At the Intersection of Script and Literature:
Writing as Aesthetic in Modern and Contemporary Japanese-language Literature

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Abstract

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This dissertation examines the dynamic relationship between written language and literary fiction in modern and contemporary Japanese-language literature. I analyze how script and narration come together to function as a site of expression, and how they connect to questions of visuality, textuality, and materiality. Informed by work from the field of textual humanities, my project brings together new philological approaches to visual aspects of text in literature written in the Japanese script. Because research in English on the visual textuality of Japanese-language literature is scant, my work serves as a fundamental first-step in creating a new area of critical interest by establishing key terms and a general theoretical framework from which to approach the topic. Chapter One establishes the scope of my project and the vocabulary necessary for an analysis of script relative to narrative content; Chapter Two looks at one author's relationship with written language; and Chapters Three and Four apply the concepts explored in Chapter One to a variety of modern and contemporary literary texts where script plays a central role. Topics discussed include the relationship between calls for postwar democracy and the establishment of a standard script; the use of non-standard (or radical) script practices in literature; the representation of dialect in literary texts; and various script practices meant to reflect internal cognitive developments of characters. This project will be of interest to scholars in the fields of literary studies and criticism, postcolonial theory, the history of writing systems, media studies, and linguistics.

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Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Images

List of Abbreviations

KYZ	*Kawabata Yasunari zenshū*. Shinchōsha, 1980.
MEC	*Middle English Compendium*. University of Michigan Library, 2018. Available online: https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary.
NKDJ	*Nihongo kokugo daijiten: dai ni han*. Shōgakukan, 2000-2. Available online: https://japanknowledge.com/en/contents/nikkoku/index.html.
OED	*Oxford English Dictionary*. Available online: http://www.oed.com.
SKJ	*Shinsen kanwa jiten*. Shōgakukan, 2011. Available online: https://japanknowledge.com/en/contents/shinsenkanwa/index.html.
TZS	*Tanizaki Jun'ichirō zenshū*. Chūō kōron shinsha, 2015.

Introduction

The act of writing is a curse: it dulls our ability to recall things and alters the way we perceive the world around us. It is a technology that outsources our experiences and will ultimately usher in the decline of humanity. This is what Nakajima Atsushi suggests in his 1942 short story "Mojika," or "The Curse of Glyphs."[1] Set in ancient Assyria, the aged scholar Nabu-ahe-eriba discovers that literacy prevents those in possession of it from directly connecting with pure objects and experiences, and that when writing is introduced people are no longer able to live in a way that directly tethers them to the experiences of life. In other words, the introduction of writing is also the introduction of a filter through which experience in its truest form must pass; it reduces the phenomena of experience to the words we have in a toolkit that is shared with others of our larger language community. This view, of course, is rooted in an understanding of writing that necessarily regards it as a second-tier practice: right or wrong, writing here is understood to be a tool developed from a desire to record spoken language. And while that may be one function of writing, it neglects the potential for written language itself to become a unique source of expression. The former understanding of writing – one in which the practice is viewed as limiting human experience – both directly and indirectly shaped the way critics and scholars of the twentieth (and twenty-first) century understood (and understand) the role written language plays in literary texts. This study aims to ameliorate said situation by analyzing the key characteristics of written Japanese and demonstrating how those characteristics come together and function as a space for aesthetic expression in modern and contemporary Japanese-language literature. This is an attempt to reframe Nakajima's curse of writing as the gift of writing; when viewed through this lens, the claim that

[1] The original text was published in *Bungakkai* 2, 1942. Today it can be found in Nakajima Atsushi, *Tonan sensei, Nantōtan* (Kōdansha bungei bunko, 1997). Nobuko Miyama Ochner, one of the few scholars to discuss Nakajima's oeuvre in English, notes that a "partial draft" of the text was written "on the back of several sheets of students' composition paper[s]" from 1939. See: Ochner, "Nakajima Atsushi: His Life and Work" (1984), 119.

written language is somehow unable to serve as an accurate record of spoken language is revealed to be a straw-man argument: if the actual goal of writing is not to record language as accurately as possible, then why obsess over that point?

But let's not get ahead of ourselves: the notion that written language is somehow detrimental to society has a long tradition. Indeed, the concern that written language-as-technology negatively affects human physiology was already evident in the 4th-century BCE. Plato relates that Socrates, in discussion with Phaedrus, warned of its detrimental effects on the power of memory. He understood writing as a static technology that only serves to remind the reader of an ephemeral instance of spoken language that has been lost forever. He further laments that it is not capable of responding to stimulus. Socrates posited that,

> In fact, [writing] will introduce forgetfulness into the soul of those who learn it: they will not practice using their memory because they will put their trust in writing, which is external and depends on signs that belong to others, instead of trying to remember from the inside, completely on their own. You have not discovered a potion for remembering, but for reminding; you provide your students with the appearance of wisdom, not with its reality. Your invention will enable them to hear many things without being properly taught, and they will imagine that they have come to know much while for the most part they will know nothing. And they will be difficult to get along with, since they will merely appear to be wise instead of really being so.[2]

One imagines what Socrates would say about the effect of the internet (and Google!) on our ability to access seemingly unlimited information. In our era of fake news, Socrates' fear of outsourcing knowledge to text is related to the ways we interact with the world around us and the larger question of experience. Nakajima's Assyrian scholar, on the other hand, is concerned with the deterministic relationship between writing and existence that emerged after writing's broad adoption by society. He laments that things not touched by the spirit of the glyphs – i.e., things not

[2] Plato, "Phaedrus." In *Plato: Complete Works* (Hackett Publishing, 1997). For a classic discussion on this episode, see Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy* (1982).

committed to writing – are cursed with perpetual non-existence. In other words, while Socrates argued that writing detaches the speaker from actual experience, Nabu-ahe-eriba argued that things left unwritten do not exist beyond momentary flashes of inspiration because they are not made accessible to future generations. This shift in focus from the way we experience the world to the way we remember it (and, incidentally, the way we continue to re-experience it) divides the history of humanity into a pre-written world and one where the practice of writing moves towards ubiquity.

The idea of writing as ubiquitous largely describes the present: when auto-generated subtitles for videos in a myriad of languages yield nearly perfect results, the line between what is committed to writing and what merely exists in written form is blurred. Indeed, the notion that existence is bound to a visible, material presence is perhaps stronger today than it has ever been: as the rush to digitize texts continues with unbridled enthusiasm, the illusion that the totality of human knowledge (and output) is available digitally continues to intensify. This shift from the material to the digital (which, as I observe later, is still fundamentally material) is one sort of curse born of the realization that writing is both an outsourcing of human capacity and a process resulting in one definition of the human experience. As the distance between that which we preserve and that which has been preserved lessens, the ability to decide what is or is not reality dissipates. However, just as Nabu-ahe-eriba observes, the complementary processes of outsourcing and memorialization mean that we do not put writing to work but are put to work by writing: if we wish to add to our collective knowledge – and continue to remember what we have already collectively learned – then we are, in effect, slaves to the process of experience and memory.

Two millennia later and it would seem we are still under writing's spell. At least EnJoe Toh, the celebrated science fiction author, thinks so: the act of writing and its impact on our experience

of the world is an obsession within his literature.[3] In *Self-Reference ENGINE* (2007), for example, he imagines a world where written language begins to suddenly disappear. EnJoe's hypothetical script is an artificial one but so are all systems of writing; he wonders what would be left of a society developed around writing if one day the practice were to simply vanish. In EnJoe's world, the total and unexpected disappearance of writing is tantamount to the disappearance of memory itself. His interest in writing reemerges in *Uyū shitan* (2009) in the form of excessive annotations. These annotations, which were absent from the original published form, recall Tanaka Yasuo's frenetic *Nantonaku, kurisutaru* (1980).[4] The function of excessive annotations in both of these texts is to force the critic to confront two questions that are often unseen and remain unresolved: first, what constitutes the totality of the text we call *Uyū shitan*? That is, is the original published form sans annotation the same text as the later, expanded version? The second question, related to the first but fundamentally different, asks whether glosses and marginalia can – or should – be elevated to the status of text. The latter question, which is reminiscent of Gérard Genette's work on architextuality and paratextuality, foreshadows the role of written language in EnJoe's literature and how it shapes the experience of the reader.

EnJoe's preoccupation with writing would fully emerge with the publication of his short story "Mojika," or "A Whirlpool of Glyphs" (2017). Homophonous with the title of Nakajima's "The Curse of Glyphs" but written with different characters, EnJoe's story changes the setting from Assyria to the Han empire.[5] The setting is a China on the precipice of standardizing the Chinese

[3] The aforementioned words of Socrates are well-known to EnJoe, too. Indeed, the late Project Itoh, a colleague, collaborator, and friend of EnJoe, references this same section in his important work *Harmony* (2008).
[4] "Uyū shitan" was first published in the May, 2008 issue of the literary journal *Gunzō* before being republished in book form with annotations the following year.
[5] Though both titles are read as *mojika*, Nakajima's short story is written 文字禍 while EnJoe's is 文字渦. 禍 means "calamity; misfortune" while 渦 means "whirlpool." It is also likely that EnJoe has yet another potential character string in mind that would connect both stories: 文字化. Also read *mojika*, this common term means "to transform or convert [something] into written language."

writing system for the first time, a development whose ramifications are still felt today.[6] The setting itself, too, is a reference to Nakajima: as Nobuko Miyama Ochner notes, Nakajima was in fact raised in a family full of scholars of the Chinese classics. Indeed, much of his literary output reworks, retells, or otherwise expands upon writings from ancient China.[7]

As described in Chapter One, the story follows the imagined experience of a young man named Yǒng and his near-impossible attempt at constructing a perfect clay model of Emperor Qin Shi Huang. While EnJoe's narrative hinges on the realization that the unification and standardization of writing – namely the creation of a Han-determined set of written characters – establishes a correct/incorrect binary, it reminds one of another type of curse that has plagued the study of Japanese literature in English: the tendency for texts that actively engage with writing to remain untranslated and often untreated in the world of literary research.[8] Many of the texts that I deal with in this study, for example, have not been translated into English and are rarely treated in English-language scholarship. Even when they are translated and discussed, the role of written language tends to remain in the background. Of course, this reality is not the result of some spell or a false notion of untranslatability. To be clear, I reject the fallacy of untranslatability between languages. I do, however, accept the reality of non-transferability between script systems. Understanding that translation between languages is not the same as non-transferability between script systems is an important point we should not overlook.

The misguided idea that a concept is untranslatable conflates the inability for word-to-word translation (stemming from lexical gaps called lacuna) with the general translatability of concepts.

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[6] The standard term for Chinese characters 漢字 is *hànzì* in Chinese and *kanji* in Japanese, literally meaning "writing of the Han."

[7] Nobuko Miyama Ochner. "A Japanese Writer in Micronesia: Nakajima Atsushi's Experiences of 1941-42," *The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese* 21:1 (1987): 2.

[8] Nakajima's text, for example, has remained untranslated. There is, however, some work on it: see, for example, Shigetoshi Morosaka's "The Haunted Graph: *Signifiant* Studies of Nakajima, Borges, and Nabokov," *Comparative Literature Studies* 41:4 (2004): 520-545.

Claims of untranslatability betray the long history of translation and the ability of skilled translators to present even the most difficult (or "foreign") concepts in a language different from that of the source text. On the other hand, the claim that a script practice is non-transferable speaks to the vast diversity of script systems and the way authors use them to represent (i.e., write) their literature. So, while the spoken language that informs written language can be thought of as translatable across languages, how that spoken language is delivered must not be assumed to be transferable across script systems. As will be made clear in the following chapter, the various characteristics of different writing systems – what I call an architecture – prevent a seamless transfer even though the underlying concepts they record (i.e., language) are always translatable so long as they are communicable via spoken language.

It is the non-transferable aspects of written Japanese that are the focus of this study. To that end, I provide an English language vocabulary for discussing the way written language appears in Japanese-language literature and the way script functions within literary texts. This is not about translation. Rather, this is about what is left behind in the shadow of translation and the texts that dwell there. In many ways, the writing of EnJoe Toh places him neatly within a larger tradition of authors making use of script as an aesthetic element of text. EnJoe's work also encourages us to consider developments in modern Japanese literature in new ways, namely from the perspective of written language. New genealogies and new connections might be made between authors as disparate as, for example, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Tawada Yōko. Before these connections can be made, however, we must first understand how script functions in literature by understanding the architectural features of the script that make said expression possible in the first place. We must understand that the "curse" of writing also brings about new possibilities of expression that do not exist in the spoken language. In a queer twist of fate, the curse becomes the gift.

1.1 Summary of Chapters

Chapter One begins with an overview of the Japanese writing system and the relationship between written language and literary studies. I argue that written language has always been central to literature in Japan even when said literature was meant to be a record of the spoken word. This meeting of the two, namely the written and spoken languages, contributes to the sense of *kotodama* – "word spirits" – scholars, writers, and the reading population in general often associate with Japanese texts. Drawing on the work of Karatani Kōjin, Katō Shūichi, and others, I describe how literary critics today maintain many of these same notions in their varied approaches to literary studies. With the stage set, I begin my own foray into the well-trodden field of script studies.

In the second half of Chapter One I define various concepts central to my study and break down key features of the Japanese writing system. The concepts I introduce are *writing*, *inscription*, and the *architecture of script*. Writing refers to the act of writing and I present numerous ways scholars have chosen to define it; inscription refers to the final version of a text that appears before a reader; and the architecture of script refers to various elements of a writing system and how a particular combination of elements forms a coherent set of tools afforded to an author when they compose a text. An understanding of these possibilities and how they function in daily life allows us to determine whether or not a particular author's use of script – what might be called their script practice – is radical in nature. As I argue, a radical script practice refers to a use of written language that challenges the hegemony of a script by using the architecture of that script to challenge conventions.

The elements of written Japanese I discuss are the three standardized character sets, standardized typographic markers, bidirectionality, predictable space distribution, interlinear glosses, the existence of a base text, interchangeability, and access to an open set of kanji and kanji-like characters. Throughout the chapter I argue that the architecture of written Japanese has

remained consistent throughout the transition from manuscript and early print culture to today's digital age. For this reason, all of the elements described above can be witnessed in premodern and modern texts alike.

Chapter Two begins by examining Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's concept of external form. For Tanizaki, the term refers to all visual aspects of a text, including elements of production (e.g., font and size) and more creative expression (e.g., varied use of glosses or obscure kanji). Such literariness, he claims, should be included in considerations of textuality, a stance supported by another author, Maruya Saiichi. I then describe the two main approaches to script in Japanese-language scholarship: the formalistic approach and the historical-contextual approach. The formalistic approach, I argue, has a long history that cannot be wrested from the grip of Motoori Norinaga and the Kokugaku ideology that locates non-linguistic qualities, namely ethnic uniqueness, in the characteristics of the Japanese script. On the other hand, the historical-contextual approach, which is often constructed in opposition to the former, is a global movement that tends to focus on the comparative aspects of the script within the larger area of East Asia. This approach, whose goal is to decenter Japan from the study of written language, historicizes and contextualizes the conditions that led to the development(s) of the architectural features of written Japanese. Not limiting itself to Japanese-language sources, this approach also understands the particularities of the Japanese writing system in ways that put it in dialogue with China, Korea, and Vietnam. Important as this research may be, it tends to focus on the script without consideration of its use in literature.

I then shift my attention to the way Western linguistics as a discipline has viewed script, focusing especially on the Bloomfieldian stance that written language is not spoken language and thus script is a roadblock for accessing phonetics. I note how this posturing has had an unintended

consequence: the tendency for scholars (and perhaps writers) to ignore the role written language and script play in various modes of literary expression. And while today linguistics and literary studies are viewed as two separate areas of study, I argue that their shared origins (i.e., the field of study known as philology) mean that they still coinfluence each other. A further consequence of this attitude is a general indifference to literature that does make use of script as an aesthetic tool.

The second part of the chapter examines Tanizaki's piece of diary literature *The Key*, demonstrating what a careful reading informed by script can tell us about a piece of fiction. I describe the historical and contextual conditions leading to the split script Tanizaki uses, i.e., the combination of kanji and katakana for Kenji and kanji and hiragana for Ikuko. I argue that what initially appears to be a gendered binary is more complicated than that. Instead, citing Jan Bardsley, I suggest Tanizaki is, consciously or not, critiquing the anachronistic views of women held by Kenji through his use of an anachronistic script while his wife's diary represents a more modern one. That is, I draw parallels between Tanizaki's script practice, the writing reforms of the postwar period, and rising calls for the democratization of society.

In Chapter Three I discuss how visuality in Japanese-language literature is created and how it functions. I begin by discussing various developments in the Japanese script since the beginning of the Meiji period, the effects these changes had on writing, and the way script reformation was framed in terms of modernization and nation-state building. I discuss the relationship between indeterminacy and variation, describe how the inability to read with assurance certain kanji or kanji combinations is linked to the condition of variation and the larger question of orthography, and I examine furigana, seemingly throw-away interlinear glosses – what one critic called "small bugs" – that function as the glue holding together the Japanese script.

From there I look at the various uses of furigana in Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin* and in a variety of contemporary Japanese-language literary texts. Overflowing with furigana from the first word to the last, *Kirikirijin* is unreadable without them. I argue that Inoue's use of language, mediated through furigana, is an integral part of the author's vision for what *Kirikirijin* should be. The use of furigana changes and evolves with the text, and was made consistent and reworked as the size of the novel increased. As illustrations by famed artist Sasaki Maki for *Kirikirijin*'s initial run disappear, the language itslef is left to occupy center stage. While most commentators of *Kirikirijin* have understandably focused on the larger narrative, I have opted to focus on the use of script and highlight commonalities in script between Inoue and the seemingly unrelated *Kachikujin Yapū*.

In Chapter Four I examine how script is used to represent non-standard forms of the Japanese language. These representations, which often come from the periphery (both in terms of geography and social status), utilize script in their attempt to confront the hegemony of the modern standard language. I begin by briefly discussing the "radical prose" of Sakiyama Tami. Her prose, which makes liberal use of dialect, unfamiliar diacritics, and unconventional furigana, challenges our understanding of the relationship between text and sound; namely, readers are continuously confronted with situations where it is impossible to authoritatively locate the aurality (or "voice") of the text. I also argue that Sakiyama's prose is radical not because it makes use of new diacritical marks but because it is irregular, unsystematic, and, ultimately, unpredictable, all conditions that reject the notion of modernity (and its relationship to the nation). In this regard, Sakiyama differs greatly from another author, Yamaura Harutsugu, and his attempt to record the language of Kesennuma: despite also introducing unfamiliar kana, Yamaura normalizes the Kesen language so as to mirror the prestige afforded modern standard Japanese. Much of Sakiyama's writing, on the

other hand, including her most radical prose, appears in mainstream, Tokyo-based literary journals. Her desire to maintain comprehensibility for readers unfamiliar with the various dialects she employs is suggestive of her larger project to subvert – to "booby trap" – the authority of the standard language. By weaving in and out of comprehensibility (and thus flirting with the danger of unintelligibility), Sakiyama questions the reader: what language am I writing in? what language are you reading in? does this make you feel uncomfortable? Sakiyama finds the power for subversion in the instability she creates.

I then turn my attention to the use of written language in Yokoyama Yūta's *I Will Be a Cat*. I argue that Yokoyama utilizes the architecture of written Japanese to highlight the deep connections members of a language community have for the writing system(s) they employ and, at the same time, the arbitrariness of an identity rooted in either national or linguistic concerns. Yokoyama's text highlights the way one's identity can be tethered to written language, a fact exemplified by the five major transformations of the external form of the text. I illustrate how each of these transformations mirror the shifting psychology of the narrator. A close reading of the text also reveals constant allusions to Natsume Soseki, Lu Xun, and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, three authors intimately concerned with their shared Sino-Japanese literary tradition, the role of written language and, especially with the latter two, the relationship between written language, scriptal confusion, and psychological instability.

I also highlight the importance of nomenclature when discussing script: though the subtle differences between (certain) characters used in both modern Chinese and Japanese may seem inconsequential, I stress how these seemingly minor differences signify beyond their immediate denotative meanings. Utilizing characters found only in the modern Chinese character set can, depending on narrative context, geographically place the speaker in China, suggest that the

language being spoken is in fact Chinese (despite being written in Japanese), or, perhaps, the speaker is speaking in Japanese but identifying with an identity rooted in China (or Chinese). These various possibilities, and indeed the entirety of written language in *I Will Be a Cat*, highlights the larger claim of this project: a serious study of script in contemporary Japanese-language literature must (i) examine the way script reflects narrative content in a particular text while (ii) understanding the mechanics (i.e., the architecture) of said script that enable it to function in such a way.

Chapter 1 An Overview of Written Japanese and a List of Pertinent Vocabulary

Much has been said about the Japanese writing system in English, from its use in the oldest extant literary texts[9] to the way it is used to write the modern form of the language.[10] Some scholars have discussed the various literary styles of the late nineteenth century and the written language's relationship to the nation and national identity.[11] Some have sketched the long history of the writing system in broad terms[12] while others have contextualized its development within the larger ecosystem of East Asian writing systems.[13] Other, more recent work, examines written language's relationship to various studies of grammar conducted during the Edo Period.[14] Scholarship in Japanese has covered this and more, with substantially more attention given to the primary documents that inform much of the English-language work described above and referenced throughout this study. There are of course no inherent qualitative differences between scholarship on the Japanese writing system written in Japanese and similar scholarship written in any other language; there are, however, different sets of assumptions and reader expectations that can be generally identified with the two. Speaking in broad terms, the most profound differences lie in the assumed reader's comfort with, and knowledge of, kanji and kana generally and the way they function within the Japanese writing system specifically. In other words, writings in English must

[9] David Barnett Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2011); though not solely focused on written language, Bjarke Frellesvig's *A History of the Japanese Language* (University of Oxford, 2011) touches upon early writing in Japan.
[10] Though one can cite many texts covering similar ground, Roy Andrew Miller's work is perhaps the most exhaustive. For excellent discussions of the Japanese language and script see: *The Japanese Language* (University of Chicago Press, 1967); *Japan's Modern Myth: The Language and Beyond* (Weatherhill, 1982).
[11] Nanette Gottlieb (nee Twine), *Language and the Modern State: The Reform of Written Japanese* (Routledge, 1991); Yŏn-suk Yi, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2010); Atsuko Ueda, "Sound, Scripts, and Styles: Kanbun Kundokutai and the National Language Reforms of 1880s Japan," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 20 (2008): 133–156.
[12] Christopher Seeley, *A History of Writing in Japan* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2000).
[13] Peter F. Kornicki, *Languages, Scripts, and Chinese Texts in East Asia* (Oxford University Press, 2018).
[14] Emi Joanne Foulk, "The Jeweled Broom and the Dust of the World: Keichū, Motoori Norinaga, and Kokugaku in Early Modern Japan" (Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA, 2016). Though script is not the central concern of Foulk's study, script is correctly understood as being one vehicle by which conceptions of grammar were perceived and thus constructed.

dedicate more time to explaining how the script represents the Japanese language; conversely, Japanese-language scholarship is more inclined to assume a priori knowledge of that same context.

For example, Japanese-language scholarship on the history of the Japanese writing system or the development of various orthographical conventions assumes a familiarity with the modern standard writing system and thus feels justified leaving otherwise ambiguous concepts undefined. The use of central terms in these studies – often, but not always, kanji and kana – highlights this phenomenon.[15] Many scholars define kanji, literally *kan* 漢 "Han Chinese" + *ji* 字 "written character" as simply "Chinese characters" or some variation therein.[16] In *An Ecology of Kanji* (2005), for example, the scholar Kawagoe Yasuhiro begins his introduction in this way.

> Kanji are interesting; they are also multifaceted.
>
> Even those kanji that at first glance appear to be simple and mundane have aspects about them that are both unexpected and surprising. Put a bit paradoxically, the simpler a kanji seems the more complex it is. The reality is that there are only a handful of kanji with numerous strokes and unfamiliar readings that also have a variety of semantic meanings […].
>
> 64-stroke kanji are the most [graphically] complex characters one encounters. Two characters that illustrate this are 龘 and 龖. According to Morohashi Tetsuji's *Daikanwa jiten*, the former character has a reading of *tetsu* and *techi*, and it is defined simply as "verbosity." The latter is read *sei* while its semantic meaning is unknown. Compare this to the first character appearing in dictionaries of Chinese characters: the single-stroke 一. There are only two

[15] Throughout this study I will not italicize words relating to the Japanese writing system that are commonplace in Japanese- and English-language scholarship; passages I quote, however, are left as-is. I have also omitted kanji from terms easily identifiable save for illustrative purposes. These determinations are often subjective and thus likely not wholly consistent. I have, where appropriate, included translations of titles for the Japanese works I cite in order to increase accessibility; original titles are given in footnotes. As a general rule, Japanese names appear in the traditional order, that is, family name appearing before given name. Finally, I follow Hepburn romanization standards for Japanese and Hanyu Pinyin standards for Chinese.

[16] The *SKJ* defines kanji as "(1) a logographic syllabary used to represent the language of the Han people. (2) Characters from China, cf. *waji*, *kokuji* (*SKJ*, s.v. "kan")." Here, kanji are understood to be the opposite of (or, at least, not) Japanese characters, i.e., kana. The *NKDJ* is a bit more precise in its definition by referring to kanji as "characters [in Japan] used together with kana to represent in written language Japanese. While kana are chiefly phonetic units, kanji reflect specific readings [*onkun*], i.e., words [*go*]" (*NKDJ*, s.v. "kanji"). Such explanations fail to answer a central albeit impossible question posed by this study: what, if anything, distinguishes *hànzì* from kanji and vice versa? This question becomes important when considering the radical nature of the authors I discuss. As will be made clear in Chapters Three and Four, it is the perceived distance from the standard written form of modern Japanese that allows that very radicalness to exist.

> Chinese-based readings [*on'yomi*] associated with the character, namely *itsu* and *ichi*, but the situation changes when discussing meaning: the *Daikanwa jiten* lists twenty-three meanings associated with it stemming from Chinese-language usage of the character [*kango*] and two meanings associated with the native Japanese readings [of *hito* and *hitotsu*]. There is a total of twenty-five examples provided in order to illustrate these differences.[17]

Kawagoe suggests that kanji have both a reading and meaning, and that the latter can be more exhaustive than the former. While not totally incorrect, it can give the wrong impression to the reader: the notion that a kanji's reading derives exclusively from its meaning creates an artificial hierarchy between the two while ignoring the fact that those writing in Japanese are relatively free to play with this relationship through various tools provided by the script itself. This power to annotate will be discussed later in the chapter.

Kawagoe is, however, correct to lament the approach that equates the complexity of a character to the number of strokes needed to write it; it is an unfortunate if not understandable assumption people make when thinking about kanji. His point is that the easier-to-write kanji are often the most versatile in terms of semantic variation and, indeed, possess multiple semantic meanings that reflect their variegated uses. The conflation of visual complexity with semantic complexity is a common trope in writings on the Japanese language, but the tendency to correlate complexity (understood here as word length and/or stroke order) with usage frequency transcends languages. In English, too, ask around for the most "complex" words and you will likely generate a list of rarely encountered or otherwise exotic ones. Upon reflection, however, and just as Kawagoe argues, it is the most used words that are the most complex. For example, the Oxford English Corpus, published by the *OED* and containing more than two billion words, notes that the most used nouns in English (e.g., *way* or *part*) ought to be understood as complex because they

[17] Emphasis mine. Yasuhiro Kawagoe, *Kanji no seitaigaku: Nihongo o kitaeru kanjiryoku no tame ni* (Sairyūsha, 2005): 1.

each contain upwards of fifteen meanings.[18] Similarly, both the 25 most frequent verbs (e.g., *to be* or *to have*) and adjectives (e.g., *good* or *new*) are all monosyllabic.[19] Echoing Kawagoe, one could argue that simpler words – whether it be those easier to write, spell, or say – start with a single, basic meaning and then proliferate through analogy, metaphor, and collocation. In practice, then, the more visually complex – i.e., obscure, exotic, long, or otherwise rare – a word is the more precise and definable it becomes. Fixed meanings – often fixed only for a brief period – are witnessed in these common words usually after they have undergone the process of semantic specialization.[20]

At the risk of overstating the obvious, I note that written Japanese (and Chinese) is not English: we should not allow the tendency for high-frequency words in English to be one or two syllables to lead us to the expectation that the more visually complex a kanji is the more difficult it is to read and/or the rarer it is: visual complexity suggests no correlation to spoken complexity, nor does it correlate to readability.[21] And while the relationship between literacy and manuscript culture is beyond the scope of this study, as Peter Kornicki has noted in his work on the history of book culture in Japan, by 1700 the "situation had been transformed out of recognition and urban, educated Japan had become dependent on print and the book had accomplished its transformation into a commercial entity."[22] This commercialization of reading would help increase literacy throughout Japan; this expansion, which continues through the dissemination of digital media today, has readied a situation where commonly encountered but difficult to write characters (e.g.,

[18] Website (2006): "The OEC Facts About the Language," *OED Online*.
[19] Ibid.
[20] For one classic essay on semantic specialization in English, see Robertson and Cassidy's "Changing Meanings and Values of Words" in *The Development of Modern English* (Prentice-Hall, 1954).
[21] This situation, of course, exists in English, too. *Knight* (as opposed to *night*) is arguably a complex spelling in that the situation in which the *k* is left unpronounced is relatively limited in the language.
[22] Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginning to the Nineteenth Century* (Brill,1997): 20.

bara 薔薇 "rose" or *utsu* 鬱 "depression") are intelligible to a large portion of the reading populace. Indeed, as Dilhara Premaratne's research demonstrates and as I discuss later, the ability to include such characters into digital texts without the need to write them stroke-by-stroke has resulted in an uptick in kanji usage since the 1980s,[23] even if the number of obscure kanji has remained relatively stable.[24]

The inverse is also true: a low stroke count does not equal simplicity.[25] For example, *wakimaeru* 弁える "to discern" includes the five-stroke character 弁, a kanji taught in primary schools and probably first learned in the term *bengoshi* 弁護士 "lawyer."[26] When considered from the reading *wakimaeru*, however, this kanji can be regarded as difficult because of its relative low-occurrence rate and the general tendency to write the term in kana.[27] It is interesting that neither the term *wakimaeru* nor the character 弁 are considered difficult in isolation; when this reading is combined with this character, however, they suddenly create confusion. In this scenario, the familiar 弁 becomes difficult because it is associated with an unfamiliar reading. Another example, chosen at random and surely more obscure, is the reading of *kizahashi* "stairs" for 階 or 階段. An archaic and at times poetic form of reference, it can also mean "steps [in a process]" or the largely unused stairs that are still part of the Noh stage.[28] What this process reveals, however, is the importance of contextualization, education (i.e., knowledge of these readings), and familiarization. Contextualization because one must be familiar with Noh to recall the physical presence of the

[23] Dilhara D. Premaratne, "The impact of information and communication technology on script policy in Japan," *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 10:4 (2009): 387-404.
[24] Premaratne, "Is the use of *kanji* increasing in the Japanese writing system?" *EJCJS*, 12:3 (2012): 1-15.
[25] Though the point here is different, it is also worth noting that short words in English are not necessarily easier to comprehend than longer words nor are they necessarily more common. Eft, for example, is a term denoting a "small lizard or lizard-like animal" that is rarely encountered today (*OED* s.v. "eft" [n], 1).
[26] *NKDJ* s.v. "wakimaeru" (v.), 1.
[27] There are, for example, cases of people taking the more common *ben* reading and reading it as *ben'eru*. See "Ben'eru janai! Wakimaeru no tadashii yomikata shitteimasuka?" (2019).
[28] *NKDJ* s.v. "kizahashi" (n.), 1, 2, and 3.

kizahashi on the stage; education because without knowledge of these terms *and* their associated kanji one cannot be expected to read them; and familiarization because even with the proper context and education needed to read them, a lack of exposure greatly inhibits one's ability to recall them. These three principles (context, education, and familiarization) are, in fact, exactly what is needed to develop literacy in written Japanese, an unremarkable occurrence for those raised in the language and the countless people who learn it through self-study or in an academic setting.

Kawagoe's assertion that a kanji's complexity – and a kanji's relationship to various meanings – ought not to be determined by its visual appearance is well-warranted. The boundaries of what he means by the term kanji, however, remains opaque. His suggestion that there is a fixed set of characters that originate from China and the various readings of a kanji should (or could) be learned to facilitate literacy in written Japanese is predicated on the false assumption that what he refers to as kanji is a transcendentally stable concept. I say transcendentally because it is possible for a concept to be stable even as the referent changes over time and place.[29] And while this understanding of kanji is rooted in a mundane understanding of the term, for this project it is necessary to ask where the boundaries of kanji lie. For example, does the term encompass the totality of writing originating from China that made its way to Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and the rest of East Asia? Or, in the case of a text written in Japanese, does it refer only to the set of characters in current use in Japan? This line of questioning, as esoteric as it sounds, is key to understanding the use of written language in relation to literature, especially if literature can be regarded as, in certain circumstances, "radical."[30] My understanding of radical script usage is, by necessity,

[29] As Zev Handel notes, "one complication for educated Japanese speakers is that the etymological meaning of the term "kanji" (which screams "Chinese!") interferes with the current-usage meaning of 'kanji'" (personal communication, 28 March, 2021).

[30] Walter Rideout, in a very different time and context, famously defined the radical novel as one "which demonstrates, either explicitly or implicitly, that its author objects to the human suffering imposed by some socioeconomic system and advocates that the system be fundamentally changed" (12). Rideout's notion that the author must object to human suffering notwithstanding (suffering is too limiting, in my opinion), my understanding

predicated on the assumption of a normative form of the written language against which authors choose to push back against. An understanding of standard kanji and kana usage is, in this schema, central to any conception of normativity. It is easy to understand the term kanji as referring to the subset of characters originating in China (*hànzì*) that are in regular use in Japan. But how do we account for the numerous graphic variants existing between these two contexts (they are not, graphically speaking, the same character)? Let's first examine some ways the Japanese script has been discussed within the field of literary studies.

1.1 Written Language and Literary Studies

In *A History of the Japanese Language: An Overview* (2001), linguist Satō Takeyoshi begins by asserting that the term kanji is the Sino-Japanese reading (*on'yomi*) of *hànzì*.

> As for the Japanese language, because [the people living in Japan] possessed no native characters to represent the Japanese language, they developed kana characters by using the kanji that had arrived from China.[31]

Alluding to the dynamic process that is language (and script) change, Satō acknowledges the significant role written language has played in the history of Japanese. His understanding of script is related to my discussion of the Kokugaku scholars in the following chapter.

> The history of the Japanese language can be discussed in terms of several different aspects: that of written language, phonetics, grammar, lexicon, writing styles [*bunshō/buntai*], and dialects. Regarding the history of written language, man'yōgana, katakana, and hiragana were developed as a result of the introduction of kanji and, together with the later development of numerous variant kana, the history of the standardized set of kana in use today is a primary focus of research. When thinking about variations (and variant forms) of character types in Japan one must also consider the history of kanji character forms taken together with the history of character styles [*jitai*] in China.

of radical literature (not just novels) is in line with Rideout. As might be expected, then, I view all of the authors examined in this study as radical literature; the focus of this study, however, is on the radical use of language by authors to reify their radical approach. Walter B. Rideout, *The Radical Novel in the United States, 1900-1954* (Columbia University Press, 1992).

[31] Takeyoshi Satō, *Gaisetsu Nihongo no rekishi* (Asakura shoten, 2001): 3.

> Additionally, concern for the listener or reader of a text by the scribe [*shokisha*] or author of a text is important for studying the history of linguistic behavior. This is done by analyzing how kanji and kana coexisted in manuscripts, woodblock prints, and printed books throughout the process of transmission.[32]

The implication is that kanji entered Japan directly from China, with the likely pathway via Baekje mentioned only in passing.[33] From those kanji sprouted the two kana systems, a development that itself resulted in the bifurcated mode of writing used today, namely the coexistence of kanji and kana in most Japanese texts. The difference between Chinese and Japanese writing, or, put another way, the place where one ends and the other begins – and whether such a distinction is even important – likely stems from the genuine linguistic ambiguity of the written language in its earliest recorded forms. In *The Birth of Japanese: Ancient Characters and Orthography* (2003), linguist Okimori Takuya puts forth the argument that, in fact, one cannot differentiate between bona fide writing (i.e., written characters) and kanji being used as pure symbols in Japanese texts written before the fourth century or so.[34]

As a side note, current English language scholarship tends to view all forms of writing deriving from Chinese writing as belonging to what Zev Handel has dubbed the "Sinographosphere."

> Although awkward, the term Sinographosphere makes clear that we are referring to those areas where Chinese writing was strongly influential. It is thus roughly equivalent to the now prevalent Japanese/Chinese term *Kanji bunkaken* / *Hànzì wénhuàquān* 漢字文化圏 'Chinese character cultural sphere', but unlike that term, it makes no claims about cultural influence beyond the use of writing itself.[35]

This approach has proven useful for thinking about the ways scripts change when they encounter different languages, especially with languages as typologically different from each other as

[32] Ibid., 8.
[33] Ibid., 43. See 43-62 for a discussion of written language in the ancient period.
[34] Takuya Okimori, *Nihongo no tanjō: kodai no moji to hyōki* (Yoshikawa Kōbun-kan, 2003): 12-6.
[35] Zev Handel, *Sinography: The Borrowing and Adaptation of the Chinese Script* (Brill, 2019): 10.

Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese. Handel's analysis provides insight into why Japanese writing developed the way it did; an analysis of how the results of that process function and relate to the content of literary texts, however, is not a concern of his study.

Returning to the topic of Japanese-language scholarship, it is understandable that literary scholars discussing the influence of writing on the history and development of literature frame their understanding of written language in ways that echo Kawagoe and Satō. One reason is because the oldest example of lengthy written Japanese is the 8th-century *Kojiki*. Commissioned by Empress Genmei and compiled by Ō no Yasumaro, the *Kojiki* is a pseudo-historical text written entirely in kanji (and indicating pronunciations vis-à-vis kanji) that is primarily read today as literature.[36] Aldo Tollini describes two important linguistic characteristics of the *Kojiki*.

> [I]t is the first attempt of extended writing in Japan (before it, only short, or very short pieces of writing were produced), and as declared in the preface in the Chinese language, *Kojiki* is the written version of an oral tradition regarding ancient events, transmitted from generation to generation. For these two reasons *Kojiki* is particularly important for the development of writing in Japan.[37]

Indeed, the editor Yasumaro himself addresses the cumbersome linguistic reality of writing the *Kojiki* in its well-known Preface.

> On the eighteenth day of the ninth month of the fourth year of Wadō [711 A.D.], an imperial command was given to me, Yasumaro, to record and present the *kuji* [舊事 'ancient dicta'] learned by imperial command by Hieda no Are. Reverently, in accordance with the imperial will, I chose and took them up in great detail. However, during the times of antiquity, both words and meanings were unsophisticated, and it was difficult to reduce the sentences and phrases to writing. If expressed completely in ideographic writing, the words will not correspond exactly with the meaning, and if written entirely phonetically, the account will be much longer. For this reason, at times ideographic and phonetic writing have been used in combination in the same phrase, and at times the

[36] This should not be taken to mean that the *Kojiki* was always viewed as an authoritative text. On the contrary: it was not until the Edo Period, and the work of Kamo no Mabuchi, that the *Kojiki* came to be regarded as an important text. For a recent translation into English, see Gustav Heldt, *The Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters* (Columbia University Press, 2014).

[37] Aldo Tollini, "Symmetry and Asymmetry – Chinese Writing in Japan: The Case of *Kojiki* (712)" in *The Idea of Writing: Writing across Borders* (Brill, 2011): 171.

> whole matter has been recorded ideographically. Thus, when the purport is difficult to gather, a note has been added to make it clear; but when the meaning is easy to understand, no note is given. Again, in the case of surnames such as Kusaka, which is written 日下, and given names such as Tarasi, which is written 帶, the traditional way of writing has been followed without change.[38]

Though a discussion of how written language is used in the *Kojiki* is beyond the scope of this study – and there already exists much research on the topic[39] – I cite it here to foreground the importance of not only written language but the act of thinking *about* written language. We might call this emphasis on script that is adjacent to, but removed from, content as script consciousness. In this way, then, the history of Japanese literature is always tied to the history and development of the writing system.

This historical reality informs the present: given the visual presence of kanji and the initial difficulty of representing spoken Japanese, one common approach by scholars considering the relationship between writing and language has been to conflate Chinese characters (kanji) with the Chinese language. When viewed this way, words written in kanji are understood to be words of foreign origin and thus exoticized; words written in kana or otherwise marked as native to Japanese are, on the other hand, assumed to be closer to an (imagined) Japanese psyche.[40] Instead of understanding language change as a dynamic process that is constantly changing through contact,

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[38] I have slightly modified the translation of the Preface by Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki* (Princetron University Press, 2015): 43.

[39] For example, see Lurie's explication in *Realms of Literacy*, 213-253.

[40] For example, *taberu* 食べる "to eat" is compared to *shokuji suru* 食事する, a Sinitic equivalent. Most verbs that do not take *suru* belong to this group of so-called native Japanese terms. It is true that one familiar with the Japanese language can intuit that *taberu* is a word of Japanese origin while *shokuji suru* is likely Sinitic in origin; it is more difficult, however, to identity terms like *tempura* 天婦羅 or てんぷら "batter-fried vegetables or seafood" as a non-native Japanese word because the term is usually written in either kanji or hiragana, both character sets that, at the very least, belie its Portuguese roots. Terms like *ume* 梅 "plum blossom" or *uma* 馬 "horse," which are today largely regarded as words of Japanese origin but can, it is argued, be traced back to Chinese, are even more opaque. This latter example also highlights the futility of assigning meaning to the pursuit of linguistic purity: the native/non-native divide discussed here has little meaning beyond contemporary cultural – and thus artificial – associations afforded to it by society at large. This is not to say that there is no meaning in the *act* of compartmentalization; in fact, within the field of cultural studies, the study of the impulse to compartmentalize has proven insightful in analyzing large societal trends.

conflict, and appropriation, this focus on written language and the Sino-Japanese divide gives rise to the notion that the Japanese language – and, as is often implied, the Japanese people – have been, and continue to be, using two languages concomitantly. One result of this purported bilingualism has been a reading of Japanese literary history in terms of a Chinese-ness and Japanese-ness that is often (imagined to be) at odds with each other.[41] For example, in his influential *A History of Japanese Literature* (1975), Katō Shūichi discusses kanji in the following manner.

> The languages of China and Japan have different origins and their sound systems, vocabulary and grammar are very different. However, the Japanese had no writing system of their own when the Asian continental culture was first encountered, and the already highly developed Chinese writing system adopted, as early as the fifth century C.E. Since Chinese characters (kanji) are ideographic [*hyōi moji*], with one character representing one monosyllabic word, some modification was necessary to adapt this system of writing to Japanese. Two methods of adaptation were possible: either the meaning of the character could be retained and its sound discarded or the sound retained and the meaning abandoned. In fact both methods were used at times. Chinese sounds were largely retained, for example, in the history *Kojiki* (*Record of Ancient Matters*) and the *Man'yoshu* and for some words in the eighth century history *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*).
>
> As well as using Chinese characters to write their own language, the Japanese also devised a method of reading Chinese poetry and prose using reading marks to indicate how to rearrange the sentence into the word order closest to Japanese and provide glosses on (Japanese) inflexions and word endings. These methods of 'translating' Chinese were also used to write Japanese poetry and prose. Consequently, from the seventh to the nineteenth centuries, Japanese literature was written in two languages, Japanese and Chinese (or at least the Japanese version of Chinese).[42]

Katō's claim that Japanese literature between the seventh to the nineteenth centuries was written in two languages is a grave oversimplification of the matter. While writings in literary Sinitic

[41] As one might expect, the linguistic difference between Chinese and Japanese is extrapolated to more significant differences rooted in culture, society, thought, etc. In English, Akiko Sasaki has addressed this very issue in *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese Polarity in Japanese Literature* (University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).
[42] Shuichi Kato, translated by Don Sanderson, *A History of Japanese Literature: From the Manyoshu to Modern Times* (Taylor and Francis, 2013): 3.

(*kambun*) have a long and important history in Japan, the amount of literature composed in literary Sinitic never reached the amount of popular literature written in the vernacular. As Judith Rabinovitch and Timothy Bradstock note, poetry written in literary Sinitic was an "important cultural activity" but a "general decline had occurred in *Kangaku* (Chinese studies) during the civil strife of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; moreover, relatively few people possessed the kind of advanced literacy in Chinese that was obtained through education in the classics."[43] Matthew Fraleigh also notes that it was not until the nineteenth century that writings in literary Sinitic would enjoy "its final spectacular flourish before the medium rapidly declined during the first decades of the twentieth century."[44] As critical as literary Sinitic was to the development of Japanese-language literature (and written Japanese), the notion that users of Japanese were and/or are constantly shifting between two linguistic polarities belies the fact that privileged (i.e., mostly educated and elite) users of the language acquired the skills needed to comprehend and produce these texts as native speakers of Japanese, a linguistic environment that contained both vernacular and literary Japanese coupled with literary Sinitic.

This insistence on the bilingual nature of the Japanese language exacerbates the conflation of Chinese characters with the Chinese language. The primary reason for this, perhaps, is because within this approach kanji become markers of an imagined alterity, which in turn leads to misunderstandings about the way kanji function within the confines of written Japanese. Karatani Kōjin, for example, in his wildly influential *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (1988), repeats many tired myths about kanji. In the quote below he references Maejima Hisoka, the well-known statesman and proponent of script reform.

[43] Judith Rabinovitch and Timothy Bradstock, "Early to mid-Edo kanshi" in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2016): 457.
[44] Matthew Fraleigh, *New Chronicles of Yanagibashi and Diary of a Journey to the West* (Cornell University, 2011): xii.

> Maejima, pointing out that a compound combining the characters "pine" and "plain" (松平) can be given four alternative phonetic readings (*matsudaira, matsuhira, matsuhei, shōhei*), among which it is impossible to determine which is correct, decried kanji as "eccentric, unwieldy, an evil without parallel in this world." But without any phonetic reading at all the characters 松平 immediately evoke a meaning.[45]

There are numerous issues with Karatani's characterization of Maejima's thoughts. Perhaps most striking is the misrepresentation of Maejima's argument: while he does refer to the ultimately unknowable scope of a kanji's reading, Maejima is here speaking specifically about geographical and personal names.[46] Names and toponyms, of course, are an area where many languages exhibit incredible complexity and diversity because rules governing their spelling and pronunciation are often dictated by local and/or personal conventions that are not publicly regulated or disseminated via official channels.[47] Furthermore, while Maejima is indeed correct in stating that, in isolation, the "correct" reading of 松平 is unknowable, it is unknowable in large part because there is no context, education, or familiarization we can rely on to judge which reading is most appropriate. In other words, Maejima's claim here is flawed because it is selective and not at all representative of the actual linguistic field; while many interesting things can be said about the Japanese writing system – which include, as I demonstrate in the next chapter, actual cases of ambiguity and uncertainty of a character's reading even when the larger context is known – to say that the state of written Japanese indicates something unique about the Japanese language and/or psyche is misleading. In fact, the same condition of ambiguity resulting from a lack of context is witnessed

[45] Kōjin Karatani, translated by Brett de Bary, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* (Duke University Press, 1998): 53.

[46] The line in question, taken from *Kanji go-haishi no gi* (1866), reads: 但地名人名に漢字を用ひさるときは喩へは松平を「マツタイラ」「マツヒラ」「マツヘイ」「シヤウヘイ」其外「シヤウヒラ」「シヤウタイラ」何と読て然るへきや其人に聞かされは其正を得さる如き実に世界上に其例を得さる奇怪不都合なる弊を除き万人一目一定音を発する利を睹ては此御美挙なるを普く賛賞仕候儀は尤速なる御事と奉存候.

[47] As an example, it is unlikely that someone not already familiar with the pronunciation of Boca Raton in Florida will pronounce it /ˈboʊkə rəˈtoʊn/ or will pronounce Buena in Washington as /ˈbjuːɛnə/. For a detailed discussion of what distinguishes names and toponyms from other words in English, see Lisa Radding and John Western, "What's in a Name? Linguistics, Geography, and Toponyms," *Geographical Review* 100:3 (2010): 394-412.

in numerous common words in English: without any context provided, what is the correct pronunciation of *read, wind, wound, bow, excuse, sewer,* or *use*?

There would be little issue if Karatani accidently misquoted Maejima. The reality, however, is that Karatani reads Maejima's proposal to abolish kanji as the beginning of the *gembun itchi* movement, a movement that, according to Karatani, was less concerned with abolishing kanji as it was giving "priority to the spoken language and to consider the gap between spoken and written language."[48] Seth Jacobowitz correctly notes that Karatani's claim stating "Maejima's promotion of kana was nothing less than a desire to rescript Japanese national identity in correspondence with the phonetic transparency of the West" ought not to be attributed to Maejima because "the case for phonetic transparency was never made by Maejima himself."[49] Jacobowitz continues his discussion of Karatani's mischaracterization of Maejima's claims.

> [Maejima's] proposal to abolish Chinese characters does not begin to address the standardization of kana, which in Tokugawa [Edo] popular culture often had a bewildering array of possibilities. The closest he comes to a new logic of kana was to recommend punctuation and spacing, which are essentially typographic distinctions, to avoid confusion that did not exist with Chinese characters. By the same token, whereas Karatani is correct in broadly asserting that Maejima's 'conception of spoken language was itself rooted in a preoccupation with phonetic writing,' it is another matter entirely to extrapolate that 'once this view had been established, the question of whether or not *kanji* were actually abolished became moot. Once even Chinese characters had come to be seen as subordinate to speech, the issue became simply a choice between characters and the native phonetic syllabary.'[50]

Jacobowitz's point – and the larger point of his monograph – is that such claims neglect the larger potentialities afforded to the actors he speaks of, here specifically referring to the "many experiments with phonetic scripts and mechanical codes from the 1870s to around 1990, when

[48] Karatani, 46-7.
[49] Seth Jabobowitz, *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan: A Media History of Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2015): 47. Jacobowitz, however, is careful to note that "Karatani's words ring true for later Meiji language reformers such as Mori Arinori, Isawa Shūji, and the various proponents of shorthand."
[50] Ibid.

Chinese characters, kana, and, at least in principle, Roman letters, were becoming standardized."[51] In other words, it was by no means inevitable that the Japanese writing system would develop the way it did. The reality, as always, is more complex than that, and more arbitrary than we tend to think. As J. Scott Miller argues, for example, and in anticipation of Jacobowitz's argument, "[rarely] today do we consider the significant and far-reaching impact of *sokki* [速記 stenography or Japanese shorthand] and other transcriptive arts on our ability to textualize the spoken word."[52] In other words, Karatani's understanding of Maejima (and, to a lesser extent, other language reformers) is a retroactively informed and thus deterministic one. Nevertheless, as Karatani describes it, the issue "was not the actual abandonment of Chinese writing but rather a profound undermining of the privileged status of writing (as *kanji*), which was accomplished through advocating an ideology of phonetic speech."[53]

In his final assessment, Karatani summarizes his approach, as well as his understanding of kanji.

> With the evolution of phonetic writing where voice and script combined, the memory of the origins of writing was lost. Moreover, in the case of Japan, there was a unique experience of the ideograph which was different even from that of the Chinese. Like the decorated face, the Chinese character has a direct, figural meaning. Once a phonocentric ideology of language had been adopted, however, even when kanji were used their meaning was subordinated to sound. Similarly, the conception of the face came to be that of the naked face as a kind of phonetic cipher. Meaning was then constituted as an inner voice recorded and expressed by the face. The Japanese discovery of realism and interiority was thus profoundly linked to the *genbun itchi* movement.[54]

First, Karatani's suggestion that kanji are ideographs is simply incorrect. Second, the idea that with language reform came a shift from an ideographic usage of script to a phonetic one suggests a lack

[51] Ibid.
[52] J. Scott Miller, "Japanese Shorthand and Sokkibon," *Monumenta Nipponica*, 49:4 (1994): 471.
[53] Karatani, 53.
[54] Karatani, 57.

of understanding regarding the nature of written language.[55] Many critics have also pointed out the flaws in Karatani's understanding regarding how kanji function in written Japanese, the lack of philological rigor in his approach, and the resulting weak foundation upon which his larger observations of society writ large stand upon.[56] This is not an especially rare critique of Karatani's work: John Whitman, for example, citing linguist Yasuda Toshiaki, notes how Karatani's claim that Tokieda Motoki (1900-1967) "was not an imperialist" – a claim rooted in "Tokieda's opposition to the blatantly coercive language-planning measures instituted by the colonial government in the 1940s such as forcing Koreans to adopt Japanese surnames" – is "naively ahistorical to begin with" and, significantly, stems from an opinion based on misguided facts.[57]

My goal here is not to criticize Karatani and other literary scholars who use a flawed analysis of script to comment on larger societal trends; they are, after all, critics concerned not with the script itself but with what a particular reading of script can tell us. Nevertheless, I am convinced that a more nuanced look at literature, authors, and their various script practices will provide literary scholars with different albeit equally important insights into the role of written language in Japanese-language literature. It might not come as a surprise, then, that few studies

[55] Linguist Sachiko Matsunaga has addressed the nature of kanji in "The Linguistic Nature of Kanji Reexamined: Do Kanji Represent Only Meanings?," *The Journal of the Association of Japanese*, 30:2 (1996): 1. "Kanji, or Chinese characters, in contrast with well-known phonetic writing systems, are commonly called 'pictographs,' 'ideographs,' 'logographs,' or 'morphographs,' terms that define kanji as written symbols which solely represent objects, ideas, words, and morphemes, respectively. These terms have been used by those who claim that kanji symbolize meanings independent of sounds (e.g., Wang, 1973; Suzuki, 1975), and those who believe that fluent readers of Chinese and Japanese read kanji without relying on sounds (e.g., Morioka, 1968; Smith, 1985). These beliefs, however, seem to have been falsified as a myth both linguistically (Nomura & Ito, 1978; Ito, 1979; DeFrancis, 1984a, 1984b, 1989) and psycholinguistically (Tzeng, Hung & Wang, 1977; Horodeck, 1987; Perfetti & Zhang, 1991; Cheng, 1992; Matsunaga, 1995). Nevertheless, the belief in this ideographic myth still appears to be strong among certain scholars (e.g., Hansen, 1993) and non-scholars alike, triggering renewed philosophical, historical, linguistic, psycholinguistic, and pedagogical counter arguments."

[56] Perhaps the most well-known Japanese-language text, published just three years after Karatani's *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, is Kamei Hideo's *Transformations of Sensibility: The Phenomenology of Meiji Literature*, translated into English by Michael Bourdaghs (University of Michigan, 2002).

[57] John Whitman, "*Kokugogaku* versus *Gengogaku*: Language Process Theory and Tokieda's Construction of Saussure Sixty Years later," in *The Linguistic Turn in Contemporary Japanese Literary Studies: Politics, Language, Textuality* (Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2010): 128-9.

have focused on the role of script in modern and contemporary Japanese-language literature. Part of the reason for this, and as highlighted in Chapter Two, is because any consideration of script is thought to require specialized knowledge of script (and thus beyond the scope of literary scholarship) and, conversely, literature broadly conceived is thought to be a marked form of language and thus irrelevant to serious studies of writing systems (and thus beyond the scope of linguistics). Furthermore, within the narrow context of English-language scholarship on Japanese-language literature, the two reasons cited above mean that there exists little established vocabulary and/or methodologies suitable for a consideration of script *in* literature. This is not to say that references to the writing system and its relation to narrative content cannot be found; rather, because a sustained study of the writing system as it relates to literature has not been conducted in English, critics interested in the topic are forced to reinvent concepts and language each time they reference and/or analyze script.[58]

1.2 Some General Terms: Writing, Inscription, and Architecture of Script

Before outlining the various elements of written Japanese I shall introduce a few terms that will aid in thinking about and discussing the relationship between written language and literature. These are less definitions and more meditations: when discussing the act of writing, for example, there is no single definition capable of defining the concept in general terms while maintaining enough specificity to prove useful in applied analyses.

1.2.1 Writing

[58] For example, Ken Ito has examined the role of script in Tanizaki Jun'ichiro's *The Key* (*Visions of Desire: Tanizaki's Fictional Worlds*, 1991); Christopher Robins looks at the subversive role script plays in Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin* ("Revealing Native States: Inoue Hisashi's Challenge to the Japanese National Narrative," 1999); Marc Yamada touches upon the frenetic script employed by Takahashi Gen'ichirō ("John Lennon vs. The Gangsters: Discursive Identity and Resistance in the Metafiction of Takahashi Gen'ichirō," 2011); and Cindi Textor has argued for the important role script plays in literature written by so-called Zainichi authors ("Radical Language, Radical Identity: Korean Writers in Japanese Spaces and the Burden to 'Represent,'" 2016). My issue is not with the argument of these scholars – indeed, I agree with most of their points – but rather I cite them as examples of approaches to script that might have benefitted from the existence of a shared vocabulary.

Writing most generally refers to the visual representation of language. Scholars have tried long and hard – but to little success – to delineate the parameters of the act of writing. If the definition is too narrow then exceptions are easily found; too broad, and the usefulness of defining a concept becomes questionable. Quoting from Handel again,

> Daniels (1996: 3) defines writing as "a system of more or less permanent marks used to represent an utterance in such a way that it can be recovered more or less exactly without the intervention of the utterer"; Rogers (2005: 2) as the "use of graphic marks to represent specific linguistic utterances"; Coulmas (2003: 1) as "a system of recording [spoken] language by means of visible or tactile marks"; and Unger and DeFrancis (1995: 45) as "a system for representing utterances of spoken language by means of permanent, visible marks".[59]

A few things stand out from these definitions. First, the material nature of the written word ("permanent marks;" "graphic marks;" "visible or tactile marks;" "permanent, visible marks") is striking. Thus, one condition of writing is that it should exist over time, a condition that in fact necessitates it having a material component.[60] One might take pause and ask about digital texts; as Matthew Kirschenbaum from the field of textual studies has demonstrated, however, even digital texts leave behind trace amounts of materiality, highlighting the fact that the digital revolution is still always tethered to the material world.[61] Second is the recognition of an established set of norms that enable successful communication between text and reader. This system of norms belongs to what I describe later as the architecture of script but differs in one important way: the above critics' understanding of writing prioritizes spoken utterances by maintaining that information (e.g., semantic meaning) can be conveyed without reliance on an aesthetic (or literary) experience. That is, the above definitions of writing might not distinguish between *I am going to*

[59] Handel, 4.
[60] Many definitions of writing include a material component. For example, Elizabeth Boone notes that writing "must serve to communicate relatively specific ideas in a conventional manner by means of permanent, visible marks." Boone, "Beyond Writing," in *The First Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2004): 313.
[61] Matthew Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (MIT Press, 2008).

New York City in April and *i am going to new york city in april* because these variations are negligible when the primary function of writing is, as Daniels states, "to represent an utterance."[62] I do not disagree with these sentiments, and indeed, they perhaps accurately characterize how writing functions in many circumstances. Furthermore, I am not interested in engaging in that well-known debate on phonocentrism ignited by Derrida more than half a century ago.

In this study, writing is understood to be a mode of representing language rooted in the spoken word but existing independent of it. Writing always exists within the structural limits of the script it appears in; communication – that is, the transmission of information – would otherwise fail. Writing can refer to both handwritten texts and printed material, digital forms of language and, at its most extreme, representations of language that do not belong to any typically recognized script system. That is, writing is understood to be broad enough to encompass representations of language that appear in manuscripts and scribbled notes; books and magazines and advertisements; messages on Twitter and Facebook; and, in some cases, even emoji.[63] As such, the term proves more confusing than not when describing the role of written language in relation to literature, especially Japanese-language literature. This is why I refer to the target of the present study, namely written language in Japanese-language literature, as "inscription."[64] Having said that, I will occasionally switch between terms such as writing, inscription, and written language in order to avoid redundancy.

1.2.2 Inscription

[62] A point of caution: there are also optional variations used in English-language writing, too. For example, writing something in all italics, all caps, or even underlining a phrase can, depending on the context, convey an aesthetic that may not be directly related to spoken language. Such optional variations are, however, less common than in Japanese.
[63] This final point is controversial: once you admit emoji into a general definition of writing it becomes difficult to differentiate between art and written language.
[64] I thank Edward Mack for first suggesting this term to me and our subsequent discussions on its potential utility.

If “writing” refers broadly to the act of visually representing language through a set of codified (and sometimes uncodified) symbols, then “inscription” refers to the resultant state of said action. More specifically, an inscription refers to the text a reader encounters when they engage with a piece of literature. An inscription, then, is often synonymous with the “external form” of a text, something discussed in Chapter Two. This definition could be broadened to include all forms of printed material; I only limit it here because the conventions surrounding, say, government edicts differ widely from literary fiction and, while there might be some overlap, these different forms of writing are rooted in different sets of conventions that help shape reader expectations of what – and how – script should (or might) function.

I use “inscription” to highlight another aspect of script as it appears in literary texts: unlike private hand-written texts (book manuscripts, etc.), inscribed texts are generally the result of a process and thus suggest intentionality on behalf of an author or editor. Inscription is not, however, meant to suggest textual authority; it refers only to the text sitting in front of a reader. They need not be printed: digital texts, too, are the result of the process of writing. At the time of this study — and something that is sure to change — interactive digital texts are still relatively uncommon. Once the ability exists for users to toggle between different forms of a text, and perhaps even different languages (or scripts), the question of what precisely constitutes the parameters of inscription will need to be revisited and revised.

The questions of authenticity and intent — what did the “original” say and what did the author mean to convey — are not tied to the concept of inscription. Here it refers only to the end product of writing. The dynamic process of transforming a manuscript or draft into a polished product has been a major object of study in the field of textual studies. Indeed, insight into that process has helped reshape the way we approach another concept best approached with caution:

the “final” product. With all of this in mind, and with the caveat that numerous “final” products can simultaneously exist, it is still true that when most readers approach a piece of literary fiction they are not doing so with an eye towards comparison; instead, they are engaging with what they presume to be the end result of a dynamic process that has resulted in the settled text before them. These assumptions, of course, are made even before a reader begins engaging with narrative content.

Another way inscription in literature differs from writing more broadly, especially in relation to handwritten texts, is that inscriptions are always the product of technological limitations. Namely, authors are limited to, and thus conditioned by, the limitations of technology when they (often unconsciously) think about how to best represent language. For example, were an author handwriting a text (or were we to look at their handwritten manuscripts), we would likely find variations in orthography, usages of contracted or informal characters, and, in the case of Japanese, use of the kana in place of Chinese characters that are either too difficult or too time consuming to write by hand. The obvious result of converting written text into printed or digital forms is the creation of an image of standardization; the less obvious result of these technological limitations is a retrogressive form of control that serves to limit the act of writing itself. That is, one result of the widespread dissemination of computers has been a sharp decrease in the frequency with which one encounters variant characters in daily life. The purview of variant characters, after all, is in large part limited to handwritten texts, regional traditions and, variant sets of movable type. Today, handwritten texts – especially the most informal ones (notes, handwritten signs, etc.) – are where both variant and contracted forms of characters are most commonly encountered. As I demonstrate, this does not mean that some authors do not push back or reject technological limitations. It simply means that authors are more conscious about writing and the scripts they make use of. My

understanding of how technology shapes inscribed texts is similar to what Alexander Galloway has called "the interface effect," namely that an interface is not a single or stable limitation but an effect, and those effects spread both forward and backward and are always rooted in an ideology.[65]

Technological expedience, too, shapes inscriptions. For example, as one prominent newspaper reports, the ease with which users can now write (or "produce") hereto rarely written kanji on their computers and cellphones has resulted in an increase in their usage and, ultimately, inclusion in the List of Chinese Characters for Regular Use. Some characters added in 2010 are familiar to all readers of modern standard Japanese: 俺 (*ore*, "I"), 誰 (*dare*, "who"), 鬱 (*utsu*, "depressed"), and 彙 (*i*, "assemblage"). In the case of *utsu* and *i*, these characters appear in common two-character compound words (e.g., *utsubyō* 鬱病, "depression"; *goi* 語彙, "vocabulary") and are thus often encountered and easily produced when typing a text.[66]

Another way technology expands an author's toolkit is through a streamlined use of various interlinear glosses. This is significant because the expansion of these technologies allows for contemporary authors to use glosses in a way that resembles Edo and Meiji Period texts. In fact, an unexpected result of this technology has been a renewed interest in said glosses: now, where they were once understood to be *kana attached to the kanji of a base text*, it is today now best understood simply as *writing attached to a base text*. Don't worry: all of these terms will be defined below.

1.2.3 Architecture of script

The final concept I will introduce is the architecture of script. As the name suggests, the architecture of a script refers to the conglomeration of objects or capacities that come together to

[65] Alexander R. Galloway, *The Interface Effect* (Wiley, 2012).
[66] "Jōyō kanji ni 'utsu' 'ore' nado tsuika – pasokon fukyū ni taiō: bunkashin tōshin, tegaki de muzukashii moji mo," *Nihon keizai shimbun* (2010).

make a script distinct. All scripts operate under some architecture, whether that architecture is shared between different written languages (e.g., both written Vietnamese script and written English operate within the architecture of the Latin script). I use the term architecture to highlight the fact that the confines of a particular script (i.e., its characteristics) and the conventions arising within that environment provides the norms by which we can judge if a text is relatively normative or radical. That is, while it may be difficult to objectively assess the relative normalcy of a particular author's script practice, it nevertheless remains true that scripts in the modern period are to some degree standardized, and thus can be understood as being *relatively* more standard than not. Though not an objective determination, such judgements serve as a steppingstone for thinking about an author's script practice and the effect it has on their literature. What follows is an exploration of several key elements of the architecture of written Japanese.

1.3 The Architectural Elements of Written Japanese

The concept of an architecture of script is fundamental to my discussion about the way script functions in literature: understanding the uses and normative applications of a script readies us to understand the mechanics behind an author's script practice and the way they use written language to reflect, enhance, or even challenge narrative content. It is critical to understand script as another analyzable entity of narrative content. The architecture of written Japanese is a collection of at least eight elements. Some features are common to all written languages and some are today particular to written Japanese.

i. Three primary character sets, i.e., (a) kanji, (b) hiragana, and (c) katakana;
ii. Typographic markers;
iii. Bidirectionality;
iv. Predictable space distribution;
v. Interlinear glosses;
vi. The base text;
vii. Interchangeability;
viii. An expansive or "open" set of kanji.

Architecture is an apt metaphor for thinking about script because each element exists within the larger structure. And, like the sturdiest of structures, all points need not be present to keep the structure standing. That is, each element listed above might be considered a possibility or option afforded to the author of a text; the combination of these choices, in turn, leads to an inscription that is either more or less radical relative to normative practices. The concept of a radical orthography, a concern of Chapters Three and Four, is predicated on the existence of a normative (or non-radical) orthography. To outline the parameters of this normative form of written Japanese I will elaborate on each of these eight elements.

1.3.1 Three Standardized Primary Character Sets: (a) Kanji

The Japanese writing system comprises three main character sets.[67] The first, kanji, is made primarily of Chinese characters thought to have first entered Japan via Korea sometime around the fifth century. This was not a singular occurrence: the routes by which kanji entered the Japanese linguistic environment were multifaceted and complex. As such, the readings of a kanji based on their Chinese pronunciation (*on'yomi*) can vary greatly depending on when and from what region of China a particular reading originates. The three most important readings are the Wu readings (*Go'on* 呉音, 5th & 6th centuries), Han readings (*Kan'on* 漢音, 7th & 8th centuries), and Tang readings (*Tō'on* 唐音, 12th century). The three different readings of the kanji 行 are often cited as instances where knowledge of these various readings are required for one to claim literacy in the modern language: *shu<u>gyō</u>* 修行 "ascetic practice; training" (Wu), *gin<u>kō</u>* 銀行 "bank" (Han), and *<u>an</u>gya* 行脚 "pilgrimage" (Tang). Thus, we can say the character 行 has three primary Sino-

[67] In fact, the Japanese writing system can host any script system in addition to kanji, hiragana, and katakana. For example, the line "白いTシャツを着た男がいました" ("there was a man with a white t-shirt on") contains the letter T.

Japanese readings (*gyō*, *kō*, and *an*) that are usually read in combination with other kanji.[68] In addition to these three readings are numerous conventional ones (*kan'yō on*) – usually rooted in a misreading but now considered standard – that are commonly encountered today.[69] Common examples include *yu* for 輸 (as opposed to *shutsu*), *atsu* for 圧 (as opposed to *ō* or *yō*), *in* for 員 (as opposed to *en* or *un*), and *ken* for 験 (as opposed to *gen*).[70]

In contrast to these readings rooted in Chinese pronunciations, most kanji also have an associated *kun'yomi*, or a Japanese reading that originates from the domestic Japanese lexicon. For example, the character 行 has three primary *kun'yomi*: *yuku, iku* "to go," and *okonau* "to carry out; to perform [a task]." The process by which a particular reading becomes associated with a particular kanji is a history unique unto each character; however, it can be generally stated that associations between a reading and a character are rooted in perceived lexical similarities between a kanji and domestic Japanese lexical concepts. Thus, it would be a mistake to understand kanji in modern Japanese as some abstract or arbitrary sign linked to the Chinese language. To summarize: kanji generally have two associated readings, called *on'yomi* and *kun'yomi*. The former is based on its Chinese pronunciation at the time of its introduction into the Japanese linguistic environment. Because a character can have more than one meaning and/or pronunciation in Chinese, these differences can be reflected in various associated Sino-Japanese readings. The latter, on the other hand, is a reading reflecting Japanese semantic equivalents of a kanji that does not generally consider its Sino-Japanese reading. The result of this two-pronged cluster of associated readings

[68] There are instances when a kanji will be read in isolation. Though common for a kanji to be read in isolation in its *kun'yomi* (e.g., *yama* for 山), it is uncommon to use a kanji's *on'yomi* in isolation. There are, however, certain words, such as the *gyō* reading of 行 ("a line of text; a verse"), that are frequently encountered in modern standard Japanese.

[69] For an in-depth discussion of these conventional readings in modern Japanese see Tateno Yukari's discussion in "Gendai Nihon kango no kanji-on" (Ph.D. dissertation, Seitoku University, 2016), 78-199.

[70] Tateno, 80-2.

for a single kanji culminates in a situation where there typically are multiple possible readings for one kanji. To further complicate matters, any *kun'yomi* associated with a kanji might also be associated with other kanji, because two or more kanji can have semantic ranges that overlap at a point that matches the meaning of one and the same Japanese word.

Recall that the character 行 has the *kun'yomi* of *iku*. This term *iku*, which today means "to go [somewhere]" in the general sense, contains many specific meanings that can be visually articulated through distinct character usage. That is, while the character 行 is as neutral as the reading *iku*, an author can choose to highlight a nuanced meaning contained within the larger concept cluster of "to go." For example, writing *iku* or *yuku* with the character 逝 indicates to the reader that you are referring to the act of "going [to the other world]," i.e., dying (or, in a very different context, having an orgasm); writing it with 往, on the other hand, suggests "going [somewhere far away]." Write 征, however, and you are conjuring images of a military advance.[71] It might be helpful to imagine two large association clusters: one focused on the *kun'yomi* (with a variety of kanji associated with a reading, e.g., *iku*) and another one focused on the *on'yomi* (with a variety of readings associated with a particular kanji, e.g., 行). The equation $iku = 行$ is really just one point of intersection on a much larger plane.

The question of how many individual kanji exist is a popular one. The answer, and in fact the question itself, is an incredibly complex one. As if often the case, the answer lies in the parameters set by the one doing the counting. The question of the totality of Chinese characters has, in recent years, emerged as a serious logistical issue for programmers and script developers as the drive to digitally encode and standardize increasingly rare characters is growing. Shouhui

[71] Note that one is most likely to encounter 往 and 征 read as *yuku*.

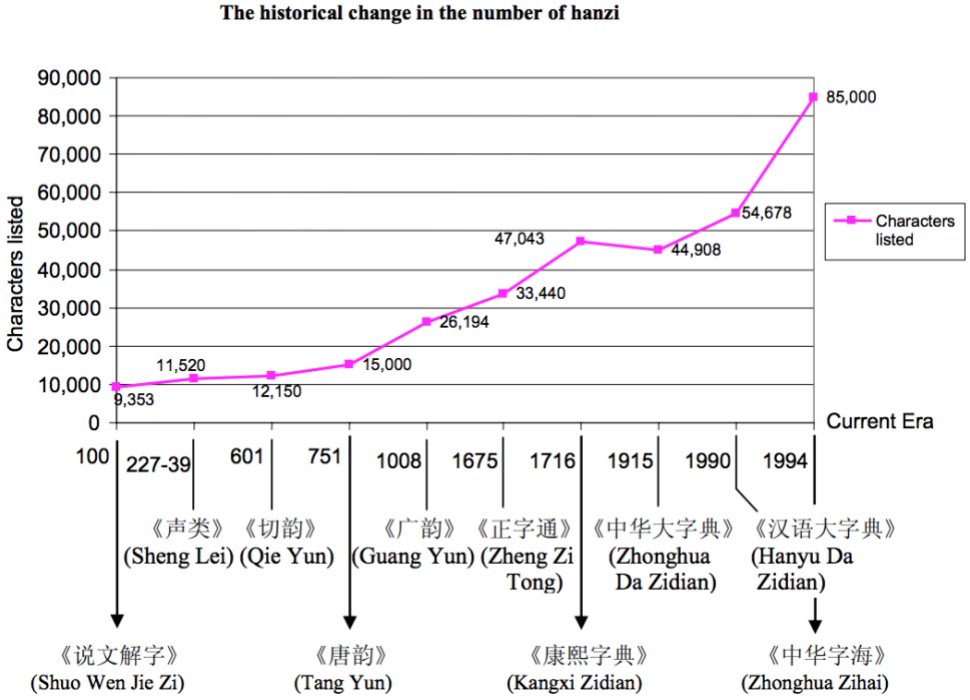
Zhao and Dongbo Zhang summarize the main issues and points of confusion involved in defining *hanzi* (Jp., kanji).

> The Chinese writing system is notoriously well known for its large pool of characters. It is generally held that *hanzi* [kanji in Japanese] is an open system, so the total number grows over time, making it almost impossible to tell precisely how big the total is. This is indubitably truer when all non-Chinese and non-Mandarin characters are added, including: a) non-Chinese *hanzi*, mainly referring to what Lunde (1999) called JKV (Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese) characters and *hanzi*-derived characters (over 20 systems throughout history), created by Chinese ethnic minorities within China proper; b) Chinese regional/dialectal characters. Although only Cantonese characters are visible in modern publications, character specificity within various dialects did exist historically and they are still being circulated locally, with some having the possibility of playing a more active role in written communication (for more information see Chen, 1996; Jordan, 2002); c) obsolete characters in ancient scripts such as *Jiaguwen* (Turtle Bones Inscription) and *Jinwen* (Metal Inscription), which represent the embryonic forms of *hanzi* engraved on animal bones and metal utensils about three millenniums ago.[72]

Though admittedly an extreme stance, if kanji (in Japanese) are defined as those characters originating in China, then one might reasonably include the totality of the characters cited above. In terms of actual numbers, Zhao and Zhang note a general trend in character dictionaries (*jiten* 字典) to include an increasing number of glyphs. Table 1-1, taken from their paper, illustrates this escalation.

[72] Shouhui Zhao and Dongbo Zhang, "The Totality of Chinese Characters – A Digital Perspective," in *Journal of Chinese Language and Computing* 17:2 (2007): 107.

Table 1-1. Mapping the totality of Chinese Characters.



Many of the dictionaries included in the chart were, and continue to be, incredibly influential in Japan. And while many of them were compiled in mainland China, the first edition of the *Dai Kanwa Jiten* (not listed), completed in 1960 and published in Japan, includes nearly 50,000 distinct character entries. The reason for dwelling on the number of Chinese characters – the vast majority of which most users in the Sinographosphere will never encounter, let alone be expected to read – is to highlight the openness of the set. At its simplest, then, we might say that a Chinese character is any marking that is included in a Chinese character dictionary.[73] Nevertheless, there are certain characters more common than others; these characters, understood to be necessary for survival throughout the Sinographosphere, are today regulated by governmental guidelines. For example, in 1988 the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China listed 7,000 commonly

[73] Some may take issue with this claim, but if we are striving for a definition that accounts for all characters appearing in dictionaries of Chinese characters, we must be more inclusive than exclusive. Take, for example, the existence of characters whose semantic meanings are unknown but are nevertheless included in these dictionaries. Some such characters include 弓 (*setsu*), 弗 (*ko*), 彫 (*choku*), 徼, or 徼. The last two characters lack both a recorded reading and semantic value. Few would argue their status as kanji.

encountered characters in the *List of Commonly Used Chinese Characters in Modern Chinese* (*Xiàndài hànyǔ tōngyòngzì biǎo* 现代汉语通用字表), with a subset of 3,500 characters listed as characters in regular use. In 2013, a list of 8,105 characters known as the *Table of General Standard Chinese Characters* (*Tōngyòng guīfàn hànzì biǎo* 通用规范汉字表) replaced these lists.[74]

In Japan, since 2010 the Japanese Ministry of Education has designated 2,136 characters as Kanji in Regular Use (*jōyō kanji*).[75] Additionally, there are 863 kanji that do not belong to this list but are recognized for use in proper names. Known as Kanji Used for Personal Names (*jinmeiyō kanji*), this list is comprised largely of new kanji with some variant forms included (e.g., 亙 for 亘 or 祿 for 禄).[76] In addition to these two lists – which totals nearly 3,000 characters – it is expected that specialists of a given field will utilize otherwise rarely encountered kanji. For example, the element boron (B) is written *hōso* 硼素 in Japanese, with the first character 硼 appearing nowhere else in the modern Japanese lexicon save for a few limited terms relating to the element (e.g., boric acid, borax, etc.).[77]

1.3.2 Three Standardized Primary Character Sets: (b) Hiragana and (c) Katakana

The second and third character sets that belong to the architectuere of written Japanese are derived from kanji but function independently from them and from each other. They are collectively referred to as kana; individually, they are referred to as either hiragana or katakana. Kana refers to both sets as a concept relative to kanji while maintaining that hiragana and katakana are also distinct from each other. Handel, borrowing Christopher Seeley's vocabulary, describes

[74] PDF: *Table of General Standard Chinese Characters*.
[75] PDF: *Kanji of Regular Use as issued by the Agency for Cultural Affairs*.
[76] PDF: *Kanji Used for Personal Names*.
[77] This does not mean that one does not encounter 硼 in literary Chinese: in that context it represents the onomatopoeic sound of the rumble of thunder or a cacophony of music.

hiragana as cursivized forms of kanji and katakana as being formed through a process of isolation in which one part (or isolated strokes) of a kanji represents the whole.[78]

> In the 10th century, practices of abbreviation in both vernacular glossing and phonographic vernacular writing led to the precursors to modern *hiragana* 平仮名 (phonograms abbreviated from sinograms by cursivization) and *katakana* 片仮名 (phonograms abbreviated from sinograms by isolation). These were not yet scripts, but haphazard abbreviations of [earlier] *man'yōgana* phonograms. Although not regular, consistent, or standardized, they nevertheless could be said to form cohesive sets of graphs.[79]

Though originating from sinograms (i.e., kanji), the differing geneses of said abbreviations led to immediately recognizable differences in form.[80] Hiragana are fluid and rounded in style (e.g., あいうえお) while katakana are angular (e.g., アイウエオ), differences that give each set immediately discernable and thus distinct visual characteristics. Some characters share the same parent kanji (*jibo* 字母), so comparison of the abbreviated hiragana and katakana forms highlight these visual differences: *u* (宇 = parent kanji; う = hiragana; ウ = katakana), *o* (於 = pk; お = h; オ = k), *yu* (由 = pk; ゆ = h; ユ = k), *mo* (毛 = pk; も = h; モ = k), *ni* (仁 = pk; に = h; ニ = k), etc. The current standard sets of hiragana and katakana are identical in their phonological scope with each consisting of 47 base characters (5 vowels, 40 consonant/vowel combinations, and the singular consonant *n* sound).[81] In addition to the two base character sets there are voiced (*dakuten*) and semi-voiced markers (*handakuten*), the ability to indicate a germinate consonant (*sokuon*), and the indication of long vowels through an elongated dash (*chōonpu*). Subscript kana, which indicate gemination (e.g., *kitta* きった, "[I] cut [sth.] ≠ *kita* きた, "[I] came"), modification of the vowel

[78] Handel, 179-180.
[79] Handel, 180.
[80] See "Development of the *Kana* Syllabaries" in Seeley, 59-89.
[81] There are numerous kana that are no longer in regular use. The most well-known characters, still occasionally encountered, are *we* (ゑ = h; ヱ = k) and *wi* (ゐ = h; ヰ = k).

sound of the preceding syllable (*byōin* びょういん, "hospital" ≠ *biyōin* びよういん, "beauty salon"), or, in many "modern" texts used to render foreign syllable shapes (*wisukii* ウィスキー "whiskey" ≈ *uisukii* ウイスキー).[82] Everything written in one set can be written in the other, and, in theory, all sounds contained within the Japanese phonetic system can be expressed in either set. Furthermore, every kanji maintaining a sound value in modern Japanese can also be expressed in hiragana or katakana: for example, *ashita* 明日 "tomorrow" can be re-written あした or アシタ.[83]

The two kana character sets and orthographical rules surrounding their use became standardized in the modern era through a series of government decrees developed more or less through trial-and-error.[84] In 1900, the Japanese Language Investigative Committee (*Kokugo chōsa iinkai*), established by the Education Ministry, codified the kana to be used in schooling, restricted the number of kanji taught in elementary schools, and updated spelling conventions of Sino-Japanese words to more accurately reflect pronunciation.[85] Though this list would be rescinded in 1908, the 1921 Interim Committee on The Japanese Language (*Rinji kokugo chōsakai*), chaired by literary giant Mori Ōgai, took up many of the same issues covered by the Japanese Language Investigative Committee. Significantly, the Interim Committee extended the effort to reflect pronunciation more accurately vis-à-vis kana from only Sino-Japanese words to domestic Japanese

[82] I use the ≈ in the final example because these terms denote the same concept, namely whisk(e)y, and they share a similarly close pronunciation. In the former two examples, however, there is no ambiguity in Japanese and the terms are not confused by speakers (or readers) of the language.
[83] The scope of what constitutes a kanji maintaining a sound value in modern Japanese is, as discussed earlier, complex and, in the final assessment, arbitrary. Taking a more conservative approach, we can say that every kanji recognized by the government or in regular use in Japan can be expressed in kana.
[84] The relationship between kana and the phonemic representation of Japanese is a complex one. See "Early Transcriptions of Japanese" (5-42) and "Previous Research on Phonograms" (43-65) in Marc Hideo Miyake, *Old Japanese: A Phonetic Representation* (Routledge, 2003).
[85] Seeley, 207.

ones.[86] While this was a major step towards universal standardization, that would only be achieved after the end of the Pacific War.

1.3.3 Three Standardized Primary Character Sets: Standardization

It is perhaps surprising that the war years saw a flurry of linguistic activity aimed at standardizing written language. As Yeonsuk Lee notes in her well-known study, the primary thrust for these reforms can be attributed to the scholar Hoshina Kōichi. Dubbing him "the forgotten scholar," Lee notes how Hoshina implemented the earlier goals of language reform espoused by the eminent philologist Ueda Kazutoshi, namely the reform of spelling conventions to align more closely with pronunciation.

> Beginning with his appointment by the Ministry of Education in 1898, Hoshina consistently advocated the adoption of the phonetic way of writing kana, the reduction of kanji with a view toward its ultimate abolition, and use of colloquial language in public sectors.[87]

Though a seemingly democratizing force in language reform, Lee reminds the reader that Hoshina's plans for reform were initiated *before* the start of the Pacific War, suggesting that Hoshina's calls for language change may have been inspired not by a desire to democratize language but to aid in Imperial Japan's push for linguistic assimilation in its colonies.[88] Indeed, between 1930 and 1940 the Japanese language was becoming more uniform just as its role in creating a unified state was growing: lists of everyday kanji and rules governing the orthography and usage of kana were revised (the modified version of the *Jōyō kanji hyō*; *Kaitei kanazukai*, both 1931; *Kanji jitai seiri an*, 1937; "Nihongo no tōsei o kyōka seyo," 1940); influential studies and essays on the relationship between the state and the Japanese language were appearing (*Kokka-go*

[86] Ibid. This shift can be broadly understood as a move away from the historical kana usage (*rekishi kanazukai*) to the modern kana usage (*gendai kanazukai*).
[87] Yeounsuk Lee, *The Ideology of Kokugo: Nationalizing Language in Modern Japan* (University of Hawaii Press, 2009): 119.
[88] Lee, 117-124.

no mondai ni tsuite; *Kokugo seisaku ron*, both 1933; *Kokugo seisaku*, 1936); the Japanese language was being tied to notions of a Japanese psyche (*Kokugo to Nihon seishin*, 1936); debates over dialects at home and language policy in the colonies were raging ("Manmō no shominzoku to minzokusei," 1936; "Sekai ni nobiyuku Nihongo," 1939; "Manshūkoku ni okeru Nihongo no chii"; *Hōgen ronsō*, 1940); how to write foreign place names and military terms in Japanese was being discussed (*Sōshi kaimei*; "Heiki yōgo shū"; "Heiki meishō oyobi yōgo no kan'i-ka ni kansuru kitei," all 1940); and efforts to standardize romanization began in earnest (*Rōmaji tsuzuri hyō*, 1937).

Even this cursory overview of script and language reform in Japan, which can be characterized as a push towards simplicity and consistency, emphasizes the ramifications of language reform policies and the real changes resulting from the process. The close relationship between government, language, and identity is obvious. Nanette Twine expresses this point succinctly (albeit in a slightly different context): the "development of colloquial style was in no way the result of a natural evolutionary process, but rather a revolutionary reform undertaken deliberately as a result of exposure to the west."[89] Language is not something fully malleable through government intervention. However, it is clear that standardization policies have led to greater homogeneity in language usage in Japan, especially where the written form of the language – i.e., kanji, kana, and orthographical conventions – is concerned.[90]

1.3.4 Typographic Markers

[89] Gottlieb, 257.

[90] This is not to say that, for example, during the Edo period writing by literate people in northern Japan would not have been intelligible to literate people in southern Japan. In fact, I suspect that literate individuals would have little trouble communicating via written language during this time, especially when following the relatively codified norms of 候文 *sōrōbun*, or the epistolary style. I surmise that the primary reason for this lies in the modes of standardization rooted in elite education and the reliance on written text that was critical to the Tokugawa government, including requirements to submit written records to government officials.

Much like kanji, the history of punctuation marks in written Japanese is a complicated matter. In the narrowest sense, the term *kutōten* 句読点 – a combination of both *kuten* 句点 "period marks" and *tōten* 読点 "reading marks" – refers to both commas and periods. In practice, however, *kutōten* refers to punctuation marks and other symbols not belonging to any of the principle character sets and not holding semantic value. Another technical term for punctuation is *yakumono*. One reason for the complicated history surrounding these markings lie in their provenance: the comma and period (、。) as used today in written Japanese (i.e., the narrow sense of *kutōten*) originate from Chinese manuscript and, later, Song Dynasty print culture; quotation marks (*kagi kakko* 「」) are in fact multifunctional and originate in Japan; the turbid or voiced sound mark (*dakuten* ゛) and semi-turbid or semi-voiced sound mark (*handakuten* ゜) began as markings applied by readers of a text as annotation markers;[91] and, despite various theories, the origin of the elongated sound symbol (*chōonpu* ー) remains a mystery. Nevertheless, these markers play an important role in the architecture of written Japanese because they shape the way a text appears to the reader. Most of my discussion below focuses primarily on the way they appear in modern standard Japanese.

According to the Standards of Orthography published by the Ministry of Education (*Monbushō kankōbutsu hyōki no kijun*) in 1950, the *kuten*, or period, is used to mark the end of a sentence or utterance. In modern standard Japanese it functions nearly identically to the English period. The *tōten*, or comma, on the other hand, occurs within a sentence and should help to remove any ambiguities of meaning. The *nakaten*, or "middle dot" (・), is primarily used to separate a string of nouns occurring within a sentence, as a separator between words written in katakana (and

[91] The terms voiced/semi-voiced and turbid/semi-turbid are often left untranslated in English language texts, and I will follow this trend moving forward.

thus usually non-Japanese vocabulary), and the numbers appearing in dates, especially when those numbers are written in kanji. For example, Dean Martin's name is rendered ディーン・マーティン (Diin Maatin) in katakana. The parentheses (*kakko*) look, and are almost identical in use to, the parentheses in English.

Single-bracket quotation marks (*kagi kakko* 「」) are nearly identical to English quotation marks when used to mark direct quotes. Their breadth of use, however, exceeds the standard English quotation marker: they can indicate direct quotations or can be used to emphasize a particular word or phrase without the implication of quotation. They are also used to indicate the titles of shorter pieces of fiction (e.g., novellas), fiction contained within larger anthologies, television shows, art exhibitions, etc. The *kagi kakko* is used far more frequently in Japanese to highlight key words and phrases than italics are in English. The double bracket marks, or *nijū kagi kakko*, are utilized when quoting or emphasizing something already included within a *kagi kakko* (e.g., quotes within a quote) and when referencing the title of books, movies, manga, etc.

The *dakuten* and *handakuten* are critical components of written modern standard Japanese. Their use is standardized and stable, and thus any deviation from normative practices is considered incorrect. Their presence or absence means the difference between *ha* は, *ba* ば(*dakuten*), or *pa* ぱ (*handakuten*). As linguist Numoto Katsuaki has outlined, the history of these markings is interesting because they did not originate with the authors of a text but, ultimately, with the reader. That is, they began with a desire on the part of the reader to indicate pronunciations of dharani (*darani* 陀羅尼), or Buddhist chants and mantras, that were originally used in Sanskrit.[92] The

[92] Katsuaki Numamoto, "Dakuon jibo kara dokuseiten e," in *Kokugogaku* 172: 3 (1993): 15-6.

oldest examples of such markings are found in ninth century manuscripts.[93] In the modern period, the use of the *dakuten* and *handakuten* would not be standardized until the orthographical reforms of the postwar period. Indeed, it is not uncommon to find inconsistent usage of these markings within a single manuscript written by a single author from before the Meiji Period. As is often cited, the Imperial Rescript on the Termination of the Greater East Asia War of 1945 (*Daitōa sensō shūketsu no shōsho* 大東亞戰爭終結ノ詔書), which marked the acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, includes neither voiced nor semi-voiced sound marks.[94]

Table 1-2 provides examples of select punctuation marks taken from a variety of contemporary texts.

Table 1-2: Examples of Various Punctuation Markers

Symbol	JP/EN	Example	Translation
。	*Kuten* 句点 Period	文化なんてものは、それほど強いものではない。面白さや価値とは関係なしに、時流に逆らえず消滅してしまうことが時にある。しかしである。大きな流れの中で特定の文化が否定されたとしても、個々人の胸の内にその文化が生んだコンテンツ—例えば物語は生きている。 山下泰平『「舞姫」の主人公をバンカラとアフリカ人がボコボコにする最高の小説の世界が明治に存在した	That thing called culture isn't as strong as we might think. Irrespective of its appeal or value, and unable to go against the current trends, there are moments when it vanishes. And yet! Even if a particular culture is negated within some larger trend, the contents – for example, the narrative – that culture birthed lives on in the hearts and minds of individuals.

[93] For a detailed account of their usage and relationship to transciptions of Sanskirt-language dharani, see "Dharuni no katenhō" (801-7) and "Dakuonpu no hassei to teichaku no rekishi" (808-932) in Numamoto, *Nihon kanji no rekishiteki kenkyū* (Kyūko shoin, 1997).

[94] For example, the Imperial Rescript includes the following line: 終ニ我カ民族ノ滅亡ヲ招來スルノミナラス (*tsui ni wa ga minzoku no metsubō o shōrai suru nominarazu*). In modern orthographic standards, カ (*ka*) would be written ガ (*ga*) while ス (*su*) would be written ズ (*zu*). The translation of the section in question reads: "[Should we continue to fight,] it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, [but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization]," *Text of Hirohito's Radio Rescript, The New York Times: 15 August 1945.*

		ので 20 万字くらいかけて紹介する本』[95]	Yamashita Taihei, *Maihime no shujinkō o bankara to Africa-jin ga bokoboko ni suru saikō no shōsetsu no sekai ga Meiji ni sonzai shita no de 20man ji kurai kakete shōkai suru hon*
、	*Tōten* 読点 Comma	仕事は順調にはかどり、一週間の滞在予定の半ばで、すっかり用がすんで、その晩彼は、商談の相手方に招待されて、その国の特産の酒をかなりのんだ。 小松左京「黄色いなずみ」[96]	Work proceeded nicely, and halfway through his stay everything that needed to get done was done. That night, he was invited out by the people he was engaged in negotiations with and drank quite a bit of that country's specialty liquor. Komatsu Sakyō, "Kiiroi nezumi"
・	*Nakaten* 中点 Middle dot	ただ、どの程度海外の人がゲイというものを主張や戦略として表に出していたのかは私のところまでは届いてこなかったので、ボーイ・ジョージが化粧するのも、坂本龍一が化粧するのも当時はある意味で同じ文脈として受け止めていたんですよ。 田亀源五郎『ゲイ・カルチャーの未来へ』[97]	However, I never knew to what extent people abroad made [their sexuality] explicit or otherwise came out as gay for strategic reasons. In a sense, I understood both Boy George and Sakamoto Ryuchi's use of make-up as belonging to part of the same content. Tagame Gengorō, *Gay culture no mirai e*
「」	Single-bracket markers	実際「X-ファイル」のマニアたちは彼ら二人のことを非常に注目していたのです。 大塚英志『物語消滅論』[98]	In fact, serious fans of *The X-Files* paid close attention to [story editors Darin Morgan and Glen Morgan]. Ōtsuka Eiji, *Monogatari shōmetsu ron*

[95] Taihei Yamashita, *Maihime no shujinkō o bankara to Africa-jin ga bokoboko ni suru saikō no shōsetsu no sekai ga Meiji ni sonzai shita no de 20man ji kurai kakete shōkai suru hon* (Kashiwa shobō, 2019): 12.
[96] Sakyō Komatsu, "Kiiroi nezumi," in *Idai naru sonzai* (Hayakawa shobō, 1983): 71.
[97] Gengorō Tagame, *Gay culture no mirai e* (ele-king books, 2017): 159.
[98] Eiji Ōtsuka, *Monogatari shōmetsu ron* (Kadokawa shoten, 2004): 65.

『』	*Nijū kagi kakko* 二重鉤括弧 Double-bracket markers	したがって、四月号に挙げた夏目漱石の『行人』のあの場面は、文を書く者すべてにとってのあり得ない事態への強い願望でもあるのですよ。 いとうせいこう『小説禁止令に賛同する』[99]	Therefore, that scene from Natsume Soseki's *The Wayfarer* included in the April issue was a strong desire for an impossible situation on the part of all people who write prose. Itō Seikō, *Shōsetsu kinshirei ni sandō suru*
々	*Dō no jiten* 同の字点 Iteration marker (kanji)	完治する方法がまだないとしても、状態を安定させることでエイズと共に生きる人々のほとんどが普通の寿命を全うできるようにする治療法が早晩あらわれるだろうと思います。 田中祐里子『痛む、生きる、身体の歴史』[100]	Even if there isn't a method for curing AIDS, I believe that sooner or later we will see the emergence of treatment methods that will allow people to live with AIDS and have a regular life expectancy. Tanaka Yuriko, quoting Asada Akira, *Yamu, ikiru, shintai no rekishi*

1.3.5 Bidirectionality

Most texts written in Japanese before the modern period were written vertically from right-to-left. Horizontal text, however, was not particularly rare. Rather, unlike today, such text would be written from right-to-left in a horizontal direction. With the advent of the printing press, however, text written from left-to-right became the standard for horizontally oriented writings. Linguist Yasuko Obana suggests that the large inclusion of Western quotations and names (presumably done in the source script) was the leading catalyst for this change.[101] Obana's claim seems to have some merit to it: the historian of written Japanese Yanaike Makoto has traced the origins of the modern horizontal orientation to late 18th century manuscripts of Dutch learning

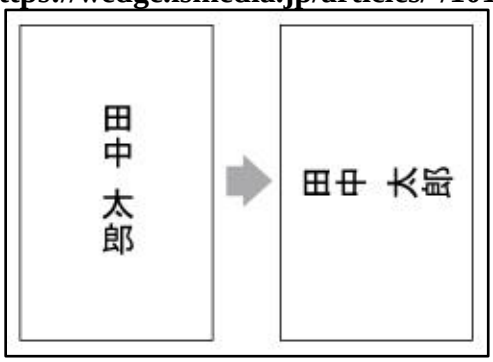
[99] Seikō Itō, *Shōsetsu kinshirei ni sandō suru* (Shūeisha, 2018): 108.
[100] Asada Akira in conversation with Susan Sontag (1994), in Yuriko Tanaka, *Yamu, ikiru, shintai no rekishi* (Seidosha, 2019): 145.
[101] Yasuko Obana, "Vertical or Horizontal? Reading Directions in Japanese," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, 60:1 (1997): 86.

(*Rangaku*) that were obviously influenced by contact with Western writings.[102] Today, unlike modern written Chinese (where contemporary texts written vertically are rare in mainland China but more common in Hong Kong and Taiwan), readers of Japanese are accustomed to both styles. Most books are printed vertically while articles accessed online, scientific reports, etc., appear horizontally. And while it is relatively easy to switch between vertical and horizontal texts, there are some conventions that prevent direct interchangeability. For example, numerals appearing in horizontal texts are generally written in Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3) whereas they often appear in kanji in vertical texts (一, 二, 三). Furigana, which will be discussed in detail below, move from the right side of a character in vertical text to sitting just above a character in horizontal ones.

In his pioneering work on the directionality of written Japanese, Yanaike has conceived of two principles that allow for more precise thinking: the first is called "character-string progression orientation" (*moji-retsu tenkai hōkō*) and the second is called "character-string position orientation" (*moji-retsu haichi hōkō*). Character-string progression orientation refers to the direction in which characters progress relative to each other (and not the text). That is, when one faces a text does the direction of characters proceed vertically or horizontally? In Image 1-1, for example both texts have a vertical progression orientation.

[102] Makoto Yanaike, *Yokogaki tōjō* (Iwanami shoten, 2003): 40.

Image 1-1. Example of Vertical Progression Orientation.
(https://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/1019)



On the other hand, character-string position orientation considers the positioning of the characters relative to a text. While both character-strings are vertically oriented the image on the left is positioned in accordance with the larger progression orientation of the text; for the image on the right, however, this is not the case. Thus, for readers of this text, the character-string appears rotated 90° clockwise.

Though the directionality of a text is not something this study will examine in-depth, the option to write a text either vertically or horizontally should be understood as one element in the architecture of script that authors writing in Japanese may exploit.[103] It is perhaps utilized less than the other elements described here because of the technical limitations of including both orientations in a single document; newspapers, however, are the one major exception. For this reason, texts tend to remain internally consistent.

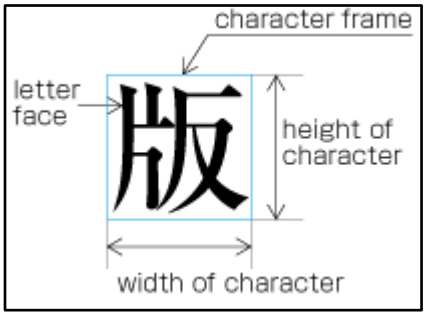
1.3.6 Predictable Space Distribution

Another characteristic of written Japanese is that characters from the three character sets appear within a character frame (*moji no sotowaku*) of equal dimension relative to the other characters of a given text.[104] A character frame is understood to be a "[r]ectangular area occupied

[103] For those interested in the technical differences between horizontal and vertical text from the perspective of computing, see Koji Ishii and Ken Lunde, "Unicode Standard Annex #50: Unicode Vertical Text Layout" (2019).
[104] My understanding of *character frame* and the other technical terms described in this paragraph are taken from the incredibly useful "W3C Requirements for Japanese Text Layout: W3C Working Group Note 3 April 2012" (2012). Quotations here refer to terms borrowed from this site.

by a character." Within each character frame is the letter face, which refers to the character itself. When we speak of the size of a character, then, we are in fact referring to the size of the character frame with the letter face expanding or shrinking in a fixed relative relationship to the surrounding frame. This principle is true for both horizontal and vertical writing.

Image 1-2. Character size and distribution.



Though the introduction of characters not belonging to the three sets described above (e.g., characters from the Latin alphabet) does complicate things, on the whole printed text is evenly distributed across the page. Diversions from this norm, on the occasions when they do occur, usually happen with the character frame of a single character or character-string being increased or reduced. The application of equally distributed character frames is associated with Chinese manuscript culture and thus, within the context of Japanese manuscripts, is to be found in texts written in literary Sinitic (*kambun*). On the other hand, in manuscripts written in vernacular Japanese and primarily utilizing the hiragana syllabary (e.g., *waka*, *kana zōshi*, etc.), the concept of a fixed character distribution is prioritized less than the visual aesthetic of linking characters.

To highlight this fact, I will introduce a 19th-century collection of *haikai* written in alternating verses of Chinese and Japanese (*wakan haikai*). The interactions between these two script environments highlights the difference between layouts (and, critically, the visuality they impart on the reader). Titled *Collection of Chinese and Japanese Haikai* (*Wakan haikai shū*), this manuscript was published by a poet named Soraku 曽洛, edited by Nakayama Kaō 中山花央, and

dated to the 13th year of Bunsei (1830).[105] *Wakan haikai* as a genre has been described by Kai Xie in the following way.

> *[W]akan haikai* refers to popular linked verse in which *wa* [Japanese] and *kan* [Chinese] verses are composed in alternating turns. Like *wakan renku* [和漢聯句], *wakan haikai* also provided a way for the encounter of *wa* and *kan*, including juxtaposition and interaction of Japanese and Chinese elements, and also communications between *haikai* and *kanshi* [漢詩] poets.[106]

While Xie's manuscript focuses on *wakan haikai* from the Genroku era (1688-1704), she notes such poems were composed throughout the Edo period.[107] And while the history of this genre of poetry is interesting and deserves further study – it is woefully understudied in both English- and Japanese-language scholarship – I cite it here to highlight the connections between manuscript culture and printed culture and to emphasize the not-so-newness of seemingly radical texts in modern standard Japanese. More specifically, I cite this manuscript to highlight the architectural structures of modern standard Japanese and to suggest that they are not new creations but, on the contrary, a legacy of manuscript culture. I will return to this manuscript throughout the remainder of this chapter so as to emphasize the historical precedents of many of the claims I make and the contemporary ramifications of them on the contemporary literary experience.

Image 1-3 illustrates the influence layout has on visuality. All eight lines of text make up a cohesive poetic unit that is both isolated and in dialogue with its neighboring poems. The

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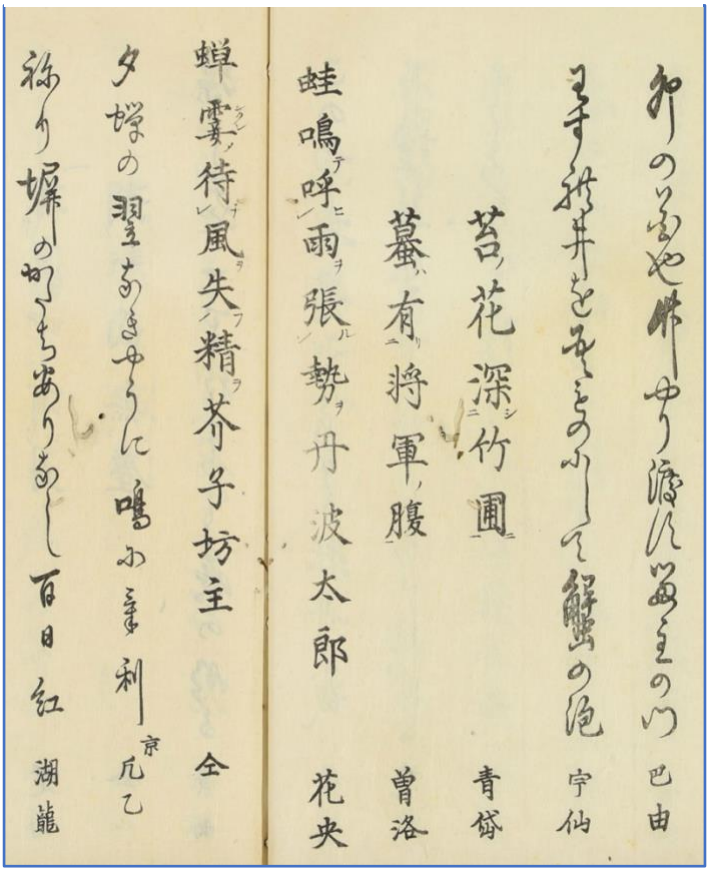
[105] The full manuscript can be accessed online via Wasdea University's *Kotenseki Sogo Database: Japanese and Chinese Classics*, call number "へ 05 04674." There is little information available about the piece. A short description, taken from an acquisition note, reads: "Authored by Soraku, the fourth generation of the Boukō 暮雨港, and edited by Kaō. The preface was written by Kaō in the 13th year of Bunsei (1830). The text is a collection of Japanese and Chinese *haikai* written by various haikai poets. Contributors from the Owari Province (Nagoya) includes its author Soraku, his teacher Gaō, Kyōtai, Shirō, and Jikō; poets from Edo include Tairei, Baoku; poets from Kyoto include Sōkyū, Jūjō; as well as poems by Buson and Bashō. It comprises five parts: spring, summer, autumn, winter, and a miscellaneous section, all of which include versus in both literary Sinitic and Japanese," *Kokubungaku kenyū shiryōkan hō*, 50:3 (1998): 5.

[106] Kai Xie, "Remapping the Sino-Japanese Dialectic: Sino-Japanese Interplay in Linked Verse Compositions of Japan, 14th to 17th Centuries" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Washington, 2017): 85. I will leave a discussion of the history and complicated rules of linked verse written in Japanese and Chinese for another occasion.

[107] Ibid., 85.

Japanese-language *haikai* (from right-to-left, lines 1, 2, 7, and 8) are written in the traditional 5-7-5 meter while the Sinitic poems appear as single five-syllable couplets (*wǔjué* 五絕; lines 3 and 4)

Image 1-3. *Wakan haikaishū* (1830).



or as doubled five-syllable couplets (lines 5 and 6). In terms of predictable character distribution, we can see that all Chinese characters appearing in the Sinitic poetry fit within an equally distributed character frame. And while the size of that character frame may differ (e.g., the size difference between 竹圃 and 青岱 in line 3), the size of each character is consistent with its character frame. In fact, a character's size and positioning indicates its function: the characters appearing in the body of the text are the largest while the name of the poet written below their contribution in a smaller character frame. The even smaller characters appearing on the upper-right side of a name provide additional information about the poet. For example, the character 京 appearing above 凡乙 (line 7) indicates the poet is from Kyoto. Other instances of supplemental

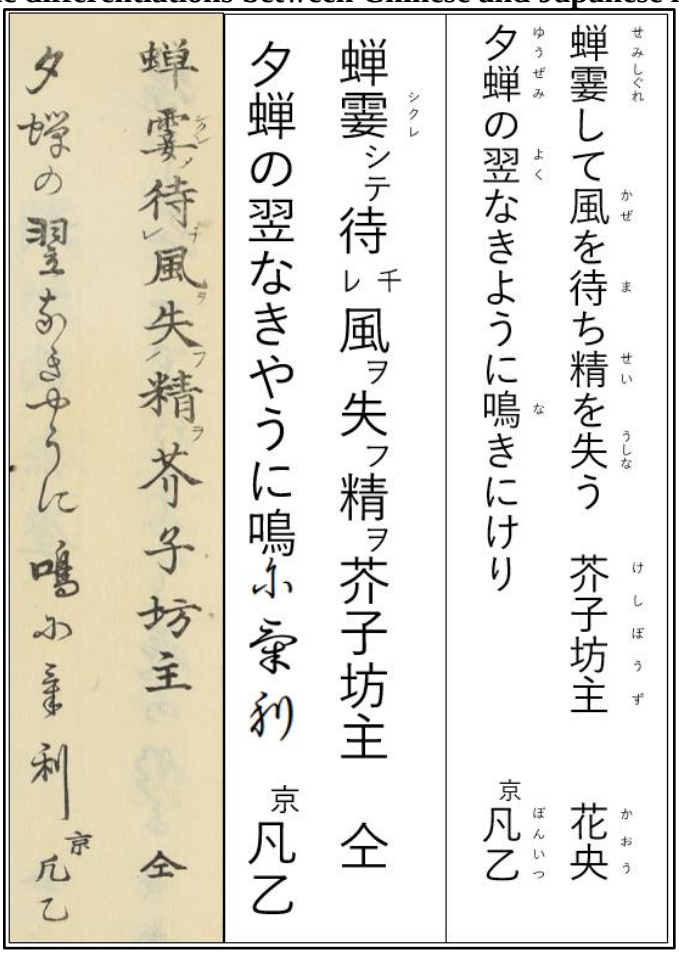
information throughout the manuscript include 曽洛父 ("father of Soraku"), 江戸 ("[from] Edo"), and 濃州 ("[from] Nōshū," i.e., from Mino Province). The highly regulated character distribution of the Sinitic verses are juxtaposed with the more cursive and connected style of the accompanying Japanese verses. In these lines (1, 2, 7, and 8), characters can connect to the ones that follow them in ways that prohibit isolation. The visual aesthetic of the text is highlighted here, especially given the use of so-called *hentaigana*, or variant kana. For example, one encounters the hiragana *ni* appearing in two forms in the same line of text: the familiar に and the less-familiar (from a contemporary perspective) 丹, itself a cursive form of 爾 (line 7).[108]

Image 1-4 (lines 6 and 7 in isolation) highlights the visual differences between the Sinitic and Japanese poems. Line 6 is written in literary Sinitic and would be read in modern Chinese as *chán shà dài fēng shī jīng jièzǐ fāng zhǔ*. This knowledge, however, is irrelevant to both the authors of the text and to modern readers: the glosses to the right of the body of the text provide Japanese readings for uncommon Chinese characters (e.g., *shigure* for 霙) and provide reading marks to the left of the base text that enable a reader to rearrange the Sinitic grammar into comprehensible (if a bit stilted) Japanese.[109] Furthermore, the use of colloquial language (e.g., *keshi bōzu* 芥子坊主) – a hallmark of the *haikai* genre – firmly locates the poem within the Japanese literary landscape.[110] A translation of the line in question, by the poet Kaō, reads: "Cicadas in a drizzle / waiting for the wind / a boy loses his steam / a poppy priest."[111] Poppy priest, or *keshi bōzu*, refers to a popular

[108] There is a long tradition in *waka* and other texts written in the Japanese script of considering the aesthetic of writing and its relationship to narrative content. See the following essays by Reginald Jackson, who has since published a book-length study on the subject: "Scripting the Moribund: *The Genji Scrolls'* Aesthetics of Decomposition," in *Reading the Tale of Genji: Its Picture Scrolls, Texts and Romance* (Brill, 2009): 3-36; "Dying in Two Dimensions: "Genji emaki" and the Wages of Depth Perception," *Mechademia: Second Arc* 7 (2012): 150-172.
[109] This practice, called *kambubn kundoku*, will be discussed at greater length in the following chapter.
[110] That is, for a reader who can read literary Sinitic but not Japanese this line makes no sense; it is incomprehensible.
[111] *Semi shigure shite / kaze o machi / sei o ushinau / keshi bōzu.*

haircut from the Edo period in which a child would shave their head save for the very top, thus resembling a priest's shaved head.[112] The juxtaposition of "cicada" and "poppy priest" – i.e., a cicada fated to soon die and a child sporting a fashionable haircut – has overtones of transience coupled with strong sexual overtones.[113]

Image 1-4. Aesthetic differentiations between Chinese and Japanese linked verse.



[112] James Hepburn (of the eponymous Hepburn system of Romanization), defines the term thus in the first volume of his important *A Japanese-English and English-Japanese Dictionary* (1888): "(coll.) One who has the hair all shaved except a circular patch behind, like children or Chinamen" (vo. 1, 292).

[113] The previous poem, also by the poet Kaō, adds more context: "A frog croaks, beckons the rain, and displays its might – summer clouds." Summer clouds is a translation of *tamba tarō* 丹波太郎. As Sasaki Sanmi notes: "*Natsu no kumo* (cloud of summer) is a cumulonimbus cloud that looks like cotton wool piled up. Such clouds can look like overlapping mountain ridges (*mine*) so they are called *kumo no mine*. The names vary according to regions: Tamba Tarō, Shinano Tarō or Bandō Tarō and others," *Chado, the Way of Tea: A Japanese Tea Master's Almanac* (Tuttle, 2005) 375.

The next poem in the collection (line 7) responds to the imagery constructed in the poppy priest one, this time switching from a Chinese register (i.e., literary Sinitic) to a *waka* one: "Like the cicadas crying at dusk / lacking a morning after / so too he cried."[114] Though the literary connections between the two poems deserve a discussion of their own, here I emphasize the visual differences between the two: in the former, all characters of the base text are written conforming to the same size character frame; in the latter, proportion, size, and the boundaries of characters become more fluid. Indeed, the first character of the poppy priest poem and the second character of the singing cicada poem are the same (蝉) but appear in different forms:  and  . The former, a cursive form of the latter, complements the fluid nature of the hiragana script as it is used throughout the manuscript (cf. lines 1, 2, and 8 in Image 1-3). Characters not only have the potential to connect with those immediately following them, but the form (i.e., the variant form being utilized) they take (e.g.,  or) is an aesthetic determination. It would not be until the advent of wide-scale printing in the modern era that written Japanese, that is, the rough equivalent of the kanji/kana hybrid style of the Japanese poetry witnessed here, would come to be written in a style mirroring the predictable character frame distribution model seen in the Sinitic poems.

1.3.7 Interlinear Glosses

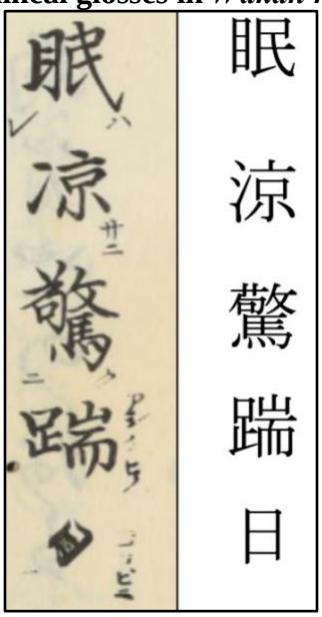
Interlinear glosses are a set of various annotations that appear to the right side of a character in the body of the text in right-to-left vertically oriented writings and above text in left-to-right horizontally oriented ones. Though these glosses can, in some texts dating from the premodern and early modern periods, be found flanked on both sides of a character or character-string (and often simultaneously), today they appear universally either to the right or just above them.[115] The

[114] *Yūzemi no / yoku naki yōni / naki ni keri*.
[115] For a discussion of double-flanked furigana in the Edo period see Shinji Konno, *Furigana no rekishi* (Shūeisha, 2009): 95-134.

most important form of interlinear glossing for this study is *furigana* 振仮名. Though the primary function of furigana is to make a particular reading explicit to the reader, the nature of that reading can vary significantly from one author to another and from one example to another even within a single text. That is, the general understanding that furigana is used to show how a kanji is read is correct; it is, however, just one function of many. As I note in Chapter Four, the linguist and historian of the Japanese writing system Shindō Sakiko has identified more than seven distinct usages of furigana occurring within just one text.[116] The poem in Figure 6 is from the same manuscript cited in the previous section. This line is of interest because it highlights the textual, literary, and visual potentials furigana can confer upon a text. The poems read: "Sleeping in the coolness / the slanted sunlight on my heel / is a surprise."[117] It is striking that the final character of the poem (日) is, through the use of furigana, made to be read *yokobi [ni]*. The final *ni* is a grammatical particle indicating the source of the speaker's surprise, here the slanted sunlight on the heel of (presumably) the poet's foot. Note that the character imitates the reading assigned to it, that is, it appears slanted.

[116] The text, Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin*, and the various forms of furigana found therein, is a central concern of Chapter Four.
[117] *Suzushisa ni nemureba / ashi no kubisu no / yokobi ni odoroku*.

Image 1-5. Interlineal glosses in *Wakan haikaishū*.



The reading assigned to the single character 日 (i.e., *yokobi*) would generally be written 横日 (lit. "slanted sunlight") in kanji or よこび/ヨコビ in kana. Instead, here the character absorbs the semantic meaning of the *yoko* ("sideways; slanted") and thus transforms from 日 to the tilted . Though possible to discount this as ludic play or some other form of entertainment existing outside the architecture of written Japanese, it is nevertheless important that such characters operate as kanji and are thus subject to the same governing principles. Furthermore, it is significant that is not associated with the phrase *yokobi* without the attached furigana; in other words, the character would remain unreadable without the addition of furigana making the reading of *yokobi* explicit. The ability to comprehend it, then, is indefinitely deferred until these interlinear glosses are provided. In much of the contemporary literature examined throughout this study, too, the use of furigana is similarly critical for comprehension.

1.3.8 The Base Text

Base text refers to the body of text that remains when all interlinear glosses are removed. In many contexts, the base text is all that is needed for the successful communication of ideas in literature. The base text is what is modified or otherwise commented upon by furigana and other glosses. It is also an indivisible element of the text: it does not refer to, for example, a text with kanji that has been reduced to a pure phonetic transcription but to the particular form a text takes regardless of the base text's configuration. In other words, the four configurations of the following phrase are related in the sense that they each would (read: could) be vocalized identically but differ from each other in that the base text is different.

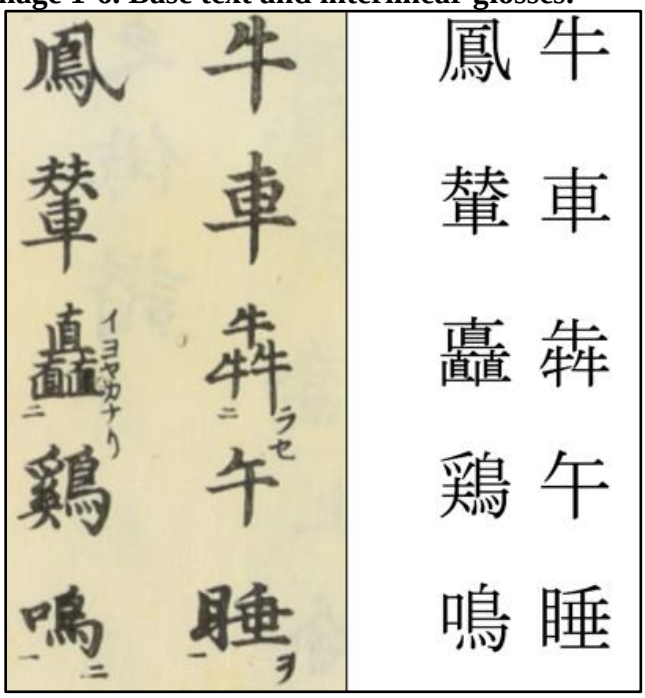
(i) りんごが大好きです。
(ii) リンゴが大好きです。
(iii) 林檎が大好きです。
(iv) 苹果が大好きです。

Each base text, read *ringo ga daisuki desu*, means "I love apples." So what is the difference? That depends on context but, for example, each instantiation can acquire nuanced meaning based on its relationship to both narrative content and other orthographical and typographical features of the text. The significance of the base text will be immediately apparent in my discussion of *I Will Be a Cat* in Chapter Four.

As illustrated by the "slanted sunlight" example, however, it is incorrect to say that the base text is always all that is needed for communication to occur. In Image 1-6, the base texts are 牛車犇午睡 (line 1) and 鳳輦鼇鶏鳴 (line 2).[118] The lines in question conform to the grammatical structure of literary Sinitic.

[118] There is an entry in the *Nihon sandai jitsuroku* (901) from the third year of Jōgan (861) that semantically links line 1 and 2: "As expected, the queen-mother wished to use the Imperial Carriage so today we used a cow-drawn carriage" (*taikō hōren o gyo subeku shikōshite kyō gissha o yōsu* 太后可御鳳輦而今日用牛車).

Image 1-6. Base text and interlinear glosses.



These lines are transformed into Japanese syntax through the use of interlinear glosses located on the bottom left-hand side of a character that indicate reading order (*kaeriten*). Those on the right hand-side indicate reading and grammatical inflections (*okurigana*). For example, the 一 ("one") and 二 ("two") appearing below 犇 and 午睡 (a bound term) in line 1 indicate to the reader that the base text should be rearranged from 牛車犇午睡 (1-2-3-4-5) to 牛車午睡犇 (1-2-4-5-3). The change rearranges the syntax into (somewhat) comprehensible Japanese; coupled with the glossing (in this case *okurigana*) provided by the commentator, the base text can be further expanded to 牛車午睡ヲ犇ラセ.[119] For readers familiar only with modern standard Japanese this text is still difficult to comprehend, but for literate readers of the late Edo period this would have been all the

[119] I say commentator instead on author because the exact step in which such glosses were added varied with the manuscript. Sometimes the author himself would write them and other times they would be added later by editors, proofreaders, etc. Additionally, it is sometimes difficult in premodern texts to differentiate between furigana and *okurigana*.

information needed to understand the author's intended reading. Fleshed out even further, the line in question would be understood as

牛車(ぎっしゃ)、午睡(ごすい)を犇(はし)らせ

gissha[120] *gosui o hashirase*

Cow-drawn carriage: send me on my afternoon nap!

In terms of base text, then, we should understand it to be 牛車犇午睡; this does not, however, determine the way it would be read; marking syntax is the job of interlinear glosses.

Though perhaps an unorthodox approach to script, I locate much of the visuality associated with written Japanese in the existence of a base text coupled with the possibility of annotation. This combination of base text and furigana can lead to interesting textual occurrences. For example, let us compare dueling readings of the same base text by two eminent scholars of Chinese literature: Suzuki Torao (1878 – 1963) and Yoshikawa Kōjirō (1904 – 1980). Though a disciple of Suzuki, Yoshikawa, in his landmark *Notes on Du Fu* (1952), presents a rendering into Japanese of Du Fu's (712 – 770) poem "Moonlit Night" that is clearly at odds with Suzuki's. Going against Suzuki's rendering of Chinese prose and poetry into a form of Japanese that retains most kanji's *on'yomi*, Yoshikawa created a new literary space by forcing *kun'yomi* onto the text, mixing the inherent Chinese landscape with a Japanese one. With this radical reading of Chinese poetry, Yoshikawa on the one hand is aligning himself with Kokugo scholars and on the other can be seen as blurring the lines between conceptions of "Japanese-ness" and "Chinese-ness." In other words, both scholars see the same base text but produce different readings through their use of furigana. Indeed, it is possible for two subjects to provide the same translation of a text but provide two different

[120] Without furigana there is indeed some uncertainty about this character-string's reading. Other possible readings for 牛車 include *ushiguruma* and *gyūsha*.

readings; the two processes are not the same and thus should be confused. Table 1-3 contains Du Fu's original poem followed by Suzuki and Yoshikawa's readings.

Table 1-3. Suzuki and Yoshikawa's dueling *kundoku*.

月夜	*yuè yè*
今夜鄜州月 閨中只獨看	*jīn yè fū zhōu yuè* *guī zhōng zhǐ dú kān*
遥憐小兒女 未解憶長安	*yáo lián xiǎo ér nǚ* *wèi jiě yì cháng ān*
香霧雲鬟濕 清輝玉臂寒	*xiāng wù yún huán shī* *qīng huī yù bì hán*
何時倚虛幌 雙照淚痕乾	*hé shí yǐ xū huǎng* *shuāng zhào lèi hén gān*

Tonight in Fuzhou my wife will be watching this moon alone. I think with tenderness of my far-away little ones, too young to understand about their father in Chang'an. My wife's soft hair must be wet from the scented night-mist, and her white arms chilled by the cold moonlight. When shall we lean on the open casement together and gaze at the moon until the tears on our cheeks are dry?[121]

Suzuki's Reading	Yoshikawa's Reading
今夜鄜州の月 *kon'ya fushū no tsuki*	今夜なる鄜州の月を *koyoi naru fushū no tsuki o*
閨中只だ獨り看るならん *keichū tada hitori miru naran*	閨中にては只えに獨り看るならむ *keichū nite wa hitoe ni hitori miru naramu*
遥かに憐れむ小兒女の *haruka ni awaremu shōjijo no*	遥かに憐れむ小さき兒の女の *haruka ni awaremu chiisaki chigo no musume no*
未だ長安を憶うを解せざるを *imada chōan o omou o kaisezaru o*	未お長安を憶うを解せざるを *nao chōan wo omou wo kaisezaru o*
香霧に雲鬟濕い *kōmu ni unkan uruoi*	香ぐわしき霧に雲なす鬟は濕い

[121] The original Chinese and prose translation are all taken from John Minford and Joseph Lau, *Classical Chinese Literature: An Anthology of Translations* (Chinese University Press, 2000).

	kaguwashiki kiri ni kumo nasu wage wa uruoi
清輝(せいき)に玉臂(ぎょくひ)に寒(さむ)からん *seiki ni gyokuhi ni samukaran*	清らなる輝(ひか)りに玉なす臂(かいば)は寒からん *kiyoranaru hikari ni tama nasu kaiba wa samukaran*
何(いず)れの時(とき)か虚幌(きょこう)に倚り *izure no toki ka kyokō ni yori*	何の時か虚(むな)しき幌(とばり)に倚りそい *izure no toki ka munashiki tobari ni yorisoi*
雙(とも)に照らされて涙痕(るいこん)乾かん *tomo ni terasarete ruikon kawakan*	雙(なら)び照らされて涙の痕(あと)の乾かん *narabi terasarete namida no ato no kawakan*[122]

Two things are worth noting in these alternate readings: first, Yoshikawa's reading is longer (e.g., lines 3, 5, 6, and 8) because he relies more heavily on domestic vocabulary terms; second, Suzuki's reading does not make use of the ubiquitous topic marker *wa* while Yoshikawa does three times (lines 2, 5, and 6). This second point is important because it is difficult to construct intelligible Japanese without including *wa*; by including it or not, the reader (not the poet!) can imbue the base text with a heightened or lessened sense of naturalness (or, in the case of Suzuki, alterity). In this way, then, it is possible for the base text to remain constant but have various glosses attached to it. This is not a question of right or wrong: it is possible for both glosses to be simultaneously correct. It is this malleability that has enticed authors writing in the Japanese script. One constant, however, is the relationship between the base text and the glossing: one should complement the other, even if the relationship between the two is not immediately obvious.

[122] Suzuki's reading is taken from Torao Suzuki, *Toshōryō shishū* (Kokmin bunko kankōkai, 1922); Yoshikawa's from Yoshikawa Kōjirō, *Toho nooto* (Sōgensha, 1952).

At least, that is how it usually works. One striking example of a text that pushes back against this assumption is the short story “Mistaken Characters” (*Goji* 誤字) included in EnJoe Toh’s 2018 collection *Whirlpool of Characters* 文字渦 (Image 1-7).

Image 1-7. “Mistaken Characters” (2018)

In this short story, EnJoe ponders the role of Unicode in an increasingly standardized global market, anticipating a world in which the desire for variant expression might one-day spill over into the margins. What initially seems to be a visual reference to Meiji period texts with furigana attached to all kanji terms (*sō rubi*) is instead something entirely different: after a first few instances of faithful glossing, the furigana begins to address the reader and the so-called annotations diverge into its own narrative that pushes back against the content of the base text. Throughout the entire collection of short stories EnJoe asks several important questions: who determines what one can

or cannot do with written language, especially within the context of written Japanese? What function might script play in Japanese-language literature? And, what are the ramifications of a handful of large tech companies maintaining what amounts to a monopoly on which characters get encoded – that is, become official – for future generations of users? In "Mistaken Characters," these questions emerge from simply questioning the assumed authority of the base text and the base text's assumed authority over interlinear glosses.

1.3.9 Interchangeability

The issue of interchangeability is the idea that one form of written expression is equivalent to another in its ability to convey basic denotative meanings and/or readings. Interchangeability refers to the potential for any kanji to be re-written in either of the two kana sets and, in some cases, another kanji. The reverse, however, from kana to kanji, is not always a possibility.[123] For example, *kinko* "confinement; imprisonment" can be written 禁錮 or 禁固 in kanji and in kana as きんこ (hiragana) or キンコ (katakana). Though writing this particular term in only kana is today rare, the potential (and thus possibility) for such a spelling is what is important. And, as explained by the Legislative Bureau House of Councilors, from around 1948 through 1953 the term was written in an unfamiliar kanji/kana combination 禁こ in official documents that complied with government attempts to limit kanji usage.[124] Significantly, each of these five permutations (禁錮, 禁固, きんこ, キンコ, and 禁こ) represent the same term (*kinko*) but manifest itself in a different base text. As described in the previous section, when each of the above permutations are read aloud

[123] In theory, many utterances (with the exception of onomatopoeia) have an associated kanji. In practice, though, many of these associations stem from premodern conventions and are not widely used today. Some examples taken at random include 忽ち (*tachimachi*, suddenly), 御目出糖 (*omedetō*, congratulations), and 御免 (*gomen*, sorry).
[124] "Hōritsu no mado: 'Kinko' no hyōki'," *Sangiin Hōseikyoku* (2020).

they reference the same word (*kinko*) in a way that bypasses the materiality of the text. When a reader engages with the material text, however, the question of the base text becomes unavoidable.

1.3.10 An Expansive (or "Open") Set of Kanji

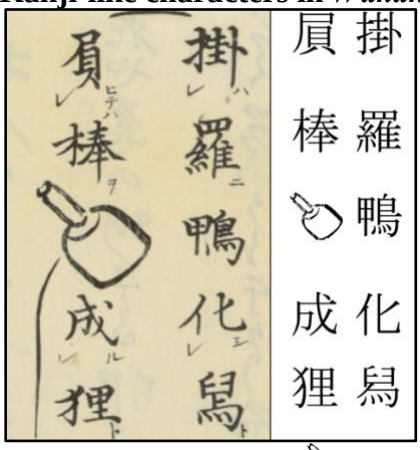
The final characteristic of written Japanese involves the parameters of kanji. As I already noted, the total number of kanji is ultimately unknowable for a variety of reasons. The primary reason is the subjective nature of categorization itself: should, for example, variant character forms (e.g., 者 vs. 者) be regarded as individual characters? What about simplified forms of traditional characters (e.g., 竜 vs. 龍)? Or, what about characters whose meaning and reading(s) have been lost to time but are nevertheless recorded in kanji dictionaries (e.g., 𠮟)? There are no definitive answers to these questions, especially once the conversation shifts from linguistic and philological concerns to the political: while the majority of Japanese readers might regard the one-stroke difference between 者 and 者 as inconsequential, for those using Chinese characters in a Korean linguistic environment it is only the latter, written in Hangul as 자 *ja*, that is deemed acceptable.[125] Discussions surrounding the essence of what constitutes a single or unique character is further exacerbated domestically when the spotlight falls on proper names; indeed, denying someone the right to use a particular kanji to represent a family name can feel like a personal assault.[126] All of these complications mean that the set of characters we refer to as kanji is an ever-expanding set of characters limited only by the various subsets or filters we apply to it a given time.

This expansive set of characters, what can also be called an open set of kanji, figures prominently in the architecture of written Japanese. This does not mean that authors feel free to

[125] For a detailed discussion in Japanese on the use of kanji in Korean proper names see Kōichi Yasuoka and Motoko Yasuoka, "Kankoku jinmeiyō kanji to kanji koodo," *Sentaa kenkyū nenpō 2016*.
[126] As I reference later in this study, one kanji in particular, typically associated with the *be* of the common last name Watanabe, has at least 13 variants in relatively common use. See, for example, Hiroyuki Sasahara, "Kanji no genzai," *Dictionaries & Beyond: Word-wise Web* (2011).

create kanji (or, more radically, kanji-like characters) of their own design; that, in fact, is quite rare. Rare, however, does not mean it does not happen, nor does it mean that the process (or capability to do so) is not significant. As Image 1-8 illustrates, the act of creating new characters can be found in the Edo period manuscript we have been examining.

Image 1-8. Kanji-like characters in *Wakan haikaishū*.



It should be obvious that the third character in line two () is not part of the traditional kanji set. Significantly, here it is not being used as a textual element removed from the poetry but rather is part of the base text. In fact, given the structure of the poem, that is, two lines of five characters,  is clearly juxtaposed with 鴨. Likely representing a bottle or shovel, the character here is functioning identically to a kanji. This Edo-period example is not exceptional. For another example of these quasi-kanji, let us turn our attention to the earlier *Haikai hitotsuboshi* (1685).[127] Edited by Kishimoto Chōwa (1638 – 1715), this manuscript is also from the Japanese/Chinese *haikai* tradition. Chōwa was a leading poet of *haikai* in the Genroku period and was an important figure who has today fallen into relative obscurity.[128] Contained within this manuscript are examples of character usages that blur the line between kanji and non-kanji.

[127] A digital version of the manuscript is available online through the *Waseda kotenseki database*, call number "文庫 18 00096."

[128] Hagino Kiyoshi had this to say about Chōwa: "In this way, the haikai group led by Chōwa was without doubt the largest of its kind in the Edo Period. Yet, despite this fact, his name, which serves as its head, has not become popular in the least. And not just that: still, now and again, even among the specialist scholar, there are instances of

The first pair of poems I would like to introduce is by two poets called Suiken 水軒 and Shikei 紫竿. Though not much is known about them, Danjō Masataka notes that together with some other poets included in the manuscript they "formed a coterie and took pride in interweaving their unique and uncommon (*dokutoku no ifū*) arcane Chinese-style poems."[129] Though Danjō ultimately views the inclusion of these poets (and poems) as a "miscalculation" (*gosan*) on the part of Chōwa, our concern here is with how "unique and uncommon" characters are used and the tools that made them possible (Image 1-9). The vocabulary of the first verse, namely *kazariwara*, or "decorative straw," immediately conjures an image of the lunar New Year (*haru* here refers to the New Year) as it would be hung at the entrance or inside of a home during the season. Straw, of course, reminds one of birds, and thus the image of young chicks leaving the nest is evoked. Then, in the second verse, we are told that the shape (*katachi* 象) of the New Year is celebrated with the sounds of *manzai*.[130]

his name being left out in discussions of Genroku era [1688 – 1704] haikai circles." Kiyoshi Hagino, "Haijin Kishimoto Chōwa no isshō," *Kokugo kokubun* 5:4 (1935).

[129] Masataka Danjō, "Kishimoto Chōwa no senshū katsudō, *Kinsei bungei* 15 (1968): 8.

[130] The term *manzai* has a long history. Though today it conjures images of stand-up comedians, as Gerald Groemer notes, "*Manzai*, literally 'ten-thousand years,' was an abbreviation of the term *senzu manzai* ('One-thousand autumns and ten-thousand year'), a turn of phrase associated with millennial prosperity and longevity bordering on permanence. The roots of *senzu manzai* as propitious dialogue and dance penetrate so deep into historical time they have become invisible," *Street Performers and Society in Urban Japan, 1600-1900: The Beggar's Gift* (Routledge, 2016): 152. They would also perform in various aristocrats' homes around the New Year, cementing their association with the season (153). In earlier periods their dress often included the folded *eboshi* and the *suō*, but in later years performers would wear a pointed hat (*kazaori eboshi*) and a *hitatare*, formal clothing for men worn at times of leisure, with large patterns. While banging their waist-drum (*koshi tsuzumi)* they would sing greetings, dancing and walk about.

Image 1-9. Two verses by Suiken and Shikei.

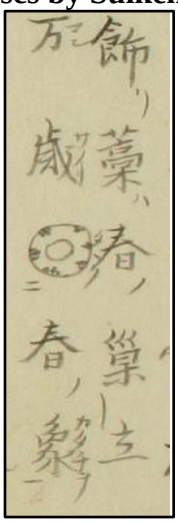


Table 1-4. Translation of Suiken and Shikei's poem.

Base Text	Reading	Translation
飾藁春巣立	飾リ藁ハ春ノ巣立 *kazariwara wa haru no sudachi*	Decorative straw [means] Leaving the nest in the New Year
万歳㊎春象	万歳(マンサイ)春ノ象(カタチ)ヲ ㊎［タタ］ク *manzai haru no katachi o tataku*	The *manzai* dance: drum the shape of the New Year!

There is a complex self-reference in line two: the "shape" of the New Year, namely the waist-drum, or the "shape of the New Year" one would expect to accompany the sounds of the *manzai*, actually appear in the poem as ㊎. We are instructed to read this unfamiliar (and in fact unique) kanji-like character as *tataku*, a verb meaning "to drum; to beat." We can say that ㊎ is, for all practical purposes, functionally indistinguishable from any other character in this manuscript; it even has furigana attached to it. Indeed, it is precisely the ability to append furigana to it that allows ㊎ to function similarly to kanji.

Let us look at another poetic exchange from the same manuscript, this time by Shikei and Isshō 一笑.

Image 1-10. Two Verses by Shikei and Isshō.

Table 1-5. Translation of Shikei and Isshō's poem.

Base Text	Reading	Translation
象鑿  生菌	象ハ  ［ツチ］ヲ 鑿(ウカツ)テ菌(クサヒラ)ト生(ナ)ル *zō wa tsuchi o ugatte kusabira to naru*	An elephant digs the soil and [in the soil] a mushroom grows
艸菌巴猿耳	艸菌ハ巴猿ノ耳 *kusabira wa haen no mimi*	The [shape of the] mushroom is that of the ears of a gibbon heard on a journey

The third character in the first verse,  , like the character read as *tataku* in the previous poem, is clearly not a traditional kanji. Here read as *tsuchi* ("soil; earth"), it is not to be found in any extant kanji dictionary. Of note is the progression of time, implied by the form of the character itself. Within the space of this poem an elephant is digging the soil, and from this soil emerges a mushroom. However, the image depicted with the character to be read *tsuchi* does not suggest "soil" but, even more provocatively, alludes to a resultant state. This acknowledgement of the future state of the soil – that with a mushroom growing in it – is only fully realized inside the visual context of the poem. This intertextual dependence is vital to the poem and realized through furigana. This relationship is further contextualized by the reference to the "ears of a monkey" in

the second line: the similarities between the shape of soil with a mushroom growing in it and the image of the ears of a monkey are clearly illustrated through the image presented in the first line.

These are undoubtedly uncommon examples. Similar ones will not be found in a typical text nor are they considered normal; most readers of Japanese would be taken aback by their use and, it is likely, denounce them as excessively ludic. However, look a little closer and you start to see similar pseudo-kanji in contemporary literature and culture that, in practice, follow the same customs and methodologies of the various Edo period manuscripts described above. In Image-11, for example, an advertisement for Mister Donuts, we see the base text incorporates of kanji-like characters (a heart and circle) annotated with furigana written in hiragana reading “kokoro” and “maaru[ku],” respectively. The full sentence means “make your heart round,” presumably a pleasurable emotional state brought on by eating donuts. Kanji-like characters in the linked verse examined above and this Mister Donuts advertisement function identically to one another.

Image 1-11: “Make Your Heart Round”

Some contemporary authors employ kanji in surprising ways. EnJoe Toh, for example, creates new kanji in his short story “A Whirlpool of Glyphs” (2016). Here he depicts the imagined experience of a certain Yǒng (俑) and his attempt to construct a perfect clay model of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, the first Emperor of China and the first ruler to achieve unification through the standardization of trade and communication, currency, and the written form of the language. He was also the commissioner of the famed Terracotta Army.

It is the standardization of the Chinese writing system that propels EnJoe's narrative forward. Yǒng, the protagonist of the piece and a fictional sculptor said to have been known throughout the land as a master molder, was tasked with the impossible: to create a larger-than-life clay model of the Emperor that captures his "true form" (*shinkei* 真形).[131] As the third sculptor to attempt such a feat, Yǒng knows he will pay with his life if he fails to meet the expectations of the Emperor.

As a noun in classical Chinese 俑 (Jp., *yō*) means "grave figurines, made of wood or pottery; puppet, dummy."[132] Thus, our protagonist Yǒng shares his name with the object he has been instructed to create: a clay figurine in the shape of the Emperor and, later, the Terracotta Army itself. The Terracotta Army 兵馬俑 (Ch. *Bīngmǎyǒng*; Jp. *heibayō*) is a set of more than 10,000 clay figurines found near the mausoleum of the Qin emperor that was rediscovered only in 1974 by local farmers digging a water well approximately one mile east of the Emperor's tomb at Mount Li. It is no coincidence that the protagonist of the piece shares his name with the object he is charged with molding into existence, and EnJoe's characteristic loose style means there is a constant ambiguity between the object-as-clay-figurine and the very much alive Yǒng. Discussions

[131] Though speaking specifically about the concept of "true forms" in the context of Daosim in medieval China and thus anachronistic to the present narrative, much of what Dominic Steavu argues can be applied to EnJoe's text: "One has only to peruse the pages of the Daoist Canon (daozang 道藏) for a hint of the tradition's reliance on the implements. Both of these ritual media operated on the basis of true form (zhenxing 真形) and the parent notion of true name (zhenming 真名). Essentially, talismans and diagrams were depictions of a supramundane entity's true name and true shape respectively, interchangeable and complementary symbols that gave a visually observable shape to a supramundane being's "image" (xiang 象)—its metaphysical substance and most fundamental identity. Although true name and true shape remained indexical, they were nonetheless closer approximations of the way in which an entity would be constituted in its unmediated state as an image (xiang) of the all-generating Dao than the habitual and inaccurately anthropomorphic representations that circulated in the world of mortals," Dominic Steavu, "Paratextuality, Materiality, and Corporeality in Medieval Chinese Religions," *Journal of Medieval Worlds,* 1:4 (2019): 11.

[132] *SCM* s.v. "俑" (n.).

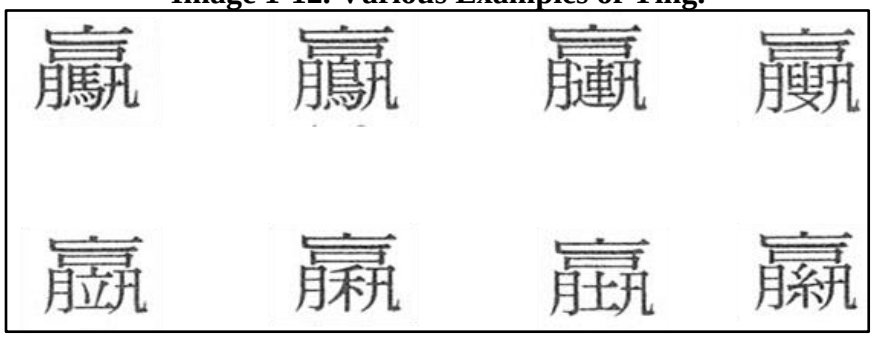
of the sculptor Yǒng and the figurines referenced by the kanji 俑 is often confused, and the line between the two often blurry.

Linguistic confusion is one hallmark of EnJoe's larger oeuvre and can be seen in his earliest piece *Self-Reference ENGINE* (2007). The justification for the linguistic ambiguity in "A Whirlpool of Glyphs" stems from Yǒng's geographical origins. He comes from a place that little emphasizes the role of writing in society, lamenting the limitations born from a standardized script. One limitation of standardization, for example, is the creation of a clear-cut (albeit arbitrary) line of demarcation between correct and incorrect, good and bad, elite and non-elite, and cultured and uncultured. That is, these attempts at script standardization are only achieved by taking the characters of the Han (漢, c. 206 BCE–220 CE) as the standard, a move that rendered many characters recorded in Chinese bronze inscriptions dating from the preceding Yin/Shang (c. 1766–1122 BCE) and Zhou Dynasties (c. 1046 – 256 BCE) obsolete. Han, of course, is where we get the term kanji 漢字 (Ch. *hànzì*), literally "characters of the Han." If the standardization of written Chinese meant that non-Han modes of expression were to be regarded as non-standard, then "A Whirlpool of Glyphs" is a meditation on the impossibility of static representation in the face of arbitrary variability and variation, whether in reference to the Terracotta Army or the attempts of standardization employed by the Qin emperor; it reminds us that everything we have before us is an accumulation of choices – and often violent ones – that in themselves have no inherent right to exist.

In one of the most striking sections of the piece, Yǒng, who is now sculpting the enlightened form of the Emperor, is confused by his constantly shifting nature. The situation is expressed throughout the text by an everchanging kanji used to represent the Emperor's name. That is, the innermost portion of the glyph Yíng 嬴 – the Emperor's family name – changes ever-

so-slightly upon consecutive viewings of the Emperor, replacing the 女 with, for example, 馬, 鳥, 連, 叟, 禾, 土, and 糸. Each time Yǒng raises his head to view the Emperor he sees a new character (Figure 14): "The more Yǒng examined the figure of Yíng standing before him the more he realizes he is a slippery being (*toraedokoro no nai jinbutsu*)."[133] Many of these kanji do not appear in extant character dictionaries; they are, in fact, creations of EnJoe and had to be specifically created for this text.[134]

Image 1-12. Various Examples of Ying.



The essence of the Emperor's personality, like all humans, is fluid. As a result, the idea that a single, unshakeable character might accurately reflect the complex personality of the individual is bewildering to Yǒng. The sense of dread tied to anxieties stemming from the impossibility of capturing a dynamic person in a static clay sculpture is represented in the text by equating that anxiety with attempts to capture that same dynamism through a single written character (kanji).

Image 1-13. Empty Ying.

This is why, for Yǒng, the center of Yíng's name is constantly changing. It is not that Yǒng yearns for *his* native characters and believes it would allow him to capture the essence of the Emperor;

[133] EnJoe Toh, "Mojika," *Mojika* (Shinchōsha, 2016).
[134] Website: "EnJoe Toh *Mojika* shuppan intabyuu (zenpen)," 2018.

rather, he is lamenting the imposition of limits on expression. Because Yǒng recalls a time when characters and the relationship between what they referenced – the relationship between the signifier and signified – were fluid, he was accustomed to creating new characters as needed. Indeed, it was through such a lens that Yǒng continued to experience the world around him. The realization Yǒng comes to, the forced "discovery" and recognition of a stable individual, is one mediated through his relationship with written language and his inability to view the Emperor as a single, steady entity. A sense of lament is at the core of EnJoe's story and indeed much of his literature; and while his approach at representation (e.g., creating new characters) might seem novel, it is fundamentally the same as those *haikai* poets from nearly 500 years ago. This is because they are both operating under a similar architecture of script that allows them to approach kanji as an open set of characters.

Chapter 2 An Appeal to the Eyes: The Japanese Script and Japanese-language Literature

As I argued in the previous chapter, all texts written in the Japanese script conform to the architecture of written Japanese. In this chapter, I examine how written language in general and the Japanese script specifically is discussed in Japanese and Western language scholarship. I also demonstrate how the written form of a text informs its meaning beyond immediate narrative content.[135] As such, I am more concerned with the way an author visually represents a text and less by its narrative content; I do maintain, however, that the two can never be independent of each other. "Text" here is taken to be an object situated at the intersection of various signifiers; as such, and as I have already stated, a text's script (and an author's script practice) can be analyzed as an independent entity but always tethered to narrative content and historical context. For this reason, then, the particular form a text takes – that is, the way the text looks on the page – necessarily acquires meaning in the way it is related to, but not wholly dependent on, narrative content.[136] And because the mixed-script system enables a multitude of possible representations that vary in scale from the format an entire text takes to the character set one uses to write a single word, the freedom for expression vis-à-vis visuality is everywhere. It is this ability for script to directly influence the reception of narrative content that makes an understanding of its various functions vital to the understanding of literature.

[135] The scope of the term "text" is closely related to Elaine Treharne and Claude Willian's use of the term in *Text Technologies: A History*: "At its core, it examines the material history of communication: what constitutes a text, the purposes for which it is intended, how it functions, and the social ends that it serves." (Stanford University Press, 2018).

[136] Recall that what I call "inscription" refers to the static form of a text as encountered by a reader. Though perhaps tangential, I note here that the idea of multiple forms of representation for narrative content is not uncommon. In the Western canon Eramus' famous *Copia: Foundations of the Abundant Style* (1512) is the most well-known early example of an author presenting similar narrative content in various styles while French author Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style* (1947; trans. 1958) has been the most influential in modern times. Retelling the same story in 99 different styles highlights the "meaning" of style as a latent rhetoric device through the process of differentiation. Bethany M. Brownholtz has brought Queneau's text into the digital age with her 2013 update, "Exercises in Style: 21st Century Remix" (DePaul University, 2013).

2.1 Script as External Form

The question of *how* to represent a text visually is a topic writers working in Japanese have also long pondered. For Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, for example, the way a text is represented on the page was of the utmost importance; indeed, he regarded it as an essential element of the literary experience. He called this visual representation of text its "external form" (*teisai* 体裁).[137] In "The Elements of Writing" (*bunshō no yōso*) section of his influential and best-selling explication of good writing, *A Composition Reader* (*Bunshō tokuhon*, 1935), Tanizaki conceives of writing as consisting of six elements: terminology (*yōgo*), rhythm (*chōshi*), style (*buntai*), external form (*teisai*), quality (*hinkaku*), and overtones (*ganchiku*). [138] Most relevant to the discussion at hand is what Tanizaki calls the *external form*.

> What I call here **the *external form* refers to all of the visual elements of writing.** If we categorize [those elements] we get the following:
>
> 1. The question of furigana and okurigana
> 2. The assigning of kanji and kana
> 3. The question of the shape of printed type
> 4. Punctuation
>
> [Earlier] I said that it is not an issue for us to appeal to the eyes and ears of the reader by supplementing a lack of expression through the use of all elements available to us because language as an entity is incomplete. [I also] said that, for better or for worse, the written character certainly affects content; and, since this is especially so in nations like ours where we use both ideographs and phonographs, it is only natural to want to align that effect with the goals of the written text. Thus, in practice, it is possible to regard a text's *external form* as one part of the content and as something that cannot be ignored.[139]

[137] Translation of terms and quotes are by the author unless explicitly stated.
[138] With the publication of this book Tanizaki initiated a boom, though somewhat delayed, among authors. As Mukai Satoshi (1988) notes in the postscript to his own composition reader, numerous authors would follow in Tanizaki's footsteps, publishing style guides bearing the same title as Tanizaki's work. The authors listed by Mukai are: Kikuchi Kan (1947), Kawabata Yasunari (1950), Itō Sei (1954), Mishima Yukio (1959), Nakamura Shin'ichirō (1975), Maruya Saiichi (1977), and Inoue Hisashi (1984), 258. Other more recent guides include those by Chūjō Shōhei (2000), Saitō Minako (2005), and Hayashi Mariko (2005). For more on this see Satoshi Mukai, *Bunshō dokuhon* (Bungei shunjū, 1988).
[139] *TNZ* vol. 19.

Some of the elements Tanizaki points to are Japanese-specific (i; ii) and some are universal to all modern writing systems (iii; iv). Our focus here will be on the former and how they relate to both Tanizaki's concept of external form and how authors can utilize them in their script practice. Tanizaki imagines an author, perhaps himself, who finds language – something he recognizes is an "incomplete entity" – being supplemented by the visual representation of a text. This will be the case as long as authors rely on abstract narrative (plot) and visual representation (script) to create literary texts. Put another way, Tanizaki claims that an author might enhance, or at least alter, the narrative quality of a text through the use of visual elements consumed by the "eyes" (not only the "ears") of its readers. Tanizaki put much stake into the visuality of a text: recognizing that the possibility for supplementation vis-à-vis script exists, he contends that the external form of a text must not be ignored.[140] He also considers it "natural" for a reader accustomed to literature written in Japanese to expect this level of visuality. This conception of visuality as the status quo allows us to speak in general terms about a text's visuality, what I generally refer to as *textual visuality*. Such textual visuality, then, is one potential byproduct contained within the architecture of written Japanese.

I stress here that Tanizaki's concept of external form extends beyond page layouts, font, and character size. Format and type, which many readers might erroneously assume covers the scope of his external form, are here only two elements categorized under the topic of printed type.[141] Instead, his interests lie in the typographical features of print coupled with the actual form

[140] Such a stance admittedly does not account for the external form of a text established by people other than the author. A tradition of editors adding readings and making other orthographical changes has long persisted throughout the history of Japanese-language literature. For example, in his discussion of the orthography employed by Edo Period author Ihara Saikaku, Christopher Seeley paraphrases the scholar Sugimoto Tsutomu: while "[c]omplicated orthography was the hallmark" of Saikaku's works "not all of these orthographic variations [of the verb] *sasayaku* were necessarily used by Saikaku himself; some may be from the brush of others who copied the special text (*hanshita* 版下) that formed the basis for the printed edition" (Seeley, 132fn37).

[141] *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford University Press, 2010) defines *format* as "[the] technical and bibliographical term for the shape of the book, defined by the number of times each sheet has been folded". *Type* is

a character-string takes. While it is true that, as Janet S. Smith notes, "anything that can be said in Japanese can be written in either of the kana syllabaries," most nouns and lexical roots can be visually represented in at least three different ways: in either of the kana syllabaries or some variation of kanji and kana.[142] These variations often depend on the tone a particular text aims to achieve, though the tone achieved by a text is usually discerned by reading representation against narrative content and context, not in isolation.[143] Though conventions exist there are no hard and fast rules; the choice to accept or reject these conventions lie with the author and, in many occasions, with the editor(s) and/or publishers of a text. These small choices are significant because they suggest tone, direct the eye to a particular word or phrase, and, as Tanizaki discusses at length elsewhere in *A Composition Reader*, gives a limited form of authorial privilege to the reader. Regarding this last point, by omitting furigana authors can create genuinely ambiguous situations where a reading is not only uncertain but, perhaps, undeterminable in any authoritative sense. The character 家 ('house; family'), for example, read as either *uchi* or *ie*, can be read either way with no noticeable difference. Since Tanizaki acknowledges the utility of excluding furigana for the sole purpose of maintaining said ambiguity, we can say that a genuinely "correct" reading of the character becomes difficult, if not impossible, to pin down.[144]

Simply put, Tanizaki argues that the visual form a text takes should be included among any consideration of a text's content because it *is* content. The importance of Tanizaki's seemingly obvious claim can be summarized thus: if an author is able to supplement (and thus change) a

defined as "[t]he most general term for letters and other characters repeatedly used together to form texts or decorations," noting, "[d]igital technology has blurred some distinctions between *type* and lettering."

[142] Janet Smith, "Japanese Writing," in *The World's Writing Systems* (Oxford University Press, 1996): 210.

[143] Tone here might be rephrased as visual tone, i.e., a tone achieved through the inscription of a text (or part of a text). The usage of tone that points to a text in its entirety is distinguishable from the tone of a particular word or phrase; tone in the latter usage is often expressed by italicizing, underlining, or bolding a particular word.

[144] Based on *TNZ* vol. 19.

narrative through the use of a particular written form, then scholars of literature approaching a text written in such a script should, at the very least, take into consideration its external form. Such a task requires a methodology for approaching script both (i) in isolation and (ii) in relation to narrative content. While script can indeed be analyzed in isolation, any meaning derived from that analysis must be determined in relation to narrative content. That is, if one wishes to assign meaning to the orthographical choice to write Hiroshima (ヒロシマ) or Fukushima (フクシマ) in katakana and not kanji (広島／福島) in a text dealing with, for example, disaster, then one must be able to justify that claim by referring back to narrative content.[145]

2.2 An Appeal to the Eyes, Ears, and Head

Nearly half a century after the publication of *A Composition Reader*, author and literary critic Maruya Saiichi – a writer also noted for his eccentric orthographical choices[146] – published a book with the same title as Tanizaki's manual. In a section entitled "Appealing to the Eyes, Ears, and Head" (*me to mimi to atama ni uttaeru*), Maruya, too, considers the role external form plays in Japanese-language literature. He begins with a lengthy excerpt from Tanizaki's 1931 "A Blind Man's Tale" (*Mōmoku monogatari*). The boxes surrounding words are my own addition.

> おくがたはちやうどそのとしの五月に若君をおうみなされ、さんごのおつかれで一と月あまりひきこもつていらつしやいましたので、わたくしがしゞゆうごかいはう申し上げ、お肩やお腰をさすりましたり、せけんばなしのお相手をつとめましたりいたしまして、おなぐさめ申してをりました。

[145] The use of ヒロシマ and フクシマ as signifiers is an incredibly common practice. Kanō Mikiyo's intervention into gendered discourse surrounding Hiroshima and Fukushima, *Hiroshima to Fukushima no aida: Jendaa no shiten kara* (Inpakuto shuppankai, 2013), embraced this concept. This is also a common occurrence outside literature, too. For a study of the katakana orthography of Hiroshima and Fukushima in newspapers, see the excellent work by Maeba Rieko, entitled "Hiroshima/Fukushima wa dono yōni hyōshō sareta ka: shinbun ni okeru katakana o chūshin ni" (Waseda University, graduation thesis).

[146] For example, Maruya continued to write contemporary standard Japanese in the historical orthography (e.g., をかしい *okashii* instead of the standard おかしい *okashii*) until his death in 2012. He was also a proponent of traditional, non-simplified kanji, e.g., writing *gei* "skill; art" as 藝 and not 芸.

> Lady Oichi had given birth to the young lord in June of that year and had spent more than a month in bed recuperating. I was constantly in attendance on her, sometimes massaging her back and shoulders, sometimes gossiping with her to amuse her.[147]

From this opening passage we can see that "A Blind Man's Tale" makes sparse use of kanji while relying heavily on hiragana. Familiar words that are usually written in kanji today – e.g., おくがた (*okugata* "Lady"; 奥方), とし (*toshi* "year"; 年), さんご (*sango* "postpartum"; 産後), せけんばなし (*sekenbanashi* "gossip"; 世間話) – appear in unfamiliar forms. And while one might argue the choice to represent these words in hiragana reflects the conventions of 16th century manuscript culture, Maruya ties the choice directly to the narrative itself, arguing that the effect of Tanizaki "writ[ing] things in hiragana that [Japanese authors] would normally write in kanji" is "scary."[148] The sense of fear Maruya detects is a result of the alienating effect of encountering familiar language in unfamiliar (visual) forms. And, as I discuss below, had the text been written exclusively in kana, the experience would yet again be different; it is the text's non-conformity that enhances its impact.

Maruya continues: "since we are not able to read the text smoothly, as a matter of course [the reader] feels as if they are listening to the nearby blind man's faltering manner of speech (*totsutotsu taru katariguchi*)." Maruya goes so far as to claim that the excessive use of hiragana is a "faint light in the narrator's field of vision" (*katarite no shikai de aru hakumei*).[149] Maruya

[147] The Japanese opening to "A Blind Man's Tale" is quoted in Saiichi Maruya, *Bunshō dokuhon*, (Chūō kōronsha, 1977): 254. Howard Hibbit's translation is from Jun'ichiro Tanizaki, *Seven Japanese Tales* (Vintage, 1996): 218. A complete romanization of the opening passage is as follows: *okugata wa chōdo sono toshi no satsuki ni wakagimi o o-uminasare, sango no otsukare de ichi to tsuki amari hikikomotte irasshaimashita node, watakushi ga shijū gokai hō mōshiage, o-kata ya o-koshi o sasurimashitari, seken banashi no o-aite o tsutomemashitari itashimashite, o-nagusame mōshite orimashita*.
[148] Maruya, 256.
[149] Ibid.

rewrites the text supplemented with kanji to illustrate how different the same text would look if written following modern standard orthography. I have added boxes to words written in kanji that previously appeared in hiragana.

> 奥方は丁度その年の五月に若君をお産みなされ、産後のお疲れで…[150]
>
> okugata wa chōdo sono toshi no satsuki ni wakagimi o o-uminasare, sango no otsukare de…

He notes that by adding kanji the denotative meaning of the text does not change and, if read aloud, remains perfectly identical. Nevertheless, from the standpoint of visuality, the texts are clearly *not* identical. Once again, the external form Tanizaki chose includes four kanji while Maruya's supplemented version includes thirteen. By eschewing standard orthographical conventions, the text becomes difficult to read; it causes the reader to stumble, or at the very least walk cautiously through, a forest of words not easily divisible into smaller semantic clusters.[151] The external form of the text mirrors the narrator's phenomenological experience of proceeding through the world in a state of near blindness.

Maruya also tells his readers that Tanizaki's literature is an exemplar of "visuality in contemporary Japanese literature" (*gendai Nihon bungaku ni okeru shikakusei*).[152] And while Tanizaki might be the author most transparent about his use of script in the construction of his literature, a similar consciousness can be found in many other texts. This ability to slow down the reader, to cause them to proceed trepidatiously through a narrative, is also a major tactic of both Sakiyama Tami and Inoue Hisashi, two authors I examine in the following chapter.

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[150] Ibid., 257-8.
[151] Written Japanese does not generally make use of spaces in either printed or written form. For most contemporary readers of Japanese, the mix of kanji and kana provide reading hints that help to distinguish nouns and verbs (often written in kanji) from particles and inflections (often written in hiragana). In fact, texts lacking kanji altogether are rare; children's books and books for early language learners are the major exceptions.
[152] Ibid., 258.

As discussed earlier, there is much work in Japanese (but less in English) focusing on the Japanese script as a historical object or as a linguistic phenomenon unrelated to narrative content. The majority of these writings fall into three general categories: (i) academically dubious studies that often fall into claims about the people who use it; (ii) a comparative approach that analyzes the particular uses of script against the larger narrative of developments of writing systems in East Asia; and (iii) an approach to script wherein it is regarded as a (un)necessary evil, ultimately dismissed as an unavoidable and imprecise tool for recording language.[153] A large portion of this chapter, then, introduces to English-language readers a few of the debates and discussions surrounding the Japanese writing system from both Japanese- and English-language sources before moving into a short analysis of the use of script in a particular text.

2.3 The Japanese Context: A Formalistic and Historical-Contextual Approach to Script

Before imagining how script relates to narrative it is important to first describe first the state of "script studies" (*moji gaku*). There are two major trends one can identify: the first is analytical in nature, examining the way script functions within a particular text. At its core, the goal is to extract laws about the Japanese script (and language).[154] Often these laws are further universalized and appropriated by nationalists who in turn make claims about the *people* using it. This methodology is often guilty of conflating script (and language) with nationality and national

[153] For a classic example of (i), see Roy Andrew Miller's scathing review of Yaeko Sato Habein's *The History of the Japanese Written Language*, *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 12:1 (1986); for (ii) see the forthcoming English translations of Saitō Mareshi's *Kanbunmyaku*: *The Literary Sinitic Context and the Birth of Modern Japanese Language and Literature* (Brill, 2020) and Bunkyō Kin's *Literary Sinitic and East Asia: A Cultural Sphere of Vernacular Reading* (Brill, 2020); for (iii), see any number of texts by John DeFrancis and William Hannas. Instance (iii), it should be noted, provides insight into the way linguists view writing, not how Japanese script specifically is treated.

[154] My use of the term "scholarship" is intentionally vague. Here it refers to both works of academic research produced and consumed by and for an academic audience as well as works written for an educated, non-specialist audience. Such an ambiguous distinction between academic and public scholarship is still apparent today, most obviously in the authority afforded a category of books known as *shinsho*, a series of paperbacks varying in quality but uniformly measuring 17 x 11 cm. It is common for academics to write books belonging to such a genre.

identity; this conflation is then further used as justification for making generalizations about the nature of what sociologist Oguma Eiji has called the "myth of the homogenous [Japanese] nation."[155] Script, then, is more important than narrative because the script itself is discussed *as* narrative, a historical object whose transformation and development tells us something about the Japanese people and nation-state. The second approach, also descriptive in nature, focuses on the Japanese writing system within the larger context of the history of writing. It is primarily concerned with the script's relationship to the other major writing systems of East Asia. In this second approach, narrative content is important only to the extent that it provides insight into the mechanics of written Japanese relative to other scripts. Here, an analysis of script can be conflated with discussions of "style" or *buntai*.[156] The former can be thought of as a *formalistic approach* to script and the latter a *historical-contextual approach*. While a formalistic approach need not be tethered to nationalism or any particular agenda, the large majority of texts published in Japanese fall into this category.

The formalistic approach, often employed by those examining manuscripts or early printed texts, strives to obtain a better understanding of how the Japanese script functions in general (i.e., focused on the systematics of a/the script). [157] The goal of the historical-contextual approach, often employed by linguists and, to a lesser extant, literary scholars, is to understand the way a script reflects or represents a particular narrative (i.e., focused on narrative to the extent it relates to the larger context of script usage). The latter approach is reminiscent of what Ignace J. Gelb dubbed

[155] See Eiji Oguma, *Tan'itsu minzoku shinwa no kigen: "Nihonjin" no jigazō no keifu* (Shin'yakusha, 1995).
[156] This very issue is a source of confusion evidenced in author Yasuoka Shōtarō's call for the need to define the term "style" in his 1969 essay "On Style." Shōtarō Yasuoka, "Buntai ni tsuite," in Junnosuke Yoshiyuki, *Bunshō dokuhon* (Takeda Random House Japan, 2007): 163-165.
[157] There are indeed grammatologists looking at the similarities between the Japanese script and, for example, cuneiform writing. An example of such scholarship is linguist Masashi Mine's essay "Gendai Nihongo ni okeru kanji no on'yomi/kun'yomi ni tsuite: sekkei mojihō to no hikaku," Kanazawa University Ryugaku Center Kiyo 1:1 (1998): 49-59.

"grammatology": Gelb proposed the development of a new academic discipline that would "establish general principles governing the use and evolution of writing on a comparative-typological basis."[158] We also see the inclusion of aesthetics into the larger question of meaning in this historical-contextual approach. As Tanizaki's thoughts on the relationship between script and literature suggest, the external form of a text (and by extension the visual manifestations and interactions on the page) exists on the same plane with all other textual elements of a work. The origins of the historical-contextual approach are located in the formalistic one, and the history of the formalistic approach cannot be removed from its explicitly nationalistic origins, a reality that has complicated the legacy and development of script studies in Japan and abroad.

For example, it is not possible to separate the influential philologist Yamada Yoshio's unrivaled academic achievements from his overt and fervent support of Japan's wartime agenda. Indeed, he published numerous books theorizing and expounding the dubious notions of the "body politic" (*kokuta* 国体) and the Japanese "spirit" (*seishin* 精神) between 1910 and 1945, including the unattributed *Kokutai no hongi* (1937), a text Robert Gale Woolbert described as "the official statement issued by the Japanese Government in 1937 for the guidance of those whose function it was to indoctrinate the youth of the country."[159] His less obviously political texts, for example *Theories of Japanese Grammar* (1908), his various histories of Nara and Heian grammar (both 1913), *A History of Kana Usage* (1929), and *Word Usage Transmitted Through Kambun Kundoku* (1935), are still considered foundational. Yamada was not unique: the pervasiveness of concepts such as body politic and spirt permeated much academic learning of the time.

[158] Ignace Jay Gelb, *A Study of Writing* (University of Chicago Press, 1974).
[159] Robert Gale Woolbert, review of Robert King Hall's *Kokutai No Hongi: Cardinal Principles of the National Entity of Japan, Foreign Affairs* (1950). The text is also known in English as *Fundamentals of Our National Polity*.

One striking example is the propagandistic Series on the Japanese Spirit (*Nihon seishin sōsho*) published in 1940 by the newly formed Education and Learning Division (*Kyōgaku-kyoku*) of the Ministry of Education. Comprising 60 volumes, it contained books such as *Tales of War and the Japanese Spirit* (vol. 26) by philologist Takagi Takeshi, *The Manyō Spirit* (vol. 33) by literary scholar Kōnosu Hayao, *Chinese Poetry and the Japanese Spirit* (vol. 34) by the scholar of Chinese literature Shionoya On, *Naobi no mitama: The Way of the Gods and the Yamato Spirit* by philologist Andō Masatsugu (45), and *Japanese Calligraphy and the Japanese Spirit* (vol. 47) by the poet and calligrapher Onoe Saishū. The development of philological approaches to the Japanese language – perhaps more than any other field of academic inquiry – was greatly shaped by this injection of fervent nationalism and belief in a unique Japanese essence. Linguistics today, too, exists in an uneasy relationship with its past: the specter of nationalism casts a long shadow in part because the foundation of the discipline has its roots in the work of many controversial intellectuals.

2.4 *Kokugaku* and the Formalistic Approach to Script

Script nationalism, or the association of a single script with a language/ethnic group that tends to be conflated with national identity, is not unique to Japan. Some prominent examples include Greek, Georgian, Korean, and the continuing drama surrounding the deciphering of writing from the ancient Indus civilization.[160] Japanese scholars and thinkers, too, have imagined the Japanese script as a mystical entity embodying certain qualities of Japanese identity. By viewing and analyzing the Japanese script as a tool for accessing a Japanese ethnos, these thinkers imbue the script with extra-textual significance and metaphysical properties. That is, they view the particular characteristics of the Japanese script as proof of a particular – what they call a "unique"

[160] Regarding the last example see Bridget Alex, "Why We Still Can't Read the Writing of the Ancient Indus Civilization," *Discover Magazine* (2019).

– Japanese world-view. This tradition in Japan has its modern roots in the Kokugaku, or nativist studies, movement of the Tokugawa Period (1600 – 1868), and is closely related to the formalistic approach to script described above in both methodology and genealogy.[161]

The term Kokugaku (lit., "native learning"), which Hirata Atsutane (1776 - 1843) ultimately traces back to Keichū (1640 - 1701), refers to a reactionary intellectual movement in Japan characterized by a move away from China-centered thought and scholarship coupled with a simultaneous drive to locate an authentic image of "Japan." That is, for scholars associated with the Kokugaku movement, an analysis of literature produced in Japan – and by extension the language it was written in – promised to reveal the constitution of the/a particular Japanese identity.[162] This obsession to discover a unique Japanese national consciousness on the part of Kokugaku scholars has had a lasting effect on the cultural makeup of modern Japan. As Susan Burns notes, "There is an important and ongoing national narrative in which Kokugaku is valorized as the intellectual movement that marked the emergence of a Japanese national consciousness in the late eighteenth century, with the result that the early modern discourse in the modern Japanese discussions of social, political, and cultural identity."[163] This line of intellectual inquiry, peppered with both genuine scholarship and obvious quackery, still has much influence in the present day.

Though it is tempting to draw a single line of continuity between the 17th century Kokugaku thinkers and those of the prewar period, Burns reminds us that the early modern period (i.e. after the Meiji Restoration of 1868) "had a very different relationship with political authority" than the

[161] For the sake of convenience, and following Susan Burns' lead, I will continue to refer to the movement described above as Kokugaku. While the arguments outlined below are far more complicated than my treatment of the topic suggests, I am here more concerned with the large brush strokes of their ideology.
[162] As literary critic Katō Norihiro argues in *Nihonjin no jigazō* (Iwanami shoten, 2017), much of the Japan/China binary paradigm established during this time was in fact a ternary: the contribution of exposure to the Western world and so-called Dutch learning, or *rangaku*, during the 17th and 18th centuries on the construction of a "Japanese" identity was significant.
[163] Susan Burns, "The Kokugaku (Native Studies) School," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2008).

Kokugaku thinkers of the Edo Period.[164] Specifically, after the Meiji Restoration many thinkers (and their ideas) that had once existed on the margins of society suddenly found themselves in the seat of power. Burns gives as examples Konakamura Kiyonori (1822–1895), who served in the Home Ministry and the Ministry of Education, and Haga Yaichi (1867–1927), who was a professor at Tokyo Imperial University. This new style of Kokugaku "abandoned the interrogation of political authority that was the center of early modern practice and sought instead to explain Japan in terms that affirmed, rather than questioned, state-authorized conceptions of national identity."[165] The influence wielded by this new generation of Kokugaku scholars cannot be overstated, and their unbridled embrace of Japanese nationalism is present in much of the state-sponsored rhetoric and propaganda disseminated before World War II.[166]

After Japan's defeat, however, attitudes towards Kokugaku scholars began to change yet again. Burns continues: "In the aftermath of World War II, the centrality of Kokugaku in intellectual discourse on Japanese national identity continued, but now it was widely associated with (indeed, blamed for) the rise of Japanese fascism in the 1930s," with postwar thinkers such as Maruyama Masao "trac[ing] the ideology of the modern Japanese state back to eighteenth-century Kokugaku and argu[ing] that the anti-rational impulses he perceived as ordering it forestalled the development of the modern subjectivity necessary for a democratic political system."[167] One common thread linking these various manifestations of the Kokugaku ideology

[164] Susan Burns, *Before the Nation: Kokugaku and the Imagining of Community in Early Modern Japan* (Duke University Press, 2003): 188.
[165] Ibid, 189.
[166] This sequence of events might sound familiar to contemporary readers. Indeed, a fitting slogan for the most extreme ideologues might have been MJGA – Make Japan Great Again.
[167] Burns, "The Kokugaku (Native Studies) School."

was an almost obsessive desire to locate a suppressed Japanese national character vis-à-vis an analysis of hereto arcane literary and pseudo literary texts.[168]

One way this "national character" might be accessed was through an analysis of the Japanese script. The idea goes that if words hold sacred power – called *kotodama* (lit. "word spirit") – then acquiring literacy in the script would provide a direct line to the ancient sounds of the Japanese language and thus reveal the "spirit" of the ancient Japanese people. Hidden beneath the surface of this approach is the longing for a Japan that never existed; it is a longing for a fictional form of the Japanese language unalloyed by the Chinese language and, by extension, Chinese culture. This is one reason Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801), the most well-known scholar associated with the Kokugaku movement, would devote so much energy to completing his 44-volume *Kojikiden* (completed in 1798). It was Norinaga's belief that he would recover an ancient form of spoken Japanese that would in turn provide readability to the then opaque eighth-century *Kojiki*, or *Records of Ancient Matters*.[169] Written exclusively in kanji, the *Kojiki* was largely unintelligible for readers in the Edo Period. Ann Wehmeyer notes that prior to Motoori the two Kokugaku scholars Keichū and Kamo no Mabuchi wrote commentaries on the *Kojiki*, but they primarily concerned themselves with relatively easier to understand songs appearing in the text. Wehmeyer goes so far as to state that "[i]t was not until Motoori that the entire text […] was given

[168] See Naoki Sakai's *Voices of the Past: The Status of Language in Eighteenth-century Japanese Discourse* (Cornell University Press, 1992) for a well-known discussion of much what I have outlined here.

[169] It is noteworthy that there were contemporary intellectuals critical of Motoori's agenda and approach. Elsewhere in her study, Burns talks of perhaps the most famous, Ueda Akinari: "Attacking Norinaga's reading of the *Kojiki* as based upon a set of flawed assumptions about language, text, and history, Akinari rejected outright the notion that Japan as community took form as the expression of innate cultural identity. He regarded [Motoori's] rise to prominence as evidence not of the veracity of his theories but as the result of appeals to the pride and prejudices of his disciples" (2003, 102). In their annotated translation of Ueda's essay *Tandai shōshin roku* (1809), William Clarke and Wendy Cobroft elaborate further: "[Ueda] became a key figure in 'one of the most famous intellectual confrontations of early modern Japan' when he disputed with [Motoori] over the latter's theory of *kana* usage in the ancient language and his unshakeable belief in Japan's central place in world history," *Tandai Shōshin Roku: An Annotated Translation* (Premodern Japanese Studies, 2009): 8.

consideration as a unitary repository of the oral tradition of Japan."[170] His contribution, then, was to provide the kanji text with a "voice."[171]

Naoki Sakai, informed by Derridean thought, describes the significance of Norinaga's approach to language in the introduction to the English translation of the first volume of *Kojikiden*.

> What the *Kojiki-den* declares unambiguously is the inauguration of a completely different way of relating the agent/subject of writing and reading to those graphic signs, and I have collectively called these newly emerging regimes whereby to relate oneself imaginarily to transcription 'phonocentrism.' By re-transcribing the original text of the *Kojiki* in which neither *hiragana* nor *katakana* characters were used at all into a new text of the *Kojiki* which is mainly *hiragana* characters, Motoori Norinaga […] destroyed the previous regimes of reading, writing, reciting, narrating and so forth which allowed for the overdeterminacy of graphic signs, and replaced them with ones in which different inscriptional ideographies […] were discriminated against one another. [172]

Sakai's focus is on the way Norinaga's view of kana not only imbued the text with a voice but also served to negate all other voices through the cancellation of other possible ones (i.e., readings). As Burns has noted, "Norinaga argued that the *Kojikiden* was not an 'interpretation' (*kaishaku*) – the term for him implied the imposition of external theories upon the text – but merely an exposition of the language of the text that added nothing."[173] For Norinaga, then, unlocking the mystery of the script meant unlocking a determined (and thus correct) oral component of the text hidden away behind the characters of Chinese origin. Successfully decoding these kanji – that is, seeing *through* the Chinese characters to the "readings" (i.e., voices) that lay behind them – would, the idea goes, enable a reading of the *Kojiki* that "[would reveal] a mode of consciousness that allowed Japan to take form as a 'natural' community, one in which laws, institutions, and ethical principles" were

[170] Ann Wehmeyer, *Kojiki-den: Book 1* (Cornell University Press, 2010): 4.
[171] This, of course, is not to say that there was no commentary on the *Kojiki* before Keichū, Mabuchi, and Norinaga. Rather, it was within this context that the text began to take on a new significance.
[172] Sakai, xiii-xiv. For a recent translation of the *Kojiki* into English see Gustave Heldt's *The Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters* (Columbia University Press, 2016).
[173] Burns, 68.

not artificially constructed by man but rather rooted in an "innate Japaneseness."[174] We might view this development as one initiating the marriage between the Japanese script and the misguided and dangerous dual desire to locate a Japanese ethnos within the script itself (its "uniqueness") and the sounds it potentially reveals. This formulaic approach to reading the *Kojiki* would influence countless scholars both directly and indirectly, shaping the methodologies they employ when approaching any number of "unreadable" (that is, unpronounceable) texts.[175]

In the end, this formalistic approach to the Japanese writing system had its eyes set on unlocking the mysteries of the "Japanese spirit" by unlocking the mystical sounds and voices (*kotodama*) of ancient Japan. While these essentialized notions of Japan, the Japanese language, and the Japanese script that emerged from the Kokugo movement would play no small part in establishing the myth of Japanese uniqueness that informed much of the zealous pre-war fascism of the 1930s, the linguistic and philological contributions of these fair-weather scholars should be recognized if for no other reason than historical contextualization. Ignoring their legacy would result in a misunderstanding regarding the foundation of much contemporary research into the Japanese language and the development of the Japanese script discussed below. Indeed, as S. Yanada notes, the work of Kokugo scholars "became the foundation for later research and opened the way to establishing linguistic study independent of both the art of verse-making and interest in the older national literature."[176] While the majority of the scholars discussed below consciously distance themselves from the Kokugaku school, they often acknowledge the many sound scholarly contributions past Kokugaku scholars have made: the aforementioned seminal study of grammar

[174] Ibid., 69.
[175] See Michael Marra's *The Poetics of Motoori Norinaga: A Hermeneutical Journey* (University of Hawaii Press, 2007) for various translations of Motoori's essays into English. Though brief, "The Tatsuta-Ogura Peak" mentions Ueda by name.
[176] S. Yanada, "Motoori Norinaga's Contributions to a Scheme of Japanese Grammar," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 13 (1950): 475.

by Yamada Yoshio, which includes indices in both German and English, not only begins with an epithet from Norinaga's *Tamagatsuma* (1795-1812) but also includes a section dedicated to analyzing his influential study of *kakari musubi*.[177] Even if these scholars do not harbor the same nationalistic tendencies as Norinaga, his work has undoubtedly shaped the way they view the functionality of the Japanese script and its relationship to the Japanese language.

2.5 Japan(ese) in East Asia: The Historical-Contextual Approach to Script

In contrast to the formalistic approach to script, the past few decades have seen the emergence of what might be called the historical-contextual approach to thinking about script. This practice strives to bring the particular characteristics of the Japanese script to the forefront of analysis while stripping away much of the metaphysical baggage attached to it by the Kokugaku scholars. Though an individual work does not belong to a particular school (because no such school exists), as a general tendency these studies are interested in how written language has developed within a specific cultural and linguistic context, focusing on how scripts have developed to represent language in a linguistic environment different from its original manifestation.[178]

Significantly, most scholars are interested in kanji and the way they were variously adapted to write languages other than the various forms of Chinese. Wide interest in the development of the writing systems of East Asia has given rise to numerous comparative studies of script in Japanese and other languages, some recent examples being the two-volume *Theories on* Kundoku:

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[177] See Yoshio Yamada, "Kakari musubi hō no ron: 'Kotoba no tama no o' no kachi," *Nippongo bunpōron* (Hōbunkan, 1908): 1290-1302. "*Kakari-musubi* ('hanging-tying') is," according to Bjarke Frellesvig, "the name in Japanese grammar for a construction in which some constituent is marked by one of the '*kakari* particles' (a) *ka, ya, so/zo, namo/namu* or (b) *koso*, and the sentence predicate it relates to is in the (a) adnominal or (b) exclamatory form, rather than in the conclusive form generally used to conclude sentences," *History of the Japanese Language* (Cambridge University Press, 2011): 247.

[178] There are two ways this might be understood. The first centers on the adaptation of Chinese characters to represent the Japanese language (and thus two linguistic environments); the second centers on written language's ability to represent spoken language in linguistic environments that change over time (i.e., the ability for written Japanese to represent Old Japanese and Modern Japanese and everything in between,). Though my primary interest is in the former, the latter ought to be considered, too.

The East Asian Kanbun World and Japanese (2008; 2010), *East Asia Reexamined from the Perspective of* Kundoku (2014), and Zev Handel's *Sinography: The Borrowing and Adaptation of the Chinese Script* (2019). In the former two, a variety of scholars reexamine the impact *kundoku* – the practice of reading kanji in the vernacular language – has had on various linguistic developments generally and on the modern Japanese script specifically. In the latter, Handel argues that the various typological features of Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese was a key factor in shaping the way kanji, and thus the script as a whole, would develop.[179] Similarly, other critics have tried to decentralize elements of script assumed to be particular to Japanese.[180]

While there is some overlap with the formalistic approach to script, the clearest differences between the two are in their modes of inquiry: while the formalistic approach strives to detect an essentialized Japanese spirit in their target texts through often dubious means, the historical-contextual approach attempts to situate a text within its larger historical and global context, understanding writing in Japan to be part of a larger community of developments in writing witnessed throughout all of East Asia (and indeed the rest of the world). It is therefore no accident that these scholars use the keyword "kanji cultural sphere" (*kanji bunkaken*) – what Handel calls the Sinographosphere – to historicize and contextualize their work. This approach is thus decidedly more global in nature, acknowledging the non-native origins of writing in Japan, a fact certain major Kokugaku scholars of the 18th and 19th century – and some in the present day – tried desperately to disprove.[181]

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[179] For an article-length summary of this argument see Handel, "Towards a Comparative Study of Sinographic Strategies in Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese," *Scripta* 1 (2009): 89–126.
[180] For an attempt to wrest furigana from Japanese hegemony see John Whitman, "The Ubiquity of the Gloss," *Scripta* 3 (2011).
[181] Hirata Atsutane, cited above, is perhaps the most notorious example of a scholar who seems to have consciously fabricated – or, at the very least, taken many liberties – in some of his otherwise scholastically-sound research. Just one example one might point to is his *Kanna hifumi no tsutae* (1819), a study arguing for the existence of written language in Japan that predates the introduction of kanji from China. Though most serious linguists and philologists dismiss Hirata's claim outright, there is a group of fringe nationalists that maintain that his theory is in fact correct.

We can point to David Lurie's introduction to writing in Japan in the *Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* as one example that removes any ambiguity about the origins of writing and the route of dissemination of kanji.

> The first appearance of writing in the Japanese archipelago was much earlier [than the early eighth century]: inscriptions in Chinese characters on imported artifacts (mostly coins and mirrors) are found starting around the last century BCE, in the late Yayoi period. The first substantial inscriptions that were domestically produced date to the fifth century CE, in the Tomb period, but there is no evidence that significant numbers of people were able to read or write. Until the mid seventh century literacy remained the province of specialist scribes – migrants from the Korean peninsula and their descendants – who were employed by the Yamato Kings, rulers from the area of modem Nara and Osaka who presided over a loose federation of local potentates spanning the archipelago from Northern Kyushu to the Kanto region.[182]

By acknowledging the historical context in which writing was introduced to the Japanese archipelago, Lurie implicitly distances himself from the agenda of Kokugaku scholars. This push to contextualize a writing system that is indeed *particular* to Japan but is no more *unique* than any other has many proponents both in Japan and abroad.[183]

These scholars, who often position themselves opposite the Kokugaku school, face a difficult task: how can they discuss the particular aspects of a society without falling into the trap of essentialism? The situation is even more precarious when discussing the Japanese script given its central role in the ever rampant *nihonjinron* (discussions of the Japanese) discourse. *Nihonjinron*, what Kosaku Yoshino defines as the "thinking elites' ideas of Japanese uniqueness," is a hallmark of contemporary Japanese culture and a major lens through which many otherwise

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An example of someone making such ludicrous claims today is Mitsuru Ikeda. His *Hotsuma jiten: kanji izen no sekai e* (Hotsuma kankōkai, 1999) is, at more than 300 pages, an achievement of pseudo-academic work.

[182] David Lurie, "Introduction: writing, literacy, and the origins of Japanese literature," in *The Cambridge History of Japanese Literature* (Cambridge University Press, 2016): 15.

[183] Some representative texts include: Saitō's *Kanbunmyaku* (2020), *Kambun Style* (Hatori shoten, 2010); Sasahara, *Kun'yomi no hanashi: kanji bunkaken no naka no Nihongo* (Kadokawa gakugei shuppan, 2008), *Hōgen kanji* (Kadokawa gakugei shuppan, 2013); Bunkyo, *Literary Sinitic and East Asia* (2020); and Lurie, *Realms of Literacy* (2011).

careful intellectuals approach the world around them.[184] Indeed, *nihonjinron* is one contemporary manifestation – or, perhaps, continuation – of the Kokugaku movement associated with Motoori and company. As the following quote by Yoshino suggests, any discussion of Japan (and Japanese) in terms of "uniqueness" must be qualified lest they be interpreted as contributing to a nationalist agenda:

> The *nihonjinron* purport to demonstrate the uniqueness of Japan. There are various ways of saying that certain features are 'unique' to Japan in Japanese, such as *dokutoku* (distinctive), *dokuji* (original), *tokuyū* (singular), *tokushu* (peculiar), *tokusei* (characteristic), and *koyū* (intrinsic). None of these expressions corresponds exactly to the English word 'unique' which precisely means 'the only one of its kind'. These Japanese words run the range of connotation from 'very different' to 'unparalleled'.
>
> The endless discussions of Japanese uniqueness are, if more precisely put, discussions of difference, but difference of a specific kind. Japanese identity is the anti-image of foreignness and, as such, can only be affirmed by formulating the images of the Other; namely, the West (or in a previous age, China).[185]

Yoshino's point is well taken. But in the context of the Japanese script a question remains: how should we discuss the effects on literature of a writing system that, if not "unique," is overflowing with "particularities"? Ignoring the particular aspects of the script has been one approach.[186] Another has been to downplay the effect script has on Japanese-language literature and, in its extreme form, critique the script as being cumbersome and a hindrance to creativity.[187] An alternate approach, which I hope this study represents, involves understanding the historical processes that led to the mechanics of script and the various motivations for authors to use script

[184] Kosaku Yoshino, *Cultural Nationalism in Contemporary Japan* (Routledge, 1992): 3.
[185] Ibid., 10-11.
[186] For a recent example see Marc Yamada's otherwise astute analysis of Takahashi Gen'ichirō's work in "John Lennon vs. The Gangsters: Discursive Identity and Resistance in the Metafiction of Takahashi Gen'ichirō," *Japanese Language and Literature: The Journal of the Association of Teachers of Japanese*, 45:1 (2011): 1-30. Despite discussing the role of language in Takahashi's work and, in fact, how his relationship with language itself enables a form of resistance otherwise impossible, Yamada refrains from mentioning how it is often the peculiar script (the style) employed by Takahashi that carries much of the weight of said resistance.
[187] Perhaps the most well-known of the latter type is by William C. Hannas in his provocative *Asia's Orthographic Dilemma* (University of Hawaii Press, 1997). For a lukewarm review of the piece see J. Marshall Unger in *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, 24:1 (1998): 197-201.

as a form of visual expression in their literature. In a sense, then, my solution is to demystify script through a structural analysis that in turn enables discussion of a text's external form relative to narrative content. Recognizing the differences and similarities between the formalist and historical-contextual approaches described above can lead to a productive synthesis of the two, a new approach that recognizes the aesthetic contributions to literature of script in what I hope is a non-essentializing way. In other words, to demystify the Japanese script we must be able to talk about the various features of the architecture of written Japanese.

Ignoring the particular characteristics of the Japanese writing system as it exists today *precisely because it is particular and, as a result of its particularities, has been misrepresented as a sign of ethnic uniqueness*, constitutes an erasure of the realities of expression witnessed in many of the Japanese language texts I examine. In fact, it is often marginalized voices that mobilize the architectural features of the script to shape and mold texts into various non-conforming entities. Ignoring the vehicle of their resistance, i.e., script, deflates the deliberate efforts of authors to resist the narrative of Japanese heterogeneity. So why hasn't the relationship between script and Japanese-language literature been examined more closely in English language scholarship? In an attempt to answer this question, let us briefly turn our attention to the treatment of script within the field of linguistics.

2.6 Western Linguistics and Script

A word of caution: there is no clear correspondence in mainstream (Western) linguistics to the formalistic/historical-contextual approaches outlined above. This is where the great fissure between the so-called scientific study of language ("linguistics") and the more general study of writing systems ("grammatology") becomes apparent.[188] The history of Western linguistics as an

[188] In another context one might speak of the great fissure between linguistics and philology. This is an even more contentious debate among linguists and philologists. As Christopher Beckwith wrote on a message board posting

academic methodology for understanding the nature of human language can be roughly sketched in three periods: i) the historical linguistics of the 19th century, characterized by a drive to reconstruct the Proto-Indo-European language; ii) the advent of structural linguistics in the early 20th century by, most famously, Ferdinand de Saussure and his followers; and iii) the theory of generative grammar by Noam Chomsky in the second half of the 20th century. As linguist Frederick J. Newmeyer has noted, with the second period "[t]he attention of the world's linguists turned more and more to the study of grammar—in the technical sense of the term the organization of the sound system of a language and the internal structure of its words and sentences."[189] With an increased focus on grammar and thus an assumed underlying structure waiting to be discovered, written language becomes viewed as an intermediary means of recording spoken language. This view of written language on the part of linguistic should have little effect on the way scholars understand the role of written language in literary texts. In practice, however, this conflation of methodologies hints at the shared philological origins of both literary studies and linguistics and the often-shared ideological undercurrents that can be detected therein.

One consequence of this disregard for written language in general and script in particular has been a prolonged insensitivity to the aesthetic application of script as a sustained topic of inquiry in English-language literary studies.[190] Put another way, despite the attitude towards written language expressed by Tanizaki and other authors, the aesthetics of script and the role it

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from 1998: "The difficulty in defining the difference is that the two fields partly overlap. Philology is essentially the study of texts, for whatever purpose the investigator has in mind. […] The discipline of linguistics is a modern development, […] the idea of linguistics as something different from philology TODAY is based on the idea that 'linguists' have theoretical and methodological training in the 'scientific study' of language, both 'Language' in general and languages, especially modern spoken languages. The focus on theoretical rigor […] is primarily what, to linguists, distinguishes them from philologists," LINGUIST List 9.741 (1998).

[189] Frederick Newmeyer, "The History of Modern Linguistics," *Linguistic Society of America*. https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/history-modern-linguistics.

[190] There are, of course, exceptions. The work of visual theorist and cultural critic Johanna Drucker in *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art* (1994) and *The Alphabetic Labyrinth: The Letters in History and Imagination* (Thames and Hudson, 1995) is notable.

plays in a given narrative have failed to become a sustained object of analysis in the field of literary studies because what would become an object of analysis – i.e., written language – is generally regarded as less prestigious than a text's narrative. The reasons for this are varied and complex, but one immediately identifiable one is – to intentionally use a "scientific" word – the imprecision with which written language is able to record (or reproduce) an utterance (i.e., speech). Were that the only function of script then such an assumption would not be worthy of contention: indeed, when we consider the nature of alphabetic writing in modern English (and other Western languages) alphabetic writing today certainly *appears*, that is, is perceived to be, static; the existence of an orthography, a "correct way to write," and, for the most part, singularity of spelling, ensures that variation in literarure is usually achieved at the lexical level. A stable script gives the illusion of a stable system of signification of speech; thus, when read aloud, script appears to negate itself (i.e., the act of writing), reducing its value to a triggering of signification with considerations of aesthetic removed. This condition, largely true in alphabetic script systems, when extrapolated to literature written in other scripts, reinforces the tendency to privilege orality over script.

This approach is not an inevitability. If Gelb gave Western linguistics the green light to incorporate script into its considerations of language, then the opportunity for its application was overshadowed by the dominant view of writing in post-structuralist modes of thought. Viewing the notion of meaning as inherently unstable, writing, too, became regarded as a vehicle for "misdelivery" (*gohai*).[191] As linguist Ikeda Jun has lamented, Gelb's concept of grammatology is now predominately a philological preoccupation while generally neglected in the academic

[191] I have borrowed the term "misdelivery" from Azuma Hiroki's reading of Jacques Derrida. The term refers to the potential for meaning in all "written texts" to be "misdelivered" (i.e., misunderstood) by an unintended reader. The point here is the randomness associated with misinterpretation. The concept emerged from Azuma's reading of Derrida's *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond* (University of Chicago Press, 1987). For more information on misdelivery see Azuma, *Sonzaiteki, yūbinteki: Jacques Derrida ni tsuite* (Shinchōsha, 1998).

discipline of linguistics.[192] In a footnote to his entry on grammatology included in *The Cambridge Handbook of Literacy* (2009), Peter T. Daniels justifies his decision to move away from the term:

> I have previously used *grammatology* as the name of the subfield that studies writing systems but I now prefer *graphonomy*, which was proposed by C.F. Hockett in 1951 (pub. 2003) and used in his *Course* (1958, 539), because (a) it is shorter, (b) Gelb's term was hijacked (with acknowledgement) by Derrida (1967) for something completely different, and (c) some have interpreted *grammatology* as the label for an approach to the study of writing rather than for that study itself.[193]

Daniel's disdain of Derrida is evident and his desire to distance himself from the influence of the philosopher is perhaps understandable.[194] Nevertheless, Derrida, in his famous study, succinctly quotes Saussure on his view of language: "Language and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first."[195] Saussure creates a hierarchy in which written language is beholden to language. The two sentences that immediately follow, however, are perhaps even more critical: "The linguistic object is not both the written and spoken forms of words; the spoken forms alone constitute the object."[196] In other words, the written form or the means by which language is recorded (i.e., script) ought not to become the target of linguistic inquiry. This view, as mentioned above, has informed the majority of studies found in the Western linguistic tradition. It has not, however, eclipsed all. For example, Josef Vachek, an influential linguist of the Prague school and intellectual mentor to the

[192] Jun Ikeda, "Bunken gengogaku josetsu," in *Jikken onseigaku to ippan gengogaku* (Tokyodō shuppan, 2006): 325-334.
[193] Peter T. Daniels, "Grammatology," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Literacy* (Cambridge University Press, 2009): 37fn1.
[194] Daniels is not alone in his thinking: Chomsky, too, famously chooses not to engage with the postmodern school of theory. For an early enunciation of Chomsky's thoughts, see Gary A. Olson and Lester Faigley, "Language, Politics, and Composition: A Conversation with Noam Chomsky," *Journal of Advanced Composition* 11.1 (1991): 1-35.
[195] Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976): 30.
[196] Saussure, *Writings in General Linguistics* (Oxford University Press, 1974): 23-4.

aforementioned Ikeda, spent much of his life rejecting Saussure's claims and the long shadows they cast over much of the intellectual world.[197]

Disregarding the notion of hierarchies of language, Vachek argues that in fact there are two distinct kinds of speech utterances: spoken and written. He posits that the former functions differently from the latter; specifically, he argues that the former responds to a given stimulus (urgent) in a dynamic way while the latter responds to a given stimulus (non-urgent) in a static way. [198] In other words, the vocalization of language (i.e., speech) is taken by Vachek to refer to an improvised mode of communication that exists in a relationship relative to the speaker/audience relationship while the visualization of language (i.e., writing) refers to a scenario in which communication can exist outside of an immediate speaker/audience binary. Though Vachek's conceptualization of speech utterances as either urgent or non-urgent strike me as oversimplification on his part[199], his approach to written language as a mode of communication equal to that of spoken language gives us a road map for removing an assumed supremacy in the speech/writing paradigm. Specifically, the prioritization of speech, often called *phonocentrism*, is here being challenged.[200]

Returning to mainstream linguistics, a contributing factor in the continued prioritization of spoken language over written language is the continuing authority of early American linguists such

[197] I recognize that Vachek himself, and many others, might take me to task for lumping him together with other Western linguists. The fact of the matter, though, is that the Prague School is difficult to define as a single cohesive movement. As Yakov Malkiel describes in a review of Vachek's *A Prague School Reader in Linguistics* (1964): "It is hazardous to assign to Vachek's reader any specific place on [a] scale of possibilities and predictions of longevity. The major obstacle is the fact that the organizational frame of the original Prague School – assuming that this label is not a misnomer, given the affiliation of some of its trailblazers with Vienna, Brno, and Geneva – came to a violent end with the political and military events of the years 1938-39 which led to the enforced discontinuance of that seed-bed of structuralism applied to the study of language, the *Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Prague*," *American Anthropologist* 68:2 (1966): 586.

[198] Vachek, "Some Remarks on Writing and Phonetic Transcription," *Acta Linguistics* 5 (1945).

[199] For example, what would Vachek make of written communication occurring in between two or more people texting with each other in real time? This seems to be more static than non-static. It might be better to think that writing *tends* to be non-urgent while spoken language *tends* to be urgent.

[200] "Phonocentrism" is usually rendered as *onsei chūshin shugi* in Japanese.

as Leonard Bloomfield. As Per Linell notes, "[m]any linguists of the twentieth century have propounded the idea that writing and written language are nothing but a secondary sign system which only indirectly, that is via spoken language, gives expression to the apperceptions of the world. Some put it in particularly stark terms: 'Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks' (Bloomfield, 1933:21), and '[l]anguage excludes writing' (Hockett, 1958:11)."[201] Linell again quotes Bloomfield: "For the linguist, writing is, except for certain matters of detail, merely an external device, like the use of the phonograph, which happens to preserve for our observation some features of the speech of past times."[202] While some scholars have tried to read Bloomfield's stance towards writing more generously, it seems far from controversial to say that he gave little weight to writing in his conception of linguistics.[203] Structural linguists of the past and many in the present understandably view writing as a distraction to the formal analysis of phonology, morphology, and syntax, those elements of language they believe provide valuable insight into universal aspects of all languages. For Bloomfield and his cohorts, written language was, and continues to be, a derivative of spoken language intended to serve primarily a record of spoken language. This is not to say that they take an antagonistic stance towards writing; rather, for these linguists, written language is simply not an object to be considered in their analysis of language.

For Vachek (and later critics such as Ikeda), such a concession is unforgiveable. Vachek spent much of his career arguing for a functionalist approach to written language that ought to be an object of linguistic concern. As he demonstrates in "Notes on the Development of the Written

[201] Per Linell, *The Written Language Bias in Linguistics: Its Nature, Origins and Transformations* (Taylor and Francis, 2005): 27.
[202] Ibid.
[203] For a brief discussion of this see Lurie, "Language, writing, and disciplinarity in the Critique of the 'Ideographic Myth": Some proleptical remarks," *Language & Communication* 26 (2006): 257-262.

Norms of English," written language does not function as a phonetic transcription of spoken language nor does it strive to.[204] Elsewhere he would define written language as a "system of graphical means employed for the purpose of producing written utterances acceptable in the given language community."[205] This system, he notes, not only includes graphemes but diacritical marks and anything else recognized by "the given language community." This includes "intentional deviation […] prompted by some functional motive (e.g., the abandonment of punctuation in modern poetry, the use of small letters instead of capitals in modern graphic art, etc.)" that resist the "[clearly] normative character" of a writing system.[206] He suggests that if the division of labor between script and expression were removed then an entire new field of learning might emerge. Here Vachek's understanding of writing and its relationship to text – text which includes narrative – is strikingly similar to Tanizaki's approach described at the beginning of this chapter. It is here in Vachek's understanding of writing that we approach a framework capable of understanding the aesthetic elements of script that come together in a non-urgent way – that is, in a non-improvisational way – to create a text that exists as more than a substandard record of its oral manifestation. Non-urgent communication, then, is manifested in a text's external form and thus its visuality. In the remainder of this chapter I will introduce one literary text whose plot hinges on visuality, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *The Key*.

2.7 Tanizaki and the Function of Script in *The Key*

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's reputation in Western academia as an influential author is well established. Howard Hibbet, one of his primary translators, shows little restraint in his admiration

[204] Vachek, *Written Language Revisited* (J. Benjamins Pub., 1989): 117-40. This is a revised version of the earlier "Some remarks on the development of the written norm of English," Chapter II of "Two chapters on written English," *Brno studies in English I* (Prague, 1959): 7-34.
[205] Vachek, *Written Language: General Problems and Problems of English* (Mouton, 1973): 9.
[206] Ibid.

of Tanizaki, declaring that he "was perhaps the greatest (as well as the most vigorous) of modern Japanese novelists," noting that "[f]or over half a century [he] pursued a single grand theme – the eternal, elusive feminine – in a matchless variety of styles and techniques and always in superb prose."[207] High praise, to be sure, but Hibbet's opinion is not shared with another of Tanizaki's translators, Edward Seidensticker. In his assessment of Tanizaki's translation into modern Japanese of the eighth century *Tale of Genji* (*Genji monogatari*) he writes: "I am fond of saying, largely to shock and surprise, that Tanizaki is no fun to translate. It is truth. To be interesting, translation must be difficult. Tanizaki is very easy. One can let one's mind wander off and he will take care of himself."[208] Donald Keene, too, was less than impressed with Tanizaki. He posits that Tanizaki's "lack of intellectual depth has militated against his being granted recognition as a central figure in the Japanese literature of the twentieth century," while in the same breath hypothesizing that "if any one writer of the period will stand the test of time and be accepted as a figure of world stature, it will be Tanizaki."[209]

Indeed, Keene's prediction has largely proven true: the number of translations of Tanizaki's fiction into English and other languages attest to his being a "figure of world stature" while the ever increasing number of international scholarly texts suggest an "intellectual depth" that continues to excite and challenge new generations of scholars working across the globe.[210]

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[207] Howard Hibbit, *Contemporary Japanese Literature: An Anthology of Fiction, Film, and Other Writing Since 1945* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1977): 354.
[208] Edward Seidensticker, "The Modern Murasaki," in *The Grand Old Man and the Great Tradition* (The University of Michigan, 2009).
[209] Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature of the Modern Era* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1984): 721.
[210] I have located at least 10 academic monographs or edited volumes written in English that look exclusively at Tanizaki's writing career with many more scholarly books that include essays and other critical pieces on Tanizaki. English translations of Tanizaki's writings near 100. Additionally, thanks to the effort of scholar Adriana Boscaro, translator Anthony Hood Chambers, and more, Tanizaki's works enjoy a level of scholarly attention in English not commonly seen among most modern Japanese authors. See, for example, Boscaro and Chambers, *A Tanizaki Feast: The International Symposium in Venice* (University of Michigan Press, 1994); Boscaro et al., *Tanizaki in Western Languages: A Bibliography of Translations and Studies* (University of Michigan Press, 1999); Luisa Bienati and Bonaventura Ruperti, *The Grand Old Man and the Great Tradition: Essays on Tanizaki Jun'ichirō in Honor of Adriana Boscaro* (University of Michigan Press, 2009).

Here I will relate my discussion of script to one aspect of Tanizaki's writing that is nevertheless often overlooked: the function of external form. Recall that for Tanizaki, external form refers to the way written language within a text represents language in its material form and not the act of writing itself. Tanizaki, like Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and other contemporary writers, was interested in the visual representation of language and thus the inscription of literary texts. To quote Keene again: "Perhaps what distinguished Tanizaki's works most conspicuously from those of other major Japanese writers of the twentieth century was his absorption with writing itself." [211] Indeed, *A Composition Reader* makes it clear that script, writing, and writing systems figures heavily into his conception of literature, understanding it to, in some cases, supplement or enhance its content. This attitude towards written language is evident in some of his earliest writings.

In 1917 – 17 years before the publication of *A Composition Reader* and 39 years before *The Key* – Tanizaki lauded the inherent visuality of kanji with a flourish.

> For poets, characters truly are jewels. As in jewels, there is sparkle in characters, and hue, and scent. The radiance of the diamond, the gracefulness of the turquoise, the mysteriousness of the alexandrite, the sweet loveliness of the ruby, the vitality of the aquamarine, seek and you will find such qualities within characters. [212]

This essay, a defense of kanji at a time when one wave of passionate calls for language reform had already somewhat settled down, argues that kanji "are indeed the most sensual" of all characters, and removing them from the written form of Japanese "would be much like discarding a jewel and settling for rubble." He does, however, concede that kanji "are the most inconvenient for practical usage," arguing they are "the most advantageous for art." [213] His preoccupation with the aesthetic

[211] Keene, 780.
[212] Thomas LaMarre, "Poetry and Characters," in *Shadows on the Screen: Tanizaki Jun'ichiro on Cinema & "Oriental" Aesthetics* (University of Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 2005): 26.
[213] Ibid., 27.

contribution of kanji specifically and writing in general is clear. While this last claim by Tanizaki is left unqualified (and vaguely reminiscent of DeFrancis' dismissive attitude towards kanji cited earlier), it is clear that his preoccupation with the aesthetic contribution of kanji specifically and writing in general to texts can be seen in his early years as an author.

This obsession with writing cannot be overemphasized. Thomas LaMarre has suggested that Tanizaki's emphasis on "fantasy and imagination," which appeared "expressly in opposition to the confessional and autobiographical tendencies of naturalist writers," situate him within the antinaturalist school (*hanshizenshugi*) that is associated with literary figures such as Izumi Kyōka and Nagai Kafū, two writers Tanizaki greatly admired. One characteristic of the writers associated with the antinaturalist school was their tendency to find aesthetic value in writing itself, "[highlighting] the opacity of words and [playing] with the density of language."[214] While this describes much of Tanizaki's more sensual literature, other texts of his are very much linked to a decidedly extra-literary world, namely the sweeping changes occurring in society in real time. One example of such a text is *The Key*.

2.8 *The Key*

The popularity of the *The Key* – a collection of two diaries kept by university professor Kenji and his wife Ikuko that details her ensuing affair with the younger Kimura – helped ensure that, as Jan Bardsley has noted, "women's desires, sexuality, and the propriety of writing about sexual intimacy [would become] some of the most discussed topics of 1956."[215] *The Key*, which "in January 1956 [electrified] the reading public," became the "chief subject of discussion, not only in literary circles but among readers in general."[216] From the standpoint of visuality (or

[214] Ibid., 5.
[215] Jan Bardsley, "What Women Want: *Fujin Koron* Tells All in 1956," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal* 19 (2000).
[216] Keene, 778.

external form), Bardsley's claim of feminine intimacy is supported in a striking way: composed of two distinct diaries, one by a man and one by a woman, narrative voice is *visually* differentiated by the mode of inscription each diary takes. Kenji's diary is written in a mixture of katakana and kanji while Ikuko's diary is written in a mixture of hiragana and kanji, particular combinations that carry with them their own set of gendered expectations. Within the context of the narrative, the former conjures images of antiquated masculinity while the latter suggests a newfound modern femininity. This gendered reading of script is, to be sure, a valid one. In fact, it is the most intuitive one given i) the historical usages of the two script combinations and ii) the male/female binary suggested by Tanizaki himself.

Another diary written by a man appears in Tanizaki's later piece of diary fiction, *Diary of a Mad Old Man* (hereafter *Old Man*). Utsugi is an elderly man documenting his struggle coming to terms with a rapidly decreasing libido. More precisely, the root of his struggle can be located in the gap between his loss of functionality (impotency) and his increasing lust for Satsuko, his daughter-in-law. The external form of Utsugi's diary, which constitutes nearly the entirety of *Old Man*, is stylistically identical to Kenji's; what is different is the absence of a competing "feminine" diary as seen in *The Key*. In other words, Utsugi's diary comes to signify an increasingly closed circuit of reference that remains rooted in its isolation, pushing questions of reliability, relevance, and sanity to the conclusion of the piece. When read against *The Key* it is the *lack* of annotation provided by a competing diary (i.e., two takes on the same "reality") that causes a careful reader to question Utsugi's subjectivity. This concern is highlighted in the postscript penned by Utsugi's doctor; appended to the diary proper after the old man's death, the doctor's note seems to cut through Utsugi's theatricality. This commentary, written in a dry, medical tone, serves as a sober reminder of his eccentricity. While such a reading of *The Key* and *Old Man* is the one Tanizaki

himself likely imagined, the external form of the text renders an alternative reading possible. There is room for a reading of these texts informed by postwar calls for the simplification of the Japanese script, calls that were also closely related to demands for a more democratic state.

More specifically, what if we chose to "read" the hiragana/kanji script employed by Ikuko in *The Key* as something other than feminine: instead, what if it represents the contemporary *standard*, a gender-neutral form of script that was already utilized throughout Japan at the time. In this context, then, Kenji's text, which I discuss below, is written in a consciously dated style, marked as masculine and, at the same time, is doubly marked as antiquated. This is not to say that for Tanizaki masculinity itself was an antiquated notion. Rather, for Tanizaki, the form of masculinity – the self-imposed sexual repression evident in *The Key* – performed by Kenji was becoming increasingly out of step with the cultural milieu of Japan in the 1950s and 1960s described by Bardsley.

Below are the opening lines of Kenji's diary, written in a mix of kanji and katakana:

> 一月一日。……僕ハ今年カラ、今日マデ日記ニ記スコヲ躊躇シテイタヨウナ事柄ヲモ敢テ書キ留メルコニシタ。僕ハ自分ノ性生活ニ関スルコ、自分ト妻トノ関係ニツイテハ、アマリ詳細ナコハ書カナイヨウニシテ来タ。ソレハ妻ガコノ日記帳ヲ秘カニ読ンデ腹ヲ立テハシナイカトイウコヲ恐レテイタカラデアッタガ、今年カラハソレヲ恐レヌコニシタ。妻ハコノ日記帳ガ書斎ノドコノ抽出ニハイッテイルカヲ知ツテイルニ違イナイ。

New Year's Day

> This year I intended to begin writing freely about a topic which, in the past, I have hesitated even to mention here. I have always avoided commenting on my sexual relations with Ikuko, for fear that she might surreptitiously read my diary and be offended. I dare say she knows exactly where to find it. But I have decided not to worry about that any more. Of course, her old-fashioned Kyoto

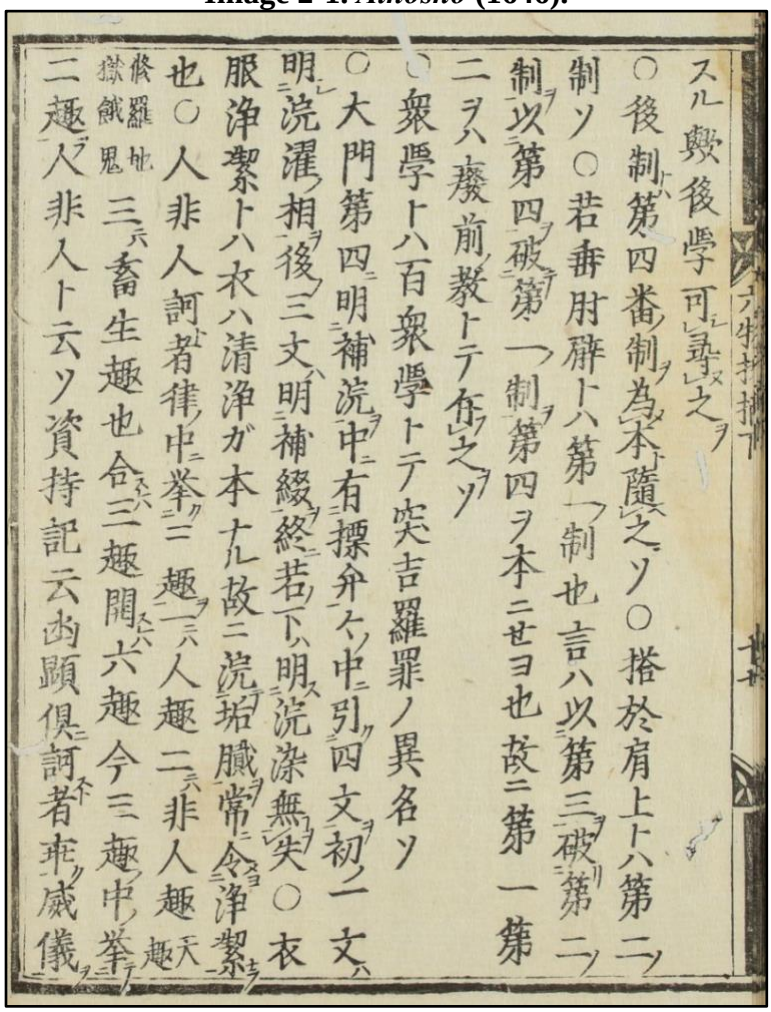
> upbringing has left her with a good deal of antiquated morality; indeed, she rather prides herself on it.[217]

The external form Kenji's diary takes is a pseudo-*kanbun kundoku style*. *Kanbun kundoku*, literally "Chinese writing with Japanese (*kun*) readings," originally referred to a method of writing classical Chinese in a deconstructed style following the syntactical order of Japanese. Given the historical prestige associated with the Chinese language, Atsuko Ueda has, borrowing the words of Benedict Anderson, rightly called *kanbun* in all its permutations a "sacred language," one imbued with all of the prestige contained therein.[218] In this mode of writing, Chinese characters and one form of the Japanese syllabary, katakana, abound while the other form, hiragana, is virtually non-existent. This particular mode of writing was common throughout the premodern period. For example, a mid-17th century copy of the important 15th century dictionary *Ainōshō* (壒嚢鈔, Image 2-1) includes not only the katakana and kanji combination witnessed in Kenji's diary but also katakana used as a tool for annotation.

[217] All Japanese excerpts are based on the *Tanizaki zenshū* (Chūō kōronsha). All English excerpts are from Hibbet's translation unless otherwise noted. The careful reader will notice that the English translations do not always match perfectly with the Japanese original. Since content is not the primary focus of analysis here I am presenting English translations in the hope that the general sense of the original might be conveyed to the reader.

[218] Atsuko Ueda, "Sound, Scripts, and Styles: Kanbun kundokutai and the National Language Reforms of 1880s Japan," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 20 (2008): 134. The reality of *kanbun* – and especially its relationship to modern written Japanese – is much more complicated than I let on here. The essay presents a detailed analysis of the relationship between *kanbun* and Meiji-era reforms.

Image 2-1. *Ainōshō* (1646).



I stress here, though, that I call Kenji's diary a *pseudo* form of *kanbun kundoku*. Despite the veneer of antiquity, including, for instance, the archaic contracted form of the nominalizing suffix *koto* (ヿ), his language is written in the vernacular, he makes use of *boku*, the informal first-person pronoun, and his verb conjugations are consistent with contemporary practices (e.g., the gerundive of *yomu* 'to read' becomes *yonde* and not *yomite*). Furthermore, there is no "original" *kanbun* text from which his diary is derived.[219] That is, were the external form of Kenji's diary re-written in

[219] The final point listed here is the least important. It was in fact commonplace for authors to write texts without an original *kanbun* text in mind.

the contemporary script there would be virtually no means of distinguishing his text from Ikuko's. For reference, her diary begins this way:

> 一月四日。……今日私は珍しい事件に出遇った。三カ日の間書斎の掃除をしなかったので、今日の午後、夫が散歩に出かけた留守に掃除をしに這入ったら、あの水仙の活けてある一輪挿しの載っている書棚の前に鍵が落ちていた。それは全く何でもないことなのかも知れない。でも夫が何の理由もなしに、ただ不用意にあの鍵をあんな風に落しておいたとは考えられない。
>
> January 4
>
> Today an odd thing happened. I've been neglecting my husband's study lately, and went to clean it this afternoon while he was out for a walk. And there, on the floor, just in front of the bookshelf where I'd put a vase of daffodils, lay the key. Maybe it was only an accident. Yet I can't believe he dropped it out of sheer carelessness.[220]

Ikuko's entries immediately follow Kenji's. While there are almost an equal number of Chinese characters in both diaries katakana are sparse, appearing only when words of foreign origin are cited, e.g., madam, Polaroid, brandy, initiative, etc., a custom in line with contemporary usage.[221] What we have contained within a singular text, then, is the visualization of two different *voices* experiencing (or expressing) the world vis-à-vis two different modes of writing, both of which are possibilities contained within the architecture of written Japanese.

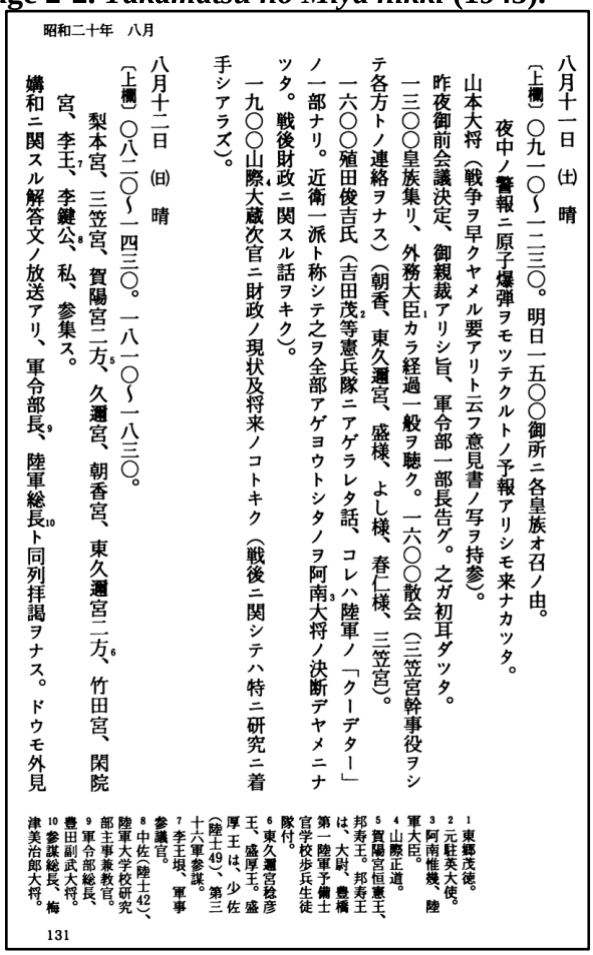
As one critic has noted, Tanizaki, "who is already of the generation of intellectuals for whom Chinese learning and kanbun literacy was no longer defining," was writing at a time when "kanbun learning and literature ha[d] lost its canonical status."[222] In fact, the very style of *kanbun kundoku* suggests an elitism that, while surely associated with masculinity, perhaps more poignantly signifies an entire prewar aesthetic. A survey of actual diaries contemporary to the *The*

[220] *Key*, 9.
[221] See Ken Ito's *Visions of Desire: Tanizaki's Fictional Worlds* (Stanford University Press, 1991) for a thorough discussion of Tanizaki's use of katakana in *The Key* and *Old Man*, especially 215 and 250-2.
[222] Wiebke Denecke, review of *Obsessions with the Sino-Japanese Polarity in Japanese Literature*, *China Review International* 14:2 (2007): 360-368.

Key reveals the outdated nature of said external form: journals by Shōno Junzō, Endō Shūsaku, and Shimao Toshio, all male authors in their 30s, highlight the archaic nature of Kenji's diary because they are primarily written in the hiragana/kanji style witnessed in Ikuko's diary. This fact allows us to imagine what mode of inscription the diary of Kimura, Ikuko's lover, might take were he to pick up a pen. That is, it seems clear that Kimura would write his own diary, as a "modern man," in the same style as Ikuko. It is also worth noting that there *are* contemporary examples of diaries written in a *kanbun kundoku style*: perhaps the most suggestive is that of Nobuhito, also known as Prince Takamatsu, younger brother of Hirohito. Born in 1905, he would have been 47 at the time of *The Key*'s publication. It is striking that Takamatsu's diary manages to be both archaic and contemporary. On an entry dated 21 August 1945 (Image 2-2) – mere weeks after the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki – he laments that there was no forewarning (*yohō arishimo konakatta* 予報アリシモ来ナカツタ) of the atomic bomb. While the expressing of the past-tense using *arishi* is no doubt archaic, the use of *konakatta* ("did not come") is colloquial and, just one line later, we see *kore ga hatsumimi datta* (之ガ初耳ダツタ, "[this was] the first time hearing [about it]").[223] The use of *datta* reflects language usage today, and the earliest entry in the *NKDJ* for *hatsumimi* is 1895.[224] So while on the one hand it can be argued that Kenji's use of the *kanbun kundoku style* is a fictional device meant to resonate with historical cultural practices, it was, on the other hand, an actual form of inscription maintained in limited environments.

[223] Takamatsu no Miya Nobuhito, *Takamatsu no Miya Nikki* (Chūō kōronsha, 1995): 131.
[224] And, of course, the term is still in regular use.

Image 2-2. *Takamatsu no Miya nikki* (1945).



昭和二十年　八月

八月十一日　(土)　晴

〔上欄〕○九一〇～一二三〇。明日一五〇〇御所ニ各皇族ヲ召ノ由。

夜中ノ警報ニ原子爆弾ヲモッテクルトノ予報アリシモ来ナカッタ。

山本大将（戦争ヲ早クヤメル要アリト云フ意見書ノ写ヲ持参）。

昨夜御前会議決定、御親裁アリシ旨、軍令部一部長告グ。之ガ初耳ダッタ。

一三〇〇皇族集リ、外務大臣[1]カラ経過一般ヲ聴ク。一六〇〇散会（三笠宮幹事役ヲシテ各方トノ連絡ヲナス）（朝香、東久邇宮、盛様、よし様、春仁様、三笠宮）。

一六〇〇殖田俊吉氏（吉田茂[2]等憲兵隊ニアゲラレタ話、コレハ陸軍ノ「クーデター」ノ一部ナリ。近衛一派ト称シテ之ヲ全部アゲヨウトシタノヲ阿南[3]大将ノ決断デヤメニナッタ。戦後財政ニ関スル話ヲキク）。

一九〇〇山際[4]大蔵次官ニ財政ノ現状及将来ノコトキク（戦後ニ関シテハ特ニ研究ニ着手シアラズ）。

八月十二日　(日)　晴

〔上欄〕○八二〇～一四三〇。一八一〇～一八三〇。

梨本宮、三笠宮、賀陽宮二方[5]、久邇宮、朝香宮、東久邇宮二方[6]、竹田宮、閑院宮、李王[7]、李鍵公[8]、私、参集ス。

媾和ニ関スル解答文ノ放送アリ、軍令部長[9]、陸軍総長[10]ト同列拝謁ヲナス。ドウモ外見

1 東郷茂徳。
2 元駐英大使。
3 阿南惟幾、陸軍大臣。
4 山際正道。
5 賀陽宮恒憲王、邦寿王。邦寿王は、大尉、豊橋第一陸軍予備士官学校歩兵生徒隊付。
6 東久邇宮稔彦王、盛厚王。盛厚王は、少佐（陸士49）、第三十六軍参謀。
7 李王垠、軍事参議官。
8 中佐（陸士42）、陸軍大学校研究部主事兼教官。
9 軍令部総長、豊田副武大将。
10 参謀総長、梅津美治郎大将。

131

As Nanette Gottlieb describes it, the language reforms of the immediate postwar period were tied to notions of democracy and egalitarianism, and, "in language-reform terms, their strategy translated to the statement that complex Chinese characters belonged to the former ruling class and that script and the remaining vestiges of archaic styles should be changed so the entire nation could understand the written language with ease."[225] And while Kenji's diary does not necessarily employ kanji in a manner distinguishable from Ikuko's, the external form signifies that outdated legacy. It is reminiscent of the prewar atmosphere, and yes, coded masculine.

[225] Nanette Gottlieb (née Twine), "Language and Politics: The Reversal of Postwar Script Reform Policy in Japan," in *Education and Schooling in Japan since 1945* (Routledge, 1998): 73.

The complex modes of representation tied to external form is suggestive of the need to consider script and its relationship to modern Japanese literature: if a diary is understood to contain the personal emotions – what Bardsley calls the "desires" – of its writers, then the inability to represent those emotions in a shared script suggests one major hurdle facing postwar Japanese democracy. That is, the two different forms of inscription emphasize not only gender imbalances but also the social and psychological differences between their two keepers, a difference that, while not mutually unintelligible, exist within disparate traditions and expectations. As Ōno Ryōji has suggested, the two disparate scripts also imply that two of them are forced to discreetly read not only each other's diary but also their "emotions."[226] The distance between husband and wife, the self and the other, is also personified in the text through Kimura, Ikuko's lover. Lacking a diary of his own, Kimura only exists within the pages of Kenji's and Ikuko's; it is his ability to reach Ikuko, to commit that "transgression," that leads Kenji to recognize the unsurmountable gulf between him and his wife, and in my reading, between the prewar and postwar.

Kimura, lacking a voice of his own, seems to haunt *The Key*, himself a ghost constructed by not only the inner thoughts of Ikuko but, significantly, Kenji as well. We might say that Kimura exists within the cracks and crevices of the two diaries, constructed for the reader by both Kenji and Ikuko's subjective accounts of reality. Significantly, though, we can guess with a high level of certainty what form his diary would take were he to write one, and, based on this assumption, whose "emotions" (or perhaps "values") he is most aligned with.

2.9 Formal Aspects of Diary Literature

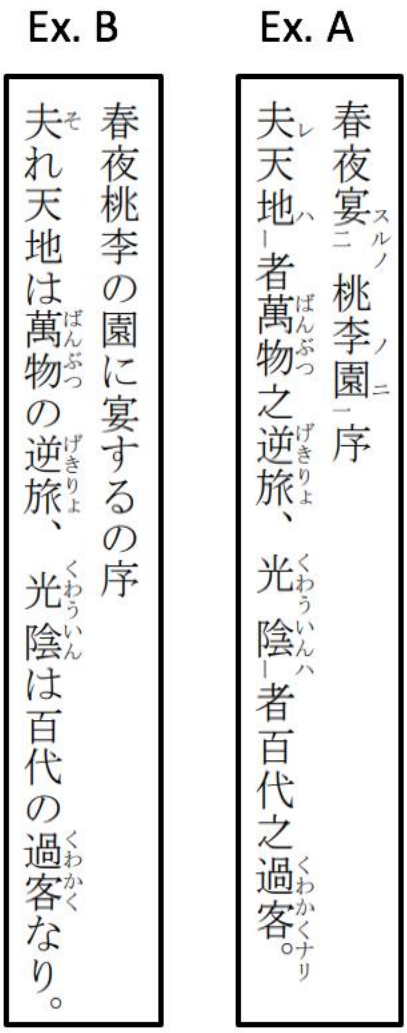
As discussed above, *The Key* is comprised of two different diaries, one written by Kenji, a male college professor, and the other by Ikuko, his wife. Here I will discuss the formal differences

[226] Ryōji Ōno, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō *Kagi* ni okeru 'dokusha' no yōso," *Nihon bungaku* 52 (2003): 30-39.

between the two and the associations these differences might have for a reader engaging with the original text. Kenji's diary is technically written in a style of *kanbun kundoku* called *kakikudashi bun* ("text written from top to bottom"), a form of literary Chinese that has been re-written into Japanese word order with grammatical inflections and particle markers written in katakana (and, more rarely, hiragana). Prince Takamatsu's diary, too, was written in this *kakikudashi bun* style. It is the result of *kanbun kundoku* – what Gottlieb succinctly defines as "Chinese read in the Japanese manner with the aid of diacritics and glosses" – being written out so that all grammatical inflections and syntactical changes are made explicit to the reader.[227] If *kanbun kundoku* is an annotated piece of text instructing the reader how to make sense of a Chinese base text vis-à-vis Japanese, then *kakikudashi bun* is that same text unpacked and made readable without the aid of glosses. Example A in Image 2-3 is an example of *kanbun kundoku* while Example B is that same text fleshed out into *kakikudashi bun* form. Note that in Example A all katakana annotations that will be moved to the base text in Example B are rewritten in hiragana. Also note that all furigana in both Examples A and B are written in hiragana. This is simply Hoshikawa's stylistic choice; it is likely a (modern) attempt at creating internal stability and consistency within the text. Recall the 17th century *Ainōshō*: no such distinction was made between annotations (e.g., between furigana or lexical terms). In fact, premodern texts exhibit incredible versatility in scribal practices concerning textual annotations.

[227] Nanette Twine, *Language and the Modern State: The Reform of Written Japanese* (Routledge, 1991): 287.

Image 2-3. Example of *kanbun kundoku* (A) and *kakikudashi bun* (B).



Kanbun kundoku and *kakikudashi bun* are terms still familiar to students studying at junior and senior high schools in Japan today because of compulsory courses in Sino-Japanese (i.e., *kanbun*).

A note of clarification: while *kakikudashi bun* developed as a derivate text resulting from rewriting literary Chinese into literary Japanese, as a style it is not dependent on the existence of a source text written in literary Chinese. That is, as in the case of *The Key*, it is possible to bypass a source literary Chinese text altogether and write an original Japanese text in the *kakikudashi bun*

style.[228] As one might expect, in such cases a text originally written in *kakikudashi bun* is not necessarily "reversible" into literary Chinese since there is no literary Chinese text on which it was based. Here, word choice and, significantly, script choice signals style. By writing the diary in a combination of kanji and katakana, a script combination not generally encountered in contemporary life, Tanizaki formally situates Kenji's diary within the larger tradition of diaries written in *kanbun*, called *kanbun nikki*. These diaries, written in varying forms of literary Chinese and kept almost exclusively by men, are synonymous with premodern notions of masculinity. This is why Kenji's diary, with its kanji/katakana mixture, is regarded as inherently masculine, especially if masculinity is likened to notions of hegemony and authority.

As Marilyn Jeanne Miller notes in her study of Japanese diary literature, there are four pillars of influence cited in the establishment of the genre: (i) classical Chinese literature, (ii) personal poetic anthologies (*shikashū*[229]), (iii) *monogatari*, and (iv) *kanbun* diaries.[230] This last form, and its derivative *kakikudashi bun* style, are associated with the public prestige and masculinity Tanizaki draws on in *The Key*. Miller describes the masculinity associated with *kanbun* diaries thus:

> Because of its many official uses, Chinese and *kambun* were, particularly in the Heian period, considered to be masculine writing; whereas, writing in *kana* or *hiragana* […] was considered feminine. […] Men used *kana* commonly only when writing *waka*, a poetic form with a standard thirty-one syllables, five lines,

[228] The intricacies of style, especially concerning the relationship between *kakikudashi bun* and vernacular Japanese, are well beyond the scope of this study. For an English introduction to the mechanics of *kanbun* and the resulting *kakikudashi bun* style, see Sydney Crawcour, *An Introduction to Kambun* (Michigan Center for Japanese Studies, 1965) and Akira Komai and Thomas Rohlich's *An Introduction to Japanese Kanbun* (University of Nagoya Press, 1988). Those interested in how *kanbun* practices in Japan deviate from literary Chinese are urged to read Edith Aldridge's "Principles of Hentai Kanbun Word Order: Evidence from the Kojiki," in *Language Change in East Asia* (Routledge, 2001): 207–232.

[229] Note that Miller writes the homophonous 詩歌集 instead of 私家集.

[230] Marilyn Jeanne Miller, *The Poetics of* Nikki Bungaku: *A Comparison of the Traditions, Conventions, and Structure of Heian Japan's Literary Diaries with Western Autobiographical Writings* (Garland, 1985): 70-85.

> and a 5-7-5-7-7 syllabi pattern, and private letters, particularly pursuant to courtship.[231]

In the above schema *kanbun* is associated with the masculine while *wabun*, or Japanese prose, the language of the *monogatari*, is associated with the feminine. Though Miller notes that things are more complicated than a simple male/female=*kanbun*/*wabun* binary, the reality is that, in the public imagination at least, such a divide continues to exist. One reason for this, she notes, is that *kanbun* was "reserved for official works meant for public circulation and for the notice of the court and other men" while *wabun* "was reserved for private works, letters and diaries, works meant for limited, private circulation." Part of this divide, she explains, meant that "personal emotions" were confined to the realm of *wabun* writing while "public positions" were to be found in *kanbun* writings.[232] Kenji's diary, then, written in a tradition imagined to be masculine and devoid of personal emotion, is a record of transgression in its promise to detail the sexual habits of its keeper while at the same time functioning as a signal to the reader highlighting the anachronistic worldview to which Kenji belongs.

Ikuko's diary, on the other hand, emerges from a different tradition of diary literature. Returning to Miller's four influences of diary fiction, Ikuko's diary is clearly positioned in the *monogatari* tradition. Together with religious and autobiographical writings, *monogatari* formed one of the three major forms of prose in premodern Japanese literature. Miller notes "[w]riters in these three areas developed Japanese prose [or *wabun*] into a versatile and subtle literary tool," locating one text in particular as the "major influence on and model for" the classical diaries such as the *Tosa nikki*: *Genji monogatari*.[233] While a discussion of *Genji*'s influence on diary literature is beyond the scope of the present study, suffice it to say that the fictional elements of *Genji* – that

[231] Miller, 75-6.
[232] Ibid., 76.
[233] Ibid., 83-4.

is, its *monogatari* elements – encouraged certain stylistic choices present in diaries to blur the line between fiction and non-fiction, and the pure expectation of either on the part of the reader. The decision to write a diary completely in the third person, for example as in the *Izumi Shikibu nikki* (ca. 1008), is a commonly cited instance of such blurring. In fact, Miller notes, there is evidence that parts of this diary were even styled on sections from *Genji*.[234] As far as the external form of *monogatari* is concerned, diaries written in this tradition heavily utilized hiragana and are written in *wabun*, or literary Japanese. Kanji are sparse in these texts. As I noted earlier, there is little evidence to suggest that someone of Kenji's education and social standing would actually write his diary in a style consistent with the *kanbun* diaries discussed. Rather, it seems plausible that Tanizaki uses the veneer of *kakikudashi bun* to signify the masculinity associated with the *kanbun* tradition while stopping short of producing a diary distinguishable any other way from Ikuko's.

Though stylistic differences are difficult to pin down and even more difficult to define, Miller sums up her takeaway thus: "By choosing to write in *kanbun* or *wabun*, the writer was limiting himself as to style, subject matter, poetic diction, poetics, tone, and audience, at the very least."[235] As made clear in *The Key*, the continuing legacy of these formalistic differences invite a gendered reading of a text written in two distinct styles. Thus, the external form of the two diaries is the only point of signification in this split in style (a distinction lost in an oral rendering of the same text), and by extension, what associations (e.g., masculine or feminine or public or private) they ought to have. As I have noted, though, this general binary quickly breaks down in the context of *The Key*: by the time of its composition, the hiragana/kanji style used by Ikuko was no longer exclusively feminine but rather the new standard of modern written Japanese. Kenji's katakana/kanji diary, however, maintained its male/archaic flavor. In summation, then, we have a

[234] Ibid., 94.
[235] Ibid., 77.

single text (*The Key*) created by a single author (Tanizaki) comprised of two diaries (Kenji/Ikuko) written in two different styles (*kanbun*/*wabun*) that suggest an inherent gendering (male/female) that might, in fact, be better understood in anachronistic/contemporary terms.

A final note to remind the reader how ubiquitous diaries and other forms of literary reminiscences are in the context of modern Japanese literature. [236] Many modern Japanese authors, both male and female, viewed the keeping of a diary as a practice somewhere between fiction and non-fiction. Some well-known authors and the diaries they kept include Natsume Soseki's *London Tower* (London tō, 1905); Ishikawa Takuboku's *A Diary in Roman Characters* (Rōma-ji nikki, ca. 1909); Shimazaki Tōson's *From the New Side of Town* (Shinkatamachi yori, 1909); Higuchi Ichiyō's *Ichiyō's Diary* (Ichiyō nikki, 1912); and Takami Jun's *A Diary on Defeat* (Haisen nikki, 1945) and *A Diary on the End of the War* (Shūsen nikki, 1946), to name just a few.[237] It would not have been unusual for Kenji to keep a diary – he was, after all, in good company. Rather, it was strange for that diary to be written in the *kakikudashi bun* style. And that strangeness is both created and conveyed through the external form of the text.

[236] For the sake of convenience, I have here grouped the *nikki* (diary), *zuihitsu* (essay), and *kikō* (travel diary) together.
[237] Once again, I am indebted to Miller's study. See pages 110-113 for a more detailed discussion on these writers and the diaries they kept. Additionally, see Miller's "*Nikki bungaku* – Literary Diaries: Their Tradition and Their Influence on Modern Japanese Fiction" (1987) for a discussion of journal literature in relation to modern Japanese literature.

Chapter 3 The Function of Furigana in Japanese Literature: Annotation and the Case of Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin*

In the previous chapter I outlined two major approaches to script in both the context of the Kokugo movement and the academic field of linguistics. I also introduced the work of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō in order to demonstrate how the assumption that a work of literature is rooted in an aurality removed from its material forms is insufficient when approaching texts written in the Japanese script. I introduced Tanizaki's own novel *The Key* (1956), analyzing it in terms of visuality and paying close attention to its external form. I argued that consideration of the written language Tanizaki employs can tell the contemporary reader much about the role of script in Japanese-language literature.

If the previous chapter was a call to consider visuality in Japanese language literature, then this chapter assumes its existence. To be sure, there was great variety in the way language was represented throughout the long history of recorded Japanese. In the modern era, however, it was only after the deprioritization of Sinitic (*kambun*) writings coupled with the rise in prestige of Western languages (mostly German and English) that the question of script was understood to be something necessitating standardization. Together with the development and expansion of modern educational institutions came various calls for script reform, the earliest and most famous example being the one presented by Maejima Hisoka in 1866 to the final shogun of the Tokugawa Period (1600-1868), Tokugawa Yoshinobu. Entitled *Proposal for Abolition of Chinese Characters* (*Kanji gohaishi no gi*), it called for the simplification of written Japanese through the abandonment of kanji.[238] In terms of literary history, these developments roughly correspond to the late nineteenth and early twentieth century movement known as *genbun itchi*, or the unification of spoken and

[238] Seeley, 138.

written language.[239] Though the work of Atsuko Ueda and others has proved otherwise, the commonplace understanding of *genbun itchi*'s relationship to literature can be traced to the work of Tsubouchi Shōyō and Futabatei Shimei.[240] Reform, it seems, was on everyone's mind.

3.1 Indeterminacy, Variation, and Japanese-language Literature

While calls for reform and standardization date back to the earliest years of Meiji, there was still considerable confusion about how the Japanese language should be written, and thus taught, in primary schools after the Elementary School Act of 1900.[241] One large hurdle that needed to be cleared before standardization became possible was understanding the amount of acceptable variation in the Japanese script. For example, it was not unusual for a single kanji to be written in graphically similar but distinct ways or with a semantically similar but altogether different characters (*itaiji*); for there to be variety in the way kana was used to write (i.e., spell) words (*kanazukai*); and for the shape of the kana themselves (*hentaigana*) to change.[242] And while *itaiji* and *hentaigana* are rarely encountered today in contemporary written Japanese, the ability to type and read them in a digital context is still regarded as an extremely important matter.[243] As Takada, et. al., note, *hentaigana* were used in personal names until 1947 and there is increasing

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[239] Again, see Twine (1991).

[240] See Ueda's *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment: The Production of "Literature" in Meiji Japan* (Stanford University Press, 2007), especially "Unraveling the Mechanism of Concealment: Historicizing *Shōsetsu shinzui*" (144-169), for a response to the oversimplification of declaring Tsubouchi and Futabatei the "creators" of the *genbun itchi* movement. Such an assertion – commonplace even today in literary histories – is evidenced in, for example, the following remark by Marleigh Grayer Ryan in *Japan's First Modern Novel:* "Ukigumo" *of Futabatei Shimei* (University of Michigan Press, 1990): "Futabatei and Tsubouchi both participated actively in the movement to modernize literary style. As soon as Futabatei started to translate and write fiction, he became aware of the necessity of choosing a style suitable to realistic fiction, and with Tsubouchi's help, he invented the style known as *gembun itchi* [unification of the written and spoken language]" (80).

[241] Takashiro Kōichi describes this confusion in "Meiji 33-nen 'Shōgakkō rei' ni yoru kana no toitsu to konran," *The bulletin of Jissen Women's Junior College* 32 (2011): 103-112.

[242] Each one of these terms (*itaiji*, *kanazukai*, *hentaigana*) has its own history, and each deserves to be analyzed when thinking about the role of variation in written Japanese. For a comprehensive examination of *itaiji* spanning from Edo into the modern era, see Sugimoto Tsutomu's 12-volume *Itaiji kenkyū shiryō shūsei* (Yuzankaku shuppan, 1973); for *kanazukai*, see Tsuneaki Egoyama, *Shin kanazukai ron* (Bokushoten, 1960); and for *hentaigana* see Hideo Kobayashi, *Nihongo shokishi genron* (Kasama shoin, 2006).

[243] They do, however, frequently appear in store names, place names, and, as discussed below, personal names.

"demand for the ability to input and display *hentaigana* on computers for academic purposes such as in the historical study of the Japanese writing system."[244]

Takada and his colleagues' comments come at a time when, as they note, the Unicode Standard – an organization with the goal to "[provide] a unique number for every character no matter what platform, device, application or language" – is nearly done.[245] The first encoding of *hentaigana* into Unicode was the result of a Dutch individual in 2009, [246] a development motivated, they claim, from an "orientalist interest" (*orientarizumu-teki kyōmi*).[247] Their stance is that this initial attempt was insufficient for practical usage, and as a result are hard at work developing a revised proposal that will include, among other things, the ability to add diacritics to various *hentaigana*. It should come as no surprise that variation in script might also become an object of literary consideration. Coupled with the possibilities for variation mentioned above is yet another one that both complicates and enriches the conversation at hand: as noted in the previous chapter, a kanji's reading, or *yomi*, can generate considerable variation. For this study, then, the term *variation* encompasses a cornucopia of possibilities and configurations, the effects of which can be minor or major but are nonetheless ubiquitous.

3.2 Variation in Literature, or How to Read *Snow Country*

It is true that all instances of variation do not significantly alter the narrative of a literary text. What variation does do, though, is significantly alter a reader's interaction with a text vis-à-vis its external form, altering the reception of a narrative. One striking example of how a kanji's reading might alter a reader's relationship with/to a text lay at the core of the modern Japanese

[244] Tomokazu Takada, Tsutomo Yada, Tatsuya Saitō, "Hentaigana no koremade to korekara: jōhō kōkan no tame no hyōjunka," *Journal of Information Processing and Management* 58:6 (2015).
[245] For more information on Unicode see "What is Unicode?".
[246] Though the article does not mention his name specifically, the proposal they are referencing was submitted by Jeroen Ruigrok van der Werven and can be accessed here. This proposal resulted in the character set known as "Kana Extended-A."
[247] Takada, 438.

literary canon, the famous opening lines of Kawabata Yasunari's *Snow Country*: "The train came out of the long tunnel into the snow country."[248]

The first two kanji of the quote (and of the novel) are 國境. This character-string immediately presents the reader with a challenge: how should it be read? The answer for the vast majority of readers today is *kokkyō*. Authoritative dictionaries, however, tell us that 國境 ("national border; provincial border") can be read as either *kokkyō* or *kunizakai*, and the *Collected Works of Kawabata Yasunari* altogether avoids a stance by foregoing the application of furigana.[249] Linguist and chief editor of the Japanese-language dictionary *Sanseido kokugo jiten*, Iima Hiroaki, notes that Kawabata, in conversation with scholar and critic Takeda Katsuhiko, acknowledges the possibility of both readings. Though Kawabata does seem to support the more common reading of *kokkyō*, he makes no special effort to persuade Takeda (who favored *kunizakai*) one way or the other.[250]

What the difference in readings amount to, according to Kawabata specialist Hatori Tetsuya, who also supported the *kokkyō* reading, is an "aesthetic of language" (*go no bikan*).[251] More recently, however, literary critic Ishihara Chiaki has argued the character-string should be read *kunizakai*.

> From 1935 *Snow Country* was written and re-fashioned from various fragments in the style of a serialized novel (*tanpen shōsetsu*); this was a rather complicated process, with some ten years passing before the emergence of a seemingly finished product. Because the narrative "present" (*genzai*) likely belongs to the pre-war era, it presumably occurs during a time when reality would be located in the "language of the country" (*o-kuni kotoba*), not in a dialect. Thus, we should probably read [the character-string] as *kunizakai*.[252]

[248] Yasunari Kawabata, *Snow Country* (Tuttle, 1957): 3. The original Japanese is: 國境の長いトンネルを抜けると雪國であつた.
[249] Kawabata, *KYZ* 10 (Shinchōsha, 1980).
[250] Hiroaki Iima, *Asobu Nihongo fushigina Nihongo* (Iwanami shoten, 2003): 158-9.
[251] Ibid., 160.
[252] Chiaki Ishihara, "'Gohai' sareta koitbito tachi." *Subaru* 36:1 (2014): 327.

What Ishihara means here is that the story takes place during a time when the "language of the country," synonymous with the common language spoken in one's hometown, would not have been viewed as a "dialect." Additionally, he makes the argument that the grapheme 國 of 國境 ,when read in combination as *kokkyō*, likely refers to a border between nations; on the other hand, he suggests that the same character-string, when read as *kunizakai*, likely refers to a border between provinces. Ishihara's locating of "reality" in the reading *kunizakai* poses an interesting question: what are we to do when the author himself suggests that *kokkyō* is the most appropriate reading? What if the author's readings are, indeed, a mistake? Or anachronistic? What if Kawabata does intend for 國境 to be read as *kokkyō* but for different readers – Ishihara among them – *kunizakai* resonates as more "real"? What might be called the meaning of the narrative does not change one way or the other; rather, the experience of the text – the aural value rooted in its visual representation – and its associated "reality," does.

One may be tempted to write this discrepancy off as a matter of personal taste, and that may indeed be the simplest answer. As Ishihara's comments suggest, though, the way in which one reads a particular kanji combination directly relates to how "real" a reader perceives a text to be. In other words, it is the atmosphere of pre-war Japan that Ishihara cites as justification for his support of a *kunizakai* reading despite the fact that such a reading is contingent on an assumed evocation of a pre-war environment by Kawabata. For Takeda, the "reality" of the text is located in a subjective "aesthetic of language"; for Ishihara, the "reality" of the text is located in historical (i.e., narratively contemporaneous) accuracy.

While serialization began in 1935 and continued through 1937, *Snow Country* was first published in novel form in 1937. It was not until 1948, however, that *Snow Country* would be

published in the form it takes today.[253] 1935 and 1948 were very different times: Ishihara locates "reality" in the narrative present of the text, ignoring an equally important but different present, namely that of the reader. The reader in 1937 was different from the reader in 1948, and even if one can reasonably argue that the 1937 Kawabata might have expected his readers to read 國境 as *kunizakai*, that 1937 reading should not be conflated with the 1948 *Snow Country*. In summation, then, a reader's reading of a text – here, contracted to a reader's reading of a single character-string – provides insight into the experiences and expectations of that same reader. And while the content of a narrative might not be contingent on one reading or another, the existence of variation in many forms adds much to the literary experience. Tanizaki, you will recall, was all too happy to let variation and ambiguity exist in his literature.

3.3 Variation & Interchangeability

The question of variation has been tackled by scholars and critics in a variety of ways. Jun Mizukawa, for example, examines what she calls "the instability of Chinese characters" (*kanji no yure*),[254] what she defines as "a space of formal indeterminacy inherent to *kanji* […] manifested as a visual indeterminacy and instability in both reading and writing."[255] For Mizukawa, the "instability" of kanji functions as a space where a presupposed line of continuity existing between a kanji's reading and its orthography or spelling breaks down. Even if we limit Mizukawa's discussion to kanji, this means is that unlike written modern English, whose orthography is, generally speaking, standardized, many utterances in modern Japanese can be written in a variety

[253] Published in December of 1948, this version of *Snow Country* incorporated short stories published after the initial 1937 publication.
[254] While I generally agree with Mizukawa's sentiment it would be more accurate to rephrase it as *kanji-rashii mono no yure*, or "the instability of kanji-like objects." That is, it is not only kanji but the two kana set and, indeed, other scripts that may be the object of annotation.
[255] Jun Mizukawa, "The Crisis of Language in Contemporary Japan: Reading, Writing, and New Technology" (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia University, 2013): 42; 195. Indeed, *Nihon kokugo daijiten* defines the term *yure* 揺れ as "something not standard and existing in a condition of instability."

of ways and are thus interchangeable. Interchangeability, you will recall, is one of the elements of the architecture of written Japanese. Whereas the spelling of a term in English can, in most situations, be regarded as either correct or incorrect, orthography in Japanese is relatively fluid. The external form of written Japanese is susceptible to variation in a way that most alphabetic scripts are not.

This does not mean that modern Japanese does not have well-established orthographical conventions and/or recognize the existence of correct spellings. Rather, it is more accurate to say that spelling in the context of Japanese usually refers to the kana rendition of a word and not necessarily to its external form; external form, for its part, refers to the visual make-up of a kana or kanji independent of spelling. This means that spelling is standardized but visual representation (*hyōki*) is not: Tokyo, whether written とうきょう (hiragana) or トウキョウ (katakana),[256] generally adhere to set, standardized spellings.[257] In this scenario, it is possible for a spelling to be correct but the base text be non-normative. In the context of written Japanese, then, "spelling" is usually interchangeable with "kana representation."

All of this is to say that when the base text is kanji it one step removed from its kana representation. In other words, the "visual indeterminacy and instability" of kanji prevents one stable line to be drawn between a word and its written form owing to the flexibility for variation that a written word's external form might take. If a listener lacking access to an already written text hears the word *machi*, or "town," they would have no foothold in distinguishing between 町,

[256] When a vowel is elongated in katakana spellings, the proceeding vowel is expressed with a long dash ー. This is especially true when the purpose of writing in katakana is to highlight the phonetic function of the script. These rules, however, are also standardized and thus wholly predictable. For example, the above example of Tokyo might appear as either トウキョウ or トーキョー depending on the nature of publication; the former is based on spelling while the latter on pronunciation. Hiragana inscriptions generally follow established spelling conventions.

[257] For a brief overview of developments in writing during the 20th century and how they relate to script reform, see Seeley, 136-151. For a specific treatment of spelling, referred to as "kana usage" or *kanazukai* in Japanese, see Konno, *Kanazukani no rekishi* (Chūkō shinsho, 2014): 173-221; 225-253.

街, まち, or マチ, all possible representations of the same word.[258] While there are (potentially) discernable differences between these orthographical variants of *machi*, there is little chance of orthographical choice greatly altering narrative meaning.[259] Within the realm of literature, though, these changes can potentially imbue a word with nuance not in via spelling but external form.

For example, while まち in this form is uncommon (with, perhaps, the notable exception of children's books), マチ is not unheard of: written in katakana, this form of representation might highlight a certain subjective foreignness posited onto the city-space (e.g., a city or town foreign to the narrator) or perhaps a sense of alienation contained within the city itself (c.f., the aesthetic evoked by Walter Benjamin in his unfinished *The Arcades Project*). That is to say, when author Sakiyama Tami writes *machi* in katakana in one of her more haunting pieces – 見えないマチからションカネーが [Mienai machi kara shonkanē ga][260] (2006) – it is not without consequence. For Sakiyama, a writer for whom identity and identification is very much tied to a subject's relationship to the community they live in, the alienating aspects of that town, whatever they might be, are highlighted and reinforced by the term's visual representation. This is not to say that meaning is completely forfeited if one form is used and not the other; rather, this means that nuance takes root and expands from the external form of a word and not just the word (or phrase) itself. The difficulty, however, is in quantifying the degree to which meaning is affected by an external form because the effect within each text is largely dependent on the author and the degree to which

[258] This list is actually incomplete because, as I mention below, an author could conceivably attach the reading *machi* to any combination of kanji (and, less likely, kana) that they want to.
[259] I say "potentially" because, for example, 町 signifies an area in which numerous households are crowded together while 街 generally refers to a street or small area aligned with shops. The latter is, in theory, contained within the former; *Kōjien*, a comprehensive Japanese-language dictionary, lists 町 as the appropriate written form for *machi*.
[260] Victoria Young has translated this title as "And so it goes in an Invisible Town" in "Inciting Difference and Distance in the Writings of Sakiyama Tami, Yi Yang-ji, and Tawada Yōko" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Leeds, 2016). All translations of the titles of Sakiyama's literature is taken from Young unless otherwise noted.

they choose to employ script as an aesthetic tool. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to thinking about the relationship between script and literature.

There is a significant difference between the example of variation I cited from Kawabata's *Snow Country* and the type of variation witnessed in Sakiyama's title: the former might be considered passive variation while the latter active. That is, intentional or not, the former is a consequence of ambiguity while the latter is a consequence of design.[261] Additionally, this possibility for variation of external form blocks a stable line of continuity from developing between spoken Japanese and written Japanese, even in the most normative texts. While an unstable line between the spoken and written, what Mizukawa calls "indeterminacy" is certainly not unique Japanese – Derrida, after all, was writing about French texts – the frequency and intensity at which it occurs is perhaps greater.

This indeterminacy has not escaped the purview of linguists: Konno Shinji, whose work I reference in the first chapter, cites the versatility with which Japanese can be written and conceives of the Japanese language written in the Japanese script as a space containing writing (spelling) conventions but wholly lacking an orthography in the traditional understanding of the term.[262] This is important because orthography, that is, "correct writing," is often thought to be central to the establishment of a standard (and often national) language. As Simon Horobin notes in *Studying the History of Early English,*

> The most important defining feature of a standard language is its uniformity and resistance to change. Another aspect is that a standard language should be 'supranational', that is, not tied to any particular locality and can be used by any individual irrespective of his or her geographical origins. Both factors are well-demonstrated by present-day standard English, which consists of a series of rules

[261] I fully acknowledge that the choice to leave something unannotated could be interpreted as active. For this discussion, though, I have decided to examine instances of active variation.
[262] For a book-length discussion on the topic of a perceived lack of orthography in Japanese see Konno, *Seishohō no nai Nihongo* (Iwanami shoten, 2013). Note that the Japanese translation of orthography, *seishohō*, is rarely used. Instead, the term *hyōki* is more common.

> which enable us to determine whether a word is spelled correctly or incorrectly, whether a sentence is correctly formed or not.[263]

Strictly speaking, then, written Japanese today conforms to Horobin's conception of a standard language because there are clear rules concerning the spelling (but not external forms) of words. The road to standardization, however, was a long one, and while Konno praises the versatility of written Japanese today amidst a booming interest in script, this same versatility challenged language reformers of the nineteenth and twentieth century to confront the question of variation from a variety of angles.[264] For many linguists and writers working with (and within) the Japanese language, these were certainly both exciting and confusing times.[265] The first attempt at a national standardization of kana usage (*kanazukai*) – what might be called spelling – would be by the Meiji government in 1872.[266]

Inspired by Karatani Kōjin's discussion of the early period of language reform, Mizukawa argues that "the emancipatory discourse concerning the Japanese writers who were finally setting themselves free from the dictatorial literary grip of *kanji* […] were beginning to engage with a distinctly modern set of literary concerns and questions of [the] modern subject while hammering out a new symbolic relation."[267] Karatani – who describes *genbun itchi* as a new ideology of writing – understands the "discovery" of the so-called modern self as intrinsically linked to the

[263] Simon Horobin, *Studying the History of Early English* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010): 33.
[264] Kanji is big business. At the time of writing, the website for Kinokuniya, Japan's largest bookseller, lists 36 books in the widely popular *Yomesō de yomenai kanji* series. The term *kanji* by itself yields more than 14,000 hits.
[265] For example, the editors of the excellent handbook *Shiryō to kaisetsu: Nihon bunshō hyōgenshi* (Izumi subaru sōsho, 2006) identify at least twenty-five discreet written "styles" (*buntai*) existing in the modern period alone. Though the term "style" as it is used here is indeed tricky – it tends not to refer to script in isolation but to particular combinations of script, grammar, vocabulary, etc. – the way a text is visually represented is central to the practice of categorization by these editors.
[266] Hiroshi Tsukishima, *Rekishi-teki kanazukai sono seiritsu to tokuchō* (Chūōkōron shinsha, 1986). In this text, linguist Tsukushima makes the case that either Mozume Takami or Sakakibara Yoshino is responsible for deciding what the final form of kana usage would be taught in primary schools throughout Japan (133-4).
[267] Mizukawa, 201.

formation of a standardized language. [268] Coupled with this new drive to unify speech and writing, Mizukawa argues, was the movement away from the Chinese classics as a model for proper kanji usage. With this move away from a Chinese (kanji) centric worldview came an accompanying freedom that "resulted not only in the disorientation of a subject" vis-à-vis a move away from the Confucian classics "but also in the ascendance of a new perspective" on the world.[269] This new perspective included insights into the relationship between language and script and the role script might play in a newly imagined Japanese identity. To be sure, radical (i.e., non-Chinese based) script usage was not new to the period: as Sugimoto Tsutomu and others have shown, there exist countless examples of authors from the Edo period both deferring to Chinese standards and rejecting them.[270] The difference is that writers now seemed to flee from the hegemony of a hereto privileged kanji (read: Chinese) worldview. There is something novel about what authors in the 20th and 21st century are/were doing with script, whether they themselves recognize(d) it or not.[271] Indeed, the politics of script as seen in Tanizaki's *The Key* can only be fully evaluated when analyzed within the larger socio-historical context.

3.4 How Orthography Becomes

The issue of variation became problematized within the context of modernization during the early Meiji period. What changed was not the fundamental structure of the Japanese writing system but rather the cultural context in which it now existed. The role of script, especially the (re-)establishment of a system of writing tied to newly emerging notions of the nation-state, was

[268] He says: "*Genbun itchi* represented the invention of a new conception of writing as equivalent with speech." Karatani, 39. See 45-6 for more on Karatani's take on *genbun itchi*.
[269] Mizukawa, 201.
[270] See Sugimoto's voluminous *Edo no bun'en to bunshōgaku* (Waseda Univeristy, 1996) for a survey of different forms of writing from different genres and authors.
[271] Even after the three-tiered script system (kanji, hiragana, and katakana) became standard, authors working in Japanese were still working within the same architectural constraints of the script inherited from its "pre-modern" mode. The "old" context, however, changed.

now central in proving the modernness (*kindaisei*) of Japan.[272] This is perhaps illustrated most clearly in 1875 when Nishimura Shigeki, then member of the Ministry of Education, ordered Ōtsuki Fumihiko, a Kokugaku scholar and fellow Ministry member, to compile what would become *Genkai* (1889), or *A Sea of Words*, the first modern dictionary of the Japanese language. *Genkai* established many conventions still seen in dictionaries today: it was organized in the *a-i-u-e-o* order; various parts of speech were indexed; a grammar guide was appended to the main text; translations from English were included in entries; and a focus on etymology was evident.[273] All of these elements came together to create a dictionary worthy of the title "modern": Hayakawa Isao tells us a grand banquet, attended by bigwigs from the financial and political sectors, was held to celebrate its publication. And while *Genkai* was not responsible for creating spelling norms, it prioritized consistency when it came to its kana usage.[274] This desire to standardize spelling, however, existed separate from the desire to unify spoken and written language.

As Horobin noted, the act of standardization was fundamental to the establishment of modern standard English and the modern nation-state.[275] In Japan, the push for modernization

[272] Lee aptly notes that it was Ueda Kazutoshi who was responsible for melding the two concepts of *kokugo* and nation-state. She writes: "The most crucial difference from the kokugaku scholars' viewpoint was that Ueda first postulated the organic connection between *kokugo*, a national language, and *kokka*, a nation-state, as a universal concept, not limited to Japan, and then explained the uniqueness and particularity of Japan" (87). All of this was done, Yi tells us, after Ueda spent nearly four years studying the newly emerged field of linguistics, particularly the "organic linguistic theory of Germany" (90).

[273] "Jisho annai," *Hitotsubashi University Research and Development Center for Higher Education*.

[274] *Genkai* was written in the historical kana (*rekishiteki kanazukai*). The historical kana usage is based primarily on the orthography found in texts from and before the mid-Heian period. The kokugo scholar Keichū codified this orthography in *Waji shōran shō* (1693). In this text he pointed out, among many other things, inconsistencies in what is known as the Teika kana usage (*Teika kanazukai*). Keichū's work, with minor modifications, was adopted by the Meiji Government and utilized in textbooks. It is still the standard orthography in which premodern texts are written.

[275] It goes without saying that English spelling today is anything but phonetic. Much like the standard seen in *Genkai*, there is much effort to preserve etymology – even when that etymology is incorrect. In the case of English, the etymology of a word often provides insight into the reason a particular word is written the way it is. In Japanese, the various historical spellings of now identical terms can help distinguish between what would have been homophonous kanji terms from at least the early modern period. John Timothy Wixted provides the following examples, all written and pronounced *kōin* today: 公印（こういん）, 行印（かういん）, 行員（かうゐん）, 光陰（くわういん）, 鉱員（くわうゐん）, and 工員（こうゐん）. Wixted, *A Handbook to Classical Japanese* (Cornell University, 2006): 21-2.

would cause similar desires for cleaning up the language, i.e., for "standardization," to swell.[276] We can see from Seth Lerer's description of the state of English language reform between the 16th and 18th centuries that those reformists' concerns were remarkably similar to language reformers in Japan:

> For over a century and a half, from John Hart in the 1550s until Jonathan Swift in the 1710s, English scholars, teachers, poets, and public figures weighed in on the pressing language matters of the day. Should there be a standard English, and should its mark be one of region, class, or education? Should spelling reflect history, or should it match the sounds of spoken English? Is there an empirical way of representing speech sounds such that a reader, regardless of his or her dialect, could pronounce those sounds equally well? And finally, behind all of these detailed questions, lay a larger philosophical problem: Was there a universal language for all people, a language of Adam, as it were, from which we have fallen away? Was language, in other words, something that inhered in the human mind, or was it a social convention? Were living languages descended from a common root?[277]

Lerer's characterization of the concerns of "scholars, teachers, poets, and public figures" is reminiscent of the debates surrounding the Japanese language at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. Questions about whether or not spelling should reflect the (often imagined) history of words or its sound were hotly contested (the latter won), and the questioning of the very source of language – though more often than not the Japanese script and not the spoken language exclusively – was tied to questions of national history and identity.[278] At the center of these discussions was the question of orthography and the interrelated practices of spelling, pronunciation, and reading.

[276] For a monograph-length study on the relationship between dictionaries and public policy in Japan, see Yasuda Toshiaki's important *Jisho no seijigaku: kotoba no kihan to wa nani ka* (Heibonsha, 2006).
[277] Seth Lerer, *Inventing English: A Portable History of the Language* (Columbia University Press, 2007): 153-4.
[278] Recall that less than 50 years before the start of the Meiji period Hirata Atsutane, one of the most important Khhokugaku scholars, was arguing for the existence of pre-kanji characters in Japan that, as Satō Minoru notes, was a falsification. The script, called the "writing of the gods" (*kanna no fumi*), was clearly based on Hangul. See Takeyoshi Satō, *Gaisetsu Nihongo no rekishi* (Asakura shoten, 1995): 45.

In "The Plan of an English Dictionary" (1747), Samuel Johnson argues that orthography, "which was long vague and uncertain, which at last, when its fluctuations ceased, was in many cases settled by accident," is "closely related" to pronunciation, "the study of which is of great importance to the duration of a language, because the first change will naturally begin by corruption in the living speech."[279] "Corruption" here refers to two things at once, namely the inevitable sound changes all languages undergo and the existence of linguistic diversity at any given point in time. The former conception of corruption is diachronic in nature while the latter is synchronic; regarding the latter, Jeff Strabone observes that "[m]any of those who saw linguistic diversity as a danger took it upon themselves to do the actual work of standardizing English as a national language."[280] These standardizers, which included Johnson,

> generally shared several beliefs about the state of their language: that English needed to be protected and preserved from corruption; that a chief source of corruption was the range of provincial and local dialects, which, though indigenous, they deemed barbarous; […] that the way to protect and preserve English was to stigmatize provincial dialects and create a pedagogy of English predicated on following writers of taste; that everyone in Great Britain, regardless of class and birthplace, could learn to speak and write according to the emerging standards; and that fixing the language in this way would strengthen the community of English speakers and, thus, the Union itself.[281]

Johnson's various concerns with script converged in his push for the creation of an orthography. The idea seems to be that were writing to be codified, that is, were "corruption" to be eliminated from the linguistic equation, then all other concerns regarding the "Union" would fall into place. This, too, is reminiscent of the discourse surrounding language reform in Japan. Hayakawa notes that by 1889 Ueda Kazutoshi, another influential Kokugo scholar and the first professor of linguistics (*hakugengaku* 博言学) at Tokyo Imperial University, was referencing Johnson's work

[279] Quoted in Tony Crowley, *Proper English? Readings in Language, History and Cultural Identity* (Routledge, 1991): 153-4.
[280] Jeff Strabone, "Samuel Johnson: Standardizer of English, Preserver of Gaelic," *ELH* 77:1 (2010): 237.
[281] Ibid., 237-8.

in his lectures. Significantly, in the middle of the Meiji period Johnson's work was discussed more as "a link in the purification of language movement" (*gengo junka undō no ikkan toshite*) than for the content of its entries and its editorial processes.[282] After all, writing is, as Lydia Liu reminds us, an "imperial technology."[283]

As an imperial technology, language reform was tied to notions of the body, with "correct" language becoming critical for a healthy nation-state. As Yoshikuni Igarashi observes, "Japanese bodies had been at the heart of nationalist discourse" during the prewar period, noting that the government attempted "to create obedient, patriotic bodies by forging ties between nationalist ideology and bodily functions."[284] Coupled with Yoshikuni's observation that the "production of healthy bodies had a national concern even prior to […] 1937," and that "the body gained official attention not only as the basis of national production and reproduction but also as the medium through which the official ideology for the nation could be materialized," there is strong evidence to suggest that language education and reform, too, was part of this larger drive to create healthy bodies.[285]

I will briefly return to the infamous propaganda piece *Fundamentals of Our National Polity* (*Kokutai no hongi*) I referenced in the previous chapter in order to illustrate this point more clearly. Published by the Ministry of Education in 1937 and penned by Yamada Yoshio, a sound national language is equated to a sound (or healthy) national body.[286] As Michael Wachutka notes, Yamada "strongly rejected the assumption that *kokugaku* was solely concerned with philosophical

[282] Isamu Hayakawa, *Webustaa jisho to Nihon no yoake: meiji no riidaa wa eigo to ika ni mukiatta ka* (Hayakawa, 2016): Kindle loc. 2979.
[283] For a discussion on how kanji circulated in East Asia see Lydia Liu, "Scripts in Motion: Writing as Imperial Technology, Past and Present," *PMLA* 130:2 (2015): 375-83.
[284] Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton University Press, 2000): 47-8.
[285] Ibid.
[286] For a translation of *Fundamentals of Our National Polity* see de Bary et al., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (Columbia University Press, 2005).

learning"; instead, he argued that "the principal objective of *kokugaku* was to clarify Japan's national polity or essence (*kokutai*)."[287] This connection between language and the national body is further strengthened in Yamada's lesser known work, the 1942 *Fundamentals of Our National Learning* (*Kokugaku no hongi*). Lee Yeounsuk's work has shown that by 1941 the Ministry of Education strived to "promote overseas pure and correct Japanese, not a local, distorted, unattractive language, but a standard, correct, and beautiful language."[288] It is within this zeitgeist that written Japanese begins to be criticized as anti-modern (read: non-Western) because of an abundance of, of all things, glosses. It is in 1938 that Yamamoto Yūzō would call for the abolishment of furigana, calling them "unpleasant bugs" and larvae crawling on the page, something "truly embarrassing for a civilized nation" (*bunmei koku toshite shin ni hazukashii koto*).[289] While it is true that furigana, too, could have been standardized, it seems as if Yamamoto took issue with the very existence of the annotations and the visuality they imparted on the text.

Yamamoto's call for the abandonment of furigana would not come to fruition. He would, however, continue to have a voice in the reform of the language: he would eventually come to serve as chairman of a new committee on kanji that was established in the immediate postwar period in response to complaints lodged against the proposed 1,295 characters included in the List of Characters for General Use (*Jōyō kanjihyō*).[290] All of this is to say that for many of the thinkers introduced here, consistency in visual representation (*hyōki*) – and the existence of strict rules – seemed to represent the state of the national polity. Variation, then, in this context, was something to be shunned. Variation as the status quo was eradicated through a process of standardization

[287] Michael Wachutka, "A Living Past as the Nation's Personality: 'Jinnō Shōtōki,' Early Shōwa Nationalism, and Das Dritte Reich,'" *Japan Review* 24 (2012): 127-50.
[288] Lee, 203.
[289] Yūzo Yamamoto, *Furigana haishi ron to sono hihan* (Hakusuisha, 1938): 7.
[290] Seeley, 152.

linked to the creation of a modern nation-state. The rules governing written Japanese underwent great changes as the result of a government-sponsored push for modernization, the first change being a reform of kana spelling.[291] Variation, though, was just one obstacle in the push for standardization. Interchangeability was one, and furigana was another.

3.5 The Root of Indeterminacy: The Various Functions of Furigana

The existence of an orthography is one way a language is imagined to have a standard form. The creation of an orthography, however, does not mean that non-standard forms of the language suddenly disappear. In fact, sometimes it is the creation of an orthography that also creates non-standard forms of language. That is, if something does not conform to a particular standard it is necessarily regarded as non-standard, and this is as true with modern Japanese as it is with any other language. Today, one of the most common ways an author represents non-standard Japanese is through the use of *furigana*, annotated readings attached to the side or above the base text. Furigana, little annotations peppered throughout Japanese-language texts, are perhaps the single most important feature of the Japanese script to consider when thinking about textual visuality. Furigana are those glosses that make the play we examined in the Chinese and Japanese bilingual poetry – and the Mister Donuts advertisement – possible!

As noted in the first chapter, Ariga Chieko describes furigana as "a reading gloss printed alongside words to indicate pronunciation or to provide additional information. [Furigana] appear

[291] The first major reforms to kana spelling would come in the 1908 Proposed Revisions to Kana Usage for Kokugo (*Kokugo kanazukai kaitei an*), but it was not until the 1941 Guidelines for Kana Usage for Armament (*Heiki ni kansuru kanazukai yōryō*) – written and published by the Japanese army – that the contemporary kana usage was formally adopted by the government. By 1946 the Ministry of Education had issued decrees standardizing kana usage for both contemporary and historical spellings, and these spellings were to be taught in schools throughout Japan. And while these rules did attempt to fully standardize orthography and impose limits on furigana usage, they did not prevent authors, advertisers, and any number of writers from utilizing script as a means for aesthetic expression.

in small type, normally in phonetic kana to the right of the Chinese characters, or kanji."[292] Ariga's characterization of furigana as providing either pronunciation or providing information is not incorrect; it does not, however, cover the total range these annotations may take. Consider the following simple example:

1. 先生が新しい語彙を説明しました。
2. 先生が新しい語彙(ごい)を説明しました。
3. 先生が新しい語彙(ボキャブラリー)を説明しました。

In a linguistic vacuum, the first sentence would be read as *sensei ga atarashii goi o setsumei shimashita* [The teacher explained new vocabulary]. This reading of the unannotated text corresponds to the standard denotative meaning of the base text. In the second sentence, the two characters 語彙 [vocabulary] have furigana attached to them, using hiragana to instruct the reader that the character-string should be read *goi*. The annotation of 語彙 in sentence two is in agreement with the standard reading of the character-string insofar as it corresponds to the reading of 語彙 as *goi* listed in the *Table of Chinese Characters in Common Use*.[293]

In sentence three, however, the same 語彙 is annotated differently, this time with the non-standard reading of ボキャブラリー (*bokyaburarii*), a Japanese rendition of the English word "vocabulary." We can characterize this reading as non-standard because (i) it does not correspond to any officially recognized reading of either character (or the combination of the two) and (ii) it

[292] Chieko Ariga, "The Playful Gloss. Rubi in Japanese Literature," *Monumenta Nipponica* 44:3 (1989): 309-335. Throughout her article Ariga uses the term *rubi* instead of *furigana*. I have opted to use the term furigana because, strictly speaking, the practice of annotating Japanese language texts exists separate from the act of printing. Ariga provides a helpful introduction to the origins of the term *rubi*: "The term *rubi* comes from 'ruby', a type size (5.5 point) formerly used in Britain. The No. 7 type in which glosses were printed during the early Meiji period was about the same size. Hence, *rubi* is a word created in the nineteenth century in conjunction with Western-style printing" (309).

[293] See the official "Heisei nijūninen naikaku kokuji jōyō kanji hyō." 彙 appears precisely once in the document, as a compound character in 語彙 (12). Other official Cabinet Notifications concerning contemporary kana usage, orthography, the transcription of foreign words, and roman transcriptions can be accessed here.

is not a conventionalized reading with currency among those literate in the Japanese language.[294] While not being recognized by the Ministry of Education in and of itself does not automatically render a reading "non-standard" in any meaningful way, it does position the reading antithetical to the government's image of a standardized language.

Nevertheless, the point here is that sentences one and two are in agreement with a set of standards and thus predictable while sentence three introduces an unpredictable element (i.e., reading) that imparts a particular form of visuality onto the base text not included in the first two. This instance of visuality is a prerequisite for the creation of a non-normative reading. As long as the reading of 語彙 is stable, i.e., read as *goi*, then the presence or absence of furigana has little or no bearing on its denotative meaning. In the case of *bokyaburarii*, though, this is not the case: the furigana provides a reading to a character-string that is unpredictable. Whereas the visuality of the furigana *goi* is a non-essential element in the establishment of meaning, its inclusion is imperative in the case of *bokyaburarii*. *Bokyaburarii* is logical but not predictable. It is logical because, in fact, 語彙 signifies to the reader the larger abstract concept of "vocabulary"; it is not predictable because it is not a recognized reading of the character and thus the relative correlation between the two terms is loose. [295] This combination of logical but unpredictable describes many of the more interesting examples of furigana discussed below.

Ariga's claim that furigana should either show pronunciation or provide additional information is, though generally true, proven insufficient when applied to more complex examples of furigana usage. To understand why we must first differentiate between what Ariga calls

[294] Note that "reading" here is different from meaning. While *bokyaburarii* might appear as a definition for the two kanji, it does not appear as a reading.
[295] Things are further complicated when we recall that the English term "vocabulary" is not identical to the katakana *bokyaburarii*. The *Nihongo kokugo daijiten* lists only a single definition for *bokyaburarii*: "term, terminology; lexicon." The OED, on the other hand, lists no fewer than five definitions with variant usages.

"pronunciation" and what is commonly referred to as a character's "reading" (*yomi*). Pronunciation, understood to be "[t]he action of pronouncing a word or words; the way in which a word is pronounced, esp. with reference to a recognized standard," is a misleading description of furigana's annotative function because furigana shows how to read a character, not how to pronounce it.[296] Pronunciation should also not to be conflated with spelling. The editors of one pronunciation guide make this clear in the introduction to their manual: they note that the system they employ "is especially useful in English, where it gives a uniformity to the many different spellings of words and, indeed, represents a more accurate pronunciation of words than does conventional spelling."[297]

Because furigana, usually written in kana, conform to the standard rules of the Japanese writing system (e.g., the same phonological system, the same set of characters), furigana tend to represent language in a manner identical to standard written Japanese. The issue here is that kana do not represent pronunciation and to claim so is to overlook the many idiosyncrasies contained therein.[298] And while the placement of furigana might suggest a function different from that of kana in the base text, what furigana usually represents is a word's reading. How a reader reads a text aloud (or, were it possible to ascertain, silently), it is that utterance that would become the target of phonetic representation. Though obvious for those familiar with Japanese, Table 3-1 illustrates how kana do not represent pronunciation but rather spelling. IPA in the chart below refers to the International Phonetic Alphabet. The IPA, which "provides the academic community

[296] All definitions of English words are, unless otherwise noted, taken from *OED Online* published by Oxford University Press.
[297] *IPA Phonics: American English Pronunciation Guide* (Vocalis Ltd., 2006): 3.
[298] A few examples of the disjunction between written form and pronunciation can be seen in particle usage (は, へ, を), long vowels (おう, おお), and the づず/ぢじ pairs.

world-wide with a notational standard for the phonetic representation of all languages," is the most comprehensive system for visually representing pronunciation.[299]

Table 3-1. "Bridge," "chopsticks," and "end-point" in the Tokyo dialect.

Kanji	Kana	IPA	Accent[300]
橋 "bridge"	はし *hashi*	[ha̱ɕiˈ]	hàshí 
箸 "chopsticks"	はし *hashi*	[haˈ̱ɕi]	há↓shì 
端 "end-point"	はし *hashi*	[ha̱ɕi]	hàshí 

The same two kana combination, はし *hashi*, serve as the readings for 橋 "bridge," 箸 "chopsticks," and "端 "end-point." Assuming the characters will be read in the Tokyo dialect, they share both the same kana and phonetic representation while the stress lands on 'shi' when referring to "bridge" but after the initial 'ha' when referring to "chopsticks." "End-point" is neutral in stress. As is well known, however, the location of these stresses can vary and, in fact, the two swap locations in the spoken language of the Kansai region. The kana representation はし alone is not capable of conveying this information to the reader. In other words, はし alone is nothing more than a kana spelling while [hàshí↓] and [há↓shì], for example, brings us much closer to actual pronunciation.[301]

[299] See "IPA Home" for more information.
[300] Images have been taken from "OJAD - Online Japanese Accent Dictionary," created by the Minematsu Laboratory, Graduate School of Engineering and the Hirose Laboratory, Graduate School of Information Science, and Technology, both at The University of Tokyo.
[301] For similar information in Japanese, see *Nihongo hatsuon accent jiten kaitei shinban* (Nihon hōsō shuppan kyōkai, 1985): 704.

The takeaway is that Ariga's conflation of reading and pronunciation is misleading and gives rise to confusion about how furigana can be used by authors of literary texts. A reading signifies to the reader a spelling they should convert into their own speech pattern while pronunciation instructs the reader in the manner in which they should articulate a reading regardless of their own linguistic habits. It is helpful, then, to characterize the primary function of furigana as using kana to visualize a desired reading.[302]

With the distinction between reading and pronunciation in mind, let me ask again: what is the function of furigana when 語彙 is made to be read *bokyaburarii*? The second function Ariga sees in furigana is its ability to add additional information to the base text. Ariga does not detail the nature of this additional information, though she seems to be differentiating between readings-for-pronunciation and readings-for-additional-information. In the first scenario, 語彙 would simply be read aloud as *bokyaburarii*; in the second scenario, then, one would presumably read the character-string as *goi* with the additional information provided by the semantic unit "vocabulary." If Ariga imagines a situation where both function simultaneously she does not say so.

Elsewhere Ariga notes that "today [furigana] are employed only sparingly in certain publications, such as technical and scholarly writings, literature, and commercial books and magazines for children."[303] While this claim may have some statistical validity, the exceptions she names are significant. It is precisely in these "certain publications," namely the very large category of literature, etc., where furigana function in the most significant and interesting ways.

[302] One might imagine pronunciation in written Japanese consisting of three orders: (i) base text [e.g., kanji], (ii) spelling/reading [e.g., kana reading], and (iii) phonetic representation [e.g., IPA rendition]. Here I have used the term "phonetic representation" over "phonetic transcription" because, as Vachek notes, a phonetic representation brings us close to "actual" pronunciation but never to its door; at the end of the day it is still a representation of an actual utterance.
[303] Ariga, 320.

Additionally, there is a large body of literature for whom furigana is absolutely crucial for the construction of meaning. A text Ariga herself references and to which I will turn my attention to shortly, Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin*, is a prime example of such literature. Ariga understands Inoue's script practice as being fundamentally ludic in nature and ultimately traceable to the Edo period *gesaku* ("playful literature") genre. And while I agree that both Inoue and much of Edo period *gesaku* have superficial similarities, those similarities stem not from a shared desire for ludic play as from a shared desire to utilize the same annotative tool found within the architecture of Japanese: furigana. Furigana in turn allows an author to create arbitrary or semi-arbitrary connections between characters or character-strings and readings.

Mizukawa's notion of the unstable kanji, what she calls "a space of formal indeterminacy," is useful when considering the role of arbitrariness in the creative process. This is because the relationship between visual representation and pronunciation is always arbitrary, and that arbitrariness can be exploited with even the most limited use of furigana. The relationship between a kanji and its reading is unstable, and this gap is highlighted with the introduction of new and unexpected readings applied to a base text. The result of this condition, namely the visualization of the instability between kanji and reading, on the one hand makes the total standardization of the written language nearly impossible; on the other, it creates just enough room for authors to exploit this freedom and add it to their repertoire of literary expressiveness. The situation might be summarized thus: if 語彙 is *usually* read as *goi* then there are times when it isn't; and when it isn't, how should we read it? When should we not read it as *goi*? And, when it's not annotated – that is, when there is no furigana attached to 語彙 – is it *always* read as *goi*?

Japanese is no vaguer than any other language nor has it ever been at any point in its history. Additionally, if all annotations functioned simply to reproduce and reinforce government-

sanctioned (thus wholly predictable and intuitive) readings, then there would be little need to discuss the visuality of the text; the function of furigana in such a case would be limited to providing reading aids. However, this is simply not the case. In the remainder of this chapter I consider the impact furigana can have on a single text. At the most basic level, furigana allow an author's work to simultaneously operate within and outside the standard Japanese language. Specifically, it is the representation of spoken non-standard Japanese vis-à-vis written Japanese that highlights the "non-standard" elements of the language(s) being employed.

3.6 Furigana and the Representation(s) of Non-Standard Japanese

The representation of non-standard Japanese in the work of Inoue Hisashi's *Kirikirijin* will serve as one example of this writing-as-resistance. To begin with, some might argue that the visual representation of dialects in *Kirikirijin* can be understood as a form of eye-dialect. Such an understanding, however, neglects the relationship between visuality and the language of the base text; it also leads the reader to erroneously assume that the author is signaling ignorance on behalf of the speaker. As Dwight L. Bolinger, citing Harold Wentworth, notes, the

> "Eye Dialect is phonetic respelling of words, not in order to show a mispronunciation (e.g. Eye-talian), but merely to burlesque the words or their speaker. Since /'wi-min/ is a standard pronunciation of women, the corresponding spelling *wimmin* is eye dialect." The spelling here is a visual morpheme which implies, 'The person quoted is one who would use a vulgar pronunciation if there were one.' Examples: *licker*, *vittles*, *sassiety*, *whut*. Misspelling is made to substitute for mispronunciation: i.e. it is suggested that the speaker is at the level of ignorance where one misspells in this fashion, hence mispronounces as well.[304]

In other words, according to Bolinger, the eye dialect is a technique by which an author signifies an ignorant speaker by intentionally misspelling a word. This misspelling, in turn, is used to signify a "mispronunciation" of sorts: even if a speaker does not technically mispronounce a word,

[304] Dwight L. Bolinger, "Visual Morphemes," *Language* 22:4 (1946): 337.

Bolinger claims, they would mispronounce it if a "vulgar pronunciation" existed. The focus here then, we might say, is not on dialect so much as it is on education: the various misspellings are imagined to be a consequence of poor education. Paul Hull Bowdre would redefine eye dialect some twenty years after Bolinger:

> Eye Dialect consists of words and groups of words which for any one of a number of possible reasons have been spelled in a manner which to the eye is recognizably nonstandard, but which to the ear still indicates a pronunciation that is standard throughout the United States or, in most instances, throughout the English-speaking world.[305]

While the insinuation of linguistic corruption – that mode of thinking seen as early as Johnson and the other critics of the English language discussed earlier – has disappeared from Bowdre, the basic premise remains the same: eye dialect refers to the conscious non-standard spelling of words that intend to comment on extra-textual conditions, usually education, class, race, etc. Unlike Bolinger, however, Bowdre redirects the reader's attention from sound (pronunciation) to sight (spelling). For Bowdre, spelling embodies a character's education relative to an assumed standard.

As we have seen, though, furigana provides readings to a base text in both standard and non-standard Japanese. When furigana provide anything other than readings – and even then, it is debatable – the function of appending furigana to kanji is to provide commentary by some hand other than the characters appearing in a text. In this way they are a type of paratext, annotations breaking the fourth wall that act as a kind of anchor linking the text to its materiality. If a particular instance of furigana happens to provide readings in a manner similar to the eye dialect, it would be a single application of furigana and not its function. We also find instances of what might be called *eye script*.[306] As the term suggests, eye script refers to the conscious manipulation of a script

[305] Paul Hull Bowdre, Jr., "A Study of Eye Dialect," (Ph.D dissertation, University of Florida, 1964): 1.
[306] I am indebted to Zev Handel for proposing this concept while he served as commentator to the panel "Embodied Texts: Rescripting Modern Japanese Literature and Media History" at the 2018 Association for Asian Studies (23 March 2018).

by an author to suggest extra-literary conditions much in the way eye dialect can. Recall the use of script in Tanizaki's *The Key* examined in the previous chapter: here, kanji and katakana form one script subset (employed by Kenji) while kanji and hiragana form another (Ikuko); despite their visual differences, both subsets are fully capable of writing grammatical structures and lexical choices consistent with modern standard Japanese. In addition to a change in speaker, the different scripts signify a difference in education.

Returning briefly to Bowdre, he rightly notes that the impact of eye dialect can only take shape when a language "[has] a reasonably well-standardized system of spelling," surmising that "one would not expect to find the device used extensively in English much before the nineteenth century."[307] In order for eye dialect to emerge as a literary tool available to authors, the condition of a standard language must already be in place; you need a standard spelling in order to have a non-standard spelling. The logic behind this claim is clear enough. However, within the space of what Atsuko Ueda calls the "linguistic terrain" of Japan in the 1880s, the existence and acceptability of various modes of writing inhibited one particular form or style from being the standard against which all other forms could be judged.[308] This meant that as calls for the standardization of the Japanese language were occupying linguists, public intellectuals, and bureaucrats, the road to standardization of the written language – the unification of speech and script, remember, is a different matter – was a tough one. Inoue Hisashi, an author and playwright familiar with the complexity of this situation, has returned time and time again to this predicament.

3.7 Inoue Hisashi and *Kirikirijin*

Inoue Hisashi (1934-2010), remembered as "one of modern Japan's most popular satirists and dramatists," was perhaps the most successful and well-known novelist-cum-playwright from

[307] Ibid., 8.
[308] Ueda, 133-56.

the 1960s until his death in 2010.[309] Much of Inoue's oeuvre can be read as criticism of the elitism he saw around him, with the specific aim of his critique often being the bureaucratic elites who equated the culture of Tokyo with the culture of Japan. As M. Cody Poulton notes in his survey of underground theater from the 1960s, "Inoue firmly planted himself in the mainstream of Japanese theater, creating for large audiences accessible entertainments that still express the leftist sentiments and Brechtian theatrics that were features of postwar *shingeki* [lit., new theater] in its heyday."[310] And while the theatre is today what both scholars and the public most associate with Inoue, he was just as productive in other fields; despite producing more than sixty plays during his lifetime, Inoue was an equally prolific writer of fiction and essays. As early as 1975, literary critic Yoshimoto Takaaki – himself a "popular thinker" – called Inoue, together with Nosaka Akiyuki, a "outstanding author of mass literature" (*sugureta taishū shōsetsuka*).[311] Inoue was, it seems, everywhere.

Poulton also notes that one of the distinguishing characteristics of Inoue's work is his interest in language, regionalism, and their relation to identity. Specifically, Poulton notes "his strong allegiance to the unique culture of Tohoku Japan."[312] On the one hand, Inoue's attachment to the local (i.e., Tohoku) is a form of regionalism that amounts to an unabashed embrace of the distinctly non-Tokyo (i.e., non-standard). It is here where Inoue seems most comfortable and what perhaps most distinguishes his work from that of his contemporaries. On the other, and rather unfortunately, it is that same attachment to the local that makes his work difficult to engage with

[309] J. Thomas Rimer and Van C. Gessel, *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature: Abridged* (Columbia University Press, 2011): 883.
[310] J. Thomas Rimer, Mitsuya Mori, and M. Cody Poulton, *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Drama*. (Columbia University Press, 2014): 325.
[311] Takaaki Yoshimoto, "Bungaku no genzai," lecture at Kyoto Seika University Division of Junior College, Kyoto, October 16, 1975.
[312] *The Columbia Anthology of Modern Japanese Drama*, 471.

in English.[313] For example, the play *Living with Father* (*Chichi to kuraseba*, 1994), one of just a handful of plays available in English, about "a survivor of the atomic bomb in Hiroshima and her relationship with her father," is entirely in the Hiroshima dialect.[314] And while not impossible to translate – as evidenced by its English translation! – Inoue's penchant for regionalism severely limits the potential reach of his literature the further it moves away from its source locality's proximity to the center of power, i.e., Tokyo. Language is not only a major concern of Inoue's work but often situated at its core.

Inoue's interest in language also transcends genre: the topic of language reform, standardization, dialect, and language usage cast a large shadow over much of his radio and television productions, novels, plays, and essays.[315] A sampling of essay collections concerned explicitly with language include *Private Edition: Japanese Grammar* (*Shikahan Nihongo bunpō*, 1981), *A Self-Produced Literary Reader* (*Jikasei bunshō tokuhon*, 1984), the two-volume *Japanese Diary* (*Nihongo nikki*, 1993-6), *Consultations about Japanese with Inoue Hisashi* (*Inoue Hisashi no Nihongo sōdan*, 1995), *Observation Notes on Japanese* (*Nihongo kansatsu nooto*, 2002), and *The Japanese Language Classroom* (*Nihongo kyōshitsu*, 2011). To be sure, Inoue is also interested in script: *Nihon*, the Japanese word for Japan, appears in at least three different scripts in the title of the works listed above, namely katakana(ニホン語日記 *Nihongo nikki*), hiragana (にほん語

[313] It is not only Inoue's use of language that makes his work difficult to engage with in English. I am indebted to Nathaniel Bond for pointing me to Margaret Rose's distinction between what she calls *high burlesque* ("that which treats something trivial in an elevated manner") and *low burlesque* ("that which treats something elevated in a trivial manner"). Rose, *Parody: Ancient, Modern, and Post-Modern* (Cambridge University Press, 1993): 60. Inoue's work, it seems, is constantly oscillating between the two.
[314] Ibid., 472.
[315] Inoue's specific interest in language standardization in fact forms the basis of numerous works. For an English language study on one such play, see Christopher Robins, "Revisiting Year One of Japanese National Language: Inoue Hisashi's Literary Challenge," *Japanese Language and Literature* 40:1 (2006): 37-58.

観察ノート *Nihongo kansatsu nooto*), and the most common, kanji (日本語教室 *Nihongo kyōshitsu*). With Inoue's interest in script in mind, let us now turn our attention to *Kirikirijin*.

Kirikirijin (lit. *The People of Kirikiri*) is a massive work of fiction that depicts the people of Kirikiri's declaration of independence from Japan.[316] In the text, Kirikiri is located in the Tohoku region of northern Japan, somewhere near the border between Miyagi and Iwate Prefecture.[317] The opening scene, described below by Christopher Robins, sets the stage for what will be the primary narrative drive of *Kirikirijin*, namely, the periphery (Kirikiri) striking back against the center (Japan) by utilizing the same tools the center initially used to grab and maintain power. The story begins when

> a train carrying hundreds of Japanese passengers across the countryside of Tohoku is made to stop dead in its tracks. At precisely 5:41 a.m. on a day in the middle of June, 1970, the northbound Towada Special Express No. 3 train is forcibly stopped in northern Miyagi Prefecture shortly after leaving the Sendai Station. In the midst of the confusion, two full-grown farm boys wearing school uniforms arrive on the scene. They are carrying hunting rifles and announce in local dialect to the bewildered passengers that "we're the police of this country (ora wa kono kuni no keikan, deyansu)."[318]

Much of the story is told through the eyes of the middle-aged Furuhashi Kenji, a second-rate author who has been ordered to go to Kirikiri and locate the author of an essay describing the discovery of gold in the area. Both he and his overbearing editor, Satō Hisao, are on the train when it is hijacked.

As Robins notes, the image of the train, which appears again in Inoue's later *The Iwate Theatre Train* (*Iihatōbo no geki ressha*, 1980) and features literary figure Miyazawa Kenji, "is

[316] I would like to thank Edwin K. Everhart for a private conversation many years ago that turned me on to *Kirikirijin* and the large body of literature that centers dialect.
[317] There is in fact an area called Kirikiri in the town Ōtsuchi, Kamihei District, Iwate Prefecture. It is not, however, the location of the fictional Kirikiri.
[318] Robins, "Revealing Native States," 155.

symbolically linked with the expansive and aggressive practices of the former Great Japanese Imperial State." Robins continues:

> The train is the ideal metaphor for the modern nation-state, creating uniform links between the center and countless peripheral areas inside and outside the boundaries of the nation. The train's smooth and unimpeded progress through a range of geographically and culturally diverse sites is predicated on the broad dispersal of uniform standards. Just as one takes for granted the preexisting infrastructure which enables the train's progress—the uniform tracks, the bridges, switching yards and stations along the way, the sense of imagined national solidarity that members of a given modern nation seem to feel is based on an intricate complex of standardized ideological elements that support and inform that identity.[319]

In addition to the train as a metaphor for modernity, another standardized ideological element that runs through Inoue's work, and more relevant to the present study, is that of national language. When the "two full-grown farm boys" yielding hunting rifles speak in their local dialect – a dialect, it must be noted, so different (i.e., non-standard) from the Tokyo dialect that *Kirikijin* includes a grammar and pronunciation guide appearing as an excerpted Kirikiri language textbook – the reader cannot help but question the genre of the piece: does their dialect signify to the reader humor? Does it suggest parody? Or, as Robins suggests, is it "total inversion"?[320]

James Fujii locates "strains of a nativistic nostalgia in the idiom of high-tech science fiction," reading the text in terms of "an era punctuated and marked by the deflation of a post-bubble Japanese economy."[321] Much of Fujii's analysis focuses on the internalization of Japanese culture, especially similarities between the form of internalization depicted in *Kirikirijin* and the brand of internationalization peddled by the Japanese government in the form of culture (related to what is now referred to as "soft power") vis-à-vis the Kyoto-based International Research Center

[319] Ibid., 154. For a detailed discussion of *Kirikirjin*, including a summary of the entire piece, I direct readers to the entirety of Robins' discussion in chapter five of his dissertation: "Derailing the National Journey: *Kirikirijin*'s Challenge to the Japanese National Narrative" (154-92).
[320] Ibid., 156. The grammar guide makes up the majority of the third chapter of *Kirikirijin*.
[321] James Fujii, "Internationalizing Japan: Rebellion in Kirikiri and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 19:2 (1998): 150.

for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken). Yoriko Izumi Moichi, on the other hand, more positively reads *Kirikirijin* as a utopian novel expressing "a 'carnivalesque' disorder, as theorised by Bakhtin, which means to challenge the totalising powers" of Japan.[322] Moichi sees hope in the people of Kirikiri's "ambition of defining small histories as opposed to the grand history of Japanese society, mainly because such communitarian histories have been neglected by Japanese historiography."[323] These variegated responses to Inoue's work suggest the difficulty of critiquing a literature that engages so deeply with questions of language and script: when the power of said literature is rooted in subversion, said literature also runs the risk of reinforcing the hegemony of the center.

Whatever the case may be, it is clear that Inoue's initial intent was to critique the idea that Tokyo could be equated with the totality of Japanese culture. Nine years before he began serializing *Kirikirijin*, Inoue produced a radio play called *Kirikiri Becomes Independent* (*Kirikiri dokuritsu su*) for the NHK, Japan's national public broadcasting organization. The radio play was "originally conceived as a polemic against government spending on the Tokyo Olympics, suggesting that life might be easier in the provinces if they seceded from Japan," a notion that would be expanded more broadly to encompass a wider critique of the Japanese nation-state.[324] The idea that life might be easier for the provinces if they seceded from Japan would evolve into the sentiment that "Japan" had no authority to tell the provinces how to live, whether in terms of what language(s) were to be spoken or how they should use government funds. What began as a very specific grievance about the Tokyo Olympics transformed into something more ideological when serialization of the novel began a few years later.

[322] Yoriko Moichi, "Losing Utopia? A Study of British and Japanese Utopian Novels in the Face of Postmodern Consciousness" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2006): 141-2.
[323] Ibid.
[324] Jonathan Clements, "Inoue Hisashi" in *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (2018).

Kirikirijin was first serialized in the June 1973 inaugural issue of *Shūmatsu kara*, a journal conceived of, and edited by, Nosaka Akiyuki, one of the kings of Japanese dark humor. Inoue continued serialization through the magazine's short history before it went on hiatus the following year. After a three-year break, Inoue would once again commence serialization, this time in the literary journal *Shōsetsu shinchō*. This run would last from 1978 until 1980. In the following year *Kirikirijin* was published as a hardcover book and four years later as a three-volume paperback from *Shinchō bunko*. It is the three-volume paperback that is most accessible to contemporary readers. In 1981 *Kirikirijin* won the 33rd Yomiuri Literary Prize as well as the 2nd Nihon SF Taisho Award.[325]

Understanding the publication history of *Kirikirijin* is important when thinking about the script used by Inoue for two reasons. First, Inoue is an author well-known for his attention to language – especially language in relation to the nation-state, standardization, and, significantly, revisions. Coupled with this attention to the ideology behind language is the amount of effort Inoue puts into maintaining the internal consistency of his texts. Second, understanding the context for publication, that is, the place where Inoue initially imagined his work to appear, gives us insight into his intended audience. In order to better understand Inoue's imagined audience in 1973, let us briefly turn our attention to *Shūmatsu kara*, the site of *Kirikijin*'s original serialization.

3.8 Literature from the End of Times

Shūmatsu kara, meaning "From the End of Times," was at its core a literary magazine obsessed with the end of the world and its accompanying aesthetic. *Shūmatsu* 終末, a term

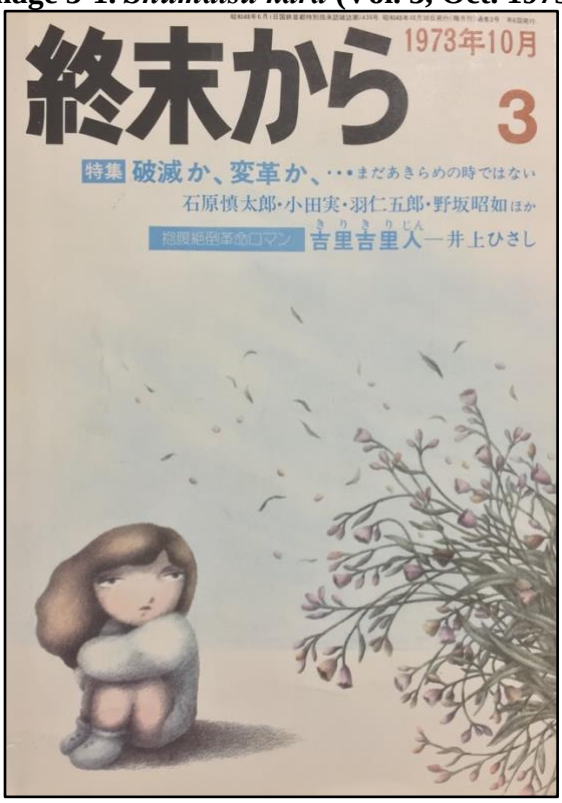
[325] I mention this because the former suggests a certain recognition by the literary establishment – Ōe Kenzaburō would win the following year – while the latter suggests a bend towards subculture. The first six recipients of the prize were Hori Akira, Inoue Hisashi, Yamada Masaki, Ōtomo Katsuhiro, Kawamata Chiaki, and Komatsu Sakyō. Inoue's position as straddling both so-called serious literature and more subculture-leaning works is reminiscent of contemporary authors such as Takahashi Gen'ichirō and EnJoe Toh.

associated with eschatology, suggests a break with the world as we have hereto known it. At once nihilistic, the magazine's aesthetic was also rooted in a *carpe diem* philosophy.[326] As Nosaka notes in conversation with Ishimure Michiko in the first issue, "there is no life after death, and there is no hell."[327] This interest in the End of Times was not coincidental. As Odagiri Susumu observes, "*Shūmatsu kara* was founded with the intention of describing how to live in the current End-of-Days condition." [328] Noting that the feature of the first issue was "an introduction to the study of destruction" (*hametsugaku nyūmon*), he suggests that this mood of destruction was rooted in a perceived increase in instances of ruin: the eruption of Mount Asama, a series of earthquakes in Hokkaido, the continuing fallout of the Yokkaichi Asthma scandal, the continued destruction of the natural world, and the onset of the First Oil Shock. This sense of impending doom was highlighted earlier in 1973 with the publication of Komatsu Sakyō's *Japan Sinks* (*Nippon chinbotsu*), a best-seller that sold more than 3.5 million copies by year's end.

The inaugural issue of *Shūmatsu kara* included works by Nosaka himself, Ishimure, Sakyō, Akasegawa Genpei, photographer Araki Nobuyoshi, author Kaikō Ken, and graphic designer Yokoo Tadanori. Later issues boasted submissions by poet Yoshimasu Gōzō, the former governor of Tokyo Ishihara Shintarō, Setouchi Jakuchō, Haniya Yutaka, Noma Hiroshi, and manga artist Tsuge Yoshiharu. I include this list of names in order to highlight the editorial influence of Nosaka, the broader interest in the End of Times, and the type of audience Inoue would have expected for such a journal.

[326] The oldest citation *NKDJ* has for *shūmatsu* is by poet Takahashi Kyoshi, dates from 1909 and is, in fact, in reference to the End of the World. Eschatology, on the other hand, refers more specifically to "the part of theology concerned with death, judgement, and the formal destiny of the soul and of humankind."
[327] *Shūmatsu kara* (Chikuma shobō) 1:1 (1973): 107.
[328] Susumu Odagiri, *Nihon kindai bungaku nenpyō* (Shōgakkan, 1993): 335.

Image 3-1. *Shūmatsu kara* (Vol. 3, Oct. 1973).



It was an eclectic mix to say the least, and all the more remarkable given that the journal would fold in less than a year. It was within this dynamic environment that Inoue would weave the complex world in which Furuhashi and his editor Satō find themselves trapped in, namely, the newly established Kirikiri nation. At the center of the Kirikiri national identity was the Kirikiri language, and Inoue put much effort into developing it as he continued to write (and rewrite) the text.

3.9 Publication Variants

The differences between the original serialization and the published two-volume hardcover and subsequent three-volume paperback editions are both surprising and expected, and range in scale from the micro to the macro. The first difference one notices before even beginning to read the

text is the disappearance of illustrations: save for the cover illustration by Anno Mitsumasa, *Kirikirijin* is, in its current configuration, unillustrated.

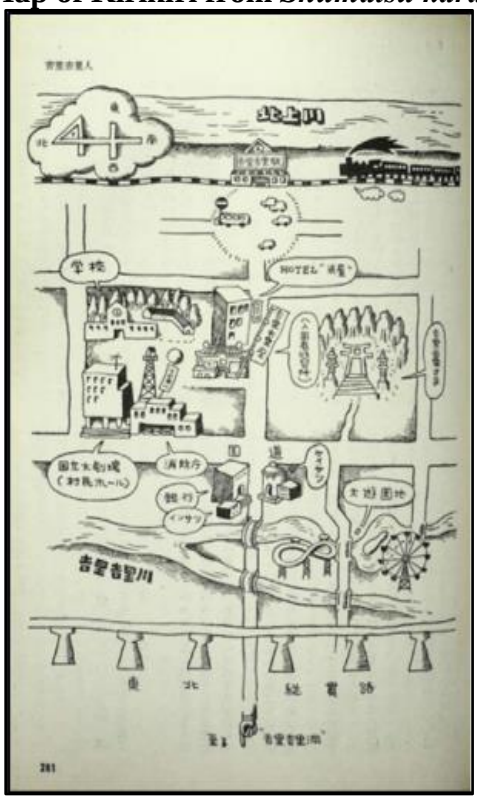
Image 3-2. Illustration of Kirikirijin by Sasaki Maki. *Shūmatsu kara*, vol. 1, June 1973.

The original serialization, however, featured illustrations by the avant-garde artist Sasaki Maki done in his instantly recognizable style (Image 3-2).[329] His illustrations tend to map out for the reader the geography of Kirikiri, the large cast of characters (Images 3-1, 3-2), and key moments in the text. Sasaki, prominently credited on each title page, would supply illustrations throughout the entirety of its run in *Shūmatsu kara*. More research is needed to draw any larger conclusions,

[329] For a detailed discussion of Sasaki's work see: Ryan Holmberg, "Hear No, Speak No: Sasaki Maki Manga and Nansensu, circa 1970," *Japan Forum* 21:1 (2009): 115-41. For more general information on *Garo* and the artists associated with the magazine see: Holmberg, *Garo Manga: The First Decade, 1964-1973* (Center for Book Arts, 2010).

but given his absence elsewhere in the magazine, Sasaki seems to have been commissioned to provide illustrations exclusively for *Kirikirijin*.

Image 3-3. Map of Kirikiri from *Shūmatsu kara*, June 1973.



The illustrations supplied by Sasaki, which disappear when the text is published in book form, demonstrate the extent to which Inoue planned his text before writing: Image 3, which appeared at the beginning of the second installment of the serialization, includes characters not yet introduced, including those who would not be introduced for some time. This tells us that Inoue not only mapped at least the contours of the story before commencing serialization but also communicated these ideas to Sasaki.

Image 3-4. An illustration of the Kirikiri people. From *Shūmatsu kara*, Aug. 1973. Furuhashi Kenji, in the upper right of the page, is drawn with droopy eyes and a cigarette dangling from his lips. Sato is just below.

One notices when comparing the text of each edition is that the rendition of Kirikirigo, the official language of Kirikiri, differs slightly between various published versions. This should not be overlooked given Inoue's attention to detail and his deep-seated interest in language and language formation. This attention to detail is highlighted at another point: the three-volume paperback version of *Kirikirijin* represents a significantly expanded version of the original serialization. I estimate that the total word count of the paperback version swells to approximately 1.5 times the size of the magazine version. Some of Inoue's later additions are suggestive of how he envisioned the text as it reached its conclusion so many years after beginning it. In Table 3-2 I have provided the opening section of the original magazine version alongside the paperback version.

Table 3-2. Different versions of *Kirikirijin*.

Kirikirijin (original serialization, June 1973)	*Kirikirijin* (paperback version, 1981)

「第一章　あんだ旅券ば持ってっか」

この奇妙な、しかし考えようによってはこの上もなく真面目な、だが照明の当て方ひとつではじつに滑稽な、また見方を変えればまことに他愛もない、それでいて心ある人にはすこぶる含蓄に富んだ、その半面この国の政治権力を握るお偉方には無性に腹立たしい、一方材料不足のテレビや新聞や週刊誌にははなはだおあつらえむきの、したがって無責任な弥次馬にはらはらどきどきわくわくの、にもかかわらず法律学者にはいらいらくよくよストレスノイローゼの因となったこの事件を語るにあたって、いったいどこから始めたらよいのかと、正直いってずいぶん迷った。

「第一章　あんだ旅券ば持って居だが」

この、奇妙な、しかし考えようによってはこの上もなく真面目な、だが照明の当て具合ひとつでは信じられないほど滑稽な、また見方を変えれば呆気ないぐらい他愛のない、それでいて心ある人びとにはすこぶる含蓄に富んだ、その半面この国の政治権力を握るお偉方やその取り巻き連中には無性に腹立たしい、一方常に材料不足を託つテレビや新聞や週刊誌にとってははなはだお誂え向きの、したがって高みの見物席の弥次馬諸公にははらはらどきどきわくわくの、にもかかわらず法律学者や言語学者にはいらいらくよくよストレスノイローゼの原因になったこの事件を語り起すにあたって、いったいどこから書き始めたらよいのかと記録係はだいぶ迷い、かなり頭を痛め、ない知恵をずいぶん絞った。

The first noticeable changes occur in the opening title. The furigana appended to 第一章, or “Part One,” でえっしょう (*deesshō*), has been rewritten で一っしょう (*deesshō*). Phonetically, these two spelling are identical; this change, however, is significant for two reasons: first, it reflects Inoue’s attempt at establishing consistency throughout the text. The representation of long vowels in each title section is consistent despite this not being the case within the main body of the text (e.g., *kangaeyō* is written 考えよう but not 考えよー). The second reason is that the representation of long vowels using the long vowel marker (*chōonpu*), today generally reserved for marking the elongation of the previous vowel (e.g., ボール *bōru* = *booru* “ball”) in the katakana script, is suggestive of a time when the written form of Japanese was in a period of great change. According to the 1900 Elementary School Act (*Shōgakkō rei*), the use of the long vowel

marker was to indicate long vowels in words written in kanji. For example, *kōchō* (principal) would be written in hiragana as こーちょー instead of the more familiar こうちょう. This mandate, however, was nullified by the Ministry of Education in 1907.[330]

An example of a grammatical change is between 持(も)ってっか (*mottekka*) and 持(も)って居(え)だが (*motteedaga*). The former, an informal collocation that might be translated as "do you have," while the latter, with *edaga* attached to the stem *motte,* raises the formality of the utterance to something like "are you in possession of?" This change alters the feeling of the original serialization, offering an ironic air of reverence to the chaotic opening scene. Thus, the former might be rendered simply as "Do you have your passport?" while the latter becomes "May I see your passport?"

The majority of changes in this opening section consist of alterations and additions to the original serialization. For example, this "strange" (*kimyō*) story of Kirikiri, which became the "source" (*moto* 因) of neurosis for the "irresponsible rubberneckers" (*musekinin yajiuma*) and "lawyers" (*hōritsu gakusha*), becomes the "source" (*moto* 原因) of neurosis for the "gentlemen rubberneckers seated high up in their spectator seats" (*takami no kenbutsuseki no yajiuma shokō*) and the "lawyers and linguists" (*hōritsu gakusha ya gengo gakusha*). Inoue once again draws the reader's attention to language by coupling linguists with lawyers. Another striking difference is the introduction of the narrator: the kana for *watashi*, the neutral first-person pronoun, has been appended to the character-string 記録係, usually read *kirokugakari*, meaning "recorder [of an event]". With this small but significant addition Inoue signals to the reader that *Watashi* will be our guide throughout the text while at the same time obliquely referencing the long tradition of the

[330] Satō, 84.

Japanese I-Novel.[331] Our narrator, who will relay a full account of the Kirikiri Incident, goes off on wild tangents, begins teaching a course on the Kirikiri language, and occasionally disappears from the story altogether.

The attention to detail is striking: it is clear from just this brief sampling of the changes made by Inoue that language itself – "language" understood as comprising both its written and spoken forms – is as vital to his project as the narrative content itself. Inoue's attention to the details of language pushes the boundaries of the Japanese script, a process wholly dependent on the existence of furigana.

3.10 Eight Types of Furigana in *Kirikirijin* (and Beyond)

As is clear by now, the architecture of written Japanese enables authors to mold the written language in ways they see fit. As linguist Shindō Sakiko has illustrated, *Kirikirijin* is a prime example of a literary text utilizing script experimentation in the postwar period to this end. Shindō notes no fewer than eight distinct types of these glosses, all of which I present below and pair with examples taken from other, more contemporary, texts.[332] The majority of the heavy-lifting was conducted by Shindō; my contribution is locating similar examples of each type in newer literature and aligning Shindō's vocabulary with my own. Shindō convincingly demonstrates that Inoue's use of seemingly frenetic furigana is more measured than it appears, and that is has correlations in the premodern and early modern Japanese literary cannon. It is my goal, however, to show that he also has successors in the contemporary literary landscape. [333] Translations from Shindō's piece, which I have altered where appropriate, are italicized while the additional text is my own

[331] For full-length studies of the genre see Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishosetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (University of California Press, 1988); Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 1996).
[332] I strongly encourage all those interested in Shindō's work to consult her original study entitled "Furigana no kinō to hensen" in *Kōza Nihongogaku 6: Gendai hyōki to no shiteki taishō* (Meiji shoin, 1982): 228-54.
[333] For example, Shindō cites furigana usage in literature by Shiba Ryōtarō, Kajii Motojirō, Tsubouchi Shōyō.

commentary. Examples followed by page numbers are taken from *Kirikirijin* and were provided by Shindō; other examples, taken from contemporary literature, are cited in footnotes. Translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

*3.10.1 Type I: The furigana shows a kanji's reading. (Furigana that show a kanji's reading can be attached to a term written with a single character, a part or the whole of a character-string or only on the kanji portion of a word written in a mixed script.) Within a sentence or passage, it provides the reading of a kanji in the base text. They are primarily ancillary in nature, preventing the misreading (*godoku*) of kanji and giving reading support for difficult or obscure kanji; they can also function to limit the reading of a character to a single one when multiple readings are possible.*[334] *(For example, in the case of* 間*, furigana would distinguish between* kan*,* aida*, or* ma*). They aid in transliterating a text.*

In example (a) below three terms are annotated with none of them "betraying" their anticipated readings. It is noteworthy that the reading of *kutabireru* (to become exhausted) for 草臥 is a conventional reading but not recognized by the Ministry of Education; 朦朧 (dim; hazy; vague) and 霞 (haze) are likewise not part of this list. The furigana in (b) provide the reading of the title of a 10th-century Japanese dictionary of kanji. This is by far the most common usage of furigana encountered in contemporary written Japanese. Examples (c), (d), and (e) are examples from contemporary literature reflecting this conventional usage. As stated earlier, if this usage of furigana – wherein all or most readings are predictable – was the only function they performed, then the visual impact of furigana on a text would not be as significant because their function would be limited to providing an already established "correct" reading. Their interaction with a text would be wholly ancillary in nature.[335]

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[334] Note that I distinguish between a "misreading" and a variant reading. Though slippery, and perhaps an inherent challenge to my claim that kanji can be read in a variety of ways, a misreading refers to a reading rooted in error, i.e., not for particular effect. For example, reading 凋落 (decline; fall; withering) as *shūraku* and not *chōraku* is an error of reading stemming from the reading of 周 or 週, two common characters read *shū*. Such misreadings, it should be noted, do not necessarily inhibit the transmission of meaning. In American English, this would be similar to reading *epitome* as [ɪˈpɪtoʊm] instead of [ɪˈpɪtəmiː]. For an example of genuine ambiguity, recall Tanizaki's embrace of ambiguity: the character 家 can be read (not pronounced!) as either *uchi* or *ie*.

[335] Page numbers correspond to the single-volume *Kirikirijin* (Shinchōsha, 1981).

a) 前日の家探しと、前々日の本の整理で彼はかなり草臥(くたび)れており、椅子に腰を落とした途端にもう眼の前は朦朧(もうろう)と霞(かすみ)がかかり、（16）

He was worn out from yesterday's house-hunting and organizing books the day before that. The moment he plopped into his chair everything before him became hazy with mist, […].

b) そのころの陸奥の田地は『倭名類聚抄(わみょうるいじゅしょう)』によれば五万四百四十町三段九十歩で、（19）

According to the *Wamyō ruijushō*, the farmland of the Mutsu region[336] was 50,440-chō, 3-tan, and 90-bu, […].[337]

c) ある日自然おそいかかってきて、彼の存在の芯(しん)に巣くってしまったこの怒りーこのはげしい、不条理な破壊への衝動は、誰にも説明できないだろう。

Some days, suddenly, this fury overwhelmed him, suffusing the very centre of his being: a violent irrational urge to destruction which could never be explained to anyone.[338]

d) 「見よ、この手を。昨日は気多丸の鉤爪(かぎづめ)で深い疵が出来ていたのに、今日は跡形もない。お前がわしを刺したとて、潰(つぶ)して、明日は元の八岐那彦に戻っているだろう」

Yakinahiko showed Unashi his left hand. 'Look at my hand. Yesterday Ketamaru left a deep gash with his talons and today there is no trace of the wound. You can stab me, even slice me to pieces, and tomorrow I'll be whole again.[339]

e) 女子高生の頃、なんとなく学校生活がかったるいという理由で体中に生えてるあらゆる毛を剃(そ)ってみたことがある。髪の毛、眉毛(まゆげ)、脇毛(わきげ)、陰毛。

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[336] This is present day Iwate and Aomori prefecture.
[337] According to *The Cambridge History of Japan, Volume 3: Medieval Japan* (Cambridge University Press, 1990), a *chō* 町 is a land measurement of 2.45 acres, a *tan* 段 (also written 反) is equivalent to one-tenth *chç*, and a *bu* 歩 1/360 *chō*, respectively.
[338] "Kyōbō na kuchi" can be found in *Yo ga aketara* (Haruki bunko, 1999): 286. The English translation is by Judith Merril and can be found in *The Best Japanese Science Fiction* (Barricade Books, 1997): 74.
[339] Natsuo Kirino, *Joshinki* (Kadokawa shoten, 2008): 193; Natsuo Kirino, trans. Rebecca Copeland, *The Goddess Chronicle* (Cannongate Books, 2013): 230.

Once, when I was in high school, I felt my life was so tiresome I decided to shave all the hair on my body. The hair on my head, my eyebrows, my armpit hair, and my pubic hair.[340]

3.10.2 Type II: Words provided in furigana show the meaning of kanji character-strings in the base text. At the same time, the meaning of the words written in furigana become limited by the kanji of the base text. Both are to some degree synonyms of each other, and the simultaneous exposure to the two provides a visuality that enriches the combination. Many of these examples occur only once [in Kirikirijin]. It is possible to read the furigana as the base text and, in fact, in many cases this would be most natural.

For example, in (g) the formal-sounding (or looking) 無賃乗車, generally read as *muchin jōsha*, is annotated with the reading of *tada nori*, meaning "riding for free." Though both denote the same situation – that is, the act of riding [a train, bus, etc.] without paying – the former carries with it an air of the official while the latter is more colloquial in nature. They signal different registers to the reader, and would ultimately alter the text's reception were either the base text or the furigana reading presented in isolation.

This gap between base text and reading is further highlighted by Shindō's claim that the furigana could in fact serve as the base text: the example sentences below – and in fact all sentences incorporating such furigana – would look vastly different if the furigana were reconfigured as the base text and written in the conventional orthography. The sentences following ≠ indicate the orthographically equivalent standard of each sentence were the furigana regarded as the base text.

f) 軍備ば持って、戦闘(いくさ)ば為(し)ろ（266）[341]

Take up armaments and make war!

g) 無賃乗車(ただのり)の秘訣(こつ) (386)

[340] Yukiko Motoya, *Ikiteiru dakedo, ai* (Shinchōsha, 2006): 9.
[341] In the Tohoku dialect the case-marking particle [o] appears as [ba]. For a thorough survey of case-marking particles in the Tohoku dialect see Takahashi Kobayashi's article "Kakujoshi" at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL).

≠ ただ乗りのコツ[342]

The secret to riding [the train] for free […].

h) 吉里吉里人と非吉里吉里人(そんでねえしと)ば識別するんでがすと。(162)
≠ 吉里吉里人とそんでねえしとば識別するんでがすと。

Discerning the people of Kiriri from people who are not, you say?

i) ケイスはエレベータで自室の階(レベル)まで降り、ポケットを探って自由界(フリーサイド)の与信素子(クレデイット・チップ)を出した。これが鍵の役目も果たす。

He rode the elevator down to his level, fumbling in his pocket for the Freeside credit chip that served as his key. [343]

3.10.3 Type III: The words written in furigana function like a base text while the kanji of the base text function to augment the furigana. This is similar to the examples of kanji limiting the meaning of the furigana discussed above, and includes various examples of character play in which vernacular Chinese vocabulary written in the Japanese script is given Japanese readings.

The examples below are noteworthy because the base text does not generally hold semantic value in modern Japanese. Rather, the base text imparts a sense of foreignness to the text vis-à-vis kanji that, here at least, is not communicated through the character's reading. In other words, the function of the base text might be thought of as decorative.

j) なかなかの手練者(てだれ)が揃っているらしいぞ、(42)

We've got some skilled hands here with us!

k) 二枚には継布(つぎ)が当たっているということをおれは忘れないものだから (193)

I wouldn't forget that there are patches on two sheets…

[342] As Wakako Kashino and Takenori Nakamura note in "Gendai Nihongo kakikotoba ni okeru hi-gairaigo no katakana hyōki jijō" (Kokuritsu kokugo kenkyūjo, 2013), more than 90% of the 1,643 occurrences of *kotsu* in the Balanced Corpus of Contemporary Written Japanese are in katakana.
[343] Gibson, William, trans. Hisashi Kuroma, *Nyuuromansaa* (Hayakawa bunko SF, 1986): 258; William Gibson, *Neuromancer* (Ace Books, 2000): 150.

l) 佐藤が雀打(したうち)しながら玄関口を見た。(220)

Clicking his tongue, Mr. Sato looked at the front door.

m) 遠浅の入り江を突進して、船底は海水の内側(なか)で悲鳴を発した。

Rushing into the shallow inlet, the bottom of the boat gave off a shriek from within the ocean water.[344]

3.10.4 Type IV: The furigana provides non-standard Japanese equivalents for a base text written in standard Japanese (e.g., dialectal variants in pronunciation and vocabulary).

In this scenario, grammatical particles of the base text often correspond to, and are appropriate for, the dialect expressed in furigana. In other words, furigana uses the architecture of written Japanese to represent what, in a slightly different context, might be viewed as a foreign language. When the text is read aloud according to the furigana, the text's meaning would almost certainly be unintelligible to anyone who lacks visual access to it and whose linguistic capabilities are limited to modern standard Japanese. Generally speaking, the primary function of the base text is to render comprehensible a text written in non-standard Japanese for readers of the standard language.

n) 耳(みんみ)ある人(すと)よ、聞(きー)いで呉(け)ろ。俺(おら)ア誠(まごと)にお前様方(めーさまがた)さ言(ゆー)う。世界にはいま軍事的超大国といわれる国が二つある。日本国の自衛隊は、そのうちの一つば仮想敵(かそーてき)さ為(す)て居(ええ)んのではあんまいか (344)

All people with ears, listen! I speak to you in earnest. There are two countries in this world called military superpowers. Might we say that one of those two regards the Japanese Self-Defense Force as an imaginary enemy?

[344] Hideo Furukawa, *Soundtrack jō* (Shūeisha bunko, 2006): 11.

o) アイッ、あんた、ここはもうあんだがいた頃の面影なんか何(ヌ)ー無(ネ)ーらんど。ほんとにヌーんネーらんサ。あんすかワッサナイしていた女(イナグ)ン達(チャー)ン、アメリカー達(ター)ン、皆(ムーン)んな居らんなてぃよ。

Ah, you! – there's no trace left of the time you were here. I mean, there's really nothing. While you girls were […], [345]

p) このマチの住人で、アンガの名前を知らない者はいない。いるとしたらそれは、ヒトのコトバをコトバとして聴き分けることのできない子供(リラビ)ングァか狂(ツ)リムン、惚(ほう)けた老人のたぐい。

There was no one living in this town that didn't know Anga's name. Even if there was someone [who didn't know her name], they are a child or are crazy, or maybe they're just senile – they're someone who can't recognize the language of people as language.[346]

3.10.5 Type V: Furigana provides readings in a foreign (often English) language or a fictitious one. The base text serves as translations into modern standard Japanese of the furigana. (The base text is not always written exclusively in kanji: one can find kanji and kana, just kana, or, more rarely, other writing systems.)

This usage of furigana corresponds to the example of 語彙 being read as *bokyaburarii*, or "vocabulary." The relationship between the furigana and the base text are clear though not intuitive; they are semantically related, though an author would not reasonably expect a reader to read the base text as such. In this way, the base text and the furigana inform each other. Due to the inclusion of foreign terms, the furigana is usually written in katakana, though exceptions such as (s) are also witnessed.

In this scenario, it should be noted that there is genuine ambiguity regarding the actual "reading" a word is meant to take. For example, in (q) there is a laundry list of linguistic terms – voice, tense, aspect, and mood – that are written in kanji but appended with furigana indicating

[345] Tami Sakiyama, "Mienai machi kara shonkanee ga," *Subaru* 28:5 (2006): 131. The English title, "And so it goes in an invisible town," is borrowed from Victoria Young as is all other titles when available.
[346] Sakiyama, "Pingihira zaka yakō" ("Night Travel on Pingihira Hill"), *Subaru* 29:1 (2007): 66.

readings such as *boisu* (“voice”), *tensu* (“tense”), etc. This list, however, is preceded by similarly linguistic classifiers such as 動詞 (*dōshi*, “verb”) and 助動詞 (*jo dōshi*, “auxiliary verb”), and proceeded by 推量 (*suiryō*, “speculation”) and 断定 (*dantei*, “conclusive assertion”), all of which lack annotation.

q) どこの国のコトバでも動詞と助動詞とはもっとも厄介で初心者の手に負えません。なにしろ、文の相（ヴォイス）・時制（テンス）・態（アスペクト）・叙法（ムード）（たとえば推量、断定、否定など）を決定するのが、主としてこのふたつの品詞ですから、(78)

In whatever language, it is the verbs and auxiliary verbs that are most unmanageable for the beginner. As you know, it is the voice, tense, aspect, and mood (inference, decision, negation, etc.) of a sentence that determines [it], especially because it is these two parts of speech […].

r) 佐藤久夫が猪首（いくび）のあちらこちらに咲き出している汗の粒を薄汚れたタオルで拭（ふ）きながら足許の馬肥し（クローバー）の上に唾（つば）を吐いた。(48)

Sato Hisao spit on the clovers beneath his feet while wiping with a dirty towel the drops of sweat popping up on his boar-like neck.

s) 第二次大戦直後に世界の国民総生産（GNP）の四割まで一人占めにしていたアメリカが (657)

Immediately after the Second World War, the United States – who controlled nearly 40% of the global GNP – […].

t) そうして想像力（イマジネーション）が駆動した瞬間に生存の本能が行動を起こしている。

So then, the moment one’s imagination kicks in, the instinct for survival takes action.[347]

u) ギアは父親が消える前と同様にハイ（高速）にセットされたままだった。

The gears were set on high just as they were before his father disappeared.[348]

[347] Furukawa, 9.
[348] Furukawa, 10.

3.10.6 Type VI: Various character-strings of the base text represent the sounds of a foreign language, and the furigana provide a reading based on that foreign language.

The kanji used in the base text is divorced from its semantic meaning. That is, the usage here is similar to what is known as *man'yōgana*, i.e., phonographic kanji usage dating from the time of the *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves*, or *Man'yōshū*. The furigana essentially re-translates the phonographic kanji into kana. This use of kanji was common during the Meiji period, especially when describing new forms of technology (e.g., "cannon" and "concrete").

v) まず加農(カノン)砲で空砲をうち、吉里吉里村民の猛省をうながす、(142)

First, fire blanks from a canon then press the people of Kirikiri for penitence, […].

w) 胸の反りを腹筋が支え切れず、彼は肩から混凝土(コンクリート)の床に叩き落ちた。(148)

His abdomen couldn't support his curved chest; the concrete fell from his shoulder and crashed down onto the floor.

3.10.7 Type VII: The furigana provides a Japanized reading of the source language of the base text, often from Chinese or a text written in the Latin script.

Furigana can be appended to long phrases and sentences as in (z). Sometimes, as in (x), the words are familiar; sometimes, as in (y), they are not. The furigana often provide nothing more than a phonetic approximation of the best text, offering no hint of semantic meaning. As is often the case, the function of furigana can change: in example (z), the furigana appended to an entire sentence suggests a non-native – or, at the very least, a Japanized form of English – reading of the base text. This non-native pronunciation, it seems, is the point. While Shindō notes that this particular usage of furigana is abundant in Tsubouchi Shōyō's 1885 *Tōsei shosei katagi* (*Portraits of Contemporary Students*), contemporary authors such as Takahashi Gen'ichirō also make similar

use of furigana. Note that in examples (aa) and (bb) that furigana has been attached to words in Hangul, a completely different script system.

x) 麻雀の「白板(パイバン)」をずらりと並べた如くよく揃った歯並みだ。(792)

His teeth were like the White dragon tiles of Mahjong lined up in a row.

y) 報知からhaughty(ホーチー)という音を連想なさい。(178)

Based on the information, imagine the sound of the word haughty.

z) なあに、He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches(ヒー フー キャン ダズ ヒー フー キャンノット ティーチズ).ですよ(663)

Whaaat, He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches – !

aa) 視線は、過去のある日と同じように一番高いところに位置する岩の表面に引き付けられた。
—바위(パウイ)（岩）
由熙の声を思い出し、その発音を真似するようにして私は呟いた。

Just as it had been some day in the past, my gaze was drawn to the surface of the highest rock.
— *bawi* (rock)[349]

bb) 厚い茶封筒は、膝の上に置かれたままだった。茶封筒を見つめ、指先でその上をなぞった。
—우・리・나・라(ウ・リ・ナ・ラ)（母国）
小さく声を出しながら、茶封筒の上に四文字のハングルを書いた。

The thick envelope filled with tea was still in her lap. She stared at it attentively, tracing the top of it with her fingertips.
—*u li na la* (mother tongue)
While speaking them softly she traced four hangul characters onto the envelope of tea.[350]

[349] Yangji Lee, *Yuhi* (Kōdansha bungei bunko,1988): 248.
[350] Ibid., 293.

3.10.8 Type VIII: Following the format of the so-called wabun eiyaku/eibun wayaku, either the base text or the furigana provides a translation into Japanese from some foreign language. The base text of (ff), for example, is Chinese.

This type of furigana is familiar to those interested in early language textbooks in Japan. The correlation between the base text and the furigana is tenuous here, with one being a (conceptual) translation of the other.

cc) 要　約(サミング・アップ)しなさい (687)

Sum it up [for me].

dd) 完璧な間合い(パーフェクト・タイミング) (589)

Perfect timing

ee) 悪くなかった(ノット・バッド)。 (589)

Not bad.

ff) 这就完了(これでおしまい) (142)

This is the end.

gg) わたしはへんてこな夢を見ていた。

わたしは十万人の観客が総立ちになり「オールド・マイ・ケンタッキー・ホーム」を合唱する正面スタンド前を 14 頭立ての 14 番手で走っていた。
はるか先を弾丸のように走ってゆくのは
「もしおまえが死なねばならないなら、先頭に立って死ね(イフ・ユー・アー・ゴーイング・トウ・ダイ・イン・フロント！！)」と強調師アリス・リチャードに命じられたケンタッキーシェリィで、3 番手にわたしの宿敵(ライバル)フォワードパスがいた。

I was having a strange dream.

> The 100,000 spectators in the grandstand were all on their feet, belting out a chorus of "My Old Kentucky Home" as I galloped past, 14th out of 14 in the race.
>
> Speeding like a bullet in the distance was –
> Kentucky Sherry, whose trainer, Alice Richards, had sent him out to the track with the command, "If you're going to die, die in the front!" And rocketing along in third place was my number one rival, Forward Pass.[351]

The eight different usages of furigana described above are all found in *Kirikirijin*. Inoue's relationship with script is, however, an extreme one. Indeed, the script of *Kirikirijin* is perhaps just as famous as the text itself. On this point, Fujii suggests that "[a]fter taking note of this practice, Japanese readers are apt to ignore the cumbersome phonetic *furigana* as they sight/speed-read their way through the lines of *kanji*-laced Japanese."[352] For this commentator, though, it is difficult to imagine furigana being simply ignored by a reader. Almost every page is overflowing with annotation, and until the reader internalizes the quirks of the author – in this case, both Inoue's grammar and style – they will not be able to comprehend the text. More importantly, Inoue's use of furigana in *Kirikirijin* extends far beyond the simple visualization of the Kirikiri dialect. Even if we concede that some readers might ignore some of those annotations, this does not detract from the fact that when we are talking about *Kirikirijin* as a piece of literature we are simultaneously referring to its narrative content *and* its external form.

A final note on context: *Kirikirijin* was not the first piece of literature to use script in such a radical way. Numa Shōzo's *Kachikujin Yapū* (*The Human Livestock Yapoos*), serialized from 1956 to 1958 in *Kitan kurabu* (*Kitan Club*), a semi-pornographic magazine specializing in sadomasochism, was an important precedent. As Mark McLelland notes about this particular type of journal, "by the early 1950s some magazines were producing more 'highbrow' articles that

[351] Gen'ichirō Takahashi, *Sayōnara, Gyangutachi* (Kōdansha bungei bunko, 1981): 42; Takahashi, trans. by Michael Emmerich, *Sayonara Gangsters* (Vertical, 2004): 40.
[352] Fujii, 154.

focused on erotic, rather than explicitly sexual topics – resulting in more features on fetishes and SM."[353] The structure of *Yapū,* a work Suzuki Shigeru has described as a "racist dystopia in which future Japanese have become posthuman 'freaks' with their bodies biotechnologically transformed," is reminiscent of *Kirikirijin*'s, with Inoue seemingly inspired by Numa's inclusion of a detailed guide to the language of Yapoo, "Yapoon," that comprises the majority of the seventh chapter. Numa's interest in language relates to *Kirikirijin* in more than just being a critique of the modern Japanese nation-state: relevant to our discussion is the fact that *Kachikujin Yapū* was equally – if not more – provocative in its use of furigana than even *Kirikirijin*.[354] Though I will save an analysis for another occasion, below is an excerpt from the section entitled "An Outline of Yapoon" (家畜語概説).

> […] 実際問題としてヤプーが口をきくことは稀であり、肉体的にも舌の構造等から唖であるのが多い（廁畜類も、昔はしゃべれたが現在の標準型はしゃべれない。舌が大きく発達し過ぎたためである。この過程を示すといえる俚諺に「良く舐める〔舌は〕拙く語る」というのが残っている）[。…]単純な文法と貧弱な語彙、イースでは家畜言語と軽蔑され、言語として扱う価値がまったくないとされているとはいえ、家畜語はやはり知性動物の特徴たる言語の一種（退化形態ではあっても）であるには違いなかったのだから。[355]

> In practice, it is rare for the Yapoo to open their mouths; corporeally speaking, many are in fact dumb (*oshi*)[356] due to the structure of the tongue (various species of lavatory cattle [*shichikurui*] were once able to speak but cannot in their current form. This is due to the overdevelopment and growth of their

[353] Mark J. Mclelland, "From the Stage to the Clinic: Changing Transgender Identities in Post-War Japan." *Japan Forum* 16:1 (2004): 1–20.
[354] Shigeru Suzuki, "Posthuman Visions in Postwar U.S. and Japanese Speculative Fiction: Re(con)figuring Western (Post)humanism" (Ph. D. dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2008): 10.
[355] Shōzo Numa, *Kachikujin yapū jō: poorin no ken* (Ōta shuppan, 1992): 102.
[356] Much of the language used by Numa is intentionally offensive. "Dumb," or *oshi*, is just one example of his provocative use of charged language. 唖 is today considered to be offensive vocabulary (*sabetsu yōgo*) and, as Kōichi Yasuoka notes in one installment of his column "Jinmeiyō kanji no shinji kyūji" (2008), cannot be used in the naming of a child.

> tongues. The proverb "good lick, bad speak" might be said to reference this process). In the Empire of Hundred Suns, the simple grammar and poor vocabulary [of the Yapoos] is ridiculed as "cattle tongue," and though it is regarded as a language with absolutely no value for use, it is clear that Yapoon is, after all, representative of a type of language used by animals with intelligence (however degenerated in form it may be).

In just this short excerpt we encounter at least three of the types of furigana described by Shindō, and a more detailed analysis of script in *Kachiku* would no doubt reveal more. The significance of drawing a link between Numa and Inoue, and between Inoue and other contemporary writers, is that it allows us to wonder if a new genealogy of writers, one based on script, might be a productive line of inquiry. Through my examination of two wildly different authors in the following chapter I will consider this question in more detail. I demonstrate how script can function as a vital element of Japanese-language literature by briefly examining the works of Sakiyama Tami and performing an in-depth analysis of script in a novella by Yokoyama Yūta. Sakiyama, an author whose script practice ensures so-called Japanese readers must always be on their toes, is read together with Yokoyama, an author invested in dismantling the Japanese language from within, establishing his own "database" of language vis-à-vis furigana.

Chapter 4 From the Periphery and Beyond: Performativity and the Representation of Non-standard Japanese

In the previous chapter I discussed how reforms to the Japanese script shaped the way script is used in literature and how new orthographical standards were disseminated through compulsory education. I also demonstrated how many literary scholars, linguists, and policy makers took the state of the Japanese script – often conflated with, but certainly not equivalent to, the Japanese language – as a benchmark against which to measure the relative modern-ness of the nation-state. This modernness, linked to the nation's health, left little room for furigana. Yamamoto Yūzō called those interlinear glosses "little bugs," a diminutive meant to highlight what he perceived to be their tasteless form. While Yamamoto's call to abandon furigana was not realized, various government-led script reforms led to a reduction in furigana usage as well as led to the creation of the first truly "standard" form of the language and script. And while no written language can perfectly represent spoken language, the reformed script represents spoken Japanese more faithfully than it did during the Edo and early Meiji period.

Language reform was only one change among many. In what Keith Vincent has called Japan's "two-timing modernity," Edo social mores survived into a modern (read: Western) world that was, on the surface, unwilling to entertain them. Though Vincent's work focuses on male-male sexuality, his thesis is relevant to a society in which language became the target of systematic analysis in the Western academic tradition.[357] The "old" Edo written language did not fulfill the

[357] For the concept of "two-timing modernity," see Keith Vincent's *Two-Timing Modernity: Homosocial Narrative in Modern Japanese Fiction* (Harvard University Asia Center, 2012). For a detailed account of the establishment of linguistics (*gengogaku*) as a field of study, see Shigetaka Kakigi's *Nihon ni okeru kindai 'gengo gaku' seiritsu no jijō* (Nakanishiya shuppa, 2018). In it he argues that Fujioka Katsuji, pupil of Ueda Kazutoshi, deserves recognition as the person who paved the way for the field in Japan. The movement to unify spoken language with written language (*genbun itchi*) did not, in practice, attempt to write literature in a way that mimics how people actually speak. Rather, it is more accurate to assess the goal of the movement in humbler terms: the movement (to the extent that it can actually be discussed as a single movement) strove to lessen the gap between spoken and written language, in essence creating a new literary language separate from the literary language of the Edo period. And while the standard narrative accepts Futabatei Shimei's claim that his *Floating Cloud* (1886-

requirements of a modern nation-state: it lacked consistency in spelling (orthography), interlinear glosses were often necessary to facilitate readability (furigana), and there was too great a gap between writing and speech. The modern standard form of the language became an object of critique precisely because of its close relationship to early Meiji values such as expansionism and assimilation.

In this chapter, I look at how furigana in contemporary literature can serve as an effective tool for subversion. The two authors I look at are, rather briefly, Sakiyama Tami and, more in depth, Yokoyama Yūta. Both are equally conscious of the historical context from which their script practice emerges. On the one hand, Sakiyama exerts much energy critiquing the hegemony of modern standard Japanese by using the versatility of the Japanese script to highlight its inability to represent the variegated languages of the Ryukyu Islands; on the other, Yokoyama uses script as a means to visualize the psychological state of an individual torn between Japanese and Chinese. This chapter, then, examines the mechanics of how these authors use written language and its impact on their literature.

Sakiyama's understanding of script – not simply language – as a potential space for "warfare" (*sakusen*) is striking, and has rightfully attracted the attention of scholars such as Davinder Bhowmik, Victoria Young, Takuma Sminkey, and Cindi Textor. As Bhowmik notes, Sakiyama writes in a "fiercely radical prose that most severely tests the genre of Okinawa fiction," resulting in a body of work that "virtually [defies] description."[358] While her "radical prose" has led to scholarly consideration of the ideological framework informing Sakiyama's self-declared

89) was the first example of this unified style, Karatani Kojin and Kamei Hideo locate the origins of modern Japanese literature in another text, namely Mori Ogai's "The Dancing Girl" (1890) for its use of the first-person perspective and treatment of the psyche. See Stephen Snyder, *Fictions of Desire: Narrative Form in the Novels of Nagai Kafu* (University of Hawaii Press, 2000): 15-6.

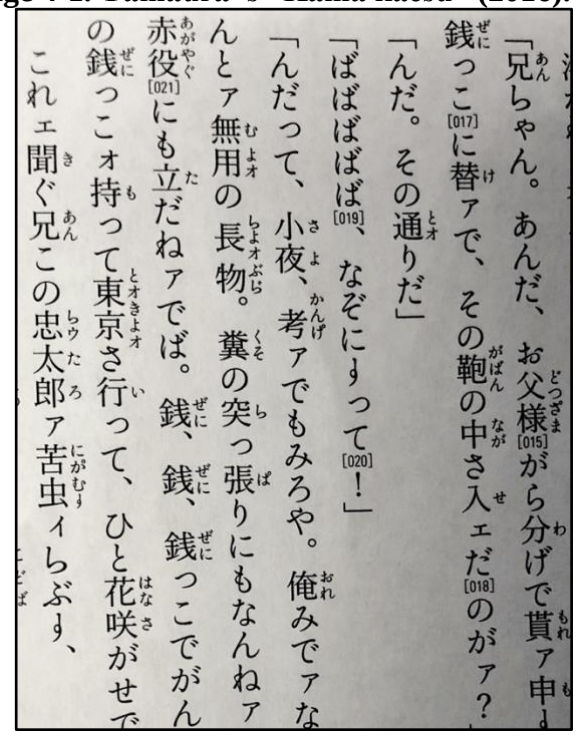
[358] Davinder Bhowmik, *Writing Okinawa: Narrative Acts of Identity and Resistance* (Routledge, 2008): 158.

war on the standard Japanese language and what it represents, there is still much work to be done regarding how her script manages to bring about these results. I present some examples from a short story, “The Front Lines of Q-Village A” (*Q mura senzen a*, 2014), to highlight this fact.

4.1 The “Radical Prose” of Sakiyama Tami

Sakiyama’s “radical prose” manifests itself in the external form of much of her literature. That her fiction is full of instances of textual visuality is noteworthy because her focus is always on the standard script’s inability to represent the lived linguistic experience of her characters. This frustration manifests itself in extreme ways: for example, a reader will occasionally encounter new diacritic marks (see, for example, the first character of the short story「ピグル風ヌ吹きば」) meant to represent sounds not contained within the modern standard language. To the dismay of many readers, though, these phrases are left unannotated. This tactic forces the reader to question their ability to “read” (here, meaning both “pronounce” and “comprehend”) a narrative. Using non-standard diacritics to represent sounds not found in the standard language is not unique to Sakiyama: Yamaura Harutugu (1940-), another contemporary author, writes in Japanese but makes use of original diacritics and original kana. His work, featuring the language of Kesennuma (*Kesengo*) of northern Japan, resembles Inoue’s *Kirikirijin* in that it strives to faithfully represent the spoken language from a particular region. Unlike Inoue and Sakiyama, however, Yamaura shuns a script practice that veers too far from his goal of representing the language of Kesennuma.

Image 4-1. Yamaura' s “Kama kaesu” (2016).



In Image 4-1, taken from Yamaura’s short story “Kama kaesu” (2016), we see numerous examples of unfamiliar kana that represent the Kesen dialect.

In one line, for example, the common expression 無用の長物 (useless object; deadwood), written in kana as むようのちょうぶつ (*muyō no chōbutsu*) in modern standard Japanese, is here written むよオのらよオぶら. That is, う has been replaced with オ, ち with ら, and つ with ら.

The first exchange replaces hiragana *u* with katakana *o* while the latter exchanges replace hiragana *chi* and *tsu* with two hiragana of Yamaura’s creation. And while the visual impact of these changes is self-evident, the goal of Yamaura’s script practice – to modify or append the modern standard Japanese script so that it can more accurately transcribe the language of Kesennuma – is vastly different from the more theoretical-cum-ideological motivations informing Inoue and Sakiyama’s

use of script. In fact, we might call Yamaura's script practice a conservative one: his goal is to augment the status quo, not dismantle it.[359] Put another way, if Yamaura's goal is to create a new standard script by expanding the modern one, then Sakiyama's goal is to destroy that old standard and reimagine a new one from the rubble.

Sakiyama, who was born on Iriomote Island in Okinawa, writes almost exclusively about the Okinawan experience. As such, much of her work has been read against that of Medoruma Shun, another author belonging to the category of Okinawan literature. As Bhowmik notes, though, Sakiyama has been largely overshadowed by Medoruma. One reason for this, we are told, is because of the radical linguistic qualities that constitute so much of her oeuvre: the free mixing of modern standard Japanese and the regional languages of Okinawa (*shimakotoba*, lit. "island language[s]") means "even the most generous [critic] often fails to understand her opaque stories' content, or even summarize, with any confidence, their plots."[360] The often trance-like cadence of her prose makes it nearly unintelligible for a reader unfamiliar with the unusual mix of grammar, vocabulary, and external form she employs.

I say "nearly" because Sakiyama is aware of her readership and works hard to bring her text to the brink of incomprehensibility without stepping over the ledge: publishing extensively in *Subaru*, a Tokyo-based literary journal, she must carefully keep her literature readable to a wide enough audience so as to ensure her inclusion in the journal. Founded in 1970 and published by Shūeisha, the popular literary magazine is situated neatly within the hegemony of the modern standard language even while publishing works that challenge that same notion. To date, the magazine has been home to three Akutagawa Prize Winners: Miki Taku's *Finch* (1973), Kanehara

[359] For an example of a similarly conservative attempt at representing language through an expansion of the modern Japanese script see the *Shimotai* Project that attempts to represent in writing the various languages and dialects of the Ryukyu Islands.

[360] Bhowmik, 158.

Hitomi's *Snakes and Earrings* (2003), and, most recently, Tanaka Shin'ya's *Devouring Each Other* (2011).[361] The question, then, is how does Sakiyama prevent her literature from becoming wholly unintelligible while maintaining a clear distance from the modern standard language? Unsurprisingly, it is the way Sakiyama employs a script that ensures comprehensibility for those readers willing to put in the effort.

4.2 Script as "Guerilla Warfare"

The threshold between intelligibility and unintelligibility is reminiscent of the threshold between languages and dialect: the line separating the two is always arbitrary and, indeed, often violent. As linguist John McWhorter writes in *The Atlantic*, "[i]f either the terms 'language' or 'dialect' have any objective use, the best anyone can do is to say that there is no such thing as a 'language': Dialects are all there is."[362] For this reason, I sometimes use language and dialect interchangeably. McWhorter's claim that "there is no objective difference between the two: Any attempt you make to impose that kind of order on reality falls apart in the face of real evidence," should also raise red-flags about another term I have been employing liberally, namely Japanese-language literature. As Victoria Young notes, the term is fundamentally flawed if used to suggest the concept of "Japanese" is a stable, self-evident category. As anyone familiar with the Japanese language specifically or the nature of language more generally understands, the idea of a single, monolithic standard language shared among a large community of speakers is nothing short of fanciful.

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[361] Both *Snakes and Earrings* and *Devouring Each Other*, for example, feature depictions of sexual violence and depravity that, in part, has led critic Sasaki Atsushi to conceive of contemporary literature in terms of "incidents" (*jiken*) that garner attention through increasingly provocative content. Viewed in this light, Sakiyama's literature, too, might be thought of as a literature of "incident." See Atsushi Sasaki's *Reigai shōsetsu ron: jiken toshite no shōsetsu* (Asashi shuppansha, 2016).

[362] John McWhorter, "What's a Language, Anyway?," *The Atlantic* (19 January 2016).

And yet, for Sakiyama and others, there *is* such a thing as "modern standard Japanese": it is taught in schools in Japan and at universities across the globe; it is heard every day on television and on the radio; and it is utilized everyday by newspapers and other mainstream news sources. As much of this study has argued, it is the assumption that such language exists that allows the authors discussed here to dissent from that very notion. In *Kirikirijin*, for example, there would be no "Kirikiri language" without a Japanese language against which to define itself. To ignore this reality is to also dismiss the lack of representation cited by authors such as Sakiyama and Medoruma. Writing on the work of resident Koreans in Japan (*Zainichi*), Cindi Textor has called the contradictory desires to (i) claim cultural and historical particularities distinct from mainstream society and (ii) to create a new hegemony vis-à-vis those particularities the "double-bind" of identity politics.[363] Though Textor is looking at the way resident Koreans' conceptions of their own identity is in dialogue with modern standard Japanese, the process she examines mirrors the relationship between the various dialects of the Japanese language and the new standardized form created during the transition from Edo to Meiji. Sakiyama, through her literature, is engaged in a very different project: she aims more to destabilize and destroy modern standard Japanese than to (re-)establish another form of language as its replacement.

As Bhowmik notes, Sakiyama "conceives of [her] method of mixing languages as guerilla warfare," striving to create a literature "booby-trapped by island language."[364] By giving various

[363] Cindi Textor, "Radical Language, Radical Identity: Korean Writers in Japanese Spaces and the Burden to 'Represent,'" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Washington, 2016): 1. "This impasse, which I will refer to as the double bind of identity politics, arises from the dual impulse to break down the essentialist difference assigned to an underrepresented collectivity and its literature and to avoid collapsing or assimilating that difference into the hegemonic mainstream, maintaining a productive particularity in the process. The question becomes, what to do with difference? How can difference be practiced without reproducing the imperialist discourse that created such difference in the first place? Or, to frame the question another way, how can identity —a concept fraught with essentialist pitfalls, but also, I will argue, with radical possibilities— be deployed, performed, or represented to productive and liberating effect?"
[364] Bhowmik, 166.

island languages of Okinawa presence on the battlefield of identity politics, language itself comes to be regarded as a tool of warfare. In Sakiyama's case, the arena used for battle becomes the visual plane: her script-based booby-traps appear most obviously in the form of odd spelling choices and textual glosses that instruct the reader to "read" a character or phrase in a specific way.[365] In the latter, the literary world created by Sakiyama is established atop the existence of furigana. Consider the following unremarkable line from her short story "Shonkanee from a Town Unseen" (Mienai machi kara shonkanē ga 見えないマチからションカネーが):

> だからあんた、なーんにも心痛(チムヤ)ミすることじゃないんだよ。
> *dakara anta, naa'nimo chimu yami suru koto janaindayo*
>
> So, there's absolutely nothing for you to anguish [lit. "to (have a) pained heart] over.[366]

The character string 心痛 is here read as *chimuyami*. These readings are unexpected: left unannotated, those accustomed with modern standard Japanese would in this context read 心 as *kokoro* and 痛ミ as *itami*.[367] The phrase *kokoro ga itamu* in modern standard Japanese might be translated as "it pains one [to hear that; to turn down an invitation, etc.]." Sakiyama, though, provides a semantic translation of the *spoken* dialect into standard *written* Japanese through annotation. That is, *chimu* and *yami* are assigned kanji based on their usage in standard Japanese despite the existence of direct cognates to both of these terms. Namely, *chimu* is related to *kimo* (written 肝), meaning "liver; innards" and by extension "courage; spirit" while *yami* is related to

[365] As will become clear during the course of my argument, to "read" is not the same as to "read aloud"; rather, here "read" is best thought to signify a sort of cognitive understanding at times divorced from the ability to be reproduced orally.

[366] Sakiyama, *Subaru* 28:5 (2006): 132. Unless otherwise noted, translations of narrative are mine.

[367] The reading of *kokoro itami* is an old one: it can even be found in the 8th century book of poetry *Man'yōshū*. Poem 3542 of Book 14 includes the unambiguous phrase 己許呂伊多美, which Alexander Vovin Romanizes as *kökörö itamî* and translates as "my heart aches." Vovin, *Man'yōshū: A New English Translation Containing the Original Text, Kana Transliteration, Romanization, Glossing and Commentary, Book 14* (Brill, 2012): 231.

yamu (usually 病む) meaning "to fall ill; to be ill."[368] And while Sakiyama's use of language is interesting when just viewed from the standpoint of script, here I highlight her posturing to the "modern standard Japanese" crowd that constitutes a large portion of her *Subaru* readership. Her ability to negotiate these two audiences gives weight to the subversive nature of her literature: today, 痛 (*itamu*) often means to experience physical pain while 病 (*yamu*) suggests an illness of either the body or the heart. While the former can, as described above, reach beyond the physical to the mental (e.g., mental anguish), the latter equally suggests suffering from both physical and psychological ailments.[369] Thus, Sakiyama's fusion of 痛 with *yamu* – even if semantically linked in the "island languages" – comes together for readers of the standard language in new and significant ways. For this reason, we should recognize that Sakiyama's textual world simultaneously contains both interpretations because, just as the line between language and dialect is unclear, so too is the line between the standard language and the island languages. It is here, in this space of indeterminacy, that Sakiyama's writing proves to be most subversive: it rejects the category of "Okinawan literature" just as forcefully as it rejects the category of "Japanese-language literature."

Things are just as complicated with Sakiyama's use of 心: the standard Japanese reading of *kokoro* has a cognate in many Okinawan dialects: *kukuru*.[370] This seemingly inconsequential script practice peppers Sakiyama's texts. It propells the narrative forward while serving as a

[368] See the entry for *chimu* and *kukuru* in *Okinawago jiten: kokuritsu kokugo kenkyūjo hen* (Ōkurashō insatsukyoku, 1963).

[369] Belaboring the point, the section on illness (*shippei*) in the 10th century dictionary *Wamyō ruijushō* reinforces the association between 痛 and physical pain: read in Japanese as *itashi* (和名伊太之), the character is defined as meaning "pain; pain in one's skin or blood flow" (痛也。痛在膚脈中也).

[370] For a detailed discussion of the differences between *chimu* and *kukuru*, see Mitsunari Nakama's *Ryūkyū hōgen no imiron* (Rukku, 2000). For a non-academic discussion on the difference between the same two terms see "Chimu to kukuru ni tsuite" (2003).

constant visual reminder – using Sakiyama's own rhetorical flourish we might call them linguistic grenades – that reinforce her pushback. They remind the reader at every turn of their inability to access the text in any meaningful way without author-supplied commentary.

4.3 Script in the "The Front-Lines of Q-Village A"

What seems like a chaotic literary space, though, is more welcoming than one might imagine: as Satō Izumi suggests, readers locate "voice (*koe*) within the written characters (*moji*)."[371] Satō addresses the relationship between spoken language and written text in Sakiyama's literature and the fundamental irreconcilability of the two. The inability for perfect transcription of language is similar to, she says, "the experiences of stammering (*kuchigomori*) and discord (*sogo*)." This discord, Satō claims, is precisely what "opens up the space for the particular literariness of writing in Okinawa," allowing us to "identify at least dual registers (*nijū no isō*) when it comes to the act of writing." She continues,

> The linguistic world of Sakiyama Tami is a never-ending wave of sounds, a ceaseless swaying and winding that is a paradoxical desire located within the expressions of her literature rooted in a reliance on written language. Furthermore, for an author who suppresses the desire to include voice (*koe*) within a script that she fixes (*kotei*), records, transcribes, and defines (*teichaku*), the equipment to solidify (*gyō ko*) that voice is always tied to the relationship between musical notation and literary language.[372]

What exactly Satō is referring to by "literary language" is unclear, but one possible example – what I take to mean marked language in the linguistic sense – is witnessed in a short story by Sakiyama called "The Front Lines of Q-Village A" (2014).[373] In this story, which begins with an unnamed narrator standing at the entrance of the now-deserted Q-Village, words that have lost

[371] Izumi Satō, "Nihongoken bungaku no 'koe' to 'kotoba': Sakiyama Tami-shi, Park Kyong Mi-shi no taiwa ni yosete," *Review of Asian and Pacific Studies* 42 (2017): 73.
[372] Ibid.
[373] The other texts in the series are "The Front Lines of Q-Village B" (*Q mura senzen b*), and "The Fall of Q-Village" (*Q mura kanraku*, 2015). All were originally published in *Subaru* and collected in *Unjuga, Nasaki* (Hana shoin, 2016).

their connection to the real world through the act of forgetting appear in katakana: オトコ (*otoko*, man); モノ(*mono*, thing); ヒトビト (*hitobito*, people); ムラ (*mura*, village); ケイカク(*keikaku*, plan); クンレン (*kunren*, training); ムラビト (*murabito*, village people); ヒト(*hito*, people); アンタ (*anta*, you); テキ (*teki*, enemy); バカ (*baka*, fool); ボク(*boku*, I); ジッタイ(*jittai*, substance); コトバ (*kotoba*, language).The effect of these common words appearing in katakana suggests disassociation from reality and, perhaps, the transition from the living to the dead through the loss of kanji. The result is eerie: the outer shell of the term has disappeared.

As this brief overview of Sakiyama's work shows, script can be mobilized as a tool to resist the hegemony and highlight the violent history of an imposition of Japanese cultural and linguistic norms onto Okinawans. Her work demands further study, but for now I would like to switch directions and look at another author that uses language in an equally effective way.

4.4 Yokoyama Yūta's Challenge: Summary of *I Will Be a Cat*

The remainder of this chapter examines the function of script in Yokoyama Yūta's *I Will Be a Cat*.[374] *Cat* tells the story of Kakeru, a university student living in China, who is struggling with his binational, bilingual, and very much biscriptal, identity. Relevant to this study is the way his anxieties manifest themselves throughout the text, namely in the chaotic mixing and shifting of scripts that stand-in for the narrator's discomfort with his personal life. It is in many ways the visualization of these anxieties that thrusts the narrative forward. Because *I Will Be a Cat* has yet to be translated into English, I provide a detailed synopsis of the story coupled with an analysis of some key scenes. Given the obvious emphasis on the visual aspects of the narrative, I have on occasion provided the original text followed by my translation. Page numbers refer to the first

[374] *I Will Be a Cat* was originally published in the June 2014 issue of the literary journal *Gunzō* and then published in hardback format in July 2014 by Kodansha. It won first-place in the 57th Gunzō Prize for New Writers, runner-up in the 151st Akutagawa Prize, and first-place in the 2nd Tekken Heterotopia Literary Prize. Page numbers refer to the 2014 hardback.

edition hardcover. In the following sections I analyze Yokoyama's script practice, detailing five distinct styles and how they relate to, and reflect, narrative content. Note that each section listed below corresponds to a section of the text.

4.4.1 Section One: Translation and the First-person Pronoun

I Will Be a Cat begins in *media res* with Kakeru at a restaurant an order of gyoza while waiting for his bowl of ramen to arrive. As he empties his plate of gyoza, Kakeru notices three hiragana emerging from beneath his food: うまい, or *u-ma-i*, meaning "delicious." Seeing the three characters triggers a stirring within.

> To the extent of being almost mysterious, those three characters penetrated my depths with an almost illegal (非合法 *iriigaru*) presumptuousness, […] sending ripples across my heart.[375]

Already we see Kakeru, who is currently in Suzhou, China, colliding with what he calls 日語 (Ch. *rìyǔ*; Jp. *nichigo*) the term for the Japanese language in Chinese. As we shall see, for most of the text Yokoyama utilizes an external form that draws on Chinese characters taken from both the modern standard Japanese character set and the simplified Chinese one used today in mainland China (called *jiǎnhuàzì* 简化字). [376] Yokoyama's script practice blurs the lines between kanji (Jpn.) and *hànzì* (Ch.). He seems to understand that he is embarking on a mission to locate the "place of origin whence language is transmitted."[377] This leads Kakeru to muse about the nature of the Japanese language, especially its ability to entertain multiple first- and second-person pronouns.

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[375] Yūta Yokoyama, *Wagahai wa neko ni naru* (Kōdansha, 2014): 14.

[376] "Simplified character" in this chapter more specifically refers to characters listed in the "Tōngyòng guīfàn hànzì biǎo," a list of 8,105 Chinese characters published by the General Office of the State Council in China and established in 2013. Note that Hong Kong and Taiwan continue to use the traditional character set; though there is some overlap, the contemporary Japanese character set (kanji) is generally easily distinguishable from both the simplified and traditional form of characters.

[377] In this section I try to provide Chinese characters where a reader of Japanese would not be able to imagine them from either the translation or romaji renditions. Words next to the Chinese characters, in italics, represent any furigana Yokoyama supplies. Any words in pinyin represent the modern standard Chinese pronunciation and

しかし困ったことだ。日語には各種各様な自称、一人称が存在するからである。日本人は話す相手によってそれらの称呼を用い分けているというが、自分にはそれが非常に難しく思われるのである。自分は自分に相手によって孫悟空のようにそう翻雲覆雨と変化を反復えされては、頭脳が異常くなりかねない。そのようなことは是非とも回避したいので、自分自身の称号は一人だけに限りたい。

ここにきて名告りを上げたのは、「私」、「僕」、「自分」、「俺」、そして「吾輩」、という五名の候補者である。「私」は主に成人が用いる称呼、「僕」は小孩の用う称呼と認いている。「僕」など論外である。誰が嬉き好んで下人を演じたがるのだ。自分は大人でも小孩でもないので、何方も不適当である。「俺」は自分のような者には最も適した表現らしいのだが、中国では郷下人の用う詞なので、これもやや抵抗感がある。余る二名は「自分」と「吾輩」であるが、ずいぶん猶豫とした考慮の末、結局自分は画数の少ない苗条な外形の「自分」を採用することにした。[378]

I'm a little stuck. There are just too many ways to refer to oneself in Japanese. I hear that when Japanese people speak they differentiate the first-person pronoun based on the person they're speaking with; that, for me, is super complicated. For myself to be changed – by me – over and over again in such rapid succession like Sun Wukong – well, I'm sure I'd go crazy.[379] I'd like to settle on just one first-person pronoun so that I can avoid such a scenario.

These days, one generally introduces oneself with one of the following five designations: *watashi* (私), *boku* (僕), *jibun* (自分), *ore* (俺), or *wagahai* (吾輩).[380] *Watashi* is a first-person pronoun used mainly by adults, and I hear

have not been supplied by Yokoyama. Words appearing in italics alone are written following modern standard Japanese orthographical conventions. Finally, all furigana appearing in quotations and excerpts are as found in the source texts.
There have been no intentional changes made to them. All translations are my own unless noted.

[378] Ibid., 16-7.

[379] Sun Wukong (孫悟空) is a mythological figure from the Chinese tradition dating to the Song dynasty but most famous as the protagonist of the 16th century *Journey to the West* (西遊記). *Journey to the West* was both influential in China and Japan, and Sun Wukong lends his name (read as Son Gokū) to the protagonist of perhaps the most internationally well-known anime *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z*. In *Journey to the West*, one of Sun Wukong's supernatural capabilities is the 72 Earthly Transformations (七十二變), hence the relation to the transformations referenced above. Furthermore, the discussion of gyoza and ramen functions similarly to bridge Chinese and Japanese tradition: shared between both China (*jiǎozi* and *lāmiàn*) and Japan (*gyōza* and *raamen*), dumplings (餃子) and ramen (拉麺 or ラーメン) are enjoyed in both countries, albeit in localized forms.

[380] This line is meant to be taken in jest: *jibun* and *wagahai*, though occasionally heard, only rarely – in the case of the latter, never – function as the sole first-person pronoun in contemporary Japan.

> that *boku* is what children use. *Boku* and the like are out of the question. Who by their own doing would want to play the role of a low-ranking person? Both are inappropriate since I am neither a child nor an adult. It seems that *ore* would be the most suitable expression for someone like myself but in China the character used to write *ore* (俺) [*ǎn* in Chinese]is used by country bumpkins and so I feel a little hesitant. *Jibun* and *wagahai* are the remaining first-person pronouns, and after giving it much thought and consideration, I've decided to go with the stylish and easy-to-write *jibun*.

What Kakeru actually says in the final line of paragraph one in reference to first-person pronouns ("I'd like to settle on just one") is more literally rendered as "I'd like to limit the designations referring to me to a single *person* (*hitori dake ni*)," emphasis mine. For Kakeru, then, each variant first-person pronoun represents a wholly different (or variant) independent identity.

Simply because Kakeru feels that way does not make it true; however, it is true that the modern Chinese language – much like English – has generally one term to signify oneself whereas Japanese has numerous.[381] Put another way, the protagonist views the constant changing of the first-person pronoun as an act of violence against a stable and unified self. And while there is certainly humor to be found in Kakeru's obsession with the number of first-person pronouns available to him, Lydia Liu has looked extensively at just how traumatic the imposition of a modern "self" – in this case, the inverse of that process – can be on identity formation. Discussing the phenomena of "pseudo-universals" in translation, especially in China during the turn of the century, she writes,

> To be sure, universality is neither true nor false, but any intellectual claim to it should be rigorously examined in the light of its own linguistic specificity and sources of authority.

[381] Though generally accurate, this is also an oversimplification of the fact for two reasons: first, there were numerous first-person pronouns in the classical (i.e., literary) Chinese language that may have encouraged the use of numerous first-person pronouns in Japan; second, there are dialectal variants to 我 (*wǒ*), the standard first-person pronoun in Chinese, that are associated with both region and class. They include the Shainghainese 吾 (*ŋu*), the Taiwanese Hokkien 我 (*gua*; *ua*), the Sixian Hakka (倮 *ŋai*), and the Cantonese 我 (*ngo5*). What is critically different, however, is the fact that in modern Chinese there is no significant switching between first-person pronouns in dialogue in a manner similar to that of modern Japanese.

> Consider some of the words frequently used and abused in this capacity across the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences: "the self," "person," and "individual." What is the Chinese, Japanese, or Arabic equivalent(s) of the word "self." This troublesome question rests on the assumption that equivalence of meaning can readily be established between different languages.[382]

Liu is taking aim at the cultural universalities ("pseudo-universals") that impose a particular – and always hierarchical – world-view onto the language in which we are seeking equivalences. Liu is especially concerned with the power structures that enable interlocutors (the translator) to assume there *must* be a word for "self" in, for example, Chinese. This assumed interchangeability of terms has imbedded within it an already-determined (and thus seemingly legitimate) flow of correctness, namely from West to East (and, like much of this study has argued, from center to periphery).

Elsewhere, and continuing with this train of thought, Liu wonders why the inverse is never asked, e.g., why isn't (or shouldn't) there be an equivalent to, say, the Chinese *fu* (rhapsody) in English language poetry instead of asking why there isn't a tradition of epic poetry in Chinese.[383] Liu raises the same line of questioning when considering the process of translating concepts situated at the core of the so-called modern self.

> The assumed homogeneity between *ji* [己], *wo* [我], *ziwo* [自我] and "self" inevitably blots out the history of each word and the history of the translation of "self" in modern Chinese, inasmuch as difference cannot be conceived at the ontological level without first presenting itself at the constitutive level where the question of linguistic transaction must be brought in.[384]

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[382] Lydia Liu, *Translingual Practice: Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 1995): 7.

[383] This, of course, brings us face-to-face with the arbitrariness of definition and genre. "Epic" is described in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2018) rather conservatively: "A long, narrative poem praising the deeds and person of a hero, often for their efforts in either founding or saving a particular community. […] The principal defining feature of the epic is the grandness of scale and the sense that the destiny of the individual is the destiny of the whole world. In contemporary literature it is primarily the fantasy genre, typified by J. R. R. Tolkien's work, which adheres to the epic form, in prose, though, rather than verse."

[384] Liu, *Translingual*, 8. I have provided Chinese characters in brackets.

In other words, all three of the above terms (*ji*, *wo*, and *zhiwo*) have their own histories, usages, meanings, and nuances, and to assume that one might suffice as a complete translation of "self" – a term that itself has its own history, usage, meaning(s), and nuances – is to both flatten the complexity of the situation and, more critically, to assume that the Chinese language *ought* to have an equivalent.

It is precisely the inverse of that process – namely, the imposition of a Japanese assumption of variability of the "self" that is legitimated linguistically – that makes Kakeru's anxieties over which first-person pronoun to use both interesting and contemporary.[385] One aspect of his dilemma emerges from the situation Liu describes in which the translation of "self" into Chinese is a matter of debate: with this no longer being the case, for Kakeru, the "self" (or "I") is a stable concept that is now under attack from the constant changes incurred by the Japanese language and by its speakers. All this lends credence to Liu's observation that these seemingly self-evident universals – self, person, individual, etc. – are nothing more than fluid social constructs that change over time and geography. This is not new knowledge. Nevertheless, it does not change the fact that for Kakeru, sitting in that ramen shop deep in thought, his identity – his sense of a stable self – feels like it is under attack by the Japanese language.

Kakeru, who was born and raised in Shanghai, spent most of his life living with his mother, a Chinese national. Together they would spend summer vacations in Japan visiting his now deceased father. This year, however, in order to attend school in Suzhou, Kakeru moves out of Shanghai and the close vicinity of his mother. With two months before the start of the academic year, Kakeru spends much of his time walking idly around his new neighborhood. One day, in a neighborhood park, Kakeru climbs a spiral-shaped staircase only to find twelve stone animals

[385] "Contemporary" in that it is the result of the effects of modernization Liu is examining.

greeting him at regularly spaced intervals: the rat, the ox, the tiger, the rabbit, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the sheep, the monkey, the rooster, the dog, and the pig.[386] As Kakeru puts it, the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac – called *shēngxiào* 生息 in Chinese and referred to variously as *seisoku*, *eto* 干支, or *jūnishi* 十二支 in Japanese – gave visitors a "silent greeting" (*mugon no aisatsu*).[387] While the Chinese zodiac unites both Chinese and Japanese culture, it is also a tool that limits through explication individual personalities in often general terms. It is for this reason that Kakeru, an anti-conformist of sorts, identifies not with any of those twelve animals but rather with an outlier, namely, a cat.[388] Throughout the text appear images of the twelve stone animals while the closest image to a cat is the rather cryptic two-character marking ΦΦ. These characters serve no function in the text save as section breaks to the narrative. Certainly a representation of cat eyes, they suggest the lingering eyes of a vanishing Cheshire cat.[389]

At the park, Kakeru produces an old baseball mitt and ball and proceeds to toss the ball against the wall immediately in front of him. He thinks about his summers in Japan and recalls how he and his father would play baseball together, the main act of bonding between them. The connection between Kakeru and his father – and the one between his father and the author Natsume Soseki (1867–1916) – is complicated by two facts: his father's name is Noboru, which is also the childhood name of Soseki's friend, Masaoka Shiki, and Shiki, a great haikuist, is also well known

[386] Based on the poetry cited in the text, it seems the actual model for the park described here is Héshān Park 何山公園 near the foot of Mt. Hèfù in Suzhou.
[387] Yokoyama, 24.
[388] It is important to note that, in fact, these two systems are not perfectly interchangeable. For example, the Japanese zodiac does not refer to a pig (*buta*) but to a wild boar (*inoshishi*) nor to a goat (*yagi*) but to a sheep (*hitsuji*): both of these differences come down to how either of the two Chinese characters are read, and yet today are standardized as such. Of special note is the fact that the Vietnamese zodiac includes a cat – it has replaced the rabbit.
[389] While it is the grin of the Cheshire cat that is usually the last to disappear, in Disney's iconic representation both the piercing yellow eyes and the large grinning mouth remain after all else has vanished.

for his deep interest in baseball.[390] Soseki's shadow, as will become clear, towers over most aspects of the narrative. Day after day Kakeru will return to this park and continue to play ball by himself.

> This simple action was more than enough to put me into a trance (*kōkotsu*). When I would take off my glove and pinch my nose I could smell the unbelievably sour but rich (*hōjun*) smell of the repeated accumulation of human sweat that had seeped into animal hide and fermented. In that instant (*setsuna*), I was wandering somewhere between this world (*shigan*) and that world (*higan*).[391]

This routine continues for another ten days until one day, at the same park, a calico cat emerges from the bushes while Kakeru looks for a ball he failed to catch. To Kakeru's surprise, his ball is lodged in the cat's mouth; dropping it on the ground, the cat proceeds to kick it with its front legs. This initiates a bout of cat-and-ball that Kakeru eyes curiously.

Kakeru then begins to reminisce about his school days in China and his relationship with his father; he also recalls how his Japanese language ability was not great, hindering his ability to communicate with him. He found class boring despite the presence of other "doubles" (i.e., biracial students). Once again, he voices his discontent with the written form of the language, expressing particular dismay at the abundant use of katakana to express words of English origin. It is his disdain for English that leads him to call "loudly for the abolishment of katakana in Japanese" (*nichigo no katakana haishi o koetakaraka ni*), a sentiment echoing the rhetoric surrounding language reform movements of the early twentieth century. His stance on the issue, informed by his familiarity with written Chinese, is predictable: if something can be expressed in kanji then why bother using katakana, especially if the result would be to alienate readers from the kanji

[390] For detailed information on the relationship between Shiki and baseball, see Christopher Keaveney's "Portrait of the Artist as Yakyū Seinen: Masaoka Shiki and the Poetry of Baseball" in *Contesting the Myths of Samurai Baseball* (Hong Kong University Press, 2018): 37-60.
[391] Yokoyama, 30.

cultural sphere? "Those clowns (*yatsura*) who want to abandon (*yameru*) Japanese and install (*insutooru*) English," he says, "ought to flee (*tōbō*) to that beautiful country, the United States (*Bikoku* 美国)." This infiltration of English is, for Kakeru, a disruption to the Japanese language: "I am someone who, from the bottom of my heart, wishes for the immediate construction of a harmonious Japanese language (*wakaiteki nichigo*)."[392] As we shall see, however, Kakeru's actual relationship with katakana is more complicated than a simple disavowal of the character set.

One day, while in Japan, Kakeru picks up a copy of Soseki's classic *I Am a Cat* from his father's bookshelf. Noting his interest in the book, his father gifts it to him. As any beginning student of Japanese knows, Soseki's prose is difficult to read; Kakeru is drawn to the text but it takes him half of a year to read it and even then he has trouble understanding it. It is significant that this would also be the last time he sees his father. After his fifth reading, however, Kakeru understands that the feline protagonist views himself as superior to the world around him. He even begins to identify with him.

> With each rereading I experienced the illusion that I myself was turning eccentric. It seemed as if this cat saw right through (看透) the world of absurd humans – it was scary. […] This cat was a type of god, maybe an incarnation (*kashin*) or doppelgänger (*bunshin*).[393]

Back in the narrative present, Kakeru is thinking about the cat he met at the park. He decides to name it Sensei, a reference to the unnamed protagonist of Soseki's other great piece of literature, *Kokoro* (1914).[394] Though Kakeru will encounter Sensei numerous times at the park, he interacts

[392] Yokoyama, 38-9. We must be careful here to not conflate Kakeru's disdain for the visual aspect of katakana with the ability for Chinese characters to represent sounds phonetically. For example, the Japanese clothing brand Uniqlo is written 優衣庫 (*yōuyīkù*), udon is 烏冬 (*wūdōng*), Cola is 可楽 (*kělè*), and Lady Gaga is 雷帝・嘎嘎 (*léidì gāgā*). The manner in which a foreign word or name is represented can change depending on the region. For example, former President Obama's last name is often written 奥巴马 (*àobāmǎ*) in mainland China but 歐巴馬 (*ōubāmǎ*) in Taiwan.

[393] Yokoyama, 50.

[394] The relationship between Kakeru and Sensei (the cat) is further complicated by the fact that Sensei's story (from *Kokoro*) is in large part tied up with his relationship with another man referred to only as "K."

with him only once. Sitting on a park bench, he gives Sensei a piece of beef jerky. After some time, and having thought Sensei disappeared, he notices him sitting next to him on the bench. Suddenly though, as if caught off-guard, Sensei shoots a glance somewhere up into the air. Kakeru also glances in that direction but does not see anything. Sensei's eyes were glaring at emptiness (*kū*) itself. Sensei then gave a single, contemplative (*tetsugaku meita*) yawn, and curled his body atop the bench. This was the only time Kakeru had direct contact with Sensei.[395] Shortly thereafter the cat disappears for good into a nearby thicket. The "emptiness" Sensei becomes engrossed in foreshadows Kakeru's means of escape from his anxieties.

4.4.2 Section Two: Kakeru Heads to Japan

After being in Suzhou for less than a month, Kakeru receives a phone call from his mother in Shanghai informing him that he must travel to Japan to renew his visa. Significantly, the dialogue between Kakeru and his mother is written in the simplified Chinese character set. Kakeru's anxieties grow as he is informed that he must travel alone, and the ghostly memory of Sensei begins to haunt him.

> Turning off the lights to his room and heading out [for Shanghai], he saw from deep within the darkness of his room the display lights from his modem flashing robotically (*mukishitsu ni*), just like the two eyes of a cat.[396]

This line is significant for many reasons, one of them being that it includes the only word of the text in standalone (i.e., unannotated base text) katakana: modem (モデム *modemu*). The modem, a tool by which one connects to the internet and thus symbolizing global connectivity, is an appropriate object to appear with cat eyes, themselves symbols of connectivity between Kakeru and his father (and between Japan and China). Indeed, Kakeru's name (though written 駿 in the

[395] Yokoyama, 56.
[396] Yokoyama, 63.

text), is homophonous with a verb meaning "to suspend something between two points; to build something that connects to two points (e.g., a bridge, a wire, etc.)." This sense of suspension gives rise to nouns such as *kakehashi* ("suspension bridge") that come to mean a mediator (or bridge) between two cultures.

The other and perhaps more relevant significance of the modem involves a pun. Modem, formally called 调制解调器 (*tiáozhìjiětiáoqì*) in Chinese, is also colloquially referred to as 猫 (*māo*), or cat. The fact that Kakeru refers to the device as a modem (*modemu*) without the kanji referent (猫) and still makes the connection between the two concepts is striking. Readers of modern Japanese literature may recall a similar scene in Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's 1927 haunting short story "Cogwheels" (*Haguruma*). As Seiji Lippit describes it, this work "records the progressive disintegration of [the narrator's] speech into a number of foreign languages, including English and French."[397] In a state of derangement, the protagonist (a fictionalized version of Akutagawa himself), makes translingual associations based on the Japanized pronunciations of words from both French and English:

> In a later scene, still in the hotel room, [the narrator] attempts to place a telephone call, but the only sound coming through the receiver is the word "mole," which he immediately translates into the French *la mort*. At the end of the work, when he is walking through the streets of a small village and comes across "the rotting corpse of a mole," he begins to feel his own impending death: "With every step I grew more anxious that something was targeting me."[398]

For most speakers of English and French, the relationship Akutagawa sees (or hears) between "mole" and "la mort" is tenuous at best – they simply do not sound close enough to warrant any association. In Japanese, however, the two are pronounced identically when rendered into the Japanese sound system. That is, in a state of mental anguish the Akutagawa-like protagonist spies

[397] Seiji Lippit, "The Disintegrating Machinery of the Modern: Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's Late Writings," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 58:1 (1999): 39.
[398] Ibid., 39.

a dead mole (*mogura*) in the street and recalls the English word for the animal, "mole" (*mooru*). From there, he makes a further association between the sound value of *mooru* with the homophonous Japanized pronunciation of the French word for death, *la mort*. Furthermore – and what links Akutagawa's psychological breakdown to Kakeru's own failing psyche – is the way script is used by Akutagawa (the author) as a vehicle to heighten the tension of these translingual moments.

> 「モオル――Mole……」
> モオルは鼹鼠(もぐらもち)と云ふ英語だつた。この聯想も僕には愉快ではなかつた。が、僕は二三秒の後、Mole を la mort に綴り直した。ラ・モオルは、――死と云ふ仏蘭西(フランス)語は忽ち僕を不安にした。

> "*Mooru* – Mole…"
> *Mooru* refers to mole in English. This association was not a pleasant one for me. And yet, two or three seconds later, I rewrote "Mole" as "la mort" (*ra mooru*). *Ra mooru,* – the French word for death made me suddenly uneasy.[399]

For Akutagawa, Japanese is both the language that unifies (mole/la mort) and, at the same time, prohibits his ascension to some universality. It is the inability for the Japanese language in this instance to differentiate between French and English and, as a result, appropriate them both – a condition he explores in yet another work, "The Faint Smile of the Gods" (1922) – that leads him to conclude he can never confront modernity on its own terms. Unlike Akutagawa, Kakeru attempts to wash away the associations between Japanese and other languages ("modem" and "cat") by breaking with his hereto established practice of avoiding stand-alone katakana. And yet, his attempt to erase the modem's associations with Sensei is for naught: as if his subconscious will not allow him to forget his anxieties, the scene described above is immediately followed by the those now familiar cat eyes.

[399] The original appears towards the end of "Part Four: Still?" in "Cogwheels." The translation is my own.

Kakeru visits his mother in Shanghai before leaving for Japan. He also has occasion to meet with his childhood friend Piao Zenan, a Chinese citizen of Korean descent. Zenan, a friend since elementary school, asks Kakeru to visit Akihabara, an area of Tokyo well-known as a hub for enthusiasts of anime, manga, and any number of other subcultures. Kakeru makes his feelings about anime clear.

> 自分は動画片(アニメ)にはあまり関心がない。知っているのは「機器猫(ドラえもん)」「七龍珠(ドラゴンボール)」「乱馬二分之一(らんまにぶんのいち)」「全職猟人(ハンターハンター)」「数碼宝貝(デジタルモンスター)」「網珠王子(テニスのおうじさま)」「嬉羊羊(シーヤンヤン)」ぐらいだ。「嬉羊羊(シーヤンヤン)」は中国のだったか。沢男なら日本の動画片(アニメ)を背(そら)で軽く百は列挙することができるだろう。

> I'm not really interested in anime. I only really know *Doraemon*, *Dragon Ball*, *Ranma ½*, *Hunter x Hunter*, *Digimon*, *The Prince of Tennis*, and *Pleasant Goat and Big Big Wolf*. Oh, was *Pleasant Goat* Chinese? Anyway, Zenan could probably list a hundred Japanese cartoons off the top of his head without a hitch.[400]

Zenan asks Kakeru to purchase a figurine for him, and Kakeru obliges. Kakeru, for his part, considers whether or not there is anything he himself wants to experience during his stay.

> I tried to think whether or not there was anything I wanted to do in Japan. Even after I was done eating I thought about this for some time but nothing came to mind… I guess I could go eat dumplings at Imozaka… That's all I can come up with.[401]

As if emerging from somewhere deep in his subconscious, Kakeru lands on a seemingly throwaway activity taken directly from Soseki's *I Am a Cat*: "Yes, indeed, let's go. How about Ueno? Let's go try some of Imozaka's famous dumplings. Have you ever tried those dumplings?"[402] These unconscious connections between Kakeru, Sensei (represented by both the

[400] Yokoyama, 66.
[401] Ibid., 76.
[402] Natsume Soseki, *I Am a Cat*, Vol. II Ch. 5.

cat and Soseki), and his father are reinforced through the following exchange between Kakeru and his mother just before he takes leave of her at the airport.

- 像(に)てきたね
- なにが？
- 側脸(よこがお)が
- 你(あなた)のお爸(とう)さんに
- はあ？
- 像(に)てねよ

- You're starting to look alike.
- What is?
- Your profile.
- Just like your father's.
- What?
- We don't look anything alike…[403]

Once on board, Kakeru finds his seat and closes his eyes; his mind and body, he tells us, becomes one (*isshin dō tai*) with the airplane (機身 *jīshēn*). As Kakeru's sense of being blends with the body of the machine he recalls that he enjoys flying. In fact, the "momentary sense of liberation" (*tsuka no kaihō kan*) puts his "mind" (*kokoro*) at ease. Looking out the window, he stares at the pure white clouds.

> Eventually three lambs (羔羊 *kohitsuji*) emerge from the clouds and run about in all directions. The lambs' true form (*shōtai*) was either water droplets or colloids (胶体 *koroido*) of ice crystals (冰晶). Ice crystals grow and become large snowflakes. I tried placing those snowflakes on the middle of Sensei's forehead (天庭 *hitai*). I was surprised at just how natural it all seemed. Sensei's face was as clear as always.[404]

[403] Yokoyama, 77.
[404] Ibid., 80.

Kakeru continues to think about Sensei even as those three lambs come to life before him. This once again suggests the depths of his attachment to the cat, and the extent to which his existence penetrates Kakeru's mind – we, together with Kakeru, are made aware that the memory of Sensei will be accompanying him on his trip to Japan. Sitting beside him is an older woman reading a feature issue of *an an*, a popular Japanese women's lifestyle magazine and, coincidently, the magazine Kakeru's mother asked him to purchase for her. The feature of this particular issue is "anti-aging" (抗衰老 *anchieijingu*). The character 抗 is here taken to mean *anchi* (anti-), triggering yet another round of word associations: "Hmmm, anti- (抗 *anchi*)…? and then, out of nowhere, I suddenly had to go to the bathroom (厠所 *unchi*)."[405] Returning to his seat he spies the woman from the corner of his eye, thinking to himself,

> 自分はあの阿姨さんを多少愚かしくて思った。某東西(サムシング)に抗う精神を持つことにおいては、我々は同志である。革命尚未成功、同志仍須努力。人世の成規(おきて)を鑑みることを鑑み、己の意気を鏡ごと貫通(つらぬ)かねばならぬことが、貫通(つらぬ)かねばならぬときが、誰にでもあるはずだ。

> I thought of her as a little foolish. And yet, we are compatriots (*dōshi*) insofar as we have something we are fighting against (*aragau*). *The revolution has not yet succeeded. Work hard, comrades!* We reflect on the way we take warning from the established rules of this world; there are things in one's life, occasions in one's life, wherein one's spirt (*iki*) must penetrate every mirror it encounters.[406]

The style of Kakeru's prose changes dramatically here. Though I will not elaborate on this further, suffice it to say that the narrative style switches to one reminiscent of that employed by Soseki and his contemporaries, especially the more philosophically oriented of Soseki's texts such as *The*

[405] Ibid., 81-2. Note that *unchi* properly means "feces" and is used here together with the verb *iku* to mean "go defecate." The kanji of the base text (厠所), however, refers exclusively to the space where one defecates, i.e., the restroom (or, in the case of an airplane, the lavatory).
[406] Ibid., 83. The line "The revolution has not yet succeeded. Work hard, comrades!" is a quote from Sun Yatsen. This translation is borrowed from "Sun Yat-sen's Shade 革命尚未成功" (*China Heritage*).

Three-Cornered World (1906), *And Then* (1909) and, of course, *Kokoro*.[407] Not only is Soseki in Kakeru's mind, he is also lurking in the external form of the text.

4.4.3 Section Three: Kakeru "Becomes" a Cat

Kakeru lands in Japan and decides to head directly to his hotel in Akihabara. Approaching customs, and being confronted with the question of national identity, makes Kakeru uneasy.

> While waiting to be inspected I was troubled over what sort of facial expression (表情 *kao*) I should make. Passing through customs I was greeted [by the customs officer] with the words "welcome home" (*okaerinasai*). I responded with "I'm home" (*tadaima*), bowed, and high-tailed it to the exit. Japan makes me nervous.[408]

Kakeru makes it to Akihabara and checks into his hotel. Venturing outside, he is overwhelmed by what he sees. The lights, the sounds, the stimulations are too much for him: "the new products were an assault to [Kakeru's] senses of sight (*shikaku*) and touch (*shokkaku*)," with all of the floor demonstrations "surrounding customers on all four sides" and creating a sense of "hallucination" (*genkaku*) and "illusion" (*sakkaku*).[409] He continues: "on a large liquid crystal television screen there were crimson red poppies (虞美人 *hinageshi*) blooming clearly and beautifully."[410] The

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[407] One characteristic of this style is the use of the formal copula *de aru*. Another characteristic is word choice: *jinsei* ("this world"; the world we inhabit), *kangamiru* (to heed; to reflect upon), *onore* (oneself; I), *iki* (spirit; disposition), etc., are relatively uncommon as independent words in contemporary Japanese and are even rarer when used together.

[408] Yokoyama, 95.

[409] Ibid., 99-100. There is much going on this section beyond the assault to Kakeru's senses: if the reference to "surrounding customers on all sides (*kyakujin o shimen kara kakou*)" strikes the reader as odd, the providence for it is referred to in the next line, "they [the shop clerks] were all singing the song of Chu" (楚歌 *Soka*). The phrase 四面楚歌 (Jpn., *shimen soka*; Chi., *sìmiàn chǔgē*), literally "on four sides, the songs of Chu" (but more generally "to be surrounded by enemies; to be besieged") refers to the situation Xiang Yu 項羽 found himself in, namely, being surrounded by the enemy Chu army and hearing their battle cries come from all directions. The source for the idiom is the ancient Chinese text *Records of the Grand Historian*.

[410] This is both a reference to Soseki's literature and the idiom described above. The three kanji 虞美人, here read as *hinageshi* (the common poppy or *Papaver rhoeas*), can also be read as *gubijin*, the same name (with the addition of one character) of Soseki's 1907 novel often called *The Poppy* in English. Furthermore, so as to bring the reference full circle, the expression "surrounded by the song of Chu" appears in a song by Consort Yu (虞美人 Yú měirén) also recorded in the *Records of the Grand Historian* that laments the defeat of Xiang Yu. The section in question, followed by my translation, reads: 漢兵已略地，四方楚歌聲；大王意氣盡，賤妾何聊生. ("The soldiers of Han have already taken control of the land; / from the four directions, the songs of the Chu. / The King's will and spirit is exhausted; / How will I, your lowly concubine, live?").

sights and sounds of Akihabara are suffocating to Kakeru, and he has no option but to retreat. After wandering around town in a haze he manages to eat dinner and return to his hotel room. He attempts to rest; sleep, however, does not come easy to him. Only after tossing and turning and making various adjustments to the position of his body does he happen upon a posture that works: laying on his side with both arms outstretched languidly, Kakeru's body would find respite only when it formed the shape of the katakana character ヒ (*hi*). It is perhaps this moment that marks most clearly the beginning of Kakeru's imminent "transformation" into a cat.

Apparently in a dream state, the following lines from the Chinese writer Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" (1918) are splashed across the page, left unannotated, sandwiched between a pair of cat eyes. Functioning like an interlude between the time Kakeru falls asleep and the moment he wakes up, the words and their associations with Lu Xun increase the anxiety surrounding Kakeru's stay in Japan.

ΦΦ
獅子的凶心
兔子的怯弱
狐狸的狡猾
ΦΦ[411]

Savage as a lion, timid as a rabbit, crafty as a fox…

"Diary of a Madman" is an important literary text for many reasons, one of the most significant being its conscious engagement with language: though the preface to the text is written in classical Chinese, the diary entries of the titular madman, which constitute the body of the text, are

[411]Ibid., 107-8. The translation is from Lu Xun, *Diary of a Madman*, trans. William. A. Lyell, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories* (University of Hawaii Press, 1990): 35. The first translation into Japanese of *Diary of a Madman* was by Yoshimi Takeuchi, *Rojin bunshū vol. 1* (Chikuma bunko, 1983). His translation reads 獅子のような凶暴さ、兎の臆病、狐の狡猾…. (19).

composed in the vernacular. As Ann Huss is careful to point out, it is critical to understand Lu Xun's use of language in terms of the May Fourth movement. As she notes, the movement "refers both to the demonstrations that took place on May 4, 1919 and to the complex cultural and political developments that preceded and followed them." Huss continues,

> The most striking change brought about by the May Fourth movement in literary terms was that most writers discarded native literary language in favor of a language explicitly based on the grammatical construction, sentence cohesion, narrative forms, and rhetoric invention of Western models. The discourse of Chinese literature since the May Fourth period dwells on the notion of a singular, belated modernity, a modernity at once at odds with the classical Chinese literary tradition and simultaneously in awe of it. Hailed as the first modern fiction in Chinese history, short stories such as Lu Xun's "Diary [of a Madman]" represented Chinese tradition, and its linguistic and literary forms, as cannibalistic. Lu Xun's story begins with a preface written in classical Chinese, the written language of the literati, and continues in the vernacular in the diary proper. The ironic juxtaposition of these two languages in the story was revolutionary: the Madman's vernacular diary, with its enlightenment discourse, implicates the classical language of the preface for blinding Chinese to the violent reality of their tradition.[412]

As one of the earliest literary texts to incorporate the vernacular language, "Diary of a Madman" used the words of a madman to critique dogmatic systems of society and demonstrate how they might be penetrated and reveal truth, often shorthand for Western modes of knowledge (what Huss calls "enlightenment"). Lu Xun's ideas veered into the radical: his interest in language extended beyond "grammatical construction, sentence cohesion, narrative forms, and rhetoric invention of Western models" and into the realm of script. As scholar of Chinese literature Jianhua Chen notes, in the same year that "Diary" was published Lu Xun was already advocating for the total abandonment of Chinese characters.

> In order to promote the new literary movement, Hu Shi, Qian Xuantong, and others actively joined the Education Bureau to push the national language movement forward. As a prominent linguist, Qian was devoted to adopting

[412] Ann Huss, "The Madman that was Ah Q: Tradition and Modernity in Lu Xun's Fiction," in *The Columbia Companion to Modern East Asian Literature* (Columbia University Press, 2003): 386.

> *baihua* [白話; vernacular speech] as the national language; his famous slogan, "If Han [i.e., Chinese] characters were not terminated, China would surely die!" (*Hanzi bu mie, Zhongguo bi wang!* 漢字不滅，中國必亡！) was widely shared by many new writers. Lu Xun, for example, repeated this slogan on several occasions.[413]

For Lu Xun and those around him, the reformation of written language – which ranged in degree from changes in syntax to abandoning the very script it was written in – was understood to be critical for the health of the nation.[414] And while his cries for the abolishment of Chinese characters would not come to fruition, the written language (and thus literature) would indeed experience a shift from the literary language to a more vernacular style.[415]

Yokoyama's citation of Lu Xun is significant given the central role of language in *I Will Be a Cat*. It is also significant because Yokoyama is drawing a parallel between Lu Xun as a representative of China and various stand-ins for Japan, most notably Soseki. The ambivalent relationship between China and Japan mirrors Kakeru's own nebulous identity. Lu Xun, like Soseki to Japanese, is often referred to as the "father of modern Chinese literature."[416] It is only natural these two figures would meet in Yokoyama's world. The connections continue: Lu Xun was heavily influenced by Soseki while studying in Japan during the first decade of the twentieth

[413] Jianhua Chen, "The Linguistic Turns and Literary Fields in Twentieth-Century China," in *A Companion to Modern Chinese Literature* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015): 300.
[414] As Yasuda Toshiaki points out, the Romanization movement in China was also of interest to those in Japan. See Yasuda, *Kanji haishi no shisōshi* (Heibonsha, 2016): 253-4.
[415] Recall that cries to abandon Chinese characters could also be heard throughout Japan at precisely the same time; this is no coincidence, as many Chinese intellectuals were intimately familiar with the various emerging discourses from Japan and vice versa.
[416] Though there are numerous examples to cite, perhaps the most recent one comes from the *Routledge Handbook of Modern Chinese Literature* (Routledge, 2018): "Lu Xun's 'A Madman's Diary' (1918) is generally accepted as the first literary work of modern literature because it fulfills all the four requisites of a modern work. For this reason, Lu Xun has been regarded as the father of modern Chinese literature."

century.[417] Indeed, Patrick Hanan notes that Soseki's *I Am a Cat* was cited as a major influence on "The True Story of Ah Q" (1921).[418]

Less obvious – but just as important – is Yokoyama's references to the work of the aforementioned Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, an act that suggests Kakeru's troubled mental state. In terms of literary history, the relationship between Lu Xun and Soseki has received much attention; the literary relationship between Akutagawa and Lu Xun, however, is largely overlooked but equally important. The primary difference between the two relationships is the direction of influence: while Soseki influenced Lu Xun, the relationship between Lu Xun and Akutagawa was more complementary. As Christopher Keaveney notes in his discussion about the White Birch Society's (*Shirakaba-ha*) influence on May Fourth writers, Lu Xun and his younger brother Zhou Zuoren included two of Akutagawa's stories in their influential *Anthology of Modern Japanese Literature* (1923), all of which were translated by either Zhou or Lu Xun.[419] Beyond that, the depiction of madness as a reaction to modernity in the literature of Lu Xun and Akutagawa is strikingly similar. If the linguistically informed psychological breakdown experienced by the narrator of Akutagawa's *Cogwheels* reminds one of Kakeru's anxieties, it is the madman narrator of Akutagawa's *Kappa* (1927) that suggests to the reader that madness is the only way out. Recall, though, that "Diary of a Madman" preceded *Kappa* by nearly a decade. It is possible, then, to read the (fictional) Author's Preface to *Kappa* as an homage to Lu Xun's "Diary."

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[417] There has been much work in both Chinese and Japanese on the relationship between these two figures. Some examples in Japanese include Hisao Hiyamas's *Russia no kage: Natsume Sōseki to Rojin* (Heibonsha, 1985) and Guodon Li's *Sōseki to Rojin no hikaku bungaku kenkyū* (Meiji shoin, 1993). In Chinese, I found Zhiting Luo and Shū Akiyoshi's "Lǔxùn yǔ Xiàmù Shùshí: shèhuì pīpíng, wénmíng pīpíng de shòuróng yǔ xiāngwéi" (鲁迅与夏目漱石:社会批评、文明批评的受容与相违), *Studies in Languages and Cultures* 40 (Kyushu University Press, 2018): 27-39, to be especially useful.

[418] Patrick Hanan, "The Technique of Lu Xun's Fiction" in *Chinese Fiction of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century: Essays* (Columbia University Press, 2004): 219.

[419] Christopher Keaveney, *Beyond Brushtalk: Sino-Japanese Literary Exchange in the Interwar Period* (Hong Kong University Press, 2009): 72. The two texts were "Rashomon" and "The Nose."

> This is the story of Patient No. 23 in one of our mental homes. He will tell his story whenever he can persuade anyone to listen.
>
> He must be beyond thirty yet, at first glance, *he is a very young looking madman*. Perhaps it is the madness that gives him his youth. He'll go through the experiences of half a lifetime, before he came to this home; how, for instance, how he… No, I think we should do better to leave such details for a while.
>
> He told his story at great length and in close detail as I listened with the doctor in charge of the mental home. All the time he spoke, he kept his arms clasped tightly round his knees. Occasionally he would glance out beyond the window where, through the iron grille, you could see a bare oak tree, with not even a single withered lead left on the black branches reaching towards the threatening snow-clouds.[420]

The "madman" of the second line, 狂人 (*kyōjin*), is the same term used in the "madman" of Lu Xun's "Diary of a Madman" (狂人日記). Fujii Shōzō posits that Lu Xun's first encounter with Akutagawa's literature was likely towards the end of 1918, and he would go on to translate his most famous early piece, "The Nose" (1916) into Chinese in 1921.[421] Furthermore, Fujii convincingly demonstrates the close relationship between Akutagawa's "Mori Sensei" (1918) and Lu Xun's "Kong Yiji" (1919).[422] Compare the opening of *Kappa* with the opening of Lu Xun's introduction to "Diary."

> There was once a pair of male siblings whose actual names I beg your indulgence to withhold. Suffice it to say that we three were boon companions during our school years. Subsequently, circumstances contrived to render us asunder so that we were gradually bereft of knowledge regarding each other's activities.
>
> Not too long ago, however, I chanced to hear that one of them had been hard afflicted with a dreaded disease. I obtained this intelligence at a time when I happened to be returning to my native haunts and, hence, made so bold as to detour somewhat from my normal course in order to visit them. I encountered but one of the siblings. He apprised me that it had been his younger brother who had suffered the dire illness. By now, however, he had long since become sound

[420] Ryūnosuke Akutagawa, *Kappa*, trans. Geoffrey Bownas (Charles E. Tuttle, 1970): 45. I altered the underlined portion for accuracy. Bownas' translation reads: "He must be beyond thirty yet, at first glance, he has the looks of a man much younger." Akutagawa's original reads 彼はもう三十を越してゐるであらう。が、一見した所は如何にも若々しい狂人である.
[421] Fujii, 111.
[422] Fujii, 102-10.

> and fit again; in fact he had already repaired to other parts to await a substantive official appointment.
>
> The elder brother apologized for having needlessly put me to the inconvenience of this visitation, and concluding his disquisition with a hearty smile, showed me two volumes of diaries which, he assured me, would reveal the nature if his brother's disorder during those fearful days.
>
> As to the *lapsus calami* that occur in the course of the diaries, I have altered not a word. Nonetheless, I have changed all the names, despite the fact that their publication would be of no great consequence since they are all humble villagers unknown to the world at large.
>
> Recorded this 2nd day in the 7th year of the Republic.[423]

Reference to "madman" (*kyōjin*) aside, the framing of the story – a madman that understands social reality better than a sane person – is a striking similarity between the two.[424] Nevertheless, the point here is that Yokoyama is drawing on the connections between Natsume Soseki, Lu Xu, and Akutagawa Ryunosuke, and projecting Kakeru as an amalgamation of all three.

Throughout *I Will Be a Cat*, Lu Xun is being referenced at the metalevel, too: the preface informs the reader that Yokoyama himself is a Japanese national studying abroad in China. This is yet another instance of inversion by Yokoyama that suggests Lu Xun's study sojourn in Japan. If one of Lu Xun's greatest early literary triumphs was the creation of literary realness through the use of vernacular Chinese, then we might say that Yokoyama's triumph is the creation of a similar realness through the use of a personal vernacular. This personal vernacular – one that not only captures Kakeru's biscriptal identity but also its fluid nature – is a result of Kakeru's identity

[423] Lu Xun, trans. Lyell, 29. If the translation sounds stilted, that is because Lyell has attempted to recreate the register of Lu Xun's original. Recall that the preface was written in literary language while the body of the text in the vernacular. The original Chinese follows: 某君昆仲，今隱其名，皆余昔日在中學時良友；分隔多年，消息漸闕。日前偶聞其一大病；适歸故鄉，迂道往訪，則僅晤一人，言病者其弟也。勞君遠道來視，然已早愈，赴某地候補 2 矣。因大笑，出示日記二冊，謂可見當日病狀，不妨獻諸舊友。持歸閱一過，知所患蓋"迫害狂"之類。語頗錯雜無倫次，又多荒唐之言；亦不著月日，惟墨色字体不一，知非一時所書。間亦有略具聯絡者，今撮錄一篇，以供醫家研究。記中語誤，一字不易；惟人名雖皆村人，不為世間所知，無關大体，然亦悉易去。至于書名，則本人愈后所題，不复改也。七年四月二日識. Based on Lu Xun, *Kuángrén rìjì, Lǔ Xùn quánjí: vol. 1* (Rénmín wénxué chūbǎn shè, 1961): 9

[424] For more information on the relationship between Akutagawa and Lu Xun, see chapters three and four of Fujii, *Lu Xun to Nihon bungaku: Sōseki, Ōgai kara Seichō, Haruki made* (Tokyo daigaku shuppankai, 2015).

confusion: it is no accident that after meandering through a series of non-standard external forms the text eventually settles on a style that suggests an acceptance of his "double" existence.

But let's not get ahead of ourselves. Returning to the narrative, Kakeru awakes from an uneasy sleep, remembering he had a dream but not remembering what it was about. His phone has fallen between the wall and the bed, and his pillow is covered in drool. At the mention of "dream" (*yume*) Yokoyama is again signaling Lu Xun, this time the Preface to *Cheering from the Sidelines* (1923). This anthology, which included "Diary of a Madman," opens with a bleak view of dreams.

> As a young man I had my share of dreams too. Later on I forgot most of them but saw nothing in the least regrettable about that. To be sure, reminiscence can afford us pleasure, but it can occasionally make us lonely too, and keep the threads of our spirits attached to still other periods of loneliness that have long since gone by. In that case, what point can there possibly be in reminiscing? The trouble is that I have not been able to forget everything, and the part I *haven't* been able to forget is the source of this volume, *Cheering from the Sidelines*.[425]

Kakeru switches on the television and happens upon a television show he watched as a child together with his mother.[426] Catching himself slipping into nostalgia – "the reminiscence" that "occasionally makes us lonely" – Kakeru leaves his hotel room and heads to Toranoana, the shop his friend Zenan insisted he visit and purchase a video game.[427] Finding his way to the shop, he asks the clerk where he can find the video game in question and is presently instructed to go behind the "pink curtains" (*pinku no noren*).[428] Kakeru soon realizes he is in the adult section and, before

[425] Lu Xun, trans. by Lyell, 21. The original reads: 我在年青時候也曾經做過許多夢，後來大半忘卻了，但自己也並不以為可惜。所謂回憶者，雖說可以使人歡欣，有時也不免使人寂寞，使精神的思縷還牽著已逝的寂寞時光，又有什麼意味呢，而我偏苦於不能全忘卻，這不能全忘的一部份，到現在便成了『吶喊』的來由, (3)

[426] The television show is a variety program hosted by popular actor Tamori (Morita Kazuyoshi). Though not mentioned by name, he is alluded to by his trademark dark sunglasses.

[427] Toranoana, meaning "tiger's lair," is a real shop in Japan. They currently have fifteen branches with their flagship store located in Akihabara. Though they specialize in selling anime and manga related goods, they are perhaps most well-known for their extensive collection of *dōjinshi*, self-published works of manga, magazines, etc. These often include fanfics. Though I am not exploring it in this study, it is quite possible to read the entirety of *I Will Be a Cat* as a fanfic or at least a fanciful expansion of Soseki's *I Am a Cat*.

[428] Yokoyama, 110.

he can fully processes his surroundings, develops an erection. In the midst of confusion and anger he runs out of the store and curses Zenan. But a promise is a promise: he collects himself and purchases the game at a nearby shop.[429]

Tired from walking around Akihabara and exhausted from all the stimulation, Kakeru takes a break at a nearby café. Entering a building he assumes to be a coffee shop, he has unknowingly stumbled into a maid café (*meido kissa*). Here, where waitresses dress in maid outfits and treat customers like "masters" (*go-shujin-sama*), Kakeru feels as if he has been transported to another world. The moment he steps into the café he is greeted in an unfamiliar way: "Welcome home, master!" (*okaerinasaimasee go-shujin-sama nyaan!*). He instinctively responds with "I'm home" (*tadaima kaerimashita*), but is thrown off by the phrase and the sentence ending *nyan*: unbeknownst to Kakeru, *nyan* is the onomatopoetic representation of a cat's meow in Japanese as well as being a sexualized sign in the otaku community his friend Zenan is entrenched in.[430] Kakeru, for his part, notices immediately that the waitresses have cat tails attached to their uniforms. Since Kakeru himself is not a member of this community, there is little reason to suspect the cat-like appearance of the waitresses signify anything to him beyond any feline associations. Nevertheless, he quickly realizes this is no normal café.

[429] For the sake of brevity, I have omitted the entire subplot surrounding "K," a girl both he and Zenan became romantically interested in while students.

[430] Ibid., 119. The *nya(n)* or *nyo* – all meaning "meow" in Japanese – intersects critically with the structure of so-called otaku culture and the importance of what cultural critic Azuma Hiroki has called "database consumption" and "*moe* elements." Speaking specifically on the cat-like character Puchiko from the well-known anime *Di Gi Charat*, he says: "These self -parodying descriptions clearly indicate the fragile position of this work. Digiko has cat ears and speaks with '*-nyo*' (the Japanese sound for 'meow') at the end of her sentences. This is not because cat ears or the '*nyo*' endings are exactly attractive themselves, but because both cat ears and peculiar sentence endings are *moe*elements and, to be exact, because the otaku of the 1990s accepted them as *moe*-elements as they became aware of the whole structure of this process," in Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (University of Minnesota Press, 2009): 47.

おまたせいたしましたーこちらはいたりあんねこまんまになりまーす。おきゃくさまーわたくしがあいじょーこめてこのこなちーずをふりふりしますのでーおこのみのりょーになったところでーねこのてでにゃんにゃんーとげんきよくーにかいおっしゃってくださいにゃん！」

といって舞る鰹魚花が蓋った番茄鶏肉炒飯に身体を弯弯曲曲、尾巴を揺揺晃晃させながら粉末芝士を振掛ける。男は恰好を估計らって両手をすっと正面に挙げて拳頭をつくり、そのまま手腕をまえに垂らした状態で、「にゃんにゃん！」と喊してふりふりを制した。すこし勢い余ったせいか、自分は「にゃんにゃん」と听こえた。

I'm sorry to have kept you waiting – here is Italian-style neko manma*!*[431] *My dear customer, I am going to shake grated cheese onto your plate with a heaping serving of love – when I've given you enough please make kitty hands and give me two energetic* nyan nyans*!*

Saying that, she made her tail sway and her body shake while she sprinkled grated cheese atop the chicken fried rice adorned with dancing bonito flakes. The man, eyeing her, softly lifted both of his hands, made fists and, having suspended his wrists in front of him, screamed out *nyan nyan!*, thus stopping the sprinkling of grated cheese.[432]

Kakeru, watching this scene from a distance, feels disconnected. His disconnect is emphasized visually on the page: the dialogue of the waitresses are all in hiragana whereas his internal dialogue continues to be written in a mix of the Chinese lexicon with Japanese readings and grammar. Kakeru's phone suddenly rings and snaps him out of his reverie. It is his mother.

- *Where are you?*
- *Tokyo.*
- *Where in Tokyo?*
- *Akihabara.*
- *Where in Akihabara?*

[431] *Neko manma* (猫飯), literally "cat food," is a simple dish of rice mixed with any type of topping, usually leftovers from the night before. As described in this scene, it is often topped with *katsuobushi*, or dried bonito flakes.
[432] Yokoyama, 120-1.

Here again the script changes with the dialogue: now, all text is written in the simplified Chinese character set. Furigana appear on the first line of text (你在哪儿 *ima doko?*, "where are you now?") but completely disappear thereafter (e.g., 东京的哪儿？, "where in Tokyo?"). In a moment of deep foreboding, Kakeru loses phone reception just as he is about to answer her line of inquisition. At this moment, when it seems as if he has lost all connection to the outside world, a waitress approaches him to take his order. Everything on the menu is outrageously expensive – so much so that Kakeru wants to leave – but he cannot find the courage to do so. He decides to order a cup of coffee.

> *You'd like a Mike Neko Coffee! Nice choice! Mako-nyan will stir milk and brown sugar into your coffee while chanting a spell to make it yummy! Dear customer, is this your first time joining us here at Maid Café Mike Neko?*[433]

He says yes, and Mako-nyan, who refers to herself in the third-person, continues.

> *At this shop, it is the rule that even our customers become cats with us! Is that OK-nyan?*

"Even our customers," Kakeru thinks to himself. At the waitress' mention of cats Kakeru's mind shoots somewhere else: "I wonder if Sensei is doing well" (*ogenki de irassharu darōka*), he says to himself in unexpectedly polite language. Suddenly, he begins imagining (遐想 *kasō*) – daydreaming, really – about Sensei.[434] The waitress informs Kakeru that once he blows out the candles she is about to light for him he will be transformed into a cat. She confirms his willingness, he hesitatingly agrees, and she begins.

> *Yes, that's the spirit! Don't you dare be embarrassed! This is a place where you come to relax and just let go. OK, let's start! Ahhh, Mako-nyan forgot something important! Wait one second! …Now where is it? …Shoko-nyan, let me borrow*

[433] Miko Neko Café is a real maid café located in Akihabara. Note that it is not uncommon for women to refer to themselves in the third person (e.g., Mako-nayan) in order to affect cuteness.

[434] 遐想 (*kasō*) is different from the homophonous 仮想 in its severity: the former means "to have a reverie about someone far away" while the latter means simply "to imagine." Yokoyama wants to highlight the emotional depth of Kakeru's longing and/or association with Sensei.

a pen. …Thank you. Dear customer, this is an erasable pen so please don't worry! Here we go! Say one, two, three. One, two three. Perfect. That's it! Oh, it looks great on you! All right, are you mentally [kokoro] prepared? Here we go – make up your mind to become a cat!

After saying that, Mako-nyan then lit the play candles.

Tadah----! Welcome to Cats World! Nyan nyan nyan![435]

Once again, the narrative is immediately cut off by those two cat eyes. Visually, the text has undergone a major shift in this new subsection: all kanji and hiragana have disappeared only to be replaced by katakana. Kakeru is confused, trying to understand both where he is and what happened to him. He has also developed a rather cynical tone. The subsection, in its entirety, follows.

> …my mind is hazy… where am i... who the hell are these people... such strange beings… they annoy me, walking on two legs… their faces are all shiny [*tsurutsuru*], rather like a teakettle… they even produce [*kosaete*] fake ears and what, are they supposed to be cats… trying to make fools of felines… the ground is slippery [*tsurutsuru*], tough to walk on… is there no soil here… ugh, and it stinks… i'm hungry… isn't there anything to eat... i smell dried fish… you also eat fish, huh… fish is my [*wagahai*] favorite food… share some with me… *nom nom nom*… what is this… it smells like fish but it looks like tree shavings… what, and they're still alive… they wriggle, curl up, smell rotten… do you all enjoy eating this... even a madman [*kichigai*] would be impressed… my claws are bothering me… i wonder if there's anything i can use… it feels weird if i'm not clawing something… it seems this wall has some good scratching… what… they're all looking at me… are cats really all that rare… making all of that noise… are they that afraid of me… are you trying to tell me this is your territory…[436]

The consciousness of the narrator here has changed. Together with a shift to *wagahai* – the same first-person pronoun used by the cat protagonist in Soseki's *I Am a Cat* – his identity has transformed into something altogether different from the *jibun* we have been reading about: the eyes from which this speaker sees the world (viewing himself as different from the humans; self-

[435] Ibid., 123-5.
[436] Ibid., 126-8.

identifying as a cat; little knowledge of food regularly consumed by humans; use of the lofty first-person pronoun *wagahai*) lacks the lived experience of Kakeru. Kakeru's consciousness, it seems, has fused with, or is at least imitating, that of Sensei; the "reverie" (遐想) of Sensei into which Kakeru slipped into earlier has returned. For this brief moment it seems Kakeru *becomes* Sensei. And even if his physical transformation is doubtful – and doubtful it is – his mental transformation is clear: having reached a breaking point, and at the urging of Mako-nyan, Kakeru wills himself to transformation and, as a result, experiences a breakthrough. This Sensei, the result of his transformation, is itself a nebulous concept, one tied up with Kakeru's longing for Soseki's Sensei, the Sensei given to him by his father, and the Sensei of the park. Kakeru's Sensei, then, is a complex combination of all three.

The next section, which undergoes yet another shift in both tone and style, brings a sense of control back to the narrator while he is still physically in the maid café. It also includes a scene suggestive of a rebirth. However, as I will explain shortly, this scene, coupled with the previous one, is intentionally misleading.

> Just as I was able to get on my hands and knees on the [slippery] floor someone smacked the side of my face with great force. It was a long-haired man with a dark face that I hadn't noticed until just now. At this moment, and under these circumstances, my mind had no room to process what was going on. There's a woman crying. The man in the suit was now gone. Mako-nyan was sitting with her buttocks on the floor. Her hands were planted firmly on the ground but didn't try to stand up. Her two kneecaps were exposed from beneath a black skirt while a translucent fluid flowed out and followed the ridges of the tile. I placed my hands on the ground, stood up, paid the bill quickly, and left the shop.[437]

In the previous section Kakeru "transformed" into a cat while in this section he has transitioned back into a human. Yokoyama makes this clear through his use of language: the

[437] Ibid., 128.

imagery of getting on all fours (*yotsunbai* 四つン爬い) suggests the shape of a cat but refers here to a human activity.

The two exposed kneecaps peeking out from beneath Mako-nyan's black skirt (*kuroi sukaato no shita kara kashira o nozokaseta hiza to hiza*) is meant to conjure images of a head emerging from below her skirt: the word for kneecap in Japanese (*hizagashira* 膝頭) includes 頭 *kashira*, "head." The character 頭 itself can be read either *atama* or *kashira* – and left unannotated in Yokoyama's text we can never be sure – but given its close proximity to *hiza* (knee), the reading of *kashira* seems most appropriate.[438] The translucent fluid (*hantō mei no ekitai*) is Mako-nyan's urine, likley a response to the shock of the whole situation.[439] Rushing out of the shop, and in a state of confusion, Kakeru is assaulted by sounds.

> I crouched down just as I got out of the elevator. My mind was hazy. I can hear something in the distance. Like a sleepwalker, my feet began to move in the direction from whence the noise was coming.
>
> I moved just as if I were swimming within the city lights, the neon signs, and car headlights. Countless times I bumped into people, nearly toppling over. I have no idea how far I walked. And yet, I knew I was getting gradually closer to the source of the sound.
>
> *BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!*[440]

Drawn to the sound like a moth to the flame, Kakeru is overcome yet again by all the stimulation. The loud roar (轟鳴), seemingly enough to tear Kakeru's eardrum, suddenly stops.

> The stillness of the night seeped into the ground, at precisely the same time a kaleidoscope of richly colored giant butterflies rushed in from in front of me. There were so many it was difficult to stand. Batting the swarm of butterflies

[438] There are in fact any other number of readings, almost all archaic: *kō be*, *kaburi*, *tsumuri*, etc. Though it is possible to detect certain differences between them – for example, as a general rule, *atama* refers to the head of living objects while *kashira* refers to the head of inanimate objects – the reality is far more complex than this. There are at least three explicit references to "kneecaps" (*hizagashira*) in Soseki's *I Am a Cat*.
[439] Note that this episode also resonates with a line from Soseki's *I Am a Cat* that I reference later in this chapter.
[440] Ibid., 129.

> away with both hands I proceeded to enter the deep. Something like a package came boiling up to the surface from the depths of my body. In my right hand I was gripping a baseball. Three fingers were holding the ball so tightly it might have changed shape. My eyes were focused in the direction of where the sound had been coming. I mustered enough strength to throw the ball into the vacuum of the empty space (*kokū*) of darkness.[441]

This loud, violent noise – one that is enough to cause physical harm to Kakeru – brings about another moment of realization. A catharsis of sorts, the moment described here is reminiscent of, but certainly different from, Joyce's "epiphany" or O'Connor's "moment of grace."[442] Kakeru's lack of religiosity notwithstanding, Yokoyama's primary concerns in *I Will Be a Cat* are rooted in thoroughly modernist ones informed by perhaps the most influential modernist author from Japan, Soseki. By continuing the theme of discontent with the modern – surely a major theme of Soseki's works such as *Kokoro* and *I Am a Cat* – Yokoyama is taking up unresolved questions of identity in the 21st century.

This question of identity is thrust to the forefront of this, the penultimate section of *I Will Be a Cat*. From the moment those cat eyes appear, that is, the moment Kakeru "becomes" a cat, his chosen first-person pronoun (*jibun*) slips away from him: whilst a cat it shifts to the lofty *wagahai*; whilst on all fours in the maid café he does not use one. When understood from context, the Japanese language does not necessitate the verbalization of a sentence's topic (e.g., the "I" of a sentence). However, given its ubiquity throughout the text, its absence is striking. In a manner of speaking, Kakeru is in a state of having lost himself.

And what of the connection between the sound and the butterflies? This "kaleidoscope" of giant butterflies rushing towards Kakeru calls to him; he is drawn to the sound, and from within that sound he locates the source: a baseball contained within himself. But why does he throw it

[441] Ibid., 129-30.
[442] For a discussion of "epiphany" see Robert Scholes and Florence Walzl, "The Epiphanies of Joyce," *Modern Language Association* 82:1 (1967); for "moments of grace," see Bob Dowell, "The Moment of Grace in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor," *College English* 27:3 (1965).

away? This moment of release – which curiously resembles the vanquishing of the No-face (*Kaonashi*) in Miyazaki Hayao's acclaimed film *Spirited Away* (2001) – suggests a confrontation with the trauma of identity through a direct confrontation with it.[443] This confrontation between cat and butterfly was unsurprisingly foreshadowed by Soseki himself. Yokoyama, it seems, had a particular haiku by Soseki in mind:

蝶去つてまた蹲踞る小猫かな

chō satte mata uzukumaru koneko kana

After the butterfly's gone / It settles down: / A kitten[444]

Set squarely in spring, the haiku describes the moment a kitten replants itself on the floor after the butterfly it was chasing flutters away. Shigematsu's translation, despite adroitly capturing the essence of the poem, flattens the sense of repetition contained in the original: what he translates as "[i]t settles down" could more literally be translated "again, it squats." Though perhaps less poetic, "again" (*mata*) suggests repetition while the action of crouching (*uzukumaru*) leaves the impression of an energetic kitten lying in wait and ready to pounce. Soseki's poem, then, suggests the cyclical nature of the unending chase, a chase that has a parallel in the shifting styles and pronouns of Kakeru's psyche.

There are other textual hints that Yokoyama had this poem in mind: after rushing out of the maid café and getting off of the elevator, we are told that Kakeru squatted. The word Yokoyama

[443] Gitte Marianne Hansen explains the significance of this scene from *Spirited Away* in her important study *Femininity, Self-harm and Eating Disorders in Japan: Navigating Contradiction in Narrative and Visual Culture* (Routledge, 2016): "And when she forces the bathhouse intruder Kaonashi [No-face] to vomit by feeding it the remaining portion of Okusaresama's [Stink God] herbal cake, her act resembles bulimics using emetic medicine as a purification tool to rid themselves of the consumed and become clean" (162). Though the context is certainly different, it is nevertheless noteworthy that in the previous scene Kakeru was seem eating something he found unpalatable. The image of purging one's trauma – the trauma that lay within – through violent means seems clear.

[444] Sōiku Shigematsu, *Zen Haiku: Poems and Letters of Natsume Sōseki* (Weatherhill, 1994): 31. The poem is from 1911 and is no. 2262 in *Natsume Sōseki zenshū: vol 17 haiku shika* (Iwanami, 2003). I have modified the orthography of Shigematsu's translation.

uses for the action, *shagamikomu*, has been written with an irregular kanji: 蹲. This particular character, which appears in the common character string 蹲踞 (*sonkyo*), "to crouch down; crouching," is seldom encountered in isolation. Thus, the close proximity of the squatting (*uzukumaru*) kitten chasing butterflies in Soseki's haiku with a squatting (*shagamikomu*) Kakeru chasing giant butterflies – the actions of which are connected through the shared usage of 蹲 – is evidence enough to suggest intention on the part of Yokoyama. For the butterfly-chasing Kakeru, the question of identity is tied to script, and it is only when his identity becomes stable that his script practice can reach equilibrium. Equilibrium is reached, it seems, when Kakeru throws the baseball contained within him deep into "the vacuum of the empty space of darkness" that Sensei was staring into on that park bench back in Suzhou.

4.4.4 Section Four: Kakeru Returns Home

Kakeru is beginning his return trip to China via Narita Airport in the final and shortest section of the piece. On the train to the airport, he is seemingly his old self with some important differences: the first, and perhaps most notable, is a change in the first-person pronoun. Abandoning *jibun* for *ore*, Kakeru's tone slips into a more familiar one. In terms of style, there is little to suggest at first glance a non-standard Japanese text: there are no furigana, katakana is, as to be expected, peppered throughout the base text without any furigana, and the orthography has returned to a normal (i.e., standard) form. As I will discuss in my analysis of script, however, readers quickly encounter something unexpected in this final style that Yokoyama employs: unannotated characters.

Yokoyama ends the novel with Kakeru addressing Sensei and making reference to intellectual concepts from both Chinese and Japanese traditions.

> Sensei, how are you? What's your world like? Does the world even exist? *Heaven and man are one* and *follow heaven and the self will leave*.[445] You said those worthless words have no bearing on those things we do every day: *walking, standing, sitting, lying* and *excreting waste*, didn't you?[446] *If we want to eat, we eat; if we want to sleep, we sleep; when we are angry, we are angry utterly; when we cry, we cry with all the desperation of extreme commitment to our grief*, you said that's what it means to become a cat.
>
> Heaven of all places has not a single cloud; it is silent and expressionless. It is simply opened to the infinity, and its cool-looking face neutralizes everything; a little self-important, it's silent. Just like a gravestone.

Parting – a dream, one stream: the Milky Way[447]

If *I Will Be a Cat* is to be read as a traditional bildungsroman and, as I suggest, the shifting first-person pronouns and scripts used by Kakeru reflect changes in his psyche, then it stands to reason that the script he settles on – i.e., the script used in the final section of the piece – reflects something resembling a resolution to his trauma. This resolution, though, does not result in a choice between two objects; instead, it results in a new style resulting from a dialogue between a Chinese and

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[445] *Heaven and man are one* is a translation of the Chinese phrase 天人合一 (*tiānrén héyī*) while *follow heaven and the self will leave* is a translation of Soseki's famous 則天去私 (*sokuten kyoshi*). The source of the latter is the *Taishō 6: bunshō nikki* (Shinchōsha, 1917). For an extended discussion on its meaning in English, see Ueda Shizuteru and Jan Van Bragt, "Sōseki and Buddhism: Reflections on His Later Works Part One," *The Eastern Buddhist* 29:2 (1996): 172-206.

[446] The reference here is to a conversation that occurs early on in *I Am a Cat*. In Ito and Wilson's translation the section in question reads: "Compared with such complexities, cats are truly simple. If we want to eat, we eat; if we want to sleep, we sleep; when we are angry, we are angry utterly; when we cry, we cry with all the desperation of extreme commitment to our grief. Thus we never keep things like diaries. For what would be the point? No doubt human beings like my two faced master find it necessary to keep diaries in order to display in a darkened room that true character so assiduously hidden from the world. But among cats both our four main occupations (walking, standing, sitting, and lying down) and such incidental activities as excreting waste are pursued quite openly. We live our diaries, and consequently have no need to keep a daily record as a means of maintaining our real characters. Had I the time to keep a diary, I'd use that time to better effect; sleeping on the veranda" (Book II). The original reads: 猫などはそこへ行くと単純なものだ。食いたければ食い、寝たければ寝る、怒るときは一生懸命に怒り、泣くときは絶体絶命に泣く。第一日記などという無用のものは決してつけない。つける必要がないからである。主人のように裏表のある人間は日記でも書いて世間に出されない自己の面目を暗室内に発揮する必要があるかも知れないが、我等猫属に至ると行住坐臥、行屎送尿ことごとく真正の日記であるから、別段そんな面倒な手数をして、己れの真面目を保存するには及ばぬと思う。日記をつけるひまがあるなら椽側に寝ているまでの事さ。

[447] Yokoyama, 134-5. I would like to thank Matthew Mewhinney for allowing me to use, and slightly modify, his translation of this haiku. The original reads *wakaruru ya yume hitosuji no ama no gawa* and appears in Soseki's *Omoidasu koto nado* (1910). Maria Flutsch has translated it "A dream parting, / The single thread of the Milky Way."

Japanese one. As my analysis demonstrates, this final style represents compression of his reality: namely, Kakeru accepts that he is, at all times, both Chinese and Japanese. This status of simultaneity is emphasized in the realization that, at every turn, the script used exists in Kakeru's mind alone.

The path to Kakeru's resolution is visualized throughout by a script practice that is both overt and oblique: while the narrator discusses style (*buntai*) on various occasions, the question of the performativity of script in *I Will Be a Cat* is never discussed in a self-referential manner. Instead, these concerns manifest throughout the text's external form.

4.5 The Five Major Script Styles of *I Will Be a Cat*

In this section I analyze the five major script styles employed by Yokoyama in the four sections of *I Will Be a Cat*. Images illustrating each style have been appended to the end of this chapter.

4.5.1 Style One: Japanese grammatical base using a Chinese lexicon written in the modern standard Japanese character set.

This orthography comprises more than 70% of the text. In Image 1 the graph 墻 of the opening line is made to be read *kabe* ("wall") through the use of furigana. This is indeed the primary lexical meaning of 墻 (*qiáng*) in modern Chinese, conventionally written in the variant 墙.[448] Though 墻 is occasionally used in Japanese, it is generally regarded as a quasi-allograph of

[448] Konno Shinji's insistence of a separation between graph/character variety (*jishu*), allograph/character form (*jitai*), character style (*jikei*), and typeface (*shotai*) is essential for a serious analysis of the script employed in *I Am a Cat* and in Japanese-language literature in general. "Graphs" generally refer to what I have been calling kanji and kana. "Allographs," borrowing Qiu Xigui's definition from *Writing Chinese* (Society for the Study of Early China, 1988), are "characters which have the same pronunciation and meaning but have different outward form" (297). Thus 賣 (shared traditional character set) and 売 (Jpn.) 'to sell' are allographs. "Character form" is, as its name suggests, the particular form in which a character appears. While 賣 and 売 are allographs (i.e., the same kanji concept) their character forms are different. "Character style" is the individual quirks of writing that appear in handwritten texts: if ten people write 売 there is a chance that ten people will produce a character with different accentuations, stroke orders, etc. Style here refers to the stylization of a character that is not regarded as significant enough to render identification difficult or significant enough to become a new character form. "Typeface" refers to the way a character appears in various calligraphic forms and fonts. Konno, *Jōyō kanji no rekishi* (Chūō kōron, 2015): 10-14.

垣 (“fence”), both sharing the reading of *kaki*.[449] A “fence,” of course, is semantically related to, but significantly different from, a “wall.” These characters, then, are best understood as false friends. More specifically, 墻 and 墻 resemble what Pedro Dominguez and Brigitte Nerlich call “semantic false friends,”

> words that are graphically and/or phonetically similar in various languages, but their meanings have diverged. […] Semantic false friends have the same etymological origin but different meanings in each of these languages. These different meaning are, however, related to each other by various figurative links.[450]

The difference here between what this character looks like in modern Chinese and what it looks like in modern Japanese is minor, but the characters are not interchangeable: by writing 牆 or 墻 (*kaki*) as 墻, the reading *kaki* becomes incorrect because the reading of *kaki* would transform the meaning of 墻 to “fence” instead of wall. Confused yet? It gets more complicated.

Particularly striking is the three-character kanji combination witnessed in the same line: 積雨雲. Meaning “cumulonimbus” in the modern Chinese lexicon and presumably read *sekiuun* in Japanese, Yokoyama’s choice to leave it unannotated will cause most readers of modern standard Japanese to pause given that this term does not appear in the modern Japanese lexicon: the word for “cumulonimbus” is *sekiran’un* (積乱雲). A single character has been replaced by another (雨 with 乱), but these small linguistic concessions are the rule with Kakeru rather than the exception.

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[449] This generally holds true in the realm of literature, too. Towards the end of Book 12 of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Gakumon no susume* (1872-76) one encounters または兄弟墻(けいていかき)に鬩(せめ)ぐのその間に; in Akutagawa’s “Sennin” (1922) we find さて、まわりに人の墻(かき)が出来ると; and a letter (1933) from Hori Tatsuo to fellow novelist Maruoka Akira contains the line いつもパイプをくはへて、生墻（病院の裏）の方へ身をこごめながら. In the first two examples furigana make the *kaki* reading explicit while in the final example we can assume with high likelihood that the two-character combination 生墻 is a variant orthography for the more common 生垣 (“hedge”) and thus ought to be read *ikegaki*.

[450] It is more accurate to modify Chamizo and Nerlich’s phraseology here and call these charaters “graphical false friends.” Pedro Chamizo and Brigitte Nerlich, “False Friends: Their Origin and Semantics in Some Selected Languages,” *Journal of Pragmatics* 34 (2002): 1836.

The domestication of the Chinese lexicon is further highlighted by the form the kanji takes: if written in the simplified Chinese character set the three characters would be written 积雨云 and 積亂雲 in the (shared) traditional character set. Table 4-1 illustrates both how minor and/or major these changes in character form can be.[451]

Table 4-1. Comparison of character forms.

Semantic Meaning	Traditional Character	Simplified Character (Ch.)	Simplified Character (Jp.)
'wall'	牆	墙	墻
'to send off; emit'	發	发	発
'to read'	讀	读	読
'dragon'	龍	龙	竜

Again, what might seem to be an innocuous replacement of a single character is, upon reflection, more relevant to Yokoyama's narrative than not:

> On the wall to my left were two giant, half-naked men who, resembling a white cumulonimbus cloud, grappled with the other's arm. It was a flat painting with no depth. On the side was a man holding an *uchiwa* as well as numerous men surrounding the two. Though these men were clothed, their heads, too, just like the half-naked men, were adorned with a Mao Zedong-style haircut.[452]

The scene describes Kakeru, who has just sat down at a ramen restaurant, and the way he processes his surroundings. Much like the feline narrator of Soseki's *I Am a Cat*, Kakeru looks around at the world with fresh eyes; he's looking at a picture of two sumo wrestlers engaged in battle but does not process it as such. Instead, the lens through which he "sees" the picture is rooted in a worldview that likens these "two giant, half-naked men" to a cumulonimbus cloud (積雨雲) linked to its (and his) relationship with the Chinese lexicon. And yet, written in the modern standard Japanese script, there is also a clear willingness to shift one's point of engagement from China to Japan.

[451] Note that these distinctions between character sets is generally based on various official lists and educational policies. It does not take into account handwritten variations and, for example, shorthand.
[452] Yokoyama, 12-3.

This first style of script is characterized by a Chinese lexicon written in the current Japanese character set; these elements come together in a way that suggests Kakeru's attempt to locate a "Japaneseness" within himself. The lack of annotation on 積雨雲, an act that suggests Kakeru's liminality, foreshadows a situation where a deeply imbedded Chinese lexicon prevents his assimilation into the Japanese linguistic environment. Yokoyama (the author) does not annotate three characters so as to highlight the extent to which Kakeru (the narrator) is tied to the Japanese context and vice versa. This situation resonates with Sakiyama's call for "guerilla warfare" and, in particular, her inclusion of linguistic "booby traps" that shatter the notion of a monolithic "Japanese language" from within. At this stage, Kakeru's attitude towards Japan[ese] is hopeful and yet, if the cumulonimbus problem is any indicator, his desire for a stable relationship with Japan[ese] will not be easily realized.

4.5.2 Style Two: Japanese grammatical base using a modern Chinese lexicon written in the simplified Chinese character set.

In this second style, appearing mostly in dialogue assumed to take place in Chinese, the base Chinese lexicon is now written in their simplified Chinese equivalents. For example, in Style 1, one would expect 簽證 (or alternatively 証) to represent *bisa* ("visa"); instead, it appears here in its simplified form as 签证. Similarly, the text includes simplified Chinese characters such as 饭 (= 飯 *han*, "meal"), 吃 (= 喫 *tabeteru*, "eating"), and 关系 (= 関係 *kankei*, "relations"). Again, this particular orthographic shift suggests a change in Kakeru's internal situation: now, speaking in Chinese (though, importantly, recorded in Japanese), the character set transforms into one emphasizing, or at least suggesting, his Chinese identity.

It is perhaps this second style that is Yokoyama's most ambitious orthographic experiment: though the characters 関 and 关, or 係 and 系, fit the definition of allograph – characters appearing

outwardly different but having the same meaning and pronunciation – Yokoyama disrupts this relationship by emphasizing both the graphic *and* semantic differences, i.e., the creation of meaning through difference that is achieved through visual variation. That is, while yes, the character variants are indeed allographs of the other when viewed in isolation, the literary effect of their use here ought to not be ignored: the simplified character set comes to represent comfort, informality, and a sense of intimacy between speaking subjects resulting in a space that resembles linguistic code switching. Code switching refers to instances where a bilingual speaker of both a privileged and unprivileged dialect consciously or unconsciously chooses the manner in which they speak so as to shield themselves from the potential negative ramifications of being associated with an unprivileged dialect. Though I do not intend to establish what might be called a "hierarchy of the self" – i.e., the notion that informal or seemingly unfiltered speech acts are somehow more authentic representations of the self – it is reasonable to assume that this is what Yokoyama is attempting.

4.5.3 Style Three: The complete disappearance of all kanji coupled with a simultaneous shift to all words being written in katakana with spellings following pre-1946 orthographical conventions.

Style 3 corresponds to Kakeru's "transformation" into a cat. Here, kanji – though not words written in Chinese characters (*kango*) – disappear, with the base text now written exclusively in katakana and spelled in the historical kana orthography.[453] It is noteworthy that the vocabulary does not shift registers (i.e., to match the archaic nature of the historical orthography). The visual impact of a text suddenly "losing" its kanji and simultaneously shifting (or reverting) into pre-

[453] Recall from Chapter 1 that "historical kana orthography" (*rekishiteki kanazukai*) refers to the orthographic rules of written Japanese prior to the governmental degree on 12 November 1946 that standardized various spelling conventions as well as removed two obsolete characters (h: ゐゑ; k: ヰヱ) from the two syllable sets.

1946 orthographic conventions signifies many things at once.[454] First, it suggests one solution to Kakeru's biscriptal dilemma: the erasure of one manifestation of his anxiety, namely the Chinese character. This sudden slip into the historical orthography also suggests the impossibility of the solution: this style – what might be called decadent given the high unlikelihood of its wider utility – amounts to nothing more than fanciful escapism. Put another way, Kakeru finds solace in his inability to write in a purely "Chinese" or "Japanese" way by abandoning kanji, the point of intersection between the two scripts. His slippage into the pre-1946 orthography, however, suggests the inability for this solution to be tenable in the long term. That is, the orthography he finds comfort in – the one his subconscious appears to be "thinking" in – has no contemporary counterpart. He and his orthography are alone.

Second, and related to the first point, this style suggests an aesthetic of emotional nakedness and vulnerability. There is precedent here, for example, in Tanikawa Shuntarō's 1988 poetry collection *Naked* (*Hadaka*). *Naked,* which is a collection of poems written exclusively in hiragana, suggests emotional frankness through its deliberate omission, and thus shedding of, kanji and katakana. Below is "You," a typical poem from the collection.

きみ

きみはぼくのとなりでねむっている
しゃつがめくれておへそがみえている
ねむってるのではなくてしんでるのだったら
どんなにうれしいだろう
きみはもうじぶんのことしかかんがえていないめで
じっとぼくをみつめることもないし

[454] The pre-1946 orthography encompasses more than just spelling conventions. The use of double iteration marks (く), called *ku no jiten*, at the beginning of line four and the non-marked geminate consonant usually represented by a small *tsu* (つツ) witnessed in line five (マツタク) are examples of this.

ぼくのきらいなあべといっしょに
かわへおよぎにいくこともないのだ
きみがそばへくるときみのにおいがして
ぼくはむねがどきどきしてくる

ゆうべゆめのなかでぼくときみは
ふたりっきりでせんそうにいった
おかあさんのこともおとうさんのことも
がっこうのこともわすれていた
ふたりとももうしぬのだとおもった
しんだきみといつまでもいきようとおもった
きみとともだちになんかなりたくない
ぼくはただきみがすきなだけだ[455]

you

you're sleeping next to me
your shirt is riding up and i can see your bellybutton
if you weren't sleeping but actually dead
oh how happy i'd be
you'd stop staring at me with eyes
that only think about yourself
and there'd be no more trips to swim at the river
with that Abe i hate so much
when you come near me i smell you
and my chest begins to beat

in my dreams last night, me and you
just the two of us, went off to war
we forgot all about our moms and dads

[455] Shuntarō Tanikawa. *Hadaka: Tanikawa Shuntarō shishū* (Chikuma shobō, 1988): 35-7.

and school
we both thought we'd both die
i want to, i thought, live forever with the deceased you
i don't want to be your friend, no
i simply love you[456]

Taking the complicated topic of childhood love as its theme, the poem evokes the raw emotions experienced by the narrator stemming from his feelings for "You" (*kimi*).[457] The plainness of the external form allows the feelings of jealousy ("that Abe I hate so much"), nervousness ("my chest begins to beat"), contentment ("just the two of us"), and, finally, revelation ("i simply love you") to float to the surface of the poem and take center stage. Throughout this collection of poetry, hiragana is used by Tanikawa to represent a move away from visual adornment that, in his calculation, hinders access to the emotional power of the poem. The use of a single character set alleviates the need to consider visual cadence in poetry, an ostensibly oral form of literary expression, and focus instead on the narrative message.[458] By removing the element of visual variation from the poetic space, Tanikawa refocuses the attention of the reader onto the orality of the words themselves.[459] As Suzanne Jill Levine notes in the preface to her important work on translation, the translation of poetry has traditionally eclipsed the translation of prose as the target of theorization because, the idea goes, "the poetry translator must be a poet, and therefore his

[456] This translation is my own. For another English rendition see William I. Elliot and Kazuo Kawamura, *Naked: Poems by Shuntaro Tanikawa* (IBC Publishing, 2006): 18-9.
[457] *Kimi* is the second-person subjective pronoun that establishes familiarity between the speaker and "You." Though *kimi* is gender-neutral, given the narrator's dream of going off to war with "You" it can be understood that both the narrator and "You" are school-age boys.
[458] Poetry, perhaps more so than any other literary genre, has been simultaneously conceived of being both an oral and written tradition. Tanikawa's *Naked* is one attempt to return to poetry's supposed oral roots while the poetry of, say, Yoshimasu Gōzō is an example of the latter. Though *Naked* is Tanikawa's attempt at prioritizing the oral aspects of poetry, his oeuvre includes many other forms of poetry.
[459] This, of course, is not wholly accurate: one reason poetry – however "naked" it appears – is recognized as such is because of the visual performativity of the text; that is, one element of poetry, one of its associated characteristics, is its visual representation on the page. Line breaks, for example, can create rhythm, alter meanings, and, quite often, draw attention to particular words or phrases the poet would like to draw a reaer's attention to.

technique or philosophy deserves our inquiry."[460] Levine goes on to demonstrate how such an approach is woefully unproductive (and flat-out wrong); it also causes us to wonder about Japanese-language literature: if it is Tanikawa's goal to strip written language of its visual baggage, then how should we think about literary fiction that regularly incorporates textual visuality into its texts?

It is a similar motivation, namely the desire to focus on emotion and narrative content, that informs Yokoyama's use of script here in Style 3: by removing all kanji, we "see" Kakeru speak in a state that, though confused, suggests he has shed his various anxieties and attachments:

> …my mind is hazy… where am i?... who the hell are these people?... such strange beings… they annoy me, walking on two legs… their faces are all shiny [*tsurutsuru*], rather like a teakettle… they even make fake ears and what – are they supposed to be cats?… trying to make fools of cats… the ground is sleek [*tsurutsuru*], tough to walk on…[461]

Kakeru's transformation into a cat signifies the extent to which he identifies with the famous unnamed protagonist of Soseki's text. Known for his detached personality and ability to distance himself from the carefully constructed social world of humans, the unnamed protagonist offers witty observations about the humans in his proximity. There is a sense of universalism in Soseki's protagonist; it does not matter where he lives – to the protagonist's mind, at least, his views are objective and the humans around him are fools. This attitude of cold detachment, of scientific observation, carries over to Yokoyama's narrator. This switch to the pre-war orthography suggests, among other things, that this narrator might in fact be a spiritual reincarnation of Soseki's narrator; in another reading, though, this switch in script and orthography might be a manifestation of Kakeru's desire to connect with his Japanese father. His father, in an attempt to connect with his son, gifts him a copy of Soseki's text. The image of Kakeru's father giving a copy of Soseki's

[460] Suzanne Jill Levine, *The Subversive Scribe: Translating Latin American Fiction* (Graywolf Press, 1991): xii.
[461] Yokoyama, 126-7.

book to him – Soseki, of course, being the "father of modern Japanese literature" – reinforces the distance Kakeru feels between both Japan and his actual father.[462] His father, who has no substantial relationship with Kakeru, attempts to communicate (to act fatherly) with him vis-à-vis the "father" of the modern Japanese literary canon. Soseki's literature was, of course, written in the prewar orthography.

Again, though, the orthography betrays an easy attempt at establishing a genuine connection between the two because Soseki's cat was never intended to represent reality. A jester-like character, the cat's primary function was to satirize Japanese society.[463] Whatever the case may be, Kakeru is spiritually transformed into a cat at a maid café, and his discontent ("are they supposed to be cats?") is clear. This provisional "solution" to Kakeru's problem of a biscriptal identity will change again in Style 4, this time taking a hint from a different "father" of modern literature.

4.5.4 Style Four: Words from the Chinese lexicon are written in the shared traditional character set with furigana providing readings for said graphs in modern Japanese. Most accompanying orthography (both spelling and typographical conventions) mirrors the pre-1946 orthography.

In the fourth major style Kakeru continues to build on Soseki's *I Am a Cat* but, crucially, returns to the standard mixed script (i.e., kanji and kana). By modifying – not copying – the style of Soseki's text, Yokoyama is able to create a fictionalized interiority where both aspects of Kakeru, his Japanese side and his Chinese side, are able to co-exist as a unified subject through the use of

[462] In the introduction to her translation of Soseki's *Kusamakura* (1906), scholar and esteemed translator of Japanese literature Meredith McKinney says that from 1907-1916, "[Soseki] wrote steadily, at the rate of around one novel a year, the works the works that would establish him as the foremost author of his time and the revered father of modern Japanese literature, whose works are still read and loved today," Natsume Soseki, trans. Meredith McKinney, *Kusamakura* (Penguin Classics, 2008): 3.

[463] Building on James Fujii's analysis of *I Am a Cat* (1993), Sari Kawana notes: "What allows the unconventional and perhaps 'ridiculous' claim of a cat's murder is the willingness to accord the spirit of parody not only in literary texts but also in literary criticism. As such, the novel can be considered a parody of all other works with a proper, human narrator," Kawana, "A Narrative Game of Cat and Mouse: Parody, Deception and Fictional Whodunit in Natsume Sōseki's *Wagahai wa neko dearu*," *Journal of Modern Literature* 33:4 (2010): 4.

a new use of script. If the loss of kanji and a reversion to a pre-1946 orthography in Style 3 represents a temporary disorientation and a loss of psychological stability, then Style 4 suggests a conscious determination by Kakeru to embrace at least some aspects of his identity.

To understand what sort of identity Kakeru is embracing, we must first understand the modifications he makes to Soseki's script practice: subverting Soseki's authority as a father figure, Yokoyama continues to distance himself from reality by creating a visual textuality that becomes increasingly his own. For example, there are notable irregularities in his use of kanji that result in the mixing of kanji character sets that, in practice, should not exist. Most striking, perhaps, is his use of the two character phrase 汉語 (annotated with furigana *chainiizu* "Chinese") to refer to the Chinese language. This particular combination is striking because 汉 is the simplified form of 漢 while 語 is drawn from both the traditional character set and the modern standard Japanese character set. That is, it is reasonable to expect this phrase to appear as either 汉语 (*hànyǔ* in Chinese) or 漢語 (*kango* in Japanese) – needless to say, it is also important to note that the unifying furigana, the term that brings these two distinct character sets together, is a Japanese rendition of the English word Chinese. Confusing as it may be, each form of representation carries with it its own history, geography, and thus meaning: 汉语 suggests mainland China post-1950s while 漢語 suggests a pre-1950s China and/or contemporary Japan (as well as Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan). Yokoyama's use of 汉語, then, is radical in that it suggests a fusion of these two histories into one subject, namely the speaker Kakeru. As an aside, this is also a case where the same term has different meanings in Chinese and Japanese: in the Chinese lexicon 汉语 simply refers to the

Chinese language while in Japanese 漢語 generally refers to words of Sino-Japanese origin, specifically words written in kanji.[464]

This particular style is characterized by Yokoyama's use of the modern Chinese lexicon whenever graphs appear with those same graphs appearing in the traditional character set, a form more or less shared between written Japanese and Chinese. I say more or less because there are in fact certain inconsistencies: in Image 4, for example, Yokoyama writes 脳海 (read as *atama* 'head'), despite the fact that the character would generally be written 腦 (*nǎo*) in the shared traditional character set and 脑 in the simplified character set.[465] Given the interest Yokoyama exhibits in Lu Xun, we can perhaps pinpoint the inspiration for this style at the intersection of Soseki with the "father" of modern Chinese literature, Lu Xun. Kakeru's obsession with Soseki is rivaled only by his devotion to the "father" of modern Chinese literature. Style 4, then, is best thought of as an external form that brings together the character sets used by both Soseki and Lu Xun in an orthographic style rooted in the early 20th century literary tradition.

4.5.5 Style Five: A majority-Japanese lexicon is written primarily in the Japanese character set. Significantly, characters in the simplified character set also pepper the text, presumably to be read in Japanese. Furigana are no longer utilized and the orthography now returns to contemporary conventions.

Just a few paragraphs long, the fourth and final section presents Kakeru's script resolution: things have returned to normal (i.e., Kakeru is now a human again), graphs now mostly appear in their modern Japanese form, and orthography follows contemporary Japanese standards. However, things are not that simple: we see character strings existing only in the Chinese lexicon (e.g., 成田

[464] In Japanese, 漢語 can also mean the classical Chinese language, though this usage is generally reserved for specialized circles.
[465] Chou Fa-Kao, "A Comparative Study of the Simplified Characters as Used in Mainland China, Singapore and Japan," in *Papers in Chinese Linguistics and Epigraphy* (The Chinese University Press, 1986): 61.

機場 instead of 成田空港 'Narita Airport'), select graphs appearing in the simplified character set (e.g., 団子 instead of 団子 'dumpling'), and the hereto ubiquitous furigana, the architectural feature of written Japanese that makes Yokoyama's narrative possible, fade into the background.

Style 5 suggests Kakeru's acceptance of an identity that is neither fully Japanese nor fully Chinese; it is meant to be a visual manifestation of his "double" identification with China and Japan. From the beginning of *I Will Be a Cat*, Kakeru refers to himself and those born to parents of different nationalities as "doubles" (*daburu*), a term used in opposition to the more common "half" (*hāfu*) or the offensive – and still encountered – "mixed blood" (*konketsu*) that, among other things, has its roots in eugenics ideology.[466] The absence of furigana in Style 5 also marks what I understand to be a private database of readings. That is, within the borders of the text, Yokoyama has successfully created a new set of "standard" readings for kanji and/or kanji combinations that are non-standard in modern Japanese. This might mean, for example, the assigning of unfamiliar readings to familiar kanji (e.g., reading 用う as *tsukau* "to use") or the use of familiar kanji in surprising ways (e.g., 機場 for "airport"). This fact is evidenced by Yokoyama's confidence to leave hereto unreadable graphs unannotated in this final section.

4.6 Concluding Thoughts on *I Will Be a Cat*

Yokoyama's *I Will Be a Cat* (*Wagahai wa neko ni naru*) describes a young man, Kakeru, struggling with his Chinese/Japanese binational identity and his ambivalent relationship with the Chinese and Japanese languages. In his effort to represent the bilingual and biscriptal nature of Kakeru's psyche, Yokoyama establishes what might be called an internal database of familiar kanji readings assigned to unfamiliar kanji combinations taking both familiar and unfamiliar forms. I

[466] For an exhaustive study on the sociological history of these terms and more, see Shimoji Lawrence Yoshitaka's recent "*Konketsu" to 'Nihonjin': hāfu, daburu, mikkusu no shakaishi* (Seidosha, 2018).

call this as an internal database of script for two reasons: first, it is a fixed usage of script that Yokoyama develops and employs in order to reflect Kakeru's psychological state. Second, because Yokoyama is relatively consistent (i.e., there is a discernible methodology) throughout the text, he is able to incrementally reduce the number of furigana because the reader is expected to internalize his imposed readings. That is, by the completion of the narrative a reader will have obtained literacy in a new set of kanji, kanji combinations, kanji forms, and their various associated readings. Put another way, if the architecture of the standard script is comprised of three main character sets, then Yokoyama's script practice adds another variable to the mix: the simplified Chinese character set. This augmentation allows Kakeru to "code switch" between a Japanese-oriented subject and a Chinese-oriented one. Still, Yokoyama reminds us just how fluid these constructions are: the final script style of text throws the reader into a momentary state of confusion; because the readability, comprehensibility, and the sense of stability he meticulously created through this internal database is shattered by a final and dramatic shift in external form.

Image 4-2. Style One (pgs. 12-3).

拉麺がまだ来ない。一起にたのんだ鍋貼はどうにお熱いうち「の期間を通りすぎ、三分の二は嘴に入れてしまったのだが、一向に主角がやってくる動静はない。仕方なく次なる鍋貼を使でやんわりと炙りあげ、黒醋に軽く浸したあと、ますー半。をれから厨房のほうを一瞥したあと、息いれて、肉汁の溢れで出ぬ間にもう一半。この一連の行動は、半白動的、半無意識的である。こうして鍋貼は余のりーつとなってしまった。

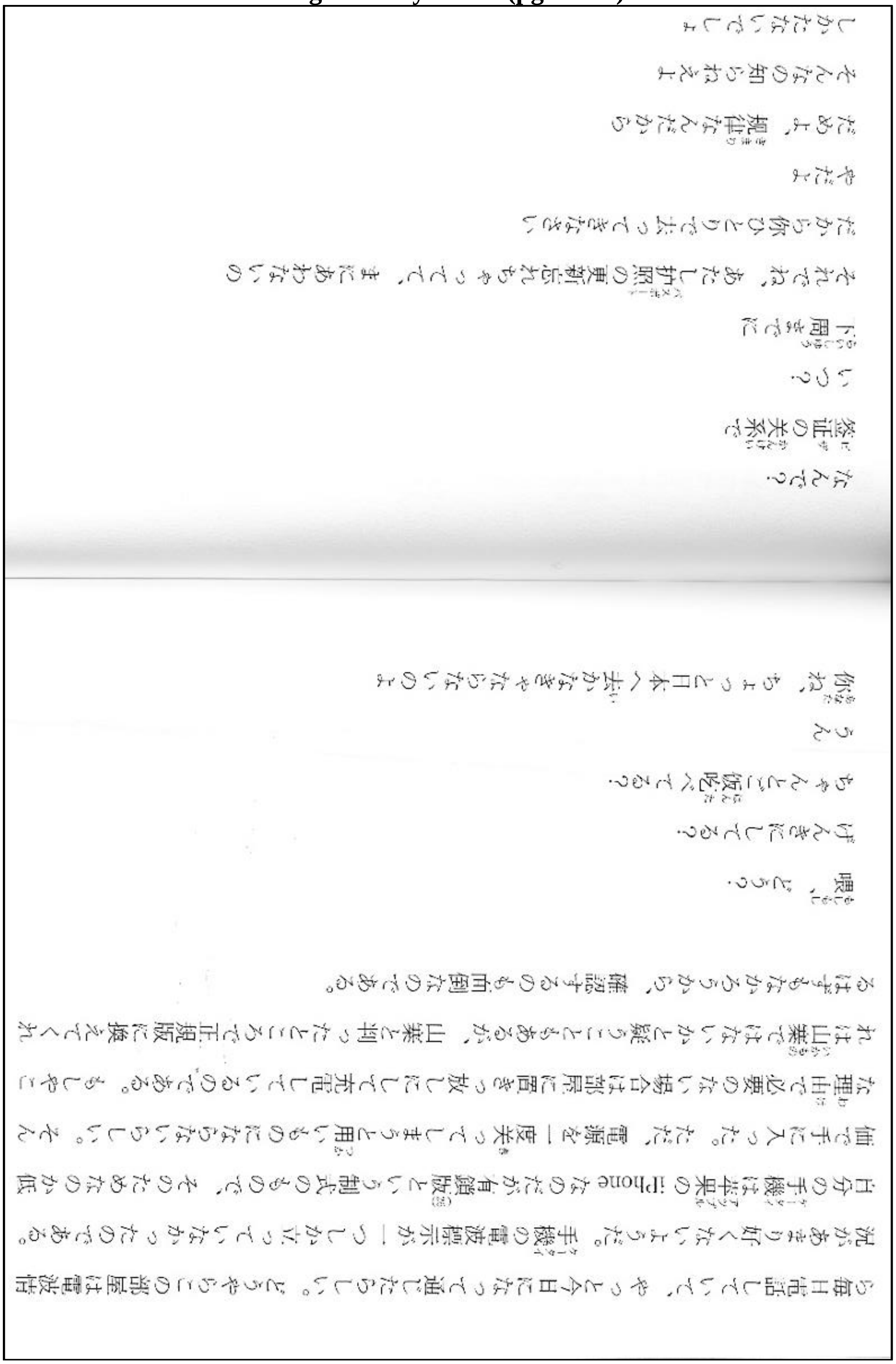
向かって右辺の塩では、半裸の白い精雨堂のような二人の大男が互いに相手の臀を抓み合っている。ぺしゃんとした凝深のない皿である。傍で囝厨を拿っている男やニ人を包朋んで観ている数人の輩は服を穿っているのだが、頭は半裸の二人同様に判で押したような毛沢東風の髪型をしている。相手を抓む拇指の向きが不白然だ。他の四本の指と同じ方向に屈がっている。自分の生手で試してみるが、拇指を切って貼りつけ直しでもをねば如何しても駄目である。

坡搗越しに外を看ると、其処はすぐ駐車場である。その入口で站っている蛍光色の馬甲を穿た警備員の男は、表情が欠乏している。正面に停まっているのは現代車、その隣が馬白達、沃尔沃、奥迪、そして豊田。向うのほうには奔馳や宝馬や捷豹もある。停まっている車の大概は黒か白か銀白色である。そのぶん紅や藍の車は顕著だ。

で找しやすい。買うとしたらそういうのが好いだろう……。

拉麺はまだ来ない。白分はこの孤事で無力で極小な最後の一鍋貼を上から呆と見つ

Image 4-3. Style Two (pgs. 60-1).



ら毎日電話していて、やっと今日になって通じたらしい。どうやらこの部屋は電波情況があまり好くないようだ。手機の電波標示が一つしか立っていなかったのである。自分の手機は苹果のiPhoneなのだが有鎖版という制式のもので、そのためなのか低価で手に入った。ただ、電源を一度关ってしまうと用いものにならないらしい。そんな理由で必要のない場合は部屋に置きっ放しにして充電しているのである。もしやこれは山寨ではないかと疑うこともあるが、山寨と判ったところで正規版に換えてくれるはずもなかろうから、確認するのも面倒なのである。

喂、どう？

げんきにしてる？

ちゃんとご飯吃べてる？

うん

你ね、ちょっと日本へ去かなきゃならないのよ

なんで？

签证の关系で

いつ？

下周までに

それでね、あたし护照の更新忘れちゃってて、まにあわないの

だから你ひとりで去ってきなさい

やだよ

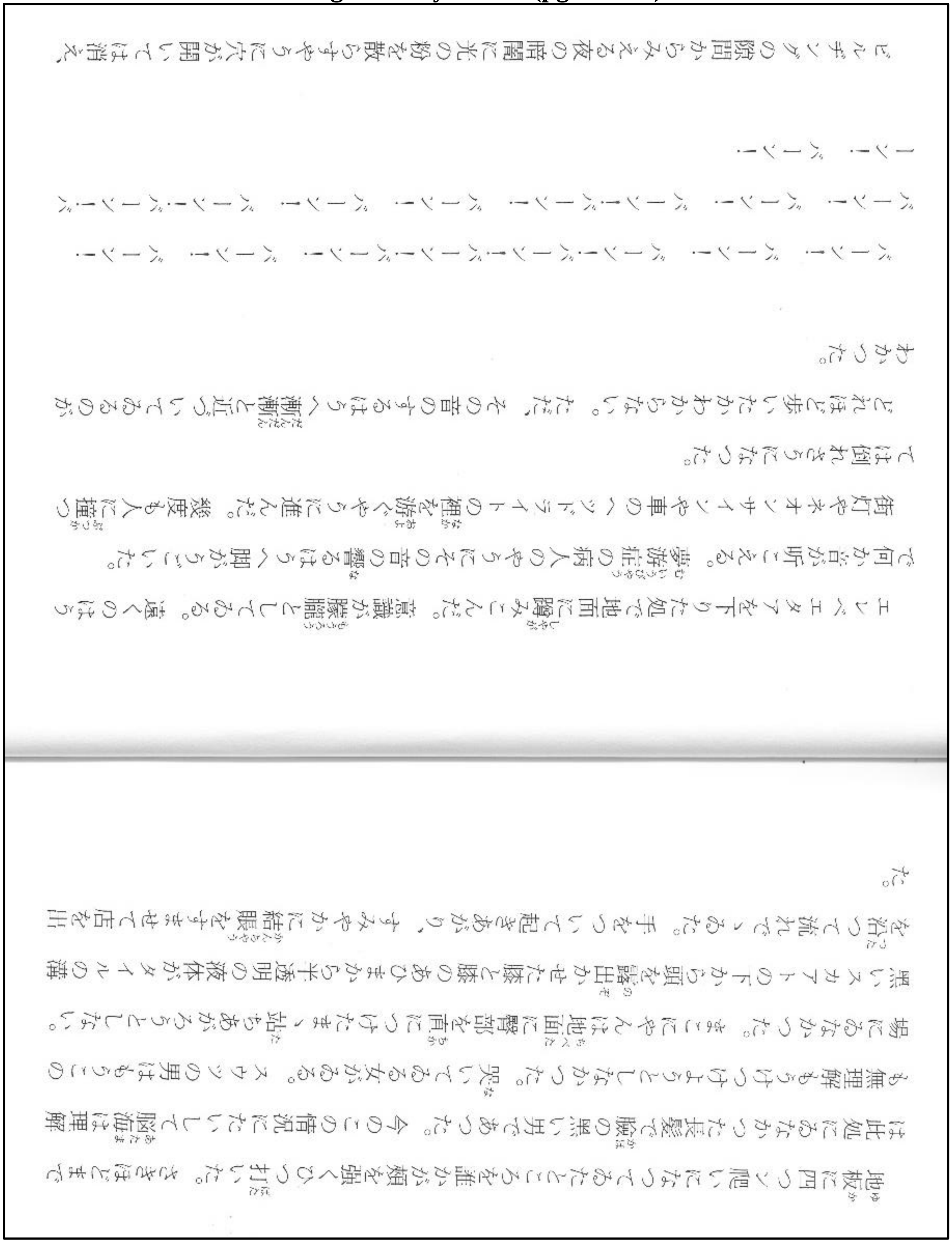
だめよ、規律なんだから

そんなの知らねえよ

しかたないでしょ

Image 4-4. Style Three (pgs. 126-7).

Image 4-5. Style Four (pgs. 128-9).

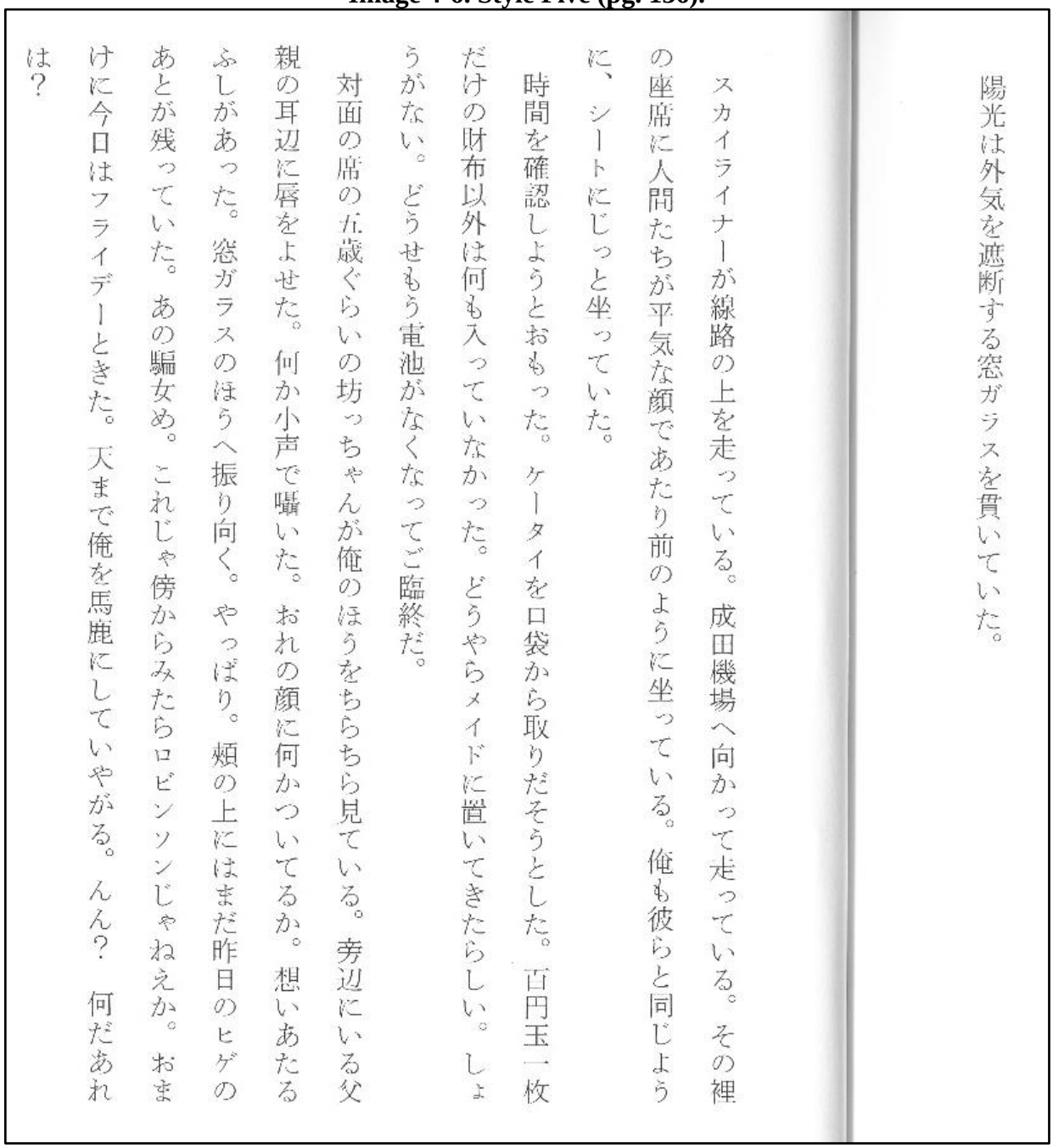

地板に四つン這いになつてゐたところを誰かが頬を強くひつ打いた。さきほどまで
は此処にゐなかつた長髪で瞼の黒い男であつた。今のこの情況にたいして脳海は理解
も無理解もうけつけようとしなかつた。哭いてゐる女がゐる。スウツの男はもうこの
場にゐなかつた。まこにやんは地面に臀部を直につけたまゝ站ちあがろうとしない。
黒いスカアトの下から頭を露出かせた膝と膝のあひまから半透明の液体がタイルの溝
を沿つて流れでゝゐた。手をついて起きあがり、すみやかに結賬をすませて店を出
た。

エレベエタアを下りた処で地面に蹲みこんだ。意識が朦朧としてゐる。遠くのはう
で何か音が听こえる。夢游症の病人のやうにその音の響るはうへ脚がうごいた。
街灯やネオンサインや車のヘツドライトの裡を游ぐやうに進んだ。幾度も人に撞つ
ては倒れさうになつた。
どれほど歩いたかわからない。ただ、その音のするはうへ漸漸と近づいてゐるのが
わかつた。

バーン！　バーン！　バーン！バーン！バーン！バーン！　バーン！　バーン！
バーン！　バーン！　バーン！バーン！　バーン！　バーン！　バーン！バーン！バ
ーン！　バーン！

ビルヂングの隙間からみえる夜の暗闇に光の粉を散らすやうに穴が開いては消え、

Image 4-6. Style Five (pg. 136).



陽光は外気を遮断する窓ガラスを貫いていた。

スカイライナーが線路の上を走っている。成田機場へ向かって走っている。その裡の座席に人間たちが平気な顔であたり前のように坐っている。俺も彼らと同じように、シートにじっと坐っていた。

時間を確認しようとおもった。ケータイを口袋から取りだそうとした。百円玉一枚だけの財布以外は何も入っていなかった。どうやらメイドに置いてきたらしい。しょうがない。どうせもう電池がなくなってご臨終だ。

対面の席の五歳ぐらいの坊っちゃんが俺のほうをちらちら見ている。旁辺にいる父親の耳辺に唇をよせた。何か小声で囁いた。おれの顔に何かついてるか。想いあたるふしがあった。窓ガラスのほうへ振り向く。やっぱり。頬の上にはまだ昨日のヒゲのあとが残っていた。あの騙女め。これじゃ傍からみたらロビンソンじゃねえか。おまけに今日はフライデーときた。天まで俺を馬鹿にしていやがる。んん？　何だあれは？

Coda

Numerous issues arise when writing about a topic as large as the relationship between written language and Japanese-language literature, especially when said topic has not been discussed in length in English. The critic must define exactly what they mean when they refer to "writing", "literature," and "the Japanese writing system"; they must explain to readers unfamiliar with the Japanese writing system why they should care about this relationship; they must explain the structure of the Japanese writing system and how authors can use it to their own ends; the critic must separate fact from fantasy as it relates to the Japanese writing system; and, finally, the critic must then perform an analysis of literary texts that are built upon this foundation. At the same time, writing about a topic this large affords one much freedom to develop new concepts and methodologies that will help other readers of Japanese-language literature think about the way written language functions in literature in new and productive ways. It is the constant tensions that arise when writing for both a new audience (i.e., those who are not familiar with the structure of written Japanese) and an old audience (i.e., those who are familiar with its structure) that necessitate the bifurcated structure of my dissertation. Namely, most chapters contain both theory and practice: an explication of some key concept(s) and an application of said concept to a literary text. With this larger goal of my project in mind, there are some points that I would like to make clear.

Readers might question my use of architecture-as-metaphor and its relationship to Structuralism. Put another way, a reader might wonder why I don't use the well-established term "structure" to describe the various components of a script that form an "architecture." First, I want to distance myself ideologically from the larger Structuralist movement. That is not to say I reject Structuralism; rather, I recognize the contributions it has made modern thought and, indeed, recognize how it has influenced my own work. For this project, though, I feel it is important to

examine written language – "language" being the primary concern of Saussure – as an independent entity capable of being analyzed without consideration of content or larger systems. Second, when discussing the use of written language in Japanese literature it is necessary to create new vocabulary if we are to have a shared vocabulary: because there does not exist a shared language to describe many of the elements I outline here (e.g., "base text," "interlinear glosses"), the language of Structuralism would prove insufficient beyond the most basic theoretical concepts. Finally, I have avoided the language of Structuralism to highlight the reality that the objects of analyses – both the Japanese script and Japanese-language literature – emerged from a very different time and place from that of early 20th-century Europe.

Other readers might wonder if I am arguing for a reevaluation of script in *all* Japanese-language literature and, more significantly, that written language plays an important role in all Japanese texts. Indeed, there is a danger that arises when writing at length and in great detail about a writing system and its relationship to literature: the misinterpretation that script is important in *all* literary texts. While written language is, in theory, important *to* all literary texts – what piece of literature does not contain a material component? – not all authors utilize written language to the same degree as the authors I discuss here. They are outliers, self-conscious experiments at representing language that relate to narrative content in complex ways. But these outliers still adhere to the architectural rules of written Japanese and, as such, may be analyzed with the tools I outline. Furthermore, script analysis is not a zero-sum game: one need not go all-in on a reading of Japanese-language literature that focuses solely on script. Rather, it is my hope that a consideration of script relative to narrative content might augment traditional literary studies and provide a space for the consideration of script. It is also my hope that less extreme instances of script-as-aesthetic will be understood as contributing to the creation of a text. For example, how

in Machida Ryōhei's boxing-themed *One Round: 1:34* (2018) the written text shifts in subtle ways throughout the piece to reflect the boxer-cum-narrator's psychology and his moments of physical exhaustion.

Finally, readers might be disappointed that my dissertation does not provide a guideline for evaluation, that is, a "cheat sheet" that tells the critic how script functions within a given text based solely on the external form of a text. This is an impossible task: an analysis of script without consideration of content will not reveal much about the larger text (not to mention the methodological similarities to the Formalistic approach I outline in Chapter Two). An analysis of script, then, is the first part of a larger equation: once we understand how script functions within a text when can then begin to analyze it against context and content. It is here that one may derive meaning.

A reader might also wonder where a project like this goes from here. It involves adding two or three chapters to my dissertation in preparation for publication as a monograph. I hope to cap this dissertation on both chronological ends by examining (i) more radical usages of script in mid- to late-Edo period (1600-1868) literature,[467] (ii) script in the work of EnJoe Toh, and (iii) the way Unicode shapes public understanding of written language in the CJK (Chinese-Japanese-Korean) language community.

I first will develop connection between script usage in the Edo period and contemporary literature, suggesting not a direct link between the two but the prevalence of a similar architecture of script, arguing that when authors work within the same architecture they are bound to come to similar conclusions. For example, I will elaborate on my discussion of *Haikai hitotsuboshi* (1683) from Chapter One. Written in alternating lines of Chinese and Japanese, this otherwise

[467] There is already good work on this topic in English. For example, see Fraleigh (2011).

unremarkable text includes more examples of the uncommon practice of annotating images (e.g., a moon ) with interlinear glosses (e.g., *tsuki* ツキ), transforming the image into a kanji-like character: .

I will then assess character usage in contemporary literature, focusing especially on the literature of EnJoe Toh. As I suggest in Chapter One, EnJoe's use of written language is striking: in *A Whirlpool of Characters* (2018), for example, he presents twelve stories connected by their focus on written language. The titular piece wonders what writing would look like if it were as fluid and dynamic as human experience and perception; in "Characters of Green," he envisions a world where combinations of characters can produce energy and transform into an untapped source of sustainable power; in "Mistaken Characters," the role of Unicode in an increasingly standardized and global market is questioned when the narrator presents a world in which a desire for variant expression causes kanji to rebel against the author (and narrative). While I conceive of EnJoe's experiments with script as extreme, I position his project within the contradictory impulses of localization and globalization. I read his work alongside authors such as Tanaka Yasuo and Takahashi Gen'ichirō. All three have received little attention in English-language scholarship, and I believe their difficult-to-discuss script practice is largely to blame.

Finally, I hope to connect technology, writing, literature, and theory by examining the development of computers and the rush to incorporate the architectural features of the Japanese script into word processing. This is where Galloway's concept of interface meets my concept of architecture.[468] For example, I will examine the role of the Unicode Consortium, a group of tech companies that gather biannually to decide what characters are to be in upcoming versions of, for example, Windows or iOS. This is important for any serious study of script today: an

[468] Galloway (2012).

understanding of Unicode provides insight into how various organizations understand the role of writing and how they balance the interests of one national standard against the interests of another. It also highlights the political nature of scripts and how nationalistic sentiments arise from them. My interest in Unicode directly relates to the ongoing digital revolution: as the push for standardization increases – the stated goal of Unicode – numerous questions emerge: what of diversity in the CJK world? who decides which characters are "real"? and what about personal names, i.e., is the ability to type variant graphs (*itaiji*) an expression of one's identity?

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