

NOW LONG AGO:
ANACHRONISM IN EDO AND CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

What is going on in a work of fiction when a samurai uses a cell phone? Anachronisms (things out of their time) such as this are certainly funny, and other anachronisms might be dismissed as mistakes on the part of the author. But are anachronisms really nothing more than errors or cheap comedic gags? This dissertation argues that anachronisms do important work on history, and explores this work that anachronisms perform in Japanese literature. Using theories of postmodern play, juxtaposition, and intertextuality, Mikhail Bakhtin's theories of the dialogic, Azuma Hiroki's theory of the cultural database, and other postmodern theories, I examine anachronism as a literary phenomenon that playfully summons up discourses about the past and reconfigures them in new ways by superimposing them on the present. However, anachronisms are inherently reflexive and playful, and cannot convincingly rewrite the past. They call attention to the work they are doing on history, exposing the absurdity of their project. History, of course, is an important site of social and cultural meaning. It is used as a source of identity, as well as to legitimate power. Anachronism, then, is a way that literature can playfully and self-consciously destabilize sociopolitical narratives and structures based on that history without convincingly rewriting history in its own act of power.

I examine the projects being undertaken with anachronism in several texts from the contemporary period (late Shōwa to the present) and the Edo period (1600-1868). The Edo period's circumstances are very different from those of the contemporary period, and so Edo texts are situated in very different contexts, and are engaged in very different projects. However, the Edo period also saw the maturation of a highly developed textual society, mass printing, and high literacy. Perhaps because of these familiar conditions, anachronism is widely apparent in Edo literature and theatre. Therefore, this dissertation examines anachronism in the Edo period as a literary technique that counterfactually and reflexively juxtaposes past and present to do work on history, while remaining cognizant that the hermeneutics and politics of the Edo period which these anachronisms worked on differ greatly from the postmodern present.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The year is 1184. Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 has been sent by his brother, Minamoto no Yoritomo 源頼朝, to drive the army of their erstwhile ally Kiso no Yoshinaka 木曾義仲 out of Kyoto and kill him. Finally, Yoshinaka is defeated, and his head is taken to be presented to Yoshitsune at his camp. Yoshitsune inspects the head and, now that he is certain Yoshinaka is dead, must inform Yoritomo straight away. He picks up a phone proffered by a retainer. “Hello, Brother? Yoshinaka is dead.”¹

At least, that is how it happens in Tezuka Osamu’s 手塚治虫 *Hi no tori* 火の鳥 (Phoenix, 1980). What are we to make of such a ridiculous anachronism? Anachronisms tend to be dismissed as mere errors, but while we can imagine authors erroneously believing, to name one infamous example, that Romans used stirrups, clearly Tezuka cannot have been under the mistaken impression that Yoshitsune possessed a telephone. What is clear, however, is that the anachronism is humorous. Precisely because it is so obviously out of place, the use of the telephone becomes a comic element. But what is this comic element doing in Tezuka’s relatively sober deconstruction of Japanese history?

It should never be presumed that comedy is innocent. Anachronisms are an engagement with history. They literally inject the present into the past (or in some cases, the past into the present). In doing so they summon up multiple discourses about the past and the present—history, in other words—and overlay them in a manner that is preposterous yet undeniably appealing. What work are anachronisms doing (for they are indeed doing work) on the crucial battleground of history?

To answer that, it is necessary to more carefully define and categorize anachronism itself. The example above is from a work published in 1980 (first published in serial form in the late 1970s). Yet anachronisms have been present in literature and culture more generally for

¹ Tezuka Osamu, *Hi no tori*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1992), 134-5. All translations from Japanese sources are mine. “*Moshimoshi, anija. Yoshinaka wa shinimashitaze.*”

centuries, perhaps most famously in Shakespeare. It is unlikely that all of these anachronisms, situated as they are in very different sociopolitical contexts, are engaged in the same project. It is therefore necessary to classify anachronisms in order to refine our discussion of them.

To begin, I should make it clear that not every anachronism is laden with meaning. Some anachronisms, like the Romans using stirrups mentioned above, really are simple errors, noticed neither by the author nor the readers (except perhaps the rare Roman history buff), and therefore failing to visibly summon discourses on past and present in the way that Yoshitsune using a telephone does. Note, however, that authorial attention (or intention) is not necessary for a fruitful anachronism: readers can very well pick up on an anachronism that an author mistakenly inserted. However, if readers remain unaware of the anachronism, it fails to function in a way that allows it to work on history. Of course the anachronism still exists in the text, and in a different context it may become significant (if, for example, the assertion that Rome was defeated by stirrups were to become widely known, future readers would be keenly aware of that anachronism, and it would evoke various historical discourses in them). Nevertheless, some anachronisms that appear in texts are not noticed or appreciated as such, and can be deemed mere errors.

However, dismissing anachronisms as such is dangerous, and should be done with the utmost caution. Failing to acknowledge that a textual element is meaningful blinds one to the work that element may be doing. For centuries, scholars dismissed the anachronisms in Shakespeare's dramatic works as mere errors. Phyllis Rackin writes that for such scholars:

anachronisms can only be faults, either faults to be blamed as the embarrassing evidence of Shakespeare's lack of education or faults to be excused as the product of a genius too preoccupied with the essence of universal truth to trouble itself with the accident of transient fashions or temporary opinions. These positions, in fact, pretty much exhaust the range of commentary on Shakespearean anachronism [before our own time].²

Shakespeare's anachronisms were, therefore, entirely dismissed, presumed to have been noticed by neither the author nor his audience because of "Shakespeare's ignorance or... the

² Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 88.

benighted age in which he lived.”³ Benighted, that is, because of the deplorable state of historiography, at least from the perspective of Enlightenment scholars.

However, as Rackin notes, scholars who catalogued all of Shakespeare’s anachronisms as errors “historicized Shakespeare’s practice, but only at the cost of denying that Shakespeare and his contemporaries were capable of historicizing their own past.”⁴ Therefore, for centuries scholars have ignored the work that Shakespeare’s anachronisms might be doing on history. Yet Shakespeare was writing at a point in history when the medieval past could be distinguished clearly from the present of the Renaissance. This consciousness of temporal distance “alienated a nostalgic present from a lost historical past.”⁵ Shakespeare’s history plays, therefore, evoke a discourse of difference by portraying a past discontinuous with the present. Yet his anachronisms create a site of contiguity between past and present in the middle of that discourse. This contiguity is, of course, ahistorical and counterfactual, but it is unlikely that such a remarkable thing was completely unnoticed by either author or audience. Shakespearean anachronism is then, according to Rackin, a site of “radical instability,” and an instability which is “political as well as epistemological: the multiply conflicted site designated by anachronism was also the point where historiographic representation, whether in the form of written narrative or dramatic reenactment, could take on dangerous present relevance.”⁶

This instability could be made to work for many projects, from the literary-symbolic to the political. Sigurd Burckhardt has argued that the clock striking in *Julius Caesar* is a deliberate anachronism, designed to drive home the fact that “time is now reckoned in a new, Caesarean style,”⁷ emphasizing Caesar’s terrible power. And Rackin provides evidence that the political work anachronisms are capable of was appreciated in Shakespeare’s own time, sometimes to deadly effect:

³ *ibid.*

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ *ibid.*, 91.

⁶ *ibid.*, 92.

⁷ Sigurd Burckhardt, *Shakespearean Meanings* (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1968), 89.

On the day before their unsuccessful uprising against Queen Elizabeth, followers of the Earl of Essex sponsored a performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II*, apparently hoping the play would incite its audience to join their rebellion. A tiny anachronism, not likely to attract attention in a modern theatre, occurs in act II, scene i, when one of the fourteenth-century conspirators against King Richard charges that the king has used benevolences to extort money from his subjects. Shakespeare may have known that Richard II never used the forced loans called benevolences; Holinshed, his source for most of the history plays, states that benevolences were introduced by Edward IV, who reigned late in the following century. And the authorities in Elizabeth's England certainly knew that Richard II never used benevolences because this very anachronism... was cited at the trial of Essex as evidence that "the times of Elizabeth rather than those of Richard II were in question."⁸

Here anachronism acts as a coded signifier, signaling that while the text is nominally about an era far enough removed from the present to be portrayed critically without fear of censorship or censure, it is really about the politics of the present: the benevolences of present-day monarchs.

However, even Rackin does not insist that every Shakespearean anachronism is significant, conceding that many are just examples of poetic license being used to rearrange the order of events or ages of characters in order to make a dramatic point.⁹ Doubtless this is true, and doubtless it is also true for many of the anachronisms found in Japanese literature as well. However, it is clear that the default position one should assume towards an anachronism is critical attention. To dismiss anachronism as error would be to repeat the mistake of centuries of Shakespeare scholars and blind ourselves to the work that anachronisms can do on the historical discourses they evoke.

This is especially important because, just like Shakespeare's era, our own time is marked by that same consciousness of temporal distance from a lost past.¹⁰ We are keenly aware of the break between the premodern and the modern, as well as the somewhat messier (if only for

⁸ Rackin, 92-3.

⁹ *ibid.*, 93. For example, Rackin notes that "in *1 Henry IV* Hotspur, historically three years older than the king, is made the contemporary of Prince Hal so that he can serve as a foil to the heir apparent, and thus Henry VI's Queen Margaret (dead in France in 1482) is kept alive in the England of Richard III to rail at the Yorkists and remind the audience of the past crimes that make their present sufferings justified."

¹⁰ I will take up the applicability of this theory to Edo in Chapter 3.

being more recent) break between modernity and postmodernity. Just like Shakespeare's history plays, contemporary depictions of history evoke a discourse of difference by portraying a past discontinuous with the present. And anachronisms that appear in these works create a site of contiguity between past and present in the middle of that discourse. It is these sites of radical instability which I wish to examine in Japanese literature, where they seem to thrive especially.

If anachronisms are radical sites of instability that evoke and abuse discourses of history, a classification of anachronism must take into account their relationship with history, and the relationship of the project in which they are implicit. For the purposes of this study I will divide anachronisms into two broad categories, namely modern and postmodern, which I will define below, with the caveat that these categories are not periodization. In other words, the category of an anachronism does not describe the period (modern or postmodern) in which the anachronistic work was published or produced, but rather the anachronism's relationship with history as described by the *cultural logic* of modernity and postmodernity, respectively. Additionally these categories are not exhaustive, and there may well be other categories of anachronism (Shakespeare scholars might wish to take up another category for his anachronisms, for example).

Despite the great volume of ink spilled on the modern and the postmodern, there is still a great variety of opinion in the discourse as to what distinguishing characteristics they have, or even when one ended and the other began. And, of course, the debate sprawls across disciplines, encompassing not only literature but architecture, photography, film, society, politics, culture, etc. But fortunately, for the purposes of describing anachronism it is only necessary to examine the way these two paradigms, modernity and postmodernity, interact with history. To elucidate that interaction, I will rely on Lyotard's definition of postmodernity: "Simplifying to the extreme, I define *postmodernism* as incredulity towards metanarratives."¹¹

¹¹ Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), xxiv.

Metanarratives, or grand narratives, are modernity's engines of legitimization, a totalizing (or all-encompassing) narrative of humanity and the individual's place within it that legitimizes the promulgation of truth and exercise of power in accordance with that narrative. William Spanos, although he uses the term "that which has become official" rather than "grand narrative," is talking about the same thing when he identifies its role in legitimation: it is "the cultural value system the State relies on to maintain its authority without having to resort to force."¹² Axel Honneth, in his reading of Lyotard, defines a grand narrative as "a philosophy of history which construes the history of the species as a process of emancipation" or "a philosophy of history which construes the process of history as a realization of Reason in the sciences."¹³ In other words, a grand narrative is literally a narrative of the human species with a utopian endpoint (emancipation or enlightenment). Since the present is aligned on this historical narrative somewhere before that endpoint, progress still needs to be made, and for that purpose power can be legitimated if it is exercised toward that end.¹⁴ Azuma Hiroki defines grand narratives in more worldly terms:

Various systems were consolidated for the purpose of organizing members of society into a unified whole: this movement was a precondition for the management of society. These systems became expressed, for instance, intellectually as the ideas of humanity and reason, politically as the nation-state and revolutionary ideologies, and economically as the primacy of production. Grand narrative is a general term for these systems... Modernity was ruled by the grand narrative.¹⁵

Later, Azuma is even blunter in his definition of grand narrative: "namely, political ideology."¹⁶

¹² William V. Spanos, "De-Struction and the Question of Postmodern Literature: Towards a Definition," *Par Rapport* 2, no. 2 (1979): 23.

¹³ Axel Honneth, "An Aversion against the Universal. A Commentary on Lyotard's Postmodern Condition," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2, no. 3 (November 1, 1985): 151.

¹⁴ I would argue that this is the main distinction between modernity's narratives and those of previous eras. Legitimizing narratives are certainly present in premodern sociopolitical entities, but they tended to legitimate a stable, eternal present (European and Japanese feudalism, Vatican hegemony, etc.) rather than place society on a trajectory towards a utopian future. Of course, history still needed to be rewritten to accommodate those narratives. I address Edo narratives in Chapter 3.

¹⁵ Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*, trans. Jonathan E. Abel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 26.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, 34.

The idea of the grand narrative is crucial to modernity's interaction with history. Modernity seeks to construct consensus by aligning the present on a certain trajectory from past to future. This legitimates the will to power in the present, but also necessitates a recasting of the past. For if the grand narrative really is a totalizing narrative of humanity, *its truths must be evident in the past as well as the present*. In other words, truth as mandated by the grand narrative must always have been true. Evidence to the contrary must be explained away as due to insufficient emancipation or enlightenment (which the present necessarily has more of, given its trajectory of progress according to the grand narrative). In other words, under a grand narrative the truths we hold to be true have always been true, they have merely been repressed somehow in the past. This is most easily discernible in the Enlightenment narrative of science and reason. Light has always traveled at a certain speed, mass has always been conserved, etc., but humans were not enlightened enough to realize it. Grand narratives that proclaim more human truths must project those truths into the past in the same manner. Hence the ethnic, colonialist, Marxist, fascist, nationalist, and other rereadings of history that have arisen to support various grand narratives and the power they legitimate.

Postmodernity, however, is marked by what Lyotard calls incredulity towards these grand narratives. Beyond incredulity, grand narratives may in fact be completely defunct. Lyotard notes the "obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation... The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers, its great voyages, its great goal."¹⁷ Indeed obsolescence might be the most appropriate description. Azuma writes that in postmodernity "grand narratives [are] already neither produced nor desired."¹⁸ Of course, this has a profound effect on the ordering of society, since as the grand narratives obsolesce the totalizing consensus they constructed falls apart, and the power of the institutions they legitimated comes into question. For Lyotard "the society of the future falls less within the province of a Newtonian anthropology (such as structuralism or systems theory) than a pragmatics of language particles. There are many different language games—a heterogeneity of

¹⁷ Lyotard, xxiv.

¹⁸ Azuma, 35.

elements. They only give rise to institutions in patches, local determinism.”¹⁹ The totalizing narrative function of modernity has been replaced by a multitude of “language games,” and “each of us lives at the intersection of many of these.”²⁰ Language games are exchanges of speech acts according to certain rules, rules which make the exchange a game, in the same way the rules of chess are what make it a pleasurable game. These acts can range from simple utterances to “a promise, a literary description, a narration, etc.”²¹ Here I broadly construe language games to be any exchange of language according to the rules of a social discourse, from the production of literary works in response to other works, to competing interpretations of history, to exchanges of memes on the Internet. But what is important to note is that the rules of the game are a contract between players, not legitimated by an external discourse, and that “every utterance should be thought of as a ‘move’ in a game;”²² every speech act (broadly construed) is participating in some language game or another; there is no transcendental plane above the social, discursive, playful level of the language game.

Individuals are not determined by a grand narrative, then, but at a relentlessly individual level by a series of overlapping simultaneous dialogic conversations (language games), forestalling any totalizing consensus. This engenders the social fracturing and decentering that is the hallmark of postmodernity. Azuma is thinking along similar lines when he argues that the grand narratives that existed in the “inner layer” of modern texts have been replaced by a “grand non-narrative,” namely a database (*dētabēsu* データベース) of *moe* elements (*moe yōso* 萌え要素, or evocative elements) which is constructed dialogically by readers. Texts (the “surface layer”) freely pick *moe* elements from this database and combine them, but the database cannot have a narrative function:

The agency that determines the appearance that emerges on the surface outer layer resides on the surface itself rather than in the deep inner layer; i.e., it belongs on the side of the user who is doing the “reading up,” rather than with the hidden information itself. In the world of the modern... model, the surface outer layer is determined by the deep inner layer [the grand narrative], but in

¹⁹ Lyotard, xxiv.

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ Lyotard, 10.

²² *ibid.*

the world of the postmodern database model, the surface outer layer is not determined by the deep inner layer; the surface reveals different expressions at those numerous moments of "reading up."²³

The individual reading up of *moe* elements, and the subsequent modification of the database to include new elements, is similar to the language games Lyotard proposes. Azuma is willing to allow for more of a postmodern mass society in the form of the shared database, but in both cases the construction of meaning is distributed to an individual level and formed dialogically rather than by a totalizing grand narrative.

Naturally, this has major implications for postmodernity's interaction with history. Since the grand narrative is not functional in postmodernity, the truths of the present (such as they are, formed locally by language games) do not require a certain historical trajectory in order to remain true, and so there is no need to inscribe them onto the past, as there is in modernity. Yet there is still interest in history, perhaps because of the lingering effect of the weight modernity places on it, or perhaps simply because history is interesting. History is, after all, just another language game, and language games can be engaged in purely for pleasure, just as Azuma's postmodern reader takes pleasure in combining *moe* elements. "To speak is to fight, in the sense of playing," Lyotard tells us, but

this does not necessarily mean that one plays in order to win. A move can be made for the sheer pleasure of its invention: what else is involved in that labor of language harassment undertaken by popular speech and by literature? Great joy is had in the endless invention of turns of phrase, of words and meanings, the process behind the evolution of language on the level of *parole*.²⁴

History, then, can be construed as a language game that gives particular pleasure to its players, as there is apparently no shortage of engagement with history in postmodernity. But although history must be engaged with, it cannot be rewritten. Of course, the grand narratives that would seek to rewrite the past for their own legitimation projects are now objects of suspicion. But quite aside from modernity's manipulation of history, postmodern language games

²³ Azuma, 32.

²⁴ Lyotard, 10.

themselves thrive on difference, on heterogeneity.²⁵ To remove the past's difference, by rewriting it to impose the ideology of the present upon it, is an attempt to force consensus, the enemy of Lyotard's postmodernity, which hobbles the language game, preventing any further moves. This is a form of what Lyotard identifies as "terror,"²⁶ the forced truncation of the language game, which is unacceptable since it denies players the pleasure of its continuation. Therefore, postmodern engagement with history must acknowledge its heterogeneity, its difference from the present.

Of course, it would be disingenuous to therefore claim that postmodern texts are able to objectively represent history. Objective history is, of course, a concept that has become obsolete in postmodernity. With the idea of History as a transcendental truth dead, history is only available to postmodern language games as text, and the texts of history are always part of some ideological project, whether that of the kings who sponsored their writing or the grand narratives of later modern rewriting. Postmodern texts engage with history as other texts, rather than represent a new authoritative history of their own. Therefore they must summon other texts—the text of modern history. Even as they playfully dismantle these histories, postmodern texts remind readers that there are histories with deep claims to authoritativeness. As Linda Hutcheon writes, postmodernism "ultimately manages to install and reinforce as much as undermine and subvert the conventions and presuppositions it appears to challenge."²⁷ Although postmodern texts destabilize modern historical discourses, they necessarily point to those discourses as targets that need destabilizing, paradoxically reinforcing their claims to truth even as the texts disrupt them.

²⁵ Of course, this is not necessarily a unique discovery of the postmodern era. Bakhtin, writing in the 1930s and 40s, treats difference and heterogeneity very similarly. For more on the similarities between Bakhtin and Lyotard, see David Carroll, "Narrative, Heterogeneity, and the Question of the Political: Bakhtin and Lyotard," in *The Aims of Representation: Subject/Text/History*, ed. Murray Krieger (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 69–106. However, it is significant that Bakhtin's work did not receive much attention until the 1970s, i.e., the postmodern era.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 63.

²⁷ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), 1-2.

These two radically different paradigms of engagement with history generally will provide a useful framework for examining anachronism specifically. As mentioned above, I identify modern and postmodern anachronism as the two main varieties of concern. Put simply, modern anachronisms attempt to inscribe the past with some present grand narrative, while postmodern anachronisms attempt to draw the past closer while still emphasizing its difference from the present.

For modernity, as described above, the truths of grand narratives must always have been true. Grand narratives seek to construct essential, totalizing human truths, which naturally cannot have been invented out of whole cloth in recent years but which are timeless and eternal. As Jürgen Habermas writes of modernity's break with the past, "the cult of the new mean[s] in fact the exaltation of the present... a longing for an undefiled, immaculate and stable present."²⁸ For the present to be both long and stable, it must be extended into the past. If the past fails to exhibit present truths, this is evidence of ignorance, insufficient representation, repressive political or social conditions, etc. To make the present stable and timeless, the past must be rewritten (or at least reframed) to make the truths of the present eternal. Clearly anachronisms, sites of radical temporal instability which allow the past and the present to be mixed, are prime candidates for the execution of this project.

Crucially, however, the nature of the project means that modern anachronisms cannot be readily apparent as such. An obvious anachronism would call attention to its constructedness. Since modern anachronisms seek to convincingly rewrite the past, that is, inscribe the grand narratives of the present onto the past, they must conceal the ideological work they are doing on the past. Put another way, all anachronisms are intertextual phenomena that evoke extratextual discourses about the past and the present, but modern anachronisms must conceal this intertextual nature. Modern anachronisms must *persuasively* characterize the past as evidencing the truths of present grand narratives. For that reason, modern anachronisms tend to concern anachronistic ideologies, psychology, and gender roles.

²⁸ Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project," in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 5.

Therefore, the most representative modern anachronistic text, at least in Japanese literature, is perhaps Mori Ōgai's 森鷗外 "Abe ichizoku" 阿部一族 (The Abe Clan, 1913). This story details the turmoil that follows in the wake of the death of a daimyō 大名 (feudal lord) during the Edo period, when several of his retainers attempt to follow him in death in the ritual suicide known as *junshi* 殉死 (following one's master in death). As the story unfolds the reader is granted access to the interiority of the various retainers, and it becomes clear that they pay hardly a thought to the ostensible moral imperative for *junshi*, namely loyalty to one's master. Rather, *junshi* is impelled by socioeconomic forces. Retainers of a certain rank who fail to follow their master in death will face shame and social ostracization, whereas the families of those who do will benefit from social approbation and very real economic support.²⁹

This is, of course, an entirely anachronistic characterization, which does not preclude it from being deviously compelling. Samurai of the Edo period were situated in a philosophy that heavily idealized loyalty as a moral good and valorized suicide (or at least appropriate suicide). For Ōgai and his readers, however, individualism is idealized (although not without complication) while loyalty as a value is denigrated, and suicide is pathologized. This ideology, the grand narrative of enlightenment humanism, must be a universal truth, elucidated in modernity but true always, so Ōgai anachronistically inscribes it onto the Edo period. The failure of contemporaneous representations to depict *junshi* this way is, of course, attributable to the poverty of the psychological language of the time or to a repressive sociopolitics that did not allow for such honesty. The philosophical system that would have validated and lionized an Edo-period samurai's decision to commit *junshi* is absent, replaced by modern socioeconomic motivations that act on fully individuated modern humans. Certainly sacrificing oneself for the socioeconomic benefit of one's family was in line with contemporary Confucian ideology, but samurai of the time would have seen *junshi* as a moral good in and of itself, quite apart from any extrinsic rewards. Ōgai omits contemporary morality and ideology, and instead inscribes modern grand narratives—Enlightenment humanism and individualism—onto the practice of *junshi* through this anachronism. Of course, the anachronism is entirely plausible: there were

²⁹ The only character who truly believes in the morality of *junshi* is the lowly dog handler, implying that only those without education or sophistication could be duped by such a philosophy.

indeed social and economic motivators involved in the practice of *junshi*. Given the alienness of the philosophical underpinnings of *junshi* to the modern reader, the depiction of these motivators as the sole foundation of *junshi* is eminently plausible. This is exactly why modern anachronism is so devastatingly convincing despite being fundamentally anachronistic. But the complete substitution of the modern grand narratives of enlightenment humanism, modern anthropology, and individualism for the contemporary philosophical systems a samurai facing *junshi* would have referenced makes it clear that Ōgai is engaged in an anachronistic project. Here we might find Ōgai guilty of (In Fredric Jameson's words) an "allegorical interpretation in which the data of one narrative line are radically impoverished by their rewriting according to the paradigm of another narrative, which is taken as the former's master code or Ur-narrative and proposed as the ultimate hidden or unconscious *meaning* of the first one."³⁰ This is exactly the function of modern anachronism, and modern history in general, but the impoverishment of or violence to history is necessary for rewriting history to appropriate it for the needs of modernity's grand narratives.

Postmodern anachronism, on the other hand, is engaged in a more complex project. Again, in postmodernity there is no grand narrative that would necessitate or legitimate the overwriting of the past, and the temporal diversity of the past—its difference from the present—must not be destroyed lest the pleasure of the language game be truncated. Yet there is still a desire to engage with the past, to draw it closer and to make it more relatable to the present. The paradox of anachronism is the site where this paradoxical project can be accomplished. In postmodern anachronism, the past and the present are superimposed at this site of radical instability, but this superimposed image is not resolved into a synthesis. Postmodern anachronisms are Bakhtinian dialogics rather than dialectics;³¹ the discourses of the past and the present exist simultaneously, inter-animating each other rather than being synthesized into a new monologue (as is the case with modern anachronism). This dynamic can

³⁰ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 22.

³¹ I refer here to Bakhtin's distinction between dialogic and dialectic as interpreted in Rupert Wegerif, "Dialogic or Dialectic? The Significance of Ontological Assumptions in Research on Educational Dialogue," *British Educational Research Journal* 34, no. 3 (2008): 350.

also be explained by the concept of intertextuality: the idea that, as Julia Kristeva famously writes, “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.”³² Of course, the anachronistic text does not quote from specific texts, but rather the virtual text of the cultural discourses on both the past and the present, enacting a “transposition of one (or several) sign-system(s) into another.”³³ As Roland Barthes has written, “any text is an intertext; other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in more or less recognizable forms: the texts of the previous and surrounding culture.”³⁴ All anachronistic texts have the surrounding culture, past and present, within them: namely cultural ideology about the past, the present, and the history that separates them. In texts with modern anachronisms, however, the culture of the present is “less recognizable” and in postmodern anachronism it is “more recognizable.” Postmodern anachronism is the *recognizable* culture of the present being quoted alongside the culture of the past, creating for the reader an intertext³⁵ where past and present are metatextually superimposed.

Clearly, in order for this form of historical engagement to be effective the anachronism itself must be immediately appreciable as such. If the anachronism is too subtle it will fail to evoke the discourses of past and present in the reader. For that reason, postmodern anachronisms usually involve objects, settings and people that are obviously and noticeably out of their time. Yoshitsune using a telephone, for instance. Postmodern anachronisms must be entirely *implausible*. A reader might be convinced that samurai really committed *junshi* for socioeconomic reasons, but obviously it is not possible that Yoshitsune really used a telephone. Postmodern anachronisms are not an attempt to rewrite the past: they rather actively preserve the discourse on the past by highlighting the absurdity of inserting the present into it. Instead

³² Julia Kristeva, “Word Dialog and Novel,” in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 37.

³³ Julia Kristeva, “Revolution in Poetic Language,” in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 111.

³⁴ Roland Barthes, “Theory of the Text,” in *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, ed. Robert Young (Boston: Routledge, 1981), 39.

³⁵ Here I will use “intertext” to mean the ephemeral “text” created at the moment of the juxtaposition of two texts: the text between texts, rather than the text which performs the act of summoning the two texts (the actual narrative work in question).

they are an attempt to create an intertext where the past and present can be juxtaposed in a specific way and used to reveal new facets of each other.

Here it might be fruitful to compare postmodern anachronism with some of the existing theories regarding postmodernity's interaction with the past. Of particular concern is Fredric Jameson's diagnosis of postmodernity as "schizophrenic" when it comes to history. Here Jameson means schizophrenic in the sense (if not the clinical reality) that the schizophrenic is unable to experience "continuity over time" and "thus given over to an undifferentiated vision of the world in the present."³⁶ Postmodern society has lost its "sense of history... its capacity to retain its own past" and "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."³⁷ But this is a puzzling claim, since a society that revels in change and obliterates tradition could well describe modernity's breaks with the past—postmodernity attempts to play with the past rather than reject it, as discussed above. Jameson here is rather talking about the shortening of the horizon of history, the point where something falls from "the present" into "the past" or "history." He writes (in 1985), "think only of the media exhaustion of news: of how Nixon and, even more so, Kennedy are figures from a now distant past."³⁸ The present moment becomes shorter and shorter as the point where present becomes past draws closer. Therefore time is broken into a "series of perpetual presents."³⁹ The history and traditions that Jameson is talking about, then, are in fact the history and tradition of the present (or in the new estimation, the very recent past). This is an important distinction because postmodern anachronisms, by their very act of visibly and deliberately (and comically) disrupting history and continuity, demonstrate that postmodernism has a very keen sense of them. The discourse on continuity, history and historical difference is not lost in

³⁶ Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Pluto Press, 1985), 120.

³⁷ *ibid.*, 125.

³⁸ *ibid.*

³⁹ *ibid.*

postmodernism, it is rather that the temporal point at which earlier moments become the past (and therefore irreconcilably different from our present) has drawn nearer.

Jameson does come close to addressing anachronism at one point, when he discusses counterfactual historiographical fiction:

Thus, for example, we may imagine (in such a postmodern narrative) the visit of the great Prussian neoclassical architect Schinkel to the new industrial city of Manchester: the conceit is historically possible, and offers the relatively postmodern charm of an episode that falls through the cracks (did the young Stalin actually go to London once? How about Marx's incognito inspection of the American Civil War?)... It is a comic-book juxtaposition, somewhat like a schoolboy exercise in which all kinds of disparate materials are put together in new ways. The visit also happened in reality, it turns out; but by now one is tempted to recall Adorno's wisecrack about something else, namely, that "even if it was a fact, it wouldn't be true." The postmodern flavor of the episode returns upon the "historical record" to derealize and denature it...

Those are, however, the cultural and ideological effects of the structure, whose conditions of possibility lie very precisely in our sense that each of the elements involved, and thus incongruously combined, belong to radically distinct and different registers: architecture and socialism, romantic art and the history of technology, politics and the imitation of antiquity. Even if these registers do oddly and dialectically coincide, as in the matter of urbanism, in which "Schinkel" is fully as much an encyclopedia entry as Engels's book on Manchester, our preconscious minds refuse to make or acknowledge the link, as those these [sic] cards came from different files... [but] it is very precisely their interesting dissonance and the garish magic realism of their unexpected juxtaposition which is the bonus of pleasure to be consumed.

It should not be thought that the postmodern narrative in any way overcomes or transcends the bizarre discursive separation at issue here: the latter is not at all to be grasped as a "contradiction" to which the postmodern collage affords a semblance of "resolution." The postmodern effect, on the contrary, ratifies the specializations and differentiations on which it is based: it presupposes them and thereby prolongs and perpetuates them (for if some genuinely unified field of knowledge emerged, where Schinkel and Engels lay down side by side like the lamb and the lion, so to speak, all postmodern incongruity would at once evaporate).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, Or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Duke University Press, 1991), 370-1.

Here we see some applicability towards anachronism. Postmodern anachronisms are certainly “comic-book juxtapositions”—indeed, comic books are a prime medium for them, as shall be seen in the following chapters. But these juxtapositions are significant precisely because they can put together things of different “registers” or “files” which would not have been linked together in the reader’s mind otherwise. (Jameson’s discussion of registers anticipates Azuma’s database model, where the consumption of disparate elements combined in a single narrative is exactly the source of pleasure in postmodern consumption.) Postmodern anachronism has this very power: by obviously and visibly putting together objects from the past and present it creates an intertext where two “cards” from very two “radically distinct and different registers” are considered side-by-side in a way that would have not occurred to the reader previously. Of course, as Jameson says, this does not result in a resolution. As mentioned above, postmodern anachronism is a dialogic and therefore cannot synthesize a new history (as modern anachronism does). Jameson’s most perceptive comment is his remark that this kind of fiction can derealize and denature the “historical record.” Jameson is right, of course, to put “historical record” in quotes, since in postmodern historiography any history is just another text and its claims to status as an authentic “record” are suspect, to say the least. I have stated that postmodern anachronism does not seek to, and in fact cannot, rewrite history, since for one thing it is too obviously counterfactual to convince anyone it represents real history, and for another that would end the pleasure of the postmodern language game. But by creating an intertext that examines the past in the new light of present “cards,” it can denature (in the sense of making visible its invisible assumptions: removing its “naturalness”) a teleological “historical record” as such. It certainly has the power to demystify the historical myths that are the foundation of modern grand narratives by inserting common and familiar objects of the present into them.

However, ultimately Jameson does not see such counterfactual historiographical fiction as productive:

This absolute and absolutely random pluralism -- and perhaps it is the only referent for which that charged term should be reserved, a kind of reality pluralism -- a coexistence not even of multiple and alternate worlds so much as

of unrelated fuzzy sets and semiautonomous subsystems whose overlap is perceptually maintained like hallucinogenic depth planes in a space of many dimensions is, of course, what is replicated by the rhetoric of decentering (and what informs official rhetorical and philosophical attacks on "totality"). This differentiation and specialization or semiautonomization of reality is then prior to what happens in the psyche -- postmodern schizo-fragmentation as opposed to modern or modernist anxieties and hysterias.⁴¹

Elsewhere Jameson has posited "modernist anxiety" as productive: "Anxiety is a hermeneutic emotion, expressing an underlying nightmare state of the world" which motivates critical reflection, whereas in postmodernism "schizophrenic or drug language gives the key notion," and psychological reactions "are no longer cognitive."⁴² Postmodern historiographical fiction then, this juxtaposition of registers, is meaningless "random pluralism" that does not create productive uncertainty about the world but rather a kind of schizophrenic fragmentation.

Here I must disagree with Jameson, for an anachronism, however comical, that allows past and present to inter-animate one another in a new way cannot help but question and undermine both past and present—or more specifically the narratives and discourses surrounding them and the power those discourses legitimate. Perhaps this is not immediately apparent in Yoshitsune using a telephone, so allow me to select another example. Elsewhere, *Hi no tori* depicts the *Shishigatani no inbō* 鹿ヶ谷陰謀 (Shishigatani conspiracy), a failed conspiracy to stage a coup in order to throw Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛 out of power in 1177. Eagerly outlining the strategy for the designated day, the monk Shunkan says "the plan is for our revolutionary army to seize the Rokuhara headquarters, the broadcasting station and Tokyo Station, then surround Kiyomori's mansion."⁴³ Of course, this statement is obviously anachronistic. Neither broadcasting nor trains exist yet. In fact, Tokyo itself does not exist yet, and the planned coup is to rather take place in Kyoto. The incongruity is hilarious, but also productive. In the intertext of the anachronism, the Shishigatani coup is juxtaposed with other coups, most conspicuously the *ni-niroku jiken* 二二六事件 (February 26th Incident, of 1936), an

⁴¹ *ibid.*, 372.

⁴² Anders Stephanson and Fredric Jameson, "Regarding Postmodernism--A Conversation with Fredric Jameson," *Social Text*, no. 21 (January 1, 1989): 4-5.

⁴³ Tezuka Osamu, *Hi no tori*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1992), 248. "Ippō, kakumeigun wa Rokuhara tandai to hōsōkyoku to Tōkyō-eki o senkyo shi, Kiyomori tei o hōi suru yotei ni natteimasu."

attempted coup by portions of the Japanese military, in which several key sites in downtown Tokyo were occupied. And perhaps also, with use of the word “revolutionary army” (*kakumeigun* 革命軍), juxtaposed with plans for communist uprisings as well. Of course, the *ni-niroku jiken* is not from the “present” of the text’s writing in the 1980s, but it is unmistakably from the “register” of modernity, out of place in the twelfth century. In the intertext the coups of the past and present are laid side by side and scrutinized against each other. This could be used for many different projects: if the text had been sympathetic to the Shishigatani conspirators, this juxtaposition might engender sympathy towards the 2-26 conspirators as well. Or, by juxtaposing one of the most infamous incidents from recent history with the Shishigatani Incident, it might rather delegitimize the Shishigatani conspirators. More likely, given the context of the anachronism, the overall thrust of *Hi no tori*, the juxtaposition is likely to suggest to the reader that struggles for power have not changed much in the past eight hundred years, just the ideology used to justify and glorify them. In any case, this is clearly not random, pointless pluralism leading to schizophrenic fragmentation, but is a specific and productive mode of interacting with history.

More useful to the description of postmodern anachronism is Linda Hutcheon’s work on postmodern historiographic metafiction, which she defines as “those well-known and popular novels which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” in which “theoretical self-awareness of history and fiction as human constructs ... is made the grounds for its rethinking and reworking of the forms and contents of the past.”⁴⁴ Although Hutcheon does not address anachronism directly, she does describe how postmodern fiction interacts with history:

Postmodern intertextuality is a formal manifestation of both a desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader and a desire to rewrite the past in a new context. It is not a modernist desire to order the present through the past or make the present look spare in contrast to the richness of the past. It is not an attempt to void or avoid history. Instead it directly confronts the past of

⁴⁴ Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 5.

literature - and of historiography, for it too derives from other texts (documents). It uses and abuses those intertextual echoes, inscribing their powerful allusions and then subverting that power through irony.⁴⁵

Here we must be cautious, because Hutcheon describes a postmodern desire to “rewrite” history. But of course, in postmodern historiography there is no “history” as a transcendental construct that can be *overwritten*. It would rather be more appropriate to describe the postmodern impulse as a desire to recontextualize history by writing *additional* texts (which have just as much validity as existing history, which is also text). Otherwise Hutcheon’s model of postmodern historiographic metafiction describes well the impulse behind postmodern anachronism. It is not an attempt to “void or avoid” history, but rather an attempt to engage with history, to “rethink and rework the forms and contents of the past.” Importantly, Hutcheon identifies a desire to “close the gap between the past and present of the reader.” Where this desire springs from is not clear, but it plainly does exist. For Lyotard, of course, it is enough that history is another language game which provides pleasure. Perhaps also modernity’s long emphasis on history as a source of identity still carries weight in postmodernity—we are, after all, living in nation states legitimized by grand narratives that constructed their borders and polities historically. Since we unquestionably, in legal reality, have an identity as Japanese or American, have a certain passport, cheer for a certain team at the Olympics, etc., history is still important in figuring out just what that identity means. Because the grand narratives that once would have aligned history to state to self in a cohesive narrative are now either cast into doubt or dead, history must be examined in another way, through metafiction. Azuma proposes that in the face of the death of grand narratives, it is the small narratives (rather than the database, a nonnarrative) that provide meaning for living.⁴⁶

A third possibility is that modernity’s long abuse of history, appropriating it to prop up its ideological frameworks, has sparked a backlash in postmodernity. The desire to close the gap between past and present, then, is an attempt to reclaim history from its appropriation by modernity, drawing history closer without imposing the interpretive framework of a grand narrative on it. Anachronisms that insert the present day into, say, the Edo period, do exactly

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 118.

⁴⁶ Azuma, 94.

this, drawing the past and the present together in a paradoxical intertext that skips over modernity entirely. Of course, to do this they must summon up those very modern discourses on history, ultimately, as Hutcheon notes, inscribing modern history even as they undermine it. Postmodern historiography can never escape from modern history, but then perhaps doing so would just close down part of the language game anyway. After all, to refute modern history entirely would just be another modern strategy—just replacing one authoritative discourse with another. Therefore, postmodern historiographic metafiction, as Hutcheon shrewdly notes, finds its form in comedy and parody: “To parody is not to destroy the past; in fact to parody is both to enshrine the past and to question it. And this, once again, is the postmodern paradox.”⁴⁷ Ultimately, the goal of postmodern historiographical fiction (and postmodern anachronism) is not to create yet another totalizing History, but “to open [history] up to the present, to prevent it from being conclusive and teleological.”⁴⁸

Finally, we come to Azuma Hiroki, who does in fact directly address postmodern anachronism, perhaps because he is dealing with Japanese popular culture, where it seems to thrive. Azuma’s work deals specifically with so-called *otaku* (fan)⁴⁹ subculture, but it is clearly broadly applicable to postmodern society (he posits *otaku* as the ideal postmodern subject),⁵⁰ and in the following excerpts we may well replace “*otaku*” with “postmodern,” “late capitalist” or “contemporary.” Discussing the frequent appropriation of the Edo period in Japanese popular culture, he writes:

Japan's cultural traditions have been severed twice: during the Meiji restoration and following defeat in World War II. In addition memories of the period from Meiji to the 1945 defeat have been subject to political repression in the postwar period. If the narcissistic Japan of the 1980s was to forget defeat and remain

⁴⁷ Hutcheon, *Poetics*, 126.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 110.

⁴⁹ The term “*otaku*” is perhaps better translated as “nerd” or “geek,” and is freighted with the discourse on a subculture deemed less-than-desirable by many segments of society. I will discuss the *otaku* more in chapter 2.

⁵⁰ He writes variously of *otaku* as “postmodern individuals” (84) and claims that *otaku* behavior “characterizes subjectivity in postmodern society” (86) because *otaku* are uniquely adept at living and operating within the realm of mass consumer culture.

oblivious to the impact of Americanization, it was easiest to return to the image of the Edo period.⁵¹

But this return is, in fact, impossible because “otaku culture in reality originated as a subculture imported from the United States after World War II, from the 1950s to the 1970s. The history of otaku culture is one of adaptation—of how to ‘domesticate’ American culture.”⁵² Therefore, “the ‘Japanese’ aspects of otaku culture are not connected to premodern Japan in any simple sense. Rather, those aspects should be perceived as emanating from a postwar Americanism (the logic of consumer society), which severed such historical continuities connecting the present with an ancient past.”⁵³ Or, more simply, “Between the otaku and Japan lies the United States.”⁵⁴ Contemporary Japanese culture is rooted in (Americanized) postwar consumerism rather than the Japanese premodern past, making a direct return to that past impossible.

The desire to “forget defeat and remain oblivious to the impact of Americanization,” therefore, can only be achieved by constructing what Azuma calls a pseudo-Japan: “Lurking at the foundations of otaku culture is the complex yearning to produce a *pseudo-Japan* once again from American-made material, after the destruction of the ‘good old Japan’ through defeat in World War II.”⁵⁵ It should be clear here that a project to remake Edo in the image of the postwar present could be a very modern project. Indeed, outside of *otaku* circles we find exactly this sort of approach in the great volume of academic and popular interpretive writings on the Edo period, perhaps sparked in the 1980s by essayist Tanaka Yūko but continuing up to the present day. A typical volume published in 2005 has chapters explicitly reframing Edo in terms of contemporary culture: “Things similar to *shōjo* manga visible in Edo,” or “Tracing pop

⁵¹ Azuma, 22.

⁵² *ibid.*, 11. Azuma traces the US origins of many characteristically “Japanese” aspects of *otaku* culture at length, for example the use of “limited animation” in anime. Ultimately, “if... we perceive a Japanese aesthetic in the composition of anime and special effects, it is also necessary to recall that neither anime nor special effects existed in Japan prior to a few decades ago and that their process of becoming ‘Japanese’ is rather convoluted.”

⁵³ *ibid.*, 13.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 13.

girls through pictures.”⁵⁶ Such work is an attempt to rewrite the past according to the frame of the present, just as any good modern history rewrites the past to support its ideology.

But the *otaku* (again, the ideal postmodern subject) approach to this project is different: since rewriting the Japanese past is impossible (and in any case undesirable), instead Azuma’s pseudo-Japan is constructed, a construct where the Edo period and the present can coexist, but which does not void the years of modernity that lay between them. This is, of course, a thoroughly anachronistic project. Azuma specifically examines the anime *Saber Marionette J* which anachronistically features an Edo-like city where characteristically Edo objects (as explicated by modern history, of course) and symbols of contemporary consumerism can coexist.⁵⁷ He concludes that such a “pseudo-Japan manufactured from U.S.-produced material’ is now the only thing left in our grasp. We can only construct an image of the Japanese cityscape by picturing family restaurants, convenience stores, and ‘love hotels’”⁵⁸ and therefore a pseudo-Japan that recreates the Edo past must include these accretions of the present, although the pseudo-Japan is too obviously anachronistic and fictional to be plausible as history. Of course, there is plenty of representation of the Edo period without family restaurants, and it is rather contemporary ideology that often seems to be unavoidable in such representations, as I will discuss in chapter 2.

I believe Azuma places too much emphasis on “Americanization” when often “modernity” would be a better description of that which postmodern culture seeks to reimagine, including not only defeat but the entire dark history of Shōwa nationalism and World War II. Nevertheless, Azuma has here identified the source of the “desire to close the gap between past and present of the reader” that Hutcheon described. It is a desire to construct a pseudo-Japan that paradoxically puts the present day in contact with the Edo period while placing the entire messy project of modernity to one side (but not erasing it by claiming that there was an actual continuous transmission of ideology and culture from Edo to

⁵⁶ Kenji Watanabe, ed., *Edo bunka to sabukaruchā* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 2005).

⁵⁷ I will examine this work more closely in chapter 2.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 20.

the present in spite of the interruptions of modernity, as earlier movements to appropriate Edo have). And postmodern anachronism is the engine of that project. But I would argue that this is not an attempt to “forget” history, as Azuma claims. The pseudo-Japan (which we now see is a synonym for the intertext created by anachronism) is, again, dialogic and therefore both past and present inter-animate without resolving to synthesis. The reader is perfectly aware that convenience stores are the result of a specific process of modernization and Americanization that is totally incongruous in an Edo setting. Indeed, it is only because it is so obviously incongruous that the anachronism has the power to evoke and juxtapose the discourses on the present and the Edo period. This evocation powerfully reinforces the incompatibility between Edo and the present, even as it playfully undermines it. Rather than forgetting, the pseudo-Japan is an attempt to fulfill the desires that impel anachronism described above: the desire to use the past as source of identity in the absence of grand narratives, the desire to reclaim history from the projects of modernity without rewriting it, and of course the desire to derive pleasure from the language game of history—indeed, pleasurable, reflexive play is the only way the above goals can be pursued when the earnest, serious projects of modernity have been called into question.

This is postmodern anachronism, the primary focus of this study. While any modern historical fiction might be said to be anachronistic to some degree or another, postmodern anachronism, those objects explicitly and noticeably in the wrong era, are much less common. However, Japanese literature seems to take particular pleasure in them, and they are in abundance. Perhaps this is because, as has often been noted, Japanese literature strongly favors visual media. Anachronisms are much more easily appreciated, and the humor of them is more impactful, when they can be perceived instantly. The humorous incongruity of Yoshitsune using a telephone is immediately apparent in a picture, whereas describing the scene in several sentences might belabor the point and ruin the joke. An examination of this literary phenomenon in the literature of the two eras in which they are in profusion—the Edo period and the contemporary period (from the 1960s to the present)—will not only elucidate a unique

feature of Japanese literature, but also the interaction of postmodern texts with history.⁵⁹ The following chapters will examine postmodern anachronism in a variety of texts, and consequently the function of anachronism will vary, as each of these texts is engaged in a very different project. They all use postmodern anachronism to juxtapose, open up, and play with history, but the sociopolitical result of that play is not uniform, serving the different projects of the different texts examined. It should also be that the focus of this study is anachronism, and it excludes other literary modes of historical juxtaposition. Time travel, for example, will not be treated here because it includes *diegetic* historical dislocation. A time traveler is (usually) uncomfortable with the past (or the future), whereas it is only the reader who is uncomfortable with Yoshitsune using a telephone, as I will expand on later.

A final note about periodization: there are many proposals for the point at which modernity ends and postmodernity begins, with most proposals putting the break somewhere in the mid-1970s. Perhaps more reasonably (for philosophical systems do not shift in a single year) Azuma describes the change as “gradually occurring over the seventy-five years between 1914 and 1989, with a single focus in the 1970s,”⁶⁰ picking World War I and the fall of the Soviet Union as the beginning and end, respectively, of the collapse of grand narratives. However, while I will discuss the proliferation of postmodern theorizing of the Edo period, this study concerns the interaction of narrative with history, and for my purposes modernity and postmodernity present different modes of interacting with history. These modes are not necessarily confined to certain date ranges. As mentioned above, the categories “modern anachronism” and “postmodern anachronism” describe a mode of interacting with history described by the cultural logic of the respective eras, but that does not mean those modes of interaction are confined to those eras. In other words, postmodern anachronism follows the cultural logic of the postmodern world, and it is in this period that this cultural logic has been theorized and formalized as a set of discourses called “postmodernism” or “postmodernity.” However, that does not preclude works written outside the postmodern period from interacting with history in the same way—it simply means that those works are deploying a

⁵⁹ Again, I will discuss the Edo period and postmodernism in Chapter 3.

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 74.

historical stance that might be at odds with the larger contemporary cultural logic. Certainly both modes of historical interaction can exist simultaneously, as the modern mode of history is still evident today in ideological histories and attempts to authoritatively represent history in textbooks. Both modes of engagement with history can even coexist within the same text, a concept that will be crucial to uncovering the anachronistic projects of texts in the chapters to come.

CHAPTER 2: ANACHRONISM IN MODERN TEXTS

2.1 – A Riot of Anachronism: History and power in *Man'en gannen no futtobōru*

Ōe Kenzaburō's 大江健三郎 *Man'en gannen no futtobōru* 万延元年のフットボール (Football in the first year of Man'en, available in English translation as *The Silent Cry*), published in 1967, is at its heart a novel about engagement with history. Written at the beginning of (what many would consider to be) the postmodern era, but within living memory of World War II and modernity's appropriations of history to legitimate power, the novel is characterized by a tension between modes of historical engagement that can only reach compromise anachronistically, signaling a new relationship between past and present.

Ōe's works frequently utilize carnival and buffoonery. Ōe has said that there is always a serious element in buffoonery and cartoonization,⁶¹ but perhaps this should be amended to say that, for Ōe, buffoonery is always serious. He is not likely to engage in the pleasurable play that is so characteristic of postmodern literature. Nor is Ōe, firmly established as a *junbungaku* 純文学 (pure literature) author, likely to abandon the realism characteristic of *junbungaku*. His works, therefore, seem like a doubtful candidate for anachronism. However, the very title of this novel is anachronistic. *Man'en gannen no futtobōru*, literally translated, means "football in the first year of Man'en," or 1860. American football being played in 1860, in a space where time is measured in Japanese units (in Japan, in other words), is extremely unlikely in narrative history, especially since the game had barely been established in the US at the time. While Ōe does not, after all, depart from realism in the novel, the anachronistic title hints at the resolution to the novel's historical tensions.

Ōe himself has written that the novel is an explicit attempt to juxtapose different eras:

When I began to write *Man'en gannen no futtobōru* in its present form, I felt that the people, things, and times surrounding the focal point of the first year of Man'en were distant enough from myself that their otherness was quite distinct. I tried to eliminate conceptual knowledge of the reality of the first year of

⁶¹ Michiko Wilson, *The Marginal World of Ōe Kenzaburō* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1986), 99.

Man'en as much as possible. Furthermore, I tried to use my imagination as a clamp, to crimp together that era and today's era.

This clamp of the novelist's imagination creates a contemporaneity that allows two different eras to inter-illuminate (*shōō shiau* 照応しあう) dynamically, while maintaining their independence. I tried to have the first year of Man'en and 1960 face each other across a century of darkness. The ball kicked by the people of the first year of Man'en flies over the abyss of a century to fall among the people of 1960. And the ball kicked back by the people of 1960 once again flies back to the first year of Man'en.⁶²

It should be evident that Ōe's project with this novel, as he describes it, is postmodern anachronism, namely juxtaposing two different eras devoid of the narrative history that leads from one to the other, allowing new links to form between them.

The novel centers on the Nedokoro family: the protagonist and narrator Mitsusaburō, his wife Natsumiko, and his younger brother Takashi. After finding out her newborn son was born brain damaged, Natsumiko has become an alcoholic. For the same reason, plus the suicide of his close friend, Mitsusaburō has fallen into depression and despair. Takashi, freshly returned to Japan from a stay in America, encourages Mitsusaburō and Natsumiko to travel with him to their family home in an isolated Shikoku village in order to find a way to begin a new life. However, it quickly becomes clear that Takashi has other plans, including selling off the family land and organizing the young men of the village in a revolt against the postwar economic and racial order. Takashi's revolt has tinges of both left-wing and right-wing ideologies—it is a revolt against capitalism and large corporations, but also against Koreans and their newfound equality in postwar Japan—making it representative of the violent extremism of both of the ideologies that were roiling Japan in the 1960s, when right-wing groups were

⁶² Ōe Kenzaburō, "Dōseiji No Futtobōru," in *Jizokusuru Kokorozashi* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1968), 408. My translation. Partially quoted in Wilson, 48. "Man'en gannen no futtobōru o genzai no katachi de jissai ni kakihajimeta toki, man'en gannen o shōten to suru jidai, jibutsu, ningen o, sono tashasei ga kukkiri to shite kuru ni jūbun na dake, jibun kara tōzaketa to kanjite ita. Man'en gannen ni okeru gainenteki na jijitsu no chishiki wo, boku wa kanō na kigiri haijo shite ita. Sono ue de, boku wa jibun no sōzōryoku no kasugai o, sono jidai to kyō no jidai to ni, uchikomubeku kokoromita no de aru. Shōsetsuka no sōzōryoku no kasugai wa, futatsu no kotonatta jidai ni, onoono dokuritsu shiteinagara, dainamikku ni shōō shiau doujisei o shutsugen saseru tame ni uchikomareru. Boku wa man'en gannen to 1960 nen to ga, hyaku nen no kurayami o naka ni shite taijisuru kōkei ni itarubeku tsutometa. Man'en gannen no hito-bito ni yotte kerareta bōru ga, hyaku nen no shin'en o tobikoete, 1960 nen no hito-bito no zujō ni ochiru. 1960 nen no hito-bito ga kerikaesu bōru wa, futatabi man'en gannen ni mukatte hishō suru."

clashing violently with left-wing protesters. This text examines the violence of the ideologue—both left and right—as well as ideology’s appropriation of history. Modernity’s ideologies must legitimate themselves and their violence through history. *Man’en gannen no futtabōru* demonstrates resistance to ideological grand narratives through resistance to their rewritings of history. Nonetheless, it also signals that history can still be useful for the needs of the present, as long as history is reflexively juxtaposed with the present—through anachronism—rather than rewritten to make the present and its ideologies appear teleological.

The novel takes place in 1960. However, the Shikoku village of 1960 is constantly superimposed upon that same village in the first year of Man’en, 1860. In that year Mitsusaburō and Takashi’s great-grandfather’s younger brother organized the young men of the village into a peasant tax revolt, which spread to neighboring villages and eventually the local castle town. It is no coincidence that the story is set in 1960, the year of the ANPO (US-Japan Security Treaty) demonstrations, another popular uprising. Their great-grandfather, however, opposed the revolt, and fortifying himself in the family storehouse, had fired, with a rare firearm, on rioters that had come to burn down his house. Ever since participating in the violent ANPO demonstrations, Takashi has become obsessed with violence, or rather the violence he perceived in himself in an atmosphere where it was permitted. In order to reconcile his identity with this violence within himself, he struggles to find socially permissible and valorized violence (or violent natures) within his family. Family is, after all, a prime source of identity. However, it is obvious to him that his only close living relative, Mitsusaburō, will not accommodate Takashi’s needs. Mitsusaburō is, as Susan Napier notes, one of Ōe’s archetypal “passive heroes,” whose cynical intellectualism observes the “active hero’s” provocative activities.⁶³

Takashi, therefore, must turn to the other significant men in his lineage, though they are already dead: his other two brothers and his great-grandfather’s younger brother. In order to legitimize his own violent nature (and incidentally the violence of both the ANPO protest he participated in and the uprising he is organizing), throughout the novel Takashi attempts to

⁶³ Susan Napier, *Escape from the Wasteland: Romanticism and Realism in the Fiction of Mishima Yukio and Oe Kenzaburo* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 9.

rewrite history, either by creatively remembering events from his childhood, or by valorizing his great-grandfather's younger brother. However, these attempts are frustrated by Mitsusaburō's insistence on an established historical narrative that contradicts the valorization of violence in the family history at every turn. Mitsusaburō's version of history is privileged for the reader by his position as narrator, which gives the reader access to his internal recollections, as well as his highly intellectualized and rational deliberation about history: Mitsusaburō seems to be a very reliable (if passive and miserable) narrator. For Takashi and the other characters, Mitsusaburō's version of history is privileged by his status as being older (and so having a more reliable memory) and more intellectual. Mitsusaburō's privileged historical narrative will not admit the valorization of violence that Takashi needs, and this tension between Takashi's and Mitsusaburō's historical narratives can be read as one of the central themes in the book.

In remembering their brother S, for example, their memories are quite contradictory:

“Natsumi, do you remember the Air Cadet winter uniform? In the middle of summer, S walked up the stone-paved road in his dark-blue winter uniform, carrying his service sword and wearing an aviator's leather boots. And whenever he would meet someone from the valley, he would snap his booted heels together with a click and salute like a Nazi. I feel like that click of his hard leather heels, and his gallant voice saying ‘Second Nedokoro son S, returned from duty’ still echoes in the valley even now.”

Takashi talked that way, but the S I remembered bore no resemblance to such an outwardly dazzling person. When he was demobilized he did wear his Air Cadet winter uniform to the foot of the bridge, but on top of the bridge he threw away his hat, boots, and service sword, then took off his jacket and came up the stone-paved road with it stuffed under his arm, hunched over. That's how I remember S's demobilization.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Ōe Kenzaburō, *Man'en Gannen No Futtobōru* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1967), 105. “‘Yokaren no fuyu no seifuku o oboete iru kai, Natsumi-chan. S nii-san wa, natsu no sakari ni, kon no fuyufuku o kite guntō o mochi, hikōshi no kawa no hannagagutsu o haite shikiishi o nobotte kita. Soshite tanima no ningen ni au tabi ni, Nachisu no gunjin ga yatta yō ni hannagagutsu no kibisu o oto o tate uchitsukete keireisurunda. Katai kawa no kibisu no tateru kashin to iu oto to, Nedokoro S-ji, tadaima fukuin shite mairimashita! to iu isamashii koe ga, ima mo tanima ni narihibiite iru yō ni kanjiru yo.’ Kono yō ni Takashi wa hanashite ita ga, boku no kioku no naka no S nii-san wa sō shita gaikōkei no hanayakasa to wa muen no ningen de atta. Fukuin shite kita toki mo, hashi no tamoto made wa tashika ni yokaren no fuyu no seifuku o kikondeita S nii-san wa, hashi no ue kara bōshi to hannagagutsu to guntō o nagesute, uwagi o nuide waki ni kakae maekagami no kakkō de shikiishimichi o nobotte kita. Sore ga boku no oboete iru S ni-san no fukuin de aru.”

Takashi identifies S, a military cadet, as a man of violence like himself, and remembers him through the filter of a soldierly ideal; gallant, manly and admirable. However, it is not only Takashi's subjective impressions of S that have been realigned to serve his ego, but also the narrative history of S's return from the Navy. Mitsusaburō's memory, however—presented to the reader as the authoritative representation of a reliable narrator—reveals Takashi's creative rewriting of history for what it is. Takashi also tries to beautify S's death (he is beaten by Koreans from a settlement in the valley):

“I vividly remember the scene on the day S was beaten to death, I still dream about it repeatedly even now. I even remember all the little details clearly,” Takashi said to my wife.

He was lying face-down on top of sharp gravel that had been trampled into small pieces, and dried mud that seemed like white powder. The autumn sunlight was bright, and the road, the vine-covered cliff, the slope covered in pampas grass opposite, and the river below all reflected it with a white light. And in all this whiteness, the river burned with the most intense white. Takashi, crouching fifty centimeters from where S's cheek pressed against the ground facing the river, and even the dog that ran around them whining high enough to set his teeth on edge, were also white. The dead S and Takashi and the dog were all enveloped in a cloud of white light...

“Taka, are you saying that's something you saw in reality?... Taka... that was all just a dream from the beginning. You probably got the image of S's dried up corpse from seeing a toad that had been run over by a tire. Frankly, your description of S's broken black head and the things seeping out of it makes me think of a flattened toad. A toad flattened so its innards have melted together and flown out,” I said, criticizing and refuting Takashi's memories. “Taka, you definitely did not see S after he died. And there's especially no way you could have seen him lying on the road. The only people who saw that were myself, when I went with a handcart to retrieve the corpse, and the Korean villagers who helped me load it... When I left the handcart in the square and came back to the house for a minute, Taka, you were standing in the kitchen stuffing your cheeks with bits of candy, and dribbling brown drool from both sides of your mouth... It was night by the time [Jin and I] carried S's corpse up the long way, below the stone fence, and took it to the storehouse. Taka, you couldn't have seen anything from start to finish, you see?”⁶⁵

⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 105-109. “*S nii-san ga nagurikorosareta hi no kōkei wa, motto kokumei ni kioku shiteite, ima demo kurikaeshi yume ni miru yo. Sore wa samazama na saibu ni itaru made jitsu ni meiryō ni oboete iru kōkei nandayo.*” to Takashi wa tsuma ni hanashita. *S nii-san wa fumikudakarete bisai ni nari keikaku no nibutta jari*

Here, Takashi tries to beautify S's violence: his corpse after his violent death in a brawl between village youths is shining and white, fascinating even in its grotesqueness to the young Takashi squatting beside him. Again, he is not just revising his childhood impressions of the corpse (which might be harder to refute), but rewriting narrative history entirely so that he was in a position to see the corpse in the first place. Takashi, freshly returned from the violent ANPO protests and a trip to America where he deliberately sought out the most dangerous neighborhoods in New York, has an intense need to beautify violence and legitimate his own attraction to it. He does this by iconizing his beautified memory of a crucial, violent moment in his family's history. However, Mitsusaburō's refutes Takashi's memory, collapsing the beautification of violent death Takashi had built up. Since he was obviously much older and more mature at the time, both Takashi and the reader must conclude that Mitsusaburō's memory of the event is more accurate. Mitsusaburō denies Takashi's attempt to use the history of S's death to beautify violence.

Thus denied, Takashi tries to at least valorize S's violence in his memories:

"I do remember the candy. It was from a big brick of candy that S plundered in the first attack on the Korean settlement. He broke it apart with the hilt of his short sword and gave me some. I remember the shape and color of that naval short sword precisely. After that S went to the second attack on the Korean settlement and was beaten to death. But when he gave me his plundered candy,

to shiroi funmatsu-jimite iru kawaita dorō no ue ni utsumuke ni taorete iru. Sunda aki no hizashi o ukete, hodō nominarazu, kusa ni ōwareta gake mo, sono hantai-gawa no ichimen ni susuki no oishigetta shamen mo, haruka kahō no kawara mo, mina shiroppoku hikari o hansha sasete iru. Soshite nanimokamo shiroi uchi ni, kawa wa mottomo hageshii shiro ni moетatte iru. Hō o jimen ni oshiatete kawa no soba ni muite iru S nii-san no atama no 50 senchimētoru waki ni kagamikonnda Takashi to, karera no mawari o ha no kishiru yō na hosoku kan-dakai umekigoe o hasshite kake mawatte iru inu mo mata shiroppei. Korosareta S nii-san to Takashi to inu wa shiroi hikari no kumo ni tsutsumarete iru... 'Sore made Taka ga genjitsu ni mita to iu no dewa nai deshō?... Taka... sore wa saisho kara tan ni hitotsu no yume to shite, Taka ni arawaretanda yo. Kansō shita S nii-san no shitai no imēji wa, taiya ni hikarete hi ni kawaite iru hikigaeru demo mita kioku ni yotte tsukuri agetandarō. Kimi no byōsha ni yoru S nii-san no uchikudakareta kuroi atama to soko kara hamidashite iru mono no nagame wa, tanteki ni, peshanko ni natta hikigaeru o omowaseru. Naizō ga tokete nagaredashite hirabettaku natta yatsu o omowaseru yo.' to boku wa hihyō shite kara Takashi no kioku e no hanshō o teishutsu shita. 'Zettai ni, Taka ga shinda S nii-san o mita hazu wa nai. Sore o mita no wa riyakā o hiite S nii-san no shitai o tori ni itta boku to, shitai o tsumikomomu no o tetsudatte kureta Chōsenjin buraku no hitotachi dake da... Hiroba ni riyakā o oite, ittan ie ni modoru to, Taka wa ōkii ame no katamari o kuchi ni fukunde kuchibiru no ryōtan kara kogechairō no tsuba o tarashi nagara doma no oku ni tatte ita yo... S nii-san no shitai wa, yoru made kakatte ishigaki no shita o mawaru michi kara hakobiageta ato, kurayashiki ni ireta kara, Taka wa saigo made nani mo minakatta no janai ka?'"

he was happy and cheerful. I think he used his naval short sword in order to excite his little brother and himself even more....”

“Taka, that’s another memory from a dream, a dream image that has settled into your memory with the same density as reality. It’s true that S and his comrades did steal black-market sake and candy from the Korean settlement. But... he hid it in a bale of straw in the barn. I’m the one who stole it and gave it to you, Taka, along with eating some myself. Furthermore, it’s not possible that S was in such a good mood after the first attack on the Korean settlement. Why? At that point, one of the Korean villagers had already died. The second attack wasn’t an attack at all, but a compensatory raid. It had already been decided that someone from the Japanese villagers’ side would be scarified. That way the two murders would cancel each other out, and the whole thing could be settled without involving the police. And it had already been decided who should play that role. In other words, S knew that he himself would be sacrificed. I only have one memory of S between the two raids, like a blurry picture, but it’s not a picture I just made up. Even though at the time the others were getting drunk off the black-market sake they stole, in the photo of my memory S was lying in a dark corner of the storehouse, completely sober, facing away from me curled up in a ball.”⁶⁶

Here the martial images in Takashi’s memory are striking. S is cheerful and spirited after a violent raid, using his military sword to break apart plundered candy and magnanimously share it with his little brother. The image of the military sword evokes the wartime valorization

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 110-111. “*Tashika ni, ame no koto wa oboete iru ga, are wa S nii-san ga, daiikkaime no Chōsenjin buraku shūgeki no toki ni gōdatsu shite kita ōkii ame no ita o, tanken no tsuka de yabuite ore ni kuretanda yo. Ore wa sono kaigun no tanken no katachi ya iro made seikaku ni oboete iru. Sono ato S nii-san wa dainikaime no shūgeki ni dekakete itte, nagurikorosaretanda. S nii-san wa, chibi no otōto to kare jishin no kandō o iyagauenimo moriageyō to shite, wazawaza kaigun no tanken no tsuka o tsukatta no da to omou ne.*’... *‘Taka, sore mo mata, kimi no yume kara no kioku nanda, tan naru yume no hatsumeji ga kimi no kioku no naka ni jissai ni atta koto to onnaji yōna mitsudo o motte teichaku shitanda. Daiikkaime no shūgeki no toki, S nii-san to sono nakama ga, Chōsenjin buraku kara mitsuzōshu to ame to o gōdatsu shite kita koto wa jujitsu da yo. Shikashi S nii-san wa,...* *sore o naya no warataba no naka ni kakushite oitanda kara. Sore o boku ga kossori nusumidashite jibun mo tabetashi, Taka ni mo yattanda yo. Sore yori motto chokusetsu ni S nii-san ga daiikkai no shūgeki no ato de jōkigen datta koto wa arienai, naze ka? Sono toki, Chōsenjin buraku de wa, sude ni hitori shinde ita. Dainikaime no shūgeki wa, tanima no Nihonjin no kawa ni mo, hitori giseisha o dashite, satsujin no umeawase o shi, otagai ni mondai o keisatsu ni mochidasu koto o shinaide sumaseyō to shita, honrai wa kōgekiteki na mokuteki no nai shūgeki dattanda ga, sono tsugunai no shūgeki de, dare ga korosareru yakuwari o ninau ka no kotae wa, tokku ni dete itanda kara ne. Sunawachi sore ga jibun no yakuwari da to iu koto wa S nii-san wa shitte ita. Boku wa S nii-san ga, kono futatsu no shūgeki no aida ni, dōiu yōsu o shite ita ka nitsuite wa, hitotsu no aimaina shashin no yōna kioku shika nainda ga, sore wa boku no sōsaku shita shashin dewa nai yo. Onaji jikan ni, hoka no renchū wa nusunda mitsuzōshu de yopparatte ita noni, sono kioku no gamen no S nii-san wa shirafu de kurayashiki no oku no ma no kurai tokoro ni mukōmuki ni, se o maruku shite nesobette, jitto ugokanainda.*”

of soldiers and sailors and associates them not only with S, but with the small-scale, village violence S had engaged in when he stole the candy, not dissimilar to Takashi's small-scale violence in the ANPO demonstrations. Takashi's insistence on glamorizing and valorizing the violent aspects of S's life and death suggests a deep-seated need to remember S that way, so that Takashi can convince himself that his own violence is connected to a family history of violent glory. Mitsusaburō, however, repeatedly unravels Takashi's memory work, not allowing him the comfort of rewriting the past to accommodate his present discoveries about himself.

Takashi, then, represents modernity's engagement with history. In a microcosm of national ideology, he has created a grand narrative of valorized violence that will legitimize violence in the present, and therefore must rewrite the past so that his grand narrative was always true and seemingly teleological. Mitsusaburō, however, resists Takashi's attempts to repurpose history for a narrative that would suit his needs, simply by insisting on recounting a different version of history. Mitsusaburō represents the postwar suspicion of modernity's projects and its appropriation of history—stances that later would become associated with postmodernity. These two modes of engagement with history are completely antithetical, and the tension between them drives the novel and is one of its main thematic axes. Therefore Natsumiko's "defection" to Takashi (not following Mitsusaburō when he moves to the storehouse, and eventually committing adultery with Takashi) can be read as a preference for Takashi's more positive, beautified outlook on history. Natsumiko's defection begins shortly after the above discussion about S's death, which greatly disturbs her: "Why did S participate in the raid even though he knew he was going to be killed, and was even really killed? Why did S have to play the role of being killed in compensation? It's terrifying to think of S lying there in a dark corner of the storehouse. It's really terrifying and revolting to imagine a young man waiting alone for the second raid."⁶⁷ Natsumiko does not disbelieve Mitsusaburō—she knows his account of S's death is more reliable than Takashi's. However, she prefers a historical perspective that offers escape from the despair of S's final hours, even knowing it is factually incorrect, deceptive, or an appropriation of history to justify violence. A version of history that has a young man spending his last days cheerfully before happening to die in brawl, even if it is

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, 112.

not accurate, is infinitely preferable to one that has him spending those days waiting for death in the dark, knowing his comrades have sacrificed him. Therefore she eventually gravitates away from Mitsusaburō and towards Takashi. In the passage quoted in the next section, as well, Natsumiko notes her preference for Takashi's lively, positive accounts of the 1860 revolt over Mitsusaburō's insistence on grim historical integrity.

Foiled by Mitsusaburō's insistence on his remembered history about their brother, Takashi changes tactics in his struggle to use history to legitimize his violence. First, he acquires power and uses it to pressure Mitsusaburō. Takashi employs his charismatic personality to recruit the young men of the village into a football team, but the practice of football is merely a pretext for gathering the young men into his entourage and personal army. He also pulls Natsumiko away from Mitsusaburō and into his own orbit, then humiliates him by selling the family land behind his back. Scorned by the football team, abandoned by his wife, and humiliated, Mitsusaburō moves from the main house to the storehouse, making literal the social isolation Takashi has imposed on him. Takashi deploys the social power he has acquired to pressure Mitsusaburō into accepting his own version of history, a metaphor for social, political, state, and academic institutions that pressure people to accept versions of history convenient to said institutions.

Secondly, Takashi tries to find glorified violence in his history by moving from his own brother to his great-grandfather's younger brother. Seeing a similarity between the violence of the 1860 uprising and that the ANPO protests he participated in, Takashi attempts to valorize his great-grandfather's younger brother. However, Mitsusaburō again disrupts this attempt with his more pragmatic historical perspective, which does not allow the glorification of the distant past any more than it does his immediate family's history. At one point, Mitsusaburō leaves his self-imposed exile to venture into the main house for food, where he finds Takashi lecturing his football team about the history of the 1860 uprising, but Mitsusaburō again insists on the ugly brutality of historical violence. When he enters the room:

The young men gave up trying to hold it in and sighed at me scornfully in unison as if on purpose...

[Natsumiko said] “Taka is telling them about some fun episodes, Mitsu. The nice thing about Taka is that he doesn’t paint the whole revolt with a gloomy fixed prejudice like you.”

“Could he actually dig up a pleasant episode from the 1860 revolt?”

“You shouldn’t ask me that, should you?” my wife snapped back, but gave me an example anyway. “When Taka told them about how all the village headmen and village officials on the way to the castle town were forced to kneel by the side of the road, and the peasants each hit them once on the head barehanded as they went by, everyone laughed happily.”

Something cruel like everyone hitting the village headmen and officials once on the head was certainly the kind of boorish, farcical thing delinquents of farming villages would think up. But those headmen and village officials, hit on the head once each by tens of thousands of people, died with the contents of their skulls like crumbled tofu.

“Did Taka tell them how, after all the people had passed by, old men were lying face down, dead, in front of their furniture covered in people’s excrement? Or did those young jocks guffaw at it even so?” I persisted not out of any desire to criticize Takashi and his new comrades, but out of simple curiosity...

[Takashi said] “the young men’s organization was truly brutal, but in a sense, that brutality reassured the normal peasants who participated. Because when it became necessary to wound or kill their enemy, they could rely on the young men’s brutality and keep their own hands clean. It was an arrangement that allowed ordinary peasants to participate in the revolt without having to worry about being arrested for arson or murder afterwards...”⁶⁸

⁶⁸ *ibid.*, 214-216. “*Wakamonotachi wa tsuini nintai suru koto o yamete, azatoku boku o chōshōsuru waza to rashii tameiki o issei ni tsuita... ‘Yukaina episōdo o Taka ga umaku hanashita no yo, Mitsu. Anata no yō ni ikki no zentai o yūtsu na koteikannen de nurikomete shimawanai tokoro ga, Taka no ikiiki shita ii tokoro janai kashira.’ ‘Sō shita yukaina episōdo ga man’en gannen no ikki ni hakkutsu dekiru no kai?’ ‘Mitsu ga sore o watashi ni kiku koto wa nai deshō?’ to tsuma wa hanpatsu shita ga, tomokaku hitotsu no rei o ageta. ‘Jōkamachi made no muramura no shōya ya mura yakunintachi wa, michibata ni hizamazukasarete, hyakushōtachi wa mina sude de sono atama o hitotsu zutsu tataite tōrisugita to, Taka ga hanashita toki, minna wa ittō ureshisō ni waratta wa.’ Tashika ni shōya, mura yakunin no atama o hitotsu zutsu tatakaseru zankoku ni wa, nōson no furyō shōnentachi ga kangaedashisō na, dorokusai kokkei no aji ga suru. Shikashi, sūmannin ni oyobu minshū ni hitotsu zutsu atama o tatakareta shōyatachi, mura yakunintachi wa, zugaikotsu no nakami o kuzureta tōfu mitai ni shite shinde shimatta no de aru. ‘Taka wa, minshū no gyōretsu ga tōrisugita ato ni jinpun ya jinnyō o kakerareta kazai no mae de, utsubuse ni haitsukubatte shindeiru rōjintachi no koto wa hanashita kai? Sore de nao, ano wakai taiikukatachi wa, kōfuku sō ni takawarai shita no ka ne?’ to boku wa Takashi to sono atarashii nakama o hihan suru ishi wa nashi ni, tada kōkishin kara koshitsu shita... ‘Wakamono-gumi no renchū wa jitsu ni kyōbō datta wake da ga, aru imi de wa sono kyōbōsa ga, futsū no hyakushō de aru sankashatachi ni, hitotsu no kakujitsu na anshinkan o ataete itanda. Tōmen no teki o kizu tsuketari koroshitari shinakereba naranai toki wa, jibun no te o yogosu koto naku kanarazu wakamono-gumi*”

Here Takashi has gathered his entourage around him to tell his version of history, and they pressure Mitsusaburō with social opprobrium on cue when he enters. Thus equipped with the power to impose his version of history, Takashi tries to valorize his great-grandfather's younger brother's violence, this time by framing the events of the past in a certain way. But despite the power employed against him, Mitsusaburō again refuses to allow Takashi's repurposing of history go by unremarked, and forcefully reminds Takashi and his audience (who are sitting within earshot of Mitsusaburō and his wife in this scene), of what lies outside the frame Takashi had tried to assert—the ignoble, sad, gruesome result of the violence Takashi had tried to glorify for its transgressiveness. Thwarted in framing his great-grandfather's younger brother's violence in positive terms, Takashi is forced to retreat and retrench, now admitting his terrible brutality, but insisting that brutality was noble and, in fact, desired by society (the normal peasants who participated in the revolt).

Takashi uses every form of social pressure against Mitsusaburō, not only pulling Natsumiko away from him and humiliating him by selling the family land without his knowledge, but also isolating him from society and forcing him to become a hermit in the storehouse, and even having his entourage belittle him. Despite all this, however, Mitsusaburō refuses to relax his insistence on historical accuracy. No matter how many people Takashi infects with his charismatic accounts of history, as long as Mitsusaburō remembers another narrative, Takashi's cannot triumph. Mitsusaburō is similar to the narrator of Ōe's early masterpiece *Me mushiri kouchi* (*Nip the Buds, Shoot the Kids*): although the villagers at the end of the novel convince all the other boys to adhere to their rewritten version of history, the narrator alone insists on telling the truth as he remembers it, making him a threat to the village who must be killed. Similarly Mitsusaburō, although alone in his resistance, is also a threat to Takashi's history. However, Takashi cannot kill Mitsusaburō, and as long as he persists in rejecting Takashi's rewritten history, Takashi's version cannot become "truth."

His attempts to re-remember or re-frame history to fulfill his own psychological needs thus frustrated by Mitsusaburō's insistence on historical accuracy, Takashi eventually sets out

no renchū no kyōbōsa o ate ni dekita kara ne. Ippan no hyakushōtachi wa ikki no ato, hōka ya satsujin no zaika de tsuikyū sareru shinpai nashi ni, ikki ni sankā dekiru shikumi datta wake da."

to re-create history. By recreating the events of 1860, Takashi hopes to create a new context for the consideration of his family's history of violence. If the modern analogue of the 1860 revolt is valorous and glorious, by association the revolt of the past will be cast in a new light. By becoming his great-grandfather's younger brother, Takashi can alter how that man of the past is perceived. Takashi therefore sets out to create his own uprising, first with his loyal football team, but eventually drawing in the whole village. Having failed at re-writing history, Takashi now attempts to over-write it. The football kicked in 1960 can travel back to 1860.

Takashi's recreation of the past is facilitated by the nature of the Nedokoros' village. Quite unlike the modern city of Tokyo where the Nedokoro brothers normally live, the outward manifestations of modernity in the village are sparse. The storehouse where the brothers' great-grandfather hid from rioters in 1860 is the same storehouse where Mitsusaburō recalls seeing S in 1945, and it is the same building Mitsusaburō moves to in the narrative present of 1960, nearly unchanged a century later. This storehouse becomes a sort of physical anchor, a point of commonality that links the two eras. Other families and buildings also remain unchanged from a century past, including the sake brewer family and their outbuilding. Mitsusaburō even guesses that the oil heater he uses in the storehouse is the first ever lit in the village.⁶⁹ It is far from the lights of Tokyo that might serve to remind one what year it is. Some time before the plot begins, the road to the nearest town is washed out, and once winter snows start, cutting off any traffic, postal, or telephone service, the village becomes a circumscribed space. Within that space, there is little to distinguish the 1960 village from the 1860 village, and so it becomes a space well-suited to Takashi's project. When one of the members of Takashi's football team is expelled from the group, he tries to travel over the mountains:

Banished by his comrades and pursued by shame and despair, the young man struggling through the snow must have pictured of himself as a peasant son of 1860 wearing a topknot. The simple youth driven by his growing fear had been surrounded by the darkness of the midnight woods, toiling through the snow; there would have been no way for him to verify that a century had passed since 1860. If he had collapsed and frozen to death the night before, he would have died exactly the same death as a young man exiled in 1860. All the "times" that

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, 207.

coexist in the deep forest would have poured into the head of this young man on the verge of death and occupied it.

“Now that the first sign of it has appeared in that young man, the tendency to identify with the young men of 1860 will spread to the whole football team. And I’ll spread it to every person in the valley. I’ll revive the revolt of our ancestors from a hundred years ago, and recreate it even more realistically than the Nenbutsu dance. Mitsu, it’s not impossible!” [Takashi said].⁷⁰

Within the special circumscribed space of the village, Takashi’s charismatic lectures about the 1860 uprising have caused his football team members to see themselves as the young men of 1860. With Takashi playing the role of his great-grandfather’s younger brother, he will lead the young men in an uprising that valorizes his violence, overwriting the sordid history of the actual young men of 1860. As long as the village is cut off from the outside world, Takashi’s project to recreate and overwrite history can find fertile ground. It is only when, briefly, the outside world is brought into the village again via television that the villagers realize how absurd Takashi’s revolt is: “Standing behind [the children], the adults weren’t focused on the TV, but murmuring uneasily. The transmissions from far off cities arriving when the valley was under a strange martial law had a certain effect. The blurry close-up on the screen of a girl singer smiling disingenuously with her large jaw thrust out renewed the sense that what had happened, and was still happening in the valley was unusual.”⁷¹ This brief intrusion of the outside world into the bounded space of the village reminds the villagers that what they are

⁷⁰ *ibid.*, 260-261. “*Nakamatachi ni tsuihōsareta chijokukan to zetsubō ni oitaterarete, makkurayami no mori o fukai yuki ni nanjūshinagara susumu wakamono ni wa, atama ni mage o noseta man’en gannen no hyakushō no musuko taru jibun jishin ga omoiegakarete ita no darō. Shidai ni tsunoru kyōkō ni karitaterareru tanjun na wakamono ga, mayonaka no mori no kurayami ni kakomarete yuki ni arukinazuminagara, iya man’en gannen kara wa sude ni hyaku nen no toki ga nagaresatta to kakunin suru tame ni dono yō na shudan ga aru ka? Sakuya moshi wakamono ga ikitaorete tōshishite shimatte ita to shitara, kare wa man’en gannen ni tsuihō sareta wakamono to zettai ni dōitsu no shi o shinda koto dattarō. Mori no takami ni kyōzon shite iru subete no ‘toki’ ga hinshi no wakamono no atama ni nadarekonde soko o ryōyūsuru. ‘Ano wakamono ni sono saisho no kizashi ga arawareta ijō, man’en gannen no wakamonotachi to jibuntachi to no dōitsuka no shikō wa, sugusama futtobōru chiimu zen’in ni denpasuru darō. Ore wa sore o tanima no ningen zentai ni hiromete yaru. Ore wa hyaku nen mae no senzotachi no ikki o tanima ni yobimodoshite, nenbutsu odori yori mo motto genjitsuteki ni saigen shitai. Mitsu, sore wa fukanō janai!’”*

⁷¹ *ibid.*, 275-276. “[*kodomo*] no haigo ni tatta otonatachi wa tokuni terevi ni shūchūshite iru no dewa nai, zawazawa shita futettei no yōsu o shimeshite ita. Enpō no toshi no nichijō seikatsusha no tsūshin ga, ima kimyō na kaigenreika no tanima ni dōjiteki ni todoite hitotsu no yakuwari o hakkisuru. Terevi no gamen ni ōtsushisareta tsukuriwarai shite ōkina shita-ago o tsukidashite iru shōjo kashu no fusenmeina imēji ga aratamete, kono tanima ni okotte jizokushitsutsu aru mono no iyōsa no inshō o kōshin suru no de aru.”

doing defies common sense: peasant revolts do not happen in 1960. In 1960 there are, instead, political demonstrations, and despite all Takashi's efforts, these two kinds of violent riots are not the same. Aside from this brief contact with the outside, however, the circumscribed space of the village is left intact, and Takashi's scheme can advance.

Nevertheless, there is, crucially, one part of the village that is an obtrusive reminder of not only modernity but narrative time: the "supermarket" (so-called, although it sells durable goods as well as consumables). The supermarket is owned by a Korean, whom the villagers derisively call the Supermarket Emperor. This Emperor originally lived in a settlement of Koreans near the village. Like many Koreans who were forcibly brought to Japan during the war, this group was used as forced laborers and relocated to the remote valley to work in the forest. After Japan's defeat, the Emperor bought up land in the settlement and accumulated wealth, eventually founding a chain of supermarkets. The supermarket, therefore, is not only an undeniable reminder of modernity—selling electronics and foreign goods—it is also a constant reminder of the war, and of Japan's defeat. A foreigner who would never have come to Japan except as a slave during Japan's colonial adventure now owns the most successful business in the valley, and the former masters of the empire are slowly being driven out of business and into economic subservience, as all the family-run village shops have been forced out of business by the cheaper and more modern supermarket.

The supermarket, therefore, is a source of resentment much like the clan officials were in 1860, and it is only natural that Takashi's riot should focus on it. His football team, and eventually the whole village at his encouragement, break into the supermarket and loot various goods. This looting divests the supermarket of its power as a symbol of narrative history, restoring a social and racial hierarchy that existed before the defeat. Takashi says as much: "[The villagers] are fully aware of the misery of their fading lifestyles... But now they've remembered the sweet feeling of superiority towards Koreans before and during the war."⁷² One of Mitsusaburō's acquaintances remarks, "Ever since the Koreans came to this valley, the valley people have continuously suffered from trouble! When the war ended, the Koreans

⁷² *ibid.*, 315-316. "*Renchū wa jibuntachi no saki-bosori no seikatsu no hisansa o mitōshite kita... Tokoroga senzen, senchū no Chōsenjin e no yūetsukan no amai kioku o omoidashitanda.*"

snatched up the valley's land and money and got rich! We're just taking back a little bit..."⁷³ Like Natsumiko, the villagers have bought into Takashi's rewritten history because it supplies a comforting narrative: that their troubles are not due to their increasing economic irrelevance but to the depredations of outside invaders who have gotten above themselves. However, Mitsusaburō again plays the role of the relentless rememberer of unaltered history:

"...the Koreans didn't come to the valley by their own will. They were slave laborers forcibly brought here from their own country. And as far as I know, there are no incidents of the villagers actively suffering trouble because of them. Even with the issue of the Korean settlement land after the war ended, no villager suffered any loss individually, right? Why have you distorted your own memory?"⁷⁴

Mitsusaburō reminds his interlocutor of history unaltered by Takashi: that the Koreans are not invaders who came to cause trouble, but victims, slaves who even when freed never caused trouble for or economic harm to the villagers. Again, he will not allow a rewriting of history, even when that rewriting would provide a comforting narrative that people in the present desperately need. He names the phenomenon for what it is: people deliberately distorting their own memories, to remember a history they know to be false. Again, Takashi's revolt has traces of both the Japanese left and right during the 1960s. It is, on the one hand, a recognizably rightist attempt to restore the social order and racial hierarchy that existed during and before the war. On the other hand, it is also a recognizably leftist attempt to overthrow a large corporation, seize the wealth of the capitalist class, and redistribute it to the villagers. The text creates an uprising that is a hybrid of left and right to show that ideology from both ends of the political spectrum, not just one particular ideology, ultimately empowers young people attracted to violence, and legitimates that violence through distortions of history. Mitsusaburō

⁷³ *ibid.*, 267. "Kono kubochi ni Chōsenjin ga kite kara to iu mono, tanima no ningen wa meiwaku o kōmuritsuzuke deshita ga! Sensō ga owaru to, Chōsenjin wa, tochi mo kane mo tanima kara mogitotte, ii mibun ni narimashita ga! Sore o sukoshi dake torikaesu no ni..."

⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 268. "...motomoto Chōsenjin wa nozonde tanima ni haitte kita no janai yo. Karera wa bokoku kara kyōseirenkōsarete kita dorei rōdōsha da. Shikamo boku no shitte iru kagiri, tanima no ningen ga karera kara sekkyokuteki ni meiwaku o kakerareta to iu jijitsu wa nai. Sensō ga owatta ato no Chōsenjin shūraku no tochi no mondai ni shite mo, sore de tanima no kojīn ga chokusetsu songai o kōmutta to iu koto wa nakatta darō. Naze jibun no kioku o yugamerunda?"

is the postwar skepticism of modern ideologies and the historiography they use to legitimate their will to power; a stance which would later become identified with postmodernism.

This tension between Takashi's attempts to rewrite history and Mitsusaburō's refusal to acknowledge them finally comes to a head in the novel's climax. Takashi, desperate to demonstrate he can wrest a modicum of control of history away from Mitsusaburō, attempts to rewrite a portion of history of which Mitsusaburō can claim no privileged knowledge. Takashi claims he attempted to rape a young woman from the valley, then murdered her by bashing her head in with a rock when she resisted. Of course, this version of history would probably result in Takashi's death, either from formal execution or at the hands of a lynch mob. However, it would allow Takashi to die as a rebellious criminal, someone who used violence to take what he wanted with no concern for social morality. This image may be a far cry from that of the young revolutionary who led his village in an uprising, but it still appeals to Takashi's vanity and his need to valorize the violence within himself. This is Takashi's desperate last-ditch effort, after Mitsusaburō has blocked all his attempts to re-write or over-write history in a way that would allow him to construct such an image for himself.

However, Mitsusaburō again stymies Takashi's attempt to rewrite history, even history lived only by Takashi and the victim which, the victim now being dead, Takashi should be able to control completely. Nevertheless, Mitsusaburō incisively debunks all of Takashi's claims, just as he did with Takashi's childhood memories. He deduces what the reader (guided by Mitsusaburō as narrator through his internal reasoning) can only assume to be the actual course of events: that the young woman was in a car with Takashi, became afraid at the speed he was driving and tried to jump out of the car, whereupon she smashed her head on a rock accidentally.

Having thus been foiled even in his attempt to rewrite his own personal history, Takashi is left with nothing but despair. Mitsusaburō demolishes his attempt to legitimize himself with history one last time: "Even our great-grandfather's younger brother, who you're counting on so much, not only committed massacres when he led the revolt, but then, in the end, he

abandoned his comrades to die and escaped through the forest alone.”⁷⁵ In a final act of contempt, Mitsusaburō vilifies their great grand-father’s younger brother’s violence one last time, that violence that Takashi was “counting on” (*tayori ni shite* 頼りにして) to validate his own. With this final victory of Mitsusaburō in the brothers’ struggle over history, the final reminder that Takashi is powerless to alter history to legitimize and valorize the violence within himself, Takashi can only commit suicide a few minutes later.

Finally, however, Mitsusaburō discovers a hidden room in the storehouse that he realizes was used to hide his great-grandfather’s younger brother for decades after the revolt. Based on this new evidence that his great-grandfather’s younger brother did not run away and abandon his comrades after all, but instead stayed in self-imposed imprisonment as punishment for his crimes, Mitsusaburō revises his opinion of him. He tells Natsumiko “At least where our great-grandfather’s younger brother is concerned, Taka didn’t have to feel ashamed of him!” To this revelation Natsumiko has the harshest of rejoinders:

I don’t think you made Taka kill himself. But I do think you drove him into the most shameful and pathetic kind of death. You repeatedly dropped him into the circle of his shame, until there was nothing left for him but to die so pathetically... And now that Taka is dead and there’s no way to take that back, you say that he didn’t have to feel ashamed of your great-grandfather’s younger brother. Even if it wouldn’t have given him a reason to keep on living, couldn’t your great-grandfather’s younger brother’s life have given him hope in the moment he was about to kill himself? If you had told this... to Taka then, his suicide might not have been so awful.

To this, however, Mitsusaburō only replies “What I just told you was only discovered after the Supermarket Emperor surveyed the storehouse. Such a thing was unthinkable that night.”⁷⁶

⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 350. “*Kimi ga mottomo tayori ni shite iru hiiojiisan no otōto wa, ikki o shidō shite satsuriku o okonatta ue, saigo ni wa nakamatachi o migorishi ni shite, jibun dake mori o koete shuppon shita.*”

⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 373-374. “*Mitsu ga Taka o jisatsusasete to wa omowanai wa. Shikashi Mitsu wa Taka no jitsatsu ga mottomo mijime na hazukashii shi ni naru yō ni, Taka o oitsumeta wa. Sono yō ni mijime ni shinu hoka nai tokoro made, Taka o kurikaeshi haji no wa no naka ni otoshikonda wa... Shikamo Taka ga shinde shimatte, mō torikaeshi no tsukanai ima, Taka wa hiiojiisan no otōto ni tsuite tokuni hajinakute yokatta nado to iidasunda wa. Saigo no hi no Taka ni totte, tatoe ikinobiru tame no tegakari ni wa naranakute mo, sukunakutomo jisatsu suru magiwa no kokoro no sasae ni wa naru mono to shite, antatachi no hiiojiisan no otōto no shōgai ga arieta no deshō? Moshi Mitsu ga... ano toki Taka ni hanashite yatte itara, Taka no jisatsu wa are hodo mugotarashiku wa nakute sunda hazu nano deshō?’ ‘Boku ga ima hanashita no wa, sūpāmāketto no tennō ga kurayashiki o chōsashi hajimete yatto hakkensareta jijitsu nanda. Ano yoru ni wa sono yōna koto nado*

Here the tension of the entire novel is summarized at its conclusion. Takashi tries to reframe and rewrite history in such a way that it serves the needs of the present, providing hope and satisfying egos, and giving himself a reason to live by inventing historical precedent to valorize his own violence. Mitsusaburō, however, disallows any such attempts, insisting on preserving history. Natsumiko points out that Mitsusaburō might have saved his brother's life (or at least given him a better death) even just by allowing for the possibility of a creative reinterpretation of history, but to do so without additional evidence is "unthinkable" for Mitsusaburō.

If the novel charts a struggle between the brothers' modes of interaction with history, clearly Mitsusaburō wins the struggle. Despite the appeal of Takashi's hopeful rewritings of history, and despite the social pressure oppressing him, Mitsusaburō never once yields his historical perspective, and prevents Takashi from rewriting history even though it means his brother's death. However, the novel is not merely a story of binary opposition. Rather, the two views of history create something new, a new treatment of the past formed dialogically by the needs of both brothers. That dialogical treatment—formed of two voices but erasing neither—is anachronism.

While Mitsusaburō never permits Takashi's attempts to rewrite the past, he *is* swayed by Takashi's superimposition of the events of 1860 onto the village of 1960. Takashi juxtaposes the two eras, hoping to overwrite one with the other. However, since Mitsusaburō will not allow the past to be overwritten, the eras become stuck in juxtaposition, unresolved. This juxtaposition, formed dialogically by the brothers' struggle, is anachronistic. For example, one carnivalesque scene gives rise to compression of time and the superimposition of eras:

I polished the narrow glass window... in an oval shape, like an old-fashioned mirror, and looked down. I saw Takashi there, completely naked, running a circle into the snow piled up in the front garden. An outdoor light, reflecting off the snow that had fallen on the ground, roof and several small shrubs under the eaves, illuminated the white garden with plentiful light that gave an impression of the vague light of dusk. The snow was still falling. I had a strange sense that everything was fixed in place, as if the lines snowflakes traced in this one second would be maintained for as long as snow fell in the valley, and

kangaerare mo shinakatta."

no other movement of snow would be possible. The essence of that second would be stretched out for eternity. Just like sound is absorbed by a layer of snow, the directionality of time was also swallowed by that snow and lost. “Time” misdistributed. The Takashi running around stark naked was my great-grandfather’s younger brother, and also my own younger brother. All the moments of a century were piled into this one moment.⁷⁷

In the bufoonery of Takashi running pointless circles in the snow naked, we can detect one of the “numerous parodies and travesties, humiliations, profanations, comic crownings and uncrownings”⁷⁸ of Bakhtin’s carnival (of which Ōe is an advocate), which signals a “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order.”⁷⁹ In this special moment and space, the established order of narrative time and history can be suspended. Here the frosted glass is polished into a round shape reminiscent of “an old-fashioned mirror.” In other words, it is like a Japanese polished-metal mirror rather than a mercury-backed mirror. Such mirrors reflected distorted, fantastical worlds. Through this portal which, like a dream, admits counterfactual perception of reality, Takashi’s carnivalesque buffoonery creates an anachronistic impression in Mitsusaburō, the sense that the person he sees is both his younger brother and also his great-grandfather’s younger brother. Time loses its directionality, is allowed to fold back on itself, and the space of a century is compressed into one moment, so that two people of different eras can anachronistically be the same person.

Michiko Wilson notes that the above passage demonstrates “the coexistence of synchronic and diachronic time.”⁸⁰ However, it would be more correct to say that diachronic

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 210. “*Hosonagai garasu mado...no kumori o kyūshiki no kagami ga sō de aru yō na daenkei ni migaitte miorosu to, maeniwa ni furitsumotta yuki no ue o, suhadaka no Takashi ga wa o egaite kakete iru no ga mieta. Kentō no hikari ga jimen to yane, nokiba no sūshu no shōkanboku ni furitsumotta yuki no hansha ni tasukerarete, higure no bon’yari shita akari no inshō o sukkari kōshin suru yutakana hikari ni, shiroi zentei o akarumasete iru. Yuki wa nao mo furishikitte iru. Kono ichi byōkan no subete no seppen no egaku senjō ga, tanima no kūkan ni yuki no furishikiru aida sono mama zutto ijisareru node atte, hoka no yuki no ugoki wa arienai to iu fushigi na kotei kannen ga umareru. Ichibyōkan no jisshitsu ga mugen ni hikinobasareru. Yuki no sō ni oto ga kyūshūaretsukushite iru yō ni, toki no hōkōsei mo mata furishikiru yuki ni suikomarete ushinawareta. Henzaisuru ‘toki.’ Suhadaka de kakete iru Takashi wa, sōsofu no otōto de ari, boku no otōto da. Hyakunenkan no subete no shunkan ga kono isshunkan ni bisshiri kasanatte iru.*”

⁷⁸ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 11.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 10.

⁸⁰ Wilson, 50.

time is being perceived through the lens of a synchronic moment. Because a synchronic perspective cannot admit a narrative chronological progression, the narrative that leads from 1860 to 1960 is discarded, but the essential parts of both eras (Mitsusaburō's great-grandfather's younger brother and his own younger brother) are retained and, consequently, conflated. This is exactly anachronism.

This anachronism reveals a compromise between the brothers' diametrically opposed historical philosophies. Takashi wishes to become their great-grandfather's younger brother, and therefore overwrite the latter's history. Mitsusaburō will never allow history to be altered. Here, however, the distorting night window and Takashi's absurd behavior create a moment removed from common sense. In this moment, the two can be superimposed—but this superimposition is anachronistic. Takashi is “my great-grandfather's younger brother, and also my own younger brother.” He occupies both roles simultaneously, and since it is impossible for anyone to be his own great-grandfather's younger brother, the juxtaposition is maintained, not resolved. Takashi cannot become his great-grandfather's younger brother after all, but the anachronistic juxtaposition opens up the possibility of connection between the two.

As Takashi moves to recreate the past in the isolated, rustic village, Mitsusaburō responds by increasingly processing reality anachronistically. In one dream:

As my dream developed, the flow of a dream involving the revolt of the peasants in the valley reached my memories of the day at the end of the war when one adult from every house in the village was mobilized to go into the large grove and harvest bamboo. From there the flow reversed, and returned to the first year of Man'en, creating a new dream flow...

In this new dream, peasants living in a “time” that was both the first year of Man'en and the end of the war who wore khaki-colored civilian defense uniforms with steel helmets hanging down their backs along with topknots, worked to cut a great number of bamboo spears. They were the people who were going to wield those bamboo spears to advance the battle of 1860 to victory, and they were also the people who were going to throw themselves at the armored sides of aircraft and landing craft in a suicidal attack...

When my mother and I shut ourselves in the storehouse, a squad of villagers carrying bamboo spears climbed the stone-paved road up to us. They were being directed by Takashi, who was of indeterminate age. Since he was the

only person in the valley who had actually seen America and Americans, he was the most reliable person to lead the villagers to attack with bamboo spears the Americans who were going to land at the seaside village. But first the bamboo spear squad was going to advance on the storehouse where my mother and I were hiding....

My brother, leading the mob, had now merged with my great-grandfather's brother of 1860 and enthusiastically challenged myself, my mother and the household spirits. Takashi was surrounded by a group of the valley's young men he had trained through football practice.⁸¹

Within the realm of dreams, temporality can be compressed. Here three points in time, 1860, 1960, and 1945, have been superimposed upon one another. In Jameson's terms, their cards have been juxtaposed, or in Azuma's, elements of the three eras (steel helmets, bamboo spears, topknots, etc.) have been extracted from the database and redeployed in a new combination. Significantly, there is no historical narrative that can support this compression of temporality into a single narrative present. But within the carnivalesque world of the dream 1860, 1960 and 1945 can coexist comfortably. The narrative history that separates them is temporarily set aside within the bounded space of the dream. Once that happens, Takashi's forceful attempts to become his great-grandfather's younger brother and to make the villagers of the present those of 1860 successfully summon the juxtaposition, although they do not

⁸¹ Ōe, *Man'en*, 149-51. "Yume no kyokumen ga tenkaishite, tanima no hyakushō-domo no hōki ni kakawaru yume no nagare ga, sensō no makki ni tanima no subete no ieie kara otona ga ikken hitori zutsu dōinsarete, ōtakeyabu ni take o kiridashi ni itta hi no omoide ni tadoritsuki, soko kara gyakurūshite mata, man'en gannen ni mukau atarashii yume no nagare o tsukutta... Atarashii yume no naka dewa, kākiro no kokubōfuku o kikonde tetsukabuto o seoi, soshite atama ni wa mage o noseta, man'en gannen to sensō no makki no kyōtsū no "toki" o ikite iru hyakushōtachi ga shikiri ni hataraitte, obitadashii kazu no takeyari o kiridashite iru. Karera wa takeyari o furutte man'en gannen no sentō o yūsei ni oshisusumeru hito-bito de ari, mata hikōki ya jōrikuyōtantei no sōkōsareta sokumen ni sutemi no kōgeki o kakerubeki hito-bito de aru... Boku to hahaoya ga kurayashiki ni tojikomotte iru to, takeyari o katsuida tanima no ningen no ittai ga shikiishimichi o nobotte kuru. Karera o shikishite iru no wa nenreifushō no Takashi da. Kare wa tanima de tada hitori, Amerika to Amerikajin o genjitsu ni mite kita ningen de aru kara, umibe no ichi ni jōrikushite semeagatte kuru Amerika gun o takeyari de geigekisuru tanima no hito-bito ni totte, mottomo shinraisubeki shikisha de arō. Shikashi, mazu takeyaritai wa boku to hahaoya no hisomu kurayashiki ni mukatte oshiyosete kuru... Bōmintachi no shikisha taru otōto wa, imaya man'en gannen no sōsofu no otōto to ittaikashite, kurayashiki ni hisomu boku to hahaoya to kareitachi o sakan ni chōhatsushite iru. Takashi no shūi o katamete iru no wa, kare ga futtobōru no renshū o tsūjite kunrenshita tanima no seinen gurūpu da.

resolve it. In the dream Takashi is, anachronistically, both himself and his great-grandfather's younger brother. The villagers anachronistically wear both topknots and civil defense uniforms.

Crucially, however, as with all postmodern anachronism, both Mitsusaburō and the reader are aware of the paradoxical nature of the juxtaposition. The various elements—topknots, civil defense uniforms, etc.—belong firmly in separate eras, and there is no possible way to resolve the anachronism into narrative history. Therefore, despite his success at superimposing the present on the past, Takashi does not succeed in rewriting or reframing history. And yet, neither does Mitsusaburō succeed in keeping the past inviolate, untouched by the present. Anachronism here is a compromise the text suggests between the two positions, dialogically formed by the two brother's conflict over history.

This anachronistic compromise does the work of opening up the past to the present, while maintaining the integrity of both eras. Anachronistic juxtaposition devoid of narrative connection allows new connections to form between the eras; in Ōe's terms, the ball passes between them over the abyss of the century that separates them. In the above passage, Takashi becomes completely identified with the brothers' great-grandfather's younger brother. The leader of a nineteenth-century peasant tax revolt becomes equated with a participant in the 1960 ANPO demonstrations, and is furthermore identified with a leader of civilian defense forces during the war. If narrative history is admitted, this conflation would be impossible, not merely because the gulf of time separating these three eras makes it impossible for one person to fill all three of these roles, but more importantly because of the ideological gulf that separates the three people and their three eras. But in Mitsusaburō's anachronistic dream, three young men who used violence to achieve some end are superimposed onto one person.

Through anachronism, the text raises the possibility that the use of violence by young men is essentially unchanged across drastically varying ideological and political regimes. In doing so, it questions and disrupts contemporary narratives. It suggests that, despite the anti-war stance of the ANPO demonstrators, they are young people just as attracted to violence as a solution to their frustration as patriots during World War II were, or as were nineteenth-century rioters who tortured and murdered many people during their uprising. Conversely, the

anachronism might suggest that the violent youths of 1860 are better understood as young revolutionaries, like the 1960 protesters, fighting against oppressive state power. However, given the text's general stance on violence as grotesque and unredeemable, it more likely suggests that the will to power will always end in violence. The ideological differences between these three different types of violent young men are acknowledged and preserved—to be taken up fruitfully elsewhere, perhaps—but for a transitory moment the anachronism suggests that they are not so different, and that narratives of peasant revolt, nationalism, or revolution are all much the same in their legitimation of ugly violence.

Whichever the case, the significant point is that the anachronism creates these possibilities as an intertext between the eras rather than rewriting the past. There is no synthesis of a new narrative history out of elements of the past and present. Those elements are too absurdly incongruous: there is no way to synthesize topknots and civil defense uniforms, after all. Given the possibilities anachronism offers, it seems that it might meet Takashi's need to open up the past to the present. However, Takashi's ego cannot be satisfied with an intertext. Regardless of the possibilities created in an intertext between the two eras, as long as the primary text—history—still speaks of the squalid brutality of violence, Takashi cannot salve his ego. He must rewrite the primary text to create some example of glorified, valorized violence, or else be swallowed by shame at his violent nature.

Man'en gannen no futtobōru signals a new kind of relationship with history. Published in 1967, at the cusp of what many would consider the postmodern era but within memory of World War II's depredations of history, the novel signals that history is now resistant to power. Abused in the ideological battles of the early twentieth century and World War II, history will no longer serve the needs of power, whether the power of authority or the revolutionary, both of which are embodied in Takashi. Power can no longer rewrite history to serve its own ideological needs. This resistance fits perfectly with Lyotard's suspicion of metanarratives or grand narratives. As discussed earlier, grand narratives, those narratives of progress and emancipation, must show themselves to have been true in the past in order to have authority in the present. They must therefore necessarily rewrite history. Mitsusaburō's resistance to

such rewriting is a form of resistance to grand narratives themselves: if he rejects the rewriting of history, the will to power in the present is not legitimated by the past. Grand narratives cannot posit a historical trajectory from the past to an emancipated future (which legitimates power in the present) without rewriting the past.

However, the novel suggests that Mitsusaburō's historical perspective is too grim and unyielding. Natsumiko functions as a sort of neutral party in the text, who is pulled between the two brothers' worldviews. Although, as discussed above, she must acknowledge that Mitsusaburō's view of history is more correct, this worldview utterly fails to give her meaning and purpose. She has nothing in her life except alcoholism and despair until she meets Takashi. Although this is due to external factors, nonetheless Mitsusaburō is incapable of rescuing her from it. It is Takashi's historical perspective which gives her hope and meaning to live, even though she knows it is fantastical and ahistorical—historical correctness is not as important to her as meaning and hope for living in the present. The text acknowledges that people in the present need to mine the past for a source of meaning and identity: if the past cannot be evoked without evoking every sordid, brutal, violent detail, where can meaning be found? Mitsusaburō cannot offer his wife these things, and pursued to extremity, his resistance to allowing history to be the plaything of power leaves Takashi with nothing but despair and suicide.

Ultimately, neither brother changes in the course of the novel. Both rigidly pursue their own historical projects until the end: Takashi is driven to commit suicide when his fails, and even after his death Mitsusaburō can only change his stance on history with new evidence. The compromise offered by anachronism is not taken up by either brother, and so the struggle can only end when one of them dies. However, the conclusion of the novel hints at new possibilities in the future. At the close of the novel Mitsusaburō and Natsumiko reconcile, and together they will raise Natsumiko's unborn child by Takashi. The future, then, will be a combination of the brothers: Takashi's child raised by Mitsusaburō. Since the brothers' struggle over history is a major thematic axis of the novel, this combination of the two of them hints that the future of historical engagement will also be a combination of their two approaches, the dialogically

formed compromise that could satisfy neither brother, but perhaps will define their progeny. In the future, anachronism may provide a mode of engaging with history that will allow it to be used as source of meaning and identity without rewriting it.

2.2 – Gags with an agenda: anachronism in Tezuka Osamu's *Hi no tori*

Although a little older than Ōe, Tezuka Osamu 手塚治虫 (1928-1989) also grew up during the war, and spent his formative years observing the state's appropriation of history for ideology and propaganda. This experience deeply affected Tezuka, and is a recurring theme in his oeuvre. Unlike Ōe, however, Tezuka is not a *junbungaku* author, but rather the celebrated *manga no kamisama* 漫画の神様 (god of manga). Tezuka took inspiration from Western comics, especially Disney cartoons and comics, in the immediate postwar and revolutionized the Japanese manga industry. He is often cited as the single most important figure in the development of manga into the wildly popular and diverse art form it is today, appealing to all segments of society—boys and girls, adults and children—and often treating difficult and serious subjects. His singular importance may have been overstated,⁸² but there is no question he is a key figure in the development of postwar manga.

Tezuka, however, never quite let go of his early inspirations: Western gag comics (comics with absurd situations designed to provoke laughter quickly) and Disney cartoons. His style remained stubbornly fixed, and he always drew rubbery, soft, rounded characters that the rest of the manga world had moved away from by the 1980s. He also never quite forgot his beginnings writing comedic gags in children's manga, and even in his more serious and tragic works he often includes jokes and gags. However, at times his use of gags goes beyond humor. He regularly inserts gags that are not particularly humorous. For example, Tezuka developed a gag character, Hyōtantsugi (a kind of gourd with bandages and a pig nose), which recurs throughout his entire body of work. Hyōtantsugi is part of Tezuka's "brand," but narratively it is an empty signifier without a referent; it does not refer to anything in particular that would create a comedic association. Its appearance is silly and comedic, true, but after the first time a reader sees it the humor of its appearance wears off, and Tezuka uses it frequently.

⁸² Sharon Kinsella argues that Tezuka's historical role was emphasized by the state and cultural institutions that were trying to draw certain kinds of manga closer to official culture in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and found in Tezuka's intellectual, apolitical (or at least not overtly political) manga an acceptable origin for this newly embraced art form. Sharon Kinsella, *Adult Manga: Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* (University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 99.

Rather than a mere gag, Hyōtantsugi is a technique Tezuka uses to disrupt narrative flow in a way that is apparent to the reader. Tezuka uses Hyōtantsugi to call the reader's attention to the constructedness of the text itself, metatextually reminding readers that they are reading a text, a fiction. For example, the last panel of a particularly artistic sequence might replace the expected final image with an image of Hyōtantsugi, betraying readers' expectations but therefore reminding them that the text created that expectation in the first place, masterfully drawing readers' attention to the manipulative power of text. While Tezuka often uses gags, visual and otherwise, they can never be dismissed as purely comedic devices.

Tezuka frequently deploys anachronism in a similar way. While his period works do not depart from history enough to allow for anachronistic elements within the diegetic world—actually part of the narrative and affecting plot and character—he frequently includes them as gag elements apparent to the reader but unacknowledged—or taken in stride—by characters. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Tezuka's "life work," *Hi no tori* 火の鳥 (Phoenix). Published sporadically in many different magazines over the course of several decades from 1967 to 1988, *Hi no tori* began as part of Tezuka's attempt to push the limits of manga expression in the 1960s. It was first published in *COM*, an experimental magazine Tezuka founded himself upon realizing he could not respond to the growing popularity of *gekiga* 劇画 ("dramatic pictures," comics oriented towards older readers with more mature themes that flourished in the 1960s) in the commercial children's magazines to which he contributed.⁸³ By the publication of the last installment of *Hi no tori* in 1988, the thematic range of manga had deepened considerably, and although the series had begun in an avant-garde magazine, Tezuka was able to publish later installments of the series in commercial magazines.

Hi no tori is a deep engagement with Japanese history. The story, across twelve volumes in the omnibus edition, moves from the distant past to the far future and back again, seeming to eventually converge on the present. Tezuka takes on the future of humanity with one hand while grappling with the Japanese past with the other. The only constant in the series is the phoenix, the immortal bird of legend whose blood will grant its immortality to anyone who

⁸³ Paul Gravett, *Manga: 60 Years of Japanese Comics* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2004), 42.

drinks it. Because of its cosmic scope and focus on this mythological creature, the work has been analyzed mainly in terms of spirituality or religion.⁸⁴ However, the worldly desire for the phoenix's blood is the overarching theme of the entire series, and in the work's humanistic vision the only human constants are the twin desires for life and power that the blood elicits.

Tezuka attended the highly nationalistic wartime educational system when he was young, and was deeply immersed in the state's appropriation of history to legitimate its sovereignty and power. He became a committed pacifist and humanist after the war, and accordingly the episodes of *Hi no tori* set in the past are nothing less than Tezuka's attempt to dismantle the Japanese history of the wartime state. Each historical hero is shown to be brutal, feckless or both, every mystery is shown to be mundane, and every beautified victory is shown to be ugly and cruel. As Rachael Hutchinson puts it:

The nation of Japan is ruled by merciless emperors and shoguns in a repeating cycle of oppression, persecution and destruction. Tezuka invokes imperial discourse and emotionally charged national symbols to create a history that is both intelligent in its critique and stirring in its rhetoric, leaving the reader questioning not only the history being represented but their own attitudes towards it.⁸⁵

It is precisely in Tezuka's use of emotionally charged national symbols that anachronism comes into play. The text juxtaposes powerful symbols from a mythicized (or sometimes just mythical) past with powerful symbols from the present or more recent history in order to open up a rigidly guarded past that is the source of Japanese identity to the possibility of new meaning.

However, it is important to note here that *Hi no tori* is an explicit attempt to reframe the past. Tezuka takes well-known episodes of Japanese history—a source text with which most readers are presumably familiar—and alters them to subvert their received meaning. However, this is not where the text deploys anachronism. Unlike the modern anachronisms of “Abe ichizoku” that attempt to impose modern ideology on the past, both the alterations to history within the diegetic space and the anachronisms outside are conspicuous and reflexive. The text

⁸⁴ Rachael Hutchinson, “Sabotaging the Rising Sun: Representing History in Tezuka Osamu's Phoenix,” in *Manga and the Representation of Japanese History*, ed. Roman Rosenbaum (New York: Routledge, 2013), 18.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

acknowledges that its project is to show a plausible alternative version of history in order to counter official state history, and in order to maintain that claim to historical plausibility it is highly conspicuous when its characters voice ideals or philosophies that are too modern: through obvious anachronisms it signals that it is intertextually evoking and juxtaposing different discourses for the reader, preventing any reading that its modern philosophies are teleologically apparent in the past.

The first volume of *Hi no tori, Reimei* 黎明 (Dawn), depicts the early pre-history of Japan and the conflict between the various kingdoms in what would become the Japanese archipelago. Significantly, the text superimposes two source texts, the *Record of Wei* (魏志 Ch. *Wei zhi*, Jp. *Gishi*), a Chinese history that includes the first known historical mention of Japan, and the *Kojiki* 古事記, the Japanese mytho-history that describes the descent of Japan's first emperors from the realm of the gods, a major source of imperial legitimization in the modern era. *Hi no tori* depicts the third-century kingdom of Yamatai 邪馬台 (long imagined to be located in Yamato, the region where the imperial court emerged, although there is no scholarly consensus) and its queen, Himiko 卑弥呼, which are briefly mentioned in the *Record of Wei*. However, Himiko is superimposed on the figure of Amaterasu 天照, the Shinto sun goddess who is claimed by the Japanese imperial line as its divine ancestor. In the *Kojiki* Amaterasu has a brother named Susano-o, and in one of the best-known episodes he becomes violently destructive, causing Amaterasu to hide in a cave, plunging the world into darkness. In the text of *Hi no tori* Himiko too has a brother named Susano-o, and hides in a cave during a solar eclipse, drawing an unmistakable parallel between her and Amaterasu.⁸⁶ Of course, in the cave incident causality is reversed from the *Kojiki*, where darkness falls because Amaterasu—the sun goddess—hides away. In *Hi no tori* an eclipse occurs, and an uncomprehending Himiko hides in a cave out of fear. *Hi no tori* shows the source of the Amaterasu legend to be not divine at all, denying Himiko/Amaterasu's divinity and, consequently, divinity as a source of legitimacy for imperial rule. This is characteristic of the text's approach to history or myth that legitimates power.

⁸⁶ Tezuka Osamu, *Hi no tori*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1992), 115-117.

The text often subverts historical sources of legitimization specifically, and the will to power generally, by anachronistically associating them with certain modern discourses. As with other anachronisms, this has the effect of opening them up to new meaning, but these “gag anachronisms” have the additional effect of poking fun at the myths and heroes that legitimated the twentieth century’s grand narratives,⁸⁷ diminishing their sacredness or revered stature and humanizing them in the sense of denying them transcendental status. For example, in one sequence of panels where Himiko imperiously demands the death of one of her subjects, her costume suddenly shifts to resemble a Nazi uniform, then a Chinese Communist Party uniform, and finally a French imperial uniform, equating Himiko—who is also Amaterasu, the principal deity of state Shinto and the imperial ancestor—with Hitler, Mao, and Napoleon in rapid sequence.⁸⁸ This non-diegetic anachronism is undeniably comedic: by creating a gag at Himiko (Amaterasu)’s expense the text deconstructs her seriousness. However, this anachronistic gag also superimposes the discourse surrounding Amaterasu with the discourse on the worst modern dictators. As a result, the most sacred, inviolable figure of prewar and wartime ideology is opened up to new meaning and contemporary discourse. She is profaned, associated with all the modern discourse on dictators, and pulled down from elevated status. Of course, this superimposition is highly reflexive and overtly textual. There is no narrative by which Himiko in the third century might wear a Nazi uniform: unlike modern anachronism, this postmodern anachronism takes place on the level of discourse, in the intertext, rather than modifying the historical narrative.

Similarly, when one of her subjects is walking near Himiko’s palace and notices her looking at him, he gushes, “She looked at me! What a privilege! What an honor!” To which his companion replies, “Hmph, you’re talking like a fan of a popular singer.”⁸⁹ Here the anachronism is textual rather than visual, but the effect is the same. The discourse surrounding

⁸⁷ Of course, the narraives Tezuka tackles legitimated imperial and samurai power before the twentieth century as well, but in Tezuka’s life they were used for the projects of the wartime state.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* p. 94. Also mentioned in Mark MacWilliams, “Revisioning Japanese Religiosity: Osamu Tezuka’s *Hi No Tori* (The Phoenix),” in *Global Goes Local Popular Culture in Asia*, ed. Timothy J. Craig and Richard King (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 2002), 183. MacWilliams notes this as a deconstruction of Amaterasu’s sanctity, but—probably like most readers of Tezuka—doesn’t seem to pay the anachronism any mind.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 89. “*Che, marude ryūkō kashu no fan mitaina koto ittera.*”

popular singers and their fans is firmly situated in the present, whereas Himiko and her subject are firmly situated in the past. This anachronism is unacknowledged in the diegetic space and is understood to be another gag: the character in question has no real knowledge of twentieth-century popular singers, and this is a sly message to the reader. Here adulation of Himiko/Amaterasu—adulation of the sacred—is juxtaposed with the mass, profane adulation of a popular singer by an obsessive fan. By putting the “cards” for different kinds of adulation side-by-side, the anachronism creates the possibility in the intertext for devotion to the divine imperial ancestor (and by implication the emperor) to be equated with fan devotion to popular singers, along with all the disdain and concern about unhealthy obsession that devotion evokes.

In one of the most striking scenes in the first volume, the text employs some of the most powerful, emotionally evocative symbols of Japan, the emperor, and imperial legitimacy, and levels withering challenges at them. This sequence of six pages opens without text, simply featuring a circular mirror on a stand. For five panels there is no dialog, only some onomatopoeic sound effects and the same image of a mirror, in the center of each panel as if captured by a fixed camera. Tezuka is famous for his cinematic innovations in manga, particularly his use of multiple cinematic “shots,” so the fixed viewpoint here is highly unusual and conspicuous. The text draws the reader’s attention to the mirror and charges it with significance: in a narrative about Amaterasu, a significant mirror can only be the mirror of the imperial regalia, a powerful symbol of the imperial line and its divine ancestry, as the mirror was purportedly a gift from Amaterasu herself. In the seventh panel Himiko finally enters the scene, which is still fixed, and it becomes apparent her hair ornament is a string of *magatama* beads, the second of the imperial regalia.⁹⁰ In the midst of these ancient symbols of nation and emperor, which the text has so conspicuously and provocatively evoked, Himiko is clearly in distress after performing her duties, exhausted and overheated. Her attendants fuss over her and anachronistically call for an electric fan and ice cream to be brought for their mistress, which are duly supplied. Again, this is a gag, not a rewriting of history to include such items in the third century. Here the text mixes some of the most revered and ancient symbols in Japan with symbols of the common and modern. The text sets up a disjunction here that creates

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, 100-101.

tension: these symbols are incompatible, something is undeniably out of place here. This anachronistic tension demands resolution.

That tension is resolved by Himiko's brother, Susano-o, who enters the scene and smugly discusses Himiko's claims to divinity. The *Record of Wei's* brief account of Himiko mentions that she was "skilled in the Way of Demons, keeping all under her spell."⁹¹ *Hi no tori* incorporates this idea of Himiko as a shamaness, and in the text she adjudicates through divination and, much like modern emperors, claims divine status for herself. However, Susano-o puts the lie to those claims here: "The people are slowly starting to lose faith in your curses... You may pretend to be a god, but anyone can see that god is slowly getting older." In response, Himiko hides her face in horror, then flies into a rage: "You're talking about my face, aren't you? My... this face!"⁹² It is revealed, therefore, that this scene revolves around Himiko's aging, as she seems to be barely able to carry out her duties as shamanistic sovereign, and is enraged by any mention of her increasing age especially as related to her face in particular. The mirror, then, must be what she uses to inspect her growing collection of wrinkles, and the *magatama* hairpiece is merely a fashion accessory she uses to accentuate her fading beauty. These imperial objects, therefore, are shown to merely be the mundane accoutrements of a vain woman. They are not sacred relics at all, and are not pregnant with any sort of divinity or solemnity. The anachronism in this scene juxtaposes past and present, sacred and profane, and by doing so opens the sacred to the possibility of the mundane. The possibility thus created, the text resolves the tension by showing Himiko to be merely human, and these objects to be merely fashion accessories.

In that same scene, Susano-o contends that Yamatai should reform its politics. "Trying to rule a country though magic is out of date now," he argues, "Sometimes I'm laughed at by other countries... Yamatai should become a true modern nation, with correct politics."⁹³ Here

⁹¹ J. Edward Kidder, *Himiko and Japan's Elusive Chieftdom of Yamatai: Archaeology, History, and Mythology* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 16.

⁹² *ibid.*, 102-103. "Watashi no kao no koto o itta ne, watashi no... kono kao no koto o...!!"

⁹³ *ibid.*, 103. "Mō, majinai de kuni o osameyō to suru no wa jidaiokure nan desu yo. Watashi wa yoso no kuni de toki-doki warawaremasu... mō Yamatai-koku wa hontō no imi de kindai kokka ni narubeki desu, tadashii seiji no ne."

the phrase “modern nation” (*kindai kokka* 近代国家) is an anachronistic usage. Of course, the anachronism is not quite as blatant as, say, ice cream in third century Japan. Nonetheless, precisely because that ice cream has summoned present discourse into the past in this scene, this anachronistic phrase demands attention. Here the phrase evokes several present-day discourses on the “modern nation:” the materialist discourse on the development of nations, of course, but more specifically Japan’s own modernization during the Meiji period, when Japan’s emergence (and acceptance by the West) as a “modern nation” was a national ambition keenly sought after by several generations. Here Susano-o implies that Yamatai is not a “modern nation,” with all the discourse that has become wrapped up in such a claim in the modern era: Yamatai is therefore old-fashioned, backwards, and benighted. However, the flow of discourse is not unidirectional. By juxtaposing the present and past here the text allows them to interilluminate, and the past can open up new possibilities in the present. Susano-o says that Yamatai is not a modern nation precisely because Himiko/Amaterasu uses *majinai* 呪い (magic) to rule and consolidate power. Because past and present are superimposed here, this inevitably brings to mind modern political systems, in particular the *tennōsei* 天皇制 (emperor system), which legitimated state power through the sovereignty of the emperor, whose reign was in turn legitimated by his divine ancestry. This is, of course, exactly how Himiko/Amaterasu legitimizes her own sovereignty in the text. It is undeniably true that Yamatai is not a “modern nation,” as Susano-o claims, but it is also true that Yamatai’s politics are quite similar to Japan’s under the emperor system. The modern discourse that was turned on the past now rebounds to illuminate the present: If Yamatai under Himiko is not a “modern nation” with all the negative connotations modern discourse associates with that, so too Japan under the emperor system was not a “modern nation,” with all those same negative connotations: feudal, backward, and benighted. The text uses anachronism not merely to criticize the past, but to allow the past and present to entwine, in however ephemeral an intertext, and allow them to open each other up to new interpretations and meanings.

Hi no tori’s main theme is the denaturing of a valorous Japanese history that was used to legitimate the *tennōsei* before and during World War II. Accordingly, the text is also invested in revealing the textuality of history, showing history to be constructed as a text rather than a

teleological true narrative.⁹⁴ The third volume of *Hi no tori* continues portraying the *Kojiki*, this time retelling the story of Yamato Takeru 日本武尊 while also addressing the construction of the text of the *Kojiki* itself. This volume uses many anachronistic references to modern technologies of information recording, manipulation and distribution in order to reveal that the texts of both past and present are ideological devices in the service of particular powers.

The text opens with a narrative introduction while the drawings zoom in on a man from behind, hiding his face: “In the ancient islands of Japan, in the kingdom of Yamato, there lived a certain king. Now as for that king’s face... it was this kind of face.”⁹⁵ Immediately following is a full page of thirteen faces, each drawn in a different modern artistic style, from cubist to one of Tezuka’s own signature gag faces. The text begins with the basic claim of most historical texts—that it can and will represent history accurately. However, it immediately gives the lie to this claim, showing a myriad of representations. These two pages form a kind of dialog: the first asks for representation of a fourth-century king, and the second answers with multiple representations. The text implies that accurate representation is impossible, and that multiple perspectives on history can result in multiple representations. In other words, all of these thirteen representations are the answer to the request for representation. They all have equal claim to authenticity, even though some are quite surreal. Significantly, the portraits are all modern styles, glaringly anachronistic in the face of the historical setting and the archaic, poetic language used on the previous page.⁹⁶ The text signals that all possible representation comes from the present looking back at the past, rather than emanating from the past itself, and as such will be subject to the projects of the present, no matter how that may twist or distort representation. Right from the beginning, the text calls attention to the constructedness of representation and sets the tone for the following chapters.

⁹⁴ I am indebted here to Rachael Hutchinson’s discussion of this topic. “Sabotaging the Rising Sun,” 26-27.

⁹⁵ Tezuka Osamu, *Hi no tori*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1992), 6. “*Akitsuishima Yamato no kuni no mahoroba ni hitori no ōsama ga oide ni narimashita. Sono ōsama no kao to kitara, konna okao deshita.*”

⁹⁶ For example, what I have rendered “In the ancient islands of Japan, in the kingdom of Yamato” is originally “*Akitsuishima/Yamato no kuni no/Mahoroba ni*” a poetic verse of 5-7-5 syllables containing flowery poetic names for Japan.

The following scene reveals that all these representations of the king's face have been portraits, painted by artists employed by the king, who rails against them for failing to do justice to his visage: "Is this the face of the coolest emperor ever?" he demands.⁹⁷ The text moves smoothly from signaling the impossibility of authentic representation to showing power's vested interest in controlling representation. This is further signaled with another anachronism: "I've been employing you at high wages for a year now. I ordered you to create the *correct* history of this Yamato court. My country and I will surely be written about in the social studies textbooks or something of our descendants."⁹⁸ Here the use of "social studies textbooks" juxtaposes two kinds of representation: the king's quest to *create (tsukuru)* a representation of history that flatters his ego and vanity, and the authoritative representation of school textbooks. By superimposing self-interested representation on textbook representation, the text destabilizes the authority of textbook history and its claims to objective, authentic historical representation.

The text then moves to critiquing technoscientific claims of authentic representation. In response to the king's demand to see the progress made over the past year one of the historians anachronistically calls for the "cassette tapes" to be brought out. Cassette tapes, of course, are supposedly capable of recording events authoritatively, with cold machine objectivity uncolored by human bias. Here the text persistently uses the language of machinery; in response to the king's desire to hear a "recording" of the history of Yamato, a court official demands that "one of you recorded (*rokuon-zumi* 録音済み) tapes get out here."⁹⁹ *Rokuon-zumi* is a word used precisely for audio recordings. However, the "tapes" here are revealed to be people, humans who have memorized laudatory propaganda about Yamato. It is clear here that the persistent anachronistic use of machine language is an attempt by power to create a fiction of machine objectivity, a fiction that is transparent, but which power must enforce in order to elevate its preferred history to objective and authentic status. Even so, the "tapes"

⁹⁷ *ibid.*, 8. "*Kore ga ichiban kakkoi teiō no kao ka.*"

⁹⁸ *ibid.*, 9. Emphasis in original. "*Yo wa omaetachi o ichinenkan kōkyū de tsutomesasete yatta. Yo wa omaetachi ni kono Yamato ōchō no tadashii rekishi o tsukuru yō ni meirei shita. Yo to yo no kuni no koto wa kanarazu shison no jidai ni shakaika no kyōkasho ka nanka ni noseru de arō.*"

⁹⁹ *ibid.* "*Rokuon-zumi no tēpu hitori dero.*"

that recite for the king turn out to have “recorded” unflattering impressions of Yamato as well, and the king rejects them, ordering that they “have their tongues pulled out and be executed.”¹⁰⁰ Despite the fiction of technoscientific objectivity that power persists in maintaining, it is clear that any “recording” that does not flatter power will be silenced, tongues symbolically removed before death. The anachronistic use of machine terminology in the fourth century allows the text to juxtapose the supposed objectivity of recording devices with the fallibility of human memory, and show such objectivity as a fiction that power is invested in maintaining.

The anachronisms continue apace as the king inspects his grave, one of the “keyhole” tombs of Japan’s Kofun period. As the architects explain (with anachronistic knowledge) that it is bigger than even the pyramids of Egypt, another says, “We’ve put in a high-speed expressway to the grave,” and another points to crowds of people holding signs and remarks, “That’s the anti-tomb alliance sit-in, and next to them are the students.”¹⁰¹ This volume was originally serialized between 1968 and 1969, during a vigorous protest movement. The anachronistic invocation of a high-speed expressway immediately evokes modern infrastructure development, juxtaposing the construction of the king’s tomb with modern construction of highways and airports. And just as modern construction projects are met with protesters, so too is this ancient construction project. The anachronism here superimposes a highly contested present upon a monolithic past, creating the possibility of new associations between them in an intertext. It allows the discourse about protests against power to flow into the discourse about the past, thereby denaturing the unity of rule and harmony of nation depicted in the *Kojiki*, and opening up the possibility that the past was just as highly contested as the present. Later in the same scene, the *Kojiki* itself is revealed to merely be a *panfuretto* パンフレット (pamphlet) for tourists coming to visit the tomb, revealing Japan’s official history during the war to be the banal, self-serving, shallow bubblegum copy typical of such brochures.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 11. “*Shita o hikkonuite shikei da.*”

¹⁰¹ *ibid.*, 12. “*Hitotsu bochi made kōsokudōro o tsukemashite...’ Are wa bochi hantai dōmei no suwarikomi deshite, ano yoko no ga gakuseidomo de gozaimasu*”

¹⁰² *ibid.*, 15.

However, *Hi no tori* does not offer an alternative, a “true” objective history that avoids the pitfalls of power’s egotistical, self-interested representation. In true postmodern fashion, it calls all histories into question. Yamato’s rival nation Kumaso 熊襲 is also compiling a history, with the specific aim of competing with the history Yamato’s king is creating. As he inks characters on a scroll, the king of Kumaso remarks, “From what I hear, the king of Yamato is cooking up (*detchi age* でっち上げ) some nonsense (*detarame* でたらめ) history, where he presents himself as the descendant of gods.... I can’t allow that. As the king of Kumaso, I’m going to leave future generations a true (*tadashii* 正しい) history, the true state of Japan.”¹⁰³ The reader has, of course, seen that the Yamato king’s history is highly questionable and distorted by the needs of power. The Kumaso king’s language here aligns with that impression, strongly denouncing Yamato’s history (“cooked up,” “nonsense,”) while claiming to offer an authoritative alternative (“true history,” “true state”). However, just prior to this moment of textual creation, another anachronism has drawn attention to the problematic nature of this textual construction. The king has sent his advisor on a public relations campaign, telling him “Listen, this isn’t the kind of era where you can win allies by force! You need advertisements! PR! Give out free gifts and ratchet up Kumaso’s popularity! Nagashima, you’re going to appear in a commercial (*komāsharu* コマーシャル)!”¹⁰⁴ The advisor, Nagashima, is then taught a jingle for advertising Kumaso sake, and sent away riding in a box drawn by oxen with a window in the side that resembles a television screen, bordered by advertisements and slogans that could have come straight from a modern advertising agency.¹⁰⁵ The Kumaso king’s claims that he is writing a “true” history, therefore, are completely undermined by this evidence that he, too, is engaged in a campaign of self-promotion. Again, the use of anachronism allows all the discourse about the mercenary commercialism of modern TV advertisements to be juxtaposed with the past and its claims at authentic representation, ultimately exposing Kumaso’s alternate

¹⁰³ *ibid.*, 23. “*Kikeba, Yamato no ōsama wa katte ni detarame na rekishi o decchiagete, jibun wa kami ni shison de tōtoinda to iu koto o happyō shiyō to shite iru to ka... Sonna koto wa yurusen... Watashi wa Kumaso no ō to shite tadashii rekishi, tadashii Nihon no sugata o kaite nokosō to omou.*”

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.*, 22. “*Iika, ima wa chikara de mikata o hikikomu jidai janai! Senden da. PR da. Sābisu o shite yatte Kumaso no na o takamerunda. Nagashima, omae komāsharu ni dero.*”

¹⁰⁵ For example: “For food and sake, it’s got to be Kumaso” and “Win our quiz game and get a trip to Kumaso!”

history as another attempt by power to insist on a fiction of objectivity to impart legitimacy to its chosen narrative.

However, the text of *Hi no tori* itself cannot and does not claim to proffer a corrected “true” history in the fashion of modern histories. Among other things, the use of anachronisms reflexively signals the text’s fictionality and constructedness. Instead the text is using the power of art to open up history, to unlock it from rigid authoritative History. In a side note that explains the background of Kumaso to the reader, the narrator argues that:

In the Yamato court’s *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki*... the Kumaso are treated as barbarians and written of as evil. If someone in Kumaso had written a record of Kumaso at the time, ancient Japanese history might be quite different. Unfortunately, however, nothing of the kind survives.

In any case, if you look at it from Kumaso’s side, the Yamato court’s subjugation of Kumaso was clearly an invasion.

In other words... history must be investigated from every angle, from all people’s sides, in order to know the truth.¹⁰⁶

Just after showing that both Yamato and Kumaso are writing self-serving histories, the text explicitly states its epistemological stance: the truth (*hontō no koto* 本当のこと) can only be grasped by looking at the history of all sides, or from every angle. However, both the history of early Japan and the hypothetical alternative to it have been shown to be the history of only one side. The only text present that might be positioned to look at all sides and all angles is the text of *Hi no tori* itself, but *Hi no tori* has deliberately renounced any claim to authoritative representation with its playful irreverence for history. Therefore the only way to examine history from every angle, and from all people’s sides, is as a synthesis of all versions of history. To phrase it another way, the *hontō no koto*—or as close to it as we can come—can only be known by the postmodern subject who reads multiple, contradictory representations of history and synthesizes it for him or herself. *Hi no tori* highlights the textuality of the history of the

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 76. “Yamato ōchō no kojiki toka nihonshoki nanka ni wa... Kumaso o mikaijin atsukai shitari akunin mitai ni kaitearu. Moshi Kumaso no dareka ga tōji no Kumaso no kiroku o kakinokoshita to shitara, kodai Nihon no rekishi wa kanari kawatteita kamoshirenai. Da ga, zannen nagara sore wa nokotteinai. Izureni seyo, Kumaso gawa kara mireba Yamato ōchō no Kumaso seibatsu wa akiraka ni shinryaku to iu koto ga dekitarō. Tsumari... rekishi to wa arayuru kakudo kara, arayuru ningen no gawa kara shirabenakereba honto no koto wa wakaranai mono nano de aru.”

Japanese imperial state, but rather than supplant it with another attempt to create authoritative history, it rejects the modern impulse for authoritative history entirely. *Hi no tori* does not quite embrace Michel Foucault's model of history as a "tactical polyvalence of discourses" employed in force relations from which there is no exteriority:¹⁰⁷ *Hi no tori* posits the "truth" of history as knowable, at least in some Platonic realm. However, in the reality in which we live it depicts received history as a discourse manipulated by power that flatters and legitimates itself, and therefore authoritative representations of history are all suspect.

The other project of this volume (or one of its other projects, at least) is the denaturing and dismantling of Yamato Takeru. Yamato Takeru is prominent in the later sections of the *Kojiki*, where he is credited with personally subjugating the Kumaso people as well as other kingdoms or groups that were rivals of the Yamato court. An early martial hero, he was featured prominently in prewar and wartime education along with the stories of Amaterasu and Emperor Jinmu, which were taught to children in history textbooks as historical fact legitimating imperial rule.¹⁰⁸ Just as the first volume of *Hi no tori* dismantled the divinity of Amaterasu and Jinmu (whom it portrays as a butchering conqueror from the Asian mainland), this volume must dismantle the heroism of Yamato Takeru.

This is again achieved through anachronism. As mentioned earlier, after the Yamato king is introduced the text reveals that he is building a great tomb for himself. In a full page panorama of the tomb site there are several small figures holding signs. Again, one of the king's retinue explains, "That's the anti-tomb alliance sit-in, and next to them are the students,"¹⁰⁹ anachronistically evoking the mass protest movements that were occurring contemporary to this chapter's original publication in 1968. Particularly what I have rendered the "anti-tomb alliance," the *bochi hantai dōmei* 墓地反対同盟, evokes the contemporary *kūkō hantai dōmei* 空港反対同盟 (anti-airport alliance), a group that opposed the construction of Narita airport near Tokyo. Army soldiers charge through the students, again evocative of contemporary

¹⁰⁷ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (London: Penguin, 1990), 100.

¹⁰⁸ Yoshimura Tokuzō traces the use of these "country founding" myths in education in *Shinwa to rekishi kyōiku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1973).

¹⁰⁹ *Hi no tori* vol. 3, 12.

events, then capture the student *iinchō* 委員長 (committee chairman), another anachronistic term appropriate for 1960s student protests, who turns out to be Yamato Oguna (who will later adopt the name Takeru), the king's own son.¹¹⁰ In the *Kojiki* Yamato Oguna is a loyal supporter of his father and the Yamato court, whose power he increases greatly by conquering other people. However, *Hi no tori* uses anachronism here to immediately link Oguna to all the discourse associated with student protesters. Even from the moment of his introduction, the text implies that he will be anti-establishment, pacifist and liberal—someone who supports the Left, rather than the Right that claimed him as a principal icon. Even without the plot events that will later reveal Oguna's character, the text has already begun the work of dismantling Yamato Takeru as a valorous martial hero, and it is able to do this through a humorous anachronism that juxtaposes the received discourse on Yamato Takeru with the discourse on contemporary student protesters, in the process creating an intertext that opens Yamato Takeru to new meaning and interpretation.

Oguna's father, the king, orders him to travel to Kumaso and kill the Kumaso leader. This, of course, is counter to Oguna's student-protester ideals, and upon arriving at Kumaso he discovers he personally likes and respects the Kumaso leader. Quite unlike the Yamato Oguna (Takeru) of the *Kojiki*, who goes to subdue the Kumaso barbarians with confidence and resolve, the Oguna of *Hi no tori* is uncertain, torn between his own budding moral principles and the demands of his father and nation. The text characterizes this with another anachronism by reproducing a newspaper advice column:

Life advice for a sixteen-year-old

Question: I'm a sixteen-year-old youth with a problem. I came to Kyushu on my father's orders to kill someone. But I think there's more to life than that, and I don't know what to do. How should I live my life?

Answer: First, you should try to get rid of the frustration that afflicts so many young people. If money isn't an issue, rather than just stop at Kyushu you should travel overseas a bit. And date women from all over the world...¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ *ibid.*, 14.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, 84. Also mentioned in MacWilliams, 187-188. "16 sai no jinsei sōdan. Shitsumon: watashi wa nayameru 16 sai no wakamono desu. Chichioya no meirei de Kyūshū made hito o korosu tame ni kimashita.

Here the text first uses the anachronistic device of a newspaper advice column, then fills that column itself with anachronisms (“Kyushu,” “overseas”). This is unmistakably an artifact of the present; aside from the mention of Oguna’s father’s order to kill, such a column would not be out of place at all in a twentieth-century newspaper. With this anachronism, the text evokes all the contemporary discourse about frustrated adolescents and associates it with Oguna. This effectively dismantles the image of Oguna—promoted by wartime and prewar education—as a soldier who confidently and without moral quandary exercises martial prowess in loyal service to the Yamato court. The use of anachronism has allowed the text to open up Oguna to present discourse on adolescent boys and ascribe to him new possibilities of meaning. Of course, precisely because the anachronism is so obviously and apparently absurd, the text does not claim a new authoritative interpretation. Rather, it creates the possibility of additional meaning. Given what we in the present know about frustrated adolescents, and given the previously demonstrated unreliability of historical texts, *Hi no tori* suggests that this new interpretation, which is allowed to exist alongside the militarist interpretation, is just as likely. When Oguna does finally kill the Kumaso leader in *Hi no tori*, far from the loyal act of a martial hero, it is the act of a troubled youth who actually wants to join the Kumaso people and only carries out his orders because of a misinterpreted sign from the phoenix, to whom he looks for transcendental guidance like many young men troubled by life.¹¹² Anachronism allows the text to open up a closed edifice of wartime morality to the possibility of new meaning.

Volumes 7 and 8 of *Hi no tori* revolve around the events of the Genpei 源平 civil war (1180-1185). This war is, perhaps, the single greatest historical source of material for later literary, media, and dramatic works, and its events and characters have been made and remade into countless cultural products, spanning a broad range of mediums from the medieval *Heike monogatari* 平家物語 and Nō plays, through Edo-period drama and fiction, to modern novels and manga. Just as in previous volumes, *Hi no tori* must denature the heroics of the war’s heroes and the exceptionalism of its events. The text signals its stance on the era in question

Demo, sore dake ga jinsei dewa nai yō ni omoete nayandeimasu. Watashi wa dō ikirubeki deshō ka. Okotae: Mazu, anata wa wakai mono ni arigachi na yokkyū fuman o kaishō subeki desu. Okane ni fujiyū nakereba Kyūshū to iwazu, kaigai ryokō no hitotsu mo yarubeki desu. Soshite sekaijū no onna to dēto o nasai.”

¹¹² Ibid., 94.

early on, when a court aristocrat (while preparing to rape a commoner woman who has been kidnapped by soldiers and brought to him), steps out onto the balcony of his residence and urinates. The text then briefly exits the diegetic space and Hyōtantsugi (the pig-gourd gag character) steps in to supply historical information: “According to one theory, in the Heian era, even aristocrats didn’t have toilets in their houses, so they just went in their gardens. Because of that, the gardens really, really stank.”¹¹³ Although not strictly anachronistic, the text here explicitly brings in modern historical discourse to disrupt romanticized perceptions of the past and encode an academic mode of reception—the text will present the past “scientifically,” with all its ugliness intact. Although accounts of the Heian era like *The Tale of Genji* may present a highly romanticized vision of courtly life, and stories of twelfth-century samurai may present romanticized valor and heroism, the text subverts these representations of history by evoking a modern academic historical discourse that portrays the Heian era as filthy, smelly and disgusting.

The text also uses unequivocal anachronisms to create new connections between past and present. As mentioned in the Introduction to this study, these volumes recount the Shishigatani 鹿ヶ谷 conspiracy, in which a group of aristocratic and ecclesiastical elite plotted a failed coup d’état against Taira no Kiyomori 平清盛, the despotic head of the Heike clan. To revisit the example brought up earlier, the monk Shunkan explains the group’s plans thusly:

The day of the revolution has been decided: April 13th! On April 13th our comrades will rise up as one, seize the court, and pull the entire Heike clan down from their official positions! The plan is for the revolutionary army to occupy the Rokuhara headquarters, the broadcast stations and Tokyo Station, and surround Kiyomori’s mansion.¹¹⁴

Much like Susano-o’s remark about modern nations, this anachronism is multidirectional; it opens up both the past and present to new meaning. The anachronistic language used here—“comrades” (*dōshi* 同志) and “revolutionary army” (*kakumeigun* 革命軍) clearly evoke modern

¹¹³ Tezuka Osamu, *Hi no tori*, vol. 7 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1992), 92. “‘*Issetsu ni yoru to, Heianchō no koro wa ōkō kizoku to itte mo ie ni toire ga nakutte, hotondo ni wa ni tare nagashi de, sono tame ni niwasaki wa kusakute kusakute tamaranakatta to iimasu.*”

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*, 248. Rokuhara is the location of the Heike clan headquarters. “‘*Kakumei jikkō no hi ga kimarimashita zo. 4 gatsu 13 nichi! 4 gatsu 13 nichi wareware dōshi wa issei ni tachiagari, tenjō o seiatsushi, Heishi ichimon o kan’i kara tatakiotosu! Ippō, kakumeigun wa Rokuhara tandai to hōsōkyoku to Tōkyō-eki o senkyoshi, Kiyomori-tei o hōi suru yotei ni natteimasu.*”

communist revolutionary rhetoric, and at the same time the anachronistic plans to occupy broadcast stations and Tokyo Station perhaps evoke another infamous failed coup, the *ni-niroku jiken*, in which a cadre of Imperial Japanese Army officers attempted to seize key areas of Tokyo and overthrow the civilian government. The use of anachronism here creates an intertext where the Shishigatani coup, the 2-26 incident and communist revolution are all juxtaposed and allowed to interilluminate.

Obviously these are three very different things: a twelfth-century coup by aristocrats, a twentieth-century right-wing coup by officers, and left-wing communist revolution. Yet in the intertext created by the anachronism, all of these are superimposed, creating new connections between them based on their commonalities. Despite their differences, this superimposition brings into sharp focus the one thing they all have in common: they are all examples of the will to power. In one direction, this opens up the history of the Shishigatani conspiracy to new meaning. The discourse surrounding modern coups and revolutions—that whatever noble ideology they espouse merely belies a naked will to power¹¹⁵—is applied to the Shishigatani conspiracy. Rather than a noble attempt to overthrow the tyrannical Kiyomori, the conspiracy is reframed as merely an attempt by one group of aristocrats to seize power for themselves from another group of aristocrats. However, at the same time the text's portrayal of the Shishigatani conspiracy is allowed to infuse those more modern attempts to seize power. The head of the conspiracy, the monk Shunkan, is portrayed as a cunning, vaguely evil-looking old man, and his co-conspirators are depicted as fat, pompous, self-important aristocrats who do little more than get drunk and exhibit bloodthirsty glee at the thought of killing Heike.¹¹⁶ Because of the use of anachronism, this unflattering depiction of the Shishigatani conspirators is superimposed on modern revolutionaries and coup conspirators in the intertext, denaturing the nobility such

¹¹⁵ It is worth noting that more than a decade passed between the publication of volume 3 and this volume. This volume was serialized between 1978 and 1980, after the protest movement in Japan collapsed and was largely discredited due to the increasingly violent tactics of certain groups. So while student protesters are portrayed as a peaceful force opposed to power in volume 3, this volume treats them quite differently. Here the text evokes student protesters in the form of the revolting warrior monks of Enryaku-ji, who are armed and uniformed and march on Kyoto in orderly ranks, closely resembling soldiers staging a coup, not peaceful protesters. The text explicitly calls them *gakushō* 学生, which has the same ideographs for the modern word for “students.” As the text notes, the term was in contemporaneous use in the Heian period, but it cannot help but evoke student protesters for the modern reader. *ibid.*, 252-255.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, 244-246.

types drape themselves with in their rhetoric. In the end the anachronism here allows the text—in accordance with its generally humanist message—to imply that all examples of the will to power are equally ugly, self-interested, and suspicious.

Although these volumes touch upon many aspects of the Genpei war and the surrounding years, the putative main character is Musashibō Benkei 武蔵坊弁慶, a warrior monk who in popular legend was the loyal retainer of Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経, the general of the Genji forces. Benkei is a well-known literary figure who appears perennially in drama and literature, most famously in the kabuki play *Kanjinchō* 勧進帳 where he helps Yoshitsune avoid suspicion and cross a road barrier. *Kanjinchō* was one of the central pieces of kabuki's contribution to the war effort because of the loyalty that Benkei displays to Yoshitsune, his superior. Censors noted that Benkei displays “perfect feudal loyalty,”¹¹⁷ and this sort of loyalty is exactly what the government wanted to instill in citizens and soldiers. A core of patriotic plays including *Kanjinchō* were performed more than a thousand times between 1931 and 1945 as kabuki responded to the demands of the government and patriotic culture.¹¹⁸ In addition, one of renowned director Kurosawa Akira's early films is *Tora no o o fumu otokotachi* 虎の尾を踏む男たち (Those Who Tread on the Tiger's Tail, 1945), a fairly faithful film reproduction of the kabuki *Kanjinchō* except for the addition of a new comic character, a porter, added to aid plot exposition. Censors approved the film for production, presumably because it showcased Benkei's loyalty and (they hoped) would therefore inspire loyalty in viewers.¹¹⁹ Production finished during the American occupation, but the movie was probably banned by the occupation government's Civil Censorship Division¹²⁰ for displaying values of “feudalistic”

¹¹⁷ James R. Brandon, *Kabuki's Forgotten War: 1931-1945* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009), 103.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.*, 186.

¹¹⁹ Later in the production process censors withdrew their approval, calling the film a corruption of *Kanjinchō*, a sacrosanct piece of traditional Japanese culture. Presumably this is because the porter, a comic character played by a popular comedian, detracted from the solemn, dignified gravity of the story. See Rachael Hutchinson, “Kurosawa Akira's One Wonderful Sunday: Censorship, Context and ‘counter-Discursive’ Film,” *Japan Forum* 19, no. 3 (2007): 372.

¹²⁰ Multiple sources claim the occupation government censored the film (see, for example, the next note), and in fact the incident is fairly well known as an example of US censorship in Japan. However, in his autobiography Kurosawa claims that the film was not censored for content. Rather, he claims that a Japanese censor, in an act of petty personal revenge against Kurosawa, purposefully left *Tora no o* off a list of films in

loyalty and the film was ordered destroyed.¹²¹ Benkei, therefore, was another important installment in the wartime government's appropriation of history for political purposes. Unsurprisingly, *Hi no tori* attempts to dismantle Benkei, who in the text is Benta 弁太, a simple, illiterate, uneducated woodcutter. Rather than a model of loyalty, Benta is instead tricked and manipulated by Yoshitsune into serving him. Benta's service to Yoshitsune, so valued as a model of virtue by the militarists, only comes about because Benta is too simple to detect and resist Yoshitsune's manipulation: *Hi no tori* depicts loyalty as the result of stupidity.

Again, the text uses anachronism to dismantle Benkei, although more sparingly than in earlier volumes. *Hi no tori* ascribes authorship of the *Gikeiki* (A story of Yoshitsune's life that is the main source text for Benkei) to the monk Myōun. Myōun remarks to one of his colleague monks that he is writing a *taiga shōsetsu* 大河小説, an anachronistic term for a *roman-fleuve* novel, based on a funny-looking person he met in town (Benta).¹²² The term *shōsetsu* is used as a translation of the Western term "novel," and specifically implies literary fiction. The use of anachronism is subtle here, a mere literary term out of time. Yet the addition of *taiga*, with its popular association with *taiga* dramas (melodramatic historical TV dramas), clearly draws the reader's attention to the anachronicity of the term. By doing so, the text evokes the discourse surrounding the modern *shōsetsu*, or novel: Myōun's work will be fictional, the product of his imagination.¹²³ And the use of the term *taiga* imposes the modern discourse about *taiga* dramas on the story about Benkei: it will be a melodramatic, highly theatrical rendition of events that takes many liberties with history. Again, the text highlights the constructedness of history, anachronistically summoning the present day discourse on literary fiction to underline that the narrative so ably deployed by the militarists to exhort wartime Japanese to loyalty is fictional, and can only be fictional. The reality of Benta's story is that of a simple man out of his

production that was handed over to the US authorities, and it merely became an illegal film by default. See Akira Kurosawa, *Something Like An Autobiography* (Vintage, 1983), 143-144.

¹²¹ Jay Rubin, "From Wholesomeness to Decadence: The Censorship of Literature under the Allied Occupation," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 11, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 93.

¹²² *Hi no tori*. Vol. 7, 113.

¹²³ Of course, as some will no doubt point out, the term *shōsetsu* is also used for works that are not expected to be *substantially* fictional, namely the popular *shishōsetsu*, or fictional autobiography, which are acknowledged to be somewhat fictionalized but still expected to closely follow the facts of the author's life. This is true, but here Myōun uses the term *taiga shōsetsu*, which is a category of fiction, and explicitly states he is inventing a fictional protagonist.

depth who is deceived and manipulated by power for its own selfish ends, which by implication may also be the real story of wartime Japanese.

Although the titular phoenix does not make an actual appearance in these volumes, the desire for its blood is again a key theme that drives the plot and motivates characters such as Kiyomori and Kiso no Yoshinaka 木曾義仲, powerful men who again crave the power to live forever so that they may reign forever. Kiyomori succeeds in acquiring a peacock from mainland China, which he is convinced is the phoenix, only to have it disappear in a major fire that ravages Kyoto. Kiyomori here is painted as a rather pathetic figure, credulously and desperately believing that a merely unusual bird is the legendary creature that will grant him immortality, then becoming distraught when the bird is lost. As he agonizes over the loss of immortality that was almost within his grasp, his sons admonish him: “There’s no way such a bird could exist in this world. Really... father, you can’t believe all the exaggerated advertisements you see in newspapers and on TV.” To which Kiyomori responds “I don’t care if you believe or not, but that bird... it was my whole reason for living.”¹²⁴ One of the themes of *Hi no tori* is humanism, specifically the rejection of transcendentalism, which in Tezuka’s early life had been used as rationalization for killing and dying and led to the disaster of the war. Throughout the series, those who devote their lives to something larger than themselves find only despair in the end. In volume 1, one of Himiko’s loyal soldiers, upon finding out that she is not divine but merely a capricious dictator, reflects, “I gave thirty years of my life in service, and what do you think I have left? Only my own stupidity.”¹²⁵ Similarly, the king in volume 3, who has devoted his life to building himself a grand tomb that will give him historical immortality, has only regrets in his dying thoughts: “I... I wanted to do something... something more. I wanted to read Kawabata Yasunari, I wanted to watch movies, I wanted to date girls, I wanted to drive a car fast, I wanted to learn mahjong, I wanted to drink Jonnie Walker just once... What will be left after I die? Nothing at all” (another anachronism, here darkly humorous, that increases the pity for the king

¹²⁴ *ibid.*, 282. “‘*Sonna tori wa kono yo ni iru hazu ga nai desu.*’ ‘*Genimo... chichiue, shinbun ya terebi no kodai kōkoku wa oshinji ni naranu ga yoroshii ka to zonzimasu.*’... ‘*Shinjiru shinjinu wa katte, da ga kono tori wa... ore ni totte ikigai de atta!*’”

¹²⁵ *Hi no tori* vol. 1, 193. “‘*30 nen mo jinsei o bō ni futtekitanda. Soshite... nani ga nokotta to omou? Ore no bakasa kagen datta yo.*’”

by evoking all the familiar things modern people like the reader wish to do in life). His last words are the Japanese aphorism “Stupidity is only cured by death.”¹²⁶ In the present volume, Kiyomori has found a reason for living in the phoenix, because its blood will allow him to transcend his own life and ensure the prosperity of the Heike clan: if his clan falls with his death, then the life he spent elevating it will have been wasted. The promise of transcendentalism has become his only hope, his reason for living. However, the text here uses anachronism to compare this belief in the transcendental to belief in overblown TV and newspaper advertisements. The reader’s knowledge of modern advertisements, their inflated and exaggerated claims, and their thinly veiled desire to part people from their money, is evoked and juxtaposed with a transcendental “reason to live.” The text equates belief in the transcendental with credulous belief in transparently overstated advertising; something only the most inept members of a consumer society actually fall victim to, objects of pity. Furthermore the manipulative nature of advertisements is, in the intertext, superimposed on transcendental belief. Again, Tezuka grew up in an era when transcendental belief was used to manipulate populations into dying and killing, and this anachronism associates the discourse on the well-known manipulateness of TV and newspaper advertisements with transcendentalism, exposing it as another means for power to exercise control.

These are the most significant examples of anachronism in the history volumes of *Hi no tori*. There are many other anachronisms in the text, sometimes used for a more straightforward comic effect. For example, when pressed on why the Heike armies have been pushed out of Kyoto by the Genji, Taira no Munemori 平宗盛 equivocates, “Well you see, that is, the Yen is very strong right now...”¹²⁷ humorously evoking contemporary evasive excuses by ineffectual CEOs. All of these anachronisms are, of course, gags, unexpectedly intruding on the diegetic space of the narrative and hilarious for it (or if not hilarious, at least darkly comedic). However, while the humor of these anachronisms might disarm the reader and preclude them

¹²⁶ *Hi no tori* vol. 3, 148. “*Yo wa motto... motto nani ka, nani ka yaritakatta. Kawabata Yasunari mo yomitakatta, eiga mo mitakatta, onna no ko to dēto shitakatta, kuruma o futtobashitakatta, mājan o oboetakatta, ichido Jonii Wōkā o nomitakatta!!... Yo ga shinda ato ni nani ga nokoru? Nani mo nokorya shinai... Baka wa shinanakya naoranai.*”

¹²⁷ Osamu Tezuka, *Hi no tori*, vol. 8 (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1992), 143. “*Are wa, tsumari, endaka ga hageshii tame ni...*”

from being considered seriously, we should not assume they are innocent fun. *Hi no tori* unquestionably has a philosophical and political project it is impressing on history, and the pastiche of past and present that anachronism creates is clearly significant in such a text. Tezuka, who grew up in an education system that appropriated history to instill a wartime, militarist ideology in citizens, attempts to dismantle that entire historical edifice with his “life work.” Using anachronism, he shows gods to be mundane, heroes to be cowards and thugs, history to be constructed, and transcendental belief to be a sign of credulousness. Although Tezuka never forgets his roots writing humorous children’s manga, the gag anachronisms here serve a purpose besides humor, opening up the closed, authoritative history of Japan to contemporary discourse and allowing the text to dismantle every hero and certainty that enabled the production and reproduction of wartime ideology.

2.3 – The past is everywhere: anachronism in contemporary popular culture

While Ōe limits his anachronisms to dreams or visions, and Tezuka confines his to gags, other works present anachronisms as a realized part of the diegetic world. Sometimes there is an explanation proffered for these anachronisms—such as in a science fiction or alternate history story—and sometimes there is not. But in either case the anachronistic world the characters find themselves in is completely natural to them, and they operate in it with none of the discomfort the reader might feel at the hodgepodge of eras and playful irreverence for history the texts evince.

All the works examined in this section conflate the (post) modern present and the Edo period. Since the Edo period is the era that came immediately before Meiji modernization, it is frequently a stand-in for “the past” or “the premodern” in general. This is understandable, as the Edo period is clearly a separate discursive space distinct from the present, not locatable on a continuum of progress that leads to the present in the way that, say, the Taishō period is. Yet at the same time its artifacts, both cultural and physical, linger in the present. The Edo period is distant from the present, yet at the same time dimly remembered. Carol Gluck notes that “as a historical time, Edo was the immediately proximate past of Meiji, meaning that it was temporally linked to modernity by its beforeness as well as its pastness.” Consequently, “Edo became not only a historical time but a cultural space, a repository of traditions (*dentō*) associated with Japanese distinctiveness, both positive and negative.”¹²⁸ For works that seek to juxtapose the past and the present, the Edo period is often the default “past.” In fact, *Hi no tori* is an outlier in anachronistic Japanese literature for treating earlier eras. Tezuka was determined to attack imperialist history wherever it sought refuge, requiring him to treat Japan’s distant history and prehistory. However, for works not engaged in that specific project the Edo period is a more familiar past, its texts performed well into the modern period that had transformed the world that birthed them, and of course reproduced endlessly in the samurai movies and period TV dramas of modernity.

¹²⁸ Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 262-263.

There are also noted similarities between the Edo period and the present that may lend Edo to easy representation: a textual society, consumerism, urbanization, advertising, and mass awareness of the contradictions of power.¹²⁹ Certainly these similarities mean there is less distance between the postmodern present and the Edo period than, say, the Heian era. However, Edo is also the site of ferocious historical appropriation, and any equivalencies drawn between Edo and the present risk participating in that discourse. Carol Gluck surveys the ways Edo has been constructed, reconstructed, reformulated, and reimagined in order to serve the needs of various modern and postmodern ideological projects. Edo has been an obstacle for the modern nation-state, a feudalism to overcome, or else it was a source of a unified Japanese populace. Or it was a source of resistance for those who opposed national hegemony. Or modern commoditization could be found in its commercial culture.¹³⁰ As Marc Steinberg has written, “by the 1980s and 1990s Edo can be accessed only in terms of its relation to the present. Edo, now more than ever, functions as a way of thinking about the present; a mirror, perhaps, by which the present beholds itself.”¹³¹ But here we must make a qualification, for insofar as the present is postmodern, Edo has been increasingly accessed in terms of postmodernity, especially during the so-called “Edo boom” of the 1980s which saw an explosion of popular discourse on Edo. Edo “became a space of postmodern freedom, play, and infinite *baraechii* (variety).”¹³² Cultural commentators like Okada Toshio famously found exact correspondences in Edo culture for postmodern phenomena.¹³³ In this discourse, as Gluck states, “Edo was imaged as essentially, identically the same time as today.”¹³⁴ I will discuss these claims in more detail in the next chapter. However, it is important to note here that while this appropriation of Edo might well be taken as anachronistic, and while it is being performed *for* the postmodern present, it is *not postmodern anachronism*. Postmodern anachronism juxtaposes the past and present, allowing them to remain distinct and mutually foreign, but creating new connections between them in the moment of superimposition. The discourse on

¹²⁹ I will take these up in greater detail in the next chapter.

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, 264.

¹³¹ Marc Steinberg, “Otaku Consumption, Superflat Art and the Return to Edo,” *Japan Forum* 16, no. 3 (2004): 450.

¹³² Gluck, “Invention,” 274.

¹³³ Steinberg, 453.

¹³⁴ Gluck, “Invention,” 283.

Edo in the 1980s rather sought to rewrite or overwrite Edo in order to accommodate the narrative of the present; ironically enough, this discourse was modern anachronism in the service of a postmodern era. The works examined here, while certainly benefiting from the newfound popularity of Edo generated by the boom-era Edo-as-postmodern discourse, are not a part of it. Rather than rewrite Edo, these texts instead use postmodern anachronisms to demarcate and enforce the boundaries between the past and present, while doing their own work in an intertext.

Unlike Tezuka, who offered non-diegetic gag anachronisms (anachronism deployed for brief comic effect and not apparent to the characters or integral to the diegetic world) in the historical past, the texts examined in this section portray diegetic anachronistic worlds, where anachronistic elements are persistent in and integral to the diegetic world, acknowledged and understood by characters. Consequently it is the setting, or the worlds themselves, that will be of principal interest here. As Jameson writes:

The strangely active and pulsating vitality of the “world” of romance, much like Stanislaw Lem’s sentient ocean in *Solaris*, tends to absorb many of the act-and event-producing functions normally reserved for narrative “characters”... we might say that in romance the category of Scene tends to capture and to appropriate the attributes of Agency and Act, making the “hero” over into something like a registering apparatus.¹³⁵

While the plot and characters of the works examined in this section are certainly important to their readers, we must acknowledge that one of their principal functions is as “registering apparatus” that lead readers through the intriguing speculative worlds realized in the texts. Especially in overtly comical works, the work the text performs on history is accomplished more by scene and setting than by the hapless protagonists. Therefore this section will concern itself mainly with narrative worlds rather than the traditional concerns of plot and characterization.

The works examined in this section are clear examples of postmodern pastiche. Linda Hutcheon, arguing against an interpretation of pastiche (by Jameson and others) as a de-historicizing mixture of past images into present spectacle that is empty of critical content,

¹³⁵ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 112.

writes that pastiche is “rummaging through the image reserves of the past in such a way as to show the history of the representations their parody calls to our attention... But this parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostalgic; it is always critical... [it] signals how present representations come from past ones and what ideological consequences derive from both continuity and difference.”¹³⁶ The pastiches of present and Edo presented in this section are certainly spectacle—hilarious spectacle at that—but they also draw attention to the ideologically charged representations of both past and present. By creating a pastiche out of incongruous elements that somehow has an internal congruity, these texts simultaneously inscribe possibilities for congruity while drawing attention to the projects such representation is necessarily engaged in.

2.3.1 – *Seibā marionetto J*

Seibā marionetto J セイバーマリオネット J (Saber Marionette J), directed by Shimoda Masami 下田正美, is a television anime that ran from 1996 to 1997. It enjoyed enough popularity to spawn another anime series, as well as several direct-to-video projects, mangas, and novels. The basic premise is that a colony spaceship encounters an accident on the way to a new planet, *Teratsū* テラツー (Terra Two), and the only survivors that actually manage to land on the surface are six men. Unable to reproduce normally, the colonists populate their new planet through cloning. Inexplicably, however, their advanced genetic manipulation technology cannot produce a female from male genes, so the colonists produce only male descendants and create robots—the titular marionettes—with a female appearance for companionship. Leaving aside the gender issues, most significantly for this study, each of the six original colonists proceeds to found his own nation, reproducing their original Earth cultures in an Epcot-esque caricature of national culture, with national costumes, national architecture, etc., meticulously reproduced and conspicuously displayed. Even centuries later, when the narrative takes place, there is apparently none of the cosmopolitanism exchange of fashions and styles that marks our own globalized world. The Japanese colonist—named Ieyasu, naturally—founds a nation

¹³⁶ Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1989), 89.

called *Japonesu* that faithfully recreates the Edo period. However, this is not a retreat into the past. The constraints imposed by the narrative framework mean that the *Japonesu* needs the advanced technologies of cloning and robotics (in addition to the industries needed to support them) in order to survive. It is impossible for *Japonesu* to abandon modernity, and modernity is on display right next to Edo visual styles.

Seibā marionetto J is comedic and adolescent in tone, and will probably never be remembered as great art. However, it does bear the distinction of being one of the only works that has drawn critical attention for its anachronisms. Azuma Hiroki, in his study of *otaku* culture, singles out *Seibā marionetto J* as exemplary of an *otaku*/postmodern worldview. He proffers it as an example of the “‘Japanese’ themes and modes created by *otaku* [which] are in fact all imitations and distortions of U.S.-made material.”¹³⁷ This anachronistic *otaku*- (and postmodern-) manufactured “pseudo-Japan,” as Azuma calls it, is both a source of celebration as a revitalization of Japanese identity and a source of anxiety because in the wake of postwar Americanization (as previously quoted in the Introduction) “‘A pseudo-Japan manufactured from U.S.-produced material’ is now the only thing left in our grasp. We can only construct an image of the Japanese cityscape by picturing family restaurants, convenience stores, and ‘love hotels.’”¹³⁸ However, this is a dubious claim. It is clear from the endless procession of samurai movies and period TV dramas set in (mostly) the Edo period that it is still quite possible to imagine a Japan—and even a Japanese cityscape—without the anachronistic accretions of modernity and Americanization.

In fact, while it seems it is still quite possible to construct a Japan without such postmodern anachronisms, it is perhaps arguable that it has become impossible to construct a Japanese past without modern anachronisms. Take the aforementioned endless procession of period dramas: rare is the movie or TV show that does not impute some sort of modern narrative or ideology into the Edo past. To pick a prominent example, Kurosawa Akira’s 黒澤明 celebrated film *Shichinin no samurai* 七人の侍 (The Seven Samurai, 1954) depicts samurai risking and spending their lives to protect a peasant village from bandits. As the samurai are

¹³⁷ Azuma, 20.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*

rōnin 浪人 (masterless), they do not do this out of a duty to defend their fiefdom or their interest in securing agricultural taxes, but rather for what is clearly a mere token payment. The samurai are motivated to help their feudal inferiors by egalitarianism and a sense of universal justice, modern ideologies the film transcribes into the past. As of this writing, the current NHK historical drama is *Hana moyu* 花燃ゆ, a story about the end of the Edo period which features a strong, plucky female protagonist who impacts national history, impressing modern gender ideology onto the past. Indeed, one would be hard pressed to find a modern narrative about the Edo past that does not anachronistically import modern ideology into the past. Like all modern anachronisms, these are attempts to appropriate history for the needs of the present by making modern ideology seem teleological in the past, furthering a narrative of progress and emancipation.

It seems Azuma's claim that "'a pseudo-Japan manufactured from U.S.-produced material' is now the only thing left in our grasp" is indeed correct, but that "material" is ideology and philosophy, rather than convenience stores and love hotels. A narrative of the past manufactured without modern (and to an extent, Americanized) ideology seems unimaginable, at least as entertainment. How would modern readers or TV audiences relate to protagonists that actually accept and affirm the caste-stratified, patriarchal neo-Confucian ideology of the Edo period? Those characters, such as they are, are more often villains, and sympathetic protagonists must defy that ideology in one way or another, such as in *Shichinin no samurai*. But this anachronistic ideology (modern ideology in the past) can exist quite without the presence of physical, visible accoutrements of modernity. Therefore, *Seibā marionetto J's* anachronisms are not the result of an inability to imagine Japan without modern buildings, but are rather involved in a certain project: to create a new compatibility between past and present, even if that compatibility is reflexively acknowledged as absurd.

Azuma further writes (as previously quoted in the Introduction):

Japan's cultural traditions have been severed twice: during the Meiji Restoration and following defeat in World War II. In addition, memories of the period from Meiji to the 1945 defeat have been subject to political repression in the postwar period. If the narcissistic Japan of the 1980s was to forget defeat and remain

oblivious to the impact of Americanization, it was easiest to return to the image of the Edo period.¹³⁹

Since he is studying contemporary *otaku* culture, Azuma focuses on Japan's modern history and ignores the severings of Japan's cultural traditions that have happened many times throughout its recorded history. Nonetheless the point remains that if there is a backlash against Americanization in late capitalist Japan, as Azuma presumes, a source of Japanese identity free from American influence must be found. An obvious source is close at hand: Japan of the early-mid-thirties until 1945. After the cosmopolitanism brought about by the first era of globalization¹⁴⁰ and "Taishō democracy" receded in the early 1930s, there was a rejection of Western culture and a concomitant resurgence of interest in Japanese culture (although, of course, this was a complicated shift that reflected both a genuine cultural trend, as well as enforcement by state and cultural institutions). A Japanese identity focused on the Emperor was constructed. This identity rejected Western culture and philosophy (at least ostensibly) but was nonetheless centered on a modern nation-state and situated in modern technoscientific society, apparently perfect for the needs of a Japanese identity that escapes American influence, which Azuma argues is desired in the wake of postwar Americanization.¹⁴¹

However, that Japanese identity both produced and was produced by some of the most ignominious episodes in Japanese history: severe political repression, Japan's colonialism and imperialism, war crimes, and the disaster of World War II. In the postwar, that identity was soundly denounced as bankrupt and (aside from a very small minority on the political margins) thoroughly rejected. It is true, as Azuma states, that this period is subject to political repression in the present—any public figure calling for a return to the *tennōsei* or other philosophical trappings of the time is quickly denounced and pulled down. However, it is also true that the philosophies of the 1930s are genuinely anathema to many people; it is not only political

¹³⁹ *ibid.*, 22. Azuma finds the beginning of the *otaku* phenomenon in the 1980s.

¹⁴⁰ Keven O'Rourke and Jeffrey G Williamson discuss the late-nineteenth/early-twentieth century first wave of globalization in *Globalization and History: The Evolution of a Nineteenth Century Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999).

¹⁴¹ At least ostensibly: of course modernity, even the nationalist modernity of the 1930s, itself contained many cultural, institutional, and ideological assumptions imported from the West.

ensorship that prevents a return of this Japanese identity, but also a genuine mass rejection of wartime ideology.

The next source for a Japanese identity free of American influence is the Edo period. Not the rigid Neo-Confucian philosophy of the ruling samurai class, of course (which in any case is tainted by the Imperial Japanese military, which took a reconstructed samurai ethos as central to its identity during the prewar and war years), but the vibrant mercantile culture of the *chōnin* 町人, urban commoners, which bears many resemblances to contemporary consumer culture. Edo offers a source of Japanese identity and cultural tradition unblemished by militarism and uncontaminated by America or the West which, as Azuma suggests, is a potential source of identity for Japanese seeking to escape postwar Americanization. However, it is also entirely unsuited to technoscientific society. The anachronisms of *Seibā marionetto J* and similar texts in the postmodern *otaku* movement, then, can be read as an attempt to infuse Edo with recognizable artifacts of technoscientific culture and therefore defuse its alienness, or perceived distance from the present, and rehabilitate it as a source of identity. It is significant that the anachronisms in *Seibā marionetto J* all summon elements recognizably sourced from the 1990s, despite the fact that the series takes place centuries in the future. All the technology advanced beyond the level of the 1990s is hidden or elided, such as the robotic marionettes—extremely advanced machines—that look and behave exactly like humans. The 1990s technology, however, is deployed quite visibly, conspicuously and humorously.

For example, the series opens with a long sequence of establishing shots of the city-state of Japoneseu that draw attention to its anachronistic nature, and establish anachronism as a central theme of the text. In one such scene, wooden buildings line a typically Edo dirt street; workers wearing topknots and Edo-appropriate garb carry bundles wrapped in cloth, while others drink sake from earthenware bottles on a restaurant's street veranda. Across the street, an electronics store sells rice cookers and cathode ray tube televisions, one of them displayed in a wooden frame.¹⁴² This anachronistic incongruity is, of course, hilarious and deployed for comic effect. Significantly, however, the anachronistic items are native to the 1990s and not

¹⁴² Shimoda Masami, *EMOTION the Best Seibā Marionetto J* (Bandai Visual, 2010), ep. 1.

centuries hence—CRT televisions rather than flat screens, holographic displays, or something even more exotic. Here we can put Azuma’s theory in terms of the juxtaposition of discourses: the text specifically summons the discourse on the Edo period and the discourse on the present in order to juxtapose them and allow new possibilities to open up between them in an intertext. It creates a connection between the Edo past and modern electronics, opening up that distant, alien past to the accoutrements of modern technoscientific society. The text creates the possibility that Edo culture is compatible with the desirable consumer artifacts of modernity. Since the Edo period is a Japanese past untainted by both Americanization and defeat, according to Azuma’s argument this has the effect of enabling Edo to be a source of Japanese identity, even in our thoroughly technological present.

There is much merit to Azuma’s argument, and this is certainly one of the major functions of anachronism in postmodern texts. However, it is necessary here to make some important distinctions. First, a word should be said about national identity in the postmodern era, which may seem oxymoronic. One of the features of the postmodern, globalized world is identity that flowers and expands across the carefully guarded national borders of modernity, which in any case are no longer so closely guarded, and consumer products that serve as a source of identity (fashions, brands, television shows, etc.) may come from any corner of the globe. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that while modern sovereignty “imposed hierarchical territorial boundaries, both to police the purity of its own identity and to exclude all that was other,” postmodern globalization “does not rely on fixed boundaries or barriers. It is a *decentered* and *detritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers. [It] manages hybrid identities, flexible hierarchies, and plural exchanges.”¹⁴³ It is therefore reasonable to wonder whether postmodern texts (and the postmodern subjects that read them) are invested in projects of national identity formation at all. However, I would argue that Hardt, Negri, and others overlook the continued importance of nation-states as a juridical reality. Although modes of production and consumption are increasingly global, people nonetheless are still Japanese or American or some other nationality as a matter of legal reality. We all hold a passport issued by

¹⁴³ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard University Press, 2009), xii-xiii. Emphasis in original.

a particular nation-state, and are subject to its laws in a very real way as long as we live within its borders. Therefore, even as postmodern, hybridized, deterritorialized identities flourish and expand, they run up against the hard border of the juridical reality of the nation-state. Although individuals can consume culture produced outside the borders of their own nation-state and dialogically form an identity that transcends those borders, they can never actually be anything other than a citizen of their own nation. By legal fiat, citizens will always belong to the national identity group. The nation-state, though denatured and stripped of its narratives, is in point of fact as relevant as ever. This is perfectly illustrated by the Olympic Games; nothing is more internationalized than the global athletics world, and the Olympics themselves are a product of global capital flows that use the games to sell airtime and advertisements worldwide. Yet the competition is heavily invested in national divisions. Athletes can only participate as a member of a nation-state, and each nation-state's athletes are presented as a team. Viewers dutifully cheer for their nation's team even though the competitions measure athletes' individual ability and their training in locations worldwide, and the whole pageantry of the nation-state (flags and anthems) is brought out and displayed. This is exactly the state of the postmodern individual: determined not by national grand narratives but by local and international cultural flows, yet nonetheless grouped into national "teams" by inescapable legal reality. Since, therefore, one is "Japanese" by juridical fiat (it says so on one's passport, after all), there is a desire to construct and understand that identity, even if it is just one part of a larger, globalized web of an individual's identity. Postmodern literature, therefore, still engages in the project of identity formation, even if its project looks very different from modernity's identity formation.

The second point to keep in mind is that, while this kind of identity formation could be read as nationalistic, the interventions in the past deployed by *Seibā marionetto J* and similar texts do not attempt to transform Edo into a golden age. Unlike Japan's past projects at forming a national identity, it does not offer an agrarian myth of pastoral utopia—its source is not only the era of Edo but the city of Edo (we presume there must be farmland somewhere, but the text only portrays the city), and its vision is far too urban and commercial to harken back to an

imagined bucolic past of community unity.¹⁴⁴ For the same reason, the text cannot be said to be manufacturing a *gemeinschaft*, an imagined idyllic community of wholesome human relationships that existed before the invention of society to mediate them.¹⁴⁵ Nor does it envision Edo as a refuge from the late capitalist alienation of humans from the products of their labor:¹⁴⁶ again in the first episode, one man remarks that he has paid a small fortune merely to rent the latest model of marionette for a while. Clearly human labor is mediated by capital, and humans are estranged from both the products of labor and the basic human need for companionship. *Seibā marionetto J*, and the other texts that will be examined below, are thoroughly postmodern and do not try to manipulate the past to revive or produce a grand narrative. Instead, Japanese late capitalist society is imposed on Edo, complete with all its disorder, contradictions, and iniquities.

Another important distinction is that these texts do not—and cannot—rewrite the Edo period for this project. Some texts, such as those mentioned in the Introduction or the overly enthusiastic texts from the “Edo boom,” explicitly attempt to rewrite or reframe the Edo period to pull it closer to the present, drawing equivalencies between Edo culture and contemporary idol singers, manga, etc. However, by using anachronism *Seibā marionetto J* explicitly polices the boundary between the past and the present, even as it juxtaposes and superimposes them. In other words, anachronism only works as a comic device *precisely because* Edo dirt streets and televisions are so obviously incongruent. Postmodern anachronism depends on this incongruity for its visual-rhetorical impact, which means that quite contrary to modern attempts to rewrite the past, postmodern texts must maintain the otherness of the past. While the juxtaposition with the present opens up that past to new possibilities, these possibilities are only created in the intertext, on the plane of the juxtaposition. “Abe ichizoku” might well convincingly claim that *junshi* was actually, historically motivated by economics, but *Seibā*

¹⁴⁴ Carol Gluck discusses the use of the agrarian ideal in early Japanese identity formation *Japan’s Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton University Press, 1985), 178.

¹⁴⁵ I am referring to the dichotomy between *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft* proposed by Ferdinand Tönnies in 1887. See Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Civil Society*, Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁶ i.e., Marxist alienation. See Nicholas Churchich, *Marxism and Alienation* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990), 61-62.

marionetto J will never convince anyone that there were actually, historically televisions in the Edo period. Unlike modern anachronism, postmodern anachronism allows the past and present to remain distinct and well-bounded even as it mixes them.

And because it so conspicuously summons both past and present and their concomitant discourses, it historicizes its own discourse and avoids essentializing the Edo period. In her study of *nihonjinron* 日本人論, a discourse about the uniqueness and superiority of Japan and Japanese associated with postwar neo-nationalism, Yumiko Iida writes:

This new culturalism differs from the previous romantic culturalism of the 1960s, principally by its “scientific” orientation, in which the notions of culture and society are dehistoricized and dematerialized. Unlike the conventional culturalism that expressed a yearning for a return to the cultural/spiritual traditions of the Japanese past, culture... was dealt with in a structural functionalist manner and reduced to a model encapsulating its essential mechanism—“*ie* society”—abstracted by means of comparing and contrasting Japanese society with Western counterparts. In effect, this “scientific,” and static, culturalist approach imposes on culture an atemporal structuralist frame, thereby dehistoricizing Japanese social history, while simultaneously subordinating its culturally unique temporality to an abstract, universal perspective in which only Japan's difference from the West appears in the guise of “cultural uniqueness.”¹⁴⁷

In other words *Nihonjinron*—and other nationalist discourses it is loosely connected to—try to distill an essential “Edo-ness” that can be dehistoricized, extracted from the past, and appropriated as both description of and prescription for the present. It is used to explain Japanese uniqueness and legitimate feelings of supremacy and pride, but of course it also seeks to construct and regulate society according to this essential Japanese society found in Edo. *Seibā marionetto J*, however, along with the other works examined in this section, does not attempt to dehistoricize or essentialize Edo. Instead Edo is localized, summoned with all its dirt streets and wooden buildings, wooden sandals and topknots. Its version of Edo is not exactly *historical*, of course, but its intertextual links to the discourse on Edo are *historicized*, precisely because of the absurd visibility of its anachronisms. What is highlighted, in other words, is

¹⁴⁷ Yumiko Iida, *Rethinking Identity in Modern Japan: Nationalism as Aesthetics* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 189.

exactly the difference between the past and present. As stated above, these texts allow the past and present to remain distinct and well-bounded even as it juxtaposes them, summoning the historicized discourse on Edo and highlighting its absurd incompatibility with the accoutrements of modernity, rather than trying to reduce Edo to something compatible with the present.

Therefore, if *Seibā marionetto J* is rehabilitating Edo as a source of Japanese identity, it is doing so *only at the level of aesthetic performance*. The reader remains fully aware that the Edo period is not compatible with televisions, rice cookers, high-rises, and hamburger stands, and in fact the anachronism only emphasizes that incompatibility. Yet coexisting unproblematically with this knowledge is the counterfactual plane of juxtaposition generated by the text, which freely mixes the discourses about the past and present to create an intertext where compatibility between Edo and televisions is completely natural. It is this plane—acknowledged as fictional and absurd, yet aesthetically pleasing—that becomes the new source of Japanese identity. Unlike modern grand narratives, this source of identity can only exist with a certain reflexive irony and aesthetic distance. Postmodern anachronism does, as Azuma implies, allow the Edo period to be repurposed as a source of identity untainted by both Americanization and ugly wartime ideology. However, it does so not by rewriting the past itself, but only by creating new possibilities between the past and present that exist as a fictional construct (and acknowledged as such) alongside the historically attested mutual alienness of the past and present.

Seibā marionetto J carefully curates the distance between the two discourses—those of the past and present— it summons in its anachronistic world. Modernity is never allowed to completely dissolve into the Edo setting. Nearly every scene carries some sly incongruity that foregrounds (however subtly) the discomfort of the mixed setting. Aerial shots featuring broad swaths of city include high-rise apartments (built in an Edo-esque architectural style) along with historical wooden buildings, and an otherwise perfectly Edo market scene might include a single modern cash register.¹⁴⁸ In one telling scene the characters approach the shogun's

¹⁴⁸ Shimoda, ep. 15.

castle—a Japanese castle, of course—which has a Western-style sculpture fountain in front of it. One of the characters stops to gaze up at the statue quizzically, halting the narrative action for several seconds until her companions call to her. This is another anachronism, of course, but it is perhaps not immediately obvious to viewers used to seeing such juxtapositions in real life (there are many Western sculptures and structures on the grounds of the imperial palace in Tokyo, a former shogunal castle, just to name one prominent example). Therefore, the text explicitly draws the reader's attention to the incongruity, attributing to it significance by having a character take note of it and interrupting the narrative flow. Even as the text creates a plane of juxtaposition showing that the Edo period *could have been* compatible with modern technology and late capitalism in some hypothetical alternate history, it enforces the distance between the two in our lived history by constantly reminding the reader of the absurdity of these eras coexisting.

But if the text does not inscribe the present into the past or try to insist that the past and present are equivalent, it does create the possibility that the past and present are *interoperable*. In technology and software, the concept of interoperability means that two (or more) systems which are distinct and different can nonetheless interface, communicate and exchange data seamlessly. This is a useful concept, and I will appropriate it unapologetically to describe the work these texts do on history with postmodern anachronism. In other words, they do not try to claim, in the manner of modern grand narratives or *nihonjinron* discourse, that the past and present are fundamentally, essentially the *same* system: that meaning and identity can flow seamlessly from past to present because those in the present are the direct inheritors of a past whose social apparatus and cultural inclinations have continued to the present. Rather, postmodern anachronisms (and the texts that deploy them) maintain past and present as two distinct and different systems of discourse; they acknowledge the discontinuity between past and present—indeed, they highlight it with their absurd juxtaposition of the two. Postmodern anachronism's intervention is rather to suggest that past and present are interoperable; that meaning and identity can be transferred between them *even though* they are mutually foreign systems, a fact that is foregrounded. While modern anachronism suggests that the logic of the Edo period and the present are just the same, postmodern anachronism

acknowledges that the logics of the two periods are different—in fact it revels in it and exploits it for comic effect—but suggests instead that the logics are interoperable. Although the two eras (and their attendant ideologies, cultural norms, social institutions, etc.) are not *compatible*, the postmodern anachronisms examined below playfully, counterfactually suggest that contemporary Japanese people could operate in the Edo period and that an Edo-period Japanese person could understand the present, even as they acknowledge this is absurd. Therefore, these texts can source identity and meaning for the postmodern present in the Edo past while avoiding the pitfalls of modern identity projects' appropriation of the past, because the past is not proposed as essentially, fundamentally the same as the present, flowing in smooth inheritance to the current day, with all the problems that entails.

Despite all modernity's efforts to find the present in the past, in its visuality and its accoutrements the past is inescapably rent from the present, making a connection between them difficult. Consider Tokutomi Sohō's thought experiment, written in 1886, to emphasize the changes brought about by modernity:

Suppose we were to take the people of Edo who died when the Tokugawa shōgun Ienari was in his heyday, bring them back from the tomb, and let them stand in the Ginza today. Show them the houses lining the sides of the street, the goods displayed in the shop windows, the passers-by on the street, and the people chatting to each other. No matter what, they certainly could not comprehend even in their dreams that this is what was known to them as Edo.¹⁴⁹

This was published not even two decades into the modern period. How much more true this would be today! The reality of this observation is inescapable, and it is a functional barrier that prevents Edo from being used as a source of identity and genetic cultural connection to the past. Instead of rewriting the past to change this fact (in the manner of modern anachronism), postmodern anachronism creates the possibility of interoperability: again, Edo and the present are allowed to remain completely distinct and foreign systems, but the texts suggest there is a mode or interpretive layer by which these two systems with their mutually alien logics could communicate and operate with each other. Just as Tokutomi focuses on the visuality of street

¹⁴⁹ Tokutomi Ichiyo, *The Future Japan*, trans. Vinh Sinh (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1989), 16. Quoted in Gluck, "Invention," 271.

scenes to emphasize the difference between eras, postmodern anachronisms in many of the works here superimpose the visualities of Edo and modern cities, those most prominent, noticeable, and remarkable emblems of historical difference.

So even as it reminds readers of the comic ridiculousness of its juxtaposition, the text does indeed execute that juxtaposition, constantly summoning the discourse on the two eras and opening up the possibility of interoperability between them. The juxtaposition of household electronics and an Edo street scene, as mentioned above, summons the mutually alien discourses on the Edo period and modern technoscientific consumer culture and superimposes them. By anachronistically showing the accoutrements of these two powerful discourses coexisting, the text creates the possibility that they are not so alien or incompatible after all: the two consumer cultures may be quite different, but ultimately they are interoperable. Of course the reader is fully cognizant of the fact that this juxtaposition is impossible and this compatibility is counterfactual, but that is of little importance. The text plays a Lyotardian language game for the pleasure of the reader, which exists alongside that other language game, history.

In another scene, a beauty contest takes place in the “Japonesu dome.” The beauty contest is clearly derived from the 1990s equivalent, with a panel of judges behind microphones, costume and talent segments, etc. The “Japonesu dome” also evokes the modern stadiums, notably the famous “Tokyo Dome.” However, the inside of the dome is laid out like a kabuki theatre, complete with box seats, a wooden stage, a pine-tree backdrop, and a *hanamichi* running through the audience.¹⁵⁰ The bright, modern, steel-and-concrete Tokyo Dome is superimposed on a traditional, wooden kabuki theatre. Here two architectural manifestations of mass culture are summoned and comically juxtaposed, creating an intertext in which they are equivalent or compatible, even if they are decidedly not in the text of history. The text of *Seibā marionetto J* creates the possibility that mass culture events of the Edo period (such as Kabuki) and contemporary mass culture events are interoperable, and therefore opens up Edo culture as a progenitor of contemporary mass culture. This is, of course, similar to the

¹⁵⁰ Shimoda, ep. 14.

project of the many modern anachronistic texts that attempt to write modern narratives into the Edo period, claiming that contemporary pop idols and manga are *just the same* as similar Edo phenomena. However, while those texts are earnestly trying to create equivalencies between Edo and (post)modernity—overwriting the text of history, as it were—*Seibā marionetto J* constrains its project to juxtaposition, creating equivalence only on the level of the intertext, while leaving the historical discourses surrounding these two mass cultures intact. The anachronistic juxtaposition is, after all, immediately obvious as such, reminding the reader of the fundamental incompatibility between Tokyo Dome and the kabuki stage even as it creates a link between them on another plane. The text does not conflate the discourse on these two mass cultures, but creates interoperability between them.

The text performs a similar function when the protagonist gets a part-time job at a burger stand: the restaurant is an open-air, wooden building in the style of an Edo *dango* 団子 (dumpling) stand, complete with *noren* 暖簾 (hanging curtains). Inside, however, the protagonist cooks Western food (hamburgers) on a modern griddle.¹⁵¹ Here the food culture, employment practices and capitalism of both the Edo and modern periods are summoned and juxtaposed. The juxtaposition is comical because these discourses are so discordant, but at the same time it creates a new possibility that there is perhaps some interoperability between the two; that Edo Japanese might have enjoyed eating hamburgers like modern Japanese, and modern Japanese could be comfortable buying food from wooden stands on dirt streets just like Edo Japanese. Unlike modern anachronisms this text does not attempt to erase the distance between past and present, but rather exploits the ridiculousness of the juxtaposition between Edo and hamburgers for comic effect. For one thing it is well known that the Buddhist injunction against eating meat meant that hamburgers would never have been a popular food in the Edo period, and hamburgers are, of course, Western, modern cuisine with a Western name. Because of this, the Edo period and the contemporary period are allowed to remain distinct from one another, two very different food and commercial cultures, and the juxtaposition is acknowledged as absurd. Nonetheless, the text creates the possibility that

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, ep. 7.

these two systems may be interoperable, that the Japanese people of one system could function—not natively, perhaps, but serviceably—in the logic of the other system.

This is precisely how postmodern anachronistic texts allow Edo to be repurposed as a source of Japanese identity. They summon the past and present, juxtapose them devoid of the narrative that leads from one to the other—a narrative fraught with fascism and defeat—and in the act of that juxtaposition allow new connections to form between them. They allow the past and present to remain different, but suggest that there is a certain interoperability between the two, and that therefore Edo is a plausible progenitor of modern, (post)industrialized, technoscientific, Americanized, late capitalist Japanese society. The comic highlighting of the juxtaposition—the essential absurdity of the admixture of these eras—ensures that the reader anticipates this new connection on the level of aesthetic performance, and will remain aware that Japanese postmodernity actually has its roots in the highly problematic Meiji, Taishō, and Shōwa eras. Nonetheless, this suggestion of interoperability can exist in parallel with knowledge of narrative history, allowing the Edo period to be a source of identity in the realm of the language game. Constructions of identity often look to the past for tradition they take part in or the community they continue. *Seibā marionetto J* allows the Edo period to become such a source of identity for postmodern, late-capitalist, Heisei Japan by portraying the two eras as interoperable. It does not try to claim a continuous tradition or organic connection between the two eras, and it never lets viewers forget the problematic history between them, but through counterfactual anachronistic juxtaposition it playfully suggests the possibility that Edoites would have understood and approved of Heisei Japan.

2.3.2 – *Naruto*

Naruto ナルト is a manga by Kishimoto Masashi 岸本齊史, serialized from 1999 to 2014. It has enjoyed immense popularity, with over two hundred million sales and multiple spinoff movies, novels, and a long-running television series. It is one of the best-selling manga of all time, and its world happens to be supremely anachronistic. *Naruto* is a manga about ninja,

and so it necessarily lives in the shadow of the giant of ninja manga, *Kamui-den* カムイ伝 (the legend of Kamui) by Shirato Sanpei 白土三平. *Kamui-den* was serialized from 1964 to 1971, and was one of the earliest manga to gain critical acclaim with its signature rough artistic style and adult-oriented violence. Not coincidentally, its original run coincides with the radical student movements and civil unrest of the 1960s. It is one of the most celebrated texts of the *gekiga* 劇画 (dramatic pictures) movement that pulled manga away from being a child-oriented medium and towards more mature themes in the 1960s, and like most *gekiga* it was intimately entangled with the period's left-wing political movements.

Kamui-den is a fine example of modern anachronism, except perhaps for the explicit attention Shirato draws to its political project. The titular Kamui is a member of Japan's untouchable caste, the *burakumin*, during the Edo period. Having faced both intense discrimination and political repression since his childhood, Kamui becomes a ninja in order to obtain the martial power necessary to fight class oppression. He engages in a shadow war against powerful samurai and daimyo, disrupting state power and class privilege, and occasionally leading the lower castes in class struggle and revolt, if not quite revolution. The text deftly inscribes the grand narratives of Marxism onto the Edo past, creating the impression they are teleological, evident in the past as well as the present, and that Japanese history can be understood as a continuum of increasing emancipation as explicated by Marxist theory, legitimizing the various left-wing movements of the present. The only thing that disrupts this appropriation of the past is the occasional aside by the narrator, sometimes paragraphs of text that enforce a certain political interpretation of the work. This makes the political project of the text a little too obvious, preventing the anachronism from hiding its rewriting of the past. Still, it was an important text in the leftwing student movements of the 1960s, and Kamui became an icon of the movement. Students even carried banners bearing Kamui's face to protests and sit-ins.¹⁵²

For its project *Kamui-den* necessarily must depict the Edo period in a relentlessly negative fashion. It was, after all, a feudal period, further back on the scale of emancipation

¹⁵² Gravett, 42.

according to Marxist historical theory than even capitalism, and so the text must portray it as even more disenfranchising than the capitalist present of the 1960s. This is perfectly in line with Marxist discourse on Edo, which, as Carol Gluck notes, portrays Edo as a dark era because “it bore the allegorical weight of the oppressions of both Tokugawa feudalism and the modern capitalism that succeeded it.”¹⁵³ *Kamui-den* has none of the cheerful equivalencies between Edo and the present that are in evidence in later texts. The Edo period is depicted as harsh and inhumane; Japan is ruled by capricious daimyō and their sadistic samurai henchmen, who brutalize commoners and cleverly pit them against each other in order to ensure no power ever rises that could challenge their vicious rule. Only class struggle and revolution can bring justice and happiness to the lives of the common people.

This is the legacy that *Kamui-den* has left for subsequent ninja manga, and *Naruto* must live with this legacy. However, *Naruto* is engaged in a very different project with history. Like *Seibā marionetto J*, *Naruto* attempts to create the possibility of interoperability between the present and the Edo period, but it must do so within the conventions of a genre where the brutality of the Edo period has been emphasized—and furthermore much of that brutality is historically attested. Therefore, *Naruto* accomplishes its project not by trying to represent the actual past, but rather with postmodern anachronism, visibly and conspicuously mixing the twenty-first-century present counterfactually with the Edo past. *Naruto* takes place in a lovingly crafted fantasy world that is not quite historical Japan, but is clearly meant to suggest it, a world that resembles the past but which is severed from history, much like the many fantasy worlds in Western fiction which resemble medieval Western Europe but which are not actually situated in the continuity of European history. The world of *Naruto* consists of *kuni* 国 (countries or feudal domains) ruled by daimyō who maintain hidden villages of ninja for their covert or overt military needs. This world, though fantasy, is clearly both Japanese and Edo in nature. Within it, however, are many accoutrements of twenty-first-century life.

Visually the text lovingly renders its world with exquisite detail. The very first panel signals the text’s anachronistic project with a wide shot of the titular protagonist’s home village.

¹⁵³ Gluck, “Invention,” 270.

Buildings roofed with wooden slats line Edo-signature dirt streets clearly built for walking, not automobiles. The buildings are fantastically whimsical, yet still obviously grounded in the Edo “wood culture” logic. Yet overhead there is the tangle of electrical wires characteristic of modern residential neighborhoods in Japan. The old-fashioned architecture is interrupted by water towers and snaking pipes, much like modern cities.¹⁵⁴ Later, the protagonist eats bread and drinks milk for breakfast (typically Western—and therefore modern—foods) before setting off for the day into that same anachronistic city, here depicted as crowded with advertising billboards just like a modern Japanese downtown.¹⁵⁵ In the same manner as *Seibā marionetto J*, this anachronistic architecture summons discourses on the Edo period and the present and juxtaposes them, allowing a suggestion of interoperability between the eras to form in the intertext. It does not really contest the brutality of the Edo period so strongly encoded by generic convention; it is very obvious that its world is impossible, and so it can never convince its readers that it offers a valid historical perspective on the Edo period. By reflexively drawing attention to its anachronisms, *Naruto* allows the unromanticized, scientific discourse on the Edo period as well as the generic discourse on the Edo period to remain intact—it does not attempt to overwrite either, but instead allows the juxtaposition with modernity to exist alongside them. Again, this juxtaposition implies a certain interoperability between the Edo period and the present: that a person living in a world governed by the Edo logic of daimyō and ninja could perfectly at home with bread, milk, electrical wires, and billboards.

However, more significantly *Naruto* also engenders intertextual interoperability between the Edo period and certain modern institutions. While the characters of *Seibā marionetto J* were educated in the *terakoya* 寺子屋 (temple schools) of the Edo period,¹⁵⁶ modern schools are prominently featured in *Naruto*. The text is largely the titular protagonist’s coming-of-age story, and so the first part of the narrative sees him shepherded through various state-run educational institutions. The village school Naruto attends is immediately recognizable as a modern Japanese school, complete with blackboard, *kyōdan* 教壇 (teaching

¹⁵⁴ Kishimoto Masashi, *Naruto*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2003), 9.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 86-87.

¹⁵⁶ Shimoda, ep. 3.

platform), desks, and the ubiquitous Japanese school architecture that places windows along one side of a classroom and a hallway on the other.¹⁵⁷ Students quarrel¹⁵⁸ and play pranks¹⁵⁹ in a way completely familiar to anyone who has been through a modern educational system.

Students also bully and exclude their peers: school bullying is an issue of major national concern, recently the focus of many newspaper columns, television news segments, variety shows, etc. Therefore, this aspect of student behavior in *Naruto* immediately summons the contemporary, modern discourse on educational institutions. The scars bullying and social exclusion have left on the protagonist are a major motif of the text. Even when the students move out of the classroom and on to practical learning, they do so under the tutelage of a state-appointed teacher. However, this recognizably modern school anachronistically teaches children to be ninja, in order to serve an Edo-period political structure in an Edo-esque world. By summoning the discourse on modern educational institutions and juxtaposing it with the discourse on the Edo period, the text opens up the possibility of interoperability between the two: that the modern educational institutions which are an important shared mass experience in Japan could operate in the Edo period, and that Edo-period Japanese—ninja—could function and receive education in them. Again, the anachronism of the modern school in the Edo period is too obvious to rewrite or overwrite the past, so the historical and genre discourses on the Edo period are left intact and the pleasure of the language game is not truncated. The database elements (the cultural discourses on the past and present) are not changed, but a new possibility is created at the moment of their extraction and admixture: the possibility that while the present is quite foreign from the past, it might be interoperable with that past, and that therefore the Edo period can be a source of identity and legacy for the postmodern, post-industrial, late-capitalist present.

The text creates the momentary possibility (however ahistorical) that Edoites could understand and operate comfortably—even unremarkably—in modern educational institutions, thereby opening up Edo as a “past” that Heisei Japanese in present-day educational institutions

¹⁵⁷ Kishimoto, vol. 1, 12.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, 91.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 11.

can look to as a source for their own world that legitimates it, even as it acknowledges that this compatibility is absurd. Like many identity projects, *Naruto* imputes the present into the past, but rather than *actually* claim “we have always been this way,” the conspicuous postmodern anachronisms draw attention to how it is constructing interoperability and the absurdity of its project. Identity is not formed on the belief that the past was actually just like the present, but on the basis of a counterfactual hypothetical where, if Heisei and Edo were somehow mixed, they would be perfectly interoperable.

Of course, the school in *Naruto* is that of a hidden ninja village, and the ultimate goal of the education and training it provides is to prepare students to serve the state in a military role. (Note the radical departure from genre convention as established by *Kamui-den*, where ninja military power was used to oppose the state.) However, that state and its military branch are portrayed anachronistically as well. While the daimyō is the putative political head of the *kuni* the protagonists live in, and is presumably freighted with all the historical baggage of that feudal position, in practice he is a very distant authority figure, hardly even mentioned until late in the narrative. The civilian and military power structures that the characters are enmeshed in and readers are exposed to are much more anachronistic. At the local level, the village is run as a meritocracy, where ninja skill is the only relevant metric for advancement up the ranks. Both men and women can climb to any position of leadership, and indeed the village leader and ninja commander is a woman for most of the story.

Of course, this is patently anachronistic, inserting modern discourses on gender equality into the past. At one point a student even complains of her overly-solicitous teacher’s *sekuhara* セクハラ (sexual harassment), a thoroughly contemporary word and concept.¹⁶⁰ The text shows postmodern gender ideology and the bureaucratic institutions enmeshed with it operating in an Edo-esque world. Of course, unlike *Hana moyu*, the text does not imply that the Edo period was actually so forgiving to gender equality. The word *sekuhara* that the student uses to describe her teacher’s actions, for example, is derived from English (a concatenation of the unwieldy *sekushuaru harasumento*), and evoking it is a speech act that inevitably summons

¹⁶⁰ Date Hayato, *Naruto shippūden kaze kage dakkān no shō*, vol. 3 (Aniplex, 2007). This line only appears in the anime version.

modernity and Western influences on Japanese society. The use of such a Western, modern word is too obviously anachronistic to be written into the past. As well, while the village leader is a woman, the village she presides over is the aforementioned fantastic anachronistic landscape, shot through with electric lines, water tanks, and other reminders of modernity. The military she oversees, while ostensibly consisting of the ninja of the Edo period, wear a uniform that is strikingly similar to modern military body armor. It is certainly something never worn in the Edo period in Japan. This highly visible anachronism reflexively reminds readers that the military force here, despite its putative claim to being a ninja (and therefore Edo) army, is modeled on more modern militaries.

The text never lets readers believe its depiction of ninja is an accurate portrayal of the past, and so never attempts to rewrite that past. The past and the present are allowed to remain separate, the discourses surrounding each that point to their inherent mutual alienness allowed to remain intact. Yet on the plane of juxtaposition the text opens up the past to the possibility of interoperability—that twenty-first-century gender equality, and its manifestations in the personnel policies of large institutions, could operate in an Edo world, even as the text acknowledges such ideology is foreign to Edo. Indeed, the ninja military is even more equitable than twenty-first-century Japanese corporations or bureaucracies.

Of course, the use of modern military uniforms is fraught with other associations as well. It is important to note here that the ninja uniforms in *Naruto* most decidedly do not resemble the uniforms of the Imperial Japanese Army, or indeed any military force of the World War II era. Instead, they very conspicuously resemble the body armor employed by modern militaries beginning in the 1980s: vests bulky from armor plates and with many pockets for storing field supplies. The text therefore summons the discourse on *recent* militaries; those of the contemporary present, certainly of the postwar. Although the world of *Naruto* is imaginary, it is certainly Japanese, so the evocation of a contemporary Japanese military force can only point to the Self Defense Forces.

However, the SDF is deeply entangled with the politics and ideology of postwar Japan. The SDF was formed as a result of the postwar constitution, which renounces Japan's right to

state belligerency and to maintain military forces. Therefore, the Self Defense Forces, as the name suggests, maintain military potential only for the defense of Japan. The governing principle of the SDF is *Senshu bōei* 専守防衛 (exclusive self-defense)—the use of military power exclusively for self-defense—which has become a deeply ingrained doctrine as well as a moral imperative. Of course there are many in Japan who object to this arrangement,¹⁶¹ but it is in general reflective of major trends in postwar philosophy and political ideology: essentially pacifist with concession to the necessity of defense. It is this tangle of associations that *Naruto* inserts into an Edo-esque world. By juxtaposing the discourse surrounding the SDF (and by extension the politics of postwar Japan) with the Edo period, the text opens up the Edo past to the possibility of interoperability with postwar political philosophy. The text shows a contemporary Japanese military force—which is not namely the SDF but heavily evokes it—functioning in an Edo world, and the people of that world functioning comfortably in its postwar ideology. Modern body armor in the Edo period is too noticeable an anachronism to ever transparently rewrite the actual history of the Edo period, and the discourses on Edo—both generic and historical—that portray it as a brutal military dictatorship quite at odds with postwar pacifism remain intact, but the possibility that despite this foreignness the Edo past could interoperate with the postwar present is created in the intertext of juxtaposed discourses. This postmodern anachronism allows the Edo period to be appropriated for modern identity formation even with the full knowledge that it was very distant indeed from twenty-first-century Japan.

¹⁶¹ Author Mishima Yukio famously committed suicide on an Ichigaya SDF base after declaiming to a gathered audience of SDF officers that “Any long-term plans for the nation a hundred years from now have been consigned to foreign countries...The fundamental issue of the nation's defense has been dodged with an opportunistic legal interpretation, and we have seen how having a military that does not use the name ‘military’ has become the source of corruption of Japanese souls and the degeneration of morality... The SDF continues to bear the dishonorable cross of a defeated nation. The SDF is not a national military, has not been accorded the foundational principles of a military, has only been given the status of a physically large police force, and even the target of its loyalty has not been made clear.” Mishima Yukio, “Mishima Yukio No ‘Geki’ Zenbun,” *Asahi Shinbun*, November 26, 1970. My translation.

2.3.3 – *Gintama*

Seibā marionetto J sets its anachronistic world in the future, while *Naruto* creates anachronism in a fantasy world. Sorachi Hideaki's 空知英秋 hit manga *Ginatama* 銀魂 (Silver soul, serialized in the magazine *Shōnen Japnu* 2003-present), however, uses alternate history to formulate its supremely anachronistic version of Edo. In this comedy manga, extraterrestrials had appeared in the skies over Edo and quickly conquered Japan twenty years before the narrative begins. In the narrative present, Japan is an occupied country, and aliens swagger through Edo's streets. However, thanks to their arrival Japan rapidly acquired advanced technology even as the cityscape remained Edo. Above the signature dirt streets and wooden buildings of Edo Japan, alien aircraft fly back and forth, and alien skyscrapers loom in the distance. Meanwhile, humans employ more recognizable technologies; cars, mopeds, cell phones, and other familiar twenty-first-century technologies—the modern artifacts of the reading present.¹⁶²

This text effectively conflates two watershed events in Japanese history: Commodore Perry's arrival in Edo Bay with a fleet of technologically advanced warships in 1854, and the Allied occupation of Japan after World War II from 1945 to 1952. The aliens show up in Edo with advanced technology just like Perry, and occupy Japan just like America did. However, this conflation of these two historical foreign incursions effectively erases the ninety years of history between them. The text deftly creates a history of Japan that moves directly from Edo to the postwar, skipping Meiji modernization and Westernization, Shōwa aggression and imperialism, the Empire of Japan's embarrassingly racist ideology vis-à-vis the rest of Asia, war crimes, and the devastation of war. Of course, this is what all the texts examined in this chapter have done: to paraphrase Ōe, the Edo period and the postwar are made to face each other over a century of darkness and interilluminate. *Gintama* simply performs this function explicitly in the diegetic space of the text, whereas the other texts perform it implicitly in the intertext. The visible anachronisms—like mopeds and cell phones—serve as a constant reminder that this

¹⁶² Sorachi Hideaki, *Gintama*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shūeisha, 2004), 6-8.

comedy narrative rests on an alternate history that completely elides the unpleasant history between Perry and McArthur. Significantly, *Gintama* does not erase the US occupation: that has become a crucial part of postwar identity, and one of the main themes of the text is finding a way for (imagined) Edo ideology to accommodate foreign occupation.

One of the overarching themes of *Gintama* is concern over the disposition of the samurai; less the samurai caste itself but more samurai philosophy and identity. The law banning swords, the *haitōrei* 廃刀令 that was passed in 1876 as part of early Meiji efforts to dissolve the Edo caste system, has been reproduced here. Without their weapons, and in a world of advanced technology, a warrior caste is clearly obsolete. However, in *Gintama* the dissolution of the samurai caste that took place in Meiji is now thrust into the twenty-first century, and Edo samurai must find a way to live with Heisei technology and postwar occupation. As the text opens onto the narrative present, the first words of the narrator are “‘A nation of samurai’ (*samurai no kuni* 侍の国)... it’s been a long time since our country was called that.”¹⁶³ Right from the start, the text signals that samurai, and specifically Japan as a nation of samurai, will be one of its major focuses. The next lines contrast the dreams of Edo samurai to the present, where “foreign” (*ikyō* 異郷) ships occupy the skies over Edo, and “foreigners” (*ijin* 異人) walk its streets.¹⁶⁴ Significantly the text here, in establishing the narrative world, does not use terms that specifically point to space aliens or extraterrestrials, but rather words that could point to terrestrial foreigners (i.e., aliens) just as easily as extraterrestrial aliens. The extraterrestrials here are clearly linked to Americans (and other foreigners) who occupied Japan, and whose aircraft still fly over Japan in the present the text was written. *Gintama* indicates that its principal concern will be the contrast between the ethics of a “nation of samurai” and a nation occupied by foreigners.

At this point, the text’s project might seem to have an alarming similarity to that other infamous project to import samurai ethics into the modern world. The samurai ethical code, *bushidō* 武士道, was used by the Imperial Japanese military in order to instill desirable

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, 8. “‘*Samurai no kuni.*’ *Bokura no kuni ga sō yobarete ita no wa ima wa mukashi no hanashi.*”

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

character in its servicemen and provide moral guidance. The *Gunjin chokuyu* 軍人勅諭 (Imperial Precepts to Soldiers and Sailors), an imperial rescript promulgated in 1882 which became the source document for Imperial Japanese military ethics, admonished soldiers to cultivate values derived from *bushidō*.¹⁶⁵ *Bushidō* and *yamato-damashii* 大和魂 (Japanese spirit) became fundamental to the identity of the Japanese military, especially the Imperial Japanese Army, even to the detriment of its ability to fight a modern war.¹⁶⁶ As World War II worsened, it was this same samurai code which was twisted to legitimate some of Japan's most notorious war crimes.¹⁶⁷ The postwar has seen sporadic attempts by nationalist groups to revive samurai ethics, *bushidō*, and *yamato-damashii* as a grand narrative and a central feature of Japanese identity. In Mishima Yukio's paean to the Imperial morality of the war years, *Yūkoku* 憂国 (Patriotism, 1960), he depicts an idealized Imperial Army officer and his wife as perfect, almost godlike beings, afforded complete certainty by their moral grounding in *bushidō* and their loyalty to the emperor. The soldier commits a perfect samurai suicide, cutting open his abdomen with no qualms. Mishima's ideal military couple has none of the uncertainty or frivolity of postwar Japanese. "Even in bed they were so terribly, solemnly serious,"¹⁶⁸ the text gushes, reflecting the fetishization of the seriousness of both the samurai and the imperial military man. Ten years later, of course, Mishima himself went on to cut open his own abdomen in samurai fashion. Even outside of explicit nationalist attempts to revive militarism and imperialism, there have been sporadic calls for a revival of samurai ethics or mentality—if only in the service of the modern businessman.¹⁶⁹ However, *Gintama* is most decidedly not engaged in a similar project to revive *bushidō* or samurai as an aspirational ideal, or at least not in any form that Mishima or IJA officers would approve of. This is because *Gintama's* samurai are themselves anachronistic.

¹⁶⁵ Robert B. Edgerton, *Warriors of the Rising Sun: A History of the Japanese Military* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1997), 323.

¹⁶⁶ Edward J. Drea, *In the Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 13.

¹⁶⁷ Edgerton, 324.

¹⁶⁸ Mishima Yukio, *Ketteiban Mishima Yukio zenshū*, vol. 20 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2002), 15. "Karera wa toko no naka de mo osoroshii hodo, genshuku na hodo majime datta."

¹⁶⁹ Gluck, "Invention," 278.

When the protagonist of *Gintama*, Gintoki, is first introduced he is shown in a head-to-toe full profile that is not bounded by panels, but is rather layered over top of three panels to take up the whole height of the page. By placing it not only outside of, but also over top of the bounded boxes of the narrative the text freights Gintoki's profile with importance, signaling that his appearance is significant. And that appearance is, at a glance, anachronistic. He wears a high-collared short-sleeved shirt, pants, and boots (Western clothes), visible because the kimono (Japanese clothes) he wears over them has been removed from the right shoulder to free up his sword arm. Over the kimono he wears a belt (Western) to hold it closed, rather than a Japanese sash or cord. The outfit is completed by motorcycle goggles, a distinctly modern accessory.¹⁷⁰ The appearance of this text's principal samurai is a layering and intertwining of past and present. The Japanese clothing and the wooden sword he is also holding summon the discourse on Edo period samurai, while the modern clothing and motorcycle goggles summon the discourse on postwar Japan,¹⁷¹ juxtaposing them in an absurd palimpsest of past and present. In thus introducing the protagonist, the text immediately implies that he is not a (stereo)typical Edo samurai, but rather some sort of new breed formed by the intersection of Edo with the postwar present.

The text quickly distances Gintoki from samurai characteristics. Far from the ideal samurai who was supposed to lead a spare and Spartan life ("supposed to" being the operative phrase, of course), Gintoki is introduced eating a chocolate parfait and is constantly eating sweets. Far from possessing samurai *makoto* 誠 (sincerity) and honesty, shortly after he is introduced Gintoki flees from a fight, planting his wooden sword on someone else so that the police go after that person instead.¹⁷² Far from serious and responsible, Gintoki enjoys reading *Shōnen Jump*, a delicious bit of anachronistic self-reference that juxtaposes the received discourse on samurai—the fetishized seriousness mentioned above, a role model for the wartime generation—and juxtaposes it with the discourse on contemporary manga readers—

¹⁷⁰ Sorachi, 14.

¹⁷¹ Because of the short-sleeved shirt—plus Gintoki's unkempt hair—the image does not evoke an Imperial Japanese soldier or sailor (which might be the first thing that comes to mind based on the description of a booted and belted samurai), but rather a later era with laxer standards of appearance.

¹⁷² *ibid.*, 18.

unserious and vaguely countercultural—and creates an intertext that superimposes them.¹⁷³ This superimposition—the *Jump*-reading samurai—is too absurd to allow one image to overwrite the other; it cannot rewrite the past, and both the discourse on samurai and the discourse on manga readers are allowed to remain distinct, but in that moment of superimposition the text creates the possibility that the two are interoperable. Note this is quite a different strategy from texts that try to claim that the Edo period had exact equivalents for manga, and therefore was just like the present. Such texts elide rather than highlight the absurdity of the juxtaposition.

Far from possessing samurai dignity, Gintoki makes his living (barely) at a *yorozuya* 万事屋 (“jack-of-all-trades store,” or more pointedly a “do-anything store”), where he sells his samurai skills to anyone willing to pay for them, for any task, no matter how petty or beneath the perceived station of a samurai. This new form of samurai employment, created by the anachronistic world that mixes postwar peace and late capitalism with Edo samurai, effectively commercializes and commodifies the samurai. His preferred means of transportation on these jobs is a moped, the mode of choice for penurious youth and restaurant delivery part-timers. This highly visible anachronism juxtaposes samurai with twenty-first-century youth stringing together a living from a series of part-time jobs, the so-called *furītā* フリーター.¹⁷⁴ Although the juxtaposition highlights its own absurdity by using a visibly anachronistic moped, it nonetheless creates a moment of possibility that *furītā* culture and samurai ethics might be interoperable, perhaps suggesting (absurdly) an interoperability between *furītā* and samurai *rōnin* 浪人 (the masterless samurai romantically imagined in popular movies and novels).

Despite shedding nearly all the supposed characteristics of the samurai, especially those that Imperial Japanese military revered, Gintoki uses his samurai strength to subvert and resist the power of the (foreigner) aliens. Upon his introduction he gets into an altercation with a group of aliens who are using Japan’s subordinate status to cause trouble in a restaurant and

¹⁷³ *ibid.*, 88.

¹⁷⁴ At one point the word *furītā* is even explicitly used. *ibid.*, 62.

humiliate its workers.¹⁷⁵ The aliens all wear some kind of uniform, strongly suggesting contemporary interactions with US military personnel. Gintoki beats the aliens with his wooden sword, a symbol of the samurai, or at least as much of the symbol as is allowed under this foreign occupation. Later, a rich alien loan shark comes to collect the mortgage on the bankrupt family dojo of another character, Shinpachi. Unable to pay, Shinpachi's sister is taken to work in the alien's flying *no-pan shabu-shabu* restaurant,¹⁷⁶ a slightly sanitized but still obvious reference to the sexual appropriation of Japanese women by foreign men through prostitution or otherwise in the postwar. Gintoki again intervenes, eventually bringing down the entire flying restaurant by striking its power core with his wooden sword.¹⁷⁷ He is no nationalist or xenophobe, however. He accepts an alien (a foreigner) as an employee in his business, and calls a group of former samurai explicitly devoted to expelling foreigners and restoring Japan to a nation of samurai "terrorists."¹⁷⁸ When an alien mocks Japanese samurai for their inability to protect the nation, Gintoki responds "The nation? ... You can have it. I have my hands full protecting what's right in front of me."¹⁷⁹ Quite opposite from Imperial soldiers and sailors, who invoked the ethos of the samurai in pursuit of defending and securing the interests of the nation, Gintoki has no use for the nation. His samurai skills are rather used for more humanistic ends, defending those he cares about, his friends and family. The alien calls this philosophy a "miserly *bushidō*," (*shimittareta bushido* しみったれた武士道)¹⁸⁰ and from the perspective of Imperial Japanese ideology he is right; Gintoki only extends his protection to his immediate world, not the nation as a whole. But this is a samurai that is interoperable with the Heisei era, and so the target of his aegis has shifted from the discredited transcendental to the humanistic. Later, he declares "I don't care one whit if the government is destroyed or the nation is destroyed! I'm just going to keep living with my head held high until my body gives out!"¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 10-13.

¹⁷⁶ An icon of male-centric, sexualized entertainment culture, the main draw of these *shabu-shabu* restaurants was the waitresses who wore short skirts without underwear.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.*, 55-56.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.*, 147.

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, 54. "Kuni da...? Kurete yaru yo, nna mon. Kochi tora me no mae no mon mamoru no ni teippai da."

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *ibid.*, 80-81. "Bakufu ga horobō ga kuni ga horobō ga kankei nai mon ne! Ore wa jibun no nikutai ga horobu made sesuji nobashite ikite ku dake yo!"

Again, the nation means nothing to Gintoki as an entity worthy of protection. But note here the complete inversion of the famous imperial admonition in the *Gunjin chokuyu* 軍人勅諭 (imperial instructions for military men) that “duty is weightier than a mountain, while death is lighter than a feather.”¹⁸² This anachronistic samurai, interoperable with the Heisei present, recognizes no duty—or indeed even a nation to which he might have duty—but fights for humanistic values.

Of course, these anachronisms summon up the cultural discourses on the past and juxtapose it with those on the present. In this case, the text summons the *modern* discourse on samurai and *bushidō*, constructed in Meiji and used heavily in the prewar and wartime state’s construction of Japanese identity.¹⁸³ Actual Edo samurai, of course, owed their loyalty to their *daimyō*, the shogun, or other feudal superiors, and might well have shared Gintoki’s lack of concern for the fate of the nation (although not his humanistic values), the “nation” as an ideological identity apparatus not even having been invented yet. They would have been far more concerned with the disposition of their *han* 藩 (feudal domain). However, the text does not evoke and open up Edo-contemporary discourse on samurai so much as it does the modern discourse which constructed samurai as the model of Japaneseness, and their *bushidō* as morality for the Imperial Japanese military, emphasizing loyalty to and self-sacrifice for the nation and emperor. It is this discourse on samurai that the text playfully opens up and destabilizes with its anachronisms.

Ultimately Gintoki is too absurdly anachronistic—with his moped, parfaits, and manga—to overwrite the fraught discourse on Edo samurai in order to appropriate them for the Heisei present. Nonetheless, the figure he cuts of the anachronistic samurai, formed at the juxtaposition of discourses, opens up that discourse on Edo samurai to the possibility of interoperability: of course, the reader understands that samurai ideology (at least as it was imagined in the modern period) was completely foreign to the Heisei present, but the text

¹⁸² Ryūsaku Tsunoda, Wm. Theodore de Bary, and Donald Keene, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), 706.

¹⁸³ For a discussion of the construction of *bushidō* in modern Japan, see Oleg Benesch, *Inventing the Way of the Samurai: Nationalism, Internationalism, and Bushido in Modern Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

creates the momentary possibility—however absurd—that there might have been a way for a (hypothetical) samurai to operate within the Heisei value system. Upon their first meeting, Shinpachi remarks that Gintoki is “too crude for a samurai, but the look in his eyes is too forthright for a *chinpira* チンピラ (thug).”¹⁸⁴ This is perhaps the crystallization of Gintoki’s character: he is neither a duty-bound Edo samurai, nor an honorless modern *chinpira*, but something between them, an anachronistically formed new breed that can operate in the moped-filled streets of modern Japan like a *chinpira* and is not locked into antiquated notions of duty to nation, but at the same time will fight selflessly like an ideal(ized) Edo samurai to protect friends and resist ongoing foreign humiliations. Gintoki tells a nationalist devoted to returning Japan to a nation of samurai that that battle ended long ago, and that he should just let it go.¹⁸⁵ The text’s project, in its idealization of Gintoki, is not to rehabilitate samurai ethics as a tool for social control in the present (Gintoki even explicitly rejects *bushidō* as an anti-humanist ideology that just gets people killed¹⁸⁶), nor to revive the grand narratives of imperial Japan, nor even to flatter Japanese pride by finding equivalencies between samurai and modern social customs. Rather, it highlights the absurdity of such manipulations of history through its highly visible, noticeable anachronisms. At the same time, however, it creates a counterfactual interoperability between Edo samurai and the postwar present, in the form of a samurai who reads manga and believes in no grand narratives. However improbable, this juxtaposition of discourses allows the text to reclaim the much-abused discourse on samurai from Imperial history—superimposing Edo on Heisei while completely deleting Shōwa militarism—and create a plane where it can be used instead as a source of identity for twenty-first-century Japan.¹⁸⁷ It creates the possibility for a Japanese identity that accommodates both samurai strength and twenty-first-century humanistic ideology and consumer culture.

¹⁸⁴ Sorachi, 16. “*Samurai to iu ni wa amari ni ararashiku, shikashi chinpira to iu ni wa amari ni massuguna me o shita otoko datta.*”

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, 154.

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.*, 163.

¹⁸⁷ Of course, it still summons the Imperial discourse on samurai in order to contest it. Like much postmodern fiction, the text can never *escape* modern history even as it attempts to dismantle it.

2.3.4 – *Samurai Chanpurū*

In the works examined so far anachronistic worlds have been created by taking Edo outside of history: placing it in the future, a fantasy world, or an alternate timeline. But the final work examined here performs its anachronistic play within Edo-in-history. Director Watanabe Shin'ichirō's 渡辺信一郎 television comedic drama anime *Samurai Chanpurū* サムライチャンプルー (2004) takes place sometime during the seventeenth century, sometimes even including historical figures, yet it is an anachronistic tour de force, with sunglasses, Mohawks, graffiti, bars, and above all hip-hop, inserted into the Edo past. The text signals its playful irreverence for such things as historical discourse with its very title. Having read up to “samurai chan-” the reader naturally expects the completed phrase to be “samurai *chanbara*,” or “samurai sword fight,” one of the classic tropes in popular fiction set in the Edo period. But this expectation is betrayed with “chanpurū” instead. Chanpurū is the name of a famous Okinawan stir-fry dish, which can include any number of components thrown together and mixed up. Before the narrative even begins, it has signaled that it will betray conventional expectations and instead offer an irreverent mixture of tropes.

The text playfully draws attention to its own anachronism. It begins *in medias res* in the sixteenth century, with two protagonists apparently about to be executed as criminals. An intertitle is then displayed with the text “one day earlier,”¹⁸⁸ upon which it cuts to a present-day street scene, complete with a train, cars, graffiti-strewn concrete architecture, and in the foreground a young man dancing to music on his headphones as he strolls by. Then a second intertitle comes up simply adding an insistent exclamation mark to the previous statement: “one day earlier!” There is then a “rewind” effect, as the scene cycles backwards through time: the young man with headphones walks backwards out of the scene, which then flows into a brief view of that same street in the Meiji (or perhaps Taishō) era, with a wooden station building, unpaved streets, and old-fashioned clothes. The rewind continues to the same street in late Edo, with passersby wearing characteristic Edo clothing and Japanese buildings built up

¹⁸⁸ Watanabe Shin'ichirō, *Samurai Chanpurū* (Manglobe, 2011), Ep. 1. “*Ichinichi mae*”

in the background, before finally flowing into the narrative present, early Edo, where there is only a path through an open field. Here the text signals the essence of its anachronistic approach from the outset. The “one day earlier” of the narrating instance and the “one day earlier” of the narrated moment are deliberately, slyly confused. This is the text’s historical stance throughout the narrative, confusing the Edo narrative present with the Heisei reading present in absurd ways. Yet, the rewind effect illustrates a historical connection between the portrayed past and the present. It is not an alternate history, but actual history that eventually leads to the present in smooth continuity. The text here acknowledges the history that leads from the Edo to Heisei—it is the history we all know and understand (and sometimes loathe), and that history will not be rewritten. The text will juxtapose eras, but received history will remain as an inviolate discourse. That history will merely be set aside for a moment to playfully confuse the two eras at either end of the rewind. And the text is rife with anachronisms that conflate the narrative present of early Edo and the reading present of Heisei. One of the two male protagonists always wears shorts, the other always wears glasses.¹⁸⁹ As Amy Fitzgerald notes, the latter anachronistically satisfies the anime convention of a quiet, stoic character wearing glasses.¹⁹⁰ A classic *moe yōso* (to use Azuma’s term), this convention has here been extracted from the database and mixed with the database element of the Edo period and samurai. These are persistent anachronistic elements, always injecting an alien element of discomfort in this historical narrative that ensures it is never received as a transparent representation of the past. Other characters wear sunglasses, have dyed Mohawks, or spray graffiti (the distinctly modern variety).

Despite the title, the text is largely unconcerned with samurai; that is to say it is unconcerned with samurai officialdom, with official samurai discourses, or with samurai ethics. Unlike *Gintama*, it is not especially concerned with the modern disposition of samurai. One protagonist, Jin 仁, has samurai status, but is a penniless outcast *rōnin* (masterless samurai). Aside from him, the only samurai to make an appearance are meddlesome, pompous shogunal

¹⁸⁹ While some spectacles had made their way to Japan by the seventeenth century, the semi-rimless glasses worn here are unmistakably modern and anachronistic.

¹⁹⁰ Amy Fitzgerald, “‘In the Way of the Samurai:’ Difference and Connection in Samurai Champloo,” *Virginia Review of Asian Studies* 10 (2008): 174.

officials or corrupt warriors who do their bidding. Samurai are an officious manifestation of the law, and are rarely portrayed positively. Instead, the text is very much concerned with the margins of society, with marginal, disaffected, or disenfranchised minorities and subgroups. One protagonist, Mugen 無幻, is a Ryukyuan. In the course of their journey from Edo to Nagasaki, the three protagonists—Mugen, Jin (a disenfranchised samurai), and Fū 風 (an orphaned teenage girl)—encounter a man with a mental disability, indentured prostitutes, a homosexual European, an Ainu man, a blind woman, and Christians, all of whom are depicted sympathetically. When the protagonists, with their highly visible anachronistic accoutrements, help these marginalized people, the text signals that their humane treatment of disaffected people is ultimately as anachronistic as their clothing, a result of Heisei moral stances¹⁹¹ not likely or—in the case of Europeans and Christians—even legally possible in the Edo period. Yet at the same time, it shows the protagonists (who are naturally both strong and bold enough to defy shogunal authorities) acting with Heisei compassion towards the dispossessed in a way that is portrayed as diegetically natural. The text summons the historical discourse about the margins of Edo society and juxtaposes it with the discourse on modern, postwar morality heavily informed by Meiji thinkers, the European Enlightenment, and postwar democracy and liberalism, and creates the possibility of interoperability. Mugen, promised wealth and power by a yakuza boss who tyrannizes his town and entraps women into prostitution, rejects the proposal, saying “This power you’re talking about, it’s the power to rule other people? ... I have no interest in that, I don’t like ruling or being ruled.”¹⁹² Here the text inserts postmodern suspicion of the will to power into the past as well, showing it to be interoperable with Edo. The protagonists are too anachronistic to write a moral and social stance so compatible with Heisei sensibilities into the discourse on the past, but the text creates the possibility that there is a way for Heisei morality to operate in the past, and that the past could accommodate that morality (even if the corrupt instruments of power could not), opening up Edo as a source of Heisei identity. Again, the text creates the momentary possibility—on the plane of

¹⁹¹ Of course, these are all relatively progressive moral stances, certainly not reflective of every element of society. Nonetheless, they are unmistakably Heisei.

¹⁹² Watanabe, ep. 4. “*Anta no iu chikaratte na, tanin o shihai suru tame no chikara ka... sonna mon ni kyōmi nee. Shihaisun no mo saren no mo gomen da.*” Quoted in Fitzgerald, 175.

counterfactual anachronistic juxtaposition—that Edoites would have understood and even embraced Heisei morality and Heisei values, allowing Edo to become a source of moral tradition and identity for Heisei Japanese readers, even as the text never lets viewers forget that this is a fiction and the actual historical Edo was quite different.

By far *Samurai Chanpurū*'s most noteworthy anachronism is its repeated and conspicuous insertion of contemporary hip-hop into the Edo past. The opening sequence is set to a hip-hop song, and the title screen displays the title on a vinyl record, as if the narrative is actually recorded on that medium so central to hip-hop performance. The background music is frequently hip-hop, and sometimes hip-hop itself anachronistically makes its way into the diegetic space. At one point the protagonists encounter a man wearing a *yankī* ヤンキー (rebellious youth) hairstyle, who is a caricature of boastful youthful ambition. He proclaims he is going to become *biggu* ビッグ (big) one day, an anachronistic use of language that signals his ambitions do not belong in this era; indeed, he claims he will one day challenge the Tokugawa shogun himself. More importantly, in order to inflate his own importance he has one of his hangers-on beatbox¹⁹³ into a “microphone” (the end of a sword hilt) every time he makes an appearance.¹⁹⁴ This is, of course, patently absurd, and precisely because of that absurdity it creates a very successful comic effect. However, it also summons the discourse on contemporary hip-hop and juxtaposes it with the discourse on the Edo period. Neither discourse is overwritten, as the anachronism is too obviously counterfactual to create the impression that hip-hop actually existed in the seventeenth century. As Fitzgerald has noted, “The worlds of hip-hop and samurai do not override one another—they *blend*.”¹⁹⁵ However, this blending reflexively maintains the mutual foreignness of its two component elements: they are not allowed to transparently merge into a single narrative, not a dialectic but a dialogic. But nonetheless the intertext of this juxtaposition suggests the possibility that hip-hop and the Edo period might be somehow interoperable. Ian Condry notes that Japanese hip-hop is an outlet for disaffected youth unwilling or unable to conform to mainstream culture's hegemonic

¹⁹³ The hip-hop technique of vocally imitating various percussion instruments.

¹⁹⁴ Watanabe, ep. 8.

¹⁹⁵ Fitzgerald, 172. Emphasis in original.

norms—the school-to-salaryman pipeline. Hip-hop serves as a subversive alternate culture that rejects and critiques dominant cultural narratives. Condry writes that “Japanese hip-hop can be seen as a sphere of public debate, oriented towards youth... [it] functions as part of a public debate questioning mainstream political values.”¹⁹⁶ By anachronistically juxtaposing hip-hop with the discourse on the Edo period, *Samurai Chanpurū* creates a possibility—absurd and counterfactual, only in the realm of intertext—that the two are interoperable, opening Edo as a source of identity for hip-hop youth. The text transgressively appropriates the source material of the dominant culture’s narratives of Japaneseness (the samurai as Japaneseness, *ie* society as Japaneseness, etc., all sourced from the Edo period) and turns it to its own ends, inserting hip-hop culture into the deep past of cultural identity. Of course, everyone knows this is not possible, and the postmodern anachronism does not try to warp the past to meet the needs of the present. Rather it playfully juxtaposes the two, allowing the possibility of interoperability to suggest itself.

In a related anachronism, Jin, the down-and-out samurai, calls upon an old dojo master he is acquainted with, only to find that he has died. Rather than inherit his dojo and continue his tradition, his two sons have let the building fall into ruin, and instead have taken up graffiti as their new passion. Although there was historically graffiti in the Edo period, the graffiti depicted here is the unmistakably modern stylized word art of the present day. The text literally transcribes postwar youth culture onto Edo spaces, but again the anachronistic nature of this transcription is too obvious to rewrite the Edo discourse. When Jin questions the sons’ unfilial behavior, they respond “This isn’t the kind of era where people inherit [their fathers’] house or art.”¹⁹⁷ Of course, the seventeenth century was very much such an era; this is clearly an anachronistic reference to the present. The two sons (who have anachronistic body piercings that solidify their image as modern and countercultural) can be taken as representative of contemporary youth who have no desire to follow in their parents’ footsteps in the employment system that ensured prosperity for the previous generations. However, the sons

¹⁹⁶ Ian Condry, *Hip-Hop Japan: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 97-98.

¹⁹⁷ Watanabe, ep. 18. “*Sōiu ie toka michi toka tsugu jidai janē sa.*”

have “put everything we have” (“*inochi kaketen*” 命かけてん) into graffiti, which they believe make it “the same as dad’s art of the sword” (“*oyaji no ken no michi to kawanne*” 親父の剣の道と変わんね). Since the brothers are engaged in an intractable rivalry, and neither has the sword skill to settle their differences in a duel, Jin accepts a graffiti competition in place of a sword competition (“*ken ni kawaru mono*” 剣に代わるもの). The two strive to tag ever more difficult or outrageous places, finally defacing Hiroshima castle itself. Jin explains this is “their own brand of revenge” (“*yatsura nari no fukushū*” 奴らなりの復讐) against the daimyō that forced their father to commit suicide.¹⁹⁸

This is an excellent anachronistic juxtaposition of the discourse on samurai and the discourse on contemporary hip-hop culture. The samurai’s almost mystical (or at least mysticized) devotion to the art or way (*michi* 道) of the sword is juxtaposed with contemporary youth devotion to the art of graffiti. Even Jin, a more conventional samurai, agrees that graffiti can be a suitable replacement for the sword. Samurai duels, mythologized extensively in drama, novels, manga, television, and movies, are juxtaposed with graffiti competitions. And the famous samurai devotion to pursue a vendetta to the ends of the earth is transposed onto the brothers’ tagging of the daimyō’s castle—significantly the castle of the daimyō who caused their father to kill himself, evoking the well-known *Chūshingura* 忠臣蔵 (47 Samurai) revenge story. Of course, it is absurd that Edo samurai would accept graffiti as equivalent to or a replacement for their swords, or tagging as a replacement for their bloody vendettas. While the text draws these equivalencies between samurai and contemporary countercultural youth, the blatant, visually obvious anachronism of modern word art in the Edo world acknowledges and foregrounds their absurdity: graffiti cannot be transparently written into the Edo past. Yet the juxtaposition of graffiti and hip-hop culture with the various discourses on samurai creates an intertextual possibility of interoperability: that although these two things are obviously foreign, there might be a way for them to operate with each other. By doing so *Samurai Chanpurū* claims Edo as a source for contemporary countercultural identity. Again, the text subversively claims (even as it unabashedly acknowledges the absurdity of its claim) the revered icon of the

¹⁹⁸ Fitzgerald also discusses this scene, 178.

most conservative strain of the dominant culture—the samurai—and deploys it instead as a source of identity for the counterculture. *Samurai Chanpurū*'s irreverent play with history is comic, farcical, and preposterous, but its postmodern anachronisms are very much accomplishing cultural work.

In his discussion of *Seibā marionetto J*, Azuma suggests that this anachronistic play is primarily concerned with avoiding Western incursions into Japanese history, namely Meiji modernization and the postwar occupation (the two severings of Japanese cultural traditions he mentions). This may be true, but these are certainly not the only unsavory episodes in modern Japanese history. Furthermore *Gintama*, at least, specifically recreates those moments of foreign invasion and occupation. It is clear that by creating anachronistic worlds that juxtapose Edo with Heisei, these works evade not only foreign incursion, but the entirety of Meiji - Taishō - Shōwa modern history. The narrative that leads from Edo to Heisei is ignored, compressed into a series of allusions, and the two eras are allowed to face each other without the embarrassing history between them: Japan's imperialism, its wars, its racist ideologies, the massacres in Chinese cities and mistreatment of prisoners, use of comfort women, etc., are all set aside. Set aside but not, it bears mentioning, deleted: postmodern anachronism reflexively signals its own impossibility, and so the reader is always aware that there is a fraught narrative that leads from Edo to Heisei that the text simply puts aside for a moment in order to indulge in the pleasure of a language game that creates new associations. Azuma's "database animals" enjoy the pleasure of disparate elements being extracted from the database and put together in unlikely combinations, but the other elements—those labeled Meiji - Taishō - Shōwa—are still present in the database, and everyone understands this. Nonetheless, this play, acknowledged by everyone as absurd and ahistorical (and all the more entertaining for it) shows these two juxtaposed eras interacting in a way that is diegetically natural and comfortable, even if the reader feels discomfort at this superimposition. Therefore, the intertext of these texts' juxtaposition of eras suggests interoperability between Edo and Heisei, creating the possibility that—although these are two distinct and very different elements of the

database—there might be some level at which they can interact with each other after all, that modern Japanese could operate in the very foreign logic of Edo, and vice-versa. This in turn, as Azuma suggests, allows Edo to become a source of postwar, postmodern, late-capitalist Japanese identity without the embarrassing narrative history that leads from one to the other. Of course, it remains to be seen whether an ephemeral moment created in an intertext can be a suitable source of identity: certainly we cannot imagine someone like Mishima being satisfied with such a source of identity. Identity typically gravitates towards grand narratives, which postmodern anachronism most decidedly does not provide. However, perhaps the appearance of these anachronistic works is precisely driven by a desire for identity from postmodern subjects, naturally suspicious of grand narratives and modernity's manipulations of history, and trained to find as much meaning in textual juxtaposition and play as in narrative itself.

CHAPTER 3: ANACHRONISM IN EDO TEXT AND THEATRE

3.1 – Postmodernism and History in the Edo Period

The Edo period (1600-1868) was a long period of relative peace and prosperity, certainly not unrelieved but vastly more stable than the preceding century or more of constant warfare between feudal domains. This stability was accompanied by an explosion in literacy and cultural production. This period in Japanese history is perhaps best known for its policy of enforced isolationism (*sakoku* 鎖国), when trade with the West was only a bare trickle that flowed through the Dutch mission on Dejima, an artificial island in Nagasaki harbor that was the only place Western ships or Westerners were allowed to reside or land ships. This hermitism in the middle of the heyday of Western colonialism has both fascinated the West and borne the censure of Meiji reformers who blamed it for Japan falling behind the West technologically. However, despite the undeniable technological gap that opened up between Japan and the West during this period, Edo was hardly an era of stagnation. Intercourse with the West, though restricted, was never as closed as is often imagined. There was sufficient trade and importation of foreign goods that, Timon Screech argues, people in the large cities were familiar with a large range of Western artifacts, and knew the look and feel of foreign goods.¹⁹⁹ Western books were also imported, and Western medicine and science were disseminated throughout Japan.²⁰⁰ Apart from intercourse with the West, Japan enjoyed a high volume of trade with the rest of Asia, especially with the Ryūkyūs and Korea through the Satsuma and Tsushima domains, respectively. This trade exceeded the volume of trade with the Dutch (which was always small in economic terms, if not in cultural impact). Despite the shogunate's overt proscription on Japanese going abroad (or at least returning), there was regular repatriation of seamen involved in the substantial overseas trade.²⁰¹ Japanese were also

¹⁹⁹ Timon Screech, *The Lens within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Later Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 7-8.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁰¹ Ronald P. Toby, "Reopening the Question of Sakoku: Diplomacy in the Legitimation of the Tokugawa Bakufu," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 3, no. 2 (1977): 325-6.

involved in hybrid, multinational inter-Asian maritime networks of trade and piracy, sometimes with the tacit support of the shogunate.²⁰²

More importantly for the present study, the Edo period saw a cultural flowering and gave birth to a vibrant popular culture. Unlike the weak Ashikaga shogunate it replaced, the Tokugawa shogunate exercised considerable control over the *daimyō* (feudal lords), bringing an end to the century of internecine warfare that had destabilized Japan in the sixteenth century. Of course, feudal politics continued apace, but the Tokugawa system contained rivalries between the domains or conflict between the domains and the shogunate to the level of politics much more (if not totally) successfully, forestalling the widespread civil war that had plagued previous eras. Not surprisingly, this long period of stability proved conducive to economic prosperity. Scholars estimate that the area of land under cultivation doubled during the early Edo period, and new technology and agricultural investment (such as irrigation projects) increased the productivity of that land.²⁰³ Accordingly, the population of Japan more than doubled during the first half of the Edo period.²⁰⁴ This surplus productivity allowed the surplus population to migrate to the cities—an explosion in urbanization. These new urbanites took up trades or provided labor for various workshops and enterprises, developing the urban economy and growing cities: the city of Edo boasted over one million people by the early eighteenth century. As literacy spread among these new urbanites (as much as 50 to 60 percent of the population was literate by the end of the nineteenth century),²⁰⁵ textual production ballooned, enabled by woodblock printing technology, and cultural products reached even the illiterate through the popular puppet and kabuki theaters.

²⁰² Xing Hang, “The Shogun’s Chinese Partners: The Alliance between Tokugawa Japan and the Zheng Family in Seventeenth-Century Maritime East Asia,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 75, no. 1 (February 2016): 111–136.

²⁰³ Nobuhiko Nakai and James L. McClain, “Commercial Change and Urban Growth in Early Modern Japan,” in *The Cambridge History of Japan: Volume 4, Early Modern Japan*, ed. John Whitney Hall (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 538.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 539.

²⁰⁵ This is, of course, an estimate, and the definition of literacy might not be equivalent to modern standards. Nonetheless, it is clear literacy in Japan was quite high for a pre-industrial nation. Kazuko Hioki, “Japanese Printed Books of the Edo Period (1603-1867): History and Characteristics of Block-Printed Books,” *Journal of the Institute of Conservation* 32, no. 1 (March 2009): 80.

This relative political stability was bought in part by a shogunal policy of *sankin kōtai* 参勤交代 (alternate attendance), requiring daimyō to spend every other year in Edo under the shogun's watchful eye to prevent them from consolidating military strength in their domains. A side effect of this policy was that processions of samurai were constantly traveling throughout Japan—and spending lavish amounts of money on travel—leading to the development of roads and waterways, as well as roadside inns and waystations to serve travelers. The road barriers managed by each domain meant that travel could not be free, but it did become much easier during this period. The shogunate also tried to enforce social stability by freezing society into four castes: the ruling samurai, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants. These castes were supposed to be hereditary, the better to perpetuate the political and social stability the Tokugawa had achieved at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Of course, as with the farmers who moved to the city to take up trades, these caste boundaries could be and were transgressed.

The result of this economic prosperity, urbanization, expanded literacy, and widely available print technology was a flourishing and vibrant popular culture with recognizable similarities to our own. Authors wrote a wide variety of books: everything from non-fiction scholarly treatises and histories, to poetry, to dramatic prose fiction, to irreverent parody, to books of jokes, to fashion guides, and more. Star actors played stories both comic and tragic on stage in front of throngs of adoring fans. This popular culture was also highly intertextual: classical narratives were constantly reworked, while pastiche and parody were major forms. It is no surprise that within this popular culture we find many examples of postmodern anachronism. Here, however, it is necessary to take a step back and examine the applicability of postmodern theory to the Edo period. After all, if I inscribe contemporary cultural theory into the Edo period, I might well be accused of attempting to overwrite the Edo past: in other words, of engaging in (modern) anachronism myself.

Certainly Edo texts contain many recognizable features of culture in our own postmodern era, such as decentering, a penchant for pastiche and parody, and intertextual play. These apparent similarities have resulted in no small volume of ink spilled on the topic of

whether or not the Edo period was, in fact, postmodern. As Carol Gluck notes, “during the 1980s when the so-called Edo boom hit... Tokugawa times received more attention—and more hype—than ever before... now [Edo] became a space of postmodern freedom, play, and infinite *baraechii* (variety).”²⁰⁶ The changes in successive editions of Etō Jun’s 江藤淳 book *Kindai izen* 近代以前 (Before the modern) are a study in the changing attitudes on Edo during the 1980s: in the original 1966 preface he states his purpose is to find a “*tokusei*” 特性 (special characteristic)—we might say essence—that is continuous across Japanese literature, created by the uniqueness of the Japanese language regardless of foreign influence,²⁰⁷ an explicit search for “*renzoku*” 連続 (continuity).²⁰⁸ However, in his 1985 preface to a new edition, he finds that Edo is entirely unique, writing that there were no significant contributions to the body of Japanese literature for thirty to sixty years after the Battle of Sekigahara 関ヶ原 (1600, the battle that solidified Tokugawa rule of Japan) and that serious literary production did not take off again until well into the Edo period, which must be because the political, social, and economic changes engendered by Sekigahara were unprecedentedly deep and broad: he now argues for radical discontinuity.²⁰⁹ In one text, Edo literature has gone from continuous with Japanese tradition to an entirely new and unique space. Although Etō was not one of the group of scholars and essayists that led the reconsideration of the Edo period in the 1980s, he seems to have been influenced by the changing discourse on Edo during that time, which began to posit it as a postmodern space of play more akin to the present day than continuous with the medieval past.

As Gluck notes, the height, although certainly not the end, of the Edo-as-postmodern discourse is located in the 1980s, within the context of a larger discussion on postmodernism in Japan. Azuma Hiroki dismisses such theories as symptomatic of Japan’s 1980s narcissism:

As a few critics at the time have already pointed out, this postmodernism fad was connected to the narcissism that permeated Japanese society in the

²⁰⁶ Carol Gluck, “The Invention of Edo,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 273.

²⁰⁷ Etō Jun, *Kindai izen* (Tokyo: Bungei Shunjū, 1985), 19.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-5.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

1980s. The discourse on postmodernism popular in Japan at the time was unique in the way it deliberately confused and intermingled questions over what encompassed “postmodernism” and what encompassed “Japaneseness.”

The claim endorsed by postmodernists at the time went something like this: Postmodernization refers to a process that occurs after modernity. However, Japan was never completely modernized in the first place. Until now this had been considered a defect; but as we progress to a new stage of world history from modernity to postmodernity, it rather becomes a benefit, because this nation, never fully modernized, is easily able to embrace the process of postmodernization... In this way Japan will emerge in the twentieth century as a leading nation...²¹⁰

In this formulation, finding postmodernism in the Edo period was just a way to satisfy 1980s narcissism, as it fit a narrative of the next stage of history (postmodernism) already existing in the unique Japanese past, a past which Japan had never totally shed in the incomplete modernization process, uniquely positioning Japan to be at the forefront of history. Of course, this is an extremely problematic stance to take vis-à-vis history. As Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian note, “when the postmodern ‘scene’ in Japan is seen as merely another way to express Japan’s cultural uniqueness in order to explain its superiority to the West, the discourse on the postmodern can never hope to be anything more than an inexpertly concealed attempt to cover up the aporias that dogged the earlier modernist discourse.”²¹¹

However, while the social atmosphere of the 1980s may well have influenced academic theories about Edo, not every argument can be easily dismissed as an apologia for Japanese superiority. Many scholars have formulated cogent arguments for considering the Edo period as postmodern. For example, the influential theorist Karatani Kōjin writes:

At the end of the seventeenth century, Itō Jinsai, a scholar with origins in the merchant class, undertook an interpretation of Confucian texts in order to criticize the rationalism (or logocentrism) of neo-Confucianism.²¹² Itō had no nationalistic pretensions; his goal was rather to affirm the universality of the

²¹⁰ Azuma Hiroki, *Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals*, trans. Jonathan E. Abel (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 17.

²¹¹ Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, “Introduction,” in *Postmodernism and Japan*, ed. Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), xvi-xvii.

²¹² Itō Jinsai’s principal stance was challenging the Neo-Confucian emphasis on rational principle by using human emotion (*ninjō*) as a way to discover and exercise virtue.

texts of Confucius. He focused his critique on Zen-like thought emanating from individual awareness. What Itō emphasized was the exteriority of language. Thus, in the eighteenth century, Japanese thought took the form of a critique of philosophy, that is, a hermeneutics. This critique of *ri* (reason, principle, etc.) was then taken up in the second half of the eighteenth century by Motoori Norinaga, who became the first to reject Buddhist, Confucian and Taoist texts in favor of a critique of rationalism based on an interpretation of ancient Japanese texts like the *Tale of Genji* and the *Records of ancient matters (Kojiki)*... The Japanese nineteenth century is distinguished, then, by the fact that, as it begins, the deconstruction of *ri* is already accomplished. It is therefore impossible to consider the nineteenth century simply as a premodern era. What stubbornly resisted the “modernization” of Japanese thought and literature in the twentieth century was not simply a premodern sensibility but a mode of thought which in some senses had already transcended the modern... A similar situation prevails in the Japan of the 1980s.²¹³

Published as it was in 1987, this is perhaps an example of Japan’s 1980s narcissism that Azuma warns against, particularly the assumption that Japanese thought and literature somehow resisted modernization at all. Nevertheless Karatani’s point about the development of a hermeneutics in the Edo period that deconstructed reason—more similar to postmodernism than pre-modern thought—is salient and hard to dismiss.

Noguchi Takehiko 野口武彦, while he declares that “Edo is premodern no matter how much we whine and cry,” in the next breath notes that:

If we take the “modern (*kindai*)” as a single “system” disconnected from social structures, or perhaps as a system that permeates the dominant world principles, the Edo period (*kinsei*) and Meiji onward (so-called *kindai*) are the same in that respect. In the limited sense that it had some sort of *eternally pragmatic* thought process, a kind of negentropy, that constantly relativized, neutralized, disempowered, and diminished those world principles—in other words “deconstructed” them—the Edo period prepared for, or rather was equipped with, the “postmodern (*chōkindai*).”²¹⁴

²¹³ Karatani Kōjin, “One Spirit, Two Nineteenth Centuries,” in *Postmodernism and Japan*, ed. Masao Miyoshi and H.D. Harootunian, trans. Alan Wolfe (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 269-271.

²¹⁴ Noguchi Takehiko, “Ankoku no Kanōsei,” in *Nihon bungaku shinshi*, ed. Matsuda Osamu, Shinsoukaiban, vol. 4, Kinsei (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1990), 339. Emphasis in original. “*Kinsei wa imasara naite mo wameite mo ‘zenkindai (pure modan)’ de atte... ‘Kindai (modan)’ o shakai taisei no ikan o towazu tan’itsu no, arui wa shihaiteki na sekai genri ni kantetsu sareta ‘seido’ to shite toraeru naraba, Edo jidai (kinsei) mo Meiji ikō (iwayuru kindai) mo sono ten de wa dōitsu de aru. Sōshita sekai genri o tsune ni sōtaika shi, chūritsuka shi,*

Noguchi finds in Edo a penchant for Derridean deconstruction of what I have rendered “world principles” (*sekai genri* 世界原理), more precisely the basic or foundational principles of the world. Noguchi seems to be using this term as being synonymous with metanarratives or grand narratives (although those terms certainly were not available during the Edo period). The philosophical trend of the Edo period, therefore, was deconstruction of grand narratives, a very postmodern preoccupation. Although Noguchi wisely restricts his analysis to this one aspect of Edo, not extending postmodernism to the entirety of Edo culture, he ascribes to Edo one of the most fundamental attributes of postmodernity.

Zhu Jie 朱捷, while not focusing specifically on the Edo period, finds postmodern theory applicable to the literary/artistic technique of *mitate* 見立て (intentional confusion of two disparate things for artistic effect), a characteristic feature of Edo art. Zhu cites Thomas Docherty’s dichotomy between modern “essence” and postmodern “event”: the theory that in modernity phenomena were perceived as an emanation of some timeless, universal essence, but in postmodernity such essences are gone and phenomena are perceived as discrete events not connected to a master essence. Zhu argues that the aesthetic value of *mitate* is derived not from an ability to expose essence in modernist fashion, but rather about making momentary unlikely connections between heterogeneous things. He argues that *Mitate* is an event: “One characteristic of *mitate* is that the relationship between the two things being superimposed is constructed *provisionally* (*kari ni naritatsu mono* 仮に成り立つもの). It is possible to connect these two things with such a thin thread because... as soon as the resonance between two heterogeneous things has been established, in the next instant [the text] moves on to the next *mitate*.”²¹⁵ Of course, this stance creates historiographical problems, as it would project postmodern theory onto the entire history of *mitate*, including the oldest Japanese poetry.

muryokuka shi, fūka shi, iwaba ‘datsukōchikuka’ shite yamanu nani ka eien ni sokubutsuteki na shikō sayō, isshu no negentoropii o zōshite ita kagiri ni oite, kinsei wa ‘chōkindai (posuto modan)’ o yōi, iya, sōbi shite ita no de aru.”

²¹⁵ Jie Zhu, “Towa Naru Konton Ni Okeru Utsurou Chitsujo: Mitate, Zeami, Posutomodan,” *Nihon Kenkyū* 11 (1994): 160. Emphasis in original. “*Mitate ni wa, mitateru mono to mitaterareru mono to no kankei wa akumademo kari ni naritatsu mono de aru to iu seikaku mo motte iru. Mitateru mono to mitaterareru mono to o naru dake komakai ito de tsunagu no o yoshi to suru to iu no wa... ishitsu na ryōsha no hibikiai ga naritatsu ya inaya tsugi no shunkan ni aratana mitate utsurō to suru no de aru.*”

However, Zhu's point that postmodern "event" or juxtaposition better theorizes *mitate* than modernist aesthetics is well-reasoned.

In her seminal book *Edo no sōzōryoku* 江戸の想像力 (The Edo imagination), Tanaka Yūko 田中優子 frames Edo society as a collection of overlapping *ren* 連, or loose associations. Tracing how haikai and academic associations used a series of agencies in various locales to forward letters and materials, she argues that Edo had established self-organizing networks of peers "irrespective of social position, economic power or education"²¹⁶ on a national scale, quite unlike the top-down information model of modernity or the supposed elite curation of knowledge by the samurai scholar gentlemen. Identifying haikai as a *kotoba gēmu* 言葉ゲーム (word game), she argues that these *ren* networks allowed the formation of national haikai *nettowāku gēmu* ネットワーク・ゲーム (network games),²¹⁷ and that these endlessly overlapping *ren* networks are what gave Edo culture its enormous energy.²¹⁸ Although she does not specifically cite Lyotard, her description of Edo period communication is strikingly similar to Lyotard's characterization of postmodernism as overlapping language games.

In his well-known apologia for *otaku* (fan) subculture, *Otaku-gaku nyūmon* オタク学入門 (Introduction to *otaku* studies), Okada Toshio 岡田斗司夫 appropriates Edo-period terminology to describe *otaku* sensibilities. *Otaku* are the true inheritors of Edo urban culture because—just like the consummate consumers of culture during the Edo period—they possess *tsū*, *takumi*, and *iki*. *Tsū* 通 in the Edo period signified a kind of "coolness," especially in the pleasure quarters, and being knowledgeable enough about pleasure-quarter culture to navigate it successfully. Okada finds this quality in the modern *otaku*'s cultural connoisseurship and deep knowledge about popular culture. *Takumi* 匠, a penchant for examining and appreciating the skillful construction of objects, is reflected in the critical eye *otaku* cast upon the construction of their favorite cultural objects. Finally *iki* 粋, similar to *je ne sais quoi*, a certain ineffable stylishness possessed by those who have *tsū*, is according to Okada reflected in the *otaku*'s

²¹⁶ Tanaka Yūko, *Edo no sōzōryoku: 18-seiki no media to hyōchō* (Tōkyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1986), 66. "Mibun ya keizairyoku ya gakumon no umu ni kakawaranai."

²¹⁷ *ibid.*, 72.

²¹⁸ *ibid.*, 113.

personal appreciation of style which allows them to find value in cultural objects.²¹⁹ Obviously Okada is trying to legitimize a maligned subculture by framing it in terms of the past here, but at the same time he is framing the past in terms of postmodern consumer culture. While some of his equivalencies seem tenuous (especially the equation of *iki*—a quality of *social*, fashionable stylishness—with the *otaku*'s personal stylistic preferences), it is not easy to dismiss the idea that Edo urban culture was concerned with dismantling cultivated narratives and reassembling them, a feature germane to postmodernism.

Similarly, in his influential *Monogatari shōhiron* 物語消費論 (Theory of narrative consumption), Ōtsuka Eiji 大塚英志 theorizes postmodern patterns of narrative consumption in terms of the Edo period kabuki terminology *sekai* and *shukō*. Briefly, *sekai* 世界 refers to a textual “world” that is well known in the culture (the world of the *Tale of the Heike*, for example), and *shukō* 趣向 is a particular text's “innovation” or “variation” on that world.²²⁰ In his famous case study of the wildly popular Bikkuriman chocolates, in which each chocolate came with one of hundreds of stickers that contained a small bit of interconnected narrative information, he writes:

In the case of “Bikkuriman,” *sekai* refers to the “legend of Bikkuriman system,” and *shukō* refers to the pseudo-narratives that each child produces. The only difference from Edo period kabuki is that within the framework of the *sekai*, in kabuki it is the senders who create narratives, whereas with *Bikkuriman* it is the consumers. In both cases the senders and receivers share the *sekai*, but with narrative consumption the right of selection of the *shukō* is as a rule surrendered to the consumer. In the fan parody manga of Comic Market, which could be called naturally occurring narrative consumption, readers share the *sekai* of popular manga like *Kyaputen tsubasa* or *Seinto seiya*, and each produces a *shukō* narrative through their own self-made comic.²²¹

²¹⁹ Marc Steinberg, “Otaku Consumption, Superflat Art and the Return to Edo,” *Japan Forum* 16, no. 3 (2004): 453.

²²⁰ While a noted feature of Edo period theatre, the *sekai* and *shukō* technique was also used in other kinds of art, such as *gesaku* textual fiction or *ukiyo-e* prints.

²²¹ Ōtsuka Eiji, *Monogatari shōhiron kai* (Tokyo: Asukī Media Wākusu, 2012), 246-48. In the first version of this book, Ōtsuka mistakenly equated *sekai* with the grand narrative of postmodern theory, to much confusion, which he seems to have corrected in this revised edition. See Eiji Ōtsuka, *Teihon monogatari shōhiron* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2001), 18-19. “‘Bikkuriman’ no baai, *sekai* wa ‘bikkuriman shinwa no taikai’ ni sōtō shi, *shukō* wa koko no kodomo ga gijiteki ni sōsaku suru monogatari ni ataru. Edo jidai no kabuki to kotonaru no

Again, Ōtsuka is trying to explicate the postmodern present using Edo, not the other way around. Yet his unapologetic use of Edo terminology as if it is a perfectly natural way to theorize postmodern consumer culture necessarily draws equivalencies between Edo culture and the present, and therefore postmodernism. This is an anachronistic use of literary theory which elides the major cultural and social differences between the Edo period and the present, dehistoricizing and appropriating *sekai* and *shukō* to describe present-day culture as if there were no important differences between the periods. But all the same Ōtsuka makes convincing points about the similarities of both cultures' narrative production and the importance of shared narratives in both eras. It is indeed true that shared textual worlds are important in cultural production in both eras—whether those of manga hits or warrior classics. Given that similarity, despite the obvious cultural discontinuities, could Edo terminology not be profitably employed to describe the present?

Steven Heine and Charles Wei-Hsun Fu write that “to some extent, the traditional, as the premodern, and the postmodern, as a development subsequent to the modern, stand in sequential relation to modernity that necessarily defines the boundaries of their advocacy and withdrawal... in the case of the argument that Japanese tradition represents an incipient postmodernism, these terms designate modes of discourse or rhetorical devices disconnected to sequence or chronology.”²²² But while it is true that both the pre-modern and the postmodern are defined by their relationship to modernity, it is disingenuous to draw equivalency between them based on that. Postmodernism may be a discourse “disconnected to sequence and chronology,” but it developed in response to the specific conditions of late modernity. Does dehistoricizing postmodernism not itself violate Fredric Jameson's famous

wa sekai no wakugumi no naka de monogatari o tsukuru no ga kabuki no baai wa okurite nano ni taishi, 'bikkuriman' de wa shōhisha de aru ten da. Sekai o okurite to ukete ga kyōyō shite iru ten wa kawaranai ga, monogatari shōhi de wa shukō no sentakuken wa gensoku to shite shōhisha ni yudanerareru. Shizenhasseiteki na monogatari shōhi de atta to ieru, komikku māketto ni okeru yaoi dōjinshi wa kyaputen tsubasa ya seinto seiya to itta ninki manga o sekai to shite dokusha ga kyōyōsuru koto de, kakuji ga mizukara no shukō to shite no monogatari o jisaku no komikku ni yotte sōshutsushita mono de aru.”

²²² Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Steven Heine, “Introduction: From ‘The Beautiful’ to ‘The Dubious’: Japanese Traditionalism, Modernism, Postmodernism,” in *Japan in Traditional and Postmodern Perspectives*, ed. Charles Wei-hsun Fu and Steven Heine (Albany: State University of New York, 1995), xi.

maxim of postmodernism: “always historicize?”²²³ It is extremely problematic to apply postmodern discourse to a different era with a very different set of historical circumstances. And yet, it is clear that many scholars have fruitfully used postmodern theory to examine the Edo period, or used Edo culture to examine the postmodern present, and found striking similarities between them that they have persuasively explicated. These theories may have been an outgrowth of 1980s Japan’s confidence or “narcissism,” but that does not invalidate their reasoning. In the face of these highly anachronistic but cogently argued applications of postmodernism to Edo, what critical stance can we take?

If yet another addition to the debate on Edo postmodernism might be permitted (or even desired) at this point, I would argue that Edo was ultimately not postmodern due to its stance on grand narratives. The Edo period simply did not have the historical experience of the twentieth century—as Azuma puts it, the entire process from the end of World War I to the fall of the Berlin Wall—that led to the suspicion of grand narratives as the legitimators of the power that had been wielded so disastrously. While it is true, in regards to Noguchi, that there is a penchant for playful deconstruction of dominant narratives in things like *ugachi* 穿ち (a satirical mode of digging or poking holes in a dominant narrative, including political narratives), there is little attestation of deconstruction as an end in and of itself. There is hardly any sense, in Edo texts, that a world deconstructed of its narratives is a desirable outcome because those narratives are legitimators of power of all varieties. Put another way, we do see resistance to power in the Edo period (as is often pointed out), but we rarely see resistance to *the will to power*.

One of the only places where deconstruction-as-goal is in evidence is in the writings of Hiraga Gennai 平賀源内 (1728-1780), a mid-eighteenth century scientist and author best known for his inventions and studies of the West. In his *Hōhiron* 放屁論 (Theory of farting), a satirical paean to a farting performer, his deconstructive stance is clear:

²²³ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981), 9.

[The actor] Tomiza is such a hit because he's bathed in the light reflected off of Kikunojō, but farts don't have anyone's coattails to ride on, no one to praise them and no one's patronage. They're trying their best just as they are... But all the musical performers imitate teachers and receive their teachings on how they should speak or sing, and they demand high fees, but the quality of their voices is something they are born with, and they sound like the cawing of crows or herons... On the other hand, this farting man has developed [his art] on his own, with neither master nor teachings. With an unspeaking butt and uncomprehending farts, he has learned the tempo of breathing and expiration, and has mastered the five tones and twelve pitches on his own. He can blow through so many things that his butt is far better than some unskillful jōruri.²²⁴

From this biting satire, it seems clear that Gennai desires the collapse of the entire edifice of social control of art, as it is corrupt and distorts artistic production away from artistic quality: even a farting performer is preferable to the present system. Here, I believe, deconstruction with deconstruction as an end (rather than merely a means to install another system of control) is in evidence. Gennai argues that any social control of humanistic production (he goes on to criticize scholars, poets, and doctors as well) will lead to the atrophying of art, culture and science. Instead he advocates a world where art is judged “just as it is,” free from extra-artistic concerns like an artist's reputation or lineage.

It is no coincidence that Gennai is one of the central figures of the 1980s Edo boom: Tanaka Yūko's *Edo no sōzōryoku* is centered on Gennai's life and work. However, Gennai is hardly typical of Edo writers. While not quite *sui generis*, it is difficult to find another Edo writer with Gennai's strong wholesale rejection of social narratives and structures (and Gennai himself was not taken seriously in his time). Similarly, while many scholars have found resistance to samurai power in Edo text and theater, there is little evidence of resistance to power itself. Even Baba Bunkō's 馬場文耕 (a popular lecturer in the eighteenth century) piercing satire and commentary usually criticizes its targets from within the ideological framework of Neo-

²²⁴ Yukihiro Nakamura, ed., *Fūrai Sanjin shū*, Nihon koten bungaku taikai 55 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1961), 234-235. “Tomiza hitori ga ōatari wa, Kikunojō ga yokō mo ari, he ni wa motoyori yokō mo naku, horete mo naku hiiki mo nashi. Jitsu ni kishōmi mukidashi no shinken shōbu... Sareba moromoro no ongyokusha, iubeki hazu no kuchi, katarubeki hazu no nondo o motte, shishō ni shitagai kuden o uke, takakyūkin wa hoshigare domo, koe no yoshiashi wa umaretsuki, tsukiyogarasu ya goisagi no, gāgā to naku ga gotoku... Shikaru ni kono hehiri otoko wa, jishin no kufū nite, shishō nakereba kuden mo nashi. Mono iwanu shiri wakarumajiki he nite, kaigō, kokyū no hyōshi o oboe, goin jūni ritsu o onozu kara sonawari, sono shinajina o hiriwakeru koto, heta jōruri no kuchi yorimo, shiri no kidori ga batsugun yoshi.”

Confucianism. The only real articulated challenge to the metanarrative of samurai rule is the *kokugaku* 国学 (nativist studies) counter-narrative. However, while (per Karatani) this narrative may have deconstructed Neo-Confucian narratives, it simply replaced them with its own “native” narratives. Far from deconstructing the will to power, *kokugaku* advocated simply moving power from the shogun to the emperor.

In fact, even those examples which are taken as evidence of resistance to samurai rule are often misconstrued, and are better understood as resistance to rule by *these* samurai: in other words, the narrative that legitimates the power of samurai is not being questioned, it is rather that the qualities of particular samurai are shown to not live up to that narrative. As Nakano Mitsutoshi 中野三敏 argues, the famed defier of samurai power Sukeroku 助六 (from the kabuki play that bears his name) is in fact an “archetype of urban commoner admiration of the samurai class... It is said he brought down the strong (*tsuyoki o kujiku* 強きをくじく), but that is resistance to those who, though strong, behaved in ways that strayed from the path of the warrior, and one who brought down such people was displaying the more splendid warrior qualities. Splendid warriors were always objects of respect, and there was no need to resist or criticize them; rather admiration of and aspiration to them was the true form of the Edoite.”²²⁵ Indeed, Sukeroku is eventually revealed to be the famous samurai Soga Gorō, a moral exemplar punishing lesser samurai for their profligate ways. Sukeroku then does not resist samurai power, much less the will to power, but rather the particular samurai that surround him who do not live up to the narrative of samurai integrity that legitimated samurai rule. The grand narrative is not in question; it is simply whether these particular corrupt samurai measure up to it. Similarly, in his study of Chikamatsu Monzaemon, Etō Jun argues that for patrons of popular theatre “there was no such thing as a dream that could be realized in real-world society. Dreams had to be fulfilled in the world of the unreal, or the world of shadows.”²²⁶ Plays which seem to criticize

²²⁵ Nakano Mitsutoshi, *Edo bunka hyōbanki: gazoku yūwa no sekai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), 28-29. “*Kore wa tenkeiteki na chōnin no bushi ganbō no sugata... Tsuyoki o kujiku to iu ga, sore wa tsuyoi keredomo bushi no michi ni hazureta furumai o suru renchū ni taishite no kōgi de ari, sore o kujiku no wa torimonaosazu, kujiku hō ga yori rippa na bushi-rashii sugata to naru no de aru. Rippa na bushi wa tsuneni sonkei no taishō dewa atte mo teikō shitari hihan shitari suru hitsuyō wa naku, mushiro sore ni akogareta no ga Edokko honrai no sugata de atta.*”

²²⁶ Etō, *Kindai izen*, 127. Quoted in Takehiko Noguchi, “Gendai Edo Gaku No Genshitsu,” *Shinchō* 6 (1987):

the sociopolitical “order” (*chitsujo* 秩序) are not agitating to realize a new order, but are rather an attempt to escape (*ridatsu* 離脱) that order in the unreal world of fiction and the shadowy world of the theatre districts.

While we cannot call the Edo period *in toto* postmodern, it is nonetheless clear that many theories about postmodern culture can be leveraged fruitfully to describe Edo. This is, upon reconsideration, not surprising: although Edo lacked postmodernism’s hermeneutic stance on grand narratives, both were fully mature, highly textual societies with vibrant popular cultures. Both can boast (at least in the latter part of Edo) a rich library of texts to draw on, so perhaps both naturally turned towards more intertextual forms. (I will not claim that this is some sort of inexorable historical trajectory that all mature textual societies must follow, just that it certainly seems to have been the case in the Edo period, as well as the postmodern present.) As a result, many cultural forms and trends from Edo resemble those of the present: it is hard to deny the relevance of postmodern decentering, juxtaposition and intertextual play to Edo forms such as *mitate*, *sekai* and *shukō*, *naimaze* 綯交ぜ (admiring disparate things), or *monozukushi* 物尽くし (exhaustive lists of similar things that humorously include completely dissimilar items).

Ultimately, then, it is not a contradiction to use theories rooted in postmodernity to describe Edo culture—as long as it is done advisedly. We must always remember that while there are valid similarities between certain cultural forms and practices, the Edo philosophical stance on metanarratives is quite different from that of postmodernity—their validity was not fundamentally questioned. Where postmodern theory delves into that hermeneutical territory it ceases to be relevant to the Edo period.²²⁷ With that in mind, however, postmodernism is a

239-40. “*genjitsu shakai no naka de jitsugensareru yōna yume wa nakatta. Yume wa higenjitsu no, arui wa kage no sekai no naka de jūjitsusareneba naranakatta.*”

²²⁷ As it happens, according to this scheme much of the work done on Edo and postmodernism during the “Edo studies boom” remains valid: most of the discourse was concerned with surface similarities between the Edo period and the present, and did not grapple with postmodern theory deeply. As Nakano writes, the Edo boom was “essentially based on ‘my Edo,’ finding within Edo an Edo that corresponded to the modern [writer’s] sensibilities.” As such, it was mostly concerned with surface features of Edo culture rather than hermeneutics. Nakano Mitsutoshi, *Edo bunka hyōbanki: gazoku yūwa no sekai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), 195. “*sono kichō no natta no wa yōsuru ni ‘watashi no Edo’ deari, Edo no naka ni, gendai no jibun no kankaku*

useful conceptual tool for describing and deciphering Edo culture. Therefore, I will describe anachronism in Edo culture as “postmodern anachronism”: what I mean here is still an anachronism that summons the past and the present and juxtaposes them for effect without allowing either to be overwritten. However, these Edo postmodern anachronisms will not share present-day postmodern anachronisms’ stance on their grand narratives. Edo postmodern anachronisms have different projects, which I will address. As mentioned earlier, postmodern anachronism follows the cultural logic of postmodernism—hence the name—but that does not preclude it from being used in periods not labeled “postmodern,” where they may do the same work, but run against the grain of contemporary cultural logic.

Another objection that might be raised to an investigation of anachronism in Edo culture is the question of contemporary awareness of historiography. In an era before “history” was developed as a discourse in the modern sense, would authors or audiences even understand that something in a text was anachronistic (that is to say, in the wrong time), or is this a view imposed by a modern understanding of history? Of course, this runs the risk, as with Shakespearean scholars, of robbing people of the Edo period of the ability to historicize their own past. However, it is true that modern history is a recent invention and its outlook cannot be assumed in the past. David Bialock, for example, traces reception of *The Tale of the Heike*, showing that throughout the medieval and Edo periods *Heike* was interpreted as history, and it was not until a “crisis in historiography” brought about by contact with Western historical discourse that *Heike* was reinterpreted as a literary text in mid-Meiji. In the face of new disciplinary boundaries between history and literature, Meiji scholars were, Bialock argues, “conjuring literature out of a historical discourse.”²²⁸

However, while it is certainly true that Edo authors and readers had a different perception of *history*—and particularly the division between history and other kinds of letters—it does not necessarily follow that they were incapable of *historicizing*. There is no reason to

ni kanau Edo o mitsukete...”

²²⁸ David Bialock, “Nation and Epic: The Tale of the Heike as Modern Classic,” in *Inventing the Classics: Modernity, National Identity, and Japanese Literature*, ed. Haruo Shirane and Tomi Suzuki (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2000), 154.

believe that Edo readers were incapable of recognizing the past as different and distinct from the present, along with its concomitant customs, fashions, and discourses. Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長, for example, famously argued for a distinctly Japanese philosophy and aesthetic, lost in his present, which he found in ancient texts like the *Kojiki* and *The Tale of Genji*, clearly recognizing the discontinuities between past and present. Even in less erudite literature there is ample evidence that Edo people were historicizing their own past. In the *kibyōshi* 黄表紙 (“yellow cover” comic book) *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi* 鸚鵡返文武二道 (Parroting back, the two paths of pen and sword, 1789), Sugawara no Michizane’s 菅原道真 (845-903) fictional son Kan Shūsai 菅秀才 is determined to reform the lazy, decadent samurai and officials at court. Reasoning that no one could be better at setting a good example than *kojin* 古人 (people of old), he summons among others the famous samurai general Minamoto no Yoshitsune 源義経 (1159-1189). Of course, this is completely anachronistic, which is acknowledged by none other than Yoshitsune himself: “I’m terribly pleased that you have selected people as unworthy as ourselves. However, we are from a much later era than you. Since you wanted people of old, perhaps there has been some mistake.” In response, someone says (the statement is unattributed, it may be Kan Shūsai’s response or it may be the implied author responding to his character’s criticism): “I know the era is wrong, but this is a *kusazōshi*, so just go with it.”²²⁹ (*Kusazōshi* 草双紙 is a larger category of popular illustrated texts to which *kibyōshi* belongs). Here we see a clear example of an anachronism that the author and (presumably) the readers are well aware is not historiographically accurate, an error which the text acknowledges but argues should be overlooked in the playful world of *kusazōshi* texts (and by extension, we can assume it would not be permitted in more serious texts). It is clear the anachronism is not the result of a failure to historicize the past, but that it is being deployed slyly for the purpose of play, a joke in which both author and readers participate. Furthermore, the anachronism metatextually acknowledges that the text is deploying historical discourses to comment on the

²²⁹ Tanahashi Masahiro, Suzuki Katsutada, and Uda Toshihiko, eds., *Kibyōshi, Senryū, Kyōka*, vol. 79, Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū (Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 1999), 154. “*Mifushō no watakushi-domo, oerami ni azukaru jō, arigatai shiawase ni gozaimasu. Shikashi watakushi-domo wa, anata-gata yori gutto nochi no yo no hito de gozaimasu. Kojin to wa omachigai ka to zanjimasuru.’ / Jidai chigai mo shitteiru ga, koko kusazōshi dakara, utchate yatte oki yare sa.*”

present, since Yoshitsune is a *kojin* not from Kan Shūsai's perspective but from that of the Edo reader.

It is clear that Edo texts can employ anachronism mindfully, not as mere errors resulting from a flawed understanding of historiography but as textual play that purposefully summons heterogeneous historical eras. And since anachronism is often clearly a deliberate textual strategy, it would be as perilous to ignore it in the Edo period as it would be to ignore it in the present. While it would be a (modern) anachronism to claim that the Edo period was postmodern, thus overwriting the Edo period with the postmodern present, it is nonetheless appropriate to describe this play with postmodern theories on juxtaposition, as long as the limits of these theories' applicability to Edo is acknowledged. In the rest of this chapter, I will examine Edo anachronism as postmodern anachronism which, while not sharing postmodernity's suspicion of grand narratives, still summons discourses on the past and the present and juxtaposes them to create new connections between them, allowing them to be dialogically superimposed without overwriting one or the other. As with anachronistic literature of the present era, each of these texts has its own project that anachronism serves.

3.2 - Playing with samurai: anachronism in Edo literature

The Tokugawa *bakufu* 幕府 (shogunate) was as invested as any modern nation in legitimating its rule and power through history. This legitimizing discourse had two main focuses, the first of which was the immediate history of the Tokugawa itself. A strict publishing ban on depicting or discussing any shogun past or present, as well as daimyō and samurai officials, protected the Tokugawa regime and the *bakuhau* 幕藩 (*bakufu* and domains) system from caricature or unflattering portrayals, although such portrayals seem to have nonetheless circulated relatively widely in manuscript form.²³⁰ The Tokugawa regime knew its legitimacy was vulnerable, since Tokugawa Iyasu had betrayed Toyotomi Hideyoshi in order to seize the power the latter had consolidated. Therefore, in the early seventeenth century the *bakufu* undertook several projects to legitimate itself, most importantly securing the patent of authority from the emperor in 1603 and having Iyasu declared *sei taishōgun* 征夷大將軍 (barbarian-subjugating great general), the title given to Minamoto no Yoritomo in 1192 that had secured his legitimacy as the first shogun.²³¹ In addition, the *bakufu* established a shogunal academy of Confucian studies headed by Hayashi Razan, a scholar who did important intellectual work in adapting Chinese Neo-Confucian thought to Japanese institutions and equating the Tokugawa *bakufu* with Chinese emperors.²³² It also used the tools of diplomacy to establish itself as the internationally recognized ruler of Japan, legitimating itself at home.²³³ The *bakufu* also heavily censored and controlled portrayals of the Tokugawa rise to power in the late sixteenth century, where the regime's legitimacy was most fragile. The shogunate understood the power that history has to legitimize or delegitimize political hegemony, and deviations from approved interpretations of Tokugawa history were harshly punished, often with execution.

²³⁰ P. F. Kornicki, "Manuscript, Not Print: Scribal Culture in the Edo Period," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 1 (2006): 23–52.

²³¹ Conrad D. Totman, *Politics in the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1600-1843* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 39.

²³² Herschel Webb, *The Japanese Imperial Institution in the Tokugawa Period*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 143-4, 168-9.

²³³ Toby, 323–63.

The other focus of the legitimizing discourse of history centered on the legitimacy of warrior rule in general. The shogunate always had to contend with a rival center of power—the imperial court. Although effectively powerless long before the seventeenth century, formidable discourses of legitimization still afforded the emperor sovereignty, especially the Shinto discourse of divine descent. In these discourses the shogunate was only legitimated by the transparent political fiction that the emperor had willingly yielded the tiresome governance of the country to the shogun. Therefore, samurai historians created a new historiography that framed the samurai rise to power as an inevitable and legitimate process. Although official historians took different stances on the institution of the emperor, they were all invested in legitimizing the existing Tokugawa sociopolitical order by using Confucian historical philosophy, which postulated a Mandate of Heaven that would fall on virtuous rulers (and which unvirtuous rulers would lose).²³⁴

These histories largely claimed that the imperial institution had lost the Mandate in the fourteenth century. The *Ōdai ichiran* 王代一覽 (Summary of rulers, 1652), edited by Hayashi Gahō 林鷺峰, for example, proposed that emperor Go-Daigo 後醍醐 (1288-1339) had lost the Mandate through moral degeneracy. As Kate Nakai notes, Hayashi “describes Godaigo in the terms standardly used for one whose actions bring about the loss of the dynasty’s mandate: Godaigo was shortsighted in his governmental decisions, arbitrary in meting out punishments and rewards, receptive to the suggestions of a scheming consort but resistant to the remonstrances and advice of loyal associates. Consequently, the ‘realm viewed buke [samurai] rule as preferable.’”²³⁵ John Brownlee also notes the same stance in Arai Hakuseki’s *Tokushi yoron* 読史余論 (Supplemental discourses on the reading of history, 1712). In the Confucian framework, “put to the test, the Emperors failed, and therefore power inevitably passed from their hands. ‘One cannot say,’ writes Hakuseki, ‘that Emperor Go Toba exercised virtuous government.’ Emperor Go-Daigo also failed: ‘Emperor Go Daigo was lacking in virtue.

²³⁴ J. Victor Koschmann, *The Mito Ideology: Discourse, Reform, and Insurrection in Late Tokugawa Japan, 1790-1864* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 45.

²³⁵ Kate Wildman Nakai, “Tokugawa Confucian Historiography: The Hayashi, Early Mito School and Arai Hakuseki,” in *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 80.

Thus when the time came to destroy the Hōjō, despite his repeated attempts to establish a restoration of the imperial government, the empire fell into disorder.”²³⁶ Consequently, in these histories imperial rule was delegitimized from the time of Go-Daigo’s reign in the fourteenth century and the samurai rise to power thereafter was a natural and legitimate process, actually preferred by the nation in Hayashi’s claim. Hakuseki even creates a new periodization, with nine stages of imperial rule ending with Go-Daigo and five stages of samurai rule culminating in the present.²³⁷ Thus, as Brownlee notes, “his nine stages of imperial rule constitute a chronicle of decline of imperial power, whereas the five stages of military rule are a tale of glorious rise of the new rulers of Japan,” culminating in the establishment of the Tokugawa regime, “the auspicious culmination of all historical development.”²³⁸

During the Edo period, therefore, historiography was a major force in legitimating samurai rule in general and the Tokugawa shogunate in particular. Special emphasis is placed on virtue and morality in this discourse: the imperial institution lost the right to rule because of a lack of moral character, and samurai gained that right because they had it in abundance. Therefore, samurai morality was a cornerstone of power legitimation, especially the Confucian values of filial piety and loyalty, mixed with the virtues of martial prowess more particular to Japanese samurai. Cultural products that highlight samurai immorality, therefore, can be read as sites of resistance against samurai power. Novels, plays, comic books, and comic dialogs set in the Edo present²³⁹ are rife with the sorts of impoverished, petty, overbearing, boorish, vain, quick-tempered samurai that people might be all too familiar with, and this can and has been read as *ugachi* 穿ち, subversively poking holes in the official ideology of samurai morality and the power it legitimated (even if such texts rarely offered an alternative to that power).

Narratives with historical settings, however, required a more careful negotiation. The history of the *sengoku jidai* 戦国時代, the warring states period of the sixteenth century that

²³⁶ John Brownlee, *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing: From Kojiki (712) to Tokushi Yoron (1712)* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991), 125.

²³⁷ *ibid.*, 123-4.

²³⁸ *ibid.*, 124.

²³⁹ In order to avoid confusion with the “present” contemporary to this writing, or the “modern” as located starting with Meiji, I will use “Edo present” and “Edo modern” to denote the perspective of Edo-period readers.

ended with Tokugawa consolidation of Japan, was, again, a sensitive area for the regime, and accordingly literary treatments of this era are relatively rare. Earlier history, however, was distant enough to be mined. The histories and semi-historical narratives of the medieval period—*Heike monogatari*, *Gikeiki*, *Soga monogatari* 曾我物語, *Genpei jōsuiki* 源平盛衰記, *Taiheiki* 太平記, *Ōninki* 応仁記, etc.—are full of riveting stories of samurai courage, valor, loyalty, and martial prowess. As such they naturally make for great entertainment, but they were also important sources of moral legitimation for the samurai class, propping up the historical narrative of the legitimate samurai takeover of political power and the continued dominance of the samurai class in the present. In the Edo period we generally see a move towards playful reworkings and pastiche reminiscent of postmodernism, but reworkings had to be careful not to rewrite history in such a way as to undermine this narrative—at least not overtly. Unlike Tezuka, Edo authors and playwrights could not have portrayed Yoshitsune as an immoral, duplicitous manipulator.²⁴⁰

This is, perhaps, one reason that anachronism appears so frequently in Edo narratives. Precisely because postmodern anachronisms are so obviously ahistorical, they cannot rewrite history. Texts that deployed postmodern anachronisms placed themselves firmly in the realm of the absurd and fictitious: they could never claim to actually represent history, and so they could never undermine official history or run afoul of the censorious samurai regime. Nonetheless, as with the anachronisms of the postwar period examined in the last chapter, while the anachronisms in Edo literature could not rewrite history they could do work on it by constructing a new intertext with the present and creating a new reading of the past.

The Edo period certainly had some postmodern tendencies towards playful pastiche and intertextuality—*naimaze* 繻交ぜ, the admixture of disparate things for the sheer pleasure of the incongruous juxtaposition (much like the pleasure of a narrative describing Schinkel visiting Manchester that Jameson describes) was an explicit feature of Edo aesthetics and is evident in

²⁴⁰ Although they could weaken his martial image by making him more elegant and refined. In plays such as *Yoshitsune senbon zakura* 義経千本桜 and *Kanjinchō*, for example, Yoshitsune is portrayed as refined and aristocratic—an elevation in status in one sense, but at the same time eliding his history as an aggressive general.

most of the texts discussed below. It is quite possible that Lyotard is applicable here; that for Edoites there was sheer pleasure in language games, and any attempt to rewrite history would be a form of “terror” that would truncate the pleasure of the language game by removing one of the discourses available to play with. While this may have been part of the reason for the prevalence of postmodern anachronism in Edo narratives, the realities of power also likely played a significant role. Postmodern anachronism allowed texts to play with history and work on it by superimposing the present onto history and creating a new text that leaves official history in place, rather than risk upsetting power by rewriting the history that legitimated it. Of course, this work could take many forms and be used for many different projects. Some of these projects were subversive, but not all. Subversive or not, all texts had to be careful not to undermine or obviate the official history favored by power (although what, exactly, counted as undermining official ideology was a shifting line, with periods of leniency punctuated by strict reforms).

3.2.1 – *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi*

The previously mentioned *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi* 鸚鵡返文武二道 (Parroting back, the two paths of pen and sword, 1789) by Koikawa Harumachi 恋川春町 is a *kibyōshi* 黄表紙, a “yellow cover” comic book²⁴¹ that is a subcategory of *kusazōshi* 草双紙, or illustrated prose writings that are usually humorous.²⁴² Like the verbal-visual narratives of the postwar era studied above, this and other *kibyōshi* are rife with gag anachronisms. The *bunbu no futamichi* of the title, which I have rendered as “the two paths of pen and sword,” references the contemporary samurai ideal. Ideologically the samurai reimagined themselves as Confucian scholar-gentlemen during the long *Pax Tokugawa* when educated administrators were needed

²⁴¹ Although, of course, it is problematic to directly equate *kibyōshi* with modern comic books. See Adam L Kern, *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), 129-132.

²⁴² Although not available in translation, *Ōmu-gaeshi* has been studied in a different context by Robert Borgen, who also notes how the text “puts aside” history. Robert Borgen, “Ōe no Masafusa and the Spirit of Michizane,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 50, no. 3 (1995): 357–384.

more than warriors. However, samurai were still expected to be warriors even if there were few opportunities for battle. Therefore, samurai were expected to master the “two paths” of both scholarly and martial arts. This was a demanding ideal which many samurai failed to live up to, leading to periodic reforms. *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi* was published in the midst of the sweeping Kansei reforms (1787-1793), and takes as its topic a (hilariously inept) effort to restore training in the twin paths to an indolent samurai caste. Of course, the text cannot directly comment on current affairs, so it is set during the tenth-century Engi era 延喜(901-923). However, the text is shot through with postmodern anachronisms, and the change in era does more than merely dodge censorship.

In this text, as mentioned above, Sugawara no Michizane’s son, reasoning that no one could better reform decadent samurai than the great men of ancient times, summons them, to which Yoshitsune remarks that he is not an ancient at all, but from a much later era.²⁴³ This explicitly acknowledged anachronism slyly implies that the narrative present of the text is actually the Edo present day, from the perspective of which Yoshitsune and his fellows really would be ancients. However, it also signals that this is a text where historicity is suspended, and where various eras will be juxtaposed with each other and allowed to interilluminate, opening the possibility of a new intertext between them.

The various training regimens that these “ancients” implement are hilariously inept. Oguri Hangan Kaneuji 小栗判官兼氏, a legendary horseman, reasons that his disciples should learn the feel of many different mounts, so he has his students take turns being horse and rider. The students bridle and ride each other, an arrangement as comically sexual in image as it sounds in text.²⁴⁴ Indeed, in search of ever more mounts to train on, the students eventually visit all the prostitutes in the city, both female and male, to “mount” and “ride” them.²⁴⁵ The text obliquely references not only homosexuality among samurai, but the degeneracy of the samurai caste, legitimated by their supposed moral superiority although in practice frequent

²⁴³ Tanahashi Masahiro, Suzuki Katsutada, and Uda Toshihiko, eds., *Kibyōshi, Senryū, Kyōka*, Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 79 (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1999), 154.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 157.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 162-3.

visitors of brothels. They have turned a reform that was supposed to restore moral integrity into just another excuse to buy prostitutes. Meanwhile, Yoshitsune tries to teach his own disciples his famous sword techniques, which he originally learned from *tengu* 天狗 (goblins), but with no *tengu* available he has students dress in *tengu* masks and wear feathers, and assigns other students to use large fans to produce the *tengu* levitation technique.²⁴⁶ Later, when training in the scholarly arts is directed by the Heian scholar and courtier Ōe no Masafusa 大江匡房(1041-1111), his students take the metaphorical dictum that “ruling a nation under Heaven is like raising up a kite” to mean that kite-flying will literally lead to better governance, creating a kite-flying craze.²⁴⁷

To the extent that the tenth-century narrative present can be taken as a transparent signifier for the Edo present, *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi* is a stinging satire of the ruling samurai class. It implies that samurai of the present can only muster an inferior imitation of the great warriors and scholars they claim as progenitors, and whose greatness still legitimates power. If the appropriation of yet another postmodern term for the study of Edo can be forgiven, the text shows that only a simulacrum of martial and scholarly (and moral) greatness is available in the present. Real martial and scholarly greatness has been completely lost; even when the actual great men of old are summoned, present-day samurai are too corrupt or inept to learn from them.

However, anachronistic juxtaposition is not unidirectional. The text also allows the ineptness of samurai of the (presumed) Edo present to flow into the past. It is, after all, Yoshitsune who comes up with the harebrained scheme to replicate *tengu* training with masks, feathers, and fans, and it is Kaneuji who designs the hilariously sexual horse training. Language from the Edo present is superimposed on the great men of old: for example, one of Yoshitsune’s students calls out advertisements for toothpaste and stomach medicine during his training, juxtaposing the popular, urban, commercial consumer market with the great samurai general of yore.²⁴⁸ Similarly, Minamoto no Tametomo’s (1139-1177) archery training is

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 155.

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 171. “*Tenka kokka o osamuru wa, ikanobori o aguru yōna mono to iu.*”

²⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 155 (see n. 19).

punctuated by the sales calls of Edo-modern doll sellers.²⁴⁹ The decidedly unglamorous present is allowed to permeate the sanctified past. *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi* punctures the seriousness of Yoshitsune, Kaneuji, and Tametomo, creating an intertext where they are associated with the grubby commercialism and incompetent, profligate samurai. The anachronisms here simultaneously delegitimize power in the present by showing contemporary samurai unable to live up to their own legitimating myths, and destabilize those very myths as sources of legitimation.

That is certainly one layer of the text, but it is not at all clear that we can assume the narrative present is a transparent signifier for the Edo present. That reading is complicated by people and references specifically located in the tenth century,²⁵⁰ especially the Engi emperor (Emperor Daigo). It is possible to read Engi as a signifier for the shogun, which is the stance the *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* takes.²⁵¹ However, Engi is often mentioned by name and uses language particular to an emperor,²⁵² preventing him from transparently melting into the shogun. Engi is a somewhat hapless ruler in the text: when an advisor discusses the Confucian principle of “administering the country and succoring the people” (*keizai* 經濟), Engi apparently does not know the term and misconstrues it as “light vegetable dish” (*keisai* 輕菜).²⁵³ He also wears the (anachronistically, as the fashion was Edo-contemporary) fashionable *nagabakibaori* 長羽き羽織 (long coat) of a *daitsū* 大通, a romantic playboy of the pleasure quarters.²⁵⁴

Engi is not a virtuous Confucian sovereign but rather given to diversions, dressing in the latest fashions, and more concerned with the evening meal than administering the country.

²⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 156 (see n. 13).

²⁵⁰ At least fictionally, if not actually. Sugawara no Michizane’s son Kan Shūsai is a fictional character from the play *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami*, although since Michizane himself is real we can safely say his son should be located in the tenth century.

²⁵¹ The SNKBZ annotates most references to imperial words or places as references to the shogun. The use of the word *kamiichinin* 上皇人, for example, typically a word for emperors, “here refers to the Tokugawa shogun,” (*ibid.*, 159 n. 20). *Kugyō* 公卿, a term that normally refers to the aristocracy, is annotated as referring to the daimyō and hatamoto who can receive an audience with the shogun, (160 n. 1). And the quarters of the emperor’s concubines in Kyoto, the *jōneiden* 常寧殿 are equated with those for the shogun’s harem in Edo castle, the *ōoku* 大奥 (165 n. 21).

²⁵² Such as the first person *chin* 朕, *ibid.*, 153.

²⁵³ *ibid.*, 166. Of course, *keizai* now means “economics,” but the contemporary meaning is different.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*, 155.

This fits neatly into the Tokugawa regime’s historical narrative of increasing imperial decadence and decreasing imperial power, eventually resulting in the loss of the mandate of heaven to the samurai caste (although the first shogun would not appear until a couple of centuries after Engi). However, the text is hardly toeing the party line. The anachronisms mean that Engi is superimposed on the shogun. Particularly the *nagabakibaori* that Engi wears is a fashion contemporary to the Edo present, superimposing the discourse of the present on the tenth-century ruler. Engi therefore evokes—as the SNKBZ editors indicate—the present-day ruler, the shogun. However, this means that Engi’s haplessness and decadence are also superimposed on the shogun: anachronistic juxtaposition allows the text to poke fun at the shogun without ever explicitly doing so. More importantly, the anachronism allows the text to turn the Tokugawa regime’s own narratives of legitimation back on itself. The text conforms to the official history of imperial delegitimization through moral decadence, but through anachronism also creates an intertext where that official narrative is superimposed on the present shogun. While not ultimately critiquing the will to power or the narratives that legitimated power through moral probity, *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi* subversively appropriates those narratives and shows that their delegitimization of the emperor can be applied to the shogun as well. Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that despite the attempts to work on history only through anachronism, this text sparked official ire. The author, Koikawa, was summoned by the authorities to answer for it, and died shortly thereafter without responding: possibly he committed suicide to forestall an unfavorable judgment that would have adversely affected his family.²⁵⁵

3.2.2 – *Daihi no senrokuhon*

Shiba Zenkō’s [*ote ryōri oshiru nomi*] *Daihi no senrokuhon* 「御手料理御知而已」 大悲千祿本 (“Hand cooked / just the soup that you know,” The thousand arms of merciful profit 1785),²⁵⁶ another *kibyōshi*, features the bodhisattva of mercy, Kannon, often depicted with a

²⁵⁵ Andrew Lawrence Markus, *The Willow in Autumn: Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783-1842* (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 207.

²⁵⁶ This text is available in translation. See Shiba Zenkō, *In the Soup, Hand Made: The Thousand Sliced Arms of*

thousand arms and thus able to reach out to anyone in need. In the text, Kannon has fallen on hard economic times and decides to rent out her surfeit of arms. Drawn to this new supply of arms, a whole cast of one-armed characters, both past and present, appears to rent her wares (as well as characters whose needs are more pun-based, such as courtesans who “need a hand” handling their customers.)²⁵⁷ Among the renters are courtesans and illiterates from the Edo present, as well as various people from the past, such as Taira no Tadanori 平忠度(1144-1184). Tadanori was a poet and samurai who famously deposited a poem in Kyoto to be included in an imperial poetry anthology before leaving to fight and die in the battle of Ichinotani (and losing an arm in the process). As such, he is a legendary samurai, a master of both elegant aristocratic art and martial skill. He can be seen as a model of a samurai mastering the “twin paths” (although his achievements lie in Japanese poetry rather than Confucian learning), situated right at the first major collapse of imperial power, the Genpei civil war.²⁵⁸ As such he legitimates samurai power both through moral example and through the regime’s historical narrative of power transferring from the emperor to samurai.

In *Daihi no senrokuhon* this ideal samurai is anachronistically depicted mingling with people of the present. In a detailed two-page spread, he is depicted in the arm rental shop in full armor with his old-fashioned hairstyle, sitting with Edo-present courtesans, shop clerks, and beggars (and the demon Ibaraki Dōji for good measure).²⁵⁹ The text calls attention to this class mixing, noting that “people who needed a hand came to rent them, gathering together regardless of station (*kisen kunju* 貴賤群集).”²⁶⁰ This can be read as, if not quite class transgression, at least a blurring of the boundaries between classes. However, the use of anachronism means that Edo period commoners are not only mingling with samurai, but with a

the Bodhisattva of Mercy = Daihi No Senrokuhon, 1785, trans. Joel Cohn (Hollywood, Calif: Highmoonoon, 2003), and Sumie Jones and Kenji Watnabe, eds., “Thousand Arms of Goddess, Julienned: The Secret Recipe of Our Handmade Soup Stock,” in *An Edo Anthology: Literature from Japan’s Mega-City, 1750-1850*, trans. Adam Kern (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013).

²⁵⁷ Suzuki Katsutada, Mizuno Minoru, and Hamada Giichirō, *Kibyōshi, Senryū, Kyōka*, Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 46 (Tōkyō: Shōgakusan, 1971), 140. “*te no nai jorō*”

²⁵⁸ It hardly matters that he was on the losing side of the Genpei war. Many people have pointed out (most notably Ivan Morris in his *Nobility of Failure*, but many others as well) that the pathos of the losing side has often had more appeal than the victory of the winners in Japanese cultural products.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.*, 141.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 140. “*Te no iriyō no mono, kisen kunju shite kari ni kuru.*”

major historical figure that features in narratives of samurai cultural cultivation, moral superiority, and power legitimation. Thanks to the anachronism, that source of legitimation is juxtaposed with the common, the commercial, and the vulgar. Visually he is depicted as lined up with a crowd of Edo-present commoners, including prostitutes—technically *hinin* 非人 (non-people), the lowest social caste. He also remarks to the clerk “as you know, put me down as ‘renter unknown (*kari-bito shirazu* 借人知らず).”²⁶¹ This is a reference to Tadanori’s final poem which, because of the politics of the time, could not be attributed to him in the imperial anthology and was instead labeled “poet unknown” (*yomi-bito shirazu* よみ人しらず), although the actual provenance of the poem was and is well known. Tadanori’s famous artistic and aristocratic accomplishment is here juxtaposed with Edo consumer culture in the form of commercial rentals. The text does not (and in any case dares not) rewrite the historical Tadanori, but by anachronistically placing him in an Edo-present rental shop it creates a new intertext that superimposes the crass, common, and commercial on Tadanori’s aristocratic refinement and high stature, puncturing his samurai solemnity. The text uses anachronism to reduce—in the intertext, at least—the power of Tadanori as legendary samurai to legitimate samurai rule.

Later we learn that “while it was his right arm that Tadanori had lost, he was so happy and excited that he rented a left arm instead.”²⁶² Far from a stolid, solemn samurai, Tadanori is depicted as an Edo-present consumer, given to over-excitement when a sensational new product hits the market. He is not a particularly competent consumer at that, buying the wrong product despite (or perhaps because of) his enthusiasm for it, and ending up stuck with the wrong thing when the shop cannot exchange it (a tale of consumer woe as familiar then as it is now). Armed with the wrong arm, Tadanori tries to write his famous poem but it comes out backwards. Giving up, he says (in modern colloquial diction that reinforces the subversive effect) “this looks shameful. I’ll just say it’s ‘poet unknown.’”²⁶³ Again, anachronistic

²⁶¹ *ibid.*, 141. “*Sessha koto wa gozonji no tōri, kari-bito shirazu to oshirushi kudasare.*”

²⁶² *ibid.*, 142. “*Tadanori no uchiotosareta wa migi no kaina, Tadanori sukoshi sekikomi tamai, amari no ureshisa, yappari hidari no te o karite kitamai.*”

²⁶³ *ibid.* “*Gaibun ga warui. Yomi-bito shirazu to yarakashite okō.*”

juxtaposition has transformed Tadanori's final aristocratic act from one of elegant pathos to that of a careless consumer and superficial poet.

Eventually Sakanoue no Tamuramaro 坂上田村麻呂 (758-811), another historical and legendary warrior (although this time from the height of imperial power), needs Kannon's thousand arms to carry out his storied slaying of a demon (based on a Nō play's poetic hyperbole that the thousand arms of mercy turned his arrow into a thousand arrows).²⁶⁴ Rather than praying, however, he shows up looking to rent the arms just like any other consumer. Previously Kannon had received one ryō (gold coin) per arm,²⁶⁵ but Tamuramaro asks for the whole lot for two silver coins per arm, about one eighth the original price.²⁶⁶ In other words, like any good consumer Tamuramaro tries to negotiate a lower unit price for buying in bulk. Once again, closed, authoritative history about the exemplary samurai of the past is opened up through anachronism. Although ridiculous, the anachronism intertextually opens the past to Edo-present consumerism and mercantilism. *Daihi no senrokuhon* leaves the accepted (mytho-) history of Tamuramaro unmolested, but creates an intertext where he is juxtaposed with the common and vulgar of the present, deflating his seriousness and sanctity, and therefore subverting the use of great samurai of the past as a legitimator of present samurai power.

3.2.3 – *Nansō Satomi hakkenden*

Nansō Satomi hakkenden 南総里見八犬伝 (The legend of the eight dogs of the Satomi clan of Nansō, 1814-1842) by Takizawa Bakin 滝沢馬琴 (1767-1848) is a massive, sprawling epic that took Bakin twenty-eight years to write and takes up some six thousand pages in modern omnibus edition.²⁶⁷ It is entirely impossible to do it justice here, or indeed even in a single book-

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 144 n. 13.

²⁶⁵ *ibid.*, 140.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*, 144. (see n. 15)

²⁶⁷ Although *Hakkenden* has been little studied in English, Leon Zolbrod has written helpful overviews of the text. See his "Yomihon: The Appearance of the Historical Novel in Late Eighteenth Century and Early Nineteenth Century Japan," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 25, no. 3 (1966): 485–98. No full translation of *Hakkenden* into English exists, but there are brief translations in Haruo Shirane's Edo literature anthology

length study. I therefore make no claims to characterize it in its entirety, and will instead focus on a single incident of anachronism, extracted and analyzed in isolation from among its hundreds of chapters, with apologies.

The most famous entry in the *yomihon* 読本 (reading books: books designed to be read for narrative, with some illustration but primarily textual) category of text, the story centers around eight heroes, each of whom represents a Confucian virtue. They are all the spiritual children of Fusehime 伏姫, the daughter of the daimyō Satomi Yoshizane 里見義実. Upon being spiritually (although not actually) impregnated by the spirit of the loyal family dog (who achieved enlightenment by listening to her read sutras), Fusehime cuts open her stomach, and the spirits of her eight children fly in different directions to be born to different mothers. Years later the eight find each other and have many adventures together. Resembling a modern-day television procedural, there is a never-ending procession of enemies, criminals and intrigues that the eight “dog warriors” must face. The text is set in the mid-fifteenth century, the main plot beginning at the end of the Yūki war in 1441. Wildly popular in its day, it continues to draw readers even now, with numerous modern translations, manga, anime, and television adaptations. However, it has been little studied in academia, probably because of its length and because Tsubouchi Shōyō famously criticized it as characteristic of everything wrong with Japanese literature at the beginning of the modern era.²⁶⁸

The striking anachronism occurs in Book Eight, when a recurring criminal antagonist named Funamushi is preying on travelers at night by pretending to sell herself, then robbing her would-be customers once they have let their guard down.²⁶⁹ One customer realizes her intentions and begins to grapple with her, when suddenly:

(Haruo Shirane, ed., *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 887-909) and in Sumie Jones and Kenji Watanabe’s anthology (Sumie Jones and Kenji Watanabe, eds., *An Edo Anthology: Literature from Japan’s Mega-City, 1750-1850* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013), 260-281).

²⁶⁸ Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Shōsetsu shinzui*, *Nihon gendai bungaku zenshū* 4 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1962), 163. Shōyō criticizes *Hakkenden* as too didactic, and calls the characters too virtuous to be human.

²⁶⁹ I discovered this particular scene thanks to Valerie Durham’s excellent translation of it in Jones and Watanabe’s recent and very welcome anthology of Edo literature mentioned above.

From behind them the report of a gun echoed, and with it Sagahei [the customer] was shot through from back to chest, tumbling to the ground before he could even call out “ah!”

It was completely unexpected, and Funamushi stood there stunned and frightened looking back, and before long someone came towards her carrying a Tanegashima musket. It was none other than that wicked character Obanai [Funamushi’s husband]. He was pulling a red-haired cow behind him.²⁷⁰

The anachronism here is, of course, the musket, which appears almost a century ahead of its time. It might be tempting to dismiss this particular anachronism as mere error: to argue that Bakin simply was not aware of the history of firearms in Japan, and that this was not noticed by either author or readers. To do so would repeat the error of generations of Shakespearean scholars who similarly dismissed the anachronistic pistol that The Douglas can famously hit a sparrow with in *Henry IV*. As Phyllis Rackin has argued, this and other Shakespearean anachronisms should be reevaluated as “deliberate, significant choices which color the meaning of a dramatic action... [Shakespeare] deliberately dislocates the action, using anachronisms like the clock that strikes in *Julius Caesar*.”²⁷¹ More specifically, however, it is unlikely that Bakin or his readers were unaware that there were no contemporaneous firearms, as the history of the musket in Japan was well known and intimately tied up with power.

Crucially, the text specifies a Tanegashima musket, which locates the item in a particular historical discourse.²⁷² Although the *Kunitomo Teppōki* 国友鉄砲記 (The record of Kunitomo firearms, 1633) does leave open the (dubious) possibility of some earlier transmission of firearms to Japan,²⁷³ the musket here is decidedly not being deployed in a dehistoricized

²⁷⁰ Takizawa Bakin, *Nansō Satomi hakkenden*, ed. Hamada Keisuke, vol. 4, Shinchō Nihon Koten Shūsei (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2003), 498-499. *Ushiro ni hibiku teppō no, tsutsuoto to morotomo ni, awaremu beshi Sagahei wa, sobira o mune made uchitōsarete, “a” to hitokoe sakebi mo aezu, mi o hirugaeshite taorekeri.*

Omoikakenaki koto nareba, Funamushi wa kotosara ni, kimo o tsubushitsu mikaerite, bōzen to shite tataazumitaru, hodo shi mo arazu Tanegashima no koteppō o hikisagete, hayaku mo koko e kuru mono ari. Kore sunawachi betsujin narazu, mata kano akuboku Obanai nari. Ito ōkinaru akake no ushi o, oitsutsu.

²⁷¹ Phyllis Rackin, “Temporality, Anachronism, and Presence in Shakespeare’s English Histories,” *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986): 102-3.

²⁷² Although it is true that “Tanegashima” was used as a generic term for a musket, not necessarily one that came from Tanegashima Island, the use here as an adjectival phrase that describes a *koteppō* (gun) specifically draws attention to the historical discourse of muskets arriving through Tanegashima.

²⁷³ Olof G. Lidin, *Tanegashima: The Arrival of Europe in Japan* (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies Press, 2002), 130-131.

fashion. The fact that this is a Tanegashima musket indicates that it comes from the transmission of firearms by Portuguese traders who were wrecked on Tanegashima Island in 1543. According to the *Teppōki* 鉄砲記 (Record of firearms, 1606) and other sources the vassal lord of the island, Tanegashima Tokitaka, purchased two muskets from the Portuguese after a demonstration and ordered his blacksmith to set about reproducing them. He succeeded within months, and in the following years muskets quickly spread throughout Japan.²⁷⁴ This history was generally known, especially through the romanticized story of the blacksmith's daughter, whom he offered to one of the Portuguese men in marriage in exchange for the secrets of musket construction.²⁷⁵ The Portuguese traders and the transmission of the musket on Tanegashima were a subject of woodblock print compositions and were featured, for example, in Katsushika Hokusai's 葛飾北斎 best-selling *Hokusai manga* 北斎漫画 series of sketches.²⁷⁶

More importantly, the history of firearms is shot through with the dynamics of power in the Edo period. The introduction of the musket marks the beginning of the political system that governed the Edo present. It would not be an exaggeration to say that it was precisely the Tanegashima musket that allowed Oda Nobunaga to conquer most of Japan, a campaign completed by Toyotomi Hideyoshi and eventually co-opted by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa line of shoguns. As early as 1549 Nobunaga—evidently realizing the military potential of the new weapon right away—ordered five hundred muskets from gunsmiths at Kunitomo (a town centrally located near Lake Biwa, long known for its blacksmithing industry, which became well known as a center of gun manufacture).²⁷⁷ The musket was crucial to Nobunaga's victory in the Battle of Nagashino in 1575, which became the turning point in his campaign of national unification.²⁷⁸ In recognition of the role the musket played in the Oda-Toyotomi-Tokugawa rise to power (not to mention its maintenance of power) Tokugawa Ieyasu even granted the gunsmiths of Kunitomo samurai status and rice stipends.²⁷⁹ Although the

²⁷⁴ *ibid.*, 1-6.

²⁷⁵ *ibid.*, 9.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.*, 23.

²⁷⁷ Delmer M. Brown, "The Impact of Firearms on Japanese Warfare, 1543-98," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 7, no. 3 (1948): 238.

²⁷⁸ Lidin, 146.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

samurai caste may have preferred the sword as a status symbol, the Tanegashima musket was an important symbol of military might, and muskets were prominently displayed when daimyō and their retinues marched through the streets of Edo and the roads of the countryside.²⁸⁰

Therefore the appearance of a Tanegashima musket in the fifteenth century, almost a century before Oda Nobunaga was even born, would certainly have been evident as anachronistic juxtaposition to Bakin and at least a subset of his readers. The anachronism is subtle enough that his less well-read readers might have missed it, but, as has been demonstrated, the information was available in the historical discourse at the time, so certainly attentive or educated readers should have realized that the musket is anachronistic. This anachronistic radical destabilization of history creates several effects. Firstly, it disrupts the official history of the regime and its sympathetic scholars. The Oda-Toyotomi-Tokugawa rise to power is concomitant with the spread of firearms in Japan. Nobunaga's prescient recognition of the musket's potential and development of new military tactics around it allowed him to begin to unify the country after a century of strife; Hideyoshi also relied on firearms for his own battles, including his invasion of Korea;²⁸¹ and muskets played a major role in the Battle of Sekigahara where Ieyasu consolidated his power, and where fully half of the Date army (his vassal clan) were armed with muskets.²⁸² In other words, the rise of muskets is equivalent to the rise of Tokugawa political hegemony. The presence of a Tanegashima musket in the fifteenth century, then, disrupts this narrative of political consolidation. *Hakkenden* anachronistically shows a musket being used long before the Oda-Toyotomi-Tokugawa samurai adopted them, and therefore (counterfactually) suggests that samurai were not among the earliest to cleverly recognize their potential and thereby profit—in fact they were a century behind. Of course, attempting to rewrite the crucial history of the Tokugawa regime in this way would have been risky, but *Hakkenden* explicitly does not. The fact that the musket is specified as a Tanegashima musket—and not some generic gun that might have somehow existed

²⁸⁰ Muskets can be seen in *ukiyo-e* that depict daimyō processions, perhaps most famously in Hokusai's *Thirty-Six Views of Mt. Fuji* series. See Julia M. White, Reiko Mochinaga Brandon, and Yoko Woodson, *Hokusai and Hiroshige: Great Japanese Prints from the James A. Michener Collection, Honolulu Academy of Arts* (San Francisco: Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, 1998), 92. (Print title: *Senjū kagai yori chōbō no Fuji*)

²⁸¹ Brown, 240.

²⁸² Lidin, 230 n. 91.

earlier—signals that it is firmly anachronistic. Such a blatantly ahistorical text cannot replace history. Instead, it summons the discourse on muskets into the past, creating an intertext between these discourses where it does its work.

In addition to subversively showing muskets in common use long before Nobunaga, *Hakkenden* also puts this earliest musket into the hands of a criminal. While the sword may have emerged as a symbol of the samurai, muskets were the lynchpin of samurai power, and possession of muskets was tightly controlled and regulated. While it is unremarkable that a bandit or villain might use a sword, muskets were weapons of the samurai, and depicting a villain using one is very subversive. Obanai is Funamushi's partner in crime in her various nefarious schemes; furthermore he has just stolen the cow he is leading in the excerpt above from unsuspecting peasants. And, of course, he commits murder using that selfsame musket. The early use of muskets, therefore, is shown to be at the hands of thieves and murderers. The musket gives Obanai—and therefore evil and criminality—irresistible power; Sagahei has no hope of resisting and dies before he can utter a single syllable, his protest against this injustice symbolically censored by overwhelming military power. Clearly portraying muskets—again, so intimately tied up with Tokugawa power and hegemony—as instruments that empower criminality is very subversive. The anachronism here functions to superimpose this discourse on early muskets with the received history of early muskets, and it becomes clear where they overlap. The text suggests that the *historical* early adopters of muskets used the overwhelming power it gave them to murder, kill innocents, and silence any protest against their power. The huge advantage muskets gave them over those armed with more traditional weapons was not clever strategy but cowardice, sneaking up on their more morally worthy enemies, lurking in the dark and shooting them in the back. And, of course, they appropriate their sustenance from farmers.

The text's project is very subtle, using an anachronism that could easily be dismissed as an error (and presumably was by the shogunal censors, whose mistake we should not repeat). The anachronism draws attention to its transparently ahistorical portrayal of Tanegashima muskets, and invites the reader to juxtapose that portrayal with the official discourse on

Tanegashima muskets, so strongly associated as they are with the Oda-Toyotomi-Tokugawa rise to power and the contemporary political hegemony of Tokugawa rule. While the text does not (and cannot) say that the current regime's consolidation of power was murderous and cowardly, by juxtaposing those discourses in the intertext, it opens up the received history of the founding of the "great peace" of the Edo period to new possibilities of interpretation. Of course, it may seem unlikely that a text so explicitly devoted to didacticism, or *kanzen chōaku* 勸善懲惡 (rewarding good and chastising evil), specifically the didacticism of official Neo-Confucianism, could have such subversive subtexts. However, reading *Hakkenden* as unrelieved Confucian didacticism accepts Shōyō too uncritically. Although Bakin stated *kanzen chōaku* was his express purpose in authoring the text, writing after the Kansei reforms as he was, realistically he could say little else. There are many ways in which *Hakkenden* subverts shogunal authority or Tokugawa hegemony, of which this anachronism is one small example. It is not incidental that Bakin chose for his story the Satomi clan, which the Tokugawa shogunate came to loggerheads with in the early seventeenth century, eventually confiscating its lands and titles. Others have noted that *Hakkenden*, from within its framework of didacticism, actually destabilizes normative social structures like class and gender.²⁸³ Ultimately, however, it is not Confucian virtue or the samurai will to power that is challenged, as shortly after the scene above the dog warriors charge in and defeat Funamushi and Obanai with samurai virtue and martial prowess. These ideal samurai²⁸⁴ (incidentally enemies of the Tokugawa) are valorized and heroicized, even as the text slyly implies that the origins of the current regime were cowardly and murderous. The text does not rewrite history or question the will to power, but nonetheless disrupts the authoritativeness of the regime's accepted history of its rise to power using Tanegashima muskets and opens it up to critique and new interpretation.

²⁸³ See, for example, Glynne Walley, "Gender and Virtue in Nansō Satomi Hakkenden," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 72, no. 2 (2012): 337–71.

²⁸⁴ Some of the warriors are not actually samurai, but that warrants its own discussion.

3.2.4 – *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji*

Many late-Edo *kusazōshi*, far too many to treat here, use the device of updating some classic in one way or another. However, the most excellent, best-selling, widely read, and enduring of these texts is undoubtedly Ryūtei Tanehiko's 柳亭種彦 (1783-1842) *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* 倭紫田舎源氏 (A fake Murasaki's country Genji).²⁸⁵ By far the most successful *gōkan* 合巻 (a type of heavily illustrated novel), the work came out in installments over the course of fourteen years, from 1829 to 1842. It was not a flagging of reader interest that ended *Inaka Genji's* long run—it was more popular than ever—but rather the draconian Tenpō reforms, which included strict bans on publishing anything deemed frivolous or licentious (and arguably resulted in the author's death). Although publishing numbers are unreliable from this period, by some estimates installments of *Inaka Genji* regularly sold as much as three times more than other popular *gōkan*.²⁸⁶ For most late Edo readers, *Inaka Genji* was likely the most familiar version of *The Tale of Genji* by far.²⁸⁷ Meiji critics would later decry it as a vulgar imitation of the monumental original, but Michael Emmerich has argued that *Inaka Genji* played a crucial role in recycling the narrative of *Genji* (as opposed to its poetic situations) and its eventual canonization.²⁸⁸

As the title implies, the text is a retelling of the great Heian classic *The Tale of Genji*, but updated for contemporary Edo tastes and sensibilities. The action is moved from the Heian period to the Muromachi period, just prior to the fifteenth-century Ōnin war. Genji—now Mitsuuji—is not an imperial prince but the wayward son of an Ashikaga shogun, the action

²⁸⁵ No full translation of this text exists, but a brief section can be found, again, in Shirane's anthology (Shirane, 801-842). Andrew Markus's study of Tanehiko contains a chapter on *Inaka Genji* that is an excellent overview. Andrew Lawrence Markus, *The Willow in Autumn: Ryūtei Tanehiko, 1783-1842* (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1992), 119-158.

²⁸⁶ Markus, 145-6.

²⁸⁷ Michael Emmerich argues that for contemporary readers "*The Tale of Genji* probably existed, insofar as it existed at all, as a reflection of *Inaka Genji*."²⁸⁷ Michael Emmerich, "The Splendor of Hybridity: Image and Text in Ryūtei Tanehiko's *Inaka Genji*," in *Envisioning the Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 213.

²⁸⁸ *ibid.*, 211-212.

surrounds the shogunal palace instead of the imperial palace, etc. Tanehiko's text was accompanied by sumptuous illustrations by the popular *ukiyo-e* artist Utagawa Kunisada. These illustrations were certainly a major selling point of the text, although we can detect more than a few sour grapes when Bakin, Tanehiko's rival author, declares the illustrations to be the only good feature of the work.²⁸⁹ Significantly, there was a long tradition of *ukiyo-e* illustrations that used *mitate* to superimpose scenes from *Genji* on contemporary illustrations: an exchange of fans between a courtesan and her customer might allude to the well-known fan exchange in the *Yūgao* chapter of *Genji*, for example.²⁹⁰ *Inaka Genji* is certainly building on that legacy, but it also adds a textual component and a carefully controlled narrative.

The text is a meticulous superimposition of three different time periods: the Heian era of the source text, the Muromachi period of the setting, and the Edo present. The first few pages offer a revealing foregrounding of the text's anachronistic project. It begins:

In the middle of Ōedo, there's a place called Shikibu Lane near Nihonbashi, where an extremely lovely girl lived. Her name was Ofuji... She always tied her hair up with a lavender (*murasaki*) string, so people never called her Ofuji, but rather by the nickname Murasaki Shikibu. When she discovered this, she thought she might as well write a modern book (*sōshi* 双紙) like *The Tale of Genji* that she had a connection to through her name. But she only ever read *kusazōshi* and only knew [popular songs], and had never even chewed on a red makeup brush [much less a writing brush]. But someone told her "there's something called the *Wakakusa Genji monogatari* that grasps the gist of it, even if it doesn't have the depth of *Kakaishō* or the breadth of *Kogetsushō* [works of Genji scholarship]. If you read it along with *Kōhaku Genji*, *Hinazuru Genji monogatari*, *Genji binkagami*, and *Genji okagami*, you should be able to understand it a little."²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ *ibid.*, 157.

²⁹⁰ Nakamachi Keiko, "Genji Pictures from Momoyama Painting to Edo Ukiyo-E: Cultural Authority and New Horizons," in *Envisioning the Tale of Genji: Media, Gender, and Cultural Production*, ed. Haruo Shirane (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 191-2.

²⁹¹ Tanehiko Ryūtei, *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji*, ed. Suzuki Jūzō, Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei 88 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 6. "Ōedo no manaka, nihonbashi ni chikaki shikibu kōji to iu tokoro ni, ito namamekitari musume ari. Sono na o Ofuji to nan ierikeru... murasaki no wagehimo o tsune ni musubikereba, hitobito Ofuji to wa yobazu, adana shite Murasaki Shikibu to zo iikeru. Onore mo itsuka kore o kikishiri, saraba wagana ni chinami aru Genji monogatari ni nitaru sōshi o tsukuranto, asayū kokoro ni kakekeredo, kusazōshi no hoka o yomazu uta wa niagari sansagari... shiru nomi nareba, benifude o dani kamazarishiga, aru hito musume ni iikeru wa, Kakai no fukaki, Kogetsu no hiroki, sore ni wa me no oyobazu tomo, yō o tsundaru Wakagusa ari. Kōhaku, Hinazuru, Binkagami, Okagami nando o terashi awasaba, sukoshi wa i o gesu tayori to

It is Ofuji who will go on to be the putative author of *Inaka Genji*. We see here an authorial stance of self-deprecation, typical in *kusazōshi* (and, indeed, most of *gesaku*). Tanehiko posits himself (whom everyone understands to be the “real” author) as an inexperienced writer not actually very knowledgeable about *Genji*, or indeed life, foolishly undertaking a fumbling attempt to write a modern *Genji*. However, this opening passage also subtly frames the story: Tanehiko is not rewriting *Genji*, he is writing an Edo-present young woman’s (*musume*, what we might now call *shōjo*) inexpert reimagining of the tale within the milieu of the popular novels she reads and the popular songs she listens to. Furthermore the intertextual references will not be the text of *Genji* itself or weighty, pedantic volumes of *Genji* scholarship, but rather Edo period popularizations of *Genji*. *Wakakusa Genji* is an early eighteenth-century abridged version translated into contemporary novelistic (*ukiyo-zōshi*) style, and the other texts mentioned are similar.²⁹² The text of *Inaka Genji*, therefore, is always contained within the frame of the present and the popular. We see here a careful, reflexive double framing: the Heian source text is self-consciously framed within the Muromachi setting, which is in turn framed within the Edo-present implied authorship and intertextual web. Every chapter of *Inaka Genji*, therefore, is evoking, layering, admixing, and superimposing the three different eras.

The next two pages also carefully layer eras. The first is an illustration of Murasaki Shikibu in front of a writing desk in Ishiyama Temple, composing *The Tale of Genji*. The print is done in an old-fashioned style with simple lines and ample white spaces, and carefully recreates the Heian era. Murasaki is wearing a *jūnihitoe* 十二単衣, a twelve-layered kimono suitable for courtly Heian ladies-in-waiting. She has long hair she wears down and sports *kurai-boshi* 位星, false eyebrows painted on the forehead, both styles appropriate to Murasaki’s era. The room she is in does not sport tatamai mats (which were not available at the time), but rather historically accurate wood-plank floors upon which straw mats are spread, with mat

naran.”

²⁹² This has been taken by some, including Bakin, as evidence that Tanehiko did not really know or understand the original text of *Genji*, and relied entirely on later translations and commentaries. Emmerich, however, argues that this is unlikely given the number of specific and close quotations from the original. Emmerich, 224-5.

skirts illustrated with Heian styles. Into this carefully constructed Heian image, an Edo-contemporary writing desk, with Edo-modern drawers and rounded corners, is anachronistically inserted.²⁹³ Yamaguchi Takeshi, in his examination of the *Inaka Genji* manuscript, notes that “the layout of buildings, the construction of buildings, even the types of furnishings, were given detailed attention in the rough sketch (*shitae* 下絵, Tanehiko’s sketch for Kunisada). The written instructions [from Tanehiko to Kunisada] were also fairly strict.”²⁹⁴ It is therefore unlikely that this is a simple oversight by either author or illustrator: each element of the picture, including small details like furnishings, was carefully weighed and considered. Rather, the text meticulously creates an authentic Heian space, then disrupts it with a recognizable artifact from the Edo present. This anachronistic juxtaposition signals, from the very first image, that the text’s project is a superimposition of eras, and a disruption of the discourses of knowledge that separate them. Just as an object familiar to readers is inserted into Murasaki’s sacred (if apocryphal) space of authorship, so too will the text of *Inaka Genji* insert the familiar into her great classic. The next page contains a mirroring image of Ofuji at her own writing desk, this time done in a lusciously illustrated Edo-present style, with many accoutrements from the Edo present. However, the image also features *yamato kumo* 大和雲, thin clouds along the border of the image. While not exactly anachronistic, they are certainly out of date for nineteenth-century *ukiyo-e*. They are far more appropriate for old-fashioned paintings and prints, and are a visual trope in illustrations of *Genji*. Visually, then, the past and the world of *Genji* disrupt the representation of the present and its discourses. These first two illustrations work as a pair, using anachronistic juxtaposition to signal that the text will disrupt both the “pastness” of the past and the “presentness” of the present: in other words, the discourses of history and historicity that distance the past from the present, including those official discourses that would proclaim the present a new era, different from a benighted past. Of course, the past really *was* different, and here that difference is acknowledged, not overwritten. Murasaki’s studio does look quite alien, old-fashioned, and uncomfortable: the past is not being

²⁹³ SNKBT vol. 88, 7.

²⁹⁴ Yamaguchi Takeshi, “Tanehiko to kōhon Inaka Genji,” in *Yamaguchi Takeshi chosakushū*, vol. 4 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1972), 442. “*Ie no kamaeyō, ie no tsukurizama, sate wa chōdo no tagui ni naru to, toriwakete shitae ni komakai chūi o haratteiru. Atsurae no kotoba mo nakanaka kibishii.*”

deployed as a *gemeinschaft* or lost golden age that emphasizes the poverty of the present (in the manner of fascist history). Rather, precisely because the writing desk and the clouds are so disruptive, the past and present are juxtaposed, superimposed in a way that allows both images to remain detectable and distinct, but also creating a third image that is the combination of the two.

Inaka Genji updates *The Tale of Genji* for Edo-present sensibilities, but does so in a way that metafictionally calls attention to its own project. The most alien aspect of the Heian source text for Edo readers (and indeed, for many readers today) was its morality. As Andrew Markus has noted:

The knottiest difficulty confronting Tanehiko was not style or pace or unfamiliarity, however, but the uncongenial spirit of the original work. *Genji* portrays a world where good and evil coexist in a universally sorrowful setting; the *gōkan*, however, demanded a strict segregation of good and evil forces, and presumed an essentially orderly, positive, and benevolent world. The spiritual and irrational elements so prominent in the Heian world view were unpalatable to more pragmatic moderns. Equally unacceptable was the selfish, frequently immoral conduct of principals in the *Tale of Genji*; a drastic revision of motivations was the compromise required to present recognizably *Genji*-like scenes and unimpeachable moral orthodoxy on the same pages.²⁹⁵

Although many scholars have written about the political motivations behind Genji's romantic adventures,²⁹⁶ to nineteenth century readers living in a completely different political system these motivations were opaque. Changing social norms (from polygamous to putatively monogamous marriages) and the Edo Neo-Confucian moral system meant that to contemporary readers Genji's actions now seemed adulterous, licentious, and immoral.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ Markus, 141.

²⁹⁶ Yamaguchi Masao, for example, reads Genji as an archetypal prince who must negotiate with those on the margins left out of the king's consolidation of power at center (Yamaguchi Masao, *Chi no enkinhō* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978), quoted in Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett De Bary (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1993), 162.) Haruo Shirane, meanwhile, reads *Genji* as challenging the *sekkō* (regency) system, since Genji returns in triumph to the capital after being exiled, winning a power struggle with the emperor's maternal relatives that similarly exiled real-life figures could not. (Haruo Shirane, *The Bridge of Dreams: A Poetics of the Tale of Genji* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 4-8.

²⁹⁷ Of course, many Edo narratives focused on *tsū* lovers and their romantic exploits, but Genji—a prince—had different moral responsibilities from a Confucian moral standpoint. And he seduces not professional courtesans but the daughters of noble houses, who were supposed to protect their chastity.

Inaka Genji gives Mitsuuji (Genji) motivations in line with Neo-Confucian expectations of an upright samurai. For example, for the first several chapters Mitsuuji is searching for an heirloom sword that has been stolen from the shogunal palace (a typical motivation in contemporary drama, especially kabuki plays). The text still follows the narrative of *Genji* very closely, but now all of Mitsuuji's immorality can be explained as *yatsushi*, the familiar kabuki device of a noble character dressing or acting in a low or vulgar manner for some greater moral purpose. The forty-seven samurai of the kabuki mega-hit *Chūshingura* 忠臣蔵—samurai of unimpeachable morality—pretend to be drunkards and dilettantes in order to throw off suspicions and eventually carry out their revenge. Mitsuuji's immoral dalliances, therefore, are just a familiar means to the ultimate moral end of recovering the sword. In *Inaka Genji's* rendition of the above-mentioned Yūgao chapter, for example, Mitsuuji's short but poignant love affair with Tasogare (Yūgao) now begins because he suspects Tasogare's mother of stealing the sword, and wants to get closer to her. Although Mitsuuji's affairs still happen more or less in accordance with the source text, the motivation behind them has been updated to reflect Neo-Confucian morality.²⁹⁸

Inaka Genji updates the Heian past, but does so reflexively. The text calls attention to the fact that it is doing work on history through the double framing technique, which explicitly "reads" *Genji* through the lens of the Muromachi period, which is in turn read through the lens of Edo period discourses—the implied *shōjo* author and intertextual web. By reflexively reading Heian through more recent eras it does not pretend, in the manner of modern anachronism, that Heian era motivations were actually so comprehensible to Edo-moderns: it does not rewrite Heian. It does not claim to translate, to transparently and accurately represent the source text, but rather calls attention to its own fictionality, textuality, and intertextuality. *Genji*—the Heian era—is acknowledged to be alien and quite distant from the past. It is not rewritten, but a new text is written that exists as the intertext of the past and the present.

²⁹⁸ Although, it should be noted, such fine samurai motivations did not help when the Tenpō reforms came around: authorities only saw *Inaka Genji* as a bawdy story full of sex and other immoral behavior. Publication was halted, the woodblocks were confiscated, and Tanehiko was summoned before the authorities and promptly died, possibly a suicide. Markus, 199-202.

In addition to the framing technique, *Inaka Genji* also includes several explicit anachronisms, of which both author and readers were well aware. We know this because one chapter introduction calls explicit attention to them:

There are no plums in the *Songs of Chu*, no chrysanthemums in the *Man'yōshū*, and no prefaces in the *kusazōshi* of old. There are no mosquito nets in *Genji*, nor is there male love. Although they might have taken baths they had no medicines, only prayers and spells... I've spent all my effort worrying about the shapes of lanterns and screens and armrests, and I've ended up drawing things like silk pillows and double sleeping mats that were undreamed of in the Higashiyama period (late fifteenth century). A summer bedroom would be too exposed and lonely without a mosquito net, so now I've drawn mosquito nets not found in *Genji* in place of stand curtains. I thought I would explain myself in something like one of these prefaces which did not exist in the *kusazōshi* of old.²⁹⁹

Tanehiko (or at least the implied Tanehiko, the introduction bears his name) signals he is fully aware of what a historicized representation would be, and chooses anachronistic representation instead. Presumably his readers (or at least a significant portion of them) were also aware of the anachronism, as he seems to feel a need to explain himself to them. We see again the typical authorial self-deprecation, but we should not take it seriously. This is the introduction to the pivotal chapter in which Genji's dalliances with Oborozukiyo (now Katsuragi) are caught by the Minister of the Right (now Biwanosuke) when he sees Genji's sash as she hurries out through a curtain (behind which they had been *in flagrante delicto*), eventually leading to Genji's exile to Suma. It is this very curtain that *Inaka Genji* replaces with a mosquito net here.³⁰⁰ Far from an incidental replacement caused by the author's aesthetic whimsy (a bedroom without a mosquito net being too lonely), this anachronism conspicuously switches one of the story's major set pieces for a fixture recognizable from the Edo present.³⁰¹ It

²⁹⁹ SNKBT vol. 88, 538. "Soji ni ume nashi, Man'yō ni kiku nashi, mukashi no kusazōshi ni jo nashi. Genji ni kaya nashi nanshoku nashi. Oyu to iu no ga sore ka mo shiranedo, kitō majinai bakari nite, kusuri o nomitaru koto mo nashi... Andon byōbu kyōsoku no, katachi sae anjitsukushi, Higashiyama no jidai ni wa, yume ni mo shiranu kinuta makura, hiyoku goza made egakinagara, natsu no toko ni wa uchiwarete, kaya no naki no wa sabishikaran to, kichō ni kaete Genji ni naki, kachō o hajimete egakasetaru, sono kotowari o mukashi mukashi no, kusazōshi ni wa naki jo rashiki mono ni, kaitsukete oku ni koso."

³⁰⁰ *ibid.*, 550-1.

³⁰¹ According to the *Nihon dai hyakka zensho* 日本大百科全書 (Encyclopedia Nipponica), while there are a few attestations of mosquito nets in earlier works, they were not in common use until the Edo period.

summons the present into both the Heian era of the source text and the Muromachi period of the setting. This anachronism creates an intertextual association with Edo-present discourses on mosquito nets, especially their appearance in bawdy or romantic narratives featuring the bedrooms of the pleasure quarters. The anachronism transgresses not only time but class, penetrating the aloofness of Heian aristocrats and Muromachi shogunal scions with a familiar object that brings with it all the discourse of commoner life and literature. Of course, the anachronism is too conspicuous (the author even points it out) to convince anyone that Heian aristocrats really, historically, were no different from Edo-present commoners. But in the anachronistic intertext such a transgressive—if fictional—possibility is created.

Much of Edo literature and art relied on the juxtaposition or blending of *ga* 雅 (elegance) and *zoku* 俗 (vulgarity), which always had subversive potential.³⁰² Therefore, it is not surprising that many other anachronisms in the text deploy this class transgressiveness. The poem that Tasogare (Yūgao) passes to Mitsuuji (Genji) on a fan outside her house is, in *Inaka Genji's* rendering, not an elegant *waka* but a *nagebushi* 投節. This was a type of popular commoner song from the seventeenth century, old enough by Tanehiko's time to be quaint, but decidedly Edo-modern and—with lines of four and three syllables—very different from the courtly *waka* with its five and seven syllable lines.³⁰³ Anachronistic to both the Heian and Muromachi periods, the presence of a *nagebushi* here transgressively inserts popular, commoner culture into the storied courtly romance of both Heian aristocrats and Muromachi elite samurai. Also Lady Rokujō, Genji's jealous mistress, becomes in *Inaka Genji* Aogi, a famous courtesan of (appropriately) the Rokujō pleasure quarters. This is an anachronism: pleasure quarters are a post-Heian development, and the Rokujō quarters in particular were not founded until the early seventeenth century.³⁰⁴ Not only is Lady Rokujō, like Yūgao, a subject of courtly romance, she is a lady of the highest aristocratic pedigree, widow of a prince. Changing her into an Edo-modern courtesan transgressively superimposes her with a commoner, a *hinin*,

Miyamoto Mizuo, "Kaya," *Nihon Dai Hyakka Zensho* (Tokyo: Shogakukan, 1994).

³⁰² For a concise discussion of *ga* and *zoku* in Edo, see Nakano Mitsutoshi, "The Role of Traditional Aesthetics," in *18th Century Japan: Culture and Society*, ed. C. Andrew Gerstle (Routledge, 2012), 124–31.

³⁰³ *ibid.*, 131–2.

³⁰⁴ Markus, 130.

who was a familiar fixture of urban life and popular narrative. Furthermore, she is a woman who is romantically and sexually available to a man of any class—provided he has the money and *tsū* charm to make his way into her boudoir, of course. The use of anachronism acknowledges the ahistoricity of such transgressiveness, but also calls attention to it, reflexively highlighting its transgressive project.

However, the most anachronistic aspect of the text is certainly the visual images. The characters are depicted in nineteenth-century dress, usually the latest fashions and hairstyles. Kunisada pours meticulous care into drawing highly detailed kimono styles and intricate fabric patterns. Each fascicle cover, furthermore, features a portrait of a character (or occasionally multiple characters) done in gorgeous full color, showing off their very fashionable attire to full advantage. *Inaka Genji* not only closely followed the latest fashions, but—being a wildly popular text—created some fashion trends as well.³⁰⁵ Of course, as mentioned above, this sort of representation has a long history in Edo visual arts. Nonetheless, *Inaka Genji* here transgressively depicts Muromachi high-ranking samurai—who are also Heian high-ranking aristocrats—in the garb of the Edo urban street and the pleasure quarters. It punctures the closed space of power and the frozen sanctity of the past by inserting into it the popular, common, and highly fluid world of Edo-modern fashion. It transforms Imperial princes and shogunal scions alike into people one could well imagine seeing on the street, or at least in the fashionable pleasure quarters. Everyone is aware this is anachronistic, of course, just as modern readers are aware that fashionable rimless glasses are anachronistic in the Edo period. *Inaka Genji* does not overwrite history, but that does not preclude enjoyment of the deliciously transgressive juxtaposition.

Historical class transgression was not the only project *Inaka Genji* was engaged in. A narrative of the exploits of someone so close to the shogun filled with anachronistic items that evoke the Edo-present necessarily (if slyly) suggests a connection with the Edo-present shogun. It has long been claimed that *Inaka Genji*, with its politically valent romantic intrigues, was a commentary on the shogunal politics of the day, specifically the political maneuvering inside

³⁰⁵ *ibid.*, 150.

the *ōoku* 大奥, the quarters of the shogun's harem. No less esteemed a figure than Katsu Kaishū (a major Meiji reformer and statesman) has promoted the idea that Tanehiko was writing about the specific conditions of the *ōoku*, which he (Tanehiko) knew about because he was a *hatamoto* 旗本 (a direct vassal of the shogun) and could enter the *ōoku* apartments at will, and this reading has attracted adherents over the years.³⁰⁶ However, Markus and others have pointed out that this is extremely unlikely: although Tanehiko did possess a fairly respectable samurai rank, he was nowhere near the upper echelon, and access to the *ōoku*, especially by men, was very tightly restricted and controlled. Even information about the *ōoku* was kept strictly secret.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, *Inaka Genji* closely follows the text of *Genji*, chapter by chapter and sometimes line by line. While such a textual project might have occasionally been able to satirize contemporary politics, it is too beholden to its source text and lacks the flexibility to be a straightforward political allegory. However, it can certainly be read as having elements of political commentary or satire, even if it is not exactly congruent to the contemporary machinations within the *ōoku*.

It is plausible to read the text as a more general critique of contemporary politics. The ruling shogun through most of the text's authorship was Tokuwaga Ienari, who was famously obsessed with the *ōoku*. He maintained a large harem, and the women of the harem (along with the various factions that backed them) became a major site of political intrigue. *Inaka Genji* is a reworking of a major text about, at its heart, sexual politics at court. It alters that text to feature the shogunal palace rather than the imperial court, then anachronistically dresses all its characters in Edo-present clothing and inserts Edo-present accoutrements into its world. These anachronisms necessarily evoke the discourses of the present and superimpose them on the past. Therefore, *Inaka Genji* can absolutely be read as a general commentary on the state of shogunal politics at the time. Which is not to say it was necessarily a critique: if the romantic and heroic Mitsuuji is a metaphor for Ienari, then the shogun is portrayed very positively (some

³⁰⁶ *ibid.*, 203. Markus notes that Ōhashi Shintarō, editor of a major Meiji edition of *Inaka Genji*, cites Katsu Kaishū and treats Tanehiko's access to the *ōoku* as established fact. However Mitamura Engyo, writing a few years later, dismisses the idea and tries to show that *Inaka Genji's* illustrations did not resemble the *ōoku*. *ibid.*, 204.

³⁰⁷ *ibid.*, 204-5.

sources even claim Ienari himself was delighted by *Inaka Genji* and recommended it to everyone at the shogunal court).³⁰⁸ *Inaka Genji* generally shows the Ashikaga shogunate in a good light, and by extension the Tokugawa shogunate as well. It is possible to read a subtle critique here: that by showing Mitsuuji's sexual dalliances motivated by such upright samurai morals, *Inaka Genji* is calling attention to the dearth of such respectable motivations in Mitsuuji's present-day counterpart. This is subtle indeed—it is more obvious that the text maintains its transgressive function. It still depicts shoguns and samurai (who themselves evoke emperors and aristocrats) wearing fashionable, familiar urban clothing. Since the anachronistic juxtaposition at work evokes the Edo-present shogunate in the Muromachi world, that transgressiveness spreads to Edo castle. The cloistered world of the *present* shogun, his concubines, and his highest advisors becomes shot through with the vulgar, popular world of urban commoners. While the blending of Heian *ga* and Edo *zoku* is apparent in other Edo *Genji* art the anachronistic intertext being deployed here allows *Inaka Genji* to disrupt not only the *ga* discourse of the Heian past, but that of the Edo present. It punctures the aloofness of the shogun and his government even as it flatters him.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the Edo period textual works that deploy anachronisms: such a project would be a massive undertaking since, as has been shown here, anachronism is a feature found in a wide variety of texts from a wide variety of textual forms and genres.³⁰⁹ The intent is rather to demonstrate the different ways that anachronism could be deployed in Edo texts, in support of those texts' diverse projects. It could be used, as in *Inaka Genji*, to flatter power even as it subtly denatures and demythologizes that power. Or it could be used to challenge official narratives of the samurai rise to power, as in *Hakkenden*, to appropriate the *bakufu's* narratives of legitimation, as in *Ōmu-gaeshi*, or to undermine samurai

³⁰⁸ Aeba Kōson, "Bunka Bunsei No Shōsetsuka," *Shikai* 14 (July 1892): 36. I found this article thanks to Markus's citation of it in *Willow in Autumn*.

³⁰⁹ Other interesting examples include Hōseidō Kisanji's *Kagekiyo hyakunin isshu* 景清百人一首, about a comical search for the twelfth-century Taira no Kagekiyo in an Edo-modern urban pleasure quarters (NKBZ vol. 46, 105-116), and Shiba Zenkō's *Hayari yasui wacha Soga* 時花兮鶻茶曾我, about the twelfth-century Soga brothers starting a business establishment like an Edo-modern *chōnin* (Koike Masatane et al., eds., *Edo no parodii ehon*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shakaishisōsha, 1980), 149-188), and Hirobe Shin'ya has argued that Tenmei (1781-9) *sharebon* and *kibyōshi* followed a trend of conflating ancient Chinese sages with Edo-modern *tsū* playboys (Hirobe Shin'ya, "Seidai o egaku kibyōshi," *Edo no bunji*, April 2000, 198-213).

moral rectitude, as in *Daihi no senrokuhon*. Although I have used postmodern theories to describe these texts' anachronistic projects, they do not quite challenge the will to power itself—they do not have that characteristic of postmodernism. Nonetheless, these texts are all transgressive or subversive in some way. While they do not challenge the legitimacy of the existing order, many of them mock power on its own terms, for not living up to its own narratives of legitimation, rather than challenge the legitimation of power itself. It is not power, or even samurai power that is questioned, but the power of the particular, feckless samurai that happen to be in charge. Nonetheless, each of these texts has found the historical juxtaposition of anachronism useful to its project, a juxtaposition that creates an intertext between the discourses of the past and the present, rather than trying to overwrite the past. The aesthetics of postmodernism here—juxtaposition and pastiche, formally expressed in the Edo period as *naimaze*—are apparent as postmodern anachronism is being deployed to metatextually mix the past and the present much as it is in the postmodern era.

3.3 – Acting out the past: Anachronism in Edo theatre

The most renowned works of Edo-period theatre are certainly Chikamatsu Monzaemon's 近松門左衛門 (1653-1725) psychologically subtle contemporary tragedies written for the *ningyō-jōruri* 人形浄瑠璃 (puppet theatre, now called *bunraku* 文楽) stage.³¹⁰ However, while Chikamatsu has received major critical attention in modern times, his work is not necessarily representative of the bulk of Edo theatre. During Chikamatsu's life, *jōruri* stages and puppets were smaller and simpler than they are now. Shortly after his death, the puppet theatre retooled itself with bigger, more articulated puppets that could perform flashier actions and use dramatic stage techniques. This was partly in response to the growing popularity of *jōruri*'s main competitor, kabuki (which featured live actors), and incorporated some of the flair and bombast that had made kabuki so popular.³¹¹ To simplify in the extreme, *jōruri* was ascendant during the first half of the Edo period, when the cultural locus of Japan was centered on the Kamigata (Kyoto and Osaka) region, which is still the center of *jōruri* practice. In the second half of the Edo period, kabuki became more sophisticated and *jōruri* gradually lost popularity to kabuki, which became dominant. At the same time, due to many external factors the cultural locus of Japan was shifting to the city of Edo, and many actors and playwrights moved to Edo, and Edo kabuki began to supersede that of Kamigata. Tokyo is even now the center of kabuki practice. The bulk of Edo theatre from the early eighteenth century on is characterized by flair, showmanship, exaggeration, and melodrama rather than Chikamatsu's social tragedies. In practice, despite the very different performance styles, the most popular plays were shared between the two art forms: best-selling *jōruri* plays were quickly adapted into kabuki plays and vice-versa. While the theatres were certainly not interchangeable, most of the texts discussed below found a home on both the kabuki and *jōruri* stages.

³¹⁰ Although, like Shakespeare, Chikamatsu certainly wrote his share of bawdy comedies and bloody period pieces.

³¹¹ Stanleigh Jones, *Bunraku Puppet Theatre: Honor, Vengeance, and Love in Four Plays of the 18th and 19th Centuries* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012), 3-4. For example, by 1745 real mud and water were being used in *jōruri* to give verisimilitude to fight scenes in *Natsu matsuri Naniwa kagami* (James R. Brandon and Samuel L. Leiter, eds., *Kabuki Plays on Stage*, vol. 1 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 199.) For a further account of these changes, see Donald Keene, *World within Walls: Japanese Literature of the Pre-Modern Era, 1600-1867* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1976), 275-9.

Edo popular theatre is rife with anachronisms. As mentioned earlier, one of the main features of kabuki narratives (and by extension *jōruri* narratives as well) is the interplay of *sekai* and *shukō*, “world” and “variation.” The *sekai* here is the well-known world of some shared text (of history or literature, or even gossip about an event), and the *shukō* is the new, innovative approach taken to that world by the individual play or performer. For playwrights, they made up the “warp and weft” of a plot.³¹² Many of the *sekai* in kabuki and *jōruri* are the worlds of historical texts—*Heike monogatari*, the *Taiheiki*, *Soga monogatari*, the *Gikeiki*, etc. Often the *shukō* of a play was the insertion of some Edo-modern material into that world of the past. Barbara Thornbury identifies three categories of *shukō*: rewriting the *sekai*, the joining of a *sekai* with a contemporary setting or story, and the combining of two or more *sekai*.³¹³ The last two innovations are clearly anachronistic. The first, rewriting a *sekai*, may seem to be merely ahistorical, but often *sekai* were rewritten to accommodate certain acting styles, such as Ichikawa Danjūrō I's rewriting of *Soga monogatari* to accommodate his own *aragoto* (bold and brash) acting style,³¹⁴ anachronistically inserting Edo-present styles into the texts of the past. Clearly a popular theatre that takes the rewriting of historical texts as one of its basic playwriting tools is fertile ground for anachronism.

This is not to say that every anachronism in Edo theatre is doing significant work on the past; historical settings were often used to escape censorship. For example, *Kanadehon chūshingura* 仮名手本忠臣蔵 (The copybook storehouse of loyal retainers, 1748, often discussed in English as simply “Chūshingura,” “Treasury of loyal retainers,” or sometimes “Forty-seven rōnin”), the hit play about forty-seven samurai who took revenge for the death of their daimyō, is set in the *sekai* of the *Taiheiki*, a historical tale about the fourteenth century.³¹⁵ However, everyone—playwrights, actors, audience, even censors—understood that this play

³¹² Helen S. E. Parker, *Progressive Traditions: An Illustrated Study of Plot Repetition in Traditional Japanese Theatre* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2006), 34-5.

³¹³ Barbara E. Thornbury, *Sukeroku's Double Identity: The Dramatic Structure of Edo Kabuki* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1982), 27-28. There are other innovations considered *shukō* which do not involve rewriting a script, but rather the innovation an actor or individual production might bring to an existing script, for example playing a role in a different style that changes the meaning of the play.

³¹⁴ Laurence Richard Kominz, *Avatars of Vengeance: Japanese Drama and the Soga Literary Tradition* (Ann Arbor: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1995), 153.

³¹⁵ Available in translation as *Chūshingura (The Treasury of Loyal Retainers): A Puppet Play*, trans. Donald Keene (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

was really about the Akō incident of 1703, in which the former retainers of Asano Naganori killed a shogunal councilor in revenge for their master's death. The setting in the past is understood to be merely a transparent formality, required to overcome the shogunate's ban on portraying current events, politics, or high-ranking samurai. There may be things in the play anachronistic to the fourteenth century, but since the setting is understood to be merely a legal convenience, these anachronisms fail to evoke anachronistic juxtaposition or do work on history. However, many plays deploy the *sekai* of the past in ways that are not primarily designed to avoid censorship, and Edo-modern *shukō* in these worlds can succeed in creating anachronisms that evoke and juxtapose the past and the present. Furthermore, as with *Ōmugaeshi* above, sometimes the use of history to escape censorship is not so transparent, and texts still interact with their historical setting even when that setting is obviously being used to escape legal restrictions.

3.3.1 – Metadramatic anachronism

Kabuki plays often feature moments that call attention to the play as a constructed work of fiction, reminding audiences that they are watching a play and thereby disrupting the naturalized diegetic world. Clearly, all postmodern anachronisms (those that conspicuously insert the present into the past) in theatre are therefore metadramatic, just as all postmodern anachronisms in literature are metatextual. Richard Hornby, discussing metadrama through literary references, states:

There are many ways in which a play can refer to other literature. In each case, the degree of metadramatic estrangement generated is proportional to the degree to which the audience recognizes the literary allusion as such. When they do recognize it, the result is like an inset type of play within the play in miniature; the imaginary world of the main play is disrupted by a reminder of its relation, as a literary construct, to another literary work or works.³¹⁶

This is an apt description of theatrical anachronism, if we simply amend it to include not just references to specific literary works, but references to the discourse on history in general.

³¹⁶ Richard Hornby, *Drama, Metadrama and Perception* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1986), 88.

Therefore anachronism in period dramas disrupts the imaginary world of the play by reminding its audience of its relation, as a *representation of history*, to other representations of history. This is quite in line with the metatextual functions of anachronisms in textual fiction.

Metafictional references often work by inserting “real life” (the world outside the text) into the text. Hornby argues that there is therefore a type of metafictional reference that is unique to theatre:

In the theatre, however, there is always readily available a special type of real-life reference that does not require any insertion at all. On stage, real life is omnipresent, as the ordinary "backstage" reality of the actors, their costumes, properties, etc. In painting, paint on the canvas is transformed into images, while in writing, words are transformed into concepts, but in the theatre, people are "transformed" into people and things into things.... A star actor may not change his voice or appearance in any way when taking on a role. Nevertheless, there is a change in our relationship to the table or the actor on stage that corresponds exactly to the change of paint into images or words into concepts; their ordinary reality is swallowed up into the dramatic world, taking on a different significance for us than they would in real life. On the other hand, since the ordinary, real life selves of the table and the actor are still *there*, unchanged in essence, the potential for easily shifting back to the real-life mode is always there as well. It is not necessary to insert real life... but only to drop the pretense of the performance... For a moment, the entire imaginary framework of the role and play is stripped away. This is not real-life insertion, but real life *acknowledgment*.³¹⁷

Kabuki plays feature many such metadramatic moments of real-life acknowledgement. A character may “accidentally” present a leaflet for the play itself instead of a prop document, or refer to the names of actors (often the very actor playing the character). For example, the saintly Narukami in the eponymous play, usually played by Ichikawa Danjūrō, jokes that he will give up religion and take up the secular name “Ichikawa Danjūrō the pervert” (*Ichikawa Danjūrōsukebe*).³¹⁸ In the case of history plays like this one, such references to the reality of the actors—who live in the performing present—very conspicuously insert the present into the diegetic world of historical representation: postmodern anachronism.

³¹⁷ *ibid.*, 97-8.

³¹⁸ Gunji Masakatsu, ed., *Kabuki jūhachiban shū*, Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei 98 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1965), 224. The name is changed when other actors play the role.

Act Seven of *Kanadehon chūshingura* features a brothel scene where courtesans entertain some of the principal characters at a night of revelry. One of the ways they liven up the party is by playing a *mitate* game—a game somewhat reminiscent of charades, where nearby familiar objects are “confused” with other objects, viewing them from a new perspective in a humorous and entertaining manner.³¹⁹ Traditionally, the performance of this game was ad-libbed by the actors, although modern performances tend to be scripted.³²⁰ At a performance of *Kanadehon chūshingura* at the Shinbashi Enbujō in January of 2013, one of the courtesans used a “smartphone” (*sumaho* スマホ) in the *mitate* game.³²¹ This is both an anachronism and a “real-life acknowledgement,” in that it acknowledges the everyday reality of the actors—one imagines that an actor has secreted a phone into his costume, and rediscovers it while casting about for objects to ad-lib with (even though this was almost certainly planned). This metadramatic moment disrupts the diegetic world of the play—and of the past—estranging or alienating the audience from it. This is a moment of comedic self-reference, but Hornby argues:

However playful a moment of self-reference may seem... it always has the effect of drastically realigning the audience's perception of the drama, forcing them to examine consciously the assumptions that lie behind and control their response to the world of the play. Since these assumptions, the drama/culture complex, are also the means by which the audience views the world at large, self-reference has the effect of challenging, in a sudden and drastic manner, the complacencies of the audience's world view.³²²

Here, the self-reference is also anachronistic, and so it challenges the audience's historical world view.

The insertion of twenty-first-century technology into either the Edo period (if the *Taiheiki sekai* setting is taken to be merely a sly disguise for Edo) or the fourteenth century (if it is not) conspicuously highlights the estrangement between the past and present, acknowledging with its absurdity just how out of place the twenty-first-century is in the past,

³¹⁹ Takeda Izumo, *Kanadehon chūshingura*, ed. Hattori Yukio (Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1994), 198-9.

³²⁰ *ibid.*, n. 14.

³²¹ *Gion Ichiriki Jaya*. Shinbashi Enbujō, Tokyo, January 25, 2013.

³²² Hornby, 117.

but at the same time mischievously putting a smartphone into the hands of a courtesan anyway. This performance playfully familiarizes the past by showing someone from the past using a familiar and unmistakably present-day object, even while paradoxically acknowledging the impossibility and preposterousness of such a thing. In the intertext created by the anachronistic juxtaposition, courtesans are associated with smartphones and all the things that attend them, such as late-capitalist commodification, information society, and youth culture. It suggests—again—that while the Edo period and the Heisei period are too obviously, visually incongruent to be equivalent or even compatible, they might on some counterfactual plane be interoperable. This allows Heisei Japanese enmeshed in such things to imagine—although everyone acknowledges it is absurd—an affinity and familiarity with Edo (or fourteenth-century) Japanese, opening up the past as a source of identity even as the historical narrative distancing that past from the present is policed by the conspicuousness of the anachronism.

Clearly, the anachronistic work done on history here is very dependent on performance and context. The objects used in the *mitate* game will change from production to production, or even from performance to performance, according to fashions and fads and the contemporary cultural discourse; in 2013, smartphones were still relatively new and their cultural impact was a popular topic of conversation. Crucially, the anachronism's success in consciously juxtaposing past and present is entirely dependent on the historical distance between the era of the setting and the instance of performance. An eighteenth-century production of the play that used an Edo-present object in a similar fashion would not have been anachronistic (if, again, we assume everyone understood that the "real" setting is the Edo period). The potential for anachronistic work changes the further away a performance moves in time from the setting, and each instance of performance partakes of its own contemporary discourses about history; a Meiji-period production of the play that had a similarly anachronistic *mitate* might have been engaged in a very different project. While I will focus on plays as texts in the remainder of this section—mostly analyzing playscripts as literary objects—it is important to note that, as Andrew Gerstle argues, each "performance should also be viewed as a 'text', one that has a physical existence in sound and movement, but which dissipates as it passes through time,

continuing to exist only in the memory of the participants.”³²³ Each instance of performance is a text that contains its own possibilities for anachronism—every performance has the potential to be a unique site of radical historical instability.

3.3.2 – *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami*

Written by the hit playwriting team of Takeda Izumo II, Namiki Senryū, and Miyoshi Shōraku, *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* 菅原伝授手習鑑 (The mirror of the transmission of Sugawara’s calligraphy, 1746) is one of the *sandaimeisaku* 三大名作 (three great works) of Edo popular theatre.³²⁴ Written as a *ningyō-jōruri* play, it proved so immensely popular that it was adapted into kabuki barely a month after it premiered.³²⁵ The play is set in the *sekai* of the legend of the titular Sugawara no Michizane (d. 903), in the Heian court. Michizane was a courtier who was exiled from the capital due to various political machinations and died in exile and disgrace, but was posthumously exonerated and enshrined as Tenjin, the god of learning, when a series of natural disasters subsequent to his death were blamed on his vengeful spirit. The play centers on the transmission of Sugawara’s secret calligraphy techniques, and invents many dramatic situations and a host of characters, including Kan Shūsai, Michizane’s son and heir (this play, in turn, is the fictional world that *Ōmu-gaeshi* is set in).

Sugawara denju tenarai kagami contains several anachronisms. Of course, the visual presentation of the play, the costumes worn, the properties used, etc., are all very anachronistic. Although Michizane himself wears a costume that at least attempts to approximate a Heian aristocrat’s robes, the other characters wear costumes contemporary to the Edo present (or at least clothing resembling Edo-present dress, if not actually a real style). However, I would argue that this fails to create an anachronistic juxtaposition of past and

³²³ C. Andrew Gerstle, “The Culture of Play: Kabuki and the Production of Texts,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 66, no. 3 (October 2003): 358-9.

³²⁴ The other two are *Kanadehon Chūshingura* and *Yoshitsune senbon-zakura*. *Sugawara* is available in translation as *Sugawara and the Secrets of Calligraphy*, trans. Stanleigh H. Jones Jr (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

³²⁵ *ibid.*, 2.

present. Kabuki costume was and is highly stylized and formalized—different kinds of costumes have formalized uses distinguishing the ranks and professions of characters, differentiating lead roles from supporting, or indicating character type (such as an *aragoto* hero or comic buffoon), and this is especially true as the temporal or social distance from the audience increased; the dress of Edo commoners was well known, but that of Heian aristocrats was not very accessible, and those costumes tended towards the fanciful and formulaic. The practiced theatregoer can instantly recognize the social positions and character types on stage by observing their costumes.³²⁶ Furthermore, some dramatic characters have an individually formal costume, developed through centuries of performance across many different plays featuring that character—sometimes even adapted from Nō theatre—which was recognizable as distinctive to that (usually historical) character.³²⁷ Although many kabuki plays feature costumes closely resembling the clothing really worn by Edo-present people (allowing, among other things, actors to set fashion trends and advertise the clothing and cloth of local businesses), many other kabuki costumes are often not at all mimetic. Actors are dressed in flamboyant, highly structured clothing that bears only a passing resemblance to real styles³²⁸—witness the kabuki standby *Shibaraku*, performed every year, in which a host of characters parade across the stage in fantastic, architectural costumes. When such costumes are used in *jidaimono* 時代物 (history plays) they are not understood to be representations of the past but part of the spectacle of kabuki; they take as their intertextual referent not history, but rather other kabuki performances. They do not evoke anachronistic juxtaposition any more than does the anachronistic language used in nearly all the works examined here—it is understood to be a convention of representation.³²⁹

However, there are other anachronisms in *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* that do succeed in juxtaposing past and present, placing their cards (in Jameson's terms) next to each

³²⁶ Ruth M. Shaver, *Kabuki Costume* (Rutland: Tuttle, 1966), 24-5.

³²⁷ Helen Parker discusses the formalized costumes used through various iterations of the *Kanjinchō* plot. See Parker, 118-9.

³²⁸ Margaret Young, "Japanese Kabuki Drama: The History and Meaning of the Essential Elements of Its Theatre Art Form" (Ph.D., Indiana University, 1954), 203-4.

³²⁹ Although, of course, a word or phrase that is too obviously contemporary—fashionable present-day idioms or celebrity quotes, for example—would be recognized as anachronistic and succeed in creating metadramatic estrangement.

other to allow for new possibilities between them. The first is the inclusion of triplets—Matsuōmaru, Umeōmaru, and Sakuramaru—as major characters. Shortly before the play debuted, triplets were born in Osaka (about a month before, so it must have been furiously rewritten at the last minute). The very unusual event was deemed auspicious, and officials even granted the family some money. It became a major topic of contemporary discussion and gossip.³³⁰ Therefore, for audiences watching the play close to its debut, the triplet brothers unmistakably summoned the present-day discourse about the triplets into the Heian past. Significantly, the three brothers are all of low social rank, mere grooms. Nevertheless, they serve and interact with very high-ranking courtiers or, in the case of Sakuramaru, even an imperial prince. The insertion of the discourse of the Edo-present birth of triplets into the past slyly suggests—not in the text itself, but in the intertext—that these brothers are Edo-present commoners of low wealth and station, yet they have access to, and are trusted servants of, the brokers of power.

Furthermore, their masters are members of the imperial court at a time when, according to the shogunate's own official histories, it still had legitimacy to rule. Edo-present commoners, therefore, are projected into a period before the samurai political supremacy of the Edo-present. In this fiction, Edo-present commoners are able to escape the totalizing hegemony of Tokugawa rule and samurai authority (although not the regime's Neo-Confucian ideology, which is central to the play; again, while there is resistance to samurai power, it is hard to find resistance to samurai narratives). They are furthermore depicted as intimates with the top echelons of the imperial court, nominally the superiors of samurai even in the Edo present, but certainly their superiors during the tenth century. The anachronistic juxtaposition here is subversive, creating the possibility (however fictional and impossible) that the Neo-Confucian caste system and its totalizing social ideology, as well as samurai rule itself, was not teleological and could be escaped by *chōnin* 町人 (urban commoners). Of course, this anachronistic juxtaposition would only have been summoned for those watching in the months or years immediately following the play's debut: as the 1746 birth of triplets faded from contemporary discourse, the triplets in the play would become merely unusual. Still, for those

³³⁰ Jones, *Sugawara*, 13.

initial audiences the juxtaposition of Edo-present commoners with the Heian past was a very subversive project. Which is not to say that those audiences consisted entirely of commoners; although kabuki is generally understood to be the theatre of the *chōnin*—officially reviled by samurai as vulgar in favor of the more aristocratic Nō theatre—Gerstle has convincingly shown that samurai were very involved in the kabuki world, both as audience members and patrons. However, Gerstle concludes that this presence of the samurai was what gave kabuki its distinctive irreverent flavor, as it always had something to react against. The essence of kabuki was performing defiance of the samurai for an audience that included samurai.³³¹

The other clear anachronism is the central presence in the play of a *terakoya* 寺子屋, literally a “temple school” but in practice referring to any school that educated commoners, including those not associated with temples. Although the practice of gathering local children and teaching them basic letters had spread to even country temples by the Muromachi period, it was not until the Edo period that *terakoya* took off and became a major fixture of commoner life.³³² The high rate of literacy in the Edo period was due in no small part to the *terakoya*. The schools, which often taught basic math, history, and literature in addition to reading and writing, had such a large impact on the culture, economy, and even politics of the Edo period that Ishikawa Ken has called the Edo period the “*terakoya era*” (*terakoya jidai* 寺子屋時代).³³³ The *terakoya*, therefore, was a conspicuous feature of Edo-present commoner life, certainly anachronistic to the Heian era. Samuel Leiter tries to explain this anachronistic contradiction by calling the *Terakoya* scene in Act 4 “an example of the *sewamono*” within a history play, although he allows that there are “a number of elements suggestive of the history classification.”³³⁴ However, this is more than a domestic scene set in the past; it is an anachronism that summons the discourse about Edo-present education and commoner life into the play’s representation of the past.

³³¹ C. Andrew Gerstle, “Eighteenth-Century Kabuki and Its Patrons,” in *A Kabuki Reader: History and Performance*, ed. Samuel L. Leiter and C. Andrew Gerstle (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 88–111.

³³² Ishikawa Ken, *Terakoya* (Tokyo: Shibundō, 1960), 58.

³³³ *ibid.*, introduction.

³³⁴ Samuel L. Leiter, *The Art of Kabuki: Famous Plays in Performance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 61.

Significantly, one of the major characters, Genzō, is a *terakoya* teacher. He is a former student of Michizane who was disowned for his romantic indiscretions. Reduced to penury, he turns to teaching at a country *terakoya* to make ends meet. Nonetheless, his calligraphic skills never atrophy, and it is Genzō to whom Michizane passes his acclaimed calligraphy secrets. Although Genzō is depicted with the two swords indicating samurai rank, at least in modern productions he does not wear his long sword on the street to advertise his rank.³³⁵ He is an impoverished samurai much closer to commoner life than the higher ranks of samurai power, and treats the peasant children whose education he is entrusted with “just as if they were my own children.”³³⁶ Genzō is the perfect image of the down-on-his-luck *terakoya* teacher—maybe a samurai with only a nominal stipend trying to leverage his education into income—that many audience members would have been familiar with from their own educations.

The *terakoya* and *terakoya* teacher are familiar aspects of Edo-present commoner life inserted anachronistically into the Heian era. They reflexively superimpose the present onto the past, creating metafictional juxtaposition of the two eras. The discourse surrounding Heian—courtly elegance, imperial politics, princes, courtiers, etc.—is summoned and juxtaposed with the discourse surrounding Edo-present commoner life—urban culture, commoner education, samurai hegemony, etc.—creating the possibility of subversive (if counterfactual) connections between the two. Not only does text write urban commoners into a valorized past, allowing them to participate in the heroic narratives of history, the text is cleverly admixing and conflating Edo-present commoner life, dominated by samurai hegemony, with a political system which is outside and predates that hegemony. This effectively suggests the possibility of a commoner society, culture, and economy quite without the samurai rule that was supposed to be the lynchpin of the nation’s peace and prosperity. Of course, history here is not rewritten to suggest Edo urban commoners really existed in the pre-Tokugawa past; there is no narrative of escaping samurai hegemony—no narrative of revolution—but this intertextual playing with

³³⁵ Although Genzō wears two swords during, for example, the inspection of “Kan Shūsai’s” head, he is only wearing a short sword when he enters from the street via the *hanamichi* in the *Terakoya* scene. Nihon Haiyū Kyōkai, *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami*, vol. 8, disc 9, Kabukiza, sayonara kōen. (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2010).

³³⁶ Yokoyama Tadashi, ed., *Jōrurishū*, Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 45 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1971), 611. “*Wa ga ko mo dōzen.*”

history creates the playful suggestion that samurai hegemony is not as totalizing as official ideology would claim.

Crucially, although Michizane transmits his calligraphic secrets to Genzō, he does not welcome him back into the fold as his disciple: “The transmission is the transmission, the disownment is the disownment. This was a special circumstance. Although you are reprehensible, I couldn’t ignore your calligraphy skills,” Michizane spits at Genzō.³³⁷ Michizane creates a distinction here between the transmission of the secrets and the mentor-disciple relationship. It is not likely that someone would transmit his artistic secrets to another who is not even his disciple, but this conceit, however unlikely, means that Genzō receives the most valuable aristocratic cultural capital imaginable but will nonetheless continue teaching at his school. Because that school is a *terakoya*, precisely the site of radical juxtaposition of the commoner Edo-present with the past, the text claims that cultural capital for the commoners of the present, notably transmitted straight from the Heian court to Edo commoners, bypassing samurai who imagined themselves as Confucian scholar-gentlemen and cultural curators. It is unlikely Genzō will actually transmit those secrets to any of his child pupils, but those commoner students (and by extension Edo-commoners) can claim to have been taught by the recipient of the great Michizane’s calligraphy secrets. Commoner *terakoya* students are, in effect, Michizane’s *mago deshi* 孫弟子 (grand-disciples, a teacher’s pupil’s pupils). By anachronistically inserting a *terakoya* into the Heian era, the text has—however playfully, however intertextually—disrupted the teleology of Tokugawa and samurai rule.

It might seem unlikely that a play which so prominently features and valorizes loyalty to one’s master could be doing such subversive work. The Terakoya scene, in particular, is a *tour de force* of the conflict of *giri* 義理 (feudal duty) and *ninjō* 人情 (human emotion), a staple of kabuki and *ningyō jōruri* psychodrama. In the scene, several people make extreme sacrifices that are emotionally devastating in order to fulfill their feudal duty. Genzō and his wife, Tonami, decide to sacrifice one of their beloved students so that his head might stand in for that of their

³³⁷ Note also that Genzō receives the transmission in recognition for his skills, not for his social position. Ibid., 515-6. “*Denju wa denju kandō wa kandō. Kakubetsu no sata nareba. Futodoki naru nanji naredomo. Nōjo nareba suteokarezu.*”

young master, Kan Shūsai, whom the evil lord Shihei is hunting. Unbeknownst to them, Matsuōmaru (in Shihei's service, but having realized his original feudal obligation to Michizane) and his wife Chiyo have already decided to sacrifice their son, and brought him to the school for just this purpose. Genzō must behead a child: Matsuōmaru must inspect his own son's severed head and pronounce it that of Kan Shūsai. Although the plot of sacrificing a child for one's lord was a kabuki trope, the churning emotion created by this situation (highlighted by several *mie* 見栄, or dramatic poses) is a major draw for audiences. The play shows characters overcoming the most powerful emotions of parental love and enduring the most terrible grief in service of their lord, which could be plausibly read as a valorization of feudal loyalty. However, Kawatake Toshio has written that this precisely highlights the absurdity of a feudal system that required such terrible sacrifices from its subjects:

The real theme of *Terakoya* is emphasizing the anger, resignation, sadness, etc., at an inhuman system that even required one to substitute one's own child for one's lord. Genzō's line when he and his wife decide that they have no other choice but to kill their brand new student Kotarō, not knowing that he is Matsuō's child, as a substitute for their lord, expresses this clearly: "one should never serve a master" (*semajiki mono wa miya-zukae* せまじきものは宮仕え).³³⁸

Japan's censors during World War II certainly thought this line (which has become idiomatic) was subversive of the loyalty they wanted to instill in citizens, as the line was amended during wartime performances.³³⁹ Therefore, Kawatake finds resistance in *Terakoya*, in the very extremeness of the acts of feudal loyalty depicted. However, while this is a plausible reading, as discussed above, commoner audiences often internalized those same samurai values of loyalty, courage, sacrifice, etc., and tried to claim them for their own (especially since so many real samurai seemed to lack them) rather than reject or propose alternatives to samurai values. If resistance is to be located in this play, it seems more plausible to locate it in the anachronism, a

³³⁸ Kawatake Toshio, *Kabuki no sekai: kyozō to jitsuzō* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1974), 141. "‘*Terakoya*’ no shin no tēma wa, shukun no tame ni wa ga ko o migawari ni sae shinakereba naranai, sono hiningensei ni taisuru ikari, akirame, kanashimi nado no kyōchō ni aru. Matsuō no ko to wa shiranu Genzō fūfu ga, ima terairi shita bakari no Kotarō o migawari ni korosu hoka nai to kesshin shita toki no, ‘semajiki mono wa miya-zukae’ to iu hitokoto no serifu ni, sore ga hakkiri utawareteiru."

³³⁹ *ibid.*

dialogical juxtaposition that did not reject or overwrite samurai values, samurai hegemony, or the history of samurai ascendance, but instead created deliciously subversive new possibilities of Edo commoner culture existing in and gaining cultural legitimacy from the Heian past.

3.3.3 – *Sukeroku yukari no Edo-zakura*

Sukeroku yukari no Edo-zakura 助六由縁江戸桜 (Sukeroku the cherry blossom of Edo, 1713)³⁴⁰ is one of the *kabuki jūhachiban* 歌舞伎十八番, or the eighteen favorite plays of the famous Ichikawa acting lineage of actors. The titular Sukeroku is a representative example of the *aragoto* acting style and a signature role of Ichikawa Danjūrō 市川團十郎 (whoever happens to hold the name). Gerstle has stated that “the essence of *aragoto* is defiance toward the samurai,”³⁴¹ and Sukeroku certainly seems to be a fine example. The play mainly consists of his romping through the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters taunting and provoking samurai. He is “the townsmen’s townsman,”³⁴² both a vigorous street brawler and a great lover—a *tsū* connoisseur of the pleasure quarters—who puts to shame officious samurai who try to lean on their status in Yoshiwara. In his famous entrance scene, after dramatically coming in via the *hanamichi* 花道 (runway), all the smitten courtesans of Yoshiwara rush to give him their pipes, while the pompous samurai Ikyū receives none. Sukeroku then condescends to give Ikyū one of his pipes, insultingly passing it to him with his foot.³⁴³

It might seem that a portrayal so blatantly disrespectful of samurai would run afoul of state censorship, but there is a twist: Sukeroku is actually Soga Gorō 曾我五郎, the famous twelfth-century samurai. The Soga story was one of the most popular vendetta stories. In the twelfth century, Soga Gorō’s father was killed by Kudō Suketsune. He and his brother, Soga Jūrō 曾我十郎, were only children at the time, but they never forgot their filial duty to their father

³⁴⁰ Available in translation as Tsuuchi Jihei II and Tsuuchi Hanemon, “Sukeroku: Flower of Edo,” in *Kabuki: Five Classic Plays*, trans. James R. Brandon (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992), 49–92.

³⁴¹ Gerstle, “Eighteenth-century,” 91.

³⁴² *ibid.*, 96.

³⁴³ NBKT v. 98, 94.

and, after eighteen years of growing and waiting, finally succeeded in killing Suketsune. This story has been told and retold countless times in a myriad of formats: textual, oral, and dramatic.³⁴⁴ It constitutes a *sekai*, a shared textual world, subject to the intervention of *shukō*, which is apparent in *Sukeroku* (although perhaps it is more correct to say that the addition of the Soga story was a *shukō* in the *Sukeroku* story; Thornbury shows how the story of *Sukeroku* and his lover *Agemaki* existed as a love suicide for some time before the Soga element was added).³⁴⁵ In any case, the result is that in this play, *Sukeroku* is actually a *yatsushi* *Soga Gorō*, disguising himself as a street brawler. The conceit is that he needs a precious sword given to his father by *Yoshitsune*—now in the possession of *Ikyū*—in order to legitimate himself as its heir and carry out his famous revenge, so he must go around provoking samurai into drawing their swords so that he can inspect whether or not they have the sword he seeks. So while audiences could enjoy the delicious appearance of a commoner insulting and defying samurai, in the end no class boundaries have been transgressed, because *Sukeroku* is actually a samurai—in fact a samurai of the most unimpeachable moral quality.

Most significantly for this study, the play is supremely anachronistic. It mixes the *sewamono* story of *Sukeroku* and *Agemaki* with the twelfth-century Soga *sekai*, meaning the text of *Sukeroku yukari no Edo-zakura* is anachronistic. Significantly, the text does not change the setting to a more historically appropriate location, such as the Gion pleasure quarters in Kyoto,³⁴⁶ which is where much of *Kanadehon chūshingura* is set. Gion was understood to be a stand-in for *Yoshiwara*, but it is historically appropriate for the *Taiheiki* setting of that play. *Sukeroku*, however, explicitly calls its setting *Yoshiwara*. To pick just one example, in provoking the arrogant samurai *Monbei*, *Sukeroku* mockingly (because *Monbei* is unimportant) asks “is there anyone who does not know this gentleman? He can’t hide anywhere in this Edo, let alone this *Yoshiwara*,”³⁴⁷ establishing that the play is set in the *Yoshiwara* pleasure quarters in Edo. During his famous *nanori* 名乗り (declaring one’s name), *Sukeroku* even says “listen, any lowlife

³⁴⁴ For an overview of the development of the Soga story, see *Kominz*, 16-78.

³⁴⁵ *Thornbury*, 58-65.

³⁴⁶ Actually just outside the official *Shimabara* licensed quarter.

³⁴⁷ *NKBT* v. 98, 99. “*Kono kata o shiranu mono ga aru mono ka. Kono Yoshiwara wa iu ni oyobazu, kono Edo ni wa kakure wa nee.*”

setting foot in these five blocks (*gochōmachi*) should know my name.”³⁴⁸ *Gochōmachi* 五丁町 refers specifically to the new Yoshiwara built after the original burned down in 1657. There can be no mistake that this play is set in the Edo present—and it must be, for Sukeroku, with his trademark “Edo lavender” headband³⁴⁹ and *aragoto* brashness, is a celebration of the *Edokko* 江戸っ子, the “child of Edo,” a term proudly adopted by *chōnin* to describe the characteristic rough-and-ready personality of the Edo urban commoner.³⁵⁰ This pride was intimately tied up with a sense of place—the Edo-present city of Edo. A proper celebration of the *Edokko* must be set in the city of Edo. Yet Sukeroku is also Soga Gorō, the (probably) historical twelfth-century samurai. This is not a forgotten artifact of iterative playwriting, it is front and center in the story. The plot revolves around Gorō and Jūrō acquiring their father’s sword, which they succeed in doing. We assume that once the play ends, they go off to take their famous revenge, which will eventually be remembered in the Yoshiwara quarters in the Edo present. There is no narrative explanation for this temporal contradiction, it is a conspicuous, unresolved anachronism.

This anachronism juxtaposes the twelfth century and the Edo period, superimposing them—and superimposing Sukeroku on Soga Gorō—in a way that keeps the narrative of history that separates them intact, yet allows surprising new connections to form between them. It is a postmodern anachronism; it does not rewrite history, but playfully opens up history to new possibilities even as it calls attention to that project and its historical impossibility. The superimposition of Sukeroku on Soga Gorō (or vice versa) superimposes a commoner on a samurai—but not just any commoner, and not just any samurai. Sukeroku is an exaggerated caricature of an *Edokko*, engaging in extremes of behavior deemed immoral by official samurai ideology: brawling in the street, insulting samurai, and frequenting the pleasure quarters. Soga Gorō is not just any samurai, but a legend, and a major historical model of samurai moral superiority. The shogunate viewed revenge for a feudal master or family member as a moral good, exemplary of the Confucian virtue of filial piety, and even had bureaucratic systems in

³⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 102. “*Ikasama, kono gochōmachi e sune o fungomu yarōmera wa, ore ga na o kiite oke.*”

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*

³⁵⁰ Thornbury, 60.

place to approve and investigate revenge killings.³⁵¹ The willingness of samurai to go to the ends of the earth to carry out a vendetta was a major edifice in the construction of a samurai moral superiority that legitimated samurai status and political hegemony. The Soga brothers were a famous historical example of this samurai moral action, easily the best-known vengeance story until the sensational Akō incident of 1703.

Anachronistically, this historical exemplar of samurai morality is juxtaposed with an exemplar of Edo-present commoner immorality. The combination seems unlikely, but this playful juxtaposition—the mixture of seemingly disparate *moe yōso* in Azuma’s terms, or the pleasurable combination of incongruous “cards” in Jameson’s—allows the connections between the two to become visible. Sukeroku, we see thanks to the evocation of the discourse on historical moral samurai, is in fact morally righteous. He is forthright and fair, devoted to his moral goal of revenge rather than enjoying his rank. His scorn is reserved for samurai who have strayed from their moral path and use their status to tyrannize commoners in the pleasure quarters, forgetting the “two paths” of literary and martial virtue. Monbei and Ikyū, mentioned above, are exactly two such samurai.

The anachronism here effectively uses a celebrated samurai of the past to criticize the samurai of the present, showing that the rulers of the Edo-present do not live up to their own historical legitimators. But it also claims that twelfth-century samurai for the urban commoners of the present. By creating an impossible, anachronistic connection between the twelfth and eighteenth (or nineteenth, in later productions) centuries, it implies that Edo urban commoners are the true inheritors of Soga Gorō and other legendary historical figures, not the venal samurai that claim him. As mentioned in the discussion above, it can be tempting to read Sukeroku as an avatar of class struggle against samurai narratives. But as Nakano Mitsutoshi argues, Sukeroku does not struggle against samurai ideology, he exemplifies it.³⁵² His scorn for and punishment of Monbei, Ikyū, and other samurai in the play is the righteous samurai’s duty

³⁵¹ David Atherton, “Valences of Vengeance: The Moral Imagination of Early Modern Japanese Vendetta Fiction” (Ph.D., Columbia University, 2013), 30-1.

³⁵² Cited in Chapter 3.1. Nakano Mitsutoshi, *Edo bunka hyōbanki: gazoku yūwa no sekai* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), 28-29.

to punish those who have strayed from samurai moral virtue. *Sukeroku* does not undermine samurai narratives, but appropriates them for *chōnin* to question the rule of the particular venal, boorish, decadent samurai that happen to be in charge. It uses anachronism to create a connection between Soga Gorō and *Edokko* that is obviously ahistorical, yet now somehow plausible: *Edokko* are closer to Soga Gorō's moral virtue than Edo present samurai. They better represent samurai virtue than samurai themselves.

Of course, the work the anachronism does is not unidirectional. The new intertextual connections formed by juxtaposing past and present also do work on history. The text associates Soga Gorō with *Sukeroku*—again, a larger-than-life caricature of (from the regime's perspective) supposedly immoral commoner behavior.³⁵³ A great gulf of history, class, and ideology separates the twelfth-century samurai from an Edo-present commoner, and it is clearly ahistorical to suggest they were similar. Yet the use of anachronism playfully opens up the possibility of a connection. It effectively denatures Soga Gorō as a heroic paragon of samurai morality, and therefore as a part of the cultural legitimation of samurai rule. For Edo theatregoers, Soga Gorō is associated with *Sukeroku*—even though those theatregoers know there is no actual, historical connection: history is not rewritten. Nonetheless, the use of Soga Gorō to legitimate samurai caste status and hegemony has been undermined. Of course, this is paradoxical: Soga Gorō's moral surety legitimates the Edo-present *Edokko* even as that moral surety is simultaneously being undermined. But, of course, postmodern literature is no stranger to paradox, and neither is Edo literature, which shares many of postmodern literature's features.

There are many anachronisms in Edo theatrical works that are not major plot or character elements, but merely small references in otherwise historical works. Nonetheless, these small anachronisms can do significant work. For example, *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan* 東海道四谷怪談 (Yotsuya ghost stories on the Tōkaidō, 1825) by Tsuruya Nanboku IV is set in the *sekai* of *Chūshingura*, but weaves in a shocking *shukō*. Following the late-Edo taste for villainy

³⁵³ Although, of course, samurai participated in these sorts of behaviors as well.

and the macabre, *Yotsuya kaidan* focuses on lemon, one of the forty-seven retainers, and depicts him as not loyal at all. He is, in fact, morally reprehensible. He kills the father of Oiwa, a woman he is interested in, and uses a promise to find the killer and avenge the murder to entice her to marry him. In the act usually performed, after showing a complete disregard and lack of affection for Oiwa and his newborn child by her, lemon agrees to have her poisoned so he can marry a younger woman from a wealthy family. The spectacle of the play focuses on the transformation of Oiwa into a vengeful ghost after the poison horribly disfigures her and she is killed.

Clearly this text can be read as subversive, taking one of the forty-seven loyal retainers that successfully carried out a vendetta for their master, a paragon of samurai virtue, and transforming him into the worst kind of criminal. The anachronism here is small and subtle, but telling. As he refuses to avenge Oiwa's father's murder, lemon remarks "nowadays, avenging one's parents is so old-fashioned" ("*ima jibun, oya no kataki mo anmari kofū da*" 今時分、親の仇もあんまり古風だ).³⁵⁴ Of course, this is quite untrue of the period in which the *sekai* is set: revenge was important in both the fourteenth and early eighteenth centuries. This rather refers to the present of the play's debut performance, when the number of vendettas by samurai had been falling precipitously since the mid-eighteenth century.³⁵⁵ The anachronism here reflexively inserts the present into the past to call attention to the fact that present-day samurai would not likely pursue a vendetta as the Akō samurai did.³⁵⁶ Past and present are juxtaposed to suggest that present samurai would not live up to their own historical heroes and legitimating myths. Furthermore, by anachronistically putting the (likely) words of a nineteenth-century samurai into lemon's mouth, the intertextual *sekai* connections with other *Chūshingura* plays suggest that lemon is representative of present-day samurai. If the forty-seven retainers are supposed to be loyal and moral (as shown in so many other representations), lemon's

³⁵⁴ Nanboku Tsuruya, *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan*, ed. Gunji Masakatsu, Shinchō Nihon koten shūsei 45 (Tōkyō: Shinchōsha, 1981), 170.

³⁵⁵ *ibid.*, n. 4.

³⁵⁶ This was partly due to policies from the shogunate that discouraged vendettas in late Edo, not just to the degeneracy of individual samurai. But despite this vendettas remained a fixture of samurai moral legitimation. Therefore the text's critique is equally effective if read as leveled at the government rather than samurai degeneracy in general.

criminality and moral degeneration in this particular manifestation of the *sekai* must be the result of samurai no longer caring about vendettas (and by implication, the samurai moral order), much like the samurai of the present. This anachronism is just one line, not a major plot device like Sukeroku's double identity. However, when the play first debuted in 1825 its scenes were performed on alternate days, with scenes from *Chūshingura* performed between them, allowing the classic story of eighteenth-century samurai loyalty to be juxtaposed with nineteenth-century samurai perfidy, and contrasted strongly against it.³⁵⁷ This anachronistic line, then, reinforced the comparison with the representative work of the *sekai*, metadramatically calling attention to larger project of exposing the moral gap between eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century samurai.

This study presents major anachronisms in representative works of Edo theatre that are doing significant work on history and the historical legitimation of power. But Edo theatre is also peppered with countless small anachronisms that may not quite challenge sociopolitical systems, but still evoke and juxtapose past and present for some (often comic) effect. When Sehei in *Kenuki* (tweezers, another of the *kabuki jūhachiban*, set in the Heian era), mentions buying "a mansion as big as a horse racetrack in Kōtsu shinchi,"³⁵⁸ he is referencing a district in Osaka newly developed with mansions and teahouses three years prior to the play's debut in 1742, and a contemporary topic of gossip.³⁵⁹ This anachronism does less work than, say, Sukeroku's appropriation of a historical hero, but it does metafictionally superimpose the cityscape of the present onto that of the past, creating new connections between the two, as it playfully pokes fun at the oversized houses of the wealthy. There are far too many such small anachronisms in Edo theatre to treat here, and the text of each new performance introduces the opportunity for more. However, this study should at least show that these anachronisms are not only comic devices: they evoke and juxtapose history, sometimes opening up both the past and the present to new meaning and critique.

³⁵⁷ James R. Brandon and Samuel L. Leiter, eds., *Kabuki Plays on Stage*, vol. 4 (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2002), 136.

³⁵⁸ NKBT v. 98, 262. "*Kōtsu shinchi de uma noriba hodo no yashiki.*"

³⁵⁹ *ibid.*, n. 2.

CONCLUSION

While some literary anachronism may be mere error, by now it should be clear that many—perhaps most—anachronisms are doing some kind of work on history. Even anachronisms introduced as thoughtless errors by authors, playwrights, or directors may still succeed in metafictionally juxtaposing past and present for readers and viewers. And, of course, what I term modern anachronisms may not be recognized as anachronisms at all, by either authors or readers. This is exactly why they have such power to legitimate the present as teleological, by retrojecting present-day ideology into the past. Because modern anachronisms are not recognized as such they can convincingly rewrite history, making it seem as if the grand narratives of the present are not constructed, but rather self-evident throughout history. By rewriting the past, they allow power to construct a narrative that places the present on a historical trajectory, and legitimizes the exercise of power to move society towards the utopia or enlightenment at the end of that trajectory.

In postmodernity, however, the will to power is suspect, as are the grand narratives that support it. Unlike modern anachronisms, which must hide the historical work they are doing, postmodern anachronisms reflexively call attention to themselves, relishing either the playful insertion of present-day objects into the past or a mixture of eras that is obviously absurd or impossible. In postmodernity rewriting history is recognized as an act of power, yet there is still a desire to play with history. Not only can the discourse of history, opened up for play, give pleasure to players of Lyotard's language games, but history must be opened up in order to expose and denature modernity's enduring projects.

History has, after all, been weighed down by modernity's appropriation of it, freighted with significance as a source of the nation, the class, the revolution, identity, and even individuality. Honneth, as mentioned in the Introduction, defines a grand narrative, modernity's key legitimator of the will to power in its various forms, as "a philosophy of history which construes the history of the species as a process of emancipation" or "a philosophy of history

which construes the process of history as a realization of Reason in the sciences."³⁶⁰ Narrative history, in other words, is nothing less than the engine that legitimated power in modernity, the source of the "cultural value system" in Spanos's term, which Power uses to maintain its authority.³⁶¹

Of course, postmodernism is characterized by suspicion of the will to power, and as a natural consequence also features suspicion of the narratives that legitimated power, as Lyotard notes. Since these narratives are exactly history, one might reason that postmodernity should therefore be suspicious of history. Instead, however, postmodernism seems to delight in history. Linda Hutcheon has identified "the presence of the past" as an important postmodern concept, but writes that "this is not a nostalgic return; it is a critical revisiting, an ironic dialog with the past of both art and society."³⁶² Postmodernity does not abandon history, but rather rethinks it as a human construct, available to us only through textuality.³⁶³ And as a text, history becomes susceptible to the textual play that is so characteristic of postmodernism (and coincidentally Edo culture as well), and is gleefully subjected to parody, pastiche, and meme propagation (witness the recent internet explosion of black-and-white images of ancient American presidents with anachronistic captions).³⁶⁴ History is transformed from the serious business of modernity to a source of fun, another of Lyotard's language games that postmodern subjects delight in.

But this play is rarely innocent: by reconfiguring history as text, postmodern play disarms modernity's powerful apparatus of legitimation and also makes history inconclusive in the sense of destroying its teleology and opening it up to new meaning. It is one of Bakhtin's "buffoon spectacles," an example of the "heteroglossia of the clown" that contests the forces

³⁶⁰ Axel Honneth, "An Aversion against the Universal. A Commentary on Lyotard's Postmodern Condition," *Theory, Culture & Society* 2, no. 3 (November 1, 1985): 151.

³⁶¹ William V. Spanos, "De-Struction and the Question of Postmodern Literature: Towards a Definition," *Par Rapport* 2, no. 2 (1979): 23.

³⁶² Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 4.

³⁶³ *ibid.*, 16.

³⁶⁴ To give one of the tamer examples: a photograph of Teddy Roosevelt edited with glasses fashionable among twenty-first century urban youth, and a caption reading "Hipster Teddy Roosevelt, created national parks before being eco-friendly was cool."

of national and socio-ideological unification and centralization.³⁶⁵ This is play that must call attention to itself as play, as absurd, acknowledging that it does not claim to represent historical truth (for that is modernity's sin), relinquishing any power to rewrite history, and instead attempting to break apart the totalizing certainties of modernity's historiography. Anachronism is precisely this kind of play.

The texts examined here have all used anachronism to play with history, albeit in very different ways and for very different projects. *Man'en gannen no futtabōru* uses anachronism as a "third way," an alternative to both modernity's appropriation of history to legitimate power and to the despairing absolute refusal to allow history to be modified to provide hope in the present. Although modernity's rewriting of history dies in the 1960s with Takashi and his revolt, and the hard truths of history will never again be elided, anachronism in dream and visions will allow history to be played with (although never altered) to provide hope for the present. *Hi no tori*, on the other hand, uses anachronism to deconstruct the official history of Japanese Empire that Tezuka grew up with, and which legitimated power so disastrously during his youth. Gods, heroes, and legends are juxtaposed with contemporary, popular, and vulgar discourses one after the other—hardly a single one left untouched—denaturing their sacredness and solemnity, and ultimately undermining their ability to legitimate present-day power. Meanwhile, popular works such as *Gintama*, *Naruto*, and *Samurai chanpurū* admix the Edo period and the twenty-first century in order to enable the past to again be accessible as a source of identity for the present. Their anachronistic juxtapositions are clearly too absurd to rewrite history in the manner of modern anachronisms; everyone is aware of the narrative history that leads from the Edo period to the Heisei period, including the ugly episodes of fascism, colonialism, war, destruction, and occupation. All of that is allowed to remain intact, but it is playfully set aside for a moment in the creation of a fictional world where the Edo period and the Heisei period are interoperable. Although everyone understands that this is impossible and ahistorical, there is pleasure to be had in this language game that mischievously subverts historiography. At the same time, by showing Edo and Heisei as interoperable, the

³⁶⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 273.

juxtaposition creates the possibility (however fictional) of the Edo period as a source of heritage and identity for Heisei people that overcomes the irreconcilable differences between the eras, and is not mediated by the sordid, recent past. Such anachronism opens up history to new possibilities, even as it refuses to rewrite it.

The Edo period had an utterly different set of social, economic, and political circumstances from those of the postwar Shōwa and Heisei periods. Consequently, its fictions are involved in very different projects. Nevertheless, Edo also possessed a mature, highly developed textual society. Without claiming equivalence between Edo and those later periods, we see that Edo literature and theatre employ “postmodern anachronism” as well—that is, the same technique of using reflexively counterfactual historical juxtaposition to do work on (or with) history—even if Edo as a whole was not quite “postmodern”. *Ōmu-gaeshi bunbu no futamichi* anachronistically juxtaposes the Edo present with the Heian era to both poke fun at the moral degeneracy of Edo-present samurai and to undermine the legitimating power of great samurai of the past. By superimposing the Engi emperor on the shogun, it also deviously turns the shogunate’s ideology of historical legitimation back on itself, creating equivalence between an inept emperor and the present ruler. *Daihi no senrokuhon*, meanwhile, juxtaposes great samurai of the past with the commercial, vulgar, commoner culture of the present, undermining those great samurai’s ability to legitimate power in the present. On the other hand, *Nansō Satomi hakkenden* uses subtle anachronism to subvert and critique the Tokugawa regime’s history of its ascension and military prowess. Likewise, *Nise Murasaki inaka Genji* uses anachronism to associate the elegant Heian aristocrats of *The Tale of Genji* with Edo-period urban commoners and high noble ladies with courtesans. It punctures the closed worlds of both the imperial and shogunal courts, and by superimposing a shogun of the past upon the shogun of the present, even breaks into the cloistered spaces of power in Edo Castle. Meanwhile, on the stages of the raucous Edo popular theater, *Sugawara denju tenarai kagami* uses anachronism to subversively show Edo-present commoners operating in the Heian imperial political system, outside of the totalizing Tokugawa political/ideological system. It also suggests that Edo commoners, through the anachronistic *terakoya*, are recipients of Sugawara no Michizane’s teachings. The text claims his prestigious cultural capital for commoners,

transmitted outside of samurai curation of culture. *Sukeroku yukari no Edo-zakura* uses anachronism to suggest that the legendary Soga Gorō actually has more in common with commoner *Edokko* than the vain, pompous, immoral samurai of the Edo present. Finally, *Tōkaidō Yotsuya kaidan* slyly uses subtle anachronistic language to draw attention to the moral degeneracy of nineteenth-century samurai.

This examination of anachronism and anachronistic projects in the literature of the postmodern and Edo periods is hardly exhaustive, but it is hopefully a representative sample of the uses of anachronism in Japanese literature and a demonstration of the wide variety of work that anachronism can do. It should be noted that there are many other forms of historical juxtaposition that were deliberately excluded from this study because, while they might be similar to anachronism, they perform their work slightly differently. For example, texts with actual diegetic time travel are not examined here. This includes both modern works like the film *Chonmage purin* ちょんまげぷりん (Topknot pudding, 2010),³⁶⁶ about an Edo-period samurai who is brought to the twenty-first century through divine intervention, as well as Edo-period works like Jōkanbō Kōa's 静観房好阿 *Imayō heta dangi* 当世下手談義 (Inept lectures in the modern style, 1752)³⁶⁷ which features the ghost of Kudō Suketsune appearing in the Edo present to criticize Soga plays. In their different ways, both feature a person from the past time-traveling to the present. Like anachronism, this time travel juxtaposes the discourses of past and present, but unlike anachronism it explicitly and diegetically acknowledges the incompatibility between the past and present. The first half of *Chonmage purin*, for example, follows the time-traveling samurai's struggles to comprehend the very alien twenty-first century Japan: Edo and Heisei are not interoperable, as they are with anachronism. After a period of personal struggle, the samurai does eventually find a way to fit in; the incompatibilities between Edo and Heisei are addressed and the possibilities for resolution and compatibility are introduced, but this is done fictionally, rather than metafictionally. While the juxtaposition of historical discourses is similar to that performed by anachronism, it is not quite

³⁶⁶ Nakamura Yoshihiro, *Chonmage Purin* (J Storm, 2010). Called *A Boy and His Samurai* in English.

³⁶⁷ Available in translation as Haruo Shirane, ed., "Modern-Style Lousy Sermons," in *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900*, trans. Satoru Saito (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 452–61.

the same, and so the great multitude of works featuring time travel in one form or another have been excluded from this study.

Also excluded are works that update historical religious figures. For example, the manga *Seinto oniisan* 聖おにいさん (English subtitle *Saint Young Men*, 2006-present)³⁶⁸ comically features both Jesus and the historical Buddha taking a vacation from their heavenly duties and living together as roommates in present-day Tokyo. Similarly, Hiraga Gennai's *Nenashigusa* 根南志具佐 (rootless grass, 1763)³⁶⁹ features Enma, the Buddhist god of the dead, falling in love with Edo-modern theatre, and even attempting to kidnap a kabuki actor he has become smitten with. These religious figures are located in the past,³⁷⁰ and placing them in the present, common, everyday world juxtaposes discourses on the past and present in a fashion similar to anachronism. However, while these figures originated in the past they are supposed to have existed continuously since then, watching over developments in the human world from their various divine planes up to the present day. They come from the past but still exist in the present. Therefore, strictly speaking, they are not anachronistic or time travelers at all. This updating of religious figures—which both destabilizes their sanctity and appropriates them for contemporary popular culture—is fascinating, but it falls outside of the scope of this study.

While historical dislocations like time travel are certainly not foreign to modern literature (H.G. Wells's seminal *The Time Machine* was published in 1895), it is probably not coincidence that they have become a major theme of literature—at least genre literature—and popular culture in the postmodern era. Like anachronism, time travel can (although it certainly does not always) allow history to be opened up to new possibilities, puncturing its closed-off sanctity, and reclaiming it from modernity's many abuses of it. Like anachronism, it can do this without repeating the mistakes of modernity and rewriting that history, and ultimately legitimating a will to power. Although outside the scope of the present study, the time travel

³⁶⁸ Serialized in *Morning 2*, volume 1 is available as Hikaru Nakamura, *Seinto oniisan*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Kodansha, 2008).

³⁶⁹ Available in translation as Haruo Shirane, ed., "Rootless Weeds," in *Early Modern Japanese Literature: An Anthology, 1600-1900*, trans. Chris Drake (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 462–86.

³⁷⁰ Although Enma is not historical, he is still associated with a religious order located in a sanctified, closed world of the timeless past.

trope deserves to be further investigated as another method of historical juxtaposition, as does the somewhat rarer updating of religious figures, and could be a topic of future studies.

In any case, while time travel is not in danger of being dismissed as mere error or unimportant gag, anachronism is—and it has usually suffered such a fate, as discussed in the Introduction. However, this study should have made clear that while anachronism is often playful, comedic buffoonery, it is rarely innocent or devoid of consequence. Rather, as Bakhtin writes, it breaks open an “epic past” which is “absolute and complete.”³⁷¹ An anachronism may be a gag deployed for a quick laugh, the result of mixing two textual worlds, or even an error the author did not notice, but it still has the effect of slyly juxtaposing the discourses on the past and the present in a way that had not been considered before. The cards of the past and present are put together in delightfully fresh ways; they are *moe yōso* extracted from the cultural database and reassembled in new combinations without their original narrative—not erasing that narrative but setting it aside. History can be denatured, it can be repurposed for the projects of the present even when that purposing is ahistorical, its ability to legitimate power can be undermined, or any variety of other historical work can be done. Anachronism is occasionally an error, often absurd, and sometimes humorous, but it is always a radical site of historical instability that works to destabilize, open up, juxtapose, reconsider, and ultimately play with the highly contested and vital discourse on history.

³⁷¹ Bakhtin, 16.

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