

Connaissance Délicieuse or the Science of Jealousy: Tsushima Yūko's Story "Kikumushi" (The Chrysanthemum Beetle)

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This essay analyzes the story "Kikumushi" (The Chrysanthemum Beetle) by the noted woman writer Tsushima Yūko (b.1947). Though most Japanese critics claim that Tsushima's writings have a narrow focus, revolving around a few, readily identifiable "themes" and "motifs" such as the brother-sister incest, the marginalization of single mothers and their children in contemporary Japanese society, the meaninglessness and absurdity of family ties/blood relationships and the various ways in which lonely, defiant women challenge traditional discourses on motherhood and female sexuality, "Kikumushi" demonstrates that Tsushima's texts not only display a complex narrative structure, but articulate critiques that transcend the Japanese context and raise important questions for feminist cross-cultural analyses. By contrasting "Kikumushi" with the *sarayashiki* (Manor-of-the-Dishes) tradition which significantly structures Tsushima's narrative, by bringing several theoretical perspectives to bear on, and especially by highlighting the play of fantasy in the story, this study shows that, in the face of a non-anthropocentric, continually shifting mythical discursive space such as that envisioned by Tsushima our habitual interpretive strategies—even the most "subversive" and "politically correct" ones—are largely inadequate and that a new critical discourse has to be invented.

Keywords: SARAYASHIKI (MANOR-OF-THE-DISHES) TRADITION, FANTASY, EPISTEMOLOGY OF JEALOUSY, REPRESENTATION OF THE FEMALE SUBJECT, FEMINIST FILM THEORY, POSTMODERNISM, LITERATURE AS ETHNOGRAPHY.

This essay explores the story "Kikumushi" (The Chrysanthemum Beetle) by the noted woman fictionist Tsushima Yūko.¹ There seems to be a consensus in the—by no means substantial—critical literature on Tsushima that her writings dramatize a limited number of "themes" and "motifs" such as the meaninglessness and absurdity of family ties/blood relationships, the struggle of lonely, defiant women against the oppressive patriarchal institutions of marriage and the family and the regulative ideologies/fictions that support them, the revision of traditional (Japanese) definitions of motherhood and female sexuality and the unusual, Faulk-

nerian configuration of the brother-sister incest in which the brother is almost always mentally retarded, and is totally subjugated by a protective, but authoritarian sister.² Japanese critics also agree that Tsushima's predilection for these topics reflects the writer's unusual life story and experience as a divorcee and single mother, and that many of her short fictions are autobiographical, employing narrative techniques close to those of the confessional *shishōsetsu*.³ None of the critical essays on Tsushima's work I have examined, however, attempts to construct feminist readings of her fiction,⁴ or to position her texts in broader sociocultural, political and critical contexts.

The readings of the story "Kikumushi" I will construct in this essay are aimed, both at exposing the inadequacy of the traditional methodologies of *Kokubungaku kenkyū* (Japanese scholarship of the indigenous literature) and of journalistic literary criticism (*bungei hihyō*) in dealing with women's texts,⁵ and at countering the prevailing critical view of Tsushima's fiction as narrowly focused depictions of typically feminine experiences. My readings also dramatize, I think, my recognition that our habitual politics of reading—even the most "subversive," most staunchly feminist or most committedly "politically correct"⁶—often fail us in the face of irreverent, fantastic texts such as the one presented here, texts that resist discursive closure, as well as the critic's imperially positioning herself at the center of the interpretive act. I hope the following pages will make clear that we need to remain alert, not only to the historicity of our politics of reading—that is, the fact that familiar theories, critical strategies and discourses arose in response to specific historico-cultural needs, but to the constructed, fictional, ultimately mythical character of the readings we produce.

After a brief synopsis of the story, the essay proceeds to contrast it with the *sarayashiki* lore on which Tsushima's text depends for a great part of its uncanny effect, and which in its turn engenders several fantastic parallel realms or worlds in which the characters in "Kikumushi" move simultaneously. The second chapter of the essay tests the hypothesis of an epistemology of jealousy posited in the first chapter, and analyzes the various ways in which knowledge is constructed, defined and critiqued in the story. The third section examines the ethnographic aspects of "Kikumushi," while the fourth and final chapter reviews the operations of fantasy in the story, and some of the consequences of these operations for the tasks and scope of political criticism.

The Story "Kikumushi"

"Kikumushi" is included in *Ōma monogatari* (Spooky Tales), a short story collection which was published in 1984. The protagonist of the story is Izumi, a single woman in her mid-thirties living with her mother in an apartment building on a busy Tokyo thoroughfare. In another apartment building fifteen minutes walk

from Izumi's lives her former schoolmate Kazuko. Kazuko is also single, but has a six-year-old daughter from a relationship with a married man. The story opens with a scene in Kazuko's apartment: while gazing at the white plastic case of the fluorescent light tubes in Kazuko's living room, Izumi and Kazuko reminisce about their schooldays. Izumi gets involved with Takashi, the younger brother of the real estate agent whose family occupies the first floor in Izumi's apartment building. Takashi, who lives alone in an apartment nearby, helps his brother and his sister-in-law with the cleaning and maintenance of the building.

Both Izumi and Takashi seem content with a pleasant sexual intimacy, carefully avoiding a deeper emotional commitment to each other. Gradually Izumi discovers traces of another woman in Takashi's apartment. She becomes increasingly jealous, but attempts to conceal her feelings from Takashi. When she discovers, not only that Takashi is involved with another woman, but that he has deliberately left things belonging to that woman in visible places for her to notice, Izumi can no longer contain her jealousy and anger and after a dramatic confrontation with her lover, temporarily breaks with him.

Three weeks after Izumi meets Takashi's other girl friend, a younger woman named Nobuko. Nobuko tells Izumi the story of her six-year relationship with Takashi, describing at length his timid, jealous nature, his immaturity and emotional instability. She also relates an incident from Takashi's schooldays, which she has heard from his mother and which seems to have left a deep imprint on her lover: when Takashi was in junior high, a girl in his class attempted suicide by gasing herself, but was saved and sent to another school. The girl had sent Takashi a postcard, saying that she wanted to die because of him, and that she would come back as a ghost and curse him to death.

Not long after hearing Nobuko's story Izumi resumes her relationship with Takashi. One day she goes to her friend Kazuko's apartment to help her clean the plastic case of the fluorescent light tubes in the latter's living room. The whole plastic case is full of dead insects, from which Kazuko's daughter retrieves a black beetle with a white pattern on its back. That evening the little girl wants to show her father the beetle she had wrapped in tissue paper, but the insect is no longer in its wrapping. The father, astonished, tells the little girl the insect may have been a chrysanthemum beetle (*kikumushi*), which became a white butterfly and took off to the sky. After the little girl goes to bed, the father tells Kazuko the story of Okiku, the servant who was shoved down a well as punishment for having placed a needle in her master's (who was also her lover's) plate, and whose desire for vengeance lives on in the form of the chrysanthemum beetle bearing her name (*kiku* = chrysanthemum). In a bed conversation with Takashi, Izumi revises the version of the Okiku legend she heard from Kazuko: not Okiku, but the jealous wife who put a needle in her husband's plate and who wrongly accused Okiku of this mischief should be regarded as the tragic heroine of the story.

Still under the impression of the legend of the unfortunate Okiku, Izumi has a vision of Takashi, who is transformed into countless black beetles, which subsequently turn into butterflies. The butterflies, each one of which is a blissful Takashi, are borne by the wind toward heaven.

Beyond the Ending: The Sarayashiki (Manor-of-the-Dishes) Tradition and the Postmodern Turn

The *sarayashiki* (Manor-of-the-Dishes) tradition—the corpus of folk tales and legends featuring the unfortunate servant Okiku, as well as the *kabuki* and puppet plays based on these legends—plays a crucial role in the construction of the discursive space of “Kikumushi.” Before I turn to an analysis of the function of this tradition in Tsushima’s story, let me anticipate one of the main motifs of the readings that follow by stating that “Kikumushi” is a fantastic text which theorizes on fantasy and which subverts, not only the readings it engenders, but also its own resistance to appropriation and renewed fantasizing by the reader. Fantasy will serve as a testing ground for the readings I will be suggesting. In order to facilitate the interpretive activity I will conduct (and hope to seduce the reader to participate in), I will be assuming that three levels of discourse/narration may be distinguished in “Kikumushi”: a dominant/hegemonic, a residual and an emergent level. This division is based on Raymond Williams’ distinction between residual, dominant and emergent cultures.⁷

Viewed from the perspective of Williams’ tripartite division, “Kikumushi” presents a very interesting configuration. The Manor-of-the-Dishes or Okiku tradition clearly occupies the dominant level of narration in the story. The legend recounted in Tsushima’s text is a lesser known variant of this tradition: accused by the jealous wife of her master and lover to have deliberately put a needle in one of his dishes, Okiku is shoved down a well with her hands tied behind her back. To show her indignation and despair at Okiku’s gruesome death, her mother throws herself into the same well and dies. Okiku’s desire of vengeance lives on in the form of the chrysanthemum beetle, which has a white pattern on its back supposedly representing Okiku, as she is about to be pushed down the well. It is said that this beetle after a while turns into a white butterfly that flies up to heaven.

The best known, and most frequently dramatized version of the Okiku legend is the one in which Okiku is put to death for having broken a precious dish belonging to the samurai household she serves in. In this version Okiku’s ghost appears at night and patiently counts the dishes she was in charge of until she reaches the missing dish, a process she repeats endlessly because the broken dish cannot be replaced. The earliest extant dramatization of this legend is the puppet play *Banshū sarayashiki* by Tamenaga Tarobee and Asada Itchō (1741).⁸ The most popular *kabuki* versions of the Okiku legend, most of which are adaptations/interpre-

tations of *Banshū Sarayashiki* are Kawatake Mokuami's *Shin sarayashiki tsuki no amagasa* (1883), and Okamoto Kido's *Banchō sarayashiki* (1916).⁹

On the residual level of the narrative in “Kikumushi” we find a conflation of modern interpretations/adaptations of various versions of the legend of the Manor of the Dishes, including the versions mentioned above. If we recall the incident of the aborted suicide of Takashi's classmate in junior high, the fact that Takashi had befriended, not the girl, who tried to commit suicide, but her boyfriend, and finally that Takashi was, and continues to be haunted by this incident, we can easily perceive the way Tsushima's story manipulates the *sarayashiki* tradition: the girl who tried to gas herself may be regarded as a conflation of Okiku and the jealous wife in the version of the legend narrated by Kazuko's lover. From the girl's perspective Takashi, interestingly enough, would be the counterpart of both Okiku (since the girl was jealous of Takashi, who claimed for himself part of the affection of the girl's boyfriend, and since the girl is, at least in part, the modern equivalent of the jealous wife of Okiku's master), and of Aoyama Tetsuzan from the puppet play *Banshū sarayashiki* (the girl = Okiku promised to come back as a ghost and torment Takashi = Tetsuzan to his death).

From the perspective of the *sarayashiki* tradition the girl who tried to gas herself and Takashi thus appear as both victims and victimizers. The “residual” triangle girl-who-tried-to-gas-herself + her boyfriend + Takashi is replicated in the “dominant,” or present-of-narration triangle Izumi + Nobuko + Takashi. Both triads are recreations of triangular relationships that appear in various versions of the Manor-of-the-Dishes legend, which thus becomes the “residual subtext” for both the “residual” narrative of Takashi and his two classmates from junior high school, and the “dominant” narrative of Takashi, Izumi and Nobuko. Before I comment on the implications of this discursive configuration let me quote the passage, from Nobuko's narrative, on the incident of the failed suicide attempt of Takashi's classmate, as well as Izumi's visualization of the curious triangular relationship between Takashi, the girl who tried to gas herself and her boyfriend.

‘I don't pretend to understand much about it, but it seems something happened in his early teens. I don't know how significant it might be... . When I'd just started living with him, we went out for a drink with a man he'd been to school with in Tokyo—in your part of town...’

‘Well, we went out together and he chatted about me and where we were living, and they reminisced, and then at some point their conversation went like this: “Come to the reunion!” “Not on your life!” Then the other man said, “It's all right, you-know-who is in the States, and won't give a damn about what happened all those years ago, anyway.” When he heard that he turned pale and knock-

ed the man over, sending his chair crashing, then walked out and left him lying there. The next day he still looked so fierce I didn't like to ask what had happened with "you-know-who".'

'Quite a time later—it would have been about four months after that—his mother came to see how we were getting on. He wasn't in at the time and she only stayed half an hour, but she brought up the same subject.'

'She told me that when he was at junior high a girl in his class had transferred to another school after attempting suicide. If it hadn't been for that unfortunate business, she said, he'd have gone on to a good university and a job in Tokyo. "But I suppose he's standing on his own feet," she said, "and I can't ask better than that." I wanted to know more about the "business" at school, because it had me worried by this time. And his own mother admitted she couldn't make head nor tail of it.'

'The girl who attempted suicide had sent him a postcard. The writing was so big it jumped right out at you, she said, and without meaning to she read it. "My life is not worth living and it's your fault. I'll come back and curse you to your death." The family was stunned. They couldn't get any explanation out of him...'

'Then he chose a college even further away and left home, which started her thinking that perhaps she *had* seen some sort of change come over him after what had happened. Not that she could have asked him about it though. It had been too long ago, she said, and he wouldn't have told her the truth... What do you think, Izumi?'

'Izumi couldn't answer at once, and before she did they came to the subway entrance, where Nobuko said simply, 'Well, this is my station.' As Izumi automatically gave a slight bow of her head, Nobuko put on a smile and went bouncily down the stairs. She didn't glance back though Izumi waited, so with a sigh Izumi started walking. At the back of her mind were the dim figures of three thirteen-year-olds: Takashi and the other boy had their arms round each other's shoulders, while on the opposite side the boy held hands with the girl as they looked happily into each other's faces.'

(71–73)

In view of the parallels and convergences between "Kikumushi" and the *sarayashi-ki* tradition described above, Tsushima's text may be said to illustrate Ernst Bloch's notion of non-synchronicity/non-synchronism. Bloch argues that we live in several different times and spaces at once, and that this phenomenon, which he calls non-synchronism, may be found both in real life and in the fictions we ceaselessly produce.

Not all people exist in the same Now. They do so only externally, by virtue of the fact that they may all be seen today. But that does not mean that they are living at the same time with others.¹⁰

Takashi, Izumi and Nobuko thus appear to live simultaneously in several times and spaces, both with respect to the Manor-of-the-Dishes tradition, and with respect to the incident of the aborted suicide of Takashi's former classmate. Another dimension of non-synchronicity may be found in the structure of the narrative: the narratives of the lives of Izumi, Takashi and Nobuko as presented to us by Tsushima's text, the narratives these characters tell each other about each other's lives (the narrativization/textualization of lived experience is foregrounded in "Kikumushi," Nobuko, Izumi and Takashi become each other's biographers/psychoanalysts and, as we shall see later on, ethnographers) and finally the narrative that frames all these stories and links them to one another—the text "Kikumushi" as a whole—combine premodern, modern and postmodern features attuned to residual/traditional, dominant/hegemonic and emergent forms of culture, in the way described by Steven Best and Douglas Kellner as characteristic for the present historical moment.¹¹ Moreover, the narrativization of lived, as well as *imagined* experience in "Kikumushi" also displays features and elements that seem resistant to territorialization/colonization by existing (past and present) epistemes.

The two discourses in "Kikumushi" that to my mind best illustrate, not only the non-synchronism, but also the working of fantasy and irony, as well as the construction of theory (theory-as-fiction/fiction-as-theory) in this text are first, what I would call the entomological discourse, and second the "theme" of jealousy. The following discussion closely scrutinizes these two discourses.

The Entomological Discourse

"Kikumushi" is a story teeming with insects. We are literally assailed by insects almost at every step in our exploration of this text. Apart from the instances outlined in the synopsis—the fact that the neon light tubes in Kazuko's room are full of dead insects, from which Kazuko's daughter selects a beetle with a white pattern, and the legend of the *kikumushi*, there are numerous other narrative moments featuring insects. Thus Izumi reminisces about her curious habit, in her last year in high school, of killing winged ants attracted by the desk lamp in her room, piling up their dead bodies in little mounds and counting them every night (417). Kazuko tells Izumi that her six-year old daughter is "awfully keen on insects." (75) In his discussion with Izumi about the legend of Okiku, Takashi remarks that the end of this folktale as related by the father of Kazuko's daughter is a little far-fetched (scientifically untenable). (77)¹² Izumi's fantasy of Takashi as countless *kikumushi* that turn into white butterflies is of course the most impressive instance of the "entomological discourse" in this story.

She glanced at Takashi's head. His stiff hair was lightly wavy. She pictured scores of tiny black insects turning one by one to white butterflies and wavering into the air. Was Takashi conjuring up the same scene and watching enraptured? Izumi stood up distractedly.

Each of the chrysanthemum beetles is Takashi, and when its body becomes vaguely restive and itchy it begins gradually changing shape, growing softer, till it exhales deeply and wafts upward like a petal. Hey, he says, exhilarated, this feels great! The same thing is happening over here, and there too. And every one of them is Takashi himself. Glancing around he sees a great many fluttering white butterflies, like a shower of blossoms. I thought I was in big trouble when I first turned into an insect, but if this is what happens it's not so bad, Takashi thinks with a blissful smile. Though now that his body is a butterfly's, being lighter, it works differently from a black beetle's and he can't move the way he wants at all. Wafting gently on the breeze is comfortable, though he supposes it's an uncertain kind of comfort...

Takashi sat up and looked at her. Izumi smiled, with a touch of embarrassment. (79)

Now the *sarayashiki* tradition that determines to a great extent, as we have seen, the configuration of the dominant and the residual levels of narration in "Kikumushi" not only testifies to the continued vitality and significance of traditional, residual cultures in the "dominant modernity" lived by the characters in the text (the fact that the social and cultural landscape—Japan in the first half of the 1980's—in which the characters in Tsushima's story move is hardly one of "full-blown postmodernity"¹³ is attested to by a number of textual instances I will discuss in the following sections), but gives rise to conscious/unconscious identifications, as well as a variety of complicated emotions in one more triangular relationship, that of Kazuko, her lover and her lover's wife. In this relationship, Kazuko may be equated with Okiku, her long time lover is the counterpart of Okiku's master and his wife, of course, the counterpart of the jealous wife in the Okiku/*kikumushi* legend. Ironically Kazuko = Okiku both longs for, and dreads the vengeance of her lover's wife. The wife, however, not only is not jealous, but has never shown the slightest inclination to meet her husband's long-time mistress. The text also suggests, with even more devastating irony, that Kazuko not only wishes to be killed, out of jealousy, by her lover's wife, but that she *may* have been killed, i.e. that she is a living ghost who has to go on living in order to incite the other woman's jealousy! In other words, in terms of the tradition of the Manor of the Dishes, Kazuko may be said to lead a double existence, as both living being and ghost, on the one hand—since she is the one who carries through her "vengeance" against her lover's wife by having a child with him—and as both Okiku and the jealous wife of the original legend, on the other hand! The supreme irony in this view is, of course, that Kazuko = Okiku, is, so to speak, forced to

avenge herself against herself, to be a double victim before she can obtain full membership in a community living in the present. (Kazuko has such an ambiguous status that she is almost never granted full membership, in any community: not only is she barred from enjoying the same rights as her lover's wife but, in terms of the Okiku legend she unconsciously stages in her life she also, paradoxically, plays a subordinate role—she cannot become a tragic heroine like Okiku unless she dies, and she obviously cannot die because her rival is determined to ignore her existence. Moreover, from the perspective of the story “Kikumushi” as a whole Kazuko is a marginal character, not only because she appears mostly as a character in a story (sic!), told either by herself (45–48), or by other co-characters about her (76–77), but also because she plays the part of ushering in Izumi and her story while at the same time serving as a foil to bring the latter character into clearer focus). Let us now listen to Kazuko, as she describes her relationship with her daughter's father, and presents her views on jealousy before she hears the story of Okiku.

‘...But I wasn't intending to have a baby from the start,’ Kazuko replied, staring at the palm of her hand.’

‘Something made you get more deeply involved, didn't it? Not the baby, and not him either...’

Kazuko didn't answer at once.

‘Well, that's one way of looking at it,’ she said at length. ‘Since his wife wasn't the type to lose her head, I may have wanted to know how she *would* take it. If she hadn't been so tolerant of her husband's affair, perhaps I wouldn't have had the baby... It's hard work making someone jealous.’

‘I'd have thought it was easy.’

‘As long as it's not important, yes. But when you brace yourself for a showdown, nothing happens. I longed for a scene, for his wife to burst in here on the rampage with a knife in her hand... I'd sigh over those stories when I saw them in the papers. When you think about it, though, she may have been longing for me to do the same. Not longing, exactly, but clinging to a hope...’

Izumi shifted her gaze beyond the glass doors of the balcony as she said, ‘What it comes down to, in fact, is that no one wants to be killed out of jealousy. Or there'd be murder everywhere.’

Kazuko was also gazing out at the trees. ‘...True, but there comes a time when—without knowing how you reached that point—you're convinced that's really the only thing left. Not that you want to be killed, but the time comes when you suddenly know you *have* been... You can't drop your guard.’ (48)

When told the story of Okiku by her lover, Kazuko is struck by the uncanny similarities between her experience and the legend of Okiku. Her reaction at this rec-

ognition is one of fear and instinctive rejection of the invisible bond that ties her to Okiku:

‘She (Kazuko) says she can’t believe it was really such a remarkable insect,’ Izumi told Takashi, ‘but the thought of it woke her up in the night with the shivers.’ (76–77)

Reviewing now the connection between Izumi, Kazuko and Nobuko and the tradition of the Manor-of-the-Dishes I think we can say that Izumi and Kazuko activate a “premodern sensibility” in their identification with Okiku and the jealous wife in the version of the Okiku legend known to them (as well as in the various other versions that may have influenced Tsushima’s text), while Nobuko may be said to identify with Takashi’s classmate in junior high school who attempted suicide (i.e. she also identifies with Okiku and the jealous wife since the girl who attempted suicide is, as we have seen, a conflation of these two characters). Unlike Izumi and Kazuko, however, who participate in the transmission and conservation of the *sarayashiki* tradition (as well as the residual culture in which this tradition is embedded) by narrating and commenting on it, and, in the case of Izumi, even revising it, Nobuko is allowed only an indirect participation in/identification with this tradition, a participation/identification which is, of course, unconscious (Nobuko is not aware of the correspondences/between the experience of the girl who committed suicide and the legend of Okiku). In other words, Izumi and Kazuko consciously allow premodern ethics, attitudes and frames of mind to intervene in their “modern” lives, while Nobuko allows a threatening residual culture to overshadow her relationship with Takashi through a move of unconscious identification I called, in a paper on Tsushima’s story “Fusehime”, a metatextual, karmic discursive operation.¹⁴ That is to say, the relationship between Nobuko and Takashi is influenced by Okiku’s premodern karma for reasons that are not only independent of Nobuko’s will, but also never revealed to her. This karmic influence, moreover, occurs unbeknownst to Nobuko. (As readers we are of course aware of the fact that the karmic interference in Nobuko’s experience is the outcome of the compositional design of the story, which, as I showed above, is structured to a great extent by the *sarayashiki* tradition.) Both the narrative Nobuko tells Izumi about the suicide attempt of Takashi’s classmate in junior high, and the continuation of this narrative after the two women leave the Italian restaurant in which they had dinner attest to Nobuko’s continuing preoccupation with the suicide incident. (71–72)

If we place the above observations in the context of Bloch’s theory of non-synchronism, we can easily see that Izumi, Kazuko and Nobuko not only live in several different times and spaces at once, but they share at least some of these other times and spaces without knowing it. Since one of these times and spaces of difference is an entomologic one—the version of the Okiku legend presented in this text is, after all, *the story of an insect*—it follows that Izumi, Nobuko and Kazuko

share a *different order of being* without necessarily being aware of this commonality among them. The three women have been, are, will and can become insects any time. We find evidence for the "entomological identity" of these characters scattered throughout the text: Izumi and Nobuko are attracted to Takashi like moths flying into a lamp; in Izumi's fantasy Takashi is the chrysanthemum beetle that turns into a white butterfly, that is, he is Okiku. Since Izumi, Nobuko and Kazuko identify, either consciously or unconsciously, with Okiku, it follows that they can become *okikumushi* and subsequently white butterflies as effortlessly as Takashi in Izumi's fantasy. Izumi relates how she and her family used to kill hawk-moths with wet newspapers (46), and how she would swat winged ants that landed on her desk attracted by the light of her desk lamp (47), while Kazuko is so frightened by the dead insects piling up in the white case of the fluorescent tubes in her living room that she endlessly postpones taking off that case and cleaning it (46, 73). The latter instances suggest the equally fantastic possibility that Izumi and Kazuko act cruelly toward insects because they fear that their "real" insect nature may be betrayed by their kind. While this would seem to link "Kikumushi" with the nightmarish, dystopian world of Kafka's "Metamorphosis" the lovely vision, conjured by Izumi, of Takashi as a chrysanthemum beetle, rather than yet another manifestation of the archetype of the flying Icarus, implies a critique of modern theories of evolution, as well as the need to rethink world history and our interaction with the environment away from human needs.

Rosemary Jackson has argued that all manifestations of the fantastic imagination attempt "to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints," to seek "that which is perceived as absence or loss."¹⁵ The different aspects of the entomological discourse in "Kikumushi," especially the fantasy of a social order of human insects certainly express such a lack or loss, and the desire to overcome it. None of the main characters in the story is happy with her/his present circumstances, all of them appear to be longing for a change. Takashi, whose job consists in helping his sister-in-law with the cleaning and maintenance of the apartment building where Izumi lives, not only looks just as fed up with this work as the principal caretaker, but vehemently protests Izumi's insinuation that he has dinner at his brother's house, and states that he agreed to help his brother and his wife only because he wanted to use them to his advantage: "Glimpsed from the side, his features wore the sulky look of a child forced to do as he is told, helping his parents with hated chores... Perhaps Takashi caught the hint of sarcasm in her inquiry, for he answered with a rancour that startled her, 'I don't go to their god-damn place, why the hell should I?... I simply thought I could use them. That's all they're good for the lot of them,' Takashi muttered, this time without expression." (50-51) Izumi's attitude toward her own job is not exactly enthusiastic either: "She described the job she'd been doing as a buyer of imported sheet music since leaving college ten years earlier. Though not without complaints, she added that it was too late to think of doing anything else." (53)

All female characters in "Kikumushi" express various degrees of discomfort with, or resistance to the assignment of gender-specific roles, as well as the discursive construction, the socialization and repression of sexuality by the powerful patriarchal order in which they live. Izumi, for instance, is ashamed of her situation as unmarried woman in her thirties who still lives with her mother, and of her unfulfilled and unexpressed sexual desires, that seem to her unsuitable for a woman of her age.

She didn't want to believe that what had prompted Takashi toward a sexual relationship was his seeing the hunger deep down in her body and, moreover, recognising her limitation: that at this late stage she wasn't going to be able to leave her mother's side. (58)

This passage also seems to point to an anomalous subject position of unmarried working women in their thirties (women past the generally accepted marriageable age) in contemporary Japanese society. This impression is confirmed by available studies and statistics: sociologist Ueno Chizuko, for instance, points out that, despite the dramatic changes in Japanese women's labor in the past two decades and the image of the liberated "career woman" presented by the mass media, in the 1980's full-time working women in their thirties made up only 20% of this age group—this figure including unmarried, divorced and widowed women as well as those without children.¹⁶

Despite an undeniable critical perspective on the reality of Japanese society in the 1980's, the entomological speculations and fantasies in "Kikumushi" amount, neither to a sustained Marxist analysis of mass culture or the pervasive consumerism in contemporary Japan, nor to a Marxist-feminist critique of changing patterns in women's labor, or of the unequal treatment of women in the workplace. Its fantastic configuration notwithstanding, the entomological discourse in this text also cannot be said to articulate "a fantasy of power that would revise the social grammar in which women are never defined as subjects," and that "disdains a sexual exchange in which women participate only as objects of circulation"—a discursive practice that Nancy K. Miller identifies as one of the major characteristics of modern and contemporary women's fiction.¹⁷ Rather than placing women in position of power, the variations on the legend of Okiku, as well as the intricate network of visible and invisible relations they create between the characters in Tsushima's story reveal alternative economies of desire that are like magic-filled hologram projections of the present transitional moment. (Izumi's vision of Takashi as a chrysanthemum beetle certainly seems to place Izumi in a position of power over her lover, but this is a very precarious position indeed: not only is Izumi as a potential human insect, subject to sudden transformations like Takashi, but this fantasy remains, after all, a mere fantasy which will affect, neither the configuration of Izumi's relationship with Takashi, nor the "social grammar" in which the two interact). That is to say, such alternative economies can be evoked not only

because individuals in late capitalist, informational societies such as Japan's have more leisure and an easier access to knowledge than in other social orders, but also because the mass of available information is manipulated in such a way as to create a sense of continuity with the past and the future alike, as well as the illusion of an unlimited ability of the individual to intervene in, and alter these histories.¹⁸ At the same time these economies of desire, as suggested above, have a critical potential that transcends the moment in time in which they originate. Izumi's fantasy in the final scene of the story is also indicative, not of an "impulse to power" (Miller, 41), or of a desire to colonize the future, but rather of a utopian impulse which may not be able to resolve present contradictions and problems and prevent future disasters, but can at least create a dream space of *jouissance*, lightness of being and uninhibited freedom, a space free of gender, class, racial and other inequities.

The Discourse of Jealousy

The discourse of jealousy in "Kikumushi" offers a fertile ground for speculation on the positionality of this text, i.e. on the question of whether it straddles modernity and postmodernity, or whether it may be regarded as an emergent literary product pointing to new possibilities in the cultural landscape of present-day Japan. Jealousy may certainly be viewed as the central "theme" of this story: the text is framed by two conversations centering on jealousy, and in between these conversations several narratives in which jealousy plays a prominent role are unfolded. In the opening, already quoted conversation between Kazuko and Izumi, the former describes her efforts to make the wife of her lover jealous, going even so far as to state that she (Kazuko) would not have given birth to her daughter if it had not been for the keen competition with her rival about the affections of the man the two women are obliged to share. (48) In the final scene of the text, Izumi and Takashi discuss the version of the Okiku legend recounted by Kazuko's lover: as I have already indicated, Izumi revises this legend, not only by assigning to the jealous wife a position of tragic heroine at least as important as Okiku's, but also by interpreting Okiku as a much more ambiguous character, rather remote from the figure of the innocent victim haunting the numerous variants of the *sarayashiki* tradition, and by emphasizing the role of the audience in the construction of this tradition. Thus Izumi sees Okiku as an insensitive, conceited young woman who let the master's infatuation with her "go to her head" and forgot about her status as a mere servant. In Izumi's interpretation of the aftermath of Okiku's gruesome death, the unfortunate maid owes her transformation into an insect—her "immortality"—not to her own desire to remind the world of her thirst for vengeance, but to the reluctance of the audience of this legend (readers, spectators, actors, storytellers) to release Okiku from her consuming grudge against the employers who put her to death, and to let her be reborn in paradise. This reluctance to "save" Okiku stems, in Izumi's view, from the audience's jealousy/envy of the un-

fortunate young woman, who was able to inspire such strong sentiments that popular imagination has enshrined her as a legendary figure. Here is Izumi's disrespectful reinterpretation of the legend of Okiku.

'...But if Okiku really existed, I wonder what became of the jealous wife who must have existed too?'

'After the truth got out she was probably investigated, but she hadn't committed murder directly... I don't know. In those days, maybe she'd have had to kill herself, and they'd have told her to get on with it.'

'I guess the husband would be beheaded, since he was the direct culprit. But when you think about it, wouldn't the wife's spirit have more reason than Okiku's to come back from the grave? It all started with her husband falling for a maid, which was mortifying enough, but she didn't have the right to dismiss her. So she'd have tried to drive her out. But maybe Okiku wasn't a very sensitive girl. If she had been, you'd think she'd have found some way of getting round the wife, getting into her good books. Or maybe, knowing the master loved her, Okiku let it go to her head. Anyway, the wife's bitterness escalates till she puts a needle in the husband's dinner. It would never have killed him. It was surely no more than a silly piece of mischief. But the husband flies into rage and has Okiku killed—though his wife may have encouraged that—and then even Okiku's mother throws herself accusingly down the same well. They can't hush it up any longer, and the wife finally has to commit suicide. The husband curses her on the way to his execution. It must have been a nightmare for her from beginning to end. And all because her husband couldn't keep his hands off the servants. There'd be no rest for her soul. What comfort could there be for a grievance like that? So her ghost still comes out at night. You know, I begin to feel sorry for her, somehow...'

'No one knows what really happened. And her story and Okiku's aren't the same—class would have entered into it, too. No, you can say what you like but Okiku's the heroine,' Takashi said, watching Izumi's face.

Izumi nodded. 'And anybody will tell you that Okiku was a beauty, and the jealous wife was ugly... No, you're right, I suppose. The story of the jealous wife doesn't give people a thrill. With a woman like Okiku, now, in a position of weakness, the plaything of destiny bewailing her fate as she goes to a tragic death—a woman like that doesn't actually mean much to us, so we can afford to be fascinated by her and think "how lovely." How lovely it must feel to inspire such jealousy. I'm sure that's why Okiku's story has become so famous. We can forget ourselves and share just a little of Okiku's

pleasure... That's not such a bad thing, you know, because meanwhile we're spared being jealous of anybody at all.'

...

'...But we won't allow Okiku eyes and a mouth like ours. Or arms that she could move freely. If she so much as opened her mouth or took a look out of her eyes we'd want to beat the daylights out of her—the shameless hussy. We're as jealous as that. And Okiku's ghost knows it, so all she ever shows is her back view as she falls into the old well... Perhaps her spirit still roams not because she can't rest but because we won't let her. For a woman as enviable as Okiku, wanting paradise would be too greedy altogether...'

(77–79)

In between the opening and ending conversations described above we witness the main narrative of the growing intimacy between Takashi and Izumi, on the one hand, and of the drama of mystery and suspense Takashi deliberately stages, by placing “suggestive feminine items” (63) in his apartment in such a way as to incite Izumi's jealousy, on the other. In this main narrative are embedded two more narratives that dramatize jealousy: a) the story of Nobuko's relationship with Takashi; b) the story, related by Nobuko, of the suicide attempt of Takashi's classmate at junior high. Via Nobuko's narrative about her six-year involvement with Takashi we learn, not only that Takashi is “timid and extremely jealous” (69), and that he, though fully aware of his own weaknesses, nevertheless “doesn't believe he'd be capable of it (i.e. jealousy) himself,” dismissing the “very idea” (of his own jealousy) as “ridiculous” (71), but that Nobuko, like Izumi a victim of Takashi's “playing tricks” on her to make her “aware of this three-way arrangement (i.e. his relationship with both Nobuko and Izumi) by the most concrete means he could think of” (70) is just as jealous of her rival Izumi as Izumi is of her.

'...Izumi, what do you think of jealousy? I've got jealousy on the brain—he's had that effect on me... ' (70)

There are several instances of theorizing on jealousy in “Kikumushi.” Apart from Kazuko's and Izumi's brief meditations in the opening conversation mentioned above (“what it comes down to, in fact, is that no one wants to be killed out of jealousy. Or there'd be murders everywhere.’ ‘...True, but there comes a time when—without knowing how you reached that point—you're convinced that's really the only thing left,’”. (48) We encounter, for instance Izumi's definition of jealousy in response to Nobuko's query about this peculiar state of mind.

'Well... the usual answer is possessiveness, isn't it? But it strikes me that's not quite it... Could it be pride? A state where no matter what you do you can't have confidence in yourself—that might be

more like it.' (70)

The central narrative on the relationship between Izumi and Takashi contains stunning descriptions of Izumi's elaborate speculations and imaginary detective work to construct, on the basis of the evidence provided by the various "women's things" scattered in Takashi's apartment—a women's magazine, two matching coffee mugs, several long hairs on the bathroom floor, a gold chain, a stocking—a coherent story, namely the narrative of Takashi's involvement with another woman. Here is a sample of such convoluted speculating, hypothesizing and imagining, operations that are, of course, activated by Izumi's jealousy and suspicions that there is "something fishy going on". (64)

It was then that Izumi was first struck by something different, something she couldn't accept. In front of Takashi she kept her displeasure well hidden, but after returning home she choked and began to tremble. What was he up to? Those mugs were an exceedingly theatrical prop, no matter how she looked at it. Being Takashi, he was hardly likely to have checked carefully around his rooms in case there was anything Izumi shouldn't see. And yet he did have a fastidious streak: his sharp eyes noticed things dropped in the street, right down to ten yen coins and rubber bands. He must have been aware of those mugs whether he liked it or not. And the mugs weren't all: even if he hadn't been consciously checking, shouldn't his eyes have taken in the women's magazine, the bag of biscuits, the hairs on the bathroom tiles? She could see Takashi glance at the bathroom floor, notice the hairs, and stare at them for several seconds before laughing grimly and leaving. But that might not be the worse of it: she could also see Takashi inspect the bathroom floor, take a closer look in the waste-paper basket and under the mat where hairs tended to catch, pick out two or three which by their length were clearly a woman's and, with a grin, carefully position them in the middle of the floor. On the point of throwing out the woman's forgotten magazine with a bunch of old newspapers, he might have remembered that it was the day Izumi came and put the pile back in the kitchen, leaving the magazine on top where she couldn't miss it. What if he hadn't actually been using the mugs with the woman, either, but had deliberately taken them from the shelf and placed them in the draining rack, then gone over to the bed and surveyed the kitchen, smiling faintly? 'Yes,' he'd say, 'that'll do nicely for today.' (59–60)

The numerous instances of theorizing and fantasizing on, or because of jealousy found in "Kikumushi" allow us, it seems to me, to posit a deliberate attempt by this text to construct not only a theory of knowledge, an epistemology or science

of jealousy, but also a new radical theory of fantasy. Although Izumi's speculations on the "suggestive feminine items" in Takashi's apartment do not display the nearly ostentatious familiarity with modern scientific knowledge we find in the endless questionings and hypotheses of the jealous narrator in Proust's *La Prisonnière*,¹⁹ they certainly present what Malcolm Bowie, referring to the discourse of jealousy in this celebrated novel, describes as a "dynamics of knowing, a portrait of the mind in process."²⁰ Izumi wants to know to whom the various feminine objects she comes across in Takashi's apartment belong, what Takashi's intention was in staging this puzzle for her to solve, what he thinks about her and their relationship (60–61). Even after she discovers Takashi's "nasty scheme" — "making deliberate use of women's things all this time in order to test Izumi's reaction" (64–65), after she meets Nobuko, listens to her story and resumes her relationship with Takashi, Izumi must still admit that "I don't know you very well yet. Really, you're full of things I don't know yet." (79) When Izumi bursts into a fit of rage, acknowledging her jealousy, Takashi admits that he had placed "women's things" in visible places for Izumi to see because he didn't know what she was "really thinking." (65) Like Izumi, Takashi also becomes absorbed in endless hypothesizing and fantasizing about the women he is involved with, trying to determine whether they are jealous, what they think of him etc. As Nobuko perceptively describes him:

'...He goes through life dreading his own jealous nature, so that as soon as he finds a relationship that takes some of the pressure off—as I did, and you did—he can't rest until he's satisfied himself that the other person is jealous too. And while he's at it he seems to lose his own balance. It's both a disappointment and a relief when it turns out that we are jealous, and then he starts brooding over what makes us that way, which leads him into very deep water... .' (71)

What "Kikumushi," then, appears to be after, is seducing us into subscribing to a set of axioms that are strikingly similar to those programatically inscribed in the politics of interpretation proposed by Proust's *La Prisonnière* and *Du Côté de chez Swann* (in a certain sense the whole opus of *A la recherche du temps perdu* may be described as a monument of hermeneutics, as well as an equally monumental exegesis of its own hermeneutic practices): jealousy is "a quest for knowledge" (Bowie, 58); knowledge is truth (to know is to have access to truth); all characters in Tsushima's text (by extension all individuals) experience various phases and aspects of a "jealous enquiry," for which they activate "inductive and hypothetico-deductive methods" (Bowie, 55). Not content with merely constructing an epistemology of jealousy, "Kikumushi" suggests that jealousy is the obligatory premise for all scientific inquiry, that all science is based on jealousy. In an even grander and more totalizing fashion, the text also seems to claim that all human relations are motivated by/based on jealousy and that love is sustained solely by jealousy. Jealousy is a primary impulse, as basic and unavoidable as sexual desire,

and which can become indistinguishable from sexual desire. This is attested to by passages such as the following:

Whenever she went to Takashi's room she was made to feel the presence of another woman, but she reprimanded herself — just because she was sexually involved, did she have to instantly turn on the silly suspicions? — and decided to take no notice. (59)

Unlike *La Prisonnière* and *Du Côté de chez Swann*, however, in which “the idea that the lover may become an honorary scientist or scholar by virtue of his jealous calculations and hypotheses is present as a insistent refrain” (Bowie, 50), and in which, moreover, the pathological curiosity motivating the jealous inquiry is celebrated as “passion de la vérité” (passion for truth) and its methods of investigation are defended time and again as “methodes d'investigation scientifique d'une veritable valeur intellectuelle et appropriées à la recherche de la vérité”.²¹ “Kikumushi” emphasizes the *visual aspect*, the role of the *gaze* and of *fantasy* in the practice of jealous inquiry/science of jealousy and the epistemology it proposes. Thus not only does Takashi incite Izumi's curiosity and “passion for truth” by placing “suggestive feminine items” in conspicuous places for her to *see*, but several passages in the text suggest that there can be no epistemology/poetics/metaphysics of jealousy without a preliminary, thorough visual investigation. The speculative, philosophical-epistemological work of the “jealous intellect” (Bowie, 59) is preceded, and sustained by the work of the ravenous, inquisitive gaze. I quote below two passages from “Kikumushi” that admirably describe how the inquisitive gaze feeds the jealous intellect, providing it with the foundation on which it then erects its fantastic imaginary architecture.

What had been in Izumi's eyes as she watched Takashi laughing? For he'd been aware of her gaze. And that wouldn't have been the only time; he'd been aware all along. Aware of Izumi's eyes slipping furtively away and yet always pursuing, never letting him escape her attention, watching avidly for her chance. Had he muttered, smiling tighly to himself, ‘Oh, her?’ The idea made Izumi stiffen with shame. At the same time she felt the man had shown himself in a sinister light. How could he have noticed a woman's covert gaze? Or had her eyes begun to pursue him so openly? (55)

Yet no matter how sternly she warned herself, her eyes went about their work as acutely as before. After a number of visits she could tell it wasn't her imagination. There was a women's magazine which Takashi couldn't possibly want to read on top of the stack of old newspapers in the kitchen. Two or three long hairs lay on the bathroom floor. They weren't Takashi's and Izumi's own hair was short. A bag of raisin biscuits had been stuffed into the china cabinet. (59)

The function of the jealous gaze in “Kikumushi” substantiates Teresa de Lauretis’s contention that spectatorship (viewing) is a “site of productive relations.”²² It is certainly because Izumi intently watched Takashi, like a spectator following the movements of the actors on the screen, that he responded, thus causing a “productive relation” to emerge between the two of them. (The relationship between Izumi and Takashi is productive in the various senses I examined above: it manipulates traditional gender hierarchies, participates in the transmission and conservation of residual cultures and traditions even while questioning and revising them and also constructs its own narratives, myths and hermeneutic practices). Moreover the representation of the female jealous subject in Tsushima’s text is characterized by identifications which de Lauretis locates in the position of the female spectator in cinema. (I think the reader will agree with me that Izumi, Nobuko and Kazuko are cast in the position of the spectator very often, if not through most of the text, watching not only Takashi and other people, but also one another, as well as each of them watching/observing herself).²³ The identification de Lauretis mentions are: a) “The masculine, active identification with the gaze (the looks of the camera and of the male characters) and the passive, feminine identification with the image (body, landscape)” (de Lauretis, 144); b) a figural, double identification with “the figure of narrative movement, the mythical subject, and with the figure of narrative closure, the narrative image” (de Lauretis, 144). De Lauretis describes the functioning of the latter figural identification as follows:

Were it not for the possibility of this second, figural identification, the woman spectator would be stranded between two incommensurable entities, the gaze and the image. Identification, that is, would be either impossible, split beyond any act of suture, or entirely masculine. The figural narrative identification, on the country, is double; both figures can and in fact must be identified with at once, for they are inherent in narrativity itself. It is this narrative identification that assures “the hold of the image,” the anchoring of the subject in the low of the film’s movement. (de Lauretis, 144)

Now “Kikumushi” does not only present female jealous subjects/spectators who do double figural identifications in the flow of narrativity (Izumi and Nobuko identifying both with Okiku = the figure of narrative movement or the mythical subject, and with Takashi = the figure of narrative closure or the narrative image), but at least one male jealous subject, Takashi, who is, interestingly enough, cast in a position of “to-be-looked-at-ness” — to use Laura Mulvey’s apt term²⁴ — a position, that is, traditionally identified as feminine in the patriarchal social order. As if to make matters worse for Takashi’s gender identity, the text writes off his masculinity altogether and unhesitatingly transforms him, through Izumi’s fantasy, into an *okikumushi*, that is into a reincarnation of Okiku, which puts poor Takashi in the shoes of the quintessential female victim. (Okiku is described by Izumi as “the plaything of destiny bewailing her fate as she goes to a tragic death” p.78). Be-

cause of these wry, ironic textual moves and manipulations and the convergences of Tsushima's text with recent feminist film theory, I would venture a few more interpretations: First, the narrative space inhabited by the jealous subjects in this story is a space of "femininity," or rather what Rey Chow calls "image-as-feminized space."²⁵ Second, the dynamics of the jealous inquiry in "Kikumushi" is not only voyeuristic and "scientific," but also cinematic (Izumi's remarkably vivid visualization, quoted above, of the way Takashi arranged "women's things" to incite her jealousy clearly consists of "filmic images"). Third, the epistemology-metaphysics-poetics of jealousy, as well as the mode of jealous inquiry posited by Tsushima's text are feminine, not in the arrogant masculinist sense advertised by Takashi ("women want you to be jealous, that's all they ever think about," p.71), but in the sense of a feminine potential for subversion, deconstruction, revision or replacement of existing paradigms. (The epistemology of jealousy proposed by "Kikumushi" is both a metaphysics and a poetics: it is a metaphysics because it has all the traits of the science of jealousy constructed by the narrator in Proust's *La Prisonnière* in the course of his interminable mental calculations and hypotheses. This is how Malcolm Bowie describes the metaphysical dimension of the epistemology of jealousy in *La Prisonnière* and *Du Côté de chez Swann*:

But over and against these emotional and moral penalties the jealous lover hears, and heeds, an imperious call to know. His privilege is to be summoned to the limits of what is thinkable, and to risk everything for a glimpse of what lies beyond. Overshadowing the promise of sexual satisfaction another, improbable, order of pleasure is seen: that of a mind suddenly confronted by, and able to grasp, 'une étroite section lumineuse pratiquée à même l'inconnu' (a luminous section cut out of the unknown). (Bowie, 45)

The discourse of jealousy in Tsushima's text may be regarded as a poetics because jealousy in this story, as in Proust's novels, functions as a semiotic model for the making of fictions.²⁶⁾

Another possibility suggested by the epistemology of jealousy projected by "Kikumushi" is that of the narrative space/sociocultural landscape that frames this epistemology—namely, contemporary, affluent Japan (or, more precisely, Japan in the 1980's)—as a feminized discursive space controlled by a feminine symbolic of jealousy. (Though this may seem an overly generalizing statement that erases the various strategies of resistance/affirmation of difference articulated by the text, it is nevertheless substantiated by the latter: Izumi uses the plural pronoun "we" to lend additional weight to her resistant reading of the legend of the Manor of the Dishes (78–79); the theorizations of jealousy scattered in the story also allow us to ascribe to it a "representative" status, i.e. to assume that "Kikumushi" reproduces the state of affairs in Japan in the particular historical moment when it was created).

While the representation of the female jealous subject as spectator and the cinematic structure of the narrative in "Kikumushi" enable us to locate two sets of identifications in the position of Izumi, Nobuko and Kazuko, namely a masculine, active identification with the gaze and a feminine, passive one with the image on the one hand, as well as a double, figural identification with the mythical subject and the narrative image, on the other, we should bear in mind that the mode of jealous inquiry as described in this story (and in other texts in which jealousy figures prominently, such as the two novels by Proust mentioned above, Enchi Fumiko's novel *Onna men* (Masks, 1958), Robbe-Grillet's novel *La Jalousie* (1957)) is also constituted by identification. Now if we consider that any identification, as Judith Butler has demonstrated, is a fantasy within a fantasy, "a double imagining that produces the effect of the empirical other fixed in an interior topos," and that gender not only is constituted by identification, but is at the same time "the disciplinary production of the figures of gender fantasy through the play of presence and absence in the body's surface, the construction of the gendered body through a series of exclusions and denials, signifying absences,"²⁷ two more ironic plays of signification enacted by "Kikumushi" will become apparent: not only is the epistemology/science of jealousy posited by this text also a science of fantasy, literally a *science-fiction*, but the feminized discursive space of contemporary Japan equally projected by this story, and which is controlled by the Symbolic Law of Jealousy (as much as by the Law of the Father), is also a fantasy! However, since this fantasy is also reality, not only because it is constructed by "real" characters as an alternative economy of desire, as a paradise for jealous subjects (which is what Izumi has in mind when she points out to Takashi that "for a woman as enviable as Okiku, wanting paradise would be too greedy altogether," and mockingly declares to him that "nobody would be fascinated by you, so you could probably go straight to paradise" (79)), but also because it (this fantasy) is historical, i.e. it is embedded in a certain historical time and place—Japan of the 1980's, as well as in the feelings, thoughts and knowledges created by the dynamics of jealousy, it follows that the fantasy of contemporary Japanese society as a feminized discursive space governed by jealousy is a fantasy of a transitional reality which cannot, will never be quite free of contradictions, constraints and oppression. This reading not only contradicts the readings produced above (paradise for jealous subjects, utopian space of uninhibited freedom, devoid of inequities and cultural constraints, powerful, transcendental epistemology of jealousy etc.), but also points to the fact that the production of fantasies and fictions is ultimately self-defeating rather than liberatory, and that the series of fantasies spun by "Kikumushi" do not quite succeed in disguising a bleak social reality, which is, however, very sparingly and fragmentarily revealed. (This vision of contemporary Japan's feminized, jealous discursive space matches the hologram vision that, as we saw above, is projected by the entomological fantasies in the story).

In light of the various lines of interpretation suggested above "Kikumushi" appears to sit comfortably, neither in the early modern Tokugawa culture from

which the legend of Okiku, narrated and revised in this story, stems; nor in the “dominant modernity” of contemporary Japanese late/techno-capitalist society, nor in postmodern/postindustrial phenomena such as information explosion, computerization processes and new media technologies.²⁸ (“Kikumushi,” like most texts by Tsushima, is thoroughly indifferent to such technologies). Though the “realist” mode of storytelling, the fact that standard colloquial Japanese is used in the dialogues as well as the epistemology/metaphysics/poetics of jealousy dramatized in this text seem to indicate that it is located, simultaneously, in three modern “traditions” (if we go by the canon of orthodox literary history)—namely realist-naturalist literature (the “mainstream” of modern Japanese literature since at least Shimazaki Tōson and Natsume Sōseki),²⁹ mimetic-representational “school” of women writers (*joryū bungaku*) and modernist narrative practices and cultural styles³⁰—an important body of textual evidence in “Kikumushi” suggests that it is closely related to postmodernist metafiction, and that it articulates a postmodern sensibility. Such evidence is found, for instance, in the triangular love relationships endlessly reproduced in this story as in a play of mirrors. These relationships, like similar arrangements in other texts by Tsushima such as the novels *Chōji* (Child of Fortune, 1978), *Hi no kawa no hotori de* (On the Banks of the River of Fire, 1983) and the short fiction “Mitsume” (The Third Eye, included in *Ōma monogatari*) suggest not only that the ideal of the modern nuclear family is obsolete, but that such arrangements, as well as other forms of unorthodox communal living such as single-parent households, gay/lesbian or “incestuous” partnerships are gradually replacing earlier family institutions and challenging the regulative fictions that have historically sustained the latter.³¹

Another example of “postmodern sensibility” in the story is the relationship between Izumi and Takashi, which is undoubtedly characterized by what Umberto Eco calls the “lost innocence” of postmodernism. In a delightful essay entitled “Postmodernism, Irony, the Enjoyable,” Eco imagines the typical “postmodern attitude” as that of a man who cannot say to a woman “I love you madly”, because “he knows that she knows (and that she knows that he knows) that these words have already been written by Barbara Cartland.” The solution proposed by Eco is to incorporate fantasy into the (impoverished) love utterance by saying, “As Barbara Cartland would put it, I love you madly.” If “postmodern” lovers will thus “consciously and with pleasure play the game of irony,” their relationship may at least partly regain the richness and depth of which it has been deprived by history.³²

Now Izumi and Takashi not only “consciously and with pleasure play the game of irony” that is the supposed postmodern equivalent of a genuine romance,³³ but the exaggerated importance jealousy assumes in their relationship—as in the relationship between Nobuko and Takashi—suggests that this intense, highly theatrical mode of expression is indeed, as Kazuko asserts at the beginning of the story, “the only thing left” of long-defunct discourses, gestures and feelings of romantic

love. One instance of the ironic love games played by Izumi and Takashi to disguise their reluctance, and/or fear of committing themselves to a lasting relationship is the passage quoted below. (It should be noted, however, that the representation of love as ironic game is a common characteristic of texts by Murakami Haruki, Yoshimoto Banana, Shimada Masahiko and other contemporary Japanese writers of the so-called “new wave” or “new generation.”)

When the autumn colors were out they had strolled in Hibiya Park, near the band shell. That was the one time that Izumi had been in unconditionally high spirits, scampering after the pigeons or bursting operatically into song among the trees. As if this too were playfulness she clung to Takashi’s arm and said sweetly, ‘I’d love some popcorn,’ and Takashi, who seemed not to mind as long as Izumi was having fun, bought her some with a wry smile. As she took handfuls from the bag, she added the final touch by resting her head archly against his shoulder and saying in a confiding whisper:

‘We could be on a real date like this, couldn’t we? I’ve always wanted to try a typical date.’

Takashi laughed and played along by stroking her head till, self-consciousness returning, he quickly shoved Izumi away.

‘Behave yourself! What’s “a typical date” supposed to mean?’

‘Walking like lovers in the movies.’ Izumi laughed uproariously.

(58)

Finally, to the extent that “Kikumushi” is governed by fantasy and irony and by a symbolic of jealousy that is in itself a fantasy, and to the extent that fantasy and irony, as Brian Attebery, Nancy Walker, Linda Hutcheon and others argue, are the dominant discursive modes in postmodernist literature and art,³⁴ Tsushima’s text may be said to display features of both fantastic and postmodernist fictions. In spite of its apparent postmodernist allegiance, however, “Kikumushi” certainly does not celebrate, but rather articulates discomfort with the current transitional cultural moment, the “postmodern” irony, playfulness and loss of innocence it enacts, and even with the fantasies it engenders.³⁵ Perhaps the emergent culture anticipated by this story, as I suggested above in the discussion of the fantastic feminized discursive space projected by this text, is one of dystopia, or at least one in which dystopias loom large. Even if this were so, it would not be a surprising conclusion, for the present moment, of which “Kikumushi” is undeniably a product, “contains both utopian and dystopian aspects which open toward conflicting futures” (Best and Kellner, 302). The ambiguous way this story reaches beyond its ending is in itself an indication of the indeterminacy, as well as of the dangers inherent in the present moment.

So far we have examined the various ways in which “Kikumushi” rewrites the *sarayashiki* tradition as well as the strategies of fantasy and irony, including uto-

pian and dystopian aspects, dramatized by the epistemology of jealousy projected by the story. Though all these discourses articulate, implicitly or explicitly, various critiques which we discussed briefly, our concern was to delineate the configuration of such discourses and the way they structure the narrative, rather than the content of the critiques or the sociocultural constraints they target. Since “Kikumushi” is preoccupied as much with epistemological questions and the construction of knowledge as it is with the construction and role of gender, I would like in the next section to explore the stance adopted by Tsushima’s story toward the relation between gender and knowledge, whether or not it formulates a feminist critique thereof, or a critique of feminist critiques of traditional epistemological/philosophical inquiry.

“Kikumushi” and the Construction of Knowledge

In recent years Western feminist philosophers have engaged in a systematic critique and/or deconstruction of all branches of mainstream academic philosophy. As Lorraine Code points out in her recent book, *What Can She Know! Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge*, feminists have shown, not only that the sex of the knower is epistemologically significant, but that traditional philosophical concepts such as objectivity, impartiality, universality and the separation of knower from the object of knowledge are rooted in culturally constituted male experiences.³⁶ In addition, feminist epistemologists argue that knowledge is a cultural construct “that bears the mark of its constructor” (Code, 55), that the “sex/gender system”³⁷ structures significantly the construction and dissemination of knowledge in Western societies, and that knowledge does not transcend, but is rooted in “specific interests and social arrangements” (Code, 68), while taking issue with traditional/dichotomies such as mind/body, abstract/concrete, objective/subjective, universal/particular and with the equating of the right-hand terms in these dichotomies with femininity. Warning against the utopian project of a feminist epistemology in which masculine modes of inquiry would be “simply displaced by feminine ones” (Code, 322), Code and other feminist philosophers/epistemologists advocate a middle-ground position on the “ecologically mapped” epistemic terrain for feminist epistemological analyses, a position that should be characterized by epistemological relativism, resistance to closure, a commitment to a politics of difference and to ecological and emancipatory projects, and that would leave room for debate and a productive ambiguity (Code, 321–324). While I disagree with the middle ground position advocated by Code,³⁸ I would like to note here that feminist critiques of Japanese philosophy and epistemology have yet to appear.

Now if we scrutinize the representation/construction of knowledge in “Kikumushi,” we can see that the various kinds of knowledge that appear in this text—knowledge about people, networks and communities and about affective relations

such as dates and love affairs, professional specialized knowledge, awareness/recognition of various emotions/affects and their impact on the subject-knower, as well as the language serving to express these knowledges—are subject to/structured by gender politics. Thus Izumi plays the role of the enamored girl in a glamorous “typical date” like those shown in the movies with great conviction, because, notwithstanding her awareness of the “game of irony,” the farce she and Takashi are consciously enacting, she is expected to act like a typical lover (58). Nobuko is present at the conversation between Takashi and his former classmate from junior high school, in which the old affair of the girl who had attempted suicide surfaces, but is not invited to participate in it (71). Takashi expects Nobuko to do all the domestic and chores in his apartment and even brazenly suggests to have an extra key made for her so that she be able to go on with the housework while he makes love to Izumi (69–70). In her interpretation of the *sarayashiki* legend, Izumi seeks to correct the stereotypical view of the ugly, jealous wife vs. the beautiful, unjustly treated Okiku (78). All knowledges possessed and put to use by the female characters in “Kikumushi” work against these characters by virtue of their being products of an oppressive, patriarchal social order. On the other hand the very attempt, in Tsushima’s story, to construct jealousy, both as fundamental knowledge, and as theory thereof (epistemology), may be construed as a critique of (Western) androcentrically derived philosophical/epistemological ideals such as pure objectivity, impartiality, value-free/value-neutral nature of knowledge.

There is, however, no one-to-one relationship between “Kikumushi” and Western (or Japanese) epistemology: Tsushima’s story, interestingly enough, articulates a dissent, and/or a resistance to the dominant epistemic and capitalist social systems that is ambiguous and equivocal, or even subversive of its own subversive intent. “Kikumushi” suggests that in certain situations questions such as “whose knowledge are we talking about?” and “the sex of the knower is epistemologically significant”—questions that are central to the project of “feminist philosophy in general, and epistemological inquiry in particular” (Code, 322)—become irrelevant. In the face of the complex dynamic of jealous inquiry enacted by the triad Izumi-Takashi-Nobuko, notions such as gender inequality, the epistemic oppression of women or philosophical binaries that subjugate women, collapse. Takashi, Izumi and Nobuko are equally jealous of each other, their knowledge of each other’s jealousy and of each other’s mind will always remain incomplete;³⁹ they all refuse to try to know more about each other, draw lines between, and manipulate each other. In Izumi’s fantasy of Takashi as countless chrysanthemum beetles that turn into white butterflies Takashi becomes the paradigmatic tragic heroine, the helpless victim of an oppressive feudal order, while at same time remaining Takashi himself. Not only do gender distinctions disappear altogether in this fantasy, but Takashi is cast in a hermaphroditic role that appears like an ironic transposition—into an even bolder realm of fantasy—of Virginia Woolf’s Orlando and Joanna Russ’s Janet in *The Female Man*—characters that are in themselves outrageous, fantastic parodies of patriarchal discourses on femininity.⁴⁰ There is no hint in Izu-

mi's fantasy of Takashi as a chrysanthemum beetle that he knows why he has turned into a butterfly, where the wind takes him, whether he will be reborn in paradise. Knowledge of the reasons for his transformation into an insect, as well as about his past, present and future condition is withheld from Takashi, which encourages us to construe this fantasy as a form of imaginary revenge, taken by Izumi on Takashi, not only for his inciting her jealousy and for compelling her to participate in a "three-way arrangement" with Nobuko as her rival, but also because he refuses to reveal complete and reliable information about himself. The traditional epistemic oppression of women is here ironically reversed.

"Kikumushi" also shows disagreement with other tenets in recent feminist critiques of mainstream, androcentrically biased philosophy and epistemology, namely the notion that knowledge is a cultural construct that bears the (gendered) mark of its constructor, and the proposal for the adoption of a middle-ground position on the "ecologically mapped epistemic terrain" as an ideal position for feminist epistemological/philosophical inquiries that oppose the classic "adversarial paradigm." With respect to the notion of knowledge as gender-specific cultural construct,⁴¹ "Kikumushi" suggests that non-anthropocentric, non-gendered knowledges whose "constructedness" is so ancient that it displays, so to speak, the mark of erasure and of instinct (i.e. "genetically transmitted" knowledge), have no place in that proposition. Butterflies, for instance, possess sophisticated knowledge about flying, pollination etc. which is neither culturally constructed, nor necessarily reflective of the complex operations of the sex/gender system. In so far as the middle-ground position on the epistemic terrain is concerned, Tsushima's text shows that subject-knowers, regardless of gender, are always already captive to a middle-ground epistemic position, which is always already ambiguous and as open-ended and inclusive as it is exclusive and self-contained. Thus all three participants in the triangular relationship Izumi-Takashi-Nobuko agree to be inclusive and tolerant, but each one of them would at the same time like to revert to the traditional couple arrangement. Many knowledges, acquired skills, discursive practices, fantasies are excluded from the tacit "contract" between these three subject-knowers, none of whom seems able to give up her/his middle-ground position. Izumi's revision of the Manor-of-the-Dishes legend not only does not put forward a "feminist explanatory diagnostic analysis" of the epistemic oppression⁴² of Okiku and the jealous wife in the *sarayashiki* lore in the context of Tokugawa culture and society, but even mocks the undeniable reality of the social oppression of the women (there is a brief mention of the class issue—the fact that Okiku and her master's wife belonged to different "classes", but no attempt whatsoever to develop a Marxist feminist critique of the condition of women during that period) (77–79).

The role of fantasy, *jouissance* and sexual desire is another important area of disagreement between "Kikumushi" and traditional epistemology/philosophy, as well as feminist critiques thereof. Tsushima's story indicates that fantasy plays a much

more important role in the construction of knowledge, of epistemologies and philosophies in general than either Western or Japanese modern philosophers, including feminists, have been willing to admit. Though Lorraine Code discusses the role of creativity and of cultural location in the construction and production of knowledge, and endorses Kant's view that knowledge is the product "of a creative synthesis of the imagination," and of the "cooperation of perception and thought" (Code, 56), her analysis and critique concentrate on the "objective," pragmatic knowledge that can be put to use in situations of everyday life, as well as on the equally "objective," abstract-intellectual knowledge discussed by Kant (cf. *The Critique of Pure Reason*) and other Western philosophers. "Kikumushi" suggests, not only that knowledge is shot through with fantasy, but also that fantasy is the backbone of epistemological inquiry. Izumi's knowledge, as well as non-knowledge about Takashi is based as much on conversations with Takashi and Nobuko, and on hearsay, as it is based on Izumi's speculations and fantasy. (The speculative streak in Izumi's knowledge of Takashi may be seen in the scene in which she imagines him deliberately arranging "suggestive feminine items" in his apartment to incite Izumi's jealousy). Kazuko's knowledge about her lover's wife is also based to a great extent on fantasy. Takashi and Izumi play at/fantasize about being lovers in the movies (58), or being children playing with puppets (63). The desire for knowledge and the power it brings with it is motivated in "Kikumushi" to a great extent by jealousy, and jealousy, as we have seen, is a mode of fantasy, or fiction-making.

In regard to the relations between knowledge and pleasure/*jouissance*, and knowledge and sexual desire, "Kikumushi" may be said to propose the following arguments: First, knowledge is *jouissance*, the "connaissance délicate" (delightful knowledge) envisioned by Roland Barthes in *Le Plaisir du texte*.⁴³ The mode of jealous inquiry posited by Tsushima's story—which, as we have seen, is the only mode of epistemological investigation endorsed by all characters in the text—certainly fits Malcolm Bowie's apt description of the mode of jealous inquiry developed by the narrator in *La Prisonnière* and other Proustian novels as "knowing-in-delight" (Bowie, 64). Such knowing-in-delight, the joy and pleasure (which may be painful, but a pleasure nonetheless) is, as the reader probably remembers, described by Izumi as follows:

With a woman like Okiku, now, in a position of weakness, the plaything of destiny bewailing her fate as she goes to a tragic death—a woman like that doesn't actually mean much to us, so we can afford to be fascinated by her and think "how lovely". How lovely it must feel to inspire such jealousy. I'm sure that's why Okiku's story has become so famous. We can forget ourselves and share just a little of Okiku's pleasure... (78)

The knowledge, shared by Takashi and Izumi, about the neighbourhood in which

they lived during their schooldays also brings them pleasure (60–61). Izumi's fantasy of Takashi as a chrysanthemum beetle is also—to Izumi and the human insect Takashi—a kind of knowing-in-delight, what Baudelaire calls “une ecstase faite de volupté et de connaissance.”⁴⁴ (This rapturous mood however, is also disquieting because it entails “non-connaissance,” non-knowledge as well).

“Kikumushi” also posits that sexual desire plays just as important a part in the construction/production of knowledge as fantasy and reason/the intellect. From the perspective of this story psychoanalysis may be redefined as the epistemology of sex(ual desire), while epistemology may be redescribed as the psychoanalysis of knowledge. It is undoubtedly sexual desire that incites Izumi's curiosity about Takashi, and that constitutes the primary motif, as well as the basis of her jealousy, her theorizing about love, jealousy and woman's gaze, and of her revision of the Manor-of-the-Dishes/Okiku lore.

What “Kikumushi,” then, proposes is the construction of a new epistemology that would be alert, not only to the politics of gender and to other culturally specific factors, but also to the various ways in which sexual desire, sensual cognizance and fantasy—the polar opposites of the classic philosophical mind, or “pure” reason—affect the production and dissemination of knowledge.

“Kikumushi” as Ethnography

Tsushima's story, it seems to me, may be regarded as an ethnography because it documents in painstaking detail the customs, practices, educational opportunities, language patterns, life-style, behavior of the inhabitants of a certain ward in Tokyo, as well as the institutions, power relations, networks and discourses informing these social structures; and also because Izumi, Takashi and Nobuko assume the role of both ethnographer and informant, collecting, sifting, comparing, analyzing data about each other for imaginary ethnographies of each other's selves, life, positionality in the sociocultural context to which they belong. In connection with the first reason why “Kikumushi” may be considered an ethnography, several general observations about the relationship between literary, and ethnographic writing, as well as a number of aspects of the narrative in Tsushima's story come to mind. In the first place, the notion of the writer as ethnographer of her/his own, or of “other” cultures seems to be a widely accepted convention. Not only is the kinship between literary and anthropological/ethnographic fiction discussed by various anthropologists,⁴⁵ but modern writers and poets often view themselves as archeologists/historians/ethnographers of past, present and future (utopian) cultures. (There are, however, very few fictionists who actually use the term “ethnography” when referring to such texts among their writings that display a marked documentary, anthropological character. Two notable exceptions are Michel Leiris and Zora Neal Hurston, both of whom pursued the double vocation

of writer and professional ethnographer/ethnologist throughout their lives.⁴⁶) Zola, Balzac and Flaubert regarded their work as objective, truthful records of the culture and society of their time. Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha series and García Márquez's Macondo series may, in spite of the fictional character of both sites, certainly be regarded as ethnographies of a sort. Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* is as much a fictional ethnography as it is a feminist revision of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

In modern Japanese literature as well we find many texts — especially the numerous painstaking descriptions of foreign cities and countries — that have a quality strongly reminiscent of ethnographic writing. Some examples that come to mind are Mori Ōgai's "Maihime" (1890), Tayama Katai's *Tōkyō no sanjūnen* (Thirty Years in Tokyo, 1917, English tr. 1987), Yokomitsu Riichi's *Shanghai* (1932), Kawabata Yasunari's *Asakusa kurenai dan* (1930) Tanizaki Junichiro's *Yōshō jidai* (Childhood Years, 1956, English tr. 1989), Nakagami Kenji's *Kumano shū* (1984) and so on.⁴⁷

The juxtaposition, in "Kikumushi," of practices and discourses of Tokugawa and contemporary Japan indicates the ethnographic, historical value of the text, while the narrative itself, in which the precise, detached, "objective" description of a typical Tokyoite setting coexists with intimate, evocative scenes and dialogues closely parallels the quality of recent ethnographies.⁴⁸

Other "ethnographic" aspects "Kikumushi" are the "entomological" interests of Izumi and Kazuko's six-year-old daughter, as well as the exchange between Kazuko and Izumi on the beauty of the blossoming cherry trees in front of Kazuko's apartment building;⁴⁹ these instances may be regarded as an ironic demystification of the famed Japanese love of nature, especially of certain traditions such as cherry blossom viewing and butterfly hunting, as well as the tireless celebration, in the form of fixed topoi, of these and other flowers and insects in Japanese art and literature.

Now a close look at the relationship between Izumi and Takashi will reveal that the behavior of the two closely resembles, at least in the incipient phase of their relationship, that of an ethnographer and an informant in the course of anthropological fieldwork. Thus not only does Izumi interrogate Takashi on his school education, eating habits, relations with his family and so on, but she closely investigates the "suggestive feminine items" in Takashi's room, analyzes, and tries to establish connections between them. Takashi definitely seems to be the indigenous "other" in Izumi's jealous inquiry, an object of research that is ultimately unknowable. Unlike scientific ethnographies/cultural anthropological studies, however, Izumi's "ethnographies" of Takashi, his life and the environment he lives in are for the most part mental pictures, or fantasies. Also, unlike the professional ethnographer, Izumi makes no attempt to make generalizations on the basis of

her relationship with Takashi, such as whether or not he represents a subculture, what the characteristic features of this subculture are and so forth. Nonetheless, if we consider the fact that Takashi, in his turn, serves as informant to Nobuko about Izumi, and that Nobuko also serves as informant to Izumi about Takashi, and that the relationship between the three both calls into question the ideal of the married couple/modern nuclear family, and displays postmodern features, we can certainly view the portrayal of this unusual triangular relationship in Tsushima's story as an ethnography of a small "post-family," postmodern community.

"Kikumushi" also shows that the subjects of ethnographic research and writing are not immutable and one-dimensional, immediately graspable and classifiable, but have multiple, shifting selves/identities that are created, and continually transformed in the process of interaction with the environment. This aspect, which the feminist anthropologist Dorinne Kondo calls "crafting selves,"⁵⁰ may be seen in the way Izumi and Takashi construct various identities to attract each other, then modify and rework these personalities as their relationship progresses. Furthermore, Izumi, Takashi and Nobuko form a congregation of "ethnographers" that occasionally engages in "scientific debates" about a mysterious Other. While the wry, humorous depiction of this intimate exchange among the three "ethnographers" in Tsushima's story subverts and demystifies the conventions and practices of modern anthropology/ethnography in ways that bear an uncanny resemblance to recent feminist and "postcolonial" critiques of this discipline, especially Trinh T. Minh-ha's ironic evocation of the "scientific gossip" of academic nativist discourse,⁵¹ the representation of the Other of the ethnographic discourse in "Kikumushi," as well as the relation between this Other and the triad of Izumi-Takashi-Nobuko is much more problematic. It is an Other which, as might be expected, assumes various identities by turns and which often undermines our expectations as to its critical potential. Its most obvious aspect—the colonized, and feared Other—is, of course, Okiku of the Manor-of-the-Dishes lore. Okiku appears as the prototypical servant or the epitome of subalternity, the "troubling outsider" who "turns up *inside* bourgeois domestic space" and who "cannot be held at a distance."⁵² (The Okiku in the original Tokugawa lore of course turns up in a feudal domestic space, which detracts nothing from the fact that she is a troubling outsider). Izumi's attitude toward Okiku is at least partly that of the colonizer: her revision of Okiku's role and personality is—to use the terms of Barthes's ironic definition of the discourse of modern science—cold, objective, more than "lightly disparaging."⁵³ Izumi's interpretation/representation of the Other displays here no traces of feminist solidarity.

Another aspect of the Other in "Kikumushi" is the "ghost" (which is a ghost only by analogy to Okiku, being in reality a haunting memory) of Takashi's classmate in junior high school who tried to commit suicide. This other Other is also gossiped about/speculated upon by the three privileged "ethnographers"—Takashi, Izumi and Nobuko.

Since Takashi, Izumi and Nobuko, as I suggested above, willingly exchange the roles of ethnographers and informants among themselves, as well as with other people, Takashi is an Other to both Izumi and Nobuko. On the other hand, because of the functioning of the sex/gender system, Izumi, Nobuko, as well as Okiku and the jealous wife in the *sarayashiki* lore are, in the eyes of Takashi, representative types of the threatening Other = woman/women. Takashi obviously considers women as an alien species, or a mythological category/abstract concept (cf. his assertion “women want you to be jealous, that’s all they ever think about,” 71). “Kikumushi” also parades an array of rebellious, resistant or vengeful Others: Okiku; Takashi’s classmate in junior high school who attempted suicide; Izumi, who avenges herself on Takashi by transforming him, in her imagination, into a chrysanthemum beetle = Okiku—that is, into the quintessential Other!

“Ethnographic” authority and consciousness is challenged in Tsushima’s story both by “ethnographers” and by “informants:” none of the characters is sure about the meaning and effects of jealousy (which, as we have seen, is the only valid mode of epistemological/ethnographic inquiry posited by the text); Nobuko seems inclined to regard the incident of the suicide attempt of Takashi’s classmate as significant, then dismisses it as irrelevant (72–73); there never is complete sincerity in the communication (the “ethnographic” gossip) between Takashi and Izumi, Izumi and Nobuko, Nobuko and Takashi. There seems to exist a “suspension of language” in the relationship between the three ethnographers/informants, a discursive practice which Trinh Minh-ha identifies as a necessary prerequisite for finding/knowing/understanding the other, and which “remains, through its signifying operations, a process constantly unsettling the identity of meaning and speaking/writing subject, a process never allowing I to fare without non-I” (Trinh, 76). Such a discursive practice, however, becomes in “Kikumushi” the signifier of the basic, constantly evolving unknowability of the other.

To conclude this discussion of the “ethnographic” aspects of Tsushima’s story I would like to point out that “Kikumushi” also invalidates an entire set of classic tropes in anthropological, sociological and psychoanalytic research on Japan: I am referring to the basic concepts of *uchi* vs. *soto* (in-group, “us” vs. outside world), *uchi* vs. *yoso* (in-group, “us” vs. another place), *honne* vs. *tatema* (real feeling vs. social appearance), *omote* vs. *ura* (formal or front side vs. intimate, the verso).⁵⁴

Takashi, Nobuko and Izumi comply on the surface with their respective family obligations, but they show or express their *honne* (real feelings), not to an *uchi* member-family, relatives or close friends, but to nearly total strangers: Takashi complains about his brother and his brother’s family on one of his first dates with Izumi; ceremonious introductory remarks are nearly completely dispensed with in the first (and probably the only) conversation between Nobuko and Kazuko. Traditional familial values such as in-group solidarity, loyalty, connectedness, hospitality are revealed in Tsushima’s text as obsolete fictions or myths. “Kikumushi” ulti-

mately suggests, not only that the anthropological concepts mentioned above are simplistic and reductive, but also that any attempt to know the other, or any culture or tradition that is not one's own with the help of such binaries will inevitably fail.

The Work of Fantasy

The operations of fantasy in "Kikumushi" are, as the foregoing discussion has shown, political in the broad sense of proposing and enacting a politics of resistance to hegemonic patriarchal discourses and institutions, and in highlighting the experience of a woman which, though intensely personal, "radiates outward into the common, shared hopes and goals" (Walker, 5) of other women, or into a critique of such aspirations. The fantastic discourse in this story is political also in the sense that it calls for certain readings that challenge existing epistemic and social structures. In terms of the dual typology of the mode of fantasy theorized by some Western critics,⁵⁵ "Kikumushi" clearly dramatizes fantasies, both of desire and of game. The rhetorical stance underlying these fantasies, however, unlike that posited by many Western theories of fantasy, is not as ambitious and imperialistic as to want to control the world. The "pure" fantasies in Tsushima's story, such as Izumi's butterfly fantasy in the end, are deconstructive, non-anthropocentric, anti-humanist and irrational, expressing a desire, not so much to control the environment and the other, as to make this world a better, more tolerant and more joyful place for all species. (The ambiguity in Izumi's vision of Takashi as a chrysanthemum beetle/butterfly is such as to allow this more "optimistic" reading in addition to the more somber readings I have suggested). The "reality-bound" fantasies in this text—Izumi's imaginings of Takashi's elaborate arrangement of women's things to incite her jealousy, the love games between Izumi and Takashi—are subversive, ironic and demystifying (Takashi, the self-declared sexist who claims that women think of nothing but jealousy is shown to be inordinately jealous, suspicious, weak and spineless), but privately, modestly so. In other words, "Kikumushi" does not articulate any apocalyptic revolutionary rhetoric, or grand feminist critique, but rather suggests that important social changes begin at the local (micro) level, and can be achieved only by recognizing the significance of micro-politics.

While the not-worlds in this story (the Manor-of-the-Dishes lore, Izumi's butterfly fantasy and her vision of the love triangle of Takashi, his classmate who tried to commit suicide and her boyfriend) seem immediately within reach, "a country that lay just beyond or alongside, or within the landscape" the characters "could see and touch,"⁵⁶ their relationship with the world is ambiguous, unsettling, untameable, both firmly within, alongside Japanese cultural landscapes, and reaching beyond, challenging, reshaping these dimensions. Fantasy in this text resists its own politics of resistance, does not allow it to congeal and become dogmatic. Its

irreverent, highly self-reflexive, ambiguous rhetoric cautions against “definitive” readings and the stance of the master critic. The play of fantasy in “Kikumushi” alerts us, paradoxically, to the complex materiality of the text, to the fact that literary fictions are structured, not only by language and various “axes of identity” such as gender, race, ethnicity and class, but also by “histories” and “traditions” we have not made, and cannot easily undo: the life-cycle and social organization of insects, the work of time, what may be called the memory, or unconscious of the planet we inhabit. To do justice to visions such as those projected by Tsushima’s story, political criticism has to reconsider—as well as constantly redefine—the ethics, philosophy, ecology and sensual appeal of the activity of interpretation.

Notes

* The author wishes to thank Rey Chow for her critical comments on this essay.

- 1 Tsushima’s reputation as one of the foremost contemporary Japanese women writers rests mainly on her short fiction. Notable among her collections of short stories are: *Mugura no haha* (The Mother in the House of Grass, 1975), *Kusa no fushido* (A Bed of Grass, 1977), *Hyōgen* (Ice Field, 1979), *Danmari ichi* (The Silent Traders, 1984), *Ōma monogatari* (Spooky Tales, 1984), *Mahiru e* (Toward Midnight, 1988) and *Yume no kiroku* (A Record of Dreams, 1988). From the novels she has published so far *Chōji* (Child of Fortune, 1978), *Yama o hashiru onna* (Woman Running in the Mountains, 1980), *Hi no kawa no hotori de* (On the Banks of the River of Fire, 1984) and *Yoru no hikari ni owarete* (Driven by the Light of the Night, 1986) have received critical acclaim. Tsushima is also a prolific essayist and the recipient of several important literary awards, including the Women’s Literature Prize, the Tamura Toshiko Prize, The Izumi Kyōka and Kawabata Yasunari Prizes as well as the Yomiuri Literature Prize. Two of Tsushima’s novels have appeared in English translation so far: *Child of Fortune*, tr. by Geraldine Harcourt (Tokyo and Palo Alto: Kodansha International, 1983) and *Woman Running in the Mountains*, tr. by Geraldine Harcourt (New York: Pantheon, 1991). Geraldine Harcourt is also the translator and compiler of a collection of Tsushima’s short stories, *The Shooting Gallery* (London: Women’s Press, 1988; New York: Pantheon Books, 1988). This collection includes a translation of “Kikumushi” under the title “The Crysanthemum Beetle.” All quotations from this story appearing in this essay are from Harcourt’s excellent translation. Page numbers are indicated in the text.
- 2 Fairly exhaustive bibliographies on Tsushima’s work may be found in Negishi Yasuko, “Tsushima Yūko,” *Kokubungaku* 35, No.6 (November 1990): 129, and in Yonaha Keiko, “Sakka annai” in Tsushima, *Ōma monogatari* (Tokyo: Kodansha (Kodansha bungei bunkō), 1989), 352. I have placed the words “themes” and “motifs” in quotation marks not so much because the pursuit of these issues is currently discredited in American and European academic literary criticism and theory, but because to my mind a focus on thematic concerns prevents the critic from engaging with the larger discursive, sociopolitical and cultural horizons that are addressed by the text/cultural product she studies. There are to my knowledge no critical assessments of the story “Kikumushi.”
- 3 Tsushima’s father, the celebrated writer Dazai Osamu, was found dead when Tsushima was barely one year-old. Her elder brother had Down’s syndrome and died in 1960 at the age of fifteen. Married in 1970, Tsushima gave birth to a daughter in 1972. Her son was born out of the wedlock in 1976. Tsushima got divorced in the same year and assumed sole responsibility for the education of her children. Her son Daimu died suddenly in 1985 before reaching the age of nine. For discussions that emphasize the autobiographical orientation of Tsushima’s fiction see especially Komori Yōichi, “Tsushima Yūko ron: Haramikomu kotoba,” *Kokubungaku* (August 1988); Senogoku Hideyo, “Kazoku no yume: Tsushima Yūko no tanpen no sekai,” *Gunzō* 39, No.9 (Septem-

- ber 1984); Yonaha Keiko, "Tsushima Yūko ron, II" in *Gendai joryū sakka ron* (Tokyo: Shinbisha, 1986), 144–164 and "Yoru no hikari ni owarete," *Kokubungaku* (August 1988). Masao Miyoshi also endorses this view in his brief discussion of Tsushima's novels *Child of Fortune* and *Woman Running in the Mountains*. See Miyoshi, *Off Center: Power and Culture Relations Between Japan and the United States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 212–16.
- 4 Even a critic like Yonaha Keiko, who perceptively argues that Tsushima's explorations in female sexuality, childbirth and motherhood and family/heterosexual relations have a powerful critical potential that is at the same mythical and visionary all but overlooks the work of gender, as well as the play of irony, ambiguity and humor in Tsushima's texts. See Yonaha Keiko, "Sakka annai" in *Ōma monogatari*, 342–49 and *Gendai joryū sakka ron*, 122–27, 139–143.
 - 5 Takeda Seiji, for instance, points out that Tsushima's stories, rather than portraying the favorite themes of modern Japanese literature, namely the existential traumas, as well as the struggle for acceptance and recognition of isolated individuals in a hostile modern world, focus on "something lurking behind the free self that governs the (modern) individual as an unknown power" (*jiyūna 'naimen' no haigo ni hisomi, "watashi no shiranai" chikara toshite ningen o kitei shiteiru nanimonoka*). See Takeda, "*Sekai*" no rinkaku (Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 1987), 84. I do not see how such vague, unfocused, assertions could help us grasp the complexity of Tsushima's fiction, what it tries to accomplish, challenge or change.
 - 6 I am reacting here against the current proliferation of "politically correct" interpretive strategies, theories and methodologies in American literary and cultural studies, discourses that are so passionately committed to the glorification of the subaltern subject/the Other, emergent/Third World literatures and so on that they tend to overlook the fact that the practice of "speaking for others" also effectively covers their voices, once again silencing or misrepresenting them. For a critique of "politically correct" discursive practices, their tendency to "other" the Other/the Third World see Rey Chow's essays "'It's you, and not me': Domination and 'Othering' in Theorizing the 'Third World,'" in *Coming to Terms: Feminism, Theory, Politics*, ed. Elizabeth Weed (New York: Routledge, 1989), 152–161, and "Love Me, Master; Love Me, Son," paper presented at the 1991 Convention of the Modern Literature Association of America.
 - 7 In *Marxism and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), William calls attention to the internal dynamic of any actual process/culture, suggesting that, rather than speaking of stages or variations within certain culture, we should recognize the characteristic of the residual, dominant and emergent phenomena, as well as the way the latter interrelate, in that culture.
 We have certainly still to speak of the "dominant" and the "effective," and in these senses of the hegemonic. But we find that we have also to speak, and indeed with further differentiation of each, of the "residual" and the "emergent," which in any real process, and at any moment in the process are significant both in themselves and in what they reveal of the characteristics of the "dominant." (121–22)
 - 8 In this play Okiku, a lady-in-waiting in the household of lord Hosokawa Masamoto overhears the plans of Aoyama Tetsuzan and others to poison the master and take his place. Tetsuzan conceals a valuable plate belonging to the Hosokawa family and blames the loss of the artifact on Okiku. He then kills her and throws her body into a well. Okiku reappears as a ghost and begins to count the precious dishes of which one is missing. Tetsuzan's plot is eventually discovered and he is forced to flee, but is relentlessly pursued by Okiku's ghost. Unable to endure this confrontation, Tetsuzan kills himself.
 - 9 Okamoto's play focuses on Okiku's love for Aoyama Harima, a *hatamoto* (member of the troop of the *shogun's* guards) rather than on her slaying or reappearance as a vengeful ghost. Worried by rumors that Harima is about to marry another woman, Okiku decides to test his feelings toward her and smashes a plate that is a treasured heirloom of his family. Thinking that this was an accident, Harima is inclined to forgive Okiku, but changes his mind when he learns of her true motives: angered by Okiku's unfounded suspicions, Harima not only smashes all other dishes that formed a set with the one broken by Okiku, but cuts her throat with his sword and orders his men to throw her body into the well of the mansion.

- 10 Ernst Bloch, "Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to its Dialectics," *New German Critique*, no. 11, Spring 1977: 22.
- 11 Best and Kellner propose a redescription of the present historical moment based both on Bloch's theory of non-synchronism, and on Raymond Williams' distinctions between residual, dominant and emergent cultures: "... We might want to speak of postmodern phenomena as only emergent tendencies within a still dominant modernity that is haunted as well by various forms of residual, traditional cultures, or which intensify key dynamics of modernity, such as innovation and fragmentation. Our present moment, on this view, is thus a contradictory transitional situation which does not yet allow any unambiguous affirmations concerning an alleged leap into full-blown post-modernity." See *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*, (New York: Guilford Press, 1990), 279–80.
- 12 The *kikumushi* (or *okikumushi*) mentioned by the father of the little girl in this story is actually the pupa (chrysalis) of the butterfly *atrophaneura alcinous*, in Japanese *jakō ageha* (translates roughly as musk swallowtail), family *Papilionidae*. The larva of this butterfly is brownish red with transverse white bands and several rows of fleshy tentacles. The pupa is creamy yellow, and has a waxy appearance. It also has orange spots on the mesothorax and dorsal projections. The adult has a long body, with the swallowtail-like rear part showing yellow, or red patches of color, and white-yellowish wings. "Just a beetle with a white pattern in the centre" (p.75, Harcourt's translation), in the Japanese original *nimai hane no marui mushi de, shiroi moyō ga mannaka ni aru dake de* (a winged round insect with just a white pattern in the centre, *Ōma monogatari*, Kodansha, 1989, 191) is an exact description, neither of the pupa, nor of the larva, nor of the adult of the *jakō ageha* of the swallowtail family. The hypothesis of Kazuko's lover that the specimen selected by his daughter from the pile of dead insects in the case of the fluorescent light tubes was a *kikumushi* is thus not so much scientifically untenable as simply erroneous.
- 13 The phrases are from Best's and Kellner's definition of the present historical moment quoted in Note 11. The contextualization of "Kikumushi" in a modern cultural landscape may be seen, among other things, in the particulars of the daily life, family relations and careers of the characters in the story: except perhaps for the fact that Nobuko, and Izumi (and probably Kazuko as well) are skilled white-collar workers with full-time employments, their life-styles, like that of Takashi and his family, are not very different from that of the urban middle class in prewar Japan.
- 14 See my essay "The Politics of Miscegenation: Reading/Theorizing Fantasy in Tsushima Yūko's Story 'Fusehime.'" Forthcoming in *Japan Forum* 5, No. 1 (April 1993).
- 15 See Jackson, *Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion* (London: Methuen, 1981), 3.
- 16 Ueno Chizuko, "Women's Labor under Patriarchal Capitalism in the Eighties," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 3, No.1 (December 1989): 1. The Japanese version of this essay is included in *Josei to Kazoku no henyō: posuto famiri e mukete*, ed. Mizuta Noriko (Tokyo: Gakuyō shobō, 1990), 17–29.
- 17 See Nancy K. Miller, "Emphasis Added: Plots and Plausibilities in Women's Fiction," *PMLA* 96, No.1 (January 1981): 41.
- 18 The sense of a continuity between past, present and future histories and cultures may be glimpsed in the following passage in the story:
- Takashi glanced at the young leaves showing at the window.
'...But let's face it,' he said, 'having the insect turn to a butterfly and take off to heaven is a bit far-fetched.'
'Mm. But otherwise Okiku's malice would live for ever, and the story wouldn't sit right. It would have been powerful, don't you think?'
'Because the insect is still with us.'
'That's right. I saw it, in fact. I wonder what its proper name is?'
Takashi rolled over in bed and lay on his stomach. Izumi turned into the same position and glanced at the lobe of Takashi's ear. It was tinged with a colour that seemed too beautiful for a man's.
'There really was a woman called Okiku, wasn't there?' he said. 'The story became

famous overnight when the mother threw herself down the well in protest at her death. The mother's virtuous deed was so widely admired, the role of tragic heroine was ready-made for Okiku.'

'Since even you and I know the story today, you'd think her soul would be able to rest in peace.'

'You'd think so, wouldn't you?' Takashi laughed a little.

- 19 See, for instance, the following passage in Proust's novel:

J'avais suivi dans mon existence une marche inverse de celle des peuples qui ne se servent de l'écriture phonétique qu'après n'avoir considéré les caractères que comme une suite de symboles; moi qui, pendant tant d'années, n'avais cherché la vie et la pensée réelles des gens que dans l'énoncé direct qu'ils m'en fournissaient volontairement, par leur faute j'en étais arrivé à ne plus attacher, au contraire, d'importance qu'aux témoignages qui ne sont pas une expression rationnelle et analytique de la vérité; les paroles elles-mêmes ne me renseignaient qu'à la condition d'être interprétées à la façon d'un afflux de sang à la figure d'une personne qui se trouble, à la façon encore d'un silence subit. Tel adverbe... jailli dans une conflagration par le rapprochement involontaire, parfois périlleux, de deux idées que l'interlocuteur n'exprimait pas et duquel, par telles méthodes d'analyse ou d'électrolyse appropriées, je pouvais les extraire, m'en disais plus qu'un discours. Albertine laissait parfois traîner dans ses propos tel ou tel de ces précieux amalgames que je me hâtais de 'traiter', pour les transformer en idées claires. (*La Prisonnière*, ed. Jean Milly (Paris: Flammarion, 1984), 88-89)

'I had in the course of my life followed a progression which was the opposite of that adopted by peoples who make use of phonetic writing only after having considered the characters as a set of symbols; having, for so many years, looked for the real life and thought of other people only in the direct statements about them which they supplied me with of their own free will, in the absence of these I had come to attach importance, on the contrary, only to disclosure that are not a rational and analytical expression of the truth; the words themselves did not enlighten me unless they were interpreted in the same way as a rush of blood to the cheeks of a person who is embarrassed, or as a sudden silence. Such and such an adverb... bursting into flames through the involuntary, sometimes perilous contact of two ideas which the speaker has not expressed but which, by applying the appropriate methods of analysis or electrolysis, I was able to extract from it, told me more than a long speech. Albertine sometimes let fall in her conversation one or other of these precious amalgams which I made haste to "treat" so as to transform them into lucide ideas.' (Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, 3 vols, trans. C.K.Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (Chutto and Windus, 1981), 83)

- 20 Malcolm Bowie, *Freud, Proust and Lacan: Theory as Fiction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 58.
- 21 Marcel Proust, *Du côté de chez Swann*, in *A la recherche du temps perdu*, 3 vols, ed. Pierre Clara and Andre Ferré, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1954), I, 274.
- 22 See *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 51.
- 23 See, for instance, the following passage:
Nobuko broke off and studied Izumi's face at length. All Izumi could do was wait blankly for Nobuko's next words. After a sip of water, she continued. (68)
- 24 Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 314.
- 25 See Chow, *Woman and Chinese Modernity: The Politics of Reading Between West and East* (Minnesota, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 18. According to Chow, image-as-feminized space can be occupied both by men and by women, and once this is done, "femininity" as a category is freed up to include fictional constructs that may not be 'women,' but that occupy a passive position in regard to the controlling symbolic."

- 26 Malcolm Bowie describes the function of the discourse of jealousy in *À la recherche du temps perdu* as epistemology, poetics and metaphysics at the same time as follows:
 Jealousy is an alertness of eye and ear and intellect; it is an experience of manifold potentiality; it is a stimulus to the making of fictions; it is a comprehensive way of inhabiting space and time. When these things are produced by pain and absence they may be called jealousy. But the same things, rediscovered in joy, and by joy transformed, may as fittingly be called *knowledge*. (Bowie, 64)
- 27 See Judith Butler, "Gender Trouble, Feminist Theory and Psychoanalytic Discourse" in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 334–335.
- 28 These are, according to Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, the most salient characteristics of the current configuration of techno-capitalist societies. See *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations*, 302.
- 29 I am thinking here, of course, of the textbook or academic literary history, in which one "school" succeeds another and all writers are neatly categorized. The *joryū sakka*, or female school writers, have traditionally occupied the periphery of the academic canon, in which the "mainstream" (*shuryū*) is constituted by the succession and/or simultaneous coexistence of "naturalism" (*shizenshugi*, which has its own mainstream, identified with the *shishōsetsu* or confessional novel), *shirakabaha*, proletarian literature, modernism, wartime literature, *sengoha* (postwar or *après-guerre* school) and so on. In spite of various attempts (the most influential of which is probably Karatani Kōjin's *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen*, 1980) to deconstruct the master narrative of modern Japanese literary history, this myth still yields great authority. See Suzuki Sadami, *Gendai Nihon bungaku no shisō: Kaitai to saihen no strategy* (Kyoto = Gogatsu shobō, 1992), 45–92 and 233–286, for a recent critique of the ideology at work in the construction of the canon of contemporary Japanese literature.
- 30 A mode of jealousy inquiry similar, though less obsessive and intense than that described in "Kikumushi" may be found in Kawabata Yasunari's modernist-surrealist experiment *Suishō gensō* (Crystal Fantasies, 1931).
- 31 Recent feminist studies of the role of women and the ideology of the family show that both have been used by the state in the interests of economic development, political control and the construction of various nationalist/racist discourses that were the corollary of Japan's imperialist expansion that began with the annexation of Korea in 1910. See, for instance, Ochiai Emiko, "The Modern Family and Japanese Culture: Exploring the Japanese Mother-Child Relationship," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 3, No.1 (December 1989): 7–15, Japanese version in *Josei to kazoku no henyō*, 45–66; and *Kindai kazoku to feminizumu* (Tokyo: Keiso shobo, 1988); Sharon Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, "The Meiji State's Policy Toward Women, 1890–1910," Yoshiko Miyake "Doubling Expectations: Motherhood and Women's Factory Work Under State Management in Japan in the 1930's and 1940's." The latter two essays are included in *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, ed. Gail Lee Bernstein (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991), 151–174 and 267–295. See also the transcript of the symposium "Women and the Family: Postfamily Alternatives," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 3, No.1 (December 1989): 79–95, Japanese version in *Josei to kazoku no henyō*, 171–214, for a discussion of contemporary partnerships and family-like arrangements.
- 32 Umberto Eco, *Postscript to the Name of the Rose*, tr. by William Weaver (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 67–68.
- 33 Nancy A. Walker points out that, although irony and fantasy are ancient literary devices, the combination of the two may be regarded as "closely related to some definitions of the postmodern spirit or temperament." See *Feminist Alternatives: Irony and Fantasy in the Contemporary Novel by Women*. (Jackson and London: University Press of Mississippi, 1930), 29.
- 34 See Attebery, *Strategies of Fantasy* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992), 1–17 and 36–50; Walker, *Feminist Alternatives*, 14–37 and Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), 1–23.
- 35 Apart from Izumi's fantasy, already quoted above, of Takashi as a chrysanthemum beetle, the fol-

lowing passage clearly displays uneasiness with the "game of irony" (soon to be replaced by the "game of jealousy") in which Izumi and Takashi engage in the first few months of their relationship.

As the time they spent together grew more intimate, she couldn't help wishing she could spend every weekend at Takashi's. Takashi said nothing when she closed her eyes and whispered, 'I'm so sleepy. If I go to sleep now, I wonder if I can wake up before morning?' He said neither 'Get some rest', nor 'Don't you dare'. Only when she'd reluctantly climbed out of bed and begun dressing would Takashi say with an air of relief, 'Look at the time. We'll be half asleep tomorrow,' as he also got up. Takashi had never said out loud, 'Don't come any closer.' Izumi had never said in so many words, 'I want to come a little closer.' She was convinced that they'd been able to preserve the sense of intimacy they'd had till now because she'd drawn her own line and made sure to back away when she reached it. Though she didn't draw the line gladly. (61)

- 36 *What Can She Know? Feminist Theory and the Construction of Knowledge* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), XI.
- 37 The label "sex/gender system" originates with Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women" in Rayna Reiter, ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women* (New York: Monthly Review, 1975)
- 38 A middle-ground position on the epistemic terrain that commits itself to "epistemological relativism" and "a productive ambiguity" could very well accommodate ethnocentric, racist or fascist epistemological/philosophical claims.
- 39 Not only does Izumi declare to Takashi "I don't know you very well yet. Really, you're full of things I don't know yet" (79), but the "conversation" between Izumi and Nobuko the one time they meet is for the most part a confessional monologue on Nobuko's part, to which Izumi hardly has a chance to add anything. Nobuko evidently doesn't know a lot about Izumi (Takashi has not revealed more than it was necessary about his relationship with the latter):

He started playing tricks on you, too, didn't he?... He did the same to me. That is, I don't know if the tricks were the same, but... It's one of his peculiar theories that people don't take things in when they're merely told. So he seems to have convinced himself that we had to be made aware of this three-way arrangement by the most concrete means he could think of... I won't go into the details of what he did to me, but I can tell you I had a very rough time, too. I expect that neither of us came off any better than the other, you know... (70)

- 40 Joanna Russ's *The Female Man* presents a fantastic vision in which four different female characters, each of whom is actually a different aspect of the same personality and each of whom inhabits a different universe, come together and engage in a lively discussion about the condition of women in their respective worlds/societies. The unifying consciousness is that of Janet, who comes from an all-female utopia called Whileaway. Rejecting the concepts of the culturally determined self and of the equally culturally constructed gender, Janet declares herself to be a man:

For years I have been saying *Let me in, Love me, Approve me, Define me, Regulate me, Validate me, Support me*. Now I say *Move over*. If we are all Mankind, it follows to my interested and righteous and right-now very bright and beady little eyes, that I too am a Man and not at all a Woman.

See Russ, *The Female Man* (1975, reprint London: The Women's Press, 1985), 140.

- 41 The notion of knowledge as cultural construct originates with Kant, although Kant of course did not concern himself with the role of gender in the construction of knowledge.
- 42 Seyla Benhabib notes that feminist scholarship in all disciplines is committed to "developing an *explanatory diagnostic analysis* of women's oppression across history, culture and society, and (to) articulating an *anticipatory-utopian critique*" of current social, cultural and political norms and values. See Benhabib, "Generalized and Concrete Other" in Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cowell, eds., *Feminism as Critique: Essays on the Politics of Gender in Late-Capitalist Societies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 80–81.
- 43 Noting that the notion of pleasure has come to be regarded as politically and intellectually suspect, Barthes wonders: "Et pourtant, si la connaissance elle même était délicieuse?" See *Le Plaisir du*

texte (Paris: Seuil, 1973), 39.

- 44 In "Richard Wagner et *Tannhäuser* à Paris," *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Claude Pichois, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), II, 785.
- 45 See, for instance, the following passage in Dorinne Kondo's fine ethnography of a family-owned sweets factory in downtown Tokyo, *Crafting Selves: Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*: (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990):

The narrative convention of the "setting" thus compels, even as I strain to avoid it, precisely because it evokes the experience of fieldwork by locating the author and the reader in a world that is initially strange, allowing the author to render that world comprehensible to the reader just as it became familiar to her in the process of doing research. Through the act of writing, complexity is inevitably simplified and assimilated to the familiar, often unconsciously reproduced conventions by which we have learned to make sense of that complexity. In this case, the "setting" trope recalls not only the conventions of ethnographic writing but also those of realist fiction—as I discovered, to my surprise and discomfort, upon re-reading Balzac's *Eugenie Grandet*. (7–8)

The following passage from James Clifford's classic study *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1988) also discusses the similarities between the discourses of ethnography and the novel.

But Dickens the actor, the oral performer, and polyphonist must be set against Flaubert, the master of authorial control, moving godlike among the thoughts and feelings of his characters. Ethnography, like the novel, wrestles with these alternatives. Does the ethnographic writer portray what natives think by means of Flaubertian "free indirect style," a style that suppresses direct quotation in favor of a controlling discourse always more or less that of the author? (Dan Sperber 1981, taking Evans-Pritchard as his example, has convincingly shown that *style indirect* is indeed the preferred mode of ethnographic interpretation.) Or does the portrayal of other subjectivities require a version that is stylistically less homogeneous, filled with Dickens' "different voices". (47)

- 46 Leiris's *Afrique fantôme* (1934) and *La règle du jeu* (4 vols. 1948–1976) and Hurston's autobiography *Dust Tracks on the Road* (1942) effectively combine autobiographical, "literary/fictional" and ethnographic discourses.
- 47 In a well-known study of the representation of urban space in modern Japanese literature, *Toshi kūkan no naka no bungaku*, Maeda Ai draws attention to the historiographical-documentary, nearly ethnographic character of such modern novels as Yokomitsu Riichi's *Shanghai* and Kawabata's *Asakusa kurenaidan*. See *Maeda Ai chosakushū*, vol.5, *Toshi kūkan no naka no bungaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma shobō, 1989), 251–283, 288–300.
- 48 Compare, for instance, the amusing description of the narrator-ethnographer lying in her Tokyo apartment with a strong flu in Kondo's *Crafting Selves* (20–21), and the "ethnographic" portrayal, in "Kikumushi," of the Tokyo ward in which Izumi and her mother live. This latter vignette is interspersed with Izumi's thoughts about the neighborhood and the tenants in her apartment building, as well as her first impressions of Takashi (49–50).
- 49 This ironic, humorous exchange reads as follows:

Pale cherry blossoms petals were sticking to the curb and the roofs of parked cars. The cherry trees in the park in front of Kazuko's building, having just passed the season's peak, were showering their blossoms as lavishly as she'd expected.

'I came over because I knew you'd turn on a great view,' Izumi told Kazuko from the balcony as she enjoyed the sweep of flowering cherries that filled her mind with their haze. 'I wouldn't worry about a few insects if a fringe benefit like this came with them.'

Kazuko's daughter was sitting in the floor, her eyes eagerly following first Izumi then her mother.

'I know, but the season is over so quickly. After the blossoms have fallen we get a shower of caterpillars instead.' (74)

- 50 Kondo describes the process of the ethnographic subject's continually creating and recreating its

selves/identities as follows:

"...identity is not a static *object*, but a creative *process*; hence *crafting* selves is an ongoing —indeed a lifelong—occupation. ... Crafting selves implies a concept of agency: that human beings create, construct, work on, and enact their identities, sometimes creatively challenging the limits of the cultural constraints which constitute both what we call selves and the ways those selves can be crafted. Finally, as I have argued, perhaps we should not speak of "the self" as a global entity, but of selves *in the plural*." (*Crafting Selves*, 48)

- 51 In *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), Trinh Minh-ha takes to task the discourse of Western nativist anthropology for its masculinist-sexist, colonizing-essentializing bias, describing it as a "conversation of the white man with the white man about the primitive-native man" (65), a "scientific gossip" that takes place "in relatively intimate conditions and mostly without witnesses" (68). In a much-quoted passage Trinh exposes the tendency of this discourse to either patronize, or "other" the Other ("primitive-native man" = (neo)-colonized Third World peoples) that constitutes the object of its research, to (mis)represent or even exclude it altogether from its elitist "conversations."
- A conversation of "us" with "us" about them is a conversation in which they are silenced. They always stand on the other side of the hill, naked and speechless, barely present in its absence. Subject of discussion, "them" is only admitted among "us," the discussing subjects, when accompanied or introduced by an "us" member, hence the dependency of them and the need to acquire good manners for the membership standing. (67)
- 52 The phrase is James Clifford's (*The Predicament of Culture*, 6) and refers to the young woman called Elsie in a poem by William Carlos Williams. This girl, whom William describes as "a girl so desolate/so hemmed round/with disease or murder/that she'll be rescued by an agent-/reared by the State and/sent out at fifteen to work in/some hard pressed/house in the suburbs-/some doctor's family, some Elsie-/...her great/ungainly hips and flopping breasts/addressed to cheap/jewelry/and rich young men with fine eyes" is in Clifford's reading a problematic figure who can be made to stand for "native," women, the poor, "marginal or "backward" peoples." In sum, Elsie can be read as a "plurality of emergent subjects" whose "possible futures reflect an unresolved set of challenges to Western visions of modernity." (Clifford, 4,5,7) The parallels between Williams' Elsie and Tsushima's Okiku are disturbing indeed.
- 53 See the following passage in Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978):
- "...When knowledge, when science speaks, I sometimes come to the point of hearing its discourse as the sound of a gossip which describes and disparages lightly, coldly and objectively what I love; which speaks of what I love according to truth." (184)
- 54 See Kondo, *Crafting Selves*, pp. 141–160 for definitions and illustrations of these concepts. Kondo, who quotes Nakane Chie's and Doi Takeo's classic studies in support of her interpretation of *uchi/soto*, *honne/tatemae* and other related notions, does not question the validity of this conceptual framework for the construction of a comprehensive theory of "Japanese" society and the "Japanese" mental structure, patterns of behavior etc.
- 55 According to Lynette Hunter, twentieth-century Western theories of fantasy posit a dual typology for this mode, namely fantasies of desire and of game. The rhetorical stance underlying both modes of fantasy is that of an activity of control, which assumes that human beings have the right, and can impose their authority on the environment, and that language can represent the world as it is. This rhetoric is negative, "a stance that tries to hide its own stance." The stance in women's writings about alternative worlds is somewhat more complex, though still tied to the epistemology and ideology of the "rationalist humanism" that has dominated Western thought since the Enlightenment. See Hunter, *Modern Allegory and Fantasy: Rhetorical Stances in Contemporary Writing* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989). Rationalist humanism aside, the double structure of fantasy as desire and game certainly applies to the modern Japanese literature of fantasy, which is usually described with the term *gensō bungaku*. While it may comprise tantalizing distinctions between *gensō junbungaku* (pure, or high-brow fantasy) and the rest of fantasy, as well as alternative definitions such as *fantaji*, *kaiki* and *mystery*, the term refers to a vast mass of writings that have

been traditionally assigned to the even vaster realm of entertainment/popular culture. For critical assessments and theoretical discussions see journals such as *Gensō bungaku*, which is published by Gensō bungaku shuppankyoku.

- 56 The phrase is from Doris Lessing's novel *The Four Gated City* (1969; Reprint, New York: Bantam, 1970), 355.

嫉妬心学と恍惚としての認識—津島佑子の短編

「菊虫」

リヴィア・モネ

要旨：批評界や文芸ジャーナリズムでは津島佑子は妊娠・出産・育児等、女性特有の経験を中心に、数少ない特定のテーマやモチーフを繰り返し追求している作者のように思われている。つまり津島が捉えようとしているテーマやモチーフが知恵遅れの兄（弟）とその妹（姉）との近親相姦、未婚の母・離婚した母やその子供の、生々しい、愛や暴力や殺意に満ちた日常生活、女の身体性（セクシュアリティ）等、現代における女性を中心とした人間関係の新たな様相の表現への模索である。本稿では津島の短編「菊虫」（『逢摩物語』所収、1984年発行）を取り上げる。作品の解説・解釈を行ないながら、津島文学についての、上記のような、一般的な読み方にとらわれず、作者のテキストが探り続ける文化的・思想的・政治的言説空間を捉えようと思う。そのためには、現在の国文学研究や文芸批評、フェミニズム批評や所謂“政治的に正しい批評”（politically correct criticism）のディスコースさえも超越した、新しい読み・批評のストラテジーを展開せねばならない。「菊虫」の場合、作者は、作品の中核である“嫉妬”をアイロニーや滑稽味やファンタジーの世界として表出しているが、この魅力的言説空間を解説するための、新たな方法論の提示を筆者は意図するものである。