

THE WALL THAT KŌBŌ BUILT:  
Four Short Stories by Abe Kōbō

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is divided into three parts: Chapter I, Chapter II, and the Appendices; each of these parts fulfills different purposes. Chapter I concerns itself with Abe Kōbō's life and working environment. Although the argument that a man's life and his works should be kept separate, may be valid when we examine the works of an author of our own cultural-linguistic environment, such an examination of style, devoid of human experience would be meaningless when applied to the works of a man who is little known and whose culture still remains to be studied by most North Americans. This thesis, therefore, examines both the man and his works. Furthermore, Japanese critics, as can be seen in the first part of Chapter I, would never consider separating the author's personality from his literary creations.

Chapter I comes to the conclusion that a connection does exist between Abe and his heroes, albeit a much more subtle one than the typical one-to-one, author-hero relationship of Japanese confessional literature.

Chapter II is an examination of seven of Abe's stories, four of which, "Oshimushime" [The Deaf Girl, 1949], "Inu" [The Dog, 1954], "Yume no heishi" [The Dream Soldier, 1957] and "Toki no gake" [The Cliff of Time, 1964], are translated and appended at the back of this thesis. Two of the remaining three, "Akai mayu" (Red Cocoon 1950, trans. John Nathan 1966), and "Dendorokakariya" (Dendrocacalia 1949,

trans. M. Jelinkova 1965), are available in English, though the remaining one "Kabe--S. Karuma shi no hanzai" [The Wall, The Crime of S. Karuma Esq., 1951], an extremely long short story remains to be translated. These three works represent not only stepping stones in Abe's career, they also testify to the painstaking experimentation in which Abe was engaged before abandoning the surrealist style of his early years.

In the second part of Chapter II, the four translations mentioned above are examined in chronological order and are analyzed in detail to show Abe's change in style at about the time he wrote "Yume no heishi." Some facts concerning Abe's politics are also explained.

Appendix I and II contain the four short stories in chronological order: first the translations and then the originals. Appendix III is a list of Abe's original works, in order of publication.

The corpus of this thesis, four translations, three stories in the original, several novels in translation, as well as the works of criticism consulted, should provide the basis for some tentative conclusions. First, Abe's style is not confessional, but descriptive and explanatory. Second, Abe abandoned the politically directed surrealism of his early days for a more subtle, documentary style. Third, Abe's heroes struggle with outside forces against which they are powerless; their defeat is intended to prove some failing present in all of us.

It is hoped that the materials introduced, and the conclusions

arrived at in this thesis will help to form the basis for more detailed research.

## Table of Contents

Chapter I.....	1
Chapter II.....	19
Notes.....	44
Appendix I	
i The Deaf Girl.....	54
ii The Dog.....	66
iii The Dream Soldier.....	79
iv The Cliff of Time.....	91
Appendix II	
i Oshimusume.....	105
ii Inu.....	112
iii Yume no heishi.....	118
iv Toki no gake.....	126
Appendix III	
List of Abe Kōbō's Original Publications.....	135
Bibliography.....	140

## CHAPTER I

The introduction of Abe Kōbō's 安部公房<sup>1</sup> works to a wider audience, presents a number of problems. First of all, despite the world-wide critical acclaim which his Suna no onna 砂の女 (The Woman in the Dunes, trans., E. Dale Saunders, 1962) received, little is known about Abe outside Japan. Second, the information regarding Abe's life and works that is available in Japanese, is written by critics whose concerns differ considerably from those of critics in North America.

In order to deal with the first unknown, the author's life and environment, I have sketched a short biography of Abe, trying to show which events in his life have influenced aspects of his literature. The problem of differing critical vantage points is much more difficult to deal with. It is impossible to sum up, in a few words, the critical concerns of the Japanese reading public, to say nothing of the criticism which emanates from the bundan 文壇, Japan's literary world. It is the differences that make themselves most apparent. An almost exclusive concern with the life and personality of the author, at the expense of more objective information concerning techniques of plot, description, and characterization, is one quality which might perplex many foreign critics.

However, it would be useful to keep in mind the fact that literature in Japan is a popular pastime, readily accessible to people

on the street. Magazines such as the Bungei Shunjū 文艺春秋, Chūō Kōron 中央公論, Bungakkai 文学会, Bungei 文艺, Shinchō 新潮, Hihyō 批評, and Ushio 潮, not to mention the monthly anthologies of taishū 大衆, or popular works, are all for sale in bookstores and sometimes even in railway stations. It is in the above-mentioned magazines that the literature of modern Japan thrives; it is also in their pages that the questions of literary interpretation are debated. Literary criticism in North America is the occupation of professional scholars, not a popular pastime practiced by men of letters.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps it is their close proximity to an attentive readership that has made Japanese critics concern themselves with describing the person as well as the works of authors. From the point of view of objective criteria, bundan critics are a breed apart from the scientific critics of North American universities. Although the university critics display perhaps too great a desire to establish elusive objective criteria--Northrop Frye mentions in the preface to his Anatomy of Criticism that there is a Ph.D. dissertation which is devoted to measuring percentages of gloom in the novels of Thomas Hardy<sup>3</sup>--Japanese critics on the other hand seem to spend an inordinately large amount of their time listing "influences" and "isms" which they are not at all eager to define. In one short four page article in his Muchi to koma, Haniya Yutaka 埴谷雄高 attributes Abe's genius to the influence of no less than nine other writers including Kafka, Rilke, Shiina Rinzō 椎名麟三, Hanada Kiyoteru 花田清輝 and Haniya himself.



Bundan critics rarely write about a work with the intent of interpreting its meaning to readers; rather, they use a given work as a springboard for their own subjective extemporizations. Etō Jun 江藤淳, in an article entitled "Modern Japanese Literary Criticism," divides the critical art into two spheres: creative popular criticism and academic criticism. Naturally, he favours the former type:

I personally do not take sides with the idea that literary criticism is, or should be, a kind of science, an idea generally accepted by academic critics.... However, I am interested in the idea that literary criticism can be a creative art, a genre of literature relying far more heavily on the art and personality of the critic than on abstract theory.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, bundan criticism can often rely far more on the personality of the critic than on the character of the work in question. Very often criticism tends to degenerate to personal reminiscences of the critic and come to have very little connection with the literary skills or personal message of the author. Honda Shūgo 本多秋五 takes up at least a quarter of his article on Abe describing how Abe grew a beard at about the time he went to Czechoslovakia in 1956, or that his father was a doctor and so was some other young author's father, or how Abe distributed a drug to guests at a party and that the drug did not take effect. This kind of celebration of the man is not at all limited to literary memoirs such as those of Honda and Haniya. It would appear that there is altogether a greater emphasis on the author as a man in Japan than in North America. Isoda Kōichi

磯田光一, writing in Bungakkai, introduces his article by describing Abe's unorthodox appearance at a meeting of writers. Abe wore shorts and a short-sleeved shirt, while the others, mostly I-novelists,<sup>5</sup> came in grey suits. Isoda comes to the conclusion that the I-novelists made a distinction between their images as people and as characters in their books, while with Abe there was no such contradiction. The implication, quite obviously, is that Abe is more sincere than the I-novelists who only claim to write sincere books. But then, an author's sincerity is purely a bundan concern; no North American professor of English would spend too much time on such a vague and seemingly naive issue. There are, however, very good historical reasons for the evolution of this exclusively Japanese critical attitude. Brett de Bary sums up the reasons as follows:

Perhaps the roots of this concern can be traced to the foundations laid by Tsubouchi Shōyō's 坪内逍遙 Shōsetsu Shinzui 小説神髓 (Essence of the novel) in 1885. For despite Tsubouchi's insistence that it was the aesthetic beauty of a novel which justified its existence, he included as basic criteria the plot. This emphasis on realism, which the early Meiji novel had learned from its European models, was in the Japanese case never fully dissociated from certain moral qualities of the book's creator--his personal sincerity and the "truth" of the tale told.<sup>6</sup>

This equation of artistic realism with personal honesty has not only resulted in the perversion of realism to confessionalism, i.e. suffering in order to write about it, but also in the elevation of the author's personality to a level at least on a par with his works. Seen in this

light, the personality and works of Abe Kōbō are considerably at odds with his literary environment. He writes no I-novels, there is not a trace of confessionalism in his works, and, in comparison with his fellow authors, he makes few remarks in public about his role as author, or intellectual. Unlike Ōe Kenzaburō 大江健三郎, Abe makes no statements about being a spokesman for his generation, neither does he indulge in the personal glorification that Mishima Yukio 三島由紀夫 was famous for.

As for the "isms," such as "surrealism," a trend which is never defined by a single critic, these would suffer from any definition. Etō Jun's paraphrasing of Yokomitsu Riichi's 横光利一 Neo-sensationist manifesto (Shin kankaku-ron 新感覚論), should offer sufficient proof that the Japanese fascination with "isms" is part of the larger fascination with western concepts in general. "[It is] a synthesis of dadaïsme, cubisme, expressionismus, futurismo, symbolisme and 'a part of' realism:"<sup>7</sup> Japanese critics have not abandoned this practice of filling their articles with foreign concepts. Iijima Kōichi 飯島耕一 writes in an article on Abe, "As he [Abe], himself has said, 'From existentialism, I moved to surrealism, and then from there to communism.'"<sup>8</sup> The frustrating aspect of this listing of recipes is that the critic never goes into any more detail than just the above sort of naming of parts.

Of course, one could easily devote a whole book to a portrait of the Japanese literary world. In fact it would be a very useful topic

for further investigation, because at the moment one can rely only on the frustrations of other students of Japanese literature when they encounter the treacherously vague, seemingly empty criticism that emanates from the bundan.

Finally, it would appear that the Japanese enjoyment of the personality of the author is what stands in the way of much systematic criticism. The above quote from Iijima's article is evidence that it is automatically assumed that the author's own comments about his life and works have a peculiar authority. In North America, authors are considered somewhat poor critics of their own works. They are regarded as simply the media for their creations. For all these above reasons, this essay has relied very little on bundan sources for its appraisal of the author's works. There is enough source material, in fact there is even too much, on Abe's life, but then the biographical information is often present at the expense of more detailed analyses of such criteria as characterization, plot, symbolism, and concrete comparison with other representatives of a particular genre. Kazuya Sakai, while lamenting the dearth of critical analyses of Abe's works, mentions the tendency of writers with an international reputation of being misrepresented by the press and the powerful publishing houses.<sup>9</sup>

But then, after all, in Japan authors are accorded treatment which is reserved only for movie stars elsewhere. Donald Keene sums up the life of the Japanese author in the following manner:

He is followed in the streets by autograph hunters, his face is on magazine covers, his every activity is reported widely in the press. His rewards are correspondingly heroic: in 1956 for example, four novelists enjoyed higher incomes than any movie actor, entertainer or professional athlete, and novelists have frequently since the war led the entire country in income.<sup>10</sup>

While public concern is not restricted to the novelist's personality alone (cf. note no. 25), the information above, should be sufficient evidence for the argument that Japanese critics, and presumably the reading public as well, display a greater interest in the life of an author than people elsewhere. Such a desire to know the background of the man with whom one is dealing, is reflected in other aspects of Japanese daily life. The exchange of extremely detailed calling cards, is a custom practiced even by university students. Having to prepare curriculum vitae when applying for any position, including janitor, or salesgirl, also testifies to the above cultural trait.

The following short biography of Abe is written to introduce both the man and his works. While much purely personal information has been left out, where possible, relationships between the author's experiences and his literary creations have been pointed out. Although, due to the necessarily small number of works examined, the relationships presented are in the manner of possibilities as opposed to indisputable facts.

Abe was born in Tokyo in 1924. His father, a medical doctor, was working for the Manchurian School of Medicine in Mukden, and Kimifusa (cf. note no. 1), was born while his father was on an extended

research assignment in Tokyo. The assignment over, the family moved back to Mukden. Abe was only one year old at this time, but he was to be brought up in Manchuria until the age of sixteen. From then on he would hover back and forth from Tokyo to Mukden, finally settling in Japan after the war.

The result of this constant moving around was to make Abe aware of the problem of the kokyō 故郷 or home-town. To the Japanese, the furusato ふるさと 故郷, --a more sentimental reference to home-town--is the object of much nostalgia. The population of Tokyo temporarily drops each New Year, when Tokyoites crowd trains to return to their furusato. It is impossible to say just how many people return, but it is evident that the home-town does occupy an important place in the spiritual lives of Japanese. The fact that there is even a special word in Japanese, satogaeri 里帰り, to describe returning to the village to visit friends and family, or graves of relatives, also indicates the importance of the home-town in Japan.

To Abe, the concept of the home-town is meaningless. He makes this clear in an abbreviated chronology or nempu, which I quote in its entirety:

I was born in Tokyo, and brought up in Manchuria. The place of family origin on my papers, however, is in Hokkaido, and I have lived there too for a few years. In short, my place of birth, the place where I was brought up, and my place of family origin, are three absolutely different places. Thanks to this fact, it is a difficult matter for me to write even an abbreviated

list of important dates in my life. Essentially, I am a man with no home-town. That is one thing I can say. And the feeling of home-town phobia which flows at the base of my emotions, may be attributable to such a background. I am put off by anything which is valued only because it is stationary.<sup>11</sup>

One critic quotes Abe making a similar remark but coming to a slightly different conclusion:

Perhaps it was because all these places, my place of family origin, of birth, and of upbringing, were all different that in later life I have become reluctant to talk about my past. What am I supposed to answer if someone asks where I'm from? (Perhaps it is just such a background that has made me shy away from I-novels.)<sup>12</sup>

In fact, Abe never wrote what could be considered an I-novel in the tradition of pseudo-realistic confessional novels. Although his first novel, Owarishi michi no shirube ni 終りし道の標べに [The Road Sign at the End of the Street, 1947], was confessional in intent, Abe himself hardly considers the work as worthy of the name, novel. In fact none of Abe's early works had much in common with previous Japanese literature, let alone I-novels. In one sense though, Abe was incorrect about himself because many of his novels deal with homelessness, alienation, poverty, and lack of belonging to home-town groups, problems which are paralleled by Abe's own personal experiences.

Abe claims to have read a collection of world literature when he was still in middle school--equivalent to junior and early senior high school. He was very much impressed by the stories of Edgar Allan

Poe, an author to whom he has been likened on point of style by many critics. He claims also to have been active as a critic in literary discussions in noon hour debates with his friends but despite the deep literary interest that such precocious behaviour might imply, Haniya Yutaka, the novelist and critic who was to help Abe publish his first work, was surprised at just how little Abe knew about literature when he met the young writer some ten years later:

This novelist who used existentialist terms so freely, except for having read Nietzsche and Heidegger, knew nothing about European literature other than what he may have gleaned through a fragmentary reading of two or three authors. When it came to Japanese literature, he had read absolutely nothing.<sup>13</sup>

Abe was probably not as interested in literature as he claims to have been. All his other hobbies, such as insect collecting, geometry and drawing designs, were indicative of a scientific bent, but his interest in insect collecting was to stand him in good stead in Suna no onna. The hero of that novel is an insect collector who finds a sort of purpose in life by hoping to have his name attached to a heretofore unknown insect.

Abe also exploited his knowledge of mathematics in an earlier novelette, Baberu no tō no tanuki バベルの塔の狸 [The Badger of the Tower of Babel, 1951], in which the hero of the story, a poet and amateur mathematician, solves equations for pleasure. Abe did not do well in foreign languages; someone interested in a literary career might have



been expected to do better.

In 1940 Abe went to Tokyo to attend Seijō kōtōgakkō 成城高等学校 a well-known college.<sup>14</sup> He maintains, he did not join in school activities and preferred to read instead. In the same year he took ill and had to return to Manchuria to recuperate. While he was sick, he read Dostoyevsky.

Japan became involved in the Pacific War in the following year. Abe recalls: "While feeling an emotional revulsion against the rising tide of fascism, I also felt at once a desire to be part of the movement. I feverishly read Nietzsche, Heidegger and Jaspers."<sup>15</sup> No doubt Abe had become alienated from Japan's war aims as a feeling of estrangement is always apparent in the sadly lost characters of his heroes. As the war progresses his mental state gradually deteriorates. He displayed little interest in his education both at college and medical school, and he received consistently poor marks in military training, signs of his alienation from the purposes of war-time society.

He read Kafka, but claims that his first impression was not too strong. Undoubtedly he must have re-read Kafka since that time because many of his works, notably Kabe--S. Karuma shi no hanzai 壁-S.カルマの犯罪 [The Wall, or the Crime of S. Karuma Esq. 1951] are definitely influenced by Kafka though Abe's critics, particularly Sasaki Kiichi 佐々木其一 try to discount any relationship between the two authors' works, maintaining that Abe's humour is essentially different from Kafka's depressing fatalism.<sup>16</sup>

His interest in mathematics was not spoiled by the war. He worked at the subject assiduously, completing his third year textbook

by the end of his second year. In 1943, he entered the Faculty of Medicine of Tokyo University but was unable to take an interest in anything. He entered, "not because I really wanted to but because I could think of nothing else to do."<sup>17</sup> He describes the early years of his medical training as being kūhaku, "a void."<sup>18</sup> As a response to this condition, he began reading Rilke's The Book of Images.<sup>19</sup>

Around Christmas of 1944 he heard rumours that defeat was nearing. His hopes returned, and he felt that he must engage in some kind of activity. He plotted with a childhood friend who was at that time also attending school in Tokyo, to return to Manchuria by means of sick-leave papers, which Abe would forge. They left school without notifying the authorities and came under kempei, or secret police, surveillance. Abe's experiences at the Korean port where they landed were to become the subject of the play Seifuku 制服 [Uniforms 1955]. His friend's father was supposed to have business connections with mounted Manchurian bandits. It was Abe's intention to join such a horde, although it is difficult to say just what could have prompted him to wish to do so. His desire certainly testifies to a search for adventure, something which is still evident in his works. But such a desire may also be taken as proof of a certain immaturity, perhaps a necessary companion to adventure, but a quality for which critics still take Abe to task.<sup>20</sup> It is interesting to note that his attempt to join the bandits and his own descriptions of his war-time alienation have been deleted by Shinchō Sha, the publishers of Abe's more recently selected works in

their nempu. It would appear that the more famous Abe becomes, the less real information becomes available on him. It is ironic that Abe, whose works deal with alienation, should be alienated from his public by his publishers through this kind of censorship. But this practice is understandable if one appreciates the fact that Japanese authors are not necessarily writers of fiction. Their opinions are constantly sought on all sorts of problems quite unrelated to their profession. The publisher might feel that Abe's status as an oracle may be adversely affected if his readers knew that he wanted to pillage the Manchurian countryside as a boy.

When Abe reached Manchuria in 1945, he found it very quiet. There, the war appeared far from being over. Abe felt as if he had been tricked. He spent his restless days helping his father in his medical practice. In August the war suddenly came to an end. With the war over, Abe hoped for a world where everything was possible.<sup>21</sup> His dream turned into a nightmare when Mukden fell into a state of total anarchy. An unfortunate event which was probably a consequence of the non-functioning of many government agencies was the outbreak of a cholera epidemic that claimed the life of Abe's father.

This period of anarchy profoundly affected Abe. While he did not immediately start writing on the spot, the experience of living under such circumstances was to make him aware not only of the infinite possibilities of human relationships but also the limitations of each individual human being. The heroes in his novels all seem to experience

trials under extreme conditions which they do not understand, and never have a hope of understanding, yet they continue to live with their inexplicable environments. There is certainly a parallel between Abe's heroes and the picture of himself which he describes below. My intention is not to show that the relationship there is an exact one, but rather that circumstances in his own life have awakened Abe to certain conditions of humanity which many Japanese have not been able to experience to the same degree. The following passage is quoted by many of his critics:

During the war I was an existentialist. Then I wrote The Road Sign at the End of the Street. The idea was that existence precedes essence, but that theory is somewhat self-denying. The more you try to hang on to it the more it bounces away. It was during my post war experiences that my existentialism first began to break down. I was in Mukden for about a year and a half. You see, I witnessed the complete breakdown of social standards. I lost all faith in anything constant. And I think it did me good.... For quite a while I lived in a condition of absolutely no police protection. No government, no police. Then you know, your outlook on the world changes a bit. What's more, at the time I didn't have any knowledge of social sciences at my disposal. I was like a child who had been left in the jungle. At any rate, I took on an animal-like approach to things. I was permeated with this idea: "OK. We can manage. Things aren't all that different, you know."<sup>22</sup>

It is difficult to be absolutely positive about the relationship between authors' lives and their works, though as has been explained, in Japanese literature, the relationship is sometimes a very close one.

In 1946 in Manchuria, Abe was still far from his literary

career. He went into business, bottling soft drinks. He was quite successful until he got the idea of making sugar from cellulose.

Eventually his enterprise failed when he tried to market soft drinks in solid, concentrated form. A Chinese landowner wanted to finance his venture, but after considering the matter carefully, Abe finally turned the man down, although it moved him emotionally to have had so much trust placed in him. Abe was only twenty-two at the time.

Having decided to repatriate, he boarded a ship at the end of the same year, but just as the boat steamed into the Japanese port, cholera was discovered on board. The ship was quarantined outside the harbour

for ten days, during which time several passengers experienced nervous breakdowns. Those ten days were to serve as the background for his

novel Kemonotachi wa kokyō o mezasu けものたちは故郷をめす [The Beasts Aim for Home, 1957]. A translation of the above would no

doubt yield valuable insights into Abe's attitude towards home, i.e.,

the kokyō of the title. In his recently translated play, Tomodachi 友達

(Friends, 1967, trans. by Donald Keene, 1969) and, Suna no onna (The

Woman in the Dunes, 1962, trans. by E. Dale Saunders, 1964), his

treatment of the family in the former, and the villagers in the latter,

leaves little doubt in the mind of the reader that Abe regards organized society with much suspicion. That is to say, Abe considers neither the

family nor the village as particularly good havens from urban alienation.

Returning to medical school in 1947, he was granted permission to re-enter a year below his classmates, but he was no more diligent than during

the war. Becoming a doctor was probably not his idea, as in Japan the oldest son usually takes the profession of his father quite automatically. Immediate postwar Japan was hardly a student's paradise, and Abe complains of suffering from malnutrition, extreme poverty, and having to make money on the black market when not living off the kindness of friends. When he finally graduated in 1948, one of his professors said, "If you promise never to become a doctor, I'll let you graduate."<sup>23</sup>

By that time Abe had already begun his literary career with the publication in 1947 of a portion of Owarishi michi no shirube ni in Kosei 個性. His permanence on the literary scene was assured, when, in 1948, he became a member of the Yoru no kai 夜の会 [Evening Club], a group of artists and critics which included Hanada Kiyoteru 花田清輝, Haniya Yutaka, Sasaki Kiichi and Okamoto Tarō 岡本太郎. In 1950 he joined the Seiki no kai 世紀の会, [The Century Group], with Teshigahara Hiroshi 勅使河原宏, who was to direct the filmed versions of his famous novels to come. Abe himself organized the Kōjōgai bungaku sākuru 工場街文学サークル [The Factory Row Literary Circle], but by 1958 we find him in the much more artistic and less politically oriented Kiroku geijutsu no kai 記録芸術の会 [The Circle of the Documentary Arts].

It should be clear from the above biography that Abe's career as an author was not the result of a long-cherished childhood desire, rather, the culmination of circumstances later in his life: his loss of direction during the war, combined with the inspiration he received

from reading the works of Rilke and European philosophers. Unlike Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 谷崎潤一郎 or Nagai Kafū 永井荷風, who diligently studied foreign literature with the intention of writing beautifully constructed works, Abe engaged in no such studies neither did he decorate his stories with any purely literary qualities. Abe's writings, especially during his early days, are primarily philosophical in intent, although it is rarely possible to reduce any of his stories to clear, logical statements. One example of Abe's philosophical style should suffice:

Apparently everything I needed to know was there. But what was I to do? Should I pretend to approve of the future and await the opportunity to proclaim the whole thing publicly? If there was any moral value in justice, I should act thus. If not, should I recognize that I myself was my future enemy and comply with dying? Perhaps I should if there was any moral value in honor. If I did not believe in the future, I should have to accept the first alternative. If I did believe in it, then I should have to recognize the second.<sup>24</sup>

The above passage is from a work Abe completed in 1959.

Despite the many improvements Abe made in his style, especially in description and characterization, such lapses into abstract argument find their way into many of his later works, notably Tanin no kao 他人の顔 (The Face of Another, trans. by E. Dale Saunders, 1966), and Moetsukita chizu 燃えつきた地図 (The Ruined Map, trans. by E. Dale Saunders, 1969). It should be pointed out that Abe's heavy argumentative style has not prevented him from enjoying literary success for as Donald Keene mentions, "A surprisingly large part of the Japanese reading public will not only

suffer but even welcome novels on quite difficult subjects."<sup>25</sup>

I would like to suggest that Abe's non-aesthetic, philosophical style finds its origins in this author's wartime and postwar experiences. Those hardships showed him just how little, man controlled his own destiny. The passage below is but one of many in which the hero is overcome by the power of circumstances:

Suddenly my body felt like lead, and I was overcome with a feeling of numbness; my words faltered. I felt quite as if I were looking into the limitlessness of space, gazing at the stars, the tears welling up in my eyes with the effort. It was like a balance between the finitude of thought and a sense of physical helplessness which was neither despair nor feeling.<sup>26</sup>

Abe's later period is characterized by a move towards a more simple, descriptive style. This, along with other stylistic changes, will be the subject of the following chapter.



## CHAPTER II

As a description of three of Abe's early works, the short stories "Dendorokakariya" テンドロカカリヤ (Dendrocacalia, 1949, trans. by M. Jelinkova 1965) and "Akai mayu" 赤い繭 (The Red Cocoon 1950, Eng. trans. by John Nathan 1966) and the novelette "Kabe" [The Wall, 1951], would facilitate an understanding of the four short stories appended to this thesis, they will be included as part of the corpus of this chapter. These three stories would serve to increase the scope of any examination of Abe's work. Furthermore, they far outshine the reputations of "Oshimushime" おしむすめ [The Deaf Girl 1949] and "Inu" [The Dog, 1954] the first two translations in this thesis. "Yume no heishi" 夢の兵士 [The Dream Soldier, 1957] and "Toki no gake" 時の涯 [The Cliff of Time, 1964], also translated here, are on the other hand, every bit the equals of "Akai mayu" and "Dendorokakariya." Both these later works were turned into plays: Nihon no nisshoku 日本の日蝕 [The Eclipse of Japan, 1959] and Toki no gake (part two of a collection of three one-act plays Bō ni natta otoko [The Man Who Became a Stick, 1969], 棒になった男).

The three earlier works, "Dendorokakariya," "Akai mayu," and "Kabe," all signify stepping stones in Abe's literary career. "Dendorokakariya" represents Abe's departure from his early gropings for a style of his own. The following remarks by Honda Shūgo seem to corrob-

orate Abe's confusion prior to writing "Dendorokakariya;"

When I first read [Owarishi] in this magazine [Kosei], I thought it was something written in the style of Shiina Rinzō. For all that, though, it was a frightfully difficult work. It was the sort of work that seemed to have no beginning, and where it was going I could not tell. Talking of "Thus it is" and "symbol of existence" and "home-town," it was the sort of work from which all one could hear were the groanings of something big being born. Though I understood that behind "Thus it is" there was "Why must it be thus?", beyond that [Owarishi] was a strange and obscure work.<sup>27</sup>

There is also evidence to the effect that Abe himself considered "Dendorokakariya" his first major work. He made this fact clear in a now often quoted interview with Haryū Ichirō 針生一郎 :

Haryū: Compared to those days "Akai mayu" and "Kabe" are cases in which the theoretical becomes much more concrete. Is there any one work to which you could point and say that, having written it, your course became clearer?

Abe: I'd say "Dendorokakariya." What I was trying to do at that time was to lift the veil off various phenomena. You say "theoretical." Well, I think I was engaged in a struggle to establish within myself a materialism, the sort of materialism that would take the veil off theories by confronting theories. "Kabe" was a result of that struggle.<sup>28</sup>

Simply put, "Dendorokakariya" describes how a man, Mr. Everyman, turns into the vegetable Dendrocacalia. The reader is at no time sure why Mr. Everyman (in the Japanese the name is Komon-kun, which does not quite convey the straightforwardness of the English) is turned into a vegetable, except that a sinister individual, known as K, the director

of the botanical gardens, wishes to plant him in a patch which will be kept at a constant, ideal temperature. Abe shares an affinity with Kafka for substituting Latin letters, often K, for proper names, probably to give his readers fewer facts of which they can be sure. K, for example, could mean Kafka, or Kōbō, or just K. Mr. Everyman had already felt the symptoms of his turning into a vegetable coming on even before his encounter with K, but K's presence and his eventual invitation to the botanical gardens seal Mr. Everyman's fate.

One does not have to go outside the story to discover Abe's message. Mr. Everyman, that is, humanity, is turning itself into vegetables. The surrealistic technique of describing the detailed process of how man turns into vegetable simply emphasizes the above message:

How unusual? Mr. Everyman could feel the pull of gravity. The face of earth drew him irresistibly, as if he were glued to the ground...and so, in fact, he was. Glancing down, he was alarmed to find his feet firmly rooted and himself turned into a plant: A soft, thin form of greenish brown neither tree nor grass.<sup>29</sup>

When at the end of the story K, whom Mr. Everyman refers to as Harpy, places the soon to vegetate hero in the plot, he says: "This spell was by no means your illness alone but [that] of people the world over: You cannot get rid of that Harpy so simply. We shall be unable to protect our fire unless we all join hands."<sup>30</sup> This statement does seem to be an exhortation for everyone, perhaps "workers," in the world

to unite. But against what? Abe answers that question by means of a dialogue between Mr. Everyman and K, in which K addresses Mr. Everyman as Mr. Dendrocacalia, while Mr. Everyman keeps referring to K as Harpy. In brief, K labels Mr. Everyman in the manner that botanists, or insect collectors, for that matter, label flora and fauna. Such labelling represents the standardization of man in an industrialized world. That is why we must protect our "flame." Mr. Everyman's calling K "Harpy, Neptune's woman, an obscure creature with the form of a bird--..."<sup>31</sup> represents the romantic attempt of man to explain away something which he does not understand, perhaps a world which he does not control, or is at least not sure of. This point of view is in conflict with K's, who confronts Mr. Everyman with, "No, Mr. Dendrocacalia. Greek mythology is rather unscientific...and harmfully useless too you know.... Have you read Timiryazev's Life of Plants?"<sup>32</sup> Therefore, it is others' definition of ourselves against which we must rebel. The "flame" is the sanctity of the individual and his right to define himself in terms of any nonsense, even Greek mythology, that he may choose.

Mr. Everyman goes to the public library to look for precedents to his dilemma. A man in black (K was also dressed in black) points to the passage of Dante's Inferno where suicides are punished. Mr. Everyman is puzzled, "I may have committed suicide without knowing..."<sup>33</sup> Abe, by means of this work, hopes to awake his readers to the problems of alienation through standardization, i.e. the giving up of individual quirks for the sake of physical comfort and a feeling of security, just

as Mr. Everyman turned into a Dendrocacalia and gave up his idea of Greek mythology for K's scientific interpretation of his world. Now Mr. Everyman is "'in the Botanical Garden. There every precaution is taken to make the climate that of Hahashima. It's a paradise in a way, you'll see. As well as being under special government protection care is taken that no harm can possibly come to you.'"34 By this Abe means to say that modern man commits a sort of suicide by his drive for security. By insuring against every uncertainty, we simply perpetuate the boredom of everyday existence. Hence we are no better than vegetables.

"Akai mayu" bears some resemblance to "Dendorokakariya." The beggar-hero of this story turns into a cocoon after being unable to find a house of his own. Here we begin to find a pattern that emerges in many of Abe's early stories, namely one of metamorphosis, or a change of form. Mr. Everyman turns into a vegetable, the beggar into a cocoon, and in the short story "Inu," the artist-hero's wife and her dog change identities. "Akai mayu" also shares a political concern with "Dendorokakariya." The latter story contains an exhortation to join hands, while the former talks of a poor man who wanders between walls, i.e. between other people's property: "I slowly walk the narrow crack dividing house from house and wonder-wonder-wonder how there can be so many and none, not one, for me."35 The narrow crack dividing house from house is the only place which does not belong to somebody. Walls keep people in or out of every other area, and it is these walls that have fascinated Abe, as symbols of false security.

In "Akai mayu" Abe tries rationally to pursue the irrationality of poverty. The beggar says, "besides, I haven't found a convincing reason why there is no house for me."<sup>36</sup> The beggar discovers though, that there is no logic to ownership. He asks a housewife to explain why her house is hers, and not his as well. The result, "No answer, and the woman's face becomes a wall and seals the window off. So this is the reality that lurks behind the smile on a woman's face. A wall! This same transfiguration always gives substance to that weird logic where something can't be mine because it belongs to someone else."<sup>37</sup>

In the above passage we see the single most important, constantly recurring symbol in Abe's works: the wall. If the reality that lurks behind a woman's face is a wall, then that wall is not really a physical, but a mental one. Perhaps we can see the physical walls of her house as being extensions of that mental concept. The last two lines of "Kabe" serve to confirm such a theory: "A plain that extends as far as the eye can see. In its middle stand I, a wall that grows ceaselessly, silently."<sup>38</sup> Abe maintains that we each have such a wall within ourselves. The mayor in "Yume no heishi" laments that his town is not like those in China; it is not surrounded by walls. In fact, however, villagers, who fail to understand an old policeman who has corrupted himself in order to be able to belong to the village, are a more secure wall than any made of clay.

So far we have seen the following three special characteristics in Abe's works: 1) metamorphosis described in surrealistic fashion;

2) use of symbols e.g. the wall; and 3) the pursuit of certain social inconsistencies to their logical conclusions.

Abe's conclusions are, of course, rarely logical except within the context of his stories. Men do not turn into vegetables or cocoons or walls. In order to appreciate Abe's stories we have to share with Abe his conviction that unless men develop themselves into independent personalities, this is exactly the fate that awaits them. Abe is not saying that we must learn how to communicate so that we may combat alienation; rather he asks what communication there can exist between alienated vegetables. Abe says it specifically in a conversation with Sasaki Kiichi:

Abe: When people speak of "human relations," etc., they are advocating the restoration of Man, a proposition that virtually no one questions. Man is alienated because of the complexity of society. To restore Man, one has to restore the human connection; that is what they are saying. In my opinion that is a negative way of thinking.

Sasaki: Alienation in Japan has always been thought of in a negative sense. However, because without alienation there can be no progress, I am of the opinion that it will be necessary to look at the problem of alienation in a positive way.<sup>39</sup>

The above statements are not only indicative of a cosmopolitan concern with alienation, a problem of industrial societies, they are also peculiarly Japanese in that people in Japan experience standardization to a much greater degree than do the citizens of other industrialized countries.

The above three points indicate the existence in Abe's works of some stylistic parallels to the novels of Franz Kafka. The description of a bizarre physical change in order to intensify an already existing mental reality was introduced by Kafka in "The Metamorphosis," possibly his greatest work. Gregor Samsa, a clerk, wakes up one morning to find that he has turned into a bug. The beginning of "Kabe" bears a striking similarity to this plot. When Abe's hero, also a clerk, wakes up in the morning, he feels a strange emptiness in his chest. Later on he discovers that his identity has been stolen by his calling card, which now goes to work instead of him, pets his secretary for him, and incites his clothes, shoes, and other belongings to rebel against him, i.e. to refuse to define his social standing. As if this was not enough, the doctor he sees concerning the hollowness in his chest pushes him out of the window of his clinic. The hero then wanders towards the city zoo, where he is arrested without reason and tried for absorbing a camel in his eye. It would be unfair to say that "Kabe" and "The Metamorphosis" are parallel in every detail. Certainly it would be unfair to Kafka, for, while Abe did win the 1951 Akutagawa Prize for "Kabe" (he had previously won another prize for "Akai mayu"), his story does not have the unity of form, or the dramatic intensity that Kafka's work has. "Kabe" is still very much an experimental work, and one feels that Abe allowed his imagination to roam just so as to adhere to surrealistic form. The similarity of openings and the sudden change from normal to extreme, however, cannot be overlooked.



There is one more point at which the two works converge, The hero of "Kabe" absorbs a picture of the barren Spanish plains into his chest while waiting for the doctor to examine his complaint of feeling hollow. After being thrown out of the doctor's office, the hero absorbs a camel because a camel is a dry-weather animal. This above sequence of images can be taken as a not particularly clever way of showing that the hero is alienated, i.e. his chest is empty and he is attracted towards phenomena, plains, camels, as well as lions and walls, which give concrete form to his empty spiritual condition.

This technique is paralleled by Gregor Samsa's, or rather the bug's, clinging to a picture of a woman when his sister tries to drag out all the furniture that Gregor used while he still looked human. Kafka says:

Did he really want his warm room, so comfortably fitted with old family furniture, to be turned into a naked den in which he would certainly be able to crawl unhampered in all directions but at the price of shedding simultaneously all recollection of his human background?...then on the wall opposite, which was already otherwise cleared, he was struck by the picture of the lady muffled in so much fur and quickly crawled up to it and pressed himself to the glass, which was a good surface to hold on to and comforted his hot belly. This picture at least, which was entirely hidden beneath him, was going to be removed by nobody."<sup>40</sup>

In clinging to the picture, Samsa reaches out for something human, while "Kabe"'s hero attracts the objects which best describe his already dehumanized condition. The technique, whether it be symbolism, imagism,

surrealism or whatever, is similar in both stories. Its purpose is to show the emptiness, the loneliness in the heart of modern man. Both stories are in fact about losses of identity, "The Metamorphosis" to a bug, and "Kabe" to a calling card.

In another sense, Gregor Samsa's turning into a bug points to his always having been a bug, in fact, even to his desire to be treated as a bug--just as S. Karuma's loss of identity to his calling card point to the unhappy reality that he has always been nothing more than his calling card. The wall that grows within his chest, in the middle of that plain, is physical testimony to a mental reality. The same thing can be said about Komon-kun in "Dendorokakariya."

It is exactly in this wall image that the second parallel between Kafka and Abe lies. Albert Camus analyzes Kafka's The Castle this way: "The great hope of K is to get the Castle to adopt him. Unable to achieve this alone, his whole effort is to deserve this favor by becoming an inhabitant of the village, by losing his status as a foreigner that everyone makes him feel. What he wants is an occupation, a home, the life of a healthy, normal man."<sup>41</sup> In essence the desires of K and those of the policeman in "Yume no heishi" are identical. "If I were to retire," the policeman daydreams, "I wouldn't have to run for my life, like other resident officers. I could even settle down and stay here. Maybe I could get together with a widow that's got some land and pass my last days in peace." (p.80) Both Kafka's castle and Abe's village are impenetrable. Perhaps Abe was

even quite consciously thinking of Kafka's novel when he put the following words in the village mayor's mouth: "In China...no matter where you go, they got castle walls separating one village from another." (p.85)

The third parallel, that of taking inconsistencies to their logical conclusions, each author achieves, as Abe has said, in order "to lift the veil off various phenomena," (cf. p.20). In Kafka's case, he wishes to show his readers the uselessness of blind faith, be that in a God, a father figure, a policeman, or anything beyond man himself. In this sense, both Kafka and Abe place the responsibility of explaining the universe on man's own shoulders. Readers constantly complain of Kafka's oppressive pessimism, but this is only true as long as we are "completely tied to our shortsighted sensual need for meaning."<sup>42</sup> If we care to interpret Kafka's work in a more detached fashion, i.e. not hoping to escape from ourselves through a complete identification with the hero, but rather to confront a new and perhaps frightening aspect of ourselves, we can see that Kafka is actually liberating us from our enslaving habits of belief.

Abe achieves a similar end in "Kabe" (as well as in the previous stories mentioned above) when he makes Mr. Karuma consult a handsome shop-window-manikin on his sickness. The manikin tells him to see a travelogue on going to "The End of the World" 世界の果.<sup>43</sup> This Mr. Karuma does, but, as we see by the last two lines of this work, even though one goes to the end of the world one cannot escape from the wall which is growing in one's own breast. Such a message

may be taken with the same sort of pessimism with which one can view Kafka. Or one can see within such a work the positive exhortation to action--the establishing of an identity that extends beyond our own calling cards, neckties, beautiful monogrammed briefcases--beyond the wall created by the property which we own.

Let us turn now to an examination of changes in Abe's style and message as seen in the four stories translated at the end of this thesis. Even without analyzing these stories in detail, it is possible to notice a sharp line separating the earlier two stories from the later two. The first two stories belong to Abe's surrealistic period, the time during which Abe simply allowed image after image to flow with very little control--or sophistication--from his mind. Essentially, it is just such a refusal to control one's style that characterizes surrealism. "The basic idea is derived from a combination of dadaism and Freud: the automatic, illogical, uncontrolled fantasies and associations of the mind represent a higher reality than the realistic, deliberately manipulated world of practical life and ordinary literature."<sup>44</sup>

Surrealist painting, poetry, and cinematography are well-known, but surrealism in novels is rarely heard of. Surrealists looked down on the novel, considering it a bookish, outmoded art form, which lacked the spontaneity of the visual arts. Thus, surrealism is usually associated with the paintings of Salvador Dali, or with a wave of film-making during the 1920's. One cinematic masterpiece from that

period, Un Chien Andalou (1929), a cooperative effort of Dali and Luis Buñuel, shows the young Buñuel slitting open the eye of a girl with a razor blade in the first scene. This sequence was to show how we should begin to look at reality with new eyes, i.e. with a new view of perception. Essentially, it is an artist's comment on art. Abe, on the other hand, from the very beginning had harnessed his surrealism to politics. In "Oshimusume" for example, the image, "...night and day quarrelled and chased one another round and round the globe. Winter squeezed itself in the space between them and became a season there," (p.54) is immediately followed by, "...and one came to differentiate between kings, vassals, merchants and beggars from the bend of their backbones." (p.55) Abe had to exercise some will in allowing his mind to wander from the disorder of the seasons to the order of society.

The relationship between Abe's surrealism and his political message is more evident in "Akai mayu" (cf. pp.23-4) than in "Oshimusume." There is reason to believe that Abe was consciously using the above technique in that even the title of chapter seven of his "Baberu no tō no tanuki" is entitled "Baberu no tō ni hairu ni wa shūru-riarizumu no hōhō ni yoranakereba naranu" バベルの塔に入るにはシュール・リアリズムの方法によらなければならぬ。 [In order to enter the Tower of Babel one must make use of surrealism]. This chapter is replete with references to surrealism, Freud, and a host of other European intellectuals.

"Oshimusume" too offers proof of Abe's surrealism, though in

a more natural aesthetically pleasing fashion. The story is a kaleidoscope of images rooted in some otherworldly conflict between man and a giant that very closely resembles God. Unfortunately, the characters of "Oshimuse," the boy and the girl, are typified more than described, and the set remains undefined beyond the statement that the action takes place on a "mislaide streetcorner." (p.58)

With "Inu" we are a little closer to the reality which we perceive with our senses, not that there was no appeal made to our senses in "Oshimuse." The giant's long soliloquy beginning with "Materializing in someone's imagination in the guise of a law of nature had the flavour of white bread..." (p.56) is a veritable list of sensuous images, but they are so overdone as to appear to be huge trimmings for a tiny roast. In "Inu" there is a greater control exercised over the mixture of real and unreal. While the intent of the tale is to show how woman and dog change identities, the change occurs gradually. Furthermore, the orthodox climactic build-up is not typical of Abe's early style. In "Dendorokakariya," the full translated title of which is "Dendrocacalia or, how Mr. Everyman became a Dendrocacalia," the reader is aware from the very beginning of the story that man will turn, in fact, man has already turned, into a vegetable. In "Inu" we are not aware of any concrete metamorphosis until, "To my surprise she [the dog] really grinned," (p.75) which is well past the middle of the story. In "Dendorokakariya," the metamorphosis takes place in the second paragraph. It is evident then, that although "Inu" was written well before

the dramatic change in style referred to above, it already represented a move towards a more controlled use of the supernatural, allegoric change which was so abundant in Abe's early stories.

By the time we read "Yume no heishi" we begin to wonder if it could have been written by the author of "Oshimushime." With the former story's lack of any adventure into the supernatural, one also notices greater attention to characterization, and, while such a tendency was evident in "Inu," perhaps due to the comic nature of that story, its characters never rose above parodies. In other words, Abe was still typifying characters instead of describing them. However, the policeman in "Yume no heishi," a story Abe wrote only three years after "Inu," appears as a full-fledged tragic character who thought he knew how to control his social environment, while all along he was the victim of the very thing he thought he could manipulate. Abe paid very close attention to developing the policeman as a personality. He introduced him by means of a long monologue beginning with "There's a thing or two I know about this village...." (p.79) and ending some two pages later with, "Besides, I've never heard of a deserter that's made it yet." (p.82) The economic brush-strokes such as "The mayor's dull voice trembled over the sound of chinaware being hurriedly put away," (p.84) with which he pinpointed the corruption of the village elders, is indicative of a maturity one could not sense in his earlier stories.

"Toki no gake" goes so far as to dispense with setting al-

together in order to delve yet deeper into the mind of the boxer-hero. When compared to "Kabe," this story represents a complete about face in his style. "Kabe" consisted of nothing but scenery, though not necessarily a scenery which added up to any conventional view of reality. This theory of most action occurring independently of the character is corroborated by the inordinate amount of explanation in which Abe ceaselessly indulged in "Kabe." This tendency to explain has been pointed out by Ichikawa Takashi 市川孝 in his essay, Abe Kōbō no bunshō 安部公房の文章 [Abe Kōbō's Style].<sup>45</sup> Ichikawa maintains that there are a large number of connectives such as no de and kara, words which are used to explain causes and reasons. Ichikawa counted ten no de and twelve kara in the first ten pages. It is difficult to say if this is absolutely conclusive evidence, but the theory would seem to be borne out by the fact that most of the action, such as having one's name stolen, having one's clothes rebel on one and being tried for absorbing a camel, are passive, and the hero does spend much of his time trying to explain to himself what is happening.

Incidentally, Abe's heroes have a tendency to lose their way, especially in his later works. In Suna no onna, Niki Jumpei 仁木順平 falls into a trap laid by the villagers. The hero of Moetsukita chizu loses himself while looking for a missing person. The question which Abe poses is how can a detective find someone while he himself is also lost. In their constantly puzzled state of mind, Abe's heroes do not display much decision-making power, although it is possible to see a



positive chronological trend in this regard. While the deaf girl hardly makes a choice at all, the artist-hero of "Inu" decides to marry the model and to train the dog; the policeman decides what should be done about the deserter; and the boxer decides to start and to quit boxing.

While in his early stories his heroes had entirely no control over the action, in his later stories they gradually gain a kind of autonomy. This is not to say that they ever come to control their environment to the degree of the heroes of popular fiction, such as television dramas. Mr. Everyman, or the beggar, or S. Karuma, or the characters of "Oshimushime" and "Dendorokakariya" were flat but necessarily so; they stood for the crisis of humanity, its very everydayness, living by force of habit, the sort of life from which Abe wanted to jolt his readers. As the giant of the whirlwinds says in "Oshimushime," "The life which has germinated inside cripples such as yourself...somehow seems to have a poisonous effect on my stomach." (p.65)

Despite the greater characterization the Abe hero has received, he has not changed to the same radical degree that Abe's overall style has. Whether his dog has started smiling, or his own son has just upset his life-long plans for settling down, or he is fighting a losing match, Abe's hero never controls his own fate. We only have to look at the conclusion of each story to understand this fact. In "Oshimushime," the girl is abandoned by her giant-god; in "Inu," the realist-artist is confronted by a super-dog, whose threats make him cry out for help; in "Yume no heishi," the policeman is forced to leave the village dragging the body of his son behind him; and in "Toki no gake" the boxer also

cries for help as he is knocked out of the ring.

There is a sort of falling from grace implied in his being knocked out and one feels that he is wiser for the experience. What he most desperately wanted was to get to the other side of the cliff of time, the place where the champions go--but, he learns, "the steepest cliff is on the other side of the champion," (p.102) All of Abe's heroes experience this falling from grace, from a state of blissful unknowing. The best example of falling from a state of haughty ignorance occurs in the opening chapters of Suna no onna, in which the hero, Niki Jumpei is physically lowered to the hell of the sand pit. In "Yume no heishi" Abe tells his readers, what in Suna no onna he expresses with symbols: "It is only now that he [the policeman] was forced to peer into the hell that separates the pursuer and the pursued." (p.83)

In his early stories Abe left his heroes in their unhappy predicaments, suffering as vegetables or cocoons. He gives the heroes of his later stories a somewhat better chance. The policeman and the boxer are simply made to abandon their futile attempts to climb their respective symbolic walls. It is interesting to note that the hero of Suna no onna, Niki Jumpei, also abandons his useless struggle to climb a wall--this time a solid sand wall,--as opposed to the symbolic ones in "Yume" and "Toki," only to discover water in the sands. One feels that Abe gives more hope to his later characters to find that water hole in the barren sands than he does to his earlier people.

There is reason to believe that Abe abandoned his surrealist technique quite suddenly in 1957 with the publication of Kemono-tachi wa kokyō o mezasu. It is difficult to ascertain whether or not this change in style was related in any way to the differences of opinion concerning the Hungarian uprising which caused a splitting of ranks in the Communist Party, an organization from which Abe was purged in 1962 along with his close friend and mentor, Hanada Kiyoteru. It is possible to point to a deemphasis of political content in his works from as early as "Inu" (1954). That story concerned itself with the troubles of an artist and the only arguments it contains are the somewhat short passages on realism versus abstract art. Could Abe have been referring to his own predicament when he put these words in his hero's mouth: "This is off the subject, but I thought I'd tell you that after I began living together with my wife, I completely lost all interest in abstracts. I admit, you were right about me. I seem to have become entirely a realist." (p.75) Whether Abe meant this statement to apply to his own state of mind or not, we cannot be sure, but we do have proof that he really did move much closer to a realistic style very few years later. The period of change is summed up in the following manner in a recent appraisal of Abe's works:

...the discovery of the limitations of his early period brought about a change towards the realistic in his style. The flights within reality which could be expected from this new realization, backed up forecasts that Abe would begin activities anew with the sort of intention that could be described as being a departure from despair. Let us trace the relationship between

his works and this stylistic change. The stories "Dendorokakariya," "Akai mayu," "R62 gō no hatsumeï" [R62号の発明], "Henkei no kiroku" [変形の記録], up to "Bō" [棒], we can classify as belonging to his early period, due to their dream-world-like quality. That is to say, instead of establishing a direct relationship with an outer reality, Abe moulded a special world within the confines of his room. His characters too he expressed through changes of form. However, when we come to Kemonotachi wa kokyō o mezasu, he establishes a setting which is completely true to life, neither does he deform his characters for the sake of allegory, he writes with a realistic style. Finally, if we take Ishi no me [石の眼] as an example, we can see that if for no other reason than its claim to being a detective story, that novel shows an awareness of reality.<sup>46</sup>

One is tempted to try to show a relationship between Abe's change of style and the misunderstanding he had at around the same time with the Communist Party. Of course the fact that his change of style and his political troubles occurred at the same time is not reason enough to claim any causal relationship between his literary and political activities.

The Communist Party and its literary ally, the Shin-Nihon Bungakkai 新日本文学会, of which Abe was also a member, did not approve of avant garde authors. Socialist realism, the style of literature most commonly endorsed by communist movements around the world, dictates that an author should write stories easily understood by the masses and depict heroes who exemplify communist ideology by their superhuman feats of courage. It is argued that only through socialist realism can authors lead the masses and further the cause of socialist

victory. One would have to be naive to believe that Abe, whose heroes are more likely to inspire suicide than martyrdom, ever took such a theory of art seriously. In 1956, Iijima Kōichi paraphrased Abe as having likened socialist realism to door-to-door selling. Based on an outmoded style, naturalism, socialist realism is a formless, mechanical sales job. At another point Abe is quoted as saying that realism robs a work of its autonomy. Why did Abe say such things so close to the time that he made his break with surrealism? Why did he switch to a more realistic style when he had so often criticized, "those who have settled down to a life of habits, those, who fear the world of strange images, different from reality, and keep their distance from that world just as they keep their distance from snakes."<sup>47</sup> Unfortunately it is impossible to come to any clear conclusions concerning the above questions on the evidence of only four short stories and a few of his early works.

It is, however, possible to clear up the question of Abe's affiliations with the Communist Party. His past membership has prejudiced at least one critic, Edward Seidensticker, who wrote of Abe:

Hotta, it may be noted in passing, makes his political views clearer in his writings than do numbers of his comrades in the fellow-travelling or communist left. The Woman in the Dunes and The Face of Another, both by Abe Kōbō, have been translated into English and therefore provide easily available testimony to this fact. Abe was a member of the Communist Party (he has since been expelled) when he wrote both novels, but the reader is likely to think of Kafka or Beckett long before he thinks of Mao or Stalin.<sup>48</sup>

Abe wrote Face of Another in 1964, two years after he had been purged from the party, and Woman in the Dunes was published in June 1962, four months subsequent to the purges. If we believe what Abe says below, then it would appear that Abe had ceased being an active member long before 1962, that is, well before the publication of both works. As has already been mentioned, it would have been a pretty futile effort in any case to look for elements of socialist realism, or affirmations of the party line, a la Mao or Stalin in any of his works even during his active period. Judging from his short stories, even as a communist, Abe could only have been an extremely individualist one. Professor Seidensticker seems to imply that although Abe does not make his allegiances clear in his works, he is a communist just the same. The following is a recently recorded discussion between Abe, Hotta Yoshie 堀田善衛 and Shimao Toshio 島尾敏雄, in which Abe clears up the manner of his break with the Party:

Abe: That's really my fault. You see, I'm kind of lazy and I haven't bothered to make anything public. Actually it had to do with my going to Czechoslovakia and writing Tōō kikō [東欧紀行]. It was during the time of the Poznan demonstrations (June 1956), so it was quite some time ago.

Shimao: I guess that'll be over ten years ago.

Hotta: Poznan. Well, that's a bit before the Hungarian uprising (October 1956). It would be about the time of the Sunakawa Case. Anyway, what did you write?

Abe: I wrote that there'll be trouble. (Laughter). And that's exactly what happened. When I was writing, the trouble was only half over, but I wrote that this

would occur, that it is obvious and inevitable. Then the Party got mad. Actually, I had written the whole thing with the best of intentions. (Laughter.) But they didn't take my good-will seriously. Well there's much more to it but when another few people have died, I'll write about it. It's impolite to hurt the living. It's true I've been slighted but I guess I'm just too kind. You might say it's a fault of character. (Laughter.)

Hotta: Then, eventually you quit on your own?

Abe: No, I hadn't been active for a while, but they nevertheless purged me, for good measure.<sup>49</sup>

In this short overview of Abe's life and works, we have examined the following:

- 1) The bundan, i.e. the environment within which Abe works, and its differences from the North American literary world;
- 2) Abe's early days and a number of tentative relationships between them and his works;
- 3) three of Abe's better known early works and what they meant in terms of plot, symbol, characterization and message;
- 4) developments in Abe's style as seen in the four stories presented in the body of this thesis.

Such an essay as this, working with only seven stories from an output of well over a hundred novels, novelettes, plays, scenarios and essays can only come to tentative conclusions. Looking back over the previous thirty or so pages in which we examined some of Abe's more salient characteristics of style and content, these three points come to mind:

- 1) Abe has dropped his attachment to surrealism in favour of a style more closely related to the reality which we perceive with our senses;
- 2) he has maintained his interest in symbols, notably walls; and
- 3) he has toned down the political content of his stories in favour of a more philosophical appeal.

While "Oshimushime," and "Kabe" present extreme problems of translation, to say nothing of enjoyment, "Yume no heishi," and "Toki no gake" not only make smooth reading, but also by their very simplicity of style contribute to greater communication between author and reader. It can be said that, while Abe's present-day stories are deceptively simple, his early fiction presents just the opposite problem. Uno Kōji 宇野若二 said of "Kabe" when it won the Akutagawa Prize in 1951, "In a word, 'Kabe' is a novel which only appears to be something, while really it is nothing; at places it is even stupid."<sup>50</sup> As for Abe, Uno had these words, "If this author continues in his present direction, his chances of development are nil."<sup>51</sup> These are harsh words, which testify at least as much to the critic's inability to accept a new style, as to the author's ineptness in convincing the critic of the worth of his work. Uno's words are not simply reactionary venom; they contain a grain of truth. For one, people expect a novel to be more than just a string of abstract images. It is extremely conceited for an author to think that his string of images is better than another person's just because his are written down; this is a problem of evaluation when there is a conscious denial of artistic control.



Abe's early works, despite a minimal amount of organization, just enough to permit us to glean an image here, a message there, lack the unity that entices a reader to formulate a meaning for himself. The images in "Kabe" are so ill-organized as to discourage attempts at interpretation. Nor does it urge us to re-read, as do the works of Kafka. Truly, one feels after having read "Oshimusume" that "it is nothing" but a string of images.

Another feeling one is likely to get in reading Abe's early creations is that the author holds nothing back. After all if he exercises little or no conscious control on the flow of his subconscious, he cannot impose too much order on his work. He can leave no clues for an attentive reader to pick up. By contrast, in his later works, Abe has hidden symbols which in his early days were floating on the surface. We have already seen how in "Yume no heishi," the clue to a fuller understanding of the story lies in the wall symbol. But even without this discreet symbol, the story presents a monumental self-realization on the part of the author. At this time, 1957, Abe must have realized that universal themes require particular settings. It is perfectly appropriate to present the universal tragedy of the anxiety and fear of the outsider who desperately wishes to belong, by means of an old policeman daydreaming of a blissful retirement, while peeling potatoes and warming his feet by a stove. It is the realization that the universal depends on the particular, on that very individual that Abe wanted to protect in "Dendorokakariya," that has ensured Abe's permanence on the Japanese literary scene.

## NOTES

1. Kōbō is the Sino-Japanese, or on reading of Kimifusa, the personal name Abe uses in everyday life. Kōbō is Abe's literary name. In accordance with what has by now become custom among students of Japanese literature, all Japanese names will be given surname first. The Hepburn system of romanization will be used throughout. Long vowels will be signified by a dash above "a," "o," and "u," and an "i" after "e," and "i." No diacritics will be provided for common place names, such as "Tokyo," "Hokkaido," etc.

2. For some critical opinions on this state of affairs, see: Tom Wayman, "English Art or Science?" UBC, Alumni Chronicle, Vol. 24, no. 2, 1970, p.12.

3. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays, (New York; Atheneum, 1969), p. 19.

4. Etō Jun, "Modern Japanese Literary Criticism," Japan Quarterly, April-June 1965, 177-186.

5. I-novels were and are still a popular novel form in Japan. Their worth as literature is still a much-debated topic. Some consider the genre as the purest form of literature and see it as constant proof of the sincerity of the author, while others feel that "confession for the sake of literature" cannot be at all sincere. For an excellent account of this genre, see Howard S. Hibbett, "The Portrait of the Artist in Japanese Fiction," Far Eastern Quarterly (May 1955), 347-354. For a representative selection of postwar I-novels, see Jay Gluck, ed., Ukiyo: Stories of Postwar Japan, (New York; Grosset & Dunlap, 1964). See also Edward Seidensticker, "The Pure and the Impure in Modern Japanese Literature," Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, (Harvard University, 1965).

6. Brett de Bary, "Ōe Kenzaburō: Voice of the Postwar Generation," Papers on Japan From Seminars at Harvard University, Vol. 5, 1970. 100-125.

7. Etō Jun, "An Undercurrent in Modern Japanese Literature," Journal of Asian Studies, Vol. 23, (May 64), pp.433-445.

8. Iijima Kōichi 飯島耕一, "Abe Kōbō, arui wa muzai no bungaku," "安部公房あいは無罪の文学 [Abe Kōbō or Innocent Literature], Hihyō 批評, Jan. 1959, p.141. (see original below)

彼自身に言わせれば、実存主義からシュールリアリズムへ、そして Kommunismus へ、である。

9. Kazuya Sakai, "A Study of Abe Kōbō's Novels: Some Remarks on Contemporary Japanese [sic] Fiction," an unpublished paper delivered at the Fifth Annual Conference of Asian Studies on the Pacific Coast, Mexico 1970, pp.1-3.

10. Donald Keene, "Elevation of the Novelist: Japanese Writers Today," The Commonweal, 68, May 9, 1958, p. 144.

11. Abe Kōbō, Ryakunempu 略年譜 [Abbreviated Chronology]. As this reference reached me in the form of a single page photocopied from a book, no information is readily available concerning title, publisher, or date of publication. Judging from the last entry in the time line, the book was published in 1965. This fragment is on page 487. (see original below)

ぼくは東京で生まれ、旧満州で育った。しかし原籍は北海道であり、そこでも数年の生活経験をもっている。  
つまり、出生地、出身地、原籍の三つが、それぞれちがっているわけだ。あかきで略歴の書き出しが、たいそうむづかしい。  
ただ、本質的に、故郷を持たない人間だということはいえると思う。

ぼくの感情の底に流れている、一種の故郷憎悪も、あんがいこうした背景によっているのかもしれない。  
定着を価値づける、あらゆるものが、ぼくを傷つける。

12. Muramatsu Tsuyoshi 村松剛, "Kaisetsu," [Commentary], Nihon no bungaku 日本の文学 [The Literature of Japan], Vol. 73 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Sha, 1968), p. 547.

13. Haniya Yutaka, Muchi to koma 鞭と独楽 [The Whip and the Top], (Tokyo: Mirai Sha, 1957) p.242. (see original below).

この実存的な言葉をさかんに使う作者がニーチェとハイデッガーを讀んでるほかは、ヨーロッパ文学については二、三の作家を断片的にしか讀まず、そして日本文学に至ってはまったく何も讀んでいないことであつた。

14. Some critics translate kōtōgakkō as high school. This word-for-word translation, though correct for the postwar 6-3-3 system of public instruction, is inaccurate when referring to the prewar 6-5-3 academic track. A student, by the time he reached his first year of kōtōgakkō was about seventeen, almost the same age as North American college freshmen. Furthermore, the education he would receive at that elitist institution would correspond more to college than to high school work.

15. Abe Kōbō, Shin'ei bungaku sōsho 2 Abe Kōbō shū nempu 新鋭文学叢書2安部公房集年譜 [Chronology to the Library of Avant Garde Literature II; Selected Works of Abe Kōbō], (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1960), p.277. Much of the information on Abe's early life comes from this chronology. (see original below)

次第に強化されるファシズムに、感覚的に反抗しながらも、一方それに同化したいという願望もあり、ニーチェ、ハイデッガー、ヤスパースなどを読みあさる。

16. Sasaki Kiichi, "Abe Kōbō," in Sengo no sakka to sakuhin 戦後の作家と作品 [Post-war novelists and their works], (Tokyo: Mirai Sha, 1967), p.162.

17. As quoted in a biographical note in John Nathan, "Two Short Stories by Abe Kōbō," Japan Quarterly, Vol. 13, No. 2, p.219.

18. Abe, Shin'ei bungaku nempu, p.278.

19. The Japanese title is Keishō shishū 形象詩集. It seems to correspond to "The Book of Images," probably the larger revised edition of 1906. It is unlikely that Abe read them in the original, as he was not very good in foreign languages. It is, however, possible that the Japanese translations were altogether a different collection of Rilke's poetry.

20. Hisamatsu Sen'ichi 久松潜一 et al., ed., "Abe Kōbō," Gendai nihon bungaku daijiten 現代日本文学大辞典 [Dictionary of Modern Japanese Literature], (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1965), pp.24-25: Abe Kōbō has attempted from a position isolated from the traditions of Japanese literature, with allegory and satire, to lay bare the alienated condition of man in a capitalist society. In his works abstract ideas are prone to stand out. It is not unlike him to tend to lean towards the immature. That, we daresay, is an unavoidable blemish when

(we consider that he is) challenging the as yet undeveloped world of avant-garde works. (see original below)

安部公房は従来の日本の文学的伝統と隔絶したところで、資本主義社会における疎外された人間の諸状況に、寓意と風刺をあはきたそうと努力して来た。

彼の作品には、ややもすれば観念性が目立ち、成熟さに欠けるという傾向が見つけられぬでもないが、それは未開拓の前衛的な作品世界に挑むにあたっての余儀ない瑕瑾とでもいうべきであろうか。

21. Abe, Shin'ei bungaku nempu, p.278. (see original below)

ふいに世界が光につまれ、あらゆる可能性が時にやって来たように思った。

22. Honda Shūgo 本多秋五, Monogatari sengo bungaku shi 物語戦後文学史 [Tales of Postwar Literature], (Tokyo: Shinchō Sha, 1965), p.538. (see original below)

「…………… 戦争中、ほくは実存主義者だったんだよ。それで『終りし道の標べに』を書いたんだね。「存在は本質に先行する」という思想さ。しかしこのテーゼはすこぶる自己否定的だね。しかみっこうとすればするほど、はねかえされる。実存主義がこわれはじめたのは、終戦の体験だよ。瀋陽に一年半はかりいた。社会の基準が徹底的にこわれるところを目撃して来たわけだ。恒常的なものに対する信頼を完全に失った。俺にとっちゃ大変ありがたなことだ。…………… だってね、かなり長い間完全な無警察状態で暮らしてたんだ。政府が無いし警察が無いんだ。そうしたら、きみ、ちょっと世界観変わるぜ。あまけにそのころの俺には社会科学的知識がゼロときている。ジャングルにほうり出された子供だよ。とにかく俺は動物的な見方を身につけた。そしてその時つくつく思ったのは、結構これでやれるな、ということだ。大して変りかねえな、という。」

23. Muramatsu, "Kaisetsu," p.547. (see original below)

「医者にならないことを約束すれば、卒業させてやる、  
と教授にいわれてね……」

24. Abe Kōbō, Inter Ice Age 4, trans. by E. Dale Saunders, (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1971), p.217.

25. Donald Keene, "Elevation of the novelist....," p.145.

26. Abe Kōbō, Inter Ice Age 4, p.219.

27. Honda Shūgo, Monogatari, p.536.

『終りし道の標ベに』を、この雑誌で初めて読んだとき、  
私は椎名麟三風のものだと思った。それにしても、恐ろしく  
難解な小説であった。どこから来て、どこへ行くとするのか、  
見当のつかぬ代物であった。  
「斯く在る」と「存在象徴」と「故郷」をめぐって、何か大きな  
ものを生もうとするうめきだけが聞えるような作品であった。  
「斯く在る」の裏側に「なぜ斯く在らねばならぬか」が  
あること位は感得できても、それから先は得体の知れぬ  
晦澁な作品であった。

Owarishi michi no shirube ni has since its publication been variously described as romantic, philosophical, or both. Abe himself hardly considers the work as being a novel, but rather a series of confessions. He claims he has quite forgotten just what it's all about, but perhaps the decidedly autobiographical intent of the work might explain its author's lapse of memory. A recent article on Abe's literary debut, Yomiuri Shimbun Sha 読売新聞社 ed., Sengo bundan iiken shi 戦後文壇事件史 [Incidents in the Postwar Literary World] (Tokyo: yomiuri Shimbun Sha) p.112, gives away the book's origins: "This novel takes the form of the notebook of a bottler of soft drinks who is captured by some mounted Manchurian bandits."

この長編小説は満州の馬賊に捕えられたサイター製造技師の手記という体裁をとっている。

28. As quoted in Kurahashi Ken'ichi 倉橋健一, "Abe Kōrō ron," 安部公房論 [Abe Kōbō], Sengo bungaku; tembō to kadai, 戦後文学: 展望と課題 [Post-war Literature: Its Scope and Themes], ed. Kokubo Makoto 小久保実 (Tokyo: Shinkō Sha, 1968) p.327. (see original below)

針生

あのころと比較して「赤い繭」とか「壁」を考えると、観念的なものがずっと具象的になってくるね。これを書いて自分の方向がはっきりしたといった作品はあるかね。

安部

やっぱり「デンドロカカリヤ」だな、あのころやっていたのは、いかにさまざまな現象からヴェールをはぎとるかということ。観念的といわれたが、どう観念とたたかって観念のヴェールをはぐかという、自分のなかえ唯物論を確立するストラuggleだったと思うんだ。そして行きついたのが「壁」だった。

29. Abe Kōbō, "Dendrocacalia; Or, how Mr. Everyman became a Dendrocacalia," trans. M. Jelinkova, New Orient, Vol. 4, April 1965, p.50.

30. Ibid., p.56.

31. Ibid., p.55.

32. Ibid., p.55.

33. Ibid., p.54.

34. Ibid., p.55.

35. Abe Kōbō, "Red Cocoon," trans. John Nathan, Japan Quarterly, April-June 1966, p.217.

36. Ibid., p.217.

37. Ibid., p.218.

38. Abe Kōbō, Kabe, (Tokyo: Shinchō Sha, 1969) p.138. (see original below)

見渡すかぎりの曠野です。

その中でぼくは静かに果しなく成長してゆく壁なのです。

39. Abe Kōbō, Sasaki Kiichi et al., "Moetsukita chizu o megutte"  
 燃えつきた地図をめくって, (On The Ruined Map) Moetsukita chizu furoku  
 燃えつきた地図・付録 (Tokyo: Shinchō Sha, 1967), (a transcribed  
 panel discussion in the notes appended to The Ruined Map), p.6. (see  
 original below)

安部

たとえば、ヒューマン・リレーションとか、そういうような  
 言い方で、人間回復の主張がされているが、  
 それに対してはほとんど誰も疑いを持たない  
 からね。だから、たとえば、現在社会が複雑だから、  
 人間が疎外されている。それを回復するのに、人間  
 のつながりを回復しなくちゃいけないという。  
 そういう発想こそ、じつは非常にネガティブな  
 ものだと思うんだからね。

佐々木

疎外というのは、いつも日本で使う場合、ネガティブ  
 なものとして考えないでしよう。  
 だけど、疎外がなきゃ進歩がないのでつまり  
 疎外という問題をポジティブなものとしてとらえる  
 視点が、これから必要だと、ぼくなんか  
 そういう意見なんだけど。

40. Franz Kafka, "The Metamorphosis" in Selected Short Stories  
 of Franz Kafka, trans. by Willa and Edwin Muir, (The Modern Library,  
 Toronto; Random House, 1952) pp.57-60.

41. Albert Camus, "Hope and the Absurd in the Work of Franz  
 Kafka," trans. by Justin O'Brien, rpt. in Ronald Gray ed., Kafka: A  
Collection of Critical Essays, Twentieth Century Views (Englewood  
 Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p.151.

42. Johannes Pfeiffer, "The Metamorphosis," rpt. in Gray, ed.,  
Kafka...

43. Abe Kōbō, Kabe, p.97.



44. Calvin S. Brown, general ed. The Reader's Companion to World Literature, (The New American Library, 1963) p.429.

45. Ichikawa Takashi, "Abe Kōbō no bunshō: 'S. Karuma shi no in hanzai' ni tsuite," 安部公房の文章—「S.カルマ氏の犯罪」について—  
[Abe Kōbō's Style: points concerning "The Crime of S. Karuma esq."]  
Gengo Seikatsu 言語生活 [Language Life], Oct. 1955 p.38.

46. Saegusa Yasutaka 三枝康高, Gendai shi no naka no sakkatachi  
現代史の中の作家たち [Authors in Modern History], (Tokyo: Yūshindō,  
1966) pp.222-223. (see original below)

……前期における自らの限界の発見は、かれにリアリスティックな方法への転機をもたらし新しい認識によって期待される真の逃亡が、絶望からの出発と名づけてもよいような志向として、こと新しく行動を開始しそうな予想を裏づける。  
そこでかれの方法上のそのような切り換えを作品に即してたとえば、『デントロカカリヤ』『赤い繭』『壁』『R62号の発明』『変形の記録』『棒』あたりまでを、一おう夢のなかの世界として前期的なものと規定できよう。すなわちそこでは外界との接触は直接にはあこなわれず、かれ自らの部屋のなかだけの特殊な世界が造形され、配置される人間もまた変形したかっこうで表現される。  
けれどもその後の『けものたちは故郷をめぐす』になると、世界は現実そのままに設定され、登場人物も寓話的なデフォルメをへないで、リアルな手法をとって描かれている。さらに『石の眼』を例にとりいえば、それが推理小説的な興味を狙っているだけに、そうとうにアクチュアルな現実性を意識していることが解る。

47. Iijima, "Abe Kōbō arui wa muzai no bungaku," p.141.  
 現実と相似でない奇怪なイメージの世界を、ちょうど「へび」を  
 怖がるように自分たちに縁遠いものだとして怖がる人々、  
 習慣的な世界に居居った人々に、彼はプロテストする。

48. E. Seidensticker, "The Japanese Novel and Disengagement,"  
Journal of Contemporary History Vol. 2, No. 2, 1967, p.181.

49. Abe Kōbō, Hotta Yoshie, Shimao Toshio, "Akiyoi yomoyama  
 banashi," 秋宵よもやま話 [Conversations of an Autumn Evening], Nihon  
 no bungaku furoku 日本の文学付録 [Notes to The Literature of  
 Japan], ed. Chūō Kōron Sha, vol. 73, (Tokyo, Chūō Kōron Sha, 1968)  
 p.6. (see original below)

安部

それがね、あれも怠け者だから公表しないのが  
 悪いんだけれども、実はチエコに行って「東欧  
 紀行」というのを書いたんだ。ちょうどポーランド  
 のボズナンの暴動(昭和31年6月)の前後  
 だから、かなり昔だよ。

島尾

十何年前になるわけだろう。

堀田

ボズナンというのはハンガリー事件(昭和31年10月)  
 の前だからね。日本で言えば石川騒動のころだ。  
 それでどういうことを書いたんだ。

安部

つまりあれは、暴動が起るにちがいない、と書い  
 たんだよ。(笑) そうしたらほんとうに起きちゃった  
 んだ。書いたころは、まだ半分しか起きてなかつ  
 たんだけれど、これは起る、起るのが当然だ。  
 ほかでも起るにちがいないということを書いた  
 わけだ。そうしたら共産党が恐っちゃってね。実は、  
 あれはとても好意的なつもりで書いたんだよ。(笑)  
 そうしたらその好意を信じてもらえなかったんだよ。  
 いろいろあるんだけど、まあそのうちにもっと何人

堀田  
安部

かが死んだら書くよ。生きている人をキズつけるのは  
悪いからな。自分はキズつけられているけれどもね。  
おれは少し親切なんだね。悪い性格(笑)。

そうすると、結局自分でやめちゃったの。

いや、自動的にずっとやめていたんだけれども、あらためてあとで  
除名になったわけだよ。

50. Honda Shūgo, Monogatari sengo bungaku shi, p.542. (see original below)

「と口にいうと、『壁』は、物ありけ〜に見えて、何にもない、バカ  
げたところさえある小説である。」

51. Honda, p.541. (see original below)

「この作者は、このままゆけば、延びることは、まずない。」

## APPENDIX I

### TRANSLATIONS

#### THE DEAF GIRL

Once upon a time, such a long time ago that no hand of no watch, no matter how fast it were wound backwards could ever reach it, in a country that cannot be found on any map, a giant--no scholar knows the type of eyes or nose or mouth he had, nor can his words be found in any dictionary--suddenly woke up and felt awfully hungry.

The giant smacked his lips and took out a handful of seed from a bag. The seeds became like dust in the wind and were so small that they rose easily. If one took a closer look, however, each seed had the exact features of a human being. The giant scattered all the seeds into the air and disappeared, turning into a number of whirlwinds.

As a result of those seeds, gradually, humans began to sprout on this earth. Towns were built, songs filled the air, and night and day followed each other in proper sequence. And when humans bore fruit yet more beautiful than that of the wheat or the animals, the whirlwind giant appeared on the streetcorners of the cities and at the bases of the mountains, to collect his first harvest.

At which time the land met with various misfortunes. To begin with, night and day quarreled and chased one another round and

round the globe. Winter squeezed itself in the space between them and became a season there. Innumerable inconveniences, called incidents, carved wrinkles into the faces of the people, and one came to differentiate between kings, and vassals, merchants and beggars from the bend of their backbones. Men let ambition rule their lives.

Furthermore, the whirlwind giant changed himself into every and all the possible shapes of human experience, brandishing his harvest scythe. No matter what sort of object people encountered, it would turn into a whirlwind and suddenly blow through the giant's insides leaving nothing but a little hollow behind. Life was the task of diligently filling up the hollows, and the giant's insides seemed to be a size beyond anyone's imagination. People had not a moment to rest their arms. As one would begin filling up a hole, the whirlwind would already have passed through the giant's insides, continuing to leave behind new hollows.

At times there were people whose hands were even faster than the whirlwind. They spent the days they saved forestalling the advent of the giant's scythe. But what permanence can there be in happiness, one cannot share with the poor? One day they too shall be ruined. As for now, only cripples who are badly misformed, poor people who are bad for the digestion, or those who have lost all palatability by turning themselves into stone, wood, and sand, have managed to avoid the giant's harvest. There could be neither happiness nor misfortune for people who had been thus left behind. These people knew well, better

than anyone else that happiness was only another name for general unhappiness and that happiness can only be found in the activity of regularly filling in the hollows left after supplying the giant's stomach.

There occurred something, however, which came to upset this state of affairs. This group of unhappy people seemed to have increased its numbers inordinately. Perhaps a fallow period had arrived. The giant's insides became empty, and the whirlwinds ran throughout the cities displaying ominous portents. The disappearance of the pieces of scrap paper which became entangled in the whirlwind was still all right. So were the swallows which too would drift out of sight after a short encounter. But the bits of shrapnel and the gasoline soaked airplane wings and other such items were too much for the giant to handle. One day while the giant was holding his dispeptic stomach, he dreamt of the taste of the many harvests of old.

"Materializing in someone's imagination in the guise of a law of nature had the flavour of white bread, something one could never tire of. One time, entering as religious faith into a conversion I enjoyed the taste of a rare, juicy steak. The discovery of a scientist had the flavour of well-salted trout, while going through the heart of a poet in the shape of a song, tasted of mellowed caviar. Love tasted of butter; friendship of asparagus; revenge, of red pickled ginger; jealousy, of hot peppers; the fighting of children had the flavour of Irish potatoes; insults tasted of raw onions. Then there were all those varieties of sinful fruits...granted, the bitter tears

of death were an indispensable element to digestion, and granted also that the lemonade of panic was necessary as a refrigerant though it did not of itself contain any nutrients, the fact remains that if all one has is the bitter medicine and the lemonade of these days, though they be of one's own making...it is sad indeed! What a skin-and-bones state of affairs! Ah well, I can't ask for more than my due. If I could just have a meal of Irish potatoes smeared with butter."

Just thinking such thoughts made his digestive acids gush forth burning his stomach walls. The juices which welled up reverberating in his parched throat, reminded him of something quite different. Unable to bear the sensation, he got up. Opening his nostrils wide, he sniffed around for something. It was nothing but the wine of love...from beer which is a tired kiss, white wine that is unrequited love, all the way to acts of unmentionable strong drink and beyond. The whirlwind opened its greedy mouth and became opaque like a living being. It began to ferret around the corners and the cracks in the walls of towns which even their inhabitants had forgotten. It must have been wine so sour, so unmaturred as to have no name. But then, perhaps it had simply gone unnoticed.

For that reason, on yet another day a gust of the whirlwind of love passed through the body of a deaf-mute girl, a girl whose skin was like old candles and whose sinewy limbs resembled those of a spider.

It happened in the following manner. As usual the girl was

diligently doing her needle work in her apartment, a wooden floored narrow room, the roof of which formed a stairwell for the apartment above. It faced onto a mislaid streetcorner. The sunlight which until then (---suddenly somewhere a wall clock struck three, though of course the girl could not hear that---) had been hesitating on the top ledge of the wall, suddenly shone into her room. Just then a young man carrying a basket cut across the street and came this way. Every day at this time, the young man, an errand boy for a laundry, brought work for the girl - torn socks and underwear. At the window sill, a pantomime ensued. She took the bundle of dirty clothes from the boy and handed over to him her finished work. But as she did so, her fingers touched the boy's hand ever so lightly. Her smiling countenance was suddenly covered with wrinkles. He picked up the bundle which had fallen because she had withdrawn her hand too quickly. But he did this with a very sullen expression on his face. With a grand flourish, he fixed his short hair which, in fact, was so short it needed no fixing. He left quickly, without a smile, causing the girl to become very sad. Her mouth remained wide open, her hands dangling on the window sill.

However the girl became aware of something strange. A whirlwind was circling around like some living thing by the window sill where the young man had just stood. On first glance, it did not appear much different from the usual whirlwind, but on second thought it was rather uncanny considering there was no wind. The girl became terribly



ashamed. The thought occurred to her that perhaps the boy had not left completely but rather having been in such a hurry, a part of him remained in the form of a whirlwind.

She was puzzled as to what to do. As she watched over it for a while, the whirlwind suddenly seemed to want to go through the window and into her room. The girl, struck with fright slammed the window shut. Even then the wind did not show any signs of wanting to leave. She did the latch and tried to scare it away by clenching her fists. However, not only did the wind not move away, if anything it came yet closer to the window and even rattled on it noisily. In the meantime the whirlwind began to change itself into something which could only have come from some stagnant pool. At length, the wind became a fluttering membrane and despite the girl's resistance, it entered her room through a slight opening in the window. The wind passed through the petrified girl leaving behind only a deep black hollow, and disappeared within an instant.

The giant was muttering to himself somewhere. "But naturally. This too is some kind of wine. It has to be wine." In a while as he became progressively tipsy he swayed his head from side to side gleefully. "Well, no matter what you say, this suits my stomach a lot better than airplanes dipped in gasoline."

The girl pained by the hollow in her breast unthinkingly raised her eyes to the sky and called out to the giant. "Dear God, what shall I do? I'm in love. I've fallen in love and I feel some-

thing has been stolen from my heart. What can I do to heal this sad scar?"

Of course there was no answer. (Even if there had been, what could it have meant to a deaf-mute girl?) The girl realized that she had to do something on her own. She looked around and saw a pile of rags in a corner of her room. She didn't think it was particularly good form, but as there was nothing else around, she had no choice but to use them as stuffing, for the time being.

The next day at the same time the same thing happened, but she couldn't use the rags again. They were after all the tools of her trade and she wasn't going to misuse them. She realized that she had to grow up and plunge the wound herself. She did have to make do with some rags though. Plugging up the hole just by growing up was far too difficult a task for a deaf-mute girl.

The giant made a sour face. "What the devil...This wine definitely tastes of rags."

The whirlwind, however, never grew tired of coming. It made its appearance the next day and the next, right after the errand boy from the laundry had left. Within a few days the girl began to smell of rags. She did not look any different from before, but in fact most of her body had turned into rags. This was partly because the girl, who was not very bright, kept forgetting her experiences with the wind almost after they occurred, and besides she didn't really know how to change her appearance.

The giant cried out in despair. "Why, they're all such an ill-formed lot! What can the matter be with them?! Their streets are full of tears and yet they say they lack water. Though fire covers their plains and mountains, they say they lack warmth. The sun will have to split in two to stop me from starving!"

Even though he spoke in this manner, the whirlwind was not at all ready to give up gathering in his harvest from the girl. It's unbelievable that there should be no way of improving this wine. With that in mind, one day he attempted to lead on the relationship of the young man and the girl.

On that day the whirlwind entered the body of the girl for good, becoming a seductive inner voice to her. "Well, girl! Just what are you going to do, carrying that heavy burden all by yourself? Open your heart to the young man and share your burden with him. Be relieved of your troubles and climb the tower of love. Climb together, holding each other's hands. Love's sweetness increases with every upward step. You are still on bitter earth, the place that comes well before the sweetness.

"I thought so too. But I have no faith in myself. You see, I am deaf."

"Deaf! And what's that got to do with it!?" Death conquers all, but is not love yet stronger than death?"

"I can only say the words I learned at school. Almost as if I were using a typewriter, I move my fingers in the air or adjust my

lips in as many ways. Besides the teachers at the deaf and dumb school never taught us words of love."

"What kind of school is there that teaches words of love? Everyone makes those up by himself. People hardly have any words of their own these days. Only when it comes to words of love do they make them up each of their own individual accord without anyone teaching them."

"But everyone laughs at my voice. They all say it sounds like a flute."

"A flute?! But isn't that just wonderful! It is said that the words of love should be spoken in a sweet whisper. Should you whisper like a flute, without a doubt you shall be even more successful. Lovers whisper to each other, their eyes closed, their words carried by the breezy sound of a flute. Delightful!"

"Excuse me but what's a whisper?"

"It's a wind that enters the very soul of man."

"And what sound does wind make?"

"Well, it's not something you can describe in a word. It is a flow of air which can sound as the rustling of the grasses and the leaves, or it can sound hitting a wall, and again it can sound when it is being split by the telephone lines. You see it has all sorts of sounds. In other words it is the sound of air which has caused itself to tremble."

"Did you say air? I cannot see it, can I? Does air feel

round, or does it have a square shape?"

"Obviously you can't see air, and its neither square nor round. If anything it feels rather light. Especially the air of the whispers of love. That is like thin gauzy silk that quivers on lovers' sighs."

"What colour would that be?"

"Well, there are fairy tales in which roses bloom from heroine's lips, so I guess it must be a rose colour."

"I just love bright red roses! Will red do?"

"Of course it'll do. As long as the words are of your own making, they'll do."

"Somehow, I've gained confidence in myself. I feel I am able to whisper words of love." And as the girl smiled to herself, so too did the whirlwind, who among the rags was thinking of the next day's delicious wine.

The following day the girl went to the remnant store. Ordering something entirely different from the usual, she completely took the storekeeper by surprise. "Leht me haehv thihs muhch ohf your vehry behst, vehry lightehst, bright rehdsihlk." And with that she emptied her purse. Although the cloth was fairly big, the girl had wanted something even bigger. When she returned home, she carefully made a beautiful ribbon, which, when she was finished, turned out to be almost twice the size of her face. Should that ribbon respiring like some living being be seen even by an invisible breeze! The girl

clapped her hands and let out an uncontrollable peal of joy, much like a sound a rabbit might have made, at which the ribbon writhed in unison with the girl's innermost thoughts. The girl then tied the ribbon lightly to the index finger of her angular right hand and continued her incoherent flute-like laughter.

The usual time came. Sunlight filled the room, and as before the young man approached carrying the laundry basket. The girl was in a state of confusion, and when the boy, thinking it strange that she should hide her right hand behind the window and exchange the bundles with only her left hand, nonchalantly peered into her room, the girl's face suddenly turned red. Not the whole of it but just a sort of spot about the size of the nail of her little finger reddened, and then spread to cover the rest of her face. At the same time she thrust the index finger of her right hand, along with the ribbon, right in front of the boy's face. Closing her eyes, she quietly kept blowing at the ribbon, all the while giving out a sound very much like that of someone blowing air in the open mouth of a bottle. Although she had to pause several times to swallow her heart which had climbed to the base of her throat, the girl, in her fire-consumed head quite believed that her whisper of love was a success. She thought she could see the letters of the alphabet written on crimson cards rising from her lips, dancing, flowing in various combinations into the young man's bosom. To the girl who could only think of words as visual images, the scene could appear in no other fashion.

Naturally, as the ribbon was beautiful, the young man's first reaction was to laugh. But he suddenly cut his laughter short. Then, he knit his eyebrows. This perplexed expression gave way to one of fear. Soon after, he burst out of the room and without looking back, he left to spread word of the girl's derangement. The whirlwind, having witnessed this scene, forced a smile. The wind was truly astonished at the sight of the girl who had kept her eyes closed with yet greater strength and who was continuing to blow on her ribbon. But when the wind noticed the tears weighing heavily on both her eyes, it clicked its tongue in an annoyed manner and said:

"Ts, ts, ts, this is indeed barren soil. I have no use for you any more. The life which has germinated inside cripples such as yourself--life which all year long shines only during the eclipses of the sun--somehow seems to have a poisonous effect on my stomach. What an utter waste of time!"

The starving whirlwind again slipped off to continue its wandering through the streets, but it never once came back to the girl's place. As a result there is still no sufficient evidence to believe that whirlwinds have a sense of taste.

## THE DOG

I detest all dogs. The sight of one is enough to make me sick to the stomach, but despite this fact I got married. Naturally, you and I are both well aware that a dog and a marriage each present separate and distinct problems. Of course, in my case the important one was the dog and not the marriage. Incidentally, the truly disgusting wretches are not the dogs but the doglovers. Those who raise dogs for some particularly useful purpose, such as in order to guard sheep, or to pull sleds, or the owners of small businesses who keep dogs as part of their means of production, these people are okay. It's the ones who raise dogs just to tie them up on the porchsteps of their good-for-nothing houses, it's that bunch I really can't stand. As far as I am concerned, they are the dregs of humanity.

My partner in marriage was a model at the studio where I used to teach. For a model, however, she didn't have a single redeeming quality; no sense of style, and no intelligence to speak of. And it wasn't as if other people had to tell me about her, no, I was very well aware of her deficiencies myself. As I'm against the use of nude models, in the beginning I never even stopped to talk to her. But F\_\_\_\_, our friend at the Art Realitè Studio took quite a liking to her so she was constantly going in and out of the place and I could not help taking notice of her. Even when she had no business being



there, she still hung about the studio. Somehow she was always around the deserted places like in front of toilets or around the corners of hallways. She was the sort who'd wait for students to try to fondle her as they were passing by. However, if someone actually tried to pet her she would raise both her hands above her head as if protecting some breakable object, and protest loudly. Of course she'd allow herself to be petted, giggling all the while. You may think this is pretty silly, but it almost became a custom at the studio. The person who started this custom was, naturally, F\_\_\_\_. According to him it was the materialization of flesh, that is to say one of the everyday exercises necessary to make a model out of a woman, but I thought quite the opposite; was it not in fact a fleshification of simple matter? So Fauvism doesn't work after all. As for the students, they were much happier helping her in her exercises than doing their own.

At first I felt we should hire another model. However, the students wouldn't discontinue their custom even with other models and there aren't too many models who'd get used to their particular habit. As a result she was always called back. The students, their faces wrinkled with excitement, would wait to get her alone. With nothing to do, they hung about aimlessly, waiting their turn to embrace her. As soon as three of them would gather, it was usually for them to analyse her excitedly in aesthetic terms. While in this heated debate, it wouldn't matter to them one bit that they were supposed to be listening to my lecture. It was all rather humiliat-

ing. Commuting to the studio became an agonizing experience. I came to feel that whenever I stepped into that building my brain became a rotten banana.

One day I caught a student just as he was trying to fondle her right in the middle of the studio. I slapped him. The fellow remained calm; didn't even blink an eye. Irritated, I slapped him once more. Suddenly, he struck me back. He was several times my strength.

"What could be the matter? Just how do these fellows look at art? These guys aren't playing around. On the contrary, they are very much in earnest. She is the cause of all this," I thought.

F\_\_\_\_\_ and I argued about this one whole night. I pointed out several of her faults. At first I attacked her habit of constantly winding bandages on her neck, arms, feet, thighs, or some such other place. To which F\_\_\_\_\_ replied: "She wants to feign sickness...because she doesn't lead a productive life she wants to become a symbol...why she is exactly what you're looking for?"

"That's the sort of sentimentalism that makes me shudder. She's no symbol; she's more like a parasite! Don't you understand you're making a mess of her?"

"Of course I know," said F\_\_\_\_\_ without yeilding an inch, "Her bandages are not in question, you see, because I'm looking at her true self and things like bandages don't get in the way. But you, on the other hand, are fascinated by her flesh which is precisely why

you notice such things...."

After that F\_\_\_\_\_ and I had a violent argument over what would happen if we were to decorate the Venus de Milo with ear and nose rings. But both of us became thoroughly exhausted before we could resolve the question. Next I dealt with her dog. Let me skip that for now though, as I'll have to go into greater detail about the dog later on. Finally F\_\_\_\_\_ said: "You're a little too emotional. You sure you aren't suffering from nervous exhaustion? Perhaps there is something you would like to let me in on; I mean about you and her, you know? If it's anything like that, feel free to tell me all about it."

I left the studio in a rage. As I was walking through the corridor I felt something clinging to my legs. It was her dog. Raising my head, I saw her standing before me. So she had overheard our entire conversation! "What are you doing out at this time of the night?" I demanded to know, but she only raised both her arms as if I was going to try to embrace her, and wiggled her body, giggling all the time. I took a step toward her and repeated my question: "What are you doing out at this time of the night?"

She only bent her head back farther saying, "The boys from the studio are out there waiting in ambush."

"Let me walk you home," I said taking another step towards her. At that moment I landed in her arms. Her hands were all over me.

No don't say a word. After all, it's not the sort of thing you would understand. No matter what you might say, I couldn't help

but marry her. To make things worse, she insisted that she couldn't marry me without her dog.

I wouldn't have minded an ordinary dog but this one was a regular freak. It consisted of an awfully large head attached to a long and narrow abdomen, and a body that was always twisting and turning. The body had no tail but that didn't stop it from almost splitting down the middle with wagging itself at the sight of absolutely anyone. But the head was so heavy that at such times, the hind legs would somehow float up and the whole animal would end up doing a complete somersault. The most pitiful sight imaginable! The animal was utter canine trash.

What's more, the beast never barked. "Duh, duh," and wails like some stammering deaf-mute were the best the dog could manage. The only time that animal ever raised a dog-like howl was in the presence of male dogs. Naturally enough, my wife's dog had to be female. I'm ashamed of it but to be honest I could never bring myself to look the beast in the eyes. She always flared back at me with an expression of ill-will like some sexless widow; someone with a seeming overabundance of common sense. She never took her eyes off us no matter what we were doing. When I asked my wife to put the dog outside, she ignored me, saying that she liked it better that way, being watched by the dog. If I attempted to glare back at her, I wouldn't even have to so much as raise my hand for the bitch to cling to the floor and let out a yelp like someone about to die. Moreover until my wife rush-

ed to her side and patted her head, the dog would not quit wailing ever so frightfully. Such demonstrations always left me looking like a fool. I was thinking that if I had to have a dog, why couldn't I have at least a more dog-like dog.

It seems though that the dog was from pedigreed German shepherd stock. The fact that one of its parents was supposed to have been flown over from America by its G.I. owner was a source of some pride for my wife. It was just like that dog to ruin the whole thing by being born of an incestuous relationship. But, nevertheless, having chosen the path of marriage, I began my daily struggles with the dog.

I continued to fight the dog. She too undefeated continued her struggle with me. At first I didn't think it would take anything to get the best of a dog. After all dogs have neither memory nor self-awareness, and if I could just pretend not to notice her disgustingly fawning manner, at best I should have no more difficulty than fighting a thick shadow. Actually, at one time she used to curl up in a corner and sit there in melancholy fashion, never bothering anyone. But soon I was to understand my mistake in underestimating the bitch. I came to comprehend that a dog can be a bother just by existing. That's just it! Why do they hang on the way they do? Their existence, however, isn't their responsibility alone. The reason dogs exist is because we let them. I am completely unable to think of any reason why I must consciously sustain that utterly meaningless object.

If there was some meaning to it, I wouldn't mind it one bit, but maintaining this dog had no meaning so I did mind. I was thinking that if I had a pistol, "bang" just one shot would be enough, when all of a sudden the animal let out a shriek and clung to the floor. What a mean, senseless bitch!

Her taste in food was another source of irritation. She couldn't munch on bones like other dogs. Cold foods would not do; she only ate hot dishes. If it was good sake, she would drink quite a bit. The weirdest thing about the dog was that though she could be wretchedly sloppy, at times her behaviour would make you think she could understand human speech. One day when I had washed her toilet pan and left it on the window sill to dry, she must have gotten the urge to relieve herself because she kept sniffing around the usual place in a very puzzled state of mind. She looked terribly foolish. Just as my wife and I were laughing at what we thought was animal instinct, all of a sudden the dog produced some old newspapers from somewhere, and after defecating on them, she used her mouth to carefully wrap the whole thing in a bundle. And if all that wasn't enough, the beast took the package between its teeth, placed it in my lap and then curled up at my wife's feet ever so comfortably. After that, whenever I noticed the dog eavesdropping on our conversation, I held my words in check. It could be just like the case of "The False Words of Hans, the Talking Horse," simply a groundless fear on my part. After all I kept thinking to myself, there's no reason for

dogs to understand human speech, but then again....

The idea of training the bitch first occurred to me when she lost all pretensions to being a watchdog and came instead to beg for affection from strangers even more than from us. I couldn't stomach the innocence with which that beast would excitedly do somersaults at the sight of even the garbage man. It got to be even worse, especially after the punks from the studio began hanging around outside. At such times the beast would run up and down under the windows, and whenever they saw her those fellows would surely drop by. The bitch became such a nuisance I would get the urge to kick the living daylight out of her. At such times my wife would restrain me with some banal clichè like, "It's 'cause you don't love her enough," and my sanity would return and I'd put up with it. Then the dog would turn those mean sharp eyes upwards and give me a sidelong stare as if gloating in victory. If only she'd do me the favour of being more like a real dog, a dog-like dog, I wouldn't have to hold her in such contempt. I then began to revamp the dog's German shepherd training along more spartan lines.

...but without any positive results. When I'd begin her exercises, she'd simply lie on her back and play dead like some overturned spider or beetle. There was just no way of handling her. Should I get the least bit rough with her, she'd raise a yelp three times above any necessary volume. To my neighbours I must have been the worst of sadists.

At that point I changed my plans. This bitch had an awfully big head. Perhaps she really could possess intelligence. Maybe she was the forerunner of some future breed, the product of mutation perhaps? How would it be to train her to become a wonder-dog? Perhaps a circus would buy her for a large sum of money; my wife to whom money is everything would gladly let the animal go...besides getting some money, I could finally get rid of that dog...two birds with one stone, you might say.

I made a quick break with past methods, and embarked on training that would integrate the dog's life into that of humans as much as possible. My wife too became interested in this effort, and I enlisted her wholehearted cooperation. The dog too came to have a pleasant disposition, and fawned for affection with three times the usual fervor. But she progressed and came to resemble people to an uncanny degree. She learned to blow her nose using a paper napkin, to smoke cigarettes, even to spit with a masterfully sullen air, then finally to nod and shake her head. It was laughter that she could not manage to learn. It was after all too much to expect of her to comprehend the psychology of laughter.

The picture I entered in the group exhibition this fall was a portrait of the dog trying desperately to laugh. Her expression was rather funny, so I fell to thinking that I should paint it; almost as if she were a canine Mona Lisa, you might say. This is off the subject but I thought I'd tell you after I began living together with



my wife, I completely lost all interest in abstracts. I admit, you were right about me. I seem to have become entirely a realist.

Then, just at the very moment I had finished painting that picture, something frightening happened. My wife was out of the room, doing the laundry in the kitchen. The dog was on top of the bed, on the point of leisurely biting into a jam sandwich though both my wife and I were putting up with having to skip a meal. I put my brush aside and felt relieved. I ordered the animal to laugh so as to make a last comparison between the canvas and the model. To my surprise she really grinned. "Well, I'll be," I mumbled to myself unintentionally, "she's finally laughed. Must be in a good mood."

To which she answered, like someone moaning "You're in a good mood yourself, aren't you?"

It was a little muffled but you could pick out the words easily. I was frightened out of my wits. My legs gave way and I sat down quite naturally. I attempted to make a reply but the lump in my stomach would not turn into speech. I heard the sounds of my wife's footsteps. Gathering all my bodily strength, I barely managed to say to the dog, "I beg you please don't speak to my wife. She'd get a heart attack and die on the spot if you spoke up all of a sudden. It's not so bad with me, but please keep quiet in front of her." The dog gave a magnanimous nod with the tip of her nose.

It's frightening enough to think that a dog too can come to speak human words. That night the dog waited for my wife to go to

sleep. Here are the words the dog whispered into my ears: "You know, dogs aren't half as stupid as you think. They have brains enough to know just what humans are thinking. You thought you had me pretty well fooled, however, I have a splendid set of teeth. Mind you they're not very good for skinning humans. No, the secret of my success is my ability to appear to be fawning for affection. But whenever I do that, it's only for a purpose and it's the same thing with pretending to put my tail between my legs. I had calculated it all beforehand. You better treat me well or I can be pretty mean. 'Cause you know you haven't got what it takes to keep me tied up."

(I bet you haven't even thought of dogs talking in this manner.)

Well, about ten days ago the programme for the fall exhibition came in the mail. My wife browsed through it, then suddenly raising her head she started coming at me: "Is this supposed to be my portrait! Well I should think that the greenest student could do a better job! Then from that mouth of hers which until then I had known only as the source of the most common platitudes, she emitted one after another a series of very rare expressions some of which I hadn't even heard until then. It all made me cringe so much that I couldn't even argue back. By some mistake "A Portrait of my Wife; by S \_\_\_\_\_" had been printed on the programme. The next morning, my wife was gone.

I tied the dog to the bedframe and gagged her mouth. She was showing her true self now. She was going wild and she bit me on both arms and legs. Nevertheless, at this point, I the human, am still the

stronger. The dog cannot stand erect and has difficulty supporting the weight of her head. Furthermore, an unfortunate thing at that, she has a decisive disadvantage in that she cannot use her fingers. But her last words before I stuffed the gags in her mouth were: "Don't be so proud! Those who are not masters will lose in the end!"

I fought with the dog. I shall continue to fight with her from now on as well. As for the ruin of my marriage, well it's just too bad, but I feel no remorse whatsoever. I knew my wife's baseness without your having to tell me. I knew it more than anyone else. Though we lived together only for a short period, the whole affair was a series of hopelessly painful events. When we were eating, she wouldn't feel at ease unless she sniffed her food before putting it in her mouth. The food wouldn't taste good unless she put it in just when all her saliva was flowing. Then she would chomp on it as loud as she could. She just couldn't relax without scaratching some part of her body, and she always had her backscratcher with her. She really went in for rings too, wearing three on each hand and changing them at least once a day. And of course she liked any man that would pet her....

Despite all this I shall wait. I shall wait continuing to fight the dog. While I'm waiting, could you do me a favour and somehow get me a job illustrating books or something?

Even now that dog is making terrible eyes at me. She is smart and maybe one day she'll find out how to untie the rope. Besides

both she and I are on the verge of starvation. I suppose you should have no difficulty understanding what that means. I'm asking you. Please lend me a hand. Even at this moment I feel I'm fighting for humanity.

## THE DREAM SOLDIER

On a day so cold that dreams froze  
I had a frightening dream.  
In the afternoon  
The dream put on my cap and left.  
And I did the latch on my door.

This story took place about fifteen years ago. Despite the fact that truth has no time, time is the one thing this story desperately needs. That of course may be a reason to believe that there is no truth to the story.

The village, tucked away in the mountains, located on a prefectural border, was since the night before entirely engulfed in a snowstorm. There was agony in the howling of the wind. A company of soldiers who from early morning had been engaged in cold endurance exercises had made their way from the town over the hills. Dragging their large straw shoes in the deep snow to the tune of a military song, they crossed the village with unsteady steps, only to disappear like shadows into the snowstorm.

The wind died down at nightfall. In the police station at the entrance of the village a solitary old police officer was leisurely peeling potatoes while warming the soles of his feet by the heat of a red hot stove. The radio was on, blaring something that he wasn't listening to. He was immersed in a succession of sweet daydreams.

"There's a thing or two I know about this village. I know

tone of voice. But his expression abruptly turned to fright and the finger with which he held the potato trembled.

After leaving the village, the soldiers continued to march straight towards the mountains. Along the way, they passed through many steep inclines, valleys, and forests, practising their high terrain maneuvers. It was well after three by the time they arrived to the last mountain ridge. The wind was raging with yet greater intensity. Despite the fact that the soldiers had difficulty even to breathe, they were ordered to return double quick on nothing but their empty stomachs. Although they knew that stiff punishment awaited them, six soldiers dropped out of ranks. As this was a special exercise to test the effects of exposure to hunger, cold, and fatigue, it was expected that some would fall out of ranks, and for that reason there was a corps of medics following from behind. Upon returning to base, however, it was discovered that the medics only picked up five stragglers. One of the soldiers, it seems, had disappeared for good.

The soldier is starving. He'll have to call at the village. But should he slip up and be seen in those clothes he might not stop at violence.

The old policeman put down the receiver, drew up his shoulders, and slowly returned to his place near the stove. He took a noisy breath through his nose. For a while he just scratched the top of his balding head. He raised his eyes to look at the clock. It was seven thirty. He didn't want to move. It was too cold outside. Besides it

isn't clearly a case of desertion yet. At any rate an awful snowstorm was raging. Could it not simply be that he became separated from his companions and lost his way? It'd be a fool who'd want to desert in the midst of snow like this. He'd leave tracks in the snow and they'd surely catch him. He must've just lost his way. By now he must be feeling pretty cold.... To be sure, should the wind keep on blowing, the snow might be safer. The wind hides footprints. Or he may have planned on that. It could have been a premeditated crime? For all that, the wind has died down completely. He may have clean fallen into some trap. I guess there's just no successful precedent for crime.... I've received a report. But that doesn't mean I've received an order. Anyway, this fellow is under MP jurisdiction, so he's none of my business. Deserters, compared to escaped convicts, are still, just well intentioned cowards. Leave him alone, leave him alone. No good has ever come from butting into other people's affairs. Besides I've never heard of a deserter that's made it yet.

He thought he heard a light tapping on the front door. He quickly turned around. He tried straining his ears for a while but he heard no noise. Surely he must have been hearing things. However for some reason he began to feel uncertain about things. It wasn't any usual uncertainty either, rather a feeling so close to fear that he could not explain it to himself. Of course his fear was in no way directed towards the deserter.

Hatred did not abruptly well up within him regarding criminals.

And because he did not feel this hatred he realized the existence of something which ordered him to hate. This was something he had not been aware of until now, having been in the secure position of a pursuer. It is only now that he has come to peer into the hell that separates the pursuer and the pursued. He stood up. Stricken with pangs of conscience, he tried shouting, "I won't allow it!" Such shouting has never quelled uncertainty. Moreover this feeling of uncertainty was still only that very tiny inner feeling, because from the outside there came a much greater feeling of fear to overwhelm him. The inner feeling was after all, the uncertainty of being an accomplice. It was a fear that everyone in the village might have felt. But the reason he could not flee from the uneasiness lay in the outer feeling. He thought to himself, "Well I guess I too am getting old." Indignation welled up within him, "When the time comes to settle the matter, it'll be settled. It's not just a matter of me myself alone bearing all the responsibility." The back of his throat had a strange wet feel to it. He cut off the air that was going to the stove, put on his sword, turned up the collar of his overcoat, and went outside.

The snow was light. It rustled, releasing a pleasant crunch at each step. It's easy to recognize foot prints, but it's impossible to tell whether they were made by shoes. Immediately upon rounding the corner on which the fish-market stood, he reached the mayor's house. It was the only house in the village equipped with a Western style window. A bright lamp was burning in it, and someone's heavy



laughter spilled onto the street. As usual it must have been the head priest's voice. Instead of going around the back way as he ordinarily might have done, he boldly pulled open the front door.

The atmosphere in the room stiffened as if everyone had been startled. The mayor's dull voice trembled above the sound of chinaware being hurriedly put away: "Who is it? At this hour."

Little too early for fright. The policeman just cleared his throat and purposely refrained from answering. The shōji screen opened revealing the assistant mayor's face. "Well well now, if it isn't the resident officer?"

"Come right in, come right up," said the head priest leaning forward. The shōji slid right open. All three smelled of sake.

"Something awful has happened," the policeman began saying.

"What is it? But save your breath, just step right in and close the screen and have a drink."

"Some soldier's run away from Mount Kita," the officer continued.

"A deserter?" the head priest peered over the edge of his glasses and swallowed the lump in his throat. "If he be coming from Mount Kita, then no matter what route he takes, he's got to pass this way."

"That's the message I got...and it seems he's aiming at this village."

"Aiming at?" the mayor slid a finger along the ridge of his

nose in a somewhat annoyed fashion.

"Yes, and they say he's damn hungry," the officer added.

"That means we're in a bad way."

"Why?" the assistant cut off the mayor in a spirited manner.

"Deserters are generally traitors aren't they? And probably cowards to boot. What's wrong with going up the mountain, hunting him down and catching him?"

"Hold it a minute! He does have a gun. What's more he's hungry, and he might be pretty desperate."

"In China," the mayor sighed, "no matter where you go, they got castle walls separating one village from another."

"They're not castle walls," the assistant mayor retorted.

"Nope, those aren't castle walls."

"Those are ordinary mud walls."

"Yup, just mud walls, that's all."

Suddenly, they all heard a sound, as of a chain grating. Instinctively, they all turned towards the noise. It was the wall clock just on the verge of striking eight. The head priest impatiently resumed his previous position. "Well then, what are we going to do?"

"Like I said, catch the fellow and make mincemeat out of him!" There was a good explanation why only the assistant mayor carried on in such a bragging manner. In all the village he was the only man in his thirties who was still not in the army. Even so, compared to his previous outburst, his tone of voice had weakened considerably.

Not wishing to dampen anyone's spirits, the policeman nodded and said, "Yes, by all means, after all the fellow's a treacherous dog. But then again...." he lowered his voice and tilted his head to one side, "he does have a gun, and you never can tell what may happen with a hunted down, starving traitor that's got a gun."

"Yes, it's like putting your head in the lion's mouth."

That was the head priest speaking with his hands toward the assistant and peering at the policeman's face. "What do you think we should do?"

"What should we do, you say? Well that's..." the mayor leisurely let the words slip while holding his nose. "You sure this deserter isn't a fellow from our village?"

"He can't be," the assistant's jaw dropped. "No, a fellow like that's gotta come from some warm, comfortable place," he said in a loud, earnest voice.

"But then why did he decide to desert here, in such a cold climate?"

"Well for the life of me...anyway he won't get away with it... feel sorry for his parents."

"Mind you, I heard a story about a widow in some village, and she hid a deserter in her loft for over two months."

"That's an old story! No traitors like that around nowadays."

"Yes, that's right."

"Look at them, all with their hearts in their mouths," the policeman thought to himself. "But I guess anyone else would be

frightened under the circumstances. They're afraid of being connected with a criminal. Should anyone find out though, it'll be impossible to cover things up without dirtying my hands. If I stopped my ears, the hand that plugged the ear will hear the fellow's cries for help. Plugging the ears itself is a sign that one is already an accomplice... that is to say, these people are completely in cahoots with each other."

"Well, if you'd like to know my opinion..." he said expressionlessly, sucking air noisily up his nose. "I think we should let everyone in the village know by means of an extraordinary circular or some such thing, that as there is a deserter approaching the village, all doors should be securely fastened, no one should even step outside, that just like during air raid warnings, no light should be allowed to escape through cracks, and that should anyone ask them anything, they are not to answer. Engaging in conversation, means getting involved. For example, at first he asks for water. 'Well, if it's only a little thing like that,' and the fellow gives him water. But next it's food, and if the fellow gives him food, next he'll be wanting a change of clothing, and after clothes, it's money. And what's he going to ask for next? He's been completely taken care of, but it's no good cause someone can now recognize his face so finally, at the end it's 'Bang!'"

All three held their breaths waiting for the officer's next words, but as there was no indication that the speech would continue, the mayor asked quietly, "And that's it is it?"

"After that, I suppose the MP's would come in...."

The head priest, stretching himself said as if the whole thing sounded very unpleasant to him, "It's kinda far to my place, so I better be going."

As the mayor started hurriedly to phone the militia guard room, the assistant mayor followed the priest and left his seat. "Guess that fellow'll be starting to wander around the village any minute now."

It took less than an hour for the message to permeate the length and breadth of the village. As if a typhoon warning had been announced, every house had its shutters barred, all the weak spots had been boarded up. There were some who even prepared bamboo spears or hatchets by their places of rest. After ten o'clock, the whole village with the exception of the police station, sank into total darkness. An animal-like fear enveloped the place.

Despite their fear though, most families, gradually went to sleep. Only the old policeman, as if waiting for something, stayed up all night continuing to strain his ears for sounds outside. Of course, the villagers, behind thier boards and shutters had no way of knowing....

The next morning, just as dawn was beginning to break, from beyond the hills to the south, there came the shrill sound of a train whistle continuing to blow in rapid succession for a long time. The foreboding cry streamed unmercifully into the village beneath the low clouds. Most of the people woke to its sound. The people who under-

stood its meaning quickly opened their shutters.

The policeman, his eyes bloodshot for lack of sleep, gazed through the south-facing windows towards the hills. His eyes could clearly see the single straight, gray line, which extended beyond the hills. The whistle stopped blowing. In a while the assistant mayor, carrying a pair of skis, appeared accompanied by two men. "It seems somebody's thrown himself in front of the train again. I think I'll go and take a look. It might've been that traitor. Want to come along?"

"No, I better stay. Could get a call from town."

In no time the three skiers came upon the gray line that extends beyond the hills. Nodding at each other, they begin to follow its path. The old policeman finally left the window and crouched in front of the fire.

When the assistant mayor returned he found the policeman dozing in the same position. The assistant tried waiting silently until the old man woke up. He gave up after the policeman didn't open his eyes for a very long time. But, just when he was about to give up, the old man opened his eyes and asked in a whisper, "Well...Did you get a look?"

"Yes, I sure did."

"Well, then you...."

"You must have known all along?"

"Yes, I knew."

"Then was it you that made him do it?"

"Well, you see...I, now, you know just how ashamed I am...he didn't have to do it so close to the village. It must have been out of spite towards me...I can't think of a fellow like that as my son... but you might do me a favour and keep quiet about this."

"But the two fellows I went with, they already know."

"I suppose you're right."

"His body wasn't badly deformed or anything. His gun was lying right beside him. They'd covered him with a branch."

"Well..."

"By the way, hadn't we better erase the foot prints under your window?"

"I suppose you're right."

Ten days thereafter, the old policeman left the village, dragging a small trailer behind him.

On a day so hot that dreams melted  
I had a strange dream.  
In the afternoon  
Only my cap returned.

## THE CLIFF OF TIME

...I just gotta win see...cause it's win or lose and I'm not taking any chances just to lose...

Hey, this milk's left over from yesterday! It's gone bad. Can't help that. No matter if I put it in the fridge, it still goes bad. I guess it's cause the milk's alive. See. It's alive. Yeah, really, it's like a living thing y'know. And because it's alive it just eats itself up. It completely loses its food value. Now this here's a mess all right...and like they even stamped the date on it, right on the lid. It's not just for show, y'know, after all the expense they went to, printing the date on the package. "Please consume contents within 24 hrs of purchase" get it?

Wow, that new punching ball they got, the red one...that's got a real good punch y'know...like one, two, one, two, one two. I think I'm pretty sensitive when it comes to sounds. I react to them real well. Like when I'm in the ring I can tell just what condition I'm in from the kind of sound the rosin makes on my soles. Once in the middle of a match I got into a real fit and I kept going back and forth to my corner to put some more rosin on my shoes. I guess they kind of laughed at me for that.

Oh, hello...Mr. Kimura, I was in good shape yesterday...yeah, in real good shape. There was a real good looker too, cheering me



from the ringside. Looked like she was saying: "Gee I like that guy," 'n' things like that. Really got fed up with myself...I guess I just gotta win...

My diet's begun to tell on me lately. I wake up in the middle of the night and find I've been dreaming about rice balls. Worse than that, I fight too many matches. It's no good, fighting too many. You size the guy up like someone you can handle and it turns out you were too kind on him.

But then if you don't get any matches, next time you can't even get into the training sessions. But if I go on like this, in no time I'll drop out. No kidding. I'll drop out in no time. I better take quality over quantity...choose only good matches...but no, I guess that's just asking for too much.

The other day, darnitall, I went so far as to weigh myself in...and then the guy doesn't show up...I could've cried...after going to all the trouble of losing weight and all...I got the money all right. It costs some money to get yourself as far as the scales. But doesn't the whole thing just burn you up. If it wasn't for my boxing, I'd be just in that time of life when I can really enjoy food. No one'd raise hell just on account of a few pounds here or there. I guess when I got started though, I didn't have any trouble at all. It's just that I'd work out more than other people, so although I'd eat just a little, it'd turn into fat right away.

It's no fun when they keep on reminding you about your weight.

I started boxing cause I got fed up with having my life laid out for me, but this boxing's just the other way around. That's why I get depressed. But, I mean, I could never commit suicide, no never. It's only guys with brains that do that sort of thing. No, I wouldn't go in for that, not at all.

Hey you really got scalped didn'tcha?...your hair, I mean... it's a good idea to go to the barber before a match. 'Cause y'know if you have hair coming out all over the place, you look twice as bad when you lose.

One, two, one, two, one, two, one, two, one, two, one, two. Hey, today I'm in pretty good shape, man.

Uh, hey, uh, Mr. Kimura, you know, the other day I drew my fortune. And what should come out but "Windfall." You know it's those pieces of paper you get with the packs of peanuts. You put in 10 yen and you push the lever. Well, I thought that's that, but then I get another. I thought it was kinda strange but the next one says "Windfall" too. Like the whole thing really floored me, cause it was really strange, I thought...but with the next one...put in another coin, I get the same thing. Really it was all pretty amazing y'know. I didn't know such things could happen. Y'know I got this busted hand, but I thought with luck like this, what the hell, why not ask the boss to line up a match for me anyway. I'd have no excuse losing with luck like that...

Okay, let's go, sparring

One, two, keep it up  
 With your right, one, two,  
 Okay, jab now, jab, jab, jab,  
 Upper straight  
 Three to the right, one two, three,  
 Right upper.

Hey, what's that noise?...oh yeeah, probably the downstairs door...even the door's made of iron around here... "thrrrump," I can hear it close in my stomach.

Something's the matter with me today. I just can't keep track of anything. Any of you guys got an extra towel? Towel, yeah, I forgot mine. I think, maybe I'm going off the deep end.

They told me that seeing as how it was before a match I didn't have to do any roadwork. So what do I do come 5 a.m....I fly out of bed like a stupid fool.... They said no need to worry about weight either, and I did intend to get a good night's sleep...that's why last night, before going to bed, I listened to some music, cause I thought I'd get some sleep...Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto...good, isn't it, that kind of music...Swan Lake too, really effective I mean.... I like jazz more, but jazz's no good if you want to go to sleep, y'know.

I don't quite know how to put it, what's really awful is getting up early. Really awful...no matter how people say roadwork's tough, I think running is a whole lot easier than getting up...when you

get up, change your clothes...there's not an awful lot you can do about it...sleepy, cold, thinking the sooner summer comes the better...that's all you ever...it really gets you down, like.

Of course saying such things doesn't help one bit. I'm doing it cause I like it, and even when I think I hate it deep down I really like it. Would I let myself get pounded like that, and still go back again for more if I really hated it deep down? It's got its good points though. First, you always know where you stand, see? It's either black or white, and that way life has a kind of certainty about it.

Jab, jab, jab, jab!

I guess it's the jab that's causing all the trouble. If only I could get that jab coming I'd feel relaxed. I'm confident about my straight punches. The thing is to keep the other guy in check with the jabs.

Jab, jab, jab, jab.

Upper straight

What's the time?

It'll soon be time for the match...dammit...I feel awful...oh, yeah, I almost forgot, I bought some red socks. Red is supposed to be lucky, that is, for people born in August, and I guess that's me...they do say that about red...for people born in August. So I bought them, the socks...What?...you mean it's white?... Really? But not for people born in August?...awful isn't it?...Mr. Kimura likes to make fun of

people like that. Strange though...it's different for different people, isn't it...red socks are no good then?

But I'm in good shape at least. I've been pretty lucky these days. I had a row of "Windfall's for my fortune didn't I? And I sleep like a log at night. The other day when I was getting a massage it hurt so much I felt like my muscles had rotted away or something, but after a good night's sleep, suddenly I felt fine. I guess it's all on account of experience. Hey, even when I try shadow-boxing like this, my hand feels real light...I'm sure to win, I am...as for my hand, you know when I get inside that ring there won't be a thing wrong with it.

I've just gotta win, there's no two ways about it...if I lose this time, I'll lose my rank...

#### ROUND 1

It's all right! When I hear the sound of the whistle close to my ears...it's just a sign that I'm relaxed...the rosin on my shoes makes a nice sound too. I'll win all right...cause I've lost four times in a row now...I've strained myself...fighting like this when my hand hurts...yeah I'm overdoing it.... A boxer's body is his investment and you can't overstrain it, but I guess I've been told often enough to know better, it's just that I'm too impatient...even though I'm rested now, I think I'll lose my place anyway...and if I should do that, it'll be the end for me...once you lose ground you can't fight your way back up too easily...it's really hard...cause the competition is tough....

A straight punch and then an upper

Get in the middle, in the middle

Watcha doin' Hit'm

Yeah that's it

Footwork, do your footwork

Okay uppers, one two

I understand...shut up you guys...after all I've been around here long enough to know what to do....

From tenth place to ninth...then from ninth to eighth... eighth to seventh...seventh to sixth...each time you go up the ranks you have to beat five opponents...the coach put it that way...so a champion amounts to ten times five, that is, fifty defeated boxers... well it'd be nice if I could get far enough to be a champion, but I guess I can't. I suppose I'll belong to the defeated fifty...it's either one or the other, being a champion, or one of the defeated fifty...I think about that, sometimes...from seventh place to eighth ...from eighth to ninth and from ninth to tenth...pretty awful isn't it?...like the only reason I'm boxing is so I can help some other guy to climb up the ranks...why is it like this...maybe I'm a hopeless case after all...

(GONG)

Okay, deep breath

Hey man, look at that body, pretty good eh?

Now, don't stop after just one and two.

One two three four

Put all you've got into it and keep going, got it?

Keep it up and up is where you'll go

Don't take any jabs now see

Wave your arms around

Give him the slip, duck now

Get in the middle there

One two three four

Give'm a pounding and you'll go up

(ROUND 2)

...Y'know, I think I really am lucky. The last time when I changed jobs, yeah, that musta been February 18... What's more I got to work sharp at eight that day...then to top it all, this is the 38th year of Shōwa...well now that makes three eights one after another. And the character eight sort of fans out at the bottom and that's really lucky. I think I have a promising future after all.

I've gotta win...cause if I lose this time I'll lose my place...

To the right, to the right, round to his right

C'mon, a straight one now

Get a move on

Hit to the right, up front

Right right right right

Keep going around him, body punches

All right, that's a good boy

Okay you're winning

Y'know I put down everything I do each day in a notebook... like what I did that day...every day...yeah, really, and I haven't missed a day yet...at first I write down the date, then the number of hours I slept, the time I got up, then the time I spent on road-work, roughly the distance I ran, what condition I was in...and then, oh yeah, what I drank before breakfast...green tea, or juice, or milk... the kind and quantity of foods...and after meals, if I had anything to drink...and then the time I left for work, and if I had a snack, I put that down, and whatever I drank after...and when I really felt worn out and took a nap I put that down and of course whatever I ate after that...well, this was until I got into training...

Then the time I left work and arrived to the gym...I took my weight, and wrote that down...next something about shadow boxing... then sparring...without fail I put down my partner's name...then the punching bag...when I finished with the punching bag I went back to shadow boxing...trying to remember the number of times, of course... same with the punching ball, how many times I hit it...then I wrote down the number of rope skips and pushups and situps, and other exercises...and then, after that, oh yeah, baths and showers...then at the end I took my weight again, the time I left the gym...then liquids, supper and beverages again...if I had a snack before I went to sleep, I honestly put that down...when I went to bed...whether I



got a massage or not what sort of vitamins I took...then after that,  
some general remarks...

I write this down every day...no kidding every day...keeping  
my purpose in mind...because after all this sort of thing isn't for  
everyone...y'know like a match begins long before it really begins...  
every day is a match...I guess you have to go to this much trouble if  
you're going to outdo someone by yourself...

Whether I win or lose right now...it's because I came this  
far in this strict fashion...

(GONG)

You landed that jab real well eh

Better than the first round

If you land a jab, then you can hit me

Understand?

Now, deep breath one two three

Okay

Got what I said?

Dya understand?!

No good! You keep coming from the left!

From the right! the right! see?

You have a big swing cause you go from the left

Bad form, really

Right, inside

Outside's no good

Circle round the right and inside, see?

(ROUND 3)

Yeah, Yeah, to the right, the right

Yeah, an upper

Land a jab now, jab

Come on

Not so wide

Hey, too big

Big, Big, still big

Now from the right and inside

Don't overdo it now, don't strain yourself

Lightly on the left

Now get close to his body

Goddammit! When you start going down, it's really fast...

there was a time when I had as many as thirty people backing me, it's dwindled down to seven now...I feel ashamed even going to the company...

"It is our most sincere desire that you be crowned with victory for your earnest efforts"...those people don't know how I feel...like it or not fifty people get defeated...but if it weren't for those fifty, there'd be no champion...maybe it is us that should be getting the thanks... they're making a fool of me as it is...

Somehow, my hands are getting awfully heavy, and that won't do, not at all. Man, I feel like I've got no defences...It really hurt that day, when I got the massage...my muscles really felt like they were rotting...really...I guess I'm just no good any more...man this is awful,

I've never fought a guy with a punch as strong as...unless I do some fast footwork it's gonna hurt bad...Suppose he punches me up so bad that my tongue swells. I won't even be able to go out and work...

...When you really start going down, in this line of work, wow! you go down quick...it's like descending with a torn parachute...whether you hang on just for sake of a clear conscience, or you let go, basically it amounts to the same thing...what about champions? you say...what the hell you think, champions go down real fast man...they go down faster than anyone else...the steepest cliff is one the other side of the champion...the only difference I guess, is which side you fall from, this side or the other side...cause either way you're going to fall, you know...damn awful just thinking about it...  
(ROUND 4, 2MIN. 16SEC.)

...Wow, where am I? Have I been sleeping? Feels like the bottom of a river. There're fish swimming above my face...

Four? Did he say four?...I hope he didn't expect me to hear that; he's got an awfully weak voice...Could it be that I'm down...maybe that's what it is...cause it's sure difficult breathing...my chest's gone bad too. I get it now...this is the smell of the mat...never mind, it's still okay...he said four didn't he...there should still be another six seconds...

I've been overdoing things, I guess, just piling one thing on another...one thing about a downhill boxer; he's always in demand...he's a good stepping stone for anyone wanting to go up...there's not

an awful lot you can do about it cause you keep on getting more and more challenges...the time I was on my way up, I guess I was also on the look-out for guys like that...what about that guy...what the hell was his name...the guy who let me fight him the first time I got a place in the ranks...I haven't seen him once since then...wonder if he's quit...

Well, I suppose it's time I got up...

Naw! not just now, how about after I've rested a little more. Did he say four? I can do it comfortably in six seconds. If I wanted to, I could get up right now. Let's see, first I'd raise the rest of myself on my right elbow. Having done that I'd pull my right leg up and then move my weight onto my left knee. And that would just about do it, wouldn't it?

Beautiful, isn't it...the blue sky, I mean, really, the sky is blue y'know...but why can I see the sky?...Is there a crack in the ceiling someplace?...Stupid isn't it? I mean thinking about the ceiling is kinda stupid...doesn't matter, that sort of thing has nothing to do with me anyway....

All right, I'll get up. I'll try and aim for that spot above his left eye and meanwhile I'll avoid him with some footwork. It looks like he's got a scar around there. To think I was knocked down so quick, right after we'd gotten into the fourth round...your whole career can change...if you get knocked down just once...my career...it doesn't matter...watch this, I'll give him such a jab he won't be able to move a muscle...okay I'll get up right now!

Raise the rest of myself on my right elbow...pull up my right leg...then firmly rest my weight on my left knee....

This is weird...I seem to have become two people...am I standing up like this?

What about the ring? where's it gone to?...all this noise ...it's so noisy I don't know what's what any more.

Okay, Yeah man! I gotcha all right...

I guess my brand new red socks did nothing. I'm through ...yeah, there's no crying over it now...there's no two ways about it, cause either way leads to a dead end...four years and six months is it?...and I'm right back where I started...that's okay though, cause when I get home I'll have a real good meal...I'll forget about my notebook and eat as much as I bloody well please...I'll smoke, and drink too...and I'll put away a whole package of that sweet yōkan...

I'll make up for every single past failure...I've had to do without a lot these past years....

Ooh! my head's begun to ache! Oh no, it hurts so bad I won't be able to go to sleep for another three days...painful as hell ...feels like I'll explode...Do something, somebody, please anything!...

APPENDIX II

堅むすめ

どんな地図にもない国で、どんな学者も知らぬ眼や鼻や口をもち、どんな辞書にも出ていない言葉を話す大男が、この世のどんな時計の針をどんなに早く逆廻転させてもとどかぬほどの大昔、ふと目を覚してひどい空腹を感じたのだった。

舌をならして大男は袋の中からひとつかみの種子をとりだした。種子は風の中ではほこりになって舞上るほど小さかったが、よく見るとそれでもひと粒ひと粒がちゃんと人間の形をしていた。男はそれをぱっと空中に撒きちらすと、自分はいくつものつむじ風となって消えてしまった。

その種子が原因となり、やがて地上に人間が芽生えた。町が建ち、歌が満ち、夜と昼とが言葉のまに整理され、家畜や小麦よりも人間たちが美しく実ったと思われたとき、つむじ風になった大男は最初の収穫のために町の角々や山の麓に現われた。

すると大地はさまざまな不幸につつまれたのだった。まず夜と昼とが仲たがいして、地球のまわりをぐるぐる追い駆けあつた。そのすきに冬がしのびこんで季節をつくつた。事件とよばれる数知れぬ不都合が人々の顔の表面に皺を刻み、王様や家来や商人や乞食という背骨のまがりかたの区別ができ、人々は生活へとかりたてられた。

その他、人間が体験しうるありとあらゆるものの姿に変身して、つむじ風の大男は刈入れの鎌をふるうのだった、人が何事かに出遇うと、それはたちまちつむじ風となって彼の中をすつと吹抜け、あとにぽっかり空洞が残された。それをせつせと埋めるしぐさが生活であつたのだ。大男の胃の腑は想像もつかぬほど大きなものであるらしかった。人々は手を休めるいとまがなかった。埋める端からつ

むじ風は彼の中を通過して、新たな空虚を残してゆくのだった。

ときたまつむじ風の行為よりもすばやい手の行為をもっている人間たちもいて、大男の鎌の訪れに先んじた密えの日々を送るのだったが、貧者とわがち得ぬ幸福がどんな永続性をもちうるだろう。いつともなく亡びていつて、いまでは、もし大男の収穫をまぬがれるものがあるとすれば、それはよほど肥立の悪い片輪若か、あまりにも不消化な貧者か、石や木や砂に変化して味のなくなったものたちだけであった。そんな取り残されたものたちには、不幸もないかわり、幸福もないらしかった。幸福とは一般的な不幸の特殊な異名であり、大男の胃袋に買った後の空虚をちんちんと埋めてゆく行為の中だけにしかないことを、とりわけ彼らは感じるのだった。

困ったことが起きた。そんな連中が不当に数を増したらしかった。不毛の時代がくるのかもしれない。大男の胃の腑は空になり、つむじ風は不吉な相貌を呈して町々をかけめぐった。中にまきこまれた紙屑が、そのまま見えなくなったり、すっと近よったつばめが、ふっと消えてしまったりするのはまだいいほうだった。胃の腑にはしばしば砲弾の破片とか、ガソリンのかかった飛行機の片翼とか、しまつにおえぬものが送り込まれてきて、もてあますのだった。

ある日大男は、不消化な胃袋をおさえながら、むかし味わった数々の収穫を夢見ていた。

——存在の法則としてひそかな思念の前に立現れるとき、それには飽くことのない白ペンの味があつた。信仰として帰依の中をゆくときは、血のしたたるビフテキの味をたのしんだ。科学者の発見には塩の利いた鯨の味があり、詩人の心に歌となつてふれるときは豊醇なイクラの味がした。愛情はバ

ターの味、友情はアスパラガスの味、復讐は紅生姜の味、嫉妬は唐辛子の味、子供のいざかいは馬鈴薯の味、屈辱は生葱の味、それにさまざまな罪の果物……むろん死の苦い涙も、消化には不可欠の要素だったし、恐怖のラムネも栄養にこそならぬが必要な清涼剤であつたとはいえ、当節のように苦味薬とラムネだけでは我が事ながらいたましいかぎりだ。どうだこの瘦せさらばえた有様は……ああ、ぜいたくは言わぬ。せめて馬鈴薯にバターをぬってたらふく食べられたらなあ。

そう思っただけでじんと胃酸がほとばしり、胃壁を焼くのだった。それが食道をつたって渴いた喉にひびいたとき、大男はなにかさらに別なものを連想し、たまらなくなつて立上つた。鼻孔をひろげて嗅ぎまわつた。ほかでもない恋の酒……疲れた接吻のビールから、片想いの白ぶどう酒、さては口に出すものはばかられる火酒の行為など。つむじ風は貪慾な口をひらき、生物のように不透明になつて、住民にさえ忘れられた町の隅々や、壁の隙間などをあさりはじめたのだった。名も持たぬほど未熟な酸い酒ならば、あるいはどこかに見落していなかったともかぎりぬではないか。

そんなわけで、別なある日、古い蠟燭のような肌をして、蜘蛛のように長い手足をもつた唾のむすめの中を、一陣の恋のつむじ風が吹きぬけたのであつた。

それはこんな具合にして行われた。ほんとうに置き忘れられたある町角の、道に面した、階段の裏が二井になっている狭い板の間で、いつものように針仕事にはげっていると、それまで壁きわでためらっていた陽差がふいに部屋の中につきささり（むすめにはむろん聞えなかったが、その時どこかの柱時計が午後三時をうった）籠をかかえたひとりの若者が道をよこぎつて、こちらにやつてきた。若



者は毎日この時間に、穴のあいた靴下だとか下着だとか、むすめのための仕事を盗んでくる洗濯屋の小僧なのだ。つづいて窓ぎわのちょっとした黙劇……小僧からよこれものの束を受け取り、かわりにつくろいおえた分を差し出すとき、むすめの指がかすかに相手の手にふれると、むすめの笑顔に急に皺がより、あんまり早く手をひっこめたので束が地面に落ちたのを、若者はひろい上げるとひどく不機嫌な顔になり、そんなことをする必要もないほど短い毛髪を大仰にかき上げ、笑顔もみせず早足で立ち去ってしまった。するとむすめは急に不幸になって、窓の敷居に両手をついたまま、ぼんやり口を開けているのであった。

ところがむすめは異様なものに気がついた。窓ぎわの、いままで若者が立っていたあたりに、つむじ風がひとつの生物のようにくるくるまわっている。一見したところ、普通のつむじ風と変りないようでもあったが、考えてみれば風もないのに不気味なことではないか。むすめは若者が完全に立ち去ったのではなく、あまり慌てたためその一部分がつむじ風になって残ったのではないかと思い、すっかり恥入るのだった。

どうしたらよいのか見当がつかず、しばらくぼんやり見守っていると、つむじ風はやにわに窓をこえて部屋に侵入しようとするらしかった。むすめは恐怖にうたれて窓を閉ざした。それでもつむじ風はいっこう立ち去るような素振りもみせないで、しっかき掛金をかけ、こぶしを握っておどしてみたが、やはりそこを動かさずじまいばかりかいつそ窓に近よって、がたがたゆすりさえるのだった。そのうちつむじ風は、腐った水の中にできるおりのようなものに変形しはじめていた。やがてひ

らひらする透明な薄膜になり、むすめの抵抗もかいたく窓の隙間からするりと中に入りこむと、立ちすくむ彼女の中を吹きとおろし、後に黒々と空虛を残して、そのままどこかに消え去った。

大男がどこかでつぶやくのだった。

——なるほど、これでも酒か。酒といわねばなるまいかな。

しかしそのうち酔いがまわってくると、愉快そうに首で調子をとりながら、

——まあなんと言ってもガソリン漬の飛行機とくらべれば、俺の胃の腑にかなったものだ。

しかしむすめは虚ろになった胸をいためて、心ならずも眼を天に向け、大男によびかけるのだった。

——神様、どうしましょう。私は恋をしてしまいました。恋がきて、私の心から何かを盗んでゆきました。どうすればこの悲しみの跡をふきけるでしょう。

もちろん返事はなかったの、(あつたとしても啞のむすめになにがわかったらう)。むすめは自分の力でなんとかしなければならなかった。見まわすと、部屋の隅にぼろきれがつんであった。具合わるいとは思ったが、ほかにはなににもなかったの、とりあえずそれを詰めものにするよりほかなかった。

翌日、同じ時間に、同じことが起ったが、もうぼろきれは使えなかった。それは簡便道具で、むだに使うわけにはゆかなかったのだ。むすめは自分自身を成長させて、傷口をふさがなければならぬことに気がついた。しかしいくらかは、やはりぼろきれで補わねばならなかった。自分自身の成長だけで埋めるのは、啞の身には重すぎる負担であつた。

大男は顔をしかめた。

——なんということだ。この酒はほろきれの味がする。

しかし飽きずにその翌日も、またその翌日も、洗濯屋の小僧の去った後につむじ風となつて現われるのだった。何日かたつとむすめはほろきれの臭いがしはじめていた。体験からさえ忘れられていたため、無知なむすめは外見を変えるすべを知らなかったで、見掛けは少しも変らぬようであつたが、実は全身、ほとんどほろきればかりになつてしまつたのであつた。

大男はすっかり落胆して叫んだ。

——ああ、なんだってこり肥立の悪いやつばかりなんだろう。どうしたつていうんだ。巷は涙であふれているのに水分が不足だというのか。野も山も火に覆われているのに熱がたらないというのか。太陽が二つにでもならなければ、俺は餓えて死んでしまふぞ！

とはいえ貪慾なつむじ風が、それでむすめからの収穫をあきらめるわけはなかった。なんとか酒の醇化をはかる工夫はないものか。そこである日、むすめと若者の関係をもっと発展させようと試みるのであつた。

その日つむじ風はむすめの中に入りこんだまま、いつまでも出ようとはせず、内心の声となつてむすめを誘ふのだった。

——むすめよ、そんな重荷をひとりで背負いこんで、いったいどうするつもりなんだ。早く小僧に打明けて、二人で分ちあうがいい。身軽になつて恋の塔を昇るのだ。手を引き合つて昇つてゆけ。恋

の甘さは上にゆけばゆくほど増してゆく。おまえのいるところはまだ甘さの前の、苦い地面だ。

——私もそう思っていました。けれど自信がありません。啞なんですもの。

——啞だと！ そんなものがなんだというのだ。死は万物を征服する。しかし愛は死よりも強いというではないか。

——私は学校で習った言葉しか話せません。まるでタイプライターを打つように、指で宙をなでまわしたり、唇の具合を幾通りかに調節するだけですもの。それに聾啞学校の先生は愛の言葉などを教えてはくれませんでした。

——どんな学校だって愛の言葉を教えたりするものか。みんな自分でつくり出すのだ。人間はほとんど自分の言葉をもちなくなった。しかし愛の言葉だけは、誰からも教わらずにめいめい自分でつくるのだ。

——でもみんな、私の声を笛のようだといって笑います。

——笛……結構なことではないか。愛の言葉は甘い啞きといわれるように、笛のようにでも啞けば、効果は一段と高まるにちがいない。春の微風のような笛の音の中で、恋人たちは眼を閉じて啞き、また啞きかえす……結構なことだ。

——啞きって、どんなものでしょう？

——人の魂の奥底まで吹き込む風のような言葉だ。

——風って、どんな音がするんでしょう？

——いちがいには言えないさ。空気の流れが、草や木の葉を鳴らす音もあれば、固い壁にうち当たる音もあるし、電線で引き裂れるときの音もある。要するに自分が原因で空気がふるえた音だな。

——空気ですって？ 私には見えませんわ。それは丸いような感じでしょうか、四角な感じでしょうか？

——見えないのが当りまえさ。四角でも丸でもない、むしろさらっとした感じというべきだ。とりわけ愛の囁きは、恋人の吐息にふれて揺れ動く薄絹のごときものだ。

——どんな色でしょう？

——そうだな……物語に、唇からバラの花が咲きこぼれたとあるから、きっとバラ色だろう。

——私は真赤なバラが好きですわ。いいでしょうか？

——いいとも、自分の言葉であればそれでいいのだ。

——なんだか、自信がついてきました。私にも愛が囁けるような気がします。

むすめが微笑むと、つむじ風もほろきれの中で、明日こそは美味しい酒にありつけそうだとほくそ笑んだ。

翌日、むすめは端布屋にいて、いつもとは異った注文をして主人を驚かすのだった。

——真赤な色で、一番軽い、上等ノ絹地ヲコレダケ下サイ。

そして財布を空にした。むすめはもっと広くほしかったのだが、それでもかなりの広さだった。帰るとむすめはそれで丹念にリボンをつくった。ほとんど顔の二倍もある、見事なりボンが出来上っ

た。たしかに目には見えぬような微風にも、それが生物のようにゆらゆら呼吸するのを見ると、むすめは思わず手を打って宛のような歓声をあげた。するとリボンも彼女の想いにあわせて身悶えた。むすめは骨ばった長い右手の人差し指にそれをしっかり結びつけ、ほんとうに笛のような声でとりとめもなく笑いつけるのだった。

いつもの時間がきて、陽差が部屋にふみこむと、いつものように若者が籠をかかえてやってきた。むすめが普段とはちがって妙にちろばいしながら、右手を窓の向うにかくし、左手だけでつくろいの束を受け渡すのを変に思い、なにげなく中をのぞきこもうとすると、むすめはさっと顔を赤らめた。しかし顔全体が赤くなるのではなく、小指の爪ほどの赤い斑点が一面にひろがるのだった。それと同時にむすめは右手の指を、赤いリボンとともに二人の顔の間につき出していた。眼を閉じて、瓶の口を吹くような音をたてながら、静かにリボンを吹きつづけるのだった。幾度も喉元までこみ上げてくる心臓を飲みくだすために、息をとめなければならなかったが、それでもむすめは火に包まれた頭の中で、愛の囁きが成功したことを信じるのだった。自分の唇からアルファベットを吐きこんだ真紅のカードが舞い上り、様々に組合わさって若者の胸に流れ込むのを見たように思った。視覚でしか言葉を考えることができない彼女は、そんな具合にしか考えられなかったのだ。

なるほどリボンは美しかったので、若者は最初声をたてて笑ったが、すぐに笑いやんで、眉をひそめた。困惑の表情が恐怖に変わり、若者は啞むすめの発狂を告げるために後も見ずに駆け出していた。

若者しながらそれを見送ったつむじ風は、むすめがなおも聞く眼を閉じて、いつまでもそのリボン

を吹きつける様子に呆れながら、しばらくそこに立っていたが、ふとむすめの両の眼に涙が重くあふれたのを目にすると、いまいまげに舌打ちをしてこう言った。

——これはまたなんていう不毛の土地だ。おまえなんぞにもう用はない。年中日蝕の太陽にしか照らされぬ、おまえのような、片輪の中に芽生えた生活は、どうやら俺の胃の腑には毒になるらしい。とんだ無駄骨折をしたものさ。

こうして餓えたつむじ風は、またもするすると町々にまよいでたが、もう一度とむすめのところに立ちよることはなかった。だからと言って、つむじ風の味覚が償するにたるものだという証拠は、まだどこにもない。

ぼくは犬というやつが大きらいだ。見ているだけでも胸がわるくなってくる。それでもぼくは結婚した。犬と結婚とが、おのずから別問題であることくらい、重々承知の上のことだ。むしろ、重要なのは犬のことであって、結婚のことなんかではない。しかし、それ以上に、飼い主というやつはもって不愉快な存在だな。ちゃんとした使用上の目的、たとえば羊の番だとか櫓をひかせるとか、小生産者が生産手段として飼育している場合はともかく、ただろくでもない家の玄関先につないでおくために飼っている連中には、まったく我慢ならないのさ。ぼくは、ああいうのを、人間の墮落だと思ひのた。

おまけに、なにぶん、ぼくの結婚相手というのが、ぼくが教えにいつている、研究所のモデルで、センスはないし、頭はわるいし、どこといつて取柄がないことくらい、人にいわれなくたつて、ぼくが一番よく知つてゐる。ぼくは裸体モデル否定論者だから、最初は彼女と口をきいたこともなかつたんだ。しかし、彼女は例の現実美術会のF君のお気に入り、年中研究所に出入りしてゐたから、いやでも目にふれないわけにはいかなかつたのさ。彼女は用がないときでも研究所の中をうろろろしてゐた。それが、きまつて、人目の少ない便所の前だとか、廊下の曲り角などで、研究生にすれちがひざま抱きしめられるのを待ちうける風なのだ。抱きつかれると、彼女は、だめよだめよ壊れものをふせぐように両手を頭の上にあげて、くすくす笑ひながら、されるままになつてゐる。ほかげたことだと思ひかもしれないが、これが、ほとんど研究所の風習になつてゐたのだ。この習慣を最初にはじめたのは、むしろF君だつた。F君に言わせると、これは肉体の物化、つまり女をモデル化するための日常的な訓練の一つだということだが、ぼくは逆だと思ひ。あれこそ物体の肉体化じゃないか。だ

からフォーヴィズムつてのは、だめなんだ。研究生たちは、もう、絵の訓練よりも彼女の訓練のほうに夢中だった。

ぼくははじめ、モデルの変更を主張した。ところが彼らはモデルが変わっても、その習慣をやめようとしなないのだ。そんな習慣になしめるモデルなんて、そうざらにいるものじゃない。そこで彼女がすぐまた呼び戻される。研究生たちは、顔中しわだらけにして、そわそわしながら彼女が一人になるチャンスを待っている。用もないのに、うろろして、彼女に抱きつく順番を待っている。そして、三人よれば、興奮しながら彼女の美学的分析の討論ははじまるという寸法だ。それが、ぼくの講義の最中だつてなんだつておかまいなしというんだから、恐れ入った話じゃないか。ぼくは研究所にかよふのが苦痛になってきた。一歩中に足をふみいれただけで、脳ミソが腐ったバナナに変わったような気持ちしてきたものだ。

ある日ぼくは、あつかましくもアトリエの中で彼女を抱こうとした研究生の一人を、ひっぱたいてやった。そいつは、平然と、目はたきもしなかった。しゃくにさわつて、もう一度ひっぱたいてやると、そいつはいきなりなぐり返してきた。ぼくよりは数倍強かった。

なんていうことだろう。やつらはいったい、芸術というものを、どんな具合に考えているのだろうか。やつらは決してふざけているんじゃない。それどころか、しごく大真面目なんだ。元凶は彼女だ、とぼくは思った。ぼくはひと晩F君と議論した。ぼくは彼女の欠点をいろいろとあげて説明した。ぼくはまず彼女が、首や、腕や、足や、太股などの、どこか一か所にかならず縋帯をまいている

悪趣味について攻撃した。するとF君はこういうのだ。彼女は病気のまねがしたいんだよ……生産生活をしてない、抽象物になりたがってるんだ……君の主張に、びったりじゃないか。ぼくは言い返してやった。なにが抽象物なもんか、寄生虫じゃないか。そつとするようなセンチメンタリズムだ。君らが彼女をめっちゃめっちゃにしてるつてことがわからないのか！ わかるとも、とF君も負けてはいない。要するにそんなことは問題じゃないのだ。ぼくは彼女の真実を見るから、縋帯なんか眼に入らない。君こそ、彼女の肉にこだわっているから、そんなものが眼につくのだろう。……それからぼくらはヴィナスの像に耳輪や鼻輪をつけたらどんなことになるかについて、激烈な論争をした。しかし、これは、結論にたつするまえに、二人とも疲れてしまった。つぎに、ぼくは彼女の犬について論じた。だが、この犬のことはまたあとで詳しく説明しなければならないから、いまは省略しよう。最後にF君がいった。君は少し感情的になりすぎている、たぶん神経衰弱にかかっているのだ。彼女について、ぼくにぶくむところがあるんじゃないの？ もし、そういうことなら、どうぞ遠慮しないでくれたまえ。

ぼくは席をけってアトリエを出た。廊下を歩いていると、ふいに足もとにからみついてくるものがある。彼女の犬だった。顔をあげると、彼女が立っていた。すると彼女は、ぼくらの話をみんな聞いてしまったのだ。こんなにおそくまで、なにをしていたんです、と詰問すると、彼女はまるでぼくが抱こうとしたみたいに、両腕をあげて身をよじりながら、くすくす笑うのだった。一歩ちかづいて、ぼくはくりかえした。こんなにおそくまで、なにをしていたんです？ ……ますますのけそるように

して彼女が言った。研究生たちが、外で待ちどせてるのよ。送ってあげよう、といってぼくはさらに一歩ちかづいた。それから、ぼくは、彼女に抱きついてしまった。

いや、なにも言わないでくれ。どうせ君なんかにはわかりやしない。君がなんと言おうと、ぼくは彼女と結婚せずにいられなかったんだ。ところが、困ったことに、彼女が犬といっしょじゃなければ結婚しないと言いだした。

二日も、あたりまえの犬だともかく、まるっきりの犬だといふ犬のち。超長い頸の前に、さかてい頭がついていて、すななみだに、いつも体をくねらせている。誰かれの見境なしに、しゃれついて、しつぽがないものだから、腰ごと、二つにひきちぎれそうにふりまわす。すると、うしろ肢がういて、頭が重すぎるので、くるりと重返りしてしまうのさ。まったく、なさけないったら、ありやしないんだ。犬の屑だよ。

おまけに、絶対に、吠えないんだ。オンオンだとか、ヴァヴァだとか、啞が口ごもったようならめき声をだし、犬らしい悲鳴をあげるのは、ただ牡犬がきたときだけ。むしろやつは牝犬だ。はずかしくって、君、ぼくはやつを正視できないくらいだよ。前髪をたらした未亡人のような分別くさい顔をしゃがって、いつでもぼくをうらむような顔でにらんでいる。ぼくと彼女がなにをしようとして、ぼくらからしつと眼をはなさない。彼女に、犬を外に出してくれとたのむのだが、彼女は犬に見られているほうがたのしいと言ってきかないんだ。ぼくがやつをにらみかえすと、べつに手をあげたわけでもないのに、ヒョッと死にそうな声をあげて床にへばりつく。おまけに、彼女がとんでいって頭を

なでてやるまで、いかにも恐ろしそうにその悲鳴をやめないんだ。デモンストレーションなんだよ。しゃくにさわるじゃないか。どうせ犬なら、もっと犬らしい犬がいい……

しかし、聞いてみると、あの犬も素姓はよかったらしい。ドイツ種の、羊の番犬だったという。親はアメリカ兵が本国から飛行機でつれてきたっていうので、それが彼女の自慢なんだが、あいにく、母子相姦でうまれたのがあの犬らしいんだ。にもかかわらず、ぼくは結婚の道を選んだ。そして、犬との闘いの毎日が始まったというわけさ。

ぼくは犬と闘いとおした。犬も負けずにぼくと闘いとおしたね。はじめぼくは、犬なんて大したものじゃないと思っていた。どうせ犬には、記憶も自意識もないんだし、あのいやらしい甘えかたさえ見てみぬふりをしていれば、せいぜい厚みのある影ぐらいのものじゃないかと思っていた。じつさい、ひと頃は、隅のほうにじっとゆらうつ、そうに腹ばいになって、ほとんど気にしないでもすみそうだった。だが、間もなくぼくの思いがいったことがわかった。犬というやつは、そこにいただけで気になるものだということが、わかりはじめたのだ。そうじゃないか、いったいなんのために、そこにいたりするのだ？ しかも、ただいるのではない。おれたちが存在させてやるから存在しているのだ。そんな意味もないものを、ぼくがわざわざ存在させてやらなきゃならないという理由が、さっぱりわからなくなってきた。意味があれば気にしないですむ。意味がないから、気になるんだ。ヒストルがあれば、バンと一発と思ってにらんでいると、いきなりキイと悲鳴をあげて床にしがみつく。なんとも下劣で無意味なんだな。

それにシヤクなのは、やつの食物の好みさ。犬のくせに、骨がくえない。冷たいものはだめで、熱いものが好きである。酒もいいものなら、かなり飲む。だが、やつの一番の不気味さは、なさけないくらいのだらしなさの反面、ときおり人間の言葉がわかるのではないかと思われるような反応をしめすことだった。ある日、やつの便器を洗って窓に干しておいたとき、便意をもよおしたらしく、いつもの場所をくんくんかきまわってケケンそうな様子でいるのが、ひどくおろかしく見え、やはり犬知恵だよと女房と二人で笑っていると、やつは急にどこからか古新聞をさがしだしてきて、その上に腕をのせて口できれいに包みこんでしまった。それだけならいいのだが、その包みをくわえて、ぼくの膝の上におき、いかにもたのしそうに女房の足にじゃれついていくではないか。それ以来、やつがぼくと女房の話にじっと耳傾けているのをみると、遠慮してつい言葉をひかえてしまったものだった。『利口なハンスの錯誤の言葉』どおり、おれの思ひすこしであつて、犬に言葉がわかるはずがないとは思ひながらも。

やつを訓練してやろうと思ひたつたのは、まずはじめに、警戒心というものが爪の垢ほどもなく、家のものよりも他人に対して甘えかかり、たとえそれが屑屋であっても、よろこびの興奮ですぐにも宙返りしてしまうという、他愛のなさに我慢しきれなくなったからだ。とくに、研究所のガキどもが外をうろつきはじめからは、その程度がひどくなった。窓の下でやつがでんでこまいをしはじめる。見るとかならずガキどもがこちらをうかがっているではないか。なんとも浅ましくて、やつを半殺しにしたいと思うのだが、あんたの愛情がたらないせいよ、と通俗的なセリフで女房にさまたげ

られると、ぼくは理性をとりもどしてじっと我慢した。やつはギョロリとこすつからい、白眼をむいて、勝ち誇つたようにぼくを流し目に見る。ぼくはやつが一人前の犬になってくれたら、もっと犬らしい意味をもつようになつたら、こんな情ない思ひはしないですむのではなからうかと、シベリア犬の訓練の方式にしたがつて、スベルタ式改造をはじめたわけだった。

……が、効果はまるでなかった。訓練をはじめると、やつはあっさり仰向けになり、ころがされたクモか甲虫のように、完全降伏を表明してしまふのだ。どうにも手のつけようがない。おまけに、ちよつとでも手荒なことをすると、必要量の三倍以上の声をはりあげて泣き叫ぶ。ぼくはきつと、隣近所から、ひどいサディストだと思われたにちがいない。

そこでぼくは方針をあらためた。こいつは特別に頭が大きい。もしかすると本当に利口なのかもしれない。突然変異で生じた、未来の犬かもしれないではないか……学者犬に仕立てたらどうだろう？……莫大な金でサーカスが買いにきたら、金には眼のない女房のことだ、よろこんで手離すにちがいない……金が入るうえに、犬を追つばらうことができる……一挙兩得だといふので、いままでとは反対になるべく人間の生活にひき入れるような訓練をこころみることにした。それに女房もこれには興味をもつて、積極的に協力してくれた。やつはいい気になつて、三倍以上も甘つたれ、しかしどんどん上達して、気味のわるいほど人間に似てきた。やつは紙をつかつて鼻をかむことも、タバコを吸うことも、ふてくされた仕種で唾をはくことも、それから最後に、うなずいたり、かぶりをふつたりすることもおぼえてしまった。ただ笑ふことだけはなかなかおぼえなかった。笑ひの心理を理解すること



はやはり無理だったらしい。

秋のグループ展に出した例の絵は、やつが笑おうとして苦しんでいる表情が面白かったので、ちょっと描いてみようという気になったのだ。犬のモナリザといったところかな。それから、これはどうでもいいことだが、女房といっしょになって以来、ぼくは抽象主義に完全に興味を失った。君の説に頭をさげる。ぼくはずっとリアリストになったようだ。

そして恐るべきことは、あの絵をかきおわった、ちょうどその瞬間にはじまったのだ。女房は外の台所で洗濯をしていた。やつはベッドのうえで、おれたちが一食ぬいて我慢しているというのに、ゆうゆうとシヤムつき食パンにかみついているところだった。おれは絵筆をおいて、ほっとしながら、最後にキャンバスとモデルを見較べるために、やつに「笑え」と命じた。するとやつが、本当にニヤリと笑ったではないか。ちえっ、とうとう笑いやがった、いい気なものだ、ゆうゆうな気持ちでなにげなくつぶやくと、「いい気なのは、自分じゃないか、」と、不明瞭だが、意味ははっきりとれる言葉で、やつがうめくように答えたのだ。ぼくは気が遠くなるほど驚いた。足の力がぬけて、自然に坐ってしまった。なにか言い返そうと思うのだが、胃の中の大きなかたまりが、びくびく動悸をうって、声にならない。妻が戻ってくる足音がした。全身の力をふりしぼり、やつとのことで犬にたのんだ。おねがいです、女房には口をきかないでください。あんたがいきなり喋ったりしたら、ショックで女房の心臓はとまってしまうかもしれません。ぼくがいいというまで、どうぞ、黙っていてください。……やつは、恩きせがましく、鼻の先でうなずいた。

犬も口をきくようになると恐ろしい。やつが、その晩、女房が寝つくのをみはからって、おれの耳にささやいた言葉を書いてみようか。やつは言った、犬だってそう馬鹿にしたもんじやないんだよ、人間が何を考えているかくらい、ちゃんとわかっていたんだよ、あんたはさんざん私を馬鹿にしていたね、しかし私にだって立派な犬歯があるんだよ、人間の皮をはぎとるくらいわけはないんだよ、あれは処世術というものさ、甘えたふりをしたって、するだけの計算はしてあったし、腰をぬかす真似だって、ちゃんと成算はあったんだ、いいかげんにしないと、ひどい目に合わすよ、あんたなんかに、私をしばらくつけておく資格はないんだから……

(君なんか、犬がこんなことを言うなんて、考えた事もないだろう)

さて、十日ばかり前のことだ。展覧会のプログラムが郵送されてきた。それに眼をとおしていた女房が、とつぜん顔をあげて、ぼくにくっつかかったのだ。「あれが、私の顔のつもりだったのね。新米の研究生だって、あんなにまずく描けやしないわ。」それから、甘ったれた常識的な言葉しか言えないのだろうと思っていたその口から、聞いたこともないような珍しい表現が限りなくとびだしてきて、ぼくをちらみあがらせてしまった。弁解はできなかった。なんの間違いか、プログラムにちゃんと印刷されてあったのだ……『妻の顔』——S作。そして翌朝、妻が寝を消していた。

ぼくは犬をベッドの脚にくくりつけ、猿ぐつわをかませた。やつは本性をあらわし、あばれて、脛と腕の二カ所にかみついた。しかし、今のところは、人間のほうがまだ強い。やつは、直立していないので、頭の重さを支えきれない。さらに、気の毒なことには、指が使えないという決定的な弱みを

もっている。が、さるぐつわをかませるす前に、やつが叫んだ言葉はこうだった。「うぬぼれるなよ！主人でないものは、いずれ負けるんだ！」

……ぼくは犬と闘った。これからも闘いつづけるだろう。だが、結婚のことについてなら、おあいにくさま、ちっとも後悔なんかしていない。君に言われなくたって、女房の愚劣さはおれがいちばんよく知ってるんだ。短い共同生活だったが、ほとんど絶望的な苦悩の連続だった。彼女は食物を口に入れるまえに、ちょっとニオイをかいでみないと気がすまない。ありったけミダシが流れるほど口の中におしこんで、できるだけ大きな音をたてて噛まないと、よく味えない。いつも孫の手をもっていて、たえずどこか扱いていないと気がすまない。それに、指輪に異常な関心をもっていて、両手に三つずつ、それも一日に一度、交換せずにはいられないのだ。むろん、抱きしめてくれる男は、みんな好きだ……

それでも、ぼくは待つだろう。犬と闘いながら、待ちつづけるだろう。そこで、どうか、ぼくのために、挿画の注文でも世話してくれないか。

犬のやつ、今もすごい眼をして、ぼくをにらみつけている。あいつは利口だから、そのうちロープを解く方法を見つけ出すかもしれない。それに、ぼくと同様、あいつも今や餓死線上にいるんだ。それが、どういうことを意味するか、君にだってわからないはずはないだろう。お願いだから、手を貸してくれ。これでもぼくは、人類のために闘っているつもりなんだ。

名もなき夜のために

夢 の 兵 士

夢も醒るような 寒い日に  
 私はこわい夢をみた  
 夢は帽子をかぶって出ていった  
 昼さがり——  
 私はドアに 鍵をした

十五年ほどまえのことである。真実には年代がないというが、この話にはどうしてもそれが  
 必要なのだ。たぶんそこに真実がなかったためだろう。

昨夜から、その県境いの、山ひだにかこまれた小さな村は、雪まじりののはげしい風にすっば  
 りとつつまれ、もたえながら悲鳴をあげていた。朝早く、耐寒訓練のためにかりだされた兵士  
 たちの一隊が、町から丘をこえてやってきた。深い雪のなかを、軍歌にあわせて大きな蹠靴を  
 ひきずり、たどたどしい足とりで村を横切つて、また吹雪のなかに影のように消えていった。  
 日が暮れ、風はやんだ。村の入口の駐在所で、独身者の老巡査は、赤くやけたストロブに足

の紙をおぶりながら、ぼんやり馬鈴薯の皮をむいていた。ラジオがなにやらうなっていたが、彼は聞いていなかった。とめどなく、甘い空想にひたっているのだった。——おれはいろいろなことを見ぬいている。村長と助役がせっせと配給物の横流しをやり、住職と組んで、それを寺の床下にかくしこんでいることも知っている。しかしおれは何も言いはしない。村の連中もおれが黙っていることを知っている。連中がいろいろと届け物をするのは、単なる口止め料というより、そういうおれに対する好意からなのだ。おれは退職しても、ほかの駐在のように村から逃出したりする必要はなく、そのままここにどまつていることができるだろう。誰か地所をもった後家と一緒にあって、老後を平和におくることだってできるかもしれないのだ。人間は、欲さえ言わなければ、なんといいたって百姓が一番だからな。息子が軍隊から戻ってきたとき、迎えてやれる家もあることだし……。戦争のおかげで、この村にも、後家の地主が三人もできた。むろんどの家にも、まだいまのところは、息子がいる。しかし息子どもだって、いつなるとき名替の戦死ってことになるんともかぎらんのだ。おれはきつと、うまいことやれるにちがいないさ。一度も村の連中にきられるようなことをしたおれはないし、土地つきの後家はどんどんふえる一方だし……。なあに、あわてることはないん、腰をすえてゆっくりと考えるさ。田地の広さと、家族関係を合わせて、一で割って……

ふいに電話のベルが鳴りだし、むきかけの馬鈴薯がすべって、灰のなかに落ちた。ひろって、シャツの裾にこすりつけながら、痛そうに腰をのぼして、土間におりる。あの職業に特有な、なげやりな動作で、受話器をつまみあげ、だらけた声で応答しはじめたのだが、みるみる表情が

こわばり、馬鈴薯をつかんだ指がひきつってふるえだした。

兵士たちは、村をすぎると、まつすぐ山にむかって行軍をつづけていった。途中、山岳戦の演習をくりかえしながら、いくつもの傾斜や谷や林をこえ、最後の尾根にたどりついたのは、もう三時もとづくに過ぎてからだった。風はますます吹きつり、息をするさえ苦しいなかを、そのまま食事もとらず、しかも帰りは踵足で引返さなければならなかったのだ。はげしい懲戒を予想しながらも、六人もの落伍者がでた。飢えと疲労と寒さの関係をしらべるための、特別の訓練だったから、落伍者ははじめから予定されており、後ろから一隊の衛生兵がついてきてはいた。ところが隊に戻ってみると、衛生兵たちは、五人の落伍者しか受取っていないのだった。兵士の一人がどこかで消えてしまったというのである。

兵士は飢えている。村にたちよるにちがいない。隙をみれば、衣服だって強奪しかねまい。——老巡査は、受話器をおいて、肩をすぼめ、のろのろとストーブのそばに戻った。鼻をすすって、しばらくのあいだ、はげあがった頭のうえを撫でている。目をあげて時計をみた。七時半だった。動きたくない、外は寒すぎる。それに、本当の脱走かどうかもまだはつきりはしていないのだ。とにかくひどい吹雪だった。ただ仲間からはぐれ、道に迷っただけかもしれないではないか。だいたいこんな雪の中で脱走したりする馬鹿がいるだろうか。足跡が残って、すぐ捕つてしまふにきまつている。きつと道に迷ったのだ。さうすりや、いまごろは、どこかで冷たくなっているところだろう。……もっとも、風が吹きつづけてさえいれば、雪の中はかえって安全かもしれないのだ。風が足跡を消してくれる。あるいは、それをねらった、計画的犯行

だったのだろうか？……それにしても、風はやんでしまった。まんまと眠にかかってしまったというわけだな。悪事でうまくいったためしはないということさ……おれは報告をうけた。しかし命令をうけたわけじゃない。なんといったって、こいつは憲兵の領分だからな。それに、脱走兵は、脱走囚とくらべれば、気のいい臆病者にきまっている。ほっとけ、ほっとけ、出しやばって得したためしはない。それに、逃げるおれと脱走兵の話なんて聞いたこともないじゃないか……

218

かすかに表のドアが音をたてたように思い、あわてて振向いた。しばらく耳をすませてみたが、もうそれっきりなんの物音もしない。錯覚にちがいがなかった。しかしなぜ急にたまらなく不安になってくる。ただの不安ではない。自分でも説明のつかないほど入り組んだ、恐怖にちかい感情だった。もちろん脱走兵士に対するおそれなどではない。一般犯人に対する場合のようには、いきなり憎しみがわいてこず、憎しみがわいてこないことで、憎しみを喰する者の存在を自覚し、それがいままでは追う者の位置に安定していたために気づかなかった。追う者と追われる者のあいだの奈落をのぞきこませることになったのだろうか。自責の念にかられて立上り、ゆるさん！ とはげしく声にだして言う。そんなことで不安が去ってくれるわけもなかった。しかもそれはまだほんの内側の小さな不安にすぎなかったのだ。その外には、さらに大きな怖れがおおいかぶさってきている。内側の不安が結局は共犯者の不安であり、村中の誰もが感ずるであろう不安であり、自分までがその不安からののがれられずにいるということだ。そのさらに大きな恐れの原因だったらしい。おれも老いこんだな、と思う。すると急に怒

りがこみあげてくるのだった。さばかれるときがくれば、いずれさばかれるのだ。なにもおれ一人で背負っていることはないじゃないか。喉の奥が変にしめっぽかった。ストロップの通風口を閉じ、剣をつつて外套の襟をたて、外に出た。

雪は軽く、さらさらして、踏みつけると気持ちのいい音をたててきしむ。足跡は分るが、靴跡は残らない。魚屋の角をまがるとすぐ、村で唯一の西洋窓のついた村長の家だ。その西洋窓にあかあかと燈がともり、こもったような高笑いが道まできこえていた。例によって住職のやつにちがいない。いつものように裏からまわることはせず、いきなり表の戸をひきあけてやった。

びっくりしたように、部屋の空気がひきしまる。あわてて瀬戸物をしまいこむ音に重ねて、間のびのした村長のゆるえ声が出た。

「誰だね、いまごろ……？」

まあまだ遅くのは早い、咳ばらいだけして、わざと返事をしなかった。障子が開いて、助役が顔をのぞけた。

「おや、なんだい、駐在さんじゃないか。」

「やあ、あがんな、あがんな。」

と住職も乗出してきて、すっかり障子が明けはなたれた。あきらかに三人とも運氣をおびている。

「弱ったことがおきてな……」

219

「なんだべ?……」「まあ話はあとだ、上つて、陣子さしめて、いっぺえ飲んで……」  
 「脱走兵がな、北山さ逃げこんだちゅうで……」  
 「脱走兵?……」住職が腹鋭越しに唾をのみこんだ。「北山からなら、どこに下るにも、ここが  
 通り道だべ。」  
 「そういう情報が入つとる……どうも、この村をねらつておるらしいな……」  
 「ねらつとる?」迷惑そうに村長が高い鼻筋にそつて指先をすべらせた。  
 「腹がへつておるちゅうで……」  
 「そんなもの、こまるぞー」  
 「なあに」と助役が勢いこんで村長をさえきり、「脱走兵なんちゅうものは、だいたいが非国  
 民だべ。よっぽどの、おくひょうたれたべな。山狩りでもして、ひとつらえてやるべえよ。」  
 「でもな、銃をもつておるちゅうで……それに、腹すかして、狂暴になつておるでな……」  
 「支那に行く」と村長が溜息をついた。「どの村にも、こう、ちゃんと部落ごとに城壁があ  
 つてな……」  
 「城壁つてことはねえべさ。」と助役がいまいましげに口をはさむ。  
 「うん、城壁つてことはねえべな……」  
 「ありやあ、ただの土塀だべ。」  
 「ただの土塀だべな……」  
 鎖がきしむような音におどろいて、思わずいっせいにふりむくと、ちょうど柱時計が八時を

打ちはじめようとするところだった。せきこんで住職がむきなおつた。

「で、どうすべえ?」  
 「だから、ひとつらまえて、半殺しにしてやるべえよー」  
 助役だけがそんなふうにかむのも、考えてみればむりのないことだった。村でまた兵隊に行  
 かない、ただ一人の三十代の男だったのである。それにしても、さつきとくらべれば、もう幾  
 分語気がおとろえかけている。巡査が、勇気づけるように、うなずいて言った。  
 「それがいいな、どうせ太みたいな非国民だ……でも」と声をおとし、首をかしげて、「銃を  
 もつとるちゅうでなあ……追手がかかった、腹すかしの非国民に、銃をもたしたら、どんなこ  
 とになるべえか……」  
 「そうだ、そうだ、氣遣いに刃物ちゅうでねえか……」と住職が助役に手をふつて、巡査の顔  
 をのぞきこみ、「どうすべえかなあ?」  
 「どうすべえつて、そりやあ……」と村長が鼻をつまみながら、思わず口をすべらせる。「ま  
 さか、その脱走兵、うちの村のものではねえべなあ……」  
 「まさか!」助役は顔をつきだし、本気で大声をあげた。「そんなんは、どうせ、ぬくいところ  
 から来たやつにきまつてるでねえかよー!」  
 「でも、どうしてまだ、脱走なんかしたんだべ? この寒空によ。」  
 「まったくなあ……どうせ、逃げおおせるわけでもなし……親が可哀そうだ……」  
 「けど、なんだな、どこやらの村じゃ、後家さんが一月以上も、屋根裏に脱走兵をかくまっ

ていたことがあるちゅう話しやねえか。」

「昔の話だべ。いまだき、そんな非国民はいやせんよ。」

「そうだなあ……」

みろ、みんなびくびくしている。やはり誰だって不安なのだ。かわりあいになるのが恐しいのだ。しかも、いったん知ってしまったら、もう手をよこさずにはすまぬことなどではしない。耳をふさげば、ふさいだその手が、こんどはかわって、救いをもとめる奴の絶叫を聞くことだろう。耳をふさぐというそのことが、すでに共犯のしるしなのだから……つまりはこいつらも、すっかりぐるだというわけさ。

「まあ、わしの考えを言わせてもらえだね……」彼はゆっくりと、鼻をすすりあげながら無表情に言った。「特急回覧板かなにかで、すぐにも村中にひろめることだな……脱走兵が村に近づくとしておるから、戸じまりを厳重にして、一步も外に出ないように……空襲警報の要領で、明りがもれんようにして、声をかけられても、返事をせんこと……口をきくと、つけこまれるでな……たとえばこうだ、まずはじめに水をいっぱいとくる……水くらいならちゅうので、水をやると、こんどは飯だな……飯をやったとするべ、するとこんどは着替えの服をくれろという……服の次には、銭だべな……銭もくれてやると、次はなんだべか。さんさんおせわになったが、顔を見られたので具合がわるい、ついでに最後のものもちゅうんで、パァンとくるべ……」

三人は巡査の次の言葉を待って、じっと息をひそめていた。しかしなにも言いたず気配がな

いので、村長がそつとたずねてみる。

「それだけかね？」

「あとのことは、憲兵がやってくれるべな……」

住職が腰をあげながら、気まずそうに言った。「おれさとは、遠いだでな……」村長が、わけて警防団の詰所に電話をかけはじめると、助役も住職のあとについて席を立った。「そろそろ、村の中さうろつきはじめるとちがうべか……」

一時間とたたぬうちに、村中にその通達が行きわたっていた。台風警報が出されてもしたように、どこの家もが、戸口にしんばりぼうを当てがい、弱いところには板を打ちつけて補強した。なかには、枕もとに、竹箒や薪割を用意したものさえいたということだ。十時すぎには駐在所をのこして、村全体がひっそりと暗闇のなかに沈んでしまう。けだものじみた不安が、村全体をつつみこんだ。

おびえながらも、やがて、大部分の家が、そのままねむりこんでしまっていた。——ただ、老巡査だけが、なにかを待ちうけるように、いつまでも起きて、じっと外の物音に耳をすませつつけている。もちろん、しめだて閉じこもってしまった村民たちには、知るすべもなかったが……

翌朝、やっと夜が明けはじめころ、南の丘の向うから、けたたましい列車の警笛が、ながいあいだ断続しながら鳴りつづけた。雲が低いので、その不吉な叫びはようしゃなく、村をめ



がけて流れこみ、ほとんどの村民がそれで目を覚まされた。その意味をさとした幾人かが、すぐにしんはりほうを外して、雨戸を開けた。

老巡査は、寝不足で赤く血走った目を、南側の窓ガラスによせ、じつと丘のほうを見つめていた。彼の目には、まっすぐ丘をこえていく、一本のかすかな灰色の線が、はつきり見えていた。汽笛がなりやみ、しばらくすると、スキーをかかえた助役が、二人の男と一緒にやって来た。

「誰かまた、鉄道とびこみをしたらしいが、昨日の非国民のやつじゃねえべかな……ちょっと行ってみるべえと思うが、あんたも一緒に来ないかね？」

「いや、わしは残る。町から、連絡があるかもしれんてな……」

やがて、スキーをはいた三人が、丘をこえていく灰色の線を発見し、うなずきあって、そのあとをのぼりはじめる。老巡査は、やつと窓ぎわをはなれて、ストロブのまえに膝をかかえこんだ。

助役が戻ってきたとき、巡査はまだそのままの姿勢で居眠りをつづけていた。助役は黙って巡査が目をさますまで待ってみた。いつまでも目をさましやうにないので、あきらめて引返そうとすると、ふと目を開けて、ささやき声でたずねた。

「どう……見て、きたかね？」

「ああ、見てきたわ。」

「そうかね、ああ……」

「あんた、知っていたんだべ？」

「ああ、知っておったよ……」

「じゃあ、あんたが、行かしたんだべな？」

「ああ……いや、わしは……な、助役さん……あんた、わしははずかしいで……なにもこんな近くでやらんでも、よかつたろうに……わしに対する、つらあてだつたんだべか……もうあんなやつ、息子だとは思わんわ……でも、あんた、村の衆には、黙っておいてくれるべえな？」

「しかし、一緒に行つた二人が、もう知っておるで……」

「そう……そうだべなあ……いずれ、わし自身も、責任とらんといかんべなあ……」

「一緒に行つた二人が、もう知っておるで……」

「だべなあ……」

「死にさまは、悪くなかつたよ。銃も、ちゃんとわざとけて、木の枝さ、かけてあった。」

「ああ……」

「それから、窓の下、足跡、消しておいたほうが、よくはねえか。」

「だべなあ……」

十日ほどして、老巡査は、リヤカーをひきながら村を立ち去った。

私はおかしな夢を見た  
帽子だけが戻ってきた  
昼さがり——

時 の 崖

……負けちゃいられねえよなあ……勝負だもんなあ……負けるために、勝負してるわけじゃねえんだからなあ……

あ、これ、昨日の牛乳じゃないか！ 駄目だよ、しょうがねえなあ、いくら冷蔵庫に置いておいたって、駄目なんだよ。牛乳ってのはね、生きてるもんたる？ 分る？ 生きてるんだよ、これ、本当に、生き物なんだ。生きてるから、自分で自分を、食っちゃうのさ。栄養がぜんぜん、無くなっちゃうんだよ。困るんだなあ、これだから……ほら、日付が入ってるたる、蓋に。だじじゃないんだよ、わざわざ印刷代かけて。今日のは、今日のうちに飲むようにってね……

いま、何時？

でも、こんど来た、新しいパンチング・ボール……あの赤いやつ……あれ、当り具合の感じいいなあ……ワン、ツウ、ワン、ツウ、ワン、ツウ……おれって、ほら、音に敏感たる？ 音を聞いただけで、びんと来ちゃうもんな。リングに上って、靴の裏が、松脂でキョッキョッキョッと鳴るたる？ あれで、もう、その日の調子が分っちゃうもんな。だから、試合の途中で、あわてて松脂をつけたおしに、コーナーに戻って来たりしちゃってさ。あのときは、笑われちゃったなあ……

あ、今晚は……木村さん、昨日調子よかったですねえ……よかったよ、本当に。リングサイドにね、ほら、すごくグラマーな女の人、応援していたでしょ、こんなになって……

230

へ好きなんだあ、好きなんだあか……

ああ、いよんなつちまうなあ……負けちゃいられねえんだよなあ……

この頃、減量がこたえて、夜中に、握り飯の夢をみて目を覚したりするんだよ。おまけに、試合の回数が多いだろ。よくないなあ、試合が多すぎるのは。手頃な相手だと思って、甘くみられているのかな？

そりや、試合がなけりや、ないで、こんどは練習に身が入らなくなってしまうよな。でも、こんなことをしてちゃ、早く駄目になっちゃう。本当に、早く駄目になっちゃうんだ。数よりも、質でいかなけりや……いい試合だけを選んで……でもより、そんなぜいたくも、言っちゃいられねえからなあ……

ちくしょう、こないだなんて、目方まではかったんだよ……計量までしたんだよ……そしたら、相手が居ないんでやんの……泣かされちゃったなあ、本当にさ……さんさん、苦勞して、減量したあけくにさ。ああ、そりや、金はもらったよ。だって、計量まで来ちゃったんじや、只ってわけにはいかないよな。でも、がっかりさせるじゃないか、こつちはよう、ボクシングなんかしてなかったら、本当に、食いざかりの年頃だろ？ 五一キロが、二キロになったからって、誰もわいおい騒いだりなんかしやしねえよ。おれだって、はじめた頃なんか、平気だったけどなあ。人一倍、運動するもんだから、ちょっと食っても、すぐ肉になっちゃうんだなあ……

もう、これ以上、いろいろ言われたんじや、おれ、つらくなっちゃうよ。あんまり分りきつた生活は、つまんねえと思って、ボクシングなんかはじめたけど、ボクシングってやつは、分らなすぎるもんな。だから、悩んじゃうのさ。でも、自殺なんか出来ねえだろ？……出来っこないさ……よっぽど頭の進んだ人間でなきゃ、そんなこと、出来るわけがないじゃないか……

……あれ、おまえ、ずいぶん上のほうつめちゃったな、頭の毛……いいんだよ、試合のまえに床屋に行くのは……本当に、不精ひげなんか生やしていると、負けたとき、一倍もみじめつたらしく見えちゃうからなあ……

ワン、ツウ、ワン、ツウ、ワン、ツウ、ワン、ツウ、ワン、ツウ、ワン、ツウ……おや、今日おれ、けっこう調子いいようだぞ……

そうそう、ねえ、木村さん、ぼくこないだ、おみくじ引いたんですよ。そしたらね、へ棚からぼた餅……つてのが、一枚でたんですよ。ほら、あの、ビーナッツに入っているの、あるでしょ？ 十円いれて、レバー押すやつ。それでね、ようしと思って、もう一枚ひいたんですよ。こりやおかしいと思ってね。そしたら、次のやつが、またへ棚からぼた餅。ぼく、もう、呆れちゃって、こりや変だと思って、もう一枚……そしたら、またそうなんだ。本当に、めんくらったなあ。こんなことって、あるんでしょうか？ ぼく、いま、手をいためちゃっているでしょう。でも、これならばと思って、先生にたのんで、どうしてもこの試合、やらしてもらおうことにしたんですよ。これで、負けたりしたら、もう本当に、申しわけ立たないからなあ……

はい スパーリング  
ワンツー連打  
ライトワンツー  
はい ジャブ ジャブ ジャブ ジャブ  
アッパーストレート  
ライト三発 一 二 三  
ライトアッパー

なんだい、いまの音？……ああ、下のドアか……ドアまで、鉄なんだからなあ……どすんと、腹にこたえやう。

あれ……今日、おれ、どうかしているな。ぜんぶ、忘れもんばかりだ。誰か、タオルの茶分、持っていませんか？ タオル、忘れちゃったよ。本当に、おれ、馬鹿なのかもしれないなあ……

今朝も、試合の前だから、ロードワークは休んでもいいって言われていたのに、いつものくせで、五時になったら、さっさと飛び起きちゃってね……馬鹿なんだなあ……計量は、もう心配ないからって言われて、うんと寝ようと思っていたのに……昨日なんか、寝るまえに、そう思ったから、音楽聞いたんですよ……チャイコフスキーのバイオリンコンチェルト……いいです

ね、ああいうの……白鳥の湖ってのも、よく効くと思うな……ジャズのほうが好きだけど、ジャズは眠れなくなるから駄目ですね……

でも、なんたって、つらいのは朝早く起きることだな。つらいなあ……いくらロードワークだなんて言っただって、走るのは案外平気だろ……起きて、服を替替えるとき……本当に、あれ、どうしようもないよね……ねむくて、寒くて……早く夏になったらいいなあと思って、もう、そればかり……いやになってしまうよなあ……

まあ、そんなこと言っただって、仕方ないよな。好きでやっているんだからな。嫌だと思っいても、心の中では好きなんだな。もしか、本気で嫌がっているのなら、あんなにひっぱたかれて、またのこのこやって来たりするもんか。いいとこ、あるんだよなあ。第一、はつきりするだろ？ 白か黒か、生きるってことが、はつきりしちゃうだろ？

ジャブ ジャブ ジャブ ジャブ！

ジャブなんだなあ、けつきよく、問題は、ジャブさえ出れば、もう安心だからな。ストレートには自信あるだろ。ジャブで、こう、相手を牽制しておいて、

ジャブ ジャブ ジャブ ジャブ

アッパーストレート！

何時になった？

ああ、もうしき試合なんだなあ……いやだなあ……おれ、もう、いやんなっちゃうよ……

ほら、おれ、赤い靴下買ったんだ。この、赤い色、縁起がいいんだって、八月生れには……

おれ、八月生れだろ……赤は、八月生れの色なんだってね。だから、買っちゃったんだよ、赤い靴下。……え？……白ですか？……本当ですか？　でも、八月生れじゃないんでしょう？……いやだなあ……木村さんは、すぐそんな厭がらせを言うんだから……変だなあ……人によって違うのかなあ……赤い靴下、駄目なのかなあ……

234

……でも、調子いいんだ、おれは。ついているんですよ、この頃。おみくじだって、へ崩からぼた餅でしよう？　夜だって、じゃんじゃんねむれるし。昨日、マッサージしてもらったときなんか、痛くて痛くて、肉が腐っちゃったのかと思ったけど、一と晩ねたら、もうけろっとしているんだからな。やっぱり、キャリアのおかげかな？　ほら、こうして、シャドウボクシングしてみても、腕の調子、軽いからなあ……。勝つように出来ているんですよ、ぼくは。腕なんか、ね、リングに上ったら、びたつとなおつてしまうと思うな。

まったく、負けちゃいられねえよなあ……こんど負けたら、もう、ランキング落ちなんだからなあ……

### ヘーラウンド

……大丈夫だ！　ホイッスルの音が、すぐ耳の近くで聞えなからな……こういうときは、気が落着いている証拠なんだ……靴の松脂もいい音をたてていやがる……勝つさ……もう四回も負けつづけなんだからな……無理しちゃったんだよなあ、腕いためているのに……本当に、無理しちゃって……ボクサーは、体がもとでだから、無理しちゃいかんなんて、いくら言われた

って、やっぱりあせつちやうよなあ……いまさら、休んだところで、いずれランク落ちたら……ランク落ちたら、やりきれんからなあ……いっぺん落ちたら、なかなか戻れないからなあ……むづかしいよ、じつさい……とにかく、競争がはげしいんだから……

ストリートでアップー

まん中へ　まん中へ　まん中へ

何をやっているんだ　打つんだよ

そうそう　そうそう

ふみ込んで　ふみ込んで

ワンツーアップー

分っているよ、うるさいなあ……おれたって、場数はふんでいるんだから……

十位から、九位だろ……九位から、八位だろ……八位から、七位だろ……七位から、六位だろ……一つランクを上るたびに、五人の相手をつぶしているんだってな……先生がそう言っていたよ……だから、チャンピオンは、五の十倍で、五十人のボクサーをつぶした勘定になるわけだな……まあ、チャンピオンまで行けばいいけど、やりきれんな、つぶされる五十人のほうになるのは……でも、どっちかしかないわけだろ、チャンピオンになるか、つぶされる五十人になるか……考えちゃうんだよ、ときどき……七位から、八位……八位から、九位……九位から、

235

十位……いやになっちゃりよなあ、もう……誰か、ほかのやつを、上にあげてやるために、ボクシングをしてるようなもんじゃ、ないか……どうしてなんだろなあ……おれ、やっぱり、見込みないのかなあ……

236

(ゴング)

はい 深呼吸

あのボディね、あれはいいね

いいけど 一 二 でやめちゃ駄目

一 二 三 四

力ぬいていいから つづけてね

つづけて それから 上へ行く

ジャブくっちゃ駄目だよ

ウェービングして

スリフダック使って

中に入って

一 二 三 四

連打してから 上に行く

## 〈2ラウンド〉

……でも、おれ、本当はついていると思うんだけどな。こんど、勤め変わったのが、ほら、二月の十八日だろ……おまけに、その日会社に着いたのが、ジャスト八時……それから、ほら、今年は三十八年、ね……ちゃんと、八が、三つもつづくだろ？ 八は、未広がりて、すごく縁起がいいんだよ。おれ、前途有望だと思ってるんだ。

負けちゃいられねえよなあ……こんど負けたら、ランク落ちだからなあ……

右へ 右へ まわり込むんだ

ほら ストレート

もたもたするなよ

右打って 前へ

右 右 右 右

まわり込んで ボディの連打

よし いいぞ

大丈夫 打ち勝っているぞ

時  
の  
聲

おれねえ、その日のことを、ぜんぶ帳面につけておくんだよ……その日に、自分が、何をし

237

たかってこと……毎日……うん、本当に、一日も欠かしたことはない……はじめに、日付を書いて、睡眠時間書いて、起床時間書いて、それから、ロードワークを何時間やったか、何キロくらい走ったか、調子はどうか……それから、ほら、朝食のまえの飲みもの……番茶だとか、ジュースだとか、牛乳だとか……食事の分量と種類ね……食事のあとで、また飲物だろ……それから、会社に出勤して、間食すれば間食……つぎは昼食で、また飲物と……うんと疲れているときなんか、ほら、昼寝しちゃったりするだろ？……そうしたら、それも書くし……もちろん、その後の飲物も書く……これが、まあ、練習に入るまでのことね……

それから、今度は、退社してジムに入った時間……ウェイトはかって、それを書く……次は、大体、シャドウボクシングね……スパーリングね……スパーリングは、忘れずに、相手の名前……それから、サンドバック……サンドバックがすんだら、もう一度シャドウボクシング……ちゃんと、回数を忘れずにね……パンチングボールも、何回やったか……それから、縄とびは何回、腹筋運動は何回、屈伸運動は何回、その他の運動は何回と、ぜんぶ書く……ええと、それから、それから……あ、ほら、入浴、シャワーね……最後にまた、ウェイトはかって、ジムを出た時間……それから、飲物、夕食、また飲物……寝るまでに間食すれば、それも正直に書く……床についた時間は何時か……マッサージは、したか、しなかったか……栄養剤は何を飲んだか……そして、そのあとに、備考ね……

これを、ぜんぶ、毎日書くんだよ……本当に毎日……心掛けさ……こんなこと、誰のためでもないんだから……だって、そうだと、試合つてのは、はじまる前から、はじまっているもの

だからね……毎日が、試合なんだから……一人でも、他人を追い越そうと思えば、これくらいのことば、しなくっちゃね……

負けられるかって、いまさら……おれ、本当に、こんなふうにして、きびしくやってきたんだからな……

(コング)

ジャブはよく出たね

ファストラウンドより

ジャブが出たから ヒットするの

分る？

はい 深呼吸して 一 二 三

オーケー

言うこと 分る？

分ってるの？

左からいくから 駐目なんだよ

右から 右から

左からいくから 大ぶりになる

みつともないよ 本当に



右から インサイド  
アウトサイドは駄目  
右からまわって インサイドね  
ウエービングして インサイド

### 〈3ラウンド〉

そうそう 右へ 右へ

そう アッパー

ジャブを出せ ジャブ

頑張るんだ

ジャブは 小さく 小さく

大きすぎるぞ

大きい 大きい まだ大きい

そら 右から インサイド

いきまないで いきまないで

左を軽く出して

そら ボディにいけ

ちくしょう、落ちはじめると、早いからなあ……いいときは、三十人もいた後援会が、七人

に減っちゃったんだとさ……会社に行っても、肩身がせまくなるし……どうか、がんばって、  
ぜひとチャンピオンの栄冠をかちとっていただきたいものであります、か……人の気も知ら  
ないで……いやでも、五十人はつぶされてしまうんだぞ……その五十人がいなくなりゃ、チャン  
ピオンだって生れはしないんだ……こっちの方で、お礼を言ってもらいたいくらいのもんだよ  
……馬鹿にしてやがる……

なんだから、いやに、腕が重くなってきたな、いかん、いかん、ガードが落ちているようだぞ  
……昨日の、マッサージのとき、痛かったからなあ……肉が腐ってるみたいだったからなあ  
……おれ、もう、駄目なのか……いやだよ、まったく、こんなパンチの強い選手と組むのは  
……フットワークで逃げきらないと、いためられちゃうぞ……舌がまわらなくなったりしたら、  
勤めにだって出られなくなってしまうからな……

まったく、落ちはじめると早いからなあ、この商売は……穴のあいた落下傘に、ぶら下って  
いるようなもんだからな……ただ、気休めに、つかまっているだけで、手をはなしても同じこ  
となんだ……チャンピオンか……なあに、チャンピオンだって、落ちるときには早いぞ……も  
っと早いくらいだぞ……チャンピオンの向う側が、いちばん急な崖なんだからな……そうだ  
ろ？……向うの崖を落ちるか、こっちの崖を落ちるか、それだけのちがいないか……けっ  
きよく、落ちてしまうんだからなあ……いやんなっちゃうなあ……

## 〈4ラウンド・二分十六秒〉

242

……おや、どこかな？ おれ、ねむっていたのかな？ 川の底にいるみたいだぞ。ほら、顔の上を、魚がおよいでいやるが……

フォア？ フォアだつて？……そんな小さな声で言ったつて、分りやしないよ……じゃ、ダウンされたのかな？……そうかもしれない……息が苦しいからな……胸も悪くなってきた……分るぞ、これはマットの臭いだ……なあに、まだ平気さ……フォアなんだろう？……平気だつたら、あとまだ六秒もあるんじゃないか……

まったく、おれも、無理を重ねちゃったからなあ……落ち目のランキング・ボクサーが、なんと言ったつていちばんよく売れるだろう？……上に進むのに、いい踏み台だからな……だから、どうしても、注文が多くなっちゃうのさ……おれだつて、ほら、上りかけのころは、やっぱりそういう人に目をつけたじゃないか……そう言えば、あの、なんて言っただけ……おれが最初に、ランク入りしたとき、相手になってくれた人……あの人も、あれつきり、見掛けなくなってしまったなあ……やめちゃったんだろうなあ……

さてと、そろそろ、起きてやろうか……

いや、もう少し休んでからにしよう。フォアだろう？ 六秒もあれば、ゆうゆうさ。起きようと思えば、いますぐにだつて起きられるんだからな。まず、右の肘で体をおこして、ああやって、右足をひいて、ぐっと左の膝に重心をうつせば、それでいいんだからね。

きれいだなあ……青空つていうけど、本当に、空つていうのは、青いんだなあ……でも、どうして空が見えるのかな？……どこか、天井に隙間があいていたっけ？……面倒くさいな……天井のことを考えるのは、てんで面倒くさいな……まあいいや……そんなこと、おれには、関係ないことだからな……

よし、起きるぞ！ フットワークで逃げながら、左の眼の上をねらつてやろう。あいつ、まだ傷の跡が残っているみたいだからな。やっとならうになつたばかりじゃないか……一回くらい、ダウンしたつて……キャリアがちがうからな、キャリアが……問題じゃないさ……みてる、ジャブで、動きがとれないようにしてやるからな……そら、いますぐ起きてやるぞ！

右の肘で、体をおこして……右足をひいて……ぐっと重心を、左の膝に……

変だな……なんだか、自分が一人になつたみたいだな……これでも、起きているんだろうか？……リングは、どこに行つてしまつたんだろう……うるさいなあ……うるさくつて、何かなんだか、分らなくなってしまうんじゃないか！

いいよ、いいよ、分ったよ……

せつかく、赤い靴下、新調したのに、おれ、もう、駄目なんだなあ……いいよ、仕方ないよ……どっちみち、おれたちの行ける道なんて、通り抜け禁止にきまつているのさ……四年と六ヶ月か……けつきよく、また元のところへ、逆戻りなんだなあ……いいよ、帰ったら、たらふく飯を食つてやるからな……帳面なんか、そつちのけで、食いたいほうだいに食つてやるさ……うん、タバコも吸うし、酒だつて飲んでやるぞ……半端一本だつて、べろつと平らげてしま

243

ってやる……やりそこなったことを、すっかり、とり返してやるんだ……本当だよ、無理してきたんだからなあ……

ああ、頭が痛くなってきたぞ！ ちくしょう、まだ二、三日、痛くてねむれないんだなあ……痛い……破裂しそうだな……たのむよ、誰か、なんとかしてくれよ……

### APPENDIX III

The following chronological list of Abe's original works is abstracted from the nempu of a recent collection of the author's works: Shinchō Sha ed., Nempu, Abe Kōbō shū - shinchō nihon bungaku 46 [Time Line to Volume 46 of Shincho's Japanese Literature - Selected Works of Abe Kōbō], (Tokyo: Shinchō Sha, 1970) pp.578-584. Unlike in the text and notes, Chinese character equivalents will not be supplied for titles either in this list or in the bibliography. Those interested in the characters are referred to the above nempu. Works which have been consulted for this thesis are marked with an asterisk but only under their original dates of publication. The actual editions used are listed in the bibliography.

1946

Mumei shishū, [Nameless Poems]. (Abe published this anthology at his own expense; the work appeared in mimeographed form.)

1947

"Owarishi michi no shirube ni," [The Road Sign at the End of the Street].

Kosei.

"Bokusō," [The Pasture]. Sōgō Bunka

"Sei no kotoba," [The Words of Life], an essay. Kindai Bungaku.

"Itansha no kokuhaku," [Confessions of a Heretic]. Jigen.

"Na mo naki yoru no tame ni," [Nameless in the Night]. Sōgō Bunka.

"Wareware wa sensō o kaku miru: zetsubō e no hankō," [This is the Way We View War: A Reaction to Despair], an essay. Kindai Bungaku.

"Busshitsu no furin ni tsuite," [Concerning the Immoral Conduct of Material Things], an essay. Kindai Bungaku.

"Aru yoru no kubomi ni," [In the Hollow of a Certain Night]. Kindai Bungaku.

"Profile: Shiina Rinzō," an essay. Sōgō Bunka.

"Kyokō," [Falsehood]. Bungaku Kikan.

1948

Owarishi michi no shirube ni, [The Road Sign at the End of the Street].  
Mayoshimi Sha.

1949

"Hakumei no hōkō," [Twilight Wanderings]. Kosei.

"Ongaku to yoru e no sasoi," [An Invitation to the Night and Music].  
Kindai Bungaku.

"Dendorokakariya," (Dendrocacalia, trans. by M. Jelinkova 1965). Hyōgen.

"Bungaku to jikan," [Time and Literature]. Kindai Bungaku.

\*"Oshinusume," [The Deaf Girl]. Kindai Bungaku.

"Yume no tōbō," [A Dream's Escape]. Ningen.

1950

\*"Mittsu no gūwa: Akai mayu, Kōzui, Mahō no chōku," [Three Fables: The Red Cocoon, The Flood, and The Magic Chalk]. Ningen.

1951

"Kabe: S. Karuma shi no hanzai," [The Wall - The Crime of S. Karuma Esq.]. Kindai Bungaku.

Baberu no tō no tanuki," [The Badger of the Tower of Babel]. Ningen.

"Te: ta ippen," [The Hand: Another Volume]. Gunzō.

"Ueta hifu," [Starved Skin]. Bungakkai.

"Shijin no shōgai," [The Life of a Poet]. Bungei.

"Kūchū rōkaku," [A Castle in the Air]. Bessatsu Bungei Shunjū.

"Chinnyūsha," [The Intruders]. Shinchō.

\*Kabe, [The Wall] a collection of short stories. Getsuyōbi Shobō.

1952

"Noa no hakobune," [Noah's Ark]. Gunzō.

"Suichū toshi," [Underwater City]. Bungakkai.

"Burūto no wana," [A Trap for Brutus]. Genzai.

"Yain no sōjō," [Disturbance in the Dead of Night], an essay. Kaizō.

"Teppōya," [The Gun Shop]. Gunzō.

"Isoppu no saiban," [Aesop's Trial]. Bungei.

Chinnyūsha, a collection of short stories. Mirai Sha.

Ueta hifu, a collection of short stories. Shoshi yuriika.

1953

"R62 gō no hatsumei," [The Discovery of R62]. Bungakkai.

"Shōjo to uo," [The Fish and the Virgin]. Gunzō.

"Sutā no kaidoku sayō ni tsuite," [Restoring a Star to Life]. Bungakkai.

1954

"Panikku," [Panic]. Bungei.

\*"Inu," [The Dog]. Kaizō.

"Henkei no kiroku," [Record of Changes]. Gunzō.

"Shinda musume ga utatta," [The Dead Girl Sang]. Bungakkai.

"Seifuku," [Uniforms], a play. Gunzō.

"Dorei kari," [Slave Hunting]. Bungei.

Kiga dōmei, [Starvation League]. Kōdan Sha.

1955

"Dorei kari," [Slave Hunting], part 2. Bungei.

"Mōchō," [The Appendix]. Bungakkai.

"Bō," ("Stick," trans. by John Nathan, 1966). Bungei.

"Dorei kari," [Slave Hunting], a play. Shin Nihon Bungaku.

"Gorotsuki," [The Bully], Bungakkai.

Dorei kari, Kaisokusen, [Speedboat] Seifuku, collection of plays.

Aoki Shoten.

1956

"Shudan," [A Means]. Bungei.

"Ninniku shokuyō hantai chinjō dan to sannin no shinshitachi," [Three Gentlemen and the Committee Against Cannibalism]. Shin Nihon Bungaku.

"Tantei to kare," [He and the Agent].

"Kagi," [The Key]. Gunzō.

"Eikyū undō," [Perpetual Movement] a play. Bungakkai.

"Kenka," [A Quarrel]. Bungakkai.

"Mirachekku kun no bōken," [The Adventures of Milachek], an essay. Shinmei'en.

R62 go no hatsumei, a collection of short stories and a play. Yamauchi Shoten.

1957

"Yūwakusha," [The Seducer]. Sōgō.

\*"Yume no heishi," [The Dream Soldier]. Bungakkai.

"Ie," [The House]. Bungakkai.

"Namari no tamago," [The Leaden Egg]. Gunzō.

Tōō o iku: hangaria mondai no haikei, [Travelling through Eastern Europe: Background to the Hungarian Problem], a collection of essays. Kōdan Sha.

Kemonotachi wa kokyō o mezasu. [The Beasts Aim for Home]. Kōdan Sha.

Mōjū no kokoro ni keisanki no te o, [Savage Hearts and Computer Hands!] criticisms. Heibon Sha.

1958

"Yūrei wa koko ni iru," [There is a Ghost Here,] a play. Shingeki.

"Emban kuru - hizayusuri no eiyū-tachi," [The discus comes: Knee-shaking Heroes]. Gendai Geijutsu.

"Shisha," [The Envoy]. Bessatsu Bungei Shunju.

Sabakareru kiroku: eiga geijutsu ron, [A Judged Record: Ideas on Film Aesthetics]. Kōdan Sha.

1959

"Satsujin ga akuma no de wa nai," [It's not the Murderer that's Evil], an essay. Chūō Kōron.

"Tōshi zuhō," [Perspective]. Gunzō.

"Ningen sokkuri," [Just Like a Human Being], a play for television. Gendai Geijutsu.

"Kawaii onna," [A Cute Woman], a musical. Gendai Geijutsu.

Yūrei wa koko ni iru, a collection of plays. Shinchō Sha.

\*Daiyonkan Hyōki, (Inter Ice Age 4, trans. by E. Dale Saunders). Kōdan Sha.

1960

"Kyojin Densetsu," [The Tale of the Giant], a play. Bungakkai.

"Eizō wa gengo no kabe o hakai suru," [Filmed Images Destroy the Wall of Language], an essay. Gunzō.

"Jiken no haikai, ichi - hachi no su jō sōdō ki," [A Record of the Movement at Bee's Nest Castle], an essay. Chūō Kōron.

"Nawa," [The Trap]. Gunzō.

"Chichindera Yapana," [Cicindela Japan]. Bungakkai.

"Pengoku," [Hell], a play for television. Gendai Geijutsu.

Ishi no me [Eyes of Stone]. Shinchō Sha.

1961

"Tanin no shi," [Death of Another]. Gunzō.

1962

"Monrō no gyakusetsu," [The Paradox of Monroe], an essay. Shinchō.

"Ōgon dōro: kōtsū no shōgun-tachi," [The Road Paved with Gold: The Generals of the Traffic War]. Sekai.

"Ningyō den," [The Tale of the Mermaid]. Bungakkai.

"Jōsai," [Fort]. Bungei.

\*Suna no onna (The Woman in the Dunes, trans. by E. Dale Saunders 1964). Shinchō Sha.

1963

"Benki ni matagatta shisō," [Thoughts Astride a Toilet], an essay. Bungakkai.

1964

"Tanin no kao," [Face of Another], Gunzō.

\*"Toki no gake," [The Cliff of Time]. Bungakkai.

\*Tanin no kao (The Face of Another, trans. by E. Dale Saunders, 1966). Shinchō Sha.

\*Mikankeina shi, [An Unrelated Death], a collection of short stories, Shinchō Sha.

Suichū toshi, a collection of short stories, Tōgen Sha.

1965

"Mokugekisha," [The Witness], a play for television. Shin Nihon Bungaku.  
Omae ni mo tsumi ga aru, [Even You are Guilty], a collection of plays.

Gakushū Kenkyū Sha.

Enomoto Buyō, [Enomoto Buyō], Chūō Kōron Sha.

Sabaku no shisō, [Desert Thoughts], a collection of essays. Kōdan Sha.

1966

"Kābu no muko," [Beyond the Curve]. Chūō Kōron.

1967

"Toshi ni tsuite," [Concerning the City]. Shinchō.

"Tomodachi," [Friends]. Bungei.

"Enomoto Buyō," a play. Chūō Kōron.

"Dorei kari," rpt. in Shingeki.

Ningen sokkuri, a collection of works. Hayakawa Shobō.

\*Moetsukita chizu (The Ruined Map, trans. by E. Dale Saunders, 1969)  
 Shinchō Sha.

Tomodachi, (Friends, trans. by Donald Keene 1969) Enomoto Buyō, a  
 collection of plays. Kawade Shobō.

1968

"Miritarīi rukku," [Military Look], an essay. Chūō Kōron.

"Itansha no pasupōto," [Passport for a Heretic], an essay. Chūō Kōron.

"Uchinaru henkyō," [Inner Regions], an essay. Chūō Kōron.

Yume no tōbō, a collection of short stories, Tokuma Shoten.

1969

"Kaban," [The Briefcase], a play. Bungei.

"Bō ni natta otoko," [The Man who Became a Stick], a play, Bungakkai.

"Ne nashi kusa no bungaku," [Literature that is like Grass without  
 Roots], an essay. Nami.

Bō ni natta otoko, a collection of plays, Shinchō Sha.

Kabe, a collection of short stories. Shinchō Bunko.



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Works of Abe Kōbō]. Tokyo: Shinchō Sha, 1970, pp.467-481.
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1971.
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Mahō no chōku," "Jigyō," and "Baberu no tō no tanuki."
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to the Library of Avant Garde Literature II]. Tokyo: Chikuma  
Shobō, 1960.
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Dream Escape]. Tokyo: Tokuma Shoten, 1968, pp.155-166.
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