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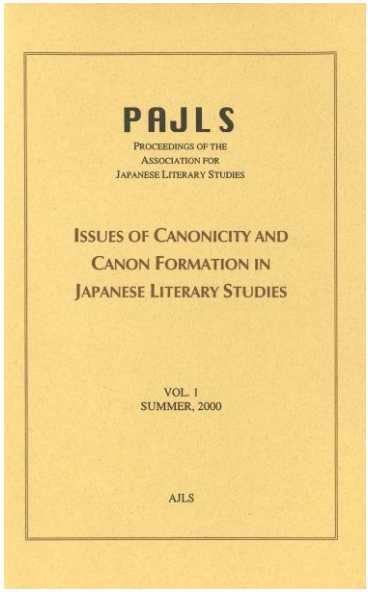

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DISCOVERING AND TEXTUALIZING MEMORY: THE *TSUIOKU SHŌSETSU* OF NAKA KANSUKE AND TAKAHASHI MUTSUO

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About the *Tsuioku Shōsetsu*

During the second decade of this century, a number of major authors in Japan began to write works that explored the psychology of childhood, works that their contemporaries sometimes identified as words *tsuioku shōsetsu* or *tsuikai shōsetsu*.[1] Judging from the proliferation of these literary evocations of childhood and their subsequent recognition as a specific subcategory of prose, it would seem that a sub-genre was in the process of being born. Nevertheless, at some point in the 1920s these terms dropped out of popular circulation, and therefore they do not sound familiar to modern ears. In examining two examples of works that fit under this rubric, this paper will identify some of the narratological features of this sub-genre before offering a hypothesis to explain the demise of the words *tsuioku shōsetsu* as a critical term.

According to writer Uno Kōji, the pioneering *tsuioku shōsetsu* was Minakami Takitarō's *Yamanote no ko* (A Boy from Yamanote), published in 1911 in *Mita bungaku*.[2] This story, narrated by an adult thinking back over his boyhood in the wealthy suburbs of Tokyo, depicts in fresh and unadorned terms the life of a child. This plumbing of childhood under the guise of remembrance was to be the hallmark of the *tsuioku shōsetsu*. Soon after the publication of this work came a large number of other similar works by aspiring writers such as Uno Kōji, Naka Kansuke, and Murō Saisei. In fact, at the beginning of one of his own *tsuioku shōsetsu* from 1913, Uno Kōji wrote, "One section of the literary world continued to turn out things marked with the typical signature of *tsuioku* short works. Unfortunately, at

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[1] The two terms appear to be used interchangeably in the writing of the time. Here too they will treated as synonyms.

[2] Quoted in Tazawa Motohisa, "*Seijirō yume o miru ko* koron," *Uno Kōji to Makino Shin'ichi: Yume to katari*, ed. Yanagizawa Takako (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1988), 47.

about the same time, for no apparent reason, I began to feel increasingly fed up with these *tsuioku*-like things."[3] One wonders if it was not the very proliferation of these works that led to Kōji's impatience.

In writing about the psychology of childhood, the authors of *tsuioku shōsetsu* had a difficult task before themselves. How could one express in written language the thoughts of a preliterate individual? What sorts of diction and verb endings should be used? And most importantly, even if those problems were ignored, what would one express? How are the thoughts of children qualitatively different from those of adults?

In *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Karatani Kōjin presents a New Historicist argument that before the turn of the century, the psychology of children was not viewed as qualitatively different from adult psychology in any significant way. For Meiji and Taishō writers such as Ogawa Mimei and Suzuki Miekichi to write literature for children, Karatani argues that the ontological category of childhood had to first be created and naturalized through what he calls an "inversion" (*tentō*). Karatani explains, "What we call 'the child' was itself discovered through such an inversion, and it was only after this that 'real children' or 'realistic children' could be seen . . . the 'child' that we see today was discovered and constituted only recently."[4]

If we accept Karatani's argument that the creation of the notion of children took place in late Meiji Japan, it would appear that this process coincided with the first *tsuioku shōsetsu*.[5] The construction of childhood as seen in the *tsuioku shōsetsu*, I would argue, however, has to do largely with another inversion that Karatani scrutinizes, namely that associated with developments in stylistics. It was only during the late Meiji Period, when

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[3] Uno Kōji, "Seijirō yume o miru ko," *Uno Kōji zenshū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1972), 10.

[4] Karatani Kōjin, *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 115.

[5] About the same time, one also finds other writers, such as Tokuda Shūsei in the remarkable 1910 novel *Ashiato*, who were describing the psychology of youth in non-autobiographical novels that do not fall under the rubric *tsuioku shōsetsu*. Clearly, the *tsuioku shōsetsu* were not the only crucible in which depictions of childhood were being forged, but they do seem to have been a particularly important one.

writers had sufficiently established the new, stable literary style of *genbun itchi*, that one began seeing large numbers of literary reminiscences of childhood. (Actually, it is more apt to refer to the "styles" of *genbun itchi*, since there were many attempts at *genbun itchi* before a relatively unified, stable stylistics emerged, and even this system of stylistics allowed for individual differences in style.) Through the developments of *genbun itchi*, the Japanese for the first time had access to a language that promised to allow uninhibited expression of "interiority" and internal psychological states. In other words, the creation of a psychological novel, and the novel of childhood in particular, was contingent on the invention of a language that could sufficiently tap into interiority without the heavy-handed mediation of pseudo-classical rhetorical styles. It required a language that had the illusion of sufficient "transparency" to allow the exploration and exposition of those thoughts within the heart of the writer. We might ask how possible it would have been for a pre-Restoration or early Meiji writer to probe the psychology of childhood with the heavy-handed language of *kihanteki bungotai*. Isn't such adult language, with its heavy mediation of honorifics and epistemological markers, almost impossibly far from the language and thought processes of children? In short, the *tsuioku shōsetsu* appears to have been made possible in large part by stylistic developments, even as these works seem to have been among the first to explore the newly naturalized concept of the child. It seems accurate to say that these pioneers, equipped with their new literary style, were in fact active agents in the process of establishing the concept of childhood as an apparently "natural" ontological category.

Characteristics of the *Tsuioku Shōsetsu*

In examining some of the narratological characteristics of the *tsuioku shōsetsu*, this paper will examine of the most famous early examples, namely Naka Kansuke's beautifully lyric novel *Gin no saji (The Silver Spoon)*, dating from 1913. Specifically, this paper will touch upon a number of stylistic features: (1) a narratological stance that identifies the content of the work as remembrance, (2) the use of diction free of Sino-Japanese compounds and pseudo-classical verb endings, and (3) the use of vignette-like stories which resist a master narrative in which all elements of the story figure to advance a central plot. Through the use of these three elements, Kansuke is able to create the illusion that he is depicting events as they might appear to a child.

I will also argue, however, that a close examination of the novel suggests that Kansuke can only tap into the interiority of the child and depict events "through the eyes of child" through an elaborate process of reconstruction. This reconstruction, which is not always obvious, is ever present and thus should be considered a fourth element in the creation of the *tsuioku shōsetsu*.

Also, in honor of the eminent author Takahashi Mutsuo, who provided one of the keynote speeches for this conference, I have elected to talk about Takahashi's lovely, modern *tsuioku shōsetsu*, a 1970 work entitled *Jū-ni no enkei* (Twelve Perspectives). As I will show, the four characteristics that I have named above in relation to Naka Kansuke's work apply equally to this powerful work by Takahashi. The repeated presence of these narratological elements seems to attest to an ongoing lineage of *tsuioku shōsetsu*, even though this rubric is virtually unknown today.

(1) Narrative Stance

Both Kansuke and Takahashi use a technique of association to open their works, and in the process of doing so they identify the subject matter as remembered by some narrator (whether or not this narrator is the author himself is a problem that will be discussed below). In *The Silver Spoon*, the story opens with a description of an oddly-shaped spoon, the one named in the title. The narrator recalls his mother telling him that the spoon was used to feed him herbal medicines to cure a scaly, "pine cone-like" rash that had afflicted him in his infancy. This story allows the protagonist to switch from the subject of the spoon to the boy's health in the second chapter. The spoon appears nowhere else in the rest of the work and thus functions only as a pivot, allowing the protagonist's thoughts to turn to the past. The story of the spoon allows the reader to identify the narrative stance as what critic Wada Atsuhiko calls "transmission and indication of events" (*dentatsu kōi shiji*), in which the author stands at a point temporally distant from the events described and thinks back over them. Kansuke uses this instead of the stance that Wada calls "indication of the occurrence of events" (*dekigoto no seiki*

shiji), in which remembered events are portrayed in the narrative present without the explicit mediation of memory.[6]

The first chapter of Takahashi's novel opens in a roughly similar fashion. The first words of the book read, "I have a photograph." Takahashi continues to describe in detail a brownish photo of him and his mother, the same photo that is reproduced on the dust jacket of the original 1970 edition (see Fig. 1). In it, small, snow-like imperfections cover their images. He remembers that on the day that the photo was taken, snow was falling as the two boarded a rickshaw to make their way to the photography studio. Why does he remember so well?

> It is because soon after that photograph was taken, my mother vanished. That event probably superimposed itself over the clear impression left by the falling snow, a very unusual occurrence in [our home in] Kyūshū, and linked with it, forming a clear image in the dark depths of my unconscious.[7]

Using this discussion of the photograph as a springboard, the author then begins to tell the story of his mother's unannounced departure for China and how he came to be left with his grandmother. The photograph, like the silver spoon, does not appear again, but the snow covering the photograph and the ground on that day does. In subsequent scenes, Takahashi sets up a subtle connection between snow and loss, which is skillfully carried throughout the first chapter. In this way, the photograph in Takahashi's work serves as a pivot, allowing discussion to turn to past events and marking them as remembered.

(2) Stylistics

In general, the language employed in *The Silver Spoon*, when compared to that in *Twelve Perspectives,* more closely resembles that which a child might use. Kansuke uses very few abstract Sino-Japanese compounds and instead employs *wabun*, the concrete, indigenous vocabulary that dominates

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[6] Wada Atsuhiko, "Kaisō keishiki ni yoru dokusho shitaku: *Gin no saji* no shuhō," *Kokubungaku kenkyū* 106.5 (1992): 85-95.

[7] Takahashi Mutsuo, *Jū-ni no enkei* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha, 1970), 9.

Fig. 1. Dust jacket of the first edition of *Jū-ni no enkei.* This photomontage, designed by Yokō Tadanori, features the photograph described in the beginning of the work. Source: Takahashi Mutsuo, *Jū-ni no enkei* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha, 1970).

the speech of children. Kansuke focuses the narrative on descriptions of games, relatives, friends, school, and the narrator's feelings about them, and because the narrator does not launch into any long, philosophical, or recondite thoughts about the world, little abstract vocabulary is necessary. Likewise, Kansuke avoids the stiffly formal language of the pseudo-classical Japanese common in documents of authority, opting instead for informal endings like those that had had gained popular use by authors in Kansuke's day. Kansuke also fills his text with a large number of onomatopoetic expressions, many of which he makes up himself. Representations of sound did not belong firmly within the realm of formal literary language at that time, though they did belong in the spoken lexicons of virtually everybody, especially children. In short, Kansuke's use of vocabulary describes the world as a child might see it and not necessarily as an adult would. By stripping away adult concepts and vocabulary, Kansuke has revealed the psychological world of youth. For primarily stylistic reasons, Natsume Sōseki praised this work as "unprecedented in the depiction of the world of a child."[8]

Though Takahashi includes passages of comparable style in *Twelve Perspectives*, Takahashi's purpose differs somewhat from Kansuke's; therefore, his language does as well. Takahashi's main interest does not lie in the discovery of the child's heart but in a discovery of the themes of his own development. In other words, the past in Takahashi's work becomes the raw material that he uses to discuss his own psychology in adult terms. The purpose of Takahashi's *tsuioku shōsetsu* is not only to locate the heart of Takahashi Mutsuo the boy, but also to pursue the psychological development of Takahashi as he grows into adulthood. This means that Takahashi is more willing to use erudite Sino-Japanese compounds than a child would or could. Though we do find passages recounted with the sort of diction found in *The Silver Spoon*, these passages are often located next to other passages that sift through memories and evaluate them in a conspicuously adult fashion.

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[8] Quoted in Iino Hiroshi, "Gin no saji," *Nihon bungei kanshō jiten*, vol. 5 (Tokyo: Gyōsei, 1987), 74.

(3) Structure of Vignettes

The major structural pattern of the *tsuioku shōsetsu* is that of a collection of vignettes. One could point to any number of passages in *The Silver Spoon* to demonstrate that a chapter could work independently of the work as a whole. For instance, Chapter 31 of Part One is little more than a description of the games and songs that the narrator played and sang as a little boy. By quoting the lyrics of songs and describing games in detail, the reader feels as if he is witnessing the children's play firsthand. The chapter ends when the narrator describes how he and his friend Okuni call repeatedly to each other until they finally enter their own houses and cannot hear one another any more. Despite the fact that the vignettes do not build toward any obvious conclusion or cathartic climax, it evokes a sense of sad beauty within the reader who, most likely, remembers similar games in his own past. We should, however, not assume that there is no architecture whatsoever in *The Silver Spoon.* Over the course of hundreds of these little vignettes, one finds, almost with surprise, that the narrator has grown into adolescence and is ready for his first serious love affair. The movement of the work is so subtle, however, that one hardly realizes that the character has grown until the narrator tells us his age.[9]

Twelve Perspectives also contains a large number of small stories that are irreducible to some overarching master narrative. For instance, in the chapter "Bāchange" (Grandma's House), Takahashi shares a large number of memories from the days during his stay with his grandparents. In one place, he describes in detail the layout of their home and some of the memories associated with certain places.

> The window of the bath was also a single pane of glass. At night when I got into the bath, beyond the window clouded with steam, the bullfrogs would be imitating the lowing of a cow perfectly,

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[9] Though *The Silver Spoon* does have a loose architecture that structures the general movement of the many vignettes, there are other *tsuioku shōsetsu*, such as Uno Kōji's *Seijirō yume o miru ko (Seijirō, The Dreamer)*, that do not have any obvious architecture and that appear to consist merely of a series of short prose works put together without regard to chronology or theme.

> and the "*yosshoi*" birds would be singing. The *yosshoi* bird would call out "yosshoi, yosshoi," and though it would frighten me out of my wits, I was also gripped by a sort of sad longing.[10]

It is precisely in such places that Takahashi's style sounds most like Naka Kansuke's. Compare the passage above with the following selection from Chapter Seven of Part One of *The Silver Spoon*.

> When we were at home my aunt used to place me by the high window facing the street, instructing me to hold onto the lattice-work. Supporting me from behind, she entertained me by teaching me the names of various things such as "horse," "wagon," or whatever happened to come within sight. At the rice shop across the street there was a crippled hen that had been run over by a wagon. Every time my aunt saw the hen standing upon its one remaining leg, its tattered feathers and tail covered with dust, she felt sorry for it, but I eventually found it repugnant.[11]

Both writers move rapidly from subject to subject, not dwelling on one point for too long, just as a child's mind and speech move rapidly between topics. In both passages, we see an extreme, almost cinematic visuality. We read detailed descriptions of windows and birds which are present for no other reason than they attracted the attention of the narrators. In both cases, the children experience strong emotions that arise simply as reactions to the things that confront them. Again, these emotions do not feed into some greater architecture of the story; rather, they appear to be included to illustrate the volatile, emotional world of the child. Such details, which resist absorption into some overarching plot, are essential in truly bringing a *tsuioku shōsetsu* to life.

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[10] Takahashi Mutsuo, *Jū-ni no enkei*, 30.

[11] Naka Kansuke, *The Silver Spoon*, trans. Etsuko Terasaki (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1976), 34-35. For the original Japanese, see Naka Kansuke, *Gin no saji* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Bunko, 1989), 17.

(4) Reconstruction of Memory

Though it contains a number of such vignettes, *Twelve Perspectives* does indeed have a clear structure, which is organized not by plot but by theme. Each chapter tends to contain certain themes and motifs, creating a degree of coherence within chapters. The presence of these themes and motifs suggests that Takahashi is reworking his memories in *Twelve Perspectives* and shaping them into wholes by making connections between what might be otherwise disparate happenings. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Takahashi will sometimes mention the same event, such as the disappearance of his mother, in different chapters in order to reveal the various ways the event affected him. In the afterword to the book, Takahashi explains that the twelve chapters of the book represent twelve different views of his life.

> Each one of the twelve perspectives is a mirror independent unto itself. If I could just line up each of these mirrors, each one whole unto itself, in a ring, from their reflections shining off one another, a world would appear . . . That was my plan. No, perhaps it would be more accurate to say that was my desire.[12]

The reason that he allowed the overlapping, he explains, is that multiplicity is implicit in the nature of a mirror. Indeed, the same event can have an array of different significances for a single person.

The fact that Takahashi manipulates his past in this way, discovering meanings in particular events and presenting a single event in different contexts, suggests that Takahashi does not believe that memory is immutable and static. In fact, Takahashi addresses this issue directly in the first chapter, "Kioku no yuki" (The Snow of Memory). After recounting his memories of going to the photography studio on a snowy day, Takahashi opens the possibility that his memories are not absolute. He tells us that in the rickshaw that carried him and his mother to the photography studio that day, there was a window cut out of the curtain which hung in front of them and empty space was filled with a thin, celluloid window. The white snow which he remembers as falling on that day was filtered through the warped and yellowed

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[12] Takahashi Mutsuo, *Jū-ni no enkei*, 263.

piece of plastic, so sometimes when he remembers the snow, it appears as yellow, pale brown, or uneven as the plastic through which he saw it. Takahashi here suggests that memory distorts just as much as the thin plastic window of that day. Since Takahashi was only three years old on that day, it is unrealistic to think that he could remember events without any distortion.

In the next paragraph, Takahashi suggests another way in which memory might be distorted. He states directly to the readers that memories of one's own experiences do not represent the sole component of memory. Hearsay, which can be in turn supplemented by the memories of other people, is also a part of memory. If this were not the case, Takahashi argues, then there is no way that he could know the date of his birth, December 15, 1937. This date is a memory implanted from the outside. Many of what he considers his "memories" from this period consist of his imagination superimposed over the stories that his mother told him. In this way he has created "new memories" using supplemental sources from the people around him. It is this concept of memory that allows him to talk about experiences his mother had during her youth. For instance, in the third section of the chapter, he relates a story about his mother. One day while she was young and strapped to her mother's back, her mother (Takahashi's maternal grandmother) was raped. This appears to have played an important role in her own development and, in turn, it also affected Takahashi and therefore deserves a place in his "memories." In this regard, the autobiographical *Twelve Perspectives* might best be seen as an admission of the fragmentary, multivocal quality of memory rather than as supposedly "unmediated" self-portraiture.

This view of memory and the self appears to owe much to recent thought in which the self, rather than being the origin of meaning and experience in humanist terms, is organized only through a performative activity in which separate, often conflicting meanings, voices, and experiences are organized under the single signifer "I." In his discussion of the nature of memory, Takahashi suggests that memory, the building block of the self, does indeed involve a negotiation of textual fragments which are reworked, distorted, or implanted from outside to conform to certain unified themes that organize the experience of being. By looking at his youth using the twelve mirrors of these chapters, Takahashi has contested the concept of the individual as a linear being organized by unique experience and chronological time. Paying attention to the distortions that are ever present in his own act of viewing and remembering, he has written an archaeology of the self. As one scholar has stated, "the existential self is a subject actively engaged in the world and

attempting to exercise some capacity to make choices and impose meanings. On one level, therefore, the construction of a self in autobiography is just one more manifestation of the existential, sense-conferring subject's engagement with the world."[13] This process of constructing a self as a means of coming to grips with one's own being is readily apparent throughout *Twelve Perspectives.*

As mentioned above, Takahashi seems to have written *Twelve Perspectives* with an entirely different purpose in mind than did Naka Kansuke when he penned *The Silver Spoon.* Kansuke's work presents his readers with the world of the child, not with adult explorations of the world of the child. Unlike in Takahashi's book, it is important to note that most of the memories are "primary," not based on hearsay from outside sources. (The only major exceptions to this rule come in the very beginning when the protagonist's mother tells him the story of his birth and he shares the personal histories of the aunt and uncle. Birth and family history, however, are natural points of departure for any biographical work, and so the move to include them is entirely understandable. Otherwise, the "memories" are presented as absolute and with very little overt mediation.) The readers see the world directly through the eyes of the child himself, not through stories collected from sisters, relatives, and playmates and not through the distance imposed by adulthood.

However, is *The Silver Spoon* actually as unmediated as it seems at first glance? Some readers assume that the work may be read as autobiography, but to what degree is that actually true? To create the book, Kansuke has indeed reworked many of his own memories, attempting to purge them of adult concepts and reveal the experiences as he might have lived them as a boy; however, in the process of recreating his childhood memories, distortions, eliminations, and recreations are almost inevitable. Edward Fowler reminds us that the Naturalist writers of early twentieth-century Japan found that "[t]he written reportive style turned out not to be fiction-free: the very act of expressing themselves in writing, they realized, was in effect to don

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[13] Terry Keefe, "Conclusion," *Autobiography and the Existential Self: Studies in Modern French Writing*, ed. Terry Keefe and Edmund Smyth (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 186.

a mask, to supplant person with persona."[14] Though Naka Kansuke was careful to distance himself from the Naturalist movement, one wonders if in writing *The Silver Spoon* he, too, did not find this to be the case.

Overall, the family background and the general outlines of the story match Naka Kansuke's own experiences as a child to a significant degree. In a long study that looks at *The Silver Spoon* in detail, Horibe Isao has attempted to match each of the characters in the work with people that surrounded Kansuke as a boy, and in virtually every case he has been successful.[15] He also notes that at times it seems that the protagonist must be Naka Kansuke himself. As evidence, he points to one passage which makes little sense unless we equate the equate Kansuke with the "I" (*"watakushi"*) telling the story. In Chapter 40, the protagonist tells of a boy named Andō who sat next to him in school.

> We had never liked each other for some reason and were always on bad terms. One day during our math class he drew a face with a patched eye on his slate board, put my name on it, and showed it to me saying, "Here, here." In retribution, I drew a large wooden clog with eyes and a nose and wrote, "Cross eyes."[16]

Why does the boy draw a one-eyed man to tease the protagonist? Horibe suggests the boy is referring to Yamamoto Kansuke, a warrior from the Age of Warring States, well known to students during Naka Kansuke's youth. If Andō were indeed referring to Yamamoto Kansuke, it would make sense if to write Naka Kansuke's given name beneath the figure.[17]

On the other hand, should we assume that the work depicts Kansuke's life without any authorial intervention? We must ask ourselves, is it possible that a child of two or three could remember some of the events described in such intimate detail? It seems probable that many of the early memories are reconstructions. Some of the memories center around the toys the protagonist owned as a child, such as a red ox and a black clay dog. Since such

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[14] Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishōsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 41.

[15] Horibe Isao, Gin no saji *kō* (Tokyo: Kanrin Shobō, 1993), 109-34.

[16] Naka Kansuke, *The Silver Spoon*, 93; Naka Kansuke, *Gin no saji*, 89.

[17] Horibe Isao, Gin no saji *kō*, 110.

items were durable, it is possible the author is reconstructing his memories of those toys from memories of a later date. The same process of reconstruction is likely taking place when the narrator describes the outdoor spectacles in Tokyo or the festivals at the Inari shrine, each of which Naka Kansuke presumably saw again later in life. It seems extraordinarily unlikely that the author would remember the scene from Chapter 7 quoted above in which the protagonist learned the words for "horse" and "wagon."

Horibe Isao agrees that overstatement seems to be a characteristic of the story. Indeed, the intensity of emotion expressed over small things in *The Silver Spoon* often seems to be a bit too strong in color to be entirely faithful to memory. For instance, in Chapter 41 the protagonist states, "My neglect of my studies swiftly showed its ill effects when examination time came: I did not know a thing. While other students quickly finished their exams and left, it was my stunning displeasure to struggle, with my face flushed red like a boiled octopus."[18] This was based on an actual event, but in an essay entitled "Song of the Top" (*Koma no uta*), Kansuke admitted, "I really don't know now whether or not the situation was so full of tragedy and brave resolve. How ever much I tried to follow the contours of truth, *The Silver Spoon* is, after all, a novel."[19]

This process of reconstruction may explain why Naka Kansuke decided not to identify the protagonist as himself. In the first editions of *The Silver Spoon*, Kansuke gave the boy the name "Shun-bō," a name completely unrelated to his own, but in subsequent editions, he removed the character "Shun," leaving the boy's name absent from the text entirely. This serves to universalize the story, to allow readers to place relate to it more intimately than if Naka Kansuke had identified the protagonist as one specific boy, but at the same time, this means the story could be about anyone and not necessarily Naka Kansuke. It seems clear that Kansuke has used memory to produce a text that could be classified as semi-autobiographical *fiction*, and the protagonist of *The Silver Spoon* is not necessarily Kansuke himself, but a *geist* or modified, reconstructed version of the author as a boy. Perhaps it was due to the recognition that *The Silver Spoon* contains a semi-fictional

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[18] Naka Kansuke, *The Silver Spoon*, 95.

[19] Naka Kansuke, "Koma no uta: *Gin no saji* hoi," *Suzuki Miekichi, Morita Sōhei, Uchida Hyakkan, Naka Kansuke shū*, Nihon gendai bungaku zenshū 41 (Tokyo: Kōdan Sha, 1967), 396.

past that Kansuke consistently chose throughout his life not to align himself with Naturalism.

In short, though Naka Kansuke and Takahashi Mutsuo approach their works with very different purposes, they use similar processes. Both rework their memories into semi-autobiographies by reconstructing the children that they were long before. One *tsuioku shōsetsu* pursues memory in order to discover the heart of a child and the other pursues memory to find the heart of a man, but both discoveries rely heavily on the process of recreation. Both treat memory as a text to be manipulated.

Disappearance of the Term But Not the Genre

As mentioned above, the words *tsuioku shōsetsu* and *tsuikai shōsetsu* appear to have dropped from the critical vocabulary of Japanese writers during the 1920s. Significantly, it was about that time that the term *shi-shōsetsu* or *watakushi-shōsetsu* emerged as a privileged signifer to index all writing dominated by the illusion of autobiography. As Tomi Suzuki shows in *Narrating the Self*, these terms appear to have emerged in the midst of a "new literary consensus institutionalized by the expanded mass media about a particular mode of reading."[20] In this mode of reading, the protagonist of a work identified as *shi-shōsetsu* would be commonly equated with the author himself. This newly developed category was expansive enough to include almost any type of writing, as long as it was dominated by the illusion of sincerity and a lack of ironic distance that would inhibit identification between protagonist and author.[21]

The concept of the *shi-shōsetsu* appears to have been broad enough to gather together a number of previously established critical terms into a single constellation of autobiographical fiction. As Richard Torrance notes in a review of Suzuki's work, before the development of the term *shi-shōsetsu* and its concomitant mode of reading, readers seem to have approached

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[20] Tomi Suzuki, *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 55.

[21] Ironically, Suzuki shows in her reading of Tayama Katai's 1907 *Futon* that there *is*, in fact, an ironic distance between Katai and the protagonist Takenaka Tokio. In establishing this work as the prototype of the *shi-shōsetsu*, subsequent *shi-shōsetsu* discourse has erased this ironic distance.

"autobiographical fiction" as belonging to a number of different categories. These included *jōchi shōsetsu* (novels of the love crazed), *seishun bungaku* (literature of fervent youth), and *tsuioku shōsetsu*.[22] After the development and canonization of the *shi-shōsetsu*, however, these genres and their respective modes of reading appear to have been subsumed by the dominant *shi-shōsetsu* discourse, and the more specific terms were forgotten.

Though the word *tsuioku shōsetsu* disappeared as a critical term, this does not mean that *tsuioku shōsetsu* themselves have disappeared. As evidence to the contrary, one can point to many works about childhood written by modern Japanese writers. For instance, Takahashi Mutsuo alone has written three works about his impoverished and difficult childhood in Kyūshū: a series of short prose pieces entitled *Osanai ōkoku kara* (From the Kingdom of Childhood) (1966-1968), *Twelve Perspectives*, and the 1970 novella *Sei naru misaki* (The Sacred Promontory). One of the biggest bestsellers of 1981 was *Madogiwa no Totto-chan* (Totto-chan: The Little Girl at the Window), an account of television personality Kuroyanagi Tetsuko's years at an elementary school for special children. A sequel entitled *Totto-channeru*, which described Kuroyanagi's adolescence and rise as a television personality, followed in 1984. Itsutsu Kikue's 1993 autobiographical work *Kōyō no naka ni inochi moyu* (A Life Blazing Amongst the Autumn Leaves) recounts the day-to-day happenings of a childhood in Japanese-occupied Manchuria. When this was made into a weekly radio serial during 1994, the book sold well, especially among members of the wartime generation who remembered their own childhood during the 1940s.[23] Though the term *tsuioku shōsetsu* appears to have been crowded out by the canonization of the *shi-shōsetsu*, which elevated the term *shi-shōsetsu* to a privileged status in discourse, the *tsuioku shōsetsu* itself appears to have continued to thrive.

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[22] Richard Torrance, review of *Narrating the Self: Fictions of Japanese Modernity*, by Tomi Suzuki, *Journal of Japanese Studies* 23.1 (1997): 206.

[23] There is also a genre of film that corresponds to the *tsuioku shōsetsu*. See, for instance, the recent *Village of Dreams* about the childhood of two identical twins in rural Shikoku.