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SHANGHAI, JAPAN, AND IDENTITY POLITICS:  
ON YOKOMITSU RIICHI'S *SHANGHAI*

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Introduction

Yokomitsu Riichi's novel *Shanghai*<sup>1</sup> takes up the problem of identity politics of Japanese people who lived in the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai. This text is underlined by the epoch-making incident of May 30, 1925, which helped strengthen the anti-imperialism and national independence movements in China. Images of Japanese people in *Shanghai* are related to Ōe Kenzaburō's thoughts on "Japan, the ambiguous, and myself."<sup>2</sup> Following Ōe, here the concept "ambiguous" refers to bipolarity; it does not mean "vague."<sup>3</sup> My question is why Japanese living in Shanghai were "ambiguous." The answer is that it was because their position in this cosmopolitan city was "ambiguous," i. e., the formation of their own identities was diffi-

- 1 *Shanghai* was originally published in a series of five short stories in *Kaizō* (Nov. 1928 – Dec. 1929, Tōkyō: Kaizōsha). These were the following: *Furo to ginkō* (*Bath and Bank*), *Ashi to seigi* (*Legs and Justice*), *Hakidame no gimon* (*A Question about Rubbish Heap*), *Jibyō to dangan* (*Chronic Disease and Bullet*), and *Kaikō shō* (*Chapter of Seaport*). After that, two short stories, *Fujin. Kaikō shō* (*Lady. Chapter of Seaport*; Jan. 1931) and *Shunpu. Kaikō shō* (*Prostitute. Chapter of Seaport*; Nov. 1931), were also published both as series in *Kaizō* (Tōkyō: Kaizōsha). These seven pieces and a new short story, *Gozen* (*Morning*) (in: *Bungaku kuotarī*, June 1932, Tōkyō: Kaizōsha) which has been inserted into chapter 32, were gathered together into a novel named *Shanghai* (July 1932, Tōkyō: Kaizōsha). While compiling these texts as a book and preparing their definitive edition (March 1935, Tōkyō: Shomotsu tenbōsha), Yokomitsu rewrote many parts, though they will not be referred to in this article. All quotations here are from *Teihon Yokomitsu Riichi zenshū*, vol. 3 (Sep. 1981, Tōkyō: Kawade shobō shinsha) whose original text is based on the first issue (1932, Kaizōsha).
- 2 According to Ōe, "After a hundred and twenty years of modernization since the opening up of the country, contemporary Japan is split between two opposite poles of ambiguity." (See ŌE 1994, p. 117.)
- 3 Ōe stated, "I would like to use the word 'ambiguous' in accordance with the distinction made by the eminent British poet Kathleen Raine, who once said of Blake that he was not so much vague as ambiguous." (See ŌE 1994, pp. 116–117.)

cult for them. The keyword “ambiguous” is related to three levels of meaning:

- 1) the ambiguity of Shanghai as a *topos*;
- 2) the ambiguity of Japan as a nation-state whose process of modernization compared to that of other nations was delayed;
- 3) the ambiguity of the literary strategy of Yokomitsu Riichi.

I first will give an outline of 3), then details concerning 1) and 2) will be given later. Furthermore, I will suggest the problematic of “identity politics” in *Shanghai*.

### The ambiguity of the literary strategy of Yokomitsu Riichi

Yokomitsu Riichi (1898–1947) is known as an author whose style of writing changed several times. Before and after writing *Shanghai*, Yokomitsu, as a standard-bearer of the *Shinkankaku-ha* (School of New Sensibilities), had denied the tradition of the literary establishment which was dominated by naturalist literature (*shizenshugi bungaku*). At the same time, he had started positioning himself against Marxist literature which then had been gathering force. It was a characteristic for the writers of the *Shinkankaku-ha* to depict the dynamics of the “city” in their literary texts. Furthermore, they introduced the defamiliarization/*Verfremdung* of a signifier/*écriture*.

In 1920s’ Japan, the time of mass production and mass consumption had begun with a boom initiated by World War I. Then a circulation system (capital – work – goods – consumption) had started roaring in earnest, the so-called Roaring Twenties. The population suddenly flew into the city and the peoples *habitus* changed. A government enterprise on city planning, the *Tōkyō shiku kaisei* (Reorganization of the City Boroughs) which started to get on the right track in the 1890s, was taken over by the *Toshi keikaku hō* (Law for Urban Planning) in 1919. It increased in effectiveness due to the *Kantō dai shinsai*, the Tōkyō earthquake of September 1923, which gave cause to the reconstruction of the city’s infrastructure. Einstein’s visit to Japan lead to the “Einstein Shock” which gave reason to doubt the common understanding of human being’s condition and his/her abilities of perception. The paradigm change in Japan was deeply influenced by avant-garde European tendencies in the arts which were simultaneously adopted such as futurism, cubism, constructivism, Dadaism, surrealism, and *Neue Sachlich-*

*keit*. Yokomitsu's text was produced by interweaving these contemporary contexts.<sup>4</sup>

Before and after writing *Shanghai* Yokomitsu aimed at a "more thorough autonomy of the signifier."<sup>5</sup> According to him,

[a] letter is a material. . . . Contents are an energy which is created between a reader and the form of letters. It becomes clear that the energy cannot be changed by the same form of letters but by the brain of the reader. That is what I said that contents are the reader's illusion given by the form of letters. . . . Literary texts which are made of enumerations of letters and which are the crops that we drew up only exist as materials of forms, being completely independent from both writers and readers. . . . The most necessary thing for literary texts is the matter of form which gives energy to the readers. All literary texts are only composed of forms: letters, words, phrases, paragraphs, and structure. The unity of these forms is brought about here as a literary text for the first time.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, Yokomitsu stated that

[as] long as a country has its own literature, the country needs a peculiar theory of forms in order to develop its literature. Especially, if the literature of Japan uses a hieroglyph (*kanji*), a peculiar theory of forms for Japanese literature should be found.<sup>7</sup>

With regard to these statements, Yokomitsu's theory of literary expression was based on thorough formalism and was conscious of the theory of the reader's response. It is very important that Yokomitsu emphasized the materiality of *écriture*. According to him, neither writer nor reader can easily assimilate *écriture* in his/her consciousness. Yokomitsu radically defamiliarized the *écriture* and tried to investigate the possibility of *géno-texte* (J. Kristeva), i. e., promoting the auto-organization of language. Needless to

4 I have explained in detail in *Hanten suru toshi* (*Reversing City*) (see TAGUCHI 1987, pp. 63–75).

5 See KOMORI 1988, p. 531: *Moji, Shintai, Shōchō kōkan. Yokomitsu Riichi's Shanghai no hōhō, jōsetsu*. This article was first published in *Shōwa bungaku kenkyū*, 1984.

6 See YOKOMITSU 1982, pp. 114–116: *Moji ni tsuite* (*About a Letter*) with the subtitle *Keishiki to mekanizumu ni tsuite* (*About Form and Mechanism*) which is the original title in *Sōsaku gekkan*, 1929.

7 See YOKOMITSU 1982, p. 154: *Bungei Jihyō* (*Literary Comment*), in: *Bungei shunjū*, 1928.

say that his theory was supported by “epistemological paradigm change” during the 1920s which was brought about by the linguistic theories of Saussure.

Yokomitsu also gave attention to the “peculiar theory of forms for Japanese literature” which used a “hieroglyph” (ideograph). “*Kanji*” is an *écriture* which connotes not only its sound but also its visual picture and pictorial symbol. Yokomitsu was groping for a formalism which was conscious of such characteristics of *kanji*. Therefore, his text inevitably had many meanings and thus became “ambiguous.” As mentioned above, Yokomitsu chose the dynamics of the “city” in the 1920s as an object of literary expression. He investigated diffuse reflections of crowd, speed, and the senses, and therefore had to change the form of his *écriture*. In other words, Yokomitsu experimented with language to represent the dynamics of the “city.” *Shanghai* was on its extension line.

### The ambiguity of Shanghai

In the second half of the 1920s, three million people lived in Shanghai. In the International Settlement and the French Concession, Chinese people amounted to ninety-eight percent. Furthermore, there were fifty thousand foreigners who came from more than forty countries. Precisely speaking, “the International Settlement” was not a concession which was directly granted by the Chinese government to a foreign government but was an area where foreigners were permitted to live by the Qing government. The status of the French Concession in Shanghai was not that of a concession, but rather it was similar to an international settlement. In short, Shanghai was an “ambiguous” *topos* where foreign powers could not legally claim their own territories.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the imperial powers constructed the “Municipal Council” as an administrative organ under the 1854 Land Regulations and tried to form an association, the so-called “Meeting of Ratepayers” which, as a legislative organ under the 1869 Land Regulations, only consisted of foreigners. By reinforcing the official power and authority of the Municipal

8 Concerning the ambiguity of the International Settlement especially seen from the point of view of an international law, I have referred to “The Shanghai Problem” (see JOHNSTONE 1937, pp. 52–53).

Council, the foreigners tried to form a new organization which differed from the traditional administrative system of the Qing government.

According to Edgar Snow:

[to] find men of all creeds and colors is not so phenomenal perhaps; New York, Paris, Berlin and Vienna can point to a medley of races. But in Shanghai there is for the most part no mixture; that is the phenomenon. Here, generation after generation, the British have stayed British, the Americans have remained "100 percenters." ... In Paris, Berlin, New York, the foreigner is subject to the laws of the country; in Shanghai (unless he is one of those whose country has no extraterritoriality rights in China) he is immune from all but his own consular jurisdiction. Among the foreign races each community maintains its identity on a standard that has its counterpart in hundreds of provincial towns in the home country. (Snow 1933:173–174)

Edgar Snow implies that Shanghai was a "mosaic city." Many nationalities and races separately lived there, but they never had symbiotic relationships with each other. In the mosaic city of Shanghai, residents kept their own *habitus* and a habitat segregation in each *topos*. The habitat segregation was kept in balance not by law but by the political and economic dynamics of each country. The stabilizing network was always fluid and unstable, and the body living there was inevitably also fluid, with changes in the political and economic dynamics.

Seen from a broader perspective, the free trade system, which Great Britain had used to demonstrate its hegemony, became a failure by World War I. Then the center of the world-system shifted to the United States. However, the United States did not lead the economic world-system after the war, and the Russian Revolution in 1917 built a socialist state. Due to this, the world-system lost its center and started shaking seriously. The cosmopolitan city of Shanghai was a kind of microcosm of such world. Needless to say, Shanghai existed as a *topos* where many different systems of political dynamics were fighting against each other: Western and Japanese imperial capitalism, Chinese national capitalism, Russian and Chinese communism, and Asianism. As for China, Shanghai was an important *topos* because it was the first modernized city, defining it as "the West in China." This city had enough talents and economic power to resist against the rule of the settlements. In short, Shanghai was a hot spot of collisions such as the West versus Asia, and capitalism versus communism. Certainly, space in Shanghai was initiating chaotic changes that occurred at a rapid pace.



### The ambiguity of modern Japan

Japan started earnestly to advance into Shanghai after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904. The Japanese population in Shanghai rapidly increased with the growing number of Japanese companies. The Japanese capital was brought to rapid progress by World War I. The number of Japanese residents in Shanghai counted 11,457 in 1915, and, overtaking the number of British residents, stood first. Japan had participated in the Western competition for colonies from the second half of the 19th century and had been waiting for an opportunity to colonize China since the annexation of Korea in 1910. Shanghai was one of the favorite targets. In short, Japan's existence was "ambiguous"; it was not only a member of the Asian countries but also of the Western powers.

Japan's ambiguity was rooted in its Asian history. Four phases can be distinguished:

- (1) Over centuries, China had been a suzerain state with Japan as its tributary; China (the strong)  $\Rightarrow$  Japan (the weak).
- (2) Since the Meiji period Japan attempted to modernize/westernize. It had raised its power through the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese War and became one of the world's "five major powers" after World War I; modern Japan (the strong)  $\Rightarrow$  China (the weak).
- (3) In the hierarchy of the Western powers, however, Japan was still a weak and small nation; the Western powers (the strong)  $\Rightarrow$  modern Japan (the weak).
- (4) As a synthesis of these relationships the hierarchy of power politics in China can be seen as the Western powers (the strong)  $\Rightarrow$  modern Japan (the ambiguous strong/weak)  $\Rightarrow$  China (the weak).

The reversion of the relations from (1) to (2) promoted the Japanese to intricate superiority towards China. This reactionary superiority was rooted in Japan's inferior complex towards China from which it had suffered over centuries. Concerning (3), however, Japan could not help feeling inferior to the Western powers. This caused Japan's intricate feelings towards China on the phase in (4). In these four phases two feelings towards China were inconsistent:

- 1) Japan directed its intricate discriminatory glance to China while receiving the same kind of glance from the Western powers;
- 2) Japan had sympathy for China. This was accompanied with inferiority towards the Western powers.

1) and 2) could also be expressed as:

1') Japan enforced the Western theory of power politics towards China while being similarly menaced by the Western powers with the same theory;

2') Japan identified itself with China due to cultural and ethnic reasons. These inconsistent feelings towards China were caused by the potential energy which the position of the "ambiguous" modern Japan connoted as described in (4). Japan certainly needed a model in order to modernize. Therefore, the Western mode of modernizing was indispensable for Japan to establish its own identity and "formation of subjectivity." However, in the process of modernization, Japan adopted a similar discriminatory view as the Western powers on Asia.

The Western settlements were based on theories and principles rooted in the history of the Western nations. For better or for worse, one needs both to rule. As for Shanghai, there was the principle of habitat segregation, the "mosaic city" (separate city) as implied by Edgar Snow. Furthermore, there was the principle of "armed neutrality" at work, even though the war still occurred. However, concerning the policy for China, Japan lacked such a theory or principle. As mentioned above, the potential energy was one of the reasons why a discourse that did not clarify the rights and wrongs of the rule—such as Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Datsua ron* (*Theory of Leaving Asia*; 1885)—was able to thrive. Fukuzawa states that

[we] have cast in our lot with the civilized Western countries, and in terms of meeting China and Korea we do not need to make a special bow towards them even though they are our neighbors. We should just do as Westerners do towards them. (Fukuzawa 1960:240) (1/1')

Furthermore, in the essay *Jiji shōgen* (*Commentary on Current Problems*; 1881), Fukuzawa stated that

[since] only Japan, among all of the countries of the East, could stand at the center of civilization with the West, it should resolve to make the protection of East Asia its own responsibility. (Fukuzawa 1959:186)

Here it is obviously acknowledged that this discourse led to Japan's self-image as "protector" of the Eastern civilization against the West (2/2'). Moreover, before and after 1920, a cloud started to hang over the Western civilization by World War I, and these discourses were linked to others which



propagandized Japan's role as the leader of Asia and its mission to unite the Eastern and Western civilizations. Texts such as *Tōzai bunmei no daihyōsha* (*A Representative of the Eastern and Western Civilizations*; 1916) by Ukita Kazutami and *Tōzai bunmei no chōwa* (*Harmony of the Eastern and Western Civilizations*; 1923), ideas by Ōkuma Shigenobu and collected by Kaneko Chikusui, are characteristic of this discourse. At that time, Japan's superiority complex towards the Western powers gained weight (though it was just overcompensation of inferiority) and its self-image as the leader of Asia swelled. The following diagram explains this relationship:

(5) modern Japan (the strong)  $\Rightarrow$  the Western powers (the weak)  $\Rightarrow$  China (the weaker).

In general, the discussion of *Kindai no chōkoku* (*Overcoming Modernity*) since the 1930s and the haughty self-image were constructed in this way, though Japan was still a petty Empire. Japan rushed into the war which continued for fifteen years. However, this self-image of modern Japan included some fundamental mistakes. It is obvious that one of them was Japan's feeling of being superior to the Western nations thus considering them as the weak. More important was Japan's lack of self-consciousness for the nationalistic and anti-Japanese feelings which started gaining power in China. These undefined and unstable relationships with foreign countries led to modern Japan's "ambiguous" position. Nevertheless, these discourses also concealed the "origin" itself. In other words, the dominant system of discourse at that time tried to eliminate the origin, "Japan, the ambiguous, and myself."

As stated at the beginning, Yokomitsu Riichi's *Shanghai* takes up the problem of identity politics of Japanese people who lived in Shanghai. Yokomitsu gave attention to the following: the dynamics of the "city" of Shanghai convulsed with the incident of May 30, the hybridization of the political power systems, the intercourse of goods, money, and human beings, the diffused reflections of crowd, speed, and the senses, and the conflict of identity politics of Japanese people living there. *Shanghai* intensively reveals "Japan, the ambiguous, and myself." This is obvious if one contrasts this text with the discourse at that time.<sup>9</sup>

9 Concerning the representation strategy of *Shanghai*, it is necessary to discuss more about its differences and deflections from the other texts at that time. In general, how-

### Identity politics in Shanghai

The following quotation is a general outline of the incident of May 30, 1925:

The beginnings of the May 30 incident were a labor movement which had spread into foreign capital cotton mills in Shanghai since February. The movement called for improvements of the labor conditions and approval of a labor union. Foreign capital textile companies tried to increase their profit by rationalization because their economic success had been overtaken by national Chinese capital textile industries. At the same time, fearing the Communist Party which expanded its power, they reinforced the management and factory supervision and set about earnestly dissipating a labor union. In such circumstances, strikes one after another took place at cotton mills in Shanghai in February 1925. This also effected a Japanese capital cotton mill in Qingdao in April. On May 15, at the Seventh Naigai cotton mill in Shanghai, laborers on strike collided with the guards of the cotton mills. A laborer, Gu Zheng-hong, a member of the Communist Party, was shot dead, and more than ten Chinese laborers were seriously or slightly injured. Protest movements against this accident soon began to expand into the anti-Japanese movement mobilizing students, intellectuals, and laborers. On May 30, the Communist Party mobilized one thousand students and laborers, and a protest demonstration unfolded in the International Settlement. It was the first large-scale protest demonstration in the history of Shanghai. The British police of the International Settlement volleyed the demonstrators. The demonstration turned into a terrible affair where thirteen Chinese were killed and a score of others was seriously injured. That was the incident of May 30. The main street in the Settlement, Nanjing Road, was dyed with blood.—The anti-British feelings of the Chinese people started to become much stronger than their anti-Japanese feelings. (NHK “Document Shōwa” shuzaihan 1986:78–79)

This kind of historical narrative chronologically arranges the events of the past from the point of view of the present and is reminiscent of a dull history textbook. Such a representation of history is farthest from the literary strategy which Yokomitsu aimed at. Of course, being involved in a historical context, nobody is able to see an “event” from a bird’s-eye view. Furthermore, objectifying an “event” itself is always restricted by the ideology of the present. In short, it is impossible to stand on a meta-level as far as a his-

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ever, an image of Shanghai appearing in the prewar texts of enlightenment has a tendency towards romantic exoticism; it was expressed as “a ‘world of liberty’ where one was able to experience being in ‘the West’ which was neither Japan nor China and a land where even a Japanese was able to behave as a colony’s ruler” (see TAKAHASHI and FURUMAYA 1995 p. 14), or “*mato*” (demoniac city) with some obscene fascinations. Yokomitsu Riichi’s *Shanghai* clearly kept a distance from these images.

torical narrative itself takes part in the formation of history. That is the trap that Hegel's historical narrative, being based on a dialectic, easily falls into even if it seems that it develops through inconsistency/contradiction in a teleological perspective.

*Shanghai* was conscious of this kind of trap to some extent. The representation system of *Shanghai* is supported by a new, strategic approach to "materialism" as stated by Yokomitsu himself:

In everyday life, we are existing and being shaped in the Japanese political system. The reality of Japan is based on the stream of time/space (*speed*). If reality moves at this *speed* and if it is capitalism and nationalism, our changes that are influenced from the outside must also be based on capitalism and nationalism. Moreover, as long as we exist in this reality, it is absolutely impossible to transcend it. We all are influenced by the *speed* of the reality being based on capitalism and nationalism, and there is no other means for us except to follow this speed.<sup>10</sup>

Here, Yokomitsu's literary position where he tried to establish "a literary theory as materialism" against Marxist literature is evident. His "materialism" shows resemblance to "a criticism as transcendentalism" advocated by Karatani Kōjin, a contemporary Japanese theorist. According to Karatani,

[everyone] exists in the world (history) and can never transcend it. That restrains even the belief that he/she can transcend it. (Karatani 1993:124)

Nobody who lived in the International Settlement of Shanghai could escape a kind of potential energy which was at work there. This is because everybody had to live in the time/space of reality. As far as the body is "*in-der-Welt-sein*" (Martin Heidegger), no one can be a colorless cosmopolitan. Therefore, the characters of *Shanghai* are involved in the power politics of the interwoven relationships in Shanghai. It is impossible for them to stand on a meta-level above the historical dynamics. In other words, the bodies of the characters of *Shanghai* are stabbed by the various power politics on the one hand, and are being faced with the difficulties of their personal "formation of subjectivity" on the other.

10 See YOKOMITSU 1982, p. 100: *Yuibutsuronteki bungakuron ni tsuite* (*About a Literary Theory as Materialism*). The original title is *Bungakuteki yuibutsuron ni tsuite* (*About Literary Materialism*), in *Sōsaku Gekkan*, 1928.

Of course, there are some exceptions. For instance, Fang Qiulan is a member of the Communist Party and participates in the anti-imperialism movement risking her life. Her way of "formation of subjectivity" is as follows. The minority's (Chinese proletariat) bodies and topos are torn to pieces by the forces of the majority (Western and Japanese imperial capitalism). By drawing a link with Chinese national capitalism, they try to carry out a revolution by proletarian force in order to reverse the relationship between suppression and rule. If a minority tries to reverse this relationship, it will certainly need to establish their own "formation of subjectivity" even though it then adopts the majority's power system. However, if it ends with this result, at the moment when they recapture their "subjectivity," they inevitably must accept the authority of the majority's subject. In chapter 24, Sanki, a tongue-tied Japanese, tries to make objections to Fang Qiulan because he thinks that the theory of the Chinese proletariat is similar to the theory of power politics of the Western nations and modern Japan. He has an obscure presentiment for the destiny of the Chinese proletariat's communist revolution. In contrast to Fang Qiulan's logic, he persists in "a rubbish heap" in the International Settlement because he thinks that there must be a "key" for "each nation-state" to be "resuscitated" at "the bottom of a rubbish heap in the International Settlement." (Yokomitsu 1981:114) The text, however, does not specify the last judgement. The "key" is finally only a semblance/*Schein* though it could be imaginarily perceived as an "idea." Thus, the "key" is a sort of *Ding an sich* (Immanuel Kant).

Sanki is wandering around the cosmopolitan city of Shanghai, thus leading to an "ambiguous" existence. He neither can stand on the minority's position like Fang Qiulan nor identify himself with the theory of the majority's power politics (imperialism). However, despite his own will, every movement he does assumes the potential energy of a Japanese suppressing and ruling the Chinese in the International Settlement. There is no place for him to stay and he is faced with schizophrenic situations of his own "subjectivity."

Sanki knows what this movement of mercantilism in Great Britain means. It must clearly be a pressure placed on the Japanese spinning industry. They are seized with panic because the development of Japanese capital in China has been menacing British goods in India—the only market for Lancashire's produce. But in China, Marxism of Chinese laborers is expanding in Japanese cotton mills. The capital of our mother country started being attacked from both sides. Sanki is reminiscent of a face



of a satisfied American and that of a more delighted Russian.—*Laissez-faire* is falling and Marxism is gaining power. In these two winds, Japanese insects are flying up.—At this moment, Sanki has nothing to do except to wander around while holding a gun. According to his thought, what he can snipe at is only the sky above his head. But as far as he is in this mill, a danger is approaching his body every moment: “Why do I have to do this futile adventure?” (Chapter 23) (Ibid.:102)

Here, revolutionary Russian communism is intruding into an opening of already conflicting British-American-Japanese capitalism, all of whom are fighting desperately against each other. In short, this combination of opposed interests is a result of the conflict between capitalism (*laissez-faire*) and communism (Marxism). Sanki is involved in this situation and cannot decide to which position he should tend. The muzzle of his gun is only wandering in “the sky above his head.” After all, Sanki is in an impotential situation of his “subjectivity.” (And this is paralleled by his sexual behavior because he always escapes soon after the beginning of love relationships. This is obvious if one looks at the time he spent with Osugi, Fang Qiulan, and others. This sequence connotes that Sanki cannot establish his own “subjectivity.”) The cosmopolitan city of Shanghai is tearing his body to pieces. The potential energy pushes him up to a position of an assailant and forces him into a situation of “danger.”

Let’s see one more instance. In the second half of the text, Sanki is wandering around Shanghai where a general strike starts:

He was conscious of himself as a Japanese again. How many times had he been forced to be conscious of himself as a Japanese? In such a situation where a danger which he felt because his body expresses his homeland is closely approaching, he suddenly felt as if the crowd was a pack of beasts with fangs. He thought about one scene where his body flew out from his mother’s womb and still yet another scene where he was walking on a road. The time between those two scenes must have been the time of his body growing alongside Japan. And these same feelings are likewise expressed into his later life. What can he do about the attempt of his heart to leave his body and force him to forget about his homeland? But his body cannot reject the outside world which compels him to be a Japanese. Not his heart but his skin has to fight, but his heart also starts fighting in obedience to his skin. Walking again in the town where weapons were shining everywhere, Sanki began to feel that faces in the crowd were excited by the weapons. The crowd lost the peoples’ personalities in a stream of metal on the bayonets and machine guns. The more they lost, the more their fierceness swelled within themselves. In this national movement, Sanki was aware of himself who tried to carry out suicide by instinct. Feeling the power of the homeland compelling him to commit suicide, he asked himself if he would commit



suicide by his own will or if he would be forced to kill himself by his homeland. "Why is my life so miserable wherever I go?" He feels that what he thinks is not what he is thinking by himself but what he is forced to think by his homeland. He wants to think by himself. For that, he had better think about nothing. To kill himself. (Chapter 35) (Ibid.:174–175)

Here, as a characteristic of Shanghai, the text intensively reveals the inter-course of three systems, namely body, space, and power politics. Sanki's body is driven away to a dimension of nothingness. His "subject" has been torn off. His body, wandering around Shanghai where a general strike has stopped routine, municipal functions, is deprived of a "heart" (inside/self-consciousness) and reduced to nothing but "skin" (physics), a representation of a "body of Japan." He cannot get out of the idea that "the outside world compels him to be a Japanese." "The outside world" is a symbol of complicated systems of power politics and is represented here as "a stream of metal on the bayonets and machine guns" (violence). The only freedom which is left for Sanki is to "think about nothing" and "to kill" his "subject." This is because he is entwined in the power of the homeland and is "forced to kill himself" no sooner than he tries to set up his "subjectivity." After all, Sanki has an ultimate problem of identity politics. Neither can Sanki assume his "subjectivity" like Fang Qiulan who represents Chinese proletariat as a national minority, nor can he identify himself with the majority's power politics (imperialism). He is excluded from every system of power politics. The only thing he can do is to wander around Shanghai as an "outcast" who can not belong anywhere.

At the end of the text Sanki was thrown into a river by Chinese rioters. He imagined being in a ship and sinking into a load of excrement:

Ah, for all that, the smell of manure filling the ship—this smells like my hometown in Japan. There, my mother might be darning the soles of *tabi* socks at this time while wearing glasses twisted with a thread around its rust. (Chapter 45) (Ibid.:232)

Finally, Sanki visits Osugi who has been corrupted into a "prostitute." Although this action looks like a negative personality conversion at first sight, their meeting in the deepest part of the city can be consistent with Sanki's "formation of subjectivity" because both characters are "outcasts." However, Sanki can not actually hold Osugi (and the text does not allow him to do so). In the peripheral regions of Shanghai, Osugi exists as a tragic minority (*subaltern*) who has had her body torn to pieces. Sanki suffers from "star-

vation” and his schizophrenic “subjectivity” on the one hand, yet he can afford to indulge himself in nostalgic images of his “mother” and Fang Qiulan on the other. Here, small but definite differences remain between them even though they both are “outcasts.”

*Shanghai* exposes this schizophrenic crack even in the last scene. I suggest to define *Shanghai* as a deconstructive text. What Yokomitsu revealed here is exactly what Ōe Kenzaburō meant by “Japan, the ambiguous, and myself.”

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