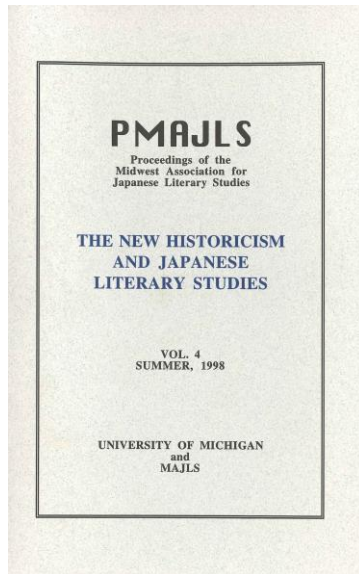"Izumi Kyōka's *Jouissance*: Dangerous Women and Deadly Words"

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Izumi Kyōka's Jouissance:
Dangerous Women and Deadly Words[1]

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The panel on which I am about to present on Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939), rather fortuitously for me, is one otherwise composed of papers on premodern literature. While I must acknowledge that the organizers have also mixed presentations on modern and premodern literatures elsewhere in this conference, at first glance at the panel line-up one might be led to wonder, how is it that the Meiji-Taisho writer Kyōka is put together with two essays on the Genji monogatari, and one on nō drama? The critical tendency to discursively and thematically link Kyōka to premodern literary productions is precisely the reading of Kyōka against which I position my paper.

Kyōka is famous for his opaque prose and ghost tales, he is also celebrated for how he wrote women. Above all, critics have insisted that Kyōka represents a "premodern Japanese aesthetic" that transcends specific time frames to "fragrance" all Japanese art forms throughout history.[2] This premodern aesthetic in Kyōka's

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[1]This paper is based on part one of my book, Dangerous Women, Deadly Words: Phallic Fantasy and Modernity in Izumi Kyōka, Enchi Fumiko, and Nakagami Kenji, forthcoming from Stanford University Press, 1998.

[2]See, for example, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Ikuta Chōkō, "Izumi Kyōka shi no shōsetsu o ronzu," and "Kyōka zenshū ni tsuite," both in Kyōkaron shūsei, Tanizawa Eiichi and Watanabe Ikko, eds. (Tokyo: Rippū shobō), 168-180 and 199-200; Gunji Masakatsu and Bandō Tamasaburō, "Kyōka geki o megutte," taidan, Izumi Kyōka: gensō bungakushi, Kokubungaku 36:9 (August 1991): 6-25; Mishima Yukio, "Bunshō tokuhon," in Mishima Yukio zenshū 28 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1975), 414-564; and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, "Junsui ni 'Nihonteki' na Kyōka sekai,"in Izumi Kyōka, Bungei tokuhon 37 (Tokyo: Kawade shobō shinsha, 1981), 67-68.

texts is most frequently embodied by dangerous, enchanting women who function as mediums to past and imagined worlds. Over and over, essays on Kyōka identify the women of his narratives as embodying "the essence of femaleness" (some with the greater sophistication that recognizes this as a male imaginary).[3] My objective today is to suggest some ways of historicizing as distinctly Meiji/Taisho imaginaries, the putative premodernity of both Kyōka's discursive style and his female characterizations. Although the trope that I call "the dangerous woman" is overtly referential to a plurality of antecedent female literary archetypes long linked to eroticism, and the supernatural, once distinct categories of female archetypes are collapsed together in Kyōka's modern renditions. This process of condensation produces a thoroughly modern version of her premodern counterparts. It is only by virtue of their shared difference from the modern that these tropes can be perceived as sharing sufficient attributes that they may be collapsed into a unity (a unity composed of their multiple fragments).

Kyōka was also celebrated as a masterful prose stylist. His polysemic prose is read as interlocked with premodern discursive traditions, as against the dominant literary trend of his contemporaries toward a modern, interiorized narrative. Kyōka's "archaic" prose is, like the dangerous woman, achieved through a process of condensation - in this case, of previously distinct antecedent generic and rhetorical signifiers. For most critics this

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[3]See, for example, Fujimoto Akira, "Botai no roman: Kyōka bungaku ni okeru sekai," in Izumi Kyōka, Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō sōsho, Tōgō Katsumi, ed. (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1981), 75-93;   Kasahara Nobuo, Izumi Kyōka: Bi to erosu no kōzō (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1976); Muramatsu Sadataka, Izumi Kyōka: shōgai to geijutsu (Tokyo: Kawade bunko, 1954); Noguchi Takehiko, "Kyōka no onna," and Tanemura Suehiro, "Suichūka hengen," both in Izumi Kyōka, Bungei tokuhon 37, 138-146; 124-133.

"invented, imaginary premodern prose" becomes the hallmark of culture and tradition, reaching a zenith in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's claim that Kyōka's prose epitomizes some pure Japanese essence,[4] while actually, in short, Kyōka's narratives create an atmosphere of the premodern that is the constitutive Other of modernity. His is a distinctly Meiji notion of Japan's premodern literary history and aesthetics, linked to the project of defining Japan as a modern nation state and Japaneseness through the rubric of an "authentic," and retroactively, increasingly feminized literary nativism, poetics, and aesthetics. This feminization is simultaneously maternalized, and becomes his locus for recuperating the repressed, missing, desired, feared and abjected not-self.

The celebration of Kyōka's putative "capturing" of an essence of femaleness resonates with the modern assertion that onnagata (female impersonators) embody femaleness more perfectly than do biological women. Indeed, one of Kyōka's most ardent contemporary fans is the onnagata Bandō Tamasaburō, who has repeatedly performed as the female lead in many of Kyōka's plays. For Tamasaburō, the overlapped productions of the abjected and Othered, revered and feared female in language meant to be performed, provides him as an onnagata, with the perfect vehicle for enacting femininity. Onnagata are concerned, precisely, with theatrical, scripted femaleness.[5] Femaleness is always already absent from the purported speaking subject, and severed from the "sexed" body. In Kyōka, likewise, dangerous women and deadly words together form a linguistic matrix for his

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[4] Tanizaki, "Junsui ni 'Nihonteki' na Kyōka sekai," 67-68.

[5] On the onnagata see Marilyn Ivy, Discourses of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 212-239.

<u>jouissance</u> .[6] This construct is a product of Meiji modernity.

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[6]The desire that leads toward <u>jouissance</u>, or the experience of a type of pleasure that threatens the stability of the experiential subject, the one having the pleasure, is fueled by the death drive, or the desire for homeostasis (the return to a state where stimulus ceases). On the "death drive" see Sigmund Freud, <u>Beyond the Pleasure Principle</u>, <u>The International Psycho-Analytic Library</u> 4 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1922). Freud identified the death drive as co-existing alongside the libidinal drive, but aimed at the cessation of animation, or a return to a pre-animate stasis. The "originary object(s)" of desire references the desired (not-yet) objects of drive before the subject itself has been formulated through mis-apprehensions of the self/Other. Although the origins of desire are formulated before the acquisition of language, the retrieval of desire is only possible through language. For the subject to feel desire the (non)object of desire must be substituted by a symbol in language, that is, in the Symbolic order. A process of ceaseless slippage of desire along a linking chain of changing signifiers ensues (because the original [non]object is not retrievable); this process is in fact, according to psychoanalysis, the source of all human "animation." Regarding <u>jouissance</u> and its connection to "woman" see Jacques Lacan, <u>Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the</u> <u>École</u> <u>Freudienne</u> (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1982); Jacques Lacan, <u>The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis</u> (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), and his <u>Écrits: A Selection</u> (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977). Woman is Other in opposition to phallic norm; and within woman's Otherness, both her putative capacity for a <u>jouissance</u> beyond that available to men, and her (actualized or not) putative constitutive inseparability from "motherhood," link her surreptitiously to the Real, (a realm foreclosed to the Symbolic), and also to the abject. The abject relates to a distinction first made between the <u>developing</u> subject and the not-self (pre-object objects); it differs from the "Other" because the subject does not yet exist. Paradigmatically, the objects of expulsion, such as excrement, and the amorphous state of not-being-self, or the homeostasis that is the aim of the death drive, are the substance of the "abject." For the psychoanalytic theorist, Julia Kristeva, the maternal body is also abjected in the process of becoming-self. The logic underlying this axiom is in order that the infant identify itself as "being-self," it must <u>abject</u> (radically jettison, or exclude) the (up until then) non-differentiated maternal body. See Julia Kristeva, <u>Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection</u> (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). Although I follow Judith Butler (see her <u>Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity</u> [New York: Routledge, 1990] and <u>Bodies That Matter: On The Discursive Limits of "Sex"</u> [New York: Routledge, 1993]) to imagine that this processing of the maternal body need not be naturalized as transcending culture (as it is in Kristeva), in modern Japan an aspect of the maternal body is repeatedly naturalized as abject, as the "other side" to the reification of

In early twentieth-century Japan the grossly misogynist, Neo-Confucian-rooted homosociality that dominated the Edo period was reshaped by the startling inclusion of women in the category of "people" (akin to men).[7] Within the debates on motherhood that conspired to remold, and to naturalize the separation of women (from men) into mutually exclusive realms of labor supportive of industrialized capitalism, the historically determined, shifting specificities that fill the structural categories of the socially abject, the Other, and the subject, their complementariness, and their reciprocal constructivity are made transparent. "Woman" was no longer socially "abjected" simply by virtue of her being woman. Maternity as a reified institution was produced, and quickly naturalized as part of the libidinal and subjective economies that became epistemic supports for Japan as a modern nation state. "Mother," however, was split into two

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maternity as female vocation. The maternal-abject, determined by cultural abhorrence that gives shape to the earliest psychic processes of separating self from not-self,   becomes a locus for desire, and for jouissance. Moreover, according to Kristeva, among others, the production and consumption of literature in particular has a special intimacy with desire; it is from the intimacy between articulation and desire that "poetic" literature is born. The reading/writing subjects of poetic literature tread closely to the foreclosed and forbidden realm of (unattainable by definition) originary desire, and to the abject. This is the substance of jouissance. See Julia Kristeva, Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980). The dangerous woman is a trope whose connection with the Real and the abject is made dominant and manifest.

[7]On the shift in women's status, and the development of maternity as a reified public institution, see Gail Lee Bernstein, ed., Recreating Japanese Women, 1600-1945 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991); Niwa Akiko, "The Formation of the Myth of Motherhood in Japan," U.S.-Japan Women's Journal, English Supplement 4 (February 1993): 70-82, and Sharon L. Sievers, Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1983).

components, the reified mother/educator who accrued social value, and (varied tropes encompassing) her abjected attributes (one of which is the "dangerous woman"). Likewise, femaleness in Kyōka's texts is a maternalized site split between abjection and reification; a construct that permits the modern phallic subject to circulate his own desire for dissolution through jouissance. In the process, for Kyōka, and for others, an aspect of maternalized femaleness (the "dangerous woman") became the handy disposal bin for all that exceeded the unity of the (now heterosexual) male subject.[8] The dangerous woman thus symbolizes, inaccurately by definition, the Real.[9]   As she is, however, constitutively represented in language, she is also always a cipher, (meaning zero, coded, and the orthographic symbol of substitution), and simultaneously surplus to any representation.

Female bodies in Kyōka's narratives are repeatedly the eroticized site in which phallic subjectivity may dissolve - the male protagonists of Kyōka's narratives experience erotically delicious psychic diffusion, and temporal and spatial confusion as they infiltrate woman's textual space. From Nanchi shinjū (Southern love suicides, 1912):

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[8]The Edo period libidinal economy was not heterosexist. (This of course does not mean that there were not relations between individuals of different sexes, but that culturally normative love and sexual practices were not exclusive of same-sex partnerings.) On Edo see Paul Schalow's introduction to his translation of Ihara Saikaku's The Great Mirror of Male Love (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).

[9]According to Jaques Lacan, the realm of the Real refers to the material organism and its biological needs, but because these can only be approached, or comprehended through the veil of language (the Symbolic), or experienced through the Imaginary (developmentally pre-Symbolic imagoes, images), there is no way to explicate, or "know" the Real. It is thus radically excluded, or foreclosed, to the subject (who is produced only in language [the Symbolic]).

"It was the weather that made vapor rise up in heat waves from
the surface of Yodo River toward the castle turret; vapors
which flared to tint the famous castle in a gorgeous mirage.
But inside the flare of color was something wavering like a
waterfall, undulating stealthily; something with long, pitch-
black hair." As he spoke Hatsuzaka was as though intoxicated
by the colors tinting the castle he described.[10]

The Kōya hijiri (The Kōya ascetic, 1900) ascetic grows dizzy as
he approaches the mountain-woman's domain: "I was fated to die
in that forest. In a flash, I felt that the confused fantasies floating
in my mind were what happens when a person is aware of his
impending death."[11] These dissolutions, however, "originate" in
language; in a polysemy and a web of significatory slippages that
accompany the appearance of the dangerous and desired woman.
Kyōka's polysemy is usually read as emerging from Edo
traditions, and seen as antinonical to the phonocentrism of the
Meiji linguistic standardization movement. I argue that actually, in
the task of nostalgic recuperation of an imaginary past, early
twentieth-century phonocentrism inscribes itself as inseparable
from Kyōka's seemingly antiquated, polysemic prose. (By
phonocentrism I refer to the putative link between sound, voice,
and the Real, and the produced perception of a [potential] gap
between writing and the Real.)

    For Kyōka, word was inextricable from enunciation, and word
contained a power to access what might be described as a realm
similar to the Lacanian Real; for Kyōka words were "magical" and
the carrier of (potentially archaic) sound. As Noguchi Takehiko

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[10] Kyōka, Nanchi shinjū, in Izumi Kyōka zenshū 14   (Tokyo: Iwanami,
1942), 364.

[11] Kyōka, Kōya hijiri, in Izumi Kyōka shū, Nihon kindai bungaku taikei 7,
Muramatsu Sadataka, ed. (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1970), 494-495.

described it, "one of Kyōka's special characteristics was letter (moji) fetishism. Kyōka most surely possessed a sensation, a sensory tactility (hada ni shokuchi sarete kuru yō na kankaku) of words themselves being endowed with a kind of incantory power."[12] Kyōka's "Ehon no haru" ("Picturebook spring," 1926) is the tale of a woman murdered cruelly in the Edo period, who "lives on" as a ghost.[13] The murdered woman has been cursed by being born on the "sixth day of the sixth month of the sixth year"; the character for "six" (mi) not only means "hebi, (snake), or hemi in archaic pronunciation, but also signifies the sign/time of the snake in the archaic calendar. In Kyōka's text the cursed sound repeats: "mi mi mi mi, mi no nengetsu no sorotta wakai onna no ikigimo (the birth time of the young woman lined up the dates of six/snake six/snake six/snake six/snake, six/snake)" (142). Moreover, as "six" is followed by "seven" (shichi) which contains the syllable shi, homophone for the root of the verb "to die," the young boy's interaction with the ghost is followed by repeated flooding (in which, naturally, countless snakes are revealed) of the nearby generally tranquil river. From Kyōka's text, "Meiji shichinen shichigatsu nanoka, taiu no furitsuzuita sono nanoka nanabanme ni machi no mō hitotsu no taiga ga osoroshii kōzui shita (On the seventh day of the seventh month of the seventh year of Meiji, on that seventh day for the seventh time after continuous heavy rains the river flooded dreadfully one more time)"(147).

How does the phonocentric polysemy so characteristic of

[12]Noguchi, "Izumi Kyōka no hito to sakuhin," in Izumi Kyōka, Kanshō Nihon gendai bungaku 3 (Tokyo: Kadokawa shoten, 1982),15-16.

[13]Kyōka, "Ehon no haru," in Izumi Kyōka gensōdan 4 (Tokyo: Iwanami shobō shinsha, 1995), 12-50. Further pagination follows quotations within text.

Kyōka's prose become an index of "the feminine"? In his 1959
Bunshō tokuhon, Mishima Yukio classified all (Japanese) prose
into two styles that, according to Mishima, originated in a Heian
Period demarcation between men's and women's discursive
"languages."[14] The masculine Apollonian style, argued Mishima,
was linked to classical Chinese, used for things "public" (politics,
history and philosophy) and was logical and transparent. The
feminine Dionysian style, that became dominant in later Japanese
discursive production, was conversely used for private matters
such as love poems, and was originated in classical Japanese, and
linked the representation of voice (or sound) to kana, the syllabary
used by Heian women. The public realm was deeply influenced
by "foreign" (mostly Chinese) concepts. Mishima contrasts Mori
Ōgai (1862-1922) as a paradigm of "masculine style" with Izumi
Kyōka as a master of "feminine (Dionysian) style." Ōgai is
Apollonian, because, holds Mishima, his sentence structure is
firmly rooted in Chinese discursive tradition. Ōgai's prose is
"terse and pure and has no flourishes." Mishima writes, Ōgai
employed words exclusively in the service of realistic description,
and refrained from "dirtying images with superfluous words, well
aware that [verbosity] would only sully the clarity of the things he
described." Kyōka, he described conversely as enticing the reader
toward a "drunkenness of reason" engendered by a "sorcery of
word"; a use of word as a "medium" for a loss of rationalism.[15]
For Mishima, a male-authored discourse functions in place of "the
female" to produce a femaleness that is a male imaginary. Further,
it is Mishima's perception of a "split" phallic self - a masculinity
formed by exclusion of the "feminine" - that generates his thesis.

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[14]Mishima Yukio, "Bunshō tokuhon," in Mishima Yukio zenshū 28 (Tokyo:
Shinchōsha, 1975), 414-564.

[15]Ibid., 444; 446-448. "Medium" is written in katakana.

Male authored Japanese discourse has <u>always</u> been adulterated by the dominance of the "Other" for Mishima - be it through "feminization" or "Sinification."

Central to Mishima's formulation is the common modern interpretation of the term "<u>onnade</u>" (woman's hand) that was poised against "masculine" writing in Chinese characters, used to describe writing in <u>hiragana</u> (cursive phonetic syllabary), and that links female discursive production and "voice." As Mizuta Noriko has deftly showed, gender in <u>monogatari</u> (tale fiction - the paradigmatic vehicle for so-called women's voices) actually functioned symbolically, or metaphorically as a fundamental aspect of specified genres - those genres deemed to be "female" were to be narrated by women, regardless of authorial sex.[16] Thus, <u>onnade</u> does not identify a particularly sexed body as the subject of the enunciation, as some modern convolutions would have. Men, too, used "<u>onnade</u>" when writing poetry, private correspondences, and so forth. As is well known, the female author of the <u>Genji Monogatari</u>, Murasaki Shikibu could certainly read and write Chinese. (And Kyōka, the modern master of "feminine" writing of course was biologically male.) <u>Onnade</u> has no intrinsic relation to female subjectivity, or voice, or "her" expression (or her genitalia, for that matter); rather, it is a metaphoric term which indicates the private, the light, the sexual and its yearnings, as separated from "public" and "significant" writing marked with erudition such as politics, or history. This is not, as Mara Miller would have it, evidence of a Japanese premodern "gender-independent co-subjectivity," but a hierarchized discursive constellation.[17]

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[16]Mizuta Noriko, "Josei no jikogatari to monogatari," <u>Hihyō kūkan</u> 4 (1992): 64-79.

[17]Mara Miller, "Canons and the Challenge of Gender: Women's Voices in the Japanese Canon," <u>Monist: An International Journal of General</u>

It is important to remember, also, that while hiragana was feminized, katakana, another phonetic syllabary, was not. Katakana was first employed as rubi (pronunciation and grammatical supplement) alongside Chinese characters in the production of kanbun (Chinese read in Japanese). Both syllabaries are simplified versions of Chinese characters, employed for sound, not meaning. Katakana continued to be used in alternation with Chinese characters on documents, social science studies, and other "public" writings well into the modern prewar period. For fiction (non-factual) writings geared toward reader entertainment, hiragana in combination with Chinese characters was the paradigm. "Women's writing in hiragana" has always been a combination of Chinese characters and cursive phonetic symbols. There was never an actual complete separation of the phonocentric from the non-phonocentric, and Chinese from "Japanese" along sexed categories. Moreover, such readings of "private" and "public" assume that premodern notions of public and private correlate with those of the twentieth century. The linkage of female "voice" with phoneticism and "the private" through hiragana usage is little more than a (admittedly complex) modern myth (in implicit service of a phallocentric agenda).

It is with the Edo period kokugaku quest for texts with "originary enunciations," that the Genji monogatari - one of Mishima's prime examples of premodern "feminine" discourse - is first canonized as a text with import other than that of pure entertainment. Its import is located in a phonocentrism; lodged in words which embody mono no aware, an expression of emotive harmony between "self" and "thing." In Edo Japan, nativist

Motoori Norinaga's (1730-1801) phonocentric passion for words which elicited mono no aware was informed by an aestheticized nationalism which reiterated itself in literary discourse; Motoori, however sought to sever phonocentrism from its Heian feminization, and return it to the realm of the "commonly human." He was neither interested in a putative femaleness, nor it should be stressed, in a reading of female author Murasaki's "voice" in The Genji; rather he sought descriptive detail, commonalty, and a non-gendered mono no aware in its pages.[18] Nativist poetics and linguistic aesthetics thus shifted again in Meiji, when an(other) inversion whereby it was refeminized was rewoven into a nostalgia collaborative with modern gender ideations; the realm of non-logic is now (again) female. This intertwined neatly with Japan's immediate political project of creating a gendered social basis for modern industrialized capitalism. That there was a female discursive tradition in premodern Japan certainly deserves analytic attention; however, this should not be conflated with "voice." The search for "female voice" begins with the twentieth-century proclamation that "women are people too."

The oft-repeated critical claim that Kyōka's polysemy reiterates Edo conventions is similarly dubious. In Kyōka's texts, undoubtedly, narrative play resembles gesaku parody because it frequently revolves around the relationship of word to meaning, and proximity of voice to self. The related quest for immediacy, (or the perceived slippage of the contemporary subject from contemporaneity), which underlay the different projects of both Edo gesake stylists and nativists, is however transformed in Kyōka into a differently nostalgic gesture toward (a modern desire

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[18]Harry Harootunian, Things Seen and Unseen: Discourse and Ideology in Tokugawa Nativism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 81; 106-8.

for) an imaginary (feminized) past as the site for healing the split self. What has already changed for Kyōka are subjectivity itself, the notion of the body and its "gender," as well as representational systems and the concept of the Real.

Edo nativists sought to recoup a "lost" sense of connection between "reality" and "truth," by "resituating language (speaking) to its locus in the body."[19] People, the nativists believed, had lost a connection with "natural" things. This connection had once been present in word, and word had been inseparable from enunciation and body. Speech had originated in antiquity in gesture, when people spoke "pure sounds." Then, it was believed, there had been no separation between voice, deed, and work (done by the body). And as in the Meiji period response to Westernization by folklorist Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962) (and Kyōka), it was against the perception of an Other, (in Edo, the adulteration of Japanese by Chinese) that antiquity was refabricated. Moreover, the site for discovering originary language (believed to retain connectedness with the Real) was discursive, and often literary: ancient songs were reported to be the best place to look for words that possessed that privileged, natural unity/communion of nature and the body. A similar quest for originary enunciation bound to the Real is rearticulated in yet other forms in Meiji, as I see it, with a minimum of two trajectories: the one followed by Kyōka and Yanagita, and in the naturalist, genbun'itchi (linguistic standardization) movement towards linguistic transparency. Whether the solution was nostalgic or "avant-garde," the perceived problem was the same: word had been severed from its connection to the real (world), and thus the Real was lost to immediacy. The Meiji solutions lie in the shifting objects of desire (a romanticized past [Kyōka]/a romanticized present moment

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[19]Ibid., 71.

[naturalists]). As in Edo, the Meiji problematic was focused along the axes of the perceived need to heal the split self (by relinking it with the Real), and to identify something "Japanese" against the encroaching other (in Meiji, the West, in Edo, China). There is crossover between the gesaku stylists' desire to subvert the prevalent (static) romanticization of past tradition, and the genbun'itchi proponents' project to construct a new literary language: both were concerned with "immediacy." Across the specificities of the varied solutions was an insistence that word, inextricable from enunciation, contains a power to access the Real. For Kyōka, Meiji naturalists, and Edo nativists, ideally, (in contradistinction to the postmodern Lacanian notion of this as an impossibility) word and the Real may embrace each other.

Kyōka's prose also differed from Edo gesaku in a manner akin to how the dangerous woman trope differed from traditional archetypes. Landscapes, poetic references, rhetorical devices, narrative, and other, varied conventions of previously discrete discursive genres are capriciously sampled and willfully set afloat as a tangled mix of inscriptions sundered from their various fixities. A cursory glance might suggest that this "generic seepage" is commensurate with eighteenth century gesaku polysemy. A closer analysis, however reveals that the affect, and (assumed) intention of Kyōka's generic mixtures and citations was deeply distanced from those of his Edo predecessors, whom Naoki Sakai has called "parodists." Sakai has written,

> The emergence of parodist literature in the eighteenth century ... [was] an effort to dislocate the junctures of the economy of generic discontinuity....
> ...[I]t was not the content of a work but rather its stylistic - or, more precisely, its graphic - arrangement that was considered to be the distinguishing mark according to which it

would be classified.[20]

By transposing a quote, or a slightly altered version of a
Buddhist, didactic, or historical authoritarian prior text, the
gesaku stylists "defamiliarized the space of literary conventions"
and simultaneously rendered it absurd, ridiculous, and bound to
the physical body, and thus to immediacy and the present
mundane, bawdy world. This defamiliarization is also, said
Sakai, familiarization, as the canon was quoted in order to laugh
at it.[21] Edo polysemy resembles Bahktin's "carnivalesque" in its
abundant vulgarities and "baseness"; it is not the polysemy that is
linked to Heian female discursive production, or Heian
"intertextuality." The polysemy of onnade, or feminized (putative)
"vernacular" writing was marked by elegance and refinement. Edo
gesaku polysemy, as Sakai has shown, was subversive to the
Heian polysemic tradition, while representing the most extreme
form of Japanese polysemy. Quite to the contrary, while Kyōka's
incorporation of references to, and citations from the classics
reiterates in form the generic seepage of Edo parodic narratives,
there is a distinct perspectival shift that dramatically redefines the
function: the incorporations and citations operate as a modern
nostalgic refabrication of the specific intertextuality of the early
medieval period. Kyōka's taste for thick, opaque prose was
undoubtedly stimulated by Edo traditions. Yet Kyōka's nostalgic,
rather than parodic incorporation of polysemic devices and
references to canonized texts represents a different displacement
of the classical than that of the Edo models, harkening back to
Heian style elegant intertextuality. Kyōka's phonocentric

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[20] Naoki Sakai, Voices of the Past: The Status of Language in Eighteenth-
Century Japanese Discourse (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press,
1991), 178; 179.

[21]Ibid., 181; 183.

polysemy asserts the authority of classical aesthetics, in a modern, generalized, and feminized defixity.

In conclusion, Kyōka's famous reverence for words, enveloped in a nostalgic desire for the Real, which lodged itself in a feminized-maternalized nativist poetics, signals another phallicized trajectory, rather than a rejection, of sociocultural and linguistic ideologies of his time. Kyōka's signifiers float between signifieds to reveal an erotic <u>danger</u> in the healing of the split between enunciation, visual representations, and the Real. For Kyōka both word and women threaten dissolution and hold seepage in their mysterious, dangerous depth.