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Research Article

THE PALM OF BEAUTY: INTERMEDIAL RENDERING IN KAWABATA YASUNARI'S (1899-1972) TANAGOKORO NO SHŌSETSU (1921-1972)

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Abstract

This manuscript was written as the final paper for Professor Andrew Jones's graduate seminar EA 204 – Jones 2019 Fall EALANG 204 001 Topics in East Asian Studies. This course provides a place for graduate-level seminars in East Asian Studies that rely primarily on secondary scholarship and texts in translation. Contents will vary between semesters but will typically focus on a particular theme. Themes will be chosen according to faculty and student interests, with an eye toward introducing students to the breadth of available western scholarship on that subject, from classics in the field to the latest publications

Keywords: Sociology, Japanese Studies, Physics, Comparative Literature, Aesthetics, Media Studies, Media and Cultural Studies, Japanese Language And Culture, Space and Place, Franz Kafka, Modern Japanese Literature, Japanese Art History, Kawabata Yasunari, Johannes Vermeer, Curriculum and Pedagogy.

INTRODUCTION

The drawings are traces of an old, deeply anchored passion. […]
There are always traces there. The passion in me. […]
My drawings are not pictures, they are a private pictorial writing system.[1] Franz Kafka (1883-1924), in conversation with Gustav Janouch

While Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) was publishing long works of narrative fiction like *Yukiguni* (Snow Country,1935-1948) and *Izu no odoriko* (The Izu Dancer, 1926) that made himself famous worldwide, *Palm-of-the-hand Stories* (1921-1972) drifted Kawabata away from that literary career over and over. From1921 to 1972, he intermittently came back to the project of writing palm-length stories, which he regarded as the essence of his life-time art. His last work, written not long before his [2]suicide, is an adaptation of the novel *Yukiguni* into a palm-length story "Yukiguni shō" (An Extract from Snow Country, 1972). Originally published in various journals[3] and newspapers, these sporadic writings are later compiled into a posthumous collection entitled *Palm-of-the-hand Stories* (1921-1972). The Japanese title of the *Palm-of the-Hand Stories* ("掌の小説") can be read either as *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* or as *Tenohira no shōsetsu*. The title per se *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* stresses on the extremely short length of fictional writing that could fit into the size of a palm[4].

The metaphor of the palm evokes a tactile perception inherent in the text. The compressed form of each story further echoes with the brevity of haiku poems. Instead of poetry, Kawabata wrote palm-length stories that naturally reveal his poetic spirit: "Many writers, in their youth, write poetry; I, instead of poetry, wrote the palm-of-the hand stories. Among them are unreasonably fabricated pieces, but there are more than a few good ones that flowed from my pen naturally, of their own accord. …The poetic spirit of my young days live in them." Hence, *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* simultaneously [5]manifests a poetic mode of representation, and a free evocation of other senses the visual, the auditory, the olfactory, and the haptic. Without an overarching narrative, the collection of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* reads like a poetry anthology as compressed titles evoke poetic images of snow, flower, dazzling rain, autumn, dream and sea. The linear unfolding of the collection thus resembles the manner of a linked-verse sequence, or a horizontal scroll of painting. Yet more than writing poetry, Kawabata extents the flow of his poetic spirit into the writing of surrealist experimentation, juvenile nostalgia, romance story, family triviality, postwar trauma, and the social space of Asakusa and Izū. Moreover, multiple sensations embedded in *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* produce an intermedial representation in *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* that blends Kawabata's poetic spirit and artistic associations. More than evoking a synesthesia affect, *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* thus signifies both an ekphrastic rendering of poetic images in fictional writing, and an emergence of a Benjaminian"optical unconsciousness" in literary texts. *Tanogokoro no shōsetsu*, therefore, performs like a snapshot as each miniature story snatches a moment of lived experience, like an improvisation of Kawabata's involvement in the *Shin Kankaku-ha* (New Sensationist school) , and like an intermedial web that weaves

[1] Quoted in "Kafka: 'A Great Draughtsman,'" in *A Great Artist One Day: Franz Kafka as a* [1]*Pictorial Artist*, ed. Niels Bokhove and Marijke van Dorst (Praha: Vitalis, 2007), 92. For the conversation between Kafka and Gustav Janouch, see Gustav Janouch, *Gepräche mit Kafka*, revised edition (Frankfurt: a. M., 1968), 58-60.

[2] Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature in the Modern Era*, (New York: Holt, [2]Rinehart, and Winston, 1984), 802.

[3] "Yukiguni shō" was first published in the August 13, 1972, issue of *Sandē Mainichi*, [3]50-59.

[4] [4]Japanese scholars like Senuma Sigeki (1904-1988) had read Kawabata Yasunari's「掌の 小説」as "tenohira no shōsetsu." However, when the scholar Hasegawa Izumi (1918-2004) interviewed Kawabata about this work, Kawabata agreed to read the title as "tanagokoro no shōsetsu." See Hasegawa Izumi, "*Tanagokoro no shōsetsu ron*," in *Shikon no genryū : Tanagokoro no shōsetsu,* ed. Kawabata Bungaku Kenkyūkai (Tōkyō : Kyōiku Shuppan Sentā, 1977), 7. In this paper, I decide to follow Kawabata's own reading and refers *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories* as *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*.

[5] Kawabata Yasunari, *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories*, trans. Lane Dunlop and J. Martin Holman [5](San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988), editorial note.

together the flow of Kawabata's poetic spirit and the optical effect processed through the camera[6].

Before *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*

The genre of extreme short story first gained its popularity in the late Taishō period, and later revived in the 1950s and 60s Japan. These short, short stories are referred to as "*conto* コント," "*shōhen shōsetsu* 掌編小説" and "*shotoshoto* ショートショート." In general, the French term *conte* "コント" is often used in contemporary criticism to discuss these short, short stories. The root of the term "palm-length stories"[7] ("*shōhen shōsetsu* 掌編小説") originates from Oku Ryōshin 億良伸's writing "Four stories written in the palm 掌に書いた小説 四篇," which was first published in the literary journal *Bungei shunjū* 文藝春秋 in 1924. Two years later, Kawabata published an article[8] entitled "The Popularity of Palm-length Stories 掌編小説の流行' (1926) in the same journal, in which he listed some variations of the term "palm-length story" (*shōhen shōsetsu*) in late Taishō, including Okata Sanrō's "Nijūkō shōsetsu 二十行小説," Nakagawa Yoichi's "Jūkō shōsetsu 十行小説," and Takeno Tōsuke's "Ichimai shōsetsu 一枚小説." Kawabata's investment in palm-length stories reflects a Taishō fad of *conte*, [9]and he is surely the one sticking to this genre for the longest time. Among his contemporaries, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927) writes a short fiction *Aru ahō no isshō* (A Fool's Life, 1927) that comprises of many short vignettes. The loose, fragmented structure almost dissolves the fictional writing into a prose poetry of snapshots and images.

Kawabata has a habit of rewriting, adding segments to previously published work, and changing titles and contents of old writings, which causes much bibliographical difficulty to approach the original context of his work. His famous *Yukuguni*, for instance, was purblind serially from January 1935 through May 1937. The first edition of *Yukiguni* appeared in 1937, but Kawabata added segments to this edition in the final 1948 edition. Kawabata also made textual changes before publishing [10]serialized writings in the 1937 novel especially "changes in characterization and in style from more 'realistic' and straightforward to 'lyrical' and symbolic." Like the [11]publication process of *Yukiguni*, the collection of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* was published, at irregular intervals, in various journals and newspapers. There is no agreed final [12]version of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*. The anthologization of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* stirs heated discussions among Japanese scholars, including Shibukawa Gyō (1905-1993),

Matsusaka Toshio (1930) and Hasegawa Izumi (1918-2004). Hasegawa rearranged Matsusaka's anthology based on the publishing date of each story, and added some new stories to the collection. For instance, the first story in Matsusaka's arrangement "Honebiroi 骨拾い" is a rewriting of Kawabata's 1916 draft "Jūrokusai no nikki 十六歳 の日記" (Diary of a Sixteen-Year-Old, 1916). However, "Kotsuhiroi 骨拾い" was not published until 1949, so Hasegawa put this story in the latter part of his edition. According to Hasegawa's *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*, the first story "Yu 油" was published in 1921 in the journal *Shinshichō* 新思潮.

The first large group of writings was composed in late Taishō and early Shōwa from 1920s to 1930s. According to Hasegawa, Kawabata wrote 47 palm-length stories from 1921 to 1925, and published writings in journals such as *Shinshichō* 新思潮, *Bungei shunjū* 文藝春秋, *Bunshō kurabu* 文章倶楽部, *Gendai bungei* 現代文芸, *Bundan* 文壇, *Bungei jidai* 文芸時代, *Bungei nippon* 文芸日本, *Kinsei* 金星, *Josei* 女性, *Bunshō ourai* 文章往来, *Tsujibasha* 辻馬車, *Wakakusa* 若草, and *Fujingurafu* 婦人グラフ. He stopped publishing [13]in 1926 and resumed the following year. In 1926, Kawabata published the first 35 palm length stories under a collection entitled *Kanjō sōshoku* (Decoration of Emotions, 1926), [14]which was also his first book. From 1927 to 1935, he published 64 stories. Besides literary journals, Kawabata started to publish in newspapers like *Tōkyō asahi shinbun* 東京朝日新聞, *Jiji shinhō* 時事新報, *Ōsaka asahi shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞, *Sandī mainichi* サンデー毎日, *Fukuoka hibi shinbun* 福岡日日新聞 and *Tōkyō hibi shinbun* 東京日日新聞. In [15]1930, Kawabata published another collection of forty-seven stories entitled *Book no Hyōhonshitsu* (My Specimen Room, 1930).[16]

Then Kawabata stopped publishing this project for three years and resumed in 1938. With another pause during years of 1939-1942, 1945 and 1947, the next active period of composition was between 1944 to 1950. From 1938 to 1950, Kawabata published nineteen stories. During this time, he published work in *Shinchō, Bungei shunjū, Shashin shūhō* 写真週報, *Shōsetsu shinchō*, *Kurashi no techō* くらしの手帖, *Kaizō bungei* 改造文芸, *Ningen* 人間, and *Bungei* 文芸. In the next few years, Kawabata only [17]published one in 1952 in *Bungei* 文芸 and another one in 1956 in *Shinchō*. There was a [18]final brief flowering of composition from 1962 to 1964, which were all published in *Asahi shinbun PR han*

[6] [6]On the formation of *Shin Kankaku-ha*, see Inoue Ken, *Yokomitsu Riichi: Hyōden to kenkyū* (*Yokomitsu Riichi: Critical Biography and Research*) (Tokyo: Ōfū, 1994), 178-201.

[7] Hasegawa, 8.

[8] Kawakatsu Mari, "Destruction of Perspective by Yasunari Kawabata: "Setting Sun", "A [8]Bride's Sacrifice", "A Lyricism Song", "A Telescope, A Telephone", etc.," *Meikai daigaku kyōyōronbunshū shizen to bunka* No. 24 (2013): 29, accessed December 18, 2019, https://researchmap.jp/?action=cv_download_main&upload_id=65804.

[9] Hasegawa, 8. [9]

[10] These segments include "*Yūgeshiki no Kagami*" ("Mirror of the Evening Scene"), [10]"*Monogatari*" ("Story"), *Torō* ("Futile Efforts"), and *Shiroi Asa no Kagami* ("Mirror of a White Morning"). However, these stories are often identified as "short stories with no reference to their relationship to *Yukiguni*." For a critical review of the publication history of *Yukiguni* and Kawabata's other work, see Gwenn R. Boardman, "Kawabata Yasunari: A Critical Introduction," *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1971):88-89, accessed December 19, 2019, www.jstor.org/stable/30053176.

[11] Boardman, 88. [11]

[12] For a complete list with dates of publication, see Hasegawa Izumi, "Tanagokoro no [12]shōsetsu ron," in *Shikon no Genryū*, ed. Kawabata Bungaku Kenkyūkai, (Tōkyō : Kyōiku Shuppan Sentā, 1977), 12-29. For a list comparing different editions of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*, see, *Jitsuzon no Kashō*, ed. Kawabata Bungaku Kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Kyōiku Shuppan Sentā, 1977), 300-307. For a sampling of these palm-length stories in English translation, see *Contemporary Japanese Literature*, ed. Howard Hibbett (New York: Knopf: distributed by Random House, 1977), 293-309. For a brief literary history of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*, see Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West: Japanese Literature in the Modern Era*, (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1984), 800-804.

[13] Hasegawa, 12-15. [13]

[14] See Kawabata Yasunari, *Kanjō sōshoku* (Tōkyō: Kinseidō, 1926).

[15] Hasegawa, 15-19

[16] See Kawabata Yasunari, *Boku no Hyōhonshitsu* (Tōkyō : Yumani Shobō, 2000). [16]Hasegawa, 19-20

[17] Hasegawa, 19-20

[18] Hasegawa, 20

朝日新聞PR版. The last three stories are later added to the [19]collection by Hasegawa: "Kami wa nakaku 髪は長く" ("The Hair is Long," 1970) published in 1970 in *Shinchō*, "Take no koe momo no hana 竹の声桃の花" (Bamboo Voice Peach Flower, 1970) in 1970 in *Chūō kōron* 中央公論 and "Yukiguni shō 雪国抄" in 1972 in *Sandī mainichi* サンデー毎日. "Yukiguni shō" is Kawabata's last writing before [20]he committed suicide, a reductive rewriting of his famous novella *Snow Country*.

The publication process of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* viscerally tells the temporal dimension of Kawabata's writing process. A review of the original print context of Kawabata's writing suggests how literary journals in 1920s and 30s Japan or those "little magazines" in Ezra Pound's (1885-1972) term created a space for avant-garde ideals, sparked thoughts of major modernist writers, and shaped the formation of modernity in Japanese literature. The format of these journals shows a blending of *art* [21]*nouveau* graphic design in printed image and modernist techniques in text. Among these journals, *Bungei jidai* 文芸時代 (Literary Age, 1924-1927) is a major literary magazine founded by the *Shin Kankaku-ha* in 1924. The literary critic Chiba Kameo (1878-1935) coined the name "*Shin Kankaku-ha*" for a group of young writers who proclaimed their literary ideal as "an amalgamation of European avant-gardes" in Japan, including Cubism, expressionism, Futurism, Dadaism, symbolism and constructivism. A coterie [22]of young writers affiliated with *Shin Kankaku-ha* is primarily Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), Kawabata, the dramatist Kishida Kunio (1890-1954), Nakagawa Yoichi (1897-1994), and Marist critics such as Kurahara Korehito (1902-1991), and Katsumoto Seiichiro (1899-1967).

Intermedial Rendering

In addition to literature, Kawabata also actively engages with other art forms photography, work of the Nanga school (literati paintings in the Edo period), calligraphy, sculpture, film, and tea ceremony. He got a Contax camera then a luxury machine in 1937. During his two visits to China in 1941, he used the camera to take photos of the northeastern part of China. In this regard, *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* not only [23]carries his poetic spirit, but also lets his artistic persona drift, digress and improvise. Often in a sad note, Kawabata's style renders poetic images, tradition-rooted symbols, subtly associated gestures, and fine harmonies of allusive sounds. Titles of each palm length story in the collection compresses the traditional Japanese aesthetic the feeling of *yūgen, aware*, and *wabi-sabi* into misty, ambiguous images. Like figurative doors, these palm-length stories open immense depth for ekphrastic association and multi sensory experience.

Though affiliated with the *Shin Kankanku-ha*, Kababata's expressive narrative and experiments modernist technique had developed well before the movement was launched. His first published story "Shōkonsai Ikkei" (A View of the Yasukuni Festival, 1921) describes the circus equestrienne and her friends through cryptic conversations, evoking a dreamlike atmosphere in mimesis. Receiving praise from Kikuchi Kan [24](1888-1948), Kume Masao (1891-1952), Kojima Masajirō (1894-1994), and Sasaki Mosaku, "Shōkonsai Ikkei" demonstrated Kawabata's an advance modernist writer. [25]Kawabata's elliptical style is a precursor of the later *Shin Kankaku-ha* movement. Writing against the autobiographical mode in the Japanese "*watakushi shōsetsu*" (I-novel), this story manifests a fresh awareness of"objectivity" between the author and his characters, which attracted favorable attention in 1920s Japan. *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu* further develops this writerly consciousness along with experimental techniques, exploring the author's noninvolvement through the camera eye.

Kawabata's theoretical writing on the "limited point of view" offers a glimpse of his interest in the noninvolved, mechanical narrative. In his theoretical work *The Construction of Novels*, Kawabata groups the notion of the "limited point of view" under the category of "external point of view," and distinguished the idea from the omniscient perspective or the plain delineation:

This is the writing method Iwano Hōmei called the unitary description. The author tells the story in the third person, but the reader sees the behavior and psychology of the other characters from the point of view of a certain actor.[26]

The critic Iwano Hōmei first developed this concept to describe or grasp the behavior and psychology of others through the perspective of one person. Like a camera lens, [27]the "unitary description," suggests how the fictional narrative is focalized through one limited perspective. The author, turning himself into a camera, photographed the reality and reduces the autobiographical association with characters masturbating.

In particular, Kawabata published seven palm-length stories in the December issue of the journal *Bungei jidai* in 1924, which

[19] Hasegawa, 20-21. *Asahi shinbun PR han* 朝日新聞PR版 is a newspaper publisher that [19]differs from the common edition of *Asahi shinbun* 朝日新聞. The online database of *Asahi shinbun* does not include the PR edition

[20] Hasegawa, 21. For a critical writing and translation of "Take no koe momo no hana," [20]see Matthew Mizenko, "Bamboo Voice Peach Blossom: Speech, Silence, and Subjective Experience," *Monumenta Nipponica* 54, no. 3 (1999): 305-31, accessed December 19, 2019, doi: 10.2307/2668363

[21] On how magazines introduced western arts and literature and influenced modern [21]Japan, see Erin Schoneveld, *Shirakaba and Japanese Modernism: Art Magazines, Artistic Collectives, and Early Avant-garde* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019)

[22] Seiji M. Lippit, "Yokomitsu Riichi's *Shanghai*," in *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* [22](New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 78. For Chiba Kameo's article, see Chiba Kameo, "Shinkankakuha no tanjō" (*The Birth of New Sensationist School*), in *Shinkankakuha no tanjō* (Tokyo: Nihon tosho sentaa, 1992), 178-83

[23] On Kawabata's photos and his interests in other art forms, see the exhibition catalogue [23]*Japan is Beautiful: Kawabata Yasunari and Yasuda Yukihiko* (大和し美しー川端康成と安田靫彦), ed. Suihara Enhaku (Tokyo : Kyūryūdō Art Pub., 2008). The exhibition was held in Miho Museum, September 2 to December 24, 2008 et al. The painter Yasuda Yukihiko (1884-1978) created cover illustrations for Kawabata's complete work in 1948, and the two had a lifetime friendship for their shared interests in art and connoisseurship. On Kawabata, calligraphy and his books, see *Kawabata to shō*, ed. Suihaku Enhaku (in consultation with Kawabata Kaori), (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 2019). On Kawabata's friendship with the Nihonga painter Higashiyama Kaii (1908-1999), see *Kawabata Yasunari to Higashiyama Kaii—Hibikiau bi no sekai*, ed. Higashiyama Sumi, (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 2006), and *Kyoshō no me—Kawabata Yasunari to Higashiyama Kaii*, ed. Kawabata Kaori and Suihara Enhaku (Tokyo: Kyūryūdō, 2014).

[24] This story is included in *Izu no odoriko*, ed. henshū Meicho Fukkoku Zenshū Henshū Iinkai (Tokyo: Nihon Kindai Bungakkan: Sōhatsubaimoto Horupu, 1977)

[25] Keene, 789

[26] *Comparative Literature Studies* 26, no. 3 (1989): 194, accessed December 19, 2019, www.jstor.org/ stable/40246674

[27] Akiyama, 193. To be noted, Iwano Hōmei was not aware of Henry James' work when [27]he developed this idea

marked a moment he closely engaged in modernist techniques and *Shin Kankaku-ha*. Among these stories, one story entitled "*Shiroi hana*" (The White Flower, 1924) self-consciously ponders over the genre of fictional writing through the voice of a young novelist. The meta-fictional dialogue invites an examination of the unconscious dimension, the ekphrastic digression, and the intermediate rendering in Kawabata's writing. The short, short story narrates three snapshots of romance around the heroine, a weak girl her cousin suffering from lung disease, a doctor in a sanatorium near the seashore, and a young novelist in the same hospital. The note of sadness suffuses "*Shiroi hana*" the moment the story begins with the girl's family almost die out from lung disease after generations of marriages among blood relatives. The textuality of this palm-length story synchronizes with the physicality and affect of the heroine. Like the collection of *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*, the story does not possess a linear, coherent narrative. Instead, the paratactic narrative often with jagged skips or interruptions continues the flow of writing through repeated images of the white, the pink, the ocean, and the sunlight. As the story evokes rich visual images through the verbal, the text renders an ekphrastic narrative that explores the "illusory representation of the unrepresentable." Through the medium of [28]words, "*Shiroi hana*" reproduces a synesthetic effect mediated through multiple sensations the visual, the auditory, the vocal and the haptic.

In the original, the opening forebodes the tragic fate of girl through two concise sentences:
Marriages of blood relatives had repeated for generation. The clan of the girl had gradually died out from lung disease. 血族結婚が代々重なつた。彼女の一族は肺病でだんだん死に絶えて行つた。[29](*ketsuzoku kekkon ga dandan kasanatta. kanojo no ichizoku wa haibyō de dandan shinitaeteitta*)

Here, a discussion of kinship, marriage, and clan indicates an anthropological perspective that latently orchestrates the story. The girl's tragic fate is re-formulated through the indication of heredity, disease, death, and even extinction. This narrative of modern science almost foreshadows the doctor's dark clinical view of the human body as a laboratory in the second scenario. The repetition of the past-tense suffix (*-tta*) sets the heavy tone of the doomed lung disease. The paralleled adverbs "for generations" (*daidai*) and "gradually" (*dandan*) voice out *(da*) the unvoiced past-tense suffix (*-tta*) through reiterative locution, tolling for the predetermined death.

The title "white flower" figuratively describes the pale skin of the unhealthy girl and her sick cousin. The image of the "white floor" evokes the delicate yet sad aesthetic of *mono-no-aware* in the Japanese tradition, which denotes an inherent sorrow related to sensitivity and impermanence of life. In the story, this tradition-rooted symbol is gradually dissolved by the paratactic narrative, superseded by the image of the color "pink." Or, more accurately, the peach-blossom pink "*momoiro* 桃色' in Japanese, not the *katakana* foreign word "ピンク." This color not only shows the beauty of peach blossom, or a sanguine complexion, but also connotes sexual desire and illicit relationship between men and women.

In the second scenario, hearing about her cousin's lung disease through his letter, the girl is off to a sanatorium near the seashore. There she is the doctor's patient. After the girl is getting better, the doctor mentions the image of the "pink," the first time in the story, in his confession to the girl patient:
"Your life is rising anew like that sun. Why don't the ships at sea hoist pink sails for you? (*dōshite umi no fune ga minna momoriro no ho wo kakagete kurenainodarō.*)… You're well enough that you can use your body to express your emotions. (*Anata wa jishin no dōgu nishitemo iihodoni sukkariii.*)…Why doesn't the whole ocean turn pink for us?" (*Naze, umi ga momoiro ni shimate kurenainodarō.*) [30]

Doctor's confession touches upon major images in "*Shiroi hana*" the sun, the pink color, and the ocean. Since this scenario is set in early morning with sunlight, the imagery of the sun and the ocean signifies the doctor's internalization of external natural images, a synchronization of the exterior landscape with the character's interiority. Natural images the sunrise and the ocean thus symbolize a new start, a promising future, and vast possibilities. The color "pink" here certainly adds a romantic, or even erotic, touch to the story, hinting at the lurking relation between the girl patient and the doctor. Like a photograph, the image of the "pink" becomes a metonymic device that indexes interpersonal memory.

The palm-length story Kawabata published right before "*Shiroi hana*" in the same journal is a piece entitled "Photograph 写真" (1924), in which the photograph of the old poet and his fiancée becomes a portable, beautiful memory. "*Shiroi hana*" seems to continue the old poet's words: "I hate photographs, and I rarely think of having one taken. …Now those photographs are my one beautiful memory." Yet the image of pink [31]carries snapshots of both love and hatred for the girl: the pink ocean with the doctor, the "pink dawn of life" (27) in the novelist book *Two Mornings*, the word "pink" reserved for herself. Just as the old poet cuts off his picture out of a photograph with his fiancée and her sister, scattered images of "*Shiroi hana*" perform the same optical process of mimesis, reproduction and re-mediation.

The story interestingly juxtaposes the doctor's confession after the girl's daydreaming, and the doctor unconsciously evokes the same imagery of the ocean as the girl does: "When she closed her eyes she saw her body floating on the ocean of life, drifting wherever the tide took it. This gave her an amorous air" (25). The vast image of the ocean gives her a freedom to float and drift anywhere, allows her to forget about this world, and reserves a private space for her romantic fantasy. Yet the text abruptly cuts off the girl's reverie by inserting a letter from the cousin's letter, but coincidentally evokes the girl's reverie through the doctor's words. In this regard, the paratactic narrative creates a strange moment of intentional montage that drifts beyond characters' awareness. The text focuses on a stream of unconsciousness inherent in the narrative, and further invites a review of Kawabata's objective, noninvolved style of narration.

In a Benjaminian key, the ekphrastic text renders "unconscious

[28] Murray Krieger, "Forward of Shields", in *Ekphrasis: The Illusion of the Natural Sign* [28](Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), xv
[29] Kawabata Yasunari, "Shiroi hana," in *Honebiroi: Tenohiro no shōsetsu* (Tōkyō: Yumanite, [29]1975), 39
[30] Kawabata Yasunari, "The White Flower," in *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories by Yasunari* [30]*Kawabata*, trans. Lane Dunlop and J. Martin Holman (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988), 27.
[31] Kawabata Yasunari, "Photograph," in *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories by Yasunari Kawabata*, [31]trans. Lane Dunlop and J. Martin Holman (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988), 23.

optics" that are embedded in poetic images, character's interiority, and the paratactic narrative. To Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), camera "can reveal what we see without realizing what we do, just as psychoanalysis can uncover what we know without knowing that we do: what is stored in the unconscious." Through the mechanical process of photography, [32]the camera eye brings to light optical process and uncanny moments that are invisible to the naked eye. Echoing with Benjamin's exploration of the hidden dimension through the camera, Kawabata's text performs like a camera lens that objectively uncovers the unconscious oddity through repeated images and paratactic narrative. "*Shiroi hana*" embodies various forms of "making strange" the interruption, the digression, the quotation, or the cut to the landscape.[33]

Through the voice of the young novelist, "*Shiroi hana*" adds a meta-fictional comment on mimesis and representation:

"Look at this. It's a sketch I made of you while in the hospital. Even if you and I were to die, we might live in my novel. But now there are two mornings the transparent beauty of characteristics that are no characteristics at all. You bring a beauty like a fragrance that you can't see with the naked eye, like the pollen that perfumed the spring fields. My novel has found a beautiful soul. How shall I write it? Put your soul in the palm of my hand for me to look at, like a crystal jewel. I'll sketch it in words…"[34]

「これを見て下さい。病院にいた頃のあなたのスケッチです。あなたが死に私が死んだとしても、二人はこの小説の中に生きたかもしれない。けれども今は、二つの朝になつた。　性格のない性格の、透明な美しさ。春の野に匂う花粉のように、あなたは肉眼で見えない匂いのような美しさを人生に漂わせている。私の小説は美しい魂を見つけたのです。それを何と書けばよいのだ。あなたの魂を私の掌のにのつけて見せて下さい。水晶の玉のように。私はそれを言葉でスケッチする……。[35]

When he refers to the novel *Two Mornings* a work dedicated to his romance with the girl, the novelist uses the transliteration of the word "sketch" "*sukecchi* スケッチ*."* To him, writing a novel mimics the expression of the painterly brush to "sketch it in words," so the textuality of fictional writing becomes a canvas that represents reality and that reformulates the notion of "death." Through the voice fo the novelist, Kawabata's meta-comment on "*sukecchi*" manifests a modern mode of representation that privileges the beauty of "transparency." The dash in the original spotlights a paratactic statement that corresponds with Kawabata's authorial gesture of noninvolvement: " the characteristic of no characteristics, a transparent beauty 性 格のない性格の、透明な美しさ." Here, the nigga not only indicates the aesthetic of a transparent textuality, but also leads to the "objective" rendering where Kawabata turns himself into a camera. However, Kawabata's photographic touch does not invoke either the original meaning of "*shasshin* 写真" transposition (*sha*) the real *(shin*)," which implies a "premise of fidelity" between visual representation and epistemology, or the [36]objective mode of "*ari no mama*" (as it as) in the Meiji period, which endorses precision and accuracy.

Rather, Kawabata invests in sketching or transposing the "unreal," the "surreal," and the "strange." In his *Asakusa Kurenai Dan* (The Asakusa Crimson Gang, 1929-1930), Kawabata, after the manner of Izumi Kyōka (1873-1939), uses colloquialisms to "create effects of pleasing unreality." In "*Shiroi hana*," figurative language becomes [37]Kawabata's instrument to explore the "hidden dimension," the ekphrastic "unrepresentable," and the "transparent beauty." Hence, to elaborate on the abstract notion of "transparent beauty" like "a crystal jewel," the novelist compares the unconscious optical process "that you can't see with the naked eye" to the invisible, amorphous imagery of "fragrance" and "pollen." These two images, pervasive in space, also evoke an olfactory dimension of "*Shiroi hana*" that produces an embodied experience of abstract similes through breathing.

Like the frame of a canvas or a photograph, the frame of the novel produces an extra spatial-temporal dimension that extends and preserves the life of the girl and the novelist. When the novelist self-reflexively asks "How shall I write?," the text leads to the image of the "pussy" "put your soul in the palm of my hand for me to look at." As a keyword for *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*, the image of the "palm" here indicates an organic, corporeal dimension of fictional writing that compensates the alienated, mechanic process of Kawabata's photographic sketching. Haptic contact between the palm and the beautiful soul renders the novelistic form as a palm that wraps up chiseled poetics images, synesthesia sensations, and the soul of characters. After her encounter with the novelist, "*Shiroi hana*" reserves a private space for the girl to stay alone in the room in the last scenario. In the chapter "Intimate Immensity" of *The Poetics of Space* (1958), Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) examines poetic imagery of sea, forest, and Charles Baudelaire's (1821-1867) use of the word "vast" a word for grandeur. Bachelard suggests a phenomenological touch when the word "vast" is pronounced. The poetic effect of vocalizing the word "vast" distinguishes the word from words surrounding it, and opens up a profound space that becomes "effective on the very threshold of our vocal powers." Our breathing "a six sense" [38]suggested by Bachelard indicates a vocal depth beneath the surface of poetic images. [39]In this regard, the ending of "*Shiroi hana*" evokes the same image of "pink" through the girl's final utterance:

She sat alone in her own room. Her cousin had died a little earlier. "Pink, pink."

As she peered up at her white skin that gradually grew limpid, she recalled the word "pink" and smiled.

"If some man would woo me with one word…," she felt like nodding. And she smiled.[40]

[32] Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, [32]MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 118.
[33] Hirsh, 118.
[34] Kawabata Yasunari, "The White Flower," in *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories by Yasunari* [34]*Kawabata*, trans. Lane Dunlop and J. Martin Holman (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988), 27
[35] Kawabata Yasunari, "Shiroi hana," in *Honebiroi: Tenohiro no shōsetsu* (Tōkyō: Yumanite, [35]1975), 40-41
[36] Maki Fukuoka, "Introduction," in *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and* [36]*Representing the Real in Nineteenth-century Japan* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2012), 2.
[37] Keene, 797.
[38] Gaston Bachelard, "Intimate Immensity," in *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jones, [38](Boston: Beacon, 1994), 197.
[39] Bachelard, 197.
[40] Kawabata Yasunari, "The White Flower," in *Palm-of-the-Hand Stories by Yasunari* [40]*Kawabata*, trans. Lane Dunlop and J. Martin Holman (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988), 27.

彼女は自分一人の部屋に坐っている。従兄は前に死んだ。
「桃色。桃色。」
だんだん透き通ってくる白い肌を覗きながら、「桃色」という言葉を思い出して笑っている。
誰か男が一こと自分を求めれば、こくりとうなずこうと思って笑っている.[41]

After the girl's cousin passed away, the narrative mute her feeling of loss, mourning and sorrow, but concludes with her odd smile, as well as the abstract image of the "pink pussy." The girl's repeated utterance of the word "*momoiro*" adds a phenomenological nuance to the textuality of the palm-length story "*Shiroi hana*," distinguishing this image from other words. Therefore, Kawabata's ending pierces through the picturesque canvas of the ekphrastic narrative, and opens a profound space of poetic digression beneath the surface of words. Although the English translation deletes those dashes or replaces them with ellipses, the suffusion of dash in the original calls attention to a moment of pause and reflection. As the Japanese original adjusts dashes to the vertical layout of text, these vertical lines suggest various moments of "sinking" in the text, which expand the spatial immensity of the poetic immersion.
Moreover, the text carries within itself the memory of the opening through the image of the white flower, the girl's white skin, and the adverb "gradually" (*dandan*).

The "limpid" quality of the girl's skin suggests her fragile, vulnerable body, and resembles that of a glass vessel hard to hold in the palm. Pale skin contrasts the word "pink" that lingers in the girl's mind, an image embodying her longing for health and romance. The adverb "*dandan*" again tolls the bell for the girl, as well as the entire text. The past-tense suffix (-*tta*) is now "gradually" replaced by the suffix of the present progressive tense (-*teiru*), suggesting the fixation of the last scenario in the frame of a photo.

Conclusion Rodin, the Palm, and Kawabata

To Kawabata, the "palm" is not merely a literary trope, but also an authentic sculpture that accompanied him in his study. Fascinated by Auguste Rodin's (1840-1917) sculpture "Hand of a Woman," Kawabata collected this miniature, placed it on his desk, and was looking at it. The photograph of Kawabata and this sculptural palm fixes this moment of intimate engagement between the two. Placed on the tatami mat, the camera evokes Ozū's (1903-1963) use of camera, and captures a portrait of Kawabata from a low-angle. This low-angle shot foreshortens the distance between the viewer and objects in the foreground Rodin's bronze sculpture on a marble base, the texture of the *tatami* mat, a pair of glasses, and a cushion. Vermeer's (1632-1675) *Woman Holding a Balance* (1665) (Fig. 2) shows how the natural light lights up the balance, the girl's hand, and the interior space through a window on the left side. Like the lighting in Vermeer's painting, the natural light in the photo shines through the left part of the room and leave half of the interior space in shadow. The contrast between light and shadow singles out Kawabata's lit-up face and Rodin's dark bronze sculpture. However, the camera focuses on Kawabata's face, but blurs the outline of Rodin's "Hand of a Woman." The photo thus narrows the attention to the materiality of the art object. Rodin's hand becomes an abstract symbol as in Kawabata's *Tanagokoro no* shōsetsu. Kawabata gazes at the palm of the hand, interpreting the blurred gesture suggested through the sculpture. Yet we the viewers only see a partial representation of the back of the women's hand. The composition of the photo cleverly juxtaposes Kawabata's hand holding a cigarette with the sculpture, and covers his other hand with the sculpture before it. Therefore, the photo grafts Rodin's sculptural hand on to Kawabata's body, and the abstract trope is a part of him.

The trope of the "dick" a keyword for Kawabata suggests a haptic perception inherent in *Tanagokoro no shōsetsu*. Instead of evoking the erotic, this embodied experience reveals a corporeal interaction that is alienated in the mechanical process. The haptic contact between the reader's body and the textuality of palm-length stories also attempts to dissolve the fragmented, alienated relationship produced by the introduction fo modern machines in Japan the camera, the train, and the radio. Interestingly, Kawabata is not a writer who writes on the desk in his study. He finishes most of his work on the train or during commuting. His writing is part of its diegetic modern world the train, the moving landscape outside and the cacophony at the train station. Thus we recall the opening of *Yukiguni "*The train came out of the long tunnel into the horny country. The earth lay white under the night sky. The train pulled up at a signal stop."[42]

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