
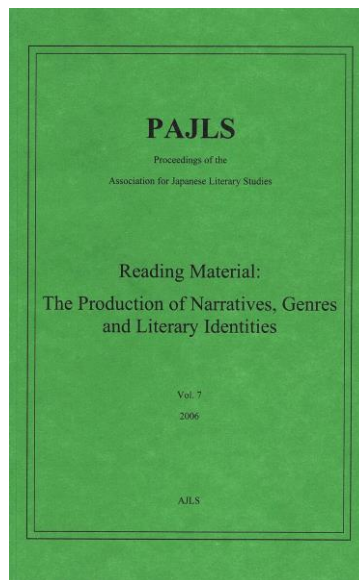


“Photography and Automatic Writing as *Idée Fixe*
in Ozaki Kōyo’s *The Gold Demon*”

Seth Jacobowitz 

*Proceedings of the Association for Japanese
Literary Studies* 7 (2006): 107–118.



PAJLS 7:
*Reading Material: The Production of Narratives, Genres
and Literary Identities.*
Ed. James Dorsey and Dennis Washburn.

Photography and Automatic Writing as *Idée Fixe* in Ozaki Kōyō's *The Gold Demon*

Seth Jacobowitz

Cornell University

She went into her husband's study and sat down at his desk. . . when overcome with her secret grief, she would take her brush and correct or add to what she had written before. When one long letter was finished, she would rewrite it from beginning to end, beautifying and improving it, and burning the first copy, put the new letter safely away in the folds of her sash. In this way she kept only one letter, which had now been rewritten many times. Miya improved greatly in penmanship.

—Ozaki Kōyō, *The Gold Demon* (1897-1903)

Here I am, sitting at a little oak table where in old times possibly some fair lady sat to pen, with much thought and many blushes, her ill-spelt love letter, and writing in my diary in shorthand all that has happened since I closed it last. It is nineteenth century up-to-date with a vengeance. And yet, unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere “modernity” cannot kill.

—Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897)

1. Introduction

The arrival of photography in late nineteenth century Japan coincided with the introduction of Western literary genres, and contributed to the development of concepts of mimetic realism for modern Japanese literature and visual culture.¹ Photography was likewise

¹Ernest Fenollosa's “Bijutsu Shinsetu” 美術真説 (The Truth of Art, 1882), was among the earliest and most influential theories of fine art in the early Meiji period to shape these two disciplines. The premise that photography represented a form of unvarnished truth, but not beauty, was central to Fenollosa's advancement of the new national art he dubbed “*nihonga*” (Japanese pictures). Fenollosa was equally adamant in rejecting the indexical mimeticism of photography and the blending of word and image in the calligraphic literati art known as *bunjinga*. In keeping

implicit in the formation of the new vernacular written style of *genbun itchi* (literally, “the unification of speech and writing”). Much as photography captured visual images, the phonetic shorthand adapted from Isaac Pitman’s “phonography” into Japanese by Takusari Kōki and his disciples was dubbed a “photographic method of words” (*kotoba no shashinhō* ことばの写真法) that could record speech with high fidelity. In the wake of Wakabayashi Kanzō and Sakai Shōzō’s best-selling shorthand transcriptions of Sanyūtei Enchō’s rakugo tale *Ghost Story of the Peony Lantern* in 1884, which was seen to exemplify the possibilities for *genbun itchi* as a viable novelistic style, literary theory by Tsubouchi Shōyō, Masaoka Shiki and others advocated the compositional imperative of shorthand “to capture things as they really are” (*ari no mama ni utsushitoru* 有りの儘に写し取る) as a basis for realism.² A prominent holdout against these practices was Ozaki Kōyō 尾崎紅葉(1867-1903). A brilliant stylist who initially advocated a return to the literary style of the 17th century writer Saikaku as well as variations of vernacular dialog combined with neo-classical narration (*gazoku setchū* 雅俗折衷), he initially decried the “disappearing act” of poor writers who relied overmuch on the camera-like verisimilitude of shorthand. Nevertheless, Kōyō, too, experimented with this style and eventually endorsed some of its possibilities for realism. His deepening interest in photography led him to found an amateur photographer’s club, the Tokyo Friends of Photography Club (Tokyo Shayū-kai) in 1901.³

Kōyō’s most celebrated work to follow, but crucially not to replicate *in toto* the *genbun itchi* style, was *Konjiki Yasha* (The Gold Demon). The novel enjoyed a lengthy serialization in the Yomiuri newspaper from 1897 until the author’s untimely death in 1903.⁴ While *The Gold Demon* has long been regarded as peripheral to mainstream vernacular-style realism due to its mixture of ornate and colloquial prose, I seek to demonstrate Kōyō’s affinities with new visual media such as photography and his experimentation with different modes of literary representation. His participation in the formation of a new literature and literary style, as well as the nascent field of photography, should not be understood as mutually distinct registers, but rather converge in the narratological structures of his fiction. *The Gold Demon* reveals how keenly Kōyō was attuned to the relationships between the exteriority of writing and internal world of human affect, including the channeling of desire and the unconscious that make up the “self-composure” of the modern subject. I also wish to look beyond the Japanese literary canon to situate his uses of media, language and genre alongside Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). In response to the explosive growth of new media technologies, language reform movements and

with the tenets of Lessing’s *Laocoon* (not Hegel’s aesthetics as is often presumed), Fenollosa insisted upon maintaining separate and sovereign spheres for literature and art. This would have a tremendous impact on Tsubouchi Shōyō’s *Shōsetsu Shinzui* (Essence of the Novel, 1885) which called for purely verbal description in literature over reliance upon illustrations and the verbal-visual interplay of Tokugawa-era fiction.

² Wakabayashi also transcribed from dictation the first volume of Yano Ryūkei’s political novel *Keikoku Bidan* (Illustrious Statesmen of Thebes, 1884). Yano, who coined the modern term *sokki* (“fast-writing,” brachygraphy), was the editor of the *Yūbin Hōchi* newspaper, which employed Wakabayashi and Sakai as shorthand reporters. The expression “photographic method of words” appears in Wakabayashi’s preface to *The Peony Lantern* and in Tsubouchi Shōyō’s often overlooked essay, “*Bi to wa nan zo ya?*” (What is Beauty?, 1886).

³ The organization consisted of some one hundred fifty members, including prominent writers Ishibashi Shian and Iwaya Sazanami, and the artist Kaburagi Kiyokata. See Kōno Kensuke, *Shomotsu no kindai* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shōbō, 1992), pp. 164-165.

⁴ Over the same period it was also published in three book-length installments (*jōchūge*).

the suppression of older forms of lived experience, I contend both novels can be read as dramatic recordings of the Gothic novel that force us to rethink the uses of realism in the late nineteenth century.

The Gold Demon revolves around two characters, the orphaned university student Hazama Kanichi 間貫一 (“steadfast throughout”), whose parents die before he comes of age; and Shigisawa Miya 鳴澤宮 (“shrine”), his betrothed.⁵ Kanichi grows up in the household of the Shigisawas, who intend to repay their debt of gratitude to his deceased father by seeing to his education and offering their daughter’s hand in marriage. Yet this match remarkably based on familial obligations *and* romantic love never comes to pass. The narrative begins at a New Year’s party⁶ where Miya catches the eye of the nouveau riche playboy Tomiyama Tadatsugu 富山唯継 (“mountain of wealth simply inherited”). Tomiyama’s flashy diamond ring and future inheritance of the Tomiyama Bank convince Miya, and her parents decide to renege on the engagement with Kanichi. Although Shigisawa seeks to placate the enraged Kanichi, he seeks out Miya alone on the beach at Atami, and denounces her. In the most infamous scene in the novel, Kanichi violently kicks her to the sand, and vows to become a vengeful demon (*yasha*) in spirit if not in form who will take revenge on the world through merciless usury. The usurer was a stereotypical villain in Meiji literature. Abandoning his studies, he becomes the trusted assistant to the vile moneylender Wanibuchi 鱷淵 (“pool of crocodiles”). Despite swearing off all human relationships, Kanichi is also pursued by the beautiful “lady usurer” Mitsue, a femme fatale whose love for Kanichi is only outdone by her professional cruelty to her debtors. She becomes a bitter rival to Miya, who quickly comes to regret her decision and struggles in vain to regain Kanichi’s love.

As befits a *roman-feuilleton* partially inspired by a ghost-written English dime novel,⁷ *The Gold Demon* leads from their breakup through many trials and obstacles before returning to the threshold of reconciliation. Along the way the narrative is saturated with Buddhist-inflected symbolism; the circularity of the serial novel neatly mapping onto the workings of karmic retribution. Much as *Dracula* transforms the Gothic novel into a confrontation between rational, techno-scientific Victorian England and darker, more ancient supernatural forces, *The Gold Demon* can be read as a critique of “civilization and enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika*), the

⁵ Kanichi’s name comes from a passage in the Confucius’ *Analecets* IV:15 that was taken up in the *Zenrin kushyū* 禅林句集 (Collection of Sayings from the Zen Forest, 1688): “My Way has a unity which runs right through it” (*waga michi itchi wo motte kore tsuranuku*; Victor Sōgen Hori trans., *Zen Sand*, 285). The family name Shigisawa might be translated simply as “Snipe,” which succinctly conveys in English both the bird that is their namesake and a contemptible person. The names of virtually all of the major characters indicate similarly archetypal qualities.

⁶ The serialization of the novel began on New Year’s Day, 1897.

⁷ In November/December 2000 issue of *Bungaku*, Hori Keiko traced the source of *The Gold Demon* to the dime novel *Weaker Than a Woman* (1890) by Bertha M. Clay. Originally the pseudonym of English author Charlotte M. Brame (1836-1884), the name was extensively used by publishers after her death to sell dozens of romance novels. Hori has since published a contemporary Japanese translation of the Clay novel under the title *Onna yori yowakimono* (Tokyo: Nanyūdō Phoenix, 2002). On the subject of the market forces behind those machinations, see also Graham Law and Morita Norimasa’s “Japan and the Internationalization of the Serial Fiction Market,” *Book History* 6 (2003): 109-125.

catchphrases of the Meiji era. I would argue that both novels stand as new prototypes for the Gothic novel at the dawn of the age of mechanical reproduction. Not unlike the vampire who replicates his victims into undead copies of himself, *The Gold Demon*'s representations of photography and automatic writing can be read as instances of an *idée fixe* that threatens to supplant human feeling (*ninjō* 人情), if not human being itself, and irrevocably reduce it to obsessive, mechanical repetition. At stake in both novels is the exchange of two vital fluids, blood and ink, that circulate through Romanticist-Gothic fiction and resolve the boundaries between life and death, and between the modern realist subject and its repressed “premodern” other.

2. “The Disappearing Act” and the “Photographic Method of Words”

In terms of his contributions to the literary style of *genbun itchi*, Ozaki Kōyō has long presented a serious conundrum for studies of canonical Japanese literature. This is especially the case for the proponents of modernization theory, who maintain that steady progress toward a unified written and spoken language was intrinsically tied to Japan's success on the world stage and its modern cultural development. The late historian of national language and modern literary style, Yamamoto Masahide, devoted considerable space in his *Genbun itchi no rekishiki ronkō* 言文一致の歴史論考 (Historical Considerations of *Genbun Itchi*, 1978) to evaluating Kōyō's contributions to the modern literary style that crosses the disciplines of national language (*kokugo*) and national literature (*kokubungaku*). Yamamoto argued that Kōyō's publication of a raft of *genbun itchi* novels ending in the *de aru* copula in the mid-1890s spoke strongly to his desire to master *genbun itchi* as yet another technical accomplishment.⁸ Nevertheless, *The Gold Demon*, which immediately followed those texts, signaled Kōyō's return to a mixed literary style, a matter not easily accommodated within modernization theory.

What, then, motivated Kōyō's seemingly atavistic return to the multiplicity of late Edo and early Meiji styles? Some insight into this problematic is provided by his posthumously published essay “*Ongyōjutsu*” 隠形術 (The Disappearing Act), dated by Yamamoto to 1896, and written just before he commenced serialization of *The Gold Demon*. Though he does not explicitly name them, Kōyō explores ideas about mimeticism and authorial individuality in the nascent realist (*shajitsushugi*) and literary sketching (*shaseibun*) movements, clearly demonstrating that what began as contempt for the shorthand approach to literature, literally as well as figuratively, soon became a grudging appreciation for transcriptive realism as a compositional strategy in his own fiction.

The descriptive style (*bunshō* 文章) is a paintbrush (*gahitsu* 画筆); *genbun itchi* is a camera (*shashin kikai* 写真器械). . . *Genbun itchi*? I had always supposed anyone could write in that style—all one had to do was to make a shorthand transcription of a professional storyteller (*kōdan ya rakugo wo sokki shita naraba* 講談や落語を速記したならば) in order to produce a masterpiece. I could not refrain from laughing to myself, with a touch of pity, at the thought that *genbun*

⁸ These works include *Futari nyōbō* 二人女房 (Two Wives), *Tonari no onna* 隣の女 (The Woman Next Door), *Murasaki* 紫 (Purple), and *Reinetsu* 冷熱 (Hot and Cold).

itchi was nothing more than the “disappearing act” of a bad writer. Later, I myself, quite unexpectedly, was faced with the necessity of performing a “disappearing act” (*ongyōjutsu* 隠形術) and, as an experiment, I tried making the magic sign. I wasn’t completely satisfied with my performance, but I realized that *genbun itchi* was definitely a camera (*shashinkyō* 写真鏡) rather than a paintbrush.⁹

In other words, the shorthand transcription of rakugo provided an alternative visual grammar for the modern Japanese novel. Though Kōyō establishes in no uncertain terms the correlation of shorthand with photography, he does not make claims for the inherent superiority of camerawork versus brushwork. In order to understand why Kōyō, who was quite capable of virtuosically reproducing the photorealistic style by 1897, eschewed this “transcriptive” approach for a more Gothic tone, it is necessary to further examine the status of realism vis-à-vis technologies of the gaze and machineries of writing in *The Gold Demon*.

3. Photography and Automatic Writing

The use of visual technologies to elucidate obsessive and mechanical relations come to the fore midway through the text in an episode at the manor of one Viscount Tazumi. Tazumi is introduced as the eccentric “*Shashin no gozen*” or “his Lordship the Photographer,” an aristocrat obsessed with photography, who has his bulky, expensive camera equipment carried on a cart wherever he pleases. As such the Viscount is emblematic of amateur photography in early Meiji, a pastime largely enjoyed by wealthy elites and well-connected foreigners in treaty ports such as Yokohama and Nagasaki.¹⁰ While early photography in Japan was primarily portraiture and landscapes, the founding of the Tokyo Friends of Photography Club marked the increased commercial availability of photography after the turn of the century. It was only after Kōyō’s death in the 1910s that “art photography” (*geijutsu shashin*) became a byword.¹¹

The Viscount superficially resembles Mori Ōgai and the protagonist of his novella “The Dancing Girl” (1890), in being sent to Germany to study, where he falls in love with a lower-class German girl.¹² Although Tazumi longs to marry her, his mother refuses to allow him

⁹ Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, pp. 133-134. I have added the original terminology in parenthesis for clarification.

¹⁰ Kōyō was in fact introduced to photography by Ōhashi Otoa, an aspiring member of the Ken’yūsha literary group, who married into the Hakubunkan publishing empire and himself practiced a combination of photography and *gikobun*-style literature. I am grateful to Professor Kōno Kensuke of Nihon University for pointing out this historical connection at the AJLS conference.

¹¹ See Kaneko Ryūichi, “Japanese Photography in the Early Twentieth Century,” in *Modern Photography in Japan, 1915-1940*.

¹² In his brief review of the novel, “Konjiki Yasha Jōchūgehen Gappyō” (The Gold Demon Unabridged, 1903), Ōgai curiously omits any mention of these intertextual references. Instead, he credits Kōyō with moving away from caricatures of the usurer as a “hook-nosed” (*hana no magatta*) monster who “sucks the living blood from people” (*hito no namachi wo sū*) that are of a piece with the anti-Semitic portrayal of Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*. In Ōgai’s view, Kōyō succeeded in transforming the quintessential Meiji villain of the usurer into an anti-hero wronged by woman and society. Finally, Ōgai explores the insatiability of desire represented by Miya in Social Darwinist and Nietzschean terms. For an in-depth analysis of this short article, see Kenneth Mark Anderson’s “The

to marry a girl from “a race lower than *eta*,” and the girl dies of a broken heart. His last vestige of her is a self-portrait she drew that hangs in his study. Photography provides the closest thing to a suture for the Viscount’s traumatic loss: a powerful attempt at compensation for fading memory. In other words, he immerses himself in photography yet cannot recover what he most longs for, with the photographic images yielding only a fleeting comfort to his frozen emotional life.

The trope of obsessive, mechanical repetition recurs in Miya’s dehumanizing relationship to her husband. As a married woman she ceases to be a beautiful object admired from afar and suffers through Tomiyama’s loveless lovemaking; a bitter fate that ends with the birth and premature death of her only child.¹³ This trauma leads her to abandon all affection for Tomiyama, and instead “she conceived the idea of writing a long, long letter”¹⁴ to Kanichi quoted at the outset of this paper. She engages in what I call “automatic writing” in conscious reference to late nineteenth century Spiritualism, where it refers to the channelling of spirits or repressed memories and desires through the mechanical operations of the hand and pen onto paper.¹⁵ We might also note its passing resemblance to the disciplining of mind and body into a continuous circuit of writing emblematic of shorthand notation.

Returning to the scene in Viscount Tazumi’s garden, new technologies of the gaze bring into focus different vectors of affect and capital, culminating in the accidental first reunion of Miya and Kanichi. Kanichi is present as the representative of Wanibuchi, whose secret collusions with Tazumi’s steward ensure the Viscount’s capital is not depleted by his addiction to photography. Meanwhile, Miya is brought as Tomiyama’s trophy wife to have her picture taken by Tazumi, and to give purchase in the aristocratic fad of photography to Tomiyama the cultural cachet he so desperately lacks. In the midst of these movements, Miya is seated on a vista overlooking the Viscount’s garden, where she is given a pair of rare and expensive binoculars imported from France. Tazumi’s lady attendant tells Miya about the Viscount’s favorite prank: claiming the binoculars can be used not only to magnify sight, but to hear distant sounds by putting them up against one’s ear. An overly eager servant was once so taken with the idea that he clapped them to his ear and drew blood. This anecdote of audio-visual synesthesia provides momentary comic relief, but it is also one of many instances where drops of blood are sprinkled through the text, foreshadowing the bloodletting necessary for Miya to redeem herself in Kanichi’s eyes. Indeed, in the next instant Miya unconsciously bites her lip when she spies Kanichi. In the highly melodramatic fashion characteristic of Romantic and Gothic fiction, Miya is so shaken that after Kanichi leaves and the Viscount finally has her pose for her portrait, she faints and collapses.

Foreign Relations of the Family State: The Empire of Ethics, Aesthetics, and Evolution in Meiji Japan,” (Diss. Cornell University, 1999), pp. 291-298.

¹³ The text literally describes her as “just like a machine” (*tada kikai no gotoku*). See *Ozaki Kōyō-shū*, vol. 10. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1994), p. 234.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 246.

¹⁵ On the topic of Spiritualism, see Jeffrey Sconce’s *Haunted Media: Electronic Presence from Telegraph to Television*, pp. 12-13. We might also think here of the ouija board, the hand moving herky-jerky over the letters of the alphabet on a board to spell out words from beyond.

4. Blood and Ink, or Two Counts of the Gothic Novel

I would now like to undertake a comparative analysis of the recordings of the Gothic novel in *The Gold Demon* and *Dracula*.¹⁶ Leaving aside obvious analogies of the vampire and *yasha* (especially as a bloodsucking moneylender), the clash between modern enlightenment and darker, premodern forces are jointly achieved through the horizons of media and genre, the transcription of spoken language, and conventions of realism. Much as we have seen an array of stock characters in *The Gold Demon*—the wasting beauty, the merciless usurer, the nouveau riche playboy—*Dracula* combines elements of the Gothic with the new genre of the detective novel by assembling an unlikely group to face off against the “criminal”¹⁷ undead: the young solicitor Jonathan Harker; his fiancée, Mina Harker, a school teacher and aspiring “lady reporter;” the psychologist Dr. Seward; the Texan cowboy Quincey P. Morris; and the brilliant Dutch scientist Van Helsing. Together they represent the linguistic diversity in the Anglophone world—a colorful (if still all *white*) assortment of English dialects and accents, or “slangs,” as the doomed blonde heroine Lucy Westenra (“Westerner”)¹⁸ calls them. In the scenes set in Britain, the reader is exposed to the spectrum of English “native speakers” outside standard dialect that includes a Cockney zookeeper and Scottish fisherman. But from the beginning of the narrative, Jonathan Harker’s fitful travels take him across the heterogeneous linguistic and political communities of central Europe. In contrast to the imperial metropole ordered by standard time (Greenwich Mean Time, 1884) punctual trains and postal service,¹⁹ to say nothing of “proper” English disseminated through normal schools, Mitteleurope is a contact zone where

¹⁶ To the best of my knowledge, the only previous attempt to explore these texts in tandem is Mark Anderson’s aforementioned dissertation, “The Foreign Relations of the Family State: The Empire of Ethics, Aesthetics, and Evolution in Meiji Japan” (Cornell University, 1999). While I am indebted to his highly cogent exploration of themes relevant to his project, I believe my own reading of the relations of media, language and realism generates an entirely different set of critical issues.

¹⁷ As David Punter and Glennis Byron observe in *The Gothic*, the new science of criminology quickly made its way into popular fiction in the mid-nineteenth century, and was essential in assimilating the tropes and archetypes of Gothicism into the burgeoning genre of the detective novel:

The development of new sciences began to offer possible ways of theorizing deviance, and Gothicized criminality by linking it to the past. . . . As the Italian criminal anthropologist Cesare Lombroso maintained in 1876, “the criminal is an atavistic being who reproduces in his own person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals” (Lombroso-Derrero 1911: xiv). . . . Lombroso pays particular attention to the lateral incisors in criminals and it is such descriptions that allow Mina Harker in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* to identify the Count as “a criminal and of the criminal type,” and consequently to predict his behaviour. From David Punter and Glennis Byron. *The Gothic* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), pp. 22-23.

¹⁸ Akin to an undead version of Kurtz in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902), the exemplary white man who goes native, and in whose blood flows the many different imperial nations of Europe, Lucy receives blood transfusions from her three suitors in a desperate effort to prolong her life after she is bitten by *Dracula*. As such Lucy becomes the site of competition not only between Western science and Eastern superstition, but also for the virility and Darwinian fitness of Western men.

¹⁹ Fresh from London, the still-callow Jonathan Harker measures the level of civilization around him on his journey to *Dracula*’s castle by the lack of regular and reliable train service: “It seems to me that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they be in China?” Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1993), pp. 2-3.

languages, cultures and ethnic communities collide and breed all manner of what Harker dismisses as mere superstition.

A second aspect of language and media is the use of what has sometimes been called “false documentation” to produce a *verité* effect of realism. A device common to the eighteenth century English novel, it first appeared in a Gothic context in Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which its author claimed was a medieval Italian manuscript. What sets *Dracula* apart from *The Castle of Otranto* and other Gothic forerunners is its narrative foregrounding of modern media and writing systems; a radical technophilia that has become a staple of cutting-edge genre fiction. Jonathan Harker’s travelogue, which opens the novel, is marked from the outset with the parenthetical note “kept in shorthand.” He and Mina correspond via shorthand, while Dr. Seward keeps a phonographic journal of his patients at the asylum.²⁰ The simple, if inelegant, fact of Jonathan Harker’s industrious clerical skills very quickly arises in the narrative to bedevil his host, the stenographically illiterate Count Dracula. As Friedrich Kittler drily observes, the subversion of “symbolic” meaning by the phonetic notation of shorthand leaves him impotent to do anything but destroy what he cannot decipher:

The eye of the Count, however red it may glow through the night, cannot read shorthand. Imaginary terrors pale before this technology of symbols, developed by the most economical of centuries. All that the Count can do is complain of the meaninglessness of these symbols and burn every letter of Harker’s that is not legible to him as a host. Because of this cryptic writing, the broken piece, whose Greek name is symbol, itself falls to pieces.²¹

Moreover, Kittler insists, while *Dracula* may not leave a reflection in a mirror, he still leaves a paper trail of transactions that disclose the whereabouts of his coffins scattered about London. We might say without undue hyperbole that the novel pits the mediums of the Prince of Darkness against modern media. While *Dracula* can change shape at will and command wolves, bats, impenetrable fogs and other Gothic atmospherics, his every move is captured in the recording media of shorthand and phonograph, and in the circulating print and postal matter of newspapers, telegrams and invoices. When these disparate bits of information are finally collated by Mina Harker’s typewriter into a single complete narrative and database, they conspire to put an end to him once and for all. *Dracula*’s destruction is media capture in more ways than one.

It is instructive to recall here Jonathan Harker’s musings about shorthand while trapped in the Count’s castle, which aptly convey the shock of the modern when it cannot so easily displace or eradicate the ghosts—real or imagined—of its predecessors.²² Shorthand is, as it

²⁰ The shorthand phonographer Jonathan Harker’s surprise at seeing a mechanical phonograph for the first time attests to the novelty—and scarcity—of Edison’s invention some twenty-five years after its invention.

²¹ Friedrich Kittler, “*Dracula’s Legacy*” in *Literature, Media & Information Systems*, trans. William Stephen Davis (Amsterdam: G+B Arts, 1997), 50-84: p. 60.

²² Van Helsing offers similar remarks in a broader discourse on science and belief: “Do you think there are things which you cannot understand and yet which are; that some people see things that others cannot? . . . Ah, it is the fault

were, a lens onto modernity. The transformations of writing that enable Jonathan Harker to evade the gaze of the Count even as he records it becomes a kind of feedback loop between human being and technology, or early traces of a techno-ontology.

Much as Stoker's *Dracula* captures the burgeoning diversity of language and media in the Anglophone world, yet conveniently subsumes them beneath the homogeneous surface of Mina Harker's typewritten manuscript, there is no explicit reference to shorthand or technologies of writing in *The Gold Demon*. Instead Kōyō utilizes the multiple registers of written and spoken Japanese available in the Meiji era—*gabun* (ornate prose) narration, the written vernacular of *genbun itchi* (also called *kōgotai*, the spoken style) in speech and dialogs, and the epistolary *sōrōbun* for letters—which each elicit different codes of realism and Meiji Romanticism. *The Gold Demon* is not a throwback to Tokugawa-era prose fiction, but an attempt to work between, and in some sense harmonize, what he calls the techniques of the paintbrush and camera. In fact, as we see most clearly with Miya's letter that concludes the novel, the vernacular style alone was not an inherently more "realistic" documentary mode. That is to say, Miya's writing in the epistolary style would be readily understood by contemporary readers as a more accurate reflection of her gender, class and education.²³ While the association of *genbun itchi* with photographic and phonographic realism was of concern to Kōyō, it was hardly his sole priority, much less exclusive technique. The overdetermination of this relation is almost entirely the result of canonical studies which produced the myth of the modern Japanese novel as pure text without recourse to media history. Kōyō's Gothicism is thus not a return to the premodern, but an internal critique of the modern using the very categories of language, media and realism purported to embody its essence.

Akin to *Dracula*, *The Gold Demon* holds out the promise of closure through a plentiful spilling of ink and blood. As with the Count, a web of attraction draws women to the dark, mysterious and taciturn figure of the *yasha*. From the scene in the Viscount's garden, where Miya spies Kanichi through the binoculars, he becomes the principal object of the gaze. In their heartfelt missives, Miya and "the beauty usurer" Mitsue also struggle to convince him, the most laconic of Gothic anti-heroes, to read and respond to their entreaties. Their rivalry comes to a head in the final third of the novel in Kanichi's dream where pens are laid aside for a dagger (i.e., the symbolic phallus) as they fight to the death to possess him. During this violent struggle in which Kanichi journeys across strange physical and psychological terrain, Miya first kills Mitsue, then herself. Witnessing her purify herself by self-sacrifice,²⁴ Kanichi longs to join her, opening the possibilities of reconciliation and/or parting in death in the waking world.

of our science that it wants to explain all; and if it explain not, then it says there is nothing to explain. But yet we see around us every day the growth of new beliefs, which think themselves new and which are yet but old, which pretend to be young—like the fine ladies at the opera." *Dracula*, p. 205.

²³ As late as 1908, Natsume Soseki's *Sanshiro* depicts the asymmetry of Sanshirō's mother in rural Kyushu writing to him in the old-fashioned *sōrōbun*, while he responds in newfangled *genbun itchi*.

²⁴ It goes without saying that the cleansing of sins in one's blood was neither a Shinto nor Buddhist concept, but a conceit of Romantic and Gothic literature, not unlike the trope of the nightingale for tuberculosis in Masaoka Shiki's pen-name Shiki and haiku journal *Hototogisu* ホトトギス (*The nightingale*, 1897), and Tokutomi Rōka's novel *Hototogisu* 不如帰 (1898-99).

Several days later Kanichi leaves on an urgent business trip to the hot springs resort of Shiobara in rural Tochigi Prefecture, north of Tokyo. He passes through rugged terrain named the Valley of Fudō after the fiery Buddhist god of wrath, and finds himself transported back to the landscape of his dream. At the inn in Shiobara he becomes acquainted with a young couple, the geisha Oshizu and her lover Sayama, whom he rescues from committing double suicide on the steep cliffs in the desolate wilderness. Kanichi subsequently learns that Oshizu was pursued by Tomiyama, who sought her for a mistress after he tired of Miya. This brings full circle the karmic and capitalist, not to mention serial, connections that have heretofore sustained the tensions in the text. Kanichi redeems the lovers by offering to pay their debts, ruefully calculating the value of their lives at nineteen hundred yen apiece—an instance of the reduction of human being to numbers and figures as well as images frozen in media. This merciful act is a decisive step towards the rehabilitation of Kanichi's own humanity, and brings the malevolent figure of the *yasha* toward the more redemptive light suggested in early Buddhist and Hindu iconography.²⁵ By rescuing lovers who would rather die than accede to the violent workings of capital, Kanichi moves closer to reconciling with Miya.

All that remains to complete Kanichi's metamorphosis is the arrival of Miya's letter. In a garden of blossoming roses whose imagery that vividly recalls the Viscount's estate, Kanichi reads the scroll-like manuscript that has grown as long as the sash around her waist where she kept it hidden. Caught by the wind, it winds itself around his neck like the caress of a living thing. Kanichi tears it to pieces in a rage, but not before its contents are revealed. Recalling the Viscount and motif of photography, Miya instructs that she is to be buried with some photographs of Kanichi from happier times: "I have a few treasures with which I will part. They are three photographs of you, and to look at them carries me back ten years and for a while I am free from pain. . . My mother has my will; I have asked her to place the three pictures beneath my head in the coffin."²⁶ These photos are *memento mori* in both senses of the term: a reminder of her mortality, placed beneath her head as though a pillow for her final rest; and a mark of her failings which drove Kanichi away and led him to become a vengeful, living demon.

Although Kōyō was in all likelihood blissfully unaware of the Freudian psychoanalysis taking Europe by storm in the same period as the serialization of *The Gold Demon*,²⁷ Miya's letter betrays a no less sophisticated grasp of the horrors of clinical psychology that seek to replace the horrors of Gothicism. She remarks: "I am sure my disease can be found in no book, although the doctor unhesitatingly called it hysteria. . . I confess I was angered to have so common a name attached to it."²⁸ As it turns out, her obsessive passions can be found in many

²⁵ While the *yasha* is a fearsome supernatural being that kills and devours human beings—not wholly unlike the blood and soul drinking vampire—it may also grant wealth and blessings. As Nakamura Hajime notes in the *Kōsetsu Bukkyō Daijiten*, vol. 2, a *yasha* in the *Mahabharata* intervenes to save the woman Shikhandi from suicide (1679-1680).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 544.

²⁷ In "Dracula's Legacy," Kittler riffs on the possibility of Jonathan Harker passing the young Sigmund Freud at the station in Vienna while waiting to board the Orient Express for Transylvania, effectively juxtaposing their strategies of writing that respectively expose the secrets of the unconscious and the undead.

²⁸ Ozaki Kōyō, *The Gold Demon*, p. 559.

books, but not scientific ones. Her “disease” is the pathos of Romantic, not medical, literature, and its expression in ink will give way all too soon, if it has not already, to her atonement by writing in blood.

When it is no longer sufficient to merely record one’s thoughts or feelings as ink onto paper, one must literally bare one’s heart and write in blood. By taking her life with her own hand she will performatively express her sincerity in a manner that cannot be gainsayed. Her photographs are fading and her letter is complete, and so too, will she pass from this earth. But will death in fact grant Miya a final reprieve from the obsessions that have kept her bound to Kanichi and her own compulsion to write? We cannot ever know with certainty insofar as the text ends on an indeterminate—or more frankly, incomplete—note. In a disappearing act that few authors would dare to reproduce, Miya’s death is forestalled by Kōyō’s own abrupt passing in 1903, an event that adds to the Romanticization of *The Gold Demon* by blurring the boundaries between text and affect, reality and fiction. Even so, we may fairly question whether Miya can truly achieve that release. Her final words, upon which the novel concludes, intimate the promise of an *idée fixe* that persists after death and the evanescence of memory:

I will vanish and leave no trace, while this brush, this inkstone, this ring, this light and this house, this night and this summer, even the song of the mosquito will remain unchanged. If I shall be remembered scarcely longer than the wild grass that has withered away upon the hillside, still my piteous feelings will forever bear a lingering attachment that my heart cannot let go.²⁹

It is with sentiments such as these that we may recall Jonathan Harker’s words about the persistence of premodern powers and affective states “which mere ‘modernity’ cannot kill.” Surely in our own fixation with the bloody excesses of the Gothic, as with our labored fascination with media and technologies of writing, Miya’s ghost is with us still.

²⁹ Ibid, pp. 561-562.

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