Specters of Modernity:
"Supernatural Japan" and the Cosmopolitan Gothic

By

Michael Joseph Blouin

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ABSTRACT

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Value of Research Specialization: From the mid-19th century until today, "Japan" has frequently been imagined in Western discourse as a supernatural entity; at the same time, Gothic tales from each nation have been exchanged, consumed, and adapted. By better understanding this phenomenon, in works ranging from the prose of Lafcadio Hearn and Winnifred Eaton to the films of Shimizu Takashi, one can better understand the cultural relationship between the two countries as well as the layers of complexity that accompany constructions of "foreignness."

Argument of Dissertation: Cosmopolitanism, following Kant, is often articulated through concepts of unity and rationality. I argue that the cultural exchange between the United States and Japan in the last century suggests a different kind of cosmopolitanism, one that instead uses Gothic tropes to interrogate the Self as it projects its own hidden "foreignness" onto distant lands. This argument builds upon theories of Julia Kristeva, Paul Ricouer, and Jean Baudrillard that argue for "radical alterity." In the macabre and spectral visions of one another, the United States and Japan glimpse the excesses within their modernization.

Contribution of Dissertation: My dissertation expands and changes out current understanding of the U.S.-Japan cultural relationship, specifically in literature and film. It attempts to challenge a dominant view that "Japan" has served solely as the Other in Western thought and rather establishes the manner in which authors and filmmakers have used this theme as an opportunity

to subvert the status quo and interrogate modernity's excess. The dissertation concludes with an analysis of Japanese horror films and their American re-makes in order to understand how one might begin to conceive of a shared affect through revisions of the "uncanny" produced by these transnational encounters.

and Miyuki Yamamoto, who took me to Hearn's home in Matsue and aided me through numerous moments of being "lost in translation." Gavin Campbell, a professor at Doshisha University, provided pointed insight during early drafts and pushed me to sharpen my prose. It was during his seminar (*zemi*), in conversation with several graduate students, that this project really started to take form.

Finally, I must reach further back into the past to recognize the constant influence of faculty at the University of Vermont. Valerie Rohy forced me to clarify my language and I will forever be in her debt for her guidance; David Jenemann taught me to appreciate Adorno and to read cinematic texts in innovative ways; Todd McGowan never failed to startle me with his wisdom or fuel my creative devices with his provocative debates in the classroom. And, of course, I owe a great deal to Tony Magistrale – "Coach" – for opening doors, for jogging while discussing King, and for inspiring me to want to get into this profession in the first place.

This dissertation is therefore an accumulation of ideas and energies borrowed from the finest individuals I have met in my life. Any success found in the pages to follow cannot be separated from their influence. Any errors or oversights confirm that I must continue to try and live up to the high standards they have set.

The world can scarcely have in reserve a less hackneyed theme than Japan.

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Was he really a man, a human entity, a personality like ourselves, or was he merely a sort of spiritual solvent, sent for the moment to precipitate whatever sincerity there was in us, and show us what the truth was concerning our relations to each other? It was a fantastic conception, but I thought it was one that I might employ in some sort of romantic design, and I was professionally grateful for it.

William Dean Howells, *A Traveler from Altruria* **(1894)**

Now, do you really imagine that the Japanese people, as they are presented to us in art, have any existence? … The whole of Japan is a pure invention. There is no such country. There are no such people.

Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying" (1889)

Then to bed, with drowsy brains harassed with a mad panorama that mixes up pictures of France, of Italy, of the ship, of the ocean, of home, in grotesque and bewildering disorder. Then a melting away of familiar faces of cities, and of tossing waves, into a great calm of forgetfulness and peace. After which, the nightmare.

Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* **(1869)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Upon spending a year abroad in Japan, I hoped to understand better why a surprisingly large number of individuals in the last century elected to adapt ghostly tales from the archipelago. Of the countless books concerning U.S.-Japan cultural relations, there is no work treating this subject at length – which I found disconcerting, as the phenomenon was as prevalent as any other. There are fascinating adaptations of Japanese superstitions from the late nineteenth century, monstrous visions of a petulant nuclear lizard, and iconic females with long, black hair; gazing out the window from the train rumbling into Kyoto station, I desired to begin to understand why these creepy imports from the Far East had been consistently popular throughout the past hundred years and what important transnational connections were running beneath the surface of these particular texts.

As I read over my correspondences from my time in Japan, a narrative mirroring the trajectory of this dissertation appears. During my early days in rural Omihachiman, I expressed a belief I will eventually discover a deeper meaning in the country. My words then slowly began to suggest self-doubt; I ruminated on how my comprehension of "Japan" and "America" was gradually being challenged by my experiences. At a certain point, while gazing up at Matsue castle in the morning fog from the very same path Gothic storyteller Lafcadio Hearn walked daily, I uncovered a possible reason as to why these haunting tales repeatedly manage to move the reader, which forms a basic premise for this project: at first, an enigmatic aesthetic lures the weary traveler into contemplation and a search for invisible forces. Subsequently, from within the mist, one finds the outline of intangible pieces of themselves repressed at home. After the twelve month stay comes to a close, while sitting in the Kansai International Airport and writing in my well-worn notebook, I deliberate further on this encounter: "Maybe my shifting attitudes

suggest why supernatural images from Japan have played such a prominent role in Western discourse."

"Japan," as it is oft- imagined by Western visitors and artists who appropriate the nation's fantastic stories, recurrently evokes a sense of the uncanny. In these cases, one's internal incomprehensibility is readily projected outward onto narratives of the archipelago, giving the texts an eerie unfamiliarity in conversation with the shockingly familiar. As my companions and I stared up at the ghostly outline of the castle, I thought of Hearn - and I considered how terrifying, and exhilarating, it must have been for him to recognize his spectrality among phantoms lingering in a distant land.

"Supernatural Japan": A Survey

Western relations with Japan have historically involved an air of the supernatural. When Commodore Matthew Perry arrived off of Japanese shores in July of 1853, he came aboard ships painted midnight black, known in Japanese as *kurofune*, a sight meant to intimidate and to give the isolated country a glimpse of America's "transcendent power." An exchange aboard Perry's fearsome vessels was later accompanied by the trail of Haley's comet, illuminating the mesmerized onlookers below.[1] One can only imagine the sort of macabre tales that could have been told of these initial, fantastic moments had authors Nathaniel Hawthorne or Herman Melville, each of whom possessed an affinity for the unnerving, agreed to Perry's request to accompany him upon his voyage. Nevertheless, from the opening of Japan's ports in the middle of the nineteenth century, discourse between the two cultures has returned time and time again to titillating sensations of a supernatural sort.

Upon first glance, the predominance of these tropes in the cultural representation of "Japan" is easily comprehended. It is, one could argue, yet another example of what critic

Edward Said labels as Orientalism. Eager to establish a power dynamic with the archipelago, Western audiences delight in transforming the complex country into a set of exotic symbols signifying the primitive, the "Unknown," the completely "irrational." Undoubtedly, there is an element of Orientalism running throughout the works to be analyzed and it is necessary to continue recognizing this trend. However, this model of analysis is not sufficient in the face of what I believe to be a more complex phenomenon. Said himself admitted that his employment of the term Orientalism should not be applied loosely to the Far East, as the relationship between Japan and the United States is based on a distinctly different power dynamic. First, the transnational flow does not readily align with a center-periphery model; rather, Japanese artists and thinkers, including film director Shimizu Takashi, have consistently interjected, opening opportunities for Western figures to re-imagine their own culture in the process. Additionally, it would be disingenuous to characterize the Western authors and filmmakers in the pages to follow as solely "idealistic travelers" or "anxious racists." Through the interweaving of visions of "Japan" with narrative forms privileging fear and doubt, these figures struggle to negotiate a dual impulse within America's long twentieth century: the excesses of national expansion with a lingering suspicion that, repressed beneath the surface of this figurative and literal expansion, "foreignness" exists within themselves. In short, "supernatural Japan" offers spectators an unfamiliar culture onto which the grotesque side of modernization can be made manifest.

This trend depends on a vast amount of artifacts, beyond the terrain of the literary and cinematic. Following Perry's expedition, and the brief window during which American was engaged in a Civil War and Japan was undergoing a painful transition away from feudal governance, curios from the archipelago became enormously popular in Western markets. Disenfranchised Westerners found in this commercialized Far East an opportunity to vent their

displeasure with the state of Western affairs.[2] In the process, they found alternative methods and initiated *ad hoc* amalgamations of artistic styles from around the globe. One brand of amalgamation interweaves Gothic fancies with Japanese subject matter. As the "Japan Idea" entered into the Western lexicon, it hybridized with familiar narrative conventions, including one of the most prevalent, the Gothic (and later, the horror film).[3]

British artists Sidney Sime and Aubrey Beardsley were two of the first to seize upon the Gothic undertones they found in Japanese art forms in order to react against the oppressiveness of Western thought.[4] Sime generated images to accompany Lord Dunsany's Orientalist fictions, as well as the publications of infamous Orientalist William Hearst, utilizing Japanese images as exotic material with which to cast a "weird atmosphere."[5] Aubrey Beardsley, on the other hand, privileging decadence over realism, painted unsettling images based upon his impressions of "Japan," which granted him "release from the bondage of what we call real things" (Beardsley, xii). Sime's "The Dirge of Shimono Kani" (from Dunsany's *Time and the Gods*, 1906) and Beardsley's "The Mysterious Rose Garden" (from *The Yellow Book, Vol. IV*, 1895) are two pointed examples of these artists drew from Japanese *ukiyo-e* prints from the Edo period (1600 – 1868) being heavily imported into Western sitting rooms. These particular paintings are stylized as woodblock prints and, in contrast to a traditional Western vanishing point perspective, remove depth to create a sense of flatness, coupled with a sense the subjects are floating in space. They are placed in a mystical frame to contain "Japan" as outside of the natural world. In Beardsley's image, a Japanese demon figure whispers into the ear of an Eve-like female. "Japan," through a mixture of eroticism, reactions against Western logic, and a sense of enticing danger, takes shape through fantastic dreams.

These initial depictions of "supernatural Japan" cannot be divorced from their political context. Imagining the Far East through its ghosts and monsters has been repeatedly wed to government propaganda. At the turn of the century, M.P. Shiel produced "The Yellow Trilogy," a series of novels concerning the "yellow peril," an anxiety Asians were plotting to take over the world. At the same moment, in Ireland, Lord Dunsany, well-known author of dark tales, was said to have drawn inspiration from playwright David Belasco's "The Darling of the Gods" (1903), a play which presents "Japan" as a land of torment and divine terrors. Dunsany's fiction, like Belasco's staging, presents an aura of "Oriental mystique" to accomplish the affect. Elsewhere during this era, perhaps most well-known of all, science fiction writer H.G. Wells channeled his distrust of Asian races in his fictional worlds. Wells' *The War in the Air* (1908) terrifies the audience with a relentless menace looming over the Western front, "The Confederation of Eastern Asia." More subtly, Wells' story "The Flowering of the Strange Orchid" (1895) tells of a Western protagonist who attempts to grow a flower from the Orient - the exotic flower signifying the region in Western popular culture. The vampiric weed demonstrates "unexpected mimicry," eventually attacking and nearly killing its unsuspecting owner, a despicable deed loosely disguising public fears of a secretive invasion by Asian legions. During the Pacific War, the anxiety towards "a yellow peril" grew ever-more pronounced.[6] In *Black Dragons* (1942), starring horror mainstay Bella Legosi, six powerful Americans were replaced by diabolical Japanese imposters seeking to invade America from the inside. The film, though unconsciously playing on existential distrust among individuals on the home front, sums up the perceived problem by representing "Japan" as sneaky, cunning, an evil force with the ability to mimic Westerners and lull them into a false sense of security in order to destroy them.[7]

Employing depictions as one-dimensional as those describing a "yellow peril," a number of figures utilize "supernatural Japan" to re-establish moral parameters for what they perceive to be an increasingly secular world.[8] Alice Mabel Bacon was an educator who helped develop a school in Japan for women; she later capitalized on her time there, and her interaction with Japanese students, to compose a collection of short stories, some of which she openly acknowledges to be adaptations of Hearn's publications. This collection, *In the Land of the Gods: Some Stories of Japan* (1905), reflects her upbringing as the daughter of a well-known pastor and professor at the Yale Divinity School. Multiple tales involve a protagonist who sins, wandering into the land of the *kitsune* (fox) and losing their way from the metaphorical path.

In "The Independence of Saburo," Saburo is a worker who has grown tired of the working lifestyle, a product of Japan's rapid modernization, "measuring and counting and writing out bills until it seemed to him that he could bear it no longer" (Bacon, 89). His first sin is abandoning the "unvarying monotony of the shop" and stealing off into a nearby rustic mountainside. He then comes upon a beautiful maiden, who he quickly tries to take with him back into the city, which he deems boastfully to be a "better place." Succumbing to a second sin of pride, Samburo wanders into the woman's hut. The atmosphere quickly grows macabre. Contact with the rational world of business has been lost and he vanishes into a world of decay and death. He discovers the girl he has been pursuing is actually a corpse: "The dead, raising her head, hitched forward across the floor. Saburo backed again. Once more the thing moved toward him, and once more he backed. It came closer, - closer -" (102-103). The story concludes with the young man fleeing home to the safety of his shop. "'I have returned', he said, as he bowed to his parents. Then he went back to his measuring stick, his *soroban*, and his account books" (104). His moral lesson resonates as if drawn from one of Bacon's contemporaries, Horatio Alger Jr.: a

14

life of humble labor, and filial piety, Bacon reminds the reader, is the only way to avoid the horrors of an "anti-modern nightmare."

Bacon adapts another tale which re-affirms faith in the modernization she envisions taking place in "Japan": "Chokichi's Pilgrimmage," adapted from Hearn's "Mujina" (itself adapted from an older Japanese tale). While Hearn's version, as we will explore at greater length in the first chapter, permits the reader to be startled by pure sensation, in direct opposition to the realism occupying much of Western literature at the fin-de-siecle, Bacon re-affirms a sense of industrial fortitude. Chokichi's economic woes frame the narrative in the form of the arrival of his bills and his need "to satisfy his creditors" (133). He decides to seek help from the gods, wandering off into the wilderness. As in "The Independence of Samburo," the woods signifies "Old Japan," a way of life now outside of the purview of a modernized archipelago. At this point in Hearn's abbreviated version, the traveler meets a woman by the roadside who has no face, symbolically representing for Hearn the absence of meaning at the heart of the narrative as well as the senselessness of using literary calculations to find redemptive Truth. In contrast, Bacon's young woman reveals herself to have not an absent face, but a demonic one: "A yell of demon laughter was in the air. He looked up to see that his companion has grown to the height of a giant, and was staring at him with terrible eyes from monkey face" (146). Unlike what I will later analyze as Hearn's proto-modernist style, Bacon's tale provides an "authentic" monster to fear, lurking in the wilderness of immorality.

Further down the road, Bacon's protagonist encounters a man with the same terrible face. It is here Hearn concludes his version, providing his reader with the chill of an abrupt ending, leaving them unsure of what to make of the impasse. Contrastingly, Bacon's version continues past the second encounter and allows her protagonist to return home and make sense of the

circuitous monstrosity. He affirms a lesson learned: "If a man would see his business prosper, let him mind it himself, nor clamor to the gods for aid" (149). The plot allowing Hearn to expose an abyss hiding beneath the tediousness of Western society affords Bacon a different opportunity - to remind her readers that escaping into the dreams of a vanishing past will simply not pay the bills in an industrial age.

A contemporary of Bacon, William Elliot Griffis likewise appropriates supernatural tales from Japan in order to adapt moral parables from Christianity. Griffis spent four years as an educator in the countryside while advocating for the "progress" of the archipelago. One of his stories, "Little Silver's Dream" (1908), advocates a life of diligent toil freed from sinful action. In the tale, a Japanese girl fantasizes about travelling on a boat ghosts are trying desperately to sink. These anti-progressive specters are unsuccessful, however, as the forward-moving sailors continue to hand them ladles without bottoms. Further on, they come to an island with "wizen-faced folks" donning grotesque leather features, long reddish-gray hair, and protruding barnacles about their visage. The howling primates enjoy their liquor a bit too much and subsequently squander their life's fortune. The girl awakens, the type of "waking" that will re-appear later in cyberpunk depictions of the archipelago (see chapter 7), having moved past the false promises of an illusory realm: "She laughed to think how they had all their work a-dipping for the water for nothing. But she never forgot the Demon's treasure – house of lost gold and happiness, whenever she saw anyone drinking more than was good for him" (Griffis 2008, 31). Moralizing therefore appears in late nineteenth century fictions portrayals of "Japan" as frequently as depictions of a "yellow peril." What binds the two trends is their reliance on stylized phantoms and that each retain "supernatural Japan" as a fantastic space which, despite its unbelievable qualities, provides a valuable service to the reader in a presumed quest for self-improvement. Representations of an

16

exterior for Western boundaries, located in the Far East, combines sentiment previously evoked by religious texts as well as early Gothic literature by harkening fear and trembling in the face of a hellish "Unknown."

Yet, unlike Bacon, Griffis on occasion pauses to reflect upon the difference between ethnography and fanciful dreaming. In the preface to his widely-read *The Mikado's Empire* (1883), Griffis writes: "It is time that a writer treated Japan as something else than an Oriental puzzle… it is time to drop the license of exaggeration" (Griffis 2006, xi). At this time, the recorded history of "Japan" was entangled with the legends and myths being imported to Western galleries and book shops.[9] Griffis recognizes this as a potential problem but remains ambivalent in his response.

Griffis never seems to recognize fully his alignment with the puzzle-makers. With no hint of irony, he begins his Japanese fairytale collection by acknowledging "some (of the tales) were suggested by native custom, and artist's pictures, while others were spun from my own brain. But all of them, I feel sure, reflect the spirit of Old Japan" (Griffis 2008, preface). This is likely due in some part to Griffis' obsession with his finances, as his letters to sister Margaret Clark Griffis demonstrate.[10] It was marketable to produce a book about the "ghostly" features of the Far East. In order to do so, certain ethical aspects of ethnography had to be suspended. While staying in Japan, Griffis grew aware of his literary talents and started to stray from his roots pontificating upon Christian principles. In his study *Mirror in the Shrine*, Robert Rosenstone cites Margaret's prediction William "will not be a minister… he wants to be a literary man" (Rosenstone, 195). Griffis walked an ever-finer line between faithful depictions of the Japanese people as he saw them and the aestheticized phantoms recycled to sell works of fiction.[11] With

his inability to reconcile the two, Griffis foundationally prefaces the uncertainty marking twentieth century stories of the macabre exchanged between the two cultures.

It is even more clearly in the now forgotten adaptations of James S. De Benneville one recognizes the powerful contradictions at work in rendering "Japan" as a supernatural entity. His two volume work, *Tales of the Tokugawa* (1921), at first appears in the vein of Bacon and Griffis. From the tales of a newly-encountered nation, one can derive universal values such as loyalty, dedication, and the sinfulness of a wasted life. But the excesses de Benneville points towards are bloodier than what serves, for Bacon and Griffis, as a "bloodless," didactic enterprise. Stemming from the atmospherics of *ukiyo-e* depictions of the grotesque, de Benneville relishes in the chaos these tales offer stiff Western literary circles with a long-standing history of resisting such unruliness.[12]

De Benneville's adaptations create multiple layers within the narrative in order to de-center the Western reader. Rokuzo, one of the multiple narrators in "Bakemono Yashiki" ("The Haunted Mansion"), reveals the disruption offered to a cohesive and linear modernity as "past fact and present fancy become strangely mixed in his recital" (De Benneville 2007). In his non-fiction account of his travels, de Benneville elaborates on the potential he finds in an imaginary "Japan": the Western subject believes he is "the favoured child of History" but modernity, through its rigorous scientific de-bunking, starts "to break down unaware the divinityship lodged in our skulls" (De Benneville 2010, 336). The process arrives at its logical conclusion in unsettling travels to a dream "Japan": "Wandering in the mazes of their own perplexities, unwilling to accept their limitations… such men are often driven in their imitations to measure the infinite by the finite" (338). The "infinite" found is not a "finite" moral lesson, as with Bacon, Griffis, or espousers of a "yellow peril," but instead "an almost dramatic hopelessness of our

situation before these abysmal depths of Space and Time" (339). This Gothic dismay produces imaginary "Japan" as a literary space for contemplating the limits of rationality as well as the scope of modernization.

In short, early attempts to contain the idea of "Japan" in supernatural terms regularly exceed, on some level, the confines of the artistic form used to do so. It is from this unrest the specters of modernity we will analyze in the pages to follow are predicated. This dissertation addresses neither images of a "yellow peril" nor didactic adaptations at length, opting rather to focus on texts developing a "supernatural Japan" to negotiate a particular Western identity from less certain waters.[13] I argue that as one moves past the preliminary sketches I have hereto examined, based more prevalently on positivist commentaries, one will locate how uniquely twentieth century literary and cinematic variations on the Gothic complicate this phenomenon. Before moving on to an overview of my theoretical approach, I would like to turn briefly to a generally unknown story that, as with the tales of de Benneville, helps to move one into the context of the past hundred years, Frank Emory Bunts' "A Japanese Hell" (1916). This tale illuminates profound doubts accompanying representations of "supernatural Japan" and unveils anxieties running deeper than Orientalist dread of the "foreign" or trepidation concerning increased moral turpitude.

"A Japanese Hell" departs from early Gothic form and pivots, like Henry James and his use of spectral materials during this era, into contemplation of narrative unreliability in Western discourse more generally. This stylistic decision reflects a shift in literature as well as attitudes toward Japan. The plot is relatively simple: a first person narrator visits Japan with military friends. His view of Mount Fuji is accompanied by "feelings of pleasure, wonder, amazement, awe – yes, even of reverence" (Bunts, 62). Near the foot of the mountain, they decide to explore

the ominous caverns beneath. Before entering the mouth, the narrator ironically mocks nearby Japanese who are paying homage to the holy mountain as "ignorant idolators" (63). The narrator's recognition of the sublime aura of the place, at odds with his dismissal of the native inhabitants, establishes his ambivalence at the opening of the tale.

This oscillation between Gothic sensation and the constraints of rational thought in Bunts' tale reveals broader tensions in depictions of a "supernatural Japan." While exploring, the protagonist becomes lost in a disquieting series of tunnels, encountering grotesqueries and gradually losing his grip on reality. He meets two Japanese men who are decomposing in graphic fashion: "He lay with those green snakes crawling over him, writhing about his neck, protruding their long shiny heads into his open mouth" (68). Upon later recalling his engagement with the rotting fellows, the narrator admits fear but immediately negates it as a minor dropping of his guard: "(The Japanese) relied upon the strange sights and surroundings to aid him in making me believe what I should have scouted and laughed at had I been safe above ground" (70). The narrator experiences "Japan" as a nightmarish landscape he must refuse, and contain, as mere illusion. His frightened spells, during which confidence is momentarily evacuated, repeatedly exposes doubt and then routinely refutes the response.

Bunts' narrative form summons a "supernatural Japan" to call into question the narrator's reliability. The narrator's representations of "Japan" as a malicious peril are made dubious by the calculated medium of the story. He draws attention to how he pieces together details from admittedly "a blank" and includes superfluous details ("Not that this has any particular connection with the adventure that I am about to relate") as well as elements reminiscent of Edgar Allan Poe's monomania, assurances for the reader - and himself - he is in fact telling the truth: "I feel justified in saying that I have always enjoyed a good reputation for veracity, and I

have not been willing to risk injuring it by relating what may, to some, appear improbable and

incredible" (65). Upon returning to the surface, the narrator expresses guilt at leaving the

decomposing men behind, trying desperately to justify his actions: "Fallacious reasoning, you

say? Oh, no! It cannot be, and yet, the horror of it" (69). One recognizes the influence of Poe and

James in following a mind turned against itself. Recognizing a loss of control over his reality, the

narrator tries desperately to explain the event in reasonable terms, assuming the Japanese

government is probably burying "inconvenient" persons alive in the caves. This warning of a

"yellow peril" stands as absurd when one considers the narrator's neurosis. It is too late for the

narrator to create a comforting version of cultural difference; all renderings of the archipelago,

be they of supernatural or man-made, are viewed with heavy skepticism. The reader likely agrees

with the narrator's assessment of his recollection: "I was afraid they would think my brain

affected by suffering" (75).

Bunts' style echoes a broader transformation of Gothic fiction during the early 1900s.

George Haggerty, examining James' contributions to the genre, argues "what is truly horrifying

about human experience… is that the subjective is the only objectivity we can know" (Haggerty,

154). The "Japan Idea," already constituted as "supernatural" by a number of widely-read

authors since the mid-nineteenth century, underwent a similar turn.[14] As "A Japanese Hell"

demonstrates, in a time of tremendous expansion *outward*, with transnational traffic crowding

Pacific routes, there was an equally dizzying movement *inward*. Cultural forms accompanying

modernization, including the Gothic and the "Japan Idea," gradually raised doubts about the

validity of any individual's cosmopolitan vision. Presumed ethnographic mastery is thus undone

in these narratives by the psychological claustrophobia of modernity. What haunts from foreign

sources cannot be separated from the corrupt mental apparatus of the Western subject. It is from

this critical transformation one can begin to interrogate the complexities underlying an imagined "Japan" over the course of the past hundred years.

Therefore, while never losing sight of the one-dimensional didactic tales and racist depictions lingering even today, the dissertation will follow Bunts' lead and focus instead on complications within later twentieth century depictions. In one respect, "Japan" is portrayed as the fulfillment of Enlightenment promises (a unification of "East/West"); in another respect, and at the same moment, "Japan" represents everything outside of the Enlightenment project, its unseen or refused elements. In this light, "Japan" occupies a rather unique position in relation to American culture. Since the Meiji Restoration (1868), the country has been understood as capable of adopting Western modes of modernization, of being "like Us," while retaining an aura of absolute difference. This attendant uncanniness urges spectators to recognize a reflection of themselves in these narratives while disturbing them with a Conradian absence found at the heart of modernity.

A Cosmopolitan Gothic

To understand better the unique brand of cosmopolitanism utilized by figures exploring "Japan" as established by the horror expressed by Bunts' tale, one must first define the style these figures were adopting (and reacting against). Cosmopolitanism has held various meanings since the age of the Stoics, who first considered the concept of becoming a "world citizen." The subject, with what scholar Mary Louise Pratt labels a "view from nowhere," envisages other cultures to absorb their unique perspectives, to attain a sort of carte blanche vantage point over the rest of the globe. In 1784, German philosopher Immanuel Kant composed an influential treatise, "Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose," which seeks to

interconnect world states by identifying *a priori* moral grounding. His Utopian vision contends Western rationalism, a particular notion flaunting its universality, to be at the center of the matter: "A universal cosmopolitan existence, will at last be realized as the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop… aimed at a perfect civil union of mankind" (Kant, 51). This optimistic vision for the future has recently been re-kindled by noted political scholar Martha Nussbaum, who detects a focal point of world development radiating outward. She writes, "We think of ourselves not as devoid of local affiliations, but as surrounded by a series of concentric circles" (Nussbaum, 9). For Kant and Nussbaum, cosmopolitanism presents a unifying notion, one privileging an accumulation of understanding towards total interconnection. *A priori*, it "offers only *reason* and the *love of humanity*" (15).

An influential example of these concentric circles being applied to renderings of "Japan," Walt Whitman's poem "A Broadway Pageant," published in the *New York Times* in 1860, gushes about the universal love the poet perceives fusing "East and West." The first Japanese envoy to visit Manhattan gave cause for elaborate spectacle; Whitman observed the procession from his apartment above the street. "The sign is reversing, the orb is enclosed / the ring is circled, the journey is done" (Whitman, 52). Cosmopolitanism allows the poet to contemplate a transcendental unity in the perceived arrival of "Japan" on the world stage. He sings of a passionate embrace and a bursting forth of his individuality amidst rapturous liberty, personified as "Libertad." The spectacle prompts Whitman to express the particularities of his nationalism – individualism, freedom, democratic vistas – as an idealized universal.

Contemporary critics of this kind of cosmopolitan idealism have been numerous. Theorist Karl-Otto Apel points out this version of cosmopolitanism is too narrow and relies solely on dangerous presuppositions, noting "human attempts to realize the goals of reason can be

achieved only to the extent that they are pre-determined through some causal mechanism within the continuous chain of the determination of nature" (Apel, 89). The risk of a cosmopolitanism based purely on the precepts of Western rationality, according to Apel, is that the particularities of specific regions will be sacrificed in the name of the universal. In other words, a forced, abstract unity could be employed to disguise the cultural myths distinguishing "Us" by precluding any of the beneficial uncertainty stemming from global interaction. In response to Nussbaum's Kantian position, Gertrude Himmelfarb admits: "Cosmopolitanism has a nice, high-minded ring to it, but it is an illusion, and, like all illusions, perilous" (Nussbaum, 77). For these critics, twentieth century writers who consider Japan, to adopt its philosophies or adapt its folklore, may lose sight of their confines and instead attempt to transform Western traditions into a singular World tradition. The didactic undertones of Griffis and Bacon add to this concern. Cultural studies scholar Timothy Brennan recognizes within this intellectual crisis "the explicit failure to see cosmopolitanism as less an expansive ethos than an expansionist policy: a move not toward complexity and variety but toward centralization and suffocating stagnation" (Brennan, 55).

Seeking to redeem cosmopolitanism and make sense of this stagnation, theorist Julia Kristeva illuminates the Gothic undertones of the phenomenon as an avenue for linking psychoanalysis overtly to global politics. She contends the self-critique involved in recognizing "foreignness" exposes one's desire for self-destruction, a liberation (again, a Gothic refrain) from the constraints of the "hyper-rational." She finds here "a disseminated 'oneself'" and insists one longs for exposure to "foreigners" and delights in becoming "foreign" (Kristeva 1991, 34). Authors Hearn and Winnifred Eaton find similar psychoanalytical potency in their encounters. Kristeva writes,

The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there

are no foreigners… a cosmopolitanism of a new sort that, cutting across

governments, economies, and markets, might work for a mankind whose

solidarity is founded on the consciousness of its unconscious – desiring,

destructive, fearful, empty, impossible. (192)

Kristeva anticipates a longing to break apart one's cultural identity, to lose the Self in the

impossibility of the Other. I will maintain that her recognition of the all-or-nothing impulse

driving cosmopolitanism mirrors the impulse driving many Gothic narratives: "cosmopolitanism

will be either libertarian or totalitarian – or else it will not be" (61). A sway between all-

consuming rationality and the freedom of chaos always-already at work, even in the writings of

Griffis and Bacon, sits embedded within Kristeva's definition of cosmopolitanism. Her need to

appreciate cosmopolitanism's designation of a radical alterity, outside of oppressive modern

paradigms, converges with a number of critical theorists who lend their voice to this dissertation.

Unity, for Kristeva, is detached and cold when placed in the rubric of a pre-determined Western

system. Echoing these concerns, commentator Michael McConnell views Nussbaum's

cosmopolitanism as "too bloodless to capture the moral imagination" (Nussbaum, 79). This

interjection rests at the center of my argument: the authors in question utilize Gothic sensation to

make once again bloody the "bloodless" task of cosmopolitanism, the beating of the individual

and collective heart, the shock of eroding cultural distinctions made manifest in a haunted Far

East.

These Gothic musings are not a complete departure from Western, specifically American,

discourse over the past century. Amy Kaplan's *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S.*

Culture outlines the integration of doubt into American identity, as a potential imperial force, from the late nineteenth century onward:

> Anarchy becomes an integral and constitutive part of empire, central to the representation of U.S. imperialism in dispersed locations and at different historical moments. Anarchy is conjured by imperial culture as a haunting specter that must be subdued and controlled, and at the same time, it is a figure of empire's undoing. (Kaplan, 13)

Analyzing Gothic moments in the travel writings of authors such as Mark Twain, Kaplan recognizes widespread ambivalence in various attempts to contain the "American domain."[15] Meanwhile, as American writers took to the seas, they confronted a desire to contain, and consume, the "foreignness" of the Other while still associating these findings with universal values presumed to be radiating outward from the Self. As Kaplan demonstrates, these two objectives remain eternally at odds and, indeed, have become "constitutive" of America's imperial pretense. Thus a certain type of Gothic unrest remained at the forefront of American thought as the nation stretched beyond its Western boundaries and into the unto-then isolated ports of Japan.

Ralph Adams Cram, famous for his Gothic designs of college campuses across the United States, was initially inspired by the ambivalence he faced during his four-month sojourn to Japan. His interpretations highlighted a Gothic unrest by overtly juxtaposing rational design with an "irrational mysticism" in his recordings of the country. While visiting in 1898, he spent time with both Hearn and Ernest Fenollosa. The dynamic picture of the nation he creates probably owes much to his discussions of the archipelago alongside two distinct world outlooks;

Fenollosa's cosmopolitan idealism, based on a Greek iconography, and Hearn's modernist

Gothicism, based on models of late Romantic uncertainty (for more, see chapter 1). Cram's

Impressions of Japanese Architecture (1905) offers one an example of the dynamism essential to

Gothicism. Initially, following Fenollosa, he depicts the architecture of the country as well-

proportioned and as a tremendous depiction of the human Spirit: "Greek architecture finds its

echo in Asia" (Cram 2010, 98). Still, amidst frequent references to the enlightened aura of

Greece, Cram conveys his personal favorite, the Gothic, an affinity he shared with Hearn: "There

is no difference but one of degree between the arts of Japan and those of medieval Europe" (111).

He departs from the tempered, bourgeoisie manifestations of Greek revivalism to celebrate the

organic sensationalism he finds in Japanese temples, "a spiritual import that is quite

overpowering. They breathe mysticism and abstraction, they are dreamlike and visionary" (59).

In the pages of *Impressions of Japanese Architecture*, Cram locates a philosophical crossroads

emerging in fin-de-siecle Western nations between Greek and Gothic styles, those espousing

rationality against a reactionary return to primal urges. Cram describes "Japan" within a specific

contest over how Western artists will respond to modernization via tales of cultural "progress"

overseas.[16]

The Gothic thus plays a major role in shaping American cosmopolitanism, in particular,

as it manifests itself in representations of "Japan." The genre remains of the utmost importance

to American literature and its depictions of a shifting geographic and intellectual frontier.[17] It

can be argued Gothicism and cosmopolitanism have been tied up in concurrent mappings of

"America." Attitudes toward Otherness, whether Salem women, Native Americans, slaves, or the

natives of distant lands, has defined American culture since well before 1776. On one hand, there

is a fascination with what repulses the cosmopolitan – in early travelogues of those passing

through Japan, this was Japanese food and superstition. On the other side, there is pleasure in

shedding the burden of national identity, complete with its rationalist baggage, and revel in

alleged differences.[18] As just one example, Charles Longfellow, son of famed American poet

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, was a "globe-trotter" who donned traditional Japanese costume

and engaged in what some would call "inappropriate dalliances" while living abroad in Japan.

The American Gothic fosters Kristeva's perceived duality, between the detached consumption of

"foreignness" versus a wholesale adoption accompanied by a complete loss of inhibition.[19]

The Gothic, I argue, intimately binds itself to the paradoxes of cosmopolitanism. One

might argue their competing impulses are fed by the same spring. Critic Noel Carroll's well-

known cognitivist reading of the genre evokes a subtle but definitively cosmopolitan mission:

"Whatever distress horror causes, as a probable price for our fascination, is outweighed for the

average consumer by the pleasure we derive in having out curiosity stimulated and rewarded"

(Carroll, 193). The pleasures of horror, for Carroll, stem from the base human instinct to go

outside and encounter difference. One finds a thrill in the shadowy beyond, whether the forests

of Massachusetts or the temples of Japan, going out in search of an amorphous entity and

whatever one finds, be it a well-defined supernatural being or a realization they themselves are

projecting internal guilt, there is pleasure in the process. Following Carroll's logic,

cosmopolitanism and the Gothic, on a fundamental level, are driven by a ceaseless projection and

probing of a never-reified self-consciousness.

The Gothic objectifies the monstrous Other and the Self in Western discourse in order to

break apart narrowly-confined subjectivities. Eric Savoy locates in the genre "the negation of

national imagery" (Savoy, 11); Rosemary Jackson, examining the closely-knit genre of fantasy,

adds that the genre "functions to subvert and undermine cultural stability" (Jackson, 69). In brief, while Kant and Nussbaum respectively appreciate an abstract, "bloodless" universality, I will use the term cosmopolitan Gothic – specifically in reference to representations of "Japan" over the long twentieth century - as an alternative which thrives on "bloodied" dis-unity, emphasizing the unreliability of the particular, and approaching universality only through a shared sense of self-criticism. The cosmopolitan Gothic, as with all modes of Gothicism, refuses Western rationalism and its unrelenting hold to focus on trepid explorers wandering into vague corners of the globe in search of the "foreignness" hidden within.

Working from this definition, a valid critique of the cosmopolitan Gothic is that it cannot pragmatically be applied to world affairs in order to address urgent questions, such as the re-allocation of material resources. Kantian idealists would dismiss such a mode of expression as nihilistic or as a reactionary defiance, bound to be overcome in the steady "progress" of Western thought. Critic Mark Edmundson, preferring traditional metaphysics over subsequent Gothic detours, criticizes the genre in precisely these terms. He contends the genre to be valuable only if one uses it to return to reasonable lines of thinking post-sojourn, a return to "the vision of life" (Edmundson, 179). He condemns writers such as Poe for being involved in a dead-end style based solely on "disillusionment." This, according to Edmundson, promotes a far from fruitful way to co-exist in a global community.

From an opposing perspective, scholar Tabish Khair claims the genre is actually *too often* grounded in formulaic metaphysics. Gothic handlings of cultural difference, from his perspective, merely stage difference; they feign alterity while in reality presuming universalism. Khair notes there is therefore a pressing need for "Otherness that cannot be simply reduced to the Self-same" (Khair, 101). In contrast to Edmundson, Khair does not find the Gothic to be based on genuine

29

"disillusionment." Edmundson's call for a return to positivist values in the Gothic obscures what Khair views as the danger behind such a proposition: a (continued) reliance upon racial determinism.[20]

The cosmopolitan Gothic in the works I examine operates somewhere between the extremes of Edmundson and Khair's competing positions. It is not based on a "dead-end"; in fact, its endless wandering is part of its nature. Nor does it go out in search of pre-determined securities. Many of the artists in question call into doubt their representations at moments in which they seem to be approaching an *a priori* Truth about Japanese – or, more often, American - culture. This reflects a Hegelian yearning to pry open the crypts of one's imagination while never exorcising the enticing strangeness propelling one forward. In many of the texts I will consider in the following chapters, no distinction is held sacred, especially America's assumed centrality – nothing, that is, but the freedom to unveil mutual uncertainty during fantasized movements abroad.[21]

In aesthetic terms, cosmopolitanism – like the Gothic – can be understood as offering a productive lens through which to engage in dynamic self-expansion. Oscar Wilde, one of the earliest figures to fuse the cosmopolitan ideal with artistic self-criticism, enjoyed the attendant detachment and the ironic power of distance from which to call preconceived notions into question. Julia Prewitt Brown's study of Wilde contemplates the impact of his contribution: "Art's freedom from ethics is the basis of its usefulness to us as ethical beings. Its transcendence of received morality is what forwards our own ethical discovery" (J. Brown, 75). Art-for-art's sake, when applied to an overly-aestheticized vision of the globe, leads to a cosmopolitanism favoring literary or cinematic experimentation and opens the way for a kind of *tabula rasa* in

those seeking the liberty to experience other cultures. Amanda Anderson seizes upon Wilde's proposition and defends the "considerable gains achieved by the denaturalizing attitude towards norms and conventions" (A. Anderson, 5). By assuming the "view from nowhere," according to Anderson, cosmopolitans subject not only different peoples to scrutiny but also their own shortcomings, granting an opportunity for "ethical discovery." Her study of "reflective interrogation of cultural norms" informs my larger project as the figures analyzed in each chapter attempt to locate in the "Japan Idea" boundaries of their perspectives through trial-and-error with various modes of expression.

Rebecca L. Walkowitz builds from Wilde and Anderson, arguing an over-aestheticized style is perhaps the most redemptive effect of a critical cosmopolitan worldview. She states, "A cosmopolitan style is not an alternative to or replacement for a cosmopolitan politics… rather, it describes an analytic feature of critical cosmopolitanism, which has been used politically by writers" (Walkowitz, 28). Aesthetics, often entwined with feelings of detachment, undermines the *a priori* unity Kant and Nussbaum render as appealing, constructing a compelling narrative to celebrate "instead of judgment and progress, an ethos of uncertainty, hesitation, and even wit that is sometimes at odds with political actions" (5). Walkowitz reminds one that cosmopolitanism continually exposes the subject to distance and discomfort. As Gothic literature influenced Wilde and the modernist writers, the thread connecting Gothic sentiments to Walkowitz's cosmopolitan style emerges as a fear of non-rationalism intermingled with a negation of self-certitude.

The cosmopolitan Gothic conceptualizes a bond between the aspiration to understand better fellow "world citizens" and the hope to recognize the potential follies and delusions in this enterprise. David Punter, a historian of the Gothic, argues the genre discloses "life is not a matter of petty detail, but an experience of self-mythologization and of mythologization of the world

around us" (Punter, 408). The cosmopolitan Gothic illuminates these mutual mythologizations and, through distance always lapsing into proximity, exposes their fictive nature. It challenges one to expand her concept of the globe without reliance upon easy or narrow-minded abstractions. At its most productive, a cosmopolitan Gothic helps one "to localize imagination," to recognize the "Japan Idea" as a local construction (Day, 73).[22] This returns us to Frank Emory Bunts' story "A Japanese Hell" and the hopelessly unreliable narrator trekking through the dark caverns of the archipelago.

Nevertheless, readings of a cosmopolitan Gothic ought not to overlook the presence of other peoples in favor of purely circulatory self-examination; accordingly, the dissertation accordingly concludes by deliberating upon the anxieties the two cultures have come to share in the last century through transnational engagement by analyzing the work of director Shimizu Takashi. Charles L. Crow's *American Gothic* is one of the few studies articulating this exchange, founded upon "a shifting geographical, cultural, linguistic and racial boundary" (Crow, 2). He situates Hearn, an author whose influence runs throughout the project, as one of the foundational figures in asserting the global characteristics of an American Gothic. From Hearn forward, Crow realizes "ideas and influences pass back and forth across the increasing permeable membranes of national and linguistic frontiers… thus American Gothic becomes part of the worldwide literature of the strange and terrifying" (102). The Gothic traditions of various cultures, especially those of Japan, have been "passed back" to Western artists throughout the twentieth century, shaping the discourse in equally profound ways. One hears the whispers of countless Japanese students serving as translators, not to mention the citizens who initially conceptualized and vocalized stimulating tales from Japan. The American Gothic of the past century, I assert, strongly inter-connects with the Japanese tales from which it derives inspiration.[23] Visions of a

"supernatural Japan" thus challenge audiences to re-consider alongside Kristeva how Gothic strains expose the presuppositions at the core of particular cosmopolitan world-views and how Western-centric constructions of modernity attempt to keep at bay what has long been repressed.[24]

<p style="text-align:center;">*Specters of Modernity*</p>

In sum, this dissertation will investigate how themes of the supernatural have been informed by cultural representations of, as well as exchanges with, the archipelago. Though not without serious ethical concern, instead of simply serving as an abject symbol, the renderings of an imaginary "Japan" I analyze also allow for self-critique in Western audiences. Correspondingly, as cultural theorist Naoki Sakai claims, the "West" can only exist through similar constructions of a subversive "Rest."[25] The "Japan Idea" has been employed consistently to (re)define the limits of the Western project, be they manifest in phantoms of the "anti-modern" or in a sublime postmodernity. In this way, the dissertation continuously seeks to define "modernity," a term highly criticized in contemporary debate. I will define "modernity" herein as emerging in tandem with the rise of capitalism and multinational corporations; as I am using it, the term marks a historical moment in which the logic of capital promotes reckless expansion and homogenization, particularly emanating from a specific Western model. The result of this brand of modernity leaves an array of distinct cultures confronting the very same specters with similar discursive tools. The boundaries of this "modernity" are patrolled in perpetuity by fantastic entities, ranging from invisible remnants of an Emersonian tradition to the liberating apparitions of cyber-communities.

In a number of ways, each chapter of this project analyzes dissatisfaction with the modernization philosopher Martin Heidegger discusses in a 1938 lecture entitled "The Age of the World Picture." Heidegger maintains the rise of man as a subject, and the globe as an objectified picture, leads to a sense there remains something "gigantic" behind it all, denied by a purely scientific perspective. He observes,

> The modern world extends itself out into a space withdrawn from representation, and so lends to the incalculable the determinateness peculiar to it, as well as a historical uniqueness. This shadow, however, points to something else, which it is denied to us of today to know. (Heidegger, 136)

The texts this project interrogates seek to extend Western paradigms into unchartered global spaces, specifically "Japan"; in so doing, they confront a "determinateness" marking a prescribed outlook. Suggested by supernatural moments from "Japan" is Heidegger's shadow, the shadow of an alarming (Heidegger suggests Utopian) force within humanity. These specters of modernity materialize in tropes of the "fantastic," which actually run throughout fantasy, science fiction, and the Gothic alike. Collectively, these tropes comprise in certain cases a cosmopolitan Gothic style which portrays an unfamiliar culture in order to expose familiar fears of the twentieth century.[26]

Western authors and filmmakers confront this version of the "Japan Idea" in a multitude of contexts, including predominantly the imperial, atomic, and economic. These historical moments reveal a period of over-reach, different brands of excess, in Western culture. At these moments, certain texts seek a way to move into "spaces incalculable" and "withdrawn from representation" to articulate an encounter with the country's burgeoning – and, theoretically, de-

stabilizing – potential. Critic Ellen Moers identifies the projection of inner surplus as a fundamental element of the Gothic genre. Among the brooding cast of characters throughout its history, she argues, "all are overreachers, all are punished by their own excesses" (Moers, 95). One discovers in these spaces a return of what has been repressed by rationalism: internal "foreignness," abjection, uncontrollable lust for global expansion. These unique moments of "overreach," read upon a distant culture, allow for an imaginary obliteration of cohesive cultural identities, including "male/female," "American/Japanese," and others.

.   The first chapter focuses on early Japanology and its deployment of the supernatural to express the ambivalence of modernity at the fin-de-siecle. The two authors, Fenollosa and Hearn, craft a narrative of "Japan" for Western readers through engagement with specters, be they "Divine" and/or unsettling. This collision in the crucible of modernization was made possible through popular artifacts of Japonisme. The chapter places these two figures in conversation with one another in order to demonstrate how the idea of "Japan" was framed via an active inquiry into where one might find phantasms in a rapidly industrializing age. As this chapter will elucidate, the resultant texts signify specters in order to mediate the competing and complimentary impulses of cultural imperialism on one hand and literary modernism on the other.

The second chapter turns to Fenollosa's wife, Mary McNeil Fenollosa (pseudonym Sidney McCall). McCall's fiction attempts, in complicated ways, to speak back to Hearn's anti-modern "Ghosts" and her husband's phenomenological "Spirits." The chapter analyzes her use of plot devices from a Gothic tradition and her exploration of gender identity through narratives depicting ghostly maidens from "Japan." Her fiction incorporates a subversive "supernatural Japan" into a dialectical narrative in order to problematize the familiar alignment of "Japan" with

"femininity." The third chapter, building off of the gender issues raised in the second, interprets the works of Theodate Geoffrey (pseudonym for Dorothy Wayman), Onoto Watanna (pseudonym for Winnifred Eaton), as well as Mrs. Hugh Fraser, authors who each attempt to use the Female Gothic to position "Japan" in relation to constructions of "femininity." These authors maintain conventions from the Female Gothic to position the "feminine" and "Japan" as monster *and* maiden. Like McCall, they seize the merging as an opportunity - though deeply problematic - to express "female potential." The second and third chapters focus on the trope of a "spectral Japan" to challenge and affirm simultaneously prescriptive gender norms.

The fourth chapter studies the phenomenon of *Godzilla*, probing one of the most memorable icons imported from Japan, the towering monster born of atomic warfare. This chapter retains relevance given the nuclear nightmares returning from repression amidst the tragic Japanese earthquake of 2011, after which the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant became a pressing cause for concern in Japanese and American discourse. I examine the Japanese *Gojira* films, as well as the American re-makes, in connection to critical discourse surrounding the nuclear issue. Both the event and Godzilla have been interpreted from conflicting perspectives. By surveying the critical perspectives of Nuclear Critics with those reading the Toho terror, I contend Godzilla as a monstrous icon serves the vital purpose of sustaining discussions surrounding atomic anxiety, once again refuting the certainty of any singular stance on this controversial issue.

Following Godzilla, depictions of a "supernatural Japan" increasingly focus on the postmodern condition. The next three chapters explore how "Japan" provides a uniquely situated fictional space in which one faces the dread of late capitalism, including the terrifying alterity of technology emergent at the so-called "end of history." The fifth chapter examines "Japan

bashing" in the 1980s and tropes of the monstrous used to articulate the phenomenon, engaging

popular horror films such as Joe Dante's *Gremlins* in dialogue with seminal postmodern theorists

such as Jean Baudrillard and Roland Barthes, especially the foundational study *Empire of Signs.*

While a pseudo-dialectics was prevalent during the Cold War, the introduction of a demonized

"Japanese capitalism" offers for Dante an alternative type of Other, one based on a degree of

difference, not of kind.

The sixth chapter pursues how Japanese horror films, made popular in the late 1990s,

orbit the absence of a central event, the "ghostliness" at the core of post-modernity, while

American re-makes habitually re-install an authentic presence for the haunting in question: a

core trauma to re-contain. These films suggest that beneath artificial cultural constructs of the

Nation and History, there is potential for shared trepidation (and thus, a more transnational

Gothicism). In particular, this section will focus on the films of director Shimizu Takashi.

Shimizu's atemporal horror films, channeling the mysticism of psychoanalyst Carl Jung and the

Japanese philosopher Yuasa Yasuo, propose a substitute to the causality normally privileged in

hauntings diagnosed as Freudian. Shimizu pursues an "overcoming of modernity" as a

homogenizing force emanating from a Western tradition and, as a result, invigorates the horror

film to move one towards a radical re-examination of the genre's basic Western-centric tenets.

The final chapter concludes by analyzing by cyber-punk literature in the last decades of

the twentieth century in dialogue with Nolan's revision in *Inception*. The relationship between

Saito and Cobb, characters I read as an allusion to Japanese and American "soft powers," plays

out in fascinating ways, down through the layers of dreams and constructs of culture embedded

within them. Enclosing "Japan" as a dream-world, defined by its major export (technology), was

the task of cyberpunk; Nolan, in contrast, utilizes a twenty-first century *Bildungsroman*, an

adventure into the postmodern realm identified within the confines of the archipelago, to then interrogate the solidity of the place to which the film ultimately returns. Through this encounter with "Japan," one becomes unsettled by the equally fictitious grounding of "America." This analysis, relying upon theorist Theodor W. Adorno's "negative dialectics," allows one see how fantasies of a "supernatural Japan" have been sustained over the course of the previous century and how this persistent trend supposes the confidences - and anxieties - of an American subject toward positions of cultural stability.

At stake in this study is a deeper understanding of how imaginary "Japan" routinely embodies the outer limit of modernity and forces one to re-situate oneself in relation to this perimeter. I recall departing from Matsue, with its rustic canals, and beginning to understand my attraction to foreign phantoms and what they exposed in my moments of doubt. Winding my way out from under the watchful presence of Mt. Daisen, I contemplated a mutual uncanny shaped by two distinct, but eerily similar, cultures. The cosmopolitan Gothic problematizes the U.S. relationship with Japan in challenging but productive ways, offering alternatives to previous paradigms set forth as the two nations move, together, into the next century.[27]

Discourses of the Invisible

"Ghosts" and "Spirits" in Early American Japanology

In the 1890s, Japanese curios filled American living rooms in parallel with a rising cosmopolitanism. This chapter will focus on how early Japanologists utilized the trendy formulation of an imaginary "Japan" to contemplate unseen forces in a modernizing world. Ernest Fenollosa, a professor from Salem who taught philosophy at Tokyo University, spent the bulk of his career documenting these curios to reveal the energy behind world "progress." Lafcadio Hearn was a nomadic journalist who was sent to Japan in 1890 to write about its "unfamiliar aspects." Hearn's writing, though radically different from Fenollosa's in style, likewise utilized an assortment of Japanese curios to express a supernatural essence within modern life, marked by its discursive absence. Early Japanology thus marks a significant and unsettled structural shift in how a discourse of the invisible represented "Japan."[28] The two authors strove to expose the emptiness beneath Gilded Age artifices while also projecting, through gathered Japanese materials, narratives of other-worldly forces made manifest in an imagined archipelago.[29]

Following Commodore Perry's mission to the country in 1853 to open its doors to foreign trade, Japan continued to modernize at a rate unheard of previously. In the government's zeal for Westernization (to "catch up"), the value of modernity was called into question directly. Subsequently, on one hand, "Japan" became a place onto which Westerners could project modernization as a successful (and pre-determined) phenomenon. On the other, Western discontents could point to the splendor of a culture that was being meticulously destroyed, lamenting a romanticized life before modernity had been introduced – which, of course, never truly existed. Both versions of "Japan" relied upon specters, be they reassuring or terrifying in

consequence.[30]

This fictional movement "further West" in American discourse contributed to what David Mogen calls the "frontier Gothic." After the proclaimed closure of the American frontier, "Japan" in the 1890s unlocked the next logical step in a collective wandering outward. Fantasies involving the archipelago consequently inherited the dual sensations associated with American "progress": "an ambivalent sense of destiny, projected into dreadful apprehensions of personal or cosmic apocalypse" (Mogen, 102). The fantastic realm of "Japan" served as an intersection between the "Ghost" of everything denied by Enlightenment thought (the Romantic, irrational, intangible) and the "Spirit" of everything the Enlightenment supposedly promised (global order, the triumph of rationalism, the "Divine" made tangible via materialist "progress").[31] Concerning the phantoms at work here, Renee L. Bergland remarks, "The lore and language of ghostliness are particularly appropriate for describing the encounters that take place within the mysteriously shifting grounds of American cultural frontiers" (Bergland, 93). As American influence stretched beyond its Western border, unsettled attitudes toward a nationalized supernatural were re-inscribed upon fantastic tales adapted from the land of the Rising Sun, transforming into what I label as the cosmopolitan Gothic.

Edward J. Ingebretsen, S.J. charts this spiritual unrest from the time of the Puritans through current trends in popular horror fiction. He applies critical mapping to explain the recurrent search for imperceptible powers: "To remember the Holy as a divine principle is in effect to remember, and in some cases to set, boundaries or limits beyond which the human does not or cannot go" (Ingebretsen, xv). Early Japanology instilled a poetic cartography by drawing boundaries both literal and imaginary. It comes perhaps as no surprise that what Ingebretsen recognizes as a defining ambivalence between the invisible as "Divine" and the invisible as a

40

cause for trembling emerges in initial reflections concerning "Japan." He envisions the slippery

dichotomy as a long-standing "rite" in American culture: "It re-presents – makes present again –

a familiar pattern of events by which to embody and to make *right* the relationship between the

community and its transcendent possibilities" (177). Hearn and Fenollosa reveal that these

discursive "rituals" were not limited to descriptions of the American wilderness, the frontier of a

Puritan mindset, but were disseminated far further into constructions of the Far East.

By examining the clash of two supernatural powers at the dawn of the twentieth century,

one unveils competing impulses emergent in American discourse articulated in the fictive

framing of "Japan." In Fenollosa's model, the reader primarily revels in a metaphysical *presence*,

a timeless structure that radiates across all cultures; in the words of Hearn, the reader focuses on

a proto-modernist *absence*, a vanished (or vanishing) essence.[32] However, instead of reading

these notions as oppositional, one might read them in conversation in hopes of better

understanding how early Japanology handled the transition between familiar positivisms and

"cosmopolitan modernisms" (to borrow Rebecca Walkowitz's term).[33] Theorist Fredric Jameson

notes:

> In the first great period of bourgeois hegemony, the reinvention of romance finds its
>
> strategy in the substitution of new positivities (theology, psychology, the dramatic
>
> metaphor) for the older magical content. When, at the end of the nineteenth century, the
>
> search for secular equivalents seems exhausted, the characteristic of a nascent
>
> modernism… circumscribes the place of the fantastic as a determinate, marked absence at
>
> the heart of the secular world. (Jameson 1981, 120 – 121)

Early Japanology offers a brief moment to reflect upon how structural transitions were

negotiated around the popular idea of a Far Eastern culture, revealing the dueling forces within

the respective positions of these two writers and their arbitration of the outward push of imperialism in correlation to the daunting enclosures of modern existence. In the end perhaps Hearn and Fenollosa, writing in the midst of a wider cultural transition into early modernism, reach common ground with their phantasms, as they are to an extent still reliant upon the predictable designs of late Romanticism.

Beneath this reification, ambivalence toward unseen forces serves as an important connection between American and Japanese culture at the turn of the century. Marilyn Ivy's study, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, analyzes Japanese modernity and nativist ethnography during the Meiji era, focusing primarily on Yanagita Kunio's seminal *Legends of Tono*. Ivy argues modernity is defined by competing phantasms in Japan, an amalgamation of specters lamenting a nostalgia for belief in higher powers while, at the same moment, constructing certainty in the invisible forces guiding modernization. She writes about "a discipline that ensures the disappearance of its origins as it constructs them" (Ivy, 95). Gerald Figal's *Civilization and Monsters* too explores the complex commodification of Japanese phantoms during the Meiji era. As Figal notes, "The scientific study of the supernatural… indeed appear to be universal phenomena of modernity. Whether Japan's modernity is particularly distinguished from that of other nations in its preoccupation with the fantastic, however, is a question left for future comparative studies" (Figal, 14 – 15).

This chapter seeks to expand this conversation across the Pacific. While Figal and Ivy each focus on Japanese discourse specifically, one can apply their analysis of ghostly depictions to Western writers contemplating "Japan" at the fin-de-siecle. Specters recorded within the archipelago served a similar purpose in both cultures at a time of unprecedented international growth; figures who described "Japan" for a Western audience were playing out an analogous

impulse as the one Ivy and Figal locate in Japanese writers such as Yanagita, who was directly influenced by Hearn's methodology. Yanagita's ethnographic writings were similarly torn between a desire to manifest a cohesive, unified Japanese "Spirit," emerging during this time of rapid national advancement into imperial strides, and his desire to depict the primitive beliefs as grotesque "Ghosts" unsettling the rigid framework of modernization used by historical chroniclers. Yanagita, like Fenollosa and Hearn, constructs a mystical essence for the recently unified body politic by concurrently deconstructing confidence in such a body through the lingering presence of ghostly remainders. Frontiers posited at the edges of two rapidly modernizing countries are haunted by expressions of transcendence - boundary-crossing and growth into "infinity" – at odds with a dramatic recession of faith, much like the push and pull of Hiroshige's emblematic wave which came to serve as a metaphor of early interactions between the two nations.

The methods with which Hearn and Fenollosa re-imagine or challenge this supernatural paradigm, and the justifications they found to support their narratives, is what makes them distinct. Still, it would be a mistake to view their approaches as clearly delineated into two separate schools, Jameson's differentiation between what might be read as Fenollosa's "new positivities" and Hearn's "nascent modernism." It was a shift moving, like most, in starts and spurts.[34] Although, by focusing on ends rather than means, both Japanologists would earn posthumous reputations as unabashed Orientalists, better understanding the relationship of their visions will allow one to tease out the dynamic complexities of modernization via its reliance on aesthetic specters. Illuminating a collision between "Spirits" and "Ghosts" imported from a newly-opened land also allows one to consider more thoroughly why images of "Japan" repeatedly align with the invisible throughout the last century.

43

Spencer's Modernity: The Uncertain Invisible

Behind their positions, one more resistant to modernization (Hearn) and the other more optimistic about its prospects (Fenollosa), the language of early Japanology was based largely in popular incantations of Western metaphysics.[35] They founded their philosophy in consultation with the works of one popularizer of "progress," Herbert Spencer. Fenollosa formed the Herbert Spencer Club while at Harvard and Hearn idolized the man in excess. Fenollosa regarded Spencer, as did many Western figures at the time, as an idealist regarding the development of the West. Hearn, however, read Spencer as far more Romantic, advocating a mystical determinism that could not be fully understood, an unwieldy terror beyond our consciousness that would be fully articulated in the decades to follow by horror writers such as H.P. Lovecraft. Spencer's uncertainty allowed Hearn to justify his brand of "ghostliness," verified through a marriage of Spencerian thought to Eastern philosophy. Fenollosa's wife, Mary McNeil Fenollosa, writes in one letter: "(Hearn) spoke of the sympathy between Herbert Spencer and Buddhism. We don't agree to this but didn't contradict it" (Chisolm, 6). The foundational split over how to interpret Spencerian thought affirms a key distinction between the two men: Fenollosa believed man would be emboldened by his discovery of a new telos present in Japan and Hearn anticipated mankind would be humbled by its profound absence, a concept he believed to be already eminent in Japanese culture.

The stances held by Hearn and Fenollosa were in part derived from differing interpretations of a philosophical work they each held in high esteem: Spencer's *First Principles* (1862). Spencerian theory, symptomatic of Western modernity at that moment, was plagued by an internal conflict between fantastic energies as "self-enclosed" and fantastic energies as "self-

reflective," even "self-destructive," in nature. Spencer's methodology was employed, broadly speaking, for two ends: tearing down older phantoms and, at the same time, replacing them with an alternative invisible entity. This phenomenon was not dissimilar from the one identified by Ivy in Japan, one relentlessly proclaiming a shrinking potency – in many cases, theology – while simultaneously attempting to fill it with a revised presence (in most cases, a brand of science or industry).

One quickly discovers the influence of a younger Spencer on Fenollosa's philosophical renderings of the Far East in the dedication to the order and logic of the cosmos. In the closing of *First Principles*, Spencer espouses a "new positivism": "knowledge of (the 'unknowable') remains incomplete until it has united the past, present, and future histories into a whole" (Spencer, 246). Spencer, after much labor, begins to uncover "a single metamorphosis universally progressing," and his project seems to shift more purposefully toward idealism (491). "In their ensemble the general truths reached exhibit, under certain aspects, a oneness not hitherto observed" (483).

Within the same work lay the seeds of a skeptical, "nascent modernism." Earlier chapters echo the mysticism of Hearn: "in its ultimate nature nothing can be known" (54). Using terms such as "vague consciousness" and "shadowy and indefinite" to describe the meaning behind "progress," Spencer seems at the opening of *First Principles* to compliment Hearn's image of an Eastern cosmology (72; 94). Spencer's "Unknowable," for Hearn, reminds the idealist that man's knowledge is confined and must, after the endless collection of small facts, eventually confront the seemingly "unanswerable" question: "What lies beyond?"(12). The answers Hearn and Fenollosa extract from Spencer's theory represent their fundamental schism.

Fenollosa found solace in the earlier works of Spencer, who could be more easily

reconciled with his idealism. He aligned himself with the Spencer he saw as optimistic that the "unknowable" was, in fact, knowable - it would simply involve a more advanced epistemology. Hearn resembles the later Spencer, who, according to Spencer biographer Mark Francis, "learned to avoid the archaic language of theology" (Francis, 210). Hearn, glossing over Spencer's ambivalence, appreciated the Spencer Francis writes "rejected German Idealism in social explanation as he had in biology… (and had) no faith in reason in history" (300). Spencer's shift in emphasis parallels his reference by the two men: Fenollosa gradually moved away from Spencer as the British philosopher appeared to grow more cynical while Hearn encountered Spencer late in his career, attracted to this cynical worldview. In each case, neglecting aspects of the work failing to complement their arguments, the two Japanologists continued to borrow *ad hoc* from the Spencerian canon.[36] Spencer, as an essential thinker who was embraced widely by the Western academy during this era, was himself unsure of how to resolve this crucial conflict with the notion of invisible forces inside of modernity. His ambivalence subsequently shapes the spectral framework for those viewing "Japan" as an ideal social experiment for testing modernity's margins.

Methodologically, Hearn and Fenollosa, like Spencer, postured themselves as pragmatists. Earlier in the nineteenth century, Spencer worked out his philosophy through exhaustively detailed processes, leaving no element of the natural world unturned, giving his work a sense of gravitas for many Western thinkers. Influenced by these techniques, Hearn catalogued the minutiae of everyday Japanese life, including the daily rituals of its insects, to make broader philosophical claims about the archipelago; Fenollosa likewise depended on factual evidence he collected in material artifacts, relied upon by the Japanese government to assist in assembling its national art work. Representing an uneasiness for, as well as attraction to,

overarching narratives of "progress" at the turn of the century, the early Japanologists garnished their interpretations with the scientific language they found in Spencer in order to compensate for the supernatural aspects of their claims. Beneath such rationalist explication remained an ever-unsettled confrontation between traditional impulses to convey the guidance of angels and an emergent impulse to watch these elements dissipate in the winds of change.

Fenollosa's "Spirit"

Supernatural sentiment appears throughout Fenollosa's endeavors to record the Far East. Fenollosa describes the art of the Buddhist Tendai sect, a sect to which he himself belonged:

> (Buddhist art allows) the opening of the inner eye to natural facts and spiritual presences that are veiled from lower forms… the power to image forth truth in forms of glowing vision… to project angelic groups upon the background of contemplation… all this is of the very substance, not of poetry and music, but of visual art. (Fenollosa 2007a, 122 – 123)

Fenollosa, harboring affections for Transcendentalism, believed his spiritual experience with Eastern art allowed him to peek into the inner-workings of a hidden sphere. Religious determinism was revised and expanded in correspondence with scientific determinism through intellectual engagement with the "Japan Idea." The "progress" of man for Fenollosa inherently revolved around Western man's potential to glimpse once again the presence of a higher power guiding humanity back toward harmony, even if the tools for locating that harmony existed in bits and fragments of Asia's imagined past. His "magical narratives," to appropriate Jameson's term, sutured disparate cultural products to resurrect feelings of faith. In so doing, Fenollosa's

synthesis of American and Japanese culture offered a teleology in line with emergent twentieth century values: "The two halves of the globe come together for the final creation of man… within the coming century the blended strength of Scientific Analysis and Spiritual Wisdom should wed for eternity the blended grace of Aesthetic Synthesis and Spiritual Love" (Fenollosa 2007b, v – vi). Man could retain Science, enriched by spirituality and art from Japan, retaining confidence in what unfolded previously and what was yet to unfold. This alternative teleology was not at odds with exposure to non-Christian cultures, an unlikely insularity for Fenollosa, a practicing cosmopolitan in an age of rapid global expansion, but restored a greater sense of purpose for his "worldly audience." Retaining the unbridled optimism of an idealist tradition, Fenollosa advocated that a Western audience should therefore be filled with a sense of "Oneness" in confidently moving to the next frontier.

Fenollosa felt he could demonstrate, with material proof, that these sensibilities were not only Romantic, but concrete and widely applicable. Never straying far from his Emersonian roots, Fenollosa maintained the evolution of art was coming full circle: Western "progress" would soon realize its full potential in a reunion with Japan. Art began in Greece, Fenollosa argued, and had split into a Western and Eastern arc. Embrace of Japan signaled a closing of the circle, promising unity between Western reason and Eastern aesthetics, a mutual past and a collaborative future. Fenollosa's poem, "The East and West: The Discovery of America," presented at a Phi Beta Kappa ceremony at Harvard, expressed this sentiment as follows: "so the pure germ of art/washed from its native soil/warm with the last caress of Grecian toil/nestled against the oriental heart" (Fenollosa 2007b, 13). Fenollosa alleged his collection of art from the archipelago would prove, in a tangible sense, that the global movement of America into the markets of the world was predestined and perfectly logical. In his estimation, his collections and

48

commentaries demonstrated "Spirit" was "world-embracing." Fenollosa elaborates, "(In the epochs of Art), the parts belong together, and will interlock… it is one great working of the human mind… we see the separate shining planes of movement of the human spirit" (Fenollosa 2007b, xxxii). The logic of "Spirit" re-affirmed itself in how the two halves of the globe had met once again, proving, once and for all, there was a "Divine" purpose behind Western development and mankind could find fulfillment by visiting his exhibits of Japanese artwork.

Planted in what he felt to be the rich soil of Emersonian and Hegelian Idealism, Fenollosa retained an eternal optimism concerning Western development. He held weekly discussions on Hegel's philosophy with his wife and friends, his work a veritable extension of Hegelian thought in a late nineteenth-century context, to which "Japan" added texture. Fenollosa biographer Lawrence Chisolm recognizes Fenollosa's "Hegelian lust after logical system" (Chisolm, 6). He argued Western man could escape the frustration of entrapment in a world full of modern efficiencies by purchasing what was believed to be "sensitive" art from the East. Fenollosa's tome, *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, published posthumously in 1912 from lectures and notes, serves as a virtual compendium to Hegel's *Aesthetics*. Its ambition was to assimilate Asian art into the historical progression of mankind. Fenollosa writes,

> The treatment of Chinese and Japanese Art together, as of a single aesthetic movement, is a third innovation. It is shown that not only were they, as wholes, almost as closely inter-related as Greek Art and Roman, but that the every-varying phases interlock into a sort of mosaic pattern, or, rather, unfold in a single dramatic movement. We are approaching the time when the art work of all the world of man may be looked upon as one, as infinite variations in a single kind of mental and social effort. (Fenollosa 2007a, xxx)

Unifying various strands of religious and artistic thought, Fenollosa canonized Japanese aesthetics in the Western imagination to make sense of the synthesizing gales blowing across the Pacific. With characteristic confidence, a trait critic Henry Adams bitterly described after visiting Fenollosa in Japan, Fenollosa made statements such as the following: "I am proving that some of their supposed treasures are relatively worthless and bringing forth the real gems from unknown holes" (Brooks, 24). As one can readily see, Fenollosa's idealism buttressed a project already saturated with overtones of cultural imperialism.

According to Fenollosa, it was the "changing moods and powers" of a specifically Western man that had the final say on where "Spirit" would geographically reach its end. He promoted confidence that to collect art from around the globe would lead to omniscience over man's moral evolution, a classical formula of the fantastic presence leaking from every pore. Emboldened by the authority placed upon him by the Japanese government at a young age, Fenollosa supported "progress" with a "Zen-like recognition that something characteristic and structural in every organic and inorganic form is friendly to man, and responds gladly to the changing moods and powers of his spirit" (Fenollosa 2007a, 33). However, this "characteristic structure" revealed itself to be subject to the whims of a particular Western academic. In the years to come, in part because of a perceived slight by the Japanese government, Fenollosa claimed one should not mistake Japan as the literal peak of the movement, but merely another temporary resting place in the evolution toward the apotheosis of Western perfection: America. Ironically, behind the supposedly all-powerful mechanics of the universe, the agency of a Western scholar seemed to dictate "Spirit's" movement according to his monetarily-influenced and shifting preferences. Thus "Spirit" is exposed as an integral component in the rise of bourgeois individualism among cultural authorities.

Fenollosa remained mired in his role as a Western analyst claiming ownership over the "East" theoretically and in practice. Preserving a Japanese aesthetic, but doing so thousands of miles away in a private collection in Boston he insisted on naming after himself, demonstrates the complicated nature of Fenollosa's project. Hearn laments to Fenollosa ("the Professor") in one letter, "I only regret that you do not use legends, - do not tell stories" (Bisland, 383). Fenollosa, an able artist as well as a trained singer of traditional Japanese music, may also have struggled with this idea, vacillating between his creative impulses - the energies he found pulsating beneath language - and his empirical reputation. Fenollosa was not alone in this over-reaching; literary scholar Thomas Peysar notes that "sweeping generalizations, often unencumbered by an evidentiary basis, and vast systematization of world-history epochs marked the culmination, if that is the right word, of the overheated intellectual style" (Peyser, 68). The entrapment in a gray area between supernatural and historical determinism is yet another manifestation of turn of the century negotiations regarding which "Spirits" and "Ghosts" would define the spiritual life of twentieth century Americans.

In the end, Fenollosa's "Spirit" was more dynamic, and ambiguous, than he could hope to articulate fully. Theorist David Krell's assessment of Hegel applies well to Fenollosa: "He will always want to cover his tracks and hedge his bets, will always want to insist on his capacity to swallow it all and embrace everything in the name of spirit" (Krell, 165). Examples appear in his complicated approach to the "unknowable" aspects of his subject. Conceivably, to recognize the Romantic differences, and increasingly the early modernist ones, titillating suburban audiences would force Fenollosa to admit his lack as interpreter and cultural consultant. In turn, to recognize his "Spirit" as a theory based solely on abstraction would threaten his position as historian. This troubling absence, looming beneath feeble authority, was fastidiously buried by

his meticulous catalogues, a routine refusal of the potential that would directly inspire the early modernists via posthumous collaboration with Ezra Pound.

Although always exploding outward, Fenollosa's thought returns at crucial points to the entrapment of man's energies in the rigid system of modernity. This ambivalence appears most lastingly in Fenollosa's *The Chinese Character as a Medium of Poetry*. Though the text undoubtedly strives to illuminate the poetic nature of Man ("vistas of strange futures unfold for man, of world-embracing cultures"), it strives moreover to break down the presence once imagined to be emanating from Western paradigms (Fenollosa 1968, 3). He locates within Western language an unsettling absence: "In nature there is *no* completeness… no full sentence really completes a thought… there could be no complete sentence (according to this definition) save one which it would take all time to pronounce" (11). Although he ultimately fights to restore the existence of a "world-embracing" energy, this particular text tarries around the concept of emptiness, unable to escape it.[37]

While much of Fenollosa's early work finds its counterpoint in Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, critiqued vociferously for its ethnocentrism, *The Chinese Character as a Medium for Poetry* correlates with the more nuanced passages of Hegel's *The Science of Logic* as well as *The Phenomenology of Spirit*. Although "Spirit" is still everywhere, it eludes any solid conceptualization; Emersonian energies spring forth from the patterns of Romanticism to escape a singular hold. Hence, though elsewhere in Fenollosa's system "Spirit" finds its expression in arrested works of Japanese art, here it is more closely aligned with *electricity* and *music*, those most invisible and purely abstract of forms.[38] Perhaps the best example of this phenomenon, and the one which is known to have directly inspired Pound, remains Fenollosa's contemplation of proper nouns, a form reifying thought, against verbs, a form preserving the liveliness and

dynamism of the mental process: "The untruth of a painting or a photograph is that, in spite of its concreteness, it drops the element of natural succession" (45). Echoing *negation* privileged by Hegel's dialectic, one derives from this late work an endless undoing of human Understanding (a concept surely attractive among the modernists to follow).

Hearn, in response to Fenollosa's aggressive assertion of positivism and in line with Fenollosa's lapse into proto-modernist sentiment in *The Chinese Written Character*, attempted to re-establish skepticism, echoing in ways Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel. The "East" became once again a "starry expanse" which could not be accessed, and the "West" became a symbol of futility, groping hopelessly for knowledge with which to survey the expanse of World Art. This was not, as some contend, merely a maneuver by Hearn to exoticize "Japan"; it was a decision to challenge Western omnipotence, echoing the rise of modernist literature, asserting from the shallowness of Western rationalism a supernatural presence to dwarf man's political and scientific achievements. This absence, as we will explore, is captured in the very form of his narratives. Hearn mused, "The systemization of human experience in no wise enlightens us as to the Whence, the Whither, or worst of all - the Why!" (Hearn 1910, 154). The essence beneath Hearn's project was an indefinable but ubiquitous "Ghost."

Hearn's "Ghost"

Recollections gradually become indistinguishable from dreams. (Hearn 2001, 100)

Though like Fenollosa Hearn admired the Victorian rigor of evolutionists, he felt something fundamental was missing in its substance. In one letter, he writes: "Natural selection can explain but a very small part of the thing" (Bisland, 236). Hearn expressed a willingness to

enter into the ongoing philosophical battle over which ideal the world should turn towards next. Writing in a letter to one friend of "the beastly Hegel," who he deemed "colourless," Hearn attempted to unsettle the audience by presenting idealism as an exercise in futility, offering in its stead a sensation-based cosmology (438). He frequently labeled this phenomenon "Ghost." Appreciating bits and pieces of Japanese culture, Hearn imagined for Western readers a pseudo-Buddhist void, an unstoppable accumulation of ancestors he believed was pushing living beings, without their consent, into the future: "At such a moment, one feels indeed as if enveloped by some monstrous sentiency, - suspended within some vital substance that feels and sees and wills alike in every part, - an infinite soft cold Ghost" (Hearn 2005, 237). Hearn's occasionally crude marriage of Buddhism, Japanese mythology, and older Romantic traditions based in Gothic and French literature revolved around the shortcomings of Western systems of rational thought. As a result, the reader faces modernity with a dissolving certainty over whether or not there is a larger force guiding the way. It is upon this dizziness Hearn, and the literary modernists, came to thrive.

Hearn and Fenollosa's discourses of the invisible suggested two possible methods with which Westerners might redefine their relationships with the supernatural. These methods were at least partially forged in direct exchanges between the two men. After visiting a Fenollosa exhibition in Tokyo, Hearn writes to him in a letter, "Nothing excited in me any desire to possess it, even as a gift, except the Kappa and the Shoki. (I know I am hopeless - but it were hopeless to try to be otherwise)" (Bisland, 382). The Kappa and Shoki, Gothic-type figures in Japanese mythology, could not be deemed "perfection" by the venerable "Professor" (Hearn's nickname for Fenollosa) because they emphasized sentiment over didacticism, focusing on the secrets of the universe instead of finding the answers to its riddles.

Hearn's "Ghost" was less "spiritually elevating" and resisted harmony to instead

manipulate affect. The works did not follow rules of post-Renaissance painting, portraying subject matter exaggerated and crude to a "refined" Western sensibility. Fenollosa, ruling the highest merit appears in classical Japanese artwork, read these grotesqueries as symptomatic of a closed-door policy in Japan, and insisted they could never be appreciated as "great art": "So in Hokusai, there is no lack of solid artistic construction; but in his themes we miss some last perfection of fibre" (Fenollosa 2009, 100). Fenollosa's Hearn's method, like artwork depicting Kappa and Shoki, held a suggestive, rather than self-fulfilling, style. Hearn embraced the "grotesque" elements in Japanese aesthetics (ironically, in ways similar to the architecture of Catholic churches he adamantly disliked but nevertheless frequently returned to in his work).[39] At the boundaries of literary form, a sublime "Japan" could remind the Western populace of what lay beyond their quotidian understanding or the reach of their purchasing power.

The Hearnian "Ghost" exists in fragments, fostered by the "suggestiveness" he interpreted in Japanese art during the Edo period. While living in Japan, his style grew more and more sparse, a technique later adopted by the early modernists to capture the limits of Western language and re-establish the promises of sublimity without. Hearn appreciates "teaching the ghostliness of all substance - granite or gossamer - just as those lately found x-rays make visible the ghostliness of flesh" (Hearn 2009, 58). Hearn's tale for Western readers, rather than the embodiment of some grand Ideal, is a material text to be dissected by the relentless tide of the cosmos. Hearn states, "Dissolution must come; all integration must yield to disintegration" (Hearn 1910, 143). According to Hearn, the mysterious content of Japanese art defies Western attempts to claim mastery over it: "Of Substance-in-itself we have not any knowledge" (265). He painted his interpretations of Japanese culture with a language of mystery and awe, strangely reminiscent of the Old Testament verses which had filled his childhood with trepidation.[40] Here

55

Hearn introduces what Jameson labels as "nascent modernism," a fantastic whose subject is not metaphysical fullness but emptiness at the heart of material expansion. Hearn lamented a vanishing that might reveal this abyss: "(Phantoms) filled all things with a sense and motion of invisible life, - they made both terror and beauty. Now there are no ghosts, no angels and demons and gods: all are dead" (Allen and Wilson, 274).

Hearn preferred the speculative realm of dreams and therefore pushed the reader beyond his words on the page. This is provocatively suggested in drafts of his writing, in which at one point he scratches out the term "classical," rich in Hegelian significance, and instead uses the term "antiquarian" (Clifton Waller, Reel 1, 0319). He declares: "Our ideals of beauty can have only a value relative to conditions that are constantly changing. Real and ideal alike are transitory" (Hearn 2007, 197). This proto-modernist refusal aligns with Hearn's detachment from the object of his studies; "Ghost," in other words, emerge ripe with potential – but this potential is denied from his modern, alienated state. Hearn scholar George Hughes notes, "In Hearn's world the ghosts may come, but they come to the Japanese, and not to Hearn. The kindly ancestral ghosts are not those of his ancestors. The circle which they look over and guard is one *from which Hearn is excluded*" (Hughes, 128 emphasis mine). The quest for Japanese artifacts as conveyors of cultural truth was dismissed as merely quixotic, a lesson Hearn learned during his time in Japan. "Ghost," he reiterated, can never be contained.

Man's construction of History, including his "promising future," was for Hearn a speck of dust in a swirling cosmos. He seeks a supernatural entity to transcend man's meager knowledge. Spencer too pondered the "Unknowable": "an all-pervading ether… we know not what the ether is…it is impossible to fathom" (Spencer, 196). Hearn's characters are constantly reminded of their insignificance, as the past and future bleed recklessly into the present (a theme

we will return to in the later chapter focusing on filmmaker Shimizu Takashi):

> The ghost in each of us must have passed through the burning of a million suns, - must
> survive the awful vanishing of countless future universes. May not Memory somehow
> and somewhere also survive? Are we sure that in ways and forms it does not? As Infinite
> Vision, - *remembrance of the Future in the Past*? (Hearn 1910, 263, emphasis mine)

A personal favorite of Hearn's, "Fragment" is a tale of a pilgrim led on a trek up an arduous and mysterious mountainside. At long last the pilgrim comes to a terrible revelation: "a trembling seized him, - and a ghostly fear. For there was not any ground, - neither beneath him nor about him nor above him, - but a heaping only, monstrous and measureless, of skulls and fragments of skulls and dust of bone" (Hearn 2005, 5). The skulls represent his incalculable past lives, turning to dust beneath the heels of time. The pilgrim's confidence in his perceptions is shaken as he faces Eternity. Even more interesting is the anxiety created by the skulls that still exist before him; the future returns to haunt him as well, a fictional manifestation of the "remembrance of the future in the past." This is an anachronistic haunting, mutating the Western language of "progress," any clear trajectory or linear vision of History, into an uncontainable vision of boundless energies. Interestingly, Hearn first heard this story from Fenollosa's wife, Mary. He modified her version, nevertheless, to fit more overtly with his version of the Japanese sublime. The only certainty for Hearn, as the story demonstrates, was man's precarious position, perched on a mountainside. Dissatisfied with Western discussions of phenomenology he encounters, Hearn erects from his personal interpretation of Eastern thought a sobering mountain of skulls.

Hearnian characters face the bottomless, and ceiling-less, excesses repressed by their rendering of modernization. Hearn professes a sort of "double-consciousness" at work: "I have

the double sensation of being myself a ghost and of being haunted" (Hearn 2009, 59). He is haunted by an ancient instinct as well as by an unnerving sense that, within the expanse of the cosmos, his life is insignificant:

> Today we have ceased to be consciously afraid of the unseen; - knowing that we ourselves are supernatural, - that even the physical man, with all his life of sense, is more ghostly than any ghost of old imagining; but some dim inheritance of the primitive fear still slumbers in our being, and waken perhaps, like an echo, to the sound of the wail in the night. (Hearn 2005, 237)

Hearn points directly at something akin to "Spirit" and modern man's confidence in this supernatural endowment guiding him out into the world. In reaction, Hearn reminds the reader of a lingering fear, the sense that when faced with the Eternal vastness of existence, he is but a piece of dust. Modernity, for Hearn, exposes the barrenness within man's familiar narratives of materialist "progress," including those of Fenollosa.

Hearn's literary alternative to "Spirit" manifests itself in his lack of narrative closure. He was fond of concluding his tales by denying the reader the morally satisfactory conclusion of Western legends: "But, no! - I really cannot tell you with what it was filled" (61). Narrative complexity for Hearn was secondary to sensation. Drawing on dream images for inspiration, tales such as "Mujina" function only to be frightening, hence the simplicity of the text itself. The narrator confronts a "faceless" ghost, "with no eyes or nose or mouth" (Hearn 1971, 79). Upon fleeing to a soba shop, he finds yet another faceless ghost, "which therewith became like unto an Egg. And, simultaneously, the light went out" (80). If the Western reader expects a moral in the story, or some sense of authority over her narrative, she is once again looking in the wrong place.

Hearn's Western reader has a duty to stop attempting to fit the pieces of the puzzle together and instead prostrate before the unwieldy "Unseen."

Hearn's notebooks are filled with diligent commentary on his constructions of an alternative teleology, one highlighting limits in order to expand his reader's consciousness via fictive cartographies. He explains why he was first drawn toward Japanese "unfinished" tales by likening the sensation they create to climbing a ruined tower and finding it still in progress or getting lost in the streets of London and coming to a "blind wall." "If you have had any of these experiences, you have doubtless had a sensation not unlike those made by some kinds of Japanese stories" (Clifton Waller, Reel 5, 0096). He utilized Western metaphors such as regal towers and London bypasses to enforce his skepticism, imagining a confident Western man, marching through "progress," and coming to an unexpected blockade: "And, simultaneously, the lights went out."

Though he argued it may be impossible to fathom, Hearn's advance of "ether" must not be mistaken as nihilism. Fascinated by the spiritual great wave as it wistfully retreated from shore, Hearn likewise contemplated the inner-workings of the tides. Attempting to provide an alternative explanation of cosmic forces, Hearn did not relish long in chaos. He assumed there was a logic hidden deep within mankind's development, though it was impossible for mere mortals to visualize.[41] Forecasting Yeats (with whom he corresponded), Pound, and other early modernists, Hearn's stylized absences simultaneously expand the senses of the reader, fueling what can be read as a growth of imperial longing to possess every kernel of Truth, scattered across the globe.

As with Fenollosa and Spencer before him, and Yanagita following afterward, Hearn cannot avoid the trap of modernity: to reason with the "Unseen." His reliance upon the works of

late Romantics causes him to pivot on occasion from the beautiful negativity he produces to frame instead a sterile, nostalgic overview. In "The Conservative," Hearn tells the tale of a young Japanese samurai who travels to the West in search of enlightenment. Upon his return, the samurai is disheartened, proclaiming: "That world had no faith" (Hearn 2007, 119). Hearn's work provides an alternative to a secular worldview he perceived as losing its belief in higher powers but does so, at times, in dogmatic fashion. The result was that in sublime "Japan," the Western reader, like the samurai returning home, could once again have faith. Hearn's texts, at the same time they celebrate the thrilling sensations of absence, offer a thinly-veiled assertion of a Romantic presence. His reader can still re-envision their identity by glimpsing, amidst the vacuum, a deeply-buried Origin, quickly fading over distant shores - hence the tacit promotion of a drive towards imperial satisfaction, always-already embedded in the commercial venues where Hearn's works made their profit.[42]

Hearn's status as nomad, a fascination among scholars interested in his work, complicates his connection to "nascent modernism" while affirming an overlap between early modernism and the imperialist project. The Irish identity Hearn scholar Sean Ronan promotes, as well as Hearn's personal association with the French West Indies, not to mention his experiences as a homeless man and his socially-condemned marriage to an African-American in Cincinnati, suggests a possible affiliation with entrapment within hegemonic domains and hints at an accompanying anxiety concerning a perceived emptiness behind materialist expansion and exploitation. His employment as a travel writer, however, divulges an unconscious (or inevitable) complacency within a broadening imperial schema.[43] Trying to tease apart the link between modernism and imperialism, Jameson writes: "If 'infinity' (and 'imperialism') are bad or negative in (E.M.) Forster, its perception, as a bodily and poetic process, is no longer that, but rather a positive

achievement and *an enlargement of our sensorium*" (Jameson 2007, 163 emphasis mine). In sum, the "blind walls" of the London metropolis Hearn refers to can be construed in two ways: as a "prison," symbolizing the modern condition and providing glimpses of a ghostly alternative - or as the aestheticizing of a bad "infinity," fostering aspirations within an ever-expanding modern world.

An Ambivalent Zeitgeist

Cultural historian T.J. Jackson Lears writes of the turn of the century as being, in multiple senses, "Janus-faced." Fenollosa's excessively optimistic histories and Hearn's proto-modernist fictions actually make available two sides of the same project, though each author struggled with the mutual admiration they felt for one another, on a personal and professional level, and failed to admit part of their respective project was reflected in the style of the other. These particular authors demonstrate how, during this period of American expansion, renderings of supernatural forces either supporting or reacting against concepts of "progress" overlapped with one another. Modernity in Western countries, as in Japan, recapitulates phantasms within its most "progressive" doctrines. This phenomenon is labeled frequently in Asian Studies scholars such as H.D. Harootunian as "uneven."

One might simultaneously frame this in terms compatible with certain articulations of Western metaphysics, actively applied by each figure. With "Japan," Hearn and Fenollosa sought two variations of a single Notion (thing-in-itself), to expand – or, in their minds, to "conclude" – Western Understanding, in the very least, of the archipelago. Yet what they portray, by necessity, remains mere Essence. While ruptures of genuine uncertainty do emerge in the words of both, the tendencies of late Romanticism weight heavily upon these initial breaks, separating their

discovery of a productive spectrality from familiar, staged projections such as the ones featured in Orientalist exotica. To put this differently, in so far as Hearn and Fenollosa sought reified meaning in the Far East, they left us with forms more symbolic than historical. Lingering in traces, one can retrospectively find a missed revelation in their works: achieving *any* concrete apprehension of "Ghost" or "Spirit" is a futile endeavor from the start, unveiling more about the cosmopolitan consciousness than about its object.[44] Laszlo K. Gefin comments on one of Pound's editorial omissions in *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, "Pound's deletion of the passage on the harmony of metaphoric overtones is, of course, revealing… obviously the poet, who from his earliest research on had been attempting to move *beyond* metaphor, was not impressed by harmonies and overtones" (Gefin, 23). Fenollosa's moments of reliance upon previously established metaphors and "overtones," much like Hearn's reliance upon clichéd tropes from his Romantic forbearers, is perhaps the strongest contributor to the lack of critical interest concerning their work; correspondingly, they are regarded as "Orientalists" and receive mere passing mention in much of contemporary scholarship. Early renderings of the Far East expose a type of picture-thinking, a magic lantern show with no conceivable end. While their works occasionally pause to offer a fecund meditation on the dynamism of metaphysics, neither were able to step back from their personal interchanges to gain a clearer vantage point on unfolding forms emerging between them.[45] Only with Mary McNeil Fenollosa, as we will see in the follow chapter, does one gain a more thorough introspection on the import of this spectral phenomenon in the broader project of representing "Japan" for Western audiences.

As I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter, it would be specious to read Hearn and Fenollosa's "magical narratives" as simple shifts away from older teleology to a proto-modernist sense of fantasy. Concluding there would be to risk overlooking the complexities of their texts.

Rather, discourses of the invisible articulated by early Japanologists reveal divisions within American discourse, a sense of spirituality blurring in aesthetic movements abroad. Literary critic Tom Lutz submits, "We, with our cosmopolitan ability to comprehend multiple perspectives, see all these possibilities, and we are absolved from specifically endorsing any one; we are allowed, in effect, to have our faith and deny it too" (Lutz, 115). To comprehend fully subsequent discourse between the two cultures, this dynamism cannot, and should not, be stilled. For, in the end, this offers one a tentative answer to Figal's initial prompt – perhaps the interplay of "Ghosts" and "Spirits" does illuminate a crucial aspect of modernity not only in Japan, but in the United States as well.

The Eternal Embrace

Ghostly Maidens in Sidney McCall's Fiction

In turn of the nineteenth century popular discourse, "Japan" was constructed for the American imagination in innumerable ways. As elucidated in the previous chapter, Fenollosa and Hearn advocated distinct approaches to the archipelago: Fenollosa calling for a synthesis of the "East/West" dialectic to result in a Utopian universal and Hearn, an ardent late Romantic and proto-modernist, employing "Ghosts" to re-affirm the mystique of the Far East and remind Western man of his humble origins.[46] Their work oscillated between urges to possess, literally and figuratively, other cultures and a need to introduce something that could not be possessed, a poetic alternative to a modern life they saw as suffering from over-industrialization and a shrinking vitality. Sidney McCall, with an innovative approach and first-hand knowledge of the two cultures, wanted to bridge the gap between these divided rhetorical approaches to "Japan." The wife of Fenollosa and close friend of Hearn, though vastly unrecognized for her contributions, suggests a way in which "Japan" can exist as both a symbol of moral progress and a phantasm to unsettle – and revitalize – Western culture. Through this debate, she seeks to reconcile divided notions of "femininity" in the American imagination and provide a way in which a "maternal West" and "mystical East" can find their way into an eternal embrace without relying upon stagnant abstractions.

Sidney McCall, the pseudonym for Mary McNeil Fenollosa, first met Fenollosa at the Boston Museum of Fine Art, where she was hired to serve as his assistant curator to the Japanese art collection in 1894. Their romance culminated in marriage and a joint venture to Japan. During this time abroad and throughout their married life, Fenollosa and McCall worked side by

side in their scholarly pursuits.[47] She dedicated her novel *The Dragon Painter* to her husband's

adopted Japanese title, Kano Yeitan. McCall shared Fenollosa's fascination with idealism and

spent many nights with him diligently studying Hegel's works.[48] Evidence can be found in her

fiction as well as her introduction to Fenollosa's *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, which was,

after his death, carefully pieced together at McCall's hand:

> Artists and writers seem to have taken their point of view through partisanship.
>
> Classicists and Goths flew at each other's throats… real variations are as infinite as the
>
> human spirit, though educed by social and spiritual changes, we come to grasp the real
>
> and larger unity of effort. (Fenollosa 1912, xxiv)

It is difficult to extricate where Fenollosa's words end and McCall's begin; one quickly

recognizes their shared pursuit of an idealist philosophy.[49]

McCall was also a friend of the elusive Hearn, meeting him upon her sojourn in Japan.

Though Fenollosa likewise enjoyed Hearn's enthusiasm for Japanese aesthetics, McCall's bond

with Hearn was stronger. Hearn writes in a letter to her: "How pleasant to know that there is

somebody to whom I can send a book hereafter with a tolerable certainty of pleasing!" (Bisland,

437). While Fenollosa had little patience for intangible "Ghosts," McCall recognized that, in

order to progress forward, the West would first have to confront the so-called "anti-modernist

East" Japanologists, including Hearn and even Fenollosa on occasion, were manufacturing.

Hearn commends her: "You understand my wishes to do something new" (403). For McCall,

higher truth would be found in the working out of these divisive ideas, in the ways Americans

came to understand their relationship to the new Japanese art forms and what they revealed to

them about their sensibilities.[50] She called for mutual recognition between the "Classicists" and

65

the "Goths." Her fiction shows dismay at the "globe-trotting" manner in which Japanese cultural

artifacts were being consumed, especially among women McCall held were decorating their

homes with Japanese artifacts in an un-sophisticated, thoughtless manner. The little or no

agreement on a "proper" methodology toward Japanese aesthetics was a central impetus for the

message behind her novels.

Many Americans were engaging in cosmopolitanism at the turn of the century, intent on

discovering a cultural sensitivity for sale in the Far East. They found in these purchases

something they believed either never existed in America, perpetuated by a nagging insecurity

that the nation lacked culture, or was currently eroding in the move toward industrialization. For

this group, Japanese aesthetics offered a sense of artistic refinement. Imports such as *ukiyo-e*

prints opened a window allowing writers Hearn and Fenollosa to borrow a past that was not their

own in support of cultural "progress." Yet the need to temper this sensitivity with displays of

overt mastery as Western authorities plagued the two Japanologists. This ambivalence was

repeatedly gendered as the "masculine" side of their project, carrying a big stick and a scientific

lens, was viewed as morally progressing with paternalistic confidence while the "feminine," anti-

modernist side, in contrast, was viewed as rejuvenating modern life with lyrical poetics

"borrowed" from the Far East. Mari Yoshihara notes, "The powerful West was associated with

virile masculinity, and the subordinate East with passive femininity" (Yoshihara, 4). In previous

scholarship, such as Christopher Benfrey's *The Great Wave*, male Japanologists are recognized

as suffering from an internal conflict, constructed as a conflict between their "feminine" and

"masculine" sensibilities, over the "appropriate" rhetorical approach to Japan.[51] McCall was a

female Japanologist who suffered from the same frustrations but whose original application of an

idealist framework to the study of the archipelago as well as its attendant gender conflicts allowed her to approach the problem from a markedly different perspective.

However, McCall, like many of her female contemporaries, was excluded from membership in erudite social circles and denied a public role in this debate. She was, and continues to be today, relegated to the status of "secretary," referenced almost exclusively not as an author, but as the widow who dutifully gathered Ernest's notes. Against such limitations, Yoshihara notes, discourse concerning the Orient offered white female writers "an effective avenue through which to become part of a dominant American ideology and to gain authority and agency which were denied to them in other realms of sociopolitical life" (Yoshihara, 6). McCall joined these writers in their pursuit of literary liberation at the hands of a fantasized "East." Larry Chisolm adds, "(McCall) hoped to make a place for herself among the literary ladies who wrote sentimental novels and practiced a higher journalism in lengthy notes on social and intellectual events" (Chisolm, 120). One can find traces of unrest in her ambition, the unrest common among most writers interested in Japan – the desire to be "literary," "sentimental," as well as a factual recorder of everyday happenings. She was a product of her age, divided internally over sweeping social concerns; her interests in everything from poetry to science to spiritualism, and the intersections in-between, were brimming with dialectical energy.[52] She spent much of her life attempting to sort these energies out in the pages of her fiction. The topic of "Japan" provided one possible arena in which she could express her philosophical perspectives, in a forum socially acceptable for fin-de-siecle women: the novel.

Before specifically addressing McCall's approach to "Japan," it is essential to note the difference in literary form between her husband, Hearn, and herself. By appreciating this difference, one might begin to recognize the significance of McCall as a mediator between the

styles of the two men and as an innovative artist in her own right. Fenollosa did not produce any substantial text during his lifetime; it was McCall and Pound who later adapted his notes and utilized them for multiple ends. Prior to this, the majority of his scholarship existed as annotations for art exhibitions, lecture notes, and memos to museum administrators. Hearn's texts, in contrast, were fragmented bits of miscellany. His few attempts at novel-writing were admittedly failures, dissolving into excessive description and abandoning plot altogether.[53] The form of the novel, though habitually dismissed by academics of the period as the genre of choice for "sentimental females," allows McCall to accomplish an innovation Hearn and Fenollosa could not: to hybridize their ideals, to re-create Fenollosa's progressive narratives while retaining the enjoyable and, for her, philosophically invaluable emphasis on dissatisfaction from Hearn's "ghostly tales."

Unlike her male contemporaries, McCall, a female writer at the turn of the century, could delve into the "mystical" elements she linked to Japanese art without the expectation of – or, more accurately, freedom to – produce a paternal ethos. Christine Guth observes that American women "expressed themselves by writing of their experiences (with Japan), often with considerable verve and interpretive insight" (Guth, 26). Overlooking this point, it was largely expected that women writers would focus on these "fanciful matters" and not the political questions held to be the near exclusive property of the male-dominated academy. The challenge for McCall was in utilizing her perceived access to an Eastern "feminine mystique" against such oppressive expectations while simultaneously supporting the idealist agenda she shared with male intellectuals such as her husband. Historian Kristin Hoganson examines the ways in which "Orientalist design as a means of female liberation" offered cosmopolitan women the opportunity to "escape" from traditional domesticity; McCall, in contrast, was interested in how

68

such "Orientalist designs," often radically unfamiliar to Western audiences, could help women come to terms with the desired and/or prescribed role of "maternal caregiver" (Hoganson, 31). At the same time as the Far East allowed liberation through its "mystique," it allowed McCall to expound upon her a belief in the role of woman as mother-figure for civilization. She subsequently attempted to negotiate a radical "feminine mysticism" with a more conservative "maternalism" vis-à-vis dialectical encounters with "Japan."

By the 1890s, many women, including McCall, were dealing with increased uncertainty over their proper role in a nascent American empire. In the years before McCall's journey to Japan, scholar Amy Kaplan contends "women (had) the work of purging both themselves and their homes of foreignness" (Kaplan, 47). In contrast to Kaplan's earlier subjects, McCall as a female artist and intellectual who strove to find a way of retaining foreignness within herself (and the home) as a source of individual liberation while also supporting the stability she viewed in the domestic realm. To do so, at certain moments she produced the specter of "femininity" as potentially disrupting the oppressive male gaze; at other points, she viewed this "unreal" specter as complimenting a positivist development in America. Undaunted by contradiction, McCall used the popular theme of "East meets West" in hopes of resolving latent tensions between how a "feminine Japan" was being envisioned by Japanologists as both a threat to, and cure for, the ills of modern man. Theorist Georg Lukács, in *The Theory of the Novel* (1971), appreciates a potentiality in the form of the novel McCall harnesses in order to express this contradiction in productive ways: "The composition of the novel is the paradoxical fusion of heterogeneous and discrete components into an organic whole which is then abolished over and over again" (Lukács, 84). According to Lukács, the ideal form of the novel manifests a Hegelian system engaged in constant "self-correction." For McCall, this means, throughout the course of the text, overcoming

69

the limited subjectivity of those who first see "Japan" as pure abstraction (Hearn) while, simultaneously, never allowing this transcendence to reach the point of reified self-certainty (Fenollosa).

Yet examples of this dynamism can also be found in McCall's examination of "femininity" in her poetry. In "The Two Homes," McCall compares her flower gardens in America and Japan as gendered spaces and how they reveal the double nature of woman: "Live I, love I, tend and sew / much as Western women do. / Yet the life is richer far, / Owning thus a double star" (McCall 1899, 64). Exotic Eastern flowers enrich the life of a domestic Western woman, affording the opportunity for duplicity in nature. According to McCall, woman is intangible in her essence but solid in her duties. "Three Women" describes wife, mother, and artist, what McCall sees as the three major roles of the female. In her final couplet, she sums up her dialectical approach: "'Clear types,' you say, 'and strangely set apart.' / Look deeper, friend, 'tis but one woman's heart" (110). The solution of "one heart" was developed at length in her fiction, where, via the form of the novel, she attempted to work systematically through this problem.

McCall's resolution for overcoming the limitations of Fenollosa's idealism and Hearn's "ghostly" resistance (positions they wavered on themselves) was a rare recognition of the inter-connection within their respective styles. The pattern of her novels introduces an Eastern specter to her Western characters, a specter endowed with an "Unknowable" essence that exudes poetic sensitivity, a trope she favored together with Hearn. This encounter forces her male cosmopolitan characters to confront unsettling manifestations of their "feminine" nature. McCall dialectically moves her Western reader towards recognition that such abstract confrontations are wholly insufficient in the modern age. Her conclusions promote a healing "maternal mystique"

70

based in "Japan," in which the "feminine" can remain a source of creative longing while evolving into a source of stability within the household. This compulsion, for McCall at her most Hegelian, cannot be resolved but instead *gives life* to the otherwise shallow enterprise of Japonisme. This examination of the "feminine" in early twentieth century America, though not entirely successful as an alternative to Western progressive doctrines, as we will examine at the conclusion of the essay, enabled McCall to reflect on the question of "femininity" against the popular backdrop of the Far East.

<div align="center">

Projecting Japanese "Ghosts"

</div>

"Oh, I feel in my bones that it is going to be a ghost story, a real one," whispered

Gwendolen, with a shiver of excitement. (McCall 1905, 148)

The Orient, according to theorist Naoki Sakai, perpetually serves as the "shadow of the West" for Western writers (Sakai, 173). "Japan" is encountered in these works as a landscape where the "Unknown" comes into contact with the material realm. In McCall's *The Breath of the Gods*, for example, Gwendolen the American protagonist proclaims it to be, upon first seeing the archipelago, a "phantom land" (McCall 1905, 85). McCall positions the "East" as a romantic nightmare for her Western cosmopolitans, onto which the characters project all of the self-doubts at work in turn of the century America. The symbolic event is endowed with a significant number of social anxieties, including the loss of a poetic sensitivity at the hands of rational science. This Other was, for McCall, the object most unlike the overly-confident male imperialist being portrayed in American discourse at that time: a female ghost from the Far East.[54]

Truth Dexter is a Victorian tale of unrequited love, in which there is a lingering unease that the two lovers - allegories for a divided "America" after a bitter period of Reconstruction -

may never (re)unite. The novel opens with a divided "America": Craighead, the masculine

lawyer from Boston, and Truth, the innocent young girl from the South. The story centers around

their relationship and the various external forces that threaten to drive them apart. Craighead

epitomizes chauvinistic values associated with the imperial "West." He boldly asks, "Are we a

nation of men, - or of charlatans?" (McCall 1901, 7). Craighead the Northerner, civilized and

ambitious, opens the novel as the newly-appointed legal advisor to a fading Southern family. The

Southern characters are everything that Craighead is not. The grandchild, Truth, "believes in

fairies yet" and relishes in Nature, loathing urban life (86). "America" appears through McCall to

be a nation torn between "ghostliness" in the Old South, with its moss-covered trees and lost

ancestors, and the all-knowing stance of the North. Forced to marry as a matter of logistics, the

couple faces each other as strangers throughout the opening of the novel.

Orchid, the beautiful but dangerous antagonist, materializes as an eerie presence amidst

assorted Eastern curios; in a far-from-subtle allusion to Japan, she is also located on a private

island. Craighead is both drawn toward and repulsed from this living spirit: "It was not so much

the ghost of his boyish ideals, as the danger alarm ringing through the last moments of a dream,

that now haunted him. With all her frankness Orchid had ever remained elusive, a mystery" (5).

She serves as a demon lurking in the margins of his married life, attempting to pull the all-

American couple apart and ruthlessly deny the possibility of future love between the two.

Craighead's initial voyage to the South was meant to "exorcise the spectre" of Orchid (36).

Instead, the specter continues to mock his efforts. She whispers to him: "Ghosts can be exorcised

only by being faced and defied" (222). To Craighead, Orchid's Otherness is ever-alluring,

tempting him to pursue global acquisition as an alternative to his dull and burdensome married

life.

Orchid is also a symbol of "nothingness," a crudely-perceived Buddhism run amuck, one trope captivating the American imagination at that time.[55] Mirroring questions surrounding gender identity, the Japanese Buddhism arriving at world exhibitions was viewed by some as a risk, especially to those seeking religious certainty. On the other hand, this imagined "nothingness" was an exhilarating alternative to the traditions of quotidian modern life. Orchid "worshipped it all in a sort of pagan ecstasy" (McCall 1901, 188). Her presence is repeatedly compared to the Old South, and yet the depth of what Orchid offers unnerves. Truth is linked with serene ponds, calm and poetic; Orchid, in contrast, is linked to the mighty sea. Truth, fearful of what this sea is capable of, states that "it laughs and pretends to play at the edges, but out there, in the deep part, it don't laugh. Somehow it always makes fun of you for tryin' to be good" (88). Orchid's Eastern nihilism aligns with the imagined terror of an immoral Other, gendered as a type of "feminine sublime." It threatens to drag Truth away, to separate violently the elements of the Western consciousness – the gentle femininity of Southern Truth and the rugged individualism of Northern Craighead.

> It was not that Craighead had forecast it, this mockery of marriage, this mere pleasant duty of domestic proximity. Neither had he desired, for alternative, a wild defiance of society's mandates, a Sicilian outlawry of romantic passion. Strange that his fate should be cast between two such abortive extremes! Orchid and Truth! Siren and sister! The evanescent mockery of the flame itself, and of its shadow! (181)

The "West" faces its shadow in *Truth Dexter*, the immaterial and boundless "East," and consequently loses all bearing. The encounter with Orchid, the fleeting Japanese "Ghost," threatens to separate the "feminine" from the "masculine," "South" from "North."

73

In *The Breath of the Gods*, these dialectical forces appear in an even greater number of allegorical characters. Gwendolen, the admirable American beauty, and Yuki, the Japanese girl of a "thousand tantalizing forms"; the individualistic senator Todd and the patriotic prince Hagane; sensitive Gwendolen and imperialist American Dodge; the aesthetically-obsessed Frenchman Pierre and the militaristic Hagane; even Yuki is divided between her American and Japanese loyalties, her Christian and Buddhist upbringing, and her desires of "love" to Pierre and "duty" to Hagane (McCall 1905, 11). The form of the novel reflects this ambivalence, shifting between lyrical abstraction and frank commentary on American politics in Asia.

The plot revolves around Yuki, a Japanese girl educated in America, and the struggle to possess her between two strong-willed men: the artistic Frenchman Pierre and the aged Prince Hagane of Japan. Yuki serves as an idol for the two lovers: a symbol of unfulfilled desire to Pierre and a symbol of national honor to Hagane. Yuki is quite literally pulled apart between her role as an aesthetic "Ghost" and a physical embodiment of the national "Spirit." At one point in the narrative, Hagane displays a gruesome painting to Yuki and Pierre (Gwendolen, as will be discussed later in the chapter, observes). The painting, foreshadowing the struggle between the two men over Yuki, becomes unnerving to everyone in the group with the exception of the two men. They delight in its passions:

> The thing glowed wet and fresh, like new-spilled blood. Before its artistic wonder was the wonder of vitality, for the image lived, - not in a world of heavy human flesh, nor in realms ethereal, but in some raging holocaust where the two worlds chafe and meet. (151)

Pierre and Hagane are in the midst of a "raging holocaust" over what "Japan" will come to mean in the twentieth century, as an iconic "Ghost" meant to inspire global art or a sacrificial body to

capture the raging "Spirit" of Japanese nationalism. The concepts are equally foreboding. "Half in the world of poetry, half in the material present, she wavered" (275).

The dichotomy is inspired by the ambiguous rhetoric of the Japanologists. For McCall, these ambivalent forces consistently come to rest on the fragmented body of a female phantom. The dénouement of *The Breath of the Gods* involves such a body, shrouded in white robes and a Gothic atmosphere of cackling ravens. Pierre bargains with Hagane and in exchange for a document he has stolen, Hagane will forfeit Yuki, his legal wife. The two parties meet to complete the transaction on a lonely roadside; in a carriage, "the black hood, bent far over the front, completely conceals the occupant" (418). Pierre approaches, full of hope for an artistic life together with his possession, and holds her gently: "And your little hands are cold! Why do you not speak, my love? Are you trying to frighten me?" Hagane, moving in the shadows, utters: "'She wishes the dagger not removed, monsieur. It keeps her sacrificial robes - immaculate.' Hagane spoke like a machine." Pierre, with a look of frenzy, cries out: "Who is that that speaks to me? Has night a voice? What spirit hides behind that mask?" To which Hagane replies, calmly, "Death" (420). The scene offers an unfinished, Hearnian moment. Is "Japan" to be a "Ghost," an impossible lover for the world's art community? Or a martyr, as Hagane himself declares, in which the material realm is publicly sacrificed? The Romantic and the militant finally receive what they have wanted all along in their idea of "Japan": not a real woman, but an ideal to haunt them and inspire them in their respective positions.

McCall's "ghostly" encounters reveal Hearn's influence, though her intention was distinct from Hearn's pessimism that a grand narrative could be recognized by mankind. Sakai reads the impulse within the Western imagination to seek out Otherness as an attempt to re-affirm its position in the world: "(The West) is always urged to approach others in order to

75

ceaselessly transform its self-image; it continually seeks itself in the midst of interaction with the

Other" (Sakai, 154). He proceeds, "the idea of progress or historicism would be unintelligible

without reference to this continual search for the Self, *a ceaseless process of re-centering*" (171

emphasis mine). Sakai critiques the use of pseudo-Hegelian historicism, a dialectical progress of

the Western mind, as an almost inescapable apparatus used to approach the "non-West." By

utilizing evocative moments of terror in the "non-West" to reach idealist conclusions, McCall

follows the "inescapable apparatus": "Japan" serves to "re-center" Western subjectivity by

forcing American characters to overcome the bifurcating forces within themselves (though, it

must be pointed out, while there is "progress" in this movement, abstraction never vanishes

altogether from the process – for McCall, it is simply re-situated, projected again and again).

Eastern Phantasm, Holy Matrimony

I care not for the ghost, the spirit, however pure. I want the wife I have lost. (McCall

2002, 236)

"Japan" as a trope in McCall's novels unfolds in a systematic fashion. In Hegelian terms,

the imperial Western gaze begins as pure consciousness. Hegel defines this early stage as

follows: "It seeks its 'other', while knowing that it there possesses nothing else but itself: it seeks

merely its own infinitude" (Hegel, 111). In terms of "globe-trotting" in the early twentieth

century, raw consciousness assumes *a priori* cohesiveness and then recklessly casts its eyes out

over the globe. Here one recognizes Craighead, and his growing worldly ambitions, who "felt as

that his only possible outlook upon the universe was through the high gold rims of his own

eyeglasses" (McCall 1905, 173). The Other, in the form of the Far East, serves the function of a

flat object to be consumed, an example being the flood of Japanese curios such as those

surrounding Orchid, into American living rooms. The one-sided perspective emanating from the

"West," forcing an ill-conceived synthesis of world forces through consumption, leads to a romanticized "East" re-assuring in its status as pure difference. At this point, the Western Self has yet, in Hegel's words, "to come back to itself from this state of estrangement" (Hegel, 25). Hearn's fiction provides an illustration of this crisis, mired in perpetual self-estrangement.

According to McCall, however, neither the "East/West" nor the "feminine/masculine" dialectic will be content with Absolute Difference. The Western subject, at this point in the narrative, is startled to discover the "Ghost" is – and has always been – the West's shadow, the hidden parts of itself it has been attempting to hunt out and understand. These parts have been cast out to play the role of Other. The "Japanese female ghosts" are recognized as elements of American culture perceived by some as internal threats, and others as evidence of something beyond modern decay: "nothingness" and agnosticism, aesthetic sensitivity and refined tastes, and, most prominently for McCall, a thrilling (but at its core, familiar) "femininity."

"Japanese female ghosts" in McCall's fiction are essential to her understanding of the telos of Western civilization. Through engagement with these specters, McCall insists cosmopolitan readers face the "Unknown," recognize their role in introducing it as an imagined Other, and then move towards reconciliation. In *Truth Dexter*, Truth is pulled away from Craighead and toward her counterpart, Orchid. Addressing the art of the East, she exclaims: "I never get tired of studying it. All that chaotic mystery… I can't keep away from it! … how much finer the pictures are unfinished!" (McCall 1901, 158). When she realizes Craighead's secret lust for Orchid, she retreats further into the abyss Orchid represents, identifying with the mystique the women share as alternatives to Craighead's pragmatism. The climax of the novel is Craighead's impending divorce from Truth, symbolizing a decisive schism within "America" between its "feminine" and "masculine" aspects. Leaving Boston to wander in the woods of her

Southern home, "her human body drifted, as it were, into a world of other dimensions… out of the very hush of finite movement… she knew herself to be a mere sentient atom." Through this experience, Truth realizes her individuality and independence from Craighead: "What had she to do with Craighead, culture, and Boston?" (320). Yet, she also recognizes the limit of this "vegetative" escapism, telling her grandmother "it seems to me that we never do anything down here but eat, and go to bed, and get up again" (334). Following the momentary union with Orchid's "Ghost," the immaterial "nothingness" of her being, Truth begins to shape a nascent identity. Within McCall's novels, the nihilism of a "feminine mystique" will not do; nor will the stiff and passion-less society of masculine Craighead and its empty consumption; it will rest in an overcoming of the two, an alternative "America" co-existing with both its poetic sensibilities and industrial ambitions.

Craighead likewise evolves over the course of the novel. His worldly ambitions fade, to a degree, and he starts to miss the simple Truth. He goes to see his wife in the South, setting aside his stubborn pride. His unsophisticated imperialism gives way to what McCall views as the stronger bonds of nationalism. She writes in the preface to *Truth Dexter* she intended for the book "to remain a picture of feelings and relations really subsisting between North and South just before that crisis in our history which brought the two sections, let us hope forever, into a common enthusiasm for a common national cause" (McCall 1901, preface). The (national) family unit is unveiled as an alternative "America" for Truth: "Absurd as it may be, and archaic, and in some sense, cruel; yet something may be said for a system which, in this pragmatic age, can yield the possibility of a new Annunciation" (346). Truth re-unites with Craighead, forgiving his temporary wander lust, intent on raising their child together with faith in the world to come. McCall's revised doctrine of "progress" centers on the theme of reproduction, in merging the

seemingly disparate parts of the self-compass into a new "Annunciation" – "North" and "South," "East" and "West."

The result for McCall, it must be emphasized, is not as vaguely conceived as her husband's "World Synthesis." Kaplan examines the imperialism behind a synthesis such as Fenollosa's: "If America sees reflections of itself everywhere and strives to encompass the globe, then it risks losing the boundaries between the domestic and the foreign that define the nation as home" (Kaplan, 170). To preserve within domestic boundaries the familiar *and* the foreign, McCall articulates a dialectic retaining difference while recognizing a higher connection between the actors involved. She projects "Japanese female ghosts" to forge alliances within the nation without erasing its tacit boundaries (an erasure McCall repeatedly critiques as being perpetrated by naïve cosmopolitan "globe-trotters"). The figure of the "Ghost," as in Hearn's fiction, reminds the reader they have limited knowledge and there are some things which elude the Western grasp. Nevertheless, through this realization, the intricacies of the whole start to gain clarity. Immediately preceding the conclusion to *Truth Dexter*, Craighead confronts the temptation of Orchid for a final time. The two characters realize upon the meeting that, in accordance to the famous Hegelian dictum, they have passed into their opposites. He tells her, "You are not half so worldly and romantic as you think." To which Orchid responds, "You are not half so unworldly and high-minded as you think" (McCall 1901, 361). Craighead has been forced to recognize and appreciate his romantic essence found in Truth, the South, and even inside of himself. He does not, however, lose his individuality and convert completely into a Hearnian dreamer; he retains his pragmatism in balance with a new-found poetic sensitivity. In *The Breath of the Gods*, Yuki and Gwendolen, symbols of "East" and "West," are recognized as mutually exclusive and yet intimately connected: "both are perfection apart - and a vision of

79

paradise together" (McCall 1905, 5). McCall sees these forces as distinct but mutually dependent on one another. She promotes the necessity of unfamiliar "Ghosts" as well as maternal figures in the search for a unified "American identity."

In *The Breath of the Gods*, the Todd family offer another allegory of American culture divided between its "masculine" and "feminine" impulses. They actively listen to the ghost story occurring all around them. This prompts them to turn inward to the unrest taking place in their native country. Dodge, agent of chauvinistic imperialism, and Gwendolen, lover of all things beautiful, spend the bulk of the novel in a quarrel, during which Dodge is lured away by Carmen, the Spanish maiden (an allusion to the Spanish-American War). Over the course of Yuki's plight, however, they are drawn back together. Dodge re-assures her: "But all I can offer now is - myself. Come to me, darling, put your poor tired little head against me, and let me try and comfort you" (363). Through witnessing Yuki's figurative dismemberment between Pierre and Hagane, a shadow of their unrequited desire for one another, the two Americans begin to re-assemble themselves into a family unit, a more cohesive national identity.

One follows Senator Todd, appointed as a neutral party in the forthcoming transaction over Yuki's body, step by step as he begins to recall the dialectical development he has observed while in Japan. His vision clears as he reasons it through: "Here were the meeting-places of the living and the dead. Here the two worlds answered, face to face, as reflections in the still water" (409). Finally, after meticulous thought, the reader through Todd pauses to inspect her progress: "The treadmill creaked again, and registered the notch of another empty revolution. Now Todd shook himself and raised his eyes to see how far he had come" (410). The distance surveyed is profound. And suddenly a ghostly teleology emerges beneath the preceding romance:

80

The thing came, like a predestined growth, from the soil of necessity. "Joint knit to joint

expands the full formed fate." As if, indeed, some ghostly counsellor leaned to him, from

which his human, his conventional selves recoiled,   shuddering, seemed to his spirit a

thing designed, not cruelly, by the Gods themselves. (405)

Enlightened, Todd, and a host of other characters who have suffered through Yuki's tale, huddle

together to find solace in their community. Removed from his usual machismo, the senator

admits: "I'd really like - if you don't mind, my dears, - to turn woman and have one good cry"

(412). They absorb the shadow of themselves, the "feminine" aspects projected upon Yuki, and

find safety inside of their collective. Each of McCall's Japan-themed novels close with a

domestic reconciliation in which the Romantic can co-exist with the pragmatist. Her proposed

escape from the impasse between Fenollosa's positivism and Hearn's Romanticism (or, more

precisely, the ambivalence between the approaches their work shares) comes in revealing the

mutual interdependence of one approach upon the other. Not merely for the sake of crude

synthesis but by retaining "perfection apart," the family unit offers McCall a possible alternative

to the corrosive dichotomies of early Japanology.

*Dissatisfaction and *The Dragon Painter**

At this critical juncture, it is germane to discuss briefly McCall's most well-known work,

The *Dragon Painter* (1906). Upon reading the conclusions to her novels, one might critique

McCall's Hegelian narratives as many critique Hegel's philosophical system: the synthesis is too

neat and all-encompassing. Is McCall guilty of perpetrating "bad metaphysics," the

unsophisticated simplification of Hegel's system into thesis/antithesis/synthesis? I would argue,

in contrast, McCall has a solid grasp of Hegelian thought, seemingly stronger than her husband's.

First, as we have seen, she retains "perfection apart," a balance of the universal and the particular that will not permit easy hybridization. Second, *The Dragon Painter* enforces a key point one might gloss over in reading the less evocative conclusions to *Truth Dexter* or *The Breath of the Gods*: there is no conceivable "end," only perpetually deferred satisfaction, Sakai's "endless re-centering." In *The Dragon Painter*, McCall conceives of a satisfying synthesis of "East/West" and "male/female" *in order to then refuse such naïve closure*.

The novel follows a triad of main characters, including Kano, a former renowned artist who is desperately seeking a male heir, Tatsu, a wild and impetuous youth living in the mountains of Japan and flinging his paintings to the wind, and Ume, Kano's beautiful and talented daughter who rarely leaves the household. Tatsu's one goal in life is to find his beloved Dragon Maiden; her image appears hidden in each of his paintings, traced into rocky cliffs and tranquil ponds. Finding in Tatsu tremendous potential, Kano attempts to seduce him into becoming his surrogate son, even going so far as to entice him with his daughter's hand (she happens to look exactly like the Dragon Maiden). Once married, Tatsu loses interest in art, electing to enjoy instead the physical pleasures of marriage. However, in having found his muse, the mountain man grows lethargic and fails to produce anything. Ume, distraught by this development, feigns death to persuade her husband to create inspired art once again. The novel closes with a return to contentment – and a child on the way.

Tatsu stands in for the "West," longing for an abstract "East" while Ume, an abstraction throughout, offers an amalgamation of stereotypes directed towards "Japan," encompassing "femininity," dragon lore, superstition, and Nature. Upon joining with Ume, the dialectical narrative progresses and he "drew his first conscious outline of the woman soon to be his wife" (McCall 2010, 126). In other words, consciousness moves through Hegel's aesthetic phases,

82

from the symbolic, a tradition presumed to align with the "East," to the image of humanity reflecting back upon itself (for Hegel, the arrival of a Western trajectory in Greece). Tatsu's "progress" once more follows detailed Hegelian schematics. Nevertheless, when "East/West," "man/woman" meet, and form an ill-conceived union – one devised for Kano's personal profit – the result is far from satisfactory. Instead, what emerges is yet another abstraction. Tatsu informs his wife: "There is no beauty now but in you! You are the sacred mirror which reflects for me all loveliness" (169). This "sacred mirror" manifests in the work of McCall's husband – universals without particulars, an all-embracing "West" which has no further need of a symbolic "East." Satisfaction for Tatsu ("Life could give him no more!") removes any remaining desire, and thus he is no longer inspired (160).

Following Ume's faked suicide (the reader is not let in on this secret and so follows Tatsu through his transformation), Tatsu gradually comes to appreciate his inter-dependence on his fellow human beings. He becomes aware his ideals can only give way to further abstraction: "But I want her… not only her aerial spirit! I want her smile, - her little hands to touch me, the golden echo of her laughter, - I want my wife, I say!" (196). He re-situates himself in the material realm of particulars: "Of late he had begun to read, with deep interest, the various essays on art, gathered in Kano's small, choice library" (229). Months – and pages – pass. McCall, at her most mechanical, thoroughly labors to shift Tatsu through Hegelian stages, struggling against a tendency to reify his position: "No, his present condition had at least the negative value of absolute void. From nothing, nothing could be taken; and to it, nothing be supplied!" (247). Tatsu slowly unfolds into a more well-rounded individual, one balancing the fanciful and the pragmatic, until he at last reunites with his "real" wife.

The crux of *The Dragon Painter* relies upon a newfound appreciation for dissatisfaction. While Kano and Tatsu as artists must seek to transcend their mortality, they must also apprehend it is this very limitation compelling them to develop as individuals. McCall suggests that without a "mystical East," or a "fantastic female," beyond their grasp, they would lose their purpose. While it is true the novel ends with the promise of an impending birth, what some might view as a "synthesis," in fact the baby is yet to be born; the reader, like Tatsu, has no choice but to wait for the next dialectical shift: "Anything might happen, or nothing!" (254). *The Dragon Painter* therefore reveals a human propensity for continual self-abstraction, the desire to find satisfying enclosure by uniting the halves of the Self and the imagined world. Yet, concurrently, McCall's Hegelian twist is crucial to understanding this novel, and to comprehending her work in general. Echoing the Freudian *fort-da* game, what truly satiates is not finding the muse engulfing the Far East, but watching it disappear in order to pursue it once again.[56] The novel draws to a close with the reader recognizing that they too must watch this artifact, fashioned from an imaginary Japan, fade away in order to move forward productively: "Unless we have eternity to spare, nodding beside (Kano) on the mats, we must bow, murmuring, 'Sayo-nara'!" (262). Lukács appreciates this attribute of the novel as a literary form due to a self-correction occurring "over and over again," an intermingling of "freedom and fetters." This revelation sheds light on the preoccupation of authors considering the archipelago, including Hearn and Fenollosa, who lament a "vanishing Japan" but, in so doing, achieve their finest artistic expression. McCall, ever engaged with the art-making process, appreciates Sakai's perpetual "re-centering" at the core of Japonisme and thus affords one an opportunity to take up renewed interest in the negation running throughout the phenomenon.[57]

The Sacrificial Wife

Still, in McCall's alternative one cannot overlook the problems in her use of "Japan" to resolve the question of gender. Her synthesis of styles ultimately cannot supersede the confounding conclusions of her male contemporaries. The dialectical system she evokes, reliant upon "feminine mystique" and "maternalism," relies upon predictable interpretive paradigms adapted from male-centered schools of thought. Specifically, McCall valorizes the self-destructive Eastern female, who accepts martyrdom, a very un-Hegelian concept, to preserve Western civilization; she simultaneously champions Western women who enthusiastically take up the mantle of maternal devotion. In either case, at the head of the family is a sacrificial woman, willfully allowing Otherness to be cast upon her for the "greater good." Truth, embracing the immaterial elements of Orchid, returns to her roots to emerge once again a symbol of purity; Yuki firmly tells Senator Todd that it is her "choice" to become the "ghost" for the two men; Ume writes in her suicide note of alleviating her husband's burdensome self-division: "By sacrifice of joy and life I now attempt to expiate it" (McCall 2010, 184). These female protagonists know all along that playing the phantom will force men, be they imperial conquerors or love-struck artists, to come to terms with the restlessness haunting them. Her iconography of the "feminine," meant to be poetically subversive or devotionally uplifting, exemplifies the stereotypes persistently employed to categorize "Japan" and "femininity" in the Western imagination. Though it was unorthodox at the time to put these stereotypes in conversation with one another, proximity does not overcome the unsatisfying limitations of each. Rather than effective revision, McCall can be read ultimately as guilty of re-capitulating at times the quagmire of gender politics from that era.

McCall's texts, albeit frustrating in their lack of satisfying answers, were nevertheless important contributions to the intersection between idealism, gender, and the role of Japanese

aesthetics in America at the turn of the century. In ways more sophisticated than her friend Hearn and husband Fenollosa, McCall imagined a method with which the "West" could mature past an imperialist consciousness and turn back on itself, focused on "mending its own house." As Hegel writes in the preface to the *Phenomenology*: "what is thus separated, and in a sense is unreal, is itself an essential moment; for just because the concrete moment is self-divided, and turns into unreality, it is something self-moving, self-active" (Hegel, 23). The most unique and enduring aspect of McCall's fiction remains its introspection on the "self-active" imagining of "Japan" and what that means for constructions of "femininity" in American discourse. Her work engages with the latent complexity that existed, and continues to exist today, between gender constructions and fantasies of the Far East.[58]

"A Soft Shock to the Ego"

Japonisme and the Female Gothic

The first quarter of the twentieth century saw tremendous changes taking place in Western concepts of gender as well as in the international position of the nation. These shifts in cultural perception were not mutually exclusive; in particular, "Japan" as an imaginary space was regularly constituted in gendered terms. This constructed locale, constituted by consumer products ranging from home décor to popular fiction, served as a canvas for multiple female artists, including Sidney McCall (as we investigated in the previous chapter). This fad revealed a set of widely known tropes with which individuals could articulate social anxieties. As Mari Yoshihara demonstrates, Western female authors made use of Japonisme in ways frequently innovative and unsettling. These authors explored the borderlands of gender identity, probing the limits of what constitutes "femininity" from the mystical excesses of what constitutes "Japan."[59]

Various scholars recognize the convergence of gender and the "Japan Idea." Christine Guth, for one, notes that an appreciation of Japanese curios has been historically aligned with an "identification with the feminine" (Guth, 94); Kristin L. Hoganson studies the historical ambivalence of this collision, commenting that "cosmopolitan domesticity illuminates something far more complex than the self-assertion generally thought to characterize the United States in this period" (Hoganson, 55). This chapter will attempt to develop these claims. One locates in many of the works of female novelists incorporating popular "japanning" techniques a depth that requires far greater analysis in order to understand how twentieth century concepts of "femininity" and Western depictions of the archipelago were forged from similar fires.

Ian Littlewood's *The Idea of Japan* extrapolates from these constructs, stating "the image of the Japanese woman is the image of Japan itself" (Littlewood, 142). While this is may be correct in particular texts, Littlewood's assertion overlooks the fear and power commonly associated with "Japanese femininity." He asserts, "(A construct of the Japanese woman) offers the chance to purchase it, to dominate it, to penetrate its mysteries… and its secret knowledge" (143). This analysis, not uncommon in critical commentary on the subject, misses a range of textual alternatives. A symbolic "feminine Japan" is relegated to the status of "product" and divorced from the raw potentiality of a "secret knowledge"; the argument presupposes the consumer to be "masculine" in orientation – the "penetrating" gaze, the "dominant" position – and therefore that the exotic core of "femininity" (as well as "Japan") is primarily the purchase of a Western, male audience. In truth, many of the writers creating the images were Western women and, while this certainly did not preclude Orientalism, it did allow avenues for self-reflection and a confrontation with narrowly-confined sites of cultural and gendered identity.

The works I consider in this chapter move away from *Madame Butterfly* and its platonic celebration of an "eternal feminine" emanating from the Far East, to be bought and contained. The resultant texts are therefore dissimilar from John Luther Long's familiar tale of the confident, dismissive Lieutenant Pinkerton and the fragile, self-destructive Japanese flower, Cho-Cho-San. In contrast, they include disruptive glimpses of what has previously been repressed by Western patriarchy. Female consumers, the dominant purchaser of curios from Japan in the early decades of the century, attain a "penetrating" gaze and confront "secret knowledge" associated with notions of the "feminine mystique."[60] As theorist Georges Bataille observes, "Human life cannot in any way be limited to the closed systems assigned to it by reasonable conceptions" (Bataille, 128). Consequently, characters in these works are repeatedly rendered in a state of awe,

bewitched by power coded as "Japanese femininity," granting the ability to transgress the barriers established by Western hegemony.

"The Japan Idea" thus provides a particularly fertile fictional ground for exploring intersecting constructions of gender and cultural difference in the Gothic genre. In one account, the country is an object of anxiety for its rapid modernization and for defeating "giants" such as Russia and China, the representation of which grants "Japan" a certain "masculine" aura (a source, undoubtedly, of trepidation among certain Western subjects). In other accounts, the country is masked by an ephemeral aestheticism, an effeminate propensity for tea ceremonies, flower decorations, and exotic geisha (again, a source for anxiety among particular "industrial" citizens). It is perhaps not surprising figures as diverse as the "hyper-masculine" politician Theodore Roosevelt and the "hyper-feminine" Hearn were drawn towards the archipelago at the very same moment. Both sides embed representations of the archipelago with "weird powers," evoking distinct sensations of fear from their audience.

An example of these competing anxieties appears in Wallace Irwin's *Seed of the Sun* (1922). On one hand, the majority of the text focuses on a masculinized "yellow peril," seen violating the California landscape as well as the white women within it. On the other hand, the reader encounters the eerie figure of Mrs. Shimba, wife of a Japanese immigrant who has divorced her and forsaken her in favor of Japanese modernization. The protagonist Anna, an innocent woman who has recently taken on the "man's work" of operating a farm, is stunned upon finding the old woman's gruesome body dangling in the rafters of the barn. Mrs. Shimba thereafter lurks in the pages of the text, her purpose never explained or finalized: "Somewhere from the moonlit outer world there came again that wail. Night after night (Anna) had heard it, floating thin and icy clear above her orchards… long-sustained and terrible… she stood at her

bedroom door palsied with superstitious terror of the soil, sweet and commonplace by day, giving up ghosts by night" (Irwin, 124). Mrs. Shimba's purpose, in terms of plot and form, is sheer excess. Anna's competing objects of dread, the shadowy male Japanese who seek to spread their metaphorical seed as well as the intangible phantasm of Japanese tradition embodied in Mrs. Shimba's howling, reflects oppositional fears surrounding her. She is psychologically pulled between her "feminine" and newly-minted "masculine" characteristics. This ambivalence provides the writers in question with a frame in which to investigate power structures entrenched within a haunted Self.

To articulate the frame, the authors this chapter will consider derive formulaic patterns from the Female Gothic, defined by Jeffrey Weinstock as "that category of literature in which female authors utilize Gothic themes in order to address specifically female concerns" (Weinstock, 1). It interrogates intersections between productions of "femininity" and literary Gothic conventions, usually, though not exclusively, undergone by female authors.[61] The term itself is malleable and regularly re-worked; indeed, it is to this malleability the chapter hopes to speak. Early twentieth century fiction was inundated with female authors employing the trappings of the Gothic, making it one of the most popular touchstones in the era. While filling Western living rooms with Japanese curios helped to construct a more cosmopolitan or empowered self-image for many of these women, tropes from the Female Gothic simultaneously fulfilled a similar desire to view the "foreignness" repressed within their domestic roles. Ellen Moers, one of the earliest theorists of the Female Gothic, argues "to give *visual* form to the fear of self, to hold anxiety up to the Gothic mirror of the imagination, may well be more common in the writings of women than of men… nothing separates female experience from male experience more sharply, and more early in life, than the compulsion to visualize the self" (Moers, 107).

This urge, typically attributed to female writers according to Moers, projects abjection imagined within oneself onto one's surroundings in order to reify a socially-defined "abnormality."

Converging familiar tropes concerning "Japan" with equally familiar tropes from the Female Gothic, these innovative female authors seized politically and financially expedient refrains. Weinstock continues, "Female authors, in choosing to employ supernatural conventions to express themselves, were responding to cultural trends and positioning themselves in the literary marketplace" (Weinstock, 17). Concomitantly, elements of Japonisme add an auxiliary element of the exotic to draw in a larger audience for works employing themes of the sensational Female Gothic. Yet, resisting such wholesale borrowings, these authors interweave fragments from each trend.

The amalgamation of these narrative devices remains ignored in previous scholarship. Each of the authors in question has been more or less relegated to the dustbins of popular fiction, cast aside as mere Orientalist curios from an eccentric time period. Re-analyzing these texts is essential not only for scholars who study U.S. representations of "Asia" more broadly, but also for those who interrogate gender construction and cultural difference within Gothic literature. This chapter will focus on three authors, Dorothy Wayman, Mary Crawford Fraser, and Winnifred Eaton, writers from the first quarter of the century who capitalize on the popularity of the Female Gothic while shaping the ways in which American culture has predominantly portrayed "Japan" and the "feminine" as an object of anxiety ever since. I begin by examining the traditional Gothic theme of a maiden kidnapped by a monster, developed by Wayman and Fraser; dark castles in these tales become scenes of border-crossing articulated through problematic visions of gendered and cultural difference. This model, despite its novelty, in many ways re-enforces an already-existent dichotomy between Self and Other. I then turn to the

border-crossings in Eaton's narratives. Departing in multiple ways from Wayman and Fraser, Eaton transforms external threats of violation into an internal investigation of a tormented Self. The abject hybridization of the "feminine" and "Japan" therefore festers in the psychology of her fictional subjects, who slowly become "foreigners to themselves" in cosmopolitan Gothic fashion.

Wayman and Fraser: Love and Death in Japanese Castles

"Japan," an oft-imagined locale in American popular culture, seems at first an unlikely setting for transposing the ominous abbeys of the British Gothicists. However, in texts written by two particular authors, Dorothy Wayman and Mrs. Hugh Fraser, the archipelago transforms into a landscape filled with shadowy ruins, attended to by brooding masters. These literary elements of necessity undergo a transformation: the castle, once coded as "masculine" in Gothic texts, as well as the maiden/monster dichotomy embedded within this formula, becomes problematized, suggesting another layer of complexity in once familiar paradoxes.

Dorothy Wayman, publishing under the pseudonym of Theodate Geoffrey, describes "Japan" by borrowing familiar archetypes. Wayman's work suffers from stilted prose not uncommon in popular fiction of the era; upon discovering a secret Japanese base, one character blurts: "If it isn't an airplane base, I'm a ding-toed wallaby" (Wayman 1926a, 205). The narratives also rely upon hackneyed plot devices and uneven character development. When one looks past these stylistic blemishes, Wayman's texts illuminate how she embraced the thrilling aspects of an imaginary "Japan" to question the "proper" role of women in the twentieth century.

Wayman resided in Japan for a short time with her husband, a U.S. government official. The experience prompted her, as many before and after, to put her pen to paper and compose a

travelogue of her life in this "weird" Eastern locale. *An Immigrant in Japan* (1926), a

supposedly authentic account of the country and its customs, repeatedly returns to Gothicism to

propel the narrative forward. In highlighting this tendency, one immediately recognizes the

persistent influence of Hearn, the self-proclaimed "anti-modern nomad" who documented Japan

with a deep affinity for the strange and bizarre (see chapter 1). Hearn lingers in all of these texts

in traces, sculpting the discourse as well as being overtly referenced on several occasions.[62] The

travelogue echoes a Hearnian style, portraying unsettling encounters with supernatural forces

through excessive descriptions – the narrator watches a woman and her child buried alive during

an earthquake, an event she deems "too horrible to contemplate"; she visits Japanese graveyards

in which "a faint rustle, as of a timid ghost stirring, made me turn"; and she experiences eerie

archipelago in ways that overtly reverberate Hearn's earlier visions: "Everyone must have felt at

some time or other that fleeting emotion – ghostly thrill, Lafcadio Hearn calls it – which comes

at the first meeting with some person *like a soft shock to the ego*" (Wayman 1926b, 86; 142; 149,

emphasis mine). "Japan" manifests as a space of romanticized Otherness through Wayman's

employment of primal, immediate, and less mediated sensations.

Wayman's borrowings from Gothicism are even more pointed in her novel *Powdered

Ashes* (1926). She closely follows a formula in existence since Horace Walpole's seminal *Castle

of Otranto*: a beautiful young woman, Paula Payne, is pursued by a sexualized madman, the

villainous Ichijiro Tsurumi, deep into the dark crevices of an ancient, decaying castle. Paula,

with her hapless but lovable husband Bob, takes a trip to Japan to conduct business. On the way,

she meets the magnetic Ichijiro upon his returning from years of studying in the West. She is

attracted and repulsed by this powerful young figure. Eventually, as "he was mad with desire to

possess Paula Payne," Ichijiro kidnaps her and holds her hostage in his family's decrepit fortress (Wayman 1926a, 120).

Beyond the trappings of predictable plot devices, what is perhaps most interesting in Wayman's narrative is the bond between victim Paula and villain Ichijiro. Gothic literature repeatedly blurs gender constructions through the connection between monster and maiden. A classic example of this phenomenon appears with Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), in which Mina is compelled towards Dracula while simultaneously feeling a profound disgust. Dracula himself, as many scholars note, exists in the boundary between socially sanctioned descriptions of "masculinity" and "femininity"; this confirms a sadomasochistic edge often present in Gothic novels.[63] *Powdered Ashes* reframes this concept to encompass the "East/West" relationship. On one side, there is Paula, who is enticed by the liberation of becoming a "modern girl," while also desiring the domination of a strong male figure. Paula, identified as "the blue-eyed one with hair cut like a boy," determines to seize an opportunity in Japan to assert her power as an adult woman. Gertrude, the matriarchal guardian of the group, warns: "Modern girls are inclined to be restless" (25). Yet from her first embrace in Ichijiro's "coiling steel cables" for arms Paula also feels a "secret thrill in the dominance of Ichijiro" (69). There is a compulsion towards the act of possessing and the act of being possessed within the novel, a dual impulse haphazardly applied to the narrative of "Japan," a nation widely portrayed in Western discourse of the time period as entering into the business of empire-building.

Ichijiro, the symbol of "New Japan," conveys a liminal identity, lunging into madness with an urge to acquire everything he sees, including Paula. Concurrently, he retains a bourgeois sentimentality marking him as already integrated into older notions of the "feminine." He has "a hand unthinkable for a man and yet, strangely, with nothing effeminate about it" (4). "Japan," as

noted, occupied a similarly ambivalent space in the popular imagination, linked to both "masculine" militarism and "feminized" leisure. Ichijiro thus supersedes the boundaries prescribed upon him as a stereotypical Japanese character. He initially "talked of art, of music, of the beauties of nature" in ways that moved Paula; his uncle, a toad-like gentry seemingly modeled after Wilkie Collins' diabolical Count Fosco, compares Ichijiro to "a butterfly intoxicated with the scent of wisteria" (10; 117). His unnatural "smoothness" makes Paula yearn for him and then finally spurn his advances. This sparks Ichijiro's transformation into absolute monstrosity:

> Thrusting Paula into a corner where she shrank back, pallid, horror-stricken, Ichijiro drew out the wooden shutters before the balcony, bolting them with a secret wooden lock, and glowered at the girl in the light of the electric bulb which burned night and day into the room. (233)

Copious emotions are baldly exposed in the confrontational scene through the pure terror of the victim and the raw animal hunger of the villain.

In this topography of excess, Ichijiro and Paula intersect as monster and maiden, each yearning for something beyond the lot designated for them in the modern world. Ichijiro, who believes possessing Paula will allow "Japan" to become a "great nation," grows obsessed with "femininity," the repressed side of his cultural identity. His "urging of a strange weapon, his talk of utilizing the new power of womanhood" almost causes the natural state of things to collapse and the advance of "Japan" to come to a screeching halt (300). Critic Marianne Noble describes the Female Gothic as "a transgressive flirtation with extreme, irrational states of being, again directing an implicit critique toward the bland states sanctioned by previous norms of

femininity" (Noble, 174). Gendered and cultural states of normativity are transgressed in Wayman's work, allowing the reader – alongside Paula and Ichijiro – to flirt with brief ecstasies of emotion against the regimented calculations of rationality upheld within modernity.

By the close of the novel, the two patriarchs return to restore order following the violations of the social order committed by their children Paula and Ichijiro, giving the novel a conservative streak persistent in popular Gothic fictions.[64] John Turner, Paula's father, scolds her: "If you'd tended to your knitting this Tsurumi devil wouldn't have had a chance for his hellish schemes" (Wayman 1926a, 275). Ichijiro's uncle, meanwhile, will not be outdone and ritualistically beheads his comatose nephew, who has pursued excess to its logical conclusion. The ending of the novel celebrates an American brand of tough-minded, unemotional industrialism captured in the rugged wisdom of the patriarchy, reminding one of Alice Mabel Bacon's earlier adaptations of Japanese folklore, *In the Land of the Gods: Some Stories of Japan* (1905), discussed in the introduction. The sensational venture into the borderland is sealed off, once again, by prescriptions of Puritanical fortitude.

Still, what remains for Wayman's readers is an imagined "Japan" to make violations of the so-called "natural order" possible. Walpole's archetypal castle, re-invented in *Powdered Ashes*, converts into a physical manifestation of the twin impulses within its characters and within the potential reader as well. The castle sits

> Surrounded by a moat… above the wall appeared the feathery white drifts of cherry
>
> blossoms… a gilded dolphin shone on the canonical peak of the stone tower… cherry
>
> trees grew here and there in the smooth-swept gravel and a clipped privet hedge curtained
>
> the stone of the wall. (170-1)

The setting stands essential to the narrative, as it provides an already-enclosed fantastic space, complete with people and customs, to re-articulate familiar literary devices. The bleak castle, once the epitome of Western male authority in Gothic literature, is itself modified in cosmopolitan fashion, "feminized" and "Japanized," curtained by beautiful flowers and topped with a gilded-dolphin. The deep connection between Paula and Ichijiro, as mutual monster and maiden, regains the potential for eruption in this mystical place across the Pacific, where unbridled impulses emerge to evoke new sensations from a very old plot.

<p style="text-align:center">*******************************</p>

Mary Crawford Fraser, publishing under the married title of Mrs. Hugh Fraser, capitalized on comparable themes to those of Wayman. Fraser was a cosmopolitan woman *par excellence*, gaining lengthy exposure to many global cultures during her lifetime, including prominently Italy and Japan, where she lived for several years as the wife of a diplomat. She was a member of a family with clear interest in macabre matters: her brother F. Marion Crawford held renown as a writer of ghost stories, and her sister Anne Von Rabe, a Baroness, wrote an early vampiress novella, *A Mystery of the Campagna* (1886). Mary herself contributed to a volume of eerie stories composed by her siblings, *Uncanny Tales* (1911), with a were-wolf narrative entitled "A Werewolf of the Campagna."[65] As a writer, her fiction handles supernatural images of "Japan" with greater involvedness than Wayman, who is certainly the more commercial writer of the two. Her explorations of an imaginary archipelago go even further in articulating an "un-representable" outside the fringes of Western patriarchy by revising formal devices borrowed from Gothicism.

Fraser's novel *The Stolen Emperor* (1904) provides a variation on the formula one finds in *Powdered Ashes*. The novel trails the young and beautiful Empress Jito as she is tormented by not one but two unseemly authority figures: the dying Emperor, who proclaims himself to be "already dead," and the daimyo Kashima, who wants to depose the Emperor and return "Japan" to a feudal state. The familiar narrative involves Kashima, mad with lust for power and for Jito, kidnapping the Empress and her son, the future Emperor, and carrying them to his ghastly castle. Over the course of the novel, Fraser positions Jito as the protagonist who faces appalling manifestations of her unsettled relationship to new-found power. *The Stolen Emperor* situates "Japan" and "femininity" at identical crossroads, torn between old (and vanishing) fictions and uncontrollable modern ones. These two sides are represented as equally extreme, giving the novel a sense of tragic impasse. "Old Japan," embodied by the dying Emperor who is coded as "feminine," hidden away in a room where "the air was dusky with perpetual gloom… the place was a casket – for a lusterless gem. The frail stopping figure and womanish hands told their own story of gilded confinement, of *morbid luxury*" (Fraser, 25 emphasis mine). Jito reacts to this part of her country (and herself): "Could the gods not have made me the ruler man, and him the subject woman? Why dress weakness in armour and strength in painted robes?" (30). A gilded past oppresses her. Conversely, meetings with Kashima, an active agent for change who is full of blind desire for an empowered future, promise a "New Japan" defined by the relentless drive to expand, flaunting "hyper-masculine" traits, lingering within Jito as well at several moments in the narrative. This compulsion, as in Wayman's text, rapidly devolves into a terrifying stand-off: "The light was failing now, and (Kashima) stood for a moment, a dark, threatening figure in the gloom, seeking for Jito… he saw her, where she stood, a white still figure in the dusk" (221). Jito

searches frantically for an escape from this land of unspeakable dread as well as her personal - and nationalized - confinement.

The novel represents the two sides of Jito, "New Japan" and "Old Japan," as synonymous with Death, forcing Jito and the reader to experience the limits of modernity – at least, as it has been chartered in their sensorium. Bataille examines such "perverse" drives in *Literature and Evil*, focusing on figures who probe into "the climax of the forbidden, a delight that is familiar and elemental and yet closed to modern thought" (Bataille 1997, 186). *The Stolen Emperor* cleaves into two locales, each consumed by analogous sensations of horror and the forbidden exteriors of modern thought. First, the Emperor's casket is traversed by Jito, who wanders frightened "in the haunted Kyoto palace, where so many hearts had broken, so many splendid shadows had passed away weeping in the gorgeous gloom… it was dark in the deserted chambers, and through the darkness came strange scents of musk and sandal wood, ghosts of perfumes hanging in the unbreathed air" (Fraser, 34-41). From this womb-like prison, Jito moves to Omi Castle, an ominous pile of rock haunted by tales of a previous Emperor who was starved within its walls. Local residents hear cries "bitter and sharp… seen a wild white face behind the bars of that window in the lower rock, had seen two skeleton hands stretched out in frantic entreaty" (57). The castle reminds one of the Marquis de Sade's "unspeakable torments." As Jito is led through the narrow corridors, she hears "wild shrieks of terror from a hundred throats rent the silence of the night… the rooms were full of screaming women… through a mass of human beings, fighting, screaming, groaning, dying as they passed" (97-98). She shifts from a nostalgic trepidation emanating from "Old Japan," with its ominous ancestors roaming the grounds, into the contemporary terror of a hedonistic "New Japan," with unruly potential lurking beneath the once-gilded surface of a castle "where some red ray struck the rock it looked wet with blood"

(115). The haunted prisons open for Jito sensations long denied, sensations outside of her quotidian experience of "proper femininity" and Japanese custom. Kashima, echoing Bataille's claims, interrogates the nightmare he embodies: "What was the difference between love and hate? As he held the woman's beautiful hands and looked into her face he felt that the joy of killing her would almost surpass the joy of possessing her… what next? What next in this night of terror?" (259). Sadomasochistic chaos reveals for Jito self-abjection as well as self-empowerment, made possible through convenient images of Japan's aestheticized history.

Although both Wayman and Fraser probe the definitions of "femininity" and the "East/West" binary via the Gothic medium, critiques of their attempts might echo critiques of early Gothic literature. The reader preserves a position safely detached from the proceedings and so the divisions of Self and Other are manipulated without serious consequence. These works remain, for the most part, a playful escape rather than a genuine questioning of the Self. In contrast, the writer I turn to in the following section utilizes components of the Gothic genre to deconstruct her identity as well as superficial distinctions erected between the "East" and "West." Winnifed Eaton's psychological moments of horror attempt to tear apart generic playfulness in favor of eerie passages to promote genuine self-doubt for her predominantly Western audience.

Winnifred Eaton: Excesses of a Divided Self

While Wayman and Fraser look to more formulaic expressions of the Gothic to render "Japan" as well as the "feminine" as sites of abjection, Eaton relies instead on the Gothicism of her contemporaries, including Henry James and Charlotte Perkins Gilman. Her representations of the archipelago and gendered crises do not rely on aged artifacts, such as decrepit castles; instead,

she internalizes the uncertainty Wayman and Fraser manifest externally within the fractured psyche of her characters. Eaton's merging of the Female Gothic and Japonisme demonstrates a modern Self plagued by the multitudes within, including murky distinctions between "East/West," "male/female."

Eaton spent the majority of her career publishing under the Japanese-sounding pseudonym Onoto Watanna. Having undergone a sort of re-discovery in the 1970s, her fiction is challenging and complex at a level scholars have yet to appreciate fully. Her accomplishments include numerous successful novels and stints as a major Hollywood screenwriter, working directly under such icons as Carl Laemmle. As a storyteller, she received glowing praise from no less than the pragmatic dean of American letters, William Dean Howells, who ironically appreciated the "realism" of her prose. She also garnered public attention through her engagement in publicized legal battles with two of the forefathers depicting a "feminized Japan," John Luther Long and David Belasco. Despite the fact she was not Japanese, nor did she ever set foot on Japanese soil, fueled by a Japanese persona Eaton's fiction maintained a certain aura of authenticity throughout her lifetime, revealing in her what biographer Jean Lee Cole calls a "shallow desire for success" (Cole, 2). Eaton's granddaughter and biographer Dianna Birchall admits Eaton "experimented and postured her way through life," while even Eaton recognizes her "success was founded upon a cheap and popular device" (Birchall, xvi; 83). Nevertheless, beneath the exploitative qualities of the ruse, Eaton poses important questions about identity, based upon her identification as a "half-caste" of European and Chinese heritage. She adopts Gothic themes, such as the literary double, to reflect divided notions of an Asian-American and female Self.[66] And though her works "were first and foremost, romances and melodramas, intended to entertain, to enchant, *sometimes to shock*," Eaton is rarely content with the merely

formulaic, electing to capitalize instead on stylized moments of "shock" in order to expose the raw potential she feels emerging from her pen.[67] She gives the reader terrifying glimpses of a truly liberated subject, a force she found buried inside of the hackneyed discourses of Japonisme as well as constructions of "femininity" (xix, emphasis mine). She writes in her faux-autobiography, "There was a pain in my heart, but it was an ecstatic one, and even as I cried softly, soundlessly, something within me sang a song that seemed immortal" (Watanna 1997, 103).

The Heart of Hyacinth (1903), prescient of the texts already discussed, links "Japan" and "femininity" in direct relation to the surpluses of Death, portraying a divided female torn between her Asian and American alliance, simultaneously posited as "pre-modern" versus "modern." *The Heart of Hyacinth* opens with the agonizingly slow death of young Hyacinth's mother, an American woman. She arrives in the village, having been driven out of her wits by Western social mores, informing the family, "Everyone stared at me; it must have been because I had gone mad, you know, quite mad. All women do" (Watanna 2000, 25). After establishing the plight of a female made "hysterical" by a liminal position between Western and Eastern cultures, as well as her station as both mother and independent woman, Eaton describes the character's vivid decomposition. When the innocent boy Koma ventures into the room of the dying woman,

> Her white face seemed to have shrunken through the night – so white and still it was that
> she seemed scarcely to breath… she seemed a spirit of the lingering twilight… but soft as
> was (Koma's) touch it acted like an electric shock upon the woman. She started and
> quivered, as her heavy lids lifted. At the little face bending above her she stared. A
> strange expression came into her face. (27 – 32)

The American mother, for the reader and Koma, shapes the remainder of the narrative. Cast in a mysterious shroud, she quite literally disintegrates before the reader's eyes, trapped in a struggle between life and Death. "Western" and "female" are subsequently rendered synonymous with decay and self-abjection. Moers, whose interpretation of the Female Gothic readily lends itself to a reading of Eaton's doubles, discovers "self-hatred" in this type of projection, signifying the "feminine" as a grotesque "living corpse" (Moers, 110). Hyacinth's internal struggle with her "half-caste" identity erupts in unnerving passages of female putrefaction.

Hyacinth identifies with the grotesque in complicated ways. At certain times, she is horrified; elsewhere, she finds it comforting, even revelatory. Early in the novel, she recognizes in her reflection the utter ghastliness of her mother's living corpse. Confronting her reflection, she recoils: "An uncanny fear took possession of the little girl. Suddenly she raised her hand, knocking the glass from that of Koma… Hyacinth was frightened – yes, actually afraid of the mirror" (75). However, at other moments, she seems attached to her darker side, a side previously repressed by Japanese punctilios. When Koma tries to tell her a comforting fairytale, Hyacinth protests:

> "I don't like those kind of stories. Like better stories about ghosts and - "
> "Oh, you always get afraid of such stories, screaming like sea gull."
> "Yes, but all same, I like to do that – like to hear such stories – like also to get frightened and scream." (41)

Hyacinth cannot resist enchantment with - and repulsion from - the abjection she imagines at her core.[68] This is further articulated in the final pages of the novel, in which she must flee from her father's attempts to reclaim her into a "proper" place in society. Her place of refuge, appropriately drenched with Eaton's Gothic sensibilities, is the family tombs.

In Koma's attempt to rescue Hyacinth from the tomb in which she hides, one locates the essential difference between Eaton and writers such as John Luther Long. Koma, unlike the self-confident Pinkerton of *Madame Butterfly*, is terrified by the "feminine" essence eluding containment by Japanese and American authorities. Prior to meeting Hyacinth's mother, Koma wanders into the house with trepidation: "The house was in darkness. Suddenly a voice, a piercing, shrill voice, rang out through the silent house. 'The light, the light!' it cried: 'oh, it is gone, gone!' Koma clutched his mother's hand with a sudden, tense fear" (16 – 17). This fear foreshadows his pursuit of Hyacinth into the silent sepulcher:

> Every inch of the ground within he examined, feeling about with his hands… fear urging him forward… this was the great secret cave he himself had shown her… he dared not look at them, lest he become dizzy with horror… something dark and still outstretched upon the surface of the rock. He caught his breath, then covered his mouth with his hands lest a cry escape him… her upturned face, with the moon rays upon it, was wondrously, ethereally beautiful. Awed, reverential, Koma gazed. (199 – 201)

The male characters in Eaton's fiction recurrently experience fear in the face of Japanese women. They are rarely condescending, possessive, or self-assured. On the contrary, finding the intersection of "Japan" and "femininity" to be a place of repulsion, the male characters are shaken from any comfortable sense of control over their surroundings. Identification with these frightened male characters permits Eaton's traget female readers to gaze, as if from an external perspective, and confront the abjection they have been led to suspect lurking within previously anchored notions of "femininity."

Theorist Julia Kristeva, in *The Power of Horror*, ruminates upon the human potential writers such as Eaton channel in their Gothic moments, illustrating positions which emerge congruently with a grotesque "feminine," "the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities (subject/object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so – double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject" (Kristeva 1982, 207). Eaton, concerned with her "half-caste" role, in addition to the fictional and professional binaries she sanctions for herself, thrives upon these dizzying spaces of overlap, where divisions between "East/West," "female/male" dissolve into genuine "shock." Scholar Dominika Ferens comments, "Winnifred combined 'romance' and 'Japan' into a fictional sphere where almost anything could happen, in order to work out racial and gender conflicts that she experienced in North America" (Ferens, 153). I believe it is in Kristeva's borderlands Eaton's fictions achieves their most powerful affect.[69]

Themes of Death and vision are blended brilliantly in Eaton's popular and ambitious novel, *The Japanese Nightingale* (1901). Female characters are sources of tremendous anxiety in the text, haunting the men who might elsewhere try to claim authority over them. The plot is similar to a considerable number of narratives from this time period: Jack, the American official, arrives in Japan only to fall in love with Yuki, a beautiful and "bewitching" geisha. The drama centers on whether or not the two will be allowed to be together in the end. Yet the plot and style diverge from the formula in important ways. Although the novel is often compared to, and compiled alongside of, fiction such as Long's *Madame Butterfly*, Eaton's novel fundamentally challenges romanticized visions of Japanese females.

For Eaton, female Japanese characters unsettle. Yuki initially emerges in a bizarre setting: "The air was filled with the "bizarre, wholly fascinating music of the koto and samisen" (Watanna 2002, 86). Eaton's imaginary "Japan" bursts with "weird" sounds, those most primal

of sensations, unfamiliar to Western ears. Accompanying the unnerving soundtrack, Yuki emerges:

> The girl did not rise at the sound of his voice, but crept nearer to him, her hair still enshrouding her. It made him feel creepy… her face was incomplete… with that rich red-black hair enshrouding her, and the long, blue eyes looking at him mistily, she was an eerie little creature that made him marvel. (92 – 93)

Unlike the exotic beauty of Long's Cho-Cho-San, Yuki's attractiveness befits the Female Gothic. She jolts Jack and the reader by startling them out of complacency and offering emotions with which to move outside "the norm."

Female readers, through Yuki, gaze through a "half-caste" lens: they are simultaneously limited as the object of Western vision and, at the same moment, empowered by their capacity to look down at the cowering men before them. In multiple moments throughout the text, Eaton draws attention to Yuki's distinctly blue eyes - a familiar marker of Western identity - in order to expose the uncertain position of the reader. The eyes petrifying Jack are both unfamiliar and familiar. This is a comfortable encounter for neither Jack nor the readers, who lose a firm grasp upon their position or point of identification within the narrative. "Japan," in Eaton's rendition, overflows with witches, ghosts, and half-dead creatures, filling onlookers with the darkest of terrors by granting, and then denying, the authority of their vision.

In these scenes, women who are deserted by American suitors are hardly demure or self-destructive; rather, they are powerful and unwilling to vanish into the mist at the whims of male perpetrators. "The bay was enchanted – yes, but haunted too… there had been many, many witchmaids who had haunted the shores" (160). The distinction between "enchanted" and

"haunted" marks perhaps the clearest distinction between authors such as Long from Eaton: "enchanted" implies a contained spectacle, and agency, for the reader. "Haunted," in contrast, implies an unwanted return, a loss of power at the hands of irrepressible sentiments. Jack starts to comprehend this distinction when he encounters Yuki's mother, a victim of prior abuse at the hands of a Western man:

> The mother crept from the shrine with stealing step, her white face like a mask of death, her small, frail hands outstretched… a consciousness of her eerie approach thrilling Jack Bigelow… she had clothed herself in all the vestal garments of the dead… swaying and tottering in all her ghastly attire. (153)

Jack, hardly "enchanted," is rendered speechless, suddenly aware of the potency in the Far East as well as the opposite sex.[70]

These "shocking" passages, Eaton's texts insist, allow female readers the potential to project a "feminine mystique" onto an uncanny Japanese body while retaining a sense of control by aligning with male victims. Placed in painful proximity to Cho-Cho-San, male characters must wait, fearful for their sanity, as Yuki abandons them. Taro, Yuki's brother, upon discovering her absence, goes into fits, unable to cope with the inversion. Jack waits by his bedside as Taro loses touch with reality. "He was in the midst of a fever dream – a nightmare… Jack saw the terrible gleam of two delirious eyes and stood magnetized. With lightning fury the raving man had thrown aside the bedclothes, sprung from the bed" (150). Jack, correspondingly tormented, loses more control with each passing hour. The home he had once shared with Yuki turns into a space of apprehension, captured in his "shadowed room… he feared to stir, lest the spell, ghostly and entrancing… might vanish into mistland… was there not behind it all some

mysterious possibility of such a spirit?" (168). He walks, alone, through the somber chambers: "'The place is haunted!' he said, and scarce knew his own hollow voice, which the echoes of the silent room mocked back at him. 'I shall go mad', he said, and again the echoes repeated, 'Mad! mad! mad!'" Jack senses Yuki - but he cannot see her. He plunges into a state of monomania, his senses heightened dramatically. Hearing the cacophony of the bells nearby, he engages in an internal dialogue echoing the poetics of Edgar Allan Poe:

> Would they never cease? Why were they so loud? They had not been so formerly. Now
> they filled all the land with their ringing. What were they tolling for, and, ah, why had the
> ghostly visitants of his house caught up the tone, and softly, sweetly, with piercing
> cadence, chanted back and echoed the sighing of the bells? (169)

The reader, if they have been following Eaton's lead and identifying with Jack's Western authority throughout the tale, is unexpectedly forced to experience a sense of smallness at the toll of these ominous bells. Once more a kind of sadomasochism puts readers in the uncomfortable position of embodying, and then fleeing from, dynamisms of gendered and cultural difference.

The madness and "hysteria" Eaton summons is in ways more daunting than the contrived suicide of Long's one-dimensional caricature. Lionel Lambourne, in his study of Japonisme, overlooks this Gothic element, proclaiming Eaton's fiction to be less artistic because, when compared to Long's fiction, it holds to be "far less tragic" (Lambourne, 146). However, at the close of *The Japanese Nightingale*, the uncomfortable overtones remind one of a funeral parlor, stirring emotions less familiar and less resolved than Long's "tragic" dénouement. Jack, lured into a fantasy world, a romanticized "escape," transforms him into a specter outside of modernity. He intones at Yuki's command: "Yes, forever" (Watanna 2002, 171). The bells cease, but only

after Jack seals himself within the world of bewitching phantoms. Behind this potency, an essential inquiry remains: though readers are given an opportunity to explore schisms within their identification in the early twentieth century, are the final options available to readers of Eaton's fiction an alignment with subjugated maidens or abject monsters?

Situating Japonisme within the Female Gothic

In measuring their originality, Eaton, Wayman, and Fraser should not be made exempt from claims of Orientalizing their subject matter. These novels, though regularly innovative, are guilty at times of transforming the "feminine" and the Far East into one-dimensional Others for consumption.[71] "Japan's" supposed connection to the "feminine" loses some of its effectiveness as a Gothic trope due to the superficiality of its commercialized construction. In the works this chapter considers, the message is muddied by trendy, and thus readily dismissed, exotica. This avenue for self-expression succumbed to conscription by popular resolution, eventually re-containing the potency these works briefly contemplate. Furthermore, instead of striving to humanize the subjects, the authors exaggerate grotesque features of the country and its women so as to entertain the intended audience, fostering foggy abstraction. In this way, the texts fall into related traps as those of McCall, Fenollosa, and Hearn. All strove to utilize an imaginary "Japan" to surpass modernity's limits but, in so doing, lost sight of the shared humanity, and historical energies, being obscured in the process.

Regardless, it would be irresponsible to overlook the complexity of these texts. Juliann E. Fleenor, for one, does not draw attention to these hybridizations in her mapping of the Female Gothic, arguing the genre "uses the traditional spatial symbolism of the ruined castle or an enclosed room to symbolize both the culture and the heroine" (Fleenor, 15). As this chapter has

sought to demonstrate, settings in a Female Gothic tradition were scarcely confined to the decaying archetypes of Western life. More than simple profit-driven capitalists, these writers revived tired formulas by blending the themes at their disposal in order to interrogate - with varying degrees of severity - the boundaries, gendered and cultural, established by Western patriarchy at the turn of the century. These authors repeatedly concern themselves with the unrepresentable, what lies beyond a mechanized, circumscribed social reality (in most cases, the constraints of fin-de-siecle domesticity).[72] Scholar Barbara Claire Freeman notes:

> The feminine sublime is neither a rhetorical mode nor an aesthetic category but a domain of experience that resists categorization, in which the subject enters into relation with an otherness – social, aesthetic, political, ethical, erotic – that is excessive and unrepresentable. (Freeman, 2)

Depictions of "Japan" and the "feminine" fit well within Freeman's purview, conceptualized as excessive by nature, thereby "resisting categorization."

In conclusion, I do not wish to suggest a dramatic change in the problematic binaries between Self and Other re-articulated by these texts. But this type of excavation, it can be argued, complicates the ways in which this binary has been formulated and allows one to reconsider the perceived agency, or lack thereof, among female artists who participated in the transaction. As Freeman notes, a "female sublime" allows for "a radical re-articulation of the role gender plays in producing the history of discourse on the sublime and the formulation of an alternative position with respect to excess and the possibilities of its figuration" (Freeman, 10). Unlike Cho-Cho-san's (in)famous complacency, these texts fundamentally compromise the stability of Western male hegemony by offering haunted characters who refuse to be stilled. While these

writers undoubtedly conflate Otherness in a troubling fashion, rendering "Japan" as well as "femininity" eternally "abnormal," they also expose complex productions of identity at risk of being lost among piles of discarded curios.

Godzilla is Dead

Nuclear Criticism and a Deferred Reading of the Toho Terror

Godzilla is a complex and multifaceted pop idol, embedded in intricate networks of cultural signification and personal meaning. (Tsutsui 2006, 7)

From the outset nuclear energy was personalized… The Bomb, capitalized like a creature from myth. (Weart, 104)

In 1984, a group of scholars from a variety of disciplines gathered at Cornell to discuss the role of critical theory in ongoing discussions surrounding the issue of nuclear proliferation. Their collective goal, as stated in the introduction to the *Diacritics* issue to follow, was straightforward: "Critical theory ought to be making a more important contribution to the public discussion of nuclear issues" (Klein, 2). The dialogue on that summer day, however, was much less straightforward; attempts to established framework for Nuclear Criticism, granting it cohesion, never quite materialized, echoing a growing gap perceived between a discipline mired in the legacy of New Criticism and a public with seemingly real concerns such as total war. Twenty years later, at the University of Kansas, a different group of intellectuals gathered, this time to discuss the cinematic child of the nuclear event: Godzilla. Their goal was likewise clear, articulated in the introduction of the resultant book, *In Godzilla's Footsteps*, as the desire to position the big green signifier "within a matrix of meaning-laden cultural references and political valences" (Tsutsui 2006, 5). Although Nuclear Criticism does not appear overtly within

these discussions, the uncertainties surrounding how to read "nuclear texts" were awoken once again, as though from a deep slumber in some deep Pacific basin.

Nuclear Criticism, as a loosely defined critical endeavor, has sought at various periods in history to answer the question how one is to read texts in a world which must routinely contemplate the absolute obliteration of nuclear blasts. How would one tell the story of nuclear annihilation, which cannot help but remain absolute speculation, mired in the realm of pure science fiction - as no one will be there afterwards to place the event in a larger narrative context? Was this indeed the heart of post-structuralism, the tipping point in which the signifier and the signified are torn irrevocably apart? Or, in contrast, might one begin to mend the fragments of the shattered relationship, building bridges between these critics and the so-called "real world"? The unsettled answers reveal a division prevalent in the second half of twentieth century Western thought. My goal is to attempt to appreciate the discussion as a whole, noting its inherent value while advocating respectful conversation as a strength of Godzilla scholarship capable of speaking to critical discourse more broadly conceived (including, importantly, the work undergone by the chapter itself).

The latex monster put forth by Toho Studios in 1954 is perhaps the "nuclear text" *par excellence*. It has become, in many ways, the face of nuclear destruction, an icon encapsulating the breadth of the controversy and a signifier struggling to touch on that most unspeakable of moments: the nuclear event. How one reads Godzilla, and its breed of sequels, reveals profound concern surrounding the value of critical theory and the debates over the methods with which one can position the "nuclear" in popular discourse. Reading Godzilla is an interpretive act re-staging many of the debates that took place at Cornell in 1984, suggesting a broader rift within

interpretive communities following the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on August 8th, 1945.

To understand this schism better, one might first consider the critical response to another text linked directly to atomic fears, John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1946). Two critics, Patrick B. Sharp and Alan Nadel, present opposing readings and illustrate the diverging perspectives focused upon by this essay. For example, Sharp reads Hersey's "non-fiction novel" as perhaps the apex of literary modernism, placing the text in relation to modernist forms espoused by T.S. Eliot in *The Waste Land*. Sharp finds Hersey's "reinvention" of official rhetoric, as well as his ability to shift modes, to be an effective model "to capture the unique and horrifying consequences of life in the modern world" (Sharpe, 149). He places Hersey within a particular canonical trajectory, portraying *Hiroshima* as a part of the cultural landscape, with the potential to revise older discursive techniques and provide an alternative method of communicating. In short, Sharp argues that Hersey borrows modernist tropes, such as fragmentation and skepticism towards narrative authority, to position the dropping of the atomic bomb as an appropriate expression of modernist angst, not unfamiliar at the time and thus, to some degree, conditioned by a causal chain of literary and historical developments.

In contrast to Sharp's viewpoint, Alan Nadel understands Hersey's work as a model for demonstrating how the postmodern crisis stems from atomic discourse. He argues *Hiroshima* "can never create a totalizing narrative," as it is built on a purely arbitrary structure of narrative authority (Nadel, 54). Nadel capitalizes on such an interpretive turn to reinvigorate the nuclear issue and endorse a framework for interpretation privileging playfulness and the deconstruction of textual oppression. He views Hersey's book as "a profound decentering of authority, not only in the political, scientific, or social arenas but also in the realm of writing" (55). Due to the

perceived meaninglessness of the devastation, Nadel's reading of Hersey contends that

Hiroshima (the novel) is an analogue for the meaninglessness of the event itself. As a

consequence, literature does not, or can no longer, make sense of the world and the senseless

deeds of man. Although Sharp and Nadel never formally align themselves with a rather

amorphous Nuclear Criticism, their discrepancies illuminate the crux of a critical problem, one

stubbornly refusing to disperse – from textual shambles, will critics, authors, and readers alike

harness "nuclear texts" as an opportunity for deconstruction or an opportunity to re-connect

discourse to social connectedness?

Godzilla serves as an excellent case study to examine how critics understand "nuclear

texts." How one continues to read the fire-breathing lizard reveals how hermeneutics has evolved

in the framing of the nuclear from 1984 until today. Ultimately, I believe what one finds in

secondary discourse is significantly more revealing than the American love affair with Godzilla.

After all, the monster delights viewers or disturbs them, engages them or rolls their eyes, evokes

their dread or trivializes it. If Godzilla is the legacy of the nuclear event that persists the longest

in popular culture, beyond heated protests, beyond reactionary shifts in public opinion, beyond

the now-fading potential of Nuclear Criticism itself, then it is perhaps to Godzilla's footsteps that

one must return in order to re-consider the position of readers within the act of nuclear

speculation. One emerges in reverence of Godzilla's awesome power (symbolizing History,

national might, the split atom, language) or laughing at its figurative death as a source of

legitimate fear, squealing at the havoc of a man-made monster finally cut free. Or perhaps, in a

contemporary society that tends to forget the nuclear threat is still as alive today as it was in 1945,

a return to Godzilla will promote a continued dialogue concerning our attitudes toward The

Bomb.

To analyze Godzilla and Nuclear Criticism in these terms is in many ways to re-visit the tenets of textual analysis. From the sheer power of atomic weaponry, which renders the act of archiving meaning to be either tedious or vital, the production and consumption of literary or cinematic artifacts is called into question. I survey the divisions these two lines of critical inquiry share in order to establish what I find to be Godzilla's most significant message: the goal of reading Godzilla as a stand-in the nuclear event is never to *destroy* it but to *debate* its meaning from countless perspectives. The same can then be said for all language in the years following the dropping of The Bomb. Disagreement over the meaning of the signifier, in this case a lizard standing three-stories tall, despite the hurling of missives from respective bunkers, reminds one of the potency in such exchanges. Amidst the rubble of words, I argue, is a simple reminder that criticism has no victor, only the endless deferral of obliteration and the privileging of negotiations over silence.

Godzilla: Making Meaning out of the Monster

Godzilla is inseparable from the atomic Bomb. The giant lizard, an amalgamation of the nuclear event and the primal myths of Japanese lore, first began stomping on Japanese citizens in Ishiro Honda's *Gojira* (1954). From there, the monster was re-made into an American version and quickly grew into a global sensation.[73] The fire-breathing mug has appeared on everything from lunch boxes to formal dinnerware. Over the course of the lengthy film series, the message of the films has shifted; topics have ranged from the mundane to the most pressing, influenced by a multitude of cultural anxieties spanning over fifty years (as we shall see in the examples I have chosen). The crisis of representation and criticism which follow the close of World War II shapes the fate of Godzilla. Like the nuclear event, like The Bomb itself, Godzilla undergoes a variety of paradoxical associations and acquires new meaning over the years. Yet within the

nature of each of these elements (Godzilla, The Bomb), there is something un-representable that is nevertheless continually articulated. At the heart rests a nuclear origin, an explosive moment that, not unlike the Nietzschean adage "God is Dead," forces the twentieth century subject to confront how they value collective narratives in the face of mutually assured destruction. Making of meaningfrom the monster across the decades, though superficially covering a range of topical concerns, is a persistent return to the trouble of making meaning at all in a world exposed to images of nuclear capability.

Reading Godzilla as a "nuclear text" subsequently leads many critical voices of the beast to retreat to familiar paradigms. In various cases, the films are interpreted as intimately linked to a vast psychological, social, or historical narrative; Godzilla itself is incorporated into a "meaningful" trajectory. For these scholars, archiving remains relevant, despite its tenuous position at the mercy of a theoretical atomic apocalypse. The branch of criticism that encouraged these kinds of readings was widely felt in Nuclear Criticism as well as in scholars who try to uncover the meaning of one of Japan's most iconic creature. This approach is at its core a reconnection of the representation to the thing-itself. It refuses to allow "nuclear texts" to fall into nihilism by filling the potential void with substantial events, narratives, and projected Truths.

Interpretations along these lines have often involved diagnosing the people who created or suffered from The Bomb and those who enjoy (fear?) watching the resultant Godzilla films. This psychoanalytic approach seeks to re-establish a cause-and-effect, a teleology that seemed thoroughly at first dislodged in the chaotic moment of nuclear explosions. Following the Freudian model of a deterministic unconscious, as well as a Jungian model of collective psychosis, these works attempt to understand Godzilla as a visual condensation of our greatest anxieties, frequently overlooking the conscious, constructed nature of the narratives themselves.

117

Authors in this vein insist Godzilla is our way of coping with The Bomb through an expression of our deficiencies and deepest neurosis. Barash and Lipton, for example, in *The Caveman and the Bomb*, locate in nuclear discourse a childish mentality towards "wargasm" (Barash and Lipton, 44). The book advocates "curing" this mentality through various means. The Bomb, for Barash and Lipton, is comprehended through well-worn psychoanalytic terms such as "phallus" and "womb." To some degree, this serves as an effort to codify an otherwise unfathomable event and classify it as expressive output among troubled individuals. Likewise, Godzilla has been read by various scholars as an expression of stunted growth, youthful stomping and perverse destruction. *All Monsters Attack* (1969), directed by original *Gojira* director Ishiro Honda, can be interpreted along these lines. A young boy Ichiro, dealing with bullying in school and a neglectful father, escapes to Monster Island in the realm of dreams and must overcome his fears to emerge from the attack unscathed and solve his real troubles at home. In similar fashion, speaking at the University of Kansas conference, Barak Kushner interprets Godzilla "like a social catharsis, aiding individuals in venting their long-repressed fears and anger" (Kushner, 44). WGodzilla and The Bomb thus supply direct answers for those living through a deeply troubling crisis in the aftermath of Hiroshima.

Supporting a parallel goal, certain authors read Godzilla as a stand-in for The Bomb through a myth-and-symbol lens. Spencer Weart examines at length the symbolic value attached to "nuclear texts," such as Einstein's talismanic sign $E = MC^2$. He finds discourse surrounding the concept of the nuclear to be a variable junkyard of signification and then meticulously re-constructs meaning from the pieces scattered across Western history. He calls these "old, autonomous features of our society, our culture, and our psychology" (Weart, 421). Mark Anderson's reading of Godzilla unearths treasures from a common heap, seizing from the film a

message he argues we have long been hoarding there: "Nature itself, the definition and source of Japanese purity, has been rendered monstrous and impure" (Anderson, 33). Anderson and Weart consider the "nuclear text" as an artifact comprised of specific meanings. It is the critic's job to make these claims through rigorous location of the meaning in question. In so doing, the reader will once again comprehend a world previously gone mad and restored to order by the critic; in truth, my essay is hardly exempt from such a process. I read *Godzilla and Mothra: The Battle for Earth* (1992) with an approach that echoes many of these critical concerns: Mothra, symbolic of Nature, is violated by Godzilla, the creation of mankind. The constant reference to "balance" might be interpreted as symptomatic of Japan's Zen philosophy; in terms of cultural history, one might find a critique of Japan's rapid industrialization at the expense of its natural splendor. Joan Bernardi, who also spoke in Kansas, espoused an approach for teaching Godzilla to students that heavily relies on an ambition she shares with these critics. She argues "familiarity with this *history* and its visual *impact* is critical to a full appreciation of Godzilla" (Bernardi, 122 emphasis mine). "Making sense" of Godzilla, studying its history and its reception, will, according to these authors, among whom I must recognize my own goals, allow one to form a cohesive narrative concerning what dropping The Bomb "really means" for Nature and society.

Examples abound of critics reading Godzilla as allegorical of social concerns. Tom Miller, interprets the Godzilla franchise as an elaborate allegory: "Godzilla represents more than the A-Bomb; Godzilla is the United States itself" (Miller). Miller pulls from the tale a political dynamic, suggesting a power struggle between the United States and Japan. In theory, from viewing *Gojira* and its sequels, one can access how the Japanese feel collectively about the United States; conversely, from watching the American re-make from 1956 featuring Raymond Burr, one can also discover the attitudes of U.S. citizens toward Japan. Yoshikuni Igarashi's

paper from *In Godzilla's Footsteps* echoes Miller's position, with only slightly different results: "Godzilla embodies… the past of pre-industrial labor conditions that persisted despite the new regime of the high-growth economy. The dark, rough surface of the monster's body resonates with memories of the bodily hardship that was common in rural Japan" (Igarashi, 95). The task for many Godzilla critics, in other words, is one of articulating what exactly Godzilla "embodies." In these terms, when one watches a film such as *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972), it is relatively easy to trace the origin of Godzilla's symbolism. In the film, aliens bring technology to Japan. Godzilla must save the world from the menace, therefore transforming into a complex symbol for native resistance rather than for mankind's nuclear ambition. According to the logic of the film, technology only produces *hakai* (destruction). Godzilla's strength comes from a mystical, primitive power within both Japan and Nature, a message also referencing the on-going conflict in Vietnam. In the aftershock of The Bomb – and one does indeed still feel the tremors – the impulse among certain critics has been to read such collective works not as ironic but as communal material, evidence of speakable Truths, a kind of survivalist need to comprehend what lies beneath the nihilistic dreams unleashed at the close of the Second World War.

It is important to note that these debates have been instigated not only by nuclear speculation but also by the so-called "culture wars" of the 1980s and 90s. On one side stood the post-structuralists, as will be discussed later in the essay, emphasizing an atomic breakdown of metaphysical systems. On the other side stood those trying to re-assert value judgment into the study of culture. Nuclear Criticism was no exception and was, in fact, one of the moments in which the extremes of each position were best revealed. Jeff Smith, for example, utilizes post-apocalyptic opportunism to call for "the reconstruction of some better metaphysics" (Smith, 133). Elsewhere, Solomon confirms a pragmatic shift, labeling the nuclear event "an epistemological

challenge to think through the consequences of our general textualization of critical knowledge, our unrelenting deconstruction of the referent, of the belief in a physical world" (Solomon, 31). Within his nuanced reading, Solomon argues one can interpret "nuclear texts" for their potentiality, their calculated likelihood of expressing reality, instead of the immediate insistence on the impossibility of the task. These value-laden readings are re-iterated in many interpretations of Godzilla as well. Susan Napier, borrowing Andrew Tudor's term "secure horror," envisions a predictable pattern emerging with Godzilla: "the forces of destruction come from outside and are vanquished" (IGF, 333). Her authoritative labeling of the formula echoes Smith and Solomon's efforts to chart a readable narrative in the after-math of the nuclear event. James Sterngold agrees: "The people wanted to lash out at what they saw as the brutality of the nuclear age. But how? Enter the puffy latex monster." All of these frameworks summon, at some level, metaphysics from a time before the allure of post-structuralism had emerged in the academy. They conjure an cohesive plot, positioning themselves as omniscient figures looking down over the unfolding logic of a society producing exactly what it needs, gradually answering questions created via cinematic works.

This resistance to the complete breakdown of meaning does not seem to have a limit to its retreat. Seeking to use the "nuclear moment" in order to articulate a more "human humanities," certain figures at the Cornell conference in 1984 evoked nostalgia for older modes of communication. McConnell saw "a post-Copernican cosmology recentered around a finite Earth with its elements of fire, air, and water; songs and chants about interconnectedness and respect for the planetary planet" (McConnell, 59); Mary Ann Caws predicted resistance to this model, warning that "no holding-together impulse is laughable, not even our desperate attempts at conversing and at singing as we can" (Caws, 70). Going significantly further than works

previously discussed, these authors would delight in the spectacle of Godzilla as a communal moment in which each member of the audience escapes the dread of The Bomb not through thinking but through a shared sensation of nuclear sublimity.

These scholars advocate reading the texts of an atomic age with a traditional lens. Unwilling to revel in meaninglessness exposed, they instead advocate the safety and security of meaning. Godzilla serves as an opportunity to define our relationship to The Bomb with enhanced clarity. The big green signifier offers a focal point around which one can determine social anxieties, the subtle movements of History, as well as rhetorical bridges between peoples. This model places Godzilla firmly in the vision of Jonathan Schell's widely-read treatise, *The Fate of the Earth* (1982):

> It is also the readers, listeners, and viewers, who while they are in the presence of a work of art are made contemporary with it and, in a way, with all other readers, listeners, and viewers, in all ages… it testifies to *our common humanity*. (Schell, 162 emphasis mine)

He adds, "Let us connect… the wholeness and meaning of life" (230). Godzilla has at various times served Schell's purpose nicely, giving scholars a chance to articulate a cohesive "wholeness" and to once again make meaning out of "nuclear texts " – and all other texts, for that matter.

Yet a resurgence of metaphysical charters among a variety of critical thinkers does not preclude interjections of uncertainty. Susan Sontag's seminal essay "The Imagination of Disaster" expresses ambivalence towards the representation of nuclear disaster. On one level, she explains away the chaos of the concept by finding within it a modern explanation: "the image derives most of its power from a supplementary and historical anxiety, also not experienced

consciously by urban life" (Sontag, 223). However, perhaps the most intriguing fact about Sontag's reading is an acknowledgment within it of *a loss of referent* that accompanies, and thus refutes, her diagnosis. She admits, despite her authoritative interpretation of why we delight in destruction, humanity is "always perilously close to insanity and unreason" (223). Unreason gives the edges of her essay an unsettling quality, undermining the determinism that appears to be at work in her prescriptive "historical anxiety." Sontag does not refuse this, walking a thin line between what she views as "twin specters": "For we live under continual threat of two equally fearful, but seemingly opposed, destinies: *unremitting banality* and *inconceivable terror*" (224). While Sontag is describing the "unremitting banality" of the modern condition as reflected in films such as *Gojira*, an endless line of signification seemingly surprised by nothing, she cannot deny the alternative analysis, one that emerges from within this banality, predicated on the very same conditions: that of a total breakdown of meaning. Sontag's position, always "very close to unreason" (and the obliteration of the line between signified and signified), manifests the gray area of criticism surrounding "nuclear texts" and the "twin specters" which make it difficult to understand fully our attraction to the Toho terror.

Godzilla is Dead: The (Un)making of Meaning

Echoing Sontag, Chon Noriega's oft-cited essay on Godzilla, "Godzilla and the Japanese Nightmare," reveals the difficulty in pinning down the exact meaning of the monster. The essay describes a "nuclear dialectic," which implicates a textual restlessness at the heart of the series. Noriega notes, "Godzilla films provide an opportunity to challenge our constructions of the Self and the Other" (Noriega, 64). Godzilla, in short, is the Other, a problematic depiction of the atomic bomb as a ruthless atrocity committed by a destructive United States to end World War II as well as the Self, an equally problematic embodiment of Japanese national strength and

"primitive power." This dialectic refuses a stable comprehension of The Bomb or its after-shocks rippling across the cultural landscape: "(The Japanese) must name (textualize) the absent cause" (72). The impossibility of the task says much about the impossibility of any naming, supported by the rise of post-structuralist theory in the academy. Still, the essay appears to resist fully diving into treating the film as bricolage or absolute play: "*Unfortunately*, Godzilla (horror) films are not perceived historically, but aesthetically" (74, emphasis mine). Noriega criticizes the "nuclear dialectic" as devoid of any meaningful purpose; the unsettled signification is dismissed as pure aestheticism, the rendering of a serious problem in unhelpful ways. What are we to do with the pure playfulness so closely knit to the Godzilla franchise?

In 1984, the keynote speaker at the Cornell conference was none other than Jacques Derrida, the forefather of a deconstructionist approach in the humanities. His presence alone drew controversy, much of which was carry-over from the "culture wars" raging simultaneously. Roger Luckhurst provides us with the historical setting by referring to one of the biggest critics of Derrida's presence in this debate, Christopher Norris: "Nowhere more obviously does Derrida propose sophistical and 'absurd' arguments, nowhere does he move closer to 'nihilist' posturing', and nowhere more plainly are literary theorists employing a 'loony' version of deconstruction than in Nuclear Criticism" (Luckhurst, 90). Lending Derrida's framework to Nuclear Criticism would, according to Norris, undermine any hope of legitimizing it in the national forum. K.K. Ruthven's attempts to provide an overview of Nuclear Criticism admit that this vein of theorizing was likely its greatest failure.[74] Regardless, Derrida did not remain silent.

His essay, "No Apocalypse, Not Now (Full Speed Ahead, Seven Missiles, Seven Missives)," is one of the most widely referenced work of Nuclear Criticism. In it, Derrida does not stray far from his theoretical bread-and-butter. The essay argues that contemplating the

nuclear event always-already relies upon a deconstructionist perspective. The nuclear event, according to Derrida, is "fabulously textual… a nuclear war has not taken place: one can only talk and write about it… a non-event" (Derrida, 23). Rather than raging against such textuality, Derrida views this as confirmation that the text overwhelms the event, that all we have to work with, all we can hope to change, is discourse itself. He warns his colleagues at the conference against trying to re-connect the signifier and signified, insisting that to do so would be reactionary and, furthermore, futile. Instead, he advises, one should take the event as an opportunity to remember the "fabulously textuality" of all parts of human life. One of his closing lines shuts the book on Nuclear Criticism with authoritative finality: "Deconstruction… belongs to the nuclear age" (27). In truth, after this essay, the inverse became plausible – the nuclear age might well belong to deconstructionists.

Certain readings of Godzilla, albeit less prevalent than those historicizing or diagnosing the text and its reception, retain Derrida's proclamation. Theodor Bestor, in his epilogue to the collection from the conference on Godzilla's influence, echoes the French theorist's approach, adding, "Like any good symbol, (Godzilla) travels well and keeps company with many, many meanings" (Bestor, 201). Godzilla critics echo these sentiments on occasion, admitting that, when it comes to Godzilla, play is unavoidably the thing. The monster will forever be open-ended, allowed to mean anything and everything at once. William Tsutsui, the leading expert on Godzilla's influence, succumbs to a Derridean turn: "The creature remains ever available as a metaphor, ever compliant to interpretation and appropriation" (Tsutsui 2006, 11); he cites Peter B. High's apt description of the beast as "the perfect floating, empty metaphor" (207). Like Derrida, Tsutsui depicts Godzilla as belonging to the same age that produced deconstruction as well as the nuclear event (in which order is dependent on how closely one follows Derrida's

logic). Tsutsui's methodology consistently pulls the rug out from under itself. His unwillingness to treat the subject matter as "overly-serious" reminds one of deconstruction's self-cannibalizing form: "Overanalyzing and over-intellectualizing can rob the monster of the unbridled exuberance, the devil-may-care abandon that is his greatest appeal. Don't worry, be stompy" (213). This playfulness allows us to appreciate Godzilla, and vicariously our depictions of The Bomb, for all of their textual freedoms, their ability to side-step any and all concrete depictions or ready political conclusions.[75] This playfulness is not without ethical risks. To atomize meaning is, in various cases, to lose sight of real-world ramifications and to lose the timbre of seriousness that makes criticism relevant for the majority of readers, criticism which might instead aid these individuals in resisting an array of oppressive ideologies being passed down through "harmless" Godzilla products.

Despite ethical concerns, those seizing the nuclear trope persistently relish in textual freedom. Jean Baudrillard, for one, uses the "nuclear" to articulate his broader critical agenda:

> The atomic shadow, the only one left to us: not the sun's shadow, nor even the shadows of Plato's cave, but the shadow of the absent, irradiated body, the delineation of the subject's annihilation of the disappearance of the original. (Baudrillard 1992, 105)

The nuclear event completely changed our imagination, Baudrillard argues, and thus the connection between body and representation, origin and text, is forever destroyed. He supports this claim through poetic liberties taken with the atomic weapon. Later, critic Akira Lippit employs the trope in a similar fashion. *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)* [2005] interrogates the impact of the nuclear event, hoping it provides a way to help us better grasp our postmodern condition. It is again unclear which comes first, The Bomb or Derrida, or whether a physical

bomb was even required to initiate this metaphorical exercise; Lippit, however, renders such questions mute. He considers The Bomb to be part-and-parcel of the victory of text over event. He sees the atomic light, manifested in cinematic terms, as a signifier for "the end of history… a hypervisibility that renders the world blind, for an ecstatic instant *colorless*" (Lippit, 102). Lippit's reading re-enacts a Derridean Nuclear Criticism by insisting the nuclear event can only be understood through its aesthetic potentiality. As with Baudrillard, the shadow is all. The trace of humanity is what remains of a world figuratively exploded. All readings, in sum, are shadow-readings, without a chance of reclaiming the human reality that has been lost in the process.

Yet it must be recalled that Derridean Nuclear Criticism is not apolitical, just as Derrida himself was hardly apolitical in orientation. Derrida's "No Apocalypse, Not Now" emphasizes the idea of speed in order to argue that the supreme goal of such criticism must be to slow things down and stop texts from haphazardly (explosively) colliding with ill-advised meanings. Gillian Brown too recognizes the devastating consequences of a reactionary reading of the nuclear event:

> As long as our concerns about nuclear holocaust maintain the logic of sequence, they retain this scenario of the wagered self… the difficulty in which feminism is placed, the predicament which we all face, implies that perhaps we should be less concerned with what the nuclear annihilates *than with what nuclear rhetoric re-produces*. (G. Brown, 299 emphasis mine)

Pointing to the "logic of sequence" in official discourse surrounding nuclear armament and the willingness of intellectuals to reproduce this logic, Brown echoes Derrida in refusing to fight speedily against terrifying words, such as the promotion of nuclear war by government bodies,

with still more faster words, such as the symbolic connection of "femininity" with "peace." They insist we slow down. Deconstruction serves Nuclear Criticism best, they would argue, when it is pushing against the grain, urging us to reconsider how we articulate Truths to one another while exposing our over-willingness to trust texts that are secretly devastating. These scholars, in reference to Godzilla, would contend that viewing the monster as embodying "American aggression" or a "Japanese national mythos" or any other host of meanings runs the risk of advocating a reactionary, oppressive, and imminently flawed logic.

Aaron Gerow echoes Derrida's concerns at the conference "In Godzilla's Footsteps." Though far less controversial, his contribution forces one to consider once overlap between Godzilla commentators and Nuclear Critics. Like Brown, Baudrillard, and Lippit, Gerow is interested in the post-structuralist potential arising from nuclear texts. The "fabulous textuality" of the monster opens possibilities for conceptualizing the nuclear event and the world left in its wake: "Godzilla certainly is an intertextual beast… intertextual precisely because it has always broken free of attempts to enclose its semiotic wanderings in a single text… (critics ought to) *celebrate this wandering textuality*" (Gerow, 63 emphasis mine). Godzilla's resistance to circumscribed meaning, and its ability to absorb multiple perspectives, can be read as symptomatic of all texts in an atomic age. This should not discourage us, Gerow writes, but rather encourage us to open our untapped creative reservoirs - in fact, it may account for Godzilla's status as a beloved icon. Gerow closes with a warning to his fellow attendees:

> We, as scholars, must be careful of where our spectatorship places us in the continuing struggle over control of the meaning of the text. We should be wary of which rays our methodological devices project, less we turn our *kaiju* (monster

films) into manageable objects and miss out on the deliriously unstable pleasure
of wandering through the variety of intertexts and wrestling with monsters. (80)

If all texts that contemplate the nuclear event are, in essence, objects of pure aesthetic speculation, Godzilla grants us an opportunity with which to "romp around a little more" (64). We can explore our greatest fears, flex our historicizing muscles, and feel free to roll our eyes or cling to the arm of a charitable friend. There may be hope yet to love The Bomb. It has given us anew the gift of imagination, a chance to stop "over-intellectualizing" for once and indulge in baser instincts of play.

Though I share certain metaphysical ambitions with the scholars discussed in the previous section, I also choose to borrow the deconstructive perspective on occasion. In *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1965), a re-make of the Japanese version, King Kong and Godzilla are rather improbably brought into contact with one another (the reason is not particularly clear – or relevant, for that matter). The film flaunts its connection to "publicity," deconstructing its own message through campiness. The Pacific Pharmaceutical Co., run by a clownish CEO, creates the spectacle by bringing the two towering lugs into contact. The audience is repeatedly reminded of this event as a sheer "publicity stunt." The American reporter, when explaining the convoluted plot, says with tongue firmly in cheek: "One thing we're sure of – they will produce one giant advertisement campaign." Television sets, binoculars, and juxtaposing news footage consistently frame the film. At one point, the CEO of the company flips a coin to see who will win the battle, shattering any heavy social weight that may have been connected to the final outcome; in another scene, as two young men carry King Kong to face Godzilla with balloons and wire, one smiles, forgetting for a moment the grim fate that has been forecasted for Japan, and exclaims: "Great publicity!" The film itself signals the potential critic to dig for meaning at their peril. Attempting

to read King Kong as solely an allusion to "America" and Godzilla as referring to "Japan" seems stretched at best, and self-defeating at worst.

Similar post-structuralist readings often hide troublesome messages. In *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* (1991), one could point to its disregard for narrative structure or the self-referential moment when the viewer meets the protagonist, a writer of science fiction who wants to escape the folly of the genre – by (wink, wink) interviewing a man who claims to have found a "real dinosaur." But this style of reading has the potential to overlook meaning-making that is ethically disconcerting. At the height of "Japan Inc.," the Japanese boom that saw the country emerge as a seemingly viable threat to the United States' status as the number one economy in the world, *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* was released. One can subsequently find an undercurrent of hyper-nationalism in the text. Godzilla is revealed to have once saved Japan during the Second World War, positioning the monster as an empowered mascot for the country. It was, the film contends, Godzilla that first made the "miracle economy" in Japan possible. The villains of the film, meanwhile, are three Americans who have returned to erase Godzilla from history in order to reclaim global dominance. The film can be read as struggling to come to terms with Japanese "power" and re-casting the nuclear event as both a blessing and a curse. Godzilla, standing in once again for The Bomb, causes mass suffering and terror in the black-and-white footage set during World War II but is later seen as a boon, allowing Japan to become a global economic force. The political message exhibited in *Godzilla vs. Ghidorah* reveals a problematic ethics. The film's campiness and raw textuality, if embraced wholesale, masks a questionable narrative revision of Japanese national identity or, elsewhere, an essentialist portrayal of "Japan" hiding Western anxieties towards Japanese fascism, carried over from World War II and made manifest once again in the midst of global competition. How one elects to read these films – indeed, all

texts in an atomic era – challenges us as one must straddle a line between critical self-effacement and pragmatic self-reflection.

<p align="center">*Reading Godzilla as a "Nuclear Text"*</p>

The devastating tsunami of 2011, and resultant crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant, immediately placed Godzilla back in the media spotlight. Peter Wynn Kirby composed a response in the *New York Times,* entitled "Japan's Long Nuclear Disaster Film." According to Kirby's assessment, this time, due to the sheer magnitude of the event in question, no cinematic representation is required to activate political exigency or anti-nuclear sentiment. Kirby writes, "We don't need a disaster film to bring out the nuclear contradictions of Japanese society." In brief, Godzilla is dead. It is at precisely such a moment, I would respectfully contest, that debates over how one reads Godzilla, and all "nuclear texts," come back to life to remind one of the value in critical conversation *as an ends to itself*.

After all, it seems there will always be a politically expedient example of nuclear power run amuck. If it is not anxieties toward North Korea, it will be a sudden meltdown; if it is not a meltdown, it will be a terrorist group "potentially" possessing the capability to construct these weapons. Godzilla, in contrast, is an icon that has withstood the tests of time. It offers up a material text around which we might converse, designated for self-questioning and the proposal of solutions (however far-fetched or one-sided), and yes, even the levity of distraction. Godzilla is a "nuclear text" that resists hermeneutic rigidity. Unlike 24 hour news cycles, it does not privilege one position over another. And, perhaps most importantly, Godzilla gives substance to a concept that is itself elusive, The Bomb. While nuclear power is shrouded in secrecy, frequently forgotten or mis-understood by the general public, Godzilla could not be more

<p align="center">131</p>

extroverted. While discourse surrounding the nuclear seems to fall into hushed whispers, even silence, Godzilla will not be ignored. And while undoubtedly the remains from Japan's most recent disaster will eventually give way to new things for the archipelago, I presume Godzilla will not exit quietly.

In surveying the two strains of Godzilla criticism, and aligning them directly with approaches taken among Nuclear Critics, there is a sense their distinctions mirror a schism between those who continue to archive the world in ways they see as "meaningful" and, on the other hand, those who recognize a fatal flaw in the very act of archiving. One might ask, upon seeing the fissure running throughout Nuclear Criticism and criticism of Godzilla alike, why I should even bother engaging in such a polemic. Even if Godzilla is not dead, one could reasonably deduce, any hope of agreeing upon the monster's meaning certainly is.

Peter Schwenger's work, *Letter Bomb: Nuclear Holocaust and the Exploding Word*, attempts to deal with this interpretive crisis. The methodology Schwenger articulates allows the critical reader to avoid further dispersing these critical particles, instead adopting deterrence, that most optimistic of nuclear tropes. Schwenger finds an opportunity to engage in this exercise in "nuclear texts," such as David Brin's *The Postman* and Russell Hoban's *Riddley Walker*. Though these texts are indeed deconstructive, opening themselves in order to challenge a prescribed meaning, they do so in a way that is itself not prescriptive but encourages a democratic ethos. While Derridean Nuclear Criticism is too often grounded on negation as solely the absence of meaning, and narrative Nuclear Criticism too frequently arrives at naïve closure, one might step back and view Godzilla through the pragmatic work of dialogue. In truth, "nuclear texts" do not provide answers nor do they establish resolutions to the trials of our times. What they do provide, Schwenger informs the reader, is a chance to debate and, more fundamentally, a chance to

communicate with one another in a world in which official discourse numbs the underlying complexity of the ideas involved. Schwenger writes: "If language is structure, it can help us to make the world, to make something even of its unmaking" (Schwenger, 52). One must refuse to negate the schisms in Nuclear Criticism and the analysis of Godzilla films but recall, in a common sense fashion, their preeminent value: cultural criticism is a means to keep people thinking, talking, and co-existing with one another. Schwenger celebrates what he labels as "the sacrificial text" (87), the text which figuratively implodes upon itself in order to defer certainty and with it, the horrors of silence. Godzilla has become a sacrificial icon along these lines. Thus the monster, in line with what I have called the cosmopolitan Gothic, rather than succumbing to disingenuous resolutions, holds in perfect tension the competing impulses of modernity. And so, the monster's recurring death, in films and in popular opinion, should be taken with both a grain of salt and a timbre of seriousness. This allows the interpreter of Godzilla to retain potency as one of the few collective spaces around which a discussion concerning nuclear disaster continues in earnest.

The Gizmo Effect

"Japan Inc." and the American Nightmare

In the 1980s, Americans confronted what came to be known as "the Japan Problem." The post-war Japanese economy had been growing at an exponential rate, widely regarded in American discourse as a "miracle"; the archipelago's economic strength precipitated anxious whispers Japan might soon overthrow America as the world's so-called "number one" economy. The perception Japanese companies were investing heavily in American real estate resurrected Hearstian fears of yet another "yellow peril." Japan was subsequently demonized in American discourse, a phenomenon the lexicon described controversially as "Japan bashing."[76] This chapter will examine the two dominant forms through which "Japan Inc." was articulated as a source of anxiety for the American audience. "Japan Inc.," framed by tropes of the supernatural, came to signify a deeply-felt unease over the values of American-style capitalism in the late stages of its development. I will thus seek to understand how important variations to the horror genre, and its cross-disciplinary applications, emerged around the increasingly complicated task of representing "Japan Inc." for American audiences.

A gradual transition away from Communism as the predominant threat to Americans did not seem to alleviate portrayals of economic fear. Vilified "Commies" were slowly interchanged with sneaky "Japs," cunning and unwieldy in their threat to the American way of life.[77] Allusions to this transfer in popular books on Japan (fictional and non-fictional) are innumerable, ranging from the suggestive to the overt. Pat Choate, along with other neo-conservative writers, utilized this transition to test the mettle of his readers: "What are the demands of patriotism in a world where global economic rivalry has replaced the Cold War?" (Choate, 213). Christopher

Wood further antagonizes: "With the end of the cold war and with its middle class mired in the worst downturn since the 1930s, America needed a new enemy" (Wood 1992, 16 – 7). The copious references to a nascent war between capitalist superpowers suggest American capitalism is habitually dependent on an alternative, demonized economic system in order to re-articulate and re-define itself.[78]

In this chapter, I will examine two modes used to express the post-Cold War conversion: "Japan Inc." as the feared Other and "Japan Inc." as the feared Same. A more familiar paradigm, "Japan Inc." as a feared Other, reflects "Japan Inc." as a monstrosity, as sheer excess, as unbridled capitalism run amuck. Linked to a rise in economic nationalism, this mode exploits an anxiety towards difference and the mystique of cultural Others. American consumers are told to retreat back into their isolationist bunkers and stave off the foreign invasion. In sharp contrast, "Japan Inc." as the feared Same expresses the monsters of "Japan Inc." as pastiche rather than authentic objects of fear. This anxiety is based on a fear of sameness, stemming from the first Bush administration's claim Japan was "just like us," a revelation that, with the loss of an imaginary "East," the imagined "West" would likewise become transparent.[79] This phenomenon, what I term here as "the Gizmo effect," turns past the expulsion of the monster in the traditional sense of confronting the Other and destroying it. Therefore, supernatural depictions of "Japan Inc." either edify, in the first mode, a recognizable modern monster; or, inverted, they expose the spectral echoes of a postmodern condition.

To start this conversation, one must analyze these two modes of monstrous excess as they posited the definitive traits of an imaginary "Japan Inc." Each mode utilized the hyperbole of the fantastic. Theoretically, creating "Japan Inc." as the Other allowed the American spectator to re-

assert a "traditional core," a *terra firma* that had been lost as well as an anticipatory nostalgia for the City on the Hill promises of American capitalism. The first section of this chapter will consequently address the intersection of popular cinema with the plethora of popular economics texts concerning the Japanese model that arose in the mid-1980s, teasing out the common thread of abject Otherness. This, however, was not Orientalism in Edward Said's well-known sense of the term; in its place, the form began to show signs of slipping into a different phenomenon entirely.

The chapter will conclude by probing into this slippage, exemplified by Joe Dante's *Gremlins* (1984), to reveal how "Japan Inc." grants American audiences an alternative breed of monster, one challenging older forms of cultural representation as well as fundamental notions of monstrosity. This is a suggestive move away from the usual formula of Self/Other routinely comprising "Japan bashing" (indeed, Orientalism at large) into a more complex representation: the rise of an Other that is a mere simulation of Otherness. As theorist Jean Baudrillard writes, "The elevation of a value to universality is a prelude to its becoming transparent, which itself is a prelude to its disappearance" (Baudrillard 1992, 105). Problematic discourse surrounding the so-called New World Order, the hastily presumed coming of a universalized capitalism, was accompanied, in Dante's film, by a suggestive collapse of the binaries previously defining global politics. *Gremlins* thus presents to the audience a substitute, one indicating a significant shift in American discourse from the paradigm of a demonized "Japan" toward "the Gizmo effect," an anxiety monsters might vanish altogether from the global community.

Excess and Enigma: A Camera without Film

The "Japan Problem" was routinely demarcated by the supernatural (i.e., "Japan" as outside of the natural, a problematic signifier of pure excess); Slavoj Žižek recurrently labels these tendencies as the "stupid first impression." In the 1980s, "Japan" as a feared Other appeared in the popular economics sections of bookstores. Countless works were written about "Japan Inc.," many of them becoming bestsellers. These texts combine the language of fear and assumed cultural Truths in exceedingly eclectic ways. The rhetoric of the day remained infused with Reaganesque populism, "turning politics into myth and religion" (Erickson 1985: 100). The heightened language of other-worldly visions carried over into pages preaching economic nationalism.

The strongest example of this phenomenon has since become widely recognized as a cornerstone of "Japan bashing," Karel van Wolferen's *Enigma of Japanese Power* (1990). Van Wolferen's work explores Japanese-style capitalism as the disconcerting foundation of Japanese society. His scathing critique of "Japan Inc." illustrates a belief that the archipelago's economic success is actually a mutation of the fundamental promises of capitalism, read here as a World System from which Japan has deviated. The language of the supernatural permeates van Wolferen's work, elevating Japanese capitalism to the status of a pagan religion, indoctrinating its misguided victims:

> Communist ideology has [...] *spawned* a class of exegeters and a *pseudo-priesthood*. It invests those who use it with the greatest power of *religious fervor* expended in the name of a superior goal. In some ways Japanism is an even more effective surrogate religion than communism, because it is less examined, more taken for granted and more *inescapable*. (Van Wolferen, 274 emphasis mine)

Van Wolferen discredits what he labels "Japanism" as an inauthentic substitution for religion - in this case, the "sacred principles" of American modes of capitalism. He employs vitriolic terms such as "spawned" and "pseudo-priesthood," imagery conjuring "Japan" as a deviant cult. Previously, of course, Communism was portrayed in similar terms. Billy Graham once declared, "My own theory about Communism is that it is masterminded by Satan. I think there is no other explanation for the tremendous gains of Communism in which they seem to outwit us at every turn, unless they have supernatural power" (Fitzgerald, 130 – 31). Yet "Japan Inc." is evoked as being even more diabolical, dehumanized with deeper levels of secrecy, infiltrating the lives of innocent Americans. Even for the authoritative van Wolferen, Japanese capitalism appears to be "inescapable," a mysterious force outside of reality with the potential to possess American citizens, regardless of their will. In the rendering of "Japan Inc." as a satanic cult, the cult lacks any agenda, manifesting satanic corruption as a ubiquitous "fervor" rather than as a direct combatant (even Communists, after all, were read as meaningful, even if that meaning was despicable). Following the populist lead of "common sense" combined with sensational rhetoric, these economists elevate "Japan Inc." as an entity far more penetrating than the usual suspects.

On a nearby bookshelf, horror fiction, in ways similar to that of popular economics, was likewise providing a demonology to explain the rise of the Japanese economy. Graham Masterton's *Tengu* is a horror novel based on a simple premise: the Japanese, still enraged over Hiroshima, have decided to unleash a supernatural force (an adaptation of a figure from Japanese mythology, the *tengu*) upon the unfortunate victims of America, in an attempt at revenge "through economic attack and through any other means at their disposal" (Masterton, 374). The force in question takes the form of evil Japanese hit-men, donning Noh masks from Japanese traditional theatre. Masterton's imagined invasion of America by these bizarre creatures,

embodiments of "Japan Inc.," is as extreme in its disregard for sexual mores as it is in its graphic scenes of gore. One Japanese temptress whispers, "We are a people possessed" (320). The force behind this enemy goes beyond any line of rationality – it is mystical, penetrating, and all-consuming. Jerry, the American veteran who serves as the protagonist, faces the monsters with terror:

> For the first time in his life he was up against something completely unstoppable; something which refused to obey any of the laws of nature… this thing, whatever it was, was supernatural, a ghost or a ghoul or a zombie, a thing that was undead and couldn't be killed by any conventional weapons, or defeated by any conventional prayers. (298)

This demonology, the myth of unsavory agents doling out the violence of Japanese capitalism, follows no rules. No law or morality could hope to contain it.

Van Wolferen's monstrous sentiency is described, in equally ominous terms, as "the System." "The System" functions beyond man's control. For van Wolferen, unlike Christianity, or the supposedly synonymous American capitalism, this deterministic authority is relentless in its amoral appetite. "The System – ubiquitous, intangible, enveloping, absorptive – has seen a threat and neutralized it" (52). Van Wolferen writes of "the System" as an organizing force based solely on self-perpetuation: "If the System is guided by an overriding, sacrosanct aim, it is its own survival" (433). He perceives "Japan Inc." to be nihilistic, expressing itself only through "ideas divorced from the context… the outside world had become a bazaar… disjointed, ill-digested bits and pieces of knowledge… unregulated by transcendental concepts" (239 – 244). "The System" therefore obeys no logic (ironically, for a "System" supposedly empty at its heart, van Wolferen is able to articulate its inner-workings with a high degree of certainty). R. Taggart

Murphy, who reflects in *The Weight of the Yen* that he counts meeting van Wolferen "among the most significant events in my life," describes "the System" with correspondingly excessive overtones, calling any study of its processes "Theory F – *F* standing for 'fear'"; its intricate network hides "masked coercion" and give "Japan Inc." a "surreal, theatrical aspect" (Murphy 19; 56). In essence, van Wolferen and followers such as Murphy view Japanese capitalism as inducing a mindless trance in its victims.[80]

Van Wolferen likewise interprets 'The System' as entirely without definable purpose: "There is no political core to this geographical centre… like groping in the proverbial bucket of eels […] elusive […] things are rarely what they seem" (van Wolferen, 27). "Japan" offers an icon for Western anxiety moving into a New World Order. However, to bypass any true self-reflection that might occur during this event, van Wolferen distinguishes "Japan Inc." as entirely comprised of gestures and symbols slipping past their referents. The Japanese brand of capitalism immediately eludes any form it is assumed to take. One only glimpses the shadowy shape of it, floating over the edge of the Pacific, a center-less and self-carnivorous entity.

As van Wolferen demonstrates, "Japan Inc." served as a convenient imaginary space onto which one could project the ills of late capitalism, or any critical discourse proposing that meaning is rapidly vanishing from modern life, or any host of talking points involving nostalgia for a more "human" way of life. The apocalyptic language used to describe Japanese capitalism masks anxieties about globalization and the impact of a true open market in which the entire world participates democratically. The same group of writers who once argued for free trade in the face of Communism find themselves creating a new foible, against which an exceptional American capitalism might re-assert itself, even violently. An unleashed globalization in the 1980s, fully realized, was immediately in danger of losing the particulars of the American model.

In turn, what remains for van Wolferen as well as fictional narrators such as Masterton is the last hope that perhaps American values, the soul missing from an evil Japanese capitalism, will urge American citizens to rescue the world from the very tenets of a free market into which many had invested everything.

Signs of this fear date back as far as the late 1960s, when anxiety toward the Japanese "miracle" first entered popular circulation. In Roman Polanski's film *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), this "miracle" of Japanese economic growth originates in the seed-bed of chaos, Satan's den. This horror film tells the story of Guy and Rosemary Woodhouse, an aspiring actor and his beautiful wife, as they attempt to climb the rungs of higher society in New York City. In the early stages of the film, Guy (John Cassavetes) appears in a commercial for the Japanese company Yamaha, peddling motorcycles. He is clearly linked to the Japanese corporation he is asked to represent. The shared motivation between Japan's upstart economy and Guy's career aspirations are laid out for the spectator by Polanski: pursuit of the almighty dollar, at any cost. Guy even allows Roman, the disciple of the Devil, to blind another man in order to then take his part in a play. Yamaha, in turn, runs advertisements during the Pope's visit to Shea stadium, depicted as a gratuitously commercial event. Guy, referring to himself as "Mr. Yamaha" on several occasions over the course of the film, symbolically aligns with "Japan" as both sell their soul for immediate material success.

The figurative tie between the Japanese economy and Guy runs even deeper than shared financial aspirations. In the closing scene, a stereotypical Japanese salaryman emerges, consulting with Roman in the corner of the room. Importantly, his presence has gone unrecognized in the rest of the film, invisible in all preceding shots of the coven. The assertion by "Japan bashers" that Japanese capitalism is a "quiet, intangible, silent" force is re-affirmed by

the mute figure (his only words the obedient declaration: "Hail Satan!"). Capitalism is revealed to be a mere cover-up. Shallow greed is not a result of a "good old boys" social network, as it initially appears to be, but is symptomatic of something far more sinister. Rosemary's belief a corrupt outside force will claim her baby neglects an unnerving reality, one in which late capitalism is not a creation of man that has grown out of his control and can be "re-tamed"; rather, it is an offspring bestowed upon him by a genuinely demonic power. Guy and the Japanese salaryman cannot help but serve the whims of a deterministic force far more occult than economic.

Still, Polanski is clearly condemning capitalism in its entirety, revealing the deviant side of any form it might take, as opposed to "bashers" such as van Wolferen, who rely on distinguishing Japanese capitalism and its enigmatic essence. Thus "Japan" as feared Other oscillates with "Japan" as feared Same. In *Rosemary's Baby*, the Japanese figure unveils his lack of meaning or purpose with the simple act of taking pictures on a camera without film.[81] The rituals of Roman and Guy are all aimed at the common purpose of literally conceiving of Satan's child as the corruption of innocence. In contrast, the ritual of this particular Japanese figure mirrors that of Rosemary herself (Mia Farrow) at the closing of the film. In other words, they each enter into the discourse of the coven with purely theatrical roles, signifying nothing but the gesture itself.

As early as 1968, "Japan Inc." blurs with "America Inc.," expressing itself through postmodern gesticulations without a core meaning. Rosemary, after violently resisting the wishes of the coven, eventually submits to being the demon child's mother, her final service the rocking of the cradle while she stares off into nowhere. She knows now, of course, her baby is the spawn of Satan and her actions merely perpetuate "the System." Nevertheless, she continues to go

through superficial motions, merging with a "System" whose "overriding, sacrosanct aim," like that of van Wolferen's Japanese capitalism, is "its own survival." By the same token, the Japanese figure, who opens the scene by absent-mindedly grinning and showing Rosemary his camera is without film, concludes the scene by busily snapping away, complacent in an equally superficial "System." The gesture rings hollow, without any intent or potential, without film to justify it as recording any actual event; playing upon the crude caricature of Japanese tourists, his goal cannot even be read, in stereotypical fashion, as a sinister acquisition of information concerning American industry. The salaryman and Rosemary transform into pure excess, the senseless movements echoed back and forth between Rosemary rocking the cradle and the "miracle" Japanese economy eagerly taking meaningless photographs evoke a dreadful sense of inescapability in both, posing for and taking pictures *that could never develop*. As will be discussed later in the chapter, theorist Roland Barthes - much like Polanski – locates a realm of pure gesture in an imaginary "Japan": "It is the flash of a photograph one takes very carefully (in the Japanese manner) but having neglected to load the camera with film" (Barthes, 83). This terrifying post-dialectic is made manifest in encounters with "Japan Inc."

Degree of Difference: A Binary Broken Down

The distinction between "Japan Inc." as feared Other and "Japan Inc." as feared Same can be further elaborated through comparisons between depictions of America's economic system and Japanese capitalism, comparisons readily slipping into details not of a degree of kind (Us vs. the supernatural Them) but of a degree of difference. Japanese modern society, in the aspects it shares with America, has long been read with such a "degree of difference."[82] In one example, Hearn, the (in)famous romancer of Japanese culture dealt with at some length in this dissertation, commented as early as the 1890s: "In all forms of society these three kinds of pressure are

exerted to some degree; but in Japanese society, owing to inherited tendency, and traditional sentiment, their power is *tremendous*" (Hearn 1997, 232 emphasis mine).[83] Later definitions of Japanese capitalism are often not prototypical polarities, such as those found in Cold War discourse; instead, reactionary Orientalist fantasies are dependent on excess as their sole characteristic, the sole matter distinguishing them at all.[84]

Van Wolferen comments upon "common human traits" between the United States and Japan but distinguishes these as containing "an overwhelming difference of degree" (van Wolferen, 329). In one case, he suggests that "Jinmyaku (webs of influence) are much more widespread, and of incomparably greater importance, than old-boy networks of the West" (van Wolferen, 110). The focus is not on the opposition of the practice but on its severity. Van Wolferen, in this attempt to navigate such narrow rhetorical spaces, ends up emphasizing a degree of difference to such an extent one loses sight of the fact that the anxieties he is raising are aimed at nothing short of the tenets of late capitalism. Van Wolferen provides the following assessment of "the System":

> The competition among salaryman families to stock their small homes with the latest-model refrigerator, air-conditioners and stereo-sound colour television and a vast array of electrical labour-saving devices, and their tiny parking places with cars, was exactly what was needed to keep many of their firms running at full capacity. (161)

This language is reminiscent of Sinclair Lewis's satirical views of main street America. Why, one must enquire, would someone espousing American capitalism attack so bitterly the fundamental principles of the capitalist project? The entire critique hinges on the concept of excess alone, that "Japan Inc." is a version of capitalism gone too far, too extreme, having lost

144

sight of its referent. In short, it has taken the logic of capitalism to its logical conclusion. As a

final example, van Wolferen writes: "(In Japan) popular 'stars' are mass-produced: with

'careers' rarely lasting more than two years, they are a caricature of the western phenomenon of

entertainers famous merely for their fame" (177). Consequently, although American capitalism

has its short-comings for van Wolferen – celebrities famous merely for their fame – Japanese

capitalism is magnified into epic/enigmatic proportions, *a caricature of a caricature*.[85] "Japan

Inc." as a result provides one of the first truly postmodern monsters in American discourse.

This phenomenon arises in a variety of fiction from this period, including Michael

Crichton's best-selling novel *Rising Sun* (1992). Crichton acknowledges his reliance on van

Wolferen in the afterword of the text and one quickly spots his influence. The murder of a young

American woman has occurred at a Japanese corporation. Peter, a detective, acquires a security

tape of the occurrence, the only signifier "capturing" the event. This videotape affords the focal

point of the entire narrative. It is played countless times, rewound, copied, manipulated, and

forged. Its unreliable images lead Peter down several dead ends. The Japanese villain is made

into a floating signifier, a blur on celluloid. Whoever committed the crime seems to exist in

another realm, hidden in the celluloid layers comprising the replication of this event. "Japan

Inc." transforms quite literally into a simulacra, Japanese control of the VCR industry allowing

for the perpetuation of this virtual world. In juxtaposition, the reader of *Rising Sun* constantly

returns to the parallel superficiality of American culture. When referring to his ex-wife, Peter

notes: "She didn't have any core, any real substance. She was like a television set: she just

played the latest show" (Crichton, 98). "Japan Inc." and "America Inc." merge within the

artificial chambers of Hollywood.

Nonetheless, as with van Wolferen and other "bashers," this surface-level realm ultimately yields to a restored sense that the threat posed by "the System" does, in fact, exist. The narrator watches the "authentic" version of the murder tape at the climax of the novel:

> And in the glass of the conference room, we saw the shape of a man. He walked forward, appearing from the right. He entered the room, looking back once to make sure he was alone. It was Ishiguro. Very deliberately, he walked to the edge of the table, placed his hands on the girl's neck, and strangled her. (373)

Crichton restores what the novel once threatens to abolish: the face of the monster, a Japanese Other, a well-defined image for Us to fear. This familiar Other, harkening back to paradigms from the Cold War, alleviates the far more daunting chaos of simulation, prompting Peter to take better care of his daughter (as well as his country). For the majority of the novel, though, what defines "Japan Inc." for Crichton is its slippery identity, an identity based on detachment from rules governing reality, a virtual existence driving the mystery forward.

"Japan" as a feared Other, used by various popular economists as well as Crichton, draws attention to a silver-lining in the presupposition that American capitalism is decidedly not based on excess. If Americans act quickly, they argue, restoring the values of a nostalgic American economy (which, of course, never existed), then the invasive economic mutation will be diverted. But heavily constructed nostalgia regularly slips into the excess it is designed to hide, the "tinny laughter" of American culture, revealing a System based on a surfeit of superficial dreams – or, more appropriately, nightmares. In the so-called New World Order, reality can only be found in the realm of the virtual: the lack of film in *Rosemary's Baby* passes into a surplus of celluloid in

Crichton's novel. Both texts reveal an imagined New World Order where the bond between human beings and their textual representation grows increasingly unrecognizable.

At this transitional moment, anxiety reverses its outward course and recognizes the horrors of a global capitalism that has risen to absolute power, only to lurch back upon its creator as a Frankenstein for the new millennium. In these works, late capitalism returns to haunt its champion, to disturb Fukuyama's idealized "End of History." Baudrillard's book, *The Transparency of Evil*, elaborates on this theme. It was translated and made available for American readers in 1993, the apex of these economic fears towards Japan. The work concludes by describing Japan's "radical Otherness," its de-humanized essence, in one-dimensional ways analogous to the narratives examined until this point. He articulates his version of an imaginary "Japan Inc.": "This cold and painstaking efficiency… is an enigma and indeed unintelligible form… a cannibalistic form – assimilating, absorbing, aping, devouring" (Baudrillard 1993, 163-4). The key distinction to consider is that Baudrillard remains well-aware of the fact this Othering process is inherently fantastic, the product of a hyper-simulated cultural apparatus. Directly linking the popular motif of the virus at that time – primarily, AIDS and cancer – to the popular imagery of "Japan Inc.," Baudrillard orbits these concepts around a late capitalism "curing" itself of any genuine fear of the Other:

> Our society is entirely dedicated to neutrailizing otherness, to destroying the other as a natural point of reference in a vast flood of aseptic communication and interaction, of illusory exchange and contact. By dint of communication, our society develops an allergy to itself… an allergy to its own shadow. Otherness denied becomes a spectre and returns in the form of a self-destructive process. This, too, is the transparency of Evil. (139)

Torn between fear of the Other, a tendency to batten down the hatches amidst economic

nationalists, and fear of the Same (a lingering suspicion that the demon is always-already within

our collective homes), American audiences can glimpse an Other whose articulation is always-

already excessive. To quote a well-worn passage from Adorno and Horkheimer: "The perfected

similarity is the absolute difference" (Horkheimer, 116). This crucial turn brings one to the

wildly successful film *Gremlins*, a film deconstructing the supernatural terms with which the

Japanese "miracle" habitually exposes a "System" with nothing left to haunt but itself.

<p style="text-align:center;">*<u>Gremlins</u> and "America Inc."*</p>

Dante's *Gremlins* displays what happens when a small American town is introduced to a

cute Magwai named Gizmo, an invasive entity imagined from the Far East. At first, the Peltzer

family is smitten with the adorable creature, welcoming it into their quiet suburban home with

open arms. Yet the Magwai quickly breeds, transforming into a grotesque, reptilian version of its

former self and threatening to tear the town apart. Dante's incredibly popular film goes on to

revise this standard myth of Outsiders plaguing an innocent town, addressing the larger trouble

of representing monsters moving into a post-Cold War era.

Initially, the film seems to follow van Wolferen's formulaic, one-dimensional Orientalist

fantasy. Dante proclaims Gizmo's "Asianness" in the first scene, opening in a caricature of

Chinatown. Ran Peltzer, a self-proclaimed "inventor," visits a cluttered shop to find a gift for his

son, Billy. He encounters a wise sage dressed in stereotypical Asian garb, sharing fortune cookie

sophistry. In crude, broken English, the sage warns: "With Magwai comes great responsibility."

Not overly moved by this warning, Ran decides to import the old man's most prized product,

Gizmo, transporting him from the imaginary world of Chinatown into the equally imaginary suburb of Kingstown Falls, U.S.A.

The import of an Asian product into a small American town, and the reactionary terror that follows, takes its basis from the very real Orientalist hysteria that took place in the 1980s. Gizmo and the gremlins are stereotypes of Japanese capitalism, portrayed with an innate ability to mimic and a "miraculous," awe-inspiring propensity for spreading in the dark secrecy of night. Gizmo mimics the tune of Billy's keyboard and blinks to copy Billy's friend; Spike and his gang delight in the empty-headed mimicry of Disney's Seven Dwarfs call: "Hi – Ho!" The town's local drunk Larry, paranoid about an invasion, targets the electronics industry, telling Billy that "gremlins" are likely to be found hiding in "the radio you stick in your ears" (Sony Walkman, a product heavily imported from Japan). Later, in his disgust at his malfunctioning TV, Larry laments: "We should have gotten a Zenith." This alludes to the well-publicized legal dispute between Zenith and Matsushita, in which Zenith representatives claimed Matsushita was practicing "predatory pricing" and was engaged in a massive "conspiracy" against the U.S. television industry. Indeed, gremlins appear at the end of the film having taken over the television sets at the shopping mall, their faces on every screen, laughing maniacally. As this occurs, the camera briefly pans to an unusual vinyl on a sales rack entitled "Figure Control Through Asian Neurothaianetic Self Hypnotism." This record, released by notorious hypnotist "Dr. Dante," re-enforces that this film focuses on an elaborate attempt to occupy the minds of Americans. The tongue, however, is never far from cheek in *Gremlins* and "Dr. Dante," a well-documented fraud, perhaps stands in for director Joe Dante, positing that all of this fear is initiated by little more than commercial fantasy. Not unlike Baudrillard, Dante points out, with this relatively minor detail, the film's exploitative quality and its "legitimacy" as an object of

horror, a realization also applicable to the tenets of "Japan bashing" in American discourse. I therefore argue *Gremlins* is a monster movie exposing the emptiness behind the paradigm of Other and Self in which the question of who to blame for the resultant carnage (Us or Them) is profoundly unsettled.

Echoing the blatantly unbelievable mythos of an appalling Japanese invasion, American capitalism, embodied in the film's Norman Rockwell-themed Christmas season, is equally artificial. The local nemesis, Mrs Diegler, whose only purpose remains "to make money," provides a cartoonish manifestation of capitalist greed, accompanied in her strolls by exaggerated circus music. In various other scenes, one witnesses American machinery, social and technological, as laughably inefficient. This is accompanied by the hackneyed sales pitch of Ran Peltzer, peddling his useless wares. Elsewhere, ridiculous protectionist Larry's demise comes at the hand of his beloved, American-made Kentucky Harvester, driven now by the mischievous gremlins. This moment registers as unnerving for Larry as it becomes clear gremlins do not limit themselves to a national affiliation (as he assumes all along). Larry's moment of alarm does not come when he sees the monsters infiltrating his world; instead, his shock comes at the moment he sees the gremlins for what they truly are: ubiquitous, undermining even the tools assumed to be on the side of an agrarian American ethic embodied by his American-made Harvester.

The demons of capitalism feast without prejudice, thus inquiring into the necessity of designating them as belonging to a particular culture. After all, Dante's images of innocent small-town United States are always-already absurd and always-already infected by late capitalism; one need look no further than the prominence of chain stores such as Allstate Insurance and Burger King on the Main Street of Kingston Falls. Baudrillard describes the

triumph of the arrival of the New World Order and the subsequent dissolution of Others – at least, authentic Others based on degree of kind – as a tremendously destabilizing event: "We see emerging here all that we are, all the allegedly universal emblems of the human in a kind of ideal hallucination and return of the repressed, including the worst, corniest, most banal things in Western 'culture'" (Baudrillard1992, 21). The gremlins, another example of the viral motif, return to feast on a society which has unwittingly, in its quest for immunity from the Communist plague, opened itself to the far more debilitating disease, the breakdown of the binary between Us and the monster.

An eclectic mixture of mimicry and propensity for extraordinary growth ("Japan Inc.") with recklessness and lack of ethics ("America Inc.") breeds the gremlins as a composite of media-fed stereotypes. In the end, the film turns back on itself, a product of the late capitalism it appears at first to be criticizing. Dante's revised formula does not advocate, through familiar dialectics, the improvement of capitalism, as most horror films during the Cold War attempt to do. Contrastingly, the surpluses of "Japan Inc." come up against the excessive capitalism of 1950s America, haunting everything - and therefore, nothing at all. A caricature of a caricature, competing stereotypes of "Japan Inc." linked to competing stereotypes of "America Inc." What exactly, if anything, is the audience supposed to be afraid of in *Gremlins*?

Roland Barthes and the Postmodern Monster

Gremlins can be read, I argue, in direct conversation with Roland Barthes' *Empire of Signs*. The two texts speak to a cultural moment in which imagining "Japan Inc." initiates a forum for discussing the cultural formulations of a New World Order. Theorist Peter Trifonas, in his analysis of *Empire of Signs*, contends that the goal of Barthes' most controversial work is

"the possibility for a reassessment of historical methodology in relation to questions of *culture and its representation* after semiotics" (Trifonas 2001, 51 emphasis mine). "Japan," a fantasy fully acknowledged by Barthes as existing only in his mind, opens the possibility of self-recognition in the Western practice of depicting Others (and, ultimately, understanding itself). This poststructuralist shift is two-pronged in its approach: first, to recognize the groundless existence of "Japan" as a text without a core, pure illusion, pure text; second, to reveal the correspondingly groundless status of the observer who once claimed an ability to "read" other cultures, accessing their hidden Truth. Barthes famously declares at the opening of the work:

> If I want to imagine a fictive nation, I can give it an invented name, treat it declaratively as a novelistic object… I can also – though in no way claiming to represent or to analyze reality itself (these being the major gestures of Western discourse) – isolate somewhere in the world (*faraway*) a certain number of features (a term employed in linguistics), and out of these features deliberately form a system. (Barthes, 3)

This "System," composed by Barthes, is not an isolated phenomenon. In actuality, he seems to posit, Western discourse has been articulating "Japan" in this fashion since the earliest encounters and continues to do so, even unconsciously in works such as those by van Wolferen. All is myth, Barthes reports, all is fantasy. The only distinction remains an untenable degree of difference. To prove the post-structuralist essence of the form itself, and the ambitions of its author, Barthes breaks down the binary of "East/West," which he views as containing the last vestiges of Self and Other and the final traces of modern monstrosity.

Barthes, unlike van Wolferen, discerns that a degree of difference is not enough to sustain the time-worn binary of "East/West." In contrast, this suggests a crack, a slippage into the ungraspable concept of excess. He states:

> Today there are doubtless a thousand things to learn about the Orient: an enormous labor of knowledge is and will be necessary (its delay can only be the result of an ideological occultation); but it is also necessary that, leaving aside vast regions of darkness (capitalist Japan, American acculturation, technological development), a slender thread of light search out not other symbols but *the very fissure of the symbolic.* (4, emphasis mine)

The symbolic "System" is reflected back on itself in the encounter with "Japan Inc."; at this moment, at the precipice of late capitalism's triumph over all takers, Western binaries are potentially upset. The fissure between political bodies, between Word and Meaning, traces a fragile mark. Baudrillard adds, "Capitalism has cannibalized all negativity… it has unceremoniously devoured the dialectic by parodistically taking the opposing terms upon itself, by parodistically going beyond its own contradictions" (Baudrillard 1992, 52). As an example, the gremlins, puppets for the amusement of film-goers, at the end of the film start to play with their own puppets, amusing themselves while the audience sits idly by. At another point, the monsters hide among stuffed animals, merchandise already indistinguishable from the object they are supposedly selling (*Gremlins* the film). Barthes' vision reverberates in *Gremlins* deconstruction of "East/West," "Us/Monster."

At stake in the intersection of these texts (popular economics, post-structuralist theory, *Gremlins* and fictional depictions of "Japan") is a provocative movement away from Cold War discursive paradigms. Perhaps, Dante seems to suggest, there are no longer alternatives to a

153

capitalist way of life. The hyper-real remainders fulfill what Ran has touted all along, but in ways far more disquieting than he could have ever imagined: "Fantastic ideas for a fantastic world." Ran's project undoubtedly failed to consider the ramifications of a glut of fantasy. Thus, in the end, the comparison between Japanese capitalism and American capitalism signifies nothing but exaggeration. It is banter, words for their own sake, pure repetition, the recycling of staged "American values." *Gremlins*, masquerading as a formulaic horror film, projects these anxieties onto the big screen.

Jeffrey Cohen, in his *Monster Theory*, asks, "Do monsters really exist? Surely they must, for if they did not, how could we?" (Cohen 1996: 20). This explains in some ways van Wolferen's grasping, and the grasping of most "bashers," for "Japan Inc." as a feared Other. To reconstitute "Japan" as outside of the natural might reassure audiences there are still things hiding under the bed and that one must remain vigilant. We have explored a number of figures in previous chapters who try to institute similar reassurances. This attempts to re-constitute the dialectic, swerving around a highly-anticipated "end of history," and accomplish the second segment of Ran's personal motto: "I make the illogical logical." This kind of model fits neatly within the horror genre and its emphasis on a degree of kind. The horror film in particular ritualizes this process, transforming it into an easily digestible form: "the monster is difference made flesh… dialectical Other" (Cohen 1996, 7). The innocent subject encounters what exists beyond itself, is terrified by its myriad of possibilities, and thus returns to itself a more fully developed subject (the surface-level formula of *Tengu* and *Rising Sun*, among countless others). However, as Cohen acknowledges, "the monster exists only to be read" (4). The frightening potential beneath this statement is that the monster might one day cease to mean anything. And so, when the act of reading ceases to offer any symbolic beyond, when Barthes succeeds in

disassembling the "East/West" dynamic, so too might all monstrous Others cease to exist. And, in turn, how can we?[86]

Gremlins, at its center, markets itself not as a traditional monster film but as a cartoon, inseparable from the cartoons drawn by its protagonist Billy, himself a caricature of the boy next door (Larry's Lil' Abner, endlessly returning). The film provides countless overly-determined stereotypes; the layers reveal not a critique of capitalism but instead empty signifiers *ad nauseum*. During one scene in a movie theatre, the gremlins transform into shadows on the screen, echoing the diminutive cartoon images they had been watching (Disney's Seven Dwarves). The line between reality and the movie they watch is compromised as they rip their way through the screen. All is fantasy. While horror films are traditionally based on dichotomies, *Gremlins* is based on absolute pastiche. As Cohen argues, most contemporary horror films depend on the knowable at odds with the "Unknown"; though the two blur, the blurring is only meaningful if one first grasps their initial distinctions (e.g., the doll that comes to life is horrifying because one also, at some level, expects it to be lifeless). Pastiche, in contrast, relies on a degree of difference, on the gross exaggeration of a subject's characteristics (a mother using household appliances not to prepare the evening meal but to slaughter invaders in her home). The movement in Western discourse concerning Japan toward the degree of difference thus coincides with a shift in the horror genre toward horror-parody, developed further in later films such as Wes Craven's *Scream* (1996). *Gremlins* embraces campiness, comical inflation aimed not at genuine anxiety but toward feel-good consumption. "Japan Inc." and "America Inc." are conflated as postmodern monsters which are, of course, not really monsters at all, but always-already merchandise.

The idealistic hope, as Trifonas comments regarding Barthes, is that "such a critical move would suspend the need to locate Japan in opposition to Western culture" (Trifonas 2001: 49).

According to Trifonas, analyzing the excesses employed to depict Japanese capitalism allows for recognition in the audience of the paralyzing sameness late capitalism has induced across national boundaries.[87] Theorist Marc Guilluame interprets a phenomenon similar to the "Gizmo effect" with a degree of optimism. Postmodern monstrosity as articulated in encounters with "Japan," according to Guilluame, de-stabilizes in a constructive fashion, allowing one to imagine a model "truly in a relationship of alterity with us," moving past older paradigms of Otherness and toward a paradigm inherently aware of its inherent limitations (Guilluame 2008, 50). One's encounter with Gizmo allows one, in short, to consider a horror genre without traditional monsters: "If we know how to interpret this fascination (with Japanese alterity), we might discover the hopes and anxieties of *our civilization*" (50, emphasis mine). While the viewer might remain fearful of the exaggerated politics Gizmo submits, what Guillaume deems Japan's "artificial strangeness," the corny, contrived voice-over ending the film ("So if your air conditioner goes on the fritz or your washing machine blows up or your video recorder conks out; before you call the repairman, turn on all the lights, check all the closets and cupboards, look under all the beds, 'cause you never can tell -there just might be a gremlin in your house") reminds the viewer that she might not fall for the ruse this time, transcending binaries embedded in formulaic fear via Hollywood. Simultaneously, she can imagine – however briefly – an apolitical world taken form in the shadows beyond it, a world where *Gremlins* serves as a radical alternative for representing cultural difference in the horror genre writ large.

A Communal Haunt

Spatial and Temporal Ruptures in the Horror Films of Shimizu Takashi

The fantastic, as an object and even mode of discourse, was closely affiliated with the

instantiation of modernity in Japan, and that it has been mobilized to assert a

mysteriousness if not exclusivity for modern Japan ever since… such a discourse might

have shaped other modernities as well, which have gone unrecognized without the

defamiliarization of modernity that an examination of Japan's case performs. (Figal, 222)

The fantastic is a long-held a "mode of discourse" in Japan. Japanese cinema, especially

the horror films of the late twentieth century, bursts with spectral entities. In contrast,

mainstream American horror cinema has rarely dealt with ghostliness in the same rigorous and

self-identifying fashion. Consider, as one example, the ghostly presence in the recent

Paranormal Activity series (2007 – 2011); the realm of supernatural entity and the physical space

of the film are clearly at odds, rather than calling into doubt the stability of the character's

subjectivity. In order to understand modernity on a global scale, one might examine how the

recent cultural exchange of Japanese horror films (also known as "J-Horror") and their

subsequent Hollywood re-makes represent a defamiliarization of modernity for Japanese

audiences and yet another layer of repression for the American viewership. This chapter will

survey how containment of national identity in Japanese popular cinema frequently features

ghostly forces that demonstrate the vacuous nature beneath its surface. Recently, Hollywood has

navigated around these anxieties, one might say "re-repressed" them, by inserting an authentic

origin at the heart of the haunting. I will argue that these specific alterations uncover a shared

cultural anxiety between the U.S. and Japan: the fear that beneath all of the ostentatious displays

of modernity, there resides an empty lacuna. As bubbles burst and economic hegemony seems to fade for the U.S. in the years following the 2008 collapse, these Japanese horror films offer a method for American audiences to encounter consistently the postmodern specters initially hinted at by Dante's *Gremlins* (see previous chapter).

To begin, one must briefly overview the importance of phantasms in Japanese cultural history. By doing so, one begins to recognize a pattern of expressing the uncanny unique to Japanese discourse. I will then address how J-Horror has been re-made in the U.S. and why the Japanese method for representing the uncanny (unlike, say, the method used by Spanish director Guillermo Del Toro in popular releases such as *Pan's Labyrinth* and *The Orphanage*) is routinely revised for audiences in the U.S. Finally, I will turn to the future and why I believe this exchange will continue to influence how Americans deal with repressed anxieties concerning modernity in the years ahead.

Shimizu Takashi, a thirty-nine year old director who once studied under auteur Kurosawa Kiyoshi, provides an ideal series of cinematic texts for undertaking this critical endeavor. His films specifically deconstruct one's understanding of space and time, urging spectators to interrogate various presumed cultural truths adopted from Western thought. In addition, Shimizu has directed films for both Japanese and American audiences. His active interest in correspondences between the two cultures therefore allows one to tease out broader implications for the horror genre as a transnational phenomenon.

Ghostly Discourse, Japanese Identity

Ghosts are one of the most prominent tropes in Japanese cinema due to the fact that what is "dead" in the modern era for the archipelago returns not as a didactic reminder or a

hypocritical impulse to be purged, as in American horror cinema, but instead returns as echoes of a transient selfhood forever eluding the stasis of frames. Japanese film of the late twentieth century, particularly the recent wave of internationally popular horror films, does not attempt to seal off uncertainty; it was against this uncertainty Japanese constructs of modernity were formed, and return perpetually to thrive.

Japanese modernity shows heavy influence from international forces, such as MacArthur and the Occupation's "assistance" in a new post-war Japanese constitution, as well as domestic parties. Within Japan, there was a movement to demonstrate Japanese modernity would not be controlled by *fushigi* (folk beliefs). The State initiated the shift towards a larger role in the global community and, consequently, the government launched a regimented attempt at dispelling opinions in the international arena that Japan was "primitive" or "backwards." As one example, Inoue, a scientist and philosopher at the turn of the century, instigated an extensive project to create taxonomy of the supernatural. The purpose was clearly to marginalize local superstitions, to trivialize them in order to create a more "rational" identity for the nation. He labeled the so-called monsters "subjective errors of the human mind" (Figal, 51). Inoue insisted that "Japan" required cohesiveness as a Nation-state, an agreement it had lacked throughout much of its history.

Reaction against this sort of repression via modernization was immediate, reminding us of issues raised in the first chapter of this dissertation: Yanagita, the proclaimed "father of native ethnology" in Japan, composed the stylized *Tales of Tono* (1912) with an openness refusing to treat the supernatural as science alone. Figal writes: "The path that (Yanagita's) folk studies would take led not to an 'elimination [of unreal objects] by paraphrase' via an ideological application of Western scientific and medical knowledge, but rather toward the construction of

159

an alternative type of knowledge of 'the Japanese' via a passage through the poetic" (117).

Yanagita's work embodies the "breaks" and "discontinuities" the Japanese supernatural offer, defying any imposed frames.

The Tales of Tono thus activated a poetic discussion of ghostly forces which has continued into the present. Previously, ghostly tales were used to teach lessons to the young. William Elliot Griffis embraced this antiquated style when he imported select supernatural tales to America in the early twentieth century (see introduction). However, the emergence of modernity as an ever-conflicted anchor for national identity altered the meaning of the ghost story in significant ways; writers such as Yanagita and later Izumi Kyoka place the fantastic at the very center of Japanese selfhood, making the claim that Japan could be recognized only in accordance to its fleeting, spectral nature. This recognition, ushered in by the rapid modernization of the Taisho and Showa periods, is a foundation upon which much of Japanese cinema was built.

> The fantastic allows the modern to be thought. In a sense, modernity itself is phantasmagoric; it ceaselessly generates that which is a la mode by consciously imagining difference from things past. Embodying transformation, a change of modes, modernity is akin to the root definition of *bakemono*, a thing that changes form. (Figal, 14)

The insecure grounding of modernity manifested itself in the flickering shadows of Japanese theatres. The images on screen of "tradition" and "cohesion" produce for the spectator recognition that what is being framed always straddles the border between life and death, "real" and "illusory."[88]

Marilyn Ivy's *Discourse of the Vanishing: Modernity, Phantasm, Japan* expands this concept of modernity and phantasm in Japan, arguing the State project of creating a "whole" Japanese identity – a visible *kokutai*, or "National essence" – hinges upon these uncanny sensations:

> Despite (Japan's) labors to recover the past and deny the losses of "tradition," modernist nostalgia must preserve, in many senses, the sense of absence that motivates its desire… (The Japanese) thematize loss in a variety of ways as they work inevitably to recover that loss. That work sometimes takes the guise of mourning, sometimes of recursive repetition, sometimes of rememoration or memorialization. And it also appears in the mode of forgetting, through moments of fetishistic disavowal. (Ivy, 10 – 13)

The work done by the spectator, the pursuit of the phantoms on screen, is the pursuit of a "lost" tradition that must be absent in order for the audience to strive continuously towards satisfaction. "Ghosts" are then essential to modernity as the Japanese subject must chase them endlessly, working towards reunion with an artificial past, forced to suspend the knowledge that what they pursue is not "real" - nor can it ever be.

Ivy labels this process "vanishing," defining the concept as follows: "what (dis)embodies in its gerund from the movement of something passing away, gone but not quite, suspended between presence and absence, located at a point that both is and is not here in the repetitive process of absenting… their status is often ghostly" (Ivy, 20). The cinematic medium is built upon constant vanishing, where fantastic dissolves consistently disrupt the bucolic harmony of solid shapes. This "vanishing" can be read as yet another symptom of modernity in Japanese

culture, recognition of the transience at work in any reification of the Nation as a discursive space.

A primary example of the intersection between phantasm and modernity can be located in Kenji Mizoguchi's classic 1953 film *Ugetsu*, one of the first films, importantly, to gain international recognition at foreign film festivals. Husband Genjuro, obsessed with material wealth and fame, is lured into a strange woman's home, where he believes himself to have found fulfillment. This temptress figure is evident throughout Japanese mythology but is now also linked directly to the hopeless drive of capitalism. Meanwhile, his wife Miyagi, deserted, is senselessly killed by soldiers. The film grows even further complicated when Genjuro breaks free to return home, where he happily finds Miyagi doing her "traditional" chores. The camera, upon his return, tracks him through an empty home. After a slow pan, it rests on the romantic image of Miyagi at work, where the audience once saw nothing at all. With this visual uncertainty, "tradition" appears as ghostly in *Ugetsu*. The images are not mere figments of Genjuro's imagination; long after he has left, the camera focuses upon Miyagi, folding clothes and completing domestic services. "Tradition," like the temptress, is found by Mizoguchi to be as fantastic as the imposed dreams of modernization. The audience gradually comes to question which "Ghosts" or "Spirits" they can believe in: those that have been - or those yet to be. Both are fictional byproducts of cinema and the State.

H.D. Harootunian, echoing Ivy, articulates this as an "uneven" process. He describes the State project of overcoming modernity as one attempting to "freeze-dry the moment of cultural unevenness," seeing it as an attempt to "stave off death" (Harootunian, 316). All of this stems from an unsettled relationship to the past, to the "origins" of modern Japan. Harootunian views Japanese discourse as:

162

An encounter with the realm of the uncanny: the same but yet the not-same, the past that

was still present, the modern and its other… the precinct of the uncanny where modern

Japan confronts its double, where the present encounters a past that in all respects is

similar but is now *out of time*. In modern society this is precisely how the appeal to

memory works against the claims of history. (321, emphasis mine)

Japanese cinema traverses the border between memory and History by asking society to

remember something visually it never could.

Pervasive ghostliness therefore reminds one of habitual, cyclical loss. As one comes to

believe they have grasped static constructs of Nation and History, and they have seen *kokutai*

manifested as cinematic image, these visions vaporize into thin air. The camera shifts and the

spectator is no longer certain of their position in relation to the cinematic space. The casings of

ghost films such as *Ugetsu* and *Otoshiana* are consistently violated and found to be inadequate -

an essential precedent to the later works of Shimizu Takashi.

<p align="center">*The Shadow Self in a "Lost Decade"*</p>

The fantastic in Japanese cinema re-appears prominently with the turn of the twenty-first

century surge in horror films by directors such as Shimizu. His films illuminate a number of

contemporary concerns, including the hyper-techologization of everyday existence and the

economic bubble burst of the 1980s. The value of the Nation was once more called into question

forcefully at the time of Shimizu's rise in popularity. Valdine Clemens in her *The Return of the*

Repressed, writes:

A "national brand" of Gothic fiction seems to proliferate whenever the political and

economic dominance that a given country has acquired appears to be passing its peak and

<p align="center">163</p>

about to decline… when reevaluation of the national identity seems to take on a particular

urgency. (Clemens, 5)

In the 1980s the economy that was impossible to sink, sank; the Japanese economic surge and

apparent dominance, after a provocative decade of investment in American real estate, started to

slow drastically. There was apparently a ceiling to Japanese growth and a number of deficiencies

were revealed: pressure by foreign countries for Japan to pay and maintain a military,

unsatisfactory living conditions (overcrowding), an uneven distribution of wealth, among others.

This slow-down was accompanied by popular self-diagnosis. Some probed how much of the

bubble should be blamed on of Japan's out-of-control Westernization. The inquiry became ever

more prevalent – what would it come to mean, moving ahead, "to be Japanese"?

More recent works influencing Shimizu, Japanese horror films such as *Ringu* and *One

Missed Call* – which, significantly, were re-made in America – explore these cultural tensions

through the omnipresent trope of the ghost. The many containers of Japanese society - television

screens, most emphatically - offer portals for the supernatural. Instead of serving as safe places

where "traditional" ideas are manifested, as was almost exclusively the case in the latter half of

the century with State-controlled networks such as NHK, television screens provide dangerously

unstable portals where ghosts travel freely between reality and the imagination. In Japanese

horror films, the televised image is regularly an eerie female specter with long black hair, such as

Sadako in *Ringu*, who literally crawls out of the screen and into the world of the narrative,

threatening always to go one step further and crawl into the sacred space of the spectator.

What is vital to note is the spectator's role, in relation to these frames, as detective,

reminiscent of Edogawa Rampo's tales at the dawn of the century. The televised images are

unstable, shaky and broken apart, but the spectator is expected to believe they are gaining clarity as the story of the traumatic past becomes progressively clearer. Miike's *Chakushin Ari* (2003, re-made in America as *One Missed Call*) expects the viewer, for most of the film, to blame the abusive mother for the haunting phone calls spreading like a virus. Only at the dénouement does one realize that they have been fooled and their detective work has been futile. The daughter was responsible all along – and even this revelation is far from certain. The past is thus forever elusive, the "origin" of the haunting always just out of reach.

American horror offers its fair share of MacGuffins as well but the difference is that in America the "origin" is typically assumed to be authentic. American horror films tend to rely upon a presumed Puritanical repression of "evil" or "deviance," but the grotesqueries returning from their unconscious are not manifestations of postmodern uncertainty, as in Japanese film, but rather manifestations of a corrupt Self situated at a genuine Manichean split. Jason's mother transformed into a monstrous state because of the cruel children at the camp, Michael Myers became monstrous due to of his sexual frustrations, and so forth. In Japanese horror, contrastingly, trepidation stems from the fact there is no original self. Individual monsters such as Michael Myers hide no reliable, core "Truth"; modernity, in short, remains spectral at every turn.

The "monstrous," as emblematic of the collective, remains situated within a different paradigm in American horror films than in their Japanese counter-parts. Popular American culture often privileges individualism against the collective; the freedom of the subject to take on an oppressive whole is essential to the mythical "American way of life." Spectators are routinely supplied with narratives of a singular hero overcoming the demons of society. Look no further than the Last Girl, such as *Halloween*'s Laurie, who survives the onslaught of raw sexuality

because of her purity. Fredric Jameson discusses these detectives in *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*, arguing Western filmmakers cannot avoid pitting an individual against a larger system:

> The journalist-witness, whatever his professional camaraderie, is alone; the collective exists on the other side, as his object, in the twin forms of the insurgents and the forces of order… (in this) sadly and evidently seem to lie in some generalized ideological incapacity of North Americans to imagine collective processes in the first place, and their tendency, in consequence, to fall back on the emotional securities of individualizing narrative paradigms wherever possible. (Jameson 1995, 40 – 41)

The Japanese individual is far less privileged in Japanese horror films; rather, it is *collectivity itself* subsuming the narrative. The haunting of society stands ubiquitous. Collective sin cannot return to threaten the family unit in Japan; what haunts the family is the unsettling notion that it cannot remember where it came from or what it stands for moving forward.

Shimizu's Negotiation of National Frames

Contemporary American horror films recurrently address a troubled national past by returning to site of the initial trauma: the divergence from the City on the Hill promise, issues of abandonment, abuse, and so forth. In essence, many of these narratives are concerned with the birth of "evil" and how it can be exorcised from the polity. Recent Japanese horror films, contrastingly, attempt to address a seemingly fatalistic future by examining the inherent slipperiness of constructs such as Nationhood. The "Japan" of yesterday and the "Japan" of tomorrow invade senselessly upon the "Japan" of today. There is rarely a point of solid identification to locate, only a postmodern surface readily disappearing from sight. The "monster" cannot be purged due to its very spectral nature. Similar to fissures opened by Dante's

166

Gremlins, the Japanese community in these horror films recognizes that its digitized framing of National collectivity exceeds its capacity to contain itself. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the films of Shimizu, in particular *Ju-On* (2000) and his hugely popular American re-make, *The Grudge* (2004).

Ju-On concerns a house cursed by a past disturbance, one returning *ad nauseum* to "infect" any who enter. This horror manifests itself, perhaps not surprisingly, in a female specter with long black hair (Kayako) and her ghost son (Toshio), who together proceed to consume all venturing within their spatial boundaries. The assumed "origin" of the haunting is the murder of these two figures by a vicious husband who has recently learned Toshio is not his son. The boy serves, I argue, as an embodiment of modern Japan: he is recognized as "inauthentic," a creation without an identifiable cause, vacillating between a Japanese past that cannot be interpreted and a Japanese future based on little more than repetitive gestures. Toshio reminds one of Barthes' argument in *Empire of Signs* as he is yet another symbolic fissure, a domestic element replete of inherent meaning. To express this endless repetition, Toshio is linked in *Ju-On* to the phantom of a black cat. Their once-distinct signification begins to overlap as the film progresses, the boy ultimately emitting feline shrieks. In one scene, protagonist Rika awakes to a room full of black cats infesting her home. The uncanny event evokes a trauma transcending spatial borders, over and over again, spreading into new bodies and new locales.

The terror in Shimizu's re-make *The Grudge* disturbs one person; in *Ju-On*, on the other hand, it returns an infinite number of times, floating endlessly outside of the house and perilously close to the realm of the spectator. Shimizu formally marks this realization with a cacophonous noise akin to feedback. Whenever Rika seems to get close to the "source," one hears a digital ringing sound (in Shimizu's film *Marebito* [2004], the sound is replaced by static). The output,

the film itself, moves too close to the "source," which is – in *Ju-On* – a horrific revelation

saturating all spatial distinctions. Digitized, the rendering of the collective disrupts itself

repeatedly, emphasizing disjuncture as it violates the artificial boundaries surrounding what it

means, embodied in the unstable household, to be "Japanese." Shimizu gradually shifts the focus

away from the murder as a catalyst by suggesting there is a far deeper disjointedness, one

ultimately alerting Rika to the tenuousness of her framed identity.

Frames both literal and figurative play a key role in addressing this rupture. In the final

scene, Rika sees in her reflection the reflection of Kayako. At last, when the ghost is revealed, it

is not simply of a supernatural realm but *exists everywhere*. In Barthean terms, the phantom is

unveiled as pure signification. The edges of the mirror offer only arbitrary delineation.

Television screens likewise allow Shimizu to explore this concept. What has been recorded,

closed off as History, pushes outward into the present, refusing stasis. In juxtaposition, the

American subject arrives back, in the logic of the majority of contemporary horror films, to a

position secure and fully-realized, even when threatened by forces it cannot understand from

outside of itself.[89] Psychoanalyst Mladen Dolar argues this moment of understanding the Self as

whole is, in fact, the primary repression. She writes, in her essay "I Shall Be With You on Your

Wedding Night: Lacan and the Uncanny,": "And it was only in that no-man's-land that (the

uncanny) could produce anxiety and doom the subject to utter insecurity, to *floating without a*

point of anchor" (Dolar, 21 emphasis mine). What has been repressed in Shimizu's *Ju-On,* and

returns in the form of spectrality, is a situation of "floating without a point of anchor," a mode of

Being the State has historically attempted to cover-up in creating a narrative of modern "Japan."

In contrast, Shimizu's American re-make *The Grudge* remains thoroughly anchored.

Jameson's argument concerning the Western "journalist-witness" applies well to Shimizu's re-

make: Karen investigates the "collective" sins in an individualistic paradigm, as if she will be able to achieve a position outside of the collective. In the Japanese version, Rika contrastingly cannot hope to be a mere witness. *Ju-On*, in turn, is not a film about its protagonist, but a film about all of Japan. This distinction is crucial: it is not the collective haunting the individual but rather the collective haunting the collective. Popular American horror films largely evoke deviance from the assumed original promises of the country while, in J-Horror, it is postulated that there is communal dismay against the repressive stability of State-imposed collectivity. A vital question remains – why, at the turn of the century, did Americans import so many of these films? Why do they continue to hold such fascination with Western audiences?

One might surmise the phenomenon is merely a novelty item American audiences crave. Or, perhaps, it offers a way for the spectator to feel safe. It's Them, not Us, who has a postmodern identity crisis. While these reasons likely hold some validity, these encounters also permit one to recognize themselves within ghostly narratives. The constant repression of an unstable foundation at play beneath every State-orchestrated collective begins to lose its rigid grip in Shimizu's cinematic realm. In a decade when the virtual is saturating the lives of most global citizens, it was not enough to ask how one could go back. One was forced, in Shimizu's films, to ask what it meant to be "Japanese" or "American" in the first place. In the decade following the presidency of George W. Bush and the hyper-patriotism at work in activist groups such as the Tea Party, these questions only become more pressing. At the moment, popular horror films in America generally maintain a tendency to "re-repress" perpetually what once returned. One need only look as far as the thoroughly "Americanized" *The Grudge* to find that in the majority of American horror films a trauma is located for an individual to face, such as a Japanese mother and son's unresolved woe against the violence of the father, and then resolve

(the recognition of a Western man's interference in the marriage). J-Horror, against this formula, tends to emphasize issues of postmodernity while threatening to expose the modern subject to a space – and, as we will see in the following section, a temporality – outside of familiar paradigms of Western modernity.

Thawing Out Jack

To pursue Shimizu's postmodern innovations in the horror genre, one must also consider the temporal implications in conjunction with the constructs of Nation hereto touched upon. Temporality, Shimizu's films recall, plays a crucial role in Western modes of modernization and in the attendant spread of Western values into other realms of the globe. Concepts such as "progress" have developed from static notions of the temporal; by tracing the development of what came before, and aspiring towards what lies ahead, the modern subject is continuously caught in the forward motion of a calculated mechanism designed to "keep time." Indeed, as industrialism has spread, this concept has become ever more rigid and commodified. One now consumes time, punching in/out at the factory or "spending" it on leisure activities. This trend manifests itself across the globe. The International Meridian Conference of 1884 established a world clock which kept the globe under the relentless sway of homogenous time. Consequently, Western and Eastern thinkers rage against the ticking of institutionalized hours. Philosopher Henri Bergson, in his numerous studies on the theme of memory and time, contests: "Let us also cast off the bad metaphysics which cramps our movements" (Bergson 1913, 103). Time, Bergson argues, is an artificial narrative born in the modern age, a narrative, he contests, one should continue to re-evaluate critically. In the remaining pages of this chapter, I will examine how Shimizu in particular considers atemporality in tandem with the paranormal to challenge Western

paradigms, providing an alternative consideration of the horror genre which departs from familiar, linear designs.

Contemporary scholarship holds interest in atemporality as a cinematic tool capable of revising narrow perspectives adopted from Western traditions. Film scholar Todd McGowan addresses the problem of temporality, through a psychoanalytical lens, as a construct in "traditional" cinematic form closely aligned with *desire*, while he contends atemporality is closely tied to *drive*, unconscious repetitions defining an eternal human condition. Atemporal cinema offers "an alternative way of experiencing existence in time – or, more exactly, a way of experiencing existence outside of our usual conception of time" (McGowan, 10). In other words, one desires the pacing, the refusals and climaxes classical Hollywood narratives provide; however, against this pull towards satisfaction, atemporal films reveal a refusal of regimented Time and offers in its stead the revelation of pure repetition. This suggests a method to unclutter the restricted consciousness of modern subjects and expose the unconscious expanses of unregulated Time. Examples include, but are hardly limited to, Christopher Nolan's *Memento* (2000) and Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* (1994).

These radical alternatives to Western constructions of temporality, film scholar Bliss Cua Lum adds, are grounded in a discussion of cultural difference. After all, homogenous time, she and McGowan acknowledge, is a uniquely Western ideal, shaped by Western modes of capitalism and other particularly Western traditions. Therefore, Lum contests, atemporal cinema utilized by non-Western filmmakers affords an opportunity to react against a coercive global consciousness. Lum uses the term "immiscible times": "multiple times that never quite dissolve into the code of modern time consciousness" (Lum 2009, 12). Specifically, Lum focuses on the intersection of the genre of the fantastic with notions of atemporality, positing that foreign

filmmakers including Shimizu embrace the supernatural as a vehicle for exploring notions of "primitiveness" and the acausality of imperial ghosts: "The fantastic as temporal translation can, at its most uncanny, allude to the 'always possible means of a space outside of language', of a world outside our familiar time" (32). McGowan and Lum therefore engage critically with the role of cinematic temporality as a constitutive element within the consciousness of contemporary subjects.

These concepts are not unfamiliar among Japanese philosophers in the last century. Since the Taisho era (1912 – 1926), a common refrain among Japanese thinkers has been the phrase "overcome modernity." Numerous works interrogate modernity and, in the process, question the presumptions underlying it as a project worthy of wholesale adoption. While Japanese society initially raced to modernize and "catch up" with the West, certain intellectuals posed serious doubts regarding the temporal underpinnings of modernity. Philosophers including Nishida Kitaro, Watsuji Tetsuro, Tanabe Hajime, and Yuasa Yasuo interrogated scientific quantification of Time and explore the ethical implications of adopting these reductive structures for the archipelago. Attempts to "overcome modernity" were not limited to Japan; in truth, it was a transnational dialogue including a wide array of Western thinkers, ranging from philosopher Martin Heidegger to psychoanalyst Carl Jung. Figures across the globe return *ad nauseum* to the topic of how to re-conceptualize Time without internalizing what Bergson labels as the "bad metaphysics" espoused in constructs of Western "progress."

In studying Shimizu's oeuvre, one revisits postulates of temporality in contemporary cinema as well as the transnational possibilities Lum illuminates. Still, though much of atemporal cinema investigates the overlaps and disjuncture between the past and present, few works before Shimizu's seriously contemplate ruptures executed from the future. Popular films

Ju-On and *Reincarnation*, when read in connection to Japanese philosopher's attempts to "overcome modernity" and the work of Carl Jung on the subject of "synchronicity," critique time in order to re-evaluate futurity as well as communal interdependence. Previous works addressing the horror genre, particularly films put forth by Hollywood, are normally situated within a Freudian framework (i.e., a troubled past begets a troubled present). Shimizu, in sharp contrast, asks if "the uncanny" might emanate from the past, present, *and* future simultaneously.

To appreciate Shimizu's temporal experiments in the horror genre, one must first define "synchronicity" in Western as well as Eastern thought, pulling equally from the works of Carl Jung and Yuasa Yasuo. I will then turn to the popular films *Ju-On* in relation to philosopher Watsuji Tetsuro's concept of "betweenness," a product of his thought on communalism as it is forged in Time. The director teases from these philosophical precedents the ethical implications of atemporality in the horror genre. We will close by considering Shimizu's *Reincarnation* in order to analyze fully his transnational impact on the genre and cinema at large. This particular film reinvigorates the tired historicism Jameson locates in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980) and, in so doing, attempts to transcend the restrictions of modern cinematic Time placed upon works of horror.

Jung and Yuasa: "Synchronicity" and the Paranormal

Synchronism is the prejudice of the East; causality is the modern prejudice of the West. (Jung 1928, 10)

The vast majority of Western horror films have been interpreted, alongside their Gothic literary antecedents, as vehicles for Freudian criticism. According to critics of the genre, Freud's model of psychoanalysis provides tools for better understanding the fears and pleasures accompanying the genre. This discourse includes "the return of the repressed," a critical

connection famously fostered by film scholar Robin Wood, as well as "the uncanny." Critic

William Patrick Day explains the connection between Freud and horror as follows:

> The Gothic is not a crude anticipation of Freudianism, nor its unacknowledged father.
>
> Rather, the two are cousins, responses to the problems of selfhood and identity, sexuality
>
> and pleasure, fear and anxiety as they manifest themselves in the nineteenth and early
>
> twentieth centuries. The Gothic arises out of the immediate needs of the reading public to
>
> escape from conventional life and articulate define the turbulence of their psychic
>
> existence. We may see Freud as the intellectual counterpart of this process. (Day 1985,
>
> 179)

Though in some ways a productive paradigm, this utilization of Freudian analysis in the horror

film tradition also reveals a certain promulgation of metaphysics based on a tendency to

industrialize and homogenize. Freudian scholarship relies largely upon causality; individual

consciousness, according to the German doctor, is plagued by biological urges and perversions

developed over time, symptomatic effects preceded by categorized causes.

Carl Jung was a colleague of Freud's and arguably the second-best known psychoanalyst

in the history of the discipline. Yet he decidedly branches away from Western thought in much

of his writing, a significant reason for his estrangement to Freud, and quite possibly one of the

reasons why few scholars today cite Jung when interpreting horror films.[90] F. David Peat, in his

study of Jung, acknowledges, "While Freud was based in a rational scientific tradition, Jung was

more interested in spiritualism, fantasy, and the curious nature of images drawn and dreamed"

(Peat 1987, 11). Jung's theories demonstrate a deep-seated interest in the occult, experiencing for

himself paranormal phenomena throughout his life. He based many of his theories on this subject

matter from studies on Eastern philosophy and religion. Jung's reliance on Eastern thought, in

tandem with his personal belief in the paranormal, developed further by one of his major

commentators, philosopher Yuasa Yasuo, allows one to comprehend Shimizu's atemporal

reactions against Western-style modernity while likewise exposing the privileging of a Freudian

framework in readings of American horror.[91]

Before analyzing Shimizu's reliance on Jungian departure points, I will briefly

distinguish Freud's approach from Jung's concept of "synchronicity." An example of Freud's

prevalence in the study of horror is "the uncanny." He defines the "uncanny" as "that class of

frightening which leads back to what is *known and long familiar*" (Freud 1917 – 1919, 220

emphasis mine). This method clearly follows a linear trajectory as the troubled past interrupts an

unsatisfactory present. In contrast to these causal chains, Jung was captivated by an idea he

labeled "synchronicity." Based on the eerie premonitions one has of an event happening

concomitantly or in the future, Jung's construct is entirely acausal and atemporal. Yuasa Yasuo,

the preeminent Japanese interpreter of Jung, writes: "Freud conceives of the unconscious as

storage of past experiences closely related to the individual's (or individual body's) life

experience (personal unconscious). In contrast, Jung thought that beneath the personal

unconscious is the region of the transpersonal collective unconscious… the domain where it

functions has *no temporal and spatial limitations*" (Yuasa 2008, 171 emphasis mine). The term

"synchronicity" derives meaning from the roots *syn* (together) and *chronos* (time). Jung thus

believes there to be a collective unconscious refusing to obey the dictates of modern time, in

opposition to Freud's compliance. If one invests in Jung's hypothesis, "uncanniness" can no

longer be contained as "known and long familiar." In contrast, the logic of time is disrupted by

atemporal hauntings.

The dynamism at work in Jung's "collective unconscious" challenges the causality of

Freud's individual unconscious. This is particularly relevant when considering the paranormal

(director Shimizu's subject matter of choice), as both Freud and Jung developed some of their

most lasting contributions to the field by considering spectrality. Jung derived much of his

thinking on "synchronicity" from Eastern thought, in particular the Chinese classic *I-Ching*; his

innovative use of these materials was intimately connected to the (then considered) mysticism of

astrology and quantum physics. Yuasa, who takes the scattered treatises on the paranormal left

by Jung and develops them, defines "synchronicity" as "the coincidence of the cognition of the

meaning of information concerning the psychological event and the physical event" (98). Yuasa

claims Jung's notion of "synchronicity," akin to premonition, has long been debated by Eastern

philosophers. The collective unconscious, according to Yuasa, is bound to *Absolute Time* and

therefore transcends modernity's isolation of the past and present from the future. All are

interconnected, "the past and future are enfolded within the present" (139). While Freud

dismisses Jung's approach as abstraction, with no scientific merit, Yuasa adopts a Jungian stance

to contest that it is narrow-minded to overlook common occurrences including coincidence and

dreams foretelling death. Jung states:

> It is extremely difficult to see where one process ends and another begins, since events
>
> and processes, beginnings and endings, merge into each other and form, strictly speaking,
>
> an indivisible continuum. We divide the processes from one another for the sake of
>
> discrimination and understanding, knowing full well that at the bottom every division is
>
> arbitrary and conventional. (Jung 1934, 143)

Why, after all, is it impossible one could be haunted by events outside of their personal

knowledge, or something frightening yet to come?[92] Shimizu's films echo these questions. Why

must one assume that hauntings are individuated, confined to the interactions of an individual's present with their specific past?[93]

While Western scholarship concerning horror film tends to avoid atemporality in favor of predictable and controllable causality, figures such as Yuasa and Shimizu maintain that atemporal hauntings open wider avenues for inquiry in regards to horror films and their broader social significance. What are the consequences of expanding in this way the definition of a term such as "uncanniness"? And what does Shimizu's cinematic experiment mean for the modern subject as well as the community in which she exists?

It must be noted that the experience of being visited by phantoms from the future, for Jung and for multiple Japanese philosophers over the last one hundred years, has not been a pleasurable "escape"; rather, the negation of modern temporality terrifies. Nishida Kitaro, a philosopher from the Kyoto School who questioned modern constructions of temporality in the early twentieth century, saw the recognition of deaths that have come before as well as those yet to come as a genuinely unsettling prospect: "Only a being that knows its own *eternal death* truly knows its sheer individuality… the self truly realizes its own temporal uniqueness as it faces its own eternal negation" (Nishida, 67 emphasis mine). Writing in the year World War II came to an end, philosopher Tanabe Hajime interrogated the position of a selfhood negated by the viciousness of death in war and the follies of mankind, a phenomenon some foresaw during the course of the war and predicted would arrive again - and again - in the years ahead. While the victor (the United States) had the luxury of continued belief in linear progress, Tanabe apprehended how the role of "vanquished subject" might offer a privileged philosophical position fueled by atemporality. The Ego, he insists, is ceaselessly invaded by "eternal death" and faces the initial horror of Absolute Time as "circulatory… a sense in which the past already

holds the future and is mediated by it" (Tanabe 1986, 73). In short, multiple twentieth century Japanese philosophers do not view the obliteration of systems of modern temporality as a comforting, mystical ideal but instead establish "synchronicity" as painful, sorrowful, and grotesque. At stake in Shimizu's atemporality is a re-imagining of the individual within a community outside of the modern visions of Time exported from Western thought. In its place rises a sort of rhizomatic prism, a Deleuzian time-image to challenge long-held beliefs. That which has been repressed returns from the past as well as the future of a personal and collective unconscious to force one into ethical debates concerning the present.

Communal Ethics: Ju-On *and "Betweenness"*

It is difficult to piece together the shards of *Ju-On*'s temporal puzzle because the world of ghosts defies calendar time. (Lum, 211)

Shimizu's version of "synchronicity" echoes Jung and Yuasa's in striving not only for poetic dissonance but also for a re-evaluation of communal ethics. For the director, at the heart of Western-influenced modernity is an intimate connection transcending the boundaries of homogenized temporal perception. Jung writes:

If – and it seems plausible – the meaningful coincidence or "cross-connection" of events cannot be explained causally, then the connection principle must lie in the *equal significance* of parallel events; in other words, their *tertium comparationis* is *meaning*. We are so accustomed to regard meaning as a psychic process or content that it never enters our heads to suppose that it could exist outside the psyche. (Jung 1960, 66)

Jung, Yuasa, and later Shimizu utilize atemporal experience as a vehicle for contemplating the "meaning" that binds every human being to their neighbors. They imagine this revelation as an eerie, unnerving encounter as it, out of necessity, disconcerts the contemporary subject.

Shimizu's film *Ju-On* (2002) engages a non-linear form to approach such "meaning" as existing "outside of the psyche." The *syuzhet*, a Russian formalist term for the order in which cinematic shots are edited together (regardless of the narrative's chronology, or *fabula*), is disjointed. Like the snapshot being taped together at the opening of the film, segments of *Ju-On* are not readily pieced together, jumping back and forth in time with few anchors to remind the spectator of how to order the events sequentially. The grainy, fragmented black-and-white footage alerts the audience that the murder of Kayako took place in the past (at least, if one can trust the common cinematic markers constructing the film's temporal orientation – an assumption Shimizu will call into doubt as the film progresses). *Ju-On* then moves forward to Rika attending to a local family who happen to live in Kayako's former home, the focal point of the paranormal activity. From here, the syuzhet moves rather freely and the characters interchange roles at the center of the film's focus, from a possessed husband and wife (Katsuya and Kazumi) to a sister (Hitomi) to a former detective involved in the case (Toyoma) to the detectives daughter (Izumi) and finally back to Rika. The one constant is "the grudge" haunting the house and its ability to spread, like a virus, outward into Japanese society.

Ju-On plays with the notion of Time as Absolute rather than linear-progressive. Shimizu's film concentrates on repetition, attempting to convey for the audience a sensation of time "piling up" rather than developing from point A to B. In one example, Hitomi has fled onto an elevator; as the elevator moves up, the audience glimpses the ghostly child Toshio staring at her. He appears on every floor with the same expression. The "piling" suggests what Jung foretold: "It cannot be a question of cause and effect, but of a falling together in time" (Jung 1960, 19). The fury attached to the event far surpasses the event itself within an individual consciousness; the raw emotions grow significantly more meaningful by speaking to a wider

audience and alerting them to an essence outside of the individual psyche. The characters interchange as the haunting folds in from every direction, without predictability. The sensation of fear the characters share within a collective unconscious, fear of an Absoluteness intruding upon the framing devices of modern life, remains constant.

The center of Shimizu's haunting, as was discussed earlier in this chapter, is less a particular house and more a wider Japanese community. In sum, a petrifying concept plagues the film: what comes before the present impacts the characters and, in turn, what is yet to come weighs just as heavily, ripples of eternity moving outward and inward without end. Watsuji Tetsuro, a Japanese philosopher well-known for his explorations of space and time, draws attention to the dual meaning of *ie* in the Japanese language. It is both a physical structure (the home) as well as a psychic structure (the bonds of family). Watsuji finds beneath these structures atemporality: "The household member, then, is not merely parent or child, husband or wife; he is also a descendent of his ancestors and himself an ancestor to those that are to come. The 'house' thus evinces most starkly the fact that the family as a whole takes precedence over its individual members" (Watsuji 1988, 141). While Watsuji, writing in a time of social upheaval and resistance to Western encroachments, was more isolationist in arguing geographical constraints to these psychic bonds, Shimizu pushes his boundaries further.

The horror of atemporal interconnection recurs throughout *Ju-On*. When Toyama, the detective investigating the house, returns to burn it down and end its reign, his temporal sequence meaningfully overlaps with that of his daughter, whose personal story follows his segment of the film. Toyama peeks through a doorway and encounters his daughter from the future, who has also come back to visit the house, not realizing the serious implications of this temporal violation. For a moment, they stare back at one another. Toyama immediately suffers

180

not only from his individual history within the house but from the knowledge his daughter Izumi will suffer just as he has, that she too will die in the process – the repetitious nature of impermanence. In the end, the images of Izumi and her father, taken in seemingly limitless negation and derived from unspeakable acts enclosed within the community, appear side by side in the family shrine. With this break in Time, Shimizu suggests that the ills of one are the ills of many and therefore human suffering cannot be readily exorcised from a collective mind. Yuasa recognizes this as "an invisible network of minds that spreads in the 'betweenness' (*aidagara*) of each individual" (Yuasa, 97). He continues, "It follows that the collective unconscious is the same in every *place* and all *time*… the collective unconscious has an objective character transcending the individual" (113). By challenging the continuity of hauntings read through a Freudian lens, Shimizu offers a vision of the alternative, a "betweenness" revealed through mutual suffering within "synchronicity."

Recent film scholarship touches upon these ethics of temporal discontinuity. Lum, for one, recognizes the disruptions as providing "the beginnings of more ethical temporal imaginings" (Lum, 41); McGowan adds, "The unconscious which interrupts the flow of meaning in our everyday interactions and thus separates us from each other, is at once the sole basis for a connection with each other" (McGowan, 19). For McGowan, atemporal cinema refutes the imposed desires of Hollywood-constructed time to expose a deeper recognition that all individuals share non-linear drives and already exist in the vastness of Absolute Time. One cannot excise themselves from this condition and, with this realization, one realizes a new mode of contentment.[94] Watsuji insists, alongside Tanabe, these ethics will be couched repeatedly in the fantastic and the unsavory, as it "appears only in the form of the restriction or negation of the individual" (Watsuji 1996, 99). He notes the dualism of the haunting: "Our present act takes

place in this identity between the past and the future… the present act has the dynamic structure of *coming back*" (271, emphasis mine). The predominant emotional response to *Ju-On* – fear - is not limited to the present or past. Anxiety returns from all points in time, "yesterday's betweenness" folding into "tomorrow's betweenness."

The result, for audiences as well as Rika, appears as an empathy rarely achieved by horror films produced in Hollywood. Rika realizes at the close of *Ju-On* it has not been the past alone plaguing her, as if it was ever clearly delineated from the present/future. In truth, she has always-already been linked to the psychic state of the slaughtered Kayako as well as to the psychic state of countless female victims to come. As she looks in the mirror at the dénouement, it is Kayako's face staring back and Kayako's head growing from her abdomen. There is a conceptual shift moving formulaic sensations of dread away from individuated experiences of anxiety and towards an ethical sense of communal interdependence.

If atemporal horror provides an opportunity to create "more ethical temporal imaginings," then one must ask how this shared affect, a sense of "betweenness" ceaselessly returning, can be effectively transmitted. To delineate his revision, Shimizu harkens back to concepts developed by Watsuji. The Japanese philosopher emphasizes infrastructures society creates to handle spatio-temporal dilemmas, utilizing examples such as the railroad to allow his readers to visualize their unconscious reliance upon a larger community. Human beings are interconnected by railways constructed with a certain reliance on where people have gone before and an anticipation of where people will need to go in the future. He labels this as "socially established *ningen sonzai*" ("socially established human existence"). From this example, Watsuji concludes: "Anticipation of the future exists not only in individual consciousness but also within society itself" (185). Institutionalized "betweeness" is the manifestation of intuitive responses to the past

and to the future, situated always in the present. One might take Watsuji's postulate and apply it to Shimizu's contemplation of a complicated network of images unifying communities.

Emotions in film - in Shimizu's case, predominantly terror - are captured not only to remember in the present but to haunt the viewers of tomorrow as well. Shimizu reflects upon this in *Ju-On* with the surveillance tape that alarms Hitomi. In the tape, a shadow gradually emerges in a vacant hall. Later in the film, Toyama will flee from this very tape. At this point, however, the shadow has fully approached the camera and stares directly at him (and, vicariously, the audience). Celluloid preserves a network to document transpersonal bonds outside of modern Time, a network based on endless repetition. Elsewhere, Izumi's friends pick up a package of pictures taken of her to cheer her up. Upon realizing Izumi is being tormented by specters, the girls look at the photos and find Izumi's eyes to be blacked out. Film, as a medium, therefore embodies "synchronicity," alerting the viewer to a past already aware of its reception in the future. These filmed images embody the essence of premonition while manifesting the interconnectedness of suffering subjects across space and time.

In the final shot of *Ju-On*, Shimizu removes the mediation of characters in order to shock the audience into ruminating upon their reliance on "betweenness." Kayako opens her eyes to stare directly into the darkened theatre. The eeriness stems less from vicarious dread, as when the spectator steps inside of the shared gaze of Rika and feels the gaze of Takeo, and more from the fact the ghost has broken all temporal restrictions. She can see the viewer sitting out there, in the future. Unfettered from linear narrative, Kayako trivializes the desire to tape the pieces of the film together in logical order and offers an ominous revelation: an atemporal drive at the base of the collective, forcing the audience member to contemplate the inconceivable expanse of eternal

repetition. It is, as we will see shortly, the medium (film) which for Shimizu manifests best the atemporality of the haunting.

<div align="center"><i>Genre: <u>Reincarnation</u> and a Grand Re-opening of the Overlook Hotel</i></div>

One's self who is observing the event is incorporated into the event as a whole. In other words, we are not observing phenomena from the outside. (Yuasa, 104)

Shimizu's film *Reincarnation* (2005) deliberately merges his discussions of "synchronicity" with a critical examination of the cultural relationship between Japan and Western countries. *Reincarnation* situates itself as a film in overt dialogue with the American horror genre and its temporal markers, in particular with the temporality of Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* (1980). Jameson analyzes the importance of repetition in Western films by auteurs including Kubrick. In his influential essay on *The Shining*, Jameson argues, as he does elsewhere, that when genres become self-conscious, they are no longer capable of "authentic expression." Horror, according to Jameson's analysis, is deliberately reified in *The Shining*. Kubrick mirrors the plight of Jack Torrance with the plight of the ghost story writ large as it grows stale, predictable, a "jail house of repetition." When a genre first forms, for Jameson, it is an eruption of communal sentiment. But when one becomes aware of it as genre, the once "unimaginable future" becomes lost to foreclosure at the hands of late capitalist production. As Jack grows weary of his domesticated life, the only solace he can take is in a nostalgic return to the roaring 1920s, where he assumes one will find communal embrace, albeit by the already-dead. This movement is one-directional - always backwards, to the past - and so Jack is caught in the logic of modernity and Western constructs of Time. He succumbs to consumable moments pre-arranged within familiar constructs of History (and, for the spectator, well-worn plot points

of horror). Jack, by the close of the film, quite literally freezes in time, stilled in a photograph hanging in the lobby of the Overlook Hotel as well as in the frame posited by *The Shining*.

> Jameson re-phrases a question he believes Kubrick to be asking with his film:
>
> How to project the illusion that things still happen, that events exist, that there are still stories to tell, in a situation in which the uniqueness and the irrevocability of private destinies and of individuality itself seem to have evaporated? (Jameson 1992, 87)

The modern concept of Time, closed off by genre, reveals itself to be an always-already artificial container. For Jameson, repetition in *The Shining* manifests in unnatural ways, as a present sealed off from the "unimaginable future" through a circuitous recall of a packaged past. Garrett Stewart, in his recent work on temporality and the cinema, argues along similar lines when considering genre: "A history of violence is seen to repeat itself, first as tragedy, then not as farce but as genre fiction and its cheap catharsis… a case of framed time in perpetuity" (Stewart 2007, 112). Shimizu's revision of *The Shining* takes a different tact when considering genre. Instead of prompting late capitalist estrangement, Shimizu relies upon the trope of ghostly repetition, especially in Kubrick's film, to expose a transnational reading of the horror genre.

In Shimizu's *Reincarnation* (original Japanese title: *Rinne*), the genre is stretched beyond the self-enclosed "prison" of late capitalist culture. Missing in their respective readings is the oversight Watsuji accentuates in regards to Heiddegerian thought: there is too much emphasis on Time without enough consideration of its relationship to Space. In brief, genre as it is filmed and exchanged is not limited to the temporal perspectives of an individual spectator. Shimizu's continuous return to the concept of visual recording reveals "betweenness" as networked within real-world structures, such as film and video distribution. Jameson's argument, that one's emotional response to Jack's rampage and Kubrick's narrative is cold and detached in the age of

postmodernity, grows weakened with the revival of shared affect in transnational circulation. The "false lead" of premonition among certain characters (as Jameson reads it) in *The Shining* revives as a "new lead" in Shimizu's adaptation; in turn, this exchange opens up a mutual recognition of repetition as a central component of the human condition. Jack and the horror genre are unfrozen, reincarnated, given an alternative purpose of embracing atemporal, and aspatial, cinematic realms to express the anxieties of a collective unconscious repressed beneath constructions of homogenous time.[95]

Reincarnation sustains commentary on the influence of American horror in Japan as well as the problem of temporal borrowings from Hollywood narratives. The film circles around a group of actors re-enacting a "true-life" murder. The director Matsumura invests in the authenticity of a work entitled "*Kioku*," or "Memories," and urges the actors to attempt to channel sensations "real victims" must have felt. The plot follows two parallel story lines: Sugiura, an soft-spoken aspiring actress, and Kinoshita, a college student. Both young women are drawn mysteriously towards the location of the crime, Kanko Hotel, a Western-style structure clearly modeled after Kubrick's Overlook. And so the characters congregate, gradually, at the isolated hotel, where Time merges in disturbing ways.

Shimizu's style aggregates Western and Japanese cinematic techniques. Jay McRoy, a scholar who has written extensively on Japanese horror, comments: "By combining in his own words 'an American and Japanese style' of horror cinema, Shimizu creates a hybrid of the U.S. slasher film and the Japanese *kaidan*" (McRoy 2005, 176). This is demonstrated in *Reincarnation* as specific shots overtly mirror Kubrick's style. The director Matsumura himself pays homage to Kubrick when composing his "tracking shots" through the Kanko Hotel. The room in which the worst of the murders, of a young girl, Chisato, is Room 227, an evocative

number fit perfectly between Stephen King's version of *The Shining* (Room 217) and Kubrick's

version (Room 237). Another familiar motif is a ball bouncing through the corridors, echoing

Jack's tennis ball from the original. Elsewhere, Sugiura stares down at a scale model of the hotel,

which slowly transforms into an overhead shot of the literal space. The effect of this homage is

two-fold: first, it reminds one of the cinematic/psychic connection between *The Shining* and

Shimizu's film, echoing Jack's ominous stare down into the hedge-maze; secondly, it

foreshadows a psychic link between Sugiura, who is at first presumed to be the victim, and the

killer, Dr. Omori - and, to go further back, with Jack Torrance himself. Genre therefore becomes

a method for establishing temporal bonds with previous atrocities and atrocities to come as well

as spatial bonds between Western and Japanese horror films, viewed by people who, regardless

of geographical grounding, have seen this type of story countless times – and whose children will

likely see it countless more.

To emphasize this shared affliction, *Reincarnation* constantly forces the viewer to make

leaps through Time, removing the security attendant to modern temporality and cinematic

continuity. In one of the earliest scenes of the film, a truck driver is looking in the mirror and

watches his face transform into a grey, corpse-like visage. Unnerved by this, he proceeds to drive

his truck off into a mountain pass, eventually hitting a bellboy who mysteriously appears on the

road. Leaping out to inspect the victim, the driver is startled to find the same face that reflected

back at him earlier in the day. Later, both Sugiura and Kinoshita experience premonitions of the

hotel, seeing it in their unconscious. Sugiura's agent reassures her that, even if she is a

reincarnation of the little girl who was killed, it does not mean the atrocities will occur again. Of

course, they do. Here one finds the acme of Shimizu's atemporal thesis to be that what haunts the

driver/bellboy and the two female protagonists is an unsavory event taking place in the past; yet

it is simultaneously a premonition of an event to be re-enacted later in *Reincarnation*. The past and the future relentlessly press down upon the present, as in many of Shimizu's works, ultimately driving the characters to demise at the hands of their impermanence.

Shimizu's formal technique echoes this sensation at key moments in the film. When Matsumura receives a box from a victim of the attacks, he starts to open it. There is then a jump-cut to move one ahead in time, to Matsumura finishing/repeating this gesture later that night. Though the cut appears seamless, in actuality it pushes the narrative forward considerably. At another moment, little Chisato stands right behind the director in his office. She then flees out the door, through the hall of the Kanko Hotel as it appeared in the past, well-decorated, yet-to-be abandoned, only to arrive at Kinoshita's doorway in the present. The ghost runs across time and space in a mere matter of moments. In another example, Sugiura dreams of walking through the front door of the Kanko Hotel and picking up Chisato's doll, an object which serves as a very important anchor for the story. She then hears someone coming, drops the doll, and enters the Hotel. Kinoshita enters the frame, following the exact path, picking up the doll as well. At this moment, Kinoshita is startled from slumber, alerting one to the fact that this was yet another premonition, a memory sent from the past/future. Shimizu moves the spectator from Sugiura's unconscious into Kinoshita's unconscious, sutured only through the psychic space of the Hotel. Jung and Yuasa's concept of "synchronicity" explains much of the atemporal play in which Shimizu engages. The characters, as with the viewers of the film, experience paranormal phenomenon as their grasp on spatio-temporal reality is called into doubt.

While *Ju-On* fosters empathy among victims, a psychic connection of vulnerability at the hands of death and suffering, *Reincarnation* insists upon alliance among perpetrators. The audience is led into assuming Sugiura to be a reincarnate of Chisato, the initial victim. However,

as Sugiura and Dr. Omori lie in wait following the murders and their re-enactment, they each raise a reflective object to end their life – Sugiura a piece of shattered glass, Omori a polished knife. As they do so, they come face to face with their reflection, only to find themselves suddenly staring into one another's eyes. Sugiura is shocked to discover she is psychically linked to Omori, Omori equally unhinged to realize his fate belongs to an innocent young woman in the future. Much like the moment shared by Toyama and his daughter in *Ju-On*, but significantly inverted, the atemporal encounter insists characters recognize their mutual interdependence, not only as victims but as those who occasionally violate the social order. No one can escape the interconnection at work within a communal haunt.

The cinematic medium undercuts Omori's desire for escape. There can be no origin or final resting place, only eternity, endless time lapsing on itself and sprawling out in every conceivable direction, into every virtual locale. Omori, who filmed all of his murders, initially feels confident his experiments will liberate him from the *mono no aware* (impermanence) of everyday life. He believes his desire to enter into Absolute Time will re-unite him with his massacred family in a higher state of being. He asks, "*Hito wa doko kara kitte, doko itte shimau no*?" ("Where do people come from, where do they go?"). Each act concurrently echoes actions of the past and those of the future. Omori's fate parallels Rika's; all individuals find negation in Absolute Time.[96] In psychoanalytic terms, upon undoing the trappings of desire, one returns once more to the persistence of drive.

Energies binding one to a conceivable world community are re-enforced by Shimizu's meditations on the horror genre. As Lum notes, "Even if one has not encountered this particular ghost film before, one has encountered ghost narratives like it before" (Lum, 220). By reifying formulas to evoke fear, and coding them in a relatively homogenous form (genre), cinema

engages in the kind of repetition earlier Japanese philosophers elucidated. Horror film, outside of its temporal restraints, retains an essential spatial component with the distribution of ghostly stories across different groups of people. Within the film itself, Suguira's agent watches Omori's macabre film in direct parallel with Shimizu's film. His realization, as he spots Suguira's reflection in the knife, is likewise the realization of the audience. Shimizu insists that although film always binds the past with the present, as Bergson has shown, it is also always an intuitive conversation with the future. As the agent watches the horrific event, the spectator experiences related emotions at the same moment. As *The Shining* influenced *Reincarnation*, *Reincarnation* undoubtedly influences filmmakers yet to be born. The repetition Jameson argues to be pastiche *par excellence* in Kubrick's film for Shimizu envelops the entire community through a psychic link.

While Jameson argues there is finality in Kubrick's playfulness with the horror genre, Shimizu insists this kind of repetition provides a powerful revelation. McGowan contends that, from such an opportunity, "There is a decision of whether to embrace repetition" (McGowan, 235). Absolute Time, repressed by modern constructs of the clock, can either return to haunt in uncomfortable ways or it can allow one to elect to begin breaking down restricted social concepts of temporality. Regardless of one's Japanese or American citizenship, fear of eternity repressed by an ever-resilient individuality is an emotion binding one as a global commune in the grips of modern time; in other words, global citizens increasingly share the same possibility for a reaction against the privileged logic of linear cause-and-effect. Shimizu's works suggest Jack's icy grin in the lobby of the Overlook, re-enacted by Sugiura at the close of *Reincarnation*, does not signal the close of the horror genre. Quite contrastingly, the iciness evokes an impending re-birth, glimpses of a spectral network ever-present at the frozen edges of a reified modernity.

190

A Western Wake

Difference and Doubt in Christopher Nolan's *Inception*

Contemporary fiction repeatedly explores "Japan" as a dream-world positioned beyond the limitations of the physical. It is imagined as a realm into which protagonists from Western countries such as America, Britain, or France wander, lose themselves, and eventually depart from in a figurative "return home." There is nothing particularly novel about this pseudo-dialectical maneuvering; critic Joe Lockard writes it is simply taking place in "a conceptual economy where old ideas are being recycled as new postmodern discoveries" (Lockard, 183). In truth, as we saw in the first chapter, as early as the 1890s Hearn was contemplating Japan while deliberating on the function of dreams, utilizing his fantasy version of the country to advocate improvement in industrialized societies. Broadly speaking, encounters with cultural Others have always held an integral role in Western metaphysics, prompting many to draw loosely from philosophers such as G.W.F. Hegel. However, this chapter attempts to address a shift, from the threadbare formula found in the majority of cyberpunk works into what is attempted in Christopher Nolan's film *Inception* (2010).[97] The title is meant to evoke a double-meaning. "Waking" describes Western characters in cyberpunk fiction who exit from the dream-world of "Japan," ostensibly returning to reality; concurrently, "wake" marks the figurative death knell of Western subjectivity - a critical turn to be analyzed later in this chapter. Within the process of dream-work which constructs an imaginary "Japan" in Nolan's film, Western subjectivity is both fortified *and* de-stabilized.[98]

In the introduction to *Race in Cyberspace*, Kolko, Nakamura, and Rodman offer the following summation of recent depictions of "Japan":

Cyberspace can provide a powerful coalition building and progressive medium for

'minorities' separated from each other by distance and other factors. On the other hand,

these nodes of race in cyberspace are marked as being parts of the whole, islands of

otherness in a largely white, male, and middle-class cyber-space. (Kolko, 9)

The archipelago, which became a token mise-en-scene for cyberpunk fiction, was a nation whose technological prowess became via export its main identification. Already invested with an aura of mysticism by years of Orientalist discourse, "Japan" plays in these stories the part of absolute Other, a playground for dreamers who can control their escape from Western-based models by gauging their comfort with the construct. In short, various narratives during the late twentieth century re-assert the formula of an adventurer who visits an exotic, Eastern locale, meditates on the difference, and then "wakes" back into the safety of home a wiser individual. Jameson deems this type of phenomenon as "the old pseudo-Hegelian caricature of the thesis/antithesis/synthesis" (Jameson 2009b, 19). The certitude of Western metaphysics remains unchanged as it is manifested in these layered dreams; the protagonist appreciates what he/she is not and subsequently adapts.

This formula, as it merges with the hyper-reality of late capitalism, also opens the possibility for radical revision, including an opportunity for doubt, a variation we will discuss as a key component in *Inception*. Conflating "Japan" with the concept of technology offers a re-imagining of earlier representative forms. In *Full Metal Apache*, cultural scholar Takayuki Tatsumi argues, "The technology of race reflects race produced by technology, suggesting a chiastic logic that illuminates the late capitalistic literary and cultural crossroads that not only link Japan and the United States but also *replace the logic of causal influence with that of global synchronicity*" (Tatsumi, 29, emphasis mine). Visions of "Japan," re-constructed by, as well as

re-constructing, the virtual realm, accelerate into a blur in which points of reference are lost, not unlike the shifts taking place in *Gremlins* as well as Shimizu's films (see chapters 5 and 6). Pseudo-Hegelian metaphysics, fundamentally based upon causality, is gradually undone by this chiastic logic. The certainty of dream and reality starts to fade, first between "Japan" and the "United States," then within the very precepts of cultural difference. What originates as simulated Otherness exposes, for Nolan, the uncertainty of all subjectivities. Julia Kristeva examines the "wake" as follows:

> Confronting the foreigner whom I reject and with whom at the same time I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container… I feel "lost," "indistinct," "hazy." The uncanny strangeness allows for many variations: they all repeat the difficulty I have in situating myself with respect to the other and keep going over the course of identification-projection that lies at the foundation of my reaching autonomy. (Kristeva, 187)

While *Inception* can be read as a commentary on the imagining of multiple global spaces (in particular, Mal's "Old Europe"), this chapter will focus on the film's depiction of "Japan" because it is predominantly by contemplating the country's "strangeness," being in "wake," and the protagonist's mis-reading of his own condition at this crucial juncture, that the audience glimpses the alienation within themselves, the weakness at the core of their "reaching autonomy." As I believe Nolan's film demonstrates, the synching of two abstract ideals, the virtual and the Orient, inadvertently exposes the flaws of a standardized dialectic, sans the potential of Hegel's original formulation.[99] Cyberpunk therefore re-enacts encounters between cultural Others dependent upon arbitrary significations and thinly-veiled biases - a point that is always true of the formal dialectic, Adorno will argue, especially in an age of mechanical

reproduction.[100] Nolan articulates this for the audience through his allusions to depiction of "Japan" in cyberpunk narratives.

Cyberpunk texts recurrently echo Hegel's critique of Kant and Heidegger's assumed overcoming of metaphysics writ large with a belief one can transcend cultural and existential limitations, moving past illusions on a path ever-closer to Truth.[101] One returns to this formula in discussing cyberpunk as well as other films that explore "waking" as a contemporary dilemma, including the Wachowski brothers' *The Matrix* (1999). *Inception*, in contrast, calls upon Adorno's concept of negative dialectics, in which the grounding of Western philosophy, reliant upon continuous "waking" into a further enlightened state, is revealed to be an elaborate fallacy: "Delusion is boundless in the field in which the official culture canon deposits its assets, in the supposedly sublime field of philosophy" (Adorno 1966, 93). At the heart of Western metaphysics, Adorno argues, is a sleight of hand, an assumption there is a central cultural ground from which the rest of the system unfolds. He contends that critical theory must reconsider this assumption. Ramifications arise when analyzing the conceptualizations of "American identity" in the wake of the 2008 meltdown (at least, as it has been articulated through the cinematic medium). In response, Nolan's critical pivot towards an Adornian approach challenges the ways in which collective dreams, cinematic products of "soft power," define differences between the "U.S." and "Japan" – and ultimately, the entire globe.

"Waking": The Dialectical Dreaming of "Japan"

Do you know that our word for "nature" is of quite recent coinage? It is scarcely a hundred years old. We have never developed a sinister view of technology, Mr.

194

Laney. It is an aspect of the natural, of oneness. Through our efforts, oneness

perfects itself. (Gibson, 254)

Before considering Christopher Nolan's revision, one must define how "Japan" has been

systematically represented as a refuge for self-reflection among disenfranchised adventurers, a

pattern articulated previously by scholars including Joshua La Bare. The narratives in question

tend to focus on one or more dis-satisfied protagonists who go on a simulated *Bildungsroman*.

While wandering abroad in the wired wilderness - frequently identified as "New Japan" - the

protagonist encounters the unnerving potentialities of a world consumed by a loss of referents,

counterfeit identities, and the rise of a technologically-dependent infrastructure. An overview of

this formula will help one to understand how these narrative devices have shaped contemporary

perceptions of "Japan." Bruce Sterling's "Maneki Neko" and William Gibson's *Idoru* each

exemplify the tradition. Through innovative techniques, their works employ a modified version

of dialectics in order to provide the subject with a chance to transcend the unsavory limitations of

a digitized world.

Bruce Sterling's short story "Maneki Neko" provides the reader a "Japan" in which

communal bonds have been strengthened to an excessive degree thanks to an omniscient

computer linking human beings together. The protagonist Tsuyoshi early in the narrative is told

by his *pokkekon* (pocket computer) he needs to give a cup of coffee to a homeless person; the

computer gently tells Tsuyoshi, "He needs it" (Sterling, 4). This charitable act is initially viewed

in a Utopian light, with a sense that in "New Japan" human beings are dependent on technology

to assist them in becoming "more human." Tsuyoshi observes, "I really believe that computers

help human beings to relate in a much more human way" (9). This romantic notion is scrutinized

by the Asian-American protagonist, Louise Hashimoto. While a prosecutor in Rhode Island, she

was responsible for undermining a group of hackers and forbidding their access to technology. Retribution for Louise is that, upon arriving in "Japan," she is pursued by the digitized copy of a "maneki neko," a ubiquitous tourist trinket sold in Japan, modeled after a waving cat. Louise, the wandering Westerner, resists immersion into Tsuyoshi's alternative community, loudly proclaiming her System will not be thwarted: "Your network gift economy is undermining the lawful, government-approved, regulated economy!" (15). The inter-connected fantasy of "New Japan" repeatedly threatens her position as an authority figure, challenging the laws she holds to be self-evident. Louise laments, "I'm up against something that is very very big and very very patient. And it knows all about me. And it's got a million arms and legs. And all those arms and legs are people" (17). "New Japan," and its link to an all-knowing technology, promises to dispose of any challengers.

In "Maneki Neko," readers must either accept the "wake" for human beings decaying at the hands of technology or, alternatively, spiritually "wake" into a mystical Far East. Each stereotypical option blurs with the other, creating an impasse for the reader. The story concludes with Tsuyoshi's brother arriving to save the day; as was established earlier in the narrative, Tsuyoshi's brother is, like Louise, unable to co-exist inside of this virtual reality. He suggests they retreat into a Zen existence: "It's a sacred place in the mountains. No computers there, no phones, nothing… it's a sanctuary for people like us. And I know the way" (19). Louise decides to grab his arm and they ascend into a "great beyond." Importantly, this is where the narrative closes. Readers cannot glimpse the secrets of the retreat, nor are they left comfortable in the computer-driven world of Tsuyoshi with its vengeful eccentricities. The reader awakens from Sterling's story, part nightmare and part Utopian dream, prompted to feel relief in a position outside of "Japan's" parameters, having overcome abstract alternatives which might have refuted

the dictates of "Western laws and economies." The reader "wakes" up, recognizing their

limitations as well as the valuable aspects of their former way of life. "Waking" is therefore

synonymous with a pseudo-Hegelian overcoming in Sterling's tale, a re-assurance there will be

developments through encounters with cultural difference, and nothing will truly need to die in

the process.

Sterling relies upon fantastic elements, a willingness to market "Japan" as hip alterity, a

formalized tool for self-reflection. This phenomenon has elsewhere been referred to as "Techno-

Orientalism." In their work *Spaces of Identity*, David Morley and Kevin Robins locate in

"Techno-Orientalism" a desire to conceive of "a more human age beyond Western modernity"

(Morley, 149). They posit there is belief among some Western readers that "Japan has come to

exist as the figure of empty and dehumanized technological power" (170). According to Morley

and Robins, virtual technologies have re-enforced, and given a new tropology, to older

Orientalisms: "Japan" is routinely flattened and imagined beyond the perceived organic nature of

Western philosophy. Considering this, critic Veronica Hollinger contends it would be a "hard SF

which recognizes the paradigm-shattering role of technology in postindustrial society" (Hollinger,

210). The cultural component of many of these works, in contrast, assures that modern

paradigms are not shattered in any serious way. They are re-constituted and preserved behind a

futuristic garb. Ironically, by dressing the issue with a guise of cultural difference, the impulse

Morley and Robins argue is preserved in "Techno-Orientalism," the drive to get past a certain

Western tradition, remains structured by the standardized dialectical schema it seeks to supersede.

Lance Olsen, a scholar of cyberpunk literature, agrees with Hollinger in stating this

pattern lacks real de-stabilizing potential. He views the trend as an indication of "a larger

movement in our contemporary cultural consciousness away from postmodernism and toward

science fiction's metaphysical and narrative equivalent of neorealism" (Olsen, 150). Theorist Marc Guillaume, who relishes the disruptions later manifested in Nolan's film, adds: "The excess of individualism or narcissism that people decry today is a compensation or a staging that helps the subject resist its dispersion… to help it maintain an appearance of unity" (Guillaume, 40). Faced with the unruly potentialities of virtual difference, a culture of hyper-mediated fantasies, the subject stages an illusion of disquietude through formulaic encounters with "Japan" in order to "wake" at choreographed moments.[102]

William Gibson likewise maintains the principles of standardized metaphysics to encompass a "Techno-Japan." Gibson's *Idoru* (1996) narrates the story of a subject who wanders into the dream-world of "Japan" in search of something he is missing: a "human experience" outside of the superficial comforts of the technological realm. The protagonist Laney interprets his fellow human beings through their digital footprints to uncover the secrets surrounding a Japanese celebrity, Rez. Gibson's novel regurgitates themes of "Techno-Orientalism" but also offers a glimpse at *Inception*'s framework, in which one cannot avoid implicating the protagonist's role as dreamer and, as a result, questioning the reliability of the dream structure itself.

The milieu of the novel is once more an unsettling "New Japan," comprised of an ominous nanotechnology capable of re-generating itself: "miracles of the new technology, as banal and as sinister as such miracles usually were… part of a façade seemed to move, but it had to be [Laney's] eyes" (89). Gibson's idea of "Japan" is a vision of futurity in which human beings merge with computers. The archipelago, recently destroyed by an earthquake and replaced by pure pastiche, appears constructed from bits of fantasy: "Look at a map. A map from before? A lot of it's not even where it used to be. Nowhere near… a lot of it's like they just made

it up" (50). Gibson also relies on a revision of Orientalist tropes, echoing Hearn's fin-de-siecle descriptions of a "fairyland… some secret urban carnival… nothing to pin the place in time but the fact that the signs were electric…. a street built by leprechauns" (62). Dreamers encounter a Far Eastern world that seems initially to defy stagnant Western norms.

Laney struggles throughout the novel to touch, beneath sleek surfaces, the "humanity" at the center of this virtual community (if any still exists). He tries to comprehend the impending marriage between Rez and the idoru (Rei Toei), a virtual Japanese woman who was created as an amalgamation of fan desires. After a series of trails, he recognizes Rez cannot be interpreted with his usual methods because he is, in essence, the embodiment of a corporation.[103] The idoru, on the other hand, remains unwieldy, "the tip of an iceberg… some unthinkable volume of information… aggregates of subjective desire" (191) and "infinitely more than the combined sum of her various selves" (217). Still, these Japanese fantasy objects, cryptic in ways occasionally shocking, retain the promise for Laney of "waking" to an alternative tomorrow, a promise espousing a unity among the desires of people from around the globe. Gibson's novel considers technology first as a legitimate threat, and then as a method with which to re-connect and transcend the existential alienations of late capitalism.

Synthesis with an imagined "Japan," at its heart, re-enforces the trappings of Western-centrism. These trappings offer brief moments of release from the deterministic route of standardized metaphysics while rarely allowing the protagonist or reader to actually glimpse *negation*, any notion of progress without certitude; Adorno's negative dialectics attempts to pose such a progress without certitude, a retrieval one perceives being postulated later in Nolan's *Inception*. *Idoru* derives its narrative from these residual schemas. As "Japan" is imagined in the novel as being assembled by "desiring machines, aggregates of subjective desire, an architecture

of articulated longing" (252), the Western dreamer overcomes their limitations by recognizing that their personal desires and longings are implicated in the foundational construction of the dream. Laney admits "somehow he had always felt that he never found the central marvel, the thing that would have made the hunt worthwhile" (241). At that moment, the idoru appears: "the central marvel here… was Rei Toei" (241). She helps him find what he has been looking for; she asks, "You've been here before, haven't you? I think that's how I found it" (242). "Japan," posited as a community based on consensual fantasy, at last provides nothing more (or less) than the fulfillment of what Western dreamers, in their regimented metaphysical mindset, apparently wish for: *an encounter with themselves*. In Hegelian terms, consciousness locates itself.

What Laney is seeking, behind layers of hyper-consumerism, does not exist in some Platonic outside or external fairyland; instead, as Laney visualizes in his encounter with the idoru, the entire dream is fueled by his longing to connect with himself through interaction with the rest of the world. Laney's realization supports the tenets of Hegelian dialectics – realized earlier in the century by Sidney McCall (see chapter 2) – by uncovering the inter-connectedness of his consciousness with the fantasies of mankind. Despite an assumed movement past the myth of "Japan," the realization one's consciousness is constantly projecting abstractions, the concept of progress is still read as forward-moving. Breaking down the origins of a fantasized "Japan" is less radical than it initially appears to be in that Laney's (and the reader's) position is strengthened rather than challenged. Cultural critic Larry McCaffery reflects upon this need to isolate something beneath the chaos, to return to a place of comprehension, commenting that a text such as *Idoru* "empowers us by providing a cognitive mapping that can help situate us in a brave new postmodern world" (McCaffery, 16).

The groundwork allows for a dramatic shift. When Morley and Robins state that "postmodern technologies become structured into the discourse of Orientalism" (Morley, 169), one pauses for an Adornian inquiry: will not these technologies eventually turn back upon the Western dreamer, rendering their authority mute and designating them in equally "post-human" ways? Where there is a blurring of dream and reality, "Japan" and "Us," resolved in most of these fictions, there is also potency, recognition of the utter pervasiveness of myth within the dreamer's subjectivity (and within a world that has exhausted itself through countless metaphysical cycles). The genre allows for an opportunity to call into question the comforts of standardized dialectical "waking" among Western readers. Perhaps these heavily-constructed dreams are embedded in the frames with which their departure is articulated; when technology – including, importantly, cinema – emerges as a vital medium for conceptualizing cultural difference, the arbitrariness of the system is exposed, its hidden exploitations made glaringly visible. Consequently, what one has been witnessing all along is a procession accompanying the last vestiges of a self-certain Western subjectivity, a ritualistic "wake."

Contemporary science fiction films explore the concept of "waking" in analogous ways by borrowing from Japanese aesthetics. *The Matrix* (1999), for example, utilizes the "waking" trope to contemplate escaping from a society based on commercial fantasy alone.[104] Protagonist Neo's struggle to overcome the illusions of a modern realm, based on a formula much like the one this chapter has been examining, neutralizes the radical shock of the initial "waking," a fact perhaps explaining the relative disappointment accompanying the film's two sequels. In short, when one has overcome the initial barrier of consciousness alongside Neo, there is increasingly comfort to be had in the formulaic overcoming, belief in a sub-structure guiding the protagonist to a better tomorrow. As soon as the cord is pulled and the audience collectively "awakens,"

transcendence is little more than a metaphysical given and the next "waking" is hardly as exhilarating. In much of cyberpunk, this means the destabilizing premise eventually reveals its presumptions, the fictions propelling it forward, such as a final arrival at satisfaction through formulaic adventure. It is at this critical moment one might turn to Christopher Nolan's film *Inception*.

The "Wake": Progress without Certitude and Christopher Nolan's <u>Inception</u>

Don't lose yourself. Find Saito and bring him back.

Inception

Nolan's *Inception* utilizes a formula similar to the texts discussed, only to invert it and call into doubt the security of standardized metaphysics in a post-2008 world, where an illusion of "American centrality," its layers of economic and social fictions, stands glaringly exposed. This illusion of centrality, as the film articulates, relies upon the cinema as one of the most prominent media in the second half of the twentieth century. Nolan's self-reflective text seeks to blur the line between cosmopolitan dreams and crumbling constructions of Western subjectivity.

The film opens in what many spectators might recognize as a traditional Japanese room which is, in truth, an eclectic mixture of antiquated and modern Japanese design. The first several lines between Saito and his guards are spoken in Japanese. Therefore, from the opening of the film, the audience is asked to draw connections between Saito and this exotic, Far Eastern locale; importantly, it is intimated this heavy-handed dream has been created by Arthur, an designer from America. This is also the place the spectator return to in one of the climactic scenes. Nolan's decision to open and close his film with an overly-aestheticized vision of "Japan" is significant as embedded within the narratives of this space are years of fantasies that

have forged the U.S.-Japan cultural relationship, embodied in Saito's relationship with the American protagonist, Dom Cobb.

Cobb's initial ambition is not dissimilar from the cyberpunk protagonists. The suspense in the early scenes at the Japanese castle arises from the fact Cobb is trying to extract a secret from Saito's unconscious, while Saito is depicted as always seemingly one step ahead. Cobb insists, "I need to know my way around your thoughts… you need to completely let me in." As in the plots previously examined, the dreamer is in search of some hidden Truth, the next step in a (simplified) dialectical progression. Yet "Japan" remains impenetrable, layered in deep mystique. After Cobb manages to steal the secret from Saito's safe within the dream, he realizes it is actually a useless document with multiple key lines already redacted. Saito and Cobb "awaken" from this literally deteriorating fantasy and Saito smiles confidently: "In my dream, we play by my rules." Indeed, in Nolan's imaginary "Japan," Cobb's confidence is thwarted and his style of extraction fails. The archipelago consequently reads as an embodiment of difference based on an exciting, alternative paradigm, reminiscent of cyberpunk narratives.[105]

However, it is this gamesmanship which gradually binds Saito and Cobb. Historically, the United States and Japan, through their global corporations, are understood as (in)famously employing what cultural analyst Joseph Nye labels as "soft power." The two predominant "soft power superpowers," especially in the years following the twilight of the Cold War, have each appeared to rely on cultural products to spread their influence.[106] To a significant degree, this connects the two countries - as opposed to earlier styles of global influence perpetrated by "Old Europe"; whereas "Old Europe" also plays a key role in assisting Cobb, partnership with Saito,

and the "Japan" he appears to embody, is what ultimately exposes the dangerous artificiality of a political system propped up predominantly by dreams.

In America, Hollywood and the television industry have been widely read as asserting "American values" onto the presumed victims of the rest of the world. Japan, likewise, has been interpreted as spreading a secretive dream-work with its wildly popular anime and video game exports.[107] On this subject, cultural scholar Koichi Iwabuchi notes, "'Asia' is (…) reconstructed by the Japanese media industries, which are enchanted with the idea of the Japanese orchestration of a pan-Asian entertainment project as a bounded capitalist space of ardent consumer aspiration" (Iwabuchi, 106-107). The two cultures are generally viewed as controlling the minds of a late capitalist globe, extracting information when necessary and planting ideas in the minds of the dreamers they encounter.[108] Cobb, in his initial meeting with Saito, gloats over this skill: "I know how to search your mind and find your secrets. I know the tricks."

Saito and Cobb are thus implicated in a "soft power" scheme emanating into communities across the globe. After Cobb fails to extract any hidden Truth but, in the process, demonstrates his skills, Saito decides to hire him to help plant an idea in someone else's mind, in exchange for a safe return to Cobb's native "America." The joint manipulation of Saito and Cobb is first put on display in a basement in Mombasa, where they encounter a group of people who hook themselves into artificial dreams because they rely on these fantasies as "the only way they can dream anymore." As with William Gibson's division of dream extraction in "America" (Laney's company DatAmerica) from dream extraction in "Japan" (the Japanese company, Paragon-Asia Dataflow), this battle for control over the new realm of fantasy is clearly waged between the two "soft power superpowers." Yet the resolution of the initial conflict between

Saito and Cobb alerts the audience *Inception* is going to challenge pseudo-dialectical logic and instead focus on the shared affliction of a late capitalism where illusion, through "soft power," overwhelms any signs of "reality" (in either culture).

Following the opening merger, the film turns its attention to how dream manipulation works. Explaining it to his future team member, Ariadne, Cobb explains: "In a dream, we create and perceive our world simultaneously. And our mind does this so well we don't even know it's happening. This allows us to get right in the middle of that process… by taking over the creating part." Nolan overtly references the act of making movies, implicating the cinema as a prominent version of dream-manipulation.[109] Cobb delights in the process of creating dreams: "The chance to build cathedrals, entire cities, things that never existed, things that couldn't exist in reality." One is of reminded of the elaborate sequences Nolan himself orchestrates for the film. Works previously directed by Nolan, from *Memento* to *The Prestige* as well as the *Batman* films, exploit comparable self-reflexive tropes, exploring the complexity of creating fantasies for a mass audience.[110] Another technique linking Cobb to Nolan as dream-manipulator is the ability to splice together episodes (shot-to-shot editing) and exploit the audience's willingness, in a quote from Saito, to "take a leap of faith." Cobb draws the viewer's attention to the detail that they, like Ariadne, have elected not to pause and ask how they have been moved from one scene to the next. Cobb then emphatically asks her: "How did we end up here?" At this moment, audience members too are startled and invited to question how Nolan's dream-manipulation functions as well as, more pointedly, how film-goers are exploited by the cinematic tools of cultural imperialists perceived to be at work in America and Japan.

This manipulative design augments through multiple allusions to "soft imperialism." The process of dream-sharing was, as Cobb's sidekick Arthur states, initiated by an industrial military complex, suggestively reminding one of the Marshall Plan and the spread of "American values" via cultural exports.[111] At another point in the film, Cobb discusses dream-manipulation with his team member, Eames. Eames, a team-member who is British, gives the American a few tips about his previous failures to plant ideas successfully into a subject's mind before the backdrop of Mombasa, a former British colony. Colonization therefore underlies the concept of dream-work, making it plausible to implicate not only the cultural imperialism of the Pacific powers but also the European empires from which they inherited the trade.

The demographic of the film's characters, symptomatic of an expansionist vision, is diverse, ranging from Cobb's wife, Mal (France) to Cobb's father, Miles (British) and the group's druggist, Yusuf (Indian). The mise-en-scene shifts with regularity, taking the viewer through a kaleidoscope of worldly ports. The vision of the film is cosmopolitan at its most ubiquitous, allowing the viewer an imagined freedom to access not only the locale of other peoples but their innermost thoughts and dreams as well. Standardized metaphysics reaches grandiose heights, affording the protagonist an incredible level of personal extension. Meanwhile, something rings false in the film: the locales are too perfect, too much like what one might expect from classical Hollywood. "Old Europe," much like "New Japan," is sterilized by its sentimental construction. Very likely everything stems from Cobb's singular imagination. This illusion of worldliness only further pushes viewers to interrogate the veracity of the film's diegetic foundation, to distinguish the supposed universal from Cobb's particularity.

As if to confirm these initial doubts, early in the plot Saito is gravely wounded, shot during a chase scene in which their target's subconscious rises up violently against them. Saito's

vulnerability suggests a damaged condition beneath the façade, indicating there is something rotten within the cultural imperialist project. He and Cobb are suddenly entrenched together in a heavily sedated dream-world, a realm so reliant on fantasy that dreams have begun to pile up precariously. If Saito dies in the dream, he will be sent spiraling into limbo. Throughout the remainder of the film, Saito is depicted as dying, coughing up bright red splotches to remind the audience of his fatal condition. To contextualize this allusion, one might consider Japan's self-proclaimed "lost decade" (the 1990s); from this period until today, the country has remained in free-fall, it's once booming economy having burst with disastrous consequences. The fantasies elsewhere depicted as comprising "Japan's essence" are simultaneously coded as a symbolic death in the film. Saito's body is threatened by demise, viewed in a constant state of "wake," haunting the film and supplying a good deal of its exigency. What has "Japan" become, the film suggests, if not a victim to its surfeit of consumer fantasies, its copious number of cinematic dreams modeled after a particular Western apparatus?

The narrative structure of *Inception* returns to the trope common in recent representations of "Japan" analyzed earlier. The Western dreamer (Cobb) is mythologized as ultimately "waking" from this disturbing late capitalist nightmare. Nevertheless, before seemingly exiting the dream, the subject, confident in his ability to navigate this uncertain terrain, returns to save Saito; Ariadne re-assures another team member that Cobb will, in the end, emerge from the adventure unscathed. Indeed, as she returns to what one assumes to be "reality," and Cobb remains in the dream to seek his Japanese employer, Ariadne yells out: "Don't lose yourself. Find Saito and bring him back." The audience is provoked into believing that Cobb, though deeply troubled, has moved beyond anxiety and is focused on saving the rest of the world from the dreams he initially forced upon them. This assurance is also a theme from cyberpunk

recognized by David Porush: "(Cyberpunk authors) document and instruct us *how to preserve our humanity* in the face of and in wonderment of and in spite of awesome technologies that seem to sacrifice us to these technologized systems of the Code" (Porush, 247, emphasis mine).

Saito, once again linked to a highly stylized version of the archipelago, is identified as a victim waiting to be rescued by an American hero who – initially, at least – seems to possess a secure grip on the difference between reality and contrived dreams. Re-energized, Cobb returns to Saito's castle, where the Japanese tycoon has transformed into a withered old man. Cobb announces, with hushed bravado, "I've come back for you. To remind you – of something. Something you once knew. That this world is not real. Come back – so we can be young men together again. Come back with me." The limbo comprising Saito's world is seemingly transcended by a self-certain protagonist. Following the 2008 economic collapse, the film seems to insinuate, the American position vis-à-vis Cobb is, rather absurdly, that only "America" can save the world from the nightmare it is largely guilty of creating in the first place.

But *Inception* does not end with the certitude one locates in this formula. The ending, which attracted a great deal of attention upon the film's release, appears decidedly uncertain, raising the distinct possibility that the entire narrative has itself been only a dream. Plausibly, it was never Saito but actually Cobb himself lost in limbo. The film ends shortly after Cobb appears to have rescued Saito; consequently, Cobb is allowed to depart for "America." He embraces his two children once again, in the idyllic sphere of his rural home, re-united in a Utopian moment of bliss. His apparent origin is established as a domesticated, agrarian vision of "America." However, the metal top, a totem used throughout the film to indicate for Cobb whether or not he is actually in a dream, still spins on the table, leaving the audience to wonder

whether or not Cobb has really returned at all or if he is, in fact, still mired in fantasies of his own making.

Evidence the entire film has been a dream is most provocatively revealed in the opening sequences, once again set in "Japan." After "waking" from the dream in which he fails to deceive Saito, Cobb tells his team that he is "getting off at Kyoto," where it will be "every man for himself." Kyoto, the Japanese emblem of an "authentic" Japan according to its self-marketing, which strives to portray the city as offering a nostalgic return to a time of purity in the country, presumably offers a respite from the weary superficiality, and untrustworthiness, of dream-manipulation. Yet the proceeding shot is a panoramic of Tokyo and its recognizable sprawl, a city, in stark contrast to Kyoto, full of late capitalist excess. Cobb's inquiry reverberates with the long shot: "How did we get here?" An authoritative cut in the film moves the spectator inexplicably from the "authentic" Kyoto, which one never actually visualizes, into the massive cityscape of Tokyo. Is it possible that Cobb's dreams, ever tied intimately to the late capitalist project, will not allow him such a retreat? Has the idea of global corporations infected his mind to such a degree that he can no longer fantasize about anything else? His dreams are seemingly dictated both by the conglomerates initially hired him to do their work and, by extension, Nolan and the authority granted him by the business of cinema. It is not his individual consciousness, his personal "reaching autonomy," that seeks but the artificial consciousness of a corporation working through him.

The demise of "Old Europe," embodied by Mal's suicide, truly disturbs Cobb; her preservation in the gilded tomb of his unconscious repeatedly casts him into traumatic self-doubt. She tells him, "The world is not real. A simple little thought that changes everything. So certain of your world, of what's *real*." She goes on to ask, "No creeping doubts? Not feeling persecuted

209

on? Being chased around the globe by anonymous corporations?" Mal serves as the mouth-piece for his anxiety, the instability of his handle over the dream. Her marked identity as French only further strengthens the perceived crisis, summoning the ghost of Jean-Paul Sartre and the existentialists. In fact, the spectator learns the totem which is the symbol of Cobb's uncertainty has not always belonged to him – before her death, it belonged to Mal. The teetering moment is consequently further destabilized as the object he relies upon originally designated the dreams of another. Her presence over the course of the film forces him to contemplate that the fantasy design has - at last - slipped entirely from his grasp. Nostalgia, his aesthetic rooms and stylized memories, cannot hide the possibility that "Old Europe" is actually dead and Cobb has been viewing it in "wake" for some time. Even more unsavory is the revelation Cobb himself is to blame for Mal's death and the injection of "American dreams" into a post-war world was actually fatal for the entire globe – including possibly, in the end, for Cobb himself.

The tragedy (or farce) of Cobb - as Gibson only begins to articulate in *Idoru* – is that amidst the crisis of a hyper-virtual world, where global dreams have gone awry, his dream structures have exceeded his capacity to contain them. He has fallen victim to the addiction he has been spreading across the globe, even injecting into his wife. Like the victims in the Mombasa basement, Cobb can no longer tell the difference between what is "real" and what is "fantasy," if, in truth, he ever could. Unlike Laney in Gibson's novel, Cobb is not wiser because of this nor is there any idealized synthesis to be found for the viewer. Instead, one leaves Cobb unaware of his individual status, just as the audience finds itself having progressed to nothing more than a stand-still. *Inception* urges the audience to grow skeptical toward the certainty of the protagonist and the act of dream-manipulation employed by "soft power superpowers" such as the U.S. and Japan. While less radical patterns such as cyberpunk, dismissed by David

Kaufmann as "yuppie postmodernism," are eventually undermined at their focal point, Nolan's uncertainty remains. This concept is captured beautifully by the camera's lingering gaze upon Cobb's spinning totem. The initial dream, the raid of Saito's castle, and the return through standardized metaphysics are each granted as open-ended possibilities; each "waking" is re-invigorated by potential, an auto-deconstruction or negative dialectics challenging the assumed grounding for the narrative as a whole.

Viewers of *Inception* who at first appear to be moving through myth inevitably arrive right back at myth. Horkheimer and Adorno recognize this as a major shift within the capitalist project: "The principle of immanence, the explanation of every event as repetition, that the Enlightenment upholds again mythic imagination, *is the principle of myth itself*" (Horkheimer, 45, emphasis mine). The essential difference is that this time Nolan's viewer has an opportunity to spot the "sleight of hand." She finds no resolution in passing through a dream "Japan" and returning to "America"; rather, she is given pause to wonder whether this exercise has been founded on nothing more than mythical masonry. One discovers dream-work constructs not only the existence of an imaginary "Japan" but the existence of a self-certain Western dreamer, seemingly obliterating cultural difference: what is "Old Europe"? "Japan? The so-called "Third World"? In the end, they appear static, imported furniture of the mind. As Cobb's subjectivity manifests itself, objectified upon celluloid, what is unveiled beneath the dream is a zero sum game, empty rituals of narrative (re)simulating themselves *ad nauseum*. Exotic "Japan" begets re-created James Bond scenarios begets the melodrama of family (and so on). Kristeva contends this reveals a deeper psychological condition in a globalized society: "Deprived of rest, without conclusion, 'cosmopolitan' – the sense of a permanent shattering" (Kristeva, 167). The cosmopolitan Gothic once again disturbs the audience by transforming the familiar into the

dreadfully unfamiliar and, perhaps of even greater consequence, the unfamiliar exposes itself as having been within our gates all along.

The "wake," designated by Nolan as a liminal space in which the spectator moves from the remnants of life toward a sense of closure, is re-constituted through the layers of *Inception*. The word "wake" and the concepts attached are double-edged. The audience must choose if they are going to believe the endearing final image of a family (a domesticated "America") or acknowledge a heavy presence which looms over all – Death, the unconscious, a moment of mastery refused. At a time in which rituals such as cinematic dreams have displaced the participant from a position of centrality, subjectivity remains in a perpetual state of "wake." The film has not been a "wake" for Saito alone; it has been a "wake" for Cobb (and the audience) as well.

Previously, in *The Matrix*, the act of "waking" is presumed to be productive, transcendence a given; in *Inception*, on the other hand, the viewer does not transcend but rather negates. Cobb does not choose to "wake up" like Mal but refuses to admit it was ever actually his dream in the first place. The audience consequently grows detached from him over the course of the film, viewing him skeptically from above (whereas the viewer of *The Matrix* almost exclusively shares in the revelations of Neo). For the audience, there can be little satisfaction in Cobb's final choice. To "wake" is to die. One must be killed to experience the kick, but it is a shallow death, always preceded by the guarantees of a return; Death, like transcendence, develops into a mere given. However, by the close of the film, the kicks, "wakings" synonymous with a predictable and choreographed death, have lost all conviction. Gone are the pseudo-dialectics of cyberpunk, in which difference is projected and then overcome; gone is the shadow of Heidegger's comforting re-encounter with the positivism of Being. In its place is an ever-

terrifying Hegelian negation and a sense of previously-buried doubt. What if the re-assurances, the narrative structures guiding Western thought in an age of rampant consumption, and dictating the majority of cinematic formulas since the early twentieth century, have been based on myth? What if there are no re-assuring cultural determinism in global politics, no *terra firma* in a hidden agrarian "America"?

The "wake" in *Inception* thus re-establishes negative dialectics as a framework for an uncertain age. The film, instead of confronting "Japan" in a confident fashion, refuses to settle on any conclusive Truth. Perhaps Cobb has chosen the most re-assuring route, as he does in his traversing of "Old Europe" and "Japan": the route of nostalgia.[112] The film, nonetheless, will not labor to break down this problem further, as that would provide another resolution, neutralizing the freedom Nolan privileges. The dénouement of *Inception* insists the fruitfulness of doubt must re-emerge in cinematic works and, more generally, in Western constructs of cultural difference. As Adorno writes, "Disenchantment of the concept is the antidote of philosophy. It keeps it from growing rampant and becoming an absolute to itself" (Adorno, 13). The turn from "wake" (as a pseudo-dialectical verb) to "wake" (as a revelatory event) is essential in understanding Nolan's post-2008 vision for a cinematic medium refusing to be an "absolute to itself." His film forces dreamers, at the dawning of theatre lights, to contemplate what may have been a "wake" for the Western-centric myths defining them. And once again, at the epicenter of this revelation, rests a spectral vision of "Japan."

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I conclude this dissertation with *Inception* as what is at stake in the film nicely summarizes what I believe to be at stake in many fantastic renderings of "Japan": how the

<center>213</center>

persistent destabilizing of the "East/West" binary can avoid "bad relativism" on one hand and stagnant reification on the other. This reminds one of the tensions highlighted in the introduction between the attitudes toward Gothicism Khair and Edmundson exhibit, positions I suggest the cosmopolitan Gothic should ideally hold in balance. How then is one to depart from this ambivalence? What, if anything, should serve as a resolution? To answer, one might turn to Judith Butler's recent study of power, in which she reconsiders Hegel's "unhappy consciousness," and discover a complimentary description of the phenomenon I have been examining:

> The temporal paradox of the subject is such that, of necessity, we must lose the perspective of a subject already formed in order to account for our own becoming. That becoming is no simple or continuous affair, but an uneasy practice of repetition and its risks, compelled yet incomplete, wavering on the horizon of social becoming. (Butler, 30)

Underlying the texts examined by this dissertation are a number of far-reaching dialectical energies, including structuralism/post-structuralism, male/female, constructs of "race"/constructs of "culture," ethnography/autoethnography, and - most pressingly for this project's purpose – "U.S./Japan." Gothic devices, with various levels of success, attempt to make meaning out of these dualisms. In the end, I still wonder what to make of the dynamic between Cobb and Saito. Unresolved, I am left to shift my attention away from the ends and more towards the process itself. After all, to resolve some artificial binary between "East" and "West" would be illusory; instead, one might focus on allure of specters and what that reveals to us about a particular cosmopolitan vision. These hauntings, from the shadows of Hearn to the roar of Godzilla, from the doubles of Eaton to the invasion of gremlins, share a refusal of satisfying closure.

I would like to end with the lingering top still spinning and the inquiries resonant. Can delusions of a "supernatural Japan" be overcome by a metaphysical return? Does the problem of Cobb's system contain, within itself, the solution? These questions are paramount and not readily answered. In his recent extensive study on the history of dialectical thought, Jameson offers a warning: "The consumption of Hollywood film form is the apprenticeship to a specific culture, to an everyday life as a cultural practice… if (America) can imagine nothing else then obviously we have nothing to warn other cultures about either" (Jameson 2009a, 443). Earlier, Herbert Marcuse, one of Adorno's colleagues in the Frankfurt School, re-frames the dialectic in a fashion that posits a solution to Jameson's point:

> Self-consciousness thus finds itself in a "state of desire"… man, awakened to self-consciousness, desires the objects around him, appropriates and uses them. But in the process he comes to feel that the objects are not the true end of his desire, but that *his needs can be fulfilled through association with other individuals*… in dealing with these objects, man is actually dealing with man. (Marcuse, 114 emphasis mine)

The cosmopolitan Gothic pushes one to recognize emptiness and loneliness in the haunted echo chambers of a Western-centric world perspective. If Cobb's final stance is the most satisfying he has to offer, and yet it is still part and parcel of the manipulative dream-scape, might one step back, face these specters with a critical eye, and make room for a negotiable future based on association not with supernatural projections, but with "other individuals"?

Notes

NOTES

[1] Historian George Feifer describes the event in vivid detail: "A spectacular comet, or meteor, appealed to the Americans even more. Appearing at midnight, it threw hours of spectral light on the ships from its blue and red fireball, listing spirits with a promise of a favorable omen" (Feifer, 105).

[2] See also Christopher Benfey's *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan* (New York: Random House, 2004).

[3] This term is borrowed from William Hosley's *The Japan Idea: Art and Life in Victorian America* (Hartford, Connecticut: Wadsworth Atheneum Shop, 1990).

[4] For more, see Linda Gertner Zatlin's *Beardsley, Japonisme, and the Perversion of the Victorian Ideal* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[5] Though Sime never formally studied Japanese art, he (like most Western consumers) demonstrated a great affinity for it. To mark a historic occasion in his life, Sime's friends bestowed upon him a traditional Japanese screen "tailored to his tastes" (Heneage and Ford, 22).

[6] For more on similar representations, see John Dower's *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1987).

[7] Another example is the work of science fiction writer Robert A. Heinlein, in particular *Sixth Column* (1949), a novel focusing upon a demonic army of PanAsians mercilessly invading the West.

[8] The adaptation of Japanese ghost stories is a long-standing tradition, ranging from Percival Lowell in the late nineteenth century on to the Baron Algernon Bertram Freeman-Mitford, F. Hadland Davis, and more recently Royall Tyler.

[9] See also *The Japanese Nation in Evolution* (1907), in which Griffis states: "Japanese history… belongs neither to the chimney of Santa Claus, nor to the nursery's fairyland… (the Japanese person) has as much right to serious attention and the benefit of truth stripped of its nursery garb, as has the European" (Griffis 1907, 24).

[10] In one of the few extended studies concerning Griffis, Edward R. Beauchamp summarizes the traits which make Griffis such a complex figure: "his long-term commitment to doing the work of God, improving his financial status, and using his literary talents to secure a reputation for himself" (Beauchamp, 24).

[11] See also Griffis' historical novel *Honda the Samurai* (1890). In this work, a narrator frequently weaves a story-within-a-story in order to cover as much of Japan's "real" and "imaginary" history. In one such case, the hand-off is so subtle the reader becomes aware of how unclear the binary really is: "I have traveled with them in the rice-lands of history; now you can lead them over the moorland of fable and fairy tale" (Griffis 1890, 131 – 132).

[12] For an explicit survey of this tradition, see Jack Hunter's *Dream Specters: Extreme Ukiyo-e: Sex, Blood, and the Supernatural* (Tokyo: Shinbaku Books, 2010).

[13] For those interested in further analysis of "the yellow peril," see Gary Hoppenstand's "Yellow Devil Doctors and Opium Dens: A Survey of the Yellow Peril Stereotypes in Mass Media Entertainment," from *The Popular Culture Reader--Third Edition.* Eds. Christopher D. Geist and Jack Nachbar (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1983).

[14] Margaret L. Carter's *Specter or Delusion?: The Supernatural in Gothic Fiction* (1987) further analyzes this critical turn. In the eighteenth and nineteenth century, she posits, there is a debate as to whether or not the supernatural truly exists and hence the Gothic retains a hint of veracity. On the other hand, "For the average twentieth century reader, the supernatural is not problematic; it is apt to be rejected without debate" (Carter, 120). The Jamesian move exposes that specters are always-already delusions; their appearance exposes nothing but faulty wiring in the modern consciousness.

[15] Twain regularly experimented with perversity and the macabre, even in dry, satirical travelogues such as *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). Once Twain's narrator arrives in Italy, his cool and collected manner shows signs of disruption. Exposure to a preserved corpse in the underground stirs a return of the narrator's long-repressed memory: "It is hard to forget repulsive things" (Twain 1966, 126). The narrator veers from the original narrative into an exposition of the haunting recollection of how he, as a boy, discovered a mutilated corpse (an episode speaking loudly to a darker dimension of the narrator's state of mind): "I went away from there. I do not say that I went away in any sort of hurry, but I simply went – that is sufficient… I have slept in the same room with him often since then – in my dreams" (127). In the face of Death, the boundary between nations, between the Self and the Other, and within the psychology of the traveler is transgressed. Later in Italy, the narrator, who meets with an American soldier looking for "bloodless adventure," contemplates the shallowness of cosmopolitan perspectives by unearthing the "bloodiness" within himself and his nation's history. Discussing the romantic portrayal of Indians, the narrator scoffs at the concept: "I have roamed with them, scalped them, had them for breakfast. I would gladly eat the whole race if I had a chance. But I am growing unreliable" (147). Episodes such as these, of which there are plenty in Twain's travel writing, provide Gothic sensations. Through encounters with the "foreignness" of the rest of the globe, characters are forced to re-encounter the unsavory "foreignness" buried deep within the individual, and national, consciousness.

[16] One might also look to Cram's collection of ghostly tales, *Black Spirits and White* (1895), which also intermingles a cosmopolitan vision of the Orient with Gothic sensations. In "No. 252

Rue M. Le Prince," Cram tells the story of a wandering Bostonian who encounters a series of disturbing rooms tied to a sublime Far East and a pseudo-Buddhist esotericism before being attacked by a malignant force. One young man, who has "rather hobbledehoy tendencies towards Buddhism," cannot hope to contain the power contained in these spaces, including the room "like the inside of an enormous Japanese box, and about as empty" (Cram 2010, 17).

[17] For a seminal study of the subject, see Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* (London: Dalkey Archive, 1998).

[18] For an example of sustained repulsion, see Henry Adams' *Letters from Japan* (1886). He writes: "Japan possesses one persuasive, universal, substantive smell – an oily, sickish, slightly fetid odor – which underlies all things, and though infinitely varied, is always the same" (Adams, 12).

[19] Scholars Tony Magistrale and Michael A. Morrison explain the Gothic genre as follows: "While part of us is appalled by its excesses and outrages, another part gleefully identifies with its rebellion against social, sexual, and moral codes" (Magistrale and Morrison, 4).

[20] Horror writer H.P. Lovecraft, for example, intermingled racial determinism within his tales, finding in Poe as well as Hearn an "archaic and Orientalised style with jeweled phrase" (Lovecraft, 57).

[21] The cosmopolitan Gothic thus shares critical space with "planetary modernism," especially as it is defined by Susan Stanford Friedman: it de-stabilizes any notion of centrality without losing the mutual fears and comforts that are shared by cultures all across the globe. As Friedman notes, "A planetary aesthetics of modernism needs to be *transformative* rather than merely *additive*" (Friedman, 487 emphasis mine).

[22] Recent scholarship by David Weir locates a similar stress on the global/local distinction. He coins the phrase "American Orient" to maintain the prevalence of fantasy at the core of the transnational relationship: "The East became not so much *terra incognita*, as the old maps had it, but *terra fantastica*… I wish my oxymoronic phrase 'American Orient' to be understood: as a version and a vision of the East that can be apprehended only through the distorted lens of the Western eye" (Weir, 2).

[23] To modify Arjun Appadurai's well-worn phrase, one might also deem this "Gothicism-at-large": recurrent reactions against modernization that appear in different communities at different times.

[24] For further example of this phenomenon, see Jack London's stories from Hawaii, such as "Koolau the Leper." Hawaii, in many of London's renditions, is a repulsive space for travellers of "New England stock." The natives serve as grotesque projections of everything the Puritanical visitors are not: carefree, passionate, one with Death. In "Koolau," London provides length descriptions of bizarre rituals, including a "dance of the living dead" (London, 43). Yet, at the

same time Koolau, king of the lepers, who resists the foreigners trying to remove him from his land, offers a site of abjection, he also provides a heroic (if not entirely "noble") savage; London pushes the reader to identify Koolau as an unfamiliar Other and, simultaneously, as intimately familiar in a united fight for sovereignty.

[25] See Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

[26] This dissertation is haunted by the contributions of Japanese individuals, refusing to envision it as a solely one-way phenomenon. For example, one must acknowledge Hearn's wife and students as translators and cultural ambassadors. One must likewise recognize the inspiration derived from numerous Japanese film directors and the important vocalization of Ishiguro Shintaro and Akio Morita with their (in)famous *"No" to ieru Nihon* (*The Japan that Can Say No*, 1989). This is therefore predominantly, but never exclusively, a Western-centric fantasy.

[27] Previous paradigms include the veritable cottage industry of travelogues concerning individuals who go on a pilgrimage to Japan to "re-connect" with themselves. In these narratives, there are frequent revisions of previously held stereotypes concerning national identity yet the stories almost always end with a return to certainty, a transcendence of earlier positions. For two examples of these innumerable travelogues, see Pico Iyer's *The Lady and the Monk: Four Seasons in Kyoto* (1992) as well as Cathy N. Davidson's *36 Views of Mt. Fuji: On Finding Myself in Japan* (1993). The cosmopolitan Gothic texts examined in this dissertation refuse final stasis.

[28] At the fin-de-siecle, this phenomenon was described by Mary Crawford Fraser as "cherry-blossom metaphysics" [Fraser, M. *A Diplomat's Wife in Japan: Sketches at the Turn of the Century* (New York: John Weatherhill Inc., 1922), p. 159].

[29] Spencer's followers share similar disagreements over the fundamental outline of "progress." Some were like Fenollosa, such as the wildly-popular Reverend Henry Beecher Stowe, in their optimism regarding the promises of Western civilization; others, like Thomas Huxley, were more akin to Hearn's Romantic subservience to the great "Unknown." For more on these disparities, see Werth Barry Werth's *Banquet at Delmonico's: Great Minds, The Gilded Age, and the Triumph of Evolution in America* (New York: Random House, 2009).

[30] Hearn and Fenollosa's texts navigate a fragile line at the turn of the century between ethnography (a self-certain stretching of knowledge concerning the globe) and auto-ethnography (a critical turn back upon the Self, recognition of the doubts haunting observers). For an interesting parallel across the Atlantic, see Jed Esty's *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003).

[31] David Punter illustrates a similar ambivalence in the Romantic poetry of Lord Byron: "There is a sense of aristocratic nostalgia which sits uneasily with the political radicalism." This conflicted construction is thus hardly novel, having been fostered from the early eighteenth

century onward [Punter, D. *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions* (New York: Longman Group, 1980), p. 109].

[32] Hearn's proto-modernism is widely acknowledged by scholars interested in his work. George Hughes, for one, points out Hearn's emphasis on "relativism" and states, "He enriches modern culture precisely because he also disturbs those centres of gravity we like to consider fixed" (George Hughes, "Lafcadio Hearn and the Fin De Siecle," from *Re-Discovering Lafcadio Hearn*. Ed. Sukehiro Hirakawa (Kent, UK: Global Books, 1997), p. 101. Elsewhere, noted Japanese scholar Donald Richie locates a significant stylistic shift in Hearn's prose, echoing the stylistic turn of many other authors into what would come to be labeled as modernism: "Simplicity… after the heightened, the complicated, the curious, Hearn had learned from Japan itself the virtues of the spare" (Donald Richie, *Lafcadio Hearn's Japan* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing, 1997), p. 15.

[33] Brad Evans labels this phenomenon as the "ethnographic imagination": "the experimentation, sometimes serious but often in the form of aesthetic dalliance, with new ways of perceiving, representing, and producing structures of affiliation and difference" [Evans, B. *Before Cultures: The Ethnographic Imagination in American Literature, 1865 – 1920* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005), p. 7]. The "dalliances" of Hearn and Fenollosa negotiate the borders of perception in similar ways.

[34] This chapter will depart from Barbara Hayley's comparative essay "Lafcadio Hearn, W.B. Yeats and Japan," concerning W.B. Yeats (the "modernist") and Hearn (the "idealist"), in so far as it takes up the issues I attend to here. However, Hayley's argument neglects several key points. First, she dramatically mis-reads Hearn's prose, overlooking its minimalist quality, its incessant emphasis on what is *absent*, as well as contending Hearn draws satisfaction from a merging of the "human" and the "Divine" (a trait far more accurately applied to Fenollosa). She writes, "If there is grandeur in Yeats's unfulfilled reaching is there not also a magnificence in Hearn's sense of arrival?" (Hayley, 60). Second, and even more important, Hayley's desire to retain divisions between these two artists fails to recognize the complexity of the task at hand. In fact, perhaps symptomatic of the transitional moment between the late Romantics and the early modernists, there is always uneasiness between the so-called "arrival" and the limits of consciousness which make such "arrival" both impossible *and* always with us.

[35] As Judith Snodgrass notes, "Fenollosa led the campaign testifying to the universal value of Japanese art from the perspective of, and in the vocabulary of, Western aesthetics" (Judith Snodgrass. *Presenting Buddhism to the West: Orientalism, Occidentalism, and the Columbian Exposition* (Raleigh, NC: University of North Caroline Press, 2003).

[36] It is important to note here that their mutual idol Spencer was also unable to resolve the question of the "Unknowable"; as Mark Francis has argued, Spencer was "eclectic on metaphysics" and his philosophy "always contained much uncertainty."

[37] Even prior to Pound's influence, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry* expresses a dissatisfaction with Western discourse: "A late stage of decay is arrested and embalmed in the dictionary… it is impossible to represent change in this system or any kind of growth" (Fenollosa 2008, 55 - 57).Yet, it must be recognized in surveying the drafts of this piece, Pound's editing of Fenollosa's manuscript did much to condense the argument and to provide the "flavor" of minimalism and early modernist styling. Haun Saussy's preface to the recent re-release of *CWCMP* states: "Pound contributed to the Americanizing of the essay, even as he Poundified it" (24).

[38] Jameson provides a concise summation of the Hegelian project against traditional philosophical discourse: "It does not, turgidly and laboriously, attempt to expound some idea which the reader then attempts, by retracing the steps of the argument, to recreate and thus to grasp or 'understand'… Better still, (Hegel's) *Logic* is *like a piece of music*, and its text a score, which *we must ourselves mentally perform* (and even orchestrate)" (Jameson 2008, 80 emphasis mine). In Fenollosa's most famous essay, language does not situate an end-in-itself but suggests a ceaseless process of Becoming in which penultimate comprehension is nothing but an illusion.

[40] For more on Hearn's early life and experiences with religion see Jonathan Cott's *Wandering Ghost: The Odyssey of Lafcadio Hearn* (New York: Kodansha International, 1992), Edward Tinker's *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1924), and O.W. Frost's *Young Hearn* (Tokyo: Hokuseido Press, 1958).

[41] Biographer Paul Murray states, "(Hearn) was unable to reconcile the notion of the unspeakable horror of ghosts with that of holiness" (Murray, 247).

[42] Hearn only begins to approach the critical cosmopolitanism later posited by theorist Paul Rabinow, "an understanding suspicious of its own imperial tendencies" (Rabinow, 258).

[43] For more on Hearn's relationship with his Irish ancestry, and his link to the work of Yeats and the Irish renaissance, see Paul Murray's evocative work, *A Fantastic Journey: The Life and Literature of Lafcadio Hearn* (1997).

[44] The unsettled nature of Hearn's project, in particular, is articulated by Murray: "Hearn was able to see through, and dismiss, contemporary Western imperialism but he was unable to break free of its philosophical constraints" (Murray, 124).

[45] One might also consider Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* for an interesting parallel. The "uneven" development is explained as follows: "The pull of the idea of the country is towards old ways, human ways, natural ways. The pull of the idea of the city is towards progress, modernisation, development. In what is then a tension, a present experienced as tension, we use the contrast of country and city to ratify an unresolved division and conflict of impulses, which *it might be better to face on its own terms*… the point of saying this is not to disprove or devalue either kind of feeling. It is to see the real change that is being written about, as we

discern its common process. For what is at issue, in all these cases, is a growth and alteration of consciousness" (Williams, 297 emphasis mine). "Japan," it could be said, represents an amalgamation of country and city, and all of the impulses Williams illustrates therein. My task in this first chapter is therefore not to deride the practice of Hearn or Fenollosa but to recognize "Japan" as a fictive site upon which these dual impulses find their deposit, in order to advocate facing these modes of representation "on their own terms."

[46] Sidney McCall writes in her preface to *Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art*, "The influence of Hegel remained with (Fenollosa) a vital and constructive factor throughout his life" (Fenollosa 2007, xiii).

[47] For more on the Fenollosa's joint ventures, see Larry Chisolm's *Fenollosa: The Far East and American Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1963).

[48] See also Van Wyck Brooks' *Fenollosa and His Circle* (1961).

[49] Though she was not a formal member of the St. Louis or Concord schools active at that time, McCall did share many of their goals as well as their uncertainties. See Dorothy G. Rogers' *America's First Woman Philosophers: Transplanting Hegel 1860 - 1925* (NY: Continuum. 2005).

[50] Georg W.F. Hegel writes, "the real subject-matter is not exhausted in its purpose, but in working the matter out" (Hegel, 12). "Spirit," according to Hegel, resists "edifying" and instead finds its nature in dialectical Becoming.

[51] See once more Christopher Benfrey's *The Great Wave: Gilded Age Misfits, Japanese Eccentrics, and the Opening of Old Japan.*

[52] For further analysis of the dialectical forces at work in Japanology, see Robert A. Rosenstone's *Mirror in the Shrine: American Encounters with Meiji Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991).

[53] For more on Hearn's evolving style, see Carl Dawson, *Lafcadio Hearn and the Vision of Japan* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).

[54] The aspects of Eastern religion projected onto this "Ghost" can be expressed in the following statement from Judith Snodgrass: "(Buddhism) would provide the competition with Christianity that was essential if the West was to reach its full evolutionary potential" (Snodgrass, 151). According to many thinkers during this era, the "Ghost" of Japan would unnerve the early twentieth century Christian but in so doing it would force them to become "better Christians."

[55] For more on this anxiety, see also Thomas Tweed's *The American Encounter with Buddhism, 1844 - 1912: Victorian Culture and the Limits of Dissent* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2000). In addition, Christine Guth discusses the obsession (and repulsion) of Americans to the Buddhist ritual of cremation: "Such images no doubt fueled fear and horror of a practice that for many Christians brought to mind the fire and brimstone of hell" (Guth, 195).

[56] For Hegel, Reason is always repelling itself as a Thing outside of itself; this endless negation is described in the *Phenomenology* as follows: "Spirit knows itself as spontaneously active in face of them, and in singling out from them something for itself, it follows its own inclinations and desires, making the object conform to *it*: in the first case it behaves negatively towards itself as an individuality; in the second case, negatively towards itself as a universal being" (Hegel, 182).

[57] One might return again to the work of Lukács to appreciate the *limitations* McCall emphasizes within her prose. Against construction of a "beautiful Japan" taking place in the work of certain figures engaging in Japonisme (mostly in the commercial sector), McCall reminds one that artistic portrayals of "Japan," as yet another trend in formal posturing (like Romanticism), must ceaselessly meet their end-point and it is here, as Lukács contends, one finds the most "human" expression possible. On playwright Richard Beer-Hoffmann, Lukács composes a passage I find resonant when considering McCall's work, without necessarily elevating her artistic skills to those of Beer-Hoffmann: "Only behind these encounters do we perceive the eternal loneliness, as vast as ever… his characters send out rays in all directions, but the roses cannot bridge the precipices, and the rays of light are reflected only in mirrors… the edifice he has so beautifully constructed breaks down at several points and sudden perspectives open up before us, sudden glimpses of something – who knows what? Life? His own soul? … We cannot help loving these moments in which Beer-Hoffmann the artist shows himself to be weaker than Beer-Hoffmann the profound and authentic human being" (Lukács 2010, 144).

[58] There is an interesting parallel between the form of McCall's narratives and the form of Hegel's *Phenomenology*: "The importance of literature to the [*Phenomenology's*] project, however, is not one of static images, but rather of their *movement* and – as the allusion to the paragraph at the work's end suggests – the ways in which that movement can be '*recollected*' or held together as part of a narrative" (Speight, 16).

[59] See once more Mari Yoshihara's *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism.*

[60] One might also consider here the popularity of Spiritualism within the suffragist movement during the same time period, in which notions of "femininity" were linked to Death, or titillating encounters with the deceased. These themes were prominent among female consumers and authors during the era, conjoined in a "rebellion against authority." Furthermore, "Death literally occurred in woman's sphere… (middle-class women) produced and purchased *a variety of memorial artifacts* from postmortem photographs to jewelry woven from the hair of the deceased." The domestic sphere became, in other words, an assortment of artifacts marking both the Far East as well as Death, creating an amalgamation in the name of liberation and bringing concrete evidence of what was beyond Western male authority into the so-called "woman's world" (Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* [Boston: Beacon Press, 1989], 2; 53 emphasis mine).

[61] For more on the shifting definition of Female Gothic, as well as the critics of the term, see Lauren Fitzgerald's "Female Gothic and the Institutionalization of Gothic Studies." *Gothic Studies* 6, 1 (2004).

[62] As an example, popular author Hallie Erminie Rives, at one time the wife of a diplomat stationed in Japan, composed a novel which also flirted at times with "Japan" as a monstrous, haunted locale: *The Kingdom of Slender Swords*. In it, the protagonist finds her long-lost father, who has been making idols in a Japanese village. This paternal figure is coded as being none other than Hearn himself. The father was born on a Mediterranean island, had a "bitter youth" in England, took quests to West Indian cities, was blind in one eye, moved to New York City in his late teens, and was hiding in Japan in order to "escape." This character, whose life mirrors that of Hearn in near precise detail, exists at the center of Rives' novel, giving it an even greater air of intrigue; this also demonstrates that Hearn would have been well-known enough at the time for many educated readers to grasp the reference [Rives, Hallie Erminie. *The Kingdom of Slender Swords* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1910), 131]. In truth, this influence continues today. In Japan, the director of *Ringu*, Nakata Hideo, is currently at work completing a film based on Hearn's life entitled *Hearn*; elsewhere, the bestselling author of the *Tales of the Otori* book series, Gillian Rubinstein, writes under the pseudonym Lian Hearn. Her works deal with Hearnian subject matter, including phantoms from "Old Japan."

[63] See also Michelle A. Masse's *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[64] I refer here to mass-produced, formulaic Gothic narratives; a fair amount of Gothic fiction, in particular works written by women in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, was far more radical in nature. One might consider canonical figures such as the Brontë sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mary Shelley, and Toni Morrison.

[65] "A Were-wolf of the Campagna" tells the tale of mysterious were-wolf attacks in an Italian village. The story, as with the works examined in this chapter, confronts the limitations of male hegemony. The reader is led to suspect that the monster terrorizing the town is a "man-wolf" with paws "larger than a man's hand." Yet Fraser provides a surprising twist at the conclusion: a trembling *house-wife* is actually the beast. The "shocking" discovery takes place when the were-wolf's severed paw transforms into the wife's dainty hand; what was once domestic and familiar is rendered dreadfully unfamiliar: "There was something diabolically familiar about the hand. He looked again and closer. There was something familiar about the ring, too. He had seen it elsewhere and very lately… The end of the story (which I can only tell as it was told to me) is that the woman was burnt as a witch" [Fraser, Mrs. Hugh. "A Were-wolf of the Campagna," from *The Were-wolf Pack*. Ed. Mark Valentine (Hertsfordshire, Britain: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2008), pp. 80 – 83].

[66] Critic Huining Ouyang notes that Eaton's fiction is "more than a charming piece of japonica," it "destabilizes orientalist binary constructions of race" [Huining Ouyang, "Ambivalent

Passages: Racial and Cultural Crossings in Onoto Watanna's 'The Heart of Hyacinth'." *MELUS* 34, 1 (Spring 2009), pp. 211 – 229].

67 Eugenia C. DeLamotte comments, 'In a world in which language itself defines women as the fearful Other, the most revealing stories they tell about themselves are mysteries' [Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 291].

68 One may also locate this doubling in Eaton's *Me: A Book of Remembrance*. In this tale, the protagonist Nora looks to the modern girl Lolly, depending upon her to manifest every urge she represses. Recognizing Lolly's darker side, Nora admits: "I think you are trying to shock me." To which Lolly, not displeased by this revelation, replies: "They're all afraid of me" (Watanna 1997, 134).

69 Even in her more romantic narratives, Eaton returns to the macabre. In *A Japanese Blossom* (1906), for example, nothing at all seems to occur; the narrative is comprised not of events but rather of letters and re-tellings. Nowhere does Eaton draw more attention to the textuality of her texts, to the distance between the telling and the thing-itself. In the middle of the novel, the characters attend the performance of a supernatural storyteller, an episode that does nothing to further the plot but seems simply there for affect. The storyteller, with "chalky white face," eyes like "black chasms," and "long fangs," tells the tale of a wronged female ghost who returns to decapitate her husband's new lover. Then, with a theatrical flourish, the woman's head appears floating above the audience. The female spectators are "paralyzed with fear" and the female protagonist admits, "I didn't know I could feel quite so shivery over a mere ghost story." Eaton draws the reader's attention here, perhaps more directly than anywhere else, to her authorial designs and the reader gets to glimpse the effectiveness of ghostly, sensational tropes unleashed upon an unwitting audience [Watanna, Onoto. *A Japanese Blossom* (New York: Dodo Press, 1906), 87 – 89].

70 Yuko Matsukawa, a scholar who has written extensively on Eaton's life, describes her as a "trickster" who enjoys "challenging our preconceptions of gender and race" [Yuko Matsukawa, "Onoto Watanna's Japanese Collaborators and Commentators." *The Japanese Journal of American Studies* No. 16 (2005), pp. 31 – 53].

71 In *Tama* (1910), a female Japanese fox-spirit bewitches a foreign teacher, the "Tojin-san." A variation of Hearn's earlier adaptation of the traditional tale "Yuki no Onna" (Woman of the Snow), this narrative follows the American teacher as he tames the woman and brings her back to her "proper" place in society. Though she haunts the first half of the novel as a vampiric terror, feeding off of her hapless victims ("the fox-woman slid down the bamboo trunk so swiftly and so silently she was beside the terrified serving-maid before the latter knew. She felt her arms caught in a sudden squeezing grip. Sharp fingers sank into her thick, fat flesh, crept up along her arms to her shoulders, nipped at her breast, her neck, her cheeks… the fox-woman had again vanished"), the sprite is quickly and efficiently brought into "decent" society by the Western patriarch (53). The Tojin-san states:

> It seems to me an amazing thing that to-day when you (Japanese) are frankly hoping to join the nations of enlightenment, you still give yourselves up to barbarous persecution because of what, after all, is nothing but a legend fit for children. (34)

Tama recapitulates the structures its antagonizing vamp initially disrupts [Watanna, Onoto. *Tama* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1910)].

[72] Philosopher Georges Bataille views this position as "an identity of opposites between glory and dejection, between exalted and imperative (higher) forms and impoverished (lower) forms" (Bataille 1985, 144 – 145).

[73] For more, see Steve Ryfle's extensive *Japan's Favorite Mon-Star: The Unauthorized Biography of the "Big G"* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1998).

[74] See also K.K. Ruthven, *Nuclear Criticism* (Melbourne, Australia: Melbourne University Press, 1993).

[75] Maurice Blanchot composed the foremost celebration of the irreverence made possible by imagining the nuclear event in *The Writing of The Disaster*. He famously glimpses the potential to escape constrictive paradigms in Western philosophy: "It is the time when the negative falls silent and when in place of men comes the infinite calm (the effervescence) which does not embody itself or make itself intelligible" (Blanchot, 40).

[76] For an in-depth analysis of this phenomenon, see Narrelle Morris' *Japan-Bashing: Anti-Japanism Since the 1980s* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[77] William Nester comments, "In its single-minded devotion to winning the Cold War with the Soviet Union, Washington may have lost a *much more difficult and subtle* war with Japan" (Nester, 398 emphasis mine).

[78] Clyde V. Prestowitz asserts, in the face of the challenge posed by Japan: 'The United States must decide once more what kind of nation it wants to be' (Prestowitz, 333).

[79] For more on the interdependence of an imaginary "East/West" binary, see once more Naoki Sakai's *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* .

[80] "The System" is visualized in a number of 1980s films directed by Ridley Scott, in particular *Black Rain* (1989). In this film, an American cop, Nick (Michael Douglas), chases a *yakuza* (gangster) through the underbelly of the archipelago. The antagonist, Sato (Yusaku Matsuda), is a sadistic killer/counterfeiter with no sense of loyalty or respect. The nightmare world of Sato remains in a perpetual cycle: like a press printing burnable bills, or a factory on auto-pilot, it senselessly moves forward, shedding limbs with senseless abandon.

[81] Ira Levin's novel *Rosemary's Baby* (1967), in contrast, does not utilize Japanese companies (and their employees) in these ways. Guy does commercials for explicitly American companies (Pall Mall, Anacin); though an anonymous Japanese businessman does appear in the climactic scene taking photos (it is the final line, in fact), the camera is deliberately loaded with film: "He held up an open camera into which he was putting film" (Levin, 239). This Japanese character thus seems more interested in learning from the capitalist pact than in exposing the fissure of the symbolic as in Polanski's film version.

[82] Ambivalent representations of Japan's Otherness (overlapping with an awareness of its Sameness) have in fact – as explicated in the introduction - been a defining characteristic of the cultural relationship between the U.S. and Japan since the 1850s. This trope may account for postmodern monsters emerging in depictions of Japan, rather than countries such as China or Korea; the emphasis on Sameness habitually applied to depictions of the archipelago possibly laid the groundwork for the specter of Sameness emerging (again) in the 1980s.

[83] Robert Heinlein's *Sixth Column* (1949), referenced also in the introduction, suggests that a degree of difference was forecasted prior to the so-called "miracle economy." In the novel, the protagonists are contemplating their enemy, the PanAsians: "The difference to him was one of *degree only*. Looking at the PanAsians through Finny's eyes there was nothing to hate; they were simply more misguided souls whose *excesses were deplorable*" (Heinlein, 35 emphasis mine).

[84] Baudrillard examines this concept of excess in two other examples of late capitalism: fashion and Western gluttony. "It's not the beautiful opposed to the ugly, it's what's *more* beautiful than the beautiful. The obese – the famous fat American – is not opposed to the skinny one. He is *fatter than fat*, and that is fascinating" (Baudrillard 1987, 99, emphasis mine).

[85] Leon Anderson adds: "(The Japanese) don't suffer from Western-style egocentrism, but rather from ethnocentrism *to a degree unknown* in the West" (Anderson 1992, 14 emphasis mine).

[86] I am specifically applying this concept to monsters used to critique capitalism during and immediately following the Cold War period. Dynamic relationships with monsters are still used to express concern over issues such as gender, race, and others. For more, see Tony Magistrale's *Abject Terrors: Surveying the Modern and Postmodern Horror Films* (2005). Yet there is evidence that even in horror films focusing on issues such as gender there is a phenomenon not unrelated to "the Gizmo effect." In one important example, Carol J. Clover views the breakdown of gender binaries in slasher films from the 1980s, appearing in the same time frame as the "Japan bashing" I've been examining. She writes, "If the project of these films is to update the binaries, the upshot is a sex/gender swamp – of male and female bodies collapsing into one another, of homo- and heterosexual stories tangled to the point of inextricability" (Clover, 107).

[87] Theorists Alexandre Kojève and Giorgio Agamben have discussed Japan in this transition away from older paradigms. Within what we have discussed as a formal degree of difference, these theorists find a revised dichotomy that is still human but strictly formalistic ("snobbism"), devoid of any perceived metaphysics. Therefore, the possibility opens for a framework beyond

the so-called End of History, one that would not be dependent on confrontation with monstrous Others.

[88] For more on the intersection between mythology and modernization in Japan, see Carol Gluck's *Japan's Modern Myths* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).

[89] Perhaps Kubrick's *The Shining* and its surfeit of photographic images indicating a concrete moment in History best exemplifies this Western tradition; Kubrick's canonical work will receive greater treatment in the second section of this chapter.

[90] Ira Progoff analyzes the schism: "(Freud) regards society as a restraining and inhibiting factor which fetters the individual… Jung calls for the reorientation of consciousness so as to develop the intuitive faculties and to bring about a spiritually synthesizing experience rather than a merely analytical understanding" (Progoff, 42; 50). According to Progoff, Freud refuses (and is unable) to engage with society, opting instead to focus on individuals, while Jung hopes to consider social meaning from a more holistic perspective.

[91] Steven Jay Schneider's introduction to *Horror Film and Psychoanalysis* contends "psychoanalytic horror film theorizing need not be homogenizing or reductive" (Schneider, 12). Schneider goes on to argue that perhaps "non-Western" film traditions do not require psychoanalytic readings; it is just as probable, I argue in this chapter, that non-Western traditions open up possibilities for a radical revision of the base assumptions underlying the readings in question.

[92] As Jung notes, "The intellect, of course, would like to arrogate to itself some scientific, physical knowledge of the affair, or, preferably, to write the whole thing off as a violation of the rules. But what a dreary world it would be if the rules were not violated sometimes!" (Jung 1963, 61).

[93] Critic Stefan Tanaka proclaims that this breakdown is part and parcel of Japan's intellectual history. He analyzes pre-Meiji era appearances of the paranormal: "Ghosts became humans, humans became ghosts. The past coexisted with the present; indeed, there was no separation. Moreover, they were unpredictable" (Tanaka, 56). Atemporality was thus far from being purely a symptom of the late twentieth century.

[94] Theorist Gilles Deleuze recognizes this shared condition in the time-image of modern cinema. He writes, "Time which is fundamentally liberated becomes power of the false" (Deleuze, 143). This "power of the false" reveals to the spectator that their perceptions of Time are as specious as reification on celluloid. The memories of another, when edited together with those of the Self, offers an existential revelation: "The power of the false cannot be separated from an irreducible multiplicity. 'I is another' ['*Je est un autre'*] has replaced Ego = Ego" (133). This disjointedness is particularly relevant in Shimizu's *Ju-On* as it overlaps and disconnects the temporal experiences of various individuals to reveal a disjointedness (and thus, interconnection) for the spectator within their given community.

[95] Deleuze, though he problematically fails to distinguish Japanese philosophy from some mystical construction of Japanese nature, recognizes the contributions of Japanese cinema (in particular, the films of Ozu) to a new contemplation of Time in film language, "connections of a new type, which are no longer sensory-motor and which bring the emancipated senses into direct relation with time and thought" (Deleuze, 17). Ozu, for Deleuze, reveals - through cinematic form - that Time is "indefinite" while change is a finite product of man.

[96] Dainin Katagiri, a Zen philosopher who played a prominent role in spreading Zen into American life, reminds one that this process is unnerving and ideally representable through tropes of fantasy or horror. Endless negation of the Ego amidst the chasm of eternity terrifies: "If you try to stay with it you become crazy… they are going down into an unfathomable abyss… they are scared because they seem to disappear… we try to escape, screaming and crying" (Dainin, 50; 89).

[97] Other prominent examples of cyberpunk fiction handling this subject matter include Pat Cadigan's *Tea from an Empty Cup* (2000) and Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* (2000).

[98] This phenomenon is outlined at length in Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The omniscience of the Enlightenment, placing Reason over nature, creates the certitude and the layered mythologies of Western metaphysics (from which one increasingly cannot escape). The authors describe the condition as follows: "Pure reason became unreason, a procedure as immune to errors as it was devoid of content" (Horkheimer, 71).

[99] According to virtual media theorist Paul Virilio, any radical edge that metaphysics might once have had is diluted by cinematic innovations: "What are we to say, then, of this dictatorship exerted for more than half a century by optical hardware which has become omniscient and omnipresent and which, like any totalitarian regime, encourages us to forget we are individuated beings?" (Virilio, 29).

[100] Adorno writes that "causality is the spell of dominated nature." He finds the tipping point of a "reductive schema" stemming from the Enlightenment to be when "man recognizes himself as the object of his insatiable reductions" (Adorno, 269). Cinematic simulation, in his terms, is symptomatic of how agency has been gradually replaced by a pre-determined process which eliminates any "genuine freedom."

[101] Adorno argues that Heidegger assumes yet another false transcendence but is actually still firmly rooted in Western metaphysics: "The philosophy of Being shares this ritual of repetition with the mythos it would so much like to be" (Adorno, 115).

[102] Tom Moylan, though electing not to discuss the portrayal of a digitized Far East, recognizes the deployment of racialized Others (located in clusters or enclaves) and the concurrent re-assertion of a status quo in cyberpunk fiction, particularly in the works of William Gibson: "Seen in terms of this *plot trajectory*, the enclaves simply become the homes of very traditional

sidekicks, and the utopian agents become no more than typical Proppian helpers who are duly employed at the standard three points in the narrative to advance the action of the main characters" (Moylan, 88). He surmises that racial issues in these works serve the purpose of being "little more than useful cogs in those larger machines" (91). Western metaphysics, in other words, once more swallows cultural difference into its greater trajectory and embedded plot lines.

[103] Prior to encountering the idoru, Laney is trained by a mysterious federal agency to conduct "nodal apprehension" from a young age; "nodal apprehension" involves a mystical style of reading someone's consumption habits in order to apprehend the essence of the individual: "He was an intuitive fisher of patterns of information… a dowser, a cybernetic water-witch" (Gibson, 26).

[104] A recent film, Duncan Jones' *Source Code* (2011), continues this tradition of examining collective dreams and the subsequent problem of "waking"; others include Paul Verhoeven's *Total Recall* (1990) and Terry Gilliam's *12 Monkeys* (1995).

[105] Masanori Oda posits, in *The Uncanny: Experiments in Cyborg Culture*, "the subject of Techno Orientalism, just as in the old Orientalism, is blind to the oppressed consciousness of the observed objects that is hidden under the shadow of brightness of imagination" (Oda, 255).

[106] For more on the connection between these two "soft power superpowers," see *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States* (Yasushi, 2008). Essays in this collection demonstrate the complexity, and overlap, within the "soft power" of these two cultures.

[107] Perhaps the most apt example is Western perceptions of Nintendo as a kind of "soft power" Trojan horse. Joseph Tobin critically defines this perspective: "Nintendo is an Althusserian apparatus, sinister, powerful, and systematic in achieving its seduction and interpellation of its child consumers" (Tobin, 8). David Sheff adds, "Even during the hours when kids weren't playing video games, they were being showered with the culture of Nintendo… Nintendo has successfully entered the collective consciousness… Super Mario was more recognized by American children than Mickey Mouse" (Scheff, 8 – 9).

[108] Ian Buruma comments, "After centuries of having absorbed the cultures of China and the West, Japan would now compel others to imbibe the culture of Japan… Japan had become a distorted mirror image of the nation that tried so hard to shape it" (Buruma, 121; 152).

[109] For examples of how American popular culture was applied in manipulative ways internationally, see also Uta G. Poiger's *Jazz Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Poiger, 2000).

[110] Nolan, in a 2010 interview, recognizes this trend in his work: "I think the relationship between movies and dreams is something that has always interested me… when you look at the idea of being able to create a limitless world and use it as almost a playground for action and

adventure, I naturally gravitate towards cinematic worlds." He goes on to point toward the deepest level of the dream in *Inception*, a mise-en-scene he acknowledges as echoing the familiar film language of the James Bond series. Dream-work, and the cinematic fantasies Nolan evokes, proceed in tandem toward a similar goal: manipulation of the dreamer (Elfman, 2010).

[111] James Chapman and Nicholas J. Cull point out that since 1945, "Hollywood became one of the prime vehicles for the projection of U.S. imperialism" (Chapman, 9).

[112] Slavoj Žižek recognizes a similar phenomenon in America in the years following the 2008 financial collapse, one in which the presumed determinism at the heart of global capitalism is overcome through an illusory "waking," revealing for Žižek a "wake" for the System in its entirety: "The danger is thus that the predominant narrative of the meltdown will be the one which, instead of awakening us from a dream, will enable us *to continue dreaming*" (Žižek, 20 emphasis mine).

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