

## CHAPTER 24

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# JAPANESE MODERNISM AND "CINE-TEXT": FRAGMENTS AND FLOWS AT EMPIRE'S EDGE IN KITAGAWA FUYUHIKO AND YOKOMITSU RIICHI

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IN November 1930, literary critic Inoue Yoshio wrote that the "belief in the eye" evident in Kitagawa Fuyuhiko's recent poetry had progressed from a faith in the human eye to a belief in "that which is all the more precise, all the more objective: to the machine eye—to the lens" (17).<sup>1</sup> This critical comment, strongly evocative of Soviet filmmaker and theorist Dziga Vertov's conception of the "cine-eye" (*kinoglaz*), builds upon Kitagawa's own statement that "the poetry of tomorrow is advancing toward the 'victory of the eye'" (Usawa 30). As Inoue suggests, Kitagawa's poetry circa 1930 displays a tendency to emulate the film camera, rather than the human eye, in presenting objects that are disassociated from the viewpoint of any single subjective viewing position. This aspiration to the free-ranging and "objective" viewpoint of the "machine eye" is part of a broad confluence between the literary and the cinematic in Kitagawa's work, which we can also identify in his exploration of the poetic genre of the "cinépoème," as well as his coinage of the term "prose film" in his later critical and theoretical writings on cinema. As I will

explore in this essay, Kitagawa's writings from the 1920s and 1930s, together with the contemporaneous works of prose author Yokomitsu Riichi, are strongly marked by this confluence of the literary and the cinematic—so much so that we might term Kitagawa and Yokomitsu's writing from this period "cine-text": literary and critical texts permeated with cinematic qualities and concerns.

Indeed, Kitagawa and Yokomitsu's engagement with film was not limited to a fascination with the precision, objectivity, or mobility of the "camera eye" as Inoue suggests. Rather, it extended to the entire ability of the cinematic apparatus to capture the temporality of objects in motion, and of the ability of the filmmaker, through film editing or montage, to organize segments of space and time registered by the film camera into a new synthetic whole: a set of issues I will schematize as the relationship between "fragment" and "flow." Furthermore, in Kitagawa and Yokomitsu's work, this interest in cinematicity was inextricably linked with an exploration of the nature of modern subjectivity under the regimes of capitalism and the economic and geopolitical competition of imperialism. In this essay, I will explore this confluence of the literary and cinematic—together with its political implications—through a brief examination of four instances of "cine-text": Kitagawa's poetry collection *War* (*Sensô* 1929, untranslated), Yokomitsu's novel *Shanghai* (*Shanghai* 1928–1932), the concept of literary formalism Yokomitsu proposed around the year 1930, and the theory of the "prose film" that Kitagawa unveiled in the following decade.<sup>2</sup>

## JAPANESE MODERNISM

Cinema, with its extensive technical complex of studio-based filming and production, international and domestic circuits of distribution, and local sites of consumption—the movie theaters—had thoroughly penetrated Japanese urban culture by the 1920s. A Japanese film almanac compiled in 1930 lists thirteen domestic film studios as well as 1,244 cinema theaters in Japan and 63 in the colonies, admitting over 192 million customers a year (*Kokusai eiga tsûshinsha* 5). The same almanac cites 2,863 Japanese films newly submitted to censorship in the Home Ministry in the year 1929, together with 741 American films and 275 European films, indicating both the prodigious output of the Japanese film industry and a substantial national appetite for foreign films (163–67).<sup>3</sup> The almanac also lists nearly seven thousand *benshi*, or film narrators, employed in the movie theaters, although by 1930 these distinctive representatives of silent-era Japanese cinema culture were already under pressure owing to the advent of "talkies" or sound film (159).<sup>4</sup> Beyond sheer numbers, the surviving Japanese films of the 1920s and 1930s—including works by such masters as Mizoguchi Kenji, Ozu Yasujiro, and Itô Daisuke—as well as the vivid pages of film journals such

as *Kinema junpo*, attest to a vibrant and cosmopolitan film culture rivaling that of any of the great metropolitan centers across the globe.

This extensive cinema was but one aspect of the modern urban culture that helped to generate and sustain a Japanese modernist literature in the 1920s and 1930s. Following the victories in the Sino-Japanese (1894–1895) and Russo-Japanese (1904–1905) wars, which demonstrated the success of the Meiji government's "rich nation, strong army" program of rapid economic and military development, Japan progressively expanded its formal empire and its informal sphere of influence in Asia and the Pacific. Subsequently, Japan's urban centers underwent a rapid period of population growth and infrastructural development in the 1910s and 1920s, including the construction of new factory zones, business centers, subways, and suburban commuter lines, as well as a glamorous consumer culture represented by the cafes and department stores of the Ginza. Rapid developments in media and communications technology included not only the establishment of a national radio broadcasting network (the present-day NHK) in 1926 and new markets opened by the publishing industry but also the dramatic expansion of newspaper circulation (nearly doubling in the early 1920s), the establishment of new mass-circulation magazines, and a literary publishing boom inaugurated in 1926 by the publication of so-called *enpon* book series available for subscription at one yen a piece.

In the popular journalism of the day, young people who embraced the new lifestyles offered by the cinemas, cafes, department stores, and commuting centers of the modern city were referred to as "modern girls" (*modan gâru* or *moga*) and "modern boys" (*modan boi* or *mobo*), and the literature that described their lifestyles—often published in the new popular magazines as well as literary journals—was identified by such critics as Ôya Sôichi and Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke as "modernism" (*modanizumu*). At the same time, writers, artists, filmmakers, and theater directors showed a keen interest in the development of European avant-gardes. Futurism, Dadaism, Cubism, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Constructivism were all introduced and extensively debated in the 1920s, and home-grown avant-garde movements emerged, such as the Mavo artists' group and the Shinkankakuha (New Perception School) literary faction. Japanese literary modernism of the 1920s and 1930s is thus characterized by the free exchange of thematic material and stylistic devices between avant-garde groups and the "popular modernism" or "vernacular modernism" developed in the popular press, as well as niche magazines and journals such as *New Youth* (*Shinseinen*) and *Literary Metropolis* (*Bungei toshi*).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, as in other modernist contexts such as the contemporary Parisian literary world, there was a heated exchange of ideas between print literature and other media, especially the cinema, further intensifying the circuit between "high" and "low" cultures.

Yokomitsu Riichi (1889–1947) is one of the foremost representatives of modernist literature to emerge from within the highbrow or "pure literature" wing of the literary establishment, as opposed to the popular modernism developed by such magazines as *New Youth*. In 1924, together with Kawabata Yasunari, Yokomitsu led a

group of young writers in breaking from the journal *Literary Seasons* (*Bungei shunjū*) to found the journal *Literary Age* (*Bungei jidai*). Soon after, critic Chiba Kameo dubbed this breakaway group the Shinkankakuha or New Perception School, capturing in this appellation the group's focus on conveying the neurological and somatic experience of contemporary urban life. Yokomitsu embraced the name and became the group's chief propagandist and theoretician. Nevertheless, despite Yokomitsu's firm roots in the elite wing of the literary establishment, it is important to note that the concepts "pure literature" (*jun bungaku*) and "mass literature" (*taishū bungaku*), which became relatively naturalized in the postwar period, were still under construction and debate in the 1920s, and, as already mentioned, Japanese modernism was characterized by the intercourse of themes, styles, audiences, and writerly affiliations between popular and highbrow literatures, as well as exchanges across literary and non-literary media. As one example of this intercourse, Yokomitsu and his fellow writers of the Shinkankakuha showed an intense interest in cinema, launching a film journal, *Film Age* (*Eiga jidai*) in 1926, collaborating with filmmaker Kinugasa Teinosuke to found the New Perception School Film Alliance (Shinkankakuha eiga renmei), and producing the noted avant-garde film *A Page of Madness* (*Kurutta Ippaiji* 1926), directed by Kinugasa from a script by Kawabata.<sup>6</sup>

Kitagawa Fuyuhiko (1900–1990) played a central role in the development of modernism in poetry similar to that of Yokomitsu in prose. In 1924, Kitagawa, Anzai Fuyue, and two others founded the poetry journal *A*, edited by Anzai out of his home in Dalian, Manchuria. Together with Anzai, Kitagawa developed the influential form of *tanshi* (short poetry), which offered a modernist revision of the haiku poetic tradition in dialogue with post-symbolist French poetry. Subsequently, Kitagawa experimented with longer forms such as the *shin sanbunshi* (New Prose Poem) and *cinépoème*, and, along with Anzai and ten other poets, participated as a founding member of a new journal, *Poetry and Poetics* (*Shi to shiron*). This journal, edited by Haruyama Yukio in Tokyo, became the most prominent forum for modernist poetry, criticism, and translation during its run from 1928–1932, arguably the high-water mark for Japanese prewar modernism.<sup>7</sup> Kitagawa was also active as a translator, publishing a translation of Max Jacob's poetry collection *Cornet à dés* and producing the first Japanese translation of André Breton's "Manifeste du surréalisme" (both in the year 1929). In addition, he established a career as a film critic and film journal editor, working on the editorial staff of the prominent film journal *Kinema junpo* from 1927 and publishing several book-length works of film criticism in the 1930s.

The late 1920s and early 1930s, which saw the rise to prominence of both popular and highbrow forms of Japanese modernism, was also an era of heated activity in Marxist criticism and the heyday of the "Proletarian Literature" movement. Despite the steady toll of government repression and factional infighting, Proletarian Literature, a multifaceted cultural movement aiming to increase consciousness of and resistance to capitalist exploitation within the framework of the international Communist movement, became a major force in Japan following the establishment of the Japan Proletarian Literary Federation in 1925 and did not wane until the mass public



renunciations of communism (*tenkô*) by jailed activists beginning in 1933. Writers of all stripes and dispositions were forced to take some position (even an ostensibly "apolitical" one) with regard to the Proletarian Literary movement, and it is here that Yokomitsu and Kitagawa differed markedly. Yokomitsu became an outspoken critic of the Proletarian Literature movement and conducted a series of debates with Marxist writers and critics in the pages of prominent intellectual and literary journals. Political tensions within the Shinkankakuha group itself eventually led to the departure of leftist writers Kataoka Teppei and Kon Tôkô from the *Literary Age* coterie and the folding of the journal in 1927. Kitagawa, on the other hand, was one of a group of left-leaning writers who in 1930 departed from the journal *Poetry and Poetics* over dissatisfaction with its "apolitical" editorial trend. He cofounded a new journal *Poetry—Reality* (*Shi—Genjitsu*), which took a more overtly political tack, and joined the Japan Proletarian Writers' League in the same year.

Despite their differing political stances, we can find many thematic as well as formal commonalities in Yokomitsu and Kitagawa's works circa 1930, especially Yokomitsu's novel *Shanghai* and Kitagawa's poetry collection *War*. Both works are set on the edges of Japan's expanding sphere of imperialist domination in East Asia. Yokomitsu's novel takes place in the Chinese treaty port of the title, a focal point of European and Japanese imperialist rivalry as well as rising Chinese nationalism. Kitagawa's poetry collection, meanwhile, is strongly associated with Manchuria, where Kitagawa grew up as the son of an engineer for the South Manchuria Railway Company, a Japanese-owned company that helped to establish Japan's imperialist foothold in the region between the Russo-Japanese war and the establishment of the puppet state of Manchukuo in 1932. In comparing these two works, I will highlight their shared formal strategies with respect to the depiction of time, motion, and materiality—strategies that both enable and limit their interrogation of the ideologies of Japanese imperialism. In particular, I will observe how these works employ the juxtaposition of "fragment" versus "flow" to explore the relationship between the bodies of individual human subjects—which are often presented as decidedly material objects and dissected into component parts—and the broader flows—of time, energy, and economic and geopolitical forces—into which these human figures are embedded. I will then turn briefly to the two authors' critical works and trace how the elements of "fragment" and "flow" are articulated differently in Yokomitsu's formalist literary theory and Kitagawa's theory of the "prose film."

## FRAGMENT AND FLOW

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In exploring relationship between fluid time and motion (flow) and the individual, abrupt, and singular moment (fragment), Yokomitsu and Kitagawa were seizing on a central formal concern of modern art of the early twentieth century. Interest in

this relationship can be traced to two clusters of nineteenth-century scientific and technological innovations: on one hand, the new sciences of thermodynamics, electromagnetics, and field theory; on the other, the development of still and motion picture photography, which opened new forms of time and space to human observation.<sup>8</sup> Connecting these two clusters were scientific investigation into the sensory mechanism of the mind-body, together with a parallel philosophical exploration of issues of perception, mind, and memory by turn-of-the-century thinkers such as William James and Henri Bergson. Meanwhile, the social science of economics, especially as enfolded into a philosophical and political program by Marx and Engels, offered new means to conceptualize the transnational flow of labor, goods, and capital, in a significant parallel to the analysis of the flows of matter and energy in contemporary physics.

In the twentieth century, under the scientific influence of thermodynamics, electromagnetics, and related disciplines, the temporally and physically discrete object as a subject of artistic representation was increasingly discredited in favor of an interest in depicting the interplay of various forces and the resulting dynamism through time. As art historian Christof Asendorf writes in respect to art between the two world wars: "the view of objects from outside was replaced by an analysis of their functions. The artist dealt henceforth with *interactions between forces and effects*" (195). Perhaps the most straightforward declaration of this artistic concern can be found in the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting," of 1910, in which Umberto Boccioni and his colleagues declare: "The gesture which we would reproduce on canvas shall no longer be a fixed moment in universal dynamism. It shall simply be the dynamic sensation itself" (289).

In contrast to the Futurist program of moving from the fixed to the dynamic image, the influential photographic studies in animal motion in the 1880s and 1890s by Eadweard Muybridge exploited the potential of photography to momentarily arrest the flow of time—most famously in capturing the positions of a horse's legs in full gallop, which were imperceptible to the naked eye. Muybridge's time-dissecting studies of human and animal bodies in motion, however, simultaneously pointed toward the potential of the motion-picture apparatus to reanimate the motion thus dissected in still photography.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, the dialectic between the new technical ability to arrest a brief instant in time and the contrary scientific and aesthetic interest in flows of time and motion is best captured in the cinematic apparatus itself, in which a sequence of instantaneous images impressed sequentially on a roll of film stock produces a moving picture when passed through the film projector.

In more recent times, Gilles Deleuze's works on cinema (*Cinéma 1: L'Image-Mouvement* 1983, and *Cinéma 2: L'Image-temps* 1985) have provided a new analysis of the connections between the cinema and the philosophy of Bergson, which offers many useful perspectives on our consideration of fragment and flow in Kitagawa and Yokomitsu. Dividing the basic elements of cinema into the frame (a closed set, or immobile section), the shot (a mobile section, or movement-image), and montage (an assemblage of movement-images), Deleuze analyzes each of these elements

as images of duration (*durée*) or the constantly changing whole: "(1) there are not only instantaneous images, that is, immobile sections of movement; (2) there are movement-images which are mobile sections of duration; (3) there are, finally, time-images, that is, duration-images, change-images, relation-images, volume-images which are beyond movement itself" (11). From a Deleuzean standpoint, we can view the works of Kitagawa and Yokomitsu as an exploration of the relationship between duration of a whole (flow) and the instantaneous image captured in the still photograph (fragment). Moreover, in Kitagawa's interest in the manipulation of time expressed in his theory of the "prose film," in which he raises the possibility of the filmmaker "rebell[ing] against time in the temporal art of film," we can find a consideration of the political valences of what Deleuze would term the "time-image," i.e., a representation that goes beyond movement to present an image of time itself.

## KITAGAWA FUYUHIKO'S WAR

The tension between the depiction of temporally and spatially dynamic systems and the tendency to arrest time and fracture space is readily apparent in Kitagawa Fuyuhiko's poetry collection *War*. Many of the poems of this collection share a common poetic strategy in which the flow of time and the field of dynamic forces are momentarily arrested, and, in that suspended moment, the progressive objectification of the human is decisively revealed. Kitagawa's poems thus isolate a point of violence, shock, abjection, or sharp incongruity at the intersection of the flow of forces through time and the decoupage of the singular moment (what Deleuze, after Bergson, refers to as the "any-instant-whatever").

One of Kitagawa's best-known poems included in *War* is his *tanshi* or "short poem" "Rush Hour" (248):

Rush Hour

At the ticket gate a finger was clipped off with the ticket

The rush hour commute provides a vivid instance of the economic pressures and flows of capitalism, rendered visible through the flow of bodies through space: at regular intervals in the workweek, the movement of the bodies of workers and the organs of mass transport are orchestrated with Taylorist efficiency. In Kitagawa's poem, set amid this orchestrated flow of the modern city, an organic body part (the finger) is mistaken for an inorganic economic token (the ticket), and, in being severed from the body, the finger becomes further abjected and objectified. The poetic conjuring of this act of accidental violence creates an image of a singular moment; and yet, at the moment that this time-fragment becomes separated from the system-flow, the brutal nature of the system is exposed. This technique of

violent poetic decoupage that paradoxically reveals the brutality of a larger system is a characteristic strategy of Kitagawa's *War*.

Despite the leftist political undertone in "Rush Hour" and many other poems of *War*, the poems of this collection nevertheless betray an ambivalent attitude toward such acts of violence and dehumanization. While the collection's recurrent violence is the occasion for the poet's outrage against the interwoven systems of capitalism, militarism, and imperialism, at the same time, violence and dehumanization themselves harbor a strong aesthetic and sexual fascination for the poet. This fascination is revealed in poems such as "Razor" (247), which also depicts the encounter of metal and flesh, in a moment of violence that ruptures the surface integrity of the body:

Razor

The blade of the Western razor is a translucent stick of candy. Lick it, and at that instant, your lips are pared off like a flash of lightning. This is a splendid refrigerant. This is a splendid refrigerant.

The imaginary act of licking the razor reminds us of the moment in Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un chien andalou* (1928) in which an eyeball is sliced with a razor. In Buñuel and Dalí's film, this moment of singularity and pain is juxtaposed in a type of visual analogy or metaphor with a matching shot of a thin cloud floating across the moon. In Kitagawa's poem the razor's violence is compared with a "splendid refrigerant," which seems to be less a metaphor than an affective description of the chilling, stimulating, and yet artificial sensation of the razor's cut. Nevertheless, in its affinities with European Surrealism, Kitagawa's "Razor" exemplifies the aesthetic of violent fetishism that recurs throughout *War*, in which human flesh intermingles with metal and glass, and the fragmented and literally objectified body becomes the object of sensual or sexual fascination.

While *tanshi* or "short poems" such as "Rush Hour" and "Razor" represent an important part of Kitagawa's early poetic oeuvre as compiled in *War*, this collection also shows Kitagawa moving away from the *tanshi* form and experimenting with longer forms such as the "new prose poem" and the "cinépoème." Although there are only two cinépoèmes collected in *War*, this poetic form is essential to understanding Kitagawa's poetic development during this period of his career. The cinépoème form, also employed by other Japanese modernist poets of the time such as Takenaka Iku and Kondô Azuma, typically comprises a set of numbered lines that are analogous to the numbered sequence of shots in a film scenario.<sup>10</sup> In his critical writings of this time, Kitagawa expressed hope for the cinépoème in transforming the sensibility of contemporary poets: "I think that writing cinépoème has a great power to effect the change from a spiritualist [or idealist] view of poetry to a materialist view of poetry" (*Junsui eiga ki* 30). He further advocated the cinépoème form because it "is the most replete with all of the conditions to make tomorrow's poetry clear and direct; and further, because the poetry of tomorrow is advancing towards the 'victory of the eye'" (quoted in Usawa 30). It is poetry's adaptation of this objectivist, materialist belief in the victory of the (machine) eye to which critic Inoue Yoshio referred in his remarks cited at the beginning of this essay.



Kitagawa's "Arm" (244) is the first of two such cinépoèmes included in *War*. Although the geographic setting of "Arm" is unspecified, the poem's context within *War*, as well as the references to denuded mountains and coolie labor, strongly suggest that the setting is Manchuria, and quite possibly the major port city of Dalian, a setting with which Kitagawa is often associated due to his boyhood experiences in Manchuria and his membership in the Dalian-based *A coterie*.<sup>11</sup>

### Arm

- 1 Denuded mountain.
- 2 An arm that pushes wagons falls from the summit.
- 3 A heap of red earth.
- 4 Severed arm.
- 5 The sea that is slowly lost.
- 6 Globules of fat, a giant structure.
- 7 Fat that trails to the summit's hospital.
- 8 A magnificent hospital.
- 9 In the hospital's specimen room, a steel arm preserved in alcohol.
- 10 The arm smirks.
- 11 Seen from the summit: streets trailing fat.
- 12 The arm that laughs like a rail.
- 13 Seen from the summit: wrenching and warping streets.

This cinépoème relies heavily on the paratactic enumeration of substantives with few transitive verbal relationships, conjunctions, or complex subordinate clauses. While it should also be noted that Kitagawa's poem employs rhetorical effects that are the special domain of poetic language, such as the personification of the "grinning" arm, or the metaphoric depiction of the bleeding limb as "the sea that is slowly lost," the main thrust of the passage is nevertheless in the sequential enumeration of objects themselves, whether organic ("an arm that pushes wagons") or inorganic ("a heap of red earth"). These objects are often spatially incongruous, and we are given no subjective position or transitive verbal relationship (such as "X viewed Y"). Instead, Kitagawa's poem evokes a "machine eye" free to assemble montage linkages between disparate objects and points in space, independently of a human subject position—the "eye which would be in things," as Deleuze writes of Vertov's "cine-eye" (81). Moreover, this "machine eye" has the flexibility to depict objects of radically different scales, from the panoramic "establishing shot" of the denuded mountain to a "close-up" of globules of fat that, under magnification, resemble a "giant structure."

The style of writing employed in Kitagawa's poem—the numbered descriptions of shots, often in brief sentence fragments ending in a substantive—closely follows the conventions of film scenario writing as it was introduced in Japanese film journals in the 1920s and 1930s (Shimamura 125–26). The technique of ending a sentence in a noun preceded by a modifying phrase (rather than a verb as is typical in Japanese grammar) is called *taigendome* in Japanese and is also frequently used in haiku poetry—marking another confluence of the literary and the cinematic in the cinépoème

form. In its use of *taigendome* and avoidance of conjunctions and hypotactic syntactic relations, Kitagawa's poem exploits a tension between the singularity of the individual line (depicting either a still object or a brief "movement-image") and the potential for a narrative flow between these lines, which must be primarily supplied by the reader in the absence of interlinking conjunctions or predicates.

Thematically, Kitagawa's poem sets into conflict two elements of Japanese imperialism in Manchuria: on one hand, the brutal exploitation of coolie labor represented by the severed arm; on the other hand, Japanese "civilization" and paternalistic colonial policies represented by the "splendid hospital." These two elements are arrayed in spatial contrast: the hospital is at the mountain's summit, and the "wrenching and warping" streets, whose docks and homes form the world of the native laborer, are in the city below. The "arm" that has been mobilized from the city to construct the colonizer's "splendid hospital" is wrenched from the body of the laborer and suspended in alcohol in the heart of the hospital, its trickle of blood and fat linking the two worlds of hospital and city. While the arm reveals the hidden brutality of the Japanese "*mission civilatrice*" (or project of assimilation), its warped metallic grin captures the subversive derision of the colonized population.

In its ideologically tendentious juxtaposition of these two elements of Japanese imperialism, Kitagawa's cinépoème could be said to employ a form of dialectical montage aimed at producing what Sergei Eisenstein terms "montage understanding." According to Eisenstein, if the dialectic montage method is successfully applied, the filmmaker and film viewer will "find in the *juxtaposition of shots an arrangement of a new qualitative element, a new image, [and] a new understanding.*"<sup>12</sup> In the cinematic arrangement of segments of time and space in "Arm," Kitagawa seems to have been working toward a method of reanimating the fragmentary and fetishistic poetic developed in his "short poetry" according to new kinetic and didactic principles. Nevertheless, both the poems in the "new prose poem" form as well as the "cinépoème" form in *War* preserve the tension between the singular and arresting moment and the depiction of motion that reveals underlying systemic forces.

## YOKOMITSU RIICHI'S SHANGHAI

A nearly identical tension between fragment and flow, as well as a concomitant aesthetic interest in cinematic qualities, is present in Yokomitsu Riichi's *Shanghai*. The novel is a fictionalization of the historical May 30th incident of 1925, in which the city of Shanghai erupted in riots and work stoppages after the shooting of a Chinese worker in a Japanese-owned cotton mill, which served to intensify the nationalist, communist, and anti-imperialist movements in China. Yokomitsu's novel depicts a

span of several weeks in the life of its protagonist, Sanki, who loses his job as a bank clerk and takes a position in a Japanese-owned cotton mill on the eve of a shooting and subsequent riot that parallels the May 30th incident. Surrounding Sanki are a complex of characters representing various nationalities, social classes, and ideological positions, including a Japanese bathhouse worker, a Singapore-based Japanese lumber trader, a Chinese revolutionary, and an Indian exponent of Pan-Asianism.

The passages of scenic description that frequently begin the chapters of Yokomitsu's novel *Shanghai* are not merely "cinematic" in the general sense of being visually evocative; in their paratactic sequences of substantives arranged according to cinematic principles, they also bear a striking resemblance to the *cinépoème* form in particular.<sup>13</sup> This tendency is evident in the very first paragraph of the novel, as well as in the descriptive passage that begins the second chapter, often cited by critics as an example of Yokomitsu's *Shinkankakuha* literary technique:

At high tide the river swelled and flowed backward. Prows of darkened motor-boats lined up in a wave pattern. A row of rudders drawn up. Mountains of off-loaded cargo. The black legs of a wharf bound in chains. A signal showing calm winds raised atop a weather station tower. A customs house spire dimly visible through evening fog. Coolies on barrels stacked on the embankment, becoming soaked in the damp air. A black sail, torn and tilted, creaking along, adrift on brackish waves. (*Shanghai* 3)

A district of crumbling brick buildings. Some Chinese, wearing long-sleeved black robes that were swollen and stagnant like kelp in the depths of the ocean, crowded together on a narrow street. A beggar groveled on the pebble-covered road. In a shop window above him hung fish bladders and bloody torsos of carp. In the fruit stand next door piles of bananas and mangos spilled out onto the pavement. And next to that a pork butcher. Skinned carcasses, suspended hoof-down, formed a flesh-colored grotto with a vague, dark recess from which the white point of a clock face sparkled like an eye. (*Shanghai* 7)

The first paragraph of the novel presents, in rapid succession, various scenes that establish a sense of the setting and atmosphere on Shanghai's docks. In the original Japanese text, Yokomitsu includes four straight sentence fragments in *taigendome* constructions (sentences 2–4). Indeed, it would not be difficult to imagine attaching numbers to each sentence in this paragraph and formatting them as a *cinépoème*. Yokomitsu's technique here seems closely related to the expressionistic montage that was used by some contemporary filmmakers to establish atmosphere and location at the start of a film. In the second of these passages, the lateral movement connecting the descriptions conveyed in each successive sentence, as the "viewer" or camera-eye seems to progress from shop to shop, suggests the technique of the tracking shot.

As in Kitagawa's *War*, there is a constant intermingling, confusion, and transposition in *Shanghai* between the realms of organic and inorganic matter. This is evident in the above passages' descriptions of the wharf's "legs" being "bound in chains," the kelp-like sleeves of the Chinese crowd, and the meat of the fishmonger and butcher shop, which lies in the enigmatic middle ground between organic flesh, inert matter, and economic commodity.<sup>14</sup> The most vivid intermingling of organic and

inorganic occurs in the final sentence, where the pork carcasses form a strange grotto framing the white clockface, transformed in Yokomitsu's simile to a gleaming eye.

These two introductory passages introduce two central motifs of the novel: in the first passage, the motif of intermeshing flows (*nagare*) and points of stagnation (*yodomi*) in the modern city; in the second, the deformation of the body and transformation of flesh into commodity. The prominent literary scholars Maeda Ai and Komori Yôichi have each discussed these motifs, and Seiji Lippit and Gregory Golley have expanded upon their analyses in English-language studies. As Komori has argued, the individual human body loses its identity and integrity in *Shanghai*, and, as Lippit paraphrases, is "placed into fluid networks of assemblage and disassemblage" (89). Clashing economic interests and conflicting racist, nationalist, and internationalist ideologies, often depicted as waves and liquid flows, all converge on Shanghai, and lay claim to the bodies and brains of the characters inhabiting the city. "The huge vortex of Asia did not appear enormous to Sanki," Yokomitsu writes. "Instead it was, for him, a map folded up inside his head" (108). At the center of this maelstrom, the novel returns time and again to the motif of the human body, abjected and commodified by the pressures of capitalism, and rendered into territory by the imperatives of nationalism. *Shanghai* thus shares with Kitagawa's *War* a tension between the depiction of dynamic ideological and economic forces and a fragmentation of time and space that objectifies and disassembles the human body.

However, while Kitagawa's poetry displays a drive to organize its fragments into a dialectical montage that is implicitly critical of capitalism and the imperialist nation-state (even while it regularly succumbs to the fetishistic allure of its own metallic violence), Yokomitsu's novel seems to primarily aspire to map the forces of imperialism and capitalism, and to trace their impact on the bodies and subjective states of its expatriate Japanese protagonists—that is, it displays a primarily descriptive rather than ideologically tendentious ambition. However, as Golley persuasively argues in his recent study *When Our Eyes No Longer See*, this descriptive impulse itself ultimately becomes a normalizing force, especially as it elucidates how nationalist ideology is inscribed onto the bodies of its protagonists. "Even at its most 'materialist,'" Golley asserts, "*Shanghai's* excavation of the underlying laws of empire—of social conflict, racial oppression, and capitalist exchange—betrays the hazardous equanimity of a purely descriptive impulse, and essential tolerance of the violence it sets out to depict" (61).

## YOKOMITSU RIICHI'S FORMALIST THEORY

The principles of fragment and flow return in a different guise in Yokomitsu's literary criticism from the same period. To get a sense of his theoretical concerns, we can begin with two statements that Yokomitsu made in the years 1928–1929, as his novel



*Shanghai* was being serialized. The first is a concise definition of literary form that he offered at the start of a protracted debate with members of the Proletarian literary faction ("Bungei jiyô 2" 151). The second is a definition of *eiga*, cinema or film (literally, projected pictures), that he contributed to a discussion of film and literature in the journal *New Tide* (*Shinchô*) (Nakamura 134):

- 1) [Literary] "form" is nothing other than a string of characters possessing rhythm that conveys meaning.
- 2) *Eiga* is a string of movements of objects that are viewed after passing through the lens.

While these two statements may seem rather innocuous at first, they contain in condensed form several theoretical elements that Yokomitsu was to develop over the course of the ensuing debate, which is known in Japanese literary history as the *keishiki shugi ronsô*, or "formalism debate." The key term connecting Yokomitsu's two statements is *raretsu*—a string, queue, or sequential accumulation of discrete items. The items being strung together shift from "characters" (*moji*) in his definition of literary form to "movements of objects" in his definition of film. The "movements of objects" that are strung together in the latter definition could arguably refer either to the single frame or film cell, or to the movement-image of the shot placed into montage. In either case, these definitions point to an analogy between the frames of a roll of film in capturing the successive positions of an object in motion, which are animated through the film apparatus and the viewer's visual perception, and the string of characters in a literary passage which are "activated" in the reader's mind through the complexities of the reading process—what Yokomitsu refers to elsewhere as the "mechanism" (*mekanizumu*) of literary form. The term *raretsu* thus returns us to the theme of the fragment or cell—represented here by the character, on the one hand, and the frame or shot on the other—versus the temporal flow of objects and energies, or the flow of time itself, as implicated in the projection and viewing of a roll of film and the reading of a literary text.<sup>15</sup> While Yokomitsu by no means implies that the "mechanism" of signification in a reader's encounter with a literary text is *identical* to a viewer's encounter with a film as mediated by the cinematic apparatus, it nevertheless appears that his thinking about these two processes developed in close parallel.

What occasioned Yokomitsu's definition of literary form as a "string of characters," and what are the implications of his formal theory to the literary politics of the day? The immediate pretext for Yokomitsu's first formulation were statements by literary critics Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke and Kurahara Korehito—both affiliated with the Proletarian literary camp—who argued that literary form (*keishiki*) should follow from the work's content (*naiyô*). In particular, Yokomitsu took objection to a warning by Hirabayashi that writers shouldn't pursue novelty of form for its own sake and thereby "let form run ahead of content." In contrast to the Marxist critics, who emphasized the vanguard role of the author in determining the "content" of the literary work, Yokomitsu insisted on the complete independence of author and text:

indeed, he envisioned the text as a “physical object” independent of both author and reader. He thus located the generation of “content” in the reader’s encounter with the text as a physical object—the operation of deciphering the text or literary “form.” Since the reader determines the content from the form manifest in the “string of characters,” from Yokomitsu’s perspective it is impossible for the form to be considered independently from, or subsidiary to, content, as Hirabayashi and Kurahara seemed to do.

In his formulations through the ensuing debate with the Proletarian camp, Yokomitsu called attention to the independence and materiality of the written text, repeatedly referring to written or printed characters as “physical objects” (*buttai*) or “objective things” (*kyakkanbutsu*), and even likening the characters on a printed page to “sculptures” or “meaningless stones.” While some might think of letters or characters as Ideas in Platonic terms, Yokomitsu points to the materiality of characters as media, literally thin layers of ink impressed onto a sheet of paper, existing as objects in the world like any other. It is only through the mechanism of the reading process that these “meaningless stones” are reborn as “content” for the reader, allowing him to experience the “illusion of life” in the text. Furthermore, in the essay “Regarding characters: on form and mechanism” (“*Moji ni tsuite: keishiki to mekanizumu ni tsuite*”), Yokomitsu argues that each reader’s generation of meaning or “content” is different, even on the level of the decipherment of individual characters:

Following our perceptions and our intellect, from the form of the object called a character, we sense content—we sense the energy of “mountain” from [the character] “mountain” and that of “sea” from [the character] “sea.” . . .

To put it otherwise, “content” is the energy that arises between the reader and the form of the characters, and it is clear that this energy does not arise from a transformation within the characters themselves, but rather arises from a transformation in the mind of the reader. . . . Therefore, the content that arises from the form that is an identical object [i.e., an identical character] changes with each reader that views this identical object. For example, there is the character “sea.” But, do we sense the identical, fixed “sea” from this character? One person might imagine the Seto Inland Sea that he saw in the past, while another might imagine the sea off the coast of Izu. In other words, the quantity of energy that is received from the character differs according to the mind of the individual reader. (115)

As this passage indicates, Yokomitsu envisioned each character giving rise to a fixed quantity of energy in the mind of the reader. As the reader follows the string of characters, the energy generated by his encounter with each character passes through his consciousness in a series of waves.<sup>16</sup> The “low-level” or “weak” energy generated by the string of characters in turn gives rise to an “intense” energy that is the literary “content” or “internal form” generated in the reader’s imagination. Yokomitsu thus distinguishes between the “external form” that is the text or “string of characters,” and the “internal form” that is the content generated in the mind of the reader:

We may speak of the intense peak of energy that is "internal form." However, since this "internal form" arises from the cluster of weak energy, if it were not for the [external] form that gives rise to this weak energy, the intense energy [of internal form] would not arise. Therefore, we encounter the question of to what extent the weak energy has linked up to create the strong energy: that is, we encounter the issue of time. We call this time speed (*tempo*). The overall energy that arises from the structure of the work is dependent on how the *tempo* and internal form are coordinated. The sense of satisfaction we receive from our imaginative experience of a work indicates a complete harmony of the *tempo* and the internal form. (118-19)

As literary scholar Komori Yōichi discusses, Yokomitsu thus presents us with a compelling perspective on the passage through which language as a temporal phenomenon is transferred into writing, a primarily spatial (or, for Yokomitsu, "sculptural") medium, and then regains its temporal aspect through the mechanism of reading. Yokomitsu's emphasis in this passage on "tempo" returns us to his original definition that literary form is a "string of characters *possessing rhythm* that conveys meaning" (my italics).

This emphasis on rhythm or tempo in literary form is consistent with a critical discourse originating from Shinkankakuha writers and their more sympathetic critics regarding the importance of a fresh and compelling rhythmic element. As I have discussed in my study of the Shinkankakuha's collaboration with filmmaker Kinugasa Teinosuke, the emergence of "rhythm" and "tempo" as key terms in discussions of the Shinkankakuha literary school developed in close parallel with the intensive attention to the role of rhythm in cinema, especially as expressed in cinematic montage during the final phase of the silent film era. This film-critical discourse was in turn strongly influenced by the introduction of French "impressionist" film and film criticism, as represented by such directors and critics as Volkov, Gance, L'Herbier, Delluc, Moussinac, Mitry, and Epstein.

For example, in Iijima Tadashi's essay of 1924, "The Rhythm of Cinema" ("Eiga no rizumu"), anthologized as the first chapter of his book *The ABC of Cinema* (*Shinema no ABC*), Iijima makes it clear that "rhythm" is the answer to his rhetorical question, "What is the fundamental quality that makes cinema (*eiga*) stand on its own as cinema?":

Time is a major factor in the artistic nature of cinema (*eiga*). A certain number of scenes, some long and some short, are projected temporally, serially, on the screen. We perceive these through our eyes. This is in the same manner as [the role of] our ears in [perceiving] music. Therefore, what makes cinema truly cinematic is the rhythm sensed through the eyes. (3)

Thus, while Iijima defines "rhythm sensed through the eyes" as the fundamental element of film, Yokomitsu in turn places central importance on the element of rhythm or tempo in the process through which the "external form" of a "string of characters," is perceived through vision and gives rise in the reader's

mind to the "internal form" of "content." Indeed, Yokomitsu goes on to define the author's goal in "formalism" as the employing of a minimum of external formal resources to engender a vivid internal form in the reader's imagination: "Formalism is the authorial ambition that attempts to limit the quantity of this variable energy [of the external form] and create an [internal] form that is like an issuing of fresh and vivid energy" (119). However, he notes that since the completed work is a "physical object" independent of the author's intention, even a superior work may, despite the author's intentions, find its energy "dispersed" and ineffectual in the mind of a given reader. While noting that many factors can shape readerly actualization of the text, Yokomitsu devotes particular attention to his fear that readers might place a predetermined ideology, rather than immediate experience of the work's form, at the center of their evaluation of the work. He therefore suggests that the "formalist movement" must engage in the education of the reader's sensibilities: "the value of the work should be determined not according to the reader's ideology (*shisô*), but according to the form of the work. . . . works of any ideology or "ism" can be in accord with formalism" (119).

To summarize his formalist theory, then, in response to overtly ideological readings of literature and the emphasis in Marxist criticism on the author's determination of content, Yokomitsu stresses the independence of the text from both author and reader: it is only a physical object. Only through the mechanism of reading, which is explained through the wavelike consciousness of the reader as his eyes follow the "string" of characters, is the text converted to "internal form" or "content." For Yokomitsu, the formalist author's goal is to manage the rhythm of the process of conversion from "external form" to "internal form" in order to produce a maximum sense of satisfaction or "fresh and vivid energy" in the reader. He does not, however, elaborate on the mechanism through which the "low energy" produced by the reader's encounter with "external form" is converted to the "intense energy" of content. Furthermore, within his exposition of "formalism" itself Yokomitsu does not specifically explain how the organization of formal and rhythmic elements beyond the level of the character (such as phrases, sentences, or longer passages) could be organized to produce this "fresh and vivid energy" in the reader.

Finally, by asserting that the works of any ideology or "ism" can be in accord with formalism, Yokomitsu effectively cuts off any discussion of the relationship between ideology and form. While this theoretical tack was undoubtedly a response to what he viewed as the naïve and simplistic politicization of literature by the Proletarian writing camp, it nevertheless retreats from the more difficult task of providing a theoretical ground upon which the *relationship* between formal and ideological issues could be interrogated. In this sense, Kitagawa's theory of the "prose film," which offers a complex reading of the relationship between the formal devices of the cinema and the critical intentions of the filmmaker, contrasts markedly with Yokomitsu's "formalism."



## KITAGAWA FUYUHIKO'S *THEORY OF THE PROSE FILM*

In his *Theory of Prose Film* (*Sanbun eiga ron*, 1940, untranslated) and related work produced over the 1930s, Kitagawa elaborated a theory that attempted to relate formal and ideological elements in film analysis, and to move beyond the montage-based film theory with its emphasis on the rhythmic qualities of cinema that Iijima Tadashi and other critics had developed in the previous decade. Kitagawa situates this theoretical development as a shift from lyricism or "poetry" in film toward a new type of filmmaking that he labeled the "prose film" (*sanbun eiga*). In Kitagawa's analysis, this shift was both stylistic, marking a difference of approach among directors, as well as temporal, corresponding with the technical transition from silent to sound film.

Poetry (*inbun*) is a literary passage with an agreeable sound when vocalized. The agreeability of the sound comes from it being regulated through such [elements] as tone or rhyme. . . .

At the close of the last century, when humans invented the motion picture apparatus that can capture reality in the form of motion, they didn't just leave it as it was. They felt the desire to connect the fragments of reality projected on the screen rhythmically, and they struggled to realize this desire. People will surely recall that for some time, theories of film as art centered on theories of rhythm. (*Gendai eiga ron* 11–12)

Through montage, then, the sustained portions of time and movement captured by the camera are reorganized to create a new type of rhythmic flow that Kitagawa associates with poetry or verse (*inbun*). He cites Abel Gance's *La Roue* (1923), which had been a central film for the elaboration of a theory of cinema as art for critics such as Iijima in the previous decade, as a prime example of the dreamlike, rhythmic beauty of films in the era of "poetry." In contrast, he offers "prose" as the mark of a possibility of a different type of filmmaking that had come to the fore in the age of the sound film: "Prose (*sanbun*) is a literary passage that emphasizes meaning over sound. Prose is rough and grinding. For prose, to observe and consider things are the essential points" (16).

Kitagawa is quick to note that since "film is fundamentally a temporal art," "no matter how you may try to make it rough, it will inevitably become rhythmic on its own." Yet with his concept of the "prose film," he raises the possibility of a new type of filmmaking that would "rebel against time in the temporal art of film" (18): "To set yourself afloat in the midst of a dream, that is, to give yourself over to time—this is the method of poetry. To awaken and become conscious of yourself in the midst of a dream, to rebel against time—this is the method of prose" (*Sanbun eiga ron* 110). To get an idea of Kitagawa's aesthetic and political agenda in proposing his theory of the "prose film," it is necessary to understand the qualities that he chooses to criticize in the previous era of "dreamlike" silent film.

Kitagawa's criticisms of the "poetic" film center on two interrelated aspects: first, the film's "flow" or rhythmic quality, which is described primarily as a quality of the film's cutting or montage, and second, the relationship of the film's protagonist to the subjectivity of the filmmaker. To clarify his attitude toward filmic "flow," Kitagawa criticizes filmmaker Yamanaka Sadao: "I viewed his fluid and elegant style as 'poetry,' and dubbed him a poet. . . . To flow is beautiful, but sometimes it's necessary to strike up against a rock or a stake." A disrupted flow grants the author "opportunity for self-reflection" (142). Kitagawa also cites the "poetic" spirit in Itô Daisuke's trilogy *Diary of Chûji's Travels* (*Chûji tabi nikki*, 1928), considered by many critics a masterpiece of silent cinema. While Itô's dynamic cutting style and rebellious attitude attracted much critical praise in the 1920s, Kitagawa criticizes Itô for failing to establish a critical distance from the film's protagonist, Kunisada Chûji, who he claims is too intimately identified with Itô's own "self." According to Kitagawa, all of the elements in the film, from Chûji's concubine, to his subordinates, to the very mountains and fields, are mobilized to depict Chûji, and "all converge towards Itô's expression of 'self' as a form of sentimental heroism" (108).

With respect to the issue of cutting and "flow," Kitagawa notes the tendency of the single cut or long take to grow in importance over montage in the era of sound film, and suggests this is one element of the new "prose film" style (117). However, as his criticism of Itô Daisuke suggests, "prose film" for Kitagawa is not simply a matter of a shift from the predominance of rhythmic montage in the silent era to a cinema of long takes in the sound era. Rather, the "prose film" is foremost a *critical attitude* of the filmmaker that is expressed through a complex configuration of editing, mise-en-scène, and camera work.

While Kitagawa particularly championed the work of contemporary Japanese director Itami Mansaku as an example of "prose film,"<sup>17</sup> perhaps his most revealing description of the "prose film" style comes in his discussion of Jean Renoir's *The Lower Depths* (*Les Bas-fonds*, 1936). He focuses on a scene in which the Baron, a member of the old aristocracy whose gambling addiction has brought him to the brink of bankruptcy, decides to wager it all on a final game. The mobile camera follows the Baron as he walks from the edge of the casino floor toward the table where he will stake his fortune, but as it does so, it also detours to capture interactions of other characters before rejoining the Baron, and takes in the entire environment and physical objects such as statues adorning the casino floor, together with the figure of the Baron. According to Kitagawa, this scene reveals Renoir's "stance or intention to really examine things carefully" (19). Furthermore, in its careful attention to the world of objects and other people that form a temporal and spatial complex with the Baron, the camera removes itself from a single identification with this character. In other contexts, Kitagawa mentions the viewpoint of secondary characters, or the presence of animals such as the white cat in Itami's *Akanishi Kakita* (1936), or even objects such as the rows of poplar trees or smokestacks in Ozu Yasujiro's films, as the director's "eyes," "pupils," or, in the latter case, his "eyelashes." These "eyes" establish a de-centered authorial presence in the film, resisting the single, uncritical identification of the filmmaker with the protagonist, which

Kitagawa criticized in Itô Daisuke's *Diary of Chûji's Travels*.<sup>18</sup> Following the description of the gambling floor scene in Renoir's *The Lower Depths*, Kitagawa concludes: "Filmmakers in the age of poetry took pure lyricism as their native element, but in the age of prose the filmmaker's eyes have a critical, satirical glint. As representative filmmakers we can cite René Clair, G. W. Pabst, Lewis Milestone, and Itami Mansaku" (19–20).

## CONCLUSION

In examining Kitagawa and Yokomitsu's literary and theoretical works from the late 1920s through the 1930s, we can thus trace the recurrence of issues of time and its creative manipulation that emerge out of a dense transnational context of philosophical and scientific inquiries, avant-garde art and literary movements such as Futurism, and, most prominently, the role of photography and the cinematic apparatus in transforming the perception of time and space. In Kitagawa's *War* and Yokomitsu's *Shanghai*, we can observe a similar attention to the flow of time and geopolitical/economic forces on the one hand, and the spatio-temporal fragmentation or extraction of "any-instants-whatever" from this flow that reveal the objectification and abjection of the human body. Both Yokomitsu's *Shanghai* as well as Kitagawa's *War* display intensive attention to the political questions of how geopolitical and economic forces (namely imperialism and capitalism) intersect with human subjectivity—in terms of both mental consciousness and physical presence or embodiment. We could thus consider both works as highly political in nature, but differing somewhat in their political thrust. While Kitagawa's poetry attempts to lead the reader to certain ideological conclusions, Yokomitsu's novel, a convincing literary depiction of certain harrowing experiences of twentieth-century modernity, seems more concerned with capturing the nature of subjective experience in an environment of intense imperialist competition. If its ultimate ideological impact may be a normalization of the imperialist ideology it seeks to depict, Yokomitsu's novel is nevertheless a masterful achievement in its orchestration of the complex geopolitical, ideological, and economic forces converging on 1920s Shanghai.

In the sphere of criticism and theory, Yokomitsu argued for the autonomy of literary art from political judgments. Toward this end, he offered a fundamental analysis of the relationship between author, text, and reader, and the "mechanism" through which a reader generates the "illusion of life" out of his textual encounter. In this context, Yokomitsu emphasized the importance of the element of rhythm or tempo, thereby connecting his "formalist" theory with previously developed critical discourses on rhythm in both Shinkankakuha literature and contemporary film.

In his theory of the "prose film," Kitagawa revived two interrelated critical parameters that Yokomitsu had explicitly excluded from his formalist theory: consideration of authorial intention as revealed in the work, and the artistic treatment of political and social ideas. In particular, he attempted to demonstrate how the filmmaker's manipulation of the space-time continuum could express a political or critical social stance through a complex combination of editing, *mise-en-scène* (including the performance of actors), and camera work. Paradoxically, "flow" in Kitagawa's film criticism is not associated with the simple flow of time captured in a single take by the film camera, but instead by the lyrical flow of time artificially created by the rhythmic montage of spatio-temporal segments compiled by silent film masters such as Gance, Yamanaka, and Itô. Conversely, "prose film," the antithesis of lyrical, montage-based "flow," may include the use of long takes, but takes that are integrated into a total system of *mise-en-scène*, camera work, and editing that expresses the film author's critical consciousness.

Despite their considerable achievements in the realms of cine-textual practice and theory, Kitagawa and Yokomitsu found their work attacked from both left and right political positions throughout the 1930s and 1940s and, together with interwar Japanese modernism in general, suffered a period of critical neglect in the postwar era. Regardless of the elements of ideological and systemic analysis I have discussed above, modernist authors were subject to attack from the left for focusing on the "surface phenomenon" of urban modernity rather than the root causes of capitalist and imperialist oppression or the revolutionary potential of the laboring classes. Meanwhile, symbolic sites of cosmopolitan urban culture, such as cafés and dance halls, came under increasing attack from right-wing ideologues both inside and outside of the government as the "national crisis" deepened with the staging of the Manchurian Incident in 1931 and the onset of full-scale war with China in 1937. "Modernist" films and novels connected with such urban phenomena and tied to the importation of Western culture were also viewed with increasing suspicion, and a conservative "literary revival" took hold in the mid-1930s (see Doak).

Kitagawa and Yokomitsu each attempted to navigate this treacherous territory according to their respective political and artistic tenets, and their complex responses to the cultural and political pressures of the wartime period merit more careful scrutiny than can be afforded here. As foreshadowed by the protagonist Sanki's growing nostalgia for a maternal/national body in the latter chapters of *Shanghai*, Yokomitsu's work following this novel increasingly focused on issues of ethnic identity, and often portrayed Eastern and Western cultures in fundamental opposition. As mentioned earlier, Kitagawa aligned himself with the Proletarian literary movement in 1930, and his poetic practice thereafter shifted away from the fragmentary, aggressively modernist style of *War*. Despite increasingly severe state censorship and a thoroughgoing crackdown on the leftist opposition following the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, such poems as "Iyarashii kami" (1936), which offers a grotesque portrait of a battleship, managed to articulate a thinly veiled criticism of Japanese militarism on the eve of full-scale war with China. However, Kitagawa's



*A Theory of Contemporary Film* (*Gendai eiga ron*), published in 1941, is marked by the coexistence of passages promoting social criticism in its discussion of the "prose film" (a summary of the author's theoretical position of the mid-1930s) together with an embrace of filmmaking for the goals of national propaganda in its discussion of war documentary and other films in the "current age." In 1942, Kitagawa was drafted and sent to Malaysia as a war correspondent and subsequently contributed poems to such propagandistic anthologies as *Poetry Collection for the Decisive Battle* (*Kessen shishû*, 1942).

After the war, the leftist critique of modernist literature as insufficiently resistant to capitalism, militarism, and imperialism was revived, persisting alongside the rightist critique of modernism as the manifestation of an unhealthy fascination with European and American culture. This doubly negative critical assessment both helped to shape, and was further reinforced by, the general dismissal of prewar modernism by the first generation of postwar Western scholars of modern Japanese literature. It was not until the end of the Cold War that Japanese modernism received a fresh wave of attention. In recent years, the modernist literature of the 1920s and 1930s has proved indispensable to scholars exploring questions of urban studies, gender studies, media and mass culture, modernity and postmodernity, and postcolonialism. Despite this new attention, the poetry and film criticism of Kitagawa Fuyuhiko still await a thorough critical examination, and much other work remains to be done—particularly with regard to the evolution of Japanese modernism during the wartime period, and the interrelation of Japanese modernism with contemporary literatures both elsewhere in Asia and in Europe and America.

As outlined in the introduction to this essay, Japanese interwar modernism is intimately connected with the rise of new forms of urban mass culture in such metropolitan centers as Osaka, Kobe, and the imperial capital of Tokyo. Nevertheless, despite the undeniable importance of the metropole, works such as Kitagawa's *War* and Yokomitsu's *Shanghai* point to the parallel significance of the imperial periphery (defined as such from the perspective of the Japanese metropole) in offering Japanese modernists an exemplary "force field"—that is, a field for the analysis of the dynamic forces that determine subjective experience in an age of competing imperialisms. This analysis of forces, as it shifts between the depiction of fluid time and motion and the isolation of spatial-temporal fragments, is deeply intertwined with the technology of the motion picture camera and the development of cinema from the turn of the century onward. Still, while this analysis of the "force field" of the imperial periphery by authors writing from the perspective of the metropole might aspire to the objectivity of the "machine eye," it should not be mistaken for a representation of modern subjectivity from the perspective of the colonial subjects. As the reappraisal of Japanese modernism continues, it is essential to situate the works of Japanese modernism in a dynamic relation with the writings of displaced colonial subjects writing from within the Japanese metropole itself, as well as the literatures emerging from China, Korea, Taiwan, and elsewhere along the multiple contact zones of the imperialist era.<sup>19</sup>

## NOTES

1. All names of authors are given in Japanese order with family names first and given names second. Authors with pen names are referred to by their pen names.
2. Quotations from Yokomitsu's novel *Shanghai* are excerpted from the translation by Dennis Washburn. All other quotations are my own translations.
3. These numbers apparently include shorter films and newsreels as well as full-length feature films; the number of domestic feature films per year during this period is estimated at around 750 (Kokusai eiga tsûshinsha 4). The average length of the films newly submitted for censorship was 4.3 reels for Japanese films and 6.4 reels for American and European films. Although no specific statistics are given for countries outside of Japan, America, and Europe, there is a discrepancy of 506 films between the total of these three regions and the complete total of new films submitted, which may correspond to the films from China and other unlisted countries.
4. The *benshi* supplied the audience with vernacular translations of the intertitles of foreign films, and also provided narrative and dialogue for domestic films. See Dym.
5. On Japanese popular modernism, see Freedman and Omori. For an exploration of the historical and ideological facets of Japanese "modernism" as expressed in the arts, social theory, and journalism, see Silverberg.
6. On *A Page of Madness* and the New Perception School Film Alliance, see Gardner, "New Perceptions." For translations of representative Shinkankakuha works from this period, see Yokomitsu, "Love" and *Other Stories*. Although I do not agree with many of its conclusions, Keene's *Yokomitsu Riichi, Modernist* is an important early English-language study of this author.
7. For studies of Japanese modernist and surrealist poetry during the era of the *Shi to shiron* (*Poetry and Poetics*) journal, see Hirata and Sas.
8. Golley extensively discusses the impact of developments in modern physics on Japanese modernism (*When Our Eyes No Longer See*, especially 10–70).
9. See Proger on Muybridge's photographic experiments. See also Doanne (especially 46–68) for a discussion of the related photographic experiments of Etienne-Jules Marey in relationship to early film and turn-of-the-century conceptions of time and motion.
10. In a concise definition offered in September 1929, Kitagawa suggested that the cinépoème could either consist of "a string of characters" (*moji no raretsu*) or "a continuum of images/film" (Kitagawa glosses the characters *eizô* [image/images] with the katakana reading *firumu* [film]) ("Shidan rebyû" 15). This suggests that Kitagawa's conception of cinépoème could cover both literary works as well as films such as Man Ray's "L'Etoile de mer" (1927), based on a poem-scenario by Robert Desnos (a textual version of this work translated by Tsuchiya Shigeichirô was published in the January 1930 issue of the film journal *Eiga ôrai*). Wall-Romana attributes the term *cinépoème* to Romanian poet and filmmaker Benjamin Fondane's coinage in 1928, and identifies a persistent interest in poem-scenarios among the French avant-garde from the years 1917 through 1929 (142). Incidentally, in his definition above Kitagawa borrows the phrase "string of characters" (*moji no raretsu*) verbatim from Yokomitsu's "formalist" literary theory, discussed below, suggesting the proximity of these two authors' critical consciousnesses during this period.
11. This is Usawa Satoru's assumption in his reading of the poem (16–18). Although the prophetically titled *Sensô* (*War*) was published two years before the full Japanese military occupation of Manchuria during the Manchurian Incident of 1931, in the 1920s Japan already had a large semicolonial presence in this territory, centering on the

Liaodong Peninsula leased to Japan following the Russo-Japanese War and the corridor of the Japanese-owned South Manchurian Railway Company running from Dalian and Lüshun in the south to Changchun and other territories in the interior. For a more detailed consideration of Kitagawa's view of Japanese imperialism and the role of the South Manchurian Railway Company, see Gardner, "Colonialism and the Avant-garde."

12. This quotation is taken from the 1944 essay "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today," collected in *Film Form* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949) 239, 245; italicized as in the original. The second year of Kitagawa's tenure on the editorial board of *Kinema Junpô* coincided with the first introduction of Soviet montage theory in that journal. The first installment of Seymon Timoshenko theoretical writings translated as "Eiga geijutsu to katteingu" ("Film Art and Cutting") by Iwasaki Akira appeared in *Eiga geijutsu* in April 1928; the second through twelfth installments were published in *Kinema Junpô* in July through December 1928. Iijima Tadashi's translation of French critic Léon Moussinac's "Soviets Roshia no Eiga" ("The Film of Soviet Russia") appeared in 22 installments in *Kinema junpô* from November 1928 through August 1929. An article by Moussinac's on Vertov's "cine-eye" (*kinoglaz*) was also published in the journal *Eiga hyôron* in November 1929. Eisenstein's writings on montage and Japanese culture were introduced in a three-part series of translations, "Nihon bunka to Montaaaju," by Fukuro Ippei in *Kinema Junpo* in February 1930. These publications on Soviet theory formed a second wave of montage theory after the extensive introduction of French writings on montage in the mid-1920s. Subsequently, poets Hanya Saburô and Orito Horio, both associates of Kitagawa, conducted a debate over the application of montage theory to poetry in the years 1933-1934. On the introduction of Soviet montage theory to Japan, see Iwamoto and Yamamoto Kikuo.

13. Several commentators, including Chiba (48) have pointed out the resemblance between Yokomitsu's technique and both the film scenario and the cinépoème. For recent discussions of cinema and media theory in relation to Yokomitsu's work, see Kitada (two articles), Kuroda, and Toeda.

14. For a discussion of the organic and inorganic in this passage, see Golley, *When Our Eyes No Longer See*, 135.

15. Yokomitsu's theory of literary form arguably takes on an extra dimension in light of the compact, cellular structure and graphic possibilities of the Japanese writing system, which typically employs logogrammatic Chinese characters (*kanji*) in combination with Japanese phonetic script (*kana*). Yokomitsu himself suggested that an analysis of the role of "ideogrammatic characters" (*keishô moji*) should be an important factor in the construction of a formalist theory specific to Japanese literature. ("Bungei jihyô 2" 154). See also Komori 477-95 for a discussion of Yokomitsu's "formalism" in relation to the literary theory of *Shi to shiron* coterie member Toyama Usaburô, who developed a poetics of the ideogram (*keishô moji*) based on gestalt theory and Saussurian linguistics. Still, it is important to note that while they may take on added significance in the context of the Japanese orthographic system, Yokomitsu's fundamental remarks on the mechanism of signification of the literary text could apply to an alphabetic "string of characters" as well as to a Japanese one. For a discussion of orthography in Japanese modernist poetry with respect to orientalist conceptions of the ideogram as well as Japanese imperialism, see Gardner, *Advertising Tower*, 46-83.

16. This wave theory of consciousness applied to reading was partly based on Natsume Sôseki's *Bungakuron* (*Theory of Literature*, 1907), which was informed by the psychological models of James and Bergson. See Komori 457-65.

17. See Hirano for a discussion of film director, screenwriter, and essayist Itami Mansaku that focuses on his position within the Japanese intelligentsia and his views of Japanese militarism.

18. Kitagawa also describes this authorial perspective as the “fourth person,” referring to the theoretical concept introduced in Yokomitsu Riichi’s “Junsui shōsetsu ron” [“Theory of The Pure Novel”] of the “fourth person” as “a self that views the self,” beyond the “I” of first person, the “you” of second person, and the “he/she/they” of third person (*Sanbun eiga ron* 114). However, Kitagawa arguably endows this “fourth person” with a political or critical valance that differs from Yokomitsu’s original application of the term.

19. For discussion of Japanese imperialism, modernism, and modern subjectivity from perspectives outside of the Imperial metropole, see Kleeman, Shih, and Shin and Robinson.

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