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Teito Tokyo:

Empire, Modernity, and the Metropolitan Imagination

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Asian Languages and Cultures

by

Timothy Unverzagt Goddard

2013

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Teito Tokyo:

Empire, Modernity, and the Metropolitan Imagination

by

Timothy Unverzagt Goddard

Doctor of Philosophy in Asian Languages and Cultures

University of California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Seiji Mizuta Lippit, Chair

What did it mean for Tokyo to become an imperial capital (*teito* 帝都)? Beginning in the late nineteenth century, the city rose to a position of global prominence alongside other cosmopolitan urban centers such as London, Paris, and New York. A variety of factors contributed to the modernization of Tokyo and its political and cultural ascendancy, including the adaptation of Western bureaucratic structures by the Japanese state, Japanese colonial expansion in East Asia, a dramatic increase in the urban population, the proliferation of popular media, and new forms of transportation, inhabitation, and consumption. These material changes also produced changes of the imagination, radically reshaping the urban experience and necessitating new modes of representation.

In its assemblage of people and capital, the metropolis produced an image of prosperity, modernity, and order that was integral to Tokyo's identity as an imperial capital. Through my reading of Japanese, Korean, and Chinese-language texts from the mid-1910s to the mid-1930s, I probe the limitations of this image, examining the ways in which authors contested the boundaries imposed by empire and modernity. Nagai Kafū, Tayama Katai, Weng Nao, Yi Sang, and Sata Ineko negotiated the affective dimensions of place and space, projecting a kaleidoscopic vision of urban life. It is here that the conflict between the image of the imperial capital and the lived experience of the city are most palpable.

I argue that to define Tokyo as a modern imperial capital is to map the city along two trajectories, linking it with both the imperial West and the (semi)colonial East. The convergence of these two trajectories results in a kind of double exposure. No single image of Tokyo is clear and distinct; rather, the different images coexist in a state of simultaneity. This fundamental irresolution of Japanese modernity and imperialism inscribes Tokyo with profound tension and unevenness, but it also opens the city to moments of cosmopolitan possibility.

The dissertation of Timothy Unverzagt Goddard is approved.

Torquil Duthie

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2013

To Michael Marra

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Okakura Kakuzō. “*Kokka*.” Translated by Timothy Unverzagt Goddard. *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 24 (December 2012): 176–183.

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Introduction:

Imagining the Imperial Capital

[S]uddenly here I was, standing in the middle of this most modern of European capitals. My eyes were dazzled by its brilliance, my mind was dazed by the riot of color. To translate *Unter den Linden* as “under the Bodhi tree” would suggest a quiet secluded spot. But just come and see the groups of men and women sauntering along the pavements that line each side of that great thoroughfare as it runs, straight as a die, through the city. It was still in the days when Wilhelm I would come to his window and gaze down upon his capital. The tall, broad-shouldered officers in their colorful dress uniform, and the attractive girls, their hair made up in the Parisian style, were everywhere a delight to the eye. Carriages ran silently on asphalt roads. Just visible in the clear sky between the towering buildings were fountains cascading with the sound of heavy rain. Looking into the distance, one could see the statue of the goddess on the victory column. She seemed to be floating halfway to heaven from the midst of the green trees on the other side of the Brandenburg Gate. All these myriad sights were gathered so close at hand that it was quite bewildering for the newcomer.

Mori Ōgai, “Maihime”

The Marunouchi Building—commonly known as the “Marubiru”—was at least four times smaller than I had imagined. I wonder if I would experience the same disillusionment if I went to Broadway in New York—oh, this city reeks of gasoline! Such was my first impression of Tokyo.

Yi Sang, “Tokyo”

I. Introduction

In 1888, Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862–1922), one of the founding figures of modern Japanese literature, left Berlin after four years of study and returned to Tokyo. Following Prussia’s victory over France in 1870, Berlin had grown to become an imperial capital of imposing grandeur. In Ōgai’s “Maihime” (Maihime 舞姫, 1890), a profound sense of wonder sweeps over the protagonist Ōta Toyotarō when he gazes upon the expansive space of Unter den Linden. Arriving in Berlin with “the vague hope of accomplishing great feats,” Toyotarō epitomizes the Meiji ethos of self-denial in service to the nation.¹ Yet even with this resolve, Toyotarō finds himself momentarily overwhelmed by the panorama of wealth and power that confronts him, disclosing a magnificent vision of Berlin as an imperial capital.

In an essay published posthumously in 1939, forty-nine years after Ōgai’s vivid depiction of the splendor of fin-de-siècle Berlin, Yi Sang 李箱 (1910–1937) articulates the keen sense of disillusionment (*hwanmyōl* 幻滅) that seized him in 1936 when, at the age of twenty-six, he finally arrived in the Japanese imperial capital. This sensibility pervades the entire essay, as Yi Sang dwells on the contradictions between an imagined Tokyo and the actual city that he sees before him. Coming to Tokyo from the colonial capital of Keijō (Kr. Kyōngsōng 京城), Yi Sang brought with him expectations conceived on the periphery of the Japanese empire, at a distance in time and space. With

¹ Mori Ōgai, “Maihime,” trans. Richard Bowring, *Monumenta Nipponica* 30.2 (Summer 1975), 152. See also Maeda Ai, “Berlin 1888: Mori Ōgai’s ‘Dancing Girl,’” trans. Leslie Pincus, in *Text and the City*, ed. James A Fujii (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 303.

Japan's emergence as a global power at the turn of the twentieth century and its concomitant territorial expansion, the city of Tokyo had begun to exert a profound impact on the imaginations of many intellectuals in East Asia. Artists, writers, and thinkers flocked to the Japanese imperial capital to pursue their studies, their movement affirming Tokyo's place as a metropolitan center of modern culture. Both Kim Kirim 金起林 (1908–?) and Pak T'aewŏn 朴泰遠 (1909–1986), two of Yi Sang's friends and fellow members in the modernist literary coterie known as the Group of Nine (*Ku'inhoe* 九人會), studied in Tokyo before returning to Keijō and rising to literary prominence. Yet for all its heady aura of sophistication and grandeur, Tokyo was an utter disappointment for Yi Sang. Beginning with the deflating moment at the start of his essay when he glimpses the Marunouchi Building, one of the most iconic sights in the Japanese imperial capital, Yi Sang is continually confounded by Tokyo's failure to live up to its promise as a modern metropolis. By revealing this gap between imagination and actual experience, Yi Sang points to a fundamental characteristic of Tokyo as an imperial capital: the very source of the city's effectiveness as a symbol—its association with the metropolitan centers of the West—is also the very thing that undermines its power.

This contradiction permeates the material and discursive constructions of Tokyo during the era of Japanese empire. Reflecting the simultaneous identification with and differentiation from both the imperial West and the colonial East that provided the foundation for Japanese colonial discourse, Tokyo as an imperial capital was characterized by spatiotemporal unevenness and cultural heterogeneity. The association of empire and modernity with Western civilization meant that the authenticity of this urban vision remained elusive. Yet while the inherent contradictions of Japanese

colonialism exposed Tokyo to accusations of imitation and incompleteness, they also opened it to moments of cosmopolitan possibility. Such possibility may be found precisely in those spaces of the city that cannot be subsumed into the imperial capital. They might be modern sites of artistic and intellectual encounter, or dark, narrow backstreets where the established rhythms of everyday life persist. Through their representations of these spaces, writers in the Taishō and early Shōwa periods contested the singular image of Tokyo as an imperial capital, recuperating the affective dimensions of urban space. Their texts offer ways of seeing and navigating the city that resist the hierarchical impositions of power, demonstrating the city’s enduring potential to be reimagined.

II. The Creation of an Imperial Capital

The eight-story Marunouchi Building is a fitting sign of the city’s grandiose pretensions. Designed by Sakurai Kotarō 桜井小太郎 (1870–1953) and built by the Fuller Company, a prominent American firm, it was completed in 1923 and remained the largest office building in Tokyo until 1968.² Writing six years after the building’s construction, the urban ethnographer Kon Wajirō 今和次郎 (1888–1973) describes it as an exemplar of the emergent form of “office architecture” (*kashijimusho kenchiku* 貸事務所建築)

² Roman Adrian Cybriwsky, *Historical Dictionary of Tokyo, Second Edition* (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2011), 136. See also Tsuchida Mitsufumi, ed., *Tōkyō bungaku chimei jiten* (Tokyo: Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1978), 312–313.

known as the *birudingu* ビルディング.³ Closely associated with the expenditure of capital and the accumulation of profit, this architectural form reached its apogee in the Marunouchi Building, with its vast numbers of shops and restaurants (about 100 on the basement level and the first two floors), offices (about 300 on floors three through eight), and people (4,500 office workers, but an approximate total of 20,000 to 30,000 people passing in and out of the building each day). This concentration of commerce and consumption under a single roof meant that the Marunouchi Building could be considered a “magnificent street” (*rippa na machi* 立派な街) or an “entertainment district” (*sakariba* 盛り場) unto itself, comparable to the main avenue in Ginza. Regional and global context are also integral to Kon’s assessment of the Marubiru’s grandeur: “she is, of course, number one in the East, and with the exception of the United States, such greatness is not seen even among the European powers.”⁴ It is not surprising, then, that proletarian author Kobayashi Takiji 小林多喜二 (1903–1933) casts the Marunouchi Building as the locus of capitalist power in his 1929 novel, *The Factory Ship* (*Kani kōsen* 蟹工船).⁵

The Marunouchi Building can also be seen as part of a broader program of urban development that sought to transform the city of Tokyo into a modern imperial capital. The term “imperial capital” (*teito* 帝都), defined as “the city where the son of heaven is”

³ Kon Wajirō, ed., vol. 1 of *Shinpan dai Tōkyō annai* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 2001), 81.

⁴ Kon Wajirō, ed., vol. 1 of *Shinpan dai Tōkyō annai* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 2001), 82.

⁵ Kobayashi Takiji, *Kani kōsen* (Tokyo: Shinchō Bunko, 2010), 34. See also Isoda Kōichi, *Shisō to shite no Tōkyō: kindai bungaku shiron nōto* (Tokyo: Kōdansha Bungei Bunko, 1990), 100.

(*tenshi no imasu miyako* 天子のいます都) or “the city where the imperial palace is” (*teijō no aru miyako* 帝城のある都), and thus synonymous with the emperor’s presence, is a classical Chinese term.⁶ As a symbolic conception of Tokyo as the center of the Japanese empire, the term entered popular usage in the late 1880s amidst an emergent discourse of “urban renewal” (*shiku kaisei* 市区改正).⁷ As the Home Ministry official Yamazaki Naotane 山崎直胤 (1852–1918) declared on February 20, 1885, in a committee meeting to discuss future plans for the capital, “The single, fundamental task of urban renewal [*shiku kaisei* 市区改正] is to envision the grandeur of Tokyo, to plan the eternal prosperity of the imperial capital [*teito* 帝都].”⁸ Taking inspiration from the transformation of Paris under Baron Haussmann (1809–1891), Yamazaki drew attention to the city as a spatial manifestation of Japanese power. Yamazaki’s comments also indicate that the idea of Tokyo as a modern imperial capital anticipated much of Japan’s imperial expansion.

Early efforts in the Meiji period such as the Ginza Brick Town (1877) and the Rokumeikan (1883) employed Western façades in importation and adaptation of foreign architectural and cultural practices. These structures were closely intertwined with Japanese political aspirations for the revision of the unequal treaties with the Western powers, as the government strived to project an image of civilization and grandeur in

⁶ Morohashi Tetsuji, ed., *Dai kanwa jiten*, s.v. “Teito.” Synonyms include *kōto* 皇都, *teikyō* 帝京, and *teishi* 帝師.

⁷ Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 256n26. See also Henry D. Smith, “Tokyo as an Idea,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 4.1 (Winter 1978), 55.

⁸ Fujimori Terunobu, *Meiji no Tōkyō keikaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004), 177.

support of its diplomatic negotiations. In the 1880s, officials in the Home Ministry and Foreign Ministry developed plans for urban renewal that proposed more comprehensive visions of Tokyo as a modern metropolis and imperial capital. Matsuda Michiyuki 松田道之 (1839–1882), the seventh governor of Tokyo and the leader of an urban planning committee formed in 1876 by the Home Ministry, presented a plan in 1880 that detailed numerous improvements to the urban infrastructure. The Matsuda plan advocated the transformation of the city center through the elimination of slums, improving the city's safety and hygiene while also furthering its economic development. Its proposals included the modernization of roads and canals, improvements to the water system, and the development of a port. Matsuda's successor, Yoshikawa Akimasa 芳川顕正 (1841–1920), presented a revised plan in 1884 that expanded the original plan's economic vision, encompassing almost all of the city's fifteen wards within a modernized transportation network. The revised plan also included four grand avenues emanating from the Imperial Palace, integrating the symbolic space of the emperor within the city.

This vision of a prominent imperial palace exemplifies an emerging conception of Tokyo as a ritual and symbolic center. As Takashi Fujitani argues, for the first decade and a half of the Meiji period, state pageantry was associated primarily with the emperor's progress through various parts of the country.⁹ The emperor and empress had taken up residence in the old Tokugawa palace in 1868, but when the palace burned to the ground in 1873, they relocated temporarily to the Akasaka Detached Palace. In the fifteen years that followed, debate raged over whether Tokyo's status ought to be a

⁹ Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 34.

temporary court (*anzaisho* 行在所) or an imperial capital (*teito* 帝都). Only in the mid-1880s did officials acknowledge the ritual significance of the palace and adopt plans for a grand reconstruction. Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉 (1835–1901), among others, argued for the necessity of rebuilding the imperial palace in magnificent fashion, in keeping with Japan’s national power. A new imperial palace was finally completed in 1888, just prior to the promulgation of the new constitution the following year. This shifting image of Tokyo led to the development of what Fujitani terms a “ritual topography” of the city, which linked specific sites of symbolic importance in a spatial matrix.¹⁰ Ceremonial activity was concentrated in and around the palace, but also incorporated sites outside of the city center such as Yasukuni Shrine, Aoyama Military Parade Field, and Ueno Park. This spatial transformation, operating in concert with Tokyo’s burgeoning economic development, was integral to the establishment of Tokyo as an imperial capital.

Officials involved in the planning of Tokyo also engaged with the recent and contemporary development of Western imperial capitals in formulating visions of the city. The dramatic transformation of Paris from 1853 to 1870 under Baron Haussmann had enacted a panoptic vision of urban space, opening up majestic vistas along major boulevards and enabling a more fluid circulation of capital.¹¹ Japanese urban planners were keenly aware of this transformation. Yamazaki Naotane, a member of the committee that considered the Yoshikawa plan, made explicit references to the French imperial capital in his suggestions for Tokyo, which included plans for broad avenues,

¹⁰ Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 81.

¹¹ See David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 107–116.

public parks and monuments, theaters, hotels, markets, and a concentration of government buildings around the Imperial Palace.¹² The committee eventually adopted some of Yamazaki's proposals, including his plans for parks, markets, and theaters. At the same time that the Home Ministry was developing this agenda for the city, the Foreign Ministry's Plan for the Centralization of Government Offices (*Kanchō shūchū keikaku* 官庁集中計画) proposed a series of baroque-style government buildings in Hibiya, linked by grand boulevards to a central train station. Minister of Foreign Affairs Inoue Kaoru 井上馨 (1836–1915) was the leader of this plan, which was developed by the German architects Wilhelm Böckmann (1832–1902) and Hermann Ende (1829–1907). Support flagged when Inoue resigned from his post in 1887 after failing to secure revision of the unequal treaties, and the Home Ministry took charge of the planning efforts thereafter.¹³

The attempt to remake Tokyo in a European image resulted in the sense that the Japanese imperial capital was no more than an imitation, an artifice. In 1886, during a visit to Japan, the French author Pierre Loti (1850–1923) was invited to attend a ball at the Rokumeikan in honor of the Meiji emperor. Loti recorded his immediate impressions upon arriving in Tokyo after a one-hour journey by train from Yokohama:

¹² Fujimori Terunobu, *Meiji no Tōkyō keikaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2004), 175–194. See also Takashi Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 75.

¹³ Minami Asuka, *Kafū to Meiji no toshi keikan* (Tokyo: Sanseidō, 2009), 39–42. See also Andre Sorensen, *The Making of Urban Japan* (London: Routledge, 2002), 67.

Here was another surprise. Had we arrived in London, or Melbourne, or New York? Tall brick houses of an American ugliness stood around the station. Rows of gaslamps allowed the long, straight streets to be discerned from afar. Telephone wires cut through the cold air, and streetcars departed in various directions with their bells and whistles ringing.¹⁴

Loti's observations make plain the confusion and dismay that Tokyo's Westernized facade engendered. Paradoxically, the more Tokyo succeeded in replicating the appearance of Western imperial capitals, the more it called attention to its own inauthenticity. This dilemma also lies at the heart of the discourse of Japanese imperialism. At the outset of his exhaustive study of the Japanese empire, Oguma Eiji points to the profound ambivalence that drove Japan at once towards "leaving Asia" (*datsu-a* 脱亞) and "reviving Asia" (*kyō-a* 興亞).¹⁵ Likewise, Prasenjit Duara identifies a "schizoid Japanese self-perception" in Japan's simultaneous identification with and reaction against the Western imperialist powers: "anxious nationalists eager to gain recognition from the Western powers by creating an empire in the contiguous region, the Japanese leadership also felt victimized by these very powers and identified with its weaker 'Asian brethren.'"¹⁶ Finally, Robert Tierney describes Japanese imperialism by

¹⁴ Pierre Loti, *Japoneries d'automne* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1889), 79.

¹⁵ Oguma Eiji, "*Nihonjin*" *no kyōkai* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1998), 8.

¹⁶ Prasenjit Duara, "The Imperialism of 'Free Nations,'" in *Imperial Formations*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 211.

employing the idea of a triangular structure in which the West functioned as an “implicit reference point,” meaning that “Japanese colonial discourse was always produced in relation to and, indeed, refracted through Western colonialism.”¹⁷ This condition led to Japan’s close identification with its colonized peoples, a “rhetoric of sameness” that distinguished Japanese imperialism from European models even while it enacted many of the same repressive policies to sustain its regional dominance.¹⁸ Japan’s dual imperative to stress its similarities to and differences from the Western powers resulted in a double trajectory in colonial discourse that also strongly shaped the transformation of Tokyo into an imperial capital. Existing topographical demarcations between *yamanote* (high city) and *shitamachi* (low city), *omote* (front) and *ura* (back), only exacerbated these instances of spatiotemporal unevenness.

III. Urban Development and the Japanese Empire

The Home Ministry’s plans for the city were codified in 1888 with the passage of the Tokyo Municipal Improvement Act (*Tōkyō shiku kaisei jōrei* 東京市区改正条例). The resulting urban policy remained in place until 1919, and addressed the commercial and political needs of the metropolis through broad infrastructural changes. These changes shaped the modern city, including the development of the city’s water supply,

¹⁷ Robert Thomas Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 21.

¹⁸ Robert Thomas Tierney, *Tropics of Savagery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 28–35.

improvements to the sewer system, and the building and widening of roads.¹⁹ Hibiya Park was created in 1903, adjacent to the Imperial Palace, and governmental buildings were clustered in nearby Kasumigaseki. In this transformation of urban space, the forces of modernization advanced against the dark, dirty regions of Tokyo, enacting a logic that Maeda Ai terms a “mythology of the negative.”²⁰

The Marunouchi district emerged as a major point for the convergence of modernity, capitalism, and imperialism by the early Taishō period. An old military parade ground when it was sold to Mitsubishi in 1890, the area was for years a dark, empty, and even menacing place. It was dubbed “Mitsubishigahara” 三菱ヶ原 (“Mitsubishi Meadow” or, more ominously, “Mitsubishi Wasteland”). Yet by the 1910s, with the construction of a row of brick buildings, the district had earned the popular moniker “one-block London” (*icchō Rondon* 一丁ロンドン).²¹ The completion of Tokyo Station in 1914 was a transformative moment for Marunouchi, enabling its emergence as the city’s preeminent central business district. The new station shifted the city’s main transportation hub from Shinbashi to Tokyo Station, and its orientation—the station’s entrance faced Marunouchi and the Imperial Palace, away from the older areas of Nihonbashi and Kyōbashi—signaled a dramatic change in the urban topography.

To account for these spatial transformations, it is necessary to consider Japanese modernity and imperialism in a regional and global context. As the only non-Western

¹⁹ André Sorensen, *The Making of Urban Japan* (London: Routledge, 2002), 71–74.

²⁰ Maeda Ai, “Utopia of the Prisonhouse: A Reading of *In Darkest Tokyo*,” trans. Seiji M. Lippit and James A. Fujii, in *Text and the City*, ed. James A. Fujii (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 45.

²¹ Edward Seidensticker, *Tokyo from Edo to Showa, 1867–1989: The Emergence of the World’s Greatest City* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2010), 88–92.

imperial power, Japan occupied an ambiguous position in international politics. On the one hand, Japanese leaders at times looked quite pointedly to Western models for modernization, including urban policy. Yet on the other hand, Japan presided over an extensive empire in East and Southeast Asia, colonizing other Asian peoples and absorbing territory into its domain. Within its empire, Tokyo itself served as a model for urban development, playing a crucial role in the growth of such cities as Keijō and Taipei. In his investigation of Tokyo's historical development, Jinnai Hidenobu argues for a clear distinction between the modernization of Tokyo and that of other non-Western cities:

The moderate, self-motivated process of change that unfolded in Tokyo during the Meiji period stands in sharp contrast to the kind of modernization or Westernization that other Asian or Arab cities were compelled to undergo as colonial cities. Such cities were often divided into two clearly separate, segregated sections—a traditional or ethnic section for natives, and a modern section for Westerners—which were set against one another as black to white. In Tokyo heterogeneous cultural elements aggressively combined to create an amalgam of many-hued natural shades.²²

In modernizing, the Japanese clearly responded to external pressures, but they exercised a degree of autonomy that was denied to colonized peoples. Jinnai's idea of Tokyo as an

²² Jinnai Hidenobu, *Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 140.

“amalgam” suggests a diffusion of cultures that was not confined to a particular district or racial group. I argue that this phenomenon is more apparent moving ahead in time to the Taishō and Shōwa eras, when cultural hybridity was not confined to spaces like the Ginza Brick Town or the Rokumeikan, but instead proliferated throughout multiple strata of society. In this heterogeneity, Tokyo contrasts with cities like colonial Keijō and semicolonial Shanghai, where space was divided more strictly along national and ethnic lines.

As an imperial capital, moreover, Tokyo served as a major locus of cultural production in East Asia. Karen Thornber employs the term “contact nebula” to describe Tokyo as a site of physical and textual encounter, with the political, cultural, and linguistic inflections of Japanese imperialism exerting a centripetal force on the region.²³ I argue that to define Tokyo as a modern imperial capital is to map the city along two trajectories, linking it with both the imperial West and the (semi)colonial East. The convergence of these two trajectories in the same city produced a kind of double exposure. No single image of Tokyo is clear and distinct; rather, the different images exist in simultaneity. The fundamental irresolution of Japanese modernity and imperialism introduces points of tension and unevenness to the city, but it also opens the city to moments of cosmopolitan possibility.

IV. Reimagining Tokyo

²³ Karen Thornber, *Empire of Texts in Motion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 1–27.

Returning to the jarring discordance between the descriptions of Unter den Linden in Mori Ōgai's Berlin and Marunouchi in Yi Sang's Tokyo, the question remains: what accounts for Yi Sang's profound disillusionment when faced with the supposed magnificence of the Japanese imperial capital? Again and again in the essay, he confronts the phantasmal foundations of imperialism and capitalist modernity, producing subversive images of the same physical sites that figure most prominently in the metropolitan imagination. This refiguring of the city undercuts Tokyo's established spatial configuration, attacking its pretensions to imperial grandeur and elite culture. By contrast, Mori Ōgai's description of Unter den Linden portrays a monumental vista that leaves the protagonist Ōta Toyotarō "dazzled" and "dazed." In his analysis of this sequence in "Maihime," Maeda Ai describes the shift from panoramic vision to linear perspective that orients Toyotarō's gaze upon Unter den Linden: "In theory, Toyotarō might have seen the panorama of Berlin as a kaleidoscope of ceaselessly flickering and changing visual impressions; instead, with the self situated as the center point, Berlin is neatly organized along the lines of a perspectival drawing."²⁴ This shift, contingent on Toyotarō's assumption of modern subjectivity, also brings into view the contrast between Unter den Linden and Klosterstrasse, the narrow street in the old city where Toyotarō meets his lover, Elise. The conflict between these two spaces, the central drama of the text, ends with the triumph of the baroque space of Unter den Linden over the erotic space of Klosterstrasse, as Toyotarō abandons Elise and returns to Japan.

In Yi Sang's description of Tokyo, however, there is no such spatial and perspectival dichotomy. Born in the colonial capital of Keijō, Yi Sang was already firmly

²⁴ Maeda Ai, "Berlin 1888: Mori Ōgai's 'Dancing Girl,'" trans. Leslie Pincus, in *Text and the City*, ed. James A. Fujii (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 305.

anchored in a modern subjectivity, and yet at the same time he was acutely conscious of modernity's insubstantiality. For this reason, Yi Sang does not succumb to the monumental spectacle of the imperial capital, but instead maintains a cynical distance from it. He even wonders if he would feel the same sense of disillusionment in New York, a thought that hints at the betrayed promise of modernity outside the confines of the Japanese empire. Yi Sang's critical description of Tokyo constitutes an immanent critique of modernity and imperialism, laying bare their precarious foundations.

Yi Sang identifies a fissure between the image of Tokyo that is maintained on the colonial margins of the Japanese empire and the reality that he encounters upon his visit to the city. In its assemblage of people and capital, Tokyo produced an image of prosperity, cleanliness, speed, grandeur, modernity, and order that was integral to the city's identity as an imperial capital. In the five chapters that follow, I probe the limitations of this image, examining the ways in which different authors contested the logic of empire and modernity in imagining Tokyo. In their writings, Nagai Kafū 永井荷風 (1879–1959), Tayama Katai 田山花袋 (1872–1930), Weng Nao 翁鬧 (1910–1940), Yi Sang, and Sata Ineko 佐多稲子 (1904–1998) negotiated the affective dimensions of place and space, projecting a kaleidoscopic vision of urban life. It is here that the tensions between the image of the city and the lived experience of the city are most palpable. How do these authors seek to rewrite the city's history, alter the symbolic value of the existing built environment, or generate new readings of its topography? These writers came from diverse backgrounds, and as individuals occupied radically different positions within the Japanese empire. Through my reading of their works, I aim to reveal alternative

conceptions of Tokyo, and to uncover moments of cosmopolitan possibility latent within the cityscape.

Tokyo's cosmopolitanism in these years derived from its identity as an imperial capital, a city reconfigured by its engagement across two spatial trajectories. The capital drew artists and writers from the periphery of the Japanese empire, and the physical dislocation of these individuals was essential to the emergence of new cultural forms in Tokyo. Meanwhile, many Japanese intellectuals traveled to Europe and America, returning to the capital with knowledge of the latest artistic and literary movements. The forms of expression that emerged from these encounters effected dramatic transformations in the representation of urban space. With the collapsing distinction between the internal and the external, the consciousness of the individual began to take on a primary role in depictions of the city. When memory and sensibility intrude into the representation of this world, it results in the blurring of subject and object. Multiple visions of Tokyo come into view, with unique spatial and temporal experiences inscribed in the different ways that the city is written. To be sure, this cosmopolitanism is fraught with the same inequalities and injustices that sustain the empire, resulting in multiple instances of what Shu-mei Shih terms "asymmetrical cosmopolitanism" in her analysis of Guo Moruo and semicolonial Shanghai.²⁵ Yet I argue that it is precisely this confluence of images that enables us to reconsider the meaning of Tokyo as an imperial capital, and in turn to rethink the dimensions of urban space.

The ambiguity of Tokyo's meaning as an imperial capital left its topography open to interpretation, as authors like Yi Sang recast specific sites to convey radically different

²⁵ Shu-mei Shih, *The Lure of the Modern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 97.

impressions of the city. In other words, the referential nature of place—that is, the geographical particularity that it possesses, the expressive possibilities that it embodies, and the emotional responses that it evokes—gave writers a concrete means with which they could engage in reflection on the modern. Literary representations of everyday life, anchored in the unique spatialities of Tokyo, shed critical light on the conditions of modernity. Such writings constitute a humanizing discourse on the modern city, one that takes the perceptions and emotions of the individual as its basis. I am not suggesting that the particularity of place (and, by extension, culture) constituted a refuge from the temporal rupture and social upheaval associated with modernity, but rather that it allowed individuals to mediate between the particular and the universal.

Tokyo's referentiality derives not only from its physical locales, but also from the new ways of life enabled by its capitalist modernity. That is, Tokyo functioned on one hand in a very concrete sense as a city comprising physical places, common districts and sites to which all inhabitants could refer. On the other, Tokyo functioned as a modern metropolis by producing new modes of consciousness among its populace and enabling new kinds of social relations, from the visceral sensations of the crowd to the new identities (salaryman, modern girl) that its inhabitants assumed as workers and consumers. Modernity's uneven development meant that complete transformation of everyday life remained an imagined vision for many people; the city represented what Harry Harootunian describes as "a place for fantasizing what had not yet become a lived reality for all."²⁶

²⁶ Harry Harootunian, *Overcome by Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 13.

The double exposure of Tokyo as an imperial capital can also be grasped through the tensions between “place” and “space” that animate the city. I understand the former to denote the particular locations in Tokyo (districts such as Asakusa, Nihonbashi, and Ginza; or, more narrowly, sites such as Sensōji, Maruzen, and Café Lion) that constituted a referential database for authors writing about the city. Existing in concrete form, these physical locales distinguish themselves by their materiality and particularity. They are named, and they acquire unique histories through a process of perception, representation, and association. As a storehouse of individual and collective memory, place embodies the affective qualities of human existence. In the literature of the modern city, the invocation of place serves to ground the narrative in the urban topography, and also enables a reflexive relationship between text and city. To cite one example, Kawabata Yasunari’s 川端康成 (1899–1972) depiction of the Casino Folies in *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* (*Asakusa kurenaidan* 浅草紅団, 1930) famously led to a surge in the actual revue’s popularity.

By contrast, I use the term “space” to signify potentiality, openness to individual creation, interpretation, and performance. In his theory of space as social production, Henri Lefebvre puts forth a tripartite classification of space as “perceived” (*perçu*), “conceived” (*conçu*), and “lived” (*vécu*) to distinguish the different modes of spatial production. The last of these categories, which Lefebvre equates to “spaces of representation” (*espaces de représentation*), relates most closely to literature as a process of signification and imagination.²⁷ Issuing forth from the mind of the artist, spaces of

²⁷ Lefebvre defines “spaces of representation” as “space *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users,’ but also of some artists and perhaps of those who *describe* and aspire only to describe: writers,

representation are not bound by the logic that controls spaces perceived and conceived; they “need obey no rules of consistency or cohesiveness.”²⁸ This freedom, which lies at the heart of literature and other forms of artistic expression, offers an avenue for resisting the spatial processes that enabled Tokyo’s transformation into an imperial capital.

The formal elements at work in the literature of this period demonstrate the tension between the perception and expression of urban space, as authors strived for a language adequate to convey (or critique) modernity. Underlying these literary developments are ongoing political and aesthetic concerns, resulting from the colonial inflections of modernity as well as the evolving linguistic structures and narrative conventions of modern Japanese, Korean, and Chinese-language literatures. The continual formation of new groups and journals in major urban centers testifies to these dynamics of literary production, as well as to the significance of the city as a catalyst for literary activity.

By recognizing the condition of double exposure that defined Tokyo as an imperial capital, I argue against a single, unified reading of the city. While most English-language scholarship on Tokyo has been conducted within the national framework of Japanese studies, I stress that Tokyo’s modernity was not exclusively Japanese in its spatial articulations, but extended outward to the imperial West and the (semi)colonial

philosophers. This is the dominated—and hence passively experienced—space which the imagination seeks to modify and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects. Thus spaces of representation may be said, though again with certain exceptions, to tend towards more or less coherent systems of non-verbal symbols and signs.” Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 39. Translation modified. See also Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l’espace*, 4th ed. (Paris: Anthropos, 2000), 49. Emphasis in original.

²⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 41.

East. While I have confined my attention to Tokyo for the purposes of this project, I also assert the broader relevance of urban space to modern literature in East Asia. This comparative perspective poses a challenge to national boundaries, revealing the cultural hybridity, spatial unevenness, and linguistic heterogeneity of the imperial capital (and, by extension, the Japanese empire). I have divided my project into the following five chapters:

Chapter One:

Nagai Kafū and the Aesthetics of Urban Strolling

Few relationships between an author and a city can match the longevity and intensity of the connection between Nagai Kafū and Tokyo. Elegiac descriptions of urban life abound in Kafū's fiction, from Kurayama Nansō's aging, atmospheric Negishi residence in *Rivalry* (*Udekurabe* 腕くらべ, 1917) to the dark, narrow backstreets of Tamanoi through which Ōe Tadasu wanders in *A Strange Tale from East of the River* (*Bokutō kidan* 瀬東綺譚, 1937). Kafū's reputation as a writer of Tokyo also derives from his lengthy personal diary, *Dyspepsia House Days* (*Danchōtei nichijō* 断腸亭日乗), which he kept from 1917 until his death in 1959. Kafū named the diary for the place where he began writing it, a small cottage built in 1916 on the family's estate in Ōkubo.²⁹ Although he later moved to Tsukiji, Azabu, and finally Ichikawa, Kafū retained this reference to his

²⁹ Edward Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 79–80.

Ōkubo dwellings, just as he continued to evoke other individualized places in the city such as his beloved childhood neighborhood of Koishikawa. In addition to his fictional writings and his diary, Kafū chronicled his Tokyo wanderings in numerous essays. In this chapter, I consider the collection of eleven essays known as *Fair-Weather Geta* (*Hiyori geta* 日和下駄, 1914–1915), in which Kafū outlines a geography of the city. In his *flânerie*, Kafū articulates an urban aesthetics critical of the city's superficial and rational modernization during the Meiji period. I situate *Fair-Weather Geta* in the context of Kafū's other writings after his 1908 return to Japan from the United States and France, arguing that it is precisely Kafū's modern, cosmopolitan perspective that allows him to discover these archaic remnants of the past.

Chapter Two:

The Capital in Ruins

The Great Kantō Earthquake caused unprecedented destruction in the city of Tokyo, while also exerting a profound influence on its future development. In *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* (*Tōkyō shinsaiki* 東京震災記, 1924), Tayama Katai chronicles the disaster and its aftermath, venturing from his home in the city's western suburbs into the *shitamachi* neighborhoods devastated by the disaster. In one sense, the Great Kantō Earthquake marked a moment of possibility for Tokyo as an imperial capital, as the extensive damage left huge swaths of urban space open for development and modernization. Ginza serves as a prototypical example of the city's reimagining in the

wake of the earthquake. With the destruction of the Ginza Brick Town, a symbol of the “civilization and enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika* 文明開化) that characterized Japan’s aspirations to modernize and appeal to Western visitors during the Meiji period, Ginza was free to become a modern district of department stores and cafes, transforming itself into an iconic site of Japanese modernity. I use Tayama Katai’s *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* to explore the relationship between the Great Kantō Earthquake and Tokyo as an imperial capital. To document the disaster is to ascribe meaning to Tokyo’s destruction, to recuperate the ruined city as a space of memory and possibility. Katai’s ability to comprehend the destruction of the city in these terms is contingent on his observational positional vis-à-vis the *shitamachi*. Katai mourns the passing of the old city, but he also looks ahead to Tokyo’s rise as a modern metropolis. In this respect, *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* contributes directly to the national discourse on reimagining the imperial capital that followed the earthquake’s devastation. Yet Katai’s account also discloses moments of spatial contestation, from irruptions of colonial violence in the aftermath of the earthquake to the spatial practices that endured the changes wrought by the reconstruction efforts. These instances of conflict reveal the unevenness intrinsic to Tokyo as an imperial capital, a city characterized by a condition of double exposure. By attending to these dimensions of the city, Katai uncovers the different ways in which the ruined capital was experienced and represented.

Chapter Three:

Weng Nao’s Tokyo Vagabonding

The tremendous post-earthquake growth of the suburbs (*kōgai* 郊外) allowed “newly opened land” (*shinkaichi* 新開地) on Tokyo’s periphery to be absorbed into the imperial capital. In this sense, suburbanization bears a strong affinity with colonization, as both spatial processes sought to expand their domains through deterritorialization and reterritorialization. With the expansion of Tokyo’s rail network, patterns of bourgeois middle-class life and commuter culture reshaped the city. Yet alternative spaces also emerged, embodying a bohemian lifestyle and encompassing cosmopolitan scenes of intellectual encounter. Through a reading of Weng Nao’s essay, “The Vagabond Town of the Tokyo Suburbs: The Neighborhood of Kōenji” (Tōkyō kōgai rōningai: Kōenji kawai 東京郊外浪人街：高円寺界隈), I consider Kōenji as the urban milieu of the vagabond (*rōnin* 浪人). I also examine the short story “Remaining Snow” (Zansetsu 残雪, 1935), in which Weng Nao evokes Tokyo as a space of mobility and possibility. Escaping from the strictures of colonial society, the young protagonist pursues a life of sexual and artistic liberation in the imperial capital.

Chapter Four:

Colonial Modernity in the Tokyo Writings of Yi Sang

In his life and literature, Yi Sang navigated the contradictions of colonial modernity that transformed the capital of Keijō. Yi Sang led an eclectic professional career, working as an architectural engineer for the Japanese Government-General’s Department of Public

Works and publishing Japanese-language poetry in the architectural journal *Chōsen to kenchiku*. After resigning from his position due to poor health, he ran a series of failed cafes while continuing to write. He became active in the 1930s modernist literary coterie known as the Group of Nine, and served as an editor of the literary journal *Shiwa sosōl*. Yi Sang was also a talented artist, composing the illustrations for his friend Pak T'aewōn's novella *One Day in the Life of the Author, Mr. Kubo* (*Sosōlga Kubo ssi ūi iril* 小説家仇甫氏의一日, 1934). When Yi Sang finally left Keijō for Tokyo in October 1936, he was already in poor health. He died just six months later, in April 1937, after enduring imprisonment on charges of thought crimes. In his writings from this brief period in Tokyo, Yi Sang expresses his disillusionment with the imperial capital and the unfulfilled promises of modernity. Focusing on the short story "Lost Flowers" (*Silhwa* 失花, 1939) and the essays "Tokyo" (Tonggyōng 東京, 1939) and "Ennui" (Kwōnt'ae 倦怠, 1937), I argue that Yi Sang unsettles the spatial hierarchy that orders the imperial and colonial capitals, bringing the two cities together in a single frame.

Chapter Five:

Memory as Cartography: Sata Ineko's *My Map of Tokyo*

After the destruction of Tokyo in the firebombing of 1945, Sata Ineko evoked the city in a series of twelve essays that were later published in a single volume as *My Map of Tokyo* (*Watashi no Tōkyō chizu* 私の東京地図, 1946–1948). Sata's recollections of urban space span a period of thirty years in the capital, recuperating the ruined city as a repository of

affect and personal memory. Her cartographic representations of the imperial capital aim at the recovery of the self, exploring the social and sensory dimensions of urban experience. Sata's position within the city is figured by her marginal social position, affording her glimpses of Tokyo's modernity. Before her rise to prominence as a writer, she works in a caramel factory, in the prestigious Maruzen bookstore, and in numerous cafes and restaurants. Through her transgressions of spatial and semiotic boundaries, Sata resists the binary distinctions underlying Japanese imperial power, outlining a map of the city as a collection of lived spaces.

Chapter One:

Nagai Kafū and the Aesthetics of Urban Strolling

And so I go out, wearing fair-weather geta and carrying an umbrella.

Nagai Kafū, *Fair-Weather Geta*

I. Introduction

Nagai Kafū's 永井荷風 (1879–1959) self-conscious declaration of his stylized appearance recurs throughout his collection of essays on Tokyo entitled *Fair-Weather Geta* (*Hiyori geta* 日和下駄, 1914–1915), drawing attention to the modern practice of urban strolling. The stroll (*sansaku* 散策; *sanpo* 散歩) constitutes an intimate engagement with the affective dimensions of urban space. It signifies no immediate goal, no destination that must be reached. Free from the routines of modern life—most notably, its preoccupation with financial gain—Kafū can wander through the city's overlooked

and forgotten places. His strolling resists the precise temporal framework of urban existence imposed by capitalist modernity, described by Georg Simmel in his 1903 essay, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”: “the technique of metropolitan life in general is not conceivable without all of its activities and reciprocal relationships being organized and coordinated in the most punctual way into a firmly fixed framework of time which transcends all subjective elements.”³⁰ It is precisely these “subjective elements” that Kafū endeavors to restore to Tokyo, a city whose rhythms had become increasingly regulated with its Meiji-era transformation into an imperial capital.

Tokyo’s development as an imperial capital was predicated on the fundamental duality of Japanese imperialism: a simultaneous identification with and differentiation from both the imperial West and the colonial East. In *Fair-Weather Geta*, Kafū highlights the incongruities of this condition, criticizing the regimentation and superficiality of Meiji modernity while also revealing alternative temporal and spatial possibilities latent in the urban landscape. Tracing a selective itinerary of the city, Kafū avoids the cacophony of the modern metropolis as well as the more conspicuous markers of its past, venturing instead into back alleys, vacant lots, and other neglected corners of the capital. His navigation of these spaces delineates a city rich in sensibility, places where vestiges of Edo still linger. Yet it is precisely Kafū’s modern, cosmopolitan perspective that allows him to discover these archaic remnants of the past. His descriptions of Tokyo are grounded in eclectic references to foreign cities and French literature, *ukiyo*e and Edo popular fiction. These diverse sensibilities come together in Kafū’s *flânerie*, a leisurely wandering through urban space that discloses a hybrid aesthetic vision of modern Tokyo.

³⁰ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” *On Individuality and Social Forms*, ed. Donald L. Levine (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 328.

Fair-Weather Geta consists of eleven essays, nine of which first appeared in the journal *Mita bungaku* 三田文学 between August 1914 and June 1915. The collected essays were published in a single volume by Momiyama Shoten in November 1915. Each essay takes a different feature of the city as its subject: water, trees, temples, shrines to evil deities (*inshi* 淫祠), maps, alleys, hills, cliffs, vacant lots, and sunsets. The origins of this sustained aesthetic contemplation of urban space can be traced to Kafū's literary output following his return to Japan in 1908, after five years abroad in the United States and France. Works such as "A Song of Fukagawa" (Fukagawa no uta 深川の唄, 1909) and "Diary of a Returnee" (Kichōsha no nikki 帰朝者の日記, 1909) display Kafū's sensitivity to the unevenness of the city and to the crudeness of its rampant modernization.³¹ Kafū's trenchant criticism of modern Tokyo does not, however, mean that a return to premodern Edo is possible. Even as he encounters traces of the old capital, Kafū retains his position as a modern observer. In this regard, Kafū's lament at the end of "A Song of Fukagawa" is emblematic. Having endured an arduous streetcar ride through the city, crossing over Eitai Bridge to Fukagawa, Kafū longs to stay and savor the archaic mood that prevails on the east bank of the Sumida River. Yet he knows that such a life is impossible for him: "Ah, but instead I must go back. That is my destiny."³² Kafū's ineluctable return to the *yamanote* from the *shitamachi*, much like his return to Japan from the West, is a fundamental condition of his aesthetic understanding of Tokyo.

³¹ For a sustained analysis of these and other writings by Kafū published from 1909 to 1910, see Rachael Hutchinson, *Nagai Kafū's Occidentalism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 133–171.

³² Nagai Kafū, "Fukagawa no uta," in vol. 6 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 118.

Kafū navigates Tokyo by accessing different modes of urban experience and representation, whether the deliberate anachronisms of his *sanjin* pose or the evocative depictions of the old city in art and literature.³³ From 1913 to 1914, immediately prior to starting work on *Fair-Weather Geta*, Kafū published two series of essays which later appeared in the collections *Tidings from Ōkubo* (*Ōkubo dayori* 大窪だより, 1916) and *On the Arts of Edo* (*Edo geijutsu ron* 江戸芸術論, 1920). In the former, Kafū documents his daily life in Tokyo and the changing of the seasons in a series of brief, dated entries written in the epistolary style (*sōrōbun* 候文). *Fair-Weather Geta* draws upon this conceptualization of the city as subjective experience, but departs from the chronological structure of *Tidings from Ōkubo*; instead, the topographical organization of *Fair-Weather Geta* foregrounds specific sites and physical features in Tokyo. *On the Arts of Edo*, meanwhile, establishes a direct connection between Kafū’s affinity for *ukiyoe* and his aesthetic vision of the city. “An Appreciation of *Ukiyoe*” (*Ukiyoe no kanshō* 浮世絵の鑑賞, 1913), the first essay in the collection, begins with a lamentation of Tokyo’s aesthetic decline. Kafū deplors the “public works project known as ‘urban renewal’ [*shiku kaisei* 市区改正]” that resulted in the destruction of an old palace gate and the removal of the pine trees that once grew in abundance around it.³⁴ In the aftermath of this physical

³³ The *sanjin* 散人, or refined man of leisure, is an enduring figure in Kafū’s writings. See Edward Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 152 and Stephen Snyder, *Fictions of Desire* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2000), 1–7 and 116–118.

³⁴ Nagai Kafū, *Edo geijutsu ron*, in vol. 10 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 145.

erasure, images of the city preserved in works of art and literature take on particular importance:

余は日々時代の茶番に打興ずることを務むると共に、又時としては心ひそかに整頓せる過去の生活を空想せざるを得ざりき。過去を夢見んには残されたる過去の文学美術の力によらざる可からず。これ余が広重と北斎との江戸名所絵によりて都会と其の近郊の風景を見ん事を冀ひ...

While I involve myself each day with the farces of this era, from time to time I also cannot help but secretly imagine the ordered life of the past. To dream of the past, I have no choice but to rely on the power of the literature and the art that still remain from the past. Through the famous views of Edo in prints by Hiroshige and Hokusai, I yearn to glimpse the city and its environs...³⁵

This artistic mediation of the city transfigures the urban landscape, offering Kafū an alternate reality akin to a dream or a fantasy. Representations of Edo in print collections such as Utagawa Hiroshige's 歌川広重 (1797–1858) *One Hundred Famous Views of Edo* (*Meisho Edo hyakkei* 名所江戸百景, 1856–1858) and Katsushika Hokusai's 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849) *Thirty-Six Views of Mount Fuji* (*Fugaku sanjūrokkei* 富嶽三十六景, ca. 1822–1831) present romantic visions of the city prior to the modernization of the Meiji

³⁵ Nagai Kafū, *Edo geijutsu ron*, in vol. 10 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 146.

period. The visuality of *ukiyoe*, moreover, lends itself to the acts of seeing and imagining, enabling the city to be comprehended as an object of aesthetic appreciation. Kafū accesses these modes of perception throughout his own strolls through the Taishō-era capital, giving voice to sensibilities that once defined the urban topography but have since been obscured or destroyed.

II. Kafū, *Ukiyoe*, and the City of Water

The modernization of Edo-Tokyo can be characterized as a transition from a city of water (*mizu no miyako* 水の都) to a city of land (*riku no miyako* 陸の都).³⁶ With this profound change to Edo-Tokyo's spatial and economic configuration came fundamental shifts in the perception and representation of the city. The *ukiyoe* artist Kobayashi Kiyochika 小林清親 (1847–1915) documented the changing capital during the early Meiji period in a print series entitled *Famous Views of Tokyo* (*Tōkyō meisho zu* 東京名所図, 1876–1881). Kiyochika's vision of Tokyo is suffused with the aesthetics of the water-based city, even in his depictions of modern buildings and other sights.³⁷ The rediscovery of Kiyochika in the early Taishō period signaled a renewed sensitivity to the changing capital. The poet Kinoshita Mokutarō 木下杢太郎 (1885–1945) returned the artist to prominence with a

³⁶ See Jinnai Hidenobu, *Tokyo: A Spatial Anthropology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 66–118 and Kawamoto Saburō, *Taishō gen'ei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Gendai Bunko, 2008), 151–171.

³⁷ Maeda Ai, “Panorama of Enlightenment,” trans. Henry D. Smith II, in *Text and the City*, ed. James A. Fujii (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 70–72.

brief 1913 essay in which he writes, “to appreciate Kiyochika’s paintings is, I think, to appreciate the poetic realm of the common people.”³⁸ For Kinoshita, Kiyochika is more than an artist who merely portrays external phenomena. Instead, he captures the sensibility of an era in which ordinary citizens are continually confronted by new and awe-inspiring sights. Kafū, too, expresses his admiration for Kiyochika’s ability to embed these cultural conditions in his documentation of early Meiji Tokyo. In “Vacant Lots” (Akichi 空地), the eighth essay in *Fair-Weather Geta*, Kafū describes an empty space adjacent to the Imperial Palace where barracks were constructed in the early Meiji period:

明治十年頃小林清親翁が新しい東京の風景を写生した水彩画をば、その儘木板摺にした東京名所図会の中に、外桜田遠景と題して、遠く樹木の中に此の兵營の正面を望んだ処が描かれてゐる。当時都下の平民が新に皇城の門外に建てられたこの西洋造を仰ぎ見て、いかなる新奇の念とまた崇拜の情に打れたか。それ等の感情は新しい画工の、云はば稚氣を帯びた新画風と古めかしい木版摺の技術と相俟つて遺憾なく紙面に躍如としてゐる。一時代の感情を表現し得たる点に於て小林翁の風景版画は甚だ価値ある美術と云はねばならぬ。

Around the tenth year of Meiji, Kobayashi Kiyochika sketched landscapes of the new Tokyo in watercolor, which were reproduced without alteration as woodblock prints. “Distant View of Soto Sakurada,” one of the prints

³⁸ Kinoshita Mokutarō, “Kobayashi Kiyochika ga Tōkyō meisho zue,” in vol. 8 of *Kinoshita Mokutarō zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981), 146.

from his collection of famous views of Tokyo, depicts the front of these barracks seen from afar, in the middle of a grove. For ordinary people living in the city at that time, what feelings of novelty and awe must have come over them as they gazed up at this Western construction that had been built outside the gate of the Imperial Palace! These emotions are utterly vivid on the page, as the painter's new style—tinged, as it were, with a certain naiveté—is coupled with the old technology of the woodblock print. For their capacity to express the emotions of an era, Kobayashi's landscape prints must be regarded as extremely valuable works of art.³⁹

For Kafū, the interplay between the modern subject matter and the archaic technology of printmaking signals the artist's simultaneous engagement with the city's two temporal registers. Maeda Ai articulates a similar tension in his analysis of light and shadow in Kiyochika's prints, with the modern gas lamps of Tokyo set against the darkness of Edo.⁴⁰ By the early Taishō period, Kiyochika's Tokyo, too, was vanishing. "During my comical strolls in fair-weather geta in search of the vestiges of Edo," writes Kafū, "I often strive to seek out this Tokyo of early Meiji. Yet with the development of a new, second Tokyo in the mere twenty or thirty years that have passed, the Tokyo that Kobayashi

³⁹ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 158.

⁴⁰ Maeda Ai, "Kiyochika no hikari to yami," in *Toshi kūkan no naka no bungaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1992), 145–154.

depicted in woodblock prints is gradually disappearing without a trace.”⁴¹ Rather than a simple dichotomy of Edo and Tokyo, Kafū’s observations suggest an urban palimpsest that is inscribed successively, as even the barracks that were once so new and unfamiliar are left in ruins. From this perspective, strolling becomes an effort to uncover multiple layers of the same city. While the *ukiyoe* of Hiroshige and Hokusai offer glimpses of premodern Edo, Kiyochika’s *ukiyoe* evoke the capital’s spatiotemporal heterogeneity at the moment of its transition from Edo to Meiji. By channeling these disparate visions of the city through his ambulatory explorations, Kafū performs an aesthetic reimagining of the imperial capital.

In navigating the land-based city that Tokyo had become by the early Taishō period, Kafū willfully has to seek out vestiges of the city of water. Kafū references the French writer Émile Magne (1877–1953), who devotes an entire chapter of *The Aesthetics of Cities (L’esthétique des villes, 1908)* to water as a key characteristic of urban space.⁴² The rhythms associated with Tokyo’s waterways inspire Kafū’s affection for ferries, an outdated form of transportation which he poses in opposition to the city’s modern conveyances: “ferries have little connection to the public life of Tokyo’s people, who ride around in cars and on trains. Yet ferries provide a great respite to those who trudge through the city carrying heavy bundles on their backs, and cause those of us who walk about at leisure to feel a sense of relaxation that cannot be experienced in modern

⁴¹ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 159.

⁴² Émile Magne, *L’esthétique des villes* (Paris: Mercvire de France, 1908), 210–269. Kafū also alludes to Magne’s work in *Ōkubo dayori*. See Nagai Kafū, *Ōkubo dayori*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 266.

life.”⁴³ The ferries hold both a simple physical appeal for the city’s workers as well as an elevated aesthetic attraction for the leisurely man about town. Kafū describes these sensations as “respite” (*kyūsoku* 休息) and “relaxation” (*ian* 慰安) respectively, words that indicate a temporary departure from the harried rhythms of capitalist modernity. During the Edo period, rivers served the dual function of transportation and recreation, as vital to the city’s economic livelihood as they were to residents’ well-being. “But today,” Kafū observes, “the waterways of Tokyo are used strictly for transportation, and have completely lost their inherited aesthetic value.”⁴⁴ Boarding the ferry, Kafū accesses an alternate temporality still present in modern Tokyo, and achieves a fleeting return to the aesthetics of the water-based city.

III. The City Remembered and Reimagined

In one sense, Kafū’s wandering through Tokyo’s streets is a wandering through personal memories, a journey that leads him back to his childhood days in Koishikawa and the surrounding areas. As he writes in the opening essay of *Fair-Weather Geta*, “for me, walking in the city of Tokyo these days is just like following a path of my life’s memories, from the time of my birth down to the present. And as the famous places and historic remnants of the past are destroyed day after day, the vicissitudes of the present

⁴³ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 151.

⁴⁴ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 140.

era tinge my strolls in the city with the lonely poetry of the sadness of impermanence.”⁴⁵

Kafū apprehends the destruction of the urban landscape in aesthetic terms, describing the accompanying feeling of pathos as *mujō hiai* 無常悲哀. Kafū’s mode of urban experience hinges on his recognition of the city’s decay, his attunement to the vanishing traces of the past. By inscribing memory and emotion into the places that he visits, Nagai Kafū organizes the city of Tokyo into an interwoven collection of narratives. In their spatial and temporal specificity, Kafū’s itineraries mark out the trajectory of his own life:

市中の散歩は子供の時から好であつた。十三四の頃私の家は一時小石川から麴町永田町の官舎へ引移つた事があつた。勿論電車のない時代である。私は神田錦町のある私立学校に上つてゐたので、半蔵御門を這入つて吹上御苑の裏手を廻る代官町の、老松鬱々たる通りをば、やがて片側に二の丸三の丸の高い石垣と深い堀とを望みつゝ、竹橋を渡つて平川口の御城門を向うに昔の御搗屋今の文部省に添うて一橋へ出る。この道程も別に遠いとは思はず初めの中は却つて物珍らしく楽しかつた。

Ever since I was a child, I liked strolling in the city. When I was thirteen or fourteen, my family moved temporarily from Koishikawa to an official residence in Nagatachō, Kōjimachi. Of course, there were no streetcars in those days. I was attending a private English-language school in Kanda’s

⁴⁵ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 113.

Nishikichō, so I would enter the Hanzōmon and follow the road behind the Fukiage Imperial Garden, through the gloomy old pine trees of Daikanchō. Gazing at the tall stone walls and the deep moat of the palace's outer fortifications as I passed by, I would cross Takebashi and head toward the castle gate at the Hirakawa entrance. Walking past what was once the Shikiya and is now the Ministry of Education, I would come out to Hitotsubashi. I didn't think that the distance was particularly far, and early on I was quite delighted by the curious sights.⁴⁶

The abundance of place names in this passage locates Kafū's childhood walking within a distinct geography of Tokyo. The path, however, is Kafū's own; his steps move him from place to place, connecting his family home in Nagatachō to his school in Nishikichō by way of a long, winding itinerary. Temporal references—the absence of streetcars, the archaic names of official buildings—situate the account in the past, in a world now sustained only by memory. Kafū's act of recollection hints at the multiple temporal registers that the city contains. Juxtaposing past and present urban visions produces a double image of Tokyo in the early Meiji period (the time of Kafū's childhood) and Tokyo in the Taishō period (the time of Kafū's writing of *Fair-Weather Geta*). Kafū's oscillation between these two moments gestures to an enduring instability in the city's composition, as instances of rupture continually elicit nostalgic recollection. While Kafū can draw upon personal memory to call forth these visions of early Meiji Tokyo, the city of Edo remains beyond the scope of his lived experience.

⁴⁶ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 112.

For Kafū, born in the twelfth year of Meiji, Edo can be glimpsed only through imagination and representation. He must rely on material artifacts from the old city to superimpose a fantastic Edo onto the present-day city. Carrying a pictorial map (*ezu* 絵図) from the Kaei 嘉永 era (1848–1854) as he wanders through Taishō-era Tokyo, Kafū engages in “comparison and contrast” (*hikaku taishō* 比較対照) of the city at different moments in time.⁴⁷ Through this activity, he illustrates a key difference between past and present modes of topographical representation:

凡そ東京地図にして精密正確なるは陸地測量部の地図に上越すものはなからうが、これを眺めて何等の興味も起らず、風景の如何をも更に想像せしめない。土地の高低を示す蝸蜒の足のやうな記号と、何万分の一とか何とか云ふ尺度一点張の正確と精密とは徒に煩雑を招ぐばかりか屢当意即妙の自由を失つてゐる。見よ不正確なる江戸絵図は上野の如く桜咲く処には自由に桜の花を描き柳原の如く柳ある処には柳の糸を添へ得るのみならず、例へば又飛鳥山より遠く日光山筑波山を見ることを得れば直にそれをば雲の彼方に描示すが如く、臨機応変に全く相反せる製図の方式態度を併用して興味津々、よく平易にその要領を会得せしめてゐる。この点よりして不正確なる江戸絵図は正確なる東京の新地図よりも遙に直感的また印象的方法に出でたものと見ねばならぬ。

⁴⁷ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 128.

Generally speaking, for a map of Tokyo that is precise and accurate, nothing is better than a map from the Land Survey Department. Looking at this map, however, does not provoke any kind of interest, nor does it enable one to imagine the actual landscape. On the contrary, the map's accuracy and precision—from the topographical lines that look like a centipede's feet to the scale measuring one ten-thousandth or something—lack improvisational freedom and inspire only annoyance in the viewer. Look at the inaccurate Edo map: it has liberal drawings of cherry blossoms in places like Ueno where cherry trees bloom, and sketches of willow branches in places like Yanagiwara where willow trees abound. And where the mountains of Nikkō and Tsukuba, more distant than Mount Asuka, happen to be visible, they are depicted just beyond the clouds. By employing ad hoc these techniques that completely contradict standard cartographic methods, the map conveys essential details in a simple and very interesting manner. On this point, the inaccurate Edo pictorial map is far more intuitive and impressive than the accurate new map of Tokyo.⁴⁸

The official map published by the Land Survey Department is deficient in that it fails to acknowledge the emotional connection between the reader and the map, and, by extension, between the reader and the city. While it is undoubtedly “precise and accurate” (*seimitsu seikaku naru* 精密正確なる), the official map's lack of “improvisational

⁴⁸ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 128–129.

freedom” (*tōi sokumyō no jiyū* 当意即妙の自由) and strict adherence to scale obfuscate the reader, who has no way of knowing which areas of the city are interesting. The subjective, affective qualities of the Edo pictorial map bridge this gap in their very departure from cartographic convention. The result is a vision of the city that is far more “intuitive” (*chokkanteki* 直感的) and “impressive” (*inshōteki* 印象的), qualities that are, in turn, intrinsic to Kafū’s navigation of urban space. Just as personal remembrance awakens the particularity of the city as dynamic, lived experience, so too does the pictorial map express an idea of the city as an open, readable text. In Lefebvre’s terms, this opposition between the official map and the pictorial map corresponds to the representation of space (*conçu*) and the space of representation (*vécu*).

IV. “Let’s Walk the Backstreets, Let’s Stroll the Side Streets”

In his efforts to uncover alternative spaces and temporalities within Tokyo, Nagai Kafū responds to the reordering of the capital that proceeded apace from the third decade of the Meiji period. With the passage of the Tokyo Municipal Improvement Act in 1888, the Japanese government codified a comprehensive plan for urban renewal. The resulting policies remained in place until 1919, and addressed the commercial and political needs of the metropolis through broad infrastructural changes.⁴⁹ In his 1917 memoir, *Thirty Years in Tokyo* (*Tōkyō no sanjūnen* 東京の三十年), the author Tayama Katai recalls the effects of these policies as the Japanese government sought to remake Tokyo as “the

⁴⁹ André Sorensen, *The Making of Urban Japan* (London: Routledge, 2002), 71–74.

capital of the new Japanese empire” (*atarashii Nippon teikoku no shufu* 新しい日本帝国の首府):

大通も殆ど渾て江戸時代の面影を失ってしまった。破壊と建設との縮図は、一時東京の市街に不思議な、不統一な光景を示したが、今ではそれも一段落ついたように、不統一のままに落付いてしまった。日比谷公園、凱旋道路、東京駅の大きな停車場、あそこいらあたりも、考えると、全く一変してしまったものだ。

The main streets, too, have lost almost all traces of Edo. For a time, the flurry of demolition and construction produced a strange and disharmonious spectacle, but now things seem to have settled down—albeit in a state of disharmony. Hibiya Park, the processional route, and Tokyo Station have all changed completely, when one thinks about it.⁵⁰

Katai’s observations describe the tumultuous spatial upheaval that characterized Tokyo’s transformation into an imperial capital. The most dramatic effects of this urban renewal can be seen on the main streets, where the combination of open space and monumental architecture signals the progress of capitalist modernity and Japanese imperial power.

Rather than a fully realized modern metropolis, however, the resulting condition of this development is an unresolved “state of disharmony” (*futōitsu no mama* 不統一の

⁵⁰ Tayama Katai, *Literary Life in Tōkyō, 1885–1915: Tayama Katai’s Memoirs* (“*Thirty Years in Tōkyō*”), trans. Kenneth G. Henshall (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987), 230. Translation modified. See also Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō no sanjūnen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1981): 262.

まま). For Kafū, the city's incongruities are all too readily apparent. In *Fair-Weather Geta*, he characterizes the unevenness of the imperial capital through a series of oppositions—steel bridges and ferries, official maps and pictorial maps, main streets and back alleys—that contrast the aesthetic qualities of the city's variegated spaces. Again and again, Kafū ventures away from the main streets to seek out the traces (*omokage* 面影) of Edo. Ishizaka Mikimasa employs the concept of the labyrinth (*meiro* 迷路) to describe this search, which guides Kafū's seemingly purposeless wanderings through overlooked corners of the modern city.⁵¹ Excavating an order subsumed in the city's progress, Kafū critiques the careless pattern of development that has obscured and destroyed that order:

今日東京の表通は銀座より日本橋通は勿論上野の広小路浅草の駒形通を始めとして到处西洋まがひの建築物とペンキ塗の看板瘦せ衰へた並樹、さては処嫌はず無遠慮に突立つてゐる電信柱と又目まぐるしい電線の網目のために、云ふまでもなく静寂の美を保つてゐた江戸市街の整頓を失ひ、しかも猶未だ音律的な活動の美を有する西洋市街の列に加はる事も出来ない。さればこの中途半端の市街に対しては、風雪雨夕焼等の変化に際する外、全く芸術的感興を催す事が出来ない。表通を歩いて絶えず感ずるこの不快と嫌悪の情とは一

⁵¹ Ishizaka Mikimasa, *Toshi no meiro* (Kyoto: Hakujisha, 1994), 19.

層私をして其の蔭にかくれた露地の光景に興味を持たせる最大の理由になるのである。

Nowadays, it goes without saying that Tokyo's main streets—Nihonbashidōri in Ginza, of course, as well as Ueno's Hirokōji and Asakusa's Komagatadōri—have lost the tranquil beauty that the order of the Edo streets had preserved. Everywhere there are faux Western buildings, painted signs and rows of thin, scraggly trees. On top of that, telephone poles stick up shamelessly in indiscriminate locations, and there is a bewildering tangle of electrical wires. These streets, moreover, do not yet possess the rhythmic, lively beauty of Western cities. Faced with this half-baked city, it is impossible to summon any sort of artistic feeling whatsoever, aside from that which accompanies natural changes like the wind and snow, the rain, and the setting sun. The sensation of displeasure and revulsion that I always feel while walking along the main streets is the biggest reason why I am so interested in the spectacle of those alleys hidden in the shadows.⁵²

This “half-baked city” (*chūto hanpa no shigai* 中途半端の市街) is rife with the brazen, the superficial, and the inauthentic. Tokyo lacks the “tranquil beauty” (*seijaku no bi* 静寂の美) of Edo as well as the “rhythmic, lively beauty” (*onritsuteki naru katsudō no bi* 音律的なる活動の美) of Western cities. While Kobayashi Kiyochika could bring together

⁵² Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 152–153.

heterogeneous elements in his depictions of the city in the early Meiji period, by early Taishō there exists only a confused jumble on the city's main streets. For Kafū, seeking a respite from this vulgar disorder, alleys hold a powerful aesthetic appeal. Dark and hidden spaces, they possess a physical intimacy that enables an intermingling of the public and private realms. Perambulation is essential to the exploration of alleys, which are inaccessible to the modes of transportation that predominate in the modern city. As Kafū writes, “there is nothing better than meandering down the side streets where cars cannot pass, or walking along the old roads that have escaped the destruction of urban renewal.”⁵³ Here, too, temporal and technological oppositions define the spatial dynamics of the city. Kawamoto Saburō identifies this “discovery of the alley” as a Taishō-era phenomenon, linking Kafū's *Fair-Weather Geta* to other writings of the period that seek to recuperate the alley as a symbolic site of premodern Edo.⁵⁴ The alley becomes an alternative space, to be experienced in a manner that might be termed aesthetic voyeurism. In its distinct spatial qualities, the alley evokes a sensation of depth that is absent in the bright, open spaces of Tokyo's main streets.

In this sense, Kafū's navigation of Tokyo constitutes a movement from the shallow and superficial to the deep and profound. The architect Maki Fumihiko describes inner depth (*oku* 奥) as a key quality in Japanese conceptions of space, noting that “the use of the term with respect to space is invariably premised on the idea of *okuyuki* [奥行

⁵³ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 115–116.

⁵⁴ Kawamoto Saburō, *Taishō gen'ei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Gendai Bunko, 2008), 84–86.

き], signifying relative distance or the sense of distance within a given space.”⁵⁵ Kafū’s strolls take him into the hidden depths of the city’s alleys, revealing glimpses of the humble lives that unfold there in dark anonymity. “Just as one sees in *ukiyo-e*, alleys are the dwelling places of the common people, unchanged from the past to the present. They hide all kinds of lives that cannot be seen from the bright main streets.”⁵⁶ Suffused with the richness of human experience, the alley encapsulates what Kafū terms “a whole world of artistic harmony” (*konzen taru geijutsuteki chōwa no sekai* 渾然たる芸術的調和の世界).⁵⁷ Kafū’s aesthetic fascination with the deprivation of Tokyo’s backstreets discloses an ambiguous coexistence of poverty and peacefulness, spaces that are at once abject and alluring.

V. Kafū’s *Flânerie*

As Kafū’s navigation of the alleys makes plain, the act of strolling is inseparable from his aesthetic vision of the city. *Fair-Weather Geta*’s alternative title, *An Account of Strolls in Tokyo* (*Tōkyō sansakuki* 東京散策記), foregrounds the author’s agency in the exploration of urban space. And while Kafū summons elegiac visions of the declining old city, his

⁵⁵ Maki Fumihiko, “The Japanese City and Inner Space,” in *Nurturing Dreams: Collected Essays on Architecture and the City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 153.

⁵⁶ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 152.

⁵⁷ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 137–138.

urban strolling is a distinctly modern phenomenon. “In old Tokyo (the *shitamachi*), the concepts of ‘stroll’ [*sanpo* 散歩] and ‘city walking’ [*machi aruki* 町歩き] did not exist,” reveals Kawamoto Saburō. “It can be said that Kafū’s city walking—a person of the *yamanote* going out for a walk in the *shitamachi*—was a new form of behavior at the time.”⁵⁸ This separation between the *yamanote* and the *shitamachi* is a requisite condition of Kafū’s walking, imposing an aesthetic distance that enables him to perceive and reflect on the urban landscape. Only once in his life did Kafū actually dwell in the *shitamachi*, when he moved to Tsukiji in 1917. His dissatisfaction with life there led him to move back to the *yamanote* in May 1920, to his so-called Eccentricity House (*Henkikan* 偏奇館) in Azabu.

Kafū’s subjective, self-conscious movement through the city of Tokyo is inherently stylized. Kafū describes his walking as a “leisurely strolling” (*burabura sanpo* ぶらぶら散歩), a mode of navigation in perfect accord with his *sanjin* pose.⁵⁹ Kafū acts the part of an individual who has turned his back on society and is guided solely by his own whims, completely indifferent to the exigencies of modern life. Kawamoto notes that Kafū’s adopted literary persona of an old, sickly recluse is deeply at odds with his actual state of health in the early Taishō period, when Kafū was in his mid-thirties and was quite vigorous in his ambulatory exploration of the city.⁶⁰ This disjuncture did not escape

⁵⁸ Kawamoto Saburō, vol. 1 of *Kafū to Tōkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Gendai Bunko, 2009), 40.

⁵⁹ Nagai Kafū, *Hiyori geta*, in vol. 11 of *Kafū zenshū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), 116.

⁶⁰ Kawamoto Saburō, vol. 1 of *Kafū to Tōkyō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Gendai Bunko, 2009), 12.

Edward Seidensticker, either, who in his analysis of *Fair-Weather Geta* remarks that “the frequent complaints of ill-health make so much walking seem a touch unlikely.”⁶¹

The performative nature of Kafū’s strolling casts a critical perspective on urban space under capitalist modernity. Writing a little more than twenty years after the publication of *Fair-Weather Geta*, Walter Benjamin applies similar scrutiny to the dynamics of the modern city in describing the figure of the *flâneur* in the Paris of Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867). In contrast to the pedestrians who allowed themselves to be jostled by the crowd, the *flâneur* “demanded elbow room and was unwilling to forego the life of a gentleman of leisure. He goes his leisurely way as a personality; in this manner he protests against the division of labor which makes people into specialists. He protests no less against their industriousness.”⁶² The *flâneur*’s mannered stance against the hurried rhythms and commodity fetishism of the modern metropolis articulates an oppositional subjectivity in the negotiation of urban space.

As a space of representation, *flânerie* opposes the panoptic vision of the city as seen from above. Centralized Meiji-era development brought about the transformation of Tokyo into a modern, imperial capital, but it also provoked moments of tension and rupture within the patterns of everyday life. Michel de Certeau describes walking as “a space of enunciation,” an expressive mode that improvises on the geography of the city

⁶¹ Edward Seidensticker, *Kafū the Scribbler* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1965), 68.

⁶² Walter Benjamin, “The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire,” trans. Harry Zohn, in vol. 4 of *Selected Writings* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 30–31.

and resists the hierarchical impositions of a centralized power.⁶³ Concurrent to the spatial transformation of Tokyo, new and faster forms of transportation altered the phenomenal experience of the city. On foot, one is free to wander, to deviate from the tracks, lines, and major thoroughfares to which other forms of transportation are obliged to adhere. Walking also affords space for contemplation; impressions are not rushed and scattered, but rather focused and prolonged. In these respects, *flânerie* is ideally suited to Kafū's critique of Tokyo's superficial and insensitive modernization, enabling his aesthetic exposition of an alternative historical and cultural geography of the city.

VI. Conclusion

Nagai Kafū's leisurely negotiation of Tokyo reveals the many spatiotemporal layers concealed in the modern imperial capital. His writings demonstrate an acute sensitivity to the affective qualities of urban space, and insofar as they condemn Tokyo's modernization, they do so because modernization has obscured those qualities of the city most necessary to a rich and meaningful life within it. Kafū's invocation of the past does not constitute a naïve advocacy of a return to it, but rather illuminates alternative ways of imagining the present-day city. While I have endeavored to contextualize *Fair-Weather Geta* among other representations of urban space in Kafū's literature prior to 1914, the collection of essays also foreshadows his subsequent efforts to reimagine the Japanese

⁶³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 98.

capital. In fictional works such as *Rivalry* (*Udekurabe* 腕くらべ, 1917) and *A Strange Tale from East of the River* (*Bokutō kidan* 墨東綺譚, 1937), Kafū combines formal experimentation with richly evocative descriptions of the city's vanishing past.⁶⁴ By highlighting Tokyo's potential as subjective, lived space, Kafū suggests the possibility of different rhythms, different sensibilities. In his modern, self-conscious practice of urban strolling, Kafū shows a keen affinity for the city as a repository of cultural life and aesthetic experience. Umbrella in hand, he strolls along in his fair-weather geta, meandering through the uneven spaces of Taishō Tokyo.

⁶⁴ See Stephen Snyder, *Fictions of Desire* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000), 54–91 and 115–153.

Chapter Two:
The Capital in Ruins

Though the architect and urbanist are dedicated to progress, it is nonetheless impossible to escape altogether a recurring premonition of total collapse.

Isozaki Arata

I have heard that it did not take ten years for San Francisco to be a finer city than before the earthquake. Tokyo too would be rebuilt in ten years, into a solid expanse of splendid buildings like the Marunouchi Building and the Marine Insurance Building. I imagined the grandeur of the new metropolis, and all the changes that would come in customs and manners as well. An orderly pattern of streets, their bright new pavements gleaming. A flood of automobiles. The geometric beauty of block towering upon block, and elevated lines and subways and trolleys weaving among them, and the stir of a nightless city, and pleasure facilities to rival those of Paris and New York...Fragments of the new Tokyo passed before my eyes, numberless, like flashes in a movie.

Tanizaki Jun'ichirō

I. Introduction

At 11:58 AM on September 1, 1923, a 7.9-magnitude earthquake struck the Kantō region. In the hours that followed, fires raged through Tokyo, destroying approximately 44 percent of the city and leaving over 100,000 people dead or missing. The Great Kantō Earthquake (Kantō daishinsai 関東大震災), as it later came to be known, was much more than a natural disaster. The pattern of devastation revealed the city's enduring economic disparities, while the violence perpetrated in the earthquake's aftermath against Koreans, leftists, and other marginalized groups exposed the precarious state of civil society. As a cataclysmic event in Tokyo's history, the Great Kantō Earthquake also offers insight into individual and communal experiences of trauma, strategies of representation and remembrance, and competing visions for the reconstruction of the imperial capital. These dimensions of the disaster renew focus on Tokyo as an urban imaginary, a site of contestation among different spatial practices.⁶⁵

Of the fifteen wards that composed the city of Tokyo at the time of the earthquake, the six wards of Asakusa, Fukagawa, Honjo, Kanda, Kyōbashi, and Nihonbashi were almost completely destroyed.⁶⁶ This low-lying area east of the Imperial Palace, home to many merchants and artisans, was known collectively as the *shitamachi*. It stood in contrast to the hilly *yamanote*, the predominately aristocratic half of the city located to the west of the Imperial Palace. "The Low City," as Edward Seidensticker describes it,

⁶⁵ Andreas Huyssen, "Introduction: World Cities, World Cultures," in *Other Cities, Other Worlds: Urban Imaginaries in a Globalizing Age*, ed. Andreas Huyssen (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 3.

⁶⁶ Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan's Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 3.

“has always been a vaguely defined region, its precise boundaries difficult to draw. It sometimes seems as much an idea as a geographic entity.”⁶⁷ It was mostly in the *shitamachi* where traces of Edo culture had lingered on into the modern era. In his history of Tokyo, Seidensticker characterizes the Great Kantō Earthquake as the demise of the *shitamachi*, a moment in which virtually all physical traces of Edo were effaced. In this sense, not only did the earthquake result in a catastrophic loss of life and property, but it also signified a moment of spatiotemporal rupture. Already, the center of the city had been shifting away from the *shitamachi*, as large population increases in the *yamanote* accompanied the expansion of Tokyo’s transportation network beginning in the late Meiji period. In the narrative of urban development, it was precisely those remnants of Edo that had hampered Tokyo from becoming a fully modern imperial capital. The destruction of the *shitamachi* therefore brought with it the promise of a new Tokyo, a city that would eclipse the likes of London, Paris, and Berlin with its metropolitan grandeur.

At the time of the earthquake, Tayama Katai 田山花袋 (1872–1930) was at home in Yoyogi San’ya, finishing lunch with his family. The rumbling drove the Tayama family out into the garden, where they watched in terrified silence as their house shook violently and tiles crashed down from their roof.⁶⁸ In the end, though, the damage was minimal; Katai’s neighborhood in the western suburbs, like much of the *yamanote*, escaped the horrific destruction that occurred in the *shitamachi*. Recovering from the shock of the earthquake, the family settled down to drink tea and eat grapes in the garden.

⁶⁷ Edward Seidensticker, *Tokyo from Edo to Showa, 1867–1869: The Emergence of the World’s Greatest City* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2010), 28.

⁶⁸ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 376.

Once the situation had grown calmer and it appeared that the worst was over, they began to tidy up their house, returning books to their shelves and cleaning the tatami. News concerning the extent of the disaster remained elusive; only later did Katai realize that at precisely this same time, scenes of utter desperation were unfolding elsewhere in the city. Around three o'clock that afternoon, Katai caught sight of a large cloud rising ominously in the distance.⁶⁹ It was smoke from the flames that had engulfed the *shitamachi*.

In the aftermath of the disaster, Katai ventured across the city through shortcuts familiar to him from his student days, making his way into the *shitamachi* to observe the destruction firsthand. These wanderings amidst the ruins of Tokyo provide the framework for his account of the catastrophe, *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* (*Tōkyō shinsaiki* 東京震災記, 1924). The episodic narrative provides a direct glimpse into this traumatic moment in Tokyo's history, while also giving Katai space to reflect on the symbolic meaning of the disaster and its significance for the city's future. Katai's position as a chronicler of the Great Kantō Earthquake foregrounds the relationship between literature and urban space, problematizing the capacity of writing to represent adequately the terrible scenes of death and destruction. Frequently, Katai apprehends the places that he visits through reference to his own literary works, underscoring the rupture between the past and the present. *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* also marks a point of intersection between the personal and communal experiences of the disaster, as Katai combines individual stories of loss and survival with references to the widely publicized events that left an enduring imprint on the city's collective memory.

⁶⁹ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 378.

Places in Tokyo where death and destruction occurred on a grand scale soon came to symbolize the trauma of the Great Kantō Earthquake in the popular imagination. The single greatest tragedy was the conflagration that swept through the site of the former Army Clothing Depot in Honjo, claiming the lives of approximately 38,000 people who had sought refuge there in the aftermath of the earthquake. Photographs of the scene show a field of corpses, burned beyond recognition. As the days passed and the bodies were cremated en masse, the scene changed from a horrific vision of death to a place of mourning and remembrance. Katai identifies this shift in signification: “as the Clothing Depot was turned into a large place of worship and people selling flowers gathered there, it became a new kind of famous site in Tokyo.”⁷⁰ While the Clothing Depot was the epicenter for the loss of human life, the Byzantine-style Nikolai Russian Orthodox Church was one of the most iconic symbols of the physical destruction wrought by the earthquake. The evocative image of the church’s burnt-out skeleton circulated in photographs, woodblock prints, and other visual media.⁷¹ These “new famous sites” (*shin meisho* 新名所) refigured the geography of Tokyo around the earthquake, encouraging tourist visits to specific locales.

In this chapter, I use Tayama Katai’s *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* to explore this relationship between representation and urban space, and to illuminate the

⁷⁰ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 534.

⁷¹ In her discussion of post-earthquake “pictures of new famous sites” (*shin meisho e* 新名所絵), Gennifer Weisenfeld examines images of the ruined church in woodblock prints by the artists Hiratsuka Unichi and Nishizawa Tekiho. See Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan’s Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 137–139.

significance of the Great Kantō Earthquake for Tokyo as an imperial capital. To document the disaster is to ascribe meaning to Tokyo's destruction, to recuperate the ruined city as a space of memory and possibility. Katai's ability to comprehend the destruction of the city in these terms is contingent on his observational positional vis-à-vis the *shitamachi*. Katai mourns the passing of the old city, but he also looks ahead to Tokyo's rise as a modern metropolis. In this respect, *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* contributes directly to the national discourse on reimagining the imperial capital that followed the earthquake's devastation. Yet Katai's account also discloses moments of spatial contestation, from irruptions of colonial violence in the aftermath of the earthquake to modes of everyday life that withstood the reconstruction project's transformations of urban space. These instances of conflict reveal the unevenness intrinsic to Tokyo as an imperial capital, a city characterized by a condition of double exposure. By attending to these dimensions of the city, Katai uncovers the different ways in which the ruined capital was experienced, imagined, and represented.

II. Ruins: Human Nature and Urban Form

Edo had endured numerous disasters in its history, including the Meireki Fire (*Meireki no taika* 明暦の大火) in 1657 and the Ansei Edo Earthquake (*Ansei Edo jishin* 安政江戸地震) in 1855. The Great Kantō Earthquake, however, was the first major disaster to befall the modern city of Tokyo. It damaged or destroyed many of the city's new buildings, reducing to rubble much of the built environment produced by the Meiji-era policy of

“civilization and enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika* 文明開化). Under the ubiquitous sign of the ruin (*haikyo* 廢墟), the disaster forced onlookers to confront Tokyo’s inherent vulnerability. As Gennifer Weisenfeld argues, Japan’s architectural transition from wood to masonry meant that ruins came to be associated not with antiquity, but with modernity.⁷² The ruins produced by the Great Kantō Earthquake were linked closely to the project of Edo-Tokyo’s transformation into a modern, imperial capital. Shinbashi Station, built in 1872 and the terminus of Japan’s first railway line, endured heavy damage in the earthquake. Images of its devastation offered a stark indication of the limits of national progress.⁷³ Evacuated of the meaning that they possessed as inhabited structures, ruins are open to interpretation by the observer. “Hence,” suggests Max Pensky, “a dialectic of natural history constructs the image of the ruin as the ‘chronotope’ in Bakhtin’s sense, a spatio-temporal singularity which serves as a generative point for narrative construction and for the narrative work of collective memory.”⁷⁴ The narratives generated by the ruins of Tokyo describe the interconnected temporal and spatial relationships underlying the construction—and destruction—of the Japanese imperial capital.

Ruins are a recurring motif in the numerous literary anthologies published in the months after the earthquake. *Ah, Tokyo* (*Aa Tōkyō* 噫東京, 1923), a poetry anthology edited by Saijō Yaso 西条八十 (1892–1970) and Mizutani Masaru 水谷まさる (1894–

⁷² Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan’s Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 150.

⁷³ Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan’s Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 144–145.

⁷⁴ Max Pensky, “Three Kinds of Ruin: Heidegger, Benjamin, Sebald,” *Poligraf* 16.61–62 (2011), 69.

1950), features a poem by Yokoyama Seiga 横山青娥 (1901–?) entitled “Ruins” (Haikyo 廃墟). One stanza reads:

昨日の都
今日はただ
廃墟の空に月照りて
雉子鳴くかや
焼野原。
Yesterday’s capital
today is nothing more
than a burnt-out wasteland,
the moon shining in a ruined sky—
the cry of a pheasant.⁷⁵

Merging his description of urban space with references to the natural world, Yokoyama’s desolate imagery conveys the capital’s overnight transformation into a “burnt-out wasteland” (*yakenohara* 焼野原). *On the Catastrophe (Saika no ue ni* 災禍の上に, 1923), another poetry anthology, brings together works by forty-nine poets. “The Fearful Ruins” (Kowashiki haikyo 怖しき廃墟), a poem by Hayashi Shin’ichi 林信一, speaks to the impossibility of imagining the city as it was before its destruction:

⁷⁵ Yokoyama Seiga, “Haikyo,” in *Kantō daishinsai*, ed. Wada Hirofumi (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2007), 139–140.

あゝこの恐ろしい廃墟の中に、
私はどうしてあの華やかな都会を、
湧き返へるやうな輝かしい文化の輝きを、
人人の美しい姿を
想像することが出来やう。

Ah, in these fearful ruins
how can I imagine
that flourishing city,
the radiance of that brilliant culture,
and the beautiful figures of the people?⁷⁶

In the same anthology, Maeda Shunsei 前田春声 (1896–1977) offers a plaintive lament for the fallen city in his poem “On the Ruins of Tokyo” (Haikyo Tōkyō ni yosu 廃墟東京に寄す), which begins:

あゝ、九月一日
地震ひ、
烈しく、烈しく、
怒の日のやうに

⁷⁶ Hayashi Shin'ichi, “Kowashiki haikyo,” in *Kantō daishinsai*, ed. Wada Hirofumi (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2007), 380.

家々のきしめき、軋めくなかに
焰となり、煙となつて消え失せた故郷よ。
いや育ちゆく東京よ、
擾乱の、力の都、
群集の八千衢よ。
あはれ灰に埋れて、
廢墟と變り、
寂として
海には続く。

Ah, September 1

the earth shook

violently, violently,

like the Day of Wrath.

The houses, with creaks and groans

turned to flames and smoke. My hometown, gone.

Tokyo,

city of disorder and power

a collection of eight thousand districts

buried in ashes,

transformed into ruins

desolate

continuing into the sea.⁷⁷

These poems emphasize the violence and suddenness of Tokyo's destruction, contrasting the vibrancy of the city before the earthquake with the desolation that followed. As a sign of total collapse, the ruin represents the spatial and temporal inverse of the metropolis.

Amidst this eerie, burnt-out landscape, the immediacy of the disaster remains palpable, as the poets dwell on the trauma of the catastrophe and attempt to recapture memories of the vanished city.

Tayama Katai also confronts the city as ruin, documenting his forays into the *shitamachi*. Two days after the earthquake, Katai journeyed on foot to Honjo in search of his mistress, the geisha Iida Yone 飯田代子 (1889–?). It was the second time that Katai had ventured into the *shitamachi* following the earthquake, and the journey brought him face to face with pervasive scenes of destruction. Along the way, he encountered his friend U, and together they ascended Kudanzaka in order to survey the damage. As Katai recounts, he gained a commanding vantage over the city below:

私は兎に角そこで地震以来焼けた区域の概念をつくることが出来た。
私は一面に焼野原で、目の及ぶ限り殆ど灰燼になつてゐないところ
のないのを見た。ニコライ堂の半ば焼け落ちてゐるのも、駿河台か
ら神保町にかけて処々に建物の残骸の聳えてゐるのも、神田明神の
焼けたあとの台地のガランとしてゐるのも、何も彼もその火災のい

⁷⁷ Maeda Shunsei, “Haikyo Tōkyō ni yosu,” in *Kantō daishinsai*, ed. Wada Hirofumi (Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 2007), 414–415.

かに烈しかったかを語り尽して余りあるのを見た。それはそこからでは、宮城の丘陵にかくれて、南の方面は見えてゐなかつたけれども、京橋から銀座、東京駅あたりは見えなかつたけれども、概して一面にその惨害のほどを知ることが出来た。『全く廃墟だ！都会の廃墟だ！』私わ思はずかう口に出して言つた。

From there, I was able to get an idea of the areas of the city that had burned since the earthquake. I looked out on a wasteland. Almost everything, as far as my eyes could reach, had been reduced to ashes. The sights told of the intensity of the conflagration, from the partially burned and collapsed Nikolai Cathedral, to the wreckage of buildings that rose up everywhere from Surugadai to Jinbōchō, to the empty platform where the Kanda Myōjin had burned. My view to the south was obscured by the hill where the Imperial Palace stands, so I was unable to see the area around Tokyo Station from Kyōbashi to Ginza, but I surmised that there had been heavy damage. “It’s all ruins! The city is in ruins!” I blurted out unthinkingly.⁷⁸

In its cartographic breadth, Katai’s view of the city from above enables him to grasp the disaster in its virtual entirety. The disfigured remains of famous sites, such as the Nikolai Cathedral and the Kanda Myōjin, orient his gaze over the city. Katai’s perspective is removed from the immediate, visceral experience of the disaster. Nevertheless,

⁷⁸ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 392.

contemplation of the scene that unfolds before him evokes a startling recognition of the city as ruins (*tokai no haikyo* 都会の廢墟).

As Katai moves into the *shitamachi*, his survey of the city from above turns into a direct glimpse of the ruined capital on ground level. Along the way, he catches sight of the burnt-out skeleton of a streetcar, which appears to him as a “strange monster” (*fushigi na kaibutsu* 不思議な怪物) lying on its side in the middle of the street.⁷⁹ When Katai finally arrives at his mistress’s ruined house and learns that she has survived, his gaze falls upon the familiar objects of everyday life that were destroyed in the disaster:

私はその焼跡に行つて暫く立つてみた。私は灰をかき起して見た。
私は見馴れた茶碗の半分欠けて落ちてゐるのを見た。つかひ馴れた
銅のバケツの焼けて壊れてゐるのを見た。鉄瓶や銅壺のころがつて
ゐるのを見た。しかし私は次第に堪らなくなつて来た。私は灰をか
き起すことをやめてじつと立尽した。涙がほろほろと灰燼の上に落
ちた。

I went to the burnt-out remains and stood there for a while. I stirred up the ashes and looked at them. I saw the familiar tea bowl that had fallen and was half-broken. I saw the old copper bucket, now burnt and collapsed. I saw the iron kettle and the copper pot that had fallen over. But then I could

⁷⁹ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 395.

bear it no longer. I stopped stirring up the ashes and just stood there. My tears fell onto the ashes.⁸⁰

Contemplation of these objects inspires a deeper, more emotional response than the astonishment elicited by the ruins of the Nikolai Cathedral. Katai's concern for Iida has brought him to this residential neighborhood, a space suffused with memory and intimacy. Though he records his observations dispassionately, with repeated declarations of "I saw" (*mita* 見た), the affective content of the scene is too much for him to bear. The destruction forces Katai to recognize the city as lived space, and the ruin as something closely related to himself.

From the initial shock of this vision, Katai gradually moves toward an understanding of the ruin as a natural phenomenon. He achieves this perspective by realizing the fundamental interconnectedness of human beings (*ningen* 人間) and nature (*shizen* 自然). While this relationship signifies, on the one hand, the vulnerability of human beings situated in nature, it also signifies an inclination toward ruin that is latent in human beings. Katai describes these two facets of ruins with the parallel phrases "human beings in nature" (*shizen no naka ni iru ningen* 自然の中にいる人間) and "nature in human beings" (*ningen no naka ni aru shizen* 人間の中にある自然).⁸¹ The recognition of this interdependence leads Katai to apprehend the destruction of Tokyo in new terms:

⁸⁰ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 420.

⁸¹ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 431.

『廃墟』といふことは、この大きな自然のリズムではないか。何んなものにでもいつか一度はやつて来るものではないか。人間の『自然死』もまたこの『廃墟』の一種ではないか。人間の心の中にも絶えず『廃墟』が繰返されてゐるのではないか。淫蕩、倦怠、奢侈、疲労、さういふものの中に『廃墟』が常に潜んでゐるのではないか。

そして『廃墟』の中から更に新しい芽が萌え出すのである。新しい恋が生れて来るのである。新しい心が目ざめて来るのである。

Aren't ruins this great natural rhythm? Isn't it something that comes to all things at one time or another? Isn't the natural death of human beings a kind of ruin? Aren't ruins continually repeated in the heart of human beings, and always concealed in debauchery, ennui, extravagance, and fatigue?

And from these ruins, a new seed sprouts. A new love is born. A new heart awakens.⁸²

This philosophical formulation pushes the ruin beyond its identity as a signifier of traumatic rupture. As Takematsu Yoshiaki argues, Katai's conception of the ruin brings together urban form and human nature in a moment of double exposure.⁸³ Contemplation

⁸² Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 431.

⁸³ Takematsu Yoshiaki, "Metsubō suru teito: bungakushijō no Kantō daishinsai," in *Haikyo no kanōsei: gendai bungaku no tanjō*, ed. Kurihara Yukio (Tokyo: Inpakuto Shuppankai, 1997), 175.

of the ruin entails reflection inward, to the vulnerability of human life and the mutability of human emotion. Yet it is precisely from this condition that new possibilities emerge, whether the transformation of the imperial capital or the rekindled love affair between Katai and Iida Yone. For this reason, Katai recognizes himself in the city's destruction. "If Tokyo were a great ruin," he writes, "then I had the feeling of seeing my own smaller ruin within it."⁸⁴

III. Colonial Violence and the Imperial Capital

While pervasive scenes of ruin were an obvious consequence of the disaster, the effects of the Great Kantō Earthquake were not limited to the physical damage inflicted on the city. With the capital reduced to a state of disorder, vigilante groups (*jikeidan* 自警団) and members of the police committed numerous acts of violence against persons deemed ethnically or politically suspicious. Over 6,000 Koreans were among those murdered in the earthquake's chaotic aftermath.⁸⁵ Targeting colonial subjects, mobs armed with bamboo spears and other makeshift weapons carried out attacks that, in the words of Seiji

⁸⁴ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 419.

⁸⁵ Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 145.

Lippit, “rendered visible on the streets of the capital city the underlying violence of colonial policy.”⁸⁶

References to this violence in *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* attest to the transformation of the city under martial law and the power of rumor to stoke the fears and prejudices of the populace. For a boatman named U, who was on his way from Yokohama to Haneda at the time of the earthquake, the trauma of the disaster was closely linked to the threat of mob violence. He describes the tactics used by vigilante groups as they sought to impose order on the city:

...自警団といふものが、竹槍を持つたり、ダンビラを携へたりして、頻りに夕暮の空気の中に彷徨してゐるのを見た。次第に日は暮れて行つた。あちこちに灯火が見え出して来た。今度は不逞鮮人と見誤られることの危険——々弁解して通らなければならない危険を感じた。『誰だ？誰だ？そこに行くのは？』かれ等は絶えずかう前後から声をかけられた。

...I saw vigilante groups roaming incessantly in the evening air, carrying bamboo spears and swords. Gradually, night fell. Lights appeared here and there. Now I felt the danger of being confused for an unruly Korean,

⁸⁶ Seiji M. Lippit, “A Modernist Nostalgia: The Colonial Landscape of Enlightenment Tokyo in Akutagawa Ryūnosuke and Edogawa Rampo,” in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, ed. Roy Starrs (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2012), 147.

having to offer a full explanation to pass by. Their voices arose all around:

“Who’s that? Who’s that? Where are you going?”⁸⁷

U’s fear of misrecognition points to the refiguring of urban space under mob rule, characterized by pervasive suspicion and persistent demands of ethnic identification. As Ken Kawashima argues, the discursive construction of the “unruly Korean” (*futei senjin* 不逞鮮人) functioned as a mechanism for the surveillance of all Koreans in the imperial capital; it was “a policing sign that operated less through the identification of Korean lawbreakers, and more through a general misidentification of all Koreans as potential or probable criminals.”⁸⁸ The violence against Koreans after the earthquake can be traced to this systematic policy of discrimination, which intensified in the wake of the 1919 March First Movement (*Samil undong* 三一運動).

As U’s account makes clear, the threat of violence also existed for Japanese in the chaotic aftermath of the earthquake. Anyone who looked or sounded Korean or who appeared somehow suspicious could be targeted for persecution. Katai’s friend H encountered the scrutiny of vigilantes while out in the city at night, and his defiant attitude only heightened their suspicion. He escaped unharmed, but his story hints at the discomfiting questions of identity that the earthquake provoked. In this regard, the subsequent exchange between Katai and H is especially revealing:

⁸⁷ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 481.

⁸⁸ Ken C. Kawashima, *The Proletarian Gamble: Korean Workers in Interwar Japan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 154.

『それに、いくらか、君は似てゐるところがあるからね？』

私は笑ひながら言つた。

『私が、鮮人に？』

Hは眼を丸くした。

『髪をいくらか長くしてゐるところなどが、似てるよ』

『いやだなア、やり切れない？』Hは大袈裟にこんなことを言つた。

『だって、さうだもの、しやうがないぢやないか？』

『本当かなア！』かう言つてHは鏡を持つて来て、自分の姿を映

して見て、『さうかな、似てゐるかなア！』

『いやに顔が細長く、蒼白いところなんかも似てゐるよ』

『それでかしら？それなら、本当にやり切れんな！』

Hは頻りに言つた。

“Well, you have some similar features,” I said, laughing.

“Similar to a Korean? Me?” H’s eyes grew wide.

“Like your hair. It’s kind of long.”

“No way. Cut it out, will you?” H said this in an exaggerated manner.

“But it’s true. There’s no helping it.”

“Really?” H brought over a mirror and looked at his reflection. “It’s true, huh? I do look similar.”

“Your face, too. It’s quite long and narrow. It’s pale as well.”

“Could that be?” he said anxiously. “Seriously, cut it out!”⁸⁹

While Katai adopts a facetious tone with H, his observations compel serious reflection on the figuring of ethnicity and nationality. H’s physical features are held up for scrutiny, as his gaze into the mirror leads to his recognition of his traits of otherness. With the breakdown of the social order precipitated by the disaster, ethnic ambiguity becomes a source of profound anxiety, impeding and imperiling the individual’s movement through the city.

The aftermath of the earthquake also saw a surge in violent action against political figures. On September 16, the prominent anarchist Ōsugi Sakae 大杉栄 (1885–1923) was tortured and killed in the custody of the military police (*kenpei* 憲兵), along with his wife Itō Noe 伊藤野枝 (1895–1923) and his six-year-old nephew. Known as the Amakasu Incident (*Amakasu jiken* 甘粕事件), after the officer Amakasu Masahiko 甘粕正彦 (1891–1945) whose unit was responsible for the murders, the event garnered the most notoriety of any politically motivated act of violence that followed the earthquake. Katai’s reflection on the incident discloses his sensitivity less to the political issues of the event than to its humanistic significance:

...あの淀橋の町の通りから、右に少し入ったあたりの光景が震災の
光景と一緒に私の頭に映った。私は何も知らないで—すぐそこに死
が来て待つてゐるのも知らないで、そこに三人してやつて来てゐる

⁸⁹ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 546–547.

時のさまを想像した。宅に待つてゐる子共達への土産か何か買ふつもりで野枝が八百屋の店に入つて行つたさまを想像した。否、そればかりではなかつた。あの麴町に行つてからのことも一つ一つはつきりと私の眼に映つて残つた。私は悲しい悲しい気持がした。人間と人間との間に社会といふものが挟つてあるがために、そのためにかうした悲劇が起つて来るのではないかと思つた。自分が無知であつたために、さうした悲惨事を悲惨事とも何とも思はずに平気で実行した甘粕をもあはれむやうな心持が盛んに起つて来た。

...as I passed by the town of Yodobashi, the spectacle that had occurred to the right and down a little way flashed through my mind along with the spectacle of the earthquake. I didn't know anything—I didn't know that death was waiting there. I imagined the appearance of those three people when they arrived together. I imagined Noe entering the grocery store to buy a gift or something for her children. No, not just that. Each of the events that took place after I went to Kojimachi also lingered clearly before my eyes. I felt sad, so sad. Such tragedies occur because of this thing called society that is interposed between human beings, I thought. Even a feeling of pity swept over me for Amakasu, who in his ignorance had calmly carried out the act without realizing what a terrible thing it was.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 540.

Katai's new knowledge of the incident forces him to revisit his experience of the earthquake, and to retrace the itinerary through the city that he followed. Just as the ruin compels Katai to reflect on the relationship between nature (*shizen* 自然) and human beings (*ningen* 人間), the Amakasu Incident pushes him toward rumination on society (*shakai* 社会). Unlike the liberating force of nature, society obstructs human beings, impeding mutual understanding and, at its worst, enabling acts of terrible cruelty.

These irruptions of violence show Tokyo as a contested space in the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake, a city subject to vigilante persecution of ethnic and political otherness. In the months that followed, the Japanese government sought to shift from this condition of trauma and unrest to a narrative of national solidarity and resilience, toward the reconstruction of the imperial capital.

IV. Visions of Reconstruction

The extensive damage to the capital caused by the Great Kantō Earthquake demanded a reconstruction project on a massive scale. In the aftermath of the disaster, hopes for the city's future were embodied in the catchphrase “reconstruction of the imperial capital” (*teito fukkō* 帝都復興), and received official imprimatur with the establishment of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Board (*Teito Fukkōin* 帝都復興院) on September 19, 1923.⁹¹ The disaster inspired a national recognition of Tokyo's symbolic significance,

⁹¹ André Sorensen, *The Making of Urban Japan: Cities and Planning from Edo to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 126–127.

and a renewed attention to the program of urban planning that sought to transform the city into a modern imperial capital. The new urban planning law of 1919 had set in place the policies that would guide this vision. Swiftly rejecting the idea of moving the capital, the Japanese government articulated a vision of reconstruction of a grand scale. In these representations of space, technocratic leaders clashed with entrenched local interests, revealing conflicts in the ways that the city was lived and imagined.

The prominent politician and administrator Gotō Shinpei 後藤新平 (1857–1929), appointed head of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Board, was the central figure in the reconstruction project. Having served as an administrator in Taiwan and Manchuria and as the mayor of Tokyo from December 1920 to April 1923, Gotō was a leading figure in public health, social policy, and urban development. In 1917, he organized the Urban Study Group (*Toshi kenkyūkai* 都市研究会), which became highly influential in researching urban issues and lobbying for legislation. The group’s journal, *Toshi kōron* 都市公論, served as a forum for progressive discourse on urban policy.⁹² On September 6, 1923, just five days after the earthquake, Gotō delivered his “Opinion on the Reconstruction of the Imperial Capital” (*Teito fukkō no gi* 帝都復興の議), in which he makes clear the symbolic dimensions of the reconstruction process: “Tokyo is the capital of the empire, the center of national politics, and the origin of national culture. Consequently, this reconstruction does not concern questions of restoring the shape of a city, but rather forms the basis for the development of the empire and for the betterment

⁹² André Sorensen, *The Making of Urban Japan: Cities and Planning from Edo to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 109.

of the national culture.”⁹³ By connecting Tokyo to the empire (*teikoku* 帝国) and the people (*kokumin* 国民), Gotō situated the city’s reconstruction within the discursive framework of Japanese imperialism. Reconstruction was about more than just the city of Tokyo; it was a project of national and imperial import. The imperial proclamation, issued six days after Gotō’s address, also speaks to the idea of Tokyo as an imperial capital:

Tokyo, the capital of the empire, has been looked upon by the people as the center of political and economic activities and the fountainhead of the cultural advancement of the nation. With the unforeseen visit of the catastrophe, the city has entirely lost its former prosperous contours but retains, nevertheless, its position as the national capital. The remedial work, therefore, ought not to consist merely in the reparation of the quondam metropolis, but, in ample provisions for the future development of the city, completely to transform the avenues and streets.⁹⁴

These statements establish strong links between the modernization of the city and the image of Tokyo as an imperial capital. Gotō’s grand reconstruction plan envisioned the transformation of the imperial capital into a modern, world-class metropolis. Despite reductions in the budget, this rhetoric helped to define Tokyo’s future development. The

⁹³ Quoted in Koshizawa Akira, *Tōkyō no toshi keikaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1991), 38.

⁹⁴ Quoted in Edward Seidensticker, *Tokyo from Edo to Showa, 1867–1989: The Emergence of the World’s Greatest City* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2010), 295.

reconstruction project began in 1924 and reached its official conclusion in March 1930, with a ceremony to mark the completion of the project.

These ambitions to transform the ruined city emerged from the immediate aftermath of the disaster, at precisely the time when huge swaths of Tokyo had been reduced to ruins. Katai, too, experiences an exhilarating sense of possibility amidst the devastation of the city. After walking from Marunouchi to Tokyo Station, he stands before the station, amazed by how little damage it sustained in the earthquake.

私はつづいてこのあたりが、大東京の中心になる時代のことを頭に浮べた。この大破壊の結果として、今度こそは本当にこのあたりが立派なものになって行くのであらう。一方は日本橋に、一方は京橋に、更に他の一方は銀座へと接続して行くやうになるだらう。その時こそ、始めて、外国の都会に比べても決して耻かしくないやうな都会の中心が出来るだらう。それこそ全く純粋な東京—江戸趣味などの少しも雑つてゐない純粋な東京が蜃気楼のやうになつて此処にあらはれて来るだらう。さうすれば、この大破壊も決して徒為ではなかつたと言へるだらう。私はこんなことを考へながら、じつとそこに立尽した。

Then my thoughts turned to the time when this area would become the center of Great Tokyo. As a result of this great destruction, surely now this area would truly become something magnificent. It would be connected to Nihonbashi in one direction, Kyōbashi in another, and Ginza in yet

another. Then, for the first time, there would emerge a city center that could compare favorably even with foreign cities. This would be a completely pure Tokyo—a pure Tokyo not mixed at all with Edo tastes would appear in this place, like a mirage. If this should happen, then even this great destruction will not have been in vain. Immersed in these thoughts, I stood there, transfixed.⁹⁵

The image of a modern city rises before Katai, its realization contingent on the demise of the old city; it is the “great destruction” (*dai hakai* 大破壊) that enables the emergence of the metropolitan “Great Tokyo” (*dai Tōkyō* 大東京). The disaster seems to have effaced all remnants of Edo from the city, a moment of spatiotemporal rupture that makes possible the construction of an unadulterated, “completely pure Tokyo.” The internalized Western gaze remains intrinsic to this image, as the Japanese imperial capital strives to equal, if not eclipse, those “foreign cities” (*gaikoku no tokai* 外国の都会).

Like Tayama Katai, Tokyo native Tanizaki Jun’ichirō 谷崎潤一郎 (1886–1965) envisioned a grandiose reconstruction of the imperial capital. Tanizaki was in Hakone at the time of the earthquake, and in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, he felt a strange intermingling of concern for his wife and child (who were in Yokohama, which also sustained heavy damage) and excitement for the future city of Tokyo. In his essay “Reflections on Tokyo” (*Tōkyō o omou* 東京をおもう, 1934), he decries the unevenness of the modernization that had left the city in a disordered condition on the eve of the

⁹⁵ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 465.

earthquake: “The old Japan had been discarded, and the new Japan had yet to arrive. A horrible state of chaos extended in every direction. The extremity of the disorder was plainly visible throughout the city of Tokyo.”⁹⁶ For Tanizaki, the reconstruction of the capital was not limited to new buildings; it meant the transformation of everyday life, as Japanese would adopt Western fashions and cultural mores. The widespread devastation wrought by the earthquake represented an opportunity to imagine the city anew.

As a catalyst for national solidarity, the earthquake gave rise to an official narrative of reconstruction, eliding traces of conflict from its representations of space. With images sustaining what Gennifer Weisenfeld terms “reconstruction’s visual rhetoric,” the city moved forward with a grand rebuilding effort that would efface the unevenness of its past.⁹⁷ *History of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction (Teito fukkō shi 帝都復興史, 1930)* is the official record of the reconstruction project. Published in three massive volumes, it contains detailed accounts of the reconstruction project, statements from political leaders, and photographs of new bridges, schools, and office buildings. As Matsuba Kazukiyo suggests, *History of the Imperial Capital Reconstruction* unfolds as a narrative (*monogatari* 物語), detailing the city’s resurgence.

The reconstruction project effected major change in Tokyo, but the transformation was not nearly as complete as Tanizaki and other observers had anticipated. As Katai writes later in *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake*:

⁹⁶ Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, “Tōkyō o omou,” in vol. 21 of *Tanizaki Jun’ichirō zenshū* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron, 1968), 9.

⁹⁷ Gennifer Weisenfeld, *Imaging Disaster: Tokyo and the Visual Culture of Japan’s Great Earthquake of 1923* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 217.

震災当時は東京の復興といふことがかなり力強く言説され、その具合では、丸で違った東京—ロンドン、パリ、ベルリンなどをも凌駕するに足りるやうな大きな立派な東京があらはれて来さうに思はれたが、現に、新聞にそのをりをりに載せられた図面などで見ては、かういふ風に出来上れば、一国の首都として東京も立派なものだなと思はれたが、次第にさうした計画は小さくなつて、今では復興といふことより復旧といふことに重きを置かれるやうになつたので、以前の東京とはさう大して違はない東京が出来上つて来さうになつて来た。これは残念なことだつた。

しかし、実際に当る事になつては、さういふ風になるのが当り前だといふやうな気もした。兎に角に、江戸時代からあつた路だ。江戸時代からあつた区劃だ。それを丸で違ったものにしようとすることは、容易なことではなかつた。そこには歴史もあり由緒もあり伝統もあり利害もあるに相違なかつた。焼出されたものでも、出来るならば、元のところに帰つて住みたいに相違なかつた。

At the time of the disaster, the reconstruction of Tokyo was discussed quite intensely. It was thought that a completely different Tokyo would come into existence—a great and magnificent city that would surpass even the likes of London, Paris, and Berlin. If you looked at the plans that were published occasionally in the newspapers, you would think that if such a city were to be realized, Tokyo would become a magnificent capital for

the entire nation. But these plans gradually diminished, and now that emphasis has been placed on restoration rather than reconstruction, it seems that a Tokyo would emerge that was not much different from the previous Tokyo. This was a shame.

Yet, when things actually came about, it seemed only natural that it should be so. After all, the roads were from the Edo period. The divisions were from the Edo period. It would not have been easy to change these things into something completely different. Without a doubt, there were histories, lineages, traditions, and interests. There is no doubt that even in those areas that had been burned out, people wanted to go back and, as much as was possible, live there as they had before.⁹⁸

The change from “reconstruction” (*fukkō* 復興) to “restoration” (*fukkyū* 復旧) signals the impossibility of a wholly new and modern city. Even with the overwhelming destruction of the *shitamachi* and the political imperative to reconstruct the city as a magnificent imperial capital, spatial practices endured. In his account, Katai acknowledges the power of place in the consciousness of the city’s people.

⁹⁸ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 496.

V. Reimagining Ginza

By destroying vast swaths of the city, the Great Kantō Earthquake profoundly altered the existing geography of Tokyo. In the years that followed, some districts rose to prominence while others fell into obscurity. The case of Ginza offers a glimpse into the reordering of the city's spatial hierarchy and the emergent spectacle of the modern. The district sustained heavy damage in the earthquake, but by the official conclusion of the reconstruction project in 1930, it had become a symbol of the resurgent metropolis. Andō Kōsei 安藤更生 (1900–1970) describes an exhilarating scene of cosmopolitan grandeur in his ethnography *A Close Look at Ginza* (*Ginza saiken* 銀座細見, 1931): “Ginza—this is the center stage for urban life in Japan. Everything is here: beautiful women, beautiful men, cafes, sushi restaurants, Marx boys, neon signs, flowers, neckties that have just arrived from Paris, shoes from New York, and even taxis that will take you anywhere in Japan for fifty sen!”⁹⁹ In their variety and ubiquity, the conflux of commodities threatens to overwhelm the visitor, while also connecting Tokyo to other metropolitan centers such as Paris and New York. Ginza's consumerism occasioned negative responses as well, such as the biting critique offered by Yi Sang in his essay “Tokyo” (Tonggyōng 東京, 1939): “Ginza is just a textbook of vanity. It's as though you will lose the right to vote if you don't walk around there. When women buy new shoes, they simply must stroll down the sidewalks of Ginza before getting into their cars.”¹⁰⁰ Yi Sang calls attention to a fundamental aspect of Ginza as an urban milieu: there, walking serves not as a means of

⁹⁹ Andō Kōsei, *Ginza saiken* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1992), 5.

¹⁰⁰ Yi Sang, “Tonggyōng,” in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 311.

transportation, but rather as a mode of displaying wealth and experiencing the sensations of the city. As a spatial practice, the social phenomenon of “Ginza strolling” (*Ginbura* 銀座ブラ) was closely linked to capitalist modernity and mass culture.

With its transformation, Ginza replaced Asakusa as the city’s primary entertainment district (*sakariba* 盛り場), a shift that Yoshimi Shun’ya describes in detail.¹⁰¹ The new Ginza was marked by the proliferation of department stores and cafes, the development of nearby Marunouchi, and the appearance of “modern girls” (*moga* モガ) and “modern boys” (*mobo* モボ) who donned Western fashions to walk its streets. Asakusa, meanwhile, suffered a symbolic blow with the collapse of the Cloud-Surpassing Pavilion (*Ryōunkaku* 凌雲閣) in the earthquake. Popularly known as the Twelve Storeys (*Jūnikai* 十二階), the red brick structure had towered over the district since 1890, enhancing Asakusa’s appeal as a popular destination. Prostitution had also flourished in the area prior to the earthquake, but afterwards these establishments were forced to relocate across the Sumida River to Tamanoi.¹⁰² While it portended the decline of Asakusa, the earthquake galvanized Ginza’s rise to become the epicenter of modern urban culture.

This vision of Ginza contrasts sharply with its image before the earthquake. The Ginza Brick Town (*Ginza rengagai* 銀座煉瓦街, 1877), a boulevard lined with Western-style brick buildings and willow trees, was constructed after a fire swept through the

¹⁰¹ Yoshimi Shun’ya, *Toshi no doramaturugī: Tōkyō, sakariba no shakaishi* (Tokyo: Kawade Bunko, 2008), 228–253.

¹⁰² Yoshimi Shun’ya, *Toshi no doramaturugī: Tōkyō, sakariba no shakaishi* (Tokyo: Kawade Bunko, 2008), 228–229.

district in 1872.¹⁰³ The development represented an early effort by the Japanese government to improve Tokyo's resistance to fire and to transform the city into an imperial capital on par with the Western powers. Katai notes that at the time of the earthquake, Ginza had remained unchanged since the early Meiji period, even as other areas such as Nihonbashi, Asakusa, and Ueno had developed rapidly. In a 1919 essay entitled "Ginza Nights" (Ginza no yoru 銀座の夜), he describes the area with a keen sense for its inherent cultural tensions:

銀座のアスハルトの上を歩くのは、良い気持だつた。私は夜よくそこを散歩した。曾ては此処は、東京の門戸であつた。旅客の一番先に入つて来るところであつた。従つて外国人などに取つては、こゝは東京での最も印象の深いところであつたに相違なかつた。これと言ふのも、新橋に停車場が出来たため、当時の政治家は、外国人に対して、きまりがわるいといふやうな心持を抱いて、それで一番先に、この銀座の大通だけを外国風の家屋に改築したのであつた。しかも、この外国風の大通は、当時の幼稚な政治家達を満足させることは出来たかも知れなかつたけれども、また内地の人民の目を驚かすことが出来たかも知れないけれど、外国の旅客達からは、却つて侮蔑と憐憫の眼を向けられたことに気が附かなかつた。ロチは書いた—あはれぬべき新開の外国風の大通！何処かの野蛮の植民地に

¹⁰³ Edward Seidensticker, *Tokyo from Edo to Showa, 1867–1869: The Emergence of the World's Greatest City* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 2010), 72–76.

でも見るやうな二層三層の小さな街路。見すばらしい楊柳の緑の靡いてみるのも、何となく異様に、不調和に見える一。

It's a good feeling to walk along the asphalt in Ginza. I have often strolled there at night. It used to be the gateway to Tokyo, the very first place where travelers would enter. Consequently, it must have left the deepest impression on foreigners out of all the places in Tokyo. When Shinbashi Station was completed, the politicians of that period felt ashamed before foreigners, so they remade only this boulevard in Ginza with foreign-style buildings. It may have satisfied the Restoration-era politicians and astonished the locals, but it inspired only contempt and pity among foreign visitors. "A pitiful foreign-style boulevard!" Loti writes. "A small road of two or three layers like one would see in a barbarous colony, and even the fluttering leaves of the scraggly willows somehow look strangely disharmonious."¹⁰⁴

To foreign visitors like Pierre Loti, the Ginza Brick Town appeared as a sham, its artificiality so transparent as to render Tokyo more comparable to a colonial outpost than an imperial capital. Loti's reaction is understandable, Katai admits, for "at that time, no matter how much the district was made into a foreign-style boulevard, the surrounding

¹⁰⁴ Tayama Katai, "Ginza no yoru," in *Yoru no Tōkyō*, ed. Akita Kōshi (Tokyo: Bunkyoūsha, 1919), 4–5. See also Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 448–449. In *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake*, Katai refers to the essay as "Yoru no Ginza," but the title appears as "Ginza no yoru" in the original publication.

area remained in exactly the same, forlorn state as it was in Edo.”¹⁰⁵ It is this persisting spatiotemporal unevenness that prevents Tokyo from becoming a fully modern metropolis. Loti’s gaze continually figures Katai’s observations of the city, leading Katai to argue for Tokyo’s progress in the intervening years. “Yet now,” he continues, “the surrounding area has developed. Marunouchi, which had long been a vacant space, is now on the verge of becoming a magnificent Unter den Linden.”¹⁰⁶ Katai again draws attention to the areas around Ginza, advocating a more totalizing vision of urban development than the piecemeal vision suggested by the Ginza Brick Town. His reference to Berlin’s central boulevard, which figures so prominently as a site of imperial pageantry in Mori Ōgai’s “Maihime,” gestures to Japan’s ascendancy in the world; the Japanese government had begun to succeed in a more impressive imagining of Tokyo as an imperial capital.

For both Katai and Loti, the specter of Edo haunts the modern city of Tokyo. While Katai decries the unevenness of Tokyo’s development, Loti seeks out remnants of Edo precisely for their capacity to represent an authentic, exotic Japan—a Japan that, he laments, is vanishing in the modern era. Edo embodies a way of life that had become foreign even to the city’s inhabitants by the time of the earthquake. Katai writes in “Ginza Nights”:

¹⁰⁵ Tayama Katai, “Ginza no yoru,” in *Yoru no Tōkyō*, ed. Akita Kōshi (Tokyo: Bunkiyūsha, 1919), 5–6. See also Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 449.

¹⁰⁶ Tayama Katai, “Ginza no yoru,” in *Yoru no Tōkyō*, ed. Akita Kōshi (Tokyo: Bunkiyūsha, 1919), 6. See also Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 449.

江戸時代の夜の大通、それも私はをりゝゝ想像した。

ヒエル、ロチは書いた。

一夜になると、全く暗黒の中に埋まれて了ふ大きな市街、宵から夢と睡眠とに耽るより他何うすることも出来ない市街、行燈とか提燈とかの微かな光のもとに早くから家の中に閉ぢ込つて了ふ人達...我等外国人にはとてもかうした生活は想像することは出来ない—

実際、ロチばかりではなかつた。今の私にしても、さうした闇の都会は十分に想像することが出来ないやうな気がした。黙阿弥の劇にをりゝゝ出て来る夜のシイン、外の提燈と内の行燈、全くそればかりに夜を過した昔の人達の生活は、果して何んなであつたであらうか。ロチの言ふやうに、宵から眠つて了はなければならぬやうな単調な生活であつたであらうか。

From time to time, I also imagine the boulevards at night during the Edo period. “When night comes,” Pierre Loti writes, “the great city is submerged in total darkness. At dusk, the city can only fall into dreams and sleep, so people shut themselves away in their homes under the faint light of the *andon* and the *chōchin*. To us foreigners, this way of life is unimaginable.” In fact, it’s not just Loti. I too have a hard time imagining such a dark city now. What could life have been like for people in the old days, passing the night with only *chōchin* outside and *andon* inside, like

those scenes that sometimes appear in the plays of Mokuami?¹⁰⁷ As Loti says, their lives must have been very simple, with nothing to do at dusk but sleep.¹⁰⁸

For Tayama Katai in 1919, nighttime Tokyo had become synonymous with light. The city was alive and illuminated, a stark contrast to the darkness of the previous era. While Loti draws a distinction between the city's Japanese residents and "us foreigners," Katai articulates a similar feeling of alienation that is, by contrast, produced solely by technological change.

While Meiji modernization displaced many spatial practices of the Edo period, the Great Kantō Earthquake's destruction of the Ginza Brick Town in turn signaled a decisive break with the early Meiji vision of urban space. From the vantage point of the earthquake's immediate aftermath, Katai articulates four spatiotemporal moments in *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake*: the imagined city of the Edo period, the city that he experienced in 1919, the ruined city of the present, and the imagined city of the future. These moments expose the spatial contestations that accompanied Tokyo's transformation into an imperial capital, as well as the traumatic spatiotemporal rupture that the Great Kantō Earthquake produced. By quoting at length from "Ginza Nights" in *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake*, Katai juxtaposes the Ginza of the recent past with the

¹⁰⁷ Kawatake Mokuami (河竹黙阿弥, 1816–1893) was a kabuki playwright in the late Edo and early Meiji periods.

¹⁰⁸ Tayama Katai, "Ginza no yoru," in *Yoru no Tōkyō*, ed. Akita Kōshi (Tokyo: Bunkyoūsha, 1919), 23.

imagined Ginza of the future. In his reflections on this place, he captures the tension between these two visions of the city:

しかし、東京といふ帝都の構造の上から言へば、今度の震災は結局いろいろな方面から好い結果を齎らして来てゐるに相違なかつた。銀座と日比谷、銀座と丸の内の接続もそのため立派に出来上つて行くに相違なかつた。私は今度こそ東京の中心が都会らしい本当の賑かさを持つて来なければならないと思つた。

とは言へ、これを限りにして、あの銀座—柳の葉の美しかつた銀座、小さな庭園のところどころに四角に劃つて出来てゐた銀座、カフェの女給の白いエプロンの目に立つた銀座、あの滑かな木煉瓦の路を持つた銀座が、単なるイリウジョンとして、また曾て一度存在した幻影として、人々の頭に残るばかりになつて了ふといふことは一否、それも決して長い間ではなく、二十年、三十年と経つて暁には、さういふ街があつたことすら知るものがなくなるのであらうといふことは、不思議な哀愁を私の胸に齎らして来ずには置かなかつた。

Yet speaking in terms of the structure of Tokyo as an imperial capital, the earthquake will eventually bring about many positive effects. Ginza will be linked magnificently to Hibiya and Marunouchi. I feel that Tokyo's city center is certain to produce a real metropolitan liveliness.

With that being said, that Ginza—Ginza with its beautiful willow leaves, Ginza with its small gardens everywhere demarcated into squares, Ginza with its cafe waitresses in their eye-catching white aprons, Ginza with its smooth woodblock streets—is now just an illusion, a phantasm that once existed, and can only linger in people’s minds. And with the passing of twenty or thirty years, not a long time at all, the people who knew those streets too will be gone. This thought cannot help but bring about a mysterious sadness in my heart.¹⁰⁹

For Katai, Ginza’s destruction inspires both nostalgia for the vanished past and hopes for the imagined future. Katai describes the Ginza of the past as an “illusion” (*iryūjon* イリュージョン) and a “phantasm” (*gen’ei* 幻影), its lived reality reduced to personal memory. Yet at the same time, reconstruction will result in a “real metropolitan liveliness” (*tokairashii hontō no nigiyakasa* 都会らしい本当の賑かさ), as Ginza is linked to Hibiya and Marunouchi to produce a cohesive city center.¹¹⁰ Only after the district is connected to these other areas will it seem complete in Katai’s eyes; only then will his imagined vision of Tokyo as an imperial capital be realized.

¹⁰⁹ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 450.

¹¹⁰ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 450.

VI. Conclusion: The City Moves Westward

About two months after the earthquake, Katai went to visit Higashi Nakano, a suburban neighborhood close to Shinjuku Station. In a conversation with his wife that evening, he conveys his astonishment upon discovering the liveliness that now defines the area around Higashi Nakano Station. “There are cafes like you might find in Ginza, with waitresses in makeup who flirt with the customers. It feels as though the suburbs have turned into the center of the city.”¹¹¹ People have relocated to the area, notes Katai, and they are selling products like those that one might find in the *shitamachi*. His wife agrees, noting the arrival in the area of the iconic department stores Mitsukoshi and Takashimaya.

These spatial transformations demonstrate the capacity of the city to reorder peripheral lands, a phenomenon that invites reflection on the relationship between disaster and urban development. While the Great Kantō Earthquake altered the dynamics of the city center, it also accelerated the westward expansion of the imperial capital. The exodus from the devastated areas of the *shitamachi* resulted in dramatic population increases on the suburban periphery, augmented by the arrival of new residents who flocked to the resurgent metropolis from other parts of the country. The transformation of these spaces altered the topography of Tokyo, inaugurating new sites of modernity and enabling the emergence of new spatial practices.

¹¹¹ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō shinsaiki*, in vol. 25 of *Teihon Katai zenshū* (Kyoto: Rinsen Shoten, 1995), 542.

Chapter Three:

Weng Nao's Tokyo Vagabonding

He who moves about the city...is a kind of reader who, following his obligations and his movements, appropriates fragments of the utterance in order to actualize them in secret. When we move about a city, we all are in the situation of the reader of Queneau's *100,000 Million Poems*, where one can find a different poem by changing a single line; unawares, we are somewhat like this avant-garde reader when we are in a city.

Roland Barthes

I. Introduction

The tremendous post-earthquake growth of Tokyo's suburbs (*kōgai* 郊外) effected broad changes to the physical boundaries and spatial practices of the imperial capital. From 1922 to 1930, the population in new suburban areas jumped from 1,430,000 to

2,900,000.¹¹² Suburbanization was intimately related to the expansion and improvement of the city's transportation network, which enabled residents to move quickly and economically from the outskirts to the city center. In October 1932, Tokyo absorbed an additional 5 counties and 82 villages, expanding to a total of 35 wards. With a population of nearly 6 million, it had become one of the largest cities in the world.¹¹³ While some of the population growth in suburban areas can be traced to the Great Kantō Earthquake's displacement of residents from the *shitamachi*, much of the new population came from outside of Tokyo. The extensive destruction caused by the earthquake enabled the city to be imagined in new ways, as reconstruction efforts aimed at the expansion and modernization of the imperial capital. As Jordan Sand argues, "the impact of the earthquake on this population was as much on the imagination as on their physical condition, for reconstruction showed the metropolis everywhere starting anew, free from the past."¹¹⁴ Nowhere was this phenomenon more evident than in the suburbs, where new lands were opened for development and incorporation into the imperial capital. The popular term "newly opened land" (*shinkaichi* 新開地), frequently used to describe recently developed suburban areas, exemplifies this logic of territorial expansion. James

¹¹² André Sorensen, *The Making of Urban Japan: Cities and Planning from Edo to the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 125.

¹¹³ Roman Adrian Cybriwsky, *Historical Dictionary of Tokyo*, 2nd. ed. (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 284.

¹¹⁴ Jordan Sand, *House and Home in Modern Japan: Architecture, Domestic Space, and Bourgeois Culture, 1880–1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2003), 257.

Fujii suggests that suburbanization and colonization share certain traits in their respective spatial operations, both involving “the reordering of lands that are never really new.”¹¹⁵

Observers of urban life took note of the social changes that accompanied Tokyo’s suburbanization. In “Various Scenes of Suburban Customs” (*Kōgai fūzoku zakkei* 郊外風俗雜景), an anthropological study first published in the May 1926 issue of *Fujin kōron*, Kon Wajirō describes the bourgeois lifestyle that epitomized the suburban phenomenon. Focusing primarily on Kōenji and Asagaya, Kon’s study offers a means of understanding the suburbs as a new locus of everyday life that enabled a profoundly different relation to the city. In one section, Kon draws a distinction between the “suburbs” (*kōgai* 郊外) and the “outskirts” (*basue* 場末), arguing for the emergence of the word “suburbs” to denote “the dwelling place for people actively carrying on a new lifestyle.”¹¹⁶ The word, Kon notes, frequently appears in the phrase “suburban residential area” (*kōgai jūtakuchi* 郊外住宅地), underscoring the association between the suburbs and bourgeois domestic space. White-collar workers commuted from the suburbs to the city center, enduring the already acute discomforts of rush hour. Kon describes the crowds that gathered on train platforms in Shinjuku, Shibuya, and Ōtsuka, the city’s major transportation hubs. The suburban areas also saw a proliferation of “culture houses” (*bunka jūtaku* 文化住宅), hybrid reworkings of Japanese and Western architectural forms. As Kon notes in a 1929 study,

¹¹⁵ James A. Fujii, “Intimate Alienation: Japanese Urban Rail and the Commodification of Urban Subjects,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 11.2 (Summer 1999), 112.

¹¹⁶ “Kōgai fūzoku zakkei,” in *Kōgengaku saishū: Modernologio*, ed. Kon Wajirō and Yoshida Kenkichi (Tokyo: Gakuyō Shobō, 1986), 124.

these culture houses were part of a burgeoning discourse of “culture life” (*bunka seikatsu* 文化生活), encompassing new styles of housing, clothing, food, and social relations.¹¹⁷

If a bourgeois, middle-class lifestyle was the most readily apparent signified of the suburbs, it was not the only spatial practice that emerged from this refiguring of the city. Insofar as the suburbs allowed residents to break with local traditions and to live at a distance from the city center, it was possible to imagine them as sites of individual liberation, even political resistance. *A Song of Wild Barley* (*Nomugi no uta* 野麦の唄), a 1935 novel by Hayashi Fumiko 林芙美子 (1903–1951), tells the story of two young women, Yuriko and Kazuko, who meet while working in Tokyo as cafe waitresses. Together they move to Kōenji and take up residence in a wooden, white painted apartment building called Hirano Villa. “It was a squalid, newly opened land, but it seemed comfortable.”¹¹⁸ Independence and physical mobility are implicit in their negotiations of urban space, and these qualities offer evidence of evolving gender norms in the modern metropolis. The western suburbs also embodied a sense of intellectual and artistic possibility, providing a haven for leftist writers from the late 1920s into the 1930s. The modernist author Ryūtanji Yū 龍胆寺雄 (1901–1992) famously (and somewhat facetiously) described his move to Kōenji in 1931 as an incursion into “enemy territory,” for his new neighbors included such prominent proletarian authors as Hayashi Fusao 林房雄 (1903–1975) and Hayama Yoshiki 葉山嘉樹 (1894–1945).¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Kon Wajirō, ed., *Shinpan dai Tōkyō annai*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 2001), 153–154.

¹¹⁸ Hayashi Fumiko, *Nomugi no uta*, in vol. 3 of *Hayashi Fumiko zenshū* (Tokyo: Bunsendō, 1977), 132.

A spirit of physical and intellectual freedom also animates the literature of Weng Nao 翁鬧 (1910–1940), who arrived in Tokyo from Taiwan in 1934. Dubbed “the man of illusion” (*huanying zhi ren* 幻影之人) by the literary critic Liu Jie 劉捷 (1911–2004), Weng Nao remains an enigmatic figure. Born in rural Shetou Township in Changhua County, he graduated from the Taichung School of Education in 1929. He worked for five years as a teacher, and then left for Tokyo with literary aspirations. After his arrival on February 22, 1934, he led a bohemian existence in the imperial capital, taking classes at Nihon University, moving in with a middle-aged woman in Kōenji, and contributing to various literary journals. After dropping out of the university and ending his relationship with the woman, he began working at a printing company. He soon lost his job, but continued to live in Tokyo, suffering from poverty and declining mental health until his untimely death.¹²⁰

Weng Nao was by no means alone in his relocation from Taiwan to Tokyo. With its concentration of colonial writers, artists, and intellectuals, Tokyo functioned as an important locus for Taiwanese cultural activity in the 1930s. The Taiwan Literature and Arts Research Association (Ch. *Taiwan yishu yanjiuhui*; Jp. *Taiwan geijutsu kenkyūkai* 台灣藝術研究会) formed in Tokyo in 1932 to promote Taiwanese theater, music, literature, and culture. The organization’s founders included the writers Wang Baiyuan 王白淵 (1902–1965), Zhang Wenhuan 張文環 (1909–1978), and Wu Kunhuang 吳坤煌

¹¹⁹ Kawamoto Saburō, *Kōgai no bungakushi* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2003), 182–183.

¹²⁰ Yang Ziqiao, “Piaofu zai yijiusanling niandai Dongjing jietou de huanying: Weng Nao zuopinzhong de ziwo shuxie yu xiandaixing xushu,” in *Weng Nao de shijie*, ed. Xiao Xiao and Chen Xianren (Taipei: Chenxing Chuban, 2009), 162–163.

(1909–1989), as well as Wu Yongfu 巫永福 (1913–2008), whose short story “Neck and Body” (Kubi to karada 首と体, 1933) describes the cosmopolitan life of a Taiwanese intellectual in Tokyo. The group published only three issues of its journal, *Formosa* (Ch. *Fu’ermosha* 福爾摩沙; Jp. *Forumosa* フォルモサ), from July 1933 to June 1934, but its influence extends well beyond this brief period.¹²¹ The Taiwan Literature and Arts Alliance (Ch. *Taiwan wenyi lianmeng*; Jp. *Taiwan bungei renmei* 台湾文芸連盟), established in Taichung on May 6, 1934, brought together numerous writers and artists from all over Taiwan. The group maintained a branch in Tokyo, and published the journal *Taiwan bungei* 台湾文芸 from November 1934 to August 1936. The journal was intended to comprise a mixture of writings in Japanese and vernacular Chinese (*baihua* 白話), but the overwhelming majority of its texts were written in Japanese. Weng Nao was a frequent contributor to *Taiwan bungei*, his essays and short stories offering snapshots of a desultory life in the imperial capital.

Weng Nao’s representations of urban space may be seen as part of a broader contemporary phenomenon in modernist literature, as writers responded to the altered spatiotemporal conditions of modern life. In his history of modern Taiwanese literature, Chen Fangming situates Weng Nao’s oeuvre within the category of “city literature” (*dushi wenxue* 都市文学). According to Chen, the category has two primary currents: works by authors in Taipei depicting colonial modernity, and works by authors in Tokyo foregrounding modern urban life in the imperial capital.¹²² This characterization

¹²¹ Chen Fangming, vol. 1 of *Taiwan xin wenxueshi* (Taipei: Lianjing Chuban, 2011), 112–116.

¹²² Chen Fangming, vol. 1 of *Taiwan xin wenxueshi* (Taipei: Lianjing Chuban, 2011), 138.

illuminates a spatial bifurcation in modern Taiwanese literature, reflecting the contrasting conditions of the colonial and imperial capitals, as well as the physical movement of writers between the colony and the metropole. Chen Yunyuan employs a dichotomy of “island capital” (Ch. *daodu*; Jp. *tōto* 島都) and “imperial capital” (Ch. *didu*; Jp. *teito* 帝都) to describe the two cities of Taipei and Tokyo, respectively. Her analytical framework suggests a dialectical tension between the periphery and the center of the Japanese empire, a spatial dynamic that conditioned Taiwanese cultural production in both cities. As urban imaginaries, Taipei and Tokyo were fundamentally interrelated. For many writers, artists, and intellectuals, the imperial capital offered an escape from the island capital; it was the place where the cosmopolitan promises of modernity might be realized. In the literature of Weng Nao, the figure of the vagabond (*rōnin* 浪人) embodies the mobility and possibility of modern life in Tokyo. As a spatial practice, Weng Nao’s vagabonding negotiates the spaces produced by suburbanization and colonization, the two modes of spatiotemporal reordering perpetuated by Japanese imperialism.

II. Vagabonding and the Western Suburbs

The origins of suburban development west of Shinjuku, along what is now known as the Chūō line, can be traced to the opening of the Kōbu Railway in 1889. It ran from Shinjuku to Tachikawa and Hachiōji, passing through Ōkubo and Nakano stations. Ogikubo Station opened in 1891, and the Kōbu Railway continued operations until its nationalization in 1906. It was not until July 1922, however, that Kōenji, Asagaya, and

Nishi Ogikubo stations were added.¹²³ In the aftermath of the Great Kantō Earthquake, the neighborhoods around these stations were inundated with new arrivals. The author Ibuse Masuji 井伏鱒二 (1898–1993) moved to the western suburbs in 1927, and lived in Ogikubo for the rest of his life.¹²⁴ In his 1981 memoir *Ogikubo Fudoki* (*Ogikubo fudoki* 荻窪風土記), Ibuse recalls the literary culture that flourished there:

私は昭和二年の初夏、牛込鶴巻町の南越館といふ下宿屋からこの荻窪に引越して来た。その頃、文学青年たちの間では、電車で渋谷に便利なところとか、または新宿や池袋の郊外などに引越して行くことが流行のやうになつてゐた。新宿郊外の中央沿線方面には三流作家が移り、世田谷方面には左翼作家が移り、大森方面には流行作家が移つて行く。それが常識だと言ふ者がゐた。関東大震災がきっかけで、東京も広くなつてゐると思ふやうになつた。ことに中央線は、高円寺、阿佐ヶ谷、西荻窪など、御大典記念として小刻みに駅が出来たので、市民の散らばつて行く速度が出た。新開地での暮らしは気楽なやうに思はれた。荻窪方面など昼間にドテラを着て歩いてゐても、近所の者が後指を差すやうなことはないと言ふ者がゐた。貧乏な文学青年を標榜する者には好都合のところである。

¹²³ Huang Yuting, “Chihō wa deta keredo: Ō Dō to 1930 nendai no Tōkyō” (Tokyo: Fuji Zerokkusu Kobayashi Setsutarō Kinen Kikin, 2008), 5.

¹²⁴ Kawamoto Saburō, *Kōgai no bungakushi* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2003), 178.

In the early summer of Shōwa 2 [1927], I moved here to Ogikubo from a boarding house called the Nan'etsukan in Tsurumakichō, Ushigome. At that time, it had become fashionable among the literary youth to move to places that were easily accessible by train to Shibuya, or to the suburbs around Shinjuku and Ikebukuro. Writers of pulp fiction moved to the Shinjuku suburbs along the Chūō line, left-wing authors moved to areas around Setagaya, and popular authors moved to the vicinity of Ōmori. This was common knowledge, people said. It seems that Tokyo was spreading out as a result of the Great Kantō Earthquake. Little by little, train stations were completed to commemorate the imperial succession, especially along the Chūō line: Kōenji, Asagaya, and Nishi Ogikubo. Citizens soon scattered all over the city. Life on newly opened land was considered comfortable. In a place like Ogikubo, even if you wore a padded kimono to go out around midday, none of your neighbors would point at you and say things. It was an ideal place for championing poor literary youth.¹²⁵

Remapping the western suburbs according to their literary affiliations, Ibuse's recollections articulate a conception of suburban Tokyo that has more to do with bohemian intellectual culture than with bourgeois propriety. While the expansion of the city's transportation network was closely associated with the vision of Tokyo as an imperial capital, the atmosphere that pervades certain suburban neighborhoods does not

¹²⁵ Ibuse Masuji, *Ogikubo fudoki*, in vol. 27 of *Ibuse Masuji zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1999), 9–10.

adhere to the spatiotemporal order imposed by this transformation of the city. Ogikubo's associations with poverty and informality identify it as a space resistant to the demands of capitalist modernity.

Seven years after Ibuse's relocation to Ogikubo, Weng Nao moved to Tokyo, eventually settling in Kōenji. In "The Vagabond Town of the Tokyo Suburbs: The Neighborhood of Kōenji" (Tōkyō kōgai rōningai: Kōenji kaiwai 東京郊外浪人街：高円寺界限), a 1935 essay published in *Taiwan bungei*, Weng Nao describes the diversity of street life that colored Kōenji in the 1930s. Defining Kōenji as the suburban milieu of the vagabond (*rōnin* 浪人), the account paints a romantic portrait of life on the city's western fringes:

新市内に編入されたとはいへ、高円寺はまだ何といつても郊外の感が深い。新宿からこちら、大久保、東中野とお上品な文化住宅地区城を出外れて、大東京の土俵ぎはを想はせる中野から此の処まで来ると、一足飛びに全然異つた雰囲気に捲き込まれる。第一街の構造からして皆悉違ふ。路幅が狭く、歩道といふものがなく、人と車と小競合ひをしながら歩かねばならぬ。此の街の体裁は此処からずつと西の方、阿佐ヶ谷、荻窪、西荻窪、吉祥寺とまで続く。併しそれらの街々の落付いてみて如何にも郊外住宅地といった感じが濃いのと較べて、こゝ高円寺は何とざわざわして浪人風情の人士の多いことか。

Although it has been incorporated into the new boundaries of the city, Kōenji still retains a strong suburban feeling. It lies just beyond Ōkubo and Higashi Nakano, districts of elegant culture houses between here and Shinjuku. If you come here from Nakano, a place that brings to mind the hustle and bustle of Great Tokyo, with a single step you will be enveloped in a totally different atmosphere. First of all, the streets are completely different in their composition. The roads are narrow and there are no sidewalks, so you must engage in the small battle between people and cars as you walk along. This appearance of the streets continues as you go west, all the way to Asagaya, Ogikubo, and Kichijōji. Yet compared to those relaxed areas where a deeply suburban, residential character prevails, here in Kōenji it is quite noisy, perhaps owing to the many gentlemen with a vagabonding air.¹²⁶

As Weng Nao describes it, Kōenji exists as a place distinct from both central Tokyo and the neighboring suburbs. Shinjuku is easily accessible, only a ten-sen train ride away, but a “strong suburban feeling” (*kōgai no kan ga fukai* 郊外の感が深い) remains.

Meanwhile, Kōenji’s “vagabonding air” (*rōnin fūzei* 浪人風情) gives it a liveliness that is lacking in the more staid “suburban residential areas” (*kōgai jūtakuchi* 郊外住宅地) around it.

¹²⁶ Weng Nao, “Tōkyō kōgai rōningai: Kōenji kaiwai,” in vol. 1 of *Taiwan junbungakushū*, ed. Hoshina Hironobu (Tokyo: Ryokuyō Shobō, 2002), 101.

Kōenji is also a temporally conditioned phenomenon, its existence predicated on the physical transformation of the suburbs from a semi-rural landscape:

六七年前までは—当時僕はこゝに居たわけではない。聞いたのだ—
駅に立てば、一望遮ぎる家並とてはなく、ずっと遠い田舎の畠まで
眺められたさうだが、大東京の拡張と共に市内に編入されてから目
ざましい発展を遂げて、今では駅からものゝ二十分も歩かなければ
畠などは見られず、街のネオンサインもいと鮮やかに青春の血潮を
湧き立てせるに充分である。

Six or seven years ago—so I’ve heard; I wasn’t here at the time—if you
stood at the station, you could see the distant fields of the countryside,
unobstructed by rows of houses. But with the expansion of Great Tokyo
and the area’s incorporation into the city limits, remarkable development
has occurred. Now even if you walk twenty minutes from the station, you
still can’t see the fields, but there are enough neon signs to make a young
man’s blood boil.¹²⁷

As Weng Nao’s observation makes plain, the rapid deterritorialization and
reterritorialization of Tokyo’s periphery have remade Kōenji into a place detached
from the rhythms of rural life, its neon signs symbolic of capitalist modernity.

¹²⁷ Weng Nao, “Tōkyō kōgai rōningai: Kōenji kaiwai,” in vol. 1 of *Taiwan junbungakushū*, ed. Hoshina Hironobu (Tokyo: Ryokuyō Shobō, 2002), 102.

As a spatial practice, vagabonding seeks individual liberation in the cosmopolitan culture of the modern metropolis. The related term “wandering” (*hōrō* 放浪) carries with it implications of socioeconomic marginality and the absence of a fixed and stable existence. Works such as Hayashi Fumiko’s *Tales of Wandering* (*Hōrōki* 放浪記, 1928–1930) and Ryūtanji Yū’s *Age of Wandering* (*Hōrō jidai* 放浪時代, 1928) present the city as a site of flux and instability, to be navigated by the young protagonist. In her analysis of Hayashi’s work, Noriko Mizuta describes the female protagonist’s wandering as a disavowal of domestic space: “The heroines of both *Vagabond’s Song* [i.e., *Tales of Wandering*] and *Drifting Clouds* [*Ukigumo* 浮雲, 1951] are dislocated women, and their drifting signifies that they do not follow the publicly acknowledged roles of women—as wife and mother—within the socially and legally guaranteed space of women: the home.”¹²⁸ The openness of urban space, in contrast to the home, enables these individuals to achieve personal freedom on the margins of society. The main character in *Age of Wandering*, a designer of display windows, avails himself of the artistic and economic opportunities presented by the changing patterns of consumption in the city. Liu Jie describes Weng Nao’s existence in the imperial capital as a “wandering lifestyle” (*hōrō seikatsu* 放浪生活), his drifting premised on his dislocation from the colonized homeland.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ “In Search of a Lost Paradise,” in *The Woman’s Hand: Gender and Theory in Japanese Women’s Writing*, ed. Paul Gordon Schalow and Janet A. Walker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 331. See also Seiji M. Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 267–268n18.

¹²⁹ Huang Yuting, “Chihō wa deta keredo: Ō Dō to 1930 nendai no Tōkyō” (Tokyo: Fuji Zerokkusu Kobayashi Setsutarō Kinen Kikin, 2008), 1.

Roland Barthes's idea of the city as a discourse helps to conceptualize vagabonding as an act of enunciation, a process by which the "reader" or "user" appropriates fragments of the city. Vagabonding operates in the liminal spaces produced by capitalist modernity, resisting the organization of space and time into distinct realms of work and leisure. Vagabonds flock to the lively parts of the city, existing in interdependence with spaces of consumption. It is not surprising, then, that Kon Wajirō includes "vagrants" (*furōsha* 浮浪者) among the "delinquent groups that make the entertainment districts their strongholds" (*sakariba o nejiro to suru furyōgun* 盛り場を根城とする不良群), along with "delinquent youth" (*furyō shōnen shōjo* 不良少年少女) and "hucksters" (*tekiya* テキヤ). Kon anticipates that the term requires some elaboration in order to be understood by the reader, and offers a tentative definition: "Vagrants might be people who wander around, doing nothing. Or rather, they are men of leisure of the lowest class. Even if someone doesn't do anything, if he has property, or if he gets a few scraps from people who take care of him, or if he has a fixed address, he is unqualified to be a vagrant."¹³⁰ Vagabonding (*rōnin*) bears some affinity to strolling (*sansaku*), in that both spaces of representation posit the city as an object of aesthetic pleasure, and are practiced by men of leisure who are not bound by the temporal exigencies of the modern metropolis. Unlike strolling, however, vagabonding is inextricably associated with abjection. While Kafū could return to his stylish abode in the *yamanote* after strolling in the *shitamachi*, Weng Nao resides in the same place where he practices his vagabonding. Moreover, the opposition between the *yamanote* and *shitamachi* that is so much a part of

¹³⁰ Kon Wajirō, ed., *Shinpan dai Tōkyō annai*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 2001), 168.

Kafū's *Fair-Weather Geta* disappears in Kōenji, a variegated cultural space on the suburban periphery.

Weng Nao's Kōenji is a site of intermingling, a place where multiple styles and social classes come together. "Male and female students, salarymen, waitresses, dancers, painters who look like they've just returned from Paris, literary youths with bobbed hair, *couples étrangers* with different-colored eyes, and drunks" all gather in the neighborhood.¹³¹ This vision establishes Kōenji as a heterogeneous place of encounter that brings together the multivalent signs of modern culture. Imamura Kinpei's restaurant epitomizes its spirit: "Even in this small eatery, a cosmopolitan feeling [*kozumoporitan no kūki* コズモポリタンの空気] is in the air. There are Chinese, Koreans, Manchurians, people from our island—all kinds of faces and languages. There may even be some Siamese and Tatars mixed in."¹³² This cosmopolitanism is founded on the two trajectories that characterize Tokyo as an imperial capital: on the one hand, the cultural sophistication of Europe, and on the other hand, the ethnic diversity of the colonial periphery. The vagabond navigates the intellectual and artistic currents that run through Kōenji, drifting in and out of cafes and other gathering places. Movement through the neighborhood leads to encounters with prominent literary figures, such as Komatsu Kiyoshi 小松清 (1900–1962), a scholar of French literature, and Nii Itaru 新居格 (1888–1951), an anarchist critic. Weng Nao's essay is replete with anecdotes from his brief encounters with these

¹³¹ Weng Nao, "Tōkyō kōgai rōningai: Kōenji kaiwai," in vol. 1 of *Taiwan junbungakushū*, ed. Hoshina Hironobu (Tokyo: Ryokuyō Shobō, 2002), 102.

¹³² Weng Nao, "Tōkyō kōgai rōningai: Kōenji kaiwai," in vol. 1 of *Taiwan junbungakushū*, ed. Hoshina Hironobu (Tokyo: Ryokuyō Shobō, 2002), 103.

and other famous personages, demonstrating his familiarity with Kōenji's cultural landscape.

This image of Kōenji as a cosmopolitan intellectual destination also figures prominently in Ibuse Masuji's essay "Kōenji Sketch (Kōenji Landscape)" (Kōenji sukecchi (Kōenji fūkei) 高円寺スケッチ(高円寺風景), 1932). Beginning his anthropological observations next to the public telephone at Kōenji station, Ibuse follows two young intellectuals who are engaged in a conversation about literary magazines. "Both of them were wearing caps, both were wearing low geta, and both had long, scraggly hair," he observes. "This type of young man is particularly numerous in Kōenji, along the Chūō line."¹³³ The youths soon change the topic to waitresses and cafes, moving through the neighborhood in search of the same Nii Itaru who appears in Weng Nao's essay. Ibuse presents Kōenji as a site of flux and encounter, removed from the exigencies of modern urban life.

In its association with the western suburbs, vagabonding appropriates the intellectual and artistic elements of metropolitan culture while eluding its impositions of spatiotemporal control. Huang Yuting likens Kōenji to a negative image that stands as the inverse of central Tokyo, a region demarcated by the Yamanote line and marked by imperial power.¹³⁴ In the "newly opened land" of the suburban periphery, the vagabond is free to drift amidst a heterogeneous and cosmopolitan crowd. Vagabonding operates in

¹³³ Ibuse Masuji, "Kōenji sukecchi (Kōenji fūkei)," in vol. 3 of *Ibuse Masuji zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1997), 585.

¹³⁴ Huang Yuting, "Chihō wa deta keredo: Ō Dō to 1930 nendai no Tōkyō" (Tokyo: Fuji Zerokkusu Kobayashi Setsutarō Kinen Kikin, 2008), 13.

the liminal spaces of the imperial capital, spaces produced by the convergence of suburbanization and colonization.

III. “Remaining Snow”: The Colonial Bohemian as Vagabond

In his analysis of Wu Zhuoliu’s 吳濁流 (1900–1976) novel *The Orphan of Asia* (*Ajia no koji* アジアの孤児, 1943–1945), Leo Ching describes Tokyo’s image as a cosmopolitan city where Taiwanese intellectuals were liberated from the stifling social obligations of their homeland. For many of these intellectuals, Tokyo was the place where the contradictions of colonial modernity might be overcome. As Ching writes, “what the Taiwanese intellectuals yearn for in these texts is nothing other than the constellation of modernity mediated through the bustling streets of Tokyo. In contrast, the villages in Taiwan can only represent an inescapable boredom and an incredibly monotonous life.”¹³⁵ Taiwan functions as an implicit reference point in these representations of Tokyo, conditioning the colonial intellectual’s experience of the imperial capital.

As the setting for Weng Nao’s short story “Remaining Snow” (*Zansetsu* 殘雪, 1935), Tokyo appears as a modern, cosmopolitan metropolis, posed in contrast to colonial Taiwan. The story centers on Lin Chunsheng, an aspiring actor who has moved from Taiwan to Tokyo. Romantically, Lin is caught between two women: Kimiko, a waitress from Hokkaido whom he meets at a cafe in Shinjuku, and Chen Yuzhi, a young woman from Tainan whom he has left behind in Taiwan. Lin’s family has cut off

¹³⁵ Leo Ching, *Becoming “Japanese”*: *Colonial Taiwan and the Politics of Identity Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 28.

financial support after learning that he has dropped out of law school to pursue a career in the theater, leaving Lin to drift through the city. His vagabonding is premised on his physical relocation from the colonial periphery to the imperial capital, and on his rejection of the social expectations and responsibilities foisted upon him by his family. Making use of key urban sites—the cafe, the train station, the apartment—Weng Nao constructs an alternative geography of the city to characterize the protagonist’s bohemian existence.

The cafe, an iconic modern space charged with intellectual energy and sexual tension, is a frequent meeting place for Lin and Kimiko. Western names (“Eden,” “Prince”) and music (Schubert’s “Unfinished” Symphony is playing in the background during their first meeting) imbue these locales with an exotic atmosphere. The cafe also establishes an idea of identity as unstable and performative, a theme that reverberates throughout the story, from Lin’s theatrical roles to Kimiko’s role as waitress. From the story’s opening scene, in which Lin meets Kimiko at Cafe Eden in Shinjuku, her identity remains enigmatic to him. She seems guileless and pure, unlikely traits for a cafe waitress. When Lin and Kimiko meet for the second time, she reveals the circumstances that led her to Tokyo:

「あたし、きのふはじめて東京へ参りましたの、北海道から。だから東京のことはまだ、何んにも分んないの。」

—東京といふ言葉を、此の女は何と強い響きをもつて言ふのであらう。

「さうですか。東京が恋しかつたんですね。」

「え、東京にはあたし、ずっと以前から憧れて居りましたわ、でも、お父さんがどうしても許しては下さらなかつたんですもの。」

「では出奔したんですね。」

この言葉に女は突然、彼から一歩後すさつて、

「あら、さうでもないわよ。でもどうしてさうお思ひなの。」

「さういふ風に見えるんですよ。」

「さうか知ら。」

と云ふと、何を思つたのか、女は邊りの人の気を奪ふほどの高声で、
愉しげに暫く笑ひ続けた。

—ではこの女は、まだ純なのだ、あの雪のやうに。

“I just arrived in Tokyo for the first time yesterday, from Hokkaido. So I don't know Tokyo yet. Not at all.” She pronounced the word “Tokyo” emphatically when she said it.

“Is that so? You were enamored of Tokyo, then.”

“Yeah, I'd always dreamed of going to Tokyo, but my father just wouldn't let me.”

“So you ran off?”

As soon as he said this, she took a step away.

“No, that's not it. Why would you think that?”

“It sure looks that way.”

“Maybe it does.”

She kept laughing for a while in a voice so loud that it disturbed
the people around her—my, this girl is still pure, like the snow.¹³⁶

For both characters, Tokyo holds a powerful allure as a destination, offering them the possibility of escape from the strictures of family life in the colonial homeland. In the imperial capital, it is possible for them to live independently, existing amidst the flux and anonymity of the metropolis. Kimiko's circumstances mirror those of Yuzhi, who is forced into an undesired engagement soon after Lin's departure for Tokyo. She flees to the island capital of Taipei, where she begins working as a waitress in a cafe.

Rail travel epitomizes the technological advancement and physical mobility associated with the imperial capital, linking diverse locations and enabling fluid movement through urban space. Lin is frequently indecisive in his navigation of the city, hopping onto and off of trains as he moves among Ginza, Yūrakuchō, Shinjuku, Ōmori, Shinagawa, and his apartment in Ōkubo. The train station itself becomes a space of encounter when Kimiko follows Lin after seeing him at a cafe:

それは一月の終りごろであつた。街までが何とはなしに白々しく見え、林は、出て来た序でに久しぶりで夜の銀ブラでもしようかと思つて、有楽町行きの切符を買つて、重たげな足どりで体を振りながら階段を上つて行つた。するとそこへ、あたふたと喜美子が階段を上つて来たのである。

「何か言ひ忘れたことでも—」

¹³⁶ Weng Nao, "Zansetsu" in *Taiwan bungei* 2.8–9 (1935), 38–39.

と、林は階段を上りつめた所で立ち止って喜美子を待った。喜美子はそれに答へないで歩き出しながら、暫くして云った。

「いゝえ、お見送りに来たの。」

It was late January, and everywhere the streets were white. Since he was out, Lin thought he might take the opportunity to do a little *ginbura* for the first time in a long while. He bought a ticket to Yūrakuchō, and made his way up the stairs with a tired gait, his body swaying. Suddenly, Kimiko came rushing up the stairs.

“Did you forget to tell me something?” Lin stopped in the middle of the stairs. Kimiko didn’t reply, but just kept going up the stairs. Finally she said,

“No, I came to see you off.”¹³⁷

Lin prolongs his farewell, allowing the trains to pass so that he can talk longer with Kimiko. When he finally leaves her, he is uncertain where to go. He stays on the train at Yūrakuchō, riding it all the way to Shinjuku. He considers getting off there, but “when he thought of the human flood of Shinjuku at night, he suddenly got fed up, and went straight back to his apartment in Ōkubo.” The absence of a fixed destination and the mobility enabled by the train open the city to Lin, allowing him to navigate its spaces with ease.

Lin’s retreat to his apartment in Ōkubo provides him with a refuge from the crowds of Shinjuku. Over the course of the story, this space provides him with some

¹³⁷ Weng Nao, “Zansetsu,” in *Taiwan bungei* 2.8–9 (1935), 52.

measure of temporary stability, enabling him to reflect on his state of dislocation. In one scene, he looks outside to the snow that has fallen, and an image of his hometown arises before his eyes:

一月、二月と割に暖かった天候が、三月に這入つて急にまた冷たくなり、さういふ晩には雪が降つたりした。けれども翌る朝になると、空は紺碧に澄んで太陽が屋根々々を明るくしてゐるのであつた。ポタリ、と雪が溶けて滴り落ちる音や、ガサツと亞鉛を迂る雪の音に、何時しか春もやつて来たのかと林は考へた。

彼は或る朝遅くまでベッドにもぐり込んで居た。枕元に置いた腕時計を手探り寄せて見ると、早や十時を十分廻つてゐた。珍らしく鳥が軒下でチュツ、と啼いてゐて、カーテンの隙間から、陽が白銀の様に電柱に照りつけてゐるのが眼にはいつた。

かういふ朝、彼の心には故里の姿が泛び上るのであつた。一面の青田、竹藪に囲まれた家々、村の小路、それから清水の滾々と湧き出てゐる小川一。

「いけねえ、いけねえ。」

突嗟に彼は跳ね起きて、カーテンを引きあげ、さつと流れ込む光線に胸を膨らませ貪り吸ふのであつた。

January and February had been comparatively warm, but with the arrival of March it suddenly got cold again. On one of those nights, snow fell. But by the following morning, the sun was shining down brightly on the roofs

from the deep blue sky. The sounds of the melting snow dripping down, and of the snow sliding off the zinc roof could only mean that spring had come, thought Lin.

One morning, he stayed in bed until late. When he glanced at the watch that he had left on his pillow, he saw that it was already ten after ten. Beneath the overhang of the roof, a bird was calling. The sun, reflecting like silver off of the electric pole, shone through the gap in the curtain and into his eyes.

On this morning, the image of his hometown arose in his mind. A expanse of green paddies, houses ensconced in bamboo groves, the lane that led into the town, and the clear water of the stream flowing by.

“No, no.”

Suddenly he got up, drew back the curtains, and felt the warmth of the sun’s rays on his chest.¹³⁸

The incursion of pastoral images from the rural, colonial space unsettles Lin’s existence in the imperial capital. His aversion signals his desire to break with his past, just as he breaks with Yuzhi. The story culminates in Lin’s decision to remain in Tokyo, leaving Yuzhi in Taiwan and Kimiko in Hokkaido. Again, Lin stands in his apartment and looks out at the snow:

¹³⁸ Weng Nao, “Zansetsu,” in *Taiwan bungei* 2.8–9 (1935), 53.

ふと、彼は奇妙なある一つの考へに礎と行き当つた。北海道と台湾とどりが遠いのであらうかといふ考へであつた。すると、地図の上では北海道の方が近い様に記憶してゐるが、彼の心の中ではどちらも等しく遠い距離を保つてゐるのに気がついた。と同時に、其処に居る玉枝も、喜美子も、自分とは著るしく遠くへだゝつた存在の様に思はれて来た。

それなら、俺は台湾へも帰るまい。北海道へも行くまい。—と彼は考へて、窓を開けて外を見た。昨夜降つた、恐ろく今年の最後のであらうと思はれる残んの雪が、ドサツト頭上の屋根から眼下の地面へ迂り落ちて、後はぐちやゝゝゝに重なり合つて行つた。

All of a sudden a strange thought came to him: which is farther, Hokkaido or Taiwan? He remembered Hokkaido looking closer on a map, but in his heart he felt as though both were equally distant. At that moment, Yuzhi and Kimiko, who were in those places, seemed remarkably separated from his existence.

He would not go back to Taiwan, he thought. He would not go to Hokkaido, either. He opened the window and looked outside. Snow had fallen the night before and remained on the roof overhead. It was probably the last snow of the year, he figured. With a thud, it slipped down to the ground below, piling up in a slushy mass.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Weng Nao, “Zansetsu,” in *Taiwan bungei* 2.8–9 (1935), 55.

With his rejection of both places and both women, Lin signals his refusal to return to the colonial periphery. The physical distance between Tokyo and these two places ceases to be important; their figurative distance is equally removed from Lin's existence in the imperial capital. The snow, which for Lin has strong associations with Kimiko, now falls to the ground. Their relationship is over.

IV. Conclusion

Lin's double refusal enables him to maintain a materially unstable but spiritually liberated existence on the physical and social margins of Tokyo. Weng Nao's own refusal to leave Tokyo, even in the face of physical deprivation, had dire consequences. In his vagabonding, he sought to navigate the liminal spaces generated by colonization and suburbanization. This space of representation celebrates the eclectic intellectual culture of the metropolis, yet it also depends on the impositions of power by which Tokyo extended its influence as an imperial capital.

Moving beyond a dichotomous structure of metropole and colony, "Remaining Snow" generates a polytopic mapping of the Japanese imperial capital and the Japanese empire. Tokyo encompasses the diverse locales of Ginza, Yūrakuchō, Ōkubo, Shinjuku, and Ōmori, while locations on the colonial periphery include Hokkaido, Tainan, Taipei, and Lin's small hometown in rural Taiwan. This geography lays bare the discursive constructions of empire, as characters move within and between these spaces.

While the image of Tokyo as a modern, cosmopolitan metropolis occupied the imaginations of many writers and intellectuals on the colonial periphery, the experience of the actual city did not always fulfill these expectations. The double exposure that characterized Tokyo as an imperial capital meant that the city remained subject to moments of unevenness and incongruity. Even as colonization and suburbanization absorbed new lands into the discursive boundaries of the Japanese empire, a vision of authentic modernity proved illusory.

Chapter Four:

Colonial Modernity in the Tokyo Writings of Yi Sang

With cities, it is as with dreams: everything imaginable can be dreamed, but even the most unexpected dream is a rebus that conceals a desire or, its reverse, a fear. Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.

Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

At bottom, we may say, the collector lives a piece of dream life. For in the dream, too, the rhythm of perception and experience is altered in such a way that everything—even the seemingly most neutral—comes to strike us; everything concerns us. In order to understand the arcades from the ground up, we sink them into the deepest stratum of the dream; we speak of them as though they had struck us.

Walter Benjamin

A dream—if only it were a dream. But I wasn't asleep. I wasn't even lying down.

Yi Sang, "Lost Flowers"

I. Introduction

In October 1936, Yi Sang 李箱 (1910–1937) left behind the colonial capital of Keijō and moved to the imperial capital of Tokyo. This spatial trajectory—a movement from the periphery to the center of the Japanese empire—describes a cultural hierarchy that was integral to Tokyo’s status as an imperial capital. Literary journals proliferated in the years after the earthquake, attesting to the burgeoning creative energy of the capital. Combining translations of European modernist literature with original Japanese-language works, these journals articulated new modes of literary expression and a new aesthetics of the city in response to the broad social and spatial transformations that were occurring under capitalist modernity.¹⁴⁰ As a site of literary contact and cultural production, Tokyo was linked at once to the avant-garde in the metropolitan centers of the West (New York, London, Paris, and Berlin) and to a growing Japanese-reading population in the (semi)colonial cities of East Asia (Keijō, Taipei, Dalian, and Shanghai).¹⁴¹ Yi Sang, fluent in Japanese and deeply engaged with the modern urban culture of Keijō, was naturally attracted to the artistic and intellectual possibilities offered by Tokyo. Yet he

¹⁴⁰ Prominent literary journals of this era included *Bungei jidai* (1924–1927), *Bungei toshi* (1928–1929), *Bungaku jidai* (1929–1932), *Shi to shiron* (1928–1931), and *Bungaku* (1932–1933). These journals featured authors such as Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成 (1899–1972) and Yokomitsu Riichi 横光利一 (1898–1947), as well as Haruyama Yukio 春山行夫 (1902–1994), Kitasono Katsue 北園克衛 (1902–1978), and Kondō Azuma 近藤東 (1904–1988). Yi Sang was an avid reader of *Shi to shiron* and *Bungaku*. See William Gardner, *Advertising Tower* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2006), 71 and Ch’oe Chinsōk, “‘Kindai no chōkanzu’ to shite no I San bungaku,” in Yi Sang, *I San sakuhin shūsei* (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2006), 348–349.

¹⁴¹ For an account of these two spatio-cultural trajectories, see Sawa Masahiro and Wada Hirofumi, eds., *Toshi modanizumu no honryū: “Shi to shiron” no resupuri nūbō* (Tokyo: Kanrin Shobō, 1996), 194–230 and 232–251, respectively.

was not entirely in thrall to the city, adopting a characteristically playful and ironic tone in a 1936 letter to his friend Kim Kirim 金起林 (1908–1986) prior to his departure: “unfortunately—or, perhaps, fortunately—it appears that I too will become a Tokyoite at the end of the month. How much it will compare with your great leap [*ungbi* 雄飛] remains to be seen.”¹⁴²

Tragically, Yi Sang’s sojourn in the imperial capital ended with his death a mere six months after his arrival. After taking up residence in a guesthouse in Jinbōchō, he was assailed by the physical and mental effects of poverty and solitude. His disillusionment is evident in a letter to Kim that he wrote during this difficult period: “what I imagined when I was leaving Seoul was, in fact, an absurd dream of paradise. At this rate, I really may end up killing myself.”¹⁴³ Already in poor health, Yi Sang’s arrest and imprisonment for thought crimes in February 1937 caused his tuberculosis to worsen. In March, he was released from prison and admitted to Tokyo Imperial University Hospital, but he died from his illness on April 17, 1937. In an essay composed after Yi Sang’s death, Kim Kirim describes his friend as “the preeminent, last modernist...charged with the grave destiny of overcoming modernism.”¹⁴⁴ Viewed in this light, Yi Sang’s journey to Tokyo may be seen as an attempt to escape from the fractured consciousness engendered by

¹⁴² “Sasin 1,” in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 321.

¹⁴³ “Sasin 7,” in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 332.

¹⁴⁴ Kim Kirim, “Modŏnijŭm ūi yŏksajŏk wich’i,” in *Kim Kirim: Kim Kirim sisŏn, sanmunsŏn, pip’yŏng, p’yŏngjŏn, yŏngu nonjip, yŏngu charyojip*, ed. Kim Yujung (Seoul: Munhak Segyesa, 1996), 122. See also John M. Frankl, “Leveling the Metropole,” *Azalea* 5 (2012), 335–336.

colonial modernity. Yet as Yi Sang soon realized, this prospect of escape was entirely illusory. As Kim Yunsik argues, “Yi Sang’s tragedy arose from his view of Seoul as Tokyo’s imitation...he resolved to leave for Tokyo in order to escape from despair, but there was only more despair in Tokyo. Neither his body nor his mind could endure this two-fold despair.”¹⁴⁵ Rather than liberating him through the experience of an authentic modernity, Yi Sang’s journey to Tokyo only transported him to a reflection of the city that he had left behind.

Beginning in 1905, Japanese occupation transformed the city of Hwangšong into Keijō (Kr. Kyōngšong 京城), a colonial capital of the Japanese empire. Todd Henry characterizes this spatial and symbolic transformation of the city as a project of incorporation and assimilation, as palaces were refigured as “officially sanctioned social” (Jp. *kōkyō*; Kr. *konggong* 公共) sites designed to encourage the native Korean population to assume a more active role in colonial modernity. The Japanese colonial government also embarked on an extensive program of “urban renewal” (*shiku kaisei* 市区改正) that included the widening of roads, improvements to the water and sewer systems, and the addition of new parks and plazas.¹⁴⁶ This development, which emulated the Meiji-era modernization of Tokyo, aimed to improve order and sanitation while facilitating the circulation of goods and people in the city. Due to the limitations of local resistance, the measures achieved broader transformations in the Japanese colonial capitals of Keijō and Taipei than they did in the imperial capital. Yet even as major thoroughfares such as

¹⁴⁵ Kim Yunsik, *Yi Sang yōngu* (Seoul: Munhak Sasangsa, 1987), 151.

¹⁴⁶ Sō Chunsōp, “1930 nyōndae ūi Sōul: Tongsidae munhak kwa sahoe ūi kwallyōn yangsang,” in *Kamgak ūi twip’yōn: Sō Chunsōp pip’yōngjip* (Seoul: Munhak kwa Chisōngsa, 2000), 375–377.

Honmachi Avenue and Taihei Avenue were developed, many back alleys lingered in labyrinthine darkness. More broadly, the city remained divided between the predominately Korean northern half of the city (Pukch'on) and the predominately Japanese southern half (Namch'on). Henry argues for a direct correlation of the unevenness that persisted in the colonial capital's social and spatial registers, as "the ongoing unevenness in the socio-cultural processes of Koreans' becoming 'Japanese' was, in turn, reflected in the fragmented nature of the city's spaces, a phenomenon which the inherent contradictions of Japanese colonialism only exacerbated."¹⁴⁷

Keijō's colonial modernity thus constituted a social and spatial doubling, a condition that Yi Sūnghun describes as "an imitation of an imitation."¹⁴⁸ If Tokyo had to contend with accusations of its derivative and inauthentic development, Keijō was twice implicated. Its modernity imposed by Japanese imperial power, the city found itself in a perpetual state of subordination and rupture. This spatio-cultural relationship between the colonial and imperial capitals engendered what Ch'oe Chinsōk terms "dual linguistic consciousness" (*nijū gengo jōtai* 二重言語状態), as bilingual writers composed Korean-language literature through sustained engagement with Japanese-language texts, sometimes even writing in Japanese and then translating into Korean.¹⁴⁹ By the mid-1930s, with the suppression of the socialist realism practiced by members of the Korea Artista Proletaria Federacio (KAPF), modernism presented one of the few avenues for the

¹⁴⁷ Todd A. Henry, "Keijō: Japanese and Korean Constructions of Colonial Seoul and the History of Its Lived Spaces, 1910–1937" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2006), 567.

¹⁴⁸ Yi Sūnghun, *Hanguk modōnijūm sisa* (Seoul: Munye Ch'ulp'ansa, 2000), 71.

¹⁴⁹ Ch'oe Chinsōk, "'Kindai no chōkanzu' to shite no I San bungaku," in *I San sakuhin shūsei* (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2006), 347.

literary representation and critique of colonial modernity. In a 1934 essay entitled “A Follow-up to Writing: Representation, Depiction, Technique” (Ch’angjak yŏrok: p’yohyŏn, myosa, kigyŏ), the author Pak T’aewŏn 朴泰遠 (1909–1986) develops the concept of “double exposure” (*ijung noch’ul* 二重露出), a spatiotemporal overlapping that brings together disparate fragments of memory or fantasy in a single image. Chris Hanscom elucidates Pak’s essay with reference to the colonial double bind—a simultaneous demand for sameness and difference—arguing that Pak’s modernism obliquely calls attention to the systematic repression underlying everyday life in the colonial capital.¹⁵⁰ The structure and multiplicity of language are intrinsic to this mode of expression, allowing the author to shift between different spaces and symbolic systems.

In his representations of Keijō and Tokyo, Yi Sang operates within and against the material constructions of empire. In the climactic scene of his short story “Wings” (Nalgae, 1936), the protagonist ascends to the roof of the Mitsukoshi department store in central Keijō. Just before he leaps off into the void, he looks down on the crowds below: “at that moment, the shrill noon whistle sounded. People were flapping their limbs like chickens; the moment when all sorts of glass, steel, marble, paper currency, and ink seemed to be boiling up, bubbling—noon with extreme splendor.”¹⁵¹ This confluence of materiality in the center of the colonial capital, punctuated by the temporal marker of the noon whistle, creates a palpable energy. The protagonist’s view from above affords him a

¹⁵⁰ Christopher Paul Hanscom, “A Question of Representation” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2006), 77–84.

¹⁵¹ Yi Sang, “Wings,” in *Modern Korean Literature: An Anthology*, ed. Peter H. Lee (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1990), 64–65. See also Yi Sang, “Nalgae,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 282.

bird's-eye perspective on the scene, a glimpse into the frenzied activity of capitalist modernity.

Yi Sang's use of language exploits the discursive possibilities of colonial modernity's double image, incorporating techniques such as intertextuality and allusion, as well as formal experimentation with structure and sound. The breakdown and multiplicity of language resists the singularity of discourse as a unified system of signs. In this chapter, I consider the works that Yi Sang composed during his ill-fated stay in Tokyo, including the short story "Lost Flowers" (Silhwa 失花, 1939) and the essays "Tokyo" (Tonggyōng 東京, 1939) and "Ennui" (Kwōnt'ae 倦怠, 1937). Yi Sang enacts the many doublings in these texts—author and protagonist, interior and exterior, past and present—through the material and discursive navigation of the colonial and imperial capitals. Time and space are not experienced along a linear trajectory, but rather are retained and revisited through dreams, memories, and fantasies. The resulting moments of double exposure refigure the cultural hierarchy that defined Tokyo as an imperial capital, bringing multiple spaces and temporalities together in a single frame.

II. Tokyo and Keijō in Double Exposure

Published posthumously in March 1939 in the journal *Munjang*, the short story “Lost Flowers” evokes the double image produced by the fundamental interconnectedness of the Japanese imperial and colonial capitals. In its nine numbered sections, the narrative traverses the time and space that separate the two cities of Tokyo and Keijō, moving back and forth in a manner that emulates the unsettled mental state of the story’s protagonist. This protagonist, a young writer by the name of Yi Sang (hereafter, “Sang”) who has moved from Keijō to Tokyo, is one of many characters in Yi Sang’s writings who shares his name and, ostensibly, his identity.

The narrative oscillates between two different times and places: October 23-24 in Keijō and December 23-24 in Tokyo. By intertwining these two settings in what Choi Won-shik calls “a loop of non-synchronous simultaneity,” Yi Sang resists a linear mode of narration that would introduce a definitive break between the past and the present, between Keijō and Tokyo.¹⁵² Both temporalities and both capitals exist in interpenetration. Not only does the setting continually switch back and forth from one section to another, but even within the same section, words and events cause the protagonist to think of a different time and place. In the story’s first scene, set in a Jinbōchō apartment, Sang listens as the Korean student Miss C reads aloud from Arnold Bennett’s (1867–1931) novel *Anna of the Five Towns* (1902). A fragmented process of pronunciation, translation, and commentary unfolds all at once, the different registers delineated only by em dashes. Sang does not speak, but his thoughts engage with Miss

¹⁵² Choi Won-shik, “Seoul, Tokyo, New York: Modern Korean Literature Seen through Yi Sang’s ‘Lost Flowers,’” *Korea Journal* 39.4 (Winter 1999), 129.

C's narration as though in dialogue with it. Certain words and phrases from the novel trigger thoughts of his lover Yŏn-i back in Keijō, and memories of her betrayal:

「연애를 했어요! 高尚한 趣味—優雅한 性格—이런것이 좋았다는 女
子の 遺書예요—죽기는 왜죽어—先生님—저같으면 죽지
않겠습니다—죽도록 사랑할수 있나요—있지요—그렇지만
저는모르겠어요.」

(나는 일즉이 어리석었드니라. 모르고 妍이와 죽기를 約束했드니라.
죽도록 사랑했것만 面會가끝난뒤 大略二十分이나 三十分 만 지나면
妍이는 내가 「설마」 하고만 녀이든 S 의 품안에 있었다.)

“I’ve fallen in love! Lofty taste—refined personality—this is the suicide
note of the girl who liked these things—why would she die—Teacher—if
it were me, I wouldn’t die—is it possible to love someone to death—I’d
say that it’s possible—but I don’t understand.”

(I’d been so foolish. In my ignorance, I had agreed to die with Yŏn-i. I
loved her to death, but just twenty or thirty minutes after our meeting had
ended, she was in S’s arms. I wouldn’t have believed it.)¹⁵³

By posing Sang’s thoughts (in parentheses) in this dialogic relationship with Miss C’s
words (in quotation marks), Yi Sang highlights the generative potential that exists
between the two different levels of discourse. This interdependence also operates in the

¹⁵³ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 347.

spatial register, for it is Yŏn-i's betrayal that serves as the catalyst for Sang's departure for Tokyo. Denied a love suicide with Yŏn-i, Sang can only look for another escape:

「功課는 여기까지밖에 안했어요—靑年이 마즈막에는—멀—리 旅行을 간다나 봐요 모든것을 이저버리려고.」

(여기는 東京이다. 나는 어쩔작정으로 여기왔나? 赤貧이如洗—꼭토—가 그랬느니라—재조없는 芸術家야 부즐없이 네貧困을 내 세우지말라고—아—내게 貧困을 팔아먹는 재조外에 무슨 技能이 남아있누. 여기는 神田區 神保町, 내가 어려서 帝展, 二科에 하가끼 注文하든 바로 계가 예다. 나는여기서 지금 앓는다.)

“I only studied up to here—in the end, the young man—it seems that he goes on a long trip...to forget everything.”

(This is Tokyo. With what purpose had I come here? Poor as a pauper—was it Cocteau who said it—an artist without talent shows off his own poverty in vain—ah, other than my poverty, what talent do I have to sell? This is Kanda, Jinbōchō. When I was young I ordered a postcard of the Teiten's Nika exhibition from this place. Now I am here, sick.)¹⁵⁴

Sang's interior monologue picks up directly from Miss C's commentary, his circumstances mirroring those of the young protagonist in Bennett's novel. His thoughts are scrambled, the firm declarations of place interspersed with discursive reflection. As

¹⁵⁴ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 347–348.

an idealized destination, Tokyo figures prominently in Yi Sang's fiction.¹⁵⁵ The main character in "Phantom Illusion" (Hwansigi 幻視記, 1938) vows, "this time I'm going away to Tokyo for sure, I told myself as I stretched out my legs."¹⁵⁶ In "Record of a Consummation" (Pongbyōlgi 逢別記, 1936) the protagonist reflects, "where should I go? I boasted to everyone I met that I was going to Tokyo."¹⁵⁷ The protagonists in these works view the Japanese imperial capital as an escape from their straitened circumstances. The mere mention of the city's name is enough to give them solace, functioning as a defiant retort against the people around them. In this scene in "Lost Flowers," Sang's reflections on his present circumstances in Tokyo lead him to think immediately of Jean Cocteau (1889–1963) and to recall an earlier occasion when Jinbōchō entered into his consciousness.¹⁵⁸ These mental leaps of literary imagination and personal memory contrast Sang's idealized expectations in the past with his straitened circumstances in the present. Sang closes his eyes, mesmerized by the sound of Miss C's voice, and the scene takes on a surreal quality: "was it a dream? For an entire hour I had been listening to her voice more than the story. One hour—it felt like an hour, but in fact it had only been ten

¹⁵⁵ For a sustained exploration of this theme in Yi Sang's literature, see Kim Yunsik, *Yi Sang yōngu* (Seoul: Munhak Sasangsa, 1987), 143–164.

¹⁵⁶ Yi Sang, "Phantom Illusion," in *A Ready-Made Life*, ed. and trans. Kim Chong-un and Bruce Fulton (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 178. See also Yi Sang, "Hwansigi," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 153.

¹⁵⁷ Yi Sang, "Pongbyōlgi," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 190.

¹⁵⁸ Walter K. Lew explores the relationship between Jean Cocteau and Yi Sang's poetry in "Jean Cocteau in the Looking Glass: A Homotextual Reading of Yi Sang's Mirror Poems," *Muae* 1 (1995), 118–149.

minutes—had I fallen asleep? No, I remembered the whole story. I wasn't asleep.”¹⁵⁹

Sang's sense of time is disrupted; he is no longer able to tell how much time has elapsed since Miss C began reading. This confusion signifies an enduring doubt about the substantiality of the present moment, a theme closely aligned with the spatiotemporal multiplicity that defines the double image.

III. Down and Out in Jinbōchō

Jinbōchō, the Tokyo neighborhood where Miss C shares an apartment with Sang's friend C, is also home to the boarding house in which Sang has a meager room. By the 1930s, Jinbōchō had already established a strong association with student life, featuring an abundance of bookstores, dormitories, eateries, and other establishments. The author and translator Tanizaki Seiji 谷崎精二 (1890–1971) begins his 1927 account of the district with this observation: “if one says Jinbōchō, one immediately thinks of students. If Ginza is the street for gentlemen, then Jinbōchō Avenue is the street for students.”¹⁶⁰ As Sano Masato notes, the district had become a gathering place not only for Japanese students but also for students drawn to the imperial capital from Korea, China, and Taiwan. Institutions included the Chinese Young Men's Christian Association (Ch. *Zhonghua Jidujiao qingnian huiguan*; Jp. *Chūka Kirisutokyō seinen kaikan* 中華基督教青年會館),

¹⁵⁹ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 348.

¹⁶⁰ Tanizaki Seiji, “Jinbōchō hen,” in *Dai Tōkyō hanjōki: Yamanote hen* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1992), 115.

the East Asia Preparatory School (*Dongya yubei xuexiao* 東亞預備學校), and the Japan-China Study Association (*Nikka gakkai* 日華学会).¹⁶¹ In this sense, Jinbōchō was a place closely linked to the colonial periphery of the Japanese empire, concentrating many young East Asian intellectuals in a single locale within Tokyo. Sang, frequently hungry and in ill health, leads a marginal material existence here. Yet he remains closely attuned to the cultural life of the neighborhood. When Sang goes out into the street, he observes the following scene:

NAUKA 社가 있는 神保町鈴蘭洞에는 古本夜市가 슌다. 섰달 대목—
이 鈴蘭洞도 곱게 裝飾되었다. 이슬 비에 저진 아스팔트를 이리디디고
저리디디고 저녁안먹은 내발길은 자못 蹣跚하였다. 그렇나 나는 最後
의 二十錢을 던져 타임스版 常用英語四千字 라는 書籍을 샀다. 四千
字—

A night market for used books stands in Jinbōchō's Suzurandō, where Nauka is located. Even Suzurandō is decorated beautifully in December, during the busy season. I hadn't eaten dinner, and I staggered here and there along on the asphalt, which was damp from the light rain. But I threw away my last twenty sen on a book called the Times Edition of 4000 Common English Words. Four thousand words—¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ Sano Masato, "Yi Sang ūi Tonggyōng ch'ehōm koch'al," *Hanguk hyōndae munhak yōngu* 7 (December 1999), 188.

¹⁶² Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 354.

Sang's reference to Nauka, a Russian-language bookstore that opened in 1931, and his purchase of a book of English words identify Jinbōchō as a heterogeneous cultural space. If modernity in Ginza was defined by conspicuous displays of consumption, in Jinbōchō it was envisioned through intellectual encounters and new forms of knowledge. Despite his physical frailty, evident in his wavering movement along the wet asphalt, Sang remains devoted to his cosmopolitan ideals. Spending the last of his money on a book instead of food, he persists in a quixotic pursuit of culture at the risk of his own destruction.

This tension between intellectual aspiration and physical deterioration mirrors Yi Sang's own experience of the imperial capital. It was here in Jinbōchō that Yi Sang lived and wrote during his ill-fated six-month stay in Tokyo. Eulogizing his friend in an essay published in June 1937, Kim Kirim offers the following account of Yi Sang's circumstances:

箱의 숙소는 九段 아래 꼬부라진 뒷골목 2층 골방이었다. 이 「날개」
돋힌 시인과 더불어 東京 거리를 漫歩하면 얼마나 유쾌하랴 하고
그리던 온갖 꿈과는 판판으로 箱은 「날개」가 아주 부러져서 起居도
바로 못하고 이불을 뒤집어쓰고 앉아 있었다.

Sang's lodgings were a back room on the second floor, in a crooked alley at the bottom of Kudan. What a pleasure it would have been to stroll the streets of Tokyo with this "winged" poet. But it was completely different from all the dreams I had cherished. With his "wings" badly broken, he

was unable to go about his daily life upright, and sat with a quilt wrapped around him.¹⁶³

Kim captures the tragedy of Yi Sang's untimely demise through images of intellectual and physical (im)mobility animated by metaphorical allusions to Yi Sang's most famous short story. Yi Sang's confinement to a back room denies him the light of day and the phenomenal pleasures of the Tokyo streets. Even after his "great leap" from the colonial capital to the imperial capital, Yi Sang found only disillusionment. The image of Tokyo as a cosmopolitan space of authentic modernity, much like Kim's dreams of accompanying Yi Sang in *flânerie*, was destined to remain phantasmal.

IV. Keijō: Reflections of Tokyo

Again and again, this pervasive feeling of despair in Tokyo leads back to Keijō, a city tinged with loss and rupture and defined by the double image of colonial modernity. There, Sang shares a room in an unnamed part of the city with Yōn-i until the night of October 23, when he learns of her infidelity. The following morning, in the story's third section, Sang prepares to leave:

¹⁶³ Kim Kirim, "Ko Yi Sang ūi ch'uōk," in *Kim Kirim: Kim Kirim sisōn, sanmunsōn, pip'yōng, p'yōngjōn, yōngu nonjip, yōngu charyojip*, ed. Kim Yujung (Seoul: Munhak Segyesa, 1996), 91.

나는 일즉암치 면도를 하고 손톱을 깎고 옷을 갈아 입고 그리고
例年 十月二十四日경에는 死체가 몇칠만이면 썩기 시작하는지 곰곰
생각하면서 모자를 쓰고 인사하듯 다시 버서들고 그리고 房—妍이와
半年 寢食을 같이하든 냄새나는房을 휘—둘러 살피자니까 하나사다
놓스네 놓스네 하고 기어 뜻을 이루지못한 금붕어도—이房에는
가을이 이렇게 지뒀것만 菊花한송이 裝飾이었다.

Quickly I shaved, cut my fingernails, and changed my clothes. While
pondering how long it would take for a corpse to start to decay from
around October 24, I put on my hat and took it off as if greeting someone
before putting it back on again. I took a look around the room, which
smelled of the six months that Yŏn-i and I had lived there
together...although it was late fall, not even a single chrysanthemum
adorned the room.¹⁶⁴

Temporal references abound in this passage, with the date, the length of time spent with Yŏn-i, and the season all imbuing the room with affect. Sang's contemplation of death and his decision to leave the room, Yŏn-i, and Keijō represent an attempt to sever the past. Only later, with his relocation to Tokyo, does it become clear to Sang that he cannot end his life, as the past continually intrudes on the present. Just as the two cities are never completely separate, so too is Sang's life divided between the colonial and imperial

¹⁶⁴ Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 350.

capitals. Flowers link sections three through five, as the narrative shifts from Keijō to Tokyo and back again. The third section ends with the above passage, while section four begins in Miss C's room, where "two chrysanthemum flowers are in full bloom."¹⁶⁵ Section four ends with Miss C giving Sang one of these two flowers, a white chrysanthemum with which to decorate his bare room in Tokyo, while section five starts with Sang back in Keijō, looking around his "room that is without a single chrysanthemum."¹⁶⁶

The intertextuality of "Lost Flowers" builds on this interplay between its different sections, unsettling the boundaries between multiple levels of discourse. At the start of the third section, a confrontation ensues between Sang and S, Yōn-i's former lover. S tells him, "Sang! I read your essay, EPIGRAM. Once—ha, ha—once. Sang!"¹⁶⁷ The fictional S refers to an actual essay by Yi Sang, published in the journal *Yōsōng* in August 1936, which features a dispute between two men over a woman named Im-i.¹⁶⁸ In the essay, one of the men tells the other that he has slept with Im-i "once"; hence S's derisive comment to Sang. The triangular relationships in "Lost Flowers" and "EPIGRAM" parallel one other, enacting a doubling similar to the relationship between Yi Sang and Sang. These reflections make it difficult to tell which is the original and

¹⁶⁵ Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 350.

¹⁶⁶ Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 353.

¹⁶⁷ Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 348.

¹⁶⁸ Yi Sang, "EPIGRAM," in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 231–232.

which is the copy, inducing a dreamlike state in which boundaries between times, places, and texts are no longer fixed.

The spatiotemporal overlapping of the story's two settings is central to this condition of double exposure, and the specter of the imperial capital intrudes upon Keijō most visibly with Sang's decision to leave for Tokyo. His decision is almost subconscious: Yōn-i asks, "'Sang! Where are you going?' My heart was racing, so I simply answered, 'Tokyo.'"¹⁶⁹ Tokyo is always present as a destination, offering an (illusory) escape from Sang's constricting circumstances in the colonial capital. In the story's seventh section, Sang goes to visit his friend Kim Yujōng (金兪政; hereafter, "Yujōng") before his departure. A double of Yi Sang's friend, the author Kim Yujōng 金裕貞 (1908–1937), Yujōng is also ill with tuberculosis. Sang reveals his decision to his friend, who is lying in bed:

「兪兄! 저는 来日 아침車로 東京가겠습니다」

「...」

「또 뵈옵기 어려울 겠요」

「...」

“Jōng, my brother! I'm leaving for Tokyo tomorrow on the morning train.”

“...”

“I wonder whether we will meet again.”

¹⁶⁹ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 353.

“...”¹⁷⁰

Yujōng is unable to respond to Sang’s statements, incapable of putting into words the emotions that Sang’s impending departure elicits. Silence also emerges at a key moment in Sang’s relationship with Yōn-i. On October 23, Sang confronts Yōn-i, interrogating her through the night and into the following morning:

二十三日 밤 열시부터 나는 가지가지 재조를 다 피워가면서妍이를拷問했다.

二十四日 東이 흰—하게 터올때쯤에야妍이는 겨우 입을열었다. 아! 長久한 時間!

「첫뻘—말해라」

「仁川 어느 旅館」

「그건안다. 둘째뻘—말해라」

「...」

「말해라」

「N 뻘당 S 의事務室」

「셋째뻘—말해라」

「...」

「말해라」

¹⁷⁰ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 358.

「東小門밖 飲碧亭」

「넛째뻘—말해라」

「...」

「말해라」

「...」

「말해라」

On the 23rd, beginning at ten o'clock at night, I used every method to torment Yŏn-i.

On the 24th, when the eastern sky began to brighten, Yŏn-i finally opened her mouth. Ah, it was an eternity!

“The first time—say it”

“A motel in Inch'ŏn”

“I already know that. The second time—say it”

“...”

“Say it”

“S's office in the N building”

“The third time—say it”

“...”

“Say it”

“A cafe outside of Tongsomun”

“The fourth time—say it”

“...”

“Say it”

“ ... ”

“Say it”¹⁷¹

These silences highlight the limits of expression, the inability of language to overcome emotional distance. Here, Tokyo and Keijō are more than physical locations; they also structure the relationships between the characters. Only later, when Sang is adrift in Tokyo, can Yujōng and Yōn-i finally speak to him. In their letters to Sang, which appear at the end of the story, they express their love for him and their desire for his return to Keijō.

In her forced confession, Yōn-i divulges a list of place names—Inch’ōn, S’s office in the N building, a cafe outside of Tongsomun—that outlines the geography of her affairs. It is a remapping of the city, with various sites absorbed into the personal narrative. Sang later adopts an equally subjective method in his own navigation of the city. On the morning of October 24, after suddenly announcing his intention to depart for Tokyo, Sang leaves the room that he has shared with Yōn-i and goes out into the city in despair. He wanders aimlessly through Keijō, pondering where to kill himself: “I considered bridges, substations, the roof of the Hwasin Department Store, and the Kyōngwōn railroad line. And yet—though this enumeration of nouns is truly ridiculous—I still couldn’t laugh about it.”¹⁷² Like Yōn-i’s infidelity, Sang’s contemplation of suicide redefines the

¹⁷¹ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 349–350.

¹⁷² Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 353.

geography of the colonial capital, arranging places by their suitability for a suicide attempt.

Sang's moment of crisis eventually leads to a state of spatiotemporal dislocation. When Sang comes to his senses, he finds himself on the eerie outskirts of the city. "I can't laugh about it. The sun has gone down. I must hurry. I'm in the suburbs, I don't know where. At any rate, I have to get back to the city. The city—where people lift up their unknowable faces in the noisy crowds. The street lights damp in the fog. London, England must be like this—."¹⁷³ Stranded in this uncanny suburban space, outside of the colonial capital, Sang immediately becomes aware of the need to get back to the city. Amidst his thoughts of Keijō, London suddenly arises in Sang's mind, the British imperial capital mirroring the Japanese colonial capital with its "street lights damp in the fog."

V. Cosmopolitan Visions of Shinjuku

"Is London, England like this?" Sang asks himself.¹⁷⁴ He is in Tokyo now. This second imagining of London enforces the connection between the Japanese colonial and imperial capitals, as both cities appear to Sang as double images of London. It is at this moment, wandering through Jinbōchō, that Sang encounters his friend Y, a playwright. Yi Sang

¹⁷³ Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 354.

¹⁷⁴ Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009), 355.

depicts their progression from one café (Empress in Jinbōchō) to another (Nova in Shinjuku), weaving Sang’s thoughts into the dialogue between the two friends:

ADVENTURE IN MANHATTAN 에서 진—아—더—가 커피한잔
맛있게 먹드라. 크림을 타먹으면 小説家仇甫氏가 그랬다—취오줌내가 난다고.
그러나 나는 조—엘 마크리—만큼은 맛있게 먹을 수 있었으니—

MOZART 의 四十一番은 「木星」이다. 나는 몰래 모차르트 의 幻術을 透視
하라고 애를 쓰지만 空腹으로 해야 저속히 어지럽다.

「新宿 가십시다」

「新宿이라?」

「NOVA 에 가십시다」

「가십시다 가십시다」

마담은 루파시카. 노—봐는 에스페간토. 헌팅을 엿인놈의 心臟을 아까부터
벌레가 연해 파먹어 들어간다. 그럼면 詩人芝溶이어! 李箱은 勿論 子爵의 아들도
아무것도 아니겠습니까 그러!

In *Adventure in Manhattan*, Jean Arthur drinks a delicious-looking cup of coffee. I drink it with cream, says the novelist Mr. Kubo—it smells like rat urine. But since I could drink it as deliciously as Joel McCrea—

Mozart’s Symphony No. 41 is “Jupiter.” Stealthily, I take great pains to see through Mozart’s sorcery, but I’m a little dizzy from my empty stomach.

“Let’s go to Shinjuku.”

“Shinjuku?”

“Let’s go to Nova.”

“Let’s go. Let’s go.”

Madam, a rubashka. “Nova,” Esperanto. Worms have been eating
away at the heart of the chap wearing the hunting cap. Well, Poet
Chiyong! Yi Sang is certainly not a viscount’s son, not anything of the
sort!¹⁷⁵

The allusive density of this passage produces a montage of modern culture, as Yi Sang assembles disparate images and references in a kaleidoscopic vision of cosmopolitan urban life. Unfinished thoughts and indistinct impressions converge in the sequence: drinking coffee causes Sang’s mind to range rapidly from *Adventure in Manhattan*, a 1936 American film starring Jean Arthur (1908–1991) and Joel McCrea (1905–1990), to *One Day in the Life of the Author, Mr. Kubo*, the aforementioned 1934 novel by Pak T’aewŏn. Sang addresses the poet Chŏng Chiyong 鄭芝溶 (1902–1950) by name, and the syntax mimics Chŏng’s 1926 poem, “Cafe France.” This stylistic heterogeneity hews closely to Walter Lew’s description of Yi Sang as “someone like a movieteller, whose energetic voice and imagination assimilated resonant fragments from another world projected behind him, alluded and even spoke to the images, or used them as a silent backdrop as he told his own local stories.”¹⁷⁶ By assembling and juxtaposing the

¹⁷⁵ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009): 355–356.

¹⁷⁶ Walter K. Lew, “Jean Cocteau in the Looking Glass,” *Muae* 1 (1995): 142. “Movieteller” is Lew’s translation of *pyŏnsa* (Jp. *benshi* 辯士).

discursive constituents of modernity, Yi Sang places the colonial and imperial capitals in a relationship of double exposure. Yi Sang's cosmopolitan vision makes clear that these cities also exist in relation to the West, as cultural elements are appropriated and recontextualized.

With its rapid development following the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923, Shinjuku had emerged as a transportation hub for the city's western suburbs and a major entertainment district (*sakariba* 盛り場). Shinjuku was the “vortex of modern life” (*seikatsu no uzu* 生活の渦), in the words of Ryūtanji Yū, who depicts scenes of the neighborhood in “Shinjuku Sketch” (*Shinjuku sukecchi* 新宿スケッチ, 1929).¹⁷⁷ Also writing in 1929, Kon Wajirō offers an informative description of Shinjuku's flourishing cafe culture:

新宿の発展と共に最近素晴らしい勢で発展また発展しつゝあるのは
カフェである。

先ず第一のカフェ街は、三越新築場の横丁である。美人女
給無慮三十人を抱擁し、絶えず新聞広告を怠らぬミハトを筆頭に、
ツバメ、ミカサ、メロン、シロクマ、メリウイドウ、ライト、キリ
ン、ユニオン、ダイヤ、グローリー、ハリウツド等々、いづれも新時
代がった名前を競ひ紅緑黄の装飾燈があやをなして入り乱れるとい
ふわけだ。

¹⁷⁷ Alisa Freedman, *Tokyo in Transit: Japanese Culture on the Rails and Road* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011): 117.

第二のカフェ街は、京王電車発着駅の反対側の横丁である。
ダルマ、セントルイス、ツバメ、オガワ、カタツムリ、オロラ等々、
この辺一帯のカフェに限って附近に遊廓がある関係から深夜一時
二時までの営業をも黙許されてゐるかたちだ。

With Shinjuku's recent development, cafes have developed at an
astonishing rate.

The first cafe street is a side street next to the new Mitsukoshi
building. Beginning with Mihato, which boasts tirelessly of its thirty
beautiful waitresses in newspaper advertisements, the cafes with new-era
names vie with each other: Swallow, Mikasa, Melon, Polar Bear, Merry
Widow, Light, Kirin, Union, Diamond, Glory, and Hollywood. Their red,
green, and yellow decorative lights all jumble together.

The second cafe street is a side street across from the Keiō train
station. The cafes are limited to Daruma, Saint Louis, Swallow, Ogawa,
Snail, and Aurora. Due to the red light district nearby, they are allowed to
stay open until one or two o'clock in the morning...¹⁷⁸

This intersection of cultural exoticism and erotic allure defines Shinjuku as a hybrid site
of modern consumption. In the cafe sequence in “Lost Flowers,” Yi Sang expresses
Shinjuku's hybridity not only through an abundance of cultural references, but also
through its linguistic inflections. By rendering the name of the cafe in roman letters

¹⁷⁸ Kon Wajirō, ed., vol. 1 of *Shinpan Dai Tōkyō annai* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 2001): 225.

(“NOVA”) and hangul (“노—봐”), for example, Yi Sang stresses its cultural indeterminacy as a setting. In this space, Y converses in French with the cafe waitress, Namiko, while Sang struggles to interpret what he sees and hears:

NOVA 의 웨—튜레스 나미꼬는 아부라에 라는 재조를가진

노라의따님 코론타이의 누이동생이시다. 美術家나미꼬氏와 戲作家

Y 君은 四次元世界の 테—머를 仏蘭西말로 會話한다.

仏蘭西말의 리듬은 C 嬢의 언더—더워취 講義처럼 曖昧하다.

나는 하도 답답해서 그만 울어버리기로 했다. 눈물이 짹 짹

쏘다진다. 나미꼬가 나를 달랜다.

Namiko, the waitress at Nova, was a daughter of Nora, a sister of Kollontai with a talent for painting. The artist Namiko and the playwright Y spoke in French about the four-dimensional world.

The rhythm of French was vague, like Miss C’s “under the watch” lecture. I was so irritated that I just started crying right there. The tears flowed in large drops. Namiko comforted me.¹⁷⁹

As a waitress and painter, Namiko appears as a liberated woman, embodying the qualities of Henrik Ibsen’s (1828–1906) famous protagonist in *A Doll’s House* (1879) and the Russian revolutionary Alexandra Kollontai (1872–1952). She shares an artistic and intellectual kinship with Y, while Sang’s lack of linguistic knowledge excludes him from

¹⁷⁹ Yi Sang, “Silhwa,” in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009): 359.

the conversation. Sang's disorientation and discomfort closely resembles the sensation that overtakes him while listening to Miss C read from *Anna of the Five Towns*. In that earlier scene, when Miss C encounters the English phrase "under the watch," she sounds it out ("ōndō tō wōch'i") before translating it into Korean ("sigye arae sō"). This linguistic practice discloses the process of doubling that occurs in translation, as words and phrases are deconstructed and reassembled in another form.

While Shinjuku's cultural hybridity confounds Sang in "Lost Flowers," it does not have the same effect on Yi Sang himself. In his essay "Tokyo," he offers a pat summary of the cultural pretension that permeates this part of the city:

新宿는 新宿다운 性格이 있다. 薄氷을 밟는듯한 侈者—우리는 「후란스 야시끼」에서 미리 牛乳를 섞어 가져온 「커피」를 한잔먹고 그리고 十錢식을 치를때 어쩐지 九錢五厘보다 五厘가 더 많은것 같다는 느낌이였다. 「에루테루」—東京市民은 仏蘭西를 HURANSU 라고 쓴다. ERUTERU 는 세계에서 第一 맛있는 戀愛를 한 사람의 이름이이라고 나는 記憶하는데 「에루테루」는 조금도 슬프지않다.

Shinjuku has a Shinjukuesque character. An extravagance like walking on thin ice—at the "French Mansion" we drank a cup of "coffee" that had already been mixed with milk. When we each paid ten sen, somehow the change of five rin seemed greater than the nine sen and five rin.

"Erut'eru"—the citizens of Tokyo write France as HURANSU.

ERUTERU, I recall, had the world's most beautiful love affair, so

“Erut’eru” is not pathetic in the least.¹⁸⁰

Yi Sang’s description of Shinjuku’s “Shinjukesque character” (*Sinjuk’u taun sŏnggyŏk* 新宿다운 性格) slyly implies that the neighborhood’s artificiality is evident in the Chinese characters (“new” and “lodging”) that make up its name.¹⁸¹ By writing “France” in hangul (“후관스”), Chinese characters (“仏蘭西”), and roman letters (“HURANSU”) in the same paragraph, Yi Sang communicates the polymorphic quality of language to the reader. The cafe’s name, which Yi Sang renders in hangul, combines the loan word *Furansu* and the native Japanese word *yashiki* 屋敷 (“mansion”; “estate”) in an awkward juxtaposition. The “citizens of Tokyo” who write “France” as “HURANSU” and “Werther” as “ERUTERU” are ignorant of the European culture to which they aspire—their sophistication is but a sham. Finally, Yi Sang puts “coffee” (*k’ŏp’i*) in quotation marks, indicating that this is not the real stuff. These linguistic provocations signal a deeper dissatisfaction with the discursive foundations of modernity in the metropole. Yi Sang knows enough about France, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and coffee to ridicule the clumsy affectations that he encounters in Shinjuku. Tokyo’s pretensions to high

¹⁸⁰ Yi Sang, “Tonggyŏng,” in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009): 310.

¹⁸¹ Michael D. Shin translates the first sentence of this passage as follows: “Shinjuku has a character like its characters: New Lodging.” See John M. Frankl, “Leveling the Metropole: Awakening and Disillusionment in Yi Sang’s ‘Tokyo,’” *Azalea: Journal of Korean Literature & Culture* 5 (2012): 326n16.

culture appear imitative and inauthentic, inspiring the same kind of disappointment that Keijō's colonial modernity elicits.

VI. "Ennui" and the Colonial Periphery

In contrast to the representations of urban space in "Lost Flowers" and "Tokyo," Yi Sang's essay "Ennui" displaces the cosmopolitan urban writer to a rural village, far away from even the colonial capital. Based on Yi Sang's trip to the town of Sŏngch'ŏn in August 1935, the essay dwells on the stultifying monotony of life in the countryside.¹⁸² Following Jina Kim in analyzing "Ennui" as part of Yi Sang's Tokyo writings, I argue that this radically different rural space reframes the cities of Keijō and Tokyo.¹⁸³ The colonial capital is always present in Yi Sang's representations of Sŏngch'ŏn, filtering his perceptions of the landscape, people, and animals. The incursion of the imperial capital comes at the end of the essay, where Yi Sang indicates the time and place of the essay's composition: "December 19, early morning. Tokyo."¹⁸⁴ These gestures link the disparate

¹⁸²The trip also inspired two other works, "Impressions of a Mountain Village" (Sanch'on yŏjŏng 山村余情, serialized in the *Maeil Shinbo* from September 27 to October 11, 1935) and "The Beautiful Chosŏn Language" (Arŭmdaun Chosŏnmal 아름다운朝鮮말, published in *Chung'ang* in September 1936).

¹⁸³ Jina Kim, "The Circulation of Urban Literary Modernity in Colonial Korea and Taiwan" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, 2006): 166–168.

¹⁸⁴ Yi Sang, "Kwŏnt'ae," in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chŏnjip*, ed. Kwŏn Yŏngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009): 284.

space of the countryside to the colonial and imperial capitals, enabling reflection on modernity and self-consciousness.

The oppressive heat, the meaninglessness of all activity, and the utter absence of stimulation in the countryside induce a deep state of lethargy in the modern urban observer. “It is nothing more than total sensory deprivation,” writes Yi Sang. “Forced to pass my suffocating days amidst the suffocating sky, the suffocating horizon, the suffocating landscape, the suffocating customs, I cannot help but want to writhe about.”¹⁸⁵ Here in the countryside, Yi Sang is separated completely from metropolitan life. There are no newspapers, no buses, no means of communication. Each day is a repetition of the previous day, the rhythms of life intertwined with the seasons. Yi Sang remains acutely conscious of the boredom produced by this repetition, yet nowhere can he find a way outside of it. Instead, observation of the world around him continually leads him back to his condition of ennui. He sees dogs that are too lethargic to bark, fish that swim about aimlessly in a stagnant pool, a cow that chews its cud in a state of rumination (*banch’u* 反芻), and children who play halfheartedly at nonsensical games before quickly tiring of them. Even the green scenery, so different from the city, soon elicits Yi Sang’s disgust: “What is it thinking, being so green? All day long that green color does absolutely nothing. It simply sits there, green, satisfied like an idiot in its greenness.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ Yi Sang, “Kwōnt’ae,” in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009): 277–278.

¹⁸⁶ Yi Sang, “Kwōnt’ae,” in vol. 4 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009): 277–278.

Again and again, the ennui (*kwōnt'ae* 倦怠) of the countryside brings Yi Sang face to face with his excessive self-consciousness (*cha'ūsik kwa'ing* 自意識過剩). As Komori Yōichi argues, while the essay outwardly constitutes an orientalist representation of the countryside from the eyes of the modern urban observer, it also enacts a critical rumination on that observer's self-consciousness.¹⁸⁷ By eliciting the colonial and imperial capitals in his representation of the countryside, Yi Sang introduces profound spatial and temporal instability to the position of the subject.

VII. Conclusion: Reflections on the Imperial Capital

For Yi Sang, Tokyo did not fulfill the promise of an authentic modernity generated by its image as an imperial capital. Instead, as Kim Yunsik argues, “Tokyo was a mirror through which Seoul could be scrutinized, and Seoul too was none other than a mirror through which Tokyo could be assessed and perceived.”¹⁸⁸ These reflections enable new insights into the condition of colonial modernity, revealing the universality of its incompleteness and unevenness. By bringing together the colonial and imperial capitals in moments of double exposure, Yi Sang reveals their fundamental interdependence. The final section of “Lost Flowers” epitomizes this technique, incorporating multiple temporalities, places, and linguistic registers:

¹⁸⁷ Komori Yōichi Jiishiki kajō kara no deguchi: Yi Sang no bungaku ni okeru kotoba no kissaki,” in supplement to *Yi Sang sakuhin shūsei*, ed. Ch'oe Chinsōk (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 2006): 14–15.

¹⁸⁸ Kim Yunsik, *Yi Sang yōngu* (Seoul: Munhak Sasangsa, 1987): 150–151.

十二月二十三日 아침 나는 神保町陋屋속에서 空腹으로 發熱하였다.
發熱로하여 기침하면서 두벌 편지는 받았다.

「저를 진정으로 사랑하시거든 오늘로라도 도라와주십시오. 밤에도
자지않고 저는뉘을 기다리고 있습니다. 兪政」

「이편지 받는대로 곧 도라오세요. 서울에서는 따뜻한 房과 당신의
사랑하는 妍이가 기다리고 있습니다. 妍書」

이날저녁에 부글없는 鄉愁를 꾸짖는것처럼 C 嬢은 나에게 白菊
한송이를 주었느니라. 그렇나 午前一時 新宿駅품에서 비칠거리는 李
箱의웃기에 白菊은 간데없다. 어느 長靴가 짓밟았을까? 그렇나—검정
外奪에 造花를 단, 댐서—한사람. 나는 異國種장아지 올시다. 그러면
당신께서는 또 무슨방석과 걸상의秘密을 그 濃化粧 그날에 지니고
계시나이까?

사람이—秘密하나도 없다는것이 참 財産없는것 보다도 더
가난하외다그러! 나를 좀 보시지요?

On the morning of December 23, in my room at the boarding house in
Jinbōchō, I came down with a fever due to my empty stomach. As I was
coughing up blood, I received two letters.

“If you really love me, please come back today. I am unable to
sleep at night, waiting for you. Yujōng.”

“Please come back as soon as you get this letter. A warm room in
Seoul and your beloved Yōn-i are waiting for you. Yōn-i.”

This evening, Miss C gave me a single white chrysanthemum as if to rebuke me for my futile homesickness. But at one o'clock in the morning on a platform in Shinjuku Station, the white chrysanthemum has disappeared from the lapel of the staggering Yi Sang. Has some boot trampled on it? Yet—a dancer with an artificial flower in a black coat. I'm a foreign puppy. So, what secrets of the cushion and chair are you hiding underneath your thick makeup?

A person without secrets really is poorer than a person without assets! Just look at me.¹⁸⁹

Moving rapidly from Jinbōchō to Keijō to Shinjuku and from morning to evening to night, the scene resists a definitive point of spatial and temporal reference. Voices from Keijō and the past intrude into Tokyo and the present, as letters from Sang's friend Yujōng and girlfriend Yōn-i urge him to return to the colonial capital. Reduced to a weakened, feverish state, Sang discovers that he has lost the flower that Miss C gave him. A mysterious dancer makes a sudden intrusion into Sang's thoughts, her artificial flower doubling the real one that he received from Miss C. Sang again alludes to Chōng Chiyong's "Cafe France" by describing himself as a "foreign puppy," before finally returning to the epigram that begins the story: "a person without secrets is poorer than a person without assets."

¹⁸⁹ Yi Sang, "Silhwa," in vol. 2 of *Yi Sang chōnjip*, ed. Kwōn Yōngmin (Seoul: Woongjin, 2009): 360–361.

Not only do the stylistic and linguistic provocations of Yi Sang's literature reveal the spatiotemporal interconnectedness of Keijō and Tokyo, but they also hint at the global simultaneity engendered by capitalist modernity. In linking the urban themes of Yi Sang's writing to those of Yokomitsu Riichi 横光利一 (1898–1947) and Mao Dun 茅盾 (1896–1981), Sano Masato identifies a “feeling of ‘contemporaneity’” (“*dōjidai*” *no kankaku* 「同時代」の感覚) that stretched across spatial boundaries to unite the major East Asian cities of Tokyo, Keijō, and Shanghai beginning in the second half of the 1920s.¹⁹⁰ This idea suggests that colonial modernity is not wholly reducible to a dichotomous relationship between colony and metropole. Rather, writers like Yi Sang incorporate diverse cultural elements to define a heterogeneous urban space. His eclectic cultural references to Western literature and film and his allusions to cities like London and New York suggest the global nature of modernity, even in spaces under colonial occupation. Simultaneity is based in the uneven experience of capitalist modernity, with the colonial inflections of that modernity extending it from the center to the periphery of the Japanese empire.

In their technical audacity and allusive breadth, Yi Sang's writings bear witness to the author's fluid movement through multiple languages and idioms. Marked by pervasive instability and profound disillusionment, his work offers no facile resolutions to the problems of the modern era. Keijō and Tokyo function not merely as physical places of reference, but also as symbolic fields for scrutinizing colonial modernity's double image. By bringing together the two cities in a single frame, Yi Sang unsettles the material and discursive foundations of Japanese imperialism.

¹⁹⁰ Sano Masato, “1930 nen, Tōkyō, Shanhai, Keijō,” *Hikaku bungaku* 36 (1993): 43.

Chapter Five:

Memory as Cartography: Sata Ineko's *My Map of Tokyo*

Everyone must have a city he can call his own, a mental, primary landscape created from the relationship between the self and the city. My city is something I have created, not something given to me by someone else. Each individual continuously acquires, selects, and assimilates territories, mental landscapes, and urban fragments made up of information, ideas, and events, and from those actions arises a new city. One can create such a place or landscape, even though it may be only a temporary habitat.

Maki Fumihiko

The space in which we live, by which we are drawn outside of ourselves, in which the erosion of our life, our time, and our history takes place, this space that wears us down and eats away at us, is also, in itself, a heterogeneous space.

Michel Foucault

I. Introduction

Like the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, the firebombing of Tokyo (*Tōkyō daikūshū* 東京大空襲) in 1944 and 1945 inflicted catastrophic damage upon the imperial capital.

Fifteen years after the official completion of the post-earthquake reconstruction project, huge swaths of the city were again reduced to rubble. Over 100,000 people perished in the attacks, which reached a climax in the Operation Meetinghouse air raid on the night of March 9-10, 1945. Japan's subsequent surrender marked the demise of not only the Japanese empire, but also the city of Tokyo as an imperial capital.

In her writings from the immediate postwar era, Sata Ineko 佐多稲子 (1904–1998) seeks to recall the ruined city, to map out the spaces destroyed and the people lost in the chaos of war. Recounting a thirty-year period from her arrival in Tokyo at age eleven to the end of World War II, Sata's memoir *My Map of Tokyo* (*Watashi no Tōkyō chizu* 私の東京地図, 1946–1948) is more than a nostalgic evocation of a city irrevocably altered. It is also an attempt to recuperate the city as a repository of affect, and by extension to recover those traces of the self inscribed on the urban topography. In her navigation of Tokyo, Sata traverses the opposing spaces of *omote* and *ura*, and in so doing unsettles the semiotic boundaries that define the imperial capital.

Born to teenage parents in Nagasaki, Sata Ineko endured a childhood of poverty and instability. When she was seven, her mother died of tuberculosis. Obligated to discontinue her schooling after the fifth grade, she moved to Tokyo in 1915 and worked a series of different jobs. She was a waitress at various cafes and restaurants, and a clerk at the prestigious Maruzen bookstore in Nihonbashi. It was also here in the capital that Sata

became active in literature and politics. While working in a cafe in Hongō, she grew familiar with Nakano Shigeharu 中野重治 (1902–1979), Hori Tatsuo 堀辰雄 (1904–1953), and her future husband, Kubokawa Tsurujirō 窪川鶴次郎 (1903–1974). Members of the coterie behind the proletarian literary journal *Roba* 驢馬 (1926–1928), they encouraged her to publish her writings. Sata rose to literary prominence in 1928 with the publication of *From the Caramel Factory* (*Kyarameru kōjō kara* キャラメル工場から), based on her personal experiences as a factory worker. Her membership in the Communist Party and her political activities led to her arrest in 1932 and her imprisonment, for two months, in 1935.

These professional and political experiences shaped Sata's negotiation of the city, and her recollections of Tokyo disclose an intimate, personal vision of the city. Published in May 1949 by Shin Nihon Bungakukai, *My Map of Tokyo* consists of twelve chapters, which first appeared as individual works in nine different journals between March 1946 and May 1948.¹⁹¹ Like Nagai Kafū's *Fair-Weather Geta*, the chapter titles suggest a topographical outline of the city, but Sata sketches a very different urban itinerary. While Kafū's leisurely strolling asserts an aesthetics of urban space against the deleterious effects of Meiji-era modernization, Sata's recollections describe a vision of the city as a collection of quotidian, lived spaces navigated by the individual. Her movement through Tokyo also discloses her socioeconomic marginality, as indicated by the frequent changes in residence and employment. In the opening passage, Sata employs the idea of the map to describe the relationship between urban space and personal identity:

¹⁹¹ Vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 457.

私の東京地図は、三十年の長きに亘って歩いてきた道の順に、心の紙に写されていったものだ。だから歳月とともに街の姿そのものが変わってゆき、私の心の地図は、名所案内の版画のように古めかしい景色であったり、白と黒とに光沢をもたせた芸術写真といったような風景であったりする。

この移りゆく風景の中を私が歩いている。まだ肉のつかぬ細い足で、東西も知らず歩き出している。次第に勝手にわかってきたときは、もう辺りはおもしろくなくて、うつむきがちに惰性の足を引きずって通った。その惰性に堪えかねて、知らぬ道にも踏みいり、袋小路に迷いぬいたこともある。ある時は、人に連れ立たれて、歩調を揃えて気負って歩いた道。

それらの東京の街は、あらかた焼け崩れた。焼けた東京の街に立って、私は私の東京地図を展げる。私の中に染みついてしまった地図は、私自身の姿だ。

My map of Tokyo is imprinted on the surface of my heart, in the order of the streets that I traversed for thirty long years. As time passes and the streets change in appearance, the map in my heart is at times an old-fashioned scene like a woodblock print of famous places, and at other times a landscape like an art photograph in glossy black and white.

I am walking in the middle of this changing landscape. I set out on my still-slender legs, not knowing where I was going. As soon as I found

my way, my surroundings were no longer interesting. With my eyes cast down, I dragged my inert legs, always going back and forth. Unable to endure this inertia, I walked down unfamiliar roads, I lost myself in blind alleys. Sometimes I went together with someone, our paces matching as we walked eagerly along the road.

Almost all of those Tokyo streets have been consumed in flames. Standing on the burned-out streets of Tokyo, I unfurl my map. This map, which has been imprinted indelibly upon me, is the form of my self.¹⁹²

As a temporally conditioned representation of the city, Sata's map is subject to aesthetic variation, encompassing the expressive modes of both the archaic woodblock print and the modern art photograph. Her repetition of "I"—especially the phrase "I unfurl my map" (*watashi wa watashi no chizu o hirogeru* 私は私の地図を展げる)—emphasizes mapping as an act intimately related to the self. Sata's description collapses the distance between the experience and representation of the city. While Kafū expounds on the affective difference in cartographic techniques between the pictorial map from the Edo period and the modern map published by the Land Survey Department, for Sata the map is less a tangible thing than a metaphor for her personal urban imaginary. That is, Sata's map of Tokyo is none other than "the form of my self" (*watashi jishin no sugata* 私自身の姿), its lines drawn by sociality, labor, and memory. This unofficial mapping of urban

¹⁹² Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 7.

space decenters the vision of Tokyo as an imperial capital, revealing the heterogeneity latent within the cityscape.

II. Semiotics of the *Shitamachi*

The map constitutes a demarcation of territory, a distinction between the familiar and the foreign. Its boundaries impose a semiotic order on the physical landscape. Defined by the contours of her everyday life, Sata's map of Tokyo is centered in the *shitamachi*:

東京の街の中で、ここは私の縄張り、と、ひそかにひとりぎめしている所がある。上野山下の界隈で、池之端、仲町、せいぜい黒門町から御徒町まで。

これは、私の感情に生活の情緒が、この辺りで最初に形づくられたからであろう。生れた土地を夜更けに出て来て、その後は古里に古里らしいつながりを失ってしまったものが、せめて、生活の情緒の最初の場所に、その故郷を感じようとしているのである。

There is a place in Tokyo that I take for granted as my domain: Ikenohata and Nakachō in the neighborhood of Ueno Yamashita, from Kuromonchō to Okachimachi at most.

This is probably because it was around here that the sentiments of life were first formed in my emotions. I left behind the place of my birth late in the night, and thereafter I no longer felt a homelike connection to

my hometown. Here at least, in the first place where the sentiments of life took shape, I tried to feel that sense of home.¹⁹³

Sata's affinity for Tokyo's *shitamachi* is premised on her sudden dislocation from her birthplace (*umareta tochi* 生まれた土地), a rupture that deprives her of an emotional attachment to her hometown (*furusato* 古里). This absence inspires Sata to seek out the feeling of home (*kokyō* 故郷) in the *shitamachi*, the first place in her life with which she forms an affective bond. By defining this domain (*nawabari* 縄張り) of lived space, Sata designates an area within the city that harbors the "sentiments of life" (*seikatsu no jōcho* 生活の情緒). The feeling of home is closely linked to the relationship between memory and place, as Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄 (1902–1983) makes plain in his 1933 essay, "Literature of the Lost Home": "Where there is no memory, there is no home. If a person does not possess powerful memories, created from an accumulation of hard and fast images that a hard and fast environment provides, he will not know that sense of well-being which brims over in the word *kokyō*."¹⁹⁴ The destruction of the *shitamachi* hovers over Sata's retrospective imagining of the city, inspiring a sense of ineluctable loss. As Sata acknowledges, the built environment of the *shitamachi* does not endure; only in memory can it be recaptured.

¹⁹³ Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 25.

¹⁹⁴ Kobayashi Hideo, "Literature of the Lost Home," trans. Paul Anderer, in *Literature of the Lost Home: Kobayashi Hideo—Literary Criticism, 1924–1939*, ed. Paul Anderer (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 48.

The *shitamachi* also exists as a space defined against the *yamanote*, an opposition that animates Nagai Kafū's *Fair-Weather Geta* and Tayama Katai's *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake*. This dichotomous relationship can be conceived as a semiotic contestation of the imperial capital, a conflict between different spheres. By traversing these two spaces, Sata calls attention to Tokyo's enduring unevenness and provokes the limits of its image as an imperial capital. Sata's identification with the *shitamachi*, in contrast to Kafū and Katai, places her in a subordinate relationship to the city's dominant discursive space, a system of signs that the cultural semiotician Yuri Lotman terms a semiosphere. The notion of boundary is integral to Lotman's definition of the semiosphere. Not only do boundaries exist on the periphery of the semiosphere, where the signs articulated in the center begin to lose their meaning, but they also run through the semiosphere itself:

In fact, the entire space of the semiosphere is transected by boundaries of different levels, boundaries of different languages and even of texts, and the internal space of each of these sub-semiospheres has its own semiotic "I" which is realized as the relationship of any language, group of texts, separate text to a metastructural space which describes them, always bearing in mind that languages and texts are hierarchically disposed on different levels.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁵ Yuri M. Lotman, *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*, trans. Ann Shukman (London: I.B. Tauris, 1990), 138.

Lotman's description offers a way of understanding Sata Ineko's *shitamachi* as a material space (a physical area extending "from Kuromonchō to Okachimachi at most") and as a semiotic space (signifying the "sentiments of life" and the feeling of home). As a repository of affect, the *shitamachi* provides a temporary refuge against the destabilizing effects of the modern metropolis. While official representations of space sustained the image of Tokyo as an imperial capital, the city could still be experienced and imagined in other ways.

III. The First Floor of Maruzen

As one of the landmarks on Sata's map, the Maruzen bookstore in Nihonbashi operates simultaneously as a place of work and as a signifier of cosmopolitan urban modernity. Located on a main avenue across from the Takashimaya department store, Maruzen served as a central locus for Japanese contact with Western literature and culture. The company was established by Hayashi Yūteki 早矢仕有的 (1837–1901) in Yokohama in 1869, and moved to Tokyo in 1893. The Nihonbashi building where Sata worked was built in 1909. Designed by Sano Riki 佐野利器 (1880–1956), it was the first steel frame structure in Tokyo. Maruzen was much more than just a bookstore; in the space of its two floors, it offered a panoply of Western products to a distinguished clientele.

With its vast array of Western books, the second floor of Maruzen became a renowned intellectual destination. Tayama Katai provides a memorable description in *Thirty Years in Tokyo*: "the surging currents of nineteenth-century European thought,

filtered through the second floor of Maruzen, were washing up on the shores of this solitary, Far Eastern island.”¹⁹⁶ In Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s 芥川龍之介 (1892–1927) “A Fool’s Life” (Aru ahō no isshō 或阿呆の一生, 1927), the foreign books on Maruzen’s second floor provide the narrator with a comforting space apart from his immediate reality, constituting a rarefied world in which he can take temporary refuge.¹⁹⁷ In Akutagawa’s “Cogwheels” (Haguruma 齒車, 1927), however, the books only increase the narrator’s sense of existential dread, as he finds one mysterious connection after another between the books and his own life.¹⁹⁸

While prominent Japanese writers, artists, and intellectuals browsed Western literature and philosophy on the second floor of Maruzen, on the first floor they mingled with Western luxury goods. Sata offers this description of the bookstore:

丸善は二階が洋書、階下が文房具と和書と、洋品部の売場に分れて
いる。私は入口近い正面わきの化粧品の売場にいる。一面鏡張りに
した、高い、広い、香水の飾棚が私のうしろにある。数段ガラスの

¹⁹⁶ Tayama Katai, *Tōkyō no sanjūnen* (Tokyo: Iwanami Bunko, 1981), 168. See also Seiji M. Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 244n33.

¹⁹⁷ Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, “The Life of a Stupid Man,” in *Rashōmon and Seventeen Other Stories*, trans. Jay Rubin (New York: Penguin, 2006), 186–187. See also Seiji M. Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 51–52.

¹⁹⁸ Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, “Spinning Gears,” in *Rashōmon and Seventeen Other Stories*, trans. Jay Rubin (New York: Penguin, 2006), 217–218. See also Seiji M. Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 55–56.

棚に配置した香水の瓶が、鏡に写って二重になって、いろいろな形で光っている。

The second floor of Maruzen sold foreign books and the floor below was divided into sections selling stationery, Japanese books, and foreign luxury goods. I was in the cosmetics department, next to the main entrance. Behind me there were high, long display shelves for perfume backed by a large mirror. The bottles of perfume, arranged on several levels of glass shelving, stood in double image, reflected in the mirror behind them and shimmering in every shape and size.¹⁹⁹

Working as a clerk on the first floor of Maruzen, Sata became a participant in lavish displays of cosmopolitan culture and material consumption. The anarchist Ōsugi Sakae visited the bookstore on one occasion and caught the attention of Sata's friend and co-worker, Satō Kimiko.²⁰⁰ The actor Ichikawa Sadanji 市川左團次 (1880–1940) and his wife “would buy Houbigant perfume and Binaud lotion, as well as Buckingham woven neckties and Edgar's handwoven scarves and linen handkerchiefs.”²⁰¹ Other visitors included the famed author and translator Uchida Roan 内田魯庵 (1868–1929), the author

¹⁹⁹ Sata Ineko, “Elegy,” in *Tokyo Stories: A Literary Stroll*, trans. Lawrence Rogers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 107–108. See also Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 57.

²⁰⁰ Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 55.

²⁰¹ Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 57.

Yoshida Genjirō 吉田絃二郎 (1886–1956), and the author Miyamoto Yuriko 宮本百合子 (1899–1951).²⁰² This confluence of prominent Japanese and Western names establishes the first floor of Maruzen as a key site of encounter, linked in its cultural inflections to Tokyo’s identity as an imperial capital. Sata’s negotiation of the capital’s material and intellectual currents, contingent on her movement from the periphery to the center of the city, bears an affinity with Weng Nao’s vagabonding. Having worked in other, less glamorous settings before coming to Maruzen, Sata feels as though she is keeping a secret from those around her: “Even my companion is unaware that my map of Tokyo extends from Ikenohata in the Ueno district to Nihonbashi, that I have played the quick-change artist, going from waitress in a small traditional restaurant to salesclerk in the prestigious Maruzen.”²⁰³ Sata’s code-switching suggests the possibility of individual mobility within the city, the transgression of spatial and semiotic boundaries. Even as Maruzen projects an air of exclusivity, Sata succeeds in gaining access to the world delineated by its walls and defined by its products.

The traumatic rupture of the Great Kantō Earthquake lays bare the fundamental instability of this space. Maruzen’s Western luxury goods, signifiers of cultural sophistication, are thrown into total disarray:

²⁰² Sata later collaborated with Miyamoto Yuriko, editing a journal entitled *Hataraku fujin* 働く婦人 that was published from 1932 to 1933. See Sachiko Shibata Schierbeck, *Japanese Women Novelists in the 20th Century: 104 Biographies, 1900–1993* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1994), 55.

²⁰³ Sata Ineko, “Elegy,” in *Tokyo Stories: A Literary Stroll*, trans. Lawrence Rogers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 105. See also Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 54.

ガラス窓のある鉄筋コンクリートの建物が大きく震れるとき、ガチャーン、ガチャーン、と瀬戸物を入れた籠か、ビール瓶をいっぱい詰めた箱でも揺すぶるような音がした...奥の高い帽子棚から白い帽子の箱が放り出すように、ぼんぼんと落ちていた。香水の棚から転り落ちる香水の瓶は、まるで小鳥の群が枝から枝へ飛び移るような可憐さで私の視野を横切る。はっと身体の痛むおもいで、石畳の上に叩きつけられる香水の瓶をおもった。

When the ferroconcrete building with its glass windows rocked violently I could hear a loud clatter, like the shaking of crated chinaware or boxes filled with beer bottles...At the back of the store white hatboxes flung themselves in quick succession off their high shelving and crashed to the floor. Bottles of perfume, toppling from their shelves, crossed my line of vision with the grace of a flock of birds flying from one branch to another. I was startled and felt almost physical pain to think of the bottles of perfume being smashed to pieces on the concrete floor.²⁰⁴

Sata's visceral response to the destruction of the perfume bottles reveals the fetishistic nature of the commodity form. Flying through the air like birds, the bottles appear as something different from what they are. They smash to pieces on the concrete floor, evacuating their meaning as commodities. In this moment of crisis, Maruzen ceases to

²⁰⁴ Sata Ineko, "Elegy," in *Tokyo Stories: A Literary Stroll*, trans. Lawrence Rogers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 116. See also Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 63–64.

function as a coherent system of signs. Sata escapes with her coworkers to the street outside, leaving behind the smashed bottles and scattered goods.

IV. Nihonbashi: *Omote* and *Ura*

Moving beyond the immediate confines of Maruzen to the neighborhood of Nihonbashi, the vision of modern grandeur and cultural sophistication becomes far more ambiguous and uneven. Centered on its eponymous bridge that had long stood as a symbol of commerce, Nihonbashi did not fully embrace the modernity of the new era. Instead, old and new cultural elements mingled in its streets and in the spatial practices of its people. This condition can be described with the spatial duality of *omote* 表 (front) and *ura* 裏 (back). With major businesses like Maruzen, Takashimaya, and Mitsukoshi occupying the main avenue, only the backstreets of Nihonbashi still belonged completely to the area's residents. Sata juxtaposes these two sides of the neighborhood:

丸善の裏通りは、日本橋の芸者家町につづいていた。表通りが今はもうただこの土地だけのものではなくて、東京という都会の中心にもなり、通り路にもなっているというようなのを、土地の人たちは諦めたように、この裏通りに自分たちの世界を形づくっているというようなものがあった。この通りにはこの土地の人々のこまかな営みがあった。小さな漬物屋もある。町内の魚屋もある。三味線屋や

下駄屋もある。横町から呉服橋の通りへかけて、格子戸の広い、軒燈には仮名文字で家号を書いた芸者家も並んでいる。

The streets behind the Maruzen led to the Nihonbashi geisha quarters.

People there had resigned themselves to the fact that the main street out in front did not belong solely to their neighborhood now; it was also the heart of the metropolis of Tokyo and had become a thoroughfare. Thus they had created their own world in those backstreets. On these streets took place the most homely enterprises of the area. There were small pickle shops. And there were neighborhood fishmongers. There were samisen makers and geta makers, too. And geisha houses, with wide-lattice doors and eave-hung lanterns on which the house name was written in *kana* script, also lined the side streets all the way to the Gofukubashi intersection.²⁰⁵

Even as Sata's description acknowledges the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization that integrated Nihonbashi's main avenue into the imperial capital, it also valorizes the enduring spatial practices of the neighborhood's residents.

Accommodating the transformation of the *omote*, the residents shifted their everyday lives from the outer space of the main avenue to the inner space of the alleys. The small, humble shops hidden away in the backstreets (*uradōri* 裏通り) stand against the imposing, modern buildings on the main street that drew outsiders to the area.

²⁰⁵ Sata Ineko, "Elegy," in *Tokyo Stories: A Literary Stroll*, trans. Lawrence Rogers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 111. Translation modified. See also Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 59.

To consider the semiotic dimensions of this spatial division, I turn to Maeda Ai's essay, "The Texts of Space, the Space of Texts" (Tekusuto no kūkan kūkan no tekusuto テクストの空間 空間のテキスト):

住いの空間のなかで分離されるオモテ／ウラという二つの領域は、都市空間のレベルでは日常的な世界と非日常的な世界の対立構造に変換される。非日常的な世界は、住いのなかのウラの領域がそうであるように、強力な禁忌、隠微な曖昧さ、無秩序、不浄性、周縁性、体性感覚性といった日常的な世界から分離され、排除された負性のしるしがあつめられて場所である。

The space of living is divided into the two domains of *omote* and *ura*. On the level of urban space, these domains are converted to the opposing structures of the everyday world and the non-everyday world. The non-everyday world, like the *ura* domain of living, is a place of powerful taboo, cryptic ambiguity, disorder, impurity, and liminality. It is a place where negative *signs*, separated and excluded from the everyday world of somatic sensation, are collected.²⁰⁶

Corresponding to the realms of the everyday (*nichijō* 日常) and the non-everyday (*hinichijō* 非日常), respectively, *omote* and *ura* function as opposing signs within the city.

²⁰⁶ Maeda Ai, *Toshi kūkan no naka no bungaku* (Tokyo: Chikuma Gakugei Bunko, 1992), 68. Emphasis in original.

Urban space (*toshi kūkan* 都市空間), like the space of living (*sumai no kūkan* 住まいの空間), is never uniform. Rather, it is divided by boundaries that separate impure, subversive, or otherwise marginal elements. The *omote* was integral to Tokyo's transformation into an imperial capital, while the *ura* existed as its double image. Not only does this characterization apply to the dynamics of Nihonbashi, but it also marks other places on Sata's map. Later, she and her husband take up residence in a *nagaya* in Jūjō. In the wake of the Manchurian Incident in 1931, they conceal their leftist political activities from public view: "The life of *omote* and *ura*, legal and illegal began to mix together around us."²⁰⁷

Commuting to Nihonbashi from her home in Hikifune, Sata experiences the area differently from the patrons of Maruzen and the local residents. She is there not to shop or to live, but to work. This regular, limited contact with Nihonbashi produces a subtle impression of place in her consciousness:

日本橋という橋は、するりと私の心に入り込んでいて、鉄の網に包んだ重厚な細工の飾りランプのあるのなどはしみじみと見たこともない。川に添って垂直に高く建っている川岸のビルディングも、都会を従に流れている川の美しさを形づくっているが、そういう風景そして眺める余裕もない。私は日本橋に生活しているので、ただ急ぎ足に歩く。

²⁰⁷ Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 124.

The bridge for which Nihonbashi is named smoothly insinuated itself into my heart; I never stood there and gazed in wonder at those decorative lamps encased in iron filigree of such imposing workmanship. And the riverside buildings that rose straight and high along the water gave form to the beauty of the river that flowed the length of the city, yet I did not have the time to look upon prospects of this sort either. Since I made my living in Nihonbashi, I merely walked briskly along its streets.²⁰⁸

As the site of her employment, Nihonbashi is so familiar to Sata that she lacks the distance from which to gaze upon it. Sata does not meander along its streets, but instead traverses them methodically to visit the various department stores, comparing their prices to those of Maruzen. Her brisk walking (*isogiashi ni aruku* 急ぎ足に歩く) is entirely at odds with Kafū's strolling, both in tempo and in tenor. Despite working in Nihonbashi for two years, she sees very little of it.

Sata's descriptions of pre-earthquake Nihonbashi recall an ephemeral vision that would soon undergo dramatic change. Writing in 1928, Tayama Katai attests to the area's transformation in his essay, "The Neighborhood of Nihonbashi" (Nihonbashi fukin 日本橋附近): "The neighborhood of Nihonbashi is different now. It no longer looks the way it

²⁰⁸ Sata Ineko, "Elegy," in *Tokyo Stories: A Literary Stroll*, trans. Lawrence Rogers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 110. Translation modified. See also Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 58.

once did. It is difficult to find traces of Meiji, let alone Edo.”²⁰⁹ Katai’s observations suggest a series of inscriptions on the urban topography, resulting in a continual effacement of previous eras.

V. War and the Capital

While Sata’s movement within the city of Tokyo outlines the variegated spaces of the imperial capital, her cartographic imagination also expands to encompass spaces of conflict on the periphery of the Japanese empire. After succumbing to intense pressure and turning away from her leftist political activity, Sata accepted an offer to embark on a wartime tour of East Asia. In the concluding chapter of *My Map of Tokyo*, Sata’s departure for China elides with the destruction of her neighborhood of Totsuka in the firebombing of 1945:

こうして、初夏近いある朝、私は身軽になって羽田から飛行機に乗った。見送りにきていた吉之助の視野から、やがて私の乗っている飛行機が雲の中に姿を消したであろうように、そのようにして、私自身、戦争の渦に自己を没しはじめたのである。

そして、十年私のそこに住んでいた戸塚の町も、四月と五月の激しかった空襲のとき焼けて、丘になった地形をむき出しにした。

²⁰⁹ Tayama Katai, “Nihonbashi fukin,” in *Dai Tōkyō hanjōki: shitamachi hen* (Ōzorasha, 1992), 291.

自分の住んでいた家の焼け跡に立って、赤さびてそれだけ残っている台所の井戸のポンプを見た。

And so, one morning in early summer, I casually boarded a plane at Haneda. Yoshinosuke had come to see me off. Before long, the plane on which I was riding must have disappeared from his view into the clouds. So it was that I first plunged myself into the vortex of war.

Even the town of Totsuka, where I had lived for ten years, burned in the intense bombing of April and May. Reduced to a hill, it lay bare the terrain. Standing in the burned-out remains of the house where I had lived, I gazed upon the rusted handle of the kitchen water pump, the only thing that remained.²¹⁰

The sudden transition from Sata's departure for China to the destruction of Tokyo collapses the distance between the periphery and the center of the Japanese empire. The violence that consumes the imperial capital is implicitly linked to the "vortex of war" (*sensō no uzu* 戦争の渦) into which Sata plunges. With the built environment of Totsuka reduced to rubble, the topographical features of the area finally come into focus. This destruction evacuates the neighborhood of its physical traces; only in memory can this lived space be recovered.

²¹⁰ Sata Ineko, *Watashi no Tōkyō chizu*, in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū*, ed. Ōe Kenzaburō et al. (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 153.

VI. Conclusion

In an afterward written thirty years after the publication of *My Map of Tokyo*, Sata Ineko acknowledges that her retracing of the city in memory was born out of a desire to denounce her complicity in the war effort. This impulse toward critical self-examination led her back into the spaces of the imperial capital:

自分は何であったのか、それを過去から探ろうという意図であったが、自分の歩いた道そのもの、つまり戦禍で失われた東京の街も書き残したい、また其の歳月の間に関わった人々をも、とひろがった。それによって、「私の東京地図」は、自分を見つめるという、はじめの主題を稀薄したかとおもう。

So what was I? It was my intention to search for the answer in the past. I wanted to write down the streets of Tokyo that I had walked, the neighborhoods that had been lost to the ravages of war. It broadened to include the people from those times. Consequently, I think that in *My Map of Tokyo* I neglected the first objective of looking for my self.²¹¹

Sata's search for her self (*jibun* 自分) in the city plays out over time and space, made up of the physical locations and social connections that shaped her experience of Tokyo. Her writing of the imperial capital reflects the ambiguity and marginality of her position

²¹¹ Sata Ineko, "Toki to hito to watashi no koto 4: senchichū to baisen no ato," in vol. 4 of *Sata Ineko zenshū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1978), 452.

within it. Traversing the boundaries of *shitamachi* and *yamanote*, *omote* and *ura*, Sata challenges the semiotic oppositions that defined the city as an imperial capital. While Sata's life in Tokyo may have been characterized by instability, her itinerary produces a map of the city that endures as a stable, written document.

Sata's recollections of Tokyo extend the idea of the city beyond its image as an imperial capital. Tokyo appears as a multivalent collection of places, a system of signs that elicits different sensations and emotions from each individual that moves through its streets. Tracing Sata's map of the city reveals the confluence of lived space and personal memory, a vision that also finds expression in the words of Gaston Bachelard: "Space that has been seized upon by the imagination cannot remain indifferent space subject to the measures and estimates of the surveyor. It has been lived in, not in its positivity, but with all the partiality of the imagination."²¹²

²¹² Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), xxxvi.

Conclusion:

Tokyo Reimagined

In a short story by Dazai Osamu 太宰治 (1909–1948) entitled “Eight Scenes of Tokyo” (Tōkyō hakkei 東京八景, 1940), the protagonist recalls his first purchase of a Tokyo city map after his arrival in the capital ten years before. For some time he refrained from buying the map, fearing that it would betray his rural origins. Even after he makes the purchase, he conceals the map in his pocket as he walks through the streets of the city. But when he returns to his boarding house, he finally unfurls his map of Tokyo: “Red, green, yellow—like a lovely painting. I held my breath and gazed at it. The Sumida River. Asakusa. Ushigome. Akasaka. It was all there. And I could get to any of these places in no time at all, whenever I wanted. I felt as if I were beholding a miracle.”²¹³ In the privacy of his room, the capital opens up before the young man’s eyes. His mind thrills to the map’s colors and place names as he perceives the immediacy of the city’s attractions.

²¹³ Dazai Osamu, “Eight Scenes from Tokyo,” trans. Ralph F. McCarthy, in *Self Portraits* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1991), 149–150.

The idea of the map as a painting suggests an aesthetic conception of urban space, recalling Nagai Kafū's use of the Kaei-era pictorial map as a guide to the Taishō-era capital. The map also enables the story's protagonist to gaze upon Tokyo in its entirety, offering the illusion of visual mastery. This moment of exhilaration displays the power of Tokyo as a unified system of signs, as well as its potential as a space of the imagination.

Mapping out Tokyo in the works of Nagai Kafū, Tayama Katai, Weng Nao, Yi Sang, and Sata Ineko, this study has revealed different ways of reading and imagining the city. I have argued that these texts disturb a singular vision of Tokyo as an imperial capital, seizing upon moments of cosmopolitan possibility within the city's cultural heterogeneity and spatiotemporal unevenness. The condition of double exposure that characterized Tokyo as an imperial capital meant that multiple images of the city blurred and overlapped, producing variegated impressions of the urban landscape. Through attention to the spatial and semiotic boundaries that defined the Japanese capital and empire, I have demonstrated how authors sought to reframe the city, bringing into focus elements that had been excluded from view.

The texts considered in this dissertation offer glimpses of the imperial capital at different moments in its history. This chronology encompasses a series of transformations: the city's modernization during the Meiji period; its destruction in the Great Kantō Earthquake; its reconstruction in the years that followed; and its devastation once more in the firebombing of World War II. Viewed in this manner, the city appears as a palimpsest, with successive inscriptions adding new meanings even as traces of previous eras still linger.

In my analysis, I have engaged Henri Lefebvre’s tripartite schema of “spatial practice” (*pratique spatiale*), “representations of space” (*représentations de l’espace*), and “spaces of representation” (*espaces de représentation*) to describe the production and contestation of urban space.²¹⁴ These three processes, Lefebvre stresses, operate in continuous dialectical engagement. Representations of space such as the 1888 Tokyo Municipal Improvement Act and the Imperial Capital Reconstruction Board’s plan sought to remake Tokyo as a modern, imperial capital. New spatial practices emerged from these transformations, such as the patterns of daily life outlined by white-collar employment, suburbanization, and the city’s expanded rail network. The spaces of representation delineated by Nagai Kafū’s strolling (*sansaku* 散策; *sanpo* 三步) in the *shitamachi* and Weng Nao’s vagabonding (*rōnin* 浪人) in Kōenji, meanwhile, make symbolic use of the city’s existing topography to reimagine the metropolis. Engaging with the city through sensation, sensibility, and personal memory, this urban literature of the Taishō and early Shōwa periods discloses new ways of seeing the city.

Frequently, I have used the terms “short story,” “essay,” and “memoir” to describe these works, but such categorization belies the stylistic ambiguity that many of these texts possess. Yi Sang’s writings in particular unsettle the boundaries of genre, his spatial and textual negotiations enabling reflection on the Japanese imperial and colonial capitals. Two of the works that I have considered were termed “accounts” (or “records”) by their authors: Nagai Kafū’s *An Account of Strolls in Tokyo* (*Tōkyō sansakuki* 東京散策記) and Tayama Katai’s *Record of the Tokyo Earthquake* (*Tōkyō shinsaiki* 東京震災

²¹⁴ Henri Lefebvre, *La production de l’espace*, 4th ed. (Paris: Anthropos, 2000): 48–49. See also Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 38–39.

記). Reportage is integral to the literature of this era, demonstrating a close engagement with urbanization's transformation of everyday life. This characteristic makes it possible to connect literature to other forms of expression associated with the modern city, such as art, architecture, theater, music, photography, and film.²¹⁵

I have argued that Tokyo as an imperial capital was defined by a condition of double exposure, produced by the convergence of two trajectories: the imperial West and the colonial East. This definition, however, does not address the significant differences internal to these spaces. More attention is needed to address cultural production in the major Western metropolises, including New York, London, Paris, and Berlin. Further research is also required to trace the inflections of colonial modernity in cities such as Keijō, Taipei, Dalian, and Shanghai. As my study has demonstrated, the image of Tokyo sustained on the colonial periphery was vital to its identity as an imperial capital. Authors such as Yi Sang and Weng Nao wrote Keijō and Taipei into their descriptions of Tokyo, while Nagai Kafū drew upon his experiences abroad in the United States and France to develop his aesthetics of urban space.

In my emphasis on Tokyo as a modern imperial capital, there is also room for greater attention to modernism and cosmopolitanism. As transnational movements that often engaged closely with urban life, modernism and cosmopolitanism present ways of thinking comparatively about capitalist modernity. How did regional and global networks contribute to the spread of new ideas, and how did urban conditions enable the contemporaneous emergence of like-minded groups and movements? I think, for example, of the interplay between Yi Sang's reading of Japanese literary journals and his work on

²¹⁵ Unno Hiroshi, *Modan toshi Tōkyō: Nihon no senkyūhyakunijūnendai* (Tokyo: Chūō Bunko, 1988), 11.

the journal *Shiwa sosōl* in Keijō. This area of study will require more sustained engagement with journals, newspapers, and other publications. The roles of imperialism and colonialism in these processes will also require further elucidation. Urban space offers a means of grappling with these historical and theoretical issues in a way that acknowledges the impact of nationalism while retaining a focus on cultural heterogeneity and hybridity.

As I note in the final chapter of my dissertation, the demise of Tokyo as an imperial capital coincided with the dissolution of the Japanese empire. The latter phenomenon had broad spatial, social, and political repercussions for East Asia, as lands that had been absorbed into the Japanese empire were suddenly cut off from the metropole and rapidly enfolded into new boundaries. Tokyo, in turn, became a site of new contestations in the postwar era, a symbol of a redefined national identity and economic resurgence, as well as a space of political protest. Through American occupation from 1945 to 1952, demonstrations against the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Joint Security Treaty in 1960, the Tokyo Olympics in 1964, and the student takeover of universities in 1968, the city was continually reshaped and reimagined. These transformations reveal the enduring relevance of urban space as grounds for critical inquiry, enabling reflection on capitalist modernity and everyday life.

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