PATCHING CULTURAL DISUNITY IN POST-WAR JAPAN: READING TANIZAKI JUN'ICHIRŌ'S *FŪTEN RŌJIN NIKKI* (DIARY OF A MAD OLD MAN) AS A PARODY OF KAWABATA YASUNARI'S *YAMA NO OTO* (SOUND OF THE MOUNTAIN)

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After the Korean war (1950–1953), one year after the end of the American Occupation, most Japanese literary works begin to focus on private lives rather than the war. It seemed like the nation was now moving on to deal with its domestic issues and regaining its autonomy. However, the ghost of the defeat and growing American cultural hegemony continued to haunt this period's literature. A couple of works that exemplify what I call the "broken family genre"[2] share a concern with the fall of the patriarchal family structure. This fall reflects this epoch's resentment about castration of the masculine national identity due to the US occupation. In Yoshikuni Igarashi's well-known research on post-war popular culture, the foundational narrative about the US-Japan relationship has been gendered since the immediate postwar, where "the US, gendered as male, rescued and converted Japan, figured as a desperate woman."[3]

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[2] I borrow this medical term, "broken family," from the cross field of sociology and psychoanalysis. Rosen Lawrence defines it as "a family structure which deviates from the ideal family structure defined by society. In American society the ideal family structure is the two-parent (one male, one female) nuclear family. In the broken family, one or both parents are absent because of death, divorce, separation, or desertion" (1970: 489). Expanding on the actual breaking of familial ties, psychiatrists include emotional estrangements into the causes of broken family relationships. I borrow this medical term not to diagnose the sociological and psychological symptoms reflected in Japanese novels, but to highlight the perceived illness and deviations of those families from the ideal Japanese families, expressed by the listed authors in their works. They tend to diagnose such a deviation through artworks so as to restore, more or less, a healthy and moral Japanese family. For sociological definition, see: Lawrence Rosen, "The Broken Home and Male Delinquency," in *The Sociology of Crime and Delinquency*, ed. Marvin Wolfgang, Leonard Savitz, and Norman Johnston, 2nd ed. (New York: J. Wiley, 1970), 489–95; Karen Wilkinson, "The Broken Family and Juvenile Delinquency: Scientific Explanation or Ideology?," *Social Problems* 21, no. 5 (1974): 726–39, https://doi.org/10.2307/799645.

[3] Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 20, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7s2kh.5.

Such a gendered discourse naturally generates in Japanese male a sense of powerlessness as "Japan unconditionally accepts the United States' desire for self-assurance," especially the generation who lived through the war and enjoyed their patriarchal power over both their families and the Japanese colonies before and during the war.[4] Aging and impotent men thus become a handy trope to express the melancholy of defeat, suppression of memories, and unfulfilled desires. Novels that take the perspective of the elderly such *as Iyagarase no nenrei* 厭がらせの年齢 (The Hateful Years, 1948) by Niwa Fumio 丹羽文雄, and movies such as *Tōkyō monogatari* 東京物語 (Tokyo Story, 1953) by Ozu Yasujirō 小津安二郎 all lament on the morally dubious younger generation that more or less takes up American lifestyles and material wealth. These dying elderly epitomize both the waning of Japanese cultural unity within the domestic spheres and the dying cultural and moral order in the family. These concerns, I assert, are not just a reflection of a transitional period of social structure, but expressions of a post-colonial anxiety about the Japanese identity, in which the younger generation are deeply influenced by allegedly American-western ideas of liberty, individualism, rebellion, and decadence.

The two stories considered in this paper—*Yama no oto* 山の音 (Sound of the Mountain, 1949) by Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成 and *Fūten rōjin nikki* 瘋癲老人日記 (Diary of a Mad Old Man, 1961–1962) by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 谷崎潤一郎—relate to this "broken family" genre for their engagement with the theme of intergenerational estrangements. But Kawabata's and Tanizaki's stories resemble each other more deeply than at this categorical level: their plots and characterizations overlap more than the generic resemblance. Both stories revolve around an aging protagonist isolated from his family. The protagonists seek comfort from their daughters-in-law who, for whatever reason, share the protagonists' loneliness and aesthetic pursuit. Kawabata's sixty-two-year-old protagonist, Ogata Shingo 尾形信吾, feels constant aesthetic and emotional estrangement from his blood family, and instead finds comfort and empathy from his daughter-in-law, Kikuko 菊子 (Chrysanthemum child). Kikuko eventually becomes distanced from Shingo by getting an abortion and gaining economic independence. Tanizaki's seventy-seven-year-old Utsugi Tokusuke 卯木督助, similarly, dwells separately from his blood family, and shows his distaste for them here and there in his diary. Ignoring his own family duties, he becomes erotically obsessed with his westernized daughter-in-law, Satsuko 颯子, especially trying to bribe her into letting

[4] Igarashi, 29.

him kiss her lower legs. Satsuko, in the end, runs away from the old man's final plan to rub her foot on paper so that he can create a Buddha-foot-tombstone modeled after her foot.

This paper attempts to explain the parodic difference between these two stories, as they represent different attitudes toward the perceived cultural crisis. If Kawabata's story laments the loss of Kikuko (ideal beauty of Japan) to the immorality of youth (US culture), Tanizaki's protagonist and his dangerous muse never confront such a loss of order. They, however, celebrate their ability to be frowned upon, although experiencing pains and threats of death from it. Moreover, Kawabata's novel connects symbolically with the socio-historical context of Japan after the occupation where men mourn upon the gendered US-Japan relationship through the female body, while Tanizaki's parody of such a symbolism highlights sexuality (bodily power), bribery (economic power), and the metonymic fetishism concealed by such a melancholic heroism.

Although previous scholarship has acknowledged the thematic similarities between these two works, few have discussed their socio-cultural commentaries on postwar politics by comparing them closely.[5] By showing the differences in their methodology toward the idea of cultural-aesthetic unity in post-war Japan, I argue that Tanizaki's use of parody attempts to remedy the older generation's anxiety about cultural or national disunity through metonymic depictions of modernity. On the one hand, Kawabata's lamentation is based on America's disturbance of a cultural continuation imagined as a metaphor, a whole, conceptual order that connects two unrelated epochs: the perceived historical Japan and modern Japan. On the other hand, Tanizaki's metonymical method

[5] For research that discusses their thematic similarities, see: Takao Hagiwara, "The Case of Two Old Playboys: Distancing and Symbolism in The Sound of the Mountain by Yasunari Kawabata and Diary of a Mad Old Man by Junichirō Tanizaki," Bernard Saint-Jacques and Matsuo Soga, eds, *Japanese Studies in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Asian Studies Association, 1985), 115–27; Tomi Suzuki, "Kawabata's Views of Language and the Postwar Construction of a Literary Genealogy," *Japan Forum* 30, no. 1 (March 2018): 85–104, https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2017.1307255. Research on these two works respectively, however, is abundant. Ken K. Ito argues Tanizaki's work casts self-irony on his late predicaments: inept sexuality and dying. Marukawa reads his work allegorically as a representation of internalized colonization under the influence of Americanism and Cold War mechanism. His observation partially supports my socio-historical reading of both works. See: Ken K. Ito, *Visions of Desire: Tanizaki's Fictional Worlds* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991); Marukawa Tetsushi, "Fūten rōjin nikki shiron: reisen kōzo to bungaku kikai 2," *Gunzō* 54, no. 6 (June 1999): 194–210; Onoe Jun'ichi, "Oi no modanizumu: sōnenki," *Nihon daigaku geijutsu gakubu kiyō* no. 43 (2006): 73–82.

highlights the impossibility of grasping the past as a whole through the hyperbolic foot-fetishism of the old man, alongside the fragmentary styles of writing that deconstruct the old man's narration in his diary. For Tanizaki, cultural unity itself is a metonymy of abstracted cultural identities from the historical past, which is always an insufficient representation of the past. Paradoxically, an alternative cultural unity is hinted at in Tanizaki's writing: it lies exactly in the contesting *drives* to continuously probe, to perceive, and to get hold of the power of narrative about cultural identity.

I apply Roman Jakobson's well-known theory of metaphor and metonymy to explain these two different reactions to the American cultural hegemony. According to Jakobson's linguistic studies, metaphor establishes a link between two unrelated images through semantic similarity, or abstraction.[6] For instance, in the relationship between a lion and a brave person, the lion and human being are linked through their shared characteristics of braveness. The historical Japan and the modern Japan, in Kawabata's case, can be linked with characteristics that he perceives as "Japaneseness," such as suggestiveness, simplicity, and symbolic evocation in poetic and prose writings. In Jakobson's theory, the two images linked by metaphor can replace each other positionally and totally. In such a way, modern Japan can replace the historical one entirely with the metaphoric logic, regardless of the drastic social changes in the modern era. Metonymy, on the other hand, establishes a relationship through linked or part-whole images, what Jakobson calls contiguity. For instance, the White House can be used to represent the American government because the White House is a part of the government, or meatball can recall meatball pasta because meatball and pasta usually appears together in real life. This relationship highlights the incompleteness in the representation compared with that of metaphor—meatball cannot replace pasta, nor can the White House replace the government. Tanizaki's modern Japan links to the historical one just like the old man's fantasy of a Satsuko-Buddha-feet, as well as medical and familial narrations about the protagonist: the result is the creation of an unfinished grotesque sculpture that cannot be fully realized but forever craved for.

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[6] Roman Jakobson, *Fundamentals of Language*, Janua Linguarum, Nr. 1 ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1956), 76–77.

THE METAPHORIC APPROACH TO CULTURAL-NATIONAL IDENTITY: KAWABATA IN THE 1950S

To better understand Kawabata's both conservative and progressive view on Japanese identity, and better understand the origin of his lamentation expressed in *Sound of the Mountain*, metaphor provides a sufficient model to understand Kawabata's dialectic approach to connect the old and the new. Published one year before *Yama no oto*, *Shin bunshō dokuhon* 新文章読本 (A New Guide to Literary Language, 1948) expresses Kawabata's understanding of Japanese cultural nationality in his view of modern Japanese language. He notes, "Of course, the present national language is imperfect, especially for academic writing, which requires imitation of foreign languages. However, our language disarrays too much by uncritically absorbing the foreign languages and making meaningless neologisms."[7]

On the one hand, he dislikes the present national language due to its lack of certain order because of foreign influence. On the other hand, he concedes that foreign languages are necessary for Japanese to prosper. In later chapters, he tries to balance potential conflicts between a conservatism according to which the national language is in disarray and a progressivism that is needed to reform Japanese. First, he abstracts certain qualities of the classical Japanese language into a group of concepts about the Japanese spirit and language: colloquial, simple, ambiguous, and lyrical. These ideals, rather than the historical forms of writing such as Heian classical Japanese and Kanbun-style writings, constitute the order that Kawabata wishes the new national language to preserve. In this sense, even though the forms, words, and grammar of the new language are drastically different from the premodern ones, the new national language should best serve for uniting the modern Japanese community and even should become a "common world language" that can be "understood just by listening to it."[8] This realization of unity, importantly, is not to restore the past, but heavily to rely on abstractions and adoptions. Thus, the lamentation that Kawabata expresses in his philosophy of language is not a simple-minded refusal of modern language but a fear of the abandonment of ideals that he perceives as central to the Japanese linguistic cultural identity.

To further his argument on language to culture, Kawabata resurrects in *Yama no oto* his notorious "virgin" female characters that mark his

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[7] Kawabata Yasunari, *Shin bunshō dokuhon* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1975), 34.
[8] Suzuki, "Kawabata's Views of Language and the Postwar Construction of a Literary Genealogy," 87.

writing career. The virgins embody Kawabata's ideal of a pure cultural unity without interference, whose predecessors are long lost. The prototype of this virgin figure in the novel is the nameless beautiful sister of Shingo's wife, his sister-in-law. Kawabata, again, connects them by abstraction: both female characters are innocent, morally good in the traditional sense, pure, and beautiful. Due to his sister-in-law's untimely early death, the protagonist married her younger sister, in whom he always finds something lacking in beauty and manners. The elder sister, however, never ceases to appear in Shingo's dream, memory, and she sometimes calls his name. Very much like the historical Japanese language replaced by the imperfect national language, Shingo's wife represents the failure in the prewar past (marrying a less beautiful wife) to maintain the pure and beautiful Japanese aesthetics and spirit.

On the other side of this embodiment is Kikuko, the daughter-in-law, who is favored by Shingo for her childlike beauty, attentive listening, and filial piety. She always listens carefully to Shingo's appreciation of nature, traditional artworks, and sounds, such as Taigu Ryōkan's calligraphy, Tawaraya Sōtatsu's painting or Yosano Akiko's waka carved in a stone.[9] These appreciations have never been shared by Shingo's blood family members. Kikuko's appearance, apparent from her name—the chrysanthemum being linked to continuous, pure, Japanese identity—represents a hopeful rebirth of the diseased aesthetic and moral ideal. This is the first layer of metaphor: ideal beauty, the ideal Japanese language, and the female figures shoulder Kawabata's dream of realizing an empathetic community, whose spirit should not be interrupted by the changing outlook of life, language, and appearance. Nevertheless, such a dream is so fragile that any disturbance from reality can interrupt its continuity.

What did he lose these ideals to? One answer is his son, as well as the blood family, who represent the younger generation's ignorance of inheriting the Japanese spirit because they take in American notions of liberty uncritically. Shūichi, his son, served as a soldier during World War II and came back indulging in carnal pleasure which soon resulted in extramarital affairs. Shingo first lost his "natural" granddaughter to Shūichi because of Kikuko's decision to have an abortion, a direct result of Shūichi's affair. And Shūichi's illegitimate son, under the law, cannot succeed the family name. In this case, sexual liberty disturbs the continuation of the family state. Later, Shingo's daughter, daughter-in-

[9] Kawabata Yasunari, *The Sound of the Mountain*, trans. Edward Seidensticker (London: Penguin Group, 2011), 113–114.

law, and the mistress of Shūichi all set out on their journeys to establish their own economic independency from the old family. Economic liberty for women is the other noise in the hope of a harmonic family.

In the end, Shingo tries to call for Kikuko's attention, but his voice is buried underneath the noise of the kitchen she works in: "'Your gourds are sagging,' he called to Kikuko. 'They seem to be too heavy.' She (Kikuko) apparently could not hear him over the sound of the dishes."[10] This intransitivity of his voice casts a sharp contrast with Shingo's link with Kikuko. Their shared appreciations of poems and nature, through a Japanese sentimentality, now is interrupted by more worldly concerns of carnal needs (the kitchen noise, sexuality, and economic independence). This contrast between the Japanese spirit and the American body constructs the central tension in the book. In a train to downtown Tokyo, one scene illustrates Shingo and Kawabata's lamentation vividly:

> The foreigner opposite Shingo shook the Japanese boy sleeping beside him and asked in English. Though the boy was not particularly small, he looked like a child beside the giant foreigner. His eyes were somewhat inflamed, and ringed with dark circles. Shingo suspected that the boy was a male prostitute who specialized in foreigners. He would soon be dead, thought Shingo.[11]

The dying small Japanese prostitute and the giant foreigner would elicit deep worries from any nation-lovers reading to this point. This illustration recalls Kawabata's worry about the Japanese national language taking in too many neologisms, which weaken the original body and spirit of Japanese language and culture. Kawabata's and Shingo's worries about the post-war US domination and even destruction of Japan foreshadows a nationalistic emancipation as one of the ways of repairing the moral backbone of a broken society, which echoes the worry of lots of right-wing politicians in Japan.[12] The sense of loss of sovereignty after the surrender in 1945 not only affected society structurally but also culturally and sentimentally. This cultural trauma of catastrophic military failure and the succeeding surrendering of national sovereignty as well as cultural identity to a foreign national culture asks for persistent attempts to overcome

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[10] Kawabata, *The Sound of the Mountain*, 209.
[11] Kawabata, *The Sound of the Mountain*, 183.
[12] Akiko Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

humiliation and disgrace. In Japan, cultural efforts include nationalism, pacifism, and reconciliationism.[13]

Kawabata's story addresses a solemn worry over a total cessation of Japanese cultural continuation symbolized by Shingo's silent worry about the Japanese boy's death, consumed by a giant foreigner. This sentimental argument that American cultural domination was killing the Japanese soul and dignity presumes that there exists some unchanging and abstracted characteristics of "Japaneseness." Concern about discontinuity stems from the attempt to find and create a perfect metaphor in the present-day Japan that can link with the Japanese origin through abstraction. This sensation logically calls for a nationalistic approach of Japan's post-war moral recovery from its defeat. As Akiko Hashimoto observes, "the nationalist approach calls for overcoming the past by advancing national strength rather than through international reconciliation. It emphasizes shared national belonging and collective attachment to a historical community and derives a social identity from that traditional heritage. People adopting this approach tend to use the language of national pride and resent the loss of national prestige and international standing that came with defeat."[14] In other words, it is the perception of the loss of an abstracted idea of social identity that calls for neo-nationalism to reconstruct cultural pride.

One note to this rough analysis of symbols is that Kawabata's resentment should not be assessed as a straight anti-American sentiment that underlies some aggressive constitution revisionists and their neo-nationalisms.[15] The protagonist in Kawabata's novel is self-aware of the deep entanglement of his pursuit of such a Japanese essence. Shingo often feels guilty about his masculine ignorance of his family, which resulted in his blood family's rejection of him (the past) and adoption of the American order. The stagnation of the protagonist results exactly from such a guilt consciousness of the present chaos: he cannot deny his agency in causing the chaos that preceded his children's desire for independence, and he wishes to communicate with them through sharing stories, aesthetics, and emotions. A cheap sympathy with the old man's gatekeeping of the traditions has never been Kawabata's approach to reform the national culture. His metaphorical approach calls for a renewed method that

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[13] Hashimoto, 2–3.
[14] Hashimoto, 123–24.
[15] One representative view is from Japan's former Prime Minister, Abe Shinzō, that "restoring some fundamentals of nationhood lost after defeat means strengthening Japan and ending military disempowerment and the one-sided dependence on the United States as a 'client state.'" (Quotation paraphrased by Hashimoto in *The Long Defeat*, 126).

combines the new and the old, the foreign and the native, without a loss of the abstracted concepts about the Japanese spirit, which is now stagnated by the heightened sense of guilt in the power struggle between the US and Japanese moral cultures.

METONYMIC CARICATURE—THE MODERN GROTESQUE

Kawabata poses difficult questions: if post-colonial Japan needs to seek freedom through a unity of culture, how can he convince the youth who just do not care about the dream of cultural unity at all or even blame their own culture as a cause of their sufferings? How can one persuade someone else when such a cultural essence is the reason for ignorance, violence, and isolation? In the mode of the metaphorical relationship, abstraction necessitates cultural unity and historical continuity. Any threat claiming to destroy the core concept of cultural identity leads to a sense of loss, defeat, and urgency for recovery. As the abstractions of Japanese sentiment, aesthetics, and moral code wane, the metaphorical method simply does not work. In such a crisis of cultural unity, Tanizaki's metonymic approach of caricature brings up an alternative mode of suggesting linkage that does not rely on abstraction, but one based on corporeality and partial resemblance.

Caricature, defined by Baudelaire and further discussed in Virginia E. Swain's research on Baudelaire, uses a metonymic method to abstract bodily contours of human beings as individuals into a type.[16] For instance, someone drawing a caricature can first sketch a king in a realistic mode. The artist then reduces the sketch into a contour, a line, a shape. The shape of the king recalls the shape of a pear, and by replacing the king's head with a pear, the artist creates a comic drawing that ridicules the king and the policies he makes (Figure 1). For Baudelaire, the reduced type can further represent abstract concepts such as beauty and ugliness, which coexist in caricature drawings. In this example, the artist envisions a pear that contrasts drastically with the original human being, thus creating a statement of political irony. According to Baudelaire's theory, the juxtaposition of one type to its opposite type, such as beauty and ugliness, vice and virtue, or just the metamorphosis itself creates comic effects.

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[16] Virginia E. Swain, *Grotesque Figures: Baudelaire, Rousseau, and the Aesthetics of Modernity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), https://directory.doabooks.org/handle/20.500.12854/88720.

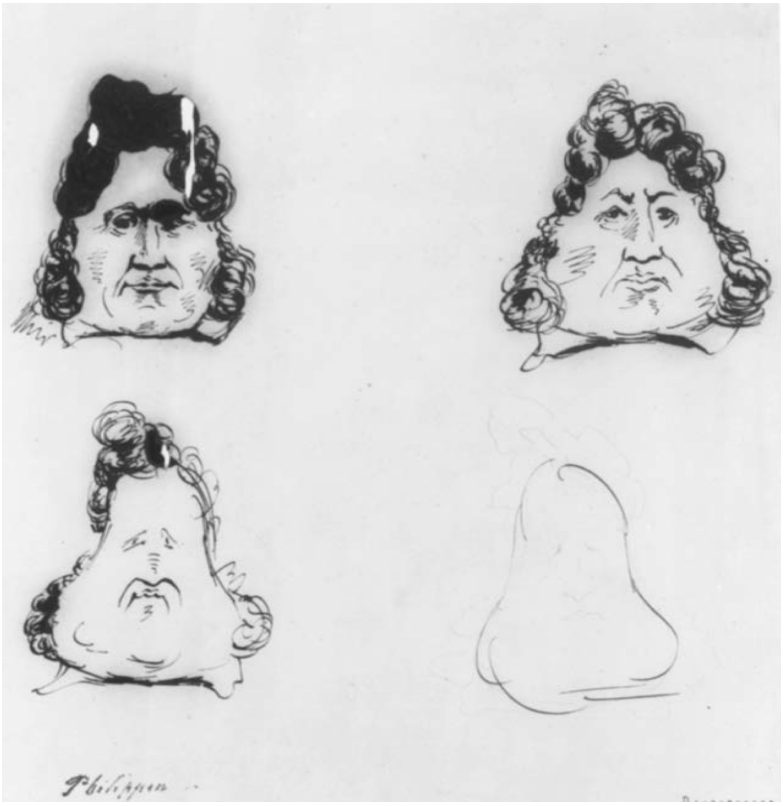

Figure 1 *La Métamorphose du roi Louis-Philippe en poire*. Sketches Charles Philipon drew in court in 1831 to defend himself against charges of defaming the king. Image courtesy of the Bibliothèque nationale de France.[17]

In the newly published complete works of Tanizaki, Tanizaki's drafts of *Fūten rōjin nikki* mention that he took inspiration from Baudelaire for his later novels.[18] Since he mentions Baudelaire in passing, there is no detailed evidence of how and why he integrates such a method in *Fūten rōjin nikki*, but a close reading of the text and a juxtaposition with Kawabata's work as the prototype of Tanizaki's sketch opens up a new

[17] Swain, 77.
[18] Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Tanizaki Jun'ichirō zenshū* (Tokyo: Chūo kōron shinsha, 2015), v. 25, 603.

reading about Tanizaki's usage of caricature concerning the question of community and unity.

To begin with, Utsugi, the aging protagonist in this novel, is a metonymic distortion of Shingo in Kawabata's novel. They share these physical and sentimental characteristics: they are isolated from their families due to different aesthetic sentiments (Utsugi, for instance, appreciates the beauty of the Kabuki actors, while his family members dislike the actors' acting style; Shingo's appreciations of mountains, flowers, and poetry are not shared by his family); they both dislike their blood families' pursuit of pleasure and self-interest; they suffer from the bodily defects of aging (forgetfulness or bodily pains); they find the embodiment of beauty and the only emotional affirmation in their daughters-in-law; and they have a certain inclination toward religion, especially Buddhism.

But Tanizaki's protagonist makes more laughable moves in uncanny pursuit of his daughter-in-law, Satsuko. In order to "enjoy sexual stimulation in all kinds of distorted, indirect ways," Utsugi amplifies his ugliness to amaze his goddess:

> I took out both my upper and lower plates, put them in the denture box on the night table, and clenched my gums hard, shriveling up my face as much as I could. Even a chimpanzee would have been better-looking. Time after time I smacked my gums open and shut, and licked my yellow tongue around in my mouth. Satsuko kept her eyes fixed steadily on that grotesque spectacle.[19]

Utsugi's logic is that the uglier he gets, the better-looking Satsuko appears, and this compliment would surely communicate to Satsuko, with no evidence to prove that Satsuko understands and agrees with his logic. The self-pitying old man in Kawabata's novel, who laments on his white hairs and forgetfulness, now becomes an old clown shamelessly pursuing his daughter-in-law. To further his plan to get a kiss from Satsuko, Utsugi even belittles himself by childishly complaining about this pain:

> "Satsu, Satsu, Satsu!" As I called her name over and over, I burst out crying. Tears streamed down my cheeks, the snivel ran from my nose, saliva dribbled from my mouth. I really howled—it wasn't an act, the instant I screamed "Satsu" I had become a

[19] Junichirō Tanizaki, *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, trans. Howard Hibbett (Oxford; Tokyo: Oxford University Press, 1988), 100–101.

> naughty, unruly child again. Ah, perhaps I actually had gone mad! … But then, worse yet, they gave way to a sudden panicky fear of madness. After that it clearly became an act: I began trying to imitate a spoiled child.[20]

Somewhere between a performance and a non-performance, Utsugi's whining also lies between madness and non-madness, a flow of suppressed desire transgressing social taboo between a family head and his daughter-in-law. This kind of transgression would never be enacted in such a grotesque way for Shingo. Shingo's affection and empathy for Kikuko is always inhibited by his own ambiguous fear, embodied in his dreams of lust and women which results in the final isolation between Shingo and Kikuko:

> That he had transferred it to the girl who had been talked of for Shūichi, that he had given her an elusive, uncertain form—was it not because he feared in the extreme having the woman be Kikuko? … The dream had been uglier than any waking adultery. The ugliness of old age, might it be? What was wrong with loving Kikuko in a dream? What was there to fear, to be ashamed of, in a dream? And indeed what would be wrong with secretly loving her in his waking hours?[21]

Shingo seems to mean that the freedom of loving his daughter-in-law is distorted by a bigger fear, an ugly fear of adultery and, symbolically, the pursuit of Japanese national beauty in post-war Japan. The ugliness of the old age, then, refers both to the aesthetic distance between the old and the young and the ugliness of shouldering historical shame and responsibility as a patriarchal head. In contrast, Tanizaki uses madness to transgress such a deep-seated fear affecting post-war (sub)-consciousness by using a metonymic imitation of Kawabata's character. Although Utsugi has the same bodily ugliness and social status as Shingo, he utilizes his old age and social privilege in a drastically distorted way to further his aesthetic pursuit. Utsugi's ugliness is not an inhibition or a dark side of beauty, but lives in necessary co-existence with Satsuko's beauty, although it requires a logical and perceptual twist on the reader's side to understand his philosophy.

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[20] Tanizaki, *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, 112–13.
[21] Yasunari Kawabata, *The Sound of the Mountain*, 156, 158.

Utsugi's patriarchal position in the family, moreover, never appears to be an obstacle to pleasing Satsuko, but rather a power that is ready to be abused to please her and himself. He buys handbags and jewelry for Satsuko, even using family money for his daughter to buy a cat's-eye size gemstone for her. Utsugi never reflects upon his callousness towards his family, especially towards his eldest son, Satsuko's husband. He even feels a little proud of his son upon learning of the son's affair, because: "Jōkichi takes after me in being as susceptible to women—and as fickle—as I was in my younger days."[22] He manipulates his nurse, doctors, and family members to take care of him whenever he plays too hard in his sexual games with Satsuko, which results in high blood pressure, heart palpitations, and headaches.[23] The daughter whom he ignores has to follow his wish to help him building a tombstone modeled after Satsuko's feet.

This touches on another metonymic extension: Satsuko. Satsuko, a muse of Utsugi's male desire, is also a rewriting of Kawabata's virgin. Satsuko resembles Kikuko as a desired object and an ideal of beauty, but this time also a Westernized femme fatale who understands fully his much more carnal than sentimental desires. Satsuko is perceived as the only one who is conspiring with Utsugi to experiment in pleasure in old age, despite their social relationship. "At present I am living for that pleasure, and for the pleasure of eating. Satsuko alone seems to have a vague notion of what is in my mind. She's the only one in the house who has even the faintest idea." Most importantly, she is a manipulable woman who can "plunge the whole household into turmoil" by "getting … involved with a handsome man."[24] Near the end of the story, Utsugi's fantasy becomes a series of fetishizations and eventually a grotesque caricature. At first, he wants to build a "Satsuko Boddhisatva," but later concedes to customize a Buddha foot modeled on Satsuko's foot. Since Satsuko's appearance is described as a modern dance girl, her image combined with the solemn Buddha creates an uncanny statue typical of the grotesque: a juxtaposition of the tradition and the modern.

Tanizaki's caricature of Kawabata's Shingo and his virgin muse, however, does not end with a shallow entertainment, as his combinations of conflicting images go on. Tanizaki further juxtaposes different types of characters, sentimentalities, and styles of writings. In Utsugi's diary, pain (illness) and pleasure (sexuality) co-occur, ugliness (Utsugi) and beauty (Satsuko) coexist in sexually provoking interactions, and amorality and

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[22] Tanizaki, *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, 62.
[23] Tanizaki, *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, 164.
[24] Tanizaki, *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, 18.

morality conflict in conversational exchanges between Utsugi and his wife and daughters about family finances. Most importantly is the drastic contrast between Utsugi's diary, which delves into his psychology, assuming a control over the whole story about his aging and pleasure, and the descriptive style of writing that follows Utsugi's diary. The doctor and nurse's notes, ending with Utsugi's daughter's diary, all reduce the old man into medical logic within a dominant filial piety narrative.

Here I propose to highlight the function of this switch of focalization and narrative reliability to argue that such a contrast of styles validates general medical and moral discourses' interpretation of Utsugi's story, thus destabilizing the reliability of Utsugi's narration. Despite their obvious stylistic and perspective discontinuities, they are nevertheless loosely connected by the story about the old man's body and social relationships after Utsugi's return from his grave-searching trip in Kyoto to Tokyo. The nurse Sasaki's report turns the identity of Utsugi from a narrating and reliable "I" to a vulnerable and thus unreliable "patient." According to her notes, Utsugi's "abnormal sexuality" needs balanced satisfaction from Satsuko's care, but not excessive sexual stimulation. In this sense, Satsuko and the medical personnel become manipulators of the old man's body, sexuality, and liveliness. After Utsugi has a stroke and is hospitalized, a doctor reports on the old man's pulse, body temperature, diagnosis and medication. Lastly, Itsuko's diary takes over to inhibit Utsugi's task on creating his tombstone modeled after Satsuko's Buddha foot. As a resistance to Utsugi's command, she "couldn't possibly make such a ridiculous request, so she called back and said the master stonecutter was away on a trip to Kyushu."[25] Itsuko eventually sent back the rubbings of Satsuko's feet back to Tokyo upon Utsugi's request, and the rubbings are used almost like a psychotropic substance that narrowly meets the medical instruction mentioned in the nurse's note: "She (the nurse) was afraid he might get excited again, but couldn't very well forbid him that little pleasure. At least it wasn't as bad as being with Satsuko."[26] These exchanges between Itsuko, the nurse, and the doctor over how, who, and what will continue and discontinue Utsugi's mental and physical life further confounds the agency of manipulation narrativized in the novel.

A curious reader will have to dig out narrative clues from the heavily detailed, dry, highly cyphered accounts to find the answers that would provide a conclusion to the plot. Does the old man realize his plan for creating the grotesque icon? Is he actually mad? Does he die? Who

[25] Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, 176.
[26] Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *Diary of a Mad Old Man*, 177.

controls the family: Utsugi, Satsuko, or the other family members? Most of the questions remain unanswered by these reports. Medical representations take over the body to report on Utsugi's health but remain in tension with the old man's logic about his obsession of sexuality and illness. The nurse's and Itsuko's diaries leave blank the question of Utsugi's secrets with Satsuko and the realization of Utsugi's ideals and fantasies. But they do continue Utsugi's story in different ways, letting the reader know that he lives on, taking measures to fetishize Satsuko and the Buddha, maintaining a delicate balance between the old man's fantasy and death. In other words, these focalizations are metonymic readings of Utsugi's bodily and mental conditions, as well as the plot itself—they are partial sketches of Utsugi's corporeality (using numbers for his pulse readings and medical terms) and contours of the remaining story about Utsugi's family life. Including Utsugi's diary, all the different perspectives are imperfect narrations and controllers of Utsugi's story about his fantasies, family turmoil, and the ultimate control of the familial relationships.

This ending, thus, creates an irony regarding who gets to control the explanation of the story. Due to the nature of their obvious metonymic and therefore partial relations to the story, none of these accounts can announce control of interpretation for readers. Competing discourses suspend an ultimate interpretation of the story about Utsugi and about who gets to control relationships in the family. Is Utsugi actually the troublemaker behind family affairs, acting only to fulfill his own distorted old-age pleasures, or are these willingly chosen by Satsuko and her husband? Utsugi's ailing body and sentimentality become a thread that loosely connects both individual and general discourses together through power struggles. They all conspire to maintain Utsugi's odd life and fantasies with their own beliefs that they are in control. This partiality but believed impartiality of representation observed in Tanizaki's multi-level usage of metonymy thus may replace the abstraction in the metaphoric method developed by Kawabata. In the method of metonymy, imagery and narrative form a looser but more inclusive community about a story, a character, an image or a national culture. Metonymy emphasizes their representative power over the origin but does not assume a totality of such a representation. Without assuming such a totality, like the unreliable narrator Utsugi, the grotesque rewriting of Kawabata's Shingo and his national beauty, Tanizaki's muse will never be lost: because the Satsuko statue is already a goddess of both the East and West, a partial representation of Buddha and Satsuko, a partial embodiment of the ultimate ideal. The liveliness comes exactly from the in-betweenness of

the belief of total embodiment, possession, manipulation, and the reality of the partiality of obtaining the desired object: the old man has to live in a balance between his sexuality and death, the story about the old man has to go on through the perspectives of several unreliable narrators, and the cultural identity lives on as a renewing metonymy of perfect Japaneseness.

CONCLUSION

Discussing how Fredric Jameson perceives affect as "a coarse measure" of a shift from a modernist to a postmodern sentiment, Lauren Berlant describes the shift as one "from a norm of modernist care for the historical resonance in the represented object" to a postmodern "investment in flatness and surface."[27] Although her discussion focuses on the genre of the historical novel, her reading of Fredric Jameson's definition of postmodernism comes in handy in my interpretation as well. The represented object, the carnal reality of aging men described by our two writers, functions in two directions similar to the discussion about a postmodern shift: Kawabata gives rich metaphorical resonances between the aged man and the Japanese past, while Tanizaki uses metonymy to deconstruct that same aestheticism into a flat but loosely connected narration. This paper does not argue for Tanizaki as postmodern despite some similarities to postmodern works, but rather highlights Tanizaki's continual consideration of a pure national unity and the possibility of achieving such an ideal, a concern troubling modern Japanese literati since the Meiji restoration. In other words, I still consider cultural conservatism a common thread in Kawabata and Tanizaki's works, even though they take radically different approaches to it.

In the political realm, if Kawabata's lamentation of a national unity now lost calls for a neonationalist approach to reclaim national culture through the undisturbed continuation of Japanese aesthetics, Tanizaki's approach flattens such a lamentation by pointing out that Kawabata's muse (Kikuko) is already and always a partial representation of Japan, and a grotesque combination between the east and the west (Satsuko's Buddha feet). Tanizaki deploys an alternative unification with the past and the cultural identity: a much looser, heterogenous one that continuously wrestles knowledge-power over the individual male (national) body, and its desiring objects. The dream of Japanese national culture, represented by the daughters-in-law seen in Tanizaki's work does not assume an undisturbed, innocent, abstracted conception that can be perfectly

[27] Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 65.

preserved in modern Japan, but rather ceaselessly sketched-out parts of a whole that creates a community of contesting curiosities. Just like the old man continually longing for love with Satsuko but never able to achieve it in his diary, doctors, nurses, and family members all use different narrative strategies to provide interpretations for the old man's fantasies and ailments, believing in their own grasps of the story. The ideal unity, then, presents itself not as a harmonic resonance of a national soul, let it be hybridity, lack or aestheticism,[28] but rather as the imagery of Satsuko Buddha feet: a grotesque figure that uncannily conjoins Japan's past and present together without harmony, pointing at the inner conflicts inherit in Kawabata's and his contemporaries' assumptions about an undisturbed, innocent totality of a national culture that no one will be able to achieve. Ultimately, Tanizaki's novel's oddity works not only as a critical spear against the post-war discourses about Japanese uniqueness and its concurring sentiment of loss and lamentation caused by US culture and guilt consciousness, but also as a stimulus for a community bound together by their *desires* for total representation, while pointing out this identity politics is always an insufficient representation, just like the function of a metonymy.

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[28] This national identity has been changed drastically since Japan's early modernization, and the dominant discourse in 1950s and 1960s is that Japan has always been a hybrid nation, which is intact from the Americanization in the post-war period. See more in: Yoshikuni Igarashi, "A Nation That Never Is: Cultural Discourse on Japanese Uniqueness," in *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970* (Princeton University Press, 2000), 73–103, http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7s2kh.7.

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