



PROJECT MUSE®

---

## The Girl Double: On the *Shōjo* as Archetype in Modern Women's Self-Expression

Mizuta Noriko, James Garza

Review of Japanese Culture and Society, Volume 30, 2018, pp. 204-220  
(Article)

Published by University of Hawai'i Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/roj.2018.0013>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/782252>

# The Girl Double: On the *Shōjo* as Archetype in Modern Women's Self-Expression

Mizuta Noriko

*Translated by James Garza*

*While its theoretical underpinnings are not fully discussed in-text, the following essay seems to be pitched at three questions which put it in conversation with earlier theorists of écriture féminine like Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva: 1) Is there a female literary practice that is essentially distinct from the way men write? 2) If so, what conditions have given rise to it? And 3) What are some of its defining traits? For Mizuta, the answer to the first question seems to be a resounding “yes,” and she brings a sensitive comparatist’s eye to the task of delineating the various uses to which female characters have been put by men and women throughout literary history, both in and outside of Japan. To answer the second question, Mizuta draws upon notions of sexual difference from Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), citing women’s secondary status as men’s Other and the role of fantasy and repressed desire in the process of acculturation that turns girls into women. But the essay’s most provocative contribution lies in its answer to the third question. For Mizuta, the narrative consequences of the above repression are crucial, and can be found in the widespread use of the motif of the double (or bunshin in Japanese) in stories by women. The protagonists in the stories she analyzes all have a fateful encounter with a younger character, who can be considered their alter ego. The term Mizuta uses to discuss these girls is *shōjo*, and while that is indeed an everyday word for a girl or young woman, it is also a key concept in studies of gender and sexuality in Japan, with a history and set of connotations that necessarily set it apart from whatever English term we may choose as a translation. As Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase writes, the “Japanese concept of *shōjo* arose with the introduction of Western girls’ education and the establishment of girls’ schools,” where the government’s ideals of the *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother) formed a major part of the curriculum.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, there was initially a class component to this category, insofar as “only girls of the leisure class” had access to*

*this kind of education.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, as Jennifer Robertson notes, in some contexts the term shōjo can imply “heterosexual inexperience and homosexual experience,”<sup>3</sup> while Brian Bergstrom discusses the term’s association in the 1980s and 90s with a new, “unproductive” mode of Japanese consumer capitalism.<sup>4</sup> Given that the term has all these connotations, and more besides, the reader may experience a kind of dissonance upon seeing, for instance, Jane Eyre described as a shōjo—it may seem as if something extra, or excessive, has been carried over into the translation. But in suggesting a basis for comparison, the mismatch has the potential to be a productive one. Translation considerations aside, Mizuta’s essay is an engaging and incisive account of several female writers who seem to have taken Cixous’ exhortation to heart: “Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing [...]. Woman must put herself into the text ....”*

(James Garza)

Tawada Yōko’s *The Bridegroom Was a Dog* (Inumuko iri, 1992) tells the story of a woman who opens a cram school on the outskirts of a modern housing development. The background and age of this unmarried instructor are a mystery, and she also breaks with the fussy, uptight precedent set by the local teachers and “education mothers” (*kyōiku mama*) in her orbit. Her unusual approach proves popular with the children: in one lesson, she extolls the virtues of reusing tissues, explaining that they get softer with every wipe and thus make especially good toilet paper; in another lesson, she tells the story of a princess who used to let a dog lick her bottom as a child. The dog returns once the princess is grown and whisks her away into the forest, where they marry and start a large family.

One day, a strange man comes to live with the cram school teacher. He also hails from parts unknown, although his appearance suggests an office worker who has left his family and, like a stray dog, takes to life on the road—a road that has led him to the doorstep of the protagonist, Kitamura Mitsuko, proprietor of the eponymous Kitamura School. It transpires that the man has a sense of smell as sharp as a dog’s, not to mention a predilection for using his tongue, both of which come into play in their first encounter. While Mitsuko already has a reputation as a bit of an eccentric among the local mothers, this seems to mark the beginning of a further retreat from the community.

The man lazes around during the day but springs to life again in the evenings, seized by a sudden frenzy for cleaning and cooking. After dinner, without fail, he leaves the house to wander about on his own. Eventually we learn that he has been frequenting a gay bar on these nightly jaunts. One of the men he meets there is the father of a young girl named Fukiko. The girl’s mother is no longer part of the picture, and Fukiko is often left to fend for herself when it comes to meals. Moved by her plight, Mitsuko brings the undernourished girl home with her. Before long, she loses all interest in the dog man,

and even comes to resent the sight of him; meanwhile, her infatuation with the girl only grows. In the end, the dog man runs off with the man from the gay bar, and Mitsuko shuts the cram school, escaping with Fukiko in the middle of the night.

As this synopsis suggests, the novella depicts a man and woman's growing disaffection with the trappings of middle-class life and eventually with society altogether. The first half of the novella sets the stage: while the woman's backstory is never totally clear, it seems she has moved to the edge of town to escape the more civic-minded aspects of middle-class life; meanwhile, the man has traded his former straight-laced life for the wandering ways of a roving dog; the two characters have sex, after which the woman allows her uninvited guest to stay on in her house. But as the second half of the novella shows, their refusal to conform to societal expectations hardly ends there, as both characters proceed to "drop out" again and again: first they drop out of "vulgar" society to the edge of town; next they drop out of society altogether; and finally they drop out of their own straight relationships to pursue gay ones.

From its very title, the novella recalls the "mixed marriage" tales (*iruikon monogatari*) of the Japanese folk tradition. Most of these tales follow the same clear-cut pattern: a man marries a woman only to discover she is in fact a supernatural being, at which point they have no choice but to part ways. The fact is that such marriages are forbidden in the world of the tales; they are socially unacceptable. Indeed, being with a supernatural creature involves a departure from the mundane world. The woman in *The Bridegroom Was a Dog*, for instance, experiences a kind of previously unknown ecstasy when she is with the dog man, who luxuriates in her smell, captivated by it. And it is when he is at his most doglike that her rundown old house at the edge of town starts to seem like the otherworldly trysting place of lovers in a fairy tale.

As it is the man who is a dog in this novella, this is the reverse of most Japanese tales of supernatural marriage, but it follows the conventional formula insofar as the man and woman split up after his true identity is revealed. This is not to suggest that their human-canine love affair is the main subject of the novella; rather, their affair is merely the first step in their retreat from society, a prelude to their renunciation of the mundane world. If their sense of taste and smell become more animalistic, this only prepares them to break away from other trappings of human society, like concern for personal appearance and participation in the workday.

After the woman learns the dog man's true identity and the story behind his transformation, she begins to lose interest in the one-time office worker. With her enthusiasm for him on the wane, the woman's relationship with the girl comes into sharp focus, intense as a new love. It would not be a stretch to call this new take on the "mixed marriage" narrative—with its focus on gay relationships and its generous helping of humor—a contemporary folk tale. Gradually, it becomes clear that the true subject of the novella is the relationship between the protagonist Mitsuko and Fukiko, the daughter of the dog man's friend from the gay bar. Fukiko may not be Mitsuko and the dog man's

child, but it is thanks to their relationship that the girl appears in Mitsuko's life. In that sense, the dog man has brought the character Fukiko into the story, and the narrative purpose of Mitsuko and the dog man's relationship was to bring Fukiko into Mitsuko's life. Now that she has a daughter, Mitsuko no longer needs a man. Mitsuko needed the dog man only so that she could become a mother; she will carry on as a single parent.

Of course, Mitsuko and Fukiko have more than a mother-daughter relationship. While Fukiko is not particularly clever, and seems unlikely to be socialized through education, she is at the same time precocious in certain respects, knowing full well how to play on Mitsuko's sympathies, as well as how to wound her emotionally. Fukiko is sloppy and unkempt, but the sticky nearness of her body is all it takes to provoke maternal feelings in Mitsuko. At the same time, Mitsuko's gnawing urge to kick the dog man out of her house so that she and Fukiko can live together goes beyond the maternal: it is an attachment to the girl as an Other. Wrapped around Fukiko's little finger, Mitsuko discovers in the girl a sexual Other.

The figure of the callous, simpering girl who elicits maternal love while parading her Otherness also appears in Tawada's "Unfertilized Egg" (Museiran, 1995), in which the girl's manipulation of the protagonist is the explicit concern of the story.

The female protagonist in this story used to share a house with a man who insisted on calling himself an author, despite a résumé of zero publications. Three years have elapsed since his death in a car crash, and although their relationship was neither sexually nor emotionally intimate, the woman has left his room on the first floor completely untouched, and he remains a kind of presence in the house. The man had apparently been laboring under the grandiose delusion that the world was waiting for him to produce his masterpiece. The woman has stayed on in the house, and now spends her days working on a writing project, making hardly any contact with the outside world.

One day, she catches a glimpse of something small and yellow moving in a corner of her garden. It is a skinny, unwashed girl. It is unclear where she has come from or who she might be, and it seems unlikely she has received much of an education. The woman cleans her up, gives her food and clothing, and lets her stay in the house. The girl prefers sleeping in the same bed as the woman; but while she seems eager to be coddled, she is also in the habit of fondling the woman's breasts, and occasionally lurches out of a seemingly sound sleep to bite the woman's thigh.

This sleeping arrangement continues until, one morning, the woman awakens to find herself tied up. She is left that way for several days. Nothing the woman says seems to get through to the girl, and she gradually becomes unmoored from reality; made to lie in her own waste, she begins to experience the total breakdown of her sense of self. A few days later, the girl finally unties the woman. It seems that the girl has been spending time at the woman's desk, copying her writings. A few more days pass, and three men dressed in white pull up at the woman's house, put her in a straitjacket and take her away. Meanwhile, the girl has disappeared with the woman's manuscript. An article appears

in the newspaper about a woman's arrest on charges of kidnapping and sexual abuse, as well as attempting to profit from a book about these crimes. The article goes on to say that the girl's whereabouts are unknown, and that she may have been murdered.

In this story, too, the woman and girl have something of a mother-daughter relationship, albeit one with strong sexual undertones, and the girl is clearly a kind of embodiment of the woman's inner self. Whenever the girl touches her, parades her own nakedness, wheedles, or climbs into bed with her, the woman seems utterly transported—but this reaction is a paradoxical one. The woman's sense of fragmentation while she is tied up and railing inwardly against the cruelty of a captor who refuses to untie her, testifies to her fierce conflict with this sexual Other. The girl is at once the woman's double and an inner Other.

Having copied the woman's manuscript, the girl is the only person on earth who knows what it contains. And now that she has disappeared along with it, who is to say she might not publish it someday under her own name? The man on the first floor used to envy the woman's ability to write while he continued to produce nothing. The two talked about it once:

"I bet you write some strange stuff."

"What do you mean, 'strange stuff'?"

"Girly (*shōjo-kusai*) stuff, I mean. It's like Sensei always says—you have to kill your inner *shōjo*. It may not be your whole personality, but I'll bet your *shōjo* comes out whenever you write."

"Who in the world is 'Sensei'?"

"I haven't been able to get you to stop writing, so I guess I'll be punished."

"What are you going on about? Sort it out in your head first before you speak. You can't just ramble on and expect me to follow."

"He told me: those who can't kill their *shōjo* must die themselves. So I guess it's the death penalty for me."<sup>6</sup>

"Sensei" is an Order of Culture (*bunka kunshō*) Award-winning physiognomist revered by the man on the first floor, and has recently given a newspaper interview about what it means to "kill one's *shōjo*":

"You've written about killing one's inner *shōjo*."

"That's right. But it's not a matter of plastic surgery."<sup>7</sup>

"Then what's the best way to kill it? Do you have any specific advice?"

"Education, for one. Through education one learns to deny oneself, to revere something greater than oneself. That 'something' could be a teacher or a spouse—it doesn't matter. It's all about rejecting the small. I generally refer to this small element as 'the *shōjo*.' It's about aiming for greatness, and constantly snuffing out what is small and weak within us."<sup>8</sup>

Despite buying into this scholar's philosophy of "killing the *shōjo*" through education, the man is unable to become a writer; by contrast, the woman—who does

not kill but instead nurtures her inner *shōjo*—does indeed become a writer. Or perhaps we should say, the woman turns her *shōjo* into a writer, even at the cost of her own life. The woman—apprehended by the police and presumably locked away for good in some prison or psychiatric ward—is the wrecked husk from which the *shōjo* emerges as a writer; she is the mundane self that had to die to complete this transformation.

The narrative of self-creation that produces the writer in “The Unfertilized Egg” is explicitly framed in terms of the repression and liberation of the inner *shōjo*. This conflict with the inner *shōjo* as an archetypal “writing self” (*kakujiko*) is especially prominent in work by modern female authors, and we can see another example of it in Kōno Taeko’s fiction. However, before I delve into that, I would like to look at a related theme in Yū Miri’s “Full House” (Furu hausu, 1995).<sup>9</sup> This novella also features a cruel “sacred *shōjo*” character who provokes maternal feelings in the protagonist, all the while dismantling her “profane” sense of self. But it also gives us a chance to think about how the inner *shōjo* relates to the breakdown of the nuclear family.

Yū wrote “Full House” around the same time that Tawada published the two stories discussed above. Once again, a girl endears herself to a female protagonist, and is depicted as a key factor in that character’s growth toward self-awareness and self-expression. If the term “growth” (*seichō*) brings to mind the nineteenth-century bildungsroman, it is a comparison that may not be entirely apt; the formation of a woman’s expressive self is not a metaphorical process, but often takes place in the context of real experiences and decisions related to childbirth and reproduction. Thus, a girl’s decision to embrace or reject adult womanhood and its trappings is no mere metaphor. Womanhood and writing exert a pull in two different directions; when a girl’s rite of passage into womanhood involves the repression and erasure of the inner *shōjo*—where her potential to become a writer resides—“growing up” clearly has implications beyond the metaphorical.

The first-person narrator of “Full House” runs a stage management company with her partner; one day, out of the blue, her father urges her to move into a new house he has built in the suburbs. Her parents have long since separated, with her mother being the one to move out; meanwhile, both the narrator and her younger sister each have their own place to live. After suffering through years of their parents’ fighting and the resulting collapse of their family, the narrator can only feel annoyance toward her father: does he really think he can make their family whole again by tossing everyone together into this new house-shaped container? Her sister feels the same way. As teenagers the two had been perfect delinquents, landing themselves in Family Court for shoplifting. On top of that, they have been nearly raped on more than one occasion, and the younger sister currently acts in pornographic films. Far from enjoying anything like the security a family is supposed to provide, the two women were victims of this structure. They have seen everything that can go wrong in a family, and as far as they are concerned, their family is finished.



Nevertheless, they accompany their father to take a look at the house, and discover another family living there. Her father, it transpires, has taken in a family he found at the train station after their business went bankrupt. The family has two children: a boy around five, and an older daughter. The latter has been using the room originally meant for the protagonist. The target of bullying in first grade, the girl has since become nonverbal, and although she has received counseling and psychiatric treatment, and even the ministrations of a “spirit medium,”<sup>10</sup> nothing has prompted her to speak again. One night while giving her a bath, the protagonist notices bruises on the girl’s body; moved to look after her, she starts cooking meals for her and braiding her hair, and it is not long before she begins to feel like her “whole physical being [has] been drawn to and ensnared by the girl.”<sup>11</sup>

In a moment when the girl seems particularly sweet and helpless, the woman comes close only to have the girl turn on her, biting her wrists and riding off on her bicycle, too fast for the woman to catch up. On another occasion, the girl cruelly empties a goldfish bowl in the garden, killing all the fish and prompting the protagonist’s sister to exclaim: “she’s just like you.”<sup>12</sup> With the homeless family now settled in, it is truly a full house. One night, after the homeless family has been lighting firecrackers in the garden, the boy places a prank call to the fire department. In an attempt to shield the boy from blame, the girl actually lights a curtain on fire. Afterwards, she flees into the night on her bicycle; the woman gives chase but her frantic shouts die on the wind, and she loses sight of the girl.

The girl in Yū’s story bears a striking resemblance to the one in Tawada’s “The Unfertilized Egg.” Here is another girl brought up outside the urban, middle-class norm. Another girl with no real education or parental involvement, abused by the authority figures in her life, and bullied at school. She therefore becomes rebellious, maladjusted, and even loses her ability to speak. Her antisocial, or perhaps socially maladaptive, tendencies are extreme, and although she seems developmentally delayed, she is in other respects precocious; for instance, she understands the adults around her very well. Cold and calculating at times, she can read people like a book and feels no compunction about exploiting their weaknesses. The girls in these stories are dangerous, but they are also affection-starved and can be quite likeable. Victimized by adults, they have a wildness about them reminiscent of street children; moreover, both girls seem headed for self-destruction.

Another thing they have in common: the girls are doubles of the protagonists. While both girls materialize out of nowhere—manifestations of the interiority of the protagonists—the subconscious darkness they spring out of in both stories has to do with the rupture of the family. The protagonists have sealed away this darkness in an effort to keep womanhood at bay; and it is from this darkness that the girls emerge.

Through their encounters with these girls, the protagonists experience a kind of shock of self-discovery as their old selves fall away, revealing a darkness they never suspected within. This resembles an awakening of maternal feeling, feelings of self-love,<sup>13</sup> and the discovery of the sexual Other at the same time. At the end of the day, the



protagonists deny the notion of family as an acceptable substitute for maternal love, self-love, or love for an Other. Family, heterosexual love, and reproduction: the protagonists reject all these in favor of the *shōjo* characters and the sexual love they inspire. These girls are an archetype of the “writing woman” (*kaku onna*) called up from the writer’s interiority, or perhaps we should refer to them as doubles (*bunshin*) of the writer. After all, these stories portray the conflict with the inner *shōjo* as the staging point for the subjectivity of the writing woman / modern female writer.

In “Full House,” the protagonist has already seen her own family disintegrate past the point of no return when she encounters her double in a girl whose own family is in the midst of the same self-destructive process in the form of homelessness. The main character in “The Bridegroom Was a Dog” finds her own double / daughter when she ventures outside the bounds of heterosexual love, discovering two sides to herself—girl and mother—in the process. In “The Unfertilized Egg,” the small, yellow girl is figured both as a gamete—that is, an unfertilized egg cell—and the archetype of the protagonist’s “writing woman.” It is precisely because this gamete-girl is *not* the product of a family structure premised on heterosexual love and reproduction, but is instead born of the protagonist’s retreat from society into self-imposed exile in her home/room, that she can represent the protagonist’s innermost writing self. This writerly self, it seems, cannot flourish in the confines of a family. It is a feature common to these stories that this self is both narcissistic and maternal, and adores the Other with a fierceness to rival any heterosexual love.

The relationships between the protagonists and girls in these stories find a precedent in the works of Kōno Taeko. There is, for instance, her short story “Ants Swarm” (Ari takaru, 1964),<sup>14</sup> which deals with child abuse. The protagonist in this story, Fumiko, has been lucky so far in avoiding pregnancy, but one day she fears the worst. Although she and her husband had previously come to a decision not to have children, when she tells him she might be pregnant, she learns that he actually wanted children. A few days later, however, she realizes it was just a false alarm. As part of the aftercare of their sexual activity—the couple routinely engage in S&M—the man places pieces of meat on the woman to soothe her wounds; it is in this context that Fumiko, an enthusiastic participant in this sexual activity, imagines what it would be like to have a daughter and abuse her. She imagines inflicting on the girl all the painful torments that she herself enjoys, so that the girl becomes a stand-in for Fumiko. This need for self-punishment leads Fumiko to create her *shōjo* double through a perverse reconfiguration of motherhood as an abusive relationship. In her fantasy, Fumiko sees herself as both girl and mother.

Two other works written around this time, “On the Examining Room Table” (Utena-ni noru, 1965) and “The Next Day” (Akuru-hi, 1965),<sup>15</sup> also examine their female characters’ feelings toward childbirth. In both stories, a protagonist who has done her best to avoid pregnancy learns that she would never have been able to conceive in the

first place, owing to a pre-existing medical condition. Like Fumiko in “Ants Swarm,” these characters have warped feelings toward childbirth, which are connected to the physiological experience of their own bodies through sexual practices that do not lead to pregnancy. These feelings are less to do with doubts about having or raising children, and more to do with a revulsion toward childbirth and the childbearing body—it is an abhorrence of reproduction itself.

The protagonists in Kōno’s fiction do not have reproductively healthy bodies or engage in procreative sex; they never give birth and so are never maternal or domestic, and they try to keep their relationships with men as far away as possible from any notions of family. Kōno has also written stories in which boys are mistreated, such as “Toddler-Hunting” (Yōji-gari, 1961) and “Crabs” (Kani, 1963).<sup>16</sup> Like “Ants Swarm,” these deal with the return of the repressed mother as well as the masochism of abjection, to borrow a term from Kristeva.<sup>17</sup> In these works, too, the protagonists are sterile women, and once again, the bullying of a child is depicted as an expression of motherhood. However, the protagonist in “Ants Swarm” is able to unleash her repressed double and establish an intensely private inner world through her masochistic sexuality. Her masochistic sexuality and her love for the girl are two sides of the same coin—or perhaps the former is the price of the latter. In the evolving inner landscape of her own sexuality, the protagonist can be both sadistic mother and masochistic daughter. In that space, the two selves are one.

The same kind of narcissistic interiority is a factor in the sexual politics of “Strange Tale of a Mummy Hunter” (Miiratori ryōkitan, 1990),<sup>18</sup> which also depicts the sexuality of men and women through the relationship between a sadistic mother and masochistic child. However, we see the roots of this perverse, repressed motherhood more clearly when the object of love and torment is a girl: it comes from the self’s rejection of reproduction. In “Ants Swarm,” the girl is a double whose function is to admonish the protagonist for not having children; she is the dark inner force driving the woman to masochistic, non-procreative sex.

Women’s repulsion at the idea of being trapped in biological families through reproduction forms an undercurrent of a lot of modern and contemporary female expression. In addition to Kōno, one can point to Tomioka Taeko, Takahashi Takako, and Masuda Mizuko, in whose works we encounter this fear in the form of a disgust with one’s own reproductive sexuality and a suspicion of the maternal. Each of these authors has also enlisted a *shōjo* character as a kind of shadow self.

A classic example of the *shōjo* as an archetype of the modern female writer can be found, for instance, in Hayashi Fumiko’s *Diary of a Vagabond* (Hōrōki, 1928-29).<sup>19</sup> But looming behind the *shōjo* narrator of that work is the figure of Midori from Higuchi Ichiyō’s “Child’s Play” (Takekurabe, 1895-96).<sup>20</sup> With no space in Japanese society for her to grow up as she wishes, Midori eventually stifles her inner *shōjo* by squeezing herself into the circumscribed life of a geisha. The narrator of *Diary of a Vagabond*, on

the other hand, is a figure of possibility, reminding us of who Midori might have become had she grown up outside of the constraints of that system, or perhaps at its periphery.

If the *shōjo* in *Diary of a Vagabond* is one end of a spectrum, then at the other end we find the *shōjo* of *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* (Dai-nana kankai hōkō, 1931)<sup>21</sup> and “Miss Cricket” (Kōrogi-jō [1932])<sup>22</sup> by Ozaki Midori.<sup>23</sup> The title character in “Miss Cricket” is a frail misanthrope who lives a lonely life of poverty and suffers from a nervous illness implied to be schizophrenia. When she is not taking powdered medicine for her frequent headaches, she can be found with her nose in a book, favoring stories of doppelgängers; while given to flights of fancy, she herself is rather listless. Mistreated by men, and with scant prospects for happiness or personal growth, Ozaki’s *shōjo* is all languid loneliness—as forlorn as the fading cries of her namesake at summer’s end. But at the same time, there is something quite profound, not to mention mordant and shrewd, about the way she faces up to the world’s senseless tragicomic turns.

A study in contrasts, this cricket-like *shōjo* seems to have both a masochistic and a sadistic side. She seems sexless yet has a faintly erotic aura at the same time. And although she seems to have sprung up out of nowhere, sufficient unto herself—not unlike a wild moss—she is also the writer’s double in the world of the story (although Ozaki herself used the term *bunshin* [“split heart/mind”]). The narrator of this story (herself a persona of the writer) has an androgynous edge to her, and the inner *shōjo* that we encounter in her solitary musings is an embodiment of the writer’s interiority. This *shōjo* figure is the inner writer who has persisted despite the fact that she reminds us—with her neurotic and self-destructive artistic temperament—of Roderick in Poe’s “The Fall of the House of Usher.” Another outsider figure, Roderick shares a gothic mansion with his twin sister until her untimely death; she returns from the tomb, and the sight of her seems to suck all the life out of him, like a vampire’s bite. Ozaki’s outsider *shōjo* thus makes a stark contrast with that of *Diary of a Vagabond*, whose fashionable disdain for the adult world of middle-class norms is accompanied by the uninhibited and bold vitality of a survivor.

Neither Hayashi’s nor Ozaki’s *shōjo* have any connection to the world of marriage, childbirth, or motherhood, and there is no chance of them ever becoming ideal mother figures. That much they have in common: neither is “good wife, wise mother” (*ryōsai kenbo*) material. Like Hayashi, Ozaki had also been an unknown when she first started publishing in *Nyonin geijutsu* (Women’s Art) magazine. However, her Miss Cricket character is quite the opposite of Hayashi’s *shōjo* as an archetype of the writer: there is a stubbornness to Miss Cricket’s nonconformity that is missing from Hayashi’s *shōjo* in *Diary of a Vagabond*; the former is apt to hold onto her own unusual sensibilities even if they bring her to ruin, while the latter has more of the grit required to survive as an outsider.

A “bad girl” (*furyō shōjo*) with a contemptuous streak, the *shōjo* in *Diary of a Vagabond* grows into a sexually liberated woman who balks at middle-class notions of decency. However, in two of the author’s late works, “A Late Chrysanthemum” (Bangiku,

1948)<sup>24</sup> and *Floating Clouds* (Ukigumo, 1949-50),<sup>25</sup> we see that the adult version of this *shōjo* character has gone beyond simply rejecting marriage, reproduction, domesticity, and family. Not only has she stopped defining her life in terms of her relationships with men, she actively avoids them altogether. Miss Cricket, on the other hand, could almost be one of Poe's mad artists, cerebral and hyper-sensitive. She is the female version of the modern artist as outsider, a person with no place in a rapidly modernizing industrial society. Nevertheless, like the *shōjo* figure in Hayashi's work, she still has no interest in either family or reproduction.

The *shōjo* figures above differ from those written by men—for instance, the blind koto player in Tanizaki's "A Portrait of Shunkin" (Shunkinshō, 1933)<sup>26</sup> or the titular character in Kawabata's "The Dancing Girl of Izu" (Izu-no odoriko, 1926)<sup>27</sup>—in two respects: their sexuality is a subtle rather than explicit part of the story, and men do not find them sexually attractive. With no interest in engaging men sexually, these *shōjo* are effectively asexual beings, gametes that have refused to develop into women.<sup>28</sup> Thus, we may say that the subjectivity of modern women writers has been defined by a wholly inward-looking and self-contained creativity, rejecting reproduction, Others of the opposite sex, and relations with the Other.

The *shōjo* has been made to signify many things throughout literary history. Not yet sexually mature, and with no clearly defined role in society, she has played a wide range of roles in the literary imagination: for instance, there is the prophetess who can peer beyond the veil of the phenomenal world and human institutions (Cassandra in Greek tragedy); there is the symbol of purity who seems hardly of this earth (Wordsworth's Lucy), there is the vaguely cruel, antisocial sprite frolicking past good and evil (Pearl in *The Scarlet Letter*); there is the girl who unwittingly drives a man to ruin through sexual obsession (Nabokov's *Lolita*); and there is the saintly girl-savior (Joan of Arc).

However, there is a big difference between these *shōjo* figures and the ones that female novelists and poets in the modern and contemporary era—writers like the Brontës, Virginia Woolf, and Sylvia Plath—have located within themselves and enlisted as alter egos.

The process of women's self-formation in modern Western societies had escaped serious analysis until Beauvoir published *The Second Sex* in 1949. It is here that she famously declared: "One is not born, but rather becomes, woman."<sup>29</sup> Using insights from existential psychoanalysis, Beauvoir examines the anguish and resistance that characterize this process, as well as the way one's interiority and sense of self is oppressed and warped, to expose the pathology of becoming a woman in modern society.

In particular, Beauvoir focuses on the psychological strain and distortions that otherwise happy, confident, bright young girls experience during puberty. Taught to conform to society's ideal image of femininity, they experience a gradual narrowing of horizons as their personal freedoms and aspirations are denied, and as if that were

not enough, they are forced to internalize the frustration and shock of this dispiriting experience.

In her autobiographical writings too, Beauvoir reflects that the freedom and splendor of her own girlhood were over too soon. Her analyses of adolescent girls similarly given to self-absorption and fantasy reveal a tendency for girls to maintain a private space of narcissistic fantasy on their way to becoming *woman*<sup>30</sup>—a refusal, in other words, to confront their real existence as individuals in the world that warps their character. What women repress in this process is something that bristles at having its free will denied or circumscribed: the *shōjo*.

In their efforts to acquire a means of expression, women in the modern period have called upon this figure, the *shōjo* double they had to seal away, deep within; it is the source of their self-expression. Restored from the depths of the unconscious, these girl-doubles become the central characters in modern women's writing: from Cathy in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) to the titular *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). Whenever Clarissa Dalloway thinks about the man whose love she rejected to become a high-society wife, her regret and sorrow are accompanied by cherished memories of the girl-double she used to love.<sup>31</sup>

In contemporary American literature, poets like Anne Sexton and Sylvia Plath found their doubles in black angels and naughty children;<sup>32</sup> these figures gave endless pursuit, tearing at the masks these women were obliged to wear—good wife, daughter, mother—despite their rejection of adulthood and the longing to stay girls forever. This conflict with the double forms the imaginative core of their poetry. The above novelists and poets depict the *shōjo* in a number of different and complex ways, but they all have one thing in common: as an archetypal self recovered in the process of acquiring a means of self-expression, the *shōjo* persona is a crucial part of the writer's subject formation (*shutai keisei*).

Most autobiographical novels by women, it seems, are premised on this recovery of the *shōjo*. Doris Lessing's *Martha Quest* series, written in the 1950s and 1960s, follows the life of an independent-minded girl born to white parents in colonial Rhodesia, who feels as out of place in her family and white Rhodesian society as she does in the black African culture around her. Despairing of English culture and customs, and disenchanted with both love and communism—she is a Communist Party member—she is clearly a personification of the early Lessing.

The *shōjo* figure in Lillian Hellman's memoir *An Unfinished Woman* (1969) is also connected to the dramatist's writerly self-formation in ways the reader can hardly miss. A Lessing-like figure, Hellman's *shōjo* rebels from a young age against her parents and white society in the American South, conducting herself with a bold disregard for middle-class mores concerning sex and marriage. Receiving more emotional support from her nanny, a black woman, than from her own parents, she grows up caught between white America and black culture, searching for a place where she might belong.

Compared to the *shōjo* consciously invoked by authors of memoirs and autobiographical novels, the *shōjo* figures constructed in the imaginative narrative space of poetry, tales (*monogatari*), and fantasies boast an even more complex and vivid set of imagery. This suggests that women's desire for narrative has always been an expression of their own deep-seated desires. The *shōjo* who strives to remain herself is repressed not just by society and the Other, but by women themselves, who lock her away deep inside; this is part of the process by which girls are made to be women.

In traditional Japanese literature, Princess Kaguya is the prototypical little girl / *shōjo* character. A child of nature, she is a godsend to the old man and woman who discover and raise her; later, she is a cruel sexual Other to her princely suitors; and finally, she is a symbol of immortality and eternity to the emperor. This is the story of a *shōjo* who rejects men, shrinks from human contact, and eventually returns—her innocence intact—to her true home on the moon. Among the countless later writers that this figure inspired was Murasaki Shikibu, whose character Murasaki no Ue (also referred to as Waka Murasaki) in *The Tale of Genji* is a variation upon that theme. Insofar as Princess Kaguya and Murasaki no Ue are obliged to receive a marriage proposal from the emperor, they recall Midori from Higuchi Ichiyō's "Child's Play,"<sup>33</sup> herself the archetype of the modern literary *shōjo*.

Midori is the most indelible *shōjo* figure in modern Japanese literature. From her first menstrual cycle she is implicated—like Waka Murasaki—in a world that turns on sex. The brief period of freedom she enjoys as a girl would have been familiar to women in prewar Japan. As with Midori, the protagonist of Miyamoto Yuriko's *Nobuko* (1924–26) grows up far from poor. In fact, she is raised in a loving household whose economic and cultural capital would have been unusual for a Japanese family of the time, and she receives an education of the quality normally reserved for boys, even being given the chance to study abroad; but her girlhood and the freedom that comes with it are equally short. Becoming a woman means marriage, and she is beset on all sides by the expectations this brings: her parents want her to be a good daughter, her husband wants her to be a good wife. In the midst of all this, she struggles to stay true to her girlhood self, and it is only through divorce and independence that she can become the writer she was meant to be.

Meanwhile, Okamoto Kanoko posits in her distinctive and fantastical narrative worlds a self-image endowed with an abundant sexuality, elements of the maternal, and the innocence of a young girl. This figure serves throughout her work to inspire male characters in their obsessive pursuit of a beauty that surpasses both nature and human artistry. The mysterious women in "A Riot of Goldfish" (Kingyo ryōran, 1937)<sup>34</sup> and "The House Spirit" (Karei, 1939)<sup>35</sup> are unattainable to the men who pine after them, and retain a kind of childish innocence; while there is something abundantly sexual about them, they nevertheless redirect men's feelings for them toward the pursuit of an otherworldly aestheticism, leading them to obsess, for instance, over the creation of a new species of goldfish, or the painstaking engraving of ornaments.



Okamoto's stories give form to a personal fantasy space, albeit one that she created to save herself from the profound sense of loss she experienced as a wife and mother in her marriage to the famous manga artist and humorist Okamoto Ippei; it was a fictional world where she could bring back to life the free-spirited, literary *shōjo* she had once been. In modeling her young heroines on the goddess Kannon,<sup>36</sup> Kanoko was attempting both to live up to Ippei's image of the ideal woman and mother, and to recover her self within the narrative world through the use of a persona. The resulting figure—a young girl endowed with the maternal—was at once a co-creation of Kanoko and Ippei, and the self-image through which Kanoko acquired a means of expression. The creation of this kind of personal narrative space—in which the writer employs the *shōjo* as a fantasy self—was not exclusive to Okamoto. It also characterizes the works of Ozaki Midori, whom I touched on above, and carries over in the contemporary period to writers like Kanai Mieko, Masuda Mizuko, and Ogawa Yōko. Their fantasy-tinged narrative worlds are all informed by the sensibilities of a *shōjo* who refuses to grow up.

The figure of the inner *shōjo* as a double of the writer has always guided modern women's self-expression, but in Tomioka Taeko's "Tale of the Snow Buddha" (Yuki-no hotoke-no monogatari, 1987) the *shōjo* figure leads the protagonist even further, to a place beyond conflict with the modern ego. While this sounds similar to the role the inner *shōjo* plays in the works of Tawada Yōko and Yū Miri, here the *shōjo* figure seems to exist at some remove from the modern female writer's inner conflicts—she is no longer part of that drama.

In "The Tale of the Snow Buddha," the first-person protagonist travels to a mountain village in Tōhoku known for its self-mummified Buddhist monks. As she learns more about the true motivations of these men and the villagers who helped mummify them, she encounters a girl who refuses to go to school owing to a nervous disorder, and finds herself powerfully drawn to her. The girl leads her into a dark, snowy cave to meet a mummy-maker, who proceeds to tell the protagonist about the mummies. The neurotic girl, who seems to have the power of second sight, is both a double of the protagonist and her guide on this quest.

On her journey to learn about the mummies, the protagonist has summoned her inner *shōjo*—although she might also be a phantom of the snow. In any case, after this *shōjo* has led her to peer into the darkness, the protagonist leaves the tale of the mummies and the girl behind in the snow and makes her way back to reality. The protagonist herself buries the inner *shōjo* once again. Just like the dark tale of desire and anguish behind the history of the mummies, the untold story of the protagonist's inner self is also left buried in the snow. The *shōjo* has led her to this point where whatever needed to be overcome in her life has indeed been sublimated.

Yamamoto Masayo's short story "Bracken Shoots" (Sawarabi, 1995) also calls upon a little girl who seems to come straight out of a folk tale. The protagonist Hīragi is a widower and retiree who leads a solitary life in a nursing home; neither particularly



happy nor particularly sad, he spends his days engaged in various idle pursuits, one of which is writing linked verse with other residents. Then one day his daughter-in-law visits with her daughter Yukari in tow,<sup>37</sup> and he invites the little girl to join his poetry circle. Yukari enlivens the group in her free and guileless way, filling the heart of the protagonist, who had previously been quietly waiting out the last of his days, with a wondrous light. Yukari's light brings into sharp relief the very human loneliness that comes with old age; it serves as a kind of salvation, filling the void left by the many things that one abandons at the end of life. This little girl (who recalls *The Tale of Genji's* Waka Murasaki) not only rekindles Hīragi's spirit, but also resembles the kind of wandering spirit (*marebito*) from folklore that brings peace and consolation. Like the girl in "The Tale of the Snow Buddha," she seems to possess a healing power—one that illustrates by contrast the fierceness of the drama that has transpired, like the brightness of the snow after a blizzard.

In positing an old man and a young girl as the main characters in "Bracken Shoots," the author seems to be intentionally evoking the world of folk tales. But the character who actually guides the reader into that fairy tale world—even more than Yukari—is a peripheral presence in the real world of the story: the daughter-in-law. A long time ago, in her student days, she also belonged to a linked verse group. Although in the beginning she used to visit Hīragi along with her husband and daughter, the visits are now just a mother-and-daughter activity. If Yukari resembles a kind of benevolent visiting spirit, it is her mother who leads her to Hīragi. Referred to only as "the bride,"<sup>38</sup> the woman is a rather inconspicuous figure in the story. Yukari is her embodiment as a young girl, the double she has repressed in her life as a "bride."

"Bracken Shoots" seems less about the inner lives of the elderly and more about the interiority of "the bride" as reflected in the mirror of the old man's heart. It is a story about the healing power of the woman's girl-double, Yukari, although it also hints at an unspoken drama at her core. A real, unaffected optimism runs through both this story and "The Tale of the Snow Buddha." Here, it has less to do with the brightness that has been restored to the main character's heart, and more to do with the brightness it reflects back to us. It is the brightness of the landscape in which we find both "the bride" and Yukari; it is the inner light of this woman who has restored her inner *shōjo* as her double. The fact that this light shines brightly now out of the aging protagonist's heart suggests that whatever inner turmoil the woman once harbored has been sublimated. It is the white light bursting into view on the other side of a long, dark tunnel—the light of a new landscape in modern women's literature.

#### Translator's Notes

This essay was originally published as Mizuta Noriko, "Shōjo-to iu bunshin—kindai josei hyōgen ni okeru

genkei toshitenō 'shōjo'" (The Girl Double: On the *Shōjo* as Archetype in Modern Women's Expression), in

*Nijusseiki no josei hyōgen—jendā bunka no gaiibu* (Women's Self-Expression in the Twentieth Century:

Toward the Externality of Gender Culture) (Tokyo: Gakugei Shorin, 2003), 167-188.

The translator is grateful to Luciana Sanga and Alessandro Castellini for their comments and suggestions, and to Julia Bullock for her editorial assistance.

1. Hiromi Tsuchiya Dollase, "Yoshiya Nobuko's 'Yaneura no nishōjo': In Search of Literary Possibilities in *Shōjo* Narratives," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 20. no. 21 (2001): 154.
2. Ibid.
3. Jennifer Robertson, *Takarazuka: Sexual Politics and Popular Culture in Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 65.
4. Brian Bergstrom, "Girlihood Next to Godliness: Lolita Fandom as Sacred Criminality in the Novels of Takemoto Novala," in *Mechademia 6: User Enhanced*, ed. Frenchy Lunning (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011): 32-33.
5. The English title used here is from Margaret Mitsutani's translation, which was published alongside two other stories in *The Bridegroom Was a Dog* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1998), 7-62.
6. Tawada Yōko, "Museiran," *Gunzō* 50, no. 1 (1995): 85.
7. This reference to plastic surgery calls back to a sinister news item in the story about illegal surgical experiments performed on children. These experiments were inspired in part by the physiognomist's writings.
8. Ibid., 79.
9. Translated by Melissa L. Wender in

*Into the Light: An Anthology of Literature by Koreans in Japan*, ed. Melissa L. Wender (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011), 174-219.

10. Ibid., 200.
11. Ibid., 211.
12. Ibid., 215.
13. The term Mizuta uses here, *jiko ai*, has been used in Japanese clinical literature as a translation for "narcissism." However, as Mizuta also uses the term *nāshishizumu*, I have kept the two terms distinct in my translation.
14. This story is available in two English translations (both titled "Ants Swarm"). The first translation, by Noriko Mizuta Lippit, appears in *Japanese Women Writers: Twentieth Century Short Fiction*, ed. Noriko Mizuta Lippit and Kyoko Iriye Selden (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1991), 112-25. The second translation, by Lucy North, appears in *Toddler-Hunting & Other Stories* (New York: New Directions, 1996), 166-84.
15. The English titles here are the same used in Julia C. Bullock, *The Other Women's Lib: Gender and Body in Japanese Women's Fiction* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2010), 174, note 61.
16. These stories appear in *Toddler-Hunting & Other Stories*, 45-68 and 135-65, respectively.
17. See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).
18. The English title for this novel is the same used in Bullock, *The Other Women's Lib*, 187.
19. Translated by Joan E. Ericson in

*Be a Woman: Hayashi Fumiko and Modern Japanese Women's Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 123-14.

20. This work is available in two English translations. The translation by Edward Seidensticker ("Growing Up") can be found in *Modern Japanese Literature*, ed. Donald Keene (New York: Grove Press, 1956), 70-110. The translation by Robert Lyons Danly ("Child's Play") appears in *In the Shade of Spring Leaves: The Life and Writings of Higuchi Ichiyō, a Woman of Letters in Meiji Japan* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1981), 254-87.
21. Translated by Kyoko Selden and Alisa Freedman in *The Asia-Pacific Journal: Japan Focus* 14, no. 16 (2016). Accessed 29 October 2018, <https://apjif.org/2016/16/Osaki.html>.
22. Translated by Seiji M. Lippit in *More Stories by Japanese Women Writers: An Anthology*, eds. Kyoko Selden and Noriko Mizuta (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011), 35-44.
23. Some sources give her surname as "Osaki." As William J. Tyler notes, this was the way the name was pronounced in her native Tottori Prefecture. See *Modanizumu: Modernist Fiction from Japan, 1913-1938* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 83.
24. This story is available in two translations: "A Late Chrysanthemum," in *A Late Chrysanthemum: Twenty-one Stories from the Japanese*, trans. Lane Dunlop (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1986), 95-112 and "Late Chrysanthemum," in *Modern Japanese Short Stories*, trans. John Bester (Tokyo: Japan Publications, 1970), 188-208.
25. This work, too, has multiple English

translations. See, for instance, *Floating Clouds*, trans. Lane Dunlop (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) and *The Floating Clouds*, trans. Yoshiyuki Koitabashi and Martin C. Collcott (Tokyo: Hara Shobo, 1965).

**26.** I have used the English title from Howard Hibbett's translation in *Seven Japanese Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1963), 3-84. The story has also been translated as "The Story of Shunkin" by Roy Humpherson and Okita Hajime in *Ashikari and The Story of Shunkin* (Tokyo: Hokuseidō Press, 1933).

**27.** I have used the English title from J. Martin Holman's translation in *The Dancing Girl of Izu and Other Stories* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 1998), 3-33. The story was previously translated by Edward Seidensticker as "The Izu Dancer" in *Atlantic* 195 (January 1955): 108-14.

**28.** I have translated *miseiran* in the original as "gametes."

**29.** Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, trans., *The Second Sex* (London: Vintage, 2011), 293. Readers of earlier translations of *The Second Sex* may be accustomed to seeing the article "a" before "woman" in this sentence. However, Borde and Malovany-Chevallier explain that

Beauvoir occasionally used "*femme* without an article to signify woman as determined by society [...]," and this is one such case. Mizuta similarly calls attention to the word "woman" two paragraphs later by placing it in brackets.

**30.** This is the only bracketed instance of "woman" (*onna*) in Mizuta's text.

**31.** This would seem to refer to Sally Seton, the character with whom Clarissa Dalloway shares a kiss as a teenager.

**32.** See for instance Sexton's "The Double Image," which includes the following lines: "Ugly angels spoke to me. The blame, / I heard them say, was mine. They tattled / like green witches in my head, letting doom / leak like a broken faucet [...]." In *Selected Poems of Anne Sexton*, eds. Diane Wood Middlebrook and Diana Hume George (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 28.

**33.** As Christine Murasaki Millett (1998: 4) writes, "Through much of *Takekurabe*, a Murasaki-like Midori is placed romantically between two boys," one of whom resembles the character of Niou in *Genji Monogatari*. In that work, Niou "expects to be the next emperor" (Ibid., 14). See "Inverted Classical Allusions and

Higuchi Ichiyō's Literary Technique in *Takekurabe*," *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal English Supplement* 14 (1998): 3-26.

**34.** I have used the English title from J. Keith Vincent's translation in *A Riot of Goldfish* (London: Hesperus, 2010).

**35.** I have used the English title from Kazuko Sugisaki's translation in *The House Spirit and Other Stories* (Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1995).

**36.** Michiko Suzuki describes Kannon as "the all-forgiving [...] maternal Goddess of Mercy" in *Becoming Modern Women: Love & Female Identity in Prewar Japanese Literature & Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 119.

**37.** As Hino Keizō, Yamamoto Michiko, and Sengoku Hideyo note in a round-table discussion, the story provides no phonetic gloss to tell the reader how this name is pronounced—and one possibility is indeed "Murasaki." See Hino, Yamamoto, and Sengoku, "Sōsaku Gappyō," *Gunzō* 50, no. 5 (1995): 344.

**38.** In a comment on an earlier version of this translation, Luciana Sanga rightly pointed out that the Japanese term (*yome*) could also be translated as "daughter-in-law."