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**From the Autobiographical to the Surreal:
The Early Fiction and *Zuihitsu* of Uchida Hyakken**

by

Rachel DiNitto

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

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Doctoral Dissertation

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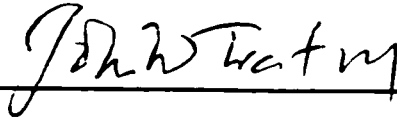
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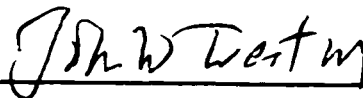
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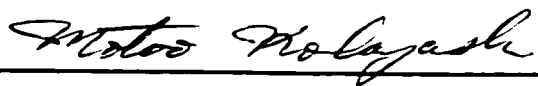


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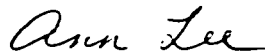
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Abstract

**From the Autobiographical to the Surreal:
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by Rachel DiNitto

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This dissertation is a re-evaluation of the 1920s-1940s fiction of the short story writer and Natsume Sôseki disciple Uchida Hyakken (1889-1971), who underwent a literary revival in the 1980s. Previous scholars lamented Hyakken's marginalized status and turned their attention to biographical aspects of his first fictional collection *Realm of the Dead* (Meido, 1922). This study begins by reconsidering the period of his debut and early fame, the late Taishô and early Shôwa eras (1920s-1930s), and seeks to uncover the reasons behind his marginalization via an exploration of literary genre and publication history. Hyakken's literature from this period is key to understanding both his oeuvre and important literary trends of the era, both canonical and noncanonical.

In conjunction with issues of canonization and genre, this study also explores new critical models for evaluating Hyakken's early work and for

reinserting it into Taishô period literature. In this vein, comparisons are drawn between Hyakken and Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Satô Haruo and Tanizaki Jun'ichirô. By questioning the label of "dreams," which is commonly applied to *Realm of the Dead*, this study offers an alternate means for analyzing Hyakken's early fiction as a part of Taishô period (1912-1926) experimentation.

Realm of the Dead was a critical failure, but Hyakken rebounded eleven years later with *Hyakkien's Miscellany* (Hyakkien zuihitsu, 1933). Although the genre of the *zuihitsu* or "miscellany" has strong premodern associations, this collection should be regarded as part of the resurgence in *zuihitsu* writing in the 1920s and 1930s. This seemingly autobiographical collection of scattered essays brings to light issues of first-person narration and the relationship between fictional characters and their real life authors. These were important issues for writers of the period and Hyakken demonstrates his awareness of them by creating a slippery "autobiographical space" in the nexus of fiction, *zuihitsu* and autobiography.

Hyakken's later stories draw on both the dark fictional world of *Realm of the Dead* and the lighter, more autobiographically based *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. This study concludes by examining three works in which Hyakken blends styles from his early career and continues to challenge biographical readings that remain prevalent in Hyakken criticism.

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All mistakes and deficiencies are my own.

Chapter I Introduction

The Hyakken Boom

A 1981 article in the *Asahi Journal* titled “Why Uchida Hyakken is Being Read Again” pondered the reasons behind the resurgence of interest in the short story writer and Natsume Sôseki disciple Uchida Hyakken (1889-1971).

Hyakken critic, Uchida Michio asked the same question two years later in an article titled “Thoughts on the Hyakken Boom” (Uchida 1997), as did Kawamura Jirô and Irokawa Takeô in their 1985 “The Uchida Hyakken Revival.”¹ We have to wonder why a reputedly marginal and forgotten author would suddenly be the subject of public interest in the early 1980s, a full ten years after his death and almost fifty years after his rise to fame in the early 1930s. Why the flurry of reprints, not only of his fiction, but also his diaries, and even love letters to his wife?² And last, why would this literary phenomenon appear in the pages of a populist evening newspaper?³

None of the above-mentioned articles is able to adequately explain the 1980s “Hyakken boom,” but they propose a variety of interesting theories. The *Asahi Journal* notes that Suzuki Seijun may have ignited the boom in 1980 with his critically acclaimed *Tsigoneruwaizen* (*Zigeunerweisen*), a film based on Hyakken’s 1949 story “Sarasâte no ban” (*The Sarasate Record*),⁴ but the boom

seems to have sustained itself longer than passing interest in a movie would suggest. The postwar writer Yasuoka Shōtarō and critic Sakai Hideyuki have speculated that Hyakken's popularity is due to the fact that his literature is simply a good fit for the lifestyles of the late Shōwa (1926-1989) Japanese youth, especially, it seems, women in their twenties.⁵

Movies and lifestyles aside, the *Asahi Journal* intriguingly suggests the real reason for the boom lies in the fact that Hyakken is finally being read as "literature," rather than the means for a limited but devoted fan base to learn more about the personal life of the author. Although there may be some truth to this, the interest in seemingly nonliterary works such as his love letters suggests that the desire to learn more about the author remains strong. Indeed, this tendency can also be observed in criticism; many Hyakken critics use his real life as a means of interpreting his literature.⁶

Questions of autobiography and self-expression are central to this study of Hyakken. The vast majority of his literature is written in a first-person voice and describes a very subjective world. The subjective first-person narrative and its relationship to Taishō period (1912-1926) literature and politics is taken up in the second chapter. This is the period in which Hyakken debuted and the phase of literary history into which I will place him. I also deal with self-expression and autobiographical texts in regard to his early short stories, his *zuihitsu* or miscellany, and also his later works which draw on the imagery and tone of his

earlier productions.

My project in this dissertation is in many respects to provide a reading of Hyakken as literature, while at the same time demonstrating the ways in which Hyakken weaves material from his real life into his literature, purposefully blending and blurring the two. In order to read his fiction primarily for its literary, rather than biographical value, I look to his first three collections, *Realm of the Dead* (Meido, 1922), *Hyakkien's Miscellany* (Hyakkien zuihitsu, 1933)⁷ and *Triumphant Entry into Port Arthur* (Ryojun nyûjôshiki, 1934), as progenitors of important themes and stylistics which reappear throughout his career. Although these collections comprise only five percent of his total literary output,⁸ they have been the object of an inordinate proportion of Hyakken criticism, and can serve as an interpretative template for understanding later creations.

Although Hyakken's early works are critical to an understanding of his literature, they have faced the dual hurdles of obscurity and a negative assessment associated with the period in which they were written. These years which comprise the imperially designated eras of Taishô (1912-1926) and early Shôwa (1926-1989) continue to lie in the shadows cast by the brilliance of Meiji (1868-1912), and its modern restoration, and the dark clouds of the Second World War. In terms of literary history, this period is dominated by the I-novel or *shishôsetsu*— the representative highbrow literary model in which the author's real life is recounted on the page through the persona of his literary alter ego—

often to the exclusion of other literary forms. Although Hyakken engaged in the discourse of self-expression, this I-novel model is not necessarily the most insightful nor applicable for his work. If we want to reassess the value of Hyakken's fiction, it seems we must also reassess the value of the period itself and the literary models with which we have been presented. I reexamine the meaning of the term Taishō and the history of the period, before proposing new literary models in my discussion of Hyakken's early fiction.

Kawamura Jirō addresses the importance of Hyakken's early works in his award-winning *Uchida Hyakken: Meaningless Tears* (Uchida Hyakken ron: muimi no namida). He claims that if *Realm of the Dead* and *Triumphant Entry into Port Arthur* did not exist, he would not have been compelled to write his study of Hyakken, for these two works are the spirit and essence of Hyakken's literature (103). Two of the recent critical book-length studies on Hyakken are dedicated solely to these early works, with an emphasis on *Realm of the Dead* seen in both Uchida Michio's *Realm of the Dead and its Periphery* (Meido no shūhen) and Masugi Hideki's *The World of Uchida Hyakken* (Uchida Hyakken no sekai).

Hyakkien's Miscellany has not received the critical attention of *Realm of the Dead* and *Triumphant Entry into Port Arthur*, but given the predominance of *zuihitsu* collections in Hyakken's oeuvre (thirty-two *zuihitsu* vs. three fiction) and Hyakken's claim to fame as a *zuihitsu* writer,⁹ one could argue that his second collection *Hyakkien's Miscellany* is more representative of his literature than the

two volumes listed above. Following the lead of Shōji Hajime's *Uchida Hyakken* (Uchida Hyakken) and Sakai Hideyuki's *Uchida Hyakken: The Pleasure of "Hyakki"* (Uchida Hyakken: "Hyakki" no yuraku), I will give equal attention to all three collections. As mentioned above, these three works comprise only a fraction of Hyakken's total literary output, but I believe the interpretative template which they form will facilitate an analysis of his career as a whole.

The Taishō period¹⁰ looms large in chapters 3, 4 and 5, which I devote to the three collections discussed above. Chapter 3 provides both information on Hyakken's life and a reevaluation of his literary origins. I review both the pre- and postwar scholarship on Hyakken and propose alternate models for analyzing his literature. Chapter 4 locates *Realm of the Dead and Triumphant Entry into Port Arthur* in the context of Taishō literary experimentation, as a backlash of sorts against the ruling modes of naturalism, and chapter 5 examines *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, with attention to the role of the modern miscellany and its relationship to the "I-novel" in the 1920s and 1930s. This approach will ground the analysis in the sociohistorical and textual, rather than the biographical, and allow for a discussion of the technical and stylistic aspects of the writing itself.

Chapters 3 and 4 could be roughly divided along lines set by the modernist writer and critic Itō Sei in his influential postwar essays on Hyakken, namely his two themes of "dreams and laughter;" however, these thematic designations can be misleading.¹¹ *Realm of the Dead and Triumphant Entry into*

Port Arthur easily fall under the former, but this label of dreams can serve to gloss over the subtle and shifting boundaries Hyakken sets up between the realm of reality and the world of dreams. Utilizing the critical tools of modernism and the fantastic, I look beyond the characterization of these works as dreamlike, to reveal their structural intricacies and the fractured picture of the self they present in early Taishō.

The issue of self-expression and self-image is even more germane in *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, which treats these themes with a lighter, more humorous touch, hence Itō's emphasis on laughter. Through an analysis of the relationship between the character "Professor Fujita Hyakkien" and the author Uchida Hyakken, I argue against the tendency of critics to want to read these stories as I-novels. While examining the relationship between the I-novel and the *zuihitsu*, I ask what it meant for Hyakken to write about himself in this way, if in fact this is what he was doing. I bring in the theoretical work of Philippe Lejeune and Elizabeth Bruss to discuss the autobiographical literary space created in these texts and the ways in which they promote and resist this reading.

Chapter 6 moves temporally beyond the Taishō period to encompass Hyakken's fiction written in the late 1930s and 1940s. Thematically, however, we will revisit Taishō as we see Hyakken recombining the elements of his early fiction to produce new forms. "The Bowler Hat" (Yamatataka bōshi, 1929) from *Triumphant Entry into Port Arthur* is one such example. Critics regard this story

to be a tribute to the famous writer Akutagawa Ryūnosuke who committed suicide in 1927. Hyakken also wrote a number of *zuihitsu* about Akutagawa, and the similarities between these two forms will be analyzed in more detail.

However, in addition to investigating the biographical aspects, “The Bowler Hat” will also be examined for its depictions of insanity, a common theme in Taishō fiction.

The 1938 story “Tokyo Diary” (*Tōkyō nikki*)¹² also provides an opportunity to analyze this new hybridized form, as well as, brings up questions about diary and travel writing, and their role in Hyakken’s fiction.¹³ This chapter will also analyze Hyakken’s famous “The Sarasate Record” for this mixing of reality and dream, and will look into the publication history of these stories and their mixed classification as both *zuihitsu* and fictional, creative writing.

Hyakken and the Modern Japanese Literary Canon

Debates about the canon and canonization occupied American literary scholars throughout the 1980s; however, this same type of canonical revisionism did not occur in Japan. There are significant differences in the two literary systems that must be taken into consideration. The point is well noted in John Guillory’s study of the western canon, when he argues that the “politics of representation in the canon” are tied to an American “democratic representational politics” (5).¹⁴ This is not to say that there have been no

revisionist movements in Japanese literature, but that they are not necessarily of the same nature or scope as those in the American context.

Given Hyakken's minor status, it is necessary to think about issues of canonization and their intersection with the present study. Is a study of Hyakken justified? How pressing is the need to demonstrate the worth of a minor figure? Is that the only or primary point of such a study? Certainly the flurry of critical works on Hyakken accompanying the recent boom argue for the importance of this monograph, and this phenomenon is not unrelated to issues of canonization. The boom can be seen positively as an act of revisionism, bringing a lost author back into focus. But since in actuality such booms are common in modern Japanese literature, it can also be seen cynically as one in a line of many, hence a fairly insignificant event.

Although these revivals do not necessarily indicate an author's literary worth, they are important because they often result in new critical studies and reprints of previously unavailable or difficult to find literary works. Criticism and publishing are crucial steps in bringing an author back into the public eye and in effect making him a part of the living canon—the one which is read and discussed, and perhaps even taught in the schools.¹⁵

This 1980s boom is not, however, the first time attention has been focused on Hyakken and his minor status, or the first attempt at revisionism. The characterization of Hyakken as a minor author can be traced back to Itô Sei, who

in 1948 attempted to reclaim Hyakken from the margins of the Japanese literary world.¹⁶ Itô argued that although Hyakken was then regarded as “outside the lineage of modern Japanese literature,” that very literature could not be “conceptualized without him” (1986, 11). Uchida Michio, however, claims that this is exactly what Japanese literary critics have proceeded to do. In the opening lines of his famous 1962 essay “Uchida Hyakken Note (1)” (Uchida Hyakken nôto (1), 1962), Uchida points out that Hyakken is virtually absent from the various anthologies of modern literature (*gendai bungaku zenshû*), and if he figures at all, it is only as Sôseki’s disciple, and not as an author in his own right (1986, 26).¹⁷ It would appear that contrary to Itô’s proclamations, Hyakken’s exclusion has not hindered the construction of a modern literary history for Japan.

Uchida explains that the reason Hyakken has not been “caught in the net” of literary history is because he fails to meet the criteria for inclusion—recognition by the literary elite (*bundan*) or engagement in societal problems (1997, 83). I would like to suggest an additional reason or alternate means for explaining Hyakken’s anomalous status and the failure of critics to reinsert him into literary history, one which lies with the definition of modern literature itself. Harkening back to Tsubouchi Shôyô’s 1885-86 treatise *The Essence of the Novel* (*Shôsetsu shinzui*) Japanese modern literary history has been constructed around the novel or *shôsetsu*, with special interest paid to the Japanese domestic version,

the I-novel.

Hyakken did not specialize in this premier form of modern Japanese literature, but he did, however, begin his career as a writer of short stories (*tampen shōsetsu*), arguably one of the primary vehicles for Taishō period fiction, and one favored by many famous and canonical writers. This point cannot be disputed, nor should it be overlooked. However, as I demonstrate, Hyakken's debut collection of short stories, *Realm of the Dead*, was a critical failure. He did not establish himself as a writer until the early 1930s, and then with *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, a collection of *zuihitsu*. Hyakken continued to write in genres more commonly associated with the premodern, such as the miscellany (*zuihitsu*), the diary (*nikki*), travel literature (*kikōbun*) and even to some extent *haiku* poetry.¹⁸ The premodern associations should not be misleading, for these genres were a central part of Taishō experiments in first-person narration, yet they are virtually absent from the modern literary canon. This absence is puzzling, but is also revealing of the relationship between genre and the canon, a relationship which does not remain stable over time.

Perhaps this is the real reason why Hyakken has not claimed a place in the orthodox literary histories. Hyakken's decision not to write I-novels may have affected his status in the canon of modern fiction. The tendency for some critics to want to read his works as I-novels may rise partly out of the need for recognition in an established genre, or may indicate the lack of critical standards

for evaluating nonnovelistic writing forms. Until we are willing to acknowledge the significance of the genres in which he wrote, we cannot validate his contributions to those genres, or consequently, to modern literature in general. Hyakken criticism is just beginning to mature (Sakai 1993, 27-28) and with the increasing interest in cultural and literary history in the 1920s and 1930s, Hyakken's early and crucial career years, other pictures of literature, or other literary histories may emerge within which he can play a pivotal role.

So as not to mislead, it is necessary to point out the fact that although Hyakken may be in a minor position, he is definitely in the canon. However, I maintain that Hyakken has been marginalized by a canonization process that favors the genre of the *shōsetsu* as pure literature. The question here arises: What exactly is the modern canon? How can we define it and speak about it meaningfully?

One possible way to define, or more specifically, to locate the Japanese canon is by referencing the various anthologies of modern and contemporary literature, or *Kindai/Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshū*.¹⁹ The relationship between prestigious literary anthologies and the canon remains undefined, and one cannot unequivocally say that inclusion in an anthology means that a work or writer has arrived at canonical status, but certainly these multivolume sets, by virtue of their existence and availability, guide who gets read and who does not. It is possible to think of these *zenshū* as somewhat analogous to the *Norton*

Anthology series for Western literature, but there are some significant differences that need to be addressed.

There is no real equivalent in English to these large, multivolume sets on both modern and premodern Japanese literature. By nature of their size, some extending to one hundred plus volumes, the politics of inclusion and exclusion are minimized in comparison with a single volume *Norton Anthology*. In the Japanese case, many more authors can be included and a wider variety of works by any single author is also allowed. An entire novel can be reprinted, whereas the Norton cannot afford such a generous page allotment. Perhaps size is also a factor in the process of revisionism. The Norton series has certainly undergone revisionism, producing anthologies such as the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature* edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and the forthcoming *Jewish American Literature*. The Japanese anthologies have not been revised in the same way or at the same pace as the *Norton*, but this may be due to the sheer size and prohibitive cost of reproducing such series.³⁰ That is not to say that there have not been revisionist movements in other venues. Certainly the recent attention given to women, Korean and *buraku* writers is part of the move to counterbalance the canon or to present an alternate canon. But this task on the whole has been left to other venues, mostly occurring outside the confines of the *Kindai bungaku zenshū*. A closer look at the politics of the Japanese anthologies will reveal these differences.

On a surface level, the physical layout of these multivolume anthologies identifies the important figures in literary history in a way not possible in the *Norton*. A visual scan indicates that certain authors occupy their own volume, or multiple volumes, while others are grouped in threes, fives, eights or even twelves. More often than not, those in the single-author volumes are major figures, such as Natsume Sôseki, Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Tanizaki Jun'ichirô or Shiga Naoya, authors who need no introduction. Writers like Hyakken, however, are in what I call "bookend volumes," and are forced to share space with other lesser-knowns.²¹ But even among the minor writers, Hyakken fares better than some, such as Wakayama Bokusui, who shares a volume with eleven others, or Edogawa Rampo and Yumeno Kyûsaku who are not usually represented at all.²²

Does placement in a shared volume indicate lesser status? If we were to read only those single-name volumes, what picture of the canon would we derive? Charles Altieri implies in his well-known essay "An Idea and Ideal of a Literary Canon," that skipping the minor writers would not overly impact our view of literature, "because they neither provided significant types exemplifying wisdom or craft nor influenced those whom we think did" (52). I find Altieri's remark misleading, because he assumes the existence of a neutral and invariable arbiter of major and minor status. However, the addition and deletion of writers from the various anthologies indicates that the canonization process changes

over time and gives way to new criteria.²³

Another problem with these *Modern Japanese Literature* anthologies is that they erase genre differences by subsuming everything under the heading of *bungaku* or “literature,” a heading which is simultaneously too broad and too narrow, because it not only erases differences across genres, but it deletes those genres deemed inappropriate or unworthy.²⁴ In this regard, it is instructive to look at other genre-specific anthologies for clues on an author’s literary classification.

Uchida Hyakken appears in a variety of anthologies, including: *Selected Masterpieces of Japanese Fairy Tales* (Nihon dôwa meisaku senshû, 1943), *Collection of Contemporary Japanese Zuihitsu* (Gendai Nihon zuihitsu, 1953), *Contemporary Travel Literature* (Gendai kikô bungaku zenshû, 1959), *Modern Haiku* (Gendai haiku taikai, 1972), *Modern Japanese Comic Literature* (Gendai Nihon no yûmoa bungaku, 1980), *Fifty Entertaining Stories from the Shôwa Era* (Shôwa no entateimento 50 hen, 1989), *Japanese Tales of Poverty* (Zen Nihon binbô monogatari, 1991), and even something as unlikely sounding as *International Science Fiction* (Sekai SF zenshû, 1971). It is noteworthy that all of these anthology titles suggest genres or modes separate from, even inferior to, “pure literature” (*junbungaku*). These genres are anthologized outside of the canon.

Japanese anthologies of modern literature are also misleading in that they do not necessarily reflect an author’s literary style or reception history. As stated

earlier, Hyakken wrote in a variety of styles ranging from children's stories to war diaries, *zuihitsu*, poetry, travelogues, and fictional short stories. However, the most commonly cited and anthologized of Hyakken's many short story collections is *Realm of the Dead*. Despite the fact that stories from this collection appear more than any other, it is far from representative of his style. In addition to the problem of overrepresentation, the predominance of *Realm of the Dead* in anthologies and critical studies also belies its poor reception in the Taishō period. Although the anthology makes literature available, by nature of its construction it decontextualizes and dehistoricizes it.

The 1980s Hyakken boom has brought us back to Itō Sei's original assessment and defense of Hyakken in the 1940s. In order to investigate Hyakken's status, I begin my study by going back even further to his debut in Taishō. When Itō Sei wrote in the postwar period, Hyakken was still publishing but had not yet been anthologized in one of these multivolume sets. He is not in Kaizōsha's influential *Contemporary Japanese Literature* (*Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshū*), a sixty-three volume series printed between 1926-1931, but this is not surprising, since his fame postdates its compilation. However, shortly after Itō's remarks, Hyakken was included in Chikuma's prestigious 1958 *Contemporary Japanese Literature* (*Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshū*), and again in 1967 in Kōdansha's somewhat revisionist *Japanese Contemporary Literature* (*Nihon gendai bungaku zenshū*).

The 1950s, in fact, represent one of the peaks in Hyakken anthologization, his works appearing in fourteen separate collections. The 1950s and 1960s also saw an increase in the amount of critical attention given to Hyakken; this is the time when critics Uchida Michio and Takahashi Yoshitaka began publishing essays on Hyakken. This combination of publishing and criticism was repeated on a larger scale in the 1980s and 1990s, and taken in this respect, we can conclude that the Hyakken boom was indeed significant, for it placed Hyakken back on the literary map.

Notes to Chapter I

¹ Uchida Michio's article "Hyakkien būmu kō" originally appeared in the *Mainichi Shinbun*, 13 June 1983, evening edition. Uchida Michio is not related to Uchida Hyakken.

² The first two volumes of a new thirty-three volume collected works were printed in 1986. The love letters date from 1905-06 and were published by Fukutake in 1989 as *Love Letters, Love Diaries* (Koibumi, koinikki). Kawamura Jirō's *Uchida Hyakken: Meaningless Tears* received the Yomiuri literary prize in 1984. Six reprints of Hyakken's original publications were issued in the 1980s and sixteen between 1990-1994. Hyakken's fiction was also reprinted in anthologized versions, with eighteen appearing in the 1980s and sixteen between 1990-1994. This implies that the "boom" was not limited to the 1980s. Publication history for Hyakken is from Morita Sakan's *The Hyakkien-Note*, which only covers up to 1994.

³ The editor of the Kawamura-Irokawa article commented on the unusual and somewhat unfathomable nature of this literary revival and on Hyakken's new found appeal (186).

⁴ This is a reference to the Spanish violinist and composer Pablo de Sarasate (1844-1908). *Zigeunerweisen* is an original Sarasate composition.

⁵ Yasuoka is quoted in Sakai (1993, 22). Yasuoka's comments are from his 1982 preface to Hyakken's *Chrysanthemum Rain* (Kiku no ame, 1939).

⁶ One of the leading Hyakken scholars, Sakai Hideyuki, takes a biographical approach in his analysis of Hyakken by foregrounding the real life experiences that are fictionalized in Hyakken's texts. Hirayama Saburō, Hyakken's disciple, mentions the tendency of contemporary readers to assume events in the stories were based in fact (1965, 248).

⁷ The term *zuihitsu* will be explained in detail in chapter 4.

⁸ Hyakken published fifty-three separate books which Morita Sakan breaks down into the following categories (Note: this does not include reprints and anthologies): six diaries (*nikki chō*), thirty-two miscellany (*zuihitsu*) collections, five novel (*shōsetsu*) collections (this is Morita's term for the pseudotravelogues in the *Idiot Train* series), three creative writing/ fictional collections (*sōsaku*), two novels (*shōsetsu*), two books of lecture notes (*kōjutsu hikki*) (one is transcriptions from a round table discussion and the other is a collection of the author's reflections), two *haiku* collections, one illustrated collection of fairy tales (*e-iri otogibanashi*). *Realm of the Dead* and *Triumphant Entry into Port Arthur* are categorized as creative writing and *Hyakkien's Miscellany* as *zuihitsu*.

⁹ *Hyakkien's Miscellany* was reprinted over ten times, becoming a best seller and retaining its popularity even in the postwar period. See the Kawamura-Irokawa article (186).

¹⁰ In the section on Taishō, I un hinge the term from its imperial designation and expand its scope to encompass the 1910s, 1920s and early 1930s, hence including Hyakken's second and third collections as a part of Taishō.

¹¹ Itō mentions dreams in the essay on "The Ascension" (Shōten, 1933), and laughter in his essay on *I am A Cat: The Fake Version* (Gansaku wagahai wa neko de aru, 1950). Sakai comments on the influential nature of Itō's essays (1993, 24). Later critics such as Sakai, Kawamura, Takahashi Yoshitaka and Noguchi Takehiko have revisited these themes. Noguchi challenges Itō's discreet characterization by proposing a dialectical relationship between the two elements of dreams and laughter.

¹² This piece was published as a part of the *zuihitsu* collection *The Bridge on the Hill* (Oka no hashi, 1938), but the story itself appeared in the creative writing column (*sōsaku ran*) of *Kaizō*.

¹³ Hyakken's diaries comprise nine of the thirty-three volumes in his collected works issued by Fukutake.

¹⁴ See Guillory's chapter 1 for more on the canon and American politics of representation.

¹⁵ As Guillory makes clear, the inclusion of authors on college and university syllabi is an act of canon reinforcement. I have not had the time to research whether or not the Hyakken boom resulted in his appearance in the classroom, but this would be another indicator of his status.

¹⁶ Itô's essay appeared as a preface to an anthology of Hyakken's stories named after a piece titled "The Ascension" when it was published as a *bunko* by Shinchô in 1948.

¹⁷ Uchida Michio uses the term *gendai* which is normally translated 'contemporary', however since he is writing in 1962 and referring back to Itô Sei's work in the 1940s, I have translated it as 'modern', rather than 'contemporary', since the latter term could be misleading.

¹⁸ Hyakken did write two novels, *Isôrô sôsô* (*Isôrô sôsô*, 1937) and *I am A Cat: The Fake Version* (*Gansaku wagahai wa neko de aru*, 1950), but these are not necessarily representative of the genre. See note above for breakdown of his works.

¹⁹ There may be other means for representing the canon, but I find the anthology to be a useful and readily researchable point of origin.

²⁰ It should be noted that a number of different publishing houses produce these multivolume sets and they are very similar in terms of the authors and works that are included. However, there are differences among the various sets and it is possible to see certain sets as compensating for the deficiencies of their predecessors, even though they originate from different publishers.

²¹ Hyakken usually shares space with Morita Sôhei, Naka Kansuke, Suzuki Miekichi and Terada Torahiko.

²² For Wakayama Bokusui see volume 28 of Chikuma's *Gendai Nihon bungaku taikai*, 1968-1973.

²³ John Guillory points out that the novel, the form we now think of as perhaps the most canonical, was "itself a noncanonical genre until the end of the nineteenth century" (24). Guillory further argues that "the works invoked as canonical change continually according to many different occasions of judgment or contestation" (30).

²⁴ See Guillory (63-4) for a discussion of genre and its relationship to what counts as literature and the assessment of individual authors.

Chapter II

Rethinking Taishō: From Private to Public and Back Again

In the introduction to her study of the writer and marxist critic Nakano Shigeharu, Miriam Silverberg asks: "How should the Taishō era be placed within the narrative of Japanese history?" (1990, 4). In attempting to answer this question, historians have taken one of two approaches: "either something 'went wrong' with the forward course of history, or 'nothing really changed' as the structuring of Meiji political history determined the character of the Taishō and Shōwa eras" (1990, 4). Literary critics have also sought to answer this question, but given the nature of their inquiry, they have had to forge tenuous and often contentious links between the discourse of literature and the "reality" of history.

I begin my own study of the literary history of the imperially marked years of the Taishō period, 1912-1926 with an essay by Karatani Kōjin, titled "The Discursive Space of Modern Japan." This serves as a fruitful starting point for this study and an entry into Taishō, because Karatani speaks in both general terms about the issues involved in any periodization or historicization of literature, and in specific terms about the problems in the Japanese case. In order to examine the role of Taishō, we must first consider some larger questions concerning periodization itself.

In stating that "all periodization is arbitrary" (193), Karatani vocalizes the

current thought in literary history that "periods are necessary fictions" (Perkins, 250), but fictions that critics are compelled to construct in order to dismantle.¹ If indeed the terms Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa are arbitrary fictions, we must question the validity of speaking of a "Taishō literature" or a "Meiji history," or of invoking any of these periods as cohesive wholes. However, as Karatani aptly points out, simply doing away with this system would not solve the problem — "there is something there that disappears when the proper name *Meiji* is removed" (192). Indeed, there is something there, that "something" is a historical context, a hierarchy of value judgments, a cultural baggage of sorts that imbues the words Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa with meaning, and ties them to each other in a relational structure. This structure allows us to laud the "brilliance of Meiji" (Najita 1974, 29) and lament the "problem of Taishō"² without having to question the ways in which these terms Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa have been used over time, or how they function in such phrases.

Whereas Meiji is often regarded as heroic and brilliant, "one of the most remarkable epochs of modern world history" (Pyle 1978, 119), Taishō is either insignificant (Seidensticker, 256) and insular (Karatani, 205) or simply problematic. Despite the seeming neutrality of words such as Meiji, I argue that their use is hardly arbitrary or neutral. In order to understand the meaning of "Taishō history" or "Taishō literature," or what is said about these topics, we must be aware of, and often in agreement with, the value systems they are

imbedded in. If we begin to question the historical use of "Taishô" and wrest it from its relational structure, specifically its relations to Meiji, then we may also begin to see the terms it is often associated with — interiority, individualism and private — in something other than a negative light.³

In attempting to answer Miriam Silverberg's question concerning the Taishô era, I examine the history of the period and investigate the usage of the term Taishô and the images it evokes. Through this endeavor I look to answer the questions: Who speaks in the name of Taishô, and whom are they speaking about? It is only through a consideration of issues of perspective and context that we can begin to reevaluate the term Taishô, and the validity of the negative characterization it often receives.

What is Taishô?

Western literary scholars have applied such concepts as "periods, genres, traditions, schools, movements, horizons of expectation, discourses, [and] communicative systems" (Perkins, 248) in their attempts to historicize and speak meaningfully about literature. Japanese critics have employed similar means and adopted similar approaches when considering the ruptures and continuities of modern Japanese literature. The (Japanese) convention of viewing literary movements as contained within an imperial reign provides one overriding framework for dividing up the years 1868 to the present.⁴ However, critics have

invoked other images, symbols and events which create fissures in the temporal rifts separating Meiji, Taishô and Shôwa.

Often contrasted with the revolutionary change of Meiji and the growing nationalism of early Shôwa, the short years which constitute the Taishô period have been portrayed both positively, as a time of relative peace and prosperity under the rule of "Taishô democracy" (Rubin, 9; Seidensticker, 256), and negatively, as a time of peaceful insignificance (Seidensticker, 256) and delusional, insular self-complacency and self-deception (Karatani, 205). The Taishô years encompass the devastation of the First World War and the upheaval of the Russian Revolution, but also the decadence of the Roaring Twenties and the new vision of European modernism and the Soviet avant-garde (Silverberg 1992, 34).

The rupture between Meiji and Taishô is most commonly marked by the death of the Meiji Emperor, but is also represented by the suicide of General Nogi Maresuke (and his wife, Shizuko), which in some ways was a more symbolic act than the passing of the ruler himself (Harootunian, 5; Karatani, 209-210).⁵ Although the Taishô period officially ended in 1926 with another imperial death, many mark the end of the age with the suicide of the writer Akutagawa Ryûnosuke in July of 1927. The period itself lasted a mere fifteen years, but even this short time span can be subdivided into the years preceding and following the Great Kantô Earthquake on September 1, 1923.

When discussing "Taishō literature" in the West, the tendency is to equate it with the *shishōsetsu* style of confessional literature. As Edward Fowler notes in his book *The Rhetoric of Confession*, "the *shishōsetsu* so dominated the Taishō literary world that the phrase "Taishō literature (*Taishō bungaku*) now connotes its heyday" (128).⁶ This over-emphasis on the pure or elite I-novel has precluded the detailed and serious study of other literary trends in Taishō such as modernism and proletarian fiction, as well as the more popular detective fiction and the elements of erotic, grotesque nonsense (*ero-guro-nansensu*) (Ozaki). It has also supported the divisions of "popular" and "pure," which are another retrospective attempt to categorize the period (Suzuki Sadami).

The period has its share of both young and old writers who published in literary journals and in newspapers, and who were variously grouped under a variety of "isms."⁷ Due to the fact that many of the so-called "Meiji" writers including Shimazaki Tōson, Tayama Katai, Masamune Hakuchō, Tokuda Shūsei and Natsume Sōseki (Satō, 139), were most active in the years of Taishō, it is difficult and possibly misleading to speak of the "Taishō" writer. Literary movements associated with Taishō include the Aestheticists, the White Birch School, the Intellectualists, the Modernists and the Proletarians, but do not exclude the late "Meiji" domain of naturalism.⁸

The Turn Inward

Karatani begins his essay by confronting the predominant tool used to periodize Japanese literature, when he asks: "What are the implications of periodizing history according to era names?" (191). He highlights the ontological and epistemological differences inherent in viewing Japanese history through either the Western calendar or the Japanese era system. Karatani's project unfolds on a worldwide scale, and in order to conceptualize the relations between Japan and the West, or alternately between Japan and the East, he invokes the terms interior and exterior, terms which oscillate as Karatani moves between historical reality and discursive space.

Karatani argues that the viewing of (modern) Japanese history by the era names Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa, "evoke[s] a certain coherent image" made possible through the interiority of the discursive system (192). However, the coherency of this image is illusory, as Karatani points out, by confessing that he, himself, was years in making the connection between the Meiji 20s-30s and the fin de siècle, or the third year of Taishō and the First World War. Although, "all periodization is arbitrary," he admits that it is also indispensable in order to impart meaning and to understand history (193). However, it is necessary to remain aware of the limitations of adhering to any one system of demarcation.

Karatani is interested in the interplay between the Western calendar and the system of era names, with respect to Japan's relations to the outside world.

Dividing historical time solely according to era names "make[s] one forget relations to the exterior and construct a single, autonomous, discursive space" (192). Karatani disavows interest in such an endeavor; rather, he envisions a Japan that is inextricably linked to the modern (western) world, the exterior. As part of this project, Karatani characterizes periods of Japanese modern literary history with respect to their awareness of this exterior, and consequently those periods which lack this awareness are deemed interior.

Playing with the terms interior and exterior, Karatani draws new lines of demarcation not necessarily dependent upon the emperors. In justifying this new system, Karatani claims that era names "do not strictly correspond to the lives of the emperors and are unrelated to the emperors personally" (194). He demonstrates this in his discussion of the use of the term Shōwa. In comparing the new left movement of 1970 to the AMPO struggle of Shōwa 35 (1960),⁹ Karatani claims that Shōwa ended in Shōwa 40.¹⁰ Despite the continued reign of the Shōwa emperor, the years that follow should be conceptualized in terms of the Western calendar.

After unhitching the eras from their rulers, Karatani reattaches them to each other. By using his new system of interior/ exterior, he can draw parallels between movements separated by Western and imperial time. In connecting Meiji to Shōwa, he argues that the issues Takeuchi Yoshimi put forth at the time of the AMPO struggles were problems of both pre-Shōwa 20 and pre-Meiji 20

(195). In superimposing the previous history of Meiji onto Shōwa, Karatani sees both periods as a time when Japan was transforming into a "nation-state of Western-power status," replete with economic development and the "revision of unequal treaties" (196). Similarly he equates Taishō with the Japan of post-1970, because of the "combination of a sense of achievement and autonomous internalization" (197) which repressed the exterior relations to the West and to Asia, relations which were present in Meiji and Shōwa.

Lacking the confrontation with the West that is indicative of Meiji or Shōwa, the Taishō period of Karatani's scheme also lacked an exterior, or a worldwide simultaneity. Karatani offers the example of Japan's involvement in World War I, which in his opinion was "only a distant event on another shore" (202).¹¹ In Karatani's view, despite the distance from this event and the lack of worldwide tension, a (false) sense of worldwide simultaneity appeared in Japan, as the West and the East were no longer seen as other. "'Things Taishōesque' emerged from a consciousness of autonomy, as tensions between Japan and the West began to ease following the Russo-Japanese War, and Japan proclaimed its separation from Asia" (202). As concern with the exterior faded, and internationalization increased, the differences between East and West that had troubled intellectuals such as Natsume Sōseki, lost their qualitative value and became merely differences of degree (201). Once the outside disappeared, the nation refocused on "things Japanese" (202).¹²

The lack of exterior, or lack of awareness of the exterior is the key to understanding Karatani's Taishō. Inherent in Karatani's terms exterior and interior are value judgments which belie his claim that "all periodization is arbitrary." This is apparent in his negative assessment of the Taishōesque.

A self-complacency that can introduce anything from the outside without actually maintaining a conception of the exterior; or, conversely, a delusionary, insular mentality that thinks of itself as worldwide, even though it is entirely local; or further, the self-deception of being unaware of "invasion," even while Japan is in fact advancing mercilessly throughout the world. (205)

Although Karatani does not state explicitly to whom this description applies, the mention of Yanagita Kunio and Natsume Sōseki leads us to believe that he is targeting the amorphous category of the "intellectual." Although there are certain problems specific to Karatani's argument, I would like to temporarily forgo an analysis of his essay in order to examine another view of Taishō which supports many of Karatani's conclusions.

Karatani's characterization of Taishō and the Taishōesque can be summarized as follows: 1) a lack of confrontation with the West as tensions eased following the Russo-Japanese War; 2) a sense of achievement and autonomous internalization; 3) refocus on "things Japanese;" 4) ignorance (on the part of the intellectual community) with respect to Japan's imperialism; 5) lack of exteriority. Karatani is not alone in his view of Taishō. In an essay which precedes Karatani's by almost two decades, H. D. Harootunian argues for a

similar complacency and self-withdrawal on the part of Japanese intellectuals in the Taishō period.

Harootunian focuses his piece, "A Sense of An Ending and the Problem of Taishō," on the historical and conceptual rupture which accompanied the era change from Meiji to Taishō. He seeks to discover what ended with Meiji and how the ending of Meiji affected the "spiritual life of Imperial Japan" (5). Although he does not discuss the problem in terms of exterior and interior, he accuses the Taishō intellectuals of renouncing their ties with politics and the realm of the public. Harootunian's 'public' functions similarly to Karatani's 'exterior;' both Karatani and Harootunian assail the Taishō intellectuals for their "delusionary, insular mentality," but whereas Karatani sees it as a lack of awareness of the exterior, Harootunian sees it as a retreat to the realm of the private.

Harootunian describes Meiji as a heroic era, which ended not only with the passing of its hero, the emperor, but with the *junshi* (self-sacrifice) of General Nogi Maresuke, who followed his lord into death. This symbolic suicide represents for Harootunian the end of *bushidō*, the way of the warrior, and the "military sense of determination and achievement that had characterized the Meiji period" (7). If the spirit of Meiji is clothed in samurai armor, it is also found marching under the banner of civilization (*bunmei*). Harootunian opposes Meiji's civilization to Taishō's culture (*bunka*); civilization "summoned purpose and

goal—self-sacrifice and nationalism," but culture promoted "individualism, culturalism and cosmopolitanism" (15). Whereas the men of Meiji committed themselves to "discipline, practical education and self-sacrificing service," the generation of Taishō sought to "operate in the private sphere and to serve only themselves" (15). Harootunian stresses this shift from public to private as he traces the Taishō generation's move from politics to the realm of the spirit.

It is difficult to grasp the reasons animating this shift from public to private, politics to the spirit, and external to internal. It is unclear what drove the Taishō intellectuals to reject politics and the political sphere and to venerate culture, isolatedness and self-centeredness (17). Harootunian suggests that the lack of a "living deity" to rule over the nation, and the "emerging social protest" and "moral failure" of the first decade of the twentieth century fueled this shift (4). Harootunian finds fault within the very origins of the concept of Taishō culture itself. Infused with the German sense of *Kultur* (culture), *bunka* was "founded on a set of unfortunate dichotomies" (16); Japanese intellectuals sided with the spirit (culture) against politics, and in Harootunian's opinion, dangerously confused the spirit with power and erroneously assumed culture to be a "more than adequate substitute for politics" (16).

Reading these two essays, we are drawn to the conclusion that perhaps something did "go wrong" in Taishō. Unlike their Meiji counterparts who served the nation, the Taishō intellectuals, and perhaps the Japanese people as a whole,

forsook their own families and communities for aesthetic and spiritual pursuits and economic and personal success.¹³ In so doing, they turned a blind eye to the nation's imperialistic conquests, and in Edwin Reischauer's opinion, failed to offer reasonable solutions to the political, economic and social upheaval, solutions which might have stopped the country from embarking on the militaristic path which led to the Second World War.¹⁴

Harootunian's conclusions are not as extreme as Reischauer's, but despite the fact that at times Harootunian seems to praise individuality for its productive role in art, literature and the "liberal political and social creed" (14), there remains a tone of condemnation in his essay. As he states, "Japanese intellectuals and writers were *confusing—dangerously* I think—spirit with power, and art with life, and making the *erroneous assumption* that culture itself was a more than adequate substitute for politics" (16).¹⁵

Is this a complete picture of the Taishō period? If so, what are the ramifications for any political, social, literary or artistic movements? I believe the opinions represented in Karatani's and Harootunian's essays present only one side of the picture. In order to balance out our view, we can turn to the historical tradition that considers Taishō a manifestation of the unresolved issues of Meiji, but Taishō remains a "problem," only now it is a problem with a history. It is important to keep in mind the complementarity of these two positions. As Victor Koschmann states, it is only through this "conflict of interpretations" (442)

that a picture of the whole emerges through our "epistemological equivalent of a wide-angle lens"(445).

In the search for a more comprehensive portrait of Taishō, there are some important questions that need to be asked: 1) Who is our object of study? Just who are these "intellectuals" Karatani and Harootunian speak of?; 2) From whose perspective are we viewing the problem? Are we judging the Taishō period from the perspective of Meiji? If so, is this valid?; 3) How are terms such as interior, individual and private functioning within the discursive system of Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa? What are the preconceptions that support this system?

The "Intellectuals"

Part of the difficulty in determining the identity of our object of study stems from a confusion of terms, or an ambiguity surrounding the referent for the word intellectual. Harootunian's "intellectuals" are a different set of men than Karatani's, who are different still from those described in socio-historical essays on the topic, such as Peter Duus' "Liberal Intellectuals and Social Conflict in Taishō Japan."

Karatani's Taishō intellectuals include members of the literary movements of naturalism, the White Birch School, and Taishō humanism (201),¹⁶ *watakushi shōsetsu* writers(I-novel)(202) and authors who are not associated with any particular school or style, such as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Yanagita Kunio

(205). He contrasts these individuals and these movements to Meiji writers such as Natsume Sôseki. We can assume that Karatani envisions Sôseki and the naturalists on opposite sides of the fence — the one separating his Meiji from his Taishô. "Thus Natsume Sôseki, who began writing fiction after the Russo-Japanese war, appeared to the dominant literary circles as a person from the previous age" (201).

Karatani may be able to argue effectively for the generation gap between Sôseki and the White Birch writers or the Taishô humanists, however, the same gap did not exist between Sôseki and the naturalists. Sôseki and many of the so-called naturalist writers are part of what Carol Gluck terms the second generation of Meiji, the generation born in the 1860s and 1870s (Gluck, 268).¹⁷ Their publishing careers also coincide; naturalism boomed in 1907, the same year in which Sôseki began his newspaper career (Rubin, 280-81).

Karatani's characterization is problematic for a number of reasons. First, I would ask Karatani to identify whom exactly he considers a naturalist, since the term was neither adequately defined in the heyday of naturalism (Ishikawa, 259), nor is it clear to whom it applies.¹⁸ Secondly, the relationship between Sôseki (and other "Meiji" writers such as Mori Ôgai) and these naturalist writers is more intertwined and dynamic than Karatani depicts it. "The generational tension that infused their [Sôseki's and Ôgai's] writing was something they shared with the naturalists and felt encouraged to express because of the accomplishments of

naturalism" (Rubin, 82). This "generational tension" accounts for the controversial views of the naturalists on such issues as the sanctity of the family, sex and the role of the individual, or the relationship of the individual to the state.

Although Harootunian also includes the White Birch movement under his category of intellectual, he extends the definition to include the poet Takamura Kôtarô (28), and philosophers, such as Nishida Kitarô and Kuki Shûzô (18). At times he discusses the withdrawal from politics of the aesthetic bourgeoisie, without mentioning specific individuals or their relationship to the intellectual class (22). Surprisingly, Harootunian's arguments regarding the intellectuals do not apply to the very politically minded men in Duus' essay, "Liberal Intellectuals and Social Conflict in Taishô Japan." Harootunian acknowledges this group but does not recognize them as intellectuals, rather he labels them Taishô ideologues, rural populists and liberals.¹⁹

The looseness with which these terms, intellectual, liberal and ideologue are used makes it difficult to identify the object of study and to emerge with a clear picture of the roles they played in the Taishô period. The men Duus studies, Ôyama Ikuo, Yoshino Sakuzô, Kawakami Hajime and Abe Isoo, among others, were actively involved in the political sphere, and hence are excluded from Karatani's and Harootunian's definitions. While some of these men adhered to a consensus model which viewed politics as a "means of creating or

maintaining community," others diverted radically to a conflict/coercion model in which politics was "simply a struggle for domination and power" (Duus 1982, 427).²⁰ Unlike their consensus minded counterparts, the latter group denied the neutrality of the Diet and the state, and viewed the social hierarchy as "a series of heights separated by awesome, perhaps unbridgeable chasms" and the equality of opportunity as an illusion (1982, 427).

As advocates of democracy (*minponshugi*), members of the proletarian party (*musan seitô*), organizers of the political study group the *Seiji kenkyûkai*, and political activists and radicals, these men were not only engaged in political and social issues, but throughout the 1920s, they attempted to define their own role as intellectuals (429). If we exclude these men from Karatani's and Harootunian's categories, we are left with writers, artists and philosophers, and we are also left with the question: What is the role of such "intellectuals" in the political and social realms? Do we subscribe to the belief of art for art's sake, or do we perceive "art" as inherently political, as "either in opposition to or in complicity with the power in place" (Lentricchia, 60)?²¹

The Critics

Having determined the identity of these "intellectuals," it is necessary to name their critics as well. The question here is one of perspective. From whose perspective are we evaluating the Taishô period? If we view the "problems" of

Taishô through the eyes of Meiji, then we must account for the gaps that existed between these generations in order to contextualize these critics' words.

The critics Harootunian quotes on the decadence and lost vision of the Taishô youth are conservatives such as Tokutomi Sohô, the publisher of *Kokumin Shinbun*, and "the most representative of those who hurled stern warnings at the younger generation for allowing their loyalty to the state to atrophy and their apathy to grow" (Oka, 209).

The criticism of such "opinion leaders" and "establishment ideologues" (Oka, 206) as Tokutomi and Miyake Setsurei must be tempered in light of the generational gap that informed them.²² This second generation, the "young men of Meiji," such as Tokutomi, were born in the 1860s and 1870s, and enjoyed their prime years of national service from late 1880s through the 1910s (Gluck, 268). Carol Gluck notes that due to the long term of their influence, "many of the same people who responded to the perceived need for a sense of nation in the late 1880s also reacted to what they saw as a crisis in social order in the early 1900s" (269). Although the men remained the same, the tasks they faced "belonged to different time[s]" (269).

In the eyes of these men, who had for decades "framed their purposes in terms of national affairs" (272),²³ the generation who had been born since the 1880s not only lacked a sense of nation, but embodied "disorderliness, extravagance, and youthful self-absorption" (273). Whereas the Meiji

generations²⁴ looked nostalgically back into the past, the young generation looked into the future and welcomed the changes of the modern (270). In Gluck's opinion, the Meiji ideologues' fears that "'the glories of Meiji' might prove ephemeral" led to their "ideological attempts to retrieve the social past and [to] their sometimes obsessive concern with the degradation (*daraku*) of youth" (274).

Harootunian acknowledges the generational gap, but he still takes the Taishō generation to task for not living up to the ideals of Meiji.

What Tokutomi failed to acknowledge is that with the ideals of the past he was trying to reach an audience with very different ideals. . . . Despite Tokutomi's atavism his assessment of contemporary conditions was essentially correct. The youth of Taishō, the nation itself, had indeed lost the ideals that had served society so well during the Meiji period. (11-12)

As mentioned previously, although Harootunian recognizes the positive effects of the new individualism, he still regards the rejection of the public as an error of judgment.

In re-evaluating the comments of the Meiji critics, I do not mean to imply that Taishō intellectuals were not self-critical or bereft of disparaging remarks with respect to the burgeoning political activity around them, or that the older generation was united in their condemnation of the Taishō youth. Oka Yoshitake mentions such men as Togawa Shūkotsu, Ebina Danjō, Ukita Kazutami, Kamata Eikichi and Fujii Kenjirō (218-224) who not only saw the

positive aspects of the new individuality, but who also criticized their Meiji peers for their "shallow and careless advice" (202). It is also important to remember that before his about-face spurred by the victories of the Sino-Japanese War, Tokutomi, himself, was a great promoter of the western, liberal "civilization and enlightenment" (*bunmei kaika*) ideals of early Meiji. Given Tokutomi's early calls for "a new Japan" in which there would be no room for a "Japanese cultural identity," it is ironic that he would go on to criticize the Taishō youth for failing to embrace the conservative ideals of the state.²⁵

Peter Duus highlights the intellectuals' ambivalence toward socialism and public demonstrations.²⁶ Demonstrations in particular were seen as dangerous and ineffective. Duus mentions Abe Isoo's resentment toward student radicalism (1982, 430), and notes the extreme views of Ukita Kazutami, the editor of *Taiyō*. Although a champion of individualism, Ukita was "an old-guard Christian liberal disgusted at the blind and irrational character of the crowd, who viewed popular demonstrations with considerable distaste.

Demonstrations, he grumbled, were the work of 'dangerous idlers' and 'rash irresponsible youths'" (1982, 415).

In addition to enduring the criticism of the older generation, these liberal intellectuals were resented by labor leaders (1982, 430), and sneered at by fiction writers, such as Arishima Takeo, who saw them as "romantics who plunged into working-class movements, even though they had nothing in common with the

workers." "For such critics, social activism by intellectuals was dilettantish dabbling" (1982, 431).

Harootunian appeals to Duus' intellectuals when he quotes Ôyama Ikuo on political malaise. To support his statement that "the aesthetic man [the Taishô intellectual] could not have any serious concern for or involvement in the arbitrary fluctuations of social and political problems" (18), Harootunian quotes Ôyama: "The majority of people. . . do not think politics has anything to do with them. . . politics does not shape the content of their lives" (18).²⁷ Again we must consider the context of this remark. Taken in isolation, this statement could support Harootunian's claims, but Duus points out that Ôyama was lamenting the indifference of the masses, and not groups such as the student radicals (1971, 429).

If indeed the populace were afflicted with a political malaise and the intellectuals were guilty of rejecting the political in order to "operate in the private and serve only themselves," and if this was not the case in Meiji, then we must ask why such a dramatic shift occurred in Taishô. When weighing these various comments and interpretations, we must also look for a certain amount of explanation. Before evaluating Karatani's and Harootunian's terms interior, private and individual, and Ôyama's statements on political disinterest, we should examine the reasons why the people of Taishô took on these characteristics. As preparation for this endeavor, I will provide a brief survey of

the political, social and economic history of the Taishō period.

Taishō History

The Taishō era opened with a political crisis, the Taishō *seihen*, in which the cabinet changed twice in two months during the winter of 1912-1913 (Gluck, 227). Calls arose for a Taishō Restoration which would fulfill the promises of Meiji and "transform Japan's internal structure just as the Meiji Restoration had transformed her relations with the outside world" (Duus 1971, 456).²⁸ The conflict of 1912-1913 could not be contained within the walls of the cabinet, but poured out into the streets of the city. Reminiscent of the Hibiya riots of 1905,²⁹ mobs demonstrated in conjunction with the Movement to Protect Constitutional Government (*Kensei yōgo undō*) in February, and the newspapers served as another voice of discontent as they joined the protests in both print and practice (Gluck, 231-2). This phenomenon was repeated on a national scale in the Rice Riots of 1918, as the ever expanding press reached beyond the metropolis into the countryside.³⁰

The year 1919 saw a rise in labor disputes, which the government attempted to silence by tempting labor to join with industry through the founding of the Conciliation Society (*Kyōchōkai*). In addition to social unrest, the economy slumped into recession with the end of the wartime boom, only the first of many economic upheavals to plague Taishō (Pyle 1978, 124-5). Tenancy

disputes also escalated over the years 1918-1926, resulting in the formation of tenant unions which voiced the countryside's discontent over rising rents (1978, 125). The communist party was formed in 1922, as "radical thought" poured in from the Russian Revolution and Wilsonian democracy (1978, 125), and the volatility of society reared its ugly head in the violent aftermath of the Great Kantô Earthquake in 1923.

Despite the government's attempts to control instability through the passage of the Peace Preservation Law of 1925, they could not keep the public out of politics, as evidenced by the granting of universal male suffrage in the same year.³¹ Struggling to contain the conflict at home, the government was creating conflict abroad. Taking advantage of Europe's preoccupation with World War I, Japan seized German holdings in Shantung and the German-held islands in the South Pacific, issued the Twenty-One Demands to China in 1915, and encountered anti-Japanese nationalist movements in Korea and China in 1919 (Pyle 1978, 134-7). Although America supported Japan economically as her best trading customer,³² political tensions increased over Japan's interests in China. Despite the Japanese acceptance of a policy of peaceful internationalism at the Washington Conference in 1921, an air of "diplomatic coolness" prevailed, and the United States Congress passed the Japan Exclusion Act in 1924 (1978, 137-9).

Given the tremendous social, political and economic upheaval on both the domestic and foreign fronts, it is difficult to understand why this period is described as one of peaceful insignificance, interiority and self-complacency. It is equally as puzzling when critics remark that, "Taishō history contains little to be either very proud of or deeply ashamed of" (Seidensticker, 256), or when they describe Taishō history as "lackluster" and unable to "stir the historian's imagination" (Najita 1974, 29).

Reasons Why

Harootunian quoted Ôyama Ikuo on the political indifference of the masses, but failed to emphasize that this attitude may have arisen from the fact that "party government lacked moral persuasiveness among much of the population" (Duus 1971, 423), a sentiment echoed by Ôyama when he stated in 1917 that "while the parties say they represent the will of the people, their actions usually betray the people's demands" (1971, 428). The people were in many ways excluded from the political process; universal male suffrage was not granted until 1925, and the government remained in the hands of the elite.³³ Kenneth Pyle notes the effects of this "oppressive orthodoxy" on the Taishō youth through the words of the poet Ishikawa Takuboku, who lamented that "The atmosphere that surrounds us youth is suffocating. The influence of authority pervades the entire country. The existing social organization reaches

into every nook and cranny" (Pyle 1989, 717). This sense of powerlessness and despair argues strongly against what Harootunian perceives to be a mistaken and self-serving retreat to the "private" among the intellectuals he describes as having lost the ideals of Meiji society.

Oka Yoshitake expands on these points in his essay "Generational Conflict After the Russo-Japanese War." He attributes the generational gap of his title to a "new consciousness of the individual" (197) which manifested itself in the *après guerre* youth in the years following the Russo-Japanese War. Oka describes this new mind-set as a confluence of the following forces, desires and trends: 1) the desire for success, both individual and economic; 2) hedonistic tendencies that the older generation had not exhibited, and therefore interpreted as "sensual dissipation," extravagance and effeminacy; 3) an air of skepticism and despair; 4) an individualistic way of thinking that was infused by the works of Nietzsche and Ibsen, and expressed in the youth's clashes with the traditional family system, involvement with romantic love, and concern for the liberation of women; 5) naturalist literature, which embodied many of the struggles of the youth; 6) socialist thought, which found many sympathizers in the postwar youth (197-200).

Oka locates the source of this self-awareness first in the "wave of self-congratulation [which] swept over Japanese society" (202) in response to the nation's victory in the Russo-Japanese War and their newly found acceptance as

a world power. The "diffusion of capitalist culture and ideology" (202) which accompanied the war also fueled the emergence of individualism. In conjunction with these more positive forces was the "remarkable reduction of social fluidity" (202), and the government's continued calls for sacrifice on the part of the populace. Japan may have proved its military might, but would require the nation's cooperation in order to win the "war of commerce and industry."³⁴

The ruling elite attempted to drum up national support for the government's expanding imperialistic campaign, but they seemed to encounter resistance on all fronts. In addition to the unwillingness of a weary populace to heed the call for more sacrifice, the government had to contend with its own distrust and enmity of the rioting masses (205).

Kenneth Pyle details the increasing monetary and human demands of the imperialistic state beginning with the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895. Military expenditures "more than tripled in the decade from 1893-1903" (1978, 105), and after mobilizing one-fifth of the male working population for service in the Russo-Japanese War, the government continued to burden the citizenry with their "soaring. . . expenditures for industrial capital formation and for military and colonial enterprises" which "brought about extensive foreign borrowing, international payment problems" and mounting taxes in the years 1905-1914 (1978, 109).

A successful imperialist policy required a unified nation at home, with every part of society subordinated to the whole, with the state taking precedence over individual citizen and over social groups. . . . If the drive for industry and empire was to be sustained, national loyalties would have to be continuously reinforced and every effort made to overcome the forces of disintegration. (Pyle 1978, 109-110).

In searching for a "successful imperialist policy," the government looked into the past for values which could be re-employed as "bulwarks against the disintegration of society in the future" (Gluck, 273). Carol Gluck mentions the "village, the family, social morality, frugality, the spirit of *bushidô*, agriculture, [and] *Shintô*" (273) as the means by which the government would reassert national purpose.

National mobilization took on an ethical tone, as the government appropriated the language of rural collectivist values as a means of propagating their ideology of a "family nation" (Pyle 1978, 115, 130). "In this way, the central government reached down into local village society, to mobilize loyalties and to extend them to the national level" (1978, 118).³⁵ The Minister of Education, Makino Nobuaki pressed the educational system into ideological service, warning students and teachers that in the face of dangerous socialist thought and declining public morality, they "should spare no effort to see that education had its desired effects."³⁶ These "desired effects" included wholesome minds, sincerity, honesty, and for women, the ideal of "good wives and wise mothers" (Oka, 215-17). The Home Minister, Tokonami Takejirô also joined the cause by

invoking the power of religion to shore up national morality (217-18).

Censorship proved to be another means by which the government asserted ideological control. Harootunian hints at the government's efforts to clamp down on the rampant, dangerous individualism and moral decadence, but does not draw an adequate picture of the invasiveness and effectiveness of the state's attempts to dictate a social and moral code for the nation.³⁷

In his book *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State*, Jay Rubin chronicles the Meiji censorship system as it expanded its grasp to include not only political (socialist) writings, but the "equally pernicious individualism" (59) which began to appear in the pages of so-called naturalist fiction published after the Russo-Japanese War. The censorship system created in Meiji remained in operation up through the Second World War (10), its influence and power fluctuating only in terms of degrees across the three eras it spanned. Although the Taishō period is often portrayed as one of openness and of "genuinely expanded liberties" (9), Rubin warns that even as democracy flourished, the government took major strides "toward the re-establishment of national harmony" (230).³⁸ In addition to cracking down on academic freedom, as mentioned previously, in 1925 the Diet passed the Peace Preservation Law, a tool the government used to arrest, torture, try and imprison citizens they found to be offenders of the state.³⁹

Writers clashed with the government throughout the first two decades of the twentieth century, in a standoff which continued up into the 1940s. Rubin traces the progress of this relationship from the government's initial reactions to the early signs of naturalism expressed in Tōson's *Hakai* (1906), to the blossoming of the movement in 1907-8, and on through the trials of the High Treason Case in 1910-11, and the government's efforts to contain the writers under the auspices of sanctioned associations such as the Committee on Literature (1911-13, 1934-37). The writers continued to resist state control, and as Rubin points out, it was only with the help of "wartime hysteria" that the government succeeded in changing the rules and containing and controlling the writers under the aegis of the Japanese Literature Patriotic Association in 1942 (Rubin, 8-11, 218-19).

Despite the differences Harootunian, Karatani and other historians⁴⁰ ascribe to the three modern periods, Rubin maintains that the relationship between the writers and the state remained constant across the three eras.

Throughout the Taishō (1912-1926) and Shōwa (1926-) periods, serious writers continued to uphold the tradition of political and artistic independence that had been established in late Meiji. Meanwhile, official thinking also remained consistent: ranged against everything that was wholesomely Japanese were the alien forces of sedition and decadence, their deadly germs always threatening to infect the sacred kokutai. As a result, the relationship between writers and the state continued essentially unchanged. (227)

In addition to the government's efforts to disperse ideology through religion, education, literature and the press, the sprawling bureaucracy sought to

transform all interests into public ones in order to reduce "uncertainty," as they struggled to establish legitimacy and to maintain authority during this period. In his essay, "The Bureaucratic State in Japan: The Problem of Authority and Legitimacy," Bernard Silberman describes the process of expansion the bureaucracy underwent during the period 1868-1945. He divides these years up into three smaller periods: bureaucratic absolutism (1868-1900), limited pluralism⁴¹ (1900-1936), and state corporatism (1936-1945).

During the decade 1889-1899, the bureaucracy sought to extend the reaches of their authority, a necessary element "both in the state and in all the nonpolitical relationships that made up society" (238). Since religion, family and community were all forms of authority, the only way for the bureaucracy to gain control over these realms was to establish their boundaries through the law. In this way, social interests became political interests as the "family, community, and organizations were removed from their bedrock of custom and anchored in a law that made them subject to the arbitrary, utilitarian purposes and aims of society as interpreted by the state bureaucracy" (238).

Silberman characterizes the bureaucracy's growth as a dialectical process which was always creating new problems while attempting to solve existing ones (238). The problem of social needs and interests proved to be no different. In legalizing these formerly social organizations, the bureaucracy diminished their local controls and freed these groups to "sustain themselves by groping for

larger, trans-local organizational forms" (242). The situation became problematic when these groups, military reserve groups, youth leagues, farmer groups, and economic associations among others, went national.

Ever fearful of its tenuous claims to legitimacy, the bureaucracy responded to these burgeoning organizations with a policy of co-optation (242). Silberman describes the period 1900-1910 as a time when private interests groups were "coopted into the administrative structure" (243). In other words, "state bureaucratic authority now came to be shared in part by transforming private interests into public ones" (243). In return for adherence to bureaucratic values, these groups were granted limited autonomy and limited access to the decision making process.

By means of "administrative recognition, definition and regulation," the bureaucracy was able to "bring private interests into the public sphere" (253-4). In this fashion it asserted its control over "a wide range of social organizations, such as the family, local groups, and private organizations of interests as well as community itself" (253). Both Harootunian and Karatani indicate a shift in Taishō from the public to the private, or the external to the internal, however on a national scale, we must recognize a process working in the reverse direction—a process which turned the private into the public.

Maruyama Masao takes a somewhat extreme position on the state's appropriation of the private.

[T]he Japanese state, being a moral entity, monopolized the right to determine values. . . . It was. . . the sanctity of. . . and interior, subjective sphere that the Japanese law failed to recognize. . . . Accordingly, until the day in 1946 when the divinity of the Emperor was formally denied in an Imperial Rescript, there was in principle no basis in Japan for freedom of belief. Since the nation includes in its "national polity" [kokutai] all the internal values of truth, morality, and beauty, neither scholarship nor art could exist apart from these national values.²

By waging its ideological battles on bureaucratic, political and legal fronts, in the schools, in places of worship, and in the press, the state was able to redefine the private as public and deny the existence of the "interior, subjective sphere." However, as Rubin cautions, "although the function of the individualistic writer. . . lay entirely outside the established systems of values," he was not "politically irrelevant" (6). Writers continued to publish in commercial journals and newspapers, reaching a significant portion of society "without compromising [their] artistic principles" (6).

The ability of these writers to continue publishing pays testimony not only to their "professional pride and independence" (Rubin, xiv), but to the "fitful and inconsistent" (Gluck, 4) nature of the ideological campaign. "The continued concern with ideology suggests that had the efforts at influence (*kyôka*) gone smoothly, no one need have dealt so copiously with the matter" (12). As mentioned by Gluck and others, the national ideology, although effective, invasive and ascendant, was neither monolithic nor singular in existence; rather, it should be seen as part of "a continuously evolving ideological landscape" (277)

in which rival ideologies vied for authority.⁴³

Despite the atmosphere of limited ideological and political pluralism in and around the years of the Taishô period, we must ask what it means to speak of the interior and the private, or to describe someone's writing or thinking as individual, in light of the larger discourse that was redefining the private and transforming it into the public.

Harootunian speaks in aesthetic and even philological⁴⁴ terms about the intellectuals' (poets, writers, philosophers) decision to reject politics for the realm of the private, and about the separation of these two realms. However, it is also possible to view the struggles of the intellectuals and the ways in which these two realms clashed in terms of "crass professional reality — sales, editorial decisions, law courts, official secrets, lurid headlines, commercial exploitation, committee meetings, parties, paper shortages, and police threats" (Rubin, xiv).

Karatani defines interiority as an agentless, delusional, self-complacent refocusing on "things Japanese," but is it not also possible to see this "interiority" as less the symptoms of an insular mentality than the product of a national ideology — an ideology which actively constructed the interior and redefined it as the local and the Japanese, in order to support imperial excursions on the exterior. To some extent, scholars such as Miriam Silverberg agree with Karatani by admitting that certain intellectuals ignored the active involvement of the state bureaucracy in the construction and censorship of mass culture in the 1920s

(1992, 50). However, Silverberg differs from Karatani by recognizing the constructed nature of this culture.⁴⁵

Silverberg acknowledges the existence of a "state-sponsored culturalism" which was contested by the Japanese avant-garde, because it "denied differences within Japan and claimed differences between Japan and the West that did not necessarily hold true at a time when Taylorist principles and Hollywood icons had taken firm hold in Japanese society" (1993, 140). If it is possible to consider the Japanese as having lost sight of the outside during the Taishō period, it is also possible to consider the state as reconstructing the outside for their own purposes. We can see both the interior and the exterior as linked to the effects of censorship, thought control and ideology, forces which maintained, or even created the boundary between exterior and interiority and "reminded" Japanese citizens of their Japaneseness.

Despite the fact that Karatani wants to deny the existence of absolutes, and view history as a discursive space, he is unwilling to see his exterior as equally as constructed a term as his interior. A tension remains between the absoluteness of historical reality, Karatani's exterior, and the shifting discursive spaces he wants to map onto it. Karatani claims that all periodization is arbitrary, but his periodizing tools of exterior and interior are not arbitrarily applied, nor are they equal in status. The interiority he assigns to Taishō is illusory, the construction of a delusional mind, but for him the exteriority of

Meiji and Shōwa is real. I believe that Karatani is ultimately unwilling to accept the arbitrariness he himself promotes. His negative characterization of Taishō hinges on the verifiable, nonillusory nature of the exterior he ascribes to Meiji and Shōwa, an exterior that is no less real or illusory than his interior.

Conclusion

We are still left with a number of unanswered questions. Is the term Taishō a viable one for the construction of a literary history? If so, then what place is there for literature in Taishō history?

When contrasting Meiji and Taishō on the basis of their exteriority / interiority, Karatani ends Meiji with the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, and begins Taishō with the annexation of Korea in 1910.⁴⁶ Many of the historians mentioned in this paper have also identified the Russo-Japanese War as a watershed in Japanese history. If we are willing to see the emergence of individualism and the state's recognition and provisional tolerance of it as part of an era of limited pluralism, then it may be more useful to speak of the years 1905-1936, after which time, as Silberman states, "the civil and military bureaucracies cooperated to foreclose the whole notion of private interests" (231).

It is possible, and even advantageous, to view these three decades spanning late Meiji, Taishō and early Shōwa as interconnected; however, as Karatani warned earlier, we cannot simply dismiss the terms Meiji, Taishō and

Shōwa. Karatani simultaneously affirms and denies the era system as he moves between imperial time and Western time, never clearly indicating which system he is operating under. Although there is a certain degree of rhetorical beauty in the structure of his argument, it leads to a great deal of unnecessary ambiguity.

In the beginning of his epilogue to the volume *Conflict in Modern Japanese History*, Victor Koschmann asks if "history" and "synchrony" are contradictory (441). His conclusions offer a way to resolve our dilemma by allowing for convergence and divergence to form a conceptual whole. In order to see "Taishō" through Koschmann's wide-angle lens, it is necessary to acknowledge both its uniqueness, and its interrelatedness to the years that precede and follow. Additionally, we must be aware that the term Taishō always exists in a relational structure with Meiji and Shōwa, and that invoking the term Taishō may color our interpretation.

• With respect to literature's place in history, Rubin demonstrates the ways in which naturalist writers interacted with the state, and did not disappear into a private realm of inaction. Rubin also voices his impatience with those who are "eager to prove the political impotence of Japanese writers and intellectuals" (181). He laments the fact that the only evidence that could refute such criticism would be "the writer's engagement in political activity quite separate from his profession or the commitment of his writing to the expression of political views" (181). As we have seen, neither of these options were necessarily viable ones

during the time period under discussion. Maybe it is time to separate writers from the ill-fated decisions of their political leaders and give the Taishô period the consideration it warrants.

Other Models in Taishô

Characterizations of the Taishô period as delusionary, insular and self-complacent seem inextricably tied up with literary conceptions of the I-novel. Fictional characters inhabiting the personal and private realm of the novel are seen to reflect the actions of their real life counterparts who turned their backs on society. But as we have seen above, the picture is far more complex and interesting. It may be time to abandon the idea of the I-novel and the terms interior, private and individual as representative of Taishô literature and allow for other traditions to take their place.

Although Uchida Hyakken did not ally himself with any specific literary movement, his contributions to Taishô literature are important for the following reasons. First, he was a member of Natsume Sôseki's *mokuyôkai* or Thursday meeting group, along with such other famous members as Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, authors who made a significant mark on Taishô literature. The legacy of Sôseki, as left to his disciples, is part of the literary inheritance of Taishô, and Hyakken is said to be one of the only disciples to explore the inner side of Sôseki and delve into the self (Itô 1986, 13). Hyakken's membership in

this group and friendship with other followers such as Morita Sôhei may offer insight into the group culture, or what Ogata Tsutomu has called *za no bungaku*, "literature of the salon."⁴

Second, as a part of the renewal of interest in creativity and the resistance to the I-novel (as I will discuss in the next chapter) Hyakken presents another side of Taishô literature which has been neglected. Third, Hyakken's fame as a *zuihitsu* writer provides us with the opportunity to examine yet another overlooked genre, but one which constituted a major trend in the postquake years of Taishô and the first half of the 1930s. The *zuihitsu*, as penned by Hyakken, offer a playful, humorous alternative to the somber I-novel, and the genre itself has interesting connections to censorship.

Hyakken continued to write into the 1970s and we can explore other genres through his writing, such as travel literature, diary writing and comic fiction. As mentioned previously, Hyakken specialized in nonmodern literary forms, and he presents additional challenges by defying the expectations of these "premodern" genres themselves. Hyakken is seen as an important figure in Japanese domestic literary criticism, and he deserves to be introduced to the West. A study of Uchida Hyakken is not just the exhumation of a forgotten author, but a chance to rethink our notions of modern literature itself.

Notes to Chapter II

¹ See Perkins for a summary of the history of literary history and current trends in the discipline.

² This is part of the title of H. D. Harootunian's essay "A Sense of An Ending and the Problem of Taishō." What ended was the "heroic time" (7) of Meiji, and what began was the problematic era of Taishō.

³ Not all critics use these terms as described above. The essays in the volume *Conflict in Modern Japanese History* look beyond the consensual model to find the conflict, dissent and turbulence of late Tokugawa, Meiji and Taishō. In the introduction to this volume, Tetsuo Najita admits that many of historians' "previous generalizations have been misleading," and that these erroneous depictions have often caused historians to handle "'hot' chronologies as if they were 'cold'" (1982, 9). Najita comments on the power of the various schemes used to interpret history and their ability to exclude large portions of that history. I believe the terms Meiji, Taishō and Shōwa can function similarly.

⁴ This system also provides a framework for political, economic, and social history.

⁵ See Gluck (224-6) for a discussion of Nogi as both a symbol of "loyalty and self-sacrificing service to the state" (226) and as the "embodiment of the Meiji period in popular culture" (224).

⁶ Also see Nakamura who defines Taishō history as both the development and the eventual stagnation of the *shishōsetsu* (143).

⁷ For a listing and discussion of the various "isms" in Taishō, see Akutagawa Ryūnosuke's essay "Taishō hachinendo no bungeikai."

⁸ For a more detailed list of Taishō literary movements see Chiba (1991a).

⁹ AMPO is the Japanese abbreviation for the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty, or *Nichibei anzen hoshō jōyaku*. The term AMPO is often used to refer to the movement in opposition to this treaty.

¹⁰ Karatani later argues that Shōwa ended in 1970 (Shōwa 45) with the suicide of Mishima Yukio (214).

¹¹ See Yamamura's "The Japanese Economy, 1911-1930: Concentration, Conflicts, and Crises" for a detailed discussion of the profound economic and subsequent political and social effects of World War I upon Japan.

¹² This "refocusing on things Japanese" can be seen as a strategy of the state to avoid the pitfalls of western industrialization and to shore up national sentiment for the burdens of domestic and international nation building, which started in Meiji and continued through the interwar years. See Pyle's "Meiji Conservatism."

¹³ See Harootunian for a discussion of the terms *seikō* (success) and *risshin shusse* (success and careerism) and how they changed over time (18). Harootunian does not mention the effects of urbanization, but it must be seen as an important factor in social dislocation.

¹⁴ See Reischauer (504-8).

¹⁵ Harootunian's use of the word culture includes the private, the spiritual and the internal. The italics in the quotation are my own.

¹⁶ Karatani groups together these three movements despite the generational and chronological gaps existing among them. The naturalist writers continued to publish through the Taishō period, but there is a generational gap between their movement and the White Birch School or the Taishō humanists. Many of the White Birch members were humanists, such as

Mushanokôji Saneatsu and Nagayo Yoshirô.

¹⁷ Compare the birth dates for Sôseki (1867-1916) and the following writers: Shimazaki Tôson (1872-1943), Tayama Katai (1872-1930), Tokuda Shûsei (1871-1943), and Masamune Hakuchô (1879-1962). Hasegawa Tenkei described naturalism as "a struggle between the fathers and the sons," but age was not the only factor influencing someone's ideological disposition; the conservative Tokutomi Sohô (1863-1957) was only four years older than Sôseki, but the two were years apart in terms of opinion. Hasegawa is quoted in Rubin (61).

¹⁸ Jay Rubin argues that naturalism never was and never has been successfully defined. "[T]hat no two of its writers (when they could be identified) ever fit neatly into any of its theories; that it represented no ideology; that 'it' was actually many writers who took a variety of positions with regard to change and the status quo; all this is ample demonstration that 'naturalism' was merely a convenient and misleading label for the beginning of the representation of 'variousness, possibility, complexity, and difficulty' in Japanese literature." This is further demonstrated by the naturalist journal Waseda Bungaku's naming of Nagai Kafû as the outstanding writer of 1909. See Rubin (184).

¹⁹ Harootunian is referring to Yoshino Sakuzô, Kawakami Hajime, Kita Ikki and Ôyama Ikuo (17-18).

²⁰ I do not think that this viewpoint necessarily implies a rejection of politics, and that is probably why Harootunian does not label these extremists as intellectuals.

²¹ Lentricchia is speaking specifically of literature and the views he expressed in his book *Criticism and Social Change*, views which he himself denounces in this essay.

²² See Oka's discussion entitled "Reactions by 'Opinion Leaders'" in his essay "Generational Conflict After the Russo-Japanese War" (206-211). The essay originally appeared in *Shisô*, February and March, 1967.

²³ Gluck paraphrases Miyake Setsurei, also second generation Meiji, who in 1913 commented that "all the great changes occurred in the decades around the Restoration, when principles (*shugi*) were clear, and in the name of imperial loyalism or constitutional government men engaged in *national* rather than *personal* affairs" (270). The italics are my own.

²⁴ Gluck includes both the first and second generation of Meiji. For a discussion of the ideological differences between these Meiji generations and those that followed see Gluck (267-75).

²⁵ See Pyle's "Meiji Conservatism," especially (679, 695-96), as well as his book, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan: Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*.

²⁶ Duus quotes from a 1916 editorial in the *Ôsaka Asahi*: "Socialism has been a kind of taboo word in Japan. . . . But after clearly studying the matter, and observing various developments, it is clear that socialism can not be summed up simply. . . . National ownership of railroads and municipal ownership of streetcar lines have . . . been touted by the socialists. . . . Is there a civilized country in the world today that does not focus on social policy?. . . [But] among the socialists, and among some extreme advocates of radical thought, are those whose main purpose is to upset the discipline of the state or to destroy the state. Such people ought to be kept under the strictest control, like madmen, murderers and robbers" (1982, 423).

²⁷ Originally cited in Peter Duus's essay, "Ôyama Ikuo and the Search for Democracy," the quotation is from a piece entitled "Seiji to seikatsu" written in 1916.

²⁸ Gluck cites contemporary newspapers on the "Taishô Restoration" (375 n. 66).

²⁹ Duus argues that the Hibiya riots were the early signs of a popular unrest that climaxed after 1918 (1982, 413).

³⁰ Circulation of large national dailies increased significantly in Taishō. Between the years 1913 and 1923 the *Ōsaka Asahi* increased in circulation from 250,000 to 800,000, and the *Ōsaka Mainichi* from 300,000 to 920,000. Gluck links the antigovernment stance of the newspapers with the rise in political consciousness and the public's readiness to riot (232-3).

³¹ The granting of male suffrage can be seen either negatively as an attempt by the elite to co-opt the masses, or positively as a liberal case of yielding to popular demands; however, regardless of the motives, the result was a victory in terms of political involvement.

³² America was Japan's largest supplier of capital, purchasing 40% of Japan's exports in the 1920s (Pyle 1978, 138).

³³ Pyle describes the established parties as "highly elitist groups, membership in which required payment of dues, sponsorship, and the like. . . . [T]hey were not organizations with which the masses were affiliated or with which people could readily identify their interests and aspirations" (1978, 129).

³⁴ This is a quotation from Naruse Nizō, the president of Japan Women's University, made in 1911 (Oka, 203).

³⁵ The state propagated ideology of "family nation" was originally created in Meiji and increased in potency in Taishō and early Shōwa. See Pyle's "Meiji Conservatism."

³⁶ A quotation from the Ministry of Education Directive No. 1, 1906 (Oka, 217).

³⁷ Rubin describes the government censorship and thought control as "a sprawling octopus that reached into every corner and tried to reach into every mind in the nation" (229).

³⁸ Rubin identifies the High Treason case of 1910 as "an important watershed in official policy." "Many steps were taken at this time that led directly to the evolution of the thought-control system of the 1930s" (9).

³⁹ The Peace Preservation Law was passed in 1925, and between the "notorious mass arrest of suspected radicals" on March 15, 1928 and the "full wartime mobilization of 1941 there were 65,921 arrests" (Rubin, 229).

⁴⁰ I am thinking of historians, such as Edwin Reischauer, who believe that something went wrong during the Taishō period. The question of what went wrong in the Japanese modernization process of the 1920s and 1930s underlies all the essays in the volume *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*. See James Morley's introduction, "Choice and Consequence" (9). Although Harootunian feels that these historians were asking the wrong questions, he shares something with this group, or at the least bridges the two groups Silverberg mentions in her study on Nakano. For Harootunian's opinion on the former group's position see 14 n. 8.

⁴¹ "Limited pluralism" is the term Silberman substitutes for Taishō Democracy (254).

⁴² This quotation, cited in Rubin (6), is from Maruyama's book *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics*, (5-6).

⁴³ The inconsistencies and contradictions of the "family nation" ideology are also evident in the changing roles of women. Although the state was promoting the model of "good wife and wise mother," it was also contending with the entry of middle-class women into the work force, the rise of women's consciousness movements and the increased divorce rate. Women were caught between the economic necessity of work and the ideological dictates of the family. See Margit Nagy's "Middle-Class Working Women During the Interwar Years," Miriam Silverberg's "The Modern Girl as Militant" and Laurel Rasplia Rodd's "Yosano Akiko and the Taishō Debate over the 'New Woman.'"

⁴⁴ I am thinking here of his discussion of the German origins of the word *bunka*.

⁴⁵ Silverberg discusses the power the Japanese state wielded over culture when she warns

that comparisons between the state culture of Britain, Germany and Japan are not relevant for a number of reasons, one being the fact that "the state's control of culture [was] stronger in the case of Japan than in the other two countries during the 1910s and 1920s" (1993, 138-9).

⁴⁶ Karatani does not explain how we are to label the years 1906-1909.

⁴⁷ My use of this term here is not meant to imply the same type of poetic group writing Ogata discusses in connection with Bashô, but I think the term can be applied to modern prose groups such as Sôseki's *Mokuyôkai*.

Chapter III

Uchida Hyakken and Taishô Era Criticism

*Uchida Hyakken: A Biographical Sketch*¹

Uchida Hyakken was born on May 29, 1889 in Okayama City to the proprietors of a family *sake* business, Hisayoshi and Mine. Named after his maternal grandfather, Eizô, he did not begin using the pen name Hyakken until his high school years (1908). Hyakken's childhood memories of growing up in Okayama provide a backdrop for many of his early stories, and he took his pseudonym from the name of a local, seasonal river, along whose banks he passed time as a youth.² It was in Okayama that he also met his future wife Kiyoko, the younger sister of his high school friend Horino Yutaka. His memories of Okayama, however, are not all pleasant. His father died suddenly of beriberi heart disease when Hyakken was sixteen, and the family business folded. Yutaka also passed away at the age of twenty.

In addition to forming an Ur-landscape for Hyakken,³ Okayama is also the site of his budding interest in literature. While still a middle and high school student, he contributed prose and poetry to the youth journal *Chûgaku sekai* and its spinoff *Bunshô sekai*, as well as to newspapers and local publications, under a variety of pen names.⁴ He began reading Sôseki the same year his father died, starting with *I Am a Cat* in 1905 and *Drifting in Space* (Yôkyoshû) in 1906. On the

suggestion of his teacher, Hyakken sent his story “The Tale of an Old Cat” (Rôbyô monogatari, 1908) to Sôseki in 1909, and much to his delight received a favorable reply.

This epistolary exchange would be followed up with a face to face interview two years later at the Uchisaiwaichô Gastro-Intestinal Hospital in Tokyo where Sôseki lay recuperating. Hyakken had moved to the city in 1910 to attend Tokyo Imperial University as a student of German literature, and soon found himself a member of Sôseki’s circle. At the *Mokuyôkai*, the Thursday gatherings held at Sôseki’s house, he met other disciples, many of whom went on to become well-known figures in Japanese literature: Komiya Toyotaka, Suzuki Miekichi, Nogami Toyochirô, Morita Sôhei, Naka Kansuke, Kume Masao and Akutagawa Ryûnosuke.

Of these fellow writers, Sôhei and Akutagawa would have the most impact on Hyakken’s life and writing. Sôhei and Hyakken’s friendship extended to their literary endeavors, as they poked fun at each other in a series of essays beginning with Sôhei’s characterization of Hyakken as a nut or crank (*kijin*) in his “A Profile of Six Literati” (Roku bunjin no yokogao, 1932) and “Idle Chatter” (Nonbirishita hanashi, 1932). Hyakken parried with his “More Idle Chatter” (Zoku nonbirishita hanashi, 1932), which led Sôhei to write “Pressing Prattle” (Nonbirishinai hanashi, 1933), among others. This playfulness was characteristic of their relationship.⁵

Akutagawa may have been one of the few contemporaries to understand and appreciate Hyakken's early fiction, as seen in his short essay titled "Uchida Hyakken" (Uchida Hyakken shi, 1927).⁶ Akutagawa helped Hyakken in his personal life as well, recommending him for a job at the Yokosuka Naval Engineers Academy (*Kaigun kikan gakkô*), where Akutagawa was teaching English. Akutagawa's suicide in 1927 sent ripples throughout the literary community and Hyakken was not immune to this loss. He painted a poignant and amusing portrait of his relationship with Akutagawa in his 1929 story "The Bowler Hat" (Yamatata bôshi).

Sôseki had passed away in 1916, but he continued to exert influence over Hyakken's personal and professional life. Both Sôseki's dark and mysterious "Ten Nights of Dreams" (*Yume jûya*, 1908) and *Drifting in Space*, as well as his humorous *The Young Master* (*Botchan*, 1906) and *I Am a Cat* (*Wagahai wa neko de aru*, 1905-07), are considered to be models upon which Hyakken based such works as *Realm of the Dead* and *I Am a Cat: The Fake Version* (Sakai 1993, 283-85). Sôseki also posthumously provided Hyakken with employment as an editor and compiler on his collected works.⁷ After graduating in 1914, Hyakken needed a steady source of income to support his wife Kiyoko, whom he married in 1912, their two children, and his own mother and grandmother who had moved up from Okayama in 1915.⁸ Hyakken took on three jobs teaching German, one in 1916 at Japan's Military Academy (*Rikugun shikan gakkô*), another in 1918 at the

Yokosuka Naval Engineers Academy, and finally his most prestigious post at Hôsei University in 1920, the year his grandmother passed away.⁹

The 1920s would prove to be a fruitful decade for Hyakken's literary career, although it began somewhat inauspiciously. His first collection of short stories, *Realm of the Dead*, was published in February of 1922, but the foundry or pre-press proofs burned in the fires of the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923 and the collection would not be reprinted until 1934. In an oft repeated sentiment, Uchida Michio laments that Hyakken missed his opportunity to impact the Taishô literary scene because the book was not reprinted earlier, and hence failed to circulate among important Taishô writers and critics (1986, 26-7).¹⁰ However, this implication that Hyakken had little to no exposure in Taishô is curious for a number of reasons. Sixteen of the eighteen stories from *Realm of the Dead* had appeared in the established literary journal *Shinshôsetsu* in January, April, May and July of 1921.¹¹ Additionally, both Akutagawa and Sôhei published articles on the stories in the January issue, urging the literary community to read Hyakken. *Realm of the Dead* did undergo an initial printing and appeared on bookstore shelves,¹² and one would assume that established authors had access to *Shinshôsetsu*. It is surprising that despite evidence to the contrary, this less-than-accurate story of *Realm of the Dead's* early demise continues to be offered as the primary reason Hyakken failed to impact the Taishô literary scene. I am not completely discounting this story, but given its dubiousness, we need to realize

that it is more lore than fact, and that we should look beyond the issue of reprints when evaluating Hyakken's literary success or failure.

By 1922, Hyakken had already started writing new stories for his upcoming collections, *Hyakkien's Miscellany* and *Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur*. Over the next eleven years he would publish sixty-four short works in a variety of forums including the established *Chûô kôron* and *Shinshôsetsu*, the up-and-coming *Bungei shunjû*, the newspapers and weeklies *Asahi Shinbun*, *Shûkan Asahi* and *Sandee Mainichi*, the women's journal *Josei*, the detective journal *Shinseinen*, Hôsei University's newspaper, and lesser-known venues such as *Keizai ôrai* and *Tôen*.

Hyakken resigned from the Military Academy in 1925 and was living under the burden of increasing debt. His life of insolvency features in his fiction and *zuihitsu*, and monetary troubles may have also been the basis for his marital problems. Although it is not known exactly when or why Hyakken moved out of his home in Koishikawa, by 1927 he was living in the Waseda Hotel, and two years later he had set up house with another woman, Satô Koi, whom he would officially marry only after his first wife's death in 1964.

The 1930s would prove to be a better decade for Hyakken. His career took off with *Hyakkien's Miscellany* in October of 1933, and the rate of publication for these years is impressive: *Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur* (February 1934), *Hyakkien's Miscellany Continued* (*Zoku Hyakkien zuihitsu*, May 1934), *The King's*

Back (Ôsama no senaka, May 1934), *Hyakkien's Book of Poems* (Hyakkien haiku chô, June 1934), *The Stringless Koto* (Mugenkin, October 1934), *The Crane* (Tsuru, February 1935), *Hyakkien's Diary* (Hyakkien nikki chô, April 1935), *The Bumpy Road* (Dekoboko michi, October 1935), *Hyakkien's Diary Continued* (Zoku Hyakkien nikki chô, February 1936), *Rapture* (Uchôten, July 1936), *Isôrô sôsô* (Isôrô sôsô, June 1937), *New Rain Miscellany* (Zuihitsu shinu, October 1937), *The Northern Sea* (Hokumei, December 1937), *Bridge on the Hill* (Oka no hashi, June 1938), *Kien's Chatter* (Kien'ôdan, February 1939), and *Chrysanthemum Rain* (Kiku no ame, October 1939). This list encompasses a wide variety of fiction, including eleven collections of miscellany (*zuihitsu*), a book of poetry, two diaries, one collection of fictional short stories, one novel, and a even a book of illustrated fairy tales. The various collections of miscellany and fictional works include upwards of thirty to forty stories apiece.

The positive reception of *Hyakkien's Miscellany* may have facilitated the publication of the works listed above, and certainly inspired both the August 1935 special issue of the journal *Arabesuku*,¹³ which contained ten essays on Hyakken, and a six volume collected works titled *The Complete Hyakken Miscellany* (Zenshû Hyakken zuihitsu, November 1936-April 1937). It is interesting to note that although this is primarily a *zuihitsu* series, it included stories from both *Realm of the Dead* and *Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur*, works which were not classified as miscellany but as creative writing or fiction (*sôsaku*).

As will be discussed in a later chapter, a number of Hyakken's works were cross-categorized,¹⁴ and critics have speculated that Hyakken neither observed traditional literary genre distinctions or even differentiated on the basis of fiction versus fact.

In terms of Hyakken's personal life, the decade of the 1930s also held some upsets. In 1934, Hyakken and fellow Sôseki disciple, Nogami Toyochirô, left Hôsei University as a result of the well-publicized "Hôsei Disturbance" (Hôsei *sôdô*).¹⁵ This incident at Hôsei would end both Hyakken's academic career and his friendship with Morita Sôhei, who had also entered Hôsei's employment in 1920. Sôhei and Hyakken never spoke after this falling out, and Hyakken only broke the silence after Sôhei's death on December 14, 1949 with his *The True Story of Sôhei* (*Jisetsu Sôheiki*, 1950). Although the disturbance strained Hyakken's personal life, it was not without its positive aspects as well, namely freeing him to pursue his writing.

In 1939 Hyakken took a commission with the Japan Mail Steamer Corporation as a consultant on mail correspondence, records, declarations and the like. He would work there for the next six and one-half years, and through this job would travel to Taiwan in November 1939 on a journey which would form the basis for his *Ship Dreams* (*Fune no yume*, 1941). Although he no longer held a formal affiliation with the university, he continued to meet with students, in a fashion somewhat reminiscent of Sôseki's *Mokuyôkai*. Two of his disciples,

Hirayama Saburô and Nakamura Takeshi, would come and visit him from their jobs with the National Rail System, and his friendship and future train trips with Hirayama form the central narrative in *The Idiot Train*.

Travel also features in *Lightening at Sea* (*Oki no inazuma*, October 1942) and *The Road Back* (*Modori michi*, July 1944). Yet despite his propensity for excursions both abroad and within Japan, Hyakken chose not to pull up his roots at a time when many were fleeing the city, remaining in Tokyo for the duration of the war. Hyakken's house burned down in the air raids of May 26, 1945 and he moved into a three mat hut on his neighbor's property. He would spend the next three-odd years living there with his companion Satô Koi until a new house was built in May of 1948. His memories of life in these Spartan, cramped quarters would be published after the war in the form of a *zuihitsu* collection, a play on Kamo no Chômei's thirteenth century classic, entitled *The New Account of My Hut* (*Shinhôjôki*, 1947), and two diaries, *Tokyo Burning* (*Tôkyô shôjin*, 1955), and the posthumously edited *Hyakkien's Postwar Diary* (*Hyakkien sengo nikki*, 1982).¹⁶

Uchida Michio suggests that Hyakken's diaries played an important role in the creation of his literature; just as *Hyakkien's Diary* gave birth to *Realm of the Dead* and *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, these wartime diaries provided a new stage upon which Hyakken built his postwar fiction (Uchida 1993, 58). Acting as a counterpoint to these somber diaries, however, Hyakken also began serializing

his humorous parody *I Am a Cat: The Fake Version* in the April 1949 issue of the journal *Shôsetsu shinchô*.¹⁷ The following year he celebrated his sixty-first birthday with the inaugural “Maada kai,” Hyakken’s annual birthday party made famous through Kurosawa Akira’s film *Not Yet!* (*Maada da yo*, 1993). The year 1951 saw the first installment of his popular *Idiot Train* series, entitled “The Idiot Special Express” (*Tokubetsu ahô ressha*), also printed in *Shôsetsu shinchô*.¹⁸ The book *The Idiot Train* would appear in three volumes in 1952, 1953 and 1956, the first of these coinciding with celebrations for the eightieth anniversary of the National Rail System (*Nihon kokukû tetsudô*), during which Hyakken was made honorary head of Tokyo Station for a day.

Other highlights from the 1950s and 1960s include his *zuihitsu* collection *Nora* (*Nora ya*, 1957) named after his beloved runaway cat. Appended to this diary style story are copies of the reward signs Hyakken posted when the cat disappeared. Hyakken’s affection for animals featured in a number of works, notably the cats in *Nora* and *Kuru, Is That You?* (*Kuru ya omae ka*, 1963), and birds in the *Hyakkien’s Miscellany* essays. As testimony to Hyakken’s postwar fame, his 1933 *Hyakkien’s Miscellany* was reprinted in *Shôsetsu shinchô* in monthly installments from January 1959 through September 1970. The Japanese Art Academy (*Geijutsuin*) may have been acting on a similar impulse in recognizing Hyakken’s contribution to literature when they nominated him for membership in 1967. Hyakken, however, declined via a short memo basically stating that he

did not want to join because he did not feel like joining. His curmudgeonly declaration was featured on television and in the press, where his words were shortened to the now famous quotation, “iya da kara, iya da” or roughly translated, “I don’t want to because I don’t want to.” ”

His last collection, *Gates Close at Dusk* (Nichibotsu heimon, 1971) was published on April 15, five days before he died at the age of eighty-one. Hyakken published roughly a volume a year over his fifty-year career, and at times he was even more prolific. Looking back on Hyakken’s life, it is curious that critics regard him as “outside the lineage of modern Japanese literature” (Itô, 1986, 11). If anything, he seems to have been a lively part of that tradition and to have fulfilled many of the prerequisites for a modern author: as a youth he contributed to influential literary journals such as *Bunshô sekai*; he allied himself with one of the giants of modern literature, Natsume Sôseki; as a member of Sôseki’s circle he mixed with well-known contemporaries such as Akutagawa Ryûnosuke; he held a prestigious university position; he had a special issue of a literary journal dedicated to him; he had his fiction reprinted and anthologized numerous times; and finally, he was recognized towards the end of his life for his literary achievements by the Art Academy.

Despite what we could call Hyakken’s impressive application for membership into literary history, critical scholarship from the 1920s through the 1970s presents Hyakken as an outsider, a forgotten author, a writer with a

limited audience, and a crafter of unusual and eclectic fiction, in other words, as an acquired taste. In this chapter I would like to take the opportunity to delve a little deeper into Hyakken's paradoxical status in order to see where these ideas about him originate and if there is any validity behind them. I begin my task by reviewing the postwar scholarship on Hyakken written by critics such as Itô Sei, Takahashi Yoshitaka and Uchida Michio. Many of the prevailing ideas about Hyakken were formulated in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s by these writers, whose work has influenced subsequent scholarship and colored popular perception. These pioneers deserve credit for opening up the field of Hyakken studies, but by always referring us back to aspects of the author's life, the precedents they set have drawn attention away from his fiction and hindered a thoroughgoing textual analysis.

Prewar scholarship on Hyakken is scarce, but in order to fully investigate him, we must return to the 1920s and 1930s, to a time when he debuted and rose to fame with his *zuihitsu* collection. My theory is that the impression of Hyakken as eclectic and anomalous is rooted in perceptions of his early fictional collections, *Realm of the Dead* and *Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur*.²⁰ Reviews from the Taishô era indicate that the stories in *Realm of the Dead* were not well received by the literary establishment of the time, and so started his reputation as an eclectic outsider. This image stayed with him even after he acquired a degree of fame, which was based not on the two collections listed above, but on

the more mundane yet popular *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. In an interesting turn of events, we can see his uniqueness and peculiarity, traits which in the early 1920s worked to his detriment, being used in 1935 as a marketing device to sell his books. Consider the following advertisement from the *Arabesuku* issue mentioned above:

One of a kind, a writer without rival in all of Japanese literature—Who can compare to Uchida Hyakken? The comparison can be drawn with Poe and Hoffmann, but can Hyakken be so readily summed up? Certainly not! For isn't Hyakken more than just literature? One who eludes even the conceptual grasp of criticism — This is Uchida Hyakken!

The advertisement is for the anthology *The Banquet* (*Daienkaï*), which contains a selection of stories from *Realm of the Dead*, *Port Arthur* and *The Stringless Koto*. This advertisement reveals the great upswing in Hyakken's market value between the 1920s and the 1930s. Hyakken transformed from someone who in the mid-1920s lacked the cachet to get his first collection reprinted, (even with the backing of such influential types as Akutagawa and Satô Haruo), into the type of writer whose work was reprinted in anthologized form as little as eight months after its original publication as a book.²¹ I do not think it would be an overstatement to say that these reprints, anthologies and collected works functioned as a literary stamp of approval, which I doubt would have been granted to an insignificant outsider.

My ventures into Hyakken criticism are aimed at trying to locate Hyakken

in modern literary history, and resolve the conflicting images of him. As stated above, I believe the persona of the “writer on the outside” was formed in relation to *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*, and hence I begin my investigation of Hyakken with a focus on these two works. The dark, uncanny short stories which comprise these early volumes are somewhat unique in his oeuvre, and have been the object of a disproportionate amount of criticism. Although Hyakken recreated the atmosphere of these moody tales in later stories, on the whole, his literature instead followed the lighter, more humorous path set by his *Hyakkien’s Miscellany*. *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur* are separated by twelve years, but the similarities in content and style justify analyzing them together.²² To facilitate a textual analysis of these two works, it is necessary to first set the stage with a critical backdrop, namely postwar criticism from the 1940s-1960s, and the scant number of Taishō and early Shōwa essays on Hyakken. After surveying this scholarship, I enumerate some newer, somewhat more radical views of Hyakken, and present them as tools for rethinking his position in literary history and for analyzing his texts. Due to the length of this critical prelude, my own analysis will be taken up in chapter 4.

Scholarship on Realm of the Dead and Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur

Atop the steep embankment a dark path ran endlessly, quietly and coldly into the night. The dingy chophouse cast its faint glow out into the blackness of the embankment above. I was

sitting in one of the worn-out seats, not eating, but filled with a longing for the company of others. The table top was bare, and the lonely reflection off the surface chilled my face. (1: 65)²³

The opening of the title story "Realm of the Dead" sets the stage for a chance, and somewhat eerie encounter between the narrator and a man he believes to be his father. Inside this cheap, dimly lit restaurant the narrator begins to recognize this man through a series of visual and auditory flashbacks, but ultimately he is unable to penetrate the barrier separating them, and he returns home crestfallen and alone. This sentimental, yet dark and disturbing mood permeates the collection, and the personal and nostalgic tone has led critics to interpret the title story in autobiographical terms, as a memorial to the author's dead father. The impossibility of such a meeting in the nether world, or *meido* (the Japanese title of the story), is one of the factors which has led critics to label this story dream-like or fantastic, and some have speculated that it is based on a real nocturnal vision.

Hyakken lost his father at age sixteen, and wrote in his diaries about his dreams, fear of death and longing for this lost parent.²⁴ His diaries cover the years during which *Realm of the Dead* was written, and critics such as Hirayama Saburô, Uchida Michio, Sakai Hideyuki and Masugi Hideki regard the diaries as a Rosetta stone of sorts for the *Realm of the Dead* stories.²⁵ It is entirely possible that any number of stories in these two collections are based on Hyakken's actual dreams or were inspired by events in his real life, however, I find this

interpretation limiting. It implies that Hyakken is lacking in creativity and imagination. As John Cheever once said, “any confusion between autobiography and fiction debases fiction.”²⁶ Regardless of whether or not Hyakken actually dreamed the incidents in *Realm of the Dead*, the resulting stories are far from mere transcriptions. This view also assumes that the diaries are not themselves fictionalized, an issue I will take up in chapter 5. By chaining the stories to the diaries, these critics close down the very openness and ambiguousness of the texts. And, by claiming that the stories cannot be understood without reference to Hyakken’s real life, they limit the interpretative possibilities available to the reader.

However, as the writer and critic Shōji Hajime refreshingly notes, Hyakken never stated whether these stories were dreams, hallucinations or real occurrences, rather he simply presented the images and narratives and left the reader to decide for him or herself (75, 78).²⁷ The title “Realm of the Dead” implies that this story takes place in the realm of the spirits, but there is no explicit reference to this “other world” in the story itself. In fact, the setting seems rather mundane and very much a part of this world. However, even if we accept the setting as the nether world, it is not necessarily clear who is dead and who is alive.

The beauty of Hyakken’s early stories lies in their openness to interpretation, however, it seems that early Hyakken critics have worked in

some ways to close meaning down. In their various attempts to analyze these stories and to rescue Hyakken from the margins of Japanese literature, these critics from the 1940s, '50s and '60s constructed a picture of Hyakken which has functioned as a mythology of sorts. Beginning in 1948 with Itô Sei, we are told that Hyakken's fiction is highly subjective and personal, autobiographical and "Japanese." The stories in *Realm of the Dead* are seen as variations of Sôseki's "Ten Nights of Dreams," and other potential influences or models are ignored. Critics may tell us that Hyakken is "outside the lineage of modern Japanese literature" (Itô 1986, 11), but they do not necessarily explain why this is the case, glossing over his aforementioned interactions with literary tradition. This picture of Hyakken hinders a rigorous textual analysis and blinds us to existing literary connections with other Taishô and early Shôwa authors, the very steps required to insert Hyakken back into literary history.

With a few exceptions, these assumptions about Hyakken have gone unchallenged until recently. After reviewing some of this early postwar criticism, I will return to the Taishô period and question these characterizations of Hyakken. In other words, after building up the Hyakken myth, I will attempt to deconstruct it. Once some ground has been cleared, I will offer my own interpretation of *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*, and bring in the work of more contemporary critics from the 1980s and 1990s, to offer both a broader perspective on Hyakken and a more detailed analysis of his literature.

Although such famous authors as Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Murō Saisei, Mishima Yukio and Yasuoka Shōtarō have written the few isolated essays on Hyakken and prefaces to his books, “Hyakken criticism” did not establish itself until the 1950s and 1960s. After this period of initial rediscovery, Hyakken’s collected works were published by Kōdansha in the early 1970s,²⁸ and interest in Hyakken surged with the boom of the 1980s.²⁹ As discussed in the previous chapter, this boom coincided with the emergence of new scholarship on Hyakken, by critics such as Sakai Hideyuki and Kawamura Jirō, and also with the republication of his collected works in an expanded version by Fukutake.³⁰

One of the most influential essays on Hyakken was written in 1948 by the modernist critic Itō Sei, in the form of a short preface to a Hyakken anthology named after “The Ascension” (Shōten, 1933), a story from *Port Arthur*.³¹ Itō opens by affirming Hyakken’s uniqueness as a writer, but also by firmly rooting him in twentieth century literature, specifically that produced in Japan. He proceeds to argue that although Hyakken is usually regarded as “outside the lineage of modern Japanese literature” (1986, 11), that literature itself “cannot be conceptualized” (1986, 11) without him, for he is a unique product of this native tradition. Within the first few lines of his essay, Itō both isolates and incorporates Hyakken. On the one hand he highlights Hyakken’s uniqueness, while on the other he attests to his key position in modern Japanese literature and to his Japaneseness.

The issue of Hyakken's "Japaneseness" is a curious one. At a number of points in the essay, Itô refers to Hyakken's literature as a national perceptual homeland, and the reflection of a purified Japanese sensibility. From his palette of "Japanese life, behavior and landscape" (1986, 13), Hyakken recorded the "shadows of legends, sexual desires, habits and dreams" (1986, 13) that live in his countrymen. It is not necessarily clear why Itô is so intent on emphasizing Hyakken's "Japaneseness," or what it brings to the critical vocabulary used to interpret his literature. Itô, however is not alone in his declarations; both Takahashi Yoshitaka and Irokawa Takeo find Hyakken to be extremely "Japanese."²

Although Itô's semi-nationalistic sentiments may appear somewhat odd in postwar, Occupation Japan, it is possible that he felt the need to find value in domestic literature and to claim it as Japan's own. Hyakken's fictional landscapes and story lines draw on his childhood experiences living in the seaside of Okayama, and perhaps it is this "local" scenery, combined with an element of Japanese folklore which attracted Itô's attention. But to say that Hyakken's imaginary world is part of some national shared consciousness seems an overstatement at the least. Despite the questionable nature of Itô's conclusions, his comments are virtually unchallenged as they are echoed by later writers and incorporated into the mythology surrounding Hyakken.

Itô does however use this as a segue to a more fruitful topic, namely the relationship between Hyakken's *Realm of the Dead* and Sôseki's "Ten Nights of Dreams." Later critics such as Sakai Hideyuki and Shôji Hajime engage in a detailed comparison of individual stories, but Itô takes it as an opportunity to offer more general comments on both Sôseki's literature and the modern novel. For reasons concerning both content and form, Itô associates *Realm of the Dead* with "Ten Nights of Dreams" and with other short pieces (*shôhin*) dating from Sôseki's early career. Itô envisions Hyakken as heir to his mentor's unfinished and unexplored early work. He speculates that this style of writing was abandoned by Sôseki because it was a poor fit for the novel, the medium in which Sôseki penned the majority of his fiction.

Writing after the war, critics such as Itô saw the "abandoned" style of "Ten Nights of Dreams" as a world of unexplored possibilities, but in the Taishô and early Shôwa years this text did not garner such high praise. Takahashi Hideo points out that through the efforts of postwar critics such as Itô, Ara Masahito and Etô Jun, "Ten Nights of Dreams" came to be regarded as the "key to unlocking the inner Sôseki," but there is hardly any mention of the text in prewar criticism (94). Sôseki's disciple, Komiya Toyotaka, all but ignored it in his preface to his mentor's collected works. He summed it up with the following comment: "I wouldn't go so far as to say there is any real depth to the work, but it may well become one of his best-loved stories on account of its unusual

beauty.”³³ Granted, Komiya had his own agenda in editing Sôseki’s collected works, but it appears that Hyakken chose as his starting point one of the more insignificant texts in his mentor’s oeuvre. The implications here are noteworthy. We may wonder why *Realm of the Dead* failed to impress the literary elite of the time, but given the fact that these elite viewed its progenitor, “Ten Nights of Dreams,” as neither a modern novel nor a literary accomplishment, Hyakken’s failure to impact the Taishô literary world is a little less mysterious.

Itô’s essay, although intriguing, is somewhat unsatisfying. Hindered perhaps by the limitations of a prefatory essay, Itô does not provide the reader with enough substance to give weight to his arguments. It seems that more than in the content of the essay itself, its worth lies in the affirmation of Hyakken as a worthwhile object of study, and as an invitation for later scholars to explore the links between Hyakken and Sôseki, issues of genre, and Hyakken’s place in modern literary history. With a few exceptions, many of these topics were left unexplored in subsequent postwar scholarship.

Takahashi Yoshitaka wrote a number of essays on Hyakken, but is known primarily for two works: a 1954 preface in the *Shôwa bungaku zenshû* volume 42, and a 1956 essay titled “Uchida Hyakken ron” which appeared in Chikuma’s *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshû* volume 75. Although neither of these essays is devoted to the two collections at hand, they touch on a number of themes in Itô and propose some new ones which are carried on by later critics.

Itô implied through his comparison of *Realm of the Dead* and "Ten Nights of Dreams" that the stories in Hyakken's collection were about dreams. He states this much more openly in his later prefaces on *The Idiot Train* and *I Am a Cat: The Fake Version* when he terms *Realm of the Dead* a "dream novel" (*mugen shôsetsu*) (1975a, 358). This may seem a trivial point, but the designation of the stories as dreams has impacted the interpretation of them and resulted in some critical scuffling. Takahashi unquestioningly imports this characterization from Itô and even commends the expert dream writing in other of Hyakken's works. For Takahashi, who longed to write with Hyakken's skill, the words were so effective they made him feel as though he too was experiencing the same dream as the characters in the story (1954, 130).

On a related note, Takahashi echoes Itô when he comments on the subjective nature of Hyakken's writing. Itô claimed that Hyakken and Suzuki Miekichi were the only two disciples to explore the inner side (*naimen*) of Sôseki and delve into the self (1986, 13). Takahashi picks up on this theme in "Uchida Hyakken ron," which he opens with a pseudopsychological discussion of Hyakken's "introvertedness" (1986, 15). Although he states that it is rare for someone to be completely extroverted or introverted, Hyakken can be classified as an extreme introvert, in other words someone who is "completely occupied with their own internal affairs, and who lives disconnected from and indifferent to other people and matters of the outside, real world" (1986, 15). This

“introvertedness” carries over into Hyakken’s fiction; Takahashi characterizes Hyakken’s early works, naming *Port Arthur* specifically, as a world in which the objective elements are engulfed by the subjective, the personal and the human.³⁴ Takahashi dubs this the realm of pathos (*hiiai*) and the uncanny (*bukimi*), terms which tie into Hyakken’s identity as “Japanese.”³⁵

In his conclusion, Takahashi forges one last link with Itô, when he remarks that Hyakken is “positively a Japanese author” (1986, 20).³⁶ In order to understand this comment, it is necessary to return to Takahashi’s discussion of introverts. Toward the end of his essay, he reformulates the term introvert to mean “a type of person who possesses an unusually strong unconscious” (1986, 20). Takahashi defines the unconscious as “the domain of the uncanny,” a vast “dark, sorrowful, malicious” realm (1986, 20). He locates the unconscious in the language of the Japanese Nô theater and haiku poetry. He tells us that the unconscious may be found to a limited extent in the western novel or in western prose, but is undeniably present in Hyakken. Hence, not only is Hyakken “positively a Japanese author,” but he is also one who “stands positively on the side of the unconscious” (1986, 20).

Takahashi further validates Hyakken’s “Japaneseness” by comparing him to these high arts unique to Japan. Hyakken did compose haiku, and his early fiction can be described as dark and uncanny, but I cannot take the leap with Takahashi and assume that these qualities in his literature emanate from his

“introvertedness” or “strong unconscious,” nor am I interested in such speculation. It seems highly ironic that Takahashi is using Western psychology and Freudian terminology such as “the unconscious” to prove Hyakken’s “Japaneseness.” Takahashi may want to locate the unconscious in Hyakken’s so-called “native” fiction, but one need look no further than the contents page of your average Taishō literary journal to see that pop psychoanalysis was part and parcel of the era’s cosmopolitan vocabulary.³⁷

In contrast to Takahashi and Itō, Uchida Michio’s writing is relatively free from ambiguous comments.³⁸ His “Uchida Hyakken Note (1)” mentioned in the Introduction, questions Itō by confronting him with evidence of Hyakken’s absence from Japanese literary history. With respect to *Realm of the Dead*, however, Uchida is in agreement with Itō, as evidenced by his terming the work a “world of dreams” (*mugen no sekai*) (1986, 33). He agrees that the *Realm of the Dead* shares the darkness and weightiness of “Ten Nights of Dreams,” and concurs that this is a representation of Hyakken’s unconscious. Yet, despite these comments, Uchida insists that we maintain the line between author and text (1986, 112).

In a two part essay titled “Natsume Sōseki and Uchida Hyakken” (Natsume Sōseki to Uchida Hyakken, 1965), Uchida touches on another point in Itō’s essay when he describes *Realm of the Dead* as a personal subjective world which only narrowly fits the methods of the modern novel (1997, 57). This, he

explains, is because the modern novel's concerns are realism and social issues. These comments help in a sense to fill out Itô's argument, but still leave us wondering what the implications are. Although nobody addresses it directly, they seem to be implying that Hyakken is writing something other than the modern novel. But, if Hyakken was not writing modern novels, then what was he writing? Is it possible to see these two early collections as something other than the fictionalization of a personal, subjective, Japanese experience? The answers are not to be found these early essays.³⁹ In search of more information, I return to the Taishô period to look at some contemporary (1920s) assessments of Hyakken's fiction, and the circumstances surrounding the publication of these early works. By placing him into a literary context, I hope to move beyond the Hyakken presented in these postwar essays and delve deeper into the texts themselves.

Taishô Perceptions of Hyakken

Hirayama Saburô recalls a conversation he had with Hyakken about the first printing of *Realm of the Dead* in February, 1922. Hirayama paraphrases Hyakken: "It was a strange book. The publisher at the time felt it should be done in a new style, and so they deleted all the page numbers. The effect was refreshingly simple and fresh" (1969, 56). Hyakken goes on to explain, however, that this was problematic not only for readers but for correct assembly of the

printed text. The publisher misaligned the pages, and Hyakken was both embarrassed and disappointed with the poor presentation (Hirayama, 1969, 56, 59).

This novelty printing seems to fit Hyakken's eclectic Taishô image, but the newness of *Realm of the Dead* is better found in the writing itself. Essays from the 1920s imply that few read Hyakken's work, and those who did viewed it rather negatively. Remarks about Hyakken's lack of exposure are curious, since the stories were featured in the journals *Tôa no hikari*, *Shinshôsetsu* and *Warera* between 1917 and 1921, and then republished in book form in 1922. For commentary on the ill-received aspects of the text, we must turn to the scant handful of essays on *Realm of the Dead* written in the 1920s by Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Morita Sôhei and Satô Haruo.

The January 1921 issue of *Shinshôsetsu* featured six stories by Hyakken under the title of "Realm of the Dead,"⁴⁰ and later that month both Akutagawa and Sôhei published articles in support of Hyakken.⁴¹ Although their approaches differ, both lament the *bundan's*, the literary elite's, failure to acknowledge the stories. Akutagawa has nothing but praise for these stories and is surprised by the unfavorable reviews. He suspects that the critics simply did not understand or know what to make of Hyakken's work. The lukewarm reception may be due in part to the unfamiliar nature of the stories, but this is the very reason Akutagawa is so enamored of them. Had Hyakken been "in the

dustbin of the *bundan* breathing the same air as the rest of us," Akutagawa is sure "he would never have been able to write these dream stories" (1975, 15). Unfettered by *bundan* trends, Hyakken wrote with a certain freedom Akutagawa finds appealing, if beyond his own grasp.

Sôhei weights his plea by noting in the opening lines that he has emerged from a year of literary silence to speak out against the unjust critical neglect *Realm of the Dead* has suffered at the hands of the *bundan*, and this is not just because he is friends with the author.² "Normally we could write this [neglect] off to the narrow-mindedness and biased views of the so-called literary elite. However in this case it would be more appropriate to say that the work itself is to blame" (1986a, 100). Implying that something is wrong with Hyakken's fiction, Sôhei works his reverse logic as he sets out to lambaste the *bundan*.

He constructs his defense around a comparison of Hyakken and Kikuchi Kan. Sôhei lauds Kikuchi's literature for its persuasiveness, popularity and comprehensibility. Kikuchi's fiction can be understood by just about anyone and can easily attract new readers. Hyakken on the other hand is not such an easy read; his abbreviated style leaves the important sections unclear, but therein lies the beauty of Hyakken's writing. For the sophisticated reader, the rewards of reading Hyakken far outnumber those offered by Kikuchi. Sôhei uses this left-handed flattery to turn the tables and mock the *bundan* as a bunch of simpletons.

Akutagawa felt the need to defend Hyakken again in 1927,⁴³ this time in praise of the *Realm of the Dead* collection, as well as of some of Hyakken's more recent stories published in the women's journal *Josei*, such as "Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur."⁴⁴ This short piece by Akutagawa serves as both an introduction to and defense of Hyakken. Akutagawa explains that Hyakken is one of Sôseki's disciples, who unfortunately has not enjoyed literary success because his first collection burned in the fires of the earthquake. Akutagawa demonstrates his point by mentioning that the only people he knows who read Hyakken are the writers Satô Haruo and Sasaki Mosaku, the poets Murô Saisei and Hagiwara Sakutarô, and the playwright Kishida Kunio. Akutagawa tried unsuccessfully with Satô to get *Realm of the Dead* reprinted, but the failure of their efforts is in no part due to Hyakken's writing, which Akutagawa tells us is "second to none" (1986, 1). "It is not merely because he is my friend, but because I truly believe in Uchida Hyakken's poetic genius that I've dashed off this piece" (1986, 1).

Akutagawa and Sôhei are not alone in their praise of Hyakken. Murô Saisei and Hagiwara Sakutarô also penned essays on Hyakken in the 1920s and '30s,⁴⁵ and Satô's mention of Hyakken in a 1923 ghost story is of particular interest. Satô's "The Hanging Room" (*Kubi kukuri no heya*) was one of thirteen pieces grouped under the heading of "Modern Day Ghost Stories" (*Tôsei hyaku monogatari*) in the May issue of *Chûô kôron*.⁴⁶

By way of introduction to his own contribution, Satô mentions that he recently read *Realm of the Dead* and is convinced it is a modern day ghost story. Hyakken brings a fresh approach to old material. Satô admits a certain degree of envy; if he had the ability to write as well as Hyakken, maybe he too could create something interesting. However, in a comment that echoes Akutagawa, Satô bemoans the fact that “our pens are too enslaved to reason to write ghost stories” (1923, 180).⁴⁷

Satô, Akutagawa and Sôhei imply there exists a newness, freedom and complexity in Hyakken’s writing that established authors not only lacked, but were unable to create or imitate due to literary restrictions. However, the implication in these three essays is that these unorthodox aspects of Hyakken’s writing may have worked to his detriment — literary critics were unable or unprepared to fully appreciate Hyakken. I would like to briefly consider the literary world at the time of *Realm of the Dead*’s debut in order to provide a backdrop against which we can view Hyakken and begin to investigate why his fiction was perceived as anomalous and incomprehensible.

Akutagawa wrote two essays evaluating the current state of literature in the years 1919 and 1920, and although they predate the publication of *Realm of the Dead* by a couple of years, his essays provide valuable insight into the literary scene at the time when Hyakken’s works began appearing in journals.⁴⁸ In the first of these two, “The Literary World of 1919” (Taishô hachinendo no

bungeikai), Akutagawa complains that although there have been sweeping changes in the political and economic conditions, the *bundan* has stagnated (1964b, 231). Broadly speaking, he tells us that the *bundan* was at that time dominated by three literary trends, naturalism (*shizenshugi*), estheticism (*yuibishugi*) and humanism (*jindôshugi*); however, there were also a number of new authors who, in attempting to synthesize the ideals of the above three, produced a very complex literature. Among these new faces are many writers now well known to literary history: Arishima Takeo, Satomi Ton, Hirotsu Kazuo, Kasai Zenzô, Kikuchi Kan and Kume Masao. And, of course, we must add Akutagawa himself to the list of rising stars in the Taishô literary scene.⁴⁹

Akutagawa's essay for the following year, "The Literary World of 1920" (Taishô kunendo no bungeikai) opens on a more hopeful note as he describes the sea change brought on by a plethora of new writers. The *bundan* had diversified over the past few years, namely due to the efforts of these newcomers who succeeded in breaking naturalism's stronghold (1964c, 245). But, since these new faces were so numerous, their individual impact was slight; in other words, Akutagawa admits, the field was flooded. In a comment with interesting repercussions for Hyakken, Akutagawa remarks that *Shinshôsetsu* introduced a number of new writers in their August issue, but these writers failed to make an impression on the *bundan*. This, he speculates, is due to the decline in demand for new talent, who unfortunately, he concludes, will have to wait out the storm

(1964c, 245). Hyakken, whose stories began appearing in *Shinshôsetsu* in January of the following year may also have been a victim of this flooded market, but competition itself cannot account for his lukewarm reception. We should also look into the content and style of his work, and the ways in which it differed from mainstream trends.

Akutagawa provides some insight when expressing his ambivalence over the current state of the *bundan*. He lauds the newfound diversity, but is disturbed by a number of recent trends, namely a staggering increase in autobiographical novels (*jijodenteki shôsetsu*). Although Akutagawa claimed earlier that the *bundan* had cast off the fetters of naturalism, these new writers returned to naturalist themes in crafting an autobiographical fiction. He admits the apparent contradiction, and by way of explanation conjectures that the antinaturalist movement may have given rise to a backlash of sorts (1964c, 246). We can speculate that this trend Akutagawa observes in 1920 is part of a larger phenomenon retrospectively labeled the I-novel.⁵⁰

As mentioned in the introduction, the I-novel forms the center of the modern literary canon, and stands, I believe deceptively, for Taishô literature itself. Although Hyakken's later miscellany are closer to the I-centered, realistic, first-person narrative of the I-novel, his writing from *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur* does not conform to such a model. Despite the fact that all but one of the stories in these two collections are first-person and center around an individual

experience, the nonlinear narratives, degree of fictionality, and antirealist tone, which at times verges on the fantastic, would seem to exempt them from the I-novel categorization.⁵¹

We can contrast Hyakken's stories in *Shinshôsetsu* with other literary developments from 1921, such as the realist narratives of the proletarian journal *Tane maku hito* (inaugural issue February 1921), and the self-centered, poetic chronicling of the everyday in Shiga Naoya's *A Dark Night's Journey* (*Anya kôro*), the first part of which was featured in *Kaizô* between January and August 1921. Although these two examples differ in terms of their literary roots, purpose and retrospective evaluation, the realist emphasis they share was a mainstream, albeit somewhat elite, trend in Taishô fiction. Hyakken, however, did not write in this style. Itô Sei argued this point in 1951: "It is not surprising that the *bundan*, with its strong realist heritage, did not accept it [*Realm of the Dead*] as a legitimate novel" (1975b, 354).

However, realist fiction did not dominate all areas of 1920s literature. Not everyone was a Neonaturalist (or a Marxist), and neither were they all writing about the trials and tribulations of their daily lives. Chiba Kameo, a Taishô critic, discusses the emergence of new writers who were, consciously or unconsciously, reacting against naturalism's normative world view and artless style, and he applauds them for reinvigorating fiction (1991a, 43). "Through them, a new reality has been grasped with precision, viewed with liveliness, and treated with

a solid, three-dimensional technique. The vocabulary is fresh. The rhetoric is tinged with life. The words are not barren letters, but feeling itself leaping off the page" (1991a, 43). At the vanguard of this trend were writers such as Akutagawa, Kume Masao, Satô Haruo and Satomi Ton, and I believe we could also add Hyakken to Chiba's list.

Writing in the 1960s, the literary critic Sasaki Kiichi also gave heed to a new trend starting in the Taishô period, namely one resulting from a confluence of domestic and international pressures which forced Japanese writers to focus on method (483).³² In a volume titled *The Discovery of Modern Literature: Experiments in Method* (*Gendai bungaku no hakken: hôhō no jikken*), he places Hyakken at the beginning of a new line of experimental fiction, as he introduces a new critical tool to the debate—modernism.

He includes Hyakken along with Satô Haruo and Hagiwara Sakutarô as early practitioners of this "search for method," writers who crafted new views of reality as a shifting world of images or a floating space of dreams (491). This experimental mantle was later taken up by modernist writers such as the Neosensualists (*Shinkankakuha*), and although the fruits of what Sasaki terms a "search for method" failed to secure a place in mainstream literary history, we can ponder the usefulness of a modernist, or more precisely, protomodernist approach for Hyakken.

It is somewhat anachronistic to dub Hyakken a modernist, especially in reference to *Realm of the Dead*, given that the term is usually restricted to movements which emerged amidst the rubble of the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923, such as the aforementioned Neosensualists. Yokomitsu Riichi, the self-styled leader of this group noted his indebtedness to European modernist movements, such as Futurism, Cubism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Symbolism and Constructivism (Noma, 67). However, we can and should question assertions such as Dennis Keene's that Yokomitsu Riichi was the only serious Japanese modernist, and realize that the term is used in broader ways in Japan itself.⁵³ Sasaki defines modernism as the antinaturalist literature written after the end of World War I, and the social psychologist and cultural critic Minami Hiroshi widens the scope of modernism by delineating not only the "full-fledged modernism" of late Taishô and early Shôwa, but a stage of "protomodernism" in late Meiji and early Taishô (1982, viii-ix).⁵⁴

Akutagawa questioned the newness of the Neosensualists in his famous 1927 "Literary, All Too Literary" (*Bungeiteki na, amari ni bungeiteki na*), when commenting that he found Satô Haruo's 1914 "The House of the Spanish Dog" (*Supein inu no ie*) to be just as new as the modernist fiction of Yokomitsu's group (1964a, 165-167). Itô Sei, a modernist known for his translations of James Joyce, also wondered if the European modernist movements of Symbolism, Dadaism and Surrealism were any newer or more experimental than Hyakken

(1986, 13). Other critics have also hinted at Hyakken's modernist tendencies. Shôji Hajime, Kawamura Jirô, and even Mishima Yukio, noted a resemblance to Franz Kafka, and Shôji suggested a connection between Hyakken's "anti-realism" and the late European modernist movements of Dadaism and Surrealism (Shôji, 73).⁵⁵

Admittedly, I am somewhat uncomfortable calling Hyakken a modernist. He never allied himself with the modernists, or for that matter, with any particular "ism" or group, outside of Sôseki's *Mokuyôkai*. He declined entry into the Art Academy because of his reluctance to join any type of association. He is a poor fit for either of the primary models of literary modernism used in Japan. He did not exhibit the modernist tendencies of the New Arts Faction (*Shinkôgeijutsuha*), whose writers celebrated and showcased "modern life" in their abundant use of *katakana*, the air of cosmopolitanism and eroticism, the frequent appearance of foreigners (sometimes to the exclusion of Japanese characters), foreign settings and tokens of American modernism such as movies and jazz, and the portrayals of domestic modern life in the bars and cafes of Ginza and the casinos and revues of Asakusa (Shimada, 82-83).⁵⁶ Neither was he party to the Neosensualists' struggles with language and form; Hyakken certainly experimented, but his efforts did not result in the complex and torturous fiction of the aforementioned group, and neither did he share their propensity for theory.

Hyakken did, however, live through a modernist moment in Japanese history. As David Harvey reminds us, modernism is more than a cultural response, it is a product of societal modernization, a crisis of representation which constituted a “fundamental rift in conceptions of reality, indeed in all the various modes of representing the world to ourselves, so that radically new cognitive and experiential maps [were] required” (178). Although the modernization process is not limited to the twentieth century, the 1910s, ‘20s and ‘30s witnessed unprecedented societal change, huge demographic shifts,⁵⁷ an emergence of “the masses,” an expansion of the press⁵⁸ and the reading public,⁵⁹ and the rapid influx of western technology and a western cultural lifestyle. Unlike in the Meiji era, this societal modernization, the phenomenon of a “modern life” (*modan raifu*), which in many senses meant a modern, western life, reached beyond elite groups and filtered into the daily activities of the average urban dweller. The parent company of *Bungei shunjū* capitalized on this in 1930 by launching a new magazine called *Modern Life* (*Modan raifu*), marketed as an encyclopedia of sorts for the expert and ingénue alike.

Although modernism was palpable in the Taishō air, the effects of this *Zeitgeist* on literary production are not always so readily detectable as in the case of the overtly modernist Neosensualists. The above arguments for Hyakken’s modernist tendencies are a collection of generally vague remarks and throwaway comments, and there seems to be no well-documented,

thoroughgoing case for modernism in Hyakken's work.⁶⁰ Part of the reason for this is probably because it would be nearly impossible to prove Hyakken a card-carrying modernist, and even if one were successful, the value of such a label is questionable. Hyakken remains elusive.

Modernism can however be a useful tool for analyzing some of the stories in *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*. None of the above-mentioned critics adequately define the term modernism, and so it is difficult to know exactly what they mean. For purposes of this study, I will bring in specific modernist notions as they are relevant to the fictional analysis in the next chapter. In a more general sense though, we can think of Hyakken's modernism as "the discovery of a new reality,"⁶¹ and associate it with the shifting notions of time, space and subjectivity common to modernist movements.

But modernism is not the only applicable paradigm. In our textual analysis, we can also uncover and discuss other influences on his work such as German Romanticism, fantastic literature, and native folklore, and through this begin to dig deeper into his so-called "Japaneseness." Finally, what I hope to demonstrate is the fact that Hyakken was not working in a vacuum, and that he shared much with other contemporary Japanese writers such as Akutagawa and Satô Haruo, Tanizaki Junichirô, Izumi Kyôka, Naka Kansuke, and of course Natsume Sôseki. These various analytical tools should enable us to move beyond the author-based analyses introduced earlier. It is only through a textual

analysis that we can reach our own conclusions about Hyakken's "Japaneseness," the subjective nature of his texts, the validity of viewing them as keys to Hyakken's real life, his "outsider status," and the "newness" of his literature.

Perhaps in the end, the inability to reduce Hyakken to any one "ism" pays testimony to his status as a Taishō writer. He is the product of a cosmopolitan era which saw through its universalist eyes little qualitative difference between Western and Asian literary texts. Writers in 1920s' Japan lived through a "general upheaval in forms of literary expression," which produced both the "mosaicist's" urge to weave together new literary forms, and the simultaneous need to dismantle "the basic generic structures of novelistic writing."⁶² It is here in the richness of Taishō that we can find Hyakken.

Notes to Chapter III

¹ Unless otherwise noted, the information in this section is from Uchida Michio's *Uchida Hyakken*, Volume 42 in the *Shinchō Nihon bungaku arubamu* series.

² The Hyakken river is a seasonal run-off of the larger Asahi river.

³ See Uchida Michio (1997, 108-109).

⁴ See Sakai (1993) for an analysis of Hyakken's fiction from these years. *Bunshō sekai* was a springboard of sorts for up-and-coming writers.

⁵ See Sakai (1993, 164) for a list of these articles and their original date and place of publication.

⁶ This essay was written less than a month before Akutagawa's suicide on July 24.

⁷ This project began in 1917 under the aegis of the Iwanami publishing company. Hyakken had been proofreading for Sōseki since 1913.

⁸ Hyakken and Kiyoko would go on to have a total of five children, two boys and three girls.

⁹ The Military Academy was the "principle school of the Imperial Japanese Army for the study of military science and training of officers." The school was as prestigious as Tokyo Imperial University and produced the military elite. See *Kōdansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, 1st ed., s.v. "Rikugun shikan gakkō."

¹⁰ The earliest mention of this lamentable tale is in Akutagawa's 1927 essay "Uchida Hyakken shi," which will be discussed later. Sakai (1993, 21) also repeats this story. Akutagawa and Satō Haruo tried to get the book reprinted earlier, but it would take the success of *Hyakkien's Miscellany* to secure the reprint. See Akutagawa (1986, 1).

¹¹ Unless otherwise noted, all publication information for Hyakken is from Morita Sakan's *The Hyakkien-note*.

¹² See Hirayama (1969, 59) and Shibata (144) on the publication of *Realm of the Dead* and its availability in bookstores.

¹³ The title of the journal is a reference to Achille-Claude Debussy's composition 2 *Arabesques* (1888-91), part of which was printed above the table of contents.

¹⁴ By this I refer to stories which, for example, originally appeared in the *zuihitsu* column of a journal but were later included in a collection of "fictional" stories, and vice versa.

¹⁵ Nogami was hired to head a new preparatory course at Hōsei in 1920, and in this capacity he hired Hyakken and Sōhei as German and English teachers. Nogami was later promoted to college dean and director, due to his hard work. However, in November 1933 a movement began among teachers and students to oust Nogami, who was absolved of his duties as college dean and head of the preparatory course, and suspended. (He was eventually fired.) In response, forty-seven teachers submitted letters of resignation as an act of support for Nogami. Hyakken was one of these forty-seven but Sōhei was not. The details of the movement and eventual outcome are not clear, and conflicting information was reported in the press. However, it appears that Sōhei and three other professors may have incited the movement against Nogami, and although Sōhei was also to have lost his job, he was protected by higher-ups in the school administration, in an act which further incensed the Nogami supporters. Hyakken was seen as one of the core instigators and was one of the first to be officially fired. (Incidentally, Satō Haruo and Tosaka Jun were also among those who lost their jobs as lecturers.) Eventually the head of the school quit and Sōhei was forced to resign by the new director general. For more details and

excerpts of newspaper articles see Sakai (1993, 255-63).

¹⁶ *Tokyo Burning* covers November 1944 through August 1945, and *Hyakkien's Postwar Diary* 1949. The latter was published in two parts appearing in March and April of 1982.

¹⁷ This was published as a book in April of 1950.

¹⁸ *Shōsetsu shinchō* printed seven installments between January of 1951 and June of 1952.

¹⁹ See Tada Motoi's essay, "Iya da kara, iya da' no otsukai o shite." Hyakken wrote out a memo and had Tada deliver the news to the Academy Head in his place. Kawabata Yasunari, then committee chairman, went to confirm this with Hyakken, but after roaming unsuccessfully around Hyakken's neighborhood, he returned home unable to find Hyakken's house.

²⁰ From this point on this collection and the title story will be referred to by the abbreviated title of *Port Arthur*.

²¹ The title *The Banquet* comes from a story in *Port Arthur. Realm of the Dead* was in its second printing in 1934.

²² There are some stories in *Port Arthur* that are closer to the style of writing in *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, and as such will be taken up in the chapter 5. Although publication of the two collections is separated by twelve years, the individual stories in *Port Arthur* started appearing in journals and newspapers as early as 1922.

²³ Unless otherwise noted, all citations of Hyakken's fiction are from the *Kōdansha* collected works (1971-73), and all translations are my own.

²⁴ For a discussion of death and fatherhood as motifs in Hyakken's diaries, and the relationship of the diaries to *Realm of the Dead*, see Sakai's section 2 of chapter 3 (1993), and Masugi's section 2 of chapter 3, and section 4 of chapter 4. Uchida (1997, 98) talks about the prominence of dreams described in Hyakken's diaries.

²⁵ See Hirayama's (1969) section titled "Meido no shūhen," Sakai (1993, 110-16), Masugi (24-34) and Uchida (1997, 94-100).

²⁶ Cheever is quoted in the following article: Sue Miller, "Virtual Reality: The Perils of Seeking a Novelist's Facts in Her Fiction," *New York Times*, 12 April 1999, Living Arts section.

²⁷ Masugi Hideki also argues that it is not necessary to force the stories into a dream framework (26, 69-70).

²⁸ The ten volume set was published between October 1971 and April 1973.

²⁹ See chapter 1 for more information on the Hyakken boom.

³⁰ See Sakai Hideyuki for a summary of Hyakken criticism (1993, 27-30). The 1980s Fukutake version is thirty-three volumes and was published between November 1986 and October 1989.

³¹ Sakai Hideyuki comments on the influential nature of Itō's essay (1993, 24). The anthology was comprised of five stories from three different collections. Many of Hyakken's stories have been reissued in anthologized form. See Morita Sakan.

³² Takahashi will be discussed presently. See Irokawa's comments in the article with Kawamura (201-202).

³³ This is from Komiya's preface to volume 8 of Sōseki's collected works (Iwanami). The passage is quoted in Takahashi Hideo (95).

³⁴ Takahashi offers the example of the story "Port Arthur," in which the narrator goes to see a film on the battle at Port Arthur. As the narrator watches the film he becomes a part of it, and Takahashi argues that all the objective elements of the story, the location of the viewing, the actual events at Port Arthur, and the rows of soldiers are all enveloped in the subjective realm of the narrator's mind (1986, 18). I offer an alternative reading of this story in my next chapter.

³⁵ These terms are revisited by later critics such as Sakai.

³⁶ He uses the English word 'pojichivv' written in *katakana*.

³⁷ The January issue of *Shinshōsetsu*, in which Hyakken debuted, was dedicated to "Sexual Desire and Pleasure," with articles on lesbian love, the masses and indecency, and the views of international artists and thinkers on sexual desire.

³⁸ Uchida Michio began writing on Hyakken in the 1960s and just recently published a volume of essays on Hyakken in 1997.

³⁹ Uchida Michio does talk about Hyakken in other ways, for example as a means to see humor in other writers such as Kasai Zenzō and Tayama Katai (1986, 183).

⁴⁰ The six stories included are "Realm of the Dead," "Santō Kyōden," "Fireworks" (Hanabi), "Kudan," "The Embankment" (Dote) (the original title for "The Companion" (Michizure)), and "The Leopard" (Hyō). See Morita Sakan.

⁴¹ Akutagawa's was titled "Meido" and appeared in the January issue of *Shinchō*, and Sōhei's essay " 'Meido' sono ta" was in the *Yomiuri Shimbun* on January 24, 25 and 26.

⁴² Akutagawa has a similar disclaimer at the end of his essay "Uchida Hyakken shi" which will be mentioned later.

⁴³ Akutagawa's essay "Uchida Hyakken shi" appeared in the July issue of *Bungei jihō*. Akutagawa committed suicide later that month on the twenty-fourth.

⁴⁴ Hyakken published twelve stories in *Josei*, eight of them appearing before Akutagawa died.

⁴⁵ See *Kaisō: Uchida Hyakken*.

⁴⁶ The remaining contributors are Kikuchi Kan, Inagaki Taruho, Kume Masao, Chikamatsu Shūkō, Murō Saisei, Uno Kōji, Toyoshima Yoshio, Osanai Kaoru, Ogawa Mimei, Kamitsukasa Shōken, Shiratori Shōgo and Yamada Kōsaku.

⁴⁷ Satō's comment is curious given that it is a preface to his own "ghost story" and is part of a selection of "modern ghost stories." Is he implying the stories in *Chūō kōron* are unsuccessful? For another example of a mystery/ghost story see Satō's "Jokaisen kidan," published between 1925-26 in *Josei*.

⁴⁸ The stories in *Realm of the Dead* were written between 1910 and 1921. See Sakai (1993, 84-5) for a listing of original publication dates and alternate titles for twelve of the eighteen stories in *Realm of the Dead*. Morita also provides detailed publication information on this topic.

⁴⁹ See Takada (65) for commentary on Akutagawa.

⁵⁰ Akutagawa does not use the term I-novel, but his description of the literature is similar to descriptions of I-novel writing. See section 3 of his essay titled "Moderu no tame no moderu" (1964c, 246-7).

⁵¹ I will discuss the I-novel in relation to Hyakken in more detail in chapter 5, where the model seems more appropriate. There are a few stories in *Port Arthur* that are closer to *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, and hence will also be addressed in chapter 5.

⁵² Sasaki is not attempting to lessen the impact of western literature on Meiji period writers, however, he sees the late Taishō years as unique in terms of the simultaneity it shared with European literary developments. For a discussion of this notion of historical simultaneity or parallel history occurring in the mid to late 1920s see Woolsey, specifically his section titled "Rupture and Notions of Parallel Historical Evolution." Among the critics he mentions are Yoshida Seiichi, Nakamura Mitsuo and Odagiri Susumu.

⁵³ Yokomitsu Riichi dates the beginning of his Neosensualist period to the earthquake, and Dennis Keene identifies Yokomitsu as "perhaps the only serious counterpart in modern

Japanese prose literature to the experimental, 'modernist' writing that existed in Europe during and following the First World War" (viii). See Keene's book for more on Yokomitsu and the Neosensualists. Sasaki Kiichi equates literary modernism with the works of the *Shinkôgeijutsuha* or New Arts Faction, written between 1928 and 1932, and Minami Hiroshi suggests 1932 as the peak of modernism and 1936 as the year of its initial decline. See Sasaki's entry on Modernism in *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten*, and Minami (1985, 494). For more on these two literary movements, also see Shimada.

⁵⁴ Minami also discusses an "underground modernism," which began its secretive movements after the banning of dance halls in 1932 and continued to exist covertly under military rule; and a "post-war occupation modernism" (1982, viii-ix). His scope is extremely broad, and in one sense, his application of the term to encompass the better part of modern Japanese history, seems to divest it of its meaning. This schematization should be taken in conjunction with his delineation of three periods of modernization: the civilization and enlightenment of Meiji, the Modernism of Taishô and early Shôwa, and the Americanization of the postwar occupation period. See Minami (1982, viii).

⁵⁵ See Mishima's comments on *Realm of the Dead* (40), and Kawamura and Irokawa's discussion (200-201).

⁵⁶ Although "modern life" and the accouterments of the modern West may have crystallized in the New Arts Faction's productions, their literature was not the only, nor the first showcase for this. Tanizaki Junichirô also featured the West and "modern life" in his work from the 1910s and early 1920s.

⁵⁷ Tokyo's population grew from 1,874,000 in 1908 to 3,699,000 in 1920. At the same time, the agricultural Niigata, Tokyo's former rival for most populated city, lost ten percent of its citizens and fell to number seven on the 1920 population scale (Kano, 298-99).

⁵⁸ Newspaper circulation rose from 1,630,000 in 1905 to 6,250,000 in 1924, and the number of journals registered with the state more than tripled between 1918 and 1932 (Silverberg 1993, 123-24).

⁵⁹ The number enrolled in higher education rose from between 40,000-80,000 in 1910 to between 180,000-200,000 in 1930 (Sakada, 461).

⁶⁰ Perhaps I should not be so hard on these critics, since their purpose may not be to prove Hyakken a modernist, and since the topic of modernism itself presents a variety of problems. Bradbury and McFarlane discuss the difficulties inherent in defining the term, and Sheppard comments on its slippery nature and the inability of critics to agree on any one definition. As Seiji Lippit notes in a recent article on Akutagawa and modernism: "As a category of literary history, modernism remains a highly ambiguous one that is often reduced to vague questions of style and formal experimentation" (30).

⁶¹ This is from the title of Sasaki's essay.

⁶² See Lippit (29-30). "Mosaicist" is a term Donald Keene uses to refer to Akutagawa.

Chapter IV

Travel, Cinema, Dreams and Doppelgangers: Short Stories from *Realm of the Dead* and *Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur*

The characters in Uchida Hyakken's *Realm of the Dead* and *Triumphant Entry Into Port Arthur* occupy a world where the familiar is unfamiliar, disorienting and disturbing, where our understanding of reality is fragmentary and inadequate, and where even our bodies and minds are in a state of flux and transition. As readers, we too are transported to a place where, as was once said of modernist literature, "uncertainty is the only certain thing" (Bradbury and McFarlane, 48). The stories in these two collections merit our attention, if for no other reason than the high quality of the writing itself. However, these works did not always enjoy such a lofty position in his oeuvre; with the exception of a few ardent supporters, early reception was at best lukewarm.

Critics locate Hyakken on the margins of mainstream literature, but a close examination of the aforementioned stories reveals not only Hyakken's uniqueness but those qualities he shared with his Taishô contemporaries. In an effort to both bring Hyakken back into the fold and affirm his literary worth, this chapter focuses on recurring images and themes in Hyakken's writing, the role of Taishô icons in his stories, and the literary techniques he held in common with other authors of the era, including Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Satô Haruo and Tanizaki Jun'ichirô. In addition to considerations of setting and character, I take

up the issues of time, space, reality and identity, as they intersect with and are transformed by individual and national memory, dreams, technological inventions and the seemingly supernatural.

The Premise of Normalcy in an Abnormal World

Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, a great fan and promoter of Hyakken, was the first in a long line of critics to call attention to the dreamlike qualities of *Realm of the Dead*. He extolled the virtues of Hyakken's writing through a favorable comparison with their mutual mentor, Sôseki: "Unlike Natsume Sôseki's "Ten Nights of Dreams," these stories don't merely pretend to be dreams, but are written exactly as if they were dreamt."¹ This statement is curious given the lack of overt reference to dreams in Hyakken's stories.

Takahashi Hideo describes *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur* as "yume no keiretsu" or a "series of dreams" from which the narrator can never awaken. In this realm where "all is a dream" there is no outside, no escape from the all-pervasive reverie (180-81). Certainly the nonlinear narratives, sudden scene changes and appearance of unexplainable phenomenon, like the return of the dead or of the unborn, fit a dream pattern. The literary inheritance of texts such as Sôseki's "Ten Nights of Dreams" may have inclined critics to interpret the events in these short stories as emanating from the realm of nocturnal visions. Uchida Michio has even suggested that Hyakken crafted *Realm of the Dead* by

grafting his own dreams onto this model set by Sôseki (1997, 108).

However, there is scant reference to the act of dreaming, or even sleeping, in the stories at hand. If indeed these works are meant to be read as dreams, they are not so explicitly marked. This contrasts with Sôseki's "Ten Nights of Dreams," which opens with the line, "I dreamt," Satô Haruo's "The House of the Spanish Dog" which also begins with, "A short story for those who are fond of dreaming," and Tanizaki's "Longing for Mother" (Haha o kouru ki, 1919), which ends with, "Suddenly, I awake. I really must have cried in my sleep, for my pillow is soaked with tears. . . My mother is no longer alive; she died two summers ago." ²

Hyakken's stories also differ in significant ways from works such as Naka Kansuke's "Diary of Dreams" (Yume no nikki, 1912) a collection of short episodic entries dated from January 31, 1904 to February 19, 1912. Ostensibly a diary of the author's dreams, Naka's work is far more surrealistic than Hyakken's. In "Diary of Dreams," we read about worlds where the sky is filled with multiple celestial bodies, the narrator flies through the air, and quartz-like water envelops the moon in a silky gauze. Although not as surreal as "Diary of Dreams," Sôseki's dream of "The First Night" has a similar mythic quality as a woman is reborn a flower one hundred years after her death. If indeed the premise for Hyakken's fiction is a dream world, then it is one which is far closer to the realities of this world than the surrealistic vision represented by other

authors.

Although Hyakken does not confirm that the stories are dreams, neither does he deny it, as does Franz Kafka in the opening of his famous *The Metamorphosis*.³

When Gregor Samsa woke up one morning from unsettling dreams, he found himself changed in his bed into a monstrous vermin. He was lying on his back as hard as armor plate, and when he lifted his head a little, he saw his vaulted brown belly, sectioned by arch-shaped ribs, to whose dome the cover, about to slide off completely, could barely cling. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, were waving helplessly before his eyes.

“What’s happened to me?” he thought. It was no dream. (3)

Gregor’s transformation may have occurred while he slept, but his insect form is as real as his alarm clock and unsuspecting family in the next room. Gregor’s situation is all too real, but when reading Hyakken, we cannot always know what is real and what is imagined. This ambiguity could be attributed to the endlessly reproduced dream structure Takahashi Hideo proposes; however, if we conclude that “all is a dream” then we miss the interplay of dream and reality, an interplay which Hyakken uses for specific effect.

Perhaps my resistance to the dream pretense belies my own imaginative limitations, but for the purposes of exploring this pretense, I will take the opposite approach and assume that these are not dreams, unless instructed otherwise by explicit clues in the text. I maintain that even if we eventually

decide these stories are dreams, they begin with a basis in reality or at least a premise of normalcy, which is an important narrative device.

This aspect of Hyakken's stories sets him apart from other Taishô authors working in the dream mode. Tanizaki's "Longing for Mother" has been mentioned alongside Hyakken's *Realm of the Dead*,⁴ and is a story which is very clearly identified as a dream. It is also a useful means of comparison because it combines many of the elements we find in two of the more famous works in *Realm of the Dead*, "Fireworks" (Hanabi) and "The Companion" (Michizure), namely they are all stories about the narrator's travels through a strange landscape and his encounter with a person from his past.

Tanizaki's story, about a small boy's search for his mother, opens on a long road in an otherworldly realm.

The sky is leaden, the moon engulfed in clouds; but light streaks down from nowhere, giving everything a pale, whitish glow. The glow is eerie and phantasmal, bright enough to reveal each pebble on the roadside yet still so dim that my vision blurs when I gaze into the distance. It is the glow of an alien, infinite realm, far, far away from the land of the living. It is the glow, depending on one's mood, of a dark moonless night—or of a moonlight night. In the midst of all this whiteness, a road, whiter still, runs straight ahead of me. Rows of pine trees stretching as far as the eye can see flank the road on either side, and the wind, blowing in gusts from my left, whistles through the needles. The wind is damp and salty; I can tell the sea is near. (1980, 467)⁵

Tanizaki's narrator, the six or seven-year-old Jun'ichi, travels alone along this road. After mistaking a tattered, wrinkled woman for his mother, he finally

finds his real mother walking by the seaside in the guise of a beautiful samisen balladeer. Their reunion, however, turns out to be no more than a dream from which the narrator wakes at the end of the tale, to reveal that he is actually thirty-three years old and his mother died two years ago.

Edward Fowler, in his afterword to the translation, describes "Longing for Mother" as "a world we all know from our dreams, an illogical world, divorced from our waking perceptions of time and space" (480). These descriptions of the story as a dream world remind us of critical evaluations of *Realm of the Dead*, and on closer examination, we find Tanizaki's story provides a much better example not only of a "dream story," but of the subjective, nostalgic, "Japanese" style of writing we have been told to expect from Hyakken.

As Fowler points out, the story is on a certain level an "excursion into nostalgia" and can easily be read as a sentimental portrait of Tanizaki's own deceased mother. I do not necessarily favor the biographical reading, but do think that Tanizaki's story submits itself more readily to this style of analysis than does Hyakken's work. Although we can find examples of both authors naming their narrators after themselves, Jun'ichi in "Longing for Mother" and Ei in Hyakken's "The Companion," the latter describes a reunion with very little basis in reality, that of Ei and a brother who was never born. Although we could interpret Hyakken's story as a lament for an aborted sibling, it requires us to stretch the biographical facts in a fashion not necessary in "Longing for Mother."

The “Japaneseness” Itô Sei attributed to Hyakken appears in “Longing for Mother” as reminiscences of old Tokyo; the narrator remembers his life in Nihonbashi and he wonders if he will ever again see the old neighborhoods, shrines and temples of Tokyo. His mother is also the picture of old Japan, a Shinnai balladeer with beautiful white skin, dressed in a silk-crepe kimono, “the kind worn by lovers on stage,” and an “old-fashioned hat made of plaited straw” (1980, 475). And there is even a hint of traditional folklore in young Jun’ichi’s fear that this woman may in reality be a fox spirit.

Folklore is one of the few “traditional” elements in Hyakken’s writing, and as conjectured earlier, this may be the reason Itô Sei found it to be “Japanese.”⁶ The fox spirit of Jun’ichi’s imagination appears in the opening lines of Hyakken’s “The Short Night” (Mijikayo, 1921): “I left the house intent on seeing the fox spirits for myself” (1: 43). A bewitching is certainly what the narrator experiences in this the most overtly folkloric of Hyakken’s stories. The influence of folklore is also apparent in “Kudan,” which is based on a local Okayama tale about the *kudan* or cow-man. Additionally, a number of Hyakken’s female characters have qualities akin to the folkloric *Yama-uba*, or mountain crone. The old woman in “Seaweed” (Ryûsô, 1921), who is killed by the narrator and reborn as a young girl, provides one such example. The animal-like transformations into dogs, cats and cows of the female characters in “Envoy to China” (Kentôshi, 1927), “Magnolia” (Mokuren, 1933) and “Wisteria” (Fuji no

hana, 1929) are also reminiscent of the "non-human wives" of folklore.⁷

However, even with these mythological interventions, Hyakken's stories, such as "Fireworks" and "The Companion," are set in a mundane world far from Tanizaki's "alien, infinite realm." Fowler argues that Tanizaki's "overt and meticulous references to dreams" inure the reader to the "highly nonrealistic mode of presentation" (480). In contrast, Hyakken's realistic mode of presentation and lack of any references to dreams heighten the impact of the unusual, inexplicable, unrealistic occurrences which lay ahead of the narrator and the reader. Compare the opening scenes of "Fireworks" and "The Companion" with "Longing for Mother."

I walked between the vast ocean and a shallow inlet, down a long embankment toward the Ushimado harbor. Thin reeds in the inlet stretched up and peeked over the top of the path. Out in the distance they grew ever taller, finally engulfing the road.

"Fireworks" (1: 11)

I crossed through a dark mountain pass. A cold wind blew down the hillside and dead leaves rustled overhead. Somewhere out in the night I heard the sound of running water. From the recess of a distant mountain, two or three lights flickered in the wind. Others scattered over the nearby hills glimmered like raindrops, but they all shone back cold and indifferent. I kept heating up and cooling down, fluctuating between sweat and chills.

"The Companion" (1: 34)

The circumstances which later befall these narrators defy any explanation based in the rules of reality, and the landscapes they pass through and roads

they walk along also possess unusual features. However, at no point in time does Hyakken or his narrator attribute this to a dream or entry into an otherworldly realm. This premise of normalcy is important for setting up later events in the plot and for appreciation of both the subtle and overt clues that something is amiss. It is also an effective narrative trick for catching the reader as “off guard” as the characters in the story. This technique of Hyakken’s is reminiscent of fantastic narratives which “assert that what they are telling is real—relying upon all the conventions of realistic fiction to do so—and then they proceed to break that assumption of realism by introducing what—within those terms—is manifestly unreal.” (Jackson, 34) The introduction of the “manifestly unreal” can be seen at work in the opening lines of Hyakken’s “Kudan.”

A large yellow moon hung in the distant sky, the flat color devoid of luminescence. I thought it nightfall but couldn’t be sure. Was the bluish light filling the sky behind me from a setting or rising sun? A dragonfly appeared on the moon’s yellow surface, but I lost sight of it when the shadow disappeared from the disk. The field around me extended as far as the eye could see. I stood there soaking wet, water dripping from the end of my tail. As a child, I’d heard stories about the *kudan*, never once thinking it would happen to me. But now I was the bogeyman, a monstrous half-breed, a cow with a human face. I had nowhere to turn in this vast, shadowless field. Why was I here, and what became of the creature that spawned me? I couldn’t begin to imagine. (1: 22)

Until we reach the water dripping from the end of his tail, the naturalistic descriptions give us no reason to expect anything out of the ordinary. Unlike the Tanizaki story in which a “highly nonrealistic mode of presentation” is used to

describe a fairly mundane story about a boy's reunion with his mother, in Hyakken's work a realistic mode is used to describe unrealistic or surrealistic events, such as a man's reunion with his unborn brother in "The Companion," or the cow-man of mythology in "Kudan."

The process of drifting from the normal to the abnormal, or real to surreal is triggered or signaled by geographic features, strange perceptual abilities, and even weather conditions. Masugi Hideki describes these slippage points in the text as hinges (*chôtsugai*) and Shôji Hajime calls them joints (*jointo*) connecting the real and the surreal.⁸ One such important device is the use of roads and pathways along which the narrator travels. Far from serving as a simple means to get from point A to point B, once the characters embark on these roads, they lose sight of their destinations and wander instead into zones where the logical rules governing reality begin to bend, distort and even disappear. In the next section, I examine the features of these landscapes and the roles they play in producing and augmenting the disorientation experienced by the narrators.

On The Road to Nowhere

One of the most noticeable features of the *Realm of the Dead* stories is the predominance of roads and paths of all varieties.⁹ The passages below provide a small sampling.

Knowing she'd be cared for, I slipped away unnoticed. My

suspicions about her infidelity proved right. I walked for a long time all alone on a strange road until I arrived at that house.

“Jintôshi” (1: 16)

I went with her to see a sideshow. We’d walked for a long time through this frighteningly large city with no side streets, but no matter how far we went the road never turned.

“The Lizard” (1: 30)

I left the house intent on seeing the fox spirits for myself. The night was dark and the wind howled. I turned off the main road onto a narrow side street which cut through town. I reached the embankment behind the city and followed the path upstream.

“The Short Night” (1: 43)

I rounded the base of the mountain and the road advanced in strange twists and turns. In the distance I could see the smoke from the temple and hear the boom of the taiko drum.

“The Stone Floor” (1: 49)

I’d been on a long pilgrimage. Day after day I followed the shore and crossed the mountains, but the road never ended.

“The Crow” (Karasu, 1921) (1: 20)

These paths follow the contours of rivers, mountains and oceans, encircle lakes, run through open fields and small towns, lead into back alleys and narrow side streets, and even into the world beyond. Many of the stories open in similar fashion to those quoted above, with the main character mid-travel along a strange road, and it is in the act of journeying that the storytelling takes place.

Critics have suggested that the predominance of embanked paths or riverbanks (*dote*), a particular type of pathway, derives from their geographical plenitude in Hyakken’s hometown of Okayama. Hyakken, however, claims that

he did not intentionally shape his fictional landscapes thus, and indeed the paths in *Realm of the Dead* are far from the warm, nostalgic symbols of Hyakken's youth.¹⁰ If anything, the landscapes in *Realm of the Dead* are reminiscent of the ghost stories of the kabuki theatre, specifically the eerie riverbank by the reeds, a traditional site of otherworldly activity.¹¹ Like these theatrical settings, Hyakken's roadways give rise to trepidation, for they lead the main character into unfamiliar and disturbing landscapes where he meets equally disturbing people. However, unlike kabuki plays, the action is not confined to the traditions of ghost stories. These pathways are far more than mere lore or nostalgia, they play an important role in plot construction.

"Fireworks" describes the movement of the narrator through a strange landscape and his interactions with a woman who inhabits that space. The narrator encounters this pale-looking woman while walking along the embankment, and begins following her to an undisclosed location. As it grows dark, fireworks rise into the sky, the reed fields around them burn, and she warns him of the dangers of being on the embankment at nightfall. From a mysterious place on the embankment they descend onto the inlet side, and the narrator remarks that, "even though the lights of the harbor glimmered in the distance, I couldn't bring myself to leave her" (1: 2). They cross a shallow stream cut in the sand and arrive at the "entrance to a long passageway." The sudden appearance of a corridor on what was once a sandy path goes unexplained, and

the action moves from outdoors to indoors.

Shōji Hajime has commented on the appearance of this passageway as an example of a “joint” connecting the real and the nonreal (47, 75). It is interesting here that Hyakken uses a hallway (*rōka*) instead of the more common device of a door, thereby retaining the image of a long road or pathway. This corridor is dark and narrow, and once inside the narrator starts to remember the reason why this woman is leading him to this place. His desire to leave, although unvoiced, is anticipated by the woman who warns him of the darkness and the fires and begs him to stay. However, when he persists she reveals, “The embankment’s been washed away. There’s no way back” (1: 13). Left without a road on which to travel, the narrator is trapped.

In the final scene, the woman bows down and reveals the nape of her neck, a traditional site of eroticism. This image triggers the memory of a meeting some ten or twenty years prior at a crossroads, yet another pathway. But, just as the narrator remembers who she is, she grabs him from behind and disappears. The story ends with the narrator immobilized and unable to scream for help. His sudden realization coincides with his inability to escape, or stated otherwise, the end of his journey, and with the end of the story. This confluence of memory and travel also feature in “The Companion,” which is similarly structured around a journey and an encounter with a stranger.

"The Companion," alternately titled **"The Embankment" (Dote),¹²** opens on a dark mountain road the narrator travels with this strange man. Although they are walking together, the narrator cannot remember when this man first appeared at his side. In addition to this unexplained appearance, the road they walk along, the lights in the distance and the sounds of nature signal the narrator that something is amiss. The narrator wonders if they are walking along a riverbank, but he is unable to find any water nearby. Yet somehow, despite the withered dryness of the landscape, he keeps hearing the sound of running water at an indistinguishable place in the distance. As readers, we have the sense that the existence of an actual riverbank would almost be a welcome site to the narrator, because then he could have recourse to traditional narratives to explain his circumstances. Such comfort however is not allowed. The road is so dark he is unable to see where he is going and at times wonders if he has wandered off the path. The blackness of the night also defies explanation; the road in front of him is so dark he cannot see his own feet, yet he is able to distinguish features of the distant landscape, which is somehow visible even though the lights in the hills are gone.

As he walks with this companion, he relies on the sound of this man's footsteps to guide him along the path. The narrator is unfamiliar with the lay of the land and begins to fear he is traveling in circles when he once again hears the sound of running water. This spatial *déjà vu* and the increasing familiarity both

of the landscape and his companion's voice work together to produce the sense that the narrator is repeating the actions of some time in the past, without necessarily being fully aware of what they were then or what the repercussions are now.

This sense of *déjà vu* also appears in "Fireworks" when the narrator sees the woman's neck, all the while slowly remembering her and the reason she has guided him to this mysterious place. There is also an intimation of a past connection between the narrator and this woman, especially when she grabs him from behind and screams: "You cheat! You unfaithful good-for-nothing!" These paths and the act of walking or traveling itself are what bring the narrator into contact with these people from his past. However, when the narrator in "The Companion" refuses to acknowledge his brother's existence, the brother disappears and the narrator is overcome with a sense of heaviness and is unable to take another step. Likewise, when the narrator in "Fireworks" is unable to return to the path, the woman disappears and leaves him immobilized. It is as if the road is only there to take the narrator into another world, and when he chooses not to comply, his journey ends.

The most famous path in *Realm of the Dead* appears in the opening lines of the title story: "Atop the steep embankment a dark path ran endlessly, quietly and coldly into the night" (1: 65). This story, however, presents an unusual case in that the narrator is never on the path itself, rather he remains below the

embankment as his father walks off into the distance (Tamazawa, 43). The embankment in this story represents less a path leading into another realm, than the border between two worlds, and the travel occurring here is more temporal than spatial. The “joints” or “hinges” in “Realm of the Dead” also derive from perceptual difficulties experienced by the narrator.

Perceptual Disconnect and Distortions of Reality

“Realm of the Dead” is set in a dingy chophouse lying in the shadows of a steep embankment. Seated in this dimly lit restaurant, the narrator looks and listens in on a group of older men gathered next to him. Throughout the story the narrator suffers what I term perceptual difficulties. He is not able to see or hear clearly; figures appear as shadows and sounds are muted. Some type of barrier separates the narrator from his surroundings, but it is not completely impermeable, and certain images and sounds do penetrate. Inside the restaurant, one man appears clearer than the rest, but still only as a silhouette against the darkness, in the narrator’s own words, like a character in a “shadow play.” His voice is also somewhat muted and is audible only to the narrator. Out of this murkiness a bee comes into clear focus as does the voice of the man he saw before. The man comments on the size of the bee and compares it to his thumb, which also stands out in sharp contrast to the background. As the man recounts a story about a bee, his voice becomes clearer and clearer and the

images he speaks of appear before the narrator's eyes.

"I once caught a bee in a glass pipe and sealed the ends with paper. The buzzing of the bee moving around inside made the paper vibrate like an organ." As his voice became clearer and clearer to me, I was overwhelmed with an unendurable longing, but for what I didn't know. Something weighed heavily on my heart as I listened to his voice.

"I set the pipe on my desk and my son came along begging me to give it to him. Kind of a stubborn kid, you see, and once he got started, there was no telling him otherwise. Losing my temper, I grabbed the pipe and marched out to the verandah. The sun was shining on the rocks in the garden."

I felt I could see that boat-shaped rock in the garden, shining in the sun. The image was so clear to me.

"The bee got away when the glass smashed on the rocks. What a goddamn shame."

"Father!" I cried out. But my voice didn't seem to reach him. The men quietly got up and went outside. (1: 66)

Although the memory of the incident with the bee is perceptually distinct, and seems to penetrate the barrier separating the narrator and his father, his cry at the end never reaches the other side. Given the title, it is possible to interpret these incidents as occurring in the interzone of life and death, a space where the rules of reality do not apply. In this space the only things which the narrator is able to perceive clearly are those which belong to his own reality. In other words, the barrier between the two worlds is impermeable and the memories of the bee and his father are clear only because they emanate from the narrator's own mind.¹³ The figures existing in the other realm, those who eventually ascend the embankment are not part of his reality, even though they temporarily

share a spatial location—the restaurant. The story advances not through the linear unfolding of events in the restaurant, but in accordance with the narrator's mental state.

Time does not unfold in a linear sense in many of the stories in *Realm of the Dead*. Instead, it follows the contours of the narrator's memories, with the effect of time advancing and retreating, repeating itself to produce a déjà vu effect, and a coexistence of the present and past. Often a visual or aural stimuli set the narrator's memory into motion and upset the natural flow of time. This effect is readily observed in "Realm of the Dead." Shôji Hajime analyzes the road in these stories as temporal rather than spatial. The aforementioned encounter between the narrator and the woman in "Fireworks" can be seen as the overlap of the present and the past, a realization which is brought to the fore by the image of her neck. The narrator is led into the past by this woman who, once recognized, disappears from a time in which she cannot exist. The invisible object strangling the narrator is not this mysterious woman but rather his own guilt-provoking memories of some past affair (Shôji, 48-9).

In this sense these stories could be considered "subjective" because the construction of reality (time, space) does not have its basis in external constants, but is generated internally from an individual experience. Takahashi Yoshitaka uses this term "subjective" to classify the title piece of the *Port Arthur* collection, a story about the screening of a twenty-year-old film on the battles of the Russo-

Japanese War. He argues that the objective elements of the story, the location of the film viewing, the historical events of Port Arthur, and the soldiers on the screen are enveloped by the subjective realm of the narrator's mind (1986, 18). Takahashi, however, overlooks an important element of the story, namely the use of the cinema. The mental images of the bee and thumb in "Realm of the Dead" are replaced in "Port Arthur" (1925) with man-made images projected onto a movie screen,¹⁴ as the action moves beyond the confines of the indigenous Japanese landscape to encompass the battle scenes at Port Arthur.

Cinematic Images of War and "Time—Space Compression"

If there are aspects of Hyakken's writing that are "old," such as the use of folklore, there are also many aspects which if not "new," are certainly "timely." This is the case for "Port Arthur," a story which combines a symbol of modern life, the cinema, with an event crucial to the formation of the modern Japanese state, the Russo-Japanese War.¹⁵ These two elements from Hyakken's story share a historical past; Peter High remarks in "The Dawn of Cinema in Japan" that "documentary war footage" was the vehicle through which film infiltrated "the mainstream of public life and entertainment" (38). The nascent Japanese film industry built its foundation on celluloid reels of the Russo-Japanese War. The industry later restructured in 1912, the first year of Taishō, as the four main producers underwent forced collaboration to form the "golaith Nikkatsu Film

combine" (High, 53).

This new technological phenomenon impacted both Taishō's economy and cultural life. Japan produced its first film superstar, Onoue Matsunosuke, who enjoyed great popularity in the 1910s and '20s, and closed out his career as a national icon with his death in 1926, the last year of the era. The masses embraced the theatre as a requisite of modern life, and the intelligentsia registered their opinions in journals such as the intellectual *Chûô kôron*, which featured the popular "moving pictures" alongside cafes and automobiles in a special 1918 issue dedicated to fashions of the times (Kawamoto, 81-82).

Besides providing the nation with new entertainment and stars, the film industry had other interesting effects on the Japanese public. Peter High notes with irony that the war footage, both from the Chinese and European continents, served to awaken "the Japanese people to a sense of 'world citizenship' stretching beyond the confines of their island nation" (37). This new sense of widening borders combined with a sense of shrinking space as images of distant lands were projected into local theatres. This paradoxical effect is part of what David Harvey terms "time-space compression," an alteration in the conceptualization of time and space, in which life sped up and distance collapsed.

Although Harvey's object of study is the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Europe, similar effects can be observed in Japan's own

modernization process, effects brought on by changes in economic organization and modes of production, technological advancements such as railway, radio and photography, rapid information exchange and expansion of the press, and imperialist excursions on the exterior.¹⁶ One of Harvey's illustrative examples is that of the first radio signal beaming around the globe in 1913 from the Eiffel tower, "thus emphasizing the capacity to collapse space into the simultaneity of an instant in universal public time" (266). Harvey's image is echoed in a movie advertisement for a Vitascope showing in the late 1890s in Tokyo, which reminded viewers that the telephone "spans a thousand miles in an instant" and other such marvels of technology.¹⁷

Japanese literature was not immune to these shifts in the economic, political and cultural spheres, and captured both the trappings and pleasures of the new lifestyle. Tanizaki Jun'ichirô's *A Fool's Love* (*Chijin no ai*, 1924-1925),¹⁸ which describes the trials and tribulations of Jôji's slavish love for the "modern girl" Naomi, is often seen as a symbol of the new, modernist "simple lifestyle" (*shinpuru raifu*) of the 1920s (Minami 1985, 494).¹⁹ Other writers such as Satô Haruo and the modernist Ryûtanji Yû reveled in the appeal of foreigners, apartment living, cafes and jazz.

Tanizaki wrote specifically about the cinema in his 1917 essay "The Present and Future of Motion Pictures" (*Katsudô shashin no genzai to shôrai*) and the following year featured it prominently in his fictive 1918 "The Carbuncle

With A Human Face" (Jinmensô), in which a strange film starring a famous Japanese actress mysteriously appears on the market. Elaine Gerbert speculates on the effects of cinema on literature from the 1910s and 1920s in "A New Look: The Influence of Vision Technology on Narrative In Taishô," in which she examines works by Satô, Akutagawa, Tanizaki and Uno Kôji. Of the examples Gerbert provides, Tanizaki's "The Carbuncle With A Human Face" is most useful in our discussion of Hyakken's "Port Arthur." Both stories give attention to visuality, the effects of reproduced images, and the power of moving pictures over the viewer, but they differ in important ways.

Both stories exhibit the internationalism of Taishô, but whereas Tanizaki's is completely fictive, Hyakken's is based on a historical event. The Japanese actress in Tanizaki's story worked in Los Angeles for the Globe Corporation, an American movie venture, where she starred alongside Caucasians. The film entitled *The Boil With A Human Face* (Ningen no kao o motta dekimono) was brought to Japan by a Frenchman who procured it while traveling in Shanghai, itself a symbol of international urban culture. The war footage in Hyakken's "Port Arthur" is also part of the global economy; a German military production, the film captures Russia's defeat at the hands of the Japanese in the war of 1904-1905.

Tanizaki's story features the film industry prominently; it is set at a film studio, the main character is an actress, Utagawa Yurie, and the movie is said to

be showing in Shibuya and Shinjuku theatres. His characters discuss film making techniques, as they entertain the possibility that someone created *The Boil With A Human Face* by splicing together scenes from other movies and adding in characters through editing tricks. Tanizaki plays with this new medium and with questions of originality and reproducibility in a way Hyakken does not. The actress and her friends at the film company conjecture that the strange unknown Japanese actor, who appears first as a beggar and later as a human-faced boil on Yurie's knee, may exist only in the celluloid universe.

Hyakken's "Port Arthur," by contrast, is more realistic, one might say even documentary. The film of the battle at Port Arthur is shown not at a theatre, but in a darkened lecture hall at Hôsei University, where an eerie bluish light seeps through openings in the heavy curtains. Other than a brief explanatory remark on the German origin of the movie, no attention is given to the filming process, industry or distribution, as seen in Tanizaki. However, both stories do focus on the contents of the film and their respective effects on the viewer. Whereas Tanizaki opts for the mysterious and grotesque, Hyakken explores the ability of moving pictures to transcend time and space.

The Boil With A Human Face is rumored to be haunted (1967a, 296). The film exacts its toll on the viewer not in a crowded movie theater, but when seen alone at night. The actress, who is trying to track down the origins of this film she has no memory of ever having made, is warned by H, an employee of the

film studio, that: "That film will scare the living daylights out of you. In a quiet room, all alone, late at night, not even a big tough guy could watch the whole thing" (1967a, 296). The frightening effects of this film range from nightmares and unexplained sickness to insanity. The existence of this unknown Japanese actor cannot be verified, and H conjectures perhaps he is not of this world, but is a phantom inhabiting the film itself (1967a, 301). It is his eerie laugh, barely audible, that drives the viewer mad (1967a, 302-3). This is doubly spooky because we assume *The Boil With A Human Face* was a silent film.²⁰

"Port Arthur" is also a silent film, but is viewed in a crowded room and has none of the mysterious elements of Tanizaki's story. Rather than driving people crazy, the film pulls the viewer in, as time and space collapse, and twenty-year-old events on a distant shore come to life.

The story unfolds at the pace of the movie, and the narrator experiences shifts in space and time as reflected on the visual and auditory planes. An army officer explains the origins of the twenty-year-old film, and having concluded his comments, suddenly sinks into the blackness of the room. But before this khaki-colored, uniformed image fades from the narrator's retina, another is projected onto it—a soldier leading a parade headed for the front. The overlap of these two men, one from the present and one from the past, one in the flesh and one on the screen, collapses the temporal gap and triggers an auditory memory of an old military tune. The next scene shifts from the farewell parade in Yokohama to

the mountains surrounding Port Arthur itself. Space collapses as the bluish image of these mountain peaks connects directly with the narrator's memory banks, throwing them open and producing a strange sense of pathos.

In the section which follows, a group of panting soldiers drags a cannon up the hillside. Watching the movements of this undifferentiated mass, our narrator sympathizes out loud with their plight, and an unnamed voice from this side of the screen, the crowd of viewers, speaks out in agreement. When a face appears amidst the group of soldiers, the narrator enters the scene in the film, crossing from spectator to participant: "Cutting through the dark sky like a dog with its head hung low, a towering peak jutted up before *us* as we climbed" (1: 138).²¹ Masugi suggests that the narrator sees his own face in this anonymous soldier and that recognition allows for the fusion of viewed object and viewing subject (123-24). This state, however, is only temporary and the narrator's position soon shifts back to the lecture hall when he asks aloud the name of the mountain he had previously ascended. He continues to move between the present and the past, between the darkened lecture hall and the ominous mountains surrounding Port Arthur, as he crosses back and forth from one side of the screen to the other.

His tension level rises as the artillery campaigns increase, and time slows down as the bombs rain "endlessly day and night" (1: 138). As readers we wonder to what degree the passage of time is actually portrayed in the film, as

opposed to in the narrator's mind. The movie closes with another parade, only these men carry no arms or knapsacks, and their empty faces and meaningless marching bring the narrator to wonder if he is not witnessing dead soldiers risen from their graves on the war-torn mountainside. The movie comes to an end, but the images from the screen are now projected onto the viewers' minds. As the audience files out of the lecture hall, the narrator continues to see these dead soldiers, but his vision is clouded with tears, and he loses his way.

The film ends much the way it began with another set of superimposed images—the marching soldiers and the crowd filing out of the lecture hall—only now the effect is intended for the reader, not the narrator. Given the similarity in language Hyakken uses to describe the two images, we can assume this effect is intentional.

Tears streamed down my face. The columns of soldiers, always the same, marched on and on. My eyes clouded with tears, obscuring the figure moving in front of me. I lost my bearings and was set adrift in an unfamiliar place.

“Stop crying” said a man walking next to me.

Just then I heard someone behind us weeping.

The crowd kept clapping. My cheeks wet from crying, I too fell in line and was led out into the quiet of the city streets, out into the distance. (1: 139)

Masugi argues that in melding these two images, the soldiers and the crowd, Hyakken has created a world where “the dead are the living and the living the dead,” and in this way, he overcomes the barrier between son and father in “Realm of the Dead” (126). There are other important differences

between the two stories. The internally-generated memories of a lost childhood in "Realm of the Dead" are replaced in "Port Arthur" by mechanically-created national memories of an overseas war. These visions are no longer the purview of an individual narrator, but are experienced as a crowd. "Port Arthur" is "subjective" in the sense that it describes personal, emotional reactions to a film, but the "subject" is no longer the nostalgic individual we saw in "Realm of the Dead" and "Fireworks." As Masugi suggests, we have an instance where characters are interchangeable and the self mutates into other selves (122).

Hyakken recrafted his visual imagery for "Port Arthur," transporting the reader to a world beyond the shadow play of "Realm of the Dead." Through superimposed images and the intervention of the screen, Hyakken demonstrates the power of film to bring the past to life, collapse distance and alter subjectivity. The cinema is one tool Hyakken uses to play with notions of linear time and geographical reality, but he also reconfigures these concepts through the juxtaposition of dream and reality in another story which features images of war and modern Tokyo, "The War Memorial Museum" (Yûshûkan, 1929).

Dream Meets Reality at the Yasukuni Shrine

Hyakken's *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur* are often described as dream stories, but as discussed earlier, there is very little mention of dreaming. "The War Memorial Museum" is one of the few stories in which Hyakken explicitly

plays with the relationship between the dream world and reality. Although sections of the story are dream sequences, they are set at the very real symbol of war and the modern state, the Yasukuni shrine.

The title of this story from the *Port Arthur* collection is a reference to the annex of the Shōkonsha, a shrine to the war dead in Tokyo, better known as the Yasukuni Shrine. This annex opened in 1882 as a war memorial museum which housed exhibits of weaponry and other military paraphernalia.²²

Although nowadays the Yasukuni Shrine is thought of by some as an “emblem of Japanese militarism” replete with a controversial postwar history,²³ when it was built in 1869, it was seen as “highly stylish and enlightened, a landmark redolent of Western modernism” (Tsubouchi/Yoshida, 48).²⁴ The Yûshûkan described in Hyakken’s story was a Western-style building designed by an Italian architect, in imitation of an old European castle.²⁵ These early associations with Rokumeikan era modernization were soon forgotten as the shrine took on nationalistic and militaristic overtones in the early part of the twentieth century. In 1908, two years before Hyakken moved up to Tokyo, the annex was remodeled to include items from the recent Sino and Russo-Japanese Wars.

The Yûshûkan in Hyakken’s story is neither a sacred space nor the site of national militaristic pride. The building and the Kudan district in which it is located, as well as an artillery lieutenant who appears in the first scene, are the

source of great trepidation for Hyakken's narrator.

One of the most structurally complex of Hyakken's tales, "The War Memorial Museum" is a multilayered nine-part sequence, in which the narrator shifts back and forth between what we assume to be dreams and reality, although the transitions are not always clear. The story opens with an unannounced visit from an imposing artillery lieutenant with eerie yellow skin. He claims to know the narrator and to have seen him at Kudanzaka the previous day, but the narrator was at home all day and has no recollection of this lieutenant. The mention of Kudanzaka, however, the hill leading to the Yasukuni Shrine, gives the narrator the chills.²⁶

In the sections that follow the action moves from the Yûshûkan to a small restaurant in the Kudan district, back to the narrator's home, then to Tokyo Station, and finally returns to the Yûshûkan. With the exception of sections six and seven, there are no overt transitions linking the individual sections. It is as if Hyakken purposefully left out the segues. In addition to the lack of narrative transitions, the time sequence from section to section is nonlinear. For example, in section one, the lieutenant claims to have seen the narrator at Kudanzaka the previous day, but the narrator does not visit Kudanzaka until section two. It is almost as if the mere mention of this place generates his experience in the following section.

The structure of the story is reminiscent of a dream, where linear time and narrative consistency are irrelevant, and images, places and words acquire a strange symbolic meaning. We could assume that the entire story is a dream but the only sections that specifically mention dreaming are four and five. Sections two and eight both describe a visit to the War Memorial Museum, and given the surrealistic tone of the former we may venture to guess that it is a dream. However, there are elements in section eight that would imply that section two was not based entirely in a dream world. In addition to sorting out reality from dream, we must sort through different layers of dreams by different characters.

Section two opens as the narrator ventures out into a wind storm to visit the Yūshūkan. The area outside the museum resembles a battle scene. To get to the entrance, the narrator walks over artillery shells and horse legs, which give way beneath his feet in an eerie, pliant sensation. The guardsmen are earless, and inside, in place of armor and swords, he sees dead soldiers piled high in large glass cases. The stench is overwhelming and he runs for the door.

Section eight is also set at the museum, but the weather conditions are the exact opposite. In the previous episode the wind was blowing so strongly that the narrator could hardly tell where he was, but in this scene, the sky is a clear, beautiful blue, the cherry trees glisten in the sun and the stone pavement is cleanly swept. All indications point to a very different experience. The museum is smaller and brighter than he expected and the requisite flags and armaments

are all in place, but the anxiety he felt before entering is not so readily dissipated, rather it intensifies. Running past the exhibits, he catches a glimpse of something disturbing on his way toward the exit.

Hidden in the shadows was another, larger display case. Behind the glass were five or six mannequins in uniform. I couldn't tell if they were real or fake. Then I saw their faces and hands, that eerie yellow skin—I retched. (1: 114)

Both episodes end as the narrator runs out the exit, and although the latter is not as surreal as the former, it is still as frightening, if not more so. We could regard section two as a dream, but we could just as readily envision the building transformed on a dark, rainy day as the narrator lets his imagination run wild. What makes section eight so visceral are these prior sequences which transform the real and turn the mannequin into an object of fear. In an unexpected turn, the mannequins in section eight are more frightening than the dead uniformed bodies in section two. This is another case where the premise of normalcy works to heighten the effect. As reader, we expect a run-of-the-mill military display, but the yellowness of the skin and its prior association with the mysterious lieutenant, as well as of the mannequins with dead bodies, works to turn this mannequin into another hinge connecting the real with the surreal, or in this case, the dream world with that of reality.

The site itself adds to the eeriness of the experience. Yasukuni is a sacred space where the spirits of the war dead are enshrined, but in Hyakken's story

this association with death takes on disturbing overtones. The dead soldiers in section two are irreverently stacked behind glass cases, leaving us to wonder if the lieutenant is in actuality the spirit of a soldier lost in action overseas. Death and war are presented as far from dignified or glorious. This mysterious lieutenant turns menacing in the section which follows.

Section three is set in a restaurant hidden away in the back streets of the Kudan district, the area around the Yasukuni Shrine. Although the narrator seems familiar with the Shrine and surrounding neighborhood, this area is completely new to him. He is led to this eatery by his friend Kimura, and the introduction of this heretofore unknown space bodes ill for their evening together. This back street is infused with the mysterious spatial qualities of *Realm of the Dead*.

While celebrating Kimura's new job in the country, they run into the lieutenant with the yellow skin. He convinces them to go for a drive and suddenly the scene shifts to the bright entryway of a restaurant. The men are served dinner and drinks, and the lieutenant sings a song which seems vaguely familiar to the narrator from some rainy day in the past. As a reader, one wonders if this is the song he heard in the distance during the lieutenant's visit in section one, however, it seems not even the narrator can be sure. The lieutenant stops suddenly and reaches his yellow hands for the narrator's neck. The serving girl manages to calm the soldier, but the narrator is thrown out and

put into a car which he tells us “sped atop a pitch black river, the dark water catching the light and flickering back at me” (1: 110).

The section ends as the narrator is spirited home across a surreal landscape, having left his friend Kimura behind. The next section opens with the narrator in bed, startled from sleep by an animal-like cry emanating from his wife. He wakes her and she relates her nightmare in which she was sleeping next to a large corpse. This body started moving and grabbing for her, but she was awakened by her own screams. The narrator listens to his wife apprehensively and in the following section has a dream of his own. The wind that had been battering the shutters dies down and the silence makes him feel as though he is sinking underwater. While nodding off he thinks about his wife’s dream.

My wife and I must have both been dreaming, she about the corpse and me the lieutenant.

But what about Kimura?

I left him with the lieutenant and that geisha. What happened back in that restaurant with the dark garden?

Thinking it over, I realized the soldier must have murdered him.

Or maybe that part happened in somebody else’s dream.

If that was so, then it’s possible that I had already been killed in another person’s dream.

But if I died in another person’s dream...

There was no way to know. (1: 112)

It is not necessarily clear if this analysis of his and his wife’s dreams occurs while he is awake, or is part of yet another dream sequence. The wife’s

dream seems to be the connection point for the various sections of the story. The body in the wife's dream resembles the dead bodies (mannequins) the narrator sees at the military museum (sections 2, 8), who also happen to have the same yellow skin as the lieutenant. Hence, the corpse in the wife's dream may be the very lieutenant who shows up at the narrator's house and then kills Kimura (sections 1, 3), and who we assume also kills the narrator and the narrator's wife, in their own or somebody else's dream (sections 4, 5). But, this body could also be the dead body of the narrator himself.

We know, however, that the narrator is not dead because he is telling the story, but the fate of his friend Kimura remains unclear until the final scene. The narrator pays a visit to Kimura's house, only to find out that Kimura is not dead, but actually departed for his new job in the country some ten days prior. This concluding section could be interpreted to mean that the preceding events all took place in a dream. However, the point is not to negate the reality of these bizarre events, but to play with the relationship between the dream world and the real world. Masugi Hideki argues that Hyakken does not simply shift the paradigm of reality into the world of dreams, rather it is the reverse—the relational structure unique to dreams takes over the real. The events described in "The War Memorial Museum" could not have occurred in the real world, but as Masugi warns, the world of dreams is constructed by mechanisms that cannot be gauged by the scale of reality (104).

This new relational structure affects the individual experience. As in "Port Arthur," objective reality takes a secondary position to subjective reality, but the latter is not limited to the experience of a single person. In "The War Memorial Museum" Hyakken works to eliminate the sanctity of the subjective by taking the dream, the domain of the unconscious and perhaps the most subjective of all areas, and opening it up. Dreams are no longer the purview of an individual subject. In this dream structure, characters are allowed to infer the content of other people's dreams, and are given access to a heretofore impenetrable and unknowable area (Masugi, 104).

In "Port Arthur" and "The War Memorial Museum" Hyakken uses the cinema and the dream to unhinge the subjective experience from the individual mind, spreading it across a number of characters. In the stories discussed below, Hyakken takes his play with subjectivity in other directions through the modern literary devices of doubling and metamorphosis.

Doppelgangers and Alter-Egos

Susan Napier comments on the plenitude of doubles and alter-egos in Taishô fiction: "While the *shishôsetsu* writers plumbed into a textualized 'real life' to find an individualized persona, writers of the fantastic took the other route, working out their explorations of the self against such textual elements as dreams, ghosts, monsters, and *doppelgangers*" (97). These textual elements were

not however limited to strictly fantastic writers. The mere suggestion of a doppelganger was used to lend eeriness to an otherwise “normal” story.

In his 1923 ghost story, Satô Haruo confessed he was most frightened by tales of “alter-egos, somnambulism and doppelgangers” (180). Satô used a shadowy double in *Gloom in the Country* (*Den'en no yûutsu*, 1918) and insinuated the existence of a doppelganger in his pseudodetective tale “The Fingerprint” (Shimon, 1918).⁷ More overt use of doppelgangers can be found in Akutagawa’s “The Two Letters” (*Futatsu no tegami*, 1917), “The Shadow” (*Kage*, 1920), and his masterpiece, “Cogwheels” (*Haguruma*, 1927).

Sakai Hideyuki attributes the doppelgangers, hallucinations and optical illusions in *Port Arthur* to the influence of Satô and Akutagawa (1993, 130-32). Sakai claims that under the influence of these two writers Hyakken changed his style to include elements that were absent in *Realm of the Dead* (1993, 132). This earlier collection is not however devoid of doppelganger effects, although they may be less salient and conventional than those found in *Port Arthur*.

Unlike classics such as Dostoyevsky’s *The Double* (1846) in which the doppelganger is visually identified by the narrator, in the “The Companion” recognition hinges on a similarity in voice. As the narrator walks with this strange companion who claims to be his unborn brother, the man pleads for recognition, begging the narrator to address him as “brother.” The narrator is reluctant to comply, and in his verbal exchange with the companion their

identities begin to overlap.

"Ei-san, I want to hear father's voice. Is it like yours?"

"How the hell would I know?" I snapped back at him. And then it hit me like a bucket of cold water—his voice—it was the same as mine.

"That's it, that's the voice!" he said, almost choking on his tears. I wavered between dread and sorrow.

"Ei-san, please say it."

"Uhh," I said, filled with sadness at the thought of calling out to my unborn brother.

"Are you going to say it? You don't know how happy it would make me. Please, hurry up," he said.

As I listened to his pleas, I felt I was losing my ability to tell our voices apart. Where did his end and mine begin? My eyes overflowed with tears. (1: 36-37)

This doubling of identity, or perhaps in this case a singling of two identities, is made clearer in the conclusion of the story, when the narrator suddenly realizes his role in these events.

Listening to him speak, it seemed to me I had once spoken those same words. And the sound of that water, I'd heard it before, too. It was all so familiar to me now.

"If I leave now, who knows if we'll meet again," he said with tears in his voice.

I struggled, but the sounds stuck in my throat. I listened to him speak in my own voice, and as I heard those unforgettable words, I longed for that painful time in the past. I was calling out to him, reaching for my brother, but in that instant this companion of mine was gone. My body suddenly felt heavy and I couldn't walk another step. (1: 37)

Although this ending can be interpreted in a number of ways, and Hyakken is not completely clear about the relationship between these two men, the

doppelganger effect is evident. Filtered through the experience of déjà vu, the narrator is placing himself in the same location, but in his brother's position, at some time in the past. Events from long ago repeat themselves, only now the roles have reversed, but the voice remains the same.

Critics Sakai Hideyuki, Uchida Michio, Shôji Hajime and Masugi Hideki all discuss the influence of Sôseki's "Ten Nights of Dreams" on *Realm of the Dead* with special attention given to "The Third Night."²⁸ This third dream opens with a description of the young boy the narrator carries on his back, who also happens to be his son. This blind, bald child with strange prescient abilities guides the narrator to a dark grove where he reveals his true identity.

"Father, it was at the cedar's root, wasn't it?"

"Yes," I replied in spite of myself, "it was."

"I think in the fifth year of Bunka?"

Now that he mentioned it, it seemed to me that it had indeed been in the fifth year of Bunka.

"It was exactly one hundred years ago that you murdered me."

As soon as I heard these words, the realization burst upon me that I had killed a blind man, at the root of this cedar tree, on just so dark a night, in the fifth year of Bunka, one hundred years ago. And at that moment, when I knew that I had murdered, the child on my back became as heavy as a god of stone. (1969, 318)

The return of past events and the sudden heaviness accompanying the narrator's realization of his own past are elements that Hyakken may have taken from Sôseki, however the relationship between the characters and the specific nature of the past event is something Hyakken leaves the reader to imagine for himself.

Although Hyakken may have taken certain themes from “Ten Nights of Dreams,” in general his stories in *Realm of the Dead* are more open-ended and the characters seem to have less control over and less understanding of their own situations. Uchida Michio argues that the two realms of reality and dream are not as clearly delineated in Hyakken as they are in Sôseki (1997, 77-78).

These same elements of blindness, prescience and repeated experience are also evident Izumi Kyôka’s “The Tale of Three Who Were Blind” (*Sannin no mekura no hanashi*, 1912). Although there is no evidence that Hyakken read Kyôka, (and there is evidence that he read Sôseki, at the very least while editing his mentor’s collected works), Kyôka’s story demonstrates that such themes were not limited to Sôseki and were somewhat current in literature of the 1910s.²⁹

Kyôka’s main character, Sakagami, is stopped by three blind masseurs, one woman and two men, while traveling through Yotsuya en route to a secret meeting with his lover. One of the masseurs asks Sakagami where he is going, but this question proves unnecessary. Before Sakagami can answer, the masseur relates the tale of a tragic love affair, by which he reveals his knowledge of Sakagami’s destination, the details of his secret meeting, and even the intimate physical features of Sakagami’s lover. This tale is about the masseur and his two companions, but it bears an uncanny resemblance to Sakagami’s own situation. As readers we wonder if these are two different men with coincidental experience, or if it is a doubling of identity, a coexistence of past and present.

"Three years ago, on a different night indeed, but in this same November, at this same hour, this happened to me too."

"I was not then the blind man you see now."

He turned squarely toward Sakagami, but his head was still bowed.

"I was going to meet a woman as you are, and I was climbing this hill."

"But I passed only one blind man. That is the whole of the difference." (248)³⁰

The entire conversation from the past is repeated in the present between Sakagami and the blind man. The story ends with the conclusion of the masseur's tale, and Sakagami is left in the Yotsuya mist as the three make their way into the darkness. But what is left unsaid is whether or not the events of the past will play out once again in the future. The relationship between Sakagami and the masseur, and the unresolved ending in "The Tale of Three Who Were Blind" is closer in some ways to "The Companion" than is "Ten Nights of Dreams."

There is another implied doppelganger in the opening section of "The War Memorial Museum" when the lieutenant claims to have seen the narrator at Kudanzaka the previous day. If the narrator was at home all day, we are left to wonder whom it was the lieutenant spotted.³¹ Hyakken did however employ a more readily recognizable doppelganger device in his 1922 "The Reflection" (Eizô) which describes the narrator's nightly encounters with his own reflection outside the glass door to his bedroom.³² The face appears repeatedly, and as it

becomes bruised and discolored, so does that of the narrator, who tries desperately to find a means of escape. Afraid of his own reflection, the narrator avoids mirrors and glass, only to meet his doppelganger again at night. In the last scene, this "reflection" enters the room, and the narrator, frozen in fear, is unable to speak or escape as his double leans over him as if to say something.

Critic Rosemary Jackson comments that "frequently, the mirror is employed as a motif or device to introduce the double, or *Doppelganger* effect" (45). The fantastic literature that Jackson studies exhibits a fascination with "problems of vision and visibility" (43); the doppelganger or reflection is a product of a different space created by the mirror in which "notions of self undergo radical change" (87). The self in the glass is disturbing not only because it represents "the self transformed into another" but also because it "suggests the instability of the 'real' on this side of the looking-glass" as well (87-8).³³

The instability of reality and the mutability of the self are themes we have seen in Hyakken's short stories discussed above, and here in "The Reflection," he employs devices common to fantastic and modernist fiction, as well as German Romanticism to achieve his results. In addition to the domestic influence of writers such as Sôseki, Kyôka, Satô and Akutagawa, we can look to European literature, specifically German, as a source of inspiration for Hyakken.³⁴

Hyakken wrote his thesis on Hermann Sudermann's *Frau Sorge*, and read and taught Dostoyevsky, Bergson, Goethe, Auerbach and Hofmannsthal. In August

of 1919, he began work on a translation of E.T.A. Hoffmann's "The Yellow Vase" (1814).³⁵

Hyakken comments in his diary that before being approached for this translation project he had never read any Hoffmann, but after looking him up in a few literary histories, his interest was piqued.³⁶ Tzvetan Todorov, in his famous *The Fantastic*, emphasizes the predominance of vision as a theme in Hoffmann: "we are literally beset, in his oeuvre, by microscopes, opera-glasses, false or real eyes" (123). It is these "symbols of indirect, distorted, subverted vision" which create the link to the marvelous world in which Hoffmann plays with the "division of personality or doubling. . . dream and reality, mind and matter" (121).³⁷ We can see in Hoffmann, "in whose stories the supernatural double approaches its most developed form," a model for Hyakken's "The Reflection."³⁸

Kawamura Jirô, however, discounts Hoffmann as any substantial influence, since Hyakken's interest in Hoffmann emerged after the majority of the stories in *Realm of the Dead* were written (162), and also because Kawamura claims Hyakken's primary motivation for the translation was the paycheck it guaranteed (59).³⁹ However, in the case of *Port Arthur*, especially "The Reflection," we can look to Hoffmann, along with Akutagawa and Satô, as models for Hyakken.

Attempting to sort out literary influence is bound to be a tricky endeavor, and the sighting of the double in “The Reflection” seems equally as dependent upon the existence of glass and mirrors as upon the strange weather conditions which accompany its appearance, and on the temporal proximity to the narrator’s dreams.⁴⁰ Hyakken relies upon naturalistic surroundings to signal the entry into another realm, as seen in the opening passage.

The gales that had been blowing all afternoon suddenly died down around ten o’clock at night. Somewhere in the distance a dog howled with a humanlike cry. All else was silent. It felt like the desk I was leaning on, the cushion underneath me, the room and the very house itself were quietly, little by little, slipping to the bottom of some gaping hole. (1: 120)

The silence accompanying the dying down of the wind and rain signals the narrator that he will be visited by his reflection that evening. The meteorological conditions also serve to isolate him from the world around him.

The wind picked up a little while after I got home. The temperature dropped with the setting of the sun and the rain ceased. But even after the rain had abated, the wind continued to rage. And then, without my noticing, it stopped too. All was silent. There was not a sound to be heard anywhere. I couldn’t understand why it was so quiet. Not a single gate in the neighborhood opened, no child cried, no dog barked. The clock read exactly ten p.m. Everyone in the house was already asleep. I got into my bed and fell asleep too. I saw my face again that night. (1: 121-22)

This sighting also often comes after the narrator has awoken from a dream, but as readers we wonder if the narrator’s sense of reality can be trusted, or if the

events described are all part of the dream world.

Hyakken may be blending domestic and international influences in the creation of “The Reflection,” but this was a common technique in Taishō writing—Akutagawa is famous for peppering his stories with foreign references. In the next section we return to German literature, this time via Japanese folklore in Hyakken’s “Kudan” (1921). This transformational tale recrafts an Okayama legend to produce a story reminiscent of Franz Kafka’s 1915 *Metamorphosis*. Hyakken wrote a number of stories in which characters change their physical shape and shift from human to animal, and these can be seen as a variation on the mutable self of the doppelganger.

Metamorphosis and the Meaningless

In my prior discussion of folkloric elements in Hyakken, I mentioned “The Short Night,” “Envoy to China,” “Magnolia” and “Wisteria,” as stories in which women transform into animals, or take on animal characteristics. One possible interpretation is to see these women as permutations of folkloric archetypes.⁴¹ The transformational process is not, however, limited to women. Other examples include the small guest who is actually an ant in “Santō Kyōden,” the younger brother of the animal herbalist in “Jintōshi” who has the face of a horse, the narrator in “The Collapsing Vortex” (Ryūka, 1928) who grows fur in his throat and howls like an animal when he tries to speak, and last, the

policemen in "Girl Trouble" (Onna deiri, 1928) who melt into a black ooze. Of all these stories, however, the most famous character is the cow-man from "Kudan."

Reminiscent of other stories in *Realm of the Dead*, "Kudan" opens with a seemingly normal description of the natural surroundings, only to reveal that the narrator has been transformed into the cow-man of mythology and legend.⁴² The wetness of his body implies a recent exit from the womb, and as he slowly dries off he begins to get his bearings and remember his human existence. However he cannot figure out when his former life came to an end. Alone in this open field, he begins to ponder his new existence, which according to legend will last only three days. But even more frightening to him is the realization that before he dies he must relate a prophecy, and when crowds form on the horizon, the situation becomes somewhat more desperate.

The *kudan* is penned in by these masses who await his words, but as time passes they grow uneasy and every movement or lack of movement on his part is taken as a sign. In the end, the crowd is afraid of what he might say and decides maybe it is best not to hear the prophecy, and rather to kill the *kudan* before he speaks. This last suggestion is offered by the *kudan's* human son. Recognizing his son's voice, the *kudan* rises to see him and the crowd flees in fear. Although the narrator has been reborn in this strange "underwater like field" (1: 22), this other world is peopled with familiar faces from his human past, such as his son, friends, relatives, and former teachers and students. Again

we have a strange overlap of two worlds not meant to coexist; the world of the real intrudes upon the mythical realm of the *kudan*.

Kawamura Jirô, who dedicated a chapter to this story, designates it as a parable or fable in order to compare it with the legendary Minotaur.⁴³

Kawamura concludes that unlike its Greek counterpart, Hyakken's "Kudan" provides neither a powerful, awe-inspiring monster, nor a rich, allusive literary text. The *kudan* is not only a pathetic worldly creature, but worse, he is a fake. If indeed the narrator had been reborn as this unique being, then he would easily be able to fulfill the prophecy and tell the crowd what they want to hear (136). The *kudan*, who retains his human face, is ashamed of his wretched appearance and fearful of being recognized by someone in the crowd. Kawamura interprets this fear of recognition as based not in shame over his physical form, but fear of what will happen when the crowd finds out he is not the real McCoy (139).

Kawamura laments that "Kudan" fails to deliver on the father-son homicide theme found in Sôseki's "The Third Night" of "Ten Nights of Dreams." Kawamura asserts, "had the crowd followed through on the son's recommendation and killed the *kudan*, then any number of serious interpretations, such as patricide, a father and son motif, or a generational curse, could easily be attempted" (141). Similarly, one could say that "Kudan" fails to deliver the social critique of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. Both stories begin with the character already in his transformed state, and as Rosemary Jackson remarks,

these are transformations without cause, which are neither willed nor welcomed by the protagonist (160). There is also an element of the Oedipal conflict in both stories, Gregor's struggles against his father are reproduced in "Kudan," albeit on a limited scale, in the son's suggested patricide. However, the two stories diverge as Gregor loses his humanity and succumbs to blindness, muteness and eventual death. Hyakken's *kudan*, on the other hand, not only retains his human face, but his human consciousness, and escapes with his life having endured relatively little trauma.

Hyakken resists the heavy mythical overtones of the Minotaur, the fate driven coincidence of Sôseki, and the intense alienation of Kafka. This frustrated Takahashi Hideo, who decried the *kudan* as a monster which "has no ties to tradition, imparts no meaning, allows for no interpretation."⁴⁴ Kawamura, although he is in agreement with Takahashi, tempers his conclusions by stating that Hyakken was not purposefully aiming for "meaninglessness" but rather he sought out that which was meaningful only to himself, and therefore his texts do not allow for the intervention of others (145).

Ultimately it is beyond our power to know what Hyakken's intentions were in writing these stories. Whether or not he meant for them to represent a subjective realm incomprehensible to others, or to make a statement on ontology is a moot question, since he is no longer alive to answer it. (But even if he were able to do so, his answer would constitute only one interpretation among many.)

The text remains open to the reader. Kawamura and Takahashi, however, would deny the reader the power of interpretation, since the stories do not conform to the weighty models of antiquity. I find Kawamura's analysis to be just as subjective as he claims Hyakken to be, as seen in his comment that: "in the deep recesses of his heart, Hyakken is frightfully sensitive to the meaningless" (151). Whether or not this is true, it does not function as a means of analyzing the stories.

Yet Kawamura's criticisms are not completely unfounded. There are a number of stories in the *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur* collections which seem to lack a deeper meaning. The events which unfold are a mystery to the characters themselves, and since the stories lack a conclusive or explanatory framework, in the end, it is difficult if not impossible to make sense of what has happened. Hyakken's characters do not ruminate on their respective dilemmas, nor do they engage in the intellectualizing common to Akutagawa or Satô's narrators. The characters in these short stories seem to have no recourse to a stable, knowable reality and its world of reason, and are afforded no critical distance. Rather than explain, Hyakken "takes pains to present the situation as real," and hence the experience remains on the level of the visceral (Fujikawa, 125).

Hyakken's doppelgangers, for example, invoke none of the moral dilemmas of Poe or Dostoyevsky, and neither do they seriously comment on the

narrator's sanity or undermine his reliability as happens in Akutagawa's "The Two Letters." Akutagawa also makes very conscious use of the concept in a way Hyakken does not: Hyakken never uses the term, whereas Akutagawa cites it in the German "Doppelgaenger" in both "The Two Letters" and "Cogwheels," and demonstrates his knowledge of contemporary scholarship on the topic, even if he fabricates some of it.

Hyakken's characters are so accepting of their situations as to be strangely passive. The *kudan* is much more anxious about the prophecy than the fact that he's been transformed into a monster, and once the crowds have dispersed he stretches his forelegs, yawns and feels that maybe he will not die after all. These characters unquestioningly accept the circumstances and people they encounter, and Hyakken offers no solutions, resolutions or neat endings. He does not explain, rather the action takes its course and remains unresolved and fragmented.

The characterization of Hyakken's work as "meaningless," however, need not be a criticism. In other words, the meaning of stories such as "Kudan" can be found precisely in the lack of meaning, the rejection of traditional overtones and the interpretational void Hyakken presents to the reader. The reader's inability to make sense of the text parallels the crowd's unsuccessful attempts to attribute meaning to the *kudan's* behavior. The story serves as a metaphor for the interpretative process, but one which is short-circuited. The reader, like the

narrator, is at the mercy of the story. The physical paralysis which afflicts Hyakken's characters represents a critical or imaginative paralysis on the part of the reader.

In 1921, Morita Sôhei commented on Hyakken's abbreviated style and his tendency to leave important sections unclear (1986a, 101-102). This ambiguity is addressed by Tanemura Suehiro who imagines Hyakken's stories as fragments of some larger text which has since been lost. If the reader had access to this lost context, the stories would not appear so strange (Kawamura/Tanemura, 68-69). Waki Teruko similarly views Hyakken's characters and settings as stripped of their narrative fabric or *monogatari* (83). Hyakken makes reference to this narrative whole in the story "Fireworks."

There was another room a little further up. A stand had been placed dead center, and a book with old, tattered pages lay open on top. I glanced over at it, and she seemed to suggest that if I would only read it, somehow it would all make sense to me. I averted my gaze and hurried past. I'd been shaken to the core, and couldn't calm down. (1: 12)

We can imagine this old book as Waki's *monogatari* or Tanemura's lost text. Hyakken's character, however, runs from this narrative which rather than enlighten, serves only to frighten him. One could go so far as to say that Hyakken intentionally avoided assigning meaning to his stories so as to leave them fragmentary and unresolved, but not necessarily meaningless. There are any number of possible subtexts which would bring meaning to his stories. A

present day Japanese reader might opt for traditional folklore whereas one of Hyakken's contemporaries may have looked to Hoffmann and Poe.⁶⁵ The connection to folklore and theatre may be what inspired Itô Sei to call the works "Japanese," while Sasaki Kiichi envisioned Hyakken as part of a modernist trend in early Taishô. And finally, critics such as Hirayama, Sakai and Uchida Michio see the diaries as the ultimate subtext, and for them the stories provide insight to Hyakken's real life.

Notes to Chapter IV

¹ See Akutagawa's 1921 essay entitled "Meido" (1975, 15). He is referring to the following six stories published in *Shinshōsetsu*, January 1921, under the title "Realm of the Dead:" "Realm of the Dead," "Santō Kyōden," "Fireworks" (Hanabi), "Kudan," "The Companion" (Michizure) and "The Leopard" (Hyō).

² The Sōseki quotation is from the translation by Itō and Wilson (314), Satō Haruo is from Saitō (162), and Tanizaki from Fowler (478).

³ Kafka's story will be discussed later with reference to Hyakken's "Kudan."

⁴ Literary critic Horikiri Naoto mentions *Realm of the Dead* alongside Hagiwara Sakutarō's *Howling at the Moon* (Tsuki ni hoeru), Satō Haruo's *Gloom in the Country* (Den'en no yūtsu) and Tanizaki's "Longing for Mother."

⁵ Translations are by Edward Fowler.

⁶ Akiyama Satoko also discusses folklore in Hyakken (112).

⁷ See Hayao Kawai's chapters 2 and 6. The female servants in "Envoy to China" are revealed to be yellow-furred beasts, a dead wife is associated with a cat in "Magnolia" and a woman in "Wisteria" grows fur and is associated with a cow.

⁸ See Masugi (51) and Shōji (47, 75).

⁹ Awazu Norio provides examples of roads and pathways in "Fireworks," "Jintōshi" (1921), "The Echo" (Kodama, 1921), "The Lizard" (Tokage, 1921), "The Companion," "The Chinaman" (Shinajin, 1921), "The Short Night," "The Stone Floor" (Ishidatami, 1921) and "Realm of the Dead" (133).

¹⁰ See Hyakken's comments on the large number of *dote* in Okayama and his nostalgic attachment to them in his essay "The Embankment" (Dote, 1966) (10: 28-30). In regards to *Realm of the Dead* he says: "Embankments appear everywhere in my old work *Realm of the Dead*. Embankments are lonely and sad. Although I didn't intend it at the time, it is clear to me now that I used the image of the embankment to convey my youthful sensitivity" (10: 30).

¹¹ A number of Hyakken's works from *Realm of the Dead* were staged in local theatres. Hyakken's granddaughter, Uchida Mine, suggested this connection with kabuki. Personal communication Uchida Mine, August 1999.

¹² The story appeared under the latter title in *Tōa no hikari* in January 1917, and under the former title in *Shinshōsetsu*, January 1921, and in the collection *Realm of the Dead* in 1922. See Sakai (1993, 84).

¹³ Personal communication from Uchida Michio, October 1998.

¹⁴ Masugi argues that the dreams of "Realm of the Dead" and the screen of "Port Arthur" act a catalysts for the telling of the respective stories (120).

¹⁵ Miriam Silverberg notes that "by 1926 there were 1,056 movie theatres showing Japanese and Western films—one theatre for every 60,000 viewers" (1993, 124). See my chapter 2 for a discussion of the significance of the Russo-Japanese War.

¹⁶ See Harvey's chapter 16 for examples in Europe. See also my chapter 2.

¹⁷ As cited in High (25). The original is from Tanaka Jun'ichirō's *Nihon eiga hattatsu-shi*, Vol. 1, 57.

¹⁸ Translated as *Naomi* by Anthony Chambers.

¹⁹ Also see Chamber's introduction to his translation. He briefly discusses the Taishō aspects of the novel. Hyakken's "Port Arthur" originally appeared in the July, 1925 issue of the

women's journal *Josei* alongside the last installment of Tanizaki's story.

²⁰ Although experiments with sound started as early as 1902, the talkies did not take off until the 1930s (Anderson and Richie, 72-74).

²¹ The italics are my own.

²² For a brief history of the shrine see the Tsubouchi/Yoshida article and Masugi (99-100). For more detailed information, see *Yasukuni Jinja hyakunenshi*. The name of the annex, "Yūshūkan," is derived from a passage of the Xunzi titled "Encouragement to Learning." The Xunzi passage is as follows from the John Knoblock translation (137): "Accordingly, where the gentleman resides is sure to be a carefully chosen neighborhood, and when he travels, it is certain to be in the company of scholars." The *yūshū* is from the second half of the above phrase.

²³ Before World War II the shrine was often used to promote patriotic and nationalistic sentiments. After the war, the Japanese government was compelled to terminate all support for the shrine and it was converted to a private religious organization. The shrine has been the source of controversy as bills have been repeatedly presented advocating government support for the shrine, but they have all been defeated. In 1979, tensions flared when Prime Minister Ohira paid a private visit to the shrine where such "war criminals" as Tōjō Hideki were enshrined a few months prior. See *Kōdansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, 1st ed., s.v. "Yasukuni Jinja."

²⁴ The Tsubouchi/Yoshida article cited here is a translated version which appeared in *Japan Echo*. The original is in the journal *Ronza* (April 1999): 76-87.

²⁵ A photograph can be found in *Yasukuni Jinja hyakunenshi*, Vol. 3.

²⁶ The shrine is located in the Kudan district at the top of Kudanzaka, as approached from the east. The name of the district comes from the name of the hill, which dates back to 1709. Yasukuni dōri (street) divides the northern and southern parts of the Kudan district.

²⁷ Gerbert discusses doppelgänger imagery in "The Fingerprint" with reference to the "ambiguous double ontological status of the actor William Wilson" and to Satō's allusion to Edgar Allan Poe's 1839 "William Wilson" (1996, 7-8). However she does not mention the fact that N uses the narrator, Satō's, name whenever he has to identify himself (see pages 73 and 91 in the Tenny translation). This seems especially relevant since in "William Wilson," the narrator's assumed name of the title also happens to be the name of his double. Also see Gerbert (1997, 23) for a brief discussion of the influence of early European Expressionist film on Satō and his use of the supernatural double.

²⁸ Sakai argues that "The Companion," "Fireworks," "The Lizard," "The Echo" and "Seaweed" are all variations on "The Third Night" (1993, 97). Note that Sakai uses an earlier version of "The Companion" which can be found in the first volume of the Fukutake collected works. Also see Masugi's chapter 6, Shōji (69-85) and Uchida Michio (1997, 47-57, 77-78).

²⁹ For further discussion of Hyakken and Kyōka see Waki Teruko's "Monogatari no nai fūkei: Hyakken to Kyōka."

³⁰ Translations are by Edward Seidensticker.

³¹ This is somewhat reminiscent of a scene in Akutagawa's "The Two Letters" in which the protagonist spots his wife with his own doppelgänger walking around in Kanda, although she claims she was home all day (1962, 192).

³² Another type of doubling occurs in the story "The Dwarf" (Waijin, 1928) in which a miniature version of the narrator appears.

³³ Jackson, in this section, is referring to Leo Bersani's analysis in *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976).

³⁴ Although I cite Akutagawa and Satō as examples of domestic writing, their work

reflects an awareness of Western literature, here specifically the use of doubles, sleepwalkers and other such devices as found in Poe.

³⁵ See Kawamura (161).

³⁶ See *Hyakken's Diary*, entry for August 6, 1919 (3: 415).

³⁷ The illusion of a mirror in the climax of Poe's "William Wilson" is also relevant. Hyakken was compared to Poe and Hoffmann in the advertisement quoted in chapter 3, therefore we can expect that such allusions would not have gone unnoticed by his readers.

³⁸ The quotation is from Herdman (3) who is referring to Ralph Tymms' discussion of Hoffmann in *Doubles in Literary Psychology* (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1949).

³⁹ Kawamura questions the relevance of German literature for Hyakken's work. He finds Hyakken to be lacking in the quintessential "weightiness" of German literature (57)

⁴⁰ The weather conditions are used similarly in "The War Memorial Museum." Okaya Kôji speculates on the meaning of wind in Hyakken's stories (137). Also see Akiyama Satoko.

⁴¹ Fujikawa Yoshiyuki discusses the women as objects of fear, which Hyakken treats similarly to the animals in his stories (126-7).

⁴² The Sino-Japanese character for *kudan* is a combination of the characters for person (the nimben radical) and cow or *ushi*. A more standard meaning for the character is 'the usual; the said; the above-mentioned'.

⁴³ Akiyama Satoko mentions other works which are similar to "Kudan," among them a Persian story about a lion with a human face, and a second century tale by Apuleius entitled "The Golden Ass" (111-12).

⁴⁴ See Takahashi Hideo (189) and Kawamura (142).

⁴⁵ See chapter 3 for the advertisement from the 1935 issue of *Arabesuku* which mentions Hoffmann and Poe.

Chapter V
Following the Brush or the Boom?
Professor Hyakkien and the Modern *Zuihitsu*

Sorting the Literary from the Miscellany

After the failure of *Realm of the Dead*, Hyakken continued to write in the style of this debut volume, but also began crafting stories of a lighter, more humorous bent, an experiment which proved successful. In 1933, he made his mark in the literary world with *Hyakkien's Miscellany* (*Hyakkien zuihitsu*). The volume was praised by the well-known poet and writer, Murô Saisei, and effectively launched Hyakken's career.¹ But to a modern, Western reader the appeal of the work, be it literary or popular, is not immediately apparent.

Hyakkien's Miscellany is a collection of thirty-four short works which range in topic from childhood reminiscences to musings on airplanes, yo-yos and facial hair; memories of the narrator's first and last meeting with his mentor, the great novelist, Natsume Sôseki; and seemingly more fictional stories about loan sharks and a life of poverty. The reader is hard pressed to find a central theme or character to unify the collection. Some stories are written in first person, while others are in third. The narrator/protagonist is referred to by a variety of names including Uchida and Hyakken, as well as the (Fujita) Hyakkien of the title, but he is equally as often unnamed or assigned seemingly unrelated names. There is no consistency in length or tone. Many of the stories are short one-to-four page

essays or fragments, while others exceed fifty pages. The mood runs the gamut from the lighthearted and comic to the poignantly serious.

Faced with such a text, one is hard pressed to find a critical means for evaluating and analyzing it. Traditional methods that trace plot or recurring symbols, or that follow character development are ineffective. Perhaps the search for method itself is flawed; the imposition of any one system of analysis works against the scattered and hence open nature of the text. One solution would be to dismiss the collection as nonliterary and hence not worthy of analysis.

However, there are good reasons to take up the challenge of *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. Hyakken's early fame rests on this text, and it is far from an aberration in his oeuvre. He continued to write in this style, by one count producing thirty-two such volumes of miscellany.² His success in the 1930s also coincides with a resurgence of interest in this style of writing, and hence is of importance to literary history.

The challenges presented in *Hyakkien's Miscellany* occur on a number of levels, both in terms of the structural form of the work and its literary and social function. What would have drawn both reader and critic to this random selection of musings on mundane topics and seemingly plotless stories? How do we make sense of the range in theme, topic and tone of the selections? Is there any underlying order to them, some organizational glue, or was this merely a convenient way for Hyakken to republish as a book a number of works he had

submitted to various newspapers, journals and weeklies over the previous ten years? How are we as readers to engage with the text? Is the lack of structure meant to resist or encourage individual interpretations? Can we impose our own strategy by reading the selections out of order, or does this violate the text? Finally, what expectations should we have when approaching such a text? What are the implicit or explicit codes we can use to classify and understand it?³

Beyond these challenges arising out of the text itself are two larger issues: historical relevance and genre. There was a *zuihitsu* boom in the late 1920s and early 1930s, but to what degree was Hyakken engaged with it? Can the historical context account for the popularity of the work, or are we treading dangerous waters looking for a connection between history and literature? The historical relevance of the *zuihitsu* must also be taken up within a discussion of genre, an area famously rife with its own problems. The *zuihitsu* or miscellany is not only difficult to define, but a number of critics resist its application to *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. An additional problem with the *zuihitsu* is distinguishing premodern and modern uses of the term and finding the most relevant criteria for evaluating Hyakken's work and the genre.

I begin my investigation by looking at Hyakken's text itself, and attempt to answer the questions above through an examination of both historical context and genre. My analysis focuses on both internal questions of form and external questions of function, in other words, on both the intrinsic properties of the text,

and on those extrinsic roles assigned to it. I also look beyond the *zuihitsu* to other discursive trends of the period that shaped its place in modern literature.

Appeal, Organization and Rules of Engagement

Hyakkien's Miscellany, although popular with readers, was a hard sell with publishers. In an essay titled "*Hyakkien's Miscellany: The Untold Story*" (*Hyakkien zuihitsu gaiden*), Takeuchi Michinosuke, founder of the Mikasa publishing house, described the reluctance on the part of publishers to take on the financial risk of printing this collection of Hyakken's *zuihitsu*. Takeuchi convinced his brother-in-law to print the text, and to save on costs, Takeuchi set the type himself.⁴ The reluctance of other publishers proved to be unfounded, and Takeuchi's gamble paid off. Twenty days after publication Murô Saisei praised the work in the prominent daily, the *Tokyo Asahi Shinbun* (November 24, 1933).

Hyakkien's Miscellany is exceptional. Unlike popular literature where you are lucky to remember one page in a hundred, Uchida Hyakken stays with you right through page ninety-nine. I have much to learn from him.⁵

Murô favorably compares Hyakken with Terada Torahiko (aka Yoshimura Fuyuhiko), one of the leading *zuihitsu* writers of the day. In contrast to Terada's cold critical distance, Murô finds a "human warmth permeating the text" (152).⁶ This warmth derives from none other than Hyakken himself, who "bares all" for the reader (153). These comments provide insight on the function

and appeal of such a work in 1930s' Japan. The immediacy and intimacy that Murô praises in Hyakken's work is a touchstone of classic *zuihitsu* and one of the many appealing qualities of the genre—the chance to get close to the author.

Murô speaks from the side of the literati, who would also have been interested in those of Hyakken's stories that mention Natsume Sôseki and other contemporary writers.⁷ One of the most famous, "Frock Coat" (*Hurokku kôto*), takes place on the day Sôseki died. Despite the gravity of the situation and Hyakken's deep attachment to Sôseki, he treats the subject with a lighthearted humor. The narrator, who we assume to be Hyakken, spent the previous night at a vigil in Sôseki's house, as his mentor lay on the brink of death. Before leaving the following morning for a new student orientation at the Military Academy, he receives the doctor's assurance there will not be any sudden changes in Sôseki's condition. While climbing the podium at the orientation, he trips and falls on his behind in front of the students, and barely restrains himself from losing his composure.

In that instant my defenses gave way under the stress and pain of a sleepless night, I felt myself losing control, ready to break down in tears, but I got a hold of myself. When I got up I realized the strange black object rolling around by the students' feet was my hat. (1: 283-84)

The humor and humanity in *Hyakkien's Miscellany* lend the work an "intimate, accessible"⁸ quality that Chiba Kameo, the journalist and critic,

identified as appealing to the troubled reader of the late 1920s. Chiba links the popularity of the *zuihitsu* to the instability of the age itself. The institution of the *zuihitsu* responded to the needs of the community.⁹

In this modern world, breathing is an act of suffocation. The world around us is at an impasse. Everywhere—anxiety and unrest. Crushed by the weightiness of life itself, gasping for air, we walk in endless suffering. Isn't there some escape from this asphyxiation? We may turn to literature, but tortuous editorials and ponderous novels don't do the trick. Then there is the *zuihitsu*—a kaleidoscope, bursting with multicolored light. The phrasing is short. But the sense is deep. The author reveals himself with overwhelming closeness. It's alive. . . . The language shocks like the whack of a steel rod or the chill of a bucket of icy water. The reader is forced into new and unknown worlds. Even though the impressions may differ from person to person, there is no doubt that the *zuihitsu* will relax, comfort and set free the troubled mind.¹⁰

According to Chiba, *zuihitsu* acted as a salve for the anxieties of the age. These anxieties were not merely felt on the level of the “vague uneasiness,” which drove Akutagawa Ryūnosuke to commit suicide, but hit the nation as a harsh economic reality.¹¹

The Japanese economy vacillated between recovery and collapse throughout the 1920s, and the nation experienced depression conditions from 1927 through 1934. White-collar workers, although they enjoyed the consumer lifestyle of the 1920s, were also in a precarious position. Economic insecurity among the educated elite influenced screenplays such as Ozu's *I Graduated From College But* (*Daigaku wa deta keredo*) of 1929 (Silverberg 1993, 120-21), and in

fact many elite faced unemployment by the end of the decade. Blue-collar workers also suffered from low wages and rapidly rising unemployment (Yamamura, 307). The “sharp increase of industrial output” that characterized the Taishô period took its toll on the factory worker, and the accompanying “agricultural stagnation” led to a decline in the living standards of farmers as well (Yamamura, 302-5).¹² The nation felt the crush of the modern world, exacerbated by increasing militarism and censorship, urban unrest, population increase and shifting demographics.

If the public sought to take their mind off their troubles, *Hyakkien's Miscellany* would have certainly fit the bill. There are a number of stories in the collection featuring Professor Fujita Hyakkien, a bumbling German professor whose mishaps are made light of in the text.¹³ The dialogue is amusing and the jokes eccentric. The text has a certain entertainment value not found in the ponderous novels Chiba mentions.¹⁴

An example from the “The Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien” (Hyakkien sensei genkôroku, 1928) illustrates the humor typical of the collection. In this story, the Professor is asked to make a speech at the wedding of a former student. He soon turns the topic to the practice of cannibalism. Since women of olden times were of low social status, they were not allowed to indulge in human sacrifice, and over the generations forgot the taste of human flesh. By extension their male offspring also forgot the taste, and this, Hyakkien explains,

is how we have arrived at our civilized society today. Thanks to women like the bride, he says, “as I stand here today I can proudly say I don’t have the urge to eat any of you” (1: 316).

Hyakken also employs a light touch when discussing poverty, a topic painfully close to home for many readers of the time. “Hyakkien’s New Look” (Hyakkien shinsô, 1930), the first of Hyakken’s signature “poverty stories” (*binbô mono*), describes the Professor’s humorous attempts to replace his threadbare coat and old hat without spending any money. He convinces a friend who is hospitalized to give him his hat, since he will not be needing one in the hospital, and later proudly returns home with a hand-me-down coat. The Professor sports this oversized, red plaid jacket, while his wife tries not to tell him how ridiculous he looks in something better suited to the race track than the classroom. In one scene the text turns quasi-philosophical as the Professor engages in a discussion on the conceptual and hence unattainable nature of money. By comparing it to other such abstract concepts as time, he arrives at the Western saying “time is money,”¹⁵ and feels justified spending that which he does not have (1: 258).

One would imagine that this lighthearted portrait of a financially strapped couple would have struck a chord with the reader of 1930s’ depression era Japan. The story is datable by the newspaper mention of events in Manchuria and Korea, and hits closer to home when the wife complains that even though

the paper mentions rents are going down, she cannot get the landlord to fix the leaky roof. The title of the last work in the Professor Hyakkien series, “Bankrupt Serenity” (*Mukô saisha mukô shin*) is a parody of the *Mencius*: “If the people have not a certain livelihood, they have not a fixed heart,”¹⁶ which Hyakken reworked to read: “If they have not steady debt, they have not a fixed heart.” The main character dreads payday because it only reminds him of his increasing debt. Not only is there something reassuring in the constancy of his debt, but he decides his personality is better suited to borrowing money than working for it.

In addition to the more emplotted works is a series of looser, essay-style pieces on a variety of topics. One such story, “Professor Hyakkien’s Daydreams” (*Hyakkien sensei gensôroku*) comments on airplanes, radio broadcasts and telephones, topics of interest to the reader of 1930.¹⁷ The Professor remarks that radio broadcasts of sporting events are really meant for the blind, and that we should not think of the radio as just a popular medium. Professor Hyakkien emphasizes the artistry of a good announcer, who recreates the visual with his voice, capitalizes on his audience’s expectations and alters his language to draw them in (1: 218).

This wide ranging collection of thirty-four stories is divided into three sections: “twenty-two short verses” (*tanshō nijūnihen*), “a poor man’s five vegetable tempura” (*binbō goshikiage*) and “seven herb porridge” (*nanakusa zōsui*).¹⁸ The first twenty-two are indeed short, but length is the only overriding

factor. The next five do all share the theme of poverty, be it comic or serious, but the last seven do not seem to share much at all. These titles, albeit creative, are an insufficient means of providing order. Other possibilities for organizing the stories would be to group the Professor Hyakkien works together, but that only accounts for six of the thirty-four. Similar attempts could be made based on tone, topic, narrative voice, chronology or original publication venue, but the nature of the collection is such that it is scattered and heterogeneous. Rather than attempt to find meaning within the work itself, it may be more fruitful to examine its connection to the historical period.

Historical Relevance: The Taishô-Shôwa Zuihitsu Boom

In 1926, Chiba Kameo proclaimed, "Now is indeed the age of the *zuihitsu*."¹⁹ In the years after the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923, literary publications such as *Bungei shunjû* began running a *zuihitsu* column, and in 1923 an entire journal was named after and dedicated to the genre. Although this journal, *Zuihitsu*, was short-lived, *Bungei shunjû* went on to become a force in the *zuihitsu* world (Yoshida 1980, 107). This was not an isolated phenomenon; soon other journals were featuring similar material (Wada, 285).²⁰ Critics have identified two periods of *zuihitsu* activity in the modern era, one in late Taishô (1923-1926) and another in early Shôwa (mid-1930s).²¹ Hyakken's fame as a *zuihitsu* writer is tied to the latter boom, namely through the above mentioned

collection of 1933 and its sequel of 1934, *Hyakkien's Miscellany Continued* (Zoku Hyakkien zuihitsu).

Although *zuihitsu* are commonly associated with the premodern period, they continued to be written in Meiji. Chiba Kameo reminisces in his essay "On Zuihitsu" (Zuihitsu ni tsuite) about reading *zuihitsu* in the literary journal *Bungakukai* in the 1890s.²² Impressionable youth like Chiba were moved by the romantic essays of Kitamura Tôkoku, Baba Kochô, Ueda Bin and Shimazaki Tôson. Chiba claims that the genre died out around 1902, but in Taishô "*zuihitsu* fever once again took hold" (289). The trend not only increased in scope, but the *zuihitsu* was established as an independent modern literary genre (289).

Chiba's impressions are confirmed in Yoshida Seiichi's comprehensive *The World of Zuihitsu* (Zuihitsu no sekai), which surveys *zuihitsu* composition from premodern through modern times.²³ The *zuihitsu* of late Taishô-early Shôwa competed with the novel for readers and boasted well-known authors. Yoshida points out that most writers who came of age during this era had a volume or two of *zuihitsu* in their oeuvre (1980, 96). A look at the list of contributors to the journal *Zuihitsu* confirms the depth and breadth of the phenomenon: Tokuda Shûsei, Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Nakamura Murao, Yamamoto Yûzô, Chikamatsu Shûkô, Toyoshima Yoshio, Yoshii Isamu, Sasaki Mosaku, Kikuchi Kan, Satô Haruo, Izumi Kyôka, Horiguchi Daigaku, Uno Kôji, Kume Masao, Hirotsu Kazuo, Kasai Zenzô, Kubota Mantarô and Satomi Ton

(Wada, 283). For Yoshida, early Shōwa was the “age of the *zuihitsu*,” a period of *zuihitsu* ascendancy he claims is unparalleled in all of Japanese history (Yoshida 1980, 106).

Why, we could ask, did the *zuihitsu* rise to popularity in the mid-1920s? Yoshida attributes it to a confluence of forces. Literature broadened its appeal, and the rise of journalism opened avenues for writing and publishing. There were more opportunities for nonspecialists to write and more demand for light reading on various societal problems. The mass communication industry also produced easy to read essays on a variety of topics of interest to the common man (Yoshida 1980, 106). World War I played an important role in press expansion,²⁴ but as Wada Toshio points out, Taishō democracy was responsible for the increased freedom of speech and literacy rates. Along similar lines, Takada Mizuho argues that the literary and societal emphasis on the individual and the private cultivated the development of the modern *zuihitsu* (120-21). The readily penned *zuihitsu* was a source of quick cash for writers,²⁵ in other words, it paid better than fiction. It was also a venue for those authors excluded from the pages of both the doctrinaire proletarian journals and the experimental, modernist publications of the mid-1920s (Wada, 278).

The anxiety and distress Chiba described in the quotation above was echoed in intellectual circles, but it was generated by the loss of intellectual, rather than economic status. Intellectuals felt threatened in the early to mid-

1920s by the growing proletarian movement; however, the suppression and eventual destruction of the movement by the government in the 1930s, was far from welcome. With the loss of the proletarian movement came the loss of intellectuals ground (Wada 287). Ever increasing censorship made it impossible for writers to openly criticize or discuss sensitive social or political problems, and hence many took cover in the *zuihitsu*. In this way, the *zuihitsu* not only responded to the needs of the intellectual community, but helped “define what [was] possible and . . . specify the appropriate means for meeting an expressive need” (Bruss, 5).

The critic Miki Kiyoshi, however, worried that the rise of the *zuihitsu* was indicative of the diluting of intellectual thought itself. Circumstances led writers to seek out the *zuihitsu*, but the means negatively affected the message. Thought itself had become scattered.²⁶ To come to a better understanding of the relationship between form and content we must turn to the genre itself and its murky definition.

Defining the Undefinable: Zuihitsu as Antigenre

The *zuihitsu* is most commonly associated with premodern Japanese classics from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,²⁷ such as *Essays in Idleness* (Tsurezuregusa, ca. 1330), but the term is of Chinese origin, dating back to the *sui-pi* of the Sung period literatus, Hung Mai.²⁸ The term *zuihitsu* first appears in

Japanese dictionaries in the fifteenth century, but the writing is not limited to the medieval period. The Edo period (1600-1868) represents the major age for *zuihitsu* composition, and there are over 5,000 extant *zuihitsu* from these years. *Zuihitsu* were faddish in the Bunka-Bunsei period (1804-1830), competing with *gesaku* or “playful writing” for an author’s time. Unlike the diary (*nikki*) and tales (*setsuwa*), which were mapped out as genres in the nineteenth century after western models, the *zuihitsu* was established much earlier.²⁹

Although the *zuihitsu* was mapped out as a genre, its definition remains murky. An attempt to grasp the essential features of the genre through a standard dictionary definition proves to be elusive. Consider the following from *Kôjien*: “Writing in which observations, experiences, impressions and the like are left to the brush and are taken down in a variety of ways.”³⁰ (“Left to the brush” is a literal translation of the Sino-Japanese characters for *zuihitsu*) This definition is very unfulfilling in that it fails to inform whether *zuihitsu* are prose or poetry, fiction or nonfiction, long or short, comic or serious.

Linda Chance, in her recent work *Formless in Form: Kenkô, Tsurezuregusa, and the Rhetoric of Japanese Fragmentary Prose*, vocalizes the problem when she describes the *zuihitsu* as the “quintessential nongenre” (35); “as a critical term *zuihitsu* has a power beyond its amorphousness, for to label a work thus is to put it outside the customary boundaries of narrativity, persona, fictivity, meter and countless other limiting constructs” (27). Yoshida Seiichi also emphasizes this

“catch-all” nature, when he admits that the label is applied to writings which fail to fit well into any other genre or category (1980, 7). Hasegawa Izumi, although he attempts to delimit the *zuihitsu* through comparisons with the novel, drama and poetry, leaves the reader with an equally vague description of *zuihitsu* as a prose narrative (1965, 22-23).³¹

Despite its ambiguous nature, attempts have been made to define the undefinable, and any reading of *zuihitsu* criticism reveals certain underlying beliefs about the genre. Given the scarcity of scholarship on modern *zuihitsu*, any definition is bound to rely heavily on premodern sources. Although there are most certainly differences between modern and premodern *zuihitsu*—circumstances of publication, language, religious influence, social status of the author, and historical relevance—they share many of the same problems and encourage similar expectations on the part of the reader. Here I discuss those aspects of *zuihitsu* writing that are most germane to the subsequent discussion of Hyakken, namely form and fictionality.

The *zuihitsu* is formless by nature. Traditionally this fragmentation was attributed to the “varied and rich” nature of the materials themselves (Chance, 31).³² This is problematic because it places responsibility not with the author, but with the writing utensil or the subject matter itself. However, as Linda Chance points out, if indeed *zuihitsu* are fragmentary, this rises out of the author’s resistance to the available structuring frameworks. Even if the structure is not

obvious, it must be seen as resulting from authorial choice rather than springing from subject matter.

In addition to the lack of form, *zuihitsu* are assumed to “contain no fiction” (Chance, 32). Chance points out the shakiness of this supposition, for “such claims can never be more than educated guesses” (32). Chance’s skepticism aside, the question of fictionality is one of the central issues at stake in *zuihitsu*, and a point on which critics are willing to give very little.³³ One of the most commonly held assumptions about premodern *zuihitsu* is that, “*zuihitsu* is meant to signify the natural or unmediated writer, released from convention and presented without fiction.”³⁴ Yoshida admits that although miscellany are not completely devoid of fiction, the author’s presence is much more direct, or raw, (perhaps unmediated) than in other genres, therefore eliminating the need for any conscious authorial pose (1980, 9). This contention is further strengthened by his conclusion that the value of the work is inextricably tied to the reader’s assessment of the author as a person (1980, 9). Hasegawa also defines the *zuihitsu* as “a literary genre that manifests the self” (1965, 77). Compared to the novel and drama, which incorporate fictional material, the *zuihitsu*, because it is based on raw experience, requires that more attention be given to the construction of the author’s experience and thought (1965, 80).

The question remains of how the *zuihitsu* was defined in 1933 when Hyakken published his first collection of miscellany. Was it based on a

premodern conception, or were there more contemporary forces shaping it? It is not safe to assume the genre remained static or invariable over the centuries. For not only can genre expectations change over time, but works themselves can change genre as they “pass through different systems of expectation” (Lejeune, 143). Here we must investigate the “systems of expectation” relevant to the modern era.

In addition to asking what the *zuihitsu* meant in the modern era, we should also ask what the *zuihitsu* meant to Uchida Hyakken. Here I do not mean to impose authorial intention upon the text, for interpretation will always remain open and contingent upon a variety of factors such as consumer, producer and era. However, it is worth noting that in Hyakken’s remarks we find a similar murkiness regarding the definition of the term *zuihitsu*. The following quotation is from an essay written in memory of Terada Torahiko.

I can’t define the word *zuihitsu*, nor do I have a clear grasp of the limitations of the term . . . Recently I titled my collection *Hyakkien zuihitsu* and have since read a number of reviews comparing myself and Terada on the basis of our *zuihitsu*. I can’t agree with such a comparison, and I think Terada would also be somewhat put off. I randomly hit upon my title because I liked the look and sound of the words. There was nothing deliberate in my use of the term *zuihitsu*. I never once thought in exclusionary terms about what was and wasn’t a *zuihitsu*. (2: 323)³⁵

A certain degree of skepticism is in order when gauging the validity of Hyakken’s self-proclaimed ignorance of *zuihitsu* parameters. By the time this

essay appeared in 1936, Hyakken would have been no stranger to the term, nor would he have been at a loss for examples of *zuihitsu* writing. His own work had been published in *zuihitsu* columns and the essay itself is dedicated to one of the great *zuihitsu* writers of the day. His reluctance to admit having used a guiding literary principle when writing his work, or to accept the limits of such a term when applied to his writing, is in some ways curious given the very open-endedness of the genre.

Despite the unsatisfyingly vague nature of the *zuihitsu* and Hyakken's rejection of the term, there is still value in trying to read *Hyakkien's Miscellany* as *zuihitsu*. It is one tool which can open the text to interpretation in a way that will not devalue the writing. Genre can also provide a window onto reader expectations and facilitate discussion of the ways in which *Hyakkien's Miscellany* functioned in the discursive system of the modern period. Elizabeth Bruss acknowledged the drawbacks and advantages of genre when she argued: "The genre does not tell us the style or construction of a text as much as how we should expect to 'take' that style or mode of construction—what force it should have for us" (4). If we can overlook the deficiencies of *zuihitsu* as a critical term, we can apply it with some positive effect and come to some understanding of the force it had in the early twentieth century.

Applying the Zuihitsu to the Miscellany

If we can accept the second term in the title of *Hyakkien's Miscellany* as an indicator of genre, an act which requires us to ignore the dictates of the author, then we can begin to apply the term to the text. If indeed *zuihitsu* are "outside the customary boundaries of narrativity, persona, fictivity, meter and countless other limiting constructs" (Chance, 27), then as reader we should not be disturbed by the inconsistencies or shifts in narrative voice, tone, length and topic which permeate the collection. Released from the need to find a common thread to unite the work, we can find comfort in the randomness and segmented nature of the text.

As mentioned earlier, *Hyakkien's Miscellany* is difficult to categorize or unify under any one theme, topic, or mode of writing. However, as demonstrated in the previous definition section, this resistance to structure and organization is a feature of classic *zuihitsu*. *Essays in Idleness*, the representative premodern *zuihitsu*, presents variety in terms of language, style, topic and the philosophical outlook of the 243 sections.³⁶ *The Pillow Book* of Sei Shônagon is a similarly fragmented text composed of "random reminiscences," "opinions, comments, imaginative sketches" and "lists" (McCullough, 157).³⁷

Many modern *zuihitsu* are scattered and fragmented, but perhaps not in the same way or to the same degree as their premodern counterparts. The aesthetic concerns of impermanence that underlie the random structure of *Essays*

*in Idleness*³⁸ were not necessarily relevant to the writer of the 1920s or 1930s. The world of *Essays in Idleness* was one of civil war and Buddhist beliefs that the world had entered a necessary but evil and degenerate era. By comparison, the Taishô period was stable, but in those times of modern instability, the *zuihitsu* did respond to and shape the nature of the discourse. It is noteworthy that the first issue of the journal *Zuihitsu* was filled primarily with contributors' memories of the Great Kantô earthquake, an event which is estimated to have killed over 100,000 people and destroyed or seriously damaged three-quarters of the buildings in the city (Seidensticker, 4-5).³⁹

Before returning to *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, it is useful to take a brief look at other modern *zuihitsu*. Terada Torahiko's 1927 "Memoranda" (Bibôroku) can readily be described with Konishi Jin'ichi's term for premodern works, namely, as "aggregates of unordered essays of no particular length" (3: 497). The title of the work itself implies a random, fragmentary, incomplete, perhaps hastily written text of no particular import. It is comprised of twelve sections or sketches on topics such as "Summer" (natsu), "Sunflower" (himawari), "Akutagawa Ryûnosuke," and "Death of the Cat" (neko no shi). It is difficult to imagine publishing a collection of notes and memos as a literary work, and in fact, Terada's "Memoranda" are more than grocery lists and post-its.

A work which better fits the memo model is Mushanokôji Saneatsu's "Fragmentary Words" (Danpengo) from *Bungei shunjû's zuihitsu* column of April

1927. The work is comprised of comments and reflections by the author on different types of people and human relationships.

It's a good thing to have friends to whom you can speak freely without being misunderstood.

I have several male friends like this, but only one female friend.

Sometimes I think I'd like to have five or six such male and female friends. Maybe I'm too selfish.

*

Is there anyone in this world who does not have some secret? Humans are not able to completely reveal themselves.

A person without pretense is an unhappy person.

*

A sense of decorum is called for when dealing with those uncomfortable expressing true feelings.

One feels lonely if there is no one to speak openly with, but by the same token, to be found lacking in decorum is not good either. (23)

Mushanokôji's snippets are reminiscent in tone and content of those sections of *Essays in Idleness* that comment on the nature of man and enumerate the characteristics of good and bad friends:⁴⁰ "One of course wants a man to be excellent in appearance and to bear himself well, but the man who is easy to listen to, speaks with charm and never talks too much—that is the sort of person of whose company I never tire" (Carter, 393). Much like Kenkô before him, Mushanokôji acts as arbiter of social convention.

This pattern of grouping essays, sketches, comments, aphorisms or even longer emplotted or semi-plotted works under a larger heading is common in *zuihitsu*. A well-known work which fits this pattern and appeared in the same

zuihitsu column as Mushanokôji's is Akutagawa Ryûnosuke's "Literary, All Too Literary" (*Bungeiteki na, amari ni bungeiteki na*, 1927).⁴¹ Seiji Lippit describes this as a "collection of fragmentary comments on literature" but stops short of identifying it as a *zuihitsu* (46). It is interesting that the essay's connection to the *zuihitsu* column of *Bungei shunjû* has been essentially erased; literary history has extracted it from the context of *zuihitsu* and inserted it into the debates on modern literature.⁴²

Another of Akutagawa's late works that fits the *zuihitsu* model is "The Words of a Petty Man" (*Shuju no kotoba*, 1923-25).⁴³ Lippit describes it as "an aphoristic work. . . composed of titled fragments," and observes that this "aphoristic fragmentation is in fact a prominent feature of a number of Akutagawa's late writings" (36). Instead of contextualizing these works within the *zuihitsu* resurgence, Lippit attributes their structure to Akutagawa's loss of faith in the power of the novel, or literature in general to "organize a coherent articulation of subjectivity" (46). But is it not also possible to see Akutagawa's late works as a successful experiment with literary form rather than a failed attempt at "coherent articulation"? And would we not benefit from examining them as *zuihitsu*?⁴⁴

Lippit's term "titled fragments" is an apt way to describe many of the selections in the first part of *Hyakkien's Miscellany* as well. A sampling of titles provides a sense of the range in content: "Amber," "Seeing Someone Off at the

Train Station," "Cholera," "First Class Car," "The Dinner Party," "God of the Wind," "Beards," "The Launching Ceremony," "A Magic Carpet," "Deep Sea Fishing" and "Napping."⁴⁵ Given the fact that Hyakken's "titled fragments" originally appeared individually in journals, weeklies and newspapers, we can assume that he envisioned them as separate units.⁴⁶ But they do not make much sense beyond providing insight on the likes and dislikes of the narrator, and many cannot be considered narrative wholes. It would make more sense to relegate the individual titles to section headings and collapse the dividing lines between them, in other words, to read *Hyakkien's Miscellany* as an *Essays in Idleness* or a *Pillow Book*.⁴⁷ If these "short verses" were subsumed within a larger framework, we would not necessarily expect them to be discreet, fully formed units. Such a premodern reading strategy would better suit the text and account for the fragmentary nature of the individual selections.

One story which forces the reader to adopt this strategy is "The Rambling Brush of Owl Woods" (*Kyôrin manpitsu*). The story is divided into eight segments ranging in length from two lines to five pages. The narrative shifts from a dream sequence to random snatches of conversation, to unrelated scenes of delivery trucks and subway riders. Following is a sample:

Four

The Mitsukoshi delivery cart was stopped outside. One of the delivery men opened the door in the back and took out a large

package. The other looked into the distance as though he were still driving the cart. Something didn't seem quite right to him. When the cart started up again, it was lighter than before, which must have seemed strange to the horse.

Five

Being shy, Genkichi wouldn't sing in front of others. While making the rounds on his bicycle at night, he passed a bathhouse on the outskirts of town. Since the road was dark and deserted, he burst into song. Just then three laborers sitting atop a log in the darkness of a workers shack called out to women entering and leaving the public bath, scaring Genkichi who flipped his bicycle and hurt himself.

Six

"I may lie but not like that," he said. He wasn't embarrassed to stretch the truth when necessary. (1: 221)

The reader is not only hard pressed to find some common thread among these three entries, but to contextualize number six at all. Akutagawa was known for his aphorisms, but even at their simplest, they imply more meaning than is found in the last entry quoted above. It is as if Hyakken took segments of longer works and cut and paste them together, but perhaps this is the essence of the *manpitsu* or "rambling brush." This term, which is used interchangeably with *zuihitsu*, allows for the author to "write things down as they come to him."⁴⁸ Although this is an apt description of the majority of the sections, the last part is closer to a narrative whole.

In this segment (eight), the narrator, a Mr. Uchida, is on his way to pay his

respects at the home of a former teacher from his high school days in Okayama. Uchida had been out of town when the teacher passed away and was feeling guilty about not having kept better correspondence. The five page story provides a brief background on his friend and describes Uchida's trip to meet with a woman he assumes to be his friend's widow. Uchida leaves after an uncomfortable visit and regrets not having come earlier. Although his intentions were honorable, by delaying the visit, he succeeded only in reminding the widow of her husband's death and absence.

A line in the conclusion is rather curious: "I wanted to write more of my memories of Okayama, but I don't feel like writing any longer" (1: 225). The writer of this text is speaking out to the reader, but who exactly is this and what is his relationship to the characters in the preceding seven sections? The seemingly unrelated segments throw off any sense of a unified narrative, as seen in the quoted sections above. But if pressed to find a means to unify the text, we could rely on a reading strategy applied to premodern *zuihitsu*, such as *Essays in Idleness*. In other words, we could use the author as a means to bring structure to this "scattered text" (Chance, 35).⁴⁹ There are various clues in the text that the stories are about the author Uchida Hyakken, for example, references to a Mr. Uchida and to literary works we know were written by Hyakken. It would be possible to attribute the thoughts, memories and opinions to the real-life author, and to see this author reflected in his characters.

Although this strategy runs counter to contemporary Western interpretative methods, it was a favored reading for the period under discussion, and continues to be used today. When examining the discursive system of 1920s and 1930s Japan, we cannot assume as Michel Foucault did that: "Everyone knows that, in a novel narrated in the first person, neither the first-person pronoun nor the present indicative refers exactly either to the writer or to the moment in which he writes, but rather to an alter ego whose distance from the author varies, often changing in the course of the work" (112). Foucault articulates the biases and assumptions held by Western readers who need to distinguish author from subject. But we must resist such an interpretation in order to look into this very question of authorial distance and the tendency to associate author, narrator and narrated in both first and third person texts.

Professor Hyakkien and Narratives of the Self

One would not have to look far to find Uchida Hyakken in *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. He appears in a variety of guises, for the reader inclined toward a biographical interpretation. The narrator/protagonist is identified as Uchida, as Hyakken, as Fujita Hyakkien and as Aochi Toyojirô, one of Hyakken's pen names. This narrator/protagonist also describes himself as a German professor at the Military Academy, and as a writer, mentioning the titles of stories Hyakken himself published. He talks about other events closely associated with

Hyakken, such as meetings with Sōseki and with loan sharks. This narrator/protagonist matches a description of the author, and on one level, Hyakken seems to be encouraging the reader to take his own life as the subtext or pretext for reading the miscellany.

Critical evaluation of *Hyakkien's Miscellany* and of *zuihitsu* in general would also support the use of a biographical subtext. As mentioned earlier, Murō Saisei praised the self-revelation in *Hyakkien's Miscellany* as lending a “human warmth” to the text. Part of the appeal for Murō was the fact that he could make the connection between the author’s name on the cover and the voice speaking out of the text. This is a standard feature of autobiographical texts (Lejeune, 13). The desire to read in an autobiographical fashion is not in and of itself that remarkable, given its predominance in Japanese literature, but the degree of intimacy expected of the *zuihitsu* is extreme. It is not simply that we can hear the author speaking, but that we can see and smell him in all his glory and ugliness.

Yoshida Seiichi explains that “more than any other genre, the smell of the writer’s bare skin and his way of thinking appear raw and unprocessed” (1980, 9). Hasegawa uses similar language when he refers to the “author’s naked body,” and to the subject matter which is “reflected in a raw state” (1965, 80). The emphasis on nakedness and rawness, specifically the term *nama*, is also found in descriptions of modern *zuihitsu*. Earlier I quoted Chiba stating “the

author reveals himself with overwhelming closeness.” A more literal translation would be “The author is naked, which leads to an overwhelming intimacy” (Wada, 187). Chiba also talks about “stripping oneself bare” in “On Zuihitsu” (1991b, 288), and Yoshida comments on the “flesh and blood of the self” in Akutagawa’s “Words of a Petty Man” (1970, 37). These physical metaphors are also used to describe the effects the *zuihitsu* has upon its readers. Chiba compares the *zuihitsu* to “the chill of a bucket of icy water,” imagery which resurfaces in Nakaya Ukichirō’s recollections on the experience of reading Terada Torahiko, which he described as akin to drinking cold water on a day when dusk sticks to sweaty, hot skin (425).

This emphasis on intimacy and unmediated self-revelation, although expected to an extreme degree in the *zuihitsu*, is not unique to *zuihitsu*. In fact, the locus classicus for this discourse in the late Taishō-early Shōwa period would be the I-novel. When examining the systems of expectation relevant to the modern *zuihitsu*, the semi-confessional, semi-autobiographical narratives of the I-novel may provide insight on contemporary forces shaping the construction and consumption of the *zuihitsu*. It is not uncommon for genres to share textual and narrative features, and we can envision the *zuihitsu* and I-novel in a state of mutual adjustment. Rather than attempt to discern the flow of the influence, or solve the proverbial chicken-and-egg problem, it is more productive to acknowledge the shared features and to distinguish the two genres in term of

function and form.⁵⁰ I begin with a description of the I-novel discourse.

Adherents of the I-novel valued the artful recounting of personal experience, which they saw as the only viable means through which to express truth. The ability of the reader to place his trust in the story lay in the immediacy and verifiability of the author's experience. In 1924, Nakamura Muraō commented on authorial presence in the *shinkyō shōsetsu* or "state-of-mind novel," a type of I-novel: "The author appears directly in the state-of-mind novel. The author speaks directly in the work, or rather, the novel appears to present the author's direct speech. . . . The main focus is not on what is written but rather on the person who wrote it."⁵¹ Kume Masao, an outspoken proponent of the I-novel stated unequivocally in 1925 "that the basis of all art lies in the self [*watakushi*]. It follows that the form that expresses this 'self' directly and frankly, without pretense and disguise, that is to say, the I-novel, should become the main path, the basis and essence of the art of prose" (Suzuki, 51).

Since interest in the author often took precedence over the narrated events, I-novels easily degenerated into plotless chronicles of daily life. I-novelist, Chikamatsu Shūkō, in defending his choice of subject and his mode of writing, explains this link between content and form—a link we can also see in the *zuihitsu*.

My writings—at least those collected in this volume—contain no plot or staging. Critics frequently declare this lack to be the great defect of my work. But plot has its drawbacks: it forces the author

to embellish the facts of his own life. True, an author cannot but be satisfied when his imaginative technique has succeeded in pleasing his audience, but I am of the school that frowns on letting plot or fabrication needlessly violate the truth of lived experience. . . . I have swallowed my shame and presented before the public eye these frivolous incidents in my life out of a respect for historical truth.³²

The emphasis Shûkô places on truth, or as he states "historical truth" is not echoed in *zuihitsu* criticism. But what exactly is the historical truth in an I-novel, if not the "personal, individual, intimate truth of the author" (Lejeune, 27)? Such a "truth," if based in personal experience, can only be subjective, and would be better labeled autobiographical truth. If the truth of the I-novel lies more in the truth of a subjective lived experience, then we are not so far from *zuihitsu* territory.

Shûkô's disregard for the unifying force of plot is also germane to the discussion of *zuihitsu*. Given the I-novel's limited narrative perspective and emphasis on the self, the presence of the author functions as a type of plot or staging. Here, as in the *zuihitsu*, the author is the force unifying the text. Scholars and critics such as Itô Sei and Hirano Ken remarked on the resemblance of the two genres,³³ but perhaps Donald Keene stated it most openly.

An essay in a book of *zuihitsu* may be no more than an intriguing sentence or two, or it may extend over several pages. In the end, after reading a series of seemingly unrelated anecdotes or impressions, we may nevertheless feel a great sense of intimacy with the writer, much as if we had read his diary or perhaps an 'I-novel' in which he laid bare the joys and sorrows of his life. (1993,

9).

My point in noting the similarities between the I-novel and the *zuihitsu* is to highlight the fact that genres are not discreet units. That the *zuihitsu* which Chance describes as “outside the customary boundaries of narrativity, persona, fictivity, meter and countless other limiting constructs” (27), was in the modern period, in fact, limited or bound by the surrounding discourse of the I-novel, or perhaps we can stretch it even further and call it the discursive system of the era.

It is useful here to think of the I-novel as not necessarily a style of writing but as Tomi Suzuki terms it, “a literary and ideological paradigm by which a vast majority of literary works were judged and described” (6). Suzuki argues that any text can become an I-novel provided it is read as such, and that it is the “reader’s expectations concerning, and belief in, the single identity of the protagonist, the narrator, and the author of a given text [that] ultimately make a text an I-novel” (6).

Suzuki’s strategy is useful, but overreliant on the reader. I would like to reinsert the author back into Suzuki’s equation. Just as the *zuihitsu* could be bound by the interpretative strategies of the I-novel, the *zuihitsu* author could also use this association to exploit reader expectations and undermine the tendencies toward author-subject identification. In place of Suzuki’s “literary and ideological paradigm,” I will borrow a term from Phippe Lejeune which

implies more of a contractual agreement between consumer and producer, the “autobiographical pact.”⁵⁴

This “autobiographical pact” functions as an affirmation in the text that the identity of the character refers back to the name of the author on the cover. (13) Its function is similar to Suzuki’s reading mode, but Lejeune identifies varying degrees of autobiographical association and expands the pact to encompass author, reader and publisher. He also employs the concept of “autobiographical space,” into which the author projects his work and invites the reader to extend the autobiographical pact to everything he has written, including fictional works (26).

I look at the ways in which Uchida Hyakken uses, or perhaps better stated, exploits the “autobiographical pact” by encouraging the reader to see him in the text, just as Murô Saisei did. But who exactly are we seeing — Uchida Hyakken or Fujita Hyakkien, or in a later work Ujita Hyakugen?⁵⁵ What is their relationship to Hyakken and what level of trust are we to place in these representations? I demonstrate this by looking at some examples from *Hyakkien’s Miscellany*.

Uchida Hyakken Meets Professor Hyakkien

In 1928, Hyakken published the first of his Professor Hyakkien stories, “The Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien,” in serial installments in the July,

September and December issues of *Shinseinen*, a magazine later known for its detective stories.⁵⁶ This rambling tale centered on the comic mishaps of Professor Fujita Hyakkien, a middle-aged German instructor at a private Tokyo university. The title alone sets the reader wondering if this Professor Hyakkien is a convenient cover for the author Uchida Hyakken, a literary disguise through which to filter the author's memoirs. A few pages into the story we are provided with further evidence to support our claim—a description of the protagonist, who happens to be an exact match for our author in age, marital status, occupation and physical appearance. Hyakken critics, such as Sakai Hideyuki, have worked to further cement our suspicions by tracing many of the incidents described in the *zuihitsu*, back to “real life” events chronicled in Hyakken's diary from the years 1917-1922, provocatively titled *Hyakkien's Diary* (Hyakkien nikki chō).

As a reader we may opt for an autobiographical, I-novel type interpretation, and could find validation for our reading, both in the resemblance we observe between the subject and the author, and in the definition of the *zuihitsu* itself — an unmediated, non-fictional, personal account. However, this type of reading is troublesome. Besides underestimating the creative abilities of the author, this interpretation is problematic because it relies on the purported “factual” or “real-life” nature of both the *zuihitsu* and the diaries, and it fails to take into account the comic distance separating author, narrator and narrated

subject.

Sakai Hideyuki offers evidence that Hyakken mined his own diaries for ideas when writing *zuihitsu*,⁵⁷ and argues that if we “take the diary as fact” then those incidents in the *zuihitsu* version which do not conform are “fabrications of the story” (1993, 170). In comparing section four of “An Insignificant Glimpse of a Great Man” (*Taijin henden*) with Hyakken’s diary entries from December 6 and 7 of 1919, Sakai details Hyakken’s “mechanism” for turning factual diary entries into fictional *zuihitsu*, by adding dialogue, altering the sequence of events, and favoring certain incidents over others (1993, 210). This *zuihitsu* was written in response to an essay by Morita Sôhei, and Sakai points out certain “mistakes” in Hyakken and Sôhei’s respective versions, which he attributes to their attempts to outdo each other by embellishing the facts (1993, 169-70).⁵⁸

In “An Insignificant Glimpse of a Great Man,” the variations noted by Sakai are not of utmost importance to the story; however, the similarities between the previously mentioned section eight of “The Rambling Brush of Owl Woods” and the diary entry (August 30, 1918) are striking. Stylistic changes notwithstanding, the *zuihitsu* appears to be an exact copy of the diary version. Sakai provides further proof by quoting from a later *zuihitsu* “The Bulbul” (*Hiyodori*) in which Hyakken acknowledges having recycled the diary entry: “I used parts of my old diary in *Hyakkien’s Miscellany* for the scene with the condolence call.”⁵⁹ A few lines later Hyakken comments further on the two

versions:

The other day I was organizing my drafts for the soon to appear *Hyakkien's Diary*. I realized I could run into problems if I use the original as is, because the language is far more controversial than in *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. Although it's a pain, I think I'll have to edit the diary. (2: 185)

Sakai does not quote this section, but it is worth noting that Hyakken took liberties with both his diary and *zuihitsu*, consciously editing them. Herein lies a problem both with Sakai's analysis and with the tendency to use the diaries to bolster an autobiographical reading, namely the factuality of the diary itself.

Sakai never seems to question the "factual" nature of the diary. However, it is not unusual for Japanese diaries to be non-mimetic and artistically ordered. In Hyakken's case, it is especially curious, given the very liberties Hyakken took in his diary with both structure and content, chronological ordering and the mixing of dreams and reality.⁶⁰ A thorough discussion of the diary lies beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is worth looking briefly at Odagiri's analysis of *Hyakkien's Diary*.

Odagiri points out the complex structuring of time in the work. At one point in *Hyakkien's Diary*, there is an overlapping of five different time periods (1987, 287). Hyakken incorporated material from his 1911 diary into the 1918 entries, but also flashes back to 1916. The text jumps on a large scale between these three years and on a smaller scale across time within a single year. Odagiri warns that if the reader is not careful, it is easy to get confused. Some days have

multiple entries, as many as eleven (1987, 291), and on other days the author notes that he waited a day before recording certain events so as not to be overwhelmed by emotion (1987, 285).⁶¹ Odagiri remarks on the free nature of the diary in terms of both form and content (1987, 296), and these few examples argue against reading Hyakken's diary, or *Hyakkien's Diary*, as an unadulterated account of events as they happened. Rather, we must recognize if not the fictional nature of the diary, then at least the managed nature of it.⁶²

If we question the factuality of the diaries, then Hyakken's *zuihitsu* cannot be seen as a mere conversion from fact to fiction, from event to story, instead we must add in another step. The *zuihitsu* are third and not second generation copies, since the facts have already been fictionalized or at least manipulated once in the diary version. But, how do we reconcile the "fictional" diaries with the purportedly "non-fictional" *zuihitsu*? As readers we have number of choices: 1) we can ignore the fictional aspect of the diaries in order to retain our definition of *zuihitsu*; 2) we can follow Yoshida Seiichi's lead and alter the definition to allow for some small degree of fiction;⁶³ 3) or we could seek a middle ground as Sakai does when terming the stories "novelistic *zuihitsu*" (*shôsetsuteki zuihitsu*) (1993, 205).

Sakai's desire to term the works "novelistic *zuihitsu*" may stem from his narrow definition of *zuihitsu*. Although he quotes the *Kôjien* definition I provided above, in his analysis he implies additional limitations: the *zuihitsu* is

mimetic, lacks fiction or a fictional structure, and is written in the style of reminiscences or memories.⁶⁴ Although some of Hyakken's *zuihitsu* meet the standard definition, many do not (1993, 205). In his defense, Sakai claims Hyakken's *zuihitsu* are not representative (1993, 205), but when speaking of the "quintessential nongenre" the term representative holds little meaning.

Sakai is not alone in wanting to inject a degree of fictionality into Hyakken's *zuihitsu*. Murô Saisei uses the terms *shôsetsu* and *monogatari* when describing *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. Both terms invoke some degree of fictionality or at least artistic structuring: the former, *shôsetsu*, is used in the modern context as a translation of the Western term "novel," and *monogatari*, although it usually refers to classical prose compositions, is employed to highlight the storyline or plot in modern works.⁶⁵

Shôji Hajime goes one step further and dubs the works I-novels, or in the case of the five poverty stories, "poor man's I-novels" (183). Since they are readily defined as I-novels, the labeling of them as *zuihitsu* is curious (183). For Shôji, the character of Hyakkien is a device the author created to examine the self (184). There is no semblance of *zuihitsu* in the second and third groupings of stories, and even among the first twenty-two are some he reads as *shôsetsu*.⁶⁶ His reading hinges on the fact that these works do not resist structure, a quality he attributes to *zuihitsu* (184-5). Shôji is able to bring structure to a work as scattered as "The Rambling Brush of Owl Woods," by using an I-novel strategy. He

describes this work as a new take on the novel, one that demonstrates the ennui of the life of the “I” through various angles (186).

The injection of fictionality and the self into *Hyakkien’s Miscellany* may be a product of a modern reading strategy. There are examples of emplotted works within the *zuihitsu* tradition (*Essays in Idleness* or *The Pillow Book*), but somehow this is not enough for the aforementioned critics. Why do they feel the need to ascribe fictionality while retaining a direct authorial presence? The desire to label *Hyakkien’s Miscellany* *shōsetsu* may be an attempt to elevate Hyakken’s creations above the lesser-regarded *zuihitsu* to the respectable *shōsetsu*.⁶⁷ But is it possible or productive to jettison the genre designation?

As we saw above, Hyakken denied having any knowledge of the boundaries implied in the term *zuihitsu* and seems to have avoided such genre designations. Hyakken is famous for describing his work as “*bunshō*,” a broad term for writing that may best be translated as *écriture*. We can see Hyakken reaching for a less restrictive term in his comments on *Hyakkien’s Miscellany*:

The book is primarily narrative writing, but there are also some lyrical passages, and some *shōsetsu* that appeared in the creative writing columns of monthly journals. The volumes I’ve produced since [*Hyakkien’s Miscellany*] have all been the same. In short, they are collections of my essays. The primary marker on the text is *bunshō*.⁶⁸

This “*bunshō*,” however, leads us into even murkier waters than *zuihitsu*. Once again, I think we can look beyond Hyakken’s preferences to see ways in which

he encourages an autobiographical interpretation and creates an “autobiographical space” for his readers.

One way Hyakken draws the reader into this space is by closely aligning his characters’ names with his own. In addition to the Hyakken-Hyakkien pairing, in 1929 Hyakken published “The Continued Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien” (Hyakkien sensei genkôyoroku) under the pen-name Aochi Toyojirô, which also happens to be the name of a character in the following stories. “Documentary Proof of the Existence of Half-Wits” (Manuke no jitsuzai ni kansuru bunken), March 1929, is a humorous portrayal of two bumblers, Aochi and Segawa, supposedly modeled on Hyakken and Sôhei. “The Bowler Hat” (Yamataka bôshi) from June 1929 is a longer work about two professors at the Military Academy, both of whom are slightly insane. As Aochi’s condition improves, his companion Noguchi’s worsens, and the story builds toward Noguchi’s suicide. Critics read this story as a tribute to Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, who worked with Hyakken at the Naval Engineers Academy and who also committed suicide in 1927. Hyakken, however, resisted this interpretation, arguing: “It’s a novel. Akutagawa’s name never even appears once.”[Ⓔ]

Aochi also figures as the main character in Hyakken’s 1933 “The Gates of Hell” (Jigoku no mon). This story is also interesting because it is another *zuihitsu* which Sakai claims is grounded in the diaries (208-214). We can begin to see the opening of this “autobiographical space” located in the nexus of the author’s real

life, his publishing history, his diaries, his *zuihitsu* and his fictional writings. Here we can also add in *Realm of the Dead*, another collection critics link to the diaries and subject to the autobiographical reading. By blurring the line between diary and fiction, creating characters that resemble him in name and physical description, and using character names as pen-names, Hyakken encourages the reader to insert all his writing into this space.⁷⁰

Although Hyakken seems to be encouraging us to use his real life as a subtext for understanding his *zuihitsu*, to identify him with the characters Hyakkien and Aochi, and in a sense to accept *zuihitsu* as nonfictional, he also works at the same time to undermine these assumptions, or to pull us out of the “autobiographical space.” A month after “The Continued Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien,” he published a short story called “The Dragonfly Marble” (Tonbodama)⁷¹ which opens with the following line: “The word I here refers to the I of the story, not to the author himself” (*Watashi to iu no wa bunshôjô no watashi desu. Hissha jishin no koto de wa arimasen*) (1: 288). This line is isolated from the rest of the text which begins “Now then, a lot of things bother me,” and proceeds to describe the narrator’s aversion to round objects.

As reader we have to wonder who exactly is speaking here? Is this a parenthetical remark by the author meant to provide interpretational guidelines? Is this an instance of Lejeune’s “phantasmic pact” — “This has meaning in relation to me, but is not I” (Lejeune, 33)? Is it a warning to the reader: “I’m not

writing about myself.” “There is no author here”? Is this the same voice that spoke in the conclusion to “The Rambling Brush of Owl Woods” or is it the character in the story staking claim to his own individuality? “Don’t confuse me with the author. I’m my own person.” Any way we read it, and I think all interpretations are valid and present, this comment breaks the link between author and protagonist and undermines any comfortable autobiographical reading of Hyakken’s work, especially if we can release ourselves from the confines of any one story to view *Hyakkien’s Miscellany* as an integrated whole. This comment also highlights the tendency of the contemporary reader of 1929 to equate the “I” with the author, and brings the whole issue to the fore.

Hyakken further casts doubt on factual, autobiographical nature of his work in the conclusion to the 1933 “The Narrow Mat” (Samushiro), a story about the narrator’s childhood.⁷²

In writing the above story I meant to recall my past, but I’m not sure anymore if everything really happened, or to what degree these hazy memories are the product of my delusional, fear-ridden mind. (1: 136)

The lines between author and subject, truth and fiction are not clear, nor could we argue are they meant to be clear. Hyakken is playing games and is making us decide for ourselves. The one thing we can say is that by adding to the layers of interpretation, through embedded comments, confusing pen names and the incorporation of biographical material, Hyakken problematizes the author-

subject identification process and makes it difficult for us to read his works in the preferred mode of the time, uncontroversially as I-novels or *zuihitsu*.

But we must be careful not to completely restrict the *zuihitsu* to the confines of the I-novel. Although they shared a concern for “unmediated self-expression,” the *zuihitsu* retained certain qualities not found in its highbrow, fictional counterpart.⁷³ In other words, we can acknowledge the areas of overlap, but must maintain the distinction between form and function. If genre criteria are defined too precisely then “we run the risk of . . . being blind to related phenomena and historical evolution” (Lejeune, 150).

One characteristic which distinguished *zuihitsu*, specifically Hyakken’s *zuihitsu*, from the I-novel is humor.⁷⁴ In his 1948 essay “The Loss of Laughter” (Warai no sôshitsu) Nakamura Mitsuo points out that “a lack of distance between authors and their fictional egos, which was integral to the [I-novel], was hardly conducive to ironic distancing or a comic view of the self.”⁷⁵ Certainly, not all I-novels are humorless, but the genre’s requirements for seriousness rarely permit the “comic view of the self” we see in the character of Professor Hyakkien.

I-novelists often revealed their dark, unseemly side in their novels, and Professor Hyakkien is also cast in a negative light. But unlike the I-novelist’s shocking confessions, these descriptions of the Professor as lazy, insensitive and self serving, mock him and provide a basis for humor. Far from the intellectual

brooding we would expect from an I-novelist, the professor engages in discussions so inane as to send the hotel maid into fits of uncontrollable laughter. He is easily fooled and foiled, and is mocked by a variety of characters in the story, including the supposedly neutral third-person narrator.⁷⁶ This comic distance keeps the author from expressing himself, as Kume Masao felt I-novelists should, namely “directly and frankly, without pretense and disguise” (Suzuki, 51). It also impedes the reading of a work such as “The Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien” as an unmediated, non-fictional personal account, unless we are willing to believe Hyakken a liar or a fool.

At times Hyakken’s comic techniques hearken back to his mentor Natsume Sôseki’s famous *I am a Cat* and *Botchan*, and although Sôseki’s work draws on premodern comic genres, I do not believe Hyakken’s humor is anachronistic.⁷⁷ Given the tendency toward self-representation and autobiography on both the part of the literary producers and consumers of the 1920s and 1930s, Hyakken exploits the inherent comic possibilities in the formless yet personal *zuihitsu*. In mocking himself, Hyakken mocks the very seriousness of the I-novel depictions and also throws a monkey wrench into the interpretative process of author-subject identification.

In addition to humor, the *zuihitsu* had a freedom of publication venue not available to the I-novel. “The Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien” was originally published in the popular detective journal, *Shinseinen*, an unlikely place to find

an I-novel. The I-novel would be better suited to a literary journal such as *Shinshôsetsu* which is famous for publishing the so-called progenitor of the genre, Tayama Katai's *The Quilt* (Futon, 1907), and later examples such as Chikamatsu Shûkô's *Suspicion* (Giwaku, 1913).

The *zuihitsu* retained its journalist associations and continued to function as light reading. Although it was put to the task of censorship evasion, and many serious writers tried their hand at the *zuihitsu*, it never competed with the I-novel as "pure literature" (*jun bungaku*). Perhaps this is why, despite the prevalence of *zuihitsu* in the prewar years, it has not been granted any significant role in literary history.

Conclusion

We have the option of classifying *Hyakkien's Miscellany* under a variety of literary categories. Although *zuihitsu* may not be the best fit for all thirty-four stories, we do not solve the problem by eliminating the term. Rather, we run the risk of dehistoricizing the text. We should also be careful not to underestimate the power of labels, and the ways in which the particulars of publishing affect consumption. We should welcome the opportunity to explore the boundaries of a so-called premodern genre in the modern period. The ambiguity inherent in the *zuihitsu* definition is an invitation to literary detective work. My research here is limited to one author, but larger questions remain: How did the *zuihitsu*

function in conjunction with other discourses of the era? Did this vary from author to author? Can we see the *zuihitsu* as an alternative writing venue, a space to experiment with form, voice and content? How does this genre fit into modern literary history?

Writers in the Taishō and early Shōwa years were well aware of the premodern *zuihitsu* tradition and were also ready to evaluate their modern productions. This connection between the premodern and modern forms of the genre deserves further exploration. The poet Hagiwara Sakutarō lamented the low quality of modern *zuihitsu*: “The *zuihitsu* of the Japanese literary elite is neither the Western essay nor the prose poems *Essays in Idleness* and *The Pillow Book*. What is commonly regarded in Japan as the *zuihitsu* is ‘literary mishmosh.’ By no means should this be considered real literature” (1975b, 313). Despite Hagiwara’s contempt for the *zuihitsu*, he found Hyakken’s to be worthy of praise, describing them as “gems on a par with the classical *Account of My Hut* (Hōjōki) and *The Pillow Book*, both in terms of their poetic beauty and consummate literary form” (1975a, 445-46).⁷⁸

Hagiwara’s praise notwithstanding, Hyakken’s *zuihitsu* are products of the modern age. The genre changed over the centuries in response to both literary and societal conditions. It is important to map out the differences between the premodern and modern *zuihitsu* and to determine the relevant forces acting upon the genre over the course of its evolution. However, it is also

important to go beyond narrow genre and historical distinctions in order to see how so-called premodern genres interacted with the discursive system of the modern era. The early twentieth century was a time during which the Japanese were reevaluating their literary past as they began writing their own literary histories. Perhaps their evaluations of premodern literature comment more on modern literary conceptions than intrinsic qualities of ancient texts. And perhaps it was these modern texts that facilitated the recognition of premodern works.⁷⁹

Taishō was an era of great literary experimentation in form, genre, and modes of expression. Many of the same issues we bring to the table when discussing the I-novel are relevant for the *zuihitsu* and the diary. The proliferation of personal narratives in this period should not be confined to canonical forms, but would benefit from the inclusion of premodern genres such as the *zuihitsu*, the diary and travel literature, and even more journalistic writing in the form of exposés (*bakuromono*).⁸⁰ A clearer picture of the ways in which these genres interacted will provide a better means for evaluating such scattered texts as *Hyakkien's Miscellany*.

Notes to Chapter V

- ¹ The work was reprinted more than ten times. See Morita Sakan.
- ² See Morita Sakan. Hyakken is often referred to as a *zuihitsu* or 'writer of miscellany'.
- ³ Phillippe Lejeune argues literary genres "constitute, in each era, a sort of implicit code, through which, and thanks to which, works of the past and recent works can be received and classified by readers" (141). All citations of Lejeune are from Leary's translation.
- ⁴ The success of *Hyakkien zuihitsu* secured the financial future of the then small Mikasa publishing house. Hyakken's book was only their second publication.
- ⁵ Murô's review is reprinted in *Yume to Warai* (153).
- ⁶ Terada's writing is usually described as scientific, which is not surprising since he was a professor in the Tokyo Imperial University's College of Science, having studied physics in both undergraduate and graduate school. Perhaps that accounts for the coldness Murô observes.
- ⁷ See Hyakken's *Watakushi no "Sôseki" to "Ryûnosuke"* for stories which feature Sôseki and Akutagawa. Hijiya-Kirschner discusses the closed and gossipy nature of the *bundan* or literary elite and the tendency to mention other writers in their fiction (177-79). To what extent the general populace was involved or interested in such matters is difficult to determine.
- ⁸ Konishi ascribes these characteristics to *Essays in Idleness* and *zuihitsu* in general: "The information was new for ordinary people, and the genre of the *zuihitsu*—which provided it in an intimate, accessible fashion—must have been extremely fresh and attractive" (3: 498).
- ⁹ Bruss borrows Merleau-Ponty's use of the term institution to describe the ways in which genres function (5).
- ¹⁰ Quoted in Wada (286-87). The original source is the inaugural issue of the second incarnation of the journal *Zuihitsu*, June 1926.
- ¹¹ This "vague uneasiness" (*bonyarishita fun*) is from Akutagawa's famous "Letter to an Old Friend" written before his suicide in 1927.
- ¹² See Yamamura for statistics on labor and the Taishô economy.
- ¹³ Following is a list of the six stories in *Hyakkien's Miscellany* that feature Professor Fujita Hyakkien: "The Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien" (Hyakkien sensei genkôroku), "The Continued Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien" (Hyakkien sensei genkôyôroku), "Hyakkien's New Look" (Hyakkien shinsô), "Professor Hyakkien's Daydreams" (Hyakkien sensei gensôroku), "An Insignificant Glimpse of a Great Man" (Taijin henden), and "Bankrupt Serenity" (Mukô saisha mukô shin).
- ¹⁴ Chiba is probably referring to works by the Naturalists, the White Birch Society, the proletarian writers and the Neo-perceptionists.
- ¹⁵ This is printed in the text in English (258).
- ¹⁶ This is my paraphrase of the Mencius saying: "The way of the people is this: —If they have a certain livelihood they will have a fixed heart; if they have not a certain livelihood, they have not a fixed heart" The translation is from James Legge (239-40).
- ¹⁷ This work originally appeared in the January 1930 issue of *Bungei shunjû* as "Hyakkien's Random Comments" (Hyakkien manroku). *Manroku* is one of many terms used to describe *zuihitsu* or *zuihitsu* style writing. Chance translates it as "rambling record" (57).
- ¹⁸ *Nanakusa* refers to a set of seven grasses or herbs gathered in either spring or autumn. The Hyakken title probably also refers to the seven herb gruel made with either seven types of vegetables or ingredients such as rice, millet, and deccan grass, and eaten after New Year's.

Nihon kokugo daijiten, 1st ed., s.v. "nanakusa" and "nanakusa no kayu."

¹⁹ As quoted in Wada (286).

²⁰ Wada mentions the journals *Fudôchô*, *Sôjin* and *Kuroshio*. Sakai makes reference to Hyakken's stories in the *zuihitsu* columns of *Josei*, *Chûô kôron*, *Keizai ôrai* and *Sandê mainichi* (1993, 197-99).

²¹ Miki Kiyoshi and Nakano Shigeharu both commented on the *zuihitsu* boom in 1935 and 1937 respectively. See Wada (288, 293).

²² Chiba's essay, which is very *zuihitsu*-like itself, appeared in a collection of essays titled, *Pen jûô*, in 1935. The original place and date of publication however is unknown. Judging from the content it could have been written as early as 1926 because it mentions both versions of the journal *Zuihitsu*, the latter appearing in 1926.

²³ For a shorter survey of the modern *zuihitsu*, see Takada's article.

²⁴ See Silverberg (1993, 123-24) on print culture.

²⁵ Wada (278) says *zuihitsu* were regarded as "easy spending money" for authors.

²⁶ Wada quotes from Miki's essay "Zuihitsu jidai," which originally appeared in the *Yomiuri shinbun*, evening edition, September 3, 1935 (288). He also discusses Tosaka Jun and Nakano Shigeharu's reaction to the *zuihitsu*. Also see Rubin on censorship.

²⁷ There is scholarly disagreement on which texts can be termed *zuihitsu*. There is general agreement regarding *Essays in Idleness*, but not on earlier works such as *The Pillow Book* (Makura no sôshi, ca. 994). Konishi argues against the classification of *The Pillow Book* as a *zuihitsu* because its composition predates the introduction of the genre into Japan. He prefers to classify it as a diary or *nikki* (2: 383-84). He considers *Essays in Idleness* to be the "Japan's first *zuihitsu*" (3: 492). Linda Chance, however, argues that *The Pillow Book* was "influential for Kenkô's project and for the later development of the generic concept" (27).

²⁸ See Hung Mai's *Jung-chai sui-pi* (1162-1202). More common parlance is *pi-chi*, or in Japanese *hikki* (Chance, 49). There is no proof of direct transmission of Chinese *sui-pi* to those works considered to be early exemplars of the genre in Japan.

²⁹ The information in this paragraph is drawn from Chance's chapter 2: "Zuihitsu as Genre and Anti-genre."

³⁰ *Kôjien*, 2nd ed., s.v. "zuihitsu."

³¹ The three critics listed in this paragraph have written the main source work on *zuihitsu*. Chance's work in English is the most recent, and she notes that Hasegawa and Yoshida's are the only monograph-length reconsiderations of the genre, and they are now outdated (both originally published in 1965).

³² Chance is quoting Satô Kanji.

³³ Chance mentions critics who focus primarily on self-expression and subjectivity in the *zuihitsu* (258 n. 77).

³⁴ This quotation is from Chance, but she disagrees (28).

³⁵ This essay, "Terada Torahiko hakase," appeared in the March 1936 issue of *Chûô kôron*. It was included in Hyakken's collection *Rapture* (Uchôten) published in July of that same year. Terada died in December of the previous year.

³⁶ See Chance's chapter 7, "The Formless Text."

³⁷ Ivan Morris also comments on the "structural confusion" and "bizarre, haphazard arrangement" of *The Pillow Book* (13).

³⁸ Chance comments that "the state of the text resembles the true nature of the world, constantly changing, full of contradictions that prohibit us from grasping its phenomena as

existents" (235).

³⁹ Wada notes a similar use of *zuihitsu* in the immediate postwar of WWII (282-3).

⁴⁰ See sections 1, 2, 38, 78, 117, 122, 150, 155 of *Essays in Idleness*.

⁴¹ This essay constitutes one half of the well-known literary debate between Tanizaki and Akutagawa. "Bungeiteki na, amari ni bungeiteki na" appeared in the April, May, June and August 1927 issues of the journal *Kaizō*. However, the sections now referred to as "Zoku Bungeiteki na, amari ni bungeiteki na" were published in *Bungei shunjū's zuihitsu* column in April and July of 1927. Given the similarities in form and topic, it is possible to consider the *Kaizō* entries as *zuihitsu* as well. It is also worth noting that Tanizaki's contribution, "Jōzetsu roku" is referred to as a serialized *zuihitsu*. Other well-known writers with *zuihitsu* in this issue (April 1927) are Kikuchi Kan, Satomi Ton, Chikamatsu Shūkō and Murō Saisei.

⁴² Keene refers to the "celebrated literary dispute" between Akutagawa and Tanizaki (1984, 754).

⁴³ Yoshida Seiichi identifies this as a *zuihitsu* in his *Zuihitsu no sekai* (1980, 107). It also appeared in *Bungei shunjū* but may predate the inception of the *zuihitsu* column.

⁴⁴ Takada comments that the essence of Akutagawa's literature lies at least partially in his *zuihitsu* (121).

⁴⁵ The original titles are: "Kohaku," "Miokuri," "Korera," "Ittōsha," "Bansankai," "Kaze no kami," "Hige," "Shinsuishiki," "Ukatōsen," "Enyōgyogyō," and "Inemuri."

⁴⁶ One has to wonder how the circumstances of publication affected the reading process. Would the reader respond differently to a story in a journal than to one in a *zuihitsu* collection?

⁴⁷ This reading strategy may not be possible for all the entries in *Hyakkien's Miscellany*, as seen in the following story which has its own divisions.

⁴⁸ *Kōjien*, 2nd ed., s.v. "manpitsu."

⁴⁹ Shioda remarks that "The fact that the *zuihitsu* never had any structural aims does not matter, since the author's humanity unifies the work" (11).

⁵⁰ This discussion of shared genre features and generic function is indebted to Bruss. See her "Introduction."

⁵¹ The translation is Tomi Suzuki's (49). See her chapter 3 on the I-novel and authenticity.

⁵² The quotation is from a preface to *Koi kara ai e*, a Chikamatsu anthology. The translation is from Fowler, 154.

⁵³ Hijijya-Kirschneit quotes from Itō Sei's 1948 *Methods of the Novel* (*Shōsetsu no hōhō*), in which he describes the I-novel as "semi-autobiographical, containing characteristics similar to miscellanies (*zuihitsu*)" (83) Also see her remarks on Itō and Hirano (299). Marleigh Ryan also discusses the connection between premodern *zuihitsu*, diaries and modern literature, although not exclusively the I-novel. See her "Modern Japanese Fiction: 'Accommodated Truth.'" Toyama Shigehiko also comments on the shared features of the two genres, interestingly noting that the popularity of the *zuihitsu* seems tied to the popularity of the I-novel (13).

⁵⁴ Suzuki refers to Lejeune's work in her introduction, but rejects it as a model since she argues that: "The referential, autobiographical reading of these [Japanese] texts was not necessarily the result of a contract proposed by the author. In the case of the I-novel, it is ultimately the reader who assumes a 'hidden contract' in the text" (6). However, in the next paragraph she acknowledges the existence of a "self-conscious I novel," in which the "author presupposes these autobiographical assumptions on the part of the reader" (7). I place Hyakken in this "self-conscious" camp.

⁵⁵ Ujita Hyakugen appears in *I Am a Cat: The Fake Version*.

⁵⁶ *Shinseinen* featured both Japanese and Western fiction, including such famous writers as P.G. Wodehouse and Arthur Conan Doyle, and their Japanese counterpart Edogawa Rampo. The September issue noted above included three stories by Wodehouse, and the previous issue had works by a variety of French, British and American writers.

⁵⁷ Sakai correlates the *zuihitsu* "The Sneeze" (Kushami), "The Glove" (Tebukoro), and "The Rambling Brush of Owl Woods" (Kyōrin manpitsu) with diary entries (1993, 216 n. 14). He also discusses the relationship of the diary to "The Gates of Hell" and "Notebook of Anger" (Rippukuchō) from *Hyakkien's Miscellany Continued* (Zoku Hyakkien zuihitsu, 1934).

⁵⁸ See Sakai (1993, 164) for a list of Hyakken and Sōhei's essays and their original date and place of publication. Also see my chapter 2 for a translation of the titles.

⁵⁹ Sakai (1993, 216 n. 14). Also see "The Bulbul" in *The Bumpy Road* (Dekoboko michi) (2: 185).

⁶⁰ It has been argued that the Japanese diary is not mimetic and "does not attempt to represent what has happened on the gross level of reality," being instead "subject to artistic rather than realistic ordering" (Chance, 19). For specific discussion of Hyakken's diaries see Odagiri (1987, 296).

⁶¹ Odagiri notes that Hyakken was unable to recreate the emotion of the previous day and the entry was lifeless (1987, 285).

⁶² People in the diary are given pseudonyms, much as though they were characters in a story.

⁶³ See Yoshida's remarks regarding the definition of *zuihitsu*, mentioned earlier in this chapter.

⁶⁴ See Sakai's chapter 5, part 1 "Hyakkien zuihitsu no hōhō."

⁶⁵ Konishi defines *monogatari* as "a prose composition, written in the past tense, that is concerned with events involving either fictional or historical characters. However, "'truth' and 'fiction' are matters of narrative stance" (2: 256). Hijiya-Kirschner defines it as "narrative 'invented' prose" (297). Also see *Nihon kokugo daijiten*, 1st ed., s.v. "monogatari" and "shōsetsu."

⁶⁶ Shōji specifically mentions "Amber," "Cholera," "God of the Wind," "Deep Sea Fishing."

⁶⁷ Wada comments on the low status of the modern *zuihitsu* (278). Tomi Suzuki asserts the I-novel was always a "value-laden concept" (3).

⁶⁸ See "Terada Torahiko hakase" (2: 323).

⁶⁹ The quotation is from Hirayama's *Waga Hyakkien sensei*, and is cited in Uchida Michio (1997, 149). Hirayama mentions Hyakken's resistance to this theory in his afterword to *Watashi no "Sōseki" to "Ryūnosuke"* (266-67).

⁷⁰ See Lejeune and also see Odagiri who claims other modern authors, such as Higuchi Ichiyō, Ishikawa Takuboku and Shiga Naoya, used their diaries as testing grounds or springboards for their fiction (1984, 17-18).

⁷¹ The word *tonbodama* refers to a small, round glass bead or marble often of a deep blue color with yellow specks, so called because it resembles a dragonfly's eye. They are often found in ancient Japanese burial mounds dating back as far as the third century. The object in this story comes from Taiwan and is light green with white lines.

⁷² Although this story is in the "fictional" *Port Arthur* collection it originally appeared in the *zuihitsu* column of *Keizai ōrai*.

⁷³ The question of whether the I-novel is fiction or nonfiction continues to be debated.

Hijiya-Kirschnerit duly notes that it is important to remember that the I-novel "does not have its origins in autobiography" but in naturalist literature or "'fictional' narrative literature" (177). Although early theorists such as Kume valued the direct expression of the author, he also valued the artistic manipulation or (re)presentation of the material.

⁷⁴ Yoshida Seiichi defines comic *zuihitsu* as a subgenre of *zuihitsu* (1980, 108-9).

⁷⁵ Nakamura as quoted in Cohn (25). The original is from Nakamura (1972, 113-15).

⁷⁶ See "The Memoirs of Professor Hyakkien."

⁷⁷ See Sumie Jones for an analysis of the Edo period literary aspects of *Botchan*.

⁷⁸ Hagiwara's essay originally appeared in *Zenshū Hyakken zuihitsu*.

⁷⁹ Hisamatsu Sen'ichi commented on the connection between the reemergence of the classical diary, and the self-centered discourse of daily life in the now canonically modern literature of naturalism (Odagiri 1984, 14).

⁸⁰ See Minami on exposés and the public's interest in the private lives of famous people (1985, 494-95).

Chapter VI

A Return to the *Realm of the Dead*: Caught Between *Zuihitsu*, Fiction and Real Life

We can see a development in Hyakken's work written after *Hyakkien's Miscellany* in which there is a mix of the two styles: the lighter, more autobiographical *zuihitsu* style and the darker, more fictional *Realm of the Dead* style. In this chapter I examine three stories that share qualities of these two styles and that are more productively discussed in light of the previous two chapters. The three stories are "The Bowler Hat" (1929) from *Port Arthur*, "Tokyo Diary" (*Tôkyô nikki*, 1938) from the *zuihitsu* collection *Bridge on the Hill* and "The Sarasate Record" (*Sarasate no ban*, 1948) from *The True Story of Sôhei*. These works provide the opportunity to examine the interconnectedness of Hyakken's fiction, *zuihitsu* and autobiography. Although this is an important aspect of these texts, they are also worth investigating as both a return to and a rejection of the world Hyakken created in *Realm of the Dead*.

In the case of "The Bowler Hat" the question of factuality versus fiction once again comes into play. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the story is often interpreted as a tribute to Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, with whom Hyakken worked at the Yokosuka Naval Engineers Academy in 1918, and who committed suicide in 1927. This is the earliest of Hyakken's stories that feature Akutagawa, but he also wrote a number of *zuihitsu* about Akutagawa, and these will be

discussed as well. "The Bowler Hat" can also be taken as a commentary on mental illness and can be read alongside Akutagawa's masterpiece *Cogwheels* (Haguruma, posthumous 1927), about a writer, a Mr. A, who is losing his mind and hallucinating both visually and aurally. Hyakken's story provides a lighter, yet still disturbing counterpart to Akutagawa's harrowing account, and will be considered in this nexus between fact, fiction and cultural commentary.

In the case of "Tokyo Diary," I return to the question of diaries and to the role of the fictive in them. This work appeared in the creative writing column (*sôsakuran*) of the journal *Kaizô*, but crosses the line between *zuihitsu*, diary and fiction. On some level we could even discuss this work as a *kikôbun* or travel writing about the city, as the writer documents his daily, albeit surreal experiences in different areas of Tokyo. This story also shares features with those in *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*, and in addition to discussing this intertextuality, I take up the conceptualization of space in the city.

The influence of both the *zuihitsu* and diaries is apparent in "The Sarasate Record" as well. Sakai Hideyuki conducts literary detective work on the real life models for the characters in the story. His analysis also reveals the actual existence of the eerie recording of Sarasate, for which the piece is named; however, the appeal of "The Sarasate Record" does not lie in the biographical details. Here again, Hyakken draws on an earlier style to craft a mysterious story about a young girl, her quirky stepmother and dead father. Suzuki Seijun's

1980 film *Zigeunerweisen* is loosely based on “The Sarasate Record,” but draws imagery from “Tokyo Diary” and “The Bowler Hat,” as Suzuki adds to Hyakken’s unfinished tale.

Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Hyakken’s Bowler

I came out of the bathroom and sat down in front of my desk. Although the room was the same as before I couldn’t settle down. The cloudy evening sky closed in from outside the open window. Pale red fruit hung from the branches of the large Chinese date tree. As I counted the fruit I grew edgy and nervous. I felt someone was inside the bathroom — waiting for me.

There was nobody else home beside me. They’d all gone shopping or running errands and hadn’t returned yet. The neighborhood houses were silent. The day was coming to a close yet the neighborhood was still, except for the distant, uneven beating of a *taiko* drum. In my loneliness something seemed amiss, and I keep thinking about the bathroom. (1: 83)

The eerie quiet of the opening to the “The Bowler Hat” is reminiscent of the atmosphere of the *Port Arthur* story “The Reflection.” In the scene which follows a cat jumps out at the narrator, Aochi Toyojirō, and frightens him. The cat seems to be toying with Aochi and even appears to speak to him. His family later returns as do the sounds of the neighborhood, and it starts raining. This opening scene, rife with an incomprehensible, even absurd paranoia, sets the stage for a story about mental instability.

Over the course of the twenty sections of “The Bowler Hat,” the main character Aochi and his colleague from the Military Academy, Noguchi, are

portrayed in varying stages of sanity and insanity. At times they purposely try to frighten one another by acting strange, and at other times they worry about each other's degrading condition. The story climaxes with Noguchi's suicide from an overdose of sleeping medication.¹

The details of Noguchi's suicide, combined with other descriptions in the text, have led critics to theorize that the character of Noguchi was modeled on Akutagawa. Hyakken and Akutagawa became friends while working together at the Yokosuka Naval Engineers Academy, as do Aochi and Noguchi at the Military Academy.² Akutagawa's suicide from an overdose of sleeping medication is well known, and Hyakken, in a series of *zuihitsu* written between 1934 and 1951, describes among other things, a visit to Akutagawa a few days before his death.

There are other details in the fictional "The Bowler Hat" that critics such as Sakai Hideyuki use to construct an autobiographical reading. Indeed, one of the main issues at stake in "The Bowler Hat" is whether or not to regard it as autobiography. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Hyakken resisted this interpretation, yet the critics persist. If we read it as autobiography, we can link it to other *zuihitsu* Hyakken wrote about Akutagawa, although the story itself is not technically a *zuihitsu*.³ We can also compare it to autobiographical interpretations of Akutagawa's *Cogwheels*. But is it necessary to adopt such an approach? Can "The Bowler Hat" be meaningfully read without reference to

biographical information on either Hyakken or Akutagawa? Is it not also possible that by limiting the reading to the author's real life, we miss the opportunity to discuss both literary and cultural aspects of the text? Given the importance of Hyakken's *zuihitsu* and the questions raised in the previous chapter, I will explore both approaches, starting with the autobiographical.

"The Bowler Hat" as Autobiography

Sakai Hideyuki considers "The Bowler Hat" to be a turning point, indicating the shift from Hyakken's more dreamlike fiction in *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*, to his realistic *zuihitsu* in *Hyakkien's Miscellany*.⁴ Between 1922 and 1933, Hyakken published just over sixty stories which were later collected in either *Port Arthur* or *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. Although Sakai acknowledges the influence of the *Realm of the Dead* style, he unquestioningly reads "The Bowler Hat" as autobiography. His research is representative of this approach. Sakai begins by examining the origins of the story, and here again, Morita Sôhei enters the picture. The title of Hyakken's story refers to Aochi's bowler, which he persists in wearing despite Noguchi's aversion to it. This behavior is also attributed to Akutagawa. Sôhei describes Akutagawa's fear of Hyakken's bowler hat in his "Akutagawa Ryûnosuke's Morbid Fear," a section in "A Profile of Six Literati" (1986b, 208).

According to Sôhei, Hyakken and Akutagawa were well known for their various phobias and sensitivities. Sôhei heard about Akutagawa's fear of the bowler and suggested that Hyakken write a story in which both characters suspect the other of being crazy. He also recommended Anderer Novellen's *Der Gedanke* as a model, since it is the story of a man who feigns insanity to commit a murder. Sôhei probably read Ueda Bin's 1909 translation of Novellen, and if Hyakken had not read it in the original German, he would have known it from references made in Sôseki's *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond* (Higan sugi made, 1912).⁵ Sôhei remarks that "The Bowler Hat" is the result of his advice.

Sakai investigates the validity of Sôhei's statements and offers three pieces of evidence in favor of Sôhei. First, although Akutagawa himself never commented on Hyakken's hat, Hyakken mentions it repeatedly in his *zuihitsu*, hence it must be true. Second, Sakai quotes from a letter Akutagawa wrote to Sasaki Mosaku (Feb. 11, 1927) regarding Hyakken's plan to compose a story based on their mutual insanity. Third, Sakai compares *Der Gedanke* with "The Bowler Hat" to demonstrate influence. Although Sakai's second and third points have some validity, his first point is problematic. Here again, we encounter the problems discussed in the last chapter regarding the fictionality of *zuihitsu*.

Hyakken mentions Akutagawa by name in seven *zuihitsu* written between 1934 and 1951.⁶ These *zuihitsu* are of interest because they describe a series of meetings between Hyakken and Akutagawa which resemble to varying degrees

incidents in "The Bowler Hat." One of the most famous takes place a few days before Noguchi/ Akutagawa's death. Compare the following versions.

Noguchi arranged to borrow 1,000 yen for me from a bookstore. We went together and he signed for it.

When I visited him later, he was leaning back in his chair, pipe in mouth, with a strange look on his face. I could swear he was asleep. His neck and hands hung loose, lacking any tension.

"What happened?" I asked concerned.

Lifting his heavy lids, he looked at me. But his eyes closed again and his body slackened.

"I took too much sleeping medicine and haven't really woken up yet."

He said after a while. His words slurred together. "I got up before I was really awake."

I remembered our conversation at the restaurant recently.

"You sure you should be up?"

"I got up cause my stomach hurt." Then after a pause, "But this happens every now and then, so no reason to worry."

"You shouldn't be taking all that medicine, you're out of it half the day."

"I shouldn't? That's strange coming from someone who gets drunk in the afternoon." (1: 105-6)

"The Bowler Hat"

The Akutagawa I met a few days later was half-asleep half-awake. His body sunk into a rattan chair in front of the *tokonoma*, he'd fallen asleep in front of his guests in the dimly lit study. He suddenly opened his eyes and greeted me with a vague remark.

"It's not good for you to take so much sleeping medicine."

"I'm OK. Plus my stomach's been bothering me lately."

I went to respond but he'd already fallen back asleep. (2: 70)

"The Fan from Hunan"⁷

I'd seen Akutagawa two days before he died. He was running low on medication and had just woken up. Not having known this, I thought this strange, speech-slurred Akutagawa was drunk. (1: 526)

"The Kappa Memorial"

Akutagawa seemed to be listening to me, but his own words were slurred, as if his tongue wouldn't move or was tied up in his mouth. I had no idea what he was saying. When I asked what was wrong, he said he'd taken too much medicine last night. I reproached him and he agreed, but by the same token he said I shouldn't drink so much either. With this remark, his head fell to his chest and he was asleep.

There was nothing I could do, so I sat and watched, and he opened his eyes, apologizing — sorry, sorry. Then he was out again. Saying he was really tired, he half smiled at me. (6: 153)

“The Turtle Cries”

The works all describe the same event, but in differing degrees of detail and with different emphasis. Perhaps most importantly, they attribute the dazed, drugged behavior to both the fictional Noguchi and the real Akutagawa. With the exception of “The Fan from Hunan,” Hyakken uses the same adjective “slurred” (*bero bero*) to describe Noguchi and Akutagawa's speech. One noticeable difference is the amount of dialogue and onomatopoeia in “The Bowler Hat” to evocatively portray Noguchi's condition.⁸ This use of expanded dialogue is seen in another scene in “The Bowler Hat” set in Noguchi's study, where Aochi waits with three other guests. The same incident is described in “The Turtle Cries,” but here the only dialogue is between Hyakken and Akutagawa, whereas there is an extensive conversation between Noguchi and his other guests in “The Bowler Hat.”⁹ We might conclude that onomatopoeia and dialogue are features more of fiction than *zuihitsu*; however, Sakai mentions a similar use of dialogue when Hyakken converted a diary entry into the *zuihitsu*

“Notebook of Anger.”¹⁰ These stylistic changes are worth pursuing, and they may lead to a more concrete criteria with which to distinguish genres, but this is beyond the scope of the current project.

Sakai argues for his autobiographical reading because the “facts” or details about Noguchi are verified by their inclusion in the *zuihitsu* about Akutagawa. But the *zuihitsu* were written after, some over twenty years after the events portrayed in the story. Could Hyakken have remembered these conversations verbatim? Or is it possible he drew on the “fictional” story to refresh his memory? Since “The Bowler Hat” was written first, it is highly possible that it served as source material for the subsequent *zuihitsu*. What is noteworthy and apparent in Sakai’s argument is his conviction that *zuihitsu* “contain no fiction.”

There are also facts that argue against reading the story autobiographically. “The Bowler Hat” takes place between the Fall and Spring,¹¹ while the two work together at the Military Academy, during which time Noguchi commits suicide. However, Akutagawa and Hyakken worked together at the Naval Engineers Academy, and not the Military Academy, and more importantly, they were colleagues in 1918, but Akutagawa did not kill himself until 1927. Aochi also talks about taking off days during the week, but Hyakken only worked at the Naval Engineers Academy one day a week. Hyakken not only took liberty with small details but with the larger timeline itself, collapsing

nine years into six months.

More important than mincing details is the fact that the incidents Sakai notes for their similarity, while they portray Noguchi's final days, do not comprise the main part of the story. They are not key to setting the mood of the story or to describing Aochi's illness, which takes up the majority of the text. This is not to say that the *zuihitsu* are not worthwhile. The *zuihitsu* are in and of themselves worth examining for the ways in which the same events are described from different angles, or with different emphasis. To some degree I agree with Sakai; these *zuihitsu*, unlike the Professor Hyakkien works, do appear to be nonfictional, or at the least lack that guise of fiction seen in the earlier collection. However, the interest should lie more in Hyakken's method of presentation and re-presentation, than in issues of fiction versus nonfiction.

At this point I leave the *zuihitsu* and look exclusively at the fictional "The Bowler Hat" for its depictions of insanity. Such an analysis allows for discussion of the social commentary in the Taishō period on mental illness and provides an opportunity to compare it with the atmosphere of *Realm of the Dead* and also with another fictional work about insanity, *Cogwheels*.

"The Bowler Hat" and the Disease of Modernity

Mental illness is a recurring theme in literature from the Taishō and early Shōwa periods. Insane asylums and the treatment of various mental illnesses

feature in works such as Hirotsu Kazuo's *The Age of Neurosis* (*Shinkeibyô jidai*, 1917), Akutagawa's *Cogwheels*, Yumeno Kyûsaku's *Dogura Magura* (1935) and the Neosensualist's film *A Page of Madness* (*Kurutta ippêji*, 1926) for which Kawabata Yasunari wrote the screenplay. Mental illness was, however, more than just a literary device, it was a social reality. Akutagawa feared he would inherit his mother's insanity (Keene 1984, 556-57) and Uno Kôji was committed in May 1927. Uno is said to be the model for the character of Saitô in "The Bowler Hat" (1: 105).¹²

Institutionalization of the mentally ill quadrupled over a five-year period, rising from 1,500 in 1923 to 6,381 in 1928 (Namase, 486), a phenomenon captured in the title of the 1932 publication *The Age of Neurosis* by the medical doctor Sata Yoshihisa.¹³ Various terms were employed, among the most common was *shinkei suiijaku* or neurasthenia, in more simple terms, a nervous breakdown. There is also the less medical and more discriminatory term *kichigai*, or crazy, although this term is not new to Taishô. The diagnosis of mental illness was inextricably intertwined with the West and modernization; at the time it was commonly referred to as "civilization disease" (*bunmeibyô*), "city disease" (*tokaibyô*) (Sata, 297), "modern disease" (*gendaibyô*) (292), "sickness of the age" (*jidaibyô*) (292) and "American disease" (*Amerikabyô*) (Minami, 498). Asylums were far from comfortable or comforting, and patients were treated like criminals, as seen in "Notes From an Former Patient of an Insane Asylum" (*Seishin byôin kara dete*

kita mono no shuki), an article printed in March 1925 in the journal *Fujin kôron* (Namase, 487).

Hyakken does not employ the medical terminology of Akutagawa's "The Two Letters," but does depict the degrading mental state of both Aochi and Noguchi. Aochi's sanity declines as the story progresses, but the situation is complicated by his persistent and purposefully strange behavior. It is not clear to the reader or to Aochi himself if he is simply acting the part or really losing his mind. At times he revels in the opportunity to scare and shock his colleagues and the waitresses at a restaurant he frequents, all the while growing afraid of his own eccentric behavior.

Within the first two sections, Aochi is already cast as somewhat paranoid and misanthropic. His relationship with the other teachers at the academy is becoming increasingly strained and his colleagues are beginning to gossip about him. The first diagnosis of his behavior as unstable comes from Noguchi. Aochi and his wife were discussing the wife's dying sister and all of a sudden Aochi makes a remark that he cannot believe came out of his mouth. He is not surprised at the content, but the fact that it was he who actually spoke the words. When he relates the story to Noguchi, his friend implies it may be a sign of something more serious.

"It was definitely you who said it. But even so, it's not good. Blurting out words you aren't even thinking, and then hearing your own voice as someone else's—pretty soon it's the real thing

for you.”

...

“It’s scary. You’d better watch yourself,” he said again. He really looked frightened.

“I’m fine. I’m fine. I can’t talk to you about this.”

“Hey, this goes beyond the strange and mysterious. Your wife must have really been surprised. I’m getting nervous just imagining the look on your face.”

“But my frau heard the voice too.”

“This voice you talk about was your own voice.”

“No it wasn’t. First off, why would I be surprised by my own voice?”

“It was your expression that got your wife. But, if by some chance you didn’t say it, that’s even scarier.”

“Now you see why I’m afraid.”

“No, no. That’s not what I meant. If it really wasn’t your voice, that means you’re starting to hear things. You’re really in trouble now. You sure scared the hell out of me.” (1: 87-88)

Higuchi Satoru, in his essay “Uchida Hyakken’s ‘The Bowler Hat,’” argues that the splitting of Aochi’s voice into his own and an unrecognizable one, is representative of the splitting of his self (212). This schizophrenic behavior is implied in another incident at a restaurant Aochi frequents. After dreaming of his grandmother, who passed away five or six years prior, Aochi decides to visit her grave. Donning his bowler hat, he heads out into the rainy day, but decides against it before reaching the cemetery and stops at a restaurant instead. He purposely behaves oddly to frighten the staff but becomes entranced by a story one of the geisha tells about a customer who is crazy. Aochi listens intently as she describes this madman, a university foreign language professor with a strange habit of always wearing a bowler hat. The mention of the hat

makes Aochi think that she had been talking about him the whole time.

Higuchi suggest that in this scene Hyakken creates a Jekyll and Hyde effect. Aochi listens to the geisha describe his own behavior as if it were someone else's, much in the same way his own voice is unrecognizable. The everyday becomes defamiliarized and he starts to become bothered by the ordinary, such as Noguchi's hands. In another scene he develops a debilitating fear of open spaces, as the heretofore normal school yard is transformed into a frightening sea by a light snowfall.

The shallow snow gave way with a crunching sound under my feet and when I'd gone about thirty feet or so across the yard, I was gripped by fear and frozen in my tracks. My legs cramped up, immobilizing me. I was floating amidst a vast ocean. The waves above me reflected the light as they closed in, splashing my chin. I couldn't advance any further. Forget moving forward, I couldn't move at all, yet still felt I could collapse at any moment. (1: 93)

A friendly colleague comforts Aochi, telling him that this panic attack of his is not uncommon and nobody would think anything amiss had it been a case of vertigo instead. Aochi, however, starts to worry that perhaps he is losing his mind, that this is symptomatic of something serious. He has other strange and unexplainable experiences. The water in his bedside glass keeps disappearing, he hears a voice out in the night, and has a recurring dream in which three unknown men approach and give him a cold stare.

One night while home alone with his child, he hears bestial cries and

when his wife returns to find him in a panic, she warns that maybe it is time to see a doctor. Noguchi's remarks about hearing things start to bother him, and Aochi wonders if that voice he hears at night is really there or not. Afraid of what the future holds, he worries about what others are saying about him and how he will be treated. He recalls a story someone told him about a patient in an insane asylum. When asked what he was in for, the patient replied that it was a difference of opinion. He thought everyone was crazy and they thought the same of him, but since he was outnumbered, he was committed. Aochi fears that he too will be deemed unfit by those around him. But, he resolves to overcome his fear by purposely acting the part and scaring those who doubt him. His primary target is Noguchi.

Aochi tells Noguchi about his cousin who had a nervous breakdown (*shinkei suiijaku*) and started to act strangely. The cousin recovered, but his second wife went insane and died. Noguchi is deeply troubled by the story. He worries about the narrator, but also appears concerned about his own future. "He [Noguchi] seemed to have decided that someday he would end up like that. Or maybe he was just waiting for it to happen, living in fear" (1: 96).

Their games continue as Noguchi introduces Aochi to a group of visitors: "This is my friend and senior, author of *Menô*, Aochi Toyojirô, the madman" (1: 99). Although he is in good spirits, Noguchi does not look well. In fact, Aochi is shocked when he first sees him. "His already thin face was even more gaunt, the

skin pulled over the bones, and his hair lacked color and luster. But more mysterious than that was the way the outline of his face seemed doubled” (1: 98). Noguchi tells Aochi he worried that Aochi would kill himself on his trip to China sometime back. But then Noguchi turns to his friend and says with conviction, “you don’t have the courage to commit suicide” (1: 105). Noguchi’s words take on meaning when he kills himself a few pages later.

The distortions in perception also happen on the level of language itself. In one of the most humorous scenes in the story, Aochi composes a letter to a colleague at school.¹⁴ He and Aochi had traded barbs about the shape of each other’s face. In response to Aochi calling his long, he tells Aochi his face is wide. Aochi take almost half a day to compose this letter in which he uses the Sino-Japanese character for the word long ‘nagai’ eighteen times in nine sentences. Of the eighteen, only three are meant to be the word long (*naganaga*, *naganagashii*, *yonaga*), in the other instances he substitutes the character *naga* for parts of other words and even breaks syntax by spreading the sounds *na* and *ga* over two separate words. The letter is transcribed below followed by an approximate translation. The underlined sections represent those written with the character. The asterisk represents one instance in which the character appears upside down to produce the reading *gana*.

Naganaga gobusata itashimashita to môshitai tokoro nagara,
kyô ohiru ome ni kakatta bakari de wa, ikura kôin ga ya no gotoku
nagarete mo hen desu ne. Naganagashii maeoki wa yamete, yôken

ni utsuritai no desu keredo, ainiku nan ni mo yôji **ga nai*** no desu. Yamunaku mado no soto o **nagamete** iru to, makkura **na garasu** to no soto ni, hen **na gara** no kimono o kita wakai **onna ga** tatte iru rashii no desu. Bikkuri shite tachiagarô to suru to, onna wa watashi no hô ni **nagashime** o shite, sore kiri kiemashita. Watashi wa fushigi **na gakkari** shita kimochi ga shimashita. Dôji ni nikai no hisashi de iya **na garigari** to iu oto ga kikoemashita. **Onna ga** nozoita no wa, ie no neko no itazura datta no deshô. Aki no **yonaga** no tsurezure ni, nan no **tsunagari** mo nai koto o môshi agemashita. Mappitsunagara okusama ni yoroshiku. (1: 86)

I've been meaning to write to you for a long time and having seen you today, it is strange how time passes like a the flight of an arrow. Disposing of the long introduction, I hope to move to the matter at hand, but unfortunately I have nothing to say. Staring out my window, outside the pitch black glass door I see a young girl in a strangely patterned kimono. Surprised by this sight I got up and noticed she was giving me a sidelong glance, but then she disappeared. I was strangely disappointed. At the same time I heard an annoying scratching sound on the second floor eaves. The woman must have been looking at our cat. Passing time on this long autumn evening, I have related these disjointed events. I apologize for not having written sooner, please send my regards to your wife.

The joke here works on a number of different levels. First, the content of the letter is absurd. Aochi apologizes for not having written, but then proceeds to write of disconnected and irrelevant events, purely as an occasion to work the character 'long' into his letter. The repeated use of the character itself is humorous as is the obvious lengths to which the narrator has gone to incorporate it, even writing it upside down.

Higuchi remarks on the parallels between Aochi's twisted mind and the ways in which he twists the language. He inserts the character into

homophonous words, such as the verb *nagareru* 'to flow', the noun *tsunagari* 'a connection' and the particle *nagara* 'though, but, yet'. In a more unconventional usage, he splits the *na* and *ga* between words, alternately using them as the adjectival or nominal particle, taking advantage of the fact that written Japanese does not have spaces between words. In such cases he inserts the *na* or *ga* into lexical items such as the nouns *onna* 'woman', *gara* 'pattern' and *garasu* 'glass', as well as into the onomatopoeia *garigari*, which is used to represent scratching sounds.

Since the Sino-Japanese character not only indicates sound but meaning, there is a disconnect between the writing system and the word it represents. In effect Hyakken bifurcates the words, creating an additional layer of meaning present in the character for the word 'long'. He breaks various writing conventions through these substitutions by using the character to replace other characters, and other words normally written in the phonetic scripts *hiragana* and *katakana*, used for inflections and particles on the one hand, and foreign loan words or emphasis on the other. This last case can be seen in the above usage for 'glass' *garasu*, which is normally written with *katakana*.

Aochi also brings to light the nontransparent nature of language in a conversation he has with the geisha who later trick him. One of them comments that it is extremely quiet outside, using the adverbial expression *shin to* to represent the lack of sound. Aochi asks if she can hear the sound *shin*, to which

she replies, "Of course you can't hear that sound. It's because you can't hear anything that you use the expression *shin to*" (1: 90). But Aochi replies that he can hear the sound *shin*, even though it is only a linguistic expression to represent silence. Aochi questions the representative nature of language itself.

Other instances of word play used in the context of mental instability appear in Akutagawa's *Cogwheels*, but without the humorous overtones. Specific words and phrases take on special meaning as the narrator's sanity slips away. The narrator, Mr. A, hears the words "all right" spoken in English outside his hotel room. He repeats this expression over and over in his mind, and when he tries to resume writing his latest story, he fills the page with "all right." He then receives a phone call informing him that his brother-in-law killed himself; Mr. A remarks that now he understands the meaning of "all right" (1970, 208-9). In another scene the narrator is on his way to an asylum (*seishin byôin*) when the words *irairasuru* 'to be frustrated, agitated' bring about the following associations: "tantalizing—Tantalus—Inferno" (1970, 214). Mr. A thinks back to the previous scene in which he tried to enter a restaurant that was closed, and could only look through the glass at the fruit on the table. Like Tantalus, he too is denied access. The image of Tantalus calls up Dante's *Inferno*, another symbol of the narrator's constant suffering.

In another scene, Mr. A picks up his phone and someone on the other end keeps repeating something that sounds like 'mole'. Even after hanging up the

phone he cannot stop thinking about the word mole. It appears in the text first in Japanese phonetic script, then in romanized English (1970, 226). He frightens himself when he associates the English word 'mole' with the French 'la mort'. "Just as death had closed in on my brother-in-law, it was closing in on me" (1970, 226). He looks in the mirror and is reminded of his doppelganger, the appearance of which is a precursor to death. But, Mr. A muses that maybe death will come to his doppelganger instead of himself (1970, 226).

Without reference to texts such as *Cogwheels*, we could attribute the paranoid atmosphere, visual and aural hallucinations, and split-selves in "The Bowler Hat" solely to the influence of *Realm of the Dead*. We could also read "The Bowler Hat" as embellished biography; towards the end of his life Akutagawa was heavily medicated and saw cogwheels spinning in front of his eyes. However, Hyakken's text can also be read as one of the many Taishō and early Shōwa commentaries on mental illness. It is often said that Akutagawa was so debilitated that he ran out of material for his stories and had to turn to his own life. On a certain level *Cogwheels* can be read as autobiography, but just as in the case of "The Bowler Hat" we must be careful not to allow such an approach to obscure the very literary aspects of these works. Real life aside, these authors used mental illness as a device to create literature.

"Tokyo Diary"

Okaya Kôji argues that "With the exception of *"Tokyo Diary,"* Hyakken basically stopped writing dream literature after *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur* (Okaya, 137).¹⁵ Although I do not completely agree with Okaya's remark, he does point out the fact that *"Tokyo Diary"* shows, perhaps more than any other text, the influence of Hyakken's early work. Not only do the stories in *"Tokyo Diary"* evoke a similar atmosphere of altered perception and disconnected reality, but to the reader familiar with the earlier two collections, *"Tokyo Diary"* is an extension of the previous works, occupying the same literary space.

"Tokyo Diary" is a collection of twenty-three vignettes set in different locations around Tokyo Station and the Imperial palace, such as Hibiya, Yûrakuchô, Kudan, Kanda, Hanzômon, Yotsuya, Ichigaya and Koishikawa. Although the work claims to be a diary, *"Tokyo Diary"* first appeared in the *sôsbaku ran* or creative writing column of the journal *Kaizô* in January 1938. It was later collected in *Bridge on the Hill* (*Oka no hashi*, 1938), Hyakken's ninth volume of *zuihitsu*. The story presents classification problems and is worth looking at from the perspective of genre. But first I compare it with its predecessors, *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*.

The last episode, number twenty-three, calls up the failed reunion of father and son in *"Realm of the Dead."* In place of the chophouse under the embankment, the narrator is now at one of the restaurants outside the entrance

to Tokyo Station. It is noisy and crowded and at first this unsettles the narrator, but after a few drinks the noise seems more distant and he is no longer bothered by his surroundings. Somewhere in the crowd he hears a familiar voice, but cannot tell where it is coming from. He tries coming to the restaurant at different times, but still hears this hoarse voice of an older man. Although he is unable to make out any words or hear the voice of this man's companion, he looks forward to his trips to the restaurant. It is as though the voice is waiting for him.

Once when the narrator is particularly drunk, he hears the voice much clearer than before and can almost make out the conversation. A week or so later the voice coughs and the narrator is taken aback.

The sound of that cough was an exact match for my father's who had died thirty years ago. I thought perhaps it was my father, but upon thinking a little more, I realized that my father was younger than me when he died, and the voice I heard was definitely older than me. Unless you continue to age after death, my father's voice would most certainly sound younger. (3: 218)

Once the narrator decides that this cannot be his father's voice, the coughing stops and the voice returns to its former talking state. Although there are similarities to "Realm of the Dead," this final recognition that it is someone else's voice returns the story to the realm of the normal. For a moment, the narrator in "Tokyo Diary" believes he is hearing a voice from beyond, and had it turned out to be true, we can imagine him searching the restaurant for his father, as did the character in the earlier story. If indeed this story is meant to reverberate with

“*Realm of the Dead*” it is also in some ways a rejection of it. The earlier story adds force to this one, but our narrator is now older and less inclined to have the encounters experienced by the dark riverbank.

In the opening to this episode, the narrator mentions he has been staying at the Tokyo Station Tetsudô Hotel for a half of a month doing work. Hyakken himself stayed at this very hotel while writing “*Tokyo Diary*,” and he talks about it in the *zuihitsu* “*Rambling notes from the Tetsudôkan*” (Tetsudôkan manki) also included in *Bridge on the Hill*.¹⁶ It is possible that Hyakken’s stay at Tokyo Station is responsible for the fact that the stories are all set in the neighborhoods surrounding the palace.¹⁷ However, the narrator from section twenty-three mentions that he has not once left the hotel, other than to go down to the restaurants in the station.¹⁸ If we assume the narrator is consistent throughout “*Tokyo Diary*,” then his travels around the city must have happened at some time prior to his stay at the hotel.

It may be possible to use autobiographical information to account for the locations of the stories, but beyond that it seems irrelevant. There is a time disjuncture between when Hyakken was writing the story at the hotel and the narrator’s travels in the surrounding city. Many of the events described in “*Tokyo Diary*,” although set in a very real city, are surreal. If we choose to place this story in line with *Realm of the Dead*, then we must acknowledge the shift in setting from the rural to the urban. Now the means for invoking the surreal is

dependent on real aspects of the modern city.

The opening selection in "Tokyo Diary" sets the eerie mood for the work. The train the narrator is on breaks down at the Hibiya intersection and everyone deboards.¹⁹ As is common in other Hyakken stories, there is a description of the weather; in the warm darkness the rain falls in large drops. Although it is raining hard, the drops seem to have no substance and turn to mist on contact, creating a smoky effect. Mishima Yukio remarks that this description of the raindrops having no substance signals the reader that something out of the ordinary will happen. This line about the raindrops acts as "a bridge connecting the real and the surreal" (Mishima, 38).

The water in the moat surrounding the Imperial Palace is strangely illuminated, and it moves back and forth, rising and falling so as to make the viewer dizzy.²⁰ The water eventually overflows onto the street, carrying with it a giant eel, larger in size than a cow. The area darkens, and the colored lights of the traffic signals reflect off its wet body. The narrator tries unsuccessfully to find a taxi, and ends up walking to Yûrakuchô, where there are countless, small, two-to-three-inch eels covering the buildings (3: 191-92).

Animals appear in a number of the episodes in "Tokyo Diary." In addition to this giant eel are the restaurant customers with animal faces in episode six, the strange sea creatures in episode eight, the blind school children who turn into goats in episode nine, the phantom horse in episode fourteen, and

the pack of wolves that run across a Kanda intersection in episode seventeen.

The appearance of supernatural animals and human-animal transformations is reminiscent of the unusual occurrences in *Realm of the Dead*. However not all the events in "Tokyo Diary" draw their imagery from nature. Although some of the works in *Port Arthur* were also in an urban setting, this conscious use of inner Tokyo locations is new. What is not particularly new, however, is the dark mysterious atmosphere, the strange meteorological conditions and the appearance of the very nonreal, such as a supersized eel crossing a major city street.

Episode twenty-two, which is also set at the Hibiya intersection, takes place inside a public phone booth. This time there are no strange animal appearances, rather the episode demonstrates the effect of this new city space on perception. The narrator enters a phone booth and sees a beautiful woman in the adjoining booth.

I needn't restrain myself since the beautiful object I gazed on was enclosed in a glass box. I forgot about the phone and looked to my heart's content. The image across from me became more and more lively. Was she talking into the phone, or speaking to me through the dirty glass? (3: 216-17)

Through this barrier of dirty glass, he is able to convince himself that the phone lines are connected and she is speaking directly to him. The booth also obscures her appearance and the narrator is shocked to see her outside the booth. The

everyday interaction is transformed by the confines of the phone booth.

Another instance of space being transformed happens in episode four when the Marunouchi building disappears. The narrator gets off a train at Tokyo Station and notices that the crescent moon seems oddly out of place in the sky. Normally the moon would not appear in that spot because it would be blocked by the Marunouchi building, but the building is no longer there.²¹ He walks over for a closer look and finds an empty lot with puddles of water and tufts of grass growing here and there. Since the Marunouchi building also had a basement, one would not expect the ground to be so flat and even, indicating that the building could not have been demolished.

The next day the narrator returns to the site for an appointment at a law office in the Marunouchi building. The building is still missing, but the area is now fenced off; however, the wire is rusted and the wood old looking, as though the fence could not possibly have been constructed the day before. Light flickers off the puddles as water striders skip across the surface. Nobody else seems bothered by the fact that this major landmark has disappeared; the bus driver calls out the name of the stop "Maru building" and another man looks confused when the narrator asks what happened to the building, as if he had never heard of it before.

The narrator stops by to visit a journalist friend and takes him to the site. He is equally as shocked. The next day, however, when the narrator returns the

building is back. His lawyer was not at work the day before so he cannot confirm the building's disappearance. The narrator is tempted to ask the people on the street, but he decides against it.

On the way home I stepped outside and turned around for one more look at the Maru building, but there wasn't a thing out of place. Not having any prior experience, I now knew that strange things do occasionally happen to large building like this. But I couldn't stop wondering— wasn't the grass being crushed and where had the water striders flown off to? (3: 195)

The moon and fenced in area are all familiar from "Kudan," as a surrealistic space is transported to the middle of the city, replacing a major urban landmark. Mishima remarked that this scene is so realistic that the open space becomes the real and the Marunouchi building the phantom (38).

Other stories are actually set in the Kudan and neighboring districts, resonating with both "Kudan" and "The War Memorial Museum." In episode seventeen, the narrator is waiting in Kanda for the train headed to Kudan. The street at Sudachô had recently been widened and on this quiet night is transformed into a large open plain. It is late at night and nobody else is around. Wind blows dust into moving clouds, and when the narrator turns around he sees a pack of wolves emerge from behind a statue of the Naval Commander Hirose Takeo, and run toward Kudan. This statue is significant because Hirose died fighting in the Russo-Japanese war and was revered as a war hero (*gunshin*), hence the connection to Kudan and the Yasukuni shrine.²² But the statue does

not come to life as the mannequins did in “The War Memorial Museum,” and the narrator is not particularly frightened by the animals. This is another deviation from the attitude of previous narrators. But at the same time, Hyakken again superimposes the folkloric onto the modern urban.

Episode six opens as the narrator’s friend takes him to a restaurant in a back street in Ginza. “Because I hadn’t been there yet, my friend took me to the *tonkatsu* or pork restaurant. It was on a small side street behind Ginza, and there was nobody out in front of the restaurant” (3: 197). This is reminiscent of the scene in “The War Memorial Museum” when Kimura leads the narrator “to a restaurant down an alley off a sidestreet that [he] didn’t even know existed at the base of Kudanzaka” (1: 109). The *tonkatsu* place, in its resemblance to the restaurant of the former story, implies that something out of the ordinary will happen here.

The restaurant gets crowded and the narrator feels claustrophobic. The majority of the episode is dedicated to describing the different sounds inside and outside the eatery. The sound of the frying oil drowns out the sound of the rain. Lightening flashes outside, but the narrator cannot hear the thunder. The restaurant is filled with the sound of customers and clinking glasses, and mixed amidst the others is a sound the narrator is unable to identify. Having read “Tokyo Diary” in its entirety, this story will remind the reader of the voice in the restaurant in episode twenty-three.

The narrator hears someone coughing or choking in a doglike whine. A blue flash of lightening illuminates the inside of the restaurant, followed by a loud clap of thunder. The narrator leaps from his seat and the customers turn to face him. In that instant when they look at him, he sees they have the faces of dogs and foxes; they are beasts in western clothing, and in their midst some lick their chops with long tongues. Again characters turn into animals or reveal their true bestial faces. This is reminiscent of “Jintôshi” in which the animal herbalist’s younger brother has the face of a horse. This frightening scene is revealed by a confluence of weather and sound, important elements in *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*. In the next episode, however, it is not sound but movement that triggers the appearance of the surreal.

In episode three, the narrator is taken for a ride around the city by an old man who was a professional driver for many years for Mitsui. The driver appears in an old car which has been altered; the back seat has been replaced with a swivel chair. The car seems unusually roomy and the height of the chair raises the eye level of the passenger, creating a new view of the scenery outside. The car runs so smoothly it is like it is driving underwater, and it is so quiet when it stops the narrator feels he is sinking under the surface (1: 193). There are a number of references to watery landscapes in earlier collections. The narrator in “The War Memorial Museum” is thrown out of the restaurant and put into a car which he tells us “sped atop a pitch black river, the dark water catching the

light and flickering back at me" (1: 110). And later in the story the quiet of the house makes him think he is sinking underwater (1: 111). The narrator in "Kudan" describes his surroundings as a strange "underwater like field" (1: 22). Given the outcomes of these other texts, the reference to water in "Tokyo Diary" should be taken as an indication that something unusual will happen.

A car pulls up next to them at Yotsuyamitsuke, but there is nobody driving this green convertible. The car moves nonetheless, and they keep pace through Hanzōmon, past the Yasukuni shrine, down Kudanzaka into Kanda and across the Sumida river. None of the passers-by or policemen notice anything strange about the driverless car. When the narrator's car turns a quick corner, he rises out of his seat and feels as though he will fall forward. In that instant he sees the driverless car in front of them and notices that in between the wheels and the street, he can see the distant rooftops and factories, as though the car were floating, its wheels never touching the ground (3: 194).

Masugi refers to this swivel seat as another hinge connecting the real and the surreal. Had it not been for the special seat, the narrator would not have experienced the surroundings as he did, and he would not have seen that the car in front was floating. But, just as in the case of the Maru building, nobody else seems to notice these strange occurrences.

The influence of Hyakken's earlier fiction is obvious, but are these stories to be seen as simply a return to past themes and techniques, or is there

something new here? Kobayashi Hideo reviewed “Tokyo Diary” in the *Asahi Shinbun* in 1938. Although he found some of the episodes interesting, he got bored with the story. Maybe Kobayashi had not read *Realm of the Dead* or *Port Arthur*, or perhaps he had and was looking for Hyakken to do something new. Hyakken was similarly criticized by Satô Haruo who saw him as repeating himself in the collection “The Crane.”²³ But Hyakken is doing something new in “Tokyo Diary.” In addition to the nonchalant attitude of the narrator, the episodes all center around a particular area of the city. Unlike previous fiction, this work claims to be a diary, and it presents genre challenges not found in *Realm of the Dead*.

In an essay titled “About *Oka no hashi*” (*Oka no hashi ni tsuite*) Hyakken comments on the relationship between publishing and genre. His collections have all been labeled *zuihitsu*, but many of them contain stories that were published in the creative writing columns of monthly journals. He asks his audience to read and decide for themselves, since in Hyakken’s opinion, such labels do not really matter. (4: 101)

Hyakken seems to be asking the reader to ignore the genre designations of *zuihitsu*, *shōsetsu* and *sōsaku*, but can we also ignore the term *nikki*, or diary, in the title of the story at hand? As mentioned in previous chapters, Hyakken published six volumes of diaries written before, during and after the war. The diaries have been seen by critics as testing grounds and literary repositories for

his fiction and *zuihitsu*. But, as stated previously, it is necessary to view the diaries as literary works, in the sense that they are far from unadulterated, day-to-day, linear accounts. I explore this genre term more in the next section.

"Tokyo Diary" and Genre

"Tokyo Diary" is not an easy fit for either the English term diary or the Japanese *nikki*. Konishi Jin'ichi defines the premodern *nikki* as: "A prose composition, written in the present tense, that is concerned with the life of a historical person" (2: 256).²⁴ We could add that *nikki* are not "invariably narrated in the first person or written by the main character" (McCullough, 15), and the marking of time is not limited to daily or near daily entries. The flow of time is fluid in the *nikki*, as is the content, which can range from the personal to the public, and include events that are far removed from the narrator.

"Tokyo Diary" is a first person, present tense narrative, but since the narrator is not identified, we cannot say with any certainty that this is a historical person. Although there are indications that the story has an autobiographical basis, the identification with Hyakken seems fraught with difficulty. The flow of time is unclear, as none of the entries are dated, and the only indication of time is as mentioned above regarding the narrator's stay at the hotel. It is the content, however, that presents the main problem. Although *nikki* can be used to record dreams, and in the premodern era the supernatural was considered to be real,

the appearance of a giant eel and the disappearance of the Maru building are far from historically verifiable events.

Perhaps if we knew our narrator was hallucinating or under the influence of drugs, we could consider this to be a diary or chronicle of his visions, but there is no textual evidence to support this. The everyday events, train riding, eating at restaurants, walking and driving through the city, are prime material for a diary, but the rest is not.

Kawamura Jirô argues that *Tokyo Burning* (*Tôkyô shôjin*), Hyakken's wartime diary, is a type of travel diary (*tabi nikki*), because it chronicles the experience of moving from the everyday into the non-everyday (*hinichijô*) (52). One of the functions of *nikki* is to highlight the experience of everyday life, and in wartime Japan the everyday certainly becomes very atypical as the city is destroyed by air raids. Unlike *Tokyo Burning*, "Tokyo Diary" does not chronicle the historical, but it does move from the normal and everyday into the non-everyday, and even into the paranormal.

The work can also be considered a travel diary or travel literature (*kikôbun*) because it moves around the city as the narrator traverses different neighborhoods. This may be stretching the definition of travel literature, but the narrator explores the city and in it discovers the new, strange and foreign within very familiar surroundings. Examples can be found in the following two episodes. In episode fourteen the narrator relates a story about a horse that

appears after eleven o'clock at night and runs through a break in the fence at the Koishikawa Botanical Garden. The story is told in such a way as to remind the reader of the folklore writings of Yanagita Kunio, who related local legends from various regions in Japan. The only difference is that Hyakken's story takes place within the confines of a well-known botanical garden in the city.

In episode twenty the narrator wanders into a tunnel being constructed at Yushima and discovers an unknown world. There is no electric lighting, yet the objects inside give off their own illumination. Large goldfish swim in puddles by the side of the road, and when he stops at a tea house, the waitress is also faintly glowing. He visits a small park where the trees glimmer and the fountain water resembles fireworks. He remarks that the scenery is more beautiful than that above ground. Unable to find his way out, he searches for someone to ask but there is nobody around. When he looks down he notices that his own body has begun to glow, as if he too has become part of this strange underground world.

If we consider "Tokyo Diary" to be travel literature, we can compare it with other travel writings of Hyakken's set both inside and outside of Japan. Hyakken wrote about his trips to Taiwan in the 1930s and 1940s, and his famous *The Idiot Train* (Ahô ressha) is a series of pseudotravelogues published in the 1950s. The first installment of *The Idiot Train* series coincided with the eightieth anniversary of the National Rail System, and its popularity may be linked to a

revival of interest in travel in the postwar years. Unlike "Tokyo Diary," the focus in *The Idiot Train* is less on the destinations and landscapes, as the narrator crosses internal and temporal borders reminiscent of *Realm of the Dead*. In the next section, however, we leave the topic of travel and return to the semi-autobiographical.

Sarasate and Hyakken

"The Sarasate Record" is the last story for consideration in this chapter and one which follows up on many of the issues relevant to "The Bowler Hat" and "Tokyo Diary." The title refers to a phonograph recording of Pablo de Sarasate's original composition *Zigeunerweisen*, on which Sarasate's voice can be heard. The narrator had borrowed this record from a friend, Nakasako, who later died, and the friend's widow, Ofusa, comes to retrieve it. The narrator does not understand why the widow is so persistent in wanting the record back, or how she even knows he has it, since Nakasako was not the type to have written such things down.

The story moves back and forth in time as it chronicles Nakasako's first meeting with Ofusa, formerly a geisha in the Tôhoku region where Nakasako was teaching. After resigning his post, Nakasako moves back to Tokyo, marries an old sweetheart and they have a daughter. The wife dies shortly after, and Nakasako, in need of a wet nurse, comes upon Ofusa by coincidence. They

marry and live a somewhat strained existence, with Nakasako dying a few years later. Ofusa cares for the daughter, Kimiko, and they move to a smaller house, bringing the story up to the narrative present. The record figures again in the end of the story as Ofusa keeps returning for it, because Kimiko has a recurring dream in which she mentions the narrator's name and his house. Ofusa takes this as a sign that there is something of her late husband's at the narrator's house that is meant for Kimiko. When the narrator returns the record to Ofusa, she has a strange, emotional response to Sarasate's garbled voice.

In his second book on Hyakken, Sakai Hideyuki analyzes "The Sarasate Record" with a heavy biographical slant. Sakai's book is divided between biographical research based on Hyakken's love letters to his first wife, and literary analysis of Hyakken's stories. The biographical aspects of the first half of the book carry over into the literary sections. Sakai openly states that his analysis of "The Sarasate Record" is an attempt to sort the factual from the fictional elements in the story (1995, 189). As part of this endeavor, he compares sections of "The Sarasate Record" with selections from Hyakken's diary and also with *zuihitsu* written before and after the story. Sakai convincingly tracks down biographical details and proposes real life models for the characters in the story. Although his efforts are to be applauded, and his analysis sheds light on Hyakken's life, it overlooks the literary aspects of the work in favor of the facts.

Okaya Kôji agrees with Sakai that “The Sarasate Record” is based in fact and can be regarded as the reminiscences of an old friend. However, he argues, once we put the story in the context of *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*, it takes on dreamlike qualities (136). I do not necessarily think the story should be considered a dream, but there are aspects of it that reverberate with earlier stories. It is also productive to compare it with the two collections listed above, and in so doing, we can turn the focus from the biographical to the literary.

“The Sarasate Record” is one of Hyakken’s best-known works. It is often included in anthologies of Hyakken’s fiction and was the basis for Suzuki Seijun’s critically acclaimed film, *Zigeunerweisen*. It was originally published in the journal *Shinchô* in November 1948, and later included in Hyakken’s third collection of fiction or creative writing (*sôsakushû*), *The True Story of Sôhei* (Jisetsu Sôheiki, 1950). It is noteworthy that the only other two such collections are *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*. *The True Story of Sôhei* is well known for the title story about Morita Sôhei, and also includes “The Turtle Cries,” mentioned above regarding Akutagawa.

Sakai’s analysis is worth reviewing because he is working within Lejeune’s “autobiographical space,” found in the nexus of fiction, diary and *zuihitsu*. Hyakken creates this space by retelling the same story in various places and styles. He also creates confusion by changing both major and minor details.

The Autobiographical Space of Sarasate

Sakai divides “The Sarasate Record” into three parts: a) The original meeting of Nakasako and Ofusa, when she is a geisha; b) Nakasako’s first marriage and the death of his wife; c) Nakasako’s second wife, Ofusa. Sakai sets out to investigate the real people behind the characters of Nakasako and Ofusa and their relationship to each other and to the narrator.

The character Nakasako is commonly thought to have been based on Hyakken’s friend Mr. Sone, a university professor.²⁵ This name Sone is an assumed name used by Hyakken in his diary, and Sakai feels it is important to keep his real identity a secret.²⁶ Sakai’s first task is to track down information on this geisha Ofusa and part A of the story. He culls information from the following six *zuihitsu*: “An Earlier Visit” (Sôyû, 1934), “Okaru” (Okaru, 1936), “Waves” (Nami, 1938), “The Eel” (Meso, 1951), “The Riverbank” (Dote, 1966) and “Iconoclasm” (Aiconokurasumu, 1967). These *zuihitsu* mention a trip to Sendai and other small details about the food and lodgings that are relevant to “The Sarasate Record.”

Sakai’s most important discovery in this section regards the model for Ofusa. In the story Nakasako falls for Ofusa, but in real life Sakai claims that it was not Sone, but Hyakken himself. “Okaru” describes Sone’s feelings for a geisha named Okaru. In “The Sarasate Record” Nakasako asks Ofusa about her

accent, only to discover that they are from the same hometown. There are similar scenes in the “An Earlier Visit” and “The Riverbank,” but here it is the unnamed narrator who is attracted to the geisha, not Sone or Nakasako. Because the narrator of “The Riverbank” mentions having written *Realm of the Dead*, Sakai regards him as Hyakken. The reader familiar with Hyakken’s life wonders if this geisha is Hyakken’s second wife Satô Koi, but Sakai does not comment on this.²⁷

Sakai turns to Hyakken’s diary and finds more information to back up his assertions regarding Hyakken and the geisha. Ultimately he decides that part A is not about Sone, but about the author himself. Part B is about Mr. Sone and his wife, as revealed in Hyakken’s diary entries chronicling Sone’s wife’s illness and funeral, as well as Sone’s philandering after her death. Part C, however, is almost purely fiction. The Ofusa of section C is not based on the geisha Hyakken developed feelings for in Tôhoku, nor is she necessarily modeled on Sone’s wet nurse. Sakai furthers his argument by pointing out that the Sarasate record did actually exist, but Hyakken did not get it from Sone, rather it came from Sôseki.

Both Hyakken’s daughter Itô Mino and Sôseki’s son Natsume Shinroku, mention that the record player, or phonograph, and the record itself originated from the Sôseki house.²⁸ After Sôseki died, his son Jun’ichi brought the family’s old Victor to Hyakken with twenty or thirty records, among which was the Sarasate. Shinroku remembers the strange sounding, muttering voice of Sarasate, and Itô also comments on its eerie quality.

Both the record and Hyakken's friend Sone were real, but "The Sarasate Record" is more than just a compilation of these facts. One could argue even stronger and say that these biographical facts are peripheral to the storytelling itself. The appeal of the work derives mainly from the way in which Hyakken sets the atmosphere; Ofusa's quirky behavior and Kimiko's dream, aspects which Sakai has not proven to be based in fact, are key to the mood. I remove the story from this biographical context and examine it for its literary qualities. I focus the analysis on sections one, two, three, ten and eleven of "The Sarasate Record."

Sarasate and Realm of the Dead

Okaya points out the similarities between the opening to "The Sarasate Record" and "The Reflection" from *Port Arthur*. Compare the passages below, starting with "The Reflection."

The gales that had been blowing all afternoon suddenly died down around ten o'clock at night. Somewhere in the distance a dog howled with a humanlike cry. All else was silent. It felt like the desk I was leaning on, the cushion underneath me, the room and the very house itself were quietly, little by little, slipping to the bottom of some gaping hole. (1: 120)

The wind that had been battering the rain doors suddenly died down around nightfall, and the house fell silent. It made me feel like I was gradually sinking down to an even quieter place. I placed my elbows on the desk and sat there, my mind a blank. Focusing on random thoughts, I started feeling better, but my

eyelids grew heavy. I heard a small, hard noise coming from the roof. Small stones must be rolling down the tiles, I thought. The rolling sound got faster and when it reached the eaves, I shuddered. It must have hit the eaves and fallen into the garden, but as I listened for it, my hair stood on end. I tried to calm down but instead tensed up and couldn't sit still. I stood up and walked toward the living room. My wife who heard the noise opened the sliding door and with a startle asked, "You're white as a ghost, what happened?" (6: 125)

As in other of Hyakken's stories, the meteorological conditions and seemingly insignificant sounds and actions set the stage for strange events to occur. This opening is definitely a return to the atmosphere of *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*. Although written in 1948, Okaya Kôji remarks that the unsettling sound of battering rain doors evokes images of a prewar Tokyo, where windows and doors rattled in the late autumn wind (137).

The next scene shifts to a bright, cheery atmosphere. An old student of the narrator's has stopped by and the two are enjoying a drink together. It grows dark outside and the wind starts blowing, bring the smell of sand with it. Then there is a knock at the door from Nakasako's wife Ofusa, who has come to collect some of his things. The significance of the sand is never explained, but since it is the same Sino-Japanese character with which the 'sa' in Nakasako's name is written, perhaps it foreshadows Ofusa's visit.

Nakasako has been dead less than a month, but Ofusa has already come twice to collect his belongings from the narrator's house. She always visits at the

same hour and always refuses to enter the house, remaining in the *genkan*, or entryway. The first two times she had come to collect reference books the narrator had borrowed from Nakasako, and now she returns for a phonograph record. Ofusa has brought along Kimiko, but she refuses to enter the house, and waits outside. The narrator returns the record, she leaves and he and his student resume their drinking. Although the cheery mood returns, the appearance of Ofusa is unsettling and even makes the *sake* taste bitter in the narrator's mouth.

In section three the student leaves and the narrator retires for the evening. The wind picks up and batters the house. Amidst the noise of the rattling rain doors is another, softer tapping that puzzles the narrator. He gets out of bed and is startled to find Ofusa at the door again. She returns this time for the Sarasate record, but the narrator cannot find it and sends her home with the promise he will keep looking.

Sections two and three are important for introducing Ofusa and her quirky behavior. Her suspiciously punctual visits, her refusal to enter the house and her detailed knowledge of her husband's belongings all peak the reader's interest. We never learn how she knows of these belongings, why she is insistent on getting them back, or why she always visits at the same hour. What we do know from this scene is that she has some deep attachment to these objects and is ready to retrieve them at all costs. She is so persistent that the narrator thinks of her as a collection agent. Kimiko's behavior is also mysterious, the reasons for

which are hinted at in section ten.

The intervening sections four through nine detail Nakasako's first meeting with Ofusa, his first marriage, his wife's death, his marriage to Ofusa and his death. In other words, these are the sections upon which Sakai's analysis is primarily based. These sections are important for laying out the relationships between characters, but do not help explain Ofusa or Kimiko's behavior in the opening or concluding parts.

Ofusa pays another timely visit to the narrator at the beginning of section ten. This time she has come to speak with the narrator's wife who is not home. Reluctantly she tells him her story. Recently Kimiko has been having a recurring dream. Every night at the same time she appears to be awake but will not respond to her mother's voice. She seems to be talking to someone, and Ofusa is convinced that it is the late Nakasako. At first Ofusa assumed it was a dream, but why would a dream continue over a series of nights and why always at the same hour? In her dreamlike state Kimiko says the narrator's name and Ofusa interprets this to mean that there is something of Nakasako's at the narrator's house that was meant for Kimiko.

The contact between a dead parent and a child through a dreamlike state is reminiscent of techniques and themes used in *Realm of the Dead* and *Port Arthur*. Ofusa's story unsettles both narrator and reader.²⁹ The dream or dreamlike state itself is unusual enough, but Ofusa's interpretation is even more

puzzling. If she cannot make out Kimiko's words, how does she know that Kimiko is having a conversation with her dead father? And how does mention of the narrator lead Ofusa to conclude that Kimiko wants to retrieve one of her father's belongings left at the narrator's house? This dream may explain Kimiko's reluctance to enter the narrator's house, but since the passage of time across the sections is not clear, there is no way to know, and Hyakken does not provide any answers.

The Sarasate record makes its appearance in the concluding section eleven. As it turns out the narrator had lent the record to a different friend, and when it is returned to him, he goes to visit Ofusa. This visit is much more cordial than previous ones. The narrator sits on Ofusa's verandah as she offers him some beer that Nakasako had left behind, and that she had taken with her from the old house. They converse about the beautiful water lily in her garden that Nakasako had cultivated, and then Ofusa remembers the record. She uncovers Nakasako's beloved phonograph and they listen together. When Sarasate's voice comes on it startles the narrator, because it is more distinct than usual. Although it still sounds garbled to the narrator, at the point when it seems Sarasate is saying something, Ofusa responds.

"No, no!" Ofusa said. She started to rise from her seat, resisting his incomprehensible words.

"No!" she insisted, and her eyes changed expression, clouding over. "Kimi dear, come, quickly. Oh no, she's not here, she's at kindergarten." She pressed her apron to her face and cried

as the words tumbled out of her mouth. (6: 135)

The narrator is unable to understand anything Sarasate is saying, but Ofusa seems to not only understand it but to argue with it. Her emotional response is out of character, as though the record has sent her into a trance. Suzuki Seijun represents Ofusa as half-crazed in the film, as she calls out "No!" in defiance of Sarasate.³⁹ The story ends with this eerie scene, and leaves the reader wondering what exactly Ofusa heard on the record and what the connection is to Kimiko and her dream.

Hyakken does not provide any answers, but Suzuki follows up with a scene involving Kimiko and the narrator. The narrator meets Kimiko on a bridge and we find out that he had made a promise with Nakasako that whoever died first would present their bones to the one remaining. Kimiko, acting as spiritual medium, relates the message that her dead father is coming to take Aochi's bones. This scene is not in Hyakken's story, but the use of Kimiko as a spiritual conduit reverberates with the scene in "The Sarasate Record" where she speaks with her dead father.

Interactions between the living and the dead are common in Hyakken's fiction. "Realm of the Dead" is the most obvious example of this, but the unborn brother in "The Companion" also qualifies. In all of Hyakken's scenes there is some trigger or object connecting the two realms. The bee in "Realm of the Dead" and the voice in "The Companion" are now joined by the phonograph in

“The Sarasate Record.”

Zigeunerweisen and the Hyakken Boom

Suzuki’s film fills in the gaps left by Hyakken and provides the motivation underlying the characters’ mysterious actions. One of the ways in which he achieves this is by weaving in material from Hyakken’s other texts. *Zigeunerweisen* is loosely based on “The Sarasate Record,” but it also skillfully incorporates dialogue, imagery and atmosphere from “The Bowler Hat” and “Tokyo Diary” and even *Realm of the Dead*. In the process, Suzuki creates continuity across Hyakken’s fiction, drawing from some of the best-known and most potent of his stories and characters.

The narrator/ protagonist in *Zigeunerweisen* is Aochi Toyojirô, German professor at the Military Academy, a character long familiar to the Hyakken reader from “The Bowler Hat,” “Documentary Proof of the Existence of Half-Wits” and other stories.³¹ By choosing to identify the unnamed character from Hyakken’s story as Aochi, Suzuki adds to the links by including *Hyakkien’s Miscellany* as background to his film.

Nakasako is introduced as Aochi’s colleague from the Military Academy, and at times Nakasako resembles Noguchi from “The Bowler Hat.” In fact, Suzuki has Nakasako play Noguchi’s part in the scene from the “The Bowler Hat” when Aochi relates the story of the strange voice he heard while lunching

with his wife. By placing this scene directly after one in which Nakasako and Aochi try to decode Sarasate's garbled words, Suzuki links these two mysterious voices and connects the various aural phenomena in Hyakken's literature. Noguchi's impending insanity may also account for Nakasako's bizarre behavior, namely his constant, yet aimless wandering and strange fascination with the human skeleton. Nakasako's mysterious death later in the film reminds the Hyakken reader of Noguchi's suicide.

Nakasako's first and second wives are doppelgangers in the film. Further adding to the mystery surrounding Ofusa (Oine in the film), Suzuki overlaps them with the woman from "Fireworks" who leads the narrator into a strange house from which he cannot escape. In this way, Suzuki brings "Fireworks" into the narrative world of "The Sarasate Record," while at the same time projecting the character of Aochi back into *Realm of the Dead*. He not only creates a connection between characters that did not exist, but he adds a sexual depth to their fleeting encounter.

The latent eroticism in "Fireworks" is intensified in *Zigeunerweisen*. Nakasako's wife leads Aochi through her house in a dark scene which uses the narrow hallway and old open book from "Fireworks." However, instead of revealing the nape of her neck, the wife's kimono falls back to expose her naked torso. Although the film does not specify the nature of Aochi's relationship with Nakasako's wife, Suzuki invents a sexual liaison between Nakasako and Aochi's

wife, Shûko, that is not present in Hyakken. Suzuki borrows a scene from episode fifteen in "Tokyo Diary" in which a geisha pulls the drunken narrator's beard and licks his eyeballs, much to his dismay (3: 208). In the film, it is Aochi's wife who licks Nakasako's eye while the two are visiting her younger sister in the hospital. The scene is repulsive, yet erotic and is followed by another where Nakasako engages in some type of sexual encounter with Shûko while Aochi is out of the house.

Although a later scene supposes that this was merely a dream by Shûko's sister, it is the relationship between these two that accounts for Oine's (Ofusa's) desire to speak to Aochi's wife about Kimiko's dream (in the film the child is named Toyoko, after Aochi). When Aochi asks why she needs to speak to his wife, Oine confirms Aochi's suspicion that Nakasako revealed his relationship with Shûko to Kimiko. Aochi later confronts Shûko, asking if Nakasako secretly gave her something. Although Shûko originally denied it, after Oine's last visit Shûko brings down a framed picture with the Sarasate record hidden in the back. Aochi responds to this admission of guilt by slapping his wife. The record shifts from the narrator's friend to Aochi's wife, and the illicit affair between Shûko and Nakasako provides the information necessary to fill in the gaps in the original Hyakken story.

It seems appropriate to end with Suzuki's film, because it is often regarded as having ignited the Hyakken boom of the 1980s.³² Yet, it is doubtful

that Suzuki assumed his audience would have been familiar with Hyakken's literature. One wonders how the viewer was expected to make sense of the film without recourse to the fiction. Hyakken is not even mentioned in the credits. For those Hyakken readers, Suzuki creates meaning, but for the average viewer, it is little more than a bizarre, incomprehensible stream of images. Given the nature of the film, its popularity and connection to the Hyakken boom are curious and deserving of further investigation. It would be worthwhile in this endeavor to also consider the appeal of a Taishō era, prewar fictional story to a postwar, post-AMPO generation.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, Suzuki's film was followed by a flood of reprints of Hyakken's fiction. Noteworthy were two separate anthologies, one titled *The Sarasate Record*, published 1981 and 1990,³³ and another from 1992, named after "Tokyo Diary."³⁴ Both *Realm of the Dead and Port Arthur* reappeared in original and anthologized form, along with Hyakken's *zuihitsu* and diaries. Although he published many others, it is these works that have remained current and that continue to be read and analyzed. To what degree Suzuki and *Zigeunerwiesen* should be credited remains an open question, but at the least, we can say that for those who subsequently read Hyakken, the literature and film worked together to create meaning and to deepen Hyakken's appeal.

In Hyakken's mature style, we see a combination of the scattered, eerie world of *Realm of the Dead*, and the comic, more autobiographically based *Hyakkien's Miscellany*. Although the two styles may seem very distinct, their combined appearance in later fiction and in *Zigeunerweisen* demonstrate the ways in which they can be linked. It is possible to see a continuity between the disconnected fiction and the fragmented *zuihitsu*; and perhaps the transition was a natural one for Hyakken to make. It is necessary not only to appreciate the individual stages of Hyakken's literature, but to reconcile the various parts of his writing to form a more cohesive picture, a literary whole.

Notes to Chapter VI

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- ¹ The protagonist in *Cogwheels*, Mr. A is also taking sleeping medication (1970, 214).
- ² See Hirayama's remarks in volume 6 of *Uchida Hyakken zenshū* (493).
- ³ The story appeared in *Chūō kōron's sōsakuran* and the collection *Port Arthur* is labeled a *sōsakushu*.
- ⁴ See Sakai (1993, 136).
- ⁵ See the section "Sunaga's Story." There is no proof that Hyakken read Novellen, but he did edit Sōseki's collected works. See Sakai (1993, 139-42).
- ⁶ The seven *zuihitsu* are: "Story of the Bamboo Cane" (Chikujōki, 1934), "The Kappa Memorial" (Kappaki, 1934), "The Fan from Hunan" (Konan no ōgi, 1934), "Nap of the Wild Boar" (Inoshishi no hirune, 1935), "Memories of Instructor Akutagawa" (Akutagawa kyōkan no omoide, 1935), "The Shirahama Reunion" (Shirahamakai, 1937) and "The Turtle Cries" (Kame naku ya, 1951).
- ⁷ "The Fan from Hunan" is the name of a short story by Akutagawa that appears in a Hyakken story of the same name.
- ⁸ Other onomatopoeia are *gunya gunya*, for Noguchi's hands and neck, and *fura fura* for his slackened body.
- ⁹ See "The Bowler Hat" (1: 98-99) and "The Turtle Cries" (6: 155).
- ¹⁰ See Sakai (1993, 208-12). Sakai compares the diary entry for May 12, 1919 (3: 398-99) with "Notebook of Anger" (1: 347-49).
- ¹¹ Uchida Michio has calculated the timeline in "The Bowler Hat" (1997, 130). Sakai says the story is set between 1926 and 1927 (1993, 146-47).
- ¹² Uno's condition is also alluded to in "The Turtle Cries" (6: 156). See Sakai (1993, 143).
- ¹³ The increase in sanitarium population is partially attributable to the "peace preservation" efforts of the state. Namase quotes a 1930 directive from police headquarters urging all households to seek a professional opinion on anyone who is considered even a little strange and have them cared for before the emperor makes his tour of the city (486).
- ¹⁴ The name of this colleague is not stated in the text, but it is possible that he is Noguchi.
- ¹⁵ Kawamura Jirō makes a similar statement, only he adds in "Selections from the Blue Flame" (Seienshō) from *New Rain Miscellany* (Zuihitsu shinu, 1937). This story was also published in *Chūō kōron* in October 1937 as fiction or creative writing (193).
- ¹⁶ Hyakken stayed at the hotel from the fourth through the seventeenth of December 1937. He also wrote about this in the *zuihitsu* "The Hotel's Winter Song" (Hoteru no fuyu no kyoku) in *Kien's Chatter*. See Morita Sakan (316).
- ¹⁷ It may also have to do with the location of Hyakken's house. Episode nine is set at a school for the blind in Zōshigaya, and Hyakken mentions living by such a school in "Sōseki's Phonograph" (Sōseki chikuonki, 1938) in *Kien's Chatter* (4: 17).
- ¹⁸ The narrator in "The Hotel's Winter Song," also mentions being locked up in the hotel room (4: 97).
- ¹⁹ Maeda Ai notes that Hibiya was a major stop for the *shiden*, the city line which was first installed in 1903 (395).
- ²⁰ Horikiri Naoto claims that Hyakken may have gotten the idea for the movement of the water from the mattress he was sleeping on at the Tokyo Station Tetsudō Hotel. See Masugi (65 n. 11). In "Rambling Notes from the Tetsudōkan," Hyakken compares sleeping on the western

mattress to sleeping in the swaying branches of a tree" (3: 150-53). Mishima says this scene is so realistically described it is like watching the television news (39).

²¹ In the text he refers to it by its abbreviated name, Maru biru, or Maru building. Construction on the building was completed in 1913 (Maeda, 285).

²² Hirose died in 1904 while trying to help seal off the Port Arthur harbor and was killed while searching for one of his men. He was posthumously appointed the rank of Commander. See *Kôdansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, 1st ed., s.v. "Hirose Takeo."

²³ See Satô's essay in *Tôen*. Also see Hyakken's response in "The Crane's Second Voice" (Tsuru futagoe) (2: 242-44).

²⁴ This emphasis on the narrative present is also found in *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature* (344-45).

²⁵ Okaya also identifies the character as Sone (136).

²⁶ Hyakken's daughter Itô Mino remarks that the character is probably based on Hyakken's college friend, Mr. Masuda (16).

²⁷ This information may be included elsewhere in Sakai's research, but if so, he does not make any reference to it.

²⁸ Both Sakai (1995, 216-17) and Hirayama Saburô (*Uchida Hyakken zenshû*, 4: 503-4) quote from Natsume Shinroku's *Neko no haka*. Also see Itô Mino (16-17) and Hyakken's *zuihitsu* "Sôseki's Phonograph."

²⁹ Hirayama says the story is meant to frighten the reader. See volume 6 of *Uchida Hyakken zenshû* (497)

³⁰ There are brief descriptions of the film in Isaka's article (168-69) and on the Nihon eiga no kansô bun website.

³¹ See my discussion of this in the previous chapter. Hyakken also used Aochi as a pen name.

³² When Nonomura Saburô, who interviewed Itô Mino for the *Bungei hiroba* article, asked Itô about the film, she commented that the popularity of this movie brought Hyakken's literature to the attention of the younger generation (14).

³³ The latter anthology includes "Tokyo Diary."

³⁴ This includes "The Sarasate Record."

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