Compelling Moments of Collaboration:

A Reading of the Works
by
Fukazawa Shichirō

by
Chizu Kanada
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Department of Asian Studies
The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of the narrative strategies in the fiction of Fukazawa Shichirō (1914-87) and the ways in which these strategies work to solicit involvement in a compelling reading experience. The role of the narrator in each of the stories I discuss proves to be critical in the establishment of this relationship. And while I examine the thematic implications further enhanced by this solicitation, I have chosen to focus on how each story through its narrator produces those thematic messages.

My emphasis on each work's technical aspect is also a deliberate, compensatory move, a reaction against the tendency of Japanese critics who slight the process of reading as a determining factor in their evaluation of Fukazawa's works. Little effort has been made to account for the construction of each work, and thus credit is rarely given for an immediate or enjoyable experience while reading. Thus, I have explored the neglected aspect of Fukazawa's fiction which, I believe, is one of the most commendable of his writings' achievements.

I have primarily dealt with one story per chapter, although I have frequent recourse to other works by Fukazawa and other writers, and have selected four stories which I believe best capture the essence of Fukazawa's narrative craftsmanship. Each story's center of consciousness—the third person narrators in the subjects of study of Chapters One and Two, respectively, "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" and The Fuefuki River, and the first person narrator-protagonists of "A Dream Tale (Chapter Three) and "The Dolls of Michinoku" (Chapter Four)—asks its reader to participate in a complex and
distinct negotiation. And yet, despite all the variety one expects and finds in
works spanning a thirty year writing career, I will contend that in each of the
four stories above certain strategies are consistently used to initiate reader
involvement and thus invite us to co-produce those compelling moments that
Fukazawa would have us enjoy.
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Introduction

In for an Experience

It is tempting to see Fukazawa Shichirō (1914-87) as one of those rarest of exceptions in Japan's community of authors and critics: the little-studied writer. Fukazawa is indeed little-studied when placed alongside Natsume Sōseki, Mishima Yukio, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, Kawabata Yasunari and the many "giants" that populate Japan's literary scene. But, in fact, by any other standard, a goodly number of critical essays have been written on this author's works; and by way of an introduction to the study to follow, I would like first to provide a brief sketch of two of the more influential examples of the criticism.

Itō Sei (1905-69) and Yamamoto Kenkichi (1907-88), two of Japan's leading literary critics, wrote comprehensive essays on Fukazawa's first published works. Itō Sei's essay "The World in the Fiction of Mr. Fukazawa Shichirō" (Fukazawa Shichirō-shi no sakuhin no sekai) (1957) was influential not only because it was one of the first essays written about the works of Fukazawa but also because it fairly captured the essence of Fukazawa's first three published stories ("On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" [Narayama bushi kō] [1956], "The Other Than First Born Sons of Tohoku" [Tohoku no zummutachi] [1957], and "The Home That Sways" [Yureru ie] [1957]). Itō summarizes the characteristics of Fukazawa's fiction by pointing out the three methodological approaches Fukazawa employed: 1) a matured imagery due to the long nurturing time (imēji baiyō kikan no nagasa) within himself of thematic priorities as well as an isolation from the literary circle (bundan) [not a
posture to be recommended for those seeking recognition]; 2) a patterning of words and phrases after the rhythms found in music; and 3) a concern for the mundane that nonetheless sees daily phenomena as unexceptional and rooted in necessity.¹

Yamamoto Kenkichi's essay, "The Works of Fukazawa Shichirō" (Fukazawa Shichirō no sakuhin)---like Itō's essay, at once responsible for and the beneficiary of Fukazawa's well-received entry onto the literary scene---was written just before Ito's essay was published and concerned Fukazawa's organizational skills in refining raw material to create a fine work of art. Yamamoto's comparative analysis in this essay between "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" and "The Other Than First Born Sons of Tohoku" concludes by locating Fukazawa's strength as the ability to create a heroine in the former story that has a universally appealing character whereas, in the latter work, a critical flaw is found in Fukazawa's inability to fully realize the potential of his subject matter.²

Building on the seminal scholarship of these two works, studies of the man and his writing have steadily increased in number. Fukazawa had a small but loyal core of critics and readers who stayed with him from the beginning, with Hinuma Rintarō (1925-68), whose laudatory essays often concerned the nihilism he found permeating Fukazawa's works, the pre-eminent example.³ In general terms, though, study of this particular author has concentrated on thematic concerns, and particularly on the author himself as an "eccentric" individual who "entertained" his readership from the time he was first brought to the public's attention.⁴ Of course, there are a few exceptions: one comprehensive essay was written about the implications of Fukazawa's style as found in his distinctive turns of phrase,⁵ and one intriguing attempt was made to prove the self-destructive nature of the imagery in "The Dolls of Michinoku"
(Michinoku no ningyō tachi) (1979)\(^6\); but they occupy only a corner of the total landscape of Fukazawa scholarship. It is my contention, then, that the technical aspects of Fukazawa's works need to be further examined, for I believe that whatever appeal his work has is not confined to larger thematic concerns but, better yet, is reinforced by complex but discernible narrative strategies that make for a reading experience at least as compelling as the "larger issues" each work addresses.

One point where these narrative strategies and thematic concerns most often meet over the terrain of Fukazawa's fiction is the temporal and physical setting of the stories. In the four stories we shall be studying, the time and place of each share a certain indeterminacy and, at times, unimportance within the whole of the story. In the subject of Chapter Four of this study, "The Dolls of Michinoku," the tale's protagonist leaves his Tokyo home by car for a village in northeastern Japan. Thus the setting of the story is technically contemporaneous, with automobiles and other trappings of modernity, but the character's characteristics, the ways of the villagers, and the village itself serve to blur those contemporary references. The defeated Heike clan of the twelfth century is mentioned, and the discovery of a long enduring village custom is particularly important, but it is the physical isolation of the small village that allows us to do without the more familiar associations with the contemporary world. Thus the village is depicted as forming its own cosmos and inviting the protagonist to do with it what he will.

As we see in Chapter Three, "A Dream Tale" amplifies this process in that we have a waking individual relating a dream that carnivalizes a world we would otherwise find familiar. This world contains members of the Imperial Family and many other contemporary references that should anchor it in the present; and yet, outrageous exaggeration and instances of incongruity too
many to numerate take this dream of modern society and fling it to the edge of delirium. Nothing sacred is left that way, and with a protagonist who finds even his own actions odd, uncertainty seems encouraged to reign supreme.

In Chapter Two, we see that The Fuefuki River is given a specific historical setting—a sixteenth century peasant village in Japan—with historical figures included in the tale's cast of characters, and is thus similar to "A Dream Tale" in its promise of specificity. None of the latter's pyrotechnics are to be found here, however, and in a sense we have the opposite process at work. Rather than starting with something familiar then twisting it almost beyond recognition, The Fuefuki River presents characters and a time we may have heard something of but which we could have never experienced in person, and then works to make that reality immediate and intelligible.

The setting of the story taken up in Chapter One, "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," is also in the past, but is less clearly so than The Fuefuki River. We are told of a farming village located somewhere in Shinshū, the present Nagano prefecture of mountainous central Japan, but the time is specified only indirectly by the use of old terms such as "hikyaku" for messenger or courier and "Shingen bukuro" for a cloth pouch or hold-all. The fact that these specifications are somewhat veiled is significant, for once we come to understand what is being said in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," we see that the story not only repaints a portrait of an older period by reinventing the contours of a time in the past, but also seeks to reawaken an awareness in the reader of that period's enduring presence and importance. The Fuefuki River likewise extends beyond the temporal and physical confines it first sets itself within. The question is, of course, how the distance is bridged.

In each of the four stories to be discussed, the physical and temporal setting of the tale is pushed away from the reader's common frame of reference.
And yet, as I will show, each tale without exception induces a high degree of reader involvement. We will soon find that it is the role assigned to each narrator that both allows for this compelling process whereby the unfamiliar is made just familiar enough, and accounts for an approach to writing that when we encounter it in print is as much a pleasure while reading as it is successful in stimulating fruitful contemplation.
Chapter One

Death for Life
and
"On the Melodies of Oak Mountain"

"On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" (Narayama bushi kō) first appeared in November, 1956, published in the literary periodical Chūō kōron, as that year's prize winning story for new talent. The work was received variously with horror, astonishment, and absolute admiration, but always made an impact on its reader. The (in)famous author and writer Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), one of the three prize search committee referees (all of whom voted in favour of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain"), commented: "I felt [a shivering horror] as if I were dashed by cold water all over my body... I feel dreadful when I speculate on the psychology of the village people who give death instructions at the parting banquet, for those people know all about the hidden custom of the village... this story makes me realize that I am a humanist [hyūmanisuto]."¹ Masamune Hakuchō (1879-1962), author and literary critic, wrote: "I even believe that this author deserves [life-long acclaim as a fiction writer] solely through this one work. I did not read this story just for sheer amusement nor as a pastime at all. I contend that I read it as a book for one's whole lifetime. Reading this latest work is one of the memorable incidents of this year for me."²

Although the work has induced strong reactions in many of its readers, the general response continues to be favourable. If readers know but one work by Fukazawa, it is likely to be "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," and the most recent of two films³ made based on the story re-affirms and helps ensure the
work's lasting, if, for some, unsettling appeal. In this chapter, I will examine some possible reasons for the challenging nature of the work and its enduring popularity.

As its primary message, "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" presents a sacralized notion of sacrifice: the deed is carried out willingly under the eyes of the Mountain god by the sacrificed herself. The death is almost a suicide, in the sense of an individual dying at her own hands. But there is none of that act's attendant desperation. Instead there is the suggestion that death will not only be watched approvingly by the Mountain god but will also benefit the larger social whole. Self-sacrifice of this order certainly possesses an intrinsic appeal, especially when its motives can be seen as purely altruistic. A reader of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" might resort to this characterization of Orin's act, for it appears to account for what she does and why she does it. The leading author, critic and scholar Itō Sei has suggested in his influential essay, "The World in the Fiction of Mr. Fukazawa Shichirō" (Fukazawa Shichirō-shi no sakuhin no sekai) (1958), that love or concern for the greater good functions to unite the death of one person and the life of another, and is central in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" in producing an emotional impact upon the reader. While Orin's death and its larger significance do form the thematic and emotional core of the story, we would be wrong to expect as a motivating impulse to act the sort of selflessness and altruism Itō Sei's comment implies. Likewise, the greater good is indeed shown to be best served by Orin's act, but the relation between deed and its motivation and the characterization of Orin that results requires a more complex analysis. In particular, the narrator's presence needs to be closely examined. Thus, below, after examining the way in which Orin is presented as a character--with reference to other works that explicate or otherwise inform "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain"--I will
discuss how, with aid from the narrator, the reader is likely to imagine their heroine and the heroism of her act.

One of the story's more telling scenes is the "Amaya incident" in which a village member is caught stealing food and he along with the other eleven members of the Amaya family are summarily executed (261-67; B. 217-22), underscoring the importance and scarcity of food for all in the village. Hence, the presence of the village rule which dictates that the elderly must go to Oak Mountain upon reaching seventy years of age is perforce justified and enforced by the community. The rule has been there since the unknown past, and it would seem unlikely that anyone would act to the contrary. Certainly, Orin had been successfully conditioned from childhood onward to accept this custom, and every time she examines the scanty stores of food in her family's possession, the necessity of "thinning out" the population stares her in the face.

When her time comes, Orin does unquestioningly leave the village for Oak Mountain. Once there, though, she is shown to display no sign of reflectiveness or emotion at what she has done: no self-recognition of her "heroic" deed, no thoughts of how useful her disappearance will be to the remaining villagers. The larger "signifieds" of Orin's act are readings made largely by others; they have little expression in Orin herself. For Orin, the situation is of another order. More than anything else, she is concerned about the manner in which she will meet her death and the impression she will leave behind. She has spent three years in preparation for her journey to the Mountain, weaving the straw mat upon which, having reached the mountain-top, she will sit, and accumulating a great stock of rice, dried mushrooms, dried bull trout, and raw sake for her family and the village people to eat in celebration upon the completion of her Oak Mountain pilgrimage (248, 261; B. 204, 217). She spends a particularly large amount of time and energy on the latter, for she is
convinced that the more she is able to offer, the more commendable her act will be. Propriety, social form, and a hope for recognition by others that borders on a desire for final vindication for herself seem to supersede any emotional attachment she might have to the people she will be leaving behind.

Her attention to the correctness of appearances even leads her to break her own still youthful front teeth in order to look more "suitable" for one who will go to the Mountain (257; B. 213). She has tried this several times, and this unflagging concern for her personal appearance is difficult to explain in terms of love and care for others at the time of her departure. Her fine strong teeth are taken to represent her great appetite, not something to be flaunted in an impoverished village, and so these teeth have become a source of shame for Orin. She finds herself ridiculed for the strange youthfulness of her teeth, not only by the village people but also by her own grandson Kesakichi. Hence, when she finally succeeds in removing her front teeth, she triumphantly goes out to present herself to her fellow villagers, assured that she will finally gain acceptance as a "proper" old lady (257; B. 213). And although she succeeds only in frightening those she had hoped to elicit compliments from (258; B. 213-14), Orin is nonetheless proud of herself, for her appearance now fits the mental image she had long held of the ideal old lady.

By congratulating herself on what she has accomplished in preparing food for her family and realizing a more befitting appearance, Orin reveals the extent of her self-pride and self-love. Exercising to the full these forms of self-expression can be done in the confines of communal restrictions; and, in the end, Orin will reach the ultimate limit of allowable self-expression by willingly ascending Oak Mountain. This is where she will make the last and greatest affirmation of her social existence by paradoxically extinguishing her social being, by obeying the most extreme of her community's rules. The pilgrimage
to Oak Mountain is one of the most important rituals of the village, and the more perfectly she practices it, the more satisfaction she will obtain. Fortunately for Orin, she also has her son Tatsuhei, the person she loves most, to witness her last and ultimate act. This doubles the potential of Orin's final opportunity to express her existence: she confirms it herself, and Tatsuhei confirms it as well.

Hence, Orin's act of "self-sacrifice" is first and foremost for her own sake, rather than for that of the community. The benefits that the village people will subsequently enjoy seem to be of secondary concern, serving more to enhance her own sense of accomplishment. In her relationship with the community she belongs to, her attention is focused on herself. Her psychological state is in fact similar to that of the character in a story appearing a few years earlier, "The Age of Bullying" (Iyagarase no nenrei) (1947) by Niwa Fumio (1904- ). This story depicts a very different family environment from "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," but the comparison is constructive in that while the motivation of the two main characters appears to be the same, the impression they have on the reader is markedly different.

"The Age of Bullying" concerns an eighty-six year old woman named Ume and her granddaughters' families. Ume's two married granddaughters do not want to take care of her, and so each family tries to leave Ume with the other. Ume, who understands her situation, plays dirty tricks to survive--she steals items belonging to her family, curses when she is treated badly, and pretends to be insane (or at least her family sees deception) when she finds it difficult to justify her deeds. Her granddaughters overtly display their animosity towards Ume, and they hope Ume will die as soon as possible. She is portrayed as the source of the antagonism between her granddaughters' families.

In "The Age of Bullying," Ume is depicted as a self-centered, narrow-minded person whose sole remaining interest in life is to cause trouble for her
kin as long as she lives. For all this, her actions, however outrageous, seem to be a signal of her wish for attention. In craving attention, she asserts herself to others and, in turn, assures herself of her own existence. Her actions are shown to be motivated solely by her own self-interest, whereas those of Orin have a more complex relation with the will of her community. Nonetheless, the two ladies' impulse to act is similar: they are both trying to secure means for their self-expression and self-affirmation.

Why, then, is Orin infinitely more likeable than Ume? Orin's manner of social and self orientation seems significant here. There is a scene in the story where Orin confronts Matayan over his attitude towards death. Matayan is her next-door neighbor, a man terribly afraid of death. His son has tried several times to take Matayan to the Mountain, and, at the time of this confrontation, Matayan has just foiled yet another attempt by biting through the rope which had bound him to his son's back (270-71; B. 225-26). Matayan ran off to Orin to ask for help, but he did not get the reception he had expected. Never one to mince her words, Orin calls Matayan a "Stupid bastard!" and goes on to chastise:

Matayan, it's awful that you had to have the "deaf lullaby" sung to you. Don't you think you're being ungrateful for everything you've enjoyed in your life? It's not a good idea to alienate yourself from the Mountain god and from your son while you are alive.

(271; B. 226)

The key word here is "ungrateful" (mōshiwakenai). The presupposition is the existence of, and one's responsibility to, something "other" than oneself. The expression "mōshiwakenai" is often used when people are unable to reciprocate the favors they have received; it can often carry overtones of guilt, but without religious connotation. The foundation for people to be able to feel "grateful" is
their recognition of the other, and once this acknowledgement is made, favours become the "currency" by which the relationship between the two can be assessed. Put another way, a good member of society does not let his account run too far into arrears. This is precisely how interpersonal relationships are seen by Orin. The "other" for Orin is the entirety of the community, the sum of the people she has lived with.

Interestingly, this entirety is represented in her speech by the word "Mountain god:" the will of the community for Orin thus becomes the will of the Mountain god. Reference to a super human, omnipotent entity certainly makes it easier for people to yield to the difficult demands of the community. For Orin, of course, the identification of the community and the Mountain god further motivates her to go to the Mountain as soon as she becomes seventy, for she believes the earlier she goes, the more favourably the god will receive her (256; B. 212). This personal interpretation and thus "justification" for her journey of no return increases her sense of pride and satisfaction in her own act.

For these reasons, Matayan's struggle against his son is incomprehensible to Orin. Matayan does not acknowledge the "favours" he is supposed to have received in the course of his life from the community and thus from the Mountain god. Their different perceptions stem from differences in self-orientation. Orin has in sight that "other" on which so large a part of her action depends, situated firmly within the network of the social favour-reciprocation mechanism. Matayan, on the other hand, does not seem to reflect upon the bonds between himself and the "other." He is absorbed in himself, and his action is oriented solely by his idea of self-interest; and in this sense, Matayan is identical to Ume in "The Age of Bullying." While Orin is very much concerned about the way she appears to those around her, her character is distinguished from these latter two characters by the presence of the "other" as an essential part of her
identity. Her actions are thus largely conditioned by the wishes and needs of the "other" as she imagines them. She is also able to gain satisfaction from her deeds for the "other," since she sees herself as part of the favour-reciprocation cycle, the cycle she regards as all-important.

The relationship between the self and the "other" that Orin epitomizes in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" has been attractive to many readers, and the appealing nature of Orin's characterization, as compared to, say, the portrayal of Matayan or Ume, seems to be further enhanced by the reader who in one way or another experiences alienation in the present society. In particular, the overwhelming popularity of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" upon its first publication can be attributed to the social environment of the 1950s. The Japanese people were experiencing an increasing sense of alienation from family and community as industrialization of the country advanced by leaps and bounds. Japan was in the midst of a great economic boom stimulated by the Korean War, and people were deserting farming communities to work in factories in urban areas. Consequently, the family structure and the role of the community was being transformed. Most people no longer lived in a large family of several generations, nor did they expect the community to play a key role in their survival. Individuality was becoming the foundation of identity for the people, and many were struggling in search of that identity.

A fantasized past, particularly one in which people like Orin might have enjoyed a sense of oneness with family and community, must thus have induced a great deal of nostalgia in a nation focusing its energies in other uncertain directions. A similar longing may also inform more recent receptions of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," for nostalgia in one form or another is ubiquitous in Japan. Certainly the story is attuned to such half-conscious longings, a desire that Orin's type of relationship to her community might still
be possible. For many, "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" served as an idealized mental retreat, a bastion of relief set in an unspecified farming village in an indefinite past.

Another influential condition for the reader's response to the heroine is the well-known legend which Fukazawa's tale no doubt evokes. Although its historical accuracy remains in question, this legend is still familiar to many living in Nagano Prefecture. It tells of the local practice of abandoning elderly people in the depths of the mountains when they reach sixty years of age as a means of population control. This legend informs folk tales such as "The Mountain Where Parents Are Abandoned" (Oyasuteyama). The story has a few variations, but the one I will discuss concerns an old man who is to be left in the mountain's farthest recesses. He is carried by his son and grandson, and when they reach their destination, the old man tells his companions to use the branches he has broken on the way up for guideposts to help them return home. His son and grandson are so moved by his thoughtfulness that they decide to bring him back home to look after him. One day, the landlord of the district makes particularly difficult demands of the villagers, including that they weave a rope out of ash, thread a warped tree branch, and construct a drum that sounds without beating it. Everyone is dumbfounded, but when the son asks his father who has been hidden from the other people's eyes for help, the old man works out every problem. The landlord is very impressed, and asks who was to be congratulated for the solutions. When he finds out that it is the old man, he tells the people in the entire district to stop abandoning the elderly because they are the ones whose wisdom should be valued. Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), one of the founding fathers of folklore studies in Japan, has argued that folklore of this kind is not based on a true story but is used to distract the listener with surprising subject
matter such as abandoning one's own parent, while silently encouraging people to fulfill their filial duties.  

Writing some twenty years later, Yamamoto Kenkichi, following Yanagita, contends that one version or another of the above story is familiar to many Japanese people.  

Hence, when "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" presents elderly people destined to be abandoned, readers may well be reminded of this foundational folklore and their reaction to it. As Yanagita points out, the story produces an effect on the reader of confirming how important it is to take good care of one's parents. In the case of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," readers are, in effect, already sympathetic towards the person to be abandoned even before they encounter her in the story. Sympathy towards Orin, then, is part of the reader's response from the beginning. This use of a pre-text text works powerfully to channel the reader's reading, here to evoke as much sympathy as the reader has to offer.  

Thus, while Orin's acts and words as a character serve to present an ordinary person who is even "selfish" in the sense that she unabashedly expresses her desire for recognition and takes great pains to "correct" her appearance and observe propriety, the readers begin to create their own preferable image of her, an image conditioned by the readers' own social reality and their familiarity with the foundational legend.  

Such a construction of Orin, in fact, is encouraged by the narrator's presentation of her. The narrator's explanation and interpretation of Orin's thoughts and actions directs the readers' "characterization" of Orin, because for one, the narrational description of the characters far outweighs the amount of dialogue and characters reflecting on themselves in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain." We shall now see how the narrator leads us to form a predominantly
favourable image of Orin, despite the fact that Orin as a person is not a perfectly altruistic character.

First of all, we are given by the narrator a striking contrast in the way Orin and Matayan are taken to Oak Mountain. While Orin's journey is completed in celebration by the "lucky" snowfall, Matayan's final ascent ends with a pathetic "murder" by his son who, in outrage and exasperation, is left with no choice but to push his father off the cliff to the mountain ravine far below where the crows which will eventually eat their prey are sheltered from the snow. The contrast is visually and metaphorically striking, with the whiteness of snow against the dark black cloud of crows, and so we have in no uncertain terms the narrator's judgement that Matayan has failed where Orin has succeeded.

The narrator's depiction of this climax of the story is intricately presented. Since the beginning of the tale, we have been often reminded that good fortune falls on those who upon reaching the top of the Mountain are greeted with falling snow. Snow starts to fall as soon as Orin settles down by a rock after her son has turned for home (274; B. 230). Disobeying one of the rules of the Mountain pilgrimage, Tatsuhei hurries back to Orin in order to share his delight with her over this special sign of favour. Orin quietly nods at her son's excited words: "Mother, it's started to snow!" and "You are lucky having snow on the day of the journey" (275; B. 230). She shakes her head repeatedly at his worries that she must be cold. All the while, Orin remains silent, calm and peaceful. "Mother, it really snowed didn't it!" (275; B. 230)—with this as his parting cry, Tatsuhei finally runs off down the Mountain. With the effective insertions of Tatsuhei's love-filled words, the narrator presents the scene in moving detail. The key element of the scene is the manner in which the narrator describes Orin and her mental state without having Orin herself resort to words. The narrator depicts in detail the heroine's single-minded recitation of a parting
sutra, the snow resting on her bangs, chest, and knees, and the wave with which she silently tells her son to go home before it becomes too difficult for him to leave (274-75; B. 229-30). This thoughtfulness towards her son and her determination to accept death courageously bring the reader's admiration of Orin to its height just as the heroine performs her heroic final act.

As mentioned above, the narrator's description of this climax is distinguished by his use of colours. When Matayan has finally fallen, a great flock of crows rises "like a black wind-spout, like a billowing column of black smoke" (B. 231; 276). The color black is allotted to Matayan as if to symbolize his "evil" nature. The whiteness of snow, on the other hand, is exclusively reserved for Orin. With its fresh white appearance, snow has the physical appeal of cleanliness, suggesting Orin's peaceful state of mind which is finally shorn of worldly concerns as death approaches.

Snow is further used to enhance the story's dramatic climax. The falling snow both figuratively and literally covers up all the unpleasant details that might impair our appreciation of Orin's act of "self-sacrifice." On the way up the mountain, we are shown corpses lying all about. We are given detailed description of scattered bones and half-decayed bodies, one of which the crows have eaten and then made a nest of (272-73; B. 227-28). This is the reality that awaits Orin, or at least it was, until the snow started to fall. By the time Tatsuhei gets back to where he has left Orin, "the snow has completely covered the ground in white" (274; B. 229), thereby concealing the bodies. He also realizes that with the snow not a single crow remains (275; B. 230). The black of the crows has been supplanted by the white of the snow, which cancels all the ugly realities and thus emphasizes the purest aspect of the journey to death.

With this dramatic, visually striking presentation of the end of Orin's life, the readers are led to feel rewarded for their story-long affection for the heroine.
The readers have taken a gradual liking to this woman, and finally their favourable reception of her is confirmed by the unequivocal celebration of her completed journey. What, then, has been arranged for the readers to be able to identify themselves with the heroine? It is, again, the narrator who has worked hard to build good impressions of Orin within the readers.

At the very beginning of the story, Orin is introduced through a description of her home, a place everyone refers to as "the Stump" because of the large zelkova tree stump out front. This stump has a broad, flat surface on which children and passers-by can sit and relax for a while, and is valued for those reasons (245; B. 200). This positive description of where Orin lives as seen through the eyes of the village people symbolizes the positive aspect of the relationship between Orin and the rest of the community.

Following a brief introduction to Orin's son Tatsuhei, Orin's first direct speech as a character follows: "A kind-hearted fellow, my son!" (245; B. 201). A person who uses the adjective "kind-hearted" has to know what "kindness" is, and a true knowledge of it comes only from the actual practice of it by that same person. Thus, we are tempted to think that Orin who here takes the initiative must be a kind person herself. Furthermore, the fact that her first utterance contains the word "kind-hearted" makes the reader receptive because the images associated with this word are positive ones. The use of this particular word at the time Orin first steps onto the stage contributes to establishing a close rapport between the reader and the main character of the tale.

The reader's first impression of Orin is confirmed and reinforced by the development of her character as undertaken by the description of the narrator. She is consistently shown as a caring, kind-hearted person. To cite a few examples, she is genuinely delighted for Tatsuhei upon hearing the news that a widow will come from the other village to marry him (246-47; B. 201-02).
Furthermore, while she is thrilled with this new family member and takes good care of her (255-57; B. 211-13), she also tries to deal with her "problem" grandson Kesakichi (249, 253-54, 266-67; B. 205-06, 209-10, 214-16).

Throughout the presentation of Orin's genial character, we are reminded time and again of her determination to make her fateful mountain pilgrimage. As the story progresses, this gives the description and interpretation of Orin's thought, speech and action a tension, since at any minute she may decide to go to the mountain and end her life; and this tension in turn keeps the reader interested in Orin's actions and thoughts. The threat that this amiable character might disappear from the story at any minute contributes further to her appeal.

Orin's favourable character is largely moulded by the narrator who, by the time the heroine makes her successful mountain pilgrimage, has carefully brought out the sympathetic elements of her character. Although most readers would take a liking to Orin, they would probably admit that when they started reading "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," they felt some discomfort with the story's subject matter of discarding the elderly, because even though they may have been aware of this legendary practice, it is no longer acceptable according to today's social and moral standards. By the time Orin achieves her goal, however, our sense of resistance has been weakened, or rather, our point of view in dealing with the story's conditions has been transformed--we wish the best for Orin under the given circumstances rather than resisting the circumstances themselves. Once the "best" is bestowed on Orin, we feel satisfied, and we too can leave the story's precincts in peace. How is this change in the readers' perspective attained? What is it in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" that involves readers so deeply that they set aside the governing morals of their day? Two narrative devices seem of greatest importance. First, songs are used in order to introduce and reinforce village customs and rules. Second, the narrator
of the tale plays a particular role in determining the rapport between the reader and the characters.

In the context of the story, songs are shown to occupy a crucial place in the villagers' life. They are used to condition the people's minds in favour of the community's interest. This is made possible largely due to the "song" type of discourse. Songs have both words and a tune, and they are often sung out loud. When they are used as a form of discourse, their acoustic effect is taken advantage of. Since songs are vocalized, accompanied by a tune and a rhythm that make them even more accessible, they easily attract people's attention and spread widely through reiteration. They are efficient vehicles for carrying messages, and a powerful mode of discourse in the community. All who sing, all who listen, are part of the distribution-reception system.

People in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" sing their local songs on every occasion. Songs are their major pastime, and they are the highlights of the Oak Mountain Festival, the annual festival that everybody looks forward to because it is the only occasion in the year when people can eat as much as they wish (246, 254; B. 201, 210). On the day of the festival, people young and old get together and dance local dances accompanied by the songs they sing (254; B. 210). The tune of the songs is always the same (with the sole exception of the deaf lullaby). There are sixteen variants in the lyrics for the festival tune, which often focus on memorable incidents in the village. These include a large bush fire (267; B. 222), the existence of an old woman who survived until she had a great-grandson (251; B. 207), and that of an old woman who was abandoned on the Mountain but came crawling back (276; B. 231-32). These are all unusual cases and also unfavourable to the interest of the community. The way to ensure they do not happen again is to make them into songs so that the village people would remember the incidents and take warning. Thus, the songs are used as a
form of propaganda against things that threaten to damage the community. There is, for instance, a song of "promoting late marriage." It reads:

Though you're over thirty,
To worry there's no need.
Another in the family,
Another mouth to feed. (B. 210; 254)

Being familiar with the song from childhood, the message to conserve food by not marrying young and thus having as few children as possible is learned through constant reinforcement, with the same song sung over and over again through one's life. The story presents a village whose people sing as naturally as they breathe and who have lost the capacity to question the content of what they sing. The fact that the songs are so prevalent in the village establishes the framework for the unquestioning absorption of any messages presented through such a medium.

The belief that it is a sign of good fortune when upon arrival at the Mountain top it begins to snow is also propagated through song. This song is about a woman named Otori whose Mountain pilgrimage was said to have been celebrated by snowfall. This is the belief which was central to Orin's Mountain journey, and by the story's end we are just as much receivers of the message the song carries as are the people in the story. This is largely why we have felt genuinely happy for Orin and her celebrated Mountain journey. This reaction of ours has been prepared and anticipated by this often reinforced "song" type of discourse.

To ensure the effectiveness of the songs' message, the narrator plays an indispensable role. His primary task is to "decipher" the songs in their context. The narrator explains their background, their immediate meanings, and the
messages behind them. The foundation song upon which virtually all others are variations, for example, runs as follows:

The Oak Mountain Festival
Three times has come and gone,
And the chestnut that we planted
Is flowing in the sun. (B. 200-01; 245)

The song appears to concern nothing more than the cyclic rotation of seasons, but the narrator fills in the background and provides interpretation. The suggestion is that with the passing of three years, one is three years older. In the village, people are supposed to go to Oak Mountain when they become seventy, so the song is a warning to the elderly that the year of their journey is always approaching (245; B. 201).

Interestingly, major events and subjects of the story are introduced by song. Songs thus provide the framework of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain." As its title suggests, the story is a contemplation of ("kō 考 ) the songs of Narayama whose tune ("Narayama bushi" 楠山節 ) accommodates the sentiments and customs of the village as expressed by a variety of different lyrics. It is the narrator who takes charge of mediating the songs to the reader, and who asks us to join in a consideration of their meaning.

Decoding the songs is a large part of what the narrator does; and yet he also takes charge of speaking for the characters. Much of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" is songs and their interpretation by the narrator, with a proportionally small amount of direct speech by characters. Hence, as discussed above, the narrator is the one who practically determines the readers' impression of the characters by the manner in which he presents them. Sometimes the narrator goes into the characters and speaks through them as part
of his narration. At these times, the blurred distinction between the character
and the narrator signifies a narrator who, involved in the story, invites his
readers to likewise experience the thoughts of the characters. There is one
instance where Orin's situation, with the addition of two women to her family, is
reflected upon by the narrator. The text, however, immediately shifts to
delivering her thoughts:

[1] Now that there were two more women in the
house, Orin found herself with time on her hands.
She was a sturdy worker, and to have nothing to do
made her feel dissatisfied, almost lonely. Even
Matsuyan [Kesakichi's wife] proved sometimes to be
of some use. However, though chafing occasionally
at her inaction, Orin had a goal before her--her
pilgrimage to the Oak Mountain. She spent all her
time in picturing that day in her mind. [2] I was
called the old devil woman [when she had appeared
with her mouth bleeding after finally breaking her
teeth], but, when I go to the Mountain, I'll show them
how different I am from people like old Matayan!
thought Orin. [3] When I go, I can give them a feast
as good as at the festival itself. Rice, mushrooms,
dried trout--I've put them aside for them, as much as
they could eat. The raw sake for the village folk I had
to make a bit weaker, it's true, but there is close on
four gallons of it, and nobody, I'm sure, knows it's
there. The day after I've gone, they'll pounce on the
food and eat it with delight. (B. 217; 261; emphasis and bracketed text added)

In the part marked "1," we recognize that the narrator stays with his narrational language and refers to Orin as "she." In part "2," however, he starts the sentence with the first person pronoun "I" to refer to Orin, whereby beginning to take on Orin's voice. The distinction between the narrator and Orin is not as yet clear in the second part, for the final sentence ends with "thought Orin," which suggests that the narrator still has not completely abandoned his narrational viewpoint.

In the part marked "3," the viewpoint has shifted totally to Orin's. The subject is the first person pronoun "I" (washi), and the speech style employed is characteristic of her, as in "I can give them a feast" (furumai ga dekiru zo) and "they'll... eat it with delight" (umagatte kuukotodaro). This last part is in effect her monologue, with no narrational framing by such phrases as "so Orin thought" (to Orin wa omotta) or "so Orin said" (to Orin wa itta).

The transition of viewpoint from the narrator to the character is so smoothly accomplished that it is hardly noticeable. By the time the readers realize the change, they have already taken on Orin's voice and attitudes, and have practically gotten to the point of uttering her words as if they were their own. By means of this process, the readers are induced to directly experience Orin's mind without overt mediation by the narrator. As a result, the readers become more and more involved in her character, as the depth of their involvement is increased by the narrator's direct presentation of the characters' thoughts.

Creating a narrator involved in the thoughts of the characters and thereby establishing a close rapport between the reader and the characters is a technique which seems to be accomplished especially well in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," and it is thus a key element in any success it may have. Because "On
the Melodies of Oak Mountain" is set in an unspecified past, there is a potential for a sense of distance from the reader's time. Moreover, the tale's settings and theme are something unknown to us as an immediate reality. Both these factors have the potential to alienate the reader. Hence, it is critical for the tale to ensure a certain depth of reader involvement, a task fulfilled by the narrator, so that it can maintain the reader's interest and provide a foundation for sympathy.

"On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" meets the requirements for a successful work, in terms of a narrative structure that ensures the involvement of the reader. At the same time, the work also enables the readers to participate comfortably in the world of fiction by catering to their nostalgia. The story introduces a woman who lived her life fully in a satisfying relationship with the community, and who can act as a focus around which the readers can construct their ideal figure of the "selfless" individual, whom they believe existed in the old days. The story provides a receptacle into which their sentiments can easily flow.

Overflowing sentiment may well have been shared by the author himself, especially in terms of how to come to terms with death. Fukazawa wrote a short story called "Boys in Jute Sacks" (Nankin kozō)12 in 1957, one year after the publication of "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain." "Boys in Jute Sacks" seems to be another work that turns on sacrificial death. This time, however, male children are sold to work all their lives as boatmen in exchange for a small amount of money which allows their family to survive. Life-long separation from one's sons is suggested to be practically identical with experiencing their deaths. The story ends with the tragic murder of a small boy and the subsequent suicide of the murderer, his grandfather, who had been grief stricken over the loss of his first grandson sold in a jute sack that very morning.
The "deaths" in "Boys in Jute Sacks" seem to be related to those in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" in their common appeal of "beauty" to both the readers and the author. Itō Sei attempts to explain why we feel that these deaths are beautiful: "Instead of taking death as an absolute privation of human existence, [there is] a framework which turns death into an existence that serves as the foundation for the reality of other lives."\(^1\) This time Itō's analysis seems appropriate in explaining the thematic priorities of both stories. For Fukazawa, those who have died are still connected to this world, reinforcing the lives of other people; or, alternately, the deceased start to live new lives through those who are still alive. Significantly, "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" begins with a topographical description that transposes on to the world of nature this belief in an incessant continuation of life force: "Beyond each mountain lies a mountain; go where one will still there are mountains and nothing more" (B. 200; 245). Amidst this continuation death is indeed "foundational": the death of Orin, as with the boys, is taken as critical in ensuring the survival of others. As we see at the story's end, Orin's padded jacket and sash are used by her grandson and his pregnant wife from the very day Orin leaves the family (277; B. 232). The connection symbolically made, the life force is passed on once again to a new generation.

Fukazawa's depiction of Orin as an ordinary, practical-minded character concerned about herself as well as others rather than an ideal incarnation of the entirely pure spirit of self-sacrifice shows the author's ability to not overdetermine his heroine. As we have seen, Orin is shown as a woman with a desire for self-expression, who is first and foremost concerned about her propriety, and who does not yield her ironclad conviction that she is "right" and Matayan is "wrong." Fukazawa's authorial distance from his heroine has made the creation of this "imperfect" and therefore feasible character possible. If he
were eager to realize a totally altruistic figure, he would likely have left an impression of cruelty and sadness—a selfless woman, alas, "killed" for the sake of a greater good. On the contrary, Fukazawa has let the reader walk away with a sense of satisfaction, a sense of accomplishment as Orin herself has enjoyed. This effect is largely accomplished through the author's control over the distance between the narrator and his characters.

In the following discussions, we will examine the effect of this distance on Fukazawa's narrative. We will see it activated throughout his works, but the degree of distance tends to increase as his career progresses. In *The Fuefuki River*, Fukazawa demonstrates with more diversity his ability at once to step back from and control his narrative.
Chapter Two

The unceasing force of life
through
*The Fuefuki River*

*The Fuefuki River* is the story of four generations of a peasant family living in the Kai Province of sixteenth century Japan. The family has lived in a small hut, called a "cricket hamper" (*gicchon kago*), located at the foot of the Fuefuki Bridge over the Fuefuki River, which still runs in present Yamanashi Prefecture. The tale has a few "main characters" as each generation of the family presents its own heroes and heroines. The major part of the story, however, focuses on the couple of the third generation and their three sons and one daughter. The tale tells of their day-to-day existence at the most basic of levels, centered primarily on scenes of eating and excreting and working and sleeping. The wars that the landlord leads interfere with the family's daily routine, putting their lives in peril at times, and eventually taking the lives of all but the father. The story has over a dozen characters who frequently appear, along with many nameless village people and the landlord's retainers, all of whom relate to the reader moments of their day.

As mentioned in Chapter One of this study, the central theme that ties this long, densely populated story together is the confirmation of life as a whole within the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. In this work, however, the deaths are not presented as a form of sacrifice, but rather, in the form of murder, sickness, and a completion of one's allotted time.
The taut chain-like force of life is particularly emphasized by the birth of a child which is always shown to follow immediately upon the end of another life. The people in *The Fuefuki River* are shown to accept this phenomenon as a manifestation of reincarnation. When Hampei's granddaughter Kiyo dies, his daughters try to console him by pointing out the fact that his neighbor has just had a baby girl. They believe that the girl is the reincarnation of Kiyo. They say that Hampei can take the girl out every now and then, so as to look after her as if she were Kiyo, and Hampei is shown to take consolation from these words (21). In the village, reincarnation is taken to be as natural as rain, and the people unquestioningly expect its manifestations and accept them as they appear. In this treatment of reincarnation we again have the author's perception of life as a whole with countless consecutive parts, with the whole being of greater import than the short segments of time allotted to any one individual. This perspective of the author informs the entire story, moving in tandem with the flow of the Fuefuki River.

The author's perception of life as a never-ending cycle is in sharp contrast with other authors' for whom reincarnation is often an issue, including Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972). Kawabata wrote a short piece entitled "Lyrical Songs" (Jojōka) in 1932. In the story, a female narrator-protagonist addresses her now deceased lover who abandoned her before dying in order to marry another woman. Her story consists chiefly of her memories of the days they spent together, and of her childhood when she was called a miraculous child due to her supernatural ability to predict the future. She frequently digresses to talk about European and Buddhist spiritual literature, including Greek mythological tales of people transforming into plants. The protagonist grieves over the fact that it is never possible for her and her beloved to be transformed into flowers which would blossom side by side together in "the other world"
This grief is the very reason behind her address to the deceased man and her conviction and source of sorrow is that "human beings have to live in the form of humans as we all do in this world, even in the world of their afterlives".

This view of reincarnation differs greatly from the one found in The Fuefuki River. First of all, the characters in the latter do not "think" about reincarnation at all. They simply expect it to happen, and accept what is to come. There is one scene in which Hampei's daughter suggests, albeit jokingly, that Hampei has been reborn as a horse. It is at least within the realm of the imaginable, then, that one might be reborn as something other than a human being. This phenomenon reflects the common Buddhist attitude toward reincarnation, that one's after life (including physical form) is determined by one's moral behavior in this world. This belief in the determining function of one's moral behavior (rather than, say, personal choice at the moment of reconception) is resented by the protagonist of Kawabata's story; she sees it as a "blemish" on an otherwise appealing potential for rebirth. For the people in The Fuefuki River, however, there is nothing extraordinary about this transformation. Equally important is the fact that, though discussed at length, reincarnation never occurs in "Lyrical Songs," whereas in The Fuefuki River, it is the major thread which weaves elements of the story together.

Kawabata's text abstracts and laments what Fukazawa shows to be concrete and accepted.

The plane on which Fukazawa operates in his fiction seems to go beyond the reach of "common sense." Indeed, Kawabata is right in assuming that reincarnation is not a scientific fact. The "illogical" phenomena that occur in the story and the depiction of village people accepting those phenomena, however, sheds light on Fukazawa's understanding of humankind and its relationship
with the world. Let us look now at the ways in which this understanding informs
the process of characterization in *The Fuefuki River*.

Hinuma Rintarō, in his essay "Seeing through to the Reality of Existence"
(Sonzai tōshi-ryoku) (1961), suggests that Fukazawa treats his characters as if
they were "objects" rather than animate beings (234). Indeed, the people in
*The Fuefuki River* are shown to die one after the other like puppets taken
arbitrarily from the stage, and new-born lives seem to indiscriminately take
over where death has occurred. The female characters have second marriages,
making little of the change and the unsuccessful first marriage (12-13, 69-70).
Drastic loss and change in life are shown to be a matter of course. A lingering
description of the characters' emotions which might be expected to accompany
such events, and which has been the focus of much modern Japanese literature, is
rarely the issue here. And yet, while Hinuma's concluding statement that
Fukazawa's characters "are not given their own psychological and emotional
property by the author" (234) is provocative in Fukazawa scholarship and
certainly has the force of received wisdom, the critic's analysis does not hold up
in the context of the story, for people in *The Fuefuki River* are not drawn with
the simplicity of stage properties.

First, we need to realize the position of the peasant in sixteenth century
Japan. The peasantry were subordinate to the district lord who possessed an
exclusive power to reign over an area, backed up by their military superiority.
Fukazawa's peasants acknowledge this situation, and they do what they can
within that limitation. Hampei, for example, is depicted as a character who
"endures" the misfortune that befalls his family. When his father-in-law is
killed by order of the landlord he in effect accepts the disaster resignedly. There
is nothing for him to do but mourn for the deceased. He does not even think ill of
the landlord, let alone consider revenge, because he knows it is impossible to do
so in the present power relationship. He does, however, unabashedly display his emotions. He jumps onto the dead body and shakes it in the hope that it might resume breathing. His legs tremble at the news of this misfortune, and his entire body shudders on the dead body whose warmth he can still feel (11). These physical descriptions suffice to represent Hampei's uncontrollable fear of the landlord and his overflowing sorrow. Hence, we see that Hampei does have emotions and that he is allowed to express them, the only contingency being that he must do so without stepping out of his designated class.

*The Fuefuki River* presents a variety of characters who express their emotions and who exercise their will to achieve what they want, while remaining within received limitations. Sadahei, for example, stubbornly refuses to join the battle even though everybody else of his age has gone to fight (33). Serving in the war has a certain appeal for the peasants, for when they win, they are financially rewarded by the landlord and can in turn help their families (9, 16-17). In the last instance, however, it is the choice of each individual whether or not to join the battle, and refusing to fight is a real option, as Sadahei demonstrates. A more dramatic example of characters who exercise their will is the middle-aged woman Tatsu, who swears revenge on the landlord of the area. Tatsu's family was the largest silk merchant in the district and each member except for her daughter has met their demise because of the landlord who had apparently become threatened by her family's wealth and prosperity (16, 30-31, 49). Tatsu declares in front of Sadahei, her half-brother, that she will avenge the treatment of her family (50). She imprecates evil upon the landlord every day, and she begins bathing in the ice cold water of the Fuefuki once a day in the middle of winter in order to intensify her curse on him (80). As if responding to her determination, the landlord, Takeda Harunobu (Shingen)\(^5\), dies of illness one summer (82-83). Upon hearing this news of his death, Tatsu's facial
expression displays her confidence that *she* was responsible for Takeda's death (83). Thus, Tatsu has achieved her goal through her own means of revenge.

What is of course striking in Tatsu's action is not only the strength of her will to carry out her resolution but also the means of implementation. She calls down curses on the landlord, relying on something other than her own self. She in effect resorts to a super-human power to actualize her revenge. Implied is Tatsu's understanding of her own limitation. Her acknowledgement of her position as an unempowered peasant is the very reason why she must resort to calling on super-human power. This power is perhaps best taken to be a "god" or "spirit." In any case, non-human entities are accounted for by Tatsu, and she seems to see these entities as both something to be in awe of because their power is not shared by humankind and something unexceptional in that their power is for Tatsu there to be drawn on.

A similar presence whose power extends beyond that of humankind is also introduced in the story--it is nature, in the form of the Fuefuki River. The River floods almost every year, and each time it does the people are forced to flee into other areas with all their possessions (22, 46, 67, 91-92). The flood destroys homes and land, and it even kills those who are not properly sheltered (46, 91-93). What the people do against this autonomous force of nature is to build protective embankments. There is one bank in particular called the *Shingen zutsumi* that despite numerous floodings has never been destroyed (91-92). In this way, peasants in *The Fuefuki River* are depicted as being in a symbiotic relationship with rather than simply the victims of the greater entities of their surroundings.

Interestingly, the undefeated bank is named after the landlord of the district whom the peasants think of as an all-powerful existence. Even those who appear to be in power, however, are depicted as being enslaved by its mere
concept. The reality behind the landlord's "authority" might be said to be symbolically contained in their title: "Sir Manor House" (o-yakata sama) お屋敷様. We encounter three landlords over three generations in the story, and they are called by their title and rarely by their own names. This practice of using a title in referring to an individual contributes to eliminating the individuality of each lord, and preserves the image which the designation suggests--the "house." Appropriately enough, the term represents the container of authority, rather than the individuals who are supposed to possess this authority. Interestingly, the three landlords Takeda Nobutora, Harunobu (Shingen) mentioned above, and Katsuyori are shown to be manipulated by the promise of this container rather than being in control of the substance of power. Harunobu expatriates his own father Nobutora in order to take over the "manor house" (26). Katsuyori succeeds Harunobu after the latter's death due to illness, only to be destroyed by another "Sir Manor House" in the neighboring district (120). Hence, the container remains intact over the generations while the reality of the power is never clear. Humankind is presented to be controlled not so much by the powers of the supernatural and nature but by their own creation of and desire for mundane power.

An understanding of humankind as but one of the groups of entities that happens to exist in this world seems to be the foundation of The Fuefuki River; and it is the writing of fiction based on this understanding that distinguishes Fukazawa from most modern Japanese writers. The majority of modern fiction begins from the existentialist assumption that individual human beings have, should have, or should have had the power to mould the world according to their will. The primary interest of the author, therefore, has been focused on the protagonists' mental struggle, especially around the issue of building up their own selves. Fukazawa, however, seems to have set out from the opposite
perspective, as even Hinuma concedes: "the center of the world is not the individual self but the world itself" (239). To Fukazawa, humankind is only one of the numerous entities that constitute this world. It yields to the forces of nature, and it can be enslaved by its own creation of power. Fukazawa's characters are informed of this limited position of their species, and within this limitation, they express their joys and sorrows to the fullest. They are far from emotionless objects, but the liveliest of characters as we shall see in the discussion below. Their foundation is a simple daily life rooted deeply in the biological necessities of Homo sapiens, as opposed to the intellectualizing activities of the alienated protagonists of works set in modern materialistic societies.

Setting the story in a sixteenth century farming village instead of the present urban environment allows the author to present a specimen of the very basic form of human life. In so doing, Fukazawa seems to be challenging our present materialistic drive and questioning which form of life is more genuinely human. The fundamental functions of Homo sapiens are called attention to throughout *The Fuefuki River*. For one, we are confronted with a frequent reference to defecation. In one scene Kiyo, a seven-year old girl, dies. The description of the night before her death is as follows:

(Did she wet the bed?) thought Hampei. When he looked closer, he found that Kiyo had defecated, too. He shook Hisa who was sleeping beside Kiyo and said, "Kiyo seems to have soiled the bed." Hisa lifted her head and replied, "What a nuisance, this kid," and immediately crawled back to bed. Hampei wiped Kiyo's bottom with Sadahei's diaper, and helped her to her feet. . . . All of a sudden, Hampei
cried in shock, "Oh, it's terrible. The child's anus is [still] open!" (18)

Subject matter such as excretion is dealt with matter-of-factly. The "justification" for talking about it at all seems to be simple: it is fatally related to this girl's very existence, as we, along with Hampei, soon find out that a person whose anus remains open after a bowel movement is said to face imminent death (19). Similarly, we are shown that the place where Hampei first learns of Kiyo's death is the toilet. While he is urinating, his second-oldest daughter Take bangs on the door to let him know of the tragedy (18).

The scene is very realistic when we come to think about how daily life progresses. It is plausible that one might encounter serious incidents under circumstances similar to Hampei. Defecation is a facet of our existence, and a biologically important one. It has, however, been little explored in the modern Japanese fiction. Fukazawa has artlessly integrated it into his world of peasants, and presented their life as close as possible to the real, earthy routine.

Another fundamental function of humankind is to produce children. As pointed out above, there are a number of births depicted in the story, and they are tightly connected to death as a form of rebirth. The arrangement that situates most of the deaths as being immediately followed by births is indicative of the author's affirmation of the life force in humankind as a whole. One of the most striking examples of this effusive life force is the birth of Jirō. We have the scene where Jirō is born from a mother who was just a moment before brutally cut down. Jirō's birth was not expected, but his grandmother Tatsu hears something near the dead body:

Right then, she heard a rustling sound at the crotch of the body, the body that was lying with its legs stretched out. She saw its kimono moving, and liquid
began to flow from the crotch. Tatsu caught her
breath in realization of what it was, and tucked up the
kimono around the body's crotch. There she saw, in a
lake of blood like stagnant water, a baby wiggling.

(75)
The description strikes the reader with the impression that the baby-boy has his
own will to live. First of all, he comes out of his mother's womb by himself,
supposedly at the shock of the slaughter. Secondly, he comes into this world
almost at the same moment his mother departs it, as if determined to take over
her short-lived life (at the time of her death his mother was nineteen years old).
Finally, the baby wiggles, as if soliciting recognition of its existence. His
attempt proves to be successful, for his grandmother realizes that he is there.

Tatsu is shown to possess as much determination as Jirō for his survival, as
her immediate reaction to Jirō's sign of life suggests:

She got to her feet as if leaping into a dance. She took
the baby's umbilical cord in her mouth, and bit the
twitching thing off with her gnashing teeth. She
hurriedly tucked the baby in the hem of her kimono,
and then was off almost tumbling over in her haste.

(75)
The narration here is devoted entirely to the description of Tatsu's furious
attempt to save her grandson. The description further suggests a tremendous life
force that a person is able to demonstrate at critical life and death moments.

As literary subject matter, a baby born from a dead mother is not common
but is found in a few other Japanese works. Its treatment in "Echigo Tsutsuishi
Oyashirazu" (1962) by Minakami Tsutomu (1919- ), though, provides a
particularly good contrast to Fukazawa's usage. In the final scene, a baby is
found in the mother's coffin, supposedly born after her burial which took place five days before. We are led to think that the baby is dead, for the final line of the story reads: "Both mother and child remain silent" (396). The biggest difference between the two authors in their treatment of similar subject matter seems to lie in their different outlook toward this occurrence. Minakami seems struck by the "unusualness" of a baby born from its dead mother. This is likely why he puts this scene at the very end of the story. He expects the reader to be left in shock as well as expecting the scene to speak for itself with its possible implications. Fukazawa, on the contrary, sees nothing at all unusual about the event. This is evident not only by the fact that his story begins with Jirō's birth—with him as a new participant in the tale—but also by the way in which he presents the scene. First of all, he describes it calmly and swiftly. He solicits no brooding over the implications of the incident. Secondly, there is no mention of any emotional reaction from Tatsu, the most immediate witness of the scene and, moreover, mother of the victim. She is merely depicted as a person who does what she has to do, with no emotional involvement in the scene dealt with. The text plainly records her act in a calm, objective tone.

Confronted by this manner of presentation, the reader is likely to be drawn into Fukazawa's way of understanding life and death, particularly as a life force that continues on regardless of death. For Fukazawa, there is nothing unusual about the entire episode, for it is merely one of the examples that embody the continuation of human life, and demonstrates the simple desire of humankind to live. For Fukazawa it is this desire that is fundamental to all human activities, and once again the author pulls us down to earth and confronts us with this undeniable foundation of our existence.

The basic, earthy aspects of life are further emphasized by the author's constant assault on reified notions of beauty. We find a number of scenes where
the contrast between the immediate reality of peasants' life and what is "superfluous" to the basic needs is starkly illustrated. There are two scenes in particular where this contrast is most deliberately pronounced. When Ume comes back home from the castle completely changed and now looking like "a princess" (*ohimesama*) (101), the princess is reminded of her origins:

Ume's kimono touches the ground, its hem dragging through the earth in the very spot where, as luck would have it, a great deal of horse manure lay covering the way.

"Oh, no, oh, no," cries Okei, as if making a fuss, and she brushes the manure away with her hands. (101)

The scene is described with nonchalance. We detect, however, a satirical undertone in phrases such as "as luck would have it" (*ainiku*) and "as if making a fuss" (*sawagitateru yōni*). The former adverb suggests the incongruity of Ume's princess-like attire for a visit home, a simple place without pretension as the mundane presence of the fertilizer reminds us. Certainly, Ume's ostentatious display appears all the more out of place when so juxtaposed to the base reality of the village environment. Incongruity becomes more pronounced when Okei, Ume's mother, is led to make a "fuss" over her daughter's soiled clothing, a move otherwise unnecessary in her daily routine. The whole picture comes through as even somewhat pathetic.

Perhaps an even more striking example of this juxtaposition of refined and unrefined visual images is the scene in which Okei sees fireflies gathered in a group on the river bank. They are so numerous and so tightly packed together that they shine profusely like a solid rock of light. Okei is excited at the sight of the spectacle and thinks how her son, Sōzō, would also be pleased to see it. She approaches the "rock" and grasps the middle of it with both hands, but, as we see,
she gets hold of more than brightly shining insects, for it turns out that the fireflies were huddled on the faeces Sōzō had earlier left behind (76-77).

Perhaps Okei is not alone in her surprise, as this scene calls to mind as it unfolds the famous firefly hunt in The Makioka Sisters (Sasameyuki) (1943-48) by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886-1965), with its markedly different treatment of the same luminescent insects. As many of Fukazawa's readers would no doubt have recalled, the three sisters go to view the fireflies, and Sachiko, from whose perspective the story is largely told, reflects while in bed on how beautiful the fireflies were:

[F]ar as the river stretched--an infinite number of little lines in two long rows on either side, quiet, unearthly. . . . Something not to be painted, but set to music. . . . Sachiko felt a surging inside her, as though she were joining them, soaring and dipping along the surface of the water, cutting her own uncertain track of light.8

For Tanizaki's characters, the fireflies suggest a refined sense of the aesthetic. The image of them is remembered by Sachiko as beautiful and dream-like. Moreover, as shown at the end of the quotation, Sachiko starts building her own narrative around the image, with herself as a participant in their "world of the fairy story" (342). In this way, Tanizaki's fireflies seem to lend themselves to conceptualization, owing perhaps to their mysterious appearance. This conceptualized beauty provides Sachiko and her sisters an "unearthly" pleasure amidst their affluent, epicurean life.

Fukazawa's fireflies of course play an entirely different role. First of all, their beauty is set up only to be destroyed by the touch and smell of human waste.
Furthermore, the brightness of the insects is used to emphasize a graphic contrast between the reified beauty and a definite sign of human life:

The fireflies were washed away by the stream,
looking like flakes of light, but the soft substance remained stuck to her hands and would hardly come off. (76)

While the brilliant flashes of beauty incarnate flutter away from Okei, her son's faeces does not leave her, as if insisting upon not being forgotten. When she finally cleans her hands and goes inside the house, Fukazawa, driving the message home, shows that excrement stubbornly remains where her hands brushed her nose (77). The unabstracted, mundane reality wins the day, and the fireflies beauty is shown to have little to do with the peasant's life. Fukazawa prioritizes the more real, substantive existence of human beings over the abstract concept of a refined beauty. When he tempts us to indulge in the world of the aesthetic, he makes sure to drag us back to the reality of the life of the peasant—there is neither room nor need for a sumptuous summer kimono, the luminescence of fireflies, and other such finery to exist.

In *The Fuefuki River*, then, there are these affirmations of the life force of the people and, as we have seen, they are thematically emphasized by the author. These affirmations are continued in the way in which the narrative is presented. In the main, this story consists of the characters' direct speech, accounting for nearly three-quarters of the entire narrative. The fact that the characters' own utterances occupy such a large portion of the story already provides the foundation for delivering the liveliest possible character description, because their words are always "heard" by the reader without obvious interpretation or mediation by a narrator. Fukazawa takes full advantage of this footing and fills the characters' utterances with an abundance of life force. In particular, he
employs the local diction of the peasant and devises a way in which to capture the intonation of the utterances in the written form of the language.

The vocabulary of the local language includes "washi" (first person self-referent used by both men and women), and dialect-specific expressions such as "boko" (reference to a child), "mekki" (a person who has sight in only one eye), and "oyatetto" (the daily manual labor in which one typically works at households other than one's own). The way in which the characters end their sentences are also distinctive: "kendo" (but...), "zura" (I suppose), "noke?" (is it?/does it?), and "goisu" (a less formal form of the honorific predicate gozaimasu). Inclusion of these local elements of the spoken language contributes to enhancing the lively depiction of the characters, as well as intensifying the earthy tone of their conversation.

The intonation of their spoken words is shown by elongated vowels for emphasis, and by a couple of half-sounds added at the end of the utterance. Some instances of the first include (with emphasis added by underline): "iyada yoo" (Stop it/I don't like it) (28) and "sonna koto mo nee rashii" (it doesn't seem that way) (34). These combinations of hiragana (a cursive Japanese script that represents sound) are the restoration of the sound compounds heard in the characters' speech. They do not have particular meanings, but rather, they add a certain pause and rhythm to the utterances, thereby contributing to increasing their similarity to actual speech. The half-sounds are devised in order to further enhance the verisimilitude of the spoken discourse. They are used sometimes in conjunction with the rhythm-giving sound compounds, and sometimes by themselves (with emphasis added by underline): "taishita kota nee" (it's no big deal) (92), "ikete yaraza " (I'll bury [her] for them) (46), and "tashikani sō da " (it sure is so) (55). What I call half-sounds are written here in smaller letters as they are in the original Japanese text as in 大したこたぬえ. Since
sounds are expressed in smaller letters, it is intended that the reader articulates those sounds very subtly and quickly, as opposed to allotting the full vocal length that the regular letters demand. In so doing, the reader provides rhythms and intonation to the characters' utterances, and thus reproduces their spoken discourse from the written form of the text. This device, together with the elongated vowels, contributes to making the characters' speech as lively and real as the written text will allow. Hence, those who people The Fuefuki River at times appear to overtake the narrative and speak directly to their reading audience.

Although character conversation constitutes a majority of the story, the role of the narrator is crucial to the effect of the entire narrative. The scenario of The Fuefuki River can be compared to that of a theater production, with characters acting on the stage and the narrator providing the necessary stage directions. The significance of the narrator's role, however, is indicated by the fact that no two direct speeches between characters are allowed to follow one another directly—they are consistently "interrupted" by narration. Here we see the narrator as a peculiar yet essential caretaker of the narrative. If we think of the direct speech of the characters as, in total, a grid-like frame, the narration is several different patternings that serve to fill out the spaces left by that frame.

One such pattern can be seen when the narrator provides "stage directions" that range from being as simple as "said he" (to itta) (76), "so they called her" (to yonde ita) (79), and the like, to suggestions of the changing countenance of characters in action:

Hisa, still standing outside the house, said,

"Who said such a thing?"

as she started to get angry. Sadahei was calm:

"The aunt in Kurokoma told me about it,"
he said. Hisa, in haste, continued,
"Okay, she definitely said it, right? Are you sure?"
and,
"Now, let's go to Kurokoma together and ask her
whether she said such a thing or not."
Sadahei, letting out a loud voice, exclaimed,
"You go ask by yourself as you please,"
to which Hisa responded in rapid speech:
"She mustn't have said such a thing. You must come
with me, and I'll ask her in front of you,"
she said. Sadahei grew angry:
"Alright then, fine, let's go together. You think I'm
telling you a lie?"
As he spoke, he started putting his straw sandals on.

This emerges as the major pattern of story-telling in *The Fuefuki River*. In the
process, not only does the narration serve to fill in the spaces between quotations
but simultaneously (re)activates those quotations. The direct speech of Hisa and
Sadahei is given visual, acoustic, and emotional modifications by the narrator,
so that their exchange is vividly experienced by the audience, the reader.
Conversely, the narrator specifies the details of the characters' action, the part
which cannot be expressed otherwise. All told, we have descriptions that
acknowledge and include into the greater whole of the narrative fabric the
slightest changes in the manner of its characters.

Interestingly, this intermingled pattern in which both characters and the
narrator are alternatingly present at the same time establishes a certain distance
between the text and the reader. Because of the narrator's "interruption" the
reader is constantly pulled back from engaging in direct involvement with the
tale, an involvement which the immediacy of the dialogue invites. This aspect of
the narrative structure facilitates a detachment on the part of the reader, and this
detachment is one of the two major effects of the story as well as an
indispensable element for our appreciation of the tale. We shall now discuss
how these two effects are produced upon the reader, and hence how we are led to
read the story with these effects working on us.

The reader's response largely consists of two opposite sentiments--
detachment from the affairs described and sympathy toward the characters who
are engaged in these affairs. This seemingly contradictory effect is produced by
the narrator's distinct way of story-telling. First, he employs a plain, objective
language shorn of emotional ups and downs. His narration takes the form of a
simple "report" of what has happened, as if it were nothing of major importance.
And yet, he occasionally discloses his fondness for the characters, which is often
noted by the final predicate he uses in his narrational sentences. Hence, the
reader confronts passages in which the narrator's detachment from and
affection for the characters are present all at once. This perspective of the
narrator is taken on by the reader, and the latter, as a consequence, is led to
experience a peculiar emotional state where two opposite sentiments co-exist.
The following example should help clarify these points:

Just as the sword flashed, Nobu's shoulders were
broken, and she crouched forward as if collapsing.
Again, she was struck on the back. Nobu, with her
knees on the earth, pressed her face down on the
ground as if begging for pardon. Her back was once
again slashed mercilessly [shimatta] by the sword.
(75)
The passage tells of the cruel and terrifying scene immediately preceding Jirō's birth (discussed above) where his mother Nobu is slain. As noted before, the incident is described by the narrator through the eyes of Nobu's mother, Tatsu. Despite the fact that the mother witnesses her daughter being slaughtered, the language used remains surprisingly neutral. It has a plain, reportorial style, whose vocabulary is primarily geared toward relating the physical impact on the woman's body of the cutting action of the sword. Neither the inevitable outcome--blood, pain, death--nor the emotional outburst of the mother is mentioned. Confronted by this factual description rather than a sentimental interpretation of the scene, the readers are led to keep themselves from being emotionally involved with the spectacle and are encouraged to see the facts as they are.

Detachment, however, is not the only effect produced upon the reader by the above passage. We take on the feeling of pity toward the victim expressed in the tone of the narrator's voice. This sentiment is especially apparent in the phrases, "as if begging for pardon" (ayamaru yōni) and "sadly" or "unfortunately" (shimatta). The choice of simile, "as if begging for pardon," reveals the observer's (in this case, the narrator's) sympathy for the victim, who wishes to relate the girl's physical response to her state of anguish. The narrator wants us to think that she is apologizing,9 thereby further revealing his wish that the sword not be brought down on her once again. The vicious stroke of the sword, however, falls a third time upon the poor woman, inviting the adverbial qualification, "mercilessly." In Japanese, this sentiment is implicitly expressed in the final suffix "shimatta," which often indicates the speaker's regret, and which sometimes involves the speaker's speculation on the subject's regret. By regretting the fact that Nobu was cut down a third time, the narrator, in turn, shows pity toward the woman. The reader is led to share the same view. Hence,
within one and the same scene, we find ourselves being distanced from the immediate bloody incident as if it were no major event, but also being sympathetic toward the victim. This is the pattern of the narrative every time the narrator presents disturbing incidents. Throughout the tale we remain emotionally neutral and discerning, due to the counterbalancing forces of two opposing sentiments.

The balance between detachment and involvement is deftly maintained by the author's manipulation of the narrator's perspective. Since the narrator's diction is consistent in its plain, objective, and fact-reporting quality, the narrative tends to be distanced from its material. Although the large quantity of direct speech of the characters contributes to the immediacy of the issues in question, the immediacy needs to be activated by the reader through involvement in the scene. The device Fukazawa employs to remind the reader of the sympathetic part of the narrator's voice is to adjust the narrator's language on a subtler level than diction. He "ties up" the narrator's sentences with predicates, usually adding subjective suffixes to them. Two such suffixes that are used throughout the tale are "shimatta," as discussed above," and "nodearu" (the fact is that). "Nodearu" implies the narrator's surprise at, for example, what a particular character has just said, as in "'Mitsuke shidai bukkorosu to jinya no hito tachi wa iu nodearu" ('As soon as we find him, we'll butcher him' said the retainers of the landlord. [What a terrible thing to say!] (63). The suffix "nodearu" here serves to emphasize the cruelty of the statement in the quotation, and shows how the viciousness of this threat was shocking enough to arouse the narrator's sympathy for the person to be killed, a sympathy of course we as readers are enjoined to share. This is the manner in which the narrator "ties up" his sentences, so that his personalized feelings toward the characters are expressed in the narration. The phrase "shimatta" often works similarly. Every
time the readers encounter the predicates that are finished with these suffixes, their response to the person in question leans toward the favorable. In this way, the narrator's voice while bearing a sympathetic tone can often "emotionalize" the detached diction that permeates the tale.

The narrator's affection for the characters is also noticeable when he "descends" into their world. That is, the narrator on occasion takes on the character's point of view. The shift in perspective is completed in a similar way as was the case in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," for the move is marked by the language the narrator adopts. The narrator's language is otherwise the standard informal form of narration that can be found in any literary work in Japanese. When he takes up a character's point of view, however, he also takes up his/her language, often bound up with localisms and sometimes a coarse peasant's diction. When he looks through Hisa's eyes, for example, the narration is inflected as follows: "Yūgata, meshi wo kutteru tokimo" (While they were eating their evening meal) (24; emphasis added), rather than what might be more "narrational," for instance: "Yūgata, gohan wo tabeteiru tokimo." Likewise, when the narrator sees the procession of the district lord's brother as Sadahei and his family do, we have "Oshōdō sama wa ... sugu oide ni natta" (The Holy Path [as in Buddhist priesthood] immediately arrived) (34; emphasis added), instead of "Takeda Harunobu no otōto wa sugu kita' (The younger brother of Takeda Harunobu immediately arrived; emphasis added). The level of politeness is definitely higher in the former speech than in the latter, and we can tell that the former description is done through the viewpoint of the peasants who choose to employ the politest level of discourse rather than to be killed for lese majesty. At this particular point in the narrative, however, the narrator has taken on the peasants' vision through which he sees the procession. In these instances, the narrator is one of the characters, and so are
we, the readers, who equate our perspective with that of the characters. It thus enables us to share firsthand their reality, and to "peek in" at their emotional subtleties that reflect their immediate present.

Hence, the readers find themselves feeling close to the individual characters. On the other hand, we feel distanced from what they are engaged in, for we are not invited to become emotionally involved in critical incidents such as the slaughter of Nobu. Although we are led to feel sorry for Nobu, the character, we do not feel so sorry that the incident occurred; the scene is intense but is described in such a way that the slaughter becomes but another part of the peasants' existence, mediated here by the narrator's detached, unemotional manner of presentation. This peculiar balance of intimacy and detachment within the reader, in fact, is a fitting attitude with which to view the story of The Fuefuki River.

As discussed above, the tale's central theme is the confirmation of an undeterable life force. This confirmation is applied not only to humankind, but also to some other manifestations of life such as nature. The phenomenon of reincarnation connecting one life to another represents the continuation of human life, and the annual flood, which often overwhelms the life of human beings, marks nature's unmistakable presence. There are also traditions, rules, and powers that hardly seem to change over the years. Within this entire movement of the earth and society, human life per se is regarded as merely one group of animate entities, to say nothing of individual persons' lives. Hence, while depicting the lives of several characters, Fukazawa, in effect, is depicting the greater movement of life as a whole, which transcends and embraces the individual lives of humankind. This is largely why his characters are born easily and die simply; as long as the stream of life continues to flow, he shows little
concern for individual deaths and births, let alone their "achievements" from day-to-day.

The reader's attachment to the characters which is facilitated by one "half" of the narrator's voice and the detachment from what they do that is created by the other serve to accommodate the tale's theme with multiplied impact. The immediate and realistic reproduction of the life of a sixteenth century peasant family has in turn led us to see it with detached eyes, and has thus led us to discern something greater than the immediately present fictional world. The following comment by the author himself seems to point to what the greater implication might be: "The protagonists [of the story] are the bridge and the cricket hamper by the Fuefuki River." The two objects that have never changed in the course of the tale seem to represent the continuing existence of one form of life or another. All the while the flow of the Fuefuki River never ceases in its assurance and celebration of such a life force. As if to confirm the survival of humankind, Sadahei, the only survivor of the entire family of the "cricket hamper" hut, is shown to wash rice in the stream of the Fuefuki at the final scene of the tale (123-24). The rice is the food that provides for his existence tomorrow. The readers are left with a vague sense of being assured that human life as represented by Sadahei will somehow persist.

A large part of the tale's success is due to the narrator who the author has had realize in the reader the two contradictory sentiments, and thereby maximizing the impact of the tale's theme. The creation of this narrator is Fukazawa's major achievement in The Fuefuki River. Unlike his approach in "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," Fukazawa manipulates and varies the narrator's language and perspective and thus strikes a balance between a detached and sympathetic tone of voice that guides the reader's response to the tale. The distance between himself and his creation has become more resolute
and reliable, and it reinforces the tale's theme which confirms the continuation of life, a life of unknown duration that goes far beyond the time span allotted mere individuals.

The treatment of individual lives as transient, less significant entities compared to the greater movement of the earth is further applied to the next story to be discussed, "A Dream Tale" (Furyū mutan, 1960). Because this story is set in the present rather than the safety of the distant past, with what was widely seen as scandalously depicted Imperial Family members figuring among the characters, "A Dream Tale" raised a controversy so great that one employee of the story's publisher was murdered. In Chapter Three, I will examine this work, which I believe marked a turning point in Fukazawa's life as a writer as well as a person and, in conclusion, will note how some of these changes had worked themselves out by the 1973 publication of his *The Old Men of Bonsai and Their Surroundings* (Bonsai rōjin to sono shūhen).
Chapter Three

Really Dreaming -- "A Dream Tale"

"A Dream Tale" (Furyū mutan) appeared in Chūō kōron in December, 1960. The story tells of a dream that the protagonist had "the other night." The dream concerns an "uprising" in Tokyo; but what would otherwise be alarming social disorder is presented as the festivities of some bizarre fair. Because these festivities included the beheading of the Crown Prince and Princess of Japan's Imperial Family—an execution taken by the crowd of the story to be merely an amusing spectacle—some groups in Japan took exception to the story. Reaction amongst rightist and nationalist elements was swift and violent, including protest in person against the publisher as well as numerous threatening letters, all of which culminated in the murder of a woman who worked at the home of the publishing company's president. As the extremity of the response suggests, the impact of "A Dream Tale" went far beyond the literary sphere.

After this incident, Fukazawa was forced to conceal his whereabouts, guarded by police officers at all times, and eventually left Tokyo to travel quietly about Japan until the social unrest and scandal his work had provoked subsided. It was not until the spring of 1962 that he returned to Tokyo, and in November 1965, he moved to Shōbu, Saitama Prefecture where he set up his own small farm with the conciliatory name "Love Me Farm" (rabu mi nōjō).

Because "A Dream Tale" models characters on members of the Imperial Family, depicts their execution, and was written and released during a time of already violent social unrest (the threat of revolution, particularly of a leftist
uprising, was felt to be a real possibility after what was a bloody struggle over the renewal in 1960 of the U.S.-Japan security pact), criticism of the work has inclined in a peculiar direction. Critics of the time in particular wrote in order to contain negative public reaction to, variously, the work, the author, their own criticism, and themselves. Certainly the threat of rightist violence was real, yet one unfortunate if understandable point these apologia share is a tendency to relegate to the distant background the work in question. Thus, in the following discussion of "The Dream Tale," I will attempt to retrieve the text by providing a more literary analysis.

The discussion to follow makes no attempt to be comprehensive and will necessitate, on the one hand, setting aside some of the interesting issues raised by the tale—the enduring role of the right in shaping literature produced in Japan, the full implications of the carnivalization of society here presented, to name just two politically potent concerns—and, on the other, providing a reading that runs contrary to the most obvious interpretation of Fukazawa's "parodic" treatment of the Imperial institution. Furthermore, by way of that more literary analysis, I will emphasize the narrative strategies of the work, and will pay particular attention to the dream as a literary framework. As we shall see, the "dream" setting is of especial interest in "A Dream Tale," for it signals Fukazawa's new approach to the writing of fiction.

The dream framework seems to have set Fukazawa free to express his disconnected, arbitrary thoughts and ideas. The structure is put in place to support the nonsensical nature of the story, and likewise signals that a logical, familiar progression of people and events may well not follow. What we see, in fact, are a series of unorthodox interpretations of images otherwise familiar to us. Fukazawa equates, for example, an uprising with a carnival by situating the seemingly opposite social expressions side by side. While the protagonist "I" is
waiting for the bus in Shibuya, he is told by people around him that there are battles going on in the center of Tokyo between those who are in power in the upper ranks of the Establishment and the rest of the masses including soldiers of the Self-Defense Forces and lower-ranking police officers. "I," however, hears only the merry music played by the military band. The bus takes "I" to the plaza in front of the Imperial Palace, and instead of gruesome scenes of armed conflict, "I" sees street stalls selling food, sweets, masks, and balloons. Live entertainment, music, and elaborate firework displays highlight the festivities (338). Hence, the chaos of an uprising is associated with the carnival atmosphere of a fair. While "I" sees the stalls, band, and fireworks before him, he merely hears about the battles.

Suga Kunio in "On Fukazawa Shichirō's 'A Dream Tale'" (Fukazawa Shichirō "Fūryū mutan" ron) points out that Fukazawa's identification of an uprising with a fun fair echoes his perception of a political demonstration as a type of festival that seems to him "merry and cheerful."7 Indeed, according to Fukazawa's understanding of social phenomena, an uprising and a festival may well be fundamentally related in so much as both are motivated by desire (yoku). In his short essay "Two Dreams" (Futatsu no yume), Fukazawa identifies the motivation behind the acts of politicians as a desire for money and power. He sees nothing unusual in this as an incentive for professions of this sort, and he even takes issue with the common impulse to denounce modern government for being dominated by lobbyists.8 In the same way, Fukazawa seems to see both an uprising and a festival as being derived from desire. The uprising is carried out by the activists' desire for power, and the festival satisfies the participants' desire for pleasure. In this sense, they are indistinguishable for Fukazawa, and so we have an uprising and a fair as two sides of the same coin.
The controversial scene of the execution of the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess should be looked at as part of the entertainment of the carnival. Thereupon, the axe was swiftly brought down, and the head of the Crown Prince went rolling over to the far end, making a metallic sound... again, the axe was brought up and, this time, the head of the Crown Princess went rolling off, making a metallic sound... the headless body in its gold brocade kimono with the pattern of a palace was left lying elegantly there. (333)

The executed are described as if they were inorganic substances rather than human beings. There is no graphic description of the bloody details, nor is there an agitated reaction from the crowd, and thus there is no association with terror or cruelty. The metallic sound in the original Japanese is expressed by the onomatopoeic word, "sutten korokoro" and "sutten korokoro karakarakara" (333). In the living language these onomatopoeia are most often used in comic description. Hence, the entire scene registers as something far from dreadful or horrifying. On the contrary, the execution is a stage show. The element of entertainment is put further into the foreground when we encounter the following scene where the headless bodies of the Emperor and the Empress Consort are laid down like an exhibit for viewing by the thronging spectators. Even a police officer takes part, not to make arrests but to direct the anxious crowd as everyone passes beside the bodies (333).

Because it so happens that the executed are members of the Imperial Family, an interesting metaphor results from this peculiar treatment of human bodies. The heads that make metallic sounds suggest the heads of robots. Indeed, the royalty of Japan are robots in the sense that they perform in strict
accordance with the desires of others. They are supposed never to show their own will or emotions on public occasions, and their official speech and actions are always subject to political priorities. We recall the actual marriage of the Crown Prince and Princess that had taken place seventeen months before the story was written. The wedding and the following procession in central Tokyo were broadcast in minute detail on television throughout the country. Their fixed smiles and constant mechanical waving to the crowd seemed merely to enhance the nation-wide festivity.

On one hand, we are tempted to infer the author's criticism of the Emperor system because of this "unusual" scene of beheading the Crown Prince and Princess and the carnival atmosphere that contains it. On the other hand, we might argue that Fukazawa nonchalantly, and perhaps unknowingly, did no more than express the commonly-held understanding of the Imperial Family as being merely a symbol, as Takeda Taijun (1912-1976) suggests. The argument in his essay "A Dream and Reality" (Yume to genjitsu) (1961) supports one possible reading of "A Dream Tale" as addressing the ambiguity of the status of the Emperor, which has not been clarified since the end of World War II. The current use of the term "symbol" (shōchō) to refer to the Emperor assumes that something inorganic is being referred to, rather unusual as legislated treatment of an individual. Takeda is of the opinion that only an inorganic substance can be a symbol, not a living human being. Rather than contesting this view, he sees Fukazawa as merely echoing, unwittingly, the commonly-held assumption about the Imperial Family. He further states that this assumption went unquestioned by the very people who were crying out against Fukazawa's tale, who likewise did not realize their own anti-humanistic treatment of the Imperial Family. Takeda concludes that it is a great tragedy for the people to accuse Fukazawa for what he had dreamed, for those people are having even worse
dreams: the illusion that they can continue whenever it is desirable for them to treat the Emperor as a mere "symbol."  

Takeda overstates the case (in an apologetic tone symptomatic, as noted above, of much "A Dream Tale" criticism), but it seems possible that Fukazawa had no other intent for this scene beyond presenting the executions in a funny, parodic way. His own comment on the scene seems to be feasible considering his easygoing, straightforward personality:

> If I were a model for the executed and my head was described as being chopped off, leaving only a metallic sound behind, I would merely think it funny and amusing. I would not feel displeased because of it. I wrote [the scene] thinking that the Crown Prince would also find it amusing and have a laugh. And yet, everyone has pointed out the wrong in what I have done and now I regret being the cause of such concern.

The officials at the Imperial Household Administrative Offices, however, did not share Fukazawa's sense of humour, nor were they swayed by his professed innocence. They tried to sue the author for libel, holding off only when told by the Ministry of Justice that the charge in this case would be difficult to make. One irony of this controversy is brought to mind by our earlier discussion of the Imperial symbol: the Imperial Family members, the very "people" who were thought to be "insulted," remained silent (and thus in character) throughout the controversy. Another perhaps larger irony is that the sort of depiction of the Imperial Family said to be at the center of the controversy seems never to have been intended by the author. Interestingly, when we return to the text, it seems
the rush to condemn the man and his work has overlooked critical portions of that controversial depiction.

At one point we find the Empress Dowager Shōken speaking on behalf of the Imperial Family, an important moment because it suggests the author's neutral standpoint and his desire to include a voice from the "parodized," not solely the apparent agent of parody:

All the nation makes much of us and takes extensive care of us. But in spite of all that, people like yourselves say we have exploited you or we are bloodsuckers. You people wanted to make us like that to suit your own convenience. What a nuisance for us, really. (336)

Although "I" is shown to be outraged with this statement by the Empress Dowager, we the readers have certainly heard what she has to say, and must include this information in our evaluation of the viewpoints of the two parties. While "I" insists that the Imperial Family lives in the lap of luxury supported by the taxpayers, he agrees with her further comment that the gods can tell which party is wrong. This termination of the argument, in effect, leaves the decision up to the reader. The author, in the final analysis, has thus refrained from granting favour to either party. Instead, we see the author's efforts to place them on an equal level through this confrontation.

This leveling of "I" and the Empress Dowager Shōken is accomplished through their literally coming to blows as if in a schoolyard fight. When the Empress Dowager scratches "I"'s face, the latter gets angry and throws her down to the ground. "I" then pins her neck down with his thighs. Empress Dowager kicks and struggles to escape, gasping for breath, with her blouse pulled half off (335-36). Here we see not our usual image of the Empress Dowager but an
individual who with all her might is engaged in a common fight, poise, dignity and grace put far aside. Her character, shorn of elegance and propriety, is further vulgarized by the language she uses. It is the same Kōshū dialect which "I" speaks. She swears--"kusokkozō" (shit head) and "temee dachi" (you bastards) (334-36)--and her speech style is as coarse as that of "I": "iiyagaru" (you dare say) and "nukashagatte" (you have the cheek to say), for instance (336). Finally, she is described as an ordinary individual, vulnerable like everybody else. She has a round bald spot on the top of her head. "I" sees it as he is about to knock her on the head, and he jumps back with a start, shouting "wahhhhh!" (336). With "I" making such a fuss about his discovery of her bald spot, the baldness itself is ridiculed, thereby making the entire scene awkwardly comical. "I" explains that he was startled because he himself has a bald spot, and he always feels dreadful when he finds his own weakness in somebody else (336). Here the distinction otherwise maintained by the vastly higher status of the Empress Dowager Shōken is blurred, and we are presented instead with two vulnerable individuals who are literally soiled now by the same earth. In addition to the obvious levelling, this scene seems at least as concerned with being amusing as with stimulating a reassessment of the status of the Emperor system.

One further way in which amusement is encouraged is found in the story's treatment of tanka. According to Fukazawa, it was the art of tanka that he had set out to ridicule. He found sentimentality and humour in the furyū or (tentatively) "refined" characteristics of tanka verses, and believed it would be more effective if the Imperial Family made fun of them, rather than, say, a village headman or some elderly person. Therefore, he wrote four tanka, and then proceeded to build the story around them.13

The four tanka are shown to be poems composed on the deathbeds of four members of the Imperial Family: the Emperor, the Empress Consort, the Crown
Prince, and the Crown Princess. We also have an elderly gentleman who
deciphers the poems for "I," stating that he has served the Imperial Household
for fifty years (333). His explanations of the poems, however, are excessively
brief. He merely says that the first half of any poem is the opening modifier of
the main verb of the second half, and therefore, what he interprets is the meaning
of the verb alone. We are shown, for example, the following poem composed by
the Empress Consort:

A plover of the rocky shore
Goes out upon the open sea
Pushing aside the violent waves.
A boatman watches it dearly,
His light soaked by the brine. (335)\textsuperscript{14}

The most likely interpretation would begin by equating the plover with the
Emperor and the boatman with the Empress Consort.\textsuperscript{15} The former, whose
habitat is on the shore, is thrown into the midst of the violent waves, that is, the
social disorder at the hands of which he is suffering from. The boatman is
watching this unfortunate bird with love and compassion, knowing that he can
do nothing for it. His eyes are misted-over with tears, and that is why his light is
seen as being dim. The gentleman, however, impatiently bypasses this
explanation, isolates the verb "to be wet" (\textit{nureru}), and merely states that the rest
of the poem modifies this single verb. Upon "I"'s request for more
interpretation, the gentleman grumbles in complaint, says that of course it is the
eye (light) that is wet with tears (the brine), and concludes that the indirectness
and subtlety here expressed is the very essence of \textit{furyū} in \textit{tanka} composition
(335). In response, "I" claims that the secret of \textit{tanka}-making seems merely to
be the construction of a riddle (335), in effect making light of the gentleman's
unquestioned faith in his understanding of the art of tanka and his efforts to protect it through reluctant explanations and mystification.

There are three more poems interpreted by the gentleman, but each time "I" teases the proffered meaning. The gentleman barely hears "I"s comments, for he appears to truly believe in the excellence of the poems. He is totally self-absorbed when he explains the poems—at one point he closes his eyes to marvel at the wonder of it all (334)—and this situation, in turn, keeps us from taking what he says too seriously. "I" plays a vital clown-like role, for his ridicule is neither excessive nor too feeble. And yet, if we were to state the target of his ridicule in one word, it would not, I think, be the old man, but would, instead, be furyū.

The term furyū has enjoyed a long history as both a concept and as a style of dance. At the concept's core is the sense of miyabi or a refined, quiet sort of elegance. From the late Heian period (794-1185), however, furyū was also used to refer to a style of dance (furyū odori). The connotations of elegance came, with furyū's new association, to be qualified by the performances' showy displays and lively, even raucous song and musical accompaniment. The festive atmosphere that often resulted at times led—especially during the Azuchi Momoyama period (1568-1600)—to the banning of such performances.

Distant precursor to the noh drama, which is now viewed as perhaps the ultimate in aesthetic refinement on stage, the furyū dance is also seen to be the prototype for 1) the noh drama's forerunner, sarugaku or musical farce noh, as well as 2) farcical elements which endure in those skits (kyōgen or more literally, "outlandish words") that have since the early Edo period (1603-1868) come to accompany a noh performance, and 3) the stylistic and colourful exaggerations of the kabuki (literally and accurately, "song, dance and theatrics"). Thus furyū has come to have as much to do with a bright and lively
display of sight and sound as an abstract notion of elegance favoured by the discerning aesthete.\textsuperscript{16}

For the old man who treasures his verses of the past like misers would their gold, furyū signifies an elegance not to be taken lightly. For "I," however, who insists on supplementing the former's interpretations with his own wry and ridiculing commentary, we have the fuller implications of the term allowed to surface. This is not to say that there is nothing at all elegant or refined about the tanka interpreted by the old man, nor is it true that furyū does not for some always denote the kind of elegance the old man so favours. Instead, the story seems determined to reveal, as does "I" with his sardonic manner, the ridiculousness of the old man's reverential manner when discussing verses and the precious side of his reluctance to divulge their "hidden" meanings.

The implications of this recasting of furyū are significant for our understanding of this carnival-like tale. Rather than inferring from the title "Furyū mutan" an ironic usage of the word furyū--the tale calling its ridiculous self "elegant" with a series of decidedly inelegant displays--we have with our broader definition of the word a challenge to rethink our understanding of the term and thus its implications for our reading of the story. "A Dream Tale" seems to suggest that untethered, carnivalesque elements such as those in the performing arts noted above may be just as much a part of the dream as they are in the term furyū itself, the tanka which furyū is here used to praise, and, by extension, the otherwise cloistered and refined image of the composers of the verses, the Imperial Family.

Discussion of just what Fukazawa implied by the use of the term in his title and tale is necessarily speculative. Given the controversy following "A Dream Tale's publication, however, one ironical implication is that in contrast to the blasphemy that was seen to pervade the depiction of the Imperial Family,
the polyphonic nature of furyū makes it possible to read the tale as an effort to liberate the members of the Imperial Family—the legislated "symbols" of Japan and the bearers of furyū's elegant remains—by revealing amidst what is imagined to be a somber, sequestered tradition of quiet restraint a co-existing potential for the sights and sounds of a festival. It is not entirely unimaginable, then, that Fukazawa really did hope to share a light-hearted laugh with the Crown Prince.

There are numerous exchanges between "I" and the old man that further challenge the common way of viewing the emblems of elegance in their society. For instance, as far as "I" is concerned, the Medal of Cultural Merit awarded by the government to those seen as having made culturally significant contributions to the nation is merely a heavy chain that "coils around one's neck as if tying it up" (333). The old gentleman not only wears one around his neck but carries a bundle of them in his hands, a bundle he has been able to collect because people had thrown them away "without a thought" (333, 337). Likewise, lying forgotten on the ground before the old man are the Three Sacred Treasures of the Imperial Throne—the sword, the mirror, and the jewel—treasures he feels are too good to be abandoned. "I," of course, sees something different: "there lie a sword like a chip of wood, a children's mirror like that sold at cheap candy stores, and a thing that looks like the bead of a toy ring"—they are "junk" which even the junk dealer would not bother to buy (337).

In an interesting move, "I" goes on to ridicule even himself toward the end of the story. While a gorgeous display of fireworks is before him, he considers death, so impressed is he with the beauty of the display. What is ridiculed, at the same time, by this particular emotional rise seems to be the concept of "dying as a martyr for one's faith in beauty" (bi ni junzuru), an act long admired as a "tasteful" thing to do in the tradition of Japanese aesthetics.
The parodizing of this view of the tradition is further suggested by the means of suicide "I" first considers. It is with seppuku in mind that he resorts to the commonplace, "[to die] by cutting one's own belly in a straight line" (hara ichimonji ni kakikitte) (338). "I," however, ends up opting to shoot himself in the head. Through the hole made by the bullet, "I" sees into where his brain should be and finds "something white, something like rice grains," what turns out to be the maggots and their eggs that have filled his head. The filthiness of the spectacle is noted by "I" himself, and he turns his face away with a startled cry (339). By recognizing something unpleasant within his own body, "I" presents himself as something similar. Representing a person as incarnated filth is exactly what he had done earlier to Empress Dowager Shōken during their brawl. He identified her with human waste, calling her "kusottare babā" (shitty old hag) (334-36). "I" did not simply use the term without thinking, for he goes on to give an elaborate explanation of what he means by this most vulgar of insults: "despite the fact that she is old, she dares to evacuate her bowels as does everybody else"; and "the faeces of the old woman is soft and extra filthy, so she is an old hag who has released filthy faeces" (335). As we saw, however, "I" later identifies himself with maggots whose images are as disgusting as faeces. Here, again, we see the doubling between "I" and the Empress Dowager Shōken, and the suggestion that these two reluctant partners can be identified with each other.

"I" further mocks himself by returning to tanka to present a farewell verse, the formality of which even "I," the would-be composer, can not help but laugh at. "I," however, discloses that he cannot compose a tanka of his own, for he plagiarizes one of the soldier's odes collected in the Manyōshū,17 as the elderly gentleman points out for us (339). "I" tries again, but this time, it is Matsuo Bashō's famous haiku: "Natsukusa ya / Tsuwamono domo ga / Yume no ato" (The summer grasses-- / Of brave soldiers' dreams / The aftermath)18
(340). This *haiku* itself fits the context and it encapsulates well the protagonist's perception of the situation he is confronted with. However, it is still somebody else's work, and thus a poor effort for one's own farewell poem. Furthermore, the fact that "I" uses *haiku* rather than *tanka* goes against the ritual of making farewell verses which dictates that *tanka* are to be used. In so doing, "I" seems to be challenging the unquestioned ritual of composing farewell poems and, in the process, not only ridiculing himself for not being capable of composing his own verse but also calling into question the putative difference between *tanka* and *haiku*, for whatever difference there may be is probably of little consequence when it comes to briefly expressing what one wishes to say.

"I" has mocked and teased what he speaks of, including himself, since the story's very beginning. "I" as narrator has opened and closed this satirical story with the most effective variety of satire: ridiculing oneself prior to anyone or anything else. Here, before he relates his dream, "I" tells us about his watch. This watch works during the day time, but it always stops working when he goes to sleep. The way he reacts to the "professional" people who examine the watch and give him advice is consistently affirmative; that is, he simply thinks "You're right, you're right" (*sō deshō, sō deshō*) and does whatever they suggest. For example, he buys a gilded watch band to go with the "gilded parts inside" which turn out to be not solid gold but, according to the clerk of the other repair shop at which he next shows the watch, plated simulations (329). "I" presented in this manner comes through as a naive, foolishly trusting person as well as being passive, even idly dependent on the suggestions of others. The narrator's apathetic description of himself as the protagonist enhances the tone of self-mockery.

But this episode has greater implications for the entire story. The issue in question may be one and the same (in this case, the watch), but multiple
interpretations are possible. The critics Hinuma and Takeda both focus their
attention on the strangeness of the watch as a clue to the unusualness of the
dream.20 I would argue, however, that the real queerness lies in the fact that 1)
two totally different definitive descriptions are possible for the one watch, and
2) the owner is so easily swayed by different interpretations. The first
peculiarity is, in fact, applied to the major part of the story that we have
discussed--"I"s identification of the uprising with the carnival, his observation
of the execution as a form of entertainment, a cynical yet informed equation of
tanka and riddles, and the suggestion that the Medal of Cultural Merit and the
Three Sacred Treasures of the Imperial Throne are junk. These all show the
possibility of different interpretations of social phenomena and the artifacts of
Japan's cultural heritage--the received images of which are all represented by
the elderly gentleman's interpretations--in a way similar to the potential
rereading furyū was shown to permit. Likewise, two people can share similar
traits, in this case, "I" and the Empress Dowager Shōken, just as one object or
word can have two interpretations. The doubling of the two that we have taken
note of points to a reinforcement of the other forgotten side of the same coin that
exemplifies the potential for a variety of interpretations. This scheme of
doubling images comes full circle at the very end of the story when "I" realizes
that while he had been having this particular dream, his watch was for once
actually working. This is to show, as Hinuma has pointed out, that "a dream is at
the same time the reality, and the reality is at the same time a dream."21

The second peculiarity suggested by the watch, however, seems to only
confuse us again, for the very person whose point of view we are led to assume
shows that he is incapable of even, as it were, telling the time. And as if in
concert with his initial confusion, he is shown at the close of the story to be
confused once again, trying to compose the very tanka that he has ridiculed. In
so doing, he is contradicting himself, and vacillates between what to value and what to dismiss. Hence, what we come to realize is that every interpretation is relative; there is no one definite understanding of what we see and what we have, and anyone who would have it otherwise is, at the least, misinformed. In other words, what matters is not what we describe but how we describe it. The relativity and individuality of interpretation is all that remains.

The confrontation between "I" and the Empress Dowager Shōken demonstrates the relativity of interpretations as is instantiated by the Emperor system of Japan. "I" contends that it is the people that are casualties of the system, who are exploited by the Imperial Family through the taxes they pay. The Empress Dowager Shōken claims that it is the Imperial Family who suffers from the system, for they are used for the convenience of the nation. That there is no definitive answer given as to who is right and who is wrong may be due to the author's belief that both are in a sense right, another way to say that there is no one mutually exclusive answer.

Since "I" is in a dream, nothing is subjected to one standard of judgement, and so his experiments concerning interpretation are made possible. The freedom from a traditional scheme of interpretation is manifest in the conversation between "I" and another character, both of whom are waiting for the bus. When "I" complains that he does not like the country called Japan, the man replies: "Don't be so angry, pal. We just call it [Japan] for convenience's sake, that's all" (330). The statement presupposes the arbitrariness between the signifier and the signified, and this is an attitude that acknowledges the arbitrariness of their relation and any subsequent interpretations.

Because of the type of narrative devices utilized in the story to tell this dream, these "extraordinary" interpretations come through as being as real as those orthodox images rooted firmly in our mind. Consequently, we are
disturbed not only by the challenge to the traditional perception of things but also by the feasibility of the "radical" attitudes the story adopts. The implementation of this approach is realized by the narrator who looks back at his own dream. The dream is over, now a memory for "I" the narrator, and a certain temporal distance from that dream allows him to talk about it with an intellectual distance as well. The important point to note here is that the narrator realizes that he did have an unusual dream. This is known from the fact that every time he presents unusual scenes, he begins his descriptions with the set phrase: "watashi ga henda to omou nowa..." (what I think is strange is that...), and closes them with "dōshita koto darō" (I wonder why [it is so]?). We recall the scene where the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess are being executed. The narrator "I," looking at the dreaming "I," asks himself:

What I think is strange is that despite the fact that the neck is constituted of bones, skin, muscle and hair, it rolls over with a metallic sound, and that I'm watching it without even thinking it strange. I wonder why? (333)

By questioning his own attitude toward the "strange" phenomenon, the narrator maintains a neutral, detached viewpoint in telling his own dream. This pattern framed by the two rhetorical phrases above appears in the story with regular frequency. It constantly reminds us of the presence of the narrator who is "analyzing" himself in the dream with objective eyes, thereby confirming the perspective which is anchored in reality.

This pattern that creates the dichotomy between the dream and reality at the same time contributes to establishing the distinct realm of the dream. This is because the pattern that points out the strangeness of the protagonist who does not even react to the event "properly" in turn emphasizes the strangeness of the
event itself. The dream can be characterized by the sequence of discursive images and events. In "A Dream Tale," these are found on every page, and their inclusion is always "justified" as well as emphasized with a description framed by one or both of the same two set phrases. The protagonist, for example, encounters a middle-aged woman who is knitting while she is waiting for the bus. Her ball of yarn is lying on the road. The narrator "I" thinks that the yarn will be dirty, but the protagonist "I" merely looks at it without bothering to pick it up for her (332). In a real dream, this type of unreasonable scene occurs. In order to point out its queerness, the narrator is used in an effectively contrasting way, providing a "reasonable" observation of the scene. Similarly, while the protagonist "I" is holding the Empress Dowager Shōken by the neck with his thighs, the narrator "I" thinks that it would be easy for her to escape because he is not putting much strength into his grip. The protagonist "I," however, worries that she might escape at any minute. The conclusion arrived at by the narrator is that despite the fact that his worry is acute and serious, she is not likely to escape; and, as always, he wonders, "why is it so?" (335). In this way the protagonist "I" and the narrator "I" are used alternatingly for the reproduction of the irrationality of the dream. This device cleverly simulates our experience of a dream, for it is precisely the way in which we look back at our own dreams and try to sort out the queerness they present.

The narrator's objective description of individual scenes contributes to the complete reproduction of his dream without inducing excessive emotional involvement within the reader. Indeed, when we are having a dream, it is most likely that we accept whatever happens without resorting to reason. It is another characteristic of the dream that the dreamer accepts the dream almost indiscriminately. Therefore, it is crucial for the story to provide the conditions of a dream so that we are led to share his dream in the way he himself did. To this
end, the narrator's detached manner of storytelling contributes to reproducing
the quality of the dream in words. When the protagonist is looking at the
execution of the Crown Prince and the Crown Princess, what he is thinking of is
not the implications of the immediate spectacle but of the axe that is being used
by the executioner. It is his axe. He does not like the idea of his axe being used
for chopping off somebody's head. He decides not to use the axe again and to
give it to somebody else, for he thinks that it probably has become dirty after the
deed (333). All these thoughts of the protagonist are related nonchalantly.
Indeed, a real dream goes on like this, with hardly any order of importance given
to the events in question, as the protagonist thinks more of his axe than of the
execution itself. Because this episode is told by the narrator matter-of-factly,
the reader is able to experience the irrational dream situation as the protagonist
did. Hence, what "I" has dreamt comes through as vividly as if we were actually
having the dream ourselves.

Unlike the previous two stories in this study, Fukazawa in this present
work presents the narrator and the protagonist as being two voices but one
person. The framework of the narrative, the dream, plays a critical role in how
these two voices work, and Fukazawa has manipulated these three narrative
elements—the dream framework, the narrator, and the protagonist—with the
intention of producing a fictional world of frivolity.

"A Dream Tale," however, lent itself to being recognized as something
more than frivolous fiction. As pointed out above, it became a source of angry
contention outside the literary arena. "A Dream Tale" marked the first real
interaction between the author and the rest of the present society, the society
which, apart from his writings, Fukazawa had studiously avoided contact with.
Interestingly, even in the previous two works we see this distancing tendency. In
"On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," Fukazawa revealed his romanticism,
pursuing the "good old days" when the likes of Orin may well have existed. In *The Fuefuki River*, he depicted a peasants' life of four hundred years ago, whose reality would appear to have little in common with our own. He was able to express what he thought was genuinely human, the fundamental activities of Homo sapiens, which seemed to have lost its place in the general rush of modern consumer society. When he wrote "A Dream Tale," however, he decided on a contemporary setting, although reality is here qualified by the story's dream world. Society, though, was unable to tolerate the story, however qualified or nuanced its author may have imagined it to be.

In Fukazawa's scheme of things, however, the important thing to note is that regardless of the time setting, the people are equally powerless in their transient existence, a theme most evident in *The Fuefuki River*. Starkly put, it does not matter to Fukazawa whether it is the Crown Prince or himself whose dramatized beheading we witness. The problem, of course, with "A Dream Tale" is that the author was much less free from the complications of characters modeled on real life individuals and other political concerns than he had imagined himself to be. Being thrown into a social controversy was the last thing Fukazawa had expected. He seems to have thought that the stories he had written had nothing to do with himself, just like the landscape—the empirical thing itself—that a painter paints has nothing to do with the painter. Although Fukazawa had realized that his thoughts were to a degree reflected in the landscape he had created, he still believed that not all of them represented his ideas, for he not only painted a landscape in which he made his characters do what he wanted them to do, but also painted a landscape that he thought would be interesting: a queer landscape, a funny landscape, a landscape finally indeterminate. For him, if he was killed by an outraged rightist, it would have
been but another landscape of the same story, not the tragic end of a wronged author.23

In sum, through "A Dream Tale," Fukazawa was forced to have some contact with the real world around him. The dream that in part permits the narrative's "irresponsibility" for its content ironically did not keep the author from direct dealings with the outer world. The structure of the story, however, seems to have opened up a new possibility for Fukazawa's narrative technique: the first person narrator relates a dream but from a certain temporal distance. This distance generates his detachment from his own dream, thereby producing the realness and immediacy of the dream itself as well as establishing the distinct world of the dreamer's unconscious.

To give this strategy some context, while also looking ahead to Chapter Four: when Fukazawa wrote *The Old Men of Bonsai and Their Surroundings* (*Bonsai rojin to sono shūhen*, 1973; hereafter, *The Bonsai*), this narrative device of having the protagonist and the narrator as being one and the same person was utilized only to emphasize the protagonist's detachment from, even rejection of, his reality. In the decade or so between "A Dream Tale" and *The Bonsai*'s publication, Fukazawa wrote some seventeen short stories, but none of them seems to have shown a substantial change in narrative technique. In *The Bonsai*, however, we see an extreme form of detachment generated by both the protagonist and the narrator. This time, the distance that creates detachment is not inherent in the setting of the tale as it is in "A Dream Tale," where the narrator reflects on a dream. The distance is created "artificially" by the author, and this fact alone hints at the intensity of detachment. This detachment, simply put, seems to represent the author's assertion that he does not wish to have anything to do with the rest of the world—a renewed determination, perhaps, after the controversy surrounding "A Dream Tale."
In *The Bonsai*, Fukazawa has created a protagonist who is a passive receiver of information, and a narrator who is looking at himself with a steady gaze and even pulse. Hence, the distance from the subject matter, in effect, is double that which is found in "A Dream Tale:" in this last work, the protagonist is at least fully engaged in his dream. In *The Bonsai*, the protagonist consistently tries to disengage himself from village affairs, and, moreover, the narrator's description of himself is detached to the point of indifference.

The protagonist "I" is shown to be reluctant to get involved in any of the activities in the village to which he has recently moved. In particular, he tries to avoid being part of what for those of the village is a popular hobby and business, the raising of dwarf trees (*bonsai*). His excuse is that he cannot bother watering the plant every day, a disinclination supported by the fact that he has already killed the pine saplings he had earlier bought out of short-lived curiosity. "I" refers to this failure thereafter whenever he feels pressure to raise *bonsai* (6, 13, 42-43, 45, 71, 87, 91-92, 204).24

As if to reinforce the disengagement of the "I" as protagonist, the "I" as narrator presents the story with utter detachment. There is one section in which the narrator ends his sentences almost exclusively with "sōda" (that's what is said). "Sōda" is a predicate that marks the statement's source as being someone other than the speaker. The statement itself is what the speaker has heard or something generally known, and, therefore, the speaker does not have to take responsibility for what he relates. It is also the form used for reporting information with the understanding that the speaker's own disposition is a separate matter. Hence, the narrator need not take responsibility for what he narrates, for he simply passes on to the reader information that "has come his way" (*mukō kara yatte kuru*).25:
They say that the summer festival of the village is near at hand. I've heard that the shrine at the entrance to the village is a "branch shrine" of the farthest mountain beyond Mt. Nyōgi seen in the distance. Therefore, it is said that the shrine farthest away is "the main shrine," and that it is customary "to visit the head shrine every year." They say that because it is far and it takes three days to get there, the two representatives of the village make this pilgrimage every year in rotation. (126; emphasis added)

This is the opening paragraph of the eighth of fifteen parts in The Bonsai. The summer festival and the surrogate pilgrimage are one of the major events of the village "I" lives in, but his manner of telling us about it is that of an outside spectator. Having set the entire section apart with "sōda" (the "They say," "I've heard," and "it is said" openings of the above translation) endings, we might even detect the speaker's determination not to be involved in any of the events here mentioned. The "I" as narrator announces his disengagement at the very beginning of the new chapter. This attitude is further maintained by his similar presentation of the characters' own speech--"sōda" is once again attached--effacing his role as a bearer of information:

"There are several households that have customarily taken care of the village shrine," it is said.

When a person in charge is going to be replaced,

"The board of officials discusses it and decides on a new person," it is said.

"How many officials are there?" I asked.

"About ten," was the response.
Then I felt relieved at having nothing to do with the matter. (128)

This excerpt is a peculiar mix of narration and the direct speech of the character. It is this character who while conversing with "I" provides all the information, but it is this information that constitutes almost all of the narrator's narration. By attributing the source of information to the character, the narrator presents himself as unconcerned about the reliability of what he is telling us, and at the same time, maintains his principle of disengagement. At the end of the above quote, the narrator-protagonist unabashedly confirms his fundamental wish to have nothing to do with his village. This is the basic pattern of the narrative of The Bonsai, with a disengaged protagonist and a narrator who reinforces this disengagement.

The author's distance from his creation as reflected in the narrator's relationship with his narration has widened considerably in this work from the early 1970s. We might expect Fukazawa's narrative to become more accessible and his narrator more involved given the use of a first person narrator-protagonist who is left to talk about himself. However, in spite of the fact that the story also seems to be based on Fukazawa's own experience on his farm in Shōbu, Saitama Prefecture,26 the narrative of The Bonsai reveals an extreme form of detachment. The entire situation may well reflect Fukazawa's personal philosophy—he has stated in other contexts that he prefers to live his life in solitude—that individuals are alone in this world.27

It is interesting then that six years later Fukazawa would write "The Dolls of Michinoku" (Michinoku no ningyō tachi), a work in which his protagonist-narrator boldly ventures into society, reaching out to members of a community he visits out of interest. The community is a mountain village all but forgotten by the rest of the world, and as we discover, gives direction to the protagonist's
longing for a world other than his own. In our final chapter, we shall examine this award winning story, giving special consideration to what interested its author in the last stages of his career and how that found expression in "The Dolls of Michinoku."
Chapter Four

Reaching out to retreat
with
"The Dolls of Michinoku"

In "The Dolls of Michinoku" (Michinoku no ningyō tachi), we find a narrator-protagonist that is markedly different from his counterpart in The Bonsai as discussed in Chapter Three of this study. While both stories situate a single narrator-protagonist, these two "I" centers of consciousness vary most in their engagement with the world around them. For "I" of The Bonsai, a deliberate disengagement typified this relationship. Ignorance and indifference mark his attitude towards bonsai raising, a practice enjoyed by all around him, and he shows skepticism verging on contempt for the unchallenged reputation of one of the village's great bonsai masters (3-4). From the outset, "I" of "The Dolls of Michinoku" has a very different attitude, and in this chapter we will explore some of these differences and the world view that informed them.

Almost from the start, "I" shows an active interest in the stranger from Michinoku (the present day Tohoku area of northeast Japan) who he first meets by chance on the property of his home in Tokyo. "I" converses freely with the man, once the former's big-city coolness thaws, and takes such a liking to his new acquaintance that he later pays a three day visit to the latter's home village, a setting that comprises most of the story.

One reason for "I"'s friendly response to the stranger of "The Dolls of Michinoku" is the language the stranger uses. He speaks one of the Tohoku
dialects, and we are told that this local language makes "I" feel comfortable and relaxed (9). Without being utterly foreign, this variant of his own language still requires effort to decipher, and it seems that it is this mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar that piques "I"'s interest and accounts for his easy manner.

For the protagonist, the ways of this stranger represent a "pure, unspoilt way of life" (junsui na seikatsu) (9). This impression is made not only by the man's Tohoku dialect but is reinforced by his physical characteristics, such as his healthily tanned face, clean-shaven but with a heavy-coloured shadow, and large clear black eyes (9). That "I" allows himself to be drawn into this unspoilt world is due in large measure to the way he views his own reality as the very opposite of pure: "yogoreta" or literally "made dirty" (10). This dichotomy is metaphorically represented by the color of the blossom that blooms on the mojizuri or "lady's tresses" plant. It is this plant which the man from Tohoku dearly loves, so much so that while doing seasonal work in Tokyo he has come to the protagonist's home to see whether the soil of the land is suitable—he quickly determines that it is not—for transplanting saplings from his backyard in Tohoku (9-10). The man explains to "I" the varying colours of the plant's blossoms, and mentions that the colours of those planted in lowlands (sato) are somehow tainted (yogoreta) (10). Later, when "I" returns the visit to this man's home, we find that the village is secluded high away in the mountains where the blossoms of the lady's tresses are free to display their "mysterious colour" (fushigi na iro) in a mixture of pink and purple (16-17, 20). Rather than in the "lowlands" of Tokyo, it is here where the man of Tohoku chooses to lead his unsullied life.

The important point to note, especially with The Bonsai in mind, is that the world of Michinoku is a separate reality discovered by "I" and not his own, whereas the world of the old masters of The Bonsai was the reality for that
narrator-protagonist. Because "I"'s surroundings once arriving in Michinoku is an unknown quantity and ideal in the sense that "I" finds in it an appealing purity, this narrator-protagonist is moved to reach out and explore in ways his counterpart in *The Bonsai* never attempted. Thus we have many scenes where the "I" of "The Dolls of Michinoku" relaxes his guard with strangers, displays other signs of open friendliness, and engages wholeheartedly in conversations by asking questions and making constructive comments. When "I" is told about the *mojizuri*, for example, he is captivated by the visitor's description and finally expresses his wish to see the plant. Interestingly, this wish is indicated by both "I" the narrator--"As I was listening to his description, I grew anxious to see the blossom" (11)--and "I" the protagonist--"'You know, I'd love to see it some time'" (12). This way, "I"'s interest is, in effect, expressed twice, and is for the reader doubly emphasized. In a similar scene in *The Bonsai*, "I" is told by his friend about a new species of bonsai azalea, but there is no indication of interest on the part of "I." Instead he is shown to follow his friend because he has nothing better to do (137-38). In fact, even when they reach the azalea sapling, there is no description of the plant, further emphasizing "I"'s disinterest, both as a protagonist and as the narrator of the tale. On the other hand, when "I" finally sees the *mojizuri* after a day's drive to Michinoku to visit his new friend (already an indication of his determination to see the plant), the narrator "I" goes into great detail describing the plant and its blossoms. The protagonist expresses an intelligent admiration of the blossoms to the man, and makes a point of thanking his host for having invited him (20).

The characteristics of the lady's tresses blossom is most suggestive in its association with the community around it. For the protagonist, its blossoms "are curious [mezurashii] rather than beautiful [utsukushii]" (20), and their colour has a "mysterious" (fushigi na) quality (20). The village the protagonist has
entered soon reveals itself to be full of mystery. Of course, this mysteriousness has been anticipated by the opacity of the man's speech. The fact that "I" barely understands half of what he hears in the Tohoku dialect is mentioned early in the story (9), and repeatedly thereafter (15, 21, 24, 29-30). The half-veiled nature of the picture that results from the protagonist-narrator's description extends to the readers who are likewise reminded of their informant's circumscribed vision. But rather than this half-understanding being an irritant, the frequent reference to this opaqueness is simply to suggest the narrator-protagonist's sustained curiosity and to encourage the reader to feel the same.

Not understanding everything that is spoken to him allows "I" to drift worry-free, ready if necessary with the explanation that he just cannot make out all that he hears. To be able to float free in a community, without exerting any significant influence nor needing to worry about being condemned for apparent shortcomings, could be pleasant indeed. We might, in fact, associate such a state with the freedom an indulged child would enjoy. Such a loose, untethered existence may be part of what the protagonist has wanted from his "retreat" to an unknown Tohoku village. Certainly a wish to float in the middle of this new reality is apparent in the way he takes part in the affairs of the village. He cannot deny his growing curiosity, and will in the end see it satisfied, but in general he hesitates to ask too many questions, to remove all of the obfuscating yet alluring haze of only partial comprehension (22-24, 33-34). The community that has received him, however, shows only openness and hospitality to the visitor. Hence, he finds himself able to satisfy what curiosity he may have in a manner undisturbing to the community.

The hospitality and openness of the village never fail to surprise "I": he is amazed time and again by the low, deferential bows (17, 25, 28, 33, 40) and other hospitable treatment he as a stranger receives. A visitor to "I"'s host greets "I" in
a respectful manner (27-28), and his host's children are to come home from far away where they live while in school just to greet him (31-32). At another time, the host offers the protagonist a massage after the latter has bathed, which "I," thinking of his bluntness when he first met the man, finds embarrassingly kind (26, 30). At one point, "I" reflects, "it is [my] first time to experience so much politeness" (30). Finally, aware of his guest's poor health, the host offers to transport "I" by his stroller (32-34), a renovated handcar with two bicycle wheels; and on the day "I" leaves the village, his host carries him on the stroller, as if conveying a precious child, for ten kilometers out of the village to where a person with a truck will drive him to the nearest bus station two hours away (38-40). This extraordinary example of hospitality along with all other such displays are deeply appreciated by the overwhelmed protagonist, who confesses at the bus station that it has been too much for him to be treated like an important guest and to always face such respectful behaviour (40). In spite of the unfamiliarity of the treatment, however, it is the hospitality of the community that has provided an atmosphere in which "I" need not hesitate to inquire into village affairs.

During his stay, the openness of the community also greatly impresses "I." For instance, the protagonist's host insists on having "I" stay at his home, indicating that they have no secrets to hide. The rest of the village people too make no effort to conceal their ways, including a custom that for some could well warrant a less open attitude. And it is to "I"'s encounter with this custom, comprising the thematic core of the work, that we now turn.

The world of Michinoku, at first half seen, half unseen, gradually discloses itself as "I" pursues the reason why the villagers refer to his host as "master" (danna sama), despite the fact that he neither seems old enough for such an honorary title, nor does he occupy a position of great importance such as
village headman (22-23). What begins as a simple question leads "I" to critical information concerning an enduring village custom that binds this curious social unit together.

That "I"'s friend is called "master" has something to do with a folding screen which the villagers borrow whenever there is a birth in their households. It is customary in this community to put the screen around the mother giving birth, but when "I" in one scene follows his host into someone else's home, the screen is set upside down. As "I" knows, a screen so inverted has traditionally signified that a dead person lies behind it. "I" recalls the smell of incense upon entering the house, and he knows that incense is burnt when people worship the deceased. His friend, however, has spoken with an elderly man of this house and their conversation has confirmed that "nothing is wrong with both mother and baby" (33). "I" is confused with the entire situation, and later asks his host for an explanation.

We learn that the ancestress of the man of Michinoku was a midwife long ago. Her job was not only to help giving birth but also to help extinguish new life. People were not familiar with contraception and therefore there was no means of population control, except the one this woman was responsible for: drowning a new-born baby before it could make its first cry. She was the one who was always asked to perform the deed, and the screen "I"'s host keeps is a reminder of this family profession, to which people still pay respect and gratitude, for the midwife in effect took over the role of murderer for them and saved them from an agonizing sense of guilt. When she became old, she had her husband or son cut off her arms at the shoulder because she was in terror of the arms that had killed so many others. She is said to have survived for three more years, accepting the miseries of living without arms as atonement for her sins.
An armless statuette made of wood in her image rests on the family altar at "I"'s host's home (36-38).

Up to this point in the narrative, the story is told in the manner of a mystery: truths unfold one after another in this enigmatic community. To this effect, the narrator-protagonist and other characters are used to orchestrate a mystery-solving process made immediate for the reader. First, the protagonist plays an active role in this foreign environment. He shows his willing attitude to become part of the community during his stay. As we have noted, the protagonist has come to this Tohoku village with the wish to merge into this unknown community that seems to represent an unsullied way of life. Therefore, he is more than willing to abide by village tradition. To begin with, he decides to call his host "master," "just like the people in this village do" (24). Due to I"'s insistence and enthusiasm, his host and hostess consider telling him the reason for the honorific despite its connection to the extremely personal part of their family history just discussed. Likewise, once the protagonist is engaged in the conversation that informs him of this village tradition, he becomes a vital part of the exchange by asking questions. He leads by example for the halting, hesitant host who finally decides to share his family history (36-38).

Even when made aware of the history of the community, much that is enigmatic remains. "Master" tells the protagonist the following when he senses the latter's curiosity over the honorific: "because our family's ancestress is sinful, this household has been called 'master'" (29). This paradoxical remark puzzles the protagonist (and the reader), and further stirs up the desire (of both) to know more about its implications. Moving closer to a resolution, the remark made by the elderly man--"nothing was wrong with both mother and baby"--turns out to be contrary to our literal interpretation of the phrase. Our natural assumption made from this familiar expression is that both the mother and her
baby are safe and sound after the delivery. However, we soon find out that it simply means "nothing has altered from the original plan" (38): the baby was to die and the mother to live on. Our expectation is denied, and the peculiarity of the community practice is thus reinforced. The characters in "The Dolls of Michinoku" are simply made to act their daily life in front of us— in the community, the old man's remarks need no interpretation— but since the custom their remarks refer to is for the reader something unfamiliar, the villager's remarks "deceive" the reader and enhance the mysteriousness and peculiarity of their village.

The role of the narrator has a great deal to do with enriching the mystery as well as its solution. First, the immediacy the narrator establishes by what we might provisionally call a "time-present" narrative strategy is an essential element in the process of directly involving the reader. The narrator begins the story in retrospect, but by the time "I" arrives in the village, the temporal perspective has changed to the present. While past tense is still used, denoting the fact that incidents have already occurred and some voice is relating them, "I" as the protagonist and narrator is shown to react as these incidents occur, and thus in a time-present manner. Thus, from "I"'s arrival in the village we are asked through the mediation of the narrator to participate in each event as it is happening, instead of listening to a narrator relate a memory, adjusted and framed with pauses for self-reflection, of something from the past. Because the narrator appears to innocently express his first impressions and uncertain guesses about his discoveries without giving them much thought, the reader is prone to accept incomplete information. Interestingly, the attendant misunderstandings lead to the tale's moments of insight. The narrator supposes, for example, that the reason why the villagers call his host "master" is that he is a descendant of the fugitives of the defeated Heike clan of the late twelfth century,
and that the people in this forgotten mountain village might still maintain a vassal-lord relationship (22). This speculation stimulates the readers' imagination, and it makes us more anxious to know the truth. Through the conversation between "I" and his host, it turns out that this particular guess is wrong, but all the same, we have stretched out our imagination over a long span of history and have experienced the excitement of entertaining possible interpretations.

Being led to sound out the potential depths of the story makes for an interesting reading experience. In another scene where a young man comes by foot from two kilometers away to report that his wife is about to have a baby, the narrator speculates to himself that the wife of his host is likely certified to provide midwifery service, thus explaining the young man's willingness to walk the distance at such a critical moment (27). The readers too are thus led to think that this lady will help the young man, but we soon discover that the young man comes to ask for the screen, not assistance (28). Hence, in effect, the narrator has once again provided wrong information, thereby digressing before our attention is steered in the right direction. This narrative strategy is deliberately suspenseful and provides for a more dramatic moment of discovery than would be found in a simpler explication. Since we depend upon the narrator's vision to make the unknown known, our discoveries of the village affairs are punctuated by constant surprises and unexpected turns of events, lending a compelling tension to "The Dolls of Michinoku."

Fukazawa endeavoured to use this sort of mystery story structure from the earliest stages of his career. In 1954, he wrote "Mt. Apennines on the Moon" (Tsuki no apeninsan), in which he tried to defer the reader's recognition of the fact that the wife of the protagonist was mentally ill. Her insanity brought about troublesome incidents that led to the newlywed couple
changing their residence nine times within three years (173). The story is well
told in terms of suspending the revelation of the cause of the difficulties. In "Mt.
Apennines on the Moon," however, the narrator never really locates himself in
the middle of events in the manner of his counterpart in "The Dolls of
Michinoku." The mystery is organized into three parts, the first two of which
keep the mystery intact. The brief, prelude-like first part uses a (qualified, as we
will see below) time-present narrative strategy, while part two, which takes up
the majority of the tale, tells of the mystery in retrospect, and reflects the
narrator's renewed sense of horror as he looks back on his experience.

In order to keep the source of the problem from the reader, the narrator
uses the word "devil" (akuma) to refer to it. The readers are led to sense that the
problem is something unfavourable, but they are not told what it is until just
before part three begins and the story draws to a close. Where the two stories
differ is in their narrator's relation to what they narrate. Even when "I" of "Mt.
Apennines on the Moon" speaks to us directly, he punctures the time-present
illusion with repeated references to the devil, thereby revealing himself to be a
narrator "in the know" rather than a narrator searching for the as yet unknown.
In contrast, the narrator-protagonist of "The Dolls of Michinoku" knows, as it
were, as little and as much as his reader.

Further still, "The Dolls of Michinoku" presents a more intricate process
of mystery-solving than does "Mt. Apennines on the Moon." In order to
discover the secret of the village custom, the story begins with an invitation to
see a particular plant. The protagonist's host who loves this plant is called
"master," a fact which has some significant connection with the enigmatic
custom of the community. The accidental glimpse which the protagonist has of
the inverted screen encourages his host finally to tell him the story. Each
disclosure is connected to the next, and the pieces once brought together eventually complete the jigsaw puzzle that is this Tohoku community.

The effect of the narrative of "The Dolls of Michinoku" is largely dependent upon its mystery-story structure, and the narrator's voice with the time-present perspective noted above contributes to setting up a foundational immediacy that further maintains the readers' interest and ensures their involvement. Another element that serves to reinforce the sense of immediacy is the narrator's language. When used properly, emotion-filled narration encourages reader involvement. The tide of emotions of the narrator in "The Dolls of Michinoku" is neither excessive nor marked by its absence; it maintains a balance so that the narrator's emotional ups and downs are read sympathetically. The emotional language also emphasizes "I"'s reaction to critical information as it unfolds. When "I" saw the inverted screen, for example, he "almost cried 'oh!'" (a! to koe wo dasu tokoro datta) (33), and when he realizes the possible connection between the inverted screen and the smell of incense, this realization "struck like a pain in [his] chest" (ha! to mune wo utta) (34). Both "a!" and "ha!" are direct expressions of a sudden explosion of emotion, in particular voicing great surprise. They also can be assertive ways of expressing this surprise in that their proper reading demands a double consonant or almost voiceless pause before the quotative particle "to." Hence, they come out as strong sounds in the Japanese syllabic system. Because of this nature of the sounds as well as the pause that follows, the expressions mark emphatic moments in the flow of the narrative. Conversely, these emphases mark an important information of the story, for they occur according to the narrator's strong emotional reaction to it. Confronted by these compelling expressions, the readers find themselves making discoveries together with the narrator-
protagonist. The immediacy generated by the narrator's emotional language is one more element encouraging involvement in the mystery-solving process.

As we move towards the end of the tale, it is worth noting again that Fukazawa has for the first time created an "I" who appears to react immediately, both as protagonist and narrator, to the situations he finds himself in. Immersed in his own story to the very end, this narrator-protagonist is shown to grasp in a flash of recognition the implications of the enduring tradition of this Tohoku village.

After leaving the village, the protagonist stops at a small Tohoku town where he makes the following comment: "I feel at ease, as if being released from the dialect of this area" (40). Because this particular dialect was both what first brought him to the Tohoku village and his communicative medium while there, his recognition that he is to leave the language marks his realization that he is going back to his earlier reality. His feeling of "release" suggests that he was ready to leave. Therefore, the above comment indicates a mature farewell to his temporary retreat. And yet, when passing by a souvenir store, he finds himself again captivated with a child's fascination by the wooden dolls that line the store's shelves. The dolls are known as kokeshi, and as soon as the protagonist sees them, he "feels [his] chest tighten" (40):

[1] Lining up on the shelf are that man's two junior-high school children! When I saw that boy and girl, I felt I had met them somewhere before--now I remember where. The two dolls standing side by side on the shelf have their arms put straight down by their bodies, just like those children did. Oh, no! [5] These dolls don't have arms! [6] Those two children kept their faces down, and so, their eyes were the same as
those of the dolls that are drawn in with one brush stroke. Are the two eyes closed, or do they look down?--they are simple strokes of the brush. With both these dolls and those two junior-high school children it is hard to tell whether they are boys or girls. Their expression--how otherworldly! Both those two junior-high school children and these dolls are identical, in their shape and countenance, with the armless [midwife] ancestress. (40)

First of all, we cannot neglect the protagonist's highly personalized reaction to the spectacle of the dolls. Although amongst wooden objects, he sees the images of the two children of his host in them, and lingers on a description of their similar traits. Second, the narrator's excited language helps to dramatize the superimposition of the two children. The straightforward reference to the children, in the first sentence of the quote, without qualifying the impression by such expressions as "the dolls look like...," or "the dolls seem to me to be...," suggests not only an extraordinary likeness of the children to the dolls perceived by the protagonist but also his shock at this identity. The exclamation point at the end of the first sentence ("dewanaika") emphasizes the astonishment of the protagonist. The fifth sentence depicts the protagonist realizing the error in his previous statement--the association with the children is disturbing, and yet it is not that the dolls have their arms pressed inconspicuously against their sides but that they have no arms at all. The exclamation "Oh, no!" ("iya") is a rhetorically strong expression and is here used in concert with the final exclamation point of the following sentence to sharpen the immediacy and degree of the speaker's emotional disturbance. The sudden realization expressed in this sentence serves to connect the images of the dolls, the children, and the armless ancestress. The
following two sentences (number six and seven) introduce eyes as another element of identification, and the fifth, sixth and seventh sentences together are arranged to culminate in the quotation's key expressions. In the original, these three sentences are framed with the same predicate "noda." "Noda" is similar to the English expression, "the fact is that..." The predicate is exclamatory but serves more to assure the speaker of the reliability of his own statement. Because the protagonist is trying to convince himself that the armlessness of the two dolls and the peculiarity of the eyes of the dolls and the children are unmistakable facts, no matter how surprising they are, he uses the self-assuring predicate "noda." The fact that he resorts to using "noda" three consecutive times suggests the very surprise he is trying to overcome by the use of this predicate. The overwhelming impact of the sight of the dolls as well as his hallucinatory associations culminate in the final exclamatory sentence, "[t]heir expression-- how otherworldly!" What the protagonist has made most of from the identification of the images of the dolls, the children and the ancestress is their shared facial expression. For him it expresses something "otherworldly" (reiteki), and it is this impression that we are to take with us as we and "I" come closer to leaving the Tohoku Province.

In the subsequent passage, the protagonist's eyes rest on more than two *kokeshi* standing tightly-packed on the shelves. As he watches, the dolls become something more. He feels as if they are children standing still in a graveyard (40-41):

> These dolls standing in rows must be the children whose lives were erased behind the inverted screen, and the dolls' faces must be those of the children whose eyes would never be open because they were drowned in their first bath before their eyes were able
to see. This otherworldly face that expresses neither sorrow nor solitude must be known by those who have made these dolls. Perhaps those people tried to have their lost children live with them by modelling the dolls after their image; or, perhaps they have made them embody the spirit of the deceased, like that of the armless ancestress, in order to atone for the sins committed behind the inverted screen. (41)

The protagonist has now applied this "otherworldly face" (reiteki na kao) not only to the faces of the previous two dolls, the two children, and the midwife ancestress, but also to the faces of the numberless dead children. Furthermore, he supposes that the faces' expressions have been created by the dead children's parents themselves. Hence, he seems to lean toward applying an otherworldliness to the people in the Tohoku community, for they both embody and understand this otherworldly face. The common presence of kokeshi in the Tohoku household further enhances the otherworldliness of the community because the doll serves as a reminder of their dead children. That "other" world of the deceased is connected to this world through the doll. The kokeshi, with its armless appearance, further serves to remind the people of their "sins," sins that are also represented by the armless statuette of the midwife ancestress. As far as the protagonist sees it, death is always next-door to life for these Tohoku people, and it is this proximity, this closeness between life and death, that is the source of the villager's otherworldliness and, again for the protagonist, the reason for the village's mysterious allure.

Of course, the otherworldliness of the Tohoku community is as much the product of the protagonist's own interpretation of the doll and his experience in the village as it is the characteristics intrinsic to the dolls or the village. In this
sense, he has grafted something external on to the community by "identifying" a characteristic with which he can explain the village and its people. Significantly, we have been prepared for this determination by the presentation of characters whose personalities are left somewhat indistinct. "I" refers to individuals with general terms that describe an occupation, function, or appearance. His hospitable friend is called either "the/that person" (kono hito, sono hito, ano hito), or "master" (danna sama), his hostess "the wife" (okusan), and the man who drives "I" to the bus station "mister/uncle" (ojisan). This manner of presenting people by general terms rather than by their personal names serves to obscure their reality in the village. As a consequence, they are likely to be perceived as entities that can be represented by no more than general terms, not as real, unique individuals. Hence, it is easier for the protagonist to attribute to them a supra-human aura. His designation "otherworldly" thus explains his so far inexplicable feelings towards the Tohoku community. Furthermore, he is shown to be unable to resist what this otherworldliness might offer to him.

While on the bus he has a nap, and when waking up it occurs to him that he might look at the passengers. He moves to an available front seat and turns back:

Housewives, young ladies, elderly people, blue-collar workers—the faces of those passengers are neatly there in rows. All of a sudden, their faces and heads have turned into the dolls I saw at that souvenir store. These people were not killed behind that inverted screen. But they could have been. They are here now, on the bus, in the form of dolls. (42)

This time, the emphasis seems not so much on the kokeshi faces but on what the kokeshi itself might imply. By superimposing the faces of the dolls onto those of
the bus passengers, the protagonist exchanges the condition of the passengers—people alive—for that of the dolls—people deprived of life. In so doing, the protagonist recognizes the element of chance involved in whether or not we are allowed to live in this world beyond the moment of our "first bath." Although it may be something of a leap to universalize this condition, as the story seems to do with a jōruri piece that runs through the narrator's mind, singing of the transient nature of life in this world (42), this leap might be justified by the fact that he is on the bus, a vehicle that goes here and there, loading and unloading a number of people from a variety of different backgrounds.

Interestingly, it is also possible to take this bus as a bus of the dead. This is more along the lines suggested by the story, for beyond the doll-like passengers, the protagonist envisions the mountains and forests that were painted on the folding screen, all the while enveloped in the sound of the thick-necked shamisen that accompanies the song of transiency (42). With this as the final scene, we wonder where this bus is taking him. We may assume that he is going back to Tokyo—what would be more natural than going home after a trip?—but we have been led before into making hasty assumptions. The story does not tell us his exact destination. Might he not, then, be on his way to the world of the deceased, together with the dolls that are both a remembrance and embodiment of the dead children? He still has the physical surroundings of the otherworldly Tohoku, and he hears the song that de-emphasizes one's attachment to this world. The music, as well as the bus, promises to transport him to this "other" world. And it seems that it is to this "other" world that he himself wishes to be taken, for everything that is making this transportation possible—the dolls, the folding-screen scenery of the bus window, the music—is a product of his imagination. "I" in "The Dolls of Michinoku" seems ultimately to take himself
to his world of choice, having used his experience in the Tohoku village as a bridge to make one further trip possible.

The "other" world that the protagonist longs for has to do with the unspoilt quality that the Tohoku community initially promised. The man who represented the unspoiltness has turned out to have a great deal to do with the world of the dead through his connection with the midwife ancestress. Thus, the protagonist, in noting the pure unspoilt ways of the Tohoku man in their initial meeting, was in effect sensing the unspoiltness of the world of the deceased. This particular world of the dead, however, is the one in which the new-born babies are "returned" to the world of their before-birth existence, as if they were never born. We have, in fact, already had this sort of "death" described precisely by the protagonist as one prominent feature of the kokeshi doll: that "otherworldly face that expresses neither sorrow nor solitude"; and it is clear that the protagonist is strongly attracted to this face. His longing for the "other" world that makes possible this expression that is shorn of sorrow and solitude in turn suggests his perception of this world as the site where sorrow and loneliness prevail. Hence, for the protagonist, this world appears to be marred by these sentiments whereas the world of pre-birth represented by the Tohoku community maintains its unspoilt quality.

The world shorn of sorrow and solitude is summed up elsewhere by Fukazawa as "quiet." He writes in a different story upon the death of his dog: "Human beings and dogs would have enjoyed tranquility [if they were not born]. We have pains because we are born.... [I]t is quieter for us in our pre-birth world." To never be born at all, to be allowed to remain in the pure and unspoilt world of pre-birth would, it seems, make all forms of life happier. Significantly, the protagonist of "The Dolls of Michinoku" never shows his pity or sorrow for the babies killed in their first bath, even though the act is perceived
as a sin by the villagers. His longing to return to the state of pre-birth is precisely the reason for the absence of sympathy. Prepared by a purifying ride in a child's stroller, the "I" who reflects Fukazawa's world view at the last stages of his career sets himself off on a trip to the unspoilt world, surrounded by a song of transience, the screen of death, and the armless dolls of Michinoku.
Conclusion

What we find along the way

Spanning between them Fukazawa's writing career, "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" and "The Dolls of Michinoku" are similarly separated by differing narrative strategies and thematic concerns. As we saw, "The Dolls of Michinoku" came to a close with a poignant yet unsettling desire, a longing on the part of the protagonist for the "other" world that, in the end, could only be realized by his death. This world of the dead was further identified with the tranquility of a "before-birth" state, and the very celebration of this temporally indeterminate state of death over life in the present suggests a denial of the possibility or at least the desirability of being reborn.

Life, death, and the relationship the two share are thematic concerns found throughout Fukazawa's oeuvre, but the perspective in this last work differs considerably from what we found in his earlier efforts. "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," for one, affirmed life as something made possible through the death of the elderly, and so we have the heroine who, leaving space for the great-grandchild about to be born, makes her journey of death willingly and with pride. Likewise, in The Fuefuki River, an unceasing life force was affirmed and celebrated, weaving individual lives into the greater fabric of an existence whose dimensions are unknowable and irrelevant since its totality, whatever it may be, will always be greater than the sum of its parts. Thus, while both "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" and "The Dolls of Michinoku" concern subject matter that points to the interconnectedness of life and death, the former story
emphasizes the essential relation between life and death and the ways in which death functions to serve the larger social good, whereas the latter focuses on an individual's perception of birth and death as something bound by his personal needs and wishes, informed primarily by a desire to retreat from the solitude of his own life rather than considering what might be best for the lives of others.

This shift in thematic emphasis is matched by a concomitant change in the narrative structure of the stories. "The Dolls of Michinoku" situates a narrator who is also a protagonist of the story, and so the narrative perspective is limited to that individual who acts in and speaks for the incidents he experiences. In contrast, "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" is told by a third person narrator who time and again adopts the characters' points of view by taking on their language and speech style, thereby making them into part of the narration. The narrator of The Fuefuki River functions similarly as a custodian of the alternating perspectives presented by different characters in their direct speech, by "interrupting" their dialogue with supplementary information and description of the immediate scene. In sum, while the latter two works involve multiple perspectives orchestrated by a single narrative voice, "The Dolls of Michinoku" entails a single point of view that is confined to the narrator-protagonist.

This difference in scope of narrative perspective is closely tied to the respective ways in which each story works to make its thematic point. With a third person narrator who remains an outsider to the story, and who is thereby invested with the authority to control the narrative by going into the minds of the characters and speaking for them, both "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" and The Fuefuki River more clearly announce their intent to make a statement beyond the concerns of a fictional character or historical moment. Hence, we are led to focus not on any one individual—even Orin, in the end, is upstaged, as
she retreats silently from view—but instead on the tales' confirmation of life as a force that flows through and beyond individuals. In "The Dolls of Michinoku," however, we are led to focus on the ever more private world of the protagonist, a world radically reduced to an existence that is informed only by a personal recognition of the connection between life and death and the promise of an otherworldly quietude. Certainly the story makes a profound statement about the solitude of life, but in the end it is unclear whether those implications really are to be extended beyond that tale to the reader, to say nothing of the characters of the tale, who seem not to share "I"s longing for a retreat to some idyllic pre-birth state.

Whatever the scope of the message and the potential range of its reception, the stories discussed in this study never fail to involve the reader in their fictional world. I have spent much of the preceding study emphasizing the role of this reader involvement, for, to my mind, involving the reader particularly amidst the unfamiliar is what Fukazawa's works do best. But there has been another reason for the emphasis, suggested first to me when I read of the overwhelmingly negative reception of "A Dream Tale." The one thing made clear by the controversy, the condemnation of both author and work, and the cool reception of the critics is that not much stock was placed in a compelling reading experience when it came to evaluating the work. This is unfortunate because it suggests an almost unanimous abandonment of much of what makes the story a pleasure to read and, further, sounds a warning that similarly "partial" readings may have been made of Fukazawa's other works. And so, while taking account of the thematic priorities of each of the four stories here studied, I have, in balance, focused more on trying to capture something of that reading experience and the way it takes form rather than only its outcome—the process, if you will, rather than just the product. In short, the attempt has been made to
encourage another criterion for determining the value of these four literary creations.

"I"s personal experience in "The Dolls of Michinoku," for instance, is effectively exploited, with the reader enjoined to share in the excitement of solving the mystery of the enigmatic Tohoku village. Certainly it is possible without earlier playing along with the mystery to see in the final scene the peculiar solitude that has driven the narrator-protagonist to look beyond the here and now; but in this case, the tale asks that we do play along, and solving that mystery alongside the protagonist makes his discovery of the one ironic retreat from solitude, death, more profound because it has also become ours to make.

In *The Fuefuki River* and "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain," the narrator maneuvers the readers so that they feel both attachment to the characters and a disengagement from their daily activities. In the process, this combination makes it possible to receive intact the tale's confirmation of life that flows incessantly through the people who we have come to know, irrespective of the trials and tribulations that have come to seem somehow less important.

Finally, in "A Dream Tale," the "I" narrator-protagonist uses a detached manner of story-telling, with "I" the narrator commenting on the actions of his protagonist counterpart, so that the readers may reproduce his dream as he had had it, thereby also giving the readers the desired base from which the dream is to be interpreted. For the reader who will accept value in an engaging experience while reading, "A Dream Tale" would meet any and all expectations, in part because the story effectively challenges our understanding of what we see as familiar and thus correct, but also because of the effective soliciting of reader participation in the compelling moments along the way, where almost
without realizing it we ourselves have laid the foundation upon which the author would have us stand to judge and enjoy the story as he tells it.

The experience of reading and the product of that experience are intimately related, and when it comes to the evaluation and appreciation of literary expressions, to neglect either is to leave oneself unnecessarily handicapped. With this discussion of the writings of Fukazawa Shichirō, it will have been enough for now if, by shedding light on the construction of the edifice as well as taking in its impression from afar, I have made accessible the neglected part of his writings that is there to be found for those who stop to see.
Notes

Introduction

1 Sei Itō, "Fukazawa Shichirō-shi no sakuhin no sekai," *Narayama bushi kō* Feb. 1957, rpt. in *Ibuse Masuji, Fukazawa Shichirō*, ed. Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō kankō kai (Yūseidō, 1977) 212-17. Translations in this study are mine unless otherwise noted. All Japanese works cited in the notes were published in Tokyo and so the name of the publisher alone has been given.


3 Rintarō Hinuma, "Sonzai tōshi-ryoku," *Hiyō* Nov. 1961, rpt. in *Ibuse Masuji, Fukazawa Shichirō*, 236. The majority of all criticism written by Hinuma concerned the works of Fukazawa. On an interesting variation of the tradition of Japan's literary figures taking their own lives, Hinuma took his at the age of forty-three. Fukazawa's posthumous comment provides a further, and given that tradition of literary suicides, more familiar inflection: "It is I, you see, who should have died" (*Watashi ga kawatte shinu beki deshita ne*). Masamichi Abe, "Dōkō futari: Hinuma Rintarō to Fukazawa Shichirō" (Two Who Travel Side By Side: Hinuma Rintarō and Fukazawa Shinichirō), *Fukazawa Shichirō, Ariyoshi Sawako, Miura Shumon, Minakami Tsutomu shū* Appendix (Chikuma shobō, 1974) 1.

4 For a brief life history of Fukazawa see the biographical sketch appended to this study.


6 Hidemi Kai, "Irohanihoheto: Fukazawa Shichirō 'Michinoku no ningyō tachi' wo yomu" (ABCDEFG: Reading Fukazawa Shichirō's "The Dolls of Michinoku"), *Gunzō* May 1982: 470-79.

Chapter One


5 Shichirō Fukazawa, "Narayama bushi kō," Narayama bushi kō, Fuefukigawa (Shinchōsha, 1981) 245-277. Trans. by John Bester, "The Oak Mountain Song," Japan Quarterly vol. 4, no. 2 April-June 1957: 200-33. Hereafter all references to "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" will be made as follows: when there is a summary of events or translation of my own, the page number(s) from the Shinchōsha edition are followed by reference to Bester's translation. (261-67; B. 217-22), the present citation, would be an example. When Bester's translation is used in whole or in part, the order is reversed--(B. 200; 245) would be an example. I have offered my own translations or altered those made by Bester only when his rendition seemed inadequate to convey what I would emphasize in a particular passage. The reason why I find my translation of the title preferable to Bester's choice will be mentioned below.


7 This is Matayan's son's explanation. Orin suspects that Matayan was rocked so hard on his son's back while his son tried to cover Matayan's crying voice with a singing of the "deaf lullaby" (tsumbo yusuri) that the rope was torn off (271). The practice of carrying
one's parents to their final resting place once they have reached a certain age is described in
a variety of tales and legends. See discussion below.

8 Ken'ichi Mizusawa, ed., Tonto mukashi ga atta gedo vol. 1, by Tsuru Nagashima
(Miraisha, 1957) 286-88. For other versions of the story, see "Ubasuteyama," Shinano no
minwa, ed. Shinano no minwa Editing Committee (Miraisha, 1958) 28-32; "Ubasuteyama
monogatari," Nihon rokujū yo shū densetsu e-monogatari, ed. Study Group of Japanese
Legends (Yamada shūbidō, 1958) 194-95.

83-84.

10 Kenkichi Yamamoto, "Fukazawa Shichirō no sakuhin," Chūō kōron Feb. 1957,

11 Both the idea of there being a "contemplation of a subject" ("kō") and the presence
of not one song but variations on one musical theme are, to my mind, unnecessarily lost by
Bester's translation of the title.

12 Shichirō Fukazawa, "Nankin kozō," Chisei Apr. 1957, rpt. in Fukazawa Shichirō,
Ariyoshi Sawako, Miura Shumon, Minakami Tsutomu shū (Chikuma shobō, 1974) 51-53.

13 Sei Itō, "Fukazawa Shichirō-shi no sakuhin no sekai," 217

Chapter Two

1 Shichirō Fukazawa, Fuefukigawa 1958, rpt. in Narayama bushi kō, Fuefukigawa
(Shinchōsha, 1981) 5-124. Further references to the text will likewise be made in the body
of the essay and are from the 1981 Shinchōsha edition.

2 Yasunari Kawabata, "Jojōka," Chūō kōron Feb. 1932, rpt. in Kawabata Yasunari
zenshū vol. 3 (Shinchōsha, 1980) 473-99. Further references to Kawabata's text are from

3 Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

5 Takeda Harunobu (Shingen) (1521-1573) is a real historical figure who ruled Kai Province in sixteenth century Japan.


7 The most likely would be that the baby cannot be allowed to live because it is the product of rape, that it cannot be a wanted being, especially from the dead mother's point of view. The effect of the tale is enhanced by this open ending, for the mystery still remains for her husband as to who is the baby's father. Secondly, it doubles the meaning of a part of the title: "Oyashirazu," which is the actual name of the area, also means "parent(s) unknown."


9 She has run away from the castle where she was serving because her pregnancy became noticeable. It seems that she does not want it thought that one of the castle men is the father (who in fact is a villager) and so, before such accusation can be made, she flees to her mother (68, 70-71).

10 I do not consider this shift of perspective to be the same as the character taking up the narrator's role as found, for example, in Tanizaki's The Makioka Sisters; in fact, quite the opposite is true. For in The Fuefuki River we see the narrator "descending" to the world of the characters, and, with this restricted awareness, bringing the reader with him. The characters-as-narrators in Tanizaki's tale--with Sachiko being the exemplar as a character/narrator whose vision and evaluation we come to depend upon--enjoy a privilege of insight that, apart from his "I" narrator-protagonists discussed in the following chapters, has no counterpart to those who people Fukazawa's fictional world.

Chapter Three

1 Shichirō Fukazawa, "Furyū mutan," Chūō kōron Dec. 1960: 328-40. Further references to the text will be made in the body of the essay and are from this edition. The term of the title is problematic and central to the story. I have chosen the romanization furyū rather than the more common furyu to signal my, and, it would appear, Fukazawa's attempt to recover the full implications of the word. In translating the title, I have omitted furyū--thus simply "A Dream Tale" (mutan)--but will discuss the term in some detail below.

2 The murder is known as the Shimanaka incident. It took place on the night of February 1, 1961 when a seventeen-year old rightist, Komori Kazutaka, visited the home of the president of the Chūō kōron Publishing Company. When Komori was told that Mr. Shimanaka was out, he stabbed Mrs. Shimanaka and Mrs. Maruyama Kane, and ran away. Mrs. Maruyama did not survive the attack. Komori surrendered himself to the police on the following day, and confessed that he had intended to kill Mr. Shimanaka for including "A Dream Tale" in Chūō kōron. Tomoko Nakamura, "Furyū mutan" jiken igo: henshūsha no jibun shi (Tabata shoten, 1976) 22-23.

3 The controversy surrounding "A Dream Tale" bears some resemblance to the sad phenomenon of the publication of Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses. A somewhat ambiguous authorial voice imbedded in a dream-narrative along with volatile subject matter left the authors of these two works to confront an extreme and violent response from radical conservative elements. One can only hope (against hope, it seems at present) that Rushdie's persecutors will, at the very least, go the way of those who hounded Fukazawa and soon find other means to pursue their cause.

4 It seems that he spent two months or so in each of Kyoto, Osaka, Onomichi, Hiroshima, and Hokkaido. Fukazawa, "Rurō no shuki," 1961, rpt. in Rurō no shuki (Tokuma shoten, 1987) 9.

6 Usui Yoshimi (1905-87) wrote an article "Fukazawa Shichirō no 'Fūryū mutan'" in *Shūkan kōron*, November, 1960, which supports Fukazawa's "high-quality, ambitious work." However, he wrote in November, 1965, that he had to support the work in order to protect Fukazawa from possible violent retaliation from rightists while in fact he did not think Fukazawa's work praiseworthy at all. Hirano Ken (1907-1978), whose initial comment on the work was generally appreciative ('I read it with a constant belly laugh' [Watakushi wa kono sakuhin wo geragera warainagara yonda]; "Bungei jihyō," *Mainichi shimbun* Nov. 25, 1960), wrote an article in *Tokyo shimbun*, Feb. 3, 1961, for the purpose of protecting himself from further "misinterpretation" of his writings. He concluded the article by expressing his wish to be safe as a citizen who only happened to have the profession of literary critic. Rpt. in *Bessatsu shimpyō*: 208-09, 229-31.


9 The English word "symbol" does not quite capture the original shōchō, which is rarely used for anything other than objects. Thus, Takeda's objection to the term's implication.


12 Nakamura, 16.

13 "Fukazawa Shichirō no mita yume," 206.

14 The Japanese text reads: Isochidori oki no aranami kakiwakete sendō itooshi tomoshibi nururu.

15 These associations seem supported by similar allusions in classical literature where the dead were often compared to white birds, as in the story of Yamato takeru no mikoto in Chapter 88 of the *Kojiki*, vol. 2 (Iwanami shoten, 1960, vol. 1 of *Nihon koten bungaku*)
taikei) 222-225. Also see the translation by Donald L. Philippi, Kojiki (Tokyo: U of Tokyo Press, 1968) 250-52. Thanks to Prof. J. Mostow for suggesting this work.

16 Kadokawa Nihon shi jiten, 2nd ed. (Kadokawa shoten, 1989) 842. Thanks to Prof. R. Kramer for suggesting that furyū might be associated with more than elegance.

17 The Manyōshū is a compendium of poems consisting of twenty volumes. The four thousand five hundred odd verses are said to have been composed between 374 and 759, and have long constituted one of the main sources and standards for poetic allusion and composition. Kadokawa Nihon shi jiten. 2nd ed. (Kadokawa shoten, 1989) 906-07. Nihon bungaku shi (Daiichi gakushūsha, 1979) 14-20, 27-30.


19 Perhaps the only real difference between tanka and haiku is their syllabic length: the former consists of thirty-one syllables, the latter seventeen. Haiku is said to better express highly concentrated images and emotions, while tanka supposedly leaves more room to address human sentiment. Both are best characterized, though, by a preoccupation with manipulating set phrases and conventional expressions.


21 Hinuma, 235.

22 We have already mentioned the volatile conditions surrounding the renewal of the U.S.-Japan security pact and the extreme reaction to "A Dream Tale" by some members of the radical right. For anyone interested, one compelling view of the psychology of a seventeen year old rightist at the time is depicted in Ōe Kenzaburō's short story "The Seventeen" (Sevuntin), Bungakkai Jan. 1961, rpt. in Ōe Kenzaburō shū (Shinchōsha, 1973) 385-421. In the story, rightist violence is shown to be justified by belief in the Emperor and loyalty to the country (420). In reality, threats made by rightists led the publisher to apologize for printing the story in his literary magazine. The written apology was made specifically to the individual Ōe seems to have had in mind when creating his protagonist, as well as to a few existing rightist organizations, on January 31, 1961. Nakamura, 45.
23 Shichirō Fukazawa, "Shōsetsu to akuchuariti," *Bungei* Dec. 1962: 133. To address the most obvious contradiction: while it is true that Fukazawa changed his residence and concealed his whereabouts, I believe he did so largely on the advice of others. Fukazawa describes his life of confinement and moving around in a short work "The Age of Numbers" (Kazu no nenrei), *Gunzo* Dec. 1963: 73-86. In the story, the protagonist's situation is shown to have been decided for him, as if totally distinct from his own wishes, and so he goes about doing whatever is "appropriate." Fukazawa gives another account of this unsettled period in an earlier essay: "While I was living in a home with police officers and others, I was playing the guitar, enjoying go [something like chess] and mahjong, and listening to records. I passed about three months that way, having fun." "Inochi no tomoshibi," *Rurō no shuki* (1961; Tokuma shoten, 1987) 122.

24 Shichirō Fukazawa, *Bonsai rōjin to sono shūhen* (Bungei shunjū, 1973). Further paginal references are made in the body of the essay and are from this edition.

25 Taijun Takeda, "Sanka shite kataru 'Ningen yokubari ron'" *Bonsai rōjin to sono shūhen* Appendix, 1.

26 Shichirō Fukazawa, "Atogaki" (Afterward), *Bonsai rōjin to sono shūhen*, 275-77.


28 "Michinoku no ningyō tachi" was awarded the Kawabata Yasunari bungaku shō (literary prize) in April, 1980, but Fukazawa declined the prize, stating, "A sense of hollowness generated by the parting from solitude would overtake me [were I to step out and accept the prize]" ("Kawabata-shō jitai ni tsuite," *Shinchō* June 1980; rpt. in *Yoroku no jinsei*, 87).

Chapter Four

1 "The Dolls of Michinoku" first appeared in *Chūō kōron*, June 1979. Further paginal references are made in the body of the essay and are to the following edition: "Michinoku no ningyō tachi," *Michinoku no ningyō tachi* (Chūō kōronsha, 1981) 9-42.
2 The area consists of Fukushima, Miyagi, Yamagata, Akita, Iwate and Aomori Prefectures. The stranger is likely from either Akita or Yamagata Prefecture (14).

3 Thanks to Prof. K. Tsuruta for pointing out the association between the stroller used to transport "I" and a suggested return to childhood.

4 What I call a time-present narrative manner is simply a subsuming of the narrative voice by the protagonist, rather than the opposite and more common strategy of a narrator shown to enter the mind of a character. A narrator-protagonist "I" makes this possible, and so we have, for example, a narrator who, by definition knows before speaking what he will say, "relating" his surprise at just having discovered something he already knew about. The exclamatory expressions "a" and "ha" (oh!) are two such examples and are discussed below.

5 The story "On the Melodies of Oak Mountain" discussed in Chapter One also involves an element of deliberate mystery. We are early told of the pilgrimage to Oak Mountain (Narayama mairi) in which those who turn seventy years of age must take part, but it is over the course of the entire tale that we piece together the significance of this voyage of no return. Fukazawa has written a few other similarly structured works including "The First Sutra upon One's Death" (Makuragyō) (1963) and "A Ghostly Tree--A Prickly Ash" (Yōki inuzanshō) (1975). In both stories, though, there is little effort to sustain a mystery's tension beyond flavouring a few moments with a pinch of the unkown, followed quickly by a simple denouement.


7 A survey of research suggests that it is still unclear whether the kokeshi has always been indigenous to Tohoku Province or only survives there. Minekichi Nishida, "Kokeshi sōron," Kokeshi no bi, eds. Keizō Tsuchihashi, et al. (Miraisha, 1961) 48-49. Yoshihiko Saji, Kokeshi zukuri: kijishi no nazo (Shinkokuminsha, 1983) 31-33.

8 Joruri is a form of musical art in Japan, an ancestor of bunraku or the puppet theater.

9 The original text reads: Iroha kaku ko no chirinuru wa / konoyo no hikari tsune naran / uki sanga wo koenuru mo / koeenu mo / kono yo no yume wa tsuyu naran (The child just taught to write no longer to be seen, gone the way of life's unsteady light. Will we or
will we not cross over those hills and streams of hardship—this dream-like life, poignant as the dew).

Biographical Sketch*

1914 Fukazawa Shichirō, born in Isawa, Yamanashi Prefecture, the fourth of five sons. Mother and father operated a printing company.

1931 Graduated from junior high school, then moved to Tokyo to work at a pharmacy. Learned to play the guitar.

1934 Was recruited to serve in the war, but failed the physical examination.

1939 Performed in and organized a guitar recital in Tokyo. First of several such concerts.

1942 Moved back to Isawa. Began writing short stories.

1946 Joined "The literary circle of new talent" (Shinjin sakka shūdan), based in Kamakura. Studied under the leader of the group, the writer and stage director Maruo Chōken.

1949 Joined a touring music band. Spent the next several years performing on the road.

1954 Performed in a burlesque play at the Nichigeki Music Theater in Tokyo.

1956 Won the Chūō kōron publishing company's prize for new talent.
1961 Forced to leave Tokyo under police escort to escape the angry reaction to his "A Dream Tale" (Furyū mutan).

1962 Returned to Tokyo.

1965 Moved to Shōbu, Saitama Prefecture, and established his "Love Me Farm."


1971 Opened a street stall in Tokyo. Named it the "Dream Stall," and sold baked sweet bean buns (imagawa yaki).

1972 Opened a second "Dream Stall" in a Tokyo Seibu Department Store.

1974 Began policy of refusing interviews. Said to have posted a sign on the door of his home saying as much. Few social engagements of any kind are subsequently recorded by his biographers.

1980 Awarded the Kawabata literary prize (Kawabata Yasunari bungaku shō), but declined it.

1987 Died of a heart attack.

Works Cited

All Japanese works cited were published in Tokyo and so the name of the publisher alone has been given.

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