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HAGIWARA SAKUTARŌ:
JAPAN'S FIRST MODERN POET

by

ADELE YUKI MATSUYOSHI

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I. Poet in a New Era

Hagiwara Sakutarō was born in 1886, in the middle of the Meiji Era. Eighteen years earlier, the Meiji emperor had been persuaded by Commodore Perry to open Japan's doors to trade after nearly 250 years of isolation. Christian missionaries were among the first to arrive; aided by translations of the Bible, their teachings and texts came to have a powerful impact on Japanese culture:

> The strongest cultural influence of the early Meiji Period was indeed the translation of the New Testament, completed in 1879. This period marked the high point of Christianity in Japan as many people were converted to the religion of the west, the source of the new culture.[1]

Protestant hymns were also translated around the same time. Although the Japanese versions were based on the English melodies, they differed in length and rhythm from the originals. Eventually, distinctive rhythm patterns

[1]Donald Keene, Appreciations of Japanese Culture (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1971), p. 137.

were established for the new hymns, "which were to find favor with the Japanese symbolist poets in the early 1900's."[2] In keeping with the new stress on universal education, translations of European songs were printed for use in public schools. Like the hymns, these songs were based on the original melodies; the words and images, however, were distinctly Japanese. Furthermore, they were usually set down in stanzas of four lines, with traditional Japanese syllable counts of 7-5-7-5. Thus East and West merged successfully in these school songs, some of which are still being sung today.

The 7-5, or "shichi go chō," metric rhythm had been the standard prosody for all Japanese poetry since the eighth-century poetry anthology, the Manyōshū ("Collection for a Myriad Ages"). Not only that, Japanese poets at the beginning of the Meiji Era were still using the ancient "tanka" and "haiku" verse forms. The tanka, consisting of five lines, with a syllabic breakdown of 5-7-5-7-7, became the predominant form of verse after the Kokinshū ("First Imperial Anthology") of 905 A.D. This compact lyrical form suited the prevailing emphasis on intensity of feeling during that period. Later, the

[2]Donald Keene, "The First Japanese Translations of European Literature," The American Scholar, Spring 1976, p. 273.

upper hemstitch of the tanka evolved into the even more concentrated form of the haiku (5-7-5), made popular by the seventeenth-century wandering poet, Bashō. The tanka and haiku were further characterized by the use of "bungotai," formal literary language modelled after Chinese. In fact, Japanese poets had been writing poems in Chinese, known as "kanshi," for a thousand years.

In 1882, three University of Tokyo professors called for the use of "kōgotai:--spoken, colloquial language--in their preface to Shintaishi ("New-style Poetry"). This book included fourteen translations of early nineteenth-century English poems, among them Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," Gray's "An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and Tennyson's "The Charge of the Light Brigade." The remaining five poems were the translators' attempts at "new-style poetry." The professors had the necessary language skills, since they had all spent time abroad; but because two of them were in the field of philosophy, while the third was in botany, they might have lacked literary expertise. At any rate, the translations were rather crude and the professors' efforts at writing "new-style poetry" turned out to be nothing more than crude imitations of their western models. Nevertheless, Shintaishi proved to be an important catalyst for the transformation of Japanese poetry because it introduced the

possibility for new modes of expression. The examples of western poetry pointed out the limitations of tanka and haiku in expressing the full range of human experience, particularly in the new age of Meiji. Most importantly, by advocating the use of kōgotai, the three translators paved the way for the development of modern colloquial speech in literature.

After Shintaishi, writers like Mori Ōgai and Ueda Bin translated works by German, French, Russian, and Italian, as well as British and American authors. Mori's 1889 Omokage ("Visions"), for example, included translations of Goethe's "Mignon" and Ophelia's song from Hamlet; later, he translated an excerpt from Rousseau's Confessions and Lermontov's short story "Taman," among other works. Ueda was a polyglot whose 1905 translations in Kaichō-on ("Sound of the Tide") affected a good many writers in the early 1900's. Although he included works by writers as diverse as Theodore Storm, Heinrich Heine, Robert Browning, and Dante, Ueda's translations of the Parnassian and Symbolist poets, among them Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé, were the most admired. In fact, Ueda's translations popularized French culture to the extent that French became the language the Japanese literati chose to study. Thus Hagiwara grew up in a unique period of Japanese literary history; his poetry would not

have been possible without the influx of western literature and the transformation of Japan's language and culture occurring at the time.

Hagiwara Sakutarō was born on November 1, 1886 in the provincial town of Maebashi, seventy miles north of Tokyo. Since his father was a successful doctor, Hagiwara was exposed to many of the western innovations available to upper middle-class families of the Meiji Era: electrical lighting, western-style furniture, and even musical instruments such as the piano. Being male and the eldest of six children, Hagiwara was spoiled in the tradition of Japanese families. Furthermore, because he was frail and sickly, he was especially doted upon by his mother; Hagiwara's attitude toward women in his poetry and his life is often attributed to the close relationship he had with his mother.

Perhaps because he was spoiled, lazy, or just plain bored, Hagiwara was a poor student who frequently missed school due to illness. He turned his attention instead to the writing of hundreds of tanka, the first of which appeared in a school magazine in 1902. After completing the equivalent of high school ("kōtōgakkō"), he drifted from Maebashi to Kumamoto to Okayama to Tokyo from 1910-1913. During that period Hagiwara explored a variety of

interests, notably music, for which he had always had an affinity (Beethoven was his favorite composer). In 1911 he studied mandolin under an Italian instructor and made a halfhearted effort at preparing for the entrance exam to the Ueno Music School. He soon discarded that effort and the following year studied guitar in Tokyo for a brief period. In the meantime, Hagiwara went to see western-style plays, occasionally reviewed Kabuki performances, and continued to write tanka. Although Hagiwara's father disapproved of his son's bohemian lifestyle, he nevertheless provided Hagiwara with financial support; this practice was to continue throughout most of the poet's adult life.

In 1913 Hagiwara read some poems by an up-and-coming poet, Murō Saisei (1889-1962) and began a correspondence which was the start of a lifelong friendship. Murō was to become one of Japan's most treasured poets. Encouraged by Muro's work, Hagiwara adapted his tanka to the "new-style" of poetry and in May of that year, five of his poems were published in the distinguished literary magazine Zamuboa. Hagiwara also began to correspond with the editor of the magazine, the well-known poet Kitahara Hakushū (1885-1943). Kitahara's poetry was characterized by his use of foreign words tracing back to Japan's contact with the Portuguese and the Dutch in the 1600's.

From 1913-14, Hagiwara made the acquaintance of such poets as Yosano Akiko (1878-1934), Yamamura Bochō (1884-1924), and Ōte Takuji (1887-1934). Together with Murō and Yamamura, Hagiwara founded Ningyo Shisha ("Mermaid Poetry Society") in June 1914 for the purpose of studying poetry, religion, and music.

1914 marked the outbreak of World War I; it was also the beginning of Hagiwara's most creative and successful years as a poet. In September he became a contributing editor of Kitahara's new literary magazine Chijō junrei ("Pilgrimage on Earth") and wrote poems for many other literary magazines as well. During the first half of 1915, Hagiwara wrote as many poems as he had in all of 1914. In March 1915 Ningyo Shisha began issuing a monthly called Takujō funsui ("Table-top Fountain"); like many literary magazines of the time, its lifespan was short--it folded after only three issues.

Suddenly in mid-1915, Hagiwara stopped writing poetry. From the series of letters written to Kitahara, it seems Hagiwara had reached a peak in a mental disorder which had been troubling him for two years. Thus, his most prolific period of writing poetry corresponded to what was possibly the most agonizing time in Hagiwara's life. Though he was to be afflicted by a variety of

mental disorders throughout his lifetime, never would he suffer as intensely as he did in those years from 1913-15.

After a year of isolation from his friends, Hagiwara published his first book of poems in 1917. Entitled Tsuki ni hoeru ("Howling at the Moon"), it was well-received by poets and critics alike. Contributing to the immediate reception of the book was the publication of Kitahara's preface to the collection in a newspaper a month before the book itself appeared. Also in the news was the rather notorious information that the Imperial Censor had called for the deletion of two poems--"Koi o koisuru hito" ("Person Who Loves Love") and "Ai-ren" ("Love-Pity")--on the basis that they would wield a corrupting influence on the youth of Japan.

For about a year after the publication of Tsuki ni hoeru, Hagiwara continued to write and publish poems. Then, for nearly two years, he ceased writing poetry altogether and concentrated on prose instead. His prose pieces discussed poetry as well as a variety of other subjects. Among his works of that period, Shi no genri ("Principles of Poetry"), a volume of poetic criticism and theory, was not published until 1930. Another work, Atarashiki yokujō ("New Desire"), comprised of what Hagiwara labelled "prose aphorisms," appeared in 1922. In

the meantime, Hagiwara had gotten married to Ueda Ineko. After two daughters--Yōko in 1920 and Akiko in 1922--the marriage failed and ended in 1929.

In January 1923 Hagiwara published his second book of poems: Aoneko ("Blue Cat"). This marked the end of Hagiwara's "innovative" period. He began to write more prose again and the poetry that he did write was characterized by a return to more conservative styles and subjects. Later collections of poetry lack the vitality and originality of Tsuki ni hoeru and Aoneko (this thesis will focus mainly on these two works). Chō o yumemu ("Dreaming of Butterflies")--1923--includes eight poems from Tsuki ni hoeru and Aoneko, plus several other poems not yet anthologized. Junjō shōkyoku shū ("Collection of Short Songs on Innocent Love")--1925--is a collection of twenty-eight poems: eighteen, most of which had been written prior to Tsuki ni hoeru, and ten new poems which represent a regression to bungotai. Hyōtō ("The Ice Land")--1934--also relies heavily on bungotai. Hagiwara's last collection of poems--Shukumei ("Destiny"), published in 1939, consists of prose poems written over a twenty-year period which resemble his "prose aphorisms."

Although Hagiwara had given up writing tanka in 1913, he maintained a lifelong respect for that tradi-

tional form. His knowledge of tanka enabled him to debate with tanka poets and he often analyzed tanka in his discussions of prosody. In 1931 Hagiwara edited an anthology of classical tanka on the subject of love and in 1935 he came out with a commentary on the twelfth-century tanka poet Princess Shikishi. Hagiwara also gained a familiarity with the haiku form, which led to his influential study of Yosa Buson (1716-83) in 1936.

Hagiwara got married a second time, to Ōya Mitsuko in 1938; she left him after eighteen months. Physically and emotionally, Hagiwara's condition deteriorated in the last few years of his life:

> The posthumous account of him written by his daughter Yōko paints a poignant picture of the aging poet, fascinated by stage-magic and simple conjuring tricks, drifting into alienation and a persistent drunkenness.[3]

At least one poet, Miyoshi Tatsuji (1900-63), remained Hagiwara's friend until the end. When Hagiwara died on May 11, 1942 of pneumonia, the younger poet inherited the mantle from the man he considered to be his master:

[3]Graeme Wilson, trans., ed., "Face at the Bottom of the World" and Other Poems by Hagiwara Sakutarō (Rutland, Vt.: Charles E. Tuttle, 1961), p. 14.

Dark mass of melancholy--
That character I loved,
Doubter and pessimist, philosopher and
wanderer,
Crystallized, unchanged and incorruptible,
Like still-warm lava, of strange music.[4]

Miyoshi went on to become the chief collaborator of the journal Shiki ("Four Seasons") which published the leading poetry of the 1930's. Until his death in 1963, Miyoshi was Japan's foremost poet.

There is no doubt that Hagiwara laid the groundwork for modern Japanese poetry. Writing when he did, between the Meiji (1868-1912) and the Taisho (1912-1926) eras, Hagiwara provided a model in poetry which enabled writers to make the transition from the tanka tradition to modern verse forms. His natural affinity for music, stimulated by the influx of western sounds and instruments, gave his poems a melodic quality totally unlike the shichi go chō-beat of tanka. Hagiwara was also gifted with a highly intense personal vision which resulted in powerful imagery that has at times been labelled "animistic," "humanistic," and "symbolist." And finally, his poems were ac-

[4]Donald Keene, trans., Appreciations of Japanese Culture, p. 147.

cessible to a wide reading audience because of his use of kōgotai. Thus, despite his physical frailty, his emotional instability, and his lack of formal schooling, Hagiwara was able to make a lasting impression on Japanese literature.

II. Possible Western Influences

Graeme Wilson, one of the first translators of Hagiwara's poems into English, points out Hagiwara's connection to the Symbolists: "Hagiwara's earliest truly modern poems, of which the first examples appeared in magazines during 1913, show traces of the influence of Baudelaire and the French Symbolists."[1] Eastern and western writers and critics such as Mori Ōgai and Donald Keene have also mentioned Hagiwara's "Symbolist" ties. Sato Hiroaki, the foremost translator of Hagiwara's poems, opposes the preceding views; in his introduction to Howling at the Moon, Sato claims that during Hagiwara's most creative and productive periods (1913-1923), the poet was not at all influenced by western ideas:

> During that time he was completely himself, utterly unaffected by all that astonishing variety of movements that poured into Japan then: neo-romanticism, dadaism, expressionism, symbolism, mysticism, nihilism, neo-classicism,

[1]Wilson, p. 16.

futurism, cubism, realism, and so forth.[2]

Hagiwara himself remarked that though he admired Baudelaire, he felt Baudelaire's productivity was due to a combination of cultivated intelligence and hard work: "Even a person like me, born with natural intelligence, could have written poems and essays in my youth like Baudelaire if I had worked as diligently."[3] Baudelaire's advantage, according to Hagiwara, lay in his "self-confidence." In his essay "Poe, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky," Hagiwara credits Poe, and not Baudelaire, with being the major influence on his poetry. Baudelaire, Hagiwara insists, is not as "terrifying" as Poe; Poe is more terrifying, too, than Nietzsche and Dostoevsky because he delves into the unknown: "Of all the mysteries manifesting the different varieties of madness, the mystery of Poe is the deepest and most occult."[4]

Edgar Allan Poe is rarely credited with being an important literary theorist, especially in his own coun-

[2]Sato, p. xxii.

[3]Itō Shinkichi et al., eds., Hagiwara Sakutarō zenshū (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1978), v. 8, p. 558.

[4]Ito et al., v. 8, p. 558.

try. Even a major critical work like Anna Balakian's The Symbolist Movement, which acknowledges Poe's contribution to the French Symbolists, does not go into much detail about the nature of Poe's influence. In fact, Balakian might be in error when she reports that the nineteenth-century concept of symbol travelled from Europe to America and then back to Europe. According to Balakian, Ralph Waldo Emerson discovered the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, Swedish mystic and visionary (1688-1722) in Manchester in 1847. Impressed by Swedenborg's scheme of symbols in the relationship of mind to matter, Emerson "took back with him to America a general concept of the philosophy and from it shaped the Transcendentalism that was to influence Edgar Allan Poe . . . "[5] Poe, it seems, would deny Balakian's contention; in a discussion on suggestiveness in poetry, for example, he clearly shows his disdain for the "transcendalists":

> It is the excess of the suggested meaning--it is the rendering this the upper instead of the undercurrent of the theme--which turns into prose (and that of the very flattest kind) the so-called poetry of the so-called transcenden-

[5]Anna Balakian, The Symbolist Movement (New York: Random House, 1967), p. 15.

talists.[6]

At any rate, Balakian is correct in recognizing Poe's influence on Baudelaire and the French Symbolists.

Most critics agree that the French Symbolists consist of a group of poets who wrote in Paris around 1885-1895, the most well-known of whom are Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, and Stephane Mallarmé. Baudelaire was actually not part of the French Symbolist school, since he wrote about forty years earlier; nevertheless, he is important to the movement because of his many contributions to nineteenth-century poetic theory.

As Anna Balakian states, Swedenborg did play a part in the evolution of symbols. His ideas did not require an intermediary like Emerson, however, for numerous translations of his lectures and essays were available throughout Europe. That Baudelaire knew of Swedenborg is evidenced by his mention of the philosopher in several of his critical works.[7] Basically, Swedenborg believed that communication between man and God occurred through

[6]Edgar Allan Poe, "The Philosophy of Composition," in Specimens of Modern English Literary Criticism, ed. William T. Brewster (New York: MacMillan, 1907), p. 267.

[7]For example, in "New Notes on Edgar Poe," in Baudelaire on Poe, trans., eds. Lois and Francis E. Hyslop, Jr. (State College Pa.: Bald Eagle Press, 1952), p. 124.

the mediation of earthly phenomena, or symbols. Each symbol had its counterpart in the spiritual world; for instance, "garden" referred to "wisdom," "trees" to "knowledge of good," and so on. But by establishing a one-to-one correspondence between concrete objects and abstract concepts, Swedenborg was really dealing with allegory, rather than symbol. Still, Swedenborg's notion of correspondences was important for the development of metaphor, for poets from the Romantics on adapted his idea of a spiritual realm to suit their concept of "the infinite":

> the true Romanticist found his vista in the dream, as the intermediary between this world and the next; but so did the symbolist cultivate dreams as the only vital level of existence of the poet, and the surrealist probed the dream world not merely to enjoy the state but thereby to cultivate the possibilities of his mind.[8]

Swedenborg's earthly symbols first became "natural" symbols in poetry. Birds were often used to suggest an

[8]Balakian, p. 16.

ideal or higher order to which the poet could fly: swans, for instance, represented purity and virginity. After recurrent use of a metaphor like the swan, however, the symbol became a meaningless convention. The Symbolists also turned to Greek antiquity and made its mythical characters part of their shadowy dream world; but when the characters became associated with a particular ideal, they became ends in themselves, which led to a form of neo-classicism. Maurice Maeterlinck, a Belgian poet of the French Symbolist school, gives a broad explanation of the kind of symbol that is doomed to a dead end: "the a priori symbol, which starts with an abstraction and tries to give it a human vestment, thus coming close to allegory."[9]

Baudelaire's poems in Les Fleurs du Mal ("Flowers of Evil") reflect the use of natural and mythical symbols. In one poem, Baudelaire associates owls with their traditionally assigned trait of wisdom, only here they also take on a demonic aspect:

> Within the shelter of black yews
> The owls in ranks are ranged apart

[9]Balakian, p. 108.

Like foreign gods, whose eyeballs dart
Red fire. They meditate and muse.[10]

The owls, like the poet, sit in judgment of mankind with its illusory goals. In another poem, "Le Cygne" ("The Swan"), Baudelaire uses the swan image to mediate between Andromache and Troy, and the poet and Paris, to create a metaphor for loss and the grief which accompanies loss.

Baudelaire's attempts to find new symbols or rejuvenate old ones foreshadow the dilemma of the French Symbolists: Mallarmé also drew from myth for his dramatic dialogue "Hériodiade--Scène"; instead of swans, Verlaine used violins to express melancholy in "Chanson d'automne" ("Autumn Song"). The main difference between Baudelaire's Andromache and Mallarmé's Hérodiade is that the former conveys one attitude while the latter embodies a tension that is difficult to pinpoint. True, Baudelaire blends time and overlaps images, but "Le Cygne" is dealing primarily with one subject: the grief suffered by separation from loved ones and country. Hérodiade, on the other hand, is a complex mixture of youth, frigidity, and barrenness; the combined images of moon, metals, ice

[10]Roy Campbell, trans., "The Owls," in The Flowers of Evil, ed. Marthiel and Jackson Mathews (New York: New Directions, 1955), p. 59.

and snow impart a cold, yet sensual effect. "Hérodiade--Scène" is a perfect example of the Symbolists' use of visual, tactile, olfactory, and auditory sensations for synesthetic effect. Not just the images, but the words themselves, like Verlaine's violins, are meant to strike chords in the reader's emotions.

Baudelaire's awareness of the affective power of words and images was realized long before Mallarmé and Verlaine: many of Baudelaire's poems are filled with intoxicating perfumes and the sensations of lovemaking. He wanted to affect his readers the way Wagner's music had affected him:

> Wagner mingled paganism, Gothic legend, and Christianity, creating a plane of reality which was mysterious without being religious, in a sense parallel to the hypnotic atmosphere created with words by Edgar Allan Poe.[11]

This hypnotic atmosphere, for Baudelaire, was like the effect of a narcotic: each person who experienced Wagner would have his own personal interpretation. Wagner's mystical music was "symbolism that is not allegory, since

[11]Balakian, p. 44.

it leaves a gap to be filled by the imagination of him who hears it."[12] Baudelaire wanted poetry to be a mystery, too, to provide gaps for the imagination to fill, but in his use of rhymed verse and conventions like the sonnet form, he never quite attained mystery on the formal level. Eventually, his symbols also lost their enigmatic qualities--through frequent exposure and in-depth analyses--and became allegorical. Still, Baudelaire laid the groundwork for much of the Symbolist aesthetic: he realized the evocative power of words, strove for mystery and ambiguity in his poetry, and helped to define the role of the poet in society.

In addition to Swedenborg, Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), German philosopher, was an important influence on the French Symbolists. In their introduction to French Symbolist Poetry, Houston and Houston claim that although Schopenhauer's direct influence is difficult to trace, his ideas are reflected in much of Symbolist poetry:

> The world of active life was for Schopenhauer the realm of blind will, a largely unconscious force by which we, as subject, constantly reach

[12]Balakian, p. 44.

> out to seize on the objects of phenomena, which we pronounce to ourselves, as goals. The process of living propels one continually toward unwanted death; while the will is purposeless in general, it shows up in each individual as a determining, fatalistic force. Sexuality is its most obvious form . . . [13]

Baudelaire's poem "Les Hiboux" ("The Owls") certainly seems to support the notion of blind will and aimless striving. In other poems like #33 (untitled of "Spleen et Idéal," the poet/persona becomes the victim of sexual urges. (In several of Baudelaire's poems, the prostitute or temptress is an important figure.)

Despite his seeming alliance with the dark forces, however, Baudelaire bitterly protested his innocence:

> Being as chaste as paper, as sober as water, as devout as a woman at communion, as harmless as a sacrificial lamb, it would not displease me to be taken for a debauchee, a drunkard, an infidel, a murderer.[14]

[13]John and Mona Houston, trans., eds., French Symbolist Poetry (Bloomington: Indiana U. Press, 1980), p. 5.

[14]Marthiel and Jackson Mathews, eds., The Flowers of Evil (New York: New Directions, 1955), p. xv.

Baudelaire's unfavorable reputation was due partially to his behaviour as a young man, but more so to rumors (which he fed with wild stories about himself). Having come into a good-sized inheritance at the age of twenty-one, Baudelaire led the life of a dandy--dressing extravagantly, hanging around cafés, and smoking hashish. Baudelaire's bohemian lifestyle in his youth and the dark themes of his poetry both reflect a longing to escape the boredom of his bourgeois upbringing. In actuality, his life and poetry reveal a morally upright person with a deep concern for the existential dilemmas confronting modern man. In poem #33, for instance, the poet is troubled by the prostitute's inability to feel; in "Les Hiboux," he is aware of man's futile striving. In both poems, Baudelaire sees the poet as sage or prophet and seeker of the abyss, "the frontier between the visible and the invisible, the conscious and the unconscious, non life and the living."[15] For Baudelaire, one of the last frontiers was death. Death was also to become one of the dominant themes in French Symbolist poetry.

Baudelaire's definition of the poet as the seeker of

[15]Balakian, p. 52.

the abyss--the unknown and the forbidden--later evolved into the "decadent spirit" of Mallarmé and other poets of the French Symbolist school. The role of seeker and prophet compelled the poet to assume a particular attitude toward life:

> the withdrawn manner, the concern with the mystery of life, the futility of free will, the imminence of death in man's daily existence, the abyss of our incomprehensions--but, with it all, the consciousness of the role of the artist, the comfort of the arts as the only means of demolishing chance, the permanence of man through the emission of thought.[16]

Whereas the spiritual act of non-willing was no more than negative knowledge for Schopenhauer, the Symbolist poet was able to redeem himself from total renunciation of life through the legacy of his work.

Baudelaire's appreciation of Wagner had led him to believe that "poetry is related to music through prosody, whose roots go deeper into the human soul than any class-

[16]Balakian, p. 115.

ical theory indicates."[17] The Symbolists took Baudelaire's idea of the relationship of poetry and music and combined it with his notion of the evocative power of words: in much of Symbolist poetry, the music of the word is emphasized, rather than the music of the poetic line. One way to heighten this effect was to repeat a word instead of rhyming it. The end rhyme of Baudelaire gave way to internal rhyme, assonance, and alliteration. According to Houston and Houston, the Symbolists also experimented with syllabic versification: "They wrote entire poems in lines of nine, eleven, and thirteen syllables, which are difficult for the ear to seize on and classify."[18] At the same time, though, perhaps this might have created the kind of "gap" for the reader that Baudelaire so admired in Wagner's music.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Hagiwara professed a deep admiration for Poe. Baudelaire also admired Poe; in fact, it was largely through his translations of Poe that he became famous and was able to support himself financially. It cannot be said, how-

[17]Mathews, p. xiii.

[18]Houston and Houston, p. 14.

ever, that Les Fleurs du Mal was influenced by Poe, since Baudelaire had already written those poems by the time he became aware of Poe. Baudelaire's first exposure to Poe occurred with a reading of Isabelle Meunieur's translation of "The Black Cat," which appeared in a Paris newspaper in 1847. Baudelaire decided to try his hand at translating Poe; in July 1848, his translation of "Mesmeric Revelation" appeared in the socialist magazine La Liberté de Penser. After this initial burst of enthusiasm, Baudelaire's interest in Poe seems to have waned for a few years; then, upon hearing of Poe's death, he made desperate attempt to obtain the recently-issued (1850) Redfield edition of The Works of the Late Edgar Allan Poe (Previously, only twelve of Poe's stories had been available in the volume Tales). Baudelaire was unsuccessful in getting the three-volume set, but managed by chance to secure back issues of The Southern Literary Messenger (of which Poe had been an editor) through an American correspondent in Paris. Besides contributions to the Messenger made by Poe, Baudelaire came across an obituary of the late author and an extensive review of his Works. Baudelaire must have been moved by these articles and by his reading of Tales because he wrote a forty-page essay on Poe for the Revue de Paris (which appeared in two installations, in March and April, 1852). In a letter to his

mother on March 27, 1852, Baudelaire wrote: "I've found an American author who has aroused in me the most astonishing sympathy. I've written a couple of articles on him, his life and works, which are written with great passion."[19]

Baudelaire finally secured a copy of the Redfield edition in 1853 and in the next twelve years translated forty-six short stories, the long poem Eureka, the novella The Narrative of A. Gordon Pym, the essay "The Philosophy of Composition," and a few poems, among them "The Raven," "The Haunted Palace," "The Conqueror Worm," and "To My Mother." The quality of Baudelaire's translations is generally recognized as being excellent; many translations of Poe into other languages have been based on Baudelaire's versions instead of the original. Thus, Baudelaire did much to enhance Poe's reputation, not just in France, but throughout Europe. More important, however, was that Baudelaire's admiration for Poe was adopted by Verlaine, Mallarmé, Rimbaud, and other French Symbolists; as Paul Valéry once remarked, "All Baudelaire disciples declared themselves disciples of Poe also, as if they could not separate the two and admire them apart

[19]Enid Starkie, Baudelaire (Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions, 1958), p. 214.

from one another."[20]

During the height of the French Symbolist movement (1885-1895), writers from Europe as well as America went to Paris to study and write: Arthur Symons, William Butler Yeats, Rainer Maria Rilke, Maurice Maeterlinck, Jean Moréas, Gabriele D'Annunzio, and Stuart Merrill. From the small elitist core of French Symbolists there emerged a broader symbolist (with a small "s") movement which would eventually "extend to America and as far east as Japan."[21] In the 1920's, the symbolist movement culminated in works like Eliot's The Waste Land, Stevens' Harmonium, and Rilke's Duino Elegies. In Japan around the same time, Hagiwara's two major volumes of poetry were published: Tsuki ni hoeru (1917) and Aoneko (1923).

Nothing seems to indicate that Hagiwara read works of foreign literature in their original languages; in fact, with the wealth of translated material available at the time, it is more likely that he read Japanese translations. One must also point out that, being a poor stu-

[20]W.T. Bandy, ed., preface to Seven Tales by Edgar Allan Poe (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), p. 8.

[21]Balakian, p. 103.

dent, Hagiwara probably was not diligent in studies of foreign language and devoted himself primarily to the writing of tanka instead. Once out of school, however, Hagiwara's dilettantish lifestyle thrust him into the current of European-influenced culture: he attended performances of western-style plays and even wrote a few reviews. Hagiwara's contacts with Murō Saisei and Kitahara Hakushū, the publication of his poems in Zamuboa, and his subsequent entrance into literary circles must have exposed him to Ueda Bin's translations of Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Verlaine. Because of the literary status of French in Japan, it is possible that Hagiwara may have read Poe via Japanese translations based on Baudelaire's translations. At any rate, the stories that Hagiwara mentions in his essay "Poe, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky" had all been translated by Baudelaire before the beginning of the Meiji Era: Histoires Extraordinaires (1856) and Nouvelles Histoires Extraordinaires (1857) comprised the bulk of Poe's short stories. If indeed Hagiwara had read a Japanese translation of Histoires Extraordinaires, he would also have read Baudelaire's famous preface "Edgar Poe, His Life and Works," which was based on his 1852 essay on Poe.

American critics of Poe have frequently questioned

Poe's extraordinary influence as a literary theorist in France and on an international level. By comparison, Poe has not been regarded as highly in his own country. True, Poe's poems (notably "The Raven," "The Bells," and "Annabelle Lee") appear in high school and college-level anthologies. Older Americans might also know Poe as a writer of horror stories or have seen the movie version of "The Fall of the House of Usher." Few Americans are aware, however, that Poe was an editor and literary critic whose essay "The Philosophy of Composition" appeared in Baudelaire's Histoires Grotesques et Serieuses (1865).

T.S. Eliot's response to "The Philosophy of Composition" is ambivalent: either Poe's essay was written tongue-in-cheek or, if Poe was serious in outlining his method for composing "The Raven," he didn't really apply his own principles in writing poetry. In analyzing Poe's method Eliot comments:

> [Poe's versification] has the effect of an incantation which, because of its very crudity, stirs the feelings at a deep and almost primitive level. But, in his choice of the word which has the right sound, Poe is by no means careful that it should also have the right

sense.[22]

As an example. Eliot pointed out the use of "immemorial" in the poem "Ulalume" (which Eliot considered to be one of Poe's most successful, as well as typical poems): "It was night, in the lonesome October / of my most immemorial year." Eliot claimed that "immemorial" could either mean "old" or "forgotten": "old" didn't make sense because the subject was talking about his youth and "forgotten" also didn't make sense because the affair had obviously not been forgotten. Eliot suggested that the French admired Poe perhaps because they didn't understand English well enough to know better. In Baudelaire's case, at least, this was certainly not true: As a child, Baudelaire had learned English from his mother. He reviewed and refined his English for the purpose of translating Poe. And lastly, Baudelaire's translations would not be regarded so highly, had his English been faulty.

Eliot may be correct, however, when he says Baudelaire might have found a classic example of "le poète maudit" in Poe. This term, used by Verlaine to describe Rimbaud, Corbiere, and Mallarmé, generally referred to

[22]T.S. Eliot, From Poe to Valéry (New York: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1948), p. 13.

poets who rebelled against society and middle-class morality, and who wrote mainly for themselves, rather than for the general public. Baudelaire's 1857 essay "New Notes on Edgar Poe" describes Poe as a man who:

> remains what the true poet was and always will be--a truth clothed in a strange manner, an apparent paradox, who does not wish to be elbowed by the crowd and who runs to the far east when the fireworks go off in the west.[23]

In Poe, Baudelaire found someone who shared the notion that "strangeness is one of the integral parts of the beautiful."[24] His contention was that, like himself, Poe recognized the surfacing of man's "primordial urges" in a greedy and materialistic age. Man's attraction to the fascination of the abyss made him perform evil deeds without a reasonably sufficient motive, as illustrated by the protagonist of "The Black Cat."

The theme of the cat runs through Poe's short story as well as Baudelaire's three poems: "Le Chat"--#1 ("The Cycle of Jeanne Duval"), "Le Chat"--#2 ("The Cycle of Ma-

[23]Hyslop, p. 125.

[24]Hyslop, p. 97.

dame Sabatier"), and "Les Chats" ("Spleen"). Poe's black cat is linked with the image of woman, in the form of the wife. She dies trying to protect the cat from her husband's attack; later, the cat is mistakenly walled-in with the murdered wife's corpse and calls attention to the site by wailing. Baudelaire's cat in "Le Chat"--#1 represents the sensuousness of woman: "And when my hand tingles with the pleasure / Of feeling your electric body / In spirit I see my woman."[25] But there is something treacherous about this cat/woman, just as there is with the black cat: "A subtle air, a dangerous perfume / Floats about her dusky body." Poe's cat is the husband's unconscious, goading him to commit murder, after which it becomes his guilty conscience which literally "gives him away." In the same way, Baudelaire's cat in "Le Chat"--#2 represents something innate in the poet, whether it is his imagination or ego: "In my brain there walks about / As though he were in his own home / A lovely cat, strong, sweet, charming." Finally, both Poe and Baudelaire make the connection between cats and the underworld: the black cat is named "Pluto"; Baudelaire's <u>les chats</u> "seek

[25]above translations by William Aggeler in <u>The Flowers of Evil</u>, ed. William Aggeler (Fresno: Academy Library Guild, 1954), pp. 119, 177, 229.

the silence and the horror of darkness / Erebus would have used them as his gloomy steeds." For all their macabre elements, neither Poe's short story nor Baudelaire's poems are meant merely to terrify or to titillate. "The Black Cat," like many of Poe's stories, depicts a world between reality and dream, between the conscious and the unconscious, between the everyday and the supernatural. In the same way, Baudelaire's poems explore the unknown or the forbidden. For Baudelaire, as for Poe, the abyss is poetry and enlightenment, whether it is angelic or demonic.

In her biography of Baudelaire, Enid Starkie is amazed at the similarity between Baudelaire and Poe:

> The coincidence of the similarity between Baudelaire and Poe is one of the most curious in the history of literature, where such coincidences are not rare, two authors writing at the same time and producing, unknown to each other, works of similar inspiration.[26]

Judging by his letters to his mother and to his friends, Baudelaire himself was astounded at the coincidence. In

[26]Starkie, p. 218.

a letter to a friend, he remarked:

> And do you know why, with such infinite patience, I translated Poe? It was because he was like me! The first time I ever opened a book by him I discovered, with rapture and awe, not only subjects which I had dreamt, but whole phrases which I'd conceived, written by him twenty years before.[27]

While it is easy to make such claims in retrospect, it is indeed "curious" that Baudelaire should feel the degree of affinity with Poe that he describes above.

Poe's importance was not as a source, but rather as a confirmation of Baudelaire's ideas regarding the unknown, the role of the poet, and prosody. The latter he derived mainly from Poe's two essays on poetic theory. "The Poetic Principle" reaffirmed Baudelaire's belief that art should not be didactic: "Poetry, if only one is willing to seek within himself, to question his heart, to recall his memories of enthusiasm, has no other goal than itself."[28] This attitude was at the core of the Symbol-

[27]Starkie, p. 218.

[28]Hyslop, p. 139.

ists' "Art-for-Art's Sake" philosophy. Baudelaire also praised Poe's:

> happy use of repetitions of the same line or of several lines, insistent reiterations of phrases which simulate the obsessions of melancholy or of a fixed idea,--of a pure and simple refrain introduced in several different ways . . .[29]

This could be said to prefigure the Symbolists' use of repetition of words in place of rhyme.

It would seem that "The Philosophy of Composition" contains more detailed insights of Poe's poetic theories than "The Poetic Principle" and, since the former was the essay Baudelaire included in Histoires Grotesque et Serieuses (1865), it was probably the one that had the most impact on the Symbolists and possibly, Hagiwara. Poe used "The Raven" to illustrate his theories regarding tension between the fantastic and the serious, the necessity for plausibility in plot, and the development of suggestiveness in poetry. Most important for Hagiwara, though, might have been Poe's contention that sadness is

[29]Hyslop, p. 261.

the highest manifestation of Beauty: "melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones."[30]

[30]Poe, p. 261.

III. Hagiwara Sakutarō, Symbolist Poet

The impact of Ueda Bin's Kaichō-on on Japanese poe- was attributable, to a great extent, to the excellence of his translations of Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Mallarmé. Critics have suggested another reason why Symbolist poetry might have become so popular: "A Japanese love of ambiguity and suggestion, going back a thousand years, underlay the triumph of the Symbolist school."[1] In his critical work, Shi no genri ("Principles of Poetry"), Hagiwara pointed out the subtleties of nō drama, a 300 year-old Japanese tradition. He also noted that the suggestive lines of ukiyoe, seventeenth-century woodcut prints, were being imitated by the French Impressionist painters. According to Hagiwara, symbolism had travelled from East to West and not the other way around, at least in the visual arts: ukiyoe provided the stimulus that awakened the Westerners to symbolism.[2]

It is not surprising that Hagiwara does not make

[1]Keene, Appreciations of Japanese Culture, p. 141.

[2]Chester C.I. Wang, trans., Principles of Poetry ("Shi no genri") by Hagiwara Sakutarō. Unpub. M.S., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1983, p. 143.

equivalent claims for the impact of nō drama and tanka poetry--while painting is readily apprehended, drama and poetry must first be translated in order to be appreciated on the most basic level. Nevertheless, the characteristics of ambiguity and suggestiveness in the tanka probably made it easier for the Japanese to accept Symbolist poetry.

As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the overlapping of images was one technique used by Baudelaire to create ambiguity. The cat in "Le Chat"--#2, for example, could represent the poet's ego or imagination. The images of cat and poet are linked so closely, however, that at least three translators have had difficulty interpreting the most crucial stanza:

> Quand mes yeux, vers ce chat que j'aime
> Tirés comme par un aimant,
> Se retournent docilement
> Et que je regarde en moi-même . . . Baudelaire[3]
>
> When from my dear cat's eyes that chain
> Me like a magnet mine return,

[3]Charles Baudelaire, "Le Chat," in The Flowers of Evil, ed. Marthiel and Jackson Mathews (New York: New Directions, 1955), p. 52.

And with docility in turn
They peer into my soul again . . . Condor[4]

When my gaze, drawn as by a magnet,
Turns in a docile way
Toward that cat whom I love
And when I look within myself . . . Aggeler[5]

When to a cherished cat my gaze
Is magnet-drawn and returns
Back to itself, it there discerns,
With strange excitement and amaze . . .
Campbell[6]

Condor's "eyes" appear to be severed from the poet: "They peer into my soul again" paints a rather comical picture. Aggeler, on the other hand, has the poet doing the looking; by doing this, though, he creates a distinct boundary between poet and cat. Campbell's version seems

[4]Alan Condor, trans., Les Fleurs du Mal by Pierre Charles Baudelaire (London: Cassell and Company, Ltd., 1952), p. 70.

[5]William Aggeler, trans., The Flowers of Evil by Charles Baudelaire (Fresno, Ca.: Academy Library Guild, 1954), p. 179.

[6]Roy Campbell, trans., "The Cat," in The Flowers of Evil, ed. Marthiel and Jackson Mathews (New York: New Directions, 1955), p. 53.

to convey best what I believe to be Baudelaire's intended effect: the "gaze" is part of the poet, yet it effectively joins him to the cat.

In the above translations, identification of the cat is not made very clear: "that cat," "my cat," and "a cat" all lend different interpretations to the poem. Similarly, ambiguity in Japanese poetry occurs on the level of grammar. In fact, it is not necessary to strive for narrative haziness as Baudelaire does in "Le Chat"--#2; imprecision is already inherent in the Japanese language. Nouns are not preceded by articles in Japanese; nor is there a distinction between singular and plural. To express possession, the referent particle "no" is used to connect nouns; to denote quantities, counters are used as a suffix with numbers. The translator of Japanese poetry into English must therefore provide the appropriate article, whether definite or indefinite, and decide if the subject is singular or plural. The solution to these problems is usually simple: the context determines what is necessary. In the process, however, one finds that much of the ambiguity, the music, and indeed, the poetry, of the original, has been lost. Compare, for example, the excerpt from "Neko" with "Cats":

Makkuroke no neko ga nihiki,
nayamashii yoru no yane no ue de,
pin to tateta shippo no saki kara,
ito no yō na migazuki ga kasunde iru.

Two pitch-black cats
on a rooftop one gloomy night:
from the points of their taut tails,
the crescent moon stretches hazily like a
thread.[7]

The underlined modifiers are not present in the original; while adding them seems necessary for clarity in English, the result is an artificial preciseness. The Japanese system for counting objects of different sizes and shapes requires suffixes for each category: Thus "nihiki" is "ni" (two) plus "hiki" (the counter for small animals). Somehow the English "two" does not achieve the same charming effect.

Another grammatical obstacle confronting the translator of Japanese poetry is the relative lack of personal pronouns. Recently, Professor James O'Brien questioned my rendering of the following line from "Raven-feathered Woman": "Your beak pecks at my heart, your eyes brim

[7]Appendix, p. 3.

with silent tears."[8] A more literal translation of the original line would be: "That beak pecks at (the) heart, pupils overflow with silent tears." Since the poet addresses the bird in the second-person elsewhere in the poem, we can assume that the second-person pronoun is warranted here (and it doesn't sound right without the pronouns). More problematic is the choice of pronouns--is it logical for the bird's eyes to fill with tears after pecking at the poet's heart? Thinking back to Edgar Allan Poe's "The Raven," I felt my translation did make sense. Hagiwara's raven, like Poe's raven, represents the spirit of the lover's deceased mistress. (In an earlier poem, "Pinks and a Blue Cat," sexual images of musk and desire were mingled with death.[9]) Because love is no longer attainable, the raven-woman sheds tears, just as Poe's raven intones the mournful "Nevermore." The pecking of the heart is as painful as the tortuous repetition of "Nevermore" and yet, symbolically, both are self-inflicted injuries: Dwelling on his grief, the lover of "Raven-feathered Woman" conjures up the spirit of his dead mistress. Poe's persona is equally masochistic; he

[8]Appendix, p. 11.

[9]Appendix, p. 6.

purposely formulates his questions "because he experiences a frenzied pleasure in so modelling his questions as to receive from the expected 'Nevermore' the most delicious because the most intolerable of sorrows."[10] We can conclude then, that the seemingly conflicting actions of pecking and weeping in "Raven-feathered Woman" are manifestations of the same emotion--grief. The externalization of grief in the form of the raven-woman thus results in the dual sensations of pain and sorrow.

The similarities between the two poems are not due to mere coincidence. Unlike the case of Baudelaire, who had not read Poe's poems before writing his major work, Hagiwara had read at least five or six poems before 1923, the year Tsuki ni hoeru was published. "To Helen," "Annabelle Lee," and "The Raven," were among those that he had read, most likely in the journal Myōjō ("Venus"). In fact, before Aoneko, Hagiwara had already read several short stories by Poe, including "The Black Cat," "The Telltale Heart," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "Ligeia," and "The Maelstrom." Hagiwara seemed especially impressed by the short stories, which he referred to as a "literary bible."

[10]Poe, p. 263.

Given the example of Baudelaire, a poet who was captivated by Poe's stories, rather than by his poems, it doesn't seem odd to hear Hagiwara say: [the tales] penetrated to the depths of my brain; they never left my poetic fantasies."[11] Hagiwara's contention was that Poe's short stories were poems in prose form, since they were based on the primary principle of poetry. Loosely defined, this principle consisted of a spiritual yearning for the metaphysical realities of the universe. To Hagiwara, symbolism entailed metaphysical contemplation of the realm of phenomena, in other words, intuitively grasping the meaning of things as a whole. This required a sense of ethics, an appreciation of all that is valuable in life. From this abstract and somewhat confused argument, Hagiwara concluded that Poe's stories were essentially poetical, since they dealt with ethical concerns such as love, humanity, and moral sentiment:

> The innate nature of ethics is poetical spirit, and, hence, writings about an ethical concept--including love--will incite emotion and give people a kind of lyrical intoxication. All

[11]Ito et al., v. 8, p. 558.

> literature concerning ethics is by itself ethical.[12]

Love is never the end, but the means, by which Poe broaches one of his favorite subjects in poetry and prose --the death of the poet's beloved:

> the death, then, of a beautiful woman is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world, and equally is it beyond doubt that the lips best suited for such a topic are those of a bereaved lover.[13]

Poe's reason for dwelling on this topic foreshadows Hagiwara's notion that the ethical (and aesthetic) aim of poetry is to incite emotion: "Beauty of whatever kind, in its supreme development, invariably excites the sensitive soul to tears." Poe concludes, "Melancholy is thus the most legitimate of all the poetical tones."[14]

One particular "cycle" of poems in Aoneko appears to

[12]This entire discussion based on Wang, pp. 75, 137, 141.

[13]Poe, p. 263.

[14]Poe, p. 261.

draw extensively from Poe's basic theme of the poet mourning the loss of his lover. These poems--"Pinks and a Blue Cat," "Enchanted Graveyard," "Pussy Willows," "Corpse of a Cat," and "The Swampland"--also incorporate cat images drawn from Poe, Baudelaire, and the Symbolists.[15] As if to support Poe's notion that "melancholy is the most legitimate of all the poetical tones," an atmosphere of melancholoy prevails throughout the cycle; in fact, Hagiwara frequently uses the word "yūutsu" (melancholy).

The most obvious reference to Poe's poems occur in the two poems "Corpse of a Cat" and "The Swamp": both contain the subheading '"to a woman named ula."[16] As one critic has pointed out,"ula" is probably derived from Poe's poem "Ulalume" in which the poet is reminded of his lover's death a year earlier. Hagiwara has also referred to "ula" as his "Ligeia," a character from a Poe story by the same name. Ula exists in the same shadowy realm as Poe's Ligeia, Ulalume, and numerous female characters in his poetry and prose:

[15]Appendix, pp. 6, 10, 12, 13, 14.

[16]Hagiwara varies his spelling of the name, at times capitalizing the first letter, at other times using the ideogram rather than the romanized form.

> This Ula (浦) is not an actual woman, but an aura in my love poems, a ghost woman who wears vaporous garments. She is a darling, tormenting woman who paints in feelings of fresh blood. This beloved woman always inspires me with music. Without sorrow or pathos, in the calendar of time eternal which spans past, present, and future, she provides a breath of painful music.[17]

When Hagiwara says ula is not an actual woman, he means that as a fictional character, she is not meant to represent a flesh-and-blood woman. Like Ligeia, who returns from the dead to take over the body of the narrator's second wife, ula is a projection of the poet's concept of metaphysical reality. Viewed realistically, "ula" and "Ligeia" are supernatural and implausible creatures; viewed psychologically, they represent extreme, perhaps even aberrant, but still believable, mental states. In Poe's account of how he wrote "The Raven," he noted how important it was for all the narrative details to be

[17]Fujikawa Hideo, "Hagiwara Sakutarō to Pō" (Hagiwara Sakutarō and Poe) in Hagiwara Sakutarō, ed. Satō Kōzō (Tokyo: Kawade Shobō, 1976), p. 107.

"within the limits of the accountable--of the real."[18] In their grief, which is often intensified by the hallucinatory effects of opium--Poe's characters see reflections of despair in the external world.

Poe makes it quite clear that his subject is the death of a beautiful woman and that his tone is one of melancholy. In his stories and poems, the main variation on this subject and mood is in the degree of grief experienced and its manifestation in the "real world." Hagiwara is more concerned with the role of the poet in exploring metaphysical reality. From his description of ula above, we gather that she is some sort of dark muse. As she drifts through the gloomy settings of the five poems, ula tries to persuade the poet to accept the dark aspects of reality--death, decay, and sexual perversion.

The role of the cat is also crucial to an interpretation of these poems. According to Hagiwara, the "blue" of "blue cat" was based on the English word describing a condition of hopelessness, weariness, and melancholy. This definition fits in, of course, with the actions of the muse. In "Pinks and a Blue Cat," she wants the poet to embrace death in the form of the "lonely blue cat."

[18]Poe, p. 266.

She literally embraces the cat, perhaps suggesting a necrophiliac act; but it is more likely that Hagiwara's intentions run deeper than the mere depiction of sexual perversion. This being the first poem of the cycle, it is my guess that Hagiwara is trying to shock the reader. Once he has captured our attention, he deflates expectation by denying any seriousness on the part of the poet: "My friend, don't let a nightmare terrorize you into reproaching me for my pathetic amusements."

Hagiwara's ironic first statement is something we should keep in mind as we proceed through the cycle. With the exception of "Blue Cat," all the "ula/cat" poems are delivered "straight." I purposely excluded "Blue Cat" from this discussion because I felt that with its mocking tone and unique ballad form, it detracted too much from the somber atmosphere of the rest of the poems. Despite its playfulness, though, "Blue Cat" contains two lines which might help us to understand the significance of the cat: "It's the specter of a cat who tells the history of the pathetic human race / It's the blue specter of happiness that we never stop chasing."[19] The cat, then, symbolizes the melancholy aspects of mankind's his-

[19]Appendix, p. 7.

tory and the futility of seeking happiness.

In the end, does the poet follow the advice of his muse? In "Corpse of a Cat," ula awaits his answer under a ghostly willow tree--she reproaches him for being late. Despairing of a past or a future and knowing that life is illusory, the poet nevertheless rejects her offer of death and decay by replying: "Let's bury this muddy corpse of a cat." His fate is to experience alienation, desolation, and bestiality in "The Swamp." The stripped-down, barren terrain of this last poem is so gloomy that it almost makes the other poems seem bright by contrast. Ula, too, has been transformed from a temptress gliding in a crimson kimono to a quivering kitten.

The conclusion of this cycle of poems has some frightening implications for our understanding of Hagiwara. In order to grasp the wholeness of metaphysical reality, it appears that the poet has to experience death. Without that experience, he reverts back to the pathetic existence of an ordinary mortal; at the same time, he is abandoned by his muse. Since this was Hagiwara's last volume of symbolist poetry, we are tempted to read a farewell to the symbolist tradition in the last two lines of the poem: "This heart feels a strange emptiness / ula! How can you leave, knowing we won't meet

again."

After Baudelaire had written Les Fleurs du Mal, he found many similarities between his work and the works of Poe. While Hagiwara's Tsuki ni hoeru and Aoneko were directly influenced by Poe, he, too found similarities in retrospect. In May 1928, Hagiwara wrote a review of "Descendants of the House of Usher" for a film magazine. He claimed that although the movie did not capture the feeling, taste, or scent of Poe's story, he enjoyed the impressions made by the sound of objects falling, clothes rustling, and nails being pounded into a coffin. In particular, Hagiwara thought the pendulum of the wall clock made a terrifying sound in the empty house. It created a mood similar to that expressed in a poem of his--"The Clock"--which had been published in a journal just the year before.[20]

Like Baudelaire, Hagiwara might have found a model of "le poète maudit" in Poe: "For someone like Poe who was in utter despair and hopelessness from the very beginning, there was no other way but to give up."[21]

[20]Appendix, p. 17.

[21]Ito et al., v. 8, p. 559.

It is interesting to consider that Hagiwara's sympathy might have developed as a result of reading Baudelaire's essay "Edgar Poe, His Life and Works." Although both writers praised Poe's stylistics, it seems they were more attracted by his ability to tread the narrow boundary between fantasy and reality. In this capacity, Poe was certainly a visionary poet.

Hagiwara obviously felt that Baudelaire was not in the same league with Poe--he simply was not "terrifying" enough. Instead, Hagiwara regarded Baudelaire as "the most humanistic of writers, one who makes the reader feel the everydayness surrounding us."[22] Hagiwara didn't seem to think much of the Symbolists, judging by his allegation that symbolism had originated in the East. In spite of Hagiwara's claims, though, he couldn't avoid being influenced by Baudelaire or the Symbolists at a time when their presence was so pervasive in Japan's literary circles. Certain characteristics of Hagiwara's poetry indeed bear traces of Symbolist influence.

Like the French Symbolists, Hagiwara had read Schopenhauer and understood the concept of the "melancholy will." The notion of a fatalistic force driving mankind

[22]Fujikawa, p. 104.

to seek illusory goals is evident in the "ula" poems. Unlike Mallarmé, though, Hagiwara apparently did not believe poetry was a means to redeem oneself in the face of nihilism. In fact, Hagiwara did not believe that good art should have a function, other than to appeal to the viewer's aesthetic sense:

> A work of art that captivates and moves is good work. Art appreciation should be based only on the work of art itself. In other words, art--no matter of what attitude--must be judged from its own viewpoint and purposes.[23]

Perhaps Hagiwara could not sustain his efforts in writing symbolist poetry because he no longer believed in creating art that lacked ethical purpose. His essays and other prose works, at least, had the potential to instruct.

Like the Symbolists, Hagiwara was confronted with the problem of revitalizing natural symbols. All natural images inherited from the tanka tradition were so codified that assigning them new attributes could be a simple matter; at the same time, challenging a thousand year-old system of classification could be viewed as a radical no-

[23]Wang, p. 42.

tion. One should keep in mind that while Hagiwara was writing in a new mode, other poets continued to write tanka. Thus, it must have shocked readers to find their nostalgic cherry blossoms suddenly "blanched and rotted" by Hagiwara.[24] The personification of animals was a legitimate device in tanka; the innovative manner in which Hagiwara portrayed animals was again, radical. The frog in "Death of a Frog," for example, reappears as the stranger on the hll, an imposing and avenging figure.[25] The rooster, traditionally associated with rising, is linked with the poet's mother and the hint of incest.[26]

On the other hand, Western readers might be offended by Hagiwara's images of decay: the bloated corpse of a cat, fish guts rotting in the sun, and so forth. Having read Japanese stories with graphic descriptions of death and decay (Tanizaki Junichirō, "The Mother of Captain Shigemoto"; Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, "Rashōmon"), I'm inclined to believe that Japanese readers would not be as squeamish. In his use of detail, Hagiwara was, conscious-

[24]Appendix, p. 15.

[25]Appendix, p. 2.

[26]Appendix, p. 8.

ly or not, applying one of the methods used by the Symbolists: Like Mallarmé's "Hérodiade--Scẽne," Hagiwara's "cat" poems at first appeal to the reader's emotions. Through this superficial response, Hagiwara, like the Symbolists, is ultimately aiming for a deeper, intellectual reaction.

Thus, Hagiwara was probably closer to the Symbolists than he would have cared to admit. Furthermore, he was indebted to Baudelaire because without Baudelaire's translations of Poe, Hagiwara might not have heard of Poe. Certainly the relationship between Poe, Baudelaire, and Hagiwara was the result of many factors: a possible Japanese pre-disposition for French culture, the Meiji Restoration and the opening of Japan to the West, Ueda Bin's translations, and Baudelaire's idolization of Poe. That Poe's influence spanned three continents in a relatively short amount of time seems to indicate a need for serious Poe scholarship. Hagiwara also demands looking into: madman, genius, and self-made scholar, Hagiwara was last, but not least, a symbolist poet.

APPENDIX:

Translations of Selected Poems

Sickly Face Underground

Underground a face appears,
the face of a lonely, sick man.

In the darkness underground,
softly, grass stalks begin to sprout,
a rat's nest begins to sprout,
tangled in the rat's nest,
innumerable hairs begin to quiver;
the time of winter solstice:
in the sickly landscape,
thin roots of green bamboo springing up,
springing up,
from the lonely, sick landscape--
truly a pathetic sight,
as if they were smoldering,
it's truly, truly a pathetic sight.

In the darkness underground,
the face of a lonely, sick man appears.

Death of a Frog

A frog was killed:
the children held high their round fists,
all together,
they raised their pretty, blood-stained hands;
the moon has risen,
someone is standing at the top of the hill.
There is a face under the hat.

Cats

Two pitch-black cats
on a rooftop one gloomy night:
from the points of their taut tails,
the crescent moon stretches hazily like a thread.
"Owaa, good evening."
"Owaa, good evening."
"Ogyaa, ogyaa, ogyaa."
"Owaaa, the master of this house is ailing."

Love-pity

Sharply, with lovely strong teeth,
you ruminate on the greenness of grass, woman;
woman,
with this pale-green grass ink
I will colour your entire face,
I will arouse your desire.
Let's play secretly among the rank grasses--
look, here a campanula shakes its head,
there a gentian moves its limbs supply.
Ah, I grasp your breasts firmly--
as for you, you press down on me mightily;
then, in this lifeless field,
let's play like snakes.
Ah, I, I will fondle you fervently
and smear the juice from green grass blades on your beautiful
skin.

Lover of Love

I painted my mouth with lipstick
and kissed the trunk of a young birch.
Suppose I were a handsome man--
on my chest there were no breasts like rubber balls,
no fragrance of fine-textured face powder rose from my skin--
I would be a withered, ill-fated man;
ah, what a pitiable man.
In today's sweet-scented field of early summer,
in a glistening thicket,
I covered my hands with sky-blue gloves,
around my waist I wrapped something like a corset,
smeared my throat with something like neck powder;
then, silently striking a coy pose,
as young girls do,
I tilted my head with much feeling
and kissed the trunk of a young birch.
I painted my mouth with rose-pink lipstick
and clung to a tall snow-white tree.

Blue Cat

It's nice to love this fine city,
it's nice to love the buildings of this fine city;
for the sake of chasing all the sweet young things,
for the sake of living the life of a blue blood,
it's nice to come to the capital and walk the busy streets.
Even in the cherry trees lining the avenues,
can't you hear throngs of sparrows chattering?
Ah, only the ghost of one blue cat
sleeps at night in this big city,
the ghost of a cat who tells the history of the pathetic
human race;
it's the blue ghost of happiness we never stop chasing.
Whatever illusions we are seeking,
I wonder what kind of dream a beggar dreams--
a beggar who, even on a sleet-filled day,
sighs knowingly as he leans on a cold wall in the back
alleys of Tokyo.

Rooster

Before daybreak
a rooster crows outside the houses,
stretching out its quivering cry,
the cry of mother calling from the desolate, untamed
countryside:
tōtekū, tōrumō, tōrumō.

Inside my cold morning bed
My soul flaps its wings.
As I peer through the crack in the sliding doors,
the landscape seems to glisten brightly in all directions;
nevertheless, before daybreak,
a solitary lament steals into my bed,
over the hazy tree tops it comes--
the cry of a rooster calling from the distant, untamed
countryside:
tōtekū, tōrumō, tōrumō.

My love,
my love,
in the chilly shadows of dawn's door
I smell the faint scent of chyrsanthemums,
like the odor of a diseased spirit,
I smell the faint rotting odor of white chyrsanthemums,

my love,

my love.

Before daybreak

my mind roams the shadows of the graveyard.

Oh, someone is calling me, and with a distressing rest-
lessness,

I find I can't bear this thin crimson air.

My love,

mother,

come quickly and put out the lights,

I hear a high wind blustering from the far corners of
the earth:

tōtekū, tōrumō, tōrumō.

Enchanting Graveyard

The wind blows through the willows--
Is there anywhere a graveyard scene as gloomy?
A slug crawls up a fence;
from the lookout drifts the odor of sultry brine.
Why have you come here,
gentle, pale, mysterious grass-like shadow?
You are neither shell, nor pheasant, nor cat;
and, lonely-looking apparition,
from the shadow of your restless form
reeks the odor of fish rotting in the back alleys of run-down fishing villages,
those intestines, softened by the sun, sloppy, raw-smelling--
it's the mournful, oppressive, truly unbearable odor of grief.

Ah, mild as this spring evening,
you who roam in your charming crimson kimono,
you, sweet as a younger sister.
It's neither the moon over the graveyard, phosphorus, a shadow, nor truth.
Just what kind of melancholy is it?
Thus, my life and body decay

snuggling stickily, coyly,

in the shadow of Nihilism's hazy landscape.

Raven-feathered Woman

Gentle raven-feathered woman,
you steal into my attic room
exuding the captivating odor of musk;
you, mysterious night bird,
perched alone on a wooden chair,
your beak pecks at my heart, your eyes brim with silent tears.
Night bird,
where does your oppressive passion come from?
Shed your gloomy attire and fly into the balm of twilight dew.

Pussy Willows

Upon the frigid, pallid face
gleams an exquisite moon, drunk on its grandeur;
with soft phrases
the moon's coy visage addresses your corpse--
ah, the dew-laden,
thoroughly-drenched pussy willows, stirring in the night wind.
To wander here
and intone each and every joyful commiseration
is man's unconscious lonely lust; yes, it is lust.
Wet with tears coursing like rivulets,
I moisten my lips with blood--
ah, such a longing!
Clinging to this sallow ghost, I am gratified . . .
I feel the night wind;
the gentle resonance of the graveyard prowls darkly among
the pussy willows.

Corpse of a Cat
-to a woman named ula

In this sodden landscape
the corpse of a cat bulges with the damp.
Nowhere is there a living creature;
odd, how the water wheel cries out plaintively.
Then, from behind a ghostly willow,
I see the graceful shape of my awaited visitor:
swathed in an airy shawl,
trailing her ethereal finery,
she glides soundlessly, like an apparition.
Ah Ura, lonely woman!
"You're late, as usual."
We have neither the past, nor the future;
the realities of life are behind us . . . .
Ura!
In these strange surroundings,
let's bury this muddy corpse of a cat.

The Swamp
-to a woman named Ura

I walked 'round the desolate marshland
thronged with frogs;
the sun shivered in the sky,
mire oozed over every path.
Like a beast I dragged my heels,
searching through dismal villages;
disheveled, I plunged into a stupor of odious indolence.

Ah, Ura!
It seems you've already left us--
at the hut where we rendezvoused
fear left you quivering like a kitten.
Beneath that gray sky
life continues . . . on and on . . .
Ura!
My heart feels a strange emptiness.
Ura! How can you leave, knowing we won't meet again.

Calendar of Idleness

Many seasons have passed:
the cherries of melancholy have since blanched and rotted;
horse-drawn carriages clatter in the distance,
sea and land slumber in the still air--
such an idle day!
Destiny grows darker and darker,
a desolate, sickly gloom smolders in the shade of willow leaves:
I have no calendar now, nor memories;
like a swallow I will leave my nest and soar the perimeters of this strange landscape.
It's an affair of the past, darling cat--
I know only one song;
and from the distant sky of scorching seaweed, I will throw you a festering kiss--
ah, besides this doleful desire, I know no other words.

Appetite of Tranquility

Walking through a pine forest,
I came upon a cheerful café.
Since it was far from the city,
no one came here;
it was a café hidden by the forest, deep in a dream of memory.
A young girl, radiant with shame
like the dawn, contrived to serve me a special dish of refreshments;
leisurely taking up my fork,
I ate the omelet and assortment of fritters.
As white clouds drifted in the sky,
I experienced an appetite of enormous tranquility.

The Clock

In the old, vacant house,
is that a chair standing vacantly?
No young woman is sitting there,
knitting,
nor can one glimpse the shape of a black cat curled by the hearth.
In this white, empty house,
while imagining a sad dream,
I heard the rattling of a loose, rusty spring
from an ancient wall clock:
Jibo . an . jan! Jibo . an . jan!

In the old, vacant house,
I gaze at the picture of a past lover.
Nowhere could I trace a memory;
in the dancing shadows of yellow sunlight,
only my mournful passions drifted.
As I dozed off in the chair--
far away, from the distant hallway,
like a disembodied spirit
came the rusty rattling of the wall clock:
Jibo . an . jan! Jibo . an . jan!

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APPROVED

A. E. Kunst

Arthur E. Kunst

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