THE INTERTEXTUAL NOVEL AND THE INTERRELATIONAL SELF:
KURAHASHI YUMIKO, A JAPANESE POSTMODERNIST

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores narrational, textual and thematic aspects of novels by Kurahashi Yumiko (1935- ), applying poststructuralist critical approaches developed by Judith Butler, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Michel Foucault, focusing upon the notion of the performativity in selfhood and textuality. My discussion begins with an overview of the context within which Kurahashi emerges as a writer, her debate with pro-Romantic or -realist Japanese critics regarding her main compositional methodology—pastiche—and the challenges to sexual norms made in her fictional practice. Kurahashi’s views on selfhood, narratives, text, and authorship, I show, parallel in many ways the concerns of poststructuralist critics.

The main body of my thesis consists of six chapters, each of which deals with either an individual novel, or two related novellas. Blue Journey (1961) is a second-person narrative written in a collage form, which demonstrates performative femininity. Divine Maiden (1965) presents the themes of incest and amnesia, inevitably questioning issues of self and other. The novel’s characters do not possess constative identity but rather demonstrate performative selfhood, and are thus not described as individuals but rather associated with others, constituting "indices." The self-reflexive, embedding, and dialogic narrative foregrounds the acts of writing and reading in which characters engages, and thus demonstrates the notion of narrative as a verbal act, while delineating paradoxical inversions of subjectivity between narrator and narratee, and narrator and narrated. The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q (1969), a third-person narrative with an intrusive and yet elusive
extradiegetic narrator, develops "indices" as the method of structuring the text, incessantly making and unmaking parallels and contrasts between subjects. The theme of selfhood is again questioned in the systems of cognitive, sexual, and digestive familiarization with others in the novel.

The fourth chapter of my thesis deals with two novellas, "Virginia" and "The Long Passage of Dreams" (1968) which frame subversions of the novel and the self with characters who subscribe to the established norms of language and society. Subversive sexual acts and paradoxes still exist, but only within the rigid framework of a logic which objectivizes them. Kurahashi’s "Japanization" of themes and methods begins with the latter novella, which refers to noh plays and uses their double-layered structure of dream and reality. This process becomes more apparent in Symposium (1985), which pastiches Divine Maiden through its theme of incest, its inversion of subject and object, and its embedded narrative, but also refers to the traditional Japanese models and employs the narrative strategies of monogatari. In so doing, the novel suggests the parallel between traditional Japanese poetics and poststructuralist criticism, particularly in terms of its stress upon the contingency of ‘truth’ and ‘selfhood’. Popoi (1987), the novel which is the topic of Chapter Six, refines the technique of pastiche, exploring a plurality of fragmentations of self and text.

Having examined the individual texts, I conclude that a parallel can be drawn between Kurahashi’s work and that of Western postmodern artists, while remaining aware of the precarious nature of such labelling due to the different cultural context.
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INTRODUCTION:

Denaturalising Nature, Dissolving the Self, Deconstructing the Novel

While Kurahashi Yumiko (1935— ) has attracted a number of readers in Japan and other countries, and has received various literary awards, only a few serious and substantial critical studies of her texts have been undertaken. Since 1960, she has published more than ten novels, dozens of short stories, five translations, and four volumes of critical essays. Her awards include the Meiji daigaku gakuchô shô [Meiji University President's Prize] in 1960, Joryû bungaku shô [Women’s Literature Prizey] in 1961, Tamura Toshiko shô [Tamura Toshiko Memorial Prize] in 1963, and Izumi Kyôka shô [Izumi Kyôka Memorial Prize] in 1987. Her fiction to 1971 has been collected in The Complete Works of Kurahashi Yumiko (1975-1976), and her work has been included in nine anthologies of contemporary Japanese literature marketed by major Japanese publishers. However, only one book of criticism concerning Kurahashi’s works has been published in Japan; in addition, two theses about Kurahashi have been produced in the United States, and two Japanese academic periodicals have devoted special issues to the author’s fiction.

In order to discover the reasons for such critical neglect in Japan, and also to provide some information regarding Kurahashi, who remains relatively unknown in North America, a preliminary overview of the context in which she has emerged as a fiction writer is needed.

Kurahashi was born the eldest daughter of a dentist and his wife in Kôchi, Shikoku, one of the four major islands in the Japanese archipelago, in 1935—on the same island and in the same year as Ôe Kenzaburô, one of the contemporary Japanese novelists best known
to Western audiences. Kurahashi’s family background seems to be analogous to a setting of many of her fictional works; in Kurai tabi [Blue Journey] (1961), Seishôjo [Divine Maiden] (1965) and "Nagai yumeji" [The Long Passage of Dreams] (1968), the heroines’ fathers are dentists. After failing university entrance examinations, Kurahashi spent a year in Kyoto, studying Japanese literature at Kyoto Women’s College and exploring the temples and gardens of the ancient capital. Her experiences during her stay in Kyoto resemble those of You in Blue Journey, who has lived in Kyoto, and later revisits the city.

Though Kurahashi wished to become a doctor, her application to medical school in the following year was unsuccessful. According to her father’s wish, she entered a dental college in Tokyo, and obtained a dental hygienist’s certificate. Despite her father’s wish for her to return to Kōchi as his assistant, she stayed in Tokyo, and was secretly admitted to the Department of French at Meiji University in 1956. Ignoring the student movements of the 1960s, she devoted herself to reading modern French and German literature: Jean Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, Franz Kafka, Arthur Rimbaud, Paul Valéry, Michel Blanchot. The fact that she wrote a graduation essay on Being and Nothingness by Sartre suggests her interest in French existentialist philosophy.

Unlike many Japanese writers, Kurahashi did not belong to any writers’ group before creating her first example of fiction, a short story "Zatsujin bokumetsu shûkan" [The Week for Extermination of Mongrels] in 1959. The story was awarded the second prize in the Meiji daigaku gakuchô shô [Meiji University President’s Prize] competition (No one was given the first prize that year). However, she was advised by the prize’s assessment committee not to publish the story because of its containing too much satire. In the
subsequent year, however, her story "Parutai" [Partei], concerning a female student who joins a communist-like party at her lover’s request, and remains scornfully distant from the fanatical dedication others show to the party’s doctrine, received the first prize in the President’s Prize competition, and was printed in the Meiji daigaku shimbun [Meiji University Newspaper]. Hirano Ken, an influential critic in Japan, and also a member of the assessment committee of the President’s Prize, critiqued "Partei," and compared it with the first work of Ōe Kenzaburō, whose talent Hirano had also ‘discovered,’ in a review in Mainichi shimbun, one of the major and nationally read newspapers in Japan. Hirano’s enthusiastic comments attracted journalistic attention to "Partei" and the short story was reprinted in Bungakkai, a major literary periodical. It was reprinted again in another popular magazine, Bungei shunjū, and made a candidate for Akutagawa shō [The Akutagawa Prize], the most prestigious award for young fiction writers in Japan. Though "Partei" did not win the competition, Kurahashi was again nominated for the prize for her short story "Natsu no owari" [The End of Summer] (1960) in the following year. "The End of Summer" did not win the competition either, but the exposure made Kurahashi’s name famous. She was asked to publish her stories in major literary magazines, and awarded the Joryū bungaku shō [Women’s Literature Prize] in 1961.

While enthusiastically supported by some critics and the mass media, Kurahashi’s earlier works were also vehemently criticized by other well-known literary critics who valorized Romantic and realistic views of literature. A sustained and animated debate about the value of her work continued in the bundan, or the literary circle of Japan. Examples of this are "Parutai’ ronsō" [Debate upon "Partei"] between Hirano Ken and Niwa Fumio, a
writer of autobiographical novels; and "Riarizumu hihan" [Criticism on Realism], a debate between Okuno Takeo, another famous Japanese literary critic who has been one of the most enthusiastic readers of Kurahashi, and Nakamura Mitsuo, a professor of French at Meiji University and also an influential critic regarding Kurahashi's two stories "Hebi" [Snake] (1960), an existentialist story in the style of Kafka and Abe Kōbō, and "Mikkoku" [Betrayal] (1960), written in the style of Jean Genet. There has been a lengthy debate between Kurahashi herself and Etō Jun, an influential literary critic, in which Ōe Kenzaburō has stood by Etō. This debate has developed into the so-called "Kurai tabi ronsō" [Dispute upon Blue Journey], regarding Kurahashi's novel, and has involved other critics such as Okuno, Shirai Kenzaburō, a translator and critic of European literature, and Shirai Kōji who has translated Sartre's La Nausée into Japanese.

These debates have been largely concerned with the propriety of Kurahashi's ideas regarding novel themes, the writer's role, and the methodologies involved in writing novels. Kurahashi's opponents contend that she employs idealistic or artificial words which lack correspondence to concrete objects in the real world, to inner reality and to her own life. Second, they contend that her fictional topics are amoral, apolitical, and lacking in seriousness. Finally, they suggest that Kurahashi is a plagiarist and has not developed her own independent fictional content or form. These objections illustrate the value systems of many modern Japanese critics: they stress mimetic representation (shajitsusei) which is demonstrated in autobiographical novels (shishōsetsu), morality (dōtokusei), and originality (dokusōsei). Given that Kurahashi's fiction is motivated by other ideas, it is thus considered weak, and unworthy of serious textual analysis.
Kurahashi has vigorously defended herself against these charges. In my opinion, her writing itself challenges the very criteria by which she is judged, rather than attempting, but failing to, fulfill them. Her views on fiction have also been expressed in a number of essays most of which are collected in four volumes. Kurahashi has published critical replies to her opponents, refuted condemnations in newspapers and periodicals, and added expository postscripts to her works when they were republished in *The Complete Works of Kurahashi Yumiko* (1975-1976).

As we may see from the above discussion, any summary of Kurahashi’s literary career inevitably results in an exploration of the intellectual and artistic debate surrounding her works. It is now perhaps time to look at this debate more closely, through an analysis of Kurahashi’s essays on fiction. One important caveat in this analysis is that most of Kurahashi’s critical essays seem to have been written in order to refute Japanese critics’ condemnations; she rarely comments upon her narrative strategies, for instance, to which little critical attention has been devoted, but more frequently comments upon views upon literature, her compositional methods, and her thematic concerns, which have been of interest to critics. Kurahashi’s silence upon the narrational aspects of her fiction should thus be considered a strategic one; as this thesis will show, the narrative methodologies of Kurahashis are, in fact, explicitly linked to thematic and compositional concerns.

Kurahashi’s view of thematics is in direct contradiction to that of her critics. She is opposed to Romantic poetics which appreciates the author’s self-projection into his/her works, and to 19th-century realism which values mimetic representations of ‘reality’ in the actual world. In an essay called "Shôsetsu no meiro to hiteisei" [The Labyrinth and
Negativity of Fiction] (1966), Kurahashi maintains that she does not wish to write novels to "report facts," including her own "experiences or life" (68). (Translations of Kurahashi's essays are all mine.) The fact that Kurahashi's works do not deal thematically with her own life, then, is not a failure of her project, but an expected consequence of her philosophy that words do not correspond to objects in the actual world.

In the same essay and elsewhere, Kurahashi declares that she does not use words as "tools for communication," but writes novels and stories with poetic words which are rather "an objective in themselves" ("The Negativity and Labyrinth of Fiction" 79). In other words, she believes in the autonomy of words in prose as well as in poetry. Thus, Nakamura Mitsuo's criticism that Kurahashi transgresses the discipline of prose, which is intended to explain things, and that she writes "poems of ideas" instead is irrelevant. Kurahashi finds "the distinction" between "words of <<poetry>>" and "words of <<prose>>" "problematic" (Ibid. 79). As Kurahashi repeatedly maintains, the content, or the "what to write" of the novel is not her primary concern, but is subject to the "style," or "how to write." In her view, the novel is "an art in which 'what to write' always depends on 'how to write,' or the 'style'" (Ibid. 76), just as poetry is such an art.

Some critics have condemned Kurahashi's works as 'fakes,' and criticized her for her lack of originality. They frown at her habit of explicitly naming, or drawing obvious parallels with, other texts, assuming that Kurahashi's work is too intellectually barren to warrant serious research. In response to such condemnation, Kurahashi has made frequent and extensive statements about her art of pastiche, as opposed to forgery. She maintains that copying precursors is "the royal road of novel writing" ("Kurai tabi no sakusha kara
She also claims, in a manner which is reminiscent of T.S. Eliot's statement, "Great poets steal," that "the respect [a writer pays to another writer] is shown only in the way [the precursor's ideas] are stolen": "the pride of a writer lies in cleverly stealing, the honor of a writer, in being stolen from" ("Miko to hîrô" [The Sybil and the Hero] (1965) 243).

In light of these considerations, I would suggest that the negative view of Kurahashi as a plagiarist needs to be radically reconsidered. Kurahashi is a parodist, and as such does not intend to develop her own 'original style' but concerns herself instead with the elaborate use of rhetoric, and the imaginative manipulation of established compositional forms.

Kurahashi compares the whole process of copying to "alchemy," emphasizing the complexity of this activity, unlike the simple acts of "pouring material into a mold" and "manufacturing on the spot" ("From the Author of Blue Journey to You"). The activity of copying is further explicated in an essay called "Watashi no shôsetsu sahô" [My Manner of Writing Novels] (1965):

I am a thin, pipe-shaped instrument which emits the sounds of words. As a composer and performer at once, I must control words completely. It is by this art that writing novels achieves the nature of a secret charm, so I absorb myself in training everyday. In short, I read poems and novels, just as an improvisational performer practices scores composed by others. Then suddenly the shape of a certain novel becomes visible, a melody audible. Here, I examine and plan the style the novel should have. (267)

This is a metaphor involving music; Kurahashi alludes to the art of painting in "From the Author of Blue Journey" to make the same point:
A painter does not draw an apple because s/he wants to eat it, but because s/he obtains a vision of the invisible world through the apple and is driven to creation. In addition, the royal road to this world is nothing but a series of styles discovered by preceding masters.

Such a method, comparable to "alchemy," "a secret charm," or "the royal road," should not be labelled pejoratively as "plagiarism." Indeed, Kurahashi calls it "pastiche [given in French by Kurahashi]" of "forerunners' 'styles'" in her essay, "Hiyō no kanashisa: Etō Jun san ni" [The Misery of Criticism: To Mr Etō Jun] (1961). Unlike 'plagiarism,' which presupposes and values 'originality,' "pastiche" indicates the conscious display of echoes of anterior texts in a particular text—that is, a demonstration of intertextuality.

To defend her art of pastiche, Kurahashi mentions many writers from European and East Asian traditions who also use the method. Thus, she writes of Lawrence Durrell: "Surely, as Durrell himself admits, his style consists of stolen objects from many writers; thus, his style is beautiful" ("Rorensu Dareru to watashi" [Lawrence Durrell and Me] (1964) 229). Similarly, she comments on Matsuo Bashō: "In The Narrow Road down to the North, (...) the reality of a travel document is unhesitatingly distorted for the sake of poetic reality; in short, The Narrow Road is not a mere travel account but a faint trace of Bashō's imagination inspired by others' styles" ("Hiraizumi de kanjiru 'eien' to 'haikyo'" ['Immortality' and 'Ruins' Perceived at Hiraizumi] (1963) 142). It is easy to compare Kurahashi with other writers of the same inclination, such as Fujiwara no Teika, who established the method of honkadori, or allusive variation in waka, Zeami, who wove poetic allusions into noh texts in medieval Japan, Mori Ōgai, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, all of whom used motifs from ancient literature in narratives with modern
settings. Pastiche is also a major feature of postmodernist art, and one may find many practitioners of the method in Europe and America as well as in East Asia.

Having examined Kurahashi's views on fiction and the pastiche methodology, I wish now to return to the thematic issues discussed in her essays. First, I will examine her important theory of "han-sekai" [Anti-World] which she wishes to construct in her novels. Next, I will explicate the analogies she draws between the "Anti-World" and the socially subordinate position of females, between the act of novel-writing and the act of secretion from female bodies, between the nothingness behind fiction and the void of the womb inside female bodies, and finally, between the performativity of fiction and the masquerade of femininity itself.

In "The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction," Kurahashi defines fiction as a form of the "Anti-World," "the world that is not this [actual] world," "the labyrinth of <imaginary space>" which is given by Kurahashi "an initial hypothesis" or "axiom, to use a term from mathematics." Characters in the Anti-World are "variables" rather than "human beings" and are thus "represented by signs such as K, L, S, M." The "Anti-World" is governed by "a logic of dreams" or "nightmares." "Leaps and twists which are inherent to dreams transform this world into a grotesque form" (77). Thus, the relationship between the "Anti-World" and the 'real' world is clarified. The former is not a representation of the latter, and yet it is a deformed version of the latter, and thus subject to it.
Kurahashi’s "Anti-World" is thus analogous to the female position in a patriarchal society. In "Watashi no ‘dai-san no sei’" [My ‘Third Sex’] (1960), she maintains, using mathematical terms again:

This world has the sign of sex. Just as we forget that the numbers we deal with in our daily life have a positive [plus] sign, so we forget the sexual sign, the male sign, which exists in this world. Women are shut in the world of the negative [minus] sign, or the Anti-world in the [actual] world, so to speak. In short, this [actual] world belongs to men. In it, women are regarded as nothing but those who have the other sex of female, as opposed to male. As Beauvoir points out, women belong to the category of <<the Other>>. (31)

Kurahashi does not try, however, to usurp the male power in the ‘real’ world. Toward the end of the same essay, she claims:

...but rather, the position of women, projecting out in to the reverse side of this world, provides them with a splendid viewpoint from which to objectivize the men’s world. (39)

Rather, she attempts to take advantage of the subordinate position females are given, and objectivize the order, norm, natural law, or "doxa" to borrow Roland Barthes’ terminology, which has been presupposed and taken for granted by a patriarchal world, and to suggest the fictional, suppositional nature of the ‘real’ world. This analogy between the novel as an "Anti-World," and the subordinate social position of women is a recurrent theme in Kurahashi’s work: the world of the novel is a metaphor for woman; woman is a metaphor for the novel.
Kurahashi draws another analogy between the act of novel writing and female secretion. In the following excerpt from an essay, "Yōjo de aru koto" [Being a Witch] (1965), she alludes to the anatomical observation that in a woman there is an empty space—the womb—while simultaneously cleverly fictionalizing this anatomy:

An old woman who has had a hysterectomy appears in Komachi hensō, the latest work of Ms. Enchi Fumiko. In fact, it seems to me this monstrous woman indicates the true nature of a woman who writes novels. Such a woman who writes novels does not have her womb by nature, so to speak, but instead, an empty darkness which secrets words. (252)

Further, in "Dokuyaku to shite no bungaku" [Literature as Poison] (1967), Kurahashi maintains that "it is not an ‘activity’ but a secretion for women to write" (90). The metaphor of secretion describes the nature of Kurahashi’s fiction. In contrast to stories and novels which present the actions of the characters, clarifying the "five Ws," or "when, where, who, what, why," her ideal fiction creates "a building in air" in which "at an unknown time, in a non-existent place, someone who is nobody, without any reason, tries to do something but eventually does not do anything" ("The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction" 68). In short, nothing happens in Kurahashi’s ideal fiction, just as in feminine life.

Kurahashi’s fiction does not impose any manifesto onto the ‘real’ world; it rather suggests the nothingness which it contains, just as women have a womb inside them, instead of a penis sticking out. Thus, her fictions are comparable to female physiology, as is expressed in this excerpt from "Being a Witch":

What on earth can modern novelists give their readers? Even if I offer too general an answer of "an imaginative world," the
passage to lead readers into this world is a "labyrinth" like bitterness itself, and what lies beyond it is not a brilliant "kingdom" but only "death" and "nothingness." ("The Labyrinth and Negativity of the Novel" 81)

Such nothingness within fiction relates not only to the anatomical presence of the womb but also to an acknowledgement of personal inner emptiness, made by Kurahashi in another essay "Aru hakaiteki na musou" [A Destructive Dream] (1963):

I am tired of [pretending to love somebody], when inside myself extends an empty darkness which is probably large enough to accommodate the galactic system. However, I do not intend to fill it up with love, religion, or marital life. (132)

Kurahashi is conscious of the emptiness of her 'self' as well as that of her fiction. It is thus no wonder that she does not write autobiographical novels, since she does not consider that she has any constative self to be expressed. Kurahashi maintains in "Nichiroku" [Diary] (1965) that she does "not have 'a real face' to be revealed by peeling off the skin" (327).

Such emptiness enables both fiction and the 'self' to be performative; they can perform any role they are assigned. Thus, Kurahashi's fiction becomes pastiche, her 'self' displaying a variety of attributes. In "From the Author of Blue Journey to You," Kurahashi maintains:

My novels are like an onion with one layer of pastiche after another. If you peel them infinitely, you will find nothing inside them.
This sarcastic reference to the 'un-original' nature of her fiction parallels her ideas of the female 'self,' a 'self' which is not constative but performative. These ideas are expressed in "My 'Third Sex':"

The women accept being women, and write as women, just as Genet accepted his status as a thief. Genet was petrified as a complete "other," or objet, and tried to succeed in reachieving his freedom both by making the choice "I am going to be a thief. I have decided to become the "I" which crimes have made me into" and by his creation of literature. (38)

Instead of rejecting the roles assigned by the 'real' world, and fighting for the subjective, and constitutive self which men have, Kurahashi decides to play the role of woman, and to create the "other" world of fiction.

To sum up, reality, selves with stable identities, natural law, truth and originality do not exist in Kurahashi’s view. Instead, the world consists of a series of perceived images, pre-existing attributes which are ascribed to subjects in a multi-layered manner, culturally established norms, and intertextualities. Since there is no ‘pure,’ ‘true,’ or stable reality, self, nature, truth, or origin, it is impossible to achieve the kind of representation praised by the critics above. Rather, the novel is fiction, and demonstrates the fictionality of all anthropocentric views of the world within discourse. Every verbal notion is culturally encoded, and thus evaluated within ideology. The issue in Kurahashi’s works is no longer a search for the authentic representation of truth, but a conscious manipulation of discursive perceptions.

Kurahashi’s views of the world and literature are visible not only in her manifestos regarding compositional methodology but also in her fictional practice. Her themes involve
the 'unrealistic' world which she calls "the Anti-World, 'unidentifiable' subjects who perform
diverse roles depending on their contexts, 'abnormal' relationships such as transgressions
of sexual norms, and an interest in 'unnatural' phenomena which cannot be accounted for
by modern Western science. Persons, places, and situations in Kurahashi's work are not
'unique' but reminiscent of other things and selves—in other words, they are not them'selves'
but rather traces of others.

Kurahashi explores transgressions of norms most extensively in her writing regarding
sexual relationships which involve questions of medical and juridical legitimacy. She
presents subversions of the sexual norm considered to be 'natural' and 'legitimate' in the
modern West and Japan: that two living human beings should have a heterosexual,
monogamous and exogamous sexual relationship. Kurahashi challenges the norm of binary
divisions of gender by the motif of masturbation, demarcation between life and death by
necrophilia, anthropocentricity by the theme of bestiality, heterosexuality by homo- and bi-
sexuality, exogamy by incest, and monogamy by polyandry.

The motif of masturbation recurs in Kurahashi's works such as Blue Journey (1961),
questioning the demarcation between the self and other which is a presupposition of
'natural' sexual relationships. In the act of masturbation, the self and other are merely roles
to be performed by the same subject. Seen from the opposite perspective, masturbation
dissolves the substantial identity of the self, by making him/her play a divided role. Thus,
masturbation demonstrates the plurality and performativity of the subject.

Sexual intercourse is not restricted to living creatures in Kurahashi's world. In Yume
no kayoiji [The Passage of Dreams] (1990), a collection of short stories most of which
feature the same heroine, Keiko, Kurahashi explores the motif of physical intercourse enjoyed by living human beings and spirits of the dead, a motif with which she has experimented in many short stories such as "Yûrei yashiki" [The Mansion of Ghosts] (1986). Keiko, as well as other women in the collection, is capable of seeing and having intercourse with people who come from Hades to this world through the passage of dreams. The dead sexual partners of Keiko include historical Japanese poets such as Fujiwara no Teika, Saigyô, Nishiwaki Junzaburô, whom Kurahashi admires for their intertextual poetics and practices.

In Kurahashi’s novel Popoi (1987), a decapitated man’s head is kept alive by futuristic artificial life support technology, and, within his own consciousness, he falls in love with the female narrator, Mai. His brain even ‘ejaculates’ when he see Mai’s naked body. The motif of beheading appears in Kurahashi’s earlier short story, "Rinne" [Reincarnation] (1962), in which the female narrator, who is simultaneously the illegitimate daughter and mistress of Stalin, is beheaded, and her brain inserted into a boy’s head. Her consciousness still longs for her male lover in her former life, whom s/he can see constantly. Such examples suggest the arbitrariness of the medical distinction between life and death.

Another way of subverting sexual norms in Kurahashi’s works is robotic sex. In Kurahashi’s science fiction story "Gôsei bijo" [Robotic Beauties] (1961), the longtime husband of the heroine Michiko turns out to be a robot which is operated by electricity. At the beginning of the story, Michiko buys a "robotic beauty" as a housemaid, following the fashion of the day, and names ‘her’ Eriko, believing that ‘she’ is not human. The increasing intimacy between her husband and Eriko makes Michiko jealous to a point at which she ‘kills’ Eriko, only to find that the "robotic beauty" is, in fact, a human being sold
at the department store. On the other hand, the husband, who is shocked by Eriko's death, and commits 'suicide' by becoming overcharged with electricity, is proved to be a robot. In the disguise of a nonsensical story, "Robotic Beauties" suggests uncertainty regarding the definition of 'humanity'.

If the border between life and death can be transgressed, so can the distinction between human and inhuman. Thus, the theme of bestiality occurs in "Yōjo no yōni" [Like a Witch] (1964), which is a parody of "Mitsu no aware" [The Heartrending Fate of Honey] by Muroo Saisei. In Muroo's novella, a male writer has an intimate relationship with a female goldfish, while in Kurahashi's, a female novelist caresses her male dog into ecstasy. Bestiality is more extensively explored as the main theme in "Koibito dōshi" [Two Couples of Lovers] (1963) which is narrated by a female black cat, Mika. Mika's keeper, K (a man), is engaged to L (a woman) who keeps a male white cat, Yanni. Although Mika and Yanni are interested in each other, both of them are also involved with their keepers. Yanni is overcome with joy when L squeezes him between her breasts. Mika has oral sex with K and makes him ejaculate by fellatio. One might wonder, as Kurahashi does in her "Notes on My Works," whether the eponymous relationships in "Two Couples of Lovers" are, in fact, those of the human and animal couples, or whether they are not the two relationships between K and Mika and L and Yanni. It is clear that in this novella Kurahashi blurs the boundary between human and nonhuman.

The norm of heterosexuality is subverted by the homosexual couple of P and Q in "Mikkoku" [Betrayal] (1960), and the lesbian inclinations in the relationship between a well-known, aging novelist L and a young, rising writer M in "Warui natsu" [Bad Summer] (1966)
the setting of which is based upon Thomas Mann’s "Death in Venice." Other elements of homosexuality in Kurahashi’s work centre around the jazz café called "The Monk" in Seishôjo [Divine Maiden] (1965) which male homosexual and lesbian couples frequent, and the owner of which, Miki, has a lesbian relationship with M. The bisexual widow in her 40s, Keiko, in Kôkan [Pleasure Exchange] (1989), sleeps with Machiko, her late husband’s mistress, while having an affair with male Prime Minister Irie; another bisexual woman, Yukiko, in Shunposhion [Symposium] (1984), is separated from her husband, and makes advances to both the man (Akira) and woman (Satoko) of a pair of heterosexual lovers.

The most recurrent motif in Kurahashi’s works—incest—challenges the legitimacy of exogamy. The incestuous siblings L and K in "Sasori tachi" [Scorpions] (1963), "Himawari no ie" [A House of Sunflowers] (1968), and "Kamigami ga ita koro no hanashi" [A Tale from the Age When Gods Existed] (1971) commit themselves to the murder of their mother. The plots of these stories are drawn from the well-known story of Electra and Orestes who engage in incest, and kill their mother Clytemnestra as a punishment for her infidelity to her husband Agamemnon. The theme of sibling incest appears in Yume no ukihashi [The Floating Bridge of Dreams] (1970), in which the allegedly half-siblings Keiko and Kôichi decide not to marry each other due to their parents’ objection, and rather try to consummate their relationship by swapping sexual partners after marrying others. Though their incestuous relationship remains unconsummated in the novel, it is consummated in the sequel, Shiro no naka no shiro [The Castle within the Castle] (1980). The issue of incest is most radically foregrounded in Divine Maiden, which presents two incestuous couples—the heroine Miki and her father Papa, and the narrator K and his elder sister L. The novel explores their ‘anti-
natural' incest which is contrasted to the physical conjunction between close relatives which
takes place 'naturally' due to their physical closeness and affinity. The main point of
Kurahashi's presentation of incest is, however, to examine the question of self and other.
Incest, to K, is a form of self-reflexivity in which one loves one's second self, and thus
undermines the foundations of an exogamy which presupposes the 'otherness' or
extraneousness of a companion.

The juridical legitimacy of monogamy is transgressed against by love triangles,
partner swapping, nymphomaniac, polygamy and polyandry. These, unlike some of the
relationships named above, do not involve emotional turbulence, or jealousy. The sisters
in "Natsu no owari" [The End of Summer] (1960) share a male lover, K, without conflict, and
conspire to murder him. The Floating Bridge of Dreams presents the long-term swapping
of sexual partners between two married couples, Keisuke and Fumiko, and Yūji and
Mitsuko. Fumiko has eloped with Yūji right after her wedding with Keisuke, and has been
taken back by Keisuke. Keiko, the legal daughter of Keisuke and Fumiko, and supposedly
the biological daughter of Yūji, starts another round of swapping when she and her lover,
Kōichi, Yūji's son, marry others. Virginia in "Virginia" is defined as a typical
"nymphomaniac," who sleeps with most of her male classmates at the university. The male
narrator of Divine Maiden, K, also engages in random love affairs, in one of which he has
sex with a "nymphomaniac." P, the male protagonist of The Round Trip to Amanon, has
polygamous relationships as the only male who is allowed to have freedom in the country
Amanon. In Popoi, Kei, the female narrator's Mai's cousin and long-term lover, supposedly
has affairs with innumerable women and is thus compared to the Shining Prince in The Tale
Besides having a relationship with him, Mai also has many other male sexual partners, despite her engagement to a man called Mr. Saeki. Blue Journey presents a similar reciprocal polyandry in that the heroine, You, and her fiancé, He, make a contract in which both of them are forbidden to have sex with each other and yet are entitled to sleep with any other man or woman. Thus, Kurahashi's fiction subverts the discipline of monogamy.

Such subversive sexual acts do not merely break taboos and norms, but also challenge stable, constative and substantial notions of selfhood; the self can be defined only in its relationship to others, and thus 'abnormal' relations presuppose 'abnormal' selves. To borrow the words of the narrator of "Vâzinia" [Virginia] (1969), echoing a statement in André Breton's Nadja, "Who one is depends upon who one is related to." The identity of self is thus by definition relational in Kurahashi's works, not constative.

Selfhood is identified through the binary oppositions implied in the sexual relationships I have examined: man or woman, human or nonhuman (flora, fauna), alive or dead, natural or artificial. Kurahashi's subversive selves, however, often do not fall on either side of the oppositions; rather they trespass the borderlines between opposing categories. The three recurrent motifs of hermaphrodites, surgery, and metamorphoses are the most evident examples of Kurahashi's blurring of the dichotomies.

"Uchôjin" [Extra-territorial Being] (1964) contains the most radical sexual transgressions of the norm, through its themes of bisexuality and incest. Bisexuality is embodied in the figure of a hermaphrodite extra-territorial being whose vagina makes it possible for the male adolescent narrator, K, to have sex with him/her, and with whose penis, K observes, K's elder sister L enjoys sexual intercourse. One night, K and L even
have sex with the extra-territorial being simultaneously, sandwiching him/her between them. On another occasion, K performs both homosexual and heterosexual sexual acts in turn with the extra-territorial being, being troubled by his/her penis when he treats him/her as a woman. K here uses him/her as a substitute for L, with whom he wishes to have an incestuous affair. L is married to a practical man, S, through an arranged marriage, and comes back to K on the very night of the wedding. K anticipates his wish for incest will now come true, but L tells him that they should go to another world inside the extra-territorial being so as to consummate their relationship. The story ends with K watching L throw herself into the vast nothingness spread inside the hermaphrodite, and fall headlong like a comet into the universe.

The hermaphrodite in "Extra-territorial Being" is super 'natural' in that s/he comes from nowhere on earth. In "Ningyo no namida" [Tears of a Mermaid] (1982), a pastiche of Hans Christian Andersen's "Little Mermaid," an androgynous being is manufactured: toward the end of the parody, the sea witch, at the mermaid's request, cuts both the mermaid and the prince who loves her in half, and grafts the mermaid's lower body onto the prince's upper body. The prince remains single all his life, petting (masturbating?) his female, grafted lower body. This seemingly absurd story presents an 'artificial' hermaphrodite, and thus questions the unitary and consistent nature of selfhood.

*Sumiyakisuto Kyō no bōken* [The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q] (1969) presents the motif of surgery, which recurs in many other stories, such as "Reincarnation" and Popoi. Doktor, whom the protagonist Sumiyakist Q encounters, operates upon each instructor at the reformatory in which he works, even when there is no medical necessity. The most
popular of his operations is castration which, again, is an attempt to cross the conventional border of gender. One of the instructors, Bukka, who has already been subject to plastic surgery, indulges in a nightmarish desire to have all his limbs amputated, himself emasculated, and all his memories erased. P, the polygamous hero of *The Round Trip to Amanon* who uses his sexual experience and medical knowledge to initiate virgins in Amanon, is eventually castrated by his favourite girl, Himeko, and sympathizes with eunuchs in the female-governed country. Such surgery attempts to ‘denaturize’ ‘nature,’ and by so doing, question the distinction between ‘nature’ (God-made) and ‘art’ (man-made), the solid subject-object relationship between the Creator and his creatures, and the authority of the Creator-God. Kurahashi claims consistently that man made God, not the other way round, and thus challenges Judeo-Christian monotheism.

The third motif, of metamorphosis, suggests pre-Christian (Greco-Roman) and non-Christian (Chinese and Japanese) animism. The transformation of human beings into plants often takes place in Kurahashi’s fiction, with "Aporon no kubi" [The Head of Apollo] (1986) as its most prominent example. In this short story, the female narrator discovers the severed head of a beautiful boy, and grows it hydroponically, succeeding in making it bloom and bear fruits. The text refers to Giuseppe Arcimboldo’s four 17th century panel paintings, *The Seasons*, in which a human head is drawn with a bunch of flowers in bloom, fruits, and so forth, showing the seasonal changes of plants. The transformation of human beings into animals occurs in "Kemono no yume" [Dreams of Beasts] (1986), whose narrator-protagonist, while dreaming, keeps discovering the people around him to be animals; eventually his dreams are proved to be ‘reality’ and he finds himself to be a beast. Such super‘natural’
phenomena cannot be accounted for by modern Western science, but were considered quite 'natural' in premodern Europe as well as in Asia.

It may by now be becoming apparent that Kurahashi's concerns are similar to those of poststructuralist literary theory. Indeed, Kurahashi's novels unite two presently popular fields of critical inquiry, and may be illuminated by reference to poststructuralist critical texts. In her exploration of femininity as performance, as a masquerade, Kurahashi's work seems similar to recent developments in gender studies, exemplified by Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*. In her celebration of the death of the author, her insistence upon the performative nature of textuality and her dethroning of the logos, Kurahashi is similar to theorists such as the later Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Michel Foucault. These two fields are linked in Kurahashi's identification of performative femininity with performative writing: the masquerade of gender is just as important as the masquerade of writing.

The notion of performativity, which is vigorously displayed in Kurahashi's fiction, has been examined in the three fields of linguistics, feminist criticism, and narrative studies. Performativity as a linguistic notion is explored by J.L. Austin's Speech Act Theory. Constativity, the antonym of performativity, pertains to utterances used "to state that something is or is not the case," whereas performativity denotes utterances that "perform an act by means of language" (Prince 70). In contrast to the Saussurean linguistic model, which presupposes the stability of a signifying system and the precedence of the addressor over the message itself, Speech Act Theory gives precedence to the act of speech. The agent and content of the message are merely two of many variables in the act's context, but are subordinate to the speech act itself. The concept of performativity, then, destabilises
concrete notions of agency or content. Austin’s concept of performativity seems close to Kurahashi’s own perception of language, agency and content. The heroine of Kurahashi’s "Kekkon" [Marriage] (1965), L, argues with her husband who is eager to discover the ‘real’ L: "Do you think that I, apart from my words, different from my words, exist somewhere, just like an object itself?" (55). Agency or content does not precede expressions; rather, expressions constitute the fictional artefact of the agent and content.

In recent theoretical inquiry into sexuality the notion of performativity has been used by a feminist theorist, Judith Butler, to indicate the theatrical nature of gender itself. Unlike many earlier feminist analyses, which make a distinction between biological sex and culturally-encoded gender, Butler feels that all aspects of sexuality bear the mark of gender:

[Gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed. The challenge for rethinking gender categories outside of the metaphysics of substance will have to consider the relevance of Nietzsche’s claim in On the Genealogy of Morals that “there is no ‘being’ behind doing, effecting, becoming; ‘the doer’ is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything.” In an application that Nietzsche himself would not have anticipated or condoned, we might state as a corollary: There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results. (Butler 25)

Butler here draws on Austin’s tenet that there is no preexisting agent prior to expression.

The negation of the preexisting, "abiding substance" (Butler 24) of gender identity echoes the interpretation of femininity made by You in Blue Journey. After menarche, which she interprets as "a castration" executed by the world, You makes the decision to
"perform the role of a woman" now that nature has declared her to be a woman (Blue Journey 116, 122). Thus she tries to 'denaturalize' an anatomically constructed feminine identity through performance. Getting to know He, who, like her, indulges in performativity, You disclosed that she is "not a woman, merely pretending to be one." In He's words, You "happens to be performing the role of a woman, but is or is not a woman from moment to moment" (Ibid. 132-133). You transcends the substantial, 'naturalized' gender identity which is culturally ascribed to the anatomical female, and constitutes a variety of identities by specific expressions upon specific occasions. Thus You confuses convention-bound people with her unidentifiability. In Butler's terms, which, in their original context, describe drag performance, You "plays upon the distinction between the anatomy of the performer and the gender that is being performed" (Butler 137). In other words, there is no "gender core" which exists prediscursively, sustainedly, substantially. Thus, Kurahashi's subjects in her fiction, especially in Divine Maiden—Writer, Miki, L, Writer's lost lover He—embody internal nothingness. Subjects are 'identified' only as absences. Writer smiles in a variety of ways without inner necessity, suggesting that there is no her'self' apart from temporary, contingent expressions such as smiles.

The notion of performativity in linguistics is applied to narrative studies by Barbara Herrnstein Smith in her essay, "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories" (1980). She intends to propose a new approach to narratives based upon Speech Act Theory, as opposed to structuralist narratology, exemplified by Gérard Genette and Seymour Chatman, which draws its model from Saussurean linguistics. Smith defines the Saussurean view of language, which has been the major model of language in Western intellectual history, as "a
conception of discourse as consisting of sets of discrete signs which, in some way, correspond to (depict, encode, denote, refer to, and so forth) sets of discrete and specific ideas, objects, or events. In contrast to the traditional perception of language, she states, that "[a]n alternative conception of language views utterances" as verbal responses—that is, as acts which, like any acts, are performed in response to various sets of conditions. Then, she contrasts two views of narratives based respectively upon the two linguistic models:

In accord with this alternative view of language, individual narratives would be described not as sets of surface-discourse-signifiers that represent (actualize, manifest, map, or express) sets of underlying-story-signifieds but as the verbal acts of particular narrators performed in response to—and thus shaped and constrained by—sets of multiple interacting conditions. For any narrative, these conditions would consist of (1) such circumstantial variables as the particular context and material setting (cultural and social, as well as strictly "physical") in which the tale is told, the particular listeners or readers addressed, and the nature of the narrator's relationship to them, and (2) such psychological variables as the narrator's motives for telling the tale and all the particular interests, desires, expectations, memories, knowledge, and prior experiences (including his knowledge of various events, of course, but also of other narratives and of various conventions and traditions of storytelling) that elicited his telling it on that occasion, to that audience, and that shaped the particular way he told it. (Smith 225-226)

Smith's view of narratives is useful in noting the features of Kurahashi's narratives. Hers are not monologic narratives with an omniscient narrator who assumes the authority to represent truth, reality, and nature. Rather, Kurahashi contextualizes narrative authority and responsibility, by multiplying narrators, incorporating addressees of the narrative into the narrative, and making the narrative conscious of itself.
However, in using Smith's model I still wish to make use of terminology developed by structuralist narratologists such as Tzvetan Todorov and Gérard Genette. Narratology provides a precise way of discussing the complex narrational strategies that are a marked feature of Kurahashi's work. My use of these terms, however, should not be taken as a wholesale endorsement of all elements of the narratological project. Rather, I intend to use these terms to show how Kurahashi problematizes the notion of narrative structure as a hypothetical verbal artefact. By embedding a narrative within another narrative, she diffuses the power of narration. By incorporating the reader into the text, she demonstrates that what is presented as the text is something that is not only written but also already read—not mere representation but rather the perception of perception. The dissonance between what is called "story time" and "discourse time" in narratology denaturalizes the naturalized linear temporality, as well as the very presupposition of complete correspondence between the world and language.

The theme of the performative self and the notion of performative narrative are inseparable from Kurahashi's two major compositional methodologies: indices and pastiche. By discussing emphatically the two methods, my critical approach may become closer to that of Roland Barthes' in S/Z. Barthes here develops structuralist terminology to break down Balzac's "Sarrasine" into discrete units, to examine its construction. His intention in doing so, however, is post-structuralist in that he denies the existence of innate, unchanging structures within texts:

[W]e must renounce structuring this text in large masses, as was done by classical rhetoric and by secondary-school explication: no construction of the text: everything signifies ceaselessly and
several times, but without being delegated to a great final ensemble, to an ultimate structure. (12)

What he appreciates instead of structure is "plurality" or "multivalence" of the text. While positing the text which is "unimpoverished by any constraint of representation" as the ideal plural text, "a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds" (5), Barthes proposes to apply "connotation" as a tool to "modestly plural" texts. Connotation is defined as "a feature which has the power to relate itself to anterior, ulterior, or exterior mentions, to other sites of the text (or of another text)" (8). Therefore, connotation within the particular text may be what Barthes calls "indices" in "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives" (197), in which "a narrative unit [is] linked to other units in the same sequence or action in terms other than chronological or causal (say, thematic)" (Prince 43).

Indices, or metaphorical associations, rather than descriptions, are employed to present subjects in Kurahashi's fiction. "What is the point of describing Miki's face, body, and clothes?" the narrator of Divine Maiden comments, negating the significance of description, which presupposes the existence of substance to be described. Subjects are rather perceived to be similar to other subjects within and outside the text, whether such similarities are explicitly mentioned by subjects in the text, or implicitly constituted as such by the reader. Being merely traces of others, subjects are not independent, unique selves but are subject to others.

Kurahashi's network of word associations is not restricted to any particular work, but instead extends beyond it. Her texts are full of references and allusions to other texts, and words thus function associatively within the scope of a larger discourse. We may recall
Kristeva's comments that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations," and that "writing" is invariably "a reading of the anterior literary corpus," applying Mikhail Bakhtin ("Word, Dialogue, and Novel" 66,69). Foucault's "What is an Author?" similarly stresses the precedence of act over agent, as Austin, Butler and Smith do in a different context. Claiming that "the author is not an indefinite source of significations which fill a work; the author does not precede the works" (159), Foucault maintains:

Referring only to itself, but without being restricted to the confines of its interiority, writing is identified with its own unfolded exteriority. This means that it is an interplay of signs arranged less according to its signified content than according to the very nature of the signifier. Writing unfolds like a game [jeu] that invariably goes beyond its own rules and transgresses its limits. (142)

Kristeva and Foucault seem to propose that intertextuality is universally found in any text. Kurahashi's texts demonstrate intertextuality by giving indications of and references to other texts. They merely perform the attributes of other texts. Her texts are thus not constative but performative, claiming to be fictions of fictions, not representations of truth.

Thus, Kurahashi's fiction denaturalizes nature, dissolves the self, and deconstructs the novel, thematically and methodologically. Traditional notions of nature, self, and the novel are thus subverted. Hence, one might call Kurahashi Yumiko a Japanese postmodernist, although I wish to save an extended discussion of the postmodern aspects of her fiction until the conclusion.

In the following six chapters, I wish to discuss five novels and two novellas by Kurahashi which demonstrate interaction among such thematic, textual, narrational issues
most conspicuously. The divisions of analysis into thematic, textual, and narrational sections should not be taken as an acknowledgement of the separability of these interpenetrating categories; it is rather a strategic analytic choice.

In Chapter 1, I will discuss Kurai tabi [Blue Journey] (1961), the first novel Kurahashi published. The heroine, You, seeks for her lost lover, He, and at the end of this journey, she makes up her mind to write a novel about the novel He attempts in vain to write. First I will review the dispute regarding whether the work is a forgery or a pastiche, then discuss its narrational, textual, thematic characteristics. The second-person narrative, the fact that the novel's textual integrity is generated not by causal, temporal contiguity but by metaphorical associations, its collage form and thematic concerns regarding the performative self, as well as its featuring a female novelist and a novel yet to be written, all suggest that it is an 'anti-novel'.

Seishôjo [Divine Maiden] (1965), which I will discuss in the second chapter, incorporates Blue Journey and other preceding works by Kurahashi by explicitly mentioning their names as the fictional works of one of the novel's characters. The story involves two incestuous couples, the primary narrator "I" and his sister L, the secondary narrator Miki and her father Papa. "I" is requested to read Miki's notebooks to help her recover from the amnesia from which she is suffering. "I" at first intends to understand and catch Miki, but toward the end of the novel he finds that he has been caught by Miki.

The themes of incest and amnesia question the notion of a stable, sustained, substantive self. The theme of nothingness inside female bodies recurs and is associated with performativity. The metaphorical associations, or "indices," which are experimented
with in *Blue Journey*, are used widely in *Divine Maiden*. Characters are explicitly and implicitly associated by common personal traits, and thus suggest their nature as traces of others, rather than unique individuals. Miki’s narrative is embedded within the primary narrative of "I," and the act of reading undertaken by "I" is incorporated within his act of writing. They also discuss their acts of writing and reading. Both Miki and "I" are biased by their specific intentions, limitations of knowledge, backgrounds, and other contextual factors, and are thus not neutral narrator/narratee. *Divine Maiden* thus destabilizes the notions of the narrative as a structure which hides the author’s message to be decoded, and suggests that the narrative is a verbal act of a narrator who is bound within a specific context.

Gradually, "I" finds that he has been, in fact, read and written about rather than reading and writing about Miki, as he has believed. Similarly, metafictional paradoxes occur in terms of the woman called Writer, who shows some similarities to Kurahashi herself. "I," the object of Kurahashi’s creation, thus writes about Kurahashi’s double. Moreover, "I" discovers that Writer, an object of his observation and writing, is writing a novel apparently about him. Thus *Divine Maiden* demonstrates its metafictional characteristics by presenting many paradoxes in an intricate way. By so doing, the novel challenges the notion of the author’s position of authority as the origin of the novel, and of an omniscient narrator’s position of authority as the origin of the narrative.

All the novels and novellas to be discussed in the later chapters are, in a variety of ways, pastiches of *Divine Maiden*. *Sumiyakisuto Kyū no bōken* [*The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q*] (1969), the topic of Chapter 3, questions the narrator as the authority and
origin of the narration, using a third-person narrative with an intrusive and unreliable narrator. Metafictional characteristics are also found in the novel. Bukka, a literary man, writes about characters in the novel, and one of his fictional productions appears to be Kurahashi’s novel. Bukka’s unimportant position in society and his disappearance in the middle of the story subverts the narrator’s precedence over the narrative. The methodology of "indices" is extensively employed in the novel, too, demonstrating the different epistemological stances characters represent. Moreover, the associations between cognitive, sexual, and digestive relationships of the ‘self’ with others, which appears in Divine Maiden, is vividly foregrounded, challenging anatomical divisions of bodily organs. Thus The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q denaturizes those things that have been considered natural constituents of narrative, self, and anatomy.

In Chapter 4 I will discuss two novellas, "Vâzinia" [Virginia] and "Nagal yumeji" [The Long Passage of Dreams] (1968), which ‘bracket’ the characteristics of the ‘anti-novel,’ which have been experimented with in the three previous narratives, by introducing logocentric characters to observe them. Although the narrators ("I" in the former, and omniscient in the latter) still sympathize with those who subvert sexual norms, those who subscribe to these norms are now described with respect. The themes of father-daughter incest and writer-reader paradox recur in "The Long Passage of Dreams." In terms of compositional methodology, "The Long Passage of Dreams" is a pastiche, mentioning its ‘sources’ explicitly. The novella extensively uses verbal expressions and structure from noh plays, which are also pastiches of preceding poetic texts, and thus multiplies its qualities as a pastiche.
Shunposhion [Symposium] (1985), to be discussed in Chapter 5, also employs the indigenous Japanese poetic techniques of monogatari and waka. In terms of its narration, it is a third-person narrative, but the narrator is not omniscient but bound within the context of characters' lives, just like the narrators in monogatari. Embedded narrative occurs here, but not much in association with modern European novelists as with the salon of the court in the Heian era. In terms of pastiche, the novel explicitly refers to waka and Chinese poems which engage in intertextual play. Thus Symposium becomes a multi-layered pastiche. The themes of incest and the paradoxical pursuit of love and knowledge recur in the novel, but this time, they are explicitly associated with similar themes in classical Japanese texts, such as The Tale of Genji. I would conjecture that even the method of indices, employed as extensively as in Divine Maiden, may parallel the self-dissolving presentation of characters in classical Japanese narratives. Thus, while sharing narrational, textual, and thematic characteristics with Divine Maiden, Symposium exhibits 'Japanese' themes and poetics.

Kurahashi's art of pastiche reaches its highest expression in Popoi (1987), the topic of Chapter 6. Concerning a severed head which is kept alive by artificial life support, the novel radically questions notions of self, life, and the integrity of the individual, just as Divine Maiden explores such issues by presenting an amnesiac girl Miki. Further, the novel's multiplication of the pastiche's complexity demonstrates that any text is, in fact, intertextual. Notions of the self as having substantive identity and the text as having integrity as an individual artefact are thus subverted in Popoi.

Thus, Kurahashi's novels subvert norms of self, compositional methodologies and narrative strategies which are taken for granted in nineteenth-century and much twentieth-
century fiction. The fact that her novels have been the objects of so much criticism in Japan shows that these concepts of presence, agency and stable selfhood are still very much alive, and provide an important component of twentieth century doxological thought in Japan. Much high modernist art, while fragmenting tradition, nevertheless retains a reverence for the individual creative subject. My thesis is that Kurahashi’s work is truly post-modern in its ‘de-doxifying’ nature, in the manner in which it attempts to undo the commonsensical notions which underpin Western and twentieth century Japanese notions of presence.
CHAPTER 1: The Birth of a Female Novelist: Blue Journey

Kurai tabi [Blue Journey] (1961) is the first novel Kurahashi, who had exclusively written short stories, attempted to write. The novel is unusual in that it was first published as a complete work; its author did not follow the modern Japanese convention of first publishing the novel as a serial in a magazine.¹ She continued this principle of publishing completed novels until 1970, when she published Yume no ukihashi [The Floating Bridge of Dreams] chapter by chapter in a periodical.² Kurahashi’s attention to publication details suggests her keen concern with the structural perfection of her novels, in sharp contrast to many Japanese prose writers, who tend to end their writings without any clear denouement. Indeed, Kurahashi is highly conscious of the structural framework of her novels, and, apparently, to judge from her comments on the work, has tried to provide them with a definite, although unconventional, structure.

Blue Journey challenges, rather than asserts, rigid conceptions of structure based upon a plot necessitated by causality, although it appears to be aware of, and to respond, to this

¹For details of this convention, see, for example, Makoto Ueda, Owari no bigaku (Tokyo: Meiji shoin, 1990) 9-10.

²In her "Atogaki" [Postscript] added to the second edition of Blue Journey, Kurahashi maintains:

Under the circumstances in Japanese literary circles, it is rather unusual that the fiction is lengthy, and thus it warrants special attention that it [the lengthy fiction] is published as a monograph without having been first published in a periodical for a number of months. (1969; Tokyo: Shinchô bunko, 1971: 240)
model. The text of *Blue Journey*, a collage of fragments arranged without a conventional chronology, is integrated by loose metaphorical associations rather than causality. In this regard, the novel can be classified as an anti-novel. Before we move to any discussion of the form and structure of *Blue Journey*, however, we must examine its critical reception in Japan. In examining the critical responses to Kurahashi’s anti-novel, I wish to emphasize that while I do not feel that authorial intention is the correct or ultimate authority for interpretation of the text, I do, in fact, agree with Kurahashi’s reading of *Blue Journey* most of the time.

In her postscript to her first edition of *Blue Journey*, which is called "Sakusha kara anata ni" [From the Author to You], Kurahashi confesses that she "uses many things which involve" herself in this novel. Indeed, if we compare the story with an essay called "Ai to kekkon ni kansuru muttsu no tegami" [Six Letters concerning Love and Marriage] (1962), which consists of six letters Kurahashi has written to her former boyfriends, we find many analogies between the story of You and He in *Blue Journey*, and that of Kurahashi Yumiko and her lover called "K." Like You, Kurahashi lived in Kyoto for a year to study at Kyoto Women’s College, tried not to accept her lover’s love, suddenly disappeared from his

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3The "anti-novel" is "a work which is deliberately constructed in a negative fashion, relying for its effects on deleting traditional elements, on violating traditional norms, and on playing against the expectations established in the reader by the novelistic methods and conventions of the past" ("Novel," *A Glossary of Literary Terms* 122).

4See Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy."

5*Kurai tabi*, 1961; Tokyo: Shinchô bunko, 1971. All the following page references are based on this edition. All the translations are mine.
reach, returned to Kyoto and was met by him at Kyoto Station, and then spent the first night together with him. She continued going out with him for five years and then parted with him, realizing their relationship had deteriorated, because they had prohibited themselves from having sexual intercourse. In short, there is an autobiographical aspect to this novel.

However, in "From the Author to You", Kurahashi says "it [Blue Journey] is not a so-called autobiographical novel," and this is, "not only because deformation is added to" her "experiences," but also because "I' is replaced by 'You’" (238). Any supposedly autobiographical novel will be narrated by an ‘I,’ though, of course, we cannot identify the narrator-protagonist ‘I’ with the author. The use of ‘You’ as protagonist of a novel is rare: Blue Journey is one of the rare cases in which the second-person is applied to the protagonist, who is usually referred to as "I" or "s/he" in conventional novels. It is La Modification (1957) written by a French experimental writer, Michel Butor, which exemplifies, if it does not inaugurate, the technique of, second-person narrative.6

The conspicuous resemblance to Butor’s novel sparked a sustained debate on whether Blue Journey is a forgery of Butor’s novel or not. Etô Jun, one of the most active critics in Japan today, claimed in Tokyo shimbun that Blue Journey was a copy of Butor’s novel ("Kaigai bungaku to sono mozôhin" [Foreign Literatures and Their Forgeries] (1961), which had been translated into Japanese by Shimizu Tôru in 1959. Etô pointed out some similarities between La Modifications and Blue Journey. First, both of them use the second-person narrative: the protagonist is referred to as "You" (vous and anata). Second, the

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6For the genesis of second-person narrative, see Bruce Morrissette, "Narrative ‘You’ in Contemporary Literature," Comparative Literature Studies 2: 1-24.
protagonist makes a trip: from Paris to Rome in the French novel and from Tokyo to Kyoto in Kurahashi's. Third, the protagonist indulges in criticism regarding architecture: on the Louvre in Butor's novel, and on Daitokuji in Kurahashi's. Finally, after a trip in both physical space and in consciousness, the protagonists of both novels decide to write a novel.

Given these similarities, it is evident that Blue Journey echoes La Modification. However, no critic had argued this resemblance until Etô raised the issue. Before Etô's intervention, Kurahashi's novel was positively reviewed in many publications as a unique and innovative work. After it was labelled as "a copy," "its reputation was confirmed in a bad way" ("Sakuhin nôto" [Notes on My Works] (1975) 240). In short, the entire discussion about the work's merits was framed in terms of its originality.

Indeed, Kurahashi's refutation in Tokyo shimbun in 1962 involves this very point. In the article, "Kurai tabi no sakusha kara anata e" [From the Author of Blue journey to You], she admits that she copied Butor's work. In opposition to Etô and other critics who criticize copying, however, she overtly maintains that copying precursors is "the royal road" in the arts, and counteracts any condemnation just because she copied Butor. In short, Kurahashi's view on creation of art is totally different from those of her critics. In "Notes on My Works" she explicitly expects the reader to "understand its similarities to Butor's [novel], and comment on Blue Journey" (240-241). There is a discrepancy in the reception of parody, whether negatively as a plagiarism, or positively as a form of art, between the comments of Kurahashi and those of her critics.

Since I have already discussed the propriety of the writer's copying in the introduction, I wish now to consider instead how readers, critics including Kurahashi, have
viewed the traces of Butor's novel in *Blue Journey*. The aspects which either Kurahashi or critics have been concerned with include: the collage form, the railway trip setting, second-person narrative, the flood of proper nouns, the protagonist's discussion of architecture, and the protagonist's discussion of the idea of writing a novel.

In "Notes on My Works" Kurahashi recalls that after writing many short stories, she was urged to write a novel both by others and by her own creative impulse (238). What differentiates the novel from the story, in her view, is its temporal (or diegetical) dimension. In "From the Author of *Blue Journey* to You," Kurahashi confesses that she struggled to achieve "time" or a temporal dimension in her first novel, but that she "could not succeed in sustaining the time of the novel in the form of a long mural." Eventually she decided upon the technique of "accumulation of fragments," or collage, which Butor uses in *La Modification*. Kurahashi recollects in "Notes on My Works": "it is this manner of arranging in order fragments of consciousness, rather than the second-person form, that I borrowed from Butor" (Vol. 3 240). This comment points to the fact that little critical attention has been given to Kurahashi's similarity to Butor in her use of collage, despite the vehement debate on 'stealing from Butor.'

Kurahashi's deep concern with the temporal development which the novel, as opposed to the short story, requires is demonstrated in her comments in published correspondence to Nakamura Shin'ichirō, a representative Japanese novelist, which was written the year after *Blue Journey* was completed. In this correspondence, Kurahashi maintains that "récits [short stories] have no time within themselves" and that "récits are supported by the pillars of the death of time." Unlike short stories, novels such as
Nakamura's have "time," and if one yields to the "time," "one will be led to an imaginary space which is excavated into the inner world like a labyrinth." But Kurahashi does not consider Blue Journey to be a novel: "I have never written a novel" ("Roman wa kanō ka" [Is a Roman Possible?] (1962)). Kurahashi clearly feels that she failed to achieve the temporal dimension necessary to a novel in Blue Journey by the application of "mosaic" or collage: "I think this cannot be called 'a novel (roman),' due to the quality of the time in it" ("From the Author of Blue Journey to You").

It is not clear from her comments for what reason Kurahashi thinks Blue Journey lacks the temporal dimension. However, I would say that although the arrangement of the fragments may seem to be arbitrary, a certain discipline governs it. Indeed, Kurahashi comments in retrospect, in "The Postscript" (1969) to the second edition of Blue Journey:

At any rate, if this 'novel,' which is made up in a form of accumulation of miscellaneous fragments, more or less constitutes a novel, it is the consequence of my efforts made to give an order to its constituent parts (you may interpret "an order" as "an arrangement" in the original sense of the word "ordo"), and to realize the form of this novel (there is no way of designating what form it is, except by writing it). Of course, it is nonsense if you do not make such efforts when you write the novel. But, in retrospect, this first long fiction for me was nothing more than these efforts. (240-241)

This excerpt suggests that Kurahashi intended to arrange the fragments in a particular order. This is not, however, a temporal order, which Kurahashi admits she failed to achieve, or a causal relationship. Instead, a series of associative linkages are at work integrating the text. I will attempt to explicate this in the first section of this chapter.
The temporal development in *Blue Journey* is suggested by the way in which Kurahashi 'borrows' the setting of the railway trip from Butor, and reduces its emphasis in her novel. It is true that the railway trip enables the protagonist to indulge in a second trip, into his/her memories, in both novels. However, there is a discrepancy in the treatments of this setting between Butor and Kurahashi. The setting forms only one part of *Blue Journey*, which consists of three parts, while in *La Modification* the narrating instance takes place only on the train. I would suggest that by framing the railway trip with parts I and III, Kurahashi attempts to articulate the narrative into a beginning, a middle and an end. I will explicate such articulation when discussing the narrative structure later.

While critics neglected Kurahashi's 'borrowing' of the form of collage, many of them criticized her copying of the second-person narrative which Butor employs extensively in *La Modification*. In her postscript to the first edition of *Blue Journey*, Kurahashi explains this device as follows:

> This [replacement of "I" for "You"] can be called a system to remote-control you. Instead of being forced to be told by the author, you will be invited into the novel, and will participate in it. There, you will think of many things, and act, remembering your past. (238)

Note that "you" has a double meaning: it indicates the narratee of this narrative as well as the protagonist in the narrative. While in the first-person narrative, "I" can signify both the narrator and the protagonist, the narratee and the protagonist are identical in the second-person narrative.
What, then, are the effects of the second-person narrative? Shimizu Tōru makes similar comments to Kurahashi’s in his postscript to the Japanese translation of *La Modification* [Kokoro gawari]:

The basis of Butor’s methodology is his understanding that the novel is not completed when it is written by the author as a book, but is accomplished only by being read by the reader, and that it is the novel which is being formed gradually in the reader’s inner space when s/he reads. (248)

The second-person narrative such as *La Modification* and *Blue Journey* is thus what Umberto Eco would call "an open work" (63), and what would be described as a "writerly text" in Roland Barthes’ terms (*S/Z* 4).

Regarding this, we should pay attention to a fact which has been neglected in the discussion of *Blue Journey*: the narrative in Kurahashi’s novel as well as Butor’s is in the present tense when it refers to what happens concurrently with the narrating act. This fact, challenging the principle that the "narrative privileges" the past tense (Prince 96), underscores the fact that the text is now being created, instead of having existed and merely "being forced to be told" by the narrator.

Thus, in terms of methodology, the text of *Blue Journey* is not a stable, already-accomplished entity, but a flexible image which is always being created and being

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7By the narrowest definition Umberto Eco makes in his "The Poetics of the Open Work," "‘open’ works" "are characterized by the invitation to make the work together with the author."

8The "writerly" text is "what can be written (rewritten)" by "the reader" who is "no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text."
recreated. In fact, this characteristic of the narrative strategy coincides with both the imagery and thematic concerns in *Blue Journey*: the preference for vague, flexible images and the appraisal of the passive, flexible and performative self. In other words, the narrative structure, imagery and thematic concern of this novel parallel each other.

However, *Blue Journey* has been condemned for what some critics call the lack of the necessity to use the innovative strategy of the second-person narrative. Some critics claim that Kurahashi applies the second-person narrative out of "no inner necessity." For example, Shirai Kenzaburō, a representative European literature translator in Japan, says that Kurahashi's "existential search of the self is superficial" ("Kaigai bungaku shōkai no mondaiten" [Problems in Introducing Foreign Literature] (1961)). Shimizu Tōru, the translator of *La Modification*, suggests that Kurahashi "should have copied Butor less" to avoid the condemnation of plagiarism, "or more" to learn the "content," as well as the "form," of the French writer. Shimizu's latter suggestion is relevant to my current discussion, and he exemplifies it as follows: "*La Modification* is a narrative of the discovery of the lost self," and "the second-person is found in the author's attempt to perceive the self." In short, Shimizu claims, this narrative strategy is "closely related to the content, or Butor’s inner necessity" ("Kurai tabi ronsō no mondaiten" [Problems in the Debate on *Blue Journey*] (1962)).

Such comments can, in fact, be divided into two questions: 1) whether or not the author of any novel should require "inner necessity" to select a form of the novel, and: 2) whether form and content are "closely related" in *Blue Journey*. As for the first question, Itō Sei, a well known critic and translator of English literature in Japan, and Haniya Yutaka,
a Japanese novelist often compared to Dostoevski, agree that Kurahashi, or any novelist for that matter, need not be conscious of an inner necessity ("Zadankai bundan 1961-nen" [Discussion on the Literary Circle in 1961]). With respect to the second, I disagree with Shirai and Shimizu, in that they imply that Kurahashi neglects the aspect of content. Butor's content is the search for the self, and Kurahashi, indeed, discusses the self extensively in her narrative. However, the perception of the self in her text is different from that of the critics, or that of Butor in their views. In Kurahashi's novel the self is not perceived as an autonomous entity but as a void which reflects others. Therefore, the loss of the self cannot pose a problem in Blue Journey. Rather, the emptiness of the self has a positive value, because it makes one's consciousness passive, flexible and thus performative. Kurahashi invariably associates these notions of passivity, flexibility and performativity with her perception of femininity in Blue Journey. In other words, her understanding of the self is visualized in terms of images of female physiology, and content and form are thus reflective of each other. Okuno Takeo, another representative literary critic in Japan, pointed out that "the novel itself becomes a woman" ("Etô Jun shi no Kurahashi Yumiko ron e" [In response to Mr Etô Jun's Critique on Kurahashi Yumiko]). I would conjecture that the difference, or even opposition, between the contents of the two novels confused some critics into thinking that Blue Journey has no content and that Kurahashi's novel lacks serious thematic concern. I will refute this proposition by considering the imagery in the second section, and the theme in the third section of this chapter.

The preponderance of proper nouns is a common feature of the two works, though it is unclear if Kurahashi took it from Butor. It is evident from "Notes on My Works" that
she deliberately used proper nouns "to the extremity" "against the former rule" not to use them (239). Indeed, she maintains in "Shôsetsu no meiro to hiteisei" [The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction] (1967) that she usually "avoids using proper nouns" (68). In Blue Journey, however, she decided to mention the proper nouns of places, objects, "just like avant-garde art which purports to be an assembly of discarded objects" ("Notes on My Works" 239). Blue Journey is her first attempt to use them, and some of her later novels have been written in this way. Etô Jun criticizes Blue Journey as "the result of a mistaken belief that reference to real names alone creates the anti-novel or new novel" ("Kaigai bungaku to sono mozôhin saisetsu" [Foreign Literatures and Their Forgeries Revisited]. However, I would suggest that what Kurahashi says about Butor in her essay "Byutôru to atarashii shôsetsu" [Butor and New Novels] (1964) —"[enumeration of] objects itself is the perception of objects" is applicable to her own text: it suggests that the enumeration of objects must be carried out by a consciousness.

These objects include buildings and gardens, such as Daitokuji, Nanzenji, Ryôanji, which the protagonist You and her lost lover He discuss in Blue Journey. Their discussions are criticized by Etô and by Shirai Kôji, the translator of Jean-Paul Sartre’s La Nausée. They say Kurahashi’s commitment to architecture is superficial, while "Butor’s devotion to Baroque art" and his "love for Rome" is deep, and generated La Modification. Etô claims that "the whole man experience" is lacking in Kurahashi’s work, and Shirai suggests that Kurahashi has only a penchant for style, without her own unique "view of the world." Kurahashi jokingly refuted Etô by stating that what he called "the discussion on art" in her
work is a series of "excerpts cut out of sightseeing guides" ("From the Author of Blue Journey to You") and for this, Shirai calls her "lacking in sincerity."

In fact, the discussions of architecture function as something more than mere pastiche. They offer a parallel to discussions of the novel in Blue Journey, and thus play a not unimportant role in the narrative:

"What a well-thought largeness, I mean, smallness!"
"Why didn't he make it [Daisen'in's garden] larger?"
"It would not have worked; it would be like enlarging a short story into a novel."
"A good reason. This idea is applicable to paintings, too."
"In the case of the novel, its quantity, number of pages and the like are important factors which determine its style. The reason to write at greater length, and more detail is not because the event took a long time but because the [novel’s] world is large." (Blue Journey 190-191)

A novel such as Blue Journey, then, is a metafiction, "a novel to be offered to the reader [which] is simultaneously the thoughts on writing the novel" as Kurahashi comments regarding Butor’s L’emploi du Temps in her essay "Butor and New Novels" (36). The same statement is applicable to Blue Journey. Shimizu Tôru says that the protagonist "vous" in Butor’s novel decides to write a novel necessitated by his failure to discover his "self," implying again that Kurahashi lacks the inner necessity which might motivate the choice of a metafictional construction. However, I would say that here, too, her theme and form are inseparably connected: the protagonist You loses her lover who is in some ways her second self, and the distancing from this second self in the narrative enables her to create a novel.
The sad story about the couple's separation, indeed, is analogous to the creation of the metafictional novel. I will describe this process in detail in the third section of this chapter.

Having examined these similarities of *Blue Journey* to Butor's novel, I will explore the narrative structure, imagery, and themes in *Blue Journey* and finally clarify that they are not arbitrarily selected, but in fact inseparably related to each other. First, however, I wish to give a summary of the novel's plot. Although the "discourse time" is only three days, the "story time" extends over fourteen years (with gaps) from the time at which the heroine was twelve years old until the "narrating instance," at which she is twenty-six.9 The heroine's recollection of her past at different temporal stages is continually intercut with her present story. The heroine, who is consistently referred to as "anata" (You), is completely at a loss regarding her long-term lover and fiancé, "kare" (He), who has been absent from her for more than a week.10 Both of them are graduate students in French literature at Q University in Tokyo. They have forbidden themselves to have sexual intercourse with each other, while maintaining a rule allowing each other to sleep with other men or women. On the first day of the discourse time, the heroine visits "relics" of their love in Kamakura, where K Senior High School, which they both attended as adolescents, is located, and comes back to Tokyo where they have lived separately but have seen each other very frequently.

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9The "discourse time" indicates "[t]he time taken by the representation of the narrated; the time of the narrating; erzählzeit" (Prince, 21), while the "story time" signifies "[t]he period of time in which the narrated occurs; erzählte zeit" (Ibid. 92).

10In this chapter, I will call the leading characters 'You' and 'He'; though they are originally uncapitalized personal pronouns, they function as the names of the characters in the text.
On the next day, You makes a railway trip to Kyoto. She used to live there at the age of nineteen, while studying at L Women’s College after she failed the first entrance examination at Q University which He entered, and where she tried to forget him despite his frequent letters of love. In Kyoto she finally fled, came back, was met at Kyoto Station by He and then spent her first night together with him. After half a year, she was accepted by Q University, and moved to Tokyo. Since then, she has frequently returned to Kyoto to visit temples with He. In short, Kyoto is replete with memories of their love.

On the train You comes across Saeki, her aunt’s ex-husband and a lecturer in French literature whose class she has previously taken. She accepts his request to stay in the same hotel, and after revisiting the temples she has gone to with He, she makes love with Saeki. The morning after, she leaves the hotel, undecided whether to accept Saeki’s proposal to spend a further night together. The only decision she seems to have made is to write a novel about He.

This, then, is the story of Blue Journey. We now turn to an examination of structure, of how Kurahashi interweaves different temporal levels to form a narrative.

The Narrative Structure of Blue Journey

In this section, I will discuss the way that the text becomes integrated by what Roland Barthes would call "indices," which implies "metaphorical relata" instead of chronological or causal relationships between units of the narrative.

Before exploring these strategies, I will clarify what Gérard Genette would call the "tense," or temporal relations between narrative and story, in this novel. As I pointed out in the introductory part of this chapter, the present tense and past tense coexist in Blue
lourney (here, I used "tense" in a purely grammatical sense). The present tense is employed to refer to occurrences and thoughts which take place simultaneously with the narrating act, while the past tense is used to mention things prior to the series of narrating instances. Therefore, it is easy to distinguish events that happen within the range of the discourse time from those that happened prior to the commencement of narrating, despite its atemporal development with perpetual "analepses," or flash-backs into different temporal moments of the past.11

According to the progress of the discourse time, the text of Blue Journey is divided into three parts: I, II, III. Embedded within this discourse time are numerous fragments which refer to events that have happened before the narrating act commences, and are presented without any obvious temporal or causal order; I wish, for convenience, to divide it into the five phases outlined below, for the sake of clarity of discussion.

The first phase is before You met her lover, He, the time when she became aware of her being feminine. The text of this phase is a series of fragments in Part II. Though in this phase reference is made to You's recollections, we are later told that You narrates the memories of this phase to He when they are in the second phase, which follows. In other words, this phase constitutes an "embedded narrative"12 without a complete frame to

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11 Analepsis signifies "an evocation of one or more events that occurred before the 'present' moment (or moment when the chronological recounting of a sequence of events is interrupted to make room for the analepsis)" ("analepsis," Prince 5). See also Gérard Genette, Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method.

12 Embedded narrative refers to a "narrative within a narrative" ("embedded narrative," Prince 25).
show that it is narrated within the primary narrative (since when the reader first reads this phase, s/he is not informed of the circumstances of its narration). The analepsis into phase one, the earliest part of You's past, takes place in the middle of the novel.

The second phase presents You at the age of seventeen, when she transfers to K Senior High School in Kamakura, and where she meets He and finds him to be the ideal lover. In the view of You, He appears to be the only person who can manage to be her "accomplice" in pretending to be in love and to "believe each other's love". You recognizes He as her "co-player" in a mask drama in which both play the roles of lovers. Further, He shares this cognition with You: He senses an identical inclination in You. Because this stage occurs in Kamakura, it is mostly referred to in Part I in which You revisits the city.

Indeed, the choice of this place is rather significant. If Kurahashi had wanted to increase the "autobiographicality" of this novel, she would have chosen Kōchi, her hometown. In addition to her desire to distance the novel from her own experience, I would suggest two reasons for the selection of Kamakura as the setting. First, Kamakura is interchangeable with Kōchi, both because it begins with K, the most important alphabetical letter in Kurahashi, which often represents male protagonists, and also because Kamakura faces the Pacific Ocean as Kōchi does, and thus provides the sea shore locale which is an important motif in Part I. Secondly, Kamakura is a centre of Japanese medieval culture, and thus functions as a counterpart of Kyoto, the ancient capital. Therefore, Kamakura and Kyoto have a parallel function in the text.

Following the initial friendship of You and He, the third phase describes when they separate for a year while He studies at Q University in Tokyo and You at L Women's
College in Kyoto. The fact that she fled while in Kyoto is mentioned once in Part I, because she left Kyoto for Kamakura, and stayed there for a while without contacting He or her roommate in Kyoto. Part II describes the unexpected meeting with He at Kyoto Station, and other incidents while she lived in Kyoto, except for her unexpectedly visiting He in Tokyo by train from Kyoto, which is narrated in Part I. The unexpected meeting is also mentioned in Part II, and so is the subsequent consummation of You's love with He in Kyoto.

The fourth phase commences when You moves to Tokyo, and ends after half a year. The utmost physical intimacy between You and He in which they participate in the "ritual," "game," and "performance" of love and sex, marks this phase. The references to phase four are made in a series of fragments in Part II.

The last portion, phase five, begins at the time at which You and He make a "contract" not to have intercourse with each other, to allow each other to have affairs with others, and to report these affairs to each other. In the meantime, they become engaged, without planning to get married, in order to "defraud" society. References to this phase are made throughout the novel.

Having sketched the relation between discourse time and story time, I will now address the methods by which this novel achieves an order. As I suggested in the introductory part of this chapter, Blue journey has, despite the seeming arbitrariness of the collage form, a clear framing structure. The narrative structure is made even more apparent by the many pairs of parallel images, which appear in Part I and III.

One of the most significant of these parallels is the setting of each of Parts I and III: Kamakura and Kyoto. They are similar in that both are historical cities in Japan. The
following dialogue between You and Saeki in Part III shows that both cities are coded as sophisticated:

"What do you like about Kyoto?"
"I like the fact that the town isn’t vulgar. Human beings have to live in such places. Your home is in Kamakura, isn’t it? Kamakura isn’t too bad, either." (214)

The parallel between the two cities is thus implied in the characters’ statements.

Further, words and phrases employed to illuminate the cities, as well as the way You perceives them, present them as parallel. Compare these two illustrations of the station plazas:

On your right lies Seibu Department Store. On your left, Fūgetsudō where you and he used to eat Bavaroises and éclairs, and souvenir shops typical of a sightseeing city.... Kamakura Station plaza, which looks entirely familiar to you. However, Kamakura shows an indifferent face to you now, in this dusty chill of February, as if it received a purposeless traveller, a questionable stranger with hollow eyes. (5)

The Main Exit of Kyoto Station, a gentle flow of black crowds, the glazed waiting room, the sightseeing department store located on the second floor facing the exit, all of them look familiar to you. [...] No one receives you, no one is looking at you, you make your way through people as if invisible. [...] Now you are a mere traveller who is trying to intrude in Kyoto in such a way as not to be noticed. (176)

Three factors are in common here: The careful enumeration of objects perceived in these places, their familiarity, and the current mental distance You has from them.

13Since a series of dots recurs in the text of Blue Journey, implying cessation in You’s consciousness, I copy them in the original, applying brackets when I omit a section in the middle of citations.
The illustration of Kamakura above is followed by You’s contemplation of the reasons she visits the city; this contemplation again finds its parallel in her visit to Kyoto:

Why did you come to Kamakura in mid-winter? [...] You cannot explain the reason to anyone, nor can you disclose your aim. [...] Kamakura, Kamakura which is a town of the past and a ruined capital for you, ...the sea and the sun which you experienced with him, you came here in search of the relics of your love. But can you find the man who absconded, if he threw himself into the end of everything? ...If that is the case, it will only be an absence, a nothingness which smells of ozone, and another disappointment which you will find here. (5-7)

In Part II, on the train, You also asks herself her reasons for her trip to Kyoto:

Kyoto, ...why are you going to Kyoto, for what? You repeat the persistent interrogation. But you cannot find any reason that will survive logical investigation. If the search for him is your aim, this trip will be meaningless and empty from the outset. If the journey is for the purpose of visiting the relics of the love between you and him, it will merely torture you.[...] Kyoto. The ancient capital engraved with temples and fine gardens. In it are also embedded the remains of love between you and him. (92)

The common features here are: the lack of hope of finding He at the end of the journey, and the trip You nevertheless makes, to places which are "the relics of love" (ai no iseki). Also, when she arrives in Kyoto, she calls it "your ruined capital" (haito) (175) using the same label which is employed for Kamakura in the first excerpt.

One small motif recurs in Kamakura and Kyoto. You is a jazz fan, and thus many jazz pieces are mentioned. The first mentioned piece is, in fact, the last one she listens to.
On the seashore of Kamakura, You taps out "the rhythm of <<Amen>> by Donald Bird," praying in vain for the reappearance of He (19). In Kyoto, at a jazz-playing coffee house called "Sangoshō" [Coral Reef], whose name is reminiscent of the sea, You recommends Saeki to listen to the piece:

"What is this?"
"Its Side B of <<Fuego>> by Donald Bird. Listen,...isn't it interesting? It's in the typical funk style, and the last one, <<Amen>>, is especially unique." (199)

To sum up, Kamakura and Kyoto have similar meaning to You and this is shown by the almost identical ways of presenting the two cities. By placing the two cities at the beginning and end of the novel, Kurahashi gives it a definite framework.

A further parallel is made between He and Saeki who respectively dominates Parts I and III. You's initial encounter with He is presented in a similar manner to her perception of Saeki's interest in her. When You meets He on the Seashore in Kamakura, their hands "slide" on an anchored boat, each's hand proceeding to each other's hand:

When the first, light touch at the tips of the fingers occurred, your fingers slid along the planks of each other's, gradually getting entangled. With this unexpected caress of fingers, your eyes lost their life.... You resisted for a long while, with your eyes open, but when the whole of your hand was grasped by his, you closed your eyes, and threw your head and the mass of your hair backward, as if you had fainted. (18)

When You comes across Saeki in the cafeteria on the train, Saeki's eyes "slide from your hair, along your back, [and] stay on your hand for a long while" (112). His attention is not
a passing one. In the above-mentioned jazz cafe in Kyoto, he suddenly grasps You’s hand, removes the glove, and licks her fingers:

You tread on Saeki’s foot with the sharp heel of your shoe, with pressure. But you fail, for you have merely stimulated his desire. Treading on Saeki’s foot ever more strongly in order to register your own defeat and hallucination, rather than to resist him, you close your eyes and throw your head backward. (201)

You’s hand attracts both He and Saeki, and her responses to their caresses are identical.

Similarly, the clothes You wears at these moments are identical: she is dressed in "a skirt of Inca pattern of vermilion and yellow" (19) when she meets He for the first time, while she buys "a pyjama of lemon colour and golden yellow stripes" (195) to sleep with Saeki.

Further, the ways He would, and Saeki does, approach and touch You without being noticed are presented similarly. When He fled and did not show up on time for the appointment with You, she is waiting for him, anticipating that he will "approach from behind without footsteps, touch your hair lightly, like the casual touch of a dove’s wings, and thus announce his arrival" (39). In a similar manner, Saeki takes her by surprise when You is indulging herself in recollecting that she was met by He seven years ago at the same Kyoto Station: "Someone’s hand, a light hand like a bird’s wing, touches your shoulder. (...) it is not he" (177).

The most important parallel in a thematic sense is that in You’s imagination, both He and Saeki have cut themselves off from "the tie of love" (110), and are absorbed in "numerous love affairs" (106). Although You does not openly associate the two men in this
regard, they do provide examples of similar selves without any established relation to others or to the world.

Saeki functions as a precursor of He. You originally perceived He as an ideal "co-player" of the "mask-play," but, after he disappears she admits:

You have carefully avoided the idea that he conceals underneath his skin an entirely invisible, dark existence—whatever you may call it—... If you had hidden yourself inside his skin when he was walking in the street, you would have seen that his face, turned inward, is that of a dismal devil. (37)

Saeki’s face is presented in an almost identical way in You’s imagination when she is heading for the hotel to spend a night with him:

The face of Saeki, waiting for you, the face of a man becoming alone, the face of a man who is forty years old, famous critic and lecturer at universities; probably, when he is alone, Saeki dares to show his utmost dismal face, exposing his dark, wrinkly inside as it really is. (194)

This image of Saeki is an echo of that of He quoted previously. In short, You’s relations with He in Part I, and with Saeki in Part III, parallel each other in their images and themes, and thus frame the novel.

As the study of most prominent "framing" suggests, the text of Blue Journey is full of images that are associated with each other. They create "indices," and suggest a textual consistency not based on contiguity. Often, an associative link is made where a causal one is lacking. Similar, if not identical, images are repeated without a logical pattern, and give
the text a rhythm and consistency. Here, I will examine two chains of images: those of hands, and ochre-yellow colour; these images also reflect thematic concerns.

As I pointed out in the comparison between He and Saeki, the touching of hands in Blue Journey initiates sexual relationships. Further, You's observing eyes often focus on people's hands and fingers. It seems to me that images of hands symbolize their owner's sexuality, masculine or feminine, as well as their professions, and that You often compares such hands with He's hands. For example, "the beautiful, cream-coloured fingers" of He's father which are "associative of the wise man of Brahmanism," lead You to define him as "one of those cultural people who occasionally send critical articles on music to provincial newspapers." You sees in him an "aged version" of He (46-47).

You also observes the fingers of two youths who are attracted to her. The first lad is reminiscent of He on the first encounter, in that he is described as "clean and well-bred," and that he is compared to "a fish" caught by You as He was. This youth entangles his "long olive-coloured fingers" with each other, which, in bed, caresses You's body like "antennae of a sea anemone" (42-43). The second lad offers a cigarette to You and she notices his "unexpectedly clean fingertips, like He's but a little darker" (73). You thinks of him as "a boy who satisfies your taste," and imagines that perhaps she "may share a bed with him" (80-81).

As these examples subtly imply, hands are often symbols of male sexuality. The hands of two jazz musicians, which You visualizes apparently out of any context, demonstrate this. You is trying to sleep on the train:
Suddenly, hands appear in front of your eyes. Cocoa-coloured hands, hands more marvellous than a bunch of five hundred yen bananas, fingers with rosy-coloured nails, erotic,...they are thrust out to you, pierce your eyes and intrude into your head. They look familiar to you, the hands,...the fingers are on the keyboard of a brass wind instrument...yes, they are the hands of John Coltrane, the dark brown hands which you saw on the jacket of <<Giant Steps>>.... (95)

The following excerpt also presents an image of hands which abruptly occurs to You's mind:

A brown, closed hand, sexual-organ-like hand which resembles a grotesque bunch of Vienna sausages...its huge thumb supports a stick, the majestic, stamen-like stick, curved over, arrogantly, sensitively...it was the end of last month when you saw this jacket at <<Ron>> at Nakano, the jacket of <<Philly Joe's Beat>>, he said, this is worth buying; you agreed. (163)

Indeed, the hands are metaphors for the phallus. Iconographically, this is implied by the similes of "a bunch of bananas" and "sausages" which dangle. Their postures and motions, such as "thrust out," "pierce," and "curved over," suggest the erection of the male organ. This association is displayed in phrases such as "sexual-organ-like" and "stamen-like" in the latter excerpt.

In fact, hands are used as a substitute for the phallus, as the following excerpt implies. You sleeps with a sadist, and according to the contract with He, she makes a report on the affair. However, You tells He a lie: though she says to He that she did not sleep with the sadist, she, in reality, did: "You raised a cry of pain, pierced the centre of your body not with the sadist’s phallus but with his rake-like hand" (149).
All these images of hands are what Genette call "advance mentions"\(^{14}\) of Saeki’s hands. While You is taking a bath in Kyoto Hotel, Saeki is watching her naked body, and she is observing his hands:

Why are such intelligent and sensitive hands dangling from that ugly body? Those marvellous hands, the professional fingers which are a little harder and dirtier than He’s pure fingers, the hands more sensitive and powerful than the slim hands of He’s father, much more attractive hands, artificial hands mentally formed for a special purpose, so to speak...Saeki still stands beyond the heat, looking at you, dangling his hands, thinking which part of you he should reach his hands to caress.... (211)

As I mentioned, You’s hand attracts Saeki just as his hands attract her eyes. However, the way her hand is presented is entirely different from these presentations of male hands: instead of projecting, You’s female hand suggests the internal hollowness and receptivity of female physiology:

As if to delve into the deep-seated, ever-winding empire of sex inside you, Saeki’s big hands bundle your fingers and grasp your wrist firmly, you cannot escape this ostentatiously possessive grasp....As your fingers struggle, your glove of the thin, tender goat leather is gently stripped off. You are made naked, more nakedly obscene than you have ever known. You are filled with blood, and stiffen your body like an infant girl. (...) Five fingers which are half open out of astonishment, these white, fine, five fingers with the pale white opal on the ring finger, sparkle like a thin fish. Saeki’s hand turns them over. (...) Saeki kisses your palm with rude amorousness like a Frenchman, and his tongue moves slowly, persistently trying to suck a hollow in your palm. (200-201).

\(^{14}\)Advance mention is a "narrative element the significance of which becomes clear only (well) after it is first mentioned" ("advance mention," Prince 4). For details, see Genette.
It is evident here that the female hand is a metaphor of the female genitals: it has "a hollow," it implies "the empire of sex" which grows inside the female body, it is something to be possessed, stripped, filled with blood, kissed and licked. This reference to a female hand contrasts strongly with the masculine sexuality expressed in the images of male hands.

The series of images of hands have no connection with each other, nor have they any necessary function in the novel’s plot. Nevertheless, they are indispensable in terms of weaving a thread of images; we might say they play a counter-point in the symphony that is the novel.

Another counter-point is that of ochre-yellow colour, which, with its associations of dryness and deserts, makes a contrast with the motif of moss colour. The text refers to colours of objects frequently; hands are "cream-coloured," or "olive-coloured," or "cocoa-coloured," or "dark-brown." These descriptions of colours not only give a visual representation of the objects but also give a certain tone to the description. The colour of ochre-yellow, which constantly appears in the text, has an important function in the text.

Let us start with the beginning of Part III. You arrives at Kyoto Station, "with a light ochre-yellow traveller’s bag in her hand" (176). When Saeki takes her by surprise, You observes that "he also has an ochre-yellow traveller’s bag" (177). The word "also" makes the narratee notice the repeated colour, following You’s perception. The fact that You and Saeki have bags of the same colour apparently suggest similar desires, which lead them to spend the night together.

They first agree to stay in the same room in the hotel. However, while Saeki is caressing You’s body, You is taken over by memories of He and by guilty consciousness that
she is "betraying" He. Saeki accepts her request that he stop, and they lie in separate beds.

Then You thinks about Saeki:

You do not understand what the man thinks, who lies in this closed, ochre-yellow room, like Christ taken off the cross. The man is more uncanny than the dead, you do not even know who he is any more....If the man has the name of Saeki, it is like a number plate on the body, you cannot explain anything from the name. This man merely exists, on the bed, with his thin, long form. (222)

This paragraph is linked to two other fragments in the text. First, You is "crucified" like a "martyr" when she consummates intercourse with Saeki (23), which, like the passage above, implies similar inclinations in Saeki and You. Second, the image of the crucified Christ has occurred earlier in Part III. You arrives at the hotel by herself, earlier than Saeki who visits other places first, and finds in the drawer of the bedside table a copy of the New Testament in English. "The only thing you are interested in [in the New Testament] is the crucifixion of Christ." This statement is preceded by recurrent mentions of the word "desert." You prefers the Old Testament, which she perceives as "a magnificent epic" and "the scorchingly absurd play of God and people in the desert." You regrets that elements of the epic "disappear in the New Testament, just as an intermittent river vanishes and reappears in the desert" (182). These recurrent associative references to the desert match the colour of the room: ochre-yellow.

Related to the desert theme is a series of rejections of relations with society, or self-identification in the social sense, in Part II; a later version of these appears in the excerpt above in the meaninglessness of Saeki's name. When You comes across Saeki on the train,
she speculates about his past: he stayed in Europe, and on returning to Japan, divorced her aunt:

Saeki became a wanderer in the sphere of European civilization, an étrangé who did not belong anywhere; while he visited Paris, Algiers, Berlin, Rome, relieved from the tie of love, he may have continued dry affairs with certain tediousness. (110)

The word "dry," which is repeated in the subsequent description of Saeki’s "pedantic writing" (110), is associated with the image of the desert. Saeki wears "a coat of desert colour" (198), and You’s speculation about Saeki’s past is similar to her conjectures regarding what he is doing now, a few pages prior to the previous excerpt:

You think...that perhaps he escaped you, the marriage with you, and even escaped the word <<love>> which became an undecodable dead word, and may be holding an unknown woman slovenly in his arms at a hotel in a local city. Imagining this scene does not make you feel jealous, but fascinates you to a degree. If you write a novel, you will write such a novel, with the story of a hero who crosses the desert of numerous love affairs and rediscovers love for you. (106)

This excerpt regarding He has elements in common with the one involving Saeki: an escape from love and marriage, affairs with many women, and dryness. The two citations frame a paragraph in which You imagines choosing the same life as Saeki has chosen and that He may be choosing:

You think of losing contact with your family, friends, seminars and the university, and of getting lost as a vagabond in the slum in the harbour city which fronts onto the sea....You will live as a female vagabond without a resident card or identification card. Then, people will forget you, and your name will
disappear from the census register. In a moment, you will die from the world to which you have belonged. Also, you will cut off your own past, cut off time like an umbilical cord from the placenta, you will throw away all your memories including him [He] and love, you will begin to live as another you. (107-108)

This paragraph is important in two senses. First, it raises an important issue of the relation of the self to others, to society, and to the past. In the third section of this chapter, I will discuss this desire on You’s part for rejection of self-identification as a social being.

Secondly, the image of the desert haunts You, too, though it does not occur in the paragraph, and thus suggests the similar nature of her existence to that of He and Saeki. She has confessed to He that when she menstruates:

[I feel] as if "the desert appears in my heart. The desert lions and camels love, the desert whose width I can’t imagine. (...) The whole world is cursing me because I am a woman. (134)

She also anticipates that the journey to Kyoto will be "more full of disappointment and danger than a journey in the desert in search of a mirage" (88).

In these examples, the image of the desert carries negative associations. However, after her "journey in the desert," You realizes that she has "freedom more wide and empty than the desert" (224) Here, the associations of the desert come closer to those of the one which illuminates the mental conditions of Saeki and He.

The third association of "ochre-yellow" appears in Part I, in which another "closed ochre-yellow" space is described: it is the house of Yuriko, He’s cousin, fellow student at high school, and You’s rival for his love. You visits Kamakura, and views Yuriko’s house from a distance: "The house with gradually sloped roofs, the windows of which facing the
sea are covered with ochre-yellow curtains, that is Yuriko’s house" (27). Some pages prior to this sentence, You looks at the curtain and contemplates:

From here, you can see that the ochre-yellow curtains are drawn, in that room of Yuriko's house. Previously, the curtains were of a different colour. You cannot remember which colour it was, ...greyish rose? No, there may have been moss-coloured curtains with Egyptian patterns, at that time. (23-24)

This room is important in the personal history of You and He's love, in that it is in this room that they kissed each other for the first time. The excerpt above tells us of the change of the curtain, and thus about the flow of time.

Further, the persistent contemplation of the curtains' colour introduces another colour motif: moss colour. When You first meets He, he wears "a sweater of moss colour" (15). You recalls that she "often walked down to the sea with him along an alley which looks like" "a narrow sandy alley between bamboo fences and old wooden board fences whose colour has changed into moss colour" (46).

You and He have frequented temples in Kyoto, one of which is Saihō-ji, which is also called "Koke-dera," the temple of moss, because of its famous moss garden. Though You does not describe the garden in the text, she recollects a Japanese cafeteria beside the temple, called "Koke no chaya," the cafeteria of moss. There, "he ate up what you left over" (170). Note that You later interprets sharing the food with Saeki as "the exchange of intimacy before sharing a bed" (205). Indeed, it seems that after leaving "the cafeteria of moss," You and He have intercourse "using all the techniques of love which formed the history of [their] love" (204). Similarly, about eleven months later, You spends a night with
Saeki after sharing food with him. She wakes up next morning to find herself left alone. But she discovers a sheet of ruled manuscript paper with "lines of moss colour" (234) that he has left behind.

The ochre-yellow colour and moss colour make a contrast, implying respectively the desert and moist soil, and thus barrenness and fruitfulness. The metaphor of moss colour later in the novel signifies that You seems to have succeeded in distancing and objectifying the existence of He. The affair with Saeki enables her to be reborn after the blue journey.

Thus, order is achieved in the narrative structure of Blue Journey. However, the way the text achieves this is different from structuring the plot in a series of actions joined by causal relationships; Blue Journey is not a conventional novel, but an anti-novel. Instead, the text supplies a variety of linked yet fragmentary images, which make metaphorical associations and thus produce a loose but important consistency in the narrative.

Images

Sequences of metaphors, then, give Blue Journey some narrative structure. Yet, these metaphors and images, as well as providing a structural coherence, also have an important relationship to the theme of the anti-novel. In Blue Journey, in a sense, theme is form; any distinction between the two is necessarily arbitrary. Yet a closer examination of image clusters in Kurahashi’s novel will, I feel, clarify the intimate relationship between theme and form. In this section, I will explore images which demonstrate the four following attributes: performativity, flexibility, passivity and fragmentation. These qualities are often given negative connotations, and are viewed as representing insincerity, indecisiveness, lack of positivity, and lack of wholeness, yet I feel that these characteristics, in fact, have a positive
value in this novel, and that they are associated with a 'gendered' notion of femininity that I will discuss in the next section.

By performativity, I mean the capacity through which one can perform any given role. The text of Blue Journey, we have seen, consists of a series of chains of images. Causal relationship is missing not only between chains but also between images within the same chains. These chains are like broken lines, their gaps filled only by metaphorical associations. Indeed, the text is replete with metaphors, or similes, through which objects, human beings, places, feelings, thoughts, and other items are re-presented as something else.

Objects of You’s hatred are compared to ugly things: thus, a screaming baby’s face is described as "look[ing] uglier than the sexual organ of a domestic animal" (23). You’s mother is compared to "an owl," showing "mummified sentiment" (52). A director of a bus transportation company who is shouting in front of Shibuya Station is compared to "Peking Man" (71). The boys who visually rape You are "small devils" with legs like those of "insects" (117). A large group of high school students who disturbed the serenity of a temple in Kyoto eleven months before the narrating commences are compared to "ostrich-like birds" (169).

Other people, who are on the same intellectual and physical level as You, are often compared to works of art. Yuriko is visualized as a version of "a naked woman drawn by Ingres" (32), and also as "Madonna by Raphael" and as "kisshō tennyo [heavenly lady of good luck] in Buddhist paintings" (34). The voluptuous beauty of Yuriko deducible from these metaphors, makes a sharp contrast with You’s apparent physical appearance, which is like the slim, youthful and girlish figure of the "Maitreya-bodhisattva at Chūgū-ji" (226).
You is also compared to the Classical Roman marble statue of a "reclining goddess," in her
eroticism (223). Seven Years ago, You and He saw it at the Bridgestone Museum in Tokyo,
where they have also examined a bronze statue called "Three Gods of Beauty" (57) which
is compared to He's naked body in the sunshine. Here, You and He are clearly contrasted.
And when the two "statues" face each other in sheer nudity, they exchange "a twisted
embrace like The Kiss by Rodin" (211).

In fact, the nature of the relationship between You and He refers to other literary
works well. In Part I, it is said to have been modelled on "Laclos' Les Liaisons dangereuses"
(41), while in Part III, You confesses that the lovers have a motto, "Like Sartre and Beauvoir"
(216). In short, the lovers perceive themselves as copies of other people, whether fictional
or historical.

Moreover, You tends to practice any art by following precursors' styles: when she is
nineteen, she writes a love letter from Kyoto to He, implying her determination to commit
suicide in "a style reminiscent of Rimbaud's Une Saison en enfer" (55). Trying in vain to
carry out this resolve, she comes home to Kamakura and "tries to play the piano, imitating
the style of Bud Powell" (54): she notes Franz Kafka's injunction to "write literary works as
a form of prayer" (106).15

15Indeed, You's commitment to art is analogous to Kurahashi's, which, as we have seen,
has been condemned as plagiarism. In this regard, the text is certainly self-reflexive.

There is one contradictory paragraph that shows that You is in search of her own
style, instead of copying other writers:

<< Establish my style >>

This memo is written down in your notebook. It was last month that
he discovered this phrase, while perusing the notebook. With a mysterious
(continued...)
I would suggest that this accumulation of copies demonstrates a commitment to 'anti-originality,' as opposed to originality. You puts this precisely, when referring to her own face in the mirror:

For example, they say strangely unique charms exist. But you, this lump of substances, have none of such a mysterious, provocative quality. Your face has no uniqueness. It even resembles a mask, in that all the parts are in solid balance. (...) This is a body with fake flesh, the mask which, like a noh mask, changes its multiple expressions, to perform the role of a woman. (131)

In a similar manner, the "diary" You has been writing since she was twelve years old is not "the record of your life" (171) but "stylistic practice in writing lies" (127) — "an accumulation

15(...continued)

smile, he said very delightedly, "Doestoevski's style, Kafka's style, Cezanne's style, Parker's style, ... I would like you to show your style soon." "I was kidding when I wrote it," [you said.] ... You were completely embarrassed. (224-225)

Another confusing comment appears in Kurahashi's postscript to the first edition, "From the Author to You":

I have hoped to write a roman without quantitative restraint. I needed freedom of this sort to discover my own style. (238)

Such an aspiration for one's own style is tautological in this context, in that neither You or Kurahashi does intend to establish her own style, but instead tries to copy others' style—or rather, in more precise terminology, rhetoric. The two excerpts are likely to confuse us into thinking that You and Kurahashi seek for originality which is, in fact, the last thing they aspire to.
of pastiches" (171). Indeed, You's "diary" is, in its performativity, a *mise en abyme* of the text of *Blue Journey*.¹⁶

Because of the emphasis on performativity, it is only when You dedicates herself to performing an assigned role that she feels relieved. When fatally wounded at heart, she wanders on the seashore in Kamakura, and she realizes the role given to her:

> In short, you were thrown away. You had better creep into the word "thrown away," then, you can warm your skin with the heat of dishonour, which you even find comfortable.... You smile, the sneaky smile of you who pretend to assume the conventional role of "a betrayed woman"....Then, you feel as if your anxiety has been properly pushed away by this disguise. (38)

The thought that she is playing a role consoles her by distancing herself from her actual misery.

In a similar manner, You requests the song "Lonely Woman" at a jazz place in Tokyo, and says in response to other customers' complaints, "Keep your mouth shut, I *am* a 'lonely woman'" (74). Leaving the place, she tells the lad with "unexpectedly clean fingertips" (74) that she will leave for "an aimless trip." This lad responds by saying "You sound like a 'lonely woman'" (80). Apparently this association she has made for herself pleases her, for she judges him to be "a boy who satisfies her taste" (80).

Entering into performativity, You accepts and performs without hesitation the role of "Mrs Saeki" when she checks in to the hotel (180) and when she makes a phone call to

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¹⁶You’s diary as an imaginary product is reminiscent of *The Diary of Anaïs Nin*, which I deal with in the next chapter.
Saeki from the jazz place (197). When he carries her to bed, she tries to perform the roles of "practising amante," and "maîtresse as awkward as a virgin" (217). On the next morning, You looks into the mirror "for characteristics of <<a mistress>>" (234). She overcomes any anticipated explosion of emotion by distancing herself from her 'self.'

In fact, You defines the nature of her own existence as "unidentifiable." On the train, she wears a pair of glasses "to shut out the world," more specifically her neighbour, and "become[s] an unidentifiable woman who is difficult to approach" (89). In the cafe, You senses the investigating eyes of gentlemen at the same table, who are "stealingly watching" "this unidentifiable girl, who does not look like either a student or a working woman, either Mademoiselle or Madame, who is young but not virginal" (152).

If You is unidentifiable, so is the relation between her and He. They have made many trips together on the same railway, on which "you two may have appeared to be a young married couple, or intimate brother and sister" (91). After He's flight, You thinks of reporting it to the police, but gives up the idea; the policemen who "lack imagination" will ceaselessly attempt to investigate the nature of their relationship, which is beyond explanation (10-11).

Their relationship is defined by the "social fact that they have been engaged for years." However, You calls their engagement "a legal fiction to defraud society," and there are recurrent definitions of their relations as those of "accomplices" (36). Also, they have seen themselves as "co-players" in the "mask play" of love, and thus express the metonymies of the play and performance art. The implications of crime and performance suggest what
Kurahashi would call "anti-world"-ness—the forgery of "reality," the reverse side of the "actual world."  

Since the day on which You was visually raped, she "has mastered the art of pretending to be you, wearing a mask," and "has lost substance" (120). When You tells He that in fact she is not a woman, but "merely pretends to be one," He admits it, and adds: "you cannot be caught; it is as if you were always dancing" (132-133). Indeed, this 'impossibility of being caught' is what You has tried to, and managed to, achieve. Looking into the mirror on the train, You notices that her face "looks like a mask" whose "abstract and void beauty" "will not easily be caressed by others' eyes." "Others' eyes," she comments, "will not be able to trap you" (131).

The elusiveness of You makes a contrast with other women in the world of the novel who are caught, caressed and possessed by men. Toward the end of the summer when You experiences her first period, she wanders on the seashore in search of lovers, having "sensed" "that men own their wives and lovers majestically" (124). On the way back from Kamakura to Tokyo, You observes a young man who "touches his woman's bum with hands moving as if caressing a domestic dog," and by doing so "displays the gesture of owning his mistress" (67). In contrast to these women, You is not to be grasped or owned, since she has no substance.

In fact, He appears to You not to have any substance either, until his flight. When they see "the sun like a copper disc through luxuriant leaves," and associate the scene

17Kurahashi defines the "anti-world" as "the world which is not this world" and maintains that for her "the fiction is a magic which forms the anti-world by <<words>>, and by using all non-literary factors freely" ("The Labyrinth and Negativity of the Fiction" 72).
simultaneously with "Max Ernst's <<Forest>>," she looks at him, struck by the "intercourse of mentalities":

In the green shaded light, his body had disappeared, as in a X-ray photograph....Then, you sensed his existence like a dark, flickering shaft of light, fleshless existence, homogenous with yours. (143-144)

However, You suspects after he disappears that he has the face of "a devil," or an of "an evil spirit" beneath such an appearance (37). In a similar manner, You admits resignedly that she does not have a fleshless existence, though she wishes to have one:

You do not believe in the flesh, it is preferable not to have such a thing, if possible.... Your flesh, the setting of your [fluid] freedom, your space, the coordinate axis by which relation is established with the world, has thus been a curse for you. (130)

You open your eyes. You are in the train. This is the space you occupy. As far as you are a lump of material weighing 47 kilograms, you must occupy the space and stick to your place. It will not help however far away you run. To however remote a place you may run, you cannot elude your own body as a skill-less pursuer, nor can you fly from your space to a light, void place. And your sorrow follows you on your escape in the form of your flesh. (160-161)

Still, the existence of You's solid substance is only occasionally mentioned. Her primary characteristic is flexibility, physical and mental. When she sleeps with He, You "lost" her "form, and became a lump of protoplasm" (142). Mental flexibility frequently recurs. You does not know why she is going to Kamakura, or to Kyoto. Uncertain of her
destination, she is "carried to Yokohama" "like a protozoa of undecided form," when the conductor comes to "touch your pseudopodium," by which "your form was decided" (6).

Leaving a restaurant called "The Door" where she has taken late lunch in Kamakura, You finds a taxi with its "door left open" and gets in it "without a clear intention" to do so (48). Coming back from Kamakura, she takes the Inokashira Line instead of the Chūō Line, because she likes it "for a reason which you do not really know" (67). You tells herself to get up early enough for the journey to Kyoto, not only in order to perform her purpose, but also "not to waste the express ticket you have got" (85). In short, You does not make decisions according to clear reason or intention.

This inclination is displayed in Kyoto by Kurahashi's impressive use of metaphors. Having arrived at Kyoto Station, Saeki requests You to stay in the same room at the Kyoto Hotel. He leaves her to make a telephone call, while You thinks that she "can run away now" if she prefers:

- Your possibilities are infinitely divided, with innumerable fragments surrounding you, like the ring around the Saturn sparkling in iridescence. But you are merely standing absent-minded. You do not feel like grasping any fragment out of numerous possibilities. It is more enjoyable to leave it to chance than to choose knowingly. (179)

As we know, You eventually spends a night together with Saeki. Next morning, she plans to go to Nara, "however, the decision is like gelatine which has not yet been solidified," she "may change the decision after a trivial disturbance" (235). We do not know of what she will do on this day, since she will "throw dice at Kyoto Station" (236).
It is evident that this flexibility is positively valued from the bright tone of this final reference to it:

You smile, in the smile are sparkling all the possibilities you have, with your white teeth: the possibility of going to Nara, ... and the possibility of having another affair with Saeki. (236)

The only decision she seems to have made is to write the novel on He. However, she does not know when she will start it, expecting that "the drying up of your money will decide it for you" (237).

You's passivity is demonstrated when she begins to make love with Saeki:

There is nothing you should do anymore. You are material with your eyes closed and softened, material of a human shape, it is yielded to Saeki's hands, and enters the manufacturing process. It is beyond your choice how you are manufactured, you do not have any responsibility,...(229)

In fact, her flexibility and passivity are analogous to those of the text itself. Being a second-person narrative, the text is always being created by the reader, who is assigned the role of the protagonist, You. The text is never a solid entity, but flexible material which accepts, the reader's "manufacturing." In short, the flexible and passive images associated with You also reflect the nature of the text.

Another feature of the text—the collage form—is also shown self-reflexively in numerous references to fragmentation: when You visits the sea at Kamakura, she catches a glimpse of "a fragment of the unexpectedly narrow and low sea," and then observes "scattered bamboo and wooden fragments," "dark green codium, flawed wakame seaweed,
torn sargasso, red seaweed like a split tongue" (8-9). When You decides not to visit You's, He's, or Yuriko's house, she wonders if "the fragment of his existence" "might or might not be there" (65). Even after she comes home to Kichijōji, Tokyo, without dropping in his apartment in Hongō, she has "a dying hope, a hope like a lizard which keeps struggling when it is cut down" (82). The dish she made "as a charm to evoke him" is pot-au-feu, in which materials "cut in square shapes" are submerged (82). When she wakes up, You expects, she will find herself in the middle of "fragments of painful dreams" (85). In the train, she tries to discard "fragments of" her "life" and finds "a fragment of paper" on which she has written a message for He (89-90), and later in Kyoto finds "a fragment of paper" on which Saeki has left a message for her while she is trying to find the characteristics of "a mistress" "among fragments of the affair remaining in your face" (234-235).

I would suggest that these persistent references to fragments function as a synecdoche of the text itself, which is a collage of fragments. This is implied when You comes up with the idea of writing a novel about He:

You must arrange in order all the notebooks, fragments; in short, order his "literary remains."...on the plane you will arrange the accumulation of numerous data, and try to extract a certain meaning....in other words to constitute the whole of He by patching together He's fragments, to complete writing He's <<novel which has not been written>>! (232-233)

It seems that by referring to the text of another novel, the text of Blue journey alludes to itself and thus becomes conscious of its own fragmentation here. By fragmentation, I mean the fact that the text consists of fragments of paragraphs, and is metaphorically illuminated by images of fragments.
Along with the word "fragment(s)," verbs which indicate disconnection or discontinuity, such as "kireru" (be cut), "sakeru" (be split), "tatsu" (cut), recur in the text. In my view, they not only allude to the fragmentation of the text, but also refer to the story in which You and He break up, and to the thematic concern with a self which, in Kurahashi's perception, is inseparable from one's tie with one's past, and one's ties with others.

As I mentioned, You and He have agreed that they can have affairs with other men or women, on the condition that they sleep "with the same person only once" (139). In other words, they are not attached to each other, and appreciate the temporary nature of the relationships with others. Thus, You parts from her temporary lover in the following way:

> You again promptly excise the childish lover who is already a mere wormlike appendix, and throw it into the labyrinth of the city. (44)

When He fails to show up on time for the appointment with You, and she discovers his absence, she perceives:

> The string of the relation between you and him was suddenly cut in two.... You were left in the midst of the labyrinth whose exit you do not know with a section of the string sheered with a sharp blade in your palm. (41)

Note that the words "labyrinth" and "excise" make the above analogous to the previous quotation. However, You's role is inverted, from the subject who excises the object and leaves him in the labyrinth, to the object to be excised and left in the labyrinth. This metaphor of the labyrinth recurs when You indulges herself in a "pathological" fancy that "a mysterious telephone may ring on the line of love wired extensively in the depth of the
labyrinth" into her "ears" (98). The trip to Kyoto itself is implicitly viewed as a wondering in the labyrinth; Saeki's face is once compared to that of "Minotaur" (210), who is semi-human monster in Greek myth, concealed in a maze and offered flesh of virgins every year. Indeed, You decides to "offer" her "own flesh" to him (225).

The separation from He has a completely different meaning to You, because He has been her "twin brother" (143) in an intellectual sense, an "accomplice," and a "co-player." He is the only person who shares performativity, resistance to identification, flexibility and passivity with You. Therefore, when he disappears she feels that the most important tie in her life has been cut. She suffers from perpetual nausea, and thinks that "this nausea is the sign of corruption of the path with the placenta of the world, the process of becoming inhuman and a lump of despair, and the sense of death" for her (70-71). Now that He "betrayed" (150) You, she feels like cutting off every connection with others:

You will live as a female vagabond without a resident card or identification card. In the meantime, people will forget you, and your name will disappear from the register. Then you die from the world to which you have belonged. Also, you will cut off your past, the time like an umbilical cord from the placenta, you will throw away all your memories including He and love, you will begin to live as another you. (107-108)

Later in the hotel room in Kyoto, You dreams of "shearing apart relationships with others, the innumerable ties, the final one being that with Saeki" (221)—or of committing suicide.

However, she reaches an opposite way of viewing the situation toward the end of the novel. She thinks that by "betraying" her and "throwing himself into death," He "relieved" her "from this situation of being accomplices, from the contract of love." You
finds herself "relieved of the pressure of his mind which has bound your mind in a relationship like that of sexual intercourse." She finds herself possessing "freedom more spacious and void than the desert," the freedom "to love someone," and "to write a novel" (224-225).

This contemplation on the self and its relation to others, the world and the past, leads us to the final aspect of the novel’s thematic concerns: imagination which functions as a substitute for active relationship with others either in a sexual sense (masturbation in the place of intercourse), or verbal sense (novel-writing instead of talking). Before that, let me summarize the discussion on imagery in Blue Journey. By comparing objects, persons, writings, feelings, thoughts to others, the text demonstrates its own performative existence as pastiche, rather than essential existence with reference to "reality." By using metaphors of flexible objects, and recurringly showing the passivity of the protagonist, the text demonstrates its own flexibility and passivity which arises from the form of the second-person novel. Further, by calling upon recurrent images of fragmentation, the text represents its own existence as a collage of fragments. Finally, discontinuity in human relationships suggests the self is only called into discourse by its relationships with others; it has no essential existence.

Thematic Concerns: Imaginative Relations of the Self to Others

We have now examined both the metaphorical sequences in Blue Journey, and have investigated some of these images in detail, always bearing their relationship to the theme of the anti-novel in mind. In one sense, it does seem peculiar to discuss the theme of an anti-novel, a genre which appears to dedicate itself to the annihilation of the conventional
distinction between form and content, style and theme. It is my conviction that the obsession with form in Blue Journey can be called thematic; Kurahashi’s text is concerned with the self and other. We might think of the relation of self and other in Blue Journey as being spread out on two axes, one of ‘reality,’ and one of ‘nature.’ On both axes are two possible points: on that of ‘reality,’ there is the possibility of either actual or imaginative relations, on that of ‘nature,’ there is the possibility of a relationship being either sexual or verbal. Blue Journey plots four possible coordinates that result from a combination of the real and natural: sexual intercourse as active sexual relationship, masturbation as imaginative sexual relationship, discussion as actual verbal relationship, and writing novels as imaginative verbal relationship. Both masturbation and writing novels are perceived as "substitutes for," or "defrauding of," actual relationships, because they are operations of imagination, not actions in the "actual" world. He interprets the act of masturbation as follows:

"I perform M [masturbation] by rubbing my imagination. Instead of relating to others, I rub my Aladdin’s lamp in order to relate to others in my dream." (135-136)

Here, the sexual organ is represented as "imagination" and "Aladdin’s lamp" both of which enable their user to transcend reality. This transcendence or suspension of reality is also the function of the novel.

The words "substitute," "defrauding," or being fake, are not negatively perceived in Kurahashi’s work. On the contrary, being fake, and thus performative, is valued positively as establishing a rapport with what Kurahashi would call the "anti-world," while
manifestations of being ‘real,’ ‘serious,’ ‘honest’ deserve contempt, due to their rigid dedication to worldly ideologies, be they moralistic, political or religious. You is disgusted with "believers" in "a newly established religion" (101) and in a political movement (161).

You’s inclination toward performance is accounted for by her becoming feminine. She has been visually raped, and subsequently experienced menarche in the summer when she was twelve years old. In her view, she was previously in "harmony with the world" (116). However, when she was told by the boys to strip on the seashore, and her feminine body was abused by them, she became aware of being feminine. You perceived this incident as "the sentence" the world has given her to make her into a woman (116). The next day, she had her first period, which she considered a carrying out of the sentence. She could not do anything about this fate: the words which describe her condition, such as "collapse," "incapable of controlling," "powerless" (121) suggest that she cannot help being passive against "rape by the world" (116).

To overcome the shock of this "castration," You made up her mind to "sacralize your existence which was made feminine." She succeeded in viewing her vagina, or "the concave-existence which opens up [her] uncanny inside" in the mirror, and became aware that "this is feminine." Then, she concluded:

> Probably, [to adapt] the principle that to lose is to win would be the sharpest strategy. So you said as a charm, I am a woman, I will become a woman.... In other words, I have to perform the role of a woman, you thought. That’s all right, there is no other way for revenge or revelation.... You smiled. (122)
It is evident here that she has chosen to be performative in order to revenge herself upon the world and relieve herself from the execution of the sentence. When approached by many boys later in her life, she visualizes an image of "innumerable male organs planted all over the wall of the world, growing erect and aiming at" her. She also comes to perceive the "fundamental" "relation between [her] and the world" is that "between the molester and [her] as his object" (125).

Her interpretation of male masturbation underscores this relation:

Unlike you, man has that convex, substantial pillar of flesh, that magic wand which invokes imagination. In the man's case, <<M>> [masturbation] inflames his ego into a powerful phallus, and the whole world is formed, with the saliva of the imagination, into the object to which the stick points, as the other, as a woman. The man grasps his ego, and launches out on the conquest of the other. He marches. (137)

This passage recalls the series of male hands which have sexual implications. It demonstrates the autonomous existence of the man's self ("ego" = "phallus"), its ability to project itself, and its clear relationship with the world as object to be conquered. On the other hand, the woman's self, that is, vagina, is invisible from the outside (You tried hard to look at it in the mirror), because it is not projected into the world but excavated into her body. The woman may not even be aware of its existence until the menarche. Even after she becomes conscious of her vagina, it merely exists, containing something without demonstrating any active properties.

You draws two conclusions. First, she defines men as obscene, intellectually inferior, and subservient to the world. He is the only man who is "capable of performing the
comedy artfully and gracefully, while knowing it is a comedy" (128). By "comedy," I would conjecture, life in general, and more specifically love and sex are implied. Secondly, she chooses not to live in the world, but to "observe" the world, not to live "the real life," but to live the "created life," "the life whose content is the loss of life." "You made a hole by eating up with the greediness of a cockroach the life which was packed around" her (128-129). Images of hollowness and excavation are here analogous to female physiology. In consequence, she "began to create a fake life" (129) by writing "a diary" which is a "pastiche," and "numerous fragments of a novel, poetic practice, and stylistic practice" (171). Here, an analogy is drawn between the performativity, or imagination, of being female and that of being a novelist.

In this context, woman seems to be more suited to observing the world instead of living in it, living a life of the imagination rather than the 'real' life, accumulating others' writings to copy them instead of projecting her self into her own writings. However, You can not dedicate herself to the completion of a novel until He leaves; the situation of being accomplices with him has kept her from novel-writing, which needs to be carried out in solitude.

The liaison between You and He deteriorates in both sexual and verbal senses. Sexually, their love making has stopped, because they are so cooperative with each other in performing their assigned roles that they cannot be absorbed in the act of lovemaking and instead end up in "mutual masturbation." They have had passing affairs with other men or women "to maintain the health and balance" of theirs (139). However, they have become tired of the sado-masochistic game in which they consciously perform the roles of betrayer
and betrayed; they thus engage in "mutual masturbation" on a larger scale. Verbally, their words come to "resemble each other extremely and closely" "like the faces of twins," the result of their avoiding competition, or the explosion of "jealousy" which an artist might feel for another artist (173). Instead of conflict, they have chosen harmony. In short, sexual and verbal "intercourses" between You and He are no longer relations between self and other, but, instead, self-reflexive performances.

Such self-reflexive confinement inhibited You and He from any commitment to novel writing, though, in fact, both of them are practising writing fiction. Despite their promise of complete openness to each other, the act is kept secret. Neither of them has let the other read her or his diaries, which are imaginative products. When You asks He why he does not write novels, he "smile[s] and open[s] his arms as if to hide the embarrassment of the taboo being mentioned" (76). I would share You's conjecture that he has been writing. In a similar manner, You is embarrassed when He reads her memo "< <Establish my style>>" in her notebook, and asks her to show her style soon (224-225). Although they may wish to, neither of them can commit themselves to establishing this verbal-imaginative relation to the world, because each of them is tied to her/his second self with whom s/he is verbally homogenous. Only after You is "released from the pressure of his mind" she is "able to begin to write novels" (224).

The collapse of the relation with He, or "the twin brother" with whom You has been homogenous in sexual and verbal inclinations, thus gives birth to the female novelist.
Conclusion

Blue Journey, then, is an anti-novel which nonetheless possesses a definite, although unconventional structure. The narrative displays fragmentation—in its collage form and through images of breakage and rupture—, flexibility and passivity—in its second-person narrative, its non-causal structure, and in its protagonist’s indecisiveness—, and performativity, in its use of non-constitutive metaphors and analogies with performing art. All these features of the narrative are not merely structural but also thematic: they relate to areas such as the perception of the self, and the meaning of writing a novel. The self is no more a whole, solid, active, and consistent entity, but is rather a collage of others’ images, and is flexible, passive, and performative. So too is the novel, which is opposed to the actual world.

I feel that Kurahashi’s use of these structural features to explore notions of the self is also an exploration of ‘femininity.’ I do not mean by this that the metaphorical association of the text with the female body, with its evacuated centre, is an essential representation of what it is to be a woman. Rather, I feel that in Blue Journey Kurahashi is performing woman’s selfhood, writing a consciously-constructed text that, like its protagonist, takes on the role of a woman and indulges in performance. Thus much of the criticism of the novel seems misguided; form and content are in a sense harmonious, because both work to ‘style’ gender; there is no surface which must be penetrated to reveal depth, as male critics would perhaps wish.

It is thus not consistent with Kurahashi’s intention to pretend that she sought for an "order" in this text, if she meant by "order" a certain consistent and solid rule, such as
"beginning-middle-end"; this should be clear from her own idea of the novel, which she sees primarily as an anti-roman. However, the absence of causality, and the construction of a text as principles of association, seems to me to give the text another "order," or the order of chaos, whether we call the result a novel or an anti-novel.

The questions posed here, if not resolved, recur in Kurahashi’s later novels. The narratee’s existence in the text, which is metaphysical and marginal here, is strengthened in the next novel, Divine Maiden. The nature of the relationship between the self and others are explored in "Virginia." Male projection into the ‘real’ world and female excavation of the imaginary world are allegorized in The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q and The Round Trip to Amanon. Indeed, with Blue Journey, Kurahashi begins a series of experiments that will persist in her literary career.
CHAPTER 2: A Narcissistic Narrative: Divine Maiden

If Blue Journey is a novel about preparing for the writing of a novel, Kurahashi's second novel, Seishōjo [Divine Maiden] (1965), is one about the two acts of writing and reading a novel. In Blue Journey, the reader is taken into the text as the protagonist You, the narrative is rendered in the present tense, and the text is always being created by the reader-protagonist. Divine Maiden incorporates the writer and reader, as well as the acts of writing and reading, into the novel. The whole text of Divine Maiden, except for the title, turns out to be a "novel" written by the narrator-agent "I," and a great deal of the story concerns his attempts to interpret notebooks which Miki, the female protagonist of Divine Maiden, writes, fabricating her life. She gives them to "I," asking him to help her recover her lost memory by deciphering them. The text of these notebooks is set into Parts I, II, and IV of this four-part novel. The primary narrator, "I," the secondary one, Miki, as well as the subordinate narrators, talk about their acts of writing and about their results. They also, at times, assume the role of narratees, becoming conscious of their acts of reading, and discussing how they interpret given texts.

Divine Maiden thus shows four important characteristics. First, in terms of its multi-layered narrative structure, we may call Divine Maiden an "embedding narrative,"¹ the primary narrative of which encloses the secondary narrative (and further subordinate narratives). Second, if we focus on the diversity of voices, Divine Maiden falls into the

¹"Embedding" is defined in Prince 25. For details, see Tzvetan Todorov, "Narrativemen," The Poetics of Prose 66-79.
category of "polyphonic (or dialogic) narrative" in Bakhtinian terms. Thirdly, in terms of
the characters' consciousness of their own acts of reading and writing, Divine Maiden is a
self-reflexive—or "narcissistic"—narrative. And lastly, Divine Maiden demonstrates B. H.
Smith's definition of narratives not as rigid "structures" but "as the verbal acts of particular
narrators performed in response to—and thus shaped and constrained by—sets of multiple
interacting conditions" which consist of "circumstantial variables" and "psychological
variables"; the narratives consist of characters' retellings (oral or written), and suggest how
diversified their recountsings are, depending upon circumstances under which such acts are
performed, both the narrators' and narratees' intentions in participating in the acts,
expectations in each other, previous knowledge, and prior experiences.

Published in 1965 as a volume in the series called lunbungaku kakioroshi sakuhin
[Latest Fiction], Divine Maiden challenges Japanese convention not only in narrative form
but also in the fact that it, like Blue Journey, was not originally published as a serial. The
debate concerning Divine Maiden in Japan, however, has centred not upon its narrative

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2"[D]ialogic narrative"; Prince 19-20. It is also defined in Julia Kristeva, "Word,
Dialogue, and Novel."

3"[S]elf-reflexive narrative"; Prince 85. Linda Hutcheon explores this sub-genre in her
Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox.

4See B. H. Smith "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories."

5Divine Maiden was not, in fact, completed all at once; Miki's embedded notebooks
were published as a story called "Watashi no kokoro wa papa no mono" [My Heart Belongs
to Daddy] in 1964.
characteristics—as the critical responses to Blue Journey have—but rather upon its thematic content.

Divine Maiden has two thematic concerns, incest and amnesia, the significance of which I will discuss later. The novel describes two incestuous relationships, one between siblings—a type of relationship Kurahashi has dealt with in her earlier stories—, and the other between father and daughter, a type that will recur in her later novels. The participants in both relationships discuss the significance of incest; as a theme, the motif of incest is repeatedly described and explored. Divine Maiden also explores the amnesia of Miki: Kurahashi has already indicated her interest in amnesia as a subject in an essay, "Kioku soshitsu" [The Loss of Memory] (1965). Although the two themes may seem very different, both do function to question the notion of self; incest, to Kurahashi, is a form of self-love, love for another in whom one "finds complete homogeneity with oneself," to borrow Kurahashi’s words in her short essay, "Insesuto ni tsuite" [On Incest] (1966); amnesia is a form of self-erasure, in that the amnesic subject does not relate her or his present self to her or his former self.

Inevitably, critical responses have criticized the depiction of incest in Divine Maiden, feeling that it is ‘lacking in sincerity,’ and that a sense of morality is missing from it. Kurahashi herself has replied that such criticism is "a tuneless song" in her "Nichiroku" [Diary] (1965), and written "On Incest," responding to moralistic accusation and defending the significance of incest in her fiction.

My consideration of Divine Maiden will be in three parts. In the first, I will discuss both incest and amnesia in Divine Maiden, explaining the self-reflexivity of incest and the
desire for self-extinction in amnesia. The second section concerns metaphors and similes which describe the characters' personal traits. As the plot summary will show, Divine Maiden does have a narrative that features causality and contiguity, unlike Blue Journey. However, "indices," or metaphorical associations, operate as widely in the text of Divine Maiden as they do in that of Blue Journey. The personal traits of each major character are, in fact, a collage of reflections of those of other characters; the text thus becomes a network of associations. I will also examine the nature of metaphors which imply that some characters' "selves" are paradoxical and empty. Not only the primary narrator "I" but also others make such associations, perceiving similarities and contrasts between persons. Even the narrator "I" is subject to the operations of others' associations. Finally, I will discuss the narration of Kurahashi's novel, which is multi-layered and which features many inversions between narrator and narratee. In this aspect, Divine Maiden reprises the multi-diegetic mode found in Kurahashi's previous novella, "Kekkon" [Marriage] (1965), but multiplies and complicates the process of embedding which Kurahashi experimented with there.

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6. It seems to me that the theme of the novel cannot be considered apart from the form. Indeed, they are so interdependent, or even inseparable from each other, that I only wish to use such categorization strategically to unpick the text, and that I do not assume any hierarchy between the categories.

7. "Kekkon" is collected in Kurahashi Yumiko zen sakuhin [Complete Works of Kurahashi Yumiko], vol.5 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1976) 5-70. This novella is a third person narrative, but the narrational viewpoint is that of its male protagonist, K. He receives and reads long letters from his girlfriend, L, which recount the process of her getting married to a man called S. In other words, L's narrative is embedded in the primary narrative.
Before discussing these points, I wish to summarize the story in chronological order, for clarity’s sake. The narrative discourse of Divine Maiden is heterogeneous in terms of both tense and viewpoint; it is achronistic, with flash-backs; many different perspectives often are given upon a single incident. First, I will overview the ‘life story’ of the primary narrator "I," prior to the moment at which the narration commences; this life is presented in a fragmentary and achronistic fashion in the primary narrative. Second, I will summarize the events that follow from the commencement of the narrative present of Divine Maiden until the novel’s conclusion.

"I"'s life until this moment is narrated either without any implied audience within the novel, or specifically to Miki or Writer, his female friend, with whom he finds it easy to talk about his past. References to his life are made continually, and achronistically, in a stream-of-consciousness text.

"I" is an adopted son of a married couple who run a variety of not-too-respectable businesses. He has a sister two years older, whom he calls L. They are from the beginning extremely close to each other, both mentally and physically, and survive World War II, poverty and domestic dissonance together. When "I" is seventeen, he discovers that L has seen him masturbating, imagining L as his love object. Driven by a sense of shame, "I" has sex with L to which she only half-consents; this incident appears close to rape. After this incident, L never talks to "I," and one day, she leaves him and vanishes without a trace.

When "I" attends high school, he is considered the most intelligent student since the foundation of the school, and is also physically well built. He and his classmates, who are called by nicknames such as "Eskimo" and "Marquis," commit occasional burglary,
kidnapping and rape for money and fun. It is after one burglary when "I" has his first, brief encounter with Miki which incites in him an overwhelming desire to understand her. At that time, Miki tells him a story that she tried to sleep with her real father, who made her mother pregnant with her and then left to become a ship's doctor. "I" trusts Miki, and is shocked by Miki's mentioning the word "incest", because it is the word he has tried to forget.

One of the victims of his rapes reports "I" to the high school, and he is eventually forced to withdraw. Writer, who appears in the narrating instance to discuss Miki's writing with "I," is his acquaintance from those days, and is understanding and even at times cooperative with him and his friends. She is a tenant in the apartment which "I"s adopted mother runs. She has written a novel with an English title, Blue Journey, "a novel which is a speculation about He and You, written in the second person" (Divine Maiden, 145). She leaves for Kyoto to visit the relics of her love for her lost lover, "He," just as You in Kurahashi's Blue Journey does, and suddenly sends "I" a telegram. Informed that she needs him, he visits her to find that she is now sick, and restores her health by making love with her. Waking up in the morning, she leaves for the city K where "He," "I" conjectures, may have died. This is the last time "I" sees Writer before the narrating instance commences.

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8Herewith, all the page references are based on the paperback edition of Seishôjo (Tokyo: Shinchô bunko, 1981). All the translations are mine. Part I of this novel has been translated by Dr. Burtha Lynn Burton, who kindly let me have a copy of her translation as well as that of her Ph.D. dissertation, "Divine Maiden: Kurahashi Yumiko's Seishôjo" (U of Texas at Austin, 1983). Although I do not use her translation here, primarily because of its interpretive nature, I appreciate her cooperation, and also, acknowledge my thanks to Mr. Robert Omar Khan who introduced Dr. Burton to me.
After entering university, "I" commits himself to the political movement called anpo, protesting the military contract between the United States and Japan. He becomes a member of the Japan Communist Party for a short while, and then organizes his own sect, functioning as its theoretical leader. Iwata, who appears in the narrating present, is one of his comrades from these days.

Losing interest in the movement, "I" then indulges himself in love affairs, and finally proceeds to graduate school in computer engineering. He is accepted by UCLA, and is waiting for a student visa to be issued by the Embassy of the United States, when it is suspended because the Embassy suspects that "I" has been previously affiliated with the Communist Party. He is frustrated, and then he reads a newspaper article on a car accident which killed Miki's mother and has left Miki in a state of amnesia. "I" visits Miki in the hospital. This is the beginning of their relationship.

The summary above consists mostly of "I"’s actions, or what Barthes would call units of "the proairetic code" (S/Z 19). The narration of Divine Maiden, however, is not constituted in this way. "I"’s narration is rather a series of attempts to solve the enigma raised by Miki—units of "the hermeneutic code" in Barthes’ terminology (Ibid. 19). Structured around the suspense arising from the solution of a mystery, Divine Maiden achieves a definite temporal dimension which is almost absent in Blue journey.9 This will become clear in the summary of the novel’s narrational time below.

9Barthes maintains that "the hermeneutic and proairetic codes" "impose their terms according to an irreversible order" so that the text may "follow a logico-temporal order" (S/Z 30).
Ever since their first encounter, "I" has been thinking of and looking out for Miki, asking himself such questions as "What kind of life has Miki led?" (7) He is given an opportunity to solve this persistent question when Miki gives him her first notebook which she has written before the accident, and asks him to "decode" it. Though the notebook concerns Miki, she "cannot make sense of" it, since she is amnesic. It appears to her to be "like a mysterious hieroglyph dug out of a ruin in the desert" (11). Thus, "I" is assigned to the role of the reader, though the notebook was not written primarily for him. In fact, Miki can make sense of most of the notebook when she makes this request. As she confesses in her third notebook, her real intention lies in making "I" watch over her.

The first notebook relates a love affair between Miki and a middle-aged dentist called Papa, whom Miki suspects to be her mother's ex-boyfriend, and may perhaps be Miki's biological father. Although "I" tries to verify the authenticity of the notebook, he knows so little about Miki's life before the accident that he cannot tell if the notebook is a fabrication.

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10 The circumstances under which the secondary narrative takes place are reminiscent of The Diary of Anaïs Nin (1966-1976) which was primarily written for, and read by, Henry Miller, the female writer's lover. In fact, Kurahashi compares "I"'s tone of speech to that of Henry Miller's in her "Notes on My Works" (Vol. 5 255), from which I would conjecture that the author may even have intended to parody Nin's act of narration for Miller, which was known to the public even prior to the publication of the diary. Moreover, Miki's notebooks in Divine Maiden, especially the first one, challenge the reader's expectations that they will be a purely autobiographical record of the writer's past. Similarly Anaïs Nin consciously fabricates her life in the Diary.

11 In fact, Miki used to live at Himon'ya (碑文谷), which, while it is an actual town's name, also literally means "the valley of hieroglyph."
or a faithful account of her life. However, "I" has a suspicion that the contents of the notebook do not necessarily reflect reality. Reading Miki's insufficiently brief reference to her first encounter with him, "I" adds a footnote:

Anyway, I am a little disappointed; if Miki had taken more note of that incident, it would have offered me a clue to judge how far this notebook is based on fact. (29)

Pursuing his investigation, "I" asks Miki when he visits her after she is discharged from the hospital:

"Do you think the content of the notebook is factual?"
"What does "factual" mean?"
"Haven't you ever thought that it might be a novel?"
"What is a novel?"
"Falsehood. Fabrication."
"What is falsehood?"
"I give up." (74)

"I" expects Miki, the author, to know whether the notebook is a fabrication or a reflection of the truth. She, however, pretends to be unable to answer the question, implicitly making an excuse out of amnesia.

After reading the first notebook, "I" visits Miki, who has now been discharged from hospital and is living at her father's house. "I" has no chance to see Miki's legal father, and

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12This paralleling of 'representation' and 'fabrication' as the functions of notebooks is reminiscent of The Golden Notebook (1962) by Doris Lessing. In The Golden Notebook, a woman writer's four notebooks assume different purposes; "the Yellow Notebook" is intended as fiction, while "the Blue Notebook" is supposed to be the representation of the writer's life, though she meditates upon the distinction between fiction and representation.
is told by her that he is "in a coma and married to being in bed" (69). Trusting Miki’s words, "I" feels her legal father is not Papa. Miki gives "I" another notebook, written after she has been discharged, presumably as a means of encouraging her own mental rehabilitation, but perhaps also assuming "I" as the reader. This assumption is suggested by Miki’s promptness in giving the notebook to "I" when he suggests she write another notebook. By the time Miki starts writing it—around the same time she hands "I" her first notebook—she has recovered a fair amount of her memory, yet pretends to be still entirely amnesic.

The content of the second notebook is mainly events that have happened and thoughts that have occurred to Miki after the accident. "I" can thus verify their authenticity to some extent. Factual references seem to be correct, because "I" says, "what a good memory you have, Miki" (87), but as the reader is told later, the state of Miki’s mind is, in fact, fabricated. Retrospectively, Miki explains her amnesic masquerade as arising from her need to keep "I"’s "desire to understand her" "which is the same as love" for her (216).

"I" kisses Miki while visiting her house, and the kiss reminds him of L. One day, he tells Miki about his incestuous experience, and discusses the meaning of incest in general. He is surprised to hear from Miki that L is now in charge of a café which Miki owns. The shocking news gives him a sleepless night and drives him to start writing the primary narrative. It is here, in Part III of the novel, that the reader is clearly informed of the fact that the text is being written by the narrator "I."

"I"’s main interest in Miki’s past is whether Papa is Miki’s biological father or not, and, if so, whether Miki knew this when she slept with him. He shows Miki’s first notebook
to Writer, whom he has come across after a year's absence and who is now married to a man called S. She guesses that Papa in the notebook is Miki's biological father and they slept together knowing their biological relationship. Later, "I" is surprised to hear the old female servant of Miki's house call her father "papa," because "I" does not expect Miki—not to say the servant—to call her legal father "papa." "I" has imagined Miki's legal father to be a vulgar businessman, not at all like Miki, and certainly not deserving to be called "papa," which implies emotional intimacy in Japanese. However, "I" subsequently meets M, Miki's female friend, and finds that the Papa of Miki's notebook has many characteristics in common with Miki's legal father. "I" then assumes that the Papa of Miki's notebook is her father; he is both biologically and legally her parent.

Finally, "I" visits Miki at her home after her legal father's funeral and hears the servant's monologue: "He was punished for his own bad deeds. He did what beasts do with his own daughter" (189). Here, the tangled thread is apparently finally unravelled; the mystery seems resolved. Miki's third notebook, sent to "I" by express mail, confirms this fact:

Papa is my father, whose flesh and bones are already burnt to ashes. Why did I deceive you [by writing] that Papa was a dentist? No, actually I wrote that to deceive myself. That's all falsehood, that's a fiction.

It was merely a defective fiction, a charm exclusively for myself. I assure you I did not intend to deceive you by it. You yourself believed that it was true. (209-210)

Here, the mystery about Papa is completely solved: he is a fictional character, modelled on Miki's legal and biological father with whom she has committed incest. Miki further
discloses that her father predicted at the time of her birth that they would have an incestuous relationship, and wrote it in his diary which she later read, and became conscious of her destiny. Miki also reveals that her father read her first notebook while she was seriously injured in the hospital, and that she cheated "I" into believing she remained completely amnesiac because she needed "I"'s attention to overcome her crisis of self-dissolution.

Until the final resolution of the mystery, "I" has wanted to 'understand' Miki. In other words, it has been his desire to understand her that has propelled the narrative. Now that he understands the mystery about her past, "I" became aware of another desire—his desire to own Miki. After reading the final notebook, "I" is finally issued a student visa by the United States Embassy. He makes a phone call to Miki to discuss whether he should go to the United States or stay in Japan and marry her. Finding that Miki has decided to enter a lunatic asylum, "I" makes up his mind to choose Miki even though this means giving up the chance to go to the States. Miki, pointing out that he has changed from a state of action to a state of inaction and self-consciousness, refuses his marriage proposal. With little hope left, "I" decides to visit Miki, only to find that she has been waiting for him. They finally achieve a mental and physical consummation of their "conjugation," which is also the conjunction of two separate story lines involving "I" and Miki, and thus bring about the end of the narrative itself.

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13The fact that Miki and her father read each other's notebooks in secret is reminiscent of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's Kagi (The Key). Key is also similar to Divine Maiden in that narration by the female narrator and by the male narrator take turns in the novel.
I have made this overview assuming omniscient knowledge of the story. However, the reader actually reads the narrative of "I," whose knowledge of Miki and of the others is rather limited, and who is influenced by mistaken beliefs about the circumstances under which Miki has written the notebooks. Miki's knowledge of "I"'s life and thoughts, too, is limited. In other words, there is no omniscient narrator in the text, and in fact, the text consists of the characters' interpretations of the psychic states, thoughts and deeds of others and of themselves. No interpretation within the text can claim to be authentic, just as no reader's interpretation of the text can be. Or rather, Divine Maiden demonstrates that narratives are, by definition, nothing but interpretations, or retellings, made by the narrator and narratee, and are thus contextualized.

The four narrational characteristics I mentioned—embedding narrative, polyphonic narrative, narcissistic narrative and narrative as a verbal act—are now made evident. The multi-diegetic, dialogic and self-reflexive narrative explicitly mentions many of what B. H. Smith calls "variables" which "shape and constrain" any narrative, such as "cultural" and "social settings," "the listeners or readers addressed," "the nature of the narrator's relationship to them," "the narrator's motives for telling the tale," "the particular interests, desires, expectations, memories, knowledge, and prior experiences that elicited his telling it on that occasion, to that audience, and that shaped the particular way he told it" (Smith 226).
Thematic Concerns:

Incest as a Self-Reflexive Act, and Amnesia as a Self-Extinctive Act

Before considering the novel's theme, we must first examine Kurahashi's views on incest and amnesia. In her essay "On Incest," Kurahashi assumes that there are three planes to existence: death, society and nature. Human beings exist on the plane of society, but always with the potential of committing the 'crime' of moving to another plane. Eros results in the movement from the plane of society to the plane of death. It is therefore consciously antisocial in that it moves into an imaginary realm, and is thus a 'crime.' Incest, for Kurahashi, results in a descent from the plane of society and human morals to an animal-like state of nature; it is also a 'crime.'

Kurahashi has been accused of not taking incest seriously, but to make this criticism of Divine Maiden is to mistake the novelist's intentions. Kurahashi is not attempting to justify incest, or to shock the reader with an amoral theme. In "Sakuhin nōto" [Notes on My Work], she expresses revulsion for incest in society, and declares that "there can be no justification" for incest (Vol. 5 254-255). Kurahashi's novel is not about incest in society, but about a peculiar injunction in which eros rises out of incest through the process of fiction; she refers to this process as "seika" (聖化) which I translate as sanctification, although the word in Japanese does not carry any Christian overtones.

Fiction, for Kurahashi, is an anti-world in which the moral constructions of society may be put into play, in which crimes may be sanctified and yet still remain as crimes. This concern is raised in discussions regarding incest by "I," Writer and Miki. When "I" asks
Writer to interpret Miki's first notebook, which recounts a seemingly incestuous affair between the heroine and Papa, Writer comments:

[The process of writing] is, in short, to create a fictional love, an impossible, imaginary love between lovers that may [ultimately] sanctify incest between father and daughter. (166)

Toward the end of the novel, Miki admits that she has tried to "sanctify" "my impossible love for my Papa" through writing the first notebook. "I" is also conscious of his own incest being "sanctified" by his retelling the incident:

Although my mouth is about to utter shameful and dark things, which look like infected blood, the words that I emit become as clear as honey, touched by the summer sun, and form a passionate song of ill-fated adventure (99).

Thus the process of sanctification occurs for both Miki and "I" in their re-telling of incest.

The narrator "I" presents his "assumptions" regarding incest to Miki. First, he defines sexual desire as aspiration for "the other who is one's second self—that is, no one but oneself—." Therefore, sexual "conjunctions" of self with other presuppose the condition that "one should be able to find oneself in the other." Thus, "the closer one is to the other, the easier one can become involved with the other." "I"'s conclusion is thus that the incest is the easiest sexual "conjunction," since it involves an other very close to the self; in other words, sex itself is a reflexive activity and incest, the easiest expression of it. On the contrary, eros is "a form of imagination," a "spiritual" and "anti-natural energy" which "one needs to unite with someone remote from oneself." Therefore, it is almost impossible "to fall in love with a person related to you." Only "spiritually exalted families" are allowed
to do that. In "I"'s view, he and L are not qualified as a "spiritually exalted family," while Miki and her Papa are, and are thus entitled to love each other (131-132). "I" considers his case to be "too natural," comparing it with the "conjunction of paramecia," and reducing it to "the level of animals, or rather of plants, of asexual reproduction" (164). To use the philosophical terms Kurahashi outlines above, "I" describes his case as "the crime" of a descent to the place of nature. In contrast, Miki's incest with her Papa is "sanctified" by her writing of the notebook, and thus "anti-natural." Despite "I"'s views regarding L, however, he does say "I love you" (135) to her, implying that their relationship is not merely sex but contains elements of eros, and paralleling Miki's saying "I love you" to her Papa (15).

Although in sharp contrast, "I"'s case and Miki's have features in common. Miki and her Papa, as well as "I" and L, show "tenderness" for each other, after their disastrous initial encounters. Recalling the physical pain which he and L shared the first time they had sex, "I" maintains:

"Afterward, I was moved beyond self-control by L's tenderness. Yes, it was tenderness: the tenderness of a sort which can never occur between people who are not blood relatives." (135)

In a similar manner, Miki recollects that the first time she made love with her papa it was a failure, and observes in her third notebook:

If we were not father and daughter, our love would have been still-born. Thanks to our strong existential tie as the father and daughter, our love achieved a mysterious tenderness. Papa loved what he created, I who was created loved my creator. This is an elect love, as the love between you and L is. (221)
It becomes evident here that Miki is conscious of the parallel between the incestuous couples. She may be inspired by "I"'s narration of his incest, in that she refers to "tenderness" between the related persons. In both cases the physical unions induce mental love. Therefore, Miki defines "I"'s case, as well as her own, as "elect love," in the above excerpt from her third notebook.

However, the fact that they have not only had an incestuous sexual relationship, but that they have also fallen in love with their second selves gives Miki, L, and "I" an overwhelmingly strong sense of dishonour. Miki writes in her third notebook:

"I feel so ashamed of loving him so much that I almost want to bite off my tongue. To love someone equals a dishonour, especially if you realize that you have loved yourself through someone else; it is a dishonour which almost deserves death." (211)

Here, Miki finds incestuous love to be a self-reflexive, dishonourable act. "I"'s case is doubly self-reflexive, in that he first engaged in masturbation with L as the imaginary object, was then seen by L, and finally raped her. In other words, he shifts from one form of self-reflexive act (masturbation) to another (incest).

In order to escape from this state of self-reflexivity, the three characters (Miki, L and "I") attempt to erase themselves. L chooses to mutilate herself and by so doing, tries to distance herself from "I," who is her second self. She then runs away from him, to erase herself from him not only verbally, but also physically. "I" succeeds in distancing himself from his past by narrating it to Miki and Writer. He does not confess his own actions, but instead assumes the role of a "troubadour" (99) and recounts his past as if "in the third
person" (158). His consciousness of performance distances himself from his past. In the primary narrative, he narrates incidents and events in the past, but they "do not seem to belong to" himself. When the Embassy of the United States defers issuing a student visa to "I," suspecting he has previously been a member of the Japan Communist Party, "I" tells Iwata that "now that we are no one; we can be anyone" (93). This phrase implies that "I" is aware of discontinuity in his self-history, and that he can perform different roles in different contexts. "I" also claims to Iwata: "I'm not what I am, but I am what I am not" (93: given in English in the original), parodying lago's words in Othello. Here, too, "I"'s disbelief in the notion of the self as a constitutive and consistent whole is clearly expressed. He thus escapes self-reflexivity by the exhaustion of the self.

I wish, in this section, to focus upon the three ways in which Miki, the centre of interest of the hermeneutic code, tries to overcome the self-reflexivity of incest. First, she plans "to have a relationship with another man" (222) so that she may open the closed circuit of incestuous love with her Papa, and proposes "I" to marry her. Secondly, she fictionalizes her incest in the first notebook. Third, in response to the catastrophic news that her Papa will die soon, she chooses to lose her memory — in fact, her amnesia is not "organic, caused by the car accident" (213), but psychogenic, chosen by her own will.14 By making this choice, she annihilates her former self. When people describe her past, she

14According to Kurahashi's definition (based on psychoanalytic cases) in "The Loss of Memory," "organic" amnesia is caused if "the brain itself gets hurt" (255). On the other hand, "psychogenic" amnesia is desired and chosen by the patient who wishes to "distance [her/him]self from the others," by "abandoning 'words' which connect [her/him]self with others" and by "erasing [her/his] past which links [her/him]self with the world" (257).
feels as though she were "listening to things in my previous life," and remarks: "Having lost
my memory means having lost myself" (79). When she tries to recount her past based on
information provided by others, she sounds as if she were "narrating in the third person
about someone else’s deeds" as "I" puts it (80)—an almost identical expression with that
which he uses to describe his own narration of the incident between himself and L.15

Conscious of the fact that she is not identical with her former "self" prior to the
accident, Miki distinguishes her "self" before from herself after, either by emphasizing the
former self, which she hardly knows, or by referring to her former "self" not as "I" but as
"Miki."

"I" grasps the delicate distinction between "Miki" (her former "self") and "I" (her
current self). When Miki asks him, "What kind of relationship do you have with me, if I
may ask?" "I" answers:

"I am your fiancé."
"Do you mean that you are Miki’s fiancé?"
"Yes. Miki and I are engaged." (85-86)

It does not take too long for "I" to adopt the distinction in naming. Answering Miki’s
question as to when Miki and "I" became engaged, he says:

"Last summer. You—can I say Miki rather than you?—
Miki suddenly made a long distance call to me and proposed
to me. Of course you do not remember, do you?" (86)

15In "The Loss of Memory," Kurahashi introduces a patient with psychogenic amnesia
whom she has interviewed, and who "narrates in the third person" about himself. He writes
just as if he were another person looking at him (262). This case seems to form the
foundation for many aspects of Miki’s character.
"I" senses that Miki will feel uncomfortable if he assumes consistency in her personal history, so he chooses to retell a part of her past in the third person, just as she does.

"I"'s acceptance of the split in Miki's life makes a sharp contrast with the way that M, Miki's female friend, treats Miki's amnesiac mind. M crudely supposes Miki to be the same self as before the accident, and says: "Can't you recollect Ella Fitzgerald? She is a jazz singer who you like" (82). Here, M uses the personal pronoun "you" to refer to Miki's former self, and the present tense ("like") to describe a part of her past. Apparently M does not care that Miki cannot relate her former "self" to her current "self." Moreover, M thinks that ideally there should not be any discontinuity in the history of Miki's self-consciousness, and that she has to help Miki fill in the gaps by providing the lost parts of her past.

"I" deals with Miki with delicacy in another regard: he does not "talk about himself" unless asked. Miki conjectures that he "restrains himself," out of care for her, whose "mind is too weakened to become interested in others" (87). In contrast, M claims to be Miki's "only female friend," (78) which Miki cannot verify. Miki reflects:

Who s/he is means what kind of relationship s/he had with I. However, now that I have disappeared, it is a mere story to me if I hear of the past I and the person shared. (87)

We can thus comprehend that not M but "I" succeeds in establishing a "strangely abstract, but sufficiently stable friendship" (8) with Miki; he does not force her to regain his past, her lost self, or her lost relationship with him. Miki appropriately compares this process of

16Kurahashi points out in the above-mentioned essay that the amnesic patient "hardly observes others" (262).
establishing the new friendship to "something gradually creeping out of a life-size hole in the wall cut in a man’s shape" (85). Miki can recognize "I"’s position in her past only as "a hole"—an absence—, though she does not doubt that he has existed for her former "self."

"I" knows, too, that he exists for her "only after the accident," saying that they "perceive each other through bodies without history, like two torsos amputated from their lower bodies" (8-9).

According to Miki’s third notebook, she has completely returned to her "original self" by the time she is discharged, "except for the only dark hole, the well of memory which should be filled with something terrible: needless to say, [it is filled with] Papa" (215). On the day when she is discharged, Miki unexpectedly gets the first notebook back from Papa. She compares "reading it" to "slowly pulling out the gauze that plugs the deep hole in [her] memory" (215). In a similar manner Miki compares her lack of memory to a hole in her third notebook:

My mind remained still dug up, like an archaeological excavation. Holes of different sizes gaped in my memory, and I often told lies just to put lids on them to suit the occasion. (212)

Interestingly, "I" often compares his recollections to "a well" (144), a "Laocoon of inflamed memories" which he can "slowly pull out" (207), or "a hole" which is "filled with snakes" (72). These coincidental expressions imply Miki and "I"’s verbal homogeneity, and display their common view of life as not linear, but oddly shaped, full of holes that are empty or filled up again.
It is significant that Miki recovers all her memory when Papa says to her, "I have heard that I am going to die soon":

> It was then that my self-centred flower of amnesia was shredded to pieces. I remembered everything, and returned to my original self. (222)

By regaining the very knowledge she wanted to forget, Miki recovers from her amnesia. Her attempt to erase her ‘self’ by falling into amnesia fails.

We have seen three efforts by Miki to erase herself, of which amnesia is the most important in terms of the novel’s hermeneutic code. Having failed to remove herself from that part of her past which she wants to forget, Miki thinks of making a new choice, a fourth way of overcoming the self-reflexivity of incest. This is to become a lunatic in order again to differentiate herself from her situation. Still pretending to be suffering from amnesia, she tells "I":

> "It seems to me that my current self remains a fake self, and that I am undergoing fake rehabilitation; I cannot regain my original self until death....Cannot we deliberately go mad?"
> "Perhaps we can, but then we are fake lunatics. And authentic lunatics are worse than fake human beings. [Such an act thus] means that you debase yourself to a level beneath that of human beings."
> "But, it seems to me that the process of regaining my lost memory is like facing a horrifying face, and thus becoming a lunatic out of fear." (95-96)

It is evident that Miki hopes to distance herself from her memory of incest. She re-emphasizes this wish toward the very end of her third notebook: "Have you ever thought of becoming a lunatic by your own will when you are in a completely lucid state of mind?"
She reasserts this idea when "I" makes a phone call to her near the end of the novel: "I will go to a lunatic asylum" (228). However, Miki does not carry out this plan: instead, she abandons "her body to the marriage" (234) with "I," as he puts it.

To summarize the discussion in this section, the two incestuous affairs in this novel are, unlike incest in the actual world, cases of "elect love," in which spiritual love accompanies physical union. However, to love the other in incest, means to love oneself. This ultimately self-reflexive situation necessitates that those who become involved in such affairs distance themselves from their current "selves," and abandon their second selves, their closed orbits of love, and their past. Methods of distancing include self-mutilation, flight, relationships with outsiders, which may be sexual (conjugation), or verbal (narration), falling into psychogenic amnesia, and fictionalizing one's past (novel writing).

However, among these solutions, conjugation, narration, and novel-writing result in a paradox. These acts presume the existence of another person to marry, to narrate to or to write for—in short, the other with whom to consummate the acts. This other must share at least some features with the subject, and in participating in marriage, narration or reading, s/he comes to know the subject person better, and becomes approximated to the person who married her/him, narrated to her/him, and whose novel s/he read. Thus, the attempts to extinguish the self which result from the self-reflexive act of incest finally only produce another self-reflexive act. "I" has discontinued his relationship with L. However, he tries to understand Miki, who, like himself, appreciated the discontinuity of life and the performativity of words. While doing so, "I" changes from a man of activity to a man of
consciousness, just as Miki is a woman of consciousness. Only then is he physically united with her.

Characterization, Performance, and Inversion of Identity

In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the frequent use of metaphors in Blue Journey which illuminates characters' fragmentary, flexible, passive and performative selves, showing the characters are no more than collages of images. Divine Maiden also resorts to metaphorical presentations of characters, rejecting descriptive representation in a manner which is reminiscent of André Breton's aversion to description in "Manifeste du Surréalisme" [Manifesto of Surrealism]. I thus wonders: "What meaning can it have to describe Miki's face, her body and her clothes?" (6). While "I" persistently observes Miki, and others, his perceptions of them are not merely descriptive, but are formed into metaphorical constructions which compare and contrast known with the unknown.

I divide my discussion in this section into four parts. First, I will examine "perceived similarities" (Brooks 91) between couples such as M and Mother, Writer and Miki, Writer and L, L and Miki, in terms of their personal traits. Secondly, I will analyze such associations and contrasts: the existence of the last three pairs of women are centred upon paradoxes and voids, while M and Mother embody constitutive, referential, and rigid

\[17\] Here I have in mind a specific phrase which follows:

And the descriptions! There is nothing to which their vacuity can be compared; they are nothing but so many superimposed images taken from some stock catalogue, which the author utilizes more and more whenever he chooses ... (André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism" 7)
representations of 'reality.' Thirdly, I will point out that these associations and contrasts are
mainly made from "I"'s perspective, and that similarities between "I" and "He" are perceived
by Writer. Finally, I will discuss how "I"’s status as an interpretant or subject who
'consumes' objects is reversed by Miki and Writer into that of an interpreted and
'consumed' object.

I do not intend to testify as to how authentic "I"’s—and others’—perceptions of
caracters are, but to examine his limited and at times unreliable discourse which displays
the performative function of words. While being aware of any observer’s limitations, I will
'play with' the words themselves. In one sense, the only point of view in Divine Maiden
is that of "I" since he narrates all of the novel. (Even Miki’s notebooks are presented to the
reader only through "I"’s reading.) However, I feel that I am justified in representing the
words and perceptions of others, which are narrated by "I," as to some extent autonomous
of him. My reasons for doing this will become clear in the course of my discussion.

Miki’s mother (herewith, Mother) and M, Miki’s female friend share some
characteristics, such as ignorance, blind admiration for purity, and the frequent use of
stereotyped expressions which suggest their common view of language as fixed entity.
Mother appears only in Miki’s first notebook, and therefore, only as a fictional character,
while M’s portrait in the first notebook is confirmed from "I"’s viewpoint when he meets her
later in the novel. One of their common features (the same pronunciation of their names)
is explicitly mentioned by Miki, while others are visible in her first notebook; further
similarities emerge if we compare Miki’s observations with "I"’s.
Explicit comparison between Mother and M first occurs when Miki begins to introduce M. She writes:

M’s name is Misao (みさお). By an interesting coincidence, my mother’s name has the same pronunciation, though the latter is written 操 as a Chinese character. (42)

Miki does not fabricate their names; the newspaper article on Miki’s car accident quoted by "I" gives her mother’s name as Miyashita Misao, and M’s business card which she hands to "I" later shows her name to be Masuda Misao. This does not seem to be merely "an interesting coincidence." To use a rhetorical term, it is a case of "praeteritio," in which what is really significant is presented in such a way that the significance is negated or made oblique. Miki’s first notebook is not usually redundant, but it returns to the phonetic identity of the two names in the following dialogue between Miki and Mother:

"You know, Miss M said,..."
"Why do you call her Miss M? She has her name, Misao."
"Because it has the same pronunciation as your name, Mother." (58)

The claimed homophone suggests a mental affinity between Mother and M. Semantically, "Misao"—especially when represented by the Chinese character above—literally means chastity. Miki relates in her notebook that Mother does not like to listen to any obscene topic of conversation, that she suspiciously watches Miki’s behaviour, and that she loves

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18 According to the definition of "Praeteritio" (or its equivalent, "Occupatio") in Richard A. Lanham, ed., A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms: A Guide for Students of English Literature 79, 68-69, it is a rhetorical technique in which "[a] speaker emphasizes something by pointedly seeming to pass over it."
"the Chinese character (pure) in (virginity)" (31). To quote Miki’s expressions, she has an "obstinate control system" in her which "must be more powerful than the mechanism of sexual control any holy woman in the Middle Ages would have had," and Mother looks "as if she believed in the Immaculate Conception." Miki indulges in a wild fantasy that she drives Mother "crazy" and turns her into a "sex-maniac" by breaking to her the news that she has slept with Papa (18).

Instead of telling Mother about the first night with Papa, Miki discloses it to M. M listens to Miki like a "generous nurse and nun" (35). The metaphor is reminiscent of the "holy woman in the Middle Ages" to whom Mother is compared. M’s final response is to say: "You are disgusting!" and "How can you smile after sleeping with a man?" (38). Mother would have presumably responded in the same way. In other words, M functions as a substitute for Mother.

Miki aptly calls M "Miss Virtue" (45), saying "the word ‘innocence’ is almost made for M" (53), who looks "like a girl depicted by Renoir" (43). Miki feels an irresistible temptation to "enslave this wonderful Miss Virtue and corrupt her completely" (45), just as Miki dreams of scandalizing Mother and arousing her sexual impulses. Again, M and Mother are doubles.

A further characteristic shared by Mother and M is their ignorance of English words. When Mother asks Miki what she has written to her father from Tōhoku where they have made a trip, Miki answers in English:

"I belong to my daddy." [given in English in original]

Mother stiffened her face, wearing a shell of indifference, merely because of the discomfort caused by my using English words which she could not understand! (60)
Miki's sentence is, in fact, the modified title of a jazz song, "My Heart Belongs to Daddy." She mentions the title again when she confesses to M about the affair with Papa. At this time, due to the noisy environment, and the possibility of the conversation being considered embarrassing in its subject matter, Miki and M communicate by writing each other notes:

> I belong to daddy. [given in English in the original]
> ?
> There was a song of this title, don't you know? (37)

The scene not only shows M's unfamiliarity with jazz, but also implies her ignorance of English, and thus her resemblance to Mother. The latter point is underscored by "I"'s dialogue with M which follows. Remembering that Miki describes her lesbian relationship with M, "I" asks:

> "Did you and Miki have a lesbian relationship?"
> "I cannot answer such a question." M stiffened her face; she apparently did not understand what the phrase "lesbian relationship" meant. (174)

M makes the same response of stiffening her face as Mother does in the preceding citation. If we compare the two observations made separately by Miki and "I," their similarity is evident.

Let us now turn to stereotyped expressions both Mother and M like to use. When Miki and Mother make a trip to Tōhoku, they happen to meet a middle-aged man:

> "Such a nice gentleman," said Mother in the bus, "and he is very handsome, too."
> Oh, Mother always describes others in such stereotypes. (60)
In a similar manner, "I" is irritated with M's "amazingly scanty" "expressive capacity" when he tries to get her to disclose her secret knowledge about Papa:

She [M] hardly used words which would intoxicate my imagination, merely listing in an unenthusiastic way abstract, or rather, little inadequate words and stereotypes, catchphrases and so on, such as "playboy type". According to her summary, the incident which happened to Miki and Papa is categorized by a tiresome label such as "a love affair of a sly girl and a middle-aged playboy". (178-179)

The above quotations not only imply Mother's and M's poor vocabulary, but also their views upon language. Stereotypes are acceptable when one assumes a stable correspondence between a word (the signifier) and an object (the signified): if an object can be represented in one way, it is sufficient, and further search for expression, which would "intoxicate [the] imagination," is unnecessary.

Miki and "I" are critical of Mother and M because the latter two characters do not see that synonyms can stand for different objects. When Miki asks Mother:

"Please tell me about Papa."
"What about your father?"
Mother did not even wonder why I said Papa, though I always call my [legal] father Father, instead of Papa. (61)

In Mother's view Papa equals Father, because "papa" and "father" are synonyms in dictionaries. M shows insensitivity of the same sort when asked by "I" about Papa:

"Miki likes middle-aged men of that type—of the type like Miki's papa."
"When you say 'papa' do you mean Miki's father?"
"Yes, Miki's papa was a charming guy...."
"...He [Miki's papa] was good at playing golf, but he liked yachting more, and was a regular participant at a yachting club."

"It's Papa exactly!" I cried, but M not understanding me, raised her eyebrows foolishly.
"What do you mean?"
"I mean, Miki's father is like the man Miki slept with."
"You might be right, though I haven't met Miki's man."
"Why would Miki call the man Papa?"
"Because he was about the same age as her papa and had some qualities in common, I would guess." (179-180)

M cannot distinguish Papa as a fictional character's name from the commonly used noun "papa." Therefore, she does not share "I"'s surprise to know that perhaps Papa is identical with Miki's papa. "I"'s negative observation regarding M--"foolishly"--reveals his critical attitude toward her insensitivity in the use of words.

Such a rigid view of words which is shared by M and Mother opposes the flexible and performative use of words which "I," Miki, and Writer utilize. The words "I," Miki, and Writer employ to narrate the parts of their past about which they are most sensitive as compared to flexible and elusive things. When "I" recounts his crimes of burglary and incest to Miki in the person of a "troubadour," he comments that:

Although I am about to tell a shameful darkness like infected blood, the words I have uttered are touched by the summer sunshine, become as transparent as honey, and turn out to be a passionate song of ill-fated adventures. (99)

Along with the discrepancy in nature between content ("I"'s deeds) and form (words), the elusiveness of form in terms of its colour and texture is implied in the simile regarding honey.
Another metaphor of elusiveness is that of the heat haze. Miki meditates upon her words in her first notebook:

The words which I had secreted had the nature of charms to melt reality and confine me within a heat haze fluctuating on the border between the real and the unreal. (217)

Here, the heat haze functions as a metaphor of the surreal nature of words, which are also comparable to charms. This metaphor also occurs in another context, when Writer tells "I" of He, her lost lover:

"He fled, one day, abruptly," said Writer. I was told this so many times and her intonation when she said this phrase was almost like a phrase of Pierrot Lunaire [composed] by Schönberg. And the colour of her pupils when she smiled was as light as the heat haze so that I could hardly bare to look at them. (146)

Her pupils, which the reader expects to be brown, escape being fixed in reality by appearing as light as the heat haze, and display performativity. "I" recurrently describes the expression on her face when telling him about He, and on another occasion, remarks that the colour of her eyes appeared to be "as light as the day dream" (147). This, too, gives surrealistic and performative impression.

Another metaphor which occurs here compares the tone of Writer's voice to music, which is the most performative of the arts, since it has little referential quality to be deciphered. Musical sound does not convey any constitutive meaning; it is rather flexible and elusive. In the novel, verbal expressions are compared to music, and thus their
performativity rather than their content is emphasized. Musical metaphor is recurrently used in *Divine Maiden*; thus, when Miki refers to her Papa, "I" observes:

"But Papa exists," Miki said, in a singing tone, looking up at the sky. Instead of being transmitted to me to convey a definite meaning, her words floated in the air, becoming something semi-transparent like a jellyfish. (96)

Here, a metaphor of music, as well as the elusive object (a jellyfish), is employed to symbolize the flexible and performative nature of Miki’s words.

Having compared common personal traits between M and Mother, and contrasted their view on words to those of "I," Miki and Writer, I will discuss two characteristics shared by Writer, L and Miki: paradox and emptiness. Before entering into the discussion, I note the fact that some similarities between them are observed and delineated by "I" and that the others remain implicit in the text. "I" calls Writer his "fake elder sister" (157), contrasting her with his real elder sister L: "I" finds his first kiss with Miki identical with a previous kiss with L: and "I" notices the similarity between Writer’s and Miki’s ways of smiling, and between the occasions when he had sexual intercourse with them. In these cases, "I" explicates the resemblances. The other resemblances do not explicitly manifest themselves as similarities, and they can be associated with each other solely by the reader’s competence to "constitute a braid" (*S/Z* 160), to use Barthes terminology. However, again, the text consists mainly of "I"’s words. In other words, "I" is still in the privileged position of the observing subject, though he may not always be able to arrange fragments of his perceptions himself.
The images of the three women whom "I" perceives contain paradoxes and voids. Writer and Miki are paradoxical in that they talk in "a bright voice" (66, 155) when they are in despair—when Miki realizes her incestuous relationship with Papa has deteriorated, and when Writer leaves Kyoto to see He who, "I" presumes, is dead. Miki and L appear to be paradoxical in the metaphors employed to describe them: L is compared to "the sun (...) in the dark" (190), "the black sun," "the midnight sun" (204), and her eyes to "the eclipse" (98). The metaphors suggest that they exist only as absences, which parallels "I"'s definition of He: "I" knows of "He's existence, or rather, his absence" (145), because "I" never receives sufficient information regarding who He is. In a similar manner, the existence of the sun in the dark, the midnight sun, or the sun in eclipse, is only perceived as an absence.

The motif of emptiness is not irrelevant to that of paradox. The sun image is also associated with L's vagina, or "the grotesque sexual mouth" (190) in "I"'s illusion, and alludes to her internal void. The existence of a void inside Writer's body is implied when "I" imagines that "her meaninglessly bright voice" in despair, one of paradoxical personal traits of her, "may have been void which oozed out of her vagina" (155). The internal void is emphasized here in reference to female physiology, which is associated with passivity, flexibility and performativity in *Blue Journey*. Writer tells "I" an absurd story that she is horrified by the holes which may draw her into "néant," or nothingness, and that she has tried to "put a lid on every hole" including "the one which has gaped in [her] body" since [He] left (146). Instead of openly confessing her current sexual inactivity, Writer implies the nothingness inside her.
While Writer is conscious of her own internal emptiness, "I" is aware of the hollow space inside Miki’s body. "I" imagines "a mercilessly excavated darkness" (6) beneath Miki’s clothes on his first encounter with her. At that time, "I" indulges himself in the fantasy that he is sailing on "the sea which spreads itself inside Miki" (122).

The physical internal void is paralleled by mental emptiness. "I" considers Writer and Miki to be in the same category in terms of their "blank minds" (159), whose passivity enables him to narrate his past. The hollow inside Writer’s mind is He’s absence, which is compared by "I" to "a fish-shaped nothingness" into which "I" tries to delve with "a hand of curiosity which is like the hand of an obstetrician who investigates the gaping mouth of the womb" (145-146). The physical hollow functions here as a metaphor for the mental hollow. In Miki’s case, the blankness of her mind is emphasized by the reference she makes to her lack of memory: "I" is attracted by her words when Miki says he can "come into me, for it is empty inside me anyway" (68).

The female characters hide their physical emptiness in almost identical clothes: Miki wears "a white knit coat" with "a stole of the same yarn" on her first encounter with "I" (6), while Writer "enclos[es] her slim body in a white Astrakhan coat," tying up "a muffler of the same material as the coat" (155) when she is leaving Kyoto.

On the other hand, both female characters hide their mental vacuums behind smiles, which, "I" mentions, are similar to each other. "I" realizes Miki’s smile is a meaningless, "abstract" and "insecure" one "which has bloomed out of amnesia," even though he would like to interpret it as a sign of utmost intimacy, like that "between siblings" or "between perfect accomplices" (67). Towards the end of the novel, Miki says: "I smile whenever I do
not know how to respond" (228). Writer performatively shows "several ways of smiling" to "I" and says: "I could try for five more types of smiling if I had a mirror" (144). In short, Miki and Writer do not smile because they are delighted or amused, but through a lack of internal impulse. On other occasions, Writer and Miki smile when they think of He and Papa. "I" observes that Writer's smile is "mystifying," while her eyes appear to be like "a day dream" (147) when she mentions He. "I" associates Miki's smile when she mentions Papa, with "a smile one would show when one is biting into ones inside" (123). I would suggest that their smiles are not projected into the actual world for the purpose of, say, attracting others' attention, or showing subservience to the world, but signify their excavation of hollowness into themselves, their imaginary world.

Next, I will examine how "I" deals with the voids in Writer's and Miki's minds and bodies. Although "I" is interested in their mental voids, he restrains himself from being too inquisitive. However, "I" has the opportunity to enter both Writer's and Miki's physical voids in sexual intercourse, and he notices that the two acts of lovemaking are almost identical: the night with Miki is "an almost exact reproduction of the night ['I'] has spent with Writer" (233). Since he does not describe in detail sexual intercourse with Miki, saying "citing the part I have written will be sufficient" (233), I will examine solely his presentation of this night with Writer. "I" compares her to "a slim plant," "a light coloured orchid" whose "fragile stalk is broken" by "an ominous phonecall" which has conveyed bad news about He. "I" tries to "become another plant with a tender cortex," and makes his "legs and arms as soft as a poplar bent by the wind," and then enters her:
There was no danger. I stopped raging like an animal, and, as another plant which has been grafted onto her, felt the time which overflowed and circulated calmly between me and her. I enlarged her at the same pace as it takes to acquire another annual ring, and simultaneously and in the same rhythm, was tightened undulatingly. It was a rhythm beyond the ability of animals to sense, a botanical rhythm, with an extremely long period. (152-153)

This phrase conveys the passivity, serenity, composure which are usually ascribed to plants.

My discussion is now moving to the next topic, that of the multi-layered inversions which take place in the perceiving subject, "I." First, his way of being is inverted. In the previous citation, it is evident that "I" is deliberately changing his state of existence from that of an animal to that of a plant. When he is with women he considers sexual objects, "I" uses many metaphors of animals to describe his phallus: "violent crab's claw" (196), "as disgraceful as a fox which disturbs a poultry farm" (203), "a broken horn of a fighting bull" (204) and the like. In contrast, he wishes and tries to metamorphose himself into a plant when he is with Writer or Miki. Inserting his phallus, which "I" aptly and recurrently calls his "ego," into a female body becomes no longer a conquest or self-projection, but a passive union like being "grafted" (153), or the "medical treatment" (154, 233) a doctor ("I") performs for a patient (Writer or Miki), not self-oriented but other-oriented.

This transformation occurs as "I" begins to appropriate female passivity. Even beyond his own consciousness, his state of existence is being associated with that of the female models in terms of emptiness. In Part II, "I" is surprised that Miki's room is "clear of any surprising object" (76); later, he mentions the "scarcity" of furniture which gives his room an impression like that of "a model of a skeleton" (209) in Part IV. Though "I" makes no
association between the two rooms, their similar appearances suggest a parallel between "I" and Miki.

Thus, a new inversion takes place in terms of the subject who is now subject to observation. In the above-examined two cases, "I" either implicitly or explicitly perceives the transformation. Although "I" is conscious of this transformation, he is "embarrassed" when Miki points out to him that his way of being has changed from that of "a wolf in hunger" to that of "a dandelion clock" (231). This is because he unexpectedly discovers in Miki another perceiving subject who observes him while "I" has thought he has been observing her. Miki's third notebook reveals that she has pretended to be "a poor patient" in amnesia "to keep him as a doctor" (211), while "I" has thought he has voluntarily assumed the task of a doctor to "nurse" Miki (66), or that of "a psychiatrist" (77). What has appeared to be "I"'s free choice is in fact under the control of Miki's will.

Another perceiving subject who is observing "I" is Writer. In fact, if we connect Writer's, Miki's and "I"'s observations, "I" is compared with He, Writer's lover, just as "I" compares Writer to L and Miki. First, both "I" and He are represented as K: When "I" refers to He, "I" simply writes "K" in a bracket after "He" with no explanation (147). Miki refers to "I" as "K" or "Mr K" in her first and second notebooks, and "I" adds a footnote: "Note: this [K] indicates me" (78). This is not "I"'s real name, however, to judge from the fact that M calls him "Mr **" (171), ** being a common sign of omission in this text. Therefore, K has another function than that of signifying his name—I would conjecture K suggests the homogeneity of "I" and He. In a further example, Writer writes "I" a letter from Kyoto, in which she recounts an absurd incident in which "a male deer as beautiful and masculine
as [I] butted [her] tailbone with the shortened horns on its head" (148). This episode is given meaning only if we associate it with an incident, narrated from "I"’s perspective, which may be either imaginary or real. In this incident, "I" watches Writer and a doctor, and sees the doctor kiss "the deepest hollow of her naked back" (150). After the incident, Writer tells "I" that the doctor is, in fact, He. In both the above examples, "I" is associated with He, which makes "I" part of the associative paradigm he has already established.

Furthermore, Miki observes that "I" is trying to enclose himself inside her. Her speculation is similar to "I"’s speculation about He, Writer’s lover who has disappeared: "Perhaps her [Writer’s] He has vanished into her" (147). In other words, the relationship between Writer and He offers a *mise-en-abyme* of that between Miki and "I." Writer, in fact, makes a parallel between He and "I". Why, then, do He and "I" decide to escape into women? Miki realizes that "I" has ceased to try to conquer the world after all his attempts to "consume the world" "like a leech" (231). We may recall here the contrast made in *Blue Journey* between the male projection into the ‘real’ world analogous to the male sexual organ, and the female excavation into the imaginary world.

Another inversion also suggests "I"’s surrendering his role as a conqueror, or a consumer, of the world. In Kurahashi’s novella, "Vâzinia" [Virginia] (1968) "perceiving is eating" (9). In a similar manner, in *Divine Maiden* "I" compares the act of perceiving to that of eating. Since he assumes the role of the perceiving subject, it is primarily he who ‘eats.’ Thus, "I" wishes "to become an eye, or a big fish, and [thus] devour Miki" (98). This synaesthetic expression, in which the organ the primary function of which is to observe (an eye) also purports to eat, synthesizes the two acts of perceiving and eating.
As we have seen, Miki has been observing "I" in the novel. "I" realizes toward the end of the novel that he is destined to be eaten by her. When he is going to read Miki's third notebook which has already been sent to him by express mail, "I" is "attracted to a golden spider which is waiting for me, displaying its jaws of death, like an insect caught in the spider's web" (209). "I"'s position is inverted from that of the subject who eats to that of the object who is eaten. Indeed, "I" employs a similar metaphor when he enters Writer's body: he compares her female organ to "the snare of an insectivorous plant filled with seductive juices" (153). These two metaphors are similar in that in both "I" is conscious of his being an object to be eaten by women.

The relationship between Writer and "I" offers another parallel to that between Miki and "I." When Writer smiles "with her mouth shut," "I" feels as if his "soles of feet" have been "licked by a hyena or the like" (101). "I" thus compares himself to an object to be eaten by a hyena—or Writer—, to carrion. The connotation also applies to Miki's metaphor for "I"'s eyes: "his eyes are as transparent as those of a dying animal" (85). While making this observation, Miki is smiling, just as Writer is when "I" compares her to a hyena. Though Miki does not compare herself to a hyena, the text makes the association implicitly. "I" is caught, and eaten by Writer and Miki. "I" writes that he "has melted into nothing inside Miki" at the end of the novel: he is consumed, and digested by Miki.

The discussion in this section began by examining contrasting or parallel images of characters who are perceived largely from "I"'s perspective. We then saw that in persistently perceiving, "I" consciously approximates himself to Writer and Miki, who he evaluates positively in contrast to M and Mother. Even though "I" is not fully aware of the
process, it is clear from his own words, and those of Writer and Miki, that images of Writer's and Miki's are duplicated and projected back on to him. "I" is transformed from the perceiving subject to the perceived object, while the primary objects (Writer and Miki) display the subjectivity in turn. Such an explicit and implicit process of appropriation results in the complete physical and metaphysical union of "I" and Miki, and "I"'s extinction. Using the terms I employed in the previous section, then, the achievement of self-reflexivity produces self-extinction. Thus, by studying metaphors regarding paradox and emptiness, we have reached the paradox and emptiness of the act of perceiving, and of the roles of the perceiver and perceived dramatised in the novel.

**Paradox: In/Around the Novel on the Novel**

The progress towards self-reflexivity and self-extinction which I analyzed in discussing theme and characterization is also found in metafictional references to the vocabulary of the novel, the novel itself, the act of writing, and the roles of the writer and the reader.

As I previously mentioned, "I" declares that he will "use words to erase" the object "from the reader's eyes" (6). In a similar manner, Writer discusses "the paradoxical relation which the novel has with reality" and maintains that one does not necessarily write a novel "to convey something" but instead writes one "to hide something" (162). Here, conventional perceptions of words as tools to indicate actual objects, and of the novel as a verbal expression of the author's intention, are challenged and refuted.

Moreover, "I" perceives the act of writing not as his self-projection but as his own self-annihilation. This becomes clear if we bridge two metaphors "I" employs for the act of writing: that of being chased by Thanatos, a deity of death, and that of feeding the novel
with the time in which the writer lives. Paralleling the race he has run competing with Miki
and his process of writing, "I" narrates his fear of being caught by Thanatos. "I" feels
Thanatos "watching everything over [his] shoulder while ["I" is] writing," always chasing "I,"
always "right behind" him, but never quite catching up. "I" tells himself:

I must not look back. I will write on breathlessly. I ran out of
breath on that night, too. I did not doubt that either of us [Miki
or "I"], who would be hindmost by half a stride would win the
lottery of Thanatos, and be dragged into the mouth gaping in
the night by the silver fork-like hand. (187-188)

It is significant in this context that Miki feels "Thanatos' breath" on her ears, "look[s] back"
toward the very end of her final notebook, and admits that she "has no power to carry on
writing about the time" between Papa's telling her that he would die and his actual death
(222). Miki is caught by Thanatos, and thus forced to cease writing.

On another occasion, "I" compares the novel he is writing to "a dinosaur" and
wonders:

There may probably be no other way of bringing up the
monster by the name of the novel than feeding it with time. In
short, I must feed this monster with the time in which I live,
and eventually transform myself into a novel. Now that I have
made up my mind to do so, all that remains for me to do is to
continue writing as fast as possible. (139)

The impulse for speed recurs here, and brings about a paradox. The faster "I" writes, the
more of the time in which "I" lives the novel (a dinosaur) consumes, and the sooner it will
catch up with the narrating instance. The novel, or dinosaur, will then devour him.
However, if "I" does not write fast enough, Thanatos will devour him. "I" is therefore
running towards death while also running away from death.\textsuperscript{19} Examining the roles of the writer and reader in the metadiegetic mode of \textit{Divine Maiden} will lead us to another paradox. Kurahashi’s previous Novella, "Marriage," will provide a simpler model. "Marriage" plays with the notions of the writer and the written, the reader and the read. It is a third person narrative, but is surveyed by the male protagonist K, who reads letters from the female protagonist (a parody of Kurahashi, to judge from the many coincidences between her and L’s life). Therefore, Kurahashi’s double writes letters which are read by a male viewer who is himself Kurahashi’s literary product. In short, the subject (K) who surveys the object (L) from the outside proves to be merely an object controlled by a subject, Kurahashi, who is apparently the object of the narration. \textit{Divine Maiden} uses a similar structure, but extends it by splitting the female protagonist in "Marriage" into three individual figures: Miki, L, and Writer.

We may recall that "I" was seen by L when he engaged in masturbation with her as his imaginary sexual object. This episode is significant in that the primary viewer ("I") is actually viewed by the primary object of his viewing (L).

Miki confesses in her third notebook that she happened to find an old diary of her Papa’s, and read his prediction made on the day of her birth that she would love him as a lover. This fortune-telling makes her conscious of the possibility of incest. In a similar manner, we are told that her papa stole Miki’s first notebook while she was in the hospital,\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Blue Journey} provides a paradox regarding death, which works in an opposite manner: "While You tell yourself to leave for death, You depart, in fact, in order to run away from death" (88). The paradox is further repeated as follows: "Pretending to chase death, you have actually been running away from death" (Ibid. 221).
read the story of their incest, and returned it to her. Thus, father and daughter take turns playing the roles of subject and object of reading, as the married couple of Tanizaki’s *Key do*. The self-reflexivity is not only found in their incestuous relationship in which "Papa loved that person whom he created, and the created [Miki] loved that person who created [her]" (221), but also in their reading and writing of each other.

Writer’s lover He presumably does steal and read her novel about himself. Writer’s novel on He, *Blue Journey*, is stolen by someone, and He, who has already fled, is the alleged thief. In Kurahashi’s *Blue Journey*, You decides to search He’s apartment to find the manuscripts of the novel he is to write. The roles of the writer and reader are thus inverted between the two novels. Further, in *Divine Maiden*, He’s reading of Writer’s *Blue Journey* offers a *mise-en-abyme* for "I"’s reading Miki’s notebooks: the novel, *Blue Journey* which Writer has written is, in fact, written in "three notebooks" (145).

Another inversion of subject and object made by Writer involves a manuscript which "I" has found in the hotel in Kyoto when he has been called by her. The manuscript concerns "he" and "she" (who is "writing a novel"), and stops at the moment previous to which "he," who visits "she," "has spent several hours" with "she" in a hotel (151). Naturally, "I" wonders if "he" alludes to "I." "I" thus reads what Writer has been writing as being about "I" and herself, since she is writing a novel. The acts of writing and reading occur simultaneously, and both the reader ("I") and writer (Writer) of the novel are found in the novel as fictional re-presentations.

Another aspect of Writer’s inversion is even more radical; she seems to be a double of Kurahashi. She shares the initials Y.K. with the author, and moreover, "I" reports that she
has written a novel called in English _Blue Journey_, a novel "as a speculation about He and You, written in the second person" (145), and thus alludes to Kurahashi's first novel. Further, she tells "I" that her new anthology of short stories concerns her marriage with S instead of K; this seems to parallel the plot of "Marriage" by Kurahashi. Making many parallels with Kurahashi, Writer transcends the subordinate position of a character viewed and narrated by "I," and implicitly dominates "I."

_Divine Maiden_ thus embodies a paradox centred upon the issues of infinite embedding and circularity, comparable to _The Erasers_ by Alain Robbe-Grillet whom Writer mentions, in which the detective turns out to be the murderer he has chased, and to _Drawing Hands_ etched by M. C. Escher, in which the hand which is drawing a hand with a pencil is simultaneously being drawn by the other hand. In such works, the relationship between subject and object is infinitely proposed and then reversed.20

The question I would like to pose here is whether Miki does not read the text of "I," just as "I" reads Miki's text. "I" listens to Miki, and Miki listens to him. Does not Miki read "I"'s writing, while "I" reads Miki's writing? Do not all reversible writer/reader couples—Papa and Miki, Writer and He, Writer and "I"—offer _mise-en-abymes_? If not, then, how is "I"'s writing presented here? "I" does not display any sense of his intended audience, and it could be said that it is Miki's reading act that has formed the text. If so, is not the reader in the same position as Miki?

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20Susan Stewart's _Nonsense: Aspects of Intertextuality in Folklore and Literature_, especially its fifth chapter, "Play with Infinity," explicates the paradox seen in anti-romans. Also, Wendy Steiner, _The Colours of Rhetoric_ has a section on "Pictorial Nonsense" which suggested to me the comparison of _Divine Maiden_ to M. C. Escher's drawing.
Whether we assume Miki’s unmentioned reading or not, it is our reading of "I"’s writing of his reading of Miki’s writing and of Writer’s writing and of his own writing which eventually gives us the visible form of the narcissistic narrative of Divine Maiden.
Kurahashi completed and published *Sumiyakisuto Kyō no bōken* [The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q] in April, 1969, after working on it for three years. The novel foregrounds discussions on views of the world and language to a greater extent than *Blue Journey* and *Divine Maiden*. It is primarily a novel about epistemology, and its abstract nature has been the focus of both favourable and unfavourable comment in Japan. Denis Keene, the translator of the novel (*The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* is the only one of Kurahashi’s novel that has been translated into English to date) points out in his "Translator’s Introduction" that the novel possesses another quality which is rarely found in Japanese literature: "*The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* is...genuine satire, perhaps the finest example of the genre Japan has yet produced," particularly given that Japan has produced, Keene maintains, "little satire" (*The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* xii).

First, preparatory to an analysis, I wish to summarize the novel’s plot. Q, a member of the Sumiyakist Party, arrives at H reformatory to take up the position of instructor, but with the secret agenda of causing revolution. His actual relation to the Sumiyakist Party is, however, never made clear in the narrative. Q tries first to understand the power structure of H reformatory’s society so that he can organize the oppressed as a revolutionary force to overthrow the people currently in power. He tries to achieve this by applying the supposedly universal theory of Sumiyakism which presupposes class hierarchy, a causal,
progressive scheme of human history, and the deterministic predominance of the economic base over the cultural superstructure.

However, Q fails to understand, define, and categorize the inhabitants of H reformatory, since there is no identifiable social system to be comprehended—no set schedules to be kept, no duties to be carried out, no reason for doing or not doing an action, no authority to be respected, no class conflict. In short, it is a world void of necessity, causality and meaning. Q participates in a number of bizarre and seemingly unrelated events: Q observes the rector of the reformatory have his whole body shaved, participates in a game whose winner is supposed to sleep with the rector’s wife, views a rite of "chastisement" or "penitence" carried out by a pupil, watches a dog race, has his anus pierced by Doktor’s penis (similar sorts of "operations," such as castration, facial plastic surgery, and the partial destruction of the brain, are obligatory for each instructor regardless of his or her physical condition), and does the rounds surveying pupils, an activity which is optional for instructors. Everything seems completely meaningless to Q, and thus symptomatic of "the corruption and depravity of the ruling classes" (133:107)1

The people at the reformatory do not necessarily oppose Q’s world view, but they regard specific situations from entirely different perspectives. Their epistemological stances are beyond Q’s teleological understanding of the human world. Thus, the theologian F’s

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1All the quotations in this chapter are based on Denis Keene, trans. The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q (Queensland, Australia: U of Queensland P, 1979). Due to the free nature of the translation, however, I have changed words, phrases, and sentences when applicable and indicated the altered/added parts by bracketing. The page numbers preceding the colons in the parentheses refer to the original Japanese text, while those after the colons refer to Keene’s translation.
fanatically religious perspective offers another monologic historic paradigm, implicitly competing with, but also mirroring the rigidity and exclusiveness of, Sumiyakism. Sumiyakism turns out not to be the one and only truth. The overseer, a rigorous rationalist who has originally been sent to the reformatory by the Government, questions the absolute value of historicism and monologism from his phenomenological viewpoint, and thus objectifies Sumiyakism. Sumiyakism turns out not to be the "truth" but rather "one hypothesis among others" (91:69).

Another of the characters is Bukka. He is a language instructor who writes novels and is thus called "the literary man" by Q; he denies the status of the author, the necessity of any logical or temporal structure within writing, and also the value of the deterministic description which purports to represent reality in the traditional novel. He thus destabilizes any epistemology founded upon concepts such as ultimate truth, necessity, and nature. Q does not understand any of Bukka's treatises on literature; he is, however, disgusted by Bukka's drive for self-destruction shown by his continually submitting to plastic surgery. The rector, who defines himself not as the centre of power but as a passive man who takes enormous interest in perceiving others, denies the existences of any external obligation, necessity, hierarchy, or authority. Instead, he perceives the world as an interdependent network, just as Bukka re-presents it as "a forest where all the trees are linked to each other by their branches" (170:138). Both Bukka and the rector are ontologists; they are anti-monologist, anti-determinist, and refute the tenets of Sumiyakism. A fifth character, Doktor, troubles Q by his refusal to believe in any paradigm through which to give meaning to the world. Doktor has an aversion to groupism, and thus mutilates Q, whom he regards as a
groupist. The contradictions between Q's philosophy and that of any one of the five characters call Q's framework of thinking into question.

After a series of futile attempts to convert the instructors to Sumiyakism, Q discovers that they are eating their pupils' flesh, and declares that he will incite a revolution to overturn such a discriminatory, cannibalistic system. However, the revolution begins not through Q's agency, but through the pupils' taking Bukka as a hostage. While Q's calling of the instructors to revolution fails to arouse their interest and cooperation, the pupils engage in a spontaneous revolution, and slaughter and devour the administrative staff including the rector and rector's wife, and then escape from the reformatory. Q remains there wondering whether the revolution which he has had in mind has occurred, and if so, if it has achieved its aim. How, he wonders, might the pupils' actions be related to Sumiyakist theory, and why have they left? The novel provides no easy answers, but ends in Q's own departure to an unknown destination.

The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q has two important features of an anti-novel: it is marked by an indeterminate setting; it is impossible to know when and where the story takes place. This is not necessarily due to the limited mental and intellectual resources of the protagonist Q; the narrator too exhibits no omniscient knowledge, leaving enigmas unresolved. No reference is made to any historical moment, unlike Divine Maiden which mentions some actual incidents in Japan in 1960's. Moreover, the narrator tries to negate the linear and mechanical flow of time inside the story, too. Thus, on his arrival by a boat, Q notices:
The hands of his ancient watch were apt to stop suddenly on the yellowing dial and, even worse, to start up again in their confused progress, a fact of which Q himself was perfectly well aware. Were he to try to calculate the time that had elapsed until the boat had disappeared, [he would be confronted by the fact that] the hands might have stopped any number of times during a process into which one could then say that eternity itself had entered. (10:2)

Similarly, when Q spends some days convalescing after Doktor’s "operation," the narrator makes the statement given below:

[Thus some days passed which were inseparable from each other.] On reflection it seemed that the days that had followed Q’s arrival at the reformatory[; too,] had at some time all knitted together, been compressed and altered into something like an annelid; and regarding this dead body of time it seemed appropriate to make use of the plain prose style of "Some weeks had already passed since Q arrived at the reformatory." (242:198)

This citation is reminiscent of the following passage of Thomas Mann’s The Magic Mountain, to which Kurahashi has compared her novel. When Hans Castorp is forced to stay in the sanatorium because of the unexpected symptom of tuberculosis, the narrator states:

[W]e need only recall the swift flight of time—even of a quite considerable period of time—which we spend in bed when we are ill. All the days are nothing but the same day repeating itself—or rather, since it is always the same day, it is incorrect to speak of repetition; a continuous present, an identity, an everlastingness—such words as these would better convey the idea....[Y]ou are losing a sense of the demarcation of time, that its units are running together, disappearing ... (The Magic Mountain 183-184)
This passage shares with the previous citation from Kurahashi's novel the fact that the protagonist has been bed-ridden, and that the days he has spent in bed have been compressed into one. The narrator of Adventures of Sumiyakist Q reinforces the shapelessness of time in the final chapter of the novel:

> A good many more weeks, indeed it may well have been months, were to pass before Q took his final leave of this stage upon which our story has been set, monotonous days of which one was hardly distinguishable from the next. (442:364)

Thus, the mechanical development of time is problematized in the narrative, although the story time, as well as the discourse time, flows in one direction from the beginning to the end of the novel.

Just as time is problematized, so the narrator is equally reluctant to tell us about the place in which the story occurs. She does not mention any concrete place names, in sharp contrast to Blue Journey which is full of the names of cities, towns, restaurants, and cafes. The reader, like Q, does not even know the basic geographical features of the novel's location. At first, Q takes it for granted that he has landed on an island, but his presupposition is radically questioned by the chief porter, whom Q meets by chance on the seashore:

> ...Q decided they must have progressed about half-way round the island, and he nervously mentioned this to the chief porter, who gave a contemptuous sigh and shrugged his shoulders. "You really do seem to think that this place is an island, don't you?" (20:10-11)
Although Q "hardly heard this remark," the text suggests that the reader keep in mind the question whether the reformatory is on an island. In fact, it becomes evident soon that Q has assumed the novel’s location to be an island through imaginative necessity, not observation:

If this were an island, then it would be independent, shut off. If this were not an island, then it would be open to the outside world; the place he had come to would be open, and so then would his own past be [sic]. Q did, in fact, want this place to be an island; and thus this story began with his landing on his imagined island,... (20:11)

This passage suggests that the previous occasions on which the location is described as an island are Q’s observations, and thus that Q can perceive things as he wishes them to be. Thus he may be caught in self-deception when he sees the sea out of the window of the rector’s room, and says "You can see the sea from here, can’t you?";

"Indeed? Well, yes, one can see something. A wall."
"Is that a wall?" Q echoed in consternation, since it was a fact he found unacceptable. However, if he strained his eyes, then it did indeed look like the surface of a wall which had been painted the colour of the sea. But then perhaps the rector was only speaking metaphorically when he called it a wall... (79:60)

There has to be sea for the place to be an island; this is perhaps why Q perceives the surface as the sea. However, it appears to the rector to be a wall. And Q can perceive it as a wall, too, if he only tries to observe it that way. The passage thus implies the subjectivity of observations: both time and place can be altered by perception.

The location of the novel, presumably an island, is often compared to a planet. The rector says that any attempt to escape from it is "rather like trying to escape from one’s own
planet by simply walking off it" (81:61). When Bukka shows Q around, the literary man compares the place to "a planet where there is no water, no air, no living creatures," or "[a] ruined planet" [haisei], though "Q [does] not notice" (173:140). Q's indifference to the metaphor underscores the significance of the comparison through preterition. Though Q does not consciously accept Bukka's metaphor, it seems inscribed in his mind, to judge from the fact, that, in his dream, he observes the similarity between the "rows of hills" and "those of some dead star [haisei]" (325:265).

This recurrent use of metaphors of a planet implies that the novel's location may be a planet, rather than an island. However, the narrator never discloses where the place is, and lets Q discover that the harbour at which he first landed has disappeared by the end of the narrative:

A grassless waste stretched out from here, but Q was thinking that it had once been territory ruled over by the sea, and so it must end somewhere, and there one would find the present position of the borders of the retreating sea. At this new boundary of sea and land there would be a new town with a new harbour, and a ferry would call at that harbour. If he did not succeed in discovering that new sea and harbour, then this place he was now leaving would not be an island, but perhaps like a peninsula, something that was connected to the land. In that case one would arrive at a new place if one kept on walking. Both alternatives were a source of hope for Q. (447:368-369)

No final conclusion is made about the topos; possibilities are rather left open.

Having summarized the plot and pointed out some anti-novelistic features of The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q, I now wish to give an overview of critical responses to it. I also wish to give a summary of how Kurahashi herself has responded to the criticism. The
first comment is Kurahashi's "atogaki" [Postscript] to the first edition of the novel, which is omitted from the English translation. The "Postscript" warrants attention because of its deceptive nature. It begins with an author’s note as follows, preceding the main discussion of the novel:

Here I would quote, in place of a postscript, part of the critical comments on this work made by Ms/ Mr Y.K., a critic, soon to be published in a periodical, with her/his permission.

The Author (449)

Kurahashi here refuses to make any ‘authoritative’ revelation of her intentions, circumstances of composition, and so forth, which the reader might expect in a postscript. Instead, she presents an interpretation of the novel, made by an imaginary critic named Y.K.. Although Y.K. is presumably Kurahashi’s alter ego, the manner in which the "Postscript" is presented suggests that we are not intended to read it as the ultimate truth about the novel. I would interpret Kurahashi’s purpose in writing such a postscript as to satirize the "intentional fallacy" which dominates much of Japanese literary criticism.

Not only the author’s note but also subsequent comments distance the author from the interpretation of the novel presented. "Ms/ Mr Y.K." refers to the author of the novel at the end of her/his comments, and leads the reader away from excessive interest in the manner in which the author may be represented biographically in the novel:

If writing novels is a kind of activity, the relation the author has to the novel, or the manner in which the author tries to produce the novel by this activity, is identical with the relation Q has to the revolution. In this sense, we can imagine who the author is from the character of Q. (451)
In other words, Y.K. implies that the author Kurahashi and the protagonist Q are not related in any other sense than their behavioral patterns.

Between the two excerpts given above from "Postscript" are a plot summary, and comments on Q's obsession with ideas, which is compared to that of Don Quixote, and which prohibits him from taking any action in order to realize the revolution. Also included are further comments on conflicts between Q and other characters who, from Q's perspective, embody different ideological stances, and a suggestion that the novel is "constituted of dialogues" between Q and others, and of "annotations" to these dialogues.

In general, critics reviewed The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q more positively than Blue Journey or Divine Maiden. Morikawa Tatsuya, a critic of contemporary Japanese literature, praises "the critical spirit and poetic imagination" in the work, though he would prefer a more radical, deconstructive interest in the structure of prose, and regrets the lack of a figure representing "the other", like Sancho Panza in Don Quixote (Morikawa Su miyaki st).

Kaga Otohiko, a well-known Japanese novelist and psychiatrist, acknowledges Kurahashi's more skilful handling of ideas compared with her earlier stories and novels. He also points out the similarities in setting between Kurahashi's novel and Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels and Kafka's Das Schloss [The Castle], examines the effects of metaphors employed to present characters and situations, and briefly explores the metanarrative quality of the novel. Kaga believes strongly in the independence of fiction from reality, and thus makes the statement that Adventures of Sumiyakist Q is not yet sufficiently detached from
reality: in his view, some incidents in the novel are so reminiscent of those in Japan of the sixties that the reader cannot help associate the fictional and historical events.

In contrast to the above-mentioned responses which ignore (in Morikawa’s case) or question (in Kaga’s) the relationship between the novel and events in Japanese society in the 1960’s, some critics interpret the novel as a satire on the leftist movement in Japan. When the paperback edition of the novel was released in 1988, Kurahashi added another postscript called "Chosha kara dokusha e: doko nimo nai basho" [From the Author for the Reader: The Non-existent Place], emphasizing that the novel has no relation to reality in Japan. Presumably refuting the associations between the Sumiyakist Party and the Japan Communist Party, and between the pupils’ upheaval and the students’ movement in Japan in 1960’s, she discloses that she named the party by representing the Carbonari, "an underground organization which was active in Italy, France, and Spain in the early 19th century," in Japanese. Although Sumiyakism embodies a monological ideology in general, as Kurahashi admits, it does not allude to any specific system of thought in Japan, since she has "no obligation to write novels in order to criticise or make fun of" "the futility of Japanese leftists" (454-455).

Kurahashi also defends her novel from complaints regarding its abstract nature and incomprehensibility, by giving examples of similar works in world literature, such as Gulliver’s Travels, Der Zauberberg [The Magic Mountain] by Thomas Mann, and noh plays, which have "a simple plot": the protagonist (Gulliver, Hans Castorp, the travelling priest) visits an unknown place, is "caught" there, experiences something new, and "escapes" to the familiar world (452-453). As Kurahashi suggests, she has also written a novella and
novel with the same characteristics—"Ningen no nai kami" [The God without Men] (1961), and Amanon koku ōkanki [The Round Trip to Amanon] (1986).

Having paid attention to some of the critical responses, I wish, in this chapter, to discuss the following three aspects of the novel. First, I will deal with its narration. Though this is less complicated than that of Divine Maiden, The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q is still a multi-diegetic and self-reflexive narrative. The literary man Bukka discloses to Q that he is writing four novels, on the rector, Doktor, Q, and Ajita, the leader of the pupils’ upheaval, respectively. One of these, called Doktor’s Notebook, is embedded in two separate parts into the primary narrative. In this regard, Kurahashi’s novel is multidiegetic. Q and Doktor read the novel by Bukka, and discuss it, just as Don Quixote does in Cervantes’ novel. Moreover, Bukka gives Q a lecture on the novel and anti-novel three times. Therefore, The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q is self-reflexive. In the complexity of its narrative, responsibility for narration becomes diffused. From my previous summary, it may appear that Bukka assumes authority in the narrative. However, he disappears halfway through the text. Further, the "heterodiegetic" narrator, who is not a character in the novel and remains obscure for most of the time, makes frequent comments on the manner in which the narrative develops, in a similar manner to the narrator of Laurence Sterne’s Tristram Shandy. Therefore, the narrating authority or responsibility is diffuse and decentred. In Michel Foucault’s terms, "the author-function" is exposed as a fiction (Foucault "What Is the Author?" 153).

Second, I will discuss the manner in which units of the "semic code"—personal traits of characters—are interwoven with metaphorical associations, in much the same way as I did
in the previous chapter. Though each pair of comparison may appear to display a dichotomy, accumulation of comparisons will eventually suggest that characters in the novels are not individual beings with essential identities but rather intersections of cultural and political attributes, any of which can be displayed depending on a particular context.

Third, I will explicate the analogies drawn between the cognitive, digestive and reproductive systems of the human body. As I mentioned in the discussion of Divine Maiden, familiarization with "the other" can take verbal, sexual, and digestive forms. The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q presents comparisons between these three forms, foregrounding them through dynamic and diffuse metaphors. By crossing over the established boundaries of anatomy, the novel challenges any categorization based on determined functions and suggests instead as associative categorizations through transactions based on performative acts.

Thus The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q demonstrates disorder, a consciousness of the world as chaos. The words "disorder" and "chaos" do not, in this novel, have negative connotations, but rather imply the subversion of a structural understanding of the world which presumes a central authority governing the logico-causal relationship between its components.

Narration

I will discuss in this section two characteristics of the narration of The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q: the function of the extradiegetic narrator, and the multi-diegetic structure. By examining them, I wish to delineate the novel's diffusion of responsibility and authority for narration.
The Adventure of Sumiyakist Q has an "extradiegetic narrator," or a narrator who is not a character inside the story (Prince 29). Therefore, the narrating voice does not belong to the protagonist, Q, although the narrating instances always describe activities to which Q is party. The narrator demonstrates her/his existence occasionally by defending her/his method of narration, or by making statements on narratives in general. The "intrusive narrator" makes "commentaries" on Q's cognition, behaviour, and upon incidents he experiences (Ibid. 46, 14). An example occurs when Q engages in masturbation for the first time in the narrative:

If [I] were to make use of [the author's] all-seeing and all-knowing privilege, [I] could look over Q's shoulder and no doubt see the full-length of a young girl,... (98:76)

After a lengthy description, the narrator concludes the description of this scene as follows:

Thus Q went on to perform various actions towards this victim within his imaginary room, but the demands of narrative require that one refrain from relating them. (99:76)

The passage tells us two things: first, that the narrator's consciousness is separate from that of Q, and second, that the narrator does not purport to represent everything that occurs faithfully, maintaining the right to narrate only what s/he, not neutral but rather bound by culture, circumstances and her/his intentions, wishes to tell.

Regarding the first point, the narrator reminds us at times that people, things and phenomena are being observed by Q, suggesting that we should not take these observations as authorial comments or revelations of ultimate truth. For example, when Q first meets
Sabiya, the nurse, she is described as "a young woman," and the narrator annotates that "[i]t is not necessarily to add that this was Q’s impression of the matter," subsequently providing the additional information that, for Q, "the standard of being or not being young" is "the standard by which the woman was judged as a woman or not" (51).

While the narrator thus implies that her/his consciousness is distinct from that of Q, the narrative development depends upon Q’s existence. Thus, when the rector confuses Q with his eloquent philosophical speech, Q’s situation is compared to that of an object swallowed by a snake, and the narrator comments:

Shall we follow Q in this pursuit and let our story dispense with its correct, surface, horizontal progress, switching to unending, underground action instead? Certainly the story sometimes does this, proceeding in a vertical direction, but this could hardly be allowed to go on for ever. Q must be swiftly dragged out from the far interior of this snake and returned to the real world. And Q himself, gradually finding the strain of such profound unrest unbearable, was also doing his best to burrow his way out to a point where his familiar, loved common words could flutter free. (148:119)

When Q is shocked to find the decapitated rector’s head toward the end of the novel, the narrator intrudes to make the following statement:

Our story would then have to end at the point where Q ceased to be a human being, which would mean an ending like that of a lizard which bites off its own tail and dies, showing an ugly if scintillating cross-section of itself as it does so. But Q recovered himself, and so our story will pursue his actions and his fate for a little longer, as a tail grows gradually thinner until it comes to an end. (438:360)
The two citations above suggest that the temporal development of the narrative requires the flow of Q's consciousness.

Another characteristic of this novel's narration—the multidiegetic mode—occurs because of the existence of a writer: Bukka, or the literary man. As far as he discloses in the narrative, he is writing, or has written, four novels. His manner of planning to write each of them offers insights which may either assist or hinder analyses of the primary narrative.

Bukka is planning to write a novel, using elements of the rector's personality. However, he is "not going to create some kind of typical human being based upon the rector, as the classic novel would do." He intends to "analyze him visually, every piece of him, overlooking nothing, and then to rebuild all those pieces as one object instead of one human being." Q misrepresents Bukka's idea as "the last word in realism"; Bukka, in contrast, makes a distinction between realist novels and his new novels:

"Realism is the method the classic novel places its faith in, the method of making puppets that look as if they're alive [and that are] called human types, and then moving them by the strings of a plausible story. The new novel that I am planning is the opposite of that, since my method is to make nothing, but simply to employ the destructive process of looking at things. Things, the world in fact, are simply there. One breaks down these things that are into as minute fragments as possible—words are these very fragments—and then arranges them on the page. They are not used in order to attach descriptive meanings to things, but solely to suggest existence." (164-165:133)
Thus the new novel refuses any description of objects and interpretation of their meanings. Instead, the new novel is constituted by fragments of perceptions from an ontological perspective. Bukka further states:

"[T]he writer must bestow no deterministic ‘character’ upon any of his characters. Men are to be dismantled. The world is to be rendered meaningless. Is the writer to look at the surfaces of the world and of men like a camera? Or is he to be a parasite looking out from his hole in the middle of the world and of men? Either choice is open to him." (216:176)

Bukka’s manifesto is in keeping with Kurahashi’s practice in Blue Journey, which exemplifies fragmentation, and in Divine Maiden which challenges descriptive representation. The cognitive mode of the new novel finds its parallels in the rector’s and Doktor’s ways of perceiving the world simply as something that is there.

Bukka reveals to Q that he has started writing a novel "with Q as the model for its main character" (243:199). The literary man is wondering whether he can use the sentence "Some weeks had already passed since Q arrived at the reformatory" (242:198). The reason for his uncertainty is that such a sentence is a "transparent breaking of the rules" "in the normal novel." The literary man explicates the problem further:

"By that [transparent breaking of the rules] I mean the writer is controlling the time of the novel as if he were some omnipotent creator; that is, he’s putting the clock forwards and backwards as he feels fit, which is not a very admirable way of going about things, you know. The time in the novel must flow naturally; or, if I’m to put that in precise terms, this time must be determined as a number of variable functions that are included in the novel, and these variables must fluctuate in the novel in a way mutually dependent on each other, and consequently the writer should not be able to adjust them freely..."
Thus the literary man raises the issue of temporality in the novel in a paradoxical way that, while questioning the author's control over the story time, implicitly denies the 'natural' flow of time which is assumed to be neutral and independent from the circumstances under which the act of writing occurs in the 19th century "old-style novel." As Bukka maintains elsewhere, "The novel is not to be made to comply with external time. In certain cases a deliberate attempt to derange this external time is called for" (216:176). In other words, the new novel denies the 'naturalness' of linear time-flow by presenting an atemporal order as an alternative construction of temporality.

Bukka has written part of the draft of a novel called Doktor's Notebook, which is embedded in the primary narrative of The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q. The nested narrative, written in the first person, recounts the narrator-protagonist (Doktor)'s marriage, his and his wife's affiliation with the Sumiyakist Party, and his dismissal from a hospital where he worked as a doctor due to his eating a miscarried baby. It further recounts the cannibalism he is still engaged in at a reformatory he has arrived at after his dismissal, and his encounter there with a Sumiyakist called Q. Bukka leaves the manuscript at Q's bedside, hoping that Q will read it. Q reads it and "put[s] all his emphasis upon whether the things written in the work [are] true or not." He tacitly assumes that "the contents of the work were actual facts" (267:217), and thus provokes Bukka with his responses to the novel: "Did he actually do something as awful as that [eating a foetus]?" The literary man states:
"I presume that you look upon the novel as something which uses real bricks and puts them together with imaginary cement, and although the completed novel may show variation in the placement and arrangement of these bricks, it is still only the result of a secondary processing which maintains this direct, one-for-one relationship with that reality it has used as its material. But the novel is not like that. The only meaning reality has for the novel is as a catalyst in the imaginative process. The world of the novel is totally different from that of reality, a world where one-for-one equivalents do not apply. I did not write that work with the intention of recording or transmitting might have said." (269-270:219-220)

Here the literary man is refuting the myth that the novel is supposed to represent reality.

He repeats his thesis on another occasion:

In a novel one word does not stand for one thing, and language is not a means of communication. The unchanging reality that would be communicated by such means does not exist. Reality is expressed by language, and exists as limitlessly as there are limitless variations of style. (216:176-177)

This statement echoes Kurahashi's manifesto concerning her compositional methodology, "The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction," in which she states that she refuses to write novels that "represent <<reality>>." Subsequently, Kurahashi reveals her aversion to writing shishōsetsu, or a supposedly faithful representation of the author's personal life. She attributes the high estimation of such novels to a predominant tendency in Japanese literary criticism which "tends to ... view novels as the authors' <<self-expression>>." Also, she downgrades the value of biographical studies of literary works (66-82). The following dialogue between Q and Bukka implies both favourable and unfavourable attitudes toward such critical approaches to literary texts:
"Anyway, the best thing seems that I should ask Doktor himself if it's true or not to make sure."
"Always assuming that Doktor tells you the truth." (270:220)

Bukka warns Q against the misbelief that the author is ready to disclose the 'truth' of his/her story and implies that the subject who retells her/his actions can neither be neutral nor faithful to the audience.

Bukka tells Q that he has completed and sent to a publisher a short story with the "improper title" of "The Anus," in which he "analyze[s] the relationship between a boy and the world about him" "the model for" the leading character of which is Ajita, the leader of the pupils' revolt (342:277-279). As I will discuss in the next section, the text of The Adventure of Sumiyakist Q consists primarily of the examination of the different relationships between characters and the world about them. Following Bukka's explanation, then, "The Anus" has the same thematic concern as The Adventure of Sumiyakist Q itself.

Except for Ajita, the models for the protagonists of the novels are all aware that Bukka is writing 'on' them. The rector asks the literary man if he has "invented that toughly flexible, that resilient style which will apprehend me in its net, yet not give way beneath [the rector's] weight" (128:102). Q is forced to listen to Bukka's discussion about his novel concerning Q. Q also finds himself in Doktor's Notebook, and discovers that Doktor has read Doktor's Notebook and that he also knows that Q has read it. The self-reflexive circle of a protagonist's reading the novel written about him, which I explored in the previous chapter, recurs in The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q.

Though Bukka himself hardly becomes the object of observation, as "I" does in Divine Maiden, he cannot stay in the privileged position of the producer of the narratives,
either; he is imprisoned by the pupils and does not appear in the later chapters of the novel. As Kaga Otohiko suggests, it is ironic that the character closest to the author, close enough to be her double, is subject to erasure and mutilation, disappearing from the story earlier than any other character. In a sense, then, the author commits suicide in the text. Paradoxically enough, in the place of the novel written by the literary man about Q, another novel about Q—The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q—is being written by Kurahashi even at the moment of Bukka’s disappearance.

The narrator of The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q who, as we have seen, manipulates its characters and narrative in a deceptive manner, is eventually responsible for the development and completion of the narrative. Bukka takes the initiative in the metafictional mode of the novel, performing not the task of a minor character but that of the narrator. It seems to me that by erasing him in the middle of the story, and letting the extradiegetic narrator complete the narration, the author both caricatures herself and transcends the mere position of a character within the novel. Furthermore, the narrative blurs its origins. Who, finally, is responsible for it: Q, the protagonist, the deceptive narrator, or Bukka? No one is. Thus, the narration of The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q actively displays disorder, through its use of a multidiegetic structure and its problematization of the position of the extradiegetic narrator.

Indices: Metaphorical Associations of Characters

The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q presents its characters in much the same way as Divine Maiden does in which characters’ personal traits are made to parallel or to contrast, either implicitly or explicitly. Q and Bukka parallel each other in their lack of practicality;
Q the teleologist and the rector the ontologist make an antagonistic pair; K and L, twins produced by the rector’s wife in a virgin birth, engage in incest and thus parallel Doktor and Sabiya who are also children of the rector and his wife; another antagonistic pair is made by the overseer, a man of reason, and the theologian F, a fanatic believer in a monotheist religion; Q and the overseer are similar in their being subject to a larger system; Q and F parallel each other in their belief in monologist and historicist doctrines; F and Ajita are both compared to a mad dog, in that they bite people; finally Doktor and Ajita share a cannibalistic inclination.

Viewed thus, it is evident that though characters often seem to be in direct contrast to each other, in fact they form an overall network which is disorderly rather than orderly. None of the characters can assume any substantial characteristic as a foundation of her/his identity. Rather, they display different attributes by being compared to others in different contexts. In other words, the characters in The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q are performative rather than constative.

Although Q can barely understand the literary man’s treatises on literature, or on the anti-novel, he shares with Bukka a basic pattern of behaviour. Just as Bukka can never complete a novel which will conform to the conditions he stipulates, Q can never realize the revolution which is the goal of his understanding of Sumiyakism. Both of them prepare for the accomplishment of their ideals, polishing their ideas, exercising in their minds, but never fulfil those ideas.

The narrator, when s/he analyses the significance of Q’s masturbation, points out that he always likes to do preparatory exercises in advance:
But Q himself doggedly tried to find some practical meaning in his daily masturbation, in this imaginary coitus with his own body. That is, according to Q, this was an armchair workout preparatory to the struggle that was inevitably to come. Of course this was hardly the kind of argument he could have seriously offered to anyone else. Also it should be noticed that this habit of conducting mock experiments in his head, of having to do everything first of all in the mind before actually doing it, was one of the most prominent of Q's characteristics.

This characteristic is also visible in Q's way of coping with his revolutionary mission. After criticising his own life as an underground Sumiyakist activist, which has resulted only in observation of people at H reformatory, he tries to justify his inactivity:

Q's behaviour had been in accord with the principle that in order to move towards ground-level operations, one could only go by the road of awareness; and the road was turning out to be unendingly long, and the revolution which it should lead to even had become like a mirage, seeming near but being far.

A mirage, which signifies that which one can always see but never reach, recurs as a metaphor in a dream of Q's in which he is about to cause a revolution:

The revolution, which he had worked out in such detail in his head, which he had come to imagine with such clarity, was now beginning to look like a mirage he would never be able to reach....It seemed that the more preliminary rehearsal he done in his imagination the more his power to act had been sapped out of him, and his resolution was now sickly pale like a ghost.

The literary man Bukka feels much the same regarding his futile attempt to write a novel. Instead of the metaphor of a mirage, Bukka employs that of the evening sun:
"In this region the sun burns huge and ripe before it goes under, so that you feel you could put out your hand and touch it and a hot juice would trickle out; but the truth is that at that time it's...going further away [most rapidly]. When I'm writing a novel I always feel I'm chasing after that setting sun. I can see the novel I should write, but as I write I can never say I get one step closer. And still I must go on writing every day, but with no hope of anything from it. It's like breathing as one waits for death; or more like having to breathe in order to wait for death." (214:175)

Bukka further explicates the paradox in which the very act of writing distances him further from his goal of the ideal novel:

"Firstly, in terms of quantitative change, in my case that is nil. I mean, no matter how hard I try to write I can hardly write anything; and even if I do manage to write a little I'm obliged to tear the whole lot up the next day. This is because I am trying to write in accordance with a very strict theory of the novel, and anything that is not in accord with my own theory I have to destroy quite ruthlessly. It's a process more like destroying a novel than making one." (215:175-176).

Novel-writing, doxologically a creative act, turns out here to be a destructive act. The excerpt above underscores the irony of being a "writer and literary theorist" (128:102) at the same time; the more acute a critic one becomes, the more difficult one finds it to write. The passage above also offers a caricature of the anti-novel, in that it simultaneously inherits and subverts the norms of the novel.

Q tries to cheer up Bukka, who is discouraged at his failure to write, "trying to encourage himself perhaps more than the literary man" (214:175). Q is thus apparently aware of the similarity between his problems and Bukka's. The morning after Q listens to Bukka, he himself begins to write:
He [Q] decided immediately to begin his own constructive operations. Firstly he opened his notebook and started to write down the plan of operations, but his hand would not move. He was like a house carpenter with no building plan, or even the knowledge of how on raises a pillar, who is yet trying to build a house. A terrible uncertainty burned about him, and he tasted some of that sense of helplessness which the literary man had tasted. His whole aim seemed to have blurred before him, a spectral monster lost in the mist. (217-218:178)

The metaphor of "a spectral monster lost in the mist" is a variation on the earlier image of "a mirage," conveying the elusiveness of Q's goal.

The above excerpt gives an example of another associative chain of metaphors in the text, those regarding construction. They appear persistently in the text, implying the discrepancy between planning and physical construction on the one hand, and the destructive nature of imaginative operations such as novel-writing and the revolutionary movement on the other. Thus, Bukka confides in Q: "while I secrete my dreams, my novel, which is a number of delicate towers built in air, appears and disappears. When I watch that, then I don't want to construct a castle like some mason with words." (335-336:273)

In fact, any incident at H reformatory is less an action than a paradoxical state in which construction and deconstruction operate simultaneously. When Q notices the irregularly-shaped pupils' dormitories for the first time, from a distance, the rector maintains:

That is the shape of both a ruined city and one in the process of being built. Work is proceeding even at present, even if only on a scale invisible to the eye; and its destruction is also occurring at the same time, again at a speed which one cannot actually notice. Over these past decades the work may as a whole appear to have made slight progress, but the precise truth of the matter is known to no one....Anyone may, of course, have his image of perfection; but once let him
announce what it is, once show the blueprint of it, and it will
be seen as merely incoherent, continually in conflict with other
things, something which will so easily crumble and fall. (167-
168:135-137)

The former part of the excerpt is reminiscent of the literary man’s endless engagement in
criticising his own writing, while the latter parallels Q’s and Bukka’s idea-oriented lack of
practicality.

There is another character to whom inactivity and desire for cognition are attributed:
the rector. Q wishes to define him as "the highest authority in the reformatory," its "control
tower," or "the apex of that pyramidal structure which is the system of management" (83:63)
in the Sumiyakist conception of society. However, the rector maintains that there are "no
pyramids," "no fixed image that will express the ontological structure" of the reformatory.
The rector would believe in what Foucault calls "[t]he omnipresence of power" and would
claim that power should not be ascribed to a specific person or institution but that "power
must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in
the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization." In other
words, "[p]ower is everywhere" (Foucault The History of Sexuality vol. 1: 92-93).

Subsequently, the rector defines himself as follows:

"...I am no functional existence, no axis of the power system,
nor am I myself any incorporation of power, as heavy as a
stone, at all. I am merely the gravitational centre of this world.
I exist as weight; I exist as extension; I exist in filling the world;
I exist in place of the world. That is [the principle of my
existence]. [A]s for power, [which embodies the principle of
action], that is something with which I am obliged to say I have
nothing at all to do." (84:63-64)
The two principles of existence and of action are echoes of the ‘femininity’ and ‘masculinity’ represented by the female and male sexual organs in *Blue L'ourney*. In that novel, normatively ‘feminine’ passivity, flexibility, performativity is appraised positively, not negatively, in opposition to the male principle of self-projection, action and conquest of the world. In *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q*, the male rector embodies the female principle. Indeed, he has asked Doktor to castrate him. The rector maintains:

"Generally speaking, being itself is what the female principle is, a principle which I myself, as you will already have observed, embody, implying that I am in the process of change from the male to the female condition." (146:118)

He continues by comparing his wife’s subjectivity, to his own:

"In my case, however, I transform substance into my flesh, in order to occupy all of the world, of space, with myself; whereas she expands that space which she unfolds within her, aiming at a purse-like condition in which the whole world may be inserted. Thus I say that she evolves an increasing darkness which is probably greater in immensity than this world." (146-147:118)

The married couple are trying to occupy the world either by a hollow (the rector’s wife) or by flesh (the rector) and thus take the place of the world. To expand hollow and flesh, they each eat as if their "satiety centres" had been "destroyed" by Doktor and thus their appetite had no limit (248:203). The rector also persistently tries to perceive others; he states that his "principle is to understand everything" (73:55). He calls his own body "a tub of omniscience," "a brain that takes in every kind of information, and ferments it all there" (382:312). I will deal with the analogy between eating and comprehension in the final
Here, I only wish to delineate the manner in which the rector and his wife relate themselves to the world.

Some people at H reformatory presume that Sabiya, the nurse, and Doktor, the doctor, are children of the rector and his wife, and that they used to be married to each other. Their presumably incestuous relationship is duplicated by that of K and L, or the Prince and Princess, who are pupils at the reformatory. The rector explains to Q that K and L "are the result of a virgin birth" (146:117), "fraternal, or dizygotic, twins" who have "embraced each other" "ever since they were on the road from the womb, from an anti-universe to our universe," and thus are in "[love, or the state in which their consciousnesses have intercourse]" (144:116). The quoted phrases, most of which also appear in Kurahashi’s short stories about incestuous siblings as well as in Blue Journey to describe the relationship between You and He, suggest complete homogeneity in that K and L are twins, self-reflexivity in that their relationship is incestuous, and self-containedness in that they are born in a virgin birth. In other words, K and L do not have any relation to the world or others but only to themselves.

It is no wonder that K and L commit suicide. The last we see of them is when they fall into the mouth of a raging volcano, "[s]till holding each other," and "[s]ink into the thick acid of the lake" (287:234). A crater lake is implicitly compared to the vaginal opening in Kurahashi’s later novel, Amanon koku Ōkanki [The Round Trip to Amanon]. K and L thus go back to the womb, or the "anti-universe" in exactly the same manner as they were born—embracing each other.
Thus K and L perform an ultimate form of self-reflexivity. This attribute and its opposite, self-distancing, are displayed in the parallel between the overseer and the theologian. They parallel each other implicitly and explicitly, in their eyes, manners of speech, mental interests, medical conditions, physical build and ways of walking. Such personal traits clearly draw a contrast between the two characters who embody the two above-mentioned opposing inclinations.

The overseer and the theologian F share a distinct characteristic which the narrative recurrently mentions: a squint. When Q is interviewed by the overseer he discovers that "the overseer’s sharply glittering eyes have a slight squint in them" which gives "the impression of his being a slightly cruel yet capable official" (31:20). The next morning, Q sees his roommate, theologian F, and finds that he "also has a squint":

It is true that this squint was considerably more pronounced than the overseer’s; but, unlike his, the theologian’s was an inward looking one, the two eyeballs making exchanges as if intent on devouring each other, and intertwining their foci on the plain between them in so selfishly single-minded a manner that it seemed almost inconceivable that they could ever achieve any view of the outside world. (57:41)

The ways in which the theologian and overseer squint are opposite, and the impressions the two men make on Q similarly contrast. Q perceives the theologian as "a most wretchedly handicapped person" (57:41), rather than "a slightly cruel yet capable official" which the overseer appears to be. Their ways of squinting seem to reflect the ways in which they relate to the others. The theologian tends to confine himself in an inner world with God. He hits himself violently as a form of prayer; this surprises Q, who observes:
[T]he inward squinting eyes of the theologian seemed even more inward, and his body was quite stiff like that of someone in an epileptic fit, so that for some other person to address him was quite fruitless. Clearly some not easily nameable alteration was going on within the theologian....The theologian is now plugged into his God, thought Q, and his body is the receiver that catches the godly wavebands. (106:83)

The theologian is watching himself and his God exclusively, unable to see others or how they see him. He cannot "reflect the other" or see "the image" of himself reflected in the mirror of "the other" (108:84).

Significantly, it is the theologian who tells Q that the people at the reformatory are cut off from the outside world through the breakdown of a "video receiver" (109:85). The theologian’s self-absorbed inclinations increase toward the end of the novel. Wishing to tell him about the schedule of the instructors’ meeting on the revolution, Q finds him on the shore, where he is meditating:

"Now an incurable, a total atrophy, an atrophy begins in the existence of man," said the theologian, lending no ear to what Q had said, and using his squint (as it seemed to Q) to bar the route through to the world outside. (394:322)

The theologian chooses to lend no ear to any other person except himself and his God, just as he cannot see anything but his own eyes.

Moreover, the theologian cannot make himself understood by others, because he suffers from an acute stammer:

The habit he had of repeating words and phrases, since he did it so frequently, was particularly unnerving. Q began to wonder just how high the frequency of this habit was. (124:99)
The speech problem of the theologian reaches its peak when he makes a theological speech at the instructors' meeting. Repetitions of phrases and unpunctuated sentences leave Q "aghast to the delirious lecture, which no matter how far it went never formed one complete sentence but gave the appearance that it could continue without end" (402-403:330).

In contrast, Q is impressed with the overseer's "horribly crisp manner" of speaking "with analytic incisiveness and cold irony" (30:19), which sounds "polished" to Q (362:295). The overseer thus becomes Q's model in both his exterior deportment and his interior critical spirit. Q is thus satisfied when he successfully concludes a controversy with the theologian, "with a crisp and faultless eloquence not inferior to the overseer's, while still keeping a stern eye" which is reminiscent of the overseer's eye, "upon his rival" toward whom Q has feelings of "affection" (112:88). Q often feels compassionate toward the theologian, while often feeling inferior to the overseer.

The overseer's eyes and way of speaking are presented in parallel in order to demonstrate his character and mannerisms:

The overseer's eyes, which in contrast to the theologian's had the tendency to repel each other in their squint, glittered, and he spoke in the crisp manner of a scholar replying to a question that had fallen like a cannon-ball into his special area of study. (272:221)

The overseer is thus clearly contrasted with the theologian in his eyes and manner of speech. Moreover, the inner inclinations of the two characters contrast with each other, although this remains implicit, not explicit, in the text. The overseer is averse to self-
absorption. He tells Q that "[t]he whole business" about "private life" is "vulgar nonsense' and expounds his ideas as follows:

"Personally I should be very glad to do without any of [the private life]. I consider quite genuinely that the private, secret areas of life should all be rooted out. When I say private I am referring to all those tendencies to lick oneself with the tongue of the consciousness, in such processes as introspection and recollection, which turn us away from our relations with others and in upon the self, with its sufferings and vanities, leading to self-deceptions, obsessions with illness and with the flesh, concerns with personal salvation, and to self-abuse." (89-90:68)

The overseer's aversion to any exclusively self-absorbed life makes a contrast with the theologian's self-reflexive life, which is concluded by his self-annihilation: he strangles himself.

However, the overseer shares a weak point with the theologian: both of them suffer from frequent spasms—the former is a stenocardiac, while the latter is an epileptic. In both cases, attacks complete a transformation of the characters into animals which they resemble even in conditions of normal health. The overseer abruptly changes from "a creature of intelligence" into "a crazed ostrich" (43:29), when he has a light attack of angina pectoris, implying the fragility of the overseer and of logos which he embodies. He resembles an ostrich even when in a healthy state through his unusual height and "considerably speedy manner of walking" (44:30). Like an ostrich, he is unable to fly, and is bound to the actual world. The metaphor further suggests the limitation of the logos, the predominant organizing power in the real world, which the overseer embodies.
The theologian gives Q the initial impression of being like "a crab" or an animal of the "crustacean" species both in terms of his "physique" and "face" (54:38) and legs: "his face" is "reminiscent of a crab’s shell," "his body," "another larger shell," and his legs are "spindly, crooked, crab-like" (392:321); he is "chronically bandy-legged" and "walk[s] with a heavy roll from side to side" (113:89). (Note that the theologian’s way of walking contrasts with the overseer’s "unswaying, regular motion" (45:31)). In addition, the theologian’s inwardly squinting eyes are compared to the crab’s scissor-like claws because they are "locked crisscross" (392:321).

When the theologian absorbs himself in prayer or communication with his God, his body becomes "stiff like that of someone in an epileptic fit," while his mental state is like that of "a freakish crustacean" which "he externally resemble[s]" (106:82-83). The hard shell of a crab may represent the theologian’s mental rigidity and exclusiveness. He does, indeed, have an epileptic fit when he dines with Q and other instructors, "with [foam] starting to dribble forth from his mouth" (120:95). The "foam," which accompanies any epileptic fit, is similar to that of a crab. The metaphor of a crab is thus in keeping with the theologian’s being epileptic, as well as his exclusionary, rigid mind.

Q and the overseer are similar in that they have a strong sense of being members of a larger system. Q has a guilty conscience when he engages in any private activity or thought (e.g. masturbation), and prohibits himself from making any statement or doing anything that is not suitable for a member of the Sumiyakist Party. The overseer wishes for the complete erasure of the private aspect of anyone’s life—by "private life" he means self-absorption in the cognitive and sexual senses. The overseer always conscious of his
"position" within any certain context, never fails to make the comment "I say the following as a private person" when he refers to anything outside his business, or "position". It is no wonder that Q sometimes tries to model himself after the overseer in order to achieve a public, or "social existence" in the rector's words.

However, the rector does not regard the overseer highly. He describes the overseer as an "insect-like" man upon whom "the habits acquired as a worker bee in the hive of the bureaucratic system have left their mark" (66:49). The rector defines Q as one of those insect-like men in a similar manner as follows:

"You can none of you get through even one day unless, as one cell in the fictional organism we call society, you feel that you are responsible for some slight portion of its metabolism. Splendid! It is thanks to this insect instinct that our society is able to endure...."

Then the rector concludes:

"...Let us create a society where everyone can work happily! There we have the insect morality of the revolutionary, the whole of it, root, branch, and flower." (171:138-139)

The pejorative label "insect" stands for a teleological, positivist view of the world and a complete dedication of the individual to the service of society. Prior to his conversation with the rector, Sumiyakist Q has a dream in which he becomes an ant which is "desperately endeavouring to eat up this impossible mountain of stones" (51:36). The dream is comprehensible through the rector's description of Sumiyakists.
The rector employs another metaphor in the excerpt, that of a "cell in the fictional organism," which recurs later in Doktor’s definition of Q as a "cellular man":

"Organisms with no independent system of their own as individuals. People who are nothing but one cell in some illusory organism structured by themselves. There are billions of people like that in the world. Give them a name, and they’re cellular man, friend." (229-230:188: emphasis added)

The phrase italicized above is an echo of the rector’s word in the previous citation, "cell in the fictional organism." The narrative draws the reader’s attention to this fact by saying "[this sounded to Q something like the way the rector talked" (230:188).

Doktor further extends the range of people to which his metaphor of the cell applies, employing it to describe "savages" as well as Sumiyakists:

"A collective of cells, a tribal organism of cells with no membrane dividing them, squirming together as one single unit of life. Its individual cell is not human....For a start, they don’t have the first person singular pronoun in their languages. In fact language for them isn’t a thread that links individuals together to form a society. For that kind, language is a part of magic, which sends ripples through the structure they always have been, a linked chain of countless cells. (230:188)

The latter part of this excerpt analyses the lack of "the first person singular pronoun" in savages’ languages, and thus compares savages to Sumiyakists again; valorizing the solidarity of the people, Sumiyakists favour the first person plural pronoun, "we." Q thus irritates Doktor by using "us":

"Stop using the damn word us!" shouted Doktor,..."Use the first person singular, because I’m not one of your us." (231:189)
Devoid of any sense of a tie with others or the world, Doktor rejects the idea that individuals are part of any group.

Doktor's above-cited simile of "cells" also applies to the buildings the pupils at H reformatory use. When Bukka shows Q around the pupils' quarters in which they live for the dry season, they are shown to consist "entirely of single cells" connected in a disorganized way. At one place among them there is "a high-rise apartment building reminiscent of a bees' nest" (178:144). The metaphor of "a bees' nest" as well as that of "cells" gives a negative connotation to the description of the pupils' residences which, by inference, attaches to the pupils themselves.

Later, Q visits the pupils in the communal living quarters in which they spend the rainy season, in order to stir them up into a revolutionary consciousness. The quarters look similar to the world of the savages that Doktor talks about:

As opposed to what Q had expected, the buildings had no corridor, and as soon as he had put a foot inside it he was in a single room. Since the single room took up the whole space of the building, it gave the impression of being inside something lower than a simple creature [which still has many partitions, articulations, and loop-shaped punctuations], even, something like a coelenterate. (353:287)

The fact that the dormitory does not have any "partitions" reminds us of the "tribal organism of cells with no membrane dividing them" that Doktor describes. The pupils are, indeed, perceived as a type of savages.

Both Q and F dedicate themselves to political (Sumlyakism) or religious doctrine. Both Sumiyakism and F's doctrines presuppose a master narrative necessitated and verified
by human history. It seems significant that the two monologists and historicists are assigned the same room.

Despite his monologic beliefs, however, F is also associated, through a further comparison, with savagery and inhumanity. In the middle of his epileptic fit, he bites Q's hand and is compared to "a mad dog" (121:96). The "foam" he emits from his mouth may be a sign of rabies well as of epilepsy (120:95). The narrative offers another character—Ajita, the leader of the pupils, and thus presumably a "savage"—who is compared to "a stray cur" and subsequently bites Q's hand (415:340). Thus F and Ajita make a parallel. Both of them are situated upon the border between human and inhuman, normal and abnormal.

A language instructor tells Q that Ajita has previously bitten his female schoolteacher to death before being sent to the reformatory, and compares Ajita to a "snake." The literary man, Bukka, compares Ajita's teeth to "those of a hyena worrying a rotting corpse." Although Q considers taking Ajita into his plans for revolution, he is horrified by Ajita's criminal record, viewing him as "a wolf." However, Q is determined enough to make up his mind to "regenerate [Ajita] from a little [mummy of an evil spirit] into a "revolutionary [dragon], or at least into that sort of thing, a wild dog a hyena, a snake, it didn't matter what" (331:269-270).

Similes employed to describe Ajita are also used to describe Doktor, although the connection between the two is always implicit, not explicit. Doktor's personal traits include his "showing the thin, sharp tip of his tongue" (224:184), reminiscent of a snake, "discrimination" which is compared to "[a poisonous snake lying in a coil in his mind]" (231:189), and his "terrifying teeth like those inside the mouth of a wild beast" (231:189).
Doktor consciously engages in cannibalism, while Ajita habitually bites others; Doktor thus shows parallels with Ajita.

Further, both Ajita and Doktor penetrate other people's bodies heartlessly. According to Bukka, Ajita pierces his schoolteacher's anus with "a rusty gimlet" (342:278). Doktor apparently inserts his penis into Q's anus, discharging semen into his rectum, to judge from the following description of Doktor 's "operation" on Q:

Suddenly the constrictors of Q's mind burst open. Some burning foreign body was entering him. As Q endured the pain he tried to think if it were a steel medical instrument, or the horn attached to the body of a monster; but brief time was drifting extraordinarily lengthily in the pouch of his mind, and suddenly a pillar of fire raised up before his eyes, and as he felt the hot brimstone soaking throughout his body, he became convulsed, and fainted. (241:197)

Doktor and Ajita thus have in common the desire to project themselves into the body of the other, yet it is a desire not based upon a deconstruction of subjectivity but upon a forcible imposition of self upon other.

The personal traits of characters in *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* constitute a textual network of comparisons and contrasts, a multiplicity of world views and means of relating self to other. The extent, variety, and frequently contradictory nature of the network indicate the plurality of human subject positions, and yet also demonstrate that these subject positions are not essentially 'true' or founded upon stable identity; they are rather performative, constituted by their environment. Such a realization leads us to the analysis I will perform in the last section of this chapter, in which I explore three parallel ways in
which the text of *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* makes the other familiar, and defamiliarizes the self.

**Familiarization of Others, Defamiliarization of Self:**

**Digestive, Reproductive, Cognitive Systems Which Relate the Subject to the World**

I showed in the previous chapter that in *Divine Maiden*, analogies are often drawn between characters' desire to know others, and their desires to eat them and to have sexual intercourse with them. This analogy is extended in *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* by the diffuse use of digestive and sexual metaphors to describe the process of cognition.

I wish first to delineate the patterns through which the subject relates to the world, other subjects or the self by giving an overview of the ways in which the three desires' operating processes interlock, and then by examining the analogies between, in particular, the digestive and cognitive systems in the text of *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q*.

Stages in the process of consumption of food—licking, biting, swallowing, absorption—function as metaphors for stages in the process of cognition of something extraneous to the self. Failures or difficulty in passing a stage—dysphagia, vomiting, indigestion—imply a futile attempt to understand something beyond individual comprehension. Vomiting is at times a metaphor of the manifestation of the self's thoughts to others, as is excretion.

Pingiya, Q's lover and disciple of Sumiyakism, is "provided with a talent as a good student":

> She would swallow every word and phrase of Q's without exception, and then regurgitate the same words with unsmiling seriousness. (304:247)
Digestive metaphors are also employed to represent the process of sexual intercourse. A tongue, teeth, and a mouth serve as metaphors for the vaginal opening. Thus, the narrator describes the first sexual encounter between Q and Pingiya, "on a high level of abstraction":

[W]hat one can call Q's sub-self was sucked into a sub-universe which had a hot tongue and teeth, and then had its essence sucked out of it in this depressor situation [sic], leaving a sense of asthenia as if his sub-self had been eaten up by this sub-universe consisting of a single mouth. (370:302-303)

Here, the words, such as "sucked," "tongue," "teeth," "eaten up," and "mouth," "constitute a braid" (Barthes S/Z 160) of association with the digestive process in a passage which represents the scene of making love.

Sexual metaphors are also used to represent the cognitive process. When Q first sees the rector, he is overwhelmed by his eloquence and his voracious desire to devour and understand the Sumiyakist. Q feels as if he were being raped:

Now the words of the rector had destroyed all resistance and were violating Q's mind, pushing their way into each corner of it. (73:55)

The metaphor of violation recurs when Q tries in vain to induct Bukka into Sumiyakism:

Q had spoken with considerable fervour....but when Q had finished he [Bukka] simply nodded his agreement. This only made Q more desperate. In aiming at the restructuring of the way one individual thought, Q meant that this should be an expulsion of the violently resisting ideas that already occupied that person, with sumiyakism raising its flag of victory in the enemy's camp. This was what was known as Sumiyakist thought processing:...For this process to bestow upon the processor a pleasure similar to that of rape with violence, it was
necessary that the person processed put up a determined, even furious resistance. (177:143)

Just as rape represents a forcible projection of self onto other, so teaching involves a forcible imposition of thought from self onto other.

In addition to making the other familiar, each of the three systems of desire—digestive, sexual, cognitive—display themes of self-familiarization. The digestive system presents cannibalism and coprophagy, the sexual system presents masturbation and nymphomania, and the cognitive system displays penitence and self-introspection. I wish to provide here some examples which link manifestations of self-familiarization in two different systems.

The rector provides a theoretical parallel between digestive and cognitive self-familiarizations, when he explains to Q the custom of penitence:

Essentially penitence has always been a laying bare with one's own hands of that which one believes evil in oneself, and the classic forms were always such methods as disembowelling, and skull splitting....As an alternative, the emetic method was in fashion for a time, for since the actual innards were found difficult of exposure, the aim was to provide a substitute for them by [discarding] the objects preserved within the body for inspection. [Technically speaking, there are the upper discarding and lower discarding.] (152-153:122-123)

Although K, the "Prince," does not use these methods for his penitence, he offers an example of parallelism between digestive and cognitive self-familiarization. He keeps "throv[owing] up" and "push[ing] back" "the sponge" which he should place in his mouth so that he will not hurt the inside while slapping himself as a form of "chastisement." "The sponge" can be defined as the other, because it has been used by many other pupils for
chastisement, and also can be viewed as a part of K’s self now that he has contained it in his mouth many times and vomited it out (154:124).

Sexual self-familiarization at times uses a digestive metaphor; Doktor in Doktor’s Notebook, written by Bukka, defines Sabiya, the nurse, as "a nymphomaniac," and maintains:

But nymphomania is a self-defeating thing. Certainly it possesses a rapacious stomach, but its juices are always secreted externally, and thus it cannot take all kinds of food within itself. Eventually it will melt itself away. (296:240-241)

Being a nymphomaniac thus does not mean one is interested in the other human beings, but suggests that one is concerned with one’s own sexual desire.

Bukka, the literary man, offers another example of self-reflexive digestive and cognitive processes. As I have shown, he insists that his novels should be read by their subjects and he is even eager to recite his work in front of others, or read and "add relevant footnotes and comments" to it along with the reader (245:200-201). It is significant that he ends up indulging in coprophagy; after he is imprisoned by the pupils, he is forced to be "besmeared in his own dung" (384:314). Just as he wants to read and annotate his own verbal products (novels), he eats his own excreted objects (dung).

The overseer would be disgusted with penitence, nymphomania or coprophagy, since he is critical of all self-conscious activities, mental or physical. When he expresses his aversion to self- reflexive acts, the overseer employs the metaphor of licking:

I consider quite genuinely that the private, secret areas of life should all be rooted out. When I say private I am referring to
all those tendencies to lick oneself with the tongue of the consciousness, in such processes as introspection and recollection, which turn us away from our relations with others and in upon the self, with its sufferings and vanities, leading to self-deceptions, obsessions with illness and with the flesh, concerns with personal salvation, and to self-abuse. (89-90:68)

As the overseer says, self-reflexive acts inhibit oneself from relating to the world.

Having explored how Q knows and digests others, in the remainder of this section, I will explore ways in which Q is known by and digested by others, examining the analogies through which Q and others relate themselves to others and the world.

On his first encounter with Q, the rector makes an analogy between eating and understanding extraneous objects:

My principle is to understand everything, and of course I understand everything about you. Namely that you are to be eaten by me and become a portion of my living and rotting flesh....Yes, you will understand many things...even the fact that you are loved by me....And the only way you will be loved by me is as an object of my consciousness. (73:55)

Just as "I" in Divine Maiden wishes to "devour" Miki by his desire for cognition, and just as the narrator of "Virginia" says that "cognition is eating," so the rector draws a parallel between eating and understanding. Moreover, just as Miki identifies "I"s desire for cognition with his love for her, so the rector states that he loves Q because he wants to understand Q.

Q does not seem to grasp the point of the rector's speech. However, he does seem to sense the rector's desire to understand and to eat him:
Q listened in some confusion to the rector’s eloquence, which was exactly as if a hot tongue, a hot wet tongue, had entered his body and was licking out all the folds and pleats of his mind, so that it now seemed that his mind was losing all sense of direction. Like a stomach that has lost its digestive powers, Q’s mind has for the moment lost the ability to secrete awareness towards this particular object. (73:55)

In fact, Q feels as if he were being eaten by the rector even before listening to him. When they first meet, they shake hands:

[I]t rather felt to Q that his hand had been folded in soft meat and was now burrowing further within. When the handshake had ended he was then overtaken by the anxiety that his hand might have been devoured... (60-61:44)

The handshake, as a sign of recognition of the other, is viewed here as a devouring of the other. Q experiences the fear of being devoured again:

[H]is hand was seized by a bunch of lumps like a powerful insect-eating plant, and he was hauled in towards the great belly. Q let out a cry of fear. [H]e feared that he would indeed be sucked into this volume of heavy, enormous flesh and be transformed into a part of it. (314-315:255)

The metaphor of a insect-eating plant reinforces the implication of devouring first suggested by the handshake.

When Q listens to another of the rector’s speeches, he has the sensation of being swallowed by him and of viewing his internal organs:

Q, being a naturally sincere person with a love of debate, was trying earnestly to follow the rector’s words, which led him into that tunnel which winds from the real to the unreal; and when
Q had time to notice, he was already swallowed up inside the belly of a snake, and he knew that the logic that supported the rector’s thought was this meaningless pattern of white bones that drew an arch above him, the ribs inside the snake, but only that his ideas swallowed up people as a snake does. The snake would encircle Q, swallow him, probably never let him return to the real world—endless deglutition of Q in a tube of unreality. (147-148:118-119)

The rector’s desire to know about Q even displays itself through metaphors drawn from the other end of the digestive system. When the rector mentions the question whether Q is an outcast or not, Q feels confused:

[He felt] as if he had suddenly been given an enema. The fear grew that the tentacles of the rector’s consciousness had entered into him from all entrances of his body and were going to reach to his inner organs, and with this fear he had the hallucination that these organs were melting within him and flowing out from the extremities of his digestive system. (379:312)

The hallucination also oppresses Q when Sabiya tells him that she knows he has "come out of prison," and Q feels a "sensation of existential incontinence as his heart seem[s] to melt and start leaking down out through [his] body" (202:165).

An actual enema is performed when Q takes Doktor’s operation: Suddenly the constrictors of Q’s mind burst open. Some burning foreign body was entering him. As Q endured the pain he tried to think if it were a steel medical instrument, or the horn attached to the body of a monster; but brief time was drifting extraordinarily lengthily in the pouch of his mind, and suddenly a pillar of fire raised up before his eyes, and as he felt the hot brimstone soaking throughout his body, he became convulsed, and fainted. (241:197)
If the "foreign body" is "the horn," then Doktor ejaculates into Q's rectum. If it is "a steel medical instrument," the operation is comparable to Ajita's insertion of a "gimlet" into his schoolteacher's "[a]nus" (342:278-279). In either case, the penetration is not associated with verbal cognition. However, the metaphor of hot brimstone recurs later in the novel, induced by the word, "town," which is "a symbol of [Q's] past life," and "the very sound of it makes Q feels as if the flesh on his back were cut apart like French doors, and the hot brimstone were poured into there" (338:273). In short, the mentioning of Q's secrets to him has the same effect as an enema upon him.

Let me now turn to a discussion of Q's process of cognition. When Q first pays a visit to the rector, he is offered a lump of unknown meat, which I would conjecture is human flesh. Q feels "a premonition of nausea," "[struck by something opposite to an appetite, or to an impulse to ingest and assimilate other organic matter—by an impulse to refuse the alien matter and discard it from his body]" (62:46). This excerpt implies that the narrator considers digestion to be a form of familiarization with extraneous matter. This point is further clarified by the rector. When Q rejects the meat and explains his rejection by reference to stomach problems, the rector corrects Q's explanation, saying that "[a]ll the people who come here show for a time a breakdown in their ability to digest things," and that "[t]his is not, however, a problem connected with the stomach" (63:47). Indeed Q experiences a sense of nausea as soon as he lands at the beginning of the novel. Nausea and lack of appetite are not problems with the stomach but rather with the cognitive system, as the rector emphasises in the lecture above.
Some time after his first rejection of the meat which the rector offers, Q decides to request meat. However, the "odour of scores of spices" is so "violent" that "[h]e only just manage[s] not to spit the thing out." Then, "that particular feel on the teeth that animal flesh gives spread[s] throughout his mouth and again incline[s] him towards nausea." Nevertheless, he succeeds in "avoid[ing] nausea by swallowing the meat in one gulp, without biting or tasting it." Eventually, "after blocking his gullet [the pieces of meat] fall into his stomach, announcing their undigested presence there like stones" (65:48-49).

When Q comes to know what he has unconsciously repressed, he feels indigestion. Thus, being informed of the cannibalism in which all the inhabitants of the reformatory (except the overseer who is a vegetarian) participate, "Q feels his body go tense all over, [as if he were a snake which had swallowed a stick]" (311:253). Also, when Doktor tells Q that the pupils "went out on a sortie," Q "grow[s] rigid as if he had swallowed a stick" (428:351). When Doktor points out that the pupils have exhausted all the supplies of frozen human flesh stored at the reformatory, Q stops him and says:

"Would you please repeat that more clearly."
"Why don't you try saying it yourself, in your own words?"
"There's a limit to everything, you know."
"You're trying to say there's a limit to what language can express, are you? In your case the cage of that limit has been made very tight indeed. Your language, and so your imagination, is shut up inside that narrow cage, and it can never arrive at anything which is outside the cage....(429:352)

Revealing that Q is now eating part of the last stock of flesh, he asks Q if Q's "language" can "digest" this fact (429:353). Here, the digestive process and the cognitive process
through language are clearly made parallel. Q cannot digest either the human flesh in his stomach or the idea of cannibalism through his language. He "suddenly become[s] aware of the existence of his stomach dangling there within his body" and vomits up what he has eaten (429:353).

Doktor further points out the transformation of the self which Q has unknowingly undergone by eating the pupils' flesh:

"You see, ever since you first came to this reformatory you've been eating student meat every day without fail. At this moment the majority of cells in your body are not what you were, but things that have been replaced, replaced by students. Which means that you are not you, but somebody else." (429:353)

Digestion, which is supposed to "assimilate other organic matter" to oneself, as the rector puts it, turns out to transform oneself into the other. A paradox occurs between making the other familiar and defamiliarization of the self.

Doktor suggests that Q should accept the fact that he has been involved in cannibalism, saying that all he can do is lie down with it for a long time, as a long, coiled snake does, and digest it, digest these hard pebbles of truth" (431:354). The metaphor of pebbles is reminiscent of the scene in which Q swallows the unknown meat, while the metaphor of a snake is an echo of the rector's search for cognition of Q. Again, digestion and cognition are made parallel. Doktor further employs the metaphor when he shows Q around so that Q can see the last of inhabitants of the reformatory—the theologian, the rector and his wife—, suggesting that Q should "swallow down the whole of reality" "just like a bird that has swallowed a stone and is now going to die" which "look[s] at everything
without blinking" (431:354)—a metaphor which also suggests the fate of Sabiya, who is often compared to a bird and whose eyes are "unblinking" (200:164).

However, Q refuses to understand the things he sees. Doktor cuts off the theologian’s penis, which he and Q discover after the theologian has strangled himself, and eats it; "Q close[s] his eyes for a while and wait[s]," deciding "to think this [i]s all something like the waking nightmare the eyes can see when they are tired" (436:358). When Q comes across the body of the rector’s wife, he is not upset because his eyes have a "membrane" "which allow[s] him not to see things he [does] not wish to see," which is "an extremely tough film over the eyes built up out of lassitude and apathy," "which, on its encountering the most potent and corrosive of poisons, is made thicker and firmer" (437:359). Thus, although he is shocked to see the rector’s decapitated head, "the membrane stretched over his eyes so he [does] not see one of the menials thrust something into his [the menial’s] mouth"—a part of the rector’s body. As Doktor maintains, "men can [deceive] themselves" (431:354). Q has "previously made up his mind that he w[ill] not understand" the mechanism of "the game," the winner of which is entitled to "buy the body of" the rector’s wife (133-134:106-107).

The manner in which a human being relates to the world is ultimately deception—deception to protect oneself and to conquer others. One deceives oneself both by not perceiving what one does not want to accept in the world and thus protecting oneself from self-destruction, and by coming to know what one wishes to accept, through language. Doktor discusses the latter as follows:
Men have to think out aims and find meanings in the world so that they won't destroy themselves, so that they can escape from death, and live. (435:357)

Indeed, what Q has done is to "think out aims" and "find meanings" according to his understanding of Sumiyakism. He criticises the "meaningless"ness of the rector's having his whole body shaved, the lack of "aim" in the construction of the pupils' dormitories, and various symptoms of the void of meaning and vacuity of direction in reformatory society. In the narrator's terms, Q engages in such operations of consciousness as if he were "[stick[ing] language onto bare existences," "attach[ing] ropes of words where by it [consciousness] can drag and fling them as it pleases" (61:45). The objects beyond such capacity for labelling or naming, such as the rector and the concrete projection of the office building which the overseer calls "a mere piece of unsightly and flabby existence" which is "unnamable" (29:18), threaten one as "existential facts that stick out awkwardly" (61:45).

A few characters are not inclined to name objects in the world to stabilize their relation to that world: Bukka, Doktor, and Doktor in Doktor's Notebook by Bukka. Bukka, who maintains that "[t]he world is to be rendered meaningless" (216:176), and tries to use words not "in order to attach descriptive meanings to things, but solely to suggest existence" (164-165:133), loves the desert-like landscape in which "[t]he paint of meaning that men put onto" "things" "has all peeled off" and "[t]he things have refused to be of any assistance at all to men" (173:140). Meaninglessness and aimlessness are to the taste of Bukka, whose ontological perceptions are opposed to Q's teleological view of the world.
When Q betrays his teleological stance and says: "The something we live for when we're living for something can be replaced by lots of other things. Such things are, as you say, merely objectives that we work out for ourselves as we think fit," Doktor replies:

"Once you get that clear to yourself, then you should be able to live without sticking meanings all over the world, or dangling aims in front of your nose. Just like me." (436:358)

Doktor clearly refuses to interpret the world in order to relate himself to it in a way that he prefers, since this is merely a deception.

Doktor in Doktor's Notebook, a metadiegetic character, presents this lack of world-view with the greatest clarity and detail:

I accepted the existence of the world. [However, what I could feel was only that the world is] an aggregate of things and men, of which aggregate I was also a part. [I could not recognize the existence of] the correlations and order which held the world together. Of course, correlation and order were secondary, conceptual existences, [the formation of which depends on what interpretations I make of the world. Unless you face the world with some kind of conceptual formula, with belief in the formula which more or less belongs to the world-view that has been already established, the world will appear to you more meaningless than] a heap of twisted roots of trees and stones. However, I cannot believe in any idea. (259:212)

This coincides with the world in the rector's perception, "a place where all things rely mutually upon each other, an interdependent system," and that in Bukka's perception, which is reminiscent of the forest in Italo Calvino's The Baron in the Trees, "a forest where all the trees are linked to each other by their branches" (170:138). Indeed, the world itself is "unnamable," an "unsightly and flabby existence" (29:18).
Conclusion

As I have shown, *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* displays disorder; the world is no longer viewed as an organized whole with a determined system of responsibility, a hierarchy of power, a linear progression of history, substantive individual; nor is a teleological understanding of functions possible. Instead, the world is as a nebula in which responsibility and power are diffused, history does not follow any Hegelian schema or Marxist master narrative, and in which people are not confined within any determined identity in terms of social class, gender (as the theme of castration shows), or belief. In other words, the world is free from the constraints of temporality, space, causality, logic, and identity. As in *Blue Journey* and *Divine Maiden*, this feature is displayed in aspects of the novel such as narration, indices, and themes. The world view of the novel and methodologies through which it is constructed thus coincide.

In fact, *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* is the last work Kurahashi shows complete confidence in post-modernist world-view and in anti-novelistic methodologies. As I will discuss in the next chapter, Kurahashi’s theses on the world and literature changed while writing the novel; the subtle balance she had maintained between constructive and destructive forces which operate both in the world and in literature began to be shaken. During the 1970’s she worked upon ‘authentic’ novels embodying a world based upon the logos. When she came back to the subversive novel, her model was no longer European anti-novels but those Japanese classics which display a similar inclination toward disorder and performativity.
Japanese literary critics have invariably declared that Kurahashi's novels changed after she visited the United States to study creative writing at Iowa State University, on a Fulbright Scholarship, between 1966 and 1967. The claim is usually made not regarding her methodology as a whole (pastiche, metanarrative, the dialogic mode) but specifically regarding the styles of her works, their motifs and ambiences, which seem to have become "Japanized" since her return to Japan.

Kurahashi's main methodology—pastiche—has not experienced any radical change. She has continued to "steal" other writers' styles and modify them. However, instead of using those of Western novelists such as Kafka, Butor, Nin, and Cervantes, she has started to appropriate the styles of modern Japanese novels and those of classical Japanese and Chinese texts. Thus, critics (including Kurahashi herself) have noted that she imitates the style of Ishikawa Jun in "Shiroi kami no dōjo" [The Little Girl with the Grey Hair] (1969), that of Kawabata Yasunari in "Reikon" [The Spirit] (1970) and Yume no ukihashi [The Floating Bridge of Dreams] (1970), and that of Mori Ōgai in Shiro no naka no shiro [The Castle within the Castle] (1980). It is clear that in many cases the motifs and plots of Kurahashi's novels are drawn from Japanese classics such as noh dramas, prose narratives in the Heian era (e.g. The Tale of Genji), and the 12th century waka.

Kurahashi's choice of sources in classical Japanese literature suggests that she may have learned 'indigenous' Japanese modes of intertextuality—honkadori [allusive variation
upon earlier Japanese poems], *hikiuta* [allusion to earlier Japanese poems in prose], and *honmondori* [allusion to earlier Chinese texts in prose]—as well as motifs and plots; the classical texts enumerated above are famous for the way in which they interweave allusions to earlier Japanese and Chinese poetic texts. We might say that classical Japanese texts have always consciously engaged in what would be called pastiche in the West.

After the publication of *Divine Maiden* in September 1965, Kurahashi published only four short stories until November 1968, when she started publishing an omnibus, *Han higeki* [Anti Tragedies]. Apart from writing essays, she was silent for almost three years. This period of silence coincided with her visit to Iowa, a subsequent sojourn in New York, and her giving birth to her first daughter. Japanese critics have noticed a drastic change in her works after this time and tended to attribute this to the author's private experiences.

My discussion is not focused on the relationship between Kurahashi as a writer and as a human being, but on the relationship between Kurahashi as a critic and as a writer. As a literary critic, she published two essays on the novel which I have quoted in preceding chapters: "Shôsetsu no meiro to hiteisei" [The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction] (June, 1966) and "Dokuyaku to shite no bungaku" [Literature as a Poison] (October, 1966). Discrepancies in Kurahashi's literary stances between the two essays reveal that her purposes in novel writing have changed to some extent, even in so short a time.

In "The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction," Kurahashi maintains that she will not write novels which purport to represent reality, whether that reality be society at large or the life of the author as an individual. Instead, she wishes to "express <<a world which is not this world>>, or <<an anti-world>>, by making use of issues" in this world.
Such an orientation makes her define the novel as "a magic which gives a <<form>> to <<an anti-world>> through language and by making free use of all non-literary factors," or as "<<form>>" itself given by the operation of magic. Therefore, Kurahashi shows interest in "<<nouveau romans>>", which are studies of the novel and negations of classical novels," enumerating experimental novelists such as Julien Glacque, André Breton, Maurice Blanchot, Michel Butor, and Alain Robbe-Grillet as her models. Although Kurahashi is aware of the dead end to which the new novel will lead, of its self-destructiveness, and of the difficulty in communication with the reader which arises from the use of the new novel as a tool, she declares that "it is ridiculous to observe the <<authentic>> constitution of the novel, and to dream of the restoration of the classical novel of the good old days." In short, she definitely prefers the anti-novel to the "authentic" novel (66-82).

"Literature as a Poison" is written as a manifesto of "rōjin bungaku" (the literature by old people) probably in contrast to "shōjo shōsetsu" (the literature by girls), the label Kurahashi employed to indicate the nature of Divine Maiden. Kurahashi feels that she was "a girl" in her teens, was meant to perform the role of "a hermaphrodite" in her twenties, and after reaching thirty is privileged to become a degendered human being, "an old person, not an old woman." Her literary stance has changed as her sense of her own age has shifted. Kurahashi summarizes her understanding of the new novel in much the same manner in "Literature as a Poison" as she did in the previous essay. However, her way of relating to the new novel has totally changed: "I am not such a dedicated person that I will try to contribute to development of the new novel." Instead, she will engage in attempts
"not to reject, but to approve of and become subject to, < <the world> >, and "to replace the content of < <the world> > by perfect < <techniques> >," or "to peel and subvert < <the world> >" "under a nonchalant appearance." In other words, Kurahashi implies here that she will write seemingly, or formally, ‘authentic’ novels the themes of which will nonetheless be provocative, and anti-worldly (87-95).

This manifesto is best carried into practice in Yume no ukihashi [The Floating Bridge of Dreams] (1970), which is a third person narrative with an omniscient narrator, has a clear plot structure, and yet deals with transgressive sexual acts such as swapping sexual partners and sibling incest. Two preceding novellas, "Vâzinia" [Virginia] and "Nagai yumeji" [The Long Passage of Dreams], both published in December, 1968, function as transitional attempts to "poison" under the disguise of an "authentic novel." They include motifs, characters, and units of plot which appear in Kurahashi’s anti-novels, Blue Journey and Divine Maiden. Issues such as nymphomania, homosexuality, incest, and lunacy recur in the novellas. However, such issues are viewed in the novellas by persons who are outsiders to such ‘absurd’ phenomena, and who thus privilege logical order, the objective viewpoint of the ‘traditional’ novel. In other words, the anti-worldliness ascribed to the anti-novels is ‘bracketed’ in the novellas by the ‘realistic’ or conventional mind.

It is in this sense that I would call "Virginia" and "The Long Passage of Dreams" transitional works in Kurahashi’s literary career; I am sceptical of the consensus held by many Japanese critics that the two are direct expressions and results of incidents in the author’s life in the United States and her life upon her subsequent return to Japan. Certainly, the setting of the former novella is Iowa, while that of the latter is, presumably,
Kōchi, the author's home town. Moreover, the major characters are American in "Virginia," and Japanese in "The Long Passage Of Dreams." However, this is not sufficient evidence to call one, "Americanized," and the other, "Japanized." Kurahashi ridicules such criticism made on the novellas' first publications in her retrospective "Notes on My Works": "'The Long Passage of Dreams' may have appeared to careless people as a return to Japanese Classics, while 'Virginia' has been seen as, so to speak, a souvenir of America" (Vol. 6 284).

In contrast to many critics, I rather feel that the two novellas have many motifs in common. To name only a few: oni or Japanese witches or demons which are destined to live on the border between the spiritual world and the human world because of their attachment to their own flesh and to the actual world, and their carnal and cannibalistic desires for human beings; conflicts between mother and daughter, the former of whom is presented as superior to the latter; and an analogy between human beings and trees.

Contrasts are apparent in the manner in which the two novellas try to transcend the form of the anti-novel. "Virginia" is first-person narrative recounted by an "intradiegetic narrator," "I," who is called "Yumiko" and shares many biographical details with Kurahashi. In short, "Virginia" purports to be a fairly transparent representation of the author's experiences. In contrast, "The Long Passage of Dreams" is narrated in the third-person by an extradiegetic narrator, and thus purports to be a fiction, though parallels are made with Kurahashi's life.

In this chapter, I wish first to summarize the manner in which "Virginia" 'brackets' features of the anti-novel, and in subsequent sections, to discuss "The Long Passage of Dreams" in terms of its mode of pastiche or collage, paradox or subversion of the subject-
object relationship, and its inclination to logocentrism, which is negatively viewed in previous novels such as The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q. I believe considering such issues will offer an insight into the continuities and discontinuities in Kurahashi's literary career which are made visible in the novellas.

"Virginia"

"Virginia" 'brackets' anti-novelistic features such as the decentering of the narrator's authority, surreal incidents—what Kurahashi would call 'anti-worldly,' or 'nightmarish'—, transgressions of the sexual norm such as nymphomania, free sex, and homosexuality, which question any stable human relationship between persons of substantive identity, subversion of traditional artistic canons, and subversion of social, legislative, and familial authority. By 'brackets' I mean that the novella mentions and distances them through the orderly mind of the narrator, even though it does not exclude them.

"Virginia" concerns a period of friendship between an intradiegetic narrator, watashi ("I"), and Virginia, which occurs in Iowa of the late 60's. "I," a 30-year-old female novelist, has come from Japan to study creative writing at Iowa State University, accompanied by her husband who is enrolled in the Film Department at the same university. Virginia is also a student in Film, 27 years old, separated from her husband, and living with two little sons. The story shows "I"'s process of getting to know Virginia, and thus consists mainly of the dialogues between them, and "I"'s observation of Virginia. The narrative begins with the following contemplation on knowing a person:
What does it mean to know a person? ...[w]e can assume that to know a person means to insert oneself into the person, or to possess him/her. It is thus an erotic act. One’s desire to know a person includes the possibility of making the other into an object, of destroying the other, and even at times of committing cannibalism. However, human beings situate language between themselves in order that death might not intervene and that it might not accomplish eroticism. Here language functions as a talisman against evil. Human beings draw a verbal image of a person, assume it to be the person, and go on. Such images are rough, abstract, and stereotyped. We say "the person is nice," or "he is a funny guy," and consider the making of such comments means we know person. (9)

"I" claims that her relation to Virginia is neither erotic, nor based on stereotypical labelling. By writing this story, the narrator "attempt[s] to read a person [Virginia] as if she were a volume of a book" (13).

Narrated solely by "I," the narrative is monologic, rather than dialogic as Divine Maiden is. Virginia remains an object under observation, while "I" stays in the privileged position of the cognizing subject. However, "I" is aware that getting to know a person means being known by her/him:

[The whole relationship between myself and Virginia was an interaction; in this regard, it was different from the relationship between me and a book. In other words, when I got to know (or read) Virginia, I was known to Virginia simultaneously. If, as I wished, Virginia regarded me as an interesting book from Japan, then we succeeded in establishing a unique relationship as two volumes of books which read each other. (13)

Just as "I" and Miki ‘read’ each other in Divine Maiden, "I" and Virginia may enjoy the metafictional circularity of reading and being read. The narrative of "Virginia" happens to
be monologic, but could be complemented if Virginia were to write a novella called "Yumiko" on "I."

In fact, Virginia interrogates "I" on two subjects: first, the 'futility' of her married life without romantic love, and: secondly, the 'meaninglessness' of her plan to return to Japan. Virginia's critical responses to these choices which "I" has made suggest that she, too, is observing "I" as other. However, "I" is not at all intimidated by Virginia. Rather, she seems to be quite confident, and even to feel superior to Virginia. The inversion of the subject-object dichotomy, which recurs and in many layers in Divine Maiden, does not occur in the text of "Virginia." In this regard, the text 'brackets' the paradox of inversion and circularity often found in anti-novels.

"Virginia" 'brackets' the anti-world again when the narrator defines the nature of the novella not as "an anti-novel which assumes the task of destroying a solid notion of the novel" but as "sub-novel" which "modifies or expands" the form of the novel so as to transcend any "restriction on possibilities of cognition" (11). As far as she restricts the rigid structural requirements, or set-patterns of the plot in the novel, which she compares to mythos in Greek tragedies, "I"'s stance coincides with that of anti-novelists. However, the reason that "I" rejects definite structure is its lack of verisimilitude, or of plausible representation of the actual world, rather than an aspiration to "the logic of <<dreams>>" in opposition to the logic of reality, which predominates in Kurahashi's "anti-world" ("The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction" 77). "I" quotes the sentence, "such things did not happen on earth" from Tonio Kröger by Thomas Mann (148), and maintains
that she will not make up 'unreal 'incidents, such as adultery between her husband and Virginia, or a lesbian relationship between herself and Virginia.

Another way that the anti-novel is bracketed is that the narrator maintains a critical attitude toward sexual transgressions of the norm, while *Blue Journey*, *Divine Maiden* and *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q* contain a variety of transgressions which are not viewed as negative. The fact that she feels adultery and lesbian relationships "absurd" suggests her aversion to them as well as, in her view, their unrealistic natures. Virginia, despite her name, is a nymphomaniac, having one-night stands with most of her male classmates in Film. This is simply beyond "I"'s comprehension, judging from the question which she never asks Virginia but keeps perpetually in mind, "Why do you sleep with so many men, Virginia?" (32). The narrator employs negative phrases to describe Virginia, such as "a witch" (30), "devastation of life" (38), "a ruined planet" (46), "a futile land" (46), and thus distances herself from Virginia's sexual disorder. Furthermore, the narrator seems to become embarrassed when talking about a penis or nudity. Such conservative attitudes towards 'obscene' topics are in sharp contrast to *You in Blue Journey* who does not hesitate to make love with strangers, is not ashamed of showing her naked body to others, and indulges in dreams about the phallus.

Finally, the narrator's sympathy with authority, the establishment, such as literary tradition as opposed to novelty for novelty's sake, or mothers as opposed to daughters, contrasts with the subversive inclination of the anti-novels. She calls American popular art "ivy plants without roots" "in a two-dimensional world without the axis of tradition, [a world] which will never grow into a huge tree" (62), while Japanese artisans polish their
techniques through apprenticeship and "persistent imitation [of their mentors' works] and practice" and at times achieve "divine art" (42). It is evident that she sympathizes with the latter.

Virginia’s mother is an embodiment of authority, order, and discipline. She "watches every occurrence in her own domain carefully, and insists on putting right any disturbance in the order as trivial as a mote of dust’s falling." She is "a college instructor in linguistics, and dominates the territory of language very severely." The mother has also prohibited her daughter from having any contact with male acquaintances. "I" draws parallels in the relationships between Virginia and her mother, and between herself and her own mother:

The daughter always locates herself ahead of her mother, positing the preposition, <<against>>, between them. Still, the daughter is related to the mother by this <<against>>, and she eventually becomes the flip side of her mother, despite her defiance. However, such self-fashioning by the daughter never fails to transform the mother in turn into a grotesque creature. Since the mother discovers that the daughter locates herself through the preposition <<against>>, the mother starts to kill herself little by little. The accumulation of small relinquishments builds up a heap of corpses of love, which weakens the mother just as the growth of gallstones does. If you ask which of the mother and daughter is the victim, it is the mother in most cases. (72)

It is evident here that the narrator is sympathetic to the mother. In addition, she acknowledges Virginia’s mother’s "insight" which does not overlook the traces of the daughter’s nymphomaniac life, though "Virginia seem[s] to think her mother does not know"
anything about it (74-75). In other words, the daughter does not know the mother knows what the daughter does. The mother’s superiority in knowledge is established here.

The narrator’s preference for order as opposed to chaos is consistent in the text. Although she claims that "Virginia [in the novella] is a collage of fragments which require the reader to gather them into an image," the novella is not as flexible as Blue Journey, another collage of fragments the text of which is incessantly being created by the reader. Rather, the narrator of "Virginia" provides innumerable parenthesized annotations which make it impossible for the reader to participate actively in interpreting the text. In other words, the text is explanatory, rather than associative, and thus is more like an essay than a novella. (Kurahashi did clearly categorize this work as a fiction when her Complete Works were edited, although we are entitled to question the author’s categorization, and categorization per se.)

In fact, Kurahashi has not written any other fiction in this style: the first-person narrative with a intradiegetic narrator who is very similar to the author. The representational nature of "Virginia" may represent the personal feelings of the author who claims to be confined within social norms in her actual life. (Remember, for example, Kurahashi shows strong aversion to incest in reality in "Notes on My Works" added to Divine Maiden: yet she feels free to write of incest in the novel itself.)

Having examined the manner in which "Virginia" transcends anti-novels, I now wish to turn to another transitional work—"The Long Passage of Dreams."
"The Long Passage of Dreams"

The text of "The Long Passage of Dreams" is full of references and allusions to works of noh. To begin with, its title draws upon the last phrase in a noh play called Tamakazura [The Jewelled Chaplet], which is quoted toward the end of the novella:

Tamakazura’s soul has attained the jewel of Truth,
and the long passage of dreams has come to an end.
(Goff, 124)

"[T]he long passage of dreams" stands for the duration of obsessive human attachments to the secular world—emotional, carnal and material desires. The fact it "has come to an end" means that those who have been attached to the secular world are finally enlightened by Buddhist truth, and achieve peace of mind. In medieval Japan it was believed that those who could not detach themselves from worldly desires became oni [demons, witches], who hovered around trying to devour living human beings, and haunted the objects of their desire, at times possessing them and torturing them to death.

Two persons in the novella experience "the long passage of dreams" or the process of overcoming attachment: Keisaku, a dentist on his deathbed, and Mariko, his daughter in her late 20’s who comes back from the United States to see him. Let us first follow Keisaku’s passage so that we may also have an overview of the story.

Incidents in Keisaku’s life are usually rendered through comparison with other incidents in Greek tragedies and noh plays. In Keisaku’s dreams Mariko provides analogies

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1I have modified Goff’s translation in order to attain consistency in the use of tense and to add the equivalent of the original word "ji" which means "the passage" and is missing from her translation.
with Greek tragedies, while Keisaku himself, who has practised the chanting and performance of noh, often associates circumstances he has been in with those in noh plays.

He met Fusa, his current wife, when he was a student at a dental school in Tokyo and she lived with her aunt in the city, engaged in practising the many arts required for a proper marriage for daughters of respectable families. At Fusa’s request, Keisaku wrote a love letter to her every night, and hoped that his wish to gain her hand would come true when he had continued the letter-writing for a period of one hundred nights. Keisaku compares his endeavour to obtain Fusa through such measures to the endeavours of Fukakusa no shôshô in a noh play called Kayoi komachi [Komachi and One Hundred Nights]. In the noh play, Komachi, a noble woman renowned for her beauty and talent in poetry-composition in the Heian era, requires one of her innumerable suitors, Lesser Captain Fukakusa, to visit her one hundred consecutive nights, and promises that only then will she let him consummate their relationship. The play ends when Fukakusa no shôshô has managed to visit her on ninety-nine consecutive nights without telling us the final result, but another noh piece, Sotoba komachi [Komachi on a Stupa] reveals that the suitor dies on the very last night.

In Keisaku’s life, Fusa, leaving for her home town on the ninety-ninth night, was caught by him at the railway station; he visited her family to ask for her hand, and was rejected. However, Fusa told her family she would choose Keisaku even at the cost of being disowned, and joined Keisaku in his home town where he set up a dentistry practice.

Mariko, in Keisaku’s dream, compares his abduction of Fusa to Jason’s flight with Medea from Colchis to steal the golden fleece. The king of Colchis, before he grants his
request, asks Jason to sow dragons’ teeth. The motif of teeth connects Jason to Keisaku, who is a dentist. Informed by Mariko of Medea’s revenge upon Jason’s infidelity, Keisaku associates this with the betrayed wife’s possessing of her husband as a spirit in the noh play, Kanawa [The Iron Crown].

Though Fusa’s superhumanly strong will and composure are comparable, in the dream, to those of Medea or the woman in The Iron Crown, Keisaku is not a latter day Jason: he has never engaged in adultery. Therefore, Fusa has had no opportunity to exert her ‘magical power,’ which "poisoned herself" and "transformed her into a witch in the disguise of a perfect, ideal housewife and mother" (114).

Overpowered by his wife in his everyday life, Keisaku has reacted by engaging himself in practising noh chanting and performance. His hopes have been to stop practising dentistry one day, and leave this world. His former hope has now been achieved, and now he dreams of leaving for a trip, accompanied by Mariko, just as Oedipus is guided by his daughter Antigone, or as Kagekiyo in the noh play Kagekiyo who was once a famous warrior, and now lives in a thatched hut as a blind beggar and is visited by his daughter Hitomaru. In another dream he has just before his death, Keisaku plays the role of a travelling priest, who encounters an old man who is identified as a devouring demon. The setting is similar to those of noh plays such as Kurozuka [A Black Tomb] and Nomori [The Guardian of the Field]; the former is mentioned, and sentences of the latter are quoted in the text. In The Guardian of the Field, the priest peeps into the demon’s bedroom in which the corpses of the human beings he has devoured are stored; the demon in Keisaku’s dream shows him a pile of the teeth he has extracted during his life. The demon further shows
Keisaku a well of "the completion of wisdom" and a hawk which disturbs the placid mirror of the water and prevents a person from viewing Prajñā pāramitā reflected in the mirror. The demon suggests that Keisaku should scatter the extracted teeth so that the hawk may be distracted from the well; he does so, and it disappears. Following the demon's instructions, Keisaku manages to look into the well, to find not pāramitā but sūnyatā, or emptiness. The next moment, the hawk bites Keisaku's back, and Keisaku finds "his flesh" to be "remove[d] as a cicada shed[s] its skin, leaving the empty shell of a long confusing dream." A sentence from Tamakazura sounds to Keisaku: "the long passage of dreams [has come] to an end." Then, "Keisaku awaken[s] from his dream and enter[s] the well" (136)—he is dead.

Kurahashi’s novella, we have seen, is full of references and allusions to noh pieces. However, noh functions as more than the source of motifs in "The Long Passage of Dreams." The novella reflects the methodologies of noh composition—pastiche of poetic phrases, the use of dialogic mode between the two major characters with an annotative chorus, and the dual structure of dream and reality. The first methodological characteristic of noh plays is evident in the very fact that "The Long Passage of Dreams" is filled with echoes of noh pieces. The novella is, in fact, a pastiche of pastiche.

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2I have used the transcriptions of the two Sanskrit words given in "Hannya-haramitta-shingyō" and "Kū" in Japanese-English Buddhist Dictionary. I also referred to A Dictionary of Buddhist Terms and Concepts, which defines "pāramitā" as "[p]ractices which Mahayana bodhisattvas must undertake in order to attain enlightenment" ("Pāramitā" 341), and "shūnyatā" as "non-substantiality, emptiness, void, latency, relativity, etc." ("Kū" 237).
Another characteristic of the novel which imitates noh methodology is its structure. While this is not identical to that of the noh play, it shows similarities in its use of the dialogic mode. Its text consists of ten sections: in the first, third, fifth, seventh and tenth sections, the heroine Mariko’s viewpoint predominates, while her father Keisaku functions as the main viewer in the second, fourth, sixth, eighth. In short, the father and daughter takes turns to provide viewpoints. The narrative is dialogic in this sense. Moreover, each section, except for the ninth, which consists merely of the doctor’s declaration of Keisaku’s death and an indication of the time, is dialogic. The sections narrated mainly from Mariko’s point of view represent her communication with Takatsu, a boyfriend, regarding Keisaku; Takatsu has asked Keisaku for her hand, and excited him to a point at which he has fallen into a coma. Their communications, direct or indirect (letters), are either rendered as dialogues or incorporated within statements made by the narrator. In Keisaku’s sections, which, as a consequence of his being in a coma, are mainly constituted of his dreams, Keisaku and Mariko, and at times Fusa, talk with each other.

The last and most important similarity between the compositional principles of Kurahashi’s novella and those of noh is the dual structure of dream and reality presented in a sub-genre of noh plays called the fukushiki mugen noh [double-decked noh on dreams]; waki, or the secondary character, often a travelling priest, meets the primary character (shite) in the ‘real’ and ‘present’ section, and in the subsequent ‘dream’ and ‘past’ section, shite turns out to be the ghost of a well-known literary or legendary person who cannot detach her/himself from the secular world after her/his death.
The theme of conflict between dream and reality predominates in the novella, and reflects the subject of this chapter—the way Kurahashi 'brackets' the anti-novel. Keisaku's dreams offer the world of the anti-novel which subverts principles of the real world. I now wish to discuss the ways in which they transcend the logico-temporal-spatial order which dominates the real world, and offer "leaps and twists typical of dreams" ("The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction" 77), how they engage in conflict with the real world and how they eventually subside.

In the second section of "The Long Passage of Dreams," Keisaku experiences his first bout of incontinence without at first realizing what is happening: he dreams of an incident in which he abducts Fusa, and then regains self-possession and is aware of his incontinence. At the beginning of his dream, he senses that the "sunny" and "warm" room "suddenly becomes dark" and "filled with chill." This suggests that Keisaku shifts from the real world to the dream world. Then he discovers he is wearing "a noh mask made by Himi," a medieval master of mask-making who made a mask of yaseotoko, the one worn by a noh performer in the role of Fukakusa no shōshō in Kayoi komachi, and the one with which Mariko associates the face of dying Keisaku. In fact, "Himi" literally means the sun and ice, and thus implies the dual structures of sunshine and cold, brightness and darkness, reality and dream. Keisaku can "see his own face from the reverse side [of the mask] as the face of an old man, with an inflexible deathlike expression" (101). Another dichotomy is added here—that between the surface of the mask (the face of a young, lovelorn man) and its reverse side (the face of a dying old man). Keisaku thus experiences both sides of the binary oppositions outlined above.
The surrealistic metamorphosis of Keisaku's face is followed by a temporal confusion. In an adjacent room, Keisaku finds Fusa as the girl who ordered him to visit her for one hundred nights. When Keisaku replies to her saying, "I no longer have such time; I am dying," Fusa runs away, leaving a note which reads, "I am going home to Kumano." Thus, the present in which Keisaku is dying is abruptly connected, without any explanation, with the ninety-ninth night of his courtship forty years ago.

Keisaku runs to the railroad station to catch up with Fusa, as he did forty years ago. The way in which the chase is presented suggests that Keisaku is fully conscious of the atemporality and absurdity of the whole episode:

What he thought while running is that if [this incident] were [happening] now, there would be the taxis which hover in the town like innumerable noctilucae. His throat was scorched dry with frustration at the thought that if it were now, he could fly to Osaka ahead of Fusa and wait for her there. However, Keisaku knew that he was running in a town of forty years ago...A rickshaw without its puller was parked with its shafts directed toward the heaven in the deserted town. Keisaku ran, pulling the rickshaw, thinking how absurd the whole business was.

Arriving at the station and running up the stairs, Keisaku was out of breath. Apparently the train had already left. He sat down on the ground, and within his head sounded the chorus of jiutai, "I was to come a hundred times; / There lacked but one .../ My eyes [are] dazzle[d]. Oh the pain, the pain! / Oh the pain! and desperate, / Before the last night had come, / He died,—Shii no Shôshô the captain." It should not have been like this, Keisaku mused, and tried to look into the well of memory. However, there was a muddle in his brain after the avalanche of encephalomalacia, and he was even uncertain of the location of the well. This is where I caught Fusa then, Keisaku thought. And now was then.
There she was, as he had expected. (102-103)

The present and the past of Keisaku’s life are at first separated by the repetition of "if it were now," and later united by the sentence, "And now was then." The word "shafts" is suggestive of those on which Fukakusa no Shōshō marked the number of his visits in Kayoi komachi, and the quotation from Sotoba komachi connects the time forty years in Keisaku’s past with the Heian era, and thus Keisaku and Fukakusa no Shōshō. Keisaku’s identity is not substantive but performative; it is surrealististically dissolved in the anti-world.

However, in a subsequent passage, Keisaku is troubled by being conscious that he is no longer as young as forty years ago, while Fusa somehow remains a youthful girl:

"I will let you go no more. I am coming with you to Kumano," said Keisaku in a youthful tone. However, his voice was that of an old man, his face, that of "yaseotoko" with a deathlike expression. Hoping Fusa would not notice it [his agedness], Keisaku expanded the wings of unrestrained carnal desire on the reverse side of his own aged ugly [face]. The girl was youthful, with the face of a "koomote" [a noh mask for young women characters]. She was somewhat different from the Fusa of that time. Imagining violating this girl with his aged body, Keisaku felt an almost frantic, brutal joy.

"I have bought a ticket for you, too," said the girl, opening her clasped paw to show it. Keisaku grabbed the hand and drew her to him. Drawn as if she had no weight, the girl hid her face in Keisaku’s chest. Worried about the foul breath of old men, Keisaku was thinking of kissing her lips. This concern had been missing "then." Confused with such vague retrospect, Keisaku continued caressing the dew-soaked, cold hair of the girl. Then the hair shone in awesome silver. The woman’s face, turned over, was witch’s mask. It was a "shinja" [a true snake: a noh mask for witches] showing its tongue.

\[1\] I have inserted Arthur Waley’s translation of Sotoba komachi several lines of which are quoted in this excerpt.
From the manner in which Fusa was working away around his feet, Keisaku realized that he had wetted his pants. Driven by irritation, he said, "Since when have you become the true snake?" (103-104)

The discrepancies between now and then, real and unreal, confuse Keisaku. Finally Fusa's face is transformed from a koomote to a shinja, without any logical transition, just as Keisaku's face is transformed into a yaseotoko at the beginning of the dream.

Similar atemporality is found in the fourth section of "The Long Passage of Dreams." Knowing that he will die soon, Keisaku plans how he will leave for Kyoto as a dead man. Illogically enough, he considers being accompanied by Mariko and Takatsu, even though they will in fact be alive after his death. Keisaku thinks he has to take out some of the trees in the yard so as to make it look tidier, "At the thought, Keisaku feels that he gets up easily and looks down at the yard from the window." His observation is as follows:

Now, the season of loquats was already over, and it was still too early for autumn fruit to ripen. Under the persimmon tree, the elementary school pupil Mariko and Kôji [her] three-year-old [brother] were having fun turning over the soil in a squatting posture....The children were digging up something. Keisaku leaned out of the window upstairs and cried to them. "Folks, you mustn't dig out the extracted teeth!"

It was rather an absurd manner of speaking to children to use such terms as "extracted teeth." Moreover, it had been much after when Keisaku had buried the teeth pulled out of his patients' mouths. There should have been an air defense moat under the place in which the schoolchild Mariko was digging. Therefore, Keisaku corrected his statement, and cried, "You mustn't play on the air defense moat!" Then Mariko and Kôji looked up at Keisaku upstairs. The two faces were muddled, their eyes and noses missing. Baffled, Keisaku said, "Look, your faces have changed in this way, for you are playing at such a place."
"I have dug a hole for you, Father," the grown up Mariko came to tell him. (110-111)

Here, again, three points in the chronological time are confused: war time, the time when Keisaku buried the extracted teeth, and the present in which Keisaku is on his deathbed. He is conscious of the atemporality and absurdity, and tries to correct them. Logical disorder is also visible, when he "gets up easily" and when the "eyes and noses" disappear from the children's faces.

The narrative in sections of Keisaku's dreams even transcends spatial reality. He can be anywhere he imagines himself to be. In one incident, Keisaku seems to be transferred to the place Kurahashi calls the "anti-world," in that he goes through a hole and reaches "the other earth":

The hole Keisaku had fallen into was like the hole of an ant lion. The funnel-shaped sandy hole collapsed easily, and his feet trod through the bottom of the sand. As soon as he felt his body was in the air, he flew down to the other earth. The place appeared somewhat like Kumano, and somewhat like Adachi ga hara or Kasuga no sato in Yamato prefecture [Both are locations in which a witch or demon appears in noh plays]. It was a world of twilight stretching as far as the end of the earth. The destination for which he had wished to leave must be such a place, thought Keisaku. (131-132)

Thus Keisaku can move between the world and the anti-world.

In addition to such surrealistic transgressions of orders of logic, time and space, Keisaku's dream displays paradoxes in which the subject and object of observation are inverted in much the same way as in Divine Maiden. Here, I wish to discuss two conspicuous examples, those of Keisaku's diary and of his jabberwockies.
Keisaku has written into his diary of "a grotesque dream" he had "around the time of Mariko's birth," in which a baby was born as a "lump of flesh covered by a semi-transparent, albumen-like pouch" and had no head, no limb, only the vaginal opening." Suddenly "a grotesque bird came down, grasped the lump and flew off." He modifies the dream by adding a fictional passage in which "Fusa, who produced the egg-like thing, laughed with her mouth torn wide like that of a cat." Then, "Keisaku store[s] the diary in a bookshelf with glass French doors with a lock. However, he often forgo[es] to turn the key, and leaves the diary on the desk, so it is quite possible that someone in the family might have had read it in his absence." (117)

Keisaku keeps asking himself if Mariko has read his diary, and becomes sure that she must have, to judge from "a slight change in her attitude":

Mariko's eyes had been those of a daughter who looks at her father, focusing upon the surface of the mask of the father which Keisaku wore. After a certain moment, however, her gaze stretched boldly forwards, and delved deep into Keisaku's eyes like a probing fishline. Her gaze was that of a woman who was in love [with a man], and knew that she was also loved [by him]. The reason that Mariko could gaze at Keisaku in such a way was that she had come to know that she was known by him. Keisaku's dream in which Mariko was born in that egg-like shape was a revelation to her. The birth dreamt of by Keisaku was the origin of her existence, and thus it was no one but Keisaku who had given birth to her. Therefore, Keisaku was the man who knew Mariko's secret. Now that Mariko came to know that she was known by a man, wasn't it rather natural that her eyes which gazed at the man appeared to be those of a woman who was completely known to him? Keisaku interpreted Mariko this way and wrote down this analysis, too, in the small leatherbacked notebook which he used as a diary. (118-119)
Keisaku and Mariko's relationship changes from that of the father and daughter to that of secret sharers, of intimate lovers. Therefore, their identities are incessantly changing, and performative. Keisaku writes that he supposes that Mariko has read what he has wrote about her birth; such multi-layered nesting in which the subject and object of observation/knowing are perpetually inverted is, as I discussed in the second chapter of my thesis, a paradoxical feature typical of anti-novels.

An answer is provided to Keisaku's question regarding whether Mariko has read the diary or not in another of his dreams in the sixth section. There, Keisaku and Mariko have a dialogue in which inversions occur unceasingly. His wish to get Mariko back from the United States is realized in his dream earlier than reality. Mariko arrives by a plane in the back yard (again, absurdly), and asks Keisaku:

"What can I do for you?"
"I have called you back because I have become ill."
"No, you have become ill because you wanted to call me back."
"My brain has begun to deteriorate because my illicit love for you became more and more acute."
"Every corner of your thoughts is clear to me; I have read your diary."
"So, I was right; you have read it."
"It's you who deliberately left it open on the desk so that I might read it."
"Now that you understand that much, I need not explain any longer. I am leaving for a trip with you."
"You are too ill to do so."
"You need not worry; mine is a feigned sickness. Are you angry?"
"Of course I am." (124)
The first inversion occurs in a cause-effect relationship: does the illness inspire the summons, or the summons the illness? The second concerns whether Keisaku wished Mariko to read his diary, or not. Finally, the third inversion explores the question whether Keisaku pretends to be ill or not.

As is evident in the passage above, Keisaku and Mariko deceive each other, trying to conquer the other and yet also apparently intoxicated with the sense of being conquered. Such sado-masochistic dialogues are only possible when both of the participants accept the paradoxical "anti-world." Keisaku cannot indulge in such mesmerizing infinite circularity when he faces Fusa. Another series of inversions occurs in his consciousness when he is with Fusa, but Fusa mercilessly refuses to play the game with him:

As his illness took a turn for the worse and his tongue became less mobile, Keisaku often pronounced words deliberately unclearly, and looked back at his family, who could not catch his words and brought their confused faces closer to his, with his eyes full of hatred. The faces of humans always looked extremely foolish on such occasions. Fusa, whose face was usually well-composed, was no exception. Keisaku was free as he wished to despise Fusa who showed the expression of a foolish, deaf person. He almost gnashed his teeth together out of hatred and rage not only at Fusa but also at himself who consciously did such things. However, it was not long before Fusa perceived Keisaku's plot, and came to nonchalantly ignore his unclear words. His hatred toward Fusa, who tried to take control of him calmly, regarding him as an unsightly, foolish partially-paralysed patient, was like that of a helpless infant. In the course of time, Keisaku gave up attacking her and got used to yielding himself up to Fusa's care as meekly as a child. Still, he became almost frantic in a momentary rage when Fusa said "Could you please say it more clearly?" in a well-composed tone of voice. He was not speaking in such a manner deliberately—he could not speak in any other way any longer, Keisaku was about to explain, but gave up. Tears filled the cloudy eyes of the patient. (104-105)
The comparison of the patient to an infant cared for by a nurse is not an unusual one. However, the patient’s position is inverted when, as in the above excerpt, he consciously performs the role of the patient, and thus views the nurse contemptuously as "a foolish, deaf person." Keisaku is even conscious of his performance and feels "hatred and rage" toward himself. Such a closure of self-reflexive acts is shattered by Fusa, who stops appearing as "a foolish, deaf person" and instead deals with Keisaku "unconcernedly" "calmly" and in a "well-composed" manner. Refusing to join her husband in the play of circularity, Fusa maintains a privileged position over him, just as she did before Keisaku fell ill. Unlike Mariko, Fusa is not an inhabitant of the "anti-world."

Another example of the power struggle between Keisaku and Fusa will lead us to consideration of the logos in "The Long Passage of Dreams." The eighth section begins as follows:

As his illness got worse, Keisaku became able to come to and fro between dreams and reality. It was because his control waned that his imagination operated unrestrainedly. The fact that his control over his imagination waned meant that his control over his limbs and mouth waned, too. When he sensed the immobility of his body, Keisaku stopped chanting and dancing, and instead licked unuttered words like candies within his mouth, with noh textbooks open on his lap, transforming himself freely, or rather dissolutely, into shite and his past self. He thus pronounced the words of the person into whom he transformed himself. It was just like dreaming, but in Keisaku’s case, he saw dreams in the presence of others while [normally] one sees dreams when one is alone, wrapped in a pouch of sleep. The words Keisaku uttered in such a state of mind were words in dreams, or, to use Fusa’s expression, jabberwockies. Fusa thought of dreams which were beyond the control of the social conventions of language, and leaked outside, as something as unrestrained as incontinence of urine. Since the time when he had become incontinent both physically and in his illusions, Keisaku had been confirmed as
an invalid. It was also since then that Fusa pointed Keisaku out to their children as "the person" instead of "your father." (130-131)

As in The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q, Kurahashi tends to dismiss the divisions between mental and other systems in the human body, and teleological explanations of the function and malfunction of organs. Here, the discharging of urine and of illusions are incorporated together.

However, what I would like to emphasize here is the narrator's negative descriptions regarding Keisaku, and the world of illusion. The narrator corrects her/his statement about Keisaku from "freely" to "dissolutely," and views the whole process of his illness as "wan[ing]" into the state of being an "invalid." The narrator also quotes Fusa's observations often: "jabberwockies," "slovenly." Eventually, Fusa comes to regard Keisaku not as respected member of family, who is presumably in power, but as an object of observation. The shift in Keisaku's position occurs because of his lack of control—especially, linguistic restraint is missing—so that he cannot be accepted any longer in society in which "language" as "a social convention" dominates.

Opposed to the intoxicated, disordered, paradoxical states of Keisaku's, and occasionally of Mariko's, minds are the sober, organized, and 'logical' dispositions of Fusa and Takatsu. We may contrast these two opposite inclinations as Dionysian and Apollonian impulses, following Neitzsche's definitions in The Birth of Tragedy ("Apollonian-Dionysian," Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics 41). The three novels I have dealt with in the preceding chapters—Blue Journey, Divine Maiden and The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q—all favour Dionysian, chaotic, subversive, and performative inclinations. A shift to a preference
for the Apollonian order is visible in "The Long Passage of Dreams" as well as in "Virginia," first in the expansive references to the ordered mannerisms of Fusa and Takatsu, secondly in the reliance of Mariko and Keisaku upon them, and thirdly in the respectful comments Mariko makes about them.

Fusa’s organized way of life is presented in many ways. Her manner of eating food is "as if she were neither driven by appetite, nor as if she did not like the taste of dishes, but [i]s completely incorporated within a ritual, far from the way in which animate creatures eat: without noise, almost without dipping chopsticks into the food" (92). In fact, the narrator clearly contrasts Fusa’s manner at meals with Keisaku’s, who "eats frantically, making a noise with his tongue" and "c[annot] compete with Fusa in the [manner] of eating" (92).

Fusa’s tone of speech is "well-composed," her attitude in general also "calm" and "unconcerned." Keisaku observes that "[a]s she becomes aged, she seems to have accomplished the art of nonchalantly making satirical and cynical statements the real messages of which Keisaku c[an]not catch." "Though Keisaku hate[s] the toughness of her heart, he d[oes] not have the art with which to compete with her" (114).

Fusa surpasses and frightens Mariko as well as Keisaku. When Mariko comes home, has a dinner with her family, and is surprised that Takatsu has been staying at home, Fusa explains the reason that she did not request him to leave as follows:

"I wish him to see the person’s [Keisaku’s] end. He [Takatsu] has established such a tie. Also, I considered the possibility that you might not have arrived in time."

Mariko stiffened her shoulders, sensing a horrible machination, beyond brutality, in her mother’s words. The word, "witch," occurred to her. A witch was beyond the reach of the interpretations of deep psychology or psychoanalysis; a
mountain hag who had grown out of the jelling of obsession and delusion. (92)

Just as in "Virginia" "I" compares Virginia’s mother to an omniscient "witch," reminding her of her own mother, Mariko here compares her mother to "a witch." Fusa's strong will, through which she unhesitatingly presents Keisaku's death as inevitable, overcomes Mariko. Subsequently, Mariko again acknowledges her inferiority to Fusa:

"I could have come back earlier if I could have changed airplanes more efficiently," said Mariko. She knew that she could only speak apologetically to her mother, and also that Fusa would never accept her apologies. (93)

Mariko is here deprived of the freedom of speech which she seems to enjoy when talking with Keisaku. Mariko is obviously under the verbal control of Fusa, as Virginia is dominated by her linguist mother who perpetually corrects her manner of speech.

Mariko used to think of the possibility of "something ominous happening to her father." In contrast, she never expected that "[a]nything ominous would happen to her mother":

Mariko was certain that her mother would never die of disease. If she ever died, no other way than suicide was conceivable. But such a superhuman woman would never commit suicide either. Words such as "the witch," "mountain hag," occurred to Mariko then, too. (93)

Mariko has unshakable trust in Fusa's physical and mental toughness, while she is uncertain about Keisaku's physical strength. Later, Keisaku's mental fragility also surfaces in Mariko's consciousness:
Mariko was convinced that her mother would never cry like an ordinary woman even at the last moment of her father's life. Fusa would never lose herself, cling to the dead man or cry over him. Being so convinced meant that Mariko was able to respect her mother. When she was around twenty years old, Mariko had been so intoxicated with the idea of "love" that she had taken to her father's side in interpreting the relationship between her parents based on this idea, and by making a judgement that her mother did not love her father. However, the Mariko of the present, who had been awaken from the intoxication of "love," found her father rather annoying, for he had yielded to [the temptation of] talking about his courtship with her mother to Mariko when she was intoxicated. It would be after his death that even those soft points he had exposed to Mariko would appear dear, Mariko thought. In contrast, her mother, without soft points, was a mountain hag, superior to a human woman. (129-130)

Here, Mariko is aware of a shift in her attitudes towards her parents; she now definitely places Fusa above Keisaku, and by so doing, implicitly values sober will and toughness above intoxication and softness.

Mariko formerly shared wild, unrestrained flights of imagination with Keisaku. Even when she faces the dying man on his deathbed and thus is supposed to concentrate on watching him, Mariko's mind is disturbed by the idea of writing a novel about an incident in New York. However, she thinks that she should not indulge in such a thought. She finds her imagination "unrestrained," and wishes to calm herself down through the help of her mother:

She would be able to write a novel, Mariko tried to tell herself again. However, she had no confidence in the idea. It disappeared like a bubble of trivial thought. Why could she not prevent herself from turning her mind over and over dissolutely, in the middle of a ritual in the presence of a dying man? It was as if she were doing something obscene with her
body beneath her clothes without being seen. Realizing the instability of her mind which could not dwell on any subject in order to escape from her father’s death, Mariko looked at her mother as if to seek control over it. (88)

The motifs of novel-writing and masturbation are contrasted with "a ritual" of death. The words "take over" indicate the operation of an evil-spirit, an operation which was part of folk-belief in medieval Japan and thus recurs in noh plays. Modifiers such as "trivial," "dissolutely," "obscene" give a negative connotation to Mariko’s loss of composure. Mariko herself is critical of her Dionysian inclination, and needs Fusa to help her resist it. Fusa simultaneously threatens and supports Mariko. The recurrent comparison of the "neatly sitting" Fusa to "a candle holder" implies her stability, brightness, and her position as the centre of order in the family.

Takatsu functions in much the same way as Fusa—that is, as a keeper of order, which is visible in his face, writing style, handwriting, the manner of his speech, his posture and his attitude to others. His behaviour is based on reason and composure.

When Mariko sees Takatsu for the first time after arriving home, he apologizes to her for having excited Keisaku by repeatedly asking for her hand to a point at which the older man fell into a coma. However, Takatsu does not make an elaborate explanation, an attempt to justify himself, but simply says, "Forgive me, please." His face, too, does not show any concern: his face "appear[s] to signify nothing." By such a "lack of expression, Takatsu's face show[s] true courtesy." "Mariko approve[s] of it," comparing it favourably to a face of emotional turbulence "like the inside of a crab’s crust" (94). Here, Mariko prefers the lack of, or overcoming of, emotions to an unstable state of mind.
Ever since Keisaku fell sick, Takatsu has been writing to Mariko in the United States:

Mariko had never read at length the long letters from Takatsu which were written in an upright hand, and in a style somewhat like a mixture of those of Montaigne and Alain. The contents of his letters were more or less those of observation records made by a courteous medical doctor. Mariko was angry at the fact that Takatsu had put the lid on her father’s opening of his inward self, that he had begun to function as a mediator through which her father viewed and contacted the outside. This should have been Mariko’s task. However, Mariko also knew that she would not be able to bear such a task. (97)

It is evident in this excerpt that Mariko acknowledges Takatsu’s formality and logic as something lacking in herself, and has an antagonistic feeling toward him, but admits that her father needs the support of such a logical person. Keisaku tells Takatsu about his early courtship with Fusa, and about his resolution to retire from dental practice, about which even Mariko does not know in detail. As Takatsu himself says, he "may know more of certain things about Keisaku than Mariko" (99). Indeed, Takatsu comes to occupy a superior position to Mariko in terms of knowledge about Keisaku.

Mariko is thus opposed to Takatsu’s disposition, and at one place even finds him "laughable" in terms of his "strangely polite, formal manner of speech" and of his "manner of sitting in front of the Japanese writing desk which show[s] he ha[s] been disciplined" (98). Nevertheless, Mariko needs Takatsu’s help just as Keisaku does. This is primarily implied in the fact that Mariko "lurch[e]s and put[s] her hand on Takatsu’s shoulder" (107), just as Keisaku "[falls] on to Takatsu’s lap" (95) when he is first shocked. Mariko’s dependence upon Takatsu becomes visible in a more extensive manner a short while prior to Keisaku’s death. Mariko finds the patient’s room too dark:
The dying man would not be troubled with excessive light, considering the darkness of the hole which he was entering. Mariko thought that even a sun-like light ball could be hung up in order to disperse the darkness leaking from the hole of death. However, the power of darkness was irresistible; it seemed to gradually suck up the remaining light. It was dim and dismal inside the room, making the people sitting there look like ghosts or demons. Mariko searched for Takatsu among them. She was in need of an Apollo-like young man who, as the only representative of reason, shining in his interior light, would send her a message, "Retain your sanity." Takatsu was sitting in the corner of the room. He looked like a member of the chorus on the noh stage who sat still, with his fan in front of his lap, during the dialogue between shite and waki. (129)

Dichotomies are visible in this passage: darkness and light, death and life, reason and insanity. The metaphors of the sun and Apollo are significant in this context, because they suggest a centric order as opposed to the Dionysian intoxication with disorder. The comparison to the chorus is also worth noting. By being compared to the chorus, Takatsu is made to assume the task of the annotator of the play—namely, the long passage of dreams through which Keisaku is proceeding.

Thus privileged, Takatsu and Fusa purport to interpret Keisaku's wishes to Mariko. Fusa tells Mariko, "That person [Keisaku] knows well that you are back; he simply does not have the ability to express it in his face" (93). In a similar but more detailed manner, Takatsu explains Keisaku's state of mind to Mariko as follows:

"Your father may know that you are back, Mariko. He cannot let us know that he knows, for he cannot move either his mouth or his eyes. But his brain may be alive and active, and he may keep thinking by himself—without even using language any more."

"Without even using language any more?" repeated Mariko as if talking in a dream.
"Because he has fallen from a world shared with others into the abyss of himself."
Would there then be no medium from which to divine from the outside the sparks of thought flashing in her father's mind? Mumbling, "Beside language," Mariko stood up, lurched and put her hand upon Takatsu's shoulder. (107)

I would suggest that this passage privileges the discursive mind (Takatsu's) over the sub-discursive mind of Keisaku. Takatsu is situated at the centre of logos (reason and language), carrying out his task of interpreting sub-discursive, illogical phenomena such as Keisaku's state of mind.

However, the narrative is not from the perspective of Fusa or Takatsu, but of Keisaku and Mariko; the world of Keisaku's illusions which Takatsu presumes to be nondiscursive is, in fact, verbally rendered. Different as it may be from the logic of the real world, the world of dream has a definite logic of its own. As Kurahashi mentions in her "The Labyrinth and Negativity of Fiction," her anti-novels are based on the "logic of <<dreams>>" as opposed to the logic which dominates the real world. Her further comment that "leaps and twists typical of dreams transform the world into a grotesque <<shape>>," is applicable to Keisaku's illusions (77).

I have examined the fact the both Keisaku and Mariko, who wander in the anti-world of absurdity, the long passage of dreams, are supported and finally overpowered by logocentrism embodied by Fusa and Takatsu. Indeed, "The Long Passage of Dreams" 'brackets' the anti-world through the controlling mechanism of logocentrism. However, unlike "Virginia," in which "I" takes complete control of Virginia, the outcome of the conflict between Apollonian order and Dionysian disorder remains ambiguous in the novella. Both
Keisaku's and Mariko's passages of dreams come to an end, but they do not join the reason-oriented world of Fusa and Takatsu. Instead, Keisaku awakens into Buddhist nothingness, while Mariko experiences a moment of enlightenment in which she senses emptiness, resurrection, and the recovery of her integrity, and thus stays in communication with her dead father.

The anti-world of Keisaku, or the long passage of dreams, comes to an end. However, he does not yield to the real world or re-enter it. Instead, he dies and "enter[s] a well" of "accomplishment of wisdom," or shñâtâ [emptiness] in Buddhist terminology (136, 134). In other words, Keisaku passes through the stage of disorderly illusions, not en route to a state of logocentric order, but to a state of emptiness, of non-signification.

Mariko, who has been in the "bad dream" of Keisaku's sickness and her own neglect of it, also feels that she has awakened from her dreams toward the end of the novella, without the aid of Fusa or Takatsu. After Keisaku's cremation, Takatsu tells Mariko that he associates Keisaku's remaining bones with the cremated bones of a couple who commit suicide together in the last scene of a Truffaut film, and which are collected by a man who survives them. Remembering the heart-wrenching appearance of her father's corpse, Mariko regards herself as "a broken doll," as thoroughly destroyed as the cremated bones. However, she does not "think of making use of Takatsu in reconstructing herself by gathering and restoring disconnected limbs and head," even though she may previously have been somewhat dependent upon Takatsu. By "making use of Takatsu" for such a purpose, Mariko means "to reconstruct her broken self" by assigning herself the position of a judge who is to decide whether Takatsu is responsible for Keisaku's death—by saying to Takatsu,
"You are not responsible [for my father's death]," "I will forgive you," or "I won't forgive you" (136-138). In deciding against this choice, she shows that her self-reconstruction cannot be achieved by establishing a relationship with Takatsu based on a social contract of responsibility.

Instead, Mariko reconstructs herself when their car comes "closer to a bridge, ascending a slope and making their heads rise up into the blue sky":

"Certainly, the weather is too good," said Mariko. It was a moment at which everything—the earth, the mountain, the town—disappeared from her vision, except the sky ahead. Then Mariko required the sense that her [formerly] broken self was [now] integrated again. She realized that a sweet sorrow was seeping out of the seams of her integrated self. Mariko even knew that her tears, under her closed eyes, were seen by Takatsu. Blood resumed circulation in her dead hand, and rose upward above her neck, making her feel as if her mind paralysed with sleep were [now] restored to life. It seemed to her as if she had, by frantically trying to survive, dreamt a long dream. (138)

It is not Takatsu, but the sight of the blue sky, empty, deprived of everything, which revitalizes Mariko. By realizing that Takatsu sees her tears, Mariko comes to have knowledge of him, rather than Takatsu having knowledge of her. At the end of the novella, she is "trying to listen to her father's voice," not to Takatsu's voice. Mariko wishes to maintain communication with her father, a communication developed in Keisaku's consciousness.

Thus, Mariko's long passage of dreams comes to an end without her yielding to the logocentric 'real world' of Apollonian order. Even though she is awakened from her dreams, she still persists in moving to and fro between dream and reality, death and life,
Dionysian disorder and Apollonian order, and the anti-world and the real world. This 'in-between-ness' possessed by Mariko is implied in the motif of a bridge which recurs at the beginning and end of the novella. In fact, Mariko hears Keisaku's voice "when the car comes on to the bridge" (138). The reference to a bridge returns the reader to another mention of a bridge earlier in the novella, one which has a metafictional dimension. When Mariko arrives at her father's deathbed, she feels dizzy:

Her sense of time was completely mixed up after she had flown in the opposite direction to the rotation of the earth. She could no longer tell when it was that she was walking on the Brooklyn Bridge. And Brooklyn Bridge even seemed to her to be the bridge over the bay outside the town.

Mariko was arm in arm with a foreign man on the bridge. Entangled by hair blown wildly by the wind, her face was like a ball tossed about in straw. The man's arms were so powerful that she was suffocated by his tight hold round her waist. His lips were looking for Mariko's, buried in her hair.

Like the dangerous footway, constructed of narrow, parallel wooden boards next to the railway tracks which country schoolchildren loved to cross even though they were forbidden to do so, the bridge also should not have been crossed on foot at such a late hour. The bridge was too long to be walked across. Innumerable car lights flowed past them like spermatozoa. No one else was crossing except Mariko and her man. The man who was walking with her in his arms looked like a messenger from Hades with a face of darkness. The water under the bridge, which was neither the river, the sea, nor the lake, was distanced from them as far as heaven is from the earth, becoming a sheet of darkness, like a beast's skin covering hell. Mariko and her man almost fell in there, tangling with each other.

While like this in his arms, Mariko was simultaneously thinking of a novel. If she succeeded in crossing the bridge, she could write a novel about it. Since her job was novel-writing, it was possible that there was another Mariko who was awake enough to think about the novel. (87-88)
Having succeeded in crossing another bridge at the novella's end, and having awakened, Mariko is ready to write a novel about her dream. Thus, the novella, "The Long Passage of Dreams," may be viewed as Mariko's work; it may be the result of her coming through a long passage of dreams, of crossing a bridge over death. It is only possible for those who have experienced dreams and awakened from them to write novels about dreams.

Indeed, "The Long Passage of Dreams" is an attempt to restore the anti-world not by letting it occupy the whole space of the novel, but by bracketing it, objectifying it within a sober, 'logical' order. This is the choice Kurahashi makes in order to supercede the anti-novels Divine Maiden and The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q. Instead, she now turns to write a seemingly 'authentic' novel like The Floating Bridge of Dreams, which, as she suggest in "Literature as a poison," "poisons the world, ...nonchalantly peels and subverts it" (94).
CHAPTER 5: Application of the Anti-Novel in a Classical Japanese Mode: Symposium

Since 1970, most of Kurahashi’s published fiction has consisted of the various parts of a series of novels which feature the same heroine, Keiko: Yume no ukihashi [The Floating Bridge of Dreams] (1970), Shiro no naka no shiro [The Castle Within the Castle] (1980), Shunposhion [Symposium] (1985), Popoi (1987), Kôkan [Pleasure Exchange] (1989), and Yume no kayoji [The Passage of Dreams] (1989). Apart from the novels in the series, she has only written one science fiction novel (Amanon koku ôkanki [The Round Trip to Amanon] (1986)), a few short stories, two anthologies of horror stories (Kurahashi Yumiko no kaiki shôhen [Horror Short Stories of Kurahashi Yumiko] (1986) and Otona no tame no zankoku dôwa [Cruel Fables for Adults] (1984)), and three volumes of essays (Meiro no tabibito [A Traveller in the Labyrinth] (1972), Jishaku no nai tabi [Travelling without a Compass] (1979), and Saigo kara nibanme no dokusô [The Second Last Poisonous Thought] (1986)). It is clear that Kurahashi’s fictional output has been dominated by the production of the Keiko series.

Prior to my discussion of one of the novels, Symposium, in this chapter, I wish to summarise the unique structure of the whole series, the narrational characteristics of the individual works, and the overall story. The six novels published to date cover the heroine’s life from her early twenties until her seventies, although there are some gaps. However, the order of the novels’ publication does not coincide with the ‘chronological’ order of Keiko’s life. The chronology according to the narrated time of the novels would be as follows:
In the last two novels, Keiko plays rather minor roles; her granddaughter, Satoko, and her lover’s granddaughter, Mai, are the major figures in *Symposium* and in *Popoi* respectively.

Although the rearrangement of the novels above appears to restore a coherent chronology, some small points undermine the presupposition that the six novels constitute one series. The last names of two characters who appear in more than one novel in the series, for example, are not consistent from one novel to another. The maiden name of Mariko, the wife of Keiko’s boyfriend, is Yagisawa in *The Floating Bridge of Dreams*, while in *Symposium*, her stepson Akira refers to her as Takagi Mariko. In a similar manner, Keiko’s later lover, Irie’s son, is called Mr Kurihara in *Symposium*, even though the surname of his unmarried daughter is Kurusu in *Popoi*. The two examples hint at a possible discontinuity in the chronology and, further, question the myth of consistency in the life of the self. In fact, *The Passage of Dreams* consists of 21 sections, 4 of which do not even feature Keiko, and the rest of which do not necessarily have any causal relationship with each other. In its use of an omnibus form, *The Passage of Dreams* may function as a miniature of the whole series in its loose sequentiality.

The facts above suggest that despite the seemingly definite sequentiality, the linkage between the texts of the "Keiko series," they may have no more connection to each other than they have to other texts by Kurahashi, or even to texts written by other authors. Each
volume is "a node in the network" (Foucault) of the "anterior literary corpus" (Kristeva, 69) and should be thus considered as closely related to other texts within the intertextual domain as it is to other texts in the "Keiko series."

The six novels in the series show three different narrative modes. The Floating Bridge of Dreams is a third-person narrative developed by an omniscient, extradiegetic narrator. The story is not viewed exclusively from the heroine Keiko’s perspective. Though the narrative is mostly from her point of view, a few scenes occur in her absence. The novel is thus written in the representative mode of 19th century realist novels, in contrast to Kurahashi’s previous novels, Blue Journey, Divine Maiden, The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q, and others, which challenge the ‘authentic’ narration of an omniscient narrator.

However, Kurahashi does not follow the mode used in The Floating Bridge of Dreams when she comes to write its sequels. Instead, she experiments with another mode which is comparable to that of monogatari in Heian and Kamakura Japan (10-13 century). In this mode, the narrator is a person who does not appear in, or act within the story, yet is not necessarily extradiegetic in that s/he knows the characters quite well. Kurahashi’s

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1This concept, intertextuality, which was first employed by Kristeva in "The Bounded Text," is expressed in an essay by J.L.Borges, called "Kafka and His Precursors":

The fact is that every writer creates his own precursors. His work modifies our conception of the past, as it will modify the future. In this correlation the identity or the plurality of the men involved is unimportant. The early Kafka of Betrachtung is less a precursor of the Kafka of somber myths and atrocious institutions than is Browning or Lord Dunsany.

(Jorge Luis Borges, Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings 201)
sequels follow the mode of monogatari, to judge from the narrator’s use of "-san," a Japanese way of addressing one’s acquaintances politely. In an essay entitled "On Novels," in Yuriika [Eureka]'s special issue on Kurahashi Yumiko, edited to ‘celebrate’ her breaking of ten years’ silence by publishing The Castle within the Castle, Kurahashi explains her use of "-san" in the novel. In the essay, written in the form of a fictionalized interview, Kurahashi is asked why she calls the heroine "Keiko-san" instead of "Keiko," and the heroine’s husband "Fukun" [a respectful and formal way of referring to a person’s husband] instead of "Yamada," as she does in The Floating Bridge of Dreams. Her answer is "[The Castle within the Castle] is a monogatari in front of its audience. Therefore, ‘Keiko-san’ is more suitable than ‘Keiko’." Kurahashi also claims in the essay that she has changed her ideas about monogatari and chosen "this manner of making an appearance to the reader, manipulating the puppets [of characters], and narrating a fictional story." In fact, the novel begins with the sentence, "I have a younger friend whose name is Keiko-san," clearly demonstrating the narrator’s existence.

The Passage of Dreams, Pleasure Exchange, Symposium are also narrated in a similar manner, though the narrator does not necessarily exhibit her/his existence. Popoi is consistently narrated in the first person; and its viewpoint is thus restricted to that of Mai, the main character.

Having examined the narrative modes in the six novels, I now wish to summarize the overall story presented in the six-novel series. In this summary I will give a brief account of preceding novels, and then a fuller summary of Symposium, the subject of this chapter. Keiko, a university student of English who is writing her graduation essay on Jane
Austen, is proposed to by Kōichi, her boyfriend and a graduate of the same university, and accepts him. However, the lovers' parents object to their marriage and they eventually give up their plans. Keiko then discovers that her mother, Fumiko, eloped with Kōichi’s father, Yūji (a university professor) right after her marriage to Keiko’s legal father, Keisuke (the president of a publishing company), and that Keiko and Kōichi may thus be half-siblings. Instead of trying to persuade their parents, who will not reveal to them if they are biologically related or not, to permit them to marry, Keiko and Kōichi marry different partners through arranged marriages. Keiko marries Yamada, her supervisor, and Kōichi marries Mariko. Both their spouses are proficient in noh drama. While maintaining a surface observance of conservative sexual norms, however, Keiko and Kōichi, as well as Yamada and Mariko, swap partners and attempt to become lovers. This behaviour is identical to that of Keiko and Kōichi’s parents, Fumiko, Keisuke, Yūji, and Kōichi’s stepmother Mitsuko, an essayist whom both Keiko and Kōichi admire. These two couples have practised partner swapping for ten years.

Although Keiko and Kōichi cannot consummate their sexual relationship at the first attempt at the end of The Floating Bridge of Dreams, they do become lovers in The Castle within the Castle. Mariko and Yamada continue their relationship without the other partners’ knowledge. Moreover, Yamada starts a sexual relationship with Machiko, a woman whom he supervises, after he has been married to Keiko for several years. What upsets Keiko is, however, not her husband’s infidelity but his conversion to Christianity, a monotheistic ideology. The Castle within the Castle narrates her efforts and eventual success in getting her husband to give up his new religion. In the meantime, Keiko finds
Machiko to be a kindred spirit, even a surrogate; their lesbian relationship then constitutes an aspect of *Pleasure Exchange*. In this novel, Keiko is now a widow in her forties, president of the publishing company which her father has left to her, and she also has a love affair with Prime Minister Irie Akira, who has been interested in her for many years.

Next comes *Symposium*. This novel features as its protagonist Miyazawa Akira, Koichi's son by his second marriage after his divorce from Mariko. He is a professor in Greco-Roman Classics, has been a young widower for a year since his wife Naoko's death in a car-accident, and comes to a seashore resort both to pass the summer and escape the militarily unstable situation which may lead to a third world war. At the hotel where he is staying, he meets an attractive young woman who reminds him of his stepmother, Takagi Mariko, his secret object of admiration. The young woman tells him that she is staying at a hotel called Shõrai-kaku [The Pavilion of the Breezes through the Pine Trees] nearby. Joined by his sister Masako, a zoologist, and her husband Ken'ichi, a molecular genetics researcher, Akira moves to Shõrai-kaku which, in fact, is managed by Ken'ichi's uncle. It has formerly been a hotel, but is now the private property of a former prime minister, Irie Akira, Keiko's latest lover. Akira again meets the young woman, Izumi Satoko, as he has wished. Later, he finds that her grandmother, Keiko, used to be his father's girlfriend.

In addition to the characters mentioned, there are two more: Kaori, the younger sister of Naoko, who is attracted to Akira, and follows him up to Shõrai-kaku, and Yukiko, Ken'ichi's cousin, who is temporarily separated from her husband, and is attracted to both Akira and Satoko. The story consists of the characters' love affairs, and their artistic and witty talks. Their meals are prepared by Hoshino, a master of French cuisine and long-term
acquaintance of Keiko's, and by Kurobê, a one-time leftist terrorist who attempts to restore the classical Chinese cuisine of the Sung dynasty. They drink European, Chinese and Japanese wines, and beers, and attend musical performances given by Satoko, Kaori and another late-arrival, Masuda, who has entered and studied at University of Tokyo as a substitute student. They go swimming, and take excursions to "The Rock of Seals," the "Town," "The Isles of Apes," and a rural town in which Satoko spent every summer of her girlhood.

Another important part of the story is a novel which Satoko is writing for only one reader, Akira. The novel is embedded within the primary narrative in five sections. It tells of Satoko's girlhood, her perceptions of the hill and river in her hometown, the buildings, and the air, and her imaginative observation of several characters. Among these are a girl whom she imagines to be her twin sister, and calls Fadette after a character in George Sand's La petit Fadette [Little Fadette], her mother and her private tutor, Mr Matsudaira, who have formerly been lovers, and her aunt whom she secretly admires. Satoko also expresses ambivalent feelings toward her female cousin Hiroko, and her idealistic love for her male cousin Hiroshi.

As the narrative time of Symposium passes characters notice changes in the ambience of their natural environment. Toward the end of the novel, Akira and Satoko get engaged, and Yukiko reconciles with her husband. In addition, Kaori starts going out with Masuda. The worsening of the world political situation, a serious earthquake, and the seasonal changes of nature, expressed in appropriate haiku, bring an end to the summer of the graceful "Symposium."
I have given a detailed summary of *Symposium* since I wish to focus upon this novel in this chapter. *Symposium* demonstrates the narrational, thematic and textual characteristics of Kurahashi's fiction which I have examined in preceding chapters: embedded narrative, pseudo-incest between alleged father and daughter, and the paradoxical inversion of the reader and the read, or the subject and object of cognition. Like other of Kurahashi's works, it features the thematic association of the cognitive, sexual, and digestive familiarization of others, indices which associate characters within the text, and pastiche, which locates the specific text within a larger corpus of anterior discourses, most markedly the discourse of classical Japanese literature. I would thus call the novel Kurahashi's most comprehensive work, if not her best, in contrast to the claim of many critics that *The Floating Bridge of Dreams* is her most representative work.

I wish now to examine the three aspects of *Symposium* in comparison with previous novels: the narrational aspect which I wish to contrast with that of *Divine Maiden* and *Adventures of Sumiyakist Q*, the thematic aspect, which I wish to contrast with the themes of *Divine Maiden* and "The Long Passage of Dreams," and the textual aspect which I will contrast with those of *Divine Maiden*, *Adventures of Sumiyakist Q*, and *Blue Journey*. In the course of my discussion, it will become clear that Kurahashi's narrational, thematic and textual production is now influenced by classical Japanese poetry, narratives, and poetics, as well as by the European anti-novel.

**Narrative Strategies**

Kurahashi's narrative strategies in *Symposium* are more complex than they at first sight appear. Although most of the novel is mediated by Akira's consciousness, his authority
to narrate is consistently problematized. By a series of metafictional paradoxes, it is suggested not only that Akira may be the narrated, not the narrator, but also that Kurahashi herself may be read and ‘created’ by her own fictional creations. In the narrative, fiction and autobiography are mixed so that one becomes indistinguishable from the other. The distinction between active narrator and passive narrated thus begins to break down.

As I mentioned in the discussion of The Floating Bridge of Dreams and its sequels, Symposium has an omniscient narrator who does not appear in the narrative. However, the narrator is not necessarily extradiegetic in the narrowest sense of the word, because s/he uses the intimate and polite suffix "-san" to address all the female characters and most of the male characters. This suggests that the narrator knows the characters and that s/he "lives" in the same social sphere as they do. Furthermore, the narrator does not have a completely neutral position among all the characters; some male characters (Kurihara, Muramatsu, Ariga) are referred to as "** shi" [Mr **], implying that the narrator is more distanced from them than from the others, and others (Ken’ichi, Masuda) are referred to by another suffix "-kun" which shows the narrator is older than and/or superior to them. Just as the narrators of The Tale of Genji, who are supposedly ladies-in-waiting, and are conjectured to be hovering spirits (Takahashi "Genji monogatari no shinteki enkinhō" 48), reveal their specific positions within the context of narration by complex use of honorifics, the narrator in Symposium is similarly bound to the context (or the situations) within the text.

In a similar manner as in The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q, the story of which is mostly viewed by the protagonist Q, who is not identical to the narrator, the viewpoint of Symposium is almost always that of its protagonist, Akira. No scene is presented directly
to the reader, but is either viewed by, or reported to, Akira. However, the narrator's knowledge supersedes Akira's in some respects. For example, when Akira sees Satoko for the first time, the narrative is as follows:

> It was also in the blazing sunshine that Akira-san saw Satoko-san, whose name he was going to know later. (8)

Akira first tells Satoko that he is a Japanese-American researcher of Modern Japanese literature. Later, when he reveals his true identity to her, that of a scholar in Greco-Roman culture, he finds that she already knows it, and is told by Satoko that she has seen his lecture on Ancient Greek Culture recorded on laser disc. However, she knows Akira not only through seeing his lecture, but also because she is the granddaughter of Keiko, who used to be a girlfriend of Akira's father. Without disclosing this much, the narrator simply but significantly states:

> Without disclosing that she had a reason to become especially interested in him, Satoko-san seemed to intend to keep her cards face down for a while. (12)

Akira remains ignorant of the personal tie between himself and Satoko as late as Section 6 of the novel, in which Keiko reveals it to him (and to the reader who has not read *The Floating Bridge of Dreams* and thus cannot take the hint dropped in Section 3). Therefore, the narrator's knowledge is greater than Akira's. S/he suspends the mystery, or suggests the presence of the hermeneutic code in Barthes' terminology, without telling us the reason for Satoko's long-term interest in Akira.

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2The page numbers given for quotations from *Symposium* are based upon the paperback version, *Shunposhion* (Tokyo: Shinchō bunko, 1988). All the translations are mine.
The most important of all the items which are reported to Akira is "a novel" which Satoko is continually writing. This novel, concerning Satoko’s girlhood, is exclusively written for him, and is embedded within the primary narrative in five sections as one part after another is completed and read by Akira. This is reminiscent of the manner in which Miki’s notebooks are handed to "I" and read by him in Divine Maiden. Moreover, just as "I" writes a novel on Miki which constitutes the primary narrative of Divine Maiden, Akira intends to write one on Satoko, though the narrative does not present the result of his plan. Perhaps, just as Satoko writes an autobiographical novel in the third person, the primary narrative of Symposium may in fact be Akira’s novel, with Akira taking the disguise of the omniscient narrator. If my conjecture is correct, Divine Maiden and Symposium make a telling parallel in that in both novels the primary narrative of the male protagonist embeds the secondary narrative of the female writer, which is then read by the primary narrator. The primary and secondary narratives are given in the former novel and in the third-person in the latter.

Just as Divine Maiden presents Writer as Kurahashi’s double, Symposium also refers to its author. Hoshino, the chef, comments that as he ages, his cooking skill deteriorates just like the skill in archery of Ki Shō, or Ji Chang in the original Chinese pronunciation. Ji Chang was famous in ancient China as a master of Chinese archery. When he grew old, his physical skills deteriorated, and he even became unable to recognize what bows and arrows were. This Chinese legend is known to Japanese audiences through a pastiche of it, "Meijin den" [A Legend of a Master] written by Nakajima Atsushi, which Hoshino mentions. The story by Nakajima admires Ki Shō’s transcendence of the minor technical
aspects of art, and his acquisition of nothingness. However, Kurahashi has written a pastiche of Nakajima's story, called "Meijin den hoi" [A Supplement to 'A Legend of a Master'] (1984), in which she claims that Ki Shô was not enlightened, but instead was merely aged and senile. A metafictional paradox occurs in Symposium regarding this story. Hoshino's reference to "A Legend of a Master" reminds Akira of "A Supplement to 'A Legend of a Master'":

There is another writer of the previous century, in fact, a female writer, called Kurahashi or something, who wrote a fable like parody of "A Legend of a Master." According to it, Ki Shô, in fact, suffers from senility. (28)

Thus, the relationship between the author-creator and her creature is inverted: the fictional character Akira talks about his creator Kurahashi in the fiction. This circularity regarding subject and object is similar to that in Divine Maiden.

Another metafictional paradox in Symposium is more implicit. When Akira sees Satoko for the first time and has a dream of writing a novel about her, he names the heroine of his novel about Satoko not Satoko (for Akira has not found out her name yet), but Takagi Mariko, using the name of his stepmother, who has become a fiction writer since divorcing Akira's father, and to whom Akira is secretly attracted. When he was invited to an American university as visiting lecturer in modern Japanese literature during the previous year, Akira recollects, he translated for his students a short story she had written called "Yume no kayoiji" [The Passage of Dreams]. The title echoes Kurahashi's "The Long Passage of Dreams," and provides another metafictional paradox in which the author is incorporated
within her own fictional text. This is also reminiscent of the fact that in *Divine Maiden*, Writer has written a novel called *Blue Journey*, just as Kurahashi has.

Similar narrational inversions occur on a minor scale in *Symposium*. First, Satoko takes over the plan of writing a novel about herself, which Akira has seemingly given up, and thus transforms her position from being merely the narrated into being both the narrator and narrated. While so doing, she usurps Akira's power of narration, and restricts his position to that of reader. Next, Satoko does not write her novel in the first person, neither does she call the heroine "Satoko," but, instead, she names the heroine of her novel "Mariko." By so doing, Satoko assumes the role of Mariko, which was originally imposed upon her by Akira, in a manner that is now self-affirming, not passive. Further, the content of Satoko's novel close to Takagi Mariko's story, about which Akira has not told Satoko. Akira summarizes Takagi Mariko's short story, "The Passage of Dreams," as follows: a young woman loved by an old nobleman becomes involved with a young man, and is so afraid that her old lover may dream of her first night with the younger man that, while yielding her body to the young lover, she lets her spirit run into the old man's dream so as to have sex with him in his dream. Akira regards the story as a pastiche of *Towazu gatari* [The Confessions of Lady Nijō], a *nikki* or a biographical poetic narrative written by a court lady of the 14th century. In fact, as I will discuss later, another part of this classical Japanese text is quoted in the novel by Satoko. In other words, with or without knowing that Takagi Mariko has written a pastiche of *The Confession of Lady Nijō*, Satoko writes another pastiche of this classical Japanese text, thus making her novel into a pastiche of Takagi Mariko's, as well as making her own identity into a pastiche of Takagi Mariko.
Satoko not only manipulates the tensions between Takagi Mariko and herself, Akira’s ‘unwritten’ novel about her and her own, and Takagi Mariko’s story and her novel: she plays with the opposition between fiction and representation, by alternately avowing and denying the faithfully autobiographical nature of her writing. When Akira is interested in the growing intimacy between Mariko and her male cousin Hiroshi in Satoko’s novel, and asks her whether she has a cousin like Hiroshi, Satoko, noticing Akira implicitly presupposes the autobiographical nature of her novel, responds to him: "Yes, I have. But please don’t forget that I am not Mariko" (266). Here, Satoko draws a line between fiction (i.e. her novel) and fact (i.e. her life as a girl). However, when Akira becomes curious about the unwritten, later life of Mr Matsudaira, Mariko’s private tutor in French and Latin, he asks Satoko:

"By the way, what’s going to happen to Mr Matsudaira?"
After a moment of thinking, Satoko-san answered in the past tense, "He passed away several years later."
"Judging from the way in which you put it, you refer to Mr Muramatsu Shôhei, don’t you?"
"Yes...." (319)

As Akira suggests, Satoko bridges the two worlds of fiction and reality, by describing Mr Matsudaira’s fate in the past tense instead of the present or future tense. However, in the sequel to this conversation, Satoko confuses Akira about the true relationships between Mr Muramatsu, her mother, and herself, by insisting that her writing is fiction. When Akira says:

"Anyway, Mariko was, or rather, Satoko-san was a disciple of Mr Muramatsu [whom I knew of]. And it seems to have been quite a dangerous relationship between the tutor and his disciple."
"In my novel, do you mean?" Satoko smiles with her mouth shut [Note she smiles the same way as Writer and Miki do in Divine Maiden].

"And so does the relationship between your mother and Mr Muramatsu. But I didn’t know about it."

"Mariko is a girl who dreams if Mr Matsudaira may be her real father."

"Satoko doesn’t have anything to do with such a dream?"

"Because my novel is my dream." (320)

Here, while Akira supposes that the characters in Satoko’s novel are mimetic representations of actual people, Satoko refuses to connect the characters to real people, and discusses fictional characters only as fictional creations.

However, when Akira and Satoko visit her hometown toward the very end of Symposium, and he says: "You did everything that Mariko did," Satoko emphatically answers: "Of course. Mariko is Satoko, didn’t you know that?" (376) Thus, Satoko keeps deceiving Akira, the intradiegetic reader, and the implied reader, as to whether her novel is fiction or autobiography.

Such is the inversion which occurs in terms of the relationship between the narrator and the narrated character. The similarity between Divine Maiden and Symposium, however, is not only in their narrative structures: the fact that a male character functions as the only intradiegetic implied reader of a female’s writing, which is supposedly about ‘herself’, involves a power struggle between the male reader and the female writer in both Divine Maiden and Symposium. To review the discussion in Chapter 2 of my dissertation, "I" realizes toward the end of his attempts to observe, read, understand, devour, and own Miki that in fact he has been observed, written, understood, devoured, and caught by Miki, who is compared to a spider which devours its mate (and also, in association with Writer,
an insectivorous plant and a hyena). Similarly, the question whether Akira or Satoko is the subject of observation, understanding and devouring repeatedly becomes a topic of conversation for the characters in Symposium. On his first encounter with Satoko, Akira has an impulse to write about her. The narrator analyses his impulse as follows:

[For a man] to feel like writing a novel regarding a young woman no sooner than first seeing her, even before finding out her name, seems to suggest an intention to catch the object, instead of making an approach toward her, by wrapping her in a cocoon woven by his imagination. In other words, Akira-san was dominated by the principle of an insectivorous plant, so to speak, in that catching Satoko-san would be to understand her, and to understand her would be to devour her. (8-9)

In this excerpt from the earliest section of the novel, Akira is compared to an insectivorous plant which is able to catch and consume its object, Satoko.

However, it soon becomes questionable whether Akira or Satoko is the pursuing subject. After Keiko discloses to Akira the long and complicated tie between their families and the fact that Satoko already knows about him and has approached him with a specific intention, Irie says: "You will lose the game if you are only known to the other and do not know anything about the other." His statement suggests Akira’s position early in the novel may, in fact, be inferior. In response, Akira thus feels trapped:

[He felt] as if not only Keiko-san and Satoko-san but Irie-san also had stretched a net of information to catch him, then narrowed down the scope of the net, and eventually got the fish into a corner. (94)
Comparing himself to a fish, Akira admits that he may be being pursued, trapped, and caught. He thus replies that he does not know whether he or Satoko "is being fished for," when asked by Irie if "it is likely [for him] to catch a big fish." Then Irie "makes" a joke in an unusually definite tone:

"You know, Miyazawa-san, it is always the woman who fishes. I admit that I put it in the wrong way. I should have asked you if it is likely that you will be fished for. It is also difficult to be fished for. A man should have the technique of eating the bait and appearing as if he were skillfully caught." (95)

Irie's comment implies not only that the man is the object of the woman's pursuit, but also that the man should be conscious of his role as the object of pursuit, and play with this role.

Such a realisation is much more rigorously foregrounded in characters' conversations in Symposium. Later in the novel, Akira tells Masako, Ken'ichi, Kaori, Yukiko, and Satoko that he is considering remarrying a certain woman, implicitly a rejection of either Kaori or Yukiko's interest in him. Masako jokingly compares the situation to fishing, and then, looking for a more precise metaphor, compares it to "three predators" competing with each other for "game." Ken'ichi then concludes the discussion by saying that "a man is destined to be eaten by someone, whoever she may be" (263-264), which recalls Irie's earlier comments.

After visiting Satoko's aunt, finding out that she initially recommended Satoko to pursue Akira, and then eventually getting engaged to Satoko, Akira makes an observation:

"To look back, it turns out that I am to own Satoko-san as a result of the operation of all your invisible hands. I feel as if I were caught in the deterministic web of a spider, though I
would stick to the presupposition that I have acted as I wished and have caught game."

"Well, you do not have to decide which presupposition is right," said Keiko-san. "You can discuss with Satoko during pillow talk as often as you like whether the spider spread a net to catch the victim, or the victim in turn caught the spider."

"I would support the assumption that Satoko-san, as a spider, caught the victim."

"Isn't she more like a lion which runs after its game than like a spider?" Ken'ichi intruded. (422-423)

The paradox thus remains unresolved, though it seems more likely that Satoko has overpowered Akira in their love affair.

**Thematic Aspects**

Now that I have examined the narrational characteristics of *Symposium*, I wish to discuss the thematic aspects it shares with *Divine Maiden* and "The Long Passage of Dreams." The same theme of pseudo-incest between a young woman and her mother's former boyfriend, or her own father, is given a quite different appearance, due mainly to the explicit references to classical Japanese models in *Symposium*. At the same time, the theme of the lack of a stable identity, and the resultant performativity of the self recalls *Blue Journey* and other novels outside the Kurahashi canon.

The theme of incest shared with the other novels occurs not in the primary narrative but in the embedded narrative of Satoko's novel in *Symposium*. Like Miki, Mariko, who represents Satoko as a girl in her teens, does not go to school. Instead, Mariko is tutored in Latin and French by Mr Matsudaira, her mother's former boyfriend who left her to go to Europe and is now a professor. The way in which Mariko's mother and Mr Matsudaira have separated is similar to the way in which Miki's mother broke up with her boyfriend: he left
her to go to Europe to study. Mariko dreams of a more intimate relationship between her mother and Mr Matsudaira, and even of the possibility of her being his biological daughter. Thus, Marikos’ imagination operates in much the same way as Miki’s does in Divine Maiden. In Miki’s first notebook, which is later proved to be fictional, Papa is allegedly Mother’s former boyfriend, and possibly Miki’s biological father. Thus viewed, Mr Matsudaira is a mixture of Papa and Miki’s mother’s ‘real’ ex-boyfriend.

A discrepancy occurs between Miki and Mariko, in that Mariko compares her mother and Mr Matsudaira to Ono no Komachi and Fukakusa no shōshō [Lesser Captain of Fukakusa], whose love affair is known to Japanese audiences through noh plays such as Kayoi komachi [Komachi and the Hundred Nights] and Sotoba komachi [The Stupa of Komachi], and to Lady at Izutsu and Ariwara no Narihira, whose adolescent love, disillusionment and final reconciliation constitute a famous section of The Tale of Ise, and provide the topic of a noh play, Izutsu. In short, Mariko finds models, or archetypes, for the relationship in the corpus of classical Japanese discourse, while Miki does not. Such a pastiche of classical Japanese texts begins to occur in "The Long Passage of Dreams." The first literary couple mentioned above are presented in the novella as a metaphor to describe Keisaku and Fusa’s courtship. Moreover, the fact that both Mariko’s father and Mr Matsudaira have The Collection of Noh Plays in their studies reminds us of Keisaku, who practices chanting and the performance of noh, and thus has volumes of noh plays in his study.

Just as Papa and Miki, and Keisaku and his daughter Mariko (note the identical name) are incestuous couples, Mr Matsudaira and Mariko have emotional tension between them.
What differentiates the last couple from the two preceding couples is, again, that Mariko draws analogies for her pseudo-incestuous relationship with Mr Matsudaira from that of Tamakazura and Genji in *The Tale of Genji*, and from that of Nijō and Ex-Emperor Gofukakusa in *The Confessions of Lady Nijō*. In the former narrative, Genji the Shining Prince takes Tamakazura, the daughter of his late mistress Yugao, as his adopted daughter. In fact, Tamakazura is not Genji’s daughter but rather the daughter of his friend and rival, Tō no chūjō, who has courted Yugao before Genji. Despite his original intention to educate Tamakazura in order to marry her to the Emperor or someone else in power, Genji himself becomes interested in her, and behaves like a suitor, which confuses Tamakazura. Genji’s love remains unconsummated, while Tamakazura’s virginity is unexpectedly violated by one of her suitors.

In the case of the second analogous relationship, Nijō and Gofukakusa maintain a long-term sexual relationship. In fact, Gofukakusa is initiated sexually by Nijō’s mother who serves him as a nurse. The mother marries a nobleman, and gives birth to his daughter, Nijō. Gofukakusa wishes to initiate her daughter. His long-sustained wish comes true when Nijō is in her early teens, and their relation continues together with polyandrous and polygamous intimacies with other men and women.

Mariko is conscious of the analogies between Tamakazura’s, Nijō’s and her own pseudo-incestuous relationship, and tells her cousin, Hiroshi, that she compares her relationship with Mr Matsudaira to those of Tamakazura and Genji and of Nijō and Gofukakusa.
However, it remains uncertain whether Mariko’s mother has ever had sex with Mr Matsudaira, or whether Mariko is his biological daughter. The reader is mystified as to the former question; Mariko’s mother simply tells her, "Don’t let your imagination run wild. This is not a novel" (301). Mr Matsudaira says at first that he is the first man with whom Mariko’s mother ever slept, and then later claims that he has just been making up a story. Satoko, the author of the novel about Mariko, tells Akira that Mariko only imagines that she might be Mr Matsudaira’s daughter; Satoko further implies that her own imagination is restricted within the domain of the novel, and does not extend beyond it.

Another theme I wish to discuss here is the unidentifiable nature of characters and places of Symposium, similar to that of You in Blue journey. In the later novel, some places and some male characters are explicitly unidentifiable: the bar "Kurobê," its owner, Irie and his room, Masuda and the mountain-hut-like restaurant at which he works as a waiter.

"Kurobê" is a bar on a river, which flies a banner like those in a medieval Chinese popular fiction, Suikoden, or Shui fu chuan [The Water Margin], and serves pseudo-Chinese delicacies. The identity of the bar is unclear; it changes its name without notice, and the owner opens and closes it upon whim; it is, in fact, a ship floating on the river and can thus drift out to sea any time. Added to its lack of a name, its mutability, and its mobility, is its abstract quality. There is nothing unique about the bar; it has hardly any decoration inside, and all that the customers can see is the served dishes, the counter and a small window through which they can catch a glimpse of the owner’s face. In other words, the bar "Kurobê" is so abstract that it can be transformed into anything whatsoever.
Similarly, Irie's room is an "abstract," "wonderful room in that it contains nothing impressive," according to Satoko. She further describes it as being "unique in that it excludes carefully anything that would demonstrate its 'uniqueness' and is kept flavourless and colourless." Such abstractness reminds Akira, who has not seen Irie's room until this moment, of Mr Teste's room in Paul Valéry's The Evening with Mr Teste, which is "an arbitrarily given residence, reminiscent of an arbitrarily given point in a theorem" (211-212).

The mountain-hut-like restaurant in the "Town" appears to Akira and Ken'ichi to be unreal and elusive. Akira and Ken'ichi visit it twice, once with Satoko and the other time by themselves. On the initial visit, the "Town" reminds them of Bernkaster, a town in southern Germany. When revisited at the end of summer, the "Town" seems to display its artificiality:

"It rather looks like a film set after shooting," said Akira-san.
"Exactly, it is like a set. This house which could be in Bernkaster appears to be a backdrop without a reverse side. The concourse as a whole, its light and air, gives the impression of being fake."
"The sun itself looks like an artificial light." (334-335)

The music played enhances these unreal impressions of the place: during both the first and second visits, Beethoven's piano trio, The Ghost, is played.

The unidentifiable, elusive and mobile characteristics of "Kurobê," the abstract quality of Irie's room, and the unreality of Masuda's restaurant are in keeping with the characters who inhabit the spaces. The owner of "Kurobê," once an active leftist terrorist, appears as if he were "an insidious monk of unknown identity" (414). While discussing Irie's room,
Akira comments that "Irie-san himself is quite a simple and abstract person" (211). Because he is abstract, he can become anyone. In fact, Irie confesses that he has published many books under a variety of pseudonyms. He calls himself as "kaijin 12-mensō" [a mysterious man with 12 different faces] (325). Being devoid of any fixed identity, Irie indulges in performing pastiches of many different personalities. Similarly, Masuda displays no guilty conscience when fabricating a resumé to fit the needs of a new employer: when he is asked by Akira and Ken'ichi if he is interested in working at "Pavilion of the Breezes through the Pine Trees," Masuda immediately prepares a resumé, and says, "Shall I rewrite the resumé, if this does not do? I can make it into something more ordinary" (346). The first resumé he writes shows an extraordinary career. According to the resumé, Masuda attended University of Tokyo for four years as a substitute for a man who failed the entrance examination; he wanted to go to university at the age of 16, but apparently was not interested in getting a degree. He was "registered" under the other man’s name, functioning as the other’s shadow or ghost. After this, he published a book called The Adventures of the Boy Odysseus. Although purporting to be a record of the experiences of his substitute self travelling in foreign countries, the story was in fact entirely fiction. He did not interview the man or write the story based upon information he had collected about him: rather he invented it. In this story, then, Masuda is shown to have subverted notions of mimetic representation, of solid identity, in producing a performative identity through fiction. Ken’ichi comments about Masuda:

"The man, a Masuda, is utterly without substance. While listening to him, our personal identities swiftly dissolve, so that our minds are diluted. Don’t you feel this way?" (347)
This comment suggests that Masuda does not have any substantial identity, but rather, his identity is elusive, flexible, and diffuse.

The theme of elusiveness, performativity, abstraction and lack of identifiability is expressed most clearly by the motif of the female beggar witnessed, and secretly used as a model by, Mariko in Satoko's novel:

During summer, Mariko was a fugitive princess in this small rural town—a princess in the disguise of a beggar; in her view, being a beggar was to take up a mode of existence like that of a transparent dog, which could appear and disappear anywhere without being observed.

There was a real female beggar in the town those days.... Sometimes, she sat like a melted slug in front of a bank at midday. At other times, she sat like a black lump in the shade of a storehouse. Mariko wondered if no one could see her move from one place to another. The idea occurred to her that she had a transparent existence, like that of a dog running through one’s feet. Or perhaps a beggar might be a fantastic expression of misery, which concurrently exists in many places, undifferentiated, and thus unquantifiable. Mariko wished to become such a beggar, to elude the vigilance of adults, and walk around the town throughout the summer. (131-132)

The identity of the beggar is diffuse, and not spatially bound. The metaphor of "a slug," used to describe the beggar, is employed by Ken’ichi later in the novel, to describe a spirit of the dead, which is also unbound in space. The semi-transparent and flexible qualities of the slug are reminiscent of those of both day-haze and jellyfish; the latter are both used as metaphors by "I" to describe Writer’s eyes and Miki’s voice in Divine Maiden, in order to stress their elusive, unreal characteristics, and further, the two women’s performative identities.
Characters and places in the novel are performative in that they perform many roles assigned to them, and do not have substantive identity. Roles are usually defined by similes, metaphors, antithetical or parallel comparisons with other characters or places, either within the text of Symposium or outside it—in other words, by contrasting or similar images. In the discussion of Divine Maiden I called the former, intratextual associations "indices," while naming the latter, extratextual network as "pastiche." Just as in Blue Journey, Divine Maiden and The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q, the same characters demonstrate different attributes, while identical actions, statements and attributes are displayed by different figures and places. Through its manipulation of such performance, the narrative transcends both the individualities of character and place, and the boundaries between works as individual verbal artefacts. Of all of Kurahashi's works it seems that Symposium makes the most detailed use of extratextual pastiche to break these boundaries.

First, I wish to examine the use of indices in Symposium. Antitheses, or contrasts, are displayed between You and Yuriko in terms of physical appearance in Blue Journey, Miki or Writer and Mother or M in terms of their understanding of language in Divine Maiden, and Q or F and the rector or Bukka, in terms of their epistemologies, in The Adventure of Sumiyakist Q. While the example in the first novel is rather simple, and the one in the second novel is detailed and yet clear, the third example demonstrates antitheses in a more complicated and diffuse manner. In The Aventures of Sumiyakist Q, contrasts and similarities coexist between each member of a pair of characters, and pairings are constantly made and remade. Symposium does make some binary oppositions between characters, but
the novel does so in a manner that is improvisational. The antagonistic pairings in *Symposium* do not serve to confirm opposing individualities, but rather suggest the possibility of the performance of a variety of contrasting roles or attributes. The clearest antithesis is made between Mariko and Hiroko within the embedded narrative of Satoko’s novel. Mariko’s aunt has married a man who has had three children. Among these cousins-in-law, two are far older than Mariko so she "can approach them as a child confronting adults, and thus always maintain stable relationships." However, the relationship between Mariko and Hiroko is constantly changing:

In contrast, her relationship with Hiroko stayed for a long time at the stage at which they spoke to each other using "sie" or "vous" even though they were both children. The two spent the summer trying to observe each other’s response; it was as if they occupied many-angled space, shaped like an unfolded umbrella, which had many pairs of opposite angles. For example, if Hiroko occupied the angle of a rural girl, Mariko behaved like a girl from the city. Shifting themselves at a dizzying speed from one pair of opposite angles to another, such as linear intelligence and holistic flesh, delicate and robust health, elder and younger sisters, guest and child of the host family, parasite and daughter of the landlord, and real niece [of the housewife] and stepdaughter, the two never failed to be careful so as not to expose delicate conflicts. The last dichotomy was the most problematic one; if Hiroko was offended for some reason and placed Mariko as a real niece, entrenching herself in the fortress of a stepdaughter, Mariko did not know how to shift [the opposition] any more. (138-139)

Although each dichotomy is made very clear, the swift movement from one to another, and the multiplicity of oppositions, diffuse the simple antagonistic formula. Rather than establishing two opposing individualities, the two swirling movements around the multiangular form suggest a multitude of attributes which Mariko and Hiroko can display,
and how flexibly they can 'change' their 'personalities' depending upon any particular context—upon any particular relationship with others at any particular moment.

Similar multiple performative possibilities are displayed in the context between Keiko and Satoko, who look "like a royal consort and young lady-in-waiting, mother and daughter, or mentor and disciple, rather than like grandmother and granddaughter," and thus mystify Akira (89). In addition, the relationship between Akira and Satoko is flexible, "ambiguous and unstable"; they pretend to be a newly-married couple, or a princess and her attendant, but Akira feels as if they are "strangers who have never seen each other" (395). Both the couples—Keiko and Satoko, and Akira and Satoko—are capable of moving from one corner of the multiangular form to another, to borrow the metaphor quoted above, while still maintaining an opposition or contrast. Their attributes are not inherent or substantial, but transient and subject to the possibility of performance.

Just as the same persons can display different attributes, so the same attributes, actions, statements may be displayed by different persons and places, subverting any sense of stable individuality which human beings and places are commonly supposed to have.

Characters in Symposium make a series of short excursions and visits to several places around Shōrai-kaku. Some of these places function as miniatures of others, in that they repeat or foreshadow attributes which are displayed upon a larger scale elsewhere. Thus "The Rock of Seals" anticipates "The Isle of Apes"; the former is located on the way to the latter, both are surrounded by the sea, and both have a concave, womb-like water-pool in which characters can hide. The patio in Shōrai-kaku is a miniature of the "Town" in that from both of them characters have a glimpse of the sea at a distance and are
reminded of the Mediterranean. The marsh-reed screened hut on the seashore functions as a substitute for the bar "Kurobê"—both have simple structures, and in both places characters plan to drink on rainy nights, carry out their plans, and are joined by others. The town along the next bay parallels both the town in which Shôrai-kaku is situated and another town in which Satoko's aunt lives; scenery in each of the first two towns "resembles" scenery in the other. Similarly, Akira and Satoko are struck by the diminished size of streets and buildings in the latter two towns. "Katsura," or the hotel at which Akira and Satoko stay overnight before their visit to her aunt's house, functions as a precursor of her aunt's house. Both hotel and house are reminiscent of shinden zukuri, or the orthodox structure for aristocratic mansions in the Heian era. Such frequent repetitions and differences give the impression of multi-layered reality; Satoko describes the similar impressions given by the two towns along the seashore as "overlapped, unfocused images" and Akira feels as if he were "either in a dream or intoxicated" (190). None of these places has substantial, individual, and stable identity. Rather, all places are perceived as duplications of each other.

Similarly, female characters demonstrate both similarities and differences in engaging in identical actions and statements, and thus blur distinctions between individual entities. Both Kaori and Satoko bite Akira's ear. Kaori bites twice, once in his dream and another time in reality. Hearing this from a witness, Yukiko, Satoko performs the same action, but in a much more tender and sophisticated way. Akira becomes "scared" not of Satoko but of "something like a sensitively operating consciousness," which enables Satoko to duplicate Kaori's act (205).
Akira himself is highly conscious of repetitions and differences in actions and statements. He notices that Kaori makes the statement, "Summer will be over without its climax," which sounds to him similar to Masako's statement, "The world will be over before summer comes" (110, 17). He comments, "You changed your hair style," to Satoko, and realizing he has uttered the same words to Yukiko, rephrases them as "You put up your hair" (315). Yukiko has let her hair down, having previously worn it up. Akira even says to Satoko, "You and Yukiko-san look as if you have been transformed into each other" (316). Then, he experiments by trying to kiss Satoko in the same, instantaneous manner as he has been kissed by Yukiko, but she catches and holds him in a long, sustained kiss. Thus, Akira, as the main viewer in the novel, perceives and delineates similarities and contrasts between characters.

As I observed, Symposium does not describe a character's unique qualities, but instead constantly compares them to those of others, knitting together a network of associations. Individual characters do not do or say things according to their personalities. Rather, they exist as intersections of actions and statements which exhibit both similarities and differences. No one is responsible for any statement or action, for no one is the origin. Characters are subject to others, functioning as nodes in a network of associations.

Similarities are not only discovered between places and figures within the text of Symposium. The braids of association extend far beyond it, showing the text's intertextual pastiche. Having examined the intratextual network, or indices, I wish now to explore the intertextual antecedents of the analogies in Symposium.
As I pointed out, the bar "Kurobe" looks like one described in The Water Margin, while Irie's room is compared to Valéry's Mr Teste's room. Akira compares the patio viewed from Satoko's room to "Tsuru kame no niwa" [The Patio of Cranes and Turtoises] at Konchi-in, Kyoto. The seashore near "The Rock of Seals" reminds both Akira and Satoko of another text of Valéry's, "Mediterranean Inspirations," in which the scattered entrails of fish are reminiscent of ukiyoe, Japanese paintings of the Edo era which present scenes from the secular, floating world. To describe "The Isle of Apes", images are borrowed from several preexisting cultural artifacts such as the movie The Planet of Apes, Huang-shan in southern China (which is a popular topic for ink paintings), Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, and Golding's Lord of the Flies. The town in which Mariko's aunt (and Satoko's, too) lives is associated with Combray in Proust's À la recherche du temps perdu [In Remembrance of the Things Past], the castle in Kafka's Das Schloss [The Castle], tōgen kyō [peach blooming village on the upper stream], which is a long-popular utopian image in Chinese paintings and poetry, and the country of Lilliput in Swift's Gulliver's Travels. The hill named by Mariko as "Rei no yama" [The Hill of Spirits] is compared to the paintings Mont Sainte-Victoire [Mt. St. Victoire] and Château Noir [The Black Chateau], by Cézanne. "The Pavilion of the Breezes through the Pine Trees," the main area in which the story of symposium, takes place, is implicitly and recurrently associated with Berghof in Mann's The Magic Mountain.

Just as locations are associated with other, extratextual ones, so the parts of the plot, and the actors within it, are constantly associated with those of preexisting stories, especially The Tale of Genji. I have already pointed out that in Satoko's novel, Mariko and Mr Matsudaira's relationship is compared to that of Tamakazura and Genji. In fact, Mariko
suspects that Hiroshi, her cousin, has witnessed an intimate scene between them, and this is reminiscent of the chapter of The Tale of Genji entitled "Nowaki" [Typhoon], in which Yūgiri, Genji's son by his late wife, Aoi, notices Genji caress Tamakazura in the manner of a lover rather than a father.

In fact, the love affair between Akira and Satoko is both explicitly and implicitly compared to that of Genji and Wakamurasaki. The only explicit reference to The Tale of Genji is made by Akira: his first sexual encounter with Satoko remains undescribed, just as Genji's sexual initiation of Wakamurasaki is omitted, the narrative simply stating that "there was a morning on which only Genji woke up early and Murasaki did not" (81). However, other allusive analogies are made with Genji. An example is the scene in which Akira sees Satoko for the first time and, immediately associates her with his stepmother, Takagi Mariko, whom he has admired. In a similar manner, Genji regards Wakamurasaki as the surrogate of Fujitsubo, his stepmother with whom he has consummated his love. Further, Keiko's interview with Akira in which she tells him about the reasons for Satoko's interest in him echoes Genji's interview with Wakamurasaki's grandmother, regarding the adopting of the girl. Part of Symposium's plot thus alludes to the story of Genji's early courtship with Murasaki explicitly and implicitly. Also, Symposium overtly adopts Genji's "technique of omission" (Takahashi "Shōhitsu no bunpō"), by making Akira comment on the narrator's behalf that "the novel should restrain itself from saying that certain incidents occurred," just as Genji does not narrate Genji's death or his first night with Murasaki (81). In short, Symposium copies both the content and method of Genji.
Moreover, the circumstances under which Satoko writes her novel are compared to those of Lady Murasaki’s writing of *Genji*. Hearing from Keiko that Satoko is writing a novel for Akira, Irie asks Satoko to let him read it, saying "[i]f I were Michinaga, I would ask Lady Murasaki to let me read" "the narrative which only [a limited number of] us can read" (197). Just as Lady Murasaki wrote *Genji* for the people within the circle of the Royal Consort Shōshi, Regent Michinaga’s daughter, Satoko is expected to write *Mariko* for the circle of people staying at The Pavilion. Thus Satoko, as the author of the novel, is compared to Lady Murasaki, the author of *The Tale of Genji*. Her relationship with Akira is associated with Genji’s with Wakamurasaki, and that of her fictional creation, Mariko, and Mr Matsudaira, with Genji’s relationship with Tamakazura. *Symposium* is thus a triple-layered pastiche of *Genji*. Furthermore, *The Confessions of Lady Nijō*, which I have previously mentioned as a "pre-text" of *Symposium*, sometimes itself shows copying from *Genji*. Therefore, *Symposium* is not only a pastiche of *Genji*, but also a pastiche of a pastiche of *Genji*.

Another part of the novel’s plot, the alleged love triangle of Akira, his late wife Naoko, and her younger sister Kaori echoes a novel, *Naoko*, written by Hori Tatsuo, a modern Japanese writer who was well read in French literature, and from which *Symposium* borrows the names of Akira and Naoko. (The names of the characters in *Naoko* are also mentioned in *The Floating Bridge of Dreams*.) However, the love triangle is much more explicitly a pastiche of the *noh* play *Matsukaze* [*Breeze through the Pine Trees*]. *Matsukaze* itself is a pastiche of the legend of Ariwara no Yukihiro, a historical poet and nobleman who was renowned for his beauty. Yukihiro is believed to have been exiled to Suma, a region
by the sea famous for its pine trees, and there loved two sisters called Matsukaze and Murasame who worked there as fisherwomen. The noh play presents their longing for Yukihira who has left them to return to the capital. In Symposium, Akira has been to see the performance of Matsukaze with Naoko and Kaori, and thus dreams of Kaori who, claiming to be a latterday Murasame, is jealous of her sister. Later, Kaori discloses that she also associated herself with Murasame when she saw the performance. The associations of Akira with Yukihira, Naoko with Matsukaze, and Kaori with Murasame are thus reinforced.

Matsukaze functions as a pre-text for Symposium in an additional way. Just like the setting of the play, Suma, the novel's setting also has pine trees among which "The Pavilion of the Breezes through the Pine Trees" stands. The name of the hotel, "Shōrai" is semantically identical with "Matsukaze": both mean "breezes through the pine trees," though Shōrai is the Japanese transcription of a Chinese word, while Matsukaze is a Japanese poetic word. The narrative persistently describes a variety of rain falling among the pine trees. Akira even wonders if there is any Chinese word to describe "the rain falling onto pine trees," which would be an equivalent to Shōrai (317). Though he cannot find any Chinese equivalent, we know a Japanese equivalent, Murasame. Thus Matsukaze is pastiched by Symposium in three senses: plot, etymology, and locale.

Another group of "pre-texts" foregrounds the theme of the moon, which recurs in the narrative in a subtle manner. Satoko introduces Akira to a poem by Li Shang-yin, a late Tang poet famous for his extremely allusive poetry. The particular poem is based upon a legend from the Six Dynasties: a man called Wu Gang is punished by being eternally required to cut down a laurel tree on the moon, a tree that always springs up again as soon
as it has been cut. Satoko remembers the poem when she notices that the laurel tree in the yard of a Japanese hotel, "Katsura" [Laurel] near her aunt’s house, has been cut down. When she was a child, Keiko, a component of whose name "Kei" stands for a laurel, taught Satoko about the Chinese legend regarding the moon, selecting for her another moon poem by a medieval Japanese poet, Fujiwara Ietaka, as one of the "One Hundred Poems" in the volume Satoko was editing in the manner of Fujiwara Teika, who edited "One Hundred Poems" by one hundred poets. Ietaka, as a well-known Shinkokin poet, made extensive use of allusive variation, or honkadori, which was the main principle for poets in the early 13th century Japan (The title of Kurahashi’s The Floating Bridge of Dreams is taken from an early 13th century Japanese poem, composed by Teika, borrowing its motif from The Tale of Genji). The particular poem selected by Satoko and quoted also by Yukiko elsewhere in Symposium reads:

Nagame tsutsu
omou mo sabishi
hisakatano
tsuki no miyako no
akegata no sora (SKKS: Autumn I, 392)

(lit. Even merely imagining the dawn sky viewed from the capital of the ever-lasting moon, while looking at it, makes me feel sad.) According to Yukiko, the poem borrows as its background the Chinese motif of the Emperor of Heaven’s experiencing physical pleasures with his court ladies every night, and then purposelessly watching the futile dawn. When Yukiko quotes the poem, she focuses upon the pleasure, alluding to the fact that Akira is exhausted by being loved by women and having intercourse with one of them, Satoko.
Both the poems by Li Shang-yin and Fujiwara letaka are pastiches of legends, and thus again make *Symposium* into a multi-layered pastiche.

Demonstrating the art of pastiche itself, *Symposium* further refers to a variety of arts of pastiche and/or improvisation: jazz performance, drawing, cooking, reciting *haiku* at an appropriate moment, *iai* or the instantaneous cutting of an object with a sword, and lacemaking.

Masako is "fond of drawing pictures, and especially is fairly skillful at imitating someone else's style," or "making a pastiche after the models of her favourites" such as "[Henri] Matisse, [Raoul] Dufy, [Paul] Klee." This reminds Irie of Tom Keating, a genius in drawing pastiches, whom Masako admires as "a master" of "plagiarism." Another implicit analogy is made between Masako's art and that of Mei Qing of Ming dynasty China: Irie has a copy of a landscape drawing by him, which is, according to the attached commentary, an "imitation of Ke Jiu-si's style." Another analogy is made with Tachibana Sekikei, "a Japanese copper-plate printer," in that both Tachibana and Masako are engaged in an interdisciplinary pastiche between literature and art. Once, Masako drew "a mirage in the style of Dufy," "expressing pictorially Su Tung-po's [poem] 'Deng-zhou Haishi bing shu' [The Mirage at Deng-zhou with a Preface]." This is just like the art of Tachibana Sekikei, whom both Irie and Masako admire, and who "made landscape prints in the styles of Wang Meng and Wen Zheng-ming," while apparently borrowing motifs from Chinese and Japanese poets, such as Li Shang-yin and Fujiwara letaka. Though reference is not made to the poets in this particular discussion of paintings, their works representing the moon are often mentioned by characters. These paintings share the motif with Tachibana's surrealist
drawings which, according to Masako's explanation, present "a landscape viewed from the moon, showing the rising earth, not the rising sun, behind Kuang-han qiu [the cold palace on the moon]" and "Wu Gang trying to cut the laurel tree" on the moon. Irie, Masako, Akira, Keiko, and Ken'ichi share a positive appraisal of such pastiche. Moreover, Irie emphasizes that he does not own any original paintings but instead has copies of paintings. In other words, he likes copies of copies of copies, rather than the original. The pastiche presented here is again multi-layered (214-216).

Similarly, the two cooks—Hoshino and Kurobê—are dedicated to improvising new dishes, borrowing ideas from previous cuisines. Due to the increasing military tension between USSR and Japan, materials for cooking have been decreasing in number and deteriorating in quality, so improvisation is needed to maintain the artistic standard of their cooking. According to Keiko, Hoshino claims that "cooking is bricolage," making use of "miscellaneous materials" which happen to be available (289), and "improvising interesting dishes" (218). Also, Kurobê is experimenting with medieval Chinese cuisine, referring to books. When he serves "Gui ye leng tang," which, according to Irie, is mentioned in T'u Fu's poem, Kurobê explains, "I followed a book from Sung dynasty called Shi lin kuang ji to cook it, but please taste it with skepticism, since I have not eaten the original" (177). In spite of his humble statements, the characters apparently enjoy his cooking, because of, not in spite of, the fact that it is a copy.

The most extensive presentation of pastiche as art is that of the jazz performance provided by Satoko and Kaori, in which copies of musical pieces and musical instruments are improvised. Kaori, who has played in a jazz band in highschool, requests Satoko, who
is an excellent amateur pianist with a classical training, to accompany her in playing Bach’s Flute Sonata in H Minor BWV 1030. Kaori explains that one can easily perform Bach in a jazz style. Keiko, one of the audience, thus calls Kaori “a [flutist] version of Jacques Louche,” who recorded his arrangements of Bach’s pieces in Play Back Play Bach (141). Satoko makes her piano sound like a harpsichord in the first movement, while Kaori plays the flute improvisationally in a jazz style in the second movement. Here, the imitations of different musical instruments and genres harmonize.

Satoko and Kaori engage in a second jam session, which Satoko calls “VSOP,” or “very special one time performance.” The title suggests its improvisational nature. Satoko explains the manner in which they perform as follows:

If I provide any composer’s, for example, Satie’s image, by performing a fragment, Kaori-san then thinks of an improvisation upon it, and then the two of us perform impromptu. (225-223)

In short, their performance consists of a series of acts of copying.

Satoko and Kaori’s third performance is based upon Baroque music: the collection of Clavecin composed by Rameau and Couperin. Satoko reveals that she uses a synthesizer, instead of a harpsichord, to "make the tones softer than a real harpsichord." She plays the synthesizer while listening to harpsichord performances on headphones, copying them as she wishes. Then Kaori plays the flute in an entirely improvisational manner. Here, the adaptation of classical musical pieces, the imitation of the sound of musical instruments, and the copying of existing performances occur simultaneously.
Thus Symposium presents many examples of many-layered pastiches, while itself being a pastiche of many previous texts, including Kurahashi’s own Divine Maiden. In this way it is similar to Blue Journey, in that its form matches its theme.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored Symposium as a culmination of the narrational, thematical, and textual experiments which Kurahashi has attempted in Blue Journey, Divine Maiden, and The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q. Symposium’s narrative strategies problematize the notion of authorship and the ability to narrate from any detached or transcendant perspective. Thematically, the novel repeats Kurahashi’s early works, with their emphasis upon the performativity of the self and a lack of substantive identity. In terms of textual devices, Symposium marks the culmination of a tendency begun in "The Long Passage of Dreams" and The Floating Bridge of Dreams. A large number of pre-texts are pastiched in a virtuoso show of intertextuality, yet these are not merely European texts, as in Kurahashi’s earlier work, but also classical Japanese texts. Since the writing of Symposium, Kurahashi has not written any novels that are experimental in terms of narrative. Rather, she has refined the art of pastiche to its most intricate expression in the last of the "Keiko" series, the novel Popoi.
CHAPTER 6: The Self as a Collage: Popoi

Popoi (1987)\(^2\) is the fourth novel in the "Keiko series," which Kurahashi began with Yume no ukihashi [The Floating Bridge of Dreams] (1971), while in fact constituting the sixth portion in terms of the narrated time, representing Keiko in her seventies. Besides featuring Keiko, Popoi shares other characters with other novels in the sequence: Miyazawa Satoko, Keiko’s granddaughter, and her husband Miyazawa Akira, whose love affair constitutes the main storyline of Symposium, and Irie Akira, the former prime minister who starts his relationship with Keiko in Kōkan [Pleasure Exchange], and more or less becomes her husband in Symposium. By sharing these characters Popoi fits into the sequence, though, as I stated in the previous chapter, it suggests discontinuity, or heterogeneity, by changing the last name of the narrator-protagonist from Kurihara into Kurusu.

Popoi’s allusive nature demonstrates such a dissolution of an individual text in a sea of intertextuality outside the confines of the "Keiko series." Popoi presents a collage of images from anterior texts, incorporating into the narrative multiple traces from past literary and fine art works concerned with the theme of a severed head. The use of references to

1A section of this paper ("A Gallery of Severed Heads: A Comparative Study of Kurahashi Yumiko") was read at ICLA 1991 Tokyo Congress, and will be published in the proceedings of the conference. Another section, regarding the three prophets, will appear in Kosumosu 12.

2This novel was published as a monograph by Fukutake shoten, Tokyo. The page numbers are based on this version. According to "kaisetsu" by Saimyōji Ikuko which is attached to a paperback version (Tokyo: Shinchō bunko, 1991), Popoi was written primarily as a scenario for a radio programme, and then first published in the periodical Kaien (August, 1987).
a short story of Kurahashi’s own called "Aporon no kubi" [The Head of Apollo] (1986) is only one example of the resonances, which will be briefly overviewed in the following discussion.

The thematic concerns of Popoi are in keeping with its textual characteristics; just as the text is a collage, and is thus dissolved in the larger literary corpus, the ‘self’ is no more than an accumulation of traces of others. Featuring a severed head’s ‘self-consciousness,’ the novel implies that the ‘self’ is dissolved in its relation to the subjects past, memory, and to other subjects, and that these relations are maintained by words.

A plot summary is necessary prior to a thematic and textual analysis of the novel. The main story of Popoi involves the "life and death" —or the evolution and subsequent decline in the "self-consciousness"— of the severed head of a terrorist which is kept alive after the man is decapitated. The head is named Popoi and looked after by the narrator-protagonist, Kurusu Mai. She is the beloved granddaughter of a former prime minister, Irie Akira (referred to in the narrative as "Grandfather"), who has lapsed into a coma since his private mansion was invaded by terrorists and he witnessed the terrible beheading. Though this is highly reminiscent of the catastrophic death of Mishima Yukio, whose biographical data are both explicitly and implicitly used in the novel, we learn from the narrative that the event was not as highly publicized in the media as its great precursor’s was: the terrorists were taken care of by a limited number of people, such as the police and neuro-scientists. Mai is engaged to one of the neuro-scientists, Saeki (called "Mr Saeki" in the narrative), who asks her to look after the head and to cooperate with him and his colleagues in performing various neurological experiments on it.
The narrative extends over the period of one year, from the time she starts to take care of the head in autumn until its burial the next autumn. It is possible to identify three successive phases in Popoi’s evolution. In the first, Popoi remains passive and totally dependent upon Mai, like a hydroponic plant, a "dead" head, or an object in a drawing. The second stage is distinguished by Popoi’s achievement of self-consciousness. He notices people in the outside world and communicates with Mai like an astute pet, becoming an observer of paintings, and a prophet. Finally, in the third phase of his evolution, Popoi returns to his original state of passivity and then dies.

The temporal development of Popoi is made up by many metaphorical chains which have both intratextual and extratextual resonances. For instance, Popoi’s growth is compared to that of a bulb—more specifically, that of a hyacinth—and is associated with T. S. Eliot’s "The Burial of the Dead." The burial of Popoi at the end of the narrative is not tragic, because the end is not exactly the end of everything; by likening Popoi to a plant, the narrative suggests the possibility of a cyclical time-flow and hence Popoi’s eventual rebirth. "The Burial of the Dead" echoes at the beginning and at the end of the novel, although the poem is not explicitly mentioned there but is quoted in another passage, where the content of the poem seems less relevant to the context.

Similarly, other extratextual references diffuse any atmosphere of violence or horror that might be expected from a novel whose central motif is a severed head. The cool, placid tone is achieved by pastiches of earlier texts that introduce a similar theme, such as a John Keats’ "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil," Tanizaki Jun’ichirō’s Bushō-kō hiwa [The Secret History of Lord Musashi], and Oscar Wilde’s Salomé. Yet this does not mean that the theme
of Popoi is peculiarly gothic; in fact, the novel deals with high-tech issues such as computer communications and artificial life support. In Kurahashi's novel, indeed, the severed head is associated by a series of metaphorical references with the computer. What links the head thematically with the previous texts is the notion of the head as a prophet. Popoi himself claims to be a prophet, and is explicitly associated with Jokanaan's head in Salomé. Furthermore, two other characters in Kurahashi's novel, Grandfather and Kei, Mai's cousin and long-term lover, also play the role of prophets, and thus constitute metaphorical associations, or "indices."

Kurahashi's text thus resembles a collage, composed of a multitude of related images: objects which explicitly or implicitly refer to precursory works of art and literature, historical and mythical figures such as Mishima, and characters in the novel itself, such as Grandfather and Kei. From these, the narrator, Mai, draws parallels to Popoi. Even beyond the narrator's consciousness, the narrative implicitly hints at parallels and contrasts between Popoi and figures in works of literature and fine art, through textual traces which are elusive but recognizable.

As in her other works, Kurahashi often mentions other texts, or refers to them in an ostentatious way. However, her manner of 'borrowing' is not as simple as it might at first sight appear. Though the author is seemingly ready to disclose the "sources" of her ideas, she is not always open with the reader: sometimes she maintains silence just so as to make the reader believe there is no precursor. I believe Kurahashi intentionally 'bares the device' of drawing from pre-existent texts, in order to play with the entire notion of the borrowing of motifs.
Popoi will help me demonstrate my assumption that the author is quite conscious in her play, using intertextual reference in three complementary ways: First, on some occasions, there are passages which allude to precursory texts, but only implicitly, causing the reader to remain continually alert to the possibility that a reference is being made. The case of "The Burial of the Dead" offers a good example of this. Second, behind certain explicit references, other pre-texts, which are not explicitly mentioned, are often hidden. Kurahashi's text is multi-layered, with some references foregrounded and others placed in the background. This occurs when Kurahashi draws images from the three major precursory texts of Keats, Tanizaki and Wilde. Finally, she employs numerous explicit references which, in Todorov's words, display "perceived similarities," but significant discrepancies lie between the precursors and her texts. Or, again in Todorov's words, the precursors she draws upon are the "same-but-different" (Brooks 91) so that the reader cannot become complacent merely with having identified the apparent "sources" of various references; this is because pastiche is continually at work in the subtext. This technique is most clearly shown in the case of the triple-layered text mentioned above, as well as in the way in which Popoi is compared to other prophets inside of and anterior to the text of the novel itself.

There are five related chains of metaphor in Popoi. The first, we have seen, is that of a flower, or a bulb. The second refers to cleaning, and the applying of cosmetics to the head. The third concerns the keeping of pets, and is used to describe the more active part of Popoi's existence. The fourth concerns works of fine art: Popoi moves from the position of being an art object to being an art connoisseur, and then back to being an art object again. The final chain of images concerns magic and the supernatural.
When Mr. Saeki asks Mai to assume the job of caring for the "raw head," he compares her task to that of "keeping pets," and then searching for a more precise image, he suggests that it is in fact more like the "hydroponic cultivation of plants" (Popoi 4). Kurahashi's animal and plant metaphors are significant both in elucidating Popoi and in exploring the novel's text-weaving strategies. First, I would like to concentrate on the plant metaphors, which occur mainly in the parts of the novel that describe the first and third phases of Popoi's existence: those in which he remains primarily in a passive state.

Some insight into Kurahashi's interest in this metaphor is given by her use of it in a preceding story, "The Head of Apollo" in which she associates a severed head with a hyacinth, and with the practice of hydroponics. In that story, the head is discovered by a girl "in a bush under trees," and it at first appears to her as "something pale and glittering" ("The Head of Apollo" 71). The girl's first encounter with the head is reminiscent of the old bamboo-cutter's discovery of the Shining Princess in Taketori monogatari [The Tale of a Bamboo-Cutter]: in this Heian fantasy, the old man finds "one stalk of bamboo shining at the base" (McCullough 28) which proves to be a tiny girl from the moon. Like the moon girl's origin, the origin of the severed head in Kurahashi's story also remains a mystery.

The girl who finds the head keeps it in a flower pot. The head blooms in spring and summer, grows fruit in autumn and ends up as a pumpkin in winter. The girl compares the process to The Four Seasons, a 16th-century painting by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, which consists of four panels, each representing a season in the shape of a human head (Figure 1).
Kurahashi offers a brilliant description of the severed head, creating textual effects as breathtaking as the visual ones of *The Four Seasons*.

In *Popoi*, however, she does not so clearly pattern the evolution of the head on the seasonal changes of a plant, although Popoi’s development is not unrelated to the seasonal cycles of nature. In contrast to "The Head of Apollo," the major transformation which occurs in *Popoi* is the shift from the passivity of a plant to the responsiveness of a pet: the similes Mr. Saeki uses at the beginning of the novel are important in expressing this shift.

Let us begin with a discussion of the most prominent plant metaphor. When Mai is first shown the head attached to its life support system, it appears to her "just like a hyacinth bulb in hydroponic culture, with many thin artificial veins" (*Popoi* 14), an impression which corroborates Mr. Saeki’s previous metaphor. There is, however, something more to Kurahashi’s specifying the plant as a hyacinth. The flower recalls the myth of Apollo and Hyacinthus in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: Apollo unintentionally causes a fatal injury to Hyacinthus, his beloved boy. In deep sorrow, he vows forever to commemorate Hyacinthus with his songs and to let the boy be reborn as a flower which will bear distinctive markings, expressive of Apollo’s grief:

A flower grew, brighter than any crimson,  
Like lilies with their silver changed to crimson.  
That was not all; Apollo kept the promise  
About the markings, and inscribed the flower  
With his own grieving words: *Ai, Ai*  
The petals say, Greek for *Alas!*  
(Ovid 240)
Thus, after his death Hyathincus is transformed into a hyacinth, with Greek words of grief inscribed upon the petals. In a similar manner, the severed head in Popoi is named "Popoi," after "a Greek interjection which expresses deep grief" (Popoi 26). However, there is a striking difference between the two stories: in the precursory epic, the dead boy is transformed into a plant and, in this passive state, achieves a kind of immortality. But in Popoi, the head achieves its identity through the "inscription," and subsequently begins to live as an active yet mortal animal.

The significance of the hyacinths is not exhausted by the Apollonian reference, however, for hyacinths lead to yet another pre-text, T.S. Eliot's "The Burial of the Dead," the first section of The Waste Land:

'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;
'They called me the hyacinth girl.'
("The Burial of the Dead" 50)

In Popoi, it is Mr Saeki who gives Mai the "hyacinth bulb."

In fact, "The Burial of the Dead" echoes continually throughout the novel, and in one place the first line of the poem is even quoted exactly:

A 20th century poet says, "April is the cruellest month."
(Popoi 111)

The line appears in a passage describing a change in the natural scenery, which is accompanied by a corresponding alteration in Popoi's hairstyle. The conjunction of natural changes with the changes of his hair style is Kurahashi's usual way of beginning a new section in the novel. The specific section concerns Mai's trip to the decapitated terrorist's
home town, in order to interview his father and acquaintances, a trip which implicitly relates to other lines from "The Burial of the Dead," which are not mentioned explicitly in the novel:

... mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.  
("The Burial of the Dead" 49)

Mai does "mix memory" and "desire" during her trip; specifically, she reconstructs the life of the decapitated terrorist and she experiences the desire of his father for money along with the desire of his former schoolteachers for social attention. At the same time, during Mai’s absence, Popoi is dedicating himself to writing, and in his "desire" to become a prophet, he draws information from his "memory."

Popoi has remained "forgetful" during winter, because he did not have self-consciousness, depending for food on Mr Saeki’s life support system. Here, Popoi is protected in a bulb if not, as in Eliot’s poem, in "a tuber."

In Popoi, what appears to be "hyacinth bulb" is actually a decapitated human head. The precursory poem implies toward its end that the hyacinth bloomed from a corpse buried in the garden:

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3It seems that the terrorist’s father whom Mai visits is a caricature of Mishima Yukio’s father, Hiraoka Azusa, who published two volumes of recollections about his son —Segare Mishima Yukio [My Son Mishima Yukio].
'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
(Ibid. 51)

The hyacinth which the girl receives has bloomed out of a buried body, just as the "hyacinth bulb" brought to Mai has "bloomed" only through the terrorist's death.

Toward the end of the novel, Mai, unable to bear watching Popoi becoming unconscious and mentally incapacitated, removes his life support, only to find that he "looks like a decaying bulb with innumerable roots" (Popoi 165), a description which corresponds to her initial impression of the head. At this point, "The Burial of the Dead" echoes again, playing an important role in concluding Popoi. Mai prays that the head "will sleep comfortably in the wet soil, pass the winter, sprout next spring and bloom beautifully" (Popoi 165), hoping for the same miracle which occurs in "The Burial of the Dead." Further, she promises herself that she will "tell [Gulda, the dog] not to dig in that spot" (Ibid. 166), and here again there is a resonance of Eliot:

'Oh keep the dog far hence, that's friend to men,
'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
("The Burial of the Dead" 51)

As this example shows, although the narrative does not actually disclose the name of Eliot or of his poem, the lines of "The Burial of the Dead" resonate in the subtext. In short, Kurahashi manipulates the reader, simultaneously exhibiting and hiding the 'source' of her literary conceits.

If the motif of hydroponics refers to Ovid and T. S. Eliot, it is also reminiscent of "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil" by John Keats, in which the heroine, Isabella, cherishes the
head of her lover, Lorenzo. After her lover has been slaughtered by her brothers and buried, Isabella digs his head out of the ground, and plants it in a pot. The story adds a new dimension to the relationship between Mai and Popoi, suggesting the possibility that they are lovers.

It is true that Mai did not love the terrorist prior to his decapitation, and thus does not feel any personal attachment to the head when she accepts the job of caring for it. However, she does experience a certain kind of excitement from the outset, recalling how, in ancient wars, the decapitated heads of warriors were "cleaned and beautified by women on their enemy's side." Identifying herself clearly with one of these ancient women, she decides to "comb [Popoi's] hair, wipe his face, and make it up" (Popoi 5-6). Later, she also shaves his beard and applies a facial pack to him.

In the scenes which describe Mai's beautification of the head, three pre-texts echo, becoming entangled with one another and giving a certain density to the text: these are "Isabella, or the Pot of Basil" already mentioned, Bushô-kô hiwa [The Secret History of Lord Musashi] by Tanizaki Jun'ichirô, and Oscar Wilde's Salomé. In Popoi these three pre-texts are treated in different ways: "Isabella" is pastiched, the male fantasy in The Secret History is reworked from a female narrator's viewpoint, and the female fantasy in Salomé is diluted.

First, let us have a look at Isabella as she cherishes Lorenzo's head:

She calm'd its wild hair with a golden comb,  
And all around each eye's sepulchral cell  
Pointed each fringed lash; the smeared loam  
With tears, as chilly as a dripping well,  
She drench'd away:—and still she comb'd, and wept  
Sighing all day—and still she kiss'd and wept.  
(Keats 113)
The conspicuous similarities in the measures that Isabella and Mai take to beautify Lorenzo and Popoi do bring out considerable differences in their feelings toward their respective heads. Mai never weeps over the tragedy of the man who was decapitated, apparently not sharing the passion of Isabella. Here, she is clearly functioning as a pastiche of the emotional lover of the Romantic Age.

Another precursory text which comes up in the beautification scenes in Popoi is The Secret History of Lord Musashi. Early in Tanizaki’s novella, we learn of Lord Musashi’s fascination with a scene he witnessed as a thirteen-year-old boy when he was being kept hostage in Ojika Castle. There he learned how the beautiful palace ladies prepared the severed heads of enemy warriors for inspection:

> The women would dress the hair, touch up the dye on the teeth, and even, on occasion, apply some light cosmetic to make the heads presentable [for inspection]. (The Secret History of Lord Musashi 20)

Lord Musashi, or Hōshimaru as he was called in his boyhood, was particularly taken by "bewitching beauty, spiced with the bitterness of cruelty" which he saw on a young girl’s face (Ibid. 30). Moreover, he felt envious of the heads:

> It is not simply that he envied the head for having the girl dress its hair, shave its pate, or gaze at it with that cruel smile; he wanted to be killed, transformed into a ghastly head with an agonized expression, and manipulated in the girl’s hands. Becoming a severed head was a necessary condition. (Ibid. 30)

Secretly the boy yearns to become helpless and dependent in the hands of a beautiful and cruel girl, yielding himself entirely to her tender, loving and yet impassive care. But his
fantasy is paradoxical and hence unrealizable because "he would lose consciousness if he
died." Consequently, he begins to indulge "in the fancy that he had become a head without
losing consciousness" (Ibid. 31).

This is precisely the state which the severed head in Popoi enjoys after gaining self-
consciousness. In other words, Popoi realizes the dream of Hôshimaru. How, then, does
Popoi feel about this state, which for Hôshimaru, seems ideal? Popoi confesses that having
been unhappy with his real mother, he used to "aspire for a mother like" Mai (Popoi 102),
and in a sense, his desire is satisfied. He also discloses, in answer to Mai's question, that
he "seems to" "be in love with" her (Ibid. 110). However, Popoi's oedipal fantasy is not
fulfilled. He claims not to be jealous, even though Mai has many boyfriends, because "it's
miserable [to become jealous]; I am a mere head" (Ibid. 132). In contrast to Hôshimaru,
who wants to become a head, Popoi seems to wish that he were a normal man.

When Mai tries to shave his head with a Western razor, Popoi becomes frightened
and closes his eyes, in a scene similar to the one in The Secret History, in which
Hôshimaru, already grown up to be Lord Musashi, reminisces about the cleansing of the
severed heads in Ojika Castle. Attempting to recreate the event, he orders Dôami, the fool,
to play the role of a severed head, and tells Ohisa, a young lady-in-waiting, to cut his nose
with a razor:

He was eerily still. Maybe he really was dead, she thought. She tried pressing and stroking the ridge of his nose. Her slender fingers came away cold and damp. Looking closely, she saw a cold sweat trickling from Dôami's forehead and down his temples. Then, when the blade of the razor gleamed before it, the death face suddenly went pale. (Ibid. 120)
Popoi is no less frightened than Dōami, though Mai does not intend to hurt him with the razor. In fact, Mai is terrified, too, at the thought that she "can easily cut his throat or carotid artery if only [she] decides to do so" (Popoi 27-28). Although Mai's hand does not "tremble[d] as she clutche[d] the razor" as did Ohisa's (The Secret History 120), the idea of harassing the helpless head surely occurs to her as well.

In the course of shaving him, Mai says to Popoi, "Open your eyes, Popoi. Open your eyes properly like a man" (Popoi 27). In this we can hear an echo of Salomé's words to Jokanaan's head:

Thine eyes that were so terrible, so full of rage and scorn, are shut now. Wherefore are they shut? Open thine eyes! Lift up thine eyelids, Jokanaan! (Wilde 39)

The analogy between Salomé and Popoi manifests itself several times in the novel. It would appear that the author intended to model Mai on Salomé, when she chose to name her heroine with the Chinese character 舞, which reads "Mai" and means "dancing." (Salomé, it will be recalled, dances in order to win Jokanaan's head.)4 The first direct allusion to Salomé appears early in the novel when Mai, awaiting the head's arrival, anticipates that it will likely be carried in "on a silver tray [or a flower basin]" (Popoi 9) just as Jokanaan's

4Perhaps I should point out here that "Mai" is one of the female names which Kurahashi uses frequently, rendered in a variety of Chinese characters. The primary reason for this preference is that "Mai" is phonetically identical with "my." In "Aiko-tachi" [Aiko and others], the heroine Aiko has multi-dimensional character and occasionally changes into Maiko, Miiko, and so forth:

"You are Aiko aren't you?"

"No, I am Maiko," (...) "not 'I,' but 'my.' Don't make a mistake." (Complete Works Vol. 5: 76)
head was carried into the king’s chamber on "a silver shield" (Wilde 39). Later, toward the end of the novel, Mai compares herself to the cruel princess, saying "I am not so gross as Salomé who kissed John’s head" (Popoi 165). In short, Salomé functions in Popoi as a ‘frame’ metaphor.

Moreover, Jokanaan and Popoi parallel each other in that each claims to be a prophet. Popoi learns how to operate the word processor with his mobile tongue, and writes many messages. It is Mai who first discovers that he can move his tongue, when she "trie[s] to kiss him and entangle her tongue with his" (Popoi 94). Despite her manifest aversion to kissing a severed head, Mai does kiss Popoi just as Salomé kisses Jokanaan’s head. But unlike Mai’s kiss, which reveals Popoi’s ability to use his tongue for conveying messages, Salomé’s kiss reveals that Jokanaan can no longer move his tongue:

[thy tongue] was like a red snake darting poison, it moves no more, it speaks no words. (Wilde 39)

In this sense, Jokanaan and Popoi make a chiasmic contrast. Jokanaan, once a prominent figure known for his eloquence, loses his capacity for speech after he is decapitated. On the contrary, in Popoi, though the decapitated terrorist has been "obscure" during his lifetime (Popoi 119), his severed head subsequently becomes expressive.

In Salomé’s case—and perhaps in Isabella’s case, too—her love remains unfulfilled while the object of her desire is still alive. It is only after the beheading that she gives free expression to her passion, becoming emotionally engaged, it seems, only on the condition that the man is passive and helpless. Apparently she finds the sense of complete control over the object of her love intoxicating. This does not apply to Popoi, however. Mai only...
meets Popoi after—and because of—the decapitation. Moreover, her "neutral," "non-sincere" (Popoi 116) disposition detaches her from any emotional entanglement with him. She cannot be a ‘loving’ Isabella, nor can she be a ‘cruel’ Salomé, who requested the head of the man she loved. Nevertheless, Mai is aware of the female fantasy of monopolizing, or overpowering the man she loves, though she does nothing to indulge it.

Having examined some of the major plant metaphors and metaphors concerned with cleaning and beautifying in the novel, I would like to turn now to Mr Saeki’s metaphor of "keeping animals." Though similarly dependent on their keepers, pets respond much more actively to human beings than do plants. Moreover, both of Mai’s pets—Gulda, the dog, and Tobermory, the cat—are particularly receptive animals that can "almost understand human language" (Popoi 51). Thus when Mai names the head Popoi, she regards him as another pet, much like Gulda and Tobermory, expecting from him the same degree of responsiveness.

Tobermory is apparently named after the cat in Saki’s The Chronicle of Clovis, which acquires the gift of speech and discusses various issues with people. This is subtly implied when Mai quotes the old saying that "a cat has nine lives" in English, which, in fact, is also cited by Saki’s Tobermory in The Chronicle. In Popoi, Tobermory—and Gulda, too—are unable to respond verbally to Mai, though they can understand what she says. Unlike them, Popoi learns to express himself in Japanese, operating with his tongue a word-processor which is developed especially for him by the same engineers who designed one for Grandfather. The first half of the ‘life’ of Popoi, therefore, presents the process of his growth from a passive, helpless and dependent existence to his being a self-conscious actor with
the capacity for language. However, the last half of his 'life' with which the remainder of
the novel concerns itself reveals that he is incapable of conveying any substantial message.
Although his messages appear to convey profound meanings, like "Kafka's writings" or the
"later writings of Wittgenstein," they are mere "fragments," just as Popoi is a mere fragment
of the decapitated man (Popoi 133). This latter phase of Popoi's life—as a pseudo-prophet—
will be discussed below.

Popoi's shift from passivity to activity, and then from activity back to passivity, reveals
itself with reference to a series of art works. Popoi begins his "life" as a work of art, and
subsequently changes into an observer of art.

A few months after she begins to take care of the head, Mai recalls her first
impression of Popoi as "something like a soiled Apollo" (Popoi 85). Here Popoi, who is in
some senses modelled after Hyacinthus, is compared by means of inversion, with Apollo.
If one assumes that Mai is referring to a sculpture of the god, the word "soiled" may imply
that the bust was recently dug out of the soil, and that it looks a little other-worldly. This
assumption is corroborated by the nature of Popoi's eventual fate: he is buried by Mai, who
hopes for his "revival" as a plant, blooming the next spring. In short, Popoi appears out of
the ground as a sculpture and disappears into it again, as a bulb, much like Persephone,
who was allowed to stay on earth during only spring and summer.

5In her notes on a story "Kekkon" [Marriage], Kurahashi cynically speculates about Kafka,
which is relevant to this reference to this discussion:

Kafka is a patient who wanted to be a patient. Being sick is, for him, writing.
As a result, he left a pile of fragments, which are neither accomplishments nor
works. ("Notes on My Works," Complete Works Vol. 5: 250)
Mai’s choice of Apollo as a metaphor for Popoi, rather than any other god, signifies two things. First, Apollo is the god of medicine, an important topic in this novel, insofar as it is medicine which holds the key to Grandfather’s recovery. Secondly, Apollo is also the god of music, and music is the other indispensable factor which contributes to the reactivation of both Grandfather’s and Popoi’s brain.

When she first assumes the task of caring for Popoi, Mai mentions a specific work of art, *Nero, the Boy* (Figure 2), thinking that there is a resemblance between Popoi and it. She decides to arrange Popoi’s hair in the same style as Nero’s: cut short on the sides, with the crown permed. As I mentioned earlier, Mai pays much attention to Popoi’s hair, like the girl in *The Secret History of Lord Musashi*, and Isabella in "The Pot of Basil," and the narrative refers every once in a while to how Popoi’s hair looks. At first, Popoi is fairly unconscious of his hair; when Mai lets him look into the mirror after she applies the first facial pack, he opens his eyes and "with only the image of his head in the mirror," he gazes "a little confusedly, and yet with a weird detachment" (*Popoi* 29). Further, he does not "seem to mind losing his hair" when the neuro-scientists shave him (Ibid. 79). In other words, he is completely without self-consciousness until a certain crucial event occurs.

Though uninterested in his own reflection in the mirror, Popoi "eagerly look[s] at" a copy of *Judith and Holofernes* drawn by Cranach (Figure 3), in which "Judith is holding a sword in her right hand, and hanging the severed head of General Holofernes in her left" (Ibid. 95). In observing the drawing, Popoi looks into a sort of mirror; what he sees is his

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6Kurahashi mentions Cranach, and also this particular picture, in her *The Castle within the Castle* (1980), comparing a character’s face with one of his drawings. See *The Castle Within the Castle* 56-58.
own likeness, recognizing an artistic representation of himself in the painting. Thus, Popoi awakens to self-consciousness, not when he looks at his own face in the mirror, but when he sees his artistic semblance. He gains a sense of identity not as a living creature but as a copy of a work of art.

Mai has accepted the drawing as a present from Grandfather, whose "intelligence and memory remain as they used to be" (Popoi 97). She and Grandfather communicated by using the word-processor. Grandfather begins:

"I knew that you liked Cranach. In addition, I associated it with Popoi."
"I will arrange it in front of Popoi. He will be intoxicated with the eroticism in this painting, rather than with my nudity."
"He might be thrilled with joy, recognizing the similarity between you and Judith."
"Terrific. Perhaps I resemble her in the oval face and nose, but I am nothing but mediocre and far from a Judith."
"Your face itself is rather a semblance of Saint Mary Magdalen as depicted by Crivelli. You are as alike as two peas, if you change your hairstyle." (Ibid. 96-97)

This conversation not only makes it clear that Popoi looks like Holofernes but also that Mai resembles Judith; thus, Popoi looks at Mai’s semblance as well as his own. He awakens to self-consciousness, and at the same time, becomes conscious of Mai’s charm through appreciating a work of art. He is shifting from being a mute object of observation like Nero, the Boy, to an awareness that he is both subject and object of observation, when he looks at Holofernes, and to a subject of observation who appreciates Judith, or Mai, who is her likeness.
Taking Grandfather's hint, Mai attempts to describe herself as Mary Magdalene in Carlo Crivelli's painting (Figure 4). There is no severed head in the drawing. Mai is the only actress here and Popoi stays outside the work of art, gazing at Mai. He has completed his transformation into an observing subject. He even makes some suggestions as to the way Mai should dress and what accessories she should use.

In order to make herself look like Mary Magdalene, Mai has to change her hairstyle, "waving it in the shape of a coiling, stout-bodied snake" (Popoi 106). The hair reminds us of Medusa, but Mai's 'Medusa' does not petrify the gazer, Popoi. Far from it, she makes his "eyes shine" and eventually he "ejaculates" (Ibid. 106-107). This Medusa humanizes that which is inhuman instead of dehumanizing what is human. At this stage, Popoi has almost come out of the world of art.

However, he retreats into passivity again toward the end of the novel. Mai notices that his face begins to resemble "that of a wooden doll" (Popoi 147), an image suggestive of the state of passivity, indifference and mindlessness which he finally reaches.

Along with these references to works of art, there are also a number of allusions to magic or trickery running through the novel. These function to raise the question of whether Popoi's existence is in fact real or an illusion, a mere trick, that is, of technology. Early in the novel, when Mr Saeki shows Mai that the severed head "does not have a body," he says: "unlike the acts in an ancient circus show, it is not a kind of trick such as when a living person pops his head out of a box" (Popoi 14-15). In this comment, Saeki is subtly drawing attention to the significant difference between Popoi and Dōami, the fool, in The
Secret History of Lord Musashi, who was ordered by Lord Musashi to play the role of a severed head, by concealing his body in a magic box.

When she exhibits Popoi to Satoko for the first time, Mai assures her that Popoi "does not have a body" just as Mr Saeki assured her earlier. Satoko’s first response is to question whether Popoi is a trick: "Are you familiar with magic, Mai?" (Popoi 33); she conjectures that Popoi must be a version of the magic trick in which "a living man hides himself in a box, pops out his head and talks" (Ibid. 34). Satoko seems to be more "familiar with magic" than Mai, comparing Popoi to "the severed yet living head" in "the old magic trick called the Sphinx" (Ibid. 34). Eventually, however, even Satoko comes to accept that Popoi is not an illusion.

An important difference between Popoi and these other magic heads is that, at least initially, he is unable to talk. In other words, he has no intention of deceiving people, nor does he communicate with them, remaining a passive object of observation. When Mai’s father invites important members of the family to a lunch to discuss the head, she "imagine[s] a scene in which Popoi suddenly opens his mouth and laughs, with the result that all the visitors spring from their seats" (Popoi 38). But, as Mai admits, modifying a phrase from Thomas Mann’s Tonio Kröger, "such a wonderful thing will never happen" (Ibid. 38), for Popoi is inactive and harmless.

Even from the beginning, however, Popoi’s face does show a slight response to the gazes of beautiful women such as Satoko and Eriko, Mai’s aunt-in-law. This makes Mai

7"Such things did not happen on earth" is the line which occurs in Thomas Mann’s "Tonio Kröger," in Death in Venice and Other Stories by Thomas Mann 148, and is also quoted in "Virginia," as we may recall.
wonder if she ought to "let Popoi join in the society of people, even though he is just a head" (Popoi 45), and eventually, as was mentioned earlier, her efforts to "talk and listen to" Popoi lead him gradually to self-consciousness. This process is made evident through another reference to a magic trick. When Mai holds Tobermory, the cat, up to Popoi, it frightens him so much that he "almost jump[s] like a jack-in-the-box" (Ibid. 51). Although this episode points to Popoi’s helplessness, the jack-in-the-box simile also suggests that he is becoming more active.

The most effective metaphors of magic in the novel are those which make comparisons between Popoi and his two counterparts: Mishima Yukio and Irie Kei, Mai’s cousin and long-time lover. The facts of Popoi’s case closely parallel the actual story of Mishima and his disciples from Tate no kai: terrorists invade the "Castle" or the residence of former Prime Minister Irie Akira, they recite an announcement to him, and one of them disembowels himself and is decapitated. The similarities are conspicuous and the narrative refers explicitly and repeatedly to Mishima.

Early in the novel, we learn that the mass media is likening Popoi’s case to Mishima’s, and Mai, who has never read the great author’s works, begins to read the Mishima biography by John Nathan so that she can better understand Popoi’s past. She wonders "how the lucid consciousness [of Mishima] became deranged to the extent that he destroyed himself, though without losing his lucidity and self-control" (Popoi 59). Fascinated by the nature of his death, she feels "as if she were being shown an adroit performance of magic" (Ibid. 60). She asks herself whether, for Mishima, "death by disembowelment and decapitation was a purpose in itself," or whether "his way of killing
himself was an elaborate trick, for some other purpose" (Ibid. 60). Whatever the case, she cannot doubt that "Mishima played the major role, disembowelled himself and was decapitated on a stage" (Ibid. 60).

One point is consistent in Mai’s hypothesis about Mishima: she considers his deed a performance. In other words, he consciously planned his death for an audience. After reflecting on Mishima, she concludes that Popoi’s story is "a poor imitation of his" (Popoi 60); unlike Mishima and his disciples, the terrorists did not seem to have any intention of staging a performance; their thoughts were too incoherent to generate an intellectually adequate speech and "neither did they plan for an audience, which is indispensable" (Ibid. 60). The narrative implies that the decapitated man lacked vision and planning, and that he was isolated from the wider part of society even before his decapitation. The suggestion seems to be that Popoi has little potential to extend the range of his communication beyond Mai.

The last reference to magic that I would like to comment on appears when Mai describes her lover Kei. He calls himself a "saint" and helps people with enquiring minds to solve problems by sending messages through his computer:

Having gotten up early in the morning, Mr Kei was sending messages. He looked to me like a magician pulling objects from a magic box; it seemed that his brain computer worked at a terrific speed, creating mysterious combinations of words. (Ibid. 155)

Here, the narrative adds a new dimension to the magic reference: Kei is likened to a magician, and by comparison Popoi is defined as a mere object of magic. Though he
gradually gains self-consciousness, he remains incapable of conducting a performance; in other words, Popoi cannot activate himself as a subject.

In fact, the human head and the computer may both be seen as "magic boxes"; both have their own "box" (skull, casing), and "magic device" (brain, internal electronics), to produce something unexpected (ideas, message). In Popoi, three human heads are explicitly compared to the computer: Kei’s, Grandfather’s and Popoi. Interestingly, each has learned to use computers and convey messages in his own way. In addition, all share the quality of being a prophet. Thus, many parallels are drawn between Popoi and Kei, and between Popoi and Grandfather.

Grandfather is expected by the mass media to offer his comments on politics, though he refuses. Kei accepts and performs the task of making suggestions to his followers. Popoi feels responsible for conveying "messages showered from the universal consciousness," opening himself to "something like music which is heard from the universe" (Popoi 139). The similes examined previously concerning Apollo and Sphinx become more comprehensible in this context. Apollo is the god of music. Perhaps Popoi, "the soiled Apollo," is the receiver of the god’s musical messages. Although Satoko refers to the Sphinx as an ancient magic trick, the word originally refers to the Egyptian monster with a human’s face and a lion’s body, which is "humanized with its beautiful, serious face, to become a wise, enigmatic and musical messenger of divine justice" ("Sphinx," Oxford Reference Dictionary 798). In addition, severed heads were believed by medieval alchemists to
possess the power of imparting prophecies. Taken together, all these references suggest that Popoi is meant to be a prophet.

Let us have a closer look at the parallels which are drawn between Popoi and Grandfather. Immediately after falling into a coma, Grandfather is at first judged to have little chance of recovery. Mr Saeki likens his brain to a computer in which an "important section of the hardware, such as the CPU, is broken," while he compares Popoi to "a computer without its output" (Popoi 43). Amazingly, however, Grandfather regains his consciousness, though he has apparently lost the use of his tongue. (Mai suspects that he merely pretends not to be able to speak so that he can virtually retire from the political world. The question remains unanswered until the end of the novel.) In much the same way, Popoi acquires self-consciousness. Perhaps "the musical messages" (Ibid. 25) played through compact discs directly to their brains contribute to their recoveries. In both cases, the first sign of their return to consciousness appears in a movement of their "upper eyelids": in Grandfather’s case, "ripples of consciousness seemed to have run through his upper eyelids" (Ibid. 24), while Popoi makes "a response somewhat like nodding, conveyed by a slight downward movement in the swelling of his upper eyelids" (Ibid. 27).

Taking a hint from a Hindu philosopher, about whom she has heard from Grandfather, Mai suggests to Mr Saeki the possibility of developing a word-processor for Grandfather, to be operated by his mobile left hand, and some computer scientists immediately start working on the project at Saeki’s request. However, "the project deviate[s]

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8In Iris Murdoch’s The Severed Head, it is said that "primitive tribes and old alchemists used to use" a severed head, "anointing it with oil and putting a morsel of gold upon its tongue to make it utter prophecies" (182).
in mid-course and the plan change[s] into that of constructing a word processor for Popoi as well as for Grandfather" (Popoi 93). An essential technical difference between them lies in that Popoi, without his limbs, must operate the word-processor with his tongue while Grandfather must use his left hand.

Mai begins to enjoy communicating with Grandfather and Popoi. In both cases, their messages are represented in katakana, the square form of Japanese phonetic letters, and this makes them seem all the more mechanical. Since hatakana stand out formally from the other conversations in the text, the reader is led to make comparisons between the two modes of communication.

While there are many similarities between Popoi and Grandfather, however, their final fates are totally different. Whereas Grandfather continues to display mental activities as brilliant as ever, which to Mai is "not only a relief but almost uncanny" (Popoi 97), Popoi gradually loses his sense and sensitivity: his interest in books, musical pieces and drawings diminishes. At last, Mai, no longer able to stand seeing him in such a miserable state, dares to remove the life support, and then to bury him. She pulls the head away from its wires to find that it "looks like a bulb which is decaying with innumerable roots" (Ibid. 165). This "frame" simile of a bulb not only corresponds with Mai’s first impression of the head but also, in the word "decay," refers to Grandfather’s brain. To Mai, before he regained consciousness, it was "more incredible than the breakdown and decay of the universe" that a "collapse was taking place in the brain of Grandfather, as if a part of the fruit were decaying" (Popoi 92). As it turns out, though, Grandfather’s brain regenerates itself enough to communicate with Mai, while Popoi’s brain suffers the real decay.
If the comparison with Grandfather’s head offers insights into the process of Popoi’s growing consciousness, the comparison with Kei draws attention to his mental limitations, which are made clearer toward the end of the novel. Though Mai does not compare Popoi with Kei as exhaustively as she does with Grandfather, there are numerous references to Kei’s extraordinary mental talent in the text, and these function to highlight the limitations of Popoi’s intellectual capacities.⁹

The magic-simile discussed earlier, for example, established Popoi’s inferiority to Kei, designating the former as a mere object in a magic show and the latter as the conductor of the show. The pair is further differentiated by dichotomies of barrenness and richness, ephemerality and infinity, and artificiality and vitality, which are presented through similes of food, water, sun and plants.

Ironically enough, the more writings that Popoi turns out on his word-processor, the more he reveals his intellectual limitations. Toward the end of the novel, some of the characters comment disparagingly on his scanty intellectual resources. Mai judges Popoi’s writings to be "meaningless fragments of linguistic texture," despite their superficial resemblance to the works of Wittgenstein and Kafka (Popoi 134). Satoko argues that Popoi will not be able to produce "ideas unceasingly" "unless he has read many times as much

⁹Kei is a descendant of the central male characters in Kurahashi’s early stories in two senses. First, his name is a homophone of "K," a letter used to represent the hero of her earlier stories, and second, he is the heroine’s cousin, his blood-tie coinciding with his mental homogeneity with her. This is similar to the situation in many of Kurahashi’s early works. Incidentally, the Indian philosopher, Krishnamurti who is mentioned in the text of Popoi, called himself "K" (Lutyens 64).
as" she, Mai or similarly educated people, because he is not supplied with "any material" "for meditation" (Ibid. 134-135). Grandfather points out that Popoi, like "a balloon floating in the air," "has lost either the content of, or the key to, the storage of his past" by which he refers to his lack of "memory" (Ibid. 142). This contrasts with Kei’s "excellent memory" from which he extracts information for his messages (Ibid. 154).

The contrast between Popoi’s and Kei’s messages is made evident between various food similes as well: Mai evaluates Kei’s messages to his followers highly, calling them "inexhaustible ambrosia" (Popoi 155), the divine food of Greek gods and the source of their immortality. According to Grandfather, Popoi’s messages seem meaningful but are in fact empty of information, just like "cotton candy" (Ibid. 143). In these images, one can discern a sharp contrast between immortality and ephemerality, and between the divine and the ordinary.

The contrast between the infinity of Kei’s resources and the barrenness of Popoi’s is further enhanced by the simile of water. Mai considers Kei:

His incredible capacity to love no matter how many women at one time is a manifestation of his power, which is like a magic spring that is never impoverished by giving people whatever they request. (Popoi 153)

In contrast, after her trip to the terrorist’s home town, Mai describes Popoi’s past as "a well" in which "there is hardly any drinkable water" (Ibid. 135). Here, she not only poses a dichotomy between richness and barrenness, but also between Kei’s life-giving capacities and Popoi’s inability to quench thirst.
Mai compares Kei's capacity for sustaining relationships with many women to that of "Genji no kimi" in The Tale of Genji (Popoi 151). Just as Genji is called the Shining Prince, so Kei calls himself "a super nova," a mysterious star, a hundred million times as bright as the sun, formed from "an explosion disrupting its structure and ejecting debris" ("Supernova," Oxford Reference Dictionary 827). Kei's character embodies both the brightness and the radiating power of the star, whereas Popoi confesses that he is "vulnerable to the sun" and that he would be "burnt to death" if he bathed in its light. Not only unable to play the role of "the sun," he is also incapable of accepting its gifts.

Various plant metaphors suggest another dichotomy between Kei and Popoi: the contrast between life force and artificiality. As mentioned earlier, the story of Popoi's life is framed within two metaphors which describe "a bulb in water-culture." Thus he is destined to decay after a short period of flourishing. Kei, on the other hand, "has transformed himself into a tree with an immense network of a hundred million leaves and stems reaching out into the universe" (Popoi 150-151). Popoi's dependent and protected existence thus protects sharply with Kei's radiant, self-sustaining and powerful vitality.

Mai, who is deeply attracted to Kei, begins to indulge in "a brilliant idea which sparkles like a dark sun," and that is "to sever Kei's head and possess it as [her] own Kei" (Popoi 154). The dichotomy between Kei and Popoi is completed here through the introduction of the severed head motif. Mai yearns for the exclusive possession of Kei's head just as Salomé yearns for Jokanaan's head. In both cases, the beloved men are too prominent and widely pursued to be monopolized by one woman. On the contrary, because he depends solely on her for his existence and because she is his only human
contact, Popoi belongs completely to Mai. In short, the more he is compared with Kei, the more apparent it becomes that Popoi has little potential for becoming a true prophet. He is, in fact, much like J. Alfred Prufrock who, imagining his "head [grown slightly bald] / brought in upon a platter," admits that he is "no prophet" (T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" 12).

But if he is not a prophet, what on earth is Popoi? Kei defines him as "a monster" (Popoi 156), and concludes that "a man shall not live by brain alone" (Ibid. 155). This comment leads Mai to contemplate the issue of brain-death. Many claim that "one can be considered a human being as long as one's brain is alive" (Ibid. 157). But what, Mai asks herself, if one's brain alone is alive? "Shall we consider it a human being regardless of whether it has a torso?" (Ibid. 157) Mai answers in the negative. "The extension of life in the state of a monster should not be prolonged" (Ibid. 157).

In Divine Maiden, Kurahashi offers another version of this contrast between someone in a vegetative state whose brain is no longer active and a severed head. The heroine of Divine Maiden, Miki, we may recall, has lost her memory, because of a severe injury sustained in a car accident. She is told by the doctor that she is suffering from amnesia, and begins contemplating her loss of memory. Then, a certain image occurs to her:

_I recollect that I saw the following picture somewhere. (Yet, I did not even tell the doctor, for I thought such a recollection would be of no use.) It was a small delineation, a drawing of a swimming fish with only its gills and head, and the lower half of the body bitten off. Was it a sea bream? I think it was a deep-sea fish. It had such big eyes. It seemed to me that its wide-open eyes, with their pupils turned backward, were sadly gazing at its lost body.... (Divine Maiden 79)"_
The fish is a precursor of Popoi, in that it does not have the lower half of its body. Just as the fish is implicitly compared with Miki, who does have her torso but has lost her memory in *Divine Maiden*, so in *Popoi* the severed head is explicitly compared with vegetables. Both severed heads and vegetables are considered incomplete as human beings. These chiasmically contrastive ‘inhuman’ beings question the divide between the body and consciousness which is foundational to modern Western discourse. One can become human only when one’s spirit and body are inseparably incorporated into oneself.

While thus pursuing the definition of humanity, *Popoi* perpetually transgresses the boundary between human beings and other living creatures. The theme of metamorphoses and similes of plants seem to subvert the hierarchy of categories of creatures which is presupposed in the Judeo-Christian monotheism. Moreover, the frequent identification of Popoi with works of art questions the distinction between nature and art, suggesting that things we may consider nature are in fact human perceptions of ‘nature,’ and are thus already culturally constructed.

*Popoi* also subverts the modern Western notion of the self as an embodiment of consistent and individual characteristics. Instead, the self is viewed as layers of preexisting images; depending upon a specific context, any of the images can be foregrounded. Popoi is identified not as himself, but as a collage of others: literary and fine art works, historical human beings such as Mishima, who are referred to not necessarily as actual persons but usually as figures in modern myths, and characters in the novel itself. The self is not independent of others, but rather subject to others.
Such views of nature and self are certainly in keeping with the compositional art of Popoi: pastiche. The work is not original, but is full of traces of anterior texts. It is not individual, but is related to other texts. The text of Popoi demonstrates its artificiality rather than naturalness, its being a pastiche rather than being unique. Popoi is not a pure representation of nature, but an imitation of imitations. Popoi is not it'self but them'selves.

Although seemingly structurally much closer to a conventional novel than many of Kurahashi's earlier literary productions, Popoi does, in fact, share their concerns with the denaturalising of the natural and the dissolution of any stable notion of the self.
Figure 1
CONCLUSION:
A Floating Bridge Between Indigenous Japanese Poetics and Postmodernism

I have examined five novels and two novellas by Kurahashi in terms of their narrative strategies, textual devices and thematic concerns, and demonstrated how the three aspects are interrelated in individual texts. I wish here to recontextualize my discussions of Kurahashi within the corpus of contemporary criticism mentioned in the Introduction, focusing upon the ways in which Kurahashi challenges modern Western and Japanese norms regarding selfhood, narrative, text, and authorship. In so doing, I hope to again stress the subversive nature of Kurahashi’s texts. As mentioned in the Introduction, the denial of the precedence of constativity over performativity in Kurahashi’s works displays similarities with the poststructuralist theoretical approaches to literature in the works of critics such as Judith Butler, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Michel Foucault.

The modern notion of the self which Judith Butler deconstructs—the notion of a substantive and sustained identity which exists preceding any particular act the self makes or any particular attribute the self displays—is challenged by the performative subjects in Kurahashi’s texts. You in Blue Journey chooses to perform a feminine role, denaturalizing naturalized anatomical femininity. Performativity is also shown by Miki and Writer in Divine Maiden, by the female beggar, Masuda, Satoko, and other characters in Symposium, and by the severed head and Mai in Popoi. Rather than expressing inherent qualities, each character takes up many roles, displays many attributes, and engages in any act which a specific context requires him/her to do, without any ‘inner’ reason, since the characters have
no inner core of meaning, but are empty, abstract and devoid of significance. Different subjects show identical attributes and engage in identical acts without reason, questioning, through their actions, whether the self preexists attributes and acts. Rather, 'selves' in Kurahashi's texts are traces of others who are either inside or outside the text, and are associated with the metaphorical links which I have called "indices," borrowing Barthes' terminology. The themes of second-self (Blue Journey), incest (Divine Maiden, The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q, "The Long Passage of Dreams," Symposium), amnesia (Divine Maiden), masturbation (Blue Journey, Divine Maiden, The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q, "The Long Passage of Dreams"), the severed head and brain death (Divine Maiden, Popoi) radically question the nineteenth century view of the self as an autonomous, substantive individual being.

In "Narrative Versions, Narrative Theories," B.H. Smith rejects the structuralist account of narrative as a structured discourse which contains a basic story which must be deciphered by the critic, suggesting rather that the narrative is an act or performance involving both narrator and narratee, a transient act bound within circumstances under which it takes place. In this view of narrative, the narrator is not an authoritarian origin who is outside the narrative, and the narratee is not a passive decoder of the text.

Kurahashi's narratives illustrate Smith's view of narrative in several ways. The second-person narrative of Blue Journey, which enables the narratee to create the narrative, suggests that narrative is not a tool for the narrator to express his or her message. Further, the novel's collage form displays the lack of any rigid narrative structure, and hence destabilises notions of narrational control.
That the narrative is an interaction between narrator and narratee, and is thus context-bound, is demonstrated in *Divine Maiden*, in which characters perform the acts of writing and reading narratives. The two narrators of the novel, "I" and Miki, are never omniscient, nor are they ever neutral. "I" has limited knowledge, and misunderstands the circumstances under which Miki writes her secondary narrative. Miki herself has specific intentions to narrate and actively and deliberately fabricates her own life in her fiction. These features of the novel suggest that narrative is not meant to convey an ultimate truth possessed by an omniscient narrator. Instead, narrative is an interaction of various conditions, or "variables" in Smith’s terminology, and thus elusive, flexible, without any ultimate structure which contains any specific message from the narrator.

The *Adventures of Sumiyakist Q*, a third-person narrative, has an extradiegetic narrator who intrudes into the flow of the narrative to make comments; at the same time it is implied that one character, Bukka, may be the ‘real’ narrator. The fact that after Bukka disappears from the story the narrative still continues denies the narrator’s omnipresence and responsibility for closure.

*Symposium*, another multi-diegetic narrative, demonstrates the notion of narrative as a performance which arises from, and is bound by, a specific context in a similar manner to *Divine Maiden*. Like *Divine Maiden*, *Symposium* features embedded narrative; in this case Satoko’s narrative, which is written with specific intentions and for a specific reader, Akira, within the primary narrative. The primary narrative of *Symposium* is a third-person narrative with an extradiegetic narrator, unlike *Divine Maiden* and like *The Adventures of Sumiyakist Q*, but s/he is, like "I" in *Divine Maiden*, bound within the context in which
characters engage in narrative performance, just as narrators in monogatari are. Thus, the notion of the narrator as an unbiased, neutral, and omniscient origin of the narrative, preceding the narrative, which is predominant in 19th century realist novels, is subverted, as is the notion of narrative as a rigid structure.

The notion of the text as an autonomous verbal artefact which has been challenged by poststructuralists such as Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, and Michel Foucault, is subverted by Kurahashi’s extensive and intricate use of pastiche. Especially in Symposium and Popoi, allusions to anterior texts are made explicit and thus the texts demonstrate the intertextuality which, according to Kristeva and Foucault, is inherent to any text. Texts are echoes of others, just as selves are traces of others. Or rather, different texts share the same words, words preceding texts: just as attributes and acts precede selves.

Accordingly, the notion of the author as an individual or unique genius who exists prior to the text, a construction which extends from Romantic to realist and even as far as modernist poetics, is demolished. Kurahashi achieves this first by the demonstration of pastiche, and then by the use of the metafictional paradoxes found in Divine Maiden and Symposium. Both texts feature characters who allude to Kurahashi herself, thus questioning the author’s precedence over what are usually considered to be the objects of her creative genius.

Viewed as a whole, Kurahashi’s fictional practice seems to indulge in a performance of those very issues radically questioned by poststructuralist criticism. Consequently, we might call her a ‘postmodern’ writer. Her work fits the respective definitions of the postmodern given by three contemporary theorists. In Linda Hutcheon’s definition:
Postmodern's initial concern is to de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life; to point out that those entities that we unthinkingly experience as 'natural' (they might even include capitalism, patriarchy, liberal humanism) are in fact 'cultural'; made by us, not given to us. (The Politics of Postmodernism 2)

Kurahashi certainly "de-naturalize[s]" naturalized concepts of the self, narrative, text and authorship in Romantic, realist, and modernist poetics, concepts which have dominated not only Western critical discourses before poststructuralism, but also Japanese critical circles. In other words, she "de-doxifies" the doxas (Ibid. 3). In this respect, then, Kurahashi is a Japanese postmodernist.

In "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," Frederic Jameson points out two common features of postmodernism: pastiche, or "the transformation of reality into images" and schizophrenia, "the fragmentation of time into a series of perpetual presents" (125). The negation of reality and linear history in Kurahashi's texts, and its replacement of multi-layered perceptions formed out of past cultural constructs thus conform to Jameson's definition of the postmodern.

For François Lyotard, the "postmodern" is an "incredulity toward metanarratives," "metanarratives" meaning discourses of legitimation, not self-reflexive narratives in this context (The Postmodern Condition xxiv). The notion of "postmodern" is contrasted with that of "modern" which, in Lyotard's view, "legitimates itself with reference to a metadiscourse [of legitimation] making an explicit appeal to some grand narrative, such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth" (Ibid. xxiii). Such presuppositions of the truth,
searches for meaning, and teleological world-views are, as we have seen, the very things which Kurahashi deconstructs in her novels. Kurahashi would thus also be designated by Lyotard as a postmodern writer, especially in view of her narratives. She subverts what Lyotard refers to as "the rule of consensus between the sender and addressee of a statement [in which] truth-value is deemed acceptable if that is cast in terms of a possible unanimity between rational minds," that is, the structuralist model of narrative based upon Saussurean linguistics (Ibid. xxiii). Examining the difference between the modern and the postmodern, Lyotard views the subversive nature of postmodernism as follows:

The postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unpresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the unattainable; that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable. A postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by preestablished rules, and they cannot be judged according to a determining judgement by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. The artist and the writer, then, are working without rules in order to formulate the rules of what will have been done. (Ibid. 81)

Lyotard's analysis thus parallels Kurahashi's rejection of the conventional novel and search for the anti-novel which, while subverting the norm of the realist novel, has not established its own norm, or rather, does not attempt to establish one.

Thus, it seems that we may describe Kurahashi's work as "postmodern," in that she subverts what is "modern." However, the subversions Kurahashi makes are in fact a return to the norms of premodern Japanese poetics. In premodern Japanese texts such as The Tale
of *Genji*, selves are perceived not as unique individuals but as surrogates of others; they are thus repetitions of their models, and yet different from them. The text-weaving methodologies in *waka*, *monogatari*, *renga*, and *noh* are based upon pastiche, and thus foreground intertextuality. The narrators in *monogatari* are not neutral, omniscient, or genuine; they often exist in the same sphere as the characters, and are thus context-bound; they employ a variety of honorifics, and oblique strategies which suggest their specific status in society, perspective, limitation of knowledge and the choices they have made to tell or not to tell certain things. The authors of classical Japanese texts are elusive; they are often anonymous, and even when the author's names are given, they usually function only as fictional artefacts. The authors of *waka* do not express their own feelings, but perform roles which are instantaneously assigned. For instance in *utae*, or composition upon paintings, poets are expected to compose poems from the viewpoints of characters in the painting themselves.

It is not a new statement that classical Japanese poetics and practices have many similarities to poststructuralist criticism and postmodern art. Kurahashi, as a contemporary Japanese writer, is bound within the contexts of both postmodernism and Japan. Is it better to view her as subscribing to traditional Japanese norms, or as subverting Romantic, realist, modernist, and structuralist norms? My tentative assumption is that she can be seen as doing both. Or rather, her writings can perhaps best be seen as an intersection of both Japanese and postmodern contexts, which have no connection in terms of causality, temporality, or location. In seeing Kurahashi as a Japanese postmodernist I am, in fact, making a metaphorical analogy in a parallel manner to that in which her texts are
composed; Kurahashi's texts, we might say, function as a floating bridge between the two performances of 'Japan' and 'postmodernity'.
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