

MODERN JAPANESE WRITERS
ENCOUNTER THE WEST: THE IMPACT
OF EXPERIENCES ABROAD OF NAGAI
KAFŪ

AND ARISHIMA TAKEO

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Abstract

This thesis examines two authors, Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) and Arishima Takeo (1878-1923) and their experiences in the West. An overview of Japan's early contact with the West and the impact this contact had on society and literature is provided to establish the historical setting. The attitude of the authors towards the West, their experiences in the United States and various locations throughout Europe, as well as the impact their experiences had on them are outlined. Nagai Kafū's piece, "Pari no Wakare" from his collection titled, *Furansu no Monogatari* (Tales of France, 1909) has been translated from Japanese into English. This translation serves to demonstrate the true nature of Nagai Kafū's feelings about Paris. As this work has hitherto not appeared in English, this will make more of Nagai Kafū's literature accessible to English readers as to date it is available in Japanese only.

Preface

The idea for this thesis initially came from a project I completed earlier, on travel within Japan during the Tokugawa period (1603-1868.) I thought it would be interesting to incorporate the idea of interactions between different cultures, which meant shifting the period under consideration to the Meiji period (1868-1912) when Japanese could more easily leave Japan and travel overseas.

The decision to choose authors active during the Meiji period was the result of a personal fondness of Japanese literature from this era. Initially, I considered focusing on two of the most well-known authors from this period, Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) and Mori Ōgai (1862-1922.) While Sōseki and Ōgai filled the criteria of having traveled overseas, after doing some preliminary research, I made the decision to move away from these major literary figures, and to focus instead on two lesser known authors. This was in part due to the fact that much work has already been undertaken on Sōseki and Ōgai. However, this was not the case for Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo. As they are still rather anonymous authors particularly in the West, I felt that they deserved some attention. Likewise, their travels took place around the same time, and their itineraries, in terms of country at least, were similar.

It is hoped that the present study will create further interest in Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo both as men and as authors and will simultaneously contribute to the research that is already available in the field.

Author's Notes

In this thesis I have referred to the writers using the names by which they are commonly known, despite the Japanese practice of surname-first order. Thus Nagai Kafū is referred to as Kafū (he took the name Kafū as his sobriquet) and likewise Natsume Sōseki and Mori Ōgai are called Sōseki and Ōgai. But, due to not having a pen-name, Arishima Takeo is called by his surname, Arishima. Where Japanese words occur these have been italicised and long Japanese vowel sounds are identified with the use of macrons. Italicisation does not apply to words originating from Japanese that have also been incorporated into the English language such as *geisha*, *samurai*.

Included in this thesis is my own translation of “Pari no Wakare” (“Adieu, Paris”) which comes from Kafū’s work *Furansu Monogatari* (Tales of France, 1909). Quotations from *Amerika Monogatari* (Tales of America, 1908) come from the translation by Mitsuko Iriye (Columbia University Press, 2000). Those from Arishima’s *Meiro* (Labyrinth, 1918) are taken from the translation by Sanford Goldstein and Seishi Shinoda (Madison Books, 1992). *ATZ* refers to *Arishima Takeo Zenshū* (Collected Works of Arishima Takeo, 1979-88.)

Introduction

Overview

Literature in the Meiji period certainly did not remain untouched by the process of westernization. What dominated the early years of the Meiji period was the translation of Western works – initially political and philosophical works – into Japanese. This impacted upon the light-hearted fiction of the Tokugawa period and ushered in a new generation of young writers. These writers moved away from the trivial fiction of the previous generation of authors and came to be accepted as professional writers. Literary schools emerged when like-minded writers collaborated on magazines and journals. These ‘schools’ usually followed a particular literary movement that had also entered Japan from abroad, like romanticism and naturalism. Naturalism was first introduced into Japan through the works of French naturalist author Emile Zola. His influence was soon surpassed by that of Guy de Maupassant before naturalism in Japan became heavily influenced by models from Germany.

The Meiji period also gave rise to a number of successful individual writers, Nagai Kafū (1879-1959) and Arishima Takeo (1878-1923) being just two. As

it turned out, there emerged a number of similarities between Kafū and Arishima, particularly in aspects relating to their upbringings and the Western influences that existed in their daily lives. Both of their fathers had experience with the West which had led them into successful careers as bureaucrats. Having been clearly advantaged by their own Western experience, they endeavoured to provide some form of Western experience for their sons. The presence of Christianity and Western literature also existed as avenues of Western influence in both the Nagai and Arishima households. The similarities, however, did not extend to the personalities of the two writers in question as they emerged as being rather antithetical.

Kafū and Arishima both went on to experience a period abroad during the first decade of the twentieth century. Kafū was sent in 1903 by his father to the United States of America, primarily to study business and to learn English. He did not remain stationary while in the United States and spent time in Tacoma, St. Louis, Michigan, New York and Washington D.C. While he spent his time studying, working or doing nothing of significance, he remained adamant that the United States was not his prime concern. In 1906 Kafū was to travel to France, the country he had long desired to visit because of the attachment he had developed to French literature. Arishima, by comparison, decided to continue his graduate studies in the United States from 1903-1906. During his

time in the country he initially based himself in Philadelphia to study before transferring to attend Harvard University. In September 1906 he also travelled to Europe where he remained until the following year.

Both of these authors used their experiences in the West for the basis of much of the literature they were to write while overseas and immediately after their return from abroad. Kafū's major works based on his time abroad were *Amerika Monogatari* (Tales of America, 1908) and *Furansu Monogatari* (Tales of France, 1909). *Amerika Monogatari* was translated by Mitsuko Iriye in 2000 but *Furansu Monogatari* is yet to be rendered into English. Arishima's major work on the West was *Meiro* (Labyrinth, 1918). He additionally kept a diary while he was overseas and wrote essays on various aspects of his life in the United States that were published sporadically. Excerpts of the aforementioned works have been included throughout this present study to demonstrate how Kafū and Arishima found life in the West.

Upon their return to Japan, it became evident that their experiences in the West had considerable impact on them and it also affected how they came to view Japan. Despite this significant impact, neither of them would ever leave Japan again. Kafū focused on his literature as well as pursuing an academic career. His feelings, however, about the state he found Japan in on his return

eventually contributed to his withdrawal from Meiji society. Arishima, by comparison, proved to be one who internalized many of his experiences from the West. He also struggled to re-adjust to life in Japan, a struggle that was enhanced by his religious, political and emotional difficulties.

Structure

The present dissertation comprises five main chapters. The first of these will provide the reader with an historical background to the Western influence on Japanese society and literature. Emphasis is placed on the Meiji period, the era in history when renewed contact with the West was to remain permanent and result in a complete transformation of the nation. Chapter Two introduces the two authors to be studied here, Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo, and sets out to establish the differences and similarities in their upbringings and their attitudes towards the West that developed as a result of the presence of Western influences. The focus of Chapter Three is their experiences in the West and a discussion of the themes present in the literature the two authors produced about the West. The fourth chapter provides a translation, from Japanese into English, of “Pari no Wakare” (“Adieu, Paris”) which appeared as the final chapter in Nagai Kafū’s work *Furansu Monogatari* (Tales of France, 1909.) It serves to demonstrate the extent of attachment to the West

that could be formed. The final chapter discusses the impact the experiences in the West had on Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo and the lasting effect this impact had on their lives even after they had returned to their homeland.

Chapter I

General Western Influence on Society and Literature

I.1. Early Contact with the West

Japan's interaction with the West began almost by accident when a Chinese sailing vessel carrying Portuguese traders found itself shipwrecked off the coast of southern Kyūshū on the island of Tanegashima in 1543. The Portuguese brought with them guns and Christianity. These were two paradoxical objects, one tangible and associated with violence, the other intangible and associated with peace. Both were symbols of the West commonly recorded as being present in first contacts between Western people and the indigenous peoples of newly discovered lands. Following this meeting with the Portuguese, Japan's contact with the West was quite significant for the next century, but thereafter, till the mid nineteenth century, sporadic.

The remainder of the sixteenth century saw the arrival of the Spanish also, and by the early seventeenth century the Dutch and the English had also made an appearance. With these Westerners came the prospect for trade which was

both attractive and acceptable to the Japanese, however, other influences, such as religion, rang alarm bells for Japan's government of the time. The governing Tokugawa Bakufu viewed Christianity as having the potential to subversively threaten their authority. This attitude arose partly from the knowledge that Christian nations, more specifically predominantly Catholic ones, were known for being active colonial expansionists. It was felt the potential was there to shake the foundations of Japan's political stability as the majority of Christians in Japan were followers of Catholicism. Furthermore, Christianity by its own accord promoted the idea of a transcendent higher authority. The Bakufu was mindful of the fact that if the Japanese people took to believing in a supreme being on a large scale, this would, in effect, demote the Shogun from his position of power as the Christian God would be considered as superior.¹

The Tokugawa Bakufu banned missionaries in 1614, largely because of the potential social and political disruption it could cause. However, traders were allowed to remain in Japan for the time being. Gradually the Tokugawa Bakufu came to place tighter restrictions on even the Westerners' trading capacities after it was discovered the southern *daimyō* in Kyūshū were the major beneficiaries of the trade and not the Bakufu. Trading contacts

¹ Henshall 04, p58.

decreased when in 1624 the English left Japan upon deciding their trading venture was unprofitable.² The Dutch, wanting to dominate trade in Japan, craftily communicated to the Bakufu that the British trading contingent were Catholic and that they were trading in Japan merely to assess the potential Japan had as a colony. The Bakufu considered the Dutch to be trustworthy and became suspicious when trading with the British. It is possible that the Bakufu found trading with nations other than the British preferable and thus the British realized that their trade was not as lucrative as they had hoped it would be. The Spanish were expelled a year later and the Portuguese suffered the same fate in 1639 when the Bakufu effectively cut Japan off from all contact with the West. There was one exception to this: a small contingent of Dutch traders was given permission to trade out of the island of Deshima in Nagasaki. As Protestants, the Dutch were seen as a safe option. They were less likely to cause any sort of disruption and were basically permitted to remain in Japan because they were not Catholics.

A continued and sustained exclusion programme had been put into practice to prevent Westerners from permeating Japanese society with their religious, mercantile and cultural influences, however, there was another door into Japan through which these influences could filter and that was via Japanese nationals

² Reischauer 81, p88.

who travelled abroad. Consequently, in 1639 Japanese were forbidden from either leaving Japan or re-entering the country if they were already overseas.

Thus with the prohibition of international travel in place and the Dutch being the only Western presence in the country, Japan developed in near isolation for the following two and a half centuries. Western nations all but consigned Japan to relative anonymity as discoveries in the New World and colonialism became the major focus of the Europeans. Significantly, the Tokugawa Bakufu's aversion towards Christianity and its consequent outlawing had a flow-on effect on the banning of anything else that could be considered as having a link to the religion.

In addition to other restrictions placed on religion, commercial trade and travel, strict censorship was placed on the importation of foreign literature into Japan. It was feared that written materials from the West, even if it was not obvious from the outset, may inadvertently spread Christian teachings through stories or messages as contained in the books. Furthermore, the Tokugawa Bakufu suspected that even Chinese books which were granted free entry to Japan may themselves contain Christian thought. This censorship was enforced by an edict in 1630 which forbade "books intending to propagate

Christianity.”³ With the expulsion of Westerners now complete (besides the Dutch) and bans placed on Western trade and publications, the Tokugawa Bakufu had placed Japan in a situation whereby it entered a period of Japanese history commonly referred to as *sakoku* or “closed country.”⁴ It is easy to assume that Japan lay in a dormant state for the next two and a half centuries while the West experienced major advancements in technology. However, while it did come to lag behind technologically, Japan’s stability brought its own growth both economically and culturally and a sizeable increase in population.⁵

It is outside the scope of this thesis to provide a complete survey of the Tokugawa period. Nevertheless, it is relevant to comment on the impact the Dutch had on Japanese society as the only Western representation in the country. For the Bakufu, the Dutch trading station at Deshima provided a window to the West that was large enough to satisfy curiosities. The Dutch themselves had two official annual duties expected of them by the Bakufu. The first of these was a written report covering affairs occurring in the West. The second was to partake in an audience with the Shogun at his court in

³ Sansom 77, p200.

⁴ The term *sakoku* was coined in 1801 by Shizuki Tadao, when he translated a chapter for Engelbert Kaempfer’s *History of Japan*. See Jansen 88-90, p88.

⁵ Hall 70, p89.

Edo.⁶ The Dutch were treated like the *daimyō* who were forced to adhere to a system of *sankin kōtai* (alternate attendance). Under this system, the *daimyō* were expected to leave their domains and travel to Edo, the capital, where they would attend the Shogun. While the *daimyō* procession to Edo was concerned with displaying the rank and wealth of the *daimyō* concerned, it was also seen by a Japanese commentator as “a decadent survival of the warlike columns of armed men who accompanied their lord to battle or attended him on his journeys in the days before the long Tokugawa peace.”⁷

This second duty was by no means an exception as *daimyō* all over Japan were expected to participate in the system of *sankin kōtai* and come to Edo to pay their respects to the Shogun and bestow upon him lavish gifts.

As time passed, the regulations placed on the importation of books grew lax. The Bakufu took advantage of their contacts with the Dutch and the Dutch contacts with the outside world and by the nineteenth century had begun ordering books to further enhance their learning. This early interest in Western knowledge and books eventually culminated in the birth of the practice of *rangaku* or “Dutch Learning” (which stood for western learning in general).

⁶ Jansen 88-90, p89.

⁷ Tsukahira 66, p73.

Those Japanese scholars based in Nagasaki focused their attention on Western science and medicine and gained substantial knowledge on specifics in these two areas.⁸ Scholars in Edo too, particularly doctors, were keen to learn as much as possible and were encouraged by the presence in Japan of Dutch and German doctors, although the Germans were mistaken by the Japanese as being Dutch.

1.2. Renewed Contact with the West

Aside from medical and scientific studies, dedicated Japanese scholars began the arduous task of translating European literature, working with materials that had already been rendered into Dutch from the various original languages in which they had been written. This method was indeed the most sensible as those engaged in “Dutch Learning” would have at least become familiar with Dutch phonology and syntax. Western medicine was, for the Japanese, a particularly intriguing field, and in 1724 the persistent efforts of three Japanese doctors culminated in the Japanese translation of *Tabulae anatomicae in quibus corporis humani* (Tables of the Human Body).⁹ This lengthy translation was a significant milestone in Japan’s interaction with the Western

⁸ Reischauer 81, p104.

⁹ The translation into Japanese was not of the original as written by John Adam Klumus, a German medical practitioner in 1722, but of the translation of Gerard Dictin of Leiden. See Jansen 88-90, p92.

world. It represented a definite link between Japan and the West and inaugurated an era of Western knowledge importation to Japan through translation.

The impact that Dutch and Western culture had on Japan was to remain limited until the 1850s when Japan was forced into recommencing contact with the West. There were, however, unsuccessful attempts to open up Japan and establish trading before this time. In 1846 Captain James Biddle (1783-1848) anchored with two warships, the *USS Columbus* and the *USS Vincennes*, at Uraga in Tōkyō Bay. He had just come from signing the first treaty between China and the United States and sought to ratify a similar treaty with Japan. Biddle was approached by a Japanese junk and was asked to board the vessel to hear the decision on the treaty he had proposed. Unluckily for Biddle, when he went to climb aboard, there was a misunderstanding between himself and a Japanese guard which culminated in Biddle having a sword drawn against him and his subsequent retreat back to his warship. Not surprisingly, the answer regarding the treaty was not a positive one. Japan at this point still disallowed contact and trade with any nation other than the Dutch. Consequently, Biddle departed from Japan after a fruitless endeavour to inaugurate a relationship as he had done in China.

Seven years later in July 1853, Commodore Matthew C. Perry (1794-1858) arrived in Tokyo Bay to deliver the Tokugawa Bakufu with a request for formal relations from the United States President Millard Fillmore (1800-1874). The requests sought that castaways had to be treated humanely and Japan had to open up its ports for fuel, provisions and trade.¹⁰ Perry departed from Japan's shores and vowed to return the following year. Upon observing the vast superiority of the United States military firepower, the Bakufu was left with no choice but to consent to the terms put forth by the Americans.

The air surrounding the shogunal camp was filled with tension and quarrelling until Perry's re-emergence in February 1854. The ensuing Treaty of Kanagawa (March, 1854) allowed the American consular official Townsend Harris (1804-1878) to be stationed at the port of Shimoda.¹¹ Inevitably, treaties were soon signed by other Western countries, including Britain, Russia, France and Holland. The treaties denied the Japanese the right to impose their own tariffs and gave foreigners the right of extraterritoriality. Japan, therefore, had no ability to deal with criminal offences committed by non-Japanese nationals. Furthermore, privileges granted to any one country then applied to all others as

¹⁰ Henshall 04, p67.

¹¹ Henshall 04, p68.

the status of “most favoured nation” was granted to all.¹² Japan felt it was ignominious that they were being forced to sign such treaties where “inequality was the essential keynote of their provisions.”¹³ Thus the treaties concluded between Japan and these Western countries during this period came to be collectively referred to as the “unequal treaties.” Regardless, the foundations were now laid for regular interaction.

Perry’s second and successful attempt to open up Japan and the treaties from the Western countries that were forced upon the Bakufu contributed to the Tokugawa regime’s demise. However, internal forces also played a role and within fifteen years the Tokugawa Bakufu had collapsed. The formation of the alliance between the Satsuma and Chōshū in 1866 was significant in the overthrow of the Bakufu. Satsuma and Chōshū were large, powerful domains in southern Kyūshū and western Honshū, respectively and were known as *tozama*, or domains that were considered to be enemies of the Shogunate. These two domains had themselves been enemies in the recent past, but found common ground in their aim to restore imperial rule. In early 1868 this coup by the Satsuma and Chōshū proved successful and Tokugawa Yoshinobu (1837-1913), the then Shogun, gave up his power. Emperor Mutsuhito (1852-

¹² Henshall 04, p68.

¹³ Hunter 89, p17.

1912) was restored on the throne and Japan entered a new era, the Meiji period (1868-1912). While the Tokugawa period was renowned for its “closed country” policy, the Meiji period came with new ideas and aims. The new government’s primary goal was to avoid colonisation. They sought to do this by remaking Japan into a society that had similar features to Western societies. Since the Meiji government thought that colonisation would be best avoided by westernizing the country, in effect identifying with those Western nations that they saw as aggressors. Colonisation aside, the new Government thought that this action would also modernize the nation, which would then as soon as possible become a power in its own right.

1.3. Westernising Society

The transition to a modern state was exceptionally momentous during the first two decades of the Meiji period. There emerged a number of slogans designed both to encourage the Japanese people and harness their spirit. The slogan *bunmei kaika* (civilization and enlightenment) highlighted the atmosphere of the Meiji period while *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong army) encapsulated the policies the government intended to implement in order to build up Japan’s wealth and military capabilities. In addition, *wakon yōsai* (Japanese spirit, Western learning) was another often quoted slogan created to encapsulate the

desired attitude of the Japanese people towards the new Western knowledge that was presenting itself in Japan. These slogans were in contrast to the earlier extreme nationalist slogan of *sonnō jōi* (revere the Emperor, expel the barbarians) which had appeared in the middle of the nineteenth century upon realization that Westerners were unlikely to leave Japan to its own devices.

A vast array of imported material objects, styles and fashion trends upon which the Japanese became fixated was perhaps the earliest explicit personification of the West. Traditional Japanese artifacts began to be replaced by cheap and routinely manufactured western ones. Foreign umbrellas deposed the paper and bamboo equivalent the Japanese used, while glass and tin containers rapidly supplanted those made from pottery and lacquer.¹⁴ It is important to note that the variety of Western objects the nation seemed obsessed with was vast.

In the field of fashion for example, there were noticeable changes. It became in vogue to wear Western style clothing and by 1872 it was compulsory for government officials to be doing so.¹⁵ Jewelry in the form of gold watches and

¹⁴ Sansom 77, p382.

¹⁵ Henshall 04, p79.

diamond rings were sought-after as they came to symbolize social status.¹⁶ This was an overt display of accessories which was previously not commonly seen with traditional Japanese dress. As a show of modernity, Emperor Mutsuhito himself wore western clothing almost consistently. This conduct by the Emperor, perhaps more than any other, demonstrated how determined Japan was to be considered as an equal by the West, as the Emperor was the main figure towards whom the nation looked for direction. It was natural, therefore, that a trend of styling hair in a western fashion should also emerge with the percentage of men with western haircuts rising from ten percent in 1872 to ninety-eight percent in 1887.¹⁷

While the population became fond of the western clothes that were light and free-flowing, there was an underlying alternative motive behind the change in dress. With the humiliating experience of the “unequal treaties” still fresh in the mind, if Japan was seen to be genuinely ‘Westernised’ there was then the chance that the aforementioned treaties would be reviewed, if not rescinded.

Additionally and more importantly, Japan studied and borrowed a diverse range of western technologies, infrastructures, and institutions which it

¹⁶ Sansom 77, p382.

¹⁷ Henshall 04, p212, n17.

adapted to suit Japanese society. Often, the effect on society was far-reaching. Besides the introduction of telegrams in 1869 and an operational postal system two years later, the most significant step towards modernisation was likely to have been the railway.¹⁸ The first track laid linked Yokohama to Shinagawa and began running in May 1872. The expansion rate of the railway was very rapid, with an impressive 5,000 miles of track completed by 1900.

The speed at which Japan sought to westernize and modernize its society sent a definite message to the West that it was serious in its endeavour to catch up, if not surpass the Western nations' own technological capabilities. This process was similarly assigned a slogan: *Oitsuke, oikose* (catch up, overtake) described Japan's intention to not only be competitive with the West but to be superior. Japan's institutions needed overhauling and it was not to any one particular country or model that Japan looked towards for inspiration. In this way, Japan's attitude towards borrowing was considerably eclectic.¹⁹ Essentially, Japan was in a prime position to adopt what it saw to be each country's forte. For example, England was favoured for its navy, while Germany's strengths were its army and medical advancements. From the

¹⁸ Henshall 04, pp79-80.

¹⁹ Hunter 89, p20.

French the Japanese studied local politics and legal practices and the United States was looked to for business methods.²⁰

For Japan to obtain the best possible understanding of the above elements, the leaders of the new government quickly came to the realization that the most successful means would be through direct observation in the West. Numerous students, ostensibly selected on their individual merits and learning capabilities, were posted overseas on government sponsored scholarships. Such was the path taken by Mori Ōgai (1862-1922). Ōgai joined the army as a medical officer upon graduating from the Medical Department of Tōkyō University in 1881. In 1884, under orders to investigate hygiene and sanitation, Ōgai was sent to Germany, with his activities overseas fully funded by the Japanese government.

In reality, however, *ryūgakusei* (overseas student/s) in the years immediately following the Restoration were selected by social status and their official connections.²¹ By 1870 this selection process encountered public criticism and there was demand for change in the selection protocol. When selection based on ability was enforced there was a noticeable increase in the number of

²⁰ Reischauer 81, p124.

²¹ Ishizuki in Burks (ed.) 85, p166.

ryūgakusei studying overseas. Statistics for the period 1870-1871 show an increase “from 170 students overseas at the end of 1870 to 411 at the end of the first quarter of 1871.”²² In the 1880s when Ōgai travelled overseas, Germany had overtaken the United States, Britain and France as the preferred destination for *ryūgakusei*. This change in choice of destination has been partly attributed to Japan’s lean towards Germany as a model for its own political development and also because academia in Germany was highly regarded.²³ With Japan striving to be considered as an equal among the Western powers, it was essential for the country’s development that it continued to learn from the best.

Students were not the only group of Japanese nationals who undertook journeys abroad for the purpose of observing the West. In 1872 the Meiji government sent a delegation of government officials, specialists and *ryūgakusei* to the United States, Britain and Europe for extensive periods of observation. The group, led by Prince Iwakura Tomomi (henceforth and commonly referred to as the Iwakura Mission), arrived in San Francisco on 15

²² This number includes students, members of inspection missions, travelers and others. Ishizuki in Burks (ed.) 85, p166.

²³ An analysis of the data given which records the destination of overseas students sent by the Monbushō (Ministry of Education) reveals that between 1880-1897, more students were sent to Germany than any other country. Interestingly, in both 1883 and 1884, when a total of four students were sent abroad by the Monbushō, all four of them went to Germany. Total student numbers between 1880-1897 show that 104 went to Germany. In comparison, only 28 went to the United States. Ishizuki in Burks (ed.) 85, p180.

January 1872. The Iwakura Mission departed from Japan with clear objectives. These can be divided into three aims. The first was to impress Western governments with the advancements Japan had made thus far towards modernisation. The second goal was to investigate the social, economic and industrial workings of the Western countries, and the third to explore the possibility of a renegotiation of the “unequal treaties.”²⁴

The Iwakura Mission was eye-opening for the members as they realized how in advance of Japan the United States and Europe were. More importantly, information gathered from various visits to factories and other cultural precincts could be implemented back in Japan, thus increasing the pace of Japan’s own modernisation. The Iwakura Mission was an avenue through which knowledge of the West spread throughout Japan, filtering down from the government officials to the common people.

Furthermore, the members projected a positive image of themselves and their country. It was paramount that a modern image of Japan was portrayed to the foreign governments and any influential representatives they came into contact with, to prove that the West had made a considerable impact on Meiji society and culture. The *London Times* reported on the Iwakura Mission in Britain:

²⁴ Swale in Nish, (ed.) 98 p12.

The Members of the Embassy are not only great officials and great nobles in a kingdom more ancient than our own, they are also statesmen who, with their lives in their hands, have worked out an immense and most beneficial revolution in their own country.²⁵

On the whole, the Iwakura Mission was a success. While the treaty renegotiations failed to eventuate, the members took back to Japan images of the Western civilizations that they could possibly reconstruct in Japan. Prince Iwakura and accompanying ambassadors left a marked impression on those with whom they interacted of the nature of social, cultural, political and economic affairs in Japan.

Meiji society was also influenced by the growing number of *oyatoi gaikokujin* (foreign employees) who took up positions in Japan. The Meiji government wanted to encourage Westerners to work in Japan and did so by providing foreigners with generous salaries. It is estimated that the salaries and miscellaneous costs of the foreigners equated to more than five percent of total government spending during the Meiji period.²⁶ Western employees with expert knowledge in mining, transportation, law, education and agricultural sectors, to name a few, were employed mainly in advisory roles, and were to

²⁵ *The London Times* (19 August 1872) in Nish, (ed.) 98, p52.

²⁶ Henshall 04, p82.

assist Japanese workers in developing their skills complementarily to Western technologies.

Initially, government agencies were the leading employers of foreigners with approximately 520 individuals from outside Japan in their service in 1875.²⁷ By 1897, however, a gradual shift from public to private sector became evident with around 760 foreigners privately employed.²⁸

The influence of foreign employees was not restricted to their respective workplaces. Simply through interaction aspects of Western socializing practices and ways of life were introduced first amongst co-workers and then into the wider community. Certain routines and systems that Westerners continued to adhere to after their arrival in Japan eventually led to their adoption in Japanese society. As early as 1870-71 the government mint is reported to have begun to operate in accordance with Western practice and observe Sunday as a holiday.²⁹ This was largely due to the number of foreign employees working there, most of whom were English. The Western calendar was adopted on a national scale in 1873 and New Year celebrations began to take place on 1 January from that year onwards. Western clothing, implements

²⁷ Hirakawa in Jansen (ed.) 88-90, p468.

²⁸ Henshall 04, p82.

²⁹ Hirakawa in Jansen (ed.) 88-90, pp470-71.

and technologies as well as time spent in the West by *ryūgakusei* and members of the Iwakura Mission stand as direct evidence of a transitional Japan.

1.4. The Effect on Literature

A further indicator of the influence the West, this time in a more abstract and ideological context, can be clearly seen in the developments that occurred in the literature from this era. In the early years of the Meiji period, concentration was placed on the translation of Western books. Specific genres were introduced to Japan, the first being “how-to” guides, as the public were more eager to read materials that provided instructions than books for pure amusement. Nakamura Masanao, also known as Keiyu, (1832-1891) was one Meiji writer who translated some of the earliest works that provided the Japanese reading public with direction. Through his work he was accredited with being “the most influential exponent of ‘enlightenment’ in the early Meiji era.”³⁰ In 1871 he translated Samuel Smiles’s *Self Help* (1859), which instilled in its readers a desire to succeed on their own merits. Statements such as “The spirit of self-help is the root of all genuine growth in the individual; and, exhibited in the lives of many, it constitutes the true source of national vigor

³⁰ Hirakawa in Jansen (ed.) 88-90, p481.

and strength”³¹ provided practical advice to a population who were discovering a newfound sense of freedom and independence since the end of the feudal age. The government deliberately encouraged this feeling of liberation while simultaneously harnessing it and maintaining its control so that the energies of the people could be directed down appropriate channels for the benefit of the state.

Furthermore, biographies of Western men who made their mark historically, such as Homer, Shakespeare and Napoleon, to name a few, began to materialize in Japan and at least early on in the Meiji period came to replace Japanese models. Works on distinguished men further encouraged Japanese to strive for success. In later decades, these western models would be slowly phased out of textbooks and written material as Japanese returned to using inspirational Japanese men, primarily successful, self-made Meiji men as models for younger generations. Politically themed novels also gained popularity as a political career rapidly emerged as the one to aspire towards in a Japan that was now being led by a group of young, energetic men. The novels of Disraeli and works by Macaulay, among numerous others (both of political and non-political backgrounds), are noted as having a great influence

³¹ Smiles 1859, p35.

on Meiji literature at a time when there was a substantial influx of European works.³²

In terms of this new literature's country of origin, Disraeli and Macaulay, both British politicians (Disraeli having served as prime minister between 1874-1880) would indicate a leaning towards English literature. However, the rates at which trends came and went in Japan at the time indicate that English literature may have been largely cast aside by 1900 for literature from Russia, France and Germany.³³ Nevertheless, English works maintained a high level of prominence even when interest grew in Russian material due to the popularity of the study of political doctrines in Japan.³⁴

It is clear that the first years of the Meiji period were, in terms of literature, dominated by the translation of Western works into Japanese. Out of the new regime, educated, literate people emerged who were keen to absorb new information. For Japanese writers themselves, writing – at least of fiction – was not a profession that was highly thought of, nor was it likely that during the first decades of Meiji one would become prosperous from pursuing such a career. Another disadvantage encountered by Meiji writers was that the not so

³² Takeyasu 99, p264.

³³ Henshall 87, p8.

³⁴ Sansom 77, p401.

glamorous *gesaku* (frivolous stories) style of writing that was never taken seriously in the Tokugawa period had followed authors into the new era.

Fortunately, the new generation of young writers was able eventually to shrug off the trivial reputation gained by novelists of the previous generation. This allowed for the “formation of the first professional society of writers, whose members proposed to increase the social significance of literature and establish it as a legitimate branch of art capable of entertaining adults.....”³⁵ The first members of the “professional society of writers” were all young men who, born around the time of the Restoration, were exposed to both traditional Japanese culture and the new influences flooding in from the West. Accordingly, the term “Meiji Youth” was applied to those who experienced a combination of these two cultures. Arishima and Kafū, born in 1878 and 1879 respectively, fit within this group.

So dominant was the Western impact that when Meiji writers first began producing works for publication, the influence of the West was noted as being “the guiding spirit of Japanese literature.” More specifically, “new movements [in Japanese literature] almost always start with importation from the West.”³⁶

³⁵ Powell 83, p21.

³⁶ Martins 70, p131.

One indisputable feature of Japanese literature is that, almost inevitably, it followed along behind the movements as they occurred in the literature and arts in the West. Furthermore, movements in Japanese literature were indistinct and confused.³⁷ In other words, distinguishable beginnings and ends of movements are particularly difficult to define. Romanticism, realism, and naturalism were all, at one time or another, movements with which Meiji authors identified themselves. It was indeed not uncommon for writers to appear inconsistent in their affiliation with a particular movement and often, the same author would identify with more than one movement.

In the West, French novelist Émile Zola (1840-1902) is justifiably granted the distinction of being the founder of naturalism. Zola theorized that it would be possible to approach literature from a scientific perspective. He sought to stress “the importance of the deterministic effects of heredity and environment on his characters.”³⁸ In practice, deterministic naturalism saw that character A was placed in environment B to generate the observation of result C.³⁹

³⁷ Henshall 04, p81.

³⁸ Henshall 77, p1.

³⁹ Henshall 08, p10.

In Zola's *Le Roman expérimental* (The Experimental Novel, 1880) Zola outlines his aim:

The observer in him gives the facts as he has observed them, suggests the point of departure, displays the solid earth on which his characters are to tread and the phenomena to develop. Then the experimenter [in him] appears and introduces an experiment, that is to say, sets his characters going in a certain story so as to show that the succession of facts [sic] will be such as the requirements of the phenomena under examination call for.⁴⁰

Aside from Zola, other well-known naturalist writers of French origin included Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) as well as Edmond Goncourt (1822-1896) and his brother Jules (1830-1870). While a discussion of each of their concepts of naturalism is not necessary here, it is important to note that there were prominent differences. Maupassant, for example, disagreed with Zola in that he felt “any claim to scientifically objective literary experimentation was misguided since it did not sufficiently take into account the inevitable subjectivity of the writer/observer.”⁴¹

While Western naturalism was known in Japan as early as 1888 through introduced theories and works initially pertaining to Zola's deterministic naturalism, it was Maupassant who was more influential.

⁴⁰ Henshall 08, p12.

⁴¹ Henshall 08, p11.

From France, naturalism spread to other western countries, especially to Germany, which is considered as being “the only other Western country to have developed a literary naturalist school of any major significance.”⁴² One aspect of German naturalism that differed from Zola’s theory was that it was characterized by compassion for the under-privileged classes. In Germany a number of varieties of naturalism emerged and while it is true that early naturalism in Japan reflected largely Zola and Maupassant, later naturalism was mostly eclectic and came to reflect a number of German influences.

Of the two authors who are the focus of this thesis, it was Nagai Kafū who developed a loose attraction to the naturalism of Zola, perhaps because of the license it gave him to comment on any subject matter. His association with Zolaism faltered somewhat when one of his works, *Amerika Monogatari* (Tales of America, 1908) received strong praise from established authors considered to be anti-naturalists. Nevertheless, Kafū’s introduction to French naturalist literature marked “the beginning of an infatuation [with France] that lasted the rest of his life.”⁴³

⁴² Henshall 77, p35.

⁴³ Keene 84, p52.

Furthermore, alongside Zola, Baudelaire also provided inspiration for Kafū's first three novels, *Yashin* (Ambition, 1903), *Jigoku no Hana* (Flowers of Hell, 1902) and *Yume no Onna* (Woman of Dreams, 1903). Particularly in *Jigoku no Hana*, Kafū's intention is positively Zolaesque in style when he declares that "There is a bestial side to human nature," and "therefore I am planning to make a daring exposure of the naked desires, brutalities, violence, and other dark passions which result from heredity and environment."⁴⁴ Kafū's writing also demonstrated that a deeper understanding of Zolaesque naturalism existed than is commonly acknowledged.

It is evident that both Japanese society and literature were greatly influenced by the West. Once the door to Japan had been forced open by Commodore Matthew C. Perry and the Japanese nation was ready and prepared to embrace everything Western, there was no halting the rapid speed with which Japan sought to westernize and modernize. Importation was a key method in the process of modernization. Not only were material objects brought into Japan on an enormous scale but western technologies that were thought to be beneficial to Japanese society also surfaced. The West, in comparison, was astounded by Japan's advancements, and realized that Japan aimed not only to be competitive with the West, but to surpass the West in terms of technology

⁴⁴ Homma 04, p9.

and modernization. Furthermore, Western knowledge – including ideologies – was equally important and was obtained through *ryūgakusei*, the Iwakura Mission, the influx of *Oyatoi gaikokujin*, and literature, all of which in their own way contributed to Japan's transition to a modern state.

Meiji literature went through an assortment of developments resulting from the influence of the West. Three early genres to appear were “self-help” books, biographies of great Western men, and novels with political themes. These were all ‘utilitarian’ and conveyed a message which promoted personal success. While the initial focus was on the translation of Western materials, Meiji authors soon discovered their individual styles and began to embrace Western movements as they appeared in Meiji literature. Early naturalism, with its ‘backing’ of ‘science’ was a powerful movement and allowed Japanese authors the freedom to express the world as they viewed it.

Chapter II

Attitudes Towards the West of Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo prior to Going overseas.

II.1. The Context

The rapid changes to society brought about by the Meiji Restoration impacted upon all Japanese in one form or another. The present chapter will identify the attitudes held by Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo toward the West. Their attitudes were largely formed and shaped according to the Western influences their families chose to accept and adhere to, as well as their personal preferences when Western equivalents of things Japanese were held up against one another.

The timeframe under consideration spans from the births of Kafū and Arishima, to the time of their departure from Japan. It will also, where deemed relevant, include any knowledge or experiences regarding the West that the parents may have passed on to their offspring. Western knowledge of this sort may have been passed on inadvertently or with the purpose of preparing them for participation in a modern society.

The travels of Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo carried these young men to the United States in October and August 1903, respectively. Both men also traveled further afield to various locations in Europe before returning to Japan. Traveling overseas gave Kafū and Arishima an opportunity to experience the West first-hand. This makes it possible to see whether the attitudes that were molded prior to going overseas remained with them as they came to play active roles within Western society and further their own knowledge.

As a nation, the main cause of angst during the decades immediately following the Meiji Restoration of 1868 was the thought of becoming a colonized nation and being forced to bow to the superiority of the nations eyeing up territories for imperial expansion. It was this western imperialism that the Japanese collectively sought to prevent and they did so with vigor not displayed by any other nation under threat.⁴⁵ This threat and anxiety persisted longer than is often realized, beyond the births of Kafū and Arishima. Even as late as the 1880s Shiga Shigetaka (1863-1927) cautioned Japan about this risk of being colonized by a western power. When Shiga visited New Zealand in 1886, he observed first-hand the demise of the Maori race at the hands of the British and was apprehensive that Japan should avoid the same fate. Upon discussing the situation with a Maori chief, Shiga became conscious of the fact that it was

⁴⁵ Lockwood 56, p37.

only through good luck that Japan had avoided the same predicament. Noting this threat posed to Japan, Shiga wrote:

Alas! Japan could be another New Zealand. As I look up at the autumn sky of these Southern Seas, I fear the threat to my home country far away. Having witnessed such cultural and racial oppression in New Zealand, I – as a son of the new Japan – must take immediate action to make my people aware of this possibility back home.⁴⁶

Luckily for Japan, she had very little to offer traders or nations who were seeking out new territories. The Western powers found that Japan offered nothing of significance, “no market of 400 million, no unfilled lands, no great trade in tea or spices or precious metals.”⁴⁷ Valuable resources of these kinds could be easily obtained elsewhere, as had already been discovered to be the case in China. As a result, Japan had been given the chance to learn from other Asian countries and to gauge how successful their reactions to the West had been. When it came to meeting the Western threat head-on, the new Meiji Government was required to stimulate amongst the people a feeling of nationalism which they did through such means as the catch-phrases discussed in the previous chapter. It was widely emphasized that in order for Japan to survive as an independent nation, emulation of the West was seen as a measure

⁴⁶ Gavin 01, pp83-84.

⁴⁷ Lockwood 56, p52.

likely to promote Japan to “equal status” rather than seeing it classed as yet another inferior oriental country.

Thus, the Japanese people were encouraged to embrace the West and all it offered, even if in some cases it was merely for show, as it was with certain democratic institutions like the Diet and Cabinet. By employing what could be defined as a defence mechanism in the form of mimicry, Japan sent a loud and confident message that it could rapidly modernize itself to be on a par with the advanced Western colonial powers.

Furthermore, Japan had a history of being a borrower of culture, religion and institutions and so were perhaps more equipped with a culture of adaptability and assimilation. During the Taika period (552-710) Prince Shōtoku sought to reform Japan using models from China. The Taika Reforms in particular (645-710) adopted the use of thousands of Chinese characters, court etiquette was developed based on the Chinese imperial models, worship began at Confucian temples and Chinese learning was encouraged. This background likely proved to be advantageous when Japan committed itself to not only staving off what was clearly regarded as the threat of colonialism but also its plan for significant modernization.

More than just aiming to maintain autonomy, the mood of the nation was for reform. Having emerged from a lengthy period of isolation, the people were more receptive to new influences. Being an island nation allowed Japan the advantage of having a number of ports around the country. This helped to facilitate the rapid influx of western objects and new technologies which were then themselves dispersed from the ports to the inland parts of Japan.⁴⁸

It soon became evident how progressive life was in the West. At the same time reports of the attitude of the Japanese filtered through from Europeans who had taken up employment in Japan following the Restoration. Educated Japanese, it seemed, felt embarrassed when confronted about their past. One Japanese in particular is noted to have remarked, “We have no history. Our history begins today.”⁴⁹ This clearly illustrates the forward-thinking spirit that the Japanese people had become committed to at that point. For Kafū, however, Japan’s past would eventually become what he tended to focus on.

⁴⁸ Lockwood 56, p53.

⁴⁹ Lockwood 56, p42, n4.

II.2. The Case of Nagai Kafū

Nagai Sōkichi was born on 3 December 1879 in Koshikawa, Tokyo. He would later adopt the name Kafū (‘Lotus Breeze’) as his sobriquet and it was by this name that he was known among literary circles.⁵⁰ His parents moved from the province of Owari to Tokyo just prior to the Meiji Restoration and both held “considerable social position and pedigree.”⁵¹ Kafū’s father, Nagai Hisaichirō (who went by the pen-name Kagen) was the son of a wealthy landowner and became known for his composition of *kanshi* (Chinese-language poems). Tsune, Kafu’s mother, was the daughter of one of Kagen’s Confucian teachers, Washizu Kidō, and was herself a talented musician.

Together, Kagen and Tsune had three children. Kafū was the first born and he had two brothers, Sadajiō (1883-1927) and Isaburō (1887-1971.) The middle brother was adopted into the family of Tsune and did not carry with him the Nagai family name. During childhood, Kafū spent a considerable amount of time being cared for by his maternal grandmother who lived in Shitaya, Tokyo. He failed to show much interest in his early education. Rather, and somewhat against prevailing trends, he was attracted to Edo-period arts and

⁵⁰ This meaning of Kafū (荷風) dates back to pre-war times but it is now obsolete. Mathews, 66, p314

⁵¹ Snyder in Mostow (ed.) 03, p71.

literature. He attended middle school in Hitotsubashi and graduated but failed to pass the entrance examination to the First High School.⁵²

Consequently, in 1897, Kafū continued his studies in the Chinese Language Department at the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages. However, his ability to apply himself diligently to his academic studies was affected by his resilient pull towards literature. After Kafū was expelled in 1899 for lack of attendance, he immersed himself in literature and traditional Japanese artistic pursuits, such as *shakuhachi* (flute), *shamisen* (lute), and *rakugo* (story telling). He also frequented entertainment precincts such as the pleasure quarter of Yoshiwara and the Kabuki Theatre. Being expelled gave Kafū the freedom to pursue activities of his own choosing, much to the disapproval of his family.

Furthermore, Kafū approached the writer Hirotsu Ryūrō (1861-1928) with the hope of being accepted as his protégé.⁵³ Ryūrō looked over Kafū's earliest manuscripts and helped to secure his first publication for *Hanakago* (Flower Basket, 1899.) By 1900, Kafū was also enticed into the world of performance

⁵² Hisamatsu (ed.) et.al. 65, p787.

⁵³ Ryūrō was a member of the *Ken'yūsha*, (Society of Friends of the Inkstone) a famous literary society started by students at Tokyo University. He is attributed with establishing a new genre of Japanese literature, known as the "tragic novel."

and became an apprentice to Fukuchi Ōchi.⁵⁴ Fukuchi had established and was the chief playwright of the Kabuki Theatre which opened in 1899.

Before the Meiji Restoration, Fukuchi had spent time overseas with a Japanese mission in Europe. He considered himself to be well-versed with French literature and Parisian theatre from the time he had spent in Europe. It is apparent that Fukuchi passed on some of this knowledge to Kafū. While working under Fukuchi, Kafū was introduced to the works of Émile Zola, the leading French naturalist author, when he was given some of Zola's works to read by Fukuchi's secretary. This introduction to French literature "marked the beginning of an infatuation that lasted the rest of his life."⁵⁵ In fact, the authors and poets Kafū read most often were by and large Frenchmen. Aside from Zola they were to include Maupassant, Daudet, Régnier and Loti.⁵⁶

Fukuchi was equally prominent as a journalist and when he left the Kabuki Theatre to pursue journalism, he was followed down this path by Kafū who departed from the Kabuki himself in 1901. While Fukuchi took up the position of editor in chief at the *Yamato Shimbun*, another position became available at

⁵⁴ Duties Kafū performed included using clappers to indicate the start and finish of an act, keeping track of the lengths of the acts, managing the theatre records, acting as messenger as well as making tea and attending to the personal needs of the chief playwright. Seidensticker 65, p12.

⁵⁵ Keene 84, p273.

⁵⁶ Kawamori in Shimizu 81, p106.

the same newspaper company, and this vacancy was filled by Kafū.⁵⁷ Kafū worked as a reporter focusing on gossip and scandal. However, his career as a journalist lasted just short of one year as he was relieved of his position during a reshuffle of employees.⁵⁸ If Kafū's work ethic as displayed to date is anything to go by, there is the strong possibility that he simply failed to sufficiently fulfill his responsibilities. Simultaneously, his passion for Edo-period literature and arts was reaffirmed when he became an acquaintance of Jōno Saigaku, an "Edo-style gesakusha, a 'frivolous writer' of fiction and figurative essays."⁵⁹ Kafū held Saigaku up as his ideal as he had lived and worked as a fiction writer in Edo Japan, something he himself acknowledged would be impossible to experience now that with Meiji, Edo was increasingly becoming a bygone era.

Kafū's dilettante lifestyle was a concern for his father. Kagen, himself a very successful man, was despondent over his son's academic failures and the unlikelihood that he would ever make something of himself unless some serious action was taken. Consequently, Kagen insisted that Kafū cease indulging himself in literature and travel to the United States for practical

⁵⁷ Fujimura, (ed.) 55, p747.

⁵⁸ The newspaper's management referred to Kafū's dismissal as him being "selected out." Keene 84, p273.

⁵⁹ Seidensticker 65, p13.

study.⁶⁰ By pressuring Kafū into studying subjects such as commerce, English and the West, Kagen hoped to salvage a business career for his dissolute son. It was intended that Kafū would enroll in business courses at an American university but Kafū himself had an alternative plan. To Kagen, Kafū appeared an obedient respectful son for when he forbade his son to go to the country of his choice, France, Kafū complied with his father's proposal of the United States. However, Kagen was to later protest against Kafū's determination to leave the United States for France. The concern was that in France, Kafū could be easily tempted into disreputable behaviour, if not the sorts of trivial undertakings he was already concerning himself with. If he was to make for himself a career in business then, in Kagen's opinion, the United States was a far more appropriate destination.

Kafū's father, Kagen, also had a history of interaction with the West. Born in 1854, he witnessed the dawn of the Meiji era and all the transformations that took place during it, right up until his death in 1913.⁶¹ Originally, the Nagai family belonged to the rank of samurai from the province of Owari.⁶² Kagen himself studied under his future father-in-law Washizu Kidō (1825-1882), a Confucian teacher who was a tutor of the lord of Owari province and head of

⁶⁰ Shinchōsha 68, p829.

⁶¹ Nihon Kindai Bungakkan 77-78, vol.2, p470.

⁶² Muramatsu 90, p36.

the Owari domain academy.⁶³ He was trained in the Confucian classics and, as mentioned earlier, became known for his composition of *kanshi* (Chinese-language poems.)

At the age of nineteen, Kagen travelled to the United States where he studied at Princeton and Rutgers between 1871 and 1874 as a student sponsored by the Japanese Government.⁶⁴ This time overseas and the experience he gained would prove invaluable in the business career he would lead. On his return to Japan, he settled in Tokyo with his wife, Tsune, whom he married in 1876. When their first son (Kafū) was born in 1879, Kagen had started along the path of a bureaucrat who ranked among the Meiji elite by working in the Health Bureau section of the Home Office.⁶⁵ Later, he became a bureaucrat in the Ministry of Education and most notably he was involved in the drafting of the Meiji Imperial Rescript of 1890.⁶⁶ In addition to his government duties, he became head of the Yokohama and Shanghai branches of a major steamship company, Nippon Yūsen (later NYK). Kafū spent time in Shanghai while his father was posted there and acknowledged that he was impressed by the city's

⁶³ Washizu Kidō, originally from Owari was the eldest son of the classical Chinese scholar Washizu Ekisai. Kidō studied at Ise and then in Edo before taking up employment in Kurume domain and then back in Owari. John 03, pp40-41.

⁶⁴ Sawada 96, p166.

⁶⁵ Odagiri and Yoshimura 83-96, vol23, p2.

⁶⁶ Snyder in Rubin (ed.)01, p135.

architecture. Visiting Shanghai gave Kafū the chance to develop his view of the world and to see how much there potentially was to explore outside of Japan.

However, merely by growing up in the Nagai household, Kafū would have been exposed to his father's attitude to the West and he referred to his father as "...quite a worshiper of the West."⁶⁷ Furthermore, this exposure was enhanced by a taste for Western culture and material possessions. The traditional Japanese-styled family home was blended with exotic, western-styled furniture. In recording his observation of these Western furnishings Kafū wrote that, "I frequently had occasion to reflect, in my childish way, on what a large number of peculiar objects my father owned."⁶⁸

With Kagen's own experience of the West and the aspects which he re-enforced in the family home, if Kafū was to develop any form of fascination with the West, then he was in the appropriate surroundings for that to occur. Even though it would not have been evident at this young age, the continued Western presence in the Nagai family home would play a lasting role in

⁶⁷ Quoted in Keene 84, p388.

⁶⁸ Keene 84, p388.

Kafū's life. When Kafū came to embark upon his own travels, his upbringing would help him to adapt to the Western environment with apparent ease.

Another Western element dominant in Kafū's life was Christianity, as previously mentioned. The inroads of this Western religion into Japanese society had been chequered, particularly as the attitudes held by the Japanese rulers through the years were inconsistent. Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582), a powerful daimyo who attempted to unify the whole of Japan, was himself a great supporter of the missionaries. When by 1568 Nobunaga had defeated his main opponents, powerful Buddhist sects sided with his rivals and this aroused much hatred on Nobunaga's part. The Buddhists maintained a strong political voice which needed to be suppressed. Thus Nobunaga promoted Christianity as he was not only motivated by the prospect of trade with Western countries but believed that with a tool such as Christianity, he could defeat his political enemies who, by a large, were Buddhists.⁶⁹ Bands of Christians emerged around Nagasaki and Yokohama with members largely being descendants of samurai families or young samurai themselves.⁷⁰ When Hideyoshi succeeded Nobunaga in 1582, he initially supported the missionaries but growing anxiety

⁶⁹ Hane 91, p31.

⁷⁰ Ogawa 73, p14.

about the power of the Christians' cause led him to turn on the missionaries and persecutions began in earnest by the late 1590s.

The story of Christianity in Japan is indeed an intricate one, particularly up until the point when in 1873 the religion became tactically recognized by the Meiji government. This was, in a large part, a direct result of the Iwakura Mission's finding that Christianity was an important part of Western society. It was concluded that harmonious and beneficial relations with the West would not eventuate until Christianity was more openly accepted.

In Kafū's own experience, Christianity had a regular presence and he learnt that this religion was a key to modernization and acceptance by the West. While Kafū's maternal grandfather had been the famous Confucian scholar Washizu Kidō, both his maternal grandmother and his mother had converted to Christianity. The reason behind their conversions is not known, but there is a link between the Washizu family and Nobunaga himself in that they both came from the province of Owari. It is therefore presumable that many samurai families in this region had converted to Christianity under the direction of Nobunaga.

Furthermore, Kafū's own brother, Sadajirō, grew up to be a Christian priest and founded the *Myōjō* church in Shitayatake-machi.⁷¹ Including Sadajirō, it is clear that at least three immediate members of Kafū's family were followers of the Christian faith. Kafū was additionally exposed to Christianity when he spent time in the household of his grandmother. Aside from the Western tendencies his father showed, if nothing else, Kafū would have noted that this seemingly alien religion, far removed from Buddhism and Confucianism, was considered important by his family. Whether he fully understood the reason why Christianity had been adopted by members of his family or not, he would at least have acquired a sense of respect for it.

Kafū also developed a passion for both French literature and culture that was to endure throughout his lifetime. While it is true that Kafū was not a diligent student, it seems that France, in particular, appealed to him. In the final chapter, *Furansu no Wakare* (Adieu, Paris), in his collection of works titled *Furansu Monogatari* (French Stories, 1909), Kafū tells us that "I had been fond of France ever since and for no obvious reason." He continues by saying, "I first learned about it at middle-school when I was studying world history."⁷² This makes it clear that the West and teachings about Western culture were

⁷¹ Muramatsu 90, p36.

⁷² Kafū 62-74, vol.3, p544.

being taught to students from a relatively young age. It also provides a starting point for when Kafū himself first acquired some knowledge of the country he would long desire to visit.

This fondness for French literature was further enhanced by Kafū's reading of Ueda Bin (1874-1916). Bin was a highly acclaimed translator of French poetry and not only provided much inspiration for Kafū, but was also an important source of information before Kafū himself attained proficiency in the French language, and was then able to appreciate French works in their original. Kafū was by no means the only well-known Meiji author to fall in love with France. Mori Ōgai, who was well acquainted with Bin, is also said to have liked France, although he had a preference for Germany.⁷³ In any case, if nothing except the example of Kafū's attraction to France is taken into consideration, it can perhaps be concluded that he had an enamoured attitude towards the West, the appropriateness of which could only be proved by his venturing to the West to experience it first hand, rather than merely through the literature he was reading.

⁷³ Keene 84, p395.

II.3. The Case of Arishima Takeo

Arishima Takeo, like Nagai Kafū, was born in Koshikawa, Tokyo, but twenty-one months earlier on 4 March 1878. He was the first born child of Arishima Takeshi and Yamanouchi Yuki. He had six siblings, two of the more well known included Ikuma (1882-1974), a painter and Hideo (1888-1983), an author who became better known by his pen-name, Satomi Ton. Their father, Takeshi was originally a seemingly humble samurai retainer of the Hongō family in Satsuma, southern Kyūshū.⁷⁴ His own early education was primarily military-based, and in 1861, at the age of nineteen, he moved to Nagasaki where he studied both Dutch naval gunnery and western science.⁷⁵ This marked Takeshi's first experience with Westerners. In 1864 he was able to put his Western learning into practice when he fought for the Satsuma against Chōshū forces and was further involved during the Meiji Restoration itself, when he served as a naval captain for the Satsuma. Following the Meiji Restoration, Takeshi obtained a position in the Customs Bureau at the Ministry of Finance and in 1878 was selected to accompany the then Minister of

⁷⁴ Morton 77, p42.

⁷⁵ Morton 88, p3.

Finance, Okuma Shigenobu (1838-1992) to England on a trip designed to educate Japanese diplomats living abroad in customs relations.⁷⁶

Through working in customs and coming in contact with Westerners, Takeshi understood the importance Western learning now held for those living in Japan's new, modernizing society. Through his own experiences and accurate foresight, Takeshi correctly predicted that developing amicable relations with the West would be an inexorable facet of Japan's future. This attitude influenced the direction Arishima's own education would take, as he was to be introduced to the West at a young age. In fact, the financial security Takeshi amassed through his directorships of such companies as the Japan Steamship Company and the Japan Railways Company enabled him to give all his children the best education available and to ensure they understood the importance of their Western studies.

Arishima's mother, Yamanouchi Yuki, came from a samurai family in Morioka, north-eastern Honshū.⁷⁷ Unlike the Satsuma, Yuki was from a family that opposed the end of Tokugawa rule and the re-establishment of an

⁷⁶ Morton 88, p3.

⁷⁷ Morton 77, p42.

Emperor on the throne.⁷⁸ In her youth, she worked as a domestic servant for a member of the Tokugawa family and had been taught the Chinese classics and the tea ceremony.⁷⁹ As Takeshi's wife she was dutiful and assisted with hosting diplomats from both Japan and abroad in the family home. Furthermore, Yuki was an energetic, artistic woman whose contribution of a traditional influence to the Arishima household complemented Takeshi's promotion of the West. This is possibly best demonstrated by quoting Arishima himself:

On returning home from school my mother would have me read from the Confucian *Analects* and *The Book of Filial Duty*. I read blindly without understanding so much as one word and I recall how I often wept after being severely scolded by my mother. My father, on the other hand, said that in the future because people would be dealing with foreigners, foreign languages would become necessary and so from the age of six or seven I associated with foreigners and even studied at a foreigners' school.⁸⁰

As the above suggests, Arishima received an education of two variants. His upbringing comprised traditional Confucian values taught to him by his mother in the home and a more open and progressive education designed specifically for those from privileged backgrounds who could make the most of the opportunities presented by the Meiji westernization process.

⁷⁸ Senuma in Ito, Kawabata and Yoshida (eds.) 71-75, vol30, p263.

⁷⁹ Morton 77, p42.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Morton 77, p43.

From an early age Arishima received a traditional Confucian education, but when the family moved to Yokohama in 1882 for Takeshi's appointment as head of the Yokohama Custom's Office, he was soon introduced to Western culture and language. In 1883, Takeshi began preparing Arishima for a future that would involve the West when he sent him, along with his younger sister Aiko, to the home of an American couple for English lessons. Scarcely anything was recorded about the couple except that their surname was Gulick.⁸¹ Hence, Arishima began receiving English lessons from native speakers from the age of around five, giving him a good head-start with his acquisition of a foreign language. It would also have helped in the development of his fluency.

From 1884 to 1887 Arishima studied at the Yokohama Eiwa Gakkō Mission School among many students from families who were living in Japan from abroad. Takeshi's choice to educate Arishima in this way, at a mission school which consisted mainly of non-native speaking pupils, was somewhat unusual as most boys of Arishima's age and status were usually only taught a traditional education at home. Arishima wrote in his memoirs of his experience in Yokohama:

⁸¹ Arishima 68-73, vol35, p429.

Only foreigners lived here, and at my school the teachers were all foreigners. On my way to and from school, I used to pass along the waterfront where hotels, foreign companies and other such buildings lined the road.⁸²

It was while Arishima was at the Mission School that he was introduced to Christianity for the first time. This religion was to have great influence upon his life as evidence will show. In 1887 he began a nine year period of study at the Gakushūin, or the Peer's School in Tōkyō. The Gakushūin was, the most elite school in Japan, and “catered to the aristocracy and the new ex-samurai bureaucracy.”⁸³ Arishima must certainly have displayed a highly aristocratic character as in 1888 he was offered the prestigious position of *gakukyū* or special school friend to the Crown Prince Yoshihito (1879-1926).⁸⁴

Upon graduation from the Gakushūin in 1896, Arishima's education took an unusual turn. Instead of following the expected path to Tokyo Imperial University, he made the decision to attend the Agricultural College in Sapporo. It is difficult to fully understand why he chose this course of action as anyone presented with the opportunity to receive an education of such calibre as the Imperial University would normally have accepted without any

⁸² Quoted in Morton 88, p13.

⁸³ Morton 88, p43

⁸⁴ Crown Prince Yoshihito came to the throne as Emperor Taishō in 1912.

hesitation. It is possible that he desired to put some distance between himself and his parents as he wished to lessen the pressures he was feeling from being the oldest son in the Arishima family.⁸⁵ This, however, fails to explain his actual choice of college as at the age of nineteen, he could have just as readily chosen a destination outside Japan had he really wanted to relieve any pressure on him. Arishima himself indicates that his choice was nationalistically driven. He felt that both the political and trading realms were making consistent advancements but that the agricultural sector was underdeveloped, the remote territory of Hokkaidō being a prime example. He wanted, as the passage below reveals, to be at the forefront of agricultural developments when they were to happen:

At the time of the Meiji Restoration, politics advanced rapidly. Trade in a time of reform progressed steadily. For industry to prosper as it has in only thirty years can have few parallels. Agriculture, however, remains isolated, adhering single-mindedly to old rules in the old ways, as in the past. How deplorable! I am not old enough to see myself as a person of great capabilities but I wish to be in the vanguard of an agricultural revolution.⁸⁶

Although Arishima was to later graduate with a Bachelor of Agricultural Studies in July 1901, shortly after his matriculation to the Agricultural College he announced that, “I soon grew fonder of literature, in particular English

⁸⁵ Lewell 93, p44.

⁸⁶ Quoted in Morton 88, p27.

literature, than of agriculture.”⁸⁷ Arishima’s apparent fondness for literature is traceable back to his days of living in a dormitory of the Gakushūin where he was forced to read literature in secret because the school did not condone reading fictional works. The school’s strict education which groomed the students for important roles in Japanese society certainly did not focus on reading novels.

It was at the Sapporo Agricultural College where Arishima found space to develop his intellectual independence and express his character. His exposure to some powerful influences, particularly Christianity, was to dominate his thinking and conduct.

The Sapporo Agricultural College was, in effect, a mission school. It had been established in 1874 by Dr. William Clark (1826-1886), an American educator with strong Christian beliefs. Although only resident in Sapporo for a short period of eight months, he made an exceptional impression on many of his students. Dr. Clark is probably best known in Sapporo, if not the rest of Japan, for the advice he gave to a group of students at the gate upon his departure,

⁸⁷ Quoted in Morton 88, p25.

“Boys, be ambitious!”⁸⁸ Along with regular academic subjects, Clark taught lessons from the bible which directly brought about the conversion to Christianity of several of his students.⁸⁹

As new students entered the school, they too were guided by the Christian principles that were passed on to them by those students who had been instructed by Dr. Clark himself. Two of the more notable Japanese Christians to emerge from the Sapporo Agricultural College were Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930) and Nitobe Inazō (1862-1933). Uchimura and Nitobe both, in turn, came into contact with Arishima and played significant roles in his college life.

Nitobe, being a family friend and a teacher at the college, was the person with whom Arishima boarded while in Sapporo. Nitobe's influence on Arishima was not purely educational, it was also spiritual. Residing in Nitobe's home, Arishima observed the Christian aspects of the daily life of Nitobe and his wife, Mary P. Elkinton.⁹⁰ He was introduced to Quakerism for the first time but Nitobe did not appear to pressure him into practicing the religion and

⁸⁸ The extended version of the quotation is: “Boys, be ambitious. Be ambitious not for money or for selfish aggrandizement, not for that evanescent thing which men call fame. Be ambitious for that attainment of all that a man ought to be.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_S._Clark.

⁸⁹ Craig and Reischauer 79, p159.

⁹⁰ Morton 88, p25.

perhaps this was due to Arishima's remaining attachment to Buddhism at the time.

Aside from being a spiritual influence, Nitobe also played a role in Arishima's intellectual development when he introduced him to the works of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) for the first time.⁹¹ Unfortunately, in 1897 when Nitobe was to leave the Sapporo Agricultural College due to ill health, Arishima was to lose a great teacher. Nitobe had been a valuable person to Arishima's development and in the shaping of Arishima's attitudes. Not only did Nitobe welcome Arishima into his family and foster a close bond, he also nurtured Arishima's passion for literature and further stimulated his interest in Christianity.

Among the students with whom Arishima studied, Morimoto Kōkichi was the most ardent follower of Christianity who befriended him. Morimoto had studied under Uchimura and through his belief in Uchimura's Christian teachings he eventually led Arishima down his own path of Christian

⁹¹ Thomas Carlyle was a famous Scottish historian and essayist. His work *Sartor Resartus* (*The Tailor Retaliored*, 1833-1834) was taught by Nitobe in his lectures on logic and studied by Arishima Takeo at the Sapporo Agricultural College. Morton 88, p26.

enlightenment. Morimoto had arrived at the school a year before Arishima and had chosen English as his major.⁹²

With Arishima himself being an admirer of English literature, it is likely the two, even before Christianity entered the dynamics of their relationship, shared common interests that saw them likely companions. From the onset Morimoto began appealing to Arishima's emotional side, singling him out to be a companion beyond compare. Arishima recorded the details of their first meeting:

We were sprawled in the hay of the storage hut at the back of the farm. He confessed to me that he had been observing me for some time; something unexpected that I had done made him choose me for a friend. He asked me then to join him in a religious quest. I was fired by his enthusiasm.⁹³

Morimoto's quest was to lead an infallible life as a Christian, entirely free of sin. The vehemence with which he strove to obtain his objective caused him an excessive amount of mental anguish and it was to Arishima that all his confessions were made. Associating constantly with someone whose faith was so intense and feeling compassion for Morimoto could have contributed to Arishima's decision to attempt to devote himself wholly to Christianity. At

⁹² Morton 88, p28.

⁹³ Quoted in Morton 88, p28.

this point, Arishima was not yet at the stage where by he was ready to become a Christian and abandon his practice of Buddhism. He was devoting himself to Morimoto more as a person than the religion Morimoto was so utterly fixated on.⁹⁴ The relationship between Arishima and Morimoto continued in this fashion for some time, Morimoto often deliberately making Arishima feel guilty for not suffering for his sins:

He [Morimoto] had pondered deeply about sin and knows it thoroughly. Although I know that many kinds of sin exist, I still cannot reach the state where my mind is filled with the awareness of it...⁹⁵

At the end of 1898, the friendship between the two students blossomed to the point where there is evidence to suggest that it became homosexual. Arishima recorded the events of his New Year Holiday with Morimoto in his diary:

Last night was truly a time of crisis for Morimoto and me. I can only write about it with the greatest reluctance. Oh, if only I were naturally resolute and firm, Morimoto would not dare to have done something like that. In the end my lack of discipline swayed Morimoto.⁹⁶

Some days later, Arishima continued to record details of the events:

I fell into great disgrace again last night. Seeing my brother [Morimoto] subject to that disagreeable passion every night, I

⁹⁴ Morton 88, p29.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Morton 88, p30.

⁹⁶ Quoted in Morton 88, p31.

have often remonstrated with him and on many occasions restrained him. Despite my resolution never to be drawn into it, last night my weak will was unable to overcome his passion, but only inflamed it even more intensely. I am reluctant to lay this sin at Morimoto's door solely on the grounds that I do not know God as yet or because I do not believe in him.⁹⁷

That something of a sexual nature took place is almost certain and no doubt such a sinful development would have caused Morimoto, if not Arishima as well, much distress. Arishima was on his own journey towards leading a pure Christian life, but he was overcome with guilt and his thoughts drifted towards suicide as a possible solution to his problems. His ability to think rationally was inhibited by the torture he felt knowing that he was responsible for leading his companion into temptation. Upon confessing to Morimoto his thoughts about ending his life, Morimoto chose to accept the same fate as Arishima. It was beyond Morimoto's comprehension that he would allow Arishima to take his own life while he continued to exist alone.

Both Arishima and Morimoto were hesitant and indecisive about actually taking their own lives. Arishima declared that, "Doubts about whether our deaths would be correct acts committed in awe of God have suddenly assailed

⁹⁷ Quoted in Morton 88, p31.

us.”⁹⁸ After what seems to have played out as a discussion on the merits and disadvantages of suicide, Arishima and Morimoto resolved to stay alive. While this would not be the only time in his life when Arishima would contemplate killing himself, it was also a turning point as it led to his conversion.⁹⁹ Arishima recorded his decision to become a Christian in his diary on 21 February 1899. He told his parents of his decision in a letter to which their response was unfavourable.

From this episode, it is not difficult to make some judgments about Arishima's character. That he gave in to the pressure to accept Christianity that was applied by Morimoto indicates that although he was sympathetic to Morimoto's plight, he was also easily influenced. However, Arishima had an earlier introduction to Christianity through being a pupil at the Yokohama Eiwa Gakkō Mission School and was perhaps, even before the bond was formed with Morimoto, an easy candidate for conversion. That Arishima chose to receive Christianity indicates an acceptance of the Western world. Combining this with Arishima's liking for English literature reveals that, at this time, his attitude toward the West was positive. His desire to learn about

⁹⁸ Quoted in Morton 88, p32.

⁹⁹ Morton 88, p34.

the West had developed from his early days and would only be completely satisfied through travel overseas.

Aside from Arishima's religious struggles and suicidal tendencies, while he was at the Sapporo Agricultural College, another event occurred which would also greatly impact on Arishima's attitudes not only toward the West but on the stance he would take later in life. In 1897 Arishima's father, under the Hokkaidō Uncultivated Lands Act, obtained for his son an extensive tract of farmland at Makkaribetsu, southwest of Sapporo.¹⁰⁰ This policy implemented by the Meiji Government was essentially a land reclamation project whereby "land was granted free to anyone responsible for reclaiming the land over a ten year period."¹⁰¹ Initially at least, Arishima was enthusiastic at the prospect of putting his agricultural skills and knowledge into practice, and being a landed proprietor would set him up with a future occupation and source of income. However, being a land owner also reminded Arishima of his privileged upbringing and in a sense plagued him in his later struggle to free himself from his inherited upper class status.

¹⁰⁰ Morton 88, p.27.

¹⁰¹ Nishigaki 90, p.387.

Following graduation in July 1901, Arishima stayed in Sapporo for the remainder of the year and concentrated on writing the history of the Sapporo Independent Church. In December he joined the army to serve his one year of compulsory military training. It is evident that he did not enjoy his time in the army and was rather against the establishment of armies:

How ironic that social organization requires the existence of armies! How absurd that we cannot live with one another without providing against the possibility of murder.¹⁰²

That Arishima came to dislike the Meiji state can be linked partly to his experience in the army, the existence of which he thought was unnecessary in any society. His attendance at a socialist meeting in Tokyo in early 1903 could additionally be viewed as being antiestablishment and led to Arishima strongly supporting socialism in later years. No doubt the feeling he held that he despised the existence of class distinctions yet simultaneously could not see a society functioning without them also contributed to the political stance he took. Arishima was further reminded of class distinctions when he visited Enyū Night School in Sapporo, a school established by Nitobe to educate children from underprivileged, working class families. Enyū Night School was

¹⁰² Quoted in Morton 88, p27.

also where Arishima first interacted with poverty and those belonging to the working classes.¹⁰³

Arishima was clearly becoming disillusioned with Meiji Japan. He made the decision to travel overseas and approached Nitobe for guidance. Following Nitobe's advice, Haverford College, a Quaker University close to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, was recommended to Arishima. He took up Nitobe's suggestion as he felt like he needed to spend time away from Japan:

The main reason behind my trip was my desire to be freed from all those circumstances in which I had been entangled until then, to pull myself together in my own way.¹⁰⁴

This statement suggests that Arishima felt it was time, like many other intellectuals, to travel to the West to further discover who he was, and to experience in their home setting all those Western aspects that had entered Japan. Thus, Arishima left Yokohama on 25 August 1903 aboard the *Iyo Maru*.

¹⁰³ Morton 77, p44.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Morton 88, p55.

II.4. Summary of Similarities and Differences

It is unmistakable that there are a multitude of similarities between Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo. The number is of such significance that by comparison, dissimilarities are almost reduced to being associated with nothing other than personality traits. Although these have been discussed individually in greater detail, a brief review, in which the similarities are clearly drawn together, will highlight just how alike their environments were and how different their characters ended up being.

Both Kafū and Arishima were the first born children in their family. Coincidentally, they were also born in the same part of Tōkyō, Koshikawa. Both of them had fathers whose backgrounds as well as career paths followed along parallel lines.

Kafū's father Kagen was of samurai origin from Owari and by his own merits became a Meiji bureaucrat working for the Health Bureau and Ministry of Education, and in his later years, taking charge of two branches of Nippon Yūsen. Before Kagen embarked upon his working career, he studied abroad for two years. This gave him an appreciation for the West which he clearly tried to instill in Kafū from a young age.

Arishima's father Takeshi was from Satsuma and in his early years had been a samurai retainer. He had studied Western technology and science and learnt of the advancements that had been made in the West. Like Kagen, he also worked for the government, in the Customs Bureau of the Ministry of Finance. This position led to a business trip to England, which further enforced the importance of having an understanding of the West. Takeshi likewise held directorship positions associated with Japan's infrastructure, primarily the Japan Steamship Company and Japan Railways Company.

For both Kafū and Arishima Christianity was a part of their lives, although for each the source of origin was different. In Kafū's experience, the Christian influence came from within the family, both his mother and maternal grandmother being Christians. He also had a brother who grew up to be a Christian priest. Based on these facts, Kafū was surrounded by family members who openly practiced a foreign religion and he would have felt that the West must have been acceptable if family members were followers of the Christian faith.

By comparison, Arishima's early education took place at a mission school and so he received his initial introduction to Christianity there. By far, his greatest

period of interaction with Christianity took place during the years he spent in Sapporo. This was particularly marked by the friendship he formed with Morimoto, who was extremely committed to the faith. Unlike Kafū, however, Arishima himself converted to Christianity and took the religion very seriously.

Outside of education and religion, both developed an attraction to foreign literature, Kafū to French literature and Arishima to English literature. Once Kafū was handed a book by Émile Zola he was said to be “infatuated” with French literature. This liking of French works can easily be linked to Kafū’s burning inclination to travel to France.

In the case of Arishima, although he was taught from the Confucian classics at home, around the age of five he began English lessons and it is plausible that he would have gained some knowledge of English literature, even if it was merely age-appropriate materials around this time. It is known that he read literature while attending the Gakushūin and that his passion for English literature specifically, emerged to its greatest extent at the Sapporo Agricultural College.

While clear parallels can be drawn between the experiences and influences of Kafū and Arishima, when their personalities are examined, they could not be more unlike. Kafū was not bothered about his education to the point where he was expelled. Instead, he preferred to spend his days idly in the Yoshiwara district or devoted to traditional Japanese pastimes. Additionally, he failed to hold down his job with the *Yamato Shimbun*, most likely due to his lackadaisical performance. His flitting from one thing to the next and his ‘lay-about’ tendencies would continue even when he was residing in the United States.

Arishima, by comparison, seems to have taken his education seriously. While at the Gakushūin he studied diligently and was a model student. Being made the *gakukyū* of Prince Yoshihito reflected this model behaviour and hard working attitude.

However, unlike Kafū, who responded to pressure indifferently, it seems that Arishima had difficulty coping with pressure. This pressure was exerted firstly from his parents who needed to prepare their eldest son to take over as head of the Arishima family. If it is true that Arishima saw attending the Agricultural College in Sapporo as a means to escape this pressure, then he certainly ran straight into another highly charged situation. Morimoto eventually swayed

Arishima into becoming a Christian and as Arishima up until this point had practiced Buddhism, it is possible that he would not have converted without Morimoto's fierce persuasion.

Arishima viewed everything he did with a seriousness that Kafū most likely did not even possess. Arishima, at times, found that life itself was too much to bear and came close on more than one occasion to committing suicide. He eventually would commit suicide, in the middle of 1923. As will become clearer, Arishima was a very intense man who would often get caught up in his emotions and thoughts. By contrast, Kafū was very carefree and nonchalant. He approached everything casually where Arishima would deeply analyze the situation. Both certainly had similarities in their lives, but their conduct and personalities could not be more different. They did, however, share the same attitude when it came to the West. It was a place they had heard much about from their fathers and it was being greatly promoted in Japan's modernization process. They each had experienced Western religion and literature, and were, beyond doubt, passionate about discovering it for themselves.

However, the momentum behind each of their individual reasons for traveling to the West was different. Essentially, Kafū was more positive about his trip to the West, though admittedly not as positive as he would have been had he

gone straight to France. Arishima by comparison, was going to the West more as a means of escape from the pressures he felt had been placed upon him.

Chapter III

The Experiences of Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo in the West and Their Writings about the West.

III.1. Nagai Kafū's Experience in the West

Kafū left Tōkyō in October 1903 on the start of his travels in the West. He left aboard the *Shinnomaru*, bound for Seattle. Upon his arrival there, he travelled straight to Tacoma, in Washington, where it had been arranged that he would reside with a man his father knew through his business connections. The house in which Kafū stayed during his time in Tacoma belonged to Mr. Yamamoto Ichirō, a well-known figure among the Japanese community and manager of the Tacoma branch of Furuya Shōten, a firm based in Seattle that had been established to import Japanese food.¹⁰⁵

On arrival in Tacoma, Kafū disregarded Kagen's instructions and enrolled at a local high school, Tacoma Stadium High school, and took French classes for one year. It still remained clear in Kafū's mind that America was merely a

¹⁰⁵ Kohl, 79, p58.

stepping stone along the journey of eventually traveling to France, the home of the authors he admired greatly, Zola, Baudelaire and Maupassant. By undertaking French lessons, he wasted no time in his endeavour to learn the native language of those writers. It is certain that the path Kagen had expected his son to take was vastly different from the course of action Kafū had chosen for himself. Even if Kagen disapproved of his son's actions of failing to spend his time in the United States studying more useful subjects such as business or English, he certainly still supported him financially. This financial support was in essence a compromise as by shipping Kafū off to the United States in the first place, Kagen ensured that his son would be distanced from the unsuitable activities and occupations he had concerned himself with in Japan.

Kafū found his stay in Tacoma pleasant and spent time enjoying the outdoors when he was not immersing himself in French textbooks and literature. The atmosphere of the town itself was also to his liking as indicated in a diary entry, "The quiet of the town pleases me especially." From a local park Mount Rainier could be seen and Kafū noted the similarities between this backdrop and the image of Mount Fuji in Japan. In fact, it appeared that this feeling was shared by all Japanese in Tacoma as, "The local Japanese call it Tacoma Fuji. It rises through the clouds capped with snow. The scenery here is extremely

beautiful.”¹⁰⁶ Kafū spent any additional time reading in the library and when he tired of that he would loaf beside a lake.¹⁰⁷

After spending approximately a year in Tacoma, Kafū travelled around Chicago and St. Louis. The trip to St. Louis coincided with the World Fair which was held there in October 1904. Kafū attended the fair with a number of delegates of a trading commission from Japan. It was around this time that Kafū began considering his options for where he could possibly go on the next leg of his United States journey. He had thoughts that he may like to go to New Orleans as French culture was still evident there at the time, New Orleans having originally been founded by the French Mississippi Company in the early 1700s. Although he was hoping New Orleans would bring about an opportunity to practice his French and indulge himself in French culture, he was dissuaded from going there as he heard that the climate in New Orleans would not be suitable and could impact upon his health.¹⁰⁸

Upon deciding that New Orleans was no longer a viable option, Kafū decided to continue his studies in Michigan where he attended Kalamazoo College. Kalamazoo College was established in 1833 as a traditional Baptist university

¹⁰⁶ Keene 98, p488.

¹⁰⁷ Kafū 69-73, p415.

¹⁰⁸ Seidensticker 65, p18.

and his enrolment date is recorded as being 28 November 1904.¹⁰⁹ At the college he undertook classes in French as well as English literature.¹¹⁰ By studying French at Kalamazoo, he hoped to continue to improve his competency in the language.

Kafū's attendance at Kalamazoo was interrupted by sporadic excursions, one of which took him to Chicago where he enjoyed the opera. While he was exploring the United States at his leisure, his love for French literature continued to blossom. Once again Kafū began to petition for his father's permission to leave the United States for France, but it was to no avail.

Around the middle of 1905, Kafū decided to take matters into his own hands. He certainly did not have the financial means to get to France, even though he had been sponsored by his father while in the United States. He left Kalamazoo and travelled to New York where he met up with his cousin Nagai Sogawa. It was by way of an introduction through Sogawa that Kafū found himself employed at the Japanese Legation in Washington D.C.¹¹¹ At the time the Legation was busy due to the impending negotiations that were to take place as a result of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905.) Kafū essentially

¹⁰⁹ Odagiri and Yoshimura 83-96, vol23, p24.

¹¹⁰ Odagiri and Yoshimura 83-96, vol23, p24.

¹¹¹ Hisamatsu (ed.) et.al 65, pp775-76.

began working at the Japanese Legation to earn money so he could afford the passage to France. Kafū's position as janitor and messenger at the Legation entailed few responsibilities and allowed him plenty of time to fulfill his enthusiasm for reading.¹¹² Kafū's cousin Sogawa established a successful career for himself and eventually became ambassador to Germany. Kafū by comparison had no interest in the Russo-Japanese War or its negotiations.

However, it was during his stay in Washington that he met, while out drinking, a prostitute by the name of Edyth Girard. The pair strolled alongside the Potomac River and later returned to where Edyth resided. Their friendship rapidly developed into an intimate relationship.¹¹³ One night Kafū received a stern letter from his father failing to approve of a trip to France and he headed straight to Edyth's house with the aim of forgetting his uncompromising father. Kafū recorded his feelings about this incident:

As I had expected, Father still does not agree with my plans to go to France. Am I then to care about literature and health? I want dissipation. I want to destroy myself in dissipation. I visited the lady I have become acquainted with, and we drained the champagne bottles, and shouted for joy.¹¹⁴

¹¹² Seidensticker 65, p19.

¹¹³ Kafū 69-73, p416.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Seidensticker 65, p.19.

Eventually it became clear that Edyth was more attached to Kafū than he was to her. That is not to say that he did not enjoy her company, merely that he preferred women he could simply love and then move on from. In fact, being involved with women of disreputable character would become a common trend in Kafū's life.

In November 1905 Kafū left Washington to return to Kalamazoo. However, by December his father had secured for him a position at the New York City branch of the Yokohama Specie Bank. Kafū initially thought that this would bring about the end of his relationship with Edyth. However, Edyth, being so attached to Kafū, decided to follow him to New York in 1906 and planned for the two of them to live together. At this, Kafū wondered whether it would impede on his ability to leave the United States for France:

In my heart of hearts a fierce battle goes on between love and the dream of art. Shall I stay in New York with Edyth and become an American? And if I do, when will I have a chance to visit the Paris I have longed to see all these years?¹¹⁵

If he had truly loved Edyth it would seem probable that he would have been determined to reconcile both Edyth and his desire to visit France. As it was, Edyth had already moved from Washington D.C. to New York to be with him.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Seidensticker 65, p21.

It is more than likely she would have agreed to go to France had she been asked.

After more than a year serving at the New York City branch of the Yokohama Specie Bank, Kafū obtained a transfer to the bank's branch in Lyons, France. Kagen had finally had a change of heart regarding his son's desire to go to France.¹¹⁶ No doubt he had some role to play in the granting of the transfer. Kafū now had a legitimate reason to leave the United States and he proceeded to break the news to Edyth. His announcement was met with tears and protest as he recorded in his diary a conclusive statement, "Already there is nothing left in my heart except my artistic ambitions. I listened absentmindedly to Edyth's complaints, delivered in tears."¹¹⁷

His departure from the United States was clearly difficult for Edyth to accept but for Kafū the reality of leaving the United States and indeed Edyth when France was on his horizon appeared not to cause an outpouring of emotion. In fact, his actions served to demonstrate that he was a rather selfish man who completely failed to consider the impact his decision would have on Edyth.

¹¹⁶ Hisamatsu (ed.) et.al 65, p788.

¹¹⁷ Quoted in Keene 98, p494.

However, it may have been the case that he also felt suffocated by this woman and saw France, in a way, as an escape route from her clutches.

In fact, Kafū could be considered as having been predominantly content throughout the four years he spent in the United States. This was in stark contrast to his contemporary Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) who had felt nothing but alienation and isolation during his two year stay in England. That Kafū was so successful in his personal assimilation into Western society has been attributed to the fact that “unlike most Japanese traveling in the West he had no sense of inferiority.”¹¹⁸ Kafū’s upbringing, more specifically the parts that were identifiably Western, had served as preparation for his contact with Western society.

Outside of working hours Kafū was able to gain much enjoyment out of New York City. Naturally he dedicated a considerable amount of time to literary pursuits but New York, with its Metropolitan and Manhattan opera houses, also afforded Kafū the opportunity of attending regular operatic performances. Two such performances Kafū attended were Wagner’s *Tannhäuser* and

¹¹⁸ Lewell 93, p273.

Tristan and Isolde. Using operas like these two, as well as others, Kafū would construct short pieces of written work using the operas as inspiration.¹¹⁹

Kafū also indulged himself on a much less refined level in New York's Chinatown. Complete with readily available prostitutes, opium smoke and filth, it was a place of ill repute. Kafū describes the nature of Chinatown as being “.....an exhibition gallery of vices, shame, disease, and death so extreme that surely human beings cannot sink any lower.”¹²⁰

As much as Kafū took pleasure in his nights at the opera, Chinatown and the time he spent in the company of Edyth, he departed from the United States in early July 1907. The journey to France that Kafū had long set his heart on was now a reality. After the ship docked at Le Havre, Kafū had two spare days before he was due to commence work and he decided to use this time to take a train to Paris. The Paris he saw for the first time undoubtedly lived up to his expectations, if not surpassed them.¹²¹

However, his work situation in Lyons proved to be less so. Naturally, Kafū's attitude was partly shaped by the fact that he never intended to forge for

¹¹⁹ Odagiri and Yoshimura 83-96, vol23, pp26-27.

¹²⁰ Quoted in Keene 84, p406.

¹²¹ Refer to p127 of this thesis.

himself a career in banking. Neither, it seemed, did he enjoy working with fellow Japanese. He avoided spending time in their company outside of work hours and generally found that working for the Yokohama Specie Bank in Lyons was intolerable.¹²² It is likely that he would have preferred to lose himself in France, among the French people. Every so often when Kafū did not want to go to work he would simply, at his own discretion, be absent and would spend his day reading.¹²³

Consequently, Kafū was fired after less than a year in the bank's service due to his "lackadaisical performance."¹²⁴ It would seem that he was not bothered about being relieved of his duties as it ultimately gave him the freedom to do as he pleased. With nothing keeping him in Lyons, he travelled once again to Paris in March 1908. Kafū had a sense of great admiration for the city as it had been the birthplace and home to a number of famous writers and poets whom he had been drawn to. One French author he was profoundly fond of was Maupassant. Upon his arrival in Paris and without delay he paid a visit to Maupassant's stone statue in the Parc Monceau.

¹²² Kafū 69-73, p416.

¹²³ Keene 84, p407.

¹²⁴ Snyder in Rubin 01, p137.

Additionally, Kafū found the Paris he saw at twilight to be very intoxicating. He took delight in the café scene and in the glittering lights that lined the boulevards. For a short period Kafū lived the life of a Parisian artist. He took lodgings in the Latin Quarter, spent time in Parc Luxembourg reading French literature and observing the comings and goings of people who passed him by. He was particularly taken with the charming nature of the young Parisian women, their clothing, their intricately decorated hats and their parasols.¹²⁵

Just as he had done so for the odd night in New York City, he attended the opera in Paris. He also had the opportunity to meet Ueda Bin (1874-1916), well-known for his translations of French poetry.¹²⁶ Ueda, like Kafū, was a true Francophile. By having this in common and with both of them being involved in literature they would have hardly been left struggling to find topics to discuss. Ueda would prove to be a useful contact for he would later recommend Kafū for a position back in Japan.

Needless to say, Kafū thoroughly enjoyed his time in Paris, even if he was only able to financially support himself and remain in the city for two months. If Kafū had been determined to stay on in Paris an obvious remedy for his lack

¹²⁵ Kafū 62-74, vol3, pp545-546.

¹²⁶ Odagiri and Yoshimura 83-96, vol23, p28.

of money would have been to seek out some form of employment. Kafū did briefly contemplate this idea, but he did not act on it. When it came to the idea of hard, menial work, such as being a waiter, it seemed as if he was suffering from perpetual laziness.¹²⁷

While the issue of money was certainly solvable, Kafū suggested in his diary that it was the condition of his father's health which was another factor in drawing him back to Japan. On arrival he was to find, however, that the supposed fatal illness his father was suffering from was no longer a concern.¹²⁸

The final few days Kafū spent in Paris before his departure were full of activity. Kafū wanted to take in all the sights and sounds of Paris so that they would be entrenched in his mind forever. He stayed up most of the night, drinking with a few companions and walking around central Paris, enjoying the night time atmosphere. As he was required to be in London a day prior to the *Sanuki-maru*'s sailing to Japan, he had time to seek out a French restaurant in London to dine at. The restaurant he found, despite its grimy state, proudly flew the French flag. It was here that he had a chance encounter with a

¹²⁷ Kafū considered the possibility of becoming a waiter but concluded that he did not have the stamina to hold down such a job. See my translation of Kafū's “巴里のわかれ” p126 of this thesis.

¹²⁸ Keene 98, p497.

distinctly Parisian woman with whom he had one final opportunity to converse in French. Having escorted the woman to her lodgings she bid him farewell in an unmistakably French fashion: “Merci monsieur, et au revoir.”¹²⁹

The farewell Kafū shared with this woman marked the end of his experiences in the West. He boarded the ship with a broken heart, saddened that he had to leave his beloved France. Of his feelings on the matter he wrote that [in Japan] “only death at the end of a monotonous life awaited me.”¹³⁰ It is likely that he was afraid he would lose the freedom he had grown accustomed to while in the West and was equally aware of the filial responsibilities he would be expected to fulfill as the eldest son in the Nagai family. No matter what course his life back in Japan was going to take, one thing was certain: the France he left behind would forever remain in his mind as “Waga Furansu” (“My France.”)

III.2. Nagai Kafū’s Writings about the West

As a result of the time spent in the United States and France, Kafū was able to write numerous short stories about his experiences in the West. These stories

¹²⁹ Kafū 62-74, vol3, p556.

¹³⁰ Quoted in Keene 84, p411.

were published in two collections: *Amerika Monogatari* (Tales of America, 1908) and *Furansu Monogatari* (Tales of France, 1909). In these two collections Kafū is regularly placed as an outside-observer whereby he narrates what he is seeing or is taking an inactive role in a story he is being told.

Both of the collections examine city and country life and references to forms of Western art and music can be found throughout. A major difference between the two works is that in *Amerika Monogatari* there is a strong presence of other Japanese presented as new immigrants and this becomes a major theme of the collection. This presence of other Japanese beside Kafū himself is lacking in *Furansu Monogatari*. While in the United States there was a significantly larger community of Japanese and he did mingle with them both on the crossing from Japan to Seattle and also in the part of town where the Japanese immigrants resided, he had very little to say of his Japanese counterparts in France.

It seemed that Kafū would have preferred to completely immerse himself in French culture and society and was unhappy with having to spend his precious

time in France working with fellow countrymen.¹³¹ That *Amerika Monogatari* surveyed the lives of Japanese trying to realize their dreams and attain a higher level of success than what was possible back home could have largely contributed to the collection's successful reception by readers back in Meiji Japan. At the time of publication in 1908, *Amerika Monogatari* was an instant sensation and this was attributed to giving "firsthand news of what had not hitherto been reported."¹³²

For the Japanese immigrants the United States was the land of freedom and opportunity. Kafū's stories combine elements of this ideal with the reality experienced by the immigrants; their arrival in a society already unharmonious because of racial issues and discrimination.¹³³ In "Night Talk in a Cabin," the first story in *Amerika Monogatari*, Kafū presents both the reasons why Japanese would travel to the United States to start a new life as well as the idealized image of the country about to become their new home. Set in the narrator's cabin aboard the ship crossing the Pacific, the narrator invited two other Japanese to his cabin for some night-time company. The three men are deliberately given varying statuses as to make their personalities and reasons for the voyage different. One of the men, Yanagida, wore Western business

¹³¹ Quoted in Keene 84, p407.

¹³² Richie 00, p3.

¹³³ Hutchinson 01, p324.

attire, was confident and was embarking upon his second trip to the West. He had returned to Japan from Australia where he had taken a translating job but was displeased with the wages. Additionally he was unlucky in love and thus decided to try his luck in the United States declaring, “As long as you are in Japan, it is simply impossible to shout with delight from the bottom of your heart.”¹³⁴

By comparison, the other man, Kishimoto, wore traditional kimono and had intentions to study in the West as he was continually passed over for promotion by college graduates. In doing so he was leaving his wife and child behind but with a college degree in hand he would be able to improve his family’s life once back in Japan. These two characters are clearly opposites and their polarity is made clear through their style of dress, speech and lifestyles.¹³⁵ Excluding the narrator (who reveals very little about his own circumstances), there are four distinct reasons behind the decisions to travel to the United States namely: being unable to integrate wholly back into Japanese society once having been abroad, feeling undervalued in the Japanese workplace, failure in love, and not having attended university.

¹³⁴ Kafū 1908/ 00, p6.

¹³⁵ Hutchinson 01, p327.

While the hopes and aspirations of those aboard ship have not yet had the chance to be crushed by the realities of the United States that await them, the following two stories in *Amerika Monogatari* reveal how quickly the dream of a better life can rapidly turn into disillusionment.

“A Return Through the Meadow” centres on a leisurely bicycle ride through the Tacoma countryside to view the state asylum. The narrator’s companion makes a special point of mentioning that there are three Japanese immigrant workers amongst its inmates. On hearing this, the narrator recalls how the Japanese immigrant workers aboard the same ship on which he had travelled were treated as if they did not matter. For one of the Japanese in the asylum, his insanity was the result of witnessing the mistreatment of his wife at the hands of the Japanese woodcutters with whom he worked and lived. The woodcutters convinced the man that his wife would be safer living in the log cabin with them than living alone in the city of Seattle. By making the man feel guilty for being the only one in the group to be having any pleasure, the woodcutters requested to borrow his wife for a night stating, “The long and short of it is this, since you have something we don’t, we are asking you to share it with us.”¹³⁶ Unable to put up a fight, the wife was raped and the man lapsed into unconsciousness from shock. Following the ordeal the man “lost

¹³⁶ Kafu 1908/00, p16.

his mind and was never the same person again.”¹³⁷ This story highlights not only the dangers that can strike down those who are naïve and trusting but also that people sharing identical experiences in the same environment can also turn on one another for individual gain.¹³⁸

Naturally, it was not just other Japanese that caused the misfortune of other Japanese immigrants, but also Americans who were prejudiced towards them. The basis for this attitude was the perception that the immigrants were “cheap labour” and were filling jobs that rightfully belonged to Americans as is made clear in “Night Fog.” The narrator is stopped in the street by a Japanese labourer and notes that “since it is the Japanese and Chinese who sell their labour for the cheapest wages and steadily encroach upon their territory, Japs must be among the labourer’s most hated enemies.”¹³⁹ The Japanese labourer proceeds to complain about his financial loss resulting from a failed investment. The immigrant’s protestations were loud enough to create a scene. The narrator himself is Japanese, but he is a gentleman and not an immigrant, however, he still feels the crowd’s scorn as they consider him as belonging to the same class as the vocal immigrant labourer. This situation highlights the

¹³⁷ Kafu 1908/00, p16.

¹³⁸ The narrator notes that “Old-timers from Japan, such as ruffians wandering up from California or sailors of dubious origin who had crossed some ocean and then turned labor bosses, vied with each other for the lifeblood of the uninformed newcomers [to Seattle and Tacoma].” Hutchinson 01, p12.

¹³⁹ Kafu 1908/00, p236

reality that to non-Japanese living in the United States of America, when it comes to the Japanese immigrants; it is race which drives their prejudice and not class.¹⁴⁰

The way the Japanese immigrants live is chronicled in the story “A Night at Seattle Harbor.” The narrator notices the stark contrast of the surroundings as he approaches the Japanese part of town after passing through First and Second Avenues. The streets become dirty and gloomy with horse dung and smoke filling the air. This indicates that the Japanese community generally remained separated from main-stream society. It can be sensed that the narrator feels as if Japan has been transplanted into this area, yet certain aspects like the sound of a *samisen* and a Japanese woman singing seem out of place coming from inside a western-styled building. That expectations of the American dream can falter is further emphasized by a group of Japanese frequenting the area. In discussing the problems they are encountering in learning English one of them states, “at first I thought that if I listened to white guys speaking for three months or so, I would be able to understand an ordinary conversation, but anticipation and reality are totally different things.”¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Hutchinson 01, p322.

¹⁴¹ 1908/00, p232.

While much more could be said of the stories that focus on the Japanese immigrants in *Amerika Monogatari*, sporadic references to what Kafū often saw as idyllic countryside give the *Amerika* and *Furansu* collections a romantic tone. In “Atop the Hill” the narrator tells us how he would:

Roam about the orchards filled with apple blossoms, go to the meadows to lie down on soft clover leaves next to grazing cattle, or stand near a brook, getting drunk with the fragrance of violets and singing along with field larks.¹⁴²

This evokes a charming image of the scenery in various locations throughout the United States.

The scenery described in *Amerika Monogatari* is felt to be more powerful than that which appears in *Furansu Monogatari*. While Kafū had already been able to visualize what France would be like through reading a great deal of French literature, the United States was an entirely new experience. While the observations Kafū makes in France authenticates what he has read, he often draws comparisons between the environment of France and that of the United States he left behind him:

As the train drew closer to Paris, the grey rain clouds vanished off to the west, and a blue, blue summer sky was revealed. The sky

¹⁴² Kafū 1908/00, p22.

was of a pellucid blue one never sees in America, no matter how clear the day may be.¹⁴³

In addition, and in a more artistic and creative manner, Kafū uses stylish women and their feminine fashions to refine a number of the scenes he describes. In *Amerika Monogatari*'s "Long Hair" the first three paragraphs contain references to women's fashion. One statement in particular reveals how the narrator is drawn to such garments: "I am one of those who love the fashions of this country, so rich in their variety of colours."¹⁴⁴ This occurs once again in *Furansu Monogatari*'s final chapter "Adieu Paris":

Sat on benches in the soft shade, reading, knitting and sewing, were elegant Parisian women, the ones that dreams are made of, and young wives, no less inferior looking and again just as you would see in a dream. As they leaned forward they revealed the pure white nape of their necks.¹⁴⁵

Western music and art forms are frequently mentioned throughout both collections. This demonstrates that Kafū had quite an expansive knowledge in this area which was enlarged by his opera attendance. "Old Regrets" is one such story that outlines in detail the opera *Tannhäuser*. The narrator proclaims that "...the music of the great genius Wagner...is different from all other

¹⁴³ Quoted in Keene 84, p407.

¹⁴⁴ Kafū 1908/00, p45.

¹⁴⁵ See my translation of Kafū's, "巴里のわかれ" ("Pari no Wakare"), p130 of this thesis.

music in that it has a mysterious power that never fails to make a strong impact upon its listener.”¹⁴⁶

Often throughout *Furansu Monogatari* Kafū makes references to great musicians and French authors. Maupassant makes frequent appearances and Kafū dedicated an essay to him in this collection.¹⁴⁷ In this essay he calls Maupassant “sensei” or “teacher/master” and attributes his desire to learn French to his eagerness of wanting to read and appreciate Maupassant’s works as Maupassant wrote them – in French. Kafū revealed the extent of his devotion to Maupassant:

I was first inspired to study French, ah, Maupassant sensei, because I thought I would like to savour your style in the original and not have to depend on English translations. It was also because I wanted to pronounce with my own lips each word and each phrase you wrote, sensei.¹⁴⁸

By writing about Maupassant, Kafū was able to immortalize the French author through his own work, just as he did through his writings about famous operas and the charming women that caught his sight.

¹⁴⁶ Kafū 1908/00, p101.

¹⁴⁷ Kafū 62-74, vol3, pp631-636.

¹⁴⁸ Keene 84, p411.

Both *Amerika Monogatari* and *Furansu Monogatari* are important collections as they record life in the United States and France through the eyes of a Japanese observer, one who generally remained uninvolved in what was happening around him. The preservation of society in these two countries through the lens of Kafū is unique. He considered a wide range of aspects of life and society as equally important, from the bustling city streets, to the inner workings of a brothel, to the magnificent French countryside. In this way, *Amerika Monogatari* and *Furansu Monogatari* are significant, not just from a literary perspective, but also from a historical and sociological point of view.

III.3. Arishima Takeo's Experience in the West

For Arishima, his journey to the West began on 25 August 1903 as he departed from Yokohama aboard the *Iyo-maru* bound for Seattle. Just prior to his departure, Arishima had been offered two important roles in Japan, both of which he declined. The first was to become the tutor of Crown Prince Yoshihito, the second as secretary to the Minister for Home Affairs, the Army and Education.¹⁴⁹ That Arishima passed up both of these prestigious opportunities reveals how intent he was on spending time abroad. He was also

¹⁴⁹ The Minister for Home Affairs, the Army and Education was Kodama Gentarō (1852-1906). Morton 88, p53.

well aware that a number of his acquaintances had already left Japan or were in the process of doing so.

With plans for his own departure gaining momentum, he took time to study English, history and literature in private in order to gain some background knowledge of the workings of the West. Morimoto had also decided to travel to the United States at the same time as Arishima and together they departed from Japan aboard the *Iyo-maru*. After they arrived in Seattle the two graduates traveled together to Chicago where they met up with a former classmate from the Sapporo Agricultural College. Not long after, Arishima and Morimoto headed their separate ways as Arishima was continuing on to Philadelphia and Morimoto had chosen to study at John Hopkins University in Baltimore.

The college Arishima attended had been established in 1833 by the Society of Friends in Philadelphia. It opened as a small school with three teachers and twenty-one students. The records for the year 1903-04 show that Arishima was one of three graduate students in attendance.¹⁵⁰ Haverford College was located in the Haverford Township, Delaware County, and nine miles west of the

¹⁵⁰ "Catalogue of Haverford College: 1903-1904, Haverford, Pa." in *ATZ* 79-88, vol16, p376.

centre of Philadelphia.¹⁵¹ The institution was to provide “a guarded education in the higher branches of learning, combining the requisite literary instruction with a religious care over the morals and manners of the scholars...”¹⁵² Haverford was a Quaker College, but it appears that little emphasis was placed on religious worship. Arishima himself observed that at the religious gatherings which took place only once a week, “there were no sermons, hymns or recitations of the creed. The congregation just meditated quietly.”¹⁵³ Arishima used this time to contemplate and was fond of this quiet time in the College chapel.

Arishima commenced his studies less than a month after his arrival in the United States. His focus was on three major subjects, history, labour problems and German.¹⁵⁴ Arishima was in fact an exceptionally diligent student and eventually graduated with the degree of Master of Arts in June the following year. His thesis, written entirely in English, was titled “Development of Japanese Civilisation – from the Mythical Age to the Time of Decline of

¹⁵¹ *ATZ* 79-88, vol16, pp378-379.

¹⁵² *ATZ* 79-88, vol16, p380.

¹⁵³ Morton 88, p56. This style of worship is general in Quaker church services.

¹⁵⁴ Senuma 72, p269.

Shogunal Power.”¹⁵⁵ Even more remarkable is the fact that Arishima wrote his entire 230 page thesis in a mere nine months.

For Thanksgiving vacation, Arthur Crowell, a fellow Haverford student who was studying engineering, invited Arishima to spend the vacation with his family on their farm in Avondale.¹⁵⁶ Arthur had one brother and three sisters. Of these, Arishima grew particularly attracted to Frances (Fanny) Crowell who was just thirteen years old at the time. While it is evident that he wanted to develop a relationship with Fanny, it did not eventuate as she did not possess feelings of that kind for him. Nevertheless she remained in his affections and his infatuation with her was revived with passion in a letter-style diary entry made on the voyage to Europe on 30 August 1906:

I feel your hands around my neck, I feel your lips on my lips, I feel your heart beating against mine. O my! Is this dream! Is this fancy? Nay, dreadful reality of the world! Dream exists, and you exist! And you exist, I love you madly! Do you! Do you love me?

¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ The title for Arishima's thesis is given as "Development of Japanese Civilisation- from the Mythical Age to the Time of Decline of Shogunal Power" in Morton 88, p58. An alternative title for the same thesis, "The Influence of Foreign Civilisation on the History of Japan" is given in Morton 77, p45. Private correspondence with Mr. Rob Hanley, Interlibrary Library Loan Specialist at the Magill Library, Haverford College confirms that Arishima's thesis was "Development of Japanese Civilisation From the Mythical Age to the time of Decline of shogunal Power" The title is in manuscript and the capitalization is as he wrote it. Correspondence via email: 24 May 2007.

¹⁵⁶ Odagiri and Yoshimura, 83-96, vol9, p33.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Morton 88, p57. (Arishima's own English).

Fanny did exist, but only on paper and in Arishima's thoughts did she become something more than his classmate's younger sibling. Thereafter, Arishima continued with his studies and worked conscientiously with the exception being a short break in April 1904 during which time he called upon Morimoto in Baltimore. The two of them took a trip to Washington where they enjoyed sightseeing around the Congress building and the affiliated library as well as the museum.¹⁵⁸

Having obtained his Master's degree in June, Arishima took a job for two months at the Friend's Asylum for the Insane at Frankford, a short distance from Pennsylvania. He was employed there as a male nurse.¹⁵⁹ Despite being required to work lengthy hours, he was immensely dedicated to his work. Part of his job involved supervising the patients while they spent time around the extensive grounds of the asylum and this also afforded him some peace and quiet. Unfortunately for him, and no doubt the asylum's patients, the other employees did not possess the same work ethic and his assiduous attitude brought him into conflict with his work colleagues. That he was driven by a desire to help those less fortunate than himself enabled him to understand and interact well with the patients.

¹⁵⁸ Odagiri and Yoshimura, 83-96, vol9, p34.

¹⁵⁹ Senuma 72, p269.

Furthermore, working at the asylum resulted in Arishima's belief in Christianity suffering an upheaval. He had grown close to one patient, Dr. J.B. Scott who had suffered a nervous breakdown because he blamed himself for his brother's suicide.¹⁶⁰ Scott professed to Arishima the extent of his guilt but not long after Arishima's departure from the asylum he himself committed suicide. This news came as a great shock to Arishima who recorded what Scott had told him as he left the asylum, including a powerful statement; "God long ago condemned me to eternal damnation because of my sins."¹⁶¹ In the past Arishima had nearly been overpowered by his own sense of guilt. This was especially with regard to the turn of events that had occurred between him and Morimoto during a New Year's overnight holiday back when the two of them were still in college in Japan.¹⁶²

Scott's suicide, with his guilt clearly a major contributing factor, caused Arishima to question Christianity. The unkindness bestowed upon the patients by his colleagues probably also had a hand in his re-evaluation of where he stood in relation to the religion. Arishima later concluded that "I became aware that the Christian concept of sin and its corollary, redemption, are

¹⁶⁰ Morton 88, p60.

¹⁶¹ Quoted in Morton 88, p60.

¹⁶² Refer to p67 of this thesis.

incompatible with my thinking...”¹⁶³ The events at the asylum were to have far-reaching consequences on his attitude toward Christianity and brought him a step closer to his eventual abandonment of the religion.

In 1904 Arishima returned to his studies and enrolled at Harvard University as a graduate student studying European history, art history, labour problems and religion.¹⁶⁴ During his time at Harvard he also spent time working as a farmhand on a farm in the outskirts of the city.¹⁶⁵ It was while he was at Harvard University that he met two men, a socialist named Kaneko Kiichi (1876-1909) and a Boston lawyer named Peabody (dates unknown). Kaneko was a Japanese socialist who had studied at Harvard and became a reporter for *The Chicago Socialist Daily*. One of the subjects Kaneko was studying was labour problems so it seems likely that Arishima made his acquaintance during class. Arishima came to know Peabody when the pair boarded together. These two men, like Morimoto earlier at the Sapporo Agricultural College, came to have substantial influence on both Arishima’s religious and political perspectives.

¹⁶³ Quoted in Morton 88, p61.

¹⁶⁴ Odagiri and Yoshimura, 83-96, vol9, p36.

¹⁶⁵ Senuma 72, p269.

Together Kaneko and Arishima studied socialist thought, and through this study and dialogue Arishima developed a strong belief in socialism. He drew the conclusion that “in order to transfer happiness from the hands of the few to the hands of the many, the claims of socialism were justified.”¹⁶⁶ Up until his association with Kaneko, Arishima had not contemplated socialism on such a profound level. His aristocratic background had not placed him in a position whereby considering socialism was necessary or of importance.

Additionally, Arishima also engaged in meaningful discussions on socialism and evolution with Peabody. This lawyer, too, left a lasting influence on Arishima when he introduced him to *Leaves of Grass* (1855), a collection of poetry by Walt Whitman. Criticized for its obscene nature, Arishima found the poetry to be liberating and later translated it into Japanese.

On completion of his studies at Harvard University, Arishima travelled to Washington D.C. where he again met up with Morimoto. However, the dynamic of their relationship had changed and they clashed over a number of matters. Just as Morimoto had been the more fanatical Christian, Arishima was now more radical as a staunch socialist.¹⁶⁷ While in Washington D.C.,

¹⁶⁶ Quoted in Morton 88, p65.

¹⁶⁷ Lewell 93, p46.

Arishima spent close to one year reading extensively in the Library of Congress. The volume of reading he undertook was monumental and included the works of such influential thinkers and authors as Ibsen, Tolstoy, Gorky and Kropotkin, to name a few.¹⁶⁸ It was during this period that he first decided to try his hand at writing a fictional work. The result was *Kankan Mushi* (Rust Chippers, 1906). Centering on Ukrainian labourers who earned their livings by removing rust off ships anchored in harbour, the work had a distinctly proletarian flavour and touches on themes of class struggle and the individual. Also appearing in *Kankan Mushi* are a number of elements characteristic of Arishima's literature, including his use of colourful language, and themes as diverse as free men, and loutish behaviour.¹⁶⁹

This work was clearly indicative of his concern about divisions within society. At this time he also gave consideration to his future career and appeared perplexed as to the direction in which he should go, commenting, "The practical problem of whether to become a farmer or teacher or writer plagued me incessantly."¹⁷⁰ He had been offered a teaching position back at the

¹⁶⁸ Arishima 68-72, p431.

¹⁶⁹ Senuma 73, p270.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in Morton 88, p68

Sapporo Agriculture School but rejected the offer upon deciding to extend his travels.

On 1 September 1906 Arishima left the United States for Europe aboard the *Dampfer Prinzess Irene*. He was going to travel around Europe with his younger brother Ikuma (1882-1974), who greeted him in Naples. Ikuma, who had been studying art in Italy, showed Arishima around museums and the two brothers studied Renaissance art before leaving Italy for Switzerland. Arishima and Ikuma stayed for a week in a hotel in Schaffhausen and it was here where Arishima met and fell in love with Mathilda Heck (1877-1970), one of daughters of the hotel owner.

However, at the time Arishima met Mathilda, he did not acknowledge or perhaps even understand his feelings for her. Even though he and Tildi (as she was affectionally known) were only in each other's company for one week, they corresponded regularly throughout the next twenty years. In one letter Arishima sent to Tildi he was extremely adamant about his feelings towards her:

I do not like you. I am not fond of you. I *loved* you and *love* you.
You may laugh or even be angry about my saying this. A

worthless and strange fellow, who had but a few days' acquaintance with you, loves you! ¹⁷¹

No sooner had Arishima sent the letter off than he regretted having done so, but it is clear that his feelings for Tildi were reciprocated. ¹⁷²

Upon leaving Schaffhausen, Arishima and Ikuma journeyed to Germany, Holland, Belgium and then France, arriving in Paris at the end of December 1906. In France the two brothers parted company as Ikuma had decided to remain in Paris to continue his art studies and Arishima continued on to London, from where he would later return to Japan. Arishima did not say much about his experience in London, but his time seems to have been largely spent reading at the British Museum.

Arishima, however, did have an encounter of great importance while he was in London. The opportunity arose for him to meet Prince Peter Alexeyevich Kropotkin (1842-1921), a well-known Russian geographer, anarchist, theorist and social reformer. Greatly impressed by Kropotkin, he engaged with him in

¹⁷¹ Quoted in Werner p379. (Arishima's own English).

¹⁷² Tildi eventually became engaged but the engagement was later broken off, perhaps because of her attachment to Arishima. It is said that Tildi went to Japan after Arishima's death and visited his grave along with the college where he had taught. She purchased books Arishima had written, even though she could not read them herself. See Arishima 1919/78, p13. Strong (tr.) Introduction to *A Certain Woman*.

various discussions about some of Kropotkin's works, the state of affairs in Russia, as well as the developments of socialism in Japan.¹⁷³ Some ten years later Arishima would write two articles on the encounter and on Kropotkin's principles, *Kurōpotokin* (Kropotkin, 1916) and *Kurōpotokin no Inshō to kare no Shugi oyobi Shisō ni tsuite* (Impressions of Kropotkin and his Principles and Thoughts, 1920). In describing Kropotkin's anarchist theory Arishima wrote: "putting it simply, breaking down society into small communities with each individual community taking a communistic form."¹⁷⁴ Arishima was eventually to put a major theory of Kropotkin's into practice when he gave away his farmland to his tenant farmers.

London marked the end of Arishima's travels abroad. On 23 February 1907 he boarded the *Inaba-maru* and left for Japan. Just as he had done in the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., and in the British Museum, he kept up his enthusiasm for reading during the voyage. He recorded his first sighting of Japan after his three year period of absence in his diary:

Those images of nature crowded my eyes with ever-changing impression, and I could not help admiring – in spite of all my intellectual objection – the beauty and loveliness of my birthplace.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Morton 88, p74.

¹⁷⁴ Quoted in Morton 88, p74.

¹⁷⁵ From Arishima Takeo's diary entry in the author's own English. *ATZ* 79-88, vol11, p162.

On an emotional level at least, Arishima was elated to see Japan again. He disembarked at Kobe on 11 April 1907.

III.4. Arishima Takeo's Writings about the West

The writings that resulted from Arishima's experience in the West were presented in a variety of forms including diary entries, novel and essay. It is evident from the beginning that unlike Kafū, Arishima did not use his time in the West to collect material that would form the body of collections of short stories. Instead, Arishima wrote about events that occurred which he considered to be significant to him.

One novel which records a segment of his time in the United States is the work *Meiro* (Labyrinth, 1918). The first part of the novel is considered to be so authentic and faithful a rendering of Arishima's activities that it has been rated as being ninety-percent autobiographical with fiction making up merely the last ten-percent.¹⁷⁶ The first part of the novel, titled *Kakode* (Departure), is set in the asylum in which Arishima worked in 1904. We can also assume with confidence that the main character of the novel who appears as "A" is

¹⁷⁶ Morton 88, p64.

Arishima himself. Certain other characters in the novel appear as they did in real life. For example, Dr. Scott is the patient at the asylum whom Arishima cared for and who then later took his own life. “P” can be taken as referring to the lawyer called Peabody with whom Arishima boarded, and “K”, if the pattern of using initials is followed, would refer to Arishima’s socialist friend Kaneko Kiichi.

In *Kakode*, the theme of Christianity makes an appearance early on and there are suggestions throughout that are linked to Arishima’s own abandonment of the religion. For “A” in the novel, he found following God to be difficult as he felt that he was powerless in the face of temptation. He also explores the extent of his faith and even indicates that now upon realization, all along his belief in God was seemingly superficial:

For someone who was once convinced he believed in God but unknowingly strayed from Him by following his own genuine intuition, can there be a lonelier time than when he realizes that, after all, he didn’t really know God? ¹⁷⁷

The underlying problem in “A’s” case was that he had endeavoured to avoid giving in to all kinds of temptation, the kind that involved sexual desire being

¹⁷⁷ Arishima 1918/ 92, p2.

the hardest to resist. In fact, “A” found that any kind of desire about which he felt guilty pulled him further away from God.

The theme of Christianity again reveals itself through advice given by Dr. Scott. On the night prior to “A’s” departure from the asylum Dr. Scott approached “A” and after he expressed his gratitude for the care he had received, he gave “A” some advice:

Throughout the remainder of your life, you must never consciously do one evil thing, no matter how trivial it is. If you do, you will never be able to regain peace of mind. You will never be able to atone for it. Never forget that.¹⁷⁸

Dr. Scott’s suicide was proof that he had never been able to atone for his own guilt. This event hit “A” hard and brought him to tears. “A” knew precisely the type of guilt that Dr. Scott had been feeling.

Aside from faith, while at the asylum, “A” learnt of the un-Christian-like behaviour of some of his colleagues:

I have the feeling they must be good-for-nothing bums, seeing that all they do is loaf around, performing hardly any work for their salaries of four dollars a week. They also act like bullies, calling the asylum a ‘bug nest’ and calling the patients ‘bugs.’¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Arishima 1918/ 92, p33.

¹⁷⁹ Arishima 1918/ 92, p23.

Unlike the other employees, “A” was hard working, focused and ethical, providing care to the best of his ability. While it can not be disputed as to the effort he put into his work, he evidently felt as though nothing he did was an achievement to be proud of, saying, “It seems as if I lived through these two months to no purpose.”¹⁸⁰

Meiro provides further insight into Arishima’s experiences in the United States through the descriptions of the people he interacted with on a regular basis, in particular their character traits, attitudes and beliefs. Peabody is the practicing lawyer who is estranged from his wife. He is romantically involved with another woman with whom he engages in sexual acts on a weekly basis. In *Meiro*, “A” is deeply affected by this and stated that it aroused his own sexual desire which he found awkward and embarrassing:

He did not blame P for his intimacy with this woman since P and his wife were separated, for that was the same as being divorced. But it repelled him that P concealed this fact – even from him. Even worse than that displeasure was the horrible effect the entire affair was having on him. He wanted to escape by whatever means from the torture he expected that day.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Arishma 1918/ 92, p28.

¹⁸¹ Arishma 1918/ 92, p48.

From this point on, “A” avoided being in the house when “P’s” mistress was present.

The character “K” is very self-assured and harbours strong political convictions. His socialist beliefs rub off on “A”, who attends a gathering of like-minded socialists to hear “K” give a speech. During his impassioned speech, “K” declares his position:

Why should I, a property-less and infirm man, attempt this long journey but for the fact that my thoughts, the very basis of my life, are not allowed to exist in Japan? Believe me, it is because I cherish my thoughts so deeply that I attempted this long journey.¹⁸²

This statement also gives an insight to the state of Japanese society at the time and it would seem, from what “K” was saying, that people were not as free in Japan to voice their political opinions as they were in the United States.

“A” understood that “K” had persevered through many difficulties in order to stand up for his socialist principles and openly acknowledged this:

He could deeply sympathise with and understand the life of “K,” who, with extraordinary boldness, courage, and talent, had suffered because he had strayed from the right road.¹⁸³

¹⁸² Arishima 1918/ 92, p59

¹⁸³ Arishima 1918/ 92, p169.

Throughout *Meiro*, “K’s” health gradually deteriorates as he succumbs to tuberculosis. “A” rushes to be by “K’s” side during his final hours and after “K’s” passing “A” showed true companionship and loyalty by watching over “K’s” casket.

Overall, much of the focus of *Meiro* is on the people Arishima came to be acquainted with throughout his time in the United States. Unlike Kafū who described atmospheres and surroundings in great detail, Arishima’s focus is on the individual to such an extent that the surroundings are, seemingly, neglected in *Meiro*. The novel does, however, provide an indication as to what Arishima thought of the personalities and actions of those around him. It is a real-life insight into the inner workings of the people who lived in the United States at the start of the twentieth century.

Besides *Meiro*, Arishima kept a record of his time in the West in the form of a diary, much of which he wrote in English. It was in his diary, and even more so in letters he wrote to firstly Fanny Crowell, and then later to Mathilda Heck, that he expressed his true feelings. He expressed himself more candidly through these means as he would have probably expected this written material to remain undisclosed and his correspondence to be private.

The diary entry for 1 September 1906 was recorded aboard the *Dampfer Prinzess Irene* on the way to Europe in the form of a letter to Fanny, but Arishima, at no time, intended for it to be sent. In this letter he expresses his fondness of the United States and reveals how it was through the time he spent there that he came to understand himself on a deeper level:

My last day in this country has come. Many a recollection sweet and sad oppresses my heart. I must say first of all that it was this country that made me to think myself, to speculate free. I have done great deal in the formation of my self and principle.....I tried to be independent in framing my thought, but not my action. I am still a slave to conventionality and tradition.....¹⁸⁴

Further in the same entry, Arishima assertively proclaims his opinion of American society:

I love America, the land found out by Columbus.....I cannot help but to cherish a heartfelt hope that one day this people will awake from the slumber of ancient tradition and van progress of universal brotherhood. 'State must go' is the necessary conclusion of every progressive mind of this age.¹⁸⁵

It is evident from this entry that Arishima was quiet socialist in his thinking and this clearly resulted from his experiences in the United States and the people, like Kaneko Kiichi, with whom he associated.

¹⁸⁴ Quoted in Morton 88, p71. (Arishima's own English).

¹⁸⁵ Quoted in Morton 88, p72. (Arishima's own English).

At other times, he revealed his vulnerable side. After traveling around Europe with his brother Ikuma, Arishima parted company from him and journeyed from Paris to London on his own. Upon his arrival in London, he states that, “I am now alone – a stranger amongst the strangers.”¹⁸⁶ This acknowledgement of loneliness was written on the back of a postcard from London which was sent to Tildi.

It was during this early stage of Arishima’s lasting correspondence that he revealed why he felt he was unable to visit Tildi again in Switzerland, despite her requests to do so. Arishima politely declined the invitation in a letter he dated 19 January 1907:

Each tiding of you invites me so kindly once more to come back to you.....But as I believe that you write it from your heart and I read it from my heart, I suppressed my desire to accept your invitation. Yes, I like to meet you [sic] once again, but how I can bear to depart from you again and forever.¹⁸⁷

Arishima was aware that he did not have a constitution that was strong enough not to shatter when the time came for him to relive the feelings he had experienced after having left Tildi the first time. He felt that “one experience

¹⁸⁶ *ATZ* 79-88 vol13, p736. The postcard was one depicting the New Central Criminal Court in London.

¹⁸⁷ *ATZ* 79-88, vol13, p733.

of this bitterness is more than enough.”¹⁸⁸ By the end of the month, he had become even more resolute in his decision not to visit Tildi again, stating “After reading your letter, I more & [sic] more firmly made my mind not to visit you once more. Don’t ask me about it anymore. If you do it again I will think of you as cruel to me.”¹⁸⁹

As each day passed and the *Inaba-maru* drew closer to Japan, Arishima grew more concerned about what kind of life awaited him back in Japan, noting, “As I approach to my homestead, I feel heavy laden oppresses my shoulders.”¹⁹⁰ There would have been opportunities available to someone of his caliber, but the matter revolved around whether he would be able to discover the path that gave him happiness.

Once back in Japan Arishima, at intervals, wrote recollections of his time in the West. One of these short essays was called *Furansesu no Kao* (Frances’s Face, 1916), which was published in the Woman’s Magazine, *Shinkei* (A New Family) on 1 March 1916.¹⁹¹ *Furansesu no Kao* describes Arishima’s visits to his classmate Arthur Crowell’s family farm in Avondale, with the majority of

¹⁸⁸ *ATZ* 79-88, vol13, p733.

¹⁸⁹ *ATZ* 79-88, vol13, p731.

¹⁹⁰ *ATZ* 79-88, vol13, p716.

¹⁹¹ *ATZ* 79-88 vol2, p601.

the attention focused on Fanny, Arthur's youngest sister. Fanny is described by Arishima as having straight, chest-nut, brown hair that was parted in middle in the style of an American Indian and cut below her ears.¹⁹² At times in *Furansesu no Kao* he frolicks alongside both Fanny and her sister Caroline in the fields and amongst the trees. In one incident, Arishima chased after Fanny and he grabbed her from behind, around her middle. Arishima felt like Bacchus as he chased Fanny and he pictured her as a nymph escaping off amidst the forest. The whole situation caused his heart to pound with an almighty strength that made his chest hurt.¹⁹³

Clearly, Arishima romanticized much of the events that took place with Fanny, who, being the innocent age of thirteen, would have thought the incident as nothing more than child's play. Upon returning to Avondale farm in spring the following year, he realized how much everyone had changed and grown in that short period of time. While Fanny was no longer as he had remembered, he still remained captivated by her and he greatly enjoyed being in her company.

¹⁹² *ATZ* 79-88, vol 2, p463.

¹⁹³ *ATZ* 79-88 vol2, p463.

By and large, Arishima's writings about the West are very personal accounts of the events that took place in his life during his time overseas and also of the relationships he developed with the people who became acquainted with him.

While unlike Kafū, Arishima's focus was not on producing works for the general reader out of his experiences in the West, they likewise contain interesting content and themes that portray what life was like at that time in both the United States and Europe.

Chapter IV

Translation of Nagai Kafū's "Pari no Wakare" ("Adieu, Paris")

The final day was coming ever closer. The following morning I was to leave Paris. I had to part with it forever. Even before the spring flowers were in bloom I had to return to Japan. Ignoring everything, including the doctor's advice even though I was in poor health, I had stubbornly remained in Paris. But now I had run out of money and could not stay on. I had to be in London the day after tomorrow for the departure of the ship that was to take me back to Japan, which meant I had get there a day before the departure.

As I had been saying that I was finally going back to Japan, a few close companions of mine took me out to a restaurant in a tree-shaded spot on the Champs-Élysées and treated me to farewell champagne. After leaving the restaurant we went to a café, still under the shady trees. It was beautifully lit and we listened to popular songs there. Then, back out again on the Boulevard, we moved on to a room in another café where we watched a beautiful Spanish woman playing castanets as she danced wildly. The night was too short and we forgot that dawn was looming.

After having spent a night partying, I savoured over and over the sights of the streets of Paris and the river Seine, wondering whether it really would be the last time I would get to see them.

While watching the early morning sun reflecting on the bell tower of Notre Dame, I plodded back to my lodgings in the Quartier Latin. Darkening my room by drawing the curtains, I tried to get quickly off to sleep, but when I thought about how this was my last day in Paris, I found it wasn't that easy to fall asleep. I could hear the early morning birds chirping in the woods of the Parc Luxembourg and the bells ringing from the Sorbonne clock tower. And in the distance was the sound of a heavy cart rumbling along on its way to market or somewhere.

Lying on my bed, gazing up to the ceiling, I wondered why it was that I hadn't spent my entire life in Paris. Why was it that I hadn't been born in Paris? Rather than being angry over the fate that had been dealt to me, I felt miserable. I could not believe that the lives of Heine, Turgenev and Chopin – men who had all died in Paris – could have been unhappy. After all, they were artists who had been able to spend their whole lives in the capital of art, just as they had wished. Like Byron had once done, I too had come to grow weary of

the land of my ancestors and had set out intrepidly on a journey to foreign climes, but now, thanks to the small problem of livelihood – that is to say, the vulgar annoyance of a thing called money – I was forced to return to where I had come from, like some lost dog with its head down in disgrace.

I couldn't remember who it was, but I recalled having once heard someone say you could always try being a waiter if you found yourself struggling to make a living in Paris. At this thought I promptly leaped out of bed, and picked up the clothes I'd left on the floor. However, having spent the night indulgently drinking champagne, I was dizzy and weary and my joints ached dreadfully. Alas, with a body such as mine, I couldn't make it as a *garçon* or anything else.¹⁹⁴ I couldn't even make a living by pimping off the earnings of a prostitute!

I collapsed back down onto the bed. I simply did not want to go back to Japan. I just wanted to stay in Paris.

Through a gap in the curtains the sun flooded in and slanted onto the floorboards. From everywhere I could hear windows and doors being opened

¹⁹⁴ It would seem that Kafū was suffering from nothing more than a hangover. This self-inflicted ailment would hardly render him unable to perform the duties of a waiter.

and waste water being thrown out. And from somewhere I could smell the pleasant aroma of coffee being brewed. In the room next to mine, I could hear the whispers of a man and a woman. Intrigued, I tried to listen in to their conversation, but just then, down in the courtyard below my window, a manservant from the lodgings began to work the water pump as he sang in a sleepy voice, “Quoi, maman, vous n’étiez pas sage?”¹⁹⁵

Back in Japan, I wouldn’t be hearing any popular French songs like this one – which was being sung in what seemed to be a hoarse voice from Normandy or thereabouts. At this thought I found myself stretching forward towards the sound as if I was listening at the opera. Why was I so fond of France?

France! Ah, France! I had been fond of France – and for no particular reason – ever since I first learned about it in a world history lesson at middle school. I never had any interest in English. Yet when I spoke just one or two words of French it felt infinitely pleasurable. My going to America was merely an indirect attempt to go from there to France. They say there is always a discrepancy between a traveller’s fantasy and reality, but in my case it turned out that the France I saw in reality was more beautiful and wonderful than the France I had fantasized about.

¹⁹⁵ “Quoi, maman, vous n’étiez pas sage?” has a meaning in English of “What, mother, you were naughty?”

Ah, my France! I had been living just so I could find a way to tread on French soil.

I could hear footsteps going up and down the stairs in the lodgings, and outside there were voices and the sounds of vehicles. The morning summer sun shone through the fabric of the curtains, and gradually the whole room began to brighten up.¹⁹⁶

Until past eleven o'clock I lay on my side on the bed, my eyes open, thinking about one thing and another, thinking about the various happenings and romantic adventures I had experienced while living overseas, and about what my life would be like after my return to Japan. But at last I grew weary of thinking and began to doze off. It was close to two o'clock in the afternoon by the time I finally got up and washed my face.

After I finished my lunch at the cheap restaurant I always went to on the corner, I reflected once more. How should I spend this half day, this final half day?

¹⁹⁶ It is late May, but Kafū is inconsistent in his seasonal terminology, sometimes referring to Spring, sometimes to Summer.

As I gazed out from the restaurant's glass door onto the wide Saint Michelle road, I saw everywhere the light of the nearly-June sun. On both sides of the road the new leaves of the chestnut trees were incredibly fresh looking, and even more so against the bold colours of some women with their new summer clothes and parasols. A group of students, wearing what looked to be brand new panama hats, seemed lost. They called out to one of the women with the parasols and they stood together chatting happily. Then they all strolled off merrily together in the direction of Parc Luxembourg.

I wanted to spend today's half-day, if possible, walking everywhere around Paris once more to see the whole city, but this was impossible given the size of the city. Instead I chose to spend my final afternoon in "my Paris" next to the Médicis Fountain in the shade of the trees in the park, where I had spent so many spring afternoons absorbing myself in my books and my thoughts.¹⁹⁷ I quickly followed after the students who were still grouped around the lady with her parasol, cut diagonally across the steep main road and went straight into the park through the iron gates.

¹⁹⁷ La Fontaine des Médicis (The Médicis Fountain) was built in 1630 under the order of Marie de Médicis (1575-1642), Queen Consort of France.

Near those iron gates, near the stone statue of the poet Leconte de Lisle, tulips had been planted arranged according to their five colours.¹⁹⁸ As they caught the bright sunlight, they had the appearance of a woven brocade pattern. Beyond the tulips lay the slope down to the fountain, a wide open park covered everywhere by the new leaves of the chestnut groves planted in straight rows. The leaves were soft and translucent, which meant that the light of the clear summer sky could shine freely through them, so that looking up from underneath it was like looking at a ceiling covered over with green tinted glass. It was so relaxing under the trees thanks to this softly lit shade, as if you had entered the cool air and calming light of a cathedral. Beyond the trees and on the other side of the fence, the road was busy with people and vehicles coming and going. However, all of that seemed far away, like a mural in a faintly lit temple.

Sat on benches in the soft shade, reading, knitting and sewing, were elegant Parisian women, the ones that dreams are made of, and young wives, no less inferior looking and again just as you would see in a dream. As they leaned forward they revealed the pure white nape of their necks. There were others about doing nothing in particular, looking as if they were in a trance, as they listened to the songs of blackbirds and robins [sic] from high in the trees.

¹⁹⁸Charles-Marie-René Leconte de Lisle (1818-1894) was a French poet of the Parnassian movement.

There was a group of three or four others who had drawn their chairs near to each other and were talking amongst themselves in hushed tones about what seemed to be a private matter. Among the nurses pushing prams there was a beautiful young child minder who stood out from the rest. Instead of wearing a hat, she had a black ribbon tied up into a large bow. Everywhere around, young children cuter than dolls were playing among the trees. An old man with thick white hair, carrying a walking cane, strolled by and stopped to watch them with his sad, aged eyes. Young couples were leaning against each other, looking neither fully awake nor napping, completely engrossed in their thoughts. There was also a lonely-looking man with a pale complexion and long beard – perhaps a poet – and he sat watching the young loving couples from a distance, the book he was reading open on his lap.

It was living poetry. But it was a kind of living poetry that was also melancholy, a type seen in Paris and nowhere else, after centuries of civilization had been pushed to the extreme and people as well as nature had suffered. I realized that just like I had done, Baudelaire and Maupassant would have experienced this afternoon shade, immersed in their own endless thoughts. I accepted that even if in the literary circles back home my

reputation as a writer was insignificant, what I was experiencing was surely sufficient happiness and honour for an artist.¹⁹⁹

Up above two or three doves sang sonorously as they flew off together in the direction of the old Médecis Fountain. The flapping of their wings was accompanied by a further cascading of the white blossoms from the chestnuts.

I sat on a shaded bench near the fountain and tried to imprint forever in my mind everything I saw around me, not only the colours of the grass and the flowers but also the style of the ladies' hats and clothes. I would close my eyes for a while and then I would take time to look around again, and then once more close them in silent contemplation.

The sun was gradually starting to set. People started leaving the shaded areas one by one. The gold of the setting sun slanted at an angle down onto the abandoned benches, and the park with its shady trees now seemed brighter than when the sun was at its highest point at midday. Then further beyond the trees, the buildings of Luxembourg and the top of the church tower of St. Sulpice made a stark contrast of light and dark, and the whole city came to be

¹⁹⁹ Charles Pierre Baudelaire (1821-1867) was a Parisian poet, critic and translator. Guy de Maupassant (1850-1893) was a popular French writer.

covered over, like a dream, in the purple twilight that is distinctly Parisian.²⁰⁰

Ah, Parisian twilight! Its beauty, its liveliness, its charming sights. Once you have set foot in Paris, it is impossible to forget the whirl of colours and sounds.

The colours of the clear twilight sky merged with the colours of the setting sun, making it a deep purple as if it had been dyed. In the reflection of the twilight the houses that were built of white stone, and the wide, flat roads, all turned a pale blue colour. The air was very cool and pure, and everything, including the roofs, people and vehicles, stood out starkly as though freshly washed. Despite this, at an indefinite point, a darkness of sorts was beckoning, and without being able to explain it, I felt as if my mind was being carried back to long ago. And then, just like an ocean tide that comes and goes, there were surges of horse carriages, electric trains and streams of people. With the light from the street lamps illuminating the neighbourhood, I felt strangely restless and started walking, though with no real idea of where I was going, my eyes excited by the movement of countless colours and my mind confused by a myriad sounds.

²⁰⁰ St. Sulpice is a monumental, Late Baroque church in Paris. It was constructed between 1646 and 1745 and is named after Saint Sulpicius, a 7th century bishop of Bourges in Aquitaine. One notable christening to have occurred at St Sulpice is that of Charles Baudelaire. <http://www.sacred-destinations.com/france/paris-st-sulpice.htm>

I thought I'd have dinner while it was still twilight – for in Paris the twilight is long and does not turn to night proper till after nine o'clock. As I walked through the twilight, I came to rest at a café on a corner near the Sorbonne to which I had grown accustomed to going each day.

It was so packed there that I could hardly find an empty seat, not just on the terrace, which was lined with fresh green potted shrubs, but even inside the spacious rooms that had filled up with local students, artists and their female companions who had all come out at exactly the right time to take in the cool of the evening. I tried to revive my spirits by immersing myself in the lively music, loud voices, bright lights and ladies' hats, and thought I should splash out and treat myself on my last night, but no matter how strong the absinthe, on this occasion it had no effect at all – rather, it was like the final drink of a man condemned to death. Amongst all the commotion of music, voices and dishes, all I could think about was the passing of time. It was just like the tempo of a slow waltz chiseling away the time, and I couldn't bare to sit still any longer. Before long, at the end of a lane, standing tall behind the stone statue of the philosopher August Comte²⁰¹ – which looked oddly pale in the electric street light – was the great clock tower of the Sorbonne. As it struck the hour, I didn't know what hour it was exactly, but it struck with a strong

²⁰¹ The philosopher August Comte (1798-1857) is widely recognised as the 'father of sociology'.

depressing sound, and I felt as if each strike penetrated my heart like a drop of poison.

Oh, the agony! I wondered what would have happened if I were to have become like some sort of wild beast and raged around destroying nearby dining tables, chairs and plates. I was in distress over having to leave Paris but Paris itself seemed not to worry: the city donned the dark mantle of night, inset with sparkling lights, and was about to enter a dreamworld of endless pleasures. The very thought made me want to press the side of my face up against the cold wall of the church in the gloomy backstreet and bawl my eyes out in private.

Mon Dieu, what was I to do?²⁰² Just then I felt it would have been better if the train were to set off immediately, and take me away. It was going to be impossible for me to wait in a calm state for this night to come to an end. Finding something to do seemed the best thing, and if I took myself away to some place, I might possibly discover a distraction. I hailed a passing cab on the main street.

²⁰² “Mon Dieu” has a meaning in English of “My God.”

Just as I was about to climb into it, two women strolling past, who were just about to stop for a brief rest on the café's chairs, spotted me and without hesitation called out:

“Please let us come with you. You're going off on an outing are you not?”

“Oui Mesdames,” I replied.²⁰³

Yes, I was going off on an outing. I wanted to flit like a breeze all over Paris until dawn. The night was becoming darker. The tree-lined avenue, like the interior of the café, was dazzling with bright electric light, and through this bright light, like a starving eagle homing in on the song of some small bird about to become its prey, our cab sped onwards in the direction of the famous pleasure quarters of Montmartre, with its even brighter lights.

Just as the true flavour of love cannot be truly understood until after a farewell, upon leaving for England, I reflected on the beauty of France.

The express train for London, which departed from Paris' Saint Lazarre Station just after ten o'clock in the morning, paused for a short break on the banks of the Seine at Rouen, where there are many production plants amidst

²⁰³ “Oui Mesdames” has a meaning in English of “Yes, Ladies.”

the river scenery, and then crossed the fertile plains of Normandy, arriving at the port of Dieppe at two o'clock in the afternoon. The passengers were immediately transferred onto a small steamboat and we spent just over two hours crossing the Channel. From Newhaven we boarded a train once again and arrived in London that evening.

The thing that I noticed immediately I got off the small steamboat was the colour of the sky. It was May, summertime, when worldwide flowers were blooming [sic]²⁰⁴, and as was to be expected, the English sky was clear. However, though it was only separated by a short stretch of Channel water, it was certainly not tinged with the soft sleek sheen you see in a French sky. After departing from Newhaven, I had immediately noticed, as far as the eye could see, the landscape of pastures of lush green grass and woods but, rather than feeling surprised, I felt it to be utterly strange. The green of that grass was tinged with black, and the shape of the trees, for some reason, seemed rugged, nothing like the graceful branches you would see in paintings by Corot²⁰⁵ or along the banks of the Seine. This spacious landscape was lonely rather than peaceful, and I could not feel the delightful intoxication evoked by the vivid colours of the Normandy pastures we had just passed through.

²⁰⁴ Kafū, here, appears to have a lack of geographical knowledge. In the southern hemisphere, it is certainly not summer during the month of May.

²⁰⁵ Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1825) was a famous Parisian landscape painter.

I felt passionately that if you are to appreciate the true meaning of words such as “pleasant” or “refreshing” there is nowhere like France.

The English would, without a doubt, claim their pastureland was beautiful. Yes, one could say that it was beautiful. However, even if something is beautiful it does not necessarily mean that it is refreshing and delightful. Pastureland as beautiful as this, to a tormented young dreamer like me, is surely nothing more than indifferent, unfeeling, cold nature. Looking at the black tinge of the grass, I could not imagine that any naked nymph would come dancing out of the mist of a summer dawn, and in the shade of those thorny woods I could not sense that any young faun would wake from his afternoon dreamtime and play his flute. In other words, nature in England, as I now saw it in this light, was nothing more than pasture that was necessary for tens of thousands of sheep. It was land that was designated for the nation’s industry and production and the like.

When I arrived in London, I wasn’t sure as to where I should go. The ship for Japan was scheduled to sail the following morning so it was merely a matter of one night, and as I had no preference, I followed the cab driver’s recommendation and went to lodgings close to the station.

It was right on dinner time and out of the dining room of the lodgings came a smell of food and a clattering of dishes, but when I looked at the face of the maid going back and forth along the corridor, I hardly felt in the mood to dine in an English house. She was probably a woman who had originated from Ireland or somewhere. She had a big down-turned mouth, her chin was protruding, both her cheekbones stuck up high and she had eyes that were deeply sunken – features that made her resemble a Japanese demon or an old witch from a German fairytale. Striding towards me in an unsightly manner and waving her big hands, she abruptly asked me “Will you be having dinner?” I was so astonished I found it hard to reply.

Of late I had become quite accustomed to the way the French language was pronounced, like music to the ears, and also to the charming French girls. Now I had come across the blunt manner of the British maid and the distinctive harshness of the English language that pierced my ears, making me feel as if I was being scolded for something or other.

I somehow managed to mumble a parting remark of “No thank you” and went out onto the street. I had heard that even in London there was a French quarter, and so I thought that perhaps there would also be a French restaurant there.

The cab driver confirmed that this was indeed the case and we drove off to that place.

After spending some time driving down busy Oxford Street, the cab pulled over in a narrow lane. I climbed down from the cab and walked on for a while but I couldn't see anything that looked French. And looking at the people walking by, they did not look French either. But soon I came across a restaurant with two crossed flags outside, the Union Jack and the familiar French tricolour, and instinctively I hurried inside.

The restaurant was cheap and dirty. Close to the doorway there were three men, most probably workmen, seated at a table covered by a stained white tablecloth, further inside there were four or five men who looked like merchants, and sitting alone in the far corner was a woman whose appearance was not unsightly. Her clothes, features and hat were a little scruffy, but I could tell at a glance that she was unmistakably a Parisian woman.

I felt like I had found an oasis in the desert. Only two or three hours had passed since I had crossed the English Channel and had left the beaches of Normandy behind me, but already I felt unbearably homesick, for which I now

thought I had found some short-term relief.²⁰⁶ However, it was indeed short-lived relief. The three workmen were shouting at one another in Parisian street slang and I was hearing the types of words that can't be found in the dictionary. This brought to mind vivid memories of my beloved Montmartre, images of what was now the irretrievable past, and this left me shrouded in an indescribable cloud of sorrow.

Inevitably I found myself looking back in the direction of the lonely-looking woman sitting by herself. She was propping herself up by leaning with one elbow on the table – a dirty table, to go with the dirty walls – looking sorrowful and sighing from time to time. She was prodding her food with her fork but made no effort to eat, staring up at the fly-spotted ceiling. It was as if she was a flower transplanted from another country, but a flower that nonetheless was losing its colour. This spectacle of a genuine Parisian profile in a British setting was one of pathos. Long grown accustomed to traveling, I quickly sensed the sadness of exile, and I wondered for what reason she had left beautiful France.

If this were Paris, even if it were a cheap restaurant, there would be a terrace in an avenue lined with shady chestnut trees from where you could watch people

²⁰⁶ Kafū at this stage was feeling homesick, not for Japan, but for the France he had just left behind.

coming and going in the purple twilight, listen to the tune of a violin, and drink intoxicating wine. However, I was now starting to think of my own lifestyle in Paris and not someone else's.

While I was eating my meal I desperately wanted to hear a word from that woman's lips, a word of gentle French. I would have no other opportunity during my lifetime to exchange words with a genuine Parisian woman, for tomorrow morning I was leaving on the ship. I wanted to ask her about her personal circumstances, about how she came to be wandering alone in the city of London of all places, where everything is blackened with soot. I was letting my imagination run away with itself. At the same time I was careful that I did not miss any opportunity that might arise to talk to her.

Fate, usually so cruel to me, must have finally taken pity upon me this time. Just when she finished her meal, the changeable English sky clouded over, and then quickly turned to rain. She had asked the waiter two or three times about what the weather was doing. When I overheard her telling the waiter that she didn't have an umbrella, I realized happily that I was in luck in that being prepared for travel as I always was, I was carrying an umbrella with me instead of a walking cane. I was unable to bear it a moment longer, and without any hesitation I called out to her, "Madame."

Needless to say, she declined to take the umbrella that I offered to her. She remained seated there thinking that before long the rain would stop, and from that point on we gradually began to converse. She had arrived in London the night before last. It was her first visit, and she was employed to work in a kiosk at the Anglo-French Exposition that had just got underway two weeks ago. She was staying in a room in a boarding house a block away but she found that the food the English ate was not to her liking, not even bread or coffee. On the other hand, she didn't have the financial means to go to a high-class restaurant and so this evening, for the first time, she had come to this cheap restaurant owned by a Frenchman.

"What do you think of London?" I asked.

"It's a gloomy place isn't it! I can't even drink the coffee," she replied with a sad smile.

I was grateful that the drizzle didn't look like it was going to stop anytime soon, and despite her protests I escorted her as far as the door to her lodgings.

The woman opened the door, and when it came time for us to part company she held out to me her gloved hand and said, “Merci monsieur, au revoir.”²⁰⁷

I shook her hand so firmly that it must have given her a surprise and then I hastily departed. Ah, the unknowing Parisian woman. She had charmingly used the nostalgic term “au revoir,” with its meaning of “till we meet again,” but for me, who after this night had to travel to the furthest edge of the far away east, it had a meaning of “adieu pour toujours”²⁰⁸ (a farewell where there is no chance of another meeting in the future). That woman was the last Parisian woman to speak to me in a genuine Parisian accent.

I thought I would find some place with music that would help dispel my growing anguish, and after I left the lane I immediately hailed a cab. But for those who have seen the lights of Paris, London, which is the biggest city in the world, has no style whatsoever and is nothing more than a clumsy mess of bricks and stones built for purely utilitarian purposes. Speak not of the immortal opera. As for the London playhouses, from the outside they look like restaurants or taverns, in contrast to the magnificence of the Théâtre Français

²⁰⁷ “Merci, monsieur, au revoir” in English means, “Thank you Sir, Goodbye.”

²⁰⁸ In English this literally means “Goodbye for ever.”

with its statue of the poet Musset.²⁰⁹ In the streets there are no trees and the buildings are uneven in height and order. No matter how much you change your position and no matter from how far away you look, you can never find even a scrap of harmony. Once in a while you can come across nice bronze statues standing here and there, but their positioning always seems ill-suited, as if they had just been planted there temporarily during road works or the like. Looking at the women passing by, their hats have no decorations adorning them, their attire shows no sense of colour, the shapes of their footwear are abominable, they have plump bottoms and the cut of their skirts lacks style. For some reason the ear-piercing whistles of people hailing the two-wheeled hackney cabs, which dash recklessly from one place to another, made me recall scenes from a detective novel.

This was the England I saw. Impatiently waiting for the next morning when I would be able to leave this land, I went to sleep in my lodgings.

²⁰⁹ Alfred Louis Charles de Musset-Pathay (1810-1857) was a Paris-born poet and novelist.

Chapter V

How the Experiences in the West Impacted

Upon Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo

V.1 Impact of Experiences abroad on Nagai Kafū

Reaching Japan in July 1908, Kafū returned to live with his family in their new home in Okubo and would not travel overseas again during his lifetime. Yet, he returned to Japan influenced by his experiences in the United States and France. Furthermore, he found that his work *Amerika Monogatari* (Tales of America, 1908) which he had written between 1903-1907 while in the United States, had been well received by the public and had landed him in the role of “perhaps the most famous *shinkichōsha* (recent returnee) of his day.”²¹⁰

Near the conclusion of his first year back in Japan Kafū called upon Mori Ōgai (1862-1922). While in France, in March 1908, Kafū had met Ueda Bin who was well acquainted with Ōgai and it was the latter that Kafū came to consider as his teacher. This was an important move for Kafū for his work *Amerika Monogatari* had received the strongest praise from those who disliked

²¹⁰ Snyder in Rubin (ed.) 01, p137.

naturalism. Ōgai himself adopted an anti-naturalist approach early on in his literary career when he rebuked Zola for transferring the “methods of analysis and dissection” from science to literature.²¹¹

Despite earlier claiming devotion to the French naturalist Zola, *Amerika Monogatari* and the later published *Furansu Monogatari* tended rather to establish Kafū as an anti-naturalist. It made sense therefore, to receive guidance from a respected writer, such as Mori Ōgai, who was noted as an anti-naturalist.

Shortly after *Amerika Monogatari*'s successful reception, Kafū began preparing a second collection of writings which he had worked on while in France and also after his return to Japan. The collection was to be published as *Furansu Monogatari* (Tales of France) at the beginning of 1909. However, 1909 saw an increase in the number of works that were banned from publication and it was also the year during which the Diet's Press Law was enacted. This law, essentially aimed to suppress free speech, built upon the Press Regulations and Publication Regulations of 1887. The Press Regulations were guidelines for magazines and newspapers while the Publication

²¹¹ Hasegawa 81, p4.

Regulations affected the release of new books.²¹² According to this regulation, three copies of a book had to be sent to the Home Minister ten days before the due date of release. In reference to Article 16, “The Home Ministry [could] prohibit the sale or distribution of a printed book or picture which he deem[ed] to be disruptive of public peace and order or injurious to public morals, and he [could] seize its plates and printed copies.”²¹³ The Diet Press Law increased the number of agencies with censoring power to four: the local prosecutor, the district prosecutor, the local police and the Home Ministry. The idea of increased censorship and law reviews was well-established by the time Kafū’s *Furansu Monogatari* went to the censors. The collection was banned around 22 March 1909, and the police proceeded to seize every printed copy without hesitation.

Although Kafū had managed to publish individual pieces of *Furansu Monogatari* in various literary magazines, he concluded that the banning was the result of two particular works in the collection, the play *Ikyō no Koi* (Love in a Foreign Land) and *Hōtō* (Dissipation.) *Ikyō no Koi* and *Hōtō* had not been published elsewhere and were the first two pieces in the order found in the

²¹² Rubin 84, p15.

²¹³ Rubin 84, p16.

1909 edition.²¹⁴ Both were considered as containing inappropriate material and consequently the work, in its entirety, was closely scrutinized. Later editions released of *Furansu Monogatari* are noted for having varying inclusions and exclusions of *Ikyō no Koi* and *Hōtō*.²¹⁵

Despite being stalled by the censors, the publishing of *Furansu Monogatari* marked Kafū's most productive year in his literary career as he produced numerous short stories and essays in quick succession. Most notable was the novel *Sumidagawa* (The River Sumida, 1909). In this work, written during the second half of 1909, he captures the essence of Edo which was fast disappearing under the continual waves of modernisation.

Concurrently while working on *Sumidagawa*, Kafū was commissioned by another acclaimed author and journalist, Natsume Sōseki, to publish a novel in serial form in the *Asahi Shimbun*. Sōseki gave this opportunity to Kafū because he had been impressed by the young author, particularly by Kafū's work *Fukugawa no Uta* (A Song of Fukugawa, February 1909.) *Fukugawa no Uta* is both a critique of Meiji Tōkyō and a nostalgic recollection of what remained of a bustling part of Edo. The serialized novel, titled *Reishō* (Sneers,

²¹⁴ Rubin 84, p117.

²¹⁵ An abridged version of *Hōtō* was published in 1923 under the title *Kumo* (Clouds), while *Ikyō no Koi* was not published until 1947. Seidensticker 65, p26.

1909-1910), by comparison, continued with Kafū's theme of criticizing Meiji Japan while lamenting the loss of the traditional culture it was replacing. Kafū, himself, in writing his intentions behind *Reishō* stated, "I have attempted to provide a serious assessment of the vulgar confusion of Tōkyō life in 1909..."²¹⁶ While outlining the details of his works in their entirety is outside the scope of this thesis, it is important to note that the literature he produced in the years immediately after his return from abroad is among the group of his most well-known and celebrated works. Often, these works also emphasized his appreciation of how life was during the Edo period. This seems to have developed after having seen how progressive life was in the West.

In 1910 Kafū's literary career took a new direction. Due to a recommendation given by Ōgai and Ueda Bin, Kafū was appointed in April as Professor of French at Keiō University. Although he was by now a popular author with French-speaking ability, there was an alternative motive behind his appointment. Waseda University, Keiō's closest rival university, ran a literary magazine, *Waseda Bungaku* (Waseda Literature) which was strongly naturalist. Therefore, Kafū's appointment at Keiō University was to encourage literature stemming from Keiō's midst to be primarily anti-naturalist.²¹⁷ As a

²¹⁶ Quoted in Rubin (ed.) 01, p137.

²¹⁷ Lewell 93, p275.

literary magazine was needed to rival *Waseda Bungaku*, Kafū was the perfect choice for editor and *Mita Bungaku* (Mita Literature) began publication the following month.

Furthermore, in 1911, the well-known anarchist Kōtoku Shūsui (1871-1911) and eleven others, including Kōtoku's wife, were executed for possessing explosives and allegedly plotting to assassinate the Emperor. Kafū was deeply shocked by the condemnation of the anarchists and would later partly attribute this incident to his withdrawal from Meiji society. In an essay he would later write in 1919, titled *Hanabi* (Fireworks), Kafū disclosed his genuine feelings about the incident.

One can sense an undertone of regret in Kafū's writing that he did not voice his opinion at the time, but doing so could have endangered his own life. He recalled how he witnessed the transportation of Kōtoku Shūsui and the other anarchists to court:

When I was teaching at Keiō University, I often chanced on my way to class to see five or six police wagons go past Yotsuya [carrying Kōtoku and the other defendants] to the Hibiya courthouse. Of all the public incidents I had witnessed or heard of, none had filled me with such loathing. I could not, as a man of letters, remain silent in this matter of principle.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ Quoted in Rubin 84, p192.

Wishing to speak out about the High Treason Incident and the ensuing executions, he found he was unable to do so and in *Hanabi* he revealed he was ashamed that he had acted in a cowardly manner:

But I, along with the other writers of my land, said nothing. The pangs of conscience that resulted were scarcely endurable. I felt intensely ashamed of myself as a writer.²¹⁹

Feeling as he did, he shunned Meiji society and wanted, more than ever, to be a part of the literary world of Edo.

In Kafū's private life, this period was marked by marriages, divorces and deaths. In 1912, he married his first wife, Saitō Yone, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. The marriage was essentially to please his parents and caused a change in his character, if only for a short time, as he had always been involved with women of questionable character and was in fact, "rather proud of never having been involved with a 'decent woman.'"²²⁰ Kafū and Yone divorced less than five months later, his infidelity more likely the reason

²¹⁹ Quoted in Rubin 84, p192.

²²⁰ Powell 83, p280.

than not as it is thought that during his marriage to Yone he was also involved with a Shimbashi geisha called Uchida Yae (Yaeji).²²¹

Tragedy struck the Nagai family the same year when Kagen died unexpectedly. A battle with Isaburō, his younger brother, ensued over the distribution of the Nagai estate which passed to Kafū as the rightful heir. The rift between the brothers has been considered as a factor in Kafū's increasing alienation from the entire family.²²²

His second marriage, to Yaeji, the geisha with whom he had apparently had an affair with during his previous marriage, further increased the ill-feeling between the family members. At the time of Kagen's death, Kafū had been off in the mountains entertaining this woman and could not be reached. This marriage proved just as unsuccessful as the first, when Yaeji left Kafū after only a few months. Perhaps it was for the same reason that ended the union between him and his first wife, or perhaps it was simply because, as Yaeji would say after Kafū's passing, "He was very fickle."²²³

²²¹ Seidensticker 65, p47.

²²² Seidensticker 65, p54.

²²³ Seidensticker 65, p57.

1916 was a year of considerable change for Kafū. He returned to the family home after a period of absence during which time he had lived in Tsukiji and Yanagibashi. This year also marked Kafū's withdrawal from literary circles as he began leading a "reclusive, eccentric, peripatetic existence..."²²⁴ He felt that his commitments to Keiō University and to *Mita Bungaku* prevented him from doing what he enjoyed most, writing and spending time in the company of geisha, and so he decided to resign from both positions.

With his lifestyle becoming increasingly solitary, Kafū built a cottage in the garden of the family's Okubo house which he named "Dyspepsia House." He used the cottage as a study and a refuge from the outside world and it was here that he produced a number of works including *Udekurabe* (Geisha in Rivalry, 1918) and *Okamezasa* (Dwarf Bamboo, 1918). He also began his monumental diary called *Danchōtei Nichijō* (Daily Records of Dyspepsia House) which he was to continue up until his death approximately forty years later.

In 1918 Kafū decided to sell the Okubo property and moved once more to Tsukiji. Although he moved house, the aforementioned diary Kafū kept was to retain the name it had originally been given, when he had resided in his "Dyspepsia House." The district was in close proximity to geisha quarters, but

²²⁴ Snyder in Mostow (ed.) 03, p171.

it did not meet Kafū's standard of quietness which had perhaps increased with his withdrawal from society and onset of middle age. He moved again in 1920 to a western styled house he had built in the wealthy district of Azabu. It was in this home, which Kafū nicknamed "Henkikan" ("Eccentricity House"), where he was to remain until the home was destroyed by the fire caused by the US incendiary bombing of Tokyo in 1945.²²⁵

For Kafū, the 1920's marked a relatively inactive decade for writing, which was the result of an array of events. Mori Ōgai, whom Kafū considered as his mentor, died in July 1922, aged 60. Ōgai's death was followed by that of Kafū's close friend, Inoue Seiichi, the next year. Kafū himself had reoccurring bouts of dyspepsia which left him feeling unwell, while much of the city around him was destroyed by the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. On the death of Ōgai and Inoue, and mindful of his own illness, he wrote that, "...since then I have had neither teacher to go to for instruction nor friend to talk pleasantly with. In illness and in loneliness, I have found the desire to write decreasing day by day."²²⁶

²²⁵ Kafū 1908/00, pxvi.

²²⁶ Quoted in Seidensticker 65, pp104-105. (Unnumbered flyleaf).

Although disinclined to put pen to paper, Kafū produced two works worthy of mention during this decade, namely *Ame Shōshō* (Quiet Rain, 1921) and *Kashima no Onna* (The Woman in the Rented Room, 1926.) The former is about a man not unlike Kafū in education and fondness of Edo period art and literature.²²⁷ The latter is about a woman who poses as a famous actress and is kept by multiple men. The story is, however, more renowned for its convincing descriptions of the aftermath of the Kantō Earthquake.²²⁸

Just prior to the 1930s Kafū began a lengthy relationship with another geisha called Ō-uta from Kojimachi. He even bought out her contract and set her up in her own establishment. However, she then informed him that she wished to continue her work.²²⁹ By 1931 Ō-uta appeared to be suffering from a mental condition and Kafū ended the relationship.

Kafū had continued to isolate himself from literary circles which, by this time, were “controlled largely by the practitioners of politically engaged Proletarian fiction...”²³⁰ He preferred to keep to himself and enjoy any old remains of the city of Edo he came across while on his habitual strolls. In particular he looked

²²⁷ Keene 84, p427.

²²⁸ Seidensticker 65, p111.

²²⁹ Seidensticker 65, p121.

²³⁰ Snyder in Rubin (ed.) 01, p143.

for old buildings, shrines and temples that had not yet been removed to make way for modern architecture.

His silence was broken, however, with the publication of *Tsuyu no Atosaki* (During the Rains) in 1931. In this work Kafū returned to his naturalistic roots and used as material for the story his personal experience of the waitresses in Ginza cafés, who worked under that guise as prostitutes. As the cafés were a part of the modern world, the setting of this story stands in contradiction to the aspects of Edo which Kafū so eagerly wished to be maintained. However, Kafū himself suggests that, “Today, however, a decade after the earthquake, the vogue of the café girls would seem to be passing.”²³¹ Thus it could be ascertained that Kafū’s writing of *Tsuyu no Atosaki* was another attempt to preserve something of the past, albeit more recent, which Kafū saw as important.

Although *Tsuyu no Atosaki* was considered as Kafū’s “comeback” work, he was to withdraw again from the literary scene, producing few works and essays until the conclusion of World War Two.²³² The reasons for his second withdrawal have been attributed to his feelings about the war in Manchuria,

²³¹ Quoted in Seidensticker 65, p132.

²³² Snyder in Rubin (ed.) 01, p143.

which was among the events which he felt strongly about.²³³ Despite this being another period during which Kafū produced few works, it was in 1937 that he produced the work which is considered as his masterpiece, *Bokutō Kitan* (A Strange Tale from East of the River.)²³⁴ *Bokutō Kitan* is about a writer similar in nature to Kafū who becomes acquainted with a prostitute from the Tamanoi pleasure quarters. The district of Tamanoi consequently becomes the place the author goes when he desires to escape the modern city. It was also the first work since *Reishō* in 1909-1910 to be serialised in the *Asahi Shimbun*.

While Kafū enjoyed the success brought about by *Bokutō Kitan*, the year was also the last for his mother, Tsune, who died after suffering from an illness for over five months. Kafū's behaviour around this time was tremendously stubborn. He was still estranged from his brother Isaburō and his loathing seems to have run so deep that even repairing the relationship while their mother was gravely ill appeared out of the question. In March 1937 Kafū wrote what appeared to be his acceptance of the situation of his severed relationship with his mother, the central blame falling upon Isaburō:

²³³ In addition to the crisis in Manchuria, Keene attributes Kafū's second lapse into silence also to the suppression of the Communist Party, the May 15 Incident (when an attempted coup by the Japanese Imperial Navy resulted in the assassination of the prime minister), as well as to a general loss of interest in writing. Keene 84, pp429-430.

²³⁴ Iriye 83 p300.

Because Isaburō's family is living with my mother.....I do not wish to pay a sick call. I am determined not to put in an appearance even if the worst comes.....When I gave up the house in Okubo in 1918 and moved to an alley in Tsukiji, I was already reconciled to what must happen. I said that I took the day of my departure from Okubo to be equivalent to the day of my mother's death.²³⁵

It is clear that Kafū was determined not to visit his mother during her illness, nor did he attend her funeral. His actions here indicate that he was of an exceptional cantankerous nature, a very unforgiving and perhaps in Tsune's eyes an unkind, obstinate man who would rather prolong the division with his brother than see his mother before she died.

In another diary entry written 30 April 1937 Kafū laid bare his accusations against Isaburō. This entry reflected how Kafū felt about his brother's actions:

Isaburō had been out of sympathy with Kafū's writing; that he had forced a split in the family at the time of Kafū's marriage to Yaeji; that he had removed himself from Kafū's family register and set himself up as the head of an independent family; and that he had encouraged his children to taunt Kafū.²³⁶

It is hard to determine to what extent Isaburō would have agreed to these charges but it is certain that Kafū found his brother quite intolerable.

²³⁵ Quoted in Seidensticker 65, p150.

²³⁶ Seidensticker 65, pp150-151.

During the Pacific War years, 1941-1945, publishing became a trial for Kafū as his works were seen by the government as “frivolous” and publishers stopped approaching him for manuscripts.²³⁷ Instead he kept the manuscripts he had prepared during these years until the conclusion of the war. Kafū himself was not a supporter of the war and maintained a silent stance throughout the years of conflict although he was quietly “convinced Japan was making a big mistake with its military policies.”²³⁸ It would not have been wise to publicly declare such an opinion if one had any concern for one’s personal safety.

Kafū re-emerged onto the literary scene with great force during the post war years and the number of works he published is said to be in the hundreds.²³⁹ One particular achievement was the publication of his monumental diary *Danchōtei Nichijō*, which he had kept for over forty years.

For his contribution to the Japanese arts, Kafū was awarded the most prestigious honour given by the Japanese government, the *Bunka Kunshō* Medal (Imperial Cultural Decoration), in 1952. The official commendation the

²³⁷ Keene 84, p434.

²³⁸ Lewell 93, p276.

²³⁹ Seidensticker 65, p170.

government gave to accompany this award described Kafū as “a poet, social critic, and researcher in Edo culture and [for] his contribution in introducing foreign literature to Japan.”²⁴⁰ Two years later he became a member of the Japanese Academy of Arts.

Kafū had been greatly intrigued by the West. He had experienced life in both the United States, and for a shorter period of time, in France. He was particularly attracted to French literature and admired the likes of Zola, Baudelaire and Maupassant. Some aspects of these writers' works Kafū went on to use in the works he produced himself. He was similarly passionate about seeking out lingering remnants of old Edo, and when the Meiji era came to an end he sought to preserve that era too. He felt most at home while wandering amidst the backstreets, temples and shrines that had remained untouched by modernization. Kafū died on 30 April 1959, alone in his home, from an internal haemorrhage, and was found the following morning by his housekeeper. He was 69 years old.

²⁴⁰ Snyder in Rubin (ed.) 01, p146.

V.2 Impact of Experiences Abroad on Arishima Takeo

In the case of Arishima, more so than Kafū, a number of significant developments occurred in his thinking as a result of the time he spent abroad. While some of these developments took place in the West, there were others that really only manifested themselves once he had returned to Japan. Arishima's experiences abroad challenged him and it is said, that "the three and a half years till his return to Japan were crucial to his development as a writer and as a man."²⁴¹ In fact, Arishima's experiences in the United States primarily, and then also in Europe, impacted upon his religious and political views and touched him on a deep emotional level as he contemplated the notions of love and independence.

In August 1907 Arishima visited the large track of land his father had purchased for him in Makkaribetsu, Hokkaido. He additionally took the opportunity to visit the old Sapporo Agricultural College, now Tōhoku Imperial University, where it was arranged that he would take up a lecturing position from January the following year. Returning to the school, Arishima was received by students and teachers alike who either knew him personally or had heard much about his character. This highlighted a problem as Arishima

²⁴¹ Arishima 1919/ 78, pp7-8. Strong (tr.) Introduction to *A Certain Woman*.

was no longer as devoted to Christianity as he had displayed before he travelled to the West. Despite this, Arishima initially allowed himself to be accepted as a Christian:

Those who knew of my past greeted me as the enthusiastic Christian I had been of old. I was immediately sent to the Church where my belief had been born. I even became the principal of its Sunday school.²⁴²

Arishima's acquaintances, both old and new, were unaware of the events that had distressed him greatly and that had called his faith into question.

The unnecessary death of Dr. J.B. Scott at the Friend's Asylum for the Insane at Frankford (as outlined in Chapter Three) was the first time that Arishima thought of Christianity as being contradictory. The kind of guilt Scott had felt over his brother's suicide was a product of his own strong Christian beliefs, yet through his faith he had been unable to find absolution and consequently took his own life as he became unable to live with the guilt. Arishima later concluded that "I became aware that the Christian concept of sin and its corollary, redemption, are incompatible with my thinking."²⁴³

²⁴² Quoted in Morton 88, p76.

²⁴³ Quoted in Morton 88, p61.

Arishima's re-evaluation of where he stood in relation to the religion was also the result of the unkindness he witnessed being bestowed upon the patients by his work colleagues. Arishima was a man of strong principles and he did not consider it Christian to be unkind to others. He was also a man who greatly disliked war; the taking of another life was quite abhorrent in his thinking. This attitude, while it had been born out of his own military service, was amplified by the un-Christian attitude of Americans with regard to the Russo-Japanese war (1904-1905).

Arishima openly proclaimed his belief in the Christian faith, but he observed that Western nations had noted Japan's racial origins and her paganism,²⁴⁴ and that there was nothing Christian in the American perception of the war.

Initially, Arishima felt unable to disappoint those in Sapporo and made an attempt to renew his faith by rejoining the Sapporo Independent Church. In reality, however, he was no longer the believer he had once been. Scholars argue that Arishima's strongest skepticism concerned the Christian principle of atonement.²⁴⁵ When one considers the difficulties Arishima faced with the concept of guilt resulting from sin and his lack of satisfaction regarding

²⁴⁴ Quoted in Morton 88, p61.

²⁴⁵ Particular scholars who hold this opinion include Sasabuchi Tomoichi, Kawa Shizuo and Miyano Mutsuo. Morton 88, p92.

redemption then this appears an accurate assessment of why he found Christianity to be problematic. Even though he alienated himself from Christianity, he maintained certain links to Christian ideas, primarily the concept of love. Love was a concept that would later form the basis of his essay *Oshiminaku ai wa ubau* (*Love Takes All Without Regret*, 1917.)

That Arishima was attracted most of all to the concept of love – at the seeming expense of confusing Christian agape love with erotic love – is evident in not only the seemingly bizarre fantasies and attachments he developed to young females in the United States but also in his spurning of the notion of arranged marriage. Arishima's father initially found two possible brides, but neither proved satisfactory. Arishima had his heart set upon marrying someone for whom he had been able to develop true feelings, but that was something a traditional arranged marriage did not allow much time for. In September 1908 he was introduced to Kamio Yasuko, the daughter of an army general. Arishima did not love Yasuko but on their second meeting he managed to sense a change of feelings toward her noting, "At last I was caught by her charm! I felt a strange uneasiness in my chest and was dazzled by her form."²⁴⁶ It seemed that he needed to convince himself of feelings toward her that did not actually exist as by January 1909 he noted that "My heart

²⁴⁶ Quoted in Morton 88, p84. (In Arishima's own English).

miserably cooled up of Yasuko recently. Where is the ardent love which I had so madly thrown upon her?²⁴⁷

Afraid to cause any conflict, particularly with his father who was possibly by this point quite irritated with his son's lack of enthusiasm, Arishima married Yasuko in March 1909. Yasuko was nineteen at the time while Arishima was then in his thirtieth year. For him, the marriage caused conflict between his sexual desires, which he had repressed in the past, and his religious conviction:

I must confess that I was always defeated by the desire of the flesh. Though in actuality I did not violate any women, in the depths of my heart I was always violating them, I was continually tormented by this inner struggle.²⁴⁸

Although the couple had three sons, the marriage was also strained by the differences in age and intellect.²⁴⁹ Five years into their marriage, Yasuko contracted tuberculosis. She became gravely ill by November 1914 and was hospitalized in Tōkyō. Arishima left his lecturing position to care for his wife and three sons until Yasuko's passing on 2 August 1916. When Yasuko died,

²⁴⁷ Quoted in Morton 88, p85. (In Arishima's own English).

²⁴⁸ Quoted in Morton 88, p87. (In Arishima's own English).

²⁴⁹ Morton 88, p87.

Arishima wrote that “she gave up her last breath with an austere calm and splendid resignation.”²⁵⁰

Throughout his marriage to Yasuko and even after her passing, there was one woman to whom Arishima remained particularly attached. That woman was Tildi, the hotel owner’s daughter from Schaffhausen. While their relationship was not of a physical nature, their meeting and ensuing correspondence could be considered to be an experience in the West that had a profound impact on him on both an emotional and romantic level. Their writings to each other were at times very impassioned, and Arishima often revealed his deep feelings towards Tildi. In one letter he wrote to her dated 25 May 1907 he declared that she was to “remember also that there is at least one on the earth who is ever ready to rejoice in your fortune and to weep over your distress.”²⁵¹

Just as Arishima had constructed a romantic dream out of Fanny in the United States, he did the same with his relationship with Tildi. By refusing to meet Tildi face to face for a second time, he was not only protecting his dream of her but he was also granting free rein to his feelings. Tildi took on the role of confidante and was able to provide Arishima with the sympathetic ear that he

²⁵⁰ Quoted in Morton 88, p91. (In Arishima’s own English).

²⁵¹ Werner 97, p.375. (In Arishima’s own English).

failed to find in his wife. Arishima felt that with Tildi he could be completely frank and she in return accepted Arishima for the person he was.

Notably, the intensity of their relationship went through three phases. The first was when Arishima returned to Japan and lasted until his marriage to Yasuko. During this period he wrote of his feeling of love toward Tildi and considered love to be the true essence of their relationship. Once married, the correspondence calmed and had a tone akin to two friends catching each other up on the happenings in their respective lives. Perhaps, when Arishima's character is reflected upon, it is possible that he felt a sense of guilt because at the time, they were both involved with other people. Only following the death of Yasuko and the end of Tildi's engagement did Arishima revert to referring to their friendship as "love" again.²⁵²

Nevertheless, Arishima and Tildi's relationship, forged almost entirely on paper, was something that Arishima considered close to his heart. It also provided him with an outlet through which he could voice his thoughts on all matters from family dramas to politics.

²⁵² Werner 97, p.382

In terms of politics, while in the West, Arishima had come into contact with people who held strong political opinions. Through spending time with Kaneko Kiichi, Peabody and then Prince Kropotkin, Arishima's own political thinking developed and he found that it was socialism to which he was now particularly drawn. Upon his return to Sapporo, Arishima became a regular participant in the weekly socialist meetings held by Tōhoku students.

Arishima clearly hoped that socialism would take a hold on Japanese society, but the authorities did not share his hopes. Just as Kafū had been affected by the High Treason Incident, so too was Arishima. It is thought that like Arishima, Kōtoku had connections with Prince Kropotkin. Kōtoku had also spent time in the United States where he had been involved in socialist activities such as his establishment of a Socialist Revolutionary Party. Arishima's own activities came under scrutiny and even he was watched as a "potentially dangerous person."²⁵³ Although the evidence was unsubstantiated, the government became suspicious of anyone who was a sympathizer with socialism. After numerous warnings, the socialist group at Tōhoku Imperial University decided that the safest option would be to disband.

²⁵³ Arishima 1919/ 78, p15. Strong (tr.) Introduction to *A Certain Woman*.

Previously, however, Arishima had made ties with a group of similarly serious writers when he had his work *Kankan Mushi* published in the October 1910 issue of the *Shirakaba* (White Birches) literary magazine which was founded earlier in the year in April. The members of the *Shirakaba* group shared more than a passion for literature. They had been educated at the Gakushūin and were all of socially elite backgrounds, coming from families of the “old Kyoto nobility or samurai aristocracy or else the sons of senior government officials.”²⁵⁴ It was the intention of most of the *Shirakaba* group to avoid commenting on social and political issues but Arishima was not one to follow this lead.

Following the death of his wife and his decision not to return to lecturing, Arishima began expressing his political views in earnest. He also began to produce his most acclaimed works during the period after 1917. The works often demonstrate his interest in socialism, and social reform and the position of women in Japanese society, a subject about which Arishima wrote numerous essays from the 1920s onwards.

Kain no Matsuei (Descendants of Cain, 1917) focused on the working class, and the main character Niemon and his wife are impoverished tenant farmers

²⁵⁴ Keene 84, p441.

who struggle day to day. The location of the farm on which they work has been identified as being situated in the same area of Hokkaido where Arishima's own estate stood.²⁵⁵ In relation to the subject of women, *Aru Onna* (A Certain Woman, 1919) makes clear links to the idea of, and Arishima's belief in the emancipation of women. The action and morals of the central character of the story, Satsuki Yōko, seems ultra-modern for the time period in which the story is set. Free-spirited and trying to gain freedom and independence, Yōko desires to escape from the male-dominated society in Japan:

Perhaps, she began to think, she should have been born in another country. To be free, as the foreign women seem to be; to be able to stand alongside a man with dignity as his equal.....Secretly, in her heart of hearts, Yōko envied the geisha. She even wondered whether in Japan the geisha were not the only women who lived as women should.²⁵⁶

The events that Yōko goes through, including her affair, deception and anguish all highlight her struggle for liberation.

Furthermore, the 1920s saw the emergence of the proletarian literature movement with the birth of several magazines that dealt extensively with socialism. The High Treason Incident had put the socialist movement into

²⁵⁵ Morton 77, p64-65.

²⁵⁶ Arishima 1919/78, p60.

decline and this was the first time since the incident that socialist aims were openly expressed by individuals. *Tane Maku Hito* (The Sowers) was one such magazine which catered for writers with left-wing thoughts. Arishima was a contributor to *Tane Maku Hito* and a supporter of the Russian Revolution who hoped that the same level of unification amongst workers could take place in Japan.

The dialogues Arishima had in the United States and in London and the opinions he developed as a result had time to mature and gain momentum once he had returned to Japan. In 1922 Arishima illustrated his theory about class reform in the essay *Senden Hitotsu* (A Declaration.) More specifically he wrote about his belief that intellectuals could not participate in a proletarian revolution because of the difference in social position.

Furthermore, Arishima had always had difficulty reconciling himself with the reality that he was a landowner. This reconciliation was made even more complicated as being a landed proprietor was not the role that Arishima had chosen for himself. This role was essentially bestowed upon him when he was given land his father had purchased for him. Being a believer in the doctrine of socialism, Arishima eventually strove to dispose of all his inherited wealth, including his land at Makkaribetsu. Despite knowing that he could never rid

himself of all his bourgeois characteristics, his decision would at least allow him to exist on profits he made solely by himself through his writing and not at the disadvantage of his tenant farmers. Arishima resolved to turn his land into a communal farm and announced his intentions in a speech to his tenants:

I want you to hold the land in common.....air, water and soil are available to all, and used for the benefit of all mankind; they should not be made the private property of one individual just for that individual's benefit.²⁵⁷

As it turned out, 1922 was a year of significant change for Arishima. In October he began his very own literary magazine, called *Izumi* (Spring) in which he published his own work. He also supplemented his income by giving a series of public lectures. Around the middle of the year it is thought that Arishima first came into contact with a journalist named Hatano Akiko (?-1923.) Hatano was the last person to have a significant effect on Arishima. Although Hatano was married, a relationship developed between the pair and when Hatano's husband became aware of the affair, he attempted to blackmail the lovers as opposed to publicly revealing them as adulterers.²⁵⁸ As adultery was then considered a criminal offence, such shame brought down upon someone of Arishima's intellectual as well as moral standing would have been insufferable. Consequently, on 8 June 1923, Arishima and Hatano committed

²⁵⁷ Quoted in Morton 88, p204.

²⁵⁸ Nishigaki 90, p375.

suicide together while on holiday at Karuizawa and abruptly all the suffering Arishima had endured during his lifetime came to an end.

Summary and Conclusions

Nagai Kafū and Arishima Takeo both left their homeland in 1903 to begin their experiences in the West. The overall purpose of the journey, according to their parents at least, was to gain an education overseas and immerse themselves in western society. Experience in hand, the young men were then to return to Japan in a strong position to make something of themselves in Meiji Japan – a society that was going through a rapid process of modernisation and westernization.

How each of these men spent their time overseas differed quite considerably, in large part linked to the personal circumstances that had contributed to their initial decisions to leave Japan. Perhaps best described in terms of a “push/pull” balance, Kafū was pulled overseas by the appeal of France and his strong Francophile nature, while Arishima was pushed in the same direction by the family pressure from which he wanted to escape.

Kafū’s father had instructed him to focus on business studies and learning English, but Kafū had an indifferent attitude towards spending his time in this way and decided instead to enhance his French knowledge. This was not surprising if we recall Kafū’s statement: “I had no specific reason to go to

France straight away and so I went to America in an effort to find an opportunity to go to France.” This opportunity arose when Kafū was granted a transfer from the Yokohama Specie Bank to its Lyons branch. In Kafū’s father’s opinion Kafū probably failed to make the most of his time in the United States, but Kafū had achieved his aim – to get to France.

Ultimately freed from responsibility when he was fired from the bank, Kafū indulged himself in the culture and atmosphere of Paris and like the true artist he wished to be, was about to “destroy himself in dissipation,” at least until he no longer had the finances to prolong his stay in Paris. With finding employment seeming too much of a hassle and perhaps posing too great a threat to his bohemian lifestyle, Kafū returned to Japan.

Being abroad impacted significantly upon Kafū and this impact became evident in both his literature and his actions. Having witnessed western culture and society in its genuine setting, Kafū became greatly disillusioned about Japan. His disillusionment was particularly in regard to what he saw as a superficial and embarrassing attempt by Japan to imitate the West. Kafū was repelled by what he saw on his return to Japan, a country that was frantic to import Western culture, yet a country that had somewhat missed the point – that Western culture had been nurtured by Westerners for hundreds if not

thousands of years in some cases. Kafū felt that Western culture could not simply be transplanted and expected to make Japan look westernized without making it look foolish. In his work *Reishō* we recall how Kafū felt Tōkyō to be in a “vulgar” state as a result of this overwhelming imitation of the West.

While Kafū voiced his criticisms about the path toward modernisation that Japan had insisted on undertaking, he also felt that this process was at the expense of what was traditional and authentic about Japan’s own culture. He lamented the loss of all that was being replaced and consequently set out to escape from the distorted world that he saw before him. In doing so he occupied himself with seeking out remnants of traditional Japan, those belonging to the bygone era of Edo such as old buildings, shrines, temples, tea-houses and geisha quarters that had remained, thus far, untouched by modernisation. He reminisced about the time when Japan was undefiled and in a state of harmony, in a cultural sense at least.

Kafū revealed his escapist attitude in the way in which he lingered amongst the elements that had not yet been lost to the wave of importations. His dislike for Meiji and nostalgic yearning for the Edo period in turn became somewhat of a yearning for Meiji when the Taishō period dawned. It was despairing for

Kafū as he watched old Japan rapidly disappear but he remained nostalgic in his outlook and his fond memories of Paris until he passed away.

Arishima by comparison looked on his journey to the west as an opportunity to gain some valuable experience and so took his time in the West seriously. He followed an academic path and gained a Master of Arts from Haverford College and also undertook a period of philanthropic work in an asylum. He associated with likeminded and equally educated people and this helped shape his own views, ideologically and religiously.

While Kafū was carefree and self-indulgent, Arishima turned out to be the exact opposite. The most eccentric we see Arishima is when he delved deep into his fantasy of Fanny Crowell, the young girl toward whom he developed an attraction. Leaving behind his formal studies and philosophical discussions with his acquaintances, Arishima crossed the Atlantic for a tour of Europe with his brother, Ikuma. It was in Switzerland where Arishima fell deeply in love with a woman named Mathilda and their correspondence was to continue for around two decades. After parting company with his brother in France, Arishima travelled to London before embarking on the journey back to Japan.

The experience Arishima had in the West impacted upon him in a way that could be viewed as being considerably more complex than it had been for Kafū. In the case of Arishima, it was not straightforward, nor was it simply a matter of being outwardly disgruntled about the present state of Japanese society. The impact revolved around internal conflicts that Arishima became better positioned to resolve after having experienced life in the West.

The first of these was associated with Arishima's relationship with Christianity. At the time of his departure from Japan, he had revealed himself to be a devoted Christian, yet one that still had reservations. However, we observe the demise of his faith as he was confronted with not only an un-Christian attitude among certain people he met in the United States but also the suicide of Dr. Scott, himself a Christian, which was to have a lasting impact on his religious conviction.

Furthermore, Arishima developed a leaning toward socialism and he remained a sympathizer after his return to Japan. Much of his knowledge and understanding about socialism can be attributed to his friendship with Kaneko Kiichi and his interest in the doctrines of Prince Kropotkin. Perhaps the most pronounced display of his socialism came in the form of his decision to hand his Makkaribetsu farmland over to his tenant farmers to hold as a collective.

Arishima was a staunch believer that wealth was better off shared among the masses than being monopolized by a few.

If Arishima did not have enough to contend with in sorting out where he stood in relation to Christianity and socialism, he also had to deal with his enduring feelings for Tildi. It seems that at no point did Arishima forget the time he spent in her company, despite it being but a brief encounter. Over twenty years' worth of correspondence is enough in itself to prove that Arishima and Tildi shared a remarkable bond.

It is evident that Arishima was a more complex character than Kafū. While Kafū dealt with the situation he found himself in on his return to Japan in the best way he knew how, Arishima remained a difficult man to decipher. The complexity of his life was evident right until the end when, by his own doing, he removed himself permanently from the difficulties he had faced by committing suicide.

However, one has to wonder why it was that neither Kafū nor Arishima returned to what was visibly their number-one loves; Kafū to Paris and Arishima to Tildi. The similarities and differences in the backgrounds of Kafū and Arishima, their experiences in the West and the impact those experiences

had on them have been highlighted here, with the aim of making the case of each author clearer than would be possible if they had been treated alone.

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