

## CHAPTER 11

# STRATEGIES FOR RESTRUCTURING

### 11.1 A New Analytical Theme: “Overcoming the Modern”

#### 11.1.1 The Invalidity of “Modern versus Anti-modern”

Ochi Haruo observed that, by 1890, writers who had begun their careers in the 1870s had come to entertain doubts about both “literature” and “Japanese modernity” (*Nihon kindai*). The doubts concerning “literature” had arisen because of the controversy over *Ukishiro monogatari*, during which criticism from the side supporting “literature” in the broad sense had exposed the decisive limitations of what one might call the unprincipled realism (*rinen naki* 理念なき *riarizumu*) of the view, proposed by Tsubouchi Shōyō in *Shōsetsu shinzui*, of “literature” as linguistic art. Therefore those doubts, encouraged by the succeeding debate over a “national (*kokumin*) literature” based on the broad definition, and by the reality of social change in the period surrounding the Sino-Japanese War, recast the character of “literature” as linguistic art and changed the form of expression. That process led to the consolidation of the modern concept of “literature.” However, just as modern “literature” became a self-evident prerequisite, there occurred a reversal of the earlier line, which either excluded politics, thought, and science, or saw them as pandering to popular taste (*tsūzoku* 通俗), and aimed instead at the pursuit of beauty. “Literature” then came to embrace within itself, as its main thrust, a trend of thought (naturalism) that held the pursuit of beauty to be popular and that emphasized the quest for truth. The terms of the conflict ceased to be “pursuit of art” versus “offering the broad reading public enlightenment and entertainment”; they were now “pursuit of truth” versus “literature for the people [*minshū*].” Such was the tortuous path followed in history by the modern concept of “literature,” through repeated reversals, splits, and transformations. What, then, of the doubts Ochi Haruo noted concerning “modernity”?

These doubts first appeared in connection with the gap between an idealized “modern West” and the reality of “modern Japan.” This gap turns out on reflection to resemble the one posited by postwar intellectuals with respect to post-Meiji Japan: that between the desired ideal of the “modern West” and the backward, distorted reality of the actual “modern Japan.” Schematically, the two are the same. However, Ochi Haruo’s observation had nothing to do with judging the actuality of “modern Japan” from the external vantage point of the postwar or contemporary period. What he had in mind, instead, was to observe the reality of a “modern Japan” that already embraced that model. That was where the shift in his perspective lay. It was a shift borne of doubts concerning the central proposition that westernization = modernization.

Of course, Ochi Haruo’s analytical perspective is not remarkable in itself. For example, the same gap has often been pointed out in the case of Natsume Sōseki. In a lecture entitled “Gendai Nihon no kaika” 現代日本の開化 (1911), Sōseki described Japan’s newly developing civilization

as being “all on the surface” (*hisō uwasuberi* 皮相上滑り), but he went on to say that we must nonetheless “swallow our tears and continue on, gliding over the surface.”<sup>1</sup> Although well aware of the gap under discussion, he urged the necessity of pursuing the ideal of the “modern West.”

Two years before Sōseki’s lecture, Nagai Kafū wrote in “Kichōsha no nikki” 帰朝者の日記 (1909) of a composer who, recently returned from the West, expressed the wish to see Japan develop a truly “national music” (*kokumin ongaku*), but who nonetheless raged against Japan’s superficial imitation of the West and its exclusive concern with profit. Caught up in this anger, Kafū’s character cultivated intimacy with a friend fond of Tokugawa culture and found himself drawn to the world of the shamisen. The theme of Kafū’s story is an inclination toward “tradition” fostered by the gap between the Western ideal and Japanese actuality. Indeed, after the High Treason Incident of 1910, Kafū seems really to have turned his back on Japan’s tendency toward superficial imitation of the West and strengthened his own predilection for Edo culture. In the “Roji” 路地 section of *Hiyori geta* 日和下駄 (1915), it was the poor back streets where one still heard the music of the shamisen that he recognized as the home of art, and he cursed “modern Japan,” where even the scenery had changed.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps Sōseki’s lecture can be said to have addressed more the manifestations of this spirit and the tendency to fall in with it. However, it is also well known that Sōseki was close to the worlds of haiku, kanbun, and kanshi. One sees here the familiar image of a Sōseki torn between “the West” and “Japan,” or “the East.”

Just as Tsubouchi Shōyō had regarded the kanbun education of the early-Meiji westernizing scholars as representing the last dregs of a bygone era, seen from the post-World War II modernizationist perspective Sōseki’s taste for kanbun and kanshi represented the dregs of an earlier era, or “tradition.” It is no wonder that, in such a context, there should have arisen a schematic mode of thought that either opposed “modernity” (*kindai*) to “tradition” or “anti-modernism” (*hankindai*), or saw them as coexisting. The pattern is starkly visible in Miyoshi Yukio’s 三好行雄 book *Nihon bungaku no kindai to hankindai* 日本文学の近代と反近代 (1972). In his “Afterword,” Miyoshi Yukio (1926-1990) wrote:

The anti-modernism I consider here takes the form of a counter-assumption that appeared in various domains—sensibilities, aesthetics, even the unconscious—prior to the formation of the full-blown anti-Western feeling, thought, and logic in Meiji intellectuals who were forced to accept the West.<sup>3</sup>

His was an antithesis to the strategies of “modernization,” meant to recover a pre-existing “anti-modernism.”

However, the schematic equating of modernization to westernization is invalid. The Meiji revival of Chinese studies and the Japanese classics, as well as the formation and development of the idea of the “history of Japanese literature,” make that clear. Similarly, the identification of

1 [Natsume] *Sōseki zenshū*, vol. 11, p. 340.

2 [Nagai] *Kafū zenshū*, vol. 12, p. 349.

3 Miyoshi Yukio, *Nihon bungaku no kindai to hankindai* (“Atogaki” あとがき) and “Kindai bungaku shi no kōsō,” in *Miyoshi Yukio chosaku shū*, vol. 6, p. 366.

“anti-modernism” and “traditionalism” as the opposing position is also invalid. No doubt Fukuchi Ōchi’s regrets, in “Nihon bungaku no fushin o tan-zu,” over the decline of Chinese studies, and his appeal to revive them, can be classified under the heading of “anti-modernism.” However, he recognized the significance of studying Latin in Europe, and on that model he hoped to rebuild the culture (*kyōyō* 教養) of the Japanese nation-state. For that reason, the point of Fukuchi’s “anti-modernism” was to promote “modernism.” Moreover Katō Hiroyuki, who published his *Jinken shinsetsu* 人權新説 in 1882, and who aimed to introduce into Japan the European view of history in terms of progress (*shinpo shikan* 進歩史觀), also in 1882 successfully established the Japanese Classics Program in the Faculty of Letters at Tokyo Imperial University. In this case, “modernizationism” and “traditionalism” appear to have coexisted within the same individual—a man who, for that matter, played a powerful role in shaping government policy. In order to preserve and develop the modern nation-state, those who built it called “tradition” back into service in order to form the cultural identity indispensable for that purpose, and set about reformulating “history.” So it is that the 1890s became the decade of the “history of Japanese literature.” There is also another issue to consider: the desire to achieve, here in Japan, the Western-style romanticism that curses the development of material civilization, longs for nature and antiquity, and sets out for strange lands. This desire represents at one and the same time both “westernization” and “anti-modernization.”

The dual opposition between “modernization = westernization” on one hand, and “anti-modernization = traditionalism” on the other, is invalid and must be dismantled. If, having done so, one divides these dual-term pairs into “modernization” versus “anti-modernization” and “westernization” versus “traditionalism,” and then places the resulting single-term pairs in contrasting parallel with each other, the examples cited above can be explained by the connections between “modernization” and “traditionalism,” and between “anti-modernization” and “westernization.” Of course, that Natsume Sōseki, who spoke of “swallowing our tears and continuing on, gliding over the surface,” should have had at the same time a taste for kanbun and kanshi can be explained in terms of a single individual harboring within himself now conflicting, now harmonious sympathies with both “westernization” and “tradition.”

However, it is worth recalling at this point the observation made by Ochi Haruo, concerning the profound doubt engendered by the gap between the idealized “modern West” and the reality of “modern Japan.” If he was right, then regardless of how he combined “modernization” versus “anti-modernization” and “westernization” versus “traditionalism,” he may well have been seeking to identify a spirit impossible to assimilate to either pair, and to follow its development.

### 11.1.2 Freeing the Novel from the Modern

For Nagai Kafū, the ideal of the “the modern” (*kindai*) was that of the modern West, which in due course safeguarded tradition and created a national culture rooted in that tradition. The gap between his ideal “modern” and the reality of modern Japan aroused in him less doubt than despair, and led to his curses. His feelings toward the reality of Japan remain inexplicable in terms of “modernization” versus “anti-modernization” and “westernization” versus “traditionalism,” no matter now these elements are combined.

What sort of novel did Nagai Kafū's feelings then produce? His *Bokutō kitan* 瀧東綺譚 (1937) can be called a parody of *Les faux-monnayeurs*, a major novel by André Gide, one of the great French writers of the first half of the twentieth century. *Les faux-monnayeurs* relates, in parallel with a certain writer's daily life, how that writer goes about writing a novel entitled *Les faux-monnayeurs*. The novel thus objectivizes the creation of a novel and novelizes (makes a novel out of) what a novel is; thus it can be said to take the form of a novel that reflects on itself. There is no need to repeat here that twentieth-century art pursued its own development by questioning the very concept of art. What is interesting is that so obvious a parody should have appeared in Japan in the 1930s. The central figure of *Bokutō kitan*, the narrator, is made to resemble as closely as possible the Kafū whom the reader knows, just as Edouard, the corresponding figure in *Les faux-monnayeurs*, resembles Gide. The novel he is writing, entitled *Shissō* 失踪, progresses in parallel with his own life. In that life, however, he lies about who he really is, he masks himself; and in the novel within the novel, the central figure really does disappear (*shissō*), exactly as the title suggests. Just as *Les faux-monnayeurs* reveals practically everything about Gide's own world, even to his predilection for young boys, *Bokutō kitan* evokes almost every aspect of Nagai Kafū's pastimes: his taste for popular city pleasures (*shitamachi fūzoku* 下町風俗), for painting ukiyo-e pictures, for independent prostitutes, for composing haikai, for literary musings, for the old poems in *Honglouloumeng* (Jp. *Kōrōmu* 紅樓夢; Dream of the Red Chamber), for Yoda Gakkai's 依田学海 kanbun travel accounts, and so on.

Also of great interest are the passages of *Bokutō kitan* in which the author explains himself directly to the reader. *Les faux-monnayeurs* has a clearly dual structure (a novel within a novel), and the author of the whole never appears in this manner. Concerning these self-explanations (*jika bengo* 自家弁護) Kafū wrote, "Those who have read Tamenaga Shunsui's fiction undoubtedly know that the author inserts passages of self-explanation here and there in his work"; and he continued a little later, "In imitation of Shunsui, I have added here some superfluous words."<sup>4</sup> He then went on gently to explain that, while the scene in which the narrator encounters the independent prostitute, Oyuki, may strike the reader as thoroughly banal, it is in its very banality absorbingly written. In short, Kafū's parody of Gide's *Les faux-monnayeurs* goes beyond the "novel within a novel" dual structure of the latter to achieve a triple one, consisting of *Shissō*, the novel-in-progress; *Bokutō kitan*, the novel surrounding *Shissō*; and the writing of *Bokutō kitan* itself—in other words, the writing of the "novel within the novel." Moreover, Kafū adopted for the whole the narrative style of a late Tokugawa-period *gesaku* writer. It is a noteworthy performance, in which Kafū exploited "tradition" to elaborate a method that surpasses the one adopted by an avant-garde twentieth-century French writer.

For Kafū, all this may well have been no more than bit of technical mischief. However, as Yokomitsu Riichi 横光利一 noted contemporaneously in his "Junsui shōsetsu ron" (1935), the form of *Les faux-monnayeurs* raises the question of how the novelist's self-consciousness is given form in the novel. This was just when writers who had converted (*tenkō* 転向) to nationalist sympathies were examining their inner state and wondering how to convey it in their work; and also when Takami Jun 高見順 was writing in his voluble style, as much as to say (as in the title

4 [Nagai] Kafū *zenshū*, vol. 9, p. 119.

of one of his essays), “Byōsha no ushiro ni nete irarenai” 描写のうしろに寝てられない (1936), “I cannot just sleep behind my descriptions.” Ishikawa Jun and Dazai Osamu (1909-1948), too, wrote in a “novel about writing a novel” form that went beyond *Les faux-monnayeurs*. These examples suggest that *Bokutō kitan* was no simple amusement for Nagai Kafū alone, but that it has a particular significance in the history of literary art (*bungei*). Ishikawa Jun’s and Dazai Osamu’s works in the same vein, conveying as they do the consciousness of the self who is writing the story, are perhaps closer in technique to Gide’s short, experimental work *Palude* (1895). They develop the method in novels that question the very action of a young, alienated intellectual in describing in writing his own inner state. With respect to that issue, a *rakugo* 落語 performer, for example, may often interrupt his story to comment on the passage he has just recited, either to shift the plot or to move it forward, thus suggesting the possibility of a writer moving his novel forward even as he conveys in writing the content of his own consciousness as a writer. As a result, an avant-garde technique is supported in these works by a traditional technique of dramatic recitation. Moreover, the avant-garde technique is further complicated by the traditional technique. Parody and self-reference can be found also in the voluble style (*jōzetsutai* 饒舌体), characteristic also of *rakugo*, *kōdan* 講談, and *manzai* 漫才, employed by such novelists, originally “detective story” writers, as Yumeno Kyūsaku 夢野久作 and Hisao Jūran 久生十蘭.<sup>5</sup>

What all this recalls is not the language of “postmodernism,” which in the 1980s and 1990s devoted attention to parody and self-reference. If the issue is to be the relationship between the “avant-garde” and “tradition,” then what it recalls instead is “Kindai to gendai,” in which Karaki Junzō treated the modernizationist strategy of postwar criticism as retrograde. (See above, Chapter 9.) In opposition to the modernizationist view, according to which Natsume Sōseki and Kawakami Hajime’s fondness for kanshi represented a survival of premodern times, Karaki proposed explaining them as representing a “modern man’s” (*kindaijin* 近代人) antiquarian tastes. This idea may seem utterly commonplace, but it is not. Karaki connected it with twentieth-century philosophy and science, which sought to overcome the impasse reached by “modern philosophy and epistemology, founded as these are on such dualities as thought and existence, idea and matter, and subject and object.” One might say that he proposed a strategy for reflecting on twentieth-century intellectual history as the history—the postmodern history!—of philosophy’s “overcoming the modern” (*kindai no chōkoku* 近代の超克). We tend to forget that this proposal of his was made in 1947. No doubt that is because modernizationism became dominant thereafter and buried it.

5 See Suzuki Sadami 1989b. Concerning *shōsetsu no shōsetsu* (“the novel within the novel”), the tendency in the United States is to speak instead of “metafiction.” However, “metafiction” refers to a level above that of fiction proper, and its meaning changes according to the definition of fiction that one adopts. It is therefore liable to confuse the discussion. For example, the sentence “She feigned tears” (*Kanojo wa usonaki shita* 彼女は嘘泣きした) could be construed as a type of metafiction; and if one limits “fiction” to the novel, then a novel containing a scene from a play could no longer be called metafiction. There is no choice but to call the formula I have cited (*kono shōsetsu no shōsetsu*, “the novel within this novel”) metafiction. To avoid the confusion, I have therefore adopted the expression *shōsetsu no shōsetsu* or *kono shōsetsu no shōsetsu*. Regarding the works of Hisao Jūran and Yumeno Kyūsaku, see Suzuki Sadami 1994b (Chapter 50, “Shōwa jūnen zengo no bungaku kakumei” 昭和10年前後の文学革命); Suzuki Sadami, “*Shōwa bungaku*” no tame ni (Chapter 1, “‘Shin seinen’ modanizumu no tenkai” 『新青年』モダニズムの展開 (1989); and Suzuki Sadami 1987c.

Karaki Junzō sought to connect his strategy to the issue of a “modern man’s” antiquarian tastes. To the extent that he treated “tradition” as supporting the will to “overcome the modern,” one easily imagines how dangerous his proposal may have seemed at the time. That is because it brought him into proximity with the “overcoming the modern” ideas of Yasuda Yojūrō 保田与重郎. As was then well known, these consisted of advocating a return to the (illusory) primeval condition of Japan as *kotodama no sakiwau kuni* 言霊の幸ふ国, “the land that spreads happiness thanks to the spiritual power of the word.” It was also well known that Yasuda, who held the Sino-Japanese War to be the fulfillment in world history of the Japanese spirit that he championed, had fallen prey to the delusion of mistaking ideas for reality.<sup>6</sup> Karaki Junzō undoubtedly gave careful consideration to citing as he did the examples of Natsume Sōseki and Kawakami Hajime. His idea that twentieth-century philosophy sought to overcome the impasse of “modern philosophy and epistemology, founded as these are on such dualities as thought and existence, idea and matter, and subject and object,” represented no intellectual leap. For him, it was completely natural. It will soon be time to make that clear.

However, Yasuda Yojūrō’s ideas on “overcoming the modern” have also been treated as the sort of phenomenon Maruyama Masao 丸山真男 had in mind when he wrote in his *Nihon no shisō* 日本の思想 (1961), “An intellectual return to tradition often occurs in much the same way as when someone, suddenly startled, blurts out a dialectal expression that he has not used for many years.”<sup>7</sup> It is not surprising that Maruyama cited Yasuda Yojūrō’s hallucinatory vision of Japan as *kotodama no sakiwau kuni* as a perfect example of a “sudden mutation”<sup>8</sup> in which the most archaic times burst forth: the reason being that, in a Japan founded on no principle at all (unlike the West, which is founded on the principles of Christianity and logic), the power to form “tradition” is weak. Could Yasuda Yojūrō then have abruptly “remembered” what he advocated so ardently? Perhaps, but it is unlikely. Was his return to the most archaic times really a “sudden mutation”? Surely one should imagine him pursuing, with one eye on the debates then under way among scholars of Japanese literature, his talk of having discovered the modern spirit of pure Japaneseness in Ueda Akinari. Are the attempts to break free of the form of the modern novel, made around 1935 by writers like Nagai Kafū, Ishikawa Jun, and Dazai Osamu, really completely unrelated to Yasuda Yojūrō’s idea of “overcoming the modern”?

Surely Yasuda Yojūrō’s idea of “overcoming the modern” seemed to Maruyama Masao to have burst forth like a sudden mutation because Maruyama viewed Japanese intellectual history from a modernizationist perspective.<sup>9</sup> As Karaki Junzō remarked, “overcoming the modern” must surely have its own reserves on which to draw, namely, “tradition.”

If reflection on this subject goes well, then it should be possible to bring to light yet another stream of thought, another intellectual history (*seishinshi* 精神史), that was never assimilated to the existing strategy of modernizationism or to the schematic opposition between the “modern”

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6 See Suzuki Sadami 1989c.

7 Maruyama 1961, p. 12.

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9 For a critique of Maruyama’s *Nihon no shisō*, see Suzuki Sadami 1992b (“Josetsu” 序説), and Suzuki Sadami 1996b, pp. 253-55.

and the “anti-modern.”<sup>10</sup> Of course, this new line will no doubt be closely connected to trends in literary art. Moreover, it may offer some help toward solving the problems that “literature” now faces.

For example, Nagai Kafū’s despair toward the actuality of “modern Japan” led him to call back into service a traditional manner of narration and thus gave rise to a novelistic form freed from the modern. At this point it will be worthwhile to return to Ochi Haruo’s perspective. How did the intellectual stance (*seishin no katachi* 精神のかたち) of doubt toward the reality of “modern Japan,” which could be assimilated neither to the modernizationist strategy nor to the polar opposition between “modern” and “anti-modern,” develop?

## 11.2 “Overcoming the Modern”: Rise and Evolution

### 11.2.1 First Glimmerings

The early Meiji conception of natural human rights is summed up in two famous utterances. The first, from *Saigoku risshi hen* 西国立志編 (Nakamura Keiu’s 中村敬字 translation of Samuel Smiles’ *Self-Help*), goes, “Heaven helps those who help themselves”; while the second, from

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<sup>10</sup> Needless to say, the new line proposed establishes an analytical axis different from the trend in ideas and in literary art to analyze the subject in terms of modernizationist strategy and in terms of a schematic opposition between the “modern” and the “anti-modern.” It involves a debate in a single dimension and at a single level.

Another vital analytical axis might be established by considering which level of benefit should receive the highest priority: benefit to the individual, the family, the local collectivity, regional society, civil society at large, Japan as a whole, Asia, or all humanity. In any given situation any of these may be opposed to the others, or may work together with the others to face a common enemy. Each normally occupies its own level within any individual, and in any given situation each may stand out above the others. It is common to distinguish them opportunistically one from the other. In relation to the current system, each can be seen to become an oppositional force.

The matter may become easier to understand if one adds the suffix “-ism” (*shugi*) to each of these analytical axes, as in “individualism,” “family-ism,” “collectivism,” “regionalism,” “socialism,” “nationalism,” “asianism,” and “universal humanism.” Of course, these are simply intellectual principles. In the twentieth century, the national socialist bloc of civil societies centered on the Soviet Union became the locus of economic activity (production, circulation, services) based on the principle of free competition, understood that the competing unit was the enterprise. (The dominant unit of consumption was the “nuclear” or “two-generation family” (*ni setai kazoku* 二世代家族). For the socialism that seeks profit for civil society as a whole, rather than for the individual or the state, it is capitalism that stands in the way of success; which is why the principle of free capital competition stands in direct opposition to the ideas of socialism. Socialism that aims at the complete dissolution of the state chooses, as an interim measure, the method of state management of capital. However, since this means abandoning the principle of profiting society at large, rather than the state, it also requires acknowledging the change to nationalist socialism. In early Meiji the notion of Japan as the leader of an Asian confederation had above all to do with imagining Japan as the leader of smaller, weaker peoples against the Western powers. However, after Japan’s victories in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese Wars, the emphasis came to be placed on the idea of the countries of East Asia being grouped under Japanese hegemony. It goes without saying that the various religions also provided many elements of the intellectual landscape.

Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Gakumon no susume* 学問のすゝめ, says, "Heaven creates no man above any other man, nor any man below any other." However, from the mid-1880s on, and through the 1890s, a principle promising progress and development for society and the state gained increasingly wide currency: that according to which the inferior would be selected out in the free struggle for existence, resulting in the advent of an ideal condition. In his *Jinken shinsetsu* 人權新説 (1882), Katō Hiroyuki 加藤弘之 introduced Spencer's social Darwinism, and intellectuals came also to know of the evolutionary theory put forward by Darwin and T. H. Huxley, to the effect that mankind had evolved from apes. By the first decade of the twentieth century these ideas seem to have been accepted almost as self-evident. For those who welcomed the advent of a society that achieved, however imperfectly, "the equality of the four classes" (*shimin byōdō* 四民平等) and allowed individual success (*risshin shusse* 立身出世) regardless of birth, the principle was beyond question. In Japan, where the Christian belief in a creator God had never taken root, the theory of evolution gained easier and broader acceptance than in Europe or America, and this remains true even today.<sup>11</sup>

For example, even Kitamura Tōkoku, who celebrated unlimited spiritual freedom and attacked the advancing material civilization of contemporary Japan with the lofty religious claim that "Mankind's last hope is to achieve union with the spirit of the cosmos" ("Ganshū mohai no hei" 頑執妄排の弊, 1893),<sup>12</sup> displayed sober insight when he wrote in "Meiji bungaku kanken" 明治文学管見 (1893), "The human race seldom acts for any other purpose than to compete in the struggle for existence."<sup>13</sup> For that matter, the extraterritorial status of the foreign enclaves in Japan, thanks to the unequal treaties, must have made the truth of "the survival of the fittest" all too obvious to the people of the time. Soon the biologist Oka Asajirō 丘浅次郎 (1868-1944), whose *Shinkaron kōwa* 進化論講話 (1904) made him a leading popularizer of Darwinism, discussed in "Jinrui no seizon kyōsō" 人類の生存競争 (*Chūō kōron*, October 1905), just after Japan's victory in the Russo-Japanese War, the inevitability of war in the struggle among nations to survive. Needless to say, this was merely a biologist's fanciful attempt to apply the concept of competition between living species to the relations between races and states.

Amid this welter of opinion, the doubts that assailed writers in 1890 (the year singled out by Ochi Haruo), concerning the reality of "modern Japan," were deepened by social conditions after the Sino-Japanese War and unquestionably spread among youth as well. Indeed, higher taxation increased the number of tenant farmers, while in the cities the lower classes began clustering together, the number of those squeezed out by social competition grew sharply, and so-called "social problems" arose. The choice was stark: whether to stand on the principle of competition or on that of fairness and equality. The issue of how life should be lived came into fundamental question, together with that of the principles governing the world.

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11 It is well known that the southern states of the United States require creationism to be presented in biology textbooks in parallel with Darwinian evolution. According to a survey done in the United States, 70 percent of Americans believe in creationism. This phenomenon is not necessarily limited to the Christian fundamentalist states of the south. Scholars who have taught biology in colleges around Boston have experienced it themselves and cite much evidence to show that it is real.

12 [Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 225.

13 [Kitamura] *Tōkoku zenshū*, vol. 2, p. 161.

In May 1903 Fujimura Misao 藤村操, an elite student at the First Higher School (Daiichi Kōtō Gakkō 第一高等学校) killed himself by throwing himself off the edge of the Kegon Waterfall (華嚴の滝) at Nikkō 日光. His suicide note read, “The truth of all things can be summed up in a single word: Incomprehensible [*fukakai* 不可解]. I suffer so greatly from the rage this causes me that I have decided at last to die.”<sup>14</sup> The world at large referred to Fujimura’s action as “philosophical suicide” and debated the deep suffering of youth. This could never have happened in an age when, in a vigorously developing state, it was possible to look forward optimistically to personal success.

In fact, it is probably fair to say that philosophical doubt about “modern times” (*kindai*) had already been expressed in the very last year of the nineteenth century, three years before Fujimura’s suicide. On the whole, *Jūkyū seiki* 十九世紀 (1900), a special commemorative issue of *Taiyō* 太陽, is filled with praise for the development of civilization and with appeals to further civilize Japan. However, Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855-1944), who contributed the section on philosophy, gave his piece a rather different tone. Acknowledging the call to “return to Kant” issued by the German idealist thinkers, Inoue summed up nineteenth-century philosophy as a confrontation between Kantian idealism and the positivism (empiricism) of Auguste Comte. He then declared himself “dissatisfied” with both and proposed, as a new philosophical trend going beyond the present situation, a “spiritualism” (*yuishinron* 唯心論) that dealt with the problem of “consciousness” (*ishiki* 意識). His discussion of the subject prominently features a bipolar opposition between “idealism” and “materialism,” but his mention of a new “idealism” concerned with the issue of “consciousness” suggests familiarity with the trend led by William James in the United States, by the neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936), and by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). The late nineteenth-century philosophical scene that aimed fundamentally to overthrow the world-view founded on mechanical materialism had reached Japan as well.

It is not surprising that the sensitivity of youth should have caused young people to feel a premonition that the manifestation of social contradictions and the established system of values were about to topple. Doubt and suffering caused not by the reality of Japan alone, but by the advance of nineteenth-century civilization itself—in short, by the “modern” age—continued to deepen. It is from this period on that there appear on the scene youths seeking a fundamental resolution of their doubts in religion and philosophy. For example, already in “Zen no ryūkō o ron-zu” 禅の流行を論ず (*Jogaku zasshi* 女学雑誌, August 1895), Iwamoto Yoshiharu 巖本善治 noted a fad for Zen that began after the Sino-Japanese War. This is when Natsume Sōseki and Nishida Kitarō (1870-1945) began their study of Zen.<sup>15</sup>

Another example is that of Nishida Tenkō 西田天香 (1872-1968). Nishida encountered the religious ideas of Tolstoy, which were just then entering Japan, in the midst of suffering caused by dissatisfaction with his position as a civil engineer in Hokkaido. He was deeply moved, and in

14 Regarding Fujimura’s suicide, Abe Tsunehisa 阿部恒久 expressed the common view when he wrote, “This suicide seems to have been prompted by a passionate search for human values opposed to those of civilization, state, and personal success. It powerfully shocked society, produced many imitators, and helped to inspire a new trend of thought centered on the individual self.”

15 Suzuki Daisetsu 鈴木大拙 is believed to have started practicing Zen in 1890, Natsume Sōseki in 1894, and Nishida Kitarō in 1896.

1903 he apparently set out on a religious quest.<sup>16</sup> Soon he founded in Kyoto a utopian community transcending all religions and known as Ittōen 一燈園. The community attracted many young people.

As an example, though a slightly later one, that perfectly reveals both the sufferings of an intellectual youth of the time and a way to resolve them, let us consider the diary that Ishikawa Takuboku 石川啄木 (1886-1912) wrote when he was working as a substitute teacher in his home village of Shibutami 渋民. The entry for March 4, 1906 laments the way “the violence of civilization” oppresses “the eternal reality known as nature” and contains the following view of art: “Art is the loftiest voice of humanity. It is the voice of the instant in which one approaches the immanence of the cosmos.”<sup>17</sup> Then, on March 29, Takuboku reflected, “I respect the rights of the individual too much to become a socialist. At the same time, however, I am too full of sympathy and tears to become an out-and-out egotist.” Takuboku went on to observe that these contradictions were not his alone, being “the nature eternally common to all humanity,” and also that they were a manifestation of Schopenhauer’s “absolute will of the cosmos.” He continued by praising as “penetrating” (*takken* 卓見) the remarks made by Anesaki Chōfū 姉崎嘲風 (1873-1949), then a student in Germany, in a letter (“Futatabi Chogyū ni atauru sho” 再び樗牛に与ふる書, *Taiyō*, August 1902) to Takayama Chogyū, the editor of *Taiyō*. Anesaki had cited the ideas of Tolstoy as exemplifying altruistic love and those of Nietzsche as exemplifying “expansion of the will and development of the self,” and had stated that Wagner’s linking of “expansion of the will” to “love” reconciled the contradiction between the two.<sup>18</sup> It was in 1901 that Takayama Chogyū declared in “Biteki seikatsu o ron-zu” 美的生活を論ず (*Taiyō*, August 1901), “When all is said and done, the greatest pleasure in life is sexual desire [*seiyoku* 性欲].” Until then the term *seiyoku* had, unlike today, referred to instinctual desire in general. The young intellectuals of the time seem to have accepted blanket approval of satisfying the individual’s desires as the key message of individualism.<sup>19</sup>

Taoka Reiun 田岡嶺雲 discussed then-current thinking in “Gendai shichō no anyū” 現代思潮の暗流 (*Taiyō*, March 1901). He saw the “belief in satisfying personal desires [*shiyokushugi* 私欲主義], [the] utilitarianism [*kōrishugi* 功利主義]” borne of individualism, and the material progress engendered by materialism as characteristic of nineteenth-century civilization, and in the conjunction of these two he discerned the origin of social inequality. In contrast, he called Tolstoy’s then-popular “universal love” [*hakuai shugi* 博愛主義], Nietzsche’s “instinctualism” [*honnō shugi* 本能主義], and the “vagabondism” [*furō shugi* 浮浪主義] of Maksim Gorki (1868-1936) all cries for “non-civilization” (*hibunmei* 非文明): in other words, a “dark current of contemporary thought.” However, this “dark current” is certainly not meaningless, because where civilization and these cries for “non-civilization” achieve “synthesis,” there appears “a great social unity” (*ichidaishakaiteki tōitsu* 一大社会的統一) of humanity endowed externally with “the development of mechanical

16 See Suzuki Sadami 1996b, pp. 111-12.

17 *Ishikawa Takuboku zenshū*, vol. 5, pp. 67-68.

18 *Ishikawa Takuboku zenshū*, vol. 5, pp. 79-80. Actually, however, in “Futatabi Chogyū ni atauru sho,” Anesaki Chōfū attributed “liberation” (*gedatsu* 解脱 to Schopenhauer, “solitude” (*kodoku* 孤独) to Nietzsche, and “love” (*ai* 愛) to Wagner.

19 See Suzuki Sadami 1996b, pp. 62-63.

civilization” and, internally, with “the natural, pure simplicity of primordial times.” This “great social unity” of humanity appears after the destruction of states in the wars of imperialism. The *Taiyō* issue in which Taoka’s piece appeared was otherwise filled with articles announcing the beginning of the Russo-Japanese War. No doubt Taoka wrote it amid the extraordinary atmosphere prevailing just before the outbreak of the war. After the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Boer War (1899-1901) in South Africa, he seems to have felt more and more acutely that the era of imperialist wars had arrived.

As a way of resolving the clash between social inequality and civilization on one hand, and non-civilization attitudes on the other, Taoka’s “synthesis” of external “development of mechanical civilization” and internal “natural, pure simplicity of primordial times” represents a thoroughly simplistic, intellectualized view. Although it has little meaning in itself, it shows that Taoka wished to transcend dialectically the confrontation between material civilization and “non-civilization,” i.e., between “modernity” and “anti-modernity.” His idea was not to set “modernity” against “anti-modernity,” but to go beyond both. Surely the pattern of his thinking deserves to be called “overcoming the modern.”

The Russo-Japanese War dragged on, new taxes were imposed, and repeated conscription brought the front line of the war into each home. For Japan, the war became an all-out effort in which the nation’s very survival was at stake. State and capital became one, thus foreshadowing the experience of England and Germany in World War I. After it was over, doubts about “modernity” became entrenched. Thanks to repeated battlefield stalemates and reckless tactics, as well as to marked progress in the development of heavy weapons, the memory of countless men being effortlessly annihilated was burned into people’s minds. Armless or legless soldiers were repatriated to every village. Violent popular protest against the Treaty of Portsmouth, which accepted the partition of Sakhalin in compensation for this huge sacrifice, began with the Hibiya Incendiary Incident (September 1905) and spread to Yokohama and Kobe. The next year there were riots against a fare rise on the Tokyo trams. A period of tenant farmer protests and factory worker strikes followed. The relaxation of national tension between intellectuals and the middle class was succeeded by a feeling of emptiness, and among young people a longing for religious sentiment and a religious atmosphere became increasingly widespread. There followed, amid a fever for philosophy, religion, and art, a period rife with theories of how life was to be lived (*jinseiron* 人生論): that of “Taisho culturism” (*Taishō kyōyōshugi* 大正教養主義).<sup>20</sup>

The shift of light industry into large factories after the Russo-Japanese War, the deterioration of working conditions, and the spread of tuberculosis ate into the lives of women laborers, while the dawn of the age of heavy and chemical industry exposed male workers to harsh conditions. Nonetheless tenant farmers, less and less able to manage by working off the farm as a couple, or by hiring themselves out as construction workers, left the land and flocked to the cities, where the dramatic progress of material civilization assaulted people’s nerves. Rejection and criticism of the state and society’s single-minded rush toward modernization burst forth in many forms. In a village in Niigata prefecture, elementary school education was conducted in complete autonomy

20 On the spiritual tenor of the times, see Suzuki Sadami 1996b, Chapter 4 (“‘Seimei’ no kakusei to shūkyō kanjō” 「生命」の覚醒と宗教感情) and Suzuki Sadami 1995.

for a year and a half. In another in Nagano prefecture, a move to bring electrification under village control brought about a clash with the government, as a result of which thirty villagers, including the mayor, were sentenced for rioting. It is not possible to subsume all such phenomena under the heading of “anti-modernization.” For example, longing for mystery and trust in natural science coexist without conflict in Maurice Maeterlinck’s famous *L’oiseau bleu* (1908). Romanticism, too, was moving toward reconciling the “modern” and the “anti-modern.”

### 11.2.2 Establishment

If the way of thinking that discerns a “modern” versus “anti-modern” clash in the same society’s ideas can be called “overcoming the modern,” then the latter appeared in a variety of forms after the Russo-Japanese War. For example, in “Kanto to shakaishugi” カントと社会主義 (*Chūō kōron*, April 1907) the young Kant scholar Fujii Kenjirō 藤井健次郎 argued that the inequality of modern society inevitably gave rise to socialism; denied the existence of dissension within socialism; and urged overcoming disunity within the social environment, in other words, reconciling the inner and outer domains. Despite the difference between his socialist thought and that of Taoka Reiun, he, too, could offer only a wholly abstract, intellectual solution. Both followed the same pattern, to the extent that both sought to transcend the conflict between civilized society (*bunmei shakai* 文明社会) and socialism. Another example is that of Kaneko Chikusui 金子筑水, who after a period of study in Germany became a prominent critic in the areas of philosophy and literature. In “Kindai shisōkai no sūsei” 近代思想界の趨勢 (*Chūō kōron*, October 1906), Kaneko noted that decadent, fin-de-siècle European aesthetics, as well as the thought of Nietzsche and Gorki, were then all the rage in Japan; termed all that sort of thing “neo-romanticism”; and defined it as “resistance” against a “material civilization that has forgotten the inner life.” His analysis resembled that of Taoka Reiun in “Gendai shichō no anyū,” but his conclusion was entirely different. He held that that “resistance” would soon escape from decadence and other such destructive tendencies, that it would reinforce subjectivity, and that it would draw nearer to the subtle and mystical aspects of Eastern thought. One cannot dismiss this confidence in Eastern thought as a mere illusion engendered by the exaltation of victory in the Russo-Japanese War. Meanwhile, dark clouds were lowering over Europe, and, even as the wave of japonisme washed over Europe, writers like Romain Rolland (1866-1944) were warning of the final crisis of European civilization.

In the realm of philosophy, a skepticism that excluded from thought both God and *das Ding an sich* led Nishida Kitarō to describe as “philosophical romanticism” the German idealism descended from Kantian philosophy, which established the basis for human free will; to overthrow radically its opposite, mechanical civilization; and to seek to transcend the limitations of German idealist thought. This project, which Nishida set forth in “Gendai no tetsugaku” 現代の哲学 (1916),<sup>21</sup> expressed more concretely the new direction for philosophy that Inoue Tetsujirō had outlined in *Jūkyū seiki*. It also conveyed accurately the themes of Nishida’s *Zen no kenkyū* 善の研究 (1911), which was then already in print. *Zen no kenkyū* posits pre-reflective consciousness as the starting point for all thought: the consciousness that forgets self in the midst of action, and in which subject

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21 Nishida Kitarō *zenshū*, vol. 12, p. 360.

and object are one (pure experience [*junsui keiken* 純粹經驗], or direct consciousness [*chokusetsu ishiki* 直接意識]). In the depths of “pure consciousness,” Nishida argued, lie aspiration to oneness with all humanity, i.e., “the good” (*zen* 善), and the religious quest for oneness with the “true life” (*shinseimei* 真生命) of the cosmos; which together constitute the true nature of humanity. Nishida’s position can certainly be said to confer philosophical rigor on Kitamura Tōkoku’s religious view that “Mankind’s last hope is to achieve union with the spirit of the cosmos.” However, his philosophical idea that human life is a manifestation of the “true life” of the cosmos (God), founded on Zen and Wang Yangming thought, is new wine in the old bottle of German idealism. It has also absorbed Christian mysticism, evolutionism, and the biological theory of heredity. Moreover, the conception of “pure experience,” which is the starting point for the whole, is borrowed from the philosophy of William James and bears the clear stamp of the twentieth century.<sup>22</sup>

When Karaki Junzō wrote in “Kindai to gendai” that twentieth-century philosophy and science can be considered an attempt to overcome the impasse reached by “modern philosophy and epistemology, founded as these are on such dualities as thought and existence, idea and matter, and subject and object,” he mentioned the names of three philosophers (Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime 田辺元, and Miki Kiyoshi 三木清) together with that of Yukawa Hideki 湯川秀樹, the author of “Genshiryoku no sekai” 原子力の世界 (1946).

Despite the vast difference in logical force between Kaneko Chikusui’s “Kindai shisōkai no sūsei” and Nishida Kitarō’s *Zen no kenkyū*, it is possible to see in both a search for something Eastern, indeed Japanese, in the way of a mode of thought for the dawn of the twentieth century, and an evocation of how this mode merges with the cosmos and with nature. Before long Kaneko Chikusui’s art criticism, with its “overcoming the modern” concerns, began emphasizing the expression of the “life” flowing in the depths of “nature” as the direction for naturalism to take.<sup>23</sup> To put the matter simply, his thought shares with Nishida Kitarō’s philosophy a “vitalistic world view” (*seikaikan ni okeru seimeishugi* 世界観における生命主義) that posits “life” as the deepest level of nature and the source of the cosmos, and continuity between this “life” and the source of all human activity; and that seeks oneness with this “life.”

From the early Meiji period on, the Japanese literary world had known of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s (1803-1882) spiritualist conception of the poet as one who “absorbs the life of the cosmos.” Kitamura Tōkoku had written about it in “Naibu seimei ron.” As noted above (9.3.1, 9.3.2), when Kunikida Doppo and Tokutomi Roka took on Wordsworth’s poetic notion of “the life of things” and the philosophy of the Impressionist painters, it was the idea of *ki* 気 that acted as a receptor; and the mingling of such ideas with knowledge of biological evolution and heredity led to the first stirrings, in the late 1880s, of vitalistic thought.

At any rate, thinking in the “overcoming the modern” pattern, which in a sense summed up the “modern” versus “anti-modern” conflict and sought a way to transcend it, was no doubt called forth by an urge to find a new direction for the twentieth century—an urge based on the recognition that the nineteenth century was over and that a profound change in world conditions was under way. However, thinking visibly conforming to this pattern was not that common, nor did it have

22 See Suzuki Sadami 1998.

23 Kaneko Chikusui 1913a and 1913b.

any great influence. Apart from initial acknowledgement by the philosophically-minded when the work was first published, only Kurata Hyakuzō's "Seimei no ninshikiteki doryoku" 生命の認知的努力 (1912) suggests that even Nishida Kitarō's *Zen no kenkyū* gained any devoted admirers. In 1921, however, when the Iwanami edition of *Zen no kenkyū* came out, and Iwanami also published Kurata's essay as the first piece in his book entitled *Ai to ninshiki to no shuppatsu* 愛と認識との出発, high-school students rushed to buy it. In the background of its popularity lay "Taishō culturism."<sup>24</sup> However, before treating that subject I should like to examine the point at which, with the close of the Meiji period, a whole era came to an end. I will inquire how the Meiji period as a whole was summed up, and how its dominant trends were defined.

Emperor Meiji passed away on July 30, 1912, and the Meiji period was over. The September 1 issue of Hakubunkan's mass-circulation magazine *Taiyō* carried an article praising him as a "sage" (*seitoku* 聖徳).<sup>25</sup> *Meiji seitenshi* 明治聖天子, the special edition issued on September 10, began with an article by Mikami Sanji, entitled "Meiji shōdai no rekishijō no chii" 明治昭代の歴史上の地位. In it, Mikami praised the late sovereign as "the greatest emperor after the dynastic founder, Jinmu Tennō." The entire special issue was given over to a look back over the greatness of the Meiji era, during which, to the greater glory of the nation, rebellion had been quelled, the state had been unified, constitutional government had been achieved, industry had flourished, and the national territory had been successfully expanded. The next, October special issue of *Taiyō* was entitled *Gotaisō tokushū* 御大葬特集. All together these issues, repeatedly reprinted, probably sold roughly two to three hundred thousand copies.<sup>26</sup>

One reason cited by Mikami Sanji for his praise of Emperor Meiji was that the emperor had "brought in Western civilization and thus made up for our shortcomings"; and he observed that this action placed the late emperor at the same level as Prince Shōtoku or Emperor Shōmu, who had introduced Chinese civilization to Japan. Mikami further saw the ability to "feed upon and assimilate" foreign writings and artifacts, "to assimilate them, and at last to make them Japanese" as characteristic of "the history of Japanese culture." This particular emphasis on the "Japanization" of the foreign can be found throughout the special *Taiyō* issue in question. *Taiyō* had consistently championed constitutionalism ever since its very first issue, and many of the articles saw the Meiji period as the one during which freedom, brotherhood, and equality had been achieved thanks to national pacification and the establishment of constitutional government. The general view was

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24 However, the term *kyōyōshugi* 教養主義 is rare in the Taishō period. Such men as Natsume Sōseki, Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻哲郎, Abe Jirō 阿部次郎, and Abe Yoshishige 安倍能成 were known as the *Kyōyō-ha* 教養派; however, it is the term *bunkashugi* 文化主義, coined by the Kantian philosopher and Tokyo Imperial University president Kuwaki Gen'yoku 桑木巖翼, that was then in fashion. It referred to thought that emphasized cultural over economic values. Both *bunkashugi* and *kyōyōshugi* were used to translate the term "culturism."

25 Interestingly, the frontispiece of this issue was a photographic portrait of Sun Wu 孫武 (1879-1939), the general known thanks to the pro-Japanese faction that succeeded in the Wuhan Revolution 武漢革命. *Taiyō*'s supportive attitude toward the Chinese revolution seems not to have extended to Sun Wen's 孫文 (1866-1925) China League (Chūka Dōmei Kai 中華同盟会).

26 The *Gotaisō tokushū* 御大葬特集 special issue definitely went through eight printings. Since police statistics for the time are unavailable, one can only guess at the number of copies. See Suzuki Sadami 2001a.

that Emperor Meiji's promulgation of the Imperial Rescript on Education had curbed the decline in morality brought about by the introduction of Western thought, and that, by emphasizing moral education, Meiji had built a Japanese-style culture which eliminated the unfortunate excesses of individualism.

Such seems to have been the view adopted by the opinion leaders of the time, after the thorough repression that curbed the spread of socialism in the aftermath of the High Treason Incident (Taigyaku jiken 大逆事件) of 1910. At roughly the same time, the legitimacy of the northern imperial line, versus that of the southern, became an issue in connection with school textbooks, and Hozumi Yatsuka 穂積八束 (1860-1912) and Uesugi Shinkichi 上杉慎吉 (1878-1929) attacked the "emperor as an organ of the state" (*tennō kikan setsu* 天皇機関説) theory put forward by Ichiki Kitokurō 一木喜徳郎 (1867-1944) and Minobe Tatsukichi 美濃部達吉 (1873-1948).<sup>27</sup> The *Taiyō* editor, Ukita Kazutami 浮田和民 (1859-1946), took a neutral, equal-minded position in this debate over the issue of sovereignty, but he nonetheless judged Minobe to be right. Contrastingly, however, in the presence of this debate, Hakubunkan (the dominant publisher of the Meiji period) contented itself with publishing in the ninth issue of its brand new journal, *Chūō kōron* 中央公論, only a perfunctory eulogy of the late emperor. Perhaps the truth is that the side concerned above all with the new era did not look back over Meiji times at all.

### 11.2.3 Development

It is especially Henri Bergson who set off the great wave of "vitalism as a world view" that swept Europe and America in the first half of the twentieth century, thanks to his book *L'évolution créatrice* (1907). In this work Bergson applied to the total activity of human culture the theory of sudden mutation as the fundamental cause of biological progress. His philosophy, the key term of which was *élan vital*, understood random opportunity to be fundamental to creative activity and sought to go beyond the teleologism and the mechanistic views of modern philosophy. Thus it exerted a great influence over anarcho-syndicalist political thought. In the realm of art, it was formulated in early twentieth-century Europe as a shift in the concept of expression: a shift from representation of objects to expression of inner life. Let us call the new formulation "vitalism in the theory of art." This shift provided a major stimulus to nascent, mutually influential avant-garde movements across Europe, for example, Futurismo in Italy, Volticism in England, and Expressionismus in Germany.

Bergson's conception of *élan vital* had a considerable impact in Japan as well, becoming an obvious influence on the anarcho-syndicalism of Ōsugi Sakae 大杉栄 (1885-1923). However, in Japan, where Eastern thought had acted as a receptor for Western spiritualism, and where knowledge of biological evolution was widespread, it was already possible to discern the beginnings of a native vitalist movement. This movement had received its own philosophical formulation in the *Zen no kenkyū* of Nishida Kitarō, who later on would incorporate Bergson's philosophy as well. As a result, a vitalism that did not necessarily rely on the concept of *élan vital*, or that adopted it only as one of its own elements, became widespread. With respect to literary ideals, it came to form the

<sup>27</sup> See Suzuki Sadami 2005b.

basis of the “new naturalism” advocated by Shimamura Hōgetsu and Iwano Hōmei; the thought of the “Shirakaba” writers Mushanokōji Saneatsu 武者小路実篤 and Arishima Takeo 有島武郎; the art theory of Takamura Kōtarō 高村光太郎; the poetics of Hagiwara Sakutarō 萩原朔太郎 and others; the tanka poetics of Saitō Mokichi 斎藤茂吉 and Wakayama Bokusui 若山牧水; and Kitahara Hakushū’s 北原白秋 ideas about children’s songs. Kanbara Tai’s 神原泰 avant-garde activity in 1916-17, under the stimulus of Italian futurism, also shared a life-centrist orientation.<sup>28</sup>

All of these displayed a complex pattern of overlapping or divergence with other ideas involving Eastern thought, liberation of sexual desire and the instincts, the attribution of supreme value to the fulfillment of life-experience in each instant of time, and the eternal endeavor of life. There also existed a modernistic tendency to see the working of “life” beneath the dynamism of mechanical civilization. An “anti-modern,” romantic trend clearly existed as well. It is not possible to say that “vitalism as a world view” was, in general, a mode of “overcoming the modern” thought that transcended the anti-modern. However Kaneko Chikusui, for example, as a disciple of Tsubouchi Shōyō, was as prominent as Shimamura Hōgetsu and made many contributions to the journal *Waseda bungaku*. Perhaps one can say that Shimamura Hōgetsu’s naturalist ideals, often said to lapse into Eastern fatalism, were seen as the new direction for art in the twentieth century called for by Kaneko Chikusui.

It seems to be Tanabe Hajime who first used the term *seimeishugi* (vitalism), in an article entitled “Bunka no gainen” 文化の概念 (*Kaizō* 改造, March 1911). Tanabe defined *bunka* (culture) as harmony between material and spiritual wealth. He called *seimeishugi* (a term derived from *Biologismus*, which Heinrich Rickert had used in his critique of Bergson’s philosophy and of American idealism) the ensemble of current resistance against the harm caused by the development of material civilization based on the conquest of nature. Judging this *seimeishugi* to be a movement in quest of *bunka*, he also appealed for a lawful, rational solution transcending it. Tanabe’s ideas closely resembled those of Fujii Kenjirō, who in “Kanto to shakaishugi” had proposed an ideal transcending socialism. However, Tanabe’s ideas differed from any appeal to Kantian idealism in their clear call to win out over the subjugation of nature, and in the way they positioned manifestations of vitalism on the order of anarcho-syndicalism as movements to attain *bunka*.

After the Great Tokyo Earthquake, all sorts of proposals were put forward, such as “Daishinsai yori etaru kyōkun” 大震災より得たる教訓 (1923), in which Tsubouchi Shōyō urged “following nature” (*shizen zuijun* 自然随順) rather than subjugating it; “Fūryū ron” 「風流」論 (1924), in which Satō Haruo sought in the beauty of the moment of union between man and nature a horizon beyond “modern literature” and its treatment of the chaos of the self; or “Chōkindaiha sengen” 超近代派宣言 (1925), in which the Nietzschean Ikuta Chōkō 生田長江 sought the liberation of the instincts and an agrarian life. By this time the idea that “modernity” was in a sense a single entity, as well as the thought of overcoming it and the ambition to do so, were recognizably widespread.

It seems likely that this trend was further encouraged by the growing diffusion of the ideas of Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), who considered the basis of modern society to be the economic system known as capitalism, and who urged revolution to overthrow it. The rise of Marxism appears to overshadow all the vitalistic ideas, all the calls to “overcome

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28 See Suzuki Sadami 1996b.

the modern” that we have seen so far. To the extent that Marxist thought rests on a theory of developmental stages and is founded upon modern industrial society, it can be placed within the category of modernism (*kindaishugi*). The Soviet Union under Stalin’s leadership then set out to demonstrate, in competition with the productive power of capitalism, the superiority of national socialism. This policy can obviously be called modernizationism.

However Senuma Shigeki, for example, in his “Shinri bungaku no hatten to sono kisū,” designated “psychological description” as the hallmark of “modern literature”; and in the process of tracing its development he wrote, as a position from which to transcend “the literature of naturalism,” that “we must through our own experience deepen our exploration of the self and, rather than merely float on the surface of things, touch the true life that moves in the depths of life itself.” For him, he concluded, it was Natsume Sōseki who had genuinely pursued this goal in the realm of literary art. The expression, “the true life that moves in the depths of life itself” unmistakably betrays the influence of the vocabulary employed by Nishida Kitarō. At the time, Senuma placed Sōseki at the summit of the “literature of individual psychology” that he believed “proletarian literature” was to transcend, but the notion of “the true life that moves in the depths of life itself” surely goes beyond individualism. At least in Nishida Kitarō’s philosophy, that is precisely the source that urges universal love for all mankind.<sup>29</sup> In short, Senuma Shigeki sought the proper direction for transcending modern individualism and believed he had found it in the ideal form of “proletarian literature.” Another example is that of the young critic Inoue Yoshio 井上良雄 (1907-2003), who in 1932-33 saw in the works of Kajii Motojirō and Shiga Naoya a mode of expression that “reproduces the self within the object.” It is in just this way, Inoue wrote, that “proletarian literature” restores the self from the alienation brought about by “modernity, which severs the subject from the object.”<sup>30</sup> Such thinking as this can be said to understand Marxism as a philosophy that aims to “overcome modernity.”

In the late 1930s, simultaneously with the outbreak of war in China, these many ways of approaching the problem of “overcoming the modern” appear to have converged into one. Since 1926 the poet Hagiwara Sakutarō, who accorded Japanese symbolic art a very high value, had been arguing (in “Shōchō no honshitsu” 象徴の本質 and other writings) that modern European symbolism had merely copied it; but in 1937, before a military audience, he insisted that the original Japanese spirit was “peaceful” and sought harmony with nature. Nonetheless, in this lecture (entitled “Nihon no shimei” 日本の使命) Hagiwara certainly did not enjoin upon the soldiers present sentiments opposed to war. “In order to defend the civilization of beauty and of absolute peace, which is the ideal of the East, against the Western balance-of-power civilization, a civilization of force,” he declared, “we have no choice but to fight the enemy with the enemy’s own arms.”<sup>31</sup> Quite apart from the question of whether Hagiwara actively supported the war, this idea of “overcoming Western modernity” thanks to the Japanese spirit as Hagiwara described it was common enough among the Japanese intellectuals of the time.

In *Nihon bunka no mondai* (1940), Nishida Kitarō argued that the Imperial Way (*kōdō* 皇道) was peaceful in nature and unrelated to political power, and that “Japan’s mission” was to realize a

29 See Suzuki Sadami 1998.

30 See Suzuki Sadami 2001b, pp. 538-40.

31 *Hagiwara Sakutarō zenshū*, vol. 10, pp. 548-49.

spirit transcending the historical substance of European modernity, i.e., political power—in other words, a spirit rejecting any power struggle between nations. Once Japan embodied, thanks to self-denial, the spirit that cleaves to the world as it really is, it could stand as “the point of union between the cultures of East and West.”<sup>32</sup>

The young scholars of the Kyoto school, whom Nishida Kitarō influenced both directly and indirectly, held three round-table discussions (*zadankai* 座談会) on the theme of “The world-historical perspective and Japan” (*Sekaishiteki tachiba to Nihon* 世界史の立場と日本). The first was held just before the outbreak of war with the United States and England, and the discussions continued on into the war. The participants considered according to their lights the character of European commentary, diverse as it was, on the post-World War I crisis in Europe. Citing Nishida Kitarō’s “I and Thou” (*watashi to nanji* 私と汝) philosophy, which treats the mutual relationship between subject and object, they applied the expression “overcoming the modern” (*kindai no chōkoku*) to the aspiration to go beyond all the ways of thinking engendered by modernity in Europe: individualism based on the principle of competition, capitalism, nationalism and imperialism, the view of history in terms of progress, and cultural relativism.<sup>33</sup> Their positive support went to the ideal of establishing in Asia new national and ethnic relations based on the principle of pluralism and on family relations: in other words, to the conception of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In their rejection of domination by any other people (which actually meant “leadership” by the superior people) these colloquia betray awareness that the militarists were watching them, but the government’s conception of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere provided their sole genuinely intellectual content. They justified the Japanese army’s previous contention that the purpose of its incursion onto the Chinese mainland was to prepare for the struggle with Western imperialism. Moreover, the early victories swelled their ideas, idealized the “Greater East Asia War” as an “overcoming [of] the modern” that announced to Western imperialism the “awakening of Asia,” and even encouraged cries of “holy war” (*seisen* 聖戦) and “imperial war” (*kōsen* 皇戦).<sup>34</sup> In this way Nishida Kitarō’s pacifist thought was overwhelmed,<sup>35</sup> and a makeshift rationale was supplied for the “Greater East Asia War,” for which the government and the military had been able to provide none. The degree to which this rationale (“awakening Asia” to counter Western

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32 *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, vol. 12, p. 360.

33 In the context of Taishō democracy, cultural relativism appears to have been widely accepted by Japanese intellectuals. Among the “basic conditions for peace” upheld by Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) in 1918, the principle of the self-determination of peoples was widely known in Japan, gaining full acceptance as the spirit of recognition that all peoples have their own, unique culture and that these cultural differences deserve mutual respect—a development that took place in the context of the founding of the League of Nations, of the prevailing international mood of peace and disarmament, and of a vigorous increase in international cultural exchange. It is also clear, from the contents of the general-coverage magazines of the time, that this attitude became associated with the idea of the nation state, and that it served to strengthen the notion of Japanese cultural uniqueness. Needless to say it also encouraged, in alliance with the nation-state, repression of national minorities.

34 Kōsaka et al. 1943, pp. 289, 304, 422.

35 In “Kokutai” 国体 (1944; *Nishida Kitarō zenshū*, vol. 12, p. 409), Nishida Kitarō argued that the struggle between concepts of the state did not deserve the name of “holy war,” and he seems to have differed with *Sekaishiteki tachiba to Nihon* in his appraisal of war. On *Nihon bunka no mondai* 日本文化の問題 and *Sekai shiteki tachiba to Nihon*, see Suzuki Sadami 1997b.

imperialism) influenced intellectuals should probably not be underestimated.<sup>36</sup>

The current of doubt toward “modern Japan” born in the minds of those writers who in 1890 (the year following the promulgation of the Imperial Constitution) planned to throw in their lot with “literature” as linguistic art—this current was deepened by the spectacle of the social contradictions produced by modern civilization in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese War. From the turn of the century into the period following that war, intellectual or artistic solutions had been offered toward the goal of transcending the “modern” versus “anti-modern” dichotomy. The stimulus of Marxism had encouraged thinking people to grasp “modernity” as a totality, and they had made various intellectual efforts to overcome it. Meanwhile, amid the rise of cultural relativism, these ideas developed in association with Easternism (Asianism) and Japanese nationalism, until in the end they gave the conceptual meaning just described to the “Greater East Asia War.” To the extent that the young Kyoto school scholars committed the perversion of mistaking the reality of imperialist war for the realization of their own ideals, there was no difference between their superior intelligence and Yasuda Yojūrō’s aesthetics of ruin.

The intellectual mainstream after World War II considered the idea of “overcoming the modern” to have fallen at last into Fascism, and it worked to re-launch “modernization.” The favored strategy to this end can be said to have, in a sense, turned the idea of “overcoming the modern” inside out. The consensus held that “overcoming the modern” had represented no more than reaction, and the conclusion was that despite a valiant attempt by Japanese thought and culture to achieve modernization, the attempt had simply failed. This position amounts to shutting one’s eyes to the history of ideas.

Today, the search for a way to transcend the dualism at the heart of modern Western philosophy, the ambition to go beyond the thought patterns it has engendered (individualism based on the principle of competition, capitalism, nationalism, imperialism, and the view of history in terms of progress), and the call for a pluralism beyond cultural relativism, are being variously debated under the heading of “postmodern” thought. However, all of these had already been proposed by the young prodigies of the Kyoto school. It is hardly possible that what they advocated should have no relevance for the current debate. It is undeniable, however, that they gave the conceptual meaning described above to the “Greater East Asia War.” Any attempt nowadays to transcend “modernity,” at least on the part of Japanese intellectuals, must take into account the possibilities and limitations of their ideas.

At any rate, it will hardly be possible to grasp the truth of the intellectual currents and culture of the twentieth century, and to make this understanding our own, in the present, unless we carefully consider such questions as the following. How, in twentieth-century Japan, did the intellectual aspiration and the artistic endeavor to “overcome the modern” conceive “modernity” and seek to transcend it? What vision did they propose? What path did these efforts take, and how did they end by falling into unanimity with militarism? What modes of expression did they pursue amid the severe curtailment of freedom of expression that prevailed under militarism, and how did they

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36 The Chūō Kōron Sha edition of *Sekaiishiteki tachiba to Nihon* sold 15,000 copies in its first printing (March 1943) and at least 10,000 in its second (August 1943). The Sōgensha edition of *Kindai no chōkoku* 近代の超克, which included an edited text of the roundtable discussion in *Bungakukai*, sold only 600 in its first printing.

flower after the war? If we cannot acknowledge these issues properly, our reading and appraisal of individual works will remain far off the mark. By employing as analytical indicators both the lineage of “overcoming the modern” ideas and the current of vitalism that stood in mutual relationship to it, we will unquestionably force ourselves radically to revise our current reading of thought and culture, and our current understanding of literary works. It is all but a foregone conclusion that our doing so will bring about an extensive revision of our perspective on intellectual, cultural, and literary history.

## 11.3 The Myth and Reality of “I-fiction” in Japan

### 11.3.1 The Significance and Character of “I-fiction”

The work of examining diverse opinions on the issue of where to place the beginning of “modern Japanese literature” has made it clear that varying views on “overcoming the modern” existed in Japan in the first half of the twentieth century, and that, when seen in this light, modes of literary thought hitherto classified as “anti-modern” reveal a quite different character. There remains the task of examining “I-fiction,” which the modernizationist view of literary history, based on the schematic proposition that westernization = modernization, has exposed as a distortion of “modern Japanese literature.”

The term “I-fiction” (*shishōsetsu*, *watakushi shōsetsu* 私小説) has long been considered to have appeared first in Uno Kōji’s short story “Amaki yo no hanashi” 甘き世の話 (1920).<sup>37</sup> However, no one has ever seriously considered the sense in which Uno employed it. He wrote:

Observant readers are no doubt aware that something strange has been going on lately in the world of Japanese fiction. An absurd character called “Watashi” [“I”] keeps turning up everywhere, without a word to describe what he looks like, what he does, or what sort of person he is. What *is* written about him, then? Nothing but a succession of peculiar reflections, or something of the kind. A little attention will reveal that this “Watashi” is none other than the author himself—the one who wrote the piece. It happens every time. So what “Watashi” does is write novels, and when he writes “Watashi” he means the fellow who signed the work. Neither readers nor writers see anything odd in this peculiar business. One need not at all costs avoid making the novelist into the novel’s hero, or having the hero be “Watashi”; but it is deplorable that every detail of this hero “Watashi” should be true of the author, so that the reader soon gathers everything in the book really happened. Because my novel *Hitogokoro* 人心 was a “Watashi” novel (「私」小説), people thought everything in it was true, hence the character fancifully based on someone named Yumeko was seen as real, too. This hardly matters to *me*, but it caused a lot of trouble for my dear Yumeko.<sup>38</sup>

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37 For example, Hirano Ken cited this passage at the start of his *Shishōsetsu no niritsu haihan* (1951).

38 *Uno Kōji zenshū*, vol. 2, pp. 442-43.

In this passage Uno Kōji used the expression “‘Watashi’ novel” to mean a novel dramatized on the basis of his own experience. He also took it for granted that a novel should include a description of the hero’s looks, profession, and personality. In other words, “‘Watashi’ novel” is one possible form for a novel, but “a succession of peculiar reflections” conveyed by a narrator whose character and identity remain imponderable is not a novel at all.

Uno Kōji began his writing career with *Seijirō: Yume miru ko* 清二郎 夢見る子 (1913), a charming set of reminiscences about a youth spent being fussed over by the geisha of Sōemonchō 宗右衛門町 in Osaka. Not long before, in *Omoide* 思ひ出 (1911), Kitahara Hakushū 北原白秋 had published a collection of romantically pure and childlike songs, and there had been something of a vogue for short, prose reminiscences of childhood. Uno Kōji himself was capable of presenting the reader with a self-portrait such as the one he included in “Yume miru heya” 夢見る部屋 (1922): “A pale grandson of Lamartine, wandering through the landscape of the heart.”<sup>39</sup> This suggests that by “‘Watashi’ novel” Uno meant the sort of autobiographical, reminiscing novel often seen in French romanticism.

The source of Japanese “I-fiction” is often sought in diaries (*nikki* 日記), travel accounts (*kikōbun* 紀行文), and literary musings (*zuihitsu* 隨筆), but that is illogical. Many works of these three kinds were written during the middle ages and the Tokugawa period, but they never gave rise to “I-fiction.” That is probably because people remained so aware of the formal norms for fiction (*shōsetsu* 小説), which had developed from wonder tales (*denki* 伝奇) and made-up stories (*tsukurimonogatari* つくり物語). What first prompted the emergence of “I-fiction” is surely the reception of modern European literary art, in particular autobiographical reminiscences told in the first person. (Epistolary novels, too, are usually classified under this heading.) Later on, in “Ich roman no koto” イヒ・ロオマンのこと (1926), Satō Haruo made it clear enough that writers like himself considered “I-fiction” to be related to the *ich-roman* of Europe. Citing *Les Confessions* (1782-89) of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Satō quoted Anatole France (1844-1924) on the difficulty of addressing a confession to society at large, and in that connection he discussed the genre’s anti-social aspects.<sup>40</sup> The first-person novel in Europe, initiated by Goethe’s *Werthers*, continued with *René* (1802) by François-René de Châteaubriand, *Obermann* (1804) by Etienne de Senancour, and *Adolphe* (1816) by Benjamin Constant. Almost all were autobiographical. The twentieth century produced countless examples, such as Hermann Hesse’s *Unterm Rad* (1906). As is well known, this type of novel then gave rise also in the same century to a focus on the workings of consciousness, as illustrated by such works as *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce and *À la recherche du temps perdu* (1913-27) by Marcel Proust.

Another well-known thesis<sup>41</sup> is that “I-fiction” emerged from post-Russo-Japanese War naturalism, with Tayama Katai’s “Futon” 蒲団 (1907): a work that reveals the author’s sense of guilt

39 Uno Kōji *zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 301.

40 In his “Kaisetsu” to *Satō Haruo zenshū* (vol. 2, p. 600), Yamamoto Kenkichi wrote, “Satō Haruo’s *Den’en no yūtsu* 田園の憂鬱 springs less from the uniquely Japanese notion of the *shishōsetsu*, than from the European romantic *ich roman* initiated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau.... It belongs to the strain of self-discovery literature that flourished everywhere in Europe.”

41 Present in such works as Nakamura Mitsuo 1963.

and inner ugliness. If “I-fiction” is to be limited to the confessional novel in this sense, then its source might be appropriately sought in the popularity of religiously-toned confessional works touched off at roughly the time of the Russo-Japanese War by Tolstoy’s *Les Confessions* (1879-1881). A tendency can be seen in this confessional strain of naturalism to concentrate on sexual desire. However the models of the genre are probably to be found in the autobiographical works of Tokutomi Roka, who within the literary establishment was not actually associated with naturalism at all.<sup>42</sup>

Exposure and confession of one’s own inner ugliness to the reader may naturally prompt self-criticism as well. In novels of this kind, members of the literary establishment usually tended to reject their own foolishness when swept away by blind passion. Known as “blind passion fiction” (*jōchi shōsetsu* 情痴小説), such works became the object of moral condemnation. Many of them, however, were accompanied by self-caricature and a tendency toward self-abasement. Elements of self-parody have been noted in both Tayama Katai’s “Futon” and Chikamatsu Shūkō’s 近松秋江 “Kurokami” 黒髪.<sup>43</sup> Even at the time, Oguri Fūyō 小栗風葉 (“*Futon gappyō*” 「蒲団」合評, *Waseda bungaku* 早稲田文学, October 1907) derived from the concluding section of “Futon” “an impression of exaggeration and ridicule.” Meanwhile, Masamune Hakuchō 正宗白鳥 (1879-1962) wrote (in his *Shizenshugi suitaishi* 自然主義衰退史, 1948) of a young man studying in the United States who, after reading “Futon,” remarked with a roar of laughter that Katai had written an idiotic novel. Hakuchō also noted the ridiculous side of “Kurokami.”<sup>44</sup>

Self-parody can be seen also in Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s “Himitsu” 秘密 (1911); and the very title of Mushanokōji Saneatsu’s *O-medetaki hito* お目出たき人 (1911) suggests how common this mood was in many works of the period. Even outside the realm of the novel, the name Santarō in Abe Jirō’s *Santarō no nikki* 三太郎の日記 (1914), a major example of Taishō culturism (*Taishō kyōyōshugi*), is synonymous with “fool.” At the end of Uno Kōji’s “Amaki yo no hanashi,” too, the narrator says he will soon be “as bald as kettle.”

This appraisal of the Tokugawa period appears at the beginning of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s “Shisei” 刺青 (1910): “People then were still endowed with the noble virtue of “folly” [*oroka* 愚], and the world then did not yet creak and groan loudly, as it does now.”<sup>45</sup> In the autumn of 1905, after the Russo-Japanese War, the general-circulation magazines began carrying the occasional article about a “Genroku craze” (*Genroku fū* 元禄風) that had gripped the population. For example, it apparently was the fashion for a woman’s kimono to bear an Edo-style crest (*komon* 小紋). It is no wonder that a lazy, springlike nostalgia for Tokugawa culture should have set in after the violence of the war. This sort of longing for old Edo is clear not only in Nagai Kafū’s “Kichōsha no nikki,” but also in the poetry and prose of Kitahara Hakushū and Kinoshita Mokutarō 木下杢太郎.<sup>46</sup> The “noble virtue of ‘folly’” mentioned at the beginning of “Shisei” no doubt conveys criticism of an intensely competitive society.<sup>47</sup> Abe Jirō’s *Santarō no nikki*, too, suggests how readily intellectuals after the

42 See Suzuki Sadami 1996b, Chapter 4, Section 1, “Zange no kisetsu” 懺悔の季節.

43 See Gotō Meisei 1983, the chapter entitled “‘Jijitsu’ ka fikushion ka: Tayama Katai ‘Futon’” 「事実」かフィクションか—田山花袋「蒲団」; and Ōsawa 1993.

44 Masamune Hakuchō *shū*, p. 238. Also “Kaisetsu” to *Kurokami*, Iwanami Bunko, 1958, pp. 191-92.

45 Tanizaki Jun’ichirō *zenshū*, vol. 1, p. 63.

46 See Suzuki Sadami 1995 and Suzuki Sadami 1997c.

47 Tanizaki Jun’ichirō wrote in “Yōnen no kioku” that he received instruction in Confucianism from his

Russo-Japanese War indulged in self-abasement, self-mockery, and self-caricature. These moods represent one of the characteristics of contemporary “I-fiction”—a characteristic that probably does indeed distinguish “I-fiction” from the nineteenth-century European first-person novel.

This practice of self-parody was further expanded by Uno Kōji, who exploited *rakugo* narrative technique in his “Kura no naka” 蔵の中 (1919). The story repeatedly states that for now it will confine itself only to the essential events, since the details will be filled in later in a novel. As the piece itself makes clear, it is not a fiction, but storytelling. This manner of writing was taken up again by Makino Shin’ichi 牧野信一 (1896-1936) in *Chichi o uru ko* 父を売る子 (1924). The title itself mocks the author’s miserable self, who sells things he writes about his father. In “Wakai” 和解 (1917), Shiga Naoya wrote in a work of fiction about how impossible it was for him to discuss in fiction the complexities of his relationship with his father, but Makino Shin’ichi’s writing about his father functions in exactly the opposite way. Makino Shin’ichi wrote many works—veritable anti-“I-fiction”—in which an author who treats only matters close to him behaves as though he is engaged in truly creative labors even though his wife reads his manuscripts and already knows everything in them.<sup>48</sup>

Ishikawa Jun carried on this Makino Shin’ichi-style “I-fiction.” His “Kajin” 佳人 (1935) shows Makino’s influence, and Makino was the first in the literary establishment to praise it.<sup>49</sup> This was the source of the “novel about writing this novel” (*kono shōsetsu o kaku shōsetsu* この小説を書く小説) typical of the mid-1930s.

### 11.3.2 The Formation of *Shinkyō Shōsetsu* (Mental-state Fiction)

What sort of novel did Uno Kōji have in mind when, in “Amaki yo no hanashi,” he criticized an unstructured (*zuisōteki* 随想的) work that never presents an image of the hero as not being a novel? In “Shinshōsetsu’ shiken” 「新小説」私見 (*Shinchō* 新潮, October 1925) he described “mental-state fiction” (*shinkyō shōsetsu* 心境小説) as “nonstandard, somewhat absurd kind of fiction, in comparison with I-fiction as we know it.” He went on to say of Shirakaba school fiction that, although written in the first person like that of the naturalist writers, it differed from the latter to an astonishing degree. There is little doubt that Uno Kōji’s criticism of unstructured works referred to those of Mushanokōji Saneatsu and Shiga Naoya. Of the same order, too, are the novels of Yoshida Genjirō 吉田絃二郎 (1886-1956), a writer influenced by the vitalistic views published in *Waseda bungaku* by Sōma Gyofū 相馬御風 (1883-1950) and Ogawa Mimei 小川未明 (1882-1961), as well as by the Shirakaba school. The appellation “mental-state fiction” refers to an unstructured work, “a nonstandard, somewhat absurd kind of fiction, in comparison with I-fiction as we

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elementary school teacher, Professor Inaba 稲葉, who urged him to read Ōshio Heihachirō’s 大塩平八郎 *Senshin dōsatsu ki* 洗心洞筈記. No doubt Professor Inaba was an adherent of Japanese Wang Yangming philosophy. In *Shūgi washō* (1672), Kumazawa Banzan called the seeker after truth “the fool” (*gusha* 愚者), as opposed to the widely-praised “clever man” (*rihatsusha* 利発者). In “Gu’ to iu toku” Tanizaki can perhaps be said to have turned this Wang Yangming style “fool” into an aesthetic “fool.”

48 See Suzuki Sadami 1987b.

49 See Suzuki Sadami 1989a.

know it.” The occurrence of the term in Nakamura Murao’s 中村武羅夫 “‘Shinkyō shōsetsu’ to ‘honkaku shōsetsu’” 「心境小説」と「本格小説」(1924) may be the first. The distinction between “mental-state fiction” and “I-fiction” seems to have remained current among literary establishment writers and critics into the early Shōwa years. Examples include “‘Watakushi’ shōsetsu to ‘shinkyō’ shōsetsu” 「私」小説と「心境」小説 by Kume Masao 久米正雄 (1925), “‘Shinkyō shōsetsu’ to ‘honkaku shōsetsu’” by Satō Haruo (1927), and “Watakushi shōsetsu ron” by Kobayashi Hideo (1935).

However, Uno Kōji began his “‘Shinshōsetsu’ shiken” by stipulating that in this essay he would refer to “mental-state fiction” as “I-fiction.” There might be a difference between the two in terms of content, but for the purposes of the essay he would regard the former as one type of the latter. That is because, as we shall see, Uno Kōji had changed his attitude toward “mental-state fiction.” There is no denying that he introduced a degree of confusion into the terminology involved.

In “‘Shinshōsetsu’ shiken,” Uno Kōji sought the source of “mental-state fiction” in the Shirakaba school’s “philosophy of the self” (*jiga tetsugaku* 自我哲学), but from a wider perspective it seems natural to look for it in informal musings (*zuisō* 随想) in which the narrator says nothing about his profession or appearance. The problem is the question of when and why works of this kind gained recognition as a variety of fiction. In other words, when and why did the accepted category of fiction (*shōsetsu*) become this vague? Presumably the explanation has something to do with the complex interplay between such phenomena as the Meiji-period coalescing of poetic impressions of nature and human affairs (for example, Tokutomi Roka’s *Shizen to jinsei* or Kunikida Doppo’s “Musashino”) as a distinct genre and the appearance of fiction elaborated from such elements; various naturalist exhortations to “write from reality” and their expression in such short, poetic reminiscences as those included in Uno Kōji’s *Seijirō: Yume miruko*; and Masaoka Shiki’s “narrative prose” (*jojibun* 叙事文), which in Takahama Kyoshi’s “Fūryū senbō” 風流讖法 (1907) gave rise to works with a story-like character. Another possibility is that “the expression of life” (*seimei no hyōgen* 生命の表現)—“vitalism in art theory” (*geijutsuron ni okeru seimeishugi* 芸術論における生命主義)—encouraged the manifestation of free expression and gave rise to unfettered expression not only unconcerned with categories but also capable of breaking them down. This trend is obvious, for example, in the case of Mushanokōji Saneatsu. Even if writers broke down such categories, however, the media ignored what they were doing. In other words, even if a writer insisted that his work was fiction, the editor might place it in the literary musings (*zuihitsu*) column, and the writer could do nothing about it. All sorts of complications arose over such issues.

The case of Shiga Naoya is worth considering in this regard. Shiga Naoya began his career with pieces like “Abashiri made” 網走まで (1910) and “Kamisori” 剃刀, in which he sought to convey in writing the wavering of his consciousness of self. His attempt can be said to represent one follow-up to a period particularly concerned with recording shifting impressions. Recording such impressions gave rise to recognition of the relative relationship between the writing subject and the object written about (cf. end of Chapter 10), but particularly worth considering is the stage at which interest passes to the “consciousness” itself of the person who relativizes the relationship between subject and object. What does this matter have to do with awareness of categories?

The *Chūō kōron* issue in which Uno Kōji’s “Amaki yo no hanashi” appeared (September 1920) also included “Manazuru” 真鶴 by Shiga Naoya. Shiga had probably already read “Amaki yo no

hanashi,” from which he quoted a passage at the head of his own work. In “Sōsaku yodan” 創作余談 he recognized “the diary recording reality as it is,”<sup>50</sup> as for example in his “Jūichigatsu mikka gogo no koto” 十一月三日午後の事 (1919), as one of his modes of writing; and this recognition is reflected in the titles of such works as “Yuki no hi (Abiko nisshi)” 雪の日 (我孫子日誌) (1920), “Akagi nite aru hi” 赤城にて或る日 (1910), and “Shinsai mimai (nikki)” 震災見舞 (日記) (1924). “Gūkan” 偶感, which begins, “This piece is neither random thoughts [*gūkan*] nor a diary,”<sup>51</sup> appeared in the informal musings (*zuisō*) column of *Josei* 女性 in October 1924. Shiga himself was probably aware of writing things that resembled fiction but were not, and no doubt his editors, too, sometimes took this ambiguity into account. It is easy enough to imagine that Nakamura Murao’s calling a *zuisō*-style work like “Kinosaki nite” 城の崎にて (1917) “mental-state fiction” led to even works Shiga Naoya himself thought of as “diaries” being recognized as a genre of fiction (*shōsetsu*).

In 1924, when Kume Masao wrote “‘Wakakushi’ *shōsetsu* to ‘shinkyō’ *shōsetsu*,” his fondest longing was for a sober, Eastern state of mind far removed from the modern man’s complexities and inner confusion, and that is why he wrote that “mental-state fiction” is the true “I-fiction.” The kind of nostalgia for Eastern mysticism and aesthetic depth foretold by Kaneko Chikusui in “Kindai shisōkai no sūsei” (1906) was then rising; the intoxicating elegance (*fūkyō* 風狂) of Matsuo Bashō was being re-appraised by readers of the “culture school” (Kyōyō-ha 教養派);<sup>52</sup> and the Great Tokyo Earthquake had reminded people how cruelly the winds of impermanence can blow. In “‘Fūryū’ ron” (1924), Satō Haruo maintained that the new consciousness of beauty involved a beauty modeled on the mood (*kyōchi* 境地) of Bashō’s haiku; that this beauty goes beyond “the modern novel,” which sets self against nature and “derives its meaning from gazing at the discord fomented by the complexities of human will and assembling them into a single work”; and that, transcending the Buddhist awareness of impermanence, it is perceived in the very instant in which self and nature become one, and the self shrinks infinitely small.<sup>53</sup> Then, in “‘Shinshōsetsu’ shiken,” Uno Kōji wrote, “No doubt one can hardly expect from any Japanese writer a true novel [*honkaku shōsetsu*] in the manner of Balzac, but conversely, it is impossible to expect from any Westerner art like that of Bashō or [Kasai] Zenzō [葛西善藏, 1887-1928].” Thus he had turned to supporting “mental-state fiction.” Uno Kōji cited Kasai Zenzō’s “Kohan shuki” 湖畔手記 (1925) and “Jakusha” 弱者 (1925); acknowledged that “after penetrating so single-mindedly into the life of ‘Watashi’, Zenzō could only write ‘I-fiction,’ or could have no desire to write anything else, and indeed had not the liberty to do so”; and argued that his works were valuable for that very reason. As the mood of the intellectuals of the time changed, cultural relativism gained strength, and there appeared a growing interest in the uniqueness of the Japanese sense of beauty. This and the rising popularity of “mass [*taishū* 大衆] literature,” “peasant [*nōmin* 農民] literature,” and “labor [*rōdō* 労働] literature” no doubt all had a role in forming Uno’s view.

50 Quoted from Kōno 1973.

51 *Shiga Naoya zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 151.

52 *Bashō haiku kenkyū* (1922); publication from a conference, convened by Ōta Mizuho 太田水穂, which gathered together Kōda Rohan, Watsuji Tetsurō, Abe Jirō, Abe Yoshishige, Komiya Toyotaka 小宮豊隆, and others. A follow-up volume was published in 1924 and a second in 1926.

53 *Satō Haruo zenshū*, vol. 11, p. 266.

### 11.3.3 Re-coining the Concept of “I-fiction”

At the time when “mental-state fiction” was coming under discussion, with its tendency to seek escape from the miseries of the self in Eastern simplicity (*kotan* 枯淡), or the realm of *yūgen* 幽玄, *wabi* 侘び, and *sabi* 侘び, “mass literature” was gaining vast popularity amid the expansion of the modern city. Its proponents, especially such writers as Edogawa Ranpo, argued that the literary establishment vogue for “I-fiction” and the like had resulted in many readers losing interest; while the supporters of “proletarian literature” observed that literary establishment fiction lacked social consciousness.<sup>54</sup> The external criticisms of the literary establishment naturally did nothing to establish a distinction between “I-fiction” and “mental-state fiction.”

Soon, in “*Sōnensha no bungaku*” 壮年者の文学 (1927), Satō Haruo expressed regret at having fallen into a sort of precocious maturity when he joined the literary establishment as a young man, because when he had “awakened to the social self” he “knew nothing of the ways of the world” and “lived entirely within the individual self”;<sup>55</sup> and he therefore advocated a “literature for those in the prime of life” (*sōnensha no bungaku*). Satō summed up the character of the “Taishō literary establishment” as lacking the “social self” (*shakaiteki jiga* 社会的自我). Needless to say, the attitudes Satō regretted were those he had displayed in “*Fūryū ron*.”

Under these circumstances the “I-fiction” and “mental-state fiction” modes of writing for a time vanished almost entirely. Their absence lasted about ten years.<sup>56</sup> Obviously this phenomenon occurred in the context of the rise of “mass literature” and polemical “proletarian literature” for the laboring masses. Thus the result seems to have been the formulaic explanation that any awareness of a distinction between “I-fiction” and “mental-state fiction” gradually faded, and that with “I-fiction” naturalism reached a developmental dead-end.<sup>57</sup>

However, Kajii Motojirō 梶井基次郎 (1901-1932), for example, considered his own mode of writing to be that of “mental-state fiction.” Miyoshi Tatsuji 三好達治 (1900-1964) recorded his saying so,<sup>58</sup> probably in the autumn of 1926, or the summer or autumn of 1927. This corresponds to the time when “proletarian literature” was gaining prominence, and many in the world of the coterie magazines were beginning to lean toward Bolshevism. Among students, some were even wondering how many days remained before the revolution. It was thought that, as the class struggle intensified, the *petit-bourgeois* intelligentsia could not help losing all future. The same significance was attributed to the suicide of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川竜之介 (1892-1927). “Despair” became a buzzword in the literary world. “I can be confident in the strength of the art

54 Suzuki Sadami 1994b, Chapter 8, Section 33.

55 Satō Haruo *zenshū*, vol. 11, p. 406.

56 In Yoshida 1958, the article for 1929 (Shōwa 4) notes the near-disappearance of *shishōsetsu* and the like. In the “*Shishōsetsu no enkan*” 私小説の円環 section of his “*Kindai bungaku no shosō: Tanizaki Jun’ichirō o shiten to shite*,” Miyoshi Yukio noted (*Kindai bungaku shi no kōsō*, p. 44) the observation made in 1935 by Kume Masao, in his “*Jun bungaku yogi setsu*,” to the effect that trajectory of the *shishōsetsu*, from glory to revival, had come to an end.

57 For example, Tsujino Hisanori 辻野久憲 (1909-1937) expressed this opinion in a letter to Kajii Motojirō; Kajii rejected it in a reply dated October 6, 1930 (*Kajii Motojirō zenshū*, vol. 3, pp. 473-74).

58 Miyoshi Tatsuji, “*Kajii Motojirō no koto*” (1934); in *Miyoshi Tatsuji zenshū*, vol. 6, pp. 23-24.

we are making in our current mood of deadlock,”<sup>59</sup> Kajii Motojirō wrote in a letter to Kitagawa Fuyuhiko 北川冬彦. Undoubtedly, that mood is exactly what Kajii wished to convey in his work. In a letter to Kondō Naoto 近藤直人 (February 2, 1928), he also described his own writing as “the spearhead realist symbolism [*sentan* 尖端 *riarisutikku shinborizumu*] of capitalist art.”<sup>60</sup> He meant that by realistically conveying his own mood in writing, he was producing works that rose to the level of symbols of existence. His pursuit of this method gave rise to such works as “Kigakuteki genkaku” 器樂的幻覚, “Takehi no hanashi” 筧の話, “Sōkyū” 蒼穹, and “Fuyu no hae” 冬の蠅. These do indeed use illusion and hallucination to reveal symbolically the relationship between self and the world, and after the war they were viewed as an expression of existentialism.<sup>61</sup>

In the method then followed by Kajii Motojirō—that of reconstructing fragments of consciousness and sensory experience by means of first-person narration—there is certainly nothing to explain who the narrator is. In that sense, he was writing “mental-state fiction.” At the same time, he was creating images similar to those that appear in the surrealist poetry of the 1920s. It is probably fair to say that Shiga Naoya’s “mental-state fiction” method shifted toward embodying what might be called spiritual incidents (*tamashii no jiken* 魂の事件) less by psychological means than by reconstructing concrete sensory data. Scenes of this kind can also be seen, though perhaps incompletely, in Satō Haruo’s *Den’en no yūtsu* 田園の憂鬱 (1919). They have much in common with the early, short works of Hori Tatsuo 堀辰雄 and with his “Utsukushii mura” 美しい村 (1933-34). This can be called the general trend of the Shōwa modernist method.

However, in “Watakushi shōsetsu ron” 私小説論 Kobayashi Hideo described “I-fiction” as “a special pit” (*tokushu na ana* 特殊な穴) dug in “the modern literary history of Japan,”<sup>62</sup> and grouped both it and “mental-state fiction” together as “confessions and evocations of experience related to real life.”<sup>63</sup> In Japan, Kobayashi wrote, “The naturalist movement ended up nurturing idiosyncratic I-fiction” because “the modern Japanese people were too narrow to foster the positivism that naturalism required, and also because they had too much old, unwanted fertilizer.” “Fertilizer” refers to “the wonderful, traditional techniques of literature.”<sup>64</sup> Kobayashi probably had Bashō’s haikai in mind, as Kume Masao did in “Wakushi” shōsetsu to “shinkyō” shōsetsu,” Satō Haruo in “Fūryū” ron,” and Uno Kōji in “Shinshōsetsu” shiken.” His argument stands only if one confuses “I-fiction” with “mental-state fiction,” or, rather, regards them as being one and the same.<sup>65</sup>

While Kobayashi Hideo’s “Watakushi shōsetsu ron” quietly draws on Satō Haruo’s “Sōnensha no bungaku,” it was more directly written as a response to Yokomitsu Riichi’s “Junsui shōsetsu ron” (1935). Learning from the example of Gide in *Les faux-monnayeurs*, Yokomitsu called “I-

59 Kajii Motojirō *zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 328.

60 Kajii Motojirō *zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 237.

61 See Suzuki Sadami 1996a, Chapter 8 (“Yugashima no sakuhin gun” 湯ヶ島の作品群).

62 Kobayashi Hideo *zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 121.

63 Kobayashi Hideo *zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 125.

64 Kobayashi Hideo *zenshū*, vol. 3, pp. 122-23.

65 The world of the Taishō-period *shishōsetsu* (i.e., *jōchi shōsetsu* 情痴小説, “passion and folly fiction”) leaned toward the so-called traditional. Examples are Yoshii Isamu’s 吉井勇 abandoning himself to the pleasures of Gion, Chikamatsu Shūkō’s kabukiesque “Kurokami,” and the *rakugo* 落語 of Uno Kōji. However, it is Bashō’s haikai that correspond to what Kobayashi Hideo called “a wonderful, traditional literary technique” (*migoto na bungaku no dentōteki gihō* 見事な文学の伝統的技法).

fiction” “pure literature,” based on the need to posit a “fourth person” who observes the first-person character, in order to objectify the confusion of the self. He also called fiction on the theme of current mores (*tōdai fūzoku shōsetsu* 当代風俗小説) “current mores fiction” (*tzūzoku* 通俗 *shōsetsu*) and called for merging the two. In response, Kobayashi Hideo expressed grave doubts about introducing the technique alone. He remarked that the “socialized ‘watashi’” is absent from the spiritual landscape of Japan and took the occasion to sum up in that proposition the reason for the failure of “proletarian literature,” which “became intoxicated by too heartless a form of thought.”<sup>66</sup> What prompted him to say this was the rash of “conversion fiction” (*tenkō shōsetsu*), in the “I-fiction” mode, that scrutinized the converted self in the period of “conversions” (*tenkō* 転向) beginning in 1933. Also in 1933, simultaneously with literary establishment calls for the “revival of literary art” (*bungei fukkō* 文芸復興), the “mental-state fiction” style revived when Uno Kōji recovered from the depths of neurosis with “Kareki no aru fūkei” 枯木のある風景, and Tokuda Shūsei 徳田秋声 likewise returned to life, after a period of depression, with “Machi no odoriba” 町の踊り場.

The absence of a “socialized ‘watashi’” came from Satō Haruo, who used the expression directly to criticize tendencies within the Taishō “literary establishment,” including himself. However, Kobayashi, who saw the same absence in the failure of “proletarian literature,” can be said to have extended it at a stroke to the spiritual landscape of Japan as a whole. The idea of finding in the spiritual landscape of modern Japan the power of a “long tradition” and an absence of sociality (*shakaisei* 社会性) was unquestionably influenced by the analysis proposed in the Comintern Theses of 1932. Just as the 1932 Theses completely missed the reality of the Japan of the time (cf. 8.1.3, above), Kobayashi Hideo missed the reality of contemporary fiction in his “Watakushi shōsetsu ron.” In answer to Yokomitsu Riichi’s proposal, Kobayashi Hideo denied the application of Gide’s technique in *Les faux-monnayeurs*. The truth, however, was that in that same year, 1935, there appeared a series of such works as Ishikawa Jun’s “Kajin” 佳人 and Dazai Osamu’s “Dōke no hana” 道化の華, which, rather than follow the “novel within the novel” form of *Les faux-monnayeurs*, developed Gide’s “writing about writing this work” approach in *Palude* and pursued it to achieve a form of fiction that objectivized the consciousness of the writing narrator. Then, in 1937, Nagai Kafū published *Bokutō kitan*, which took the form of a parody of *Les faux-monnayeurs*. Such was the truth of the development of the “I-fiction” method (cf. 10.1.2).

In this way, the fact that Japan’s “naturalist” tradition arose during a period that saw the birth of “overcoming modernity” thought, i.e., a period in which philosophical interest was focused on “consciousness” in the hope of discovering a methodology transcending both positivism and mechanical materialism, was placed completely outside of the realm of possibility. At the same time, the fact that all involved at the time were fully aware that “I-fiction” issued from a lineage traceable back to the first-person novels produced by Western European romanticism was forgotten. The arguments that equated “I-fiction” and “mental-state fiction” arose from the obliviousness to these two facts.

Further, it appears that while in the Taishō period the characters 私小説 were glossed in kana as *watakushi shōsetsu*, the younger generation in the mid-1930s began to read them as *shishōsetsu*.

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66 Kobayashi Hideo *zenshū*, vol. 3, p. 130.

As perceptions changed, so the name began to change as well. In the postwar period *shishōsetsu* became the normal reading.<sup>67</sup>

In 1937, after a ten-year gap, Shiga Naoya completed *An'yakōro*, which, in view of the “conversion” period just past, gathered admiration for the consistent attitude it conveyed. Amid the severe wartime restrictions on subject-matter, “I-fiction” drawing on material close to the author’s daily life, as well as parodies of such works (for example, Itō Sei’s 伊藤整 “Tokunō Gorō no seikatsu to iken” 得能五郎の生活と意見, 1941), continued to be written. However, autobiographical, reminiscence-filled “I-fiction,” or “mental-state fiction,” actually flourished most in the postwar period. That is because works impressed with the writer’s personal experience of the war and wartime conditions appeared in vast numbers. An example in the “mental-state fiction” vein is Ozaki Kazuo’s 尾崎一雄 “Mushi no iroiro” 虫のいろいろ (1948). Mixed in with these, there occurred a revival of “I-fiction” proper, concentrating without a hint of self-parody on the author’s sexual experiences and on the death of family members. As examples one can cite “Sei Yohane Byōin nite” 聖ヨハネ病院にて by Kanbayashi Akatsuki 上林暁 (1946), *Makkō chō* 抹香町 by Kawasaki Chōtarō 川崎長太郎 (1954), *Miotsukushi* 濤標 by Tonomura Shigeru 外村繁 (1960), and *Chiri no naka* 塵の中 by Wada Yoshie 和田芳恵 (1963). These examples of “I-fiction” appeared not only in “pure literature” magazines, but also in “middlebrow” and weekly magazines. Many writers pursued this manner of writing further, in one way or another. Some, like Ishikawa Jun, Dazai Osamu, and Sakaguchi Ango 坂口安吾 (1906-1955) had been through the late 1930s and the war, while others (the “postwar writers”) began their careers after the war: these included Noma Hiroshi 野間宏 (1915-1991), Shiina Rinzō 椎名麟三 (1911-1973), and Umezaki Haruo 梅崎春生 (1915-1965). To be mentioned also are such so-called “third-wave new writers” (*daisan no shinjin* 第三の新人) as Fujieda Shizuo 藤枝静男 (1908-1993), Yoshiyuki Junnosuke 吉行淳之介 (1924-1994), Yasuoka Shōtarō 安岡章太郎 (b. 1920), and Shōno Junzō 庄野潤三 (b. 1921).<sup>68</sup>

Precisely because of these wide fluctuations, the mainstream of postwar criticism enshrined the whole of “I-fiction,” which Kobayashi Hideo had described as a “special pit” dug in “the history of modern Japanese literature,” as a central issue. Arguing that the lineage from naturalism to “I-fiction” is what symbolizes the special character of modern Japanese literature, hence its backwardness, postwar critics continued to advocate the “modernization” of fiction.<sup>69</sup>

67 See Inagaki 1953.

68 See Suzuki Sadami 1994b, pp. 270-72.

69 Among postwar critics, Hirano Ken, for example (in his *Shishōsetsu no niritsu haihan*), defined the “critical difference” between “I-fiction” and “mental state fiction” as follows: “I-fiction is the literature of ruin, while mental state fiction is the literature of salvation.” Hirano himself observed that “one must be sympathetic to the literary aspirations of the former, steeped as it is in original sin.” As examples of “mental state fiction” he cited Shiga Naoya’s “Kinosaki nite” and “Horibata no sumai,” Ozaki Kazuo’s “Mushi no iroiro,” and Nagayo Yoshiro’s *Takezawa Sensei to iu hito*; and he stressed their intellectual character. For this sort of reason Hirano Ken’s attitude toward the *shishōsetsu* has been derided as contradictory.

The above discussion is based, with some modifications, on the view of “I-fiction” expressed in my *Nihon no “bungaku” o kangaeru*.