

**The Discourse on Love Between Men in Interwar Japan:
Iwata's History of Homosexuality**

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Iwata's History of Homosexuality

Between 1920 and 1945, Iwata Jun'ichi (岩田準一) carried out an unprecedented, extensive research project on the history and literature of homoeroticism in Japan. What makes Iwata's "history of homosexuality" so intriguing is that it was written under conditions that appear to be so different from those which gave rise in the West to the field of inquiry we call "history of homosexuality". Because in Japan such a field seems hardly to have existed at all outside of Iwata's work—or before and after it—it appears as singular and anomalous. It also emerges fifty years earlier than its Western counterpart, and yet seems to imply what might be considered contemporary insights: namely a sense of historical and cultural specificity in regard to sexuality. Moreover, the Western production of histories of homosexuality arose in the face of social antagonism toward an emergent subcultural identity and in connection with that identity formation—a formation on which an emancipatory effort, as well as oppression, depended.¹ These histories arose in relation to an identity politics and existed intertextually with its political discourse; Iwata's did not. Not that Iwata's history was produced in a vacuum, rather, it was produced in a very different discursive situation—one which apparently did not include sexual identity formation and may even have contained elements of resistance to the very concept of sexual identity as it was being formed in the West.

The title of a collection of essays Iwata published in Showa 5-6 (1930-1) probably indicates how he defined the scope and subject of his investigations; it was called "*Honcho Nanshoku Ko*" (本朝男色考) or "Reflections on Love Between Men in Our Country". Iwata used the Tokugawa period word *nanshoku* (男色) in his title; he used it almost exclusively in reference to his topic. The word is a compound of the character for "male" and the character for "passion" or "sexual love", and so, as it assumes the masculine subject position, it refers to sexual love between men. Writing an introduction to a reprint of the essays in Showa 27 (1952), his friend and fellow traveler,

¹D'Emelio (1992), 96-113; D'Emelio cites Jonathan Katz's *Gay American History*, published in 1976, and Jeffrey Weeks's *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present*, published the following year, as the pioneers of the field.

the pseudonymous Edogawa Ranpo, characterizes Iwata's life's work as *doseiaishi* (同性愛史) or *doseiaibungakushi* (同性愛文学史), using words based on the more recent coinage *doseiai* (同性愛), literally "same-sex-love", which are less problematically translated as "history of homosexuality" and "literary history of homosexuality" respectively.²

The question of nomenclature is not only a problem of translation; the different word choices are indicative of a tension between two different conceptualizations of sexuality. The transition—from the Tokugawa coinage to the neologism clearly inspired by the word "homosexuality"—may signal a reorientation from the traditional to the modern and from the Japanese to the Western, but in the time that Iwata was working, both terms were current. In fact Iwata himself uses the word *doseiai* as early as Taisho 9 (1920).³ The significance of the two words cannot be fully explained simply in terms of a movement toward the latter pole of the binarisms East/West and Traditional/Modern. Rather, the mapping of the two terms onto these, *and* onto other oppositions that represent axes of social conflict and cultural confrontation during the inter-war years in Japan, promise an insight into the puzzle of what Iwata was doing when he was writing history and how his work fits into the discursive landscape of Japan in the twenties and thirties.

Silverberg notes that the various articulations of class and gender identity, sexuality, and cultural tradition in the newly instituted mass media existed in tension with the state ideology of national polity. In her discussion of the rise of capitalism and mass culture in Japan, she is careful to distinguish the specifically Japanese character of this economic/cultural system; i.e. it is inflected by the legacy of state capitalism, the emperor-centered state ideology, and the state's direct influence on mass culture through widespread censorship.⁴ Moreover, she asks *how* the experience of the West was fundamental to the Japanese experience of modernity. Her answer is that the construction of a modern sensibility is a dynamic cross-cultural process encompassing both aesthetics and praxis: "... male and female Japanese citizens of different classes integrated the

²Edogawa (1973a), viii.

³This is clear from the title of the article "Doseiai no Gensho ni Taisuru Shochi Kaiketsu" published that year in *Shinaishi*, cited in Edogawa (1973a).

relationship between East and West in different ways, although *not* through borrowing or through a double life enabling them to switch back and forth from white-collar suit to kimono. They constructed an identity informed not by bricolage but by a form of cultural code-switching, whereby aspects of Western material and mass culture were integrated into the experience of everyday practice.”⁵ By examining the discourse on homosexuality as an aspect of the production, in the context of an era of great social/economic transformation, of a new Japanese sexuality inflected by an encounter with Western sexology, this paper will attempt to take up her challenge that “A new cultural history needs to explore how new attitudes toward food, dress, and *sexuality* had profound implications regarding Japanese attitudes toward self, others, and the state.”⁶

Historiography

In *The Writing of History*, Michel De Certeau makes the critical observation that historiography is itself located within history. The very practice of making history has a cultural and historical specificity so that, “There exists a historicity of history, implying the movement which links an interpretive practice to a social praxis.”⁷ This insight supplies the theoretical basis for linking Iwata's historiographical project to the socio-sexual and political currents of his day. For De Certeau, historiography's production of intelligibility depends upon a division of time into a past and a present, which allows for the manipulation of the relationship of the present to that past, now “other.” De Certeau in fact gives examples of historical strategies that differ from the “othering” of the past which characterizes the Western incarnation of history: India's “process of coexistence and reabsorption,” the Merina's “‘privilege’ (*tantara*) that must be remembered so that one shall not oneself be forgotten,” and the Fo who define “identity through a return to a past.”⁸ Therefore, the degree to which Iwata's historiography can be explained in De Certeau's terms must remain, at least temporarily, in question.

⁴Silverberg (1991), 61-89passim.

⁵Silverberg (1991), 88.

⁶Silverberg (1991), 87; emphasis added.

⁷De Certeau (1988), 21.

⁸De Certeau (1988), 4.

On the other hand, my own historical process may be less problematically subsumed under his explanatory models. De Certeau states that, “any reading of the past—however much it is controlled by the analysis of documents—is driven by a reading of current events.”⁹ Clearly, my interest in Iwata is related to my own position in relation to the still emergent field of the history of homosexuality, and to a new sense of the instability of sexual identities as the result of contemporary theorizing and politics around sexuality and gender. I see Iwata's situation—being a pioneer of *doseiaishi* in a Japan experiencing the instability of its sexuality and gender formations—as somehow analogous to my own. And though his practice of historiography may differ, clearly, it represents a problem of identity formation in several dimensions (sexual, national, etc.) and an attempt to come to terms with a new sexuality and the relation of that sexuality to a Western and to a traditional “other.” In this sense, Iwata's historiography may be considered heterology.

De Certeau explains that history and ethnology share with many modern Western disciplines, the structure of heterology which creates intelligibility through a relationship with the other, “basing its mastery of expression upon what the other keeps silent, and guaranteeing the interpretive work of a science ... by the frontier that separates it from an area awaiting this work in order to be known.”¹⁰ Ethnography manipulates the relationship of a presumptive cultural interior to that which is made into a cultural other, and history manipulates the relationship between that which is deemed the present and that which becomes a distinct and past. Though De Certeau cautions that his discussion of historiography and ethnography as heterologies is uniquely applicable to the modern West, it seems that Iwata's studies of Japanese homosexuality are implicated in both of these heterological structures and may even partake of them.

Iwata's friend Edogawa relates that he was completely disinterested in Western materials on sexology while Edogawa found them both fascinating and important.¹¹ In fact, Iwata refused to treat the ethnographic dimension of homosexuality; but his relationship to ethnography is

⁹De Certeau (1988), 23.

¹⁰De Certeau (1988), 3.

¹¹Edogawa (1973).

complicated. He did do other “ethnographic” work (such as a study of Toba area pearl divers) and was associated with *minshukugaku* (民衆苦学) especially through his correspondence with Minakata Kumagusu (南方熊楠). If, as I assert, Iwata's historical project is a response to a new sexuality that has everything to do with the West, his refusal is significant; it seems to suggest a reactionary positioning. It may represent a reaction against the ethnographic attentions of the West—Edward Carpenter (1911), Ferdinand Karsch-Haack (1906) and Magnus Hirschfeld, all wrote about the phenomenon in Japan¹²—and an enactment of defiant self definition, a “writing back”; or, it may be defensive appeal to tradition in response to the undesirable influence of Western notions of sexuality. In doing history, Iwata performs an implicit rebuff of a privileged foreign knowledge and in a claim for identity and consciousness absents the imposing voice of the West.

According to De Certeau, the labor of historiography proceeds through the act of separating the present from the past. In this act, historiography creates the space for interpretation. But in the process of representation and the production of intelligibility, it selects between what is understandable and what is to be forgotten. The latter returns at the edges of discourse to disrupt continuity and order—the construction of which is a function of history—but they enable something new. “Therein they symbolize a return of the repressed, that is, a return of what, at a given moment, has *become* unthinkable in order for a new identity to *become* thinkable.”¹³ This process is at work, I believe, in Iwata's obsessive search for the origins of Japan's homoerotic traditions. In Iwata's work, the space for an emergent new sexuality depends on the production of *nanshoku* as a historical artifact; this in turn depends upon the separation of a past from a present, which is accomplished through the repression of a more recent history.

Ethnography

De Certeau's description of ethnography as a heteronomous colonizing practice is productively complemented by James Clifford's assertion that modernity itself is ethnographic.

¹²Schalow (1990), 45.

Ethnography is not only a practice but a situation: “By the 1920s a truly global space of cultural connections and dissolutions has become imaginable: local authenticities meet and merge in transient urban and suburban settings.”¹⁴ The play of identities within this global space are politically charged, “‘Cultural’ difference is no longer a stable, exotic otherness; self-other relations are matters of power and rhetoric rather than of essence.”¹⁵ Notions of identity, personal and collective self-fashioning, including the construction of “tradition,” are formed within this dialogic space, according to a dialogic rule: “... identity, considered ethnographically, must always be mixed, relational, and inventive.”¹⁶ This is an apt characterization of the problematics of Japanese sexual identity formation in the twenties and thirties; it also sheds light on Iwata's historiographical strategy as a return to tradition. Furthermore, Clifford casts suspicion on any, “return to ‘original’ sources, or gathering up of a true tradition. Such claims to purity are in any event always subverted by the need to stage authenticity in opposition to external, often dominating alternatives.”¹⁷ Clifford's emphasis on the relationality of identity formation—even that which is cast in the mode of tradition—lends credence to an interpretation of Iwata's project as having been constructed in opposition to Western sexological discourse. His appeal to tradition must be put into perspective by seeing it against an inventive, creolizing, intercultural milieu.

The ethnographic situation, rife with various fragmentations and juxtapositions, performs—or makes possible—a kind of cultural critique. The aspect of the ethnographic which Clifford associates with the parallel development of surrealism and ethnography in the 20s and 30s in France, he terms “ethnographic surrealism.” He explains, “Ethnography cut with surrealism emerges as the theory and practice of juxtaposition. It studies, and is part of, the invention and interruption of meaningful wholes in works of cultural import-export.”¹⁸ The cultural contrasts—the constitutive “play of the familiar and the strange”—available in an intercultural context

¹³De Certeau (1988), 4.

¹⁴Clifford (1988), 4.

¹⁵Clifford (1988), 14.

¹⁶Clifford (1988), 10.

¹⁷Clifford (1988), 11f.

enable an ethnographic attitude, that is, one in which culture and its norms can be seen as “artificial arrangements susceptible to detached analysis and comparison with other possible dispositions.”¹⁹ Through juxtaposition, then, apparently stable orders can appear to be constructed, ideological, or repressive.

This discussion is as relevant to the situation in interwar Japan as it is to our own use of ethnographic methods and materials. Alongside the critical practice of historicising sexuality (Foucault's *History of Sexuality* is only the most well known of these efforts), there is a legacy of feminist and queer anthropology that has used ethnographic data in order to make a case for the constructedness of Western sex and gender systems. In both disciplines, sexuality becomes interpreted as a cultural production rather than a natural essence. The representation of other sex and gender systems (Native American, Melanesian, Indian, Ancient Greek, Victorian, etc.) allows for a questioning of the normativity of contemporary Western models, and opens up a space for the critique of these as oppressive and ideological. This essay, like most contemporary queer scholarship, is heir to that legacy.

Sexography

David Halperin's *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* rehearses a twenty year long debate between social constructivist and essentialist understandings of homosexuality as a preface to his own scholarship on homosexuality in Greek antiquity. A constructionist picture emerges of homosexuality and heterosexuality as Western bourgeois productions characterized by an identification of the self with the sexual self that is clearly absent from classical antiquity. The gradual fashioning of the sexual self can be traced historically from late antiquity through the contemporary period. The basic conclusion of this line of research (which becomes the premise of most later work) is summed up in the following way: “... the study of sexual life in antiquity reveals homosexuality, heterosexuality, and even sexuality itself to be relatively recent and highly culture-specific forms of erotic life—not the basic building-blocks of sexual identity for all human

¹⁸Clifford (1988), 147.

beings in all times and places, but peculiar and indeed exceptional ways of conceptualizing as well as *experiencing* sexual desire.”²⁰ By locating the advent of this new sexuality in the scientific and medicological discourse of sexology the late nineteenth century Europe, the cross-cultural and trans-historical usefulness of the hetero/homo taxonomy is called into question through the specification of its ideological baggage. The doubt then arises, “It may well be that homosexuality properly speaking has no history of its own outside the West or much before the beginning of our century.”²¹ This is a presumption, now almost axiomatic in the field, that is problematized by the existence of Iwata's scholarship. On the one hand, Iwata's work seems to carefully avoid applying a Western taxonomy to a Japanese erotics. Recognizing differences, Iwata shares with queer scholars the problem of, “first of all, how to recover the terms in which the experiences of individuals belonging to past societies were actually constituted and, second, how to measure and assess the differences between those terms and the ones we currently employ.”²² On the other hand, I suspect that his work is, at least indirectly, informed by—enabled by—the availability of European sexology to Japanese intellectuals.

According to a constructivist methodology, we should not trace the history of “homosexuality” as a thing, but rather examine the significance of same sex-sexual contacts as they are variously constructed, that is as “a plurality of only partly overlapping social and conceptual territories, a series of cultural formations that shift as their constituents change, combine in different sequences, or compose new patterns.”²³ Perhaps motivated by different considerations, Iwata's history does seem to assume that some kind of dynamism is possible for sexuality. However, we must be careful here, even in the application of our category “sexuality” because it is the culturally and historically bounded conceptualization on which both homosexuality and heterosexuality depend. Moreover, as D'Emilio notes, the development of this notion of sexuality is related to a

¹⁹Clifford (1988), 119.

²⁰Halperin (1990), 9.

²¹Halperin (1990), 18.

²²Halperin (1990), 29.

²³Halperin (1990), 29.

set of developments associated with the rise of capitalism; these include the spread of market relations, the decline in kin-based economic structures, the advent of possessive individualism, and the replacement of divine cosmologies by a faith in individual reason.²⁴

Halperin outlines the peculiar linkage of intercourse, kinship, family, and gender which becomes the domain of sexuality as follows:

First of all, sexuality defines itself as a separate, sexual domain within the larger field of man's psychophysical nature. Second, sexuality effects the conceptual demarcation and isolation of that domain from other areas of personal and social life that have traditionally cut across it, such as carnality, love, affection, appetite, and desire—to name but a few of the older claimants to territories more recently staked out by sexuality. Finally, sexuality generates sexual identity: it endows each of us with an individual sexual nature, with a personal essence defined (at least in part) in specifically sexual terms. ... [O]ne of the chief conceptual functions of sexuality is to distinguish, once and for all, sexual identity from matters of gender—to decouple, as it were, kinds of sexual predilection from degrees of masculinity and femininity."²⁵

Most importantly, this sexuality, through its ramifications in a range of behaviors, attitudes, choices, styles, and judgments, etc., becomes the secret center of personal identity and a hermeneutics of the self.

It is within this understanding of the domain of sexuality that the plurality of homo/hetero, as two distinct sexualities, makes sense. Halperin's contrasting description of Ancient Greek erotics is instructive here because it suggests a possibility for the characterization of pre-modern Japanese erotics. In classical Athens, sexual object choice was characterized not in terms of sexual typology (male, female), but rather in terms of a differentiation between "active" and "passive", determined by the articulation of social power, and not congruent with gender lines. Accordingly, all sexual encounters, regardless of the genders of the persons involved, were part of "*a single form of sexual experience* which all free adult males shared."²⁶ Allen Bray, in *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, makes a similar point in regard to the conceptualization of sodomy in 16th and 17th century England; sodomy was not "a sexuality in its own right, but existed as a potential

²⁴D'Emelio (1992), 108-9.

²⁵D'Emelio (1992), 25.

²⁶D'Emelio (1992), 33.

for confusion and disorder in *one undivided sexuality*.”²⁷ In a similar way, the Japanese *nanshoku* may have existed as a part of—one possibility within—an undifferentiated erotic field.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* marks the end of the essentialism/constructivism debate and the beginning of a more complicated and nuanced discussion of modern sexuality. She argues that there are two internal contradictions to modern sexual definition and that the first of these subsumes the essentialism/constructivism split.

The first is the contradiction between seeing homo/heterosexual definition on the one hand as an issue of active importance primarily for a small, distinct, relatively fixed homosexual minority (what I refer to as a minoritizing view), and seeing it on the other hand as an issue of continuing, determinative importance in the lives of people across the spectrum of sexualities (what I refer to as a universalizing view). The second is the contradiction between seeing same-sex object choice on the one hand as a matter of liminality or transitivity between genders, and seeing it on the other hand as reflecting an impulse of separatism—though by no means necessarily political separatism—within each gender.²⁸

Moreover, the crisis of (especially male) homo/heterosexual definition is endemic to modern western culture and structures many of its major nodes of thought and knowledge by indelibly marking the following categories:

secrecy/disclosure, knowledge/ignorance, private/public, masculine/feminine, majority/minority, innocence/initiation, natural/artificial, new/old, discipline/terrorism, canonic/noncanonic, wholeness/decadence, urbane/provincial, domestic/foreign, health/illness, same/different, active/passive, in/out, cognition/paranoia, art/kitsch, utopia/apocalypse, sincerity/sentimentality, and voluntariness/addiction.²⁹

Using a deconstructive strategy she shows that the ostensibly symmetrical dyad homo/hetero actually exists in an unstable dynamic relationship where hetero is ontologically privileged but at the same time dependent for meaning on homo because it must simultaneously subsume and exclude it.

Since both constructivist and essentialist strategies have been continuously available and appropriated to sexual self-definition *and* to both “pro-homo” and “anti-homo” politics and discourse, Sedgwick aims to displace the now standard debate over their meaning and legitimacy, by

²⁷Quoted in D'Emelio (1992), 102; emphasis added.

²⁸Sedgwick (1990), 1.

²⁹Sedgwick (1990), 11.

focusing on how these categorizations themselves work: “what enactments they are performing and what relations they are creating, rather than what they essentially mean.”³⁰ By replacing these categories with “minoritizing” and “universalizing”, she asks, “In whose lives is homo/heterosexual definition an issue of continuing centrality and difficulty?”³¹ She avoids a problem she sees as endemic to the essentialism/constructivism debate: conflating the question of phylogeny, “How fully are the meaning and experience of sexual activity and identity contingent on their mutual structuring with other historically and culturally variable aspects of a given society?”³² and the question of ontogeny, “What is the cause of homo- [or of hetero-] sexuality in the individual?”³³ This debate depends on the already unstable definitions of nature and nurture. And, in a society where there is an overwhelming and unchallenged desire to eradicate gay identity *and* gay people, there is no safe conceptualization of gay origins. A constructionist position which depends on a concept of cultural malleability is a strong defense against biological determinism but is subject to the anti-gay pressures of social engineering. An essentialist position offers resistance to the pressures of social engineering, but easily falls prey to pathologizing or eugenic impulses.³⁴ While the question of phylogeny remains crucial to historical and anthropological work on sexuality, Sedgwick's effort to illuminate the implications of the ontogenetic entailments of current methodological formulations is important for this scholarship and its politics.

One of the values of Sedgwick's work is that it acknowledges (in a way that is consonant with the discussions of Clifford and De Certeau above) the important work of history and anthropology in defamiliarizing and denaturalizing the past and the distant, as well as the present, but points out that such analysis has “tended inadvertently to *refamiliarize*, *renaturalize*, damagingly reify an entity that it could be doing much more to subject to analysis ... counterposing

³⁰Sedgwick (1990), 27.

³¹Sedgwick (1990), 40.

³²Sedgwick (1990), 40.

³³Sedgwick (1990), 40.

³⁴Sedgwick (1990), 40-44.

against the alterity of the past a relatively unified homosexuality.”³⁵ Her project problematizes the notion of “homosexuality as we conceive of it today” by seeing it too as a contested space of contradictory and overlapping definitional forces. She sees the work of Foucault and Halperin as examples of an unfortunate reductionism wherein new models of sexuality are assumed to simply replace older ones. For Foucault a sodomy defined as an act is superseded by the “homosexual” as a species defined in terms of gender inversion and minority status. Halperin points to the later emergence of the “straight-acting gay-male” which replaces the invert with a gender-separatist model. Sedgwick points out the contemporary coexistence of all three models: “... issues of modern homo/heterosexual definition are structured, not by the supersession of one model and the consequent withering away of another, but instead by the relations enabled by the unrationalized coexistence of different models during the times they do coexist.”³⁶ This observation is of key importance to the case of interwar Japanese sexuality. The problem is properly seen not as a question how modern Western notions of sexuality replace Japanese ones, but rather how various models of sexuality coexist and interact in relation to the complex social context of Japan in the 20s and 30s.

A Discursive Space

Interpreting Iwata's history then, requires as background an inventory of the notions of sexuality that may have existed at the time, and an outline of the relevant aspects of their social context. It seems justifiable to focus on the relationship of Japan to the West and to modernity as a significant aspect of the intellectual and political climate of the era, and to describe something of the field of sexology in Europe because it probably played a significant role in shaping the discourse on sexuality in Japan (though, of course, images of Western sexuality that reached the Japanese through the mediation of popular culture venues like film were significant as well).

³⁵Sedgwick (1990), 45.

³⁶Sedgwick (1990), 47.

The West and the East, the Traditional and the Modern

Iwata's more noted contemporary, Kuki Shuzo complains that, "Contemporary Japan has come face to face with a crisis. Every aspect of our life is tainted by the West, a condition commonly believed to be 'modern.' But this is a dangerous delusion, one which must be dispelled."³⁷ From this, we can see the how the intertwined forces represented by the modern and the West impinge on the Japanese as a crisis and engender an impulse toward resistance and critique. The slippage here between the terms modern and Western is not a phenomenon exclusive to Japan; Sakai argues that historical discourse has already structured the relationship between the two: "Historically, modernity has primarily been opposed to its historical precedent; geopolitically it has been contrasted to the non-modern, or, more specifically, to the non-West. Thus, the pairing has served as a discursive scheme according to which the historical predicate is translated into a geopolitical one and vice versa."³⁸ He also relates that in the 30s, Kyoto School critics problematized this relationship, recognizing that history had a spatial, relational aspect as well as a chronological one and conceiving of history as interactive "coexisting temporalities" rather than as an "evolutionary and linear series of events."³⁹

Under the threat of colonization, the universalizing narrative in which Western modernity triumphs, had been assimilated by the Japanese under the slogan "civilization and enlightenment," *bunmei kaika* (文明開化); during the same period they successfully modernized and entered the world market. By the 1920s and 1930s Western ideas were already well established in the language and in the everyday lives of Japanese intellectuals, so that their resistance to the West, in the form of an assertion of Japaneseness, necessarily took place within Western discursive modes.⁴⁰

Karatani Kojin's mapping of the discursive space of modern Japan provides a more specific periodization for modernity in Japan which accounts for both internal and external orientations. He

³⁷Kuki, from "Japanese Culture," quoted in Pincus (1991), 142.

³⁸Sakai (1989), 94.

³⁹Sakai (1989), 105-7.

describes the Taisho and Showa periods (the eras during which Iwata was writing) in the following terms. “‘Things Taishoesque’ emerged from a consciousness of autonomy, as tension between Japan and the West began to ease following the Russo-Japanese War, and Japan proclaimed its separation from Asia. ... it is in this type of period that discourse on Japan and on Japanese culture begin to proliferate.”⁴¹ In the Taisho's discursive space, “Japanese Culture” is affirmed and while Asia and the West, as the other, are eradicated. The result is an range of seemingly contradictory attitudes that typify the period: “a self complacency that can introduce anything from the outside without actually maintaining a conception of the exterior; or, conversely, a delusionary, insular mentality that thinks of itself as worldwide, even though it is entirely local; or further, the self-deception of being unaware of ‘invasion,’ even while Japan is in fact advancing mercilessly throughout the world.”⁴² The Showa period sees a rejection of the Taisho's sense of autonomy. Japan and the West come to be seen on the same level so that differences between them were emphasized.

Kuki Shuzo

Kuki Shuzo's most famous work, *Iki no Kozo* (意気の構造), *The Structure of Iki*, should be seen in relation to the impression of overwhelming cultural colonization that the newly reconstructed Tokyo presented in 1929 when he returned to Japan from Europe. As Pincus relates,

Among contemporary observers, there were those who welcomed this modern transformation as a cultural revolution with the potential to empower new social classes. Kuki, however, saw it not as a liberating transcultural modernity, nor as acceptable cultural borrowing, but rather as a sign of the invasive presence of the West.⁴³

She adds that, “the anxiety of contamination that pervades ‘*iki*’ no kozo is as much an anxiety over the *internal* specter of mass culture (and allied possibilities of mass politics) as it is an anxiety over the *external* presence of the West.”⁴⁴

⁴⁰Pincus (1991), 144.

⁴¹Karatani (1991), 203.

⁴²Karatani (1991), 205.

⁴³Pincus (1991), 150.

⁴⁴Pincus (1991), 151.

Kuki identified, *iki* (意気)—a late Tokugawa period term that in the pleasure quarters of Edo referred to a certain refined aesthetic sensibility—as a privileged signifier of a unique Japanese cultural essence. But he employed a European methodology; cultural hermeneutics promised the reclamation of an alienated tradition and the restoration to human experience of the integrity it was supposed to have lost to a mass and mechanized modernity. Ironically, his methodology was a mark of the same heterogeneous Japan that was separated from its past.⁴⁵ *Iki no Kozo* is full of contradictory impulses; Kuki was driven to find a domain outside of Western metaphysics, but used the resulting insights in the construction of an ethnic identity. In the process, *iki* was emptied of its historical and social specificity: “In this manner, a single word was assigned the task of representing the identity of an inimitable collective subject against the claims of Western universalism.”⁴⁶

Yanagita Kunio

According to Harootunian's account of Yanagita Kunio's *minzokugaku* (民族学), folkloric studies, the discipline's formation was supported by the larger cultural discourse that was already contesting newly assimilated forms knowledge, including developmental theories of history and industrial production and exchange practices. This modern knowledge threatened the introduction of “difference” and the eradication of the elements of life that the Japanese took as “the Sign of irreducible sameness.” Social theorist like Yanagita saw the vestiges of a declining precapitalist order coexisting antagonistically with a capitalist society. *Minzokugaku* was an ethnographic discipline formed in response to this dilemma—employing the *kokugakuron* (国学論), nativist notion of “the folk” as a defense against the bureaucratic rationality of the imperial state's program of modernization. In rejecting the concept of society, they aimed to preserve older forms of social relationships and practices of daily life and thereby solve the problem of identity, division, and conflict.⁴⁷

⁴⁵Pincus (1991), 144-5.

⁴⁶Pincus (1991), 148.

⁴⁷Harootunian (1990), 99-101.

Yanagita's work, like Kuki's, was a hybrid, deploying a narrative form to represent the timeless tales of the folk and a scientific skepticism as a guarantee of a thorough understanding of contemporary problems. His use of the narrative form secured the effect of being a witness to a timeless folk experience he merely records. This folk experience is what possessed the authority to contest modern rationalized structures. *Minzokugaku* gave rise to a discourse of authenticity that focused on the countryside as a metonym for the essentially Japanese.⁴⁸ Another effect of Yanagita's project was a redefinition of history: "history is eventless and consists of sediments piled on top of each other to resemble the imperceptible growth of a large icicle."⁴⁹ Practices from a remote past, immune to historical change, appear as new manifestations in the daily lives of contemporary folk. The focus of historical development becomes the nature of the relationships that exist between the folk, rather than the progress of the spirit (idealism) or economic transformations (Marxism).⁵⁰

Sexology

According to Donald Roden, the beginning of the Taisho brought an interest in sexology by Japanese psychologists, medical doctors and "amateurs." These pioneers of Japanese sexology studied the works of the early European sexologists like Richard Krafft-Ebbing, Havelock Ellis, Magnus Hirschfeld, and Freud, and wrote their own books on sexual deviance. One such work, Habuto Eiji and Sawada Junjiro's *Hentai Seiyokuron* (The theory of Deviant Sexual Desire) apparently bears a striking resemblance to Krafft-Ebbing's *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886) which the authors reference throughout.⁵¹ Edogawa's introduction to Iwata's *Honcho Nanshoku Ko*, mentions that he studied many western works on sexuality at the same time that Iwata was searching through Ancient Japanese Literature for references to *nanshoku*. Iwata was apparently uninterested in the Western material, but Edogawa lists them as important reference works for the study of homosexuality and sees Iwata's work as part of the same field, comparing it favorably in

⁴⁸Harootunian (1990), 102-105.

⁴⁹Harootunian (1990), 109.

⁵⁰Harootunian (1990), 122-3.

terms of quality and depth of scholarship. Edogawa's list includes the above-mentioned sexologists Krafft-Ebbing, Ellis, and Hirschfeld, and adds Urlichs, Bloch, and Karsch-Haack. He also lists several other Western writers on homosexuality whose work, though related to and contemporary with the above, tend not to write in medicalized terms: Richard Burton, J. A. Symonds, Edward Carpenter, and Andre Gide.

In the 1860s, Urlichs coined the term "uranism" to refer to the phenomena of *anima mulieris in corpore virili inclusa*, a woman's soul enclosed in a male body, which came later to define homosexuality. His complicated theory of psychic hermaphroditism explained uranism in terms of innate biological factors. His apologetic work was directly related to the question of whether or not "unnatural vice" was to be criminalized in the newly reunified Germany. Krafft-Ebbing's contribution was to pathologize Urlichs theory of inversion; homosexuality became a biological perversion. In 1895, Hirschfeld, who was a central figure in the early homosexual rights movement, began an effort to reverse the trend toward a pathological conception, and, still using a biological model, insisted that homosexuality was a normal sexual variation, a third sex. Freud's work can be seen as part of a trend to see all perversions in terms of homosexual and heterosexual drives; but these drives are assigned developmental significance therapeutic treatments. This outline of the development of sexology leaves out much of the complicated debate over the subject of sexology, its vocabulary, taxonomy explanation, which formed the history of its formation.⁵² With the simultaneous reception of this whole body of work in Japan, it would not be surprising that these same issues would remain unclear in the Japanese setting.

As Sedgwick reminds us, the theorizing of sexuality is not usually univocal, and Hirschfeld's predominating notion of a gender transitive third sex, should be contrasted with Friedländer's contemporary conception of homosexuality as the highest evolutionary development of gender differentiation.⁵³ His objection to Hirschfeld's theory took into account not medical but

⁵¹Roden (1990), 45.

⁵²Hekma (1989), 176-185

⁵³Sedgwick (1990), 88.

anthropological data, especially the Greek case.⁵⁴ This also points to the importance to the larger discourse of works outside of the medical field. For example, J. A. Symonds study of Ancient Greece, written in the 1880, but not widely published then, was perhaps the first history of homosexuality.⁵⁵ Edward Carpenter's work, especially his *Intermediate Types Among Primitive Folk* (1911), also used ethnographic data in order to make a case for the value of "sexual intermediates" who have an important, special role in society. Richard Burton's "Terminal Essay" from his ten volume translation of the Arabian Nights contains an extended discussion of a climactic theory of homosexuality. He posits the existence of a "sotadic zone" that extended around the world (coextensive with the non-Christian world) inside of which homosexuality flourished. This theory may be difficult to take seriously, but his attention to the ethnography of pederastic practices is certainly significant. I do not mean to suggest here that there were entirely separate genres of writing about sexuality; these writers undoubtedly influenced each other, and some, like Havelock Ellis, combined the methods of various fields.

Gender Trouble in the Taisho

Iwata began his research project in the Taisho period, a time which according to Donald Roden, was characterized by a fascination with gender ambivalence in reaction to the carefully disciplined sex roles of the Meiji era. Roden interprets this fascination as part of a broader global phenomenon he explains in terms of a shift in social interest from "character," governed by self control, duty, and civilization building through technical, and bureaucratic means, to "personality," emphasizing individualism, consumption, sensuality, and culture.⁵⁶

Strict definitions of gender were linked to the project of national formation during the Meiji era. The slogan "*ryosai kenbo*" (良妻賢母), good wives and wise mothers, that was inscribed in the Meiji civil code (1898-1947) referred a prescribed gender role for women to the nationalist project. Roden finds a symmetry between *otoko no honbun* (男の本分) and *onna no*

⁵⁴Luristen (1974), 50.

⁵⁵Duberman (1989), 1; it does not constitute a field of the history of homosexuality though.

⁵⁶Roden (1990), 37-55 passim.

honbun (女の本分), the duties of men and women, respectively, which define nationalist inflected gender appropriate behavior: domesticity, chastity, modesty and submissiveness for girls, and public achievement, ambition, and fortitude for boys. Jennifer Robertson, however, disputes the existence of any male equivalent of *ryosai kenbo*, pointing out that threats to social order are more commonly referred to *fujin mondai* (婦人問題), “the women problem”; no “man problem” exists.⁵⁷ In any case, strict enforcement of gender roles especially in the educational institutions of the Meiji, reflected an understanding of gender that, particularly on the right, was associated with both state interest and state order.

In the Taisho era, gender distinctions began to blur and the Japanese became fascinated with androgyny and sexual ambivalence. Interestingly, Roden points to a pre-industrial cultural tradition in which gender distinctions were as not as absolute—especially the traditions of the urban pleasure quarters, Iwata's subject—as one source for this fascination.⁵⁸ The change then is in part a reaction to the Meiji leadership's suppression of these pleasures in deference to a Victorian conception of respectability.

A challenge to Meiji gender ideology was present in the literature of the time that portrayed a new sensitive, emotional, and vulnerable male character.⁵⁹ The films of the era also featured a new kind of man: the *nimaeme* (二枚目), an effeminate and weak male second.⁶⁰ The phenomenon of the *atarashiki onna* (新じき女) or “new women”, however, was a more prominent, and controversial manifestation of gender redefinition. This new women is characterized in contrast to the “new man” by an emotional independence and an assertiveness that relates to both a new social situation and a nascent feminist understanding.

For women, the number of years between puberty and marriage increased as the result of universal education and the new acceptability—even desirability—of a brief term of participation in the industrial or commercial workforce. During this period of time women are described as *shojo*

⁵⁷Robertson, (1991) 171.

⁵⁸Roden (1990), 42.

⁵⁹Roden (1990), 43.

(少女 and 処女 both mean “little girl” or “virgin”), not-quite-female, because the definition of adult womanhood depends upon marriage and motherhood. As *shinshokugyofujin* (新職業婦人), “new working women”, and *modan garu* (モダンガル), or *moga* (モガ), “modern girls”, *shojo* were the antithesis of the “good wife, wise mother.”⁶¹

The issue of homosexuality was also part of the debate over gender roles in the Taisho. The term *shojo*, for example implied heterosexual inexperience and homosexual experience. Premarital heterosexual relationships were prohibited for women, but relationships between schoolgirls were an accepted and typical part of their adolescence. These relationships were referred to as *doseiai*, homosexual, or *kurasu esu* (クラスS), “Class S” (the S stood for sex, sister or *shojo*), and considered rather innocuous. Another variety of same-sex relationship based on a kind of butch/femme role-playing, however, was viewed as a dangerous challenge to gender norms.⁶²

According to Robertson, these relationships were probably inspired by the *otokoyaku* (男役), male-role, and *musumeyaku* (娘役), daughter-role, who played the male and female lead, in the dramatic productions of the all girl Takarazuka Review. Much of the debate about “lesbianism”—the word “*rezubian*” (レスビアン) does not come into common use until the seventies—in fact took place with the actresses of the Takarazuka at their center. The Takarazuka productions were meant to display, glorify and inculcate the accepted gender stereotypes, but the players of the Takarazuka and their fans manipulated the images so as to undermine this effect. In the image of the *otokoyaku*, the Review provided not simply a model of male gender, but also a model of a woman who resisted the oppressive and limited conventional female role and adopted, both on and off stage, a new “butch” persona. The same-sex relationships of the Takarazuka actors and those who imitated them were conceived and enacted in terms of these asymmetrical and interdependent roles. Robertson explains that these heterogender relationships, unlike the homogender “Class S” relationships that easily fit into the sex-segregated and homosocial climate of Japan, are perceived

⁶⁰Roden (1990), 48.

⁶¹Robertson (1989), 56.

as threatening because they assert a feminine sexuality—*shojo* relationships are usually assumed to be platonic—and because they refract the heterosexual norm encoded in the Meiji civil code as well as the incest taboo.⁶³

“Class S” relationships were generally ignored but critics reviled the “butch” sexuality as un-Japanese—alien and unnatural.⁶⁴ This style of role-playing however resembles that of other older Japanese homosexualities. The lesbian roles were referred to as *tachi* (which Robertson translates as “one who wields the ‘sword’”, possibly 太刀) and *neko* (猫, “pussy cat,” an allusion to unlicensed *geisha*). Iwata uses similar words to refer to male couples in the Tokugawa, but Minakata writes that Iwata’s use of the terms *tachi* (立ち, lit., “stand”) and *uke* (受け, lit., receive) to refer to partners is incorrect since they are recent coinages based on Western words. He prefers the terms *jokon* (上婚) and *kakon* (下婚), upper spouse, lower spouse, and he confirms that the sort of role playing they imply was common in *nanshoku*.⁶⁵ Paul Schalow’s work on Tokugawa era homosexuality also shows that this role playing was an essential part of *nanshoku*. In this case, similar actually to “Class S” love, not gender, but age was the significant factor in differentiating roles. In *wakashudo* (若衆道), the way of loving youths, the adult male was called *nenja* (念者), one who desires, and the youth was called, naturally, *wakashu* (若衆), a youth. These asymmetrical roles within which *nanshoku* was conceived and enacted were signified by hairstyle and clothing. The importance of playing the role was much greater than actually following the ideal age-graded model of the relationship, so that it was possible to adopt the role of “youth,” based on appearance, regardless of one’s true age. A self-consciousness of this fact developed to such a degree that Saikaku, the Edo period writer of popular erotica, was able to play on its irony for comic effect in his stories.⁶⁶ What Schalow does not comment on is the fact that some of the youths in these relationships were Kabuki actors who were *onnagata* (女方), men who play women’s roles,

⁶²Robertson, (1989), 56-7.

⁶³Robertson, (1989), 57-8, and (1991), 172.

⁶⁴Robertson, (1989), 60-1.

⁶⁵Minakata (1951), vol. 9, 292.

and according to tradition at least, adopted the role of exemplary woman both on and off the stage. Since Saikaku treats them under the heading of *nanshoku*, it is not clear that this gender performance effects the categorization of the relationship at all. It is possible that even for the *onnagata*, the issue of being a feminized male does not arise.

In the Taisho though, homosexuality *was* viewed as an aspect of the feminization of the masculine and the masculinization of the feminine—a phenomenon which, depending on one's perspective, signaled an undesirable atavistic tendency toward the debauchery of a past era, the psychopathology and decline of a new era, or the dawning of a great new age. Among those commenting on the phenomenon were the previously mentioned sexologists Habuto and Sawada who were obsessed with the disruption of social order that was threatened by *fushizen sieyoku* (不自然性欲), unnatural desires, manifesting in criminality and an antisocial confusion of the sexes. They link the masculinization of women and the feminization of men to the spread of homosexuality, which they apparently see in terms of inversion. While they acknowledged the pre-Meiji existence of homosexual prostitution as a sexual diversion of the samurai and townsmen, they were alarmed by a current trend: “Homosexuality has almost become a fashion, spreading throughout society.”⁶⁷ The prescriptive literature of Habuto, Sawada and other experts who offered their counsel to the officials of law enforcement and education, found another audience in the bored urban middle class. Valued for their ability to titillate with descriptions of deviant sexuality, these works became part of a growing underground culture of sexology, part of the era's popular fascination with *ero-guro-nansensu* (エロルロナンセンス), erotic-grotesque-nonsense. Iwata's work, published as it was mainly in crime magazines, may teeter on the line between these genres of academic sexological discourse and popular erotic interest.

Despite the concerted state efforts to sanitize Japanese society, especially through censorship, *ero-guro-nansensu*, with its confusion of gender and sexuality, was a prominent feature of

⁶⁶Schalow (1989b), 122-8.

⁶⁷Habuto and Sawada, *hentai siyokuron*, 18th edition, quoted in Roden (1990), 45-46. I haven't looked at the original text, but Roden uses the term twice in his account of the work so I assume he used it for a reason.

both popular and high culture. The reaction of General Ugaki Kazushige is typical of the government's response:

The feminization of men and the masculinization of women and the neutered gender that results is a modernistic tendency that makes it impossible for the individual, the society, or the nation to achieve great progress. Accordingly, since the manliness of man and the femininity of woman must forever be preserved, it is imperative that we not allow the rise of neutered people who defy nature's grace.⁶⁸

As is evidenced by the general's tirade, diatribes against feminism, homosexuality, and the transgression of gender norms usually appealed to medicine and science to assert a biological imperative that made these transgressions perversions of nature.

There were other social critics, however, who had a rather different explanation of this same phenomenon. Oya Soichi accounts for it as a symptom of late bourgeois capitalism in which people have been turned into passive consumers of sensation:

Those who unceasingly seek for new and more exciting stimuli inevitable become dissatisfied with ordinary sensations; instead they would find great happiness in artificially transposing gender traits. Namely, one grouping of women will become consciously masculinized while one grouping of men will become consciously feminized.⁶⁹

Still, for Oya, this new androgyny is a sign of evolutionary development and portends society's progress to a new stage. The psychologist Yasuda Tokutaro has an even more positive interpretation:

In the past, our Japanese history has had two civilizations. The first was a civilization of feminine spirit in a matriarchal system, the second was the civilization of masculine spirit which overthrew it. And now we are trying to evolve and progress to a new third stage of civilization. This will be neither matriarchal nor patriarchal. ... And so the contemporary era is a shadowy transition period when we try and climb to this third stage, and at the same time a period when the past suddenly collapses. I have observed that today's female homosexuality is an aspect of this transitional phenomenon.⁷⁰

What is similar about these two explanations is that they appeal to culture rather than nature as the arbiter of gender and sexuality. They admit of a certain malleability and a historical specificity regarding sex and gender systems (universalizing, to use Sedgwick's term). Moreover,

⁶⁸Roden (1990), 52. quoted from diary; written in 1922.

⁶⁹Roden (1990), 53-4; quoted from his *zenshu*, the original essay was published in 1930.

they are evidence that, just as in the Western case, competing conceptualizations of sexuality exist simultaneously in the discursive landscape of interwar Japan.

Texts

Yasuda Tokutaro

I have already quoted from Yasuda Tokutaro's essay, but it worth summarizing the rest of the article for the way it situates the disciplines of sexology and history within a discourse on homosexuality. Yasuda as a psychologist is obviously familiar with medical discourse on sexuality; he cites Freud and he brags of having bought up a mountain of German sexological works, including the entire corpus of Magnus Hirschfeld, just before the Nazis burned down his Institute for Sexual Science. He calls Hirschfeld "the greatest authority in this field" and is familiar with his Scientific Humanitarian Committee and its efforts to abolish anti-sodomy statutes in Germany. Yasuda's article is, however, almost a polemic against a medicalized understanding of homosexuality. It is likely that this is in part an acceptance of Hirschfeld's anti-pathologizing stance, but his use of Japanese history as foil against a biologically determined conception of homosexuality is interesting too. He was aware that Western works treated Japanese homoerotic traditions and he saw this fact as a sign of Japanese preeminence. He used historical material not just to construct an apologetics though, but specifically to make the theoretical point that homosexuality was a cultural rather than biological phenomenon. He writes, "It is said that homosexuality is a congenital illness, *but we learn from history*, that in most cases, it posses a cultivated, environmental, occupational, or social basis."⁷¹

Doseiai no Rekishikan (Showa 10 [1935])

Yasuda's article centers on explaining a recent scandal in which a young women from a wealthy family, fond of dressing in butch drag, stole money from her parents and then ran away with a movie starlet, later attempting an unsuccessful romantic suicide. Butch drag, rebellious girls, and "lesbianism" were all common occurrences at this time and frequently reported in the press.

⁷⁰Yasuda (1935), 152; the translation is my own.

Yasuda's article, published (and only slightly censored) in the very mainstream magazine *Chuo Koron* attempted to assign social meaning to these events rather than dismiss them as "childish games."

In regard specifically to female homosexuality his appeal to history is hampered by a lack of materials. He explains this away, "history is the history of the ruling class. ... so a male dominated Japanese history is of course a history of *nanshoku*, and nothing like female homosexuality will appear in it." This parallels Yanagita's critique that, "Historical narratives have 'obscured the role of ordinary folk by concentrating only on wars and heroes.'"72 Yasuda goes on to recount briefly the history of *nanshoku* in its theatrical, monastic, and martial manifestations. Interestingly, he uses *nanshoku* (男色) or *shudo* (衆道) to refer to the historical phenomena and *doseiai* (同性愛), to refer to homoeroticism more generically or in the modern period.73 In the end, the history lesson of *nanshoku* is this: Oda Nobunaga, Tomotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu were all known for their devotion to *shudo* and these "heroes were not victims of a disease of deviant sexual desire; there was the love of women [*joshoku* (女色)] and at the same time the love of men [*nanshoku* (男色)]; they were the masters of both roads."74

One aspect of Yasuda's history depends upon problematizing the conflation of transvestism and homosexuality. He partially accepts this axiom of inversion directly from sexology: "According to science, we read that the impulse for men to dress as women and women to dress as men is "transvestism" and that this impulse and homosexuality are intimately related." Yet, he questions the attribution of perversion, "Women dressing as men probably have some deeper social interest than merely a perverted sexual desire, in the same way that men dressing as women have a

⁷¹Yasuda (1935), 149; emphasis added.

⁷²Harootunian (1990) 107.

⁷³Sometimes he uses *hentai* (変体), "perverse," or *hentaiteki seiyoku* (変態性欲), "deviant sexuality," no doubt translations from the German, to describe modern cases. For female homoeroticism he usually writes the phrase *jodoshi no doseiai* (女同志の同性愛) meaning something like "companionate female homosexuality" which emphasizes the assumption he later makes explicit, that female homosexuality is platonic.

⁷⁴Yasuda (1935), 148.

specifically social basis.”⁷⁵ The history he refers to here is the transition between a supposedly matriarchal past and a patriarchal present when the role of priestess was taken over by men in drag. He also cites the transition from Women's Kabuki to Boy's Kabuki where female roles came to be played by the male *onnagata*. The connection between homosexuality and transvestism remains intact but instead of a pathological drive, transvestism is seen as a strategic mechanism of vocational encroachment. This observation holds for the contemporary situation: “In the case of the beautiful little “butch dike,” her masculine behavior ... symbolizes her rebellion against patriarchal society.”⁷⁶

Yasuda identifies his time as one in which women are struggling to throw off oppressive structures; their masculinized behavior is part of that process. He links both this feminism and transgender behavior to Westernization and modernization because he sees both processes as having already taken place in the modern West. He accepts the Western universal model of an evolutionary history. The degree to which Japanese women are masculine and rebellious becomes a measure of Japanese status. Progress in the westernization of both men and women proceeded apace from the time of the Restoration, but the ultra-nationalism of the mid-Meiji brought a setback for women; the Russo-Japanese war period brought a second wave of europeanization, and the women of the Taisho are taking part in a third.⁷⁷

Yasuda explains the romantic suicide pacts, *shinju* (心中), between lesbian couples as related to this struggle:

... it is a matter of the psychological phenomenon of women sympathizing with those who suffer with the same affliction—sharing a common fate, they sympathize; together they suffer from the same illness, together they detest the tyranny of men—these kinds of sympathies become friendship and become love, and finally, as an escape from a painful and degrading actuality, they lead to the homosexual double suicide.⁷⁸

⁷⁵Yasuda (1935), 149; Cf. Freud's “basic bisexuality”.

⁷⁶Yasuda (1935), 150.

⁷⁷Yasuda (1935), 150.

⁷⁸Yasuda (1935), 152; but *shinju* also has a long and venerable tradition in Japanese romance.

Although it begins to sound a bit like the political lesbianism of the 1970s, Yasuda's conception of homosexuality is not really confined to this political level. Probably quoting Freud, he writes that homosexuality in girls is not based on physiological defects, but is part of a normal developmental cycle that eventually turns into adult heterosexuality *isei renai* (異性恋愛). He explains the "butch/fem" role-playing which he says always accompany this type of relationship as a kind of practice for adult heterosexuality. Adolescent homosexuality becomes a training ground for the married life and a temporary substitute sexual outlet. In addition, "unlike *nanshoku*, the homosexuality between schoolgirls is always platonic. ... There is no standard by which to strictly decide up to where it is friendship and from where it is homosexuality."⁷⁹ So despite his attention to feminist concerns, and in conformity with the general social understanding (and a bit like Freud), he refuses to grant sexual agency to women.

In another line straight out of Freud, Yasuda argues for that homosexuality is situational: "When humans are confined in circumstances where there is no opposite sex object, it is normal for the repressed libido to seek an object of perverse affection."⁸⁰ While he accepts Freud's assertion that homosexuality develops through relations with parents, he finds that the larger social environment is also a factor. So for example, he writes, "Freud left out of his analysis of Leonardo as a homosexual [*doseiaisha* (同性愛者)] the powerful social background of the Renaissance."⁸¹

Yasuda's conceptualization of homosexuality then, while definitely influenced by sexological models, is not that different from Iwata's. When he is discussing the history of homosexuality, Yasuda also uses the language of customs, of fashion, and of popularity. He understands homosexuality to be situational rather than biological; he vehemently rejects the concept of sexual perversity (as a physiological fact). Sexuality is definitely a cultural artifact for Yasuda; it is subject to social and historical change and it has social and historical meaning. The concluding words of Yasuda's essay were quoted above—they explain contemporary female homosexuality as the sign

⁷⁹Yasuda (1935), 151.

⁸⁰Yasuda (1935), 151.

⁸¹Yasuda (1935), 151.

of a transition to the next stage in a grand evolutionary scheme—the following passage, pitting history against biology, is perhaps as important:

When future historians reflect on the history of homosexuality in Japan, they will definitely show a great historical interest in that period from the Taisho through the Showa era in which the female homosexuality that does not appear in the Tokugawa era comes to increase more and more. And of particular interest will be the striking masculinity of the women of this era. These have a sociological significance that cannot be explained in terms of hormones.⁸²

Minakata Kumagusu

The well know biologist and folklorist Minakata Kumagusu initiated a correspondence with Iwata about *nanshoku* after reading *Honcho Nanshoku Ko* in *Hanzai Kagaku*. The fact that Minakata read *Hanzai Kagaku*, and took Iwata's work seriously enough to engage him in dialogue shows the degree to which popular and high culture were integrated and the extent to which *ero-guro-nansensu* was part of both. The correspondence lasted from 1931 through 1934, a total of 58 letters that take up over a hundred of pages in Minakata's collected works.

In the first letter, Minakata lays out his “sexology of the pure” dividing love between men into two categories:

“Pure love” [joai (情愛)], *otokomichi* (男道), and “impure love” [*fujoai* (不情愛)], *nanshoku* (男色), are two different things. ... in as much as pure love is none other than the way of friendship, central among the five ethical relationships, there is no need to quote anything other than this Confucian notion. If the way of friendship were merely the kind you get today which takes place through superficial acquaintances and in which there is a selfish negotiation between self-interests, then friendship would not be worthy of inclusion along side the other four relationships.⁸³

Minakata relegates *nanshoku* to the category of impure and carnal, using a different word, *otokomichi*, “the way of men,” as the valued term of the pair. (I have not found *otokomichi* used anywhere else and I suspect that it is his own coinage. Cf. *Wakashudo*.) In positing this “platonic” ideal for love between men, he pledges his allegiance to a Chinese ethics that is heavily implicated in Meiji state ideology. Not surprisingly, he is critical of modern manifestations of same-sex-love because it tends to emphasize the carnal to the exclusion of the pure. “It may seem

⁸²Yasuda (1935), 152.

incredible by today's standards," he writes, "but in all these examples of passions for young men, it seems unlikely that there was ever so much as a glimpse by the lover of the rear garden of these boys."⁸⁴ His examples—which range from Japan (Tokugawa Ieyasu liked boys), to Classical Greece and China, and even modern Paris—are, however, more equivocal. Finally he admits: "That in all ages and times, the pure and the impure have at the same time been put into practice is only as one might expect, ... and inside the pure there can be things that are impure."⁸⁵

What he achieves then by making the distinction is not really clear. His rejection of *nanshoku* is surprising because, as a folklorist and defender of Japanese tradition, one would expect him to embrace it as a relic of the past.⁸⁶ His remark, noted above, about native terms verses Western based neologisms seems at odds with this move. Perhaps his understanding is similar to the contemporary opinion of "platonic homosexuality" between girls. Still, his conception is easily distinguished from the modern sexological ones having more in common with pre-Meiji notions of *nanshoku*.

Iwata Jun'ichi

Edogawa Rampo relates that Iwata spent a great deal of time searching in old book stores for sources and meticulously taking notes on his material before he ever wrote anything for publication. It was apparently at Edogawa's urging that he published the series of essays called *Honcho Nanshoku Ko*, "Reflections on Love Between Men in Our Country," in *Hanzai Kagak*, "Criminal Science," starting in June of Showa 5 (1930). This first series proceeded chronologically from the beginning of recorded Japanese history—citing the *Nihon Shoki* (c. 720) and the *Shoku Nihon Gi* (c. 797)—up to through the Kamakura era (1185-1333). Other essays, published mostly in the in the same journal, also covered the Muromachi era (1333-1573). He went on to publish, less systematically, work that dealt with the Tokugawa (1603-1868), but he tended to focus

⁸³Minakata (1951), vol. 9, 291; translation by Bill Sibley.

⁸⁴Minakata (1951), vol. 9, 294.

⁸⁵Minakata (1951), vol. 9, 294.

more and more on the literature of *nanshoku*, through collections of stories. His final work, never published in his lifetime, was *Nanshoku Bunken Shoshi* (男色文献書誌), "An Annotated Bibliography of Male Love." The manuscript was finished in 1943, but it was not published until Showa 31 (1956). *Nanshoku Bunken Shoshi* is a 370 page long carefully annotated bibliography of all references to *nanshoku* in Japanese literature from the Manyōshū and early chronicles through the literature of the Edo period. Considering even just the scope and form of his project, it seems that a great deal of rhetorical force is collected behind an assertion that, as something that pervades the history and literature of Japan from the earliest time, *nanshoku* is thoroughly Japanese. It is as if Iwata is compelled to demonstrate, through his attention to the past, something about *nanshoku* in contemporary era.

Nihon Nanshoku no Kigen (Showa 5 [1930])

The first essay of *Honcho Nanshoku Ko*, "*Nihon Nanshoku no Kigen*", "The Myth of the Origin of Japanese Homosexuality," attempts to refute the common perception of *nanshoku* as a foreign practice that the Zen patriarch Kōbō Daishi brought back with him from China in the first year of the Daidō Era (806). But more than this, it sets up his project as a search for origins:

It is easy to follow in later history the consequences of an event. It is difficult, however, or almost impossible, to succeed in the search for its 'origin'. If we insist on finding this, we will often end up in the world of legends and oral tradition, which takes us far from our own reality: I do not know myself, at the beginning of this search for the origin of Japanese homosexuality [*nanshoku*], how to escape this kind of absurdity. Nonetheless, even if the traditions we may find in these kinds of account [sic] seem to refer to unbelievable events, allow me to treat them provisionally as historical facts, for there might well be something of historical value even in these traditions.⁸⁷

Iwata locates the point of origin, the first record of *nanshoku* in Japan, in the *Nihon Shoki*:

In the paragraph on the first year of the era of the empress Jingu, in Vol. 9, one finds a sin called the sin of *azunai*, 'azunai no tsumi'. This sin is presented, in fact,

⁸⁶Minakata was an ally of Yanagita Kunio in an effort to criticize the bureaucratic encroachment into the countryside threatened by the 1908 Shrine Merger Act but parted company with Yanagita over the question of political action; see Harootunian (1990), 103-4.

⁸⁷Iwata (1989c), "*Nihon Nanshoku no Kigen*," 31; further references will be to *Kigen*.

as the homosexual vice abominated by the gods, like the sin of Sodom in the Old Testament.⁸⁸

The passage in question is the following story about two Shinto priests, told to explain the perpetual darkness that hung over the province of Ki:

‘Once there were two good friends, Shinu no Hafuri and Ama no Hafuri. When the first died of a sickness, Ama no Hafuri wept greatly and said, “While he was alive, we were very intimate friends. Why should we not have the same grave?” So he killed himself, right next to the dead body. That is why they buried them both in the same tomb. That is the sin concerned I presume.’⁸⁹

It is interesting that Iwata associated the love between the priests with sin, especially the *Western* “sin of Sodom.” Watanabe rightly points out that the interpretation of *uruwashiki tomo* (麗しき友, lit. “beautiful” or “graceful” and “friend”) is speculative, and that the sin involved may in fact be the joint burial of two priests who were bound to exclusive service of separate shrines.⁹⁰ Iwata’s association of *azunai* with sodomy seems to mitigate any claim to Japaneseness for *nanshoku* by asserting its identity with a non-Japanese practice. At the same time it conflates the *affectional* term “*uruwashiki tomo*”, with the *act* of sodomy. On the other hand, the reference to the Old Testament points to a mythical origin for sodomy, and Iwata is perhaps only making a case for a parallel history, rather than an equivalency. Finally, his assertion of an origin in antiquity is a challenge to the narrative of foreign origin: “The history of Japanese homosexuality [*nanshoku*] begins with a mythic tradition; this ought to be known by those who believe that the custom was first disseminated by the monk Kukai, in the ninth century AD.”⁹¹

Kagama Kidan (Showa 8 [1933])

Neither *Edo Kagama no Matsuro*, “The Last Days of the *Kagama* of Edo” nor *Kagama Kidan*, “Curious Tales of the *Kagama*,” were not part of the original series *Honcho Nanshoku Ko*, but they fit at the very end of the narrative history of same-sex eroticism in Japan that Iwata constructed, telling of the ascendancy and decline of *nanshoku* in the period just preceding the

⁸⁸*Kigen*, 32-3.

⁸⁹*Kigen*, 33.

⁹⁰Watanabe (1989), 151n.

⁹¹*Kigen*, 34.

modernizing Meiji. The *kagama* (陰間), “boy-prostitutes,” the evolution of their vocation, and its eventual decline, seem to have interested Iwata greatly; he wrote three essays on the topic. *Kagama Kidan* details the development of the *kagama* from being predominantly Kabuki actors to being predominantly prostitutes.

“Today,” writes Iwata, “a male prostitute is called a *kagama*. In the Genroku period [1688-1704], when homosexuality [*nanshoku*] was more fashionable than ever before, these prostitutes were generally called *yaro* [野郎], and the word *kagama* was applied only to a special kind. This change in terminology reflects a change in customs.”⁹² Two things stand out in this passage: one is the effort to make a connection between practices of the present and these practices of a time past; the other is the theme of change in erotic fashion. Iwata’s attention to changes in custom and to the waxing and waning of the fashion for homosexuality, *nanshoku ryuko* (男色流行) in his terms, is constant throughout this text. It is this attention to the historical specificity of *nanshoku* that makes his understanding of the phenomenon constructionist, or in Sedgwick’s terms, universalizing.

Iwata, for instance, explains the decline of *nanshoku* in the Kyoho era (1716-36) as the result of an austerity program imposed by the shogunate in order to bring economic recovery:

... the shogun Yoshimune greatly detested debauchery. If a man was rich enough to afford it, he had nonetheless to abstain, so as not to upset the authorities. During the great peace of Kyoho, one had to be very discreet in taking one’s pleasure with women; it was even more impossible to throw oneself into homosexual [*nanshoku*] pleasure, chiefly because it was regarded as being still more luxurious. In fact, it was those who had sufficiently taken their pleasure with women who had often ended up with this other love. It is not surprising then that the *yaro* disappeared, at least from social visibility, and that the fashion for homosexuality should have gone with them.⁹³

Another interesting point in this passage is the explanation of *nanshoku* as the result of a saturation of heterosexual pleasure. This explanation is analogous to Oya’s explanation of homosexual perversion in the context of late capitalism’s bourgeois consumerism.

⁹²*Kigen*, 91.

⁹³*Kigen*, 97.

Nanshoku had one more period of ascendancy from the 1750s through the 1780s before its eventual decline and obliteration. According to Iwata this period corresponds to the time of Edo's highest cultural achievement. (It is also the time of *iki*):

In this new climate, homosexuality [*nanshoku*] made a comeback. Male prostitution, which had hitherto been practiced only in secret by actors, became the overt occupation of specialists. There appeared many establishments offering homosexual pleasures to the public. Homosexuality became as popular as it had been before. The new centre for these entertainments was Edo, in place of Kyoto and Osaka in the Genroku period.⁹⁴

Iwata cites the Tempo Reform of 1842-43, another imposition of austerity measures by the *bakufu*, as the beginning of the end for the *kagama*. The Meiji restoration was the final blow. The Taisho, though, may portend something new:

... it is very curious that since the Taisho era ... strange people have begun to haunt the hidden corners of Tokyo and Osaka, and they are now called *kagama*. These are not elegant; they are only vagabonds who prostitute themselves in the darker corners of the parks. It is incredible that they should have been given the name of the *kagama* of the Edo period, who were, no doubt about it, most elegant and graceful! If by chance you do not know the history, and seeing the *kagama* of today, believe that there existed such people in other times, I will remind you that the *kagama* of old were as charming and elegant in body as they were in their dress.⁹⁵

This ending suggests, in its return to the present, the closing of a hermeneutic circle. The importance of the *kagama* and of this period for Iwata's work is, I believe, the possibility that they offer for this kind of closure. It is that moment on the other side of the Meiji that defines the past. In fact, the Meiji period hardly appears in Iwata's work at all; it is as if it is a black whole that swallowed *nanshoku*. The recovery of the tradition, even as a historical artifact, necessitates making contact with the other side, so tantalizingly close, and so frustratingly far away.

Edo Kagema no Matsuro (Showa 7 [1932])

Edo Kagema no Matsuro, as the title suggests, deals with specifically with this period of time, when the institution of boy prostitution is in its final decline. Iwata's tries to both explain that decline and obtain as accurate a description as possible of the customs of the *kagama*. The essay itself is almost in the form of a pilgrimage to those last days and back. "One wonders," Iwata

⁹⁴*Kigen*, 97.

starts off musingly, “of the *kagama chaya* (陰間茶屋 tea houses with *kagama*—*i.e.* brothels) in the city of Edo, of what kind and how many were there in Tempo 13 (1843), when the Shogun's councilor, Mizuno Etchu no Kami Tadakui promulgated the reforms...”⁹⁶ He goes on to tell us how many houses were left at each location and how many boys were kept there.

Iwata is quick to point out that the decline of the brothels was not the result of the Tempo reforms; even without the reforms, their prosperity would probably have deteriorated. Rather, the decline “was probably the result of a gradual dwindling of the number of people who were comfortable with this fashion, and also a gradual narrowing of extent to which people were devoted to the practice.”⁹⁷ The prohibitions imposed by the *bakufu*, though more effective than previous injunctions, were not thorough at all. With the threat of Commodore Perry's Black Ships, and a seething anti-shogunism, the political circumstances were such that the *bakufu* could not really concern itself with the persistence of the *kagama*. Between a kind of vocational inertia—the boys in their prime were loath to abandon their craft—and the protection of the then still powerful Buddhist Temples whose monks were for generations—and for religious reasons—the *kagama*'s best customers, the brothels on the Temple grounds remained.

Finally only the *chaya* at Yushima Tenshin of Higashi Hiezan in Ueno were left. In the battle of Shogitai in Keio 4 [1868], at the dawning of the Meiji Restoration, the temple of the *kagama*'s most ardent patrons was destroyed, its priests and monks dispersed, and the downfall of the *kagama* was ensured. Iwata comments, “Thus, not only from the perspective of national history, but also for the history of Japanese prostitution, this event has become quite important.”⁹⁸ This is a point that Iwata labors:

Thus, for the *kagama* of Yushima too, the Meiji Restoration is something like a turning point in their downfall. On the verge of the Keio period, as the world was approaching the Meiji era, at any moment, even the prohibitions of the ruling power were changed; so too for the priests of Ueno who had bestowed the favor of their

⁹⁵*Kigen*, 106.

⁹⁶Iwata (1973), 212; the translation is my own—further references will be to *Kagama*.

⁹⁷*Kagama*, 213.

⁹⁸*Kagama*, 216.

patronage, not that the tastes of the priests had changed, but it was probably a time when the completely confused spirit of the era made one do so.⁹⁹

The downfall is then the result of the convergence of legal prohibition, declining fashion, and unfavorable political circumstances. The Meiji Restoration is the sign of this downfall, *and* it also is what buries the past and removes it from the present:

In the fourth month of Meiji 24 [1892] Yushima became a Tokyo city park, and aside from the exception of one small restaurant called Uoju, all of the businesses on the park grounds were removed, so that all traces of the *kagama chaya* of olden times are, after forty years, lost to the past.¹⁰⁰

In the remaining part of the essay, Iwata tries to bridge the chasm that the Meiji represents. He is keen to find eyewitness accounts of the daily life of the *kagama*. Ultimately he resorts to the only possible touchstone. “Once I went to the original Uoju restaurant which had existed in the Yushima precincts from the early days of the Meiji, and stubbornly insisted on interviewing the owner about the situation of the old *kagama*.”¹⁰¹

Iwata describes the approach to Uoju as if he is on a pilgrimage, “... Up the hill to Yushima Kiritoshi, and passing through the torii made of a big rock, there, just to the left is a large restaurant...”¹⁰²; his quest is to hear the story of the willow tree that stands in front of the restaurant. The old willow tree that a *kagama* planted there becomes a metaphor for the tradition of the *kagama* and the possibility of its transmission into the present time. The reliance on narrative, and the trope of the traveler, witness to the telling of a tale are familiar from Yanagita Kunio's, *minshukugaku* (民衆苦学).

The proprietor of Uoju, a Mr. Ueda, tells Iwata the story passed down from his grandfather, which, as he always assures us, is recorded faithfully. The original willow tree grew from a *mayudama* (繭玉), a colored ball of *mochi* (餅), that Old Mr. Ueda and a certain former *kagama* named Matsu brought back from a pilgrimage to Kamedomyoji temple in the fourth month of Meiji 8 (1876). It was called the “Myogen Willow” since it was a souvenir of a pilgrimage to that

⁹⁹*Kagama*, 215

¹⁰⁰*Kagama*, 215

¹⁰¹*Kagama*, 217

temple. This tree died in a fire during the Kanto earthquake—a fate conspicuously parallel to the Sanjuroku Bo temple that once protected the *kagama* of Yushima—but it was replaced by a tree grown from a cutting of one of its branches. The new tree, it is said, has in this way, “succeeded to its professional name.”¹⁰³

Even after having been granted a hearing of this tale, Iwata was disappointed. “... when I faced Mr. Ueda, it was already 60 years from those early days of the Meiji to the present; without the *kagama* of those very last days surviving, and without the existence of anyone who remembered exactly the circumstances of those times, where was I to inquire?¹⁰⁴ So Iwata continues his quest; based on a tip from a woman at Uoju he seeks out an old woman who might know something. Again there is a short travel narrative; “In Kiyomizu Cho, in the middle of a valley facing the lower Ueno Park, and below the Kodo Zoo, there is a painter’s shop named Yamagishi...”¹⁰⁵ and ultimately disappointment:

Right away, I asked the old women’s age. She told me that this year she will be 60 years old. That would mean that she was born in the first year of the Meiji period. Disappointed, I left the house, and did not visit there again.¹⁰⁶

Iwata eventually gives up on the hope of finding a direct source, believing that anyone who could speak from first hand experience about the *kagama* has already died. So, he culled descriptions of *kagama* daily practices from two Meiji era written sources that “faithfully record the speech of an eyewitness’s observations of the time.”¹⁰⁷

After detailing the lives and styles of the *kagama*, Iwata summarizes their history as a preface to a return to modern times:

In the last analysis, the Meiwa [1764-71] and An-ei [1772-80] periods were the climax of prosperity for the *kagama*, since then, they became a little distanced from popular tastes, and their continued prosperity became dependent upon the priest class, but the reform of Tempo 13 [1843] brought a situation where only the pleasure district of Yushima remained, and almost all the others had completely vanished.

¹⁰²*Kagama*, 217

¹⁰³*Kagama*, 218-19.

¹⁰⁴*Kagama*, 219.

¹⁰⁵*Kagama*, 219

¹⁰⁶*Kagama*, 219

¹⁰⁷*Kagama*, 220

Though there were those places that depended on the protection of the Yushima Higashi Hiezan priests who were able to resist the authority of the *bakufu*, since fortune suddenly announced that it had become a confused world, even the priest class gradually succumbed, without looking back on this fact. At that point, Ueno suddenly lost the battle, the event became the defeat of the priest class; in the end, the *kagama* of Yushima and Sanjuroku Bo which was destroyed by fire, had a shared destiny. In view of this, it finally came to pass that the age declared the final days of the *kagama* of Edo.

Iwata concludes, however, by raising doubts about the finality of this end. He finds evidence that some *kagama* survived into the Meiji in Tanaka Kotaro's novel about the circumstances of post-Restoration Japan. Even if the *kagama* had not survived, *nanshoku* had. During the Meiji, the public was still captivated by press accounts and even novelized versions of *nanshoku* scandals (like an affair between a famous actor and a distinguished priest). The novels *The Temperament of Today's Youth* by Tsubouchi Shoyo and *Vita Sexualis* by Mori Ogai testify to the existence of *nanshoku* among the students of the era.¹⁰⁸

Mori's book is especially interesting. Written in 1909 and banned a month after publication, it tells of the protagonists sexual awakening in the boy's school culture of the early Meiji. The atmosphere of the school is saturated with two varieties of eroticism neither of which the novels protagonist can relate to. One is the "heterosexual" dandyism of the effeminate and sophisticated, brothel patronizing "mashers" and the other is the *nanshoku* of the ultra-masculine Satsuma youth, the "queers" who, in a zealous reenactment of *bushido* custom, chase after pretty young boys. Iwata's comment on the "queers" is this: "... since this masculine spirit depends on the force of circumstance, it has only been able to precariously maintain a feeble existence in moments of the past which blow away without any resistance."¹⁰⁹

What is significant about Iwata's conclusion is that it makes the *kagama* only one manifestation of the *perennial* phenomenon of *nanshoku*. Whatever form it takes, this *nanshoku* is a custom or a fashion, and definitely not equivalent to the "perversion" or "perversity" models of sexological discourse. The form this *nanshoku* will take in any given circumstance is not

¹⁰⁸*Kagama*, 223

¹⁰⁹*Kagama*, 223

predictable. The flourishing of *nanshoku* is highly contingent. There is no doubt, though, that the last days of the *kagema* of Edo are not the last days of *nanshoku*.

In the mind of the public, both the *kagema* of Yushima, and the scandal of Tashijo were new. When the world begins again, and we return to a peaceful time, is it not true that a taste for the secret debauchery of the past era of ease will return to people's hearts? Just like this, the streets of Edo will gradually come to be outdone by the streets of Meiji ... ¹¹⁰

The Terminology of Difference: *Nanshoku/Doseiai*

As we have seen, the twentieth century brought to Japan a proliferation of vocabulary to describe same-sex-eroticism. Japan already had a rich vocabulary for the relations between men; *nanshoku* and *wakashudo* are only the most common of these. In an appendix to *Honcho Nanshoku Ko*, Iwata defined 66 terms used by Saikaku in specific reference to *nanshoku*. In contrast to this, it seems that same-sex relationships between women, though they probably existed, could not be named before the assimilation of Western terminology. For this reason perhaps, female homosexuality has displayed less resistance to being termed "*doseiai*." In the case of male homosexuality, because of a certain definitional dissonance, there is a tension as the two words confront each other in the discursive space of modern Japan.

Certainly *nanshoku* had some degree of definitional coherence during its heyday in the Tokugawa era, but "in Japan of the late 1920s, the language of Edo culture was rapidly losing ground in the vocabulary of everyday life."¹¹¹ The terms of the discourse on homosexuality were taking on new connotations as they confronted each other in this new and changing context. "The tradition of *nanshoku*," writes Aoyama, "was denied by Christian morality and obliterated like other 'old abuses' from the Edo period. On the other hand, as modernization proceeded, 'Western' homosexuality was often associated by the intellectuals with the glories of the Classical Age or the flower of decadence."¹¹² But as we have seen, the valuations of the terms are not always the same. The alignment of the dyad *nanshoku/doseiai* with the binarisms Past/Present, East/West,

¹¹⁰*Kagema*, 223

¹¹¹Pincus (1991), 152.

¹¹²Aoyama (1988), 195.

and even Custom/Perversion is a simple and obvious operation, but it sets into motion—it is set in the motion of—a churning debate over the meaning of modernism in twentieth century Japan.

If Iwata's historiography functions as De Certeau suggests, it is doing the foundational work for a new sexuality in modern Japan. In establishing a relationship to the past, it creates a space for something new to come into being. Iwata's history divides Japan's modern sexuality from the tradition of *nanshoku* through a suppression of Meiji sexuality. This critical elision hides a history of transition—a history that implicates state policies in both the transformation of and in the repression of emergent forms of sexuality. In this way Iwata avoids discussing the possibility of fragmenting new identity formations that potentially threaten the state ideology of national polity. His attention to *nanshoku*, in this respect, might also be seen as evidence of conservatism; *nanshoku* is part of a single unified sexuality shared by all adult males, whereas, homosexuality carries with it the specter of distinct, and therefore divisive sexual identities.

By identifying alliances between political tendencies and conceptualizations of homosexuality I would not want to suggest that these divisions are particularly clear or explicit; the discourse on homosexuality is enabled by the unrationalized coexistence of ideas that adhere variously to the words *nanshoku* and *doseiai*. This is a situation that is indicative of the dynamic cultural contact between Japan and the West. One surprising quality of the resulting socio-sexual milieu—distinct as it is from its Western counterpart—is that Sedgwick's categories, Universalizing/Minoritizing and Gender separatist/Gender transitive, still appear to be relevant.

The erotics of *nanshoku* assume a universalizing model; though it is always going in and out of style, *nanshoku* is there for anyone who can choose it. There is also rhetoric of perversion, definitely understood in biological and minoritizing terms that hovers around, but does not exclusively adhere to *doseiai*. The older models of same-sex eroticism seems stronger in the interwar years than the new ones and tend to temper minoritizing understandings rather than the other way around. On the gender axis, it is clear that at least two understanding of same-sex eroticism exist. Japan's *nanshoku*, however, seems to have encompassed both hyper-masculine and effeminate bodies within a unified sexuality. With the assimilation of modern Western notions of

gender, and inversion theories of homosexuality, the relationship between homosexuality and gender become further problematized. In either case, the way these axes are applied to Japan's modern sexuality is somewhat distinct from how they would be applied in the West.

The persistence of older models of eroticism within the Japanese cultural space tend to set up a resistance against the newer models. Yasuda's polemic against biologism is a good example of this dynamic. Even though he accepts Hirschfeld's authority, he argues stiffly against it. Yasuda makes explicit what is only implicit in Iwata's work, that the history of *nanshoku* is a useful tool in the defense against dissonant sexological models of eros.

Writing about Kuki's *Iki no Kozo*, Pincus suggests that a linguistic fissure runs through the text:

The title itself already suggests an unlikely alliance between two disparate languages: *iki*, a word with its roots in the popular culture of late Edo, expresses an appreciation of style in a colloquial, even performative, mode; *kozo*, or structure, a weighty analytic term of more recent origin, suggests the continuing dialogue of Japanese intellectuals with Western knowledge."¹¹³

A parallel fissure runs through the discourse on homosexuality. The roots of *nanshoku* are tangled in the same ground as *iki*—as a word and as a practice of Edo popular culture. In the same way, *doseiai*, like *kozo*, is rooted in a Western science. Unlike *kozo* and *iki*, though, they cannot exist in a balancing subject/object relationship. Instead they remain in tension—locked in a contest over meaning.

¹¹³Pincus (1991), 152.

Bibliography

Note: I have listed the primary sources separately; Iwata's essays are listed individually, even though they were published in collections (also listed), in order to provide the original publication data. My translations of texts by Iwata, Yasuda, and Edogawa were all done in a tutorial with Bill Sibley without whose help and support the translations would not have been possible. Professor Sibley also provided a translation of Minakata's letter "*Joai to Fujoi*".

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