Demystifying the Self: Metaphors of Sin and Self-Sacrifice in Miura Ayako's Early Novels

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Introduction

Subjectivity (主体性 *shutaisei*) has been a staple theme in the field of intellectual and literary history of postwar Japan. While there are many permutations of this theme, subjectivity has often been equated with the concept of the modern self (近代的自我 *kindaiteki jiga*)—an autonomous individual set against a social totality. Okuno Takeo, in his 1960 essay tracing the birth of postwar criticism, observes the prevalence of the term "modern self" in the works of *kindai bungaku* (近代文学 Modern literature, 1945–1964) writers and other critics, including Itō Sei's seminal work *Shōsetsu no hōhō* (小説の方法 The method of the novel, 1948).[1] Building on Okuno's insights, Suzuki Sadami emphasizes the underlying motivation for these criticisms: issues of war responsibility. Suzuki argues that the focus of *kindai bungaku* authors and other critics on the modern self represents their commitment to grappling with war-related concerns. This focus reflects a collective realization that "they ruefully understood that the Japanese people, especially intellectuals, had failed as individuals to acquire a modern subjectivity or to organize an effective anti-war movement."[2] The immediate impetus behind Japan's postwar literati to establish subjectivity resonated with contemporary writers, including those who developed the genre known as *nikutai bungaku* (肉體文学 literature of the flesh). These attempts stemmed primarily from self-criticism regarding their past failure to halt and confront the war. The construction of a unified subjectivity was, thus, considered critical for building a bulwark against totalitarianism, undergirding the core of their anti-war convictions.

Through an analysis of the writings of Miura Ayako 三浦綾子 (1922–

1999), this essay explores an alternative to the dominant forms of subjectivity embedded in the postwar cultural sphere. To this end, I focus on three of her novels from the mid-1960s: *Hyōten* (氷点, 1964 *Freezing Point*, 1986), *Hitsujigaoka* (ひつじが丘 Hill of sheep, 1965) and *Shiokari tōge* (塩狩峠, 1966, *Shiokari Pass*, 1987).[3] Critical reactions to these works, especially to Miura's debut novel *Hyōten*, were often divided. Critics such as Hirano Ken criticized the novels for supposed shortcomings in literary quality.[4] They contend that Miura's fiction is often subordinated to her intention to proselytize Christianity through her writing. Conversely, many scholars deem the novels to be outstanding works of Christian literature that are attractive to a broader Japanese readership, where less than one percent of the total population professed Christianity in the postwar years.[5] These conflicting responses to Miura's fiction manifest notably in the debate on whether to commend her works as "missionary-oriented literature" (伝道志向の文学 *dendō shikō no bungaku*) or to dismiss them as "apologetic literature" (主人持ちの文学 *shujin mochi no bungaku*).[6] In contrast, this essay aims to dislodge Miura's texts from their religious moorings and reread them in the discursive terrain of postwar debates on subjectivity. It argues that the depictions of sin and self-sacrifice in Miura's fiction function as metaphors for challenging the status quo of the postwar ideas of subjectivity.

Indeed, Miura was not alone in redefining the concept of subjectivity outside the prevailing discourse. Such attempts gained momentum, particularly among women writers, whose support for imperial Japan during the Asia-Pacific War was often marked by ambivalence or paradox, distinct from their male counterparts. As Watanabe Sumiko and others elucidate, amidst societal expectations for secondary roles on the homefront (銃後 *jūgo*) during the war, most women writers actively supported the imperial war efforts, regardless of their background, to improve their marginalized positions and increase their literary output.[7] In a similar vein, Noriko Horiguchi summarizes: "Female writers and intellectuals were not simply either passive victims or active participants, but played both roles simultaneously."[8] Consequently, the wartime experiences of women writers often differed from those of leftist male literati, such as *kindai bungaku* authors, who were anti-war yet remained subject to the reality of the war, which influenced their representation of subjectivity in their postwar fiction. Douglas Slaymaker argues that novels by women writers tend to challenge the masculinist presumption of individuals as discrete units with the ability to control their lives. This

depiction of a more fluid identity is evident in works such as Hayashi Fumiko's (1903–1951) *Ukigumo* (1951, *Floating Clouds*, 2006).[9]

Born in 1922, Miura spent most of her youth and early adulthood amid the nationalistic turmoil of the war. Influenced by the idea of women's solidarity toward the war effort (銃後の護り *jūgo no mamori*), Miura, as an elementary school teacher, passionately encouraged her students to embrace Japanese imperialism. These efforts proved futile with Japan's defeat in the war and precipitated a personal crisis that prompted her to reassess her gendered national identity. In her writings, however, Miura adopts a distinct perspective on subjectivity that diverges from both male authors and the majority of postwar female authors. Her fiction debunks the myth of self-contained individuals and presents the self neither as an idealized autonomous agent nor as doomed to a precarious existence, but as relational in the sense of being inherently involved in reconciling relationships with others. This counter-vision is collectively portrayed in *Hyōten*, *Hitsujigaoka*, and *Shiokari tōge* by the metaphors of sin and self-sacrifice, where the narrative is presented in the form of domestic novels (家庭小説 *katei shōsetsu*) popular in the 1960s.

Considering this aspect of Miura's novels, Iida Yūko's hermeneutic analysis of women writers' fiction enables us to interpret it within the context of their literary practice's negotiatory nature. Iida argues that women writers (albeit with a cautious acknowledgment of the ambivalence within the category due to their dynamic and shifting subjectivities) are primarily situated within a broader context of gender politics. This context characterizes their writing as an extensive and unsettling engagement with traditionally gendered norms. To clarify this point, Iida broadens Judith Butler's theories of language and coins the terms *ōtōsei* (応答性 responsiveness) and *hidokusei* (被読性 being read). The former, derived from Butler's concept of speech as an insurrectionary act, refers to the writings of women writers as a response to their readings, emphasizing their potential to challenge the dominant narratives surrounding feminine subjectivity.[10] The latter highlights the challenges associated with this writing from a readership perspective. Here, Iida rejects the conventional assumption in reader-response criticism that considers readers as monolithic; instead, she underscores the potential for a diverse readership with varying interests and ideas.[11] According to Iida, this multitude of readers renders women writers' counter-writings multilayered rather than linear, and the presence of *hidokusei* becomes more pronounced in the text when the author is a minority voice that

deviates from norms in society.[12]

By addressing these concepts, this study explores the discursive politics of Miura's writings. As I show, whereas subjectivity in postwar literature and criticism is often uncritically aligned with masculinist self-determination perspectives, Miura problematizes and redefines it from her viewpoint as a double minority in the Japanese literary milieu. This duality arises from the author's gender as a female writer and her status as a religious minority owing to her Christian faith. Her doubly minoritized position significantly shapes her alternative discourse on subjectivity, simultaneously complicating the formation and presentation of her counternarrative. Using the notions of *ōtōsei* and *hidokusei*, I aim to unfold the interplay between Miura's position as a female Christian writer in the postwar era and her approach to the issue of subjectivity. This analysis focuses on their influence on the narrative strategies she employs to subversively challenge the stereotypical and gendered renderings of subjectivity.

Subjectivity in Postwar Japanese Literature and Criticism

The immediate postwar years in Japan saw a vigorous debate on subjectivity. Despite the scarcity of material resources and chaotic conditions, over 200 articles were published in various periodicals between 1945 and 1950, ranging from philosophical to political.[13] This nationwide discussion, known as the "postwar debate on subjectivity" (戦後主体性論争 *sengo shutaisei ronsō*), was initially launched by the proponents of *kindai bungaku* who disavowed the Marxist vision of writers' subjective nature.[14] In a 1945 article, Kurahara Korehito, a leading communist critic and cofounder of the New Japan Literature Association (新日本文学会 *Shin Nihon Bungakukai*), stressed the role of writers in the postwar era of democratic revolution as prophets of the people (大衆 *taishū*). Kurahara asserted that writers should be dedicated to portraying the circumstances and voices of the people in their works, emphasizing that "authors must immerse themselves in the daily life of the people, battle alongside them, and witness their struggles and happiness."[15]

For *kindai bungaku* authors, once committed to the left-wing literary movements of the 1930s but who witnessed their collapse, Kurahara's claim seemed to be a retrograde step. They believed that constructing literary subjects required a radical reflection on their wartime experiences. Particularly vociferous in this regard was Ara

Masato, who wrote in his 1946 essay "Daini no seishun" (第二の青春 Second youth) that his identity as a leftist humanist was utterly disrupted when he recognized the petty egoism of his comrades.[16] In light of this disillusionment during his "first youth," Ara identified egoism as the mainspring of his postwar "second youth." Here, egoism is perceived not as an antithesis but, albeit paradoxically, as a prerequisite for his unwavering passion for humanism. Ara considered his own body to be the instrument of this renewed venture, declaring its critical role in achieving authentic artistic subjectivity: "Let us ardently pursue and extend the thought of our flesh [自らの肉體の思惟 *mizukara no nikutai no shii*] to the cosmological limit—the limitless world of emptiness experienced through [entering] the abyss [that yawns behind egoism]."[17]

The term flesh (肉體 *nikutai*) became a hallmark of the postwar era immediately after Japan's defeat. Confronted with the disintegration of Japanese imperialism and its underlying ideologies, critics and writers widely embraced it as a foundation of their postwar experience due to their deep distrust in existing values and beliefs. Tamura Taijirō's 1947 novel *Nikutai no mon* (肉體の門 Gateway to the flesh), a bestseller that propelled him into prominence as a "body writer" (肉體作家 *nikutai sakka*), exemplifies this trend.[18] While serving as a soldier of the Imperial Japanese Army on the frontlines in China, Tamura witnessed "Japanese who had seemingly plausible and grandiose 'thoughts' turned into beasts, including myself."[19] His faith in the flesh, crystallized in his renowned manifesto, "I declare that thought is my flesh," serves as a counter to his war experience and is vividly expressed in *Nikutai no mon*.[20] The story tells of teenage women working as prostitutes in the ruins of bombed-out Tokyo and focuses on their interactions with a demobilized soldier, Ibuki Shintarō. Ibuki believes that "the breath of life" (生命の息吹 *seimei no ibuki*) residing in his gunshot body is paramount to his postwar existence.[21] Rejected by postwar Japanese society owing to his criminal lifestyle, Ibuki—particularly his virile and muscular body—is fetishized by the prostitutes. His attempt to reconcile his war experiences with his postwar life is finally fulfilled at the end of the novel when he sexually conquers one of the prostitutes, Borneo Maya:

> Ibuki felt the same sensation as when operating a machine gun on the frontlines of the war: a sense of fulfillment in life due to a mixture of

> fighting spirit and primal fear, which made him feel like he was about to lose consciousness. Maya's moans of physical pleasure drove Ibuki even more wild … [Maya] felt her waist burning like wax, melting and flowing. A sense of being alive for the first time in her life—Maya felt this was her foremost birth into this world.[22]

Mitsuishi Ayumi contends that Ibuki's catharsis, achieved through his sexual mastery over Maya, symbolizes a rejuvenation of Japanese male subjectivity. In this narrative, men embrace their war experiences as an integral step toward restoring their wounded masculinity by locating and constituting female subjectivity within the same rebirth narrative.[23] Buried beneath this rejuvenation are the memories of violence associated with such experiences. Mitsuishi concludes that the term "flesh" in Tamura's text serves as a "magic word" that facilitates the renewal process without directly addressing the contradictions and challenges inherently carried on by male bodies.[24] The scene wherein Ibuki's body—a tangible record of his war experiences—establishes authenticity caters to male readers of the time, simultaneously deflecting their attention away from their problematic past.

While the popularity of *nikutai bungaku* soon declined, the concept of subjectivity remained a focal point in literary criticism. In the mid-1950s, when Yoshimoto Takaaki reignited the debate on writers' subjective nature regarding their war responsibility, it served as a useful foil in exposing the discrepancy between writers' proclaimed anti-war standpoints and their involvement in the war effort.[25] Following this line of discussion, however, the reevaluation of postwar literature (戦後文学論争 *sengo bungaku ronsō*) in the 1960s brought the concept of subjectivity back to the forefront. In his controversial essay "'Sengobungaku' wa gen'ei datta" (「戦後文学」は幻影だった Postwar literature was an illusion, 1962), Sasaki Kiichi acknowledged the gradual decline of postwar literature, to which he was connected as a member of *kindai bungaku*. He retrospectively claimed that such a decline was inevitable because of the concept of "modernity" (「近代」の概念 *kindai no gainen*) that existed as a far-off dream in the minds of critics and writers.[26] According to Sasaki, a corollary to this was postwar writers' failure to "fit their ideas and thoughts into a postwar society that had changed after the 1950s."[27]

In response to Sasaki's argument, Honda Shūgo, another member of *kindai bungaku*, countered that the decline of postwar literature stemmed from writers' inability to establish an authentic self rather than the idea of subjectivity itself: "Broadly speaking, here lies the issue of the subject (主

体の問題 *shutai no mondai*). In my view, many postwar writers … had little regard for their greatest asset and chased after fads."[28] The squandered resources—a potential opportunity for reconsidering all traditional values and conventional assumptions after the ruins of war— were indicative of the tragic fate of postwar literature. He objected to Sasaki by stating: "How on earth could something like 'postwar society that changed after the 1950s' exist in literature without the tension between the society and the subject who observes it?"[29] In retrospect, these arguments seem to have reached what Victor Koschmann describes as "a vicious circle of supplementarity," an impasse formed by a binary system in which the ego (or the body) is essentialized and placed in absolute opposition to a historically conditioned social structure.[30] As Koschmann explains, this essentialization is achieved by upholding only certain types of subjects and disregarding others, transforming them into "paternalistic versions of an Enlightenment program" through which modern subjects can be formed.[31]

This gendered exclusivity inherent in the postwar concept of subjectivity becomes apparent when considering the challenges women writers faced in their approach to the issue of subjectivity. Sata Ineko's 佐多稲子 (1904–1998) short story "*Hōmatsu no kiroku*" (泡沫の記録 A record of foam, 1948) is particularly relevant here. In this story, the female protagonist's postwar self is constantly torn between her identity as a left-wing writer and her commitment to the war effort. Through the depiction of the protagonist's torment, derived from her disguised political conversion (偽装転向 *gisō tenkō*) during the war, the story concerns notions of subjectivity as unified and self-contained, stressing its fluidity and indeterminacy: "The lies she told during the war have left her with the guilt of falsehood and have once again brought shame [not only to herself but also] to leftism itself, but there is no longer any way for her to return … [d]espite her subjectivity, this pain will eat away at her own heart until her ambivalence is objectively cleared away."[32] The protagonist can, therefore, not reconcile with her past and is kept in flux. In this sense, she resembles Sata, who bore her war responsibility as a cross throughout her life, as described by Hasegawa Kei.[33]

To be sure, there was a common denominator among a younger generation of critics who found the sharp division between writers' subjectivity and the outside world in the arguments of the *kindai bungaku* coterie problematic. Okuno Takeo argued that this binary conception is a réchauffé of classical theories about politics and literature, which limits

writers' pursuit of subjectivity within the paradigm where it is eventually subsumed into political discourse.[34] In Okuno's view, Abe Kōbō's *Suna no onna* (砂の女, 1962 *The Woman in the Dunes*, 2006) and Mishima Yukio's *Utsukushii hoshi* (美しい星, 1962, *Beautiful Star*, 2022) demonstrate the fallibility of this theory because both successfully recreate the political climate of 1960s Japan out of "practices of [the writers'] spiritual freedom" (精神の自由な活動 *seishin no jiyū na katsudō*).[35] Likewise, Isoda Kōichi denounced the notion of subjectivity embedded in postwar literature as a form of realism that upheld egoistic desires over other modes of experiences. He maintained that such an idea failed to account for what he called "the workings of the minds" (精神の運動 *seishin no undō*), a spiritual realm of creativity without which literature was reduced to a mere dualism between the ego versus the world.[36] The emphasis on inner autonomy in these criticisms provides an antidote to the entrenched vision of subjectivity as opposed to objective circumstances; its ultimate goal is not to defy the idea of subjectivity as unified but to restore its primacy over the prolonged sway of Marxist literary criticism. However, despite their vigorous critique, the novices remained uncritical of the masculinist notion of the self-centered ego that the dominant discourse on subjectivity embodies; their criticism resulted in an obfuscation of this issue by directing the focus of the discussion to an ahistorical context.

It was within this mid-1960s literary scene, when the scrutiny and renewal of the notion of subjectivity were pursued with greater vehemence, that Miura Ayako debuted with her Asahi literary prize-winning novel *Hyōten*. Miura was not a full-time writer when she received the prize in 1964, but the owner of a variety store; thus, the Asahi newspaper portrayed the newcomer as an "easy-going housewife" (キサクな雑貨店の主婦 *kisakuna zakkaten no shufu*).[37] As Miura's career developed, this gendered label was soon replaced by a religious one, namely a Christian writer (キリスト者作家 *kirisutosha sakka*), and she tended to be sidelined, if not ostracized, from mainstream literary circles. In contrast to these views, I argue that Miura and her fiction are deeply enmeshed in, or in tension with, the long-standing postwar discourses on subjectivity. To address this point, I now turn to Miura's approach to the issue of subjectivity in terms of the concepts of *ōtōsei* and *hidokusei*. The central questions are, respectively: To what extent did Miura's readings of contemporary fiction and the Bible, a cornerstone of her faith, affect her response to the hegemonic discourse on subjectivity? What were the challenges she faced in responding to this discursive climate?

Demystifying the Self

The exploration of the first question concerning *ōtōsei* leads us to examine Miura's reading experiences during her battle with tuberculosis that straddled thirteen years from 1946 through 1958. Miura recalls in a 1972 autobiography that the disease felt like a tangible penalty for her former guileless faith in the emperor, stressing her guilt for having participated in the war effort.[38] This sense of guilt underlines Miura's reaction to the various texts she read while bedridden, ranging from literary to religious. In her reading of Ishihama Tsuneo's *Gyangu pouetto* (ぎゃんぐ・ぽうえっと Gang poet, 1949), Miura rejects an optimistically slanted depiction of feminine subjectivity in the novel. The story addresses how to live amid the chaos of postwar Japan by describing people in the ruins of the air-raided Osaka. Miura's criticism concentrates on Keiko, a young mistress with little trouble in her postwar life except for her illness. Suffering from tuberculosis, Keiko expresses her sincere wish to live by contrasting her fate with that of her older brother who was killed in a fight with his friends but who, in her view, died due to his sentimental gloom after the war: "I want to live … why could not my brother never appreciate the beauty of living despite my strong desire to live?"[39] Miura dismisses such praise of life as a "barefaced lie" and denies Keiko's naïve outlook on the death of her older brother.[40] For Miura, the aspiring Keiko—set apart from postwar difficulties such as anomie, social insecurity, and war responsibility—appears dubious because of her guilt.

It is unsurprising that Miura's reading of the Bible and her subsequent baptism in 1952 were central to the reconstruction of her damaged psyche; however, a closer examination of this experience reveals that it also allowed Miura to envision subjectivity beyond precarious identity. "After the defeat in the war," Miura writes, "I became very pessimistic and cynical … in light of the Bible, I saw a far more humiliating, broken, and repulsive version of myself. However, I eventually understood that God's love never rejects me; rather, it accepts me just as I am."[41] This radical revision of Miura's view of the self is akin to what Kevin Hart calls a "counterexperience," an unsettling yet invigorating process that invites the individual to reorder their experiences and senses from the perspective of divine love through prayer.[42] The underlying idea is that God exists as an absolute and reconciling love, which interrogates "the sovereignty of the constituting 'I'."[43] Similarly, as Miura read the Bible, her guilt for participating in the war effort emerged not merely as a stigma but also as

a means of rethinking the nature of subjectivity. The self here is a relational being rather than a self-existing entity, embracing reconciliation with others as essential in its formation. Neither solid nor fluid selfhood is thus relevant to Miura's exploration of redefining subjectivity; instead, such an intersubjective conception of the self, which stems from her experience of reading the Bible, rests on this venture.

This point leads to the second question regarding *hidokusei*, namely, the obstacles Miura faced in responding to the issue of subjectivity. Notably, the majority of Miura's works were published in popular magazines such as *Shufu no tomo* (主婦の友 Housewife's companion) and *Ōru yomimono* (オール讀物 All reading), or as newspaper serials, rather than in pure literature journals such as *Gunzō* (群像 Arts group) and *Bungakukai* (文學界 Literary world).[44] Miura's primary readership was not among the *bundan* (文壇 literary circle) but rather a broader range of readers, comprising people of varied gender, class, and war experience. Moreover, it was typical for Miura's readers to be unacquainted with her biblically-inspired view of subjectivity. The gap in familiarity with Christianity between Miura and her readers emerged, however, as a potential catalyst for her future writings. When she received letters from all over Japan after publishing *Taiyō wa futatabi bossezu* (太陽は再び没せず The sun will not set again, 1961), a memoir of her journey with faith that appeared in *Shufu no tomo*, Miura pondered: "They were heartrending letters written by those who were injured by love and life … I reflected on the importance of publishing in magazines circulated among the masses. Christians should address themselves to those outside the faith."[45] A corollary to this effort is the series of narrative strategies that Miura developed to involve her readers in imagining a subjectivity that differed from how it was portrayed in dominant narratives.

A conspicuous feature in this regard is the combination of an extradiegetic narrator and the internal perspectives of the characters in Miura's fiction. Philip Gabriel argues in his critique of *Hyōten* that while the largely unobtrusive narrator of the novel avoids prolonged analyses of the characters' psychological states, the reader can discern their inner thoughts through the numerous parenthetical statements dispersed throughout the text.[46] He considers that this technique exemplifies Miura's greatness as a Christian writer: "the contrasting outer and inner worlds of her characters and the critical importance of exploring the inner one."[47] From the perspective of *hidokusei*, however, the double-layered narration in Miura's fiction is integral to her proactive engagement with her diverse

and mostly non-Christian readership. It establishes a transparent interface with the narrative, wherein the reader can capture a holistic picture of the characters regardless of their interpretive interests. Additionally, this rendering of narrative visibility facilitates a sympathetic bond between the reader and the characters, thereby allowing the reader to identify with the perspectives of the characters, even those that may appear unfamiliar to them, such as those with Christian viewpoints. For some critics, this heightened access to the characters seems artificial; Hirano Ken, in his critique of *Hyōten*, acerbically asserted that almost all the characters in the novel are merely "puppets of the author."[48] What Hirano and others have overlooked is Miura's minority position in the Japanese literary field. This diminished distance between the reader and the characters is a narrative strategy she employs to prompt her readers to vicariously experience the characters' struggles in reevaluating their view of the self from the perspective of biblical faith.

The symbolic use of domestic fiction is also a considerable aspect of Miura's counternarrative. Unlike its earlier perception as a genre primarily associated with middle- and upper-class women in the late Meiji era, the literary style saw widespread adoption by writers in the 1960s.[49] During this period, it served to depict broader societal issues behind the optimistic façade of the contemporary high economic growth society through descriptions of inward life, such as personal feelings and troubles. Miura's novels align with this trend of reinventing the genre of domestic fiction. A private and depoliticized setting in her works is used to illustrate the politics of subjectivity. Here, certain types of imagined subjectivities in the postwar cultural arena emerge as concrete individuals and compete for legitimacy. The family struggles faced by these characters symbolize this discursive competition. They pursue their own perceived authenticity at the expense of domestic harmony until encountering Christians, albeit often described as an enigmatic Other, who represent a different perspective on their challenges. Therefore, Miura's employment of the popular narrative form of her time operates as a rhetorical primer, encouraging her readership to engage with a biblically based critique of subjectivity without undermining the effectiveness of her fiction.

In this representative narrative of competing subjectivities, images of sin and self-sacrifice serve as metaphors for imagining an alternative vision of the self. Rather than solely referring to extramarital affairs or the Christian doctrine of sin as being self-centeredness and alienation from God, sin is portrayed in a manner that illuminates the lurking pitfalls in

notions of subjectivity discursively constructed by individual willpower: an exploitative and self-redemptive nature inherent in solipsistic efforts to achieve an authentic self. To illustrate this issue further, Miura's fiction employs self-sacrifice as a counter-metaphor. It subverts the clichéd egocentric approach to subjectivity with its self-emptying rhetoric while highlighting another dimension of the self—a relational self where the self and others exist in a reconciling mode of connection. This realm of intersubjective psychic reality becomes a strategic narrative device of a subplot that parallels the stories of domestic conflict, collectively developed in *Hyōten*, *Hitsujigaoka*, and *Shiokari tōge*.

The focus in these novels lies in engaging with the dominant postwar discourse on subjectivity rather than on establishing the author's credentials as a Christian artist. Christian symbolism in Miura's stories is not merely a literary exposition of her theology nor a display of religious imagery in general but is integral to formulating a riposte to the discursive narrative with careful attention to her potential readers. In the remainder of this essay, I discuss how Miura's textual strategies of *ōtōsei* and *hidokusei* discussed above are employed in her texts.

Unveiled Postwar Selves

Hyōten spans from 1946 to 1964 and revolves around the decades-long conflict in the Tsujiguchi household, a rural doctor's family in the Hokkaido city of Asahikawa. The novel includes a host of major and minor characters who contribute to the family catastrophe, but especially Tsujiguchi Keizō, his wife Natsue, and their adopted daughter Yōko occupy a crucial position. The tragedy is triggered by the death of Ruriko, a three-year-old daughter of the Tsujiguchi family, who was strangled to death by a stranger named Saishi Tsuchio near the river close to their home. Amidst sorrow and suffering, Keizō harbors resentment toward Natsue for having met one of his young doctor staff members, Dr. Murai, at their home during such a crisis. His antagonism escalates when he notices a love bite on Natsue's neck after her meeting with Murai, and he contrives a revenge plot to have Natsue unwittingly raise a child of Ruriko's killer. This ruse comes to fruition with the adoption of the alleged criminal's infant, whom they name Yōko; it continues unabated for seven years until Natsue discovers Keizō's diary, which exposes the deceit. Infuriated by her husband's cruelty, Natsue resolves to seek retribution and makes a complete about-face from a devoted homemaker to a demoness. Meanwhile, Yōko thrives despite her strained family atmosphere, growing

into a self-sufficient adolescent. By the time she becomes a teenager, Yōko is aware of her adoption but unclear about her birth parents. The secret of Yōko's birth is ultimately betrayed by Natsue when she vents her long-held grudge against Saishi and his doppelganger Yōko. Devastated by this revelation, Yōko attempts suicide. In one of her farewell letters, she writes: "Having discovered the potential for sin within me, I have lost all hope of living … Yōko's freezing point [氷点 *hyōten*] lies where 'you are a child of sinners.'"[50] The climax occurs when Dr. Takagi, Keizō's long-time friend who mediated Yōko's adoption, reveals that Yōko is not Saishi's daughter but an illegitimate child of Takagi's acquaintances. The novel ends with Yōko in bed in a coma with a faint glimmer of hope for recovery, with the now genuinely contrite Keizō and Natsue, as well as their older son Tōru and friends, anxiously awaiting her awakening.

Given the pronounced emphasis on sin in Yōko's climactic notes, *Hyōten* seemingly embraces the concept of sin at its core, consistent with Miura's own remark that "the theme of sin is my earnest cry."[51] Correspondingly, the reception of the novel primarily dwells on the problem of egoism and its potential solution to the subsequent question of how to live, such as returning to the presence of God.[52] In contrast, I argue that the Christian terminology of sin serves as a cultural critique rather than a religious commentary. It is integrated into the postwar family drama, where the trio of main characters—Keizō, Natsue, and Yōko—epitomizes the tensions inherent in the discursive construction of subjectivity in the postwar period and is used to expose the limitations of the canonized imagined self. Here, Keizō represents the masculinist nature of the modern self that the dominant discourse often ignores, while Natsue embodies the exploitative aspect of a sensually spirited and anti-dogmatic individual lauded in *nikutai bungaku*. Yōko emerges as a spiritualized subjectivity upheld by the younger counterparts to *kindai bungaku* authors and is set as an alternative to these selfhoods, albeit tantamount to them being trapped in a solipsistic prison of the self. The devastating fate of the three main characters defines Miura's scathing criticism of the postwar discourse on subjectivity, described within the overarching metaphor of sin.

The parodic reinterpretation of the modern self is illustrated by Keizō's double-standard use of the biblical principle of "love thy enemy," his life-long motto that he repeatedly invoked throughout the novel. Ostensibly, Keizō showcases major attributes of the modern self: he is a rational, intelligent, and self-disciplined individual who remained anti-war

according to his motto and is now a solid, reliable hospital manager who is publicly recognized as "whiter than white."[53] His unified image is, however, corrupted by the two enemies towering over him since Ruriko's death: Saishi and Natsue. On the one hand, even when embittered by the death of his beloved daughter, Keizō consoles himself by empathizing with Saishi. The criminal is someone to be reconciled with *ab initio*, as his motto demands, and Keizō empathetically contemplates Saishi's hardships during his life: "([Saishi] joined the military from abusive labor camps [タコ部屋 *tako beya*] and was wounded on the battlefront … Given all that, this man knows little about a free society)."[54] The narrator interpolates Keizō's thoughts and provides an explanatory note, "Keizō is more mindful of Saishi's past than ever before … [he] felt like he could understand the hardening of hearts of the murderer."[55]

On the other hand, Keizō is quick to take revenge when he suspects his wife of infidelity, even with the misuse of his motto: "(What would Takagi say if I told him that I would raise Saishi's child … [Takagi] will not be able to oppose 'love thy enemy' after all)."[56] Keizō's speculation is, as illustrated from the beginning by the extradiegetic narrator, off the mark, as no actual affair exists between Natsue and Murai, and the reader may be unfavorably predisposed toward Keizō for his hesitancy to interrogate his wife about her supposed treachery before seeking revenge. However, here lies a key to unveiling the gendered nature of modernistic Keizō: his authenticity is inherently associated with patriarchal pride that requires him to reign over his entire household, where his subjectivity comes at the cost of subduing that of his wife. This deep-seated pride is marked from the outset by Keizō's ingrained masculine possessiveness as well as his misogynistic attitude toward Natsue, which prevents him from being seen as vulnerable by her.[57] For Keizō, his wife's alleged infidelity is a death blow to the underlying structure of his very self. His retaliation is, therefore, virtually designed to retrieve his lost authenticity by inciting Natsue, who implores him to adopt an infant girl out of sorrow and remorse over Ruriko's death, to embrace motherhood. This is the foremost reason why Keizō treats Yōko's identity as confidential:

> (I should take in [the criminal's infant] without consulting her. Natsue will remain unaware and will cherish her. Secrets must be kept … [when Natsue discovers the truth] how much she will regret the past decades of her life. Nevertheless, that is fine. The child of a criminal will be showered with love. I tried "love thy enemy" anyway. If I raise her knowing that she is the child of an enemy, I may suffer more than Natsue, who knows nothing.)[58]

Two interrelated strategies are evident here: the demarcation of Natsue as a caring mother and the rehabilitation of Keizō's identity as sovereign, which is achieved by exercising his motto to dominate her domestically, despite the loss of its integrity. The emerging Keizō, whose traditional patriarchal role primarily defines his ego, resembles Foucauldian accounts of the subject as a historical variable constituted through certain social practices rather than producing itself out of thin air. "These practices [of self-constitution] are … not something invented by the individual himself," Foucault observes, "[t]hey are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group."[59] Keizō's countercharge falls into such practices. It is through the reenactment of the gendered norms of his culture that his true selfhood is reclaimed. He must be justified, in a deeper sense, not by his virtuous deeds, but by his culturally determined hegemony over women.

Later in the novel, Keizō describes the authoritative nature of his relationship with Natsue as the consequence of sin. At this stage, the very definition of the word "love" in his motto comes to reflect its original biblical meaning—*agape* or selfless love—because of his experience encountering a foreign missionary who exhibits self-sacrificial behavior on a capsized ferry where only a few, including himself, survive (I will revisit this later in this section). While Keizō embraces the missionary's altruism with reverence, he considers himself powerless to emulate it. Furthermore, this reflection serves to disclose his unyielding animosity toward Natsue, leading him to ponder: "(If I were to have a one-night stand, I would not be angry with myself. Nevertheless, I can never forgive my wife for being unfaithful. What on earth does this mean? … What is self-centeredness? Is it not the root of sin?)"[60] Because of the narrator's parenthetical interruption, the text foregrounds Keizō's awareness of his sinfulness, which prompts some critics to interpret it as a sort of catechism about original sin.[61] However, the image of sin is conjured up as the protagonist questions, albeit rudimentarily, his toxic masculinity rather than theological issues. It is used to reinforce Keizō as entangled by the patriarchal compulsions that dictate his pursuit of an authentic self. The more the idea of sin lodges in his mind, the more his self-sufficient—or "modern" on a metaphorical level—self becomes decentered.[62]

Interestingly, there are no instances of Natsue, Keizō's antagonistic counterpart, coming across the notion of sin throughout the text. She is described as devoid of affiliation with any dogmatic viewpoint, whether

religious or political, and regards her own material body as fundamental to her subjectivity. The dualistic representation of Natsue's self is inherently embedded in her barrenness caused by the sterilization treatment she received as a remedy for pleurisy in the early 1940s in her twenties. The narrator briefly tells in retrospect that Natsue shows no hesitation to undergo the procedure: "'With Tōru and Ruriko, I [Natsue] have no need for more children.' Although Natsue appears docile at first glance, she was persistent in her decision."[63] Her somewhat blunt assertion sounds offensive or even disloyal to Keizō, for he laments her renouncing reproductive potential despite her age. When contextualized within the historical timeframe of the story, Natsue's voluntary sterilization of her body appears at odds with the contemporary public discourse around the physiology of women of childbearing age. As demonstrated in the political campaign of "beget and multiply" (産めよ殖やせよ *ume yo fuyase yo*), young women of the time were expected to give birth to about five children in order to increase the population and achieve the vision of the Great East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (大東亜共栄圏 *daitōa kyōeiken*) and strengthen Japan's national security.[64] Natsue's body operates as a site where the grandiose propaganda cannot take root, asserting its autonomy to exercise motherhood in its own terms. In this subversive vein, she resembles Ibuki Shintarō in *Nikutai no mon*, whose monstrous, egocentric body challenges wartime Japan's totalitarianism that mobilized individuals to the imperial cause, albeit with the difference that, as a consequence of her self-chosen barrenness, war memories are abstracted from her and her body.

The similarities between these characters are, however, not confined to the nature of their egos clashing with ideological forces. Just as Ibuki leverages female sexuality to realize the authenticity of his postwar self, so does Natsue attempt to dominate her male counterparts to prove her authenticity. This aspect of the protagonist is hinted at in her temptation of Murai from the outset. Following her coquettish resistance against his eager kiss, which results in him grazing her cheek, Natsue admits that "(I do not dislike it at all)," or, if anything, adores it, as the extradiegetic narrator explicates, "[Natsue] deemed [her cheek] as if it were a jewel."[65] Natsue's subjugating approach to men becomes apparent later in the story as her physical vitality diminishes with age and, more significantly, pales in comparison to that of her teenage daugther Yōko. Now, the target is Kitahara Kunio, Tōru's senior at college and for whom Yōko harbors feelings. Natsue uses her coquetry to trap the youth and regain her self-confidence. This attempt fails with Kitahara's disdainful outlook,

eventually betraying Natsue's hegemonic femininity: "For Natsue, Kitahara was not Tōru's friend but the opposite sex. All men must praise her beauty and be willing to welcome her intentions."[66] No sign of guilt is present in her mind, or elsewhere in the text, which highlights her sinful pride in her physical presence. The absence of the image of sin in Natsue's characterization is a paradoxical complement to the anti-metaphysical and materialistic self that is celebrated in *nikutai bungaku*, and reveals its exploitative dependence on a different gender in its pursuit of authenticity.

As Yōko (陽子) owes her name to the sun (太陽 *taiyō*), her role in the literary exploration of the politics of subjectivity seems to lie in shedding light on a solution to the conditional aspects of selfhood represented by Keizō and Natsue. Critics have often characterized Yōko as self-contained: no matter how difficult the external circumstances, particularly the neglect and harshness of her adopted mother, Yōko remains virtuous and invulnerable to adversity.[67] Her seemingly reaching independent nature is reminiscent of a spiritualized form of subject championed by critics, such as Okuno and Isoda; however, a closer reading of the text reveals that Yōko's autonomy comes not from her inherent integrity but the desire to redeem her true self from her perceived fate as a foundling. Her yearning for authenticity takes the form of moral superiority to the vicious Natsue during childhood and becomes a longing for intimate love when she reaches her teenage years.[68] This latter point is highlighted by the limited yet telling intertextual link between Yōko and Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847):

> The fact that the main character, Heathcliff, was an abandoned child evokes emotions in Yōko. As someone who does not know their birth parents, she sympathizes with the abandoned Heathcliff and the intensity of his love for Catherine, with whom he grew up together as a sibling and remained obsessed even after she got married, whose grave he eventually uncovered, and whose vision he held while dying. (Children who have been abandoned by their parents, like Heathcliff, may feel compelled to pursue their loved ones forever as "the only one, indispensable.") … While reading, Yōko was inspired to love and be loved fiercely.[69]

In Yōko's mind, an overt parallel is drawn between her and Heathcliff by the shared destiny of an abandoned child. The passionate enactor of Heathcliff, who herself has prompted this identification, is then offered through iterative refinement in the form of an abstracted indirect quotation of the novel in question. What is particularly interesting here, however, is

that Yōko seems to miss almost entirely Heathcliff's multi-faceted nature (such as his ambiguous racial and cultural background) and, more importantly, the equally salient difference between his vengeful attitude toward the Earnshaws and her own situation with the Tsujiguchis.[70] In this context, *Wuthering Heights* is reduced to a melodrama. Yōko's one-dimensional interpretation of Heathcliff as a romantic figure is brought to the fore in the text as the reader tracks Yōko's focalization and, in so doing, their attention extends beyond the superficial linkages between these two characters to the redemptive ambition Yōko invests in her pursuit of her true self in love relationships to compensate for her orphanhood.

Nowhere is the limitation of this quest for authentic selfhood revealed to a greater extent than in the climactic chapter, "Suicide Note," which is composed of Yōko's farewell letters addressed to her stepparents, Kitahara, and Tōru. Although the chapter is only three pages long, the word "sin" (罪 *tsumi*) appears more than ten times and is used to describe the protagonist's distress in the face of Natsue's disclosure that her birth father is Saishi Tsuchio, the murder of Ruriko. The following passage conveys the gist of her anguish:

> "Kitahara san [who is dubious about Natsue's claim], it no longer makes any difference to me whose daughter I am … I was cocky enough to refuse to see a drop of evil in myself and could no longer live with the fact that sin dwells in me."[71]

Takebayashi Kazushi, amongst others, interprets Yōko's keen awareness of her sinfulness as a reflection of the Christian principle of original sin as innate in all individuals.[72] By contrast, Philip Gabriel suggests that the acuteness of the protagonist's awareness can be misleading in conceptualizing this doctrine.[73] Beyond these theological implications, however, sin has a specific discursive connotation: it alludes to the solipsistic realm of an autonomous inner self espoused by the progeny of *kindai bungaku* authors. In this context, what Yōko rejects in the name of sin is critical. It demonstrates not merely a matter of sinfulness but also the reality in which an internally independent subject is unsettled by the presence of its unknown self. The consequence is the suicide of the subject, the inevitable end of such subjectivity that is incompatible with any reality outside itself.

For critics of the wartime generation (戦中派 *senchū-ha*), whose youth was, similar to Miura, affected by the war in myriad ways, *Hyōten* appears distinctive from the time of its publication in its attempt to counter the

postwar discourse on subjectivity. In a 1965 Asahi newspaper literary review, Etō Jun describes the novel as "a challenge to the *bundan shōsetsu*" that tends to posit the self as pure and absolute and praises its insight into the bleak reality of human existence.[74] Takano Toshimi also avers that the narrative extends beyond the literary field and raises questions about what he calls "postwar consciousness." "Since the end of the war," he claims retrospectively, "Japanese [people] have constantly been seeking to become 'something'" out of an uneasiness caused by the collapse of Japanese imperialism, and it is this consciousness that drives postwar literature to explore the possibility of a solid, autonomous self, to which *Hyōten* stands as an antithesis.[75] While these discussions are helpful, I argue that the novel has another level: it attempts to rearticulate the master narrative of postwar subjectivity. This is hinted at in Keizō's emerging attitude toward a foreign missionary who, amid the panic on a capsized ferry in stormy weather, offers his life jacket to a woman—a citizen of a former enemy of his country—at the risk of losing his own life by saying, "You are younger than me. It will be the youth who will shape Japan."[76] The missionary and his self-sacrificial act stick in Keizō's mind, yet simultaneously, he feels an unbridgeable distance between him and the foreigner:

> In bed, Keizō frequently contemplated the fate of the missionary who gave his life preserver to a woman suffering from stomach cramps. He wished that the missionary, who had done what he could not, was still alive. Keizō recognized that inheriting the missionary's life was impossible, and their experiences were undoubtedly different and irreconcilable.[77]

As with the many critiques cited in this section, the focus of critics has been on the theological nuances presented by the missionary. Sako Jun'ichirō analyzes this character as an embodiment of the notion of love described in John 15:13 ("Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" [New International Version]).[78] In light of the above discussion, however, the image of self-sacrifice is better described as a metaphor for the reversal of the logic of the postwar agenda of subjectivity reconstruction rather than simply Christian ethics. It suggests an oxymoronic proposition that one can achieve authenticity if one empties oneself for the sake of others, with a particular focus on reconciliation. At this stage, however, this counter-perspective is illustrated as a foreign, unattainable concept; it is further unfolded in Miura's subsequent novels *Hitsujigaoka* and *Shiokari tōge*. Nevertheless,

Hyōten can be regarded as a milestone in Miura's career, where the writer marks the beginning of her endeavors to redefine the mainstream view of subjectivity.

Refocusing the Self

Set from 1949 to 1954 in the Hokkaido city of Sapporo, *Hitsujigaoka* describes the struggle of a man named Sugihara Ryōichi, for whom his *tenkō* (転向 political conversion) experience during the war remains an indelible stigma that labels him a betrayer for the rest of his life. His postwar life is built around an anxious desire to atone for his past, which drives him to embrace art as a means to cultivate an authentic self at the expense of indulging in alcohol and pursuing women as prey in his regenerative quest. Hirono Naomi, the only daughter of Rev. Hirono Kōsuke and his wife Aiko, is one of his victims. Lured by Ryōichi's open countenance and frank disclosure, she accepts his marriage proposal but soon faces domestic violence and a miserable marital life. Naomi reaches the end of her patience after two years of marriage and returns to her parents' home in despair. Soon after his wife's disappearance, Ryōichi visits the Hirono family and suddenly develops hemoptysis. While he recuperates at Hirono's home, Ryōichi is drawn to Georges Rouault's paintings of Christ. He looks with wonder at their beauty that reveals the futility of his own attempts at art while simultaneously giving pause to his restlessness. His reaction to the experience culminates in a portrait of himself bathed in the blood of Christ on the cross, an artwork intended as a gift for Naomi but only found after his unfortunate death in the snow on Christmas day. Upon seeing the picture, Naomi perceives Ryōichi's sincere plea for forgiveness and responds with contrition for her unyielding coldness toward him.

As exemplified by the publication of the monumental, three-volume *Kyōdō kenyū: Tenkō* (共同研究 転向 Collective research: *tenkō*, 1959–1962), compiled by the Institute of the Science of Thought (思想の科学研究会 *Shisō no kagaku kenkyūkai*), in which the research leader Tsurumi Shunsuke describes its aim as to "generate a more autonomous subject than ever before in Japanese thought," *tenkō* became a locus of discursive struggles over articulating subjectivity from the late 1950s to the early 1960s.[79] Rather than solely referring to the interwar *tenkō* phenomenon where incarcerated communists collectively renounced Marxism following the Sano-Nabeyama statement in 1933, *tenkō* here often serves as a complex figurative language.[80] For Maruyama Masao, it signifies an

immature modern subject incapable of exercising autonomy; in the arguments of another political theorist, Fujita Shōzō, *tenkō* is incorporated into his analysis of modern Japan as an affective construct undifferentiated by distinctions such as individual and community.[81] Irena Hayter and Mark Williams encapsulate the rhetorical functionality of *tenkō* in those works as "another allegory for underdevelopment" in which persistent figures of scarcity and absence are involved.[82] Max Ward also points out that within this metaphor, binary oppositions such as West/Japan and abstract theory/national belonging are inherently maintained.[83] As such, *tenkō* tends to become synonymous with an unchangeable Japanese identity and social order, integrated into the essentialist narratives of *Nihonjinron* (日本人論 theories of Japaneseness).

These discursive traits of *tenkō* are selectively reflected in the portrayal of Ryōichi in *Hitsujigaoka*. On the one hand, the novel avoids attributing the cause of his *tenkō* to his affective bonds with his natal family, nor does it describe its consequences as a return to an unmediated national unity of emotion or the naked self from the world of imported abstractions. On the other hand, the trauma Ryōichi endures due to his *tenkō*, especially his abhorrence of his own submissive cowardice and imperative craving for renewal, are highlighted. He blatantly talks to Naomi in the early days of their acquaintance, "[since committing *tenkō*] I have come to define myself as a traitor … If you love me, I might be reborn."[84] The same idea is reiterated in a more demanding tone in his conversation with his old friend, Takeyama Testuya.[85] This fetishistic impulse toward marriage with Naomi and other women, is, however, not purely for the object itself but is instigated by his desire to spice up his artistic life. In bed at the Hironos' house, Ryōichi confesses: "I was willing to toy with women and do whatever it took to create a picture … the most terrifying was to lose myself as a painter. As long as art was conceived as an expression of self, I had to pursue a life of egoism."[86] The anxious *tenkōsha* represents subjectivity deprived of autonomy yet striving to compensate for the loss. He is essentially a reversed mirror image of the modern self inseparably captured in its mythology.

The bloodied Ryōichi gazing at Christ on the cross in his self-portrait points to the potential for a transformation of the self that is trapped in a never-ending labyrinth of modernization. Despite its overt Christian imagery, the emphasis on animating the picture is not about the protagonist's conversion to the faith. "(I am not sure why Christ was crucified, but I do know that he experienced great sorrow)," the narrator

parenthetically describes Ryōichi's appreciation of Rouault's paintings that inspired his own artistic expression and adds, "Ryōichi questioned his knowledge of the true meaning of deep sorrow."[87] An orthodox conversion narrative—the willingness to accept the cross of Christ as one's redemption—is diminished; instead, the text foregrounds an empathetic tie between Ryōichi and Christ, through which the protagonist comes to reconsider the anguish that used to take hold of his very existence. In other words, Ryōichi's self-portrait reveals that the sacrificial image of Christ punctures his solipsism: the protagonist is redeemed, not from sin, but from the egocentrism he previously ascribed a crucial role in forming the self, invited to locate himself in a relational reality.

This shift in defining the nature of the self is further underlined by the fact that Ryōichi's self-portrait has a specific audience: Naomi. For the evolved Ryōichi, art is no longer a means to authenticate himself in solitude but to seek reconciliation with his victim in selflessness. The posthumous painting is thus best interpreted not as evidence of "another conversion" of the *tenkōsha* protagonist to a Christian life, as Odajima Motoari and others argue, but as an expression of an intersubjective vision that orients the self toward others in the paradigm of restoring relationships.[88]

A similar, yet more elaborate form of this selfhood is evident in *Shiokari tōge*, a novel penned in parallel with *Hitsujigaoka* and serialized from April 1966 to August 1968 in a Christian journal, *Shinto no tomo* (信徒の友 Believers' friend). It is based on the life of Nagano Masao (1880–1909), a pious Meiji Christian in Hokkaido who, alongside his job as a railway employee, devoted himself to evangelical work until his death that saved the passengers of a runaway car at the Shiokari Pass.[89] The main character is called Nagano Nobuo, and the story chronicles his arduous trajectory from unbelief to belief. Nobuo was born in 1876, the eldest son of an upper-class family of a former samurai (士族 *shizoku*) and raised by his father Sadayuki and grandmother Tose, who abhors Christianity as a subversive threat to Japanese society. Nobuo develops an early distaste for the religion, but this antipathy yields to ambivalence during his teenage years when his Christian mother, Kiku, and faithful younger sister, Machiko, return to the family home after Tose's death. Exposed to their faith and also Sadayuki's approach to Christianity, which is remarkably revealed in his will after his sudden death, Nobuo becomes less hostile to Christianity but still perceives it as irrelevant to him. A turning point occurs when, as a twenty-three-year-old railway employee, Nobuo

discovers that his friend's sister, Fujiko, whom he is determined to marry, is a Christian. Motivated by his deep affection for her, Nobuo reads the Bible and seeks faith.

Meanwhile, Mihori Minekichi, the protagonist's co-worker, is in peril of losing his job for stealing another employee's pay envelope. With all his strength, Nobuo attempts to be a Good Samaritan for his miserable friend but only faces Minekichi's skepticism and dislike. This struggle leads the protagonist to recognize the righteous pride in his altruism, and Nobuo eventually accepts Christ, the true Good Samaritan, as his savior who has atoned for his sins. Despite Nobuo's subsequent reconciliation efforts, Minekichi remains unmoved until he witnesses Nobuo's death at the Shiokari Pass, where the protagonist sacrifices himself to save the passengers, including Minekichi, of a runaway train. Struck by the incident, the antagonist becomes repentant and along with other railway workers, converts to Christianity—this ending resonates with the novel's epigraph, taken from John 12:14: "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. However, if it dies, it produces many seeds."

The interpretation of Nobuo's death has long been discussed among critics. Most view it as a metonymic pointer to *agape* love exemplified by the sacrificial death of Christ in the Bible, which Miura uses as a means for her evangelistic outreach to non-Christian readers.[90] Mizutani Akio is particularly vociferous, arguing that Nobuo's death reifies the author's belief in Christ.[91] I contend that the self-sacrificial image operates as a metaphorical hinge that articulates Miura's approach to refocusing the postwar discourse on subjectivity. It expands the intersubjective vision presented in *Hitsujigaoka* toward a more reconciliation-oriented, rather than merely relational, figure of selfhood. The text uses the historical subject of *shizoku* (former samurai class) as a vehicle to illustrate this view. By crafting an archetype of emergent autonomous subjectivity in modern Japanese history in its own right, *Shiokari tōge* retroactively constructs an alternative view of the modern self while reimagining this notion to encompass the restorative interplay between the self and others.

Barred from their previous privileges as a result of political measures taken by the Meiji government immediately after the Restoration, the *shizoku* emerged as iconic figures of an identity crisis. By the end of the 1880s, they were no longer entitled to either the *katana* (刀 sword), a symbol of samurai pride and prestige, nor the *karoku* (家禄 hereditary stipends), which allowed the samurai to enjoy financial well-being.

Former samurai were consequently compelled to exercise their individual agency to climb the social ladder.[92] As Jason Karlin points out, they typically overcame this obstacle by redesigning the foundation of authority around Western etiquette and manners, and hence "the West became the new signifier of status and power."[93] Christianity, whose practices became less restricted after the Meiji government repealed the Tokugawa bakufu's anti-Christian laws in 1873, was no exception. Sumiya Mikio elucidates that most early Meiji Christians, such as Uemura Masahisa (1858–1925) and Ibuka Kajinosuke (1854–1940), were of the *shizoku* lineage. They embraced Christianity to fulfill their revolutionary zeal, so much so that "[their enthusiasm for] the construction of new Japan and their faith were inseparable."[94] This aspiration also resonated with ethical reform, leading them to adopt a puritanical lifestyle as a means to counter the feudalistic habits of the mind. In this way, the subject of rights and obligations, an aspect of modern society that dismantles the foundational logic of the feudal status system, was pursued.[95]

Nobuo's protracted engagement with Christianity represents the dialectical tension between feudal and modern subjectivity, albeit with a focus not on rekindling lost social or political grandeur but on recreating selfhood. The protagonist embodies the ambivalence of a warrior identity: he internalizes *samurai* ethos (such as the class-consciousness of feudal times) yet simultaneously finds himself unfit to uphold these standards—especially those pertaining to masculinity. A memorable instance occurs when adolescent Nobuo is led by his older cousin Takashi to the Yoshiwara red-light district. Contrary to the prevailing discourse of manliness of the time, where young men should have sexual experience with a woman before joining the military, he flees from such an experience by reminding himself, "(I am not acting like a man … about face!)."[96] This amounts to an abstention from sexual desires with great effort, leading Nobuo to identify himself as a man governed by his will and reason. At this point, his self-discipline convinces him to believe that "I am not weak enough to depend upon God," and Christianity is regarded as a refuge for the feeble-minded.[97] Through these attempts to deconstruct warrior manhood, Nobuo adopts a modern persona who invests his faith with autonomous volition rather than feudal values.

As with Ryōichi in *Hitsujigaoka*, an encounter with Christ inverts Nobuo's self-appraisal and accentuates his autonomy as a delusion of being authentically oneself, through which an alternative conception of the self that counteracts solipsism is brought forth. A critical difference lies,

however, in the degree to which the protagonist is engaged in reconciling psychic phenomena. In essence, reconciliation is the *basso continuo* of Nobuo's renewed life, where his emergent sense of self depends on restoring relationships with his two great antagonists: God and Minekichi. In the testimony he prepares for his baptism, Nobuo writes: "[referring to his attempt to be a Good Samaritan to Minekichi] I had placed myself in the position of a child of God and looked down on my friend … I now realize that it was this arrogance, my sin, that nailed Jesus to the cross. I now believe in the atonement of the cross for my sin."[98] After Minekichi, who had always been suspicious of Nobuo's generosity, reads this testimony, Nobuo prays that Minekichi also recognizes God's love and implores, "Please forgive me."[99] The repentant Nobuo resembles Ryōichi but differs in being pulled more into reconciling reality. Here, the protagonist comes to exercise his autonomy, not to perfect himself as a modern individual in society or politics, but to practice the reconciliation he learns from Christ in his relationship with his antagonist.

Nobuo's sacrificial death at Shiokari Pass constitutes the climactic center of this reconciliation process. The scene is foreshadowed by Nobuo's reaction to the contentious Minekichi on the eve of his death. At the dinner, Minekichi teases Nobuo for marrying Fujiko, an invalid, and interrogates, "Do you not believe that you will ultimately sacrifice yourself in favor of this woman? … You seem to possess the aura of a swindler."[100] After Minekichi becomes drunk and lies down uncovered, Nobuo takes care of him and reflects on 1 John 3:13–16 ("Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters, if the world hates you ... And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."): "Nobuo wondered if he could truly love someone enough to sacrifice his own life for them. He gazed at Mihori snoring loudly with his mouth opened."[101] The fruit of this contemplation becomes a reality, if not explicitly articulated, when Nobuo encounters a crisis the very next day. The train Nobuo and Minekichi take to Asahikawa, where Fujiko is waiting for their long-awaited engagement ceremony, suddenly loses control at the steep Shiokari Pass. At this point, the narrator focalizes on Nobuo's immediate actions and thoughts:

> Nobuo exerted all his strength to turn the steering wheel, but the train's speed remained unchanged. He quickly realized that he could stop the train with his own body at this speed. At that moment, the faces of Fujiko, Kiku, and Machiko flashed before him in his mind's eye. Nobuo closed his eyes to clear his thoughts. The handbrake was released, and Nobuo's body quickly

fell down onto the tracks.[102]

Interestingly, the narrator adds a descriptive detail to this portrait later in the story when Minekichi recalls Nobuo's death: "[just before Nobuo leaped onto the tracks] he suddenly turned and acknowledged him [Minekichi] with a nod."[103] This gap in the narrative is highly suggestive. On the one hand, the juxtaposition of Nobuo's relatives with the impending danger, where the lives of all the other passengers, including Minekichi, are at stake, shows that the protagonist renounces his most personal and desired ones for the sake of others. On the other hand, the complemented line indicates that Nobuo's death carries a personal dimension: it is the culmination of his efforts to reconcile with Minekichi. His reconciliatory impulse finds its form in a spectacle that subordinates his whole being to his opponent so that the feud between them may come to an end.

Indeed, an examination of the protagonist's "true" motivation behind his death renders this argument moot. This would risk confusing the fictional realm with reality, lending additional assumptions to several theories on the death of Nagano Masao.[104] Instead, the self-sacrificial image can be interpreted as a symbolic device to display a reconciled subjectivity. The transformation of Minekichi after the accident underscores this point. Although the reader is briefly informed about Minekichi's contrition for his offense and his subsequent baptism, the text is emphatic about the complete about-face change in his personality: "Nagano-san's death, which I saw, delivered a more poignant message to me than his will or any other means. "[105] This suggests that Minekichi grasps the personal significance of Nobuo's death and comes to terms with it; at this stage, he is transposed from antagonist to protagonist in his inheritance of a relational subject intimately linked to the idea of reconciliation. It is this image of spreading a climate of reconciliation that the term "many seeds" in the epigraph of the novel anticipates—rather than a mere shift in perspective from self- to other-centered, the image draws attention to an intersubjective definition of self, viewing it a reconciliation of one to another.

Conclusion

Miura Ayako's 1964 debut novel, *Hyōten*, and subsequent works, *Hitsujigaoka* and *Shiokari tōge*, are by no means divorced from the

contemporary literary and intellectual discourse. In contrast to the widespread criticism of dismissing Miura's works as only evangelistic texts or celebrating them as a unique instance of the genre of Christian literature, I argued that the metaphors of sin and self-sacrifice in the three novels are strategically used to form a counternarrative to the dominant postwar discourse on subjectivity. The challenge is both to deconstruct and reconstruct the notion of the modern self: sin as a metaphor for the irredeemable propensity of imagined postwar selves to maintain or rehabilitate authenticity egoistically on the one hand, and self-sacrifice as a symbolic reverse of the telos of modern subjects by highlighting their intersubjective, constructed nature on the other. Reconciliation is, in this context, described as a process of redefining autonomy through a restorative interplay with others and, in so doing, of narrating the self as beyond solipsism and the essential dualism of the ego versus the world. The self is demystified and relocated into another reality, in which autonomy is associated with practices of reconciliation rather than self-determination.

As in the case of *nikutai bungaku* and the postwar criticisms of the modern self, the novels' obsession with subjectivity and its reconciliatory role resonates with Miura's treatment of the issues of war responsibility. It is critical to recall here that Miura's *ōtōsei*—her responsiveness to her contemporary literary milieu—is marked by her deep sense of guilt for the proactive role she played in the war effort on the homefront, or, to borrow Miura's own words, for "teaching erroneous ideas to my students."[106] More significantly, those with whom she interacted during her first teaching stint in the rural Hokkaido region of Utashinai were not limited to the locals but also Korean children whose parents were carted off as forced laborers by the Japanese colonial administration. "I felt as if I received a box in the ear," Miura reminisces about the moment when she was faced with the benign yet unbending refusal of a Korean student to allow teachers, including Miura, to read her Korean book.[107] She adds, "I was reminded that, no matter how much I adored Koreans and they became attached to us, an invisible barrier separating us from them existed."[108] For the nationalist Miura of the time, however, such a barrier lost its significance within the ideological framework of the prevalent policy of Japanization (皇民化政策 *kōminka seisaku*). Reflecting on her failure to imagine Japan's brutalities against Koreans from the student's behavior, Miura avows: "What an idiot I was" (何という愚かな人間であったことか *nantoiu orokana ningen datta kotoka*).[109] Her guilt is thus hardly restricted

to her wartime teaching but includes a broader focus on the experiences of Asian victims who bore the brunt of Japanese imperialism.

　　Miura's later writings, such as *Aoi toge* (青い棘 Blue thorn, 1982) and *Jūkō* (銃口 Muzzle, 1994), attempt to come to grip with the legacies of Japan's imperial past. Kuroko Kazuo remarks that at the heart of the fictional universe of these novels lies the tension between the Japanese sense of victimhood and complicity in the nation's imperial agenda.[110] Remarkable in this regard is Kunikoshi Yasurō, the veteran protagonist in *Aoi toge*, who suffers with the death of his superiors and subordinates by American bombings yet simultaneously laments the victims of Japan's imperial aspirations as people who had supported this venture. Where such aggression responsibility is articulated, the text avoids reducing it to the militarist state; instead, it emphasizes individuals as agents who reflect on Japan's role as a victimizer of Asian nations as their own problems. At the cenotaph for the Chinese victims of forced labor in Asahikawa, Kunikoshi sincerely apologizes to a visiting Chinese professor, whose seventeen-year-old brother was one of the victims, for the past crimes.[111] The protagonist's subjectivity lies between the contradictory identities of victim and victimizer; however, as *kuni* (邦 nation) and *koshi* (越 transcendence) in his name collectively imply transcending national boundaries, Kunikoshi is crafted with a perspective on reconciliation on a global scale. This image of reconciliation and its associated subjectivity does not stand alone in Miura's oeuvre. Its blueprint can also be found, albeit within the symbolic world of domestic dramas, in her earliest novels.

NOTES

Unless otherwise noted, all the translations from the Japanese are the author's own.

1　Okuno Takeo, "Itō riron to Hirano kōshiki: kindai nihon bungaku e no genriron," vol. 2 in *Okuno Takeo bungaku ronshū* (Tokyo: Tairyūsha, 1976), 48–49.

2　Suzuki Sadami, *The Concept of "Literature" in Japan*, trans. Royall Tyler (Kyoto: International Research Center for Japanese Studies, 2006), 248.

3 For the English translation of *Hyōten*, see *Freezing Point*, trans. Shimizu Hiromu and John Terry (Wilmington, DE: Dawn Press, 1986); for *Shiokari tōge*, see *Shiokari Pass*, trans. Bill and Sheila Fearnehough (Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle, 1987).

4 See Hirano Ken, "Showa yonjūichi nen," vol. 11 in *Hirano Ken zenshū* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1975), 288–94; Tagawa Kenzō, *Hihanteki shutai no keisei: kirisutokyō hihan no gendaiteki kadai* (Tokyo: San'ichi shobō, 1971), 64–67; Dōmeki Kyōzaburō, *Gendai no sakka 101 nin* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1975), 189–90.

5 See Higuchi Noriko, "*Hyōten* ni okeru 'genzai'," in *Miura Ayako no iyashi: ningengakuteki hikaku kenkyū*, ed. Araki Masami (Fukuoka: Nakagawa shoten, 2004), 34–46; Kubota Gyōichi, *Nihon no sakka to kirisutokyō: nijūnin no sakka no kiseki* (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 2006), 144–49; Morishita Tatsue, Hyōten *kaito* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2014), 45–46. For the Christian population in postwar Japan, see "Nihon no kirisutokyō kyōkai jinkō no suii," in *Kirisutokyō nenkan 2023–2024*, ed. Editorial Committee of Kirisutokyō Nenkan (Tokyo: Kirisutokyō shinbunsha, 2023), 55.

6 Takebayashi Kazushi describes Miura's oeuvre as "missionary-oriented literature," claiming that the author's uniqueness lies in her explicit intention to convey the love God revealed in Jesus on the cross through her fiction. For details, see Takebayashi Kazushi, *Miura Ayako bungaku no honshitsu to shosō* (Tokyo: Shintensha, 2022), 30–32. Critics, such as Hirano Ken and Odagiri Hideo, criticized Miura's work for being overtly reductive in their portrayals of Christian beliefs. On this, see Kuroko Kazuo, "Miura Ayako," *Showa bungaku kenkyū* 40 (March 2000), 151–52.

7 Watanabe Sumiko, "Nihon no kindai sensō to sakka tachi: josei bungakusha no sensō sekinin," in *Onna tachi no sensō sekinin*, eds. by Okano Yukie et al. (Tokyo: Tokyodō shuppan, 2004), 123–25. Saitō Minako argues that while the wartime role assigned to women was primarily based on the model of "good wife, wise mother" (良妻賢母 ryōsai kenbo), women were no longer confined to the private sphere but became instrumental in the success of Japan's imperial project (*Modangāru ron: onnanoko ni wa shusse no michi ga futatsu aru* (Tokyo: Magajinhausu, 2000), 173). This extension of women's social role was supported by progressive female leaders (including Hani Motoko 羽仁もと子 (1873–1957) and Ichikawa Fusae 市川房枝 (1893–1981)) with surprising enthusiasm (Ibid., 174). For an overview of research on the issue of women's participation in the war effort, see also Narita Ryūichi, "Women in the Motherland: Oku Mumeo through Wartime and Postwar," in *Total War and 'Modernization*,' trans. Noriko Aso, eds. Yasushi Yamanouchi et al. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1998), 137–58.

8 Noriko J. Horiguchi, *Women Adrift: The Literature of Japan's Imperial Body* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), x–xi.

9 Douglas N. Slaymaker, *The Body in Postwar Japanese Fiction* (London: Routledge, 2004), 139. For the English translation of *Ukigumo*, see *Floating Clouds*, trans. Lane Dunlop (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

10 Iida Yuko, *Kanojotachi no bungaku* (Nagoya: Nagoya daigaku shuppankai, 2016), 10. For Butler's speech act theory, see Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (London: Routledge, 1997).

11 Ibid., 11–13.

12 Ibid., 13.

13 Iwasa Shigeru, "Shutaisei ronsō no hihanteki kentō," *Hitotsubashi ronsō* 28 (January 1990): 177.

14 For a detailed account of this debate, see Victor J. Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996), especially ch. 2.

15 Kurahra Korehito, "Atarashii bungaku e no shuppatsu," vol.3 in *Kurahara Korehito hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Shinnihon shuppansha, 1967), 6.

16 Ara Masato, "Daini no seishun," vol.1 in *Sengo bungaku ronsō*, eds. Kōno Toshirō et al. (Tokyo: Banchō shobō, 1972), 17–18.

17 Ibid., 24.

18 Contemporary writers such as Sakaguchi Ango 坂口安吾 (1906–1955) and Dazai Osamu 太宰治 (1909–1948), who were seen as members of the emerging group of writers called the *Buraiha* (無頼派 Decadent school), shared a similar approach. In his 1946 essay "Zoku darakuron" (続堕落論 Discourse on decadence, part II), Sakaguchi urged Japanese nationals to "become naked, discard stereotypical taboos, and seek your true voice" to begin anew (Sakaguchi Ango, "Darakuron (zoku darakuron)," in *Darakuron, Nihon bunka shikan: hoka nijūni hen* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2008), 239). Likewise, Dazai's 1947 novel *Shayō* (斜陽 *The Setting Sun*) describes the flesh as a potentially vital resource for renewing faith in life. For details, see Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan*, 57–60; Yoshikuni Igarashi, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945–1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 55–61.

19 Tamura Taijirō, "Nikutai ga ningen de aru," vol. 5 in *Tamura Taijirō senshū*, eds. Hata Masahiro and Onishi Yasumitsu (Tokyo: Nihontoshosentā, 2005), 188.

20 Ibid., 187.

21 Tamura Taijirō, "Nikutai no mon," vol. 94 in *Nihon gendai bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1980), 322.

22 Ibid., 331.

23 Mitsuishi Ayumi, "'Nikutai' kara sengo o saikōsuru: Tamura Taijirō no 'nikutai bungaku' o chūshin ni," vol.4 in *Sengo nihon o yomikaeru* (Kyoto: Rinsen shoten, 2019), 222.

24 Ibid.

25 Yoshimoto prefers to use the term "interiority" (内部 *naibu*) rather than "subject" (主体 *shutai*) in his essays such as "'Minshushugi bungaku' hihan" (「民主主義文学」批判 "A critique of democratic literature," 1956) and "Bungakusha no sensō sekinin" (文学者の戦争責任 Writers' war responsibilities, 1956). Washida Koyata notes that the term "inner reality of consciousness" (内部の現実意識 *naibu no genjitsu ishiki*), a key concept in the former essay, can be interpreted as a synonym for the concept of subjectivity (Washida Koyata, "Yoshimoto Takaaki ron: sensō sekinin o megutte, part 1," *Sapporo daigaku kyōyōgakubu kiyō* 34 (March 1989), 138).

26 Sasaki Kiichi, "'Sengo bungaku' wa gen'ei datta," vol. 2 in *Sengo bungaku ronsō*, eds. Ōkubo Tsuneo et al. (Tokyo: Banchō shobo, 1972), 571. Oguma Eiji argues that the concept of modernity was often used among postwar intellectuals to signify the notion of subjectivity. For details, see Oguma Eiji, *'Minshu' to 'aikoku': sengo nihon no nashonarizumu to kōkyōsei* (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 2002), 220–26.

27 Sasaki, "'Sengo bungaku' wa gen'ei datta," 571.

28 Honda Shūgo, "Sengo bungaku wa gen'ei ka," vol. 2 in *Sengo bungaku ronsō*, eds. Ōkubo Tsuneo et al. (Tokyo: Banchō shobo, 1972), 576.

29 Ibid., 577.

30 Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan*, 233.

31 Ibid., 239.

32 Sata Ineko, "Hōmatsu no kiroku," vol. 83 in *Nihon gendai bungaku zenshū: Sata Ineko, Tsuboi Sakae shū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1980), 228–29. For further reflections on this novel, see Kitagawa Akio, "Sata Ineko no haisen shori: 'Kyogi,' 'Hōmatsu no kiroku' o chūshin ni," in *Sata Ineko to sengo nihon*, eds. Kobayashi Yūko and Hasegawa Kei (Tokyo: Nanatsumori shokan, 2005), 96–112.

33 Hasegawa Kei, "Sata Ineko no ajia e no manazashi: hanpuku sareru sensō no kioku to hansen no gensetsu," in *Sensō no kioku to onna tachi no hansen hyōgen*, eds. by Hasegawa Kei and Okano Yukie (Tokyo: Yumani shobō, 2015), 62–63.

34 Okuno Takeo, "'Seiji to bungaku' riron no hasan," vol. 2 in *Sengo bungaku ronsō*, eds. Ōkubo Tsuneo et al. (Tokyo: Banchō shobō, 1972), 602.

35 Ibid., 599. For *Suna no onna*, see *The Woman in the Dunes*, trans. E. Dale Saunders (London: Penguin Classics, 2006); for *Utsukushii hoshi*, see *Beautiful Star*, trans. Stephen Dodd (London: Penguin Classics, 2022).

36 Isoda Kōichi, "Sengo bungaku no seishinzō," vol. 2 in *Sengo bungaku ronsō*, eds., Ōkubo Tsuneo et al. (Tokyo: Banchō shobō, 1972), 590.

37 "Kisakuna zakkaten no shufu: issenman'en kenshō shōsetsu ni tōsen no Miura san," *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo), Jul. 10, 1964.

38 Miura Ayako, *Miura Ayako zenshū* (Tokyo: Shufunotomosha, 1991) [hereafter *MAZ*], vol. 5, 431.

39 Ishihama Tsuneo, "Gyangu pouetto," *Ningen* 8.4 (August 1949), 38.

40 *MAZ*, 16, 11.

41 *MAZ*, 18. 250.

42 Kevin Hart, "The Experience of the Kingdom of God," in *The Experience of God: A Postmodern Response*, eds., Kevin Hart and Barbara Wall (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), 80–81.

43 Ibid., 81.

44 For the publication record of Miura's oeuvre, see "Nenpu," in *Chiisana ippo kara* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1997), 252–64.

45 *MAZ*, 3. 476–77. This memoir is Miura's first published work, albeit under the pen name Hayashida Ritsuko.

46 Philip Gabriel, *Spirit Matters: The Transcendent in Modern Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 12–13.

47 Ibid., 13.

48 Hirano Ken, "Gogatsu no shōsetsu," *Mainichi Shinbun* (Tokyo), May 3, 1965.

49 *Daisan no shinjin* writers (第三の新人 the third generation of new writers) were a generation of authors that debuted during the mid-1950s. For the details on the writers' adoption of the genre of domestic novels, see Nozaki Ai "Katei ni okeru 'keppeki' to teikō: kōdo keizai seichō ki no 'katei shōsetsu' o megutte," *Gendai shisō* 50.2 (February 2022), 30–41.

[50] *MAZ*, 1. 336. In the following text, square brackets have been added by the author to clarify words, phrases, or punctuation, while parentheses are part of the original quotations from Miura's works.

[51] Miura Ayako, "Ōbosakuhin to watashi," *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo), Jul. 11, 1964.

[52] For instance, see Takebayashi, *Miura Ayako bungaku no honshitsu to shosō*, 54; Katayama Reiko, *Miura Ayako shōron:* Hyōten*,* Michi Ariki*, tanka no koto nado* (Tokyo: Sōkyūshorin, 2019), 16–17; Morishita, Hyōten *kaitō* (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 2014), 59–61; Asai Kiyoshi, "*Hyōten*/*Zoku hyōten*," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 63, no. 11 (November 1998), 48.

[53] *MAZ*, 1. 37.

[54] Ibid., 35. "Takobeya" refers to worker housing in Hokkaido and Sakhalin Island coal mines before the Asia-Pacific War, signifying workers forced to labor intensively and unable to leave once inside. For details, see Yohei Achira, "Unearthing Takobeya Labour in Hokkaido," in *Local History and War Memories in Hokkaido*, trans. Philip A. Seaton, ed. Philip A. Seaton (London: Routledge, 2015), 146–58.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid., 65.

[57] Ibid., 28–29, 43, 45, 62, 65–66, 75.

[58] Ibid., 63.

[59] Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, vol. 1 in *The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954–1984*, trans. Robert Hurley and others, ed. Paul Rabinow, (New York: New Press, 1997), 291. For details on Foucault's conception of subjectivity, see Mark G. E. Kelly, "Foucault, Subjectivity, and Technologies of the Self," in *A Companion to Foucault*, eds. Christopher Falzon, Timothy O'Leary, and Jana Sawicki (Chichester, SXW: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 510–25.

[60] *MAZ*, 1. 305.

[61] See Sako Jun'ichirō, *Miura Ayako no kokoro* (Tokyo: Chōbunsha, 1989), 58–59; Higuchi, "*Hyōten* ni okeru genzai," 38–39; Gabriel, *Spirit Matters*, 26–27; Takebayashi, *Miura Ayako bungaku no honshitsu to shosō*, 58.

[62] This depiction is also evident in Keizō's troubled relationship with Yōko. He suffers when he discovers in himself a growing sexual yearning for Yōko as she grows up, which is incompatible with his image as a loving father. See *MAZ*, 1. 183–5, 240, 247–8, 303–5.

[63] *MAZ*, 1. 44.

64 Yoshikawa Toyoko, "Umeyo fuyaseyo, sanji chōsetsu undō kara kokumin yūseihō e," in *Onna tachi no sensō sekinin*, eds., Okano Yukie et al. (Tokyo: Tokyodō shuppan, 2004), 44.

65 *MAZ*, 1. 12.

66 *MAZ*, 1. 287.

67 For instance, see Kudō Shigeru, "Yōko no monogatari: shōsetsu *Hyōten* shiron," *Beppu kokugo kokubungaku* 43 (February 2001), 29; Higuchi, "*Hyōten* ni okeru genzai," 39.

68 *MAZ*, 1. 226, 237, 242–5, 335.

69 Ibid., 250.

70 In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff is often marked by his "coloured" appearance, particularly his blackness, while his racial and cultural background remains murky due to the varied and conflicting interpretations offered by the characters in the story, as Sarah Fermi explains: "Heathcliff's multiple suggested origins (Lascar, Gypsy, Prince of China, India, an American or Spanish castaway) all point in the same direction: he was a man of colour" (Sara Fermi, "A Question of Colour," *Brontë Studies* 40.4 (November 2015), 340). This enigmatic nature of Heathcliff incurs opposition in the Earnshaw family into which he is adopted, leading to a cold and dismissive treatment by the family members such as Mrs. Earnshaw and Hindely, the eldest Earnshaw child. Heathcliff's revenge on the Earnshaws as well as the Lintons, another key family in *Wuthering Heights* who also treat Heathcliff with condescension and disgust, thus constitutes the central plot of the novel. In Yōko's reception of this story, however, these notable features of Heathcliff are overlooked; instead, his status as an orphan is emphasized as if it were his sole defining feature.

71 *MAZ*, 1. 337.

72 Takebayashi, *Miura Ayako bungaku no honshitsu to shosō*, 246–7. See also Morishita, Hyōten *kaitō*, 240–3; Higuchi, "*Hyōten* ni okeru genzai," 39–41; Katayama, *Miura Ayako shōron*, 12–17.

73 Gabriel, *Spirit Matters*, 31–32.

74 Etō Jun, "Bungei jihyō jō," *Asahi Shinbun* (Tokyo), Nov. 26, 1965.

75 Takano Toshimi, *Sonzai no bungaku: Takano Toshimi hyōronshū* (Tokyo: Sanichi shōbō, 1968), 15.

76 *MAZ*, 1. 175–6.

77 Ibid., 178.

78 Sako, *Miura Ayako no kokoro*, 50–53. Hereafter, the New International Version will be used for all the quotations from the Bible.

[79] Tsurumi Shunsuke, "Jogen: tenkō no kyōdō kenkyū ni tsuite," vol.1 in *Kyōdō kenkyū tenkō: senzenhen jō*, ed. Shisō no kagaku kenkyūkai (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2012), 22.

[80] In 1933, two prominent members of the Japanese Communist Party, Sano Manabu (1892–1953) and Nabeyama Sadachika (1901–1979), who had been incarcerated since 1929, issued the Sano-Nabeyama statement. This declaration of political conversion criticized the Comintern, portraying it as a tool for advancing Soviet Russia's interests, both in Japan and globally, and voiced support for the emperor system and its expansion. For details, see Irena Hayter and Mark Williams, "Introduction," in Tenkō*: Cultures of Political Conversion in Transwar Japan*, eds. Irena Hayter, George T. Sipos, and Mark Williams (London: Routledge, 2021), xix–xxii.

[81] Ibid., xxiii.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Max Ward, "Ideological Conversion as Historical Catachresis: Coming to Terms with *Tenkō*," in Tenkō*: Cultures of Political Conversion in Transwar Japan*, eds. Irena Hayter, George T. Sipos, and Mark Williams (London: Routledge, 2021), 15.

[84] *MAZ*, 1. 372.

[85] Ibid., 380–1.

[86] Ibid., 464.

[87] Ibid., 473.

[88] Odajima Motoari, *Miura Ayako ron: sono gendai teki igi* (Sapporo: Hakurosha, 2022), 98. See also Ōtsuka Tatsuya, "*Hitsujigaoka*," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 63.11 (November 1998), 58; Tani Shungi and Ji Aiqin, "Miura Ayako bungaku ni okeru 'genzai' to 'yurushi' no ikkansei: *Hyōten* to *Hitsujigaoka* o chūshin ni," *Nihongaku rondan* 1 (December 2019), 73–74.

[89] For details about Nagano Masao, see *Ko Nagano Masao kun no ryakuden fukkokuban*, ed. Asahikawa rokujō kyōkai kyujushūnen kinenjigyō (Asahikawa: Nihon kirisutokyōdan asahikawa, 1991).

[90] See Harada Yōichi, "Sugao no Miura bungaku," *Miura Ayako sakuhinshū geppō* 2 (June 1983), 3; Sako, *Miura Ayako no kokoro*, 77; Kubota Gyōichi, *Ai to akashi no bungaku: Miura Ayako no hito to sakuhin* (Shiga: Darumashobō, 1989), 40–43; Nonomiya Noriko, "*Shiokari tōge*," *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō* 63.11 (November 1998), 69; Kuroko Kazuo, *Miura Ayako ron: 'ai' to 'ikirukoto' no imi* (Sapporo: Hakurosha, 2009), 99.

91 Mizutani Akio, *Miura Ayako: ai to inori no bungei* (Tokyo: Shufunotomosha, 1989), 85.

92 For details about the Meiji government's treatment of *shizoku* and their subsequent struggles, see Ochiai Hiroki, "Meiji seifu to kashizoku: kindai Nihon ni okeru mibunsei no kaitai to saihen," in *Bakumatsu Meiji ki no kokumin kokka keisei to bunka henyō*, eds. Nishikawa Nagao and Matsumiya Hideharu (Tokyo: Shinyōsha, 1995), 143–166; Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 64–67.

93 Jason G. Karlin. *Gender and Nation in Meiji Japan: Modernity, Loss, and the Doing of History* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2014), 25.

94 Sumiya Mikio, "Kindai nihon no keisei to kirisutokyō," vol. 8 in *Sumiya Mikio chosakushū* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2003), 14.

95 Ibid., 14.

96 *MAZ*, 2. 97.

97 Ibid., 141.

98 Ibid., 182.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid., 198.

101 Ibid., 198.

102 Ibid., 203.

103 Ibid., 208.

104 After publishing *Shiokari tōge*, Miura was criticized for romanticizing the life of Nagano Masao, whose death could be merely attributed to his misuse of the emergency handbrake. In response to this, Miura wrote an afterword to the novel in which she justifies her choice to depict Nobuo in a sacrificial way by referring to several existing testimonies of Nagano Masao's death. For details, see Ibid., 2. 214–6.

105 Ibid., 209.

106 *MAZ*, 3. 17.

107 *MAZ*, 5. 335

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 Kuroko, *Miura Ayako ron*, 114.

[111] *MAZ*, 11. 176.

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