (Lean 2007, 19-20). See also *ibid.* 20 for further bibliographic references regarding the topic of traditional “virtue and sentiment” in the context of non-Western modernity.

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