

Chapter 2. An Absent Father and “Incompetent” Brothers

Visits to Tokyo and Setbacks

Though she had already been publishing works in *Bunshō Sekai*, it was in 1916 (Taishō 5) that a major magazine, *Shinchō*, requested submissions from Midori and published such works as the short stories “*Motoki Shizuko-shi ni tsuite* (About Motoki Shizuko)” and “*Natsu iku kokoro* (A Heart of Summer Demise).” This inspired Midori to try to make a living as a writer, and the following year she resigned from her job as an elementary school teacher and went to Tokyo, counting on the help of her older brother Shirō, who was then a student at Tokyo Imperial University in the Department of Agriculture.

At this time, Midori met Nakamura Murao, the chief editor of *Shinchō*. It is quite possible that Nakamura told her of the difficulties for a woman living alone in Tokyo trying to support herself by writing. Returning home to Tottori for a time, Midori returned to Tokyo in the summer of that same year. Midori’s impatience is clearly visible in these back and forth trips between Tottori and Tokyo.

The next year, Midori considered moving to Tokyo and entering a university in order to write novels while studying literature, but her plans had to be postponed because Shirō, on whose support Midori was counting, had graduated from the Department of Agriculture and moved to Osaka for an engineering job, leaving Midori without a place to live in Tokyo. Thus Midori’s ambitions ended with this setback.

Midori was finally able to move to Tokyo and enroll in the Department of Japanese Literature at Japan Women’s University in 1919. She began living in the Shunju-ryō dormitory located in Mejiro. At that time, Japan Women’s University was well-known for its “Good Wife Wise Mother” education and attracted women from Tokyo and regional areas with a variety of goals, including the daughters of good families who desired general cultivation as well as talented women who aimed to be able to support themselves.

Midori’s roommate Matsushita Fumiko, who would become Midori’s life-long friend, was the only child of a landowner in Asahikawa, Hokkaido and a student in the Home Economics Department. Ozaki Masu, a few years behind Midori in Tottori Girls’ School was also in the Home Economics Department. Midori’s classmate at Tottori Girls’ School, Ojima Kimino, was a student at the Women’s Art School, but lived on her

own in an apartment in Mejiro, where Japan Women's University was located. In addition, Midori's cousin Tamura Kumazō, who later became the model for Sangorō in Midori's *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, was a student at Tokyo Music School.

Chūjō Yuriko, Yuasa Yoshiko, Amino Kiku, and Tanno Teiko, among others, were all students in the Department of English Literature at Japan Women's University, and Murayama Ryu was in the Department of Japanese Literature. Though she had entered late, the experience of mingling amongst these women at the Women's University and direct exposure to the atmosphere in Tokyo, the cultural center of Japan, were strong stimulation for Midori and hardened her resolve to become a self-supporting expressionist.

However, just when Midori's work "From the Doldrums (Mifutai kara)" was published in *Shinchō* alongside the works of rising novelists Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Shiga Naoya, and Satō Haruo, and her future as a writer seemed about to begin, the University reprimanded Midori for submitting her work to a magazine while still a student and she decided to withdraw from school. It was 1920 (Taishō 9) and Midori was 24 years old.

Midori's decision to withdraw from the University was a declaration of unyielding resolve to become a writer and to pursue literature without compromising herself for the University. But without university student status, she no longer had a place to stay in Tokyo. Midori was forced to return to Tottori briefly, but unable to repress her desire to live in the capital, she returned to Tokyo the following year to live with Matsushita Fumiko, who had also withdrawn from the University and had an apartment in Ōtsuka. Midori tried to find a job with a publishing company in order to support herself, but as she was never able to get along well with others, she couldn't keep such jobs for long and frequently relied on Fumiko financially.

Fumiko was the daughter of a wealthy family and she believed in Midori's talent as a writer. In addition, Fumiko had been deeply moved by Midori's devoted care during her illness and hospitalization two years earlier. It seems that she intended to support Midori's creative career as a life-long friend and confidante. Fumiko herself was a talented *Waka* poet and published her poems in a coterie magazine, but she devoted far more of her literary passion to supporting Midori in her attempt to establish herself than to her own aims as a writer.

Yet, despite this support from her closest friend Fumiko and the recognition of her talent as a writer by everyone in her literary circle, Midori was unable to seize the

opportunity to actively engage in the life of a rising writer and proceed along her own path. Blessed with an unusual personality that transcended “woman,” Midori’s unique character was respected and loved by all for her kind heart and sympathy for others. But for this very reason she was unable to free herself from the yoke of family: each time there was an issue, such as her second older brother’s illness or her younger sister’s divorce, her family called her back home and pressed her into service. With her father already dead and her mother unreliable, Midori was greatly concerned for her three younger sisters and bore the responsibility of an eldest daughter in a patriarchal family both in practical and emotional terms.

During her late 20s, or the 7 years from her withdrawal from Japan Women’s University until she settled down in Kamiochiai in 1927, Midori’s energy was consumed not only by the flames of her creative passions, but also by several trips back and forth between Tottori and Tokyo to attend to the needs and illnesses of her family. Although she struggled to become independent, she could never extricate herself from Tottori and her family, nor could she abandon her role within the family.

The “Incompetence” and “Impotence” of Her Older Brothers

It was not until 1927 (Shōwa 2) that Midori was finally able to concentrate on creative writing in Tokyo. She returned to Tokyo to take care of Fumiko, who had become seriously ill. After Fumiko was released from the hospital, she rented a house in Kamiochiai and they began to live there together.

Caring for Fumiko was the spiritual reason for Midori’s return to Tokyo, but in fact her life in Tokyo was made possible only because she could live with Fumiko and depend on her financially. Their life together, bound by strong mutual friendship and commitment as well as Fumiko’s financial support, was based on bonds of protection and dependency that went much deeper than those of their time as classmates at the women’s university.

The sudden demise of Midori’s father in 1908 (Meiji 41) had deprived the Ozaki family of its economic stability as well as its social position. He died just after

her oldest brother Atsurō graduated from the Naval Academy, and while her brothers Tetsurō and Shirō were still at Tottori Middle School and Midori, at thirteen years old, was a first year student at Tottori Girls' School. Their father's death had a much larger influence on Midori's future than that of her brothers. Though she was now dependent on her older brothers, they still did not have the power to assume the role of her father, and yet as the oldest daughter, Midori was now responsible for her mother and her three younger sisters. This would greatly affect the course of her life.

Before World War II, the father in a patriarchal family held great power over his daughter's future. In the case of his absence, that power went to the older brother. We can only imagine what kind of life Midori would have had if her father had lived. We might assume that he would have required Midori to marry, as the most common and appropriate course. However, her father was an educator and an elementary school headmaster who clearly wished to give his children a high-level education, and Midori and her brothers all grew up to be diligent students earning excellent grades, having internalized their father's ambitions. In a sense, one could say that Midori's intellectual appetite, which led her to leave her teaching job soon after she began and to enroll in Japan Women's University at the age of 23, was the natural result of being raised in that environment and of her father's educational standards. Her father probably would not have allowed her to quit her teaching job, refuse to marry, and move to Tokyo for the uncertain and unstable life of a writer, but I believe that if Midori truly wanted to study literature at Japan Women's University, her father would not have been opposed, and would even have supported her.

It was not that there was no one for Midori to marry—in fact, it is said that as the oldest daughter of the Ozaki family there were many possibilities. It was probably because her desire to pursue literature was so strong that she did not show any interest, but it may also have been the fact that as the oldest daughter in a home with no father she had to care for her younger sisters. In other words, she had to take on the role of surrogate mother. At the very least, it is certain that Midori herself thought that her sisters' future was her responsibility as oldest daughter, that she exerted herself on behalf of her sisters' marriages far more than for her own, and that even after her sisters were married she continued to worry about them.

Here we can detect the impotence of the mother within the patriarchal family. Given her lack of power and economic strength and her minute influence over her daughters, it appears that the daily role of the housewife, such as taking care of the family and doing the housework, was all Midori's mother could manage. A powerless

mother who had lost her husband, could not protect her daughters socially or economically and had an insecure existence. She could hardly be a role model for her daughters of an independent woman. Midori's older brothers and grandmother appear in her works, but her father and mother never do, they do not exist.

In a patriarchal family, it is the oldest brother who succeeds the father as head of household. As daughters of regional, intellectual families often went to Tokyo to stay with brothers who were either studying or working in the capital, older brothers with social status were actually more helpful to their future paths than fathers. For example, it was quite common for an older brother, as his sister's guardian, to choose a husband for her from among his own friends, as in Natsume Sōseki's novel *The Poppy* (*Gubijinsō*). By marrying his sister to a man who seemed assured of reaching a position of high social status in this way, the older brother could maintain or even improve his own social status. Younger sisters therefore had an exchange value, so to speak, and modern social strata were constructed out of such homosocial bonds, with older brothers at the center.

Although Midori was dependent on her older brothers after her father died, her oldest brother Atsurō could not yet support her economically. Her second older brother Tetsurō, who had been adopted by relatives on their mother's side at the Yōgenji Temple, was studying Buddhism at Ryūkoku University in Kyoto, but later developed a brain disease and had to be nursed by Midori until he died in 1929 (Shōwa 4).

As I mentioned before, it was her third brother Shirō with whom Midori stayed when she first came to Tokyo in 1917, while he was still a student of Tokyo University. Midori respected and loved this brother, who had a literary sensibility, and they got along very well. Shirō recognized Midori's talent. However, when Shirō graduated the following year, he moved to Osaka, and was therefore no longer in Tokyo when Midori moved back to the capital and entered Japan Women's University. Furthermore, Shirō could not support his younger sister economically, having just begun his career.

Therefore, though Midori had three older brothers who had all been born into the intellectual class, received a higher education, and promised to achieve a reasonably high social status (though not an elite bureaucratic position), they all were "impotent" with regard to Midori: not only did they fail to provide Midori with economic support, but as her guardians they could not create a stable position for their younger sister by finding her a marriage partner from amongst their friends or acquaintances

with good prospects within the homosocial connections they would make in the future.

This “impotence” on the part of her older brothers might have been favorable to Midori’s attempt to leave the family and become independent, but the fact that they didn’t have the economic power to support Midori as she struggled to become a writer was a significant obstacle. It left Midori with a deep dilemma, torn between the demands of her family and creative writing.

Nevertheless, Midori respected and loved her brothers. She never criticized them nor severed her ties to them. In her works, Midori often describes relationships between older brothers and younger sisters, and it is clear that Midori and her older brothers shared relationships of intimate and mutual dependency. Although in reality, it was Midori who took care of her older brothers, she could not escape from the fact that ideologically, she was a woman in a patriarchal family, owned and protected by them. Throughout her life, Midori maintained sibling bonds of combined independence and dependence with her three brothers, who were “incompetent” because they could not fulfill their brotherly roles within the patriarchal family toward a younger sister and “impotent” in terms of understanding and supporting Midori in her ambition to become a creative writer. These relationships formed the core of Midori’s life and literary works.

Kamiochiai

Having completed one of her many trips to Tokyo in 1927, Midori began living in Kamiochiai with Matsushita Fumiko, who had just recovered from serious illness. Although it was within the city, Kamiochiai was still a newly developed residential area at the time, with many wooded areas and agricultural fields. The second floor of a rented house with a tin roof, one of many that had been built there since the Great Kantō Earthquake, became the one and only home Midori would know as a writer.

Having become close to the as yet unknown Hayashi Fumiko, Midori was introduced to the editor of *Nyonin Geijutsu* (Women’s Arts), Hasegawa Shigure. She translated Poe’s *Morella* into Japanese and published it in 1930 and also wrote some film criticism, as she had become fascinated by Chaplin. And then, in that second floor room in Kamiochiai, Midori wrote her major works one after another: *Apple Pie in the Afternoon* (Appurupai no gogo, 1929), *Walking* (Hokō, 1931), *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* (Dainana kankai hōkō, 1931), *Miss Cricket* (Kōrogijō, 1932), and *One Night of Anton in the Basement* (Chikashitsu anton no ichiya, 1932). Midori wrote

these novels steadily, sitting at a desk by her second floor window. She had not been blessed with the tough survival skills of Hayashi Fumiko. To begin with, she had no desire to become famous, and as she never tried to sell her works by making friends with editors, she lived in dire poverty as a matter of course.

This second floor room of the tin-roofed rental house in Kamiochiai was Midori's home for five and a half years until September, 1932 when her oldest brother Atsurō took her back to Tottori, suffering frequent hallucinations due to an addiction to the anti-headache drug Migrenin. Takahashi Takeo, an aspiring writer much younger than Midori she had once planned to marry, had noticed Midori's symptoms and informed her family in Tottori, at which point her oldest brother hurried to Tokyo and brought her home. Although she had been worried about Midori's health, Matsushita Fumiko had left Tokyo roughly one year earlier to join her husband in Hokkaido.

Kamiochiai, where Midori and Fumiko lived together, was at that time a newly developed residential area of Tokyo, a mixed area of fields, farm houses, and new brick-roofed rental houses, where undiscovered artists and writers had begun to settle. It is relatively close to Mejiro, where her Japan Women's University dormitory was located, but whereas Mejiro was a high-class residential neighborhood set on high ground, Kamiochiai is a lowland, and didn't seem urban because of the remaining areas of nature. In the early Showa Era, as Shinjuku developed as the terminal station of the private railway lines and rose as a new entertainment district, young people from the countryside who came to work there found Kamiochiai in Yodobashi-ku to be a close, convenient, and cheap place to rent.

Hayashi Fumiko, who lived in Kamiochiai and Shimo-ochiai, wrote about this neighborhood in "*Ochiaichō Yamakawa-ki* (Ochiai Mountain and River Diary)," her recollections of Ozaki Midori. According to Hayashi, even though it was close to Nakanoi Station on the Seibu Line, it was rumored to be such a remote place that robbers were frequently about at night. A river separated Kamiochiai from Shimo-ochiai, and while Shimo-ochiai was on top of a small hill and a few fashionable, modern houses were beginning to appear there, Kamiochiai was in a small gully along the riverbank where silk tree flowers bloomed and workers in an arsenal factory lived in long, flat apartment buildings scattered amongst pigpens and farmhouses. You could also see the tall chimney of a crematory nearby.

Hayashi Fumiko liked the Ochiai area and said that it was difficult for her to leave. Years later (in the summer of the first year of the Pacific War) she built a new house in Shimo-ochiai that still stands. Kamiochiai, the site of her memories of close

friends Yoshiya Nobuko and Ozaki Midori, was new to Fumiko. She writes of visiting Midori's neighborhood after she had disappeared to Tottori, looking up at her second floor room with its decaying clothes line, and thinking of the brilliance of the work Midori wrote there, *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*. Even Hayashi Fumiko had no information about Midori after her return to Tottori, and it is well-known that she lamented the fact that although she wanted to recommend *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* for the Akutagawa Prize, she had no idea of what was going on with Midori.

Kamiochiai was located on the outskirts of the capital, and also the outskirts of the literary world. Many famous scholars and writers lived in Hongō, Nishikatachō, Komagome, and Tabata, and poets such as Hagiwara Sakutarō and Murō Saisei lived a little further from Ōmori in Magome. The area was therefore called the New Village of Writers. Ibuse Masuji and other writers began to live along the Chuō Line in Nakano, Kōenji, and Ogikubo, and in the 1930s, an artists' village called "Montparnasse" where young painters gathered to live grew along the Seibu line close to Ikebukuro. And of course, many budding young writers gathered to live in Kamiochiai. One of them, Ozaki Kazuo, named the damp and still-rural Kamiochiai where they lived "Mole Corner" or "Slug Corner" in his delightful stories.

Hayashi Fumiko and Ozaki Midori

When we talk about Kamiochiai, we cannot omit these two women writers' names: Hayashi Fumiko and Ozaki Midori. For these two, Kamiochiai provided an observation deck from which to view the modern city of Tokyo, one very different from Ginza, Hongō, or Asakusa.

Kamiochiai was not like Hongō, where scholars and medical doctors lived, or Aoyama and Azabu, where noblemen, government officials, and financiers lived, or modern Ginza, where men strolled about, or the fashionable entertainment quarters of Yanagibashi, Nihonbashi, Akasaka, and Kagurazaka, or the red-light districts of Kōtō or Bokutō. Kamiochiai was a convenient place where young women who had come from rural areas to the city to find jobs as mannequin girls at the gorgeous new Shinjuku department stores, as café and bar waitresses, or as dancers could walk to work, though it was peripheral to the city itself. Such was the Kamiochiai where Hayashi Fumiko and Ozaki Midori came to know each other.

Kamiochiai was a comfortable, semi-undeveloped area, not yet labeled with any social or cultural signs: it was literally a newly-developing town. It symbolized the

Tokyo of aspiring and unknown women writers who had come from rural areas without any support and must forge their own way on their own power. These two impoverished women had no fathers, brothers, husbands, or relative who would protect and supervise them, yet they recognized each other's individuality and talent both as individuals and creative writers attempting to live on their own. Making Kamiochiai the base of their lives and expressive practice, each in her own way turned her vision of and walks around the modern city of Tokyo into core of her work.

There is no proof that Ozaki Midori walked around any areas of Tokyo other than Kamiochiai and the Shinjuku environs. When Midori went out for a walk or to visit a friend, it was to areas even further out such as Higashi-nakano or Ogikubo. As opposed to writers such as Tanizaki Junichirō, Nagai Kafu, or Edogawa Rampo, who constructed their literary worlds from the places within the city where they actually walked and lived (in other words, writers who, as walkers in the city, constructed a topos with symbolic meaning for their literature), Midori sat in her room on the second floor of her rented house with its tin roof in Kamiochiai and walked the city in her imagination. It was not an actual walk, but an imagined, conceptual mapping. Midori liked to give herself the image of one who lives in an attic room or a basement.

Hayashi Fumiko, on the other hand, who created a woman wanderer who rejected a settled life at the heart of *Hōrōki (Diary of a Vagabond)*, had been constantly moving around since her early childhood. First taken with her parents, itinerant peddlers who traveled throughout Kyūshū and Setouchi, she continued to move even after she came to Tokyo, first to an apartment in a three-storied wooden house in Hongō with her first lover, then to places like Nezu and Nippori looking for jobs. This roaming, wandering life itself became her path to a career as a writer.

Hayashi Fumiko moved to Kamiochiai when Midori introduced her to her former landlord, either at Midori's invitation or at her request. When Fumiko moved in, Midori helped her to change the *shoji* screen papers. Midori had quickly recognized the still unknown Fumiko's talent, and flattered and built her confidence by reciting Fumiko's poems by heart. Matsushita Fumiko bore the cost of publishing Hayashi's first collection of poems, *I Saw a Pale Horse*. Ten years younger than Midori, Hayashi Fumiko trusted in Midori's critical eye and sensibility, but I believe that even more than that, Midori, with her unfeminine character, her lack of desire for success, and the sobriety with which she approached life, was a person one could rely on, because her unchanging personality was uninfluenced by the social trends. Unable to rely on her own parents or to trust any men and burning with passionate feelings of rivalry toward

other women, Hayashi Fumiko could open up to Midori without anxiety.

Hayashi Fumiko's *Diary of a Vagabond* soon became a best-seller and she used the proceeds to tour Manchuria, China, and France. Upon returning to Japan and going to visit Midori, Fumiko found her exactly as she had left her, writing at her desk in her room, with the desk and mirror in exactly the same position. Compared to Fumiko herself, who was inclined to wander and change her mind, who liked to rearrange her disorganized and cluttered apartment, and who was always going away somewhere, she was surprised at how Midori was diligently writing novels in the same position, at the same desk in the same room, for six months or even a year.

Like Matsushita Fumiko, Hayashi Fumiko was concerned about Midori's habitual use of anti-headache drugs, but her attempts to make Midori stop failed. Fumiko was keenly aware of the vulnerability of Midori's lifestyle—she was incapable of working as a waitress as Fumiko had, she could not flatter people in order to sell her novels, and she lacked the thick skin necessary for survival—which accompanied the richness of her powers of imagination and her conceptual purity. In addition to Hayashi Fumiko, writers and critics such as Hirabayashi Taiko, Yoshiya Nobuko, and Itagaki Naoko surrounded Midori, but desperate in their efforts to survive while launching their careers as writers, none had the time to consider or take care of Midori. When Matsushita Fumiko went back to Hokkaido, Midori's solitude and neurosis deepened.

Nyonin Geijutsu, Film Criticism, and Poe

One of the attractions of the city for Midori was film. It must have been a great joy for Midori to be able to see, at any time, those foreign films that were not accessible in Tottori. As the newest representational medium born of advanced technology, film had a great influence on modern art and literature, and there are clear traces of cinematic methods in Midori's novels.

In her essay "The Structure of *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, and Other Issues," Midori revealed that before she began writing *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, she prepared a detailed "*mise en scene* map" and aimed to portray the behavior and psychology of her characters through detailed description of objects that appear in each scene, such as a Bohemian necktie or the oranges in a hedge, avoiding novelistic explanation as much as possible.

As Midori clearly intended to incorporate cinematic methods into the basic structure of her works, we could liken her preparation of each scene in significant

detail, before she taking up her pen to write, to the preparation of a film scenario. Creation through Midori's method of "mise en scene map" succeeds in creating the unique world of *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*; it makes possible and validates a flight of fancy that transcends the limits of realism in novels that rely on words alone, and gives birth to the effective representation of a world that transcends reality.

Midori claimed that her essays, *Eiga Mansō* (Random Jottings about Film) published in *Nyonin Geijutsu*, were discussions of film as literary criticism rather than actual film criticism, but they are unique essays that demonstrate her keen sensitivity to film in the careful attention she pays to the details of each scene and to Chaplin's every gesture. Film indisputably influenced the formation of her unique mode of expression.

In July, 1928 (Shōwa 3), the inaugural volume of *Nyonin Geijutsu* edited by Hasegawa Shigure was published, and the serial publication of Hayashi Fumiko's *Diary of a Vagabond* began, marking her debut as a writer. Ozaki Midori's literary destiny also cannot be separated from *Nyonin Geijutsu*.

Midori published a series of six essays on German expressionist and Chaplin films in *Nyonin Geijutsu*, followed by her Japanese translation of Poe's *Morella*. Surely there was no other publication at that time willing to publish the film theory of an unknown woman writer. *Nyonin Geijutsu* was probably also the only publication that would publish a translation of Poe's novel by a young unknown woman, rather than a famous author or scholar of English Literature. If not for her encounter with *Nyonin Geijutsu*, a medium that allowed women to write essays freely, it would not be possible to talk about Midori's translation of Poe or her connection to film, as a new experimental mode of expression representing the age of technology.

Furthermore, we cannot overlook the effect on Midori's literature of meeting Hayashi Fumiko and Hirabayashi Taiko through *Nyonin Geijutsu*, two women writers who were polar opposites to Midori in terms of their uninhibited behavior, but shared with her an essential anarchic orientation. In that sense, the journal that Hasegawa Shigure created with funding from her husband Mikami Otokichi played a great role as a stage for women's expressive practice.

Poe had been read in Japan from early on through magazines such as *Shin Seinen* (New Youth), and had stimulated and influenced the imaginations of young urban writers such as Tanizaki Junichiro and Edogawa Rampo. In addition, Hiratsuka Raicho published a translation of a Poe work in every issue of her journal *Seito* (Blue

Stockings). Aside from Raicho, all Poe translators were male, and the major draw for readers of magazines such as *Shin Seinen* were his tales of the grotesque and strange. Therefore one could say that Raicho was the first to forge a connection between Poe and women. However, Midori's interest and sympathy for Poe went far beyond Raicho's.

Poe was the first writer to portray the loneliness of the city-dweller. In *The Man of the Crowd* (1840), Poe creates a protagonist who pursues a faceless, shadow-like man as he aimlessly roams the city streets, only to realize it is himself. Midori felt in sympathy with Poe, mapping the figure of this urban wanderer who has lost his identity onto her own internal urban experience. These shared feelings made Poe, just like Chaplin, Midori's soul mate, an alternate self.

I think that more attention should be given to Midori's translation of Poe, serialized in *Nyonin Geijutsu*, for the sake of Poe studies and studies of modernism. This completed translation, which seems at first glance like a minor episode in her career, clearly reveals the sense of incompatibility with the structure of gender culture shared by Poe and Midori and the similarities in their alienation and deviance from society. It further suggests the very core that constitutes modernist and grotesque literature.

Poe's Girls

One of the commonalities between works by Midori and Poe is that their protagonists are not sexually mature women, but rather unsexual, or asexual, "girls." The protagonists of Chaplin's films are also attracted to women who are poor, weak, and innocent, with no one to depend on, much like young girls. In contrast to Chaplin's hard-up girls, however, who end up finding happiness because they are protected by the similarly socially powerless Chaplin and can trust in his masculinity and humanity, Poe's girls would avenge themselves by destroying all happiness in this world. Their enemies are not strong men who oppress the weak, but their own brothers, cousins, and husbands, namely the men they are close to and identify with, who could even be called alternate selves.

Madeline of Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* lives with her brother Roderick, the only remaining members of the great family of Usher descending from Medieval times, cut off from the outside world in an old decaying mansion by the side of a dark lake, as though imprisoned by her brother's hallucinations. One day, when the sickly Madeline faints, her brother encoffins her and puts her in a vault in a wall of

the mansion. Reviving, she staggers to Roderick's room, but shocked by his sister's return to life and fearing it is a hallucination, he loses his mind in terror. Underneath the faltering body of Madeline, Roderick and the entire decomposing mansion sink to the bottom of the lake.

In his short stories *Eleonora* and *Berenice*, male protagonists who have married childhood girlfriends lose interest in their wives as they awaken to sexuality and become sexually mature women. Locking their wives away, they take away their will to live and drive them toward death. However, both wives revive, and by haunting their husbands, drive him in turn to his own madness and death.

In *Morella*, the novel Midori translated, a man falls in love with and marries Morella, a maiden who in her youthful innocence believes deeply in the immortality of the soul. Morella pours all of her love into him, demanding his love in return, but by gradually growing cold toward her, he drives her to her death. At the moment of her death, Morella declares that she leaves their daughter to him and that she herself will remain immortal. This daughter grows up with unnatural speed, and becomes identical to her mother. Driven by fear, the protagonist tries to force his daughter to be baptized, but is made to understand that his daughter is the resurrection of Morella. The daughter soon dies, but the protagonist recognizes that he will never be free from Morella, who had believed in the immortality of her spirit. As he now appears to be insane, we must wonder if Morella and her daughter as resurrection were all simply illusion, the products of his imagination.

The longing for girls that runs throughout most of Poe's works, is the flipside of his hatred and fear of sexually mature women, or women that know the ways of the world. The girls, or the girl-like women that his protagonists marry, much like the thirteen year old Virginia that Poe himself took as wife, are so pure they seem otherworldly, or to have a supernatural ability to communicate with the other world. It is clear that Poe thought the ability to communicate with nature or the universe, the ability to glimpse the immortal spirit of the afterlife, only dwells in presexual flesh, as Poe's protagonists kill their sisters and lovers when they become mature women. Poe was only interested in a spiritual, immortal *eros*, not a physical love.

Morella is one of his many tales with this typical pattern, depicting a girl fated to die as a mature woman after marrying and knowing sex, as does *Eleonora*, which depicts a girl who can communicate with nature, and *Ligeia*, with a heroine who has the power to see into the depths of the soul.

The maidens doomed by Poe, however, always come back for revenge. The

targets of their revenge are their husbands, who are filled with both joy and horror when faced with their wives, resurrected as girls, and lose their minds. The resurrection of these girls could be the hallucinations of a madman, but Poe intentionally leaves that point ambiguous, creating a double meaning where either interpretation is possible. Poe not only establishes that his narrator is telling the tale of a madman, but also that the narrator himself lost his sanity during this past incident that he describes. Through these two devices of fantastic fiction, Poe dramatizes the desire of brother and sister to become physically one, or the male desire to merge with a girl wife.

Poe's maidens cling to their men, never leaving. This fantasy of the eternal maiden leads the men to destruction. The revenge of a girl made wife is a revenge against the husband who sacrificed the life and body of the living girl to his longing for her pure spirit. The resurrected girl who drives her man to madness is a messenger from hell, the immortal spirit resurrected by a nonsexual *eros*.

Older Brother/Younger Sister

Now, what about Ozaki Midori's girls? Midori's young girl as protagonist is the most clear in *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, but even before this work of fantasy, constructed around a sensitivity to a world in an alternate dimension, Midori wrote *Apple Pie in the Afternoon*. This play is one of the original models of Midori's brother-sister tales, telling the story of an older brother and younger sister studying together in Tokyo against a social backdrop.

In *Apple Pie in the Afternoon*, the older brother is irritated by his unfeminine younger sister, who is more interested in writing than love. Entrusted by their father back home with his sister's education and the cultivation of her femininity in preparation for marriage, the brother thinks how wonderful it would be if his sister would awaken to womanhood by falling in love. This work, in the form of a play, provides an example of a typical brother-sister relationship for the children of a rural, middle-class family sent to study in Tokyo.

The brother falls in love with one of his sister's classmates and proposes. As this woman is the younger sister of one of his friends, he asks his sister to marry the older brother. Not only would this be convenient, but in this way he could fulfill the role of older brother entrusted to him by their father.

The younger sister begins to date her brother's friend, but it is something of a "love game" to her rather than a relationship predicated on future marriage as her brother had hoped. One Sunday afternoon, choosing a time when her older brother will be absent, this friend visits bearing an apple pie. It is suggested that they exchange sweet kisses, yet the younger sister is never seriously in love with her brother's friend. She is one of the "New Women" who wear blue stockings, have fashionably short hair, and aspires to become a writer.

To this sister, with her short hair and shaved nape, more interested in philosophy than cosmetics, with neither the appearance nor presence socially recognized as feminine, 'apple pie in the afternoon' with her brother's friend is clearly nothing more than a game with the flavor of modern love. Although the taste of sweet apple pie might have mingled with that of "red pepper soda water" (as her brother would say) on their lips, it is made clear to the reader that this clever "new woman" shields her autonomous from the word "love," unwilling to lightly accept the role of wife and mother by marrying.

The kind of love that Midori sought does not seem to have been one of sweet kisses with men, nor of sexual passion, nor the achievement of a stable life through marrying quickly and creating a family. Men who approached "new women" and professed their love must have truly supported their ideas and new lifestyle and wanted to share that kind of life to some extent. But we cannot be sure that they didn't propose out of curiosity for a novelty or to show off their sophistication. There were many men fascinated by Midori's literature, but of course most of them chose a woman unlike Midori when it came to choosing a wife. One of these men married Midori's younger sister Misao, a domestic woman rather than a "new woman." He had been a fan of Midori's writing since her publication in *Bunsho sekai*, but the passionate letters he wrote to Midori eventually led to his marriage to Midori's younger sister.

Neither Midori nor the younger sister of *Apple Pie in the Afternoon* led the conspicuous new lifestyle of the "modern girl," but they were clearly "new women" with self-consciousness. We do not know whether the play *Apple Pie Afternoon* was planned as a one-act play or was cut short, but either way, with its image of an "apple pie," perfectly suited to the modern and fashionable young women of Tokyo, it conveys the irritation of a younger sister seeking new dreams and a new lifestyle but feeling pressure from her family and particularly her older brother. An extremely interesting work with a light touch, it parallels Midori's own life.

Although brother and sister are mutually emotionally dependent in this work,

in the final analysis they are both self-absorbed. The one room apartment they share is an isolated space far from their rural home, and like a secret room just for the two of them cut off from society, it is also free from the bonds of family. There is no sense of everyday reality there, and between the brother and sister hovers a somehow incestuous *eros*.

An older brother and younger sister resembling Midori and her brother at that time are also found in *From the Doldrums*, published in *Shincho*, and the cause of Midori's withdrawal from Japan Women's University. Here the erotic feelings between the siblings are even more clearly depicted. In fact, the original pattern of Midori's brother-sister stories is probably *From the Doldrums* rather than *Apple Pie in the Afternoon*.

The younger sister of this sibling pair studying in Tokyo, takes a leave from her university in order to tend to her older brother's illness and even follows him to his sanatorium. The novel is written in the form of a letter from the older brother to his friend M, in which he informs M that he has detected a secret love for M within his sister. The brother describes his younger sister's slightly eccentric character to M, the secret story of her birth to a different mother, and about his deep, though perverse, love for his sister. It is not unnatural for him, as her older brother, to look for a marriage partner for his sister and to inform that partner of his sister's secret thoughts in terms of his role within their sibling relationship. However, most of this letter to M is devoted to an analysis of this sister with whom he is enthralled, and is thus an expression of their complicated love.

The novel depicts the deep, affectionate love of an older brother who is drawn toward his sullen and taciturn younger sister. The brother closely observes and describes his sister, an introvert closed off from others, yet intelligent and extremely sensitive. While the brother cannot help but feel a deep love and "pity" for the lonely figure of his half-sister—always outwardly placid, she hides violent emotions inside, as though standing in the darkness with bowed head peering into her own heart—he cannot tell her of these feelings.

While at home to recuperate from illness, the older brother meets his sister's mother and a younger step-brother, and for a brief time the brother and sister to open up to each other. The sister returns to Tokyo without him, but leaves him her diary in which she has confided her feelings. Upon reading this diary, the brother believes that his sister is attracted to his friend M, and writes his long letter in which he informs M of her love and expresses his hope that they will begin a relationship.

Within the framework of a novel, this text legitimates the older brother's performance of his social duty to find a marriage partner for his younger sister, as a sort of hidden protector. The brother fails to fulfill this role due to his sister's "eccentric" character and because at the same time as he feels "pity" for her, he is also deeply in love with her. We understand that what appeared to be incompetence or an inability to socially and economically act as her hidden protector, is actually the brother's desire for his sister to remain as she is, without destroying any aspects of herself, though he recognizes she is lacking in femininity and though he is pained by her peculiar deviance from gender norms. The brother sees himself in his sister: the two are one, or alternate selves of each other. In other words, the brother is not 'incompetent' but 'incapable.'

The younger sister described in *From the Doldrums*, seems to be a self-portrait of Midori. Delivering the story to the reader through the older brother's narration is a novelistic device, and might also be an expression of Midori's subliminal, erotic desire for her own brother. The brother and sister in this work give such a strong impression of being one both physically and spiritually, that it may even be that Midori is viewing the younger sister as a man would. In contrast, the older brother in *Apple Pie in the Afternoon* does not seem to understand the unusual personality of his introverted sister, who is intelligent but lacks conventional femininity, because he is irritated by the difficulties in trying to fulfill his role as older brother. However, the inability of the brother and sister in *Apple Pie in the Afternoon* to open up to each other despite their mutually loving, intimate relationship, is the same in *From the Doldrums*.

In *First Love* (Hatsukoi), an older brother falls in love with his younger sister momentarily when he sees her dressed like a man on a festival day. The brother's suppressed subliminal desire is only exposed because it is an instantaneous emotion arising during a festival, a time removed from the everyday. We feel the secret, forbidden eroticism of his love, which is not for a woman, but for a woman dressed as a man. It is doubly furtive layered with the socially taboo crime of love for a younger sister. Midori's interest in the incestuous desires of brother and sister who yearn for physical unity and her interest in reversals of gender and sexuality through transvestism hint at the depths of her own interest in cross-dressing and her insight into the erotic layers lurking in the depths of gender culture. Much like the imaginary world of the movie screen, gender reversals are easily possible in the misty world of Midori's texts.

The relationships between the protagonist and the woman he loves in

Chaplin's films are similar to this sibling relationship between intimate alternate selves and may be one of the reasons why Midori so loved his movies. The love relationship in Chaplin's films is not between a man and woman within a society or patriarchal family where sexual roles are clear, it is not between a masculine man and feminine woman or a husband-like husband and wife-like wife. Rather it is a relationship and bond between partners who dwell on the margins, alienated from gender society.

The young girls in Midori's *Apple Pie in the Afternoon* or *From the Doldrums* are clearly described as self-aware and intelligent, and have distinctive personalities, but they remain very ambiguous, and are not as clearly positioned as protagonists as are the girls of Poe and Chaplin. Though the younger sister in *From the Doldrums* is an alternate self to the brother, she is still an object described through the subjectivity of the older brother, and the younger sister in *Apple Pie in the Afternoon* is not clearly constructed as the protagonist of a drama, the narrator of the story, or the driver of the action. The transformation from this pre-heroine would eventually be born in Midori's masterpiece, *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*.

Financial Hardship

Of Midori's three older brothers, only the third brother Shiro seems to have sent some money to his mother in Tottori from Osaka, but he soon went to Korea and took a job in Seoul. Doubtless neither the oldest brother, a military officer, the second brother, who was sick, nor the third brother, a salaried employee, had any extra money with which to support Midori in Tokyo. Even though they were from the rural, intellectual class and had received a higher education in the capital, they were not among the elite who landed upper-level jobs in government ministries, but instead the kind of practical men who constituted what might be called the second level of the elite.

Whether you were from the city or the countryside, a distinguished education was the only path to social status for the sons and daughters of the intellectual middle class without landowning or propertied families. If the father, the main support of such a family, died, his children immediately fell into financial distress. Forced to pay their own tuition and expenses and bereft of a powerful protector, such children would have to attain a social position on their own. Given the family system of primogeniture, the position of second and third sons was similar to that of women in a patriarchal family, and they had to leave home to seek work or adoption into another family.

Midori's third and closest brother Shiro, the one who understood her best, was probably worried about Midori living in Tokyo, but without any extra money to help her out financially he must have been at a loss as to how to give Midori any spiritual support as she remained single, strained her nerves writing novels, and gradually fell ill. Midori must have gradually become a problem, not only for her oldest brother the military officer, but also for the third brother, her confidante.

While she was living with Matsushita Fumiko, Midori could count on her for living expenses, but when Fumiko got married and returned to Hokkaido, Midori was on her own and had to beg from her mother in Tottori in order to make ends meet. I wonder how her mother felt, reading letters from Midori complaining that she couldn't get anything for her manuscripts and asking her to send money. Her powerless mother had to take some of the money sent from her sons and lend it to Midori to support her in Tokyo.

Unable to financially support her, unable to force her into a family by finding her a marriage partner, and also unable to believe in Midori's talent and become her spiritual protector—these were the underlying conditions that eventually led Midori's older brothers (especially the oldest) to see Midori as a burden on the family and bring her back to Tottori. Midori was thus besieged by her family.

Beleaguered with the same conditions as Hayashi Fumiko in her years of poverty, Midori wore herself down writing manuscripts that never made any money. When I think of Midori in this way, I can't help but remember that Virginia Woolf said what a woman needs to write is "500 pounds per year and a room of her own." (*A Room of One's Own*)

In order to counter conventional aesthetics and value systems, poets and painters of the avant-garde modernist arts advanced as a representational movement by forming groups to encourage and stimulate each other. But Midori's avant-garde sensibility, an overly sensitive delicacy, crystalized into expression in isolation, as she did not belong to any groups and was only acquainted with an extremely limited number of women writers sharing anarchic tendencies. Gertrude Stein, living in Paris, had a great influence on European and American modernist artists such as Picasso and Matisse because her unique talents gave birth to a literature of her own. When I consider this example, I feel that if only Midori had had just a bit more financial support in Tokyo, she might have paved the way for a women's modernism through an exchange with other young artists with avant-garde tendencies in the same way as Stein.

Ozaki Midori's Novels for Young Girls

Midori wrote novels for young girls (*shojo shosetsu*) under the pen name Nanjo Nobuko. One of these was *To a Girl Named Lala*, which she wrote in May, 1927, shortly after she moved in with Matsushita Fumiko in Kamiochiai. With the rise of the urban middle class, more girls were advancing to higher women's schools, not only seeking the cultivation of a future bride, but also dreaming of intellectual stimulation and a free lifestyle. The literary genre of novels for young girls was just becoming popular at this time. Circulation figures for the magazine *Shojo Sekai* (Girl World), founded at the end of the Meiji era and targeting young female readers, increased throughout the Taisho Era, exceeding 200,000 copies at its height.

The popularity of girls' novels was accompanied by other social phenomena such as the birth of *Takarazuka Shojo Kagekidan* (the Takarazuka Revue), the rise of a new generation sharing girlish tastes in fashions and cosmetics, and the economic activities of industries aiming to expand a market targeting this new consumer power. On the one hand, these phenomena gave birth to Taisho romance culture including the art of Takehisa Yumeji, while on the other hand they created a foundation of shared sympathy among women toward *Seito* (Blue Stockings).

The term *shojo* (young girl) included students at women's schools and other young unmarried women. Although as daughters within the patriarchal family system they were educated to be the Good Wife Wise Mother, girlhood was a sort of free realm before being placed in the role of a mature woman. As a byproduct of modernization, girlhood was a temporary respite from the practical woman's realm and a sexual role when they could freely awaken, but as "*ojosan*" (young ladies) who had no independent social position, they could only enjoy this freedom until they married. It was a temporary moratorium contained within various social sites for girls' circles, such as schools and girls' media.

Though sexually immature and inexperienced, these girls were attuned to the erotic power of imagination and the awakening of self-consciousness. In many cases, young girls aimed their erotic and romantic feelings toward other young girls through the medium of girls' novels. They also fantasized about characters of the opposite sex in tales and girls' novels though they didn't imagine their fantasies could possibly come true, as the actual objects of their affection were usually the older brothers or cousins of their friends.

Midori's *To a Girl Named Lala* was published in *Shojo no Tomo* (Girl's Friend), one of the magazines that targeted girl readers. It is one of a very few known works amongst the many girls' novels that Midori wrote, and here too we can see the figure of the young girl common to Midori, Chaplin and Poe.

Thanks to the diligent work of researchers, most of Midori's published girls' novels are available today. *To a Girl Named Lala*, which is more a children's tale than a girls' novel, is about a young minstrel named Antonio, who meets the blind young Lala, possessor of an other-worldly beauty, and falls in love. In the middle of a long journey, the protagonist visits a friend and his family on the island of Sicily, but when caught in a storm becomes lost in a cave from which, according to legend, no one ever returns. While lying unconscious, he dreams that a blind girl, escorted by an old man, mistakes him for a god and begs him to grant her back her sight. The protagonist is saved miraculously and later meets the beautiful Maria, a carbon copy of the blind Lala, at an upper-class party in Rome. The two grow close, but it is Lala, barefoot and clad in rags, earnestly praying to her god, rather than the pampered Maria who Antonio seeks, and so he says goodbye to Maria and travels to Sicily searching for a trace of Lala.

The condensed essence of Midori's literature emanates from this allegorical novel for young girls. A strange, hallucinatory supernatural experience, spiritual communication and exchange, a whimsical beauty that transcends this-worldly time, sympathy and grief in response to innocence and purity. A sensitivity to and imagination of the invisible and the inexpressible. Midori gives her readers a glimpse of an unfamiliar, dream-like world, a realm in which reality and the supernatural are transposed on a foundation of both the formed and the formless, such as dream and reality, the conscious and the unconscious, land and undersea, or journey and residence.

Another characteristic of Midori's literature, however, which does not appear here, is humor. Through the sensitivity of the blind girl, the underwater, unconscious experience, and the attachment to that which has vanished, this work shows very clearly how sublime beauty, the essence of the grotesque aesthetic, exists at the boundary between reality and the strange, fantastic, and supernatural, and forms the foundation of Midori's literature.

Midori's protagonists are always young girls, and Lala is the original model. Midori's girls are weak, young, unable to support themselves, lack a social protector, and have not yet amounted to anything. The other characters are also weak and uncertain, with no social position, and no access to power or money, like the Chaplin

characters Midori loved.

Among her works, the sensitivity, aesthetics, and significance attached to Midori's "girl" come forth most clearly in *To a Girl Named Lala*. Lala, a symbol of the weak in her blindness, poverty, and lack of protector and social power, is equipped with the ability to sense the supernatural, and thus represents both the fragile body and a sensitivity to the beauty of things that cannot be sensed with the five senses. Her ability is sharply contrasted with thought and imagination that is limited to the everyday logic of people upholding pragmatic gender characteristics.

Midori's girls cannot continue to exist in the real world; eventually they must mature as women and acquire the adult ability to conform to society. As though foreseeing this, the youth leaves the living, beautiful girl in front of him and pursues the phantom of the blind girl he met in a dream, traveling into a fantasy world.

Midori's protagonists show a marked hatred, fear, and indifference toward women of the real world who smell of sex and the mature body. The opposite, a longing and passion for an asexual, ethereal girl who is cold and cruel toward men, is portrayed in a tale within a tale which the protagonist of *Tojo* (*On the Way*, 1931) reads in solitude in the library. The young girl as protagonist, without sexual characteristics and existing outside of gender, free from the female roles of lover, wife, or mother, is common to Midori and Poe.

In Poe's *Morella*, the wife, resurrected as a young girl after her death, announces to her husband the permanence of her resurrection and her undiminished ability to sense the eternal spirit. Poe's themes of physical destruction and decay, the denial of maturity, discomfort with corporeal sensations such as sexuality and childbirth, and the friction between the body and the resurrected eternal soul, must have struck a chord with Midori. Because in *Morella*, Poe's strong preference for the "sublime," a concept that represents a psychologically imaginative quality, an internal quality of the artist, as opposed to "beauty," a concept that belongs to the physical, can be clearly seen.

Sublime beauty is born of a spirit responding to something grand and majestic that transcends reality. That spirit is not bound to the body and physical sensation but soars free of vulgar beauty; it is an intuitive and symbolic, rather than intellectual, internal ability to sense that which transcends the natural realm. The sublime is a realm that transcends harmony and equilibrium and is deeply connected with the human power of imagination that desires immortality, indestructability, and an experience of the infinite as well as the power of imagination that gives rise to anxiety

and fear. The concept of the sublime, which presumes a schism between the ordinary and an extraordinary world and sees the value and origin of beauty in the search for an internal world, is the foundation of the grotesque. Romanticists believed that the power of imagination would allow us to achieve a sensitivity to the supernatural and mysterious at the limits of the subconscious.

Midori's *To a Girl Named Lala* is permeated with Poe's "sublime," seen in such elements as the beauty and purity of the girl due to her blindness, the horror of the encounter with the supernatural storm, the uncanniness of the light cast by divine revelation, and the encounter with Maria. Yet while the young Lala is described to us by the protagonist of the story, she herself is not a speaking subject. Perhaps the process whereby this young girl transforms into a speaking girl in *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* paralleled a process in which Midori built a "speaking subject" for herself through the girl.

Midori eventually molded her young girl into a humorous character, closer to Chaplin's protagonists. A tragic anti-heroine with deep *pathos*, unattractive and even funny-looking, far from the typical heroine. I believe that was Midori's strategy, a device to create a new subjectivity free from sexual markers. Midori achieves this splendidly in *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*.

This narrative of a subjectivity free of the contamination of sexual difference coded in the figure of a young girl is neither the witty drama of *Apple Pie in the Afternoon* nor the parable or children's tale she experimented with in *To a Girl Named Lala*. Instead it inaugurates a genre in which the realistic novel is blended with the representation of another dimension.

The Desire to Remain an "Odd Girl"

A comparison of Midori's girls and Hayashi Fumiko's girls is very interesting. The protagonist of *Diary of a Vagabond* is a young girl on the verge of becoming a woman, and Hayashi Fumiko creates a narrative subject through this immature girl standing on the brink of adult female experience. The young girl as speaking subject has an important meaning as a representative subjectivity in women's modernist literature. Though Fumiko's subject is a young girl, she has a keen, precocious sense of the world. She doesn't miss any chance for success in the course of her wanderings.

Just as in Midori's literature, the subject of *Diary of a Vagabond* is neither an

innocent nor a mature woman. The work takes the form of overlapping texts, a blend of the conventional genres of novel, poem, and diary. As opposed to the anti-naturalist mode of expression Midori uses to represent a world in an alternate dimension, however, Fumiko's world is represented realistically, and the various genre are identifiable, but fuse together.

Despite these differences, Midori and Fumiko both endow their young girls, subjects free from cultural markers of gender, with an existence that is liberated from family and the roles of mother or wife. Therein lie the themes of modern women's literature and the difficulties of creating a speaking and writing subject that plagued modern women writers.

What is the connection between urban modernism and the young girl constructed as subject by women writers? The machine civilization and the urban civilization born of the industrial revolution gave rise to a new version of vulnerability, as rural people who migrated to the city as industrial laborers were met with a new kind of alienation. Rural women arriving in the city, with the exception of a very few who had the financial support and social protection of fathers and brothers, were positioned outside the family system. Women were only protected and granted a social role and home when they lived within the family as mothers, wives, or daughters. Under the Meiji Constitution of modern Japan, there was no place in legitimate society for women outside of the family.

Therefore, young, unmarried women in the city were taken for runaways or rebels from the family who would eventually follow a path of vagrancy and degradation. Women living alone in the city were vulnerable people with no one to rely on, like young girls with no protectors.

Yet, even so, women fled the chains of the patriarchal family and flocked to the cities seeking a new place to live. In order to become a subject, to find themselves free of the female existence in which the father's protection and control is merely transferred to her husband, they first had to reject a love of the sexual, physical body, and a marriage that would place them within the system in a sexual role. The fact that the girls in Midori's novels did not fall in love with a corporeal opposite sex and radiated eros without any concrete object toward a fantasy was a rejection of womanhood. Their homes in the city were individual rooms of fantasy, such as the second floor of an apartment house, a small maid's room, or an attic apartment. Only in this space of fantasy could a young girl, an outsider or heretic ejected from the patriarchal family, nurture the illusion that it was possible to remain an "odd girl."

The urban existence is one of nameless invisibility. City dwellers are domestic immigrants from the countryside, who leave traditional communities, family, and relatives behind. All are outsiders, with a home that is somewhere else, faceless, invisible beings without bonds of property or blood, mutually indifferent. The topos of the city, which is the core of modernist literature, and a sensitivity for the homeless, floating people gives shape to Midori's literature. Midori had no home in the city. She also didn't have the escape route of a new family through the institution of marriage to replace her siblings. Escape into her own inner world, a world with a supernatural sensibility, was the only thing left to her. For Midori, this meant continuing to be a "girl."

Monologue with an Alternate Self in "Lonesome Walker"

Ozaki Midori's wandering was not the actual movement from place to place that forms society and culture, as in Hayashi Fumiko's travels; it was wandering in an internal world rather than walking a map. Midori walks the subliminal of the city rather than the asphalt streets. The three novels Midori wrote from 1931-1932, *On the Way*, *Walking*, and *One Night of Anton in the Basement*, which form a trilogy, give us a glimpse of her style of wandering. Not actually using one's feet, existences themselves that float.

On the Way combines the memories and fantasies of its protagonist on his way home from the library. *Walking* is the inner monologue of a young girl sent on an errand first to the home of a relative, the zoologist Mr. Matsumoto, by her grandmother, who worries about her granddaughter always holed up in her attic room, and then from there to the home of the poet Tsuchida Kyusaku, the younger brother of the zoologist's wife. The story is of "walking," but it is a walk through the mind, a wandering. The girl becomes the object of an experiment in schizophrenia at the request of Dr. Koda Tohachi, in which they read together a conversation between two lovers in a play. When the experiment is over and Koda leaves, the girl falls in love and shuts herself up again in her attic room.

One Night of Anton in the Basement appears to be a continuation of the story in *Walking* and is composed of conversations, inner monologues, and Tsuchida Kyusaku's diaries and notes. The conversations are between the young girl who visits

the poet Tsuchida Kyusaku in his basement in order to deliver some tadpoles from Mr. Matsumoto, Tsuchida Kyusaku, and his friend Koda Tohachi. One of the inner monologues of the poet in this work seems to transmit Midori's desire verbatim: "A basement—oh, in my heart I seek a wonderful basement. A single room with a door that makes an invigorating sound. I would go down there and forget everything above ground."

Midori was one of the earliest writers to employ "stream of consciousness" in these novels, which consist of the monologues, memories, and fantasies of a night walker. She also portrayed a solitary night walker as protagonist in *Mokusei* (Osmanthus, 1929). The protagonist lives in a "rented attic room," never meeting or speaking with anyone, living a life "that would not be strange for a mute, or moss." After seeing off a friend at the station who urges her to join her in a move to Hokkaido, the protagonist goes to see a Chaplin film. On the way home, she indulges in an imaginary conversation with Chaplin and then, when she stops for a cup of coffee, exchanges words with the café waitress about Chaplin. After paying 40 *sen* for the cup of coffee, she is left with only 30 *sen*. With that 30 *sen*, she sends a telegram to her mother back home in the country, which reads "I am withering moss" and asks her to send money.

Tsuda Saburo, the poet protagonist of *Shijin no kutsu* (The Poet's Shoes) who hates to go outside of the house and fears the outside world, is clearly an alter-ego of Midori. A lonesome, pessimistic, oddball, he lives in the attic room of an old Western-style house and looks out from his small attic window, which he calls "walking." That dark attic is his "ivory tower," where he can become an expressionist poet, writing the symbolic poems he loves. In *Miss Cricket* as well, a walk is only the short round-trip to the neighborhood library. Midori's protagonists definitely do not like walking, in fact they hate it.

Ozaki Midori's actual walking range was extremely limited. In fact, she hardly ever went outside, continuing to sit in front of her desk on the second floor of her tin-roofed rented house, just like the agoraphobic protagonists of her works who lived in attics or basements. The rare diversion in the midst of her days devoted to creative writing were trips to the movies or the library. As in the Ozaki Hosai haiku, "Even when I cough, I am alone," and like the protagonists of her own works, she must have often gone a week or ten days without speaking with anyone. To Midori, the diversion of a walk must have been a temporary escape from confinement in her own lonely, internal world and her addiction to the migraine drug *migrenin*. But even those walks

resembled a monologue, a walk of the mind and a lonely conversation with an alternate self.

Imagination and the Aesthetics of the “Grotesque”

Around that time (circa 1930), Midori gave a talk entitled “Random Thoughts on Expressionism” at the third anniversary symposium of *Nyonin Geijutsu* along with Hayashi Fumiko and Hirabayashi Taiko. These thoughts relating to expressionism and the several essays on film Midori had published in *Nyonin Geijutsu* are quite unique, addressing an imaginative power and representational art that differs from the realism of naturalist literature. It is clear that Midori formed her own creative world from an urban modernist sensibility and the power of imagination, and through a deep understanding and interest in concepts linked to Poe, such as the grotesque, humor, schizophrenia, and madness as expressions of the crisis for the individual brought on by mechanical civilization.

Poe said that what he portrayed was a “spiritual horror,” and claimed to be the first writer to employ the aesthetic concepts of the grotesque and the arabesque as creative methods. In the introduction to *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque*, Poe wrote that he deals with “events so ridiculous they are grotesque,” “events so shocking they are horrific,” “events so exaggeratedly witty they become burlesque,” and “strange events elevated to the level of mysterious and miraculous.” A transcendent imaginative power that cannot be absorbed into the rational order, that reveals the supernatural and investigates the unconscious realm beneath reality—this is the basis of Poe’s literary expression. Poe said that whenever he spoke in reality, he felt terror and awe at the prospect that his words transforming at some point into the words of an alternate dimension.

Hayashi Fumiko and Hirabayashi Taiko both in their own ways led lifestyles that radically challenged the harsh reality of a gendered society. By exhaustively chronicling their lives and painful relationships with men in works of realistic literature, they achieved an objective outlook on their experiences as women within gender culture. In contrast, Ozaki Midori, like Poe, “ran away” from gendered society by withdrawing from reality and deeply immersing herself in her own internal world. Through this descent into the subconscious, she was able to envision a path out of gender culture, just like Hayashi and Hirabayashi.

Midori’s literature does not excavate the subliminal layers of gender culture, in

which the repressed desires and hopes of sexuality and family relationships accumulate. Women writers such as Enchi Fumiko and Okamoto Kanoko have dug up these deep layers of imagination in stories that interweave men's dreams and women's grudges, and have tried to transcend gendered culture through the re-telling of tales. However, the honed sensitivity and imaginative power that Ozaki Midori nurtured in the metropolis of Tokyo did not lead her expressive practice in that direction.

The novels and essays that Midori wrote while still in Tottori and while a university student in Tokyo touch on family and human relationships, but in what must be called her representative works written in Kamiochiai a decade later, such as *Apple Pie in the Afternoon*, *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, *One Night of Anton in the Basement*, *Walking*, and *Miss Cricket*, Midori's actual feelings and relationships are no longer addressed as such. These works are a symbolically and rationally constructed abstract world, colored by dreams and a delicate sensitivity.

This world is the world condensed in *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*. It is a world of the "seventh sense," a floating space for only one person, permeated with bright light and humor, a world where micro-particles dance like fog outside the world of that pseudo-family where those with a "sixth sense" sensibility, who live in an "underworld" looked down on by those wishing to escape reality mingle with their alternate selves. This was the literary world that Midori arrived at.

Behind Midori's symbolic and abstract world was a unique sensual world constructed of grotesque aesthetics and the power of imagination and a sharp reaction against the age of the metropolis and technology. The decadence and corruption of the modern city—the noisy chatter and heavy make-up of the women of the red-light districts and cafes that adorned the lively surface of a city swarming with the jobless as the worldwide Great Depression began at the end of the 1920s, the pathetic fatigue of the nihilistic playboys, the crowds of vulnerable people fearful of violence—overlapped in Midori's eyes with uprooted women away from their families floating in the depths. Hers was a vision of the "grotesque" common to the worlds of Poe and Chaplin.

In this world, where the ground shook with footsteps of an inexorably approaching militarism, all the urban amusements, fantasies, drugs, and weak physical bodies, were destined to be squashed, weeded out by force. For this very reason, the grotesque existed, its terror and brilliance ever increasing.

The grotesque in Poe's definition, as mentioned before, is a viewpoint and aesthetic in which irrational human existence is projected onto a burlesque landscape made up of the disharmonious mixture of humor and tragedy, laughter and horror, the

insipid and the witty, the misshapen and the amorphous, the incongruous and the irregular, exaggeration and mystery, the strange and the supernatural, the eerie and the sublime. This was also the ironic method of Chaplin's awkward tragi-comedies of the antihero, with which he depicted the reality of weaklings in the city, alienated by post-industrial revolution mechanical civilization.

The masterpieces Ozaki Midori wrote in this period, *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense* and *Miss Cricket*, were modernist works employing such methods, and nonsensical from the point of view of realism. They describe a different dimension filled with discordant sounds, where misshapen plants and humans communicate with each other through awkward gestures. However, as Hanada Kiyoteru notes, it is not a dark world at the bottom of a stagnant swamp; Ozaki Midori's unique world overflows with light and smell and sound and is filled with lucid humor. What constructs this tragicomic, ironic world that overflows with light-infused humor, where the funny, tragic, and horrible co-exist, is an eros in which bodies of the opposite sex do not exist, love that has no concrete object, and the broken hearts and one-sided crushes of "young girls" of Midori's modernist imagination.

When the author at last revealed the world of the "seventh sense," a fantastic, conceptual, symbolic world of bright senses that transcends reality and the natural world, in the form of the novel *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, rather than being greeted with voices of celebration, she was suddenly and brutally pulled from the stage. Midori's older brother came to Tokyo intending to fulfill his role and responsibility as oldest son of the patriarchal family, which he had failed before. This "incompetent brother" appeared at Midori's room in Kamiochiai as a Naval Lieutenant, tore his gifted sister from her masterpiece *Wanderings in the Realm of the Seventh Sense*, forced her to return home as a drug addict, and confined her for the rest of her life as a form of "protection."