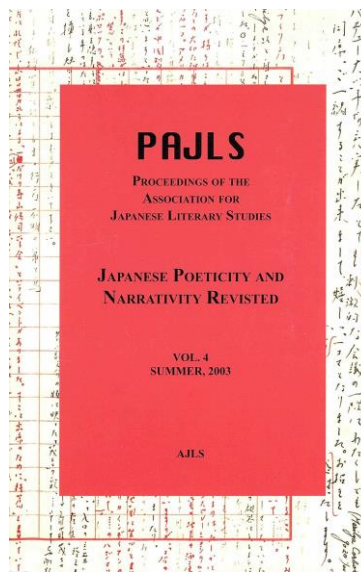


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The Poetry and Prose of Kitagawa Fuyuhiko as
Modernist History”

Annika Culver 

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**COLONIAL MANCHURIA IN THE SURREALIST IMAGINATION:
THE POETRY AND PROSE OF KITAGAWA FUYUHIKO AS
MODERNIST HISTORY**

Annika A. Culver
University of Chicago

Kitagawa Fuyuhiko's (1900–1990) poetry¹ and short stories set in southeastern Manchuria can be read as a modernist history complicating the one-sided interpretation of post-colonial discourse in its equivocation in the portrayal of the colonial other and the (poetic) self. In Kitagawa's writing, "self" and "other" are blurred in his narrative as he explores the multiple surfaces of colonial modernity. The assimilation of the self into the other and his strategies of increasing narratological intimacy in *Hoppō* (*The North*, 1931) and in certain poems in the poetry collections *Sensō* (*War*, 1929) and *Kōri* (*Ice*, 1933) prevent a simplistic post-colonial reading. In this paper, I address the value of poetry and fictional prose as a creative, though problematic, alternative to the standard historical discourse privileging documents. These texts are usually considered as the most objective and "factual" in their reporting of reality. The value of poetry or fictional prose engaging with history is that it restores the subjectivity present in forms attempting to capture reality.

Kitagawa's poems and stories actively engage with history, yet are removed in space and time from his personal experiences in Manchuria. As the son of an engineer attached to the South Manchurian Railways conglomerate (*Mantetsu*), he lived in Manchuria from 1907 to 1919, roughly ten years preceding the completion of his two poetry collections portraying this colonial territory. Consequently, Manchuria as a product of the poet's memories and imagination becomes a poetic topos distanced in time and space.

The following poem from *War*, entitled "Flowers," describes an old Chinese man, possibly a former coolie, lying down for a nap in the streets of Dairen (modern-day Dalian, China):

¹ As a poet, Kitagawa Fuyuhiko was instrumental in familiarizing Japanese literary circles and the art world with the "theoretical" principles of French Surrealism in his translation of Andre Breton's first manifesto of surrealism, which appeared in 1929 in *Shi to shiron* (the literary journal *Poetry and Poetics*) numbers 4 and 5. He and other poets centered around this journal were actively experimenting with the creative potential developed in surrealism for language and imagery.

“Flowers”

Buried in the midst of flowers stolen from the rowhouses, and snoozing in the sunlight, an old Chinese man like a dust rag, is happy. Happy.²

In spite of the dusty filthiness of the man, Kitagawa projects his own emotions of happiness onto him. As a poet, he sees beauty amidst the squalor of the streets and in the image of the other. Subverting the colonial economy in his laziness, the old man challenges its efficiency and linear time-consciousness. In the poet’s eye, he is oblivious to modernization, and, in his old age, does not need its “improvements” to feel satisfaction in life. Kitagawa repeats “happy” twice, emphasizing the old man’s lazy contentment while buried in the midst of stolen flowers. This man gains happiness with the stolen flowers procured in an act that in itself resists economic transaction. The incongruous presence of the flowers and the happiness of the old man despite his clothes resembling dusty rags, bring a surreal tension into the poem. The tide of History passes him by, as he remains a timeless, anachronistic figure incompatible with the modernity of the city.

In Leo Ou-Fan Lee’s analysis of Yokomitsu Riichi’s novel *Shanghai* (Shanghai, 1931),³ the city is a generator for “...the subjective sensations aroused by the excitements of material modernity.”⁴ The surface realities of modernity (in its ultimate symbol, the urban metropolis) clash in Yokomitsu’s narrative, revealing the surreal inconsistencies still persisting in spite of the acceptance of a linear History based on an increasing level of progress. Filth and squalor unrelentingly remain in the pungent alleys and back streets of this urban and cultural center of China, unassailed by the corrective force of Modernity. Shanghai functions as a double of Tokyo, and Yokomitsu’s narrative odyssey into the

² My translation. Original text in Kitagawa, *Sensō* (War), Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 1995, p. 16. (Original printing, Tokyo: Hoseigaku Shōten, 1929).

³ *Shanghai* was published in *Kaizō* (Reconstruction) from November 1928 to December 1929, in a printing contemporaneous to Kitagawa’s 1929 collection of poetry *War*. [Two concluding chapters appeared a year later, and *Shanghai* first came out in book form in 1932.] In fact, as an accomplished novelist and leader of the *Shin-kankaku ha* (Neo-Sensationalists), Yokomitsu Riichi served as a literary mentor to Kitagawa by encouraging his literary talents in a letter expressing his enthusiastic praise of the poet’s first (privately published) collection of poetry *Sanhan kikan sōshitsu* (Loss of the Semi-Circular Canals, 1925). Yokomitsu also wrote the preface to *War*.

⁴ Leo Ou-Fan Lee, *Shanghai Modern: The Flowering of a New Urban Culture in China, 1930–1945*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 317–318.

anachronistic world of the city's underbelly reveals the modernist's subversive resistance to the linear advance of history. Could Tokyo (Japan) itself be harboring the same anachronistic elements (not synchronic with the desired History) as Shanghai (China)—one of the most modern, progressive, cosmopolitan, and up-to-date cities in Asia in the thirties? According to Emanuel Pastreich, “Yokomitsu's language leaves us with a weird, surreal impression we can well imagine [in] a Dali painting... Shanghai serves as a defamiliarized landscape in which the Modernist author can explore the limits of his new sensations, his *Shinkankaku*.”⁵

Shanghai and Manchuria in the narrative descriptions of these two avant-garde authors become the “defamiliarized landscape” in which the other helps to illuminate the self. Nowhere is the unevenness of modernity more haunting than in the image of the other, who, when (s)he confronts the viewer, a part of the self is reflected. The other is unfathomable because the self is unfathomable, and the very nature of individual memory defies the objectivity of History. For Yokomitsu, reality could only be adequately perceived through the viscosity of the senses. Kitagawa's jarring juxtapositions of images and fragments in his poetry and short stories leave the reader with no less of a sensation of shock and disorientation. The surface realities of colonialism and the other produce a surreal tension as the perceptive gap is bridged between “distant realities.”

Kitagawa's poetry becomes his own internal “ethnography” in his confrontation with the colonial other that dislocates the poet's sense of security in his own reality. I define ethnography in the context it was viewed in the late twenties and early thirties—the search for a form of representation of the other which would make the other understandable and intellectually accessible to “us” while highlighting the other's strangeness and uniqueness.⁶ This portrayal of the other easily translates into the creation of binary oppositions and restricting surface dichotomies that legitimize *and* destabilize existing structures of

⁵ Quoted in Lee, p. 317.

⁶ See “On Ethnographic Surrealism” in James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 117-151. Ethnography was an important component in surrealism's descriptions of the everyday and the extraordinary. Clifford writes, “I am using the term *surrealism* in an obviously expanded sense to circumscribe an aesthetic that values fragments, curious collections, unexpected juxtapositions – that works to provoke the manifestations of extraordinary realities drawn from the domains of the erotic, the exotic, and the unconscious.” p. 118.

colonialism in tropes such as modern vs. anachronistic, progressive vs. traditional, colonizer vs. native, civilized vs. primitive, and rational vs. superstitious. For a poet attracted to Surrealism like Kitagawa, this cleaving of reality into fragments represents the potential to reveal the inconsistencies of empire and question its surface realities. The non-Japanese natives of Manchuria are described by Kitagawa as people who are motivated more by survival in this region than any recognizable code of ethics. They have so little in common with the colonial Japanese residents that they appear to inhabit their own distinct reality. However, in depicting the economic unevenness generated by the colonial economy and its conditions of labor, Kitagawa points to the reasons for the surreal existence of two distant realities in this border region where people's relations are determined by the crossing (or transgressing) of boundaries.

Kitagawa's short story *Hoppō* (*The North*, 1931)⁷ depicts the borderlands of southern Manchuria near the Yalu River between northeast China and Korea. This story includes several of the same images as the "memory fragments" of *War*, and, later, *Ice*. Here, the fragmented poetic visions of the two poetry collections are fleshed out into a narrative that reads like a poem while the story's images often appear larger than their narrative function. In the author's prose, this part of Manchuria emerges as a liminal region where the economics of colonialism, gender, and sexuality are played out in a narrative in which several different realities collide, leading to a violent (or potentially violent) conclusion in each of the four sections of the story. This short story is one of three that the author published in journals between 1931 and 1934. At this point in his literary career, Kitagawa had already achieved renown through his poetry, and had published three collections⁸ prior to his venture into prose. (Incidentally, all three short stories have Manchuria as their setting).

The fragmented composition of the story and the author's preoccupation with a surface reality resembling that of a photograph bring it closer to Surrealism. In a juxtaposition that shocks the reader

⁷ Kitagawa, Fuyuhiko. *Hoppō* (The North) in *Chuō kōron* (The Central Review) no. 519 (April 1931), pp. 161–178.

⁸ See Kitagawa Fuyuhiko, *Sanhankikan sōshitsu* (Loss of the Semi-Circular Canals) (Tokyo: Shijo Geijutsu sha, 1925), *Kenonki to hana* (Thermometer and Flower) (Tokyo: Misumaru sha, 1926), and *Sensō* (War) (Tokyo: Hoseigaku Shōten, 1929). For an analysis of Kitagawa's early poetry from 1925 to 1933, see Annika A. Culver, "Modernity in Conflict: Destabilizing Images of the Modern in the Poetry of Kitagawa Fuyuhiko," unpublished seminar paper, University of Chicago, 2002.

with its abrupt change in style, the entire third section, *Ude* (Arms), is written as a Surrealist prose poem that later appears in Kitagawa's poetry collection *Kōri* (Ice, 1933) under the title of *Ase* (Sweat). The same image of the arm splintering into wire also surfaces in the much shorter poem *Ude* (Arms) in *War*.⁹ The *War* collection of poems is suffused with a polemic voice that often makes use of cynicism or black humor—elements absent in *The North*.

The North shows a marked contrast to Kitagawa's earlier work in *War* (1929) in which certain poems present an exploration of the grotesque absurdities of capitalism and its corresponding imperialistic expansionism. *War* is redolent with proletarian literary themes (anti-imperialism, a critical view of capitalism, and an interest in workers and labor relations) cached within the poetic language of Surrealism in its juxtaposition of incongruous elements, as well as Futurism in its mechanization of the human such as in the following poem, "Arms."

"Arms"

An emaciated, thin arm. Really. Yet, it's not a thing to regret.
Because arms break apart. Because arms break apart like wires.
One does not have to go so far as to face the sun with the back
of one's legs. One does not have to fear even a little[,]
something like a storm.

One must hide swords in the center of one's eye. One must
endure porcupines on one's back. One must ceaselessly throw
spears at the sun.

Arms are growing up from the mud.¹⁰

The phrase "break apart" (*bunretsu suru*) appears in the depiction of an arm shattering in this poem as well as in the third section *Ude* (Arms) of *The North*. It is often used to describe the breaking up into factions in a political movement. In both the poem and in the story, this is a positive occurrence. In the story, it implies that the witnessing of an act of violence (the unseen action of the supervisor beating a coolie until his

⁹ The first five lines of "Arms" in *War* are nearly identical to those appearing in the third section of *The North*, also entitled "Arms."

¹⁰ My translation. Kitagawa, *Sensō* (1995), pp. 10–11. For a deeper analysis of this poem and others in the *War* collection, see William Gardner, "War and the Avant-Garde: Essays on Kitagawa Fuyuhiko's *Sensō* [War]" Master's Thesis, Stanford University, 1995.

arm breaks) will lead the coolies loading sacks of soybean meal onto a ferry to consciousness of their exploitation in their desire to defend their fellows. If one arm breaks, others will grow in the fertile muck to join the movement. One moment was “wasted,” and the human became inanimate and organic as a pure representation of surface. However, the anachronistic and inefficient surface hides the buildup of a subversive, revolutionary inner political strength, as Kitagawa appears to imply in the poem by the same name: “One must hide swords in the center of one’s eye.”

However, in contrast to the poetry of *War* and *Ice* and, briefly, in its “Arms” section, *The North* does not appear to be very critical of imperialism in its deadpan depictions of the bungling, ethically dubious, and primitive non-Japanese inhabitants of Manchuria. Because they are represented by the author as elements that cannot fit into the ordered, “civilized” reality of the Japanese colonists because of their lawless, disordered, and generally anachronistic way of life, the *Chuō kōron* reader unfamiliar with the elemental harshness of the region would come to the conclusion that colonial Japanese discipline and order would be beneficial in Manchuria. In addition, Kitagawa depicts the other in a fetishistic, often eroticized, description meant to titillate the reader. Manchuria in the author’s stories and poetry appears as an inhospitable border region where nothing is certain, and natural elements or human nature can suddenly take one by surprise. Reality itself is suffused with a shaky alterity, and the structure of the narrative reveals this instability.

Kitagawa’s story can be read in terms of an ethnographic Surrealism,¹¹ in that the author’s view of the non-Japanese other (Chinese, Korean, or Mongolian) in Manchuria parallels the French Surrealist obsession with describing a space in which two incongruent realities exist,¹² or, as in the words of the surrealist poet Pierre Reverdy,

¹¹ See Clifford, “On Ethnographic Surrealism.” For Clifford, “The Surrealist moment in ethnography is that moment in which the possibility of comparison exists in unmediated tension with sheer incongruity.” p. 146.

¹² For the French group of Surrealists centered around Andre Breton, Africa was viewed as a fertile ground for the Surrealist imagination. Breton and Michel Leiris keenly studied the exotic artifacts brought back by the Djibouti Mission. These “primitive” and anachronistic objects contained within them the revolutionary potential to unleash the creative energies of the unconscious, and with their timelessness, could provide an alternative to the alienated objects of modernity. An ethnographic view of the colonial other and his/her exotic trappings served both as the literary counterpoint to and the legitimation of a linear history entangled in a discourse of imperialism and modernization driven by capitalism.

“distant realities.”¹³ In her discussion of Surrealism in Japan, Miryam Sas believes that “a vision of alterity, a foreign space located somewhere ‘beyond,’ plays a crucial role in formulations of avant-garde praxis for both the Japanese and French contexts.”¹⁴ The concept of distant realities has been noted by the French founder of Surrealism Andre Breton, as well as by Nishiwaki Junzaburo, a Surrealist poet in Tokyo. Kitagawa sets this problematic story in a Manchuria characterized by the radical juxtaposition of the modern and the archaic, where the incompatible time scales of the other and the colonizer exist in an uneasy, surreal tension. In his experiments with time and narrative, the author breaks up fictional “reality” into fragments and puts them together into new configurations with their own internal logic—similar to the process of encoding another culture. He almost seems to be writing a “modernist history” through his deliberate rupture of historical continuity which alerts the reader that the reliability of memory, and therefore History, is suspect. However, his projection of his own narrative fantasies onto the other in a border region displaced in space and time from the “real” Japan makes this text no less problematic.

The North begins with the phrase, “In this world, there is a kind of human who possesses a mysterious charm,”¹⁵ implying that the fascinating characters of whom we are about to read are exotic and removed from ordinary life while selectively drawing us into their world. In the beginning paragraph, the author is capturing a particular moment in his prose narrative dedicated to voyeuristically exploring the extraordinary nature of life in a border region of Manchuria in contrast to what the Japanese reader may be familiar with. *The North* is permeated by the author’s increasing intimacy with the form of the other, such as when the narrator “becomes” the Chinese house boy in the first section, *Furui kagami* (Old Mirror). Also, in the third section, “Arm,” the narrator curiously appears as *watashi* (I), again, in the guise of a laborer. This literary device appears to validate Kitagawa’s knowledge of the other and lends authority to his words.

¹³ Pierre Reverdy first mentions the juxtaposition of “distant realities” in the March 18th issue of Nord-Sud. Miryam Sas, *Fault Lines: Cultural Memory and Japanese Surrealism* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1999), p. 3. I am indebted to Miryam Sas’s thought-provoking analysis of Surrealist poetics in Japan for my discussion of the Surrealist language in Kitagawa’s novella *The North*.

¹⁴ Sas, p. 6.

¹⁵ In Japanese: *Kono yo ni wa, isshū fushigina miryoku o motta ningen ga aru*. (All translations are mine, unless otherwise noted.) Kitagawa, p. 161.

Jennifer Robertson's analysis of the performativity of empire in the context of the Takarazuka Review provides an intriguing explanation for why this form of representation might appear in Kitagawa's story: "The inversion of imperial expansion is imperial implosion, whereby political power and eroticized domination are compressed and interiorized."¹⁶ Kitagawa's obsession with a Manchuria he knew mainly from his childhood when he lived near the Yalu River parallels the official preoccupation with this region and the Japanese government's exhortations for colonists to develop Manchuria. The growing interest in Manchuria as a future part of the Japanese empire necessitated the creation of knowledgeable experts and the compiling of useful data, such as that formulated by the South Manchuria Railroad's research department, an organization in which Kitagawa's father Taguro Tsutomu worked as an engineer. *The North* encapsulates the author's exploration of the self in the context of imperialism while he projects his own desires onto the other as an intellectual "knowledgeable" about Manchuria. In his story, the author writes a surrealist ethnography of the various characters that one might encounter in Manchuria—a Chinese houseboy, a Korean barmaid, Chinese coolies, a Japanese labor supervisor, a Russian prostitute, and a group of nomadic Mongolians.¹⁷

In *The North*, the collection of disjointed viewpoints (ranging from *boku* [the informal, male "I"], an omniscient, third person narrator, to *watashi* [the gender-neutral, more formal "I"]) form a collage of fragments, similar to the unreliable images of memories or oral history. Kitagawa's novella was written in 1931, and this work could be read as crafted from his recollections of life in the Manchuria of his childhood from 1907–1919. The author lived near the Yalu River in elementary school and middle school, and would have witnessed the flood that drowned Sairen's (the Korean female protagonist of the *Sōshun* [Early

¹⁶ Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 133.

¹⁷ These characters belong to the five distinct ethnicities later recognized by the Japanese puppet government of Manchukuo (*Manshūkoku*) in its propaganda disseminated about the "harmony of the five races" (*minzoku kyōwa*): Japanese, Manchurian (Chinese), Korean, Mongolian, and Russian. In reality, *minzoku kyōwa* was an entirely fictional policy, with the Japanese administrators and colonists occupying a clearly superior position over largely resentful colonized peoples.

Spring] section) parents.¹⁸ In addition to these memory fragments, another layer appears superimposed, that of the memories of Kitagawa's visits to Anzai Fuyue, an avant-garde poet who was his friend, and later rival. In 1923, the author meets Anzai in Dairen, who proposes his collaboration in a poetry magazine. Two years later, Kitagawa returns to visit his father Taguro Tsutomu, who gives his son a tour of the new Choko line for which tracks are being laid near Fengtian (modern-day Shenyang). These three layers of memory interpenetrate the text, while they blend with the writer's imagination of possible happenings in this newly colonized region.

One of Kitagawa's most arresting poems is his poem "Ice" from the *Ice* (1933) collection that describes the construction of a railroad bridge and tracks by Chinese coolies in the freezing Manchurian wastelands:

"Ice"

- 1 Frozen desert plain.
- 2 Sand hills rising here and there.
- 3 Azure layer of ice.
- 4 Stakes.
- 5 A coolie wrapped in the fur skin of a wild dog.
- 6 The coolie's palm.
- 7 Hard cracked, black chapped ditch.
- 8 Azure layer of ice pierced by stakes.
- 9 Hammer head facing upwards.
- 10 Coolies wrapped in the fur skins of wild dogs gather as if they are absorbing the open air.

¹⁸ Kitagawa does, in fact, publish a short story entitled *Hanran* (Flood) in 1931. This work, describing the tragic deaths of poor Koreans living at the edge of the river who drowned in a summer flood of the Yalu River, was later fashioned into a long epic prose poem republished in 1948.

11 They are touching one another by their palms and the ditches
of chapped skin that show through torn gloves.

12 Moving thick chain.

13 The half-finished railroad bridge stacked over a freezing
river.

14 A wallpaper-like prostitute comes out from the gap of a sand
hill.¹⁹

This poem arranged in fourteen lines like the shots of a film²⁰ (or a ciné-poème) describes the process of modernizing the empty, desert-like landscape by building the infrastructure for the railroad (suggesting the South Manchurian Railways [*Mantetsu*]). Kitagawa's gaze returns repeatedly to two images: stakes piercing the ground covered with an azure layer of ice (symbolizing the claiming of territory by the colonial enterprise of the railroad), and the welts in the chapped palms of the coolie laborers. The wounds in their hands mirror those inflicted on the landscape in the trenches they dig. While the coolies are described as appearing like wild dogs due to the furs they wear, they are not completely dehumanized as they huddle and touch each others' hands while resting from their labor. The poem's fragmentary nature highlights the uneven course of modernity in Manchuria in that the process of building the railroad can only be performed by the backbreaking human labor of coolies who merely benefit indirectly from the progress and prosperity it can bring to the region. As elements alienated from the "modern"—evidenced by the fact that an image of the railroad bridge does not include that of the workers—they subvert the smooth, linear process of modernization. Labor is fetishized in their bodies, but not shown in the reality depicted in the poem. While the coolies and the "wallpaper-thin prostitute" are necessary for modernization to occur, their bodies provide testimony to the exploitative nature of colonialism. The harsh surfaces of colonialism appearing in the poem darkly mirror the true reality of a history full of scars, fragments, wounds, and anachronistic inconsistencies. Kitagawa's ethnographic concern for the

¹⁹ My translation. Original in Tsuruoka, *Kitagawa Fuyuhiko shishū* (Collection of Kitagawa Fuyuhiko's Poetry), pp. 80–81.

²⁰ Kitagawa was also a film critic with *Kinema-junpo* from 1927 to the end of the war. A longer and more in-depth analysis of *Ice* appears in my aforementioned paper on Kitagawa.

surreal other is like for that of the artifact—the surface itself cannot be penetrated and remains unfathomable, so the viewer has to project his own story onto it.

The poet's jarring juxtaposition of images and his tendency to anthropomorphose inanimate objects or forces borders on the Surrealist project in which visual fragments create a poetic energy in the nature of their associations. His position as an outsider—as a foreigner in Manchuria during the time he lived there, and as a “colonial” when he returned to Japan—contributed to his depiction of the unreliability of representing reality, and no doubt influenced his flirtation with Surrealism. While engaging with history and contemporary conditions, Kitagawa's deliberate destabilization of a fictional reality in his poetry attempts to transform the consciousness of the reader by questioning the unreliable surfaces of existing realities.

The following poem from the *Ice* (1933) collection describes the entry of Japanese soldiers into a small Chinese hamlet in the wake of the Manchurian Incident of September 18, 1931, when the five provinces of China's northeast were conquered by Japan with minimal troops and little bloodshed. The tempestuous weather corresponds to the traditional depiction of autumn as stormy, and heightens the tension of the scene.

“Burial”

A strong wind strips the wall. Birds fall into the stagnancy of muddy pools. Trees with broken legs. The gigantic weight of echoes stops up the throat of the strong wind. A completely drenched army. An army sinking towards the bottom of this desolate village. A descending fault line of red earth.

Tomorrow the sun may be seen.²¹

The army, as the most modern military in Asia and a symbol of modernity, regimentation, and superb organization, was viewed by many Japanese as a force bringing civilization to Manchuria. Undaunted by pouring rain and wind strong enough to lift papers plastered to the walls, knock birds out of branches, and break the trunks of trees, the army pushes relentlessly on with a strength evidenced by the loudness of its footfalls. A descending fault line of red earth is carved into the landscape like a wound. Boundaries, borders, and cartographical demarcations are forcibly etched across the land by the initial penetration of the invading

²¹ My translation. Original in Tsuruoka, ed. *Kitagawa Fuyuhiko zenshishū*, p. 78.

army. The archetypal village encountered by the military is desolate and empty—a common portrayal of colonial territory as empty, deserted, and ready to be fashioned into exploitable resources by the modernity of the colonizer. The village appears as an anachronism in the forward march of History that engulfs it like a flood, drowning it. Yet, it is difficult to determine whether it is the Japanese army being buried or the seemingly empty village. In spite of the resistance put up by nature to the invading troops, Kitagawa suggests that the sun might come out tomorrow. As evidenced by history, the solar time of the conqueror prevails. However, the poem seems to equivocate in its message—the bleakness of the first section is set off by the possibly hopeful tone of the last phrase, while the title itself calls into question any positive reading of the event portrayed.

Kitagawa, as well as other avant-garde modernists, recognized the existence of multiple realities and the fragmentary nature of memories. The reliability of memory fragments has been challenged by modern researchers, initially including Sigmund Freud who, according to Miryam Sas, theorized that “there is no longer a direct or clear link between conscious experience and memory.”²² Hence, Kitagawa’s poetic fragments, unorthodox linkages, and nonlinear prose passages provide the components of a modernist history which explores the multi-faceted nature of experience, and by extension, that of History. As proposed by Heather Bowen-Struyk in a discussion of Kitagawa’s work, “(For Kitagawa) the representation of reality in the colonies, like memory, is never completely fathomable and always potentially dangerous.”²³

Kitagawa’s poems are strikingly visual, and almost function as photographic snapshots of the poet’s imagination. While the contemporary reader is confronted with these fragmentary visions of a history challenging in its vibrancy that relegated to the dusty annals of history books, Kitagawa’s poems arrest the “viewer” with the poet’s own history, created a decade after his experience. His depictions of the colonial other in Manchuria reinforce the notion of incompatible time scales in the anthropomorphosed force of modernization and the landscape (or its human figures) on which it acts. This “discovery” of multiple realities by the poet, who also distorts the reality of time in his descriptions of Manchuria ten years later, leads him towards a form of expression not unlike that represented by Surrealism. Kitagawa was obsessed with an objective portrayal of reality, yet realized that this

²² Sas, p. 37.

²³ Heather Bowen-Struyk, comments, September 2002.

method of representation did not suffice to describe an unstable, unevenly “modern” landscape.

In the short story *Hoppō* (The North, 1931) and two poetry collections entitled *Sensō* (War, 1929) and *Kōri* (Ice, 1933), Kitagawa Fuyuhiko depicts an unstable vision of the colonial other against the backdrop of a modernizing Manchuria developed through Japanese capital. His poems and stories²⁴ are problematic in that as they reproduce existing structures of Japanese representation, they also subvert the colonial gaze by portraying non-Japanese natives as anachronisms in a modernizing landscape and as figures that are unable to fit into the efficient schema of colonial capitalism.

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²⁴ Kitagawa wrote three other short stories or novellas in addition to *The North* during the thirties. All four of his prose pieces take place in Manchuria.

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