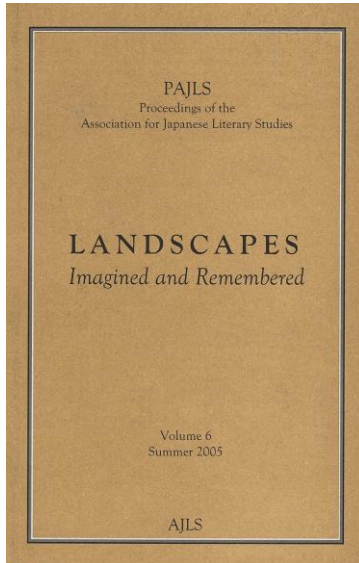


“The Violated Body as Landscape: Rupture and Mutilation in the Narratives of Kim Sa-ryang and Yi Yang-ji”

Barbara Hartley 

Proceedings of the Association for Japanese Literary Studies 6 (2005): 203–215.



PAJLS 6:
Landscapes: Imagined and Remembered.
Ed. Paul S. Atkins, Davinder L. Bhowmik, and Edward Mack.

**The Violated Body as Landscape: Rupture and Mutilation in the
Narratives of
Kim Sa-ryang and Yi Yang-ji**

Barbara Hartley
University of Queensland

In Japanese narrative, the trope of landscape has been variously invoked by writing subjects in both utopian and dystopian modes, and thus a notion of landscape as backdrop to violence provides few unique insights. However, when writers marginalized by an authoritative center, such as colonial subjects or their children, use Japanese for literary production, a disquieting dissonance reverberates throughout the topos of their texts, forcing the reader to interrogate conventional notions of landscape as either external backdrop or reflection of the interiority of a unitary subjective representation. Notwithstanding the diversity of their individual experiences, the history of earlier Korean background writers, for example, can compel these authors to interpret landscape through an intertextual filter of authorized brutality and oppression. Like the identities of the writing subjects, the landscapes that scaffold the texts are often sites of fracture and dismemberment in which the commission and reception of violence, and the associated scoring of bodies, carries an almost existential imperative. In extreme cases, the violated body can become the landscape itself, indistinguishable from other abject sites, such as stagnant water or crumbling living quarters.¹

This analysis of the violated body and landscape will focus on the work of Korean background writers Kim Sa-ryang (1914-1950?²) and Yi Yang-ji (1955-1992). Although writing in different times and from differing gender perspectives, both authors produced representations of violated bodies as the landscape of their texts. I will focus on two texts by Kim Sa-ryang, namely, his signature work, “Hikari no naka ni” (In the Light, *Bungei shuto*, 1939), and “Mukyū ikka” (The Eternal Family, *Kaizō*, 1940). Attention will also be given to two early Yi Yang-ji narratives, “Nabi taryon” (“Nageki no chō,” The Sorrowful Butterfly, *Gunzō*, 1982)³ and the apocalyptic “Kazukime” (Woman

¹ I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Tomoko Aoyama for providing valuable feedback on this article.

² There is uncertainty concerning Kim’s fate in 1950 following the outbreak of hostilities in Korea.

³ The title of this text is given in Korean rendered in *katakana*. The Japanese translation, “Nageki no chō,” is given in the autobiographical chronology compiled by the author. See Yi Yang-ji, *Yuhi-Nabi taryon* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1997), 378. Elise Foxworth gives the English in the Japan Foundation *Newsletter*, October 2001.

under Water, *Gunzō*, 1983), an account of events leading to the suicide of a young woman of Korean background.

Kim Sa-ryang, born in Pyongyang, was the son of a family of the former Korean aristocracy.⁴ Following his expulsion from school in 1931 at the age of seventeen, Kim surreptitiously departed Korea for Japan. Here he completed his education and began writing in both Japanese and Korean. “Hikari no naka ni” was nominated for the autumn Akutagawa Prize in 1939, with selection committee members Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) and Kume Masao (1891-1952) expressing strong admiration for the text.⁵ Kim returned to Pyongyang in 1942 and affiliated with the North after the liberation of Korea. He is assumed to have died when ill health led to his separation from the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea militia retreating ahead of the advance of U.S. troops northwards across the Korean Peninsula.

Yi Yang-ji, a second-generation “resident Korean,” was born in Yamanashi prefecture, Japan, in 1955.⁶ Her father left Cheju Island for Japan in 1942, eventually adopting the Japanese name Tanaka. As part of a concerted effort to erase their Korean ethnicity, Yi’s parents took Japanese citizenship when she was nine. Becoming increasingly unsettled after the collapse of her parents’ marriage, Yi left high school prior to graduation and took work at an inn in Kyoto, where she completed her schooling. The author first visited Korea in 1980, returning again in 1982 for a half-year sojourn. There she pursued an interest in traditional Korean performing arts and, following a well-documented struggle with the Korean language, received post-graduate accreditation in Korea in 1988. Yi Yang-ji’s narrative, “Yuhi” (Yuhi, *Gunzō*, 1988), was awarded the Akutagawa Prize in autumn 1988, forty-nine years after the nomination of Kim’s “Hikari no naka ni.” She died unexpectedly in 1992, having been engaged in commercial text production for barely a decade.⁷

Kim Sa-ryang’s texts were published during the Japanese occupation of Korea, an occupation that saw ongoing exploitation of the resources of the colony. It is therefore not surprising that a number of his texts, including “Mukyū ikka,” are bleak accounts of the lives of men and women whose subjectivity is eclipsed by a daily grind of pitifully remunerated menial labor conducted in dehumanizing surrounds. Yi Yang-ji’s work was published forty

⁴ Information concerning Kim Sa-ryang’s background is derived mainly from material provided in An U-sik, *Kim Sa-ryang: Sono teikō no shōgai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1972), and the biographical information presented in the 1999 Kōdansha Bungei Bunko collected works of Kim Sa-ryang.

⁵ See Takii Kōsaku, et al., “Dai-jukkai Akutagawa shō senpyō,” in *Akutagawa zenshū*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjūsha, 1982), 394-97.

⁶ Biographical information given here is derived principally from the chronology appended to the 1997 Kōdansha Bungei Bunko collection of Yi’s narratives.

⁷ Nakagami Kenji, with less than three months to live, was a mourner at the funeral. Watanabe Naomi notes that Nakagami referred to Yi Yang-ji as a “blood sister.” See Watanabe’s “Kaisetsu,” in Yi, *Yuhi-Nabi taryon*, 368.

years later, however, when the “resident” Korean was no longer strictly a colonial subject. Nevertheless, the discursive residue of the exploitative colonial experience continued to impact the identities of individual Korean background subjects in a Japan which, to borrow a term from Slavoj Žizek, legislated these subjects as the stateless “traumatic excess”⁸ of the immaculate nation. Building on Žizek’s term, I argue that the subject constituted within this field of traumatic excess, featured in the texts of both Kim and Yi, responds to and is configured in the landscape in a manner that distinguishes him or her from textual subjects constituted outside this field. In order to understand the nature of this difference, it is useful to turn to Karatani Kōjin’s discussion of landscape featured in *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*.

According to Karatani, landscape is “an epistemological constellation, the origins of which were suppressed as soon as it was produced.”⁹ In other words, an understanding of the constructed and hegemonic nature of landscape is concealed beneath the notion of landscape as natural phenomenon. Citing the Kunikida Doppo text *Wasureenu hitobito* (Unforgettable People, 1898) as one of the first examples of the modern use of landscape,¹⁰ Karatani explains the manner in which Doppo’s narrator, gazing from the deck of a steamer on the Inland Sea, constructs the scene of an isolated individual against a natural backdrop as an expression of his own interiorized self. Citing Kobayashi Hideo for support,¹¹ Karatani argues that the projection of self on one’s surrounds in this manner is an inevitable function of modernity. I want to suggest, however, that Karatani’s discussion perhaps lacks the universality both he and Kobayashi claim, a universality that is revealed as conditional, if not particular, when consideration is given to

⁸ Slavoj Žizek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997), 5. The term arises in Žizek’s discussion of the manner in which the power of ideology transcends its commonly acknowledged ability to “[permeate] the alleged extra-ideological strata of everyday life.” Žizek argues that it is, in fact, “the materialization of ideology in external materiality” that most apparently “reveals inherent antagonisms which the explicit formulation of ideology cannot afford to acknowledge.” Citing Claude Lévi-Strauss as the master of analysis of external reality, Žizek evokes Lévi-Strauss’ semiotic triangle of food: “raw, baked, or boiled,” as a counterpoint for a discussion of the cultural differences that feature in the mechanics of toilet design. He reiterates Jacques Lacan’s observation that, in spite of differences in actual method, it is the obsession with the disposal of the traumatic excess of “shit” that distinguishes the human species from other animals. While Žizek’s specific focus is bodily waste or excess, the analogy to social “excess” is clearly implied. See Žizek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, 4-5.

⁹ Karatani Kōjin, *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 22.

¹⁰ Here Karatani specifically argues that Doppo’s work is a text that confirms the fact that landscape was “an inversion of consciousness before it became a representational convention.” *Ibid.*, 23.

¹¹ Karatani notes that Kobayashi has described “no one as having transcended the confines of landscape.” *Ibid.*, 34.

texts outside the *kokubungaku* canon, including the writing of the colonial subject.¹²

Before examining the nature of the relationship between subject and landscape for those defined as traumatic colonial excess, we must note two points. First, the projected self of Doppo's protagonist is a fantasized self. In spite of putative identification with the objectified, remote individual sighted, this protagonist will *never* be the figure in the far-off vista. Second, there is a clear boundary by virtue of anonymity, even more than by distance between the viewing subject and the object viewed.¹³ Yet, unlike that of Doppo's fashionably reflective protagonist, the identity of the colonial subject is disfigured physically, culturally, and psychologically by the immediate or residual experience of colonization and associated discourses that seek to exploit or violently void this subject.¹⁴ Defined as "traumatic excess," he or she is deprived, among other things, of the wherewithal to maintain the boundary between self and "Other" that would permit access to the epistemological constellation to which Karatani refers. The radical absence of this boundary leaves these subjects unprotected and exposed, that is, at risk of becoming the landscape itself. Moreover, far from being a bucolic fantasyland sighted from the deck of a steamer, the landscape that these subjects become is the undesirable and physically offensive surrounds of their discursively prescribed domain.

Examination of Yi Yang-ji's "Kazukime" confirms the inappropriateness of Doppo's scopics as a model for the consideration of landscape in the work of this writer. Like other Yi Yang-ji narratives, including "Anigoze" (My Beloved Brother, *Gunzō*, 1983) and "Rai'i" (The Reason for the Visit, *Gunzō*, 1986), "Kazukime" is a complex melange of interwoven blocks of time and space. The text features a polyvocal narration comprised of third-person recollections of the dead protagonist herself, third-person recollections of the dead girl's Japanese stepsister, a first-person account of the dead girl given by a previous lover, and a first-person account of a middle-aged bar worker who befriended and gave some solace to the protagonist in the final, increasingly

¹² This is not in any way to deny Karatani's significant role in championing the texts of minority writers, such as Nakagami Kenji, in the Japanese literary community. Nevertheless, groundbreaking though the *Origins* text is, the discussion is largely confined to canonic works. These are works that generally erase the existence of the traumatic excess, namely Korean background writers and writers from other marginalized groups. Of course, given the nature of the *Origins* project, this is only to be expected.

¹³ It is useful to remember here that Doppo was writing after the 1894-95 conflict with China, but prior to the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05). This was a time when Japan was still coming to terms with the notion of "the subject."

¹⁴ From a slightly different perspective, Kyeong-Hee Choi has noted the "intriguing array" of narratives that feature disabled characters in Korean-language texts during the two decades of *bunka seiji* (cultural politics), the more ameliorative approach to administering the colony which followed the first suppressive decade. See Kyeong-Hee Choi, "Impaired Body as Colonial Trope: Kang Kyōng'ae's 'Underground Village,'" *Public Culture* 13:3 (Spring 2001), 431.

desperate year of her life. Ōba Minako has commented on the complicated time configurations that are features of the “Rai’i” text; “Kazukime” presents a similar challenge to the reader.¹⁵

The text opens with the protagonist, here presented as a primary school student, alone on a riverbank.¹⁶ It is a vista from which the presence of other humans has been voided. Thus, the possibility of the projection of the interiorized self against an objectified other whose dimensions have been safely reduced by perspective against the horizon of a natural tableau is eliminated. The girl is the child of a mother who, having separated from her first husband, a violent Korean man, marries an equally violent Japanese man. She attempts to atone for this error by suppressing any remnant of Koreanness, savagely socializing her daughter to do likewise, and performing the role of an ideal Japanese housewife. Despite the fact that this traumatized daughter is positioned on an elevated levee in the opening scene of the text, the girl’s ocular perimeter is initially restricted to her immediate surroundings. Framed in the oppressive heat of the day, where the air “hangs listlessly on the ground across which there is no sign of a breeze,”¹⁷ she is, in fact, crouching down before a clump of cosmos, the same flower as the pattern of her shoes.

In this opening flashback scene there are already intimations, in the association between the flowers on the levee and the girl’s shoes, of an objectifying correspondence between the *shōjo*-like subject and her physical surroundings. The source of this objectification is the word Chōsen, the old name for Korea,¹⁸ which the girl has been terrified to find in her social studies text. Her dread concerning the possible disclosure of her Korean background during a lesson on Chōsen has reduced the child to a state of feverish semi-consciousness for the past week. Recovering only that morning, she has left the house and made her way to the levee beside a local river. Even here, however, she finds herself ravaged by, and forced to become an element in, the volatility of her physical surrounds. Needing to urinate, she takes down her underclothes and squats on the side of the bank. At this point, the rock upon which she has balanced dislodges, and she is unable to prevent herself from sliding down the bank and into one of the pools of viscous river water

¹⁵ Senji Kuroi, et al., “Dai-hyakunijūrokkaī sōsaku gōhyō,” *Gunzō* 41:6 (June 1986), 383.

¹⁶ Given Norma Field’s discussion, alluded to further in a later footnote, of the significance of the protagonist of the “Yuhi” text being depicted in child-like terms, it might be pointed out that the presentation of the “Kazukime” protagonist as a child is part of a series of flashbacks provided to give the reader knowledge of a range of events in the young woman’s life. See Norma Field, “Texts of Childhood in Internationalizing Japan,” in *Text and Nation*, ed. Peter C. Pfeiffer and Laura Garcia-Moreno (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996), particularly the discussion on “Yuhi,” 160-68.

¹⁷ Yi Yang-ji, “Kazukime,” in *Gendai shūsakushū, josei sakka shirizū* 23, ed. Kōno Taeko, et al. (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1999), 521.

¹⁸ The name also specifically refers to Korea at the time of the Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945. The title given to the principal colonial authority was “Chōsen Sōtokufu,” generally translated as the Office of the Governor-General of Korea.

lying at the base of the levee. As she struggles to maintain her balance, a stream of urine trickles down the inside of each leg. The abjectifying impact of both the loss of control of her bodily excretions and her partial immersion in the rank water of the river entrenches the wretched impression already created by the account of the girl's chaotic family circumstances and her terror of exposure at school.

The text progresses with the young woman being subjected to ongoing and increasingly destructive trauma, including rapes by her Japanese stepbrothers. These rapes are the harbingers of other degradation, which is often set in the confined space of a single claustrophobic room. Commentators, including Anthony Hood Chambers¹⁹ and Elaine Gerbert,²⁰ have noted the manner in which writers such as Uno Kōji, Satō Haruo, and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō build on an Edo tradition of the enclosed space as a site of pleasure to create private rooms, idealized sites of imaginary excess in which the most intense desires might be pleasurably satisfied.²¹ However, in the "Kazukime" text, the enclosed space has neither allure nor fascination and is never a site in which the subject can indulge in what transgressively delights her or him. Rather, the topos of the room is a site of alienating desolation. On one occasion, the protagonist accompanies three young men to the tiny apartment that is the home of one and, pre-empting what she expects to be an evening of drinking preceding a ritual of group sex, casually undresses. In spite of the young woman's bare flesh and erotic gestures, however, her jaded familiarity with what she has memorized as the requisite script, through rape and other interludes with various men, merely creates a sense of unsettling bleakness.

Other enclosed spaces in which the author incarcerates her protagonist include the bedroom in which the young woman is kept by her family when ill and the space defined by the curtain around the hospital bed where her mother, in the final stages of uterine cancer, exudes an offensive odor in response to which her daughter struggles to prevent herself from retching. The enclosure that ultimately impinges on her is the cramped bathroom in which she eventually takes her life. These rooms are not fantasy spaces but constant markers, inverse incarnations even, of the girl's objectification. In other words, rather than the inanimate object being personified, life is stripped from the animate subject who, in turn, is objectified and subsumed into the deadening surrounds.

¹⁹ For example, Anthony Hood Chambers, *The Secret Window: Ideal Worlds in Tanizaki's Fiction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 3.

²⁰ Elaine Gerbert, "Space and Aesthetic Imagination in Some Taishō Writing," in *Japan's Competing Modernities: Issues in Culture and Democracy 1900-1930*, ed. Sharon A. Minichiello (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 73. Here, Gerbert discusses the privatized space as a particular characteristic of Taishō-period (1912-26) culture.

²¹ The exquisitely perverse nature of activities undertaken in many of these rooms is nicely reviewed in Noguchi Takehiko's discussion of Tanizaki's early narratives. See especially Noguchi Takehiko, *Tanizaki Jun'ichirō ron* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1973), 15-16.

On one occasion, the protagonist assumes not just the trauma of her surrounds but the role of historical subjects in these surrounds. Late in the evening, the narrator's partner discovers the young woman collapsed on the tile floor of the bathroom. Reduced to semi-coherence by a minor earth tremor, the girl expresses her fear that a major quake will lead to her being vulnerable to a repeat of events that occurred in the days immediately following the September 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake.²² During this time, when vigilante groups prowled the streets of Tokyo and elsewhere, over 6,000 Koreans were slaughtered before the authorities, having tacitly supported the vigilante endeavors, acted to bring a halt to the massacre.²³ This blurring of personal paranoia with discourses of ethnic violence is a provocative feature of the text. In another incident, the young woman confides to an older Japanese friend that she has heard stories of some Japanese medical practitioners surreptitiously sterilizing Korean women and hastening the deaths of Korean patients.²⁴ In death, too, the young woman affiliates with her surrounds, here the seascape perimeter of Cheju, her father's homeland. Her suicide is presented as the result of the protagonist's acquiescence to an inner underwater voice that first summons her when she lies ill with terror at the outset of the text. Drawn by the voice, her death in the bath becomes her return to the ocean of the Cheju coast, where the salty water and kelp beat against the rocky shore of the island.²⁵ It may be noted that this is the *kazukime*, the woman under water, of the title.

The confined space also features in the Kim Sa-ryang text "Mukyū ikka." Here, the father of a Korean family has been lured from his homeland, not by compulsion, but by what the second-generation protagonist/narrator describes as an enthusiastic response to utopian discourses of modernization that circulated at the time of the Japanese occupation of Korea.²⁶ With its extended accounts of penury, the text is reminiscent of the works of the proletarian movement writers with whom Kim associated while in Japan. However, Kim's work avoids a blunt class warfare aesthetic, focusing instead on the traumatized existence of the subjects represented.

²² Yi, "Kazukime," 541-42.

²³ While the number of deaths is contested, Matsuo Shōichi cites the figure at over 6,000, with 700 resident Chinese also being murdered. As evidence of the collusion of authorities in the massacre, Matsuo also notes that, although charges were laid, almost all perpetrators escaped penalty. Matsuo Shōichi, *Kantō daishinsai to kaigenrei* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2003), 2-3.

²⁴ The anecdote recalls an incident in Ariyoshi Sawako's *Hishoku* (Without Color, 1964), in which the African-American husband of the Japanese protagonist and the man's brother discuss the alleged practice of white supremacist medical students deliberately killing African-American patients in the American South. See Ariyoshi Sawako, *Hishoku* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1967), 337-39.

²⁵ Yi, "Kazukime," 556.

²⁶ Kim Sa-ryang, "Mukyū ikka," in *'Hikari no naka ni': Kim Sa-ryang sakuhinshū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1999), 226.

The text opens with the protagonist/narrator entering the claustrophobic enclosure that is the dwelling of his parents. Having despaired of finding material wealth in Japan, the couple have instead directed their energies, in a manner highly disadvantageous to their own welfare, to supporting others in the immigrant Korean community. As a result, they now house six adults in their tiny, shanty-like dwelling. The narration is set in the environs of a city construction site where the exploited flesh of colonial subjects contributes to the munificence of the national project and its beneficiaries, including collaborating Koreans.²⁷

While the Doppo narrator is free to view a comfortably distant fantasized self,²⁸ the restrictive circumstances of the traumatized subject compel him or her to confront his or her own flesh-and-blood self in any contemplation of the surrounds. This point is driven home in “Mukyū ikka,” during a scene in which the protagonist catches sight of one of his parents’ lodgers, a boy in his teens, working in the morning sun on the excavation of a slope of land.²⁹ The youth had eagerly come to Japan to study. However, unlike the elite youth of Japan, whose scholastic sojourns in Europe resulted in significant professional and personal benefit,³⁰ this young man has experienced only destitution. Confronted with harsh economic reality, he has responded by betraying those who have assisted him. Thus, in spite of the fact that the aging couple upon whose hospitality he depends are facing financial crisis, he has hoarded his meager income rather than contribute to the cost of running the household. Unlike the object of Doppo’s narrator’s gaze, this young man realizes that he has been sighted, something the viewing narrator also understands. Quickly

²⁷ It is useful to read this section of Kim’s text cognizant of Gennifer Weisenfeld’s article “Touring Japan-as-Museum: NIPPON and Other Imperialist Japanese Travelogues.” Here, Weisenfeld presents reproductions of the covers of various editions of the stylish and internationally circulated “information” photographic journal, *NIPPON*. The cover of the no. 1, 1934, edition featured a modernized *kokeshi* doll image tastefully juxtaposed against an impressive multi-storied architectural edifice presented for consideration by the international community as an example of the achievements of the Japanese nation. Gennifer Weisenfeld, “Touring Japan-as-Museum: NIPPON and Other Imperialist Japanese Travelogues,” in *positions: east asian cultures critique* 8:3 (Winter 2000), 761. It is an edifice that might well have been constructed with the labor of the “Mukyū ikka” community.

²⁸ It might be noted here that the elite do not observe like kind. Their gaze, instead, is firmly fixed on the “Other,” be it the idealized *jōmin*, the salt of the earth common Japanese people, or the fascinatingly abject “traumatic excess.” It is through viewing these that the elite define their own privileged identities.

²⁹ Kim “Mukyū ikka,” 221.

³⁰ As Maeda Ai has argued in his superlative discussion of the Berlin cityscape in Mori Ōgai’s “Maihime,” elite Japanese youth were not above being drawn away from the opulence of Unter den Linden to the less salubrious Alt-Berlin, with its crumbling surfaces “fissured with the scars of history.” However, unlike the young men from Korea, the “Maihime” protagonist, Ōta Toyotarō, has the power to extricate himself at will from the disorder and “excess” represented by this site. See Maeda Ai, “Berlin 1888: Mori Ōgai’s ‘Dancing Girl,’” trans. Leslie Pincus, *Text and the City: Essays in Japanese Modernity*, ed. James A. Fujii (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 295-328.

the narrator looks away, aware that the young man is, in fact, himself. This is not an interiorized, fantasized self, but his own flesh-and-blood, traumatized self. For, in spite of the anxiety he feels for his parents, he also understands the desperation that has motivated the boy's meanness. For the past seven years, the narrator too has attempted, without success, to save the money required to undertake a degree in engineering. And although his gaze remains averted, he is nevertheless aware of the boy's humiliation at having been sighted, laboriously shoveling away at the ground beneath him, almost as if engaging in a forced act of self-internment on the site that is incrementally devouring his youthful vitality.³¹

The notion of the subject's viewing its own traumatized self rather than an objectified interiorized Other is also apparent in Yi Yang-ji's "Nabi taryon." In this semi-autobiographical text, the young protagonist walks through the winter landscape following her discovery that the Korean identity she has striven to conceal has, in fact, been known by other workers since the time of her arrival at the inn to which she fled to escape her parents' crumbling marriage. In her footprints in the snow she sees images of the faces of the members of her family,³² each a part of herself and each of whom, like herself, has been distorted and damaged by the strain of concealing her or his status as traumatic excess. She also views the sites of their trauma, including the courtroom in which her parent's divorce is being played out and to which she repeatedly refers as a *kaibōshitsu*, an autopsy room.

In this text, too, there are occasions when the protagonist/subject affiliates with the historical landscape of the nation, here presented in a reference to Japanese military atrocities in China. The rice cook at the inn, a menacing individual by the name of Katsura, entertains himself by demonstrating decapitation techniques to his younger coworkers. The narrator explains: "During the lunch break, Katsura would brandish a staff and show [the students who worked at the inn part-time] how to cut off a human head. The hands that prepared our rice had sliced off heads of the Chinese. Our rice was served by hands that had been drenched in Chinese blood."³³

Like "Kazukime," this text is also an account of the protagonist's slide into the psychological anguish of the traumatized, during which process she repeatedly identifies herself as an object in the surrounds of Japan. Recalling both Natsume Sōseki and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, she becomes terrified of trains and, as the Tokyo scenery closes in upon her from outside a train window, she is consumed by the fear that she will "be suffocated as she is crushed beneath the Japanese passengers."³⁴ It is a fear that provokes fantasies of both killing

³¹ It might also be noted that this scene is singled out by Kawamura Minato in his commentary of Kim's collected works as being a key event in the narrative. Kawamura Minato, "Kaisetsu," in *Hikari no naka ni': Kim Sa-ryang sakuhinshū*, 305.

³² Yi, "Nabi taryon," in *Yuhi-Nabi taryon*, 37.

³³ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 50.

and being killed. On one occasion, when she is taken to a hospital by ambulance following a particularly destructive bout of drinking, she interprets the Tokyo landscape as that of Korea, “the homeland never seen.”³⁵ The incident occurs in conjunction with a growing acknowledgment that this homeland is a site that might offer possibilities for recovery from her concerted agenda of self-abuse. It is interesting to note that while the persistent natural trope of “Kazukime,” namely the sound of water, is a harbinger of the protagonist’s death, the eponymous butterfly (the recurring image in this text) has a cathartic quality. As a means of overcoming her status as traumatic excess, the narrator commits herself to the traditional music and dance of Korea. She focuses these endeavors on the symbol of the white butterfly, an image drawn from the form of the traditional Korean dancer, clothed in white, whose movement is accompanied by the fluid motion of *sugon*, flowing ribbon-like sleeve extensions.

The final text for discussion is Kim Sa-ryang’s “Hikari no naka ni,” which narrates the relationship between a young Korean man studying in Japan, first introduced as Minami-sensei, and an unattractive, urchin-like child, Yamada Haruo. The young man teaches night school for exhausted factory laborers in Tokyo’s Kōtō district. Here, he uses the Japanese rather than the Korean reading of his name in order, he argues, to prevent unsettling the children who also attend the school, one of whom is the boy Yamada. During a tense exchange between Minami and a Korean youth who demands that Minami declare his Korean background, Yamada learns that Minami is Korean. The boy initially ridicules the teacher’s ethnicity. However, when his mother, also a Korean, is knifed by her husband following his release from prison, the child seeks comfort from Minami. This, the young teacher reasons, is the result of Yamada’s identification with himself as a Korean in place of the traumatized mother. The text concludes with the teacher and the boy going on a day outing together in Ueno, where, after the child is treated to a department store lunch, the pair dance together through the park to Shinobazu Pond.

A key element in the text is the desire, understandable given the likely cost of open declaration, of some colonial subjects to conceal their ethnicity.³⁶ The text also confronts the extremes of brutality that can be visited on those,

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

³⁶ Kawamura Minato cites Kim’s admission that the text, “Tenma” (translated by John Whittier Treat as Pegasus; *Bungei shunjū*, June 1940), written after “Hikari no naka ni” as an account of a fawning Korean writer who seeks to ingratiate himself with Japanese authorities, is to some extent an expression of the author (Kim) himself. See Kawamura, *Umaretara soko ga furusato: Zainichi Kankokujin bungakuron* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1999), 30. It is likely that in the “Hikari no naka ni” text, also, Kim is castigating himself over an inability to overtly and unambiguously declare his ethnic identity. In “Hikari no naka ni,” however, Kim demonstrates an awareness of the overwhelming complexity of the issue and is less severe in his condemnation of the colonial subject driven to concealment.

such as Yamada's mother, who are overtly identified as colonial subjects. In the text, the child's mother is mutilated by her ruthless partner,³⁷ who claims to have snatched her from the owner of a business in the nearby Susaki area, a former red-light quarter. Later, when the child steals a wad of tobacco to stem the blood flow from his mother's wound,³⁸ it is confirmed that she is brutalized repeatedly by her husband. Contemplating an explanation for her decision to endure this mistreatment rather than accept his advice to return to her homeland, the young teacher naively speculates that the woman may be seeking a modicum of self-respect by affiliating with a Japanese, regardless of the penalty. However, a reading of this radically traumatized woman in conjunction with the trauma of, for example, the protagonist of Yi Yang-ji's "Kazukime," reveals the inadequacy of this argument, although it might provide insights into motivation for the young man's own behavior.³⁹

The women in both "Kazukime" and "Hikari no naka ni" undoubtedly engage in self-destructive behavior. Yi Yang-ji's protagonist maims herself with implements such as a hammer and kitchen knife; Yamada's mother accepts incessant abuse from her partner. However, the notion of choice in these activities is as absurd as the notion of Korea's having "chosen" to be annexed by Japan.⁴⁰ And it is therefore reasonable to consider the bodies of both women, whose extreme frailty is emphasized throughout each text,⁴¹ as metonyms for the body of the colony itself. In other words, they are presented as sites of an excess of abuse and trauma from which there is little chance of

³⁷ In keeping with the ambivalent nature of the various identities featured in the text, it transpires that, in spite of his having a Japanese name and being known to despise Koreans, this man's mother was South Korean and he himself was born in South Korea.

³⁸ See Kim, "Hikari no naka ni," 48 and 51, respectively, for accounts of the discovery of the theft and the child's explanation.

³⁹ It was pointed out during a discussion following the delivery of this paper at the 2004 Association for Japanese Literary Studies meeting that the young teacher arrived at this conclusion only *after* the mother rejected his advice to leave her violent husband and return to Korea. This is certainly the case. I would nevertheless argue that, as mentioned in the discussion above, the fact that the young man comes to such a conclusion provides greater insight into his own behavior than insight into what motivates the woman. In other words, when Minami/Nan suggests to the brutalized woman that she return to Korea, he also questions his own motives for remaining in Japan, where he must constantly deal with the temptation to conceal his background. For while there may be some small advantage to be gained for the women through affiliation with a crazed petty criminal, considerable advantage accrues to the young man by remaining in Japan and pursuing his studies.

⁴⁰ This is in spite of the claim made in late October, 2003, by the governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintarō, that Korea voluntarily chose to be annexed by Japan.

⁴¹ It has already been noted that, in a discussion of Yi Yang-ji's "Yuhi," Norma Field argues that the small body of the protagonist in that text permits her to adopt the persona of a child. This does not seem to be the case with respect to the small bodies of either Yamada's mother or the "Kazukime" protagonist. Neither woman has a "child-like" relationship with other characters, which Field notes is a feature of Yuhi's relationship with her Korean hosts. Nevertheless, the conclusion ultimately drawn by Field to the effect that foregrounding the child-like body ensures that "national questions escape rehearsal in their worn grooves because the narrative refuses their intellectual resolution" also has relevance here. See Field, "Texts of Childhood," 167.

respite. For, notwithstanding Oguma Eiji's and Kevin Doak's discussions of various voices that interrogated the more inhumane attitudes among Japanese elite toward the colony,⁴² these voices were not in the ascendancy and were generally muted, if not totally silenced. It may also be noted here that it is not necessarily only the body of the woman that is presented as a site of mutilation. "Akai yama" (The Red Hills: A Doctor's Story, 1932) is a Korean-language text by Kim Dong-in. The narrative is set in Manchuria, in a Korean community displaced by the forced forfeiture of land imposed on many farming families in Korea by Japanese colonial authorities. This text features a scene in which the Manchurian landlord judges the quality of rice levied from an elderly tenant farmer as below standard. He subsequently has the old man savagely beaten and his body tied to a horse for dispatch back to the village. A local thuggish misfit who tries to avenge the old man's death meets a similar fate, his body "bent at the waist . . . like a figure seven."⁴³

A final comment is reserved for the eponymous light of Kim's work, the presence of which suggests redemptive possibilities even in this bleakness. While light is a persistent trope in the text, it is particularly deployed in the closing pages with respect to the boy, Yamada. The boy confides that he loves to dance. As he reveals this, "his entire body seemed to emit a radiance."⁴⁴ There has been previous reference to light in association with the child. Yet, while that earlier light was unsettling, there is an intimation of splendor in the final vision. To the young teacher, currently subjecting himself to a severe bout of self-criticism for failing to state his Korean background directly, the boy's revelation provides recuperative inspiration. He fantasizes a performance by Yamada, as follows:

I imagined the single figure of this boy, distorted and damaged by his unfortunate background, swirling through the light, his legs stretched and arms extended, seeking the green and red of the various lights that played around him. My entire body was swept with a palpable feeling of joy. The boy looked back at me, smiling contentedly.⁴⁵

⁴² See Oguma Eiji, "Yūshoku no shokumin teikoku," in *Nashonariti no datsukōchiku*, eds. Naoki Sakai, et al. (Tokyo: Kashiwa Shobō, 1996) and Kevin Doak, "Culture, Ethnicity, and the State in Early Twentieth-Century Japan," in Minichiello, *Japan's Competing Modernities*.

⁴³ For a discussion of "Akai yama" and this incident in particular, see Kawamura, *Bungaku kara miru 'Manshū': 'Gozoku kyōwa' no ume to genjitsu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1998), 122-124. Accounts of the deaths of the old man and the thug appear on pages 4 and 6 respectively in Kim Dong-in, "The Red Hills: A Doctor's Story," in Chung Ching-wha, ed. *Modern Korean Short Stories* (Kowloon: Heinemann Educational Books, Asia, 1980).

⁴⁴ Kim, "Hikari no naka ni," 54.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

As the teacher replies to the young man's suggestion that they study dance together, the boy's eyes, the reader is told, "[shone] with the blue of the stars."⁴⁶

It may be argued with some justification that this imagery borders on the sentimental. In terms of the present discussion, however, it is the protagonist's capacity for fantasy that is important. Rather than viewing only a constrained and traumatized self, his vision of the boy against the green surrounds of Ueno Park provides Nan-sensei, for he has now determined to use his Korean name, with the means to express tentative new desires and to hope for their realization. The teacher declares that he cannot miss this opportunity to assist the boy to release himself from his withdrawn state. Yet, it may be argued that such a commitment is equally indicative of his own desire for release from the trauma of having to conceal his ethnicity, a trauma which has constrained the expression of the young man's identity as much as the boy's. We can only speculate about the likely outcome of Nan-sensei's desires and expectations. Furthermore, his epiphany offers little in the way of amelioration for the traumatized woman of the text. Nevertheless, the experience does confirm some degree of success, if only momentary, in the protagonist's struggle to avoid being consigned to the zone of the traumatic excess. On the contrary, he seeks to construct an active subjectivity in which he has the integrity to declare his Korean identity openly, regardless of the hostile response this might provoke, and the power to sustain himself through fantasies of redemption.

⁴⁶ Ibid.