

TANIZAKI JUN'ICHIRO
AND THE ART OF STORYTELLING

by

THIEN TRUONG PHAM
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Department of ASIAN STUDIES

The University of British Columbia
1956 Main Mall
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1Y3

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This thesis deals with the storytelling art of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. An esthete par excellence, this prolific writer produced for over half a century a string of works that are essentially dedicated to the glorification of art and beauty. This glorification in turn enhances the quality of life which, also in the author's view, is both a dream and a game. Art and beauty, dreams and games are virtually the building blocks of Tanizaki's fictional universe in which illusion and reality are meant to be complementary rather than opposing forces that govern human existence. Transplanting this fabulous world into the reader's heart is the result of Tanizaki's special skill in storytelling. An analysis of his four major works will hopefully bring this skill into full view.

Chapter One examines Tanizaki's early short story "Shisei" that marks his brilliant debut. Though marred by technical flaws, "Shisei" succeeds remarkably in luring the reader into a fairy-tale atmosphere where art and beauty are the only *raison d'être*. A sensuous style characterizes this lively tale and between the lines flows a life force that will become Tanizaki's trademark.

The theme of art and beauty is brought to a climax in "Shunkinshō" which is analysed in Chapter Two. The simple perspective of "Shisei" is now abandoned, giving way to a maze of multiple viewpoints that are there for the single purpose of hypnotizing the reader. The ultimate goal is to make the reader share the passion and

devotion of an artist in the pursuit of the Ideal. The monogatari style is a feature of this novella and helps generate the ambiguity needed for the narrative.

Chapter Three deals with "Yume no ukihashi," a tale of dream and sensuality. Man's ambition to create and perpetuate dreams is given full treatment in this story in which illusions are the name of the game. Incest is also a thorny issue but Tanizaki seems to consciously skirt the problem with various devices.

Fūten rōjin nikki, Tanizaki's crowning novel, is the subject of Chapter Four. Everything that the author stands for in his writing is now brought into focus. Using the casual form of a diary, art motifs and erotic scenes are placed at well-calculated points so that structural balance is maintained throughout the story. A game-playing spirit and the overwhelming life force which starts with "Shisei" embody this last tour-de-force that proudly consolidates the author's fame.

This thesis, through the four works that are examined, can be considered an attempt to shed some light on the question of why and how Tanizaki fascinates the reader.

Supervisor

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TANIZAKI JUN'ICHIRO
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INTRODUCTION

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 谷崎 潤一郎 (1886-1965) is a towering figure in contemporary Japanese literature. Itō Sei 伊藤 整 (1905-1969) evaluates his importance in these terms: "If we removed this writer from our contemporary literature, it would surely create a huge emptiness (ōki na kūkyo)." ¹ Tanizaki is impressive not only because of the bulk of writing he left behind, much of which is of lasting value, but also by the influence that he exerted on his contemporaries. The critic Fukada Kyūya 深田 久弥 (1903-1971) once said that as far as style is concerned, today's young writers could hardly escape from the influence of the two literary giants, namely, Shiga Naoya 志賀 直哉 (1883-1971) and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. ² From a different angle, Mishima Yukio 三島 由 紀 夫 (1925-1970) reflects on Tanizaki's undaunted passion for art in the face of social upheaval and concludes that Tanizaki's achievements in half a century are weighty enough to tip the scale in favor of art. ³

However, Tanizaki's works also invite harsh comments. In a way, Tanizaki is controversial. The man is like a mischievous prodigy who fascinates us with his incredible talents and at the same time shocks us with his so-called

abnormal behaviour. Those who criticize him see in him just a skilled craftsman without much to say and with a lot to embarrass serious writers and readers alike. In other words, Tanizaki has nothing to offer us intellectually. While Satō Haruo 佐藤春夫 (1892-1964) denounces the lack of philosophy that lies under an interesting surface as a sort of "charlatanism,"⁴ Hinatsu Kōnosuke 日夏耿之介 (1890-1971) attacks Tanizaki's use of abnormal material to cover up his otherwise banal narration.⁵ Curiously enough, we also find Tanizaki's own brother Seiji 精二 (1890-1971), himself a novelist of note, among his detractors. Seiji comments that "there are few artists whose writing has less in the way of intellectual content than has Jun'ichirō's."⁶

Although these criticisms are directed at Tanizaki's early writings (up to about 1928), they can well be applied to his entire career for the simple reason that Tanizaki never cared to be an intellectual and consequently, to write intellectually. On the other hand, he takes great interest in forms, as his heated polemic with Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川竜之介 (1892-1927) on the subject of plot structure reveals. This famous debate took place in 1927, a few months before Akutagawa committed suicide.

According to Akutagawa, novels with carefully constructed plots and interesting stories that appeal to the popular taste are not "pure literature" (jun bungaku)

because they are far removed from reality. The mission of literature, he declares, is to deal directly with life which is by nature unorganized and formless. As a result, only novels without a story-like story (hanashinonai hanashi) are a true reflection of life and thus, true literature. He made it clear that Tanizaki was the target of his critique.

Tanizaki's answer to this personal attack divulges an artistic concept to which he remains faithful for the rest of his life. In a nutshell, Tanizaki believes in the creation of a fictional universe supported by the architectural beauty of a novel. The mission of a novelist, he argues, is to tell a story, and insofar as his story fascinates the reader, the mission is fulfilled.

Be that as it may, Tanizaki's success as a writer does not rely solely on a well-structured plot and an interesting story. His appeal projects far beyond this conceptual framework and reaches into the roots of the reader's sensitivity. Tanizaki's works may be devoid of philosophical contemplation but they do confer an insight of their own, and this insight is wonderfully rendered through the author's creative power. After all, intellectual content, ideology and even humanistic themes are like the meaningful words of a song delivered by a woman with a beautiful voice. We listen to them with rapture, pretending to take deep interest in their message, but all along we know how light they would become without

that vocal enhancement. It is the beautiful voice that carries the words into our hearts and minds. What then, in the case of Tanizaki, is the equivalent of this beautiful voice?

This thesis will attempt, by way of textual interpretation, to find an answer to this crucial question. Four major works have been chosen for the analysis, beginning with his maiden success "Shisei" 刺青 ("The Tattooer," 1910) and ending with his last tour-de-force Fūten rōjin nikki 瘋癲老人日記 (Diary of a Mad Old Man, 1961). In between, there is "Shunkinshō" 春琴抄 ("A Portrait of Shunkin," 1933) and "Yume no ukihashi" 夢の浮橋 ("The Bridge of Dreams," 1959), two of the most popular novellas of Tanizaki.

All four works adequately represent the author in that they contain his most consistent themes throughout his writing career, an eloquent sample of his diverse narrative techniques, and his vision--also consistent--of art and life and their interdependence. However, in order to have a more comprehensive view of these properties, we shall first present a glimpse into Tanizaki's life and works before proceeding to the exploration of the secret world of this prominent novelist.

Tanizaki was born in 1886 in Nihonbashi, an old busy district of downtown Tokyo. The date was July 24 and, as he reminisced in Yō shō jidai 幼少時代 (My Childhood Years, 1955), it was known as one of the hottest summers ever recorded. Tanizaki himself seemed to see a connection between this fact and the fact that he suffered keenly from cold and found tremendous comfort in hot weather. His father Sōgorō was a devoted family man but had little skill in conducting business. This accounted for the continual failures of all his business attempts and consequently led his pampered family to poverty. His mother Seki, a famous beauty who appeared often on the nishikie (color prints) of the time, was a well-protected daughter of a prosperous family, and thus found herself ill-suited to handle the situation. Tanizaki still remembered in his later years the days when, too poor to hire servants, his father and mother and himself took turns preparing the meals (at which mother Seki was a disaster).

In any case, Seki could be proud of the long-lasting and all-pervasive image that she had cast upon her son's writing career. Indeed, Tanizaki cherished every memory of his mother and idolized her as the Eternal Woman of his dreams. In a short essay entitled "Onna no kao" 女の顔 ("The Face of a Woman," 1923), Tanizaki explains:⁷

If I say sublime, I think that here it should include something eternal. In my dreams, often mother's silhouette appears. Not of her last moments, but it seems to be the face of hers when I was seven or eight--she was young and beautiful. This gives me the most sublime feeling.

As a child, Tanizaki was known to be quite wayward at home and yet extremely shy out of the house. His wet nurse had to accompany him to school until he was almost ten years old. This was more or less due to the fact that little Tanizaki never liked school until a good teacher by the name of Nogawa Zan'ei came along, with whom he felt perfectly at ease. Another teacher, Inaba Seikichi, was also to play an important part in Tanizaki's life. Both taught Tanizaki during his years at Sakamoto Elementary School and, with their special interest in all aspects of culture, they helped pave the way for the young lad to finally achieve his destiny as a great literary man. It might not be an exaggeration to assume, as does Fukuda Kiyoto 福田清人, that teacher Nogawa gave him the inspiration to become a future writer and teacher Inaba deepened his love for literature.⁸ As a result, Tanizaki started his writer's career literally at the age of twelve, when he participated in a monthly circulation magazine (kairan zasshi) by the name of Gakusei kurabu 学生くらぶ (Students' Club).

By the time Tanizaki attended Hibiya Middle School, his family had gone bankrupt. To support his education, Tanizaki found work as a live-in tutor in the house of a

restaurant owner, where he eventually experienced the first taste of love: he became infatuated with Fukuko, a relative of the owner, who was also working there as a maid. This love affair was soon discovered and both were dismissed from the house. Traces of this ill-fated love are to reappear five years later in Atsumono ^羹 (The Stew, 1912), one of his early works of some length and of minor importance. Meanwhile, Tanizaki went to Tokyo University to study Japanese literature, determined to become an author.

To be sure, the most important year in the life of Tanizaki the writer is 1910, when he published "Shisei." This first brilliant short story appeared in the November issue of Shinshichō 新思潮 (a literary magazine of which he was one of the founders) and received a warm welcome from the critics, once for all establishing his name in literary circles (bundan). At this juncture, a word about the literary atmosphere toward the end of the Meiji era is in order.

The cataclysmic changes that the Meiji Restoration incurred in Japan affected virtually every aspect of the Japanese life. In the literary domain, waves of Western concepts and movements swept the country and, as is often the case with followers, Japan was confused and a few steps behind. While Naturalism inspired by Flaubert and Emile Zola was already on the wane in Europe by the end of the nineteenth century, the Japanese literati in 1910

were still under its all-embracing influence. However, the dreamless, stark and dreary atmosphere inherent in the naturalistic works soon disappointed the Japanese people who, after all, are Shintoist at heart and to whom fantasy and esthetics are a way of life.

It turned out that Tanizaki was a true member of the race in that respect. "Shisei," as we shall see in the next chapter, is a fairy tale of the sort where fantasy and esthetics are mingled into a rainbow of colors, where art and beauty are the only *raison d'être* and where gloom casts no shadow on the path of human destiny. Nagai Kafū 永井荷風 (1879-1959), then a leader of the anti-naturalist movement, was among the first to recognize Tanizaki's talent. His critique "Mr. Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's Works" published in Mita bungaku 三田文学 a year later definitely helped thrust forward the literary career of his younger protégé, a career which was to bloom for over half a century to come.

What Kafū found in Tanizaki's early works, which amounted to a mere handful and include "Shisei," "Kirin" 麒麟 ("The Unicorn," 1910) and "Shōnen" 少年 ("Youth," 1911), strangely enough seems to apply well on the whole to the latter's entire opus--a comment "almost prophetic," as Prof. Seidensticker puts it in his essay "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, 1886-1965."⁹ Kafū enumerates three essential elements in Tanizaki's writing. The first one is, in his own words, that Tanizaki "has

a mysterious quality (shinpi yūgen) produced by carnal fear (nikutai kyōfu). It is an intense pleasure that comes by way of reaction from mortification of the flesh."¹⁰ The second characteristic is that Tanizaki's work is a thorough product of a city man. This is somewhat baffling, unless we agree that to be sophisticated is a required quality for a good writer, or unless we accept the importance of a new polished and refined 'urban literature' which, as Nomura Shōgo 野村尚吾 tries to explain further, "is pitted against the mud-smelling, hay-smacking works of the countrified naturalists."¹¹

The third feature concerns style. Kafū observes:

... Tanizaki's style is perfect. Now that the literary world of modern Japan has excluded, under the pretext of life, the problem of 'style' which, I think, is an inherent element of all literary works, to present such an argument, I might turn myself into a laughing-stock for my foolishness. 12

But let us postpone the discussion on the quality of Tanizaki's writing to the following chapters and resume tracing the course of his life.

What with the time-consuming preparation of Shinshichō and his loathing of school, Tanizaki ended up quitting the university. He was then twenty-five years old (by the Western calendar) and a member of the PAN Society 八ノノ会 where he got acquainted with artists of all types, whose only common link was that they used

a mode of expression that was anti-naturalistic. Its members included such people as Osanai Kaoru 小山内薫 founder of the New Theater Movement and also co-founder with Tanizaki of Shinshichō, and Nagai Kafū. It was a time when enemies of Naturalism started to appear from all directions and in all forms, leading eventually to a profusion of schools or ha 派 and to which Prof. Yoshikazu Kataoka in his Introduction to Contemporary Japanese Literature seemed to have had a hard time sticking labels.¹³ As for Tanizaki, he led the kind of Bohemian life which suited his artistic ideals and produced a series of works either of exotic settings or describing strange feelings or phenomena, such as "Akuma" 悪魔 ("The Devil," 1912), "Kyōfu" 恐怖 ("Terror," 1913), "Ningyo no nageki" 人魚の嘆き ("The Laments of the Mermaid," 1917). Both facts seemed to account for the epithets of "estheticism," "decadence," or "diabolism" that were eagerly attributed to him during those years. In retrospect, we can say that "estheticism" is certainly the one that remained with him throughout his long career.

Between "Shisei" (1910) and Okuni to Gohei お國と五平 (Okuni and Gohei, 1922), Tanizaki wrote scores of short stories, plays and a few novels, but none of them could stand the test of time. Nevertheless, as Kathleen Merken observes,

Tanizaki sometimes succeeds in the creation of

a strong secondary character here, an arresting descriptive passage there. Although many works may not be of the highest caliber individually, they may often be considered in groups by affinities which can be highly suggestive, in the context of Tanizaki's entire work. 14

In the meantime, a noteworthy event was his marriage to Chiyoko, in 1916. She was ten years his junior and an exemplary wife, yet Tanizaki was unhappy. His ideal woman, as we can see in the bulk of his writing, is an elusive beauty beyond his reach. She is an embodiment of the female principle which enriches his dreams and nourishes his artistic vitality. It is almost as if he created this kind of woman-concept on purpose. Indeed, unlike the ordinary image of the writer who is usually someone dissatisfied with life and uses literature as an outlet for his anger and sorrow, Tanizaki loved life and was quite at ease in society. His art-for-art's-sake attitude combined with his pleasure-loving proclivity inevitably led him away from Naturalism to the realm of fantasy where he could give free rein to his imagination. Consequently, the woman of his dreams forever remained "a vague dream, and its very refusal to become a reality made his longing the keener."¹⁵ It was exactly this eternal longing that Tanizaki needed for his art in order to impart an aura of aware, even of suffering, to his fictional characters.

This does not mean, of course, that the unreachable beauty as a constant theme in Tanizaki's writing is only

a literary device. It simply means that the eternal longing for her is consciously nurtured, consciously explored, as evidenced by the glittering cluster of fabulous women adorning his later works. Shunkin in "Shunkinshō," Yukiko in Sasame yuki 細雪 (The Makioka Sisters, 1943-1948), Oyū in "Ashikari" 芦刈 ("Ashikari," 1932), Satsuko in Fūten rōjin nikki, all conform to his ideal of what a woman should be and yet each in her own right is an original creation.

It may be further deduced that his other constant obsession, "Longing for mother" (Hahakoi), is more or less a derivation of the previous theme. His mother died when Tanizaki was thirty-two and a year later, he wrote "Haha o kouru ki" 母を恋ふる記 ("Longing for Mother," 1919) in which the image of Mother blended into the woman-concept of the still young author who was always eager to find new sources of inspiration or to experiment with a variety of new writing techniques. The female beauty from this moment on was to play the double role of mother and love idol. As a result, this confusing image makes the Eternal Woman in Tanizaki's works all the more unreal and unobtainable, and yet at the same time all the more tantalizing and irresistible, like the enchanting voice of a singing mermaid.

"Yoshino kuzu" 吉野葛 ("Arrowroot"), written in 1931, is a testimony to this synthetic ideal. The young man Tsumura who at the end of the story marries the girl

who reminds him of his deceased mother, quietly confesses that the love for his mother "was simply a vague yearning for the 'unknown woman', in other words, that it was connected with the first buddings of adolescent love." He continues, "In my case, the woman of the past who was my mother, and the woman who will be my wife in the future, are both 'unknown women', and both are tied to me by an invisible thread of fate."¹⁶ Similarly, the ambiguous relationship between stepmother and son in "Yume no ukihashi" is another manifestation of the mother-lover hangup which is to haunt Tanizaki for the rest of his life. Even in other works which do not deal directly with the mother theme, the heroines "generally suggest in appearance what he wrote of his mother," as Donald Keene remarks in Landscapes and Portraits.¹⁷ Indeed, the dead mother has now become a new source of inspiration.

Be that as it may, it is rather unfair and almost cynical to assume that Tanizaki was only using the maternal image as another literary device. Although according to Nomura Shōgo, Tanizaki was not known to be very filial as a young man, the grief of a son over the loss of his mother is not to be questioned. However, as is the case with the 'unreachable beauty', the eternal longing for mother is also consciously nurtured and explored. In more specific terms, Tanizaki can only worship a woman at a distance, and in the case of Mother, the distance is occasioned by her death. "Itansha no kanashimi"

異端者の悲しみ ("Sorrows of a Heretic," 1917),

an apparently autobiographical work written a year before his mother's death, presents an image that is rather different: unpleasant and ill-tempered, the mother reminds us of the earthly woman Tanizaki first encounters in his dream described in "Haha o kouru ki." As Seidensticker points out, "Perhaps it took her death and transfiguration to provide him with an appropriate object of worship."¹⁸

The next important event in Tanizaki's life was linked with a natural disaster, the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923. Tanizaki and his wife and daughter were safely evacuated to the Kansai area, a move which, according to many Japanese critics, turned out to be a major factor in all his later achievements. Although it is doubtful that a sudden change in environment can be responsible for the production of so many great works, one thing is clear: that the Osaka-Kyoto culture seemed to resist the indiscriminate imitation of the West better and thus still retained the flavor of traditions for which the thirty-seven-year-old author began to feel some nostalgia. It is to be noted that Tanizaki had always been a self-professed Westernizer. Not only in literature, in which he claimed to be deeply influenced by Poe, Baudelaire and Oscar Wilde, but also in tastes, manners and women. In fact, in Chijin no ai 痴人の愛 (A Fool's Love, 1924), a novel written after the Earth-

quake, the heroine Naomi, who looks like the Western actress Mary Pickford and is trained to behave like a Westerner, becomes the object of the hero's worship. However, this story reveals for the first time Tanizaki's misgivings about the destructive side of blindly emulating the West, which culminates in the ultimate surrender of the young hero's will. The seed of nostalgia for the soothing past which germinates in "Haha o kouru ki" is now reinforced by the fears of a comfortless present.

This sentimental dichotomy finally takes more concrete forms in the next two major novels, serialized almost simultaneously in 1928-29. Manji 卍 (The Whirlpool) ends with the utmost despair of the heroine Sonoko who, as the narrator of the story, retraces the upheaval of her life which was caught up in a whirlpool of intricate loves affecting four characters, as suggested by the four arms of the Manji 卍 title. Individualism, sexual liberation and homosexuality are among the basic ingredients of this novel and the message seems to be that to copy a civilization superficially will only lead one to suffering.

The other novel, Tade kuu mushi 蓼喰ふ虫 (Some Prefer Nettles), is generally regarded as one of Tanizaki's masterpieces. It deals with the conflict between the Westernized present and the traditional past, each one represented by a beauty who is described with some exaggeration to emphasize what they stand for. The

quiet charm of the Kyoto woman Ohisa versus the exuberant expression of the Eurasian Louise... the fragile beauty of a past long gone against the sweeping strength of a present determined to swallow all that is in its path is a drama which pushed Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867-1916) to seek comfort in religion.

But Tanizaki is different. At the end of Tade kuu mushi, there are indications that the pull of tradition is going to have the upper hand. Indeed, from this moment on a new period opens in Tanizaki's career, which is usually referred to as "Koten kaiki" 古典回帰 ("Return to tradition"). As a footnote to the story itself, the unhappy marital situation involving Kaname and Misako is a reflection of the author's life, who at that time was considering divorcing Chiyoko. He finally did in 1930, by "yielding" her to his close friend Satō Haruo, himself a poet and novelist.

"Koten kaiki," as the name indicates, marks a new direction in Tanizaki's writings in which the author endeavors to rediscover the beauty of the Japanese tradition. This romantic quest for the past begins with the earlier mentioned "Yoshino kuzu," a novella which might be more appropriately called a lyrical essay or travel diary, or perhaps a mixture of both genres. Other works follow, some of which are based on historical material and some of which are pure fiction but most are proof of a tremendous imaginative power and consummate

narrative technique. While Mōmoku monogatari 盲目物語 (A Blind Man's Tale, 1931) deals with the devotion of a blind masseur to his beautiful mistress and is set in the warring years of the sixteenth century, Bushūkō hiwa 武州公秘話 (The Secret History of the Lord of Musashi, 1931) reveals the secrets of the sexual life of the fictive hero Lord of Musashi, also set in the period of feudal turmoil.

"Ashikari" is yet another effort to bring back the ghost of a poetic past, which finds further sustenance in the author's undertaking of an elaborate translation of Genji monogatari 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, 11th century)¹⁹ into modern Japanese, in 1936.

The most fascinating work of this period however, in the opinion of several critics, is "Shunkinshō." This unusual love story between mistress and servant takes place in mercantile Osaka of the nineteenth century and treats the worldly events of the Meiji Restoration with total indifference. The reason is, of course, that both lovers are blind, physically and figuratively, each in his (or her) own way: Shunkin with her self-centered behaviour, and Sasuke with his relentless worship for his mistress-lover. Since Chapter Two is devoted to a close examination of this extraordinary novella, it will suffice to say at this stage that "Shunkinshō" caused quite a stir in the bundan at the time of its publication. This was, on the one hand, because of its literary quality

and on the other, because of its brave challenge to the then-prevailing position of proletarian literature. The artist Tanizaki, in his implacable pursuit of the Ideal, had in fact never wanted to follow the main stream.

As for his personal quest for the Eternal Woman in his life, another attempt was made: Tanizaki married again in 1931, only to have this marriage end in a divorce three years later. However, his third marriage in 1935 turned out to be a successful one. Matsuko, whom he had known for almost ten years, seemed to respond to his esthetic need of harmonizing life and art into a single reality and until his last moments, this elegant beauty was to become the woman of his dreams. In an essay he wrote in his old age, "Setsugoan yawa" 雪後庵夜話 ("The Night Story at Setsugoan," 1963), Tanizaki lovingly admitted that Matsuko was the model for many of his female characters, including Shunkin.

In 1936, the year of the "China Incident," Tanizaki once more showed his indifference to external circumstances by publishing "Neko to Shōzō to futari no onna" 猫と庄造と二人の女 ("The Cat, Shōzō and the Two Women," 1936), a delightful parody of love triangle--or rectangle--with the unconcerned cat in the middle. Then, as the world situation became more and more threatening, Tanizaki channeled his energy into the translation of The Tale of Genji, which fully occupied him until the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941.

The war years witnessed a decrease in his creative activity. Nevertheless, in 1943, Tanizaki started serializing his longest and most elaborately structured novel Sasame yuki, dealing with the decline of an old wealthy Osaka family in the years immediately preceding the Pacific War. Unlike the other works in the "Koten kaiki" period, this novel has a contemporary setting. The mood, however, is very much the same: with the last preserve of the Japanese tradition under the threat of destruction, there is a pervading feeling of aware that makes the events in the story appear as if they already belonged to an unretrievable past. Accused as "non-contributing" to the national war effort, Sasame yuki was banned by the Army, but Tanizaki continued to write it secretly and to finally publish it in 1948, when Japan was in the process of recovering from the devastating blows of the two atomic explosions.

The "return to tradition" episode, which was thought to have ended with the first translation of The Tale of Genji, made a brilliant comeback for the last time with Shōshō Shigemoto no haha 少将滋幹の母 (The Mother of General Shigemoto, 1949). By this time, Tanizaki was already recognized as a leading figure in Japanese literature. In 1947, the "Mainichi Cultural Prize" was awarded to him; in 1949, the "Asahi Cultural Prize" and the "Imperial Award of Cultural Merit." Bathed in glory and fame, Tanizaki, now an aging man of sixty-four,

was yet to produce a few more stunning works. Among a handful of essays and a revised translation of Genji, was Kagi 鍵 (The Key), written in 1956. This erotic drama acted out by a fifty-six-year-old professor and his forty-four-year-old Kyoto-bred wife and composed in the intricate form of a double diary, once more proves Tanizaki's vigor in exploring the inner workings of human sexuality and experimenting with fresh modes of writing.

The tireless author, however, was not immune to the rigorous demands of old age. Tanizaki suffered from high blood pressure and from a strange disease that deprived his right hand of the strength to write. In 1959, Tanizaki had to dictate "Yume no ukihashi," another one of his most famous novellas. The story, which will be the subject of our analysis in Chapter Three, deals with the memories of a young man about the superimposed images of his true mother and stepmother and, in a definite manner, brings the author's "longing for mother" theme to a climax.

Hereafter, Tanizaki's health deteriorated. The few subsequent works until his last repose were all written orally, that is, by dictation to a secretary. His fame, however, never waned. A potential candidate to the Nobel Prize,²⁰ he was also nominated as Honorary Member of the U.S. Academy of Art and Literature. His artistic vitality never did wane either. Besides revising the translation

of Genji for the third time, two more novels were produced, Fūten rōjin nikki and Daidokoro taiheiki 台所太平記 (Records of a Peaceful Kitchen, 1962).

Fūten rōjin nikki is no doubt a tour-de-force in Tanizaki's career. The near-dead old diarist Utsugi paradoxically embodies the extraordinary life force that was so characteristic of the author himself, who was now seventy-five and could now look back upon his past achievements with satisfaction. In Chapter Four, we shall discuss in detail the literary value of this fictional work which still amazingly retains the initial vigor projected by "Shisei," with half a century in between and a great number of works along the way.

Again, Tanizaki continued to write until the very end of his life on the 30th of July 1965, aged seventy-nine as marked by his last essay "Shichijūkyū sai no haru" 七十九歳の春 ("My Seventy-nine Years," 1965). Like old Utsugi, he never could, so to speak, put his brush down. And yet like Utsugi, he had also found time to choose his grave a few years before his death. The grave, located in the compound of the Honen Temple in Kyoto, shows two stones, one bearing the word "kū" 空 ("Emptiness"), the other "jaku" 寂 ("Tranquility"). The restless old man was finally resigned to lying still. Or was he still thinking of a way, in his last moments, to bring art into the realm of death?

CHAPTER ONE

The young hero in "Shisei," however, does try to bring life into art, or to put it plainly, to create a 'living' art. "Shisei" is a simple story, with a single-minded purpose: to glorify the dominance of art over nature. And in order to carry out this scheme, all we need is a skilled artist, a beauty, and their combined strength. The setting of the tale is Tokugawa Edo, an ideal period in that the time is far enough to allow for fantasies and close enough to evoke nostalgia. It is also an ideal period with two hundred and fifty years of peaceful isolation, a "world within walls" to use Donald Keene's terms, wherein all the idiosyncrasies of a nation were permitted and, moreover, cultivated. One of them is, for instance, the practice of tattoo. In the midst of this passion, Seikichi is introduced.

A young tattooer with great skill, Seikichi has two secret obsessions: one is to derive pleasure from the pains he inflicts upon his clients and the other, to "create a masterpiece upon the skin of a beautiful woman."¹ For several years, the search for this ideal remains fruitless until the day he catches a glimpse of a woman's "milk-white foot peeping out beneath the curtains of a departing palanquin."² Unable to see her face, his

longing for the foot, which he believes in all his artistic perception to belong to the woman of his quest, turns into passionate love. More and more time passes and finally destiny intervenes. One morning the next spring, a girl shows up at his place with a request from her geisha master: she is, as one may expect, the woman of the Foot.

Seikichi will not miss the opportunity. First, he shows her two picture scrolls, one depicting a famous Chinese princess in a languorous pose, watching a man about to be tortured. The other is called The Victims (Hiryō), also displaying a young woman "gloating over a heap of men's corpses lying at her feet."³ The girl is frightened at the paintings, but at the same time admits that there is something in her that resembles the women in the scrolls. Now Seikichi is ready to bring his long-cherished desire to life: upon the beautiful back of the girl drugged to sleep, he pours out his soul with every drop of ink to form the image of a giant blackwidow spider (jorōgumo). The girl from now on, whispers Seikichi, will look so beautiful that "all men will become your victims" ("Otoko to iu otoko wa, mina omae no koyashi ni naru no da.").⁴

As we can see, it is a simple story. The success of "Shisei" does not lie in the "realism" of its plot, since there are situations where Tanizaki borrows not just the simplistic view of a fairy tale, but also its

magical wand to make things happen. Nor does it lie in its characterization, since the two main characters, Seikichi and the girl, function more as symbols for "the artist" and "the beauty," than as well-rounded characters, with all the accompanying psychological descriptions.

Nor again does it lie in its philosophical content, since there is none, as Mushanokōji Saneatsu 武者小路 実篤 comments rather harshly: "In terms of thoughts, Tanizaki's literature is a big zero."⁵

"Shisei" indeed, has flaws. Nevertheless, what saves the story and moreover turns it into a successful one is the life force that pervades throughout the tale. This life force, in fact, is typical of Tanizaki. Fifty years later, it is still to be found in his last major work, Fūten rōjin nikki. The difference is that in Fūten, it is expressed with the sophistication of an old man flirting with death; in "Shisei," it manifests itself with the raw energy of a young man burning with life. The lack of intellectual quality in a way turns out to be an asset for a story that essentially invites the reader not to think but to share the pleasure and pain of physical phenomena.

The presence of the life force in "Shisei" is overwhelming. It grows from a lively world of fantasy, excessively given to the cult of beauty, into the distilled form of an artist's unshakable will to create an enchantress to whom he will dedicate his life; and finally, when

this life force seems to burn out after the work of art is realized, it is again taken up and carried on by the creature herself in her unquenchable thirst for the conquest of men.

In the following analysis, the narrative technique that supports the tale will be closely examined and flaws as well as controversies will also be discussed. Here is how "Shisei" begins:

It was an age when men honored the noble virtue of frivolity, when life was not such a harsh struggle as it is today. 6

This introduction performs a double function: to invite the reader into the dreamland of a carefree past and to reassure him that he will not encounter familiar mundane problems in disguise along the way. For a world that can honor the "noble virtue of frivolity" must be a happy world, and its problems, if any, must be quite different from ours. The reader is now relieved and enters the fairy tale atmosphere with confidence and with a secret pleasure of not having to use common sense or logic, as it were, to judge the story. In view of the importance of this very effective introduction, let us have a look at its original form:

Kore wa mada hitobito ga "oroka" to iu tōtoi
toku o motte ite, yo no naka ga ima no yō ni
hageshiku kishimiawanai jibun de atta. 7

The key word in this sentence is "oroka" 愚 , meaning

stupidity, foolishness, or frivolity. The first interpretation that comes to mind is obviously one of irony. Many scholars see in this a criticism of the modern times when people engage in violent conflicts precisely because they lack that "frivolous" quality. In short, the word is not to be taken at face-value. The second interpretation is that "oroka" can be taken literally, with the meaning of "frivolity." For how else can we justify the mass craze of "tattoo," a form of lesser art which not only inflicts pains upon the receiver, but is also doomed to mortality because of its very "livingness"? Another interpretation is also a literal one--foolishness viewed from without: the foolishness of the single-minded artist in the pursuit of an ideal, as exemplified by Seikichi the tattooer.

Tanizaki probably meant all three. "Shisei," after all, is an art story, and Tanizaki makes sure that the reader will not take his tale for a run-of-the-mill fairy tale. In the next two sentences, he describes his fantasized Edo and concludes with a statement: "All the beautiful were strong, and all the ugly were weak."⁸ (Subete utsukushii mono wa tsuwamono de ari, minikui mono wa yowamono de atta).⁹

As is clear from the statement, the world of "Shisei" is not peopled with heroes and villains as a fairy tale should be. Instead, there are only the beautiful and the ugly--a world devoid of morality as society under-

stands. In other words, it is a world of amorality created by the artist and for the artist; and here is one time when the simplistic view of a fairy tale serves Tanizaki's purpose perfectly. Now in this world that idolizes the beautiful, tattooing becomes surely an excellent means; henceforth, paint is poured into people's bodies; sensuous dazzling lines and colors dance upon their skin: a florid cheerful world wherein eventually lurks a blackwidow spider with malevolent power and diabolic ambition.

The reader should not lose sight of this fact in order to fully realize the impact of contrasting colors and moods carefully prepared by the author to accentuate the threat imminent in the artist's goal. Not until toward the end of the tattooing scene on the girl's white body are we informed of the nature of the picture that Seikichi had in mind, and we might even suspect that he already had that picture in mind during all the frustrated years of his search for the Ideal Woman. That is, while the reader is caught off-guard by the nonchalant, nonbiri atmosphere of a glamorized Edo, an evil creature is in the process of gestation. Perhaps Tanizaki is called a "diabolist" not without reason.

In many other works of the novelist, "shocks" seem to play an important part in his narrative techniques. In Bushūkō hiwa, for instance, the shocking scene of the pretty girl with a smiling face lovingly washing an

enemy's severed head serves to enhance the morbid nature of the hero's perversity; in Sasame yuki, another instance can be drawn from the famous but controversial conclusion where beautiful Yukiko keeps running to the toilet on the train because of her persistent diarrhea. "Shunkin-shō" probably offers the best example: no reader, however hard he may try, can blot out of his mind the gruesome scene where Sasuke makes himself blind by pricking his eyes with a needle. The shocking effect in "Shisei," however, is purely esthetic. It comes from the fact that although we expect to see a 'certain' picture on the girl's back, we just do not expect to see one of the most revolting animals on earth. And the casual manner in which Tanizaki introduces the jorōgumo makes it all the more uncanny:

Little by little the tattoo marks began to take on the form of a huge black-widow spider; and by the time the night sky was paling into dawn this weird, malevolent creature had stretched its eight legs to embrace the whole of the girl's back. 10

As a matter of fact, the spider motif has deep roots in the Japanese and Chinese traditions. Its vicious web into which its victims fall is seen as a metaphor for the deadly power of a female beauty. Even its name has some significance which is unfortunately lost in translation: jorō 女 郎 is a term used to designate a courtesan of old Japan. In Chinese literature, the famous sixteenth-century novel Journey to the West provides evidence in

the erotic scene where the monk Hsüan-Tsang is seduced by seven beautiful women who turn out to be spiders disguised as humans.¹¹ Thus, a reader well-versed in Sino-Japanese culture, after the initial shock at the appearance of this "mashō no dōbutsu,"¹² would marvel at this excellent choice of motif which, as a structural device, ties itself firmly to the harbinger scene of the painting Hiryō (The Victims), and, as a thematic device, brings forth the hidden intention of the artist's will.

The artist himself is described as a very "sadistic" man. "His pleasure lay in the agony men felt as he drove his needles into them, torturing their swollen, blood-red flesh; and the louder they groaned, the keener was Seikichi's strange delight,"¹³ so we have learned.

We have also learned that Seikichi is a former Ukiyoe painter. His decline to the lower status of "tattooer" is significant in that it reveals the author's personal outlook on art: it is rather non-intellectual, non-cerebral and appeals directly to the physical senses. Tattoo is a form of art, albeit a lesser form, that owes its existence to a living human body and to the extent that it serves his purpose, Tanizaki is willing to sacrifice the more elegant but fleshless form of Ukiyoe painting. This artistic concept is what imparts an erotic aura to most Tanizaki's writing and, to "Shisei," it is even essential: the tale would have been just a lifeless tale with an arrogant message. To put it differently,

the appeal of Tanizaki's style, in general, is very often sensuous and sensual.

A brief comparison with "Jigokuhen" 地獄変 ("The Hell Screen," 1918) will help elucidate the point. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke wrote this famous art story in 1918 as a manifesto of his art-for-art's-sake conception and brilliantly succeeded in convincing the reader of the superiority of Art to Life. The great painter Yoshihide, after having achieved the fabulous picture of Hell with the sacrifice of his beloved daughter's life, puts an end to his own life. The ultimate goal of Art once realized, there is nothing left for the Artist but Death. (The same might be said about Mishima Yukio whose idealization of the beauty of youth is inherent in art, is a form of art; and since art is not supposed to age, as youth does, there is nothing left for him but putting an end to its gradual disintegration: both Akutagawa and Mishima took their own lives at the peak of their writing career).

To Akutagawa, "art and life were never compatible. Art was almost like a tool with which he would organize, control and even punish life for injuries he felt he had suffered," observes Prof. Tsuruta in his analysis of "Jigokuhen."¹⁴ As a result, Akutagawa's art is lofty, but lonely. Tanizaki's attitude is different: there cannot be, he seems to say, art without life, and there cannot be life without art. The two sometimes stand side

by side, energizing each other; sometimes they melt into one, like the spider on the girl's body. In either case, their coexistence is conspicuous--almost physiological.

Thus, while "Jigokuhen" moves the reader conceptually, "Shisei" charms him physically. The story is characterized by lavish descriptive scenes involving the human body. After a long passage where the artist's sadism is given a free hand with his victims either "collapsing at his feet half dead" or "twisting their mouth, gritting their teeth and screaming aloud as if they were dying,"¹⁵ we come to another description where this sadistic tone gives way to the lyrical. It concerns Seikichi's first glimpse of the lovely foot of the Ideal Woman:

To his sharp eye, a human foot was as expressive as a face. This one was sheer perfection. Exquisitely chiseled toes, nails like the iridescent shells along the shore at Enoshima, a pearl-like rounded heel, skin so lustrous that it seemed bathed in the limpid waters of a mountain spring--this, indeed was a foot to be nourished by men's blood, a foot to trample on their bodies. 16

As with contrasting colors and moods, contrasting tones are part of Tanizaki's skill in storytelling. In fact, contrasts of all kinds figure strongly among the author's favorite writing devices: youth and old age, as in Fūten rōjin nikki; master and servant, as in "Shunkinshō"; the refined and the grotesque, as in Shōshō Shigemoto no hana, to name a few. If anything, contrasts bring liveliness and readers of Tanizaki hardly ever

experience boredom.

Some, however, might frown at the heavily Western flavor in the passage quoted above. The preciousness of the metaphors¹⁷ indeed verges on pomposity and shows the young author overly carried away by his first revelation of what is going to be his life-long obsession: foot-fetishism, a recurrent theme which becomes a favorite topic among both Japanese and Western critics. In the context of "Shisei," nevertheless, the foot motif has a functional purpose: it serves to emphasize the perfectionist demands of a great artist whom "a lovely face and a fine body were not enough to satisfy."¹⁸ Only a perfect beauty--from head to toes, that is--can equal the intensity of his will.

As far as the style is concerned, Tanizaki himself in his later years was also to frown upon the figurative language which he used excessively in "Shisei" and other early works. The subdued tone and colloquial manner in "Ashikari" and "Shunkinshō," for instance, mark a definite change--or rather maturation--in style, which is the result of both improved narrative technique and age. Again in the context of "Shisei" however, the figurative language sometimes works wonders, as in the next scene when the Ideal Woman has shown up at Seikichi's place and, after an intense scrutiny, he felt that "her beauty mirrored the dreams of the generations of glamorous men and women who had lived and died in this vast capital,

where the nation's sins and wealth were concentrated."¹⁹ Exuberant descriptions have a way of magnifying reality into awe-inspiring dimensions wherein this tale of fantasies is comfortably at home.

Even when Tanizaki indulges himself in difficult Chinese characters and exotic details, he sometimes offers the reader the most fascinating description, as in the presentation of the painting of the Chinese princess:

She was leaning on a balustrade in a languorous pose, the long skirt of her figured brocade robe trailing halfway down a flight of stairs, her slender body barely able to support the weight of her gold crown studded with coral lapis lazuli. In her right hand she held a large wine cup, tilting it to her lips as she gazed down at a man who was about to be tortured in the garden below. 20

The reason is, the subject of the painting does require a lavish description of the glamorous princess to bring out the contrast with the wretched fate of the victim. The poignancy of the scene makes us wonder whether one should admire the fairy-like beauty of the royal consort or pity the tortured man and, in this confusion, one thing seems to become clear: that Art transcends Reality.

With mundane details, however, Tanizaki is not always that brilliant. In the morning when Seikichi was to meet the woman of his quest, he was actually "holding a toothbrush in his mouth" (fusayōji o kuwaenagara)²¹

and gazing at a pot of lilies. Probably embarrassed by this down-to-earth element, both translators Howard Hibbett and Ivan Morris²² simply omitted it in their renderings. On the other hand, Matsumoto Ryōzō, in Japanese Literature New and Old, remains faithful to the text.²³ The point at issue here is not whether a translation should be literal or not, but whether the toothbrush motif is of any use for the tale, or to put it differently, whether it should be there at all.

Gwenn Petersen thinks it should be there. The detail, she regrets, is "unfortunately omitted by the two Western translators."²⁴ Her argument is that mundane details in Tanizaki's works,

rather than being an undercutting of the poetic and esthetic tradition... are essential aspects of his esthetic of harmony. Just as pain and cruelty are close to beauty, and as hate is akin to love, so the mundane is never far from the poetic. 25

In the general case, Petersen comes close to the truth. Readers of Tanizaki indeed are to get used to the scattered presence of the mundane throughout his work, in keeping with the author's concept of beauty, which "must always grow from the realities of life."²⁶ Thus, the old smell of a toilet to evoke nostalgia, or the sight of a messy dish to hint at some erotic fantasy, or if we may repeat again, the diarrhea of Yukiko at the end of Sasame yuki to shock the reader out of his sentimentality.

Mundane details, as a writing device, are to tone down the author's poetic flight from reality and reassure the reader that he is still in control of his craft. Such, apparently, is Tanizaki's purpose.

In the specific case of "Shisei," however, it fails utterly to realize. Mundane details, short of being naturalistic, must carry within themselves certain suggestive quality in order to function. As in the example above, an old smell of a toilet without its nostalgic evocation would be rather hard on the reader's sensible nose. A toothbrush, in spite of all our sympathy for its hygienic purpose, does not seem to suggest much of anything and in the fairytale-like atmosphere of "Shisei," it stands out like a sore thumb, out of place both in time and space. Not to mention that at that precise moment, the author is about to borrow the magical wand to conjure up the meeting between Seikichi and the girl, the "unrealism" of which would have been easily overlooked but for the unfortunate motif. In the final analysis, it is clearly a misjudgment of situation.

This technical flaw will again lead us to another down-to-earth device which Kathleen Merken laments as "making excessive demands on the reader's indulgence."²⁷ It is when Seikichi had convinced the girl of his intention, and in order to prepare her for the tattooing process, the reader was informed that "under his kimono was a vial of anesthetic which he had obtained some time ago from

a Dutch physician."²⁸

Without excusing the author for this ludicrous detail, the reader might wonder why it is there. Obviously, it is there for one reason: to put the girl to sleep. But why? Have we not learned that Seikichi takes pleasure in watching the men suffer writhingly under his uncom-passionate needles? Here, interestingly, is the crux of the problem.

For while the handy "vial of anesthetic" fails regret-tably as a narrative device, it is there for a thematic purpose: it reveals for the first time that Seikichi's 'sadism', in fact, is only an expression of contempt for the 'lesser' men, as generally reflecting the attitude of a great artist toward his fellow beings. This attitude is moreover strengthened by the feeling that, although the artist himself believes in the superiority of art to nature, there is nothing in his powers to prove it concretely--unless he can find a perfect medium, an accom-plice. That's when the artist needs the beauty. There-fore, the mysterious girl in "Shisei" has never been looked upon by Seikichi as a 'lesser' being, or a victim, and consequently she is spared his sadism. For this reason, the girl cannot suffer and some such device as the "anes-thetic" will have to be created, although Tanizaki probably could have done better.

To carry the matter one step further, Seikichi even becomes sentimental in his treatment toward the girl as

evidenced by his answer when she asks to see the tattoo: "First you must bathe to bring out the colors", whispered Seikichi compassionately. 'I am afraid it will hurt, but be brave a little longer.'²⁹ Or when he offers a sympathetic hand to help the girl dry herself, a gesture that must be rare for a man who "would look down coolly" at his victims and remark "I dare say that hurts" with "an air of satisfaction."³⁰ These details are important because they serve as a clue for our understanding whether the conclusion of the story is a role-reversal scene, that is, victim becomes aggressor and aggressor becomes victim, as is generally thought.³¹ The question is, since the girl has never been a victim, how then can there be a reversal of roles? The discussion may best be reserved for the end; for now, let us return to the picture scrolls section which can be considered as the central pillar of the structure of "Shisei."

After the painting of the Chinese princess, in which the girl "discovered her secret self,"³² Seikichi rolls out the second one. It shows a young woman leaning against a tree, her eyes full of pride and joy, gloating over the scenery of death before her. Men's corpses lie scattered everywhere but somehow the scenery looks like a garden in Spring, where birds flutter about and sing in triumph. The painting is appropriately titled Hiryō (The Victims).

The girl is now frightened at the resemblance of her

own image and the ensuing scene is typical of Tanizaki's diabolic attitude: as Satan in the snake's disguise tempted Eve with the forbidden fruit, Seikichi the artist is now tempting his Ideal Woman with the works of art that reflect her most secret ambitions--and we know the outcome! Like Satan, he knows the weaknesses of woman and like Satan, he also knows her powers upon man. The difference with the biblical legend is that Seikichi is both Satan and Adam, in all his awareness; and the girl, far from being a wandering Eve burdened with sin, is actually an accomplice of Satan (Seikichi) in a scheme of wreaking havoc in the world of men to which Seikichi also belongs. This split personality of Seikichi can be regarded as a polarization of Tanizaki's sado-masochism, one of the many "isms" that are attributed to the author with more or less valid reasons, but often over-emphasized.

Because sado-masochistic or not, Seikichi is, first and foremost, a true artist. The tattooing scene involving the Perfect Beauty is heightened by his relentless passion riveted on the "work of art (that) had been the supreme effort of his life."³³ The temporal flow is marked by the poetic description of scenery in which daylight is followed by moonlight and followed by daylight again, a tiny cycle of time that witnesses the birth of the most powerful machine for the conquest of men. And within that cycle, the intense mood of the artist at work is counter-balanced by the casual rhythm of nature, uncon-

cerned but inspiring. When the morning sun "reflected from the water sketched rippling golden waves ... on the face of the girl," Seikichi sat there in trance, "contemplating her serene masklike face." When "the moon hung over the mansion across the river, bathing the houses along the bank in a dreamlike radiance," he was totally absorbed in his creation. And when the morning "haze began to thin out ... in the early breeze,"³⁴ Seikichi, now the work finished, also felt his heart empty. Nature and man are in perfect harmony.

The tattooing scene above is probably one of the best scenes Tanizaki ever described. The details of the 'tableau' are chosen with the sensibility of a poet and the visual expertise of a painter. Except for a small "realistic" break about the inquiry of the geisha's servant, which is somewhat uncalled for, mundane elements are conspicuously absent to create a wholesome esthetic effect. All this is to prepare for the wakening of the girl and the coming to life of the spider, whose legs move menacingly with her shuddering breath.

The wakening scene is composed mainly of dialogue, but a different kind of dialogue from the picture scrolls scene. A transformation has now taken place: Seikichi's speech no longer has the forceful urgency of a tempter's, but takes on the meek tone of an understanding companion. Satan has given his soul to the beauty³⁵ and left Adam to face his destiny. On the other hand, the girl's speech

is gaining confidence as a prelude to the conclusion, a climactic scene in which the transformation of the girl is complete, immediate, and even overwhelms her creator's expectations.

Structurally, "Shisei" is divided into four sections, of which the conclusion is the shortest one. It begins with the girl's line: "How the water stings!... Leave me alone--wait in the other room! I hate to have a man see me suffer like this!"³⁶ Right away we notice the authority in her command. From the beautiful but timid girl of yesterday she is now transformed into a femme fatale, ruthless and confident. The metamorphosis however does not come about without some agony: collapsing to the floor, moaning nightmarishly, her disheveled hair floating wildly over her flushed cheeks.... Only one thing remains undisturbed and unstained: the white soles of her feet reflected in the mirror. The reader is left to wonder whether the foot motif here has any implication other than adding a contrasting color to the blackness of hair and the redness of cheeks that highlight the erotic picture.

An hour later, the girl reappears, fully prepared for the apotheosis. The scroll paintings too reappear, live, in her person: leaning on the balustrade like the Chinese princess, a song of triumph (kachidoki) echoes in her ears. Her bright eyes look toward the hazy sky, as if scanning for potential victims. The first one, she declares, is Seikichi.

It is now time to open up the discussion again:
is there a role-reversal scene?

There are three indications in favor of this interpretation. First, the girl's authoritative attitude. Second, Seikichi's amazement at the change as if taken by surprise. And third, obviously, the girl's declaration ("You are my first victim!").³⁷

In the no-role-reversal interpretation, however, the same arguments can be taken care of favorably. First, the girl's authoritative attitude is a result of her transformation, a transformation which she herself had always secretly desired but was now brought about by Seikichi's effort. That is, this attitude is inherent in a femme fatale aware of her destructive power, and not necessarily the attitude of a victim who becomes an aggressor. Also, if we understand the word "victim" (koyashi) as the recipient of a certain mishap, or pain, or suffering without wanting it, then the term cannot be applied to the girl who secretly wished for the transformation.

Second, Seikichi's amazement at the change is more an amazement at the immediate effectiveness of his own art than at the different girl herself. When he tells the girl "Your old fears are gone,"³⁸ surely he is already looking forward to seeing a more confident personality, worthy of the mission he has cut out for her. This amazement can be likened to that of a scientist

who invents a machine that turns out to work even better than he expected. Therefore, it is not the surprise of an aggressor who suddenly finds his victim in a dominating position. This leads us to the last point: Is Seikichi, then, a victim as the girl declares?

The answer is, no, not in the ordinary sense. Seikichi is a "false" victim, or if you prefer, a "voluntary" victim. When he points at the Hiryō painting and says: "All these men will ruin their lives for you,"³⁹ and later, after the tattoo: "All men will be your victims,"⁴⁰ without doubt, he already includes himself. The Satan-part of Seikichi speaks sadistically while his Adam-part enjoys masochistically, picturing himself lying at the feet of the ruthless beauty who, as a matter of fact, does not know it.

Her hasty declaration somewhat lacking in subtlety does reveal Tanizaki's thinking of woman: she is either a goddess or a plaything,⁴¹ but most often both. Under the radiant halo of a Bodhisattva lies the mindless form of a doll to whom the depth of an artist's soul is never fathomed. She alone thinks that Seikichi is her victim, but little does she know that the "victim" actually derives tremendous pleasure from being so treated. He, therefore, is hardly a victim at all. Not to mention that he also finds great delight in the conquering power of this fabulous creation of which he is co-author: the winner, in the final analysis, remains Seikichi.

The tale concludes with an erotic gesture and a threatening vision: at Seikichi's request to see the tattoo, the girl denudes herself and "just then her resplendently tattooed back caught a ray of sunlight and the spider was wreathed in flames."⁴² Unlike "Jigokuhen," which is self-contained, "Shisei" projects a boundless vitality far into the future. The reader of "Jigokuhen" ends the story with a sorrowful compassion for what has happened; the reader of "Shisei" finishes the tale with a foreboding feeling of what will happen: yet in either case, Art triumphs, like the kachidoki heralding the incarnation of the Eternal Woman.

CHAPTER TWO

There are twenty-three years between "Shisei" (1910) and "Shunkinshō" (1933), and there is also as much difference between them in terms of style and structure. Although "the artist" and "the beauty" still remain, the simplistic view of a fairy tale is gone, giving way to a complexity of conflicting viewpoints, manipulated by a newly added element which turns out to be crucial: the narrator.

The story is told by a scholar who happened to acquire a document called "Biography of Shunkin" which relates the life of Mozuya Shunkin, a famous blind musician of the transitional period of Edo and Meiji. Shunkin is a gifted girl who had the misfortune of contracting an eye disease which destroyed her vision forever at the age of nine. She grows up to be a fabulous musician, known for her beauty and charm, notorious for her egotism and cruelty. The only person who adores everything she does and worships her beyond description is, however, her pupil Sasuke, who himself becomes a recognized virtuoso. From the time Sasuke was a shopboy leading the blind little beauty by the hand to her music school, to the moment fate took away his eternal idol at the age of fifty-seven, Shunkin was his flame of love that refused to burn out before

his own death at eighty-three, coincidentally on the anniversary of Shunkin's death.

With more detail, the plot runs as follows:

After the catastrophe that robbed Shunkin of her beautiful eyes, Nukui Sasuke, who had just come to work for her family business as an apprentice, was put in charge of the hapless girl. Fascinated by her lovely appearance and musical talent, the young servant took to learning music himself, at first by smuggling a samisen into the attic where he slept in the company of his fellow-workers, and then by practising alone in the pitch-dark closet to isolate the noise. His secret study was somehow found out and Shunkin's parents, moved by the boy's artistic determination, made Shunkin his teacher. This relationship went on until Shunkin turned sixteen and a curious change in her figure began to be noticed. She was pregnant. But she refused to name the person involved and moreover, refused to marry Sasuke, even at her parents' insistence. The baby was subsequently born and was sent out for adoption.

Shunkin became a music teacher at nineteen, moved out of her parents' house and Sasuke, then twenty-three, came to live with her. They never married and this ambiguous relationship continued until Shunkin, at the age of thirty-six, was again struck by disaster: an unknown enemy sneaked into her bedroom one night and poured a kettle of scalding water on her face. Shunkin suffered

severely from the burn but even more so, from the thought that Sasuke would see her ruined beauty when the wound healed. "I'll make sure that I never see your face,"¹ was Sasuke's quiet answer to Shunkin's tearful distress.

Then, with the determination of a martyr, Sasuke pierced his eyes with a needle. He became totally blind and thus the beautiful image of Shunkin was preserved intact until his death. Sasuke's self-immolation was reportedly praised by a priest as "very nearly the act of a saint,"² and the story ends with a question addressed to the readers: "Would you ladies and gentlemen agree with his opinion?" ("Dokusha shoken wa shukō seraruru ya")³

A definite "No" for an answer would mean that the story has failed to impress the reader. However, given the overwhelming success of "Shunkinshō" over the years,⁴ the answer seems to be rather positive or something close to it. This chapter is devoted to finding out what has induced the reader to sympathize with the unusual sacrifice of Sasuke.

To begin with, let us have a look at how the two main characters are introduced: very simply, on the peaceful grounds of a temple, they lie side by side "in their eternal sleep, bound by a mysterious fate."⁵ Likewise, the vague curiosity in the reader's mind aroused by the narrator's search for Shunkin's grave does not take long to be satisfied: without suspense, the narrator informs us of the unusual relationship between the two

musicians. Even the respective sizes of their tombstones are indicative of their relative positions and attitudes in life. In this introductory section indeed, we seem to know everything we ought to know about the plot and the characters. Moreover, the narrator's feeling toward the couple is also revealed: "After kneeling at Shunkin's grave for a moment, I ran my hand affectionately along the top of Sasuke's stone,"⁶ he said reflectively.

It is clear then, that there is not much in the way of expectation for the reader. He knows he has now before him a love story, uncommon though it is, but still a love story that does not seem to promise a great deal of excitement or tragedy in the tradition of Romeo and Juliet, for instance. Nevertheless, he is somewhat intrigued by the multiple relationship between Shunkin and Sasuke (mistress-servant, master-pupil, husband-wife, lovers); it is incredible and yet it sounds real. And it is precisely this feeling of reality that Tanizaki wanted to impart to the reader, as he confessed in his essay "Shunkinshō kōgo" 春琴抄後語 ("Postscript to 'A Portrait of Shunkin'", 1934): "When I wrote 'A Portrait of Shunkin', the one concern uppermost in my mind was to find a form that would convey the greatest feeling of reality."⁷

This "feeling of reality," it turns out, is due to the presence of the "I" narrator, a literary device that

Tanizaki favours in most of his successful works in the "Koten kaiki" period. In "Shunkinshō," it is used to perfection. Nakamura Mitsuo 中村光夫, who has a harsh view on the "intellectual content" of Tanizaki's writing, is otherwise impressed by the author's storytelling skill in this novella. He has this to say: "Opening the novel with the visit of 'I' the narrator at the graves of Shunkin and Sasuke is the simplest and the most effective way to impress the reader with the actual existence of these people."⁸

The point, however, is not whether it is a "true" story, meaning that it actually happened, but whether or not the reader can be convinced of its realness. The narrator is there to fulfill this purpose. The deceptively casual manner in which he introduces the two characters and even his unveiled affection for them are evidence of his sincerity. The reader is now inclined to trust him, and thus begins to fall into his cunning trap. As we shall see later, the more we listen to him the more he numbs our reasoning mind with conflicting interpretations that finally lead us to his ultimate goal: to bring us sympathetic readers to the burial grounds of that Buddhist temple, where, just like him, we shall kneel down before Shunkin's grave and unconsciously run our hands "affectionately along the top of Sasuke's stone."

From the next section where the "Biography of Shunkin"

comes into play, we are offered yet more proof of the narrator's sincerity: he cautions us that the document might well have been written by Sasuke, and therefore "one hardly knows how much of it to believe."⁹ To the exuberant praise on Shunkin's "aristocratic grace and beauty" found in the "Biography,"¹⁰ he tones it down with his reserved impression of a faded photograph of Shunkin, taken the same year Sasuke himself became blind. The photograph motif is an excellent link between the reader and Sasuke because this is the image of a still-lovely Shunkin--and not a Shunkin whose beauty is destroyed--that will remain in their inner vision. The misty photograph shows a beautiful lady without "any real individuality,"¹¹ and yet in a discreet manner, she is subtly raised to the immortal status of the merciful goddess Kannon.

The "real" Shunkin, in fact, is a mixture of charm, talent and cruelty. Her violent character is presumably shaped by her blindness, aggravated by a hint of human ill-will, at least in Sasuke's view, which the narrator keeps warning us not to take too seriously, because "this was not the only time that his grief over Shunkin seemed to poison his mind toward others."¹² The effect of this warning is that paradoxically we are brought one step closer to Sasuke inasmuch as we can sense in his very "unreasonableness" the unconditional devotion of his protective love for the defenseless beauty. This will

also serve as a clue to the understanding of the climactic scene where his gruesome self-immolation comes as a shock even to sympathetic readers.

Until her second calamity, Shunkin remains a puzzle, a mystery. Her occasional outbursts of temper are, to use a strong word, animal-like, whereas her awareness of beauty is as touching as her stoical attitude toward life. Shunkin is like a mental patient that sometimes frightens us with her erratic behaviour but more often arouses our compassion as we ponder upon the roots of the symptoms. However, in order to judge the blind girl in all fairness, we should first keep in mind that the mature Shunkin is basically a voluptuous body with the subconscious of a nine-year-old child. The world she innately "sees" is the one she saw before her eyes went shut, and 'growing up' for her is simply a physiological process that has nothing to do with the realities outside. In her inner world, things would remain the same as they are, and people unaged and unchanged, including Sasuke, whom, we must also remember, she has never seen nor known before the first accident. To her, Sasuke is no more than a hand and a voice, helpful, comforting and above all, convenient; "mating," as it were, is also part of her "animality." Therefore she makes love with Sasuke at the age of fifteen without being apparently in love with him, carries her pregnancy and, later, turns away her first baby without a hint of regret. Morality as we know is virtually non-

existent in a world where the complications of adulthood are simply viewed as the rules of a child's game, to be observed or rejected at will.

It is the discrepancy between the two realities that makes Shunkin an interesting case. The creation of the blind Shunkin allows the author ample space to explore all the extremes in conduct a beautiful woman is capable of. Without her physical handicap that presupposes a certain degree of morbidity, it would be hard for us to imagine the scene where Shunkin gives a sharp kick to Sasuke's swollen cheek, for instance. Likewise, the total absorption in her own self is only possible with a person who lives permanently in mental isolation, with art being her sole occupation. Yet viewed from a different angle, Shunkin symbolizes the purest state of a born artist to whom the abstract concept of art is internalized to the point it is stripped of its humanity: it is no coincidence that Shunkin prizes her larks and nightingales more than the humans around her. Moreover, Shunkin sees herself in the image of the trained nightingales that will not sing in the presence of human beings and therefore are always housed in a dark cage (a fact that obviously refers to her dim world). When they sing, their lovely voice reminds you

of the tranquil charm of a secluded ravine--
a rustling stream murmurs to you, clouds of
cherry blossoms float up before your eyes.
Blossoms and mist alike are within that song,
and we forget that we are still in the dusty

city. This is where art rivals nature. And
here too is the secret of music, 13

lectures Shunkin to her pupils in a high-spirited moment in which she appears to be a symbol of art herself.

That is undoubtedly how Sasuke sees Shunkin. For him, Shunkin is the incarnation of art in its most divine form, and most readers will admit that there is something quasi-religious in his life-long worship for the beautiful woman. Parallel with the extremisms of Shunkin, the characterization of Sasuke can be considered a test-case of how far an artist can go in the pursuit of the Ideal. In the creation of a lowly, ill-educated person as the hero of the story, Tanizaki is able to preclude all social conventions surrounding the dignity of a nobleman and thus allows humility and loyalty plenty of room to express themselves. In Sasuke, these two qualities reach the highest degree that can hardly be found elsewhere in Tanizaki's works, even among the numerous male characters who, in the words of Seidensticker, "submit abjectly and absolutely to a being of lesser import than (themselves)."¹⁴

It is true that Sasuke's devotion to Shunkin is absolute, and perhaps, abject. But while Shunkin is a musical prodigy, Sasuke is the very image of a self-made artist whose sensitivity predisposes him to succumb to the powerful appeal of the art that his idol symbolizes. This makes him fully aware of the limit of his own talent, which can only be compensated by extreme hard work that,

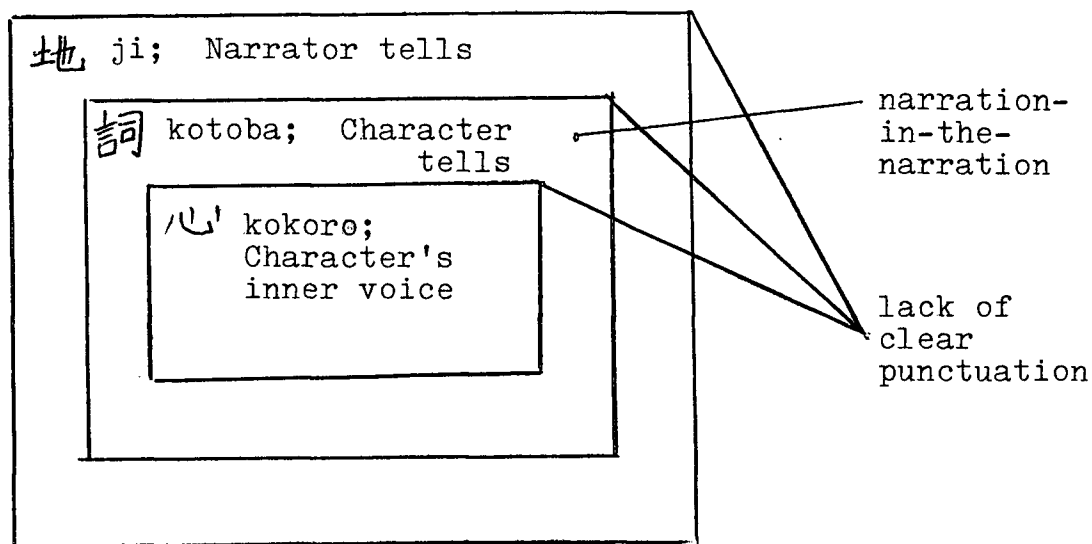
being a shopboy, he is not unfamiliar with. Therefore, the humility of a servant combined with that of a self-conscious artist can be accountable for Sasuke's "undignified" conduct. In the characterizations of Shunkin and Sasuke, Tanizaki is actually dealing with the two known types of artists, namely, the prodigy and the self-made. While art is their *raison d'être*, the first type tends toward loftiness and the second type toward humanity.

So far we have attempted to shed some light on the psychology of Shunkin and Sasuke. The reason is, in this novella, the "real" Shunkin and Sasuke are only perceptions offered by our narrator-interpreter. In order to have a better view of this feature of the story, let us take a glance at the structure of the monogatari-narrative which influenced the style of "Shunkinshō."

According to Prof. Noguchi Takehiko 野口武彦, the structure of the monogatari-narrative implies an absence of distinction between objective description and dialogue (*kakkan byōsha to kaiwa*). On the other hand, there is the existence of a narrator who "tells" the reader what happens in the story in his own voice. His voice occasionally gives way to the voices (both outer and inner) of the characters. This ambiguity is further emphasized by the omission of useless subject-pronouns and a lack of clear punctuation.

Below is how Prof. Noguchi describes the structure graphically:¹⁵

草子地 sōshiji; Narrator comments (Narrator's outer voice)



One Sentence
(Omission of subject-pronouns → manyfold persons)

The sentence structure will be discussed later when we deal with style, but right now what is of interest to us here is the core part, the "character's inner voice," which is conspicuously absent in "Shunkinshō." Many critics at the time of its publication had commented that it was a defect, but had not waited long to obtain an answer from Tanizaki himself. In the same essay "Shunkinshō kōgo" (1934), he wrote:

In response to those who say that I have failed to describe what Shunkin or Sasuke are really thinking, I would like to counter with the question: "Why is it necessary to describe what they are thinking? Don't you understand their thoughts anyway from what I have written?" 16

In retrospect, it is precisely because Tanizaki

spares us the description of Shunkin and Sasuke's psychology that the story gains so much in pathos and becomes so mysteriously moving. We watch the two characters act out their drama as we would a jōruri performance. Although in a jōruri performance, the chanter gives us a clear description of the puppets' emotions, their wooden faces thrill us as they seem to betray a depth of feelings that we ordinary mortals cannot fathom. The narrator in "Shunkinshō" does not tell us the characters' thinking, but interprets it with skepticism because the main source (the "Biography") is unreliable. His skepticism runs through the story first by the frequent use of the uncertain de arō form, and second, by the presence of conflicting interpretations or viewpoints offered by various sources. While the story deliberately lacks the positive description of a jōruri play, its very uncertainty wraps around the blind couple like a shroud of mystery. In this foggy atmosphere, the sightless lovers move about, and not unlike the puppets, seem to conceal behind their closed eyes a glow of happiness that we cannot fully perceive.

Strangely, it is the uncertainties in "Shunkinshō" that make the story believable. These uncertainties are cleverly concocted by the narrator who very often presents us first with the most extreme view of the "Biography," i.e. Sasuke's, then counters it with his own objective judgment, and then makes appeal to other

verbal reports. The most important one comes from Shigisawa Teru, a living witness who knew the couple intimately. In creating this living source, Tanizaki has subtly added a significant weight in order to tip the scale on Sasuke's side because in most cases, Teru's reports "merely confirm Sasuke's points and heighten the tone of his passion," as Sumie Jones rightly observes in her excellent essay "How Tanizaki Disarms the Intellectual Reader."¹⁷

After all, that is exactly what the narrator wants: to bring the confused reader back to the pathetic figure of Sasuke. And perhaps, that is also what the reader unconsciously wants: to be convinced that Sasuke is right, so that he could simply close his eyes and dream of the heavenly happiness that the blind virtuoso alone knows and claims after his loss of sight:

... (T)his world became a Paradise, and I seem to be dwelling in the cup of a lotus flower, together with my teacher. It was not until I was blind that I fully understood (her) true beauty, or really appreciated the smoothness and glamor of her limbs and the sweetness of her voice... 18

The narrator, however, does more than just manipulate different opinions for his own purpose. Sometimes he forgets himself and gets involved. When he gets involved, the cold frontier between him and the "Biography" disappears, leaving the reader under the spell of the forceful circumstance, as when Sasuke told Shunkin:

"I have gone blind, I shall never see your face again as long as I live." All Shunkin replied was: "Really, Sasuke?"

She sat there a long while, sunk in thought. Never before or since did Sasuke experience such happiness as during those moments of silence. 19

Or further, when Sasuke had explained to her the noble reason why he had made himself blind, Shunkin simply said:

"Sasuke!"
And the blind lovers embraced, weeping. 20

The narrator describes the scene as if he saw it with his own eyes. But this imagination is readily forgiven, because by this time, the reader has already been hypnotized into surrendering to the narrator's whim by the maze of uncertainties encountered along the way.

This electrifying scene in fact, is the most significant moment in the entire novella. It is as if Tanizaki wrote "Shunkinshō" just for this moment alone. It is the moment of truth, we might be tempted to say. All of a sudden, Sasuke is vindicated. All the humiliation and suffering he has so far endured have melted away with Shunkin's grateful tears. And beautiful Shunkin, the pampered nightingale that has so far ignored human feelings, has now known the taste of humiliation (at the hands of her impudent pupil Ritarō) and suffering. Humiliation and suffering teach a person to understand human life; yet they do not necessarily make a person more human. At times they might even breed cruelty out of bitterness

and vindictiveness. Therefore, in order that the two severe lessons in Shunkin's life might have a beneficial effect on her, a catalyst is needed. The catalyst, obviously, is nothing else but the very act of Sasuke's sacrifice.

It may not be an exaggeration to say that by this selfless act, Sasuke has imparted to Shunkin the humanity that has been so pitifully lacking in her. For the first time in her life, Shunkin knows that Sasuke is more than just a hand and a voice, that blindness is not an excuse for being inhuman, and that happiness can be a true feeling between lovers. For the first time in her life, indeed, her tears are human tears.

From this moment on, we hear no more of Shunkin's idiosyncrasies. Instead, the narrator suggests that tasting the bitterness of life has helped her attain "the ultimate mastery of her art." He continues:

Both in love and in art she must have discovered undreamed-of ecstasies. Teru says that Shunkin used to play the samisen for hours on end, while Sasuke sat beside her, his head bowed, listening in rapture. Often the pupils marvel at the subtle tones that filtered to their ears from the inner room, whispering among themselves that this must be no ordinary instrument. 21

We have mentioned in Chapter One that Akutagawa considered art almost as a tool to punish life for the injuries he had suffered. The early romantic Izumi Kyōka 泉鏡花 (1873-1940), in his famous art story "Uta andon" 歌行燈 ("The Singing Lantern," 1910), offered

a more soothing concept of art as an agent for the purification of guilt. In "Shunkinshō," Tanizaki seems to suggest an even more heart-warming view of art as a healing power for human sorrows. It is to be noted that "Shunkinshō" is the last story of Tanizaki's dealing essentially with art and artists. Thereafter, Tanizaki feels no need to expound theories and begins to live "art and life" in the most harmonious way possible. Nonetheless, as the last art story, it is also the most powerful one: the blissful effect of art in "Shunkinshō" is enough to justify all the passions it generates in men.

It is also to be noted that blindness seems to be a perfect device for a story attempting to describe the utmost happiness that a union of art and life can produce. By closing their eyes on external realities, the blind lovers are shielded from the disillusionment that the visible world might cause; and in Sasuke's exclamation that it was "because both of us were blind that we experienced a happiness ordinary people never know,"²² we seem to hear the echo of the Pasteur's words to the blind girl Gertrude in Gide's La Symphonie Pastorale (The Pastoral Symphony, 1925): "Those who have eyes do not know their happiness."²³ What the French author André Gide means here is simply that we are prevented by our own visual faculty from being truly aware of the natural happiness that exists within. Gide goes as far as to let the girl die of disillusionment at the end once her eyesight is restored,

when she sees that the day is clearer, the sky vaster, and yet "the human forehead is so much bonier" than she has imagined.²⁴

Tanizaki wrote "Shunkinshō" during the "Koten kaiki" period. Mōmoku monogatari (1931) was also a product of those years. The theme of blindness may not be a traditional source of inspiration, but the mysterious elegance of shadows is definitely one. "...Our ancestors, forced to live in dark rooms, presently came to discover beauty in shadows, ultimately to guide shadows toward beauty's ends,"²⁵ mused Tanizaki in "In'ei raisan" 陰翳礼讃 ("In Praise of Shadows," 1934), a long essay which, as the title indicates, is dedicated to the beauty of shadows. And while "our ancestors cut off the brightness on the land from above and created a world of shadows, and far in the depths of it they placed woman, marking her the whitest of beings,"²⁶ Tanizaki placed Shunkin in a world of relentless darkness that would make the blind beauty even more remote and untouchable. The Eternal Woman in "Shisei," once again, reappears.

There might be another reason why Tanizaki was attracted to the theme of blindness. Readers of Tanizaki certainly know that he is a very physical writer, and the lack of sight automatically brings the sense of touch to the forefront. "Shunkinshō" indeed abounds in descriptions or allusions involving the tactile sense and the pleasure it incurs. From Shunkin's caressing the rough

bark of an old plum tree with her delicate hands, to Sasuke's passionate reminiscence of her smooth skin or soft, pliant limbs...the reader is lulled into a world where bodily contacts are lovingly described without being obscene. When the narrator informs us that Sasuke massaged Shunkin, dressed her, bathed her; and that "in the nude, her body was unexpectedly voluptuous,"²⁷ all we feel is a mild envy for the extreme good luck of Sasuke and at the same time we understand the hidden motive of his life-long worship for the lovely idol. Time and again, Tanizaki seems to be telling us that without the support of flesh and skin, art will lose its initial appeal.

We have pointed out above that Tanizaki inherited the appreciation of shadows from the Japanese tradition. He was also impressed by the peculiar style of the classics, especially the Genji monogatari, and found it most intriguing because,

as everyone knows, it is hard to distinguish dialogue from narrative in the rainy-night passage of "Hahakigi" in Genji, and hard to know who starts talking where, but the beauty of Japanese prose is most apparent in such passages. 28

That is exactly what Tanizaki does in "Shunkinshō," blending dialogue and narrative seamlessly into a flow of words that gives the reader the impression that someone is 'telling' him a story, and not depicting it. If we just glance back at Noguchi's graphical interpretation

of the monogatari-narrative structure, we shall see that the sentences in "Shunkinshō" fit the model: most of them are unusually long, with very little punctuation between description and conversation, and when there is a narration-in-the-narration, in most cases, subject-pronouns are missing. The omission of subject-pronouns is inherent to the Japanese language, but in "Shunkinshō," it has a particular function of adding more ambiguity to the text; in other words, it is part of the trap laid out by the narrator to further confuse the helpless reader.

To have an idea about the length of "Shunkinshō"'s sentences, let us refer to the statistics that the Japanese critic Hatano Kanji 波多野完治 has taken the trouble to provide in his essay "Sakka no bunshō shinri" 作家の文章心理 ("Stylistic psychology of writers," 1953).²⁹ On twenty-five sentences taken randomly from the narrative part of "Shunkinshō"'s introductory section, the average number of words is 85 per sentence. The shortest sentence contains 35 words, which is still longer than the average count of 32 words using the same method on a story by Shiga Naoya. The longest sentence amounts to 232 words.

Whether we like it or not, long sentences generate a feeling of "breathlessness" as we try to follow the string of thoughts from one perspective to another, shifting through the many layers of information, with only our narrator as a trustful but unreliable guide,

who is also, or who pretends to be also, groping in the dark. At the end, the breathless reader leaves his logic behind to submerge himself in the translucent world of fantasies, little suspecting that those long sentences are an integral part of the elaborate trap in which he falls.

We may now safely conclude that the most captivating effect in "Shunkinshō" derives from the half dark-half light, half factual-half illusory atmosphere created by the narrator magician, who is no other than the author himself. To bring about this atmosphere, Tanizaki skillfully combines the ambiguity of the Japanese language with an intricate structure of narrative in which conflicting interpretations, accounts and viewpoints are juggled together with apparent objectivity to "disarm the intellectual reader," as Sumie Jones points out. Once off-guard and confused, the reader simply walks into this labyrinth of illusions, at first with self-abandon, later with passion. When he comes out, bewitched, he might be surprised to find himself at the narrator's side, kneeling before Shunkin's grave and stroking Sasuke's tombstone with affection. Another "victim of Tanizaki's tricks," again to quote Sumie Jones.³⁰

There remains however one last problem to deal with: how are we to take the very act of Sasuke's self-immolation? It is a disturbing question because it touches on the most fundamental fear of mankind: the fear of

physical pain. Mental anguish can be coped with by most ordinary men but only heroes can handle physical pain, especially self-inflicted pain. The eyes being the most sensitive area of the human body, seem destined to take the brunt of heroes' emotions in many instances, real and legendary. The warrior Kagekiyo, the narrator tells us, gouged out his own eyes when "he was so touched by the magnanimity of his archenemy Yoritomo."³¹ Another example is Oedipus destroying his vision out of repentance for his involuntary incestuous sin. These superhuman acts command pity and admiration; and because the men as heroes are supposedly above us, our conscience is at ease. But as a man Sasuke is undoubtedly less than our equal; he is what Donald Keene would call "an abject figure," "weak-willed and negative."³² That is why his act bothers us.

His courageous act somehow offsets our own weakness; we secretly wonder whether, under the same circumstances, we would be capable of such determination; for it is clear that Sasuke's self-immolation is the only solution, short of committing shinjū. In his own words, he does it as a self-punishment for having failed to protect Shunkin, but his esthetic sense also dictates his action. Just as Sasuke cannot stand to lose the lovely face "that has haunted (him) for the past thirty years,"³³ neither can the reader; and since the reader only sees Shunkin through Sasuke's eyes, Tanizaki is being kind to both by providing this timely blindness.

'Timely' is indeed the word for it, if we trust the "Biography" which gives a very simple account of the event: "By some strange turn of fate, within a few weeks Sasuke began to suffer from cataracts, and soon lost his sight altogether."³⁴ The reader, even though dazed by all the uncertainties in the story, still realizes that this is too miraculous to be true. The narrator also voices the same opinion, supported by more information from Teru, thus corroborating the idea that the truth is being falsified. However, the reader is happy enough and prepared to take the miracle as another mystery of the novella.

A few pages later, Tanizaki comes back deliberately with the eye-piercing scene, depicted with surgical precision. We look on horrified, but fascinated. As with children who are fascinated with ghost stories precisely because they are afraid of ghosts, our fascination stems from our own fear of physical pain. Our fear, without doubt, reflects the author's fear.

This is where the eye-piercing scene takes on a different meaning. It seems that Tanizaki does not just want to shock the reader out of sheer perversity, as he is wont to do. It seems rather, that the scene contains a message, or perhaps a self-challenge, as if Tanizaki wanted to test his own determination in the pursuit of his Ideal, by laying out meticulously all the terrifying details of the artist's self-sacrifice, which is a challenge that most readers secretly wish they would never have

to meet.

It follows that the scene disturbs our conscience. In spite of all our admiration for Sasuke's appropriate decision, the eye-piercing scene itself will forever remain, as it were, a shocking experience. But probably it is meant to be so, because it symbolizes a life-long challenge, not only to the author, but also to the reader himself. It is very likely an impossible challenge.

CHAPTER THREE

The work to be examined here may be qualified as "poetic" at first glance. Both the title, "Yume no ukihashi," which literally means "The Floating Bridge of Dreams," and the poem that starts the novella set the mood for the reader before he enters the last dreamland of the author who is now seventy-three, aged and sickly.

The key element of the story is a dream, or dreams, in various forms: some as tender as the female breast, some as sweet as mother's milk, and some yet as ghastly as a crawling centipede... Within the vast great dream that is human existence, they form and vanish, sometimes by a twist of fate and sometimes by the force of human will. In "Yume no ukihashi," Tanizaki seems to dwell seriously on man's capacity to create and perpetuate dreams--even beyond the grave.

The place is Kyoto and the time early twentieth century. The setting, a villa by the name of "Heron's Nest" with its landscape garden, is minutely described to the last detail; within its main gate which faces a stone bridge over a stream, a pair of stone figures of Korean mandarins solemnly stand as if to ward off the intruders. There, dreams will materialize, undisturbed by external

realities, like a haunted castle where ghosts freely wander.

The main cast is composed of a father, a son, and two mothers. The story is a sort of reminiscence, or memoir, written by the son at the age of twenty-five, when the other three have all departed. All the events that take place within the boundary of Heron's Nest are seen through the young man's eyes, but we shall soon learn that he not only sees, but also smells, hears, tastes and touches. The bygone days are relived to the fullest through his sensory experiences. His name is Tadasu but the father's is not mentioned; and the two mothers share the name of Chinu. As a matter of fact, the young narrator cannot recall clearly the first mother--his real one who died when he was four--and he grows up alongside his stepmother who deliberately acts in the same manner as her predecessor. All this, as Tadasu realizes later, is perpetrated by the father in an effort to comfort the motherless son and also to relive his smouldering love for his deceased wife; in other words, to create "a bridge linking dream to dream....," as Prince Genji once sadly hinted.¹

Triggered by the death of the first mother, the plot of "Yume no ukihashi" in a way resembles a game. Let us metaphorically call it the "dream game" in which the three main participants play not against each other, but instead against the impermanence of life. The father who devises the game is a cool, determined tactician; the stepmother

is a conscientious player who, with her charm and beauty, confers to the game all the excitement and passion that a game would require. The son at first plays along unknowingly, but then grows more and more conscious of the game and eventually ends up in a state of addiction. Each player, in his or her own way, is perfect; but whether the game has been won or lost will depend largely on how we perceive it.

It is likely that Tanizaki did not intend it to be won or lost. What is important is how much pleasure and satisfaction the players can derive from the game while playing. In this sense, it will be clear that Tanizaki is hardly bothered by the ultimate outcome of the game, but instead devotes all his artistic energy to re-creating every single moment of the past. It is also in this sense that the reader should approach the story, leaving outside the main gate of Heron's Nest all the ordinary quests for philosophical meaning as well as all the moral conventions established by society.

Then, and only then, can we truly appreciate the beauty of "Yume no ukihashi." Young Tadasu as the narrator is an excellent agent to bring out this beauty. In the absence of rational thinking, all the five human senses operate at full capacity. An example is the following scene involving Tadasu and his first mother:

The faint scent of her hair, which was done up in a chignon, wafted into my nostrils.

Seeking out her nipples with my mouth, I played with them like an infant, took them between my lips, ran my tongue over them...

When I used my tongue as hard as I could, licking her nipples and pressing around them, the milk flowed out nicely. The mingled scents of her hair and milk hovered there in her bosom, around my face. As dark as it was, I could still dimly see her white breasts. 2

This poetic description of a mother-and-child scene tinged with eros has its blessing in the innocence of a childhood memory virtually unknown to people of modern times (Western and Japanese alike) when breast-feeding is no longer common. Needless to say, everyone understands that the link between mother and child in the past is definitely the mother's breast. For young Tadasu it represents the whole dream world, the "sweet, dimly white dream world"³ (*amai honojiroi yume no sekai*) that disappears along with his mother's death. It takes a sensual writer like Tanizaki to depict an abstract world with qualifiers such as amai for the taste of milk and honojiroi for the blurred vision of the mother's bosom.

This crucial image is to be kept in mind if we are to fully grasp the meaning of further actions between the protagonist and his stepmother, for they all center upon the beautiful charmer's breast, with or without milk. For Tadasu, to retrieve the lost dream means to relive the suckling experience, and the stepmother, even more aware of this than he, has deliberately given her breasts to the eight-year-old child who sucked with passion. The dreamland is thus recovered and the dream game continues.

In this exclusive dreamland of his, young Tadasu is enchanted not only by those "firm little buds at the tips of (Mother's) soft, full breasts,"⁴ but also by any event that happens to impress his sensory perceptions. Even at the age of four, he would peer down into the stream to watch the water mortar slowly fill up with water then spill it into the pond, and "often my dreams were penetrated by (its) distant clack, far beyond my shuttered windows," he recalls.⁵ As his hearing sense would notice the seductive rhythm of Mother's voice when she sings lullabies for him, his vision would register the sight of Mother dangling her beautiful feet in the pond. They were "little dumpling-like feet" which caught his fancy and around which he thought "how pleasant it would be if the fish in our pond came gliding playfully...."⁶

Tanizaki's foot-fetishism is well-known. In "Shisei," we have been acquainted with the jewel-like foot that was "to be nourished by men's blood,"⁷ and in "Shunkinshō," with the "dainty little foot" that "was just big enough to nestle into (Sasuke's) palm."⁸ But the foot scene in "Yume no ukihashi" is devoid of any sexual connotation. It is pure and lovely. More importantly, it reveals the true nature of the owner of the foot: she too, enjoys sensuous pleasures. It is probably the only instance in all Tanizaki's writing that a woman's foot is not perceived solely from the worshipper's viewpoint; it also has a meaning of its own. In other words, the foot motif here does not

have a thematic function as is usually expected, but rather plays a part in the subtle characterization of Mother.

To strengthen this revelation, Tanizaki immediately provides us with the next scene, brought about by his exceptional skill in associating one sensuous experience with another. The playful gliding fish in Tadasu's fantasy leads to the memory of some "long, thin, slippery-looking leaves" in his soup one day. When he asks Mother what they are, she tells him, "That's called nununawa." When Father protests that they are called junsai nowadays, the mother says: "But doesn't nununawa sound long and slippery, just the way it is? That's the name for it in all the old poems, you know."⁹

Her attachment to a word that sounds "long and slippery" is another evidence of her sensuous inclination that sets her apart from the many otherwise fabulous women in Tanizaki's stories, who either seem ethereal, untouchable, or unfeeling. To put it differently, it might be the only time that the author has given his female character a human dimension, heretofore unfamiliar to the reader. Having said so, it may not be too far-fetched to assume that the sensuous stepmother is also sensual. When she gives her breasts to Tadasu as a child and again as an eighteen-year-old adolescent, the pleasure obviously is not his alone. Consequently, the hints of their sexual relationship may be more than hints.

It is now that we face a serious issue: the "quasi-incestuous variation" of Tanizaki's hahakoi theme, as Prof. Seidensticker formulates it.¹⁰ Nomura Shōgo goes even further, commenting that it is a "kind of incest" (boshi sōkan) and that the author having pierced through the hahakoi theme of old, is now "liberated from the spell of the taboo."¹¹

Although themes are not of our main concern, the incest issue deserves our consideration because of its serious implications. Incest being almost a universal taboo, does create problems even in the evaluation of the work of art itself. Oedipus, for instance, is an incest story, but were it not for its ultimate morality (the hero's self-punishment), we might legitimately doubt whether it could have ever become such an unforgettable tale. In the case of "Yume no ukihashi," if the "incest" label were not removed, the novella might never occupy the place it deserves in Japanese literature. To give a concrete example, Itō Sei hardly mentions this beautiful story throughout almost one hundred and fifty pages of criticisms on Tanizaki's writings, although many lesser works such as "Shōnen" / 少年 ("Youth," 1911) or "Chiisana ōkoku" / 小さな王国 ("A Little Kingdom," 1918), are dealt with thoroughly.¹² Similarly, Prof. Ueda Makoto, in his Modern Japanese Writers, examines Tanizaki's concepts and ideas of art and life without even uttering the words "Yume no ukihashi."¹³

Those who comment on the work also experience the same uneasiness. Kathleen Merken, for example, deals mainly with the narrative technique of "Yume," but feels that she has to clarify the case somehow by stating in the beginning of her analysis that it is not "a tale of incestuous love."¹⁴ Unfortunately, she offers no further explanation. On the other hand, Gwenn Petersen goes straight out to Tanizaki's defense. She says:

The reader who regards this story as an example of Tanizaki's 'strange' interests is ignoring the tradition. For the relationship of boy and stepmother is but another version of a traditional theme, one found in The Tale of Genji itself. The reader ... should remember the world of Genji, in which the Shining One fathered an exquisitely beautiful son by his father's concubine Fujitsubo (that is, by his stepmother...). 15

What we can deduce from the critics' attitudes is that the incest theme is indeed disturbing. The following discussion attempts to prove that Tanizaki himself is also conscious of the problem and has done everything in his powers to dissociate incest from his well-known hahakoi theme. In other words, the author also knows there is a line he should never cross. In order to deal with this thorny issue adequately, we must first closely examine the mutual relationships of the characters involved. Let us begin with Mother.

There are two mothers in actuality, but they gradually blend into one through the clever device of super-imposing images engineered by the father in order to confuse

the son. This is in fact in keeping with Tanizaki's conception of the Eternal Woman in her double role as mother and lover, as discussed in the Introduction.

Thus, the two mothers would dangle their feet in the pond, play the koto in the very same pose, use the same word nenunawa for those long, slippery leaves, and sing the same old lullaby that the son knows so well. The scheme is carried out smoothly except that it is doubtful whether young Tadasu is really taken in or only pretends to be taken in. When he first had a glimpse of the second Chinu, he did not have "the impression that here indeed was the reincarnation of my mother."¹⁶ And yet he was captivated by "her indefinable attractiveness and charm,"¹⁷ which surely was an a priori condition for the scheme to work.

A male reader would recall when he was seven or eight, how he would be attracted by a beautiful teacher in his elementary school. The attraction is certainly innocent; but below the surface, our sexual instincts are at work, as psychologists would tell us. Thus, in the same manner, Tadasu as a child is already drawn toward the lovely woman who is to become his stepmother even before the dream game operates full tilt. That is to say, the father's effort to create a super-imposed image of Mother only reinforces the son's attachment to the second Chinu, but does not necessarily generate it. Without her "indefinable attractiveness and charm," this elaborate game of illusions might

even turn out to be a disillusion.

That does not mean, however, that Tadasu is always aware of the trick. His real longing for the dead mother doubled with his affection for the second one predisposes him to play the game with zeal. This undoubtedly overburdens his young mind, and at times he is found to be truly confused, at least at a subconscious level. But after all, this confusion serves his purpose: that is how he can continue suckling at his stepmother's breast until the age of thirteen, without embarrassment? We can see that the first mother, although dead, still plays an active role in the dream game. Sometimes she is a spiritual force that binds the three players together and sometimes she is an alibi. Yet for the author, there is only one mother in his mind, the Eternal Mother who appears for the first time in "Haha o kouru ki" (1919), again in "Yoshino kuzu" (1931), and then again in Shōshō Shigemoto no haha (1949). The super-imposed image of Mother in "Yume no ukihashi" is undeniably an excellent device to channel the maternal figure back into her original shape.

The characterization of the father in relation to the son, on the other hand, might be said to resemble two faces of the same coin, or two different levels of consciousness within the same man. The father is a dream-maker, and by all means a dreamer. His greatest desire, indeed, is to create dreams and see that they last, even

beyond death. His planning and arrangement of things have in them the calculated determination of an experienced stockbroker. (Incidentally, we are informed that he is a banker). That is not to say that he does not enjoy the game, but without the sensuous instincts of young Tadasu, his ambitious scheme would look like a skeleton. It is the child's passions that flesh out the father's dream.

As a result, among the three characters, three tacit alliances form a triangle, with the image of the first mother, or just Mother, in the middle. Within this triangle, there is only one thing that counts: let the dream continue, at all costs. And at all costs means to ignore all social mores. The father, as we might expect, is the first to show proof of this spirit. As soon as he is aware of his fatal illness, he proceeds to modify the dream game. Thus, the background of the second Chinu is cleverly revealed through the account of nurse Okane, although we shall never know for sure whether he actually instructed her to do so. Next, the infant Takeshi (born of his second marriage) is smuggled away for adoption, also with unclear reasons. We might suppose that Takeshi's presence would obstruct the dream game but "Yume no ukihashi" being a memoir, unanswered questions abound and unsolved mysteries will keep haunting the reader's mind long after the story is finished. We shall have a chance to return to this idea later. Suffice it to say now that the

revelation of the stepmother's identity is very important for our discussion. From this moment on, the two mothers are no longer one.

"Perhaps he had reason to want to sever the connection between my real mother and my stepmother, who had become so closely linked in my mind," the narrator reflects.¹⁸ The reason becomes clearer as he ponders upon the second event. One afternoon, Tadasu now eighteen, chances upon his stepmother in the Silk-Tree Pavillion, milking her breasts (Takeshi has been sent away). She gives him a glass of her milk, tempts him with her full breasts and we witness another suckling scene, this time overwhelmed with the sexual passion of an adolescent. The stepmother's behaviour is again another mystery in the story that remains unsolved.

One thing is clear, however. She too makes a conscious effort to separate herself from the image of the dead mother by referring to her while talking to Tadasu, as "your previous mother" (*mae no okāsan*), something she has never done before. The narrator speculates that his father must have had something to do with her change of attitude. The mental preparation is now ready: the mother-and-child relationship is transformed into one between man and woman.

The truth finally comes out at the father's deathbed. The dream is to be carried on and Tadasu is charged with the new mission, that is, to take care of his stepmother

and give her all his love. The father dies, calling the name Chinu and repeating over and over the phrase Yume no... ukihashi. We can reasonably assume that Chinu here refers to both mothers but Yume no...ukihashi is as ambiguous as the foggy mind of a dying man. Is he content in his last moment that he has been able to link the two dreams of his life together or does he realize that he has spent his entire life dealing with illusions? In any case, his repeated phrase is what the story is essentially about: the human effort to bridge dream to dream.

As far as Tadasu is concerned, the second Chinu has already shed the image of Mother to resume her initial form: the woman whose "indefinable attractiveness and charm" had captivated his fancy ten years earlier. Now with Father's insistence, his love for her is free of guilt, but there is still society to deal with. That's when Sawako, the gardener's daughter, enters the scene. He is to marry her, according to Father's will, and eventually if he has a child, he is also to send it away. The father's last move has in it a touch of ruthless lucidity that is frightening. Paradoxically, it reveals that Tanizaki has not quite forgotten what society thinks about incestuous relationships.

To make this transfer of love from father to son less unnatural, Tanizaki employs an ingenious device: the reader is informed that the second Chinu, whose real name is Tsuneko, is a former geisha. In the cultural

fabric of the traditional Japanese society, being a geisha is not a lowly profession; but the implied fact is that she is still an entertainer for men. In the presence of a geisha, father and son are simply two men.

Likewise, to further distance the two mother images the author uses another device: Tsuneko's pregnancy. The exclusive love between Mother and Tadasu is now broken. A new element of reality has crept in to remind the young man that his stepmother is after all, another woman. The reader begins to feel that the Mother illusion slowly disappears, giving way to new-born "nightmarish fancies."¹⁹

Now we can return to the incest issue with some definite ideas. There are three suckling scenes in the story. The first, involving the real mother, is as innocent as it could be; the second, with the stepmother, hovers on the border of illusion and reality; and the last, in the Silk-Tree Pavillion, has been carefully prepared so that the Mother image is no longer a driving force in the young man's passion. What keeps the critics away from "Yume no ukihashi" is actually their oedipal interpretations of the story: they see in the sexual relationship between Tadasu and his stepmother a perverse disguise for the author's mother complex. In other words, incest is the culmination of his hahakoi theme. On the contrary, we have seen that Tanizaki took pains to avoid this misinterpretation, by using various means--either

by characters' actions or by authorial arrangement-- to put a distance between the two mothers as the boy grows up. The story, then, is incestuous only if we consider stepmother-and-son relationship incestuous.

It follows from the above that Tanizaki is far from being liberated from the taboo as Nomura Shōgo claims. Tanizaki might ignore morality, trample on social conventions, or shock the reader with grotesque devices; but "there is a line one ought not to cross," as he made the narrator observe in the story.²⁰ As a matter of fact, the mother image returns to the aged author once more in Fūten rōjin nikki (1961). She comes to the old protagonist Utsugi in a dream, as ethereal and elusive as she has ever been in "Haha o kouru ki" or Shōshō Shigemoto no haha. The reader can rest assured that the Eternal Mother has safely crossed "The Bridge of Dreams," undisturbed by the incestuous insinuations.

Tanizaki is neither a conformist nor a revolutionary. At the risk of repeating what everyone seems to know, Tanizaki is, first and foremost, an artist with sharp senses, who uses them solely for the appreciation of life. Therefore, the foregoing discussion is only an attempt to remove an obstacle that has proved harmful to the evaluation of the novella. There is indeed no room for psycho-pathology in Tanizaki's fictional world, and a reader who looks for beauty in the psychic depth of the story will surely be disappointed, for the intrinsic

beauty of "Yume no ukihashi" is conversely to be found on the surface, or in the air, so to speak. To use the same metaphor as the title, we might call it a "floating" beauty.

A beauty that floats from one instant to another is vaguely what occurs in our mind when we yearn for the unretrievable past; it carries within itself the poignant memory of a vanished dream. Every detail in "Yume no ukihashi" points to this nostalgia that is so dear to our heart: a feeling of loss that pervades human life from childhood to old age in which every moment and every place has its own significance. Understandably enough, in our occasional escape from reality we tend to take refuge in the most beautiful memories of the past and that is where Tanizaki's success lies, because he offers the reader a nostalgic vision that corresponds to the latter's mood of reverie and regret.

Needless to say, this nostalgic vision does not come about by chance. It is prepared with consummate skill, as we may expect from Tanizaki. Just as the fragrance of burning incense and the lingering echo of a bell enhance the sacredness of a temple, the narrator's journey to the past begins in a dream-like atmosphere born of a poetic union between nature and man. Heron's Nest, for instance, is so named "because night herons often alighted in its garden. Even now, herons occasionally come swooping down. Although I have seldom actually seen them, I have often

heard their long, strident cry."²¹

The shallow stream that flows past the main gate of Heron's Nest is likewise not just any ordinary stream. It is linked with the Kamo River, a geographical element rich in poetic allusions. Even Tadasu's name is also the name of the woods that surround his house and the Shimogamo Shrine.²² The water mortar itself is not simply a bamboo device to amuse the grown-ups with its staccato movement but has a history of its own, deeply embedded in the cultural tradition of Kyoto. The ancient capital and its genius loci, indeed, have lent Tanizaki a great hand in the creation of his dream castle.

Some readers might find Tadasu's meticulous depiction of the setting somewhat exaggerated. While it is open to debate, at least on one level it serves to show the narrator's profound attachment to his childhood home. His clear remembrance of the house and its surroundings furthermore offsets the hazy image of Mother, a haziness that is not due to a failing memory, but is produced by the power of illusion. In more than one way, the substantial presence of Heron's Nest is a sorrowful reminder of the days gone by. It stands as a solemn witness to the happy and sad moments that take turns affecting its dwellers. On its grounds, three deaths take place, involving successively the first mother, father and stepmother. All three have different functions in the plot. The first, as we have suggested, is to trigger the dream game, the

second to test its viability and the third to end it all. It is worth noting that the third death (the stepmother's) is caused by another kind of dweller of Heron's Nest that Tanizaki, in his deceptively casual manner, has already introduced to the reader in the early pages: the centipede.

Therefore, from the viewpoint of plot structure, Heron's Nest is ubiquitously important. Except for an excursion to Shizuichino, undertaken by the narrator in search of his half-brother Takeshi, all the major events of the novella take place within its boundary. Tanizaki wrote "Yume no ukihashi" almost as a softer version of a ghost story. All the ingredients are there: a well-defined mansion in a remote location, an intelligent but taciturn landlord, the ghost of a beloved person, a beautiful woman and a perceptive child. There is intrigue, there is death and above all, there is a sense of mystery that runs through the tale.

It turns out that this sense of mystery is what keeps the reader's interest alive. The reason is, as we have indicated earlier in this analysis, that the beauty of "Yume" is to be found in every single moment of the past related, wonderfully brought back to life by the author's masterful skill in sensory expression. This indication unfortunately implies also that whenever the story is reduced to a mere account of past events, its distinctive quality will also begin to wane. As a result, the reader will occasionally experience uninspiring passages which

are there simply for the plot's sake, and indeed it is sometimes difficult to determine whether their presence would enhance the beauty of the fleeting moments or would actually weaken it. The account of the father's sickness, for instance, is much too long and its clinical aspect somehow damages the essentially dream-like effect of the novella.

To compensate for this almost unavoidable defect, Tanizaki provides the reader with some entertainment: he challenges the latter's detective instinct. Mystery starts right from the beginning with the poem "Bridge of Dreams" signed by Chinu. Till the end of the story, neither the narrator nor the reader find out which mother wrote it. What arouses our curiosity even more is her thick, fleshy Konoe style of calligraphy which probably "reveals something of her personality."²³ Till the end of the story, neither the narrator nor the reader know the real motive of the stepmother's behaviour in the Silk-Tree Pavillion scene. Similarly, the father's thinking is also as puzzling as his last words, "the bridge...of dreams," that seal his fate in mystery.

The most ingenious stroke, however, is the stepmother's death. It is as if the author, intuitively feeling the decline in the reader's interest, devised this violent death as an electric shock to jolt the story back to life. The stepmother died, bitten by a centipede that Tadasu suspects was put on her body by Sawako during a

massage session. This might be a freak accident or this might be of criminal intention. In any case, Tadasu's suspicion at least serves as a good excuse for him to divorce his wife. The baffled reader, as usual, will never know the truth.

In most cases, the reader is accompanied by the narrator in his attempt to find an answer. Sometimes however, he is left all by himself to do the detective work. This happens when the narrator deliberately hides the truth from him. Tantalizing the reader with "Of course, all that I record here is true: I do not allow myself the slightest falsehood or distortion. But there are limits even to telling the truth..." and "although I certainly never write anything untrue, neither do I write the whole of the truth,"²⁴ the narrator sets the bait to lure the reader into wracking his brain over numerous frustrating questions.

For example: is there really a sexual relationship between the narrator and his stepmother? If there is, does it take place before or after the father's death? If it took place after, things would be rather simple, but if it took place before, there could be further implications. Takeshi, for instance, could be the narrator's son. If we try to piece the chronological information together, we shall realize that our suspicion is not groundless. Let us take the year the stepmother gives birth to Takeshi as a landmark. He was born in May. Earlier in

January, the narrator "learned that Mother was pregnant."²⁵ Then it was last autumn (the previous year) "that Father noticed a change in the state of his health and went to be examined by Dr. Kato."²⁶ The doctor had this to say: "I must ask you to refrain from sexual intercourse..."²⁷ and Father accepted: "I'll do as you've told me."²⁸

Now let us assume that last autumn could be last September, and that from that time on there was no more sexual intercourse between Father and Mother, then her pregnancy by January is rather suspicious. There are also nine months between last September and May, which stand for a natural gestation period. Of course, Tanizaki is clever enough not to give any precise date, but the hint might be there, on purpose.

If our suspicion proves to be correct, Tadasu's journey to Shizuichino in search of Takeshi can be seen as motivated by a sense of guilt. Similarly, there is all the more reason for Tadasu to bring the child back at the end when the second Chinu is dead and he is divorced. Takeshi is then a responsibility, a sad memento, and obviously a vain effort to perpetuate the dream. This effort, in fact, is what tells us that the link between Tanizaki's "Yume no ukihashi" and the last chapter of The Tale of Genji is not only thematic, but also contextual. In Kaoru's letter to Ukifune, delivered by her own brother, Kaoru asks: "Have you forgotten this boy? I keep him here beside me in memory of one who

disappeared."²⁹

The one who disappeared in "Yume" brought the dream game to an end. The haunted mansion Heron's Nest is sold, and the only survivor lives on in the aftermath of a vanished dream. Takeshi who looks exactly like Mother is the narrator's new source of comfort, but how long a dream substitute can replace a dream is what we all want to know.

The answer might easily have come from the author himself. Not too long, he would likely say; because a dream is not just a vague longing: it is as substantial as a woman's breast.

CHAPTER FOUR

Dreams often make reality seem harsher than it actually is. Tanizaki however, at the age of seventy-five, has found an antidote for this. It is not so much that he tries to make reality less harsh as that he turns much of it into something comical, though without the light-heartedness of a popular comedy. That is what we shall experience in Fūten rōjin nikki (Diary of a Mad Old Man, 1961), after having left the nebulous dreamland of "Yume no ukihashi."

Fūten rōjin nikki is, as the title indicates, a diary kept by a sick old man of seventy-seven. The novel is comprised of his diary, followed by three extracts from his nurse's report, his doctor's record, and his daughter's notes. The main body of the novel is, of course, Old Utsugi's diary which starts with an entry dated June 16th and breaks off with the one dated November 18th of the same year. To be exact, that represents one hundred and fifty-five days of Utsugi's life. It is a short span of time compared to his long existence, but Utsugi seems to enjoy the thrill of a lifetime and barely survives at the end.

Old Utsugi is indeed physically very sick. He is besieged with high blood pressure, neuralgia and has

trouble walking. However, his mind is still as alert and scheming as that of a mischievous youth always on the lookout for excitement. Conveniently, he is provided with excitement right in his home in the form of his daughter-in-law Satsuko, whose beauty and waywardness greatly correspond to his demanding taste in women. She then becomes the divine object of his adoration. The plot evolves around this apparently absurd infatuation of an impotent old man with his devious but stunning daughter-in-law and results in a drama wherein the tragic aspect of man's fate is gracefully watered down by the comic and lurking death overcome by an extraordinary will to live. What seems to be madness often turns out to be self-irony in disguise.

The novel is written in katakana, except for the last part--the three extracts--which is written in hiragana. This is certainly done on purpose. The contrast between the stiff, formal katakana and the smooth, informal hiragana draws the line between the secret world of the old man's imagination and the commonplace world of the "outsiders." The serious-looking katakana, moreover, seems to make the self-mockery underneath the lines much more humorous. It should be noted in passing that the original text only gives the date for each entry of Utsugi's diary (e.g. sixteen instead of June 16--translator Hibbett has added the month for the reader's convenience). The reason for this might be that it gives

the impression of a temporal flow of daily events that is renewed at short intervals instead of the more linear notion of month and year that inexorably reminds one of the passing of time.

The formless diary genre becomes a most effective tool in the hands of Tanizaki. It allows the author to throw about his thoughts casually, disconnect them at will and rearrange them according to his mood. This pattern of behaviour perfectly suits the characterization of an old man whose sexual fantasy is often interrupted by physical pain and routine medical treatment. The entries are of varying lengths and are not always written daily. Nevertheless, balance is maintained throughout the work due to the shorter entries which are inserted between the longer ones, although it is these that usually contain all the elements of interest.

Balance, however, is not one of Utsugi's fortes. He is extreme not only in his passion for Satsuko, but in almost everything he does. He can treat his wife and daughters with utmost disdain and he can spend hours filling in his diary, in spite of his aching arm. Utsugi is a type, just as Shunkin and Sasuke are types. Tanizaki's characters are often the projection of a certain image of individuals "that happens to capture his creative ambition," as Sumie Jones observes.¹ What makes Utsugi so impressive to the reader is that Tanizaki employs all of his imaginative powers to turn Utsugi into an extra-

ordinary character without sacrificing his basic humanity. For example, as unfeeling as he is toward his family, Utsugi breaks down crying when his grandson Keisuke comes to his sickbed for a stealthy visit (entry of October 19).

Perhaps the best method to use when examining a diary is to start from the beginning. The first entry, June 16, gives us a glimpse of the diarist's attitude toward art, or life in general. The physical appearance of the Kabuki actors are as important to him as their talent at performing. Those who play women's roles interest him the most, although "not off stage."² We feel in the presence of an old man who is candidly attracted to feminine beauty and who knows how to enjoy the soothing effect of illusions without mistaking them for reality. In other words, Utsugi is a man who is comfortable with both opposing aspects of human life and, moreover, seems to make the best of them. His single experience with an onnagata is related matter-of-factly and even his impotency is mentioned with naturalness. Perhaps to a person of his age, pretense and self-consciousness appear as vain as vanity itself.

Nevertheless, the difference between Utsugi and most of his aged counterparts is that he is still interested in sexual adventure. From the June 17 entry on, this adventure gradually takes place, inevitably with a fascinating woman at the center. In the first entry, we learn that Satsuko accompanies Utsugi and his wife to the

theater. Her name is mentioned casually and we have no inkling of her incredible role in the story. This information is immediately followed by Utsugi's musing on acting and we are thrown off-guard until the author determinedly--and skillfully--leads us back to what he has in mind before he ends the entry: "Even if you're impotent you have a kind of sex life."³

In Fūten rōjin, we shall witness Tanizaki's genius in using art motifs to embellish reality. For him, art is not an abstract concept, as we have often suggested: it needs the support of flesh and skin. Sex, which is the essential element of life, has indeed always been the driving force in his writing. For this reason, many critics dismiss Tanizaki as a writer without philosophy, but Itō Sei counters that to consider sex as an ideal in life is in itself a philosophy.⁴ Whatever the case, Old Utsugi seems little concerned about this intellectual problem. In the June 19 entry, he bluntly declares that sexual stimulation and food are the two things that keep him alive. But this crude reality is given distance by the scattered presence of art motifs throughout the story. Religious symbols also come in handy. It might not be a mistake to say that Tanizaki starts his writing career as an artist drawing beauty from the realities of life but toward the end of his existence, he becomes a "realist" drawing beauty from art. It is the energizing effect of art versus life and vice versa that characterizes Tani-

zaki's works and perhaps has something to do with his longevity, both in life and in writing.

In this sense, Utsugi is very much a self-portrait of the author himself. Without necessarily being an autobiography, Fūten rōjin nikki is the key to our understanding of Tanizaki's youthful energy. The adventure that refuses to end even beyond the last entry of November 18 is more than entertaining. It is profoundly life-inspiring. The point is not to stay alive at any cost, but to stay alive because there are things worth living for. Whatever the things may be for each one of us, for Utsugi, they are sexual fantasy and food. If worst comes to worst, sexual fantasy might just be the thing that keeps him alive, as insinuated in Nurse Sasaki's Report.⁵

It is in the June 17 entry that Satsuko enters the scene. Her first line, "I understand what Father means," deliberately reveals the collusion between her and her father-in-law.⁶ What she gets from this collusion is material favors in return for the sexual stimulation that she dispenses to Utsugi, stingily or generously, depending on the importance of her requests. For an imported handbag that costs over twenty thousand yen for instance, Utsugi receives the leftover of her hamo dish along with the plum sauce that she has smeared around untidily when the family goes to a restaurant in the Ginza (entry June 18).

The contrast with his wife's perfectly neat leftovers

makes Satsuko's all the more erotic to Utsugi. "Maybe she did it on purpose," the old man muses.⁷ Indeed, it is not the food that he really wants, but rather the hidden excitement stirred by anything connected with his idol. Utsugi is no longer capable of the act of love-making but the pleasures of the senses he still can enjoy--especially when they involve Satsuko.

The food motif here is rich in meaning. Sharing food is always a sign of affection, and although Utsugi understands very well that Satsuko does it with different intentions, he simply will not let lucidity destroy the momentous happiness created by illusion. In short, he even puts illusions to good use. It follows in later entries that whenever he has an "erotic thriller" (pinkī surirā) with Satsuko, his enjoyment is extreme even at the risk of dying. Again, Satsuko has more favors to ask, and again, Utsugi complies in total disregard for his family.

These blissful instants are in fact rather rare. What Utsugi constantly faces is his clinical condition and a foreboding of death. The reader gets acquainted with both in the June 19 entry. They will not stop there however. All through the pages sickness and the shadow of death are built into the infrastructure of the novel, relentlessly reminding the reader of reality. Standing above them on a pedestal, fortunately, is a dazzling Satsuko whose beauty possesses the life-giving power of

a Bodhisattva.

In "Yume no ukihashi," we have said that the clinical details of the father's sickness somehow damage the dream-like atmosphere of the story. In Fūten rōjin nikki, on the contrary, they are a necessity. As a technical device, Utsugi's physical suffering and the various medical treatments he has to endure--from the Glisson's sling to acupuncture to the Xylocaine-injection experiment (entry October 21)--serve to offset the exciting moments he spends with Satsuko. As a thematic device, they represent the harshness of reality that can only be overcome by a passion for life which in turn is embodied in the beauty of the female principle.

Be that as it may, while Satsuko inspires the hero to endure physical suffering with courage, she cannot make it less painful. Death is different. It frightens him at times but since it is an abstract idea until it actually arrives, Utsugi knows how to make it less terrifying. He pictures the scene of his last moments, with someone singing "The Moon at Dawn" and naturally, with Satsuko at his side. Art and beauty are his eternal companions even in death. These two motifs will be magnified many times when we come to the end of the diary in a climactic scene that contains almost everything that Tanizaki stands for in his writing: his worship for beauty, his passion for art and life, his foot-fetishism, his masochism... and more importantly, his boundless

vitality that had gushed forth from "Shisei" half a century before and still flowed in his veins with ever-growing vigor.

The first bodily contact that takes place between the two principal characters is noted in the June 20 entry. Old Utsugi finds a good opportunity to ask Satsuko to let him see her feet. "She stretched both legs out on the sofa and peeled off her nylons to show me. I put her feet on my lap and clasped each of her toes in my hand, one by one," the diarist relates.⁸ Two things are worth noting here: the pleasure of the sense of touch and Utsugi's rapture for the woman's feet. Hardly developed in this little scene, they will soon return in force with a slight change in a series of scenes involving Satsuko's foot and the sense of taste, which, as far as sexuality is concerned, is an erotic extension of the sense of touch. The scenes are built up gradually for the effect of suspense. Between the preliminary foot scene above and the subsequent ones however, there are a few elements that deserve our attention.

First of all there is the poem written on the hanging scroll at the end of the June 20 entry. We shall notice that there exist three quotations of poetry in this novel, the other two being found in entries for September 3 and October 29. They may all sound like a casual note by the diarist but from an authorial viewpoint, they are there intentionally to share along with other art motifs and

religious imagery. This is part of the narrative responsibility to produce a structural balance and to impart an aura of esthetic elegance to a story that might otherwise be treated as a case of perverted eroticism. Interspersed between physical suffering and thrilling moments, all those symbolic devices appear so refreshing, so purifying that the reader hardly feels weighed down by reality. In fact, they seem to be there to ease Utsugi's pain and divert the deadly tension that arises from the sexual stimulation.

In a paper presented at the Nitobe-Ohira Conference in Japanese Studies held at the University of British Columbia in Summer 1984, Mr. Hagiwara Takao suggested that the art motifs in Fūten function "chiefly as distance-makers. They create a distance firstly between Utsugi and Satsuko and secondly between this world and the other world."⁹ The reason for this distancing, he argues, is that Utsugi's relationship with Satsuko "tends to become very intimate and raw, and thus even vulgar,"¹⁰ and that his feeling "content" with the idea of death also tends to destroy some of its poignant mystery. The art motifs are there to elevate this double relationship to the level of refined art. Hagiwara's esthetic view corroborates our view that Tanizaki's use of art motifs is quite clever in a novel whose style is deceptively casual. That is, without careful observation we are likely to miss its subtle function because, in Kathleen Merken's words,

"it (the use of art motifs) is rendered without the author directing the reader's attention to his ideas or his techniques."¹¹

The second element that catches our attention is Utsugi's musing on feminine beauty. Linked with his masochistic confession that he is "more attracted, more fascinated by women who cause (him) pain,"¹² Utsugi sets out to define his Ideal Woman: beautiful, with white, slender legs and delicate feet to be sure, but with a face that reveals "a streak of cruelty,"¹³ the kind of face that he finds in Simone Signoret who plays the criminal in Les Diaboliques, or in Takahashi Oden, again another notorious murderess in early Meiji. Utsugi concludes: "Sometimes I think I would be happier if a woman like Oden turned up to kill me."¹⁴

It sounds like wishful thinking but Utsugi does manage to come rather close to this dream, in a slightly different way. He has found something of Oden in Satsuko and has deliberately "groomed" her in that direction. In the July 12 entry, we see all the dark side of Satsuko: how she is spiteful, sarcastic; how she is a bit of a liar; how she shocks people with her passion for violent sports ("You get excited when you see blood. That's part of the fun!"); and how the masochist Utsugi, in a moment akin to ecstasy, felt "an excruciating pain in my left hand. And yet I also felt an acute sense of pleasure. As I looked into Satsuko's malicious face the pain--and

the pleasure--become more and more intense."¹⁵ The artist Seikichi in "Shisei" is now back again, with fifty years weighing on his decrepit shoulders but still with as much passion in his eternally young heart.

Another element of interest is a bedtime scene which, although it is trivial, strengthens our impression of Utsugi's "healthy" sense of taste and which explains his love for food and sex in spite of his impotency. One night, when Nurse Sasaki is away, Satsuko takes her place to sleep in Utsugi's bedroom (entry July 23). As she hands him two pills of Adalin, the excited old man slyly suggests: "While you're at it, why not give it to me mouth-to-mouth?"¹⁶ His request is coldly rejected but somehow it reminds us of the pleasure he certainly had when he ate Satsuko's leftover dish, and it also anticipates the great thrill that is in store for him in the following scenes described in entries for July 26, July 28 and, with a small break between, August 11.

We might call them the bathroom scenes, for they all take place in Utsugi's bathroom. To make a long story short, Satsuko takes a shower while leaving the door unlocked so that the old man can sneak in. Then, in three separate sessions, she indulges his sexual fantasies, at first by letting him wipe her back exposed between the shower curtains and by allowing him to kiss her leg. Next, in the third entry (August 11), we see the old man crouching down and, her little toes in his mouth, suckling

rapturously.

These erotic scenes are probably what earned Fūten rōjin nikki the label of "semi-pornographic," along with Kagi (The Key, 1955), written some six years earlier. But while Kagi sustains a serious mood throughout the story, Fūten entertains the reader with its ironic tone that turns the scenes almost into caricatures. While the reader might be aroused by the "strip-tease" effect of a "flicker of a shoulder, a knee"¹⁷ between the curtains, or a leg half-veiled that evokes the intimacy of a gynecological examination, he is even more inclined to laugh at the pathetic kneeling figure of the lecherous old man.

"Waves of terror, excitement, pleasure surged within me; pains as violent as a heart attack gripped my chest....," Utsugi notes.¹⁸ The consequence is alarming. His blood pressure shoots up to a dangerous level while Nurse Sasaki panics in the absence of a plausible cause. The old man remains silent, "stoically" resigned to his end. If Oden-Satsuko does not kill him as he wishes, he will let himself be killed by her irresistible temptation all the same.

This erotic thriller however does not kill Utsugi. Together with another one described in the August 18 entry, involving a "necking" session that lasts over twenty minutes, they form the culminating point of erotica in the story. This is nearly halfway through the diary and, structurally speaking, this peak marks the end of a series

of physical contacts between Utsugi and Satsuko. In its wake, we find an Utsugi given to reverie, exposed to more physical anguish and finally, seized by a surge of artistic impulses in another climactic scene that forms the second peak of the novel. In terms of plot pattern, Fūten rōjin nikki may indeed be considered as having two peaks (the second one relatively higher) with different functions but which are mutually related. We shall elaborate further on this point when we come to the end. Along the way, it is interesting to note that there is a marked shift in direction that makes the second half of the diary (from about the August 19 entry on) larger in scope and deeper in meaning.

The first movement in space is found in the August 20 entry, when the diarist goes to Karuizawa with Satsuko and Nurse Sasaki. The trip in itself is trivial but it forecasts the Kyoto trip that assumes the narrative importance of a subplot. On the other hand, the first movement in time is recorded in the September 3 entry. Summer is gone and the early autumn brings with it melancholy and nostalgia. Utsugi's reminiscence of his childhood amidst the chirping crickets and in his nurse's arms leads to his speculations on the differences between women of the past and the present. The travel in time of Utsugi's psyche will soon reach the future in the form of his spacial journey to Kyoto in search of an ideal burial place.

Even in his space-time movement Utsugi never seems

to be uprooted from reality. As a matter of fact reality, however pitiful or ridiculous, is often used in this novel for comical effect. Irony, satire, self-mockery, along with the art motifs, can be regarded as highly efficient distance-makers that allow the diarist--or, by extension, the author--to view the world and himself with detachment. The chirping of the cricket Utsugi thought he heard somewhere at dawn (entry September 4) triggers the memory of his early childhood depicted with nostalgic overtones. This poetic mood however ends abruptly upon his realization that the cricket's chirp is in fact the sound of his own breathing. Interestingly, Utsugi's reaction is not one of disillusion but on the contrary, of fascination: he goes on experimenting with this whistling noise as if it came from another person. The ability to laugh at himself is what makes Utsugi's diary completely devoid of grimness and self-pity.

To illustrate this point, a comparison with a masterpiece of Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成 (1899-1972) seems appropriate. Nemureru bijo 眠る美女 (House of Sleeping Beauties, 1969)¹⁹ also deals with an old man's sexual urge. The protagonist Eguchi is ten years younger than Utsugi, still potent, but starts frequenting a secret house that caters to the needs of impotent old men with drugged-to-sleep girls. The story describes the nights he spends with those various slumbering beauties, his memories, his dreams, his frustrations... In this esoteric

setting, the characterization of Eguchi is superbly realistic. Unlike Utsugi, who seems to be a rare specimen among mortals, Eguchi is the faithful image of an old man in his declining years. The narrative is imbued with bitterness and self-pity, a kind of pathos that verges on depression. Kawabata's writing genius has transformed this fabulous tale of sexual fantasy into a psychological mirror of old age. As we might expect, the reflection is painful to watch.

Fūten rōjin nikki presents a totally different drama. Whereas in Nemureru bijo old age is treated almost as the ultimate tragedy of a man's life, in Fūten, Utsugi's humorous view makes the world an amusing stage and old age an integral part of the human comedy. Utsugi spares no one--including himself. Of his daughter Kugako, he mumbles, "She calls Mrs. Yutani a gossip, but when it comes to gossiping she can hold her own."²⁰ His nephew Haruhisa, who is also Satsuko's lover, is not rated very high either in Utsugi's opinion when compared with her dog Leslie: "Leslie's features are aristocratic, he has a certain air of nobility. Perhaps he is more handsome than that rather negroid-looking Haruhisa."²¹ Even his idol Satsuko is not immune. After having bought the three-million-yen jewel, Satsuko returns, the old man remarks, "like a triumphant general."²² But the most exhilarating is definitely his own description: "Even a chimpanzee would have been better-looking."²³

What the reader finds in Utsugi's diary is a mirror, not of old age, but of life. Life as it actually is, life as it should be, and life as Utsugi makes it. With death looming in the background, every remaining day of Utsugi's existence takes on an urgent meaning, to be dispelled in great part by his sense of humour.

It should be noted however that Utsugi is not always funny. He can be deadly serious at times. Entries for October 22 and 23 reveal a frightened Utsugi, debating with himself to find a convincing reason to face the dreaded injection experiment. The second half of the November 17 entry gives us another glimpse of the suffering diarist whose bruised heart (Satsuko has rushed back to Tokyo) leads him almost to the brink of insanity. These occasional moments of seriousness, in fact, bring Utsugi closer to the reader. The more we perceive the humanity in him, the more we admire his courageous fight for survival. Utsugi is Everyman and at the same time he is extraordinary. As we have discovered by now, the secret of his life-inspiring attitude is a happy combination of a sense of humour and a passion for art and beauty.

So far, it sounds as if Utsugi dominated the novel. In his role as the diarist, of course he does, but the truth is that he has found an equal match in the characterization of Satsuko. Viewed exclusively from Utsugi's eyes, Satsuko is a fascinating presence. The very epitome of a modern Oriental woman, Satsuko takes tremendous

pleasure in the material aspect of freedom which the West brought along with its civilization: driving a British car, wearing European clothes, watching boxing fights and having a lover almost publicly. All this is performed however, not in a matter-of-fact way that would look natural to a Western woman, but rather in an exotic manner which might best be described as a blend of charming haughtiness and blissful innocence.

Upon closer examination, Satsuko is a much more complex character than her appearance would lead us to believe. Having to put up with a lecherous father-in-law, Satsuko knows how to make things work both ways. We do not know who starts to manipulate whom, but in the interplay of the heroine and the hero, their inner self is often laid bare to the reader's benefit. More than in any other work of Tanizaki's, this interplay is carried out by two characters of equal power and equal determination. Both try to outsmart each other, and both try to obtain as much as they can from the intrigue. Sometimes Satsuko has the upper hand, sometimes Utsugi does, but every winning trick reveals a little of their personality. Entries for October 9 and 13 will give us a clear idea about the inner working of their minds.

The pain in Utsugi's hand has been so intense that for five days he has been bed-ridden. While in bed suffering, he still wracks his brain for a subterfuge that would induce Satsuko into giving him a real mouth-to-

mouth kiss. "I would scream tearfully, like a child," he schemes.²⁴ At first, he thinks of shamming extreme pain so that Satsuko would pity him, but when the moment of action arrives, his hand actually hurts him to the point that his screams "Satsu! It hurts!" are perfectly real.²⁵ What follows is a parody of the pathetic condition of an old man in the grips of his second-childhood crisis. "Tears streamed down my cheeks, the snivel ran from my nose, saliva dribbled from my mouth. I really howled-- it wasn't an act, the instant I screamed "Satsu!" I had become a naughty, unruly child again," Utsugi notes.²⁶

Satsuko's reaction to subdue this "unruly child" is extraordinary. It is at the same time confident, charming, understanding and intelligent. This is the Satsuko that most impresses the reader in spite of all her idiosyncrasies. Still, there is a short moment of uneasy silence at the outset when Satsuko is not sure whether the old man is really crazy or is only pretending. This moment of perplexity is significant in that it uncovers for the first time her vulnerability to Utsugi's strong will, a deed quite rare in Tanizaki's writing where the beautiful females usually lead their men by the nose. Therefore, if it is true that Utsugi has found an equal match in Satsuko, it is also true that Satsuko has found an equal match in Utsugi.

Tanizaki loves playing. For him, playing is more than a way of life; it is life itself. Without play,

humanity would probably be reduced to a huge army of ants forever busying themselves with the boring task of survival. His stories therefore throng with characters who are engaged in some sort of game or another. As an example, the father-in-law in Some Prefer Nettles (1928) comes readily to mind. Hardly an old man, he decidedly plays an old man and the satisfaction he derives from the game seems to justify his calculated effort. The professor in Kagi also plays an erotic game that gives him tremendous delight but eventually costs him his life. And naturally, the dream game in "Yume no ukihashi" is not to be forgotten.

Along the same line, the odd couple Utsugi-Satsuko reminds us of two chess players of equal talent. Since they know each other perfectly well, every move by the opponent is susceptible to anticipation, but their originality is such that now and then they are bound to surprise each other. This observation leads us to the second climax of the novel, in which the surprise baffles one and nearly kills the other.

On November 12th, Utsugi, in the company of Nurse Sasaki and Satsuko, travels to Kyoto to choose his grave. As he confesses in the November 10 entry, having Satsuko along "was actually the principal object of my trip. Looking for a burial place was something of a pretext."²⁷ Thus, on the train and at the hotel where they are to stay during the visit, the scheming old man attempts one move

after another to keep Satsuko by his side, but to no avail. Then, while studying the design of tombstone to suit his grave, Utsugi suddenly comes up with a fascinating idea: instead of engraving the image of a Bodhisattva on his tombstone, why not Satsuko's? "Nothing could be better than to lie buried under her image," to quote the diary.²⁸ This impulse finally leads to his decision to have Buddha's Footprint carved on his tombstone, using Satsuko's footprint as model.

We shall now closely examine this scene, in view of its utmost importance in the book. The footprint-carving idea is definitely one of the best literary devices Tanizaki has ever thought of in his entire career. In one masterful stroke, he sums up and confirms almost everything that his works have been known for. First, he brings out the passionate artist in the image of Old Utsugi spending the whole day dabbing Satsuko's feet. His frenzy for such a trifling work of art may be ridiculous but, beside its intent of self-parody, it can also be viewed in a more favorable light. Commenting on the author's unusual quest for divine beauty, Noriko Lippit has this to say: "In (Tanizaki), art plays a significant role in (his) grotesque endeavor to restore the sense of life."²⁹ In the specific case of the mad artist Utsugi, his preposterous effort is not to restore the sense of life, but rather to prepare himself for Nirvana. As we have indicated earlier in the analysis, art and beauty, his

inseparable companions, will follow him to the grave.

Next, Tanizaki's masochism and foot-fetishism are nowhere as well expressed as in the following paragraph, when Utsugi imagines Satsuko's footprint on his tombstone:

When she treads on my grave and feels as if she's trampling on that doting old man's bones, my spirit will still be alive, feeling the whole weight of her body, feeling pain, feeling the fine-grained velvety smoothness of the sole of her feet...

Between sobs I would scream: "It hurts! It hurts!... Even though it hurts, I'm happy--I've never been more happy, I'm much, much happier than when I was alive!... Trample harder! Harder!" 30

The apotheosis of the Eternal Woman also reaches its culminating point. "My only conceivable divinity is Satsuko," Utsugi confesses.³¹ In the old man's fancy, at this point Satsuko is no mere human--she is a Bodhisattva. In the reader's observation however, also at this point, Satsuko represents both a goddess and a demon as Hagiwara Takao cleverly points out in the same paper mentioned earlier:

If we compare, as Utsugi himself does, Satsuko's madonna-like quality to the Bodhisattva Seishi, we can associate her dark, destructive nature to Kali, the dark ancient Indian goddess, the archetypal terrible mother, who dances her cosmic dance of destruction and procreation upon the corpse of her consort Vishnu. 32

Glancing back at the first climactic scene, we can now pinpoint the difference between the two peaks of the novel. Although they are equally exciting, the bathroom

scenes are actually a build-up for the foot-dabbing scene and as a result, they are not equal in intensity and thematic importance. In the bathroom scenes, Satsuko is the manipulator, rationing out her sexual favors to the old man. But in the foot-dabbing scene, Utsugi is master of the situation, freely savouring every minute of his creative time. The first peak shows a playful Utsugi still enjoying life as a game but the second peak displays his vulnerability as he is carried away by his own passion. When life ceases to be a game, the threat of death becomes an ugly reality.

From a thematic viewpoint, the first climax deals with eroticism in its most mundane form, whereas the second one elevates it to a transcendental, almost supernatural, level. It looks as if Tanizaki created the second climax to purify the vulgarity of the first one and at the same time hinted that the highest degree of eroticism is in itself a form of religion. Undoubtedly the tremendous energy in Utsugi's single-minded performance represents the author's effort to bring the Tantric Paradise within his reach.

Utsugi's 'highest degree of eroticism' however, proves to be too much for Satsuko. To return to our chess-playing analogy, his surprise move--the foot-dabbing initiative--overwhelms her and causes her to flee back to Tokyo the next day without warning. Satsuko's escape is in turn a surprise move that is responsible for the old man's

collapse.

In the last entry (November 18), the image of Satsuko as a Bodhisattva-Kali complex undergoes another transformation. We may consider this as a subtle trick on the part of the author to redirect the reader to the ultimate manifestation of his Eternal Woman. This happens after Satsuko's flight and Old Utsugi rushes back to Tokyo steaming with rage. His diary relates the subsequent scene as he arrives at the Tokyo train station:

I fumed and fretted so much they were at their wit's end with me--until I felt a soft hand nestling in mine. The hand was Satsuko's.
 "Now Father, you'd better do as I say!"
 I quieted down obediently, and the chair started moving at once. 33

Anyone who has read the famous Chinese novel Journey to the West will certainly remember the episode when the malicious Monkey terrorizes the Heavenly Court and finally gets captured by Buddha's palm.³⁴ In Utsugi's case, Satsuko's soft hand has the same conquering power. Satsuko alone knows it and for everyone else's sake, has used it at the right moment. From the image of a Bodhisattva in the old man's fantasy, she is now even in the reader's eyes, the Bodhisattva herself. The Kali aspect becomes a dim shadow and Satsuko-Bodhisattva will ascend upon her lotus platform, "wearing a crown, with jeweled streamers dangling on her breast, with her heavenly robe fluttering in the wind."³⁵ This is the life-giving image of the Eternal Woman that Tanizaki ultimately wants us to see.

Utsugi's diary breaks off here, but the novel is not over yet. The three extracts that give a finishing touch to the story function in a tongue-in-cheek manner to offer the reader a totally different view of the "mad old man." In both Nurse Sasaki's Report and Dr. Katsumi's Clinical Record, Utsugi is seen as a suffering patient in light of his physical predicament. There is no trace of the humorous diarist who has so far entertained the reader with his sexual adventures. Utsugi is reduced to a clinical case that possibly hints at the common perception that the "rational" world usually holds of the artist. Itsuko's Notes give him back some humanity, but in her account of Utsugi's obsession with Satsuko's footprints, we can sense a certain bewilderment, as if she had doubts about his mental sanity. Again, her attitude might represent that of the "common" world toward the artist in general.

The one who comes closest to understanding Utsugi is decidedly his son Jokichi. At the end, Itsuko quotes him as saying, "The old man's head is full of daydreams, just watching them work on that pool...."³⁶ It is true that Utsugi lives with dreams, or illusions, which in turn keep him alive. But his dreams are never vague, as is the case with "Yume no ukihashi"; they now have the curvacious form of a mermaid playing in water. For this sublime vision alone, he will remain with us humans.

Utsugi's survival, however, gives rise to controversy among scholars. While most Japanese critics express a

favorable opinion, their Western counterparts seem to hesitate. Donald Keene, for one, thinks that "Fūten" is a captivating book, marred only by the weak ending. Probably this was because the logical ending, the death of the old man, was the one subject Tanizaki at this stage of his life could not treat with humor."³⁷ Edward Seidensticker is harsher in his comments. He says:

The old man ought to die and does not, and the novel falls to pieces at the point where his diary gives way to the diaries and notebooks of those around him... There are clever tricks at the end of the book, but they are only tricks, and the novel is killed that the old man may live. 38

It becomes obvious that by normal standards of Western literary criticism, the death of the old man is called for so that Fūten rōjin nikki could have achieved the "dignified" status of a tragi-comedy. While there is no possibility of settling the issue, we might at least try to offer an interpretation. From a symbolic viewpoint for instance, it might be argued that Utsugi's survival not only does not kill the story, but on the contrary, immortalizes it. His survival has turned Tanizaki's crowning novel into a legend. If a frivolous comparison may be allowed, Utsugi will live on like Count Dracula, casting a shadow of fear on beautiful women. He will soon be tottering to the swimming pool, leaning heavily on his cane, just to catch a fleeting glimpse of the lovely shape of his eternal idol. That might well be all he can

do. But his incredible vitality will keep her at bay. As long as he lives, Satsuko will have to reckon with his undaunted presence. In a way, Utsugi has vindicated all his male counterparts in other Tanizaki's stories, who have usually been made to suffer at a woman's whims. It is as if toward the end of the author's life, his true self emerges, crystallized in the towering figure of his persona Utsugi. It is the Tanizaki that will remain in the reader's mind, the Tanizaki who has a great passion for art and beauty, who looks at the world around him with an amused eye, and who, if life is not a dream, will turn it into a dream, and if life is not a game, will turn it into a game. It is the Tanizaki who makes life wonderfully interesting for himself and his reader.

CONCLUSION

Both dream and game died with the passing of the author on July 30, 1965, the day Edward Seidensticker thought "considerably more important" for literature than exactly the same day of 1912, when Emperor Meiji passed away.¹ Along with our deep regret for the man whom Donald Keene considers "to have been the finest modern Japanese novelist,"² there is an urge to unravel the secret appeal by which Tanizaki had held readers captive for over half a century. This has been the chief goal of the foregoing analyses and hopefully they have contributed to our understanding of this great--but controversial--author.

It seems curious that those who dislike him, do so for almost the same reasons as those who admire him. As we have presented in the Introduction, Tanizaki is mainly criticized on two points: his excessive concern with plots, or form in general, and his lack of intellectual content. The four works examined in this thesis have clearly proven that precisely because of Tanizaki's concern with plots and his lack of intellectual content, his stories strike us as extremely captivating. Whether in an exotic environment as in "Shisei," or a traditional surrounding as in "Shunkinshō," or an exclusive dreamland

as in "Yume no ukihashi," or again, a contemporary setting as in Fūten rōjin nikki, Tanizaki never fails to engage the reader's interest because his stories--or tales, as he prefers to call his works--are original products of a world of fantasy into which the reader can retreat with pleasure.

Tanizaki's narrative principle is in fact simple: a reader is a listener. The author writes with this listener constantly on his mind, or to put it differently, he tells a story instead of depicting it in conformity with his conception of writing, as expressed in his polemic with Akutagawa. This explains the peculiar closeness that the reader experiences toward the author. It is the feeling of listening to a story that predisposes the reader to yield instinctively to emotions and sensations, undeniably the two prime sources of Tanizaki's appeal. Since it does not have to pass through the filter of the intellect, this non-cerebral appeal takes effect almost instantly: without warning, the reader finds himself among the author's creations and unconsciously lives through their pleasures and sorrows. At the core of this appeal lies a wholesome sensuousness that directly affects the reader's senses, especially in the area of gusto-tactility. Curiously, we never seem to outgrow these two infantile sensations and thus in the passion that moves Tanizaki's characters, we perceive a truthful reflection of the erotic self.

Tanizaki's most consistent theme--the pursuit of an elusive beauty--is also built around this sensuousness that makes the Eternal Woman at the same time both ethereal and corporeal. Beneath this unrelenting pursuit flows a life force that defies suffering, self-sacrifice and even death. Throughout Tanizaki's career, this life force is translated into an artistic energy that is unmistakably his trademark, and perhaps in a fortunate way, fills the intellectual vacuum in his works.

A variety of narrative techniques and a firm grasp of structural balance sustain this energy, and together with an interesting plot, they form a solid foundation upon which Tanizaki's secret appeal works wonders. While his maiden work "Shisei" shows proof of a refined style and lively expressions, "Shunkinshō" employs a narrator to manipulate multiple viewpoints in order to create illusions in the reader's mind. "Yume no ukihashi," on the other hand, utilizes illusions to create further illusions. Needless to say, this double manipulation results in a dream-filled world wherein both the narrator and the reader are helplessly trapped. Finally, Fūten rōjin nikki uses the casual form of diary writing to lure the off-guard reader into the secret playground of an old man's fancy, enhanced by the use of art motifs but cleverly toned down by a detached view of reality.

It is a fact--confirmed by the author himself--that Tanizaki wrote consciously to entertain the reader.

Calling himself a storyteller, Tanizaki pursued this life-long mission with devotion and without pretense. The result is a fascinating literary heritage that can only be the work of an outstanding writer.

It is fitting that the last word should come from an acknowledged authority in literary criticism. According to Northrop Frye, author of the famous book Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays, "In literature, what entertains is prior to what instructs, or, as we may say, the reality-principle is subordinate to the pleasure-principle."³ This statement seems to have been formulated just for Tanizaki.

INTRODUCTION

¹ Itō Sei, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Itō Sei Zenshū (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1973), vol. XX, p. 8.

² See Hatano Kanji, "Sakka no bunshō shinri," Shinchō editions, Bunshō shinrigaku nyūmon (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1953), vol. III, Chapter 2, p. 159.

³ Mishima Yukio, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō ni tsuite," in Mishima Yukio Zenshū. Ed. Saeki Shōichi et al. (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1975), vol. XXXII, pp. 445-455.

⁴ See Edward Seidensticker, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, 1886-1965," Monumenta Nipponica, 21 (1966), p. 262.

⁵ Hinatsu Kōnosuke, Tanizaki bungaku (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1950), pp. 138-139.

⁶ See Edward Fowler, "Tanizaki's Sentimental Education," Monumenta Nipponica, vol. 35, no 4, p. 483.

⁷ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1966), vol. XXII, p. 124. My translation.

⁸ Fukuda Kiyoto, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō--hito to sakuhin (Tokyo: Shimizu shoin, 1966), p. 20.

⁹ Edward G. Seidensticker, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, 1886-1965," Monumenta Nipponica, 21 (1966), p. 253.

¹⁰ Translated by Seidensticker in same essay, p. 253.

¹¹ Nomura Shōgo, Denki: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (Tokyo: Rokkō Shuppan, 1972), p. 164. My translation.

¹² See Nomura Shōgo, Denki, p. 164. My translation.

¹³ Yoshikazu Kataoka, Introduction to Contemporary

Japanese Literature (Tokyo: Kokusai bunka shinkokai, 1939), Introduction.

¹⁴ Kathleen Merken, "Evolution of a Narrative Artist: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," Diss. University of British Columbia 1979, p. 5.

¹⁵ Edward Seidensticker, trans., Some Prefer Nettles. By Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, (New York: Knopf, 1955), p. 37.

¹⁶ Anthony Chambers, trans., "Arrowroot" in The Secret History of the Lord of Musashi and Arrowroot (New York: Knopf, 1982), p. 175.

¹⁷ Donald Keene, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Landscapes and Portraits (Palo Alto: Kōdansha International, 1971), p. 175.

¹⁸ Edward Seidensticker, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, 1886-1965," Monumenta Nipponica, 21 (1966), p. 256.

¹⁹ Murasaki Shikibu, Genji monogatari (The Tale of Genji, 11th century). There are two English translations of this great novel by Arthur Waley and Edward Seidensticker. The former is published by (New York: The Modern Library, 1960); and the latter by (New York: Knopf, 1976).

²⁰ This nomination however was disqualified on the ground that there was not enough translation on Tanizaki's works at that time. See Gwenn Petersen, The Moon in the Water (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), p. 50.

CHAPTER ONE

¹ All quotations from the four Tanizaki's translated works discussed in this thesis are taken from the translations of Howard Hibbett. This quotation comes from "The Tattooer," in Seven Japanese Tales (New York: Knopf, 1963), p. 162.

² Ibid., p. 163.

³ Ibid., p. 165.

⁴ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1966), vol. I, p. 70.

⁵ See Itō Sei, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Itō Sei Zenshū (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1973), vol. XX, p. 8.

⁶ Howard Hibbett, trans., "The Tattooer," p. 160.

⁷ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, vol. I, p. 63.

⁸ Ibid., p. 63. My translation.

⁹ Howard Hibbett's translation: "Everywhere beauty and strength were one" (p. 160) seems to miss the point.

¹⁰ Howard Hibbett, trans., pp. 167-168.

¹¹ Original Chinese title: Hsi Yu Chi, written by Wu-Ch'eng-en (circa 1500-circa 1582). The translation Journey to the West is done by Anthony C. Yu, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1980. This erotic scene can be found in vol. III, Chapter 72 of the translation.

¹² Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, vol. I, p. 70.

¹³ Howard Hibbett, trans., "The Tattooer," p. 162.

¹⁴ Kinya Tsuruta, "The Hell Screen," in Approaches to the Modern Japanese Short Story, edited by Thomas E. Swann and Kinya Tsuruta (Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1982), p. 13.

¹⁵ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, vol. I, p. 64. My translation.

¹⁶ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 163.

¹⁷ Even the translated line, "This one was sheer perfection" has for original, "Kare ni totte wa tōtoki niku no hogyoku de atta," which means, "To him, (her foot) was a jewel made out of precious flesh." Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, vol. I, p. 65.

¹⁸ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 162.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 164.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 165.

²¹ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, vol. I, p. 65.

²² Ivan Morris, trans., "Tattoo," in Modern Japanese Stories (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Tuttle, 1962), p. 87.

²³ Matsumoto Ryōzō, Japanese Literature New and Old (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1961), p. 110.

²⁴ Gwenn Boardman Petersen, The Moon in the Water (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), p. 58.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 59.

²⁶ Edward Seidensticker, trans., "In Praise of Shadows," by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. Japan Quarterly, 1 (1954), p. 49.

²⁷ Kathleen Merken, "Evolution of a Narrative Artist:

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," Diss. University of British Columbia 1979, p. 14.

²⁸ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 166.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 162.

³¹ Kathleen Merken, for example, states that in the conclusion, "the triumph of the victim over her creator is (now) complete." See Kathleen Merken, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Approaches to the Modern Japanese Short Story, p. 325.

³² Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 165.

³³ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁴ All the quotations in this paragraph are taken from Howard Hibbett, trans., "The Tattooer," pp. 166, 167, 168.

³⁵ "Giving me your soul must have made me very beautiful," says the girl. Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 168.

³⁶ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 169.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 169.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 168.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 166.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 168.

⁴¹ As Kaname muses in Tade kuu mushi, Edward Seidensticker, trans., Some Prefer Nettles (New York: Knopf, 1965), p. 101.

⁴² Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 169.

CHAPTER TWO

¹ Howard Hibbett, trans., "A Portrait of Shunkin," in Seven Japanese Tales (New York: Knopf, 1963), p. 73.

² Ibid., p. 84.

³ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1966), vol. XIII, p. 555. My translation.

⁴ "Shunkinshō," beside its popularity with the general reader, has been adapted to the screen at least five times. See Anthony H. Chambers, in the Introduction to "Postscript to 'A Portrait of Shunkin'," his translation of Tanizaki's "Shunkinshō kōgo," Monumenta Nipponica, vol. 35, no 4, p. 457.

⁵ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 6.

⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷ Anthony Chambers, trans., "Postscript to 'A Portrait of Shunkin'," p. 466.

⁸ Nakamura Mitsuo, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Ron (Tokyo: Kawade Shobo, 1952), p. 191. The sentence is translated by Sumie Jones in "How Tanizaki Disarms the Intellectual Reader," Literature East and West, 18 (1974), p. 328.

⁹ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 8.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 8.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 8.

¹² Ibid., p. 11.

¹³ Ibid., p. 52.

¹⁴ Edward Seidensticker, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō,

1886-1965," Monumenta Nipponica, 21 (1966), p. 254.

¹⁵ Noguchi Takehiko, teaching material for the Modern Japanese Literature Seminar in the University of British Columbia, 1982-83.

¹⁶ Tanizaki Jun'ichirō Zenshū, vol. XXI, p. 86.
The passage is translated by Donald Keene, in Landscapes and Portraits, p. 182.

¹⁷ Sumie Jones, "How Tanizaki Disarms the Intellectual Reader," p. 323.

¹⁸ Roy Humpherson and Hajime Okita, "The Story of Shunkin," in Ashikari and the Story of Shunkin (Tokyo: Hokuseidō, 1936), p. 164.

¹⁹ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 74.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 76.

²¹ Ibid., p. 81-82.

²² Ibid., p. 81.

²³ André Gide, La Symphonie Pastorale (Paris: Gallimard, 1925), p. 48. My translation.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 120. My translation.

²⁵ Edward Seidensticker, trans., "In Praise of Shadows," Japan Quarterly, 1 (Oct/Dec 1954), p. 49.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 50.

²⁷ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 45.

²⁸ Anthony Chambers, trans., "Postscript to 'A Portrait of Shunkin'," p. 462.

²⁹ Hatano Kanji, "Sakka no bunshō shinri," Shinchō editions, Bunshō shinrigaku nyūmon, vol. III, Chapter 2,

(Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1953), p. 161.

³⁰ Sumie Jones, "How Tanizaki Disarms the Intellectual Reader," p. 325.

³¹ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 74.

³² Donald Keene, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Landscapes and Portraits (Palo Alto: Kōdansha International, 1971), p. 172.

³³ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 75.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 69.

CHAPTER THREE

¹Quote borrowed from Howard Hibbett, in Seven Japanese Tales (New York: Knopf, 1963), Introduction part, p. vi.

² Howard Hibbett, trans., "The Bridge of Dreams," in Seven Japanese Tales, p. 106.

³ Ibid., p. 109.

⁴ Ibid., p. 119.

⁵ Ibid., p. 107.

⁶ Ibid., p. 105.

⁷ Howard Hibbett, trans., "The Tattooer," p. 163.

⁸ Howard Hibbett, trans., "A Portrait of Shunkin," pp. 44-45.

⁹ Howard Hibbett, trans., "The Bridge of Dreams," p. 105.

¹⁰ Edward Seidensticker, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, 1886-1965," Monumenta Nipponica, 21 (1966), p. 259.

¹¹ Nomura Shōgo, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō no sakuhin (Tokyo: Rokkō shuppan, 1974), p. 211. My translation.

¹² See Itō Sei, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Itō Sei Zenshū (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1973), vol. XX, pp. 8-150.

¹³ See Ueda Makoto, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Modern Japanese Writers and the Nature of Literature (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1976), pp. 54-84.

¹⁴ Kathleen Merken, "The Bridge of Dreams," in

Approaches to the Modern Japanese Short Story, edited by Thomas E. Swann and Kinya Tsuruta (Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1982), p. 333.

¹⁵ Gwenn Boardman Petersen, The Moon in the Water (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1979), p. 73.

¹⁶ Howard Hibbett, trans., "The Bridge of Dreams," p. 113.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 141.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 141.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 140.

²¹ Ibid., p. 97.

²² Howard Hibbett omits the name of the woods in his translation.

²³ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 97.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 140.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 124.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 137.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 138.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 139.

²⁹ Edward Seidensticker, trans., The Tale of Genji (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 1089.

CHAPTER FOUR

¹ Sumie Jones, "How Tanizaki Disarms the Intellectual Reader," Literature East and West, 18 (1974), p. 321.

² Howard Hibbett, trans., Diary of a Mad Old Man (New York: Knopf, 1965), p. 4.

³ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴ See Itō Sei, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Itō Sei Zenshū (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1973), vol. XX, pp. 8-150.

⁵ Howard Hibbett, trans., Diary of a Mad Old Man, p. 163.

⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁸ Ibid., p. 20.

⁹ Hagiwara Takao, "The Case of Two Old Playboys: Distance and Symbolism in Yama no oto (The Sound of the Mountain) and Fūten rōjin nikki (Diary of a Mad Old Man)," paper presented at the Nitobe-Ohira Conference in Japanese Studies at the University of British Columbia in Summer 1984, p. 24.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

¹¹ Kathleen Merken, "Evolution of a Narrative Artist: Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," Diss. University of British Columbia 1979, p. 171.

¹² Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 26.

¹³ Ibid., p. 27.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 34.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

¹⁹ Kawabata Yasunari, "Nemureru bijo," in Kawabata Yasunari Zenshū (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1969), vol. XI, pp. 233-319. The work is translated by Edward Seidensticker as House of Sleeping Beauties (Japan: Kōdansha International, 1969).

²⁰ Howard Hibbett, trans., Diary of a Mad Old Man, p. 86.

²¹ Ibid., p. 97.

²² Ibid., p. 75.

²³ Ibid., p. 101.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 108.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 112.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 113.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 132.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 144.

²⁹ Noriko Mizuta Lippit, Reality and Fiction in Modern Japanese Literature (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1980), pp. 92-93.

³⁰ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 155.

³¹ Ibid., p. 144.

³² Hagiwara Takao, "The Case of Two Old Playboys," p. 19.

³³ Howard Hibbett, trans., p. 161.

³⁴ Original Chinese title: Hsi Yu Chi, written by Wu-Ch'eng-en (circa 1500-circa 1582). The translation Journey to the West is done by Anthony C. Yu, published by the University of Chicago Press in 1980. This exciting scene can be found in vol. III, Chapter 7 of the translation.

³⁵ Howard Hibbett, trans., Diary of a Mad Old Man, p. 147.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 177.

³⁷ Donald Keene, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Landscapes and Portraits (Palo Alto: Kōdansha International, 1971), p. 184.

³⁸ Edward Seidensticker, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, 1886-1965," Monumenta Nipponica, 21 (1966), p. 264.

CONCLUSION

¹ Edward Seidensticker, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, 1886-1965," Monumenta Nipponica, 21 (1966), p. 249.

² Donald Keene, "Tanizaki Jun'ichirō," in Landscapes and Portraits (Palo Alto: Kōdansha International, 1971), p. 185.

³ Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 75.

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