Neuere Lyrik
INTERKULTURELLE UND INTERDISZIPLINÄRE STUDIEN 7

Leith Morton

The Writing of Disaster

Literary Representations of War, Trauma and Earthquakes in Modern Japan

PETER LANG

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This book analyzes the literature that emerged from World War II. It also examines the literature that resulted from the two major earthquakes that have struck Japan over the course of over the last hundred years. The small number of volumes previously published examining the literature of war and earthquakes in Japan have almost always focused exclusively on fiction while this volume focuses mainly on poetry. This volume breaks new ground in its attempt to draw together and analyze the literature produced by these tragedies as a single phenomenon. It provides a new template for the literature of trauma produced by such events as the earthquake that accompanied the tsunami and nuclear meltdown in northeast Japan in 2011.

The Author
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NEUERE LYRIK

Interkulturelle und interdisziplinäre Studien

Herausgegeben von
Henrieke Stahl, Dmitrij Bak, Hermann Korte,
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BAND 7

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Preface

In writing this book I have been ably supported by many colleagues present and past, some of these scholars I will mention here but the exigencies of space prevent me from listing them all. I wish to express my profound gratitude to all who have arranged seminars and colloquiums, conferences and panels where I could present these chapters in their first incarnations as scholarly papers. I would especially thank my former colleagues at the Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tōkyō Kōgyō Daigaku) where I spent eleven happy and productive years teaching and researching Japanese, English and comparative literature before returning to Australia in late 2014. On many occasions, former colleagues including Inoue Ken, Inoue Masaatsu, Roger Pulvers, Alison Tokita, Hugh De Ferranti, Garvin Perram, Hashizume Daizaburō, Hattori Takakazu (recently deceased), Tokosumi Akifumi (recently deceased), Saeki Yasuki, Ishihara Yuki and Iguchi Tokio helped my research in many and varied ways.

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In Europe, I should also like to thank colleagues for providing venues where I was able to read early versions of certain some of the chapters: Over the years, the members of the Académie du Midi in France have helped in more ways than I can mention, especially by providing a most hospitable environment in which to try out my ideas; I thank in particular Roger T. Ames, Henry Rosemount (recently deceased), Graham Parkes and Helmut and Lalli Maassen. In Germany and France, Günter Wohlfart (now based in France), Hans-Georg Möller and Karl-Heinz Pohl have helped enormously, both in the past and present.

Towards the end of my period of residence in Tokyo, I was able to spend time with colleagues in the USA for lectures and at conferences and the like, and these visits helped to focus my research. I thank especially Jon Holt at Portland State University and Massimiliano Tomasi at Western Washington University. I am also grateful for the chance to discuss contemporary Japanese

poetry with Jeffrey Angles (now at Western Michigan University) shortly before returning home to Sydney. Over a number of decades, I have worked with Rachael Hutchinson at the University of Delaware as a collaborator in a number of scholarly projects, some resulting in chapters in this book, and her insights have often changed my thinking to my advantage, and I offer her my most unqualified thanks.

In 2018, I was invited to Trier University in Germany as a senior Research Fellow in residence in the DFG Kolleg Research Group (Russian-language Poetry in Transition) for six months, and this stay in Germany at Trier University not only provided an ideal venue to discuss Japanese poetry but also permitted visits to several other university campuses where I was able to further refine my ideas on Japanese verse. At Trier I thank again Karl-Heinz and Linda Pohl, two special people, and, above all, Henrieke Stahl-Schwaetzer, the director of this massive research project on contemporary poetry (the formal project title is far too modest). Also special thanks to Andreas Regelsberger in Japanese studies and Christian Soffel in Sinology at Trier (also Kolleg members) who helped in numerous ways. I was able to return to Trier in 2019 to refine my ideas even further with colleagues in the Kolleg, and I thank the scholars and postdoctoral researchers whose own work challenged me and made think more deeply about my subject; in particular, Ralph Müller, Peter Geist, Friederike Reents, Angelika Schmitt, Yuri Orlitski, Matthias Fechner and Anna Gavryliuk, whose day to day assistance also proved invaluable. Jasmin Böhm, a PhD student in modern Japanese literature at Trier, was particularly helpful in aiding me in navigating the campus, and its offices; her assistance is much appreciated. Thanks go also to Katina Baharova whose organizational skills made my stay in Trier much easier. I also thank in particular my old friend Finn Riedel in Weimar, Helmut and Lalli Maassen in Pont, my colleagues in Japanese and Chinese, especially Jana Rosker and Luka Culiberg, at the University of Ljubljana in Slovenia and Zhiyi Yang at the Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main.

Also, in 2018, I was appointed as an Honorary Associate in the Department of Japanese Studies, School of Languages and Cultures, the University of Sydney. This appointment has helped enormously in providing me with extensive access to academic databases and other resources at the Fisher Library in the university, and I am most grateful to the generosity of my colleagues in Japanese studies—especially Rebecca Suter—at Sydney University for their invitation to rejoin my old alma mater as a researcher. I should also like to thank, at Sydney University, Mats Karlsson, Yasumoto Seiko, and former colleagues Sakuko Matsui and Hugh Clarke for their friendship and assistance over the years, and also Michael Carter, another former colleague, for his sage advice. At the Australian National University in Canberra, I thank Carol Hayes for all her support and friendship over many years.

Very early versions of a number of these chapters have been published in various journals and books over time, and I should like to thank the editors for their permission to republish. Also, I should like to thank the several Japanese authors, and their families, who have generously supported my research over many years by giving permission to translate. I also wish to thank Ekaterina Evgrashkina for her editorial assistance. Finally, I thank my wife Sachiko who has accompanied me on every step of this scholarly journey, and whose research assistance has been invaluable.

Introduction

"Between the vast insanities
That men so cleverly invent
It may be here, it may be here,
A simulacrum of content"
(from) "The Bungaloes" by William Plomer[1]

In the past few years a number of book-length English-language studies of the cultural dimensions of disasters in modern Japan have appeared in print.[2] The question arises: Why do we need another? The reason is that none of these books concentrates solely on literature, as this book does, and only a few of the volumes treat the disaster spawned by World War II—the most destructive military conflict in Japanese history. This volume has a deliberate focus on both the literature that emerged from World War II, with four chapters on this topic, and also the literature that resulted from the two major earthquakes that have struck Japan over the course of over the last hundred years—incorporating the writing inspired by one of the major floods of the prewar period—with another four chapters investigating these subjects. One additional chapter examines the fiction of a well-known contemporary Okinawan author.[3] Also, in this volume, World War II encompasses the Japanese military excursions onto the Asian continent, and thus includes the so-called "Fifteen Years' War" (1931–1945) in its purview. The small number of volumes previously published examining the literature of war and earthquakes in Japan have almost always focused exclusively on fiction, but this volume has an equal focus on both poetry and fiction. In this sense, this volume breaks new ground in its attempt to draw together and analyze as a single phenomenon the literature produced by these tragedies.[4]

The literature borne out of war, earthquake and flood, similarly literature that dramatizes disasters, has been explored in some depth by scholars of European literature—Maurice Blanchot's famous 1980 book *L'Ecriture du Désastre* (translated as The Writing of the Disaster)—is emblematic, and also by scholars of English literature: Kate McLoughlin's *Authoring War* (2011) and Christopher Coker's *Men at War* (2014) are two representative studies of war literature.[5] Nor do I need to gesture to the many distinguished studies of the Holocaust and modern literature, which have poured forth from presses over many decades, or the select group of books in English on the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and literature.[6] Yet the topic of disasters (especially dealing with the disaster of World War II) and writing, save for the important exception of atomic bomb literature, hardly figures at all in English-language studies of modern Japanese literature.[7] Thus this volume is charting a pioneering path rather than ploughing the well-tilled ground of previous scholarship.

This book will examine only a select number of literary representations of war, flood and earthquakes in twentieth and twenty-first century Japan. The literary works all fall into the two categories of prose, both fictional and non-fictional, and poetry (inclusive of free verse and such traditional varieties of verse as tanka and haiku).[8] My selection of the disasters treated in the book is, I trust, judicious, since the literature produced by the two most destructive earthquakes to strike Japan over the course of over the last hundred years and the most terrible war ever experienced by Japan in its long history are all subjected to detailed scrutiny. Nonetheless, other tragedies exist that are not dealt with here.

For instance, the literature of the Russo-Japanese conflict of 1905 is not treated within these pages. And, because of the manifest need for a much greater depth of analysis than can be permitted in a broad study of disaster such as this volume represents, nor do I examine literature dealing with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (although this book does make use of some of the methodologies employed by scholars to analyze these tragic events). Literary works arising from the earthquake that struck the Kobe region in January 1995 and which resulted in over 6,000 deaths are not examined here either, despite the fact that this was the third most destructive earthquake to strike Japan over the last hundred years. And the impact on literature of a host of other tragedies also escape the attention of this volume—this is not because they are not worthy of mention but due to the exigencies of space and, in many cases (but by no means all), their relatively slight impact on literature compared to the disasters actually analyzed herein, the decision has been taken not to subject them to scrutiny. In general, the reasons outlined here, and, above all, the limitations of space, will suffice to explain why my investigation is limited to the specific events chosen for study in this book. Hence this investigation of the literature of Japan's wars and disasters over the past hundred years cannot be described as completely comprehensive, and my hope is that this book will stimulate further research on this topic.

There are extensive studies of World War II and literature in the Japanese language, and I have necessarily drawn upon these important studies in this book. Fewer studies exist of natural disasters and modern Japanese literature but because of the impact of the massive earthquake that struck the north-eastern coast of Japan on March 11 2011, and which subsequently spawned the horrific tsunami that took many lives, a number of works have emerged in recent years; in consequence this event has given a significant boost to such scholarship—many new volumes on this subject will appear no doubt in the Japanese language in the near future.[9] Nonetheless, I have tried to work from primary sources—literature published during times of earthquake and war, or not long after, or faithful reprints thereof—as much as possible in an attempt to capture the sense of the times and also to express my own viewpoint on these issues, as a researcher working from a comparative perspective outside

the Japanese language discourse. In this volume, primary sources also refer to the original versions of literary texts published during wartime as, until very recently, postwar reprints often differed significantly from a number of the wartime originals due to self-censorship on the part of the authors.[10]

The focus will be on the literary works examined in this book, and while on occasion I will cite various works on trauma and disaster written from the broader perspective of anthropology, medical science or the sociology and history of medicine and also psychological and psychiatric studies, my only purpose in doing so will be to help elucidate the contents of the literary works under examination. My expertise is solely in the field of literature and this book will not attempt to draw any conclusions on issues relating to trauma caused by war and disaster outside of the implications expressed in the works of literature themselves.[11]

The experiences of war and disaster discussed in these literary texts are based on real, historical events experienced by the authors and thus have strong connections to history, but the chief emphasis will be on how these historical events are manifested in the literary texts under investigation. In the course of literary analysis, I will make reference to the historical events that inspired the literature and provide some documentation of the historical reality, but the examination of these events as history is not the prime focus of this book.[12]

The essence of literary analysis is the assumption that the work of literature is essentially a fiction, in some cases related to real events, but which goes beyond the boundaries of historical truth to express a deeper truth (in the minds of most authors, at least), a truth delving into the human mind and imagination. The beautiful and terrifying lies that fiction or art conjures up define the subject of this study. This comment also applies to a degree even to works of non-fiction as the few works of non-fiction studied in these pages largely consists of an individual's remaking of oneself through the act of recollection as expressed quite deliberately in essay or memoir form. That is, the essay is a conscious recasting or re-dramatizing of events that have already occurred, and in the skillful hands of the writers scrutinized here, represents a re-imagining of event that approaches literature ("beautiful or terrifying lies"), and in some cases can clearly be recognized as an important literary creation. My understanding is that one of the most important purposes of history is distinguish between the truth and a lie, but literature asks the reader to imagine a lie more truthful than historical reality, and in this it operates on a different set of critical parameters than utilized by historical analysis.[13]

These remarks may be seen as a protective coloration for a book that does not aspire to or intend to be read as history but they should be read rather as an affirmation of the power of literary narratives to inspire, amaze and move the reader in ways that, by and large, only literature (or in a broader sense, art) does consistently, and has this as its chief purpose. The renowned literary

critic Michael Riffaterre has argued that "truth in fiction is not based on an actual experience of factuality, nor does the interpretation or the aesthetic evaluation of fictional narrative require that it be verified against reality". Riffaterre emphasizes verisimilitude, "a system of representations that seems to reflect a reality external to the text" as one means of evaluation but this is far from the only one, especially when applied to poetry.[14] Riffaterre notes that "narrative truth is thus a linguistic phenomenon; since it is experienced through enactment by reading".[15] I agree with Riffaterre about the basic nature of literary truth as a linguistic phenomenon, which is why I seek out the subtle differences in rhetoric, tone and register in the texts under examination, keeping a keen eye on the language of the text in my attempts to decode the various meanings inscribed therein. As Riffaterre suggests, "fiction relies on [semiotic] codes", which he defines as "arbitrary conventions that can be identified independently of the narrative".[16] The various genres of Japanese literature—whether poetry or prose—have their own critical conventions, which therefore assign codes to the act of reading these works. One purpose of this book will be to clarify and scrutinize these conventions or codes so as to arrive at the most informed and correct readings of these works. This is especially the case with the some of the works examined in chapter three: readings of poetry composed under a complex form of social duress by kamikaze pilots about to embark on their last journeys.

Reading poetry is a complex act of hermeneusis, and to broadly summarize my approach in this book to the interpretations of the many examples of verse analyzed herein, I quote from Peter Verdonk's 2013 work *The Stylistics of Poetry*:

> I subscribe to the view that a poem, and for that matter all other literary genres, can be regarded as a verbal composition which represents an utterance or discourse between the author and the reader. Discourse may be defined here as a context-dependent interpersonal linguistic activity whose form depends on its social purpose, which in our case is a message in a certain literary form transmitted from author to reader.
>
> Working in reverse order, I think it can be argued that the tenet that literature is a mode of discourse falls in with [...] the stage of the reader's response and of pragmatics, in which readers, as verbal creatures, display their habitual communicative behavior by responding to the poet's verbal structure. Readers do so because the verbal structure encodes a discourse in which a speaker invites them, and sometimes even provokes them, to create conceivable contexts for it. On this point, the literary pragmaticist fully agrees [...] that the reader is a vital link in the poem's discourse and that, as he puts it, the poem does not exist in a practical sense at all, if there has been no successful reading. Again, in literary pragmatic terms the poet's text becomes a meaningful discourse only at the time when it is being read, that is, when the reader starts to build up interpersonal and socio-cultural contexts by imagining plausible circumstances and motives which could have given rise to the discourse gradually taking shape.

> Indeed, it is an established fact that language in use, that is discourse, is governed by a wide range of contextual factors, which may extend from the phonological, grammatical and semantic context [...] to broader contexts such as the situation within which the discourse occurs, the identities, beliefs, attitudes of the participants and the relations holding between them. Even more broadly, readers might also take into account any social, psychological, historical or cultural contexts if these prove to have a bearing on the act of communication.
>
> With regard to the interpersonal aspects of the poem's discourse, it is only natural that, in order to deepen their insight into the poet's situation, attitudes and feelings, and, indeed, into their identity, readers might also avail themselves of all the knowledge and experience they have gained from previous similar contexts.
>
> In addition, for a profound understanding of the socio-cultural contexts of the poem's discourse, the reader should also have experience of institutionalized stylistic registers developed from literary genre conventions such as the epic, the lyric, the pastoral, the sonnet and many others. These literary traditions are facts of society and history, and awareness of them makes the reader and the poet equal (and congenial) participants in a socio-linguistic community [...]. A final and obvious remark we can make about the conception of poetry as discourse is that because it allows, perhaps we should say, persuades readers to create their own contexts of meaning, it enables them to account for the artistic axiom that different readers in different times and places will attach different sets of contexts to one and the same verbal structure.[17]

This statement is a common-sense exposition of how one reads a poem (and, in many respects, any work of literature), and therefore how an analysis or interpretation of that poem should proceed. It is worth noting that Verdonk's exposition takes for granted that when reading the poem, the reader cannot stand outside the text in a state of disembodied abstraction. As he puts it in his reading of a poem by the English poet Philip Larkin (1922–85), "if we conceive of a poem as a mode of discourse, we are not primarily concerned with its verbal structures as elements of a static object, but as elements of a dynamic communicative process between the author and reader. The poem's verbal constituents are dynamic in the sense that, although presented simultaneously, they are encountered by the reader as a kinetic process of fulfilled and frustrated expectations and of ever-changing emotions stirred up by directive impulses [...]. It is through the analysis of such impulses that our initial response will be reinforced, enlarged, changed and refined."[18] The notion that the poem, or indeed, any literary work, can be seen or understood from the outside without a dynamic sustained engagement on the part of the reader risks not seeing or reading the poem at all; in this sense, reading literature is not an instrumental act but a process of engagement. Verdonk's arguments bring to mind the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge's (1772–1834) admonition for readers when encountering texts to adopt a "willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith".[19]

A more sustained definition of poetry in general, and the lyric in particular has recently appeared. Jonathan Culler's 2015 book *Theory of the Lyric*

has been well received by critics as it seeks to redefine lyric verse in such a way as to rewrite the contemporary hermeneutic that applies to reading poetry. Culler criticizes contemporary historicist readings of poetry in the following way:

> Distinguished by its mode of enunciation, where the poet speaks *in propria persona*, lyric becomes the subjective form, with drama and epic as alternately the objective and the mixed forms [...].
>
> This conception of the lyric, as representation of subjective experience, while widely disseminated and influential, no longer has great currency in the academic world. It has been replaced by a variant which treats the lyric not as mimesis of the experience of the poet but as a representation of the action of a fictional speaker: in this account, the lyric is spoken by a persona, whose situation and motivation one needs to reconstruct. This has become the dominant model in the pedagogy of the lyric in the Anglo-American world, if not elsewhere. Students are asked, when confronting a poem, to work out who is speaking, in what circumstances, to what end, and to chart the drama of attitudes that the poem captures. In effect, the dramatic monologue, which puts on stage a character speaking to a defined audience or to him- or herself, has been made the model for lyric, which becomes the fictional imitation or representation of a real-world speech act.[20]

Culler's model of the lyric, although diverse, claims a space for the lyric as an event, often a voice speaking, or as he puts it an "epideictic" (formal, rhetorical) mode of expression. This does not mean that poetry cannot deal with political or ideological subjects but as the quote above states, as lyric is a "mimesis of the experience of the poet", it cannot therefore be read as "a representation of the action of a fictional speaker". This means it is fundamentally different from a prose dramatization of an event. As Culler later argues:

> The indeterminacy of meaning in poetry provides an experience of freedom and a release from the compulsion to signify. With its apparently gratuitous chiming and rhyming, its supplemental metrical organization and uses of lineation [...] lyric language works against instrumental reason, prosaic efficiency, and communicative transparency, quite independently of the thematic content of particular lyrics [...]. Hegel argues that once prose has taken dominion of the world, and "the mere accuracy of the prosaic way of putting things has become the ordinary rule," to lyric falls the task of transforming "the prosaic consciousness's ordinary mode of expression into a poetic one," working "out of the mind's habitual abstractness into a concrete liveliness" and creating estrangement from the prosaic perception of the world. Lyric's sonorous structures, as they acquire a formal solidity, convey a feeling, Robert Kaufman argues, that we can glimpse alternatives to the concepts that have structured our world. Readers' encounters with anomalous verbal combinations, along with the kinetic effects of rhythm, offer a challenge to homogenized experience. Song has always ministered to pleasure more than industry, and often has been a form of resistance to the political organization of life; and as the written version of song, lyric operates in the same fashion, but with greater verbal artistry and precision.[21]

Culler's argument sees lyric poetry as occupying a different kind of space from political rhetoric or ideological argument; as noted above, this does not mean that poetry cannot have political connotations or meanings. To emphasize this point: the complexities of "resistance" poetry are discussed in a number of chapters in this book. Culler elaborates on his earlier observations by citing Theodor Adorno's essay "On Lyric Poetry and Society" where he explains: "[Adorno] embraces the claim of his collaborator Max Horkheimer that 'art, since it became autonomous, has preserved the utopia that evaporated from religion, insofar as at constitutes a resistance to the economic system, and that 'an element of resistance is inherent in the most aloof art.' In its aloofness, the lyric is nonetheless 'always the subjective expression of a social antagonism'; the greatness of works of art lies in their power 'to give voice to what ideology conceals'. Historical relations and social antagonisms are the more effectively constellated when the poem does not make the relation between self and society an explicit theme and this relation is allowed to crystalize 'involuntarily' within the poem."[22] These observations become immediately relevant to some of the verse written by Japanese soldiers, as we will see in chapter two.

Another useful source on the relationship between literature and history, or literature and reality is the philosopher John Gibson, who in his 2009 essay "Literature and Knowledge" noted the following:

> Literary works do not embody conceptual knowledge, if by this we mean that they offer an elaboration of the nature of some aspect of our world, delivered, as it were, in a propositional package. Nor need they, if they are to have a claim to cognitive value. If they embody a form of understanding, it will consist in a more literal act of embodiment, namely, in the capacity of a literary narrative to give shape form, and structure to the range of values, concerns, and experiences that define human reality.
>
> […]
>
> The vision of life we find in literary narratives shows us human practice and circumstance not from an abstracted, external perspective but from the "inside" of life, in its full dramatic form. And […] we can now see how this dramatic presentation of life might be a very important cognitive achievement. This achievement does not consist in the stating of truths or the offering of knowledge of matters of fact. It is rather a matter of literature's ability to open up for us a world of value and significance and of all that this implies about our capacity to understand fully the import of various forms of human activity. Literary works' mode of engaging with the world is never narrowly or purely cognitive. Literature would not be *dramatic* if it were. But it is precisely this drama we need if we are to have a textual form that is capable of documenting our particular way in the world. And this is not a minor accomplishment from the cognitive point of view. It shows literature to be among the richest, most potent media we have for the articulation of cultural understanding.[23]

In this quotation, Gibson defends the role of literature in, as he puts it, articulating "cultural understanding". Without literature, Gibson notes, we cannot understand fully the import of various forms of human activity. The notion of

a dramatic demonstration of the import of human activity through the literary arts, or to use his other phrase, the embodiment of the values, concerns, and experiences that define human reality, strike an immediate chord with readers whose readings of literary works had the effect of either moving them deeply or even changing their view of the world, and this experience of reading is not at all uncommon. I could cite many other philosophers, authors and critics from East and West, on the value and significance of literature, from ancient times to the present day, but the writers mentioned above should serve as exemplars of a viewpoint that is held almost universally on the role of literature and its connection to historical reality.

The motivation for this book arises from an essay I was asked to write over two decades ago on World War II and its implications for Japanese literature.[24] My research led me to the conclusion that the issue of the war dead, and indeed of those who died in general as a result of catastrophes was a real and, in many ways, unresolved question for the Japanese people as a whole. This was primarily because of the large number of deceased whose bodies were never found, and thus who could not be mourned in the normal way. There were larger implications that I only began to understand later when I considered the problems associated with the enshrinement at the Yasukuni Shrine of millions of soldiers who perished during wars in which Japan was involved, irrespective of the wishes of the individual concerned or their family. However, Yasukuni and its historic significance has been already been addressed by many studies, and this book will not deal with this important question.[25] Later, when researching the poet Soh Sakon and his magnificent long poem *Moeru Haha* (Mother Burning, 1968) on the wartime firebombing of Tokyo, the issue of the war dead surfaced once again.[26] Soh spent most of his life composing poetry about the restitution that he believed was due to the unmourned deaths of Japanese soldiers during the Fifteen Years War.

Thus, having considered these questions over a number of years, I was led to write the individual studies that make up this book. Literature cannot serve as a substitute for political or religious debate over how we mourn the dead, especially those killed in the disasters enumerated in this book, but it can reveal the sources of the debate itself. Literature reconstructs the past and historical memory in such a way as to create a different but important narrative that speaks to the readers of literature in the present. This volume has been written with the aim of doing just that and also of stimulating further research on this most crucial issue for many Japanese people even today.

Chapter one is a study of literature produced as a result of the Great Tokyo Earthquake of 1923, although the earthquake also affected other nearby regions such as Yokohama just as powerfully, and this needs to be understood when considering the literature resulting from this terrible tragedy. A careful sampling of verses from the major genres of Japanese poetry on the event is

translated and analyzed with the view of illustrating what response the immediate aftermath of the earthquake could elicit from poets in the face of this overwhelming disaster, which took the lives of some 100,000 people. A few examples of prose are also examined, both fiction and non-fiction alike, to gain an understanding of how some of the most prominent authors of the day experienced this calamity and reacted to it. A detailed study is made of two special volumes containing literature on the earthquake produced in the immediate aftermath of the event and also, I translate and comment on four sequences of tanka poetry on the earthquake written by some of the most distinguished tanka poets of the twentieth century.

Chapter two is a study of wartime tanka poetry written by soldiers involved in the conflict as well as civilians who served on the home front. On the one hand, much of this poetry served as a cathartic release for the immense suffering experienced by those who were participants in the conflict; and on the other hand, much of the verse acts to memorialize the tragic deaths of those whose thoughts and emotions can only be glimpsed from the poems they left behind. Other poetry examined includes the "death poems" written by the young men who were members of the "tokkōtai" (kamikaze suicide pilots), and also poems that write against war, as well as poetry of the opposing persuasion. Two prominent tanka poets are singled out for particular scrutiny and reevaluation: the conservative, pro-war poet Kawada Jun (1882–1966) and erstwhile revolutionary poet Maekawa Samio (1903–90).

Chapter three is a study of the so-called Nomonhan Incident referring to a large-scale military clash between Soviet forces and the Kwantung Army on the Mongolian plains in May–September 1939. This ferocious battle in which tens of thousands lost their lives was covered up by the Japanese military for decades because it was a resounding defeat for the Japanese forces; although even today a small number of apologists for the Japanese side argue that they actually won this battle that was in reality a small-scale war. The loss had profound implications for Japan's wartime strategy.

Many Japanese novels and works of non-fiction have been written about this war, especially over the last forty years or so, but this chapter focuses attention on one of the earliest and most popular explorations of this event in print: Captain Kusaba Sakae's two volume work entitled *Noro kōchi—Nomonhan sensha senki* (Noro Hills: An Account of the Tank Annihilation Combat at Nomonhan, 1941–3), which sold over a million copies when it first appeared. Captain Kusaba was an artillery commander during the war, and was wounded in action, and was thus evacuated in order to undergo rehabilitation. This work, which I read as military memoir in the style of fiction, is compared to many other reportage accounts of war written by Japanese soldiers, and is examined not only for its intrinsic interest as a literary work but also for its significance for writing on war generally, and how war reportage deals with

the issues of suffering and trauma, truth and falsehood. To my knowledge, this is the first study of this important work to be published in any language.

Chapter four also concentrates on the war in China and the Pacific and studies the wartime verse of two famous free verse poets: Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956) and Kusano Shinpei (1903–88). Some examples of poetry written after the war's end by these poets is also subjected to scrutiny in an attempt to understand the nature of Japanese patriotic verse that possesses literary merit as opposed to jingoistic verse, which has none. The chapter presents an evaluation of war poetry generally as well as investigating the writings, mainly in essay form, of the various luminaries associated with the *Matinée Poetique* group of authors who in the immediate aftermath of the war undertook a reappraisal of the fascist ideology that led to the war, and who attempted to create a new democratic base for postwar writing through a revival of European modernist literature.

Chapter five is a study of self-censorship by various representative free verse Japanese poets immediately after the end of World War II, although in some cases this concealment of their wartime poetry extended well into the postwar period. The issue of war responsibility loomed large at the war's end, and this debate is also reexamined. The famous critic Yoshimoto Takaaki's (1924–2012) critiques of these poets are investigated in some detail while two poets—Kaneko Mitsuharu (1895–1975) and Takahashi Shinkichi (1901–87) — are scrutinized with a view to reassessing their work, some of which can be read as falling into the category of anti-war literature.

Chapter six is a detailed study of natural disasters—principally storms and floods—as they are depicted in the famous novelist Tanizaki Junichirō's (1886–1965) masterpiece *Sasameyuki* (The Makioka Sisters, 1948). This novel has been acclaimed as one of the greatest works of fiction produced in Japan during the twentieth century and traces the history of the Makioka family, especially of the four sisters (who correspond to Tanizaki's wife's family) from the 1930s to the postwar era. A number of traumatic events occur in the novel, which act as revelations of character, and much besides: two of these events are the Great Hanshin flood of 1938 and a violent typhoon that strikes Tokyo later in the narrative. Tanizaki's use of these events is analyzed in detail, and the implications for readings of the novel as well as its historic significance form the heart of my exegesis.

Chapter seven examines the trauma of the postcolonial hybrid in the fiction of the distinguished Okinawan novelist Ōshiro Tatsuhiro (b. 1925). Postcolonialism and hybridity are important issues for Okinawa and its literary establishment, so Ōshiro's contributions to this debate come under consideration in this chapter, as does a comparative examination of a number of postcolonial theorists on the relationship between hybridity and trauma. Ōshiro has written much fiction on yuta, the female shamans found in contemporary Okinawa, and I summarize a number of the author's stories written on this

theme. I single out one novella in particular, *Meiro* (The Labyrinth, 1992), for detailed analysis. It should be noted that this novella also deals with the relationship between Okinawa and the US bases that dot the islands of the prefecture; it goes without saying that this is an ongoing political issue.

Chapter eight deals with the earthquake, and subsequent tsunami and nuclear meltdowns (which I collectively refer to as the "event") that struck the northeastern regions of Japan on 11 March 2011.[27] The methodology I adopt to trace the impact of this event on Japanese literature is to analyze in detail selected issues of the famous monthly literary journal *Gendaishi techō* (Contemporary Poetry Handbook) from 2011 to 2014 that printed poetry and prose relating to the event, and attempted at times an overview of the event and its impact on literature. In that period alone there were over 40 issues of the journal published that contain hundreds of poems, prose essays and round table discussions: a significant number of these touch upon the event and have not been subjected to analysis before. The output of *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* exceeds the vast majority of mass-circulation literary journals published in Japan, and thus presents a detailed picture of the event as literature.

In addition to this analysis, I also examine various works of fiction and non-fiction treating the event, and subject to detailed scrutiny Takahashi Gen'ichirō's (b. 1951) 2011 novel *Koisuru genpatsu* (Nuclear Plant in Love): a powerful and harsh indictment of the then Japanese government which Takahashi takes to task for its neglect of safety issues surrounding the nuclear power industry, and for its mismanagement of the various crises resulting from the event. Takahashi's novel is a fierce satire, full of obscenities, designed to enrage readers; an aim it may be said in which the work succeeds.

Chapter nine, the last chapter, also deals with the "event" that struck the northeastern regions of Japan on 11 March 2011 by focusing on traditional genres of poetry; namely, verse composed in the *tanka* and *haiku* forms. I examine verse by both "amateur" and "professional" poets—in other words, poems by unknown authors as well as by well-known authors—in order to probe the sources of trauma that either inspired or (in most cases) resulted from personal experience of the event. Using the insights into trauma developed by the existentialist German-Swiss psychiatrist and philosopher, Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), which arise from his writings on "limit situations" (Grenzsituationen)—sometimes translated as "boundary situations"—and existence, I attempt to read these verses not simply as a documentary record of the event but also as an account of the author's or projected author's trauma as it is thrust onto the page, and onto the reader's consciousness.

Finally, the book concludes with various reflections on the nature of translation and representation, which goes to the heart of the kind of analysis contained in these pages that treats the most sensitive of themes: suffering and trauma, not to mention death. Studies of catastrophes and disasters, wars and

earthquakes, are difficult to undertake as they probe the limits of the investigator's imagination, especially investigators such as myself who has had little personal experience of such events. This raises an ethical issue in dealing with literature of this nature, which is addressed in the reflections. The necessity of research and scholarship on the literature of disaster is, it goes without saying, absolutely imperative, since without such scholarship, translation and discussion, the powerful attempts to elicit empathy and understanding on the part of the authors of the literary works that treat these subjects, as seen in the many works examined here, would be completely in vain.

Chapter One

1. "Amid the Frenzied Sea of Fire": The Great Tokyo Earthquake of 1923 and Literature

Noa no yo mo	In the age of Noah
Kaku ya ari kemu	It must have been like this
Arekuruu	Amid the frenzied
Hi no umi no uchi ni	Sea of fire
Mono mina horobinu	Everything is destroyed

Tsubouchi Shōyō[1]

The massive earthquake that struck the Tokyo-Yokohama area and surrounding regions on 1 September 1923 was the deadliest natural disaster ever recorded in Japanese history, with well over 100,000 documented deaths. The devastation this calamity wrought on Tokyo alone was without precedent. Following in the wake of the earthquake, much of the city—and its environs—were engulfed by an intense firestorm that lasted two days and destroyed large sections of the metropolis. Over half a million dwellings were totally destroyed by fire.[2] Out of a total population of just over two million in the capital, nearly one and half million people were made homeless.[3] In various genres of literature, writers recorded their reactions to the event, and documented the tragedy, with both prose and modern and traditional forms of poetry being prominent: primarily *shi*, *tanka* and *haiku*.

This chapter will focus firstly on the reactions of free verse (shi) poets as documented in a number of collections of free verse poetry published within two months after the earthquake. The free verse poets examined here include the famous Kawaji Ryūko (1885–1959) and Satō Sōnosuke (1890–1942), among others. Free verse poets were much affected by the tragedy; for example, the distinguished poet Nishiwaki Junzaburō (1894–1982) composed a number of poems on the earthquake in his celebrated 1933 poetry collection *Ambarvalia*, but Nishiwaki's volume demands a more detailed examination than is possible here[4]. In addition, I will also translate a prose poem by the French author Paul Claudel (1868–1955), who was residing in Tokyo at this time, in order to obtain a sense of the international reaction to this event. Next, a few haiku that will serve to represent a much larger body of verse composed on the earthquake will also be examined and translated. In addition, we will briefly scrutinize one of the many literary debates born out of the earthquake and its impact on literature.

The following section will examine both fiction and non-fiction produced after the earthquake. The wave of non-fiction that resulted from the earthquake was published very soon after the actual event. This is easy to understand given that most of this writing was documentary in nature, tracing the

personal reactions of the authors to the earthquake. Writers of non-fiction and fiction examined here include such distinguished authors as the novelist Nagai Kafū (1879–1959), the novelist and poet Murō Saisei (1889–1962), the novelist Yoshiya Nobuko (1896–1973), the poet Tsuboi Shigeji (1897–1975), the novelist Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927), the novelist Kōda Aya (1904–1990), the novelist Yoshimura Akira (1927–2006) and the poet Saitō Mokichi (1882–1953). The fiction composed on the earthquake took longer to emerge since it was, in a real sense, a product of reflection and review that focused on the significance of the events for individuals as well as for society in general.[5]

Finally, we will investigate a different genre of verse—the traditional genre of tanka (the oldest Japanese verse genre) —by translating and analyzing the poetry of a number of famous famous tanka poets: Aizu Yaichi (1881–1956), Kubota Utsubo (1877–1967), Yosano Akiko (1878–1942) and Wakayama Bokusui (1885–1928) that was composed in reaction to the event. Much of this verse will be taken from selected journals, books and magazines published at the time that capture the mood of crisis that engulfed the nation.

The literature produced in the wake of the 1923 earthquake made an enormous contribution to the literature of disaster by showing how culture could serve as a memorial to disaster, and also act as a means by which those who lived through it could cope with the event. Trauma memorialized in literature not only functions as a reminder to future generations of the tragedies of the past but also creates a literary precedent or model for the witnessing and recording of similar events in the future. This is clear from literary reactions to the 11 March 2011 East Japan Earthquake, and the Fukushima nuclear meltdown and tsunami that followed it. Award-winning tanka, free verse collections and novels written about this event have already appeared; many such reach back to the September 1923 earthquake and the writing produced at the time. However, the emphasis in this study will be on the earlier disaster. This chapter's chief focus is directed to a few examples of prose fiction and non-fiction but mainly concerns itself with the overwhelming mass of poetry published on the earthquake in both traditional and modern genres.[6]

1.1 The Event

The devastation wrought by the earthquake is clearly visible in photographs published in various collections at the time (available in print and now online).[7] The means of production utilized by the mass media in Tokyo (including radio broadcasts) were nearly all destroyed by the earthquake and fires, thus the production of newspapers and the like reporting on events was quickly relocated to western Japan.[8] The famous novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886–1965) who moved immediately to Ōsaka following the earthquake was interviewed by the Ōsaka Mainichi weekly news magazine eight days after the

event and remarked, "Except for the businesses that survived the earthquake, publication has been shifted to Ōsaka and Kyoto and publishers are now all based in western Japan".[9]

The earthquake and ensuing fires and tsunami were quickly the subject of media representation. Gennifer Weisenfeld notes that, "The print media had demonstrated its miraculous recovery by producing over seventy special earthquake issues in the month of October alone"[10]. A number of special issues of literary and art journals appeared almost immediately. The celebrated tanka journal *Araragi* (Yew tree) brought out an issue on 1 October, but it was only 8 pages in length. The November and December issues were also special earthquake editions; the November issue came to 125 pages.[11] The tanka poet Takada Namikichi (1898–1962), whose poetry volume on the earthquake *Kawanami* (River ripples, 1929) was praised by many, composed the following tanka for the February 1924 issue of *Araragi*:

Hahaue yo	Mother!
Hinaka ni arite	And my sick sister
Yameru ko wo	Surrounded by fire
Itawari kanete	Unable to care for her
Tomo ni shinikemu	Both perished[12]

Although the family home was burnt to the ground, Takada's brother survived the earthquake and fire but his three sisters and mother who were at home died in the firestorm.[13]

In the special earthquake issue of the magazine *Fujin Kurabu* (Ladies' Club) published in October 1923, the well-known free verse poet Shiratori Shōgo (1890–1973) penned the following short free verse poem entitled "Ryōgoku no hotori" (Near Ryōgoku):

Standing near the Ryōgoku bridge
Between the wooden debris and boats
I saw countless bodies floating in the water.
Pursued by the flames drowned in the water
I saw countless bodies: old young men women
What remains with me is
A dead mother clutching her baby
A woman floating together with her just-born fetus.[14]

Haiku poets also responded to the tragedy with many fine haiku composed in the aftermath of the earthquake. Here I will translate only a tiny selection, but these poems can stand for the response of the larger community of haiku poets to the events of 1 September. First, three haiku from the brush of one of the greatest haiku poets of the modern era: Kawahigashi Hekigotō (1873–1937) who advocated haiku written in a modern free meter format. Hekigotō composed a group of 18 free meter haiku under the title of "Shinsai zatsuei" (Mis-

cellaneous Verse on the Earthquake) that were published in the magazine *Midori* (Green) in October/November 1923, and the following selection is taken from this sequence.

Yoru no	Night:
Takidashi no	A makeshift kitchen: Flames
Sukima o moru hi	Flickering between the queue[15]
Yane goshi no	Over the night roofs
Hi no te ni	Flames leaping
Kao sarasu yoru	Exposed faces [16]
Yakeato o yuku	Making my way through the ruins
Hirugaeru	White washing
Hoshi mono no hakufu	Flapping [17]

Another haiku poet who composed moving poetry in response to the tragedy was Hasegawa Reisho (1886–1928), the husband of the equally famous haiku poet Hasegawa Kanajo (1887–1969). Reisho composed the following haiku that was published in his collection *Zassō* (Weeds, 1923). The poem has the headnote, "At the back of Hakone, at the time of the earthquake, a rock cliff split in two, falling onto the ground."

Akikusa ni	Onto the autumn grasses
Daibanjaku no	A huge rock fell
Hakanasa yo	Nothing lasts [18]

As is well known, a large number of Korean residents of Tokyo were massacred in the aftermath to the earthquake, the murders ostensibly triggered by rumours of Korean "spies" starting the fires. Estimates of Koreans slaughtered by mobs range from two thousand to eight thousand.[19] The free verse poet Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886–1942), undoubtedly the most acclaimed poet of prewar Japan, wrote the following short free verse poem entitled "Kinjitsu shokan" (My Impressions of Recent Events) about this event, which was published in the magazine *Gendai* (The Present) in March 1924:

> Masses of Koreans were killed
> Their blood extends over a hundred leagues
> Enraged, I witnessed this: what barbarity![20]

References to the slaughter of the Koreans can be found in other contemporary sources, especially prose pieces, sometimes written in an excess of patriotic zeal castigating Koreans as agents of revolution, and sometimes lamenting the terrible tragedy. One outstanding example of the latter is the Korean poet Kim Yong-je's (1909–94) poem entitled "Memories of the Earthquake: For September 1" published in the journal *Fujin Senki* (Women's Battleship) in 1931. Kim was resident in Tokyo for several years and the poem describes two Korean women murdered at the time by Japanese in a frenzy of violence.[21]

Various debates by writers were carried out after the earthquake as to its significance for literature and art.[22] One of the most explosive was the novelist

Kikuchi Kan's (1888–1948) essay *Saigo zakkan* (Stray Thoughts After the Quake), published in the leading journal *Chūō kōron (Central Review*) in October 1923. Kikuchi begins with the following provocative statements:

> The earthquake was, in the final analysis, a social revolution. Property, position and tradition have been made into an absurdity; society is now based on merit. It is a society for those who can truly work hard. This may be a temporary phenomenon or only partly so but as a result of this horrifying earthquake one good thing has emerged [...]. If politicians and the people alike do not forget the lessons we have learnt, I believe they may be able to avoid the havoc of the social revolution looming up before us [...]. In any event, I now understand that you make only what you eat yourself; this is the most important job of all. I believe the strongest among us make what they eat themselves. In that sense, the greatest and most powerful jobs are held by farmers [...]. As a result of the earthquake, there is no doubt that art and literature will deteriorate. The fact that we have lost faith in literature and art may be one of the reasons for this. Moreover, the need for literature and art will decline dramatically.[23]

Kikuchi's attack on literature, his bold predictions of its irrelevance and inevitable demise in the face of the tragedy caused by the earthquake—which might seem a paradoxical and somewhat self-defeating position for a professional writer to adopt—was quickly rebutted the following month by another well-known novelist, Hirotsu Kazuo (1891–1968), who wrote a reply to Kikuchi in the *Jiji shinpō* (Current Affairs) newspaper entitled "Hinan to bengo (Kikuchi Kan ni taisuru)" (Criticism and Justification: Against Kikuchi Kan):

> I know that when we are confronted by earthquakes and fires and wars—events of extraordinary destructive power—then literary works will cease to exist but if we proceed along this path logically, then we can anticipate there will come a time when the earth itself will be destroyed. Thus, it is foolish as a general rule for human beings to utter the word eternal. And if we take this to its logical conclusion, then debates will cease, words themselves will disappear [...]. If we contemplate a far distant future when this occurs or rather if we take this to be our basic presupposition, then human life, learning, even art and literature, everything will end up as nothing—however, living and breathing human beings all eject this pessimistic view of life from their thinking. Human beings recoil from this cosmic pessimism or nihilism to return to optimism, to the activism of human life. Thereupon, using human standards, humans create various words [...] and thus the word eternal lives as a human construction. And so, the words eternal art are alive.[24]

I have quoted at length from these two writers to give a sense of the vitality and urgency of debates conducted by Japanese authors over matters as fundamental as the prospects for literature and art after the earthquake. Next, I will investigate prose works on the earthquake in more detail.[25]

1.2. The Earthquake in Prose

A number of well-known authors put pen to paper to both record and reflect on the earthquake immediately following the event. As we have seen above, these works were primarily documentary pieces, non-fiction rather than fiction. For example, in October 1923 the novelist and poet Murō Saisei (1889–1962) wrote a memoir of the earthquake entitled *Nichiroku* (A Journal) in the *Kaizō* (*Reconstruction*) magazine. His wife had been admitted to the Hamada Hospital in Surugadai in central Tokyo where at the end of August she gave birth to a daughter named Asako. After the earthquake struck, Murō was in a frenzy to find his wife and his daughter, having heard that the Hamada Hospital had been destroyed by fire. He searched in vain on 1 September (the day of the earthquake) but in the afternoon of the following day was able to locate them near Ueno whence they had been evacuated. His wife told him "You were so late in coming that I thought you had died."[26] The memoir is a record of events from 31 August to 9 September, written in diary format, with the main focus on Murō's friends and family. Kishi Mutsuko states that the diary record was partly used as material for Murō's award-winning long novel *Anzukko* (Anzukko, 1957), later filmed with the actress Kagawa Kyōko starring as Anzukko.[27] Kishi also cites the novelist Hori Tatsuo's (1904–1953) heartrending account of the loss of his mother in the earthquake, as recorded in Hori's piece "Hana o moteru onna" (The Woman with the Flowers) first published in the *Fujin Gahō* (Ladies Pictorial) journal in August 1932: "My mother died in the earthquake. I also lost her photograph. —Oddly, as time has passed, in my heart the loss of both my mother and the photograph have melded together. I don't know why but what warms my heart is the image of mother as a young woman in the photo rather than the image of her in her old age."[28]

Five other examples (among many) of such writings produced in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake are, first, the novelist Kanō Sakujirō's (1885–1941) memoir entitled *Shinsai nikki* (Earthquake Diary) published in the journal *Bunshō kurabu* (Writing Club) also in October where the novelist records his experience of the earthquake, beginning with: "1 September 1923: it was just at the time I sat down at the table to eat lunch when it happened. I experienced a violent shaking as if my body as been suddenly flung downwards. I thought it was an earthquake, but I never imagined the scale and magnitude of the event." Kanō goes on to describe in detail the events of that day, noting that the account was taken from his diary at the time. [29]

The second example of non-fiction is from Yoshiya Nobuko (1896–1973), the popular woman novelist, who contributed a two-part memoir to the volume *Shishū sanbun: Ā Tōkyō* (Poetry Prose: Ah Tokyo), published in November 1923. This volume will be examined in some detail later. Yoshiya wrote two prose pieces on the quake and also a poem. The first piece entitled *Horobinu yume* (The Dream That Will Not Perish) is written with the clarion tones of

an Old Testament prophet and commences with the following declaration: "The afternoon of 1 September 1923—a day that will forever live in memory, never to be forgotten—the arrival in the sky over the imperial capital of a mysterious giant cloud! How can I possibly describe it? That cumulonimbus—a terrible, unearthly demonic power, that cloud filled with Mother Nature's secrets, that giant cloud! Rising ominously, breaking the axis of the earth-crust in two, welling up forever rising! Can it truly be called a cloud? A nebula, a lava-flow blazing upwards incorporating a heat and eternal fire hidden within the earth's crust? Alas, is it not sublime, in this very instant the earth returns to the primitive chaos of creation?"[30] Here Yoshiya almost anticipates the horror of the atomic bomb cloud rising over Hiroshima 22 years later. Yoshiya goes on to probe the significance of this cosmic event for humankind and reaches the following conclusion, listening to the voice of her soul: "'Nay, nay'! There may come a day when everything on this earth will perish, but something will remain, amid the madness and violence of Nature, something will somehow survive, this you weak children know not! [...]. What alone will survive is the will of humankind!".[31] This pronouncement from her soul fills Yoshiya with joy. The use of the word "will" or "determination" (ishi) presumably indicates the will of humanity to recreate, to rebuild; as she later notes: "The shining invisible dream in the heart of humanity of the true, the good and the beautiful birthed for eternity; this power will never be lost, never disappear, never perish."[32]

After this near-apocalyptic appeal for post-earthquake humanity to live again, Yoshiya follows with a short personal memoir of her own experience during the quake entitled *Nayameru miyako no ichigū* (In A Corner of the Suffering Capital). Yoshiya's language here stands in sharp contrast to the white-hot rhetoric of the previous piece and narrates in a quiet, matter of fact manner her search for her friend Chiyoko, who had gone on holiday with Yoshiya to a country spa in Shinshū and returned with her to Tokyo the day before the earthquake. Fortunately, Chiyoko survived.

The eminent novelist Nagai Kafū (1879–1959) was renowned as a chronicler of Tokyo, both before and after the earthquake. He also kept a famous diary in which with cynicism and irony in equal measure he recorded the vicissitudes of life in Tokyo. Kafū's diary is often quoted by scholars and students of literature alike as a source for important events in the history of the city, and his account of the earthquake is no exception. The translation of the diary passage relating his experience is by Edward Seidensticker:

> Then, at about noon, the earth began to rumble. I was sitting under the bookcase reading the posthumous writings of Hosoi Heishū [Hosoi Heishū (1728–1802) was a Nagoya Confucian scholar], when, with some surprise, I found books falling on me. I got up and opened a window. Outside there were great clouds of dust and smoke, reducing visibility to almost nil. Women and children were screaming,

> chickens were cackling, dogs were barking. The clouds of dust were from tiles falling outside the gate. As I set about making my preparations to flee, the earth once more began shaking. With a book still in my hand, I went out the front door and into the garden. In a few minutes there was another shock. I was swaying back and forth quite as if I were on a ship. Bracing myself against the gate, I looked fearfully back at my house. A few roof tiles had fallen, but the doors and windows were all in place. Feeling somewhat more at ease, I went out to the main street to have lunch at the Yamagata Hotel. The wall of the dining room having collapsed, there were tables on the street, where a few foreign guests were having lunch. After lunch I went home, but with the earth still quaking I could not go inside. I could only sit in the garden in fear and trembling. The sky, blackly cloudy through the day, gradually cleared in the evening, and a half moon came out. After dinner at the hotel, I climbed Mt. Atago to have a look at the fires. At past ten, when I started up Edomi Hill on my way home, the fires in Akasaka and Tameike had already reached Aoi Bridge.[33]

Kafū's insouciance in going off to have lunch at a hotel amid the chaos of the earthquake is typical of his response to life in general. But it also paints a stark picture of the looming disaster caused by the massive firestorm about to engulf Tokyo.

According to the critic Kishi Mutsuko, Kafū wrote four stories that are directly influenced by the earthquake. The stories are in order of composition: *Shitaya sōwa* (Shitaya Gleanings, 1926; original title "Shitaya no hanashi"); "Chijirashikami" (Permed Hair, 1925); "Kashima no onna" (The Woman in the Rented Room, 1926) and "Nakasu byōin wo otonoau" (Visiting Nakasu Hospital, 1928).[34] The distinguished critic Yoshida Seiichi (1908–84) in his 1971 book on Kafū adds another work, "Ichikawa sensei no jinroku" (Record of Dr Ichikawa"s Escape), to this list but notes that both "Visiting Nakasu Hospital" and "Record of Dr Ichikawa's Escape" are essays and not fiction. He especially praises *Shitaya Gleanings*: an autobiographical work based on Kafū's family.[35] Edward Seidensticker also admires this work (but also classifies it as non-fiction) in his 1965 biography of Kafū, and observes of the "The Woman in the Rented Room" that the earthquake "provided the background" for the short story.[36] Actually, in this work the earthquake is unmistakably in the background, hardly featuring in the foreground at all. There are just a few references to the fires in this narrative of the relationship between a gentleman called Nagashima and a fickle call-girl named Kikuko.[37] If Seidensticker's implied view that this story has the strongest connection to the earthquake is correct, then, it is clear that Kafū's diary provides the best evidence of the impact of the earthquake on the novelist.

There is a problem with drawing a line between non-fiction and fiction in modern Japanese prose that has long been noticed by researchers: all too often, the lines are blurred, and the genres overlap. This is too large an issue to explore here but as an example of one such ambiguous work I will cite the leftist poet Tsuboi Shigeji's (1897–1975) essay or story "Jūgoen gojussen—shinsai tsuisōki" (Fifteen yen, fifty sen—Recollections of the Earthquake, 1928) first

published in the leftwing journal *Senki* (Battle Flag). This piece is narrated in the first person, and initially describes a journey on a train by a traveller who is leaving from Tabata station in Tokyo a few days after the earthquake, with the platform and carriages jammed full of people fleeing Tokyo. He describes the overcrowded trains thus: "The crowd, frustrated by being unable to board the carriages, climbed onto the roofs, desperate to escape the streets where the disaster brought chaos and fear. I saw large numbers of people layered like tiles on the roofs of trains about to leave the station—I was utterly taken aback by their courage. Even old men and women lined with wrinkles climbed onto the roofs. Barking at the people loudly, station staff tried to sweep the passengers off the roofs with long bamboo poles as if sweeping dirt away with brooms, yet their faces showing no fear whatever, they made no attempt to clamber down. I wondered if they had chosen to flee the earthquake stricken-streets over being hurtled from the roofs of the steam trains to their deaths?".[38]

A little later Tsuboi writes, "People on the train spoke of the things they had seen and heard in connection with the earthquake, terrible things; with exaggerated gestures, they recounted baseless rumours as if they were true. One gangster-type brandished a creepy tattoo on his arm and nonchalantly boasted about his skill in killing a Korean on a whim with one sword stroke. Other people trumpeted aloud heedless of others that the reason Tokyo was turned into flame was because of bombs hurled willy nilly by socialists"[39]. Later in the narrative, Tsuboi tells the tale of how his protagonist (presumably Tsuboi himself) was accused of being a Korean in Ushigome in Tokyo while walking with a friend. The accuser was a soldier who held a sword to the protagonist's back (his clothing appeared to be Korean dress).[40]

While he was studying medicine in Munich, the famous tanka poet Saitō Mokichi wrote a memoir of the earthquake called "Nihon daijishin" (The great Japanese earthquake). It was published in October 1929 in the *Kaizō* (Reconstruction) magazine. Mokichi writes: "Today the [German] newspapers noted that the death toll from the earthquake had reached half a million. Dormant volcanos, big and small, began to become active. Tokyo, Yokohama, Fukagawa, Senju, Yokosuka, Asakusa, Kanda, Hongō, Shitaya, Atami, Gotenba and Hakone were all made extinct. The government moved piecemeal to Kyoto and Osaka. Tokyo is still engulfed by flame. The Prime Minister is dead, as are many Ministers"[41]. As Mokichi and his readers knew in 1929, nearly every fact reported here was wrong, except for the ongoing reports of damage in Tokyo. Thus, the total chaos and confusion engendered by the earthquake is skillfully conveyed by Mokichi's adroit description of how it was initially misreported abroad. The variety of responses in prose to the earthquake written in the immediate aftermath of the event is evident even in this small sample of nonfiction, and fiction.

Works written long after the event include the well-known author Kōda Aya's (1904–1990) 1993 novel *Kimono*. Yukiko Dejima argues that this tale

"may be the only work that can be called a masterpiece among the earthquake literature on the great Kanto Earthquake"[42]. The novel was published after the author's death and centers on the response of a nineteen-year old girl called Rutsuko to the earthquake. It was written towards the end of Kōda's life, the last full-length novel she wrote before her death.

The novelist Yoshimura Akira (1927–2006) wrote a full-length historical novel called *Kantō daishinsai* (Great Kantō Earthquake) about the earthquake that was published in 1973 and subsequently won the Kikuchi Kan prize for fiction. To call this work a novel is somewhat misleading (although such narratives are ubiquitous in modern Japanese fiction, as noted above) because it reads like a work of non-fiction, with chapter titles like "Imamura setsu vs Ōmori setsu" (the Imamura Theory versus the Ōmori theory) discussing the debate between two scientists as to the cause of the quake. The book also has chapters narrating the murders of such people as the famous anarchist Ōsugi Sakae (1885–1923) relating this to the crackdown on socialists by the authorities in the wake of the earthquake.[43] The exposition is that of a novel, with dialogue between characters as if the invisible author is recording these conversations in real life. At the same time, there is a consistent third-person narration chronicling particular issues such as the connection between government pronouncements and the attacks upon Koreans, which Yoshimura (in the guise of the third-person narrator) discusses in some detail, and with much dramatization of particular incidents.[44]

Dejima notes that the famous novelist Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927) wrote a number of short pieces about the earthquake after viewing various sites personally. Probably the most famous reference to the earthquake among Akutagawa's works is to be found in his 1927 fragmented autobiographical collection "Aru aho no isshō" (The Life of a Fool), where he wrote: "The smell was close to that of a ripe apricot. While walking through the ruins, he detected this faint scent, and thought that the stink from the corpses rotting under the hot sun wasn't too bad after all. But standing in front of the pond where the corpses were piled one on top of another, he realized that the term 'macabre' was not an exaggeration. What particularly moved him was the corpse of a 12- or 13-year-old child. Gazing at the corpse, he almost felt envious." The envy Akutagawa feels is for a young death (he committed suicide at some time after completing the manuscript); as immediately after this passage, he recalls the proverb of "those who the gods love die young".[45]

A number of book length works were published quickly after the earthquake. Following is a partial listing of books published in November 1923 alone: Arano Kōhei edited two volumes on the earthquake entitled *Shinsai romansu: aiwa to kawa* (Earthquake Romance: Sad Tales, Excellent Tales) and *Shinsai romansu: zanwa to bidan no maki* (Earthquake Romance: Cruel Tales and Heartwarming Tales); other notable works include Nakajima Hekisen's *Teito shinsai sōnan kara Nagasaki made* (From the Earthquake and Disaster

in the Imperial Capital to Nagasaki), Seki Jirō's *Shinsai Terusu dai 3 shū* (Earthquake Tales: Vol. 3), and Hanamura Tsuyuko's *Shinsai higeki: Hi no jigoku* (Earthquake Tragedy: Hell-Fire).[46]

The transformation of direct experience into fiction took longer to produce than non-fiction essays and memoirs, and it was not until the following year 1924 that fictional works on the earthquake began to be published in large numbers. But, as we have seen, novels on the earthquake were produced many decades after the event; as the earthquake faded in living memory and receded into history, such works can be properly classified as historical fiction.

1.3. *Ah Tokyo*

The celebrated artist and poet Takehisa Yumeji (1884–1934) contributed drawings of the tragic scenes resulting from the earthquake to the special volume entitled *Shi sanbun Ā Tokyo* (Poetry Prose: Ah Tokyo), published in November 1923, but the volume was more notable for poetry than art.[47] This 200 page book was produced by the Kōransha company, well known for publishing poets and poetry, and included works by a representative list of its authors (who acted as the editors) among whom were the free verse poets Saijō Yaso (1892–1970), Noguchi Ujō (1882–1945), Ikuta Shungetsu (1892–1930), Takehisa Yumeji, Kawaji Ryūkō, Mizutani Masaru (1894–1950) and Hitomi Tōmei (1883–1974). In the preface, the editors noted that, "A hundred nights would not suffice to express the pain and sadness of residents of Tokyo at the loss of so many thousands of lives and millions of yen [...]. We at Kōransha are at one with the feelings of the victims and will memorialize for the future this unparalleled and appalling tragedy, moreover we pray that this calamity will never again befall the imperial capital that now will have to be rebuilt from the ground up."[48]

I will examine representative poems from this volume (although there were some prose pieces, most of the items in the volume are poems), and here I should note that verse collected in the book is almost all free verse (jiyūshi)—some written in colloquial diction, others using classical diction; in that sense, the volume confirms the triumph of this mode of verse composition which was introduced to Japan a mere two decades earlier. The poet generally seen as responsible for the popularity of this new verse genre was Kawaji Ryūkō, and so the first two poems I translate from this book will come from his pen.

Destruction (*Hakai*)

Revolution wrought by Nature is
Far more ingenious than
The scheming of mankind,
Reducing the battered metropolis
To ash,

In just three minutes
Bringing destruction
That is not possible without sweat and toil.
Like an infant
Smashing up a paper doll for no reason whatever.[49]

Aftershocks (*Yoshin*)

"You won't be wrong to think of this as war!"
"But, it's a war with your life on the line.
Every time the earth shakes with a thud
Running outside embracing weeping children
Makes this a war marked by the depth of human compassion;
Looking back at the wailing women and children before my eyes
Who will continue the struggle against inexorable Nature tonight
All through the sleepless night."[50]

The style of poetry in Ah Tokyo closely approaches what James E. Young in his study of Holocaust literature, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust* (1990), has described as "documentary realism". He comments: "'documentary realism'" has become the style by which to persuade readers of a work's testamentary character. For the survivor's witness to be credible, it must seem natural and unconstructed."[51] Kawaji's use of the present tense reinforces the sense of immediacy that the poetry projects. His second poem in particular reads as a conversation, an autobiographical or documentary narrative. Another free verse poem from the same volume is the following verse by Mizutani Masaru, which is interwoven into a prose description of the destruction wrought by the earthquake. Unlike Kawaji Ryūkō's verse, Mizutani's poem is composed in classical Japanese:

There was once a city here—
As if fumbling
The autumn winds blow over the burnt ground
Death slumbers in the unending darkness
So silent so black that
Memories dissipate in the autumn winds
Grief and sadness
Scatter into the night air.
Ah, a city in ruins!
A city inhabited by autumn winds![52]

This verse is followed by a prose passage where Mizutani makes more explicit what is powerfully expressed in the poem: "The night is no more than a city filled with the black ash of death. The light that flickered brightly in the sky is now a mere memory, like a dream extinguished."[53] The poem is a dirge, or perhaps an elegy to those who perished in the fires that ravaged Tokyo, leaving only ash and desolation.

Susan Gubar writing of poetry written on and by the survivors of the Holocaust notes that:

> At its least mediated, documentary poetry aspires to the condition of journalistic or legal reportage, reiterating the words of survivors to contest incredulity; however, since even representations that claim to imitate the world also construct versions of it, various aesthetic maneuvers inevitably intervene to complicate the reportorial model. North American and British poets have edited legal depositions; transcribed oral histories; described their reactions to circumstantial evidence and trials; used passages in books about the Holocaust as footnotes, titles, epigraphs, and occasions for ethical speculations; and recorded their reactions to conversations with survivors. To the extent that the most literal, legalistic journalism crops testimony as rigorously as a camera frames experience, documentary poets question the objectivity of representation, just as they emphasize the artifice of presumably factual accounts, the blurring of the line between fiction and fact, [...].[54]

The objectivity of representation is an interesting notion when applied to poetry. The variety of lyric poetry that Mizutani employs, by virtue of its lyricism, acts to distance the reader from the horror of the devastation caused by the earthquake but, at the same time, it also memorializes it in a way that transcends mere documentary journalism. Mizutani does this by utilizing the traditional figures and devices of poetic art: the anthropomorphizing of the autumn wind; and, in exactly the same way, Kawaji anthropomorphizes Nature (which is why I capitalize it in translation) in his first poem. The transformation of documentary realism into art is one of the defining characteristics of significant poetry. In this sense, the memorialization of trauma/tragedy is the product of a process of formalization. The use of formal categories of poetic expression such as the dirge or elegy or lament transcend the reality of the present and point to a future where only memory—the memory of tragedy formally rendered into art—remains. In essence this is the purpose and function of *Ah Tokyo*. Yumeji Takehisa's long, formal lament for those who perished in the fires illustrates this perfectly. I translate only the first stanza of this seven-stanza poem:

> A Lament for The Dead City (*Shito Aishō*)
>
> 1
> Those who survived
> They can be forgotten
> These must never be forgotten
> They and these
> Were divided and placed into
> Two boxes
> One was burnt
> One survived.
> The one that was burnt
> Contained what must never be forgotten.[55]

Yumeji's verse has an angular, formal concision that marks it as distinctly modern poetry, although the hand of the draftsman sketching an outline can

also be discerned in the work. The abstract, minimalist nature of the poem emphasizes by contrast the immensity of the tragedy.

1.4. *Earthquake Poetry Collection*

Another collection produced on the earthquake that is representative of the outpouring of free verse written in the aftermath of the tragedy is the book entitled *Shinsai shishū: Saika no ue ni* (Earthquake Poetry Collection: On the Disaster) published in November 1923 by the Shinchōsha company.

This 240-page volume was edited by a poets' association called the "shiwakai" (poetry discussion group), which included such well-known poets as Kitahara Hakushū (1885–1942), Saijō Yaso, Hinatsu Kōnosuke (1890–1971) and Horiguchi Daigaku (1892–1981). Poetry by 49 poets was included in this volume but I will translate a sample of just three works. The first is by the famous French poet Paul Claudel (1868–1955), who was the French ambassador to Japan, based in Tokyo from 1921 to 1927. In his 1926 volume *L'Oiseau Noir Dans le Soleil Levant* (Black Bird Against the Rising Sun), Claudel wrote of the earthquake in a reportage style. He submitted the poem (written in French) translated below to the editors of the *Earthquake Poetry Collection*, and this prose poem is apparently a true record (poetically expressed) of his journey to Yokohama searching for his daughter.[56]

The text is composed in an imitation of the 7/5 meter of traditional Japanese verse, and, literally translated, reads: "To my right and my left there is a town burning but the moon between the clouds is the same as seven white women. Head on the rail body tangled together with the trembling body of the earth I listen to the last cicada. On the sea seven syllables of light a single drop of milk". Claudel is known for his Catholic mysticism, and this mysterious verse expressing the poet's exhaustion and terror, but also a perverse sense of beauty, captures this incongruous mixture of themes perfectly.

In the same collection are poems by Satō Sōnosuke (1890–1942), a famous modern poet who was interested in faraway places like France and also Okinawa. His verse in this volume is both realistic and fantastic as we see from the following poem written about refugees huddling in a customs warehouse to escape the fires.

A Heavenly Hell (*Tengoku meita jigoku*)

The customs warehouse filled with ash-grey citizens
Goods scattered everywhere, everyone wants something
A drink! a drink, the barrels spout a fountain of wine
Outside the windows, fire maidens from the harbor
Dance in giddying circles: the dance of vultures
A poor man's heaven is wreathed in flame
Eyes are keys; hands are pickaxes

Scorched to their eyebrows, children lap at milk
Their parents have belly-sacs filled with Rhinewine
Strolling through a miraculous bazaar.[57]

This poem presents the truly bizarre spectacle of refugees availing themselves of the luxury goods in the customs warehouse, while fleeing the flames outside which are personified as fire-maidens. Satō's imagery is strained somewhat in an attempt to capture the Dante-like features of a building that seems like heaven but could soon turn into a hell as it is devoured by the flames. Other poems by him are brutally realistic, but documentary realism has its limits and poets sought escape from the constraints of such narrative devices by recourse to extravagant poetic figures and tropes, as illustrated in this poem.

The final free verse poem from *Earthquake Poetry Collection* that I translate is the following verse by another famous poet Senge Motomaro (1888–1948).

Death Train (*Shi no densha*)

A burnt train, nothing but bones left,
Passengers and the driver alike are nothing but bones
On a journey to the land of death
How hideous the postures of the dead![58]

This rather ugly poem (like much of the poetry in this volume) sums up effectively the grisly horror of the aftermath to the firestorm that engulfed Tokyo.

1.5. Aizu Yaichi's *Aftershocks*

Aizu Yaichi was born in Niigata on the Japan Sea coast and was educated in his home province as well as at Waseda University in Tokyo, whence he graduated in 1906 with a degree in English literature. From an early age, he displayed a love of poetry and the fine arts and by 1925 was lecturing on Japanese art in Waseda University. His first book of tanka poetry was *Nankyō shinshō* (Nara New Songs, 1924), which revealed his admiration for the art and architecture of the Nara region. In this maiden volume of verse, Aizu included eight tanka on the 1923 earthquake under the title *Shinyo* (Aftershocks, 1923). In 1953, Aizu published a poetry volume entitled *Jichū rokumeishū* (Self-Annotated Howling Stag Collection), which included the poet's own comments on all his verse (which was reproduced in the volume), including *Aftershocks*, and the following translation of Aizu's reaction to the earthquake and the tanka he composed recording this event is taken from this book. "On the first of September [1923] I was eating lunch when suddenly everything began to shake violently, I ran out into my garden, but the shocks became increasingly ferocious, and I could no longer stand up. I remained on all fours, looking all round me, the water from the water-lily basins leapt into the air, falling with

mud everywhere, half the roof tiles fell down. The aftershocks occurred frequently, my bookcases all collapsed and fell onto the straw mats one on top of the other, as it wasn't safe to go inside the house, I took the storm shutters from their compartments and choosing a flat place amid the Japanese cedars put the shutters down as a floor. Stripping the carpet from my parlor, I made it into a shelter over our heads and spent many days there [...]."[59]

The following five tanka are taken from *Aftershocks* but it should be noted that the remaining untranslated three poems in the sequence for the most part echo the grisly verse that is demonstrated by the fourth poem I translate here.

Ōtono mo	The fields the grasses
Nobe no kusane mo	The Emperor's palace
Oshinabete	Will you shake them all
Nai uchifuru ka	With your earthquake?
Kami no manimani	O god of creation[60]

The above poem is written in Aizu's famous neo-classical style where the poet uses recondite vocabulary drawn from ancient literature, and like all of his verse, is composed in the hiragana script (minus any Chinese characters), another gesture to the Japanese past. The use of such diction and vocabulary adds a certain austere, almost classical quality to the poem, and this in turn adds to his theme of the unbridled power of nature.

Uchihisasu	On the sunlit
Miyakōji mo	Avenues of the capital
Watatsumi no	Like the rolling
Nami no uneri to	Waves over the waters
Nai furiyamazu	The earthquake does not end[61]

This next poem is similar to the preceding verse in both diction and theme.

Atarashiki	I can hardly wait
Machi no chimata no	For spring to dance
Noki no ha ni	Onto the eaves of rooftops
Kagayou haru o	On the streets
Itsu to ka matamu	Of our town reborn[62]

This much praised verse looks to the future, to next spring when all will be reborn in a cataclysm of new growth.

Aki no hi wa	The autumn sunlight
Tsugite terasedo	Continues to shine
Kokobaku no	But the grease
Hito no abura wa	From countless corpses
Tsuchi ni kawakazu	Lies wet on the earth[63]

This tanka is of a piece with much of the documentary style of literature produced in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and is unsparing in its description of the loss of life.

Waga yado no	The vase from Peru
Perū no tsubo mo	In my home was
Kudaketari	Completely shattered
Na ga Panseon	Your Pantheon
Tsutsu ga arazu ya	Is it still safe?[64]

This last verse that I translate from *Aftershocks* is a slightly humorous poem (as stated by the author in his notes to the verse), where the narrator wonders if the earthquake has even shaken the mighty Pantheon in Greece, given that it has shattered his precious Peruvian vase.

1.6. Kubota Utsubo's *Shiny Leaves*

In 1926 the famous poet Kubota Utsubo's tanka collection *Kagamiba* (Shiny Leaves) was published and included in the collection are 24 tanka on the earthquake. I have selected 5 poems from this selection for translation. Kubota begins his poetry with the following note: "Fortunately my house was spared the damage caused by the great earthquake of September 1st. There were many people I was worried about but there was no way I could visit them. On the 2nd, hoping for the aftershocks to subside, I went to see the remains of my nephew's house in Sarugaku-chō, Kanda."[65] This note is followed by the first poem in the sequence, which chronicles the poet's increasingly desperate search for his nephew:

Moenokoru	Walking back through
Honoo no hara o	The smoldering
Yukimodori	Paddocks
Miredomo wakazu	Not comprehending what I saw
Oi ga ie atari	Near my nephew's home [66]
Chi wa subete	The earth was completely covered
Akaki oki nari	In red embers
Kono shita ni	Underneath
Oi no ari tomo	My nephew may be buried
Waga ika ni semu	What can I do?[67]
Yakenokori	Still burning
Akaki hi moyuru	The red fires burning
Jinbochō	I ventured through
Misakichō yukedo	Misakichō and Jinbochō
Hito hitori mizu	Saw not a single soul [68]
Tobotobo to	Trudging
Noronoro to furafura to	Creeping along reeling
Kuru hitora	People
Hitomi suwarite	Eyes fixed
Tada ni kewashiki	Just grim [69]

The above verse is noticeable for the heavy use of onomatopoeia and alliteration, as well as the *ji-amari* (extra syllables), common features of modern tanka poetry.

The last poem is about his friend, the tanka poet Nishikawa Tomoyoshi, who Kubota heard had died at Hifukushō in eastern Tokyo.

Kegashitaru	Carrying on his back
Chichi o seoite	His injured father
Hi no chimata	Running through
Hashireru Nishikawa o	The streets of fire
Hito no mata mizu	Nishikawa was never seen again [70]

1.7. Yosano Akiko's Poetry on the Earthquake

Yosano Akiko and Wakayama Bokusui were associates as well as two of the greatest poets of 20th century Japan; both poets were leaders of the school of tanka that was greatly influenced by the naturalist movement, especially after 1910.[71] I will discuss Bokusui's verse later but will first investigate Akiko's poetry on the earthquake. Akiko is without any doubt the most celebrated female poet of her time.[72] Despite the fact that her Tokyo residence did not suffer any damage during the earthquake, Akiko was deeply affected by this event because the manuscript of her translation or commentary on the *Tale of Genji* (the second version of the work that Akiko finished), which she had placed for the safekeeping in the school that she ran, was completely destroyed in the ensuing fires. This was a great loss to Akiko and to scholarship on *Genji* (other manuscripts by Akiko were also destroyed in the fires).[73] Subsequently Akiko wrote a large number of tanka about the earthquake, which were later collected and published in her 20th collection of poetry *Rurikō,* (Lapis Lazuli Light, 1925).[74] The collection contained 529 tanka plus a free verse poem. The total number of tanka written on the theme of the earthquake come to 54 in total, from which I have selected ten poems for translation, the order of the verses (as in the original) making a narrative documenting the events of that terrible day and following night.

Daiichi o ba	The sky of
Aisuru mono no	The first of September
Kanashimi o	Mocks our grief
Azameru kugatsu	We who love
Tsuitachi no sora	Mother earth! [75]
Yasuminaku	Unrelenting
Nai shite aki no	The earthquake
Getsumei ni	In the autumn moonlight
Aware moyuru ka	Will it all burn down? How pitiful
Tōkyō no machi	The city of Tokyo [76]

Kōmyō o	The capital abandoning
Suteshi miyako ga	Hope and Buddha's grace equally
Mizukara o	Burning itself to death
Yaku honoo age	Flames rising
Akaku suredomo	All is red [77]
Waga miyako	Our capital
Hi no umi to nari	Has become a sea of flame
Yamanote ni	Uptown
Nokorunakaba wa	The remaining half of the city is
Shōmō wo matsu	Awaiting total destruction [78]

"Uptown" (Yamanote) was the area where the wealthy citizens of Tokyo dwelled; fortunately, few people died there. This stood in stark contrast to the unfortunate "downtown" (shitamachi) where the poor resided, and which became the scene of many deaths.

Nai no yo no	The night of the earthquake
Kusamakura o ba	Outdoors sleeping rough
Fuku mono wa	The breeze is
Daichi ga morasu	The earth's
Zetsubō no iki	Exhalations of despair [79]

Ōtsuka Torahiko notes that when the earthquake occurred, Akiko fled with her family to the riverbank where they spent two nights together with other evacuees.[80] As stated above, Akiko's house was uptown in Kōjimachi, and so escaped destruction.

Tenchi kuyu	Heaven and earth break
Inochi wo oshimu	The thought of
Kokoro dani	Cherishing life
Ima shibashi nite	Now will be forgotten
Wasure hatsu beki	For a brief instant [81]
Kono yowa ni	In the middle of the night
Ikinokoritaru	Counting
Kazu saguru	Survivors
Ayashiki kaze no	A sinister wind
Ningen wo fuku	Blows over humanity [82]
Dare mite mo	No matter who you see
Oya harakara no	You feel the same as
Kokochi sure	Parents brothers and sisters
Nai osamarite	The earthquake has subsided
Asa ni itareba	Morning has come [83]
Sora ni nomi	Only in the heavens
Kiritsu nokorite	Does order remain
Hi no shizumi	The sun sinks
Haikyo no ue ni	Over the ruins
Tsuki nobori kinu	The moon has risen [84]

Hito amata
Shinuru hi ni shite
Ikitaru wa
Shi yori hakanaki
Kokochi koso sure

On a day when
Countless people have perished
Life is
More fleeting than death
This is what I felt [85]

1.8. Wakayama Bokusui's Miscellaneous Poems on the Aftershocks

Wakayama Bokusui wrote 8 tanka on the earthquake in his 15th collection of tanka *Kuromatsu* (Black Pines, 1938). The volume was put together ten years after the poet's death, in one sense as a memorial to Bokusui's work.[86] The book contained poetry written between 1923 and 1928, including what the distinguished tanka critic Shinma Shin'ichi calls "a linked sequence of poems" (rensaku), that is, the eight poems titled "Yoshin zatsuei" (Miscellaneous Poems on the Aftershocks). Shinma remarks that the sequence was begun on September 1, 1923, namely, the day the earthquake occurred.[87] Bokusui also kept a diary record of the earthquake in a single volume of recollections entitled *Jumoku to sono ha* (Tree and Leaves, 1925). My translation of the sequence follows:

Yo ni hiru ni
Nai yuritsuzuku
Konogoro no
Kokoro susabi no
Sube nakarikeri

Day and night
The earthquakes continue
At a time such as this
Hearts cannot help
But harden [88]

Tsuki koete
Nao yuritsuzuku
Ōnai no
Koyoi mo yuru yo
Kono shizuka yo o

A month later
Still going on
The enormous earthquake
Tonight, too, rocking
This tranquil night [89]

Me no mae no
Dentō no hi o
Yurisutete
Nai sugiyukinu
Kono shizuka yo o

Before my very eyes
Jolting the
Glow of the electric light
The earthquake rolls uncaring
Over this tranquil night [90]

Niwa ki kusa
Susamite zo miyu
Yoru hiru naku
Nai yuritsuzuki
Hareshi hi goro o

Look how the trees and grasses
In the garden have gone to seed
Day and night
The earthquake still going on
This fine day [91]

Waga kokoro
Ikidooroshi mo
Yoru hiru naku
Yuritsuzuku nai o
Uchimamorite

The rage
In my heart
Day and night
Staring at
The never-ending earthquake[92]

Waga musume	My daughter
Muttsu ni nareru ga	Has turned six
Itaitashi	How bitter to see
Nai ni obiete	Her thin frame
Yase no mietaru	Terrified from the earthquake[93]
Asa yoi ni	The sadness of keeping
Aimiru tsuma o	The wife
Kodomora o	I see morning and evening
Mamoritsutsu kanashi	My children
Nai no shigeki ni	From the shock of the quake [94]
Nagori naru	Aftereffects:
Kabe no yabure no	The winter
Fuyu wa nao	With broken walls
Me ni tsuku mono o	Everywhere I look
Nao yururu nai	The quake is never-ending [95]

Wakayama wrote these poems near the end of his life, and it can be noted that his style had reached a literary peak with these verses. The connections between the poems in terms of shared and repeated motifs, by the stress placed upon mention of the continuing tremors and their continuing effects upon people, are carefully mapped out through the device of Bokusui's steady rhythm. I have not dwelled on the stylistics or techniques of the powerful examples of poetry scrutinized hitherto, but that the verses investigated above are the product of a group of poets exceedingly skilled at their art even when dealing with an event of such unprecedented tragedy as the 1923 earthquake cannot be denied. Their poetry still has the power to move readers over nearly a hundred years later, and this fact alone is testimony to their continuing significance as literary creations. These verses memorialize a hideous tragedy, and thus have created a remarkable precedent for poets chronicling such events in the future, as can be seen in the outpouring of poetry produced on the subject of the 11 March 2011 earthquake, where, once again, documentary description mingles with considered reflection to produce undeniably important art.

1.9. Concluding Note

In her fine, detailed study of the visual culture created by the 1923 earthquake, Gennifer Weisenfeld writes, "Memorial spaces not only serve as spiritual sanctuaries but also provide, in Timothy Brown's words, a kind of 'pedagogy of trauma' that goes beyond mere description and narration of the event. In such venues, salvaged artifacts and exhibit spaces are mobilized to bear witness to the event in a visceral and palpable manner that cannot be represented solely by photographs and other documentary materials."[96] Literature also provides a pedagogy of trauma in that it acts to both capture for history the facts of the

tragedy itself and fashion a cathartic release from the trauma caused by the earthquake. In the works studied above, we have seen not merely documentary description but also attempts at catharsis. The incongruous humour of Aizu Yaichi's Peruvian vase, as well as Yosano Akiko's invocations of the Buddha, where the tragedy is given a cosmic dimension, and Yoshiya Nobuko's apocalyptic thundering, which attempts to go beyond the event itself, are useful examples of cathartic writing, although they are but a tiny sampling of a much larger body of work written with similar aims. As Weisenfeld and other chroniclers of the event point out, there was also an element of concealment in these memorials (whether architectural or literary) as the authorities sought to suppress information on the slaughter of Koreans.

Evaluating the literature produced in the aftermath of the 1923 earthquake is an ongoing task for Japanese literature. In the 1960s and 1970s, three famous critics—Inagaki Tatsurō (1901–1986), Odagiri Susumu (1924–1992) and Miyoshi Yukio (1926–90) —attempted to summarize and historicize the impact of the event on literature. The debate between the three involved rereading much literature produced at the time, examining these works in a broad-ranging way. Such issues as whether "documentary" or fragmentary writing could be considered as literature; what connection did the earthquake have to experimental or avant-garde writing; was it a cause of the explosion of popular forms of narrative (and journals which published them) after the earthquake that accompanied the rapid growth of graphic magazines; what connection did the earthquake have to the expansion of the cinema in Japan, and the growing popularity of non-fiction?—all these questions could be and were linked to the impact of the earthquake on publishing in general. The three critics differed about the value of journalistic forms of non-fiction, the apparent decline in highbrow writing, and a host of other issues. In 1956, the Marxian commentator Odagiri praised the "fresh qualities and limpid prose" of the writing produced at the time, by which he meant the efforts of popular authors to document their personal experiences in plain prose.[97] This was in stark contrast to Miyoshi Yukio who declared in 1976 that: "To the present day no literature worthy of the name has been produced with the [1923] earthquake as its theme".[98] These debates go to the heart of what literature is: what possibilities exist for imaginative writing in the face of the reality of the death and destruction wrought by earthquakes. The topic is far from exhausted; this book is intended as a contribution to the debate.

The personal touches so evident in the individual narratives and verses of poets can also reshape the tragedy in such a way as to make it comprehensible for future generations. Such an immense tragedy on the massive scale of the 1923 earthquake cannot be reproduced in any real way in literature, or art in general, but by carefully reshaping and selecting incidents for emphasis, an apprehension of the event is created, one that bears witness to the irreducible dimension of individual experience. This not only reminds future generations

of the event but also creates a literary precedent or model for the witnessing and recording of similar events, as we have seen in the recent outpouring of verse of all types and varieties on the 11 March 2011 East Japan Earthquake, and the Fukushima nuclear meltdown.[99] This study has only documented a fraction of the literature produced in the aftermath to the 1923 earthquake but the range and quality of writing seen here has many lessons to teach us, not only about the history of the 1923 Tokyo earthquake, but also about the value of art and the possibilities that literature can create.

Chapter Two

2. Writing in Extremis: Wartime *Tanka* Poetry

> It is not the "best" who survive (they are the ones who get killed first); war involves the survival of the worst—the fittest. Primo Levi (a survivor of Auschwitz) put it best: "It is the impression that the others died in your place; that you are alive *gratis*, thanks to a privilege you have not earned, a trick you played on the dead!" [...] "We, the survivors are not the true witnesses" he added in another work; those best placed to bear witness died, not despite their valour but because of it. Those even better placed can't bear witness; they return home mute because they have touched bottom. The survivors who can write or talk about their experiences are the ones who have survived because of their prevarications, or abilities, or simply good luck—those are the soldiers who have not looked the Gorgon in the face [...]. All of which also reminds us why many soldiers choose not to survive; that those who go to their certain death running headlong into machine gun fire do so because that is what the men to the left and the right of them are doing. Over the centuries, writes Sebastian Junger, men have chosen to die in battle with their friends rather than flee on their own and perhaps, survive [...]. Survival is often a choice, one that men have to live with for the rest of their lives.
>
> From *Men at War* by Christopher Coker[1]

This chapter focuses on verse composed during World War II, specifically on the tanka genre of poetry—the mainstream of the classical verse tradition of Japan since its beginnings over a millennia and a half ago.[2] I explore a range of responses to the war in verse by a variety of amateur poets, mostly military men who composed poetry in the tanka form as a means of self-expression and also as a relief from the carnage they saw all around them. I compare their poetry to the tanka composed during the war by Kawada Jun, a noted tanka poet and critic, whose work I also contextualize in relation to other professional tanka poets' wartime verse.[3] I also examine some *jisei no ku* or "death poems" written as part of the ceremonial farewell held for kamikaze pilots about to launch themselves on their journey to oblivion. One famous modernist poet, Maekawa Samio, a controversial figure whose wartime patriotic tanka came under heavy criticism is also subjected to scrutiny, not merely to test the claims made by postwar critics about him but also to see if tanka could offer any kind of resistance to war. This leads to a discussion of the connections between fascism and modernism, an important issue for literature produced during war.

I investigate various issues arising out of a reading of these tanka, including whether such writing possesses literary merit and, if so, what criteria should be used to evaluate it. I also assess the criteria governing the selection of wartime verse and the purposes (aesthetic, political or moral) these collections serve. Wartime tanka provide a microcosm for investigating the interrelationship between literature as an affective and aesthetic medium and

history, politics, and war in Japan during and since WWII. Further, an examination of the principles behind these selections of war poetry, published from World War II to the present, involves analyzing the meaning of the war itself for the post-war generation and also for contemporary Japan. Another issue is the nature of tanka itself: is this oldest of Japanese verse genres to be seen primarily as an exercise in linguistic art or is it merely a form of self-expression, a therapeutic exercise in self-healing? Yet another issue to be taken up is that identified in the title: from the responses recorded in the poetry examined here, is it possible to identify several strands of emotional and intellectual concern, to see several selves encoded within these verses? Many other issues can be seen to emerge even from the small sampling of verse examined here, which is taken from the vastly larger body of such writing produced during wartime. One of the conclusions that can be drawn from this study is that the verses composed by amateurs convey both the complexity of individual emotion and, sometimes, even a message of protest against the war; thus the common impression among critics that wartime tanka is utterly devoid of literary or artistic merit needs to be modified. The expressions of sympathy for the enemy found in a number of the tanka also testify to the humanity of the authors of such poetry.

2.1. Writing against War

The first group of poems that I will examine is taken from a collection called *Heitai Man'yōshū* (The Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves by Soldiers) edited by Hayasaka Takashi and published in early 2007.[4] Hayasaka draws upon an eclectic collection of sources to select his verse—collections of tanka published during wartime, but also contemporary collections of such verse as well. Hayasaka is a non-fiction writer, born in 1973, who has published much on the war and, in the preface to his book, notes that he wishes to use tanka to "read the era," that is, to narrate a kind of history, and he emphasizes the value of such poetry as an important historical source. He claims that tanka is a fertile variety of nonfiction in addition to being poetry written in the grand lyric style. He goes on to comment, "these short tanka contain in every word emotions characteristic of their time and its joys and sorrows. No trace of the post-war fashion for 'performance' or 'decoration' is present. This is language pure and naked."[5]

To embrace contradiction has often been seen as an important quality of poetry, but here the editor displays a distinct fondness for embracing opposites in prose. Are the poems he collects in this volume non-fiction or are they splendid examples of lyric verse? Clearly, he is hedging his bets and so he includes distinctly prosaic verse as well as poetry that makes claims to literary merit. I am, of course, selecting from his selection, and my own bias is towards

poems that display literary excellence rather than historical accuracy, whatever that might mean in respect of literature.

Hayasaka divides his collection into chapters which correspond to historical stages of the Pacific War, hence the poetry collected in each chapter reflects various themes. His first chapter narrates the outbreak of war in China, and the verses by soldiers collected herein display a powerful sense of humanity, and also pathos. Two poems from this chapter typify this.

The following tanka was written by Uehara Torimatsu:

Shinahei no	Scooping up
Shi ni uku mizu wo	The water upon which floats
Kumiagete	The Chinese soldiers' bodies
Setsunakeredomo	Is heartbreaking
Nomaneba narazu	But I have to drink[6]

The poem is realistic and moving and displays sympathy for the Chinese enemy who are only too human in death. This verse was first published in a 1938 collection of poetry called *Seisen tankashū* (Tanka Collection from the Holy War). Whether this tone is characteristic of the entire collection is doubtful, given the historical background of anti-Chinese propaganda accompanying the Japanese advance into China, but that it is representative of Hayasaka's collection is clear from the other poems in the book. Hayasaka also includes the following poem by Motegi Tadao from the same 1938 collection:

Doro doro no	In the centre of a
Chi no umi no naka ni	Sea of muddy blood
Utsupuseru	Lying face down
Tekihei wakashi	A young enemy soldier
Umeki no koe su	Softly groaning[7]

The sentiments are similar, and also make this poem an equally effective antidote to jingoism.

Hayasaka has selected poems that suggest the horror of war for those on the home front as well. The following poem by Satō Fumiko, reveals the pain of a woman, probably a wife, who has lost her partner:

Shingapōru	In my hand now
Kōryaku sen ni	A telegram
Senshi to no	Telling of his death
Denpō wa ima	In the battle for
Waga te ni arinu	The conquest of Singapore[8]

Another accomplished poem, which dissects the cruelty of war with a simple yet poignant image, is the following tanka by Yamada Kōjirō:

Kurasu ichi no	We used to call him
Ōki otoko to	The biggest boy
Iwareshi wo	In class
Kono hitotsubo ni	Now he fits inside
Osamareru wa ya	This small urn[9]

The quiet irony present in the following poem by Masaki Yoshiko reveals that not all imperial subjects were moved to frenzies of patriotism by the declaration of war:

Beiei ni	On the day
Sensen fukoku	Of the declaration
Arishi hi no	Of war against the US and Britain
Hiru wo shizuka ni	In the afternoon
Hana wo ikekau	I quietly arranged flowers[10]

This poem does not merely suggest a quiet, reflective attitude in the face of the outbreak of hostilities but in its diction also contrasts the hard, official unpoetic Sino-Japanese declaration of war in the first part of the poem with the delicate traditional language of classical poetry in the latter half of the tanka, which possibly indicates an allusion to the famous 10th century waka collection, the *Kokinshū* (Collection of Ancient and Modern Japanese Verse).

Another example of an even quieter kind of irony is the next poem by Komure Sōichi:

Shingapōru	Celebrating the
Kanraku iwai shi	Fall of Singapore
Nochi no hi no	The next day
Shizukesa michite	Silence overflowing
Yuki no furu machi	Snow fell on our town[11]

This poem stands out among the vast number of tanka published at the time, far too numerous to cite, that celebrate the fall of Singapore in language that is not only decidedly unpoetic but also downright bloodthirsty.[12] Although I have come across many examples of patriotic poetry written on this theme, this is the first time I have found a verse such as this which, in its ambiguity, could actually be read as unpatriotic. This is another indication of the particular approach that Hayasaka has taken to his anthology, which reveals the complexity of Japanese responses to the war. It would be an exaggeration to class all these tanka as examples of writing against war, and yet the verses demonstrate a clear resistance to the aggressively jingoistic tone of pro-war patriotic tanka published in vast numbers at the time. In this respect, Hayasaka has identified a diaspora of dissent, however muted, within the wartime tanka community of writers and readers, including the works of soldiers fighting on the front line.

Hayasaka also has an eye for verse written by frontline soldiers that is striking and of considerable literary merit. The following two tanka are powerful examples of the genre. First, a poem by Unno Ryūji:

Hi no machi ni	Staring at a
Nagaruru chishio	Black kitten
Nameteiru	Licking the
Kuroki koneko wo	Rivers of blood flowing
Mite itarikeri	In the town of fire[13]

And next a poem by Ikeda Isamu first published in January 1939 in a collection of tanka titled *Shōi gunjin seisen kashū* (*A Collection of Tanka From Soldiers Wounded in the Holy War),* written by servicemen and women who had been injured during the war. The gesture of peace depicted in the verse has become familiar to later generations from subsequent wars:

Kinō made	Until yesterday
Hi wo fukasekemu	Exploding with fire
Jūshin ni	In this gunbarrel
Kosumosu soete	A cosmos flower
Yuku hei no ari	A soldier at march[14]

Hayasaka includes more familiar samples of patriotic tanka in his collection but these poems display genuine aesthetic power. The following two poems can stand for the stoicism of the ordinary soldier on the battlefield and also for the numbing desolation of death. This first tanka is by Ishige Hajime:

Tekizen ni	Hearing we will embark
Jōrikusuru to	Right in the face of
Kikinitsutsu	The enemy
Warera shizuka ni	We calmly
Ringo wo mukumo	Peel apples[15]

Next a tanka from the same book by Ishikawa Kiyoshi, a soldier fighting in the China campaign:

(Near Wusun Creek)	
Me no mae ni	Before my very eyes
Taoreshi tomo no	Gazing upon
Nakigara no	The rotting corpse
Kusaru wo mitsutsu	Of a fallen friend
Sube nakariki to	I could do nothing[16]

It seems that these poems are all written by amateurs, mostly by military personnel directly involved in fighting. This is a diaspora within a diaspora, as the examples cited above are not only fine poetry but also often reveal in their tone and subject matter a view of the war that firmly contradicts much tanka that simply echoes the official government line and can be classified as a form of pro-war propaganda. This alternative perspective follows along the scholarly path first broken by post-war Japanese literary critics who have been much concerned with revising definitions of patriotic poetry to permit poetry showing literary excellence, defined in as broad a way as possible, to be distinguished from jingoistic pro-war verse that has little or no merit on aesthetic grounds. And, as we have seen, Hayasaka's anthology epitomizes this approach.[17]

Numerous examples of wartime tanka written by amateurs can be found that demonstrate the opposite tendency: banal verse glorifying the efforts of the Japanese military. This kind of writing makes no claims to literary excel-

lence. Rather than engage in the task of examining such poetry, it will be useful to investigate the verse of "professional" poets, whose writing was acclaimed by his peers. The question arises: did such poets with these kinds of credentials write tanka that, while suitably patriotic, possessed literary merit? So, as a contrast to the works of the amateur poets discussed above, next I will briefly investigate the verse of a well-known professional tanka poet, Kawada Jun (1882–1966), who wrote much poetry on the war and whose writing is a good example of the mainstream of wartime patriotic tanka.

2.2. Kawada Jun's Wartime Tanka

Kawada Jun was both a scholarly commentator on tanka as well as a prolific author of many tanka collections. He won many awards for his tanka and was commended by his peers for his numerous talents. A graduate of the law faculty of Tokyo Imperial University, Kawada was a successful businessman who first established his name as a romantic poet but, by the 1920s, he had begun to write tanka with a more realistic tone.[18] He was the author of a formidable number of volumes of wartime tanka and, in common with the vast majority of his contemporaries, wrote a large body of patriotic and, at times, jingoistic verse. The distinguished tanka critic Kimata Osamu notes that Kawada, "stood in the forefront of [the wartime patriotic tanka poets]."[19] According to Kimata, the defeat dealt Kawada a severe blow, and he had to weather a number of fierce attacks as a "war criminal poet."[20] Kawada lapsed into a deep depression for many years, although at the end of his career he achieved fame once again with a volume of love poems. From this it can be inferred that he was (again, in common with most of his contemporaries) sincere in expressing the patriotic sentiments found in his verse. Let us examine some tanka from these collections, to determine what differences existed between the wartime verse of amateurs and professionals.[21]

Firstly, from his 1942 collection *Shika Taiheiyō sen* (Historical Tanka from the Pacific War), the following verse, which has not stood the test of time and can now be read with a mordant sense of irony:

Ato no yo no	Children and grandchildren
Komagora kyō wo	In the future
Shinobite wa	Recalling today
Ika ni ōkinaru	How will they revere
Miyo to aogamu	This time![22]

To be fair to the poet, we should keep in mind that he was in his sixties when he penned his patriotic verse, and was a victim of the social conditioning imposed upon the prewar generation who had been indoctrinated into a distinctly jingoistic and ethnocentric view of Japan and its incursions onto the Asian continent, as numerous commentators have pointed out. This is a

comment that can apply to most of Kawada's wartime verse, but this observation alone cannot absolve the poet of responsibility for the poem's lack of artistic merit.

The next tanka comes from the same book, and is a slightly better poem, because of its metaphoric links between cold, purity and war, but has many doppelgangers in verse written at the time by Kawada's contemporaries.

Ametsuchi ni	The heaven and the earth
Samusa no kiyoku	Are purified by cold
Koru toki shi	The time when all is concentrated!
Daitōasen	The Emperor has announced
Norase tamaeri	The Greater East Asia War![23]

The next poem from the same book expresses pacifistic sentiments but also ends in a note of patriotic resolve:

Mukashi yori	From ancient times
Aete tatakai wo	Japan has been a
Konomazaru	Land
Mikuni ni shi aredo	Never willingly going to war
Kyō wa tatakau!	But today we fight![24]

The following two tanka from the same volume are much more typical of the anti-Western theme ground out with unvarying monotony by most tanka poets at the time:

Igirisu to	Britain
Iu ōnusubito to	The great thief
Amerika to	And the hypocrite
Iu gizensha to ite	USA
Sekai darakusu	Have corrupted the world[25]
Nusumitaru	In her [Britain's] overweening
Chihyō no hirosa	Pride about
Hokorikani	Her stolen territories
Shi ga kuni ha	She declares
Taiyō bossezu to iu	The sun will never set on them[26]

These two poems come from a section of the book entitled "Dai Toa sensō no igi" ("The Significance of the Greater East Asian War"). This last poem from this section of Kawada's book has an almost expository air about it, as if providing a justification for the attack on the US:

Waga kuni wa	Our nation
Tsune ni wareyorimo	Has only
Tsuyoki kuni to	Ever fought countries
Tatakaitariki	Stronger than ourselves
Amerika wa chigau	America is not![27]

In the same book, Kawada penned three poems about Australia, presumably in anticipation of Japan's impending invasion of this monument to British colonialism (as far as Japanese like Kawada were concerned). I translate as follows:

Kasumetorishi	To exploit
Gōshūtō no	The island of Australia
Kaitaku nimo	Stolen from its owners
Nanahyaku gojūnin no	750 convicts
Shūjin okurinu	Were transported there[28]
Jiyūimin wa	Free settlers
Kanada ni iku wo	Journeyed to Canada
Awarenarukana	Oh how sad that
Shūjin shokumin ha	Convict settlers were
Taiheiyō e	Transported to the Pacific![29]
Sangoshō ni	Even the bêche-de-mer
Hisomite ikeru	Living hidden
Namako sae	Within the coral reefs
Kaizokudomo no	Cannot escape the
Me yori nogarezu	Gaze of these pirates[30]

These three tanka are collectively grouped under the heading of Arthur Phillip's arrival in Australia in 1787, a year earlier than most Australians are accustomed to from their history lessons, which date the event to 1788.

Kawada wrote another volume of tanka, published in 1942, entitled *Shika nettai sakusen* (Historical Tanka From the War in the Tropics), in which he composed two tanka that are distinctly jingoistic, and rather sad in their anxiety to establish Japan's superiority in respect of the fauna found in the imperial land:

Shikishima no	A bird
Yamato no hokani ha	Found only in
Oranu tori	Splendid Japan
Uguisu nakinu	The bush warbler sings
Kono asaake wo	On this morning[31]
Marai no iwa	A bird living in the rocky
Yama ni sumeru wa	Mountains in Malaya
Hogoshoku nite	Is camouflaged
Kujaku to iedomo	It may be called "peacock"
Utsukushikarazu	But it is not beautiful[32]

It would be unfair to judge Kawada's work on the basis of these poems alone, so I have translated two poems about the war written in 1938 and included in his award-winning collection *Washi* (Eagle) published in 1942, which display a naturalistic tone that does not descend to jingoistic doggerel. These verses demonstrate that it is indeed possible to write poetry on the theme of war that can achieve literary excellence, without recourse to hackneyed expressions

and tired rhetoric. The sense of war as eternal, and the accompanying exhaustion which many felt not, just in Japan, is powerfully conveyed by Kawada's plain, precise diction, and emphasized by the fact that poems were placed side by side on the same page:

Kono ikusa	This war
Kotoshi wa oroka	Will go on, I believe, and on
Komu toshi mo	Into this year, and
Mata komu toshi mo	Not just the coming year but also
Tsuzuku omoisu	The year after that[33]

Kono ikusa	This war
Warera no ikeru	Will go on, I believe, and on
Yo wa oroka	Not just into the era
Tsugi no jidai ni	In which we live, but also
Tsuzuku omoisu	The age after that[34]

The comparison of the wartime verse of the professional tanka poet with the amateurs included in Hayasaka's collection tends to flatter the amateurs, with the sole exception of the two poems by Kawada just quoted, but that is no doubt partly a product of Hayasaka's keen editorial eye and also my own bias towards translating verses which display literary merit. Nevertheless, it is dispiriting to find so many tanka written by Kawada (who was judged a fine poet by his contemporaries) which, while they are not outrageously bad verse, do not do anything much to improve his reputation. Kimata Osamu comments that, "[Kawada's war poetry] relapses into a mere record [of events] and thus it is difficult to describe these poems as outstanding. Now, reading them carefully once again, there are many poems that are just awful."[35] The question arises: is this because of the subject matter, the time in which they were written, or is it due to other causes? One way to examine this question is to look deeper into the aesthetic espoused by Kawada at this time. In a volume of tanka entitled *Shika nanboku sakusen* (Historical Tanka from the North/South Front) that was published in 1943, Kawada wrote an essay called "Sensō tanka e no taido" (My Attitude Towards War Tanka) in which he explains his perspective:

> "War tanka," firstly, consists of poetry written by soldiers on the front line, and secondly, works written on the home front, such verse strengthens the will of people as a whole to fight, and also, we have to realize that the differences between the front line and home front are diminishing. My war poetry, it is hardly necessary to say, until now belonged to the latter category. This year I am sixty-two, a poet, alone in my thatched hut in the north of Kyoto, moved by various things. In the past I have seen a part of the Chinese continent, and Manchuria and Mongolia but I have not been blessed with the opportunity yet to visit the new battlefields of the South Pacific theatre [...]. No matter how excited this old white-haired man is in this situation, it is doubtful whether [my poetry] strikes a resonant note with the world. Despite this, I have to compose poetry.

> My poetry about this holy war can be divided into two types: first, a heartfelt expression of constant emotions as someone engaged in the home front, and second, literary works composed on the war and battlegrounds from my imagination but based on the announcements from the Imperial headquarters, newspaper articles, radio broadcasts, and interviews with soldiers who returned from the front. There is no difficulty with the former category as far as my feelings are concerned. Works in the latter category have been critiqued negatively, and also positively, but I paid no heed to criticism. Putting aside the argument for art that the imagination is the basis of poetry, in reality when I am totally obsessed with the war, I come to sense the battlefield, however vaguely. Also, listening intently to the numerous radio broadcasts [about the war], a concrete reality appears before me. This inspires the urge to compose poetry and frequently my imagination compels me to write verse with the force of reality. The difference between reality and the imagination dissolves and I feel excited in exactly the same way as an ordinary citizen [...].
>
> However, tanka based on the reality of soldiers actually involved in warfare themselves is truer and deeper than the work of artists embedded in military units who are observing battles, and also poetry based on the feelings of visitors who travel to see these new battlefields.[36]

The argument that Kawada makes in this essay is commonplace and echoes the practice of most professional poets. What is striking about his remarks is his total identification with the imperial cause—there is not a hint of the notion of the poem being capable of taking a reflective, even ironic position in regard to the sentiments or sensibility expressed by the narrator (who is, after all, a construct of the author), a critical strategy that Kawada would have been familiar with as a poet and critic. On the other hand, his best poetry is the product of direct meditation and observation, and this may well reflect the trend towards naturalism in tanka that dominated this genre of verse well into the 20th century.

Later in the essay, Kawada cites the views of the conservative tanka poet and critic Okano Naoshichirō (1896–1986), which were published in a newspaper at the time, concerning poetry about war fabricated by those who have no experience of actual combat. Okano observes that such poets as himself have been criticized for casting away verisimilitude in their verse. Critics say that they are merely self-opinionated egotists who do not fight in the war but simply observe from afar—their verse is a desecration of the "tanka way." Okano objects to such criticisms by noting that he does his best as an imperial subject and as a poet.[37] Kawada says he is in total agreement with this position but the defense he cites reads rather weakly and it is not too difficult to discern an element of self-doubt in Kawada's protestations.

2.3. Tanka at War

Kawada Jun was typical of a large number of poets who wrote tanka during wartime. However, in order to contextualize Kawada's wartime poetry, and to further investigate the issues raised at the beginning of this study concerning literary merit and patriotic verse, a focus on one professional tanka poet—no matter how significant or representative his poetry may be—cannot adequately represent the mass of such poets who wrote during wartime. For this reason, and, in order to gain a broader perspective, I will subject a number of tanka poets writing at more or less the same time to scrutiny as part of my examination of an important anthology of wartime tanka poetry.

As numerous critics have noted, it is a great pity that poets possessed of such talent should choose to prostitute their art in pursuit of such ignoble ends. Sone Hiroyoshi's comments in his history of wartime literature may be cited as exemplary:

> The thoughts of writers concerning the commencement of the Pacific War were immediately published in newspapers and magazines, but almost as if they had conspired together, they all expressed an emotion of a new beginning as if the dark clouds had parted, and at the same time, a martial spirit was born within their bodies. Even allowing for the harsh controls over expression that were introduced after the beginning of the war, there is no doubt that these sentiments reflected the true feelings of writers. But it must not be forgotten that their prose and poetry were, from a literary perspective, exceedingly low in quality.[38]

That Sone is correct in his assessment cannot be doubted. I will cite the example of another important tanka poet as evidence of the jingoistic "martial spirit" born within the majority of Japanese authors at the time. Katō Masayuki (1901–75) was a graduate of the Philosophy Department of Tokyo University and later became a professor at Yamanashi University. He wrote a number of tanka collections, as well as literary critiques that were highly evaluated by his peers. Although Katō was not as distinguished or acclaimed a tanka poet as Kawada, his verse possesses a certain interest because of his philosophical inclinations, and among his works there is one tanka collection called *Kaijindō* (Truth of the Heart)—the title is a famous Chinese place name—published in 1943, dealing with the Second World War. Katō wrote this collection in Beijing between 1941 and 1942 and, in the preface, he writes:

> The outbreak of the Greater East Asian War made my blue blood course strongly through my veins in accordance with the making of history. I only desired that my literature in praise of war be filled from the beginning to the end with purity and simplicity [...]. Writing poems in praise of the Chinese continent, poems in praise of the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere imposes a great burden of expression upon me [...] My poet friends here in China said that they had started to sense that China was not a foreign place. I feel that this is describing the Japanization of the Chinese continent.[39]

As this quotation demonstrates, the philosopher Katō (who cites the great German philosopher Immanuel Kant [1724–1804]—known for his pursuit of rational thought—in his verse) was completely caught up in the wartime propaganda that claimed much of the Chinese continent as part of the Japanese Empire.

In the essays appended to Katō's collection, there is a piece reflecting upon the spiritual history of tanka during wartime. In this essay, Katō cites three tanka by Saitō Mokichi, mentioned in the previous chapter, and seen by most Japanese readers as perhaps the greatest tanka poet of the 20th century. The three tanka read as follows:

Minami no	Echoing throughout
Umi ni todorokishi	The Southern Seas
Kachidoki wo	Let us listen to
Ima koro kikame	The triumphant shouts
Miburui tachite	As we tremble in anticipation[40]
Taikoku no	Heralding an attack
Yaburen to suru	The impending collapse
Sakigake ni	Of a great nation
Umi no tekigun	Enemy ships sink
Shizumi ni shizumu	One after another[41]
Ametsuchi wo	Piercing
Tsuranukan to suru	The heavens and the earth
Kamuchikara	A divine power
Teki no kantai	Sinking
Uchi ni uchi tari	The enemy fleet[42]

These tanka have little artistic merit and cannot be read as anything but propaganda. That such a powerful and widely respected poet as Mokichi could produce verse of this banality is testimony to the depths to which the tanka genre sunk under pressure from the authorities, and also the degree to which even great poets could sacrifice the quality of their poetry to the irresistible sway of patriotism. Amy Vladeck Heinrich, Mokichi's biographer, comments:

> Mokichi's support [for the war] was not merely a matter of course; it was enthusiastic: war stirred his blood. He was a patriot in the Meiji mold, and firmly believed it his duty to follow, and not to question, the Emperor and through him the nation. His responsibility was to serve, not to judge. The roots of this patriotism were firmly planted in his childhood, in his war games, and his prayers for his soldier brothers who fought in Manchuria.[43]

Saitō Mokichi inherited the leadership of the *Araragi* group of tanka poets, which, was the most influential tanka coterie in the prewar period. The coterie produced a magazine of the same name that published most of the leading poets of the day.[44] In 1940, the *Araragi* group published a volume of poems about Japan's incursion onto the Asian continent called *Shina jihen kashū* (A Collection of Tanka From the China War) edited by Saitō Mokichi and another

important tanka poet Tsuchiya Bunmei (1890–1990). Selected from a much larger number of poems and poets, this collection included 3,636 tanka by 554 *Araragi* poets (116 of whom went to the front), and can be read as the "official" expression of the views of the tanka establishment towards the war.[45] A sampling of several representative poems from this collection will suffice to demonstrate the nature of verse produced by patriotic tanka poets during wartime. The following poem is written by Ikeda Kuniki who was sent as a soldier to North Manchuria:

Kokkyō ni	On the Manchurian-China frontier
Teki to mukaite	Facing the enemy
Yonayona ni	Night after night
Kokubunpō wo	Faithfully, I continued my reading of
Ware ha yominazumu	Books on Japanese grammar[46]

This poem has an almost humorous tone and it displays a certain humanity in the face of war. The next poem is by Itō Zenkichi who served as a sailor:

Iki shini wo	Not thinking of
Omowazu tadani	Life or death
Tatakaedo	Just fighting
Atsusa wo shinogu	To cope with the heat
Mizu horinikeri	Water is what I want[47]

This tanka possesses a certain elemental strength as basic human desires triumph over anything else. The next poem is written by Iioka Kazuho:

Nichieikaidan no	Uncaring whether
Seihi ha shirazu	The talks between Japan and Britain
Hei warera	Have succeeded
Yakuru eitei ni	In the scorching barrack square, we soldiers
Jū toru hinemosu	Night and day cling to our rifles[48]

The indifference of the ordinary soldier to matters political is squarely expressed in this poem. The following poem is written by Kamikojima Masao in central China:

Teki to ware to	The enemy and us
Taiji shite iru	Face to face across
Manaka naru	A creek
Nagare no ue wo ba	Fireflies
Hotaru tobi ori	Rise into the air[49]

The appearance of fireflies puts into perspective the deadly reality of war. The next poem was written in northern China by Kobuchi Masao on the topic on fording a river in the face of the enemy:

Samazama no	The corpses of enemy soldiers
Shinizama shitaru	Who met their death
Tekihei no	In different ways
Kabane ha miredo	I look at
Nanigoto mo nashi	But think nothing of it[50]

In these terse words we apprehend the utter pointlessness of war and death which is its consequence. The following poem is written by Tezuka Kishisaburō in northern China.

Urarakani	Rising gloriously
Hibari wa	Into the sky
Sora ni agaredomo	Larks!
Teki ni mukaite	Facing the enemy
Ware ha fushiori	Flat on my belly[51]

The contrast in this sad verse again reveals the inhumanity of war. The final poem is by Hirao Ken'ichi in central China and displays a grim humor in the face of battle.

Tatakai ni	Ordered to fight
Mesare kitarite	Five months have passed
Itsutsuki amari	And I have
Wa ga taijū ha	Lost a total of
Go kiro heritari	Five kilograms in weight[52]

2.4. Writing in Extremis

A major contribution to the literature of wartime Japan was the poetry produced by those who deliberately sacrificed their own lives in service of the war. One significant anthology of such poetry was the *Daitōa sensō jun'nan iei shū* (Collection of Posthumously Published Poems of Those who Gave Their Lives during the Great East-Asian War) published in September 1976 and edited by Yasuda Yojūrō (1910–1981). Yasuda was one of the leaders of the prewar romantic school of writing and thirty years after the event took part in the reevaluation of the war and the writing produced during wartime. Yasuda edited these posthumous manuscripts (which are primarily tanka) written by *tokkōtai* (kamikaze squadrons) before they launched their suicide missions. However, it should be kept in mind that, according to Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, who has written an important book on the subject, "neither the [*tokkōtai*] pilots themselves nor the Japanese public considered their acts to be acts of suicide."[53] Ohnuki-Tierney boldly declares that the kamikaze pilots were coerced into their acts of self-immolation, stating that "when the [*tokkōtai*] operation was instituted, not a single officer from the military academies volunteered to sortie as a pilot; they knew too well that it was a meaningless death."[54] Hosaka Masayasu cites a military study conducted in May 1945 to the effect that one third of the kamikaze pilots surveyed held deep reservations about their mission. Hosaka notes that such a study, given the circumstances of the time, was likely to be an attempt at window-dressing unpalatable facts.[55] The kamikaze pilots were mostly teenagers who had been recently recruited, although some were college students.[56]

A translation of some of these verses will convey the sense of the existential crises experienced by these young men. And provide a useful contrast to the poetry examined above which often reflects the perspective of the war-weary soldier on the battle front, a perspective that expresses a certain skepticism, if not cynicism, about the nature of war. These translations should be seen as an addition to the poems and diary extracts translated by Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney in her 2006 volume of translations by kamikaze pilots entitled *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers*.[57] However, it should be kept in mind that these were public documents and therefore subject to the constraints of public expression, including strict censorship. This kind of literature can be classified under the rubric of patriotic rather than pro-war poetry—a number of critics, especially the poet Seo Ikuo, argue that such a distinction is possible and necessary to identify poetry written with a genuine commitment to honesty and sincerity that is the hallmark of true art (but not necessarily any guarantee of quality).[58] Seo's emphasis on the truth of "public" patriotic poetry like that of the kamikaze, poetry from the heart so to speak, is timely and echoes Adam Piette's comment about British poetry of the the Second World War, "public feeling was in many ways more powerful than stunned and detached personal emotions (in poetry those feelings associated with the lyric)".[59] Pro-war poetry, it follows, is poetry written as propaganda and lacks true commitment to artistic ideals. Endō Masuji, a kamikaze pilot who died in April 1945 during the Okinawan campaign, wrote the following poem:

Ware mo mata	I too
Kimi wo mamoran	Will protect the Emperor
Harukaze ni	In the spring breeze
Isamite chiran	I will fall bravely
Yamatozakura to	Together with the cherry blossoms of Japan[60]

The next poem is by Onozuka Kazue, a suicide pilot who died in March 1945 in the same battle for Okinawa:

Kawazu naku	Frogs croak
Haru no sue ni mo	And spring too is
Narinureba	Drawing to an end
Ideya sakuran	Let us bloom golden
Yamabuki no hana	Japanese rose blossoms[61]

Sekine Shigeru, who was a sailor and died during an air raid in Hiroshima in July 1945, wrote the next poem:

Chichi mo naku	No father
Haha mo naku	No mother
Tada kuni no tame	For the sake of my country alone
Kessen no hana to	I will fall as a flower
Chiruran	In the final battle[62]

The following two tanka are by Yamato Shōgo, who died in a kamikaze attack on 25 February 1945, aged 17 years.

Chichi haha ni
Saigo to omou
Kono tayori
Ware ni kaku koto mo nashi
Tada ogenki de

To father and mother
This communication will
Be my last, I believe
I cannot write anything
Just be well![63]

Nikkori to
Waratte ikan
Yasukuni e
Konomi wa
Hare no Tokkōtai

With a smile
On our faces
Shall we journey to Yasukuni
I am a
Glorious kamikaze[64]

The following two tanka by Otozu Kazuichi, who died in a kamikaze attack in May 1945 in Okinawa, are taken from a postcard sent to his younger brother. They differ from the conventional diction and tone adopted by many of the kamikaze pilots in their death poems, but given the relationship of the poet to the person to whom they are addressed, Otozu's refusal to dwell on his impending death is not so difficult to comprehend:

Ware koso wa
Shina wo ba mamoru
Sakimori zo
Mino tsutanasa wa
Uchi mo wasurete

I am truly
A border guard
Protecting China
I forget
All my inabilities[65]

Nubatama no
Yomichi wo samumi
Naku mushi no
Kanashimi omou
Sono kanashimi wo

The jet-black
Night is cold
How sad,
The insects singing
So sorrowfully![66]

The following tanka are all from Hayasaka's volume. The next tanka is taken from a collection of poems by kamikaze pilots entitled *Kumo nagaruru hate ni*: *Senbotsu hikō yobigakusei no shuki* (Where the Clouds Blow: Personal Accounts by Student Pilots who Died in the War) first published in 1952. This poem is by Yamashita Hisao.

Tokkō no
Wagami wa kudakemu
Ōinaru
Honoo no gotoku
Umi wo sometsutsu

As a kamikaze
My body will break
And in a
Great fire
Dye the sea red![67]

This tanka by Koshiro Ajia is taken from the same 1952 collection and is a death poem written before his suicide at the age of 22 in a kamikaze attack. The poem is referring to his girlfriend, a Ms. K.

Kimi omou	Thinking upon you, my dearest
Kokoro wa tsune ni	My love will
Kawaranedo	Never fade
Subete wo sutete	Abandoning all
Ōzora ni chiramu	I will fall into the heavens[68]

In selecting these tanka from the various collections cited above, I have naturally veered towards poetry that achieves a certain excellence through the use of powerful poetic figures (images of falling into the heavens and the like), or through simple but terse diction that vividly conveys the strength of the writer's emotions. At the same time, various verses are conventional expressions of patriotic self-sacrifice, and draw from the large existing vocabulary of hackneyed imagery, such as the cherry blossom. In this way, both verse of no particular artistic merit and verse that may be said to have achieved a modicum of aesthetic excellence can be contrasted for the insights they give readers into the experience of war, the attitudes of those who were prepared to die in the service of their cause, and also how such emotion can be delineated in verse. Patriotic poetry can thus be evaluated on its own literary merits as well being read as providing a deeper insight into the psychology and emotions of the kamikaze pilots.

2.5. Tanka against War

An analysis of the selected wartime verse of another tanka poet Maekawa Samio (1903–90), whose writing was much more celebrated in the prewar period, may hint at possible answers to the question of whether resistance was possible in the traditional genre of tanka, the most conservative of all varieties of traditional poetry.

Samio began his career as an experimental proletarian poet, but, as the country gradually came to be placed on a war footing, the intellectual and cultural climate became more conservative, and the experiments in meter and diction indulged in by Samio and his comrades were increasingly frowned upon by the establishment. In November 1936 the *Dai Nippon kajin kyōkai* (Greater Japan Association of Tanka Poets) was formed with the aim of "respecting the tanka tradition and following a fixed metre".[69] A number of Samio's colleagues associated with the Modern movement turned away from experimentation to pursue more traditional themes, writing fixed-meter tanka.[70]

Samio's verse written between 1936 and 1939 was collected in the volume *Yamato*—a poetic epithet for Japan, often associated with patriotic sentiments, but Samio was born in the local region of Nara known as Yamato so there is also personal connection—published in August 1940, some 550 poems in total. I will subject several of these verses to close scrutiny in an attempt to evaluate

the differences, if any, between Samio's prewar Modernist verse and his wartime poetry. I will also look at one or two poems from *Tenpyōun* (Tiling Clouds), published in March 1942 but including poems written between 1939 and 1941, some 70 tanka in all.

Yamato represents Samio's turn to what he called "Neo-Classicism", a return to a more orthodox mode of tanka, but one which did not repudiate Modernist influences, as he made clear in his essay "Shinkotenshugi no hōkō" (The Course of Neo-Classicism) where he writes: "Since [the decade of the 1930s, we have been exposed to the fires of Hell in respect of literature. If I were to sum it up, it could be called the 'esprit moderne'. For example, I passed through Cubism, Dada and Surrealism. I believe that unless you make your way through these [movements] then you cannot be a modern tanka poet in the true sense of the word"[71]. He concludes:

> We did not want to be put into the same basket as the old-fashioned romantic poets who had dominated the world of tanka, we wanted to make it perfectly clear that our position was fundamentally incompatible with poets associated with absolutism and the new realism, those opportunistic currents found in the present, Rather, we wanted to grow as Japanese tanka poets and expand our movement positively.[72]

One issue that needs to be investigated in reading Samio's verse from this period is the connection between modernism and fascism. In recent years, a number of scholars have taken up this question and have published a number of provocative works on the subject. Roger Griffin is one such scholar and his 2007 book *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* has proposed some interesting ideas on the subject. Griffin states his thesis early: "Fascism's thrust towards a *new* type of society means that it represents an *alternative modernism* rather than rejection of it."[73] Griffin elaborates upon this proposition thus: "Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany both [were] concrete manifestations of a generic political ideology and praxis that has come to be termed 'fascism', but that fascism itself can be seen as a political variant of modernism."[74]

Griffin's thesis arises out of a consideration of the nature of the art and literature produced in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany; this explosion of cultural production he categorizes as modernist in origin and intent. Can such an argument apply to Japanese art and literature from the same period? One leading scholar of Japanese literature, Alan Tansman, thinks it can and has argued this case in his 2009 book *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism.* Tansman is building a case based on the premise that "culture is where fascism forms its ideological power, and Japanese fascism was fueled by a literary sensibility".[75] Tansman argues that writers who extolled aesthetic apolitical values in their work were practicing a kind of fascist aesthetics because, in his words, "artistic evocations of beauty and the aesthetic response to them [...] attempted to resolve the conflicts of modernity by calling for complete

submission, either to absolute order or to an undifferentiated but liberating experience of violence. Such an aesthetics exalted mindlessness and glamorized death."[76] The connection to modernism, Tansman argues, lies in the international nature of modernist aesthetics. He contends that, "Fascism thus cannot be separated from modernism; modernism and fascism together formed a lingua-franca spoken as fluently in Japan as in Europe [...] fascism encompassed not only state intellectuals but also modernist writers such as Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis [...] Gottfried Benn [...] F. T. Marinetti and D'Annunzio [...] Georges Sorel and Louis-Ferdinand Céline."[77]

The reason I have quoted so extensively from the texts above connecting modernism to fascism is because these arguments in a different form can and have been applied to the poetry of Maekawa Samio. At the end of the war he was subject to unrelenting criticism on the grounds that his modernist and neo-classical verse (extolling traditional aesthetics) were antithetical to two volumes of wartime verse which promoted martial values, including sacrificing oneself for the state.[78] These criticisms, in which Samio was called the Japanese "Jekyll and Hyde", and a "two-faced hypocrite", so damaged the poet's reputation and his psychological state that his name was virtually excised from Japanese literary history for the first four decades after World War II and he withdrew almost completely from the literary scene.

Let us consider these criticisms more closely. Probably the most influential, and most likely the first, of Samio's postwar critics is the commentator Ara Masahito (1913–79). Ara was one of the founders of the postwar literary journal *Kindai bungaku* (Modern Literature), which flew the Marxist banner in its attempts to construct a new democratic basis for postwar Japanese literature. The first step that the editors of this journal took was to denounce the writers they saw as quislings who collaborated with the wartime authorities in producing xenophobic pro-war literature. Ara's denunciation of Samio took place in an essay he wrote for the journal *Yagumo* (Eight Clouds) in July 1947. I have translated extracts from this article:

> Before me are two collections of tanka: *Kōbai* (Apricot Blossoms, 1946) and *Kongō* (Mt Kongō, 1945). I am not criticizing the poet Maekawa Samio simply using these collections as my source. I have also briefly passed my eyes over collections like *Shokubutsusai*, *Hakuhō* and *Yamato*. My conclusion arises from these collections; however, in order to draw a picture of the poet, the best method is to compare the two collections mentioned previously with all their discrepancies and strange differences.
>
> *Mt. Kongō* was published the year after the war ended. Its publication was delayed because of the war but I believe it was fortunate that it could appear before the end of the war. If a collection like this was published after the war, Samio might have been dealt with politically as an ultranationalist. In general, this collection consists of poetry written in the third year of the Pacific war and follows his collection *Nihon shi uruwashi* (Japan is Beautiful, 1943). In order to ascertain what attitude he took as a poet in composing his verse, and how he

> behaved during the Pacific War, it is sufficient to merely glance at some pages of this collection. Despite it being it being troublesome, and embarrassing to do so, let's have a look at the table of contents. By this means I want you to imagine what the content of this collection amounted to [...].
>
> [...] I do not necessarily believe that in the present era after the war that Maekawa Samio faked his war weariness of those past days nor that he planned to reinvent himself as a democratic poet using this war weariness as a passport. I criticize him only with the best of motives. But I do want to point out his two-sided nature. I think that while expressing the feelings that are articulated in *Apricot Blossoms,* he composed the poetry that we find in *Mt Kongō*—I think the shift which resembles that from Dr Jekyll to Mr Hyde is highly suspicious [...]. What I would like to say is if he truly cursed the war, as the poems in *Apricot Blossoms* do, then *Mt Kongō* wouldn't have been put together.[79]

This criticism of Samio had an enormous impact upon the poet's life, and for decades after influenced the view of Samio held in tanka circles. This viewpoint was spread by the left-wing tanka poets who dominated the post-war tanka world, many of whom had been former colleagues of Samio in the 1920s when he was regarded as the leading proletarian tanka poet in Japan. With the publication of the tanka collection *Shokubutsusai* (Botanical Revels) in 1930, Samio's open rejection of proletarian verse in favor of modernism became widely known and led these poets to regard him as a traitor to the cause.

Over the past two decades, however, evaluations of Samio's work have undergone a revision and, with Saigusa Takayuki's acclaimed 1993 book-length study of the poet, Samio has finally received due credit as one of the most important tanka poets of the twentieth century, who was not a hypocrite and whose reservations about the path down which Japan's leaders were taking his country are evident in the collections that will now be examined. Saigusa has pointed out that Ara's criticism is based upon a highly-selective reading of only a few poems from *Apricot Blossoms*, and a reading of the whole work, which Saigusa has carefully studied, clearly demonstrates that Ara is mistaken in his characterization of the collection. Before we begin our examination, it should be noted that Samio did indeed write patriotic, martial verse, especially in two wartime collections, which have little, if any, literary merit (which is why they are not considered here). In writing patriotic verse in the traditional style, he was doing the same as virtually all tanka poets at the time, and his output of such poetry was relatively small compared to his contemporaries. Moreover, Samio's patriotic verse does not fulfill Tansman's aesthetic test of fascist complicity with modernism because they were not modernist poems. Samio's modernist poetry produced during the war years strikes a different note, as will be demonstrated below.

First, I will translate a verse from *Yamato*, which has been praised extravagantly by commentators.[80]

Noibara no	How lovely!
Saki niou tsuchi no	The soil where
Maganashiki	Baby roses oft blossom
Ikimono wa mina	All creatures great and small
Soko wo ugoku na	Abideth here![81]

Saigusa Takayuki finds in the strong affirmation of life expressed by this poem a hidden tension, as if the admonition in the last line, where the verb could also be translated as "remain" or "stop here!", is a warning of darker times to come. The tension of the times is expressed in reverse, as it were. Poet and critic Tsukamoto Kunio (1922–2005) sees in the poem a beautiful and powerful paean of praise to the poet's birthplace, and also argues for the strong influence of the classical verse tradition on the poem, thus exemplifying Samio's creed of "Neo-classicism".[82]

Saimatsu no	On the last day
Hi ni mizukara wo	If I were
Kubiru tomo	To hang myself
Nani ga kono yo no	Will I become a laughing stock?
Waraigusa naramu	Will we all?[83]

Saigusa comments that this poem, also from *Yamato*, as is the following verse, is a powerful expression of the crisis Japan was facing in the middle to late 1930s as it hurtled onwards in a seemingly inexorable path towards war. Death itself has no impact in the face of societal collapse, and in this sense the poem suggests an anarchic and nihilistic stance in the face of disaster.[84]

Mata hitotsu	"Another country
Kuni horoberi to	Has fallen"
Shirasuru mo	The news arrived
Warera arigatashi	In deep gratitude
Tada ni nemureri	We nod off[85]

Nobody could read this verse as anything but as a strong anti-war work that in its sarcasm and the context of the times could easily be seen as treasonous.

The following three poems come from *Tiling Clouds*, that is, they were all written between 1939 and 1941 when censorship of poetry had become all-encompassing and publication of any poem by a leading writer that did not support the war could be cause for arrest. The first tanka translated here was written in September 1939, when Germany invaded Poland and France and Britain responded by declaring war on Germany. Samio had failed the physical exam for military service two years earlier and so spent the war years in the countryside.[86]

Taisen no	When the great war began
Hajimaru aki o	This autumn
Mura zumai	In this remote, country hamlet
Yūbe ni yakite	That evening I ate
Dojō tauburu	Grilled freshwater eel[87]

This poem needs little commentary except to say that in addition to the irony there is also a tension provided by the contrast between the safety of the countryside and the dangers of the war front, and also the freshwater eel or loach that the narrator is consuming at the time was probably caught by the narrator himself, and thus the poem points to the poverty of the countryside—an indirect consequence of war. The contrast may also intimate that the act of eating grilled eel is not only a luxury, but a reckless luxury and the safety of the poet's secluded rural idyll will not last.

Saigusa remarks about the next poem that rather than expressing a strong will to live, the poem is actually lamenting the present, it expresses a sense of resignation. Hope lies not in the present but in the future through death and salvation.[88]

Tsuchi kure no	There will come a time
Inochi to iu mo	When this clod of earth
Hi to moete	My life
Ten ni maiyuku	Will burn
Toki mo arinamu	Soaring unto the heavens[89]

Saigusa discerns a change in tone in the poems collected in the last section of *Tiling Clouds* from a focus on the personal self to a focus on the public self. This was the trend of the times and almost no tanka poets of any note were able to resist it. However, we have already seen in the poems cited above that Samio was consistent in his construction of an intensely personal poetic identity that saw only disaster and darkness ahead— by no criterion can these poems be read as the expressions of a chauvinistic patriot whose mission it was to denigrate the personal in favour of a public celebration of tradition. The next poem perfectly conveys that sense of ambivalence about Japan's invasion of China. By this time only words of praise were permitted by the authorities about Japan's military campaign to subjugate China. I cannot imagine how the celebration of a quiet pacifistic beauty in this verse could be read as anything other than a rejection of the dogmatic rhetoric of war.

Shina jihen	In the afternoon of the anniversary
Kinenbi no gogo wo	Of our incursion into China
No ni idete	I go into the fields
Natsubana no takeki	And pick a bunch
Tsumi tabanetaru	Of summer blossoms in full bloom [90]

2.6. Conclusion

Yoel Hoffman in his translated volume of Japanese death poems comments that, "One who dies lusting for death in this world or for salvation in the next is not enlightened. This is why many death poems express not only resignation to death but even indifference to the prospects of a world beyond."[91] Such a prohibition against the fierce expression of strong emotion does not

seem to have prevented several of the authors of the tanka cited above from revealing a complex mix of feelings, both in regard to the prospect of their own deaths but also in relation to the several recipients of their poems. Some tanka clearly evade the shackles placed upon such poetry by the authorities who intended that these verses should demonstrate an unflinching commitment to the war and to the Emperor, and thus could be used as a suitably patriotic accompaniment to the usual outpouring of war propaganda produced by imperial Japan.

As a number of the above poems demonstrate, the literature produced during the Pacific War included poems that, while mundane examples of literature, move the reader because of the sad and yet sincere sentiments expressed in them. I do not need to stress under what circumstances these poems were written. These verses testify to the enormous pressure under which literature was produced at the time and also enhance our understanding of the relationship between poetry and the state, poetry and the individual in wartime Japan.[92] There was room for negotiation between the author and his state sponsor in the sense of a subtle and mediated expression of individual emotion and, as can be seen from several of the verses, even of protest, however ambiguous, against the war, and those responsible for it. The expressions of sympathy for the enemy amid the horror of the battlefield also testify to the humanity of the authors of such poetry and elevate the tone of the poetry to a higher level.

As demonstrated in discussions of individual poems, the criteria used to evaluate war tanka does not have to differ significantly from that used to evaluate tanka in general. The particular aesthetic created by wartime tanka is a more complex matter, however. The poet Seo Ikuo, and one or two others, wish to draw a distinction between patriotic and pro-war verse. Indeed, I have used such a distinction as part of my own evaluation of this poetry. But it is evident from the analysis of Kawada Jun's tanka that the pressure exerted upon poets by the authorities (whether psychological or otherwise) had the power to distort and cheapen the production of individual tanka. Much of the wartime poetry written by this fine poet, as noted earlier, is of little aesthetic merit. Yet the poet was capable of writing first-rate poetry about the war, as revealed in the two tanka included in his volume *Eagle*. To make a final judgment on Kawada's poetry would require an examination of all of his verse and such an analysis is outside the scope of this study. It is important to keep in mind that most of the tanka produced during the war resembles Kawada's worst efforts at poetry rather than his best.

The importance of selection is demonstrated by the quality and the nature of the verse that Hayasaka chooses for his war poetry volume. Hayasaka undoubtedly has a preference towards outstanding tanka, and tanka that expresses resistance to the war. It is fair to say that he must have trawled deep into the archives to discover such poetry, which was printed in anthologies of

patriotic verse that all but disappeared from libraries after the war, and his extensive bibliography is proof of that.[93] Similarly, the verses from the 1940 *Araragi* volume that I have chosen for examination are, in my opinion, poems of genuine aesthetic merit, among much poetry in the same volume that is forgettable and pedestrian. The freshness of poetic expression, which avoids trite, clichéd language and often results in a blunt, sometimes humorous, sometimes ironic tone, successfully conveys the harsh reality of life at the front as well as communicating to readers the humanity of the authors. We apprehend the ring of truth in these verses, which unlike much of the poetry in the volume, are not mere exercises in propaganda devoid of artistic merit.

This is also the case with the poetry of Maekawa Samio, whose wartime tanka became an ideological battleground upon which the struggles of the various factions in the postwar literary scene were played out. The one-time revolutionary surrealist poet was assailed by his old comrades on the left for his putative betrayal of their cause in the form of his "patriotic" wartime tanka. As we have seen, these charges conveniently overlooked the even more jingoistic tanka (far exceeding in volume Maekawa's production of wartime verse) of many of his contemporaries. Further, as demonstrated here, much of Maekawa's verse was not jingoistic at all. Filled with a deep yearning for peace, and a strong revulsion against militarism, Maekawa's tanka expressed the poet's resistance to war ironically and indirectly in the face of the overwhelming dominance of artistic expression by the military. The fact that it took over half a century before his name and much of his wartime poetry was reevaluated and his reputation restored is testimony to the fierce heat generated by the postwar debate over war responsibility analyzed in chapter five.

Finally, are the tanka translated here primarily therapeutic exercises or genuine attempts at art? This question is more directed at the amateur poets investigated above than the "professionals" and is even more complicated than some of the earlier issues raised in this study because it is possible for poets to achieve both objectives. Some of the poems that express grief at the carnage occasioned by war or personal grief at the death of a friend are unmistakably personal confessions of the uncontrollable emotions of the several authors involved. Yet, some of these poems by amateurs do achieve the status of art, as demonstrated in my analysis hitherto, as do also some of the more ironic tanka chosen by Hayasaka and composed by one or two other poets. That Maekawa's tanka should rise to the great heights that they have is no surprise given the poet's prominence on the prewar tanka scene. What is more surprising is how some of the tragic verse by some of the soldiers who perished in the course of the war also achieves a modicum of aesthetic excellence.

The mysterious nature of art is nowhere more clearly revealed than in some of the fine tanka translated here, which embrace a complex set of contradictions, balancing a heightened narrative mode with variations on the role of the narrator, and also the diction used. I am thinking here of some of the

descriptive tanka as well as tanka which eschew extravagant tropes in favor of a cold naturalistic tone. Nevertheless, there are many conventional tanka which do not make any claim to art, but are written as expressions of personal emotion (like much modern tanka by amateurs)—this is perhaps the final tragedy of war, in that even a mode of artistic expression as powerful and familiar as the tanka genre, with its exceedingly long history, can turn into banal, propaganda-laden doggerel that often descends into base expressions of racial superiority and abuse.

Chapter Three

3. War, Memory, Trauma, Fiction, Truth: Kusaba Sakae at Nomonhan, 1939

> Duty is weightier than a mountain,
> Death is lighter than a feather
>
> —Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors (1882)[1]

Nomonhan was one of the most important, and one of the most savage battles that Japan initiated during the course of the Fifteen Years War. From May to September 1939, Japan and the Soviet Union engaged in what started out as a small border clash but quickly escalated into a large undeclared war on the Mongolian plains near Nomonhan.2 Both countries committed tens of thousands of troops, and hundreds of tanks and airplanes. Lieutenant Colonel Charles Otterstedt (U.S. Army) wrote of the strategic significance of the battle in his article "The Kwantung Army and The Nomonhan Incident: Its Impact On National Security", published in 2000:

> The tactical outcome of the confrontation sided with the Soviets. The superior artillery, armor, and air support, coupled with the near-brilliant orchestration of the campaign by General Zhukov, provided the Soviets a decisive victory. From a strategic point, the Nomonhan lncident had far-reaching consequences for Japan and the Soviet Union. As Dr. Edward Drea pointed out, "Although Japan's decision to execute its go south strategy [in 1941] was predominately predicated on economic factors, the Nomonhan lncident of 1939 was a definite factor in Japan's decision to switch from its traditional go north strategy and adopt the 'go south' strategy." Even the Soviet historian Ponomaryov and colleagues concluded that "the defeat inflicted by the Red Army on the Japanese troops along the Khalkhin Gol (also referred to as the Halha) River somewhat sobered up the high-handed Japanese militarists, while the Soviet-German (Nonaggression) Treaty deprived them of the basis of their anti-Soviet designs." This strategic shift to the south relieved the pressure of the Soviets having to fight two land fronts simultaneously as well as permitting the Soviets to shift their military resources against the Germans in the west. General Petro Grigorenko confirmed the Russians' own perception of the risk facing them if Japan had chosen to strike north after the Germans invaded Russia from the west. Major General A.K. Kazakovtsev, the operations chief of the Far Eastern Front, told Grigorenko in 1941: "If the Japanese enter the war on Hitler's side [...] our cause is hopeless."[3]

3.1. Nomonhan: Victory or Defeat?

In 1985, American historian Alvin D. Coox (1924–99) wrote the definitive English-language two volume study of the campaign and confirmed its significance for the future course of World War II, as well as describing the impact that the loss of so many Japanese troops had on the government and people

of Japan. Coox notes that soon after the fighting ended, the Japanese War Ministry released a single figure for casualties—18,000 killed, wounded and sick. As Coox observes, this is remarkable for the size of the admission and for the closeness to the classified military records.[4] On the impact abroad, Coox cites the *New York Times* correspondent Hugh Byas to the effect that "that the magnitude of the Japanese losses had not been expected by the Japanese public". The *New York Times* headline at the time read: "Tokyo Admits Defeat by Soviet; Calls Mongol Battle 'Disastrous'."[5]

Coox argues that in reality the Japanese lost a total of over 20,000 men from a committed number of 75,738. He also writes that all Japanese military historians note the staggering proportion of Japanese ground troops lost at Nomonhan, as a percentage of the forces engaged.[6] The Soviet Union did not release an unambiguous figure detailing the number of Soviet casualties but the most explicit total that was made public was 9,284. Coox argued that this statistic "represents a considerable underestimate."[7]

In the decades since Coox's two volumes were published, foreign researchers have been given access to the Russian archives and a new picture is emerging of the battle and the losses of the respective armies. In an article published in 2010, Miura Nobuyuki, Yakov Zinberg and Iwaki Shigeyuki argued that the total personnel losses of the Red Army amounted to 25, 655 casualties—a much larger number than hitherto envisaged. In fact the Soviet losses were so great that, in the words of the authors, this figure "casts a shadow of doubt on the issue of the allegedly decisive victory achieved by the Soviet Union."[8] Indeed, some six or seven years prior to this, in the years 2002–3, or even earlier, publications began to appear in Japan maintaining that Japan had actually won the engagement.[9] Distinguished military historian Hata Ikuhiko (b. 1932) in the afterword to his 2014 book *Mei to an no Nomonhan senshi* (The Light and Darkness of Nomonhan Military History) emphasizes the importance of the opening of the Soviet archives from the late 1990s on changed historical assessments of the battle; he lists a number of books using the archives that soon appeared arguing that Japan had won the battle.[10] However, as Coox has demonstrated, the notion that Japan was the victor was not embraced by the Japanese military at the time; despite official propaganda to the contrary, the view was that it represented a resounding defeat for the Japanese forces. Further, Hata argues in his book that if the objective was to gain territory from the enemy then it was certainly a defeat as far as Japan was concerned.[11]

Consequently, the Japanese authorities hushed up the conflict, with survivors who were officers encouraged to commit suicide and ordinary soldiers told not to speak of the defeat to anyone.[12] Aya Louisa McDonald in her 2015 article on Nomonhan and art argues that the Japanese artist Fujita Tsuguharu (1886–1968), in addition to his famous 1941 painting depicting the Nomonhan battle, completed another painting at the same time that "was considered a

potentially dangerous possession that needed to be kept from the public" because of the realistic portrait of the horrors that the Japanese troops suffered, and so was "lost".[13] Alvin Coox wrote that early in his research on the subject, "[he] wondered whether the true story will ever be uncovered."[14] He contends that the truth (as it was known to the military) about the Nomonhan campaign only began to be discussed openly from the late 1960s. As he noted, the year 1969 is particularly memorable for it was at that time that the official history, written by Nishihara Yukio appeared treating the Nomonhan Incident in "authentic detail".[15]

The distinguished historian Ienaga Saburō stated that the Japanese government continued to hush up the data on total Nomonhan Japanese battle deaths until his own book appeared in 1968. This claim was disputed by Coox.[16] Already by 1941, however, some mention of the setback at Nomonhan began to appear in a limited number of Japanese publications. Coox cites the widely distributed soldiers' handbook (1940) where it was written that it was "regrettable but evident that our forces' fighting capacity was inferior to that of Russians in the Nomonhan Incident; therein lies the reason for our 18,000 casualties."[17] Also in 1941 there appeared the first volume of Captain Kusaba Sakae's memoir—written in the style of a novel—of the Nomonhan Incident. Kusaba was involved in the fighting at Nomonhan in his role as Captain in the Seventh Battery of the 13th Field (Ise) Artillery Regiment. He was wounded on 28 August in 1939 and eventually sent home. His unit was awarded a citation for combat by Lieutenant General Ogisu Ryūhei, who was the commander of the 6th Army. Coox comments on Kusaba's testimony to an Imperial aide, which was recorded for transmission to the Emperor in 1940: "Kusaba emphasized perceived self-attributes of the Japanese army: Yamato spirit, faith in victory, and offensive elan."[18] Kusaba's book did not disappear after its initial publication in wartime but was reprinted as late as 1978.[19]

In 1968, the distinguished critic Murakami Hyōe (1923–2003) wrote of the cover up that followed the apparent defeat at Nomonhan. He cited several memoirs which appeared in the early 1940s that dealt with the Nomonhan battle: Higuchi Kōyō's (1889–1950) *Nomonhan jissen ki* (A Record of the Nomonhan Battle, 1941), Tanaka Eiji's *Tōkon* (Fighting Spirit, 1941), Matsumura Kōjirō's *Gekitsui* (Shot Down, 1942), Irie Tokurō's (1913–89) *Horonbairu no arawashi* (The Fierce Eagles of Hulun Buir, 1941), Takashima Masao's *Barushagaru sōgen* (Balshagal Plain, 1942) and Ogawa Shinkichi's *Sekishu ni ikiru* (Living with One Hand, 1941). As Murakami observed, in order to convey the ferocity of the fighting, a large number of non-fiction works were published at the time by journalists. Murakami argues that the total impact that these books had on the public was to suggest that the Japanese forces actually won the battle of Nomonhan.[20] Is this the case with Kusaba's work entitled *Noro kōchi—Nomonhan sensha senki* (Noro Hills: An Account of the Tank Annihilation Combat at Nomonhan, 2 vols, 1941–3), which Murakami highlights for

the large number of copies sold, having been reprinted 400 times in the three months after the first publication? We will investigate this question below but the popularity of the book and the lingering impact it had on readers is demonstrated by a number of pertinent quotations.

In 2008, the mathematician Shimura Gorō (b. 1930) published an English-language autobiography entitled *The Map of My Life* in which he wrote the following about his childhood memories of World War II:

> By 1940 the Japanese army was bogged down in China making no progress. Every ordinary Japanese citizen felt the shortage of everyday goods, but strangely the army did not care. In 1939 there was a military conflict at the border of Soviet Russia and Manchuria, and Japanese troops suffered heavy damage, but the details of the whole affair were kept from the Japanese public. However, a few years after this defeat, an army captain named Sakae Kusaba wrote a book that recorded the misery of the battles, from which the reader could infer how disastrous the matter was. I read the book when it was published but did not realize how bad the situation was.[21]

In Ochiai Michio's 2013 book *Nomonhan jiken no shinjitsu* (the Truth of the Nomonhan Incident), Ochiai writes that Kusaba's volume had a massive impact on Japanese at the time for, despite the overall censorship of the Nomonhan battle, it gave readers a real sense of the death and destruction that occurred there. He also mentions that the book was banned by the occupation authorities.[22]

In his 2014 work, Hata Ikuhiko states that in addition to the 450 reprintings of Kusaba's *Noro Hills*, the book sold well over a million copies—an extraordinary figure for wartime publications. He observes that reading the book today, it is no doubt a mediocre work but it must have struck a chord in the hearts of contemporary readers.[23] He also emphasizes the importance of best-selling historical novels such as Gomikawa Junpei's (1916–95) massive work *Nomonhan* (1974) on public perceptions of the event: these novels emphasized the huge number of Japanese soldiers who died in vain, thus seeing the battle as essentially a defeat.[24] Basing his work on the accounts of three soldiers who had survived the battle, the popular novelist Itō Keiichi (1917–2016) wrote the award-winning novel *Shizukana Nomonhan* (Silent Nomonhan) in 1983.[25] Only twelve years later, in 1995, the famous novelist Murakami Haruki (b. 1949) used the battle of Nomonhan as the centerpiece of his long novel *Nejimakitori kuronikuru* (The Wind-Up Bird Chronicle), and in this respect echoes the theme of Gomikawa and Itō's novels, although the significance of the event is also found in the idea that the battle was a long suppressed secret.[26] Handō Kazutoshi (b. 1930) has written a number of works on the war and in 1998 his mainly non-fiction account of the battle *Nomonhan no natsu* (Summer in Nomonhan) appeared, and was subsequently awarded the Yamamoto Shichihei prize. In 2001 on NHK TV there was a special program investigating the "secret" of the Nomonhan battle, and subsequently a book based

on the program written by Kamakura Hideya entitled *Nomonhan kakusareta "sensō"* (The Hidden "War" at Nomonhan, 2001) was also published. In addition, other books on Nomonhan have been published in Japanese in recent years that offer narrative histories of the event or focus on documents relating to the battle, but do not discuss Kusaba's work.[27]

3.2. Kusaba's *Noro Hills* and War Memory

The appearance of reportage-style accounts of war complete with realistic descriptions of the fighting long predates World War II, and, in the Japanese case, can be seen as a tradition of writing that in the modern era comes to prominence in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905–6.[28] The most famous example of a work from that time that records battlefield details (while still emphasizing the bravery of the Japanese soldiers) is Sakurai Tadayoshi's *Nikudan* (Human Bullets, 1906) translated into English the year after its original publication and soon after appearing in translation in several other languages. Sakura was also an officer, like Kusaba, serving in the Japanese military during the course of the Russo-Japanese war, and his work created a template that generations of soldier-authors were to follow.[29] As Aaron William Moore notes, "Given the immense popularity of the novel, it is very likely that Japanese servicemen thereafter used similar language to describe their own experiences—if not merely to be able to express themselves in a manner understandable to a civilian audience".[30] What exactly was the nature of the templates established by Sakurai's novel and like-minded works on Kusaba's novel?

A number of studies exist in Japanese and English that examine writing on war, and the individual recollections of war by soldiers in the form of wartime diaries or "field diaries" (jinchū nikki or nisshi) as they were called, letters, and memoirs, including works written as novels in the style of Kusaba. Kano Masano in his 2005 book *Heishi de aru koto: dōin to jūgun no seishinshi* (Being a Soldier: A Spiritual History of the Deployed and Soldiers) argues that in the past two decades such writings have proliferated in Japan.[31] A small sample from his list of representative works includes: Kuroda Toshio's (ed.) *Mura to sensō: heiji gakari no shōgen* (The Village and Soldiers: Testimony of Village Secretaries in Charge of Military Affairs, 1988); Ōe Shinobu's *Heishitachi no nichiro sensō: 500 tsū no gunji yūbin kara* (The Soldiers' Russo-Japanese War: 500 Letters From the Military, 1988); Shibahara Takuji's (ed.) *Nitchū sensō jūgun nisshi: shichōhei no senjō taiken* (Diaries From the War in China: The Experience of Transport Soldiers, 1989); Ono Kenji, Fujiwara Akira, Honda Katsuichi's (ed.) *Nankin daigyakusatsu o kirokushita kōgun heishitachi* (Soldiers of the Imperial Army Documenting the Nanking Massacre, 1996); Fujii Tadatoshi's *Heitachi no sensō: tegami, nikki, taikenki o yomitoku* (Soldiers' War: Decoding Letters, Diaries and Records of Personal Experience, 2000);

Harada Keiichi's *Kokumingun no shinwa: heishi ni naru to iu koto* (The Myth of the People's Army: To Be a Soldier, 2001); Ōhama Tetsuya's *Nihonjin to sensō: Rekishi to shite no sensō taiken* (The Japanese and War: War Experience as History, 2002) and Yoshida Hiroshi's *Nihon no guntai: heishitachi no kindaishi* (Japan's Army: the Modern History of Soldiers, 2002).[32]

As an addenda, we might insert into Kano's list, Hirabayashi Toshihiko's powerful 2009 study of wartime poets *Senchū sengo shiteki jidai no shōgen 1935–1955* (The Testimony of Wartime and Post-war Poetry 1935–1955), and Yamaguchi Toshio's (ed.) important collection of studies *Nihon kindai bungaku to sensō: "Jūgonen sensō" ki no bungaku o tsūjite* (Modern Japanese Literature and War: On the Literature of "The Fifteen Years War", 2012) although there are many other volumes not noted here that Kano mentions as worthy of investigation.[33] Since the publication of Kano's book in 2005 (and before) undoubtedly many more publications have been issued in Japanese, not to mention the numerous documentary series that collect records of the war.

The most famous publication recording the voices of the dead—the young soldiers who perished in vast numbers as a result of Japan's invasion of China, South-East Asia and the Pacific—that appeared in the immediate aftermath of the war was the celebrated *Kike wadatsumi no koe: Nihon senbotsu gakusei no shuki* (Listen to the Voices from the Sea: Writings of the Fallen Japanese Students, 1949) edited by the Nihon senbotsu gakusei shuki henshū iinkai (Japan Memorial Society for the Students Killed in the War—Wadatsumi Society).[34] This volume collected memoirs written by conscripted students who died in the war. The publication is often remembered as exploding the myth that young soldiers died with the Emperor's name on their lips; the book demonstrated that it was much more likely that their mother's name was the last words that they uttered.[35]

In English many famous studies have appeared on war literature, some which have been mentioned in the Introduction. In addition, a number of books have been published on Japanese war writing that, especially in recent years, have provided a context against which we can evaluate Kusaba's two volumes (although to date I have not been able to find any works specifically examining Kusaba's writing). Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney has examined the literature left by kamikaze pilots in some detail, her 2006 work *Kamikaze Diaries: Reflections of Japanese Student Soldiers*, mentioned in the previous chapter, is exemplary and contains numerous translations of diary extracts and poems left by these victims to Japan's wartime folly in sending youths to their deaths in spectacular acts of self-immolation in ramshackle wooden aircraft.[36] Her work complements and enhances my discussion of kamikaze poetry in chapter two. Donald Keene has translated diary extracts from various writers composed between 1941 and 1946 in his 2010 book *So Lovely A Country Will Never Perish*; these writers expressed opposition in one form or another to the war, and so differ for the most part from military diaries or memoirs.[37] Samuel

Hideo Yamashita's 2005 book *Leaves From an Autumn of Emergencies: Selections From the Wartime Diaries of Ordinary Japanese* also includes a translation of a diary left by a kamikaze pilot killed in 1945, but mostly focuses on diary records of ordinary Japanese.[38]

These excellent works (and others not mentioned, such as studies of individual wartime writers) help enormously in establishing a context that permits readers to evaluate and understand Kusaba's work. But the English-language publication most relevant to creating a hermeneutic of understanding for Kusaba is Aaron William Moore's 2013 book *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire*. In this important book, Moore has examined over 200 Japanese and Chinese wartime military diaries (as noted at the beginning of his bibliography) and thus he provides a broad overview of war diaries that often includes discussion of memoirs such as that written by Kusaba. First a quotation from Moore that analyses the notion of truth, not merely applicable to diaries but also to Kusaba's work, as we shall soon discover.

> Servicemen did not use a consistent voice in their diaries because their manners of expression, personal beliefs, and conditions of writing were constantly changing. Most important, however much we must remove the truth value of the text from our readings, diarists usually accepted them as true reflections of themselves in a way that most writers of fiction, news, and stereo manuals rarely do. Even though we cannot equate the diary with the author, pulling him totally away from his diary, as well as the experience of the war itself, is unwise [...]. At the same time, it is essential to separate the connection of a diary to its author from the rhetoric of truth that surrounds diaries themselves, with particular caution for how contemporary society links "truth" to the concept of "privacy." East Asian literary culture enjoyed a plethora of confessions, diaries, and other self-narratives that tested the boundary between "fact" and "fiction." Mishima Yukio, a Japanese author who was all too familiar with the techniques of public performance of self, declared in *Confessions of a Mask* that "only a mask can confess".[39]

We can conclude that the notion of truth is complex even in regard to diaries and this insight allows a reading of Kusaba's work as literature, that is, it falls into the category of fiction, however much the author claims it is simply a true record of events.

What claims does the author make about his book? Before examining the author's preface, it is useful to attempt a brief analysis of the various prefaces by others that garland the beginning of volume one. The first preface is by Hasegawa Uichi, the director of publicity for the Kwantung Army. He notes that: "With regard to accounts of war, dodging the same bullets, news from correspondant-soldiers—whether wielding the 'pen' or the 'camera', memoirs of soldiers or commissioned officers fighting the enemy with rifles or Japanese swords—there should no difference in their contents that convey the true experience of war but when we look at actual works we find that in the impressions gained from them there are significant disparities."[40] He then goes on to observe that accounts by unit leaders leave readers with a powerful impression

of events because of the overall perspective of a commander responsible for the safety of his troops (thus able to overcome the limitations of an individual perspective). He notes that Kusaba as a unit commander went through the whole Nomonhan campaign until he was injured in fighting, remarking that reports of the fierce fighting left Kusaba's brother with the understanding that his older brother had perished.[41] He states, "[Kusaba's] memoir is written in a flowing, refined style".[42] He urges readers to give the book at least one reading, and exclaims that it is not in any sense a commonplace or hackneyed work.[43] Hasegawa stresses the actual experience of Kusaba as unit commander contributing to the reality of the memoir as a whole.

The second preface is by the commander of the Kwantung Army, thanking Kusaba's unit for their valiant efforts, first on July 3 1939 in driving back a massed enemy tank advance and rescuing the field headquarters; second on 23 July for capturing an enemy encampment with emplaced artillery on the Noro Hills, and third for taking part in fierce fighting on 27 August against an enemy tank force in which nine of the enemy tanks were destroyed (it should be noted that Kusaba received his war-ending injury on 28 August).[44] Coox confirms the first of these incidents, noting that "Kusaba's Type 38 field artillery [...] proved their salvation"; he also confirms more or less the truth of the description of the second action but characterizes the battle commencing 20 August as a massive loss for the Japanese forces.[45] However, this does not necessarily contradict the commander's praise for Kusaba's unit. The third preface is by Fujimoto Tetsukuma, a Major-General and the chief of staff of the Sixth Army. He begins his preface by apologizing to the relatives of those killed at Nomonhan, and like his predecessors praises Kusaba's valor and courage. For Fujimoto what is striking about Kusaba's account is that it is "a record of this blood-stained war that is without artifice, no trace of exaggeration and entirely authentic, true to word."[46] He showers praise on Kusaba's account to an extravagant degree—claiming that Kusaba's descriptions of the enemy ring exceptionally true.[47] The fourth preface is by Colonel Yoshitomi Tokuzō, the leader of the Yoshitomi unit, and later commander of the 13th field artillery regiment, who praises the courage and decision-making ability of Kusaba. He also describes *Noro Hills* as an important source to educate readers in the future about the truth of what happened at Nomonhan.[48] He adds: "The magic of Kusaba's writing portrays the nonsense that can occur on the battlefield so you won't be able to stop laughing."[49] This last claim perhaps gestures towards the document as a work of literature.

If we examine the four prefaces and epigraphs written by these senior officers, then we see a few common threads running through all the pieces. Namely, a concern with praising the courage of the author and the soldiers he describes; also, an emphasis on the truthfulness of the narrative. The general idea seems to be that if you want to understand what went on at Nomonhan, then this is the book for you. No doubt, the families of the tens of thousands

of soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the battle were most anxious to find out exactly what happened. In this respect, the fictionality of Kusaba's account is carefully effaced from the prefaces.

This is also the case with author's own preface where he writes:

> As a result of the Nomonhan Campaign, I clearly grasped the strength, mental capacity and military technology of the Soviet forces. That the enemy possessed these advantages did not weaken my belief that we would be victorious over the Soviet forces—actually this belief was strengthened. But, unfortunately, because of the circumstances and the Soviet equipment, especially the quantity of the enemy armaments, in the final analysis our iron mace was not able to crush the enemy and we did not achieve a satisfactory outcome. [...] Finally, I'd like to add that I did not carelessly embellish or color any actual events, no matter how trivial. Thus, I did not utilize aliases, recording the real names of the people involved. Also, I wish to add that I took nearly all of the photographs included throughout the text in the time that I could spare from the fighting.[50]

The overall impact of all the prefaces is to attest to the truthfulness of Kusaba's account, as well as establishing the book's authenticity by the repeated praise to that effect from his military superiors. The addition of copious numbers of photographs from the front—over 200 throughout the 633 pages of the two volumes, plus the many inserted drawings by Eguchi Shin'ichi also add to the sense of authenticity conveyed in the text. The fact that in his own preface Kusaba admits that the battle was lost by Japan is also proof of his intention, as far as was possible in an era of strict military censorship of all published matter, to reveal the truth. It should be noted that there is clear evidence of repeated incidences of censorship with numerous blank spaces (fuseji) scattered throughout the text.

Do the conventions of reportage or the military memoir influence the shape of *Noro Hills*? To answer this question, we return to Moore's study of military diaries where he writes:

> Reportage, a slightly later phenomenon in East Asia, aimed to convey information not just as undigested data but as a story that exposed hidden "truths" and moved its audience to collective action. War reportage began in late nineteenth-century East Asia as a capitalist invention intended to increase the circulation of newspapers, but it was not particularly concerned with the virtues and tribulations of the common soldier until the arrival of mass politics at the turn of the twentieth century [...]. Similarly, by exposing crimes against the nation and expressing the fundamental heroism of the armed forces, war reportage attempted to mobilize the public to support national defense. War reportage took as its aim capturing the true experience of war from the worm's-eye view and inspiring its reader (the worm) to participate in the ongoing struggle (mobilization). To a large degree, then, war reportage embraced the same writing techniques that were developed significantly by Marxist pioneers and simply replaced "workers" with "our troops." In a slow and uneven process, war reportage and the field diary, as writing forms with roughly similar goals and similar objects, began to influence one another at the beginning of the twentieth century.[51]

The notion of exposing the truth features prominently in Moore's characterization of reportage, and certainly Kusaba's account promotes a strongly patriotic narrative in its portrayal of the Japanese soldiers fighting at Nomonhan. The trauma caused by war is also an important element in both diary writing on war and also related narratives such as fiction or memoirs. How this may affect *Noro Hills* is one of the questions that will be examined in the detailed analysis of the text that follows. However, Moore's view on these matters is also of relevance to the discussion.

> Although soldiers shared Wittgenstein's dim view of language superficially [that it is often inadequate to represent experience], they nevertheless made frequent use of it to describe combat. Consequently, this book has explained how their acts of writing war, whether they were accurate or not, in any case had implications for how soldiers viewed the conflict, the enemy, and themselves [...]. Soldiers seemed unusually preoccupied with diary writing. In fact, in the field of cognitive neuroscience, the "compulsion to chronicle" and narrativize experience is now thought to be a hardwired facet of the human brain and a product of evolutionary process. Scholarship on trauma—particularly wartime psychological injury—seems, however, to state the opposite: that the brain resists the narrativization of life experience and even chops out whole sections of the past, because it is, as Allan Young put it, "an affliction through which pain and fear colonize and degrade the sufferer's life-world." Nevertheless, to treat this affliction, psychologists actually emphasize talk therapy, which puts disparate memories into a structured, rational narrative in order to give comfort to trauma patients. Considering the problems with trauma and the unreliability of memory, in addition to philosophy and neuroscience's suspicion of language's ability to represent real life, one might be forgiven in seeing these diaries as being entirely separate from war experience. Still, one cannot ignore the effects of unwritten experiences on the composition of the diary, even if many of those experiences cannot be discussed directly. The "physics of writing war" shows us that experience, particularly of the traumatic kind, is encoded in textual blank spots and can be detected by the activity around them. In the observable world of written language, invisible phenomena such as trauma, guilt, emotion, desire, and other indescribable mental events must be similarly treated with a Wittgensteinian mixture of respect and relative silence. One can, however, measure the effects of these events. Changes in writing can be reasonably ascribed to the powerful influence of experience, even if the experience itself is forever beyond us. We cannot "know what war was like," but we can see the impact that it had on individuals in their writing.[52]

3.3. *Noro Hills*, Volume One: Truth or Fiction?

Noro Hills was published in two volumes by the Masu Shobō company in Tokyo: the first on 20 February 1941 and the second on 20 June 1943. Among other books listed for sale from the same publisher in the advertisements at the end of volume one we find the infamous Nazi writer Hans Grimm's

(1875–1959) 1926 novel *Volk ohne Raum* (A People Without Space) in Japanese translation—an argument for establishing colonies or seizing territory. The blurb proclaims this this book has been eagerly awaited by the Japanese reading public.[53] The adage of the company we keep has often been applied to books but it may well be doubtful that Kusaba would want to have been a fellow-traveller with Grimm as the two books seem to have little in common: Kusaba hardly mentions the motives behind or the objectives of the engagements at Nomonhan.

Volume one is divided into 12 chapters, in order the chapter titles are: *Shosen made* (Until the Start of the War), *Sensha senmetsu Sen* (Battle to Decimate Tanks), *Barushagaru e* (To Balshagal), *Kessen* (Bloody Battle), *Tekichū no ichinichi* (A day Inside Enemy Territory), *Gōnai seikatsu* (Life In The Trenches), *Sōkōgeki* (All-out Attack), *Mizu to sōgen* (Water and the Prairie), *Nomonhan aparto* (An Apartment in Nomonhan), *Kūchūsen to Imosashi* (Air Battle and Potato Skewing), *Noro kōchi de* (At Noro Hills) and *Kesshikō* (Death March). The first chapter records in a diary-like fashion events occurring after the arrival of Kusaba and his unit at the battlefield on 27 June 1939 and is arranged into daily diary entries (with the date and day highlighted in bold print) commencing on 27 June and continuing until 3 July.[54]

The next chapter also begins with as a diary entry for Monday 3 July but the whole of the chapter is devoted to describing the events of that day, that is, a detailed description of a tank battle. The next chapter (chapter three, although the chapters are not numbered) narrates in detail the events of the following two days 4, 5 July in like manner, with the dates noted as in a diary. Chapter four also follows the same pattern detailing events of the succeeding three days: 6, 7, 8 July. Chapter five also devotes the whole chapter to one day: Sunday 9 July. But the next chapter, chapter six, departs from the diary-style narrative to describe the minutiae of life in the trenches. The next chapter is organized in a similar fashion in that it describes an assault taking place on 20–3 July. As with the earlier chapters, the days are marked in diary style with days and dates noted.

The following chapter, chapter eight is a detailed reflection on the three-day battle described in the previous chapter. This does not depart from the real-time narration (including much dialogue) that is the hallmark of the chapters so far and that clearly indicate that the work in its overall design is modeled on military fiction. The remaining chapters also depart from the strict diary format to jump about somewhat as they narrate events from various perspectives. Dates are mentioned in the text but not in a strict linear progression.

If we examine the content of the chapters in more detail, then it is clear that it narrates the historic incursion of Japanese troops into Soviet territory at Nomonhan from the point of view of one participant in the process—Captain Kusaba—the text is narrated in part in the first person but often in

the third person (using terms like "kare" or "he" or sometimes "jibun" or oneself), with dialogue and descriptive tableaux. An omniscient narrator also appears from time to time to give readers insights into the general situation or into the thoughts of other Japanese soldiers mentioned in the text. The story begins:

> "Captain…Captain!"
>
> Sergeant Furukawa called out, shaking me awake from the depths of a deep sleep, only vaguely aware, I couldn't move at first.
>
> It was around 4 in the morning but on the Hulun Buir plain—latitude 49 degrees—the sun had already started to whiten the eastern sky from 3 am and I felt on my eyelids the burning heat of the sunlight of early summer. We had left Hailar at 4 am on 22 June and by marching step by step had defeated the terrible terrain of the great prairie and by 8 pm on the evening 26 June had arrived at a nameless sand dune 4 kilometers to the east of the tomb of the great [Mongolian] general […].
>
> "What?"
>
> "The orders have come through!"
>
> Yes, this was now the battlefront, no doubt about it […]. [55]

From the first, Kusaba experiences the fear and trembling that characterizes a soldier's anticipation of battle: "Through my spectacles, staring at the mass of the tanks, running hard at us, raising thick dust like a prairie fire, I couldn't stop trembling."[56] It is noticeable that here he is reflecting on the tanks of the Manchukuoan military, part of the Japanese forces, not the enemy.

The work as a whole is quite realistic and the author is unsparing in his descriptions of the carnage resulting from the many battlefield encounters that he records.

> Every time Colonel Komatsubara and the Komatsubara corps disappeared in the smoke of enemy artillery fire, I thought they had perished, but when I saw the muzzles of our artillery firing, I was relieved. "They're safe", I thought. (50)

Coox tells the story of the advance of Japanese forces against what they had wrongly thought was a lightly-armed small Soviet-Mongolian force; in reality the Soviets had assembled a large tank, artillery and infantry presence, the tanks in particular exceeding the total Japanese tanks at Nomonhan by a considerable number. According to historian Stuart D. Goldman, the Japanese tanks numbered only 70 while the Soviets deployed 186 tanks.[57] Coox's more detailed account complements and expands Kusaba's narrative of the battle as it unfolded in late June and early July:

> The Kwantung Army had directed the 23rd Division to launch its offensive as soon as preparations were complete […] Komatsubara reached his decision: the 23rd Division must commence action quickly from the early hours of 1 July in order not to lose its opportunity […]. Drawn up by the 23rd Division at Chiangchunmiao in consultation with the Kwantung Army staff officers, especially Tsuji, the order of 30

> June called for pinning and defeating hostile forces on the right shore while the river-crossing units swung around the enemy on the other bank and severed his line of retreat [...]. With five infantry battalions from the 71st and 72nd regiments, Kobayashi was to leave Chiangchunmiao on the morning of 1 July [...]. [58]
>
> [...] Moving behind the infantry group, Komatsubara would bring up artillery and engineers and proceed across the Halha, too. The motorized reserved—three battalions of the 7th Division's 26th Infantry Regiment transferred from Yasuoka's command—would exploit the anticipated success by crossing the river and operating on Kobayashi's outer wing. On the right shore, Yasuoka's tank corps would follow Kobayashi and Komatsubara to the Fui area and, at dawn on the 3rd, strike toward the Halha-Holsten confluence while the main body of the 23rd Division was attacking across the river [...]. By 4 a.m. on 1 July, about 15,000 heavily laden troops had started to march westward some 30–35 km. across an arid plain. [...] It was noon on 2 July before an attack battalion of the 72nd Infantry Regiment could advance against Fui Heights.[59]

Coox's account of the battle of 3 July is also instructive:

> By the time the 3rd Battalion came across the river around 9 a.m. and turned south, enemy resistance had stiffened and the fighting became so heavy that no distinction between first and second lines could be discerned. Contrary to the regiment's original plan, the new battalion entered combat immediately. One of the company commanders called the battlefield "black with enemy armor." Under tank fire and heavy artillery barrages, the Japanese offensive lost momentum and gradually degenerated into defensive operations. The soldiers dug foxholes, leaving only their heads protruding. They would wait now to launch a night attack.[60]

After Kusaba unit's heroic action in driving back a massed enemy tank advance and rescuing the field headquarters, Coox cites a second lieutenant reflecting on the overall battle:

> But the division commander's junior aide, an infantry second lieutenant, remarks upon the unforgettable sight of row after row of enemy tanks pushing forward from the area south of Komatsu Heights around noon. The lieutenant was amazed by the masses of machines; he had never seen so many. Even after very heavy losses, Tsuji observes the enemy still had more than 200 armored vehicles in action.[61]

The Japanese surprise at the large number of Soviet tanks they encountered is also indicated in Kusaba's account, but at first it seemed victory was within their grasp, as this extract from chapter seven demonstrates.

> Then on the morning of the 19th (July), I left on reconnaissance of the enemy position to prepare for the all-out attack, which was coming ever closer. From morning, the Nagano Regiment was on the receiving end of a furious attack by enemy tanks that were using flame-throwers. The battlefield where we were replying to the enemy's fire had come to life, so it was very dangerous setting. The plain was covered by gray cloud and rain, and accompanied by private first-class Kawashima, I moved three or four thousand meters towards the enemy. On our left flank, the Nagano detachment encountered sustained shelling, the smoke from the artillery barrage made it impossible to see anything. My unit and that of Sakai fired our artillery

> repeatedly. Our accuracy was excellent. In the end, the enemy tanks and counter-attacking infantry scattered, moving at a fast pace. As always, their retreat was incredibly fast.[62]

This signaled the beginning of the main attack on the Soviet forces around Noro, which continued for some days. On 21 July Kusaba describes the actions of his artillery command, but soon segues into the tale of private first-class Machida:

> With a terrible howl, there was a severe impact and a flash of light blinded me: everything turned black. A soldier, covered in blood, collapsed. Targeting the smoke from our cooking fires, a type-15 grenade landed precisely into our trench. And immediately the second and third shells arrived. "Oy, it's dangerous, get out!" Three soldiers leapt from their trenches and dashed off. Running frantically, they leapt into the trench where the Seki Unit had its observation station and breathed a sigh of relief. Forgetting their clothing and their hats as if they'd agreed beforehand, they clutched their mess kits in their right hands. One soldier tightly held onto his mess kit which had not been heated in a fierce grip.
>
> The battle was about to enter upon a new stage of ferocity any moment, and so there was no time to relax in the trenches, a single bullet, a petrol can, had become more valuable than food. Attack after attack, clash after clash followed, and by the middle of July there was a severe shortage of rice and water, so we were given strict orders to cut down on our food. There was a private first class called Machida Tarō. With a brave heart he decided not to eat lunch. It was not because breakfast and dinner were such delicious meals. Four or five pieces of hardtack and a small portion of water, and on occasion rice and bully beef—that was all he had to eat. Finally, after four or five days, he could not help but feel starved, and in the end, he decided to cook some rice, but not enough to fill the mess kit that he was carrying with him every day. Next, there was no water, but he found black water—enough to fit in the palm of the hand—at the bottom of a gas tank and used this to cook his rice. But the rice was an inedible black color and stank of gasoline. No matter how much he tried it would not go down his throat, and so, bitter though it was, he threw the rice away, which then attracted a mass of flies as if it were a delicacy. Gazing at this scene, crushed, for no reason that he could understand, tears rolled down his cheeks. "Shit!" Stomping on the rice, looking to one side he saw his beloved horse munching away contentedly on the wild grass. Chewing one tuft of grass after another, the horse vanquished the grass growing like green moss, lifted his head and heaved a great, happy sigh. Then once again commenced to eat. Casting a hazy eye at this, private first-class Machida thought that the grass that his horse Daigungō was chewing looked rather tasty. In the next instant a strange thought occurred to Machida's dazed, numb brain—"that looks quite edible!" "Right, I'll have a bite." He suddenly tore out some grass and shoved it in his mouth, he chewed with all his might, but a strange taste remained on his dry tongue and swallow as he may the grass would not go down.
>
> "How stupid is this, my horse is chewing away contentedly, and I've come to envy him." So said Private first-class Machida with a bittersweet expression on his face [...]. This is another story from that time.[63]

This particular quotation is telling for it confirms that *Noro Hills* is indeed a variety of fiction, if not literature. Whether the story of private first-class

Machida is true is not relevant. What is relevant is that Kusaba chose to interleave this humorous yet sad tale into the account of a battle, a battle that was real and, as Kusaba describes above, that resulted in the death of various combatants.[64] By his interweaving of this story into an ostensible narrative account of war, Kusaba is, in Aaron William Moore's words, "[adopting] a voice and, in doing so, putting on a performance of the self—either as implied author, narrator or protagonist."[65]

3.4. *Noro Hills,* Volume Two: Retrospection and Reality

The second volume consists of 11 chapters, all numbered in order, the chapter titles are: *Yasen byōin* (Battlefield Hospital), *Shitō nihyaku kiro* (A Desperate Journey over Two Hundred Kilometers), *Tsuisō* (Retrospection), *Byōsō nite* (In a Hospital Room), *Sōkōgeki semaru* (Imminent: All-out Attack), *Nomonhan no kyōkun* (Lessons from Nomonhan), *Kikan no hi chikaku* (Nearing My Return Home), *Saikai* (Reunion), *Sokoku e kaeru* (Coming Home), *Futatabi genchi e* (Return to Nomonhan), *Eirei to tomo ni* (With the Spirits of the Dead). The narrative begins with Kusaba, having sustained serious chest and lung injuries during the fighting, being evacuated from the battlefield in a truck that comes under the fire of Soviet air attacks. The date of his injury is 28 July, we learn that he is in a field hospital, a tent, and that his recovery is by no means certain. He is accompanied by his batman, Nagatomo.

The first three chapters of the second volume describe in some detail the hellish journey on a truck with other wounded soldiers to the Hailar hospital where Kusaba's family was waiting. The journey he undertakes covers a few days and thus the mental state of Kusaba—his memories and reflections—are the key constituents of the narrative. He meets other wounded, which prompts dreams of the battles he has fought at Nomonhan, and recollections of the fates of other comrades. While convalescing in the hospital, he meets up with sergeant Shigyō, who has preserved Kusaba's field diary (jinchū nisshi). As his batman Nagatomo reports:

> "Captain [Kusaba], the detailed battle report and your field diary have survived in good order!"
>
> "Righto," I said, and heaved an involuntary sigh of relief.
>
> Our group was following Komatsu's battalion on the night of the 27th and we were hurrying towards the Old Engineering Bridge when we lost sight of the main group, sergeant Shigyō declared:
>
> "Captain Kusaba, I'll go and see if I can make contact with them."
>
> Thereupon he disappeared on his own into the darkness amid the advancing enemy tanks.
>
> Through an irony of fate, shortly after, our group ran across quite by accident an enemy tank battalion in the dark, and an unexpected battle commenced.

> In the battle, my beloved subordinates Tomiyoshi and Furukawa died. So to revenge ourselves, we engaged in a ferocious firefight with the enemy tanks and utterly destroyed them.
>
> After waiting for some time for us at the Old Engineering Bridge, the Komatsubara Battalion advanced over the hills in the darkness and seeing the terrible and unfortunate fire of battle below, decided we had all perished and made a rapid forward advance—we were left all alone surrounded by the enemy. Sergeant Shigyō had already made contact with the Komatsubara Battalion more easily than expected and set back upon the path that he had taken to lead our group towards Komatsubara's troops when suddenly he was confronted by the fire of the enemy tanks.
>
> "Oh, shit!" he swore, and throwing himself down, felt a sudden whipping pain like a shock in his upper left arm. In a state of confusion, he tried to raise his left hand, but it felt like it belonged to someone else, just hanging limply. [...] He knew in his bones that he had been hit. He fastened his left arm to his body, silently closed his eyes, and trusting his fate to heaven, lay down on the hills. He finished by telling Nagatomo that by a stroke of good fortune the enemy gave up the pursuit and the next morning he was rescued by friendly forces. [66]

The use of conversations like this, which in this instance is a retelling of the experience of his batman Nagatomo, and in turn, Nagatomo's narrative is a retelling of sergeant Shigyō's tale, illustrate the complex nature of Kusaba's novel. At this point in the narrative, as noted above, Kusaba is convalescing in the Hailar hospital, so the whole sequence of events narrated in the above quotation form part of an extended recollection or "retrospection", as the chapter title states. This is no mere field diary, a record simply jotting down events in a more or less chronological sequence soon after they occurred. Rather, Kusaba is painting an intricate portrait of a small war, shaping his narrative around a series of vignettes.

This chapter is significant for another reason: while in his hospital bed Kusaba is told of his younger brother's death in battle. The narration of this heart-rending news also reveals further dimensions of this fascinating book.

> Fukunaga said to me: "We were informed of the death in battle of the [Commander of the 13th Field Artillery Regiment], Colonel Ise."
>
> In response to those words (it has finally come about), dazed, I tried to get up. But I wasn't able to move. I felt as if I had been dealt a sharp blow and at the same time I thought this was no good for my younger brother Hiroshi who accompanied Colonel Ise everywhere. I couldn't help but look at my sister-in-law Toshiko who was downcast, biting her lower lip so tightly I thought it would bleed. Lying there waiting for his news to come, strangely disconnected thoughts came and went in my mind.
>
> Just as I was about to say something, Ise's Adjutant, Fukunaga, started to speak:
>
> "Actually, about your brother [...]."
>
> "I saw him in the ditch at the Old Engineering Bridge on the 29th, the last day of the engagement. He had suffered a slight wound to his foot and was wearing sandals but was in good shape. We were in the middle of the battle so there

> was no time to talk [...]. The enemy counterattack grew increasingly intense, enemy tanks were advancing on all sides, the bombardment was so fierce you couldn't open your eyes. I was wounded while attempting to pass on communications, I barely survived so don't know the full details but there is no doubt that the entire Ise Regiment and the Yamagata Regiment perished in battle [...] "He paused for a second.
>
> "So, what you're saying is that my brother was with the Commander at that time?" That was all I could get out. My brother revered Colonel Ise with all his heart and in turn was cherished by the Commander as if he were his own son. The fact that they were together meant that they died together in battle. Of that I was sure.
>
> My brother had died—I realized this after only a few words from Fukunaga. To die with one's commander is something sought after by all warriors. Deep in sorrow, this thought comforted me a little. Then as if the dam had broken, memory after memory of the Commander and my brother came into my mind.
>
> [...]
>
> The Commander was dead [...]. And so was my little brother. I was now almost completely certain that the 26 years of my brother's life had ended as the flowers scatter in the winds!
>
> I don't know how much time had passed, but I could no longer see Toshiko. Fukunaga, his head bent, was lost in thought. As if listening to this extraordinary conversation with him, the interior of the hospital room remained silent.
>
> "I see, thank you very much. Thanks to your words I now feel that I understand what happened to my brother at the end. But I didn't realize the situation was so bad."[67]

This moving passage constitutes in many ways the heart of volume two. The trauma evident in the whole passage is sublimated to the needs and purpose of his narrative, that is, Kusaba emphasizes heroism and bravery but his true feelings are clearly revealed. Aaron William Moore notes how this rewriting, reshaping was a common feature of Japanese soldiers' accounts of the war in his discussion of Kogura Isamu's correction of his wartime diary:

> He probably went probably went to a veterans' meeting or the local library or, like many others, made the trip to Tokyo's National Institute for Defense Studies (Bōei kenkyūjo) in order to correct factual errors such as the names of his commanders, Chinese place names, and the dates and times for certain events. He may have read published diaries, reportage, and memoirs or relied on the self-published diaries of friends to find the proper information and appropriate language for his refurbished diary. None of these tools had been available to him during the war, but in rewriting the diary, he was involved in the same project of "self-censorship" as that of the wartime diarists.[68]

The interweaving of the personal with the historical account of this battle in Kusaba's narrative is one of the hallmarks of his writing. In reality, both Colonel Yamagata Takemitsu of the 64th Infantry Regiment and Colonel Ise took their own lives on 29 August 1939, probably as a result of the destruction of their respective regiments.[69] This fact is referred to a few pages after the quotation above, where Kusaba cites remarks by Lieutenant-Colonel Gotō in

conversation in his hospital room: "Sadly, both men died honorable deaths in battle. The place was the Old Engineering Bridge, on the morning of the 29th, where both Colonel Ise and Colonel Yamagata committed suicide. And so did your brother, I believe."[70] This statement confirms that Kusaba believed (or perhaps hoped) that Hiroshi took his own life together with his commanders. And also confirms that at the time suicide was considered an honorable death for soldiers who had been defeated in battle. However, Coox's account based on official records and interviews paints a different picture. Coox writes that First Lieutenant Kusaba Hiroshi died on or about 6:30 am in a botched withdrawal from a firefight but describes Yamagata and Ise's death in the following way: "At 4:20 pm, in a covered shelter, the two colonels shot themselves with their pistols, one between the eyes and the other through the temple."[71] Coox also noted that only three other men witnessed the suicide, naming two.

The chapter ends with Gotō handing over a broken stopwatch and some blood-smeared money recovered from the body of Kusaba's brother Hiroshi, at which point Hiroshi's wife Toshiko flees the bedroom, and Kusaba verifies that the items belonged to Hiroshi. He ends his narrative of his brother's death with the following thoughts: "Hiroshi! You did well. I'll join you soon. I'll pay them back!"[72]

Volume one of *Noro Hills* was first published in February 1941, and volume two was first published in June 1943. The preface to volume two differs from the preface to volume one. The absence of the chronology (indicated by entries in bold print) that is a feature of volume one is emblematic of the changes that mark the second volume, as is the numbering of the chapters, which did not occur in chapter one. In the preface to the second volume, Kusaba explains that in discussion with the publisher the decision was made to confine the battle narrative largely to volume one, and the decision to publish a second volume two years later was to include elements from the original manuscript deleted by the publisher, and was also in response to readers' reactions to the first volume—no doubt the massive sales of the first volume played some role in the publisher's considerations. Kusaba also notes that he is writing the preface having been sent to the front in China, and we know from other sources that he was involved in fighting there.[73] This may have been where he perished since I have not been able to find any trace of his activities in the postwar period.

From chapter six— "Lessons from Nomonhan"—onwards, Kusaba's story moves away from direct retellings of events experienced at Nomonhan and becomes a more personal series of reflections and observations, often in the form of accounts based on "things that I had heard while in hospital"[74]. Thus, chapters seven and eight are personal, almost autobiographical narratives of what happened to Kusaba after the end of the battle. Chapter nine—"Coming

Home"—tells the tale of his return home to Japan, and contains some observations about the significance of the battle:

> The huge numbers of war dead cannot have died in vain, their enormous sacrifice and the lessons we learnt from this must be put to use in the next conflict. With the China War as the pivot, the international situation is growing ever more dangerous. I know the day is coming when we shall embark upon an even more decisive war against an enemy far stronger than the Soviet Union. If we again undergo the terrible struggle that we experienced at Nomonhan, then the 8,000 heroic souls of those who died there will not be able to close their eyes to it. If I speak honestly, the battle at Nomonhan ended without any positive result.[75]

As Alvin Coox and others have pointed out in their analyses of the conflict, these lessons were not taken to heart by the Japanese military, who dismissed the defeat at Nomonhan as an aberration and saw no reason to alter their strategies. The fact that in this book Kusaba put down the truth as he saw it, a truth that was unpalatable and unwanted by the military establishment who went to great lengths to suppress it, reveals that war literature can subvert (if only in a very limited way) the lies of war. The fact that over a million Japanese read the book soon after its publication tells us that the truth can be known through the guise of fiction, even during a time of enormous hardship and strict censorship.

3.5. Brief Concluding Note

The two volumes are full of references to the governing ideology of the time—that to die in battle for sake of the Emperor was glorious and so on. This merciless cult of death assiduously promoted by the Japanese government and the military was, at the time, inescapable.[76] Nevertheless, Kusaba's work that characteristically mixes genres as do many accounts of war written by soldiers does not hesitate to tell the truth about the death and misery that results from men being forced to murder one another in the name of nationalism. The honesty of his account does not make this work a literary masterpiece—far from it, the book is filled with repetitive clichés, and often the narrative jumps about so that the reader is forced to ponder what point the author might be trying to make. The honesty shines through nonetheless, and there is no doubt that for many readers it gave them a deep insight into a massive military blunder that cost tens of thousands of Japanese lives.

Kusaba's work is not, in any sense, an anti-war novel. He is full of praise for his commanders and does not dwell overmuch on the fate of the Russians immolated in their tanks by his unit's artillery fire. His emphasis is on the bravery of the Japanese soldiers, and their enormous sacrifices for their nation. This was surely another reason why the book sold so widely: bravery offers a small but telling compensation for the death of a loved one, as we saw in his

account of his brother's death. These personal touches, whether exaggerated or made-up, as in the story of private first-class Machida, give his narrative a certain depth and humanity sometimes lacking in war tales. This humanity may well be why the book was reprinted as late as 1978. We are now in a position to answer the question posed by Murakami Hyōe thirty-odd years ago: did this book suggest that the Japanese forces actually won the battle of Nomonhan? The answer is, most decidedly, no. And this is the reason why the book still maintains our interest nearly eighty years after the battle at Nomonhan: it tells the truth both of the battle and of the anguish of war.

Chapter Four

4. War in China and the Pacific: Takamura Kōtarō, Kusano Shinpei and the Matinée Poétique

"He worked for war, who hated war, and died.
The blind or seeing hand that shoots or steers
Is nerved with hope: so was that active head
Through all these murderous years."

—William Plomer, from "In a Bombed House"[1]

To consider the poetics of war or the aesthetic dimension of literature composed during wartime or written to advocate war, and assess the trauma caused by war itself as expressed in such literature, is a difficult and demanding task. Consideration of these issues naturally raises ethical or moral issues, as ethics and morality become part of the evaluative criteria that pass judgment on works produced during wartime and also in the postwar era that take war as their theme. Many literary critics have argued that the intellectual or artist must be faithful to the truth. George Steiner has written: "No city, no nation, no loyalty is worth a lie."[2] Tim Redman in his 1991 book on Ezra Pound and fascism cites these lines in support of the proposition that Pound firmly believed in the lies of fascism, which brings into doubt the notion of truth as a sufficient standard to evaluate art, but only if we equate truth with belief.[3] If belief is insufficient to the truth, then, can we pass judgment on war literature? Here, it is possible for moral critique can shift to an aesthetic mode and critique literature for failing to express the truth.

The reevaluation of the war and the relationship of writers to the war that occurred in Japan in 1946 in the form of a dialogue between Katō Shūichi (1919–2007), Nakamura Shin'ichirō (1918–97) and Fukunaga Takehiko (1918–79) —the founders of the *Matinée Poétique*—was also an attempt at a similar exercise in their decidedly jaundiced overview of wartime writing. Here, for example, is what Katō wrote in the first piece entitled "Atarashii Seikinha" (On the New Romanticists) in their series of essays, published in 1947 under the title *1946: Bungakuteki Kōsatsui* (Literary Inquiry):

> The young generation who attended military academies seized politics and power by force, started total war, slaughtered countless people, destroyed all cities, factories, morality and the economy, and thus prepared today's hunger and collapse for us.[4]

Earlier in the essay, Katō wrote that, "The intellectual initiation of the generation of our elders was brought about via the dialectic of the Kyoto school of philosophy and the lyrical poetry of the Nazis". But in order to define just how

different the younger postwar generation is, Katō went on to say, "The bellows of the fanatical Japanists, the dictatorship of the military cabinets, terrorism, oppression, accommodation, propaganda, absolute spiritual chaos occasioned by the catastrophe—in contrast to the unending fear caused by this, the younger generation sought silence and eternity in the world of poetry and metaphysics."[5] The criticism of the wartime generation extended to the literature produced by them. In an essay in the same collection, Fukunaga Takehiko wrote, "Naturally, amid the gigantic reversal at the very base of our life caused by this great war, it is truly painful to see the pitiful failure of literature".[6] I will stop at this point as the essays of the *Matinée Poétique* group will be subjected to a more detailed analysis later in this chapter.

In this instance moral critique has shifted to an aesthetic mode and has indeed critiqued literature for failing to express the truth. In a way, this chapter will attempt something similar by reading two Japanese poets and their poetry produced at the time of the Pacific War. The "Pacific War" indicates not merely the period from 1939 to 1945, but also the years from 1931 onwards, which is why the phrase "Fifteen Years War" is used in Japan. However, the questions of belief, truth and aesthetic critique are complicated and by no means easy to resolve. Not all postwar thinkers shared in the absolute condemnation of wartime poetry expressed by the members of *Matinée Poétique*. For instance, one of foremost thinkers in postwar Japan, Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910–77) wrote the following in 1959 about what he calls "texts of resistance".

> The people can only be organised by passing through the war, or by passing through their lives since they are actually fighting the war. Without this experience, in other words, one cannot engage in intellectual production. This experience is the minimal condition for thought. To negate war poetry because it is war poetry is to negate the people's lives. The moment of resistance emerges when one decides to change the very nature of the war by accepting war poetry as such but then criticising both its dependence on the old notions of war and its misunderstanding of the nature of the war being fought (which is not that of imperialist war). This helps create a war poetry that is appropriate to the total war.[7]

This passage is typical of Takeuchi's attitude to the Pacific War where much hangs on what he means by "total war". My intuition is that the term "total war" for Takeuchi means a war that repudiates Western imperialism, an interpretation that differs from conventional usage, but, if this reading of Yoshimi is correct, is such a war to be welcomed? In this passage, written over a decade after the war's end, Takeuchi implies that a certain type of war poetry can fulfill an ethical and aesthetic demand. And such a viewpoint is not limited to Japan.

In his 2004 book *Defending Japan's Pacific War: The Kyoto School Philosophers and Post-White Power*, David Williams writes:

> From a Japanese perspective, the Pacific War was a double struggle—a war of imperial expansion and a battle for Asian liberation from Western domination. From

> a White American perspective: it was at once a war against Japanese imperialism and a struggle to secure US domination of the Pacific [...]. The mastering of our unmastered past begins with the revisionist history of the Pacific War.[8]

This chapter will not attempt to address the issues raised by David Williams except insofar as they bear on two points of interest: whether Japanese poets in writing patriotic verse in support of Japan's wartime aims seek or represent the spirit of "resistance" mentioned by Takeuchi, which is read here as a kind of truth that resists the wartime propaganda of expansionist and xenophobic military power, and secondly, whether these poems work as aesthetic or literary constructs, that is, do they allow or perhaps persuade or even move the reader to a position which approaches a truth, whether intellectual or moral or even emotional? Or do they quickly make us wish we had not wasted our time in reading the verse? Poetry written in the immediate aftermath of the war also raises similar questions as this work is equally vulnerable to the postwar propaganda of total repudiation of the wartime ideology in favour of the new ideological imperatives imposed by the Allied Occupation. The means by which we approach this investigation is an examination of the verse composed by Japanese poets themselves during and after the war's end.

4.1. Takamura Kōtarō's War Poetry

Takamura Kōtarō (1883–1956) wrote several poems in the 1920s and 1930s expressing his alienation as a Japanese who had lived abroad; later he turned to the production of notoriously jingoistic verse. He has been much discussed, especially by the poet and critic Yoshimoto Takaaki (1924–2012), the scourge of postwar poets who collaborated with the militarists. It is appropriate here to begin with a poem from an earlier phase of his career, before he became a full-blown apologist for the wartime regime. "Zō no ginkō" (The Elephant's Piggy Bank), a much translated and much anthologised poem, was written on 7 February 1926 and was later included in his poetry collection *Kiroku* (Documents) published in March 1944. In the preface to this collection, Kōtarō explained that the poem concerned a small zoo in Central Park close to an obelisk that he often used to walk past when he was residing in New York in the summer of 1925.[9]

The Elephant's Piggy Bank

The blank-looking elephant in the Central Park Zoo,
Picks up skilfully all the coppers and nickels that are thrown to him,
With the extraordinarily big tip of his nose,
And drops them with a clink, into the elephant's piggy bank above.

From time to time he rolls his red eyes and thrusts out his nose,
And says to this Jap as "they" call me, gimme some nickels.
That's what the elephant says,
Pleased at hearing him say it I throw out some more nickels.

A blank-looking elephant, product of India,
A lonely young man, product of Japan.
The crowd "they" had better have a look-see at
Why the two of us are so friendly.

Bathed in the rays of the setting sun, I take a walk through Central Park,
And an obelisk brought from the Nile looks at me.
Ah, there's someone else who is angry.
Returning to his attic "their" Jap lashes at his own blood.[10]

The elephant is not merely Kōtarō's alienated ego, as demonstrated by his use of the word "Jappu" (Jap) to refer to himself, but also conducts a kind of playful dialogue with the poet-persona himself. This doubled perspective of the Japanese as an animal in the zoo of the West, gawked at by the white customers who pay for him to perform, expresses the torment of the poet-persona revealed in the last stanza, who takes on the classic victim's role of blaming himself for his victimisation. The reference to the obelisk vaguely gestures towards Western imperialism but more specifically, in the context of the poem, seems yet another version of the poet's tormented self. The complexities of narration—where the poet almost satirizes his own persona—allow the reader to gain a certain aesthetic satisfaction from this powerful and finely crafted poem.

A poem Takamura wrote in 1936, which was published the following year in the January issue of the *Chūō kōron* journal, has been taken up by critics as an example of how Kōtarō's attitude towards militarism and fascism at this time was complex and had not yet progressed to the full-blown Japanism of the war years.[11] The poem is called "Kenpyō itaru" (Solid Ice Cometh!) and a translation follows:

Solid Ice Cometh!

Crossing 140 degrees from the northwest, an intense cold snap is coming.
Books will be burnt, the mouths of scholars will be forced shut.
Above the heads of the deaf masses
The swastika will flatter in the breeze.
Something will tear the world in two,
And fill the hills on the plains of Aragon's Catalonia.
Now a foul wind is howling on the edge of the Shaanxi.
Nature's statistics are unyielding and keep on advancing.
Teeming life is destroying the earth.
To return this globe to a pristine state
Ah shall we call upon an ice age again?
During the day tranquil autumn, at night bitter cold.
This morning as far as the eye could see frost covered-roofs.
Solid ice cometh, solid ice cometh!

Ice Age! Take possession of this world!
Let the earth see! Who are the real humans,
And why do they here survive?[12]

The poem is explicitly political and, as first pointed out by Yoshimoto Takaaki, refers to a number of topical events: first, and most prominent in the minds of contemporary Japanese readers, the "2.26" (February 1936) uprising as it is known in Japanese, an attempt at a military rebellion that occurred in Tokyo in February 1936. Next, "Crossing 140 degrees" refers to the West, and in this connection Takamura is gesturing towards the ascent of Hitler to power in Germany in 1933. On 27 January 1936 the German parliament under the control of Hitler passed a law imposing restrictions on free speech, and in May that year the notorious burning of the books was carried out on the orders of the Nazis. In December 1936, Japan and Germany signed a treaty that made them allies, part of the "Axis" alliance, and this would have come as no surprise to contemporaries who were acute observers of the political scene. The civil war in Spain started in July 1936, and the French poet Louis Aragon (1897–1982) fought against the nationalists; this, it seems to me, is what Takamura is referring to but "Aragon" could imply other things as well. On 12 December 1936, Chang Hsüeh-liang (1901–1975) and several other warlords (who had previously surrendered and become Nationalist generals) kidnapped the famous nationalist Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek (1887–1975) for two weeks in what is known as the Xi'an Incident, and this event is recalled by the line "the Shaanxi". Finally, the line, "Nature's statistics are unyielding" appears to be a general reference to these events that had such a great impact upon the Japanese intellectual world.[13]

As Ōshima Tokumaru notes in his analysis of this poem, the "deaf populace" undoubtedly refers to the German people; thus, it can be read as a criticism of German fascism or the Nazi ideology.[14] At the same time, the last three lines points to a desire not for a fascist revolution but for some kind of revolutionary struggle or change. Yoshimoto Takaaki in his commentary on the poem in an essay first published in 1962 notes that it is almost written from a left-wing perspective yet the mention of the words "ice age" possess a powerful resonance because of the use Takamura made of it in other of his writings.[15] According to Yoshimoto, it signifies "a transcendental ethic where everything fake is totally destroyed in an ice age".[16] The poem is interesting because of the complex of emotions at work in it but also because the very obscurity and elliptical nature of the poem (which may have been prompted by fears of censorship) acts to strengthen its force as a work of literature. This may well be a poem that enacts a kind of resistance to fascist values.

As Japan descended further into the dark valley of the 1930s so Takamura's support for the war became more explicit. Eventually, under the pressure of national mobilisation for war, this alienation developed into full-blown xenophobia against the West. As demonstrated above, Takamura's poetry during the thirties is complex: his youthful admiration for the West,

and early dislike of pro-war fascist values gradually changes into something more openly patriotic but this is not a linear or untroubled process. By the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the chief US base in the Pacific, his poetry had succumbed to the massive outpouring of support for the war amongst the Japanese people at large. Three poetry collections written during the war express these patriotic and anti-Western feelings: *Ōinaru hi ni* (On that Great Day, April 1942), *Ojisan no shi* (Uncle's Poetry, November 1943), a collection of poetry written for children, and *Documents*. Very few of these poems possess much literary merit, as judged by Japanese readers after the war, so here we will focus on one or two poems that may not be ranked among the poet's best work but are worthy of examination for a variety of other reasons.

In his poem "Jihen nishūnen" (Second Anniversary of the China Incident, July 1939), referring to the Marco Polo Bridge Incident of July 1937 that led to full-scale war with China, Takamura takes pride in the victorious advance of the Japanese forces into China, as the following lines reveal:

> It's been a full two years
> It was a tranquil summer evening on the marble Marco Polo Bridge
> Since then half of the Asian continent has flowed with blood, this blood has been wiped away
> Today the people have sacrificed their lives
> In an effort to put down the half hidden true form of
> This monster without end [...]
> In order to save you truly
> From the greed of those who wish to make China a colony
> There is no other way, is there not, than to smash you on the head? [...][17]

So here the poet has determined that, in order to save China, China itself must be destroyed. A perverse and perhaps obscene logic, but a logic shared with many other Japanese poets and warmongers at the time. This poem sounds a victorious note and has little aesthetic or literary value.

By the beginning of 1944, Takamura was writing essays like "Sensō to shi" (War and Poetry, 1944) in which literature itself was equated with war:

> Already war itself is a great poem [...]. In this era of holy war the height of beauty is raised, the depth of beauty is increased, and everywhere we can see the true nature of things, we can see clearly everywhere the process where beauty purifies men [...]. The million who are at war thirst for true poetry [...].[18]

This essay is typical of the sentiments that appear in Takamura's verse, which by this time was nothing but propaganda, as we can see in the following poem. "Ryūkyū kessen" (The Final Battle for the Ryūkyū Islands, 1945) was published on April 1 1945 in the Asahi newspaper.

> *The Final Battle for the Ryūkyū Islands*
>
> Ryūkyū, land of the sacred Omoro Sōshi

Will become the final great battlefield of the Greater East Asian War.
The enemy is gathering his strength for a big blow,
The lovely mountains and valleys of these island-jewels,
In the green grasslands of Manzamō, the crimson of deigo flowers,
Will be poured a cataract of violence.
Ryūkyū—in all sincerity the carotid artery of Japan,
Everything will occur here, everywhere here will coalesce.
Defend Ryūkyū, victory in the Ryūkyūs.
All the Japanese in all of Japan!
Give your all for Ryūkyū!
The enemy will spare no sacrifice,
Our holy opportunity has arrived.
All the Japanese in all of Japan!
Stand up and send your blood to the Ryūkyūs!
Ah descendants of Nabi from Onna, comrades in blood!
Crouch down in the shade of palm leaves
Avoid the bullets, put out the fires of war,
Go forth bravely and utterly destroy our evil enemy![19]

This last poem preaches a cataract of blood; Takamura seems to be urging blood to explode from the very body of Okinawa itself, here foregrounded by detailed reference to place names and local flora, as his extended metaphor explicitly states. If this poem has any aesthetic merit, then it lies in the almost religious exultation of bloodlust, an insane, frenzied desire for destruction. The famed mass suicides by units on the verge of defeat within the Imperial Japanese Army (whether forced or not) during the Pacific War can be said to have been deified, and not even all that symbolically, by the white-hot rhetoric of this poem. War should be understood, as this poem teaches us, as something beyond reason, and I am speaking here not of the reason of grand strategy but of the reason of death. And certainly, this poem bears a great burden of moral culpability in that it urges its readers onto a jihad of mass death. The reason that the poem provokes such strong reactions among readers, as will be demonstrated presently, is precisely because of its aesthetic power. The critic Tsuboi Hideto has taken Takamura to task for this poem, which he objects to on moral grounds that it faithfully, and without apology, parrots the ideology of imperial rule. He sees the emperor as being ultimately responsible for the massive loss of life suffered in wartime by the inhabitants of Okinawa and castigates his puppet Takamura for aiding and abetting in the war effort.[20]

Yet Yoshimoto Takaaki has also written of the massive impact this poem had upon him, as a patriotic fanatical young man of twenty or so in the last months of the war. This comment encapsulates the dilemma of patriotic, jingoistic poetry: the better the poem (in terms of aesthetic impact), the more morally culpable the impact on readers.[21]

Next, we will examine a poem Takamura wrote in the immediate aftermath of the defeat. The poem is entitled "Ichioku no gōkyū" (A Hundred Million People Weep) and was first published on 17 May 1945 in the *Asahi*

newspaper. It was written after the famous radio broadcast on 15 August by the emperor announcing Japan's surrender:

A Hundred Million People Weep

With just one speech from the Emperor and a hundred million people weep.
At noon on 15 August 1945,
My hands flat on the straw mat of the office of the Toyagasaki shrine
The village shrine in Hanamaki, Iwate Prefecture,
My body prostrate at the low ramble of the Emperor's voice
Flowing through the heavens.
My body cannot cease trembling.
The Emperor's voice reverberates and dies away, then silence.
At this moment silent lamentation extends throughout Japan.
In every corner of the land, a hundred million people, I know,
All prostrate themselves facing the imperial residence.
This insignificant retainer in fear is speechless.
I simply look directly at the reality
Not permitting myself the slightest ambiguity.
When we lose our steel weapons
The purity of our spirit naturally increases.
Truth and beauty will be the very culture of our future
With our tears as parents, they will realize our ideals.[22]

This poem is not the most aesthetically pleasing poem that Takamura ever wrote, as it is filled with phrases taken from wartime jargon that are stereotypical expressions of awe and respect for the emperor—in this respect it is typical of much of his war poetry. What is surprising about the poem is the last four lines, which seem to embrace the defeat openly, even offering a spirit of hope. The sentiment idealized in these lines clearly contradicts the lugubrious tone of national mourning expressed in the rest of the poem. The rapid shift in tenor can be interpreted as a device designed to shock readers into assenting to the logic of these last few lines. Thus, the poem can be read as a didactic admonition to the Japanese people to change with the times. This reading fits the rhetorical mode adopted by Takamura in his postwar *Angu shōden* (Confessions of an Idiot) poems, which also act as a mea culpa, an apology for his wartime excesses. However, as Ōshima Tokumaru has observed, these poems were almost universally condemned at the time as little more than self-justifying explanations, with little artistic intent or merit.[23] Perhaps the same comment can be made of "A Hundred Million People Weep". *Confessions of an Idiot* formed the main part of his 1950 poetry collection *Tenkei* (Template). I have translated here another one of these poems titled "Shūsen" (The End of the War) in order to capture a different dimension of Kōtarō's poetry composed on the theme of the war.

The End of the War

My studio was burned to the ground,
And so I came to Hanamaki in the hinterlands.

There I heard that radio broadcast.
I knelt all alone trembling.
At long last Japan was naked,
People's hearts had fallen to the bottom.
The occupation army saved us from starvation,
We just barely avoided extinction.
At that time the Emperor took it upon himself,
To declare that he was not a god.
As the days passed,
The beams fell from my eyes,
And the burden of 60 years suddenly disappeared.
Once again, my grandfather, my father and mother
Returned to their place in heaven,
I breathed a big sigh of relief.
After freeing myself from this strange burden
Only the love of being ordinary was left.
The color of a celadon-blue sky after the rain
Filled my empty heart,
Having lost everything
I enjoy to the full a bleak beauty.[24]

The poem is replete with references to other poems contained in the *Confessions of an Idiot* sequence, mainly lamenting the influence of his family on the ultranationalist ideology that the poet came to embrace. The diction of the poem is spare and terse and conveys the simplicity of a heartfelt decision to abandon the bellicose jingoism that marked virtually all of his wartime verse. The religious fervor that Kōtarō felt toward the Emperor is revealed in the poem, and his repentance is thus cast in quasi-religious language. I have used the translation "heaven" for Nirvana (nehan) in keeping with the spiritual tone of the poem. As noted above, perhaps the sincerity of Kōtarō's about-turn helped to convince post-war readers like Yoshimoto Takaaki that his poetry was deserving of analysis and exegesis.

Nevertheless, Yoshimoto Takaaki was profoundly shocked by the earlier poem, "A Hundred Million People Weep", which he appears to despise, because the tone was completely out of keeping with the ashen ruins that characterized post-defeat Tokyo, and other major cities of Japan. He argues that it is typical of a modernizing intellectual like Takamura who could shift his allegiance and ideology effortlessly, unlike the ordinary people of Japan whose wartime suffering could not so easily be denied.[25]

The task of evaluating such verse is intimidating and yet, as seen here, Yoshimoto Takaaki has dedicated a significant portion of his writing to doing just that. Yoshimoto was most active as a critic of postwar poetry in the mid to late 1950s and early 60s. To summarize all of his various and copious studies on Takamura Kōtarō is an exceedingly difficult task. But the thrust of his analysis is that Takamura captures the authentic voice of the people in some of his poems, and this differentiates Takamura's wartime poetry from the wartime

verse of the prewar avant-garde poets, which, by and large, Yoshimoto condemns. It seems almost as if Yoshimoto idealizes authenticity or sincerity, a quality that in other critics' hands, and indeed from time to time in Yoshimoto's own criticisms, is hardly something to be praised. Undoubtedly Takamura's famous postwar repentance in his *Confessions of an Idiot* verse has a great deal to do with Yoshimoto's defence of his writing. But to be fair to Yoshimoto, his analysis of Takamura's work is exceedingly complex and goes beyond the simple formula of sincerity.

The distinguished contemporary poet Seo Ikuo in his much-acclaimed study of wartime poetry—*Sensōshiron 1910–1945* (A Study of War Poetry, 2006) —mounts an effective defense of Yoshimoto on Takamura, and also attempts to relativize Japanese war poetry in order to understand the phenomenon better, not primarily on political but rather on aesthetic grounds. He develops Yoshimoto's stylistic analysis of poets like Takamura into a more detailed probing of subjectivity and narrativity as a critical element of poetic composition. [26] In other words, technique is all-important in assessing whether the poem deserves praise or criticism, irrespective of whether the content is jingoistic. Such a critical foundation allows Seo more insight into Takamura's work then can be found in more conventional apologists for Takamura like Ukegawa Toshio, who has argued in his 1969 book on Takamura that Takamura wrote patriotic poetry but not poetry that glorifies war, as his basic stance was anti-war.[27] At the very least, this logic would appear to be contradicted by "The Final Battle for the Ryūkyū Islands". And, in any case, it is easy to find poems by Takamura that appeal to young men to shed their blood; to quote Steve Rabson on Takamura, that "read like recruiting posters in verse".

4.2. *Matinée Poétique* and 1946

As noted in the beginning of this chapter, a different collection of reactions to the war is available in the book *1946 Bungakuteki kōsatsu* (1946: Literary Considerations), which was written by the authors Katō Shūichi, Nakamura Shin'ichirō and Fukunaga Takehiko and was a collection of exchanges published in 1946 by these authors in various journals under various headings. All three writers were members of the *Matinée Poétique* group which despised ideology and held high the banner of aesthetics—in part a reaction to the debased ideology of the war, but also an attempt to revive a prewar current of writing modeled on European aesthetics. The volume was published under the title cited above in May 1947. All three men wrote fiction as well as poetry, but, as Donald Keene notes, the heart of their collective aesthetic is their attempt to write verse along European Neo-Classical lines.[28] As a result much of the analysis in the book is concerned with poetry. The first essay in the book

is by Katō Shūichi and, as noted earlier, is called "On the New Romanticists". The article celebrates the crushing defeat suffered by Japan in World War II and argues the need to trace its causes from the Meiji era through to the lack of resistance by the prewar intellectual elite to the fascist expansionist regime that eventually took control of the Japanese state. Katō contends that part of the problem was the new romanticists, youth in their twenties who were appalled by the radical political philosophies of the 1930s. As a result, they turned away from politics altogether, retreated into silence, and failed to offer any kind of resistance to militarist philosophies. As Katō writes:

> The war generation was the new romanticists. To be more precise, after the Manchurian Incident in 1930s and, to be even more precise, after the fall of Nanjing with its parade of flags and the great purge of the people's front, when the influence of the war became pervasive in all areas, the generation of intellectuals who reached twenty at that time possessed a distinctive character in terms of their education and spirit that enabled their noble sentiment to be described as a new romanticism [...]. The age of poetry and philosophy was born quite suddenly with these youths in the depth of the period of militarism. [Katō goes on to describe a conversation he had with such a youth from this generation.]
>
> I had this conversation with him around about the time we had the so-called series of "final battles", in Saipan. The "final battles" ended in final defeat after final defeat. We have to pursue the responsibility for this. And that responsibility naturally rests upon the intelligentsia who permitted a feudalistic military government to emerge after the Meiji Restoration and demonstrated no resistance whatever to this course of events. I said to him, "It's difficult to accept the fact that my own companions and those of my generation rushed recklessly to our deaths." He listened quietly to me and replied, "What you've said is perfectly logical, but it's defeatism. I don't believe we will be defeated. And if we are then I will die a glorious death [...]."
>
> Of course when Japan was defeated, there was nothing so heroic as a glorious death, so he is still alive now, not only is he still alive but he has grown his hair long, which at the time of our conversation was cut like a prisoner, and like a mantra to make his hair grow, every day three times in a soft voice he repeats the words "peaceful Japan" and "democracy" [...].
>
> This youth who feels not the slightest pang of conscience, who changed from a fanatic warmonger to an advocate of peace; this youth who, while having a deep understanding of great art, does not realise that his education was made possible by his father's war profiteering; this youth who utters not the slightest word of protest and merely repeats what newspapers say on any historically important social phenomenon [...] is refined, sincere, utterly kind to friends like me, and has absolutely no consciousness of the common people who are without sin and were ruthlessly exploited by the running dogs of the militarist ruling classes—people like his father—who were slaughtered by them and suffered humiliation after humiliation. Moreover, this youth is not in any way exceptional.
>
> What gave birth to him was the wartime generation. The new romanticists were the epidemic of that era. The majority of the urban youth who turned twenty in the second half of the nineteenth century display for the most part these tendencies [...]

> The elder generation's intellectual initiation was via the dialectic of the Kyoto school of philosophy and the lyrical poetry of the Nazis. The bellows of the fanatical Japanists, the dictatorship of the military cabinets, terrorism, oppression, accommodation, propaganda, the absolute economic, spiritual chaos occasioned by the catastrophe—turning their backs on the unending fear caused by this, the younger generation sought silence and eternity in the world of poetry and metaphysics. The urban culture of the Taisho era had already been destroyed. Society had lost its order and decorum. The ideal of art had been forgotten. Spiritual criticism disappeared together with the retreat of the Marxists. Novelists relapsed into silence. Non-fiction writers sang the praises of militarism [...]. All art turned into propaganda. Logic was replaced by a belief in the 'Holy Land'. It can be said that reason only remained in the logic of the ethnic philosophy and co-prosperity sphere invented by the Kyoto school of philosophy [...].[29]

In this passage Katō caricatures the so-called romanticists who he believes dominated the immediate postwar order. He describes their ideal of humanism in this way: 'When people are starving, and you kill a pet dog and give it to the starving soul, this is called humanism.'[30] His conclusion is:

> In short, the new romanticists are without power and without learning. Their knowledge of the people is pathetic, and they don't even possess the powers of judgment of children in regard to social and historical problems, consequently, they sing the songs of philosophy and poetry and have appointed themselves the patrons of the arts. In regard to philosophy and poetry, they sing "dirges"; those who sing of "existence and time" are exceedingly few in number.[31]

Katō puts the blame for war not on these young romanticists who don't understand anything and who are destroying postwar Japan, but rather on others: "The young generation who attended military academies, seized control of politics and the state by force, started total war, slaughtered countless people, destroyed all cities, factories, morality and economy, prepared today's hunger and collapse for us."[32]

Clearly this essay is a cry of despair and is as such is inspired by the specific historical circumstances of its composition. There is also a political context that has influenced Kato's logic, namely, that the essay advocates a critique of the war and the postwar generation that originated in the "1932 Theses" of the Comintern (Communist International). Suzuki Sadami makes this observation as part of his argument that this essay follows the political line of the postwar Communist Party.[33]

Other essays in the same volume pursue similar themes, but not necessarily the same political line. For example, Fukunaga Takehiko in his essay "Literary Currents", cited earlier, takes to task modern Japanese poetry, which he says has failed to truly understand Western verse. He argues that Japanese writers cannot read great foreign literature in the original, so they are trapped within the barrier of cultural provincialism. He also criticizes translations into Japanese of foreign literature, which he slates as inadequate.[34]

Another famous essay in the collection, written by Katō Shūichi, is "Yakeato no bigaku" (The Aesthetic of Ruins). The beginning of this essay is startling, to say the least:

> In 1945 the flames were already beautiful. The flames on the streets of Tokyo that consumed in no time whatsoever our homes, our beds, our half-eaten eggs and noodles, in short, everything we possessed and everything we did not possess were infinitely beautiful. If we take as beautiful the towering flames that in one breath swept away the clear azure sky of a winter morning, the beautiful "green darkness" of May, the traces of our hopes, our regrets and our small efforts, and also our shame, our foolishness and our wit, then are not the burned ruins also beautiful? The topography of Tokyo unfolds into a giant landscape with nothing to hinder the eye, its hills and plains, its water-filled valleys, and its irregularities undulate along the horizon revealing the broad sky far away. There has never been a sky with such a clear horizon. The buildings are like paintings by Bruegel with iron sheets decorated by red rust and rows of low roofs and the white undulating lanes between the fields. The yellow light of dusk is truly bright against the crumbling white walls of the warehouses. The clear ultramarine sky of autumn gives birth to a harmony without compare in the windows of the brick buildings, burned and razed to the ground. As if symbolizing human isolation, the blackened trees stand in the cold autumn wind making the branches sing like the mesh of a net against the gray sky. Are not these ruins beautiful? [...]
>
> After Tokyo was burned to the ground did it not become astonishingly beautiful? There is no dispute about this. Whether the ruins are beautiful or ugly, people will say that the key issue is the ruins, which gave birth to this tragedy, and the history that led to this tragedy. That is precisely the case but that beautiful things are beautiful is a fact: anything that can be seen by the eye can become a beautiful object. There is no necessity to look upon a woman's body as the most beautiful object. The aesthetic of the ruins is possible in the same way as a sociology of ruins, an economy of ruins, a politics of ruins; not only possible but equally necessary. What is the essence of the beauty of the ruins?
>
> In a word, it is the beauty of matter itself [...].
>
> But this is not itself sufficient. To speak about the ruins of Tokyo is to narrate a kind of parable. It may be that I have simply suggested that a true political revolution accompanies a revolution of sensibility, that a revolutionary artist is an artist who brings about aesthetic revolution, not an artist who is subject to the dictates of political propaganda. The aesthetics of ruins is like the possibility of the aesthetics of the ruins in the streets of Tokyo—in order to be an aesthetic of the ruins of the Japanese spirit in the same way as the streets of Tokyo, the present state of the Japanese spirit must be completely destroyed [...]. The very social system, as it is stated in the Potsdam Declaration, must be completely reformed in a democratic and a logical way and by liberating the Japanese people it must nourish reason and humanity within our hearts, the hearts of the Japanese people.[35]

To construct an aesthetic of the ruins amidst the actual devastation and ruins of Tokyo, systematically destroyed by waves of B29 bombers that subjected the city to one of the greatest firestorms in history, is perhaps not merely a singularly courageous act but also an astonishingly reckless act. That Katō

Shūichi was capable of such intellectual bravery and, at the same time, foolishness is unimpeachable testimony to the devastation that Tokyo suffered. This is truly a literary reflection born out of the suffering and trauma of war. And in a sense this extravagant, ironic rhetoric is not so difficult to understand given the extreme language used in the patriotic pronouncements published by leading Japanese writers and poets cited previously. To swing from one extreme to another is the sign of a society deeply traumatized by first war and then defeat.

4.3. Kusano Shinpei's War Poetry

Kusano Shinpei (1903–88) is a poet who was trenchantly criticized by commentators for the verse he wrote during wartime. But, as we shall see, the reality is much more complex than seems at first sight. The most important critic to condemn Kusano as a major offender in respect of his pro-war poetry and to undertake a detailed analysis of his work was Sakuramoto Tomio in his volume *Kūbaku to sensō: senjika no shijin tachi* (The Vacuum and the War: Poets in Wartime, 1983). This book announced Sakuramoto's arrival on the literary scene as a latter-day scourge of patriotic and pro-war poets: a critic who had inherited Yoshimoto Takaaki's mantle in taking up the gauntlet against writers who Sakuramoto claims had either hidden or whitewashed their wartime verse. In his 1983 book, Sakuramoto devotes one chapter to Kusano's poetry. He begins by quoting from several statements that Kusano made about collected editions of his verse (one in particular) published in the postwar period. While acknowledging that Kusano himself had indicated in writing that these collections incorporated corrections and alterations, that is, changes from the original versions of the poems, Sakuramoto criticizes Kusano for deleting his patriotic verse from these collections, and thus, in Sakuramoto's words, "avoiding responsibility for cooperating in the war effort".[36]

Next, Sakuramoto describes in detail Kusano's relationship with China. Kusano first visited China in 1921 where he studied at Lingnan University in Canton, an American oriented Christian school. A private university established by a group of American missionaries in 1888, the school was originally named Canton Christian College, but in 1927 management of the university passed into Chinese hands, and the English name was changed to Lingnan University, the transliteration of the school's Chinese name. Kusano spent five years at Lingnan and made a number of close friendships with several of his Chinese classmates. One of his closest friends was Lin Pai-Sheng (1901–46). In July 1940 Kusano was invited back to China to join him as an adviser to the Propaganda Department in the puppet government of Wang Ching-wei (1883–1944). Lin Pai-sheng was the head of this department. The Wang Ching-wei

regime was established in March 1940 and purported to be the true government of China (it was generally known as the Nanjing Government) but in reality, was exactly as its unhappy epithet implies: a puppet of Japan. However, there is no doubt that among its supporters, both Japanese and Chinese, were a few like Kusano who believed in a genuine form of pan-Asianism, in a genuine reconciliation between a generous Japan and a China freed from the shackles of foreign oppression.[37]

The complete story of Kusano's connection with the Wang Ching-wei government is complex and still only partially documented.[38] Sakuramoto focuses on Kusano's support of the Nanjing government through his speeches and poems. Kusano had previously been employed at the *Teito Nichi nichi* newspaper as a secretary to the managing director, and undoubtedly it was because of his ability as a writer that he was invited to Nanjing. Lin Pai-sheng also had a background as a newspaperman and was active in producing propaganda supporting the Nanjing regime. Further, Kusano played an active role in the three Greater East Asian Writers' Conferences organized by the Japanese government in 1942, 1943 and 1944, the last conference being held in Nanjing. These conferences are also generally seen as part of the Japanese government's efforts to support its puppet regimes in China and elsewhere through propaganda. Sakuramoto cites quotations from two radio broadcasts that Kusano made in Nanjing in support of Wang Ching-wei. Kusano's admiration for Wang also resulted after the war in a novel based on his life called *Unmei no hito* (Man of Destiny, 1955).[39] There is a striking parallel here to Ezra Pound's wartime activities in support of Mussolini's fascist government. Pound also broadcast propaganda in favour of the fascists and produced poetry that attacked his own government. Yet unlike Kusano, Pound was tried as a war criminal by the US government, escaping execution on the grounds of insanity.

After the war, Wang's government was excoriated by both the Nationalist government established in Taiwan and also by the Communist government established in mainland China. The Nanjing government was seen by both parties as merely an accomplice of the Japanese invaders, and anything to do with that government was seen as anathema, contrary to Chinese interests and inevitably tainted by its association with the hated Japanese.[40] It is against this background that Sakuramoto condemns Kusano's association with the Nanjing government, and any activities arising out of his work with it. Fukasawa Chūkō notes that opinion is divided on just how important a role Kusano played in the Nanjing government, with one contemporary stating that his position was in name only, while others believed he exercised more influence.[41]

Is Kusano guilty then of making the fatal mistake of siding with his old pro-Japanese friends from Canton, and of believing the Pan-Asian propaganda produced by his own government? If this is the case, then Kusano strongly resembles Pound in that he firmly believed in the anti-Western ideal of Pan-

Asianism, which no doubt was a tool manipulated by the Japanese authorities to strengthen their hold on the Asian mainland, but which may have some intrinsic value as an ideology opposing Western imperialism and colonialism. In his 1997 book on Kusano, Shindō Ken argues that Kusano did not understand the true nature of the subservience of the Wang Ching-wei regime to Japan. He advances various reasons for Kusano's stupidity, several of which strongly resemble the arguments explaining Pound's infatuation with Mussolini.[42] In that sense, he was a dupe in the same way as Ezra Pound was. Certainly, Kusano did not renounce his beliefs after the war, as his novel eulogizing Wang Ching-wei demonstrates.[43] In his interview-autobiography, *Dekuboko no michi* (Rough Path, 1978) Kusano declared that: "The entire Wang Ching-wei circle held fast to the ideal of peace on all fronts but the hypocrites who constituted the mainstream of Japanese politics adopted a policy of *Realpolitick*. Tōjō and the hypocrites, the military all had the ideal of *Realpolitic*, and after the war they were sent to prison, so they ended up depressed, in a wretched state. The Chinese embraced a spirit of martyrdom for their ideals thus at their core they were strong."[44] Is Kusano's belief in Wang Ching-wei the cause of Sakuramoto's ire? Sakuramoto's citation of Kusano's wartime radio broadcasts would seem to indicate that this is the case but more pertinent is his wartime verse which I will now analyse.

Daibyakudō (The Great White Road) consisted of 25 poems and was published in April 1944 in Kyoto by the Kōchō Shorinkan publishing house. The editors of the Kusano *Collected Works* (published in 12 volumes between 1978 and 1984) note that this volume contains all 12 of Kusano's pro-war poems.[45] I have translated four poems from *The Great White Road*: "Warera danjite tatakau" (We are Determined to Fight!), "Wakiagaru Uta" (A Song Welling up), "Daitōa sensō 2 nen no Fu" (An Ode to the Second Year of the Greater East Asian War) and the title poem "The Great White Road". This last poem was excluded from the volume by the censors yet Kusano declared that this was by far the best poem in the collection.[46] It was first published in July 1944 in the *Ajia* magazine (presumably little altered from the censored poem) and was reprinted with corrections in a volume of collected poems called *Kusano Shinpei shi zenkei* that was published in 1973. The version translated here is of the 1944 original poem. The first three poems translated are all typical of the other pro-war verse in the volume in that they display very little literary merit (and were not reprinted as part of the poet's *oeuvre* until the *Collected Works* appeared). The first poem is written on the subject of the day that the surprise attack on Pearl Harbour was launched and describes a reaction commonly shared among Japanese in general and Japanese writers in particular.

We are Determined to Fight!

Ah at last.
At the beginning of the 27th century of Japanese history.
At last a huge explosion has occurred.

We are burning with hatred.
In the face of the empty threats and intimidation that have continued for so long, even until yesterday.
Now no one will flinch.
No one will hesitate.
To defend our glorious fatherland.
To defend the Greater Asian Region.
At last we have stood up.
At this furious moment at the beginning of the 27th century of Japanese history.
Now no longer.
Now no one will flinch.
No one will hesitate.
We vow on our ancestor's blood.
We pledge ourselves to the future of the Greater Asian Region.
At last.
We have stood up.
Now of all times.
We will let fly at the U.S.A.
We will let fly at the Britain.
Now of all times.
Fire on the U.S.A.!
Fire on Britain!

In Nanjing, sleet falling, 8 December in the year 2601 since the founding of Japan[47]

As the epigraph to "We are Determined to Fight!" emphasizes, this is an unashamedly pro-war outburst of martial bravura. The stress on standing up to and fighting against what Kusano and his confrères saw as the colonial powers is married to a glorification of Japanese tradition and history. As a literary artefact the verse is no more than doggerel and lacks artistic merit, but the poet himself may not have wanted to make any literary claims for it. He wrote in a memo attached to the volume containing these poems in his *Collected Works*: "From the beginning of the conflict in China to the outbreak of the Greater East Asian War my mood was gloomy, I mostly wrote poetry on frogs and Mt. Fuji. But from the time of the declaration of war against the US and Britain, I suddenly began to compose poetry about the war. This was only natural for me. It is a matter of shame for my ancestors and my descendants alike that my war poetry is truly lacking in originality [...]. As a group we had to band together and complete the work of writing pro-war poetry. Those in the past and the future make up my bloodline. Please understand my intentions, don't criticize me for the poor quality of my poetry."[48] Interestingly, Shindō Ken regards these sentiments as extremely close to the logic of Takeuchi Yoshimi, cited at the outset of this chapter.[49] The justification for writing jingoistic verse with little artistic merit that the poet offers here is much the same as the excuses put forward by the majority of his literary compatriots, that is, the circumstances of the time necessitated the production of pro-war poetry regardless of whatever the individual poet may have felt.

A Song Swelling Up

Under a heavy.
Gray sky.
Walking, that melody welling up.
'No matter how many millions the enemies are'.
That song.

U.S.A.
Britain.
Australia.
The Netherlands.
Chungking.
Cuba.

U.S.A. Britain. Australia. The Netherlands. Chungking. Cuba. Let them take up the gauntlet. Burma. Australia. Let them take up the gauntlet. Let all the countries of South America may defy us!

Aah this song.
That melody we sang marching in line holding banners wells up.

Short in stature we the Yamato people.
Our small archipelago.
The time has come for us to fight half the world as our enemy.
The time has come for us to fight their billions not their millions.
The time has come for the yellow races of East Asia to band strongly together to unify and fight the white race!

What a great honour!
How great and glorious!
A huge *banzai*.
At this 2600th year since the founding of Japan.

U.S.A.
Britain.
Australia.
The Netherlands.
Chungking.
Cuba.

U.S.A. Britain. Australia. The Netherlands. Chungking. Cuba. Let them take up the gauntlet. Burma. Australia. Let them take up the gauntlet. Let all the countries of South America may defy us!

'No matter how many millions the enemies are' this death-defying spirit wells up.
Wells up through the entire length and breadth of Japan.

A balloon flies from the 6th floor of the Propaganda Department of the People's government.
Of Nanjing.
The Chinese words say 'Let's cooperate and smash the British and American forces'.
Under the freezing sky.
Walking, welling up that melody.

The song of our grandfathers in the Meiji era.
Quietly quietly welling up.[50]

"A Song Swelling Up" refers to a popular Japanese melody, with lyrics by the well-known poet Yamada Bimyō (1868–1910) and the melody by Koyama Sakunosuke (1864–1927). The song was known to generations of Japanese citizens, and thus this work follows the previous poem in glorifying Japan and denouncing the colonial powers and their possessions: equally it makes no claim to literary merit. Incidentally, the line "No matter how many millions the enemies are" is not only taken from this famous Meiji era anthem but is also its title.

An Ode to the Second Year of the Great East Asian War

Aah.
The great war continues.
The holy unparalleled war continues.
We must not think of peace.
Because the war itself is the way to peace.
Because the war itself is the way to creation.
Do not think even in the slightest of peace.
War continues.
Continue the war!
Until each and every one of the enemy raises their hands.
We are determined to fight to the end.
We will fight to the end recklessly fiercely.
Our blue blood spraying all around.
The power of past Emperors burning brightly.
The power of past Emperors radiant.
Unique in the world.
Our soldiers unique in the world will fight to the last.
All imperial subjects will fight to the last.
With all their heart and strength.
Will fight to the last.[51]

This poem is even more nationalistic in tone than the previous works, explicitly propounding the myth of the divine Emperor, and in its injunctions not to think of peace perhaps reflects the ongoing intensity of the conflict and the need to inculcate a spirit of sacrifice in the military and citizenry. Paradoxically, the intensity of tone that adds to the literary strength of the poem also acts to render the sentiments expressed in it even more repugnant to readers in the present day.

The Great White Road

Walking.
Walking.
Coughing silently.
Walking.
Many many hundreds of thousands.

Walking.
Walking
Faces clotted with blood.
Some with no heads.
And only one leg.
Helmets full of bullet holes.
All holding rifles as well.
No sounds.
No voices.
No eyeballs.
Softly smiling.
Walking.
Walking.
Walking.
Along the great white road deep inside heaven.
At night heaven is dark.
Tomorrow it will be bright.
Towards the blue depths of heaven a single white line.
Towards the dark depths of heaven a single white line.
Night.
And day.
Walking.
Along the great white road to the infinity of heaven
No longer weary.
Needing neither sleep nor drink.
Nor mess tins.
Softly smiling.
Contented softly smiling.
That moment of regret.
That moment of frustration.
That moment of Banzai for the Emperor.
Now has faded a long way away.
Neither night.
Or day.
Along the great white road deep inside heaven.
Walking.
Walking.
Hundreds and thousands.
The soldiers of Imperial Japan.
With a smile like the soul itself.
No sound.
No cough.
Walking.
Where did the column begin.
Where it will end?
Along the great white road deep inside heaven [...].
Aah a stupendous.
Great beam of light.
Beyond the darkness aah there it is.

A blinding dazzling great beam of light.
In the now silent forefront.
Hands aloft.
The Rising Sun banner now rises suddenly.
And disappears into the great beam of light.
Rising Sun banners now rise suddenly one after another.
With the names of comrades written upon them.
And disappear into the dazzling beam of light.
Disappear into the cavern of heaven.[52]

This last poem is easily the most impressive as literature, and as a requiem for the dead is both moving and effective. It may well be that it was censored by the authorities precisely because of its aesthetic excellence. The work has such persuasive power that it can be read as an anti-war poem, which would have been anathema to the government of the day. Comparing this 1944 version to the one published after the war, it is true that Kusano changed some of the lines to lessen the patriotic emphasis but as seen above the original is still a powerful and touching lament for those soldiers who perished in the fighting.[53] Fukasawa Chūkō in his book-length study of Kusano showers praise upon the poem, proclaiming it to be an antiwar poem, and describes it as a "superb, beautiful" work of art.[54] The poem demonstrates that it is possible to write verse that is both patriotic and yet of considerable poetic merit. The poet was justly proud of it and the fact that he chose to include only this poem in his 1973 volume of collected poetry (albeit in a slightly rewritten form) from among the 12 pro-war poems that he wrote discloses his feelings of shame towards his wartime verse.

Fukasawa notes that while *The Great White Road* collection contains some excellent poems (mainly written on the theme of Mt. Fuji), overall the tone is fiercely patriotic and full of praise for the war.[55] Only the title poem from this collection can be said to speak to the truth that resists wartime propaganda glorifying death, and thus has the power to persuade the reader of the horror and reality of death. After the war, as demonstrated by his memo and the exclusion of the verses from his various post-war collections, Kusano repudiated these poems. But it seems that he was a true believer in the cause of Wang Ching-wei, and thus after a fashion did speak his truth, contrary to Sakuramoto's assertions of insincerity and deliberate falsehood.

Earlier, in 1943, Kusano published another volume of poems entitled *Fuji San* (Mt. Fuji), which I have translated into English and discussed elsewhere.[56] All the poems contained within it were written on the theme of Mt. Fuji, a subject that one could say Kusano was obsessed with throughout his life. Mt. Fuji was also the title of a post-war collection of verse, also composed on the same theme. These poems were explicitly patriotic but possess great literary merit, further confirming the proposition that patriotism can produce art of significant merit.[57] As an example of such a poem, a translation of one of the

best-known poems, known simply as work/opus number "17", from the *Mt. Fuji* volume follows:

> *17*
>
> After thousands millions billions of years.
> By the end of billions of years.
> All life on earth may have died.
> Trees grass birds frogs men.
> Perhaps even moss & trepang.
> Blue ice serrating cracking.
> All will change that much.
> Yet even after for a time Fuji squats stark.
> O terrible beauty! Unmatched even in the age of fire.
> The spirit of the Japanese people.
> There gathers freezes.
> White flame.
> Blows from the summit.
> Heaven silently descends to see this faith.[58]

4.4. Conclusion

Other poets belonging to the same generation as Takamura Kōtarō and Kusano Shinpei, such as the famous Kitasono Katsue (1902–1978), Miyoshi Tatsuji (1900–1964) and Tsuboi Shigeji (1897–1975), whose verse is briefly examined in chapter five, took a similar path in their wartime verse as the two poets discussed here. It is likely that the poets of this generation did not experience any particular sense of dislocation or alienation as Japan moved into the war: the shift from the interwar period to wartime was not as dramatic as the shift from wartime Japan to the postwar era, as we can see in the writing of postwar poets who experienced the war in their youth, such as Yoshimoto Takaaki. Kitasono did not write much pro-war poetry but the few patriotic poems that he did write he deleted from his postwar collections or rewrote to eliminate the jingoistic content; a practice followed by virtually all Japanese writers.[59]

Seo Ikuo argues a more complex case: that Kitasono was not an extreme pro-war poet; rather he puts Kitasono's verse in the category of "patriotic poetry", but the author himself may have not agreed with this view. Seo's contention is that modernist poets like Kitasono did not abandon their avant-garde techniques or themes:

> What is occurring [in wartime modernist poetry] is that modernist techniques and a mechanical "I" are discarded; there is no frank revelation of the private self, characteristic of naturalism. On the contrary, not only are the constitutive elements of the work and the grammatical subject a product of selection but the author himself is selected as an optional element [...] and is substituted for the "ethical" author.

> We can think of this along the lines of inserting operating software into a computer, indeed the operator himself [as a software construct], so that the hardware does not change. Narrative itself becomes somebody else's narrative in an acrobatic maneuver in the hands of wartime modernist poets. The poets themselves are exchanged. I believe this was common to most of the wartime modernist poets. The poets themselves were substitutes. They were substitutes for someone or something else. This historical moment took for granted a "transcendental author" who manipulates the entire poem, including the poet who composed the poem. In order to maintain this logic, pure modernist poetry put a "transcendental author" into their works.[60]

This argument can be interpreted in a number of ways. One way is to read it as affirming the right of poetry, and literature at large, to be fictional. All elements in a literary work, including the narrator, and (to use Wayne Booth's term) the implied author, are products of the actual author's imagination, irrespective of any real-life correlates. If this reading is correct then Seo is simply reiterating literary theories that became widely known through Wimsatt and Beardsley's arguments relating to the intentional and affective fallacies published over half a century ago, and also in the writings of Wayne Booth.[61] Seo's intent here is to partially absolve some wartime modernist poets from criticism for writing pro-war poems—the jingoistic sentiments in the poems do not represent the actual author's sentiments, but rather a fictionally constructed author. In my view, this logic cannot be made into a general argument but can only be applied to close readings of particular poems.

Another reading is that Seo finds continuities between the prewar and wartime techniques and themes of modernist poets. In that sense, to argue that there is a radical and decisive break with wartime verse is mistaken, even allowing for the wartime background and changes in poets' viewpoints occasioned by the circumstances of the time. Reading the work of famous wartime poets like Takamura Kōtarō and Tsuboi Shigeji, or even Kitasono Katsue, it is possible to argue that continuities in style and theme outweigh discontinuities, and one can sometimes find advances in technique, which may affect critical evaluation of wartime verse, although any exercises in evaluation are fraught with difficulty owing to whatever normative criteria is applied to the poem under examination, especially if the criteria include ethical considerations.

If it were possible to summarize the various directions that literature in Japan took, especially modern poetry, during and after the period under discussion, then several themes can be discerned in the work examined here: patriotism, the issue of war responsibility, mourning the war dead, the anguish and trauma occasioned by war, the hopes and despair that Japanese felt after the defeat, the dissolution of society as it had existed to that point and apprehension as well as anticipation about what the post-war era would bring. This particular historical moment was deeply traumatic as well as full of possibilities. The dawn of a new age is always built upon the ruins of the old, and there is no doubt the legacy left to poets in the postwar era was contradictory

and complex, and also painful as the survivors contemplated the reality of those who did not survive, a much more important theme for postwar poetry than the implications, political or otherwise, of the defeat for the Japanese nation. To understand the poetry and poetics of the period from the vantage point of over half a century later is a daunting task. Explicit recourse to contemporary critics is necessary to accomplish this, especially Yoshimoto Takaaki, who is acknowledged as having set the terms of the debate for later generations of readers, but also the *Matinée Poétique* group who did so much to revive literature and literary debate in the immediate aftermath of the war.

The poets chosen for examination are two of the best poets of their era, and in the case of Takamura Kōtarō, one of the most lauded poets of the twentieth century. Takamura's war poetry has been the focal point for the investigation of his verse, the totality of which encompasses much more than poetry written on the themes touched upon in this chapter. Takamura has a well-deserved reputation for poetry composed on the theme of love, for example, but an analysis of such verse clearly exceeds the boundaries of this exercise in criticism. We have examined only a tiny fragment of Kusano Shinpei's output as a poet, and his writing demands a much more sustained analysis than has been possible here. The question of ethical or moral criteria in passing judgment on works produced during wartime and also in the postwar era was raised at the beginning of this chapter but, as demonstrated in the careful, subtle criticism and poetics of commentators like Yoshimoto and Seo Ikuo, this exercise is by no means easy or even possible, given the nature of poetry itself, indeed of all writing. Nevertheless, some evaluations have been given, albeit in various forms, and this provides some assistance in grappling with issues like the poetics of war or the aesthetic dimension of literature composed during wartime, issues no less important for their intractability as their historic significance.

Chapter Five

5. Self-Censorship: The Case of Wartime Japanese Poetry

> "Perhaps Major Sugimoto [Japanese wartime censor] and the others were expecting me to offer cringing apologies [for publishing controversial material] but instead I tried to make some sort of defense. Not that I was attempting any 'conscious resistance': far from a bold stance, it was more like the distant howls of a beaten dog." [Hatanaka Shigeo, wartime editor, *Central Review*]
>
> From *Injurious to Public Morals* by Jay Rubin[1]

In a review of a book on the media by James Hardy published in the *Daily Yomiuri* newspaper in March 2006 the issue of self-censorship was raised. Hardy cites Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's "propaganda model" where it is argued that self-censorship is a fundamental problem facing journalists, since they tend to "subordinate their own beliefs to an assigned ideology"[2]. This issue is linked to the role of the media in wartime, specifically during the war in Iraq in 2003. However, the same issue can be, and has been raised in respect of World War II, where much of the vast outpouring of patriotic and propagandist literature written by Japanese writers seemed extremely difficult to find once the war ended. Although censorship of militaristic literature by the Occupation authorities was one cause of this, it is unlikely that it was the main cause, especially after the end of the Occupation[3] In collection after collection of poetry and prose published in the first two decades after the war, gaps were left where writers appeared to have written very little from the late 1930s to the war's end. In recent years, much of this lacuna has been filled by the large array of archival series of wartime writings published in ever-increasing numbers over the last decade or two. And this trend has extended to individual collected works published over the last few decades where the missing literary works have reappeared. (Some exceptions remain, however.)

This chapter will investigate how and why these "missing" works came to be missing and in doing so will focus on the issue of self-censorship by the writers concerned, as there is no doubt that this was the reason many of the works disappeared from view in the first place. The specific topic of discussion will be wartime Japanese poetry (mostly limited here to *shi*, modern *vers libre*, but not traditional genres of verse like tanka and haiku), an area in which fierce and frequent debate and exhaustive research has been carried out over a number of decades. In these debates, the role of ideology is accepted by all concerned as one of the causes behind the production of such poetry. However, once the prewar and wartime fascist ideology (this is the preferred nomenclature by many of the Japanese critics involved in the debate—and fascist

ideology is now a subject of much interest by Western scholars reappraising the issue of fascism in Japan) collapsed with Japan's surrender to the Allied Powers in 1945, so did the justification for the production of these works[4]. The focus here will be on poetry written during the Pacific war, fought primarily against the Anglo-American powers, rather than during the war in China.[5] Critics have regarded most of these writings as largely devoid of literary merit, a viewpoint more than justified by the examples that follow. The new democratic, liberal ideology which replaced the Japanese version of fascism espoused a distinctly different set of values to those held during the war, which left such poetry as shameful relics of a discredited past. This process was not simple or straightforward however, and the complex questions arising out of these debates concerning censorship, poetry, ideology and war responsibility do not provide any easy answers for students of self-censorship in the early years of the 21st century.

5.1. Censorship and Self-Censorship

Virtually all literature, including poetry, written during the war years was subject to censorship, although the kind and degree depends upon the particular circumstances and the period in which publication took place. Ben-Ami Shillony has described the process of censorship in some detail in his 1981 book *Politics and Culture in Wartime Japan*, looking at intellectuals and writers in particular, and Jay Rubin has also documented this process in his 1984 study *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State* where he focuses in his last chapter on the general liberal magazines *Chūō Kōron* (Central Review) and *Kaizō* (Reconstruction).[6] Rubin traces the increasing censorship of such journals by the military to the point where, as he writes, "the publishing industry police[d] itself", that is, was engaged in self-censorship.[7] Both authors cite Donald Keene's 1971 article "Japanese Writers and the Greater East Asia War", among other sources, as evidence of the fact that there was a "lack of literary resistance to the war in Japan", with most writers exulting in Japan's military triumphs.[8]

The most detailed English-language study of literary censorship during the Allied Occupation is Sharalyn Orbaugh's 2006 volume *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, documenting censorship exercised by the Occupation authorities. Orbaugh argues that it was "surprisingly lenient [...] although ultranationalist sentiments were expressly prohibited".[9] In recent years, various series have been published in Japan reproducing literary works censored by the Occupation authorities, and it often appears that the motive for the censorship was explicitly political, designed to protect the Occupation from criticism by removing any references to crimes committed by Allied soldiers.[10] These two categories of removing ultranationalist sentiments and protection

of the Occupation itself, probably cover most incidences of censorship of verse published during the Occupation.

The exact nature of wartime self-censorship emerges in memoirs published by the editors in question. Hatanaka Shigeo, wartime editor-in-chief of the *Chūō Kōron* noted that editors corrected texts in various ways to make them read more in line with military objectives, that is, more patriotically. In his own words, "We were truly callous in how we changed manuscripts [...]. what we did was certainly a violation of the author's copyright."[11] Some editors even destroyed the integrity of the texts by removing whole sections. The wartime editor-in-chief of the popular children's magazine *Shōnen Kurabu* (Juvenile Club), Katō Ken'ichi, repeats the same story, an indication of just how pervasive the censorship was. Katō also notes that a certain *Colonel S* threatened his editors with a sabre in order to enforce the military's will over the magazine.[12] The threat of violence was all too real: John Solt in his 1999 biography of the modernist poet Kitasono Katue (1902–78) notes that experimental poets in Kobe had been arrested as subversives in 1940, and in the same year Katue himself was questioned by the Thought Police (amongst other poets) about his verse.[13]

The replacement and rewriting of texts by editors are important when assessing postwar self-censorship; it could be argued that changes to the texts of poems or essays on poetry were merely an attempt by the authors to reclaim the original text (although, in fact, this claim is seldom made). The degree of wartime censorship testifies to the strength of the ideology which inspired the "patriotic" verse flowing from the pens of poets in vast numbers during the war years.

Just how much poetry was published during this period? Sakuramoto Tomio, a scholar who has played a leading role in the collection of data relating to wartime poetry as mentioned in the previous chapter, states that his research has shown that over 146 anthologies of poetry were published during the Pacific War, and over 300 individual volumes of poetry.[14] Ben-Ami Shillony increases that figure by citing 863 poetry books published in 1942 alone, presumably including traditional genres of verse, unlike Sakamoto who is solely concerned with *shi*.[15] It is unlikely that all of these texts are still extant given the small print runs of some individual volumes, and widespread destruction wrought on the metropolitan centers—especially, Tokyo—by the massive Allied bombing raids carried out during the war. It is quite possible therefore that all the facts about self-censorship among poets will never be known but much has been uncovered by such investigators as Sakuramoto (1983, 1996), Tsuboi Hideto (1997), Abe Takeshi (1980, 2005), Tsuruoka Yoshihisa (1971), Takahashi Ryūji (1975) and last, but not least, Yoshimoto Takaaki (1970).[16]

The issue of self-censorship hinges on the regret, shame or, simply embarrassment that poets felt after the war concerning their wartime poetry. The

fear of retribution by the Occupation authorities probably played a role but it appears to be only a minor one, as it seems few poets were actually arrested in the postwar purges, although the most famous jingoistic poet Takamura Kōtarō may have fled to the mountains to escape Occupation scrutiny. But why should this be so? If poets were determined to eliminate every inferior work from their *oeuvre,* then the collected poems of many great twentieth and twenty-first century poets would be decidedly thinner. This is especially the case in Japan where for most of the last hundred years or so, literary works have been widely made available in individual collections, either collected or selected works or collected poems. The assumption has generally been that such collections should contain all published works by the authors concerned (and, in some cases, unpublished works), an assumption not really challenged after World War II, as we shall see later. Also, collections of war poetry by Australian, US and British poets are widely available and patriotic verse is generally not held in low esteem, as it is in Japan. And, as a number of critics have pointed out, this negative evaluation of patriotic poetry in Japan applies usually only to verse written during the so-called Pacific War, not to verse written during earlier or later wars.[17] What is it about poetry written at this time that makes it so objectionable?

As mentioned earlier, as a result of the defeat, the governing ideology changed from fascism to democracy, and values changed accordingly. The facts that democratic, liberal, secular values were those of the victors, and that for seven years Japan was under military occupation and rule by the same victors who attempted to impose those values on Japanese society at large, obviously played a major role in persuading poets that their wartime verse needed to be self-censored—in many cases concealed or rewritten entirely. If this were the only factor, then one would expect to see over the past half century since the war a gradual reversal of judgement, away from ideology or politics towards an evaluation based primarily on literary or aesthetic grounds. This is, in fact beginning to happen as demonstrated by Takahashi Ryūji's attempt to differentiate between wartime poetry that has literary merit and verse that has none, and the poet Seo Ikuo's recent study of wartime poetry where he attempts to reevaluate patriotic poetry on the grounds that there is no *a priori* reason to condemn such verse, while criticizing pro-war poetry on aesthetic grounds.[18]

Takahashi defines "war poetry" (*sensōshi*, a word connoting a negative evaluation of wartime poetry), on the grounds of both content and form, as poetry that supports a fascist totalitarian ideology, or actively rejoices in the imperial myth, or that deliberately utilizes an archaic style or the specialized military jargon sanctioned by the authorities.[19] But, as seen here, politics still plays a crucial role in determining judgement. As secular and liberal democratic values have taken root in the Japanese consciousness over the decades following World War II, aesthetic values have inevitably

taken on a political coloration that finds much patriotic war poetry simply unacceptable as literature. Part of the reason for the continuing debate over war poetry and the issue of self-censorship—some critics have long alleged that this exercise, especially as undertaken by Sakuramoto and his allies, is actually a witch-hunt—lies in the immediate postwar environment and the polemics over war responsibility.

5.2. Who is guilty? The Controversy over War Responsibility

It is broadly acknowledged that the debate over the responsibility that writers had in promoting fascist values during the Fifteen Years War was touched off by an article written by the leftist critic Odagiri Hideo (1916–2000) titled "Bungaku ni okeru sensō sekinin no tsuikyū" (Pursuing War Responsibility in Literature), published in June 1946 in the newly-formed journal *Shin Nihon Bungaku* (New Japanese Literature). Odagiri states his premise at the outset: "war responsibility in respect of literature is, more than anything else, first and foremost our problem. This problem commences with our self-criticism".[20] But then Odagiri goes on to name 25 writers who "have the prime responsibility" for promoting the war, thus beginning a climate of denunciation and counter-denunciation. The poets named include: Takamura Kōtarō, Saitō Mokichi, Noguchi Yonejirō (1875–1947), Saijō Yaso (1892–1970) and Satō Haruo (1892–1964).[21] The critic Kobayashi Hideo (1902–83) was also named; two months later Kobayashi resigned his professorship at Meiji University and around that time fell onto the rail tracks at Suidōbashi station, sustaining minor injuries.[22] Odagiri's article originated in a speech given at the inaugural meeting of the *Shin Nihon bungaku kai* (Association for New Japanese Literature) and signaled the start of a political struggle for dominance over literature. The issue of war guilt was the rallying cry of writers involved with this association which centered upon prewar, proletarian authors, most of whom—like one of the association's most prominent members, the poet Nakano Shigeharu (1902–79)—had committed *tenkō* (an ideological turnabout). Under government pressure, Nakano committed *tenkō* in 1934 and underwent a conversion to pro-military values, although in his case this was a camouflage.[23]

The distinguished postwar literary historian Hirano Ken (1897–1978) was the leader of the literary opposition after the publication of his essay "Hitotsu no hansotei" (An Anti-Proposition) in May 1946 in the journal *Shinseikatsu* (New Life).[24] J. Victor Koschmann has characterized this essay as a classic statement of the doctrine that the end never justifies the means.[25] Clearly this is not a direct response to Odagiri but it represents a drawing of the lines between the group of writers like Hirano associated with the postwar journal *Kindai Bungaku* (Modern Literature) who criticized the *Shin Nihon Bungaku*

group on various grounds but primarily objected to what they saw as the instrumentalist communist ideology of the group, which dictated a political approach to literature.[26]

The debate over war responsibility and self-censorship had new life breathed into it by a series of articles published by the poet and critic Yoshimoto Takaaki commencing in 1955 that focused on the concealment and rewriting of patriotic war poetry. The articles dating from 1955–6 were collected together and published in a single volume, together with four articles by Takei Akio, in September 1956.[27] Yoshimoto continued to explore this issue with further articles published between 1956 and 1960 subsequently reprinted in various of his books. Some of the 1957–8 pieces were republished as late as 2006.[28] It would be instructive and useful to describe in detail all these articles here, and further references to them will occur later, but at this juncture it is only necessary to summarize a few of the most important, as Yoshimoto is generally recognized as the chief theorist of the self-censorship issue.

Yoshimoto is of a younger generation than the earlier protagonists in the debate and, as Oguma Eiji suggests in his 2002 examination of Yoshimoto, the fact that he did not go to war and instead survived it, inflicted a deep psychological trauma on him that has driven his pursuit of writers who concealed their wartime activities.[29] One of the earliest and most famous of his polemics "Zensedai no shijin tachi—Tsuboi Okamoto no hyōka ni tsuite" (Poets of the Previous Generation—on the Evaluation of Tsuboi and Okamoto) was first published in the journal *Shigaku* (Poetics) in November 1955. Yoshimoto castigates the two prewar modernist poets Tsuboi Shigeji (1897–1975) and Okamoto Jun (1901–1978) for concealment of their wartime patriotic poetry. What angered Yoshimoto most was the fact that in the prewar era both poets espoused leftist, anarchistic values and at the war's end both men declared themselves in the democratic, progressive camp. Yoshimoto particularly savages Tsuboi who was lauded as a "resistance poet" after the war. Yoshimoto sees this as hypocrisy of the worst kind since both poets wrote collaborationist pro-war poetry during the war and tried to conceal these activities later.[30]

Yoshimoto also developed a complex critique of the "*Shiki-ha*" (Four Seasons) school of prewar verse. This school of poetry included one of the greatest Japanese poets of the century Miyoshi Tatsuji (1900–64) and was the dominant current in prewar poetry circles. Many of the poets belonging to the school wrote xenophobic, pro-war verse, including Miyoshi. Yoshimoto's main critique of this school is his "Shiki-ha no honshitsu" (The Essence of the 'Four Seasons' Group) first published in April 1958 in the *Bungaku* journal. He is not as harsh in his judgement on these poets as he is of modernist avant-garde poets because he regards them as primitive, romanticists who yearn for a Japanese arcadia—in this sense he finds continuities in their prewar and wartime writing, although he still condemns their barbarous wartime verse.[31] Yoshimoto's most famous critique of prewar and wartime verse

is his essay "Geijutsuteki teikō to zasetsu" (Artistic Resistance and Collapse) first published in April 1958 but later reprinted in his 1959 book of the same name. Focusing on poetry, the carefully argued essay investigates the issue of why artistic resistance to the war collapsed in the face of government oppression. Yoshimoto's answer is that both the prewar proletarian poets' poetry movement and avant-garde poets were fatally flawed in their political sensibility and in their failure to grasp the true nature of the consciousness of ordinary Japanese. He also criticizes individual poets belonging to both schools for their inability to write poetry free from political dictates. This powerful critique must be read against the background of the debate over politics, literature and subjectivity raging at the time, described in detail by J. Victor Koschmann and Thomas Schnellbächer.[32] It should also be noted that these three essays are taken from a much larger number of such critiques written by Yoshimoto at the time.

Two essays summarize the general reaction to Yoshimoto's decisive intervention in the debate: first, the critic Hanada Kiyoteru's (1909–74) July 1957 essay "Yangā zenerēshon" (Younger Generation) which defends Okamoto Jun and argues for the existence of a different kind of resistance that Yoshimoto is not prepared to countenance and, second, the poet Akiyama Kiyoshi's (1905–88) pro-Yoshimoto essay "Minshushugi bungaku to sensō sekinin" (Democratic Literature and War Responsibility) published in 1956, where Akiyama further attacks Okamoto and argues that the *Shin Nihon Bungaku* group's views are imprisoned in the rigid straightjacket of communist ideology.[33] Whether supporting or opposing Yoshimoto's views, critics after Yoshimoto had to start from the premises that he established; as Ōkubo Norio, the editor of a volume of essays on war responsibility wrote, "it was Yoshimoto Takaaki who established self-criticism in respect of the issue of responsibility regarding war literature".[34]

5.3. Miyoshi Tatsuji's Self-Censorship

Donald Keene's assessment of Miyoshi's jingoistic, xenophobic war poetry is short and succinct: "His wartime 'Japanism' was quite dissimilar to Takamura Kōtarō's; his love of Japan was absolute and did not imply a rejection of the West [...] he did not recant after the defeat. "[35] How accurate is this assessment? Miyoshi wrote seven volumes of verse between 1940 and 1945 of which three books are made up of unabashed pro-war poetry: *Shōhō itaru* (News of Victory Has Come, 1942), *Kantaku* (Wooden Clappers in the Cold Night, 1943) and *Kanka eigen* (Martial Music, 1945). The title poem of the first collection reads as follows:

News of victory has come
News of victory has come

To the clear sky of early winter
And the cloudless islands of Yamato
News of victory has come
At the mouth of Pearl Harbour, US warships have capsized
On the far shores of Malaya, British warships have been destroyed
Thieves for a hundred years in East Asia
Ah you despicable red-haired blue-eyed merchants
Why is your greed and bluster so strong?
Why are your warships so flimsy and weak?
Tomorrow Hong Kong will fall
The day after, the Philippines will bow before us
On the next day Singapore will fly the white flag of surrender for the third time
Ah a hundred years of blight in East Asia
Aged thieves with wrinkles and bent backs
Already the pomp of your cannon and fortress is in vain
In the end they could not support
Your cunning trade of blackmail and extortion
On the seas of the eastern hemisphere
The dawn of our sphere of divine ideals
The cool breezes of daybreak will blow[36]

An extract from the second poem in the collection, "Amerika Taiheiyō kantai wa zenmetsu seri" (The US Pacific Fleet is destroyed) reads as follows:

Ah your threats
Ah your show
Ah your economic blockade
Ah the ABCD line
Is laughable! The fat President of an obese democracy
All our intrigues of last night were sweeter than sweet
The US Pacific fleet is destroyed
Mile upon mile through the stormy sea
Running against the massive waves
Ah warships under the leadership of the mediocre Admiral Kimmel
After a sound night's sleep
Deep in the so placid Pearl Harbour
The line of warships sank
[...]
The true sons of the Imperial Land under the eastern sun released all at once a thunderous assault
Their submarines all sank forever
[...]
Depart our oceans, shame on you![37]

It would be tedious to translate much more as these poems are typical of most of verse found in the three collections. One of the poems in *News of Victory Has Come,* "Jon Buru karō sahai Winsuton Chāchirushi e no shigen" (A Personal Message to Mr Winston Churchill, John Bull's Principal Agent) has the words: "Your precious democracy was totally useless" and is marked by the presence of sarcasm in almost every line.[38] There are also a number of tanka

in this collection. "Shūjitsu eigen" (Lasting Words on Autumn Days) is a sequence of nine tanka extolling Japan—the first four tanka read exactly the same except that one word or phrase differs in each poem, so the first tanka, "Yoki tomo no kokodaku sumeba hinomoto o muni naru kuni to waga omounari" (Good friends live in this country Japan that I believe is peerless) is changed slightly for the second variation which substitutes "yoki sho" (good books) for "good friends", and so on.[39]

In content I do not find these poems to be any less jingoistic than Takamura Kōtarō's wartime verse, and they certainly read like a rejection of the West. To date no critic has found such verse to have any literary merit, but Yoshimoto Takaaki argues that the following two tanka by Miyoshi from "Marei no kankatsu" (The Rape of Malaya), a sequence of 11 tanka in *News of Victory Has Come*, are cruel and primitive but less "mechanical" than Nazi cruelty: "Shinshū no kurogane o mote kitaetaru hozutsu ni kakete tsukuse kono zoku"(Using shells made with Japanese iron, wipe out this enemy!) and "Kono zoku wa kokoro kitanashi mononofu no nasake na kake so uchiteshi tsukuse" (The enemy has filthy hearts, don't pity them, kill them!).[40]

Following their original appearance, these poems did not materialize again in any collection of Miyoshi's verse until the publication of the 1965 *Collected Works* (from which they are taken) shortly after the poet's death, over a quarter of a century later. That this was due to Miyoshi's self-censorship is verified by Ishihara Yatsuka's bibliographical notes appended to the second volume of the *Collected Works* where he quotes Miyoshi's postwar admonition, "Apart from these few poems, do not reprint [these 3 wartime collections]", and confirms that the first reprinting since the war was in the *Collected Works*.[41]

After the war, Miyoshi undertook a kind of recantation with his attacks on the Emperor, most notably in his essays "Natsukashii Nihon" (Nostalgic Japan), the first part of which was published in *Shinchō* in January 1946, and "Tennō o meguru hitobito" (Those around the Emperor) published in the same magazine in February 1950. Miyoshi wrote in the former essay, "On reflection we men of culture [...] are all burning with shame", in reference to their failure to stop the madness. He also criticized the Emperor trenchantly: "The Emperor is the head of the state, and as the one most responsible must take the responsibility for the war and defeat [...]. The Emperor neglected his duties shamefully by permitting the military clique to do as it wished and did not conduct his duties as necessary [...]. His responsibility extends beyond merely losing the war [...]."[42]

Such critics as Abe Takeshi, and Tsuruoka Yoshihisa are unwilling to accept Miyoshi's repentance as genuine. Tsuruoka observes that in his postwar writings, Miyoshi portrayed himself as a victim, not as part of an aggressive war effort.[43] Further, he asserts that Miyoshi's gifts as a lyric poet were turned totally over to the service of Japan's wartime rulers, therefore his war poetry

was not faked but totally sincere. Abe repeats the sentiments, with the comment that Miyoshi was the "running dog" of the military.[44] The real issue is that of self-censorship: the fact that in his lifetime Miyoshi forbade any republication of the three volumes of his jingoistic patriotic poetry, and not only expressed few regrets about this work but created the illusion that his wartime verse was slight and insignificant. He was aided and abetted by the many Japanese editors and critics (named and condemned by Abe, Tsuruoka and Sakuramoto) who hardly mention these poems in their postwar anthologies, books and articles on Miyoshi. Together, these observations permit the conclusion that it was a form of subterfuge, a refusal to face the issue. Miyoshi stands in stark contrast to Takamura Kōtarō who confronted the past openly with his "Confession of an Idiot" poems, as noted in chapter four. A number of Japanese commentators on Miyoshi like Tsuruoka Yoshihisa and Tsuboi Hideto agree with Donald Keene: they feel he was perfectly sincere in his sentiments but if that is the case, why the self-censorship, the twenty-five years of cover-up? Perhaps the answer to the question is because just about everyone followed suit.

5.4 Tsuboi Shigeji as a Resistance Poet

Before discussing the much-discussed case of Tsuboi, two quotations will demonstrate how widespread and common self-censorship was among modern poets. First, from the distinguished poet Ayukawa Nobuo's (1920–86) article "Sensō sekinin no kyoshū" (My attitude towards debates over war responsibility) first published in 1959: "Without exception 'Selected' and 'Collected Poems' put together after the war had all war poetry and patriotic poetry of the poets of the previous generation excised and left blank."[45] The second quote comes from a leading contemporary critic of modern poetry Tsuboi Hideto in his magisterial 1997 study *Koe no shukusai: Nihon kindai shi to sensō* (A celebration of voices: modern Japanese poetry and war):

> While still alive, authors excluded topical war poetry from their collections. After their deaths, editors who took into consideration the "honor" of their surviving family members removed such poetry from their "Collected Works" or "Collected Poetry" [...]. Naturally, it is not unusual for sections dealing with the war to be expunged from biographies, studies and articles in dictionaries and encyclopedias. Generally speaking, what supports this massive, systemic amnesia, i.e. cover-up, is the logic that this period was a disaster since free speech was nullified and everybody had to create works unwillingly.[46]

Both these statements are supported by the massive body of evidence collected by Sakuramoto, Abe and Tsuruoka which lists publication after publication carefully vetted so that little remains of the poets' wartime verse.

Tsuboi argues that the justification offered by poets themselves for their collective amnesia about their war poetry is especially weak given the nature of poetic creation—ultimately poetic expression is a creation of the heart, it emerges voluntarily.[47] Yoshimoto Takaaki in his 1959 article "Shijin no sensō sekinin ron—bungakuteki ni ruikeika" (The debate over poets' war responsibility—a literary classification) argued that the notion that the past is the past—used to justify omissions and excisions of wartime verse—is a typical example of the Japanese logic of amnesia and indifference arising out of "populist sentimentality". This kind of thinking is supported by the "fundamental, objective lack of substance in Japanese society" and the "strong intrinsic authority of the mentality possessed by the Japanese ruling class".[48] Yoshimoto here traces the sources of the self-censorship of verse (whitewash may be a better term) to Japanese society itself. One of the most flagrant examples of self-censorship cited by Yoshimoto is the poet Tsuboi Shigeji.

The clearest example of the rewriting that Yoshimoto finds reprehensible in Tsuboi's work is the prose poem "Tetsubin ni yoseru uta" (A poem dedicated to an iron kettle), published in June 1943 in the *Fujin Kōron* (Ladies review) journal, which reads in translation as follows:

> When I found you for the first time in the corner of a curio shop, you were covered in rust. When I had any spare time, I polished you. The more I polished the more my love permeated your skin. You became dearer to me than my dearest friends. You are stubborn and silent but when your bottom is warmed over a flame-red charcoal fire you begin to sing. Ah, when I hear that song, I think how many harsh winters we have passed together. But now the times have added to the harshness still more. The tumult of war has entered my living room. You can no longer sing on and on in my living room, I can no longer enjoy your songs forever. Oh, my Nanbu iron kettle. Goodbye! There to be melted anew, straightened out, for our warships, to make unbreakable steel plates! Repel all the uncounted millions of enemy shells that fall upon your skin![49]

What enraged Yoshimoto about this "monumentally patriotic poem" (in Yoshimoto's words) is the fact that after the war when it was published under the title "Tetsubin no uta" (A song of the iron kettle) in October 1952, the poem was rewritten with no reference to the war whatever, thus the last two sentences disappear.[50] The original version of the poem is now available in the 1988 *Collected Works*, published after Tsuboi's death.

Tsuboi was a radical, avant-garde poet before the war, with a fervent attachment to the left. After the war, he reinvented himself as a "resistance" (teikō) poet, who did not succumb to wartime nationalism, as he wrote in the preface to his September 1946 collection *Kajitsu* (Fruit): "I did not abandon the composition of poetry during the oppressive climate of the war years. But however insignificant these works were, they were an effort at resistance. I tried hard to express my true feelings welling up within me, without being

swept away by the tenor of the times."[51] Also in the postscript to his 1952 collection *Sensō no me* (War Eyes), Tsuboi wrote, "Editing this collection amid the reactionary climate of Japan today, I realized clearly how passive my posture of resistance was."[52] He was publicly taken up by both Odagiri Hideo and Nakano Shigeharu as one of the leaders of the artistic resistance. It was this postwar re-invention of his poetic self, which necessitated self-censorship or, more properly, concealment of his wartime poetry, that so incensed Yoshimoto and his collaborators.[53]

Yoshimoto's pursuit of Tsuboi was relentless and motivated by intense emotion. Yoshimoto wrote that he remembers in 1949 "swearing in his heart" not to forgive people like Tsuboi for wearing the masks of democrats. He observed that "A poem dedicated to an iron kettle" ended in "pseudo-fascist demagogy" while the rewritten version ended in a "pseudo-democratic spirit". Yoshimoto described his reaction to the original poem in the following way: "I feel shame, humiliation and despair."[54] It is true that Tsuboi criticised Yoshimoto's study of Takamura Kōtarō, but such vehemence could not arise from mere pique.

Yoshimoto found one war poem by Tsuboi worthy of a kind of praise, "a brave, sad poem" called "Mizukara o imashimeru uta" (A poem admonishing myself) published in *Nihon Kōron* (Japan review) in 1943:[55]

> Swords must be polished sharply
> The skin of the blade without imperfection
> Rifles are heavy
> So shoulders must be broad and powerful
> Walk straight ahead
> Sometimes zig zag
> But charges must be quick and daring
> Battles cries must echo like thunder
> An enemy ten times as many must be met with a hundred times more courage
> On the road to war
> Advance singing war anthems
> When advancing
> Do not count the number of lives
> Your gallantry and cowardice
> Will be decided for the first time when the battle ends
> Only a donkey
> Disputes glorious deeds in the midst of war[56]

I can see two possible reasons why Yoshimoto praised this poem: one is that it is a poem of praise and encouragement for the ordinary soldiers for whom Yoshimoto had much sympathy, and secondly it could be read as anti-war poem (but Yoshimoto does not say this) as one reading of "donkey" (roba) is to see this animal as referring to the poet himself, admonishing himself for not speaking out against the war but also providing a justification for remaining silent. This poem was not reprinted in the decade following the war.

Critics other than Yoshimoto also criticized Tsuboi. Murata Masao condemned "A poem dedicated to an iron kettle" as a pro-war work, and criticized the changes made to conceal it, as did Abe Takeshi, who cited Tsuboi's defense of "Iron kettle" written after the war: "This poem was written in response to a request from the poetry section of the Patriotic Writers' Association [...]. To refuse would mean that I was clearly signaling my opposition to the war [...]. I did not possess sufficient courage [to refuse] and nor was I able to keep silent."[57] Two other wartime, jingoistic poems often mentioned by critics that were subject to self-censorship are "Nanpō e" (To the South, 1944) and "Yubi no tabi" (A Finger's Journey, 1942).[58] And one can easily see why Tsuboi concealed these poems since they are close relatives of the martial verse written by Miyoshi Tatsuji and Takamura Kōtarō. Overall, however, in volume and content, Tsuboi did not write anything like the wartime verse of these two poets.

The bibliographical note (*kaidai*) attached to volume one of his *Collected Works*, which includes all the war poetry, remarks about these poems that they "are a matter of deep regret", but cites Kaneko Mitsuharu (1895–1975)—whom Yoshimoto conceded was a true "resistance poet"—saying that, "I am happy to [declare] that Tsuboi did not retreat from a position of resistance to the war during World War II".[59] This comment seems to refer to Tsuboi's private position rather than the one he revealed to the wartime public, as Tsuboi's own defense cited earlier suggests. Yoshimoto's ire was chiefly aroused by Tsuboi's postwar posturing as a resistance poet which concealed completely his wartime verse, and also by his postwar poetry which Yoshimoto despised and openly ridiculed, primarily because he saw it as politically motivated, thus being an exact analogue to the wartime poetry.[60] Ironically, Tsuboi's postwar poetry ended up being censored by the occupation authorities.[61]

5.5. Kaneko Mitsuharu: Self-Censorship or Plain, Old Irony?

Kaneko Mitsuharu was championed by a number of critics in addition to Yoshimoto as a poet who actually did write resistance poetry during the 1930s and the 1940s.[62] These poems were later collected in three volumes: *Same* (Sharks, 1937), *Rakkasan* (Parachute, 1948) and *Ga* (Moths, 1948). The argument made for Kaneko is that he wrote anti-war poetry using difficult, ambiguous, ironic and highly symbolic or allegoric language that could not be understood by Japanese censors. This reading of Kaneko's work was promoted assiduously by the poet himself, for example, in his 1957 autobiography *Shijin* (Poet):

> *Sharks* was a taboo book, but as I had elaborated a heavy camouflage, it was not obvious even to the censor [...]. "Foam" (Awa) was an exposure of the Japanese army's atrocities. "Angels" (Tenshi) was a rejection of conscription and pacifist [...] seen from the government side, I must be a person who deserved liquidation, when I wrote such things [...]. I very naturally opposed the war with a feeling which on my side I was definitely up to that time unwilling to give up and I continued to write poems [...] in opposition to the state apparatus.[63]

A. R. Davis, the translator of this volume, has also translated selections from all three poetry books which, whether read in English translation or Japanese, confirm that his poetry was indeed ironic and, to an experienced reader, quite clearly anti-war.

But in 1983 with the publication of Sakuramoto Tomio's volume *Kūhaku to sensō: senjika no shijin tachi* (The vacuum and the war: poets in wartime), Kaneko's reputation underwent a mauling, at least in the eyes of Sakuramoto's supporters. Sakuramoto alleged that Kaneko had self-censored his own wartime poetry when it was published later. Sakuramoto cites three examples of such poems "Minato" (The harbor), "Kōzui" (Flood) and "Dangan" (Bullet). He also disputes the "ironic" reading of various resistance poems.[64] Sakuramoto's arguments seem to be fairly slight for the first two poems. For example, the October 1937 version of "The harbor", published in the *Bungei* (Literature) magazine, basically just adds the following four lines to the second part of the poem:

> We must fight
> For the necessity
> We must win
> For our faith[65]

The other changes are inconsequential but Sakuramoto feels the excision of a two-line quotation from Hegel, "For the people to enjoy eternal peace/Is nothing other than simple depravity", in the postwar version is sinister rather than (in my view) comic.[66] The 1975 *Collected Works*, published at the time of Kaneko's death, does not include the earlier versions, reproducing the 1948 *Parachute* as first published, and therefore differs from the previous editions of *Collected Works* by other poets examined here. "The harbor" as published in 1948 reads as a highly ambiguous poem which may be calling readers to take up arms against the war whereas the 1937 version is more a call to arms, however neither version is explicit or jingoistic. "Flood" can by no stretch of the imagination be described as a "war poem" but "Bullet" is different, as the translation of the original 1939 version demonstrates: (the original title was "Tama" [Bullet]):

> When a bullet flies out of a gun barrel
> Immediately, it becomes a pigeon and takes flight,
> Fighting for peace in East Asia.

Don't be afraid.
The bullet is whistling
At play.

Into the dry, cracked creek the swaying
wild fleabane heading towards sleep

Following a steel helmet between flesh and bone
the bullet rests its head cocked.

Bullet.
The smallest angel
Innocent, dirty life. Do as you wish.
The swiftness
Of heaven caught by you.[67]

The version of the poem that appears in *Parachute*, and the *Collected Works*, is very similar to the original but lacks the line "Fighting for peace in East Asia" and is more overtly sarcastic. Sakuramoto notes the 1948 version has been acclaimed as an outstanding example of an anti-war poem, full of irony, that may appear otherwise. He argues the original published in a 1939 collection of patriotic poetry reveals how pro-war the poem is.

The poem is certainly an unsettling mixture of playfulness and menace, but the ugliness of its overall tone—celebrating murder—enables this reader to see it as not all that different from the revised version. The dissonance between the angelic, heaven promised by death (and the Blakean innocence of the tone) and the ugly reality of death itself, graphically displayed in the second-last stanza, results in a condemnation of war and violence, a sarcastic, brutal reminder of the evil of war. However, such a reading is anathema to Sakuramoto who is determined to convict Kaneko for his crime of self-censorship. Politics, as Yoshimoto noted decades ago, determines meanings before they emerge as a negotiation between reader and text, but only if the reader prefers politics to reading.

A good example of how a reader can be initially excited and stimulated by Sakuramoto's logic, only on many close readings of the text to reject them altogether, is the poet and critic Shimaoka Shin's detailed rebuttal of Sakuramoto's view of Kaneko.[68] This rebuttal is matched by Kaneko's biographer Hara Masaji who also mounts a convincing argument against Sakuramoto on Kaneko while acknowledging that one prose piece written for children and published in October 1938 titled "Miyo! Fukutsu no Doitsudamashii" (Behold! The indomitable German soul) may stand as the sole example of "pro-war literature" authored by the poet.[69]

Another instalment in this long-running saga of charge and countercharge is Nakamura Makoto's 2009 volume *Kaneko Mitsuharu: "sensō" to "sei" no shigaku* (Kaneko Mitsuharu: the poetics of war and life), which is clearly in the camp that absolves the poet from Sakuramoto's continuing salvo of criticism. Using newly discovered articles by Kaneko to bolster his case, Nakamura subjects all the verses discussed above (and other wartime verse

by Kaneko and other poets investigated here) to a careful and detailed analysis, and agrees that the evidence confirms Kaneko's anti-war position, although he also believes that Kaneko's wartime verse production is more complex than a simplistic categorization of it as a sarcastic parody of wartime jingoism.[70] This characterization agrees with James Morita's English-language 1980 study of the poet, and also with Steve Rabson's 1998 volume on war in modern Japanese poetry.[71]

5.6. Takahashi Shinkichi: Uncomplicated Patriot?

Takahashi Shinkichi (1901–87) is a fascinating poet whose work is far more complicated than the labels of "Dadaist" or "Zen poet" that have been applied to his verse both in Japan and abroad suggest. Abe Takeshi argues that Takahashi's reputation as a Buddhist poet is undeserved with a number of non-pacificist poems being published in *Jinja sanpai* (Pilgrimages to shrines, 1942) and *Kirishima* (1942).[72] The 1982 *Collected Works*, published five years before the poet's death, explains the situation at the time in the bibliographical note attached to the first volume:

> At this time [during the war] pilgrimages to shrines and purification ceremonies became popular among the people who, for the first time, began to feel a crisis in the strength of Japan during the course of this long war. Takahashi as a Japanese had a profound interest in the origins of various divine festivals unique to Japan and decided on his own initiative to visit many old shrines throughout the country. Virtually the whole of 1941 was spent in this way. He wrote various things which were collected into a single volume but, on this occasion, is deleted from this collection [...]. In addition, the two poems "Minami no umi" (South Seas) and "Shingapōru kanraku" (The conquest of Singapore) have been deleted at the author's request.[73]

Kirishima is reprinted in the *Collected Works*, with the two poems listed above deleted as stated. "South Seas" is a typical war poem: "Let's go / Into the Southern Ocean / Singapore has fallen / India is next / And then comes Australia [...]. Asia is tomorrow / Europe is the past [...]. To the Hawaiian Islands / The US is weak / Panama is next / And then comes New York [...] the Pacific I s free / The world is small".[74] "The conquest of Singapore" is similar in tone and content to "South Seas". However, many other poems in *Kirishima* are nothing like as patriotic or jingoistic as these verses. So, the charge of self-censorship is justified but on rather thin grounds. What of *Pilgrimages to Shrines*?

This work is primarily a series of prose essays on various shrines visited by the poet, with only a few poems included. The tone of the essays is respectful and pious (using the honorifics typical of the time to refer to the Emperor), with due attention being paid to the Imperial mythology undergirding many of the legends and tales associated with the shrines. The poems refer more

directly to the war, but also act to extol the mystery of the Imperial myth. The poem "Meiji Jingū" (Meiji shrine) begins with the following three lines:

> How pure, cool and spacious
> Is the shrine
> Where the Emperor's soul is still[75]

The first half of the poem proceeds along these lines until we come to, "Nanking the capital of China has fallen / In North China an independent government has been established", decidedly unpoetic, but the last four lines resume the initial theme:

> Why do all our countrymen united
> Burn with loyalty?
> Because of the unbroken Imperial line
> How lovely the myriad islands of Japan[76]

This mixture of patriotic reverence for the Imperial mythology combined with references to sacrifices and victories in the war mark all of the few poems in this volume. For example, "Torimiyama no matsuri no ni wa" (The Altar on Mt. Torimi) repeats the line (or variations of) "Fighting is the greatest joy" a few times, although the ostensible theme of the poem is the legends associated with three sacred mountains in Nara.[77]

Takahashi became an extremely religious man—he turned to nihilism and then religion after his father's suicide in 1930. In the autobiographical summary attached to a collection of his verse published in 1954, Takahashi wrote:

> World War II began. My distrust of Japanese Shintō deepened and I embarked upon a tour of old temples throughout the country [...] and came to feel that they were an extension of the real world and were constructed on the basis of lies but I was not able to publish this at the time [...] two forces contended within my heart—the struggle between Shintō and Buddhism [...] my heart was broken by this struggle.[78]

In later life, Takahashi turned once more to Buddhism, but the statement above seems to indicate that his wartime Shintō poetry was also a kind of camouflage, although it is clear he was struggling with the question of religion. Read in this light, the self-censorship of his wartime verse was not solely or even primarily due to embarrassment at the nature of his emperor worship but rather, as a result of his struggles with Shintō, he re-invented himself as a failed Shintōist, and eventually turned once again in the direction of Buddhism. His self-censorship indicates a profound loss of faith in the national creed.

5.7. Brief Concluding Note

From the studies of self-censorship examined here, it is easy to see that self-censorship is also a form of self-invention, of a rewriting of the self in the direction of a different intellectual, emotional or literary program, whether inspired by ideology, history, circumstances in general or internal forces. Writers are, it can be argued, naturally prone to such an exercise as writing is, literally, the invention of worlds on a blank page, and identity becomes one element in a complex construction that eventually results in literature. In that sense, the discarding or rewriting of certain works of poetry in favor of others is a normal part of literary production, and something practiced by most poets. In this study, literary reasons for self-censorship have not been given the same degree of consideration as non-literary factors, and if this is a failing, then it is a failing common to the debate as a whole and to many of the critics who initiated it. However, as James Hardy noted of the Iraq war at the beginning of this study, the exigencies of war, and its aftermath, change many things, including the reading, production and interpretation of literature.

Chapter Six

6. "Sturm und Drang" in Tanizaki Junichiro's *The Makioka Sisters* (1948)

> "[...] for my particular grief
> Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
> That it engluts and swallows other sorrows
> And it is still itself."
>
> William Shakespeare, from *Macbeth*

Tanizaki Junichirō's (1886–1965) long novel *Sasameyuki* (trans. The Makioka Sisters, 1957) is generally regarded as a masterpiece, both inside and outside Japan.[1] The novel was written between 1943 and 1948 and is based upon the real experience and history of Tanizaki's third and last wife Nezu Matsuko's family, roughly corresponding to the years 1936 to 1941 (Tanizaki married Matsuko in 1935, and soon moved her two unmarried sisters into their house). This work was a convincing portrait of prewar upper-middle class Osaka society in all its elegance and luxury, so convincing in fact that it was viewed by the authorities as detracting from the increasingly martial tenor of the times, and accordingly the first instalment of the novel was banned in 1943 and the novel was not published in its entirety until after the end of World War II.[2] Prominent among the impressively realistic scenes that occur throughout the work, we find a description of a disastrous storm and flood that assailed the Osaka/Kobe region where the fictional Makioka family lives. This description covers a few chapters about halfway through the novel and is based upon an actual event: the Great Hanshin Flood, although one or two other disasters also may have contributed to Tanizaki's impressive realization of this event in fiction; most notably the Muroto Typhoon that reached the coast near Kobe on 21 September 1934. However, this event is more likely to have contributed to the description of a Tokyo typhoon that follows soon after in the novel. This chapter traces the connections between such disasters and the themes and narrative of Tanizaki's great novel.

6.1. Flood, Storm and Typhoon

Three natural disasters stand out in the history of the Osaka-Kobe region (commonly called the Hanshin region) in prewar Japan that may well have influenced the writing of *The Makioka Sisters* in terms of the scale and immensity of the tragedies that occurred. In increasing order of intensity, the first was a massive downpour on Mt Rokko in Kobe on 1 August 1939 that led to vast swathes of the mountain collapsing and subsequent mudslides that

destroyed 14, 165 homes and killed two citizens. The Muroto Typhoon (Sept. 1934) was the second with some 281 fatalities and 1,523 injured. The third was the Great Hanshin Flood of July 1938 caused by a seasonal rain front that killed 671 citizens and injured 1, 463. In the city of Kobe alone 616 people died and over seventy percent of all households sustained damage.[3] It is possible that the Muroto Typhoon influenced the description of the typhoon in Tokyo experienced by the two Makioka sisters Sachiko and Yukiko, not long after the description of the Great Hanshin flood. Direct evidence exists for the Great Hanshin flood influencing the composition of the work and Tanizaki's wife Matsuko's reminiscences testify to the fact that the Tokyo typhoon is based on a real event. But no matter how accurate (or, in the case of Tanizaki, how approximate) is the data used in a work of fiction, it nonetheless remains fiction even when based on actual experience. Before examining the author's experience of these events, we need to take into account issues relating to fictionality raised by many critics and commentators writing on the literature of disaster based on real events. The literature of the Holocaust has often served as a starting point for such discussions, and in Ruth Franklin's study of Holocaust narratives *A Thousand Darknesses* (2011) there are some remarks pertinent to this issue:

> It might be argued that different standards of criticism should apply to works of nonfiction about the Holocaust and to works of fiction. By this logic, it is acceptable to coolly dissect the metaphors in a work such as Piotr Rawicz's *Blood from the Sky*, a deliberately surreal novel, whereas it is morally dubious, or at least beside the point, to do so for Elie Wiessel's *Night*, which continues to be accepted as the ultimately canonical Holocaust memoir. The problem is that these categories are perpetually fluid. *Night*—like the stories of Tadeusz Borowski, the autobiographical works of Primo Levi, and virtually every other important work of literature about the Holocaust—has been understood, at different times, as both a novel and a memoir. In his perceptive book Writing and rewriting the Holocaust, James E. Young analyzes in detail the essential narrative component of diaries and testimonies, and concludes: "If there is a line between fact and fiction, it may by necessity be a winding border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other."[4]

In *The Makioka Sisters* it might seem that the border is exceptionally fluid but Tanizaki used the Great Hanshin flood for multiple purposes quite apart from the obvious one of verisimilitude; for his novel is, above all, a realistic work that creates an unforgettable world, but a world that the author knew was already lost to the past as he was engaged in the act of writing it. The scholar Katō Shūichi (1919-2008) famously described the work as "Tanizaki's *A la recherché du temps perdu*."[5] This brilliant creation of the lives of the four Makioka sisters and their upper middle class milieu in the traditional Hanshin region has been justly applauded by readers and critics since the publication of the complete novel in 1948; it is the recreation of the particular *temps perdu* of prewar Japan, the lost past that has captured the imagination of readers.[6]

The critic Asami Fukashi (1899–1973) wrote that the work "was an elegy for the upper middle class of the Osaka/Kobe region now lost forever."[7] Reinventing a vanished world has traditionally been the task of the artist, as the editors of the 2012 volume *Panic and Mourning* note. As Ansgar Nünning points out, expanding Nelson Goodman's notion of "ways of worldmaking":

> Literature can couple coherent representations of the world, of objects, moral messages, and human agency with a self-conscious reflection of ways of world-making. Through this paradoxical structure it exposes the normativity of the construed world and engages in an open process of negotiation of our own strategies of worldmaking. (Nünning and Nünning 2010: 7)
>
> Hence, literature seems particularly suited to offering a forum for negotiating panic and mourning which, especially in the face of tragedy or trauma, seem to disrupt, destroy or even defy common-sense and continuity. Consequentially, within the literary "paradoxical structure" as a space for negotiating panic and mourning, the capacity to narrate—telling, writing, shaping stories—is of primal concern.[8]

As we will see, *The Makioka Sisters* does in some sense negotiate mourning but the mourning is directed at an entire class, and this remembrance (staged, as it were, in the real time of the novel) is part of an elaborate structure of ritual and memory intermingled to make up a portrait of one family, which can stand for that milieu that vanishes before the reader's eyes, as the almost invisible timeframe of the novel is constructed against the background of Japan's descent into war—barely mentioned in the narrative—the trigger for the dissolution of prewar society and the upper middle class that dominated it. In this respect, it should be emphasized that the era in which the novel is set is synchronous with the incursion of Japanese forces onto the Asian continent, the so-called "China Incident" (for "incident" read "war"), the name by which the government sought to disguise the Japanese invasion of China. But these events rarely impinge on the lives of the Makioka sisters, which is why the war hardly rates a mention in the novel. Anthony Chambers remarks that the novel "is not 'an escape from reality'" [as argued by the critic Nakamura Shin'ichirō] but, in the context of the early 1940s, a subversive reminder of the non-military roots of Japanese culture, a lament for the decline of the Osaka merchant's way of life, and a sort of 'secret history' of Japan from 1936 to 1941."[9] Ken Ito has a slightly different viewpoint: "By contrasting the sisters' youthfulness, their momentary immunity from time, against the insistent pace of history, Tanizaki foreshadows the tragic and inevitable loss. The characters repeatedly allude to the events of their day: [...] the China Incident, the bombing of London. The accelerating currents of time around them are already beginning to disperse the small eddy where the sisters live."[10] It is important to recognize however that these reminders of history are but allusions (in Ito's words): only if the reader actively and painstakingly searches for history outside the small world of the Makioka family will it be found.

6.2. Tanizaki and the Great Hanshin Flood

The telling, the shaping of stories is Tanizaki's trademark as a novelist—known as a fabulist through his fantastic reinventions of a decidedly grotesque and erotic past as in his celebrated stories *Shisei* (The Tattooer, 1910); *Shunkinshō* (A Portrait of Shunkin, 1933) and *Bushūkō hiwa* (The Secret History of the Lord of Musashi, 1935), to name only a few—but he was also occasionally a writer of fiction that arose directly from his own experience, although this practice was more honored in the breach than in the observance. Perhaps the most personal of all his fictions is *The Makioka Sisters*. In this novel the Great Hanshin Flood of 1938 not only resonates with the truth of history but also serves as a touchstone in the thematic development of the plot. The best account of the flood and Tanizaki's relationship to it is found in Koyano Atsushi's 2006 biography of Tanizaki:

> On 5 July 1938, the Kansai region was assailed by a massive storm. Wading through muddy water, Tanizaki went with a maid called Omitsu to help Morita Nobuko who was isolated in the Nezu residence in Uozaki when the Sumiyoshi river overflowed its banks. This later became the scene in the novel where the photographer Itakura rescued Taeko. In reality, the flood was not as terrible as described in the novel. On 6 July Tanizaki toured the sites of flood damage with Mr. Kamogawa and viewed the damage to the Kōnan primary school and the Tanaka Chiyo sewing school that Nobuko attended. He wrote this section of the novel using the primary school students' compositions as a source. In a registered letter to Morita Shigeko on 7 July, Tanizaki detailed the damage done to a friend's home.[11]

Koyano rebuts the scholar Anthony Chamber's view that Tanizaki did not personally experience the flood.[12] Before investigating these issues further we need to confirm Tanizaki's relationship with the Nezu/Morita sisters (not fictional) and the Makioka sisters (fictional). Tanizaki's third wife was Nezu Matsuko (nee Morita) who had three sisters. The sisters were, in order of age, (oldest first): Asako, Matsuko, Shigeko, and Nobuko. It has been known for many years that the daughters in the Makioka family, Tsuruko, Sachiko, Yukiko, and Taeko correspond to the four daughters in the Morita family. Simply put, the four sisters' lives from 1936 to 1941, their activities in all their quotidian minutiae, which center around the search for a husband for the thirty-year-old Yukiko (in 1936), make up the plot of this long novel. Chambers records in his book length study of Tanizaki that Tanizaki's wife Matsuko wrote that "almost everything we did during that period turns up in *The Makioka Sisters*," although events are subtly transposed and altered, presumably to disguise the autobiographical nature of the fiction.[13]

An important source of information concerning these events and the novel is Matsuko's oral reminiscences recorded by Inazawa Hideo in 1982–3. Matsuko says of the flood:

> Regarding the Great Hanshin Flood of 1938, in *The Makioka Sisters* it is written that we lived in Ashiya but in reality, we lived in the village of Sumiyoshi, Tan Takabayashi. The flood did not threaten our household. In respect of the episode concerning the landslide, we heard about this from Emiko [her daughter]'s teacher, and even today a massive rock remains at Kōnan primary school. The wife of someone who worked at the C. Itō trading company met a terrible end in the flood and her body was so damaged that could they identify her only because of her ring. Tanizaki had a sixth sense about danger, he was very sensitive to such events, so he stopped Emiko from going to Kōnan primary school. In the novel Teinosuke goes to pick up Etsuko but in reality, this did not happen.[14]

Tanizaki began working on the novel in 1939 (basing much of the narrative on notebooks compiled earlier), commencing the actual writing of the work in 1943, and after being forced to suspend publication by the censors (although he continued in private to write), finished it in 1948.[15] In an essay published that same year Tanizaki commented on its composition:

> In relation to the influence of the war, what I wrote in this novel was connected to the gradual internal decline in Japan—the way in which the age was derailed—and so I kept a record chronicling these events month by month and year by year. I forced myself to note down the correspondences in the plot until the end. For example, talking about taking taxi cabs, were cabs available at that time, and if they were, what was the fare? [...]
>
> [...] When writing about the windstorm and flood damage in the Kansai region, my account of the timing of the actual flood is not accurate. I heard that some people misunderstood that the section I wrote on the flood was my own personal experience of it, but I was in a completely safe place. And, in actuality, I was not frightened in the least. I used my observations after venturing out two or three hours after the flood and also read compositions about the flood damage written by students from a nearby school as sources for my account.[16]

Tanizaki confirms that he was in the Kansai area (meaning the Hanshin region plus the city of Kyoto—it appears likely that Tanizaki experienced the flood in his Kobe residence) at the time of the flood but makes transparent the embellished nature of his description of the tragedy as it unfolds in his narrative. That there is a strong connection with reality is obvious in the author's descriptions of the flood, which we will examine presently. Chambers quotes the author Shiba Ryōtarō (1923–96) to the effect that the description was so verbose that the author could not have witnessed it.[17] Shiba's argument is, presumably, that recollection of actual experience is usually fragmentary, especially when the memories are traumatic. Quite apart from the evidence above of Tanizaki himself affirming his presence there, as the earlier quotation from Ansgar Nünning emphasizes, the paradoxical structure of world making, the invention of worlds on paper, exposes the normativity of the construed world. In other words, Tanizaki's description of the flood is so compelling and real precisely because it is, in some sense, constructed,

despite the fact that the author was on the ground, (albeit in a safe place) so to speak, when the event happened.

The author Nomura Shōgo (1912–75) reported that Tanizaki's brother-in-law Kamogawa Shin'ichi, with whom Tanizaki surveyed the damage wrought by the flood the day following the event, noted that it was just dumb luck that preserved the Tanizaki residence from the effects of the flood because the Ashiya river was fortuitously prevented from overflowing onto Tanizaki's house by a boulder that blocked the flow.[18] Concerning Tanizaki's use of the primary school students' compositions, we recall James E. Young's words that the division between fact and fiction may act as a winding border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other: the author's personal experience did not suffice, he needed more detailed eye-witness accounts to construct his narrative.

The critic Mori Mayumi (b. 1954) writes that in the novel Tanizaki mentions in connection with the flood a home guard vigilante group being active in the area and, that not long after, Sachiko's German neighbours returned home to Germany. These two events hint at the wartime background to what is happening in the novel—1938 was, after all, a pivotal year in the formation of what later came to be known as World War II—but the chronological connections are so seamlessly interwoven into the story that when Mori first read the novel as a junior high school student she "was not conscious of the fact that it was a work set in wartime."[19] Here history is not effaced, rather it is hidden: available to readers who read as Tanizaki may have written the novel: as both a commentary on real history and the telling of an unknown, invented history that lingers long after the real history fades away.

6.3. The Great Hanshin Flood and *The Makioka Sisters*

The purposes that the Great Hanshin Flood serve in the novel are manifold: to delineate character in a deeper and more nuanced way than before; to use the disaster of the flood, the crisis that it creates in the lives of citizens living in the Kansai region as a subtle echo of the larger crises that are befalling the citizens of Japan as the country engages even more fiercely in the fighting in China; to precipitate a crisis in the affairs of the Makioka family whereby the urgency of Yukiko's betrothal to an as yet unknown suitor becomes all the more pressing; and to develop another dimension of the youngest sister Taeko's character, and her sisters' understanding of her nature. Tanizaki himself in an interview in 1949 commented that the scenes recounting the flood and also the typhoon were a reflection of the seasons; in other words, a representation of the natural cycle of storms and typhoons that bedevils Japan.[20]

First and foremost, the flood is a reminder of the inherent violence of raw Nature, and the transience of life itself in the face of an obdurate and uncaring environment. The vulnerability of humans to the depredations of nature and their helplessness in the face of the fury of the natural world also reflects the inherent instability of the social order. The world of prewar Osaka, too, appeared stable and assured insofar as the Makioka family perceived their social milieu and their place in it. Their daily life placed a premium on appearance and the ritual of the seasons. This is crucial to an understanding of the novel and its continuing attraction to readers. In an important study, the critic Noguchi Takehiko made the following observations on the Makioka sisters on their annual trek to Kyoto to view the cherry blossoms:

> What is it that moves these women to return each year to see the cherries in full bloom? On a dimension beyond language or logic, there is something in the flowers that speaks to one's existential self. [...] When Sachiko, upon reaching a certain age, confesses that she is just beginning to appreciate "the ordinary and commonplaceness of the many hundreds of poems that have been composed about cherry blossoms since the days of the poetry anthology, *Kokinshū*," she is trying to say that she now realizes that what is "ordinary and commonplace" is the name given to the sense of self-identity that is the very center of our being and lets us be at peace with ourselves. For unless human beings are able to assume that there is something permanent and unchanging, they could not survive the knowledge that each minute they are eroded by time.[21]

As Noguchi intimates, this is the central theme of the novel—the ever-increasing struggle of the Makioka family to preserve an unchanging identity amid the ongoing vicissitudes of time. The erosion of time, the fragility of the human order, of the very milieu in which the Makioka family is deeply interwoven, and that Tanizaki memorializes in his greatest work of fiction is most graphically revealed in the flood as it unfolds in Edward Seidensticker's acclaimed translation:

> It was the morning of July 5, just a month after the dance recital.
>
> Even for the rainy season, there had been more rain than usual. It rained all through June and on into July, when the rainy season should have been over. From the third through the fourth it rained, and on the morning of the fifth the slow rain turned into a downpour. Even so, no one foresaw that but two hours would bring the most disastrous flood in the history of the Kobe-Osaka district. At about seven, Etsuko, bundled against the rain, but not especially worried, started out as usual with O-haru. Her school was some three or four hundred yards south of the National Highway, not far from the west bank of the Ashiya River. O-haru, who usually came back after seeing the child across the highway, felt that in such a storm she must go as far as the school. She was not back at the house until eight-thirty. Her interest aroused by the flood warnings the youths of the Home Defense Corps were spreading, she made a detour along the embankment, and she reported that the water was frightening around Narihira Bridge, almost as high as the bridge already. Still no one suspected the danger. "Do you think you should go out in this rain?" said Sachiko when some ten or twenty minutes after O-haru's

> return Taeko put on a green oiled-silk raincoat and overshoes and started to go out, but Taeko, off this morning not to her studio but to the sewing school, only laughed and said that a small flood might be interesting. Sachiko did not try to stop her. Only Teinosuke decided to wait until the rain had let up a little. He was killing time over some papers in his study when he heard the siren.[22]

There is an allusion to the war in the mention of the Home Defence Corps, but, as noted previously, the war in China is alluded to only indirectly in passages such as this—there is no direct reference, nor is the flood connected to the war. In this passage, Tanizaki builds the suspense slowly and chronicles the devastating consequences of the flood through the experience of the Makioka family. In the above passage, we see the first encounter of Sachiko, her husband Teinosuke, sister Taeko and her daughter Etsuko (accompanied by their maid Oharu) with the flood; gradually they come to realize the enormity of the disaster:

> It usually took no more than a half hour for Teinosuke to go to and from the school. Today it had taken upwards of an hour. By the time he returned, information about the Sumiyoshi flood was fairly detailed, if somewhat confusing: the district west of Tanaka had become one great, swirling river: the sewing school was in the worst of the flood: south of the National Highway, the Kōnan Market and the golf course had literally become an arm of the sea; people and animals were dead and injured by the score, houses were collapsing. The news Sachiko had gathered, in short, was all bad.[23]

Soon, the flood takes on epic proportions:

> This was a region of fields, pine groves, and brooks, dotted by old farm houses and the red roofs of foreign-style houses on land sloping gently from Mt. Rokkō to Osaka Bay—Teinosuke was fond of saying that even for this bright, dry Osaka-Kobe region, it was bright and dry and good for walking. Now it had become a torrent that made one think of the Yang-tze or the Yellow River in flood. Even for a flood it was extraordinary: great waves rolled from Mt. Rokkō one after another, breaking and roaring and sending up sheets of foam, as if in an enormous cauldron. It seemed less a river than a black boiling sea, with the mid-summer surf at the most violent. The railroad stretched ahead like a pier out into the sea, in some places almost under water, in others a twisted ladder of rails and ties, the land beneath having been torn away. He noticed a pair of little crabs scuttling along at his feet. No doubt they were from one of the brooks, and had fled to the tracks before the rising water.[24]

The climax of the flood occurs when the family discovers Taeko's absence and the photographer Itakura who is in love with Taeko (but an unsuitable partner for her due to his lowly origins) seeks her out and eventually rescues her.

> Like Teinosuke, Itakura approached along the tracks and through the Kōnan Girls' Academy. Since he was some two or three hours earlier than Teinosuke, he still found it possible to make his way beyond. No doubt he was not lying when he said that three times he was swept away and barely escaped drowning, and that he was quite alone in the torrent. It was after he reached the sewing school that the waves

> were at their highest. He finally had to climb to the roof, and while he was staring absently at the flood he noticed that someone was waving insistently from the roof of Mrs. Tamaki's house. It was Kane, the maid. When she knew he had seen her, Kane pointed in the direction of the parlor window and, raising three fingers wrote the name "Taeko" in the air. Itakura plunged into the water again. Half swimming, half sinking, he fought his way to the arbor. It was clear that he had truly risked his life in this last, most perilous bout with the water.[25]

Itakura's selfless rescue of Taeko is ironic as she is slowly revealed as the most fickle and egotistical of the sisters—caring little for the social proprieties that govern their small world. Not long after this incident, we are given an insight into her true feelings for Itakura when she muses, "as long as he kept his distance, she could pretend she noticed nothing [concerning his feelings for her]. Itakura was very useful [...] and she might as well use him, especially since he seemed to think it a privilege to be used. Such in any case was her view of her relations with him."[26]

She is in fact a modern woman, a rebel, in stark contrast to her staid older sisters. As another modern woman born into a world utterly different from prewar Osaka, Mori Mayumi expressed her sympathies for Taeko, and her daring decision to carry on with a man like Itakura who was merely a poor photographer, and thus in the eyes of the Makioka family completely unsuitable for her.[27] But a more conventional view of Taeko's character is held by Noguchi Takehiko who describes her as "a veritable vampire, living off numerous men."[28] While Noguchi claims that "a shadow of evil hangs around her body," he also makes the point that Tanizaki is careful not to overstep the conventions of the domestic novel and her evil "is merely hinted at."[29] I believe this characterization goes too far, as does Noguchi's idealization of Yukiko in his study, where he claims that Tanizaki portrays her as "a princess above the clouds."[30] It is likely that this characterization arises from the view that Yukiko is an idealized embodiment of the "eternal feminine," an ideal pursued by Tanizaki in his writing, as he noted in a letter to his future wife Matsuko in 1932.[31]

Chambers points out that Yukiko's behaviour in rejecting the various marriage proposals made to her, and her strong desire to continue living as an unmarried woman in her sister Sachiko's household can be seen as "spoiled and wilful."[32] The darker aspects of Taeko's character appear in earnest after the flood, and this event seems to act as the catalyst for a revelation of character that grows in importance as a counterplot to the increasingly fraught search for Yukiko's husband. As the problem of Taeko and her hedonistic lifestyle becomes more serious, the decline of the Makioka family becomes ever more apparent when suitors begin to reject Yukiko rather than the other way around. As Chambers notes, "Had there never been a flood, it is unlikely that Tanizaki would have invented one, and to that extent it is true that the flood is there because it happened. More important is that the flood is crucial vehicle for developing the characters of Taeko and Itakura, Teinosuke, Oharu, Sachiko, Okubata, and Mrs. Stolz, and serves as a central metaphor and a

structural turning point on which the entire novel pivots."[33] Ken Ito gives extravagant praise to Tanizaki's description of the flood, it "stand[s] among the finest examples of [its] kind in Japanese prose." [34]

6.4 *The Makioka Sisters* and the Tokyo Typhoon

The typhoon that occurs in the novel in Tokyo plays a much lesser role in the development of the story than does the flood. For Ken Ito however, it performs two important functions: first relating to Sachiko, the chief protagonist of the novel, and from whose perspective the story is mainly narrated: "To Sachiko, Tokyo is a hostile territory lacking the warmth, the sense of connectedness, the presence of a shared culture that she feels everywhere in Kansai [...]. Tanizaki has resorted to his characteristic use of distance to emphasize the desirability of an idealized world. Tokyo's poverty, bleakness, and disorder serve to set off Ashiya's harmonious integration of tradition, modernity and cosmopolitanism [...]."[35] The Tokyo typhoon also permits readers a significant insight into Sachiko's character, argues Ito. Tanizaki's "elegy to a set of class values require that the authority of a certain class go unchallenged," he notes.[36] Sachiko's class prejudices are revealed clearly in her disdain for Tokyo: her experience confirms for her the unsuitability of placing Yukiko in her older sister Tsuruko's household in Shibuya in Tokyo. Sachiko's dislike of Tokyo is made clear in the narrative with passages such as the following:

> But for the rest there was little in Tokyo that pleased her. Magnificent though the Ginza might be, there was something dry and harsh in the air that made her sure she would always be a stranger there. And she especially disliked the drab streets in the outlying districts. As the cab approached Shibuya, she felt somehow chilly even in the summer night. It was as though she had come to a distant, utterly foreign country. She did not know whether she had ever before been in this part of Tokyo. In any case, the streets seemed to her quite unlike those of Kyoto and Osaka and Kobe—they seemed rather like what one would expect in a frontier city farther to the north or even in Manchuria.[37]

The rejection of modernity conveyed in Sachiko's remarks was paralleled in Tanizaki's own life: his rejection of Tokyo after the massive 1923 earthquake; leaving his birthplace to re-establish himself in Osaka-Kobe—the traditional heartland of Japan. The rebuff to the shining, bright metropolis that Tokyo represents (as noted in chapter one, it was a wasteland after the great earthquake of 1923—it took several years before the city was rebuilt) in favor of the old, tradition-bound Kansai region in the west of Japan could also indicate a refusal to face the changing tide of Japanese history. As more and more businesses were relocated to Tokyo away from the old merchant city of Osaka over the first half of the twentieth century—a relocation paralleled in the fortunes

of the Makioka family as Tsuruko the elder sister moves to Tokyo—so the decline of the Kansai region as an economic and political powerhouse became evident. By her preference for Osaka over Tokyo, Sachiko was confirming the decline of those members of the Makioka family remaining in the Kansai (and equally the prewar Osaka elite to which they belonged).

Tanizaki's description of the Tokyo typhoon reflects the horror that such a natural disaster brings to someone away from their home region:

> It was the night of the first of September.
>
> Sachiko and Yukiko had dinner with Tatsuo and Tsuruko, the children having eaten earlier. The talk turned from the Tokyo-Yokohama earthquake—September 1 was the anniversary—to the recent Ashiya flood, and as the matter of Taeko and the young photographer Itakura came up, Sachiko told them in some detail of what had happened. She herself had not been in danger, she said, and she only knew what Taeko had told her. No doubt it was not by way of retribution, but that very night the worst typhoon in over ten years hit Tokyo. For almost the first time in her life Sachiko knew two or three hours of real terror.[38]

The terror that Sachiko experienced is exacerbated by the ramshackle construction of her sister's house in Shibuya—another reminder of the decline in the fortunes of the Makioka family, and this reminder is even more obvious when the children flee to their next door neighbours whose house is built on much sturdier lines:

> The house was just then shaken by a gust of wind which they thought must surely blow it over. The stairs, flimsy as shingles, seemed about to crumple under her feet, while the walls on either side ballooned like sails. Dirt and sand came in through the yawning cracks between the plaster and the pillars. Certain that she was about to be crushed to death, Sachiko threw herself down the stairs, almost knocking Teruo over before her [...]. Sachiko thought that in her fright she had been imagining things, but here downstairs she could see that at each fresh gust of wind the pillars and the plastered walls were indeed separated by cracks two and three inches wide—she wanted to say six inches or a foot, watching by the one flashlight. The cracks opened before the wind and closed in the lulls, and each time they were wider than before. Sachiko remembered how the Osaka house had shaken in the Hachiyama earthquake, but an earthquake is over in a moment. This opening and closing of the walls was quite new to her.
>
> Even Tatsuo, doing his best to remain calm, began to feel uneasy at the billowing walls. Was this the only house that was rocking so, he wondered aloud—the other houses in the neighborhood were more solidly built. The Koizumis' would be standing up well enough, said Teruo. It was a solid, one-storey house. Suppose they go to the Koizumis'? They did not want the house to fall on them [...]. Half an hour later Tatsuo appeared somewhat sheepishly at the Koizumis' back door. The wind was worse than ever; but the walls and pillars of the Koizumi house were so solid that no one thought of the danger. How strange that a better-built house should make such a difference.[39]

Ken Ito observes that the low-cost rental housing that Tsuruko's family inhabits its triggers a wave of revulsion in Sachiko; again, an indicator of her disgust for the apparent poverty of her older sister. This only reinforces her class prejudices in favour of the elegance of her cultured Kansai existence.[40] The next day Sachiko has had enough and decides to return to Osaka with her entourage earlier than had been planned:

> Although there was a clear autumn sky the next morning, the memory of the typhoon was still with Sachiko like a nightmare. Worried about the effect on Etsuko's nerves, she decided that the time for deliberation had passed. She put in an emergency call to Osaka and asked Teinosuke to make reservations at the Hamaya Inn. She would like if possible to move that day, she said, and toward evening she had a call from the Hamaya. Reservations had been made from Osaka, and a room was waiting for her. She set out with Etsuko after a brief farewell to her sister. She would have dinner at the inn, she said, and if Tsuruko did not mind she would like to leave O-haru in Shibuya for three or four more days. She hoped her sister might have time to visit the inn.[41]

Whether the typhoon in the novel was influenced by the Muroto typhoon or not is moot: in all probability we will never know. Japan is a typhoon-prone country and so there is no doubt that Tanizaki had a rich store of experience to draw upon in creating his powerful description of the fear and terror that such an event can arouse in those who experience it. In Matsuko's reminiscences, she remarks about the typhoon that: "In *The Makioka Sisters* the typhoon is set in Shibuya but in reality my older sister lived in Hakusan in Gotenchō, near Koishikawa botanical gardens [...] during the great storm massive cracks appeared in the walls and the pillars in the second story that was attached onto my sister's house. We were all terribly frightened."[42] This quotation confirms that the typhoon was based on an actual event: we can also see that the real-life experience of Matsuko is mirrored quite closely in the novel. This may be an important source of the frightening detail created by Tanizaki in his description of the typhoon and the fear that it evokes. In his account of the typhoon, Tanizaki maintains the focus on the shocks suffered by the two Makioka sisters in Tokyo, thus the typhoon is literally embodied in the traumatic experiences of the two women. Once again James E. Young's words come to mind: "If there is a line between fact and fiction, it may it may by necessity be a winding border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other."

6.5. Concluding Note

The critic Nakamura Shinichirō noted that the differences in the culture and landscape of Tokyo and Osaka were much exaggerated by Tanizaki, which leads Nakamura to the conclusion that the Osaka depicted in the novel is an

ideal, thus the work is less a realistic narrative than a fantasy about an ideal (but fast vanishing) life.[43] This viewpoint has been adopted by many commentators on the novel although there are also not a few proponents of the opinion that the work is, in the words of the critic and novelist Itō Sei (1905–69), "a realistic novel; a social novel of the type rarely written by Japanese novelists." [44] Itō's praise for the novel reproves the long-held criticism of many Japanese commentators on the modern Japanese novel that serious Japanese fiction is essentially inward-looking, focused on the self rather than society.[45] Itō further characterizes the work as "a novel of psychological realism focused on the family."[46]

That equally eminent critics passionately hold apparently contradictory views leads to the conclusion that the realms of fantasy and realism are not as far apart as may appear to be the case. Tanizaki has often been described by critics as a novelist who plays in a complex way with irony and contradiction in his works; the contrasting reactions to Taeko's character, with Mori Mayumi seeing her as a daring portrait of a modern rebel, and Noguchi Takehiko who rails against her immorality illustrate this point perfectly. The latter interpretation relies on Sachiko's hide-bound view of her wayward sister, but the former opinion recognizes Tanizaki's celebration of Taeko's desire to be free. Both interpretations are rooted in the power and persuasiveness of Tanizaki's creations: Sachiko is the much-loved sympathetic lynchpin of the Makioka family, holding it together through troubled times, thus her limited view of Taeko is credible because of the verisimilitude of her character. While a different reader is given licence by Tanizaki's subtle and double-edged prose to form a completely different view of Taeko.

Fantasy realistically described, and in the case of the flood and typhoon discussed here, forensically portrayed, can create an exceptional kind of verisimilitude that persuades the reader of the absolute realism of the narrative, and invites investigation of whether the author did in fact actually experience something like the events described (as much of the scholarship cited above does). Yet the story is much more than an exercise in realistic description, even in some cases of disastrous events, and if Tanizaki does gild the lily in favour of a rosy-hued narrative of an upper middle class Osaka family—and this is questionable given the inexorable sense of decline that pervades the novel—then the conventions of the family or domestic novel clearly played a not insignificant role in persuading the author to tone down his hitherto common practice of writing fiction obsessed with sexual perversity (with his next major novel *Kagi* [The Key, 1956] he was soon to return to his perennial theme of sadomasochistic sexual obsession). In 1961, Tanizaki himself stated that the fear of censorship played a role in the novel's composition: "I had intended to write about the depravity and decadence of the privileged classes in the areas around Ashiya and Shukugawa [in Kobe]. But as the war worsened, the military and other authorities gradually became more exacting, and it became

dangerous to take up such subjects. I thus ended up with no choice but to portray only those sides of life that were not likely to invite their attention."[47]

Yukiko does marry in the end, or so it appears, but the novel ends before her marriage with a typical example of Tanizaki's irony: she is travelling to Tokyo to marry but is assailed on the train by an episode of diarrhoea. This is much discussed by critics as reflecting the continuing anxiety of Yukiko over her marriage or as a tocsin of the age: by the time Tanizaki was writing the last section of the novel, Tokyo was hit by massive bombing raids, and he had to be evacuated from the city. It is notable that no hint of the wartime disaster that was to befall Tokyo occurs in the novel, and thus it may be not inappropriate to read the work as a lyrical evocation of the lost, languorous prewar life of his much-loved wife's family: and, after all, in the novel, they coped with disaster admirably. It may be that in some respects the novel was meant to comfort the Japanese people during the time of the greatest disaster to befall Japan in the twentieth century.

Chapter Seven

7. The Trauma of the Postcolonial Hybrid: Ōshiro Tatsuhiro and Yuta

"The threefold terror of love; a fallen flare
Through the hollow of an ear;
Wings beating about the room;
The terrors of all terrors that I bore
The Heavens in my womb."

From "The Mother of God" by W. B. Yeats[1]

7.1. The Postcolonial Condition and Hybridity

Postcolonialism is a complex, and much contested term. One fact suggests itself immediately: that postcolonial formations—whether cultural, social, political or whatever—remain linked in a complex fashion to the colonial experience. As Ania Loomba writes in her 1998 book *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*: "if the inequities of colonial rule have not been erased, it is perhaps premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism."[2]

Hybridity is an equally controversial and much debated term. Although writing of Europe, Loomba notes that, "liberation, for [victims of colonialism] hinged upon the discovery or rehabilitation of their cultural identity which [...] colonialism had disparaged and wrecked." She cites Stuart Hall as identifying this as a search for a "sort of collective 'one true self' [...] which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common."[3] The same idea was expressed by Franz Fanon (1925–61) earlier, who noted that this is a search "for some very beautiful splendid era whose existence rehabilitates us both in regard to ourselves, and in regard to others."[4] Here we see the basis of a view of hybridity that seeks to locate it in the reconstructed notion of selfhood and nationhood of a colonized people.

Stuart Hall's notion is not simply a romanticised, idealized version of a pre-colonial paradise. As Loomba notes, Hall argues that colonised peoples cannot simply search for a past "which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity." He elaborates that such an ideal "is no mere phantasm either [...]. It has its histories—and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us."[5]

These concerns are especially pertinent to the grand project of the Okinawan writer Ōshiro Tatsuhiro (b.1925) which explores notions of postcoloniality and hybridity in fiction; specifically, investigating the notion of a "pre-Japanese" Okinawan culture in the literary imagination in the present and in the past by a series of stories on cultural phenomena peculiar to Okinawa.[6] This

chapter will be concerned with "yuta", the spirit mediums or female shamans who are ubiquitous in contemporary Okinawa. I will examine Ōshiro's writing dealing with this theme in detail later, but first we need to subject to further scrutiny the notions of postcolonialism and hybridity, and, later, the trauma occasioned by this.

To this point, formulations and interpretations of these concepts have been drawn exclusively from theorists writing on Western colonial practices. Japan's history as a colonial power is well known, and numerous studies in Japanese as well as other languages attest to a long and vigorous debate over the implications of Japan's vast colonial empire for both the colonized and the colonizers. In literary studies as well, much scholarly work has been accomplished by such researchers as Kawamura Minato (writing in Japanese) and Faye Yuan Kleeman (writing in English).[7] Studies of Okinawan colonial and postcolonial literature have also developed rapidly in the postwar era, especially by scholars working in Okinawa like Nakahodo Masanori and Okamoto Keitoku.[8] I will not attempt to summarize this large and impressive body of work here save to note that working authors such as Ōshiro himself have also made a significant contribution to the various debates on the issues, as will soon become evident.

The heat and passion that the notions of colonialism and postcolonialism generate can be judged from an essay entitled "Okinawa to posutokoroniarizumu" (Okinawa and Postcolonialism) written by Nomura Kōya in 2001. Nomura's argument makes some startling assertions:

> Modern Okinawa is a threat to the peoples of Asia, it once bore the burden of numerous massacres in Vietnam, and in that sense, is without doubt an island of fiends. The residents of these demonic islands afterwards were compelled to assist in the slaughter of adults and children alike in Palestine, Iraq and Yugoslavia. Here we have the paradox of the victims of colonialism at the same time being turned into the perpetrators of colonialism.
>
> Then just who was it who forced the Okinawa people into this dilemma? To begin with, why were the Okinawan people forced to bear the burden of the US bases [which caused these calamities]? It was because the Okinawan people are not the Japanese people. The ones behind this, who calmly foisted the contradiction that is the US bases on the Okinawan people, who desire the continuance of this situation, are none other than the Japanese.
>
> If we agree that postcolonialism is "an unending colonialism" then it is the Japanese most of all who should recall these words of Franz Fanon.
>
> In Japan, postcolonialism which does not pose a question for Japanese, is an utterly toxic doctrine. It continues to pose the question of the unending colonialism of the Japanese. If there was research which called itself postcolonial and did not ask this question of the Japanese, then, in reality, it is none other than colonialism wearing a mask of honesty.
>
> Japan does not seek a transformed Okinawa. What the Japanese want is the current situation in Okinawa to prevail forever. The Japanese do not live in Okinawa, they rule over it.[9]

Some of Nomura's hyperbole can perhaps be put down to rhetorical intent, but there is a strong sense of rage at Okinawa's treatment by Japan that drives one or two of the more outrageous assertions found in this essay.

Ōshiro has commented himself on the history of Okinawa as a colonial subject in numerous essays written over the past three decades. Perhaps one of his most pertinent statements can be found in an article he wrote in the *Asahi Jānaru* (Journal) in 1972, the year Okinawa was returned to Japanese sovereignty from American overlordship:

> An antimony was born from the colonial government established by Satsuma. [In the 17th century] Satsuma, while ruling and exploiting the Ryūkyūs as a colony, ordered Okinawans to think of themselves as part of Satsuma. This can be said to be the model of the policy centuries later of forcing Okinawans to think of themselves as Imperial subjects when Okinawa became a colony in the Japanese empire [...]. I am convinced now that, as far as Japan is concerned, Okinawa is a military colony.[10]

Later in the same essay, Ōshiro spelled out the implications of Okinawa's colonial past for literature: "In the prewar period, for the most part the modern literature of Okinawa dealt with the theme of liberating ourselves from Yamato [Japan]. After the war, the pattern was exactly the same except that the US replaced Yamato [...] [Since the 1980s] in our Okinawan literature we have tried to appeal to the world. This is our response to this global information age, to the age of multiculturalism. Can the indigenous culture of Okinawa be made universal?"[11]

7.2. Yuta and Ōshiro Tatsuhiro

The authoritative, multi-volume Shōgakukan *Nihon kokugo daijiten* (Dictionary of Japanese, vol. 13, 2nd edn) defines "yuta" as a word indicating a shaman (kitōshi), usually female, found in Okinawa and Amami-Ōshima. The dictionary cites as a source Yanagita Kunio's study *Miko kō* (On Mantic Females), published between March 1913 and March 1914 in his ethnological journal *Kyōdo kenkyū* (Local studies). In *On Mantic Females*, Yanagita mentions Okinawa on occasion, but points out that the term was widely used from ancient times throughout Japan to mean female shamans, as well as women who perform sacral duties in shrines and a variety of related functions. He also mentions such cognate terms as "ichi", "ichiko", "agata", "itako", "moriko" and so on. Despite their various functions, these words also refer to mediums (some female, some not) and shrine maidens and different kinds of mantic female. We can thus conclude that the term is of quite ancient origin and originally referred not only to shamans in Okinawa but in numerous other regions of Japan.[12] But as the Shōgakukan dictionary entry notes, nowadays the word seems restricted in usage to Okinawa and Amami-Ōshima.[13]

Postwar research on yuta, such as that found in Takasaka Kaoru's 1987 edited volume of essays *Okinawa no saishi—jirei to kadai* (Okinawan Rituals—Case Studies and Problems), presents a variety of perspectives that enrich and deepen Yanagita's earlier study, with the added strength that the focus is exclusively on yuta in Okinawa. Takasaka himself argues that, unlike other more traditional village priestesses, yuta are women without any specialized training in rites who carry on this function because of the gradual disappearance of the older priestly class of women. He cites evidence that the ritualistic language used by yuta is borrowed from the rites intoned by older, more traditional sacral females.[14] Tanigawa Ken'ichi, one of Yanagita's most celebrated and distinguished successors, who established his own school of ethnology, supplies the most important evidence relating to the role yuta play in contemporary Okinawa. Tanigawa is the author of numerous works on Okinawa. His book *Kami ni ōwarete* (Pursued by God, 2000) directly addresses the same issues treated by Ōshiro in the fiction that we will examine here.

Tanigawa's book is divided into four chapters or sections and an introduction. In the introduction titled "Tamashi no kiki" (The Crisis of the Spirit), Tanigawa explains that his book is an account of the "religious experiences" (shūkyō taiken) of various Okinawan women (and a few men) who have become possessed by God. Glossing the word yuta as meaning shaman, he writes that his interest in Okinawan yuta was kindled by the knowledge that these women undergo terrible trials and tribulations, and this is crucial in their development as yuta. The central person in these accounts is Nema Kana, a yuta who lives in Hirashi on Miyako Island, one of the many islands that make up Okinawa. Tanigawa describes the process of becoming a yuta, which is to be possessed by God. Tanigawa compares this experience to the ordeal of Jesus Christ during his forty days in the wilderness. Generally speaking, the women who are possessed do not seek this out; in fact, they see themselves as having been forcibly taken against their will by God. For example, on Ikema island, women resisted this process for several years; thus, until 1996 when Kana's daughter was selected as a "tsukasa" (celebrant) and accepted this burden, no yuta existed to perform the various religious rites normally celebrated by the islanders.[15]

In the introduction, and at the end of the fourth chapter, Tanigawa writes in the first person, so it is clear that readers are meant to assume that he is relating real events. The accounts of the yuta are narrated in the third person, with personal and place names given freely. However, the normal apparatus of the ethnographer or cultural anthropologist, and the practice often adopted by Tanigawa in other books—namely, interview dates, sources, footnotes, citations etc.—are absent. The book reads like a collection of stories.

The incidents in Nema's life bear a remarkable resemblance to many of the incidents and crises suffered by yuta in Ōshiro's fiction. This is not because Ōshiro is acquainted with Nema (this seems altogether too improbable) but

because of the common elements linking yuta together. Thus, we are in a position to conclude that, based on the evidence provided by Tanigawa, Ōshiro's tales are indeed realistic, and very close to the actual life-histories of yuta themselves. In saying this, I am assuming that Nema actually exists and the yuta whose stories are recounted in Tanigawa's volume are equally real. The similarity between Tanigawa's real-life yuta and Ōshiro's fictional yuta also indicates how much research Ōshiro himself may have done in creating his fictional accounts. This is not to argue that fidelity to factuality in itself is a necessary criterion of literary evaluation, but, knowing that Ōshiro's stories possess such factuality enriches and deepens appreciation of his technique, and further enhances readings of the stories.

Ōshiro Tatsuhiro came to prominence on the Japanese mainland in 1967 when he was awarded the Akutagawa Prize for his novella *Kakuteru pātii* (Cocktail Party). However, he had been well-known in Okinawa for a much longer period.[16] During the 1950s Ōshiro was one of the central figures in the development and formation of postwar Okinawan literature, quite apart from the several posts he held in the government (often in positions relating to the preservation of Okinawan culture). Okamoto Keitoku argues that Ōshiro's early fiction often took up autobiographical themes, a dominant strand of prewar and immediate postwar Okinawan fiction, but after the publication of *Cocktail Party* which dealt with Okinawan identity, US occupation and the war—as Michael Molasky notes, the central theme in postwar Okinawan writing until the 1970s—his range as a writer expanded considerably.[17]

Before examining representative works on yuta written by Ōshiro, it is useful to glance at the perspective of an outsider: how do non-Japanese view this very Japanese, properly speaking, Okinawan phenomenon? A classic description of yuta can be found in Carmen Blacker's famous book *The Catalpa Bow*:

> The women [in Okinawa] who possess the capacity for trance, and who are consequently called shamans, are [...] personages known as *yuta*.
>
> The *yuta* evince all the characteristic marks of the shaman. Before her supernatural call to the sacred life, she is afflicted by symptoms of sickness very similar to those of arctic hysteria. Loss of appetite, hallucinations, terrifying dreams, skin trouble, headaches, failing eyesight and periods of dissociation of personality are the usual lot of the incipient *yuta*. Once the supernatural call is made to them, however, and once they accept the new life which is thrust upon them, the symptoms disappear and give way to powers of clairvoyance, clairaudience and possession, all the equipment, in short, to discern the causes of human misfortune when these lie in the spirit world.[18]

Blacker travelled extensively throughout Japan in the course of her research on Japanese ritual and religious practices, and her acclaimed book based on her many years of fieldwork represents the fruit of her labors. It should be

noted that Blacker translates yuta as "shaman" or "sacral women" but for the purposes of this chapter the term will be left untranslated.

In his 1997 volume *Kōgen o motomete* (Seeking Out the Light), Ōshiro explains why he decided to take up the theme of yuta:

> From around the end of the 1970s, I thought I'd like to write about what makes yuta tick. Trying to sketch out how I should interpret the mind of a yuta, I felt that being a yuta was a kind of disease engendered by civilization, and at the same time, a negative model of behaviour arising from this, and also a phenomenon linked to the insecurity that Okinawa experienced after its reversion back to Japan. A psychiatrist told me that there was a very fine line between yuta and schizophrenia, and that the cause of this was the confusion in values produced by the melting pot of the three models of Okinawan culture, Japanese culture and American culture.[19]

Later, writing of the 1980s, Ōshiro noted:

> At this time a new development occurred in the themes of my fiction. It was my attempt to describe the depths of Okinawan history and the Okinawan people. Okinawan culture, originally, was a female culture—at least such a view exists. This may well have influenced me at the subconscious level since I was born and raised in the women's quarters [...] the most important element of [Okinawan] female culture is that preserved by yuta. I began to write a series of novellas on this theme [...]. In *Meiro* (Labyrinth, 1991), I tried to depict Okinawan culture groaning beneath the weight of modern culture and the system of US bases by the symbol of a mixed-blood woman who possessed the mind of a yuta.[20]

Ōshiro maintained a keen interest in traditional Okinawan culture and this emerged as an important theme in his writing from 1960s onwards, especially in relation to the role women play in modern Okinawa in maintaining and passing on traditional cultural practices. His 1968 story "Kamishima" (Divine island), for instance, features a woman called Futenma Yae as the main character (Yae is a *noro*, a village priestess) and the story deals in part with her religious responsibilities during World War II.[21] Similarly, Ōshiro's 1979 novel *Hanabanashiki utage no ato ni* (After the splendid banquet) has another *noro* called Akamine Matsu as its chief protagonist.[22]

Ōshiro himself defines yuta as female shamans who differ from the kinds of female mediums such as noro or itako (found in northern Japan), because they are quite ordinary people who, for the most part, live quite ordinary lives. This information is taken from Ōshiro's own essay on yuta first published in 1991 in the *Nishi Nippon* (West Japan) newspaper.[23] He began by discussing how even intellectuals such as himself may automatically think, when hearing of someone taken ill, of the phrase "ugan busuku" or "not enough prayers." This attitude derives from the belief that illness or other troubles can be helped by prayer. Such a belief is not confined to Okinawa, of course. It may well be that a majority of the peoples of the world would agree with such a sentiment. However, Ōshiro goes on to link this belief with the phenomenon As stated above, yuta differ from other female mediums because they are

quite ordinary people, who live mundane lives. Ōshiro notes how this explains the fact that the numinous is perceived as being a matter of everyday life in Okinawa.

Ōshiro tells the story of when he worked at the Prefectural Museum, he would see women prostrate intoning prayers in front of the stone or porcelain funerary urns. These funerary urns are traditionally quite large and contain bones, not ashes as usual in mainland Japan, and are often made in the form of dwellings. The prayers were improvised, not learnt, and he discovered that after a period of extended mental or spiritual anguish such women could become divinely possessed. This signaled the beginning of the process whereby they would become yuta.

When he was a boy, Ōshiro thought that yuta, like the village priestesses called "noro" found in rural areas, would gradually disappear. But, if anything, he writes, they seem to be on the increase. Over a decade earlier in 1981, Ōshiro had written his first story about yuta called *Mumyō no matsuri* (The Dark Festival). Since writing that tale, he had written many more stories on yuta and had gradually come to feel that yuta performed the role of scapegoats for contemporary Okinawans. The need for this role had increased under the American occupation.[24]

Interestingly, Steve Rabson who translated *Cocktail Party* into English quotes Ōshiro as saying that his 1966 story "Kame-no-kō Baka" (Turtleback tombs) was more deserving of literary acclaim than *Cocktail Party*. *Turtleback Tombs*, also translated into English by Steve Rabson, deals with ancestral graves, a matter closely related to the devotional duties of yuta, and yuta also appear in this story.[25] Hokama Shuzen cited the sub-title of *Turtleback Tombs*, "jikken hōgen o motsu fudoki" (a topography written in an experimental dialect) to argue that with this novel, Ōshiro gave a great boost to postwar Okinawan literature by attempting to develop an Okinawan dialect that could be understood by mainlanders, and thus could serve as a model for future writing in Okinawa. Hokama also draws attention to Ōshiro's radio drama performed in 1952 that was written in "Nāfa Yamatōguchi" (Naha-mainland mixed dialect). This was a pioneering attempt to realize a new approach to indigenous Okinawan culture.[26] Ōshiro himself has spoken of his neologism "Yamato Uchināguchi" (in standard Japanese: Nihon Okinawago or Japanese-Okinawan speech), which represents his own attempt to develop a mode of writing in dialect that clearly reveals its Okinawan origins while still intelligible to mainland Japanese readers. This then becomes, in the hands of contemporary Okinawan authors and speakers, "Uchinā Yamatoguchi", a bastardized form of Okinawan dialect substituting for the real thing.[27]

Why do women feature so prominently in Okinawan culture? The historian Kawahashi Noriko summarizes neatly the nature and significance of the woman's role in Okinawa. The relevant passage will be quoted in full as an

understanding of this issue is crucial to any reading of Ōshiro's fiction treating women in general and yuta in particular.

> One of the most striking characteristics of Okinawan religious culture is its gendered nature, and its allocation of authority to females. The complete domination by women in the rituals of the various Okinawan social institutions, such as household group, kin group, village community, and, formerly, the state, illustrates that women monopolize control of the religious sphere even when that sphere's relevance extends to the whole society. As has been observed by many researchers, non-subordinate roles of women in the religio-cultural life of Okinawa significantly differ from those found in other cultures, where women are traditionally excluded from religious leadership.
>
> Ordinary Okinawan women serve conspicuous religious functions as sisters and daughters on the one hand, and as wives and mothers on the other. Okinawan women, regardless of the official priestesshood, are assigned a culturally recognized role as spiritual guardians. In general, while sisters are traditionally believed to fulfill the role of spiritual protector toward their brothers throughout their lives, married women are assumed to protect their household members as housewife-priestesses of the hearth deity. That is, Okinawan religious culture appears to have chosen a particular modality of sacred beings in which women in general are imbued with extraordinary strength.[28]

It is striking that Kawahashi offers this statement to argue against a 1990 book on Okinawan women by Horiba Kiyoko that puts the case that women are oppressed by men in Okinawa. In support of her thesis Kawahashi cites the anthropologist Henrietta Moore who notes that "When researchers perceive the asymmetrical relations between women and men in other cultures, they assume such assymmetries to be analogous to their own cultural experience of the unequal and hierarchical nature of gender relations in the West."[29] This remark reminds us of the danger of simplistically and uncritically assuming an easy identification of the gendered other in Ōshiro's fiction with any putative equivalent in Western literature, whether textual or theoretical.

7.3. Yuta/Hybridity/Trauma

Ania Loomba notes that "hybridity has become central to postcolonial theory", and we have already seen how it has been taken up by such theorists of postcoloniality as Homi Bhabha, who (in Loomba's words) "suggested that crossovers of various sorts or 'hybridity' and 'ambivalence' more adequately describe the dynamics of the colonial encounter".[30] Bhabha himself writes that the "partializing process of hybridity is best described as a metonymy of presence".[31] He goes on to argue (in his 1994 book *The Location of Culture*) that "This, however, exacts a price, for the existence of two contradictory knowledges (multiple beliefs) splits the ego (or the discourse) into two psychical attitudes, and forms of knowledge, towards the external world. The first of

these takes reality into consideration while the second replaces it with a product of desire."[32] This split in personality and psyche operates not merely on a discursive level; as Bhabha puts it: "The voice of command is interrupted by questions that arise from these heterogeneous sites and circuits of power which, though momentarily 'fixed' in the authoritative alignment of subjects, must continually be represented in the production of terror or fear. The paranoid threat from the hybrid is finally uncontainable because it breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside. In the productivity of power, the boundaries of authority—its reality effects—are always besieged by 'the other scene' of fixations and phantoms."[33] Bhaba's insights are usefully applied to the dilemma of the hybrid as exemplified in the presence/personage of yuta, especially when read against the multiple layers of colonialism or colonial authority that Ōshiro inscribes in his texts dealing with the encounters between yuta and the Okinawan Prefectural government, itself a camouflage for the Japanese government, which in turn has inherited the legacy of the US occupation of Okinawa, in other words, yet another layer of colonial, or more correctly, postcolonial authority.

More specifically, when we read Ōshiro's fictional depictions of yuta and their existential angst in having to mediate between the postcolonial colonial authorities mentioned above, we apprehend a fundamental split in their psyches, for, as the yuta themselves have it, they are women possessed by the divine: their very selves are torn into two, not merely a metaphoric splitting of the self, but, within the context of Ōshiro's fiction, a life or death struggle to survive the weight of numinous possession. The trauma resulting from this struggle is a key feature of the stories Ōshiro wrote on the topic of yuta. Thus, it is possible to read the trauma endemic to divine possession in the specific case of yuta as a response to repression of various kinds.

As Ōshiro wrote in *Seeking Out the Light-Source*, Okinawa's history began a thousand years after that of mainland Japan.[34] This time gap left Okinawan civilization with a number of difficulties. Modernization in Okinawa occurred in a society which had not experienced a medieval period; this was quite different from the case of mainland Japan. The phenomenon of yuta, Ōshiro argues, arises from this very difference.[35] Ōshiro notes that modern civilization has left the Okinawan people with a schizophrenic personality. This is especially the case for people who have lost their identity; they need to create a separate world in which to live, this is how they become yuta.[36] In order to discover why it is that they suffer so, such individuals have an overwhelming urge to seek their identity in their past, in their ancestral heritage. As a consequence, the function of yuta is a direct result of the anguish caused by the loss of identity suffered by modern Okinawans in the course of their recent history. The Okinawan people have been trapped in the triangle of Okinawan, Japanese and American culture.[37]

Repression itself has a long history of documentation within the medical sciences and is often associated with the ideas of Sigmund Freud. The sociologist Joseph E. Davis has summarized the history of this concept thus:

> As a psychoanalytic term, *repression* dates to the studies of hysteria at the end of the nineteenth century. It emerged at the same time as *dissociation*, and the two were originally models in conflict. Both were theorized as defense mechanisms, as psychological processes that provide protection against painful memories and unacceptable wishes (not against experiences per se). But they embodied different conceptions of memory. Repression was Freud's concept, and he came to it indirectly. As has been widely discussed (e.g., Erdelyi 1990; Haaken 1994; Spiegel 1990; Young 1995), Freud (and Breuer) originally held that traumatic experiences are always charged with intense emotions. Normally, reactions to these experiences (for example, crying, acts of revenge) discharge these emotions, but such discharge is not always possible. Under these circumstances, the memories of the trauma remain painful and unmanageable, and the conscious personality suppresses them in self-defense. They enter a "second consciousness," not unlike a hypnotic state, where they are isolated in a separate and autonomous operation gradually lost to access by the conscious personality. However, the pathogenic power of the memories, now secret, produces symptoms of distress. The distress, Freud believed, could be relieved if the memories of the event that provoked it, still largely intact, could be brought back to consciousness (through hypnosis, persuasion, etc.) and accompanying emotional reactions aroused, and if both event and emotions could be put into words, thus finally discharging the emotion (abreaction). In his early "double consciousness" model, then, Freud posited a "vertical" split in consciousness, with the memories of the original trauma preserved, more or less whole, in an alter ego state.[38]

In Ōshiro's descriptions of yuta in the throes of divine possession in his fiction, and the accompanying trauma, we see physical states approximating the "second consciousness," mentioned above. But these descriptions have a social and political context specific to postcolonial Okinawa that enables readers to make connections between individual trauma and the trauma of the body collective. Ban Wang's discussion of trauma in Chinese cinema places the depiction of trauma in a larger social frame:

> We may turn to Walter Benjamin, the theorist of modern shock experience, to restore the large socio-historical context that accounts for trauma as a sign of an impossible history. In his analysis of urban, industrial modernity, Benjamin linked trauma to the history of capitalistic production, described its impact on consciousness and memory, and analysed new forms of visual experience and the arts derived from industrial and urban shocks. In the intensified tempo of industrial and urban modernity, Benjamin detected the shift from the catastrophic event to a new trauma embedded in the new life conditions riddled with constant shocks. Earlier, trauma in Freudian psychoanalysis had tended to focus on the way consciousness parries the impact of a specific traumatic event by providing sensational or horrific fodder for the newspaper headlines, such as shell shock, war, or railroad accidents. Departing from that analysis Benjamin sought to appropriate the "fruitfulness of

> Freud's hypothesis in situations far removed from those which Freud had in mind". Broadly socio-historical and intrinsic to the life-form of the modern world [...].[39]

By reading trauma in this way, Ban Wang permits consideration of the larger socio-political issues that Ōshiro takes pains to delineate in his writing on yuta. Wang further elaborates on this point in a way relevant for readers of Ōshiro's fiction:

> By locating trauma as an isolated image detached from the broader apprehension of socio-historical forces, trauma studies may mirror an isolating, defensive consciousness. It zeros in on a passive image of mental trauma as something accidently falling out of the blue, without trying to understand why the modern consciousness, in its daily acceptance of pounding shocks, is simply unable to register memory and experience. Constantly on an emergency standby basis to deal with changeable and traumatic environs, the subject has no share in shaping history and taking control of its action. Since social action is no other than the conscious, collective shaping of the lifeworld and ordering of time, the inactive subject succumbs to an invisible hand, whether it is driven by apocalypse, evil, market, or terrorism.[40]

Wang is stressing here that trauma in the context of culture, or in the case of this chapter, as represented in literature, cannot be understood without a focus on the larger social forces that give rise this very same trauma. This is something that Ōshiro Tatsuhiro not only understands well but also gives voice to in his depictions of yuta in his fiction. To examine these issues in more detail, we now turn to Ōshiro's stories on the theme of yuta.

The Dark Festival (originally published in 1981, as noted earlier) is the longest of the four novellas contained in Ōshiro's 1992 volume *Gushō kara no koe* (Voices from The Next World) —all of which depict yuta—and, in some ways, the most complex of the three stories set in present-day Okinawa (although it is not without its faults); consequently it deserves a much more extended treatment than is possible in this chapter. However, as it illuminates many of Ōshiro's themes in a particularly instructive manner, I will refer to it from time to time and so will provide a brief summary of the plot. Chapter one tells of a thirty-nine-year-old widow called Tawada Katsuko—her husband and son have recently died in accidents—who has gone to a remote mountain with an old yuta called Fukumoto Shizu to pray for her ancestors, descendants of the powerful Aji clan. According to Shizu, Katsuko has neglected her religious duties, and the implication is that this may lay behind the tragedies that have befallen her. The two women argue over which graves are those of Katsuko's ancestors. Katsuko has the first of a number of increasingly violent (and at times, erotic) visions, and fears she is becoming a yuta herself. She decides to relocate her ancestor's bones to the site nearby that she has been informed by her vision holds the correct grave.

This leads Katsuko in the next chapter to relocate herself from her home in Kadena to the village of Hamasaki to be near her ancestors. This event triggers a series of political conflicts with an oil company as the villagers adopt Katsuko as their yuta, and in chapter three, the village decides, on Katsuko's advice, to build a magnificent tomb for the Aji on the mountain where, we discover later, an oil plant is to be built. Katsuko herself becomes embroiled in the villagers' lives, and often doubts her visions.[41]

Chapters three and four continue to explore the impact of Katsuko's visions on the villagers and on Katsuko herself. Katsuko's revelations, which lead her into competition with Shizu, become apocalyptic nightmares foretelling the end of the world, or, at least the collapse of the 'tomb' mountain. They also enfold Katsuko in sexual dream-fantasies where she has passionate sex with a god-like man. One remarkable scene in chapter four recounts a vision where Japan is created: "God dipped his staff in the lower world. Whereupon a dark grey color resembling sea or mist formed and created a whirlpool. The staff stretched to infinity. God gently stirred the lower world with his staff, and then lifted it up. Drops fell from the tip of the staff. Katsuko seemed to have known from long ago that this was how the world was formed. As if she has always known it, the drops from the staff finally congealed and one island appeared."[42]

In this passage, Okinawan legend seems to appropriate the Japanese creation myth, as this description is very close to the Japanese myth of origin as recounted in the ancient mythohistorical document, the *Kojiki*. Finally, in the last chapter, Katsuko's erotic fantasies take on material form with the appearance of a handsome young man—one of the leaders of the anti-oil plant movement. And in her visions, he merges with her divine lover, or should that be succubus? Overcome by violent, sexual revelations or hallucinations, and also by the competing voices of her ancestors, Katsuko collapses on the mountain, and readers are left with the following enigmatic ending: "Will she be buried deep beneath the earth? How terrifying! Katsuko pressed her hands tightly against her ears. The drone of the cicadas was suddenly stilled."[43]

In this short description, the many sub-plots contained in the villagers' tales that Katsuko interprets as part of her duties as a yuta have been left out. However, to counterbalance the rather obvious blemish of Ōshiro almost mechanically linking Katsuko's visions to her unassuaged grief and loneliness—joining her inner tormented psyche to the other-world of divine possession—the nightmarish, almost surreal quality of Katsuko's revelations (we are never quite sure which is vision and which is non-vision, and neither is Katsuko) invest the character of Katsuko with great power. Indeed, of all the yuta portrayed in the three contemporary tales, Katsuko is the most impressive in the sheer incoherence and dynamism of her emotional self. She is a woman on the very edge of sanity and Ōshiro has spared none of his considerable rhetorical

or stylistic skill in allowing his language to approach poetry in its extravagant imagery and disjointed rhythms.

I have published elsewhere a study of *Funerary Urn* so will summarize in just a few lines the plot of this work.[44] *Funerary Urn* deals with a woman called Maja Etsuko who is in the process of becoming a yuta, an event triggered by the revelation of her husband's infidelity and the subsequent birth of a son to his mistress. In addition, the Maja household is also under attack by another yuta who demands that Etsuko find the resting place of her husband's ancestors in order to give the spirits of the dead (who are, in one sense, alive) peace. The birth of the divine in Etsuko is the centrepiece of the novella, and the subsequent joining of the material world and the spiritual world in her psyche.[45]

7.4 Postcolonial Hybridity: Matsuyo in the Labyrinth

The Labyrinth is a narrative that specifically focuses on the issue of hybridity and postcoloniality and so it will be subjected to an extended analysis in the pages that follow. *The Labyrinth* was first published in the *Bungakkai* magazine in 1991 but it was reprinted together with *The Dark Festival* and, as noted above, two other stories in *Voices from the Next World* in 1992.[46] The story is as follows: The chief protagonist of the story is a young woman called Matsuyo who is of mixed-blood ancestry but looks exactly like a typical blonde American girl. The irony is that Matsuyo was raised in rural Yomitan by her grandmother and doesn't speak a word of any language other than her native Okinawan dialect. Matsuyo works in the evenings as a hostess in a bar but she is, like Katsuko and Etsuko, possessed by the divine. Matsuyo senses tragic events before they occur—of people about whom she has unhappy premonitions. As she whispers to her bargirl friend Sachi, "that person—his outline is starting to blur.'[47] Matsuyo had her first episode of divine possession (*kamigakari*) when she was seven.

Sachi is in hospital with what appears to be bronchitis, but her condition is steadily growing worse. Matsuyo dislikes the atmosphere at the hospital—she finds the hospital corridors treacherous in their uniformity, describing them as a "labyrinth" (*meiro*) and she is convinced that unless she intercedes with Sachi's ancestors by prayer, she will not recover. As Matsuyo's grandmother told her, "Ugansu (gosenzo) ga miimante (mimamotte) kudasaru yo" (your ancestors protect you).[48] Although Matsuyo's gifts differ somewhat from traditional yuta, she is often asked for advice and her reputation as a yuta is slowly spreading.

Matsuyo grows increasingly concerned for Sachi. In the hospital, there is no "hinukan", (in standard Japanese "hi no kami") the fire god or oven god—a fireplace where Okinawans place votive offerings to their ancestors on the

ashes; this makes it all the more urgent for Matsuyo to find an appropriate spot for her prayers. From the beginning of the novella, Matsuyo's beliefs and the modernity of contemporary Okinawa as symbolized by the uniform, modern corridors of the hospital (which lack a place where traditional Okinawan religion can be practiced) come into conflict.

Matsuyo asks Tamai Akira, a high official at the Prefectural Cultural Affairs office (which Ōshiro once headed), and her boyfriend of two years standing, for help to access the US military base at Kadena where a traditional site of worship is located. In a series of flashbacks, she recalls their first night together after she went to see him because she believed the Emperor of Japan was going to steal music from Okinawa. Explaining her anxieties to Tamai, she remarked that illogical fears come out of nowhere but, if she prays as instructed by god, then they disappear. She added: "I'm not a yuta [...]. Despite the fact that people say I am [...] I just pray to rid myself of these anxieties."[49]

However, in the present, she is stunned by Tamai's refusal to help her gain entry to the base, even after she has repeated her grandmother's words to him, "Yuta banish the punishments that ordinary people endure."[50] Visiting the hospital, Tamai even suggests she give up her advocacy of this issue with hospital staff—choose Christianity or Buddhism instead, he suggests. Not long after this conversation, Matsuyo has a vision of his death which is promptly realized when he is killed by a car directly outside the hospital.

Her difficulties mount. Tamai's successor says she is unlikely to gain permission from the Kadena base authorities as they would be shocked by the sight of a pretty blonde girl—who they would take as American—performing Okinawan religious rituals in a military base. They may well arrest her as a spy, he warns her. Matsuyo begs him, "Inside the wire netting [at the base] the past is waiting", she says, "If I can't pray there, I have this feeling that lots of things will meet their doom".[51] The official's nonplussed reply is similar to Tamai's: if she were performing Christian or Buddhist rites, then, there would be no difficulty. In tears, Matsuyo leaves with Junko, her seamstress friend.

But then she decides that if she wears a black robe like the Buddhist priests, she may be able to gain access to the base and save her friend. So, she asks Junko to make her such a robe. Junko thinks the whole prospect of blonde, female Matsuyo robed in black priestly clothing is quite absurd and muses that she is witnessing a traffic accident between the past and the present, between Okinawa and the USA. However, in the end, she accedes to her friend's wishes as she knows that Matsuyo truly is possessed by the divine and there the novella ends.

This long plot-summary leaves out many of the sub-plots concerning other men, Matsuyo's rivalry with a nurse at the hospital and various recountings of her encounters with the divine in dreams, and in reality. Clearly, however, the tone is not as forbidding as in *The Dark Festival* and *Funerary Urn* and Matsuyo's acceptance of her yuta nature is nowhere near as traumatic

as Katsuko or Etsuko's struggles against their eventual fate. Both Katsuko and Etsuko almost go mad with the pressure of the numinous upon their psyches but, in contrast, Matsuyo after hearing the official's advice about turning to other religions thinks to herself, "when my god fills my head how can the Christian God or the Buddha come into me?"[52] The point of difference between *The Labyrinth* and the other yuta stories in the collection is that Matsuyo is clearly a hybrid figure whose fate is juxtaposed against the two postcolonial presences of the US and the Okinawan/Japanese government.

The first significant positioning of Matsuyo as a yuta in relation to the US occurs when she is 25: The passage reads:

> It happened on a fine day in the autumn in her 25th year. Matsuyo was suffering from a headache and so didn't go to work and was at home when a small gasoline tank fell into the garden from a US plane flying above her head. It was about the size of large refrigerator but the instant it dropped into the garden it looked bigger than a small shack with a corrugated iron roof. Matsuyo saw her grandmother crushed beneath it—struck by a sudden vision. Her grandmother was in the toilet at the time. Then, one morning a month later, without any warning, her grandmother died asleep in her bed.[53]

This passage has an almost comic tone as the humorous touches illustrate—the grandmother in the toilet when the gas tank hits the ground at exactly the same time Matsuyo has her vision—but these incongruities, and the vision which warns of her grandmother's death, are predicated upon a gas tank falling from a US plane. As every Okinawan is aware, US planes form a large part of the makeup of the US bases that inhabit large chunks of various Okinawan locales, including a large area of Okinawa itself (the most populous of the islands that make up the island-chain), and they constantly pass overhead and routinely disturb the peace of the people on the ground. These frequent US flights are one of the many irritants in the US-Okinawan relationship and serve as a reminder of Okinawa's unique and unenvied status as the host for the vast bulk of the US forces stationed in Japan, and for the complexities of the postcolonial US-Okinawa-Japan triangle.

The next important reference to the US comes in connection with Matsuyo's attempts to gain permission to enter the US base at Kadena to worship. The passage reads:

> It took a surprisingly long time for Matsuyo to obtain permission that allowed her to pray inside the wire-netting of the base. In the past she only had to receive permission from the US military authorities but now she had to gain permission from the Defence Agency of the Japanese government [...] after listening to Yona Hanjirō's [the patron of Junko, Matsuyo's seamstress friend] explanation, the Agency official indicated his understanding of the need for a yuta to pray there because of the existence of shell middens or relics. He understood but did not answer straight away because there was no precedent.

> "Since the propellers of the B52s and Phantoms make such a loud drone, will Matsuyo's prayers be able to be heard by God?" asked Yona on the phone to Junko.[54]

Actually, Yona had misunderstood the advice that he received—the issue was not the noise that the B52s made but rather the potential for military secrets, secret information regarding military technology—being stolen. Junko has another concern, which the passage goes on to articulate:

> Junko felt, in contrast to this, that despite the fact that Matsuyo was half American, she was ignorant of things American and so inside the wire netting, she might end up being run over underneath the wheels of the B52s or being blown away by the jet-stream of the fighter planes.[55]

Here again, in Junko's comic imaginings, we see Ōshiro's light touch, with the description of Matsuyo as a helpless victim of the giant B52s. Or is this stark realism? The other significant fact about this passage is that the Japanese military authorities—and also the Okinawan Cultural Affairs Agency in the person of Tamai, Matsuyo's lover—act as agents of the American will, and perhaps, as the passage implies, go beyond the Americans' own intentions in their zeal to act as colonial surrogates.

Ōshiro thus allows us to view Matsuyo as a site of resistance both against the American military occupation in its continuing role as a postwar colonial ruler, which in the passage quoted earlier is represented by the constant US air traffic, and also against mainland and Okinawan officialdom which perpetuates the colonial legacy. At the same time, her own mixed ancestry permits the author to explore these dilemmas and Matsuyo's own trauma in an ironic way—her position confuses Okinawans and Americans alike: who is she? Neither one thing nor the other, and this magnificient ambivalence drives her on and exposes the anxieties and contradictions at the very heart of the postcolonial US-Okinawa-Japan triangle: thus, we find both dimensions, the personal and the social, intersecting in Matsuyo's presence.

As a yuta, Matsuyo represents the ancestral Okinawa belief in a divinity that, despite its affiliation to various local religions on the mainland, is nonetheless firmly rooted in the specific religious history and experience of Okinawa. This is especially noticeable in the role that women play as yuta in the maintenance of those same beliefs. In this sense, the reference to 'modern civilization' as one of the forces that Matsuyo is resisting as a symbol of Okinawan culture, made by Ōshiro in his memoirs, could signify some modern Okinawans, such as those singled out in the passages cited above.

Thus, Matsuyo's role is complex and ambiguous—she does not represent polarized opposites so much as shifting currents within Okinawa's exploration of its post-reversion status. Matsuyo is an appealing, at times comic figure, who in her innocence, essential goodness, and the steadfast nature of her very

Okinawan faith as a yuta, becomes more than mere symbol, and escapes any easy definition of hybridity, both in a positive and negative sense.

The sympathetic and vivid portrayal of her character by Ōshiro alerts us to the power of his art, and to the possibilities inherent in literature. While we may not share Matsuyo's beliefs, nevertheless, the sympathy she evokes makes it possible for readers to enter, if only in their imagination, into the other world of a female shaman—her mantic nature is transformed by the power of language into yet another mirror of the enduring, and still mysterious entity called human nature. And her very contrariness and innocence grants us an insight not only into the specular power of hybridity but also into the enduring power of the numinous as it persists through the presence of yuta in Okinawan culture.

Finally, has sufficient evidence been gathered to support Ōshiro's own statements about his own novella? Does Matsuyo exist as the woman the author would wish her to be? Two further quotations serve to confirm the strength of Matsuyo's convictions and her character. First, the following passage illustrates the vitality of this extraordinary woman whose youth and energy represent a stark contrast to, for example, the character of Etsuko in *The Funerary Urn*:

> They came to Junko's shop. While walking, unawares, Matsuyo took the lead and guided Junko to her business. Junko was entirely passive. Nor did she have any words in reply to Matsuyo's declaration:
>
> "Make me priests' robes. Black robes."
>
> Junko stared into Matsuyo's gray eyes, then Matsuyo added.
>
> "I'm going shave my head. Really, I will. So I will go to prayer dressed in black robes. I *will* cure Sachi's illness, you'll see".[56]

In *The Funerary Urn*, Etsuko feels her head about to split open when confronted by the combined demands of her family and the numinous. Katsuko's visions in *The Dark Festival* eventually appear to actually displace reality as she perceives it. Matsuyo's anxieties, her divinely inspired visions, drive her, as they do Etsuko and Katsuko, to exercise her powers as a yuta. However, Etsuko's ordeal threatens to kill her—readers are not sure whether she can survive the transformation her body is undergoing—and Katsuko's visions drive her to the very borders of insanity. Whereas in *Labyrinth*, written a number of years after the earlier two stories, Matsuyo's contact with the divine simply hardens her determination, her energy, which has the power almost to enslave her cocky friend Junko to her will.

Ōshiro assures us in his final sentences of Matsuyo's almost certain victory over the forces that oppose her:

> The night turned to rain. In the half-darkness outside the window, one after another, reflections from car headlights flashed by, rain pelted down diffracting the gleaming light. No one can guarantee that an accident might not occur. Yet Matsuyo, her head shaved, garbed in black, may well boast nonchalantly that she

> could easily tell—better than before, dressed up like this—whether an accident was about to happen.[57]

In these last sentences, there is a gentle humor that consistently informs the novella from the first page. Not only does this comic element lighten the darkness of the trauma caused by divine possession, but it acts as an ironic counterpoint that allows the narrative voice (which fashions the expectations of the readers—playing the role of the invisible readers' friend) to inject a charming, complex and mysterious distance into the portrait of Matsuyo, which deepens and enhances her personality. She is no mere puppet of the author, the narrator hints, because neither he nor we know exactly what she will do.

Matsuyo is clearly a hybrid construction: on the outside, she is blond, blue-eyed American; on the inside, she is a pure Okinawan, so Okinawan in fact, that she becomes a yuta, a woman of great spiritual power. As noted earlier, Matsuyo's role as someone who is utterly unlike what she appears to be is the source of much gentle humor. However, the humor is entirely affectionate: in no sense does Ōshiro caricature Matsuyo. In her otherworldly innocence and goodness, Ōshiro attempts to convey the complex yet pure spirituality that she symbolizes.

Finally, Matsuyo's hybrid nature and its significance for the story is revealed in various ways by Ōshiro. When visiting Sachi in hospital, Matsuyo continually clashes with a nurse called Nakasone Yoshie, and there are gentle hints that initially, at least, Yoshie's view of Matsuyo is a product of her mixed blood parentage, as the following exchange suggests:

> Matsuyo blurted out [to the nurse], "the bed is placed in the wrong direction, so can't you change it around?" That was the start. The nurse replied that the rules did not allow for it. She was short, and had compact, intelligent-looking features. Her reply had a prissy air about it. Afterwards, Matsuyo reasoned that as she was taller than the nurse, then the nurse must have felt that Matsuyo had got the better of her.
>
> "You listen to me. You go on about rules and regulations, but which is more important: saving the patients' lives or obeying the rules?"
>
> "Whaat [...]?"
>
> The nurse was taken aback, and she was also furious, it appeared that she didn't know how to deal with either emotion.
>
> "This is too much!"
>
> There were eight beds in the ward, all occupied. As one, the patients all turned to Matsuyo and the nurse.
>
> "All the patients who have been here have got well and gone home."
>
> "Can you guarantee that in the future it will be the same?"
>
> Hearing this, conscious of the patients' gaze, the nurse looked aghast.
>
> "Whether nurse or patient, you are the first person ever to have uttered anything like that!"
>
> As she said this, the nurse thrust her thermometer into her pocket and stalked out.
>
> [...]

> In the evening, after Matsuyo had returned home, Nakasone Yoshie, the nurse with compact features, came to take Sachi's temperature, asking,
>
> "Your friend [...] is she a "half"?"
>
> "Uh huh."
>
> Not understanding what the nurse was getting at, Sachi indicated agreement with her brow.
>
> "For a 'half' she's a strange one."
>
> Sachi's eyes glinted with amusement.[58]

In a later scene, the relationship between Matsuyo and the nurse becomes even more fraught. Matsuyo's yuta nature is the issue. Another aspect of hybridity is revealed here since Matsuyo appears as not only caught between two ethnic identities but also trapped between two natures: one human, and one divine.

> Afterwards, Yoshie hesitated. Then, boldly declared:
>
> "They say you're a yuta."
>
> "Mmm"
>
> Matsuyo didn't know how to reply. She didn't like people to come right out and call her a yuta, especially not in an insulting tone of voice. She believed she was different from what most people thought of as yuta. Most people thought yuta were in it for the money. She hadn't wanted to be a yuta, she was simply the recipient of the murmurs and instructions of the gods, in her there is no sin. Isn't she instead a victim?[59]

7.5. Brief Concluding Note

The vulnerability of Matsuyo's position is clearly discerned in this passage. The hybrid nature of a mixed-blood yuta can stand, and in some respects, does stand in Ōshiro's fiction for the hybrid experiences of the Okinawan people. Their culture, as Ōshiro explained in *Seeking Out the Light* cited earlier, is a melting pot of diverse cultural and colonial experiences. The particular postcolonial clash that Matsuyo symbolizes is that between the USA and Okinawa. The fact that Matsuyo finally decides to dress herself in the black robes of a Buddhist priest demonstrates her strength—she adds yet another religious layer to those already existing in her makeup to achieve her end of saving Sachi's life through prayer and ritual. Nothing stops Matsuyo who has been granted the gift of foresight by the gods. In her victory over her opponents, which can be predicted from the narrative dynamic, it may be that Ōshiro is championing that ultimate victory of hybridity itself: the enduring mark of Okinawan culture.

Chapter Eight

8. The Great 2011 East Japan Earthquake and Literature: *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* 2011–2014

> Spatial discontinuity boosting morphological divergence. It's a situation that reminds me of Gide's reflections on the form of the novel at the time he was writing *The Counterfeiters:* granted that the novel is a slice of life, he muses, why should we always slice "in the direction of length", emphasizing the passage of time? Why not slice *in the direction of width*, and of the multiplicity of simultaneous events? Length, plus width: this is how a tree signifies. And you [...] cannot help but wonder: which is the most significant axis, here—the vertical, or the horizontal? Diachronic succession, or synchronic drifting apart? This perceptual uncertainty between time and (mortho) space—this impossibility, in fact, of really "seeing" them both at once—is the sign of a new conception of literary history, in which literature moves forwards and *sideways* at once; often, more sideways than forwards.
>
> From Franco Moretti, *Graphs, Maps, Trees* [1]

The massive earthquake that occurred on the afternoon of 11 March 2011 off the coast of northeast Japan, the subsequent tsunami, and other tragedies resulting from this cataclysmic event (including the meltdown at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant) have been extensively documented in thousands of books and articles published in Japanese, and hundreds of books published in other languages, including English (not to mention the explosion of images from TV, mobile phones, the Internet etc that are still widely available and were viewed by hundreds of millions at the time, both inside and outside Japan).[2] In this chapter, the totality of these multiple disasters will be referred to as the "event".

In 2019, some eight years later, literature on the Great East Japan Earthquake continues to grow, and the amount of material available on the Internet increases day by day. It seems everyone who was in eastern Japan at the time of the earthquake has a story to tell, and many of those affected have put their words into print, either on paper or cyberprint. A vast outpouring of literature (especially poetry) has been produced in Japanese and other languages, much of it freely available in print or on online. In this chapter I can only examine a tiny fraction of this unprecedented explosion of writing, concentrating on those literary works that have received the greatest attention from Japanese readers. The ubiquity of digital communication, comprising tweets, text messages, emails, blogs and webpages, as well as the expansion of modern print technology (namely, ebooks, mobile-phone novels and the like) have made this disaster by far the best documented of all Japanese earthquakes, and, in many ways, for contemporaries the hardest to grasp, as it is an ongoing event,

with continuing revelations about large expanses of land contaminated by radioactivity and the plight of tens of thousands of residents of northeastern Japan who lost their homes and livelihoods as a result of the quake, and ensuing tragedies.[3] First, we will outline the current understanding of the historical event itself.

8.1. The 3.11 Earthquake as History

It is difficult to grasp the facts concerning the massive damage done by the earthquake, tsunami and the aftereffects of the nuclear meltdown on Japan given that the tragedy is ongoing, and still impacts, and will continue to impact, upon the lives of the Japanese people some years after the event. Thus, the following quotations attempt a chronological sequencing of understanding of the event as each quotation comes closer to the present.

First, Takahashi Hirose wrote the following in 2011 soon after the event:

> On 11 March, 2011 at 2:46 PM, 130km off the Ojika Peninsula in Miyagi Prefecture, there occurred a massive earthquake centering on the Pacific Plate. This was the Great Tohoku Earthquake. This earthquake and the ensuing tsunami brought destruction to the entire northeastern coast all the way to the Kanto [Tokyo] area, and became the Great Tohoku Disaster. Moreover, it caused damage so far as to cause a meltdown [...] at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant [...].[4]

The next quotation comes from a year later, 2012, and is taken from the eyewitness accounts of Lucy Birmingham and David McNeill, residents of Japan at the time of the earthquake:

> The explosive force that Mayor Sakurai [Katsunobu, mayor of the coastal city of Minamisoma] and the townspeople felt at 2:46 P.M. had been released by one of Japan's most unstable faults, about 60 miles east of his office and 19 miles beneath the sea. The earth's crust is made up of eight large tectonic plates that have been moving and grinding against each other for millions of years, and the largest—the Pacific Plate—dips under the slab of rock underneath Japan's main island, Honshu. Eventually, the stress of that friction is released, but seldom as violently as on March 11. Scientists would later estimate its force at over one million kilotons of TNT—the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945 released fifteen kilotons. The force of the quake tugged the Pacific coastline 8 feet closer to the United States. Ancient Japanese blamed earthquakes on the angry gods. Even modern inhabitants of one of the planet's most technologically sophisticated societies sometimes wondered if they were not right [...]. A 23-foot tsunami was 40 minutes away. And at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant 15 miles to the south, the power was out, detonating a chain of events that would, in a few days, turn Minamisoma's incipient disaster into an existential crisis [...].[5]
>
> [...] Minamisoma's agony is replicated along the northeast coast, where 19,000 people are dead or missing. The deluge has left behind gaping landscapes reminiscent of the atomic aftermath in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. [...] Only the rusting steel spines of the strongest buildings now stand in many of these coastal towns in Iwate,

> Miyagi, and Fukushima Prefectures. Temporary, two-roomed homes have sprung up in schools, parks, and every available public space, housing the roughly 340,000 people displaced by the disaster. As we write (2012), 22 million tons of rubble is piled up on the outskirts of most coastal towns and cities. Local governments around Japan had refused to remove any of it because of fears of radioactive contamination, though they have slowly started to relent [...]. Soma was one of 300 fishing ports damaged or destroyed, along with 22,000 boats. Thousands of fishermen along the Tohoku coast have confined themselves to harbor because of radiation fears. The total blow to Tohoku's fisheries from the tsunami in a country, and region, synonymous with the sea and its resources, is estimated at ¥1.2 trillion—nearly $15 billion.[6]

The last quotation is taken from one of the most recent accounts of the damage caused by the event in a volume of essays edited by Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt and Barbara Geilhorn, which was published in 2016. The text is taken from the introduction written by the two editors:

> March 11, 2011, was a chilly and profoundly cloudy day in northern Japan (Tohoku) that felt nothing like spring. In the early afternoon, at 14.46, the region was struck by what was later termed the Great East Japan Earthquake, a gigantic 9.0 magnitude quake that could be felt all the way down to southern Kyushu. The temblor unleashed several equally enormous tsunamis, devastating six prefectures, and triggered the second INES level-seven accident in history at Fukushima I, the country's fourth oldest nuclear power plant, which was first commissioned in 1971. Even now, the sheer facts of the March 11 triple disaster are dizzying—soteigai, or "exceeding all expectations," was one of the most frequently repeated adjectives used to describe the quake and tsunami, both of which were classified as occurring once in a thousand years. The quake shoved portions of northeastern Japan by as much as 5.3 meters closer to North America; the seabed near the epicenter shifted around fifty meters horizontally toward the southeast and was elevated by up to ten meters (JAMSTEC 2011). Water, gas, and electricity supplies were knocked out for days if not weeks in the affected areas, and telecommunications were severely disrupted. Even several hundred kilometers from the epicenter, more than 1.2 million books fell off the bookshelves in Tokyo's National Diet Library; the capital's skyscrapers swayed visibly, and with much of the public transportation system paralyzed until the next day, millions had to walk home. Nonetheless, thanks to Japan's strict building standards, most buildings in the disaster area remained standing and the overall damage caused by this largest quake ever recorded in Japanese history was remarkably small [...]. Not so the damage caused by the tsunamis. A 500 km stretch of coastline was destroyed within minutes as the water rose up to 10 km inland, reaching a maximum run-up height of more than forty-three meters at an island off Onagawa Town in Miyagi Prefecture (Sankei Shimbun 2012). The tsunamis engulfed entire towns, dragged houses across rice fields and onto highways, and tossed around cars, trucks, and boats like toys, creating an estimated 20 million tons of debris as approximately 1.2 million buildings were damaged or completely destroyed. Due to an earthquake-induced blackout, the tsunami warning system did not function properly in many coastal areas, and even where it did, the tremendous size and speed of the tsunami were underestimated by many. According to the National Police Agency, the tsunamis left almost 16,000

confirmed dead and, exactly four years later, 2,584 people are still missing. The nuclear dimension of the 3.11 disaster is less easily circumscribed. One year after the meltdowns, Jeff Kingston attempts the following summary:

'The long-term health effects are uncertain, but the costs of the nuclear crisis have been enormous and are mounting. The reckoning includes displacement of some 80,000 residents within the 20 km evacuation zone around the crippled reactors, many of whom will probably never return to their homes, loss of livelihoods suffered by local farmers, fishermen, and various businesses in Fukushima, together with anxiety about radiation and even the stigma of radiation that confronts the people of the prefecture. This stigma follows those who leave to restart lives elsewhere and raises concerns among young people concerning marriage prospects and raising families. In addition, there has been a wider economic fallout as bans on Japanese products were imposed overseas and overall in-bound tourism declined by 25% in 2011'".[7]

These three quotations provide the basic facts and demonstrate that as the event further recedes into memory, the more horrific and widespread the damage seems to be. The accounting is still continuing. A glance at the Japanese *Wikipedia* site in November 2018 reveals the following statistics about the event: the total of dead verified to date is 15, 895; the total missing is 2, 539 and the total of those injured (not dead or missing) is 6, 156. Wikipedia cites police figures for the age breakdown of those in the three prefectures most affected by the disaster who were killed by the event as follows: 63 percent were over the age of 60 years, with the largest single age cohort who perished aged between 70 to 79, making up 23.81 percent of the total who lost their lives. The number of homes either totally or mostly destroyed amounted to 402,704 dwellings at the end of 2018. At the peak of the disaster, over 8 million homes had lost electric power; nearly two million incidences of water service stoppages were reported. In February 2017, there were still 123, 168 persons who had been evacuated from their homes. Nearly 29,000 fishing vessels were damaged by the event, and 319 seaports suffered damage.[8]

Parts of the northeast region of Japan remain uninhabitable and will continue to do so for many years to come. The debate over the advisability of nuclear power for an earthquake prone country like Japan is still a hot issue, and the financial assistance for those displaced or otherwise affected by the earthquake is ongoing and will continue for some time yet. The cost to the economy of supplying LNG or coal or other forms of energy to replace the nuclear power stations that are still closed down (the overwhelming majority, although some are being brought back on line over the course of 2017–18) is immense. The impoverishment suffered by hundreds of thousands of households affected by the event cannot be estimated. Numerous websites in English and Japanese add to the existing documentation in book and article form on the event, and readers can easily access the Internet for the latest information. A number of ebooks on the event in English and Japanese can be downloaded from commercial websites such as Amazon Kindle for free. This

is far more information than is available about any other earthquake, tsunami or equivalent event in Japanese history, although information about previous tragedies is also accelerating online as more and more websites are created in Japan to document past events.

The effect on Tokyo residents (Fukushima is 300 kilometers away from Tokyo) was also profound (I was one of them). The fact that radioactive particles (plutonium, strontium, cesium) from the nuclear meltdown reached Tokyo created an eerie streetscape in the nation's capital with many people swathed in masks, hats and gloves in the darkened streets (electricity was frequently turned off to preserve power) to avoid being contaminated. On the other hand, in my own case, evacuating to Osaka on the instructions of the Australian government soon after, revealed that life there was continuing as normal. Plastic water bottles were on sale in convenience stores—in Tokyo the day after the earthquake, water bottles, canned food, emergency supplies etc had all sold out—no blackouts as in Tokyo; and people seemed unperturbed. Later, questions began to be raised about the safety of the nuclear reactors supplying Osaka with power, and the threat resulting from the event started to hit home even to the residents of Japan's second largest urban megalopolis.

8.2. "Confronting the Great East Japan Earthquake": *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* May 2011

As this event is ongoing, so literary reactions to it are also an ongoing phenomenon. To explore this phenomenon in some detail, I examine selected issues of the famous monthly literary journal *Gendaishi techō* (Contemporary Poetry Handbook) from 2011 to 2014 that printed poetry and prose relating to the event and attempted at times an overview of the event and its impact on literature. In that period alone there were over 40 issues of the journal published that contain hundreds of poems, prose essays and round table discussions: a significant number of these touch upon the event. This output exceeds the vast majority of mass-circulation literary journals published in Japan, and thus presents a detailed picture of the event as literature. In order to keep analysis to a manageable level, I have chosen only a few examples of writing out of a much larger sample. My prime criterion in selecting pieces for scrutiny is how relevant and successful the literary artifact is in conveying the scale and importance of the event, and also the literary excellence of the work. However limited, this restricted investigation of a single but extremely influential journal does permit an appreciation of how the event is expressed, evaluated and perceived over time by contemporary Japanese literature.

The technique mentioned in the quotation from Franco Moretti at the beginning of this chapter talks of slicing in the direction of width, as well as using

a diachronic axis—viewing events over time—to understand how literature manifests itself in history. This technique I imitate explicitly in my study of the 3.11 event by investigating different genres of writing—various forms of prose, as well as poetry—over the time encompassed by the issues of *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* analyzed here. Limiting the analysis to just the first four years after the event, as opposed to a larger period of time, is not arbitrary given the constraints of space and given that as time passes such events grow more remote in memory. This is the especially the case for commercial mass circulation monthlies aimed at a national readership such as *Contemporary Poetry Handbook*, where most readers of the journal are not likely to have experienced the event personally.

On the efficacy of literature to convey the reality of a tragedy such as the event, we may cite the writer Shigematsu Kiyoshi (as quoted by Geilhorn and Iwata-Weickgennant) who points out: "Big Data does not allow us to understand the socio-cultural dimension of disaster. 'If one forgets that 'big' results from the accumulation of "innumerous smalls," it can easily happen that something important is missed in the analysis'. While not denying the usefulness of scientific data collection, Shigematsu insists that the arts in general and literature in particular are indispensible when it comes to analyzing the human experience of disaster: "'Big data' is of no help when it comes to tracing the memories of the dead. It cannot record the voices of the deceased. But isn't that what humans have their imagination for?'"[9]

In 2011, the first concerted attempt in *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* to grasp the gravity of the event for literature was the May issue which had the following heading emblazoned on a bright red cover, "Higashi Nippon daishinsai to mukiau tame ni" (Confronting the Great East Japan Earthquake). The work foregrounded on the cover is the Fukushima-born poet Wagō Ryōichi's (b. 1968) long poem "Shi no tsubute" (Poem Pebbles), published in book form, with the book title the same as the poem, the following month.[10] Wagō's poems were all originally tweets (Twitter is the most popular social media in Japan), and thus the long poem, divided into 11 stanzas, with the twitter dates listed, slowly metamorphoses from straightforward prose into poetry, although the progression is not linear, with prose passages appearing throughout the poem.[11] For instance at the end of stanza 8, Wagō repeats the line "shi o kaku" (I'll write poetry) 7 times in each of the 5 lines of the stanza in response to the question he asks in the previous two lines: "I'm not selling it [his soul to the devil]/ As if [...]. /So, what next?" These two lines are punctuated and therefore can be read as plain colloquial prose in contrast to the plastic/concrete poetry block of verse following them.[12] The block of assertions about writing poetry is followed by a poetic evocation of the seashore of his homeland. The devil is earlier identified as either the event itself or poetry acting in concert with the tragedy to displace the actual event.[13]

The book-length version contains much extra verse and was the first of a number of publications relating to the event that made Wagō one of the most famous, or at least, most widely-read poets in contemporary Japan. He is recognized as the authentic voice of Fukushima, and has established a powerful reputation, especially on radio, as a personality, and reader of his own poetry. Wagō's verse is easy to read (as might be expected from its genesis in tweets) but, Jeffrey Angles suggests, has drawn criticism from other Japanese poets as being too superficial.[14]

If the May 2011 issue of *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* and Twitter created the media phenomenon of Wagō Ryōichi, then the other 29 poets who contributed poems and essays on the event also made a strong impression on readers. Such well-known contemporary poets and authors as Ibu Tōma, (Fukushima resident), Oikawa Toshiya (b. 1975), Kikuchi Yuiko, Kiyotake Kō (b. 1950), Saitō Kōji, Saitō Mitsugu, Suzuki Yumiko, Sudō Yōhei, Tian Yuan (born in China in 1965 but active as a poet writing in Japanese), Fujiwara Naoko, Bunya Jun (b. 1953), Hirata Toshiko (b. 1955), Sasaki Mikirō (b. 1947), Yotsumoto Yasuhiro (b. 1959) and the famous poet and critic Kitagawa Tōru (b. 1935) are among those who contributed to the issue. A number of these poets were born in the northeast of Japan or have ongoing connections to that region and others are veteran authors, whose reputations as writers have been established for some time. All the poetry included in the issue was by poets with connections to the areas directly affected by the earthquake, but the essays were more commonly by veteran poets.

Examining their works reveals a variety of responses to the event. Ibu Tōma's 20 stanza poem "Uchuu o samayou otoko no uta" (The Song of a Man Wandering in the Rain), which is the first poem (a free verse poem like the overwhelming majority of the verse published in the magazine) in the journal, begins in the following way:

> No umbrella
> A man wandering in the rain
>
> Struck by radioactive rain
> No past no future
> Burying his claws in frozen time
>
> From one mountain of rubble to another
> The man wanders alone.[15]

As the first three stanzas of this poem demonstrate, the cinematic image of an irradiated man wandering through the rubble could be read as a word picture taken from the many TV documentaries illustrating the post-tsunami damage in Fukushima. The poem reveals that this refers to a man who comes across a stray dog searching for the remains of his house among the debris. The poem goes on to make several observations about the revenge of nature on an over-

technologized world, making explicit mention of the nuclear reactors in Fukushima. There is a also a prose addendum making the point that the irradiated man cannot wash himself, as advised by the government, because there is no water available.[16] Thus the tone is that of documentary realism, a notion discussed previously in chap. 1.

Saitō Mitsugu's poem "Minami Sōma shi Kodaka no chi kara" (From the Locale of Kodaka, Minami Sōma city) follows directly after. Saitō is a member of *Rekitei*, the venerable free verse poetry coterie, and was at the time of the earthquake, Principal of *Kodaka shōgyō kōkō* (Kodaka Commercial High School), which was located in Minami Sōma city in Fukushima.[17] This city suffered cataclysmic damage and was mentioned earlier as the site of an "existential crisis". Saitō Mitsugu's 5 stanza 28-line poem is similar to "The Song of a Man Wandering in the Rain" in its embrace of documentary realism, but it is even more specific to place and time, listing several nearby villages evacuated due to the event, including Kodaka. Thus, at times, the poem reverts to prose (like much of Wagō's verse), a characteristic of documentary-style poetry. The poem is narrated in objective fashion, describing the earthquake and tsunami that engulfed Minami Sōma. The last line of the first stanza reads: "21-year-old journalist Kumata was swallowed up by the tsunami and did not return". This last phrase could also be translated as "became one of those who disappeared". The first line of the next stanza reads: "Earthquake and. Tsunami and. Radiation exposure."[18]

One intriguing feature of the verse is the reference to the poet Kusano Shinpei, discussed in chap. 4. Kusano had established a retreat for poetry in Kawauchi village, Futaba County in the same region called *Tenzan bunko* (Tenzan Library), which later became a museum dedicated to the poet. Saitō writes in the poem that the evacuation was carried out there as well, in "Kusano Shinpei's Tenzan Library".[19] The listing in the poem of the massive damage done to the region, as well as the catalogue of various types of radioactive exposure (plutonium, cesium particles) is followed by, at the beginning of the third stanza, a return to the personal: "We were exiled from our hometown, exiled from Paradise"; then the narrator appeals to God: "This is humankind's original sin. If you name this the sin of scientific culture/ In this age of the great flood, where is Noah?/Will the earth become a giant ark?" Finally, the poem ends on a note of hope: dawn will come after the long night. [20]

The poem is not solely therefore a work of documentary realism; on the contrary, the poem embraces the numinous and the doctrine of sin and salvation in a hopeful ending, invoking the cosmos, a return to the land of Caanan (mentioned in the poem), a return for those exiled by the fury of nature. The theme of a contract between human beings and nature, also hinted at in the previous poem, is made explicit in Saitō's poem.

Kiyotake Kō's poem "Magunichūdo 9.0" (Magnitude 9) resembles Wagō's verse in that the 8 short 2 or 3 line stanzas of the poem are subdivided into three sections: "Tsunami", "Korogatteiru nowa" (Rolling) and "Dodaiseki no ue ni atta nowa" (On Top of the Cornerstone).[21] The stanzas can be read as three short separate poems, or as three connected poems on the theme of a daughter washed away by the tsunami, with verses referring to the daughter's life as a child, unmarried woman and married woman. The poem title became the title of a volume of free-verse by Kiyotake on the event published later in October 2011. The poet in her prose commentary accompanying the poem notes that she wanted to compose "simple, easily-understood" verse about the event.[22]

Like Kiyotake, Kikuchi Yuiko is also a female poet hailing from the north-eastern region of Japan, and thus was directly affected by the event. Her 32-line 3 stanza poem "Shindo gokyō—Morioka" (Strong 5+ Seismic Intensity—Morioka) is also like the preceding poems a documentary-style description of the event that personalizes the experience of the event. The poem implies that the narrator was in Morioka, and thus the earthquake was not as severe as in Fukushima. Nevertheless, the movement of the earth shocks the narrator, "Then the world was shoved upwards/Screws from the glass door turned and came off".[23] The first stanza ends with: "At that time racing in front of the coastal waterline / Where I was / 'Eternity' and the 'Everyday' were / Graphically severed".[24]

The poem ends with the narrator checking to see if her mother was safe when the building she evacuated to had a gas explosion. Thus, the sense of crisis conveyed by the depiction of the earthquake and tsunami is continually interwoven with the personal. Oikawa Toshiya's poem "Nami ni kami, umi no kirameki no kami ga katatta uta" (A Song Sung by the God of the Waves, the God of the Glittering Sea) stands in stark contrast to the personal verses which constitute the majority of poetry included in this special issue. Oikawa, who was awarded the poetry magazine *Shi to shisō* (Poetry and Thought) 25th new poet's prize in 2017 for a poem on the event, instead recreates the terrible and awesome voices of the gods in his 30-line poem. [25]

The first line is an onomatopoeic representation of the reverberations produced by the earthquake, the next line reads: "Strong god, awesome god, the god of the earthquake has come, /a merciless god, a harsh god, the god of the tsunami has come".[26] The invocation of the gods ends in the gods telling of an unending flow of tears, clearly gesturing towards the loss of life in the tsunami. The poet adds to two lines in the local Fukushima dialect to ground the poem even more deeply in the local waters.[27] In this poem, the presence of Japanese tradition in the form of the divine reaches back to some poems examined in chap. 1 reflecting on the 1923 earthquake with a focus on the numinous.

A number of the essays follow the template mentioned earlier of a description of how the quake affected the poet personally. Sasaki Mikirō, known as a

chronicler of the highways and byways of Tokyo, recounts in his essay titled "Inori to erosu to seimeiryoku to" (Prayer and Eros and the Life-force and) how his books fell down from the shelves of his Tokyo residence, his desperate attempts to save his laptop from falling. He then shifts to describing the danger from radiation, and how Tokyo gradually deteriorated, as fears from contamination in the water supply spread.[28] Thus his account conforms to the eyewitness model of recording the truth as plainly and accurately as possible. His final reflections in the essay center on the problem of "seeing the other", prompted by the poet Terayama Shūji's (1935–83) oft-quoted remark that "those who die are [always] strangers".[29]

The personal accounts continue with the poet Ikawa Hitoshi (b. 1940)'s essay "Kami mo hotoke mo nai" ([There is] no God nor Buddha), which discusses his atheism—"I hate the gods, Christ and the Buddha"—in the face of this terrible disaster.[30] The poet lost his daughter to illness in 2010, and concludes that for people to cope with their losses and continue on, they need to trust in life. Curiously, at the end of his essay, he returns to Buddhism to tell the tale of the Shakamuni Buddha leaving this life and entering Nirvana when the Sala tree showered blossoms on the body of the Buddha and his disciples. Ikawa interprets this as blossoms falling on the survivors of the event: an encouragement to those who survived the earthquake to take heart and to live courageously.[31] The religious wellsprings of the Japanese come to the surface in this essay that boldly declares the author's atheism, mimicking a number of poems where the numinous is given much prominence.

In the Fukushima-born poet and critic Fukasawa Chūkō's (b. 1934) essay "Furusato wa, jishin ni tsunami ni, hōshanō" (My Homeland has been Assailed by an Earthquake, Tsunami and Radioactive Particles), he appeals for writers to "recover the power of language that will transform culture"; a very similar declaration to Hirotsu Kazuo's appeal to authors after the 1923 earthquake, cited in chap. 1. [32] Indeed, Fukasawa mentions the 1923 volume *Earthquake Poetry Collection: On the Disaster* investigated in chap. 1 as a model for a similar volume on the Fukushima disaster. He argues that Paul Claudel's 1923 poem (also investigated in chap. 1) is a better response to some of the "flat lyrical verse" collected in that volume.[33] Fukasawa analyses verse produced in response to the 1995 Kobe earthquake and also in a 1954 anti-nuclear volume that included poems by many of the leading poets of the day, discussing their failures in an attempt to create a superior model for post Fukushima poetry. He often returns to the poetry of Kusano Shinpei (also born in Fukushima), about whom he has written two scholarly volumes (cited in chap. 4) and regards as an exemplar for producing poetry about historical tragedies, with much quotation from his verse.[34]

Hirata Toshiko also discusses the role of poets in the face of tragedy in her essay, "Jishin to shijin" (The Earthquake and Poets) but this is a very personal account where the poet decides it is better to read than write in the immediate

aftermath of the event, which Hirata experienced in Tokyo. She mentions meeting the American scholar and translator Jeffrey Angles in front of the Kinokuniya bookshop, thus introducing an international dimension to her record of that day.[35]

The international dimension is further expanded with the essay of the poet Yotsumoto Yasuhiro, "Hibunsetsu shinsō jigoku no hanran: Doitsu kara higashi Nippon no tsunami o miorosu" (A Rebellion in the Deep Layers of Hell Against Non-Segmentation: Looking over the Tsunami in East Japan From Germany). Yotsumoto has lived in Germany for decades but writes that in contrast to the 1995 Kobe earthquake where he could not recognize the city that the destruction created, the distance between himself and Japan was obliterated by the earthquake. He was "held captive" by the images of the tsunami he viewed on German TV.[36] German interest soon turned to the nuclear meltdown, but the poet remained transfixed by the tsunami: and this led him to reconsider the nature of poetic language, focusing on the notion of "non-segmentation".[37]

The poet and translator Sekiguchi Ryōko's (b. 1970) article "Kore wa gūzen dewa nai" (This is No Coincidence) also adds an international flavor as the poet is based in Paris, and has published works in French as well as Japanese. The title of her article derives specifically from reading a collection of tanka (that was to feature in a joint poetry reading in Paris) by Ishii Tatsuhiko (b.1952), which was written prior to the earthquake but in its apocalyptic tone prefigures the earthquake. This leads into mention of Sekiguchi's own research on an earthquake in Boston in 1918 as a starting point into writing on catastrophe studies: all this happening a few months before the 2011 earthquake.[38] Sekiguchi reflects on these events and states that "We are all living the night before the catastrophe", but this soon changes to the day after the catastrophe, or, as she finally concludes, an "unending catastrophe".[39]

The last article from this special issue that I will discuss is the poet Ogasawara Chōrui's (b. 1977) article "Wake ga wakaranai, ikite iru shi o yomitai" (I Want to Read Incomprehensible Poetry That's Alive). Like Sekiguchi, Ogasawara begins by discussing another poet's work: in this case the young poet Akakura Shōhei, who like Sekiguchi lives outside Japan, in his case, in Iceland (according to Twitter). The article develops into an analysis of Akakura's verse, which Ogasawara discovered in the February and April 2011 issues of *Contemporary Poetry Handbook*. He is seduced by the powerful rhythms of Akakura's verse, although he doesn't understand it. This seduction, his excitement at reading this hitherto unknown poet is what creates art, and presumably, enables Ogasawara to deal with the disaster of the earthquake.[40]

This summary of the May 2011 special edition covers more or less the entire span of poetry and articles collected in this issue, which was devoted almost solely to the earthquake and its aftermath. We can see that the focus is on the immediate response of the various authors to the event: much of the poetry

and prose being produced within days or a week or two after the event. Thus, the emphasis is clearly on a documentary style account of the individual reaction and response, with little attempt to go beyond description. The editors deliberately chose or commissioned works by poets from the northeast region most directly impacted by the event, which permits a powerful range of personal responses, but also testifies to the richness of Japan's literary tradition, strong even in the regions. The poems that touch upon the notions of faith, fate or divine intervention/retribution represent only a small minority of responses. Few authors go so far as Ikawa Hitoshi's unabashed declaration of atheism (as problematic as that is); and only the scholar Fukasawa Chūkō tries to put the literature produced by the event into any literary-historical context. The prose pieces that internationalize the event affirm the cosmopolitan nature of contemporary Japanese literature, with such poets as Sekiguchi Ryōko and Yotsumoto Yasuhiro resident overseas, able to instantly follow the event on TV or the Internet, unlike the German response to the 1923 earthquake that Saitō Mokichi caricatures in chapter one. What happens in the issues of the journal in the months and years that follow? This question I will now address, continuing to utilize Franco Moretti's approach as outlined above.

8.3. *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* June–December 2011

The next (June) issue of the journal in 2011 is devoted to the poetry of the surrealist poet Kitasono Katsue (1902–78).[41] The same issue also has a section entitled "Ōtō, 3.11 Higashi Nippon daishinsai to mukiau tame ni" (Responses: Confronting the Great East Japan Earthquake). This section comprises poetry by 8 writers who include some the most acclaimed poets of the last half-century in Japan: the famous feminist poets Shiraishi Kazuko (b. 1931) and Kōra Rumiko (b. 1932); the equally distinguished poets and critics Takahashi Mutsuo (b. 1937) and Nomura Kiwao (b. 1951) as well as a poem by the translator Jeffrey Angles. Finally, there is a prose essay by the poet and translator Miyata Kōsuke (b.1980).[42]

Shiraishi's long 5-page poem, "Umi, riku, kage" (Sea, Land, Shadow) begins with: "Sea, land, shadow, Iwanuma/The tsunami, the tsunami arrived/Silently arrived/Silently departed/This is Iwanuma"[43]. Iwanuma city was one of the localities inundated by the tsunami. The next stanza focuses on the image of a lone boat shipwrecked on the shore: "It has become a ghost ship with no-one aboard"[44]. Over the next two stanzas, the trope of the boat gradually evolves into the boat ferrying those killed by the tsunami to the land of death. The next two stanzas again stress the overwhelming power of the tsunami, which carries all before it, indifferent to the fates of the victims. Shiraishi next gives voice to a family about to be engulfed by the tsunami, dramatizing the

voices of the mother and child: "The mother embraces the baby/Why why what? /What is that rumbling? Why is the earth sinking? /A tall wave from the sky above comes crashing down."[45]

The imagining of the massive engulfing wave ends in: "With a pop, souls soared from their bodies!".[46] The next two stanzas, which end the poem, describe the devastation of post tsunami Iwanuma; in the ruins of the homes, "I could see souls shining!", writes the poet.[47] The final lines return to the trope of the coming of spring, which had been hinted at earlier in the poem: "Cherry blossoms in the nearby mountains/Began to bloom as if on a whim." "Goodbye", the last stanza begins, "I'll come to see you again". [48] The poet appears to be addressing the souls of the dead, who, at this point, are also represented by the newly blooming cherry blossoms. With these traditional images of the birth of life anew, the long narrative reaches an apotheosis.

This poem differs in several ways from the documentary verse published in the previous issue of the journal. The narrative structure with a number of themes intertwined together; the descriptions of the tragedy dramatized in a number of episodes or various foci and the overarching theme of death and rebirth are all appropriate to a longer meditation on the event. This long meditation becomes, in the hands of one of the greatest poets of her generation, a fine, carefully designed and delivered epicedium to those who perished in the event. By comparison, Wagō Ryōichi's celebrated "Poem-stones", first published in the previous issue of the journal, is much longer and something quite different; an epic but superbly personal recreation in a minute by minute narrative (taken from his Twitter entries) of the unfolding of the tragedy, and its aftermath.

Takahashi Mutsuo's 5 page, 9 stanza poem, "Ima koko ni korera no koto o" (Here And Now We Talk About The Facts of the Event) begins with an evocation, and imitation of T.S. Eliot's (1888–1965) opening to his famous epic 1922 poem *The Waste Land*: "In that land if April is the cruellest month/ Then in this land March is even grimmer/In the depths of the snow-swirled sea, plates collide/Mixing old memories with fresh desire".[49] Compare this with the opining lines of Eliot's celebrated poem, and the intent of the poet is made crystal-clear: "April is the cruellest month, breeding/ Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/ Memory and desire, stirring/ Dull roots with spring rain."[50] As Takahashi would have it, Eliot's epic poem lamenting the immense tragedy for Europe of World War 1 is a useful analogue for the immense tragedy wrought on Japan by the 3.11 event.

The poem then turns away from an explicit mirroring of Eliot to explore the cosmic, world-shattering nature of the event. In the second stanza, Takahashi describes the sudden swelling of the confined dwarf god who becomes a giant demon and then grows to fill the heavens.[51] This trope swells into a vision of not merely each village evacuating, fleeing, but the whole country, nay the whole world made homeless: wandering refugees.

The next 12-line stanza repeats variations on the following two lines: "The rain falls/(Does the rain wash the debris, comfort the dead?)".[52] That is, the line about the rain falling is followed by an explanatory statement, which is mostly posed in the form of a question. The next stanza lists a series of grisly answers to the question of what does nuclear power signify, such as: "[Does it signify] an aborted fetus ripped out of the mother assaulted and made pregnant by the child?".[53] The macabre tone is maintained in the stanza following where a series of blunt declarations about the "rainbow as horrific verdict, not the beautiful rainbow of promise" are made: "All our internal organs stage a revolt/Our brain matter runs hot, boils over and melts/We close the windows, and hang cloth over the glass doors".[54]

This indictment on the foolish adoption of nuclear power is followed in the next stanza by another description of the citizens wearing dark sunglasses and masks to protect themselves against radiation, seeking out "safe" vegetables and water on the Internet, and finally ending up as victims drifting aimlessly without a destination. In the next stanza, the analysis of the victims reveals that their enemy is themselves: they only have themselves to blame for the nuclear catastrophe caused by the event.[55]

The final two stanzas are a powerful critique of the Japanese people permitting through inaction the disaster that occurred (the nuclear meltdown) and also a plea to record the voices of those who are voiceless: the dead, the victims of the tragedy. Takahashi focuses on the role of the recorder, the witness, the chronicler of the tragedy, who is not just the author himself. The last line of this superb poem reads: "Our eyes must not simply scrutinize hope or despair but also the truth"[56]. Takahashi writes in his short prose accompaniment: "Before we were victims, we were perpetrators. Unless we are aware of this, our words will lose all substance, and go in circles"[57].

Nomura Kiwao's poem entitled "Gūkei" (Incident) is built around repetition of the phrase "Hikari ga/keiren shite" (The light/Convulses), occurring several times throughout the 78-line poem. This phrase seems to indicate a flash that casts the narrator into another episode (largely gleaned from TV reportage of the event) from the tragedy or at least to indicate a sudden shift from the previous narrative line. The poem is divided into two parts; the first is concerned with death, beginning with the ancient Egyptian gods and concluding with the story of a beautiful old woman who refuses to tell a TV crew the name of her son (lost in the tsunami) for whom she is searching because, the narrator opines, if she does so, he will never return.[58] The second part is also focused on death, with references to people being carried out to sea (by the tsunami). The narrator states, "I have no words to mourn", and this sense of fragmentation, with the light convulsing ever more frequently appears to imitate the rush to death. The last lines of the poem describe a person who died in the fetal position on the stairs: "Even the sea that took all the lives/Lives unable to speak/He embraced".[59]

In Nomura's accompanying prose notes, he writes: "What is poetry for? Is it for the living? I don't think so. I feel it is for each and every one of those uncountable numbers who died. I don't know. These days I understand less and less."[60] Here is an expression of the bewilderment felt over the death of the tens of thousands of people who perished in the earthquake and tsunami, not an immediate response by someone who experienced the event, but an expression of sustained mourning for the dead, in much the same way as Takahashi's poem.

Kōra Rumiko's poem is narrated from the perspective of the tsunami still recognizing the voice of the innocent girl who was swallowed up in its waves.[61] In that sense the girl achieves a kind of immortality as the last line of the poem confirms: "Even now Her voice is speaking within me".[62] Miyata Kōsuke's essay "Iwaki Nakoso" begins with a clever title, as it refers to a district of Iwaki, but the characters for the place name Nakoso also mean "don't come!". The essay also mentions the poetry of Kusano Shinpei, who hailed from that area, but is a straightforward description of the impact of the tsunami on Iwaki city.[63]

In summation, the verse collected in this edition of the journal in the short period of time that has elapsed since the event displays a more meditative, free form quality compared to the verse published in the immediate aftermath. Philosophical questions about the meaning of life and death are asked and in Takahashi's elaborate, complex poem the responsibility for the meltdown is explicitly addressed. Poets go beyond documentary descriptions to probe deeper beneath the surface and in doing so begin to ask political issues concerning responsibility.

In the July issue of the journal, the theme of the event does not seem to feature at all in the verse collected in the volume, which is devoted to contemporary French poetry and features several discussions and interviews on the topic of contemporary French verse. The poet Saitō Mitsugu as part of a series he is writing on "Shi o ikiru chi" (The Earth where Poetry Lives) contributed a one-page essay on Minami Sōma city, heavily damaged by the tsunami. The focus in his essay is on the radiation released by the meltdown, and the impact it has on local residents, especially the schoolchildren attending Kodaka Commercial High School where he was the Principal.[64]

In the August issue of the journal, the theme of the event is continued in various poems. There is also a continuation of the section entitled "Ōtō, 3.11 Higashi Nippon daishinsai to mukiau tame ni" (Responses: Confronting the Great East Japan Earthquake), which first featured in the July issue, but in this issue, the response is by 15 Chinese authors whose poems and prose essays are translated into Japanese by various hands. Thus it is fair to say that this is the first truly international response to the event by non-Japanese literati recorded in the journal (excepting the poem by the American translator Jeffrey Angles).[65] The first poem in the journal is entitled "Hōtai" (Bandage) by the

famous poet Tsujii Takashi (1927-2013).[66] This long 7 stanza poem appears to be a part of a series that the poet is writing on the theme of death. As the first stanza reveals, this theme appears early:

> The dead must raise their voices in protest
> At that time when the possibility of a requiem for a god-forsaken country may appear
> Perhaps they could not write the score of a melody neither march nor court music
> I am about to die in order to
> Listen to the ominous sound that the invisible antlion and the paulonia leaf makes when it falls[67]

The poem goes on to recount the narrator's experience at the end of World War 2 where "There was nobody around me/So I felt/For the first time I was truly free".[68] By the middle of the second stanza, the scene has shifted to post tsunami Japan: "Like the town after the giant tsunami/It appeared that I was everywhere on my own".[69] The surrealistic dream-like atmosphere of the poem becomes obvious when a bandage appears walking down the street, the narrator muses that he might have remembered this from the novel *Die Auf Zeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (The Notebooks Of Malte Laurids Brigge, 1910) by the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926).[70] The bandages spiral around the faces of men and women alike: a prospect that frightens the narrator. White coats (often an image of dread in contemporary Japan) and suits overtake the narrator who fears he has fallen to Hades. He speculates on the nature of Hades but concludes at the end of the fourth stanza that: "After that day the gods vanished".[71]

More references to hospital rooms and patients appear; then horrific images of misshapen people and by the 6th stanza, apocalyptic images of volcanoes erupting and the ocean turning into a cataract accumulate. The narrator criticizes the lies fed to the Japanese people about nuclear power and singles out the lie of GDP growing ever larger promising to increase happiness. He writes: "Can't we call this a picture-board show: just self-hypnosis?".[72] In the second-last stanza the narrator suggests that the hospital is the gateway to the past or Hades: which direction should he take? In the last stanza he begins with: "Though I didn't want to seek it out/I have come to this hospital to seek out death".[73] But the hospital allows him to unwind the bandages, to rid himself of the drips in his body, and to rid himself of nuclear powered electric generators. At the end, naked, he wonders: where to next? This long narrative poem uses dream states to conjure up the horrors of post tsunami trauma, especially those glimpsed in sinister hospital wards; the intimations of Hades and the apocalypse are powerfully conveyed and leave a lasting impression on the mind of the reader.

The veteran woman poet Shinkawa Kazue (b. 1929) also composed a long poem on the event entitled "Kyastā— 'Eien'" (Newscaster— Eternity) in this

issue of the journal.[74] The first stanza is set in the pre-modern Edo era where the poet locates "eternity". In the long third stanza the first three lines read: "That was something that happened in the Edo era/Now next 'eternity' repaired to/The districts stricken by the Great East Japan Earthquake".[75] Then follows a detailed description of the tragedy of the earthquake and the tsunami. This in turn is followed by an expostulation from eternity concerning the release of plutonium into the atmosphere. Given that plutonium has a half-life of 24,000 years, eternity notes that even he "is put to shame".[76] "Eternity" gives voice to the precious souls affected by the event, especially elderly women. The poet joins in at the last "gazing/at those who have lost their homes, their livelihoods"; and there the poem ends.[77] This gentle poem is a requiem for those who suffered from the event seen from the perspective of "eternity". Another long poem by the poet Kido Juri (b. 1959) entitled "Hyōryūbutsu" (Floating Debris) which focuses on the island of debris from the event that washed out to sea is included in the same issue.[78] This fine narrative poem is also a requiem for those who perished during the event. This poem, like the two discussed previously, also touches upon Japanese myths of origin and notions of the numinous. Thus, it is possible to conclude that as time passes, the poetry on the event becomes more complex and expansive in its themes.

The remaining issues for 2011 retreat in the density of their treatment of the event, with no special sections dealing with the earthquake and tsunami, save for the December issue. For example, the issue for September of that year features only translations of poetry from four Chinese poets: Ye Si (b. 1949), Chen Yuhong (b. 1952), Chen Ke Hua (b. 1961) and Hung Hung (b. 1964) specifically treating the event.[79] The November issue contains a dialogue between the poets Wagō Ryōichi and Fukuma Ken'ichi (also known as a film-maker) on their award-winning poetry collections that deal with the event.[80] There is also a review by Kido Juri of Wagō's celebrated verse collection on the event, *Poem-stones*, this is a continuing series by Kido, which he titles "Kōzui no Ato" (After the Flood).[81] The final issue of that fateful year has a special section titled "Jishin igo no shi no kotoba" (Words After the Earthquake). I should note that it is the normal practice of this journal to publish jumbo December issues looking back over the year. This special section features 7 essays written by the following authors: Wagō Ryōichi, poet and critic Kondō Yōta (b. 1949), poet Yamasaki Kayoko (b. 1956), poet Kawazu Kiyoe (b. 1961), poet Soeda Kaoru (b. 1955), poet Torii Mayumi, Satō Yūichi and finally a round-table dialogue between the poets, Isaka Yohko (b. 1949), Kido Juri and Kishida Masayuki (b. 1979).[82]

The first 5-page essay by Wagō is a very personal reflection on the event and poetry and records his day by day reactions to the event. Wagō rues the impossibility of literature of ever capturing the horrific reality of the loss of so much life and property, and states that his initial reaction was to simply record

everything that he saw and experienced with "no stanzas, no figures of speech".[83] These observations lead him to consider the meaning of life, which is surely more than just bread. He documents his attempts to capture the brutal reality of the quake, spurning comparisons and figurative metaphors, concentrating on the absence of the daily necessities of life caused by the devastation. He discusses his use of Twitter to write his verse and his struggle to use poetic figures (which he decided was after all the heart of poetry) but his failure to achieve this. He reveals how he was moved by the accounts of victims in shelters. The essay ends with the statement that even now Wagō is searching for "poetic figures to speak to the earthquake".[84]

The next essay by Kondō Yōta is an equally personal account documenting his journey to Minami Sōma city in September. He was accompanied by a friend and includes photos of his trip in the essay. Travelling around various villages in the region, the poet documents his interviews with locals and records the levels of radioactivity confirmed by Geiger counter. Kondō notes that he followed Wagō's Twitter poetry at the time of the event, and subsequently purchased the two volumes of poetry that resulted from Wagō's tweets. This inspired him to investigate issues raised by Wagō. We can see here just how big an impact Wagō made on his contemporaries with his tweets and then his poetry volumes. Kondō marvels at the power of Twitter as a new communication medium for poets. The utility of the Internet as a new medium for poetry is one of the conclusions that he reaches as part of his meditation upon "after the quake". Finally, the poet expresses his anger at the nuclear meltdown and nuclear power in general, especially in an earthquake-prone country like Japan.[85]

The essay by Yamasaki begins with the poet undertaking a poetry reading in the south of Serbia. Travelling about the region with friends, she discusses how the mud and straw walls of the village huts resembles that of Japan of old. This leads the poet to muse on the harshness of village life in sparsely populated regions such as this. Yamasaki also examines the basic economy of such regions. She recalls the NATO bombing of the then Yugoslavia in 1999; these thoughts lead her into reviewing the 2011 earthquake, and how the devastation resulting from both events had much in common, but the attitude of the world towards the two events was completely different. She then contemplates the dilemma of what poetry can do; what poetry can be made in the face of such tragedy. Finally, Yamasaki reaffirms that poetry when it is a collective activity, explicitly dialogic, can "beckon from the depths of the soul".[86]

Kawazu Kiyoe's essay also questions the purpose and value of poetry by first examining the ancient Greek terms for "freedom". This leads her into a deeper analysis of the nature of poetry, especially poetry after the quake. Kawazu's discussion is more philosophic than the previous essays and draws less upon her own experience. Her discussion focuses on the metaphor of

"water" in exploring the dimensions of post-earthquake poetic language, although she contrasts the purity of water with water contaminated by radioactive particles. Her summary of post-quake poetry is as follows: "Most poets attempted to compose poetry about the earthquake. Some annotated minute by minute their own fears and despair amid the quake; others documented the facts of the damage that was caused by the quake in an unvarnished fashion; while still others angrily recorded the disasters to date. All of this verse is too much like prose to be called poetry: their words were a necessary venting of their feelings; like leaves from a tree agitated amid the terrible reality [of the quake], they sought to save themselves; one can say that their words were songs of self-salvation."[87]

In Kawazu's analysis we can glimpse a hint of aesthetic criticism of post-quake verse, she implies (very gently, it must be said) that there is too much documentary realism, and not enough art. Later, she summarizes her case in a pithy syllogism: "In the face of the mighty earthquake, metaphor is dead=poetry is dead=powerless: this pessimistic (yet indifferent) argument fills me with misgivings."[88] She argues that the conclusion that poetry is powerless (in the face of tragedies like the event) should be made by readers, not writers; writers have the responsibility to seek out new tropes, new forms of expression to describe an event of this magnitude. Finally, Kawazu contrasts the German philosopher Theodore Adorno's (1903–69) famous dictum that to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric with the verse of the German poet Paul Celan (1920–70) —a survivor of the Nazi massacre of the Jews, who composed much verse seeking out the limits of language—to declare that poetry will shine forth from the deepest darkness.[89]

Soeda Kaoru's long 6-page double column essay (in fact all the essays are double columns) also focuses on political and, to a degree, literary issues rather than the personal. He is seeking to define what an authentic "post-earthquake" literature could be. His view is that it has to directly address the existential crisis provoked by the event. Therefore, he desires that such a body of writing would attempt to define solutions, to act almost as a spiritual atonement for the event. Thus, he praises the Emperor's words of sorrow and compassion that appeared on 16 March 2011, a mere week after the event.[90] He quotes from the poets Isaka Yohko and Yoshimoto Takaaki in his attempt to define a form of language/writing adequate to the event. He is dissatisfied with existing responses save for Wagō's tweets, which he evaluates more highly than Wagō's two subsequent poetry volumes that condensed the tweets into conventional free verse.[91] He argues that article 9 of the Japanese constitution banning war was such a response to the existential crisis caused by the Fifteen Years War; and hopes that similar restrictions be placed on nuclear energy, which would constitute an adequate response to the event. Soeda's essay clearly belongs to that large body of political writing that saw the event as provoking a crisis in Japanese governance, and the democratic process itself.

Torii Mayumi's essay examines the relationship between "you" and "I" or the poet and the reader in the wake of the event. She argues that the relationship is fundamentally broken because of the gap between those who experienced it and those who did not. But Wagō's poetry, like stones thrown against the window (a reference to the title of his post-event book of verse), goes a long way towards restoring that relationship.[92]

All the essays have titles; Satō Yūichi's essay is entitled "Shinsai to shi to rizumu" (The Earthquake and Poetry and Rhythm), and thus can be seen to be the essay most concerned with literary analysis. It is also the longest, some 10 pages in length. Satō notes that the fundamental difference between war poetry and poetry written as the result of the earthquake lies in the difference between the two phenomena: the former is caused by the actions of humans, but the latter is a product of nature. He also observes that the first great flowering of literature produced in response to the event was poetry.[93] Post-event poetry (dealing with the event) differs significantly from poetry prior to the event. It has a shamanistic quality, a primitive quality that avoids the everyday—a consistent theme of pre-event poetry.

Next Satō summarizes various of the reactions to post-event poetry. Some say poetry before the event was just the same old exchanges between closed poetry circles, now it has a wider audience, and has provoked a reaction from the mass media. More critical voices argue: post-event poetry is just therapy, just a consumer commodity; rather than this kind of naïve therapeutic exercise, poetry should strive to create authentic art. Poetry that depicts the survivors as sad, pitiful people (whether written by themselves or others) and uses this as a basis for evaluation is insincere and decadent. This kind of verse uses the event to make money. An environment that does not permit criticism of tragic poetry returns us to the wartime atmosphere of repression. Other voices maintain that the earthquake put an end to the characteristic postwar suspicion of that kind of verse, put an end to postmodern dichotomies. Others say reacting negatively to verse critical of the nuclear power generating companies (a traditional target of the left) is itself a form of hysteria. To portray the Japanese people as mere victims, to see them as having no responsibility for the event is to repeat the postwar amnesia about the causes of the war.[94]

Satō proposes to put these issues into context by examining the post-event poetry of three well-known poets: the haiku poet Hasegawa Kai (b. 1954), the poet and critic Fujii Sadakazu (b. 1942) and Wagō. Hasegawa is a haiku poet but produced a volume of tanka poetry on the event entitled *Shinsai kashū* (Earthquake Tanka, 2011). The first edition of this book appeared in April, only a few weeks after the event.[95] Hasegawa has stated that this will be his last volume of tanka and henceforth he will return to haiku. Satō interprets this statement as an indication of how Hasegawa's verse is "correct".[96] That is, he criticizes the nuclear power companies in his tanka and also cites the wife of one of the firemen (universally praised as heroes in Japan) who risked their

lives to cool down the nuclear reactor after the meltdown. Certainly the introduction to the volume touches upon politics, raising questions about the role of Japanese politics in creating the energy supply system that led to the event.[97] The book itself is divided into 9 sections, and section two, for example, containing poems treating the meltdown, is explicitly critical of the Tokyo Electric Power Company. Other sections such as section six reach back into Japanese mythohistory by quoting the *Kojiki* (Records of Ancient Matters, 8th century) to seek out tropes that will suffice to convey the massive devastation resulting from the event.[98] It may be useful to see the volume as written in the white heat of anger and sorrow of the immediate aftermath of the event, thus combining documentary realism depicting the massive death toll with powerful strictures lashing the irresponsibility that led the nation into the tragedy.

Satō describes Fujii Sadakazu's book, entitled *Azuma uta hen—Koto naru koe dokugin senku* (Poems from The East—A Thousand Lines Solo in a Different Voice, 2011), as a long renga sequence—a renga is a linked verse composition, often involving more than one poet—based on tanka. Thus, Fujii's poems follow the basic meter of tanka: 5/7/5 then 7/7 then 5/7/5, and so on, although like many modern tanka, this rhythmical pattern is followed only loosely. Some broken lines from this sequence read as follows: "Kan Naoto [Prime Minister at the time of the event] Get on with it crisis management [...]. Radioactive plumes heading towards Tokyo. If you want to flee to the Kansai region, go take my grandchildren with you."[99] Satō characterizes the sequence as "raw documentary, opinions, prayers, straight expressions of sadness [...]". Satō declares that you must read every one of the 1000 lines to fully grasp the grand nature of this long, impressive poem.[100] This tour-de-force, in Satō's words, cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of how Fujii remakes the tanka form into a kind of bestial and, at times, gentle howl that works perfectly to capture the chaos and tragedy of the event. We should note here that Fujii is famous as a free verse (shi) poet, not as a tanka poet. Satō cites two other contemporary (free verse) poets, Inagawa Masato (b. 1949) and Yoshimasu Gōzō (b. 1939) whose comparable verbal gymnastics inspire imitation but concludes that Fujii will have few or no imitators.[101]

Finally, Satō turns his critical eye to the verse of Wagō. Noting that Wagō has become a media sensation, Satō says therefore that opinions will vary greatly on his verse. However, Satō argues that despite criticism of his poetry as naïve, as mere therapy, he is willing to bet on its aesthetic merit.[102] Satō examines several books by Wagō, including poetry volumes published before the event. Satō argues if you divide colloquial free verse into the two categories of popular poetry (that is, easy-to-read verse) and symbolist poetry, then Wagō's verse displays the tendency to condense and dissect the latter at the same time. He also discerns differences in rhythm (a notion incorporating poetic figures) between Wagō's verse before and after the event.[103] He ends with

an affirmation of verse to cope with the event, which is a continuing phenomenon. Satō's elegantly written essay attempts to summarize poetic responses to the event in such a way that permits poetry to flourish rather than be permanently caught up in the issue of its own adequacy or efficacy to communicate the reality of the event in the face of the massive loss of life that resulted from the tragedy.

Some poems in this issue appear to touch upon the event, for example, Koike Masayo's (b. 1959) poem "Niji" (Rainbow) composed in September begins with the two lines: "After the earthquake my father went gaga/After the earthquake my husband left me" but clearly these thoughts are more personal than a requiem for those who perished, and no location is given for the earthquake.[104] Soon after, Suga Keijirō's (b. 1958) poem entitled "Shima no mizu, shima no hi Agend' Ars 2" (Island Water, Island Fire Agend' Ars 2) follows. This poem also gestures to the earthquake with mention of rubble, deserted towns etc but no specific location is given.[105] We may be able to read this as one sign of how these two well-known poets are attempting to distance themselves from the event as poetic topos but nevertheless reveal the impact of the event on their verse. Let us now examine issues from 2012 onwards.

8.4 *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* 2012–14

It may seem logical that as time passes so the act of poetic distancing becomes more prominent. However, this proposition needs to be tested against the evidence contained in the *Contemporary Poetry Handbook*. The first issue for 2012 published in January refers directly to the event in a dialogue, and a few poems relate to it. Themes which are connected to the event but do not refer directly to it appear in some of these poems. The poet Yoshimasu Gōzō conducted a 14-page dialogue with the distinguished ethnographer Akasaka Norio (b. 1953), who has a long-standing interest in the northeast region of Japan, and who was Director of the Fukushima Prefectural Museum. The conversation between the two men entitled "Requiem" (*sic*) is wide-ranging, covering a host of topics including the prospects of nuclear power, the possibilities for poetry in the post-event era, Yoshimasu's recent verse, Akasaka recounting journeys across the ravaged northeast, detailing the extent of the devastation on the infrastructure required for travel, among other topics.[106] The famous ethnographer and poet Orikuchi Shinobu's (1887–1953) name comes up often in their discussion, especially in relation to religious conceptions of earthquake and tsunami as expressed historically through art and literature. Discussion is not limited to Japanese thinkers on how to interpret the event, Nietzsche's writing is referred to now and again. As we can see, the emphasis here is more on understanding the ramifications of the event for society and art rather than simply documenting it.

Poems that are clearly linked to the event through their themes in this issue, without directly referring to it, include the work entitled "Te ni nigitta dōro chizu o hiza ni suberasete" (Letting the Roadmap Slip from My Hands To my Knees) by the venerable poet Hasegawa Ryūsei (b. 1928). This long poem is a list of nuclear power plants and facilities that the narrator finds on a map—as he says: "Somehow lively but a list of loathsome addresses".[107] The poem is an attack on the mass of nuclear facilities located throughout the length and breadth of the Japanese archipelago. Fujii Sadakazu's poem entitled "Memo kara memo e" (Memo after Memo) is a collage poem that consists of a series of quotations from people connected with Fukushima but does not directly address the event.[108] Takahashi Mutsuo's poem or poems entitled "Ano toki kara—genshiryoku jidai no koibitotachi" (From That Time—Lovers in the Age of Nuclear Power) is a brutal attack on nuclear power but without directly referencing the event.[109] The only poem in this issue that directly connects to the event is Wagō's poem, titled "Gōon to seijaku no ato" (After the Thunder and Silence), which is illustrated by photos from Fukushima by the French photographer Thierry Girard (b. 1951).[110] Wagō's verse accompanying the photos consists of short poems, some of which can be read as a sequence, for example he writes below the photo of Yotsukura in Iwaki city "Silence is noisy morning", this is followed by similar brief one-line verses ending in words playing the same role as "morning": "hirune" (midday), "yūgure" (evening), "namida" (tears) and "umi" (sea).[111] The accompanying verses are quite simple, quite straightforward, as they must be to complement the photos. Thus, we find that the ongoing consequences of the event for Japan, namely the reliance on nuclear energy, in this issue at least has become the focus of poetry.

The next issue for 2012 that has significant attention paid to the event is the March issue. The cover declares that this issue has a special segment entitled "Ima koko ni, shi no koe o—Higashi Nippon daishinsai kara ichinen" (Now What has Happened to the Voice of Poetry—One Year after the Great East Japan Earthquake). The special segment consists of poetry by 10 mostly well-known poets (several of whom already have had poems published over the past 12 months on the event) and a dialogue between Fujii Sadakazu and the young poet Satō Yuichi on poetics after the event. The ten poets are: Tsujii Takashi, Yoshimasu Gōzō, Takahashi Mutsuo, Sasaki Mikirō, Inaba Mayumi (1950–2014), Koike Masayo, Itō Hiromi (b. 1955), Wagō Ryōichi, Minashita Kiryū (b. 1970) and Misumi Mizuki (b. 1981).[112] It is noteworthy that the 10 poets are divided equally into 5 men and 5 women. There is also a 13-page special lecture entitled "Mirai kara no kioku" (Memories from the Future) by Sasaki Mikirō, the first entry in the magazine, which is reproduced in its entirety.[113]

Sasaki's lecture delivered in Kobe attempts to link the issue of self to the immense tragedy of the event, and also to the question of how poetry can be composed in the face of such a calamitous event. He describes in some detail

the reactions of the inhabitants of the region to the earthquake and tsunami, taking his word-pictures of the event (and the snatches of conversation he quotes) from video coverage available on various websites.[114] Because of the half-life extending into hundreds of years of the radioactive particles that fell on the region, this tragedy will continue well into the future (thus the title of his speech). Sasaki advocates dialogue with those affected. Citing the philosopher Washida Kiyokazu's (b. 1949) 1999 book *"Kiku" koto no chikara* (The Power of "Listening") written in the aftermath of the Kobe earthquake of 1995, Sasaki argues that this tragedy created a new kind of clinical philosophy focused on actively listening to the other to the point where a special kind of empathy or understanding is possible. Sasaki assembles quotations from the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1905–95), the thinker Kobayashi Hideo (1902–83) and the poet Nakahara Chūya (1907–37) in support.[115] Emphasizing housing needs and the like of the evacuees (many of whom cannot return to their homes because of the irradiated soil), Sasaki discusses the music of the region and the long tradition in Japan of wandering minstrels (as in the blind singers reciting the medieval song-narrative: the *Tale of the Heike*) who give voice to the victims of tragedies such as this, linking this to requiems for the repose of the dead.[116]

Finally, Sasaki returns to Tokyo (in his speech) and examines the fears of Tokyo residents, large numbers of whom fled to the Osaka-Kobe region, and lists the various events held in Tokyo to assist the victims of the tragedy.
He mentions the poetry recitals by himself, Tanikawa Shuntarō and Takahashi Mutsuo—three old men who by reading poetry teach young people not to be afraid of old geezers such as themselves, he jokes—highlighting Tanikawa's famous poem on the event "Tōku e" (Far Away), where Tanikawa's narrator pines for "My heart [to] Take me/Far away [...]. Far beyond despair/Far away".[117] We should note that the Japanese word for heart "kokoro" used in this poem can also be translated as mind. For Sasaki words (meaning in this context poetry and more) will create a bridge between the inexpressible sorrow of the victims and ourselves.

It is interesting to note that the 10 poems under the heading of "Koto no ha 311" (Words 3.11) by the poets mentioned above that follow Sasaki's speech all include a photograph of the poet. After a gentle elegiac poem by Tsujii, Yoshimasu's visual feast of a poem roars into the reader's consciousness. The long 5 page poem is entitled "Shi no soba (côtés) de" (Alongside [côtés] the Poem), and in a note to the work the poet reveals that this is merely an extract from a long 3,000 line poem that will take a year to complete.[118] The poem has references to the Fukushima region where the event occurred and also to radiation and to the Ukraine where Chernobyl (the site of the 1986 nuclear plant meltdown) is located. The title is explained by a line on the third page of the poem "Kaya kubo, kaya kubo, [...] (Bonjour Marilya, Sooky nous a quittée a 15h. Elle n'est pas parti seul. J'étais a ses côtés)". The French line is underscored

by an English translation of the French: "In English: Hello Marilya, Sooky has left us at 3 pm. She did not leave (die) alone I was by her side". The repetition of "Kaya kubo" (the name of a small village in Fukushima) occurs at the beginning of the three preceding lines, which are followed by references to events and sounds in Paris and Japan occurring in January and February 2012.[119] The poem is printed in big letters with lines snaking over the page; replete with Yoshimasu's characteristic multilingual wordplay and punning, as we see in the line directly following the lines quoted above: "Kote tomo, koti, [...] tomo, kikoeru *côtés* sunawachi 's' (su)=mu, oto ni mimi ni sumasu [...]" (*côtés* sounds like a gauntlet, like *koti* [...] namely 's' (nest))=mu, I strain my ears to hear the sounds [...]."[120] This line is incomprehensible unless we interpret it as a play on words: gauntlet is pronounced as "kote" in Japanese, which segues into the word *koti* written in katakana, a variant on the previous sound, which then morphs into *côtés*, which sounds almost identical to the Japanese *koti*; and finally "su" or nest is pronounced like "s" in Japanese. Attend to the sounds is Yoshimasu's message, but the meanings are also implicit: an elegy for the dead. Gods appear in this punning poem, and also the howl of a white wolf (which also points to the dog star Sirius), which we are told is coming from afar.

Next comes Takahashi Mutsuo's straightforward poem about language being born from the destruction of the world, which is followed by Sasaki's allegoric poem entitled "Kyūteisha suru made" (Until A Sudden Stop). Like Takahashi's poem, this verse does not mention the event directly. Inaba Mayumi's poem "Hakobune 2011" (Arc 2011) does mention the tsunami and the dead, but not in a documentary fashion, rather in a reflective way.[121] Itō Hiromi's poem "Ryōri suru, shi o kaku" (I Cook, Write Poetry) begins with the lines: "Daishinsai, ōtsunami/hito ga shinda! to iu aida ni/sorekara genpatsu jiko da" (A massive earthquake, a giant tsunami/While people were dying!/Next came the nuclear meltdown), thus pushing the event right into the face of readers.[122] This long 8 page poem reads like an extended personal meditation on the event; discussing how people in Tokyo reacted to the event, how they baked and brought cookies to the victims (especially one friend) etc. Itō notes that she did not write a poem herself at the time, given that she was a resident of California and Kumamoto (in the far south of Japan), and she did not want to write a clichéd poem full of trite sentiments. But she did translate part of the 13th century classic *Hōjōki* (An Account of My Hut) into modern Japanese. This famous, elegantly written text, authored in 1212 by the monk Kamo no Chōmei (1155–1216), deals with disasters, including earthquakes that struck Kyoto; and Itō quotes from her translation to demonstrate how the event affected her. She also had recourse to Buddhist texts like the *Lotus Sutra* to pray for the happiness of the land. The poem is not only religious in tone at the end but also reveals the poet's fears and feelings of helplessness when confronted by the event.[123]

After Koike Masayo's two short, simple poems about surviving the tsunami with the narrator likened to a seed, Wagō's long 7-page poem appears. The poem is titled "Hairo shihen" (Decommissioning Nuclear Plants: A Poem) yet this poem rarely mentions nuclear plants apart from a few references at the beginning and end of the work; instead the poem focuses on Wagō's personal life, writing poetry in the shadow (seen simultaneously as a phenomenon reaching back to the past and into the future) of the nuclear meltdown.[124] Misumi Mizuki's poem entitled "Onmon" (Sound Patterns) does not directly refer to the event but is a short melancholy lyric asking questions like "You all so young take a breath/Does it have any more significance than this?", and "it" here I interpret as referring to the event.[125] The final poem in this sequence of verses is by Minashita Kiryū thus ending the special segment with poetry from three women poets (excluding Wagō). Minashita's two page poem is entitled "Kami wasure" (God Forsaken); the apocalyptic nature of the work and its connection to the northeast and the event is made clear in the last 4 lines: "I long for the unexplored now created by remote control/so far away/at night I know/ this god-forsaken place".[126] This stanza can be read as referring to a longing for the future ("unexplored now") that would have come in the absence of the event but only the god-forsaken reality of the post-tsunami present survives.

The August 2012 issue of the journal takes up the theme of "Kioku to genzai" (Memory and the Present) and contains poetry and prose written on a variety of topics. The Second World War comes up in several pieces as do various other important historical moments. The event is specifically treated in two poems: "Suteru: genpatsu hasai" (Abandonment: The Nuclear Power Plant Has Blown Up) by Mishō Hiromi (1925–2015) and another poem by Wagō in his "Decommissioning Nuclear Plants" series. Mishō was a physician who on occasion wrote verse about his patients. This particular poem begins with the following three lines: "Earthquake! The nuclear power plant has been destroyed/they're telling us to get out! /In their uniforms just as they were they fled".[127] Descriptions of the devastation following the event are mixed with the poet's recollections over 60 years. This theme is linked to the tragedy of local people having to abandon their homes and their memories; the fact that they won't be able to return home for 30 years.

Wagō's long 6-page poem begins with meticulous descriptions of homes and the school where he taught, appearing to document the impact of the event. But almost immediately the poem morphs into a nightmarish description of the everyday activities of the classroom twisted into a narrative of blood and demonic possession.[128] He is describing the exaggerated anguish of the children of the school where he taught being evacuated out of Fukushima and relocated to other schools far away. By stanza 12, the narrator/schoolboy is declaring: "Bugger it I'll smash every window in the classrooms to bits Bugger it/Even the school meals I'll destroy them all bugger it/Studying I'll

destroy it all Bugger it/I'll turn the sun into a full moon bugger it".[129] The lesson is clear: the anger and anguish caused by the event remains over a year later. Wagō's "Decommissioning Nuclear Plants" series continues, with another poem published in the September issue but by the last issue of 2012, the December issue, contrary to the December 2011 special section on the event, only a few poems are included that directly refer to the event. The poet and film-maker Fukuma Kenji (b.1949) contributed an article on post event poetry where he reviews verse by Wagō and Fujii Sadakazu related to the earthquake and tsunami, but this small article stands in stark contrast to the mass of critiques in the bumper December issue of the previous year.[130]

To find a special segment devoted to the event in issues produced in 2013, we move forward to the May issue. This issue of the journal features a special section on the event entitled "Dashinsai no ato, watashitachi wa nani o hyōgen suru no ka" (After the Great Earthquake: What can we say?). It begins with a 17-page dialogue between the two poets Wagō and Yoshimasu Gōzō. Then follows five essays by different authors on various aspects of the event, which in turn is followed by a section entitled "Tōjisha o megutte" (On the Victims), which includes five more essays written from different perspectives. Thus, this special feature in the journal is quite different in tone from those previously published in that it consists solely of prose pieces. This is also the last special issue on the event to be published in *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* to the time of writing, although in April 2018, there was a special issue devoted to the poetry of Wagō.

To put this in perspective, it took just over two and a half years from the time of the earthquake, tsunami and meltdown to come to the point where as a topic for poetry and for prose the event was considered no longer directly newsworthy. This is not to deny the many poems and books published on the event since May 2013 (some of which will be considered presently) but if *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* can be seen as an iconic commercial publication trying for the sake of sales to keep a finger on the pulse of the nation then we must conclude that by this time the topic had slowly slipped out the immediate consciousness of the Japanese people to reside in that special section of memory reserved for the category of history.

The 17-page dialogue between the two poets Wagō and Yoshimasu begins with various reflections by the former poet before Yoshimasu says the following: "It's been just over two years since that enormous disaster occurred and I came here today to inquire quietly about your (Wagō's) experience of this period. I have thought of many things to talk about with you […]".[131] This remark by the famous poet and critic whose many publications dwarf those of Wagō reveals to what heights of fame the formerly obscure poet from Fukushima has risen to since the event: as mentioned earlier, Wagō has become the public face of Fukushima and the event. The first 4 or 5 pages of the dialogue focuses

mainly on Wagō's "Decommissioning Nuclear Plants" series, which Yoshimasu praises extravagantly. Yoshimasu highly evaluates the technique of Wagō, honed by his experience in writing much of his verse as tweets.[132] Here we recall that Yoshimasu is very much an oral/aural poet famed for his dramatic public poetry readings. The conversation is wide-ranging, veering from the impact on Yoshimasu of the famous French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss' (1908–2009) classic book *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) to the impact on Wagō of Yoshimasu's poetry books *Rasenka* (Helix Songs, 1990) and *Hanabi no ie no iriguchi de* (At the Entrance To the House of Fireworks, 1995).[133] Finally, Yoshimasu remarks that after their long conversation, he feels that Wagō may well write something like Dante's *La Divina Commedia* (The Divine Comedy): a rather astonishing statement but perhaps not atypical for an older Japanese poet-mentor encouraging a younger poet (Yoshimasu is Wagō's senior by nearly 30 years).[134]

The first of the five essays on post-earthquake expression is by the scholar Yamaichi Kōichirō on the poetry of Wagō. The title of the essay is "'Toi demo nai kotae demo nai' shi no tame ni" (Towards poetry [that provides]'Neither questions nor answers'), and the subtitle is: "Mujinka suru shijin to shite no Wagō Ryōichi" (Wagō Ryōichi: A Poet Who is Not There). The subtitle will be explained in the brief summary of the essay that follows but it refers partly to the idea of a non-anthropomorphic view of the event. The word "mujin" (unattended, unmanned) comes from a poem called "Mujin no shisō" (Thought Absent Humanity) contained in Wagō's 2013 collection *Hairo shihen* (Poetry on Decommissioning a Nuclear Plant), where the poet Yamaichi singles out Wagō's line: "What shall we do? Telegraph poles ponder telegraph poles" as an example of this kind of logic; an attempt, argues Yamaichi, to create a paradoxical poetic subject.[135] The poem emphasizes the cruelty of the nuclear energy industry, energy arising out of a nuclear reaction; the word "mujin" also implies cruelty in its attendant sense of the inhuman. The essay mainly focuses on the *Poetry on Decommissioning a Nuclear Plant* collection but also mentions a few early works by Wagō.

The next essay by Harada Isao analyzes poetry dealing with the event from the perspective of how the event impacted on the local people. He takes up the verse of such local poets as Kiyotake Kō, a resident of Sendai, and the poet Aki Akira, who is also resident in Sendai. Kiyotake's verse on the event he finds notable because of the indirect approach Kiyotake takes to the tsunami—writing of his goldfish and his girlfriend—and how the tsunami and its consequences can be reflected elliptically in his poetry. He also discusses the poet Saitō Hiroji (b.1943), another Sendai resident, focusing on Saitō's 2013 collection *Banka, Umi ni nagarete* (Elegy: Drifting in the Sea).[136]

Another local poet Wakamatsu Jōtarō (b.1935), who has lived in Minami Sōma for many years, has been writing both verse and essays warning of the danger of a nuclear meltdown for over thirty years. Harada notes that this

well-known poet has already had a volume of his poetry translated into English in 2012 under the title *What Makes Us* by the American poet-translator Arthur Binard.[137] Harada examines a number of Wakamatsu's works on the earthquake, all of which he evaluates highly. The next poet taken up by Harada is Terui Ryōhei (b.1946), a resident of Hanamaki in Iwate prefecture. He discusses Terui's 2012 Collection *Gareki no kotoba de katare* (Speak in Broken Shards!), which was awarded the Tsuboi Shigeji poetry prize that year. Terui survived the earthquake but many of his friends and relatives did not. The opening lines of the title poem Harada characterizes as brilliant: "Don't say that there are no words/If you can't find the words/Speak with no words/Speak in broken shards/Speak with broken tears [...]".[138]

Harada goes on to examine the work of a number of other poets, and also anthologies dealing with the event. He also looks at the verse composed by local High School students, which he finds worthy of approbation. There have been a number of such collections published, a fact that testifies to the importance of verse (of all genres and varieties) in representing and memorializing the reaction of the local people to the terrible events of 2011. Harada's conclusion is that literature that mourns the dead and injured is only the first stage of comprehending and memorializing the event; the task of moving on to create forms of expression appropriate to a "post event" perspective is just beginning.[139]

Two essays that follow by the tanka poet Yamada Wataru (b. 1983) and the haiku poet Seki Etsushi (b. 1969) respectively discuss firstly tanka on the event and then haiku. Both writers testify to the explosion of poetry in their respective genres on the event. Yamada notes in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami that tanka poets were relatively silent but then they returned to the making of tanka with a flourish. He singles out Ōguchi Reiko's (b. 1969) collection *Tori san naita* (The Birds Wept, 2012) for praise. This volume was the poet's fourth collection and was awarded the Wakayama Bokusui Prize and the New Authors Geijutsu Senshō Award. Ōguchi was evacuated from the site of the disaster with her husband and children but this collection also includes poems that only allude to the event indirectly. Ōguchi's book is examined in detail in the next chapter. One representative verse from the collection is: "Naze hinan/shitaka to toware/'ko ga daiji'/to kotaete mata/dareka wo kizutsukete" (Asked why/Did you evacuate? /If you reply/'To save my children'/Someone will be hurt".[140]

Yamada is critical of the famous poet and critic Okai Takashi's (b. 1928) viewpoint as expressed in his 2011 essay-volume *Waga kokuhaku* (My Confession) where Okai offers a defense of nuclear power following the meltdown. Yamada is also scathing on two tanka (Yamada describes them as: "mediocre verse") that Okai published a month after the event where he expresses a weak ambiguity about nuclear power without condemning it.[141] Yamada also discusses the award-winning Fukushima-born tanka poet Yoshida Hayato's (b.

1989) essay entitled "Ai ni tsuite" (On Love), also dealing with nuclear power, but which is a riposte to Okai's views. In conclusion, Yamada argues that there are micro and macro responses to the event in literature: the former deals with personal matters while the latter looks at larger issues.[142] It is possible to discern in this Yamada's pessimism concerning tanka since the micro mode of verse is infinitesimally more popular among Japanese readers than the macro style of tanka.

Seki Etsushi discusses the haiku poet Nakazato Natsuhiko's 6-part essay serialized in the coterie journal *Tategami* (Mane) throughout 2013. This is a personal chronicle telling of the evacuation of Nakazato's family away from the nuclear power plant which was located a mere 5 kilometers away from their home. This leads the poet to reflect on the everyday and memory, and includes powerful haiku documenting the terror of the event. Seki also examines haiku by Satō Naruyuki and Terui Midori (b. 1962). Terui's 2013 haiku collection *Ryūgu* (Palace of the Dragon king), examined in the next chapter, was especially acclaimed for its moving verse about the event.[143] Seki contrasts haiku written by survivors of the event with poetry by the distinguished haiku poet Hasegawa Kai. Hasegawa's 2011 tanka volume *Earthquake Poetry*, published just weeks after the event, was composed as tanka rather than haiku. As the poet writes in his introduction to this book: "I am a haiku poet but I'm still not sure why I composed tanka rather than haiku."[144] Seki was not happy with the haiku establishment's initial response to the earthquake, which he saw as tepid but seems pleased by the works of many amateur haiku poets (who make up the vast majority of Japanese composing haiku).[145] Other articles in the May issue investigate how the event is seen in other forms of artistic expression, including photography and documentary movies.

There have been no further special issues on the event in the *Contemporary Poetry Handbook* to the time of writing, although as noted previously, there was a special issue on the poetry of Wagō in April 2018, which made some mention of the importance of the event in his verse. It is interesting to observe that as early as 2014, Takushi Odagiri had argued that Wagō's tweet-poetry "overturn[s] the system of repetitive lyricism that had lasted from long before", describing it as "rakugakigaku" or "scribbology", a term invented by the radical poet and film-maker Terayama Shūji, where Terayama proposed the notion that scribbology rejects printed letters, and thus inaugurated action poetry, something fundamentally different from conventional print poetry.[146] But Odagiri is talking primarily about Wagō's tweets, not the published versions of his poems in book form.

Sporadic poems have appeared that take the event as their theme; some examples follow. In the July 2013 issue, the poets Wagō and Fujii Sadakazu continued their series of dialogue discussions on poetry relating to the event (including their own volumes) and Fujii continued or completed his long renga entitled *Poems From The East—A Thousand Lines Solo in a Different*

Voice over some 24 pages in the journal. This appears to be the complete version, but poets often rewrite, sometimes years later, so it may be premature to pronounce the end of Fujii's grand project[147]. The tanka poet (*sic*) Saitō Saitō (b. 1972) published a multi-part poem entitled *Normal Radiation Background* in various issues during 2013; the segment in the September 2013 issue features the line: "Something terrible is going to happen to Fukushima!" as part of a long, rambling poem that is a mixture of verse and (mostly) prose, liberally interleaved with quotations from various sources; almost a documentary social history of families and the institutions supporting them.[148]

In the January 2014 issue of the *Contemporary Poetry Handbook*, the poem "'FUKUSHIMA' Ibaruna" ('FUKUSHIMA': Don't Swagger!) by the poet Sugimoto Maiko (b. 1973) appeared. The poem does not directly refer to the event but the word "kizuna" (ties, connections) is criticized in the poem and this word was the catch-cry of a slick TV advertising campaign funded by the nuclear power industry to deflect attention away from the meltdown. The poem castigates local politicians. The background to this poem may well be the attempts by local politicians to attract former residents back to the region; some say in a cynical attempt to restore their decimated power base.[149] Even more fugitive references to the event can be found. In the same issue, in one stanza of Ikei Masaki's (b. 1953) long multi-part poem "Unmei" (Fate) there is the line: "From the former site of the nuclear power plant/The bones of a dragon are uncovered".[150] This is typical of the fleeting references to the event that occur in the journal from this time onwards. It is notable, for example, in the issue that directly followed, the February 2014 issue of *Contemporary Poetry Handbook*, there is no mention of the event whatsoever.[151] Of course, from time to time, in *Contemporary Poetry Handbook*, poetry relating to the event has appeared and will continue to appear, but the topic is but one of many, and the urgency surrounding the subject that we have seen in the issues examined in this chapter is no more.[152]

8.5. Fiction and the 2011 Earthquake

What of the prose produced as a result of the event? We have already examined a large number of essays published in the *Contemporary Poetry Handbook*, but there are other prose works that have achieved a modicum of critical acclaim.[153] The four editors of the massive 2017 volume *Higashi Nippon daishinsaigo bungakuron* (A Study of Literature After the Great East Japan Earthquake) set themselves the task of reading serious prose fiction (but also managed to fit in Wagō's poetry volume *Poem Pebbles*) produced in the years since the earthquake to 2017, and came up with a list of some 38 notable works. These were written, for example, by such famous authors as Ōe Kenzaburō (b. 1935), winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1994, and the well-known

novelist Tsutsui Yasutaka (b. 1934). A number of the other works were written by authors who are not as well known. After reading a large number of works, and having determined that the 38 books selected represented the best literature produced on the event in this period, the editors came to the curious conclusion that, "A cause of alarm for us in the research team was that no masterpieces were written [on the subject] since the earthquake."[154] This statement echoes the literary critic Miyoshi Yukio's statement in 1976 to the effect that no masterpieces had been produced to that point in time on the 1923 earthquake. Miyoshi, like the editorial team of the 2017 volume, was thinking primarily in terms of prose works, however.

According to Fujita Naoya (one of the editors of the volume), the reason why no masterpieces have been produced as a result of 3/11 is that it takes about two decades before great works of literature can be made on the basis of the massive tragedies resulting from war, earthquakes or other disasters.[155] Presumably it takes at least this long before the events themselves can be put into an historical or societal perspective and before those who participated in these events, either actively, or as observers from afar, can absorb the lessons learnt from the experience. This is especially the case for Japanese authors since they have to overcome another problem identified by Fujita; namely, the tradition in modern Japanese fiction of focusing on the personal at the expense of the larger, historical picture (naturally, many exceptions exist to this generalization).[156] This argument is predicated upon the assumption that the large social novel provides a superior aesthetic realization of disaster over a more personal narrative. Common sense logic would appear to strengthen this case—if we have no real description of the disaster and all its ramifications for daily life, then the interior realization of character would not suffice to capture the enormity of the event. However, I have some reservations about this argument, beginning with the assumption that prose is most suited to express trauma; poetry and drama seem to me to have compelling claims in this regard, as demonstrated earlier in this chapter. Further, the need for the massive social-realist novel developed in the nineteenth century to represent history and championed by such influential critics as Georg Lukacs (1885–1971), seems to have been fulfilled nowadays by the mass media, TV, movies and the Internet. Again, some great works of fiction are exceptions to this rule.

In Linda Flores' 2017 article "Matrices of Time, Space and Text", rewritten prose works by Kawakami Hiromi (b. 1958) and the Fukushima-born author Furukawa Hideo (b. 1966) are subjected to a close analysis. Flores is not the first scholar who has examined these two rewritten narratives, citing earlier studies on Kawakami by such scholars as Komori Yōichi and Roman Rosenbaum.[157] Kawakami reworked or rewrote a 1993 story with the title of "Kamisama" (The Gods), which was published in September 2011 under the title of "Kamisama 2011". Ted Goossen and Motoyuki Shibata have translated the rewritten story and the original into English, the former under the title of

"God Bless You 2011".[158] The stories are quite short and as the author explains in a postscript attached to "God Bless You 2011", the title refers to the bear god. She notes that the tale was rewritten in an attempt to: "express my amazement at how our daily lives can go on uneventfully day after day and then suddenly be so dramatically changed by external events".[159] The external event Kawakami refers to is, of course, the 2011 earthquake and meltdown, which she further discusses in the postscript, giving details on the radiation released by the meltdown. The story is simplicity itself; the unnamed narrator goes for a walk along the riverbank with a giant bear that lives a few doors down from her apartment. The bear speaks perfect Japanese and seems to have hands as dexterous as those of humans as he catches and with a small knife, guts, then salts three fish for the narrator. The walk by the riverbank comes with frequent reminders of background radiation, with the bear chatting about how "Bears can handle strontium. Plutonium, too".[160] They farewell each other with a hug before the narrator's apartment, and the bear remarks: "I had a truly wonderful time. I feel as though I had returned from a voyage to some faraway place. May the bear god bestow his blessings on you [...]".[161]

Analysis of the two stories centers on the differences between the two narratives, which are minimal, but in the 2011 story the event looms large. Flores summarizes various critics' responses to such rewritten fiction, declaring that both stories exist simultaneously as intertextual narratives, suggesting that texts are not closed, not necessarily finished works.[162] This conclusion is not surprising in the light of much modern Japanese fiction existing as rewritten narratives. Two famous examples of rewriting are the Nobel-Prize winning author Kawabata Yasunari's (1899–1972) famous novel *Yukiguni* (Snow Country, 1935–47) being rewritten several times over a long period. The second example is the famous novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's (1886–1965) translations of the classic 11th century *Tale of the Genji*, which he reworked into three different versions over a similarly lengthy period of time.

Flores also investigates Furukawa Hideo's 2011 novel *Umatachi yo, soredemo hikari wa muku de*, translated into English by Doug Slaymaker in 2016 under the title of *Horses, Horses, in the End the Light Remains Pure: A Tale That Begins with Fukushima*. This novel is contrasted with an earlier novel by Furukawa titled *Seikazoku* (Holy Family, 2008). The earlier novel, in Flores' words, "traces the spatial geography of Tōhoku [...] tracks a seven-hundred-year historical time span, mingling at times past, present, and future."[163] The link to the 2011 novel is that one of the two fictional Inazuka brothers, whose family connections as expressed in letters and conversations is the chief device by which the history of the region is recounted, appears magically in *Horses, Horses*. This novel is, like Takahashi Gen'ichirō's (b. 1951) 2011 novel *Koisuru genpatsu* (Nuclear Plant in Love) which I examine below, to quote the translator: "a sort of memoir, sort of fiction, sort of essay, something of a road trip; it can be chaotic and overwhelming."[164] The distinguished critic Kawamura

Minato writes of the work: "Is this a novel or a tale? Or perhaps, it is the daydream of a novelist who goes to the horrible site of the nuclear-quake disaster, an absurd fictional space that blends the world of reality with the world of imagination, hallucinated by a radiation-afflicted mind."[165] The novel recounts a road trip to the radiation-soaked region by Furukawa, and some fellow-authors. Flores sees the work as embodying the trauma experienced by those who experienced the event, and even as an attempt at healing this trauma. Much of her analysis is taken up with trauma studies, and such symptoms of trauma as temporal disjuncture, which is mentioned in the narrative several times. In this reading of the novel (perhaps just "fiction" is a better term) we can find numerous common threads linking with earlier chapters of this book that also discuss traumatized narratives.

Yuki Masami examines the author Taguchi Randy's (b. 1959) 2013 book *Zōn nite* (In the Zone), consisting of four novellas of which the first two concern "Hatori Yōko", a female writer in her forties, and the remaining two stories are separate narratives. All are connected to the radiation zone established after the nuclear meltdown. Post meltdown consequences is a topic which Taguchi had already explored in an essay on Chernobyl included in her 2006 book *Yoru beki jidai no kibō* (Hope in the Age of No Reliance). The Hatori Yōko narratives detail how the protagonist copes with living in irradiated villages; the following two stories tell the tale of how firstly Mamiko, who was forced to evacuate her home in Fukushima after the meltdown, come to an accommodation with the animals who are left behind in the radiation zone, and secondly how two women survive for years living in one of the irradiated villages. Masami comments that "Taguchi's literary effort gives the zone a new meaning, that is a testing ground in which individual values are exposed, challenged and reconsidered."[166]

Returning to the 2017 volume, *A Study of Literature After the Great East Japan Earthquake*, cited at the beginning of this section, the critic Fujita Naoya further narrowed the list of significant works of fiction down to 9 novels by such important contemporary authors as Kawakami Hiromi, Takahashi Gen'ichirō, Itō Seikō (b. 1961), Ueda Takahiro (b. 1979), Henmi Yō (b.1944), Takiguchi Yūshō (b. 1982), Yoshimura Man'ichi (b. 1961) and Matsunami Tarō (b.1982). From this list, I have selected Takahashi's controversial novel *Nuclear Plant in Love* for a close reading. This novel was published in November 2011 and was written with a searing pace and passion. Ostensibly a record of the making of a pornographic video for charity to assist the victims of the event (thus instead of chapters, the work is divided into "makings"), the novel is a vicious satire on nuclear power and much else beside. It is very much a collage-style mish-mash of several types of writing, with no real attempt to develop a consistent story-line, but with the fierce satire maintained throughout. The novel is written in straightforward colloquial Japanese and is easy to read,

although there is much obscene language and descriptions of sex, as befits a pornographic movie.

The first making begins by emphasizing the fictionality of the work, including the unnamed narrator (it is mostly narrated in the first person), since several real people are mentioned in the work, this is probably a wise move by the author. On the very first page, the narrator declares: "If you think this work resembles something that has actually happened, even if only slightly, it is because you are completely off your rocker… a crazy world such as this could not possibly exist. Take yourself off to a mental hospital! Now! I mean Now!"[167] This admonition is written in heavy black type and extra-large print. This device Takahashi uses several times throughout the novel. In this first chapter (as "making" amounts to the same thing), a character called "George" appears who has magical abilities, being able to change reality, and alter the timeline—just like an author of a fiction. For example, George turns into the US actress Angelina Jolie, actually a facsimile thereof, who begs the narrator to have sex with her ("Stick it in me!").[168] The event is mentioned several times in the first chapter, often inserted into the text as a kind of prose poem with the appropriate lineation, as seen in the lines: "Fuck the earthquake!/ Fuck the tsunami!/ Fuck nuclear power plants!".[169]

The next chapter is titled: "Making two: Lover, return to my bosom (Lover Come Back to Me)". The words in parentheses are English words written in phonetic (katakana) script and are the name of a song. Several songs appear throughout the narrative. The meta-narrative elements in the novel feature strongly in this section with the narrator fantasizing or imagining that George has changed reality to the extent that he (the narrator) is living in a parallel universe where a ridiculous porn movie with the title "Koisuru genpatsu" is being made.[170] Scatology rears its head with the fantasy of this porn video featuring the famous nineteenth century writer Higuchi Ichiyō (1872–96) eating her own feces.[171] The title of "making" is further defined with the narrator commenting that this is a video about the making of a video. For students of modern Japanese literature (such as myself) this chapter is quite funny as it features various scenarios where an imagined Osama Bin Laden holds a conversation with the acclaimed poets of the nineteenth century *Myōjō* circle, notably the famous feminist poet Yosano Akiko (1878–1942). There is a literary logic to this as earlier Takahashi had quoted a famous poem about anarchists and revolution written by the socialist poet Ishikawa Takuboku (1886–1912). Thus, readers can follow the narrator swinging from absurdity to political criticism, especially of the Yasukuni shrine, where the Japanese war dead are enshrined.[172] The last pages of the chapter return to Fukushima: how should the victims of this tragedy be treated? A charity porn video is obviously unnatural, but the satire thickens with the notion of a porn musical, where we are all singing until the fadeout.

In "Making three" the political criticism continues, with a focus on the emperor of Japan. The irony of the emperor arguing that people (here Takahashi means civil servants) should not be punished for not bowing to the national anthem or Japanese flag (his plea totally ignored by the government) and the emperor's comments about the Korean origins of the Imperial House not being reported in the newspapers is juxtaposed against scenes from World War 2 where sailors from the sinking battleship Yamato are floating in the sea arguing about the size of vaginas. Various other historical events feature in this chapter, which switches from comedy to harsh criticism of the Japanese government.[173]

Making four returns to slapstick comedy, with numerous scatological jokes, some exceedingly grotesque. The narrator declares several times in large block print that: "I love poo!".[174] This chapter also features many songs, adding to its light tone. Much of the chapter highlights dialogues between the narrator and the "shachō" (the CEO of the company making the video) Political criticism is still present however, with the narrator asking why the Yasukuni shrine could not enshrine enemy soldiers or homosexuals or accident victims. The last pages gesture towards Fukushima with a reference to the "cauldron of hell".[175]

Making five uses satire in its most pointed form by inventing a war widow and her niece living in an evacuation center in Fukushima. Another female character called Saori is introduced and much of the chapter relates dialogues between Saori and Yoshiko (the niece) and also between Yone (the war widow). The dialogues focus on escaping schoolyard rape (bite the penis off!), and Saori's disgust with men who just use her for her body, among other things. The numerous sex scenes (this is, after all, the making of a porn movie) are variously disgusting and grotesque and illustrate the falsity and hypocrisy of the porn industry, which fakes love for money. The cynicism evident throughout the novel is particularly savage in this chapter. However, the attacks on pornography are balanced by an emphasis on the need for sex education in schools.[176]

Making six is rather short and appears to relate a personal account from the narrator's life. The narrator tells of his aunt who went to Hiroshima in 1945 instead of his mother. All his family in Hiroshima are incinerated in the A-bomb explosion, and only his mother remains. Consumed by guilt, his mother married her dead sister's fiancé, and produced the narrator. This does not assuage his mother's survivor guilt and she continually suffers from insomnia and well as being constantly angry. The narrator was given a life-size sex doll, and instead of having sex with the doll, asks himself several times (in big block letters): "Am I talking to nothing? Rather, am I nothing? [...] What I know is this: the only thing that understands me is a porn video [...]. I've been watching TV every day. Earthquake, tremor, tsunami, nuclear plant, self-defense forces, the PM's official residence, black-outs, MITI [...]. I can't make head or

tail of any of it."[177] The last pages of the chapter grow grimmer in tone: "The reason why I want to make a porn video is because of the connection to hell, if this is something linked to hell, I feel I can do it."[178] The image of hell reappears, and, again, in my view gestures towards Fukushima.

Takahashi takes a break from the making of the video in the next section entitled "Shinsai bungakuron" (A Study of Earthquake Literature). This is a serious analysis of several literary and cinematic works dealing with earthquakes and the "poisoned earth". Takahashi—due to the context and nature of this chapter, I use the author rather than the narrator here despite there being no mention of the author's name—begins with Susan Sontag's essay on 9. 11 and thus introduces the theme of terrorism. Then he switches to Kawakami Hiromi's story "God Bless You 2011" discussed earlier. This work he compares to the famed director Miyazaki Hayao's highly successful 1984 movie *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, which treats the theme of the "poisoned earth". A number of other eclectic artists are discussed including the French novelist Jules Verne (1828–1905) and also the novelist Ishimure Michiko (1927–2018), whose famous 1969 novel or non-fiction work (this question still is under debate) *Kugai jōdo waga minamatabyō* (translated as *Paradise in the Sea of Sorrow: Our Minamata Disease*) deals with environmental pollution and the horrific consequences for humans.[179]

The last chapter is called making seven, which takes off from where the previous chapter ended by connecting *Nausicaä* with the meltdown. This chapter following the example of previous chapters is full of popular music, and also imagines a number of conversations between famous people or rather their "doubles", not the real thing, as the narrator is quick to point out. These imaginary conversations invariably center on sex (with each other, sex-dolls etc) and feature such famous doubles as Bill and Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama and Kim Jong-il, and the former Prime Minister Kan Naoto (b.1946), who was in charge in 2011 when the earthquake, tsunami and meltdown occurred. The imaginings become even more fantastic (and the humor more scattergun) with the narrator envisaging a mass sex orgy at Fukushima involving millions (but actually referring to only twenty thousand), singing the famous anthem of love and peace: "we are the world". Finally, the narrator (or is it the author?) writes: "No matter how stupid I make this book, it can't surpass the stupidity of reality!".[180] At the end, the narrator asks George the magician to restore everything to what it was: a plea to return to before the meltdown. If this scene is reminiscent of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, then it is because in some ways, the two works are similar.

8.6. Brief Concluding Note

Nuclear Plant in Love is permitted license that Shakespeare was not, in respect of obscene language, political satire, coprophilia and scatology and all sorts of other perversions. Although the Bard certainly knew his way around a judicious use of bawdy and grotesque comedy and satire. Takahashi's novel may never be acclaimed in the way Shakespeare's drama is but both writers are driven by the same stern moral impulses: in the face of the horrors of human miscarriage leading to the deaths of thousands; a raging, burning anger that manifests itself in the extremes of vicious and deadly satire. As Takahashi metaphorically reiterates endlessly in this book: the porn video, with all its grotesque sexual excess, is nothing compared to the reality of the event. But as many post-event authors have lamented: how do you describe the horrifying reality of mass death? Words are simply not equal to the immense tragedy; Takahashi's solution is to shock with sexual excess: this, he intimates, allows the reader to feel something; not nothing, not just a suffocating numbness. He expands his attack to subjects normally concealed behind Japanese political taboos, such as the emperor, and the atomic bombing. Clearly, in this work, they are all connected: politics is responsible for Japanese nuclear power plants, and much else besides.

The scholar Chiba Kazumiki argues that Takahashi's masterly technique reproduces the voices of the victims while distancing itself from a monolithic monologue by an omniscient author. He also argues that the constant parody is also a parody of any attempt to create a master narrative; this is one way, he observes, that Takahashi can articulate the voicelessness of the victims. Thus, Takahashi can evade or even defy the notorious literary paradox that tragedy has no voice, that suffering is beyond the capacity of language to express. The number of the people involved in the fictional mass sex orgy at Fukushima exactly matches the number of dead. Chiba views this as quite deliberate: it is a powerful eulogy, a memorium for the dead, and a slap in the face of official attempts to mourn, which Takahashi sees as inauthentic.[181]

Modern Japanese literature has a small but powerful library of satirical works that burn with the same anger and passion: from Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's (1892–1927) novel *Kappa* (1927) to Amano Tetsuo's (1926–2008) fiction, which continued from 1956, *Kachikujin yappū* (Human Livestock Yappu), the latter published under the pen-name of Numa Shōzō. Whether *Nuclear Plant in Love* will stand the test of time is yet to be determined but it is safe to say that Takahashi has ventured where few dare to go, and this work which spurns social realism has taken up the cause of the dead and given them voice in a scarifying metaphor of sex and dissolution that is impossible to ignore.

Chapter Nine

9. Trauma and Catharsis: The 2011 East Japan Earthquake and Traditional Genres of Verse

Ima haha wa	Mother now
Ryūgūjō no	A white hibiscus
Shirofuyō	In the palace of the dead[1]

From Terui Midori's collection *Ryūgū* (Palace of the Dragon King, 2013)

As documented in the previous chapter, the March 2011 earthquake in northern Japan was the one of the most violent earthquakes experienced on the Japanese archipelago since ancient times. It resulted in overwhelming tragedy: nuclear reactors melted down, a massive tsunami hit the region, hundreds of thousands of dwellings were destroyed and over thirty thousand people lost their lives. How did the two major traditional genres of Japanese poetry—tanka and haiku—deal with this tragedy: that is, how did they document this event, and represent or dramatize or even catharsize the trauma that ensued in the lives of millions? Because millions of amateur Japanese compose verse in traditional forms, I will examine some examples of amateur verse in anthologies compiled soon after the event. I will also subject to scrutiny a selected sample of verse pertaining to the event by well-known haiku and tanka poets, including books of poetry written by poets who personally experienced the event. By a careful reading of these poems I seek to answer some fundamental issues raised by poetry produced under extreme circumstances: how does poetry deal with tragedy on such a monumental scale? Is the metapoetic meaning amplified, enhanced or fundamentally transformed by this experience? What exactly do these texts articulate? How do traditional metrical forms address and express such an event; to be more specific, in what way do the compositions of traditional poetry genres differ from free verse written on the same theme? This last question permits a consideration of rhythms and musicality, that is, the performative aspects of lyric to become a topic for investigation, as well as raising the issue of poetic genres and their significance, especially in respect of the representation of catastrophe.

9.1. Trauma and Literature

There are many theorists and scholars of literature who have examined the relationship between trauma and literature, and the issue of how literature may represent trauma in writing: some of these theories have been discussed in previous chapters. In this chapter, I will add to these views by examining further insights by various thinkers on trauma in order to create a context for

this study of traditional varieties of poetry produced as a result of the 2011 earthquake, tsunami and nuclear meltdown in northeastern Japan.

The first thinker I will consider is the existentialist German-Swiss psychiatrist and philosopher, Karl Jaspers (1883–1969), whose insights into trauma arise from his writings on "limit situations" (Grenzsituationen)—sometimes translated as "boundary situations"—and existence. In his book, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, translated as the *Way to Wisdom*, (originating in twelve radio lectures commissioned by a Basel radio station in 1949) Jaspers notes: "Only at the limit in extreme situations, can the call of the unconditional lead to loss of life, to acceptance of inevitable death, while in bondage to the conditional, we wish first, last and, at any price, to preserve our physical existence".[2] A number of commentators have sought to elucidate further, and deepen our understanding of Jaspers' notion of limit situations. Filiz Peach in his 2008 book, *Death, Deathlessness' and Existenz in Karl Jaspers' Philosophy* defines the concept thus:

> According to Jaspers, human beings are always in situations. General situations are temporary and are always changing. Boundary situations, however, are unclear and oppressive, situations that one cannot modify. They are the situations which mark the limits of our finitude. They can also be seen as the crises in human existence in which they appear as internal contradictions. A boundary situation can be described as an inescapable limit of our empirical existence with an uncertain future. A situation becomes a boundary situation 'when it succeeds in awakening the individual self to its existential content'. Lichtigfeld elaborates this 'precarious character of finite existence' by stating that boundary situations occur when 'life is broken up by events that cannot be mastered by human agency, human wisdom or power'. There are four specific boundary situations – suffering, guilt, struggle and death – all of which are closely connected with Existenz [...].[3]

These insights arise out of Jaspers' experience as a psychiatrist, and are reflections on the nature of existence itself but Jaspers also warned about the dangers of applying such concepts in a facile manner to art, as we see from this statement from his series of lectures in Frankfurt in 1937, published under the title of *Existenzphilosophie* (philosophy of existence): "No aesthetic theory can scientifically understand the intrinsic reality of art—that is, the truth that was experienced and created in art"[4]. This acts as a necessary corrective to arguing directly from event to art or literature; however, argument by analogy can assist in understanding the link between event and literature, and in this respect, enhances our readings of literature inspired by traumatic events such as the 2001 earthquake.

Before we leave Jaspers to consider other theorists of trauma, one final quote from Peach introduces "foundering" (Scheitern), another concept that Jaspers uses to understand trauma:

> Jaspers' concept of foundering (Scheitern) [...] has close connections with both the antinomical structure of existence and boundary situations. It is an important existential concept because the underlying tension of antinomies, in particular the subject/object split, leads to foundering. Jaspers tells us that without foundering one may not be able to achieve self-realisation: "Everything founders [...] although the thought that all things founder will initially express despair in the boundary situation, an Existenz cannot come to itself if it has not been in boundary situations".
>
> Jaspers explains foundering thus: boundary situations draw our attention to the precarious status of our everyday existence. These situations bring out the awareness of one's transient nature and the inadequacy of the human condition, which accentuate the limitation and predicament of the human being. As Jaspers often says, when we find ourselves in situations that are not in our control, we are faced with profound dissatisfaction and crises. He observes that when we encounter crises, we often fail to come to terms with the situation we are in. In Jaspers' words: "In every boundary situation, I have the ground pulled out from under my feet, so to speak". Jaspers calls this awareness of inadequacy and the sense of failure foundering (Scheitern). This sense of failure is an important aspect of boundary situations because such crises can lead to the achievement of selfhood through foundering. According to Jaspers, in boundary situations when one has the experience of foundering, one's possibilities and freedom disappear. Foundering indicates the presence of nothingness and at the same time awareness of Being itself. Despite the negative connotation of failure, however, Jaspers turns the notion of Scheitern around in a positive way and discusses the possibility of breaking through the boundaries of extreme situations.[5]

How accurate are these observations when applied to the poetry under investigation? This question will be answered later but now we will examine the writing of a few other theorists of trauma to see if they may be able to offer a hermeneutic that can better comprehend the poetry of catastrophe.

In the first chapter of David C. Stahl's 2018 book *Trauma, Dissociation and re-Enactment in Japanese Literature and Film*, he cites Judith Herman's 1997 book on trauma entitled *Trauma and Recovery*:

> In the following passage, Herman discusses the origins and centrality of trust and the devastating social and existential consequences of betrayal: "The sense of safety in the world, or basic trust, is acquired in earliest life in the relationship with the first caretaker. Originating with life itself, the sense of trust sustains a person throughout the lifecycle. It forms the basis of all systems of relationship and faith [...]. Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim's faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis"[6].

The notion of trauma that Jaspers elucidates is further elaborated upon by Herman who focuses on the loss of faith and family. This is a common reaction of survivors of disasters but, equally, it must be said, is the reverse. Seeking

out faith, in whatever form (perhaps not finding it), remains a frequent response of survivors of disaster. Finally, we will examine one or two passages from the French thinker Maurice Blanchot's (1907–2003) *L'Ecriture du désastre* (translated as "The Writing of the Disaster"), published in 1980, a long meditation upon the representation of catastrophe in writing, or of the impossibility of such representation, and which gestures in various places towards the Holocaust, which may be the chief disaster Blanchot is thinking of. Blanchot reiterates the paradox that the experience of disaster cannot be adequately expressed yet only art or writing is capable of such expression.

> The disaster, unexperienced. It is what escapes the very possibility of experience—it is the limit of writing. This must be repeated: the disaster de-scribes. Which does not mean that the disaster, as the force of writing, is excluded from it, is beyond the pale of writing or extratextual.
>
> It is dark disaster that brings the light.[7]

This why the literature of catastrophe is vital to the act of understanding. Poetry, in particular, is the preferred means of expression of many survivors of disasters. Traditional genres of Japanese poetry are often seen as fragmentary, although this contention is debateable but the unique form of the *haiku*, for instance, attempts to link fragmentary or momentary experience into an aesthetic moment that somehow suggests more than the words of the haiku itself; and this kind of writing is briefly touched upon by Blanchot in reference to disaster:

> Fragmentary writing is risk, it would seem: risk itself. It is not based on any theory, nor does it introduce a practice one could define as *interruption*. Interrupted, it goes on. Interrogating itself, it does not co-opt the question but suspends it (without maintaining it) as nonresponse. Thus, if it claims that its time comes only when the whole—at least ideally—is realized, this is because that time is never sure, but is the absence of time, absence in a nonnegative sense, time anterior to all past-present, as well as posterior to every possibility of a present yet to come.[8]

How useful these comments are to comprehending and reading traditional Japanese verse, and how may the theories of trauma outlined above assist in this understanding is the desideratum of the next section.

9.2. Selection of Tanka from Local and Anonymous Poets

In order to sample the full gamut of traditional verse produced as a result of the earthquake and tsunami, we will first examine a group of tanka composed by different poets who are based in the local region.[9] The tanka were selected from tanka verses published in local journals and magazines during the course

of 2011–12, and were subsequently included in a one volume collection of poetry entitled *Kanashimi no umi* (Sea of Sadness, 2012), edited by the tanka poets Tanigawa Kenichi (b. 1921) and Tamada Takahide (b.1947). Both men are recognized veteran tanka poets. From the 626 tanka included in this volume I have selected 6 tanka for translation and analysis, taken at ransom. None of the authors of these poems is all that well-known nationally, but some of them are known to the local community. It just so happened that, apart from Tokuyama Takaaki (b. 1940), all the poets turned out to be women. Millions of Japanese compose traditional varieties of poetry (mainly, *tanka*, *haiku* and *senryū*) for recreation and pleasure; but only a few are well-known nationally or have a number of individual volumes of poetry produced by recognized presses. In that sense, the verses that I have selected at random from the *Sea of Sadness* collection are close to those composed by purely amateur poets (amateur in the sense that they are not seeking a career, either part-time or full-time). Later I will contrast these poems published by more "professional" poets. Following are the tanka:

Hekishoku no	She who said
Umi ga suki da to	I love the
Iishi hito	Deep blue sea
Sono mama umi no	Has become
Megami to naru ya	A goddess

It goes without saying that the poet-author Kumagaya Toshiko (b. 1945) from Kitakami-city in Miyagi Prefecture is, referring to the death of a woman by drowning, presumably in the tsunami.[10]

Risai seshi	Damaged by the earthquake
Ie hitotsu tekkyo	One house was demolished
Sono ato ni	What remained
Shitai muttsu to	I heard today were
Kyō wa kikitari	Six bodies

The poet Onodera Yōko (b. 1942) is from Kesennuma-city, one of the places most damaged by the tsunami.[11]

Akumu nara	Doing the rounds of the morgues
Sameyo to meguru	If this is a nightmare
Anchisho ni	Let me wake up!
Ane no itai no	Finding my big sister's
Hitsugi ni mamienu	Body in a coffin

This tanka by Hanzawa Satoko (b. 1936) from Watari-county, Watari, needs little commentary.[12]

Miru kagiri	As far as I can see
Ataka mo Sai no	The River Styx
Kawara nasu	Making up
Gareki no yama ni	The mountain of wreckage
Kotoba wa muryoku	Language is powerless

It brings to mind one of Maurice Blanchot's observations in his meditation on writing disaster:

> For immediacy is absolute presence—which undermines and overturns everything. Immediacy is the infinite, neither close nor distant, and no longer the desired or demanded, but violent abduction [...]. Immediacy not only rules out all mediation; it is the infiniteness of a presence such that it can no longer be spoken of, for the relation itself, be it ethical or ontological, has burned up all at once in a night bereft of darkness. In this night there are no longer any terms, there is no longer a relation, no longer a beyond—in this night God himself has annulled himself[13].

The above poem composed by Tokuyama Takaaki (b. 1940) from Sendai-city[14].

Ōtsunami	In the wake of
Sarite shidoro no	The tsunami: chaos
Hisaichi no	In the evacuation zones
Gareki no yama wo	A crescent moon illuminates
Terasu mikazuki	A mountain of wreckage

This poem is composed by Satō Mitsuyo (b. 1931) from Sendai-city[15].

Tento ide	Emerging from the tent
Hahan ni miageshi	Gazing upwards at midnight
Nanpō ni	To the south
Iyō ni hikaru	Strangely bright
Hoshi hitotsu ari	A single star

This poem is composed by Satō Reiko (b. 1934) from Sendai-city[16].

Finally, to further illuminate the nature of "amateur" traditional verse written on the tragedy, I have chosen two poems (again, at random) from a publication produced by NHK in 2014, Japan's national broadcaster, of a collection of mostly anonymous verses edited by the TV documentary producer Gen Masayuki (b. 1958), which was based upon a TV documentary broadcast nation-wide on NHK on 19 March 2014. These verses were nearly all tanka and numbered around 100 poems.

Gen comments on why he preferred the tanka genre for his collection of anonymous poems:

> From the distant past tanka, born and raised in Japan, have continued to weave together into the hearts of Japanese the time and the moment, using the 5/7/5/7/7 syllabic format. Then March 2011 happened. From that day, that time, completely anonymous folk—young and old, men and women—with no experience of tanka entrusted their individual thoughts to this 31-syllable verse genre and created a narrative. As if the earthquake had awakened the DNA deep in their hearts. The earthquake, the tsunami, the nuclear meltdown.[17]

Two random tanka taken from Gen's selection, which itself was gleaned from interviews with survivors, newspapers, libraries, magazines and the like, provides a small insight into the reaction of ordinary people to this tragedy.[18]

Hita hita to	Waves lapping
Mune o utsu nami	Against my chest
Tamashii no	Spirits roaming
Samayou sato o	Over home
Fuku kaze no hate	The winds blowing towards the waves[19]
Itai shashin	Looking at 200
Nihyaku mai mite	Photographs of the dead
Mizu wo nomu	I drink water
Nodo oto tatezu ni	Making no sound
Tada yukkuri to	Slowly slowly[20]

Reflecting on the poems translated above, it is clear that many of them express a view of existence that falls into the first few stages of Jaspers' limit or boundary situations, not to mention Jaspers' notion of foundering. The traumatic situations described in the poems of searching for one's loved ones amid mounds of corpses "violate the victim's faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis", to quote Judith Herman. Another link to the theorists cited earlier is the inability to find words to capture the reality of the trauma. As Tokuyama Takaaki notes, in the tanka quoted above: "Language is powerless". Does the poetry composed by well-known "professional" poets also fit this model of trauma outlined above? And what are the differences in poetic technique? The first "professional poet" we shall examine is Yamakawa Noboru (b. 1940).

9.3. A Diary of the Earthquake in Verse

Yamakawa's tanka are taken from his book *3.11 Shinsai tanka wasurenaide* (Do not Forget the Tanka of the 2011 Earthquake!, 2013), a diary of tanka composed every few days from 11 March 2011 to 11 March 2012: a total of 383 poems arranged by month (roughly the same number of poems per month). Yamakawa began writing tanka as a member of the prestigious *Araragi* tanka school but in 2010 broke away from this group because of his objections to the old-fashioned style and diction advocated by them. He began to compose tanka in a more modern style, using contemporary language and diction. Since then he has won a number of major awards for his tanka collections, including the Miyagi Prefecture tanka prize (twice) and the special prize awarded by the Museum of Modern Japanese Literature in 2009.[21] I have selected the first tanka of each month from March to October 2011 for translation. In this sense, my selection is a fair summary of the type of poem composed by Yamakawa but makes no claims that these are the best poems in the collection. The first poem for March 2011 follows:

Kuru kuru to	"It will come, it will come"
Iwareta jishin	So it was said of the earthquake that
Tsui ni kite	Finally came
Tatte irarezu	Unable to stand
Jimen ni kagamu	I hug the earth[22]

This first poem appears as the beginning of a narrative, and as the following tanka for March reveal, this is exactly what the author is doing, by listing his personal responses to the event (tsunami, meltdown etc) as it unfolds. Indeed, the very fact of consecutive composition imposes a chronological patterning onto Yamakawa's narrative.

Genpatsu no	Out of the nuclear reactor
Genso seshiumu	Cesium
Hisan suru	Scattering
Hōshanō more	Radioactive particles escaping
Kono ōzora ni	Into the heavens[23]

The documentary style of this April poem is one with much of Yamakawa's verse narrative, and this apparent objectivity adds to the strength of the tanka.

Hisaichi no	Hauling debris
Gareki wo hakobu	From the disaster zone
Hitotachi wa	People
Borantia nano ka	Are they volunteers?
Doro ni mamirete	Covered in mud[24]
Waga machi no	The incineration plant
Shōkyakujō mo	In my town
Fukkyū shi	Has been put back into operation
Gareki wo moyasu	Smoke rises
Kemuri ga tatta	Debris burning[25]

The previous two tanka follow the documentary narrative but the mention of so much mud that human figures cannot be distinguished and the melancholy image of smoke rising acts as a not so subtle reminder of the terrible costs incurred by the tragedy.

Hi ga tateba	As the days pass
Wasurete shimau	The earthquake is
Shinsai wo	Slowly forgotten
Jishuku chiiki ga	Despite the proliferation of
Kakudai shite mo	No go areas[26]
Gienkin wo	Because they didn't
Dasanai tame ni	Donate any money to the victims
Kokuban e	There are children
Namae harareta	Whose names are written
Jidōra ga iru	On the blackboard[27]

In the previous two poems, the narrative sharpens its rhetoric and a critical tone enters the narrative.

Hinansho wa	Evacuation centers
Yakume wo oete	Fulfil their function
Heisa sare	And are closed
Kasetsu jūtaku	Temporary housing facilities
Hodohodo umaru	Are only partly filled[28]

Here the criticism becomes political.

Joen shita	Paddy fields
Inada wa buji ni	With the salt removed
Koganeiro	Happily turn to gold
Ase no kesshō to	The fruit of our sweat
Nōka wa kataru	Say the farmers[29]

The poem points to an ironic contrast: the rice can finally be harvested—thus the golden fields—but the harvest is the result of superhuman efforts.

Poetry can perform many functions and in Yamakawa's book, the narrative moves beyond the depiction of trauma to assume the role of political and social commentary. The style of Yamakawa's verse is clear, avoiding difficult diction and old-fashioned language to speak plainly to readers.

9.4 Anatomy of a Tanka Masterpiece

Following are translations from Ōguchi Ryōko's (b. 1969) fourth collection of tanka, *Torisan naita* (The Birds Wept, 2013), which (as mentioned in the previous chapter) was awarded the Wakayama Bokusui Prize in 2012 and the *Geijutsu Senshō Shinjin shō* (New Poet Arts Award) in 2013. Ōguchi is probably the best-known author among the poets examined in this study and has achieved much renown as a tanka poet, and like the other poets whose work is discussed here, she is a survivor of the event. One of the most acclaimed tanka collections to be published on the theme of the 2011 earthquake, and subsequent tragedies, this volume demands a sustained analysis from a variety of perspectives. The book has a number of explanatory notes, some of which I translate. The narrative of the earthquake is intensely personal and is interwoven into the poet's familial relationships, especially connected to her husband and children. The volume includes poetry written from 2005 to 2012 and covers a large number of events significant in the poet's life, including childbirth, her religious faith and moving addresses.[30] The book cannot simply be characterised simply as a narrative tale in the sense of a story because it also contains psychological insights and a social and historical dimension.

The book is divided by number into three chapters, and each chapter is further divided into a number of subheadings with various individual tanka included under the general heading or theme, although the number of tanka collected under each heading vary in number. There are 47 subheadings, which

loosely relate to the poems included therein. Several hundred tanka are included in the collection but less than half directly address the tragedy of 2011. The first four tanka translated here are taken from chapter three of the collection, under the subheading below.

It grew quiet

Gakubuchi no Naka no Sakura to Kyōkai ga Mirumiru katamuki Ochite waretari	Inside the frame The cherry-blossoms And church In an instant fell And shattered[31]
Chikai shyōrai Kanarazu kuru to Iware i shi Yure to omoitsutsu Ko wo daki taeru	People said In the near future It was inevitable Here be the earthquake, I thought I clutched my child and held on[32]
Mizu, denki, gasu Tomaritaru wo Iu ware ni "Tsunami to genpatsu" to Otto wa iradatsu	When I said The water, electricity and gas Has stopped My husband responded, irritated "Tsunami and nuclear plant"[33]
Yure no nochi Shizuke kari keri Shussha suru Otto wo miokuri Yuki ni kizukeri	After the earthquake It grew quiet Sending my husband off To go to work I noticed the snow[34]

These four tanka not only document the earthquake but also integrate the experience of the event with the quotidian tensions of family life, focusing on the relationship between husband and wife.

The following tanka proceeds on from the previous section, but with the subheading "news", and with a head note.

Father Andre LaChapelle (76). Sent as a foreign missionary 50 years earlier by the Société des Missions-Étrangères du Québec; 15 years ago, he was appointed as the chief priest of the Shiogama Church.

Pasupōto ga Mazu hongoku e Shirase taru Sono shi wo warera Futsukago ni kiku	Because of his passport The notification was sent first To his home country We heard about his death Two days later[35]

Ōguchi's relationship with the Roman Catholic Church in Japan is one of the themes of this collection. The next tanka is included under the subheading of "distance" (kyori) and follows directly after "news".

Gūguru mappu	Again and again
Ikutabi mo miru	I stared at Google Maps
Genpatsu to	Checking the distance
Ware to no kyori wo	Between myself
Tashikame nagara	And the nuclear reactor[36]

The next tanka is included under the subheading "escape" (nigeru), and follows directly on from the previous subheading, as does the tanka following.

Chūya tōbun	Because the equinox
Chikazukeba	Grows closer
Hibi akiraka ni	It's clear that every day
Ko no kami ni	Radioactive particles are
Furu hōshasenryō	Falling upon the heads of my children[37]

The Spring or Vernal Equinox was on March 20 2011; a few weeks after the nuclear meltdown that happened on 13 March 2011.

Hinanmin to	Having become a refugee
Narite samayou	Wandering around
Sendai eki	Sendai Station
Higashiguchi mina	At the East Gate everyone
Masuku shite ori	Wearing facemasks[38]

This last tanka from Ōguchi that I examine is also included in "escape".

Banshun no	In late spring
Jishuhinan,	A voluntary evacuation,
Sokai, idō, ijū,	Involuntary evacuation, transfer, relocation,
Iikae nagara	No matter how I say it
Matabi ni narinu	I have embarked on a fateful journey[39]

We can see that this last tanka returns to one of the major themes of the collection: the idea of exile and change, as the earthquake necessitates constant shifts by the people affected, and in the poet's case, by her family.

Finally, I investigate a renowned collection of haiku, one of the major traditional genres contemporary verse.

9.5. Poems from the Palace of the Dragon King

One of the most acclaimed books of haiku poetry that treats the earthquake, tsunami and meltdown is Terui Midori's (b. 1962) collection *Ryūgū* (Palace of the Dragon King, 2013). In the same year of publication, the collection was awarded the 12th *Haiku Four Seasons Prize* and the 68th *Contemporary Haiku Association Prize*. The book consists of 223 poems, divided into six chapters. In the postscript to the collection Terui explains the circumstances behind its publication:

> This book, *In the Palace of the Dragon King*, is my fifth collection of haiku verse, the first in four years. Providing nothing intervened, I was intending to select poems that I had composed from the spring of 2008 to make a collection. However, because of my husband's work, we were living in Kamaishi city when the earthquake struck. My inner world was severely shaken, and I was forced to survive constantly facing life and death. Since then, making the verse which was born from days of gratitude and prayer, into a pillar, all the while under the shadow of death around me and despite my own immaturity, I decided to put together a collection with all my heart and soul, dedicated to those who were forced to suffer terrible deaths from the tsunami.[40]

The similarities between Terui and the other authors examined here lay primarily in the common experience of surviving the earthquake and consequent tragedies. Nevertheless, the volume, as is obvious from its title, which refers to a legendary or mythical palace under the sea, uses Japanese myth and legend as a trope to attempt to capture the spiritual as well as the spatial dimensions of the tragedy. In this sense, the religious and the cosmic dimensions of so many needless deaths combine in this collection, yet this does not prevent the poet from making comments from time to time on the social and political aspects of the event.

The following six haiku are all taken from the first chapter entitled "doro no hana" (Mud flowers).

Tsunami yori	After surviving
Ikite kaeru ya	The tsunami
Kuroki nyō	Black urine[41]

After the earthquake it was reported that urine turned black: a symptom of infection caused by drinking dirty water.

Futago nara	Twins
Onaji shinigao	The same faces in death
Momo no hana	Peach blossoms[42]

Haru no hoshi	The stars of springtime
Konnani hito ga	So many thousands
Shinda no ka	Have died[43]

The connection between the cosmic and the particular is well expressed in this poem.

San ten ichi ichi	On March 11
Tami wa kokka ni	The people were abandoned
Misuteraru	By the state[44]

Anger against the state for its inadequate preparations for a disaster of the proportions of March 2011 was widely felt throughout Japan, and, in many ways, is still ongoing.

Oboroyo no	A night of a smoky moon
Doro no fūzeshi	Sealed by mud
Kuro piano	A black piano[45]

Sorezore ni
Tamashii wo nose
Tori kaeru

Carrying a soul
For each and every one
Birds fly home[46]

The next three tanka are taken from chapter two "Myōkan" (Officials of the Otherworld).

Ima haha wa
Ryūgūjō no
Shirofuyō

Mother now
A white hibiscus
In the palace of the dead[47]

Mujū nite
Musai no mura no
Yamatsutsuji

A deserted
Village without colour
Mountain azaleas[48]

Kono atari
Wagaya to omou
Kadobi ka na

Around here
A balefire
Where I think my house used to be[49]

The next three tanka are taken from Chapter four "Yukisabi" (Snow-rust).

Kamaishi wa
Hone bakari nari
Ikanobori

Kamaishi:
Bones only remain
Kite-frames[50]

Shi wo mae ni
Renmen to yuki
Sara ni yuki

Before death comes
Never-ending snow
Still more snow[51]

This powerful verse reminds us of Blanchot's earlier comments on fragmentary writing, which is not to say that all haiku is fragmentary, but it is often remarked that the best haiku points readers in a direction of something not said, something yet to be said; in this they are incomplete.

Kansubaru
Tare mo dare ka no
Tada hitori

The Pleiades in winter
Everyone is someone's
Special one[52]

The next two tanka are taken from chapter six, the last chapter, "Gekkō" (Moon rainbow).

Kuri no hana
Sokushinbutsu no
Nururu kuchibiru

Chestnut blossoms
The slippery lips of
Those who became Buddhas[53]

Those who became Buddhas refers to cadavers.

Ama no kawa
Hyōryūsen no
Sabi fukaku

The Milky Way
On the floating derelicts
Rust everywhere[54]

The extended metaphor of the sea upon which floats the boats destroyed by the tsunami to the galaxy is typical of the conjunction of the cosmic and the

personal in this collection. We are also reminded of Jaspers' notion of foundering: "Foundering indicates the presence of nothingness and at the same time awareness of Being itself".[55]

9.6. Concluding Note

The collections of traditional-style poetry examined here explore in many different ways Jaspers' limit situations: by documenting the horrors of the catastrophe, by documenting the pain of the survivors, and by seeking spiritual consolation, or at least, understanding, in an attempt to cope with the trauma of loss and guilt. Virtually all of the poems examined above are composed by survivors of the earthquake and subsequent events; there is little in the way of considered reflection in these verses. The overall tone is somber—a sense of grief for those lost to the tsunami, and a sense of devastation among those who survived. Some of the poets introduce a religious aspect to their mourning: this is clear in the verse of Ōguchi Ryōko, who also recreates the feeling of dread that the nuclear meltdown brought. The nuclear meltdown is perhaps the one consequence of the disaster that presents an ongoing existential threat. And this is conveyed powerfully in the tanka of Ōguchi Ryōko and Yamakawa Noboru.

Such Japanese traditional modes of verse as tanka and haiku are short verse forms, which have few equivalents in the poetry of other languages, and hence by their very nature, are either highly allusive—depending upon, calling upon the pre-existing tradition of tanka and haiku for their meaning—or highly compressed explosions of feeling meant to convey momentary or fragmentary insights into what Jaspers calls limit situations. In general, this makes traditional genres of verse difficult to interpret and translate as much of the content is supported by assumed knowledge. However, the specific knowledge of the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011 in the northeast of Japan is well known and widely disseminated so that permits much of this verse to be intelligible to outsiders, who were not witnesses to the terrible tragedy. It should be stressed here is that while that I have selected representative poetry from the poets translated here, this is only a tiny sampling of verses from the collections of verse examined. Much more remains to be explored in the writing of these poets.

The question of whether the metapoetic meaning is amplified, enhanced or fundamentally transformed by this experience is difficult to answer without an investigation and comparison of other verse forms treating the same tragedy. My intuition is that the poetry of catastrophe, as demonstrated here, has an immediate impact upon readers, and the similarities between the verse of these very different poets disclose that impact in a very dynamic way in that the poems are almost all immediately intelligible, however varied and different

the background of readers. Naturally, for non-Japanese readers the poetry is only knowable in translation, and this renders the question of the impact of metrical schemes more complex as discussion of these forms is reliant upon knowledge of the original Japanese verse. Even in translation, the fragmentary yet compressed qualities of the poems are immediately apparent, I believe, and when comparing the tanka with haiku this becomes even more evident.

Free verse has narrative verse as one of the major pillars of its tradition; when we read the short verse forms translated above the only possible narrative derives from the collection as a whole, not individual poems. Possible narratives can be glimpsed in the volumes of these poets but explicit narrative with a story-line and characters (as can be seen in much poetry written in European languages) cannot. The tradition of tanka and haiku by and large is hostile to the extended narratives often found in European poetry thus we find the necessity of constructing a different hermeneutic for traditional Japanese verse. As is obvious from the poetry analysed here, there is a personal element, characteristic of the lyric in several languages, that is prominent in much of the verse. The speaking voice of lyric poetry is not simply an imitation of the poet's own voice—though intimately related to it—as Jonathan Culler has argued in his well-received 2015 book *Theory of the Lyric*.[56] Culler's conclusion is that lyric poetry is an *epideictic* discourse, which is a much more fulsome notion that is traditionally held. The voices these poets create are shifting but distinct, especially in the tanka; the haiku are more diverse utterances, with much hanging upon readers to draw their own conclusions. The existential crises revealed within the verse, even by the "amateur poets", are impressively conveyed, and confirm the truth of Blanchot's declaration about reading the literature of catastrophe: "Reading is anguish, and this is because any text, however important, or amusing it may be (and the more engaging it seems to be), is empty—at bottom it doesn't exist; you have to cross an abyss, and if you do not jump, you do not comprehend."[57]

Reflections

> "I should like to begin by laying special emphasis on what may appear at first glance almost a truism, the importance of not placing any reliance at all on the indirect evidence furnished by translated texts. Translated words and sentences are partial equivalents at the very most. They may serve as rough-and-ready guides to our fumbling first steps, but in many cases they are quite inadequate and even misleading. And in any case they can never afford a reliable basis, for discussion of the structure of the ethical world-view of a people [...] however, if we are but reminded that even when we are actually reading a text in the original we tend almost unconsciously to read into it our own concepts fostered by our mother tongue, and thus to transmute many, if not all, of its key terms into equivalent terms obtainable in our native language. But if we do this, we are, in reality, doing nothing more than understanding the original text in a translation; we are, in other words, manipulating translated concepts without being aware of it".
>
> From *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* by Toshihiko Izutsu[1]

The warning against undue reliance on translation quoted above may seem to contradict the main thrust of this book, namely, that by reading through literature in translation the responses of Japanese to various disasters and tragedies that occurred in the modern era we come to a deeper understanding of what these events signify to the people of Japan; we gain a more profound knowledge of the possibilities of literature written in Japanese and that lessons can be drawn from this for people living outside Japan. The issues at stake are twofold: the reliability of reading literature in translation or even the possibility of a non-Japanese reading Japanese literature in the original in any way that is meaningful; and the connection between literature and the larger social context from which it is born. In regard to the first, in two earlier books—*Modern Japanese Culture* (2003) and *The Alien Within* (2009)— using the insights of such thinkers on language and translation as Lawrence Venuti (b. 1953), George Steiner (b.1929), Willard Van Orman Quine (1908–2000) and Hans-Georg Gadamer (1902–2002), I have argued in various places that translation is indispensable to the process of understanding the thought of peoples whose culture and language differ from our own.[2] Indeed, it is absolutely necessary, but, with a number of important provisos. Rather than reiterate arguments that I have discussed in more detail in the two books referred to earlier; I will summarize my thinking on the issue.

The argument that is most powerful in any attempt to read the literature of a culture foreign to one's own is that advanced by the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer in his seminal 1960 book *Wahrheit und Methode* (Truth and Method) where he maintains that the hermeneutic method (Gadamer's own theory of interpretation) or "horizon" as he calls it, outlines a rationale for dialogue in which: "the dialectic of question and answer always precedes the dialectic of interpretation. It is what determines understanding as an event."[3]

This dialectical methodology thus determines that: "the true locus of hermeneutics is this in-between."[4] Gadamer gives credit to the philosopher Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) for his insight that a language view is a worldview but argues that "in the same way as with perception we can speak of the 'linguistic shadings' that the world undergoes in different language worlds [...] each one potentially contains every other one within it—i.e. each worldview can be extended into every other. It can understand and comprehend, from within itself, the 'view' of the world presented in another language."[5] To relate this insight to the problem outlined above, we can first acknowledge that this viewpoint is explicitly comparative, a dialectic or dialogue between the reader of the Japanese text, and the author of the text (another way of describing the process of translation). It is also explicitly contextual, attempting a reading/translation that is firmly rooted in a deep understanding of the specific circumstances of the text and its author, and therefore that it is quite possible to comprehend the "world presented in another language." As one of its prime objectives, this book attempts to supply that contextual understanding, albeit within the limitations of a one volume study.

The renowned philosopher and translator Toshihiko Izutsu (1914–93) himself in *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an* (2002 edition) writes that:

> Each one of our words represents a particular perspective in which we see the word, and what is called a "concept" is nothing but the crystallization of such a subjective perspective; that is to say, it is a more or less stable form assumed by the perspective. Of course the perspective here is not subjective in the sense that it is individual; it is not individual but social, for it is the common possession of a whole community, handed down from preceding ages by historical tradition. And yet it is subjective in the sense that it brings in something of the positive human interest which makes our conceptual representation of the world not an exact duplicate of objective reality.[6]

This passage assumes that the words of the sacred text he is studying are open to understanding by others than those who wrote it (given the nature and purpose of sacred texts, it would be meaningless if it were not); and, further, that this process is not merely a matter of understanding of language but the specific historical tradition as well. This tradition is part of the contextual understanding that is referred to above as being one of the objects of this volume. This brings us to the second issue mentioned earlier, that of the connection between literature and the larger social context in which it is born. In a sense, this issue has already been addressed by the remarks above, but in the explicit context of a study of actual historical disasters and the relationship between literature that arises out of these tragedies the relationship becomes even more transparent. These comments notwithstanding, Izutsu's observation that our conceptual representation of the world is not an exact duplicate of objective reality is directly relevant to literature which acts on the assumption that the worlds of literature and of objective reality

are different, yet connected in a complex twisting of disparate threads composed as much of poetic fancy as verisimilitude, and this is very pertinent to questions of reading and evaluation.

Much of the literature produced as a result of war and catastrophe, whether earthquakes or violent storms and floods is an almost spontaneous reaction to the various traumas experienced by the authors. This is evident in the poetry written by kamikaze pilots about to die or in the poetry and prose composed within weeks or days after the horrific earthquakes of 1923 and 2011. The poetry of Wagō Ryōichi composed on site in the immediate aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, and also the nuclear meltdown (and during the many aftershocks that plagued the northeast of Japan for several months), is exemplary in this regard. Such writing rarely reaches the heights attained by work written long after the event or, like Tanizaki's great novel *The Makioka Sisters*, (also written many years after the typhoon and storms described within) inspired by actual events but is not an exact record of those events. Fujita Naoya's estimate cited earlier of two decades before masterpieces can arise out of tragedy is apposite. Tanizaki's novel was based partially on the notebooks he kept at the time but also on the records of schoolchildren that he accessed. This reminds us of perhaps the greatest novel written on the subject of the atomic bombing of Japan in 1945: Ibuse Masuji's (1898–1993) *Kuroi ame* (Black Rain, 1966), based on the diary of a survivor.

It is incorrect to assert however that such spontaneous writing is not important or significant literature. More than any other author and surpassing literature written in any other genre, Wagō's poetry has come to define the 2011 tragedy. He has become the authentic "voice" (if not, "face") of Fukushima. This is a result not only of the power of his verse but also because of the impact of social media, which includes Youtube and videos attached to social media (as noted earlier, his poems were nearly all produced as tweets before they appeared in books and magazines), and also such "old" media as TV and radio, where he is very active as a personality and literary figure.

The question remains as to how to evaluate those works of literature that are composed in "documentary" fashion soon after the catastrophe has occurred. The question of aesthetic evaluation, I believe, must remain a separate issue from the historical or sociological significance of such works, which is not to say that the two are not connected. It can be argued that all writing has some historical or sociological significance but in terms of literary or aesthetic value it is fair to say that some works can be and have been valued more highly than others. There are now thousands of stories and poems based on the 2011 earthquake available in Japanese (as any check of Japanese Google will verify). Only a few are widely known and read, not necessarily solely for their literary value, yet there is no doubt literary value plays a major role in their continuing relevance for readers. We recall the pessimistic pronouncement of the literary critic Miyoshi Yukio in 1976 that: "To the present day no literature worthy of

the name has been produced with the [1923] earthquake as its theme". I put 1923 in square brackets as this earthquake was what he was mainly referring to, but he also meant by implication the whole corpus of Japanese literature. I believe that this book proves that this view is not correct; I have cited and translated many powerful works of literature written as a result of the two most horrific earthquakes to strike Japan over the course of the past century.

The literature written during wartime is more problematic. As demonstrated in various parts of this book but especially in chapter five, such writing was subject to censorship, at times quite strict censorship, and thus produced under a number of constraints that militated against the free expression of the author; not to mention the many works (in particular verse) that were created on demand, not necessarily in response to the author's desire or intention, but written primarily as propaganda. I have tried to indicate where on occasion such writing could evade its constraints and make a powerful contribution to literature; that is, work that has a high literary or aesthetic value as judged by later generations of Japanese readers. Also, poets such as Maekawa Samio created verse that can even be read as anti-war writing or at the very least writing that dared to question the values and morality underpinning the "15 years" war.

The issue of aesthetic or literary evaluation can, for works written in the past, rest partially on the judgment of history. To be precise, it rests on the judgment (in the case of this book) of Japanese readers, critics, scholars and publishers who have determined the demand for one work over another and can enforce this demand through their control of the conditions and mechanisms governing publication. This disparate group of individuals, a community of interest that changes over time, is known traditionally as the "bundan" or literary world and has been much studied and discussed in Japan throughout the course of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, but less so outside Japan.[7]

Until recently, the majority of literature written and published in modern Japan, covering the period encompassed by this book, was either unavailable or overlooked in favor of a minority (substantial in size nevertheless) of selected, acclaimed literary works or authors (relative to all works or authors published), which are frequently reprinted, either in paperback form or in the multivolume sets of collected or selected series of works by individual authors or libraries of modern literature or sets compiled on particular themes, such as chronological sets covering the Taishō or Shōwa eras or libraries of writing on war or by women or in similar genre collections. Sometimes particular literary journals or magazines are also reprinted by scholarly publishers, and these reprints do broaden the base of literary works available in print, as do many of the sets cited above. With books being scanned into various electronic formats (pdf files or epubs etc), then subsequently sold as ebooks through various commercial publishers (i.e. Kindle books and such like), and

electronic databases for researchers appearing more frequently on the Internet, the literary database is gradually being broadened but it is difficult to see this occurring without some managerial direction on the part of the bundan.

It goes without saying that some kind of editorial process is essential given the time and effort (costing money) that goes into such activities. Further, readers cannot possibly read all the works currently in print (paper or electronic), let alone a putative future database that would cover most literature written in Japanese over the course of the last hundred years. Hence a critical framework/infrastructure that leads readers to works of significance, either aesthetic or historic, is indispensable. Indeed, this book is a tiny part of such an infrastructure. Much of the database used in this volume is taken from collections or selections of writing compiled by editors or editorial teams. For example, the poetry examined in chapter two is drawn primarily from such collections. I have made my own selections from these selections or collections of works, so my own literary judgement plays a major role in the picture I have painted of the literature of catastrophe. I have tried to make explicit the literary and aesthetic criteria behind my selections throughout the book, citing in the introduction the general rule of thumb that I have followed in my literary analysis by drawing on the insights of Michael Riffaterre, Peter Verdonk, Jonathon Culler, Yoshimoto Takaaki, Sei Ikuo, Izutsu Toshihiko and a host of other critics in Japan and the West. On occasion my literary judgement differs from the bundan, and when this occurs, I have tried to make my reasoning transparent.

In short, this work (and most others) cannot escape from the process of bundan management, interpreted as broadly as possible. It could be argued that chapter three on Kusaba Sakae's account of the battle of Nomonhan is a departure from the established canon or infrastructure of modern Japanese literature overseen by the bundan but, on reflection, if this is true, it is only a partial exception to the rule, given that I draw upon other published Japanese fiction and non-fiction to create a hermeneutic framework for understanding and evaluation.[8] As mentioned earlier, I have sought to cite original works in their original published format as far as possible in this book but having recourse to republished series is simply unavoidable when writing on a topic as large as the literature of disaster in Japan covering the whole of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. This is not necessarily a negative as the integrity and motives of the overwhelming majority of bundan participants are not in question. Without their mighty labors in creating the large database of Japanese literature that is available to readers in the present, this book, and most others like it, could not have been written. However, it is necessary to raise this issue so as to provide readers with a broad overview of the sources used in researching and writing the book, and to highlight the questions that arise from the selection and evaluation of the literary works discussed here.

To return the questions raised by Toshihiko Izutsu above, translation is the chief means by which I communicate the content of the works used my discussion of disaster and trauma in literature. How efficacious is translation in conveying the full import of literature produced by disaster or written on the topic of disaster? Earlier I cited Izutsu's remarks that allude to the doctrine of untranslatability in Islamic tradition where, "translators are readily held to be apostates and heretics".[9] Izutsu develops his ideas further:

> Thus the immediate reality of existence, whatever it is, is not presented to our ideation as it originally and naturally is, but rather through the prism of symbols registered in our vocabulary. This prism of symbols is not a mere imitation, a mere duplicate of the original reality, and the symbols do not correspond exactly to the forms of reality; they are rather ideational forms, by the sole agency of which anything becomes a real object for our intellectual apprehension [...]. What is most important to remark in this respect is not only that each community has its particular way of isolating the segments and units, which are therefore peculiar to itself, but that these segments and units form among themselves a system. They are not simply there without any order; on the contrary, they constitute a very complex, highly organized, whole. And the way they are combined and put in relation with each other is no less peculiar to the community than the nature of the segments themselves. This organized whole, peculiar to each community, is what is called vocabulary [...]. Vocabulary—or, more generally, language with its web of connotative patterns—is primarily a system of 'articulatory' forms, in accordance with which we dissect the perpetual flux of nature into a certain number of entities and events. In Benjamin Whorf's pertinent words, each language is 'a provisional analysis of reality', since 'language dissects nature differently'. Even the same kind of ordinary experience is usually segmented by different languages in different ways. Out of one and the same situation, different languages tend to isolate different categories of essentials; and each language has its own peculiar way of grouping the units thus isolated into a certain number of higher systems, which again are put together into a comprehensive network of concepts. And that is vocabulary.[10]

From this quotation, we see that Izutsu is using Benjamin Lee Whorf's (1897–1941) ideas on language (still highly controversial) but Izutsu's reading of Whorf does not hold that translation is impossible—on the contrary, Izutsu himself translates numerous passages from the *Qur'an* in his study. The point he makes is that, without a detailed philological exegesis of the kind he habitually employs, "translation turns out to be far more frequently misleading than enlightening."[11] This book uses a variety of means to provide the philological exegesis necessary to understand the literature of disaster, as noted above, not unlike Izutsu's own practice in his study. Therefore, the translations included are themselves not problematic, and in my opinion, more enlightening than misleading, in that I have tried to provide a large body of data and evidence to assist in reading the literary works investigated herein.

The conclusions that can be drawn from reading the literature of disaster are many; most are summarized in the concluding notes at the end of each of

the chapters. The tension between reading historical (non-fictional) accounts of catastrophe, and reading literature that is partly or completely fictional is well expressed in the famous historian Inga Clendinnen's (1943–2016) ruminations in her 1999 book *Reading the Holocaust*:

> [...] I am persuaded that we listen differently to stories which are 'real', however naively or awkwardly reported, from stories, however beguiling, which we know to be invented. With a work of fiction, we marvel at the fictioneer's imagination. With real thought and actions presented for our scrutiny we are brought to wonder at ourselves.[12]

But only a few pages later, as Clendinnen reaches the end of her book, she concludes with a (translated) poem:

> Whatever the virtues of novelists and historians, it is still the poets who say most, and most succinctly, I conclude with the words of a Polish poet who [...] won the Nobel Prize for Literature, who says much of what I have been trying to say over these many pages in as many words.[13]

As Jonathan Culler in his book *Theory of the Lyric* has argued, poetry, especially lyric poetry (nearly all the poetry translated and analyzed here falls into that category), may well stake a different claim to fiction in its representation of reality:

> I have been concerned [...] to show that [...] the model of lyric as intense expression of the subjective experience of the poet does not fit a great many poems, whether ancient or modern. More important, it leads away from the language of the poem to an experience of the poet, which a reader is supposed to try to reconstruct. But our attention should be directed to experiencing the poem itself as an event, not to discovering what the author might have experienced. The dramatic monologue also demands of the reader a reconstruction—this time of the situation and motives of a fictional speaker/character rather than the author. But for many poems of the tradition, attempting to work out who is speaking brings no benefits and obscures rather than clarifies what the poem itself is doing. Even when it is possible to imagine a speaker, this orientation emphasizes the fictional dimension of the poem, neglecting those ritualistic and musical elements that make the poem compel our attention in the first place [...] Kate Hamburger's modification of the Hegelian model so as to differentiate lyric from fiction offers a promising framework. The lyric is, at bottom, a statement about this world rather than the projection of a fictional speaker and a fictional world. Her principle that the relationship between the lyric "I" and the living poet is indeterminate emphasizes what was already at least implicit in Hegel's version of what I have been calling, somewhat abusively, the romantic model: the subjectivity at work in the lyric is a formal principle of unity more than the consciousness of a given individual. This model can accommodate the strain of lyric, both classical and modern, that I have frequently emphasized: lyric as epideixis—public discourse about meaning and value—made distinctive by its ritualistic elements. With this conception as a starting point, one can then specify that many lyrics incorporate fictional elements, whether identifiable speakers, as in dramatic monologues, rudimentary plots, as in ballads, or

> simply incidents made notable by their insertion in the fundamentally hyperbolic space of a lyric poem.[14]

I would suggest that since Clendinnen's book was published nearly two decades ago the distinctions she makes between fiction and non-fiction, and poetry as literature have shifted to accommodate a more complex, but in many ways, more capacious understanding of these genres. The quotation from Culler above is an example of how the clear-cut boundary between fiction and non-fiction can be blurred in poetry, although this does not render poetry any less potent in its power to move readers. Ruth Franklin in her 2011 book *A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction* makes a similar claim in her discussion of the novelist Thomas Keneally's (b. 1935) book *Schindler's Ark* (1982) and its cinematic adaptation by the director Steven Spielberg (b. 1946) under the title *Schindler's List* (1993):

> How Keneally could believe that a book that he himself claimed contained no fictional elements could nonetheless "qualify as fiction" may forever remain a mystery. Today the label of "nonfiction" novel has fallen out of use, and it is no longer unusual to find nonfiction that borrows techniques from the art of the novel [...]. *Schindler's Ark* published now, would likely be called "narrative nonfiction" [...]. We might accept, as we must for so many works of literature about the Holocaust, that "if there is a line between fact and fiction, it may by necessity be a winding border that tends to bind these two categories as much as it separates them, allowing each side to dissolve occasionally into the other", as James E. Young has written.[15]

Whatever the preferred nomenclature, the present understanding of the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction, and the status of lyric poetry, allows providentially for the analysis practiced above on the literature of disaster. Captain Kusaba's *Noro Hills* is undoubtedly a work that straddles fiction and non-fiction, drawing from both genres to achieve its effects. The *tanka* on World War II written by those who perished in the conflict also partake of several elements of the lyric as expounded by Culler in the quotation above, and these elements include both ritual and the rhythms of traditional Japanese verse. The postcolonial dilemma explored by Ōshiro Tatsuhiro in his depiction of *yuta*, while clearly fiction, is based upon the ineluctable reality of the US bases in Okinawa (and Japan generally), a highly contemporary and contentious political issue, thus demonstrating the complex and diverse connections between fiction and reality, among many other themes. The poetry and prose written on the 2011 earthquake and tsunami is documentary but also prophetic, as well as highly political. We can conclude that the literature of disaster, the writing of disaster, is not a disaster after all: rather, it reflects the many-faceted human response to catastrophe in a way that enables memory, that mourns the dead and moves readers to hitherto unexperienced epiphanies of understanding, and pity, to use the venerable Aristotelian benchmark.

A pity beyond words, but not beyond the limitations of the human imagination to share in the sorrow arising out of natural disasters, and to cultivate an unquenchable anger at the devastation to which the folly of war can lead.

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Introduction: Notes

[1] Plomer (1973), *Collected Poems*, 146. Note that all names are in the Japanese order of surname first except when the author is published in English with the surname last, and that all translations are by the author unless otherwise stated.

[2] See, for example, *Imag(in)ing the War in Japan: Representing and Responding to Trauma in Postwar Literature and Film* edited by David Stahl and Mark Williams (2010); *Japan at Nature's Edge: The Environmental Context of a Global Power* edited by Ian Jared Miller, Julia Adeney Thomas and Brett L. Walker (2013); *Literature and Art After Fukushima: Four Approaches* edited by Lisette Gebhardt and Yuki Masami (2014); *When The Tsunami Came to Shore: Culture and Disaster in Japan* edited by Roy Starrs (2014); *Visions of Precarity in Japanese Popular Culture and Literature* edited by Kristina Iwata-Weickgenannt and Roman Rosenbaum (2015); *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* edited by Barbara Geilhorn and Kristina Iwata-Weickgennant (2016); Alex Bates (2015), *The Culture of the Quake* and David C. Stahl's (2018) *Trauma, Dissociation and Re-enactment in Japanese Literature and Film*.

[3] In this volume "prewar" refers to the period before the outbreak of World War II in Europe, i.e. 1939, and "postwar" refers to the period after the end of World War II, i.e. 1945.

[4] There is a new field of social scientific research called disaster studies, which "address the social and behavioral aspects of sudden onset collective stress situations typically referred to as mass emergencies or disasters" (Lindell, 1) but this book is concerned solely with literary representations of disasters and so cannot be classified as belonging to this research domain. For details, see Michael K. Lindell (2013), "Disaster Studies", 797-825.

[5] Maurice Blanchot (1980), *The Writing of the Disaster*, trans. Ann Smock; Kate McLoughlin (2011), *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Iliad to Iraq* and Christopher Coker (2014), *Men at War: What Fiction Tells us about Conflict from The Iliad to Catch-22*. Such multi-essay volumes as *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II* ed. Marina Mackay (2009) are also useful additions to the scholarship on literature and war.

[6] Amongst a vast literature on the subject, some notable works on the Holocaust and literature include: James E. Young (1990), *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*; Inga Clendinnen (1999), *Reading the Holocaust*; Susan Gubar (2003), *Poetry After Auschwitz*; Zöe Vania Waxman (2006), *Writing the Holocaust* and Ruth Franklin (2011), *A Thousand Darknesses: Lies and Truth in Holocaust Fiction*. Important studies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb literature include: *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses* ed. and trans. Richard H. Minear (1990), Walter A. Davis (2001), *Deracination: Historicity, Hiroshima and the Tragic Imperative* and John Treat (1995), *Writing Ground Zero: Japanese Literature and the Atomic Bomb*.

[7] There are a number of excellent books on earthquakes from the larger viewpoint of culture or art (including some of the volumes mentioned in footnote 2); see, for example, Bates, *The Culture of the Quake*; Iwata-Weickgenannt and Rosenbaum, *Visions of Precarity in Japanese Popular Culture and Literature*; Starrs, *When The Tsunami Came to Shore*; Clancey (2006), *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Seismicity, 1968-1930* and Weisenfeld (2012), *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's*

Great Earthquake of 1923. The two volumes by David C. Stahl and Mark Williams respectively, listed in footnote 2, focus mainly on literature produced after the Second World War. In addition, there are excellent individual volumes on war literature that focus on a single author such as Hino Ashihei (1907-60) or Ōoka Shōhei (1909-88); see David M. Rosenfeld (2002), *Unhappy Soldier: Hino Ashihei and Japanese World War II Literature* and David C. Stahl (2003), *The Burdens of Survival: Ōoka Shōhei's Writings on the Pacific War*. There are also a number of fine genre studies in English on Japanese war literature with a specific emphasis on poetry or diaries or on the family and women, or the Japanese wartime empire and colonialism. Examples include Steve Rabson's (1998) *Righteous Cause or Tragic Folly: Changing Views of War in Modern Japanese Poetry*; Kimberly T. Kono (2010), *Romance, Family, and Nation in Japanese Colonial Literature*; Robert T. Tierney (2010), *Tropics of Savagery: The Culture of Japanese Empire in Comparative Frame*; Noriko J. Horiguchi (2012), *Women Adrift: The Literature of Japan's Imperial Body*; Shunsuke Tsurumi (1986), *An Intellectual History of Wartime Japan: 1931-1945*; Donald Keene's (2010) *So Lovely A Country Will Never Perish: Wartime Diaries of Japanese Writers* and Aaron William Moore's (2013) *Writing War: Soldiers Record the Japanese Empire*.

8 No plays or dramas are examined, nor do I undertake any study of speeches, or dramatic scripts written for radio, TV or the cinema, as research on these genres demand specialist expertise which lies within the province of authorities in drama or cinema studies.

9 Some representative studies that have appeared over the last decade are: Shimura (2011 [ed]), *Daishinsai no kiroku to bungaku*; Kawamura (2013), *Shinsai genpatsu bungakuron*; Kimura (2013), *Shinsaigo bungakuron*; Komori (2014), *Shisha no koe, seija no koe*; Maeda (2016), *Jishin to bungaku*; Iida, Ichishi et al /Genkaiken (2017 [eds]), *Higashi Nippon daishinsaigo bungakuron* and Kimura (2018), *Sono go no shinsaigo bungakuron*. Three recent volumes are: Mizuta (2018, [ed)], *Unruly Cradle*, Iwanami (2018, [ed)], *3.11 o kokoro ni kizande* and Chiba (2019), *Gendai bungaku wa "shinsai no kizu" o iyaseru ka? —3.11 no shōgeki to merankorii*.

10 Morton (2013), "Self-Censorship: The Case of Wartime Japanese Poetry", 112-133.

11 On the relationship between literature and the medical sciences, Walter A. Davis writes that "great literature offers us insights into the dynamics of the psyche that exceed the concepts and frameworks that have informed psychoanalysis thus far." (Davis (2001), *Deracination*, xvi)

12 For the most part, I leave historical analysis to historians, who have their own disciplinary rules and methodologies, and which differ significantly from the rules and methodologies of literary analysis, despite some elements of inevitable overlap.

13 Some readers may see this brief discussion of historical analysis as naïve and uninformed, given the writings of historians like Hayden White who in his influential 1973 work *Metahistory* sees in historical writing "the transformation of chronicle into story" (p. 5) and thus adopts many of the formal methods of literary analysis to read history, or more properly, individual historians. However, not all historians share White's preoccupation with rhetorical analysis, and few historians, I suggest, would wish to conflate the methodologies of literary analysis with that of history.

14 Riffaterre (1990), *Fictional Truth*, xiii, xiv.

15 Ibid, xiv.

16 Ibid, xv.

17 Verdonk (2013), *The Stylistics of Poetry*, 80-81.

18 Ibid, 85.

[19] Coleridge (1907), *Biographia Literaria*, chap. 14, p.1.
[20] Culler (2015), *Theory of the Lyric*, 2.
[21] Ibid, 304-5.
[22] Ibid, 331.
[23] Gibson (2009), "Literature and Knowledge", 482.
[24] See Morton (1996), "Japan" in *Australia in Asia: Communities of Thought*.
[25] On Yasukuni, see, for example, Breen (2011), "Voices of Rage".
[26] My research on Soh and *Mother Burning* is available in chapter three of my 2004 book *Modernism in Practice* and translations from *Mother Burning* are available in my translation volume *Minashita Kiryū, Yotsumoto Yasuhiro and Soh Sakon: Selected Poems* (2017).
[27] I will add a brief record of my own experience of 3.11 in my office at the Tokyo Institute of Technology, located in central Tokyo. My office was on the corner of the 10th floor (the top floor) of a building built a few decades ago. The earthquake struck when I was at my desk working in my office, and after scrambling to protect myself by ducking into the well cavity of my thankfully large desk, the initial shaking multiplied what seemed like many times and the office not only moved quickly up and down like a ship at sea, but also swayed back and forth. The movements became more violent. I had experienced hundreds of earthquakes during my 20 odd years residence in Japan but nothing like this. The old, heavy printer on my desk slid off onto the floor when the desk tilted at an alarming angle (as did the room itself), and the violent shaking snapped a number of the heavy bolts holding my bookshelves to the walls, and the metal shelves and books came crashing down. Everything fell out or downwards—filing cabinets, bookshelves, tables, computers, crockery etc—this continued for what seemed hours (no more than a few minutes), the shaking all the time appearing to be getting more violent. I feared the building would collapse but Japanese building codes are the toughest in the world, and finally, it stopped. I later confirmed that there was no serious structural damage. The car journey home, which usually took 30 minutes, lasted several hours, as vehicles in central Tokyo formed an unimaginable traffic jam. Naturally, my experience was nothing compared to the people living in the northeast.

Chapter One: Notes

[1] *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū* Vol. 12 [1923]: 593, ed, Sone, Hiroyoshi (2002).
[2] Figures cited in Wada (2007), "Kantō daishinsai to modan toshi", 609 in *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, ed, Wada Hirofumi. See also Clancey (2006), *Earthquake Nation: The Cultural Politics of Japanese Seismicity 1868-1930*.
[3] Joseph Hammer (2006), *Yokohama Burning*, 244. In J. Charles Schencking's detailed study of the earthquake damage, the figure of 2.5 million people being made homeless is cited. Schencking (2009), "1923 Tokyo as a Devastated War and Occupation Zone", 111-3.
[4] On the poetry of Nishiwaki, see Hirata (1993), *The Poetry and Poetics of Nishiwaki Junzaburō* and Nishiwaki Junzaburō (1991), *Gen'ei: Selected Poems of Nishiwaki Junzaburō*, Trans. Yasuko Claremont.
[5] In this chapter my approach is quite different, for example, from Alex Bates' fine study dealing primarily with the impact of the 1923 earthquake on fiction and film, with some consideration of plays composed on the theme of the earthquake, but which does not treat poetry, see Bates (2015), *The Culture of the Quake*.
[6] Bates, *The Culture of the Quake*. Yukiko Dejima (2016) in "Tsunamis and Earthquakes in Japanese Literature", 90-92, also includes a brief but useful two-page summary of various writings about the earthquake.

7 Photograph taken from *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, Ed. Wada Hirofumi (2007), (original source: the Ōsaka Mainichi newspaper).
8 Ibid, 609-12. For details on the response of Japanese newspapers to the crisis, see Schenking (2009), "1923 Tokyo as a Devastated War and Occupation Zone", 119-122.
9 Cited Wada, *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, 612.
10 Weisenfeld (2012), *Imaging Disaster*, 69.
11 Cited Wada, *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, 613.
12 Cited ibid, 614.
13 Ibid.
14 Cited ibid, 615.
15 *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū* Vol. 12 [1923]: 614.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
19 Hammer, *Yokohama Burning*, 167. Gennifer Weisenfeld cites a figure of over 6,000 deaths, *Imaging Disaster*, 66. See J. Charles Schenking for a detailed analysis of the massive military mobilization accompanying the deaths, Schenking, "1923 Tokyo as a Devastated War and Occupation Zone", 116-9.
20 *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū* Vol. 13 [1924]: 550, ed. Kamei, Hideo.
21 For a part translation and discussion, see Perry (2014), *Recasting Red Culture in Proletarian Japan*, 162-166.
22 Alex Bates discusses these debates in *The Culture of The Quake*, 40-50.
23 *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū* Vol. 12 [1923]: 554-5. For another analysis of this debate, see Karlsson (2014), "Proletarian Writers and the Great Tokyo Earthquake of 1923", 299-318 in Starrs (ed.) *When the Tsunami Came to Shore*.
24 *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū* Vol. 12 [1923]: 558-9.
25 See *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū,* 13: 11-272 for a selection of such works. The discussion over the impact of the 1923 earthquake on literature did not end at the time. Maeda Jun summarizes and analyses a well-known debate about this issue, which occurred in the 1960s and 1970s between three famous critics: Inagaki Tatsurō, Odagiri Susumu and Miyoshi Yukio. See Maeda (2016), *Jishin to bungaku*, 134-141.
26 *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū,* 12: 535.
27 Kishi (2011), "Kindaibungakushatachi no shinsai kiroku", 116-7 in Shimura (ed), *Daishinsai no kiroku to bungaku*.
28 Ibid, 118.
29 *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū,* 12: 537, 542.
30 Wada, *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, 53.
31 Ibid, 54-5.
32 Ibid, 56.
33 Seidensticker (1965), *Kafū the Scribbler*, 106-7.
34 Kishi, "Kindaibungakushatachi no shinsai kiroku", 104-5 in Shimura, *Daishinsai no kiroku to bungaku*.
35 Yoshida (1971), *Nagai Kafū*, 146-51.
36 Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler*, 111.
37 Nagai Kafū, "Kashima no onna" in *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū* Vol. 15 [1926]: 154-62, ed. Kamei, Hideo.
38 Tsuboi (1998), "Jūgoen gojussen—shinsai tsuisōki" in *Tsuboi Shigeji zenshū,* 2: 242-3. Note that in this reprinted narrative, the word Korean (senjin or chōsenjin) is inserted

by the editors into the text as they believed the omissions (fuseji) indicated in the original—the original published story was censored—stood for this word.

39 Ibid, 243.

40 Ibid, 244.

41 Saitō Mokichi (1929), "Nihon daijishin" in the *Aozora Bunko* [ebook] edition, 9.

42 Dejima (2016), "Tsunamis and Earthquakes in Japanese Literature", 92.

43 Yoshimura (1973), *Kantō daishinsai*, 158-160.

44 See chaps 12 and 13, ibid, 136-158.

45 Akutagawa, *Akutagawa Ryūnosuke shū*, 255. This is my own translation; for a complete translation of the work by Jay Rubin, see Akutagawa (2006), *Ryūnosuke Akutagawa: Rashōmon and Seventeen Other Stories*, 186-206. The English novelist David Peace (b. 1967), who has resided in Japan since 1994, has written a short dramatic recreation of Akutagawa and the 1923 earthquake, see Peace (2012), "After the Disaster, Before the Disaster".

46 *Hennentai: Taishō bungaku zenshū,* 15: 661-2. For a good analysis of this type of publication, see Bates, *The Culture of the Quake*, 73-88.

47 Reproduced in Wada, *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, 5.

48 Ibid, 10.

49 Ibid, 103.

50 Ibid, 104-5.

51 Young (1990), *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust*, 90.

52 *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, 95.

53 Ibid.

54 Gubar (2003), *Poetry After Auschwitz*, 150.

55 *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, 65.

56 Ibid, 221. For details of Claudel's movements, and the frantic efforts of Western diplomats to seek out their loved ones, see Hammer, *Yokohama Burning*, pp. 176-7.

57 *Kantō daishinsai [Modan toshi bunka 26]*, 299-300.

58 Ibid, 325.

59 *Aizu Yaichi zenshū*, 5: 158.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid, 159.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid, 161.

64 Ibid, 163.

65 Kubota Utsubo (1992), *Kashū Kagamiba,* 77.

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid, 78.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid, 79.

71 For details on naturalism and tanka, see Morton (2009), *The Alien Within: Representations of the Exotic in Twentieth-Century Japanese Literature*, 92-6.

72 For details of Akiko's life, see Beichmann (2002), *Embracing The Firebird*. For translations from her most famous book of poetry, see Morton (2007), *Yosano Akiko no "Midaregami" wo eigo de ajiwau*.

73 The first colloquial version of *Genji* produced by Akiko was published in 1912-3, and, according to Gay Rowley, the work that was destroyed in the fires was to be a detailed

commentary on or annotated version of the text. Her third version was published in 1938-9. See G.G. Rowley (2000), *Yosano Akiko and The Tale of Genji* for details, 135-9.

74 Hirako (ed, 1995), *[Nenpyō: Sakka Tokuhon] Yosano Akiko*, 116-121.

75 Yosano (2007), *Tekkan Akiko zenshū*. Vol. 22. Ed. Itsumi Kumi, 242.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 Ibid, 243.

80 Ōtsuka (Ed., 2004), *Uta no imi ga sugu wakaru*, 227.

81 Yosano Akiko, *Tekkan Akiko zenshū*, 22: 243.

82 Ibid.

83 Ibid, 244.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid, 245.

86 Shinma (Annot., 1975), *Nihon no shiika: Yosano Tekkan Yosano Akiko*, 284.

87 Ibid.

88 Wakayama (1975), *Wakayama Bokusui zenkashū*, 457.

89 Ibid.

90 Ibid.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster*, 285.

97 Quoted in Maeda, *Jishin to bungaku*, 136.

98 Quoted ibid, 140.

99 For example, in the May 2013 edition of the monthly journal *Gendai shi techō* (Contemporary Poetry Handbook) an article by the poet Saitō Emiko (b.1960) recalls in the light of the 2011 earthquake the damage done by the 1923 earthquake, and the implications for society in general. See *Gendai shi techō* (May 2013) 56: 5, 27.

Chapter Two: Notes

1 Coker (2014), *Men at War*, 190-1.

2 Tanka are short poems mostly composed in a 31-syllable sequence of 5/7/5/7/7 syllables. Generally speaking, the composition and content of the form is looser and more relaxed than classical tanka (composed from the earliest times to the end of the nineteenth century) known as waka, which have the same syllable count but follow stricter rules relating to vocabulary correspondence.

3 The contrast here between professional and amateur is not meant to imply that some tanka poets lived exclusively on the income generated by their verse, as this was rarely the case. The word professional applies to poets who were recognized by their peers as important practitioners of tanka; they composed poetry as an attempt at creating art, not as simply a therapeutic exercise or hobby or as part of a ritual (like death poems)—in that sense they were "professional."

4 The original *Man'yōshū* is the oldest collection of Japanese poetry, collected and published in the 8th century.

5 Hayasaka (2007), *Heitai Man'yōshū*, 5.

6 Ibid, 71. This poem was originally published in the poetry journal *Tama* in May 1942.
7 Ibid, 32.
8 Hayasaka (2007), *Heitai Man'yōshū*, 71. This poem was originally published in the poetry journal *Tama* in May 1942.
9 Ibid, 106-07. This poem was originally published in February 1943 in a later issue of *Tama*.
10 Ibid, 55. This poem was first published in the journal *Kokumin Bungaku* (*People's Literature*) in February 1942.
11 Ibid, 70. This poem was first published in the *Tama* journal in May 1942.
12 Examples of such tanka can be found in Donald Keene's various articles on wartime poetry, especially "Japanese Writers and the Greater East Asian War," in his *Landscapes and Portraits*, 300-21.
13 Hayasaka, *Heitai Manyōshū*, 15. This poem was originally published in the *Tanka Collection from the Holy War* volume.
14 Ibid, 18.
15 Ibid, 12. This poem is taken from the *Tanka Collection from the Holy War* volume.
16 Ibid, 13.
17 See this approach in, for example, chapter five and Leith Morton, "Sensōshiron," *Hikaku Bungaku kenkyū* 91 (2008): 43-64.
18 See the biographies of Kawada in *Nihon Kindai Bungaku Daijiten*, 438-40, ed, Odagiri Hideo et al, and, also, the *Nihon Bungaku Shi Jiten: Kingendaihen*, 252, ed, Miyoshi Yukio et al. See also the brief study of Kawada in Kimata (1964), *Kindai tanka no kanshō to hihyō*, 581-99.
19 Kimata (1964), *Kindai tanka no kanshō to hihyō*, 594.
20 Ibid.
21 *Nihon Kindai Bungaku Daijiten*, 439.
22 Kawada (1942), *Shika taiheiyō sen*, 13.
23 Ibid, 10.
24 Ibid, 17.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid, 18.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid, 159.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid, 161.
31 Kawada (1942), *Shika nettai sakusen*, 176.
32 Ibid, 177.
33 Kawada (1973), *Gendai Nihon bungaku taikei*: *Kawada Jun shū*, 224.
34 Ibid.
35 Kimata (1964), *Kindai tanka no kanshō to hihyō*, 594.
36 Kawada, *Shika nanboku sakusen*, 135-40.
37 Ibid, 140.
38 Sone Hiroyoshi "Senzen senchū no bungaku—Shōwa 8 nen kara haisen made," 390. In *Shōwa bungaku zenshū [Bekkan]*, edited by Isoda Kōichi et al.
39 Katō (1943), *Kaijindō*, 2-4.
40 Ibid 257.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.

[43] Heinrich (1983), *Fragments of Rainbows*, 67. On Mokichi's wartime verse, see Rabson (1998), *Righteous Cause or Tragic Folly*, 199-203.
[44] The meaning of the word *araragi* is the Japanese yew tree.
[45] For a detailed analysis of tanka from the China war, see Tsuboi Hideto's discussion in "Sensō tanka", 83-119.
[46] Saitō (1940), *Shina Jihen kashū*, 17.
[47] Ibid. 31.
[48] Ibid, 36.
[49] Ibid, 77.
[50] Ibid, 96.
[51] Ibid, 146.
[52] Ibid, 178.
[53] Ohnuki-Tierney (2002), *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms*, 20. For a study that argues strongly against the notion that kamikaze were suicide bombers, see Susaki (2004), *Kamikaze no shinjitsu*.
[54] Ohnuki-Tierney, *Kamikaze, Cherry Blossoms, and Nationalisms*, 4.
[55] Hosaka (2005), *"Tokkō" to Nihonjin*, 56.
[56] For the testimony of various college students who volunteered to be kamikaze, in addition to Ohnuki-Tierney, see Kōsaka (2007), *Tokkōtaiintachi e no rekuiemu*.
[57] Ohnuki-Tierney (2006), *Kamikaze Diaries*.
[58] Seo (2006), *Sensōshi ron*.
[59] Piette, "War Poetry in Britain", 13, in *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War 2*, ed, Marina MacKay.
[60] Yasuda (2006), *Dai Tōa sensōshi bunko*, 14.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid, 16.
[63] Ibid, 27.
[64] Ibid. Yasukuni refers to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo (opened in 1869) where the souls of the war dead fallen in the modern era are enshrined. Thus, the journey to Yasukuni indicates a journey to death.
[65] Ibid, 29.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Hayasaka, *Heitai Man'yōshū*, 154-55.
[68] Ibid, 156.
[69] For details, see Saigusa (1993), *Maekawa Samio*, 166.
[70] Ibid, 167.
[71] Maekawa Samio (2008), *Maekawa Samio zenshū*, 3: 225.
[72] Ibid, 226-7.
[73] Griffin (2007), *Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler*, 2.
[74] Ibid, 6.
[75] Tansman (2009), *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*, 1.
[76] Ibid, 2.
[77] Ibid, 18.
[78] For details, see Saigusa (1993), *Maekawa Samio*, 246-276 passim.
[79] Ibid, 249-51.
[80] See Tsukamoto Kunio's praise, cited Saigusa, *Maekawa Samio*, 185-6.
[81] Maekawa Samio (2002), *Maekawa Samio zenshū*, 1: 295.
[82] Saigusa, *Maekawa Samio*, 185-6.

[83] Maekawa, *Maekawa Samio zenshū*, 1: 258.
[84] Saigusa, *Maekawa Samio*, 193-4.
[85] Maekawa, *Maekawa Samio zenshū*, 1: 299.
[86] Saigusa, *Maekawa Samio*, 193-4.
[87] Maekawa, *Maekawa Samio zenshū*, 1: 320.
[88] Saigusa, *Maekawa Samio*, 197-8.
[89] Maekawa Samio, *Maekawa Samio zenshū*, 1: 330.
[90] Ibid, 395.
[91] Hoffman (1968), *Japanese Death Poems*, 67.
[92] On this issue, see chapter 5. On the trauma produced by war, and its connection to literature, see Stonebridge, "Theories of Trauma".
[93] Hayasaka, *Heitai Man'yōshū*, 392-94, 400-01.

Chapter Three: Notes

[1] Cited Coox (1985), *Nomonhan: Japan Against Russia, 1939*, 2: 818.
[2] For information on the name "Nomonhan", and its provenance, see Kitagawa (2015), *Nomonhan*, 128-43. Apparently, the name refers to a well-grassed plain where a tomb of a famous Lama is located.
[3] Lieutenant Colonel Charles Otterstedt, "The Kwantung Army And The Nomonhan Incident: Its Impact On National Security", 1. In addition to Coox, various English-language studies exist on Nomohan, for example : Andy McDonald (2017), *Where the War Was Won: Nomonhan 1939*; Stuart D. Goldman (2012), *Nomonhan, 1939: The Red Army's Victory That Shaped World War II*; Edward J. Drea (2008), *Nomonhan: Japanese-Soviet Tactical Combat, 1939* and Dimitar Nedialkov (2011), *In the Skies of Nomonhan: Japan Versus Russia to September 1939* but these books do not discuss Kusaba's work.
[4] Coox, *Nomonhan*, 2: 917, 923.
[5] Ibid, 2: 914.
[6] Ibid, 2: 915-7.
[7] Ibid, 2: 918-9.
[8] Nobuyuki Miura, Yakov Zinberg and Iwaki Shigeyuki, "The 'Nomonhan Incident': Some New Aspects Revealed Through Russian and Japanese Historical Sources", 5: 73-95.
[9] Ibid, 89, n. 25, 26. See also the books listed by Hata Ikuhiko in the afterword to his study, *Mei to an no Nomonhan senshi* (2014). These works, which make of use of the Russian archives to argue a fundamentally different viewpoint from hitherto, began appearing from the late 1990s.
[10] Hata, ibid. Also see the works listed in chap. one, entitled "Nomonhan zenshi" (A Prehistory of Nomonhan), of Hata's book.
[11] For details, see ibid, chap. 9 "Nomonhan sen haiboku jinji no kessan—Mudan taikyoku kara jiketsu kyōyō made" (A Settlement of Accounts in Regard to the Personnel involved in the Defeat at Nomonhan—From Unauthorised Retreat to Forced Suicides). Goldman also shares this perspective as exemplified in the title of his book: *Nomonhan, 1939*. Edward Drea in his 2009 book, *Japan's Imperial Army*, agrees that Japan lost the battle, as he wrote: "the [Japanese] general staff…accepted defeat." (205). By 2015 the notion that Japan had won the battle was in retreat as demonstrated by Todaka Kazushige's offhand remark in his account of Nomonhan, that "[Japan] lost the battle" (Todaka, *"Senki" de yomitoku ano sensō no shinjitsu*, 209).
[12] Coox, *Nomonhan*, 2: 928-38, esp., 938, 940.

[13] McDonald (2015), "Art, War and Truth", 154. Thanks to Professor Emeritus John Clark (Sydney University) for drawing my attention to this article and obtaining a copy for me.

[14] Coox, *Nomonhan*, 2: 928-38, esp., 938, 940. Ochi Harumi noted in the postscript to his 2012 book *Nomonhan jiken* that: "The output of documents relating to the battle at Nomonhan have increased noticeably in recent years and the overall picture of what happened there has been much clarified but there is still a great deal that is obscure and unresolved." (p. 325).

[15] Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1:xi (Preface).

[16] Ibid

[17] Ibid, 2: 1025.

[18] Ibid, 2: 990.

[19] Kitagawa, *Nomonhan*, 159.

[20] Murakami, "'Seisen" to senjika no bungaku", 304-5.

[21] Shimura (2008), *The Map of My Life*.

[22] Ochiai Michio, *Nomonhan jiken no shinjitsu*.

[23] Ibid, Chap. 1.

[24] Hata Ikuhiko in the afterword to *Mei to an no Nomonhan senshi*. Gomikawa's work (published in 2000) reads almost as a documentary account of the battle, but this style of historical fiction is common in Japan and is generally read as an imitation of history rather than a complete remaking of it (although, in fact, this is what it does). In that sense Gomikawa's *Nomonhan* straddles the border between fiction and non-fiction (more so than the well-known novels sometimes called "factions"—hybrid narratives—of such authors as E.L. Doctorow and Truman Capote); and in this closely resembles Kusaba's *Noro Hills*. This resemblance may not be entirely accidental, as it is likely that Kusaba's work was one of the sources used by Gomikawa despite the fact that Kusaba's name is only mentioned three times in the text (in Vol.1, chap., 13 and in vol.2, twice in chap. 77), but only once as the author of *Noro Hills*. Also, the second character of Kusaba is incorrectly given as "place" rather than "grass"; presumably a simple misprint. See Gomikawa, *Nomonhan*. It is also interesting to note that Coox makes great use of Gomikawa's novel, citing it as a source several times in his narrative. Stuart D. Goldman also spells Kusaba's name incorrectly as Kusabe in his brief mention of the action where Kusaba saves the field command unit.

[25] Itō (2005), *Shizukana Nomonhan*.

[26] Jay Rubin discusses the use Murakami made of the Nomonhan battle in his novel, and his investigation of what actually happened at Nomonhan in his chapter, "Murakami Haruki and the War Inside" (2010) in Stahl and Williams, *Imag(in)ing the War in Japan*, 53-75.

[27] To name but a few: Tanaka Katsuhiko (Mongolian studies), *Nomonhan sensō—Mongoru to Manshūkoku* (2009); Moriyama Kōhei, *Nomonhan jiken: 15 Pointo de yomitoku* (2016); Totaka Kazushige, *"Senki" de yomitoku ano sensō no shinjitsu* (2015); Kitagawa Shirō, *Nomonhan: Moto Manshūkoku gaikōkan no shōgen* (2015) and Ochi Harumi, *Nomonhan jiken*, (2012). It is interesting to note that Tsuji Masanobu (1901-68), a notorious figure who was deeply involved as a senior officer in the Kwantung Army in fomenting the Nomonhan conflict, wrote a book entitled *Nomonhan hisshi* (A Secret History of Nomonhan, 1967) where he claims that Japan won the battle.

[28] For a brief history of military diaries in Japan see Aaron William Moore (2013), *Writing War*, 25-35. Hino Ashihei's (1907-60) fiction on World War 2 is also exemplary.

[29] Moore also examines *Human Bullets*, ibid, 37-42. See also Tsuboi Hideto's discussion of the same book in "Sensō tanka", 90-1.
[30] Moore, *Writing War,* 42.
[31] Kano (2005), *Heishi de aru koto,* 109.
[32] Ibid, 109-115.
[33] Hirabayashi (2009), *Senchū sengo;* Yamaguchi (2012), *Nihon kindai bungaku to sensō.*
[34] Kano, *Heishi de aru koto,* 115. The volume has been translated into English, see *Listen to the Voices from the Sea*, trans. Midori Yamanouchi and Joseph L. Quinn (2000).
[35] For documented evidence from soldiers's diaries and letters of soldiers dying with their mother's names on their lips see Kano, *Heishi de aru koto,* 128-9.
[36] Ohnuki-Tierney (2006), *Kamikaze Diaries.*
[37] Keene (2010), *So Lovely A Country.*
[38] Yamashita (2005), *Leaves From an Autumn of Emergencies*.
[39] Moore, *Writing War,* 22-3.
[40] Kusaba, *Noro Hills*, 1:17.
[41] Ibid, 1:17-8.
[42] Ibid, 1:18.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid, 19. On Kusaba's injury, see Coox, *Nomonhan*, 2: 1110.
[45] Coox, *Nomonhan*, 1:316, 516-21, 2: 664-778.
[46] Kusaba, *Noro Hills*, 1: 21.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Ibid, 1: 23.
[49] Ibid. On the topic of laughter or humor as it appears in war literature, see chapter 6 of McLoughlin (2011), *Authoring War*.
[50] Kusaba, *Noro Hills*, 1: 25-6.
[51] Moore, *Writing War,* 8.
[52] Ibid, 385-6.
[53] Kusaba, *Noro Hills*, vol. 1, endpage.
[54] Ibid, 1: 33-54.
[55] Ibid, 1: 33-4.
[56] Ibid, 1:36-7.
[57] Goldman, *Nomonhan,* 105-6.
[58] Coox, *Nomonhan,* 1: 287.
[59] Ibid, 1: 289-291.
[60] Ibid, 1: 300.
[61] Ibid, 1: 317.
[62] Kusaba, *Noro Hills,* 1: 181.
[63] Ibid, 1: 221-3.
[64] The discussion of humor in war writing in chapter 6 of McLoughlin, *Authoring War* is relevant here.
[65] Moore, *Writing War,* 19.
[66] Kusaba, *Noro Hills,* 2: 77-79.
[67] Ibid, 2: 101-4.
[68] Moore, *Writing War,* Chap. 6 first paragraph.
[69] Coox, 2: 1104, 1110.
[70] Kusaba, *Noro Hills,* 2: 125.
[71] Coox, 2: 809-11.

[72] Kusaba, *Noro Hills,* 2: 126.
[73] Ibid, 2: 1-2. See the following blog entry for mention of Kusaba in China: http://blog.daiwatari.net/page_id=37 (accessed 22.6.17).
[74] Kusaba, *Noro Hills,* 2: 162.
[75] Ibid, 2: 252.
[76] For an analysis of the cult of death, see David C. Earhart, "All Ready to Die"and also Walter Skya (2009), *Japan's Holy War*, 253.

Chapter Four: Notes

[1] Plomer (1973), *Collected Poems*, 92.
[2] Quoted in Tim Redman (1991), *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991, 10.
[3] Redman, *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism*, 10.
[4] Katō (2000), "Atarashii seikinha", 20-1. For a translation of this essay, see Ueda *et al* (eds. 2017), *The Politics and Literature Debate in Postwar Japanese Criticism 1945-52*, 282-7.
[5] Katō, "Atarashii seikinha", 15.
[6] Fukunaga (2000), "Bungaku no kōryu", 31.
[7] Takeuchi (2005), "Overcoming Modernity", 131.
[8] Williams (2004), *Defending Japan's Pacific* War, 173.
[9] Takamura (1976), *Takamura Kōtarō zenshū*, 2: 350.
[10] Ibid, 2: 37-8.
[11] See Ōshima (1979), *Mokichi・Kōtarō no sengo*, 22–23; Yoshimoto (1972), *chosakushū*, 8: 116.
[12] Takamura, *Takamura Kōtarō zenshū*, 2: 185-6.
[13] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 8: 113–115.
[14] Ōshima, *Mokichi・Kōtarō no sengo*, 22–23.
[15] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 8: 115.
[16] Ibid, 8: 116.
[17] Takamura, *Takamura Kōtarō zenshū*, 2: 257-8.
[18] Ibid, 5: 142–143.
[19] Ibid, 3: 240-1. *Omoro Sōshi* is the name of a collection of songs in Old Rūkyūan compiled between 1531 and 1623 that act as a sacred repository of Okinawan history and myth. Nabi from Onna was an early eighteenth-century poetess who achieved great fame as an Okinawan author.
[20] Tsuboi (2006), *Kankaku no kindai*, 404–406.
[21] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 8: 158–161.
[22] Takamura, *Takamura Kōtarō zenshū*, 3: 246-7.
[23] Ōshima, *Mokichi・Kōtarō no sengo*, 90.
[24] Takamura, *Takamura Kōtarō zenshū*, 3: 302-3.
[25] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 5: 142–143; 163.
[26] Seo (2006), *Sensō shi ron*.
[27] Ukegawa (1969), *Takamura Kōtarō ron*, 92–97.
[28] Keene (1984), *Dawn to the West*, 1 (Fiction): 1007.
[29] Katō, "Atarashii seikinha", 20-1. 12–15. See also the translation in Ueda *et al*, *The Politics and Literature Debate*, 284-8.
[30] Ibid, 17.
[31] Ibid, 19–20.

[32] Ibid, 20–21.
[33] Suzuki, Commentary, *1946 · Bungakuteki kōsatsu*, 270.
[34] Fukunaga, "Bungaku no kōryu", 31-40.
[35] Katō, *1946 · Bungakuteki kōsatsu*, 94–99 *passim*.
[36] Sakuramoto (1983), *Kūhaku to sekinin*, 38.
[37] Ibid, 38-51. A detailed biographical account of Kusano's long history with China is available in Hōjō (2009), *Shiyū: Kokkyō o koete*. Hōjō is in no doubt as to the genuineness of Kusano's belief in pan-Asianism; on his relationship to Wang Ching-wei, see *Shiyū: Kokkyō o koete*, 214-233. See also Morton (1985), "A Dragon Rising", 42 and Hotta (2007), *Pan-Asianism and Japan's War in Asia*, 173-4.
[38] See Hōjō, *Shiyū: Kokkyō o koete*, 214-49 and Fukasawa (1984), *Kusano Shinpei kenkyū josetsu*, 293.
[39] Sakuramoto, *Kūhaku to sekinin*, pp. 41-50; Kusano (1984), *Kusano Shinpei zenshū*, 12: 334-340; Kusano (1982), *Kusano Shinpei zenshū*, 7: 254-540.
[40] Pepper, *Civil War in China*, 12-13.
[41] Fukasawa, *Kusano Shinpei kenkyū josetsu*, 302.
[42] Shindō (1997), *Unaru sei'un*, 135-7.
[43] Kusano, *Kusano Shinpei zenshū*, 7: 254-540.
[44] Kusano (1978), *Dekoboko no michi*, 137.
[45] Kusano (1978) *Kusano Shinpei zenshū*, 1: 524. Earlier, in 1943, Kusano published another volume of poems entitled *Fuji San* (Mt. Fuji), that can possibly be read as containing patriotic verse, which has been translated into English and discussed elsewhere. See Morton (1985), "A Dragon Rising", 39-64 and also Morton (trans, 1991), *Mt. Fuji: Selected Poems*.
[46] Kusano, *Kusano Shinpei zenshū*, 1: 364.
[47] Ibid, 1: 523-4.
[48] Ibid, 1: 363-4.
[49] Shindō, *Unaru sei'un*, 159.
[50] Kusano, *Kusano Shinpei zenshū*, 1: 325-8.
[51] Ibid, 1: 343-3.
[52] Ibid, 1: 523-4
[53] Ibid, 3: 272-5.
[54] Fukasawa, *Kusano Shinpei kenkyū josetsu*, 296-7.
[55] Ibid, 306-7.
[56] Morton, *Mt. Fuji: Selected Poems*; Morton, "A Dragon Rising".
[57] Ibid, "A Dragon Rising", 39-64.
[58] Kusano, *Kusano Shinpei zenshū*, 1: 303-4; Morton, *Mt. Fuji: Selected Poems*, 23-4.
[59] Solt (1999), *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning*, 136–211.
[60] Seo, *Sensō shi ron*, 162.
[61] Lodge (1972), *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism,* 334–360; Booth (1988), *The Company We Keep*.

Chapter Five: Notes

[1] Rubin (1984), *Injurious to Public Morals*, 264.
[2] Hardy, James "Hitting the Press", *Daily Yomiuri* (12 March 2006), 18.
[3] Orbaugh (2007), *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 88-102; Molasky (1999), *The American Occupation of Japan and Okinawa*, 93-101; Dower (1999), *Embracing Defeat*, 405-440; Rubin (1985), "From Wholesomeness to Decadence", 71-103.

4 Tansman (2009), *The Aesthetics of Japanese Fascism*; Tansman (ed, 2009), *The Culture of Japanese Fascism*.
5 In addition to chapter three, where tanka written during the campaign in China is examined, see also Morton (2016), "Writing and Politics" and Morton (2011), "Wartime *tanka* Poetry".
6 Shillony (1981), *Politics and Culture*,110-133; Rubin, *Injurious to Public Morals*, 256-278.
7 Rubin, *Injurious to Public Morals*, 270.
8 Ibid, 272; Keene (1971), "Japanese Writers and the Greater East Asia War".
9 Orbaugh, *Japanese Fiction of the Allied Occupation*, 88.
10 Yamamoto (Ed., 2009-10), *Senryōki zasshi shiryō taikei*, 2009-10; Mayo (2012), "Odes to Purity", 175.
11 Hara (2001), *Hyōden: Kaneko Mitsuharu*, 534.
12 Ibid.
13 Solt, *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning*, 148.
14 Cited Tsuboi (1997), *Koe no shukusai*, 167, 361.
15 Shillony, *Politics and Culture*, 110.
16 Sakuramoto, *Kūhaku to sekinin*, *Hon ga dangan datta koro*; Tsuboi, *Koe no shukusai*; Abe (1980), *Kindaishi no haiboku*, *Kindai Nihon no sengo to shijin*; Tsuruoka (1971), *Taiheiyō sensōka no shi to shisō*; Takahashi (1975), *Sensō bungaku tsūshin*; Yoshimoto (1970), *Yoshimoto Takaaki zenchosakushū*, Vol.5.
17 Rabson (1998), *Righteous Cause or Tragic Folly*, 3-5.
18 Seo, *Sensō shi ron*; Takahashi cited by Hara, *Hyōden: Kaneko Mitsuharu*, 530-1.
19 Hara, *Hyōden: Kaneko Mitsuharu*, 530-1.
20 Odagiri, "Bungaku ni okeru sensō sekinin no tsuikyū", 115.
21 Ibid, 116.
22 Takamizawa (2001), *My Brother Hideo Kobayashi*, vii.
23 Silverberg, *Changing Song*, 199, 203-5. On *tenkō*, see Mark Williams (2016), "Expedient Conversion". Note the detailed discussion of this debate in Ueda *et al* (eds, 2017), *The Politics and Literature Debate*, 7-27, and the translation of Odagiri's article, ibid, 243-6.
24 Hirano (1972), "Hitotsu no hansotei", 117-120.
25 Koschmann (1996), *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan*, 70-1.
26 Ibid; Schnellbächer (2004), *Abe Kōbō, Literary Strategist*, 72-110.
27 Yoshimoto, and Takei (eds, 1956), *Bungakusha no sensō sekinin*.
28 Yoshimoto (2006), *Shigaku josetsu*.
29 Oguma (2002), *"'Minshū' to 'Aikoku'"*, 598-655.
30 Yoshimoto, *Yoshimoto chosakushū*, 5: 38-54.
31 Ibid, 119-35.
32 Yoshimoto, *Yoshimoto chosakushū*, 4:145-172; Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity*, 41-87; Schnellbächer, *Abe Kōbō,* 48-110.
33 Hanada "Yangā zenerēshon", 139-146; Akiyama "Minshushugi bungaku", 147-159.
34 Ōkubo, "Kaidai", 167.
35 Keene, *Dawn to The West (Poetry)*, 317.
36 Miyoshi (1965), *Miyoshi Tatsuji zenshū*, 2: 29-30.
37 Ibid, 2: 31-32.
38 Ibid, 2: 43-44.
39 Ibid, 2: 63.
40 Ibid, 2: 38. Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 5: 130-131.
41 Miyoshi, *Miyoshi Tatsuji zenshū*, 2: 503.

[42] Miyoshi (1965), *Miyoshi Tatsuji zenshū*, 8: 9-34.
[43] Tsuruoka, *Taiheiyō sensōka*, 157-178.
[44] Abe, *Kindaishi no haiboku*, 18.
[45] Ayukawa (2005), "Sensō sekinin no kyoshū", 100-101.
[46] Tsuboi, *Koe no shukusai*, 159.
[47] Ibid, 160.
[48] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 13: 467-468.
[49] Tsuboi (1998), *Tsuboi Shigeji zenshū*, 1: 150-151.
[50] Tsuboi (1954), *Gendai Nihon shijin zenshū*, 10: 278-279, 294; Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 5: 43-44.
[51] Tsuboi, *Gendai Nihon shijin zenshū*, 10: 224.
[52] Ibid, 10: 293.
[53] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 5: 38-41.
[54] Ibid, 5: 43-45.
[55] Ibid, 5: 47.
[56] Tsuboi, *Tsuboi Shigeji zenshū*, 1: 157.
[57] Abe, *Kindaishi no haiboku*, 232; Murata (1971), *Sensō/shi/hihyō*, 38-39.
[58] Tsuboi, *Tsuboi Shigeji zenshū*, 1: 140, 157-158
[59] Ibid, 1: 468.
[60] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 5: 46-48.
[61] Dower, *Embracing Defeat*, 416-417.
[62] Yoshimoto, *chosakushū*, 5: 456; Morita, *Kaneko Mitsuharu*, 60-82; Tsuruoka, *Taiheiyō sensōka*, 85-111; Tsuboi, *Koe no shukusai*, 179; Keene, *Dawn to The West (Poetry)*, 358-63.
[63] Kaneko (1998), *Shijin*, 182-186.
[64] Sakuramoto, *Kūhaku to sekinin*, 96-129.
[65] Sakuramoto, *Kūhaku to sekinin*, 99; Kaneko, *Kaneko Mitsuharu zenshū*, 2: 70-75.
[66] Sakuramoto, *Kūhaku to sekinin*, 101.
[67] Ibid, 109-110
[68] Shimaoka (1983), *Shijin to shōsetsuka*, 61-67.
[69] Hara, *Hyōden*, 521-534.
[70] Nakamura (2009), *Kaneko Mitsuharu* 81-112.
[71] Morita, *Kaneko Mitsuharu*, 60-83; Rabson, *Righteous Cause*, 215-17.
[72] Abe, *Kindaishi no haiboku*, 170-174.
[73] Takahashi (1982), *Takahashi Shinkichi zenshū*, 1: 723-724.
[74] Abe, *Kindaishi no haiboku*, 171-172.
[75] Takahashi (1942), *Jinja sanpai*, 10.
[76] Ibid, 12-13.
[77] Ibid, 8-9.
[78] Takahashi (1954), *Gendai Nihon shijin zenshū*, 12: 1, 4.

Chapter Six: Notes

[1] References to *Sasameyuki* are to the Seidensticker translation (*The Makioka Sisters*) but quotations were checked against the original found in volume 15 of the *Tanizaki Junichirō zenshū* [Collected Works]. The American translator Edward Seidensticker's (1921-2007) version of *Sasameyuki* is especially acclaimed but, like all translations, is a compromise between the demands of English prose and the genius of the Japanese original. This can be illustrated in the title with the word *Sasameyuki* signifying fine, gentle, even dreamy snow—this points to the personality of the character Yukiko,

whose name literally means "snow child" (a common female name)—the Chinese character "yuki," meaning snow, shared by both words. Tanizaki is known to have agonized over the title before finally settling on *Sasameyuki*. Seidensticker was well acquainted with Tanizaki, and they discussed the English title ("obliquely", in Seidensticker's words) before agreeing on it; it was close to an early Japanese title that Tanizaki eventually rejected. Clearly, the poetic nuances and the intertextual reference are lost in the English translation: one of many such compromises in the translation proper. For details, see Chambers (1994), *The Secret Window,* 71, 140.

2 An interesting study (2012) of *Sasameyuki* and censorship is Bayard-Sakai (2012), "Real Censorship and Fantasized Reading", 110-112.

3 These figures derive from Tanibata Go "Spatial characteristics of damaged shrines and temples of the Great Hanshin Flood Disaster in Kobe, Japan [in Japanese]" 158; also from Japanese Wikipedia entries on the individual disasters (accessed 16 June 2015) and on the entries in the *bōsai jōhō shinbun* (Preventing Natural Disasters Newspaper) www.bosaijoho.jp/reading/history/item_690.html (accessed 16 June 2015) and the 'Rokko Sabo' data www.kkr.mlit.go.jp/rokko (accessed 16 June 2015). Sources differ somewhat as to the exact figures for fatalities and damage.

4 Franklin (2011), *A Thousand Darknesses*, 9.

5 Kato (1983), *A History of Japanese Literature: The Modern Years*, 3: 204.

6 Oda Minoru wrote in a well-known critique of the work in 1968 that the famous proletarian author Nakano Shigeharu (1902-1979) could not bear to read the novel because of the contrast between the life of ease and relative luxury enjoyed by the Makioka sisters and the privations endured by leftist writers such as himself at the time. This does not stop Oda, however, from declaring at the end of his long critique that the novel "was a masterpiece, one of the highest peaks of Japanese literature." Oda, "*Sasameyuki* no sekai," 153, 155. Ken Ito (*Visions of Desire* 190) writes that the novel "received mixed reviews [from contemporary critics] despite its enormous popular success." He himself notes that "an elegy to a gentler culture that had been destroyed by the war effort and made irretrievable by defeat, *Sasameyuki* had been granted by history the distance its author had anticipated" (190).

7 Asami (1968), "Fukkatsu suru taika gun", 392.

8 Quoted in Agostino et al, *Panic and Mourning*, 4.

9 Chambers, *The Secret Window*, 88.

10 Ito (1991), *Visions of Desire*, 192.

11 Koyano (2006), *Tanizaki den*, 308.

12 Chambers, *The Secret Window*, 76.

13 Ibid, 74.

14 Inazawa (1983), *Kikigaki*, 252.

15 Noguchi (1977), "Time in the World of Sasameyuki", 8.

16 Tanizaki (1968), "*Sasameyuki* sono ta", 364-65.

17 Chambers, *The Secret Garden*, 141 n.16.

18 Nomura (1973), *Tanizaki Junichirō*, 142.

19 Mori Mayumi (2012), *Shōwa bungeishi*, 18-19.

20 Tanizaki (1969), "*Sasameyuki* sadan", 239.

21 Noguchi, "World of *Sasameyuki*," 20.

22 Tanizaki (1957), *The Makioka Sisters*, 168.

23 Ibid, 174.

24 Ibid, 176.

[25] Ibid, 197.
[26] Ibid, 247.
[27] Mori, *Shōwa bungeishi*, 12.
[28] Noguchi, "World of *Sasameyuki*," 33.
[29] Ibid, 33-35.
[30] Ibid, 17.
[31] Quoted by Mishima (2003), *Tanizaki Junichirō to Ōsaka*, 159.
[32] Chambers, *The Secret Window*, 85.
[33] Ibid, 76.
[34] Ito, *Visions of Desire*, 189.
[35] Ibid, 203-204.
[36] Ibid, 205.
[37] Tanizaki, *The Makioka Sisters*, 217.
[38] Ibid, 223.
[39] Ibid, 224-26.
[40] Ito, *Visions of Desire*, 202-203.
[41] Tanizaki, *The Makioka Sisters*, 226.
[42] Inazawa, *Kikigaki*, 252-3.
[43] Quoted in Chambers, *The Secret Window*, 87.
[44] Itō (1970), *Tanizaki Junichirō no bungaku*, 187.
[45] For details of this view, see Arima (1969), *The Failure of Freedom* and Nakamura (2011), *Fūzoku shōsetsu ron*.
[46] Itō, *Tanizaki Junichirō no bungaku*, 188.
[47] Quoted in Ito, *Visions of Desire*, 212.

Chapter Seven: Notes

[1] Yeats (1969), *Selected Poetry*, 155.
[2] Loomba (1998), *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 7.
[3] Ibid, 181.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid, 182-3.
[6] No single volume exploring the writing of Ōshiro exists in English, but there are studies of Ōshiro's work in various formats. For example, chap. 4 of Bhowmik (2008), *Writing Okinawa* is devoted to an analysis of Ōshiro and Ruth Forsythe's 2017 article "Identity Politics in Okinawan *Kumiodori*" examines one of Ōshiro's plays. For additional analyses, see Morton (2009), *The Alien Within*, chaps, 6 and 7. See also Mike Molasky's discussion of various works by Ōshiro in his *The American Occupation of Japan*. There is also a 2005 University of Pennsylvania PhD dissertation on Ōshiro entitled "Writing at the Edge: Narratives of Okinawan History and Cultural Identity in the Literary Texts of Ōshiro Tatsuhiro" by Hidehiko Motohama. Selected translations from Ōshiro's fiction and essays are available in the translation volumes of Okinawan literature mentioned below.
[7] Kawamura (1994), *Nan'yō・Karafuto no Nihon bungaku*; Kleeman (2003), *Under an Imperial Sun*.
[8] Nakahodo (1987), *Okinawa bungakuron no hōhō*; Okamoto (1996), *Gendai bungaku ni miru Okinawa no jigazō*.
[9] Nomura (2001), "Okinawa to posutokoroniarizumu", 156-8.
[10] Ōshiro (2002), *Ōshiro Tatsuhiro zenshū*, 12: 309-12.

[11] Ibid, 330-1.
[12] Yanagita (1990), *Yanagita Kunio zenshū*, Vol. 11, 395-417.
[13] On yuta as historically depicted in Okinawan song and ritual, see also Tanigawa (1991), *Nantō bungaku hasseiron*, especially chap. 3.
[14] Takasaka (1987), *Okinawa no saishi*, 10,22.
[15] Tanigawa (2000), *Kami ni ōwarete*, 4-20, 183-9. See also his *Nantō bungaku hasseiron*, cited above.
[16] This novel has been translated into English by Steve Rabson in Rabson (Ed., 1989), *Okinawa: Two Postwar Novellas*. Other translations of Okinawan literature include: Molasky, and Rabson (eds, 2000), *Southern Exposure*; Bhowmik, and Rabson (2016), *Islands of Protest*; Stewart and Yamazato, (eds, 2011). *Living Spirit*.
[17] Okamoto, *Okinawa bungaku no chihei*, 101-2; Molasky (1999), *The American Occupation of Japan*, 3.
[18] Blacker (1975), *The Catalpa Bow*, 114,
[19] Ōshiro (1997), *Kōgen o motomete*, 293.
[20] Ibid, 296.
[21] For details, see Okamoto, *Gendai bungaku ni miru Okinawa no jigazō*, 64-67.
[22] Ibid, 205.
[23] Ōshiro (1992), *Gushō kara no koe*, 272-6.
[24] This essay is found in *Gushō kara no koe*, 272-6. For an analysis of one of Ōshiro's stories about yuta, see Morton, *The Alien Within*, chap, 6.
[25] Molasky, and Rabson, *Southern Exposure*, 112.
[26] Hokama (2000), *Okinawa no kotoba to rekishi*, 89-91.
[27] Ōshiro (2001), "Kindai Okinawa bungaku to hōgen", 203-9.
[28] Kawahashi (2000), "Seven Hindrances of Women?", 86.
[29] Ibid, 91.
[30] Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 105, 119.
[31] Bhabha (1994), *The Location of Culture*, 163-4.
[32] Ibid, 164.
[33] Ibid, 165.
[34] Ōshiro, *Kōgen o motomete*, 292-3.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid, 293.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Davis (2005), *Accounts of Innocence*, 123-4.
[39] Wang (2012), "The Banality of Trauma", 148.
[40] Ibid, 151.
[41] Ōshiro, *Gushō kara no koe*, 64-105.
[42] Ibid, 120.
[43] Ibid, 146.
[44] Morton, *The Alien Within*, chap. 5.
[45] Ōshiro, *Gushō kara no koe*, 147-209.
[46] Hidehiko Motohama's 2005 PhD dissertation contains a discussion and complete translation of this story. See Motohama, "Writing at the Edge", 183-223; however, all translations from this text that are cited above are my own.
[47] Ōshiro, *Gushō kara no koe*, 14.
[48] Ibid, 17.
[49] Ibid, 30-1.

50 Ibid, 34-5.
51 Ibid, 57.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid, 17.
54 Ibid, 54.
55 Ibid, 55.
56 Ibid, 59-60.
57 Ibid, 61.
58 Ibid, 10-13.
59 Ibid, 38.

Chapter Eight: Notes

1 Moretti (2007), *Graphs, Maps, Trees*, 90-91.
2 To date, as far as I can ascertain, only four books have been published in English that treat in detail the literature produced in Japan in response to the earthquake: Gebhardt and Masami (eds, 2014), *Literature and Art After Fukushima: Four Approaches*; Luke and Karashima (eds, 2012), *March Was Made Of Yarn*; Starrs (2014), *When the Tsunami Came to Shore* and Geilhorn and Iwata-Weickgennant (eds, 2016), *Fukushima and the Arts: Negotiating Nuclear Disaster* but undoubtedly there will be many more to come.
3 As I write this in July 2017, today's newspaper informs me that three executives of TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) have gone on trial for criminal offences relating to deaths caused by the earthquake and meltdown. Clearly, this event is a long way from being over.
4 Hirose (2011), *Fukushima Meltdown*, Intro: 1.
5 Birmingham, McNeill (eds, 2012), *Strong in the Rain*, 1: 2.
6 Ibid, Chap. 10.
7 Geilhorn and Iwata-Weickgennant, *Fukushima and the Arts*, 22-3.
8 https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/[in Japanese] Higashi Nihon daishinsai (accessed 22 July 2017).
9 Geilhorn and Iwata-Weickgennant, *Fukushima and the Arts*, 31-2.
10 Wagō, *Shi no tsubute*.
11 *Gendaishi techō* (May 2011) 54: 5, 38-76. For an analysis and some translated extracts from this poem see Angles (2014), "These Things Here and Now", 116-120. For further analysis of Wagō by Angles (2016), see his "Poetry in an Era of Nuclear Power", 210-217. Also see Beret (2016), *Worte ohne Schutzanzug: Wagō Ryōichi*; Odagiri's (2014), "The End of Literature and the Beginning of Praxis: Wagō Ryōichi's Pebbles of Poetry" and De Pieri (2016), "Wagō Ryoichi's Net-poetry and the Revolutionary 'Shared Literature'".
12 *Gendaishi techō* (May 2011) 54: 5, 60.
13 Ibid, 59.
14 Angles, "These Things Here and Now", 132-3.
15 *Gendaishi techō* (May 2011) 54: 5, 12.
16 Ibid, 14-15.
17 See the note in the blog on https://www.j-cast.com/2014/03/12199009.html. Accessed 29 July 2017.
18 *Gendaishi techō* (May 2011) 54: 5, 16-17.
19 Ibid, 17.
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid, 20-21.

[22] Ibid, 21.
[23] Ibid, 22.
[24] Ibid, 23.
[25] For the award-winning poem see http://userweb.vc-net.ne.jp/doyobi/sito22_1.html (accessed 15.8.17)
[26] *Gendaishi techō* (May 2011) 54: 5, 28.
[27] Ibid, 29.
[28] Ibid, 96-7.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Ibid, 99.
[31] Ibid, 100.
[32] Ibid, 101.
[33] Ibid, 102.
[34] Ibid, 102-3.
[35] Ibid, 110.
[36] Ibid, 114-5.
[37] Ibid, 115. In a personal communication (August 2017), Yotsumoto revealed that the notion of "non-segmentation" derives from the linguistic theories of the scholar Toshihiko Izutsu (1914-1993). This influenced his poetry, which was then undergoing a reevaluation. See the introduction to Morton (trans., 2017), *Minashita Kiryū, Yotsumoto Yasuhiro and Soh Sakon: Selected Poems*, 9-11.
[38] *Gendaishi techō* (May 2011) 54: 5, 117-8.
[39] Ibid, 118.
[40] Ibid, 122-3.
[41] John Solt's biography of Kitasono Katsue is justly acclaimed, see Solt (1999), *Shredding the Tapestry of Meaning*.
[42] Translations from the poetry of Shiraishi Kazuko are available in Morton (ed, 1993), *An Anthology of Contemporary Japanese Poetry*; translations of the verse of Takahashi Mutsuo are available in Takahashi (1984), *A Bunch of Keys* and translations of the poetry of Nomura Kiwao are available in Nomura (2011), *Spectacle & Pigsty*.
[43] *Gendaishi techō* (June 2011) 54: 6, 62. According to Japanese Wikipedia (accessed 25.8.17), 180 bodies were found after the tsunami engulfed the town.
[44] Ibid, 63.
[45] Ibid, 64.
[46] Ibid, 66.
[47] Ibid, 67.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 70.
[50] Eliot (1963), *Collected Poems*, 63. A translation of this poem by Jeffrey Angles is available in Mizuta (2018), *Unruly Cradle*, 1-4.
[51] *Gendaishi techō* (June 2011) 54: 6, 70-1.
[52] Ibid, 71.
[53] Ibid, 72.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid, 73-4.
[56] Ibid, 74.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid, 76.

59 Ibid, 78.
60 Ibid, 79.
61 Ibid, 68-9.
62 Ibid, 69.
63 Ibid, 96-7.
64 *Gendaishi techō* (July 2011) 54: 7, 153.
65 *Gendaishi techō* (August 2011) 54: 8, 198-232.
66 Translations of the poetry of Tsujii Takashi are available in Tsujii (1994), *Disappearance of the Butterfly*.
67 *Gendaishi techō* (August 2011) 54: 8, 10.
68 Ibid, 11.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid, 12.
71 Ibid, 13.
72 Ibid, 14.
73 Ibid, 15.
74 Translations of the poetry of Shinkawa Kazue are available in Morton (ed), *An Anthology of Contemporary Japanese Poetry*.
75 *Gendaishi techō* (August 2011) 54: 8, 21.
76 Ibid, 22.
77 Ibid, 24.
78 Ibid, 122-126.
79 *Gendaishi techō* (September 2011) 54: 9, 128-137.
80 *Gendaishi techō* (November 2011) 54: 11, 10-23.
81 Ibid, 126-134.
82 Translations of Yamasaki Kayoko's poetry are available in Kikuchi and Crawford (eds, 2017), *Poet to Poet*; translations of Isaka Yohko's poetry are available in Morton (ed), *An Anthology of Contemporary Japanese Poetry*.
83 *Gendaishi techō* (December 2011) 54: 12, 11.
84 Ibid, 14.
85 Ibid, 19.
86 Ibid, 23.
87 Ibid, 26.
88 Ibid, 27.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid, 28-9.
91 Ibid, 32-3.
92 Ibid, 34-6.
93 Ibid, 37-8.
94 Ibid, 38-9.
95 See the colophon to Hasegawa (2011), *Shinsai kashū*.
96 *Gendaishi techō* (December 2011) 54: 12, 39-40.
97 Hasegawa, *Shinsai kashū*, i-iii.
98 Ibid, section 2 (21-42); section 6 (95-106).
99 *Gendaishi techō* (December 2011) 54: 12, 42.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid, 43.
102 Ibid, 44.

[103] Ibid, 46.
[104] Ibid, 378. For translations of Koike see Morton (trans, 2013), *Poems of Masayo Koike, Shuntarō Tanikawa and Rin Ishigaki*.
[105] *Gendaishi techō* (December 2011) 54: 12, 380.
[106] *Gendaishi techō* (January 2012) 55: 1, 30-33.
[107] Ibid, 48-9.
[108] Ibid, 80-3.
[109] Ibid, 73-5.
[110] Ibid, 100-107.
[111] Ibid, 102.
[112] Translations of Minashita Kiryū are available in Morton (trans), *Minashita Kiryū, Yotsumoto Yasuhiro and Soh Sakon: Selected Poems*; translations of the poetry of Itō Hiromi are available in Morton (ed) *An Anthology of Contemporary Japanese Poetry*; a complete translation of Itō's most notorious book (translated by Jeffrey Angles) is Itō (2009), *Killing Kanoko*. Translations of the poetry of Sasaki Mikirō are available in Sasaki (1988), *Demented Flute*; translations of the poetry of Misumi Mizuki are available in Kikuchi and Crawford (eds) *Poet to Poet*; and translations from the poetry of Yoshimasu Gōzō are available in Yoshimasu (2016), *Alice Iris Red Horse*.
[113] *Gendaishi techō* (March 2012) 55: 3, 10-23.
[114] Ibid, 12-14.
[115] Ibid, 14-16.
[116] Ibid, 17-19.
[117] Ibid, 23.
[118] Ibid, 28.
[119] Ibid, 30.
[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid, 33-40.
[122] Ibid, 41.
[123] Ibid, 41-49.
[124] Ibid, 53-9.
[125] Ibid, 60.
[126] Ibid, 64.
[127] *Gendaishi techō* (August 2012) 55: 8, 20.
[128] Ibid, 140-1.
[129] Ibid, 142-3.
[130] *Gendaishi techō* (December 2012) 55: 12, 34-40.
[131] *Gendaishi techō* (May 2013) 56: 5, 11.
[132] Ibid, 12-15.
[133] Ibid, 21-4.
[134] Ibid, 26.
[135] Ibid, 32.
[136] Ibid, 36-7.
[137] See Karan and Suganuma (2016), *Japan After 3/11*, 95-6, for a more detailed analysis of Wakamatsu's poetry on the earthquake by Yukiko Dejima (2016), as well as treatment of one or two other poets.
[138] *Gendaishi techō* (May 2013) 56: 5, 38.
[139] Ibid, 39.
[140] Ibid, 40-1.

[141] Ibid, 43.
[142] Ibid, 45.
[143] Ibid, 49.
[144] Hasegawa, *Shinsai kashū*, 1.
[145] *Gendaishi techō* (May 2013) 56: 5, 50-2.
[146] Takushi Odagiri, "The End of Literature and the beginning of Praxis: Wagō's Ryōichi's *Pebbles of Poetry*", 375.
[147] *Gendaishi techō* (July 2013) 56: 7, 52-9; 132-157.
[148] *Gendaishi techō* (September 2013) 56: 9, 56.
[149] *Gendaishi techō* (January 2014) 57: 1, 196-7.
[150] Ibid, 113.
[151] *Gendaishi techō* (February 2014) 57: 2.
[152] There is a collection of essays by various individuals (journalists, scholars, poets etc) who wrote short comments on the event on the publisher Iwanami's home page from Feb. 2017 to Feb. 2018, see Iwanami shoten (ed, 2018), *3.11 o kokoro ni kizande*. The book edits and packages the essays into a single volume. This booklet series has been produced annually since 2011-12. A typical sample is the poet Yotsumoto Yasuhiro's (b. 1959) essay, where he reads the poet Arai Takako's "translated" volume of the famous poet from Northeast Japan, Ishikawa Takuboku's (1886-1912) poems (93-95). In early 1919, Saitō Mitsugu's poetry volume *Yūyakeuri* (Selling Evening) written on post-earthquake Fukushima was awarded a major poetry prize, testifiying to the ongoing nature of the event in contemporary Japan.
[153] A number of the works on 3. 11 listed in the bibliography also include studies of other artistic genres influenced by the event, such as drama or cinema. Due to the limitations of space, this volume concentrates on poetry and prose, but this should not deter readers from exploring other studies; exemplary in this regard are Barbara Geilhorn's co-edited volume and her study of local theatrical productions treating the event: see Geilhorn, *Fukushima and the Arts* (2016) and her "Local Theater Responding to a Global Issue" (2017).
[154] Iida (2107), *Higashi Nippon daishinsaigo bungakuron*, 33.
[155] Ibid, 34.
[156] Ibid, 34-5.
[157] Flores (2017), "Matrices of Time, Space and Text", 151-7. Flores cites Komori's 2014 book *Shisha no koe, seija no kotoba: Bungaku de tou genpatsu no Nihon* (Voices of the Dead, Words of the Survivors: Literature Questioning Nuclear Japan), and Rosenbaum, "Post 3.11 Literature in Japan".
[158] Flores, "Matrices of Time, Space and Text", 151-7. Kawakami, Hiroko. "God Bless You, 2011", trans. Ted Goossen and Shibata Motoyuki.
[159] Kawakami, "God Bless You, 2011", 47.
[160] Ibid, 40.
[161] Ibid, 44.
[162] Flores, "Matrices of Time, Space and Text", 150-1.
[163] Ibid, 157.
[164] Ibid, 158.
[165] Quoted ibid, 158.
[166] Masami (2014), "Post-Fukushima Discourses on Food and Eating", 49-50.
[167] Takahashi (2011), *Koisuru genpatsu*, front pages.
[168] Ibid, 35-6.

169 Ibid, 22-3.
170 Ibid, 44-5.
171 Ibid, 46-7.
172 Ibid, 47-58.
173 Ibid, 68-95.
174 Ibid, 109-111.
175 Ibid, 96-123.
176 Ibid, 124-179.
177 Ibid, 195.
178 Ibid, 197.
179 Ibid, 200-229.
180 Ibid, 265.
181 Chiba (2019), *Gendai bungaku wa "shinsai no kizu"*, 28-33.

Chapter Nine: Notes

1 Terui (2013), *Ryūgū*, 23.
2 Jaspers (2003), *Way to Wisdom: An Introduction to Philosophy*, 52.
3 Peach (2008), *Death, Deathlessness' and Existenz in Karl Jaspers' Philosophy*, 42.
4 Jaspers (1971), *Philosophy of Existence*, 33.
5 Peach, *Death, Deathlessness' and Existenz in Karl Jaspers' Philosophy*, 60-1.
6 Stahl (2018), *Trauma, Dissociation and re-Enactment in Japanese Literature and Film*, 14.
7 Blanchot (1980), *The Writing of the Disaster*, 7.
8 Ibid, 60.
9 In addition to the collections I examine, a number of translated collections of tanka (as well as other genres of verse) have been published since the earthquake. For tanka see, for example, *3.11 Manyōshū: Fukkatsu no Tō/March 11 Manyōshū FUKUSHIMA "Tower of the Resurrection"*, eds Hikosaka Naoyoshi et al; trans. Kimberly Hughes et al (2012) and *Voices from Japan*, a collection of translated tanka produced by the American School in Japan in 2012, available for download from the school as a pdf file.
10 Tanigawa Kenichi and Tamada Takahide (eds, 2012), *Kanashimi no umi*, 70.
11 Ibid
12 Ibid, 71.
13 Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*, 24.
14 *Kanashimi no umi*, 96.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid, 97.
17 Gen Masayuki (ed.), *[NHK dokyumentarii] 3.11 Manyōshu: Yomibito shirazutachi no daishinsai*, 32-3.
18 Ibid, 4.
19 Ibid, 27.
20 Ibid, 62.
21 Yamakawa (2013), *3.11 Shinsai tanka wasurenaide*, colophon (135).
22 Ibid, 7.
23 Ibid, 13.
24 Ibid, 23.
25 Ibid, 34.
26 Ibid, 44.
27 Ibid, 55.

[28] Ibid, 65.
[29] Ibid, 75.
[30] Ōguchi (2013) *Torisan naita*, 103.
[31] Ibid, 78.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Ibid, 81.
[36] Ibid, 83.
[37] Ibid, 84.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid, 86.
[40] Terui, *Ryūgū*, 56 (postscript).
[41] Ibid, 7.
[42] Ibid, 8.
[43] Ibid, 9.
[44] Ibid, 10.
[45] Ibid, 12.
[46] Ibid, 17.
[47] Ibid, 23.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid, 28.
[50] Ibid, 43.
[51] Ibid, 46.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Ibid, 53.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Peach, *Death, Deathlessness' and Existenz in Karl Jaspers' Philosophy*, 61.
[56] Culler (2015), *Theory of the Lyric*.
[57] Blanchot, *The Writing of the Disaster*,10.

Reflections: Notes

[1] Izutsu (2002), *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, 4-5.
[2] Morton (2003), *Modern Japanese Culture*, chap 1 passim; Morton (2009), *The Alien Within*, chaps 1, 2 passim.
[3] Gadamer (1994), *Truth and Method*, 472.
[4] Ibid, 295.
[5] Ibid, 448.
[6] Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, 9.
[7] For a recent analysis of the bundan, see Hutchinson and Morton (eds, 2016), *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature*, 255-299. Two representative histories of the bundan in Japanese are: Itō Sei and Senuma Shigeki's *Nihon bundanshi* (24 vols plus index), now available in paperback; and Kawanishi Masaaki's *Shin Nihon bundanshi* in 10 volumes.
[8] For a detailed account of how canonicity works within modern Japan, see Morton (2000), "The Canonization of Yosano Akiko's *Midaregami*".

[9] Citing Wail S. Hassan in Apter (2013), *Against World Literature*, 256. As Apter notes, this refers to the notion that the holy book of Islam is untranslatable because it is considered the sacred word of God.
[10] Izutsu, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'an*, 11.
[11] Ibid, 24.
[12] Clendinnen (1999), *Reading the Holocaust*, 172.
[13] Ibid, 184.
[14] Culler, *Theory of the Lyric,* 349-50.
[15] Franklin, *A Thousand Darknesses*, 151.

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