CHAPTER 9

THE IDEA OF "MODERN JAPANESE LITERATURE"

9.1 Postwar Critical Strategies

9.1.1 The Starting Point of Postwar Criticism

When Takeuchi Yoshimi observed disapprovingly that the "modernism" (*kindaishugi* 近代主義) of post-Meiji writers afforded no access to the problem of the folk (*minzoku*), his criticism extended at the same time to the "modernism" of mainstream postwar criticism. What, then, was this latter "modernism"? In an essay entitled "Itō riron to Hirano kōshiki: Kindai Nihon bungaku e no gen riron" 伊藤理論と平野公式–近代日本文学への原理論, Okuno Takeo 奥野健男 admirably identified the starting point of postwar criticism. He wrote:

> The years immediately following the war can be called decisive in the history of Japanese literary criticism, which flowered then with vivid appeal, well ahead of its time, and blazed the way for the new, postwar literature. In addition, this is when a fundamental elucidation of Japan's modern literature was first offered. The characteristics of Japanese literature, hitherto treated only impressionistically, subjectively, or situationally, were now grasped from a comprehensive, theoretical, and historical perspective. Itō Sei 伊藤整 in *Shōsetsu no hōhō* 小説の方法 (1948); Hirano Ken 平野謙 in "Shishōsetsu" 私小説 (1947) and *Shishōsetsu no niritsu haihan* 私小説の二律背反 (1951); Fukuda Tsuneari 福田恆存 in "Kindai Nihon bungaku no keifu" 近代日本文学の系譜 (1945); and Nakamura Mitsuo中村光夫, Sasaki Kiichi 佐々木基一, Odagiri Hideo 小田切秀雄, Honda Shūgo 本多秋五, Ara Masahito 荒正人, and Senuma Shigeki 瀬沼茂樹 all developed, each from his own perspective, a theoretical view of modern Japanese literature.
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> Although elaborated by independent authors, each entirely individual in character, these views coincided to a remarkable degree. Or, rather, despite differences of method and approach, their drift is nearly the same. Utterly different intellectually and in terms of personal background, their authors nonetheless reached the same understanding of modern Japanese literature. This is remarkable. Moreover, they published their views at almost the same time. It is like what can happen in the field of physics, when new models and hypotheses concerning the same new data appear almost on the same day.[1]

1 Itō Sei et al.1960, p. 50.

In answer to the question of why the critics of the time had reached such unanimity, Okuno replied:

> The earlier modern literature changed and collapsed during the war, and afterwards it ceased to exist. During that period of stasis people were able to gain a certain perspective on Japanese literature and view it objectively. They had a chance to reflect on their earlier blindness and to approach the subject logically.

Then he cited the following characteristics as common to all the critics' works:

> From the perspective of the modern self and the premodern conditions of Japanese society, they discuss the reason "I-fiction" had to appear, the explanation for its particular view of art, its weaknesses and distortions in comparison with the literatures of Europe, and the symptoms of decadence that its spirit and technique began inevitably to manifest.[2]

He was right. In addition, he made it plain that behind all these interpretations one can discern the presence both of Kobayashi Hideo's 小林秀雄 "Watakushi shōsetsu ron" 私小説論 and of Marxist art theory.[3] Okuno gave special attention to "Itō's theory and Hirano's formula," stating that "these two explain everything and are impossible to exclude from any consideration of the subject." Nonetheless, he acknowledged the existence of "many streams of modern Japanese literature beside that of 'I-fiction'" and declared his dissatisfaction with them all.[4]

One further remark is needed. The critics focused their attention on explaining the rise of "I-fiction" because they ruefully understood that the Japanese people, especially intellectuals, had failed as individuals to acquire a modern subjectivity or to organize an effective anti-war movement, and had been dragged into the quagmire of war as a consequence of having developed no "modern self" (*kindaiteki jiga* 近代的自我).[5] Thus they upheld the need to "modernize" "literature," which is the expression of the self, and from this perspective adopted the common strategy of attacking "the modern self and the premodern conditions of Japanese society." As their standard they adopted the civil society of modern Europe and the image of the autonomous individuals inhabiting them; and from among the many modes of literary expression they therefore concentrated their interest on works directly concerned with "self" and the relationship between "self" and others. This approach can be called "history seen in terms of the modern self" (*kindaiteki jiga shikan* 近代的自我史観).

The dynamics of twentieth-century international politics in the lead-up to World War II, the ideas behind the domestic and external policies conceived with a view to invading China, the failure to organize any anti-war or anti-imperialist movement, and the intellectual and cultural circumstances surrounding these: to neglect analyzing such problems while lamenting the failure

2 Itō Sei et al.1960, p. 51.
3 Itō Sei et al.1960, p. 52.
4 Itō Sei et al.1960, p. 62.
5 Within Marxism, this turned into a controversy between Umemoto Katsumi 梅本克己, Tanaka Kichiroku 田中吉六, and others concerning "subjectivity" (*shutaisei* 主体性).

of any "modern self" to develop in Japan amounts to a subjectivism that, oblivious of objective conditions, would reduce causes to purely subjective ones. Moreover, it is indeed "modernism" to seek one's standard of judgment in the ideal image of the "self" of nineteenth-century European civil society. To do so while ignoring international conditions and the structure of twentieth-century Japanese society is to commit an egregious anachronism. Seen with the benefit of hindsight, it is less Marxist art theory that allowed this obvious anachronism to claim such authority, than it was the influence of the single-state fallacy of history and revolutionary strategy (according to which socialism was to be realized in each state, according to that state's stage of development) to which Marxism, indeed Stalinism, had succumbed; and in particular, needless to say, that of the Comintern Theses of 1932, which defined Japan as a semi-feudal society. The strategy based on this Kōza-ha 講座派[6] style view of history was not adopted only by those preoccupied with the issue of the "modern self"; it was shared by the mainstream of postwar intellectuals, even those who kept their distance from Marxism itself.

A model manifestation of this phenomenon can found in "Shingakumonron" 新学問論 (*Chōryū* 潮流, January 1947) a roundtable discussion (*zadankai* 座談会) that brought together around its central figure, Maruyama Masao 丸山真男, various professors and associate professors from Tokyo University. In contrast with feudal (premodern) society, in which learning is focused on human relations (*jinrin* 人倫), the participants characterized learning in a modern society as studying nature above all, by means of observation and experiment. While acknowledging the limits of modern science, on the whole the participants also advocated the progress of modernization in the field of learning. They grasped Japan's post-Meiji westernization process, i.e., "modernization," but they regretted that the Japanese had not fully assimilated it and considered ways to advance it more thoroughly. My practice is to sum up this sort of strategic position as *kindaikashugi* 近代化主義 ("modernization-ism"). However, it is important not to forget that, at first, all these *kindaikashugi* strategies developed while containing various internal contradictions.

9.1.2 Aspects of Strategy

For example, Fukuda Tsuneari (1912-1994) insisted not only on working to establish "modernity" (*kindai* 近代), but also, at the same time on "striving to overcome the limitations of the modern." In his "Kindai no kokufuku" 近代の克服 (*Tenbō* 展望, May 1947) he wrote, "Establishing modernity is the task facing present-day Japan." On that basis he then declared his own position: "We have undeniably strayed from our own reality to adopt the modernity of Europe, and it is a fact that under such circumstances modern Japan could not have been other than it is. This situation, to which I am resigned, I consider to be wholly bad." The core of his message was as follows: "It is a paradoxical truth that it will be impossible to establish modernity, at least in contemporary Japan, unless we realize its limitations and plan to overcome it."

While recognizing the need to re-launch and re-establish "modernization," Fukuda urged paradoxically that, precisely with that goal in mind, it was necessary to "realize the limitations

6 The Kōza-ha (a name that has been translated "lecturists") consisted of the group of Marxist economic scholars associated with the enormously influential book *Nihon shihonshugi hattatsushi kōza* 日本資本主義発達史講座 (Iwanami Shoten, 1932).

[of modernity] and plan to overcome it." He had begun to outline this position in "Kindai Nihon bungaku no hassō" 近代日本文学の発想 (1945). After the end of the war, the need to establish "modernity" had become the mainstream of intellectual opinion and Fukuda, while half agreeing, nonetheless remained convinced that "modernity" was to be overcome. On this theme, the ideas of D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), known then in Japan as one hallmark of "overcoming the modern," can be called a rare twentieth-century example of typically nineteenth-century romanticism.

From his modernizationist position Fukuda also proposed to discuss the development of "modern Japanese literature" with reference to the expressive technique of "objective realism" (*kyakkanteki riarizumu* 客観的リアリズム). The position taken by Nakamura Mitsuo best represents this "view of history in terms of realism" (*riarizumu shikan*リアリズム史観). For example, Nakamura wrote in "Kōbungaku no fukkatsu" 硬文学の復活 (1963), "The realism of Japanese naturalism did not, like its French counterpart, expose directly the hypocrisy of society; its characteristic feature was, instead, to challenge the hypocrisy of society by means of the author's self-confession." However, "This had to do with the stern demands of late Meiji social ethics and the density of interpersonal relations," which were such that, "while resisting feudal convention and social ethics, it used these conventionalized interpersonal relations to sustain its own existence."[7]

To the extent that the unmasking of this "distortion" (*yugami* 歪み) assumes Meiji society to be characterized by "feudal conventions," it conforms to the analysis set forth in the Comintern Theses of 1932 and to the Kōza-ha view of history, which is derived from them.[8] This view of history in terms of realism sets up the technique of realism as the critical standard for "modern literature" and thus confirms the prevailing understanding, according to which "modern literature" began in the late 1880s, when Tsubouchi Shōyō's *Shōsetsu shinzui* and other such works appeared. The image of "the history of modern Japanese literature" conveyed by Nakamura Mitsuo's *Nihon no kindai shōsetsu*日本の近代小説 (Iwanami Shinsho, 1954), informed as it was by this historical view, is, even today, the most familiar one of all.

Various dissenting theories have been put forward. For example, in "Seiji shōsetsu to 'kindai' bungaku: Meiji seiji shōsetsu saihyōka no tame ni" 政治小説と「近代」文学–明治政治小説再評価のために (*Shisō no kagaku* 思想の科学, June 1959), written just before the anti-Security Treaty struggle of 1960, Asukai Masamichi 飛鳥井雅道 proposed the political realism of the Meiji political novel as the origin of "modern Japanese literature." Elsewhere Etō Jun 江藤淳, in his "Riarizumu no genryū: Shaseibun to tasha no mondai" リアリズムの源流–写生文と他者の問題 (*Shinchō* 新潮, October 1971), set out to determine when what we now experience as a "living style" first appeared in "literature" and declared the origins of realism to lie in Masaoka Shiki's *shaseibun*. Elsewhere again, Karatani Kōjin 柄谷行人, in *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen*日本近代文学の起源 (1980), applied the standard of "cognitive arrangement" (*ninshikiteki na fuchi* 認識的な布置) to seek its origins in, say, Kunikida Doppo's "Wasureenu hitobito" 忘れえぬ人々 (included in Doppo's *Musashino* 武蔵野, 1901), in which interior solitude and evocation of

7 *Nakamura Mitsuo zenshū*, vol. 9, p. 134.

8 In "Nakamura Mitsuo no tōjō," Hirano Ken pointed out again the mutual influence between Nakamura Mitsuo's "Tenkō sakka ron" 転向作家論 and Kobayashi Hideo's 小林秀雄 "Watakushi shōsetsu ron" 私小説論, and he demonstrated that Nakamura's thesis was based on the popular front view of history.

landscape mutually correspond, and observed that such correspondences can be found in Masaoka Shiki's *shasei* 写生 (realism).

However, the ideas proposed by Asukai, Etō, and Karatani all fall within the framework of the "view of history in terms of realism." They may demand that the content of this view be rewritten, but they do not fundamentally question the view itself. The basic difficulty with it will be a theme in the chapter that follows. Here, it will be enough to demonstrate the logical force of the assertion made by Okuno Takeo in "Itō riron to Hirano kōshiki: Kindai Nihon bungaku e no gen riron," to the effect that, "There are many streams of modern Japanese literature beside that of 'I-fiction'."

One should remember the names of Ozaki Kōyō, Kōda Rohan, Izumi Kyōka, Higuchi Ichiyō; of Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sōseki; of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川竜之介; of Nagai Kafū 永井荷風, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and Satō Haruo 佐藤春夫; and of Yokomitsu Riichi 横光利一and Kawabata Yasunari. There are also the "proletarian literature" novels of Hayama Yoshiki 葉山嘉樹 and others, and the "mass literature" novels of Nakazato Kaizan 中里介山 and Osaragi Jirō 大佛次郎. It should be obvious to anyone that "modern Japanese literature" by no means developed around "I-fiction". Nevertheless, the critics' unanimity in propounding theories "less of modern Japanese literature than of 'I-fiction '," based on their allegiance to the strategy of condemning "the modern self and the premodern conditions of Japanese society," has played a decisive role in the later image of Japan's "modern literature."

So-called "pure literature," itself involved with "I-fiction" centered image of "history of literature," takes as its principal object the intellectual's consciousness of self and therefore, as Takeuchi Yoshimi noted, clearly lacks any access to "the people" (*kokumin*) or "the folk" (*minzoku*), or any examination of nationalistic trends. The thinking that reduces cultural trends to "the modern self and the premodern conditions of Japanese society" falls into a kind of social reductionism that treats the development of Japanese literary art ever since Meiji as though the backwardness of Japan's spiritual landscape had caused it to follow its own, unique path. I have already pointed out repeatedly that that image of society is decisively wrong. It ignores the role that Japan has actually played in twentieth-century international society and commits the error of considering the country in complete isolation.

Needless to say, the crucial task after World War II has been to reflect thoroughly on the path followed by the state known as Japan, which pursued imperialist wars in East Asia in the early twentieth century. It has *not* been to survey prewar Japan from the historical viewpoint of the Kōza-ha, which rests on the strategic position of re-launching the "modernization" chosen by postwar Japan. The situation is the same in the realm of "literature." The real task has not been to bewail backwardness and "distortions" in the modernization of "literature" and other cultural trends from Meiji on, but radically to redefine the development of "literature" in the context of the total culture, from an international standpoint and with regard to popular and mass trends.

In reality, many literary works inspired by Japan's defeat, especially those of the so-called "Decadents" (Burai-ha 無頼派) like Ishikawa Jun 石川淳, Dazai Osamu 太宰治, and Sakaguchi Ango 坂口安吾, as well as those of the so-called "First Wave postwar writers" (Daiichiji sengo-ha 第一次戦後派), who started out after the end of the war, convey fundamental doubts about the

strategy of re-launching "modernization."[9]

In the realm of criticism, too, there were those who advocated an entirely different strategic position. For example, in "Kindai to gendai" 近代と現代 (*Tenbō*, March 1947), Karaki Junzō 唐木順三 treated Natsume Sōseki and Kawakami Hajime's 河上肇 fondness for kanshi not as a survival of a premodern past, but as a tendency toward the antiquarian tastes of the "modern man" (*kindaijin* 近代人). Linking twentieth-century philosophy and science, which had attempted to overcome the impasse reached by "modern philosophy and epistemology, founded as they are on such dualities as thought and existence, idea and matter, or subject and object," he proposed a basic strategy for discussing them.[10]

In order to transcend this image of "modern literature" and this view of the "history" of the same, founded as they are on a succession of mistaken approaches, it will first be necessary to determine when and how the idea of "modern literature" arose.

9.2 The Formation of the Idea of "Modern Literature"

9.2.1 The Term "the Modern Period"

Nowadays we habitually identify Japan's *kindai* (modern period) with that initiated by the Meiji Restoration. However, the word "kindai" has long been used to refer less to any fixed block of time than to a somewhat vague notion of "recent times" (*konogoro* このごろ), times close to the present. For example, the poetic treatise presented by Fujiwara no Teika 藤原定家 (1162-1241) to Minamoto no Sanetomo 源実朝 (1192-1219) is entitled *Kindai shūka* 近代秀歌 (1209). The term "kinsei" 近世 means the same thing, and until the war both were used at times more or less interchangeably with *tōdai* 当代 or *tōsei* 当世, which designate the present age. For example, in the title of *Kinsei burai* 近世無頼 (1930), a collection of poems by Jō Samon 城左門 celebrating the spirit of the early Shōwa "modern vagabond," the term "kinsei" is equivalent in meaning to *tōdai*, "our time." "Kinsei" also appears in exactly the same sense in the title of Takizawa Bakin's *Kinsei mono no hon Edo sakusha burui* 近世物之本江戸作者部類. In short, until World War II, "kinsei" and "kindai" were both more or less interchangeable in the sense of "nowadays."

However, the term "kinsei" was also in use to designate a particular historical period. As the examples of Ōwada Takeki's *Wabungaku shi* and Haga Yaichi's *Kokubungaku jikkō* have shown, in Meiji times history was divided into *jōko* 上古, *chūko* 中古, and *kinsei* 近世. In the works just mentioned, the Meiji period itself is called *kondai* 今代 or *gendai* 現代. Thus "kinsei" appears to designate the period between ancient times and the present: the era covered by the Tokugawa period. Presumably this is why "kinsei" was accepted into conventional usage in that sense.

In contrast, despite the Meiji Restoration being undoubtedly a major turning point for Japan, people were also aware of the turning points marked by the beginnings of the Taishō and Shōwa eras; and in early Shōwa there seems still to have been no single, commonly agreed way to refer to the entire period of time from the Restoration up to the present. Then, amid calls to re-launch

9 See "Gūi no bakudan: Haisen shōsetsu o yomu" 寓意の爆弾–敗戦小説を読む (1985) and related essays published in Suzuki Sadami 1987c.

10 *Karaki Junzō zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 223.

"modernization" in the aftermath of the defeat, intellectuals began looking back with dismay on the process of Japan's "modernization" and thus came to use the word "kindai" to refer to the entire period during which Japan had assimilated modern European science and technology, and had developed as an industrial society.[11] Literary critics, too, became accustomed to calling "kindai bungaku" the literature that had developed since the Meiji Restoration.

However, certain circumstances must surely have prepared this change. First, let us verify that at a certain point an idea corresponding to our notion of "kindai" (even if not necessarily so designated) gained acceptance among intellectuals as a matter of shared understanding. The most obvious such moment in time is no doubt the years between 1900 and the end of the Russo-Japanese War.

In the previous chapter I discussed examples taken from *Jūkyū seiki*, a special issue of the magazine *Taiyō* (June 1900), in which the new Meiji literature was identified as beginning with Tsubouchi Shōyō, and Ueda Bin was quoted as using the term *bungei*. Japan first consciously experienced then the transition into a new century according to the Western calendar. It also gained a retrospective view of "the nineteenth century" as a whole, and prepared to explore the possibilities of the next one. For this special issue, *Taiyō* solicited contributions from the best experts in the relevant fields. The issue surveys trends throughout the nineteenth century in a wide range of Western studies, covering government, industry, and culture, and it is known for having introduced Western civilization to many young men and women of the time. One notes, scattered throughout, a tendency to treat the industrial revolution in England or the 1789 revolution in France as the beginning of this civilization, together with opinions identifying the European nineteenth century as the age of individualism; of romanticism in pursuit of personal freedom; of the development of machine civilization; of positivism or mechanical materialism; of the drive toward social equality; and so on. Almost all the elements associated with our current notion of modern Europe are present. The impact they had on Meiji Japan is obvious in the very conception of this special issue.

Still, no writer in the issue ever calls all this "Western modernity" (*Seiyō kindai*) or "modern civilization" (*kindai bunmei*). The issue is always "nineteenth-century civilization." Of course, the issue's very title invites this usage, but the usage also suggests that at the time the term "kindai" was not used to designate any particular historical period. It worth noting also that this *Taiyō* issue occasionally uses the term *bunka* to mean exactly the same thing as *bunmei*.

A little later on, Kaneko Chikusui 金子筑水 (1870-1937) observed in "Kindaishugi no engen" 近代主義の淵源 (*Taiyō*, November 1911) that the term *kindaishugi* (*modanizumu* モダニズム) was currently in fashion. He wrote, "The mention of modern life or modernism brings to mind the enormous and extremely complex advances we have made, thanks to scientific knowledge, in the industry, economy, transportation, commerce, etc. characteristic of contemporary life." He seems to have used the term in an average sort of sense to refer to the new life, indeed the new spirit, accompanying the prosperity of material civilization.[12] Perhaps this is the moment when the word *modan* モダン replaced the term *haikara* ハイカラ. However, *modan* did not refer to a historical period, either. It was in the 1920s, after the beginning of the Shōwa era, that *modan*

11 In the world of art, for example, the art of the Meiji period apparently came to be called "modern art" (*kindai bijutsu* 近代美術) only after World War II (Satō Dōshin 1996, p. 27).

12 Personal communication from Hayashi Masako 林正子.

became genuinely popular.[13]

Then when did the word "kindai" come into use not in the sense of "recently" (*saikin* 最近), but in that of the historical period beginning with the Meiji Restoration? It will be worth selecting from a detailed chronology of literary history those works on "literature" that include "kindai" in the title. The earliest is no doubt Takasu Baikei's 高須梅溪 *Kindai bungei shi ron* 近代文芸史論 (Nihon Hyōronsha, 1921). As noted earlier, this work brings together both art (*bijutsu*) and "literature" in the sense of linguistic art.

In the Shōwa period the number of such works grows. The following examples can be cited:

> Yuchi Takashi 湯地孝, *Nihon kindai shi no hattatsu* 日本近代詩の発達 (Furōkaku Shobō, 1928).
> Shinoda Tarō 篠田太郎, *Shiteki yuibutsuron yori mitaru kindai Nihon bungaku shi* 史的唯物論より観たる近代日本文学史 (Shun'yōdō, 1932).
> Watanabe Junzō 渡辺順三, *Shiteki yuibutsuron yori mitaru kindai tanka shi* 史的唯物論より観たる近代短歌史 (Kaizōsha, 1932).
> Onchi Terutake 遠地輝武, *Kindai Nihon shi no shiteki tenbō* 近代日本詩の史的展望 (Kōshinsha, 1934).
> Shioda Ryōhei 塩田良平, *Kindai Nihon bungaku ron* 近代日本文学論 (Manjōkaku, 1935).
> Kataoka Yoshikazu 片岡良一, *Kindai Nihon no sakka to sakuhin* 近代日本の作家と作品 (Iwanami Shoten, 1939).
> Hijikata Teiichi 土方定一, *Kindai Nihon bungaku hyōron shi* 近代日本文学評論史 (Seitō Shorin, 1936).
> Yoshida Seiichi 吉田精一, *Kindai Nihon rōmanshugi kenkyū* 近代日本浪漫主義研究 (Musashino Shoin, 1940).
> Kataoka Yoshikazu 片岡良一, *Kindai Nihon bungaku no tenbō* 近代日本文学の展望 (Chūō Kōron Sha, 1941).[14]

This list suggests that the use of "kindai bungaku" to designate the literature of the Meiji period and after was commonplace by the end of the 1930s. This phenomenon no doubt parallels the growing debate over how to evaluate Meiji culture. However, powerful motivation is needed to reduce the entire period since the Restoration to a single entity. That motivation was provided by Marxism and its fellow travelers, whose strategic goal was the overthrow of capitalist society. Among the examples just cited, the titles of the works by Shinoda Tarō and Watanabe Junzō make that clear. The purpose of these writers was to survey the history of "bourgeois literature," i.e., "kindai bungaku" and to clear the way for the "proletarian literature" that was to replace it. Their basic method was of course to discuss literary change from the perspective of social change, but some among them transcended the temptation to stop at making external judgments and adopted the method of understanding from within.[15] One such example is that of Senuma Shigeki 瀬沼茂

13 See prologue to Suzuki Sadami 1992c.
14 Fujimoto Toshihiko 藤本寿彦 assisted with checking these materials.
15 In the field of Japanese Marxist literary criticism, Aono Suekichi 青野季吉 (1890-1961) proposed

樹 (1904-1988).

9.2.2 An Image of "Modern Japanese Literature"

In "Shinri bungaku no hatten to sono kisū" 心理文学の発展とその帰趨 (1930), Senuma Shigeki defined psychological description as the hallmark of "kindai bungaku" and took the position that the origin of such literature was to be found in Tsubouchi Shōyō's *Shōsetsu shinzui*. This, he explained, "is because [this literature] is founded on the capitalist economic structure nurtured by the bourgeoisie, after the bourgeoisie had broken free of feudalism, and because it is intimately associated with the individualism, liberalism, and subjectivist ideology typical of the bourgeois outlook." He went to state that "typical psychological description" first appears in Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo* 浮雲; that "the awakening of self-consciousness" (*jiga ishiki no kakusei* 自我意識の覚醒) becomes visible in Kitamura Tōkoku's "Naibu seimei ron" (1893); and that the expression of the complexities of self and fate can be seen in the later works of Higuchi Ichiyō. He also discerned the essence of romanticism in Izumi Kyōka's search for "the limitless possibilities" of the self. Of the naturalist works of the post-Russo-Japanese War period he wrote, "They attempt with the attitude of the scientist to merge with actual human life and to describe human nature just as it is, from a position transcending all notions of good and evil, or beauty and ugliness, and thence to grasp objective 'truth'." This effort "yielded epoch-making works of broad scope," such as Shimazaki Tōson's *Hakai* 破戒 (1906). However, absorbing themselves exclusively in the dark side of human nature led them to despair of human beings, to lean toward fleshly indulgence, and to lose the support of the self; so that they fell into the "miseries of exposure of reality" and the "miseries of disillusionment," and in the end saw nothing around them but a void. As an example, Senuma cited Masamune Hakuchō's "Izuko e" 何処へ (1908). While the literature of naturalism is in thrall to the "lesser self" or "secondary self" (*dainigi no ware* 第二義の我), Senuma wrote, "in order to reach the primary self we must delve deeply through our own experiences into the self and touch, beyond all surface phenomena, the true life that moves in the depths of life itself." As someone who had perfected the spirit of individual quest, the spirit that arrives at the "greater self" which is "without human feelings [*hininjō* 非人情], hence impartial and dispassionate," Senuma cited Natsume Sōseki, whom he credited with first "conveying the movements of the psyche" and achieving "three-dimensional psychological description." After World War I, however, amid the gathering "general crisis" of capitalism "the ideal of 'universal humanity' became a mere illusion." Nonetheless, Senuma continued, "despite its ongoing decline, the questing spirit of kindai bungaku stubbornly continued to probe the self." Senuma cited Shiga Naoya's 志賀直哉 *An'ya kōro* 暗夜行路 (1921-37) as an example of a work that "achieved the ultimate in aesthetic contemplation of the self's direct experience and the scope of that experience." As examples of works concerned with the "mechanism of human psychology," he cited the Taishō and early Shōwa writings of Yokomitsu Riichi, Kawabata Yasunari, Hori Tatsuo 堀辰雄 (1904-1953), and Itō Sei, concerning which he discussed the "process of dissolution" of "the literature of individual psychology."

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the method of external criticism based on an internal understanding of the writer's position. See Suzuki Sadami 1991.

Senuma's outline of course lays the groundwork for proposing, as the "proletarian literature" that is to replace all this, a new, "anti-individualistic psychological literature," founded on "the historical consciousness that arises inevitably from the contemporary mode of life" and upon "the collective awareness known as class consciousness."[16] In short, Senuma's outline seeks the characteristics of the "modern" (kindai) novel in the image of bourgeois individualistic psychology and follows the process of its evolution from the perspective of internal critique.

I am not alone in seeing in Senuma's discourse a precursor of the postwar view of history in terms of the "modern self," or even one of the foundations for it. Moreover, one might well feel that the postwar fixation on "I-fiction" is thoroughly insubstantial in comparison. However, the historical view of "modern literature" as elaborated for the purpose of transcending "bourgeois literature" was only temporarily swept aside by the Comintern Theses of 1932, which defined Japanese society as semi-feudal. That is because this change of strategy forced a shift from criticizing "modern literature" as "bourgeois," to criticizing it as "feudal." The repression directed against the Japan Communist Party and its movement, and the stream of "converts" (*tenkōsha* 転向者) away from Communist sympathies, meant that the "proletarian literature" movement collapsed, and that the ambition to transcend "modern literature" from the standpoint of the proletariat came to nothing.

9.2.3 In the "New Order"

And then, as though to step in and run the next leg of the relay, there appeared in the late 1930s a fresh ambition: one seeking to transcend European "modernity" by means of the "Japanese spirit." However, this ambition by no means progressed in a straight or single line. Just as in the case of Asano Akira's essay "Kokumin bungaku ron no konpon mondai" (see Chapter 8), it is impossible to overlook a continuity with early Shōwa "Marxism."

Yasuda Yojūrō 保田与重郎 began his "Kindai bungei no tanjō" 近代文芸の誕生 (originally entitled "Ueda Akinari" 上田秋成, 1939) by writing that while reading Ueda Akinari's *ukiyo zōshi* entitled *Shodō kikimimi seken zaru*, he was powerfully struck by the work's resemblance to modern literature. "Saikaku or Bashō may have some claim to be called the fathers of modern literature," he wrote, "but Akinari or [Takebe] Ayatari can certainly be called the fathers of the modern novel." Akinari's mischievous *ukiyo zōshi* differ from Saikaku's satirical and ironical evocations of life in his time, and to the extent that they convey "the wounds suffered by the author and the burdens he bears," "they qualify in a major way as modern literature and modern novels." He went on to praise the "creative genius of the hallucinatory romanticism" of *Ugetsu monogatari*, remarking, "The people at large recognized that Akinari the novelist was by no means less talented than the novelists of modern Europe." He concluded, "Akinari is one of those who prepared the way for modern Japan."[17]

In comparing Akinari's fiction to the "modern European novel," Yasuda thus defined "the wounds suffered by the author and the burdens he bears" as the hallmark of "modern literature" and traced its origins back beyond the Meiji Restoration. The question of whether Bashō or Saikaku was

16 *Gendai bungei hyōron shū*, vol. 2, pp. 85-94. In vol. 95 of *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshū*.
17 *Yasuda Yojūrō zenshū*, vol. 8, pp. 202-205.

the father of modern Japanese literature seems then to have been vigorously debated by scholars in the field. If it is after the war that "kindai" came to be defined as beginning at the time of the Restoration, then in that same postwar period scholars of literature debated the proposition that the origins of modern literature lay in Tokugawa times. This may seem a little surprising. However, Shimazaki Tōson had remarked already in 1915, in his "Pari-dayori" 巴里だより, how pleasant it would be "if someone would only write what might be called a study of the Japanese nineteenth century." Citing the "formation of a national consciousness" that began with Motoori Norinaga and the "realism" (*shaseishugi*) of writers like Shikitei Sanba, Tōson wondered whether preparation for the new, post-Restoration Japan had not begun a hundred years ago.[18]

Concerning the debate over whether Saikaku or Bashō was the father of modern Japanese literature, Yasuda Yojūrō wrote that, to him, everything written before Bashō belonged to the past (*koten* 古典). "The current problem," he repeated, is that "in order to learn from Europe, modern Japanese literary art ignored every new element in the Japan of the Restoration period"; and he concluded, "Akinari is the very first figure to consider in connection with such a question of historical succession."[19] Thus Yasuda plainly stated that "the current problem" was to bring to light the modern elements present in Japan before the period of "learning from Europe" and to gauge their "historical succession." In order to resist European modernity, he aspired to discover a modernity that might be called purely Japanese.

Two years later, in 1941, and into the following year, *Chūō kōron* published three roundtable discussions on the theme of "Japan in the perspective of world history" (*Sekaishiteki tachiba to Nihon* 世界史的立場と日本, published in book form in 1943). In them the most brilliant young scholars of the Kyoto school (Kōsaka Masaaki 高坂正顕, Nishitani Keiji 西谷啓治, Kōyama Iwao 高山岩男, and Suzuki Shigetaka 鈴木成高) debated the proposition that Japanese "kindai" had two aspects, Tokugawa and post-Restoration, as well as the continuity or lack thereof between these two.[20] Their conclusion was that the Meiji Restoration was founded on Tokugawa-period "kindai," which set Japan on the way toward the westernization, i.e., modernization, that it subjectively sought. More than anything else, these discussions explored the theory of "overcoming the modern" (capitalism, machine civilization, the theory of stages of development, individualism, nationalism, imperialism, relativism, skepticism, and so on).[21] The participants shared with Yasuda Yojūrō the idea of finding in the Tokugawa period a "kindai" prior to that of westernization, but their basic stance and strategy were quite different.

This series of roundtable discussions inspired the magazine *Bungakukai* 文學界 to hold its own on the theme of "overcoming the modern." In this case, however, the participants, who included some Kyoto school scholars, were diverse in perspective, and the discussions ended inconclusively, without ever reaching any clear definition of "kindai." The book version (Sōgensha, 1943) was considerably modified from the original version, including substitution of certain new material,

18 "Furansu monogatari" was first serialized in *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* 東京朝日新聞, then published in *Sensō to Pari* 戦争と巴里. The chapter in question is entitled "Haru o machitsutsu" 春を待ちつつ. *Shinsōban Shimazaki Tōson zenshū*, vol. 6, p. 391.

19 *Yasuda Yojūrō zenshū*, vol. 8, p. 212.

20 Kōsaka et al. 1943, pp. 26-30.

21 Kōsaka et al. 1943, p. 347.

but the impression of ineffectualness remained. Yasuda Yojūrō, who cast such a shadow over the event, absented himself from it, having in December of the previous year published *Kindai no shūen* 近代の終焉, in which he wrote of "wishing to sweep away all trends of thought that damage our present in the name of the modern."[22] For Yasuda at this time, *kindai no shūen* (the end of the modern) was "synonymous with Japan's self-awareness"[23] ("Shōnen shōsetsu no shinkaitaku" 少年小説の新開拓, 1942).

Yasuda's condemnation of things learned from the Europe masquerading as modernity pervades this work. He had long waged a desperate struggle to restore Japanese aesthetics and the Japanese spirit. However, in "Kindai bungei no tanjō" and *Kindai no shūen* his fundamental critique of "kindai" seems to have changed. In "Shōnen shōsetsu no shinkaitaku" he used the expression *kindai no shūen* to mean the end of the nineteenth-century European novel.[24] His earlier attitude, manifested in such remarks as the one quoted above ("Akinari the novelist was by no means less talented than the novelists of modern Europe") had changed completely. What brought about this change was no doubt the call to a "new order" (*shintaisei* 新体制) that arose in 1940 within the political and intellectual worlds. The term *shintaisei* meant building a powerful domestic order for the sake of "carrying through a holy war" *seisen kantetsu* 聖戦貫徹 (the war against China), in order to establish a "new East Asian order" corresponding to the "new European order" of Nazi Germany. The conviction that Japan, indeed Asia, was moving toward a new era, however perverse it may seem now, was widespread at the time.

The Kyoto school's roundtable discussions, as well as the debate with Yasuda Yojūrō from 1940 on, were based on recognition that the present, the successor era to the post-Restoration age of westernization (i.e., modernization) was the age of "overcoming the modern"; or else on enthusiasm for bringing that age into being. The Kyoto school discussions clearly rejected outside domination. Yasuda, for his part, was plainly led to sympathize with militarism by the idea that the war with China was justified as a war—one that might mean conflict with Great Britain and the United States—to free Asia from Western imperialism, build a "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" led by Japan, and establish a new order in the world. The idea that the world was obviously heading into a new age was fanatic in character. However, that these calls to "overcome the modern" should have fallen into the abyss of oblivion, as utterly meaningless, merely signifies the desire to avert one's eyes from them. The debates on this subject certainly played a part at least in fixing the custom of referring to the period since the Meiji Restoration as "kindai."

9.2.4 Where to Place the Origin?

In 1939, Yasuda Yojūrō saw in Ueda Akinari's fiction "the birth of modern literary art." This opinion is by no means to be dismissed out of hand. In the postwar period, too, all sorts of doubts were expressed concerning the mainstream view, generally accepted as self-evident, that "modern Japanese literature" began in Meiji times. For example, Satō Haruo wrote as follows in *Kindai Nihon bungaku no tenbō* 近代日本文学の展望 (1947):

22 *Yasuda Yojūrō zenshū*, vol. 11, p. 267.
23 *Yasuda Yojūrō zenshū*, vol. 13, p. 425.
24 *Yasuda Yojūrō zenshū*, vol. 13, p. 214.

> When and how did *kinsei* or *kindai* begin in Japan, whose revival of literary art went through no political or industrial revolution? There must be many opinions on the subject. I will therefore venture to state mine. The Genroku period is no doubt remarkable, but I have a feeling it is too recent to work as the beginning of *kinsei* and too far back to make sense as the beginning of *kindai*. The idea that the revival of literary art occurred around Momoyama, and that its potentiality can also be discerned in the art of Nobunaga and Hideyoshi's heyday, strikes me as doubtful. I imagine that for some people it is possible to situate it about two centuries ago, but one cannot be sure without seeking the opinion of the historians. In the case of *kindai*, however, my own, simpleminded feeling is that a better choice might be the Tenmei era (1781-1789), which reflects the decadence and melancholy of Bakumatsu times, and during which one catches a first inkling of Japanese pre-romanticism. Still, it is not obvious that the Tenmei era has that clear a character of its own. No doubt the best thing in the end is to follow accepted wisdom in seeing the Meiji Restoration period as epoch-making and to define it as neither *kinsei* nor *kindai*, but as the origin of contemporary times.
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> However, fortunately or unfortunately the Meiji Restoration was a very gentle revolution, . . . and the essential spirit of things remained, as before, semi-feudal . . . . Perhaps it is the incompleteness of the revolution of the Meiji Restoration that distantly explains our recent defeat in the war.[25]

Any attempt directly to apply the concepts of *kinsei* and *kindai*, the hallmarks of the European Renaissance and of Europe's political and economic revolutions, to the history of Japanese culture is bound to end in confusion. Of course, Satō Haruo's consciousness of the issue had been nurtured in the late 1920s and the 1930s. The idea that Japan's Renaissance had taken place in the so-called medieval (*chūsei*) period had a good deal in common with viewpoint consistently expressed in the novels of Hanada Kiyoteru 花田清輝 (1909-74), from *Chōjū giwa* 鳥獣戯話 (1962) to his late work *Nihon no runessansujin* 日本のルネッサンス人, to the effect that the first stirrings of the Japanese Renaissance are to be seen in the turmoil of the sixteenth-century Sengoku 戦国 period. This trend of thought gave rise to such works as *Sengoku ransei no bungaku* 戦国乱世の文学 (1965) by Sugiura Minpei 杉浦明平, or Terada Tōru's 寺田透 *Waga chūsei* わが中世 (1967).

Another clear idea proposed soon after the war was based on the proposition that the starting point in question could be located in the so-called vernacular revolution, which replaced Latin with the vernacular language of each European country, and which in Europe marked the origin of modern literature. Katsumoto Seiichirō 勝本清一郎 (1899-1967) began "Kindai Nihon bungaku no haaku" 近代日本文学の把握 (*Shin Nihon bungaku* 新日本文学, January 1948) by writing:

> Some hold that modern literature began with Tsubouchi Shōyō and Futabatei Shimei, but I would like to propose a much longer process. The dawn of a literature of the people (*shomin* 庶民), associated with a conception of the modern colloquial

25 *Satō Haruo zenshū*, vol. 12, p. 115.

language, can be seen in the Muromachi period, in association with the emergence of an urban class.

He then went to pose various objections to the accepted convention of applying the qualifiers "kinsei" to the literature of the Tokugawa period and "kindai" to that of the period initiated by the Meiji Restoration. His own approach involved analyzing the "history of literature" after the Tokugawa period in terms of "dual feudal and modern aspects," and within that framework he noted the modern elements in the Tokugawa period. Concerning the literary history of the Meiji period and after, he wrote, "Some have presented a close-up view of it, based solely on a short-range grasp of materials they themselves have chosen, without ever describing it in terms of the full spectrum of its relationships with society at large." In this passage he accurately critiqued an unfortunate practice that continues even today.

The beginning point of Japan's "modern literature" has indeed been defined in many, widely varying ways. For example, Teruoka Yasutaka 暉峻康隆 (1908-2001) wrote of Ihara Saikaku's *Kōshoku gonin onna* 好色五人女, "To the extent that it treats non-professional passion, love pursued within the context of morality, law, and the social order—in other words, love in the ordinary sense—this work is an epoch-making one."[26] In free love liberated from feudal morality he discerned the pulse of the new townsman class, though he observed that the feudal yoke of the Tokugawa (*bakuhan* 幕藩) system had grown heavier thereafter.

Another instance is that of Ishikawa Jun, who in "Akinari shiron" 秋成私論 (1959) wrote of *Harusame monogatari* 春雨物語, "As a work it is continuous with the modern spirit, in that it could end at any point, or continue on indefinitely."[27] Nakamura Yukihiko, for his part, saw in Akinari's work "the first short stories (*tanpen shōsetsu* 短編小説) continuous with those of modern times."[28] Nakamura Yukihiko's *Kinsei jusha no bungakukan* 近世儒者の文学観 properly notes that the Japanese literature scholars of the prewar Shōwa era attempted to develop and systematize the presence of the "modern" in Tokugawa literature.

A further example is that of Takada Mamoru 高田衛 (b. 1930), who wrote not of Akinari alone, but of all of mid-Tokugawa literature, that "Buson's haikai, [Hiraga] Gennai's *dangibon* 談義本, [Takebe] Ayatari's revival of the *katauta* 片歌—in each case the pattern of the genre is consciously reinforced," so that "modernization of genre modality founded on maturity of individual thought . . . becomes a historical characteristic of literature."[29] His interpretation suggests the possibility of tracing a "modern, historical sense of self" back to the Tokugawa period. Elsewhere Haga Tōru

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26 Teruoka 1952, pp. 168-69.

27 *Ishikawa Jun zenshū*, vol. 14, p. 276. Ishikawa Jun's use of the expression "the modern spirit" (*kindai seishin* 近代精神) was largely idiosyncratic, as I have shown. It refers to the twentieth-century novelistic methods seen in such precursors as Izumi Kyōka 泉鏡花.

28 Nakamura Yukihiko 1994. In "Dentō to no taiwa: Ueda Akinari" (*Hihyō* 批評, January-August 1965), Saeki Shōichi 佐伯彰一 compared Akinari to Takebe Ayatari 建部綾足. He called Takebe "a novelist of real life" (*Hihyō*, February), in contrast to Akinari, whose *Ugetsu monogatari* he described as a precursor of the work of Edgar Allen Poe (March). He can be said to have shed light on various "modern" aspects of these writers. Etō Jun, too, discerned modern elements in the work of Ueda Akinari, but because of their idiosyncratic character he judged them to be close to madness (Etō 1985).

29 Takada Mamoru 1968, p. 11.

芳賀徹 (b. 1931) noted the "spontaneity [*naihatsusei* 内発性] of Japanese modern culture" and, from that perspective, suggested calling the Tokugawa period "early modern."[30] All these views have merit and deserve consideration.

Opinions on when "modern literature" originated naturally vary according to how "modern literature" is defined. For example, Lu Xun cited three telltale characteristics (conscious construction of fictionality, clearly aesthetic quality of style, and reality of description) to situate the beginning of the Chinese shōsetsu (*xiaoshuo*) in Tang-dynasty wonder tales (*zhuanqi* 伝奇). In other words, it is possible to hold that modern Chinese fiction began in the Tang dynasty. Moreover, it is possible to see the same standard as applying to the monogatari of Heian Japan. Depending on the standard invoked, it is not impossible even to discern the beginnings of European modern literature in the ancient literary art of East Asia.

In order to pursue this issue further, it will be necessary to sweep away any notion of reducing it to a matter of the social order and to confirm the principle that thought, culture, and history develop in a manner relatively independent of politics and the economy. Once that has been done, I will propose the following as the conditions necessary for the rise of modern forms. First, the work of literary art is published (naturally in the vernacular language) for an unspecified, large number of readers. Second, the work is not one provisionally written down from a fluid body of folktales, but instead one stamped with the individuality of an author (although not necessarily of a particular, named person), in a manner expected by the reader. (For brief discussion of the concept of "author," see below, 12.2.) These, I believe, are the two elements required. Muromachi-period *otogi zōshi* 御伽草子 and Tokugawa-period *kana zōshi* 仮名草子 seem to satisfy the first requirement, and Saikaku's *ukiyo zōshi* the second. I should add, however, concerning "kindai" as a particular time period, that while traces of the "modern" can be found scattered through the politico-economic system and the cultural forms of the Tokugawa period, I myself cannot recognize in them a unified cultural system derived from the modern European nation-state.

30 Haga Tōru 1978. The words "early modern" are cited in English.