Double Fictions and Double Visions of Japanese Modernity

by

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Abstract

At roughly the same historical conjuncture when it began to be articulated as a concept marking a return of the repressed within the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Otto Rank, the doppelganger motif became the subject of a veritable explosion of literary attention in 1920s Japan. Several authors – including Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Edogawa Rampo, Tanizaki Jun’ichirô, and others – repeatedly deployed the doppelganger motif in their fictions against the backdrop of rapid urbanization, imperial expansion, and the restructuring of all aspects of everyday life by a burgeoning commodity culture. Interestingly, as if enacting the very compulsion to repeat embodied by the doppelganger on a historical register as well, a repetition of this proliferation of doppelganger images is apparent in the contemporary conjuncture, in the works of authors like Abe Kôbô, Murakami Haruki, or Shimada Masahiko, as well as in the films of Tsukamoto Shinya or Kurosawa Kiyoshi.

To date, much of the previous scholarship on the figure of the doppelganger tends to be preoccupied with the attempt to locate its origins, whether in mythic or psychical terms. In contrast to this concern with fixing the figure to an imagined essence, in my dissertation, I instead place emphasis on the doppelganger’s enactment of repetition itself through an examination at the figure through the prism of the problem of genre, in terms of how it has come to be discursively constituted as a genre itself, as well as its embodiment of the very logic of genre in its play on the positions of identity and difference. By historicizing its formation as a genre, it becomes possible to productively situate not only the
proliferation of images of the doppelganger in 1920s Japan but also its repetitions, resignifications, and critical articulations in the present within the shifting constellation of relations among various discourses and practices that organize colonial and global modernity – language and visuality, the space of empire and the construction of ethno-racial identities, libidinal and material economies – that structure (yet are nevertheless exceeded by) its constitution as a concept.
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Author’s Note

Throughout this dissertation, all Japanese names are given with the surname preceding their first name, unless the author in question resides and publishes primarily outside of Japan in a language other than Japanese, in line with the established convention in the field. Also, following Japanese convention, authors are referred to either by surname (e.g., Abe) or given pen name (e.g., Rampo), depending on the name for which they are most recognized. Where translations of the literary materials are available, I have cited those; all other translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. Transliteration follows the revised Hepburn Romanization system.
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INTRODUCTION

Defining the Doppelganger

As a figure that occupies the lacuna between self and other, the doppelganger marks a sense of crisis, an anxiety mired in tensions and contradictions that manifest when the discursive boundaries of the structures of modernity are no longer tenable. Indeed, what is most noteworthy about the doppelganger (in its myriad manifestations) is the fundamental ambiguity and destabilizing properties of its characteristics. It is simultaneously subject and object; it is an enactment of the mirror stage of subject formation on one hand, and at the same time it is the return of the repressed, the materialization of the excess that the limits of the modern subject cannot contain. It is around this figure of the doppelganger and the critical questions and problems it foregrounds for those films and fictions of Japanese modernity informed by it that this dissertation is organized. Its task is to take the doppelganger’s appearances in Japanese films and fictions as a point of departure, or to borrow the words of Gilles Deleuze, a “practice of concepts” that enables the possibility of rendering visible its relations with a range of different problems and issues in the history of Japanese modernity, and through this, open a space with the possibility of thinking, of telling different narratives about them.¹

What exactly is the doppelganger? The study of the doppelganger as a literary motif is itself of course not unprecedented.² Yet despite these precedents, defining the doppelganger beyond a rough

¹ Deleuze uses the phrase at the end of Cinema 2: The Time-Image, in reference to the role of philosophical inquiry in the study of cinema. He writes, “philosophical theory is itself a practice, just as much as its object. It is no more abstract than its object. It is a practice of concepts and must be judged in the light of other practices with which it interferes. A theory of cinema is not ‘about’ cinema, but about the concepts that cinema gives rise to and which are themselves related to other concepts corresponding to other practices, the practice of concepts in general having no privilege over others, any more than one object has over others” (Deleuze 1989: 268). Needless to say, in this dissertation, rather than cinema, it is the concepts and practices that the doppelganger gives rise that will be the object of investigation.

² For a thorough review of the most often cited textual appearances of the doppelganger in both literature and film, along with the critical studies and the various definitions and approaches beyond the examples I note, see Fonseca (2006). Also, in Japanese, two recent works have also attempted a meta-analysis of existing studies on the motif in Japanese literature to produce a cataloguing of the Japanese literary texts commonly referenced in connection with the doppelganger, namely Mizuno (2002) and Nishii (2006).
description of its characteristics has been a notoriously difficult, if not ultimately unproductive, endeavor. Christopher Hallam, for one, has lamented the embarrassing vagueness of the concept, writing that “in the broadest sense of the idea, ‘double’ can mean almost any dual, and in some cases even multiple, structure in a text” (Hallam 1981: 5). The earliest known use of the word “Doppelgänger” (literally, double-goer) is typically credited to Jean-Paul Richter (1763-1825) with his novel Siebenkäs (1796-1797). Whether the term is his own coinage or not is uncertain, but what is telling is that the novel glosses the term in a footnote that defines Doppelgänger with the words ‘so people who see themselves are called’ [So heissen Leute, die sich selbst sehen], suggesting that at that moment, the concept was potentially unfamiliar to readers so as to require explanation (Richter 1959: 242). Since then however, this motif of two seemingly separate (and typically oppositional) yet nevertheless otherwise identically appearing persons has been taken up by countless other writers, among which the most often referenced are the German Romantic authors Adelbert von Chamisso (1781-1838) and E.T.A. Hoffman (1776-1822) along with writers associated with the Gothic tradition such as Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). More recently, the doppelganger has made appearances in more contemporary work as well, including (but certainly not limited to) such texts as Paul Auster’s The New York Trilogy (1987) or Chuck Palahniuk’s Fight Club (1996). Given these multiple appearances and the different permutations of the motif each one produces, the seeming vagueness of the concept comes with little surprise. Tony Fonseca summarizes the point well when writes: “Perhaps the doppelgänger was destined to vagueness given the variety of Romantic authors, German, Russian and American, who took Jean Paul’s simple phrase and created their own versions…” The German Romantics began a trend that continues even today, as the

3 Although both Dmitris Vardoulakis (2004) and John Herdman (1991) assert that it is in fact Jean-Paul Richter’s coinage, there nonetheless remains some doubt as to whether the term’s glossing in the novel necessarily implies coinage or merely reference to an extant (if obscure) myth. Regardless, the question itself is illustrative of the difficulty to pin down the concept’s origins. Vardoulakis does note an interesting point: in the earliest written appearances of the word in Jean Paul Richter’s work, it was originally spelled as Doppeltgânger, with the “t” separating the two constitutive words (i.e., doppel – double and ganger – goer/walker), suggesting that the combined word had yet to be naturalized. See Vardoulakis (2004) for a detailed discussion of this point and analysis of Jean Paul Richter’s novel in terms of its critique of transcendental subjectivity.

4 I have reverted to the German spelling here as it is the word itself that is under discussion. Elsewhere, when referring to the broader concept (unless in quotation), I will make use of the accepted anglicized form ‘doppelganger’ without the capitalization or umlaut.
imaginative nature of the doppelgänger lends itself to science fiction, horror, and fantasy” (Fonseca 2006: 189-90).

Further to this, beyond its literary manifestation, there are many other discourses and phenomena that the figure of the doppelganger arguably imbricates. The expansive and meticulously documented cataloguing of various manifestations of such related tropes such as twins and doubles, mannequins and modeling, portraiture and photography in all manner of discourses ranging from literature to scientific treatises to advertising copy that Hillel Schwartz performs in his book The Culture of the Copy (1996) is a testament to this point. Indeed, Schwartz himself is seemingly unable to put back together the various fragments that emerge out of his work. He concludes with even more examples of “the culture of copying” and with a rather polemical call for a renewed authenticity, ending with the words:

Telling true spirit from false has never been simple. Our culture of the copy further discourages discernment, unless it be a kind of doubling back. The more we attempt to tell things apart, the more we end up defending our skills at replication. The more intrepid our assertions of individual presence, the more makeshift seem our identities, the less retrievable our origins. There may come a point of no return. (Schwartz 1996: 378)

Schwartz’s words aside, there has certainly been no lack in efforts to pin down the double. As the existence of the several previous studies of the motif attest to, numerous attempts have been made to discern the doppelganger, to seek the origins of its appearances. Tzvetan Todorov, for example, briefly touched upon the motif in his study of the genre of the fantastic (Todorov 1975). A more focused attention is brought to bear on the motif in Ralph Tymms’ Doubles in Literary Psychology (1949) and Robert Rogers’ A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature (1970), both of which, as their titles indicate, take on a decidedly psychoanalytic bent. Rogers sees in the doppelganger the embodiment of “essentially intrapsychic or endopsychic” struggles (Rogers 1970: 4); Tymms on the other hand describes the figure as “a figment of the mind, to which one attributes the promptings of the unconscious self, now dissociated from the conscious personality” (Tymms 1949: 97). More famously, Sigmund Freud identifies
the figure of the doppelganger as an emblematic figure for his concept of “the uncanny” (unheimlich – literally, un-homelike) that sense of terror produced when something familiar but has since been repressed returns and is encountered as alien, thus rendering it at once familiar and not, and hence un-homelike. In other words, it is a sense that is brought about when that “which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” subsequently returns to disturb the present (Freud 2000c: 243). For Freud, not only is the doppelganger a literal repetition of the image of the ego, but it is also a return and repetition of childhood narcissism, “a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people” (Freud 2000c: 236).

Indeed the impact of psychoanalysis on most understandings of the doppelganger motif is difficult to overstate, with Christopher Hallam even going so far as to assert that “any Double figure in prose fiction which can be explained by anthropology (including folklore), spurious scientific theories, philosophy, or some other system, can in most cases be understood more fully, more clearly, and, in crucial ways, more convincingly by depth psychology” (Hallam 1981: 12-13). Much of these patterns in discussions of the doppelganger can be traced back to Otto Rank’s early psychoanalytic attempt to apprehend the double in his seminal book *Der Doppelgänger* (The Double, 1925, trans. 1971), which is widely regarded as the pioneering examination of the figure, and whom no less than Sigmund Freud references in his own seminal essay on the uncanny. In several ways, *Der Doppelgänger* set the stage for the modes of analysis taken on by subsequent critics. Rank explains the purpose of his project as follows:

> We must arrive at the meaning of these fundamental problems... by tracing the related forms of the [doppelganger] motif in literary models and parallels and by comparing these forms with the corresponding folkloric, ethnographic, and mythical traditions. We should then be able to see clearly how all these motifs, originating in primitive man [sic] and his [sic] concepts, attain to

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5 Rank’s book was translated into English by Harry Tucker, Jr. as *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* in 1971. Although the book upon which this translation was based was not published until 1925, earlier versions of his its chapters were disseminated as early as 1914. Indeed, Sigmund Freud references Rank in his own discussion of the doppelganger figure in “The Uncanny” (1919). For reference, the publication history of *Der Doppelgänger* appears in the preface of the English translation (Rank 1971: vii-viii).
literary form through those writers who are disposed to accept them… In the last analysis, they can be traced back to the essential problem of the ego. (Rank 1971: 7)  

As the above passage suggests, in contrast to his antecedents, strictly speaking Rank is not doing a literary analysis of the doppelganger. Although he does take up literary texts and authors (Oscar Wilde and Edgar Allan Poe are featured) as his points of departure for his study, the psychoanalytic frame he deploys is unconcerned with questions of literature per se. Instead, the doppelgangers that appear in the literary texts that he examines are in large part utilized as evidence of his assertion that the authors he discusses were subject to “psychic disturbances or neurological and mental illnesses and during their lifetime they demonstrated a marked eccentricity in behavior” (Rank 1971: 35).

Rank does not end his discussion on this point, however. He further builds upon this by delving into representations of the doppelganger in myth and folklore so as to show “the common psychological basis of the superstitious and artistic representations of these impulses” (Rank 1971: 48). In his analysis, Rank traces the doppelganger back to what he believes to be its earlier manifestations in so-called “primitive” culture as a point of contrast to its ostensibly modern psychological form, suggesting that the latter (and in particular its association with foretelling imminent death) is an inversion of an earlier understanding of the double as representing the immortal soul, a ward against death (Rank 1971: 66).

Through this move, what Rank does is to extend the understanding of the doppelganger as a manifestation of a return of the repressed to give it a historical dimension as well; just as the doppelganger’s uncanny effect is the product of the familiar returning in alien form, its modern form is the primitive double turned alien and threatening.

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While the use of the gendered terms here may very well be nothing more than a reflection of the longstanding sexist tendency to use the male pronoun as an unmarked default signifier that was still prevalent at the time of the book’s publication, it nonetheless also (perhaps unconsciously) highlights the specifically gendered character of the psychoanalytic conception of the doppelganger. The authors most often cited as pioneers in the deployment of the motif – for example, Edgar Allan Poe, E. T. A. Hoffman, or Robert Louis Stevenson – are invariably male, as are the characters who encounter their doubles in their fiction. What this hints at are the processes of abjection through which the psychoanalytic subject (and with it, the doppelganger) is formed. As critics such as Anne McClintock and Mary Ann Doane have shown, this process on the one hand involves the constitutive exclusion of colonized subjects that I discuss below, as well as its inevitable intersection with the axis of gender (McClintock 1995: 71-74; Doane 1991: 211). As a consequence, the female doppelganger is either made invisible or reduced to an exception to the rule.
What ties together these two approaches to the doppelganger – anthropological and psychoanalytic – in Rank and his antecedents is a common desire to fix, to distill, to literally de-fine (to set finite boundaries to) the doppelganger into an ahistorical essence that I believe betrays its radically ambiguous and destabilizing potential. On one hand, the anthropological desire is to locate its mythic or folkloric origins; on the other hand, the psychoanalytic desire is to locate its psychic origins. Yet, there is a certain irony to the move that Rank makes here, given how the figure of the doppelganger precisely foregrounds the very problem of privileging origins and originality through the mechanism of doubling and repetition; in making the “copy” virtually indistinguishable from the “original,” it challenges the very notion of originality.

More fundamentally, attempting to locate the origins of the doppelganger motif is an ultimately unproductive endeavor; retroactively tracing origins and lineages is a move mired in problems, of which a particularly questionable one is the assumption of the a priori existence of a category of the doppelganger that is both stable and transhistorical, outside of its literary representations. In other words, such an approach in search of origins cannot but entail, in the words of Michel Foucault “an attempt to capture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities, because this search assumes the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession” (Foucault 1977: 142). But if the incessant attempts at defining the doppelganger noted above are any indication, such a presupposition is clearly untenable in that they illustrate precisely how the figure of the doppelganger is under discursive contestation, regularly defined and redefined yet at once resisting and exceeding attempts at its definition.

Among the preceding studies of the doppelganger, C.F. Keppler’s project of cataloguing the myriad forms taken by the figure is one that is notably illustrative of this point. Keppler is correct to highlight the issues with simply presupposing the doppelganger as a coherent and singular category a priori. In his formulation: “I came to realize that I did not really know what I meant by ‘Double,’ but had simply always assumed I knew; that as a result I was sliding about haphazardly between notions that were
far from identical with one another, and that the whole edifice of my argument was being erected on such a sandy and shifting foundation” (Keppler 1972: ix). More to the point, when Keppler attempts to pin down the double, what he produces is a typology of the doppelganger, documenting the myriad forms it has taken to show a multiplicity of variations, which range from such versions as twin brother, vision of horror, savior, and others. In the end though, the fact that all that binds these variations together is a single name, the arguably even more vague category of “the second self,” is certainly indicative of the problem (Keppler 1972: 6-10).

Emergence of a Genre

I will not attempt to define the doppelganger in this dissertation. While recognizing the risks entailed in this move, ultimately, such an attempt cannot but become an exercise in arbitrarily identifying a singular essence to the doppelganger, or alternatively, an ur-text to the figure against which subsequent manifestations are to be read in the reductive terms of convergence or divergence, inclusion in or exclusion to the boundaries of the concept. Certainly, one could very well object and point to the aforementioned Siebenkäs of Jean-Paul Richter’s as an obvious point of origin. Yet, it is interesting that in much of the preceding work on the figure of the doppelganger, aside from being noted as the text in which the term “doppelganger” first came to be coined, it is nevertheless largely ignored; rarely is it taken up as a central object of attention. Furthermore, despite having named the concept by the late 18th century, it is rather striking that it is not until nearly a hundred years later that the doppelganger takes off as a popular literary motif.

What this suggests is that while the naming of the “doppelganger” can certainly be tracked back to Jean Paul Richter, whether one can place all that much significance on this point is questionable. As such, to identify it as a singular origin or Ur-text for the motif is arguably suspect. It would stretch credibility to attribute its reappearance in the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries to little more than literary influence given that not only is there a considerable historical gap (not to mention
significant material and social transformations during that gap), but also, it is taken up by a range of authors in a wide variety of forms, as C.F Keppler’s typology attests. On the contrary, an argument can be made that it is not in its origins, but in its subsequent recurrences that the figure of the doppelganger becomes meaningful, for only in its repetition does the doppelganger emerge as a motif that signifies; only in its repetition is the condition of possibility for individual texts to be recognized as being in relation to a larger set of texts whose members bear resemblance with one another produced.

Insofar as one accepts the premise that there is a perceived relation among the various texts in which the motif appears, in lieu of defining the doppelganger, I believe it can be more productively apprehended as constituting a discursive genre. By genre here, I do not mean static classificatory categories based on common intrinsic aesthetic traits that can be logically identified and demarcated, but rather, I follow Ralph Cohen un understanding genres as “open systems… groupings of texts by critics to fulfill certain ends” (Cohen 1986: 210). Key to Cohen’s understanding of genre is the recognition that they are discursive processes that function to govern the limits and possibilities of meaning production in texts. They are, in this sense, not natural systems but social institutions that are in history. They are constantly under negotiation not only as texts identified as members in a given genre accrue, but moreover, through the very performance of definition and classification. As Cohen argues:

[Classifications] are historical assumptions constructed by authors, audiences, and critics in order to serve communicative and aesthetic purposes. Such groupings are always in terms of distinctions and interrelations, and they form a system or community of genres. The purposes they serve are social and aesthetic. Groupings arise at particular historical moments, and as they include more and more members, they are subject to repeated redefinitions or abandonment. (Cohen 1986: 210)

Echoes of Cohen’s articulation of the process of generic emergence and reproduction in the discourses surrounding the figure of the doppelganger are certainly discernable, particularly in the repeating attempts at redefinition arising from the shifts in the boundaries of the body of work that inevitably ensue as new texts are added and effect changes in how one text relates to another touched upon above. Of course, this is not an issue restricted solely to the discourse on the doppelganger. Rather, it implicates
any form of critical practice based on a drive towards retroactively produced categorical definitions and
taxonomies. In effect, in its resistance to easy classification, what the particular features associated with
the figure of the doppelganger illustrate is how ahistorical acts of defining are suspect from the start.
Consequently, the challenge it brings to attention is to examine and account for the underpinnings of
these very definitions and acts generic classification.

With the doppelganger, the task therefore is not simply the rejection of the perceived generic
affiliation of texts that feature the doppelganger motif, but rather to approach the problem of the
doppelganger from a historical frame of analysis. By this, what is entailed is not the construction of a
narrative of the lineage and development of the doppelganger motif. Instead, it is to account for the
historicity of representations of the doppelganger, of the imagination of the doppelganger as such. The
“origins” of the doppelganger, in this sense, are not to be located in the depths of myth or the psyche,
but precisely in the institutions and practices through which a production of knowledge about the
doppelganger is enacted, which necessarily includes my own work here.7

Relevant here is Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s critique of psychoanalysis in The Anti-Oedipus
(1983). Discussing in detail Deleuze and Guattari’s complex and far-reaching discussion is beyond the
scope of this dissertation, but what is particularly noteworthy to the matter of approaching the
doppelganger motif in literary and cultural production is their critique of the reduction of desiring
production and the unconscious to the Oedipal structure in Freudian psychoanalysis, arguing the
Oedipal construction of the psyche cannot be taken as self-evident, but rather recognized to be an
ideologically produced system. In their words: “Only in appearance is Oedipus a beginning, either as a
historical or prehistorical origin, or as a structural foundation. In reality it is a completely ideological
beginning, for the sake of ideology. Oedipus is always and solely an aggregate of destination fabricated to
meet the requirements of an aggregate of departure constituted by a social formation” (Deleuze and
Guattari 1983: 101). For Deleuze and Guattari, the ideology and social formation to which Oedipus and

7 Needless to say, my arguments here derive much inspiration from the work of Michel Foucault,
especially his The Order of Things (1970) and An Archaeology of Knowledge (1972).
psychoanalysis are complicit is the repressive side of modern capitalism. “Oedipus is this displaced or internalized limit where desire lets itself be caught. The Oedipal triangle is the personal and private territoriality that corresponds to all of capitalism’s efforts at social reterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 266). In other words, psychoanalysis does not liberate or attempt to understand the repressed unconscious as it is conventionally viewed, but rather it sets up the boundaries of the unconscious in correspondence with the demands of a modern capitalist social formation.

As far as the specific figure of the doppelganger is concerned, Tzvetan Todorov has raised a similar point (even if only obliquely) in his consideration of the genre of “the fantastic.” Pointing to Rank’s study of the doppelganger motif as a key example (along with other motifs such as vampires and the devil), he suggests that “psychoanalysis has replaced (and thereby made useless) the literature of the fantastic” (Todorov 1975: 160). Here, what Todorov is emphasizing is a coincidence in the themes of the literary fantastic (in which he includes fictions of the doppelganger) and psychoanalytic objects of analysis, indeed going so far as to suggest that the function of the literary fantastic and psychoanalysis – which is, for Todorov, the opening up of a discursive space to articulate social taboos – are largely identical.

Commenting on Todorov’s assertion, Andrew J. Webber points out the continued proliferation of literary representations of the doppelganger since the coming into being of psychoanalysis: He writes: “theory and practice are independent in the case of the Doppelgänger. In fact, the literary double is a stubborn revenant and duly returns after the event of Rank’s essay, where it arguably eludes the exorcism of comprehensive analysis anyhow” (Webber 1996: 42). Todorov’s proclamation of the death or obsolescence of the fantastic may be premature, but there is also another dimension that can be drawn from his assertion. In positing the argument that psychoanalysis takes over the themes of fantastic literature, Todorov in effect refuses to privilege psychoanalysis as a metalanguage. Rather, he places it side by side with the literature of the fantastic as a coequal narrative form that similarly exhibits an
obsession with seamless causality and a pattern of equilibrium to disequilibrium and back to equilibrium in its narrative structure (Todorov 1975: 161-64).

The implication here is that psychoanalysis is not merely an interpretative schema that provides a means through which the figure of the doppelganger in literary texts can be examined and apprehended. Rather, it is precisely these schema that produce the figure of the doppelganger within particular logics, particular discursive regimes. In other words, they do not so much provide a means of illuminating the doppelganger as containing the doppelganger within a specific logic of subjectivity that is enmeshed in a web of relations that constitutes the discursive regime of the modern. As such, the critical task is not to merely describe the doppelganger – to imagine an essential doppelganger or even construct a taxonomy or typology of its manifestations. Rather, the doppelganger is more productively taken up as a point of departure and an optic that enables the possibility of making visible its collisions and intersections with other discourses, other problems. In doing so, it is crucial to account for the historical coming into being of these institutions of knowledge production and how they come to constitute (and discipline) the doppelganger within their respective objects of vision; in other words, it is crucial to understand the mechanisms through which the doppelganger is constituted as a genre. Taking up the doppelganger as a discursive genre in this mode facilitates the proper situating of the repeated attempts to seek the origins of the doppelganger by such psychoanalytic thinkers such as Otto Rank and Sigmund Freud, not to mention their antecedents. In dealing with their respective definitions of the doppelganger, the question to ask is not whether the characteristics they highlight correctly get at some imagined essence to the figure of the double; instead, it is what social and material conditions provoke (and hence are implicated by) their appearance and recurrence at particular historical moments and in particular registers.

**Interruptions**

Such an approach to generic formations and emergences that emphasizes the operations or practices through which perceived resemblances are produced at particular historical junctures is of course
applicable to any literary genre or grouping, whether formally constituted as such or not. But what is particularly significant in the case of the doppelganger is that the attributes and characteristics most typically ascribed to it already foregrounds the very operations of genre formation itself. Or, to put it differently, in its play on repetition and difference that Steven Neale identifies as its basic principle (Neale 1980: 48), the doppelganger arguably already embodies the very logic of genre, and as such, is a figure that is particularly productive to take up in these terms.

This is evident in a number of ways. For one, there is the matter of repetition, upon which logic the emergence of generic classification is predicated. Here, Sigmund Freud’s characterization of the doppelganger as an emblematic figure of his notion of the uncanny is worth recalling, for a crucial aspect of Freud’s analysis is his linkage with the (at the time) nascent notion of the repetition-compulsion, which Freud characterizes. “Whatever reminds us of this inner ‘compulsion to repeat,’” Freud writes, “is perceived as uncanny” (Freud 2000c: 240). Implied in these words, as Neil Hertz correctly observes, is that the sense of the uncanny cannot be reduced to a specific repressed content that returns and repeats. It is not what repeats that provokes the uncanny effect; it is instead the very process, the very operation of the repetition-compulsion itself that produces it (Hertz 1985: 101). Although the point is only very briefly touched upon and left undeveloped in “The Uncanny” elsewhere, Freud has written much on the subject of the repetition-compulsion – which can be roughly described as the phenomenon wherein subjects compulsively reenact past traumatic events – but as far as its relation to the uncanny is concerned, I believe that the key element that weds these two concepts together can be found in the structure of deferral, of nachträglichkeit.

Nachträglichkeit (deferred action) names the process in which a traumatic event earlier in life remains incomprehensible at the time it is experienced, and as a consequence is repressed without properly being assimilated. Only when another event later in life and in a different context provokes its return does it come to be recognized as traumatic, and thus producing an uncanny sense as it is

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8 The major work of Freud’s to deal with the concept is Beyond the Pleasure Principle (1920), which was written concurrently with “The Uncanny.”
encountered as at once both familiar and unfamiliar. The parallels with the temporality of generic emergence are clear. Like the doppelganger itself, which as Andrew J. Webber has characterized, “embodies a dislocation in time, always coming after its proper event” (Webber 1996: 9), this structure of deferral is what animates the temporality of the emergence of genres, constituted as they are only in their repetition and recognizable only after the fact of their discursive coming into being. Indeed, the case of the Jean-Paul Richter’s *Siebenkäs* or even his later *Titan* (1800-1803), wherein the doppelgangers are largely minor plot devices, but are given significance for their naming of the concept retrospectively when subsequent fictions and studies pick up on it and coalesce to produce a recognizable and coherent category of texts, is a case in point.

More importantly, highlighting this deferred action upon which logic the doppelganger is predicated also brings to mind the fundamental openness of the generic structure, wherein each repetition inevitably brings with it the potential for interruption, for resignification, for the appearance of difference. In this way, if the figure of the doppelganger can be said to enact the logic of genre, then in doing so, it also recognizes that built into this logic is the possibility of interruption and transgression. In other words, what the doppelganger foregrounds is the law of genre in the sense that Jacques Derrida has advanced. For Derrida, genre operates on the basis of a prohibition against their mixing; their coherence derives from their effacement of their discursivity so as to appear as natural forms sharply demarcated from other genres. But, at the same time, Derrida also argues that from the moment of their constitution – of their articulation – genres are always already transgressed, because the very act of naming a genre – the marking of membership into a genre – occupies a space outside of genre. Consequently, “the law of the law of genre is,” Derrida writes, “a principle of contamination, a law of impurity, a parasitical economy” (Derrida 1992: 227). Derrida’s point here is not simply that the generic definitions often fail to capture the texts classified under its name. Beyond that, it is that built into the very system of genres is a principle of generic contamination, of the potential for interruption, which is
“the condition for the possibility and the impossibility of taxonomy” (Derrida 1992: 231). And it is this constitutive yet at once interruptive operation of genre that I contend the doppelganger embodies.

In fact, in his rereading of Freud’s classic essay “The Uncanny,” it is precisely this figuration of interruption that Dimitris Vardoulakis finds to be the defining feature of the doppelganger. Rather than merely a fictional representations or manifestation of psychic troubles, for Vardoulakis, the doppelganger is more productively understood conceptually as a notion of the subject conceived in terms of excess, marked by the processes of negation and interruption. As he puts the point:

The subjective ontology that the Doppelgänger introduces should not be seen as positing an originary substance or essence. On the contrary, its formal openness allows for its own interruption. At the same time, that openness is impossible without the interruption. The Doppelgänger, then, is a form of relationality that is not only a condition of possibility, but also a reflection of and on that condition. In this way, the Doppelgänger is aligned to a notion of modernity as interruption. (Vardoulakis 2006: 100)

Vardoulakis’s richly theoretical project to articulate the subjective ontology (and its philosophical-political) consequences engages a set of questions and problems that differ from own literary-historical examination of the motif. Nevertheless, his attention to this formal openness and interruptive function that the doppelganger points towards what possibilities might be opened up in thinking through how even as the doppelganger is contained within the boundaries of generic formation, it necessarily exceeds these boundaries and interrupts their processes, and moreover, in its very embodiment, foregrounds this operation. What it compels recognition of is the fact that at stake in the question of genre is more than merely questions of conventions in literary or cinematic classification. On the contrary, as Derrida points out, it involves all moves to classify, demarcate, and regulate, therefore implicating systems of law and social institutions of subjectivity, e.g., gender, nation, etc. (Derrida 1992: 242). Charles Bazerman raises a similar argument, succinctly summarizing the point as follows:

Genres are not just forms. Genres are forms of life, ways of being. They are frames for social action. They are environments for learning. They are locations within which meaning is constructed. Genres shape the thoughts we form and the communications by which we interact.
Genres are the familiar places we go to to create intelligible communicative action with each other and the guideposts we use to explore the unfamiliar. (Bazerman 1997: 19)

At stake therefore in the doppelganger’s enactment of the interruption of the formation of generic boundaries are gestures towards broader questions of the concepts and categories of analysis through which knowledge is produced, history is narrated, and social life is grasped, and with that, the possibility for articulating lines of critical intervention. If genres are frames for social action – setting the limits of what can be thought and unthought, what narratives can be told and not told – then it is imperative to recognize that they are not neutral but rather ideological, and in their interruption perhaps flashes of other forms, even if only momentary, can become visible. While genres may very well be impossible to stand outside of, as Derrida suggests, nevertheless against their functioning to make familiar what is unfamiliar, what the doppelganger’s interruptions might enable is the making of the familiar unfamiliar, the generation of the uncanny.

Recalling then my above discussion of the psychoanalytic apprehension of the doppelganger, although it forms a powerful overarching structural logic or regime in which to define and discipline the figure, it is necessary to recognize that cracks and gaps exist in this firmament. The very possibility of the interventions performed by, for instance, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault immediately suggests that the disciplinary power of these apparatuses is not total. The work of these thinkers (among others) demonstrates the possibility of a space from which the exposure of the mechanism of the ways in which a given discursive regime attempts to conceal its contingency and its historicity that is worth cultivating. Here, Karatani Kôjin’s corrective to a form of genealogical method is valuable. “But this methodology,” he writes, “finds it necessary to exclude from consideration people or texts which demonstrated an awareness of a discursive formation even while they were a part of it” (Karatani 1993: 186). Karatani’s point is a particularly crucial reminder, especially in cases when moments of crisis – wherein the artifice of the discursive formation is more visible – are the focus of attention.
Another Origin

Such a sense of crisis was certainly prevalent in the social and cultural climate when, as Suzuki Sadami (among others) has noted, an unprecedented storm of fictions of the doppelganger came upon the Japanese literary landscape in the 1920s and 1930s (Suzuki 1992: 211). Citing a range of (primarily male) authors in whose body of work this was visible – Tanizaki Jun’ichirô (1886-1965), Uchida Hyakken (1889-1971), Satô Haruo (1892-1964), Akutagawa Ryûnosuke (1892-1927), and Edogawa Rampo (1894-1965) just to name a few – Suzuki argues that given this veritable boom in doppelganger fictions, it cannot be read reductively in terms of a simple line of influence from Europe, and particularly German Romanticism (Suzuki 1992: 219). Indeed, while without a doubt the popularity of the motif among the German Romantics certainly predates its proliferation among these Japanese authors, historical precedence alone is insufficient to explain the phenomenon, for what this does not explain is why the doppelganger became popular at the particular historical juncture in question.

Suzuki Sadami points to the city, and the transformations in social life – the breakdown in extant familial structures that were a consequence of the mass migrations into urban centers, the fears and anxieties produced by anonymity, the impact of mass consumer culture on social relations – that the rapid urbanization witnessed in Tokyo in the early 20th century as productive of a pervading sense of a crisis of subjectivity, of which the doppelganger became a favored literary metaphor. In a similar vein, Seiji Lippit too finds that in much of the writing of the period, “the city becomes the ground for...

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9 The relative rarity of female doppelgangers and female authors who take up the doppelganger is attributable to a number of factors. The most obvious is simply the gendered terms on which what counts as “literary” is defined in the first place. Beyond this though, another aspect of this is how because the psychoanalytic conception of the subject whose breakdown the figure of the doppelganger marks is underpinned by a regime of a normative masculinity, the female doppelganger is arguably by definition excluded from the discursive production of the concept. This is not to say that there are no female doppelgangers, a notion belied by its appearances in the fiction of authors like Ozaki Midori (1896-1971) or Kurahashi Yumiko (1935-2005). Rather, it is that the received discourse on the doppelganger imagines it to be male at the onset, and thus excludes its female counterpart from definition even if it were otherwise similar.

10 A mediating context to Suzuki’s argument here is the tendency to read events and developments in the literary history of Japan in terms of the influence and assimilation – indeed, the copying – of similar movements in Europe, whether it is the rise and fall of literary movements, modernist practices, the forms that mass culture take, among others. Where the concept of the doppelganger and its complication of notions of “original” and “copy” may be useful is precisely to call such readings into question.
representing a fragmented consciousness of modern culture” (Lippit 2002: 32-33), but he further builds upon it by bringing the question of urban space into relation with the surrounding discourses on such issues as nationalism, cosmopolitanism, and colonialism. In addition, although his work does not deal with the figure of the doppelganger specifically, his anchoring of his analysis to the writing of the literary critic Kobayashi Hideo on the sense of dislocation and homelessness that the space of the city brings is suggestive, for what is this sense of homelessness if not precisely the literal unheimlich, the un-home-like.11

Ultimately, the point to be gleamed here is that the question of what provokes the appearance and proliferation of the doppelganger in literature is overdetermined, impacted by multiple forces and any attempt to point to a singular determining element can only ever be reductive. As such, a rigorous investigation of the doppelganger’s literary and cinematic appearances (and their critical receptions) must work through a range of distinct yet nonetheless interconnected discourses and account for various social and material contexts. On its own, none of these discourses is singularly determinant, but in their intersections, they are productive of the imagination of the doppelganger. For my own part, without implying a foreclosure of other possible directions that may be taken, I will contend in the subsequent chapters of this dissertation that the films and fictions of doppelganger emerge in Japan as aestheticized engagements with the socio-cultural consequences of the constitution and crises of capitalist modernity out of intersections of such circulating discourses and practices as the relations between language and visuality, colonialism and commodity culture, and the emergence of psychoanalysis and mass culture. By tracing the figure’s myriad appearances at those historical junctures of Japanese modernity wherein its appearance particularly recurs, I aim to illustrate that an attention to how the doppelganger brings to light the transforming relations among these discourses has significant ramifications for how the most fundamental mechanisms of modernity and its contestations, anxieties, and instabilities are understood and experienced.

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However, in drawing on films and fictions of the doppelganger from Japan for my examples, an inevitable question that demands contending with is: “Why Japan?” The easy response to this is to point to a scarcity of sustained critical and theoretical studies of the figure of the doppelganger in Japanese film or literature. In English, there is the occasional journal article or conference presentation, but to date, no book length treatment of the motif. In Japanese, aside from the aforementioned extended discussion of the motif by Suzuki Sadami referenced above, a few other book length studies exist, of which two noteworthy examples are Watanabe Masahiko’s *Kindai bungaku no bunshinzô* (The image of the double in modern literature, 1999) along with Yamashita Takeshi’s *20-seiki nihon kai'i bungaku shi – dopperugengâ bungakukô* (Catalog of 20th century Japanese uncanny literature – a study of the literary doppelganger, 2003), which reprints a series of short articles written for the journal *Gensô bungaku* (Fantasy literature).

The former is a work that attempts to trace a lineage of doppelgangers in the literature of Japan, organized in a largely conventional literary history. Divided into three sections by imperial reign name (Meiji, Taisho, and Showa), with each period prefaced with a summary of the literary-historical context and then moving onto discussions of representative texts. In contrast, the orientation of the latter book by Yamashita tends to be descriptive; indeed, as the title indicates, it is more of a catalog (than a critical examination) of the doppelganger’s various appearances and manifestations in Japanese fiction. Without necessarily precluding the value of these studies – their breadth is commendable as they tackle a wide range of authors in whose work the doppelganger motif has featured, moving from texts by Mori Ôgai to Uno Kôji to Tanizaki Jun’ichirô to Murakami Haruki (and traversing through many others in between) and even for that reason alone is a useful reference – I must nevertheless recognize the limits to approaching the doppelganger in the terms that both Watanabe and Yamashita approach the motif.

Ultimately however, as valid a response the filling of a scholarly gap might be, it does not quite

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get to the heart of the question at hand. Aptly, in light of the characteristics of the figure itself, in
thinking Japanese fictions and films of the doppelganger, one is faced with a dilemma of identity and
difference. On one hand, if one places emphasis on identity, that is treating the examination of the
double in Japanese films and fictions as nothing more than extensions of an \textit{a priori} concept, objects
upon which an already fixed theorization of the doppelganger is to be applied, an implicit consequence is
the tendency to construct and stabilize the figure of the double. This would reduce it into nothing more
than a trope with its own formulaic devices, in effect foreclosing the possibility of recognizing the
historicity of the figure, not to mention thinking through the critical implications of the destabilizing
power that I argue to be one of the doppelganger’s central functions. On the other hand, if one opts to
emphasize the “Japanese” side of the phrase, hence playing up difference, while possibly allowing for
cognizance of history, one danger nevertheless is implicitly reducing doppelganger fictions in Japan to
nothing more than a particular variation on Euro-American films and fictions of the doppelganger that is
imagined to be a baseline universal standard. It becomes in effect marked by what Rey Chow has called
an “ethnic supplement,” the effect of which is “to stabilize and fix their intellectual and theoretical
content by way of a national, ethnic, or cultural location” (Chow 2000: 3).

Again, the problem of origins is implicit in posing the question “why Japan?” This is a problem
that arises particularly in the case wherein the focus is on a topic such as “the doppelganger” in that the
German word can be read as a sign of its European origins, especially given how in Japanese, it is
typically transliterated into \textit{dopperugengâ}, and hence seemingly marking it off as a foreign concept.  

\footnote{A point of clarification is called for here. Interestingly, depending on the historical moment of the text
in question, the term is transliterated alternatively as \textit{dopperengern} (primarily in interwar writings) or \textit{dopperengengî} (in
more recent references), which I believe suggests a transliteration from the German in the former case that moves
to a transliteration mediated through the English language’s own borrowing of the term. Also, the concept has also
been translated as \textit{bunsin} (split-body), an early example of which is Mori Ōgai’s 1902 translation of a Heinrich
Heine poem that was also put to music under the title “Der Doppelgänger” as a part of Franz Schubert’s collection
of songs \textit{Schwanengesang} (Swan Song, 1928) (Nishii 2006: 214). Such was also the case in the Japanese translation of
Otto Rank’s seminal work on the figure \textit{Der Doppelgänger}, whose title is rendered as \textit{Bunsin: dopperugengâ} (1988), in
some ways paralleling the rendering of the title in the English version as \textit{The Double} (1971). These terms are
typically used interchangeably, a practice I adopt here in line with my resistance to narrowly defining the concept.
In any case, these variations aside, in more recent critical work on the subject in the Japanese language, \textit{dopperugengâ}
appears to be the most often used term.
said, this is not a problem restricted to cases such as these, but is symptomatic of, as Rey Chow puts it, “an over-determined series of historical factors, the most crucial of which is the lingering, pervasive hegemony of Western culture” (Chow 2000: 2). The category of “film” is a typical example, wherein the implicit assumption of film’s essential foreignness to Japan often goes unexamined, leading to tired discussions that are staged along the lines of Japan’s “domestication” of (Western) film. The point that this misses is not only the permeability and historicity of the boundaries of what gets constituted as essentially “Japanese,” but also how the categories of “Japan” and “film” are not in opposition, but rather implicate one another in their constitution.  

Or for an even broader example, one scarcely need mention the category of “modernity,” and how it is still regularly read as external, sometimes even in opposition to “Japan.” Overlooked in this approach is that modernity is not a discrete object but rather a relation. Relevant here is Naoki Sakai’s argument in his book *Translation and Subjectivity* (1997) that it is only in the event of translation that languages can be demarcated as national languages from one another. The critical move Sakai makes is to call into question the assumption that languages exist *a priori* and translation mediates between them; rather, it is precisely through the event of translation that the boundaries of one language and another are drawn in the first place. Sakai’s point here can further be extended to encompass not only the issue of national languages per se, but the very problem of national boundaries itself. In other words, the idea of a nation is, producible only in relation to another, through the system that Naoki Sakai has termed a “schema of cofiguration” (Sakai 1997: 40–71), in which the boundaries between “West” and “non-West” are drawn and defined against one another. Only when this relationality is repressed can modernity be thought of as having a singular geographic origin.

The question “why Japan?” therefore stages a false problem, in that it presupposes the otherness of Japan against a Euro-American normative context through such a schema of cofiguration. For this reason, I opt not to perform a comparative approach to my readings of the doppelganger, not to naively

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14 Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto has eloquently articulated precisely this point, noting how the category of “Japan” was a fundamental component of the disciplinary formation of “Film Studies” (Yoshimoto 2002: 383). Conversely, Both Rey Chow (1995) and Aaron Gerow (1993) have noted how in the case of China and Japan, respectively, the imagination of the nation is heavily mediated by the transformations in scopic regimes effected by the emergence of cinema as a cultural form.
suggest that the problem of the doppelganger I will confront is particularly Japanese, but to avoid reproducing such a bifurcation. Johannes Fabian, in his seminal critique of the field of anthropology, puts it well. “There would be no raison d’etre for the comparative method if it was not the classification of entities or traits which first have to be separate and distinct before their similarities can be used to establish taxonomies and developmental sequences” (Fabian 1983: 16). Rather, in locating my study of the doppelganger in specifically Japanese films and fictions functions not to offer a particular manifestation of the doppelganger in a supposed “foreign” context, but to contend that from the very moment of its emergence as a coherent genre, as the subsequent chapters will illustrate, the doppelganger already implicates a transnational relation, situated in a modernity that when understood in its capitalist and colonial dimensions is always already global. “Japan” is in this sense taken up not merely as a location but as a key theoretical problem. Viewed symptomatically, one could go so far as to suggest that the very fact of the question “why Japan?” (a question not typically posed of other locations) hints at an unease, in effect positioning Japan as a kind of uncanny image, as a doppelganger of the discourse on the doppelganger.

Premised on its conception as a figure that enacts and embodies a compulsion to repeat that is organized on a structure of deferral, it seems only apt to examine the discourses of the doppelganger in their repetitions. Analogous to how under the structural logic of deferral, an initial, “original” traumatic event cannot be grasped until it is resignified in repetition, is it not also the case that the concept of the doppelganger – and with it the constellation of discourses and apparatuses of modernity on whose intersection its emergence is situated – can only be fully and properly apprehended when it repeats, whether in historical or geographical terms? When understood as a repetition in this sense, accounting for the appearances of the doppelganger and its discursive underpinnings is productive insofar as they speak to the problem of how a global modernity can be grasped not in the tired modes of origins and diffusions (as Eurocentric histories would have it) or of West and the rest bifurcations, but as a structure that produces sets of relations between mutually constitutive positionalities, with which, in the words of
Naoki Sakai, “a form of theorizing based on the acknowledgement of traces of the other in the specifically local text” (Sakai 2001: 91) can be performed.

But there is an even more critical dimension to the Japanese doppelganger’s enactment of repetition. One consequence of the tendency to position putatively “Western” forms as a normative standard discussed above is that critical attention on the cultural production of the 1920s and 1930s has been until recently sparse. As Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano has put it, “Japanese culture of the Taisho period… has been confined as a devalued cultural epoch – neither traditional nor really modern, but only ‘derivative’” (Wada-Marciano 2008: 8). It was only in the late 1980s and into the 1990s that a resurgence in interest in the literary and cultural milieu of interwar Japan, a point that Suzuki Sadami has also remarked on. This renewed interest in the moment took on a number of forms, from the rethinking of Japanese modernism to an attention to mass cultural forms such as detective fiction or the various women’s magazines to scholarly examinations of early cinema, not to mention a much warranted historical attention to Japanese imperialism and fascism, both in the scholarship within Japan and elsewhere. To this may also be added an emergent critical interest in the figure of the doppelganger, perhaps facilitated by the appearance of Ariuchi Yoshihiro’s Japanese translation of Otto Rank’s Der Doppelgänger in 1988, which interestingly enough is concurrent with a renewed recurrence – a repetition – of films and fictions in Japan that feature the figure. Indeed, I would go so far as to suggest that, much like the earlier moment of the 1920s, there is again a veritable proliferation of the doppelganger in the literary and cultural discourse of the contemporary moment that is suggestive of a historical dimension – a historical unconscious – to its enactment of the compulsion to repeat. If the doppelganger is indeed to be understood as embodying a return of the repressed, then at stake in its renewed appearance in contemporary Japan is also what has been repressed in history.

The persistence of this gap until recently can be linked to what Mark Driscoll has identified as a “mutually reinforcing logie” wherein cultural and historical work on the Japanese colonial empire was circumscribed on both sides of the Pacific in line with the interests of Cold War geopolitics, with the
consequence that in historical discourse, the period is if not largely overlooked, is nonetheless often written off as an aberration, a wrong turn in the linear narrative of a path towards “modernization” (Driscoll 2005: 163). Filling this gap and correcting the account of Japan’s literary and cultural history is without a doubt a crucial task, but is only a first step. Understood in the terms of the doppelganger’s practice of repetition and its logic of deferral, at stake here is not only the repressed history per se, but also the history of the present and what social and material conditions in the contemporary juncture provoke its return. This demands a critical practice that does not simply reproduce the domination of the subject over the object of study, that simply fixes the doppelganger and the constellation of discourses and practices it implicates as an origin without accounting for its critical possibilities for the subject in the present moment. In this respect, Mieke Bal’s insistence on a need to account for the narrative act in the practice of critical exposition is an important reminder for my work on the doppelganger, such that, in here words, there can be a “foregrounding of the active presence of the object, or text, in the same historical space as inhabited by the subject, ‘me’” (Bal 1996: 11).

Staging Problems

There are several ways in which this dissertation can be concretely organized, with each form producing different analytic consequences, even if only implicitly. For instance, it could easily be arranged chronologically, moving from one period to the next, as Watanabe Masahiko (1999) does in his work on the doppelganger. Another option is to take up the motif as it appears by author, as Yamashita Takeshi (2003) opts to do in his cataloguing of the doppelganger’s appearances in Japanese literature. In an effort to facilitate comprehensibility, up to a point, this dissertation follows both modes of organization, with each chapter closely examining a set of texts in a roughly chronological order. However, this dissertation

15 Needless to say, the object of criticism here is what has been called “modernization theory,” whose impact on the history of the field of Japanese studies since its inception as an academic discipline in the aftermath of the Second World War is difficult to overstate. Modernization theory, in a nutshell, posits a single path towards a telos of capitalist development based on the standard of North America and Western Europe, with any other paths dismissed as deviations. For a thorough critique of the model, see Harootunian (2000: ix-xxxii).
is intended to be neither an exhaustive study of the doppelganger’s literary and cinematic appearances in Japan, nor a simple chronology of the figure’s trajectory in Japanese literary history. Rather its orientation is towards the articulation of an approach that is sensitive to the conceptual and historical complexities the very figure foregrounds. Thus, given the multifaceted matrix of intersecting problems discussed above, I recognize that an approach that foregrounds relationality – be it in terms of the relations between textual, a historical relation, or a geopolitical relation – rather than, for instance, continuity or textual autonomy is arguably in order.

In this dissertation I address this concern on two levels. On a micro scale, each of the chapters addresses a problematic of relationality. Although each chapter takes up the work of a literary author or film director in whose body of work the doppelganger motif recurs one at a time, the effort is not to construct an imagined unity to their body of work. Rather, it is to take up these literary and/or cinematic appearances as points of departure to historicize the doppelganger and situate its relations within the various facets – discourses, practices, apparatuses, and operations – of Japanese modernity that on the one hand constitute the conditions of possibility for the imagination of the double, yet on the other hand are interrupted and exceeded by it. Each chapter examines its own specific set of questions, its own focal points, yet nevertheless are tied together by the figure of the doppelganger, such that taken together, they may facilitate an accounting for the different registers, the various inflections of the logic of modernity implicated by the work the figure of the doppelganger performs upon them. The various chapters share an interest in unearthing the linkages, the assemblages, the textures of matters such as cinema and voyeurism, the constitution and visibility of gender and race in anthropological practice, and globalization and empire, that are made visible by the appearance and haunting of the doppelganger at specific moments in history.

On a macro scale, while the texts examined follow a largely chronological order, to place emphasis less on lineage and continuity and more on returns and repetition that mirror the problems of temporality embodied by the doppelganger, the dissertation takes on a chiastic structure, with the
problems and questions raised by each of the chapters in its first half revisited, and with that, inevitably producing a consequent resignification of how these issues are grasped. Two historical moments that were both witness to a proliferation of texts in which the doppelganger motif features are thus taken up in this dissertation. Part 1 examines the first period between the two world wars that were marked in Japan by radical transformations in material conditions and the sociocultural milieu: rapid urbanization, the rise of mass literature and consumer culture, the establishment and expansion of the Japanese empire and the cultural negotiations and contestations that entailed, and the emergence of cinema as a popular cultural form, and the attendant transformations in the logics of visuality and perception brought about.

Chapter 1 examines the appearances of the doppelganger in the work of the detective fictionist Edogawa Rampo as a point of departure to establish the frames of reference and terms of the discussions. In many ways, Rampo enacts and embodies many of the key problems placed into the spotlight by the figure of the doppelganger. Not only does the motif noticeably recur in many of his fictions, but also, his very name is famously a repetition of Edgar Allan Poe’s, who is himself notable for writing one of the texts most typically identified with the genre of doppelganger fictions, “William Wilson” (1839), a short story dealing with a man who encounters another who bears the exact name as his. In this chapter, I read the doppelganger in terms of the intersection of detective fiction and psychoanalysis and situate the discussion in the problem of urbanization and anonymity.

With chapter 2, I move from urban space to the space of empire, and look at its tensions, its transformations, and the ways in which the figure of the doppelganger makes visible its textures. I expand upon the previous discussion of the detective by accounting for its ethnographic (and hence, imperial) dimensions and take up how this intersects with the colonial unconscious of psychoanalytic theorizations of the doppelganger. Focusing on the work of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, the discussions will work through issues of racialization and colonial subjectivity in connection with the double and ends with a look at how these processes are further complicated by the becoming commodity spectacle of the colonial contact zone.
Picking up from the previous chapter, Chapter 3 then tackles the question of cinema and visual culture, and its impact on the imagination of the doppelganger. Here, I consider various facets of the question of the configuration of visuality and its effects on spatiotemporal experience (of the screen, of the city, of the nation) and social relations (of spectatorship, of commodity culture, of race and gender). Particular attention will be given to the fictions of Akutagawa Ryûnosuke and the points of intersection between language and visual/voyeuristic culture that the doppelgangers in their fictions foreground. Embedded within many of the fictions of Akutagawa are engagements with the emergence and transformations of the cinematic apparatus, bound up with which are other logics, other abstract machines through which social forms and subjectivities are configured.

If Akutagawa’s fiction links the doppelganger with the cinematic apparatus, what then might this mean for films on the doppelganger themselves? This is one question chapter 4 will address. In this chapter, I revisit the work of Edogawa Rampo and build upon the preceding discussion by considering the problem of film adaptations of his writings, which have seen a notable boom since the 1990s. Through a close analysis of the story “The Twins” (Sôseiji, 1924; trans. 1956) and its later adaptation as Tsukamoto Shinya’s Gemini (Sôseiji: Gemini, 1999), this chapter will consider the logic of repetition, but not only in terms of one text to another, but also of one historical moment to another, and their implications for conceptualizing and troubling the relations, the repetition and return of film into fiction, past into present, the 1920s into the contemporary. If the film adaptation is understood as a kind of doppelganger, then at stake here is not only a textual and transmedia doubling but also a historical doppelganger. When understood in terms analogous to the structure of deferral embodied by the double wherein it is only in its repetition that it comes to be recognized, then one implication is that in the critical practice of historicizing the doppelganger, it is not sufficient to situate its appearances in their “original” moments of production; beyond this, the very act of looking at the doppelganger in the present must itself be historicized.
Thus, part 2 of this dissertation will account for a second historical moment that is not only marked by the reappearance of a recurrence of the doppelganger motif in literary and cinematic production, but also, is instrumental in shaping the understanding of the previous moment in its very repetition of it – the contemporary juncture. Chapter 5 begins this discussion by revisiting the relation between the doppelganger and detective fiction, this time with an attention to the work of Abe Kôbô. Taking this discussion as its starting point, it will then articulate an approach to thinking these two historical moments in terms of the doppelganger’s returns and repetition, and work through the stakes of such a practice.

Chapter 6 then builds upon these preceding discussions of the doppelganger and the problem of historical repetition it gestures towards by accounting for the question of difference, accounting for how the dimensions of these problems shift in the contemporary moment of global modernity marked by the passage into flexible accumulation and the incessant transnational traffic of image-commodities. Reading this against the discussion of the doppelganger in terms of the colonial context and the reconfigurations of visuality presented in the previous chapters, it will discuss the questions raised by the doubles in the texts and the doubling of the texts of Murakami Haruki and David Mitchell, particularly in terms of the terrain of representation, translation, and the nation in the present historical juncture. In this chapter, I examine how Murakami’s and Mitchell’s fictions – doubles of one another in an intertextual sense – complicate questions and discourses of origins and authenticity, symptomatic of what Tatsumi Takayuki has suggested to be a shift to a “network of synchronicity” from an older form of transcultural interaction (Tatsumi 2006: 4). Tatsumi’s argument is worth complicating, however, by considering how it functions as a repetition of a similar perception of global simultaneity in 1920s Japan, suggesting that what is at stake is less the reality of synchronicity/simultaneity per se, but particular historical discourses or optics with which the imagination, the desire for such a simultaneity is produced.

Finally, with Chapter 7, I conclude my discussion by turning to the films of Kurosawa Kiyoshi, in particular Doppelganger (Dopperugengã, 2003) and Retribution (Sakebi, 2006). Through an examination of
these films, this chapter will first recapitulate some of the key issues and problems raised in the preceding chapters, and from there, an attempt to consider the implications of the doppelganger in terms of practice. It poses the question: if the figure of the doppelganger is intimately intertwined with questions of looking, then what implications might it have for the practice of criticism? Through this, I hope to not only account for my own gaze upon the doppelganger in the production of my dissertation, but more importantly, also attempt to articulate the implications that kind of productive disruption embodied by the doppelganger might have for critical practice.
Part I:

The Emergence of the Doppelganger
CHAPTER 1
DETECTION AND THE DOPPELGANGER:
FORMATIONS OF A GENRE IN INTERWAR JAPAN

Edogawa Rampo as Doppelganger

Edogawa Rampo¹ (b. Hirai Tarô, 1894-1965) arguably embodies the figure known as the doppelganger par excellence. On top of being one of the most famous and popular detective fictionists of his generation in Japan, representations of not only doubles themselves, but also other imagery that can be linked to the motif of doubling such as disguises, dolls, mirrors, and masks feature heavily in much of his fiction. As Mark Silver has observed, “characters who enact a dizzying variety of bizarre impersonations, transformations, and monstrous hybridizations” proliferate in Rampo’s work, all of which are motifs which can broadly be linked to the doppelganger (Silver 2008: 132). One example is his early short story “One Man, two roles” (Hitori futayaku, 1925), which features a man who puts on a disguise in order to seduce his wife and catch her cheating on him, but ends up opting to receive plastic surgery to take on the role permanently. Similar plot devices also appear in “The Twins” (Sôseiji, 1924; trans. 1956) as well as The strange tale of panorama island (Panorama-tô kidan, 1926). In the former, the younger of a set of twins murders his brother and takes over his identity to acquire both his wife and his share of the inheritance. Likewise, in the latter, the protagonist named Hitomi Kôsuke fakes his own suicide to disappear and then subsequently take over the life of a man named Komoda, with whom he bears an uncanny resemblance, and then subsequently uses his wealth to build the titular Panorama Island.

Beyond this prevalence of doppelganger figures and related motifs in his fiction, there is an even more fundamental doubleness at play in Rampo that is immediately marked by his choice of nom-de-

¹ Although his name is properly transliterated “Edogawa Ranpo” under revised Hepburn romanization conventions (which I otherwise follow in the rest of this dissertation), I have opted to use “Rampo” instead to reflect how his name is typically written in English translations of his work. Also, following Japanese convention, while the surname is “Edogawa,” I refer to the author as “Rampo.”
plume. As has been often remarked upon by subsequent commentary on Rampo and indeed explained by Rampo himself in a later essay (Edogawa 1992: 212), when Hirai Tarô made his debut as a writer of detective fiction in 1923 with the short story “The Two-sen Copper Coin” (Nisen dôka, 1923) his choice of the pseudonym “Edogawa Rampo” was meant to echo the Japanese transliteration of the name of American author “Edgar Allan Poe,” a writer best known for his mystery and macabre fiction, with the intention of making himself out to be his Japanese doppelganger.2

More than merely a point of trivia though, this doubling effected by Rampo’s name gestures towards what Shimizu Yoshinori has called a “tenacious two-faced-ness” [kyôjin na nimensei] in Rampo’s body of work. In Shimizu’s view, Rampo’s body of work itself can be broadly divided into two groups: his scientific (or honkaku – “orthodox”) detective fictions and his fantastic (or henkaku – “unorthodox”) romances (Shimizu 1994: 32), where honkaku is typically taken to mean in accordance with the rules and conventions of a putative “Western detective fiction.”3 Shimizu’s deployment of this bifurcated frame for reading Rampo is not an isolated one; a similar observation has been made by another critic, Ozaki Hotsuki, who further divides Rampo’s work up on a temporal axis between early scientific and “authentic” detective fictions and later fantastic grotesquerie, with the short story “The Stalker in the Attic” (Yaneura no sanposha, 1925; trans. 2008) – wherein the protagonist, an urban youth stricken by boredom even after playing at various disguises and cross-dressing, repeatedly sneaks into the shared attic space of his apartment building to spy upon his neighbors through the cracks in the floor – signaling the shift (Ozaki 1980: 122).

Shimizu’s and Ozaki’s observations of Rampo’s body of work are not in themselves new notions; in fact, they carry over from similar critical discourse surrounding his work contemporary to the

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2 With translations by Mori Ôgai and Tanizaki Seiji published in the 1910s – the most noteworthy of which is Akaki shi no kamen (Masque of Red Death, 1913), which included not only the famous titular gothic tale first published in 1842, but also Poe’s seminal doppelganger fiction “William Wilson” (1839) by the time of Rampo’s debut, not to mention the emerging popularity of detective fictions in translation (for which Poe was famous) – this was likely no big secret among readers at the time.

3 Shimizu also points to a third category – Rampo’s popular juvenile fiction – but considers it an attempt to synthesize the two sides and as such, can be considered derivate of the primary doubleness (Shimizu 1994: 33).
time he was actively writing, especially as it concerned his position within the debates and discussions surrounding the then emergent genre of detective fiction. The terms *honkaku* and *henkaku* that have since become the standard classificatory scheme for detective fictions in Japan can be traced back to the first round of the formative debates that subsequently mapped out the terrain of the genre, in a series of essays by Kôga Saburô, which are themselves derived from the commentary by the famous social critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke on what he terms “healthy” [*kenzen*] and “unhealthy” [*fukenzen*] detective fiction in his essay “Directions of Detective Fiction Circles” (Tantei shôsetsu dan no shôkeikô, 1926).

Within this schema, Rampo has been, on the one hand, typically recognized as the “father” of modern detective fiction in Japan characterized by deductive reasoning and scientific methodology in the detection and apprehension of criminals. This positioning of Rampo began as soon as his first published story “The Two-sen Copper Coin” appeared in the magazine *Shinseinen* (*New youth*). As Kyoko Omori notes, the publication of Rampo’s story took place with much fanfare, accompanied not only by Rampo’s own treatise on detective fiction, but also a piece of commentary praising Rampo’s work for its successful adoption of the conventions of deductive reasoning in European and American detective narratives, with the effect of consolidating the conventions of the detective genre (Omori 2003: 81-85). This positioning of Rampo in the literary history of detective fiction in Japan is only further punctuated by his postwar literary activities, especially his participation in debates surrounding the “proper” form of detective narratives as a proponent of the classic whodunit form based on principles of logic, rationality, and science. Especially with his rearticulation and reassertion of the boundaries of “orthodox” detective fiction in the now canonical collection of essays *Illusory Castle* (*Gen’ei jô*, 1951), Rampo’s writings on the

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4 Several of Kôga’s essays deal with this subject, including (but not limited to) “From notes on the rainy season” [Baiuki no nōto kara] in *Shinseinen* (1934) and his “Detective fiction lectures” [Tantei shôsetsu kōwa] series in *Purofiru* (1934).

5 Kozakai Fuboku (1890-1921), a literary critic and also detective fictionist himself, wrote the accompanying commentary, in which he places Rampo alongside the likes of Edgar Allan Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle, and thus illustrating that the standard against which Japanese detective fiction is evaluated is how they stand up to their European and American counterparts (Kozakai 1923: 264-265). This too is implied in Rampo’s accompanying essay, titled “On Detective Fiction” (Tantei shôsetsu ni tsuite, 1923) when he comments on how Japanese detective fictions to date remain unsatisfactory in quality.
subject, in the view of Satomi Saito, “constituted the foundational narrative for any postwar writers who revived the detective fiction genre” (Saito 2007: 154).

On the other hand, what is especially striking about Rampo’s postwar advocacy of “orthodox” detective fiction is the extent to which the positions he stakes out in the latter part of his career stand in marked contrast to his earlier stances. In fact, Rampo’s fiction – often taken as a representative for prewar detective fictions in general – regularly faced criticism for tending towards the bizarre and the grotesque and reflected an “unorthodox” or “inauthentic” development of the detective fiction genre, especially because he was also seen, in the words of Jim Reichert (among others) as a “leading spokesperson” of the wildly popular literary and cultural phenomenon known as erotic-grotesque-nonsense [ero-guro-nansensu] (Reichert 2001: 114). This was the case with both critics contemporary to Rampo’s time as well as with more recent rearticulations and critiques of the genre. In the former case, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke names Rampo specifically as one of the writers whom he finds exhibiting an “unhealthy” fascination for the morbid and the grotesque (Hirabayashi 1979: 28-36). In the latter case, critic Gonda Manji has asserted that “the modern detective fiction of the prewar years, which started after the publication of Shinseinen and the debut of Edogawa Rampo, consists of an overwhelmingly large number of stories that play with the fantastic world of horror and bizarreness that rejects social reality” is a case in point (Gonda 1996: 7). Similarly, in Kasai Kiyoshi’s discussion of the history of detective fiction in Japan, he suggests that because of the extensive presence of fantasy and horror elements in detective fiction during the 1920s (including Rampo’s), it is properly characterized as unorthodox (Kasai 1997: 10).

The striking thing about this pattern of critical discourse surrounding Rampo’s fiction and the central position it occupies within the discursive space of detective fiction is how it not only “parallels the development of the detective fiction genre in Japan,” as Satomi Saito has put it (Saito 2007: 94), but

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6 Saito (2007: 154-166) provides a finely nuanced discussion of not only the shifts, but also the subtle continuities in Rampo’s positions vis-à-vis the construction of the genre of detective fiction.

7 Reichert describes ero-guro-nansensu as “the prewar, bourgeois cultural phenomenon that devoted itself to explorations of the deviant, the bizarre, and the ridiculous” (Reichert 2001: 114). Others who have discussed Rampo in terms of erotic-grotesque-nonsense include Mark Driscoll (2000) and Jeffrey Angles (2008).
also how it closely mirrors the conventional narrative of Japanese modernization. As Saito notes, the postwar rearticulations of the genre in which Rampo participated “coincided with the issue of [Japan’s] ‘improper’ modernization” (Saito 2007: 17). Parallel to how postwar discourse explained away the path taken towards imperial expansion and fascism by prewar Japanese modernization as an “improper” path to modernity or a wrong turn that is subsequently corrected by postwar American occupation (euphemistically viewed as “democratization”), the turn towards the bizarre, the grotesque, and the fantastic taken by detective fiction in prewar Japan was likewise a developmental misstep in the genre that will then be corrected in the postwar.

Similarly, the received understanding of the history of detective fiction in Japan takes an imagined “Western detective fiction” as definitive of what is considered orthodox; that is, it came to be considered the proper form detective fiction should take. As a consequence, it is thus unsurprising that the dominant pattern of critical discourse and commentary surrounding Rampo easily maps onto what Yoshikuni Igarashi has deftly identified as the tendency to reduce Rampo’s body of work to either mere domesticized copies of European and American detective stories or alternatively praised for its divergence from it and excavating a “Japanese authenticity” (Igarashi 2005: 300-303). Citing both critics contemporary to Rampo as well as those writing from within what he identifies as a Rampo boom in the present,8 Igarashi notes how Rampo’s name itself has function as a kind of sign that structures much of the critical discourse surrounding his fiction in a parallel binarism between Japan and the West, the premodern and the modern, copy and original.

Mark Silver’s discussion of detective fiction in Japan in terms of a process of cultural borrowing is just such a case in point. On the work of Edogawa Rampo, for example, he notes that “[t]he remarkable thing about [Rampo’s] work is how powerfully it invites the simple, unidirectional view of influence that… theoreticians of international literary relations would urge us to discard” (Silver 2008: 8 This Rampo boom that Igarashi observes is of course connected to the broader boom in critical attention to the 1920s and 1930s in Japan since the 1980s that Suzuki Sadami (1992) has observed, a point which I briefly touched upon in the introduction to this dissertation and will be revisited in Chapter 4.
In Silver’s view, the most noteworthy characteristic of Rampo’s fiction is a profound sense of ambivalence and tension, which he reads as reflective of an “anxiety of influence.” Because Rampo’s works (and Japanese detective fiction at large) appear belatedly, that is, only in the wake of the emergence of the genre elsewhere, they are haunted by an anxiety of being nothing more than derivative of a putative “Western original” that is fundamentally foreign to Japan. In Silver’s words: “Writers of detective fiction… were working in a genre that employed an imported and novel narrative structure, one whose relative fixity meant it could not so easily withstand hybridization with native Japanese forms and still remain true to itself” (Silver 2008: 2). Hence, for Silver, the prevalence of doubles, disguises, and imitations in Rampo’s detective fiction is a sign that is indicative of this anxiety about his status as an imitation, his own “monstrous hybridity” (Silver 2008: 135). With its arguments premised on an a priori difference between the positionalities of “West” and “Japan” and emphasis on a temporal lag in characterizing the latter’s relation to the former, echoes of the presuppositions upon which notions of modernization as a linear narrative with “Westernization” as its telos are unmistakeable in Silver’s analysis. In other words, it reproduces what Harry Harootunian has identified as “the logic of the prevailing received narratives that have persistently appealed to the comparative experience of late economic development as the invariant element in explaining Japan’s modern history and its difference from Western industrial societies” (Harootunian 2000: xvi).

It should be evident by now how this particular frame of analysis is predicated upon unsustainable assumptions and as such suffers from significant limitations in what it can illuminate. In the former case of the narrative of modernization, for instance, Harry Harootunian has leveled thorough critiques of the fundamental assumptions upon which its logic rests. In his words, this received idea of modernization sees “development comparatively according to a baseline experience attributed to

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9 The phrase “anxiety of influence” is, of course, from Harold Bloom in his book titled, not surprisingly, The Anxiety of Influence (1973), which Silver cites favorably in his analysis, and deploys as a frame of analysis to read Japanese detective fiction, albeit in terms of individual literary influences but of larger geo-cultural categories of West and Japan.
Western societies, tracking the variable locations of latecomers like Japan, and assessing the political and social costs incurred from starting later” (Harootunian 2000: xvi). One such consequence that is often ascribed to the experience of Japan, especially in its prewar moment, is the tautological notion that because its path diverged from an imagined normative linear path of modernization in a putative West, it was an “improper” or “incomplete” modernization. More fundamentally, what such a perspective effaces is co-eval character modernity around the globe, inflected unevenly in different locales without a doubt, but nonetheless fundamentally interconnected.

Indeed it is such a sense of shared historical temporality that becomes evident when the emergence of the genre of detective fiction is subjected to a proper historicizing. Just as the problem with the latecomer view of Japan’s modernity is the unexamined alignment of the modern with the West as an imagined unity – i.e., the conflation of modernization with Westernization – what is not challenged in Silver’s analysis of Rampo and Japanese detective fiction is the very notion of statically positioning Golden Age Euro-American detective fiction as the standard-bearer of “true” detective fiction. Yet, what has to be considered here is that the very notion of detective fiction as a genre – and more importantly how “Western detective fiction” has come to be constituted as the normative form the genre should take – cannot simply be taken as a given. Here, a crucial point to consider is that the inscription of a discourse that posited imagined normative “Western detective fiction” was taking place precisely when, in Europe and the United States, several significant shifts were concurrently taking place in the genre’s construction. Specifically, Slavoj Žižek has identified as a shift from what he terms “the detective-story” to “the detective-novel.”

The form of novel is not yet possible with Conan Doyle, as is attested by his novels themselves: they are really just extended short stories with a long flashback written in the form of an adventure story (Valley of Fear) or they incorporate elements of another genre, of the Gothic novel (The Hound of the Baskervilles). In the twenties, however, the detective story quickly disappears as a genre and is replaced by the detective novel (the twenties and thirties are considered the golden age of classic, “logic and deduction” detective novel). (Žižek 1990: 27)
An implication that can be drawn from Žižek’s points here is that contrary to popular perception, the form of detective fiction that has subsequently come to called the “whodunit” based on principles of rationality and deductive logic that was not always a defining characteristic of “Western detective fiction” but was instead a discursive formation that appears at a historically specific moment concurrent with the debates surrounding “Japanese detective fiction.” Indeed, it is not until 1928 that author S.S. Van Dine pens the now famous “Twenty Rules for Writing Detective Stories.” The other major treatise that codified the rules and conventions of the genre – Ronald Knox’s “Decalogue” of ten commandments – likewise does not appear until 1929. These articulations of the genre’s “proper” boundaries became necessary in reaction to various mutations and emerging developments of new forms of detective narratives such as the hardboiled novel, the thriller, and the suspense. What these developments in the literary history of the detective genre reveal is that contrary to the static standard it is typically imagined as in the received histories of Japanese detective fiction, so-called “Western detective fiction” was itself under revision at this historical conjuncture and cannot be unproblematically taken as a fixed point of reference. Its contours and boundaries were often under intense discursive contestation. Consequently, Japanese detective fiction cannot be simply read as an imported or derivative genre; what Silver reads as a particular cultural anxiety in Japan is arguably better understood as a broader historical anxiety that takes on trans-local dimensions.

Of course, a possible counterpoint to this is the fact that it was just such an understanding of precisely how Edogawa Rampo and his contemporaries grasped their situation. Even then, however, I do not believe it is sufficient to simply accept their premises and positions at face value. Rather, the challenge is to rigorously situate their utterances in their specific historical moment, that is, to account for the institutional forces that shaped the limits of the discursive space they occupied and to draw out the social functions that this desire to demarcate Japan from the West in their articulations of genre served. After all, as Fredric Jameson once pointed out, “[g]enres are essentially literary institutions, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a
particular cultural artifacts” (Jameson 1981: 106). In the context of Japanese detective fiction, Satomi Saito articulates the challenge succinctly:

While scholars examine how Japanese writers adapted the foreign genre to address social issues or how the Japanese literary tradition of crime fiction merged with the foreign genre, in many cases, these studies seem to presuppose genres exist *a priori* as a stable category… This genre needs to be examined as a site of contested discourses rather than, for example, as a cultural influence on Japanese literature, domestic writers’ appropriation of a foreign genre, or its alternative development in Japan. (Saito 2007: 1)

As far as Rampo and the *honkaku/henkaku*, modern/premodern, or West/Japan binaries that have mediated much of the critical attention to his work (and to detective fiction in Japan at large) is concerned then, Yoshikuni Igarashi is without a doubt correct when he argues that “Rampo’s work does not, in fact, force the reader to make the decision to remain on one side or the other of these binaries; rather, it traverses the terrains of both Japan and the West as well as those of the premodern and the modern” (Igarashi 2005: 303). However, beyond simply ascribing a position of hybridity that straddles these poles, it is critical to historicize the (re)production of these binaries in the first place. As I discussed previously in the introduction, the distinction between the categories of “Japan” and the “West” do not come into being outside of their discursive articulations; similarly, the “pre-modern” does not become, after all, become a discrete moment outside of its relationality constituted by the advent of the “modern.”

Harry Harootunian has suggested that in rapidly transforming social and material conditions of 1920s Japan, “modern life was figured first in discourse as fantasy, before it was ubiquitously lived as experience” (Harootunian 2000: 13), implying in effect that cultural production cannot be simply reduced to reflections or representations of the social milieus at the historical junctures in which they appear. Beyond this, it also takes on a pedagogical function; it plays an active and productive role in shaping how given historical moments can be grasped. Here though, it is crucial to account for not only
what is contained in these fantasies – what stories they tell – of modernity, but also how the very forms they take shape and structure what narratives can be produced in the first place.

It is with this context in mind that the figure of the doppelganger – and its intersections with the emergence of the genre of detective fiction in the writings of authors such as Rampo – takes on its significance. As I discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, parallel to the discursive negotiations surrounding the genre of detective fiction in Japan, the very notion of a “Japanese doppelganger” in literature or cinema is often troubled by a similar preoccupation with its purported “foreign” origins. Particularly given the German origins of the word Doppelgänger – often either transliterated as dopperugengâ or sometimes even used as is or in an Anglicized form – it is easy to fall into the trap of reducing the concept to something foreign that arrives on Japanese shores as a consequence of modernization. 10

Furthermore, a potential interrelation between detective fiction and the doppelganger is certainly hinted at by Rampo’s repeated use of the motif in his detective fictions, and for that matter, the fact that the doppelganger’s appearance as a coherent concept is historically concurrent with detective fiction’s formation as a formal genre with both emerging roughly in the 1920s and retrospectively constructing their pre-histories. More importantly, it is worth recalling that a key aspect to the figure of the doppelganger is its potential to trouble categories of identity and difference, and with that, the potential to foreground the logic and limit of genre even as it effectively functions as one; in other words, its critical force lies in the immanence of the possibility for its undoing in its very concept. As such, in examining its interplay with the genre of detective fiction in the writings of Edogawa Rampo and others, what the figure of the doppelganger bears the capacity to foreground is not only how the genre through its prescribed formal characteristics of texts classified under the label “detective fiction,” as well as in the discourse through which the genre and its boundaries is constituted – indeed the very logic of genre itself

10 For example, Akutagawa Ryûnosuke famously writes about a friend who witnesses his doppelganger – using the German word as is – in his posthumously published “Spinning Gears” (Haguruma, 1927; trans. 2008). Likewise, one of Tominozowa Rintarô’s short stories is titled “Serenade: A Lunatic Story on Doppelganger” (Serenaado: A Lunatic Story on Doppelganger,” 1922) with the subtitle, including the word “Doppelganger” itself, appearing in English.
– functioned as discursive mechanisms that mediated and structured the ways in which modern life in the 1920s could be apprehended, but also how these discursive mechanisms can become untenable.

**Doubled Detectives**

Among Edogawa Rampo’s fictions, *The Beast in the Shadows* (*Injû*, 1928; trans. 2006) is one that is particularly well-suited for illustrating this interplay between detective and doppelganger, and as such, it serves as a productive point of departure from where to begin an articulation of the larger stakes implicated by this relation. In this novel, the narrator – a detective novelist – is asked for help by a woman named Shizuko who is apparently being stalked and sent threatening letters by a former sweetheart in her youth by the name of Hirata Ichirô (playfully referencing Rampo’s own birth name Hirai Tarô), who eventually goes by the pseudonym Ôe Shundei to become a rather enigmatic and personally secretive detective novelist and erstwhile rival of the narrator’s. Throughout his investigation, he comes across motifs from Shundei’s fiction. Taking these up as clues, he is initially led to believe that the culprit, rather than Shundei himself, is Shizuko’s husband impersonating the infamous author. Thinking he had solved the case, the narrator and Shizuko slip into a secret romance and sadomasochistic sexual relationship. But, after noticing odd gaps and contradictions in the timeline of events, the narrator concludes that the whole thing was a ruse by Shizuko herself – who is in fact the real identity of Shundei – to murder her husband and deflect attention from herself. Yet at the end of it all, the narrator expresses a sense of retrospective uncertainty. Lacking an outright confession from Shizuko who subsequently commits suicide at the end of the novel following the accusations he levels against her, the narrator of *The Beast in the Shadows* wonders if he had not been in fact mistaken, if his suspicion of Shizuko was ultimately premature.

From the above summary, already evident is the plethora of disguises, impersonations, and false identities at play in this novel. At the center of it all is the question of the identity of Ôe Shundei, indeed whether Ôe Shundei has existence beyond just a name. Is he the pseudonym of one Hirata Ichirô, or is
he being impersonated by the husband of Shizuko as a part of some twisted game he is playing? Or is his presence ultimately fictive, nothing more than the orchestration of Shizuko herself? In itself, this attention to the true identity of Shundei is neither unusual nor surprising for detective fiction. After all, for the criminal to be apprehended he or she must be named and a singular identity fixed. This sets up the central dynamic between the detective on the one hand and the doppelganger and its close relatives on the other. In compounding this challenge of identification and individuation central to the task of the detective, it should come with little surprise that doubles and impersonations with their resistance to simple demarcations of identity and difference finds a home in the genre as one motif among many.

Where Rampo’s fiction is significant is in the notable pervasiveness of such motifs in his writing. Further to this, his fictions punctuate this proliferation of the doppelganger, calling particular attention to their deployment by way of a citation of texts that have since come to be identified as exemplars in the corpus of doppelganger fictions. Take, for example, the aforementioned short story “The Twins,” wherein a direct reference is made to the classic doppelganger text by Scottish author Robert Louis Stevenson *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and its famous split-personality protagonist. At one point in the story following one twin’s murder of his brother, he ponders his future criminal activities with the words: “I would be able to enact Stevenson’s fantastic tale of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in real life [Sutivunson no Jikiru-bakase to Haido-shi’ to in ano mugeketa na shōsetsu wo, genjitsu ni jikkō dekiru no desu] (Edogawa 1969a: 88). Likewise, in another work, *Beyond the Bizarre* (*Ryōki no hate*, 1930), a similar reference is made, when its protagonist – an itinerant youth named Aoki runs into a man with the exact same appearance as a friend of his. Upon realizing that his straight-laced friend Shinagawa apparently has a criminal double, he exclaims “Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde!” (Edogawa 1969b: 110). These intertextual citations of Stevenson have the effect of not only calling further attention to the figure of the double, but moreover, it is indicative of the extent to which the concept has become familiar to Rampo’s readers through the dissemination of its various literary representations. In none of the examples cited above does Rampo even bother to elaborate upon his citations with some form of summary or annotation;
rather, the author’s name and the book’s title or alternatively the name of the principal characters Jekyll and Hyde are merely dropped.\textsuperscript{11}

A more elaborate instance of such a name checking of Stevenson, however, is what appears in \textit{The Beast in the Shadows}. Near the end of the novel, following the narrator’s realization that his initial belief that Shizuko’s husband was impersonating Ôe Shundei is mistaken, he meets with Shizuko – who by then had become his illicit lover – in their private rented room. Combing once again Shundei’s fiction for clues to his suspicion that Shizuko is herself in fact the mysterious author in question, he tells her:

“That Shundei mingled with the homeless in Asakusa Park seems like something right out of Stevenson’s \textit{The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde}, don’t you think? After realizing this, I searched for something similar in Shundei’s fiction and discovered two pieces that you will perhaps know: ‘Panorama Country,’ a long story published immediately before he went missing, and ‘One Person, Two Roles,’ a short story published earlier. When I read these, I understood well how attracted he was by a Dr Jekyll-type approach, in which one person could transform into two.” (Edogawa 2006: 265)\textsuperscript{12}

The narrator’s statement is doubly interesting in that, on the one hand, like several other fictions in Rampo’s body of work, it offers yet another citation of Stevenson’s novel, and on the other hand, it does so in a transparently self-referential manner. The two stories of Shundei’s referenced here recall Rampo’s own writings that feature the figure of the doppelganger. “Panorama Country,” on the one hand, is an allusion to Rampo’s “The Strange Tale of Panorama Island,” and “One Person, Two Roles,” on the other hand, shares a title with one of Rampo’s own short stories. These are not isolated instances, too, and other similarly thinly disguised citations of Rampo’s fiction – always attributed to Shundei – are scattered throughout \textit{The Beast in the Shadows}, the most obvious of which is a reference to Rampo’s “The Stalker in the Attic” which appears in the novel as “Games in the Attic” [\textit{Yaneura no yûgi}] when, at one

\textsuperscript{11} Interestingly, to the best of my knowledge, the earliest Japanese translation of Stevenson’s novel did not appear until 1935 with the Iwanami Bunko edition translated by Iwata Ryókichi. It is likely therefore that Rampo’s reference points towards the classic 1920 film adaptation directed by John Robertson and starring John Barrymore in the titular role. According to Nishii Yaeko, the adaptation saw reasonably wide release in Japan in the same year, albeit with the title alternating between \textit{jikiru-hakase to haido-shi} and \textit{Noroeru akuma} depending on the theater in which it was shown (Nishii 2006: 231).

\textsuperscript{12} The English passage is from the Ian Hughes translation of Rampo’s novel. In the original Japanese, the titles cited are “\textit{Panorama koku}” and “\textit{Hitori futayaku}.” (Edogawa 2005b: 653).
point, the narrator is led to believe that Shundei is spying upon Shizuko in the manner represented in the
story in question. None of these references would come as a surprise to the alert reader though, given
that the relation between Edogawa Rampo and Ōe Shundei is already foreshadowed early in the
narrative through the explicit linkage made by the rendering of Shundei’s supposed real name – Hirata
Ichirō – as a play on Rampo’s own name, Hirai Ōtarō.

As a consequence of these self-referential citations, Rampo implicitly also points to his own
fascination with stories of the doppelganger, the so-called “Jekyll-type approach” that proliferates in his
detective fiction. Although it is eventually revealed to be nothing more than a red herring when the killer
is revealed to apparently be Shizuko herself, the character of Ōe Shundei is linked with the actual author
of the novel leading to the implication that the criminal the narrator seeks is Rampo himself, in effect
playfully literalizing the dictum that the relationship between author and reader is parallel to that of
criminal and detective. Indeed, some years later, this suggestion produces an effect outside of the realm
of the novel’s fictional world. Sari Kawana notes a historical parallel involving Rampo and the narrative
of The Beast in the Shadows when the infamous Tamanoi dismemberment case wherein “a dismembered
male corpse was found in a sewer pipe in Tamanoi, an area of Tokyo known for unlicensed prostitution”
takes place in 1932 (Kawana 2008: 70). The case is noteworthy for a number of reasons. As Kawana
observes, the Tamanoi case is just one of several high-profile criminal cases during this period involving
dismemberment that parallels a similar fascination for not only murder but dismemberment in the
popular erotic-grotesque fictions of the 1920s and 30s (Kawana 2008: 69-71), hinting at the possibility

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13 An early hint of this parallel, albeit still undeveloped, can be found in S.S. Van Dine’s famous “Twenty
Rules for Writing Detective Stories” includes this as one of the genre’s basic principles. In his words, “With regard
to information about the story, the following homology must be observed: author : reader = criminal : detective”
(qtd in Todorov 1977: 142). Later literary critics of detective fiction have taken the point further. As one
noteworthy example, Susan Sweeney highlights how the form of detective fiction – its emphasis on suspense, on
acts of reading signs, on the production of narrative closure – illustrates the workings of narrativity as such. One
component of this is the analogy between author and critical, reader and detective. In Sweeney’s words, “[t]he
genre dramatizes the interdependent relationship between writer and reader… the relationship between criminal
and detective, mediated by the crime which one commits and the other resolves, suggests the relationship between
writer and reader, mediated by the text… the criminal is the author of a crime that the detective must interpret”
(Sweeney 1991: 8).
that the representations of gruesome crimes in the genre have served as inspirations. Moreover, in the Tamanoi case specifically, just as Ōe Shundei’s supposed criminal activities follow an odd hiatus from writing fiction, Rampo himself took a brief break from writing at the time of the Tamanoi dismemberment, such that at one point, a suspicious reader suggested to the police that Rampo is in fact the killer (Kawana 2008: 108).14

However, this fictional play of conflating the identities of Rampo with that of the character Shundei might be complicated by the typical tendency to associate a text’s protagonist with the identity of the novel’s real-world author. Indeed, this was a tendency that was especially pronounced at the particular moment of the novel’s serialization in the late 1920s when what Tomi Suzuki has termed the “I-novel discourse” -- wherein texts came to be read specifically for their autobiographical traces – emerged as an ascendant reading paradigm (Suzuki 1997: 2-3). Rampo’s *The Beast in the Shadows* arguably plays upon such practices of reading, most fundamentally by making its narrator and detective-protagonist himself an author of detective fictions, but more importantly, by rendering him almost as a cipher, at least in the novel’s early chapters, with the effect of making the temptation of reading him as a surrogate for Rampo himself much more compelling. His name – Samukawa – is not mentioned until the third chapter, and aside from his self-identification as a writer of detective stories, ironically very little else is revealed about him making him even more of a mystery than Shundei, whom he characterizes as especially enigmatic. In fact, in large part, he is characterized in negative terms, as Shundei’s polar opposite. Whereas Shundei is eccentric and eerie, the narrator claims to be virtuous; whereas the former’s style is gloomy and grotesque, the latter’s is “bright and reflected ordinary values” (Edogawa 2006: 195). This opposition is set up as early as the novel’s very first paragraph:

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14 Kawana cites the *Yomiuri shinbun* (21 March 1932) wherein this letter, a part of which reads “Edogawa Rampo is the killer. It is extremely suspicious that he stopped writing upon the occurrence of this case. I advise the police to detain him immediately” is mentioned (Kawana 2008: 108). Rampo discusses his own hiatus from writing detective fiction in his essay “Torikku o koete” [Beyond the trick] (Edogawa 2005a).
It sometimes seems to me that there are two types of detective novelist. One, you could say, is the criminal sort, whose only interest is in the crime and who cannot be satisfied when writing a detective story of the deductive kind unless depicting the cruel psychology of the criminal. The other is the detective type, an author of very sound character whose only interest is in the intellectual process of detection and who is indifferent to the criminal’s psychology.

(Edogawa 2006: 177)

The narrator of The Beast in the Shadows then follows this up with the assertion that while on the one hand, he is an example of the latter (a detective writer whose primary preoccupation is deductive reasoning), his rival and the supposed stalker of Shizuko, Ôe Shundei, is on the other hand an example of the former (a so-called “criminal sort”).

The reference to the debates and discursive contestations surrounding the genre of detective fiction taking place at the time in Japan is clear in the novel’s opening passage, with the narrator Samukawa placing himself on the honkaku side of the equation and Shundei on the henkaku. In so doing, given how Rampo himself is famously known for straddling these poles, for being positioned as at once a honkaku as well as henkaku detective fictionist, a consequence of which is to encourage the identification of Rampo with both the narrator and his rival Shundei. Or, to put it in terms of the central positionalities within the conventional logic of detective narratives, The Beast in the Shadows metafictively plays upon the idea of positioning Rampo the author as at once both the detective and the criminal – the subject and object – of its narrative. Read against this discursive backdrop, the later citation of Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde takes on greater resonance. Although by the end of the novel when the revelation of the Shundei’s identity as Shizuko takes place it is seemingly revealed to be nothing more than a red herring, at least initially, the set up of the story is to hint at the possibility that Samukawa and Shundei are the same person, that the novel is itself one that takes a “Jekyll-type approach.”

It is this complication that Mark Silver arguably elides in his reading of The Beast in the Shadows. While he is no doubt correct in his observation that “The mystery in [The Beast in the Shadows] is structured to make the reader repeatedly confront the question of Shundei’s identity” and that the novel
sets up Shundei “as a surrogate within the text for Rampo’s own authorial identity” (Silver 2008: 152-53), his assertion that the uncertainty surrounding Shundei’s identity allegorically reflects Rampo’s own ambivalence towards a putative “West” has problems. For Silver, because the novel’s plot revolves around the question of whether Shundei has an existence outside of Shizuko’s impersonation of him, the fundamental issue at stake in the novel is whether Rampo himself can ever be more than an impersonation of Western detective fiction. However, a flaw in this analogy can be found in the slippage between Shizuko and the West as the origins against which the impersonation is defined; yet, they do not occupy an analogous positionality. Shizuko’s use of Shundei as a pseudonym is meant to conceal her gender and so as to grant her the privilege of publishing her grotesque fictions without its burden, without damaging her social position, a situation that bears little resemblance to what is at play in Rampo’s relation the West. Indeed, there is precious little to connect Shizuko to the positionality of the West. The key detail that Silver cites -- a riding crop, almost always identified in the novel as a “foreign-made riding crop” (gaikoku-sei jōba muchi), that first Shizuko’s husband and subsequently the narrator uses to whip Shizuko in their respective sexual encounters, which in his view is illustrative of how Shizuko’s sexuality is marked as culturally influenced by the West – strikes me as rather tenuous at best.

In fact, even if one accepts Silver’s premise here, the novel’s initial set up as a doppelganger fiction certainly complicates the picture. What its laying out of false clues hinting at the potential for a shared identity between Samukawa the detective-narrator and Shundei the criminal calls into question is the presupposition of an *a priori* difference between the positions of West and Japan upon which the reading of the novel as reflecting an anxiety towards cultural assimilation and influence is predicated. On the contrary, the desire to fix Shundei’s – and by implication Rampo’s – identity that serves as the primary force that moves the novel’s narrative more suggests that it is the very discursive demarcations of these positionalities – the constitution of identity and difference itself – in response to their entanglement and confusion that is at stake.
Indeed it is precisely in these terms that Seiji Lippit has characterized the discursive space of the historical moment of 1920s Japan in which Rampo’s novel appears. Extending and building upon Karatani Kôjin’s critique of the origins of Japanese modernity in terms of the demarcation of a space outside the interior – the mapping out of the positionalities of subject and object itself that marks the discursive regime of modernity15 – Lippit correctly contends that contrary to the tired narratives that reduce the narrative of modernity in Japan to nothing more than a process of assimilation of Western technology and ideas, it is “the distinctions themselves between national and foreign (that is, Western) culture… [that] were in effect mapped out by this process” (Lippit 2002: 11, emphasis mine). Moreover, Lippit further argues that what is significant about the discursive milieu of Japan in the 1920s and 30s is that this demarcation that is “the central operation” of modernity’s coming into being in Japan has “become untenable” (Lippit 2002: 33); its continued reproduction, in other words, could no longer be sustained.

For Lippit, a symptom of this milieu is the “generalized sense of anxiety surrounding the institution of literature” (Lippit 2002: 17). In his argument, this emerged as a consequence of two transformations in the context of cultural production. The first is the rapidity of the process of urbanization and “consolidation of a mass consumer capitalism… and the commodification of all levels of culture (17) such that by the end of the decade, there was much talk of the demise of the literary novel only to be replaced by popular fiction and cinema. The second is an increasing “ politicization of literature,” so to speak, in effect calling into question literature’s demarcation from politics, a discourse upon which the very concept of “literature” was first constructed: “By the 1920s, however, any faith in the autonomy of literary practice had been decisively undermined; it was only as a reaction formation

15 Karatani’s central argument is that Japan in the 1890s saw the emergence of a radical transformation in modes of perception, indeed the total discursive and epistemological configuration through which knowledge and experience are mediated. Focusing in particular on the emergence of a conception of an interiorized subject (nainen) and its differentiation from an exterior ‘landscape’ (jūketsu), for Karatani, it is through the projection a space that exceeds the interior, that is, the exterior landscape, which allows for the mapping out of the boundaries of the modern subject, and the simultaneous concealment or erasure from memory of this process, in effect producing the illusion that interiority and landscape had always existed (Karatani 1993: 193).
that the concept of ‘pure’ literature (*junbun gaku*) was first widely circulated during this period” (Lippit 2002: 19).

It is also against this backdrop that various modernist engagements with problems of language and representation make their appearance in Japan. In line with Jon Thompson’s characterization of the genre as a kind of popular modernism then, that the discursive formation of detective fiction takes place at this time in Japan is of little surprise. As Thompson puts it, to the extent that modernism is “organized around the desire to translate the incoherent into the coherent, the inarticulate into the articulate, the unsaid into the said,” it “shares an analogous epistemological form with detective fiction” (Thompson 1993: 111-12). Slavoj Žižek has made a similar observation, noting that the shifts in accents of detective fiction that took place in the 1920s coincided with the “final breakdown of the ‘realistic’ novel,” and as such needs to be read in relation to it (Žižek 1990: 27). For Žižek, the central formal problem to which both detective fiction and modernist literature emerged in response was identical: “the impossibility of telling a story, telling it in a linear, consistent way, rendering the ‘realistic’ continuity of events”; in turn, the detective’s task is “to reconstitute ‘what really happened’ around and before the murder… to tell ‘the real story’ in the form of a linear narration” (Žižek 1990: 28). Like modernist literature, in other words, detective fiction takes as its point of departure “a crisis in representation” and subjectivity, and its chief concern the desire to construct what Harry Harootunian terms “an authentic and stable ground” (Harootunian 2000: xx) upon which to anchor the production of narratives able to imagine solutions to this historical impasse. 16 Further complicating this in the context of what Neil Larsen calls “peripheral modernisms” is how this comes to be typically mapped onto a crisis of national representation (Larsen 1990: xxxvi). Such a pattern is certainly visible in the case of Japan wherein the mass influx of commodity culture was not only a transnational phenomenon, but also, in the words of

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16 The phrase “crisis in representation” is from Neil Larsen, who contends that “modernism, as an ideology dominated by but not specific to the realm of aesthetics, is the inversion . . . of a historically objective ‘crisis in representation’ affecting the construction of what are initially social and political identities” (Larsen 1990: xxiv).
Seiji Lippit, “posed the question of transnationalism, a conception of culture that exceeds national boundaries” (Lippit 2002: 19). If Rampo’s *The Beast in the Shadows* is any indication, it is this crisis that the figure of the doppelganger marks and what detective fiction – both in its narrative logic and its discursive constitution as a genre – attempts to discipline.

**Psychoanalysis and the Proliferation of Literary Doppelgangers**

Rampo’s taking up of the doppelganger in his detective fictions can be compared to the psychoanalytic attempts to define the figure. As I noted in the introduction, a key element in the constitution of the doppelganger as a concept and sign through which literary texts could be categorized was the critical attention brought to bear upon it by psychoanalytic discourse. Indeed, in their attempts to unmask – to reveal a hidden truth about – the doppelganger, both Otto Rank’s attempt to apprehend the double by way of a discussion of fictions by E.T.A. Hoffman, Dostoyevsky, and Edgar Allan Poe as well as the film *The Student of Prague* (*Der Student Von Prag*, 1913) in his book *The Double: A Psychoanalytic Study* (*Der Doppelgänger*, 1925; trans. 1971) as well as Sigmund Freud’s expansion upon Rank’s ideas and discussion in the seminal essay “The Uncanny” (*Das Unheimlich*, 1919) with its treatment of Hoffman’s short story “The Sandman” (*Der Sandmann*, 1816) might themselves be understood as detective fictions in a different register.

In fact, even more so than in the context of Germany (and Europe more generally), this was perhaps the case in the context Japan given the history of the reception of psychoanalysis there. Historically concurrent with the discursive formation of detective fiction and the rise of modernist literature, by the 1920s and 30s, the popularization of the discourse of psychoanalysis, was already evident in Japan. More importantly, it was especially among those not formally associated with the academic discipline of psychiatry that it became well received. As early as the first decades of the twentieth century, laboratories of psychology and psychiatry had begun to appear in Japan. However, their early practitioners were, more often than not, oriented towards experimental psychology and
behaviorism; indeed the first laboratory of psychology that was formed at the Tokyo Imperial University was called a “psychophysical laboratory” [seishin butsurigaku] (Oyama, et al 2001: 398-99). Consequently, when Freudian psychoanalysis came onto the scene following the publication of Ōtsuki Kaison’s “The Psychology of Forgetting” (Monowasure no shinri, 1912) and Kubō Yoshihide’s Psychoanalysis (Seishinbunseki, 1919), which are widely considered to be the pioneering texts of psychoanalysis in Japan, “most academic psychologists and psychiatrists were too conservative to accept psychoanalysis as their theoretical standpoint, though many cultured persons outside of academic institutes, especially those with a taste for literature, showed much interest in it” (Oyama, et al 2001: 401).

One such “cultured person” was Ōtsuki Kenji. A literature graduate from Waseda University, Ōtsuki was one of the founders of the Tokyo Psychoanalytical Association and a central figure in the project to translate much of Freud’s writing up to that point, culminating in a ten-volume edition that was published in 1929 (Blowers and Yang 1998: 122). Another individual who moved among Ōtsuki’s circle, however, was none other than Edogawa Rampo. Rampo was loosely associated with Ōtsuki Kenji in the planning of the journal Psychoanalysis [Seishinbunseki], at one point contributing an article titled “J.A. Shimonzu no hisoka naru jônetsu” (J.A. Symond’s Secret Passions, 1933) to the journal, and later becoming co-founder of the Japanese Psychoanalytic Association in 1931 (Driscoll 2000: 135-36).

Moreover, as Mark Driscoll notes, Rampo’s fiction often seemingly thematized psychoanalytic concerns of the time. Pointing to some of the themes that were often taken up in the field – which included such subjects as sadomasochism, sleepwalking, hypnosis, among others – and coupling them with other emergent discourses of the time such as urban anthropology and gender and sexuality studies, he observes that “[t]he fiction of Edogawa Rampo translated many of these themes into a popular idiom and sold them to a mass culture reading public” (Driscoll 2000: 4). To Driscoll’s examples, I would also add the figure of the doppelganger, for not only was Rampo an active participant in the dissemination of the motif through his own fiction, he also played a role in popularizing Euro-American precedents through his essays that discussed authors such as Edgar Allan Poe as well as producing translations such
as an anthology featuring Poe and E. T. A. Hoffman as part of the publishing house Kaizōsha’s series *World Popular Literature Collection* (*Sekai taishū bungaku zenshū 30: Pō, Hofuman*, 1929).

If Žižek, among others, is correct in noting the parallels between the roles of detective and analyst, especially in terms of the “formal procedures” they employ, then it is perhaps not coincidental that Rampo – in his capacity as a detective fiction writer – showed an interest in the figure of the doppelganger and the psychoanalytic articulations thereof. For Žižek, both detective and analyst are faced with a scene in the aftermath of an event (e.g., murder or psychic trauma) that seemingly has the appearance of an imaginary unity; the patient may not bear any outright symptoms or a crime scene may not reveal any clues which point to an obvious culprit. Upon further examination, however, cracks in this imaginary unity begin to appear. The detective may begin to notice inconsistencies in the crime scene, contradictions in the testimony of suspects, etc; in the same vein, the analyst encounters unsaid gaps, slippages, etc. In both cases, it is through the attention to these details in the “false solution” that a different solution, a different narrative emerges (Žižek 1990: 29-34).

According to Elisabeth Strowick, however, there is nevertheless a crucial difference between the two practices. On the one hand, both detective and analyst indeed employ procedures that are predicated upon a knowledge/power regime based on the tendency to “reconstruct the object from the clues, that is, to reconstruct the ‘facts’ as the very cause of those clues,” in effect fabricating *after the fact* what Strowick calls the cause-effect-nexus (Strowick 2005: 657). On the other hand, in contrast to criminology, because to a certain extent – as Freud’s own writing on confession and criminology attests to – psychoanalytic discourse maintains cognizance of its own performativity, there is within its practice an immanent intervention into the repression or disavowal of the contingency of the act of reconstruction through narration itself and with that comes the implication that what is discovered in the analysis is less the cause of a given “clue” but are rather themselves rhetorical effects of the act of
reading the “clue” in question. In her words, the psychoanalytic process, “[i]nstead of inferring the facts (that is, the act that caused the trace) from the clue, it draws the attention to the textual structure of the abductive inference itself and thus also to the construed nature of the facts themselves” (Strowick 2005: 656).

In connection with this, what is most striking as far as Edogawa Rampo’s own detective fictions are concerned is its self-referential foregrounding of precisely this centrality of the performativity of the detective’s act of narrative reconstitution, bringing the formal homology between detective and analyst in effect closer. Similar to Strowick’s characterization of psychoanalysis, literary critic Suga Hidemi reads into Edogawa Rampo’s own writing a privileging of contingency, of the “irregular” knowledge of the private detective against the “regular” knowledge of policing and offers this as a model for critical practice (Suga 1988: 225-26). In other words, there is an intervention into the repression or disavowal of the contingency of the act of reconstruction itself and its implication that what is discovered in the analysis is less the cause of a given “clue” but are rather themselves rhetorical effects of the act of reading of the “clue” in question. Indeed his work often exhibits self-reflexive characteristics in the form of unreliable narrators and detectives who call into question their own solutions.

Even as early as his debut short story “The Two-sen Copper Coin,” hints of this are evident. Despite the considerable praise it received for bearing key hallmarks of what was considered “proper” detective fiction, at the same time, as Sari Kawana has noted, it overturned several central conventions, not the least of which is its deployment of an unreliable narrator against expectations of fair-play (Kawana 2008: 20). Similarly, one of the most controversial parts of his The Beast in the Shadows is its short final chapter wherein following what initially appeared to be a conclusive leveling of an accusation at

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17 In “Psycho-Analysis and the Establishment of the Facts in Legal Proceedings” (1906), Freud at once recognizes the analogy between detection and analysis but also the limits of this analogy. He writes, “[t]he task of the therapist, however, is the same as that of the examining magistrate. We have to uncover the hidden psychical material; and in order to do this we have invented a number of detective devices, some of which it seems that you gentlemen of the law are now about to copy from us… In the case of the criminal it is a secret which he knows and hides from you, whereas in the case of the hysterical it is a secret which he himself does not know either, which is hidden even from himself” (Freud 2000: 108).
Shizuko for murdering her husband (and using him and his investigation of the alleged stalking by Ōe Shundei as an alibi), the narrator expresses doubts about his own conclusion.

Taking into consideration Žižek’s argument that “the [detective] novel is finished not when we get the answer to ‘Whodunit?’ but when the detective is finally able to tell ‘the real story’ in the form of a linear narration” (Žižek 1990: 28), then it becomes possible to conclude that the key effect of the final chapter of Rampo’s novel is to double back upon itself and self-reflexively undermine its reliability by calling into question the process of narrative production. Indeed, this is something foreshadowed earlier in the text as well. At one point in its opening chapter, the narrator indicates that there remains the possibility that he might write up his notes as a novel, yet leaving it unclear whether the text in question are his rough notes or the already fictionalized account. Furthermore, he adds the following comment: “For not only was the incident as unfathomable as a dream in broad daylight, the fantasies I built up around it were so terrifying to discomfort even myself” (Edogawa 2006: 178, emphasis mine).18

What these hints suggest are the possibility of gaps and slippages in the process of narration. In The Beast in the Shadows, there is not only a narration in the first-person against the conventions of the detective genre of the time, but it moreover seemingly suggests that there is incompleteness in the differentiation between the narrating subject and the narrated object, between narrating present and narrated past.19 Indeed, a critical point in the narrative of The Beast in the Shadows is the fact that rather than following the conventional structure wherein the act of investigation is preceded by the event of the crime, the investigation is precisely the condition of possibility for the crime to happen in the first place. As Tzvetan Todorov has shown, “[detective fiction] contains not one but two stories: the story of the crime and the story of the investigation. In their purest form, these two stories have no point in

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18 The original passage in Japanese is even more explicit about the phantasmagoric character of the narrator’s account. It reads: “bakushū no yume no yō ni, seitai no tsukanai, ben ni ninkimina koitogara de atta bakari de naku, sore ni tsuite watashi no egaita mōsō ga jūnichi wo kanjiru yō na orososhii mono de atta kara da” (Edogawa 2005b: 560).

19 Tangentially, Komori Yōichi has called attention to the relationship between this foundational schism at the heart of modern self-narration and the convention of having the detective’s story narrated by another party, e.g., Watson in the Sherlock Holmes stories, which is a practice that appears relatively less often in Rampo’s work (Komori 1988: 328).
I have already noted above how the fixing of a singular identity to the criminal is central to the conventional narrative logic of detective fiction. As Franco Moretti has shown, a principal function in detective fiction is the *individuation* of crime, so as to absolve the social body at large. In Moretti’s words, “In finding one solution that is valid for all – detective fiction does not permit alternative readings – society posits its unity, and, again, declares itself innocent… all the other characters of the detective story and, on the same plane, the reader – cannot, therefore, be actively or passively responsible for the crime” (Moretti 2005: 144-45). In a similar vein, Žižek has argued that the central point of difference between the practice of detection and analysis, is that while in the former the endpoint is the identification of a singular criminal with its implied guarantee of innocence (i.e., the externalizing or Othering of guilt) in all others, in the latter, the conclusion is that all are guilty, all are implicated in the crime (Žižek 1990: 39-40).

In *The Beast in the Shadows* however by implicating the narrator in the crime, Rampo’s novel seemingly rejects the genre’s tendency to produce a singular scapegoat, bringing it closer to psychoanalytic practice. Understood in terms of the principle of the genre that posits the analogy between reader and detective, in the novel, with the positions of detective and criminal – self and other – confused, what the novel then suggests is the implication of the reader in the crime. In other words, it functions on the basis “where the transcendental distance from and epistemological certainty towards the criminal in classical detective fiction – the Othering of the criminal by the Law – is adamantly and consistently refused,” as Mark Driscoll has characterized Rampo’s writing (Driscoll 2000: 13).

Thus, regardless of the fact that the initial set up linking the narrator with his seeming alter-ego Ōe Shundei turns out to be nothing more than a red herring, considered in terms of its narrative form...
and performance, Rampo’s detective novel could very well be read as enacting the logic of the
doppelganger. It recognizes that the fixing of (the criminal’s) identity can never be a fully completed
operation, a point that is particularly dramatized in the novel when the narrator triumphantly figures out
that Ōe Shundei is none other in Shizuko herself, pointing to Shundei’s obsession with doppelganger
fictions as a clue, as an expression of Shizuko’s deception. Ironically, while this marks off himself as a
separate entity from his rival against the early gestures of the narrative, at the same time, it also hints at
his increasing identification with Shundei. For in authoring the narrative of *The Beast in the Shadows*, he
too has produced his own “Jekyll-type” story obsessed with grotesquerie and perversion; he has in effect
become Shundei, or at least the kind of author he asserts Shundei to be.

The novel can thus be said to enact what the literary critic Paul Coates has suggested to be the
underlying basis of the doppelganger’s manifestation. In his words, “[t]he attempt to expel the foreign
element fails however: the implication of self and other is already too deep. Hence the foreign appears in
the form of the self: outside it perhaps, but its Double” (Coates 1988: 4). The doppelganger’s
appearance, in other words, marks an excess; it manifests when the detective’s compulsive task of
reinscribing a narrative is incomplete, when the relation between subject and object upon whose basis
the possibility of narration is conditioned have become too entangled to completely demarcate.

**Situating the Doppelganger**

As a figure that appears out of a broad set of interlocking discourses – modernism, psychoanalysis, and
detective fiction – that all emerge at the particular historical conjuncture of the 1920s in Japan, it should
not at all be surprising then the proliferation of doppelganger is not merely a peculiar interest isolated to
the fiction of Edogawa Rampo. Indeed it makes notable appearances in the work of several other writers
from the same period – Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, or Satō Haruō, for example – who
while themselves not usually considered detective fictionists, were nevertheless known for making use of
the genre’s tropes and narrative devices in their modernist fictions. Historically co-incident to the
emergence of the genre of detective fiction, the 1920s to the 1930s also witnessed, as a number of critics have pointed out (Suzuki 1992; Watanabe 1999; Yamashita 2003), what might be considered a doppelganger boom in literary production. This prevalence is even more noteworthy when considered against its relative absence in prior moments of history. The earliest texts Yamashita Takeshi discusses in his broad overview of the appearances of the doppelganger in Japanese literature, for example, are Mori Ōgai’s “A strange mirror” (Fushigi na kagami, 1912) and The double (Bunshin, 1913) from the end of the Meiji period (1868-1912) and the beginning of the Taisho period (1912-1926) respectively (Yamashita 2003: 12-13). Watanabe Masahiko is even more explicit in noting the relative absence of texts that deal with the doppelganger in the Meiji period; his own study of the figure of the double in modern Japanese literature is compelled to begin with a chapter that asks why there is such an absence, only to be followed by an explosion of doppelganger fictions once the Taisho period begins, something that is only punctuated further by a veritable explosion in the 1920s (Watanabe 1999: 18-20).

In fact, while they are on their own arguably anecdotal, Watanabe’s observations are substantiated by meta-analyses of the existing critical scholarship on the doppelganger motif in Japanese literature. A look at the work by Mizuno Rei and Nishii Yaeko, in their respective cataloguing of what literary texts are cited by critics when discussing the doppelganger, reveals a pattern that is in agreement with Watanabe’s suggestion. In the former case, for the period 1868-1912, Mizuno lists only eight texts appear in contrast to the twenty-three that appear between 1912 and 1926. In the latter study, Nishii’s more extensive catalog of texts is even more telling. The annotated listing of texts culled from the citations of major critical scholarship on the doppelganger that has been published in Japan – including literary work, scholarly essays, translations, and films – only fills one page for the span of the Meiji period in contrast to the full nine pages that Taisho period texts occupy (Nishii 2006).

In noting this, my intention is not to suggest that motifs akin to the double did not exist prior to the Taisho period. One could easily point to so-called “pre-modern” texts that reference related phenomenon such as somnambulism [rikonbyō] (Nishii 2006: 215-220), or the prevalence of the plot
pattern wherein twins take on a quest \[\text{futago no takara sagashi}\] as a trope in pre-modern tales, which, as Hasumi Shigehiko has suggested, finds repetition in contemporary fiction (Hasumi 1989). That said, what arguably does take place in the early twentieth century is the beginnings of the formation of the doppelganger as a genre of fiction – indeed as a concept in a broader discursive constellation – that comes into coherence at this historically specific moment. In other words, at issue here is less the existence of precedents per se, but rather how a diverse set texts came to be grouped together under the sign of the doppelganger, such that preceding texts could then retroactively be read as proto-doppelganger narratives, and subsequent texts read through the lens of an established genre.

Just as mass cultural forms such as detective fiction or modernist literary practices in Japan “cannot be analyzed solely as the transplantation, or even replication, of literary practices that originated elsewhere,” as Seiji Lippit has succinctly put the point (Lippit 2002: 21-22), neither can doppelganger fictions in Japan be read in terms of mere imitation. Nor can it be reduced to nothing more than thematizations of psychoanalytic concerns. While I have little doubt that they had a contributory effect, it is nevertheless necessary to consider the material conditions of possibility that enabled the dissemination of these discourses. In other words, although translation of doppelganger fictions from elsewhere and the importation of psychoanalytic theories into Japan certainly made available to writers and critics the modern conceptual understanding of the doppelganger, this availability alone does not in itself explain the motif’s popularity. In order to account for this, it is also necessary to consider the existing social and material conditions of the time, and how these facilitated and made possible the entry of the fantasy of the doppelganger into the popular consciousness.

With respect to this question, another story of Rampo’s titled \textit{Beyond the bizarre} is instructive. Its narrative centers on a wealthy yet bored married man by the name of Aoki, who while wandering (“curiosity-hunting”) in a street festival in Tokyo, happens to run into someone who has the exact appearance of his close friend Shinagawa, but turns out to be someone else altogether. A turn towards the bizarre takes place when he tails the “other” Shinagawa to a flophouse that houses a secret attic
wherein casual sexual encounters take place. After bringing Shinagawa with him to observe his double performing sadomasochistic sexual activities from behind a peephole, the story begins to fragment, with Shinagawa receiving a letter from one of his double’s lovers, Aoki suspecting that his wife (or her double) is also involved in the activities within the secret flophouse, ultimately culminating in the rather contrived conclusion wherein the doubles in question were engineered through plastic surgery as a part of a mad scheme of a scientist from Shanghai.20

What enables Aoki’s so-called “curiosity-hunting” – his flânerie – is the cover of anonymity provided by the mass circulation of bodies in urban spaces that were a consequence of the industrial boom experienced during the First World War when Tokyo’s population growth reached 14.5 percent, in stark contrast to the national average of one percent. Much of this growth came from waves of population migration, both from the rural regions of “Japan proper” as well as the empire’s colonial periphery. Not surprisingly, when the first national census was published in 1920, not only had Tokyo’s population reached a staggering 3.35 million, making one of the largest metropolitan centers of the world at the time, but also, over half of the city’s population was composed of migrants from outside of the city (Matsuyama 1984: 20). But the end of the First World War, however, also led to a sharp economic downturn in Japan, leading to significant increases in the surplus population produced by one of the most fundamental operations of capitalist accumulation. In this situation, there came the double push on the one hand to undermine extant forms of identities (in effect producing the anxieties marked by the image of the doppelganger), and on the other hand, the move to capture and discipline these dislocated bodies so as to facilitate their commodification and circulation as labor; in other words, in operation were the conjoined processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization.

Not coincidentally, these events led to the exacerbation of existing social problems – crime and the breakdown of communities – that consequently increased demands for greater policing of the

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population. Given the anonymity of the city, procedures of individuation and the fixing of identities became a key problem in the area of crime and its detection and policing, requiring new techniques and technologies that are subsequently taken up by writers of detective fictions. In *Beyond the bizarre*, Shinagawa articulates the problem after Aoki informs him of the existence of his double: “You say he’s a criminal. Picking someone’s pocket may be a petty offense, but what if he commits something more serious, murder for instance? I look just like him, so there’s a chance I might get entangled in some mix-up. I can neither stop nor predict his crimes. What if I don’t have an alibi? It’s rather frightening to think about,” he says. (Edogawa 1969b: 79).

It was not only in the area of policing that a reterritorializing response to the deterritorialized space of the city and its displaced populations was visible. A wide range of techniques for the management – or to put it differently, the differentiation and segmentation on various axes – of populations came about in the 1920s and 30s. The larger culture of “erotic-grotesque nonsense,” in which Kon Wajirô’s infamous “modernology” project that involved a meticulous ethnographic documenting of the transformations of such things as body language, fashion, or language as markers of modernity or the proliferation of journals of the bizarre [*ryôki*] documenting all manner of “odd” artifacts and phenomenon such as colonial photographs or accounts of uncommon sexual encounters might be included, as well as other practices like the mass media manufacture of the “modern girl” or the racialized segmentation of the labor force are all symptomatic of this reterritorializing tendency.21 In this regard, I agree with Miriam Silverberg’s suggestion that media practices in Japan at the time were a product of a “documentary impulse” (Silverberg 2006: 39) that I would contend is derived from an obsessive desire to segment and rationalize the new collective mass of dislocated human bodies.

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21 Miriam Silverberg extends the notion of “erotic grotesque nonsense” from merely a genre of popular literary discourse to suggest that it is symptomatic of “modern culture” of the 1920s and 30s at large, which she characterizes by way of the metaphor of montage (Silverberg 2006). On modernology and the modern girl, see Silverberg (2006). On *ryôki* culture, see Angles (2008). On policing and the racialization of labor, especially Korean labor in interwar Japan, see Kawashima (2009).
Along with these various biopolitical techniques, another factor in the conceptual formation of the doppelganger was the popularization of psychoanalytic theories in Japan. Given the aforementioned affinities in the epistemological foundations of the practices of detection (and its popularization in the form of detective fiction) and psychoanalysis, I do not think it is overreaching to suggest that the attempts within psychoanalytic discourses to apprehend the figure of the doppelganger is functionally analogous to the above mentioned techniques developed in response to the logic of displacement operating in Japan’s urban centers. After all, as Suzuki Sadami has noted, the lived experience of being removed from a rural collective life only to be thrust into a privatized and solitary social situation and the traumas and anxieties they produced were key conditions of possibility for the popularization of psychoanalytic discourse (Suzuki 1992: 219). The displacement produced by the experience of urbanization, in other words, also has a psychical dimension.

These anxieties were perhaps most famously expressed in Kobayashi Hideo’s characterization of Tokyo as a space of homelessness in his famous essay “Literature of the Lost Home” (Kokyô o ushinatta bungaku, 1933). For Kobayashi, because of the rapid and repeated transformations witnessed by Tokyo - punctuated further by the devastation wrought by the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923 that leveled much of the city – means that it cannot serve as stable ground for the accumulation of memory; it is a shifting, phantasmal place. Elsewhere, Kobayashi also writes: “Both the capacity and the patience to dream for oneself are lost. Yet the craving to dream remains. How convenient, then, for people to just go and stand dumbfounded in the city streets, where the high-speed, manufactured motion seems already dreamlike” (Kobayashi 1995: 128).

Kobayashi’s characterization of urban space as “dreamlike” finds an echo in Rampo’s Beyond the bizarre. Not only does the novel early on suggest that its protagonist Aoki has a tendency to confuse fact and fiction [jijitsu to shōsetsu o kondô shite] (Edogawa 1969b: 69), but also, the novel ends with the suggestion that the events depicted in the story were possibly only imagined. The last two lines of the novel repeat the words “it’s okay if it’s just a dream narrative” [yume monogatari de yoi no da] after the
expression of anxiety at the implications should the manufacture of doppelgangers through surgery were in fact possible (190). As a technique of fiction, doubtless this particular plot device has indeed become a familiar cliché. However, considered in the context of the consumer capitalist environment of Japan’s urban spaces at the time, Aoki’s dreamlike confusion of fact and fiction – of object and its image – is not just a rhetorical sleight of hand, but is emblematic of the lived experience of its consumer-subjects. Noting that the mass production of consumer commodities was coupled with their display and advertisement -- itself part of a larger cultural production that was marked by the rise of cinema along with other visual spectacles (indeed, Rampo’s *Beyond the bizarre* begins in a site catering to such spectacles) – there is certainly much merit to Miriam Silverberg’s suggestion that “the consumption of images of objects rather than the objects themselves was central to Japanese modern culture” (Silverberg 2006: 23).

However, there is another dimension to this sense of dislocation (physical and psychical) in the urban spaces of interwar Japan that cannot be ignored. Often, discussions of the emergence of consumer culture in Japan highlight the penetration of foreign commodities and cultural products. Striking, however, is the all too often overlooked slippage between “foreign” and “Western,” evident for instance in discussions of cinema or detective fiction, which as discussed above have a tendency to reduce the questions the genre poses to issues of a process of domesticating a foreign (“Western”) cultural form. But, as Seiji Lippit has critically argued:

> The rapid expansion of various forms of mass culture was premised on a worldwide spread of capital and technology that in some cases was seen to threaten the integrity of national boundaries. For certain intellectuals, for example, the influx of mass culture (typically identified as American) signaled the nation’s colonization by foreign culture and capital. Yet what was in fact occurring during this period was an expansion of Japanese empire; that is, the wave of accelerated urbanization and industrialization of the period beginning in World War I can be linked to Japan’s growing economic extension into Asia. (Lippit 2002: 20)

With this context in mind, the question of what is at stake in the various reterritorializing processes and practices that make themselves visible in 1920s and 30s Japan can be better articulated. The point is especially noteworthy when the aftermath of one of the key events that reshaped the lived experience of
urban life in Tokyo – the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake – is considered. Given the near total destruction of the urban space (and the massive reconstruction effort made necessary in its wake) that this event wrought, the event can be seen as punctuating the generalized sense of dislocation already evident by this time, with the contradictions in Japanese colonial discourse at the heart of it all. As Seiji Lippit puts it: “[t]he earthquake brought together into one symbolic locus the various transformations taking place in Japanese culture at the time, many of which had already been set in motion… It also brought into the open certain contradictions in the Japanese discourse of colonialism, which were expressed as a form of racist paranoia – specifically, the fear of being unable to distinguish between Japanese and Koreans” (Lippit 2002: 24).

What Lippit refers to here is massacre of over six thousand Koreans in Tokyo by vigilante groups (with the participation of the Tokyo police) in the wake of unsubstantiated rumors of plots to set fires and poison the water system. These groups set up check points across the ruins of the city and compelled those who passed through to perform a linguistic test to discern any accent or some other marker of linguistic difference. Whether these tests were or were not effective is beside the point here. More importantly, what is suggested by this event is that it brought to the surface the tensions and contradictions surrounding the colonial discourse of assimilation [dōka] already in operation at the time. As Ken Kawashima has thoroughly documented and analyzed, the figuration and criminalization of the Korean – and especially the so-called “unruly Korean” [futei senjin] that came to discursively stand in for all Koreans – was a persistent strategy of colonial governance through which the reality of class struggles could be repressed and displaced. In Kawashima’s words, “[t]his ethnic separation and segmentation was a fundamental social condition for the commodification of Korean labor power” (Kawashima 2009: 153). Thus, the ethnic violence in the wake of the earthquake was not simply a singular event, but a distillation of the violence at the heart of the very constitution of the Japanese empire. It revealed anxieties surrounding the penetration and internalization of the periphery into the center, the other into the self.
In other words, it revealed colonial underpinnings to the haunting of the doppelganger that went beyond just a matter of literary imagination.

The linguistic character of the tests of ethnicity in the wake of the destruction of 1923 reveals that while on the one hand, racial difference did not manifest as a visible sign, there nevertheless existed a desire to mark these differences and produce segmentations and exclusions. That practices like Kon Wajirō’s urban anthropological “modernology” emerge out of this context is thus no accident. Although for the most part, Kon does not closely engage the issue of colonial difference, his meticulous documentation of minutiae – gestures, fashion, etc. – could be said to have empire at its heart, even if it remains repressed, unsaid. Transformations in literary practice in Japan during this time – the beginnings of modernism and detective fiction, for instance – can also be understood in similar terms. In this regard, Fredric Jameson once argued that accounting for the spatial logic of imperial expansion is critical to grasping formal transformations in literary discourse. The sheer distance of the colonial periphery renders the working of the whole imperial space ungraspable, unrepresentable:

For colonialism means that a significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis, outside of the daily life and existential experience of the home country, in colonies over the water whose own life experience and life world – very different from that of the imperial power – remain unknown and unimaginable for the subjects of the imperial power, whatever social class they may belong to. Such spatial disjunction has as its immediate consequence the inability to grasp the way the system functions as a whole. (Jameson 1990: 50-51)

Without disagreeing with Jameson’s broader point about the unrepresentability of the totality of empire as crucial to the problem at hand, I would nevertheless modify his point by contending that it is not the spatial separation per se that is at issue here, but rather how, following Raymond Williams, metropolitan capitals were at once imperial capitals on whose sites the interpenetration of the colonial periphery into the metropolis – in other words, the blurring of their demarcating boundaries – took place (Williams 1989: 44). Indeed, if Tokyo in the 1920s and 30s is any indication, rather than a separated space, it appears closer to what Mary Louise Pratt has termed a “contact zone,” a “space of colonial encounters,
the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with one another, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict” (Pratt 1992: 6). One such symptom of a condition of coercion is precisely the reactionary desire (and the power to enact this desire) to re-mark boundaries, to exclude and designate the colonial subject as Other.

With detective fiction, this is especially hard to miss. Here, Ikeda Hiroshi’s observation that in many cases, the crimes that take place in the urban centers are represented as originating from the colonial periphery in detective fictions, thus marking the latter as a site that is just as central in importance as the city for the genre, is a particularly salient point (Ikeda 1997: 10). In the case of the Arthur Conan Doyle’s various Sherlock Holmes fictions, for instance, the titular character and his partner (and focalizer of the narrative) Watson’s first meeting is enabled by the latter’s injury from a campaign in Afghanistan that compels him to return to England. Moreover, as Ronald Thomas points out, the criminals in these fictions were often, if not “foreigners” literally, were nevertheless characterized as bearing some kind of foreign taint, reflecting in literary form the racist component of the discipline of criminology at the time and its inseparability from Britain’s colonial expansion (Thomas 1994: 661-663). Coupled with Thomas’ reading of the detective as “a designated figure of authority – the literary detective – [who] gains the power to tell ‘the truth’ by acquiring the right to tell someone else’s story against his or her will,” in effect mirroring the asymmetrical relation between colonizer and colonized, the profound linkage between the narrative form and colonial ideology and practice is unmistakeable (Thomas 1994: 656).

Such a tendency can be observed in the case of Rampo’s detective fiction and their associated doppelgangers as well. With Beyond the bizarre, for instance, the origin of the mad scientist who surgically manufactures the doppelgangers is traced to Shanghai. In The Beast in the Shadows, a link is made between Shizuko’s husband Oyamada’s sadomasochistic tendencies and a period of time he spent abroad. Indeed this is one of the central contentions Mark Driscoll makes in his reading of the genre of erotic-grotesque-nonsense – and Rampo’s place in it specifically – through the lens of its colonial situatedness.
Driscoll is certainly not off the mark when he points out that in Japan and elsewhere, the colonies functioned as “laboratories of modernity” wherein the various techniques of social control and policing were practiced and perfected prior to their adoption in the metropolitan centers. As such, the social content of detective fiction cannot but be colonial in character. While I am wary of going as far as Driscoll does when he asserts that both elements of Rampo’s work “originated in the Japanese colonial periphery in China and Korea” (Driscoll 2000: 5, emphasis in the original) in that the question of origins does not strike me as the key problem here, I do nonetheless agree that it is crucial to recognize that the formation of the various genres under discussion here – be it detective fiction, erotic-grotesque-nonsense, or doppelganger fictions – are predicated on the dynamics of the colonial relation.

Not coincidentally given its parallel narrative operation with detective fiction, a similar argument can be raised vis-à-vis the discourse of psychoanalysis in that its constitution takes place not only at the same moment of colonialism and imperialism, but also, with a language and logic indebted to it. In her book, Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism (2003), Ranjanna Khanna argues that psychoanalysis is itself a colonial discourse, that “the psychoanalytic self was constituted through the specifically national-colonial encounter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (Khanna 2003: 27). What this means is that the condition of possibility for the psychoanalytic construction of the modern, masculine, and “civilized” self is the demarcation of its others – the feminine, the primitive, the savage – an event that is enabled primarily through the contact zone of the colonial encounter. In other words, the coming into being of psychoanalysis is predicated upon the colonial relation and the structures of exclusion that entailed, wherein those that are marked Other are in effect incorporated into its logic as its excluded, its own constitutive repression.

As a case in point, the psychoanalytic discourse on the doppelganger confirms much of Khanna’s conclusions. It is worth recalling that a central facet of Otto Rank’s pioneering investigations into the double was a practice of armchair anthropology, serving as a reminder that his pioneering work was predicated precisely on this colonial gaze and relation. To arrive at his argument wherein the origin
of the doppelganger figure is traced to the moment of childhood narcissism prior to the demarcation of subject from object, Rank goes back in time by way of folklore read through the colonial anthropological practice of the early twentieth century in an attempt to identify a “primitive” and “pure” doppelganger, prior to modern civilization. In other words, he had to rely on a hierarchical schema of “civilizations” – a kind of “civilizational childhood” upon which narcissism could be ascribed in racial and cultural terms (Rank 1971: xvii-xviii). The imagination of the doppelganger as a concept was, in other words, inaugurated by and inseparable from the colonial encounter. 22

However, if, as Karatani Kôjin has argued in his classic critique of modernization in The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature (1993), the category of “children” had to be “discovered” – that is, invented – in modernity (115), then the uncanny appearance of the doppelganger cannot be reduced to a return of an original childhood narcissism, to “a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people,” as Sigmund Freud has put it. (Freud 1986: 366). Rather, it is a sign marking the breakdown in the foundational demarcation of child from adult (or pre-modern from modern) on which the teleology of modern subjectivity (and modernity) rests. In addition, Karatani’s point here can be broadly aligned with other arguments surrounding the constitution and structuring of historical narratives of colonial modernity that note how their underlying logic rests on a foundational schism located on a temporal axis. Dipesh Chakrabarty, for example, has asserted that a “historical construction of temporality (medieval/modern, separated by historical time), in other words, is precisely the axis along which the colonial subject splits itself. Or to put it differently, this split is what is history; writing history is performing this split over and over again” (Chakrabarty 1992: 13). In other words, the condition of possibility for historical time itself (as it has come to be conceived in colonial – and by implication – capitalist modernity) is a structure of exclusion; the “pre-modern” (or the “pre-

22 That Rank’s anthropology tended towards the speculative is possibly a reflection of his particular national position in Germany vis-à-vis colonized spaces. As Edward Said remarked in Orientalism (1978), Germany’s colonial gaze does not share with its Anglo-French-American counterparts the same degree of colonial interests in the objects of its vision. As such, while nevertheless exhibiting a parallel positional superiority, “the German Orient was almost exclusively a scholarly, or at least a classical, Orient” (Said 1978: 19).
capitalist”) had to be overcome and repressed and rendered docile by locating it as chronologically prior to “the modern” or “the capitalist.” For Chakrabarty therefore, history is the compulsion to repeat this foundational repression, this constitutive violence of capitalism and colonialism. If so, then in its enactment of the compulsion to repeat, the figure of the doppelganger seems inseparable from the history of colonial modernity, the significance of which will be the focus of attention in the subsequent chapter.
CHAPTER 2:
DOUBLED ASSIMILATIONS AND EXCLUSIONS:
THE DOPPELGANGER IN THE CONTACT ZONE

Colonial Encounters and the Doppelganger

As I noted in the introduction to this dissertation, following the pattern that Otto Rank established in his seminal study of the figure Der Doppelgänger (1925; trans. 1971), much of the preceding critical scholarship on the doppelganger motif in Euro-American literatures to date can be characterized by two tendencies. The first is the preeminent position occupied by psychoanalytical theories in its articulation seen most prominently in the work of first Ralph Tymms with his Doubles in Literary Psychology (1949) and followed by Robert Rogers with his A Psychoanalytic Study of the Double in Literature (1970). Second, there is also often a gesture to a kind of “prehistory” of the figure, often in the form of an acknowledgement of its ancient origins as manifested in myths or folklore. An example of such a move is certainly visible in Carl F. Keppler’s The Literature of the Second Self (1972). As I discussed previously, the project at the heart of this book is an attempt to construct a typology of doppelganger figures, classifying them by their various narrative functions that include in some cases that of the savior but in other instances the tormentor as well. Indeed, if there is one thing that can be taken away from Keppler’s taxonomy, it is the broad range of variations that the figure of the doppelganger can take in its literary representations. Yet interestingly, Keppler nonetheless posits a unity and universality to the idea of the doppelganger. This he does by way of pointing to its ancient origins, asserting that “from the persistence of his appearances, he would seem to be a product of considerable importance to the writers of world literature; he would seem, in other words, to have his roots deeply fastened in the soil of human thought and experience” (Keppler 1972: 2).

A similar gesture can also be seen in Gordon Sleuthag’s work on the doppelganger in recent American fiction, The Play of the Double in Postmodern American Fiction (1993). Although the object of his study and the aims of his project differ markedly from Keppler’s in that his attention is placed upon
reading the figure of the doppelganger in the fictions of such authors as Vladimir Nabokov and Thomas Pynchon as a sign of a fragmentary subjectivity through which postmodernity is often characterized, he nevertheless resorts to an appeal to origins as the initial grounding of his analysis. “The sign of the double is an ancient one,” he writes. “It has roots in the earliest Western literature, and it enjoys an astonishing capacity for survival and recombination” (Sleuthag 1993: 8). While he acknowledges the instability of the category of the double, this does not become an impediment to narrating a brief history of it that moves from Plato to postmodernism, in effect, paradoxically producing a line of continuity by way of difference. In other words, while recognizing shifts in what the doppelganger ostensibly represents, there is nonetheless an elision of the historicity of the discursive formations that enable the figure of the doppelganger to produce meaning, that is, to become a coherent concept, in the first place. This is despite opening his introduction to the book with a favorable citation of Michel Foucault’s *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972), indeed even asserting that his own work will be “archaeological.” In fact, Foucault’s writings on the formation of regimes of knowledge production have more radical implications for considering the figure of the doppelganger and its discursive coming into being than Sleuthag recognizes. Elsewhere, specifically in the closing chapter of his earlier *The Order of Things* (1970), Foucault has called attention to precisely the close relationship between psychoanalysis and ethnography, the intersection of which was, as the preceding chapters have shown, instrumental to the constitution of the concept of the doppelganger.

For Foucault, psychoanalysis and ethnography in concert took on key roles in facilitating the emergence of a discursive regime through which the condition of possibility for “knowledge about man in general” could be constituted (Foucault 1970: 378). Whereas the former produces this image of a rational European subject by way of an interpersonal relationality between neurotic and analyst, the latter does so by constituting a differential relation with other cultures mediated through the interaction of the informant and the ethnologist. As Foucault puts it, “just as [psychoanalysis] can be deployed only in the calm violence of a particular relationship and the transference it produces, so ethnology can assume its
proper dimensions only within the historical sovereignty – always restrained but always present – of European thought and the relation that can bring it face to face with all other cultures as well as with itself” (Foucault 1970: 377). Moreover, this was not merely a relationship of parallelism. Rather, there were noteworthy instances of cross-pollination between the two discourses, to the extent that they can be understood as mutually constitutive. An illustrative example of this is Sigmund Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* (1913), whose very subtitle “resemblances between the mental lives of savages and neurotics” already explicitly sets up such a relation. As the subtitle suggests, the fundamental presupposition underpinning the discussion in the book is a parallel positionality ascribed to the respective objects of scrutiny in the disciplines of psychoanalysis and ethnology, a point that Freud articulates as follows: “A comparison between the psychology of primitive peoples, as it is taught by social anthropology, and the psychology of neurotics, as it has been revealed by psychoanalysis, will be bound to show numerous points of agreement and will throw new light upon familiar facts in both sciences” (Freud 1999: 1).

With this move, Freud’s work reproduces the foundational contradiction at the heart of the historical emergence of the “science of Man.” On the one hand, a conclusion that Freud is able to make by way of this posited analogy between the “neurotic” and the “savage” is the universality of his concepts, suggesting that the Oedipus complex or the incest taboo can be traced back to the origins of the human species as such. Yet paradoxically, this claim of universality is predicated on precisely the exclusion of others from the category of “Man.” In this respect, it is a concrete illustration of the point that the psychoanalytic conception of the subject is constituted precisely through its processes of exclusion in racialized, gendered, and classed terms, such that as Mary Ann Doane has noted, it can be seen as a form of inverted ethnography. In her words, it is the “writing of the ethnicity of the white Western psyche” wherein “[r]epression becomes the prerequisite for the construction of a white culture that stipulates that female sexuality act as the trace within of what has been excluded” (Doane 1991: 211).
Through these constitutive exclusions, Freud thus enacts what Naoki Sakai has characterized as the separation and juxtaposition of two poles of “the human” – *humanitas* which designates what is considered universally human and *anthropos* which marks cultural particularity against this universality (Sakai 2001: 75-76). Implicated here then is the larger discourse of Western civilization, a central trope to which, according to Sakai is an oxymoronic understanding of the location designated “the West, which is putatively a particular locale while residing everywhere, which ardently segregates itself from the Rest but reaches all places on earth” (Sakai 2001: 79). Needless to say, this contradictory discourse of being at once universal and yet nonetheless distinct from the rest is one of the central ideological apparatuses underpinning the colonial relation, and disciplines such as anthropology and its ethnographic practices were certainly complicit in the reproduction of these ideas, as critics of the field such as Johannes Fabian and James Clifford have already demonstrated (Fabian 1983; Clifford 1988). Similarly, it is in this respect that the techniques and discourses of psychoanalysis are arguably wedded to the global system of colonial conquest and subjugation taking place at the moment of its emergence as a discipline. Ranjanna Khanna, in her remarkable and rigorous discussion of this problem in her book *Psychoanalysis and Colonialism* (2003), succinctly summarizes the point:

Psychoanalysis is a colonial discipline. A colonial intellectual formation disciplines a way of being as much as it establishes a form of analysis based in the age of colonialism and constitutive of concepts of the primitive against which the civilizing mission could establish itself. It brought into the world an idea of being that was dependent on colonial political and ontological relations, and through its disciplinary practices, formalized and perpetuated an idea of uncivilized, primitive, concealed, and timeless colonized peoples. (Khanna 2003: 6)

This is not to say that psychoanalysis can simply be dismissed or claim that its analytical insights could never have otherwise arisen outside of this discursive field. However, that it historically did emerge out of such a context means that its language and concepts inevitably imbricate the logics of this formation and as such cannot be separated from it. As such, what is therefore demanded is the rigorous historicizing of the concepts produced within psychoanalytic discourses, or what Anne McClintock has termed a “situated psychoanalysis” that is able to perform “the elaboration of narratives that interrogate
the relations between psychoanalysis and material history... a mutual engagement that would comprise both a decolonizing of psychoanalysis and a psychoanalyzing of colonialism” (McClintock 1995: 73-74).

In a number of ways, the discourse on the doppelganger is symptomatic of the colonial underpinnings of psychoanalytic discourse. If indeed Michel Foucault’s observation that the concept of “Man” that is the object of both psychoanalysis and anthropology is based on a “strange empirico-doublet” in his doubled role as both object of knowledge on the one hand and the subject that serves as the condition of possibility for the very production of such knowledge on the other (Foucault 1970: 318), then insofar as the doppelganger is a figure that at once occupies the position of subject and object, of self and other, it may very well be the emblematic signifier of this contradiction. Critically, however, what enables this vision of *humanitas* as double is the marking off and objectification of the *anthropos*, with one consequence being the differing treatments of the appearances of the doppelganger depending on its location. In Otto Rank’s work, this linkage is made most explicit when Rank discusses the figure of the doppelganger in terms of the concept of narcissism and then subsequently asserts that a fundamental narcissism can also be seen in what he terms “primitive cultures,” that is, one might understand, in Rank’s words, “primitive man, just as of the child, as being exquisitely narcissistic” (Rank 1971: 83). For Rank, therefore, so-called “primitive cultures” elsewhere (as if all these cultures were a singular, monolithic body) serve as a representative of “fossilized” cultures that offer a glimpse of “primitive man” as such, in line with conventional understandings and opinion of so-called “primitive cultures” derived from evolutionist ideology from received from the “armchair speculation” of anthropologists of the time; in other words, these so-called “primitive cultures” could then be placed upon a linear track and be made to stand-in for an earlier phase in the evolution of “civilization,” such that they compared with (as Rank does) myths, folklore, and superstitions surrounding shadows and mirrors in Germany (and other parts of Europe) at the time, which was, like the literary doppelganger motif, often associated with an impending death. Hence, Rank’s assertion: “we realize that our ‘superstition’ finds an actual counterpart in the ‘belief’ of savages” (Rank 1971: 51).
Key to this move is the psychoanalytic understanding of narcissism in Rank, as well as Freud’s thought that Rank believes to be the central psychological situation that the figure of the doppelganger embodies. Noting how the conventional understanding of the doppelganger as a harbinger of death – and indeed, in many fictions of the doppelganger, the protagonist’s “suicide” by way of the murder of one’s double – points to an enactment of displacement in that suicidal tendencies are externalized as a consequence of excessive self-love, he suggests that the double is symptomatic of a regression to a state of childlike narcissism. Or, in his words, “the double turns out to be a functional expression of the psychological fact that an individual with an attitude of this kind cannot free himself from a certain phase of his narcissistically loved ego-development” (Rank 1971: 80).

Following Freud, in other words, Rank posits narcissistic autoeroticism as a fundamental feature of a phase of childhood, which is overcome in the passage to adult sexuality. According to Freud in his discussion in “On Narcissism” (1914) what takes place in this passage is the repression of this original primary narcissism through the displacement of desire from oneself to a substitute “ego-ideal” who is typically the father figure; in other words, what takes place is the Oedipal constitution of the ego (Freud 2000: 101). Freud does not stop there though. Rather, he takes up this mechanism of the formation of an “ego-ideal” and extrapolates it from the family system to larger social formations, noting that: “The ego-ideal opens up an important avenue for the understanding of group psychology. In addition to its individual side, this ideal has a social side; it is also the common ideal of a family, a class, or a nation” (Freud 2000: 101). In this vein, “primitive cultures,” because they lack the multiple artificial groupings of “civilization” and with that the overlapping ego-ideals formed in such a structure, can be understood as fundamentally narcissistic.

Of course, the very notion of “civilization” here can be understood as itself functioning as an “ego-ideal” that is based upon group membership precisely through the exclusion of the “primitive,” a process in which psychoanalysis is both a symptom and constitutive force in that as it discusses the psychic breakdown of the subject, it paradoxically reinscribes it by positing the primacy of “civilized”
(i.e., European) subject who is capable of such an experience. Thus, as Ranjanna Khanna puts it, “[t]he idea of sustaining a modern self and a modern group is constitutionally invested in creating a primitive and colonized other. This is both constitutive of a discourse of modern selfhood, and also of the description of the social context that gave rise to modern neurosis” (Khanna 2003: 83).

By implication, the psychoanalytic understanding of the specific form of “modern neurosis” embodied by the encounter with one’s doppelganger is likewise intimately entangled with such a logic of bifurcation between civilized and primitive; the idea of the doppelganger cannot be separated from the system of colonialism upon which such a logic is predicated. As such, just as Freud suggests in “The Uncanny” (1919) that when this repressed primary narcissism returns and repeats later in life, it takes on a familiar yet frightening (hence uncanny, i.e., unheimlich, literally, un-homelike) form with the doppelganger as one of its notable embodiments, Rank is able to argue that the common association of the doppelganger with impending death in modern literature is a consequence of a similar reversal of the function of the shadow in “primitive cultures” as a ward against death, as a guarantor of immortality (Rank 1971: 86).

What ramifications might then this have for reading those fictions of the doppelganger that emerge out of non-white, non-European locations such as the fictions that came out of Japan during the 1920s and 30s? Given that almost at the very moment of its consolidation as a modern capitalist nation-state, Japan engaged in colonial expansion – first with the annexation of the Ryukyu kingdom and Ezo as the prefectures of Okinawa and Hokkaido, respectively, and moving into Taiwan in 1895 following the Sino-Japanese war and Korea in 1905 in the aftermath of the Russo-Japanese war – there is certainly a case that can be made that the same logic of civilization and savagery through which the imagination of the doppelganger was constituted were also in operation in the Japanese context. In the literary and cultural realm, it is worth noting, for example, how the invention of the notion of “landscape” whose marking off was for Karatani Kôjin a crucial component in constituting the interiorized subject in modern Japan was accompanied by the actual discovery of a landscape that was from its onset already
alienated in the colonization of Hokkaido (Karatani 1993: 40-41), implying a similar intimate entanglement between colonial practice and the interiorization of the subject. To put it in the terms of Freud, what this suggests is that on a much larger scale, the ideology of imperialism and colonialism itself became the ego-ideal with which Japan came to metaphorically identify.

That said, while to an extent, there are merits in this, complicating the picture are salient particularities in Japanese colonial policy and practice that warrant consideration. A key element here is how the prevailing dominant discourses of Social Darwinism and scientific racism – which claimed an absolute demarcation between West and non-West as civilized and primitive and through which in part European colonial expansion was rationalized – could not be fully deployed in the case of the Japanese colonial empire. Despite emerging as a colonial power, Japan was nevertheless still also the object of the same orientalizing and racializing discourses deployed against its own colonial periphery; its own positionality vis-à-vis its colonial subjects could not adopt the same transcendent normative invisibility conferred by constructions of the notion of “whiteness.” As Leo Ching notes, “caught in between the contradictory positionality of not-white, not-quite and yet-alike, Japan’s domineering gaze towards its colonial subjects in the East must always invariably redirect itself, somewhat ambivalently, to the imperialist glare of the West” (Ching 1998: 66). A useful term Oguma Eiji uses to describe this condition of Japanese imperialism is “colored colonial empire” [yûshoku no shokumin teikoku] (Oguma 1996: 81-102). This condition entailed significant contradictions, by making it necessary to produce colonial ideologies based not on the absolute exclusion of a racialized other, but rather, one that had to recombine this with one predicated upon assimilation, yet nevertheless, maintaining a level of structural exclusion so as to maintain the necessarily uneven relations of power in the colonial situation. As Tessa Morris-Suzuki has articulated, “the colonial order needed to produce both similarity and difference in its subjects. Rather than defining colonial policy simply as “assimilationist” or simply as “discriminatory”… assimilation and discrimination, Japanization and exoticization, were different sides of the same colonial coin” (Morris-Suzuki 1998b: 159).
The situation of Japan’s colonial empire can thus be grasped in the terms of colonial ambivalence that Homi Bhaba has articulated in that its ideological operation is based on “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhaba 1994: 122). But there is another dimension to this, for this takes place not only with respect to the position occupied by the colonial subjects of the Japanese empire, but also on the level of the Japanese empire’s own relation to the system of imperialism itself. In other words, this two-faced operation of assimilation and exclusion in Japanese colonial discourse is itself mirrored on a larger scale in Japan’s own position among the various colonial empires at the time. If the notion of “civilization” can be understood as broadly functioning as a form of the “ego-ideal” through which primary narcissism is repressed, as Freud discusses, then what the case of the Japanese empire and the specific character of its relations with its colonial periphery can be understood as a consequence of the incomplete assimilation and identification with this “ego-ideal” of the Japanese colonial empire as a consequence of the particular position within a system of racial hierarchy wherein it cannot assume the unmarked and invisible position that whiteness confers. Thus, with respect to thinking the doppelganger, the critical implication here is that in the case of Japan, the figure is inseparable from the question of how discourses of racialization operate at this particular historical juncture; the doppelganger is, in other words, a racialized figure, a return of the racialized repressed. Indeed, it is precisely the incompleteness of assimilation brought about by this process of racialization through which primary narcissism is blocked that is precisely the condition of possibility for the return of primary narcissism, for the appearance of the doppelganger.

More fundamentally, I would also contend that this manifests not only in the specific context of Japanese fictions of the doppelganger; in line with my remarks in the previous chapter, such fictions cannot be reduced to mere exceptions or variations to a standard (and normative) Euro-American conception of the doppelganger in a move that only serves to sustain the presumed universality of a Euro-American baseline notion of modernity through a reproduction of the West/non-West axis. Rather, Japanese doppelganger fictions are illustrative of the constitution of the concept of the
doppelganger in general, only that the contours of its racialized aspect become more visible by virtue of the lack of invisibility conferred by the ideology of whiteness. Just as the process of racialization and racialized subject formation takes place by conferring a corporeal visibility, then it makes sense that, in this process, the immanent contradictions embedded in the constitution of the modern subject is itself rendered in greater visibility.

What this indicates is that far from being the exception to the rule, the incomplete (or perhaps even contradictory) assimilation to the ego-ideal – as the case, for instance, of Japan’s relation to the existing global logic of “civilization” and its practices of colonial imperialism can be characterized– is precisely the process at work everywhere. In this respect, it then perhaps comes as no surprise that it is precisely Otto Rank’s attempt to produce and to fix the doppelganger as universal through his recourse to a colonial anthropological practice that paradoxically opens a space in which it becomes possible to reveal its very historicity and the contingency of its conceptualization upon colonial relations of power.

**Return of the Racialized Repressed**

In taking the figure of the doppelganger as signifying a kind of return of a racialized repressed, however, one thing that demands recognizing is that in such a move, there is also the danger of reifying a notion of “national culture” based upon some imagined essential difference between Orient and Occident, or more specifically in this case, Japan and the West. Indeed, to speak of a “return” in such terms cannot help but also invoke the notion of a “return to Japan” [nihon e no kaiki] following a period of cosmopolitanism based upon an identification with “European civilization” through whose prism the historiography of the period is conventionally read.

The case of Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, and the discourse surrounding his biography and body of work are illustrative here. In a pattern which mirrors the now often challenged practice of periodization that
moves from Taisho democracy and cosmopolitanism to the aggressive nationalism of the Showa period, the literary career of Tanizaki is typically read in a similar fashion. This narrative usually goes as follows: In the early part of his career, Tanizaki’s writings expressed a certain naïve infatuation, a youthful exuberance for an imagined “West,” manifesting primarily in as an obsessive hedonism and sensuality. It is only following his move to the Kansai area in the aftermath of the earthquake of 1923 that he begins to mature as a writer, and this maturation is punctuated by a marked shift towards an appreciation of the traditions of old Japan, return to his roots in Japanese traditions against the immature flirtations with what he is not (Western).

There are evident problems in this, not the least of which is its overly reductive schematic character. Rightly, it has been challenged and called into question by recent critical scholarship on not only Tanizaki specifically, but also the general periodization of this part of Japan’s history. Parallel to the argument that the schism between the Taisho and Showa periods has been overstated, critics such as Gregory Golley, for instance, have suggested that a closer examination of Tanizaki’s writings from the supposed “return to Japan” period reveals considerable subversive qualities (Golley 2008). Atsuko Sakaki complicates the purported picture of nativism in Tanizaki’s later years by unearthing a complicating third term “China” that features in much of his work (Sakaki 2006: 178). Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto has also shown that Tanizaki’s supposed “return to Japan” cannot be reduced to a mere reversal of the hierarchy between one extreme or another. “What distinguishes Tanizaki’s work,” Yoshimoto writes, “is that instead of simply reversing the hierarchical order of East and West, he constantly problematizes the identities of both and refuses to give any fixed cultural attributes to either” (Yoshimoto 2003: 72).

Although one might criticize such valorizations of Tanizaki as possibly overstated in that it is ultimately not necessary to claim Tanizaki as solely on the subversive side of the equation to challenge the notion that he became an uncritical traditionalist, Yoshimoto does identify a crucial issue at the heart

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1 This is of course a periodization that has seen much contestation as well. See, for instance, the range of essays in *Japan’s Competing Modernities* (1998) or *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taisho Democracy* (1974), which discuss the issues of historiography surrounding the passage from Taisho to Showa periods.
of the dependence on a West/Japan dyad upon which the narrative of a “return to Japan” is predicated. Presupposed and reified in the construction of this dyad is the coherence of such positionalities as “West” and “Japan” as self-evidently mutually exclusive in the first place. Indeed, as Thomas LaMarre has argued, in the discourse surrounding Tanizaki specifically, if this schema persists, “it is because it introduces a neat divide between a series of things that commentators prefer to keep apart, namely, Japan and the West, and tradition and modernity” (LaMarre 2005: 16). However, as I have also discussed in the preceding chapter vis-à-vis commentary on Edogawa Rampo and detective fiction in Japan, the categories “Western” and “Japanese” do not a priori exist outside of their discursive constitution of their difference by way of being brought into relation. Yet, what is most striking about Tanizaki’s fictions of the doppelganger is precisely how they foreground the historical production of such categories as “West” and “Japan” and render them unstable. Is it any surprise that like Rampo, many of Tanizaki’s fictions feature the doppelganger, given the figure’s incessant challenge to any neat demarcation between self and other?

Certainly, in fictions such as the very appropriately titled “The Story of A and B” (A to B no hanashi, 1921) or “Mr. Aozuka’s Story” (Aozuka-shi no hanashi, 1926) traces of the prototypical features commonly associated with fictions of the doppelganger can certainly be found that might suggest that they are instances of literary influence from European and American Romanticism, as might be inferred from, for example, Noriko Mizuta-Lippit’s pointing to the motif as an example of the impact of the writer Edgar Allan Poe on the themes and techniques deployed in Tanizaki’s fictions (Mizuta-Lippit 1977: 227). On the one hand, in the former case -- wherein two individuals, one good and another evil, who are both writers and ostensibly cousins, agree to a pact wherein A surrenders all the recognition he has earned as a writer to B as proof of his desire to redeem him from his criminal ways -- there is the typical splitting of the characters who are otherwise symmetrical – indeed in this case, punctuated further by the reduction of their identities and names to anonymous initials – on an axis of a moral binary and their subsequent interchange. On the other hand, in the latter more fleshed out text -- which centers on
an actress and the manufacture of lifelike dolls in her likeness and the uncanny effects produced therein – as Thomas LaMarre has noted, echoes of E. T. A. Hoffman’s “The Sandman” and its uncanny female dolls on which Freud placed his attention in his discussion of “the uncanny” through which he articulates his understanding of the figure of the doppelgänger are also evident (LaMarre 2005: 270).

Nevertheless, I would contend that they are not reducible to simply imitations or instances of literary influence that confirm Tanizaki’s supposed internalization of “Western culture” in the early part of his career. More than merely affirming and recapitulating these received conceptions of the figure of the doppelgänger or alternatively, producing a localized “Japanese” version of the doppelgänger figure, Tanizaki explicitly ties the motif of doubling to the operations of racializing discourses, seemingly recognizing the fundamental relation between the two. This is particularly the case in fictions such as “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” (Tomoda to Matsunaga no hanashi, 1926), which features a man living out a double life as a purportedly “Westernized” Tomoda and a “traditional Japanese” Matsunaga, but whose narrative does not merely reproduce such an opposition, but instead at once illustrates the limits of its historical production.

“The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” opens when the narrator, a professional writer identified only as F.K. receives a letter from a woman residing in Yamato (Nara) who requests his assistance in locating her missing husband. She reveals to the writer that her husband, one Matsunaga Gisuke, has again – in a cycle that apparently repeats every three or so years – left home without leaving her with any information as to his whereabouts. Upon searching his belongings for clues to find – along with an amethyst ring and several photographs featuring women in indecent garb – a postcard from the narrator addressed to a man named Tomoda Ginzō, has contacted him in the hope that he might be able to clear things up. She wonders if through this Tomoda, he might be able to assist her in locating her husband. Indeed, the narrator is familiar with Tomoda, whose own periodic disappearances curiously line up with Matsunaga’s, leading him to suspect that they are the same individual. However, his suspicions are challenged when he receives a photograph of Matsunaga and finds that he looks nothing at all like his
friend Tomoda. Whereas Tomoda is a young rotund man who does not even appear Japanese while Matsunaga, in contrast, is an old and emaciated man who bears little resemblance to Tomoda. Whereas the narrator knows Tomoda to be a lustful glutton, the photograph of Matsunaga makes him appear to be dull and depressed, as if they were not only different individuals, but “two extremes, with one bright and hearty and the other dark and melancholy” (Tanizaki 1967d: 426). Not surprisingly, when after meeting him in Yokohama, Tomoda denies any knowledge of Matsunaga and claims to have no idea how the postcard the narrator sent him happened to end up among his possessions. Nevertheless, through various plot twists and turns, with a telling one involving a ring that Tomoda wears (that oddly is not shown in the photographs Tomoda hands to the narrator to forward to Mrs. Matsunaga) that is similar to the amethyst ring left in Yamato, F.K. is eventually able to surmise the story, which is (mostly) confirmed by Tomoda’s eventual confession. Finding himself suffocated by the marriage foisted upon him by his mother, Matsunaga first fled to Paris and reinvented himself as a Frenchman named Jacques Morin, transforming not only his behavior but his very body until he is no longer recognizable as Matsunaga, or even as someone Japanese. But when he falls ill after three years, he is forced to return to his hometown and the illness causes him to lose his appetite and become once again the emaciated Matsunaga. Three years later and fully recovered, he takes off again, this time for Shanghai, once again becoming a large man and taking on the new name of Tomoda Ginzô. And thus begins a repeating three-year cycle of departures (to Yokohama, Tokyo, and finally Kobe) and returns, bodily transformations and reversions.

On its face, “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” does not take the form of the classic doppelganger; indeed it is the mirror image of the doppelganger narrative in that rather than two individuals of the same bodily appearance, what appears instead is a single person who seemingly occupies two seemingly distinct bodies, two separate identities under two separate names. That said, with its narrative framed as a mystery based upon the confusion of the identities of Tomoda and Matsunaga, its underlying logic is nonetheless not all that different from the typical doppelganger narrative. In both
cases, conflict arises from the unfixing of identities from singular bodies; Tomoda emerges as the excess that the subjectivity of Matsunaga is unable to contain (and vice versa), forging a separate persona that, if the constant oscillation between the two identities is any indication, never quite completely and neatly divisible. In this sense, I would contend that Tanizaki’s story nevertheless enacts a similar narrative of the return of the repressed, albeit couched not in the terms of individual psyches and the unconscious, but in the language of racialization and the lived experience of colonial modernity.

It is without a doubt easy to read “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” in terms of the received literary-biographical narrative of early infatuation with the West followed by a “return to Japan” that is usually ascribed to Tanizaki’s career. After all, its plot revolves precisely upon such a movement of departures and returns. That the locations cited – Shanghai, Yokohama, Tokyo, and finally Kobe – mirror Tanizaki’s own movements and changes of residence only serves to emphasize the point. Indeed, when Alain Delissen reads the text in relation to Tanizaki’s famous treatise on Japanese aesthetics *In Praise of Shadows* (*In’ei raisan*, 1933; trans. 1977), such a coding certainly appears to be in operation. Delissen writes:

> Throughout his work, the theme of dual personalities, taken from Western novels (Stevenson) and movies (Wegener), epitomises the feeling of a “double life” experienced by Japanese people vis-à-vis modernity. It finds a tentative “solution” in his more famous *In Praise of Shadows* (*In’ei raisan*, 1933), which *Tomoda and Matsunaga* foretells in various ways, although it leaves the conclusion more open to the tugging forces of modernisation. (Delissen 2003: 3)

Although Delissen does not elaborate upon the point, the notion of the “double life” here certainly recalls Harry Harootunian’s characterization of the experience of modernity in interwar Japan as a “doubling that imprinted a difference between the new demands of capitalism and the market and the force of received forms of history and cultural patterns” (Harootunian 2000: xvii). Alternatively, in this sense, perhaps a closer point of reference is to what Benedict Anderson has called in a different context – quoting a phrase from writer Jose Rizal – “the specter of comparisons,” which is, in his understanding, is “a new, restless double-consciousness which made it impossible ever after to experience Berlin
without at once thinking of Manila, or Manila without thinking of Berlin. Here indeed is the origin of nationalism which lives by making comparisons” (Anderson 1998: 229). In Tanizaki’s story, however, this tension in the experience of modernity is made corporeal, inscribed upon the very bodies of Tomoda/Matsunaga; it is not only a case of “dual personalities” as Delissen would have it, but of dual bodies. As Thomas LaMarre notes, “[i]n this story, the contradictions of modernity are expressed in physical and corporeal terms. The human body itself has become the site of coexisting tendencies that threaten to undo it” (LaMarre 2005: 272). In this sense, and coupled with the reference to In Praise of Shadows, it seems more apt to relate this with the common misreading of this experience wherein the operations of capitalist modernity is conflated with, culturally coded, or perhaps most accurately, racialized as “Western.”

Nevertheless, with its incessant dyadic comparisons of purportedly Western and Japanese aesthetics and the production of the appearance of a cultural nationalist treatise that it seemingly takes on precisely through such a comparative move, Anderson’s description seems particularly apt in reference to Tanizaki’s In Praise of Shadows. The text, often read as the culmination of the so-called “return to Japan” of Tanizaki, deals with a range of subjects, from architecture, to food, to women, and others. Nevertheless, an overarching logic that encompasses these various topics is the contrast between light and shadow, coded consistently as “Western” and “Japanese,” respectively. Whereas Tanizaki characterizes Western aesthetics (and “white” bodies) as constantly seeking illumination and clarity, the prevalence of shadow in Japanese aesthetics (and likewise, the bodies racialized as “Japanese”) serves to capture a subtlety that is lost under the bright lights of the modern.

An argument can certainly be made for Delissen’s linking of “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” with the later text In Praise of Shadows. Indeed, it warrants remarking here that in his confession at the end of the narrative, when Tomoda explains the motivation behind his periodic transformations from Tomoda to Matsunaga and back, he places emphasis upon the prevalence of spaces under a shadowy illumination [usugurai] – especially as a means of concealing the taint of yellow
inscribed upon the surface of the body as yellow skin – in his remarks about Japan to explain his disgust with it and consequent desire to become a Westerner (Tanizaki 1967d: 471-72). Pointing to this, Anne Bayard-Sakai perceptively notes how strikingly similar statements such as these are once again taken up in the text *In Praise of Shadows* albeit in reversed form. Whereas in “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” the culture of shadow that Tanizaki associates with Japan is rejected as ugly and distasteful, seven years later in *In Praise of Shadows*, the same observations are noted, but this time valorized. Thus, for Bayard-Sakai, the text functions as a continuation and punctuation of a trajectory first began as a schematic dualism in “The Story of A and B,” then literally fleshed out in “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” and then conceptually finalized in *In Praise of Shadows*. As she puts it, “this text bears the essence of what Tanizaki tried to formulate during those years – thus closing it by putting in a full stop” (Bayard-Sakai 1998: 98-99).

But can *In Praise of Shadows* be considered a closing of what has been held in tension – a triumph of the traditional (or the Japanese) over the modern (or the Western) – in the final analysis? Komori Yōichi, for one, suggests otherwise. Pointing to odd shifts and ironic reversals that permeate the text, Komori argues that rather than merely a valorization of Japanese aesthetics, it is on the contrary its subversion (Komori and Hasumi 1993: 19). Indeed, in passages dealing specifically with the impact of racialization, at certain points, a sentiment of abjection seems to erupt from the text, revealing descriptions that do not quite reverse those found in his earlier writings, such as in “The Story of Tomoda to Matsunaga.” For instance, Tanizaki writes that “the Japanese complexion, no matter how white, is tinged by a slight cloudiness” (Tanizaki 1977: 31-32) as well as the words: “When one of us goes among a group of Westerners it is like a grimy stain of a sheet of white paper” (Tanizaki 1977: 32; emphasis mine). A racial shadow, perhaps otherwise repressed, but returns when juxtaposed against “the Westerner,” nevertheless remains.

In her remarkably thorough rereading of the ambivalences that manifest in Tanizaki’s *In Praise of Shadows*, Margherita Long reads Tanizaki’s valorization of Japanese aesthetics as a kind of fetish
response. By this, what Long means is that Tanizaki’s supposed “return to Japan” is to a Japan that cannot be characterized as “original,” that is, prior to the formation of a national subjectivity as a consequence of its encounter (and desire to identify with) the West. Rather, it is one that cannot help but be intimately entangled with it, indeed emerging only by passing through and internalizing the racializing gaze upon it and in that aftermath functioning as a palliative, as a means of displacing or disavowing this foundational trauma. This, Long finds particularly in the passages in Tanizaki’s text that while purportedly valorizing Japanese aesthetics, nevertheless reveal slippages that serve to sustain the racializing gaze, only in a secretive, disavowed form. She writes:

“[W]retchedness” draws attention to itself as the product of an impossible identification that demands both that Japan adopt the Western obsession with the clean and sanitary, and the impossible standards (eliminate every last particle of dirt!) will ensure failure… Recourse to “our own culture” and “our own arts” comes only afterward, but its role as a defense against the trauma of surrender is no less necessary as a result. (Long 2009: 19)

In at least one instance, Tanizaki’s words themselves suggest an awareness of this aspect of his textual performance, writing, at one point, “We must be resigned to the fact that as long as our skin is the color it is, the loss we have suffered cannot be remedied. I have written all this because I thought that there might still be somewhere, possibly in literature or the arts, where something could be saved” (Tanizaki 1977: 42).

Ultimately though, whether Tanizaki was conscious or not is perhaps beside the point, for implicated here is not only Tanizaki himself but the larger discursive context of culturalism in which he participated. As Naoki Sakai has demonstrated, the logic these discourses of culturalism share is how the very signifier “Japan” and its associated discourses on national culture and national character comes to be imagined only “under the hegemony of Eurocentrism,” and moreover, “The demand to be
recognized in one’s particularity is in fact complicitous with Eurocentric universalism” (Sakai 2005: 10). The cultural imaginary named “Japan” emerges, in other words, only after the fact, that is, in response to the impacts of European colonial practice and a discourse of Eurocentric hegemony enabled by it. It is thus less a return per se and more of an act of discursive invention that is only possible by way of comparison, through what he terms a “schema of co-figuration.”

Long’s reading of Tanizaki’s return as a form of cultural fetish, in this sense, echoes Sakai’s argument that the assertion of an essential “Japanese culture” (that is exterior to capitalist modernity, misidentified with the fantasy of the West) is based upon what he terms “a narrative of ‘excuse.’” For Sakai, the recognition of a notion of “Japan” or “Japanese culture” arises out of the demand to recognize the normativity, the proclaimed universality of the so-called West. In his words:

> It is precisely the demand to “become like a Westerner!” or to “acquire the standards of the West,” that makes one aware of those historical and cultural traces that have accumulated within the body that make it impossible, try as one might, to comply with this demand…. We can call this narrative one of “excuse” because the existence of various commands constitute the preconditions for confirming oneself as Japanese, and the particularity of Japanese culture is offered as an explanation for the impossibility of complying with these commands. (Sakai 2005: 10-11).

In this respect, Sakai can be said to echo – to a point – Freud’s conception of the ego-ideal on a larger scale. As Freud notes, the relation of the ego-ideal “to the ego is not exhausted by the precept ‘you ought to be like this (like your father).’ It also comprises the prohibition: ‘you may not be like this (like your father)—that is, you may not do all that he does; some things are his prerogative’” (Freud 1953: 34-35).

In Tanizaki’s story, this contradiction is literalized, rendered as a doubling of the titular characters takes place not only on a psychical level, but also a corporeal level; he does not only identify with the West as Tomoda, but transforms his body to the point of effacing any racialized features that mark him as “Japanese.” To achieve the transformation from the gaunt Matsunaga to the obese and “Westernized” Tomoda, the character makes himself a glutton – he literally “assimilates” the West into
his own body. But his body can only take in so much, such that after the three years, he falls ill, and is forced to return to his hometown of Nara to once again become Japanese, become Matsunaga and recuperate. Matsunaga thus returns as a kind of reminder of Tomoda’s racial shadow, whose perceived weakness of body in the end cannot sustain the lifestyle Tomoda leads. One way to grasp this is through the terms deployed by Frantz Fanon for a different, but nevertheless arguably analogous (at least to a certain extent), context. For Fanon, racialized subject formation is predicated upon a traumatic identification with one’s inferior position so as to render one unable to fully assimilate into a given ego-ideal. It is to be ineluctably other, even to oneself. In the context of Japan, as well as other locations marked as “non-Western,” this logic comes to be coded, literally inscribed upon the body in the process of racialization, or what Frantz Fanon has called a process of “epidermalization.” (Fanon 1967: 116).

Given that the construction of the fantasy of “Japan” is dependent upon the backdrop of Eurocentric hegemony and as such, is necessarily temporally anterior to the notion of the modern (coded as the Western) yet is nevertheless imagined to represent a national culture prior to it, the temporality of culturalism can be characterized as akin to the similarly inverted temporality of trauma in its psychoanalytic conception. Crucial to the notion of trauma is the point that its recognition is predicated precisely on a repetition, that is, the traumatic event is constituted in repetition. As Marilyn Ivy has succinctly put the point, “trauma always presupposes (at least) two scenes, two events. The recognition

Related to this point, Tomoko Aoyama (2008) identifies food as a common trope through which division (whether in terms of ethics, nations, or genders) is represented in 1920s Japanese Fiction, citing Tanizaki’s “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” as one such example. According to Aoyama, in the case of Tanizaki’s story, this division is presented as one between Japan and “China as West”, with the latter read as hedonistic and voracious and the former as ascetic and anorexic (145). The conflation of China and the West is significant here for two reasons: first, it points towards what Atsuko Sakaki has identified a historical shift in the treatment of China in Japanese literary discourse from the centripetal movement towards the center of civilization to a material fetishization of Chinese objects (Sakaki 2006: 84-82); second, it signals a discursive unease surrounding the categories of “West” and “China,” allowing for their slippage. The latter point in particular I discuss further below.

Fanon uses the term “epidermalization” specifically to contrast it against the notion of “internalization” in an effort to highlight how the production of a racialized subjectivity operates on the basis of a visual schema, that is through a sense of over-visibility such that one is “overdetermined from without” (Fanon 1967: 116). Interestingly, in contrast to Fanon’s conceptualization, Tanizaki’s account in “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” locates racialization not on the body but in the body in that the transformation from Matsunaga to Tomoda is made through the internalization of food. I do not think this is necessarily a contradiction per se. Rather, the significance of this difference may very well lie incompelling the complication of the surface/depth dialectic typically ascribed to visuality and corporeality, a point that I discuss in greater detail below.
of an event as traumatic occurs only after the fact, only as a memory. Indeed, the second time is the first time; the “first” never really occurs” (Ivy 2008: 10). One might therefore, with this in mind, characterize the “Japan” that returns as uncanny in the sense of a home that has been lost, indeed that never really existed, constituted only as an effect of what is excluded in the traumatic process of identification and racialization.

It is precisely this attention to the traumatic temporality arising from the dynamics of identification and its inevitable failure and its relation with the process of racialization that Sakai articulates that is of particular relevance with reference to Tanizaki’s “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga.” At no point does Matsunaga (or any other character) speak of “Japan” in positive terms, or for that matter, make an appearance in the text outside of his mediation through Tomoda, suggesting that the conception of “Japan” has coherence only when defined negatively. Instead, Matsunaga merely serves a palliative function for Tomoda, in alignment with Margherita Long’s characterization of Tanizaki’s “Japan.” By returning home and becoming Matsunaga again for a period of three years, the character is gradually able to recover his health. His becoming Matsunaga again is not a permanent return however, for once he is able to recuperate, he again departs to again engage in the gluttony and debauchery that then transforms his body into Tomoda until another three years pass and he is again compelled to return as a consequence of failing health. It is noteworthy that after returning to his Matsunaga identity, Tomoda does not simply disappear altogether, but rather repeats the process of transformation once again. What is evident here is that the temporality of the “return to Japan” that Tomoda/Matsunaga enacts is not represented in a linear teleological fashion, that is, as a natural end-point following a brief youthful dalliance with the West, as such narratives of return often do. Rather, it takes the form of a repetition. It can be thus be described, in the terms of psychoanalysis, as a form of acting-out a repetition-compulsion, in this case, of the trauma arising out of the contradictions of racialized subjectivity and identification. It is in this sense that Matsunaga functions as a temporary palliative – a means to manage these contradictions without necessarily providing a resolution, hence
opening the door to future repetitions. It is a means of living with coexisting contradictions rather than resolving them.

With this in mind, I cannot help but wonder if this compulsion to repeat that Tomoda/Matsunaga embodies and enacts might also be extended to an inter-textual level. Contrary to Anne Bayard-Sakai’s seemingly linear characterization of the movement from “The Story of A and B” to “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” and finally closed and concluded with the “return to Japan” of In Praise of Shadows, perhaps the last text is less a conclusion, less a return and more aptly characterized as another repetition that does not necessarily resolve? Of course, one might argue, as Yamashita Takeshi does, that at the end of Tanizaki’s story, Tomoda says in his confession to the narrator that for reasons of health his next transformation will likely be his last, that when he next becomes Matsunaga again, it will this time be permanent, “suggesting that in the end, it is the Oriental Matsunaga who is victorious” (Yamashita 2003: 386), hence prefiguring Tanizaki’s “return to Japan.” Perhaps so, and yet is it not rather telling that the final confession is delivered not by Matsunaga upon the completion of his repeated departures and returns, but by Tomoda, who clearly laments how his age and failing health might prevent him from becoming Tomoda again in three years time. The “sad look” [kanashige na metsuki] (Tanizaki 1967d: 493) Tomoda is described as casting upon the narrator suggests that the home Matsunaga represents is not at all a familiar, reassuring space, but rather, an uncanny one that was never really a home in the first place. Giving the final word and primacy of voice to Tomoda belies any supposed “victory” of Matsunaga (who does not even speak or appear once in the story). More fundamentally, the rhetoric of confession is based on performatively producing the appearance of transparency and truth, and as such, by having the confession uttered in Tomoda’s voice, what is suggested is that the “Westernized” Tomoda is more than merely the disguise – the performed alter-ego – of an original and authentic “Japanese” Matsunaga. Instead, it is the apparent authenticity and
originality of Matsunaga is the performance. In effect, rather than offering a resolution, Tomoda’s confession only further deepens the confusion between original and fake.\(^5\)

The point here then is that to even pose the problem of whether it is the Westernized Tomoda or the Japanese Matsunaga who triumphs is unproductive, for what this question is premised upon is the idea that such identities as “Western” and “Japanese” remain stable and mutually exclusive through the course of the story. Yet, it is arguably just such a supposition that the conclusion of “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” calls into question. In this regard, a perceptive observation of Thomas LaMarre’s is that in his movement from Tomoda to Matsunaga and back, there is a consistent spatial compression of where this putative West is located that takes place. When Tomoda first travels, his destination is Paris. But subsequent trips take him only as far as Shanghai, then Tokyo and Yokohama, and in his last incarnation before the story ends, Kobe, a point that is given particular emphasis by the fact that Tomoda closes his confession precisely by calling attention to the nearness of Kobe to Matsunaga’s hometown (Tanizaki 1967d: 493). For LaMarre, this logic of oscillation problematizes any understanding of the relation between East and West in Tanizaki as a simple linear movement away from the West to the East. Rather, “the story presents a kind of compression or miniaturization of the oscillation between East and West, between past and present. In the end, the West now is no further than Kobe.” (LaMarre 2005: 273). Clearly then, in Tanizaki’s story, such clearly demarcated positions as East and West cannot be sustained; they imbricate one another and consequently, can be inhabited in the same places, indeed even in the same body as coexisting contradictions that are not necessarily resolved.

As such, rather than merely enforcing or foreshadowing a “return to Japan,” I would contend that the deployment of the doppelganger in Tanizaki’s “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” on the contrary foregrounds precisely the imminent contradictions that arise out of such a discourse. In this sense, it prefigures Naoki Sakai’s critique of cultural nationalist discourses that since emerged in Japan in that through the oscillations of geographic space inscribed upon the doubled body of Tomoda and

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\(^5\) Much appreciation goes to my supervisor Atsuko Sakaki for bringing this point to my attention.
Matsunaga, it brings into focus how in the shift from Taisho cosmopolitanism to Showa nationalism – the rejection of the West and the return to Japan – is but a displacement of the same “will to pursue the path of modernization” (Sakai 1997: 170).

**Oscillations and Repetition Compulsions**

There is another dimension to the geographic collapse between the poles of East and West that appears in “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga.” When the various destinations at which Tomoda ends up – Paris, Shanghai, Tokyo, Yokohama, and finally Kobe – is examined, a noteworthy slippage is revealed. Aside from the gradual decrease in the distance from Matsunaga’s hometown of Nara in each iteration of Tomoda’s departure itself, it is striking that Shanghai is mapped onto the position of “the West.” When considered in conjunction with the fact that even Japanese cities can occupy a “Western” positionality in the text, that Shanghai can do so as well is perhaps not in itself significant. However, when considered in connection that the identity of “Tomoda” as a Westernized Japanese man, as opposed to the Frenchman Jacques Morin he is able to become (because of the erasure of racial signifiers that mark him as “Japanese” as a consequence of his corporeal transformation), first appears when he ends up in Shanghai, things become more complicated. Why then does he adopt the hybridized identity of Tomoda in his latter transformations, beginning with his period of stay in Shanghai? Here, the choice of his destination is significant.

A key aspect to the treatment of Shanghai of the early twentieth century is its perceived cosmopolitanism, especially evidenced in characterizations of the city by way of comparisons with the imperial metropoles of Europe and America, for example, as a “Paris of the East” or alternatively a “New York of the West.” Yet what is particularly interesting about such statements, as Meng Yue has effectively shown, is not merely the peculiarity of a non-Western cosmopolitanism that towards which they gesture, but also the profound ambivalence about how Shanghai is situated in the world, how it is a “doubly dislocated” city (Meng 2006: vii-viii). In Meng’s analysis, what distinguishes Shanghai from many
other places is that it occupies a position reducible neither to core nor periphery; on the one hand it is not mere a non-Western version of a European metropolitan capital insofar as it was not at the core of any imperial power, yet on the other hand, was not a simple colonized city on the periphery. Rather, it was a city at the intersection of multiple empires, the meeting point of the “overlapping histories” of the various European (and later, Japanese)\(^6\) imperialisms and emergent cultural practices and negotiations in the wake of the declining Qing Empire. In other words, it was at once cosmopolitan and semicolonial; as Meng Yue succinctly puts it, “Shanghai, in short, was not merely a site that housed different worlds; rather, it was the result of their meetings and interactions” (Meng 2006: xii).

Insofar as it is a paradigmatic example of those “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today,” perhaps more so than any other location at the time, Shanghai embodies the very definition of a “contact zone” that I suggested to be a key context to the formation of the doppelganger as a concept in the preceding chapter (Pratt 1992: 4). Here though, the latter clause of Pratt’s definition warrants attention here. If indeed Shanghai is a city marked by the production of hybrid subjectivities, then it is essential that it also be recognized that the production of these hybridities takes place on an uneven terrain. In Arif Dirlik’s words, “Colonial modernity… was marked not only by inequalities in power structurally but also by inequalities in the ‘hybridization’ of those who inhabited the contact zones of colonial modernity” (Dirlik 2005: 21). It becomes necessary to ask who has the privilege of taking on hybrid subjectivities. Or, on the flip side, an even more salient question is who is compelled to perform such hybridities.

\(^6\) In fact, by 1926 when Tanizaki’s story is first published, Shanghai had become a particularly significant outpost for the Japanese empire, which rivaled even British economic interests by the 1920s, and moreover, was taking on a much more significant place in the economy of the empire as a whole, even more so than its formal colonies of Korea and Taiwan (Iriye 1992: 55). Indeed, events in 1925 – when a general strike directed against British and Japanese imperial presence in the city following violent attempts at quelling protests – further punctuate this.
Considered against this backdrop, is it a surprise that the identity of “Jacques Morin” no longer becomes possible, and in his place emerges the hybrid Tomoda? After all, in the contact zone of Shanghai and the practices of retranslation and transculturation within them, there is also a vigorous policing of (national) identities in response; through the institutions and operations of colonial relations of power/knowledge, the repressed nationality returns thus rendering the complete transformation from Matsunaga to Morin impossible. In this respect, the space of Shanghai has the consequence of making visible the very contradictions that underpin Japanese colonial modernity, which Seiji Lippit has characterized as a kind of doubling: “a double inscription of Japan as an imperial power (and thus identifies it with the West) and as an Asian (non-Western) culture” (Lippit 2002: 77). In this sense, if Lippit is correct when he notes that a crucial condition of possibility for the emergence of a sense of a cosmopolitan subjectivity (and its identification with European civilization) in Taisho literature was the foreclosure of questions of empire (and at once being predicated upon it), then it seems possible to assert that in this slippage through which Shanghai surfaces in “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga,” this constitutive excluded returns, and with it, all the concealed contradictions of Japanese colonial modernity.7

As such, although Tomoda's period of stay in Shanghai supposedly takes some years prior – according to the story, a brief period between the summer of 1912 to the Fall of 1915 (Tanizaki 1967d: 425) – it is nevertheless difficult not to consider Japan's own colonial presence in Shanghai as a context here, especially given Tanizaki's own trip to the city in 1926. In fact, this was Tanizaki's second trip to China. A previous trip in 1918 produced a range of travelogues, essays, and fictions that can be characterized as “Sinophilic.” Although this second trip in 1926 resulted in comparably little Sinophilic literary production other than this brief reference to the city of Shanghai in “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” (Sakaki 2006: 204n42), it may be productive to read this text against Tanizaki's previous

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7 James Fujii has also addressed this problem, noting that when “Used to apprehend early twentieth-century Japan, the term “modern” almost always erases Japan’s own reproduction of imperialist behavior and instead signifies the introduction of Western thought and material goods” (Fujii 1993: 133).
engagements with the space of China, particularly in terms of the ambivalent position China occupies in the Japanese cultural imaginary.

One text in particular – The unfinished novel *Mermaids/Mermen* (*Kôjin*, 1918) is worth considering in connection with “The Story of Tomoda and Matsunaga” in that both texts share in the deployment of such plot devices as racial and ethnic (as well as gender) passing as a means of constructing of secret identities and performances in conjunction with the play on doubles and doubling. At one point in the narrative, the Japanese Shakespearean stage actress Hayashi Shinju travels to Shanghai and performs a scene from a Chinese classic, appearing therein as the Chinese male character Yan Qing. Midway through her performance, however, an elderly Chinese man appears on stage, claiming that she is in fact his lost son Lin Zhenzhu (which is written using the same characters as “Hayashi Shinju”). As Tanizaki terminated his writing of the novel to work on film productions when it was only partly completed and never returned to it in later years, the mystery of Hayashi Shinju’s identity remains unresolved.

Pointing to this and other episodes in *Mermaids/Mermen*, in particular a passing remark by a peripheral character suggesting that Hayashi Shinju be compared with the legendary Chinese male-performing-female actor Mei Lanfang, Atsuko Sakaki correctly notes how the cross-ethnic performance in the text is coupled with associating a feminizing movement with China and a masculizing movement with Japan, a pattern that not only aligns it with other Sinophilic fictions that Tanizaki produced early in his career but also paralleling similar tropes in concurrent Orientalizing discourses (Sakaki 2006: 102). On its face, what this points to is an instance of Tanizaki assimilating and internalizing the logic of Orientalism in his casting his gaze upon China. Certainly, critics such as Kang Sang-jung, for instance, have argued that Japan assimilated Euro-American colonial discourses and practices, not the least of which is the colonial gaze that produces the image of a monolithic and ahistorical colonial Other (Kang

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8 Given the ideological association of women with the space of domesticity, it warrants noting here that the gendering of China as feminine resonates with the aforementioned positioning of China as an uncanny home. Chikako Nagayama (2009) discusses precisely this intersection of domestic space and gender as they are negotiated in the representations of Manchurian space in 1930s Japanese cinema. My own analysis here is indebted to her ideas.
1996). That said, without necessarily denying that there is indeed such a gesture, I would nevertheless contend here however that to emphasize solely this aspect to it might very well miss the point. While without a doubt well intentioned as a critique of Japanese colonial discourses, Oguma Eiji’s cautioning against an uncritical adoption of Edward Said’s critique of “Orientalism” in his eponymous book (1979) and its application into the context of Japan within contemporary Japanese intellectual discourse is nevertheless relevant. He writes:

“Orientalism” was accepted as an authoritative academic paradigm of the West, and as a new, universal discourse. A number of scholars in Japan started to search for and identify Japanese versions of Orientalism in the words used by modern Japanese intellectuals when referring to Chinese or Koreans. On the other hand, however, there was very little research on how Japan was portrayed by the West as part of the Orient…. Ironically, however, the more researchers emphasize the fact that an Orientalism existed in modern Japan just as it did in the West, the more they “prove” that Japan had accomplished a modernization that could be compared to that experienced by Western nations. (Oguma 2002: 352-53n12)

For Oguma, in other words, the critique of Japanese colonial discourse solely in terms of its own deployment of an orientalizing practice (without accounting for the specific conditions and contradictions in which such takes place, Japan’s own positioning as a racialized other in Euro-American discourses) ironically reproduces what may very well be a key discursive move through which the contradictions of Japanese colonial ideology were managed at the time. However, according to Komori Yōichi, a crucial operating logic of Japanese colonialism was the negotiation of two driving forces. To facilitate the functioning of its colonial project through the production of a “colonial consciousness” [shokuminchishugiteki ishibi] by way of a displacement or disavowal of its “colonial unconscious” [shokuminchishugiteki muishibi] that took the form of the external colonial pressures exerted upon Japan, that is the foundational trauma of the threat of itself becoming colonized by precisely enacting its own effective internal colonization of itself through the assimilation of the prevailing colonial discourses of the time that is at the very heart of the formation of the modern Japanese nation-state (Komori 2001: 15).
With Tanizaki’s fictions, however, this is not the case. Rather than disavowing the “colonial unconscious” in line with Komori’s arguments, there is instead a consistent foregrounding of it, most notably in his persistent meditations on “racial difference,” albeit in what would appear now to be a naïve mode that presupposes “race” as biological fact. Nevertheless, this indicates that Tanizaki remained conscious of the different positionality vis-à-vis an imagined “Orient” he inhabited as a Japanese subject. Thomas LaMarre characterizes as an a sense of imperial ambivalence that is at once an imperial nationalism and its subversion, adding that “[t]o call attention to the imperial/colonial ambivalence… is to stress that Japan is being brought into relation, not only to the West but also to the countries and regions of East Asia included in Japan’s Orient” (LaMarre 2005: 14). Likewise, Adrian Pinnington suggests that what orientalist tropes Tanizaki deploys in his writing are complicated by “his consciousness of Japanese racial difference from the West, and to suggest that this consciousness led him to relativize orientalist paradigms in interesting ways” (Pinnington 2007: 76).

In part, this may be a consequence of the particularities of the historical relation between Japan and its East Asian colonial subjects (actual or potential), especially China. Japan’s “Orient” [tôyô] is not reducible to an internalization or functional equivalent of the “Orient” constituted through the Euro-American gaze (Tanaka 1993). In the case of Japan and China, the situation is complicated by Japan’s historical location in the periphery of Chinese cultural hegemony, which is disrupted only by the appearance of Europe as a new cultural hegemon in the region, a consequence of which is, as Atsuko Sakaki has suggested, a situation of an “ambiguous cultural hierarchy” between China and Japan wherein a double logic of on the one hand the appropriation of the format of Chinese intellectual travelers that at once enact a symbolic colonization of China (Sakaki 2006: 83). In Tanizaki’s writings, this ambiguity manifests in the form of occasional slippages of identification. Thomas LaMarre perceptively observes that there are moments when Tanizaki speaks as “Japanese” and moments when he identifies as “Oriental,” and in the process affirming an identification with China and other parts of East Asia (LaMarre 2005: 13). Thus, rather than confirming Japan’s supposed “Westernization,” its disavowal of
the trauma at the core of its constitution as a nation-state and ethno-cultural identity, Tanizaki’s production of an imagined “China,” through what at first glance appears like an enactment of an orientalizing gaze, paradoxically complicates and brings to the foreground the immanent contradictions of Japanese colonial discourse; concretely.

One text that demonstrates this particularly effectively is an essay of Tanizaki’s titled “The Pursuit of Chinese Things” (Shina shumi to iu koto, 1922; trans. 2005). As the title indicates, the short piece is an articulation of Tanizaki’s complex relationship to the idea of “China” that manifests in the form of a fondness (i.e., a so-called Shina shumi). What is especially noteworthy here is Tanizaki’s move to bring into relation this taste for China and Chinese things with his own by then well-known (and one that he acknowledges) fascination for an imagined “Western culture,” indeed prefiguring the later discourses asserting a “return to Japan” that has subsequently been the trajectory ascribed to Tanizaki’s (and others) literary career when he writes “[i]t seems almost a matter of course that those who yearn only for Western civilization – and I am one of them – would, at a certain time, return to the pursuit of Japanese things, and would, in the end, hasten on to the pursuit of Chinese things” (Tanizaki 2005b: 261).

Crucially, Tanizaki here locates “China” as a further, second-order space to which one returns, a point that is given particular punctuation by Tanizaki’s suggestion that whatever sense of assimilation into Western culture one might embody, China embodies a far deeper connection for modern Japan. However, as Tanizaki metaphorically constructs China as a kind of “homeland,” it is not one that he characterizes in terms of simple familiarity or domesticity, but rather one fraught with ambivalence. He writes: “While the pursuit of Chinese things, so full of fascination, inspires a strange sense of longing in me, as when one gazes over the mountains and streams of one’s homeland, at the same time I harbor a sort of fear” (Tanizaki 2005b: 262). With this in mind, I cannot help but agree with Thomas LaMarre when, taking this point up, he convincingly argues that Tanizaki characterizes “China” here in a sense similar to Freud’s conception of the uncanny. As LaMarre puts it:
What is the terror that the writer feels when viewing a Chinese landscape but the uncanny or “unhomelike” (das unheimlich)? The Chinese landscape evokes a home that is not home, that was never home. It evokes a past that has gone yet will not go away…This past is like the unconscious that erupts into consciousness yet remains intangible and incomprehensible, resulting in a compulsive repetition that allows for the displacement but not the realization of its truths. It is a dirty little secret. It is a hobby pursued alone, furtively, like Tanizaki’s pursuit of Chinese poetry. (LaMarre 2005: 268-69)

LaMarre’s cogent reading of the logic through which Tanizaki’s writing produces “China” suggests that this image itself functions allegorically as a doppelganger, as that once repressed mirror image that is at once familiar and threatening, at once self and other. Not surprisingly, given Tanizaki’s obsessive meditations on “race” and amid the constellation of colonial discourses that were in operation at this historical moment, what the “dirty little secret” designates here is a racialized uncanny, that is, the return of a racialized repressed, or the haunting of a racial shadow. In this sense, what is seemingly suggested here is that if, in the context of Japan, this foundational trauma is displaced and disavowed through the enactment of its own colonial expansion, its own casting of an orientalizing upon its Others, ironically, it is precisely Tanizaki’s gaze upon “China” – the attempt to demarcate the other from the self – that disrupts this by provoking the traumatic repetition of seeing oneself as other.

It is in these terms that the appearance of the cross-ethnic doppelganger in Mermaids/Mermen might then be understood. As Atsuko Sakaki notes, when the actress Hayashi Shinju is first confronted onstage with the suggestion that she is the lost son of a Chinese man, it is nevertheless curious that her response is not amusement or dismissal of what on its face appears to be a patently absurd claim (in that not only is it a cross-ethnic double but a cross-gender double), but shock, as if there is more to the story – a secret, perhaps even to Hayashi Shinju herself – that is left unrevealed (Sakaki 2006: 100). That the incompleteness of the text leaves this unresolved, in effect keeping gender and ethnic identities undecidable, perhaps suggests that it is ultimately irresolvable. Thus, if Mermaids/Mermen is any indication, then at stake therefore in Tanizaki’s cross-ethnic doppelganger in the bringing into relation of various subjective positionalities is exactly their destabilization; in recognizing the fundamentally colonial
and racialized constitution of the figure of the doppelganger, the effect is ultimately to render contingent and undecidable – to call into question – the racial and cultural categories presumed to be fixed and natural.

**Contact Zone of Visuality**

That the doubling and concurrent gender and border crossing of Hayashi Shinju in *Mermaids/Mermen* is literally enacted on stage is itself of no small significance, in that it takes place at a historical moment in the aftermath of major shifts in the conception of theater and specifically acting that are themselves intimately interwoven with discourses of orientalism, imperialism and how these are inflected in gendered and racialized performances. According to Ayako Kano, by the end of the Meiji period, important changes in the practices surrounding theater and acting – and especially women's acting – in its capacity as a pedagogical space, played a significant part in a shift to “a definition of womanhood grounded in the physical body, rather than constituted in performance” (Kano 1997: 190). What defined the woman on stage became defined less by the learned gestures and performances, and more by her body (often bared) in itself, and as such, the actress in modern theater, in this sense, contributed to the formation of a conception of gender that was biologically fixed. Or, as she puts it elsewhere, “There is a shift, a realignment, from gender at the endpoint of acting, to gender at the beginning of acting” (Kano 1999: 46), that is gender as emanating from the physical body outwards and given expression in performance, as opposed to gender as the product, the very effect of these performances.9

Indeed telltale signs of this shift are represented in Tanizaki's *Mermaids/Mermen*. In Hayashi Shinju's cross-gender and cross-ethnic performance of the role of a Chinese man on stage (which the text makes out to be largely convincing), what is suggested is the privileging of performativity over the physical body. Yet in the aftermath of the old man publicly claiming that Hayashi Shinju is his lost son

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9 This should not be taken to mean that this shift is a solely reactionary move. As Kano effectively shows, there was a level of ambivalence in the increasing visibility of women and women's bodies on stage, in that while reproducing a biologically essentialist definition of gender, it allowed theater to become a crucial site of feminist struggle (Kano 1999).
Lin Zhenzhu, when there is an attempt to resolve the confusion, the means to do this is the baring of the physical body to “prove” that Hayashi Shinju is indeed a Japanese woman and not a Chinese man. Nevertheless, the mystery is ultimately left unresolved, and indeed complicated further, in that the attempt to prove Hayashi Shinju's identity as a Japanese woman results in the revelation of another doubling, this time in the form of Lin Zhenzhu's sister, who is described as appearing like a twin to the stage actress, suggesting that it may very well be the attempt to demarcate and fix these differences that provokes the doppelganger's appearance in the first place.

Implicated in this shift in the modes of gendered and racialized identifications enacted by such stage performances (whether the historical ones performed by Kawakami Sadayakko or the fictional performance Tanizaki stages in his story) and the ways in which they were viewed and made to signify that Kano addresses is not merely matters specific to the situation of theater, but a broader historical situation of an emerging modern regime of the visibility of the body that encompasses not only theater, but a larger constellation of disciplines that includes biology, medicine, policing, statistics, among others. In the field of medicine, for instance, Michel Foucault has discussed the emergence of what he calls the “medical gaze” – which he characterizes as a mode of looking and observing at the patient’s body that purports to be transparent and unmediated by discourse – as constitutive to its formation as a discipline. For Foucault, an important consequence of this procedure and its claim to untroubled empiricism and to “the care with which it silently lets things surface to the observing gaze without disturbing them with discourse” (Foucault 1973: xix) is that the body comes to be configured and made to appear as an essentially material and biological fact. Of course, this development cannot be understood as a simple move towards greater realism and to the discovery of the empirical “truth” of the body. Rather, it is a political process of knowledge production of the body. Implicit in the work of Foucault therefore is the point that a key component (if not indeed constitutive of its very condition of possibility) to the development of these disciplinary techniques therefore was the emergence of a modern regime of visuality.
It is in the work of Jonathan Crary, however, that this attention to regimes of vision and visibility is developed further and underscored. In agreement with Foucault, Crary asserts that “[t]he assessment of ‘normality’ in medicine, psychology, and other fields became an essential part of the shaping of the individual to the requirements of institutional power in the nineteenth century, and it was through these disciplines that the subject in a sense became visible” (Crary 1990: 15-16); through the rendering visible of the body, what were enabled were its inspection, classification, and categorization. Where Crary’s analysis develops further than Foucault’s however is his extension of the problem of embodied subjection to not only the object of vision but also to the practices of observation as such, and with it, their constitution of an embodied observing subject, for the same disciplinary procedures through which visible bodies were apprehended and abstracted were applied to the eye as well.

Interestingly, it is precisely within such a schema of corporealized subjective vision that Crary maps out where the doppelganger seemingly appears for Tanizaki, a point that is especially illustrated in his “The Tumor with a Human Face” (Jinmenso, 1918; trans.2005). The story is loosely structured in two parts, opening with a summary of a film within the fiction (also titled Tumor with a Human Face) only to be followed by an investigation as to the origins of the mysterious film by its lead actress. The story of the film centers on a Japanese courtesan who elopes with an American sailor. While the two are successful in escaping Japan and smuggling her to the United States, the courtesan finds that she develops a tumor on her knee that bears the hideous face of a beggar she had previously spurned (and who had killed himself in the aftermath). Persistently tortured and goaded by this tumor, she ends up murdering her husband, and then subsequently transforming into a femme fatale who seduces, robs, and kills a series of other American men, only to end up killing herself in the end when the tumor on her knee reveals itself in public. The story does not end here though and in the remainder, the focus shifts to the investigation into the origins of the film by Utagawa Yurie, the actress who plays the courtesan. Having no memory of ever making such a film, she inquires with a friend named only H who works at her studio of employment. Yet neither he nor anyone else seems to be able to trace when or how the
The madness and death that results from solitary viewings of the film is described in terms akin to the encounter with one’s doppelganger. The image on the screen collapses the distance between spectator and image, between original and copy, and as a consequence, their relation inverts and a sense of terror erupts at the threat of one’s becoming image, of being replaced by the image on the screen. As Thomas LaMarre puts it, “the terror implies a double mechanism, which entails at once ‘identification’ with the image, and the image’s destruction of the self” (LaMarre 2005: 107).

In “Tumor with a Human Face,” the encounter with the screen doppelganger enacts a kind of over-identification with the image on the screen that results in the body’s recorporealization against the presumed to be effaced body of the spectator within the darkened space of theater. In other words, Tanizaki resists an understanding of cinematic spectatorship based on a position of transcendence and
aesthetic distance. Instead, images provoke terror and shock to the body; they are not merely objects of perception but productive of affects and sensations. In this sense, the doppelganger can be compared to what Linda Williams has termed “body genres” such as horror or melodrama, which operate precisely on the activation and manipulation of affects (Williams 1991: 5) insofar as like the latter, the former compels the recognition of the “carnal density” (Crary 1991: 150) of vision.

But there is another dimension to Tanizaki’s deployment of the doppelganger in relation to his foregrounding of the materiality of the spectator’s body the figure provokes. H’s discussion of the terror in an actor’s encounter with his own face on the screen is hypothetical in nature. None of those who are said to have viewed the film and consequently suffered ill effects are in fact actors. Instead, they are film technicians and the company president. But if this encounter with the double on the screen is what provokes the experience of terror, then to what do the spectators of the film within the story Tumor with a Human Face identify if it is not necessarily their own faces? Thomas LaMarre perceptively suggests that it is a racial identification at work in Tanizaki’s story. Pointing to the description of the man whose face is superimposed onto the tumor as “so dark that you can’t say whether he’s Japanese or a South Seas native” (Tanizaki 2005a: 99), LaMarre correctly notes that more than anything else, this is a racially marked face, and it is this racial marking with which the film’s spectators identify and encounter as their uncanny double.

The affective response – the ultimate terror – is specifically that of Japanese men confronted with the repulsive face of a Japanese man, their own ugliness, their racial taint. And, as it turns out, the repulsiveness of the Japanese face is linked to the possibility of seeing oneself as a dark, colonial other, indistinguishable from a native of the South Seas. It is in this concern for racial origins that one sees how the optical unconscious or the cinematic, now a shock to the body, involves new forms of sensory experience that in turn entail new ways of organizing one’s relation to the world. (LaMarre 2005: 112)

Addressed here therefore is the ambivalent position Japan occupies in the world at the historical juncture when “The Tumor with the Human Face” first appears that I have previously discussed above. To recapitulate the point, as a colonial empire that is nevertheless subject to the same processes of
racialization as its own colonized subjects, the structuring logic of Japan’s colonial gaze is a persistent ambivalence over on the one hand, the conjoined discourse of assimilation and exclusion that organizes how its colonized subjects are positioned, but also and at once its own identification with (and exclusion from) the unmarked subjectivity of other colonial empires. By bringing this ambivalence into relation with the cinematic spectatorship, what Tanizaki’s story suggests is that the problem of the corporeal in the modernizing of vision is inseparable from processes of racialization, and for that matter, of gendered marking, with significant consequences for how the problem of the doppelganger might be apprehended.

A crucial ramification that can be drawn from this gesture is to highlight the necessity to account for how the configuration of the body under regimes of surveillance and spectacle addressed by Foucault and Crary does not take place on an even visual field. Or, to put it another way, if as Foucault has put it the mechanisms of modern sociality are organized around “a certain policy of the body, a certain way of rendering a group of men docile and useful…[which] required the involvement of definite relations of power; it called for a technique of overlapping subjection and objectification; it brought with it new procedures of individualization” (Foucault 1977: 305), then these procedures of subjection and objectification must be understood not as a singular procedure but one that produces segmentations and classifications. Indeed, this is a point Foucault recognizes in his discussions of how various exclusions and categorizations – of the mad body, the sick body, the criminal body, etc. – serve to constitute an image of the normal.

Needless to say, to this can be added the gendered and racialized bodies that are discursively produced as bearing an excess of corporeality – indeed arguably even embodying corporeality as such – as well. With Tanizaki, in “The Tumor with a Human Face,” for instance, the suggestions of Utagawa Yurie’s “to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey 1975: 11) are unmistakable. At the onset of the narrative, she is described as having a “smooth, ample figure” and as possessing a beautiful face that “tempered Occidental coquetterie with Oriental modesty” (Tanizaki 2005a: 86). Notably, these are not separable in Utagawa Yurie’s body but are properly taken up as intersecting procedures. It is telling that when the
famous roles she has played are listed in the story, they point to archetypes such as the geisha or the
dragon lady that are both gendered and racialized at once. In this respect, the character of Utagawa Yurie
might be read in conjunction with the commentary surrounding a number of theatrical performances
that the famous actress Kawakami Sadayakko and her troupe staged on tour in Europe and the United
States in 1899, performances which, as Kano notes, were gazed upon and read in terms laden with
Orientalist tropes (Kano 1997: 201-02). As such, in this context, the inscription of gender upon the
material body as its natural expression is inseparable from the intersecting biologism of the racializing
discourses concurrently in operation. Sadayakko’s body was not only gazed upon (and constituted
through this gaze) as a woman, but specifically, as a Japanese woman.

Ultimately, the point here is that the disciplinary procedures through which the body came to be
regarded as an object of vision and knowledge production and the related process wherein vision itself
came to be understood as a physiological problem are arguably inseparable from the larger organizing
logic of imperialism. Without necessarily diminishing the insights they offer, it is nonetheless worth
noting that both Foucault and Crary take up the respective epistemic shifts they address largely in the
terms of the scientific and philosophical discourses of nineteenth century Europe. Yet, rather than
originating in Europe and subsequently taken elsewhere, might it be argued that these disciplinary
procedures and techniques of vision were constituted precisely in the history of colonial relations and the
demands of colonial governance? As Mary Louise Pratt has pointed out, “For what were the slave trade
and the plantation system if not massive experiments in social engineering and discipline, serial
production, the systematization of human life, the standardizing of persons” (Pratt 1992: 36). Following
from this critique, Ann Stoler’s (1995) and Deborah Poole’s (1997) respective correctives to the work of
Foucault and Crary is indeed welcome. Stoler challenges Foucault’s chronology of the disciplinary gaze,
contending that the discourses of the body were very much underpinned by the demands colonial
expansion. For Stoler, the “scientific” language to classify bodies into different “races” developed in the
periphery was one of the crucial means through which disciplinary discourses came to be perfected in
the metropole (Stoler 1995: 7). Poole further develops this point with an attention to how colonial discourse was constitutive of the incessant abstraction of visual modernity, suggesting that “in the explosive terrain of (post)colonial relations, the notions of accumulation, serialization, and interchangeability that lay at the heart of both visual modernity and the capitalist economy were played out most dramatically in the domain of racial theory and the related physiognomic discourse of ‘types’” (Poole 1997: 14-15).

To recapitulate then, it is precisely in this intersection of colonial discourses of the body and the techniques and technologies of vision that Tanizaki locates the appearance of the doppelganger in “The Tumor with a Human Face.” The encounter with the double – that is, the sight of one’s own face on the cinematic screen, especially when placed in close-up and magnified – provokes the sensation of terror, compelling a recognition of the bodily materiality of the spectator. This, however, is a materiality marked by the signifiers of race and gender. In the former case, the shock of the cinematic experience is inflected by the identification (and disavowal of this identification) with the racialized image on the screen. But it is also a gendered procedure, for it is specifically Japanese men who experience this return of the racialized repressed in their acts of looking. Tellingly, despite H’s suggestion that actors must surely go mad at the sight of their images on the screen, the actress Utagawa Yurie expresses no such sentiment. After all, if the terror provoked by the sight of one’s double draws from its collapsing of distinctions between the subject and object of looking, then is it any surprise that it is in those who occupy a gendered position that allows for the fantasy of a fully observing subject in the economy of vision that this terror takes on valence? For the actress and her status as image or spectacle from the start, the experience of being at once subject and object of vision is less a terrifying event and more the very condition of her being.10 In Tanizaki’s story, cinema is, in other words, is taken up as a practice and

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10 As Teresa de Lauretis has argued, “The representation of woman as image (spectacle, object to be looked at, vision of beauty - and the concurrent representation of the female body as the locus of sexuality, site of visual pleasure, or lure of the gaze) is so pervasive in our culture, well before and beyond the institution of cinema, that it necessarily constitutes a starting point for any understanding of sexual difference and its ideological effects in the construction of social subjects, its presence in all forms of subjectivity” (de Lauretis 1984: 37-38).
product of a contact zone that is productive of the appearances of the figure of the doppelganger. Thomas LaMarre has put the point well: “The brilliance of Tanizaki’s exploration of the cinematic lies in his association of the collapse of perceptual distance with the collapse of geographical distance. The cinematic thus implicates a geopolitical experience, a sort of global unconscious analogous to the optical unconscious” (LaMarre 2005: 114).

Of course, the social and technical mechanisms of cinema here cannot be understood as solely determining the appearances of the doppelganger. Rather, it is simply one specific site within the regime of visual modernity that is productive of the figure’s appearances. In fact, Jonathan Crary is careful to point out that the emergence of the corporealized techniques of vision precedes the appearance of photography and cinema (Crary 1991: 14). In a similar vein, in reference to the scholarship on cinema and the formation of modern subjectivity, Ayako Kano argues that “some of the conditions for this constitution of a new subjectivity – dark auditorium, illuminated spectacle, a performance which addresses the spectator but is not addressed by the spectator – already existed in the modernizing theaters of the 1910s” (Kano 1999: 44). Theater therefore prefigures photography's and cinema's circulation of images and was just as instrumental in the production of spectacles, especially for international consumption in the various panorama halls and World Fairs; it was just as instrumental in shaping and constituting this modern subjectivity, with all its gendered and racialized components, through the structuring of the traffic of gazes implicated therein.

That said, where theater differs from photography and cinema, however, is in its reproducibility. Whereas the spectacle on the stage is accessible only to those physically present before it, photography and cinema disseminate their images across the capitalist networks of production and distribution, as the somewhat ominous conclusion of “The Tumor with the Human Face” brings to attention with the words “What will become of this film when it becomes the property of Globe? Because they’re in it for themselves, they’ll surely make many copies and distribute widely this time. That’s exactly what they’ll do” (Tanizaki 2005a: 101). Indeed, historically, colonial photography and ethnographic films were
important channels in through which an embodied otherness – in both racialized and gendered terms – came to be encountered, classified, fixed, and domesticated. Mary Ann Doane, for instance, cites the circulation of colonial photographs of African women as a case in point, writing that “Within a photographic discourse which brought the dark continent home to Europeans, the exotic and the erotic were welded together, situating the African woman as the signifier of an excessive, incommensurable sexuality” (Doane 1991: 213). Of course, the particulars of the construction of African women vis-a-vis the normative position of the European male cannot be conflated with the orientalizing gaze cast upon Japanese women, or the constitution of the colonial subjects of the Japanese empire. Yet what is common nonetheless is how the circulation of their images in effect collapse geographical distances; in other words, the dissemination these mechanically reproduced images of photographs and cinema multiply the contact zones in which colonial encounters may take place. 11 In this sense, if in Tanizaki's *Mermaids/Mermen*, the stage in Shanghai serves as one specific site wherein the contradictions embedded in the logic of Japan's colonial empire come to the foreground in the form of the doppelganger, in “The Tumor with a Human Face” in contrast, through the mechanization of image production in the cinema, such sites wherein gendered and racialized identities come to be formed and fixed – as well as the possibility of their breakdown, the possibility of the doppelganger's appearance – come to be multiplied and encountered everywhere.

11 On this point, Anne McClintock goes even further than this, suggesting that it is only when colonial images began to circulate as commodity spectacles did the global project of empire through which the subjectivities of both colonizer and colonized truly come to fruition. She writes: “if the imperial science of the surface promised to unroll over the earth a single ‘Great Map of Mankind,’ and cast a single, European, male authority over the planet, ambition far outran effect for quite some time. The project was fissured with intellectual paradox, incompletion and ignorance. The technological capacity to map and catalog the earth’s surface remained, for some time, haphazard, shoddy and downright inept. The promoters pf the global project sorely lacked the technical capacity to formally reproduce the optical ‘truth’ of nature as well as the economic capacity to distribute this truth for global consumption. In order for this to happen, the global project had to wait until the second half of the nineteenth century, with the emergence, I suggest, of commodity spectacle – in particular photography” (McClintock 1995: 34).
CHAPTER 3
SCOPIC REGIMES OF JAPANESE MODERNITY:
PSYCHOANALYSIS, VISUALITY, AND THE DOPPELGANGER

Shadows of The Student of Prague

The structural link between cinema and psychoanalysis is not a subject that has thus far gone unremarked. The most obvious point of contact is the historically coincident origin of the two technical and social apparatuses in 1895. The year witnessed both the Lumière brothers’ first public screening of a film in Paris as well as the publication of Sigmund Freud’s and Josef Breuer’s *Studies in Hysteria*, which arguably inaugurated the coming into being of psychoanalysis as a discipline. However, the connection goes beyond a mere accident of history. Indeed Walter Benjamin famously observed the shared attention to the capture of the contingent. Both psychoanalysis and cinema enable an attention to detail that had not been previously possible; whereas psychoanalysis brought attention to those traces of the unconscious that emerge as linguistic slippages, which would otherwise have been ephemeral and remained unnoticed, cinema’s manipulations of vision – close-ups and slow-motions, for example – and reproducibility bring about the possibility of defamiliarization, of revealing hidden details in everyday objects and gestures. Benjamin sums up the point with the following words: “The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses” (Benjamin 1978: 237).

However, despite this parallel history, the relationship between cinema and psychoanalysis has not always been symmetrical; or as Stephen Heath has noted, “[i]n the parallel histories of psychoanalysis and cinema, interest is, on the face of it, one-sided: cinema’s in psychoanalysis” (Heath 1999: 25). Indeed, the deployment of psychoanalytic theories of the unconscious played a crucial role in the institutionalization and consolidation of film studies as a discipline. Specifically, the work of Jacques Lacan coupled with Louis Althusser’s theorization of ideology and subject formation underpinned much of the articulation of cinema as an apparatus through which desire and fantasy came to be mobilized,
especially during the 1970s with the appearance of Christian Metz’s seminal essay “The Imaginary Signifier” (1975) in the prominent British cinema studies journal Screen as well as the publication of Jean-Louis Baudry’s “Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematic Apparatus” (1974). In contrast, as Heath shows, psychoanalytic discourse has often exhibited a resistance to a rigorous engagement with cinema. If it is not outright rejected or disavowed, as was the case with Freud himself, its engagements with cinema have a tendency to be reductive.1 More often than not, the relation between cinema and psychoanalysis tends to be reduced to either taking up the former merely as a means of illustrating concepts in the latter. Less often addressed is how the cinematic apparatus might be more than just an object for psychoanalytic investigations, but is on the contrary critical to shaping the very contours of psychoanalytic discourse itself. As Mary Ann Doane has suggested, “[p]sychoanalytic theory would appear to be dependent upon the activation of scenarios with visual, auditory, and narrative dimensions” (Doane 1991: 44-45).

Needless to say, it is necessary to complicate this relation. It is not sufficient to consider the matter only in terms of films as representations of psychoanalysis or the psychoanalytic reading of films. Rather, the critical task at hand is to take these two terms together, as cinema and psychoanalysis, with an emphasis on their very relationality, on how their points of contact mutually constitute (and complicate) their respective apparatuses and operations. Heath puts the point succinctly:

“Cinema and psychoanalysis,”2 moreover, can be a way of enclosing and delimiting a topic that should, on the contrary, be opened up to areas of concern that are not typically taken. There is a need, for example, to consider not just how psychoanalysis and psychoanalysts are represented in cinema but also how the recourse to film functions in the analytic session, how the analysand’s speech and associations may draw and depend on cinema’s given sounds and images, its provision of a residue of signifying traces taken up as unconscious material… giving some attention to the resistances of psychoanalysis: that is, to the difficulties the latter poses to and finds itself in its encounters – or misencounters – with cinema. (Heath 1999: 26-27)

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1 Sigmund Freud’s objection to cinema lies in his suspicion that it is incapable of representing psychoanalytic concepts. See Heath (1999: 26-33) for a more thorough discussion.

2 Prior to its publication as a part of an anthology of critical essays, the context of Heath’s remarks here was a 1993 conference at the University of California, Los Angeles, titled “Cinema and Psychoanalysis: Parallel Histories.” His reference to “cinema and psychoanalysis” at once addresses to the title of this conference as well as the broader problem of the relationship between the two disciplines.
It is here where an attention to the discursive formation of the doppelganger can be instructive, in that clearly outlined in the psychoanalytic attention to the figure is the crucial mediating role played by technologies of visibility at the heart of its conceptual articulations. In the opening chapter of *The Double* (*Der Doppelgänger*, 1925), Otto Rank begins his seminal analysis of the doppelganger with an elaboration of the initial impetus that provoked him to begin his study. With various caveats and apologies for beginning with what Rank calls the “random and banal subject” of film spectatorship, he nevertheless tells the story of his experience of viewing what was at the time a recently released film, Paul Wegener and Stellan Rye’s *The Student of Prague* (*Der Student von Prag*, 1913), indeed endeavoring to recount with some detail a summary of the film’s narrative (Rank 1971: 1-7). The story of *The Student of Prague* involves a young man named Balduin who becomes obsessed with a wealthy countess, but as he is a penniless student, she remains unattainable to him. When the sorcerer Scapinelli approaches him with the offer of great wealth in exchange for his reflection in the mirror, he agrees. Of course, things do not end there, and despite winning the countess Margit’s affection, his mirror image – his doppelganger – begins tormenting him, leading eventually to the ruin of his affair. In retaliation, Balduin confronts his now autonomous reflection and attempts to force him back into the mirror. Successful, the student proceeds to draw a gun and shoot his reflection in the mirror; however, it is he who falls to the ground dead in the end.

In his account, Rank provides a rather telling remark when he characterizes the scenes of the film as “shadowy, fleeting, but impressive” (Rank 1971: 3). This comment is noteworthy for a number of reasons. At its most mundane level, this characterization is of course a consequence of the absence of modes of distribution of films other than the singular experience of viewing a film in question at the theater, hence demanding that the story be recapitulated from memory. Another level to Rank’s remarks though is its gesture to how the film’s plot has the potential to evoke a sense of déjà vu, a sense of having vague recollections of other narratives of the doppelganger. Many of the tropes and narrative
patterns employed by *The Student of Prague* have since become familiar elements of films and fictions that can broadly be classified together under the sign of the doppelganger. Indeed at this juncture, it is likely that the narrative of *The Student of Prague* will to some extent sound familiar to many, regardless of whether or not they have in fact seen the film or one of its several remakes through the intervening years.³

This is not all that surprising when one considers that Edgar Allan Poe is credited as one of the writers of the film. His now famous short story “William Wilson” (1839) was one of the film’s primary inspirations, and in fact, *The Student of Prague* may very well be considered a loose adaptation of Poe’s story. Like *The Student of Prague*, “William Wilson” deals with a student (albeit in this case at Eton College and Oxford University) who is persistently pursued by his apparent double – another young man who bears the same name and face as the story’s protagonist. Disgusted by the presence of this doppelganger, he decides to leave school and instead lead a life of debauchery, at one point swindling a young nobleman of his money in a game of cards and later beginning an adulterous affair. This does not allow him to escape his doppelganger, however, who turns up wherever he happens to go. In a narrative development paralleled by *The Student of Prague*, it is only when he takes his doppelganger into the anteroom of a banquet hall and kills him that the eponymous protagonist finds himself rid of his double, but only at the cost of his own life.

By the time *The Student of Prague* was produced, Poe’s story, along with the fictions of German Romantics such as E. T. A. Hoffmann or Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) had since become one of the defining texts of the theme. The comments by the German novelist Thomas Mann on Fyodor Dostoevsky’s own doppelganger-themed novella “The Double: A Petersburg Poem” (1846) illustrates this point well. Mann asserts that Dostoevsky’s novella “by no means improved on Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘William Wilson,’ a tale that deals with the same old romantic

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³ Wegener’s film saw its first remake produced as early as 1926, with Henrik Galeen’s similarly titled film, only to be followed yet again in 1935 by another version directed by Arthur Robison. A Czech television miniseries (*Praski Student*, 1990) and an English short film remake (*The Student of Prague*, 2004) also exist.
motif in a way far more profound on the moral side and more successfully resolving the critical [theme] in the poetic” (qtd. in Meyers 1992: 207). The implication here is that Poe’s story had become an established standard against which other doppelganger fictions can be read and compared. With this in mind, and in conjunction with Otto Rank’s taking up of the film as his point of departure for the early theoretical articulations of the doppelganger in psychoanalytic discourse, the merit of Nishii Yaeko’s suggestion that the appearance of The Student of Prague marks a key moment in the consolidation of the doppelganger as a coherent genre becomes evident (Nishii 2006: 227-28). The film recapitulates (and in effect constructs) what were to become the standard key tropes and formulae of preceding doppelganger fictions – the twin that haunts one’s every move, the Faustian bargain, the unleashing of hedonistic sexuality and violence, not to mention the conclusion wherein the man who murders his own mirror-image only to end up killing himself – from such sources as not only “William Wilson” but also Oscar Wilde’s The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890).

In the particular context of Japan wherein that the dissemination of film, in contrast to that of literary or critical texts on the doppelganger, was less affected by the temporal lag inevitable in the production of any literary translation, the impact of film on the popularization of the motif is difficult to overstate. In many instances, film adaptations of fictions of the doppelganger appeared nearly simultaneously as the translations of their source texts in Japan, if not prior to them. For example, as I briefly touched upon in Chapter 1, it can be recalled that Edogawa Rampo’s numerous references to Robert Louis Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde were made apparently prior to Japanese translations of the novel becoming widely disseminated among the reading population, suggesting that it is the novel’s film adaptation that became a point of reference. Likewise, Japanese translations of “William Wilson” did not make an appearance until 1913, only a year prior to the release in Japan of The Student of Prague. In this respect, Watanabe Masahiko is certainly correct when he

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4 The translation in question here appeared as a part of a collection of Poe’s fiction under the title Akaki shi no kamen (The Masque of Red Death) translated by Tanizaki Seiji, brother of the novelist Tanizaki Jun’ichirō
highlights not only the arrival of psychoanalysis in Japan, but also the mechanical reproductive
technology of cinema as crucial elements that were formative of constituting the condition of possibility
for the emergence and popularization of the concept of the doppelganger in Japan during the 1920s
(Watanabe 1999: 70).

What is striking about the doppelganger specifically is how it is not reducible to just another
motif that finds circulation through the mass distribution of cinematic spectacles. More fundamentally,
its very features – in particular its collapse of the distinctions between original and copy – underscore the
very logic of these techniques of industrial reproduction of the image. This is a point that Jean
Baudrillard has noted when he highlights a linkage between the uncanniness of the indexical quality of
the technology of photography and the cinema and how the figure of the doppelganger functions to
foreground a metafilmic character to _The Student of Prague_. In his words:

> Counterfeit and reproduction always imply an anxiety, a disquieting strangeness. There is unease
in front of the photograph, which as been assimilated into a sorcerer’s trickery, an unease, more
generally, in front of any technical equipment. Benjamin relates this to the unease bound up with
the appearance of a mirror-image. There is already a little sorcery at work in the mirror, but how
much more there would be were the image to be detached from the mirror, transported,
stockpiled, and reproduced at whim (cf. _The Student of Prague_, where the Devil detaches the
student’s image from the mirror and then hunts him down through the intermediary of this
image). (Baudrillard 1993: 84)

What Wegener and Rye’s film brings to attention, in other words, are the parallels between the
discourses surrounding reproductive technologies of vision (e.g., cinema, photography) and the
doppelganger. Considered with this in mind, that it was _The Student of Prague_ that served as the point of
departure for the psychoanalytic examination of the doppelganger in Rank’s case was perhaps no
accident. Wegener and Rye’s film – and perhaps doppelganger films in general – can after all arguably be
viewed as meditations on mechanism of cinematic representation and reproduction. Andrew J. Webber
articulates the point succinctly when he writes: “As is invariably the case with _Doppelgänger_ stories, the

(Poe 1913). A new translation was subsequently published in 1929, prepared by none other than Edogawa Rampo
himself (Poe 1929).
Student von Prag is a tale of flight from shadows. The flight of shadowy images in filmic representation is all the more apposite when the fugitive is pursued by the shadow, the projected image, of himself” (Webber 1996: 43). Indeed photography (and especially portrait photography) and cinema produce what are perceived to be indexical images that threaten to replace the subjects they capture; they bring forth copies that will survive their subjects, hence inevitably marking its coming death, paralleling how seeing one’s doppelganger is often considered an omen of one’s imminent death.

An implication that can be drawn here therefore is that the geographical collapse effected by cinema and its ability to circulate images as a consequence of their mechanical reproducibility cannot be separated from the more fundamental perceptual collapse the encounter with the cinematic image generates. Not only was cinema instrumental for its role in literally making visible the doppelganger and as a consequence consolidating the concept, but also for showcasing the ability of cinematic technologies to literally produce doppelgangers through optical as well as editing tricks, that is, to take the figure from the realm of dream and fantasy to a scientifically (re)producible possibility at this historical moment. Or to put it another way, the critical point here is that in asserting that cinema – and especially a particular film like The Student of Prague – was formative of the discourse of the doppelganger in interwar Japan, as Watanabe Masahiko does, at stake is not merely the issue of popularization, of facilitating the dissemination of the concept of the doppelganger in its capacity as a mass cultural form (Watanabe 1999: 70-73); More importantly, it is the social consequences of the apparatus of cinema itself, and how its mechanisms of signification produced the conditions of possibility for the conceptualizing of the doppelganger that warrants attention. A final and most critical dimension to Otto Rank’s engagement with The Student of Prague can thus be further articulated. In his characterization of the scenes of the film as “shadowy” and “fleeting,” might he not also be implicitly speaking of the flickering cinematic images as such and their capacity to literally produce immaterial doubles?

In fact, this point is precisely one of the central thrusts of German media critic Friedrich Kittler’s own excursus into the figure of the doppelganger’s relations with media technologies. Citing not only
Otto Rank’s discussion of his viewing of *The Student of Prague*, but also how the technology of the camera and its capability to record “24 pictures per second by chopping up the body before the viewfinder” was deployed to produce photographic traces of patients’ bodies as proof of hysteria in psychiatric laboratories, Kittler criticizes the centering of psychoanalysis in discussions of the figure of the doppelganger, asserting instead that though the mobilization of the apparatus of cinema “prepared the way for psychoanalysis,” this fact has been repressed (Kittler 1997: 94). Here, Kittler asserts that cinema is the repressed unconscious – perhaps the doppelganger – of psychoanalytic (and also arguably literary) discourse. Going beyond Otto Rank’s suggestion that “uniqueness of cinematography” lies in the fact that it “visibly portrays psychological images” is in part what makes it conducive to the portrayal of doppelgangers (Rank 1971: 7), he argues that on the contrary, cinema does not merely offer the possibility of visually representing the doppelganger. Rather, it is the technologies of the cinematic apparatus that enables psychoanalysis to apprehend and take up the figure of the doppelganger as one of its concerns in the first place: “In order to catch sight of Doubles, people need no longer be either educated or drunk. Even illiterates, or especially they, see the student of Prague, his and his mistress… which as such are already Doubles – as celluloid ghosts of the actors’ bodies” (Kittler 1997: 96).

What this highlights is how the popular dissemination of figure of the doppelganger in the 1920s is intimately wedded to an emergent mechanized visual culture of modernity. To put it in simpler terms, the doppelganger is a visual object through and through. As such, to be properly grasped and historicized, it is insufficient to read it solely in psychoanalytic terms, in the manner of “resolving things into the confirmation of a set of given themes, a repeatable psychoanalytic story duly repeated” (Heath 1999: 35). Rather, its discursive production as a concept – that is, its literary and psychoanalytic articulation – needs to be situated within the broader problem of visual modernity.
Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s Doppelgangers

In Japanese literary articulations of the doppelganger, this structural linkage between technologies of vision and the figure takes on a particular visibility in the work of Akutagawa Ryūnosuke. This is especially evident in “The Shadow” (Kage, 1921; trans. 1988), a short story wherein the encounter with one’s double is specifically enacted against the backdrop of cinematic spectatorship. Initially, the story takes on a seemingly fairly conventional appearance. Narrated in the third person, it opens in Yokohama with the protagonist Chen Cai, a Chinese businessman, receiving an anonymous letter – apparently another in a series of them he has been periodically receiving – informing him of his wife Fusako’s infidelity. After informing his wife on the phone that he will be working late and so will miss the final train back to their home in Kamakura, he secretly returns home in an attempt to catch his wife. It is when, under the cover of darkness, he returns home to spy on his wife through the bedroom window that he encounters his doppelganger. Rather than finding another man with Fusako as he has been led to believe, Chen Cai finds another Chen Cai in the bedroom of his home. As Chen Cai watches from a corner of the room, the other Chen Cai strangles the sleeping Fusako. It is not until the final scene of the story, however, when a frame narrative replaces the first, and it is revealed that the preceding section is in fact a film being watched by two spectators. From this point, the story shifts into a first person narration with a man (the narrator) wondering if he had dreamed the film – also titled The Shadow – that forms the body of the first part of the story. When he confers with his female companion, she points out to him that no film by the title of The Shadow appears in the program, yet curiously acknowledging a vague recollection of it when the narrator describes its plot to her.

As the above summary indicates, Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” works through many of the familiar established tropes of doppelganger fictions, particularly the conventional characterization of the shadowy doppelganger as an externalized projection of an individual’s unconscious, especially his or her repressed violent urges that can only end in a murderous finale. When juxtaposed to Otto Rank’s discussion of The Student of Prague, however, it is difficult to miss the similarity between Rank’s
aforementioned attempt to put into writing his recollection of the film’s “shadowy, fleeting” scenes and the characterization of the narrator’s experience of cinematic spectatorship as almost hallucinatory and the ensuing doubt and uncertainty it engenders in the final scene of Akutagawa’s “The Shadow.” To put it another way, Akutagawa’s story goes beyond the mere reproduction of the established tropes and plot patterns of doppelganger fictions that have appeared thus far. When, especially in its ending wherein the narrator wonders whether he had dreamed the film he had just seen, it moreover gestures towards a parallel between film work and dream work, towards the crucial role played by the cinema as both a technical and social apparatus – in its production of images, its modes of display and distribution, its mobilization of desires – in the constitution of modern subjectivities through which the conceptual articulation of the figure of the doppelganger is made possible.

“The Shadow” is not the only piece of fiction that features the figure of the doppelganger in Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s body of work. On the contrary, the motif appears fairly prominently in several of his fictions. Its earliest manifestation is in “Two letters” (Futatsu no tegami, 1917); a perhaps more well-known example is its appearance in a brief, yet nonetheless crucial scene near the end of one of his final works prior to his suicide in July 1927, the ostensibly autobiographical “Spinning Gears” (Haguruma, 1927; trans. 2006). Indeed, when considered against the context of 1920s Japan, Seiji Lippit’s suggestion that the doppelganger is “an important theme in [Akutagawa’s] literature” as a whole – which he reads as the expression of “an anxiety of being imitated (or of imitating others)” on the one hand, and “at the same time, the double functions as a literal manifestation of a fragmented consciousness left in the wake of the disintegration of the universal space of literary practice” on the other – is accurate (Lippit 2002: 62). As such, before turning to “The Shadow” and its articulation of the relations between the figure of the doppelganger and the visual culture out of which it emerges, it is worth briefly examining the double’s other appearances in Akutagawa’s to situate its manifestations within patterns in his broader body of work.
In the earlier “Two letters,” the doppelganger features centrally not only as a figure represented in the narrative, but also in the very form the performance of the narration takes. The short story takes on an epistolary form, introduced and framed by a narrator (yo) as a pair of letters that he happened to get a hold of and is forwarding to the chief of police, to whom they were originally addressed. What appears to be another individual named Sasaki (watakushi) is the author of the letters themselves. The first one begins with its encoded author’s odd insistence on his own sanity through an extended treatise on various philosophical and psychological works attesting to the scientific validity of the phenomenon of encountering one’s doppelganger.5 It is only following this that he explains his predicament: Apparently, three times already, he had witnessed his own doppelganger – each time with his wife (or her own double). Shortly, following these encounters, rumors that his wife is having an affair begin to surface and he and his wife become the object of various acts of harassment. Believing these two events to be connected, he suggests all this is the result of the materialization of his wife’s desire to travel outside their home, and his neighbors have mistaken the psychical projection of his image for another man. For this reason, he requests police assistance in quelling the harassment. His explanation falls apart however with the titular second letter, which reveals that his wife has disappeared. Moreover, this second letter is cut short following his declaration that he now intends to do research on supernatural phenomena. The framing narrator (yo) explains that the letter turns into nothing more than incoherent philosophical ramblings from that point and hence he cut the rest of it short.

From the above summary, it is apparent that a key feature of the narrative performance of “Two letters” is a breakdown in its narrative. This element is further given particular emphasis by the narrator’s

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5 In these references, the author of the letters alternates between the using the German term Doppelganger as is or transliterating it as doppenngengeru. As I briefly noted in the introduction, the –geru ending as opposed to –gâ as is more often seen in contemporary writings on the figure is likely indicative of a transliteration from the German directly, as opposed to the latter's mediation through its Anglicized form. Elsewhere in the text, Akutagawa also uses dai-ni no watashi [second self] rather than the more common translation bunshin [split self]. This multiplicity of terms used by Akutagawa is suggestive of a situation when standardized translations or transliterations into Japanese have yet to be consolidated. Coupled with the extensive explanatory text about the concept embedded into the story, what is indicated here is that at the time of the story’s writing the doppelganger had yet to be domesticated into the popular milieu of Japan and that its consolidation as a generic trope had yet to be completed.
almost obsessive emphasis on proving his sanity (despite the apparently supernatural encounter with his own doppelganger) early in the story through the various citations of doppelganger related psychological research, and in so doing, paradoxically calling it to attention and into question. Given this particular progression that the story deploys, it seems only logical to read Sasaki’s (watakushi’s) two letters as narratives produced in response to his increasing psychic fragmentation, as attempts to assuage and his emergent personal crisis punctuated by his repeated encounters with his doppelganger.

In this sense, Akutagawa’s story has formal affinities with the detective fictions of Edogawa Rampo discussed in Chapter 1. Analogous to the role that Rampo’s detectives play in resolving the disruption provoked by a crime through the production of a narrative, “to tell ‘the real story’ in the form of a linear narration,” in Slavoj Žižek’s words (Žižek 1990: 28), the letters in Akutagawa’s story are an attempt to construct a coherent narrative that can explain the spread of rumors of the supposed infidelity of the narrator’s wife, which he believes to be a false accusation. Indeed, Ichiyanagi Hirotaka goes so far as to argue that “Two letters” is formally organized around the conventions of detective fiction: “the charge of a crime is brought, and the protection of the victims is sought. The criminal is ‘society’ [seken]. The crime is the harassment of the narrator and his wife. The motive, the wife’s infidelity” (Ichiyanagi 2004: 120). However, Sasaki’s attempt is ultimately unsuccessful. His narration is revealed to be unreliable, reduced to incoherent rambling in his second letter, and ultimately the mystery is left unresolved. Consequently, as Ichiyanagi argues, “Even as ‘Two letters’ abides by the conventional forms of detective fiction, these are shifted and inverted into a parody of detective fiction” (Ichiyanagi 2004: 119).

The most overt manifestation of this is, of course, the second letter’s supposed incoherent rambling, which is for Watanabe Masahiko, indicative of a schizophrenic author behind the narrative performance of the letters (Watanabe 1999: 104). Indeed, this particular aspect of the narrative of “Two letters” arguably prefigures the notion of “schizophrenia” as it is deployed by Fredric Jameson in reference to what he deems as the concept underlying the loss of historicity in postmodernist fictions.
Borrowing from Jacques Lacan’s ideas on the role of language in subject formation, for Jameson, schizophrenia is, characterized by "the failure of the infant to accede fully into the realm of speech and language" (Jameson 1983: 118). In “Two letters,” the repeated encounters with the doppelganger in Akutagawa’s story foreshadow the return of the repressed, from a moment prior to the demarcation between subject and object constituted through language. With the second letter, all that remains is the breakdown of the capacity for coherent language and narrative production, into what Jameson describes as “an experience of isolated, disconnected, discontinuous material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence” (Jameson 1983: 119) such that by the end of the story, it appears that the original narrator has completely disappeared, thoroughly dominated and replaced by his double (yo), to whom is left the task of framing the narrative and forwarding the letters to their addressee.

A similar linkage between the breakdown of language and the appearance of the doppelganger can be seen in “Spinning Gears” as well. Although lacking the formal play exhibited by “Two letters” in terms of the narrative strategies it deploys, like the previous story, “Spinning Gears” is similarly a first person account of a narrator who is increasingly exhibiting signs of mental breakdown and fragmentation. In the story, the narrator proceeds through what should be several seemingly uneventful days comprised of several events only loosely strung together into a plot beginning with his attendance to a wedding reception, visits to the famous Maruzen bookstore, periods of time spent writing in a hotel room, among others. In the course of these events though, he begins to exhibit the symptoms that suggest the deterioration of his mental stability such as regular bouts of insomnia, and most obviously, periodic hallucinations of images of silver wings as well as the titular “spinning gears” [baguruma].

But perhaps the most persistent of these symptoms is, as Seiji Lippit has put it in his thorough discussion of “Spinning Gears,” the clear indication that the “narrator’s mental collapse is signaled specifically by a breakdown of his linguistic capacity” (Lippit 2002: 57). For example, early in the narrative, after overhearing a hotel bellboy utter the English phrase “all right,” the narrator finds himself unable to clear his mind of the word, such that when he decides to write, he cannot help it when his pen
fails him; instead, “it just kept writing the same words over and over: ‘All right… All right… All right, Sir… All right…’” (Akutagawa 2006: 211). Later, in a conversation with a friend, he finds that he is unable to pronounce the last syllable of the Japanese word for “insomnia” [fuminsha] (Akutagawa 2006: 224). And then there are the repeated instances of the narrator’s overhearing of the English word “mole,” which in the narrator’s mind is transfigured into the French la mort [death]. Indeed it is following one such instance, after receiving an odd telephone call wherein the voice on the other end of the line said nothing but this word that he considers the idea of the doppelganger:

I went to look in the mirror for the first time in quite a while, and stood face-to-face with my own reflection. It, too, was smiling, of course. As I stared at my own image, I thought about my second self. Fortunately, I had never seen my second self – what the Germans call a Doppelganger. The wife of my friend K, however, who had become an American film actor, had spotted my second self in the lobby of the Imperial Theatre. I recalled my confusion when she suddenly said to me, “Sorry I didn’t have a chance to speak with you the other night.” And then there was the time a certain one-legged translator, now dead, saw my second self in a Ginza tobacco shop. Maybe death was coming to my second self rather than for me. (Akutagawa 2006: 225)

The juxtaposition of the French phrase “la mort” with the narrator’s sudden recollection of the alleged presence of his doppelganger serves not only to highlight the conventional association of the figure with a forewarning of death, but also the overlap between the collapse of the subject through the breaking apart of language through which it is constituted (to some extent further placed into the foreground by the reference to the translator in the above quote) and the destabilization of self-other relations signified by the figure of the doppelganger. The significance of this relation is perhaps particularly visible in the context of Japanese modernity, wherein historically, the unification and consolidation of a specific schema of language played a central role in the constitution of modern subjectivity. At the heart of this

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6 Quotations for “Spinning Gears,” unless otherwise noted, are from the excellent new translation by Jay Rubin (Akutagawa 2006).
7 Similar to some instances in “Two letters,” the word Doppelgänger appears untranslated from the German in the original Japanese text. Likewise, other references to foreign languages – la mort and all right, among others – appear as is. See Akutagawa (1934c: 481) and (1934c: 507-508).
8 Otto Rank identifies this association with the threat or omen of impending death as a key characteristic of the doppelganger, which he reads as a kind of uncanny inversion of what he believes to be the function of the figure as supposedly a ward against death in its folkloric and “primitive” appearances (Rank 1971: 71-76).
issue is Karatani Kōjin’s rethinking of what was then the conventional understanding of the formation of the phonocentric literary language known as *genbun-itchi* – literally, the unification of speech and writing – in 1890s Japan.

The critical thrust of Karatani’s analysis is that the conjoined conceptions of an interiorized subject (*naimen*) and its differentiation from an exterior object or “landscape” (*fûkei*) came into being in the 1890s as a consequence of a transformation in the perceptual configuration. In other words, it is the projection of a space that exceeds the interior, that is, the exterior landscape, which allows for the mapping out of the boundaries of the modern subject, and its simultaneous concealment or erasure from memory (in a kind of suturing process) in effect producing the illusion that interiority and landscape had always existed (Karatani 1993: 193). This, Karatani traces to the emergence of the movement to standardize literary language tied to an ideology of transparent representation known as *genbun-itchi*.

Although *genbun-itchi* was ideologically posited as the result of the need for the new ‘modern subject’ for a language to transparently communicate its inner being, Karatani’s analysis inverts this. He suggests instead that the formation of this “modern subject” is an effect (and not the cause) of *genbun-itchi* in the sense that the modern interiorized subject could only be conceptualized once language could be reconfigured to represent from a fixed transcendent position (Karatani 1993: 69).

By the time of Akutagawa (and especially with his later writings), fractures had begun to appear in this schematic configuration; the demarcation of subject and object, native and foreign was showing signs of breakdown. Hence, in Akutagawa’s “Spinning Gears,” what appears is a process wherein, as Seiji Lippit puts it, “this artificial, constructed language unravels into a variety of foreign. It is like a translation in reverse, as though modern Japanese were being separated into its various foreign components” (Lippit 2002: 59). With this come the attendant consequences for the constitution of modern subjectivity, in this instance, materializing in the form of the doppelganger. For Lippit, it was the emerging popularity of cinema and the signifying techniques deployed therein that became a key impetus in this breakdown, pointing in particular to Akutagawa’s experimentation and incorporation of the cinematic technique of
montage in his fiction as one such sign. In his words: “The general principle of montage seems to have had a significant impact on his late writings. In effect, Akutagawa discovered in the film scenario a process that violently fragments literature, and montage here represents literature’s dismemberment into a series of short, discrete units connected according to their contiguity rather than any linear logic of plot development” (Lippit 2002: 51).

Without a doubt, the impact of the techniques and technologies of cinema on Akutagawa’s writing – whether explicitly taken up on the level of the story as in the case of “The Shadow” and a number of other fictions that feature the cinematic apparatus such as the earlier “Unrequited Love” (Katakoi, 1917) or only implicitly hinted at on the level of the discursive construction of the narrative itself as can be seen in the fragmentation of form of such fictions as “Spinning Gears” or “Life a Stupid Man” (Aru ahô no isshô, 1927; trans. 2006) – are remarkable even if only for the extend to which they are foregrounded. That said, this cannot be reduced to simply an individual idiosyncrasy of Akutagawa’s; in fact, the significance of cinematic technologies and techniques for shaping the lived experience of Japanese modernity is difficult to overemphasize. Concrete illustrations of this impact are extensively illustrated in the recent work of Miriam Silverberg on Japanese mass culture of the 1920s, wherein she deploys the metaphor of montage to characterize the various transformations taking place in the mass culture (and their consumer-subjects) of the moment, suggesting that the impact of such cinematic signifying techniques was felt not only by Akutagawa or other literary writers, but was rather a broad popular phenomenon. Citing the disparate collisions and juxtapositions in such areas as magazine layouts, theater costumes, and even language itself, Silverberg writes: “My understanding (and vision) of Japanese culture in this period is that the principle of montage was central to popular consciousness” (Silverberg 2006: 4).

More fundamentally, it can be argued that the perceptual reconfigurations that underpinned the constitution of conceptions of modern literature and modern subjectivity (and moreover in a specifically national configuration) are thoroughly wedded to (and emerged as a consequence of and response to) a
traumatic encounter with an onslaught of mechanically reproduced images. Indeed this is precisely what Rey Chow contends in her brilliant rereading of Chinese writer Lu Xun’s famous account of watching a newsreel of the execution of a Chinese man whose spectacle was observed by a crowd of onlookers. Against the standard literary-biographical account of this event, Chow places the problem of visuality and the very center of the sense of shock Lu Xun experiences at witnessing this spectacle. In other words, it is not simply what is represented in the images that is traumatic, but the encounter with the cinematic image as such; as Chow puts it, “If we say that he sees the horror of an execution, we must also say that he sees the horror of the activity of watching” (Chow 1996: 8).

Chow presents Lu Xun’s traumatic encounter with the cinematic image as a kind of autoethnographic mirror stage. It provokes an act of identification with the projected image of one’s own (national) self, in so doing at once enacting an identification with the very gaze through which one is produced as subject. In effect, a logic of seeing the (national) self as other – a logic of the doppelganger – structures this traumatic encounter. In Chow’s words:

This self-consciousness is inextricably linked to the position of being a spectator.... Because it is grounded in an apprehension of the aggressiveness of the technological medium of visuality, self-consciousness henceforth could not be separated from a certain violence that splits the self, in the very moment it becomes “conscious,” into seeing and the seen.... National self-consciousness is thus not only a matter of watching “China” being represented on the screen, it is more precisely watching one’s self – as a film, as a spectacle, as something always already watched. (Chow 1996: 9)

In the context of Japan, Eric Cazdyn relates an anecdote about the kabuki actor Ichikawa Danjûrô IX’s first encounter with film that parallels Chow’s discussion of the event of Lu Xun’s encounter with the cinematic image. After viewing a recording of his own performance, Danjûrô reportedly expressed a sense of discomfort, a sense of the uncanny, at seeing his own dance recorded on film, to the point of

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9 Lacan discussed his concept of the mirror stage in several different essays, but its fundamental ideas are covered in “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience” (1977) and later developed in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (1981).
insisting that the film in question – *Momijigari* (Maple Viewing, 1899) – should never be circulated during his lifetime. Cazdyn explains the implications of this first encounter with film:

Danjūrō’s experience speaks to the emergence of modern subjectivity, in which the strangeness or shock of seeing oneself in film for the first time produces an *awareness* of being – at the same time – spectator and spectacle, subject and object, seer and seen… the shock represents – at one and the same time – the liberation from older forms of visuality and older systemic constraints as well as the crucial menacing element in re-inforcing a whole new system of control. (Cazdyn 2002: 16)

Cazdyn ties the trauma of the perceptual revolution in Meiji Japan to the radical transformations in language and literary practice that Karatani Kōjin has articulated. Although the *genbun-itchi* revolution is often understood largely as a literary problem, as Karatani himself points out, parallel transformations were taking place in other dimensions of cultural practice such as, for instance, reforms in theater and performance. Noting this, Cazdyn points out that it was “the same Ichikawa Danjūrō IX who was so shocked to see his own image projected back at him in 1900 who most importantly represented the drama reforms” (Cazdyn 2002: 41-42). In other words, embodied by Danjūrō is a double movement of shock and recuperation, of deterritorialization and reterritorialization enacted by modern visuality. Considered with this in mind, it is perhaps not an accident that Karatani’s understanding of the mechanism of the landscape-interiority demarcation constituted in the logic of *genbun-itchi* takes on a notably visual character. This incessant visuality manifests in a number of ways, not the least of which is Karatani’s repeated references to painting and especially to the development of Cartesian perspective with its placement of the subject of vision in a transcendent position unambiguously demarcated from and with mastery over the object of its gaze as forms productive of the modern conception of “landscape” alienated from the subject in which a practice of literary representation is enmeshed.

Interestingly enough, in contrast to Karatani’s analysis, Jonathan Crary suggests that it is not the emergence of Cartesian perspective but rather precisely its breakdown that marks the emergence of visual modernity. For Crary, the technology of the camera obscura is most emblematic of the principles of Cartesian perspective, pointing in particular to the decorporealization of the body of the spectator and
its consequent constitution of the subject’s interiority that is the central operation engendered by its apparatus (Crary 1990: 39). However, by the nineteenth century, the dominant paradigm for grasping the problem of vision undergoes a radical restructuring and this classical model of fixed vision is replaced by a discourse of subjective vision, which is mobile, embodied, and abstracted, and is moreover inseparable from the broader reorganization of “new sets of relations between the body on the one hand and forms of institutional and discursive power on the other” (Crary 1990: 3) taking place at the time and served as preconditions to the emergence of technologies such as cinema and photography. Thus, against the received narrative that draws a line of continuity from the camera obscura to photography to cinema, Crary proposes a more complex history of modern visuality marked by ruptures, contestations, negotiations, and recuperations. As Crary puts it, “If later in the nineteenth century, cinema and photography seem to invite formal comparisons with the camera obscura, it is within a social, cultural, and scientific milieu where there had already been a profound break with the conditions presupposed by this device” (Crary 1990: 27).

Crary’s discussion allows for the complication of Karatani’s examination of the origins of modern literature in Japan as well as illuminating the relations between visual and textual practice. If Karatani is correct in his contention that the demarcation of interiority and landscape built into the structure of Cartesian perspective is formative of modern literary practice, then it is a practice that must be situated within the already transformed conditions of visuality into which it emerges. As such, analogous to Rey Chow’s contention that the origins of literary modernism in China must be located in the trauma of a technologized visuality in her discussion of Lu Xun, the reforms to standardize literary language that Karatani critiques in his work might then be understood in a similar fashion, that is, as a reterritorializing reaction to the shock of the image. “[L]iterature,” Chow writes, “is a way to evade the shock of the visual” (Chow 1996: 14); in other words, it is a response whose function is to contain and repress the shock of visuality and the material and social consequences it entailed. Understood in this sense, the cinematic techniques evident in the fictions of Akutagawa (among others) is perhaps better
understood not necessarily as a force “foreign” to literature that threatens it, but rather – analogous to
psychoanalysis in Friedrich Kittler’s analysis – as a return of the repressed trauma of modern visuality
that lies at its heart, and whose excess manifests as the figure of the doppelganger.

One implication here is the need to recognize that it is not sufficient to simply oppose cinema
with literature, image with language. There are considerable critical limits to a practice that Mieke Bal has
termed “visual essentialism,” that is, the approach wherein focus is placed upon specific objects of visual
culture (e.g., cinema) as opposed to “the underlying social institutions and practices of a given regime of
visuality.” A key contention that Bal emphasizes is that visuality is not a property of a given object. On
the contrary:

[I]t is the practices of looking invested in any object that constitute the object domain: its
historicity, its social anchoring and its openness to the analysis of its synaesthetics. It is the
possibility of performing acts of seeing, not the materiality of the object seen, that decides
whether an artifact can be considered from the perspective of visual culture studies. Even
“purely” linguistic objects such as literary texts can be analysed meaningfully and productively in
this way qua visuality. Indeed, some “purely” literary texts only make sense visually.
(Bal 2003: 11)

The point here therefore is that in calling attention to the relations between cinema and the
doppelganger, a point that demands emphasizing is that it is neither specific visual objects (e.g., The
Student of Prague), nor even the technology of cinema more broadly that singularly produce the conception
of the doppelganger. Although if Friedrich Kittler’s diagnosis also is correct in the context of Japan and
the cinematic apparatus is certainly inseparable from the figure’s emergence in the 1920s, it is critical not
to reductively identify it as a point of origin in place of psychoanalytic theories or myth and folklore (as
earlier engagements with the motif sometimes suggest) in a kind of technological determinist move. The
apparatus of cinema is, after all, but one nodal point in a larger multifaceted and contested field of
visuality that implicates not only particular visual cultural forms (e.g., cinema), but also all manner of
social and cultural institutions and relations around it. In other words, it is what Martin Jay calls the
“scopic regime” in which both cinema and literature (not to mention other cultural forms) are both products and productive forms that demands attention.\textsuperscript{10}

More importantly, in line with Jay’s analysis, it is also critical to recognize that scopic regimes are not necessarily singular, that is, there is not one true and natural scopic regime. On the contrary, not only are they social institutions, but more importantly, they multiply coexist within a contested field (Jay 1988: 4). Crucial to consider here, in other words, is that cinema is ultimately not only a technical apparatus, but also, as Stephen Heath has highlighted, at once a social and economic apparatus, and by implication, take place on an uneven terrain that is at once a site of struggle and contestation. In Heath’s words: “Cinema does not exist in the technological and then become this or that practice in the social; its history is a history of the technological and social together, a history in which the determinations are not simple but multiple, interacting, in which the ideological is there from the start” (Heath 1981: 227).

\textbf{Gender, Cinema, and “The Shadow”}

In Akutagawa’s fictions, one crucial area where visuality is shown to be irreducible to mere matters of the technical apparatus but instead implicate broader social and economic forces and their internal contestations is in the ways in which configurations of domestic space and their gendered effects are implicitly taken up in their narratives. It is telling, for instance, that in both “Two letters” and “The Shadow,” the appearance of the doppelganger is entangled with their respective male protagonists’ obsessive suspicion of their wives’ supposed infidelity. What underpins these male anxieties are transformations in the urban form and domestic space taking place in early twentieth century Japan that arguably parallel – if not prefigure – the trajectories seen in the emergence of the cinematic spectator. The narrator of the first letter in the former text suggests that it is his wife’s confinement in the home and her consequent desire to escape it that provoke the projection of the double; similarly in the latter,

\textsuperscript{10} While the term “scopic regime” here is most famously associated with Martin Jay in his classic essay “Scopic Regimes of Modernity” (1988), he does not originate it, but rather repurposes the term from its original deployment in Christian Metz’s classic of film theory \textit{The Imaginary Signifier} (1982).
with the exception of one flashback scene when she still worked as a café waitress prior to her marriage to the protagonist Chen Cai, the wife Fusako is bound to the confines of their suburban home in Kamakura.

In Walter Benjamin’s writings on the poet Charles Baudelaire (1973), the modern urban form of the nineteenth century is famously associated with the mobilized observer embodied in the figure of the flâneur. But, as Anne Friedberg has shown, the flâneur was a resolutely male figure; his mobilized gaze upon the urban landscape and access to both the public and domestic realm was a privilege accorded only to bourgeois men (Friedberg 1995: 29). Women, in contrast, could only occupy one position or the other, as either a public woman of the streets or a private properly married woman. It is only with the emergence of the department store when flânerie could be made productive for capital in a privatized public space that the privilege of the mobile gaze has conferred upon women, that the female flâneur could become possible (Friedberg 1995: 36).

Such a dichotomy in the possible spatial positions women could occupy was certainly evident in Japan as well, especially visible in discourses that positioned the housewife against that of the Café waitress (Silverberg 2006: 84). If the modern is marked by the uprooting of received social forms – in this case, the extended patriarchal household [ie] – then it is also the case that this is recuperated through new modes of spatial organization, specifically the sharp demarcation and gendering of public and private – exterior and interior – space. However, as Miriam Silverberg illustrates, this was never so simple an operation, and the starkly demarcated domestic space of the household was never quite stable, as is made evident by popular discourses addressed to the housewife that called on her to become a consumer-subject entailing that she on the one hand go out into the world and on the other bring the modern into her home (Silverberg 2006: 144). Just as the case of late nineteenth century Europe witnessed the emergence of the female flâneur, new configurations of mass consumer culture of 1920s Japan facilitated an increase in bourgeois women’s mobility that allowed her to be in public spaces unchaperoned without being reduced to carnal commodities, to “objects for consumption, objects for
the gaze of the flâneur” (Friedberg 1995: 35). It is arguably this new configuration in the gendering of spatial and visual relations that engenders the obsession with their respective wives’ fidelity in the male protagonists of the two stories by Akutagawa as a kind of recuperative reaction.

Anne Friedberg contends that the mobilized gaze in the practice of flânerie – especially when it is coupled with the virtual gaze of photography – is prototypical of aspects of cinematic spectatorship (Friedberg 1995: 2-3). If so, then it is perhaps not all too surprising that in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow,” the breakdown in the gendered boundaries of interior and exterior spaces marked by its male protagonist’s obsessive surveillance of his wife’s sexuality is bound up with the collapse of the visual mastery of the Cartesian observer based on clear demarcations between interiority and exteriority and whose symptom is the figure of the doppelganger. Unlike other fictions of the doppelganger – for example, Poe’s “William Wilson” wherein the two William Wilsons interact on a physical level (one William Wilson kills the other and ends up killing himself in the process) – it is striking that the primary interaction of the two Chen Cais in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” is primarily that of looking. Indeed, from its very beginning, at earlier points in the narrative before even the protagonist’s encounter with the doppelganger takes place, various moments of spying and voyeurism (and an attendant paranoia at being spied upon) appear. In a flashback sequence embedded into the first scene labeled “Yokohama” for instance, which relates protagonist Chen Cai’s recollection of his first meeting with his wife Fusako, the gaze takes on a central role. The flashback sequence opens as follows:

… Cigarette smoke, the fragrance of flowers, the clatter of knives and forks upon plates… Melody from Carmen drifting dissonantly from one corner. Amid the chaos, glass of beer before him, Chen sat entranced with his elbows on the table. Before his eyes, not one thing was not in dizzying motion – waitresses, customers, even the ceiling fans. Only Chen was still, gaze cast upon the woman by the cash register all throughout. (Akutagawa 1934b: 257)

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11 All the scenes of the story are marked according to one of three locales – Yokohama, Kamakura, and Tokyo, in a move that further mimics the film scenario form and its arrangement of scenes by location to facilitate the film production process.

12 While this translation is my own, I have also cross-referenced an existing English translation of “The Shadow,” which appeared in O’Brien (1988). My translation differs in that I have opted not to naturalize the sentence structures in English to better emphasize the staccato rhythm of language Akutagawa deploys in an effort to better highlight the defamiliarizing excess of detail that is characteristic of the story.
Here, Chen sitting immobile as the rest of scene is in constant motion serves further to call to mind the experience of cinematic spectatorship (and hence foreshadows the ending of the story), a point that is only punctuated when the flashback sequence ends with Chen in the darkness, once again gazing at the night sky. Later, other scenes hammer the point home further. Several scenes show Chen (as well as his assistant Imanishi) gazing upon his wife’s photograph (Akutagawa 1934b: 277). At one point, Fusako has a strange sense that someone stands behind her, gazing at her, almost hinting at an awareness of her existence as a character in a film (266). In another, as if a voyeur, Chen at one point peers through a keyhole into his wife’s bedroom (276).

But perhaps the most telling instance is a moment when Chen stands in the darkness of the garden, gazing up towards the window of his wife’s bedroom in an attempt to catch her in an act of infidelity in which he mistakenly believes she will engage.

“Fusako.” As if a groan, Chen longingly uttered his wife’s name. It was right at that moment. Far above on the second floor, a blinding light filled a room. “That’s, that window – ” Swallowing his breath, Chen grasped the trunk of a pine and stands on his tiptoes in order to get a better view. The window – the glass panes of the window of the second floor bedroom were wide open and the bright interior showed itself. The light from inside the room casts shadows upon the tree branches, which seem to float against the night sky. But that was not where the mystery ended. A single shadow, a dim silhouette approached the window. The light comes from deep within the room and his face remains in shadow. One thing was certain though. It was not a woman’s silhouette. (Akutagawa 1934b: 274-75)

It is this moment in the narrative of Akutagawa’s story that the doppelganger makes its appearance. So convinced is Chen Cai that his wife is having an affair after having repeatedly received typewritten letters (later revealed to be written by his assistant Imanishi and anonymously sent to the protagonist), despite evidence to the contrary that she is alone in their home (a private investigator whom Chen meets on the way home informs him as much), that his rage overcomes him and it materializes in the form of the silhouette that appears before the window. As Carole Cavanaugh summarizes: “Jealousy prevails when [Chen’s] vision overtakes reality to form a false reality. He continues to ‘see’ her with another man and
so cannot prevent himself from killing her” (Cavanaugh 1997: 309-10). This other man, however, is later revealed to be his double when he subsequently enters the bedroom; he is, in other words, nothing more than a projection of his own violent unconscious who proceeds to murder his own wife.

The appearance of Chen Cai’s doppelganger in “The Shadow,” in this sense, aligns with the conventional understanding of the doppelganger (with which, if the various references in “Two letters” is any indication, Akutagawa was familiar) as a projection of the unconscious. As C.K. Kepler has put it, “[o]ften the conscious mind tries to deny its unconscious through the mechanism of "projection", attributing its own unconscious content (a murderous impulse, for example) to a real person in the world outside; at times it even creates an external hallucination in the image of this content” (Kepler 1972: 25). However, what Akutagawa’s story also places in the foreground is an intimate linkage between the psychical “projection” that produces the figure of doppelganger and the “projection” at the center of signifying mechanisms of the cinematic apparatus, both in terms of the literal projection of light through which the images appear on the screen as well as an act of projection by the spectator through which these images are given meaning. The point is well summarized by Aaron Gerow when he compares the space of the film theater at the end of the story to this earlier scene wherein Chen Cai sits in the darkness peering through a window into his wife’s bedroom. In his words:

[“The Shadow”] interestingly connects this split in identity with the problematic of seeing, both in the case of the film seemingly manufactured by the two spectators at the end (who remain ignorant of their role in this process), as well as in the example of Chen Cai watching his wife from outside her window. The latter episode is itself a spatial allegorization of the film viewing process. Chen remains immobile in the dark, his hidden desires giving life to his double through a form of projection that corresponds with his utterance of his wife’s name Fusako. (Gerow 1995: 199)

In both instances, the event of film spectatorship (literally or allegorically) ends up with the appearance of the doppelganger. In the case of Chen Cai and his peering through the window into the bedroom where his wife sleeps, this takes on a more overt form. With the final scene of the story with the two spectators musing about the mysterious film they had just viewed, this is more obliquely suggested
through the unnamed first-person narrator’s observation that his female companion’s “melancholy” [yūutsu na] eyes remind him of the eyes of Fusako in the film *The Shadow*, in effect indirectly implying his own identification with, and as such, doubling of the Chen Cai of the film (Akutagawa 1934b: 280-81).

Carole Cavanaugh argues that this linkage between the event of film spectatorship and the projection of a doppelganger enacted by Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” is demonstrative of the emergence of a transcendental subjectivity. By this, Cavanaugh refers to the process or mechanism wherein a specular subjectivity is formed when the spectator identifies with the positionality of the camera/projector and through this, the act of seeing itself. Cavanaugh’s line of analysis is in large part based upon the psychoanalytic theorization of the psychic mechanisms involved in the act of cinematic spectatorship of Christian Metz in *The Imaginary Signifier* (1982). Citing, for instance, the seeming total fabrication of the film by the narrator of “The Shadow” in the closing scene made apparent when his female companion points out that no such film titled *The Shadow* appears in the program (hence suggesting that he had “dreamed” the film), Cavanaugh suggests that this shows the “identification of the subject with his own ability to make coherent what happens on the screen” (Cavanaugh 1997: 310). This is in agreement with Metz’s characterization of the spectator’s position as a kind of voyeur, placed before the screen as “all-perceiving… as a pure act of perception: as the condition of possibility of the perceived and hence as a kind of transcendental subject” (Metz 1982: 49).

I differ from Cavanaugh’s reading of the consequent projection of the doppelganger that this act of voyeurism provokes. Rather than confirming the visual mastery of the male spectator or illustrating a transcendental vision that moves outside the confines of embodiment, such that, “the power of spectator identification is announced in the fact that ‘seeing’ alone moves outside the self to a transcendent level, the level on which the self has the power to observe its own actions” (Cavanaugh 1997: 311), I would contend that the doppelganger here is indicative of precisely the breakdown of the illusion of visual mastery of the voyeuristic gaze. Contrary to Cavanaugh’s reading, in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” the predominant sense one receives from the story is not mastery but ambiguity and unease. In
the final scene of the story with the pair of perplexed spectators, neither the narrator nor his companion can account for the film they had just seen, which does not appear in the program, yet even the woman who points this out expresses her own vague familiarity with the film’s storyline. With this in mind, I find it difficult to characterize the pair of spectators in “The Shadow” as particularly “all-perceiving.” Likewise, Aaron Gerow suggests that the portrayal of cinema in “The Shadow” engages with it as a still alien technology of representation. Pointing to the ending, Gerow argues that the story questions “the ontological status of the art form itself by portraying a filmic text that is not a trace of a profilmic reality, but rather a work whose own reality has been put into doubt” (Gerow 1995: 198). In other words, “The Shadow” portrays cinema as an alien mode of representation that functions from without the confines of reality against conventional characterizations of film as an indexical “authentic” recording of reality.

Further to this, the allegorical representation of cinematic spectatorship in the film within the story takes on a similar character. When Chen Cai first encounters the doppelganger as a distinct physical and material body, his first response is shock, and the stability of the camera-as-subject’s field of view is destabilized in the scene of the encounter. Although the doppelganger is already foreshadowed by an earlier scene wherein Chen Cai spies the silhouette of a man through the window to the bedroom, until the moment Chen Cai opens the bedroom door, the narrative still centers on him. However, the scene cuts at the moment he enters the bedroom into another scene back in Yokohama where it is revealed that Imanishi (Chen Cai’s personal assistant) is the one typing the letters “informing” Chen Cai of his wife’s infidelity. But when the story cuts back to Chen Cai’s home in Kamakura, it has already become impossible to determine which of the two Chen Cais is the “original” one followed from the story’s beginning.

Immobile in the corner, Chen Cai stares at the two bodies lying atop one another on the bed. One was Fusako – or perhaps something that was once Fusako until moments before. The entire face is swollen and purple, the tongue protrudes halfway from the mouth and the partly closed eyes gaze towards the ceiling. The other one is Chen Cai, not one bit different from the Chen Cai in the corner. (Akutagawa 1934b: 278)
Although the Chen Cai in the corner functions as the subject of the gaze at this particular moment in the narration, as a result of the previous scene cut and the jump in time, continuity with the previous moment wherein Chen Cai is forcing open the bedroom door is broken. As a result, it has become impossible to tell if the “original” Chen Cai of the previous scene is the one lurking in the corner or the one atop Fusako on the bed. This confusion is further compounded when the Chen Cai atop Fusako’s body rises and realizes that there is another Chen Cai in the room. The following words are exchanged: “Who are you?” Standing before the chair, he almost chokes on his words. “So you were the one who went through the pine groves… who sneaked in through the back gate… who stood by this window looking out… who… my wife… Fusako” (Akutagawa 1934b: 279). As both of them are at this moment standing before the chair, which of the two Chen Cais is actually doing the speaking has become indeterminate. Only the uncertain “he” [kare] marks the speech of the speakers, potentially referring to either of the pair. Indeed, it is even impossible to tell if these two lines constitute an exchange of dialogue or the second is merely a follow-up, further making the task of distinguishing the two difficult. All that is certain is that one or the other has murdered Fusako.

Cavanaugh correctly notes that the positioning of the spectator vis-à-vis the object of vision is conventionally gendered with the male viewer as the active subject of vision and the woman as the passive object of his gaze in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow.” Especially visible in the scene when he spies on his wife through the window of his own home, it is Chen Cai who occupies the position of the voyeuristic spectator. More important to consider here though is the question of distance and its role in enabling the positioning of the male spectator as voyeuristic subject of vision. On this point, Mary Ann Doane has argued that the logic of the sexual division at work in the structuring of the gaze is not only an opposition between active and passive, but also that between distance and proximity (Doane 1991: 21). Following Metz’s articulation of the apparatus of cinema and taking up Laura Mulvey’s famous critical articulation of the female spectator in her “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (Mulvey 1975) as points of departure, Doane recognizes that a level of distance between the spectator and the image is
foundational to voyeurism insofar as (following its Lacanian articulation) desire is constituted around a lack as its unattainable object-cause. However, the maintenance of this gap is made impossible for the female spectator: “For the female spectator there is a certain overpresence of the image – she is the image” (Doane 1991: 22). As a consequence, she is denied the possibility of taking the stance of voyeurism. In its place, her spectatorship takes on a form that can be understood as a kind of narcissism.

But is this principle of spectatorial narcissism not exactly what the encounter with the doppelganger in the cinematic apparatus entails? The underlying presupposition in Metz’s analysis is a marked distinction between the moment of specular subject formation before the mirror that Jacques Lacan has famously articulated and the event of subject formation before the screen of cinema. In fact, in Metz’s view, while a process of identification also takes place before the screen, the transcendent subjectivity of the cinematic spectator is predicated precisely upon the absence of the spectator from the screen, that the screen, in other words, is not fully identical to a mirror.

The spectator is absent from the screen: contrary to the child in the mirror, he cannot identify with himself as an object, but only with objects which are there without him. In this sense the screen is not a mirror. The perceived, this time, is entirely on the side of the object, and there is no longer any equivalent of the own image, of the unique mix of perceived and subject (of other and I) which was precisely the figure necessary to disengage one from the other. (Metz 1982: 48)

Metz argues that when the spectator steps before the cinematic screen, he has already passed the mirror stage of subject formation, and as such, is already capable of constituting a world of objects despite his or her own absence from the position of the perceived (Metz 1982: 46). Hence, the appearance of the doppelganger on the screen is a sign not of the confirmation of the production of a transcendental subjectivity in the spectator, but precisely its failure; it is, after all, in Freud’s characterization, a return of the repressed to that moment before self and other, subject and object, have become differentiated (Freud 2000c: 236). Or to put it in the terms of Lacan, the encounter with the doppelganger restages the traumatic experience of the mirror stage and its production of a constitutively split subject who is taken
in by the specular image in the mirror and consequently identifies with it, hence becoming alienated from itself in its inauguration into the Imaginary (Lacan 1977).

The figure of the doppelganger thus confronts the male spectator with the trauma of the fundamental split in his subjectivity. By highlighting this structuring lack, the effect is to take apart any illusion of visual mastery or a coherent unitary subjectivity. That in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow,” the response to this is with the violence the protagonist enacts upon his wife further underscores the point that appearance of the doppelganger is intimately bound up with the logic of sexual difference. After all, as Mary Ann Doane has noted, “For the splitting of subjectivity in psychoanalysis is given meaning (or holds meaning in the balance) not through sight in general but by means of a specific sight – that of the female body as representation of castration” (Doane 1991: 195). In “The Shadow,” as if unable to find a means of recuperating his loss of visual mastery and illusion of a unified subjectivity, the protagonist falls back to an act of violence directed against the female body whose psychical threat is what the cinematic apparatus attempts to contain.

**Vicissitudes of Visuality**

My analysis of the doppelganger’s appearance in the event of cinematic spectatorship above posits it as a kind of exception, as an excess that emerges out of the model of the normal processes of spectator identification that Christian Metz articulates. However, there are considerable critical limits to such a reading. In taking Metz’s conception of the (male) spectator in his positioning as a transcendental subject of vision as the foil against which the doppelganger is read, neglected in the account are modes of cinematic display other than narrative cinema that have existed historically. Furthermore, in setting the doppelganger as a traumatic exception, an unintended yet nevertheless implied consequence is the reinscription of the fixed and unitary spectator as the natural and normative mode of vision.

However, as recent scholarship on the practices of early cinema has shown, this was not quite the case, in Japan or elsewhere. Scott McQuire, for example, points out that in contrast to film theory
from the 1970s onwards, commentary surrounding photography and early cinema at the time often ascribed a transformative, even revolutionary character to the cinematic apparatus. In his words, “Where the earlier writers were struck by the potency of cinematic displacement of the embodied eye, later analyses have concentrated more on the systematic structuring of this ‘primary’ identification as the means to achieving a particular form of narrative closure” (McQuire 1998: 70). Indeed, the practices of looking employed in connection with early cinema reflect such a sense as well. Stephen Heath, for example, notes that when cinema first emerged, “it is the technology which provides the immediate interest: what is promoted and sold is the experience of the machine, the apparatus” (Heath 1981: 221), suggesting a different experience of spectatorship was in place at the time. Likewise, in the case of Japan, one cannot overlook that at the time of the writing “The Shadow,” a considerable number of the performances of cinema was still done through the intermediation of the *benshi* or *katsuben* – live commentators who functioned not only to over-narrate the content of the film, but also, as Eric Cazdyn notes, “would often comment on production processes, explaining how the film stock had been produced or a particular scene contrived” (Cazdyn 2002: 47).13

In connection with this, one of the critical reminders that Tom Gunning offers when he discusses the practices of spectatorship vis-à-vis early cinema in terms of what he calls “the cinema of attractions” – that is, as an event based less on film as a storytelling medium and more on film as an exhibition of a unabashed visual spectacle – is to avoid the trap of reinscribing the hegemonic position in critical discourse that narrative cinema has since taken (Gunning 1990: 56). Only later does the narrativization of cinema take place, and even then, “the cinema of attractions does not disappear with the dominance of narrative, but rather goes underground, both into certain avant-garde practices and as a component of narrative films, more evident in some genre (e.g., the musical) than in others” (57).

13 In line with the historical turn in the field of cinema studies, there has been much recent attention to the *benshi* commentator in early Japanese cinema. An excellent overview of the discourses surrounding the place of the *benshi* in the formation of Japanese cinema can be found in Gerow (1994); Dym (2000) provides a history of the practice of commentary in Japan; Abé Mark Nornes (2007) discusses the rise and fall of these commentators in relation to practices of translation and subtitling.
Consequently, it would be ahistorical to ascribe the practices of vision of later cinematic forms to those that came before, or even consider them as proto-narrative-films, and hence implying that the shift from one to the other was simply a natural progression. The same can be said with regard to Akutagawa’s treatment of the apparatus of cinema; it is necessary to recognize that narrative-cinematic spectatorial practices could very well not be completely naturalized at this point, and ahistorically ascribing such to it (even if only as the standard against which it diverges) warrants challenging.

Joan Copjec has lodged an even more far-reaching criticism of the totalizing tendency in the foundational theories of the cinematic apparatus. Copjec forcefully argues that much of film theory that purports to be psychoanalytical is in fact based on a radically reductive misunderstanding of Jacques Lacan’s conception of the gaze. Contrary to its standard presentation in theories of the cinematic apparatus, the gaze for Lacan is not in the possession of the spectator; on the contrary, it is an objective gaze outside of the subject, distinguished from the eye of the spectator, marking not the subject’s mastery of the image, but precisely the impossibility of such a mastery in the first place:

The subject, in short, cannot be located or locate itself at the point of the gaze, since this point marks, on the contrary, its very annihilation…. In film theory, the gaze is located “in front of” the image, as its signified, the point of maximal meaning or sum of all that appears in the image and the point that "gives" meaning. The subject is, then, thought to identify with and thus, in a sense, to coincide with the gaze. In Lacan, on the other hand, the gaze is located "behind" the image, as that which fails to appear in it and thus as that which makes all its meanings suspect. (Copjec 1994: 35-36)

For Copjec, the problem with theories of the cinematic apparatus that make use of merely a “mirage of psychoanalysis” (Copjec 1994: 26) is the mechanism’s seeming perfection. While acknowledging that film theory has generally claimed that the spectator’s taking on a position of visual mastery is based on an ideological operation of misrecognition, she nonetheless criticizes them for rarely ever accounting for how this process might fail, going so far as to suggest that film theory strives to abolish alterity from the mechanism. By centering the transcendent subject in a position of visual mastery, the comprehension of the cinematic apparatus can only ever be complicit in the effacement of difference. It is this that is at
stake in her bid to “rediscover” Lacan’s gaze in the cinema, for by relocating the gaze, desire – and by implication, the desire of the Other – and not identification becomes the fundamental problem, thus opening up a space to recognize difference.

On the point of film theory’s misappropriation of the concept of the gaze, Copjec is certainly correct. There is no doubt that for Lacan, the gaze is always already in the field of the Other, and the subject only ever emerges as an effect of the gaze, constituted in the desire of the Other: “In the scopic, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture” (Lacan 1981: 106). Moreover, as far as the challenge of conceiving of the figure of the doppelganger and its situatedness in the visual field, Copjec’s corrective proves to be productive for its recognition that the traumatic constitution of the subject not merely as a singular event or stage that is subsequently overcome. Rather, it is something structural that is built into the very construction of subjectivity as such. That said, I cannot help but wonder if this merely replaces one totalizing schema with another. For even as the possibility of radical alterity is unearthed in the revision of theories of the apparatus, in the move to return to Lacan as an ontological foundation, is this alterity not already domesticated, schematized and rendered legible in advance? Either way, the risk of reducing cinema to little more than illustrations of psychoanalytic principles remains. Stephen Heath has raised a point pertinent to this problem: “attention needs to be given to what investment in the ‘properly’ psychoanalytic carries with it in any given context” (Heath 1999: 34). If desire is the desire of the Other, then it seems only warranted to account for what mediates the desire for the “properly psychoanalytic,” what structures the relation between cinema and psychoanalysis.

One way to address this problem is with an engagement with the broad critique that Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari level at psychoanalysis in The Anti-Oedipus (1983). Although their arguments are difficult to summarize without doing injustice to their richness and complexity, at least one critical point that Deleuze and Guattari raise is that in the centering of the figure of Oedipus, the discourse of psychoanalysis in effect does not merely illuminate the mechanisms and operations of desire and the
unconscious. It moreover participates in setting up its limits in accordance with the social formation of capitalist modernity; it participates, in other words, precisely in the symbolic structuring of desire. They write: “Oedipus is this displaced or internalized limit where desire lets itself be caught. The Oedipal triangle is the personal and private territoriality that corresponds to all of capitalism’s efforts at social reterritorialization” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 266). One particular figure that occupies a key position in their discussion is the schizophrenic, whom they characterize as – contrary to its conventional understanding as unproductive and apathetic – embodying a productive desire not based on “lack.” In the schizophrenic’s constant decoding and deterritorialization of codes, it resists containment and reterritorialization in the Oedipal triangle, and posits a radical potential. Its appearance of unproductiveness is, for Deleuze and Guattari, is a consequence of the attempt to oedipalize it, posing the rhetorical question: “Could it be that the loss of reality is not the effect of the schizophrenic process, but the effect of its forced oedipalization, that is to say, its interruption?” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 123).

In a critical gesture not dissimilar to the one Deleuze and Guattari perform, Jonathan Beller interrogates the relations between cinema and psychoanalysis by contending that the former is better grasped less as an explanatory metalanguage with which to read cinema and more as itself a technique that emerges out of the technical and economic apparatus of cinema itself. In words that echo (and expand upon) Friedrich Kittler’s discussion of the doppelganger, for Beller, cinema is “the unconscious of the unconscious.” Rather than merely mobilizing an unconscious that a priori exists, the cinematic apparatus is what instantiates its coming into being in the first place; as he puts it, “the cinematic apparatus is “not a late-blooming technology for imaginary titillation through an industrial interface with the unconscious, but… a precursor of and model for the unconscious as it has been theorized through the course of the twentieth century” (Beller 2006a: 18). As a case in point, one aspect of Lacanian psychoanalysis that Beller rereads is the structure of the gaze. If for Lacan, subjectivity emerges in the field of the visible under the gaze of the Other – “what determines me, at the most profound level, in
the visible, is the gaze that is outside” (Lacan 1981: 106) – in Beller’s argument, what enables this procedure is a historically specific condition wherein vision has become subject to the processes of the commodity fetish, such that it has become an autonomized and alienated spectacle.

As such, for Beller, a twofold task of critically historicizing psychoanalysis is called for. Not only must the coming into being of psychoanalysis (and its articulation of the doppelganger) be historicized and its relations with cinema and the broader scopic regime within which it emerges be accounted for, but also and at once, the sociocultural apparatus of cinema and the social relations constituted through it must also be recognized. As Beller puts it, “the understanding of cinema must undergo a similar shifting in order to appear in its proper relation to industrial development and capitalism” (Beller 2006: 155). It is not sufficient to treat cinema as essentially producing either a traumatic dislocation of subjectivity or as producing ideological identifications, but rather the task is to account for the vicissitudes of these operations at historically specific moments and situate them within the social, political, and economic forces that structure their workings.

Thus, against Christian Metz’s argument that the primary function served by the constitution of a transcendental subjectivity in cinematic spectatorship is the production of its own consumers, in Beller’s argument, cinema’s constitution of its own consumer-spectators is only a symptom, for its mechanical production of affects and subjectivities serves as an enabling condition for the larger project of expropriating and capitalizing an emerging order of productive labor from its spectators – attention – and through images as surplus-value bearing commodities. More importantly, this process is not restricted to the film theater, but is increasingly becoming a decisive component of social organization as a whole, that is, “cinema” is not merely an issue of the spectator before the screen, but is itself becoming a “mode of production” as such. In his words:

Cinema and its succeeding (if still simultaneous) formations, particularly television, video, computers, and the internet, are deterritorialized factories in which spectators work, that, in which we perform value-productive labor. It is in and through the cinematic image and its legacy, the gossamer imaginary arising out of a matrix of socio-psycho-material relations, that we make our lives…. What is immediately suggested by the cinematic mode of production (CMP),
properly understood, is that a social relation that emerged as ‘the cinema’ is today characteristic of sociality in general. (Beller 2006: 1)

In calling cinema a mode of production, Beller suggests that what takes place on the site of cinematic spectatorship and the process of the mechanization of vision is the capitalist social relation as such so as to posit the intersections of social, material, and cultural reproduction without conveniently bracketing off one term or the other or reducing either to a dependent relation on the other. Developing the point further, he posits two forms of labor performed by the spectator. The first kind of labor is the valorization of the images (or more accurately, image-commodities) through the attention given to them in acts of viewing. One need to only think of celebrities or image-commodity franchises to realize the value produced by increased visibility. Cinema becomes, in other words, an extension of the working day into visual terrain. The second form of labor implicated in Beller’s work is performed by spectators upon themselves. The act of spectatorship produces desires, affects, and subjectivities that function as the condition of possibility for the production of value. Spectators are, in effect, not only productive of value in the image-commodities they consume, but are also consumed by and become images themselves. As Beller explains it:

Early cinematic montage extended the logic of the assembly-line (the sequencing of discreet, programmatic machine-orchestrated human operations) to the sensorium and brought the industrial revolution to the eye. Cinema welds human sensual activity, what Marx called “sensual labor,” in the context of commodity production, to celluloid. Instead of striking a blow to sheet metal wrapped around a mold or tightening a bolt, we sutured one image to the next (and, like workers who disappeared in the commodities they produced, we sutured ourselves into the image). (Beller 2006: 9)

Understood in this sense, the shifts in the practices of spectatorship surrounding early cinema might then be grasped as a kind of primitive accumulation taking place on the order of the visual; a process of colonization inwards parallel to the outward colonial expansion of capital. Just as the force of capital breaks apart existing structures of social relations only to capture the displaced bodies produced by this process and disciplines them into workers, on the order of vision, the existing structure of social
relations within one scopic regime is undermined, such that vision could be alienated and subsequently commodified, surplus-value extracted from it.\(^\text{14}\)

Against this backdrop, the latent content of the obsessive schematization of the unconscious seen in psychoanalytic discourse can thus be understood as an attempt to reterritorialize, to render legible and come to terms with deterritorializing visual-economic trauma marked by the expropriation and alienation of vision operating in parallel with the literary modernizations that Rey Chow and Karatani Kôjin have discussed. Or, as Beller articulates the point, “[t]he eruption of the unconscious through the structure of the gap emerges as a crisis of signification, and psychoanalysis appears as linguistic endeavor to remedy a breakdown in language” (Beller 2006a: 163). What both literary and psychoanalytic discourse effectively perform is an act of narrativization as a means of remedying the subjective anxieties provoked by an excess of representation. In this sense, they prefigure cinema’s own historical move from the spectacle of actuality films to narrative filmmaking that Mary Ann Doane has suggested performs a similar function. In her words, “cinema, as in psychoanalysis, time is produced as an effect, at least in part to protect the subject from the anxieties of total representation generated by the new technological media” (Doane 2002: 68).

Indeed, in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow,” signs of this emerging regime of alienated vision appear in the text primarily as a sense of temporal alienation. Not only is the narrative cut up into discrete scenes marked by their locations, as I noted above, but these scenes themselves are broken apart by several flashback sequences that enter suddenly and without any preparation for the reader. All that marks the shift from one temporal frame to another entry are ellipses at the beginning of the scene. Indeed, in one instance, the shift takes place in the middle of a yet to be completed statement by Chen, as he recalls a moment from the early days of his marriage to Fusako, only to be interrupted by the ringing of a telephone. With “the cut,” filmic practice begins its shift from the unabashed exhibitionism

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\(^{14}\) Is it any accident that Sigmund Freud explicitly links the sense of the uncanny with a kind of alienation of vision? In his classic reading of Hoffman’s *The Sandman*, he argues against Ernst Jentsch’s analysis of uncanniness as an effect of the confusion between animate and inanimate. Instead, for Freud, “the feeling of something uncanny is directly attached… to the idea of being robbed of one’s eyes” (Freud 2000c: 230).
of the cinema of attractions to the grammar of narrative cinema and the alienation of vision that organizes the logic of the scopic regime to which it belongs. But in this same cut can be located the point of potential breakdown should it fail to produce a suturing effect. The standard process of suture is most clearly visible in the shot/reverse-shot sequence. While the disembodied first shot produces a sense of anxiety in the spectator, this is contained in the subsequent reverse-shot through its anchoring in a specific character within the screen. A figure such as the doppelganger, however, disrupts this procedure by confusing the positions of the subject and object of the gaze. Akutagawa’s story can thus be understood as articulating the ambiguities and tensions surrounding the temporal effects of the then emergent form of narrative cinema.

What these temporal shifts in Akutagawa’s story suggest is that within the cinematic text, time has become externalized. Its experience is no longer necessarily organized around the subject. Rather, temporal movements move at the standardized speed of the running of film, at the rate that its discretely divided still images are projected onto the screen. I do not believe it is overreaching to suggest that what is evident here is the emergence of an assembly-line logic – indeed, perhaps even a Taylorization – of the spectator’s temporality, that is, a mechanization of the eye parallel to the mechanization of the body. Analogous to the techniques of “scientific management” brought forth by Frederick Taylor wherein the bodily movements and gestures of workers on the assembly line were isolated and routinized such that it became possible for the speed of their movements and intensity of their work to be organized around the bare minimum time needed to run the lines as opposed to their own subjective rhythms, in “The Shadow,” there appears an attempt to represent in language this emerging experience of a temporality of narrative wherein its movement is organized around not a narrator but an abstracted and rationalized logic. As a consequence, subjective time has become, in other words, “cinematic time,” in the terms used by Mary Ann Doane. As she puts it, “the representation of time in cinema (its ‘recording’) is also and simultaneously the production of temporalities for the spectator, a structuring of the spectator’s time” (Doane 2002: 24). Indeed, for Doane, in its role of enabling the representability of time itself, cinema
was a critical participant – along with other discourses and institutions such as psychoanalysis, statistics, and other emerging “scientific” discourses – in this effort to reify, rationalize, and standardize time in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as part of a process in the organization of a capitalist mode of production and its regimented and divisible conception of time necessary for the functioning of the working day (Doane 2002: 5-8). To this, it now appears also possible to add that cinematic time became, at once, itself an extension of this same working day.¹⁵

However, there is another interlinked dimension to Doane’s conception of “cinematic time.” Because of its capability to ensure that any moment can be made the subject of a film, in other words, its capacity to allow for the recording of the ephemeral, cinema can also be aligned with an emphasis on the temporality of contingency. This draws from the perceived indexical properties of the technical apparatus of cinema, most evident in the particular genre of early cinema known as the actuality, which were films that were often composed only of a single scene and shot capturing a mundane scene, be it the arrival of a train or a street scene. By capturing these scenes, they are made repeatable, and the sheer detail that would otherwise become nothing more than ephemera captured onto film and rendered visible. Something akin to this property of the cinematic apparatus is certainly visible in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” as well. Recalling the first flashback sequence of the story quoted earlier, for example, there is a noticeable excess of arbitrary detail, which emphasizes the contingency that the camera all takes in.

If the simultaneous enactment of contingency and rationalization of time in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” is any indication, then Doane is likely correct when she asserts that these tendencies are not opposed, but rather exhibit an “interdependence and alliance in the structuring of temporality in modernity” (Doane 2002: 11). Contingency, for Doane, is almost akin to an unconscious of rationalization in that it is not only repressed and excluded from the rationalization of time, but

¹⁵ Jonathan Beller also raises the issue of Taylorization in terms of cinematic spectatorship in conjunction with Pavlovian ideas of behavioral control and how these are taken up Sergei Eisenstein’s *The Strike* as well as his film theories. See chapter 2 of Beller’s *The Cinematic Mode of Production* (2006).
structurally necessary as its excluded, that is, incorporated into the schema as its other. In this sense, not unlike the relationship between the practices surrounding the cinema of attractions and narrative cinema, what is suggested here, it seems, is that at issue is not merely a matter of one set of practices replacing the other, but how they simultaneously operate at once, and what shifts at different moments in history is the relationality between them. “Cinematic time” and its role in the constitution of the spectator-subject might then, in this respect, be better understood if considered in alignment with the articulations of temporality in the problem of subject formation that Jean Laplanche has introduced into psychoanalysis as kind of “rhythm” between these mutually constitutive tendencies of contingency and rationalization. In Laplanche’s view, this “rhythm” is experienced as a continuous dual process oscillating between de-translation and simultaneous re-translation, wherein what takes place is “the splitting up of signifying sequences” in existing received subjectivities, consequently producing the effects of a schizophrenic break, so that the subject may “recompose a unity” (Laplanche 1992: 171).

In terms of the broader problem of visuality, Jonathan Crary has provided a compelling account of a similar dynamic. Crary characterizes visuality as a process in a state of perpetual transformation, indeed even crisis, writing that “since the late nineteenth century, and increasingly during the last two decades, capitalist modernity has generated a constant re-creation of the conditions of sensory experience, in what could be called a revolutionizing of the means of perception… At the moment when the dynamic logic of capital began to dramatically undermine any stable or enduring structure of perception, this logic simultaneously attempted to impose a disciplinary regime of attentiveness” (Crary 2001: 13). Although Crary’s own study focuses on the nineteenth century, which he considers the ground zero of the emergence of this dynamic in the scopic regime of capitalist modernity, parallel to Laplanche, a key point he raises here is to emphasize that this doubled logic structures the visual (and the psychoanalytic) is not a singular event, but one that repeats continuously. Or, to put it in Lacanian terms, what the spectator-subject (both individually and collectively) undergoes is a continuously repeating
reenactment of the mirror stage and its repression before the screen, in the service of reproducing the spectator’s capability to accrue value onto the image through his or her attention.

In this respect, the appearance of the doppelganger in Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” might then be understood as a by-product—the excess—of this rhythm of de-translation and re-translation, or alternatively, schizophrenia and oedipalization, manifesting when this process is unable to be completed; it represents the excess that escapes the formation of a transcendental subjectivity and its attempts to demarcate subject and object, self and other, and as such, appears as a repetition of the mirror stage. Indeed, that Akutagawa’s “The Shadow” appeared at the moment when the cinema of attractions was arguably beginning to be displaced by narrative cinema is perhaps no mere coincidence. At this moment in the history of visuality in Japan, this oscillation from one process to the other had yet to be fully routinized, opening the possibility for that which cannot quite be captured in this operation to make an appearance, one manifestation of which is marked by the fantasy of the doppelganger.
CHAPTER 4
RAMPO’S REPETITIONS: ADAPTATION AS DOPPELGANGER

The Persistence of Vision in Edogawa Rampo

In the critical discourse surrounding his work, Edogawa Rampo’s engagements with cinema and other technologies of visuality emergent in early twentieth century Japan have not thus far gone unnoticed. Indeed, one might go so far as to say that it has almost become de rigueur to note his seemingly obsessive attention to all manner of optical devices – lenses, films, panoramas, and especially mirrors – as one unmistakable feature that permeates much of his writing. Such a move is certainly made by William Tyler when, commenting on Rampo’s “The Man Traveling with a Brocade Portrait” (Oshie to tabi suru otoko, 1929; trans. 2008), he singles out the “ruminations on the power of mirages, binoculars, and the lens of the mind to transform reality” (Tyler 2008: 376) as a key element of the story. Likewise, Seth Jacobowitz suggests that optical technologies play a crucial role in Rampo’s literary imagination (Jacobowitz 2008: xxxvii), as does Yoshikuni Igarashi when he argues that the question of the body’s place within the scopic regime of modernity is a central concern in much of Rampo’s fictions, that his “literary imagination traces the process of subject formation and the transformation in the scopic field of modern society” (Igarashi 2005: 323).

These assertions are certainly not unfounded. In fact, in a number of his own writings, Rampo has self-reflectively commented on the impact of the emergence of all manner of optical devices and technologies not only on his work, but also implicitly on the broader social and cultural milieu in which he lived. In his “A Passion For Lenses” (Renzu shikôshô, 1937; trans. 2008) for example, Rampo recounts a number of childhood experiences that speak of his long-standing fondness for “telescopes, [An earlier version of this chapter appeared in Japan Forum as “Rampo’s Repetitions: The Doppelganger in Edogawa Rampo and Tsukamoto Shin’ya” (Posadas 2009).]
cameras, and projection machines” (Rampo 2008b: 149). Among these include the accidental discovery of the camera obscura effect when the sunlight streaming through a hole in the shôji blinds of his darkened room produced a projection of the scenery outside as well as moments of playful experimentation with his father’s magnifying glass (Rampo 2008b: 147-48). Specifically, what seemingly attracts Rampo to these devices and technologies is their capacity to render visible what was once unseen. An illustrative example of this is a reference to a news article about the construction of a new astronomical telescope in the United States, which he suggests will have significant transformative consequences for human knowledge. In Rampo’s words: “The scope of human vision will expand tremendously. It will become possible to see what was once impossible to behold. It will be a momentous occasion, as though the whole human race, once blind, is granted the gift of sight” (Rampo 2008b: 150).

His penchant for hyperbole aside, what is particularly interesting about Rampo’s self-professed fascination for optical technologies is how his comments align with (and prefigure) Guy Debord’s characterization of the concept of the spectacle, whose underlying logic is, in his words, “to cause a world that is no longer directly perceptible to be seen via different specialized mediations” (Debord 1994: 17). Certainly, when the historicity of the emergence of the society of spectacle is accounted for, it becomes clear that it closely parallels the formation of the genre of detective fiction. With the former, Jonathan Crary has suggested that while it matures and takes shape in the 1920s, it nonetheless has a crucial prehistory, which he traces back to the 1840s and the radical reconfiguration and increasing abstraction of vision taking place at that historical moment (Crary 1991: 18-19). Likewise, in the case of the latter, while its most commonly cited prototypical texts – Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in the

2 Page references for Rampo’s “A Passion For Lenses” and “The Horrors of Film” point to Seth Jacobowitz recent translation of the two texts in The Edogawa Rampo Reader (2008).

3 While he does not name the telescope in his essay, instead referring to it only as a new telescope with a two-hundred inch mirror that will supercede the then largest Hooker telescope at the Mount Wilson Observatory (Rampo 2008b: 150), he is likely referring to the construction of the Hale telescope at the Palomar Observatory, which was eventually completed in 1948 and took over the title of the largest optical telescope until the Russian BTA-6 telescope subsequently took its place in 1975.
Rue Morgue” (1841) and “The Purloined Letter” (1844) or Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1861) – begin to appear at the same period of visual reorganization, as Kasai Kiyoshi has argued, it was not until the aftermath of the First World War when the massive scale of anonymous deaths provoked a desire to account for individual deaths that it coalesced into the familiar contours of an identifiable genre with codified rules and formulae (Kasai 1998: 51).

Especially in light of how, as the preceding chapters have discussed, the psychoanalytic production of the unconscious is underpinned by the vicissitudes of image-commodity culture on the one hand, and on the other hand how the historical emergence of psychoanalysis and detective fiction (in which much of Rampo’s literary production has been classified) parallel one another, that a parallel historical trajectory can be ascribed to detective fiction and the development of the society of the spectacle is not all too surprising. In fact, in highlighting the capacity of optical devices to render visible what would otherwise be invisible, what Rampo effectively identifies (even if only inadvertently) is precisely the point of intersection between the discursive operations of psychoanalysis and detective fiction as forms of what Jonathan Crary has called “techniques of the observer.” Optical technologies, in the words of Mary Ann Doane, “become forms of prosthetic devices that compensate for a flawed body, for the finitude of human vision” (Doane 2002: 80-81). Whereas psychoanalysis addresses the psychical anxieties of dislocated through the revelation of the invisible workings of the unconscious from the observation of exterior symptoms, detective stories offer fictionalized accounts of the desire to place the body under observation so as to render it into a site of visible clues for the identification of criminals within the new modes of mobility and circulation of urban spaces.

In this respect, detective fiction can be understood as symptomatic of the spectacle and its reorganization of the senses in modernity wherein vision becomes separated from the other senses (and especially touch) so as to facilitate its abstraction and the placement of vision in a hegemonic position in
the realm of knowledge production. Indeed, one might go so far as assert that Rampo’s body of work is particularly emblematic, as Matsuyama Iwao does when he underscores precisely this aspect of Rampo’s writing in his attempt to situate his work within the transformations in the configuration of urban space in Tokyo of the 1920s. Pointing out the richly evocative representations of sensory experiences in his work, Matsuyama highlights how Rampo’s fiction is illustrative of the significant impact of the rapid transformation of the space of the city on the human body and modes of perceiving. One particular point he highlights is the stark demarcation of public and private spaces that new architectural forms – especially the enclosed and compartmentalized spaces of so-called Western-style homes – which tended to also map onto the senses with vision becoming hegemonic in the public realm while other senses were repressed into the private. (Matsuyama 1994: 31). Thus, in Matsuyama’s view, Rampo’s work is inseparable from the autonomization and privileging of vision and its impact on the production of knowledge and configuration of bodies in space under regimes of observation; the condition of possibility for their emergence is no less than the scopic regime of the society of spectacle.

But what is of even greater significance is how Rampo’s work incessantly interrogates the limits of visuality. If what characterizes the scopic regime of modernity is the repression of the senses other than vision, for Matsuyama, what concerns Rampo’s literary production is the unearthing of these senses, the articulation of what exceeds the boundaries of knowledge and experience structured around visuality. Taking up and further developing Matsuyama’s discussion, Yoshikuni Igarashi goes so far as to contend that Rampo’s literary project can be apprehended as one that is coeval to and historically contemporaneous with Jacques Lacan’s own psychoanalytic articulations of the structuring of subjectivity in the scopic field (Igarashi 2005: 303). In his theorization of the “mirror stage” and elsewhere, Lacan highlights not only the specular dimensions of subject formation (i.e., the identification with the

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4 In Debord’s analysis, “[s]ince the spectacle’s job is to cause a world that is no longer directly perceptible to be seen via different specialized mediations, it is inevitable that it should elevate the human sense of sight to the special place once occupied by touch; the most abstract of the senses, and the most easily deceived, sight is naturally the most readily adaptable to present-day society’s generalized abstraction” (Debord 1994: 17).
wholeness of the body-image in the mirror over the fragmentary incompleteness of the actual body) and its entry into the symbolic order, but moreover attempts to grasp how in this process is revealed the constitutively alienated character of the identification with the image. In Igarashi’s argument, parallel to Lacan’s project, Rampo’s fictions often bring to the foreground the “underlying tensions within the constitution of modern subjectivity” (Igarashi 2005: 304). In other words, Rampo’s work dramatizes the specular formation of the subject wherein a traumatic excess must be repressed, yet is at once nonetheless constitutive of its very formation.

No doubt, Igarashi’s attempt to link Rampo’s writing with Lacan’s concept of the mirror stage has much merit, especially given that in Rampo’s non-fictional writings, he has a number of times pointed specifically to mirrors in terms of the excess of vision – affects, shocks, terrors – they produce. For instance, in the aforementioned “A Passion for Lenses,” he briefly mentions his fear of concave mirrors, writing “I lack the courage to stand in front of a concave mirror and see it reflect back a dozen or more times larger” (Edogawa 2008b: 149). This statement in fact repeats a similar remark Rampo has made in an earlier short essay, “The Horrors of Film” (Eiga no kyōfu, 1926; trans 2008). Here, Rampo compares the experience of cinematic spectatorship to something akin to looking at a concave mirror and its terrifying capability to magnify the images therein, and through that, threaten the fragmentation of the subject:

A massive face a thousand times larger than mine suffuses the screen. Then it looks in my direction and laughs. I can only imagine, what if it were my own face up there!” For the most part, film actors keep a firm grasp on their sanity. But have you ever seen your face reflected in a concave mirror? (…) Film actors constantly have to stare into them. It’s truly a wonder they don’t lose their minds. (Edogawa 2008b: 137)

Rampo’s emphasis on the scale of the image and its effects not only recalls Tanizaki’s story “The Tumor with a Human Face” (Jimenenso, 1918: trans. 2005) discussed in Chapter 2, but also prefigures Gilles Deleuze’s conception of the close-up in cinema as productive of the process of facialization. In Deleuze’s (and Guattari’s) theorization, facialization is a central component in the process of subject
formation, functioning as a “loci of resonance” through which the operations of signification and subjectionizition must pass (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 168-69). In cinema, it is through the close up that the face is given shape. Rather than existing a priori to being shot in close up, the face is produced through the this very shot. In Deleuze’s words, “[t]here is no close up of the face. The close up is the face” (Deleuze 1986: 102). However, while instrumental in the process, this is not where the operation of the close up ends for Deleuze in that immanent to this very procedure is its disruption. An effect of the magnification of the face is to render it excessive; it inspires attention to what would otherwise be invisible minute oscillations, intense vibrations, and micromovements on the surface of the face, which hold the potential to threaten to break free of the limits of the face: “The close up has merely pushed the face to those regions where the principle of individuation ceases to hold sway… the facial close up is both the face and its effacement” (Deleuze 1986: 102).

With this in mind, that the previously discussed proliferation of appearances of the figure of the doppelganger in Rampo’s fictions typically manifest in forms closely linked with the specular only serves to punctuate the point. In some cases, these take the form of explicit references to visual spectacles in fictions such as *The strange tale of panorama island* (*Panorama-tô kitan*, 1926) whose protagonist uses wealth he has falsely inherited upon his assumption of another’s identity (with whom he has an uncanny resemblance) to build a panorama on an abandoned island or “The Man Traveling with the Brocade Portrait” wherein several visual practices and devices – binoculars, peep show booths, mirages – are named in connection with a doubling in the form of one of the characters becoming an image, becoming a part of the very brocade portrait that is the object of his desire. 5 In other cases, the linkage is more implicit, yet no less crucial, as is the case in Rampo’s depictions of forms of flânerie – a practice whose mobilized gaze Anne Friedberg has suggested to be a precursor to cinema (Friedberg 1995: 3) – seen in for example the curiosity hunting of the protagonist of *Beyond the bizarre* (*Ryôki no hate*, 1930) and his

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5 Igarashi’s (2005: 307-312) above cited discussion of Rampo and visuality devotes a section to *The strange tale of panorama island*; Thomas Looser (2002) provides a close examination of “The Man Traveling with a Brocade Portrait” in terms of its deployment of cinematic grammar.
subsequent encounter with his friend’s double. Either way, Seth Jacobowitz is certainly not off the mark when he notes that Rampo’s literary oeuvre is “rife with dolls, mannequins, automata, and puppets… which originated in the museums, department stores, vaudeville theaters, and other places where modern life was consumed as spectacle” (Jacobowitz 2008: xxx).

Further to this, Rampo’s deployment of the motif of the mirror as emblematic of an excess of vision, of an uncanny recognition of one’s own image as Other is doubly interesting because his own fictions have often, especially in recent years, been the subject of what Jacobowitz characterizes as another mirroring in the form of film adaptation (Jacobowitz: xxxix – xli). The first of such adaptations appeared not long after Rampo’s literary debut in 1923, with the first film version of The Dwarf (Issun boshi, 1927) appearing only four years after. Subsequently, his work had seen periodic adaptation for the screen, but it was not until the 1990s that a veritable explosion of films based on Rampo’s fiction becomes particularly visible. As Katsura Chiho has observed, this Rampo boom was especially marked by the appearance of four films that adapt of his fiction in 1994, the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth (Katsura 1994: 70). 6 This was not a one-off event either, and to date, there continues to be a proliferation of film adaptations of Rampo’s work.7 With this in mind, while possibly overstating things, Tatsumi Takayuki is perhaps not totally off the mark when he suggests that Rampo is at the very heart of

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6 The films in question are two different versions of The Mystery of Rampo (Rampo, 1994), one directed by Okuyama Kazuyoshi and the other by Mayuzumi Rintaró, which were commissioned specifically to commemorate the centennial of Rampo’s birth, and two films in the Edogawa Ranpo Gekijô [Edogawa Rampo Theater] series, namely Stalker in the Attic (Yaneura no sanposha, 1994) and The Man Traveling with a Brocade Portrait (Oshie to tabi suru otoko, 1994).

7 Subsequent adaptations include (aside from the four films of 1994): an omnibus film, Rampo Noir (Rampo Jigoku, 2005); the ongoing “Erotic Rampo” film series that have thus far released two titles – The human chair (Ningen isu, 2007) and yet another adaptation of Stalker in the attic (Yaneura no sanposha, 2007); adaptations by famed pink film directors Jissôji Akio and Wakamatsu Kôji, Murder on D-hill (D-zaka no satsujin jiken, 1998) and the forthcoming Caterpillar (Kyatapirâ, 2010) based on Rampo’s “Caterpillar” (Imomushi, 1929); a transnational production titled Inju, the Beast in the Shadow (Inju, la bête dans l’ombre, 2008) by Franco-Swiss director Barbet Schroeder, based on the Rampo novel of the same title; finally there are also several television appearances by Rampo’s trademark detective Akechi Kogorô that are too numerous to list here.
not only film culture, but of a newly resurgent erotic-grotesque sensibility in contemporary popular culture (Tatsumi 2008: x).\(^8\)

The significance of these adaptations and interpretations of Rampo is obvious, given how one of the central features of the figure of the doppelganger is the disruption of the relations between originals and copies. As such, might it not be productive to take up the issue of film adaptation in its terms, especially seeing as how adaptation works on the basis of repetition? Adaptations necessarily involve the engendering of a sense of recognition in its audience, be it canny or uncanny, in a manner that Linda Hutcheon has termed “the audience’s ‘palimpsestuous’ intertextuality” which activates memory, through which both similarity and difference come to be recognized (Hutcheon 2006: 21-22). More importantly, as the preceding chapter has discussed, the doppelganger marks those moments which Slavoj Žižek has in another context termed “eruptions of the traumatic Real” (Žižek 1992: 150),\(^9\) that is, if it represents the excess of psychoanalytic attempts to apprehend modern subjectivity as it is constituted within the vicissitudes of visual modernity. If so, then it seems only apt to pose the problem of what ramifications might be drawn when the representation in question presents itself not only as a repetition at the onset, but also one that takes the form of cinema, the technical and social apparatus of which is constitutive of the very condition of possibility for the imagination of the doppelganger in the first place?

**Crime and Confession**

Among the works of Rampo, one that stands out for not only centrally featuring the figure of the doppelganger but also finding itself subsequently adapted for the screen is “The Twins: A Condemned Criminal’s Confession to a Priest” (Sôseiji: aru shikeishû ga kyôkaishi ni uchiaketa hanashi, 1924; trans. 1956), a text from early in Rampo’s writing career. As the title suggests, the story of “The Twins” centers

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\(^8\) In fairness to Tatsumi, the context of his assertion is a preface to a recently published collection of new English translations of Rampo’s work, which calls for just such a hyperbolic rhetoric.

\(^9\) While Žižek has used the phrase elsewhere as well (in discussions for instance of David Lynch’s films), the context of the phrase in the specific citation above points to his close analysis of Franz Kafka’s *The Trial* to explicate his understanding of Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytic theories.
on a pair of identical twin brothers and is told as the confession of the younger, who murders his older brother to steal his identity. He performs this killing by pretending to travel to Korea to look for work there, and then secretly returning to kill his brother and then dumping his body in a dried up well. After taking over his identity (and along with it his older brother’s larger share of the inheritance and his wife), he begins spending his brother’s money to the point that he accumulates large debts, leading him to commit further crimes to support his extravagant lifestyle. Having earlier found what he believes to be his dead brother’s fingerprint, he realizes that he has a foolproof method for committing perfect crimes: by planting his dead brother’s fingerprint at the crime scenes, he could easily redirect attention away from him. But his plan backfires when the fingerprint he leaves ends up in fact being his own, appearing unrecognizable to him only because it was a negative image of it.

From just this rough summary of “The Twins,” already evident is the key role the problem of visibility plays in the task of individuation, in the constitution of subjectivity in narratives of crime and detection. As Yoshikuni Igarashi has put the point succinctly: “Detective stories bear the special mark of urbanity and modern subjectivity in their emphasis on the scientific methods used to probe the visible body in the process of establishing identity” (Igarashi 2005: 301). With “The Twins,” the central crime that forms the premise of the story is identity theft, a crime that was certainly not an altogether unknown occurrence in the 1920s in Japan or elsewhere, despite the almost fantastical extreme that Rampo takes it in the scenario he concocts. For example, in his discussion of the shifts in the system of authorship and authorial names in 1920s Japan, Takeda Nobuaki notes the existence of journalistic coverage of a “new crime” (shinhanzai) wherein individuals who accumulate debts or swindle money would take on the names of famous writers – literally becoming their doppelgangers – to avoid having the crimes pinned on them (Takeda 1993: 274).10

10 Here the pseudonym “Edogawa Rampo” is also significant. Rampo’s debut takes place at a moment when, according to Takeda, the use of pen-names among literary authors had begun to decline in popularity, which he reads as indicative of a shift in the system of valuation of names, wherein its function as a signifier of “authenticity” lead to increased value attached to a writer’s use of one’s real name (Takeda 1993: 272).
As I noted previously, attaching names to individual bodies – the fixing of identities – was the central problem in the area of crime and its detection and policing, and as such, became the narrative logic underpinning detective fiction; its historical emergence as a genre takes place in reaction to the dislocation and cover of anonymity provided by the mass circulation of bodies in urban spaces, or in Walter Benjamin’s words, “the obliteration of the individual’s traces in the big-city crowd” (Benjamin 1973: 43). This anonymity provided by the urban fabric became a particular concern for policing when dealing with repeat offenders. As Serizawa Kazuya has pointed out, policing shifts its focus from the crimes themselves to individual criminals, particularly in terms of assessing the danger they pose to the social fabric, and repeat offenders (whether already realized or only potential) were assessed to be of greater risk (Serizawa 2001: 74). But the problem then was how to identify who was a repeat offender with confidence. After all, names could be changed and disguises could be adopted. The doppelganger becomes, in effect, not merely figures of fantasy, but scientific problems in the field of policing and the management of populations.

Concurrent transformations taking place in the regime of visuality are at the very heart of these processes, be it in enabling new networks of mobility and circulation of “vast amounts of visual imagery and information” (Crary 1991: 96) that undermine and dissolve extant forms of subjectivities, or in facilitating the move to fix these dislocated bodies to ease in their commoditization and capture. Concretely, Tom Gunning has pointed to the operations of photography and early cinema as a case in point. In his words, “[w]hile the mechanical reproduction and multiplication of photographic images undermined traditional understandings of identity, within the practice of criminology and detective fiction the photograph could also be used as a guarantor of identity and as a means of establishing guilt or innocence” (Gunning 1995: 19). This is especially evident in the institution of techniques like the accumulation of captured criminals’ portraits that were arranged into “Rogues’ Galleries” or the more the more advanced and complicated Bertillon system (developed by and named after French police
statistician Alphonse Bertillon), which involved not only the collection of portrait photographs but also charts and measurements for the classifying and systematizing various physiognomic features.

With the protagonist of “The Twins,” by virtue of being a one half of a set of twin brothers who are virtually indistinguishable from each other, with the sole exception of a mole on the younger brother’s leg, photography becomes largely incapable of establishing his individual identity, and as a consequence, his guilt in any crime. Certainly, he is eventually captured, but it is exactly what gives him away – his fingerprint -- that is noteworthy. Although Yoshikuni Igarashi suggests that, “[t]he materiality of his own body comes back to haunt him, although this materiality manifests itself only through the visible signs of the body surface” (Igarashi 2005: 314), it might be more accurate to say that it is a kind of excessive vision that is able to capture surface detail of the fingerprint as a trace of the tactile that ultimately does him in. Furthermore, it is telling that when he is caught, the fingerprint that finally lays bare his crime is no ordinary fingerprint but the negative image of his fingerprint that he misrecognizes as his brother’s. When he first finds and studies the fingerprint in his dead brother’s diary, it appears similar in pattern but sufficiently different from his own and hence he concludes that it must have been his brother’s. Only later upon his arrest and capture does he realize the reason behind the subtle differences. In his explanation: “The mark I had found in the diary was not a direct fingerprint but had been pressed there after I had once wiped my ink-stained fingers off. So it was the ink which remained in the shallow grooves between the ridges rather than the ridges themselves which had made the mark, producing a print like the negative of photograph” (Edogawa 1956: 141).

While decisive in eventually leading to his arrest, the specific instance of the narrator’s misrecognition of his own fingerprint (albeit reversed) as his brother’s is only part of a larger pattern of similar acts. In his account, the narrator explains that subsequent to his murder of his brother, he develops an aversion to mirrors and other reflective surfaces, for when looking into the mirror, what he sees is not his own reflection but the misrecognition of his twin brother’s image. In his words: “From

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11 For the sake of consistency for purposes of cross-referencing, I have cited James Harris’s English translation of Rampo’s story here. Commentary on the translation, when necessary, will be made in the footnotes.
the moment I cut off my twin’s life, I began to fear all mirrors….wherever I gazed, his face – his mad, leering face – stared back at me, full of vengeance: it was, of course, my own face” (Edogawa 1956: 123). Here, what is evident is that following a similar logic to the fear of mirrors Rampo expressed in “A Passion for Lenses,” the underlying reason behind his aversion to his own reflection is his desire to avoid seeing his own image appear monstrous and other. If in the Lacanian account of the process of ego formation via the mirror stage what takes place is a misrecognition – a méconnaissance – wherein the subject identifies with the illusory unity of the exteriorized specular (Lacan 1977: 4), in “The Twins,” what seems to be the case is the breakdown or reversal of this process; the identification is broken and the mirror image instead appears in its full alterity, with the consequence of threatening a traumatic fragmentation of the subject.

Insofar as detective fiction is underpinned by visual practices, the protagonist of “The Twins” can be said to occupy a position of excess; he embodies the point of breakdown of both the specular constitution of the subject and visual techniques of vision. Further to this, the very form that the narration takes in the story can itself be read as a reversal or as a negative image of the classical form of detective fiction for which Edogawa Rampo is known. Unlike other works that Rampo produced at this stage in his writing career, the character of the detective plays only a minor role in it. He appears only at the end of the story to apprehend the narrator following his second crime (when he leaves his fingerprint) yet completely overlooks his first (the murder and identity theft of his twin brother). Instead, “The Twins” is framed as the murderous twin brother’s confession delivered to a prison chaplain as he is awaiting his execution. This confession opens with the following words uttered by the narrator:

Father, I’ve finally made up my mind to confess to you. My day of execution is drawing nearer; and I want to make a clean breast of all my sins, for I feel that this is the only way I can obtain a few days of peace before I die. So I beg you to spare me some of your time to hear the story of my wicked life…. I think my wife would hate me forever if I were to die without confessing to the other crime as well. And there’s yet one more reason. I’ve always had a livid fear of the vengeance of the man I murdered! No I don’t mean the one I killed when I stole the money. That case is already closed, for I have already confessed my guilt. The fact is, I committed another murder before that. (Edogawa 1956: 125-26)
This reference to “the other crime” of which only the narrator can speak marks the condition of possibility for the narrative’s performance as the limit of the techniques of detection and apprehension represented in detective fiction. The narrative comes into being in response to an implied detective story that fails to apprehend his earlier perfect crime of murder and identity theft. The effect of this is that although on one level the text still features attention to new scientific methods in the apprehension of crime and the intellectual tricks for which the detective genre is famous (in particular, the creative use of fingerprinting), its narrative performance appears to place less emphasis on this in contrast to its focus on the motivations and psychology of the criminal. Or to put it differently, the performance of confession in “The Twins” has the effect of centering the object of surveillance (the criminal) rather than its subject (the detective) as the case would be in detective fictions.

The significance of this can be better understood by looking into the specifics of what the narrator’s crime entailed. At one point in his account, he explains that in order to take over his brother’s life without arousing suspicion, he undertook a careful study of every detail of his mannerisms, down to “the way he wrung his towel after washing” (Edogawa 1956: 130). Even after he had completed the deed, his study continued with such details as copying his brother’s handwriting and cutting off a mole in his leg that distinguished one from the other. He was, in effect, disciplining his own body to become his brother to a point beyond imitation. Indeed, his mimicry was so complete that not a single person – not even his brother’s wife (or so he claims, at least) – suspected the theft of identity (Edogawa 1956: 136). Of course, had his crime and mimicry in fact been perfect, he would never have been apprehended and consequently there would be no story to tell. There is always an excess that cannot be contained, that threatens to return and break apart the seeming completeness and perfection of the crime. In “The Twins,” it takes the form of the doppelganger; the narrator’s murdered dead twin returns, this time in the form of a persistent haunting, or alternatively, a psychic disturbance:

Although he has long been dead, he haunts me day and night. In my dreams he treads on my chest with the weight of a thousand pounds; and then he clutches me by the throat and chokes me. In the daytime he appears on the wall there and stares at me with ghastly eyes, or shows his
face in that window and laughs at me grimly. And the fact that we were twins, identical to each other in looks, in the shapes of our bodies, in everything, made things all the worse. No sooner had I killed him than he began to appear before me every time I looked at myself. (Edogawa 1956: 126)

An interesting aspect of the narrator’s description of his brother’s haunting is that it shows another manifestation of a reversal. In this case, the positions the two brothers occupy switches places. Whereas previously, it was the narrator who constantly watched his brother in an effort to learn his habits and mannerisms, this time it is the dead brother who performs the surveillance. Whereas it was the narrator who murdered his brother, in his dreams it is the other way around. Indeed, his reference to his mirror image is itself significant. It suggests that in taking his brother’s place, that is taking on his brother’s body to the last detail, the effect is a repression of his former identity such that the image of his own past identity appears alien to him; he cannot help but misrecognize it as his brother’s image.

Recalling Sigmund Freud’s seminal discussion of the doppelganger in “The Uncanny” (Das unheimlich, 1919), one of the points he is careful to emphasize is that the experience of the uncanny is an effect that comes not because something is alien or unfamiliar, but from the encounter with that “which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” subsequently returning to disturb the present (Freud 2000c: 243). In this sense, its paradigmatic embodiment is the doppelganger, which can be characterized as a manifestation of the return or recurrence of the traumatic constitution of subjectivity that, when it repeats in the present, appears alienated not despite of but precisely because of its similitude. Of course, in “The Twins,” the repressed that returns as an uncanny haunting that disturbs the stability of the present is not the primary narcissism of childhood, as Freud would have it. Nevertheless, it is a past image of the ego that has been surmounted. In this case, it is through its repression as a product of the narrator disciplining and transforming his own body into his brother’s.

With this in mind, despite beginning with a biological rather than a psychical doubling as in the case of identical twins, as the narrative progresses, the text nonetheless comes to closely mirror the
template for the uncanny worked out by Freud and the standard tropes and plot patterns of doppelganger fictions elsewhere. The narrator is persistently haunted and perceives himself to be stalked everywhere by his double; he expresses terror at the fantasy of his twin brother’s vengeance; he acts out the compulsion to repeat the same actions and events by committing a second murder, then claiming that: “it seems to me that it was my brother’s desire for revenge that made me commit the second murder, which led to my ultimate undoing” (Edogawa 1956: 126). Clearly, its narrative plays out in the terms that Andrew J. Weber has identified as the doppelganger story’s most common characteristics. As he puts it, “the Doppelgänger may be said to act as the vicarious agent of repressed fantasies. The Doppelgänger story is thus recurrently marked by compulsive repetitions, hysterical crises, and the obsessive terror of persecution fantasies” (Weber 1996: 17). Indeed “The Twins” can easily be described as an example of those “fugitive, secret stories of men leading double lives” within the structure of a homosocial rivalry triangulated by the desire for a female third party (the wife) in an almost perfectly distilled form (Weber 1996: 17).

It seems apt to read his narrative performance as an attempt not only to confess the facts of a crime, but also as a kind of “working through” – in the sense that Freud has articulated as functioning “to fill in gaps in memory” and to “overcome resistances due to repression” (Freud 2000a: 148) – of the psychical crisis stemming from the repression of his ego necessary to take his twin brother’s place. It is true that strictly speaking the context of the narrative performance of confession encoded in “The Twins” is explicitly set up in religious rather than psychoanalytic terms. The subtitle “a condemned criminal’s confession to a priest” [aru shikeishû ga kyôkaishi ni uchiaketa hanashi], for instance, makes the identity of the addressee clear. That said, when he articulates the motivations behind his act of confession, things become more complicated. Along with the desire for forgiveness or absolution prior to this execution, he also expresses the desire “to drive away the feeling of being haunted” (Edogawa 1956: 127).
Ultimately, this is arguably not all that crucial a distinction that needs to be made. In this regard, Michel Foucault’s discussion of the confessional form and the discourse of psychoanalysis in *The History of Sexuality* (1978) is instructive. Here, Foucault aligns psychoanalysis with a multifaceted constellation of domains that took over and institutionalized confession from its prior position in Christian penance. Although it effected a dissemination, confession’s fundamental function – “the production of true discourse on sex” – nevertheless remained, albeit under the rubric of science instead of religion (Foucault 1978: 63). *Scientia sexualis*, according to Foucault, “has pursued the task of producing true discourses concerning sex, and this by adapting – not without difficulty – the ancient procedure of confession to the rules of scientific discourse” (Foucault 1978: 67-68). Of particular significance here is Foucault’s attention to the *productive* function of confession. Although his critique focuses on the problematics of sexuality, the critical move that Foucault makes also opens up the implications of the confessional form for illuminating the figure of the doppelganger. One of his key observations is that precisely at the moments characterized as sexually repressive, there is also at once a proliferation of discourses on the subject, an “incitement to discourse.” Foucault raises the question: “Is it not with the aim of inciting people to speak of sex that it is made to mirror, at the outer limit of every actual discourse, something akin to a secret whose discovery is imperative, a thing abusively reduced to silence, and at the same time, difficult and necessary, dangerous and precious to divulge?” (Foucault 1978: 34-35).

The argument might be extended beyond sexuality to the overall apparatus of “repression,” and with that in mind, what is suggested here is that repression is not something that exists a priori only to be uncovered by confession (in whatever institution such might take place), but rather it is an effect of the discursive production. With respect to the figure of the doppelganger, the implication is that it is insufficient to read it merely as the return of the repressed per se. Instead, it is its confession that constructs the repression, and consequently enables the appearance of the doppelganger. With “The Twins,” the significance of this aspect of the act of confession can be clarified when it is recalled that the
appearance of a doppelganger figure in the story is an effect precisely of the repression constituted by performance, in this case, of the narrator’s disciplinary transformation of his own body into that of his twin brother’s. However, what Foucault’s discussion brings to attention is the necessity of recognizing that the act of confession that forms the narrative of the story, however, is itself a performance; like the protagonist’s performative self-disciplining of his body, it is productive of the doppelganger as well.

Indeed, this productive capacity of self-narration is something Freud himself at certain points seemingly recognizes. While Foucault is not incorrect to point out that psychoanalysis shares with other discourses its obsession with the act of confession, its functioning within psychoanalytic discourse also has a crucial divergence from other contexts of confession. In contrast to confessions in the area of crime wherein the truth that is concealed and subsequently revealed in the act of confession is known to its narrator, in the context of psychoanalysis, this is not the case. Rather, the secret (be it a truth or a trauma) is hidden from the narrator as well, with the consequence that psychoanalysis places emphasis on the performative, on locating the truth of utterance not on what the confessor utterance, but on the gaps, slippages and contradictions (i.e., the so-called Freudian slip) that emerge in the performative act of the utterance itself (Freud 2000a: 108). In fact, it is precisely such a slippage – a performative contradiction – that rises to the surface. If, as the he suggests in his own account, the narrator’s performance of his twin brother was so thorough and internalized to the point that he misrecognizes his own image in the mirror, would that not imply that his own act of narration should be from the position of his brother as well? For his act of confession to be possible in the first place, his mimicry cannot be as perfect as he asserts. Either way, the reliability of his narrative comes into question.

Mark Currie has noted that this knot of narrative (un)reliability in the act of self-narration is typically disentangled by way of a recourse through narrative time. Confession, like any narrative performance, is predicated on the production of a schism. Telling a reliable story is necessarily predicated on a splitting between the narrated of the past and the narrator’s present such that one is able to stand
apart from the past and “objectively” reconstitute its events. As such, acts of narration, in effect, produce conceptions of both past and present as discrete and autonomous positions. The implications of this illusory temporal schism are even more significant when dealing with first-person narrations such as confession. With acts of self-narration, involved is not only a schism between temporal positions, but also a schism between the present narrating self and the past narrated self. What this demarcation and fixing of temporal positions allows for is the appearance of a reliable narration about unreliability, that is, in Currie’s words, it “constructs a contrast between ‘I’ of the time of the narration and the ‘I’ of narrated time along the lines of the former is truthful and the latter dishonest… confession contrasts the moral personality of the narrator with that of the narrated as the reliable narration of a former unreliability, or the truth about lies (Currie 2007: 61).

This highlights certain complications when read in connection with the psychoanalytic conception of the doppelganger. For Currie, like other forms of self-narration, “psychoanalysis operates on the assumption that mental disturbance is a state of self-ignorance to be overcome in the moment of narration by self-knowledge” (Currie 2007: 63). However, if the purpose behind the performance of the confession is to cure the psychical schism marked by the haunting of the doppelganger, then is there not merely another splitting, in this case on a temporal axis, that is produced in the process? After all, if the doppelganger is a haunting that returns from a repressed past, then it seems that the effect of this split on a temporal axis constituted by acts of self-narration is to reproduce the condition of possibility for its reappearance or repetition. In this sense, the act of confession in “The Twins” cannot be said to resolve the crisis in his subjectivity marked by the doppelganger’s haunting. Rather, it is closer to a momentary management of the crisis that allows for the double to return anew. In other words, as Foucault’s

12 Needless to say, my highlighting of these points is indebted to the work of Roland Barthes, especially his theorization of the preterite as necessary to the development of the novel in Writing Degree Zero (1967: 29-40). While recognizing that it is not strictly speaking reducible to a past tense, Karatani Kôjin has extended Barthes’s argument about the preterite to the use of the –ta verb ending as enabling the reduction of the narrator’s position to a neutral one on the text’s metalevel (Karatani: 1993: 72-75). That said, Karatani arguably overstates the point. In contrast to Karatani, Suga Hidemi, for instance, suggests that it is the –de aru ending that is of greater importance (Suga 1995). See also Sakaki (1999) for a discussion of these issues.
observations on the connection between repression and a proliferation of discourses, it appears that the obsessive attempts to exorcise the doppelganger through confession itself is a product of the compulsion to repeat, which Freud identifies as a key symptom in the doppelganger’s appearance. Given that even as he awaits execution in his prison cell, his double continues to haunt him such that “ever since being condemned to the gallows” his life has become “a perpetual nightmare” (Edogawa 1956: 127), then were the narrator not scheduled to be shortly executed, might the story not have ended here? Might there have been another return of the doppelganger

**Flashbacks**

Seventy-five years after “The Twins” was first published, the doppelganger does indeed return from the repressed anew, this time in the form of a film adaptation: Tsukamoto Shin'ya’s Gemini (Sōseiji: Gemini, 1999). As I noted above, since the 1990s there can be witnessed a boom in film productions that adapt Edogawa Rampo’s fiction. *Gemini* not only happens to appear right at the dead center of this boom, but furthermore, it was a film that might have never come into being had it not been for the boom I noted above. Following his co-starring role as Rampo’s famous detective Akechi Kogorō in the extravagant Shōchiku production to celebrate the centennial of the writer’s birth, *The Mystery of Rampo* (*Ranpo*, 1994), Motoki Masahiro took the initiative in producing *Gemini* (Mes 2006: 153), in which he also starred in the leading role of one of the twins.

I am cognizant of the potential problems that can arise in placing these two texts – Rampo’s short story and Tsukamoto’s adaptation thereof – side by side. Not the least of these is that even if a privileging of “the original” is studiously avoided, the focus still remains on their inevitable relative differences (as an effect of the different systems of signification employed therein) and yet presupposing a common ground – a basic story – that allows for comparability in the first place. Barbara Herrnstein Smith has already cogently critiqued such a stance; after all, any such basic story can only ever be another version of a given narrative and as such cannot be placed in a transcendent position to facilitate
comparability (Smith 1980: 221-222). Without dismissing these concerns, I must also point to the necessity of recognizing that the semiotic grammar of the forms in question – fiction and film – do not function autonomously. A quick glance at the history of Japanese cinema reveals how, with such movements as the *jyūnigekiga* ("pure film") or *bungei eiga* ("literary film") that sought to legitimate the institution of cinema by way of producing facsimiles of literature, the contours of what became “cinema” were at least in part shaped by literary discourse (McDonald 1999: ix). Conversely, there has been much commentary, by for example Seiji Lippit (2002) and Gregory Golley (2008), on how cinematic techniques had a profound effect on (particularly modernist) Japanese fiction since the 1920s.

The point here is that the boundaries of fiction and film in the context of the operations of modernity are porous; there is already film in fiction and vice versa such that each one’s history implicates the other, particularly as far as their envisioning of the doppelganger is concerned. Or to put it differently, they are in effect constituted in relation to each other. It is this relationality that I wish to emphasize by reading Rampo and Tsukamoto side-by-side rather than working within the tired tropes that move between the limits of the poles of convergence and divergence. In particular, what I wish to suggest here is that Tsukamoto’s adaptation of Rampo’s “The Twins” functions as an intertextual embodiment of the doppelganger. It enacts the return of what has been repressed through the narrative performance of Rampo’s story and in doing so disrupts the usual relation typically ascribed to “original” and “copy.” While attention to the problem of adaptation in much critical work today rightly challenge approaches that seek to privilege some form of fidelity with the original and will make allowances for transformation in every iteration of its “copies” (see Hutcheon 2006), the closure of the “original” is nevertheless often still locked in place. But, as will be made evident, this closure or completeness of a given text cannot but be a fiction. Indeed, the temporal dimensions of the doppelganger hint at this in that if it is thought of as a return of the repressed, then by definition there is an excess that is not quite contained by the demarcation of temporal positions.
Of course, this aspect of adaptation is arguably a function of any such text, even if more often than not it is repressed. However, what is striking with Tsukamoto’s *Gemini* is the extent to which it foregrounds this function. Indeed, the schema of temporalization that structures adaptation is precisely what Tsukamoto Shin’ya’s *Gemini* renders visible and arguably calls into question. Although Rampo’s story is presumably set contemporary to its time of writing, Tsukamoto’s film, given its much later production, can be seen as almost a period film. *Gemini* never quite makes the period in which it is set explicit, but references to a recent war hint that it takes place sometime after the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905). This is established early in the film. Following a set of rather gruesome opening shots showing rats feeding on the carcass of another animal, *Gemini* shows a sequence of patients being attended by the protagonist of the film Daitokuji Yukio, a doctor and veteran of the war. These scenes foreshadow several key plot elements that play a bigger role later in the story. First, his conversation with an injured soldier makes note of medals he has received in the line of duty and sets up his social standing in the community as a kind of local war hero. Second, a child to whom he tends comments on being attacked by other children from the nearby slums, establishing the tensions existing between the social classes.

Much more noteworthy at this point, however, is the film’s distinct visual style. In contrast to the formalized illusion of truth-telling deployed as the narrative strategy in “The Twins,” *Gemini* takes on a more overtly presentational mode: It makes use of a bold color palette in its lighting, and furthermore all the characters wear deliberately overdone and almost theatrical makeup and move in an oddly affected fashion, with the effect of giving their appearances an overtly alien, defamiliarizing quality that could very well be called appropriately uncanny, given the story at hand. This is especially emphasized when the film moves to a scene shot with a heavy yellow hue of a seemingly idyllic late afternoon in the Daitokuji manor that introduces not only Yukio but also his wife Rin and his parents wherein a line that Yukio utters – “what a horrible color” – calls attention to film’s lighting. In this sense, *Gemini*’s visual style flaunts its fictionality, foregrounding the artifice of its images rather than repressing it.
Already evident at this point is the extent to which *Gemini* considerably fleshes out the narrative of Rampo’s short story. The unnamed characters of Rampo’s story are given names (the principal ones being the two twins – the elder Yukio and the younger Sutekichi introduced later – as well as the wife Rin), occupations, and notably more detailed back-stories. But perhaps the most significant alteration in the film is in the reversal of the relationship between the twins. Unlike in Rampo’s short story wherein the younger twin is at the center as the text’s narrator, in *Gemini*, he does not make an onscreen appearance until much later in the film. Indeed, in Tsukamoto’s version, the twins are initially not even aware of each other’s existence. The only hint of his presence Yukio receives is when his mother suggests that there may be problems with his inheritance just before she dies.13

In the beginning, Sutekichi’s presence manifests only as an undercurrent of tension as he stalks in the shadows studying his brother Yukio. Yukio’s parents initially direct their apprehensions towards Yukio’s wife Rin, who claims to have lost her memory after escaping from a fire. These tensions are only exacerbated when strange odors begin emanating from the house, and soon after, Yukio’s father falls dead with soil in his mouth. His mother too soon follows, and Yukio’s life is quickly turned upside down. It is only in the morning after a stormy night and an argument with Rin regarding the preferential treatment he gives to financially well-off patients that Yukio finally encounters Sutekichi, who promptly pushes him into a dried-up well in the garden and begins impersonating him.

From this point, a central issue that emerges in the film is the question of memory, specifically its repression and subsequent revelation. Unlike in Rampo’s story, when Yukio falls to the bottom of the well, he does not simply die. Rather, Sutekichi proceeds to torment him by revealing the past that had been concealed from him. This past includes the knowledge that his wife Rin is only feigning her amnesia to conceal her origins in the slums and thus be able to marry into Yukio’s family. Apparently, Rin was Sutekichi’s former lover during their shared life in the nearby slums. At one point in their past,

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13 Given that Yukio is apparently the older of the twins (Sutekichi at one point calls him oniisan [older brother]), why this should be the case is unclear in the film, given that until 1945, the civil code granted the right of inheritance exclusively to the first son.
Posadas: Chapter 4: Rampo’s Repetitions

Sutekichi and Rin are separated when the former is expelled from his adopted home and exiled from the town following a murder he commits. It is at this point that Rin first meets the older twin Yukio by accident, whom she first thinks is Sutekichi himself. But upon realizing that he isn’t Sutekichi, she subsequently uses amnesia as an excuse to conceal her past from him. More importantly, by virtue of the concealment of his existence from Yukio, Sutekichi himself embodies the violent return of this repressed past. When Yukio and Sutekichi were born, the younger Sutekichi, because of the strange snake-shaped scar on his thigh, was left to drift down a river where he was picked up by a troupe of theater actors in a slum downstream. It is only until after he comes face to face with his twin and taunted with the knowledge of this violent past that all this is revealed to Yukio.

Of particular interest in this return embodied by Sutekichi – particularly when considered vis-à-vis the deployment of the confessional mode in Rampo’s story – is that the revelation of the repressed past is performed as narrative. It is through Sutekichi’s words to Yukio that the knowledge of the past comes to be revealed. But when these stories are given visual representation in a series of flashback sequences, the already stylized images of the film explodes in a frenzy of colors and movement. A jittery handheld camera replaces the sweeping picturesque pans of the earlier scenes; vibrant primary colors replace the oppressive monotone of characters’ costumes seen in the film’s scenes in the Daitokuji manor. The effect is to further aggravate the already foregrounded artifice of the film.

The first of these scenes involves the origins of a scar on Rin’s leg, previously mentioned as something she received after escaping from a fire. It is revealed in this flashback, however, that the scar is in fact self-inflicted. Rin scarred herself to mirror Sutekichi’s own snake-shaped scar on his leg. Her scarring is then followed by a sexual intercourse between Rin and Sutekichi. Indeed, the scene following Rin’s scarring looks less like sexual intercourse and more of a choreographed dance between the two. Given the centrality of socioeconomic class divisions in the narrative of *Gemini*, one would likely not be mistaken if this particular visual device in the film were to be read as a technique to give members of different social classes a distinct visual character. However, when the fact that every one of the scenes of
the slums in *Gemini* is a flashback is taken into account, this reading can be further complicated. What is involved is not merely a distinguishing of members of distinct socioeconomic classes, but also a differentiation of temporal positions. As the film overall foregrounds the artifice of its historical representation through its distinctive visual style as I noted above, it is no surprise then that this can only be exacerbated when characters delve into and narrate from memory.

With this in mind, in contrast to the formalized truth telling enacted through literary confession in “The Twins” wherein a concealment of its own performativity takes place, what takes place in Sutekichi’s revelation of the past in *Gemini* is a foregrounding of precisely this performativity. Emphasis thus slips from the events that he narrates per se and instead moves towards the question of how the relationship between past and present is formed through this act of narration. The explosion of color and camera movement in these flashbacks suggests that the scenes represented therein refuse to be assimilated into the rest of the film’s scheme of representation.

In this regard, and especially given that Sutekichi’s first appearance in the film has him performing cartwheels while covered in soil and dirt, as if he had just literally risen from the grave, the function that Sutekichi’s appearance and disruption of Daitokuji life serves in the film is comparable to Jacques Derrida’s conception of the specter. For Derrida, the specter exists only as a relation, and in particular, a temporal relation. Taking up the ghost of the dead king in the opening of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as an exemplary figure and point of departure, he calls attention to tropes of return and repetition as the specter’s primary preoccupation: “A question of repetition: a specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back” (Derrida 1994: 11; emphasis in original). In placing emphasis on this point, Derrida ties the ontology of the specter to the problem of the temporal (and by implication, the historical). Just as the specter oscillates between (and in effect, deconstructs) such categories as presence and absence, life and death, etc., so too does it relate to temporal positions. To put it another way, the specter is not merely a return of a past that can then be
assimilated into a familiar continuity, but a radical alterity that resists easy temporalization, that manifests when, in Derrida’s words by way of quotation from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet,* “time is out of joint”:

A spectral moment, a moment that no longer belongs to time, if one understands by this word the linking of modalized presents (past present, actual present: “now,” future present). We are questioning in this instant, we are asking ourselves about this instant that is not docile to time, at least to what we call time. (Derrida 1994: xx)

In *Gemini,* the interruption of time performed by the doppelganger’s return manifests in the breakdown of its narrative, most notably at the end of the film. Eventually, Yukio is able to escape from the bottom of the well where Sutekichi keeps him prisoner. With his escape, he attacks his younger twin and strangles him to death. When he subsequently locates Rin following this, it initially appears that the disruption Sutekichi initiated has ended; the status quo has been restored. But this is not where the film ends, and the denouement that follows complicates this picture. First to appear on screen is a scene of childbirth, followed by a shot of a pair of twin babies, one of whom bears a snake shaped scar. This is then succeeded by a scene of an infant drifting down a river, only to be picked up by someone downstream. The next scene then returns to the Daitokuji manor, with Rin carrying her newborn child over her shoulder. On the one hand, this sequence could very well be viewed as a flashback showing Yukio’s and Sutekichi’s repressed history. On the other hand, as a consequence of having it tacked onto the end of the film, particularly when juxtaposed with the shot of Rin and her child, there also comes a hint that this may not be a flashback at all but rather a repetition of events, leaving open the possibility of another return of the doppelganger. Either way, narrative beginnings and endings collapse into one another; “the time is out of joint.”

Furthermore, the disruptive return of the repressed that *Gemini* performs extends to an intertextual level as well. Not only does it reveal a concealed past within its own narrative, but it arguably also unearths what has been repressed through the narrative performance of Rampo’s story. One particular example in which this manifests is in the character of Rin in the film. In contrast to the relatively pivotal role she plays in *Gemini,* her unnamed counterpart is largely a peripheral character in “The Twins,”
despite the constitutive role she plays in structuring the interplay of desire in the dyadic relationship between the twins in her role as the third term in their homosocial triangle. Nevertheless, her few appearances offer hints as to where cracks in the closure of the narrative and the reliability of its narrator might be found.

In “The Twins,” the narrator mentions his wife relatively early in his confession, when he asks his direct interlocutor to communicate to her what he reveals. He says: “I think my wife would hate me forever if I were to die without confessing the other crime as well” (Edogawa 1956: 125). At this point, it seems like an innocuous enough line, but it oddly calls attention to itself when it is later reinforced at the end of the narrative with the words “I beg you, Father, to make the facts known, especially to my ‘wife’” (Edogawa 1956: 142). This, however, raises a curious question. When the narrator suggests that his wife would hate him forever if he were not to confess, one is forced to wonder why she would if she (and for that matter anyone else) knew nothing of his “other crime” of murdering and replacing his own twin brother. One possibility lies in what initially appears to be a throwaway line the narrator utters. Although he had closely observed his brother’s mannerisms prior to murdering him so as to more effectively take his place, the narrator does admit, however, that he did not observe them engaging in physical intimacy. He points out that:

Late that night I even ventured into her bedroom, but once there, I felt shaky, for I hadn’t the faintest notion about his habits in this private chamber. However, still bubbling over with self-confidence – it was my firm belief that even if she did find out the truth, she would not spurn me, her old sweetheart – I opened the sliding door of her boudoir and soon switched off the lights. (Edogawa 1956: 136)

With his stated motivations for confessing his crime in mind, perhaps the narrator’s wife did indeed find out that he had replaced his twin brother. This is precisely what Tsukamoto’s Gemini foregrounds when it considerably fleshes out this scene. In the film, as soon as Sutekichi has sexual intercourse with Rin, she is immediately aware that it is no longer Yukio with her and demands that Sutekichi fess up and tell her everything. Curiously, Sutekichi refuses to admit anything to her, instead asserting his new role as Yukio
and accusing Rin of having gone mad. With this scene, what *Gemini* brings to mind is Eve Sedgwick’s claim that in the triangulated interplay of desire, rivalry is often as critical a relationship – if not more so – as the one with the object of desire. As Sedgwick puts it, “The bond that links the two rivals is as intense and potent as the bond that links either of the rivals to the beloved… the bonds of ‘rivalry’ and ‘love,’ differently as they are experienced, are equally powerful and in many senses equivalent” (Sedgwick 1985: 21). Indeed, unlike in Rampo’s “The Twins,” in *Gemini*, the older twin Yukio is not merely murdered and his corpse hidden, but instead he is kept alive at the bottom of the well. Because the rivalry between the twins is just as powerful, Sutekichi cannot simply remove Yukio from the picture and take back Rin. Rather, it is the taking over of Yukio’s life as Yukio that is his goal.

Here, *Gemini* fleshes out a part of the narrative that is elided in “The Twins” but in doing so, it does not merely fill in a gap, but more importantly, it also reveals fundamental slippages in Rampo’s story. Even as it pursues the logical conclusion of the premise of murdering and then subsequently taking the place of his brother set up by the narrator of “The Twins,” it is striking that *Gemini* ends up in a completely different place. By the end of the film, instead of the younger twin killing the older, the outcome is reversed; it is Yukio who has killed Sutekichi. Thus the film enacts the compulsion to repeat once more. In line with how the examination of performativity of the narrator’s confession in “The Twins” reveals its unreliability, the film’s enactment of Rampo’s story suggests that it is precisely that: an enactment. It is impossible to tell which twin in fact survives in the end, which twin is in fact performing the confession.

### Repetition Compulsions

There is another dimension to the repetition and resignification of Rampo’s “The Twins” that *Gemini* undertakes. In its taking apart of its source text, implicated in the adaptation of Rampo’s story into film are not only matters of the transformations in the respective stories at hand but also how these changes are inevitably mediated by the broader shifts in the historical moments of production in which each text
is situated. Needless to say, this is not in itself a particularly novel point to make, nor is it an issue limited to Rampo’s writing and the adaptations thereof. Rather, it is a problem inherent in any adaptation or other form of intertextual transmission across history. Eric Cazdyn puts the point succinctly with these words: “There is much to be gained by tracking how a particular scene has transformed… as each version, made at a different moment, will necessarily spread its historical concern over the representation of the narrative” (Cazdyn 2002: 89). Every text, in other words, necessarily bears within it its own historical unconscious.

What is less often accounted for though, for Cazdyn, is the historicity of the very relation constituted through adaptation itself, with the consequence that the very concept of adaptation as well as the text marked as “original” remains stable and unexamined. An interesting concept Cazdyn produces in response to this is what he terms “transformative adaptation” to describe adaptations that call attention to the consequent transformations they produce in the ostensibly “original” text, with the consequence of calling into question the usual linear temporal trajectory ascribed to the process of adaptation, in effect underscoring how “the original is not only what it is but also that it exceeds itself” (Cazdyn 2002: 117). Or to put it another way, at stake in the problem of adaptation is not only the historical unconscious underpinning the texts in question, but also their historiographic unconscious.

In light of the above discussion of the film’s unearthing of the buried contradictions at the heart of the narrative performance of Rampo’s story, it seems warranted to suggest that in certain respects, Tsukamoto’s *Gemini* can be read as a transformative adaptation as Cazdyn defines it. Indeed, interruptions in the temporal order are central to its narrative, and in this respect, it is no accident that in both Rampo’s story and Tsukamoto’s film, the underlying motive in the acts of identity theft perpetrated by their respective doppelgangers is the matter of inheritance. Inheritance, after all, is not merely a question of money, but is moreover a mechanism through which property relations (and the structures of power attached to it) are reproduced. In both texts, the appearance of the double results in the
interruption of the predetermined movement of inheritance and as such hints at the disruption of capitalist reproduction itself.

On top of this, *Gemini* touches on the issue of inheritance in the terms of prewar eugenicist and Social Darwinist discourse, most evident when Yukio expresses disdain for providing medical treatment to those from the slums by suggesting that violence and disease is something in their very nature, in their very blood. At one point, he tells Rin: “The slums are breeding grounds of infection. And it’s not just disease. Robberies and break-ins and numerous other crimes… They’re just like that, those people. From birth. The whole place should be razed to the ground” (Tsukamoto 1999). Given that the issue of genetic inheritance is central to the very idea of twins, this attention probably should not come as a surprise. Nevertheless, to bring up Social Darwinism here cannot help but call to mind its concrete manifestation in such historical developments as the emergence of “racial sciences,” and of course the material foundation thereof, colonialism.

The significance of this attention to these eugenicist discourses lies in how it compels a reconsideration of the problem of fingerprinting, which functions as the central “trick” in the narrative of “The Twins.” Introduced into Japanese policing in 1908, fingerprinting first saw use as an administrative tool in the 1860s in British India as a means of verifying the identity of contractors and pensioners and was quickly adopted as a forensic tool by the turn of the century (Cole 2002: 63). Fingerprinting, by virtue of the discovery that no two fingerprints are identical, became a key technology in the production of individuated docile bodies, first in the colonial peripheries and subsequently in the imperial metropolitan capitals. Less well known is how in the early twentieth century, in Japan and elsewhere, the science of fingerprinting was not restricted to matters of forensic identification. Often, it was studied as a means of unlocking a biological truth, typically tied to the racial classifications of colonial subjects, with an attempt to identify racially tied behavioral patterns in fingerprints (Inoue 2008: 208-212). It perhaps comes as little surprise that one of the pioneers and major figures in early fingerprinting studies – Francis Galton – was also a noted eugenicist.
I have already discussed the critical role played by the technologies through which colonial subjectivities came to be constituted in the production of the concept of the doppelganger. In bringing this to the surface, true to form in its role as an adaptation – as a doppelganger – of its source text, what *Gemini* performs then is the excavation of the repressed historical unconscious buried in between the lines of the deployment of the doppelganger in Rampo’s “The Twins.” Moreover, if Friedrich Kittler (1997) is correct in his suggestion that the critical attention placed upon the figure of the doppelganger by psychoanalytic discourse and its consequent formation as a genre of literature was at least in part enabled by the technology of cinema and the then emergent schema of visuality in which it is situated, then it seems only apt that it is in the form of a film adaptation that what is repressed in Rampo’s ‘The Twins’ is brought into open.

Given how the formation of the imagination of the doppelganger as a coherent concept is enabled by the impact of technologies of vision and especially the appearance of the cinematic apparatus onto the scene, it cannot be mere coincidence that the Rampo boom of the 1990s within which *Gemini* makes its appearance coincides with the emergence of new media technologies and its impact on not only the production of image-based cultural products, but also their practices of consumption and spectatorship. In her recent work on the subject, Laura Mulvey, for example, it is the problem of the spectator’s relationship to temporality in particular that she emphasizes as playing a critical role in present-day shifts in practices of spectatorship. A case in point that Mulvey highlights is the new modes of viewing enabled by digital encoding of films. Whereas films at one time could only be viewed a limited number of times at the theater and only at the set narrative sequence, as was the case with Otto Rank’s aforementioned viewing of *The Student of Prague* and his subsequent attempt to capture its “fleeting, shadowy, but impressive scenes” (Rank 1971: 3), in the present, digital modes of distribution, in contrast, produce a new set of temporal relations between the spectator and the image in that they open the possibility of stilling the image, returning to a previous moment, or jumping forward at will (Mulvey 2006: 21-22). Even more significant for Mulvey are the historical implications that this new set of
relations brings to light, for new media technologies not only made old films again readily available for consumption (in digitally remastered forms) and through this invoking film’s historicity, but the non-linear engagement with the film image enabled by the same technologies also compelled the recognition of cinema’s historicity, and with that, the calling into question of the linearity of film history itself. As Mulvey puts it, “Such a return to the past through cinema is paradoxically facilitated by the kind of spectatorship that has developed with the use of new technologies, with the possibility of returning to and repeating a specific film fragment” (Mulvey 2006: 8).

Thomas LaMarre has raised a similar point about contemporary discourse on cinema in general, arguing that the historical turn in the thinking surrounding cinema as both a technical and social apparatus derives from the radical changes in the practices of spectatorship constituted through video and new media (LaMarre 2006: 175). One way to think about this is that cinema underwent a crisis of identity, or perhaps even a trauma. And just as the experience of trauma is constituted a repetition, that is, the recognition of an earlier repressed trauma, the contemporary traumatic crisis of cinema provoked by new media forms served to reveal cinema’s traumatic origins. Or, to put it another way, new media produces its own doppelganger, in the form of early cinema and the possibilities it offered before this came to be truncated by the hegemony of narrative cinema. Indeed, if Rampo’s “The Twins” and Tsukamoto’s Gemini are any indication, there may be something to this, seeing as there is something of a temporal relation that can only be characterized as traumatic at work between them. They illustrate how just as an event is only recognized as traumatic only after it is first repressed and then subsequently returns to disturb the psyche (in the form of, for instance, the doppelganger) in a scheme of “retroactive causality” and as such render the notion of an “original trauma” problematic, an ostensible “original” does not come to be recognized as such until after the fact of its adaptation (Mather and Marsden 2004: 211).

The significance of this lies in the fact that as this crisis of cinema and the rediscovery of early cinema by way of new media it provoked was taking place, in cultural discourse in Japan, there was a
parallel return to the Taisho period (1912-1926) – a Taisho boom – marked by not only film adaptations but also a resurgence in critical interest in the culture and literature of the period. Here, it is worth recalling that the veritable explosion in Rampo-related film adaptations of which *Gemini* is one example takes place at a historically specific moment. Certainly, film adaptations of Rampo’s work have been produced at earlier points in time, with the first one appearing as early as 1927 with the first film version of *The Dwarf* (*Issun bōshi*, 1927) with Rampo’s own involvement. That said, what has not been seen previously is the kind of sustained attention to his work seen through the 1990s and beyond. In connection with this, I would also argue that this desire to adapt Rampo’s work – this compulsion to repeat Rampo – takes place at the same moment as (and can be linked to) a wave of renewed interest in the doppelganger, especially in the cinema, as Tony Fonseca’s sampling of recent contemporary films in Euro-America illustrates (Fonseca 2007: 207-210). In the case of Japan, while Watanabe Masahiko has expressed the observation that since the end of the Showa period (1926-1989), interest in the doppelganger has died down, it should be noted that he frames this in narrowly construed literary terms that excludes popular genres such as detective fiction, horror, or science fiction, not to mention manga, film, television, or anime. As such, even if one were to concur with Watanabe’s statement, it is telling that one of the possible reasons he gives for this decline of interest is precisely the saturation of doppelgangers and other related motifs like disguises, multiple personalities, clones, virtual avatars, cyborgs in popular culture (Watanabe 1999: 213).

Beyond this however, what is of even greater significance is that the major comprehensive critical studies of the doppelganger in Japanese fiction – namely, Suzuki Sadami’s *Modan toshi no hyōgen* (Expressions of the modern city, 1992), Watanabe Masahiko’s *Kindai bungaku no bunshin-zô* (*The image of the double in modern literature*, 1999) and Yamashita Takeshi’s *Dopperugengâ bungaku-kô* (*Catalog of doppelganger literature*, 2003), and for that matter Ariuchi Yoshihiro’s Japanese translation of Otto Rank’s *Der...* 

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14 Fonseca mentions several contemporary films and directors who have, in his view, produced the best representations of the doppelganger to date: David Cronenberg’s *Dead Ringers* (1988), David Fincher’s adaptation of Chuck Palahniuk’s *Fight Club* (1999), David Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive* (2001), Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s *Doppelgänger* (*Dopperugengâ*, 2003), and Brad Anderson’s *The Machinist* (*El Maquinista*, 2004).
Doppelgänger (Bunshin: dopperugengā, 1988) – all appear at this time.\(^{15}\) What this suggests is that parallel to how the formation of the doppelganger as a coherent concept through the critical articulation of it in psychoanalytic discourse coincides with (and is facilitated by) the popular dissemination of cinema and the constitution of a scopic regime under its logic in the 1920s, I would contend that corollary to this, the critical articulation of doppelganger fictions in Japan that takes place from the 1980s onwards emerges in conjunction with (and is arguably enabled by) its cinematic rearticulations. Consequently, might this not suggest that at stake in the figure of the doppelganger is not only what it reveals through its appearances in fictions coming out of 1920s Japan, but also how it speaks to the conditions of the present moment through the compulsion to repeat its appearances by way of the critical attention placed upon it? After all, if at the heart of the problem of the doppelganger is the relationality constituted in the act of looking within a specific scopic regime, then it seems only proper to include in any critical articulation of the historical circumstances of the doppelganger’s appearance the very act of looking historically towards the figure of the doppelganger itself, and what social and material conditions provoke the desire to do so.

\(^{15}\) These critical writings on the doppelganger in Japanese literature also form the backbone of Nishii Yaeko’s (2006) and Mizuno Rei’s (2002) respective metacritical cataloguing of the works that are referenced and hence discursively produced as doppelganger fictions.
Part II:

Repetition Compulsions
CHAPTER 5
HISTORY IN A HALL OF MIRRORS:
DETECTIVE FICTION AND THE DOPPELGANGER REVISITED

Repetitions and Resignifications

In light of how the figure of the doppelganger is structured around the enactment of very compulsion to repeat itself, it seems only appropriate that the proliferation of the motif in modernist fictions of the 1920s sees a repetition in contemporary films and fictions alongside a recently renewed critical interest in the figure, in effect literally performing this compulsion to repeat on a historical register. What might account for this discursive repetition of the doppelganger in the contemporary conjuncture? Or, to put it in more specific terms, if in interwar Japan the doppelganger’s emergence as a sign marks the point of intersection of various discursive practices – the narrative forms of detective fiction, psychoanalytic theories, regimes of visuality – how then might the doppelganger’s return and repetition in the passage to late capitalism and the ensuing material and sociocultural transformations entailed therein be historicized?

Interestingly, this seeming compulsion to repeat the doppelganger in the discourses of the contemporary conjuncture is not an isolated instance, but rather appears as a nodal point in a network of similar patterns of repetition also visible in other areas of cultural production. Furthermore, that it is the same discourses surrounding the technologies and practices in which the production of the doppelganger as concept is constituted that seemingly see a repetition in the present only serves to suggest that accounting for doppelganger’s enactment of repetition may very well implicate broader issues of historical and critical practice. For example, Saitô Tamaki has observed the appearance of a commodification and mass popularization of psychoanalytic terms and concepts in Japan since the 1980s, visible in such phenomena as the invitation of psychologists and psychoanalysts as commentators in mass media, in the institutionalization of counseling in education, not to mention the proliferation of
trauma fictions (Saitô 2003). Likewise, in visual media, the advent of new media technologies has enabled a historical turn in the critical articulations of cinema. It has provoked a resurgence of interest in early cinema, a repetition of the sense of shock at the heart of cinema’s origins, indeed an uncanny doubling of cinema in new media that perhaps not surprisingly brings forth a tendency “to populate the narrative form with doubles, reflections, doppelgangers, and other specters” (LaMarre 2005: 176). Similarly, in the genre of detective fiction, the renewed interest in not only “new orthodox mysteries” [shin-bonkaku misuteri] but also in “anti-mysteries” since the 1990s in Japan restages the debates and discourses surrounding the oppositions between orthodox and unorthodox detective fictions as well as “pure literature” [junbungaku] and “mass literature” [taishû bungaku] (Oshino 2005: 21-22).1

Indeed, Karatani Kôjin has gone so far as to suggest a generalized sense of an uncanny historical repetition between these two historical moments in question. In his discussion, Karatani specifies as the focus of his attention the 1990s and the pervasive notion of an “end of history” which in Japan is only further accentuated as the end of the Cold War with the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the fall of the Berlin Wall is accompanied by not only the death of the Showa Emperor but also the piercing of the 1980s economic bubble and the subsequent slipping of Japan into a seemingly endless recession.

Occasioned by the publication of a new Japanese translation of Karl Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852) and taking as his point of departure its famous opening lines, Karatani takes up the question of repetition as a commentary on the linkage between the economic malaise and particularly the rise of nationalist sentiment in Japan at the time and its relationship to earlier emergence of fascisms in the 1930s.2 Key to his argument is that his interest lies not in the repetition of events per se, but to situate them in a broader structural problematic. As Karatani puts the point, “[t]o speak of historical

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1 Outside of the context of Japan, among those who have noted and taken up these patterns of repetition are Philip Rosen on the problem of indexicality and historicity in the relation between cinema and new media in his *Change Mummified* (2001) and Jon Thompson on the intersections among detective fiction, modernism, and postmodernism in his *Fiction, Crime, and Empire* (1993).

2 Needless to say, the lines in question from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* are as follows: “Hegel remarks somewhere that all the events and personalities of great importance in world history occur, as it were, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce” (Marx 2005: 1).
repetition is not to mean that the same events repeat. What can repeat are not the events (content) but the forms (structures) immanent to them” (Karatani 2004: 5). For Karatani, this form in question is the structuring lack at the heart of their systems of representation, whether understood in political terms with the system of parliamentary representation, or in economic terms with the role of money as representation of value (Karatani 2004: 5-6), or as Eric Cazdyn has suggested in an extension of Karatani’s discussion, in the realm of the aesthetic as it is marked by the desire for all manner of “reality culture” (and its historical precursors) that purport to exceed the logic of representation in their seeming immediacy (Cazdyn 2005: 278-79), which at both the historical conjunctures in question have come into crisis. Considered with this in mind, these various repetitions – of the doppelganger, of the detective, of cinema – seemingly present themselves as expressions in a cultural-aesthetic register, as symptomatic of this broader structural repetition of a crisis of representation.

As the preceding chapters have discussed, in the context of interwar Japan, two intersecting processes – imperial expansion and its production of colonial subjects and the simultaneous colonization of subjectivity through transformations in schemas of visuality – mark the condition of possibility for the imagination of the doppelganger. On the one hand, the circulation of photographic and cinematic images were instrumental in what Anne McClintock has characterized as a shift from a discourse dominated by scientific racism in the 19th century to the commodity racisms from the early 20th century, which “converted the narrative of imperial Progress into mass-produced consumer spectacles,” with the effect of extending the colonial encounter from their specific contact zones to households in the various imperial metropoles and consequently transforming the practice of imperialism from a necessary means to stave off capital from coming into crisis to a productive image-commodity in itself (McClintock 1995: 31-32). Conversely, especially with its industrialization in the cinematic apparatus, the concurrent mass penetration of image culture into the social fabric with their consequent effects on the production of subjectivities is itself arguably a form of colonization that extends rather than outwards geographically but inwards into human subjectivities. Jonathan Beller has articulated the point most forcefully. He
argues that the industrial production of images in the cinematic apparatus extends the logics of capitalism and colonialism, effecting first a systematic production of the imaginary for the subject, and then subsequently making the imaginary in itself productive for capital. In Beller’s words:

In 1900, under the rubric… of “imperialism,” capital achieves a fully global presence. Rather than expiring in crisis brought about by this limit to its expansion (as predicted by Marx, Lenin, and Rosa Luxemborg), the so-called highest stage of capital begins the colonization (and correlation) of bodies through image technologies such as cinema. Not only does capital expand geographically, it also burrows into the flesh. (Beller 2006b: 199)

The common logic that links these two processes emergent in the early twentieth century is how their engendering of what David Harvey has called a “spatialization of time,” which is a process that can be characterized as a kind of palliative reaction in an attempt to mitigate the experience of “time-space compression” within the structure of colonial modernity of the early twentieth century as a consequence of capitalist expansion. In Harvey’s analysis, in response to capital’s periodic crises of overaccumulation, a strategy that often comes into play is what he terms a temporal displacement, involving such fixes as a speed up in production (to absorb extant excess capacity) or alternatively (and more often than not in conjunction with) a spatial displacement involving the production of new spaces of accumulation, i.e., imperialism (Harvey 1989: 182-84). These, however, have the consequence of generating the aforementioned time-space compressions, which Harvey describes as “processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves” (Harvey 1989: 240). Technologies such as the telephone, railways, or cinema, not to mention the advent of imperial conquest, vastly expanded spatial and temporal dimensions, which compelled the development of new ways of grasping with social conditions, provoking organizational as well as cultural-aesthetic responses that sought to find a fixed ground in the field of representation from which the experience of time-space compression could be grasped and indeed commanded. In the latter register, various forms of detective fictions, psychoanalyses, modernisms, or the narrative systematization of cinema emerge, and in the former case, political-
economic developments such as fascism in some instances, or Fordist-Keynesian forms of social management in others see maturity in the late 1930s and into the postwar period.

By the 1970s, however, these Fordist-Modernist practices were no longer viable; by then its mechanisms for controlling the immanent tendency towards crisis had been overwhelmed by the conjoined processes of debt accumulation and decolonization that made further temporal as well as geographic displacement under the same logic difficult. This thus ushered in a passage into a new regime of accumulation, which David Harvey has termed “flexible accumulation,” which in his view is “marked by a direct confrontation with the rigidities of Fordism” and as a consequence, triggered a new round of intensified time-space compression in the form of the acceleration of production processes through such techniques as small-batch production and improvements in media communication and information technologies which in turn also enables a spatial compression in the form of a transnational dissemination of sites of production and consumption (Harvey 1989: 147), and with that, a repetition of the conditions that mark the doppelganger’s appearances. But implied with any repetition is also a necessary difference. As such, it seems only pertinent to posit the question of how the doppelganger is resignified as a consequence of the passage to late capitalism and the ensuing transformations in the organization of sociocultural sphere entailed therein. More importantly, with the figure of the doppelganger, because its very concept poses the question of repetition, in effect calling attention precisely this interplay between difference and repetition, it can further serve as a productive concept through which to think the relation constituted by this historical repetition, that is, to think the imperative to historicize in the terms of representation and repetition.

In this task, the work of Abe Kôbô (1924-1993) proves to be a particularly effective point of reference for the articulation of the problem at hand. Born in Tokyo and raised in Mukden, Abe is renowned primarily as an avant-garde poet and fictionist, as well as playwright. He is perhaps most famous internationally for the novel *The Woman in Dunes* (*Suna no onna*, 1962; trans. 1964), in no small part because of the acclaimed film adaptation of the novel penned by Abe himself and directed by...
Teshigahara Hiroshi, which took the Special Jury Prize at Cannes in 1964. However, it is in the novels subsequent to this that doubles and motifs of doubling make repeated appearances in his writing. In The Face of Another (Tanin no kao, 1964; trans. 1966), an unnamed scientist whose face is hideously damaged by a laboratory accident embarks on a plan to construct a mask for himself that is not reproduction of his own face prior to his accident, but rather, a new face altogether; while donning this face, he undertakes an obsessive plot for revenge against his wife by seducing her in the guise of this new identity. In The Ruined Map (Moetsukita chizu, 1967; trans. 1969), the protagonist is a private detective who is in the employ of a woman whose husband mysteriously and without warning vanished without a trace; in the course of his investigation, however, he loses his memory and ends recursively with him taking on the identity of the man he is pursuing. Finally, The Box Man (Hako no tsume, 1973; trans. 1974) features an anonymous ex-photographer who wears a large cardboard box over his head and upper body; after he is shot with an air rifle by an unknown assailant, this box man becomes paranoid that he is about to be murdered and his box stolen, to be replaced by what he calls a “fake box man.”

These doppelganger fictions of Abe’s – and especially The Box Man – are of particular interest for a number of reasons. First, their appearances closely track the years that many critics – Fredric Jameson and David Harvey among them – characterize as the period marking the passage from Fordist modes of capitalist organization to a regime of flexible accumulation, culminating in the watershed year of 1973, at which point, in a manifestation of a kind of nachträglichkeit, of the structure of deferral, the preceding yet ongoing processes became visible. As Jameson articulates the point, on the levels of both “infrastructure and superstructures – the economic system and the cultural ‘structure of feeling’ – somehow crystallized in the great shock of the crises of 1973… which, now that the dust clouds of have rolled away, disclose

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3 Prior to the publication of Woman in the Dunes, Abe had already received recognition in Japan with his short story “The Crime of S. Karma” (S. Karuma-shi no hanzai, 1951; trans. 1991), which was awarded the prestigious Akutagwa Prize.

4 Abe and Teshigahara also collaborated to produce adaptations of two of Abe’s novels subsequent to The Woman in the Dunes, namely, The Face of Another and The Ruined Map. Teshigahara’s previous film Pitfall (Otoshiana, 1962), while not an adaptation of a novel, was nonetheless also penned by Abe.
the existence, already in place, of a strange new landscape” (Jameson 1991: xx-xxi). Abe’s *The Box Man* comes onto the scene in this year, repeating and consolidating the themes and techniques of the preceding novels, in particular their subversion of the conventions and expectations of popular genres like detective fiction and science fiction. Thus, the appearance of Abe’s *The Box Man* not only prefigures the discursive repetition of the doppelganger in contemporary Japan, but also, as Tatsumi Takayuki has noted, coincides with the publication of other landmark works of fiction like J.G. Ballard’s *Crash* (1973) and Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* (1973) that anticipate the kinds of transgeneric practice that he tags with the label “slipstream” (Tatsumi 2006: 91-92). As such, in line with Tomiko Yoda’s contention that the sociocultural milieu of contemporary Japan is most effectively understood when considered in relation to the historical changes that have taken place since the 1970s (Yoda 2005: 33), the examination of Abe’s novel – in terms not only of the historical position it occupies but also how the deployment of the doppelganger in its narrative might illuminate the complexities thereof – can be productive for thinking the relation constituted by these contemporary discursive and historical repetitions marked by the haunting of the figure of doppelganger.

**Detectives and Doppelgangers Redux**

Given the sustained unstable and fragmented structure of its narrative, attempting to summarize *The Box Man* is a rather difficult and arduous if not ultimately unproductive endeavor. In broad outline though, its narrative centers on a man – formerly a photographer – who evidently (and inexplicably) wears and walks around with cardboard box (with a peephole carved out of through which he can see) over his head and body. Through the course of his confused, fragmentary, and meandering account, a number of other characters – in particular, a young nurse to whom the protagonist is drawn and her immediate

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5 Tatsumi names authors like Paul Auster, Murakami Haruki, Shimada Masahiko as examples of “slipstream” writers. Another term he uses to refer to the transgeneric works of authors from this period (borrowing from his close collaborator Larry McCaffery) is “avant-pop”; For Tatsumi, whereas Abe represents the last of the post-war avant-garde, writers like Murakami and Shimada are fully in the avant-pop (Tatsumi 2006: 29-30).
superior, a doctor who seemingly desires to become a box man himself – make appearances, in between a variety of inserts, marginalia, and rambling excursuses on such topics as homelessness, euthanasia, voyeurism, and others. However, more important than what semblance of a plot there is in the novel is the performance of the narration itself, which is framed as a set of notes written on the interior of the box in which the narrator resides.

The context of the narration is quickly established. It begins rather abruptly with a short section comprising a few short paragraphs labeled under the heading “My case” which begins:

This is the record of a box man.
   I am beginning this account in a box. A cardboard box that reaches just to my hips when I put it over my head.
   That is to say, at this juncture the box man is me. A box man, in his box, is recording the chronicle of a box man. (Abe 1974: 3) 6

As early as these opening paragraphs, already certain elements that will play key functions in the narrative later on are foreshadowed. The first of these is a shift into a third person self-reference by the narrator. Whereas at this point it may seem to be nothing more than a quirk of the narrative voice,7 events that occur later in the narrative make this initially innocuous shift resonate. Along with this, there is also the casual use of the phrase “at this juncture” [ima no tokoro]. Again, initially this seems nothing particularly noteworthy, but when read in conjunction with the provisional and tentative nature of language and narrative that the novel highlights, this phrase takes on much greater weight. As the novel progress, the narrative proves to be fragmentary and unreliable, with later sections rewriting earlier ones, and the identities of characters and narrators become suspect.

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6 Unless otherwise noted, all page references are to the English translation by E. Dale Saunders (Abe 1974).

7 This is particularly the case in the Japanese text, given that such shifts tend to be less jarring in the context of the Japanese language, at least relative to English. Nonetheless, it is still a shift that is made evident by the repetition of the subject of the sentence in the final two sentences. The Japanese text reads: “Kore wa hakootoko ni tsuite no kiroku dearu. Boku wa ima, kono kiroku o hako no naka de kakihajimeteiru. Atama kara kaboru to, suppari, chûdo kashî no ben made todoku danbôru no hako no naka da. Tsumari, ima no tokoro, hakootoko wa kono boku jishin da to in koto dearu. Hakootoko go, hako no naka de, hakootoko no kiroku o tsuketeiru to in wake da” (Abe 1999c: 9).
Initially, however, this particular feature of the narrative connects most directly to the underlying motivations behind the narrator’s performance of the text. The novel’s opening is immediately followed by another section titled “Instructions for Making a Box” wherein the narrator, without yet going into the motivations behind donning a box over one’s head, describes in precise detail the mechanics of constructing a box necessary to perform this act. Only subsequent to this, in a section labeled “The Case of A” does a hint of a story begin to manifest. While the section first appears to be a minor segue to elaborate upon the possible motivations behind any individual’s decision to become a box, it subsequently becomes clear that the events depicted in it have a more direct connection to the narrator’s situation. “The Case of A” tells the story of a man who upon finding a box man taking up residence outside his window, takes out an air rifle and shoots him. The box man flees after he is shot, leaving behind the cardboard box he donned, which is subsequently picked up by A. With the cardboard box in his home, A then finds himself drawn to the box, and proceeds – with some trepidation, initially – to first sit within it and eventually to don it over his head, ending up taking over the role of the box man when finally he leaves his home while wearing the cardboard box.

Following this brief account, the narrator of *The Box Man* then reveals in a back-story which mirrors the events he describes in “The Case of A” that he too has been shot with an air rifle. A nurse on a bicycle directs him to a nearby hospital and there he is offered a proposition (on behalf of the doctor for whom the nurse works) – fifty thousand yen in exchange for his box. Disarmed by his attraction to the nurse, he agrees, only to be struck later by doubts and paranoia that the act of selling his box means his death. It is this paranoia that compels the narrator to perform the text of the novel. He writes: “Anyway, there’s nothing better than being on my guard. Hence my little safety device. If worst comes to worst, I intend to leave these notes as evidence. Whatever death I meet, I have no desire for suicide. If I die it won’t be suicide even by mistake, but definitely foul play” (Abe 1974: 17).

As the story proceeds, however, the main body of the narrative is interspersed with all manner of inserted marginalia. The first of these appears as follows:
(Stop. Out of ink. I get an old pencil from my bag. Two and a half minutes to sharpen it. Fortunately I have not yet been killed. As proof, I have changed from a ballpoint pen to a pencil, but my writing is exactly the same as before.) (Abe 1974: 17)

The significance of these fractures in the narrative is twofold. First, they underscore the status of the text as a verbal artifact. The narrator eventually reveals that the text of the novel is made up of notes (and the occasional photograph) attached to the inner walls of the box. Second, they establish that the context of the narration is immediate, practically real-time in nature, rather than a retrospective narration. By indicating breaks wherein real-time events outside the text (i.e., running out of ink) affect the content of the text itself, Abe highlights that what is apparently occurring is that the writing of the text occurs simultaneous to the action (or more accurately, the writing of the text is itself the action). Yet here, a contradiction arises. Because the performance of the narrative is explicitly in written and not oral form, the words “Stop. Out of Ink” [inkingireiniyōruchūdan] to appear in the text, the author needs to have written it after the fact as the action of running out of ink and sharpening a pencil is not one he could performed and simultaneously written. An even more prominent example of these paradoxes turns up later when the box man leaves the box to go the hospital. Here, the narrative (ostensibly written up as notes inside the box) continues even when he is supposedly outside of the box.

In addition, at several instances, the novel hints at the possibility that there may in fact be multiple authors, not to mention the presence of editors, of the notes that form the text of the box. One noteworthy example appears as yet another of the aforementioned marginalia. This section, labeled in the text with the words “Three-and-a-Half Page Insert on Different Paper,” is a transcription of a conversation between two characters other than the narrator (labeled as the doctor and “she” who is apparently the nurse the box man previously encounters) and begins with a parenthetical note that reads:

(It’s not only the paper that’s dissimilar. For the first time a fountain pen is being used, and the writing is clearly different. If in time someone makes a clear copy in a new notebook with other notes, they should simply standardize the paper and the writing. There’s no need to worry about the difference in writing and in paper now.) (Abe 1974: 57)
Not only does the preface to this section suggest (and yet attempt to minimize it in the final sentence) a change in the author of the following text, like the first of these marginalia I cited above, it also calls our attention to the materiality of the text as well. It acts as a reminder that the text at hand appears as handwritten notes (indeed, in different handwritings, as well) on multiple kinds of paper. Yet, at the same time, by calling attention to this feature, a jarring effect is produced in that the actual text at hand (that is, the novel *The Box Man*, written by Abe Kôbô, in the hands of an actual reader) is in the form of a printed book, as if the suggestion in the above insert to standardize the writing and paper had been in fact performed. Another example appears later, a parenthetical remark that reads “(a sudden, unexplained interruption)” following an abrupt end to a section (Abe 1974: 140). Is this parenthetical remark a part of the text of the box man’s notes or commentary added later? Of course, this could be grasped as nothing more than a consequence of the limitations of book publishing and printing. Nonetheless, it does produce significant effects for how the reader is situated vis-à-vis the text of the novel. These added marginalia, by calling attention to the material characteristics, demand the reader’s active participation in the forming of the narrative’s coherence. Indeed, the last line of the cited passage above even goes as far as directly addressing the reader. Interestingly, by suggesting that the difference in writing and paper is unimportant, the text in effect calls attention to it, and as such, one cannot help but consider its potential significance.

Alongside these textual interruptions, marginalia, and the like that disrupt the stability of the text and emphasize its provisional nature and its status as a verbal artifact are various inserts – photographs,

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8 To my knowledge, no version of the novel in the material form (as handwritten notes and photographs attached to the interior of a cardboard box) has been produced. However, the physical design (by Kondô Kazuya) of the most recent Shinchôsha edition of Abe’s complete works collection (*Abe Kôbô zenshû*, 1997-2000) draws much inspiration from *The Box Man*. Each volume is incased in a plain cardboard box with a small window in its front. While the book is in its slipcover, a metal nameplate with the volume number and ISBN lines up with this opening. Once the book is removed, however, the opening becomes a small rectangular window through which various photographs of Abe himself are visible. Christopher Bolton perceptively observes that when the book is removed, the form taken by the cardboard slipcovers “recalls the box man’s observation port… Abe inside, gazing out like the box man himself” (Bolton 2009: 201).
news clippings, affidavits – that further break up the text of the novel. Most notable among these are a series of captioned photographs interspersed throughout the narrative, producing what Christopher Bolton has termed “a collage like narrative that seemed to draw its organizing principle as much from the idea of the photo essay as from the novel” (Bolton 2009: 198). If one follows the logic of the context for narration established by the novel, these photographs are presumably attached to the notes scribbled by the box man. Indeed, given the identification of the narrator’s previous occupation prior to becoming a box man as a photographer (however questionable the veracity of this may be), and for that matter, how the very figure of the box man as enclosed in a box with only a small window through which to see embodies the form of the camera obscura itself, there is a strong suggestion that these photographs were taken by the narrator himself. For the most part, these photographs depict decrepit urban scenes: a blurry shot of a house reflected on the surface of a traffic mirror, cars abandoned in a junkyard, a line of men urinating in a public restroom, among others. In this respect, they thematically resonate with the text’s meditations on questions of anonymity and rootlessness. As Christopher Bolton has characterized them, “[s]ome of the images depict the box men around us (things and people we see but never really see); other photos seem to represent the box man’s view of us” (Bolton 2009: 199). Yet beyond references to box men and the occasional repetition of passages from the text of the novel in their captions, insofar as the main body of text in the novel does not refer to these photographs, there is largely no direct linkage made between them and the narrative.

There is, however, one notable exception to this. The very first photograph that appears connects directly with the box man’s narration. It is a blurred negative image of the silhouette of a man carrying a long object (ostensibly the air rifle used to shoot the narrator), which the narrator claims is photographic evidence of the threat to his life. Thus, the photograph serves to underscore the narrator’s motivations in performing the text of the narrative. He is paranoid that he is to be murdered soon, and creates “a safety device” by writing the notes that form the text of the novel as a means of speaking from beyond the grave. Although whether it in fact refers to the narrator or merely is something inserted to
underscore his predicament is not made clear by the text, as if to further emphasize this point, another newspaper clipping of a short article about a dead vagrant ignored by passers-by appears later (Abe 1974: 30).

When the motivations of the box man for telling his story – to leave a record should he be murdered – are taken into account, then it is perhaps not absurd to suggest that the narrative performance of *The Box Man* might be productively read in terms of (or for that matter against) the forms and features of detective fiction. Certainly, at a glance, *The Box Man* does not appear to be anything like a detective novel. Unlike Abe’s preceding novel *The Ruined Map*, in which a detective features as the text’s protagonist and narrator and the narrative is organized around the search for a missing person (albeit one that is ultimately unsuccessful), in *The Box Man*, neither does a figure of the detective make any overt appearance nor is its story, strictly speaking, structured around the investigation of a crime. However, more than the obvious trappings of the genre per se, it is the the articulations of the mechanisms of narration and narrativity as such that are thoroughly embedded in the conventions of the genre. As Susan Sweeney has noted, “in its formal elements, such as sequence, suspense, and closure, as well as in its content, the detective story dramatizes the workings of narrative itself” (Sweeney 1990: 3). Of particular relevance here is the much-noted structural alignment of the roles of detective and reader that organizes the workings of classical detective fiction that the preceding chapters have touched upon (Todorov 1977: 142; Sweeney 1990: 8). Taking into account the framing of the narration as an act in anticipation of a crime in *The Box Man*, as well as the very organization of the novel as a sequence of case files (e.g., “My Case,” “The Case of A,”), there is arguably the appearance of a gesture towards the genre. Rather than dramatizing a detective solving a case through the creation of a narrative from disparate clues, *The Box Man* provides only the raw clues, in effect, the text attempts to position the reader into the role of the detective in the background ostensibly investigating an apparent murder. Producing a coherent narrative out of these is left to the reader-detective, something tThe box man himself explicitly states at one point: “Almost everything up until now can be proved by analyzing the
film. But from this point on, nothing at all is backed by objective evidence. I expect that either you or the finder of these notes will believe my testimony and justify it on your own” (Abe 1974: 24). In this respect, The Box Man might be said to uphold the narrative logic of detective fiction in a particularly distilled form.

There is however a crucial difference that must also be accounted for here. Whereas detective fiction “is unusually preoccupied with establishing linear sequences” (Sweeney 1990: 4), in other words organized around the telling “of the real story in the form of a linear narration” (Žižek 1990: 28), with The Box Man, the very possibility of performing this task of narrative construction given to the reader (as surrogate detective) is precisely what is challenged. The potential multiplicity of narrators, the unreliability of the narrative, indeed the violations of the narrative frame (e.g., narrations of scenes outside the box) ensure that any sense of coherence to the story is perpetually slipping out of grasp. Perhaps Christopher Bolton is correct when he suggests that a “closer examination reveals a careful and very logical map of people and events underlying the chaotic text,” that “[w]ith some effort, almost everything in the novel can be rationalized into a single coherent narrative, cast, and timeline” (Bolton 2009: 200).9 Even if that were the case, however, such a move strikes me as counterproductive as it places primacy to an underlying plot or story. Rather than merely something that mediates (however opaquely) a fixed deep story, is not the foregrounding of its own status as a verbal artifact in The Box Man indicative that the point here is not the mystery of the “real story” per se, but its very narrativity, the very process through which narratives come to be constituted in the first place? By doubling its narrative back onto itself, The Box Man arguably occupies a liminal space between the discursive categories of fiction and criticism. As Mark Currie puts it, such a self-referential move “is a way of giving the novel a critical function, the ability to explore the logic and philosophy of narrative without recourse to metalanguage: it renders fiction theoretical” (Currie 1998: 52). In line with this, Currie argues that it

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9 Unfortunately, Bolton does not go much further with this assertion, and as such, evaluating the specifics of his take on the novel and the narrative continuity that he perceives to lurk underneath its fragmentary and self-referential discursive performance is not possible.
would be more accurate to perhaps call self-reflexive narratives “theoretical fictions” rather than the more commonly used “metafiction.”

In fact, it is exactly this attention to the mechanisms of narrative construction that the act of donning a cardboard box over one’s head and body evokes. Donning a box forces the individual to “see” the world from behind an “observation window” with a width of seventeen inches (Abe 1974: 5). This inevitably impacts the manner in which one views the world outside the box as seen when the narrator points out that:

> When anyone comes into contact with the scenery around him, he tends to see selectively only those elements necessary. For example, though one remembers a bus stop, one can have absolutely no recollection of a large willow tree nearby. One’s attention is caught willy-nilly by the hundred-yen piece dropped on the road, but the bent and rusty nail and the weeds by the wayside may just as well not be there. On the average road one usually managed not to go astray. However, as soon as one looks out the box’s observation window, things appear to be different. The various details of the scenery become homogenous, have equal significance. (Abe 1974: 41-42)

What the text emphasizes here is the impact of framing devices to the ways in which perception and experience is organized and mediated. Whereas the processes in which this perceptual framing occurs are often rendered invisible in one’s daily existence, in *The Box Man*, this underlying perceptual and cognitive mechanism is brought to the forefront. By peering through the window of the box, the act of seeing is not only reframed, but given literal visibility and materiality in the form of the cardboard box, with the consequence that those objects that would normally be ignored or overlooked take on a new visibility as well. The opacity of the narrative performance can be read in parallel to the opacity of the framing that the window of the cardboard box. It functions to foreground the detective’s task as one of narrative construction, and by implication, the reader’s role in constituting a narrative out of the various documents and fragments that form the text of the novel. Or to put it another way, *The Box Man* arguably works as what Patricia Merivale and Susan Sweeney have termed a “metaphysical detective story,” which they describe as “a text that parodies or subverts traditional detective-story conventions –
such as narrative closure and the detective’s role as a surrogate reader – with the intention, or at least the
effect, of asking questions about mysteries of being and knowing which transcend the mere
machinations of the mystery plot” (Merivale and Sweeney 1999: 2).10 In other words, it is a novel that
goes beyond merely presenting a mystery to be solved but instead addresses and calls into question the
narrative procedures through which these very solutions come to be realized in the first place, and with
this, attempts to articulate that which they render invisible, that which exceeds them. At stake here is the
problem of apprehending not only the operations of literary fiction, but moreover, all manner of
narrative forms that organize and mediate one’s relation to the world, within which must be included the
workings of culture, of ideology, of history.11

Detection and History

Michael Holquist has suggested that metaphysical detective stories are emblematic of fictions of postwar
postmodernism, naming the likes of Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977), Jorge Luis Borges (1899-1986), and
Alain Robbe-Grillet (1922-2008) as examples of authors in whose work this characteristic tends to

10 It should be noted here that the term “metaphysical detective story” do not originate with Merivale and
Sweeney, but was first used by Howard Haycraft in his classic Murder for Pleasure: The Life and Times of the Detective
Story (1941). It was subsequently picked up by Michael Holquist (1971) and other literary critics, but nonetheless, is
still only one term among several to refer to texts broadly that deploy the tropes and formulae of detective fiction
for other literary purposes, typically metafictive in orientation. Inevitably, the choice of term brings with it its
implicit emphasis. Calling it a “deconstructive mystery” or “postmodern mystery” links it with specific literary-
critical theories; “post-nouveau roman detective novel” situates things in a specific sociohistorical milieu; “anti-
detective” foregrounds the tendency for the reversal of generic formulae, albeit perhaps misleadingly suggesting a
negation of these (Merivale and Sweeney 1999: 3-4). Within the discursive space of contemporary debates on the
genre in Japan, “anti-mystery” is the term most often used (Oshino 2005: 21). I follow Merivale and Sweeney’s
choice of term for its comparatively broader take on this category of fiction, which they trace back to Edgar Allan
Poe’s seminal “Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) and “The Purloined Letter” (1844) and finds more recent
examples in such texts as Paul Auster’s The New York Trilogy (1985-1986), Umberto Eco’s In the Name of the Rose
(1980), and also Abe Kôbô’s work (Merivale and Sweeney 1999: 18)).

11 In asserting this, my point of departure is of course Linda Hutcheon’s concept of “historiographic
metafiction.” With this term, what Hutcheon describes are texts that “enact the problematic nature of the relation
of writing history to narrativization and, thus, to fictionalization, thereby raising the same questions about the
cognitive status of historical knowledge with which current philosophers of history are also grappling” (Hutcheon
1988: 93). Although for Hutcheon, “historiographic metafiction” is a form that is particularly characteristic of
literary writing in postmodernity distinct from “late modernist radical metafiction” (Hutcheon 1988: 108) I differ in
my assessment by emphasizing that insofar as any literary text – metafictive or otherwise – organizes narrative in
some form, then it bears within it a historiographic unconscious.
feature (Holquist 1971: 135). Holquist contends that in contrast to the modernist fictions of the prewar period wherein myth and psychoanalysis served as the underlying discursive forms, with postmodernist texts, analogous structural underpinnings and narrative subtexts are drawn from detective fictions. He elaborates the point as follows. The defining characteristic of the practices of cultural production in the early twentieth century is the division between high culture and mass culture, more so than at any other time in history, as marked by the parallel flourishing of high modernism on the one hand and detective fiction on the other. Against the backdrop of a crisis of faith in reason – in The Enlightenment – a bifurcated discursive response emerges. Whereas “the upper reaches of literature were dramatizing the limits of reason by experimenting with such irrational modes as myth and the sub-conscious, that the lower reaches of literature were dramatizing the power of reason” (Holquist 1971: 147).

Andreas Huyssen has suggested that what distinguishes postmodernism from modernism is its relation to mass culture. Whereas earlier modernisms were constituted “through a conscious strategy of exclusion, an anxiety of contamination by its other: an increasingly consuming and engulfing mass culture,” with the contemporary postmodern, this cleavage no longer held (Huyssen 1986: vii). In a similar vein, for Holquist, it is this opposition between high culture and mass culture that collapses in the aftermath of the Second World War. Postmodernism bridges this gap between high and low culture, taking up the narrative logic of detective fiction as its point of departure, not only mining its conventions and plot patterns, but also subverting them and articulating their limits. “What myth was to experimental fiction before World War II, detective fiction is to avant-garde prose after World War II…. Post-Modernism exploits detective stories by expanding and changing certain possibilities in them, just as Modernism had modified the potentialities of myth” (Holquist 1971: 148-49).

There is something too neat, too categorical about Holquist’s account here. Certainly, it would be easy to plug Abe into the schema he sketches out, as for example, Tatsumi Takayuki does when he places Abe at the forefront of an emerging transgeneric poetics that becomes especially evident in contemporary Japanese literature. Also, that there are ranks of authors – both in Japan and elsewhere –
who have taken up (and subvert) the tropes of detective fiction as a means of articulating questions about narration and narrativity is undeniable. However, less convincing is Holquist’s assertion that this is peculiar to postmodernity. Indeed contrary to Holquist’s suggestion, much of the modernist fiction in Japan during the 1920s and 1930s, in the works of Satô Haruo or Tanizaki Jun’ichirô for example, often arguably employed not only thematic elements but also narrative strategies that are undoubtedly indebted to the burgeoning genre of detective fiction. Conversely, there is of course the so-called father of Japanese detective fiction Edogawa Rampo, and not to mention his American doppelganger in Edgar Allan Poe, neither of whose works are reducible to expressions of a naïve faith in the epistemological certainty of the figure of the detective. If my own discussion of Rampo in the preceding chapters is any indication, then one thing that is clear is that what often characterizes his detective fiction is their lack of complete closure; his detectives’ acts of narrative construction – and with that any sense of mechanical certainty – are regularly called into question. In effect, his fictions can be read as forms of “popular modernisms,” to use the terms of Jon Thompson’s characterization; they illustrate “that modernism is a kind of detective fiction and that detective fiction is a kind of modernism” (Thompson 1993: 120). At least as far as detective fiction is concerned in the context of Japan – and I suspect in the context of Euro-America as well, if Thompson’s discussion is any indication – an easy categorical distinction between high culture and mass culture is difficult to sustain, and with that any simple radical break from modernism to postmodernism as well.

This is not to say that such distinctions were not asserted. On the contrary, as the persistent attempts to define “pure literature” [junbungaka] against “mass literature” [taishû bungaku] indicate, the desire for such a stark demarcation was without a doubt present. Nonetheless, on this point, I agree with Seiji Lippit that these discourses and debates are more productively read as symptoms. Rather than showing that these distinctions were clear, the very need to assert a distinction demonstrates precisely their increasing untenability, their being subject to question in the first place. In Lippit’s words, “[b]y the 1920s…any faith in the autonomy of literary practice had been decisively undermined; it was only as a
reaction formation that the concept of ‘pure’ literature (junbun-gaku) was first widely circulated during this period” (Lippit 2002: 19).

More to the point, the three discursive practices Holquist highlights – myth, psychoanalysis, and detective fiction – all operate on similar principles, and for that matter underpin the production of the doppelganger as a concept. To recapitulate my earlier discussion, rather than taking them to be in opposition to one another, they are more productively grasped as working along parallel trajectories. While they operate in different registers, they nonetheless shared a common logic of seeking to recuperate the possibility of representation, to find a fixed ground of authenticity in response to a social milieu marked by its crisis; as Harry Harootunian has put it, “[w]hat modernist discourse in Japan, and elsewhere, confronted was the crisis of modernity over the stability and reliability of forms of representation” (Harootunian 2000: xxv). Concretely, what was taking place in 1920s Japan was the rapid urbanization and the emergence of a burgeoning consumer culture facilitated by the increasing commodification of all aspects of social life coupled with colonial expansion, which left vast swaths of unevenness in its wake that meant the turning of cities into contact zones wherein the different temporalities collided, with the peripheries interiorized into the metropoles. Against this backdrop of the rapid social and material transformations taking place within this milieu of newly circulating images, commodities, and bodies marked by a sense of dislocation and alienation, parallel discourses that render legible these anxieties and tensions – among which modernism, alongside detective fiction, psychoanalysis, nativist ethnographies, or nationalist mythmaking – make their appearance. At their hearts is a similar drive what Ernst Bloch has called “a remoter something” – an essential clue or symptom that might reveal a hitherto unknown coherence to the “nightmare of history” – so as to reveal its hidden origins and make it possible to give it narrative form (Bloch 1988). Thus, through this gesture, they, in the words of Harootunian, “attacked the problems raised by capitalism at the level of representation, each, in its own way, trying to find a stable ground and referent capable of guaranteeing the possibility of representation” (Harootunian 2000: 414).
However, *The Box Man* is not a text that emerged out of this specific historical conjuncture, and to simply extend this analysis to Abe’s novel would be clearly questionable. That said, if indeed what underpin modernist and detective fictions are the parallel drives to produce a solution to the mystery of modernity, to locate a hidden “remoter something” that might fix the grounds for representation against the shifting terrain of incessant novelty and change and in the process construct a coherent narrative out of a set of disparate clues and the material traces of past events, then it seems that at stake in their narrative performances is the very problem of historical narration and its conditions of possibility. The significance of the play of the detective in *The Box Man* therefore lies in how it constitutes its historical relation to its formal precedents, and through this, how it interrogates the historicity of modernity as such. This the novel addresses at the one instance in the text when detective fiction is explicitly referenced.

Of course, I feel lately the signs of the times are more and more going in a direction unsuitable to detective stories. As I write this, the way in which the installment-plan system is expanding, for example, occurs to me. Just as there are almost no more people who are afraid of shots, contrary to times past, now there are few who shrink from installment buying. But with installment buying, one mortgages everything, one exposes oneself, one’s work, one’s house to securing the money. (Abe 1974: 141)

At first glance, the juxtaposition of the impossibility of detective fiction with attitudes towards installment-plan buying appears like an odd bit of a *non sequitur*. But if viewed with an attention to their embedded temporalities, then the linkage between them becomes clear. As I have previously touched upon, detective fiction is typically organized around a double structure consisting of the story of a crime and the second story of the investigation whose relation maps onto the schism between (past) story and (present) discourse. In *The Box Man*, however, the temporal relation between these two stories is inverted; rather than producing the reconstructed narrative of events leading up to a crime after the fact, it is a narration performed in anticipation of a crime, in effect reducing itself to a kind of indexical trace in advance, performed for posterity. Parallel to the box man’s habit of “recording the past events of the
day after tomorrow when nothing has yet occurred” (Abe 1974: 117), the temporal principle behind installment-plan buying is the colonizing of the future by locking it into place, transforming it into merely another extension of the present, with the consequence of producing, in Fredric Jameson’s terms a sense of a “perpetual present” (Jameson 1992: 179). What this juxtaposition between detective fiction and economic practice provides then is not only a gesture towards the burgeoning financialization of the capitalist mode of production that had become especially pronounced since the 1970s, but more importantly, it suggests that the fragmentary and temporally dislocated narration of the novel is emblematic of the broader sociocultural and material transformations taking place at its historical moment of production.

On its face then, The Box Man appears to be in alignment with Fredric Jameson’s famous characterization of postmodernity as marked by a sense of historical deafness, that is, by its dominant cultural feature of being no longer able to think historically. In contrast to earlier high modernisms, whose central thrust is its obsessive awareness of “deep time,” for Jameson, the defining feature of the postmodern is “the disappearance of a sense of history, the way in which our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve” (Jameson 1983: 125). In his own periodization, Jameson situates the passage to postmodernity against the backdrop of the various political-economic transformations – the increasing financialization of capital and the rise of transnational corporations, decolonization and the emergence of a new global division of labor, new forms of media relations and the circulation of spectacles and image-commodities – whose foundations can be traced in the 1950s but whose crystallization can be located in the aftermath of event of the 1973 oil crisis and the collapse of the Bretton Woods system and their economic and cultural impacts (Jameson 1991: xix-xx).

At the center of the question of the problem of postmodernity is the question of whether it is in fact distinct from earlier modernisms, and consequently whether the term itself is productive in the first
place. In other words, at issue is whether its relation to its precedents is to be read in terms of continuity or discontinuity, in terms of identity or difference. While on the one hand the very prefix “post” implies a break with the past, on the other hand, the commonalities of the stylistic features typically construed as “postmodern” – fragmentary narratives, self-reflexivity, intertextual parody, and others – are ones that are arguably already visible in earlier modernist practices, and as such naive assertions of a radical novelty to the postmodern are “marked by – as if a product of its own discourse – a symptomatic amnesia to the past,” as Anne Friedberg once put it (Friedberg 1995: 5). Critics and theorists of various persuasions each account for this in their own ways, typically contending that postmodernism “marks neither a simple and radical break from [modernism] nor a straightforward continuity with it” (Hutcheon 1988: 18). For instance, while nevertheless insisting on a distinction between them, Andreas Huyssen suggests that while the postmodern is a new paradigm, that does not necessarily mean a total break but rather a reconfiguration of relations, “that modernism, avant-garde, and mass culture have entered into a new set of mutual relations and discursive configurations which we call ‘postmodern’ and which is clearly distinct from the paradigm of ‘high modernism’” (Huyssen 1986: x); likewise, Anne Friedberg reads the postmodern in terms of the practices engendered by cinema, arguing for a gradual increasing permeation of these practices already latent in the modern as opposed to a singular historical break or rupture (Friedberg 1995: 2). For his part, while Jameson overall errs on the side of emphasizing its distinctiveness from earlier epochs, what his critical move to historicize the postmodern effectively does is to sidestep the problem altogether:

Even if all the constitutive features of postmodernism were identical with and coterminous to those of an older modernism – a position I feel erroneous but which only an even lengthier analysis of modernism proper could dispel – the two phenomena would still remain utterly distinct in their meaning and social function, owing to the very different positioning of postmodernism in the economic system of late capital, and beyond that, to the transformation of the very sphere of culture in contemporary society. (Jameson 1991: 5)
For Jameson, what distinguishes postmodernism from modernism is less any essential stylistic or aesthetic features and more the shifts in the historical conditions in which these formal characteristics are encountered. In this schema, modernism’s the attention to “deep time” is a product of the incompleteness of modernization. Because the residue of previous social forms coexisted with the present – the old was still with the new – it was still possible to experience temporal difference. In contrast, “[p]ostmodernism is what you have when the modernization process is complete” ((Jameson 1991: ix); it is the expression of the moment when all traces of past social forms have been swept away, and all cultural production has been fully subsumed into the logic of the commodity and its fetishism. Indeed one symptom of this is how even the radical interventions of modernist practice can be resignified within the logic of postmodernity. What might have been at a different historical conjuncture a radical intervention into the modern is canonized and reified; “what used to be virulent, subversive, or at least offensive ideas have now been transformed into so many material signifiers at which you gaze for a moment and pass on” (Jameson 1991: 150).

How then might Abe Kôbô’s fiction fit within this schema? Tatsumi Takayuki has suggested a similar procedure at work in the reception of the works of Abe specifically. According to Tatsumi, while Abe was acknowledged to be one of the most radically avant-garde writers in his time, the formal experiments and subversion of literary conventions that had marked his body of work had, by the 1980s, already been commodified. This was the consequence of the “escalation of the hyperconsumerist society, an escalation that transformed the most radical renunciation of literary convention into a major literary convention in itself” (Tatsumi 2006: 30). Echoing Jameson, within the cultural milieu of postmodernity, the narrative disruptions and interruptions have effectively been neutralized, rendered into nothing more than another passing literary fad.

There are without a doubt compelling and intriguing aspects to Jameson’s and Tatsumi’s accounts here, not the least of which is the important intervention into the then ongoing debates surrounding postmodernism and postmodernity through the linking of the cultural with the political-
economic. By shifting the terrain of discussion from purely matters of style or literary classification and onto the broader field of historical inquiry, the problem is rendered moot, because even if there is a relation of identity in stylistic features or practices, the changed socioeconomic context and discursive milieu in which they appear necessarily lead to different social and cultural valences. In so doing, he places emphasis on the material grounds in which postmodernism makes its appearance by arguing that it is no less than the expression of the cultural dominant within the new phase of late capitalist accumulation. In this respect, Jameson’s project can be characterized as no less than a historicizing effort, indeed itself as “an attempt to think the present historically in an age that has forgotten to think historically in the first place” (Jameson 1991: ix).

“Always historicize!” is of course the famous and much repeated slogan that opens the preface to Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* (1981: 9). Less often remarked upon though is precisely what it is that Jameson identifies to be the critical object of historicizing. It is not merely, as Jameson makes clear in the opening pages, the historicizing of cultural forms in themselves that is the task at hand. While accounting for the historicity of texts, be it in terms of the linguistic and narrative structures they deploy, the genres in which they participate, or the motifs they reproduce, is certainly a necessary task, it is not on its own sufficient as a critical gesture. Beyond this what is at stake in this call to “always historicize” is the historicity of the very frames and categories of analysis through which these texts are apprehended. In Jameson’s words:

> [T]he historicizing operation can follow two distinct paths, which only ultimately meet in the same place: the path of the object and the path of the subject, the historical origins of the things themselves and that more intangible historicity of the concepts and categories by which we attempt to understand these things. In the area of culture… we are thus confronted with a choice between study of the nature of the “objective” structures of a given cultural text… and something rather different which would instead foreground the interpretative categories or codes through which we read and receive the text in question. For better or for worse, it is this second path we have chosen to follow here. (Jameson 1981: 9)
Even if only for its recognition that the encounter with a text is literally never *immediate*, but is rather always already mediated through the frames and categories of analysis through which it is apprehended, then without a doubt, the approach Jameson proposes here certainly has much merit. Interestingly, however, Jameson seemingly excludes his own dialectical interpretative frame from consideration in such terms, asserting that this call to historicize – indeed to *always* historicize – is “the one absolute and we may very well say ‘transhistorical’ imperative” (Jameson 1981: 9, emphasis mine). Of course, this may simply be a matter of stylistic or rhetorical excess performed in an effort to underscore the critical and political necessity of accounting for the historicity of what structures the limits of thought. Or to put it differently, Jameson’s hyperbole here might very well be understood as a kind of strategic essentialism in the service of its polemical call to bring to attention the totality of ideological underpinnings that structure modes of textual analysis and moreover to argue the political as the absolute horizon of the practice of literary analysis. Nevertheless, if indeed the imperative to historicize the various interpretative apparatuses in operation – that is, to account for the historical totality that exceeds each of them – is the task at hand, then it seems only apt to pose the problem of the historicity of the desire to historicize.

With this in mind, one question that must be raised here is: if one of the symptoms of postmodernity is its resignification of modernism, then is the distinction between a modernist emphasis on deep time and a postmodernist sense of historical deafness one that is prior to this resignification within the postmodern interpretative frame? Or is it a distinction that emerges precisely through its mediation within postmodernity? On the one hand, if it is the former, then how might Jameson’s own articulation of the temporal and historical consciousness of modernism – indeed the very possibility of his own performance of a historicizing gesture – *within* the moment marked by historical deafness that Jameson identifies with postmodernity to be accounted for? On the other hand, if it is the latter, then does it not suggest that this modernist consciousness is not opposed to but rather immanent to postmodernity. More to the point, given that the very category “postmodern” comes into legibility only through its differentiation from what its retroactive production of the “modern,” it seems reasonable to
say that the latter’s difference is constitutive of the condition of possibility for recognizing the former in the first place.

One answer might be to read Jameson’s historicizing gesture as a kind of exception, as a kind of residue from an earlier historical moment that somehow persists within the new cultural dominant. Yet, there is nonetheless something I find unsatisfactory in this approach. By reading difference in terms of exception – as residual or emergent forces – rather than as something internal and immanent to, and for that matter, constitutive of the cultural dominant, it seems to me that it also becomes easier to exclude them from view altogether. Further to this, such a move runs the risk of reinscribing history as taking on a linear coherence. Indeed, insofar as it functions as an attempt to renarrativize history in the aftermath of the end of history, the historicizing move Jameson makes is not at all unlike a kind of detective work, with the mystery to be solved the question of the history of the present. Like the detective, the solution to this mystery lies in the positing of an origin – modernism – the relation to which forms the fixed ground from where narrative of the present can be articulated.

Jameson’s and Tatsumi’s respective accounts of postmodernity as the product of the completion of the modernization process (i.e., the elimination of the traces and remnants of the past the once coexisted with the modern) is illustrative here, for it reproduces the teleology of the modernization narrative that misreads unevenness as incompleteness. Aside from the obvious problem of its Eurocentric developmental teleology wherein, as Harry Harootunian has put it, “temporality was always measured from one, base time line since, it was believed, true time was kept by the modern West” (Harootunian 2000: xv- xvi), more fundamentally, what modernization theory conceals is how unevenness always accompanies and is a fundamental feature of capitalist development. In this sense, unevenness is not a sign of incomplete modernity but rather, in its unceasing expansionist drive towards the production of excess, capitalism inevitably keeps social formations uneven, whether in terms of urban and rural, metropole and colony, or indeed, a global scale of West and non-West. If Harootunian is correct in his assertion that “modernism was the historical watermark of uneven development, its
signature, even though it sought to efface and repress this historical condition of production” (Harootunian 2000: xxi), then perhaps these critical gestures can be more productively understood as symptoms of the generalization and intensification of this unevenness as well as a concurrent desire to repress them from view.

**Mirrors and Repetitions**

On a number of levels, *The Box Man* enacts precisely the collision and folding into one another of uneven temporalities. At its very onset, it signals towards this when even before the box man begins with his narration proper, the novel opens with an insert of a short news clipping, which carries the headline “CLEAN SWEEP OF UENO HOBOS: Check This Morning – 180 Arrests” (Abe 1974: 3). The attached article subsequently continues with the following words:

> All were taken to the Ueno Police Station where they were photographed and fingerprinted. Four, who complained of being sick, were sent to the hospital via the Daito Welfare Office; nine were sent to a home for the aged. Those remaining were released after signing an agreement not to relapse into vagrancy…. An hour later there was every indication that almost all had returned to their former haunts. (Abe 1974: 3)

The image of homeless bodies subjected through the procedures of policing and state surveillance with which the novel opens serves as a marker of the uneven temporalities at the heart of a capitalist economy. While they are outside of the formal circuits of social and economic life, they are nonetheless essential to its workings as a surplus population, constitutive of it through their very exclusion. Indeed, for the most part, they are mostly unseen; or more accurately, they are visible yet this very visibility is disavowed. While the narrator of *The Box Man* asserts a distinction between the homeless and box men, at least on the level of their in/visibility, there is an unmistakable parallel. Like the homeless whose numbers are large yet at the same time not acknowledged or spoken of, box men are “not especially uncommon, there is every opportunity of seeing one. Surely, even you have, at least once. But I also realize full well that you don’t want to admit it. You’re not the only one” (Abe 1974: 8). Insofar as the
text is “the record of a box man,” the novel in effect renders visible these traces of uneven development, literally placing into view that which would normally be unacknowledged. Moreover, beyond the level of the story, the very narrative performance of *The Box Man* is based on the incorporation and juxtaposition of multiple authors and multiple narrative temporalities coexisting within the same set of pages and colliding against one another. By making little attempt to order this multiplicity into a linear coherence, the text of the novel is effectively turned into a document of the fundamental and constitutive unevenness and temporal hybridity.

It is when considered with this in mind that the appearance of figure of the doppelganger takes on significance in the novel. In *The Box Man* the figure of the doppelganger manifests in the form of what the narrator calls a “fake box man,” who is apparently another man who wears an exact replica of his box down to the last detail, which given that their faces are concealed grants him an exactly identical appearance. He first shows up in the novel midway through the narrative. As the box man awaits what he perceives to be his impending death following his first encounter with the nurse who offers fifty thousand yen in exchange for his box, he is caught by surprise when he later in fact receives the fifty thousand yen he had been promised, contrary to his initial assumption that what would be coming was his murder. Having second thoughts about exchanging his box, he walks to the nearby hospital where she works in an effort to renegotiate. Yet, when the box man arrives at the hospital and looks through a window, he spies upon what he names a “fake box man” conversing with the now disrobed nurse. Because of his physical circumstances, the box man is unable to view the scene he spies upon in the window of the nurse’s room in the hospital directly. Instead, he is forced to view the scene as it is reflected in a car’s rear view mirror that he has kept with him. Upon catching a glimpse of the “fake” box man, he writes the following:

He was seated on the edge of the bed and was wearing a box exactly like mine. From where I was, only the back and the right side were visible; it was a cardboard box, exactly the same as my own – from the degree of dirtiness to the remains of the printed letters giving the name of a
commercial product… to say nothing of the size. It was a fake replica of myself, imitated by design. (Abe 1974: 45)

This “fake” box man is not merely another box man, but a copy, a doppelganger of the particular box man narrating the novel. Accentuating the point is the use of the mirror as a device mediating the box man’s viewing of the scene before him, something that is further underscored in the narrative by the presence of a single sentence that is upside down in what appears to be a textual demonstration that the scene described is a mirror image. The passage reads: “Suddenly it occurred to me. Somewhere I remembered having seen exactly the same scene as this” (Abe 1974: 44). The scene therefore is a mirror image on a variety of levels. First, the object being viewed (the “fake” box man) is itself a mirror image of the subject (the narrating box man). Second, the scene is itself viewed as a reflection on the surface of a car’s rear-view mirror. And finally, with the expression of déjà vu in the inverted text, what is suggested is that the whole scene itself is a mirror image of a previous scene from memory, although only vaguely recalled, perhaps even only imagined.

A subsequent encounter between the narrator and the so-called “fake box man” is considerably more fleshed out. Upon returning to the shoreline where he currently hides, the box man plots his next move. He decides to leave the box and return to the hospital to see the nurse once more. His intent is to return the fifty thousand yen and explain his reasons for being unable to simply abandon his life as a box man. What he finds himself in, on the other hand, is a confrontation between himself, the “fake” box man, and the nurse. With the nurse staying mostly silent, the narrator (who is now out of his box) and the “fake” box man argue. Then the “fake” box man offers a proposal: the narrator can take his place at the hospital and share his life with the nurse on the condition that the “fake” box man be allowed to watch them. The narrator initially hesitates, but his hand is eventually forced when the “fake” box man commands the nurse to strip. In an attempt to recover his control of the situation, the narrator reveals that none of the scene is happening in “actuality.” After the “fake” box man asks him who is writing these notes (referring to the text of the novel) if he is in fact outside the box chatting, the narrator points
out to the “fake” box man that: “If you talk about it you yourself will admit that you two are merely figments of my imagination” (Abe 1974: 100).

Here, it is revealed that rather than properly being at the scene, what is occurring is that the box man is still at the shore where he waits writing these notes. None of the events being described have in fact happened. Rather the narrator writes of future events as if they are already past. Thus, rather than a “record” of a box man (as the narrator states in the opening lines of the novel) per se, perhaps the text can be better described as a simulation of a box man. Instead of having occurred and recorded after the fact (as is the presumed temporal narrative context in conventional fictional narratives), is a speculation, an act of narration that precedes the event it purports to represent. In this sense, it is an emblematic example of the box man’s habit of occupying the future in advance that has been central to the novel’s narrative organization. A marginal note at the beginning of this scene foreshadows this: “(Let me put this down before I forget. A clincher has just occurred to me that I should like to use when I see her. ‘I don’t want you to laugh or get angry. I don’t care about others laughing or getting angry, you’re the one who’s important.’)” (Abe 1974: 70). While it initially appears that it is only the marginal note that is a simulation of the conversation he intends to pursue with the nurse the following morning, it eventually becomes apparent that it is in fact the whole scene (perhaps, arguably, even the whole novel) that the narrator imagines or simulates in this fashion.

This scene in The Box Man serves to foreground the temporal ordering on which acts of narration and representation are predicated. By asserting his authorship over the narrative and declaring his interlocutors to be nothing more than figments of his imagination, what the box man attempts to perform is an act of temporal demarcation; he attempts to produce the conventional schism on the axis of time wherein that the story-time is broken off and exteriorized from the discourse-time so as to enable the latter to take on the function of a metalanguage to which the object (i.e., the story) must
become subordinate. Consequently, it perhaps comes with little surprise that when the fake box man challenges the narrator’s claim to the authorship of the notes on the interior walls of the box (and as such the authorship of the narrative as such), it is precisely around the terms of temporality that his argument revolves. He tells the narrator:

“Well, then, shall we compromise and say that you can write five pages an hour? Fifty-nine pages divided by five makes eleven, leaving four. Eleven hours and fifty minutes, shall we say? Since these are your last pages, it comes roughly to twelve hours, wouldn’t you agree? A total of twelve hours of constant writing without food or drink. If you began at three in the morning, it would be absolutely impossible for it to be now something before three in the afternoon.”

(Abe 1974: 105)

However, the events of this scene supposedly take place at eight in the following morning when the box man returns to the hospital once his clothes had dried off. Thus, the fake box man argues that it is impossible for the narrator to have authored the text. He highlights a disjunction in the narrative context between the duration of the discourse-time and the purported story-time. In so doing, the encounter with the doppelganger self-reflexively reveals a performative contradiction in the narrative of the novel. If the production of a linear coherence to narration is, as I have discussed previously, predicated on the demarcation of the temporal positions of story and discourse, then the encounter with the doppelganger in *The Box Man* functions to confuse this demarcation, to foreground the collision and entanglement of other temporalities.

Apprehended in conjunction with the novel’s brief commentary on the historical moment of its production marked by on the one hand the impossibility of detective stories and on the other hand the occupation of the future in the system of debt and installment-plan buying, what the deployment of the doppelganger in the novel thus brings to attention are the other temporalities interiorized within the

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12 Needless to say, the terms story-time and discourse-time derive from structuralist models of narrative, specifically from Seymour Chatman’s *Story and Discourse* (1978). The broader concepts behind this are not solely Chatman’s though, with similar models articulated in Russian Formalism or in the work of Gérard Genette (1980), for example.
seemingly perpetual present. The doppelganger evokes the unevenness of temporalities constitutive of
the present, that for Harry Harootunian is the central hallmark of the lived experience of modernity:

[T]hese ghosts of a surviving past… return from a place out of time or a different temporality to
haunt and disturb the historical present, to trouble the stable boundaries between past and
present, subject and object, interior and exterior. This haunting requires envisaging a structure of
comparability that recognizes the role played by temporally rooted forms in the present… past
and present are not necessarily successive but simultaneously produced (as Bergson once
proposed) or coexist as uneven temporalities, just as the here and there of modernity are coeval,
even though the latter is forgotten in the former. (Harootunian 2004: 47)

The rendering impossible of the detective in The Box Man can thus be understood as a symptom not of
the completion of the modernization process, but instead, of the deepening of uneven development. It
marks the generalization of the entanglement of uneven temporalities to an extent that it is now beyond
the powers of the detective to manage and disambiguate. It activates a recognition that there is
something that exceeds the detective’s narrative procedure, one marker of which is the doppelganger’s
appearance. If the detective’s task is to make coherent the contradictions of modern life, to construct a
narrative and to fix it (to literally close a case), in contrast, the doppelganger resists this desire for closure.

However, I do recognize the risk in placing undue emphasis on this multiplicity and unevenness
of temporalities within the moment of the present. In this respect, there is much merit in Fredric
Jameson’s point that the possibilities for difference become legible only when posited against cultural
dominant as a means of organizing a broad field of heterogeneity. As Jameson puts it, “[i]f we do not
achieve some general sense of a cultural dominant, then we fall back into a view of present history as
sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is
undecidable” (Jameson 1991: 6). In this sense, Jameson’s emphasis on distinguishing the conditions of
the present from the past in his contention that the passage to postmodernity is indicative of modernity’s
completion – of the elimination of the traces and remnants of the past the once coexisted with the
modern – may very well be understood as strategic. While Philip Rosen has a point when he contends
that to emphasize the difference of the postmodern from the modern – of the present conjuncture from
the past – “is to evade their interplay, the mixtures of old and new, the temporal hybridities that constitute the present” (Rosen 2001: xviii-xix), conversely, to emphasize continuities at the expense of an attention to breaks and ruptures runs the risk of denying difference, indeed denying the very possibility of history altogether. Nonetheless, a question that must be raised here is whether the modernist move to set up a point of origin as a means of securing the grounds for narration and representation is necessary to think historically. Can the history of the present be articulated without having to anchor it to a vision of the past that is fixed, to a retroactively constituted origin from which to derive its coherence? This may very well be nothing more than a matter of emphasis, but I believe it is an emphasis that matters.

Given its disruption of notions of origins, it seems that addressing this question is precisely what is at the heart of the doppelganger’s discursive repetitions. In The Box Man, the scene subsequent to the encounter with the fake box man (labeled “The Case of C”) speaks to this issue with particular cogency. In this scene, as if to further emphasize the mirroring enacted through the appearance of the figure of the doppelganger, the novel shifts into the second person perspective and repeats the opening lines beginning with “this is the record of a box man” (Abe 1974: 117). The shift of perspective has the effect of performing an act of mirroring on the level of the narrative form. It should be noted though that the mirrored past lines are not simply the repetition of the same. Rather, the novel recontextualizes and resignifies them by quoting and interiorizing their words within a mirror image of the narration.

Notably, this is not the first time Abe has made use of this technique of repeating word-for-word passages from earlier sections of the novel in subsequent scenes. Indeed, its appearance in The Box Man is a repetition of a similar repetition that appears in The Ruined Map. The novel opens with its detective protagonist in his car, observing the surrounding landscape as he travels to a suburban apartment block to meet with his client for the first time.

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13 Thomas LaMarre has raised similar questions in terms of the relation between cinema and animation (LaMarre 2006: 162). This is not altogether unconnected, in light of Anne Friedberg’s discussion of the centrality of cinema to how postmodernity is conceptualized (Friedberg 1995: 168-77). Needless to say, my discussion here is indebted to their work.
The surface of the street was not asphalt but a rough-textured concrete with narrow grooves about five inches apart, apparently to prevent slipping. But they did not look as though they would be much help to pedestrians. The purposely rough concrete surface was covered with dust and tire shavings, and on rainy days, even if one wore old rubber-soled shoes, it would surely make for difficult walking. No doubt the pavement was made in this way for cars. If so, the grooves every five inches would be very effective. (Abe 1969: 5)

Close to the novel’s conclusion, the same words appear again (Abe 1969: 272). Much has happened by this point though: the detective has followed every lead to the whereabouts of the missing man he seeks, interviewing potential sources of information and tracking down the origins of the few pieces of physical clues, a newspaper clipping and a box of matches. All of these clues lead to dead ends however, and moreover, by the end of the novel, the protagonist loses all his memory, in effect turning the detective in search of a missing person into the missing person (or at least his double) himself. Just as the repetition of the opening lines serves to punctuate the various mirroring procedures surrounding the appearance of the doppelganger in *The Box Man* on the level of the novel’s form, in *The Ruined Map*, what the repetition of the opening sequence gives emphasis to is the circularity of its narrative.

While *The Ruined Map* has been criticized by the likes of Karatani Kôjin for glorifying anonymity and the escape from social life without confronting and transforming its structures (Karatani 2001), Mark Gibeau suggests that there is more to the novel than meets the eye. By placing attention specifically to these textual repetitions and the circularity of its narrative, Gibeau effectively contends that the conclusion of the novel when the detective ends up without memory and beginning to walk away his previous life is not as radical a break as it might initially seem. He points to the crucial fact that all he appears to be abandoning at the conclusion of the novel – his home, his occupation, his wife, indeed even his name – were all things he did not possess in the first place. What this suggests is that at stake in the repetition at the novel’s conclusion is more than merely the protagonist’s descent into anonymity. Rather, it points to a deferred recognition that this had always been the condition in which he existed. Thus, for Gibeau “the protagonist’s amnesia can be read as another instance of repetition, employing the
metaphor of amnesia to emphasize the broader and profound condition of anomie *under which the protagonist has been laboring all along*” (Gibeau 2005: 171, emphasis mine). In this sense, what this repetition brings to attention is a conception of the past that is not a closed or singular point of origin, but rather one that is itself subject to shifts and transformations in the traversing of time into the present.

Grasped in these terms, these repetitions enacted through the figure of the doppelganger can be compared with Mieke Bal’s use of the motif of the mirror in her conception of history as literally “preposterous,” as at once inscribing a coeval “pre” and “post.” “History,” Bal writes, “as a mirroring of the past within the present, is itself, in my preposterous version of it, wed to the act of mirroring, without which we cannot live, yet for which we must not fall” (Bal 1999: 263). Bal’s vision of a “preposterous” history is one wherein the past is inevitably mirrored and interiorized in the present, one that emphasizes a destabilizing entanglement rather than the severance and closure of different temporal positions. Like Bal’s conception of the mirror, the figure of the doppelganger is “a tool of semiotic theorizing” that allows one to grasp – but not fix – the contemporeneity and non-autonomy (indeed, entanglement) of temporalities (Bal 1999: 263). As such, it opens up a space of possibility for recognizing and grappling with the mechanisms of modern life without resorting to a repression of their complexities.

Interestingly, in E. Dale Saunder’s English translation of both *The Ruined Map* and *The Box Man*, the repeating passages in question do not follow their appearances in the opening pages word-for-word, in contrast to the respective Japanese texts, which repeat the same lines verbatim. In the case of *The Box Man* the repetition reads as “I am at this time beginning to write this record in this box” rather than the words “I am beginning this account in a box” that appears initially in the novel’s opening pages (Abe 1974: 117, 3).14 Although in all likelihood, this is nothing more than a lapse in the translation, insofar as translation is itself an act based upon mirroring and repetition, when considered without a privileging of

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14 In the Japanese text, the line reads exactly as “*kore wa hakoottoko ni tsuite no kiroku dearu. Boku wa ima, kono kiroku wo hako no naka de kakihajimetsu*” in both the opening and its subsequent repetition in “The Case of C” (Abe 1999c: 9, 85).
the original as would be entailed if the doppelganger’s appearance is to be logically pursued, this seeming lapse nevertheless brings to attention the implications of the doppelganger’s enactment of repetition. It highlights the question of difference necessarily produced in every new iteration (including iterations of translations), even if only by virtue of the act of repetition itself. If what characterizes the contemporary conjuncture is the endless everyday of the repetition of the same, then in anticipation of these concerns that have since haunted the present moment, what is invoked by the multiple manifestations of the figure of the doppelganger in Abe’s fictions – in the story, in the organization of its narrative, in its doubling as translation – is the potential for difference within this structure of repetition.
CHAPTER 6
INTERTEXTUAL DOPPELGANGER: DOUBLE VISIONS OF “JAPAN”

Murakami Haruki and his Doubles

One author who has emerged out of the contemporary conjuncture of late capitalism in whose fiction
the figure of the doppelganger is an unmistakably central feature is Murakami Haruki (1949-). The
numerous and repeated appearance of images of twins, doubles, and mirror images throughout his body
of work is difficult to deny. Several examples can be named here. In The Wind-up Bird Chronicle
(Nejimakidori kuronikersu, 1994-1995; trans. 1997), although against the backdrop of its sprawling and
complex narrative that intersperses a domestic drama involving the disappearance of a cat and
subsequently the narrator’s wife with accounts of the Nomonhan Incident and a host of supernatural
events, the doppelganger’s appearance in this novel is only in a relatively minor scene, it is no less
striking. Late in the third volume of the trilogy, there is a scene with a mute character named Cinnamon
Akasaka waking up and going outside into a garden, only to return to bed and find himself, his
doppelganger, still sleeping soundly in his bed. A consequence of this encounter with his double is his
loss of voice, which is later tied to stories he and his mother collectively constructed with increasing
complexity as one story begot another nested within it and yet another. In the later explanation of
Cinnamon Akasaka’s mother, “His words were lost in that labyrinth, swallowed by the world of his
stories” (Murakami 1997: 444).

A more explicit – if at times inelegant and heavy-handed – articulation of the linkage between
the encounter with the doppelganger and the failure of language and narration among Murakami’s works
though can be found in Sputnik Sweetheart (Supûtoniku no koibito, 1999; trans. 2002). This novel centers on
the relationship between a narrator (whose name is marked only with the initial “K”) and a young
struggling writer named Sumire, the doppelganger manifests most conspicuously in a late scene after
Sumire disappears without a trace while she is vacationing with her employer Miu on a Greek island. When the narrator travels there to search for her, the only clue he finds are a set of documents on Sumire’s computer. In one such document, Sumire recounts the story of Miu’s traumatic encounter with her doppelganger. As if rehearsing the tropes associated with Freud’s conception of the uncanny – repetitions, vision, and the rendering of an intimately familiar space as alien – to the letter, the scene takes place while Miu is in a Ferris wheel, from where she attempts to peer through her apartment window with a pair of binoculars as the machine repeatedly goes round. When Miu is finally able to locate her window when the Ferris wheel abruptly stops and traps her within it, what she finds is not her empty apartment but a vision of her double having sex that she describes as “meaningless and obscene” with a man she had previously encountered (Murakami 2002: 156). Miu is left mentally scarred in the aftermath, losing not only the color of her hair, but also her ability to play the piano or engage in sexual intercourse, which she explains is the consequence of half of her splitting off and crossing to the “other side.” Similarly, Sumire’s subsequent disappearance is the effect of her undergoing a similar experience; she too “was splitting in two” (Murakami 2001: 161), she too “broke through a mirror and journeyed to the other side” (165-66).

Beyond the persistent appearance of the figure of the doppelganger per se, however, doubles and doubling are arguably a typical characteristic that structurally organizes the fictional worlds of much of Murakami’s fiction. Whether or not it is given form through the figure of the doppelganger, what characterizes Murakami’s fiction (and especially those texts that make use of elements of the fantastic) if the observations of critics like Jay Rubin (2002) or Yokoo Kazuhiro (1994) are correct, is their general structuring around a gap between a notion of “this side” [kochiragawa] and an “other side” [achiragawa]. As Rubin once noted, “[Murakami’s] writings tend to posit two parallel worlds, one obviously fantastic and the other closer to recognizable ‘reality’” (Rubin 2002: 116). Typically, his fiction then revolves around a passage through the gap between these two worlds, which is often coded in terms of an encounter between a subject that has been split across the two spaces.
Such is certainly the case in *Sputnik Sweetheart* and *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*. Likewise, in Murakami’s *After Dark* (*Afutâ dâku*, 2004; trans. 2006), this duality is set up between, as the title of the novel hints at, the daytime and nighttime cities, with each character seemingly mirrored by an alter-ego on the other side of the divide, most notably in two protagonists of the novel, the twin sisters Mari and Eri. But the most obvious example is perhaps Murakami’s Tanizaki Prize-winning *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* (*Sekai no owari to hâdoboirudo wandârando*, 1985; trans. 1991). The novel is structured around two parallel narratives in alternating chapters. The first, labeled “Hard-boiled Wonderland,” is set in a near future Tokyo characterized by an information acquisition war between what termed simply as “The System” [*shisutemu*] and “The Factory” [*fakutorii*], and is centered on an unnamed narrator who works for the former as a “calcutec” (*kigôshi*), a kind of human data-processing unit who uses his own mind to encrypt and transport sensitive data. The second narrative thread, called “End of the World,” is starkly different. It is set in an idyllic and magical town sealed off by walls where shadows and memories are removed from the residents and the narrator works as a reader of old dreams from skulls found in the library. It is not until near the end of the novel that the relationship between these two narrative threads is made explicit: the story of “The End of the World” takes place in a locked out section of the unconscious of the narrator of “Hard-boiled Wonderland,” which has broken off from his mind as a consequence of a problem in his data encryption interface.

In fact, an early short story of Murakami’s self-reflexively references (and anticipates the subsequent commentary on) the prevalence of this by now much remarked schema on which logic his fiction tends to operate. While it is otherwise little more than an unassuming vignette about a strange

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1 The translations of these terms are from Alfred Birnbaum’s 1991 translation for Kodansha International. It should be noted that Birnbaum’s translations tend to be loose and often creatively go beyond the original text, a significant example from this novel being his rendering of the name of the creatures dwelling in Tokyo’s subterranean tunnels as “INKlings” (short for “infra-nocturnal kappa”), which in Murakami’s text are named simply *yanikuro* [literally, dark-black]. Nonetheless, as Jay Rubin has noted, much of Murakami’s international popularity in the Anglophone world may very well be traced to accentuated hip-ness of Birnbaum’s rendering of Murakami’s language (Rubin 2002: 273-289). Given that I take up the transnational and intertextual doublings of Murakami’s work in the balance of this chapter, to better characterize which version of Murakami facilitated his international impact, I have opted to reference Birnbaum’s rendering of Murakami here.
experience of its narrator’s when he encountered his doppelganger at the time he was working as a security guard at a middle school during a story night, “The Mirror” (Kagami, 1983; trans. 2006) opens with a statement that anticipates the subsequent commentary on Murakami’s work: “All of the stories you’ve been telling tonight seem to fall into… the type where you have the world of the living on one side, the world of death on the other, and some force that allows a crossing-over from one side to the other” (Murakami 2006: 55). While ostensibly setting up the context of the narration as a gathered group exchanging horror stories among them to preface the narrator’s own contribution with the account of his encounter with his double, read in retrospect, it is as if the narrator were speaking of Murakami’s body of work itself.

Michael Fisch has perceptively argued that this narrative device wherein a contact with and crossing over to the “other side” is typically “employed toward a depiction of a crisis of representation as a critique of the condition of language in the mass-mediated culture of late capitalist Japan” (Fisch 2004: 364). For Fisch, the contact with the “other side” produces an experience of shock, which has the effect of provoking a return of the repressed cognition of that which exceeds language and representation. In this sense, it inaugurates a crisis in the mechanisms of signification that constitute the symbolic order and through this a gesture towards a momentary contact with the Real beyond the mechanisms of signification. Concretely, this can be seen in how the appearance of the doppelganger in Murakami’s fiction is often coupled with a concurrent breakdown in language and narrative. As I mentioned above, in The Wind-up Bird Chronicle, Cinammon loses his voice and becomes trapped in what can be characterized as a state of excess in narration; in Sputnik Sweetheart, Sumire’s reaction to Miu’s story is to implicitly express what is seemingly an odd cognizance of her own textuality, her own fictive status in a metafictive gesture that bares the mechanisms of the fiction in which she exists, and in so doing at once

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2 The passage is from Philip Gabriel’s translation for Murakami’s second English language collection of short stories Blind Willow, Sleeping Woman (2006). Interestingly, the seeming metafictive gesture of the opening is stronger in the translation with the appearance of a direct address effected by the use of the pronoun “you.” In contrast, the Japanese text simply speaks of “everyone’s stories” [minna no hanashi], which suggests a more concrete context for the utterance of this statement and the rest of the narration in a kind of group exchange of horror stories.
foregrounds the fictions that constitute the operation of the symbolic in its introduction of a “cut to the real” (Lacan 1977: 65). In Fisch’s articulation:

[T]he real toward which [the other side] gestures can be seen as modernity’s remainder, the excess of a split consciousness of a subject constituted in mediation…. In this capacity, it begins to take on the function of a real that is the effect of the stripping away of the illusory framework constituting the consciousness of the everyday and marks an uncanny recognition of a sustained commitment to disavowal. (Fisch 2004: 363)

Fisch’s theorization of the schema organizing Murakami’s fictional worlds recalls the mechanisms underpinning the emergence of the doppelganger as a concept at an earlier moment of the twentieth century. To repeat, modern subjectivity is traumatically constituted as an effect of visual modernization, which produces an excess of signification that cannot be immediately apprehended, and consequently can only be repressed as what Walter Benjamin has called an “optical unconscious” (Benjamin 1978: 73). The appearance of the doppelganger in 1920s Japan is symptomatic of a moment when this operation is no longer tenable and the repressed remainder returns. Likewise, Murakami’s fiction addresses the breakdown of the desire “to defer the realization that what is being recalled is not just the initial repression from which the illusionary framework emerged, but rather something that is more frightening than death: the systematic nature of everyday life and the correlative mechanism of repression instantiated in order to live” (Fisch 2004: 366).

Crucially, as the Japanese context makes especially visible, the emergent visual modernity that is at the heart of the doppelganger’s conceptual formation is inseparable from the conditions of colonial modernity. It is on the intersection of these two domains that the doppelganger emerges, and as such, its uncanny vision interrupts and undermines the mechanism of repression structured around an absolute separation between interiority and exteriority upon which the imagination of not only the bourgeois subject as private and autonomous, but also a fixed and bounded national subjectivity based on a putative cultural essence is premised. The doppelganger, in other words, is illustrative of Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto’s assertion that “Globalization and image culture do not exist separately first and then
interact with each other… on a fundamental level globalization and image are inseparable from each other” (Yoshimoto 1996: 109). As such, what is evident in the moment of late capitalism is a repetition – indeed, perhaps even an intensification and exacerbation – of the conditions on which the appearance of the doppelganger as a concept and literary-cinematic motif rested when it saw its dissemination in 1920s Japan. Consequently, it seems only necessary to pose the question of what the stakes and consequences of the doppelganger’s repetitions in the wake of the passage from colonial modernity to what Arif Dirlik has termed “global modernity,” which marks on the one hand the end of formal colonialisms yet on the other hand is at once the transnational generalization and deepening of the logic of colonial modernity itself, “the internalization by societies globally of the premises of a capitalist modernity, deeply entangled in colonialism, to which there is now no viable alternative” (Dirlik 2005: 7).

The point is perhaps even more pertinent when dealing with Murakami and his doubles given his much-repeated title (whether celebrated or maligned) as Japan’s most international contemporary writer. In Susan Napier’s view, this is not unconnected with the prevalence of doubles in his fiction, which she reads as one of the exemplary figures of the fantastic and represents an interiorized alterity, or in the terms she uses, an “inner alien.” Comparing Murakami’s deployments of the double to his literary precedents, Napier suggests that what distinguishes him from previous writers in whose work the doppelganger motif features prominently (Napier references Akutagawa Ryûnosuke, Abe Kôbô and Endô Shûsaku specifically) is how “due to the fact that he grew up in a culture more comfortable with ideas of the Western self, Murakami depicts his other selves in a largely positive fashion, as gateways to a deeper understanding of the self as a whole” (Napier 1996: 126).

While the recognition of the transnational implications of Murakami’s work is important, I find Napier’s diagnosis here largely unconvincing. In the first place, if the above discussion of the doppelgangers in Murakami’s fiction is any indication, then it seems premature to conclude that his representations of doubles necessarily take on a “positive” character. Furthermore, the move to read

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3 The global impact of Murakami Haruki, Sekai wa Murakami Haruki o dô yomu ka? (Shibata, et al 2007) provides a broad overview.
Murakami’s work in the tired terms of Westernization re-inscribes an oversimplified opposition between a national particularity and an international universality that is coded as Japanese and Western. Indeed, Napier’s approach here is symptomatic in that much of the existing critical commentary on Murakami in the English language tends to place his work in opposition to a putative Japanese literary culture (especially against the so-called I-novel [shishôsetsu]) as a fixed point of reference from which to depart, as if this were not at its origins already under discursive contestation. In effect, the gesture to go beyond the old tropes of the cultural hermeneutics on Japan vis-à-vis Murakami is dependent on making him an exception. Yet given his intense international popularity that eclipses any other Japanese author today, it has arguably become difficult to treat Murakami in such terms, to the extent that – alongside such cultural productions as Japanese manga and animation, television dramas, or horror cinema – his fiction has arguably one of the primary vectors through which images of “Japan” circulate in the world. Consequently, while perhaps resistant to being framed in the terms of the cultural hermeneutics of an older orientalizing discourse, Murakami’s fiction nonetheless participates in the intensifying productions and circulations of “Japan” as an image-commodity within a world literary ecology in the present that is marked by what Ueno Toshiya has discussed as “techno-orientalism.”

“Techno-orientalism,” in Ueno’s conceptualization, is the late 20th century information capitalist mutation of the Orientalism of the late 19th century wherein “Japan” is imagined in terms of a hypermodern hybridity through a melding of a racialized and gendered alterity with the uncanny of a machinic automaton (Ueno 2002: 228-29). These techno-orientalizing image productions are especially visible in what has come to be known as the cyberpunk subgenre of science-fiction, most famously in its seminal texts, William Gibson’s Neuromancer (1984) with its deployment of Chiba City to stage.

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4 Two major studies in English – Matthew Strecher’s Dances with Sheep (2002) and Jay Rubin’s Haruki Murakami and the Music of Words (2002) – both follow this pattern of discussion, with the former situating Murakami in the context of the debates surrounding the boundaries of “pure literature” and the latter beginning with an overview of the critical response to Murakami’s fiction by the likes of Ōe Kenzaburô and Masao Miyoshi. For a recent overview of the massive body of critical commentary on Murakami and his work, see Seats (2007: 25-42).

5 While Ueno’s work has been instrumental in its conceptual development, I should nevertheless note that the term “techno-orientalism” itself does not originate with him, but rather a concept he picks up from David Morley and Kevin Robbins (Morley and Robbins 1995).
its techno-dystopic world and Ridley Scott’s film *Bladerunner* (1982) with its juxtaposition of images of geisha and the noiresque Los Angeles. Through their mediation, what is enabled is the treatment of the contemporary experience of dislocation in late capitalist modernity in a culturally fetishized form, as something quintessentially Japanese so as to render it graspable. Or, as Wendy Chun has articulated in her development upon the concept, techno-Orientalism “seeks to orient the reader to a technology-overloaded present/future [...] through the promise of readable difference, and through a conflation of information networks with an exotic urban landscape” (Chun 2006: 177).

If the global impact of Murakami Haruki’s fiction is any indication, then it appears that just as an ethnographic gaze was constitutive of the conception of the doppelganger in the early twentieth century, contemporary techno-orientalisms may very well be productive of a proliferation of doppelgangers in the present. Here, it is worth noting that one indicator of Murakami’s global appeal is not only the speed in which his fiction is translated, but also the appearance of so-called Murakami imitators in various parts of the world. It seems that contrary to Watanabe Masahiko’s placement of Murakami’s work as marking both the pinnacle and “the end of the doppelganger” [*bunshin no shûen*], his fiction has been particularly productive of transnational doublings, of intertextual doppelgangers (Watanabe 1999: 212-19). Tom Gunning has aptly characterized the uncanny vision engendered by the figure of the doppelganger as a kind of optical experience “of a sudden invasion of the interior by the exterior,” with the consequence of interrupting the essential and absolute separation of interiority from exteriority, that is the separation of domestic space that enables the imagination of the bourgeois subject as a private and autonomous individual (Gunning 2003: 126). Might a similar effect also be apparent on the scale of the nation?

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6 Cyberpunk is a sub-genre of science fiction often characterized by its attention to the penetration of technologies into human bodies and perceptual systems within a narrative style heavily influenced by hard-boiled fiction and film noir. Larry McCaffery provides a useful overview of cyberpunk and its relations with science fiction as a whole as well as postmodernist writings from the 1980s in his introduction to *Storming the Reality Studio*, which contains both excerpts from major works in the genre as well as critical essays (McCaffery 1991: 1-16).

7 On the impact of Murakami Haruki in China, see the comments of Murakami translators Wang Min and Lin Shaohua in “Chûgoku no Murakami bûmu” [China’s Murakami boom] (2003). Elsewhere, aside from David Mitchell, whom I discuss in further detail below, the debut novel of another British author, Stephen Hall’s recent *The Raw Shark Texts* (2007) is often compared to Murakami.
It is against this backdrop that British author David Mitchell’s novel *number9dream* appears, and in such terms that it can be productively read. Set in Japan and narrated by a Japanese protagonist, on its face, Mitchell’s Booker Prize nominated novel seemingly reproduces techno-orientalist imagery particularly through its deployment of what are by now stereotypical images of a hypermodern Tokyo derived from the deployment of “the Orient” and specifically of “Japan” as signifiers of the increasing incursion of technology into the human body and human perceptual systems. Yet, what makes the novel of particular note here is how while partaking in *Bladerunner* inspired cyberpunk motifs to represent its Tokyo setting, its self-reflexive hypermediation of these motifs arguably calls attention to the pervasiveness of the image-commodity and its attendant fetishism (and the constellation of relations implicated therein), thus enacting a baring of the very mechanism of repression and displacement onto the Other of which techno-orientalist imagery is symptomatic. That it moreover implicitly positions itself as a kind of intertextual doppelganger of the fiction of Murakami Haruki through a plethora of quotations and allusions to them serves only to further punctuate the point by recognizing the interruptive potential that techno-orientalist gaze attempts to displace.

**Remediating “Japan”**

David Mitchell’s *number9dream* literally begins with a fantasy. It opens with the lines: “It is a simple matter. I know your name, and you knew mine, once upon a time: Eiji Miyake. Yes, *that* Eiji Miyake. We are both busy people Ms. Katô, so why not cut the small talk? I am in Tokyo to find my father. You know his name and you know his address” (Mitchell 2001: 3). The opening lines and the scene that unfolds subsequent to it, however, are imaginary. They are rehearsed in advance by the protagonist and narrator of the novel named Eiji Miyake as he waits in the Jupiter Café adjacent to a building called Panopticon where his father’s lawyer Akiko Katô is evidently employed, presumably in preparation for the scenario’s eventual enactment, as the scene that immediately follows illustrates:
My first morning in Tokyo, and I am already getting ahead of myself. The Jupiter Café sloshes with lunch-hour laughter, Friday plottings, clinking saucers. Drones bark into mobile phones. She-drones hitch up sagging voices to sound more feminine. Coffee, seafood sandwiches, detergent, steam. I have an across-the-street view of the PanOpticon’s main entrance. Quite a sight, this zirconium gothic skyscraper. Its upper floors are hidden by clouds. Under the tight-fitting lid Tokyo steams – 34° C with 86% humidity. A big Panasonic display says so. (Mitchell 2001: 3)

The novel’s opening sets up several key elements of the narrative. At the most basic level, it establishes through proper nouns naming the place (Tokyo) and the two characters that the narrative takes place in Japan. The opening also serves to setup the primary narrative thread of the novel wherein the protagonist Eiji Miyake is in search for his estranged father. But as is made apparent early on and given further emphasis as the plot develops, it becomes evident that while Eiji claims to be on a quest to find the father who abandoned him and his deceased sister Anju, he takes very little concrete action to fulfill this quest. For the most part, He sits around, reminisces, fantasizes, looks for part-time work, has various run-ins with all sorts of characters, and even gets involved with the yakuza.

Despite the simple framing of the narrative of a now grown-up child in search of his lost father, the narrative gets quite convoluted rapidly. This is further complicated by another feature of the narrative foreshadowed by the opening lines. The protagonist Eiji often slips into elaborate fantasies, the first of which occurs early in the first chapter with Eiji storming the Panopticon in search of Akiko Katô. Smoothly following from the scene in the Jupiter Café, it is made to appear that Eiji attempts to infiltrate the PanOpticon. Bluffing his way past security to reach the office of Akiko Katô, he is then finally able to utter the lines from the novel’s opening that he has been rehearsing. Following this statement by the narrator, the novel then proceeds to an exchange and confrontation with the aforementioned Ms. Katô, which quickly escalates into his shooting her and his subsequent escape.

These fantasies come without preparation or transition in the novel. Often, aside from the sheer absurdity of the scenarios depicted, there is no clue that the scene described is one of Eiji’s fantasies until after the fact, when the subsequent scene returns to the events prior to the narrator’s extended excurses. A later fantasy, for example, takes the absurdity to a surreal level when following another character’s
comment on Tokyo’s weather, the narrator proceeds to describe a massive rainfall that leads to a flood covering Tokyo’s streets (complete with crocodiles) and ends with the impossible scene of Eiji narrating his own funeral wherein ambassadors, dignitaries, and even Yoko Ono attends (Mitchell 2001: 18-21).

One effect of the absence of preparation for or transition into these fantasies of Eiji’s is to create a nagging sense of unreliability in the narration. The borders between Eiji’s experiences and fantasies are routinely transgressed and consequently making it effectively impossible to mark the distinctions between them. More importantly, what makes Eiji’s fantasies even more interesting is that they take on the form of mass-media cultural artifacts. For instance, the first extended excursion into Eiji’s daydreams – the aforementioned storming of the Panopticon – takes on the pattern of an action scene in to a cyberpunk science fiction film, eventually ending with Eiji shooting Akiko Katô, only to have it subsequently revealed that it was nothing more than a mechanical simulacrum he has killed. The following passage occurs near the end of this fantasy:

Akiko Katô closes the door with her ankle, and levels a Zuvre Lone Eagle .440 at the spot between my eyebrows. Dumbly, I look at the Akiko Katô still slumped in her chair. The doorway Katô laughs, a grin twisted and broad. Emeralds and rubies are set in her teeth. ‘A bioborg, dummy! A replicant! You never watched Bladerunner? (Mitchell 2001: 11-12)

Coupled with the notable excess of detail in its description along with the staccato rhythm and choices of metaphors (as evidenced by the first passage quoted from the opening of the novel), this citation of Ridley Scott’s film Bladerunner (1982) in this early scene can perhaps be read as a marker of number9dream’s significant borrowing of tropes from the cyberpunk tradition. While not all of Eiji’s fantasies take on the same character as the first, it is noteworthy that video games are often juxtaposed to them. In the opening chapter, for example, the end of each of Eiji’s daydream excursions and his return to the “real” world are marked by a description of an old man (called Lao Tzu) playing a hand-held video game unit as he loiters in the same café where Eiji waits. A scene in a later chapter (appropriately titled “Video Games”) further emphasizes this connection. In this scene, Eiji is playing a video game at a game center in Shibuya wherein he is caught in a shootout as he attempts to rescue his father from fleeing kidnappers
The cyberspace behind the screen of a video game once again melds with Eiji’s quest to find his father when at one point, Lao Tzu lends him his “vidboy3” to play a brand name artificial intelligence game which generates a virtual father with whom Eiji can communicate (Mitchell 2001: 126-29).

A more significant reworking of cyberpunk in *number9dream*, however, can be seen in its representation of Tokyo. Mitchell’s Tokyo is a dazzling barrage of disorienting images. Watching a video screen on the NHK building next to the Jupiter Café, Eiji rattles off a montage of discontinuous scenes that flash on it:

Missile launchers recoil, cities catch on fire. A new Nokia cellphone. Foreign affairs minister announces putative WW2 Nanking excesses are left-wing plots to destroy patriotism. Zizzi Hikaru washes her hair in Pearl River shampoo. Fly draped skeletons stalk an African city. Nintendo proudly presents *Universal Soldiers*. The kid who hijacked a coach and slit three throats says he did it to stand out. (Mitchell 2001: 125)

Mitchell’s novel is certainly not the first text to depict Tokyo as a (in the words of Jean Baudrillard) “site of the disappearance of meaning.” Roland Barthes characterization of Tokyo as an empty sign in *Empire of Signs* (1982) is one famous example. Another noteworthy example is Chris Marker’s film *Sans Soleil* (1982). Marker’s film is worth a closer look. Like *number9dream*, to highlight a sense of disorientation, several scenes in *Sans Soleil* focus on the large number of video screens on the sides of buildings in Tokyo’s many downtowns, which is, as Catherine Russell notes in an article on Tokyo in the popular cinematic imagination, “[o]ne of the most striking features of contemporary Tokyo” (Russell 2002: 212). Taking note of *Sans Soleil’s* (as well as other documentaries by Western filmmakers set in Tokyo) focus on this feature of contemporary Tokyo, Russell suggests that more than merely a matter of linguistic difference, the disorienting character of Tokyo for Marker’s narrator (and camera) stems from the condition of a destabilized viewing positions in an image-saturated environment (Russell 2002: 213).

A similar focus on video screens appears in Mitchell’s novel. This can be seen not only in his attention to the massive video screens on the sides of buildings in his descriptions of the city itself, but
to miniature screens in the form of Lao Tzu’s “vidboy3” or even the display of an ATM which triggers his run-in with the yakuza midway through the narrative. However, a more significant point of similarity in Mitchell’s and Marker’s representation of contemporary Tokyo lies in the discursive strategies they deploy. Marker’s film evokes the excess of signifiers through the use of cinematic montage, jarring juxtapositions, and intercuts. Scott Bukatman has suggested that Marker’s technique borrows heavily from the rhetoric of science fiction, and particularly the then emergent language of cyberpunk, to communicate the experience of dislocation (Bukatman 1993: 27). As I noted above, *number9dream*’s language also borrows extensively from the characteristic surplus of signification commonly seen in cyberpunk texts. As a means of depicting the hyperconsumerism and the physical characteristic of the city as an image-saturated space, Mitchell’s novel presents a parade of brand-names, arbitrary proper nouns, and an excess of detail render Tokyo as a space wherein it is no longer possible to trace signs to their referents and any sense of a coherent meaning becomes impossible.

I do not mean to suggest that *number9dream* should necessarily be categorized as a cyberpunk text. To do so would achieve little more than a largely unproductive effort at reifying genre boundaries and arbitrary categorizing. Rather, similar to Marker’s film, Mitchell’s novel actively remediates and repurposes tropes and rhetorical strategies commonly found in cyberpunk. David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as the redeployment and embedding of one medium or several other media (and its system of representation) into another (Bolter and Grusin 1999: 56). Intermediation, in Bolter and Grusin’s analysis, is a particular form of intertextuality that crosses over different media and by implication, different representational systems.

That it is the motifs and rhetorical strategies of cyberpunk texts that *number9dream* retools is not accidental, given that they are themselves often self-conscious of their own acts of intermediation. Livia Monnet succinctly summarizes this character of the genre when she points out that cyberpunk texts

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8 For a discussion of how science fiction’s rhetorical strategies (e.g., hyperbole, neologisms, literalization of metaphor, demand a foregrounding of the act of reading, see Delaney (1977). For a discussion of the use of incongruous juxtapositions in the language of cyberpunk, particularly in William Gibson’s *Neuromancer*, see McHale (1992).
“partake of, and contribute to, the extraordinary information overload in global technocapitalism at the turn of the twenty-first century: cyberpunk is an encyclopaedia of parodies, pastiches, remediations and revisions of media texts and mediated cultural practices from several histories and cultural legacies” (Monnet 2002: 227). To put it another way, both thematically with its focused attention on the social impact of hypothetical human-machine mediatric interfaces as well as formally with its appropriations of film noir styles, its incessant citation of fetishized image-commodities in the form of brand name dropping, and constant cross-referencing and cross-pollination with other texts in the genre, cyberpunk is inevitably intermediated. Thus, writing of William Gibson’s prose in Neuromancer, for example, Scott Bukatman is able to assert that “the space of the text is deeply cultural in origin, explicitly contoured by other writers, genres and voices. The heavily referential space of the text thus removes that origin to a site outside the subject and inside the technologies of information” (Bukatman 1993: 171).

The significance of Bolter and Grusin’s argument on intermediation can be better understood when considered against the context of how the urban space of Tokyo itself functions as representational site, or, in the words of Catherine Russell, “[t]he omnipresent projection of advertisements and music videos in the various city centres suggest how the city is a screening space, a discursive site.” The urban space of Tokyo is, in other words, not merely a site to be represented, but is itself already prefigured as spectacle, as representation; it is, in other words, an extension of the economy of visuality, a part of the same assemblage of technologies as cinema, television, and other media forms. Thus, what number9dream arguably performs is a punctuation of this aspect of the genre. What is striking in its remediation of cyberpunk is how it foregrounds its very act of remediation with little attempt at constructing an illusion of transparent immediacy. In other words, number9dream’s remediation of cyberpunk’s rhetorical strategies is not merely a matter of borrowing a language through which Tokyo
can be represented; through their explicit deployment as the narrator’s fantasies, the text calls attention to the act of mediation itself by highlighting the logic of hypermediacy.⁹

The question at this point then is what implications can be drawn from *number9dream’s* foregrounding of its acts of remediation in terms of its representation of Japan. Mitchell’s remediation of cyberpunk’s rhetorical strategies as a means of representing contemporary Japan is complicated by the fact that the image of Japan as a space of technological and media overload has arguably been to a certain extent produced by cyberpunk texts themselves. In this regard, while William Gibson had never set foot in Japan at the time he wrote the seminal cyberpunk text *Neuromancer* (the first half of which is set in “Chiba city”), a telling example that Tatsumi highlights is that following its publication (and relatively rapid translation into Japanese), significantly reconfigured Japanese self-representation (particularly in Japan’s own science fiction) by bringing into the spotlight the literary activities of until that point largely unknown writers whose works had been coinciding stylistically and thematically with American cyberpunk.¹⁰ The consequence of this was not only to foreground a renewed sense of time-space compression, but moreover, it had the effect blurring distinctions between (mis)perceiver and (mis)perceived and confusing any attempt to locate an imaginary and mythical authentic and original “Japan” outside of cross-cultural intermediation, outside of its production as “Japanoid.” As Tatsumi puts it, “Gibson’s Chiba City may have sprung from his misperception of Japan, but it was this misperception that encouraged Japanese readers to correctly perceive the nature of postmodernist Japan. In short, the moment we perceive cyberpunk stories which misperceive Japan, we are already perceived correctly by cyberpunk” (Tatsumi 2006: 111).

⁹ Bolter and Grusin identify two tendencies in acts of remediation: what they call immediacy (wherein the act of remediation is effaced to create the illusion of transparency for the production of reality effects) and hypermediacy (wherein the act of remediation is foregrounded in the text) (21-44).

¹⁰ Gibson’s novel was translated as *Nyûrromansâ* (1985) by Kuroma Hisashi. Kuroma’s translation is particularly noteworthy for its frequent application of furigana glosses to the translations of the considerable neologisms in *Neuromancer*, a technique that, according to Tatsumi Takayuki provoked considerable debate and discussion at the time (Tatsumi 2006: 107-08).
In this respect, the significance of *number9dream’s* remediation of cyberpunk tropes might be better understood with reference to Mitchell’s preceding novel *Ghostwritten* (1999), as well as his subsequent novel *Cloud Atlas* (2004). Whereas the former is organized around multiple vignettes each set in a different location – Hong Kong, Tokyo, London, etc. – the latter, in contrast, is structured as a set of multiple nested stories-within-stories. Nonetheless, in either case, what is gestured toward is how singular narratives are inadequate for capturing the complexity of the structural relations through which lived experience is constituted as a consequence of their having taken on transnational scales, in effect, exhibiting a cognizance of the unrepresentability of their totality, in line with how Fredric Jameson has characterized the conditions of social life in the present (Jameson 1991: 51).

Certainly at a glance, *number9dream*, unlike the two other above-mentioned fictions of Mitchell’s, appears noticeably more conventional in its narrative structure, featuring neither multiple locations nor multiple stories that coalesce into a larger totality and instead dealing largely with a single protagonist organized around a single plot. But it is here where its remediations of cyberpunk tropes become significant, for if Tokyo is always experienced as image or representation, then as a consequence of the transnational traffic of image culture, it is also paradoxically rendered unrepresentable in that it exists only in the totality of the constellation of relations through which these images are produced and circulated. Not only does the parade of shifting signifiers (whether fictional or in reference to actual image-commodities) through which the city is represented produce a dizzying effect upon its reader that renders the text opaque, more importantly, congealed in each of these circulating image-commodities are social relations whose origins are somewhere else. In foregrounding and hypermediating the operations of these image-commodities, the novel can be said to recognize a desire to bring the structuring constellation of relations through which the space of Tokyo is rendered unrepresentable into visibility.
Intertextual Doppelgangers

These issues highlighted by Mitchell’s remediation of cyberpunk is further punctuated by another set of remediations that number9dream foregrounds: its numerous citations and allusions to the fiction of Japanese author Murakami Haruki. For instance, descriptions of Ai Imajo, the waitress with the perfect swan-like neck and love interest of protagonist Eiji Miyake is reminiscent of Murakami’s description of the character Kiki, the girl with perfect ears in his A Wild Sheep Chase (Hitsuji o meguru bōken, 1982; trans. 1991) and Dance Dance Dance (Dansu dansu dansu, 1988; trans. 1994). Also, Goatwriter, who appears as a character in a children’s book that Eiji reads while he is in hiding from the yakuza recalls not only the disembodied ghostwriter of Mitchell’s previous novel Ghostwritten (1999), but to a certain extent also of the Sheep Man [Hitsuji-otoko] from the same two novels noted above. Indeed, in interviews and essays, Mitchell himself has admitted Murakami’s role as an inspiration for his own writing (Mitchell 2000).

Just as in my previous discussion of number9dream’s remediation of cyberpunk texts, more than the obvious referencing of Murakami’s fiction, what is more significant is Mitchell’s appropriation and embedding of several rhetorical strategies that commonly appear in Murakami’s fiction into its own narrative. While number9dream flashes allusions to several of Murakami’s writings, in terms of its narrative strategies, the text it perhaps borrows the most from is the aforementioned The Wind-up Bird Chronicle. As

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11 While I discuss these two sets of quotations/remediations separately here, it is worth noting that Livia Monnet identified cyberpunk tropes (among several other intertextual references) in Murakami’s writing as well. She suggests that whether or not they overtly make use of the genre conventions of cyberpunk fictions, Murakami’s narrative strategies in their constructions of parallel spaces and virtual worlds nevertheless exhibit a keen awareness of the implications of information technologies on contemporary social relations. See Monnet (1997).

12 It is also worth noting that aside from Murakami, number9dream also alludes to several other Japanese writers. At one point, Eiji rattles off a series of authors he reads – Yoshimoto Banana, Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, Dazai Osamu, Philip K. Dick (Mitchell 2001: 236). A more subtle allusion is to Mori Ōgai’s “Sanshō the Steward” (Sanshō dayû, 1915; tr. 1991), a story that later also saw adaptation by Mizoguchi Kenji as Sanshō the Bailiff (Sanshō dayû, 1954). In this story, two siblings and their mother are sold into slavery. To distract the guards and enable her brother to escape, Anju drowns herself. Not only is the name of Eiji’s sister in number9dream also Anju, she also dies by drowning in Mitchell’s novel.
I touched upon above, the story of this novel involves the narrator’s quest to recover his estranged wife from a kind of “mental prison” of his brother-in-law Noboru Wataya, an upstart politician and TV pundit. Stories by an old World War II veteran told to the narrator about covert operations in Nomonhan form the second major narrative thread. And a third narrative thread appears near the end with the narrator acting as a kind of supernatural healer. The similarity between the two texts, *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle* and *number9dream* are difficult to overlook. Both novels primary narrative involves a quest for a missing person. Both novels also feature metafictional devices in the form of a story within the story (the Goatwriter sections in *number9dream* and Akasaka Cinnamon’s stories in *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*). Finally, in a move akin to the strategies deployed in texts that Linda Hutcheon has called “historiographic metafiction,” both novels have the protagonists reading extended personal accounts of the experiences of soldiers during the Second World War.13

When all these elements are considered, it does not seem to be much of a stretch to go so far as to suggest that *number9dream* takes on the position of an intertextual doppelganger of Murakami’s novel. By highlighting this, however, my point is not merely to imply that Mitchell’s novel is nothing more than a derivative and inferior copy of Murakami. Such an argument would reinscribe a privileging of notions of originality, a point that the very concept of the doppelganger calls into question. Indeed, on the contrary, a closer look at the specific aspects of Murakami’s fiction that appear in *number9dream* coupled with an analysis of how these are reconfigured in Mitchell’s deployment shows that like Mitchell’s foregrounding of cyberpunk rhetorical strategies, it is this intertextuality itself that is focused on by the novel, with the effect of foregrounding the very problem of originality as such. To elaborate upon this point, it is worth noting a key point of difference in the two novels. While both involve searches for missing persons, the respective objects of the quests in the two novels differ. In *The Wind-up Bird Chronicle*, the protagonist Okada Tōru searches for his missing wife. In contrast, *number9dream* has a missing father as the object of the search (which is, tellingly, ultimately aborted). While this may initially

13 In his analysis of Murakami Haruki’s fiction, Matthew Strecher (2002) takes up Hutcheon’s category of “historiographic metafictions” as one key strand in his work.
seem like a trivial point of difference, whereas the often fantastic quests for missing women in Murakami’s fictions may be understood as indicative of a predictable mapping of alterity onto the feminine, the quest for the father (and its associated concepts of genetic lineage and origins) in *number9dream* resonates with the problem of origins placed into the spotlight in the text’s functioning as an intertextual doppelganger of Murakami’s fiction.

These questions of origins and authorship are especially highlighted through the metafictional questions the novel raises, questions that take center stage in the section of the novel when Eiji is in hiding at a writer’s residence following his run-in with the yakuza. In this section, scenes of Eiji waiting and occasionally meeting up with other characters are interspersed with scenes from a manuscript of a children’s story about three sentient and anthromorphic farm animals (Goatwriter, Mrs. Comb, and Pithecanthropus) that Eiji reads. This section of *number9dream*’s narrative opens with Goatwriter hearing fragments of “the truly untold tale” and then scribbling them down with the same pen used by Sei Shônagon. “The truly untold tale” is presented as a holy grail of stories, reminding us of the cliché that there are no longer any truly original stories; all other tales written now have already been told before. The following day, however, Goatwriter’s manuscript containing the fragments of the truly untold tale he had heard and written down is stolen. Later on, he finds that even the pen of Sei Shônagon, what he calls the tongue of his imagination, is stolen as well. The three characters then go on a quest to find the thief.

Throughout this section, Mitchell lets loose a series of in-jokes about the writing process and profession. Goatwriter literally drinks water from a “stream of consciousness” (Mitchell 2001: 256). Their first suspect, a perpetually swearing rodent named Scatrat, lives in “the margins” (Mitchell 2001: 214-16). Eventually, they find themselves trapped in the spider Queen Erichnid’s literal website. Queen Erichnid tells them that she intends to digitize Goatwriter and assimilate his writing talents. Upon hearing this, Goatwriter asks Queen Erichnid “Where is the creative fulfilment in passing off another’s stories as your own?” (Mitchell 2001: 246).
It is interesting, however, that while Goatwriter asks this, he himself cannot claim to be producing an original story. Even the “truly untold tale” he writes is not his own. Rather, he merely hears fragments of it in the whispers of the wind and the songs of birds and attempts to reconstruct it in writing. His pen (the tongue of his imagination) is not his own either but the pen of Sei Shônagon. The last scene of the Goatwriter section emphasizes this point very well. After his encounter with Queen Erichnid, Goatwriter disappears in search of the “truly untold tale.” When he begins writing again in his hideaway, he is surprised to find that the pen of Sei Shônagon speaking to him. In response to his question of when it began to speak, the pen says “Since you learned to unblock your ears” (Mitchell 2001: 267). The phrase “unblocked ears” emphasizes the act of listening. The writer is not the source or origin of the text, but is merely a conduit through which other writings are processed. Mitchell here echoes Roland Barthes’ ideas on authorship and the text. In “The Death of the Author,” he writes that the text is “a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture” (Barthes 1977: 146). Indeed, as if to further emphasize this point, the term “unblocked ears” itself is a quotation from Murakami Haruki’s A Wild Sheep Chase, where the phrase appears as the title of the chapter wherein Murakami’s narrator first meets a character identified only as the girl with perfect ears. She appears plain under normal conditions, but when she pulls back her hair and unblocks her ears, she takes on an almost magical radiance. In number9dream, by quoting and recontextualizing this phrase from Murakami, Mitchell in effect simultaneously performs the idea of writing as a web of quotations as he thematically depicts it in the Goatwriter section.

Another scene later in the novel serves to echo this point. In yet another of Eiji’s fantasies, he dreams he is having a conversation with John Lennon in Ueno park. At one point, Eiji asks John Lennon what the song “Tomorrow Never Knows” is about.

John pulls a philosopher pose. “I never knew.”
We giggle helplessly. “But you wrote it!”
“No, Eiji, I never…” He dabs his tears away. “It wrote me.” (Mitchell 2001: 398)
With this statement, *number9dream* proclaims its allegiance to the understanding of the author not as origin and arbiter of a text’s meaning (what Barthes calls an Author-God) but as something constituted in and through the text. The implications of this are made clear in the rest of their conversation. John Lennon tells Eiji that “#9dream” is a descendant of “Norwegian Wood.” One can of course read this literally as Lennon talking about songs he wrote. Yet simultaneously, it also points to the title of the novel itself (*number9dream*) and the title of Murakami’s most famous novel *Norwegian Wood* (*Noruwei no mori*, 1987; trans. 2000), which is itself named after John Lennon’s song “Norwegian Wood” and as such Mitchell’s intertextual doubling of Murakami.

What is particularly interesting here is that just as Mitchell extensively cites and borrows from Murakami’s fiction, Murakami himself is known for his constant citation of other texts. Indeed, this is perhaps the most often cited (and at times criticized) feature of Murakami’s fiction is its constant citation of other texts (be it books that characters read or films they see or music they listen to). Aside from *Norwegian Wood*, one can also point to *South of the Border, West of the Sun* (*Kokkyô no minami, taiyô no nishi*, 1992; trans. 1999) the first part of whose title references the Nat King Cole Song) or the short story “The 1963/1982 Girl from Ipanema” (1963/1982-nen no Ipanema-musume, 1992; trans. 2002). This particular trait of Murakami’s writing has incited Masao Miyoshi to go so far as to call Murakami’s fiction nothing more than a “sophisticated stylization of trivia” (Miyoshi 1991: 235). Other critics, both in Japan and the United States, noting this as well as his constant citation of Western cultural artifacts and brand-name goods observe the “un-Japanese” feel of Murakami’s writing.14

Mitchell’s intertextual doubling of Murakami then complicates the problem of cross-cultural representation. If one takes this aspect of Murakami’s reputation into account, then Mitchell’s reworking

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14 Strecher (2002: 5) succinctly summarizes many of these criticisms of Murakami. Jay Rubin also notes that the apparent sense of Murakami’s “internationalism” among his English language readers was perhaps further emphasized by Alfred Birnbaum’s translation of *Hitsuji o meguru bôken* which deliberately omitted many references specific to 1970s Japan in an effort to bridge the time lag (the translation appeared in 1991). See Rubin (2002: 273-89).
Murakami’s writing into *number9dream* can be grasped as highlighting the multidirectional nature of transnational flows of cultural artifacts and representations. Murakami’s representation of contemporary Japan is itself heavily infused with what is conventionally thought of as Western cultural (and media) artifacts, in effect blurring the lines between what is “Japanese” and what is not. In Mitchell and Murakami, “Japan” is inevitably tangled with various intermediations. The significance of this can be better illuminated by a point regarding Murakami’s fiction raised by Chiyoko Kawakami. Looking in particular at *Hard-boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* she cites several scenes wherein the narrator repeatedly analogizes his actual experiences with fictional representations. One particular example Kawakami points out wherein the narrator constructs a filmic treatment out of a simple glimpse of a couple he sees in a car on the highway. She argues that this habit of Murakami’s narrator is a dramatization of the impossibility of experience itself to stand outside the process of intermediation. In her words:

> What lurks at the core of this fascination is [the narrator’s] realization that unique experiences are no longer possible. He has already seen his own experience presented somewhere – in movies, paintings, lyrics for popular songs, or literature. In other words, existential experience per se no longer yields him any meaning but reminds him of representational patterns. (Kawakami 2002: 325)

In other words, for Murakami’s narrator, the actuality of an experience no longer necessarily makes it authentic. Beyond the absence of a no truly original story, there is also no truly original experience in that ostensibly actual and real experiences are inevitably shot through with all manner of representations and mediations.

One can perhaps push this point further. Unlike William Gibson, Mitchell was in fact based in Japan at the time of his writing of *number9dream*. While conventionally, this might lead one to assume that Mitchell has access to first-hand (and ostensibly more “authentic”) experiences of Japan and Tokyo, in *number9dream*, what one finds instead is the suggestion that first-hand experience is no guarantee of authenticity. In this sense, the repeating remediation of imagery, tropes, and rhetorical strategies that
*number9dream* performs is reminiscent of Jean Baudrillard’s ideas on simulacra. He writes that “all hold-ups, hijacks and the like are now as it were simulation hold-ups, in the sense that they are inscribed in advance in the decoding and orchestration rituals of the media, anticipated in their mode of presentation and possible consequences” (Baudrillard 1993b: 198). The same can perhaps be said of cross-cultural experiences and representations thereof. How one experiences difference is already anticipated and intermediated by preceding texts beforehand.

The novel’s doubling of Murakami’s fictions – and the consequent troubling of notions of originality that the very performance of such a doubling entails – can therefore perhaps be understood as effecting the production of a narrative that is less about any actual Japan and more of a self-referential narrative about the fantasy of “Japan,” that is, the impossibility of an experience of an authentic and original experience of “Japan” outside of its global traffic as an image-commodity. It foregrounds how, just as any other nation, “Japan” necessarily exceeds the boundaries that its name formally designates. Subsumed under its name is not merely a singular or monolithic entity that is reducible to a geographic location or the putative cultural essence of a set of traits and practices that can simply be identified and demarcated; rather it is at once a space constituted in and as fantasy. In other words, “Japan” is a signifier that is overcoded and overdetermined by a shifting constellation of relations through which it is imagined along with their consequent discursive contestations and complications.

**Postcolonial Hybridities**

In its remediation of cyberpunk rhetorical strategies and its critique of the desire for originality and authenticity through the intertextual doubling of Murakami, *number9dream* may very well be understood as a text that embodies the notion that the cultural critic Tatsumi Takayuki has named the “Japanoid.” Tatsumi defines the Japanoid “post-80s hyper-creole subjectivity transgressing the boundary between the Japanese and non-Japanese, and in so doing, naturalizing the very act of transgression” (Tatsumi 2002: 16). Building upon the work of Donna Haraway on the human-machine hybridity of the figure of the
cyborg and bringing into relation with the transracial and transcultural hybridity of the postcolonial figure of the Creole, for Tatsumi, the emergence of the notion of the Japanoid is a particular consequence of the contemporary condition, wherein “the interracial identity… at the turn of the nineteenth century developed into a cyborgian identity… at the turn of the twentieth century” (Tatsumi 2006: 29). Read in these terms and in conjunction with the novel’s cyberpunk remediations, *number9dream*, at least on its face, indeed appears to confirm the key arguments that Tatsumi posits.

There is certainly much that is compelling about Tatsumi’s discussion of mimicry and his notion of the Japanoid, not the least of which is how it opens up a space in which to consider the problem of the doppelganger not merely as a literary motif or thematic concern within a given text, but as something that also necessarily carries intertextual and transnational dimensions. That said, I cannot help but find that Tatsumi is entirely too uncritical of the science fictions and postmodernist texts – and by extension the material conditions of the world in which they emerge – he examines in his analyses. One might go so far as to say that in his uncritical celebration of a certain kind of multicultural hybridity, he gives the operations of power in late capitalist modernity a pass. Although he does not explicitly assert it, in characterizing and celebrating what he sees as the creativity of cross-cultural literary transactions in the contemporary moment as a “multicultural and transgeneric poetics of chaotic negotiation,” Tatsumi almost seems to imply that the present is at a posthistorical moment that Homi Bhaba has described as an “unhomely world,” of “ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art” (Bhaba 1994: 18). After all, if following its Freudian characterization, “the unhomely” is marked by the return in an alienated form of that which is familiar but has since been repressed and as such is structured on the basis of a temporal lag, then what Tatsumi seems to suggest in arguing a shift from relations based on the lag of original and its mimicry to a synchronic transcultural negotiation is a condition wherein doubles, mimics, and hybrids are present everywhere; the experience of the uncanny has become ubiquitous, has become the generalized condition.
Indeed, much in Tatsumi’s articulation of the concept of the Japanoid is indebted to the work of postcolonial theorist Homi Bhaba, in particular, his discussion of mimicry and ambivalence as part of his broader critique of binary oppositions (e.g., colonizer/colonized, civilized/savage, etc.) the production of which, in Bhaba’s argument, is a fundamental mechanism through which colonial power operates, and as a consequence, it too arguably suffers from similar problems and limits. What Bhaba’s discussion aims to show is how the imposition of these various bifurcations upon the colonized are never quite complete—that is, they are necessarily and structurally ambivalent—and the key example that is highlighted is the practice of colonial mimicry. For Bhaba, colonial mimicry, on the one hand, by generating an image of a “reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (Bhaba 1994: 85-86, italics in original), functions to impose an identity upon the colonized subject so as to discipline and regulate otherness in the service of reproducing empire in the role of intermediary; in this sense, it is “one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge” (Bhaba 1994: 122). Yet, in so doing, because necessary to this operation is the constant production of slippage between identity and difference (otherwise the subservient position of the colonized intermediary subject could not be maintained), mimicry at the same time bears within it the potential to become an immanent threat to the logic of the colonial order. In the constitution of a hybrid identity, a rupture in the demarcation between originality and mimicry—in other words, the positionalities of colonizer and colonized—is introduced. In Tatsumi’s view, despite never formally being subject to colonization, it is nevertheless precisely such a relation that structures the intercultural traffic between Japan and its (“Western”) Other, and under such a logic that the figure of the Japanoid—as a mimic, or indeed a doppelganger—embodies not “a failed attempt to achieve originality, but as a counter-strategy that radically problematizes the very origin of originality” emerges (Tatsumi 2006: 10).
Tatsumi is of course not the first to extend this notion of colonial mimicry to the case of Japan.\textsuperscript{15} What Tatsumi adds to this discussion, however, is his suggestion that the transformation in the spatial and temporal logics operating in late capitalism is crucial to enabling this shift from the imposition of mimicry as the exercise of colonial power to its subversion. Whereas the relation implicated in mimicry is often marked by a temporal ordering in that the ostensible “original” is identified as such by way of its temporal precedence (and hence dominant position) over its copy, Tatsumi suggests that – in line with the renewed conditions of time-space compression in late capitalism – since the 1980s especially, this has increasingly become no longer sustainable. Tatsumi thus constructs a historical narrative of mimicry that passes through three stages: “The essentialist myth of originality and imitation, the late capitalist synchronicity between different cultures, and the multicultural and transgeneric poetics of chaotic negotiation” (Tatsumi 2006: 9).

Here, Anne McClintock’s cogent critique of the postcolonial discourse on mimicry and ambivalence seems relevant. A crucial point she raises is that historically, whatever immanent ambivalence or subversive potential built into the form and logic of colonialism and embodied in the colonial hybrid (and by extension, the doppelganger) there may be, all too often, it was easily contained in the context of colonialism, easily deployed as an operation of power as opposed to its resistance, thus calling into question whether ambivalence in itself is inherently subversive. As McClintock puts it:

But if mimicry always betrays a slippage between identity and difference, doesn’t one need to elaborate how colonial mimicry differs from anti-colonial mimicry; if colonial and anti-colonial mimicry are formally identical in their founding ambivalence, why did colonial mimicry succeed for so long? (…) The more one insists on the transhistorical ubiquity of ambivalence, the less powerful a concept it becomes. In the compulsion to repeat, the everywhere of the ambivalent

\textsuperscript{15} Tatsumi, for instance, cites Marilyn Ivy, who has suggested such a reading of Japan’s modern history, indeed going so far as to suggest that despite not experiencing an extended history of colonial subjugation itself and on the contrary becoming an imperialist power in its own right, it is perhaps even more of a paradigmatic example of how mimicry moves from a mechanism of colonial disciplining to a form of performative subversion. She writes: “It is no doubt Japan’s… entry into geopolitics as an entirely exotic and late modernizing nation-state instead of an outright colony that has made its mimicry all the more threatening. As the only predominantly nonwhite nation to have challenged western dominance on a global scale… Japan, in its role as a quasi-colonized mimic, has finally exceeded itself” (Ivy 1995: 7).
becomes the scene of the same. If ambivalence is everywhere, at what point does it become subversive? (McClintock 1995: 64-65)

While recognizing that hybridity and ambivalence, at least in particular contexts, may indeed have subversive potential, McClintock’s critique draws from what she sees as an overemphasis on the formal abstraction of Bhaba’s conception of ambivalence, which in her view, all too easily effaces the material differences in social, political, and economic power wielded by colonizer and colonized. A consequence of this is that the question of hybridity and ambivalence is articulated ahistorically, with its different historical appearances collapsed into a singular story of subversive mimicry, with the effect of eliding differences between mimicry that is disruptive and mimicry that is all too often violently enforced. As such, McClintock argues that “[t]he lyrical glamour cast by some postcolonial theorists over ambivalence and hybridity is not always historically warranted,” thus demanding an analysis that is situated in the specificities of the structure of relations present in the historical moment in question.

Of significance here are recent debates and discourses on “globalization” that engage with the political-economic structures and conditions of the contemporary moment, not the least of which is the work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. A key point in their analysis is their distinguishing of the current global order, which they term simply as “Empire” – “a new logic and structure of rule” – from preceding forms of modern imperialism (Hardt and Negri 2000: xi). Whereas imperialism was predicated on the system of nation-states, with the borders of the nation-state marking the center of rule over those outside of it (and as such functioned as an expansion of the sovereignty of colonial European nation-states), Empire is a fundamentally new form of global sovereignty and not merely the extension of imperialism, one that operates under the logic of a “decentered and deterritorialized apparatus of rule” (Hardt and Negri 2000: xi, italics in original).

Consequently, in Hardt and Negri’s view, postcolonial theories that unproblematically affirm a politics of difference over and against rigid binaries and hierarchies – they cite Homi Bhaba as a case in
point\textsuperscript{16} -- miss their mark, insofar as such an approach presupposes a simple extension an earlier mode of imperialist practice onto the conditions of the present. It fails, in other words, to recognize that it is now a fundamentally new “mode of the production of identity and difference,” one wherein the defense of difference and hybridity is not necessarily opposed to, but rather buttresses the logic of the capitalist imperial machine (Hardt and Negri 2000: 45). As they put it:

\begin{quote}
Postcolonialist theorists in general give a very confused view of this passage because they remain fixated on attacking an old form of power and propose a strategy of liberation that could be effective only on that old terrain… What is missing here is a recognition of the novelty of the structures and logics of power that order the contemporary world. Empire is not a weak echo of modern imperialisms but a fundamentally new form of rule. (Hardt and Negri 2000: 145-46)
\end{quote}

As such, for Hardt and Negri, postcolonialist theory is perhaps less oppositional and more symptomatic of the passage into the regime they name Empire. While recognizing that it may very well be a “productive tool for rereading history,” they also argue that “it is entirely insufficient for theorizing contemporary global power” (Hardt and Negri: 146). If such is the case, then the point may very well be more salient in the case of Tatsumi – even more so than Bhaba – given that Tatsumi’s account is framed less as a historical account and more as an examination of the politics of literary-cultural transactions in the context of the contemporary late capitalist moment. Indeed, tellingly, to affirm the novelty and creative potential of what he sees as the hybridity of the transgeneric and transnational literary transactions of the present, Tatsumi must pose the idea of an essentialized originality as a foil. The object of his critique (and what he argues is being overcome by the texts he examines), in other words, is the complicity between a Euro-American Orientalism and Japanese cultural nationalism. Yet, if one follows the logic of Hardt and Negri, what Tatsumi fails to account for is how this may no longer be the primary operation of power at hand. In the specific case of Japan, Kôichi Iwabuchi, for instance, has suggested

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{16} While I am broadly in agreement with their critique of Homi Bhaba’s conception of hybridity, I am less convinced of Hardt and Negri’s conflation of Bhaba and postcolonial discourse \textit{tout court}, which is too internally varied, with its own internal debates and disagreements that it is perhaps unproductive to reduce and reify it into a singular coherent discourse with Bhaba as its representative.
\end{flushleft}
that “a Western Orientalist gaze gives way to a global reciprocal glance and whereby the resulting international framework is highly commodified and spectacular,” in which the identification of Japan with a sense of “cool” and “postmodern” is a key part of the brand identity, of what is fetishized in this image-commodity (Iwabuchi 2008: 549).

Hardt and Negri’s point is well taken, and the critique they level is certainly warranted. Yet, it only goes so far, and such a frame of analysis misses a more fundamental criticism that can be leveled against Tatsumi. In part, this is perhaps a consequence of the historical unconscious embedded in their analysis, an aspect that, despite the markedly different tenor of their work, they arguably nevertheless share with Tatsumi. Like Tatsumi, Hardt and Negri insist on the radical novelty of the contemporary moment. One particular point in which this clearly manifests is their argument surrounding what they term “immaterial labor.” For Hardt and Negri, one key feature of the passage to the contemporary mode of capitalist modernity is a shift from one organized primarily on industrial labor to one based on the production and commodification of communication and affect, in other words, immaterial labor – which they characterize as “labor that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge, or communication” – is becoming dominant (Hardt and Negri 2000: 290).

What distinguishes immaterial labor from the labor of mass factory workers is not only the commodities they produce. More importantly, in Hardt and Negri’s view, a key aspect of immaterial labor is that it cannot be isolated in clearly demarcated sites of production; the factory has become deterritorialized, and thus the assumed separation between working time and non-working time (and with that, the theory of value) breaks down. In other words, what allows for the organization of Empire around decentered and deterritorialized spaces (as opposed to an older imperialism organized around the logic of colonial metropoles and peripheries) is the deterritorialization of labor itself. Elsewhere, Negri has described this as a passage from a “formal subsumption” to a “real subsumption,” wherein in the latter case, value-productive labor no longer takes place in designated sites and during the formal working day as is the case with mass factory labor, but instead, all facets of social life have come to be
organized around the commodity form, around a logic of capital. Indeed, a crucial component of this is the emergence of a social factory, wherein the production of subjectivities and sociality itself is what is primarily manufactured.

The problem with Hardt and Negri’s argument is not in the concept of immaterial labor per se, but rather, it lies in their insistence on its novelty, on how its emergence is closely linked with – indeed a consequence of – the shift from the Fordist mode of capitalist production to its post-Fordist phase with its emphasis on lean production lines and manufactured precarity (Hardt and Negri 2000: 290), such that it leads them to make claims about the present (and through the demarcation of the present from the past, implicitly about the past as well) that are arguably untenable. An example of this is visible when Negri elsewhere suggests that one effect of immaterial labor increasing hegemonic position in the present moment is that workers have now come to be constituted as multitude – a multiplicity of singularities – rather than as an undifferentiated unity of a class (Negri 2008: 27-28), as if this notion of an undifferentiated unity was not at its onset already problematic, as if labor was not already a multiplicity that cannot be subsumed under a singular name without constitutive exclusions operating.

Similar arguments can also be raised against other examples they point towards to highlight the emergent character of immaterial labor. For example, feminist critics have highlighted how Hardt and Negri’s discussion of “affective labor” (which they include as one face of immaterial labor) elides how women’s (largely unwaged) reproductive labor – that is, labor that reproduces the conditions of possibility for waged labor – was a constitutive component of capitalist relations of production from its very origins.

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17 “When the capitalist process of production has attained such a high level of development so as to comprehend even the smallest fraction of social production, one can speak, in Marxian terms, of a ‘real subsumption’ of society in capital. The contemporary ‘mode of production’ is this ‘subsumption.’ What is the form of value of the ‘mode of production’ which is called the ‘real subsumption?’ (…) It is the entirety of these relations which constitute the form of value of the ‘real subsumption.’ We can develop this concept affirming that this form of value is the very ‘communication’ which develops among productive forces” (Negri 1996: 139).

18 I agree with Neferti Tadiar when she argues that the social force of history has a longer history than theorists of globalization – she cites Arjun Appadurai (1996) specifically – often grant. In her view, “If imagination has come to the attention of social analysts as a new social fact, it is because it has for a long while now been at work in what would appear to be more material practices of economic production and state power…imagination, as culturally organized social practice, is an intrinsic, constitutive part of political economy” (Tadiar 2005: 4).

19 Some examples include Rofel (2001: 637-49) and Schultz (2006: 77-82)
More broadly, when Hardt and Negri discuss the production of subjectivities and sociality, which in their argument is the primary commodity produced in immaterial labor, as a novel phenomenon of the present, what is overlooked is how, as Anne McClintock has shown, the transformation of discourses of imperialism from merely a mechanism of ideological control into commodity spectacles – “the mass marketing of imperialism as a global system of signs” – in and of themselves was evident even in the imperialisms of preceding historical moments (McClintock 1995: 56-61).

In response to these criticisms, Hardt and Negri would certainly point out – as they have in their later Multitude – that the presence of immaterial labor in preceding moments of history in no way invalidates their thesis. Their point is neither that there is no longer material (or industrial) labor nor that immaterial labor had hitherto not existed, but rather about the displacement of industrial labor “from its hegemonic position over other forms of labor by immaterial labor” (Hardt and Negri 2004: 223). However, I do not find this explanation completely satisfactory, for what is not addressed here is why it is even necessary (or productive) to posit a hegemonic class of labor in the first place. A more rigorous account of the operations (and transformations therein) of capitalist modernity would need to account for not only a posited hegemonic form of labor but for the totality of the constellation of relations that structures how different forms in different locations and contexts intersect so as to constitute the conditions of one another’s reproduction.

In this sense, I would contend that Hardt and Negri’s insistence on the novelty of immaterial labor derives from, and as such, is indicative of an insufficient accounting for the significance of uneven geographical development (and the relationalities constituted therein), which is a manifestation not of incomplete capitalist subsumption (as Hardt and Negri’s account of a passage from a merely formal to real subsumption seemingly implies) but as fundamental structural logic produced by (and constitutive of) the operations of capitalist modernization as such.20 In highlighting this point, it should not be taken

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20 In this regard, I agree with David Harvey when he suggests that “capitalism survives through uneven geographical development... capitalism is uneven geographical development” (Harvey 2006: 115, italics in original). In the context of Japan, Harry Harootunian has raised a similar argument in his various critiques of modernization
as merely a criticism of Hardt and Negri’s eurocentrism – an aspect of work which I would certainly not be the first to note\textsuperscript{21} -- and with that, a demand for inclusion and representation that would nonetheless retain the terms of analysis. Rather, it is to emphasize the consequences of the very frame of analysis in question, wherein the experience found in the hegemonic location to stand in for all other locations, one of which is the mistaking of immaterial labor’s production of sociality as something novel that emerges only in a distinct historical period (the present) as opposed to something that has always been a fundamental component of capitalist modernity – albeit displaced onto the colonial periphery or onto women (and especially onto women of the colonial periphery) – that becomes visible as through a different analytical frame. Thus, if there is something significant to the collapse of interior/exterior demarcations, then it is perhaps the increasing inability to displace social production onto the margins in the present moment; or to put it differently, it is the generalization of the conditions of exploitation in the (post-)colonial contact zones such that they become visible even in the former metropoles, even when viewed from a Eurocentric frame.

**Doppelganger as Japanoid**

To return then to Tatsumi’s writings and its significance for reading David Mitchell’s *number9dream*, one conclusion that can be reached is that it is precisely this structural logic that also informs his understanding of contemporary “Japanese” cultural commodity production. In his focus on the literary theories and late-development accounts of the rise of fascism. See, for example, Harootunian (2004: 49). As such, following Harvey, globalization does not (indeed, it cannot) flatten out these differences, instead, “The general diminution in transport costs in no way disrupts the significance of territorial divisions and specializations of labor… Reducing the friction of distance, in short, makes capital more rather than less sensitive to local geographical variations” (Harvey 2006: 100).

\textsuperscript{21} Lisa Rofel (2001), for example, has written a particularly powerful critique in such terms, wherein she argues that Hardt and Negri’s narrative of Empire assumes “that all non-European subjects merely rehearse Europe’s history of modernity” (644), with the consequence that it produces a skewed picture of the possibilities for political organization. As she puts it: “Much later in the book they acknowledge the obvious, that much industrial labor has been moved to non-Western countries and is performed by women. So what exactly is the role of factory labor that has been reduced? Not, I believe, its importance to a world economy but, rather, its place in an economy of heroic politics” (Rofel 2001: 644). For other critiques of Hardt and Negri’s *Empire*, also see Laclau (2004), among others in the same volume.
and cultural transactions between Japan and the United States and reading Japan as a postcolonial space, what is kept out of view is the history of Japan’s own colonial empire, an attention to which would call to task not only Tatsumi’s rather uncritical celebration of the hybridity of the Japanoid, but also his assertion of its novelty in the present moment. One need only to look at the cultural policies enacted by imperial Japan upon its colonial subjects in the 1920s, which took the shape of an ideology and practice of imperial multiculturalism and culturally enforced hybridity as a case in point, in part as a consequence of Japan’s peculiar status as a non-white, non-Western colonial empire.22

In effect, what Tatsumi’s analysis of the Japanoid overlooks is what Mark Driscoll has characterized as “postcoloniality in reverse – the fabricated inversion assigned to East Asia of the normalized Euro-American trajectory of globalized multiculturalism” (Driscoll 2005: 172). Thus, reinscribed is a twofold tendency: on the one hand, it reinscribes the normativity of the Eurocentric postcolonial narrative from an ethnoracial homogeneity to multicultural postcoloniality (an experience that is reversed in East Asia) with the corollary effect that, on the other hand, the history of the Japanese colonial empire and its “pluralist innovations in colonial governance… that might be said to have preceded, or at least usefully compared to, modes of governance in other multiethnic societies” (Driscoll 2005: 164) such as the one visible in the contemporary global context. Tatsumi (and up to a point, Hardt and Negri as well), in this sense, can thus be said to work through a prism that views history through a singular narrative frame, in what Anne McClintock has called “panoptical time.” As McClintock puts it in her critique of just such a tendency in postcolonial theories: “If the theory promises a decentering of history in hybridity, syncretism, multidimensional time and so forth, the singularity of the term effects a recentering of global history around the single rubric of European time. Colonialism returns at the moment of its disappearance” (McClintock 1995: 11).

22 This is a central point in much of Oguma Eiji’s writings, especially in his analyses of the historicity and genealogy of Japanese self-images whose emphasis tends to oscillate between cultural particularisms and cultural hybridities and its impact on Japanese colonial practice (Oguma 2002). In a similar vein, Leo Ching (1998) and Mark Driscoll (2000) have also discussed the deployment of notions of cultural hybridity as an apparatus of rule in Japanese colonial discourse.
In Tatsumi’s case, a tellingly symptomatic example of this repression of colonialism can be found in the example he cites to illustrate what he reads as a sense of transcultural simultaneity and chaotic negotiation to the extent that original and copy, precursor and follower, are no longer easily identifiable. Tatsumi points to two literary texts that he finds to be strikingly similar to one another as a case in point: Paul Auster’s *Moon Palace* (1989) and Shimada Masahiko’s *Higan Sensei* (1992). In effect, reading them as intertextual doppelgangers of one another, Tatsumi observes that:

> Both skillfully displace the boundary between literature and paraliterature, and both use a Chinese restaurant, Moon Palace in New York, as their central setting. Their plot structures are likewise similar, as they weave their exemplary “orphan” narratives. Shimada, who wrote *Higan-Sensei* without reading Auster, narrates the story of an orphan-seeking father, who mirrors strikingly the father-seeking-orphan in Auster’s *Moon Palace*. (Tatsumi 2006: 172-73)

At a glance, Tatsumi’s observations certainly appear correct. But more striking here is what he does not remark upon. He does not note, for instance, that Auster’s novel, references and to some extent rewrites Jules Verne’s *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1873) – as is made evident through its naming of its protagonist (Marco Stanley Fogg from Phileas Fogg of Verne’s novel) – a text that is perhaps a paradigmatic example of the commodity spectacularization of imperial discourse that Anne McClintock addresses. Likewise, Shimada’s novel is a rewriting of Natsume Sōseki’s *Kokoro* (1914; trans. 1957), the purpose of which was in part, according to Shimada himself, to bring out its political unconscious, particularly in terms of how gender relations among its characters gesture towards Japan’s colonial relations with East Asia, seemingly echoing McClintock’s discussion of the colonial backdrop against which the cult of domesticity emerges (Gregory and McCaffery 2002; McClintock 1995: 5).

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23 Like Murakami, both authors had previously written what can without a doubt be considered doppelganger fictions. In Auster’s case, his *The New York Trilogy* (1985-1986) – and especially its first part, *City of Glass* – features a detective fictionist who writes under the pseudonym William Wilson (from Edgar Allan Poe’s seminal doppelganger text) and not only impersonates a certain private investigator named “Paul Auster” but is also tripped up in his tailing of a man when his doppelganger appears and walks in the opposite direction. Shimada Masahiko’s *Dream Messenger* (*Yumetsukai*, 1989; trans. 1994), one of the protagonists starts out as a “rental child,” who adopts multiple personae to serve as temporary surrogate children to childless couples. All three authors also form a circuit of transnational literary relations via their translator-doppelgangers. While Philip Gabriel has translated the fictions of both Shimada Masahiko and Murakami Haruki, Auster’s primary translator Shibata Motoyuki has been a close collaborator of Murakami’s in translating American literature (see Miura 2003).
It is when considered with this context in mind that the stakes of the remediation of cyberpunk’s techno-orientalist tropes and its positioning of itself as an intertextual doppelganger of the fiction of Murakami Haruki in *number9dream* become visible. It would be easy to say that it partakes of and reproduces the techno-orientalizing logic of the Japanoid. After all, under a regime wherein discourses of multicultural hybridity are themselves increasingly becoming highly commodified spectacles, this may very well be inevitable. Yet in calling attention to these relations, I would also contend that more importantly, *number9dream* puts them under erasure, baring their mechanism, and in so doing, gestures toward the recognition of the limits of the kind of cultural politics Tatsumi advances in his analysis. Specifically, through its mapping of the techno-orientalist tropes of cyberpunk it takes up onto the fantasies of its protagonist, what is hinted at is a recognition of the embeddedness of this imagination of “Japan” in, to use the terms of Neferti Tadiar, a transnational system of “fantasy-production,” in other words, the global order of production through which the imaginary is constituted and subsumed by the logics of capital (Tadiar 2005: 5-8). In so doing, *number9dream* calls attention how, in the words of Rey Chow, “the West owns not only the components but also the codes of fantasy, the non-West is deprived not only of the control of industrial and commercial, but of imaginary productions as well” (Chow 1991: xiii). 24

That this hypermediation of techno-orientalist tropes is coupled with the quotations and allusions – the intertextual doubling – of Murakami Haruki is perhaps no accident. Key to grasping this linkage is the fact that, as Ueno Toshiya has observed, the emergence of this techno-orientalism can be aligned with how “The Post-Fordist economy is inextricably tied to the labor forces in Asia” (Ueno

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24 In a similar vein, Teshome Gabriel points out: “To the extent that we recognize a history of unequal exchanges between the South and North, we must also recognize the unequal symbolic exchanges involved” (Gabriel 1989: 38). Of course, Japan is conventionally not considered a member of the Global South, per se. Nonetheless, despite its material economic parity with other nation-states in the Global North, insofar as it is still the object of orientalizing (or techno-orientalizing) and othering discourses, on the terrain of symbolic and immaterial production, it is arguably still in an asymmetrical relationship to a normative and hegemonic Euro-America.
This manifests in two ways: First, its melding of machinic alterity with a racialized and
gendered otherness marks the radical changes in the organization of global labor in the form of the
displacement of the sites of mechanized production onto women and ethnic Others (Ueno 2002a: 229); Second, that cultural production, that is, the production of image-commodities in Japan themselves (particularly in export industry of animation) has itself increasingly taken on a transnational character, through the use of relatively inexpensive non-Japanese Asian labor. Taken together, what appears is a seeming repetition – albeit under a different set of conditions – of Japan’s double consciousness as at once colonizer and colonized that formed a key backdrop to the literary doppelgangers of an earlier historical moment. Indeed, Ueno links techno-orientalism specifically to Freud’s notion of the uncanny, characterizing the former as a kind of defense mechanism against the sense of the uncanny in the form of a projection or displacement, a “shock projected onto the other” (Ueno 2002b: 235).

The historical repetition at work here, however, is not one that can merely be confined to peculiarities in Japanese culture or history. After all, through its traumatic temporality, it is precisely the recognition of the repressed past that the figure compels. Relevant to recall here is Freud’s classic discussion of the figure of the double in “The Uncanny” (1919): in the primary text Freud reads to develop his concepts – E.T.A. Hoffman’s “The Sandman” (Der Sandmann, 1816), the doppelganger in question – the automaton Olympia – takes the form of precisely that of the mechanical double, who is furthermore displaced onto the body of the Other, of the woman. Also crucial to recall here is how Freud’s sense of the uncanny derives not from something fundamentally alien, but is instead, an effect of something familiar that returns in an estranged form. In this sense, and especially when the backdrop of mass industrialization and mass mobilization for mechanized war in the aftermath of which Freud produces his account of the uncanny is taken into consideration, it is not the alterity of Olympia’s mechanical body itself that activates the sense of the uncanny, but rather, how it functions as an

25 In terms of the changes to the management and organizational structures of manufacturing industries, Hardt and Negri have also implicitly recognized the point in describing the passage from “Fordism” to “Toyotism” with the latter’s emphasis on lean and smaller scale production lines (Hardt and Negri 2000: 289-90).
evocation of the increasing alienation of the body in the machine, of how at the historical moment in question, the human body as such has already been automatized (in mechanized labor and warfare). As Bruce Grenville remarks, “It is the body doubled – doubled by the machine that is so common, so familiar, so ubiquitous, and so essential that it threatens to consume us, to destroy our links with nature and history, and quite literally, especially in times of war, to destroy the body itself and to replace it with its uncanny double” (Grenville 2002: 20-21). Through its literary and cinematic representations, this threat can be articulated in an aestheticized form, “in an imaginary form that permits us to disregard its real presence… [such that] we are unable (or unwilling) to see that which is in front of our eyes; we repress the recognition of its real form and instead remain fascinated by its beauty” (Grenville 2002: 21).

Here, displacement onto a spectacularized Other (e.g., the worker, the woman, the racialized other) – a reinscription of the double as other – is a key strategy that often operates, which as Rey Chow aptly highlights, happens under the scopophilic logic of the cinema (Chow 1993: 60-63). This is perhaps no accident, given the indebtedness of the emergence of the figure of the doppelganger to cinema’s rise as a technical and social apparatus. Or to put it another way, at the same time that modern mechanized visuality is what allows for the displacement onto the spectacularized other of the anxiety of the automatized body, paradoxically, it is precisely this spectatorial interface with the cinematic apparatus that is perhaps the site wherein this automatization, this production of the double (in the form of the image-commodification) arguably becomes most advanced. In line with Jonathan Beller’s argument that in the cinematic apparatus, the spectator performs labor that is productive of value for the image-commodities viewed, but moreover, in the same process produces oneself as image (Beller 2006a: 29), it becomes possible to take the problem of the alienation of the worker in his or her product to its logical limit. Following Marx’s statement that “[t]he alienation of the worker in his product means not only that his labor becomes an object, an external existence, but that it exists outside him [sic], independently, as something alien to him” (Marx 1978: 72), with the commodity fetish extends to the production of the
human body as such as an alienated image-commodity, one’s own self yet nevertheless externalized and alien, a doppelganger.

When this context is accounted for, one implication that can be drawn is that rather than a radically novel phenomenon or something peculiar only to the context of Japan, these images that number9dream remediates are symptomatic of a compulsive repetition, which render visible, albeit in an aestheticized and spectacularized form, the uncomfortable knowledge that under the cinematic mode of production, the encounter with the double is no longer (if it ever was) particularly exceptional, but rather the fundamental condition of social life; all are already automatons, and it is only in an act of repression that this is displaced onto the other, be it in gendered or racialized terms. By troubling the relations between self and other, between familiar and unfamiliar, in its capacity as an intertextual and transcultural doppelganger, what number9dream arguably enacts is a resistance to this displacement, or alternatively an uncanny interruption of the fantasy of techno-orientalism.

Indeed it is a series of repeated interruptions of the narrator Eiji’s fantasies that structure the very narrative performance of the novel. Every time the story seemingly begins to take shape, every time Eiji’s quest seemingly begins to move in one direction or another, something provokes it to abruptly end. Further to this, another set of salient interruptions also appears on a different register. At various points in the narrative, events that highlight all manner of violence built into the structural logic of Japan and its place in the world erupt to flash what has been repressed in the slick images of techno-Orientalist fantasy. The character of Miriam, a Korean club hostess involved with the yakuza, hints at the complexities of the colonial history between Japan and Korea and its continuing repercussions; likewise, the journal of the kaiten suicide submarine pilot Tsukiyama Subaru that Eiji reads at one point calls to mind the disavowal of the history of war constitutive of the postwar social order of Japan; finally, the letter from Kozue Yamaya telling the story of the murder of her son and her captivity as a sex slave in payment for her husband’s debts brings into focus the base of brutal violence and exploitation upon which the highest orders of finance capital is built. Through these interruptions, the novel calls attention
to the unevenness and asymmetrical relations not only in its material aspects, but also in its immaterial and imaginative production, through which the social factory in the contemporary global order is constituted. One might even suggest that although it may be unable to articulate a way of this alienated imaginary, the novel nevertheless gestures toward such a desire, toward a project of claiming a “freedom of imagination,” as Partha Chatterjee once put it (Chatterjee 1993: 13) when the ninth chapter – the titular number 9 dream – at the end of the novel remains blank, yet to be written.
CHAPTER 7
THE DOPPELGANGER AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Repetition Compulsions

By the end of Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s film Retribution (Sakebi, 2007), the protagonist – named Yoshioka Noboru and played by Kurosawa’s regular lead Yakusho Kôji – has collected in a gym bag the skeletal remains of two dead women who in one form or another, he has killed – a woman with whom he was intimate as well as a stranger, a woman most easily identifiable by her striking red dress. He walks down a Tokyo avenue that is eerily devoid of any of its usual crowds or any sign of human life whatsoever aside from an abandoned newspaper rustling in the wind. Everyone in the city is apparently dead, except Yoshioka, whose life has been spared by the vengeful ghost of the woman in a red dress whose spectral presence has been haunting him. All this is punctuated by her repeated chanting of a curse, seemingly addressed not only to characters in the film, but also the film’s spectators themselves: “I died, so everyone else should die too” [watashi wa shinda, dakara minna mo shinde kudasai].

The finale of Retribution is noteworthy for a number of reasons, the most obvious of which is the fact that Retribution is no isolated case as far as apocalyptic scenarios go, but instead participates in a broader proliferation of end-of-the-world fantasies. Such a proliferation is certainly visible in the case of Japanese cultural production and discourses, perhaps most visibly in the popularity of the emergent genre of popular culture – especially in comic books (manga), animation, and the so-called “light novels” (raito noberu, juvenile fiction with attached manga style illustrations) – that has come to be known as sekai-kei (literally world-type). While the boundaries of what gets included in the term tends to be rather amorphous, works typically categorized as sekai-kei, according to Oshino Takeshi, can be characterized as texts wherein “concerns in close personal relationships centered upon a male protagonist are directly tied to a large abstract problem such as a ‘global crisis’ or ‘the end of the

1 For the sake of consistency, I have followed the translations that appear as English subtitles included in the Retribution DVD for quotations of dialogue from the film. However, translations of citations from other Japanese language material, unless otherwise indicated, are my own.
world’ without traversing the middle ground of family, society, or nation” (Oshino 2008: 80). Of course, this proliferation is not restricted to just the context of Japan; rather, it is arguably part of a larger global phenomenon that a number of thinkers, not the least of whom Fredric Jameson, have characterized as symptomatic of the impasse of the contemporary situation in the aftermath of Francis Fukuyama’s infamous declaration of “the end of history” such that “it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism” (Jameson 2005: 199). Echoing Jameson’s assertion, Slavoj Žižek elaborates upon the point as follows:

[N]obody seriously considers possible alternatives to capitalism any longer, whereas popular imagination is persecuted by the visions of the forthcoming “breakdown of nature,” of the stoppage of all life on Earth – it seems easier to imagine the “end of the world” than a far more modest change in the mode of production, as if liberal capitalism is the “real” that will somehow survive even under conditions of a global ecological catastrophe.

(Žižek 1999: 55)

With Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s *Retribution*, this backdrop of proliferating apocalyptic fantasies is further placed into the foreground by the fact that this is not the first film in Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s body of work to feature such an apocalyptic finale. For those spectators familiar with his body of work, the final scene of the film is haunted not only by the voice of the woman in red chanting her curse, but also the ghosts of Kurosawa’s previous work lurking in the projected shadows and light of the film. To be more specific, in this instance, it is the film *Pulse* (*Kairo*, 2001) that is referenced, which is itself prefigured by the closing scene of a burning city in the distance in the previous Kurosawa film *Charisma* (*Karisuma*, 1999). In *Pulse*, the plot centers on ghosts who haunt the electronic networks of the world. They manifest as videos and images in secret websites, which trigger extreme ennui and a sense of social isolation in all who see them, eventually leading them to commit suicide, leaving only an odd black stain on the concrete walls where they last stood. Foreshadowing then the conclusion of *Retribution*, by the end of the film, a similar rapid depopulation of the city has taken place, until by its end, only one of the characters in its ensemble cast remains alive.

But perhaps what is most uncanny about this enactment of repetition, especially when considered in conjunction with fantasies of the end of the world that Kurosawa’s *Retribution* performs

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is its apparent mirroring of some of the major tropes of the discourses on the nation emerging in the aftermath of the so-called “end of history,” and especially in the wake of the 1995 Sarin gas attack on Tokyo’s subway system perpetrated by the Aum Shinrikyô, which might very well be understood as a literal “end of history” enactment, a millennial fantasy *par excellence.* I would certainly not be the first to remark on the resurgence of nationalist discourse in Japan, especially as pertaining to the issue of constitutional revision and Japan’s ability to wage war, taking place at this same moment, and into the post 9/11 sociocultural milieu. Indeed, Marilyn Ivy for instance suggests a linkage between the apocalyptic scenario, the “total war” against the Japanese state enacted by the Aum Shinrikyô and these nationalist discourses that seek to open the possibility of another war (through constitutional revision) as a means of resolving and recuperating from the abject state produced by the defeat in the previous war, i.e., the Second World War (Ivy 2005: 145-47). As such, these fantasies of war and world’s end that proliferate at this moment cannot be separated from the deferred ending of what has been called its “long postwar” (Gluck 1997; Harootunian 2005), marked by not only the global backdrop of the close of the Cold War, but also by ending of the Showa period with the death of the emperor coupled with a sharp economic downturn following the decade of the so-called “bubble” economy of the 1980s.

What is perhaps most striking about this post-postwar space beginning in the 1990s and extending into the present, in the view of Harry Harootunian, is the pervasiveness of reactionary discourses that return precisely to the site of the postwar, that repeat and reenact the logic of the postwar, despite their claims to correct the history of Japan since the postwar, in effect functioning to further defer the end of the long postwar (Harootunian 2005: 113-114). As a case in point, Harootunian takes up Katô Norihiro’s infamous and rather meandering *On Post-defeat* (*Haisengo-ron*, 1995), wherein Katô argues that the persistence of the postwar in Japan is constituted by a “twist”

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2 The Aum Shinrikyô were a new religious movement whose philosophy combined idiosyncratic Buddhist concepts with science-fictional tropes. Yumiko Iida (2000) provides an extended discussion of Aum and the end of the world fantasy at the heart of their 1995 Sarin gas attack in the context of recessionary Japan.

3 The controversy over constitutional revision in Japan centers on the issue of Article 9, in which the right to belligerence and the use of military force is renounced. It should be also be noted that accompanying moves to revise the constitution so as to allow a military build up in Japan as well as legally participate in American military action (under the euphemism of “collective self-defense”) is also accompanied by moves to revise history textbooks in an effort to portray imperial Japanese aggression in a more favorable light.
nejire], a taint at its origins in the form of war defeat and the subsequent imposition of an alien constitution upon it, a consequence of which is a lack of a fixed ground upon which a national subjectivity may be constituted. However, as Harootunian correctly points out, what Katô’s analysis of postwar Japan as a culturally colonized nation entails is the reinscription of a victim logic that functions to disavow the history of Japan’s history as colonizer, in effect repeating and reinforcing the very postwar settlement that Katô claims to challenge (Harootunian 2005: 113-114). Thus, despite any claims he makes about correcting the repression and disavowal of history that has structured the postwar discursive space of Japan, Katô on the contrary enacts a compulsion to repeat its very logic.

In this sense, I do not think Marilyn Ivy is off the mark when she suggests that it is the logic of a traumatic acting-out that animates much of this discourse given that crucial to the notion of trauma is the point that its recognition is predicated precisely on a repetition-compulsion. That is, the traumatic event is constituted only in repetition; an event is recognized as traumatic only after it is first repressed and then subsequently returns to disturb the psyche, structured in a logic that Sigmund Freud terms nachträglichkeit – only belatedly, as a deferred action. Especially when considered in light of Sigmund Freud’s linking of the uncanny (and its embodiment in the figure of the double) to what he calls the repetition-compulsion – or, as Freud has put it, “whatever reminds us of this inner ‘compulsion to repeat’ is perceived as uncanny” (Freud 2000: 240) – it is perhaps no surprise that Katô takes up the figure of the double in his writings. Yet tellingly, in his deployment of the figure, he refuses to follow its figuration of traumatic repetition to its logical conclusion, to recognize the implications of the structure of deferral upon which a return of the repressed is constituted.

Referencing R.L. Stevenson’s novel The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1842), Katô suggests that the national character of Japan is reducible to a similar dual structure, with on the one hand an authentic, if repressed, native interiority and a colonizing foreign exteriority (in the form of a cultural reassertion).
extension of the postwar American occupation). But if one takes the enactment of the compulsion to repeat by the figure of the doppelganger in connection with the constitution of national subjectivities seriously, then it seems only appropriate to recognize that if the figure of the doppelganger foregrounds something, then it is how the very conception of the nation is precisely constituted on a structure of deferral – *nachträglichkeit* – in the sense that its origins can only be belatedly apprehended after the fact, such that, as Benedict Anderson has noted, national images are “replicas without originals” (Anderson 1998: 26); “Hence there is no Originator of the nation, or rather the Originator is ceaselessly changing, here-and-now, ‘Us’” (Anderson 1998: 57).5

What Katô expresses then is an impossible desire for a “normal” national subjectivity outside of trauma. Yet this fails to recognize that this may very well be a structural impossibility for no nation-state can exist outside of a constitutive violence at its very origins, if Slavoj Žižek is correct in his diagnosis (Žižek 1993: 210). Noteworthy here then is how Katô misreads a uniquely Japanese cultural crisis in place of what is properly a broader structural crisis produced by the inevitable unevenness of capitalism, and in so doing repeating, as Harootunian has pointed out, the same slippage between notions of modernity and capitalism, the misrecognition of the impact of the commodity form as an essentialized and reified “Western modernity” that animated the fascist fantasies of overcoming modernity through an appeal to an unchanging native substratum of essence at an earlier moment of history (Harootunian 2005: 110).6 Katô’s nationalist discourse arguably performs a similar function of providing an alibi, an imaginary solution to a real crisis, seeking “capitalism without capitalism” as Žižek once characterized the object of fascist desire (Žižek 2003: 185), in effect making this less a proper recuperative move and more of an act of displacement, a compulsive re-repression of that history – and with it, history as such – which has returned in the aftermath of the crisis of the postwar cultural and economic logic since the 1990s.

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5 In connection with this, one might also recall Ernest Renan’s contention that nation-state formation was structured on a need to “remember to forget” its historicity, echoing a psychoanalytic conception of traumatic repression (Renan 1990 [1882]: 8-22).

6 Katô’s move here might also be characterized as a mirror image of the techno-orientalist gaze I discussed in the preceding chapter. While the traffic of techno-orientalist image-commodities function to displace the machinic uncanny effects marked by the doppelganger onto an aestheticized cultural otherness, Katô’s slippage from the register of the political-economic to the cultural (and thus denying their interpenetration) works through a similar logic, albeit in a self-orientalizing mode.
I bring up Katô’s reactionary writings here not to simply criticize it – as important a task that certainly is – but to treat it symptomatically, that is, to illustrate what broader issues and concerns of history the doppelganger’s enactments of repetition might imbricate. For my own purposes here, the point is especially pertinent given that the historical moment in question is also marked by the resurgence in literary and critical engagements with the figure of the doppelganger. However, contrary to Katô’s drive to displace the constitutive trauma of national subjectivity, to disavow history and to reinscribe the nation as the fixed horizon of analysis, what might it mean to take seriously the ruptures and interruptions marked by the doppelganger’s repeated returns? Might then the potential for rendering visible something other to the perpetual present of the contemporary conjuncture be opened? The words of Gilles Deleuze are instructive here: “The repetition of dissymmetry is hidden within symmetrical ensembles and effects; a repetition of distinctive points underneath that of ordinary points; and everywhere the Other in the repetition of the Same” (Deleuze 1994: 24).

Kurosawa’s work is especially interesting when situated against this backdrop seeing as his work addresses the post-Aum discursive space marked by the intersection of nationalist acting out and apocalyptic fantasies. For instance, 

*Cure* (1997), the film that catapulted him to international visibility with its hypnotist serial killer is widely read as a critical engagement on the casual violence perpetrated by the Aum Shinrikyô. In light of the above discussion, his later film *Retribution* might be a film that is an even more productive text to read in this context, precisely because its narrative is structured around the foregrounding of the problem of repetition. Beyond its aforementioned repetition of the Kurosawa’s trademark apocalyptic finale, several other instances in *Retribution* when moments of spectatorial déjà vu manifest. Indeed, what is immediately striking about the film is the extent to which it is haunted by the specters of previous films from Kurosawa’s body of work. I am certainly not the first to take note of this characteristic of *Retribution*. Kume Yoriko, for instance,

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7 A number of articles have asserted this, perhaps exemplary of which is Abe Kashô’s, who specifically names *Cure* a “horror film after Aum” [*Ômu ikô no kyûisu eiga*] (Abe 2000: 121). While Abe’s brief discussion focuses specifically on *Cure*, I do not believe it overstates the case to extend the point to account for the emergence of ‘J-Horror’ as a genre at this moment as, if not a critical intervention in the way Kurosawa’s film may be, at the very least symptomatic of the post-Aum milieu.
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observes that the deployment of the serial killer narrative rehashes his earlier film Cure, or the employment of the figure of the double from Doppelganger (Dopperugengâ, 2003) (Kume 2007: 129-30). At first glance, there undoubtedly exists a temptation to find fault in this, to suggest that Kurosawa has exhausted his imagination and assert that he is now repeating himself. Rather than considering these apparent repetitions as weaknesses, however, in the case of Retribution, this repetition is precisely the point. Tellingly, what repeats in Kurosawa’s film are motifs that foreground precisely the very problem of repetition itself, as can be seen from both the aforementioned instances of intertextual repetitions noted above. On the one hand, what is the ghost that haunts the protagonist of Retribution if not a repetition, a repetition in the present of something of the (now dead) past? Likewise, on the other hand, the serial killer narrative that initially structures the plot of Kurosawa’s film is precisely the dramatization of repetition (of murder). That these two motifs furthermore coalesce around vague hints of a doppelganger (the repetition of the subject) of the film’s protagonist Yoshioka lurking in the background is perhaps no surprise.

Needless to say, the problem of history and repetition has been at the very heart of the examination of the concept of the doppelganger in this dissertation. Not only is the uncanny of which the figure of the doppelganger emblematic closely linked to the concept of the repetition-compulsion, but also, from a longer view, the pervasive appearances of the doppelganger in literary, cinematic, and critical discourses on the one hand the interwar period and on the other the contemporary conjuncture enact a logic of repetition on a historical register as well. In the spirit of the doppelganger’s performances of repetition then, in place of a conclusion, I bring the discussion of the doppelganger here to a chiastic return. In its examination of the deployment of the motif in the films of Kurosawa Kiyoshi, the task of this chapter is twofold: first, it will revisit and recapitulate the key issues at hand made visible through the examination of the figure of the doppelganger that I have discussed thus far; second, in a brief epilogue to both the chapter and the overall dissertation, it will also proceed to attempt to articulate the stakes of thinking the doppelganger, not merely as a literary or cinematic motif, but as a practice of concepts that implicates the issues and concerns at the heart of the broader discursive space in the contemporary conjuncture.
I began this dissertation with a discussion of the concept of the doppelganger in terms of the problem of genre. On one level, the doppelganger is discursively conceived as a genre of literature and film; it is not reducible to an origins or essence but is rather a concept whose emergence is inevitably shaped by the discursive space in which it is formed. Specifically, as the preceding chapters have documented, some of the forces that have shaped and determined the doppelganger’s manifestations (and with that, the meanings it comes to produce) are the twinned forces of colonial expansion outward geographically and the inward into the unconscious through the revolutions in forms and practices of visuality. On another level though, genres function on the basis of organizing texts around a tension between producing something that is recognizably familiar on the one hand and yet nevertheless offers a variation on this familiarity; “genres are instances of repetition and difference,” as Steve Neale once put it (Neale 1980: 48). Thus, in its play on difference and repetition, the doppelganger enacts the very logic of genre and makes visible its limits, attempting to give embodiment to that which exceeds and interrupts their operations.

Kurosawa’s films make for an effective test case for the revisiting and resignification of these questions in that they not only place these concerns at center stage through its aforementioned foregrounding of tropes of repetition, but moreover, the simultaneous articulation and subversion of genre has been central to his filmmaking. Since he initially gained wide international recognition, Kurosawa Kiyoshi has typically been positioned as a genre film auteur – a so-called “outlaw master” who at once distills and exceeds genre filmmaking – in film journalistic discourse.8 One particular genre to which Kurosawa’s name has come to be closely attached is horror, perhaps unsurprisingly given that not only was it with his thriller *Cure* and especially with the premiere of the horror film *Pulse* at the Cannes Film Festival that he first became widely regarded, but also that this took place in the broader context marked by the cult popularity of Japanese horror cinema in the aftermath of Nakata Hideo’s *Ring (Ringu, 1997)* as well as Shimizu Takashi’s *The Grudge (Juon, 2000)*. With *Retribution* in particular, this association is given further emphasis by the fact that unlike much of his

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8 The term “outlaw master” is from Chris DesJardins. In his book *Outlaw Masters of Japanese Film* (2005), he includes Kurosawa among these “genre filmmakers who made genre movies usually labelled as samurai, yakuza, horror, pink, etc., but who pushed the envelope beyond the usual conventions in some way either in style or content” (DesJardins 2005: 1).
independently produced preceding films, *Retribution* was a commissioned project. Not only was it made specifically for the “J-Horror Theater” line-up produced by Ichise Takashige (who was also the producer of Japanese horror cinema staples *Ring* and *The Grudge*), but moreover, as Kurosawa explains it, he was asked specifically to re-make “*Cure*, but with ghosts” [*yûrei ga detekuru Cure*] (Kurosawa 2007). As such, another set of noteworthy repetitions that the film performs is its mining of the imagery and plot devices of the most familiar films from the corpus of contemporary Japanese horror cinema, especially the vengeful female ghost alongside images of water and drowning made familiar by the above films of Nakata Hideo and Shimizu Takashi and further repeated in countless other so-called “J-Horror” films in the last few years.

But what might be at stake in the baring of the mechanism of generic repetition? Here, it is crucial to note that the problem of genre goes beyond literary or cinematic forms per se, but implicate all manner of classifications and categorizations through which what forms of knowledge, what narrative of history, what critical interventions can be thought and imagined. As Jacques Derrida has remarked, “the question of the literary genre is not a formal one: it covers the motif of the law in general, of generation in the natural and symbolic senses” (Derrida 1992: 242). As such, the critical problem at stake in the interruptions of the structures and operations of genre that the figure of the doppelganger brings to attention in the contemporary conjuncture may very well be the failure of imagination at the moment of late capitalism of which Fredric Jameson speaks, and how this is instantiated in the context of Japan through the facilitation of the interlinked proliferation of both apocalyptic fantasies and nationalist narratives. After all, as a structuring force on the imagination, as a mechanism through which desire as manipulated and regulated, might not “the nation” along all manner of other categories of analysis be understood in terms of genre?

Dimitris Vardoulakis has suggested that the concept of the doppelganger, in its disfiguring of the relation between presence and absence, can be productively understood as a figuration of an impulse to recognize that “the future is a structural element of the present, that part of the present which makes possible an interruption of a linear notion of time… the Doppelganger allows for a finite infinite – a temporality of the present which does not concede primacy to the future”
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(Vardoulakis 2005: 205). Insofar as the figure of the doppelganger embodies a compulsion to repeat, to this point, it is also worth adding that, as Dominick LaCapra as suggested, a facet of the acting out of traumatic repetition is that the “mimetic relation to the past” repeats “as if it were fully present rather than represented in memory and inscription,” implying that a traumatic event occupies a place at the limit of representability; traumatic events repeat precisely because they remain impossible to represent, they remain literally un-canny (LaCapra 1998: 45). In this sense, if Fredric Jameson is correct when he hints that the popularity of apocalyptic fantasies is indicative of an as of yet unrepresentable Utopian desire, then could the foregrounding of these tropes of repetition that doppelganger performs – both in Kurosawa’s work and more generally – hint at the repressed traumatic violence that is constitutive of the present moment of capitalist modernity, and with this, a desire to imagine a way of it?

Double Visions

Given the pervasive repetition of tropes from not only his oeuvre, but also the most familiar motifs from Japanese horror cinema, it probably does not come as a surprise either that Retribution is not the first film in Kurosawa’s body of work to feature the figure of the doppelganger. Its first appearance has to be credited to a brief scene in the made-for-television movie Séance (Kôrei, 2000), when the sound engineer protagonist of the film, who is wracked by guilt after accidentally killing a child who without his knowledge sneaked into his equipment case and was locked in there, encounters (and subsequently douses in flame) his silent double staring back at him.9 A more extensive treatment is in the appropriately titled Doppelganger. The story of Doppelganger largely follows the research scientist Hayasaki, in his attempts to develop an “artificial body” [jinkô jintai]: a mentally operated wheelchair to serve as an extension of the human body for disabled individuals. Initially running into difficulties in both technical terms of the complexity of translating mental inputs into machinic responses, and financial terms as his employers and manager threaten to pull the plug on his funding, things take a

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9 Kurosawa’s film Séance is itself a loose remake of the British film Séance on a Wet Afternoon (1964), directed by Bryan Forbes, which is itself an adaptation of the Mark McShane novel (1961) of the same title.
turn when he encounters his doppelganger. To assist Hayasaki in completing his project, his double subsequently sets into motion a series of events such as the illicit acquisition of funds or research data from other institutions or access to an assistant and a scrap warehouse that allows him to work independently after he is removed from his position of employment.

Setting its story aside, what is most interesting about Doppelganger is its treatment of generic categories. Although the film initially sets up a story centered on Hayasaki’s difficulties in the development of the “artificial body” and a consequent psychical breakdown that triggers the appearance of his double, there is a considerable shift in the film’s second half. Following the completion of the “artificial body” and a violent confrontation between Hayasaki and his doppelganger, the narrative shifts into something akin to a road movie, with various comedic set-pieces as the characters attempt to transport the machine to offer it up for sale. This shift is but one manifestation of a larger shift in genre that Doppelganger exhibits. Its first few scenes make it appear like a horror film, especially marked by its use of atmospheric music along with shots of empty spaces and wind-blown curtains that are the staples of the genre. Yet, midway through the film, the narrative almost imperceptibly slips into a more comedic mode.

The impact of this shift is to subvert the generic expectations often associated with the doppelganger motif as well Kurosawa’s own reputation for horror filmmaking. This is especially the case in scenes wherein moments of undecidability in the setting up of spectatorial expectations is played up, such as one sequence wherein Hayasaki’s double commits a pair of murders. In the first, he brutally and repeatedly strikes a man’s skull with a hammer, albeit against the aural backdrop of rather cartoonish sound effects for the hammer strikes and the doppelganger’s cheerful whistling, only to be followed by a subsequent scene of murder in which the music (now non-diegetic) takes on an appropriately dramatic tenor, but again incongruently matched up with an act of killing that takes on an almost slapstick, physical comedic character.

10 An excellent discussion of the specific film forms and techniques that have seen widespread use in horror cinema can be found in the edited volume Horror Film: Creating and Marketing Fear (Hantke 2004), especially in its introduction and first part. In particular, several authors point to the use of dissolves, point-of-view shots, shock cuts, and schemes for lighting as some of the formal conventions that have been crucial to the genre.
The point here then is not that whether Kurosawa’s film is better classified as comedy rather than horror; rather, it is that *Doppelganger* renders visible the sociohistorical constructedness of the generic categories of horror and comedy (and by implication the system of genres as such), laying bare the technical devices through which spectatorial desires are manipulated and regulated. If there is something that the genres of horror and comedy share, it is how their functioning as aesthetic objects is dependent upon the provocation of an interruption – an involuntary affective response – in the spectatorial experience, be it the eruption of terror or laughter. In this respect, *Doppelganger* can be understood in terms of what Linda Williams has proposed as the category of “body genres,” which name films that place particular emphasis on the production of an excessive corporeal experience of the spectator, pointing specifically to horror, pornography, and melodrama as key examples. She writes: “The body spectacle is featured most sensationally in pornography's portrayal of orgasm, in horror's portrayal of violence and terror, and in melodrama's portrayal of weeping” (Williams 1991: 4).11

With *Doppelganger*, however, a consequence of its slippage from horror to comedy is to produce conflicting affective responses in the spectator; instead of either terror or laughter, the response provoked becomes the terror at one’s own laughter (or vice versa). Considered in conjunction with the very foregrounding of the apparatus of cinema and its spectatorship effected by the extensive deployment of split screens – through the replication and multiplication of the same images, the cutting up of the mise-en-scene, or the simultaneous presentation of multiple spaces in which the two Hayasaki’s act – in *Doppelganger*, what this performance of genre subversion does can thus perhaps be understood as the compelling a second-guessing – a doubling – of the spectator’s own affective responses; it makes doppelgangers out of its spectators, foregrounding his or her implication in the circuit of images, with the consequence of blocking any drive towards the assumption of an illusory position of visual mastery.

While their specific operations differ, a similar procedure of implicating and interrupting the spectator’s gaze is also arguably the central facet of the deployment of the doppelganger motif in

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11 While Williams does not include comedy in her schema, I would nonetheless suggest that it shares a similar preoccupation with the production of excess in the body of the spectator.
Kurosawa’s later film *Retribution*. From its very opening scene, *Retribution* calls upon its spectators to look. Immediately after the titles appear and then vanish off the screen, the film’s spectators are immediately called upon to bear witness to a murder. In a sequence of only three cuts, all shot from a distance (with the first shot from behind the cover of an abandoned car) with the effect of accentuating the sense that one is secretly witnessing the scene in question, a man in a black jacket drags a woman in a red dress across the barren landscape of the landfills along Tokyo’s waterfront and pushes her face into a puddle of saltwater.

The film’s opening shots will take on greater significance later on, but initially, its primary function is to set up the plot. From here, the story continues with a series of subsequent murders, all of which are linked together by a common *modus operandi* – the drowning of the victim in (specifically) saltwater – police investigators led by the film’s protagonist Yoshioka initially believe they have a serial killer on the loose, and during the film’s first half, it appears that the film will take the shape of a murder mystery. However, a number of plot twists ensue. Clues collected at the crime scenes seemingly point to Yoshioka himself as the perpetrator, and moreover, these suspicions cast over the possibility that Yoshioka himself is involved in the series of murders are only exacerbated when the narrative takes a turn towards the supernatural with the presence of what at first appears to be the ghost of the first victim – a woman in the red dress. In the first encounter between the two, the woman in red expresses familiarity with Yoshioka, asking him “why didn’t you stay with me?” with a seemingly disembodied voice. Yoshioka however vehemently denies any knowledge of her despite seeming gaps in his memory that call his certainty into question. Later, in a subsequent encounter, her intentions are made clear. She accuses Yoshioka of murdering her, of drowning her in saltwater.

The situation becomes even more complicated when even after a suspect who is not only found with incriminating evidence, but also immediately confesses to the murder of the woman in red from the beginning of the film is finally apprehended, the ghost nevertheless continues to haunt Yoshioka. It is only at this point that he realizes that she is not the murdered woman from the opening scene, but rather someone else altogether. Her identity is then revealed as that of a woman
Yoshioka once glimpsed through the windows of the abandoned mental institution (that appears in his dreams and flashbacks) during a ferry ride along Tokyo’s waterfront. In a sense then, she is not mistaken when she accuses Yoshioka of murder, only that it is not the murder from the film’s opening that is in question, but a prior crime, that of seeing her trapped in the abandoned building yet doing nothing, and as a consequence, leaving her to die there, for which she seeks vengeance.

Certainly, when considered in contrast to the two films that preceded it, Doppelganger and the subsequent Loft (Rofuto, 2005), both of which feature an idiosyncratic juxtaposition of different genres (in the case of the latter, horror and melodrama), Retribution appears almost like a throwback for Kurosawa. For the first time in several years, Kurosawa is seemingly playing the horror genre straight with the film. That said, a few points complicate a simple reading of Retribution as little more than a straight horror film, not the least of which is that the stereotypical avenging ghost (of the woman in red) on which the horror of the film typically revolves is ultimately not all that frightening, but is instead, as Kume Yoriko points out, an oddly sympathetic figure (Kume 2007: 130). Indeed, even the responses to her by characters within the film are not reducible to fear. In Yoshioka’s case, for instance, despite his initial terror when she first appears, subsequent encounters between them might be better described as annoyance or frustration as he tries to argue with her and attempt in vain to convince her that he had nothing to do with her murder.

Nakano Yasushi has suggested that at the time when “Japanese Horror” began to be articulated as a coherent genre in the 1990s, one of the central discourses through which the emergent genre took shape was the question of the ghost-figure’s visibility. One particular practice that emerged at this moment was to present the ghost-figure only obliquely, typically by obscuring her face, in response to the commentary surrounding Nakata Hideo’s film immediately preceding Ring titled Ghost Actress (Joyûrei, 1996) wherein there was much criticism of how the over-visibility [miseung] of the ghost rendered her less frightening (Nakano 2005: 115-18). Considered in this context, the seemingly sympathetic (as opposed to terrifying) character of the woman in red in Retribution becomes unsurprising. Her face is indeed made quite visible to spectators. Indeed, when she first appears, the film goes so far as to offer a shot of her slowly approaching the camera in silence,
eventually ending with a close-up shot of her face that is made even more noteworthy given the usual rarity of close-ups in Kurosawa’s film aesthetic, which is typically dominated by long shots often obscured by screens, windows, or other obstacles.

The issue here though is not simply that Kurosawa’s film fails as a horror film. Rather, it is to suggest that if the figure of the woman in red per se is not what evokes terror, then it becomes necessary to work out what function she otherwise serves despite seemingly appearing like the stereotypical female avenging spirit that populates much of the output of the J-Horror genre. Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano has noted that implicit in much of the representation of ghosts that manifest in the major horror films of the 1990s are metacinematic concerns in that their appearances are often intimately linked to various optical technologies. For example, Sadako in Nakata Hideo’s *Ring* is first glimpsed as an image in an unmarked videotape that anonymously circulates and later literally appears by passing through the screen of a television; Shimizu Takashi’s *Marebito* (2004) employs an amateur cameraman as its protagonist and much of the film images in it are those captured by the protagonist’s own camera; and Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s own *Pulse* has the ghosts occupy cyberspace, and the encounter with them takes place through computer screens.

Given the above context, I cannot help but wonder if rather than something to be dismissed as a flaw, the peculiar visibility of the ghost of the woman in red in *Retribution* is perhaps precisely the point. It is not simply a film that attempts at being horror cinema; rather, it is arguably about the very relation between horror and the apparatus of cinema by foregrounding and articulating the implications of what is already buried within the genre’s aesthetic conventions. Here then is where the film’s opening shots take on significance. In calling upon the spectator to occupy the position of witness to a crime, it brings to attention the very desire to look, the desire to see horror. In this respect, despite appearing at a glance to work conventionally within the genre of horror, insofar as it gestures towards the implication of the spectator in the circulation of images and the affects they produce, it is perhaps not all that different from the previous *Doppelganger*. Moreover, that in *Retribution* this problem is articulated through the figure of the doppelganger as well only punctuates the point.
The issue here can be better clarified when the doppelganger’s appearance in *Retribution* is situated within the context of the detective story involving the pursuit of a serial killer that from which, at least initially, the film derives its narrative momentum. By now, the intersection of the doppelganger motif and the detective narrative in Kurosawa’s film probably comes with little surprise, in light of the various linkages between them discussed in the preceding chapters. Indeed, not unlike the breakdown in the logic of detective fiction that the doppelganger motif enacts, what is especially noteworthy about the serial killer plot as it is deployed in *Retribution* is how it ultimately articulates the limit of detective narratives. I use the term “limit” here in two distinct, but nevertheless related senses: first, as the epitome of the logic of the form of the detective narrative and second as its point of its breakdown.

In the former case, as I have touched upon, if the historical coming into being of detective narratives as an institutionalized genre is taken into consideration, it becomes clear how the figure of the serial killer has come to be viewed as the embodiment of the idea of criminality as such since the early twentieth century. To recapitulate, as Serizawa Kazuya has pointed out, by the 1920s, at the same moment that detective fiction began to form as a distinct genre of popular fiction, the logic of policing in Japan shifts its focus from the *acts* of crime themselves to the *bodies* of individual criminals, particularly in terms of assessing the danger they pose to the social fabric. Under this scheme, repeat offenders (whether already realized or only as a potential) were assessed to be of greater risk (Serizawa 2003: 74). Detective fiction, with its interest in emergent scientific techniques of criminology and the idea of deductive logic, served to disseminate and naturalize these transformations into the popular imagination; in it the figure of the serial killer not surprisingly comes to embody the personification of criminality itself in that, as Steffan Hantke has put it, “[t]he serial killer is more fantastic than the murderer in conventional detective fiction; one is ostracized for what he *did*, the other for what he *is*” (Hantke 1998: 181).

In the latter case though, in embodying the limit of the conception of modern criminality, the figure of the serial killer – precisely as an effect of the repetition of murder he or she performs – also marks the point of breakdown in the conventional logic of the detective narrative, at least in its
most classic and orthodox forms. This becomes clear when the work the figure performs is read in terms of (and against) the usual narrative effects produced by form of the detective story. Tzvetan Todorov has characterized detective fiction as a form constituted in the relation between two stories: the story of the crime and the story of the investigation. In Todorov’s view, the relation between these two constitutive stories – at least in what he calls detective fiction’s classic “whodunit” form – is that “one is absent but real, the other present but insignificant” (Todorov 1997: 46). To put it more concretely, while the story of the crime is at the center of detective narratives, it is itself not directly accessible but must be mediated through the investigation that takes place anterior to the crime. Here, the crucial point to consider is the narrative character of the task of the detective. Upon arriving at the scene after the fact of a crime, the detective works to apprehend the disparate clues that can be found there. To accomplish this, each one of these clues must be made to signify, to serve as a trace of an event in the past. In the course of this investigation, the detective has to arrange these traces temporally, in effect locating a point of origin – a motive – from which a the narrative leading up to the event of the crime can be constructed.

However, serial killer stories introduce certain complications into this schema. Not only does the serial killer often lack a motive beyond the act of murder itself, but also, in contrast to cases wherein there is merely a single event to investigate, with serial killing, the investigation is no longer anterior to the crime. Rather, they proceed simultaneous to one another and consequently, it becomes impossible for crime and investigation to be neatly demarcated. Consequently, the relation between the two necessarily shifts. A key effect of this complication in the temporal ordering of crime and investigation is to raise the stakes by in effect implicating the detective in the continuation of the killings. Every subsequent repetition of murder becomes a consequence of the absence of closure in the investigation (in the construction of narrative). The story (of the crime) does not merely end followed by and demarcated from its telling (the investigation), but rather persists into the narrative present as something that is not merely static to be interpreted, but something to which one must intervene. In the case of Retribution, Yoshioka and the Tokyo police force’s investigation
begins immediately upon the discovery of the first body of the woman in red. But before this investigation makes much headway, subsequent murders with identical *modus operandi* take place.

In itself, the serial killer plot does not necessarily challenge the conventional narrative logic of detective fiction. Nonetheless, by breaking open the closed system of the detective's act of narrative construction, it does however point towards the possibilities for its unravelling. In *Retribution*, this is further complicated by the apparent lack of a singular agent perpetrating the murders, rendering the task of producing a sense of continuity among the repeated crimes impossible. As suspects to the series of murders are apprehended and interrogated, it becomes apparent that unrelated individuals seemingly perpetrate each of the killings. The murder of the woman in red is followed by the death of the delinquent son of a doctor at the hands of his father, and then a young man by her lover after he informs her of his intention to leave his wife and marry her. What links this series of murders together is only one thing: the common act of drowning the victim in saltwater, a point that is punctuated when the third killer goes so far as to collect a large amount of saltwater for the purpose of drowning her victim in a bathtub. Against the aforementioned effect of the serial killer story to place emphasis on the perpetrator rather than the crime per se, the narrative of *Retribution* is structured around the problem of a series of killings without an obvious agent, without an identifiable singular serial killer.

The appearance of this particular plot device in *Retribution* might very well provoke an experience of *déjà vu*. This narrative of serial killing without a singular serial killer, wherein seemingly unrelated individuals commit remarkably identical murders, is a familiar one in Kurosawa’s work and does not make its first appearance in this film. As I have noted, this particular narrative device has already seen appearance in an earlier film of Kurosawa’s, namely *Cure*, hence accentuating the trope of repetition on an inter-textual level as well. In *Cure*, the investigators are faced with the similar dilemma of multiple murders all perpetrated by unrelated individuals but nevertheless sharing similar characteristics; in this case, the identical x-shaped pattern of wounding. Only later is it revealed that the murders each of them commits followed an encounter with an amnesiac master hypnotist who unearths repressed violent desires (against a coworker, or a marriage partner, or persons of the other
gender, for instance) in those he meets, as if activating a recognition of trauma in them, with the effect of compelling them to act up these traumas by performing murder.

What these two films share is their engagement with how the notion of crime is articulated – what crimes are representable and unrepresentable – in detective narratives. In connection with this, Hasumi Shigehiko has noted that within the milieu of Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s films (and particularly in the case of *Cure*), there is nothing out of the ordinary in the act of murder. In Hasumi’s words: “No one bothers to make any effort to prove their innocence. Most gestures lack motive, and this is because not even murder is conceived of as a crime… indeed, with Kurosawa Kiyoshi, murder is an everyday occurrence.” (Hasumi 2008: 69). The point here is not that murderers do not get apprehended in Kurosawa’s films. On the contrary, it is precisely because even murder is treated as an everyday occurrence that the mystery and the crime in his films are in effect not located in the individual killings, but elsewhere, in the structuring relationality constituted among them. In both *Cure* and *Retribution*, for instance, when under questioning, the apprehended killers express the sentiment that their act was the most logical course of action at that moment; they make no effort to produce alibis, conceal their crimes, or prove their innocence. Kurosawa, in other words, refuses to render his killers as embodiments of a monstrous otherness to be ostracized, instead recognizing that the capability to murder is in every one (albeit possibly repressed); it is built right into the structure of the everyday.12

In *Cure*, the film’s closing scene particularly hammers the point home. Taken on its own, this scene wherein the detective protagonist sits at a café alone appears fairly banal. Yet, as Abe Kashô accurately observes, when juxtaposed to the preceding scene wherein he shoots and kills the amnesiac hypnotist perpetrating the various murders throughout the film, with strong hints that in doing so, he has acquired the ability from him to mesmerize others and activate whatever murderous tendencies in them, what on its face is a seemingly innocent scene of everyday life takes on

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12 On this point, Kurosawa’s film agrees with the critique of the popular imagination of the serial killer as a mythic, almost fantastic figure that Richard Tithecott has leveled. He correctly notes that the serial killer, more often than not, enacts the violent fantasies – in the context of the United States, white male violence against women and people of color – embedded in and arguably constitutive of the institutions of capitalist modernity (Tithecott 1997: 161).
undertones of horror (Abe 2000: 124). Moreover, this undertone of horror is made to exceed the boundaries of the film itself, for in Cure, the mesmerism that provokes the return of the repressed and their attendant acts of murder is performed by the hypnotist through the flickering of the flame of his cigarette lighter in the darkness or the reflection of light on dripping water, in other words, through the interplay on light and darkness, the very same interplay at work in the cinematography of the film itself. For Abe, an effect of this is the spectator is compelled to wonder if he or she too has been the victim of the same mesmerism, noting further that as a consequence, “[b]eyond merely making horror the subject of representation, Kurosawa renders film itself into an object of horror” (Abe 2000: 123).

A similar observation can certainly be made of Retribution. A key scene that points in this direction is the interrogation of the second suspect – the doctor who killed his son. While he confesses to his son’s murder readily, the interrogation continues as Yoshioka attempts to press him – without any success – to admit involvement in the earlier killing of the woman in red. Midway through the interrogation, however, the doctor begins to wander about the room, until finally cowering in fear at something he and only he is apparently seeing. Most interesting in this scene is not the haunting itself though. Rather, it is the direction of the man’s gaze at this unseen presence. His eyes are turned outwards, towards a space just outside the mise-en-scene, towards the frame of the shot itself; it is the film’s very form itself that causes him distress.

It is when viewed against this context that the significance of the evocation of the figure of the doppelganger in Retribution can be clarified. Unlike in Cure wherein every individual murderer is quickly apprehended, with Retribution although suspects are identified for the latter two of the three murders, until past the midway point of the film, the first murder remains a mystery, leaving open the suggestion that the film’s protagonist Yoshioka may himself be the killer they are tracking down. Clues recovered from the first crime scene all seemingly point to him. Not only are his fingerprints found on the dead body of the woman, but also, the button from a trench coat found floating in one of the puddles of saltwater at the scene coincidentally happens to match a black coat with a missing button that he owns.
In both cases, the possibility of Yoshioka’s guilt is quickly dismissed. On the one hand, the crime lab ascribes the presence of Yoshioka’s fingerprints to a mishandling of evidence, and on the other hand, the trench coat matching the button found at the scene is revealed to be a readily available mass-produced commodity. That said, it is nevertheless telling that although he strenuously denies any connection to the murders, his very defensiveness itself suggests something more is at hand. He reacts with vehemence to even the slightest hint that he might be involved, indeed even when no real accusation has been made. Moreover, this is coupled with several half-hearted attempts at concealing evidence. When he finds the coat button in the very first scene of the investigation, for instance, Yoshioka first examines the black coat in his closet and attempts to (unsuccessfully) verify that it is not his own before surrendering the evidence to the crime lab. Although Yoshioka appears to have no conscious memory of committing these crimes, his actions nevertheless suggest that there may very well be grounds to doubt his claims of innocence, as if there is something that has been repressed – his doppelganger perhaps – on which basis he nevertheless acts. That in the course of his investigations, he is persistently haunted by the ghost of a woman in a red dress accusing him of killing her only further raises suspicions, for triggered with their every encounter is a sequence of momentary mixed-up flashbacks, of first Yoshioka drowning the woman in red that rapidly cuts to a shot of what is later revealed to be the ruins of a prewar mental institution visible from a bayside ferry that Yoshioka regularly used in his commutes in the past.

A consequence of this is to further concretize the implication of the detective in the crimes he investigates that is implicit in the logic of serial killing. If one considers Steffan Hantke’s assertion that the serial killer narrative already implicitly structures the relationship between the detective and the criminal as “those of two doubles” in that the detective is compelled to mirror the criminal’s every move (Hantke 1998: 194), this is perhaps only logical. In this respect, the doppelganger motif in Retribution arguably recalls the historical emergence of “hardboiled” detective narratives – characterized precisely by the collapse of the neat demarcation between crime and investigation, between story and discourse that consequently foregrounds the detective’s relation to (and
entanglement with) the crime in question -- in the 1920s and 1930s.\textsuperscript{13} Perhaps not coincidentally, this was also a key moment in the history of literary and cinematic articulations of the doppelganger, as I have discussed previously.\textsuperscript{14}

At stake in this complication of the relationship between detective and criminal enacted in the figure of the doppelganger, however, are more than mere matters of genre conventions. Especially relevant here is the point that in the scholarship surrounding detective narratives, one point of emphasis has been how the relationship of the detective and the criminal is aligned with an analogous relationship between reader/spectator vis-à-vis the text. The significance of this can be better clarified when the hardboiled novel’s cinematic analogue – the film noir – is specifically considered, for what the film noir realizes is the production of vicarious pleasure in the spectator, and as such, he or she is implicated in the violence through the act of bearing witness. This is certainly at work in \textit{Retribution}. Recalling the voyeuristic camera that observes a brutal murder that is the film’s opening scene, \textit{Retribution} can be said to turn its spectators into such witnesses to, or perhaps voyeuristic participants in a crime. In light of this, Hasumi Shigehiko is without a doubt on the mark in his description of Kurosawa’s film as an “exceptionally ethical work that compels a consciousness of looking and the responsibility thereof with every shot” [\textit{miru koto to sono sekinin wo shotto goto ni ishiki-ka saseru kådo ni rinriteki na sakubin}] (Hasumi 2008: 34).

\textbf{Ghosts and Interruptions}

\textsuperscript{13} Protagonists of “hardboiled” narratives are typically distinguished from their “whodunit” counterparts in terms of their relationship to the crime in question. Whereas the detectives of the latter are exterior to the crime, in the former, they are intimately tied to it.

\textsuperscript{14} It is worth remarking here that the engagement with the detective genre that Kurosawa’s film performs here does not take place in a vacuum, but rather participates in a broader discursive context of contestations surrounding definition of the detective genre since the 1990s. This is marked by on the one hand as a revival of the detective story in its classic whodunit form (the so-called \textit{shin-bonkaku} [“new orthodox”] mysteries) and on the other hand as the rise of its various literary subversions in the form of metafictional anti-mysteries. Further to this, in parallel to the discursive genealogy of the doppelganger, as Oshino Takeshi has observed, the present debates and discourses surrounding the detective genre appears to repeat similar discussions taking place in the 1930s (Oshino 2005: 21). To this may also be added the overlapping phenomenon of the proliferation of doppelganger fictions at identical historical conjunctures that I have been examining here.
Taking stock of the ways in which the figure of the double enacts an interruption that exceeds the boundaries of the film so as to also implicate the spectator is of particular importance for articulating the stakes of the figure’s function to interrupt the ways in which genres act to structure the unfolding of their narratives. While perhaps not doing so in as overt a form, not unlike the case in Doppelganger, a similar consequence of the appearance of the double in Retribution is the derailment of its initial narrative set up, the breakdown in the logic of the genre it seemingly takes up. This is made evident by the fact that as the narrative progresses, Yoshioka himself seemingly loses interest in the initial driving force of the narrative – the investigation of the murders. As hints of his doppelganger begin to manifest his attention is focused less on attending to the evidence or following up leads and more on the dilemmas of his unconscious. When he does happen to locate suspects, it is largely by accident. The doctor who murdered his son is coincidentally found loitering around the Tokyo waterfront, and the locating of the young woman who killed her lover is the result of a rather contrived random encounter on the street. In the latter case, Yoshioka is not even present at the crime scene when it is first investigated, further aggravating any suspicions about him.

What is more striking than this, however, is that this suggestion that Yoshioka’s double is the perpetrator of the killings in fact turns out to be a red herring when it is revealed that he is not in fact the killer of the woman in red from the film’s opening scene, hence revealing itself not to be a film that merely rehearses the now familiar trick in detective narratives of collapsing the perpetrator and the detective into a single character. Earlier I noted that when Tokyo Police are finally able to identify the first victim as Shibata Reiko, they are quickly able to apprehend a suspect (her ex-boyfriend), who is not only found with incriminating evidence, but also immediately confesses to the crime. Yet despite this arrest and seeming closure of the mystery, the result is not, as it might be expected, to absolve Yoshioka of guilt. On the contrary, it arguably implicates him further. The story does not end; the ghost of the woman in red persists in haunting him, in accusing him of killing her. Ultimately, what is still lacking is an explanation for the uncanny similarities in the modus operandi of the three killers that have been identified. In other words, although the individual crimes have
been resolved, the relations among them remain unclear. And it is in the constitution of this relationality where Yoshioka’s – and with it, the spectator’s – implication in the crime lies.

In his own writing, Kurosawa Kiyoshi has asserted that what distinguishes horror cinema from other genres which may evoke the supernatural is that the terror it provokes is not one that can easily be dismissed or overcome through the simple closure of the narrative; on the contrary, it is a fear that persists, that produces an interruption that radically transforms one’s life from that moment on, which moreover cannot be reduced to particular images or tropes, but is rather a potential that all cinema bears (Kurosawa 2001: 23-26). Certainly, such is true of the ghost of the woman in red in Retribution given how she refuses to be quieted even as the murders are resolved. Further to this, as a consequence of her continued haunting, the ghost of the woman in red activates what has been repressed in Yoshioka’s memory (appearing in the film in the form of a rapid flashback montage), one that irrevocably transforms Yoshioka by forcing the recognition in him that he is capable of (and has indeed performed) murder (Kurosawa 2002: 23-26). In the end, Yoshioka realizes that the ghost who haunts him is not the first victim in the serial killing, Shibata Reiko, but someone else altogether, someone from a memory long since repressed: a woman he once glimpsed behind the window of an abandoned mental institution by the Tokyo waterfront, who subsequently reveals to Yoshioka her fate since that moment of their first encounter: “I stayed there for years and years, waiting and waiting, forgotten by everyone. Then I died,” she tells him.

A conclusion that can be drawn from her words is that the crime for which she seeks retribution is not the kind of violent murder that the film has made visible in its serial killer narrative, but rather is the embodiment of the logic of murder built into structure of the everyday of capitalism predicated upon the productions of unevenness, exclusions, and indeed, violence. It speaks to, in other words, the “the featureless, deindividualized crime that anyone could have committed because at this point everyone is the same” (Moretti 2005: 135-37), the perfect crime of capitalism wherein violence is not the exception but is instead the rule that, as Franco Moretti once remarked, is unrepresentable in detective fiction:
Money is always the motive of crime in detective fiction, yet the genre is wholly silent about production: that unequal exchange between labor-power and wages which is the true source of social wealth. Like popular economics, detective fiction incites people to seek the secret of profit in the sphere of circulation, where it cannot be found – but in compensation, one finds thefts, con-jobs, frauds, false pretenses, and so on. The indignation against what is rotten and immoral in the economy must concentrate on these phenomena. As for the factory – it is innocent, and thus free to carry on. (Moretti 2005: 139)

With this taken into account, it should not come as a surprise then that it is not only Yoshioka whom she haunts. Rather it is everyone who has managed to catch a glimpse of her through the windows of the abandoned mental institution, including (but apparently not limited to) each one of the perpetrators of the individual murders. Later, when Yoshioka interrogates the suspect of the third saltwater killing, she tells him “her emotions poured into me,” in other words, her desires (for retribution) become imbricated in the repressed desires of all who see her. To put it another way, it is her appearance that provokes the return of the repressed, the activation of a murderous doppelganger, in those she haunts, entangling their desires with her own and consequently provoking them to murder. Thus, what is terrifying about the woman in red is not any threat of retribution per se – at no point does the ghost of the woman in red, for instance, directly threaten violence against Yoshioka – but rather, because of her uncanny provocation of a traumatic return in those who gaze upon her. Her very presence marks the repetition of trauma that is the condition of possibility for the recognition of an “original” trauma, in effect disturbing the stability of the present that is predicated on such a repression. In other words, she does more than just embody a reminder the persistence of remnants of the past in the present; she moreover renders visible the violence in the very demarcation of past and present. In this sense, I would contend that at stake in her demand for justice is not merely the response to a violence that took place in the past that has since been repressed, but the violence of the structure of repression itself, or alternatively, the condition that structurally makes the production of repression necessary.

With this in mind, I believe there is much merit to Kume Yoriko’s reading of the ghost in the women in red as a kind of doppelganger; in Kume’s word, “it is possible to regard her as the doppelganger of ‘humanity’ as a whole” [‘jinrui’ zentai no dopperugengâ toshite minusu koto ga kanô] (Kume
Or alternatively, as I would prefer to put it, insofar as she returns from out of time and refuses to be domesticated, she might be understood as a doppelganger of history. Indeed, as I have discussed in a previous chapter, it is precisely in terms of this resistance to being temporally domesticated, to being rendered as dead and completed, that Jacques Derrida articulates his conception of the specter. Writing at the same moment of Japan’s so-called “horror boom” in the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, wherein following the collapse of the Soviet Bloc, Derrida evokes the temporality with the specter against the pronouncements of “the end of history” made by such individuals as Francis Fukuyama, which in essence declare the victory of capitalist modernity over any other social or material arrangement.

Derrida’s conception of the specter is particularly relevant in the case of Retribution in part because for Derrida, the specter’s primary preoccupation is precisely repetition: “A question of repetition: a specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back” (Derrida 1994: 11). In placing emphasis on this point, Derrida ties the ontology of the specter to the problem of the temporal (and by implication, the historical). Just as the specter oscillates between (and in effect, deconstructs) such categories as presence and absence, life and death, etc., so too does it relate to temporal positions. To put it another way, the specter’s appearance marks not merely a return of a past that can then be assimilated into a familiar continuity, but a radical alterity that resists easy temporalization, with the effect calling into question the presumed stability of the present, producing a sense that, in Derrida’s words by way of quotation from Shakespeare’s Hamlet, “time is out of joint:”

Indeed, time is out of joint in Retribution. Formally, this is given particular emphasis through the ragged temporality produced by the sudden and jarring cuts that break apart the often long takes of the film’s scenes with the effect of baring the mechanism of film’s illusory transparency constructed through its editing together into a continuous movement of shots that were in all likelihood taken at disparate places and times. Notably, an early scene in the film foreshadows this question of disjointed time even before the ghost makes her appearance in what might at first be dismissed as a throwaway line in a conversation between him and a woman named Harue who
appears to be an intimate partner. Referencing an earthquake from an earlier scene – which itself
hints at the tenuous stability of the foundations of the filmic space-time – they discuss the recent
construction at the waterfront visible from the window of Yoshioka’s apartment. Both note how
they are no longer able to recall what stood on the land prior to the new construction, with Yoshioka
further adding the comment that as a consequence of all the land reclamation, construction, and
tearing down of structures, he would probably no longer know where any of the locations he used to
see when he was still commuting by waterfront ferry from the nearby city of Kawasaki to Tokyo.
This constant (re)construction taking place at the waterfront is not, however, viewed as a sign of
progress or development. On the contrary, to the characters in the film, it is seen as more indicative
of the failure of progress, suggesting a sense of a lack of future, with the two declaring the future “a
big disappointment.” Their world can be characterized by, in other words, the compulsion to repeat
the constant sameness produced by endless differentiation that is arguably capitalist modernity’s
prime feature.

Taking up Derrida’s notion of the specter, Bliss Cua Lim reads ghost films in the
postcolonial context as “historical allegories” that “make incongruous use of the vocabulary of the
supernatural to articulate historical injustice, referring to ‘social reality’ by recourse to the undead”
(Lim 2001: 288). The ghost represents an interruption in the order of linear time imposed by the
regime of modernity, such that the historical injustice at stake in its appearance is not only a matter
of violence that took place in the historical past, but the violence (symbolic or otherwise) of modern
historicism, of the temporality of capitalist modernity itself. To a point, Lim’s analysis certainly finds
resonance in Kurosawa’s Retribution. Not only does the appearance of the ghost of the woman in red
gesture towards a disruption in the normal operation of modern time – in the film manifesting in the
form of an interruption in the normal and expected unfolding of narrative within the strictures of its
genre – but also, in her capacity as history’s doppelganger, it comes then as no surprise that the ghost
in Retribution is figured as a woman, and moreover, a “madwoman,” embodying that which must be
repressed to produce the subject of modernity, in this case, the feminine and the irrational. She is, to
put it differently, the modern subject’s Other personified, incorporated into the constitution of its
logic precisely through her exclusion, her repression. As such, recalling Ranjanna Khanna’s discussion of the colonial logic of psychoanalysis, with the return of the woman in red from the dead, does she not perform precisely that role of provoking a historical trauma that undoes the figuration of the modern subject by rendering visible how it is constituted through the violence of the colonial relation (Khanna 2003: 27)?

Much of Bliss Lim’s analysis of the ghost film is compelling, and as far as the specific texts (and their respective Hong Kong and Philippine contexts) she examines are concerned, there is no doubt something productive in considering their deployment of the figure of the ghost in terms of a postcolonial historical allegory. Yet that said, while Lim herself is careful not to fall into this trap – careful to recognize that the temporality of the ghost cannot be reduced to representing a naïve authentic time that has not already been worked over by modernity – I nevertheless cannot help but sense a danger in how the emphasis on the allegorical function of the ghost can easily slip into a valorization of ahistorical national allegories, a danger that is particularly fraught when considering the context of Japan where the production of national allegories cannot be separated from its disavowed history of imperial conquest. Furthermore, given the ghost’s (and the doppelganger’s) foregrounding of the problem of representing the past, it is worth referencing Arif Dirlik’s complaint about the inordinate focus on the past in postcolonial discourses, writing that: “Preoccupation with colonialism and its legacies makes for an exaggerated view of the hold of the past over contemporary realities, and an obliviousness to the reconfiguration of past legacies by contemporary restructurizations of power” (Dirlik 2002: 429). Dirlik may very well be overstating things, but I believe that there is nonetheless a valid point made here, for while the attention to the historical allegorical function of the ghost without a doubt has merit, it is also critical to articulate what conditions in the present provoke the appearance of these ghosts. More to the point, it is critical to interrogate the

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15 The films in question are Stanley Kwan’s Rouge (Yanzhi Kou, 1987) and Butch Perez’s Haplos (1982), respectively.

16 Harry Harootunian criticizes Partha Chatterjee precisely on these terms, arguing that Chatterjee’s desire for an indigenous alternative modernity that has not already been worked over by capitalism and colonialism repeats the same logic that facilitated fascist ideologies in 1930s Japan (Harootunian 2002).
stakes of the desire for these ghosts, such that they come to be circulated as image-commodities in the form of cinema and new media.

As an illustrative case in point, it is worth taking up Jay McRoy’s recent discussion of contemporary Japanese horror cinema in these terms. Like Lim, McRoy suggests in his discussion that figures of the avenging spirits that proliferate in horror films, through their acts of vengeance, “simultaneously balance the scales of a perceived sense of justice, evoke fears of social change or the return of a ‘monstrous past’ and expose the inequities inherent within a largely patriarchal structure” (McRoy 2005: 4). While nothing in McRoy’s assertion itself appears inaccurate per se, it is telling that the socio-cultural picture of Japan he paints is rather overly expansive and slips into an almost ahistorical account. Much of what he highlights in his analysis – fears of social change or critiques of the patriarchal structures – are not new themes in much of the stereotypical commentary and discourse (regardless of how accurate a picture they might in fact paint) surrounding Japan through the decades, and in asserting these without much qualification or elaboration, what is elided is any sense of historical specificity.

The gap in McRoy’s argument is revealed by a tendency in his analysis, despite at times acknowledging cross-cultural interactions, to rely on a tired West/Japan binary as its starting point with the effect of implicitly reifying an ahistorical notion of “Japan” or “Japanese culture.” For instance, to read ghost films such as Nakata Hideo’s Ring as “key texts for mapping crucial socio-cultural anxieties” in terms of the impact of late capitalism on the “various (re)constructions” of the Japanese family appears to be a sound point of departure. (McRoy 2008: 81), But to do so, as McRoy does, without accounting for the function the form of the family serves in the capitalist mode of production in the first place strikes me as lacking. Instead, McRoy simply offers the pat observation that “one of the more interesting aspects of contemporary Japanese culture is the varying degrees to which US ideologies and popular aesthetics… have had a deeply rooted and curiously expansive impact upon Japanese social formations” (McRoy 2008: 79) in a move that appears to simply uncritically reproduce discredited narratives of modernization and Westernization.
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Consequently, even if the politics they espouse differ, it seems nonetheless that the underlying premises of McRoy’s analysis here shares much with the same dual structure that seeks to neatly demarcate the domain of the political-economic and the cultural – and with it, the same elision of history – that Harootunian criticizes in the nationalist discourse of Kató Norihiro.¹⁷ This is not unconnected to another problem in McRoy’s examination of Japanese horror cinema: the lack of specificity in the treatment of the genre named “Japanese horror cinema.” If, as McRoy asserts, “[h]orror cinema has long been a vital component of the Japanese film industry” (McRoy 2005: 1), then why is it only since the 1990s that it has become a particular object of fascinated attention in film discourse both globally and within Japan? In other words, why it is specifically since the 1990s that the genre has seen an unprecedented boom., and indeed arguably only formed discursively at the specific conjuncture of the 1990s, as Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano has highlighted (Wada-Marciano 2007: 23).¹⁸

This elision of historical specificity is made most evident when he repeatedly references a national “cinematic tradition” as if “Japanese horror” (with a distinct emphasis on Japanese) is a coherent and stable genre that can be distilled into a transhistorical essence. Telling, for instance, is his attempt to draw a lineage between the appearance of figure of the “avenging spirit” in contemporary Japanese horror cinema and traditional “Japanese literary and dramatic arts”, referencing specifically the kaidan and shuramono – the genre of supernatural plays in kabuki theater and ghost plays in Nô theater, respectively. (McRoy 2008: 75). Likewise, his coverage of films spans everything from the standard contemporary work of Nakata Hideo and Shimizu Takashi to pink films to even Iwai Shunji’s All About Lily Chou-Chou (Ririi shushu no subete, 2001).

What such an expansive approach to the genre does, in Mitsuyo Wada-Marciano’s argument, is to wrench the specific films from the specific material conditions of their production and

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¹⁷ The linkage between the narrative of assimilation and its elision of the political economic is touched upon by Marilyn Ivy, who notes that: “Disclosed in the image of assimilation with its insistence on the final imperviousness of Japanese culture is a profound categorical uneasiness, an uneasiness contained only by keeping the spheres of the economic and cultural distinct” (Ivy 1995: 1-2).

¹⁸ In suggesting that “Japanese Horror” as a genre formed in the 1990s, I understand the point to mean not that horror cinema did not exist in Japan prior to this moment, but rather that it comes to be named as a genre, and with that the discursive boundaries that marked its common tropes, conventions, its aesthetics, indeed its own pre-history began to ossify, at this point.
spectatorship, such that films that were not classified as horror at their moment of production retroactively come to seen as so (Wada-Marciano 2007: 42-44). Indeed, considering its expansiveness, it seems to not be much of a stretch from here to grasp that under this broad category of horror that McRoy deploys, practically any film may be considered; it is almost as if the specific genre of “Japanese horror cinema” has come to stand in for a national “Japanese cinema” as such. The consequences of this are twofold: first, it implicitly reproduces an ahistorical construct of the nation and national cinema; second, viewed in conjunction with an understanding of horror as a genre that is especially attentive to alterity, the conflation of Japanese horror cinema with Japanese cinema as such hints at a positioning of “Japan” as essentially other.

For Wada-Marciano, the very naming of “Japanese horror cinema” or “J-horror” as a genre with any semblance of coherence has a historical specificity predicated upon shifts in the transnational flows of capital and culture effected by transformations in the practices of producing and consuming image-commodities that new media technologies have enabled (Wada-Marciano 2007: 23). If so, then the irony here is that “J-Horror” is perhaps an exemplary transnational form. Indeed it is telling that in many cases, Japanese scholars use the *katakana* transliteration (typically reserved for foreign words) *Japanizu horâ* to refer to the genre, as if it were a foreign entity, implicitly acknowledging how its national marker and formation as a genre are marked by its traffic as a globally circulated commodity.19 In other words, contrary to any claims as to their supposed cultural particularity, it seems that the genre of “J-Horror” from the outset already imbricates the production of nationality through the circulation of images.

One scarcely needs to mention the concerns raised against the arguably othering gaze employed in Fredric Jameson’s assertion that “[a]ll third-world texts are necessarily… allegorical” to recognize how potentially charged such an approach can become (Jameson 1986: 69; Ahmad 1987: 3-25). It is not my intention to rehash these debates here, but simply to note that the crucial consideration that needs to be made in the aftermath of the issue of “national allegory” the position of the critic performing an allegorical interpretation cannot be seen as external to the object of

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19 See, for example, the essays by Kume Yoriko (2007) and Nakano Yasushi (2005) referenced elsewhere in this chapter.
interpretation; they are positionalities enabled by the global circulation of images as commodities and the immaterial labor of their production and consumption. Shu-Mei Shih puts it well when she identifies that at stake here is “the politics of allegorical interpretation as value-producing labor — who has the privilege of doing it, who is forced to do it, who has the luxury not to do it” (Shih 2004: 21). Or to put it in the terms discussed above, it may be pertinent to pose the question: who is compelled to produce horror, to produce ghosts – or for that matter, doppelgangers – for allegorical consumption?

The point may even be more fundamental in the case of cinema, a point that Kurosawa’s Retribution effectively brings to attention. Consider that the crime for which the ghost of the woman in red seeks justice is precisely the crime of looking; she implicates Yoshioka and others because they looked and saw her silhouette through the windows of the abandoned mental institution in which she is imprisoned – they in effect became witnesses to a crime – yet turned away and did nothing. I have discussed elsewhere in this dissertation Jonathan Beller’s argument that cinema and the social practices relations it constitutes are “deterritorialized factories in which spectators work, that is, in which we perform value-productive labor” (Beller 2006: 1). At the heart of Beller’s claim is that, especially since the inauguration of late capitalism, the logic of capitalist expansion and accumulation has been increasingly organized around the cinematic apparatus. As a consequence, in the act of looking, which functions as an extension of the working day, not only is value extracted from the spectator’s labor, but the very logic of capitalist social relations – with all its attendant unevenness, exploitations, dispossessions, and violence – is reproduced. Might this not be the general logic of murder, the perfect crime in which all spectators participate – whether they intend to or not – for which the ghost of the woman in red seeks retribution? Might this not be precisely what is at stake in the interruption of the desire to look that the encounter with the doppelganger provokes?

Epilogue

In looking, Jonathan Beller further argues, there is another form of labor that takes place: spectators also perform work upon themselves. The act of spectatorship constitutes desires, affects, and
subjectivities in the service of the social relations necessary for the reproduction of capitalist modernity. The industrial production of images in the cinematic apparatus extends the logics of capitalism and colonialism, effecting first a systematic production of the imaginary for the subject, and then subsequently making the imaginary in itself productive for capital. (Beller 2006b: 199). In other words, through the labor of looking, there is also, in the words of Neferti Tadiar, a “fantasy-production” – a structuring and ordering of the imaginary – that operates (Tadiar 2003: 5-6).

Throughout my study of the doppelganger in this dissertation, a key concern has been the search for critical practice of looking that does not simply end up in a performative contradiction that reductively fixes the figure of the double without accounting for the contradictions it lays bare, and with this, the transformative potential it might bear. Insofar as the figure of the doppelganger embodies a play on the positions of identity and difference, of subject and object, such a practice has been demanded by the object of the study itself. But if my discussion here has been any indication, then this is no doubt a problem that goes beyond just the analysis of the doppelganger. While it would be overreaching to assert that it offers an answer to the problem, in its interruption of the ascribed narrative trajectories that generic categories impose, the critical force of the doppelganger might very well be located in its potential for articulating a desire to interrupt – to open up to critique – the limits and contradictions of these fantasy-productions that structure what can be imagined, what can be dreamed. Its appearances in the work of Kurosawa Kiyoshi – alongside those of Edogawa Rampo, Akutagawa Ryōnosuke, Tanizaki Jun’ichirō and others – illustrate that the structuring of the imaginary is as much a crucial site of struggle as any. They speak to the problem that Tomiko Yoda has in a different context written of in the following terms: “[a] critical question that arises… is whether the existing frames of knowledge are adequate to the task of developing an understanding, not to speak of a cogent strategy against, the problems arising before us” (Yoda 2005: 49).

If, as I have suggested previously, on the one hand the detective does his or her work under the conditions of a temporal lag, and that on the other hand detective work can be thought to parallel spectatorial work, then it seems possible to consider that it is through the mechanism of fantasy-
production that this lag manifests in the latter. Or to put it another way, just as what is possible in
detective work is limited by the rules and conventions of the genre in which he or she operates, so
too is the spectator’s (and critic’s) imagination. Like narratives plugged into the formulaic
conventions of ossified literary genres, novel phenomena tend to be understood using older concepts
and categories that are insufficient to account for precisely their novelty. Indeed, the revived
insistence on the category of the nation as a means of domesticating the traumatic disjunctures of the
present moment in Japan is just such an example. Relevant here is my previous discussion of the
historicity of the doppelganger’s conceptualization within psychoanalytic discourse. In the
doppelganger’s figuration of traumatic repetition, one implication that can be drawn is that if the very
condition of possibility for conceiving of the traumatic constitution of subjectivity is predicated on
the colonial violence that is constitutive of modernity, then implicated in the experience of trauma is
also a broader “historical trauma,” wherein, as Kaja Silverman has characterized it, the narratives of
“dominant fictions” come to be undone (Silverman 1992: 55). The challenge here then is to cultivate
the doppelganger’s embodiment of excess, its enactment of traumatic repetition with the capacity to
threaten to “undo our imaginary relation to the symbolic order, as well as the other elements within
the social formation with which that order is imbricated” (Silverman 1992: 55).

In the present moment marked in by what Saitô Tamaki has observed as a recent resurgence
of a desire for fetishized images and narratives of trauma and recuperation – what could very well be
characterized as a commodification of trauma – in the popular culture of Japan in the contemporary
moment (Saitô 2003), the issue is perhaps even more pressing. This returns this discussion to Fredric
Jameson’s observation of an “increasing inability to imagine a different future.” By this, what
Jameson seeks is a future that is a radical alternative to the structures and logics of capitalist
modernity, a future that has not been colonized by and reduced to merely the extension of (and in
effect rendered docile to) the present (Jameson 2005: 232). With its own apocalyptic finale,
Kurosawa’s Retribution is certainly no exception. Indeed, it too seems unable to articulate a different
way out of the present. At one point, Yoshioka even goes so far as to ask the ghost of the woman in
red “what did you want me to do?” But she has no response to this question. In the end, even after
Yoshioka has collected her remains, she is not quieted. All that he achieves is individual absolution for himself. Everyone else is still subject to her vengeance. But could there also be hints of a utopian dimension to this apocalypse? Like the earthquakes in the film that open cracks in the walls through which the ghost might emerge, could there also be tremblings that hint at a desire for something that is yet to become imaginable, that at this juncture can only be articulated as the primal, disembodied scream of the woman in red, as the film’s titular sakebi?

Parallel to how the uncanny effects of the doppelganger disrupt the temporality of genre, the uncanny is also built into cinema’s technological apparatus as such. After all, not only have ghosts haunted cinema since its beginnings, but moreover optical technologies have long been associated with a sense of the uncanny in their potential to turn its spectators into specters. Especially pronounced (but not restricted to such cases) when dealing with the double – when the spectator’s own image is optically reproduced – cinema, photography, and other similar technologies compel the realization that these images, as Jacques Derrida has observed, “will be reproducible in our absence, because we know this already, we are already haunted by this future… We are spectralized by the shot, captured by spectrality in advance” (Derrida and Stiegler 2002: 117). Thus, the image becomes the doppelganger that acts as a harbinger of death. But with this also comes a potential fracture in the fantasy-production, for if the images will survive the spectator, then perhaps a crack in the wall through which the imagination of the Other who will encounter the same images, from a future yet to be colonized by the present, might also be opened.

Thus, to repeat, to return to the film’s finale from where this final chapter began, might not the repeated utterance of the words “I died, so everyone else should die, too” by the woman in red – addressed not only to the characters in the film, but also to the film’s spectators – be an invocation to become ghosts, or doppelgangers, and with it a demand to imagine something Other, yet to come.
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