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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE FAILURE OF FREEDOM: A PORTRAIT OF MODERN JAPANESE INTELLECTUALS by Arima Tatsuo [= *Harvard East Asian Series*, 39]. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969. Pp. xiii + 296. \$10.00.

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please. . . . The tradition of all the dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living.¹

—Karl Marx

—Clever, Lenehan said. Very.

—Gave it to them on a hot plate, Myles Crawford said, the whole bloody history.

Nightmare from which you will never awake.²

—James Joyce

THIS is an impatient book. It is in many places also intolerant and too often insensitive beyond the bounds of even the more slapdash sort of academic discourse.

While neither the author's choice of specific subjects nor the manner in which they are treated would seem to justify the tendentious title and the pretentious chapter and subchapter headings (" . . . The Limitations of Experience," "The Tyranny of Art," "The Genius and Social Alienation"), the work is no doubt a contribution to its field, whether one considers the field to be Japanese history or, somewhat more broadly, Japanese studies as they are practiced in our country.

Centered primarily on the Taishō era (1912–1926), despite the sweeping "modern" of the subtitle, *The Failure of Freedom* contains a great deal of information about this very complex period in the cultural history of post-Restoration Japan. Unfortunately much of the information is ruthlessly subordinated to a rather pedestrian main argument. We are given provocative glimpses of varied perspectives

¹ *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 15.

² *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), p. 137.

(previously hidden, for the most part, in that difficult language) which Japanese creative thinkers and writers have had on their own historical experience. But these are frequently made all but incidental to the author's negatively conceived and narrowly applied thesis. And once again modern Japanese culture and history are examined with an eye to finding parallels which they display, or fail to display, with a preconceived pattern of mankind's historical destiny: a pattern that is clearly based on the progressive development of the Western liberal democracies but reinforced by selective appeals, of the kind known as "revisionist," to Marxist ideologies, or to their exclusive property, historical necessity.

We are by now well accustomed to various approaches to the modern Japanese experience that implicitly condone or condemn in accordance with the fluctuations of the GNP and with the extent to which certain standards of political conduct and social organization set by the liberal democracies are observed. So perhaps it should not come as any surprise, especially given the emphasis on "failure" in the title, that this is still another study of Japan from which there is nothing new and important for *us* to learn, except incidentally. From the preface on, it is apparent that the work is to be an object lesson in the folly of political apathy and a confirmation of what we already "know" about the inexorable nature of the historical process. And yet most of its particular subjects are both by temperament and by chosen vocation—metaphysics, religion, literature—more likely to be concerned with the quality of the individual life than with the mechanics of the modern bureaucratic state, and predictably less interested in the development of the society through historical becoming than in either eternity, palpable moments of being or, as it appears in some instances, nonbeing.

Presumably these are still matters of some interest to most of us, in one form or another. But Mr. Arima does not often indulge our curiosity about them. Time and time again in this book he sacrifices an intelligent discussion of specific ideas and concrete images of man that have been formed by his subjects to highminded historicism and proto-ideology.

The thesis, to state it as it is presented in the preface, has to do with "the dominant modes of thought in prewar Japan . . . and with the intellectuals' failure to grasp the simple fact that such ideas as

freedom and emancipation—which many of them enthusiastically espoused—are basically political and social categories” (p. vii). In the conclusion this is amended to:

. . . prewar Japanese intellectuals on the whole failed to see a paradoxical yet simple fact about constitutional government. This form of government does not invade the inner life of man; it philosophically assumes the plurality of individual values and faith and has the strength to permit political indifference, on the one hand, and to invite hostile criticism on the other. It institutionally and legally guarantees freedom of choice for man in his social, political and intellectual life. Yet in times of crisis . . . it cannot survive without the conscious and sympathetic support and participation of those who benefit from it. Such a simple truth often eludes the most intelligent and sensitive of men. (pp. 216–217)

There is a reasonable and tolerant tone to these words that varies considerably from the retrospective polemics which precede them. One would wish, though, that Mr. Arima had elaborated on the “times of crisis” earlier in his book, as a sure sense of impending crisis seems to be at the crux of much of his argument.

The concluding qualification of the “simple fact,” which in the end becomes a “simple yet paradoxical fact,” would indicate that the author is indeed aware of some of the complexities and contradictions left bristling all over the ground he has half-covered, half-skirted so rapidly. Yet, in the course of his long lament for the relatively free and liberal society that failed to develop on a firm foundation in prewar Japan, Mr. Arima can be quite a tyrant with his “simple fact.” Emotionally charged figures of speech fly thick and fast through these pages: “escapist,” “sentimental,” “ignorant,” “timid,” “lawless,” “morbid,” “petty-bourgeois”; “sickness,” “defeatism,” “destruction,” and (repeatedly) “sin.” And this is not the least paradoxical feature of the work.

He states in the preface, “I should like to emphasize here that my purpose is neither to assail the intellectuals’ lack of social and political commitment nor to speculate on what they ought to have done.” But what is this weak disclaimer if not “escapist” and “sentimental” itself, when the purpose he denies is evident on every other page of the text proper?

To be sure, there are awesome contradictions and complexities in the subject to begin with, in addition to those which the author brings

to it through his conflicting approaches and attitudes. The brief introductory discussion of what he calls "the revolutionary Meiji restoration" and its "imprint upon the Japanese consciousness" is unusually cogent and illuminating. Pointing out the basic contrast between Japan's state-sponsored crash program of selective modernization and the very different Western experience, he comments that "whereas the typical European social revolution pitted the old against the new, proposing a transvaluation of all values and compelling groups in society to make a choice, in Japan the past was not only made congruous with the future but even evoked to legitimize its emergence" (p. 3). (I would question, though, the appropriateness of Nietzsche's phrase "the transvaluation of all values" to the "typical European social revolution." This proposal for truly radical and total change came at the end of, and partly in reaction to, a century of violent upheavals, restorations of *status quo ante*, and lasting reforms that were more gradual and limited in scope.)

The author further emphasizes the role of the Western rebellion against the Church and the ensuing secularization of consciousness, with the strong suggestion that this resulted in a massive commitment to social and political "realities" (a word often invoked uncritically in this book) on the part of European intellectuals—in contrast to their Japanese counterparts of the post-Meiji era who, he observes, in many cases indulged their "inherent tendencies toward . . . social alienation" in a "total flight from society on religious or aesthetic grounds" (pp. 2, 6).

The distinction between the long, complex process by which European society as a whole entered what we call the modern period in various different spheres and Japan's rapid change of direction in restricted areas, effected from the top, is of course valid and vital to our perception of the large questions raised in this study. But the implication that a great majority of creative intellectuals in the West, whatever their specific political and social views, have accepted the general direction of their societies' development—have "embraced history," as the saying goes, is not borne out by European intellectual and artistic history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Mr. Arima does not seem to approve of alienation. But it is hardly a condition peculiar to modern Japanese writers and intellectuals. Beginning with the Romantics, alienation has been a dominant tone

and a recurring theme of much of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Western literature; and with the Symbolists it was elevated to a primary esthetic principle. Yet here it might be particularly apt to recall that as a philosophical statement about the changing human condition it appears to have originated in the thought of Rousseau, who deplored the sense of estrangement that he saw as arising from the mechanical workings of representative and bureaucratic, centralized governments. The concept was further universalized by Hegel, in abstract, phenomenological terms; then turned "upright" and materialized by Marx, although there is at least a hint by the young and still strongly Hegelian Marx of the Paris Manuscripts that in some measure alienation may indeed be an inevitable condition of modern man as an economic and political creature:

[Alienation] is manifested not only in the fact that *my* means of life belong to someone else, that *my* desire is the inaccessible possession of another, but also in the fact that everything is itself something different from itself—that my activity is *something* else and that, finally (and this applies also to the capitalist), all is under the sway of *inhuman* power.³ (Author's italics)

This could conceivably have been said by William Blake, Rimbaud, Allen Ginsberg—or Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, for that matter, although none of them, perhaps, would have put it quite this way.

To be fair, it is naturally not alienation per se to which the author objects so strenuously in his subjects but their failure (how many times this word appears!) to do something about it. Yet, in this respect true to his prefatory promise, he is not at all specific about what they "ought to have done," beyond making themselves more aware of the "social and political categories." Among the tentative solutions that he might have proposed for alienation, that universal problem of modern, "developed" societies (or at the very least of his "sensitive and intelligent men"), there would presumably not have been anything along the lines of Rousseauian primitivism and a return to nature, since with some extremely significant variations, this has been

³ Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), p. 156. I have substituted "alienation" here for "estrangement," by which the translator of this edition (Martin Milligan) renders *entfremdung*. ("Alienation" is, I believe, the usual translation for this term. For example, see T. B. Bottomore's rendering of this same passage, which is otherwise less satisfactory, in *Karl Marx: Early Writings* [New York, 1963], p. 177.)

an important recurring motif in many of the literary works that Mr. Arima more or less rejects out of hand. Nor, one assumes, would he accept any remedy that partook of metaphysical transcendence or Hegelian *aufhebung*, as we can see in his rather summary treatment of the first intellectual discussed in this work, Nishida Kitarō.

There remains a very large question as to the author's position on the solution for this and other problems facing modern man at which the mature Marx arrived, a solution which both orthodox Marxists and some revisionists have considered to be final, superseding any doubts that Marx himself may have expressed in his earlier works. I, for one, do not believe that any thoroughgoing materialism, whether dialectical and socialist or neopositivist and capitalist, can offer a satisfactory answer in sufficiently human terms.

The bulk of this work is devoted to separate studies of eight principal subjects: a philosopher and a religious thinker; a barely organized and largely underground political movement; two novelists, with heavy stress on their roles as ideologues (or ideologues manqués as the case may be); and three so-called schools of writers of fiction, although as Mr. Arima presents them to us, two of them would seem to have half-abandoned the creation of fiction, and another to have preferred political theory to literary practice from the beginning.

Mr. Arima's treatment of the philosopher Nishida Kitarō and the Christian leader Uchimura Kanzō are perhaps the soundest specific discussions in *The Failure of Freedom*, along with that of the anarchist Ōsugi Sakae in a later chapter. As an intellectual historian he is on home ground here, so to speak. He succeeds in briefly and clearly tracing the development of his subjects' original ideas, although I cannot myself judge how biased the rudimentary analysis of their complex thought might be by the author's preoccupation with his simple fact.

Having conceded that "it would be an exaggeration to suggest that [Nishida's] philosophy underlies the whole intellectual pattern of the Taishō era" (p. 7), Mr. Arima argues convincingly that his transcendent category of "pure experience"—ultimately derived from the Zen experience of enlightenment (or *mu*: nothingness) though set forth partly in Hegelian epistemological terms—has much in common with other, very different expressions by modern Japanese intellectuals of a longing for harmony, quiescence, even nothingness itself. Predictably, the author does not, however, find much of value in these merely

individual quests. He quickly dismisses as "careless" Nishida's transference of the ideal of harmony into the political sphere through the notion of a mystical union of society and the individual in the Imperial Household. Then, with a passing swipe at Watsuji Tetsurō, a cultural historian and popular philosopher who shared and disseminated some of Nishida's concepts (including that of the transcendent nature of the Imperial Household), the author goes on to his next recalcitrant thinker.

(I might observe here that for all his sometimes irksome tendencies to sentimentalize and mystify, Watsuji has until recently been an influential figure and surely deserves more than the occasional mention he receives in this study.⁴ "In retrospect," the author comments on him at one point, "it is difficult to believe that competent university scholars" could preach such an idea [p. 12]. But why should "competent university scholars" be considered immune to various farfetched notions that may or may not have some intrinsic interest?)

Uchimura Kanzō is given the fullest treatment of all the individual intellectuals discussed in *The Failure of Freedom*. This emphasis seems fitting in a way, although not, perhaps, for the reasons the author suggests: that, along with Marxism, Christianity has been one of the two "intellectually 'popular heterodoxies'" since the Restoration, and that from the religion (as from Marxist thought) "the Japanese could have learned a great deal about both the practice and the ethical basis of constitutionalism" (p. 15). In the light of his previous observations, Mr. Arima would presumably agree that it was partly through the revolt directly against the Church in the Reformation and partly through the subsequent "secularization of consciousness" that the ethical basis for political liberalism was formed in the West; it was founded, in other words, on the negation of Christianity, not only as an institution but as a binding faith, with specific religious sanctions.⁵ And I would question how truly "popular" Christianity ever

⁴ See for example Robert Bellah's article "Japan's Cultural Identity: Some Reflections on the Works of Watsuji Tetsurō," *JAS* 24(1965).573-594.

⁵ Cf. Ienaga Saburo 家永三郎 on Uchimura's own opinion: "He came to the conclusion that Christianity was by no means the foundation of modern civilization; on the contrary, he felt that his religion clearly condemned this civilization." *Kindai Nihon no shisōka* 近代日本の思想家 (Tokyo, 1962), pp. 108-109.

became among modern Japanese intellectuals at large, even as a recurring fad in the Meiji and Taishō eras.

Rather, I agree both with the author's assessment of Uchimura as somehow important, and with the conclusion that his peculiar form of Christianity was not suited to the political and social "reality" of prewar Japan. But I wonder whether it is not precisely the idiosyncrasy of Uchimura's personality and the lack of immediate social or political relevance in his thought which make him an interesting figure—a man whose intellectual development is particularly revealing on the paradoxical nature of much of modern Japanese (as of Western) culture.

Uchimura is usually mentioned at least briefly in the survey histories of the period for his central role in a celebrated incident that took place in 1892, when he was a teacher at the First Higher School in Tokyo. The details of the episode are not quite clear. To relate it according to what would seem a reliable summary, Uchimura was accused of neglecting to bow sufficiently low before the Imperial Rescript On Education, during a ceremony in which the newly issued document was installed at the school; having fallen ill shortly after the event, he sent a friend to do obeisance in his stead and later submitted to the ritual himself (on the grounds that it expressed only respect, not worship); but in spite of this slightly ignominious compromise, he was eventually more or less forced out of his position by censorious superiors and colleagues.⁶

This incident is omitted from the chapter on Uchimura in *The Failure of Freedom*, no doubt because of the author's primary concern with the content of his thought—though also, conceivably, because of a certain reluctance to cast one of the book's main subjects in a somewhat tragicomic light, as he appears in this episode. Yet it seems

⁶ I have followed here mainly Ienaga's account (*ibid.*, pp. 101–102) and that of Masamune Hakuchō 正宗白鳥 in *Uchimura Kanzō* 内村鑑三 (*Masamune Hakuchō zenshū* [Tokyo, 1965], ix, 133–135). There is some disagreement among these and other accounts as to whether Uchimura in fact bowed—but not low enough—, barely nodded, or resolutely kept his head erect. In a letter written a few months after the incident, Uchimura himself asserted: "Hesitating in doubt, I took a safer course for my Christian conscience . . . and did *not* bow." (Quoted by Robert Bellah in *Beyond Belief* [New York, 1970], pp. 107–108.) Hakuchō comments on the conflicting versions of the episode with characteristic cynicism: "In any case, the whole affair appears to have been quite a muddle, a tempest in a teapot" (Hakuchō, ix 134).

impossible to do justice to Uchimura without acknowledging the quixotic character of some of his ventures, intellectual and otherwise, as well as the serious significance of his thought (anachronistic though it may strike us in a strictly historical perspective) and, above all, the intrinsic value of his faith.

Like many other Meiji and Taishō intellectuals, Uchimura set himself the nearly impossible task of reconciling within some solid personal synthesis essentially irreconcilable contradictions inherent in the Western tradition which he had studied so diligently, in addition to those aspects of premodern Japanese ethics and religion which he wanted to preserve. "Jesus and Japan" was the motto he adopted for his synthesis, a slogan probably intended to appeal to the wide audience he hoped to reach in such works as *How I Became A Christian* and *Alone With God And Me* (both originally written in English). But it naturally does not suggest the specific gravity that he attached to these two lodestars in his universe.

His Christianity was a thoroughly individual combination of fundamentalism, Calvinism, and revivalism, in which the Saviour figures rather ambiguously. And his nationalism was a type of religious and ethical ethnocentrism that has little to do with the dominant modern varieties of the imperialist powers and the newly independent nations. Rather, it resembled somewhat Nichiren's concept of Japan as the central realm of the true faith, although in his writings Uchimura chose to draw instead on the eclectic pseudo-doctrine of *bushidō*, as set forth in the *Hagakure* ("the Bible of the warrior class," Mr. Arima calls it).⁷ Indeed, Uchimura himself seems to have recognized his temperamental affinity with Nichiren and the other individualist reformers of Kamakura Buddhism: the author cites here his wish that he had been born in the Teiō-Teiei eras (1222–1233 [1222 is the year of Nichiren's birth]).⁸ But he also appears to have purposely stressed the secular warrior ethic at their expense, no doubt mindful of the

⁷ On page 22 the author quotes this work as stating: "*Bushidō* is death. *There is no particular reason for this, but if a samurai . . . is obliged to make a choice between life and death, it is his duty to choose death*" (italics mine). No direct reference to the *Hagakure* is provided (we are instead referred to a Japanese study of Max Weber), but the italicized words are a mistranslation of the original words, "Betsu ni *shisai* 仔細 *nashi*," i.e., "There is nothing particularly difficult about this." Cf. Mishima Yukio, *Hagakure nyūmon* 葉隱入門 (Tokyo, 1968), p. 78.

⁸ Uchimura's family were in fact adherents of the Nichiren sect.

striking similarities between these rival "protestant" doctrines and his own.

One is not surprised to learn here that neither Uchimura's radical interpretation of Protestantism through the "No Church" movement, with its emphasis on a small body of the elect, nor his secular ethic based on the feudal *bushidō* (both of which the author combines in the Weberian category of *Heldenethik*), lent themselves readily to progressive political activism. Conditioned as many of us are by the modern scholarly focus on various secularized ethics—the remnants of lost faith—we tend to forget that in the not so distant past articulate religious leaders were in fact concerned primarily with matters of faith in a living god and less preoccupied with this world than with the world to come, or "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be."

It is Uchimura's abiding faith which alone gives some consistency to his constantly shifting views of the secular world. Without granting full importance to this faith in one's approach to his diverse religious commentaries and social criticism it is difficult to explain his apparent rejection of the universalism and egalitarianism expressed in his early writings, and to account for his subsequent espousal of seemingly nationalistic, elitist, and even reactionary sentiments. (For example, he commented that "Christianity has been from its very origins first and foremost a religion of the middle class; the early disciples of Jesus . . . were all independent middle-class people." And he felt that the Japanese were far more faithful than nominal Christians in the West to the scriptural teachings on relations between the sexes—and especially so by comparison to the Americans, whose practices were "directly opposite" to what was written: "'For the husband is the head of the wife. . . .'"⁹)

Mr. Arima does not, of course, disesteem Uchimura's faith, but plainly deplors that in the end he "denied the value of the present and was prone to dwell on the past" (p. 47). The author sees Uchimura's turning away from the modern world in the context of the general reaction to Western culture which is said to have swept through the Japanese intellectual world in the 1890's. Yet is it not at least equally possible to see his change of direction, away from the sur-

⁹ Quoted by Ienaga Saburō in *Kindai seishin to sono genkai* 近代精神とその限界 (Tokyo, 1950), pp. 154, 160.

face reality of *kaika* civilization toward the past that survived within himself and other men, as stemming from a clearer perception than he had previously had of the implications of modern utilitarianism for his faith?

The author quotes Uchimura's *Kyūanroku*: "Can present-day civilization compensate for the independence of our souls through modernization?" (p. 45). As if to reply to this rhetorical question, Mr. Arima later observes, "Emotional attachment to the past is natural. . . . But when eulogizing of the past becomes an exclusive and overriding preoccupation, it tends to blind people to the reality [*sic*] and to the future" (p. 47). Having discussed Uchimura's life and works at length, surely he must recognize the reality of the man's faith and of this belief in the soul, even if he considers it merely a subjective reality. Yet he does not seem aware that for a man with such beliefs, the "objective conditions" of society and state (this is presumably what is meant by "the reality," in his phrase) can only be of secondary importance.

Insofar as Uchimura continued to be interested in nonmaterial manifestations of the "modern spirit" (the term used by Ienaga Saburō in an essay devoted to him, "Kindai seishin to sono genkai" ["The Modern Spirit and its Limitations"]), he contributed a good deal through newspaper and journal articles to the dissemination of various outlooks on the world that were still quite new to many Japanese: the very notion of universal moral values which were not necessarily tied to a specific religion (though of course they ultimately were for Uchimura) nor to particular social relations; pacifism; and, as Mr. Arima points out, a kind of evolutionary view of history that was quite distinct from the superficial positivism popular in this period. Yet it is on the "limitations" of the modern spirit in his understanding of it that Uchimura came to dwell more and more, as Ienaga emphasizes in his essay.

Several of the writers who subsequently figure in this book were strongly influenced by Uchimura in their youth: Masamune Hakuchō, Arishima Takeo, and Shiga Naoya, among others. The author sensibly does not speculate on the effects of this association (indeed, he does not even mention them), which in their case seem to have been of a directly personal, and only partially intellectual, nature. Yet glimpses of Uchimura which we are given through their eyes, both in autobio-

graphical reminiscences and in the guise of fictional characters for whom he was apparently the “model,” help to round our image of the whole man.

All of them suggest in one way or another that Uchimura held a powerful moral attraction for educated men in late Meiji Japan, most particularly, perhaps, for young students. It is clear, for instance, that Shiga Naoya’s alter ego in the confessional novel *Otsu Junkichi* (1912) is drawn to Christianity not so much by its doctrinal tenets as by the charisma of the minister “U,” which is concentrated in his face: “a dark complexion, large features . . . and somehow forbidding at first glance; but in reality quite appealing.”¹⁰ And in Arishima’s *Aru onna* (1919) there is evidently a good deal of Uchimura in the Old Testament figure of Yōko’s childhood pastor, whose patriarchal love changes to wrath when she is judged to be “fallen” because of a divorce and rumored loose relations with men. At the end of the long novel, the dying heroine sends for this minister who has cast her out; she waits in excruciating pain for his arrival and, presumably, for his forgiveness, although the reader has been given reason to doubt that he would yield even now.

What is most striking about the retrospective glimpses of Uchimura in the literature is that, with the partial exception of Arishima, there is little evidence that the doctrinal core or theological substance of his teachings made any deep impression at all on the developing sensibilities of these young writers. In the long reminiscence *Uchimura Kanzō* (1949), Hakuchō appears almost callously indifferent to the whole notion of absolute faith, even expressing doubts that the beliefs and attendant sufferings which Uchimura professed were completely sincere—that they in fact had the subjective reality alluded to above.¹¹

¹⁰ *Shiga Naoya zenshū* 志賀直哉 | (Tokyo, 1955). VI, 9. Cf. his recollection in “Uchimura Kanzō Sensei no omoide”: “I was not particularly impressed with the doctrine, although this was naturally what was most important from Sensei’s point of view” (IX, 211).

¹¹ Hakuchō also conjures up here a mildly wicked fantasy about Uchimura’s role at a convention of American missionaries (he had, in fact, once attended such a gathering at the invitation of the president of Amherst College): “One imagines that, in its way, the American missionary circus must have been more captivating and provocative than the chorus girl revue at the Kokusai Theatre. Thousands of well-educated men and women jammed into several large lecture halls, all eager to hear how the blessings of the gospel had been bestowed upon various strange peoples: . . . ‘Ladies and gentlemen!

("In his thoughts and his reactions," Hakuchō observes, "he tended to exaggerate everything, whether joyful or sorrowful; and this was one of his attractions for adolescents" [Hakuchō, ix, 139].) We may conjecture that whatever emotional commitment to the religion Hakuchō himself was able to muster in his youth was founded mainly on his own rather morose, peasant view of life, which one finds throughout his works. As his own remarks would suggest, he was most susceptible to the gloomy mood that pervades Uchimura's puritanical strain of Christianity: "the vague presentiment that it was indeed 'a frightening thing to have been born human' " (Hakuchō, ix, 147).

For Hakuchō, Shiga, and Arishima alike, the major stumbling block to achieving real faith seems not to have been a lack of belief in god (to whom they granted at least provisional existence in the figure of Uchimura himself); they have all indicated in later writings that they felt impeded by an inability to believe in sin, which was a prerequisite of faith and grace in Uchimura's uncompromising form of Christianity. "I did not experience very acutely the consciousness of sin which Uchimura preached," Hakuchō admits. Similarly, Arishima recalls, "I was drawn by Christ's love alone. I could not help agreeing on an intellectual level to what was explained to me [about the necessary awareness of sin]; but I did not feel it deep inside."¹²

Both Arishima and Shiga specifically attribute their "failure" to believe in sin to the ultimate roots of the concept, as they correctly perceived, in what was for them an unfamiliar and untenable view of human sexuality. Arishima succinctly describes the impasse he arrived at on this question: "the Bible versus Sex." More intellectually convinced by the foreign religion than either Shiga or Hakuchō ever became, he went to great lengths to bring on himself a strong sense of sin and guilt. Partly through an adolescent infatuation with an admiring homosexual friend—a zealous Christian, who told Arishima that he himself always felt properly guilt-stricken—Arishima dis-

You see before you on this stage young men who have come from the Orient. Until recently they have all been worshiping idols of wood and stone; but now they honor the very same God whom we of the white race worship and glorify. I would like you to hear from the lips of these Oriental youths themselves how they inclined their hearts toward the true faith' " (ix, 526).

¹² *Arishima Takeo zenshū* 有島武郎 || (Tokyo, 1930), vi, 61.

covered sin and experienced a dramatic conversion, only to lapse back into unbelief a short while later.¹³

The chapter on Uchimura Kanzō in *The Failure of Freedom* reminds us not to overlook the role of Christianity in the intellectual life of Meiji and Taishō Japan, to which we might add its largely indirect (and by no means wholly intellectual) contributions to the world of literature. The Western religion clearly occupied a position in academic, bureaucratic, and literary circles that was disproportional to its place in the society at large. But it is equally important that we not overestimate the influence of the particular tenets of Christianity as a faith, or even of its underlying view of man and his society, on important styles of modern Japanese consciousness—much less on the more deep-rooted creative sensibility.

By late Meiji and Taishō, most well-educated Japanese were presumably aware of the general decline into which Christianity as an intellectual force had long since entered in the West. In secularized form it continued, of course, to function partially as an ethical force. But as Robert Bellah and others have shown us, the Japanese had somewhat analogous secular ethics in their own tradition. (And in *Sore kara* [1910] and other writings, Sōseki, or his characters, can be quite devastating on the hypocritical way in which certain traditional moral attitudes were made useful in the modern world.) If not initially drawn to Christianity's articles of faith, the Japanese were not likely to be attracted merely to the moral by-products of a religion which they saw only superficially adhered to, for the most part, in the lands of its origins. The cynical view expressed by the hero of *Sore kara* was perhaps shared to some extent by many intellectuals of the period:

He did not choose to believe in god. And even had he so chosen, as a man of thought and reason he could not very well have believed. It seemed to him that so long as men had faith in one another, the question of god did not arise; there was no need for him. Only when there was mutual mistrust among men did god have the right to exist, in order to alleviate their suffering. Therefore he assumed that wherever god existed the people were deceitful. But Japan, he concluded, was now the sort of country

¹³ For an account of Arishima's conversion experience see Yasukawa Sadao's 安川定男 *Arishima Takeo ron* (Tokyo, 1967), pp. 18–26.

where men neither believed in god, nor any longer in each other. He attributed this mainly to the economic conditions that had come to prevail.¹⁴

The chapter entitled "The Anarchists: The Negation of Politics" proves to be centered mainly on Ōsugi Sakae, certainly one of the more original and provocative figures in the prewar history of Japanese political and social thought. The author has provided a concise survey of Ōsugi's eventful career and an interesting introduction to this complex mind.

Here, as elsewhere in *The Failure of Freedom*, there is a tendency to concentrate on the futility and the folly of the subject's intellectual undertakings. But in the particular case of anarchism this emphasis is by no means peculiar to Mr. Arima's approach. It is not uncommon among historians of political thought, whatever their own persuasions, to give only passing attention to the Bakunins, Kropotkins, and Sorels, on the pragmatic grounds that the anarchists never arrived at a demonstrably possible (as well as, by definition, minimal) scheme according to which men could live and work together in the world.

Even those who acknowledge the contribution anarchism has made to the tactics of various radical and revolutionary movements which have won major battles (if they have sometimes lost the war) may be as disposed to deny it a place of its own in history as are others who condemn it out of hand for its alleged glorification of violence and destruction. This view overlooks the important function anarchism has served as a catalyst in the realms of political theory, art, and literature, as well as in the arena of history. (It has also, of course, been a significant style of modern life.) Historically, anarchism has often played the role of the brave fool, openly challenging the organized violence of repressive states where more "rational" progressive angels fear to tread.

To appreciate the informative discussion of Ōsugi (principally) contained in this chapter, the reader must largely disregard the conclusion and the chapter title itself, which would insist that Ōsugi's anarchism had nothing to do with politics in any acceptable historical definition of the word—as if his articulate views that the author has summarized for us here were simply the delusions of a fringe fanatic. The chapter concludes with a peevish sigh: "How often have radicals

¹⁴ *Natsume Sōseki zenshū* (Tokyo, 1966), iv, 452.

denied their own usefulness to society through their refusal to abide by the rules of politics?" (p. 69). Ōsugi was made to pay far more than the lawful penalty for "breaking the rules" (if indeed he broke any) when he was assassinated by an army officer in 1923, in the wave of brutal repression that followed the Great Earthquake. That such a wave could be launched right after the heyday of so-called Taishō democracy suggests that Ōsugi and others had good reason to question these rules and to resist the entrenched authority which arbitrarily enforced them.

In an attempt to broaden the scope of this chapter, the author mentions briefly several other socialist and generally "leftist" spokesmen. This gives the impression, perhaps unintentionally, that men of widely divergent political and social views such as Kawakami Hajime and Kagawa Toyohiko can be in some way closely associated with anarchism. The impression is especially misleading in the case of Kagawa, a Christian socialist and social worker who is criticized here for his only "half-hearted commitment to parliamentarianism."

The quotation which the author cites in support of his criticism of Kagawa is not rendered accurately in his translation of it. The passage in question reads: "Gikai seiji o tanomubekarazu to nasu wa isasaka sōkei de wa nai ka"¹⁵ 議會政治を恃むべからずとなすとは聊か早計ごはないか. Mr. Arima translates: "We are as yet *too immature* to abandon the parliamentary system" (p. 57 [Mr. Arima's italics]). (He then comments that "whatever Kagawa meant by the expression 'too immature' this half-hearted commitment . . . could hardly withstand the anarchists' impatience.") And this is the rather literal sense of Kagawa's words that I get: "Is it not a bit hasty to assert that we should not [or cannot] rely on parliamentary government?" Or somewhat less literally: "It is rash to assert that the parliamentary system is not to be relied upon" [i.e., before universal manhood suffrage has even been tried]. In any case, nothing is said here about being "too immature," nor about any possibility of abandoning parliamentary principles altogether.

In the last five chapters of *The Failure of Freedom* the author focuses his attention on literature: the "naturalists," the Shirakaba-ha (the White Birch "School"), Arishima Takeo ("Bourgeois Critic"), Akuta-

¹⁵ Quoted in *Kindai Nihon shisōshi kōza* 近代日本思想史講座 (Tokyo, 1960), I, 217.

gawa Ryūnosuke ("The Literature of Defeatism"), and the so-called proletarian writers. If the analysis is on the whole reductive and often crude, with the emphasis, of course, on these writers' nonrecognition of the author's "simple fact," he accomplishes what he has set out to do. He proves that the two dozen or so writers whom he discusses at length or merely mentions in passing have made scarcely any contribution to social thought or to the promulgation of a specifically political consciousness among their readers.

And so we learn that "in terms of the structure of thought, [the naturalists'] presumably scientific literary method . . . in the end led them to fatalism" (p. 84); and that "naturalism ended in a total loss of direction, for it never provided a definition of its goal" (p. 97). "If the Shirakaba-ha intellectuals were culturally productive, in the social context of Taishō Japan they lived on a sterile promontory" (p. 125). "Arishima made a complete circle—a circle that in no place was tangent to the realities of politics" (p. 150). And concerning Akutagawa: "Here again is vivid testimony to the Japanese intellectuals' failure to conceive of the emancipation of the individual in social terms" (p. 172).

Structure, goals, production . . . —it does sound very sterile. If there were something new about the author's approach to this large and varied body of literature, if indeed he had devoted a page or two to the discussion of a single work of fiction by the writers he "treats" (there are two partial exceptions: Arishima's novel *Aru onna* and Akutagawa's satirical story *Kappa*), one might be grateful for a different perspective, however restricted it might seem. But especially since the Second World War, historicist and ideologist literary scholars, of both the hazy neo-Hegelianizing and the self-styled Marxist materializing varieties, have been legion in Japan.

Mr. Arima has clearly drawn heavily on them for his initial choice of authors according to convenient, if doubtful, categories such as "naturalism," "idealism," "hedonism," etc. (For example, in Yoshida Seiichi's *Meiji Taishō bungaku shi*, which is cited in this work, all of prewar literature falls neatly by school and zeitgeist into ten-year periods.) And he is no doubt partly indebted to them also for his sociopolitical critique of these authors: "intellectual analysis," he calls it at one point, in contrast to "literary criticism" (p. 77). One thing that he brings to the analysis that is fresh, after a manner of

speaking, is some of the vocabulary of the social and political sciences with its familiar reifying and instrumentalist overtones.

According to the logic implicit in this approach, the writer as spokesman for some more or less explicit ideas about society—his “politics”—takes precedence over his works in their wholeness (each one of which must nevertheless have some semblance of a life of its own, however fragmentary or lopsided in relation to “real life,” if we are to consider it worth talking about in the first place). The social ideas and the politics—in the wider sense of “the total complex of relations between men in society” (*Webster’s Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary*), as they are reflected or deliberately distorted in the works—are then reduced to specific “norms,” “values,” and “goals” which are attributed directly to the writer himself. These are in turn subjected to an automatic comparison with standardized models, or some cumbersome Weberian *ethik*. And thus both the particular works and the individual human sensibility that gave rise to them are explained away, processed out of existence.

But I exaggerate. All of this does not happen here. On his way to the inevitably disapproving conclusions, the author pauses from time to time to show some original insight into the personality and thought of one subject or another and, far less often, an awareness of something more than the ideological content in certain works.

The discussions of the “naturalists” and the White Birch “School” represent the reductive tendencies inherent in Mr. Arima’s point of view at their worst, perhaps because of the simple-minded theorizing and sophomoric platitudes of those who were the most vociferous, self-appointed spokesmen for these groups of disparate authors (if hardly the most accomplished writers among them): Tayama Katai and Mushakōji Saneatsu, respectively, both of them decidedly easy game for the intellectual analyst or the literary critic. All that nonsense about “flat description” (*heimen byōsha*) on the one hand, the artist needing only to be “true to his own feelings” on the other—this does not give our author much to chew on; nor could anyone be expected to find such slogans nourishing fare now, whatever vague inspiration they may have once provided for their more creative friends and associates. Had he given us a close look, or even a cursory glance, into a few of the individual works—say, one of Tokuda Shūsei’s later works, which are not mentioned, or the “egocentric”

(as he is described here) Shiga Naoya's *An'ya kōro* (1936), which is dispatched in two sentences (p. 120)—it might have proved more enlightening for author and reader alike.

On Arishima Takeo and Akutagawa, though, to each of whom a whole chapter is devoted, Mr. Arima manages to go beyond essentially pointless polemics and to say something of genuine interest, no doubt owing to the particularly intellectual cast of these two writers' minds. (A serious problem underlying this section of the study is the apparent assumption that most writers are preponderantly "intellectual," in the sense of being given primarily to abstract thought and large ideas in their works. This has certainly not been true of modern Japanese novelists on the whole; nor, for that matter, of Western writers, even since the introduction of a strongly cerebral strain into nineteenth-century fiction.)

As the author aptly observes (in the figure of speech which, together with some of the discussion itself, seems to derive partly from Honda Shūgo's analysis),¹⁶ Arishima came full circle: from those youthful and, as we have seen, unsuccessful strivings for a strong sense of sin; through a haphazard recapitulation of many central concerns in the history of Western thought and literature between the sixteenth and the early twentieth centuries; to a final, desperate attempt at a personal synthesis that would reconcile the equally harsh moral dictates of St. Paul and Marx with his own sensuous and tender-minded nature. His last public gestures were no doubt in vain, if all the more moving because of this. The confused statement in *Oshiminaku ai wa ubau* (1917) of his "philosophy of life" is almost unreadable today.¹⁷ (Has anyone ever made much sense out of it? The summary of it contained in this chapter is helpful but understandably sketchy.) And Mr. Arima's citations from contemporary responses to Arishima's "manifesto," in which as a bourgeois intellectual he dis-

¹⁶ For example in *Shirakaba ha no sakka to sakuhin* 白樺派の作家と作品 (Tokyo, 1968): "It is not very hard to traverse Arishima's career through its shortest diameter, but to encompass all of it is something which has not yet been done (pp. 312-313). This work is a revised version of Honda's *Shirakaba ha no bungaku* (Tokyo, 1955).

¹⁷ Mr. Arima translates the title as "Relentlessly Love Steals"; a partial English version of the work by Arishima himself is entitled "Love, the Plunderer" (in *The New East* [August, 1917]); but the title appears to be a variation on St. Paul's self-martyrizing words: "And I will gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love, the less I be loved" (II Corinthians 12:15).

qualified himself from any creative role in the just society of workers he envisaged, would indicate that neither his words, nor the relinquishing of his Hokkaido farmlands to the tenants with which he backed up his manifesto, had any lasting effect on the development of class consciousness or the "objective conditions" favorable to socialism in prewar Japan.¹⁸

Although the author emphasizes the futility of these final gestures prior to Arishima's suicide, deploring his distrust of society and his "alienation from the process of historical change" (p. 151), on the whole his treatment of him is unusually full and sympathetic. One would wish, though, for a somewhat more extensive critique of *Aru onna* (1919), the novel which in itself ought to assure Arishima a secure place in the cultural history of modern Japan. Here, if anywhere among Mr. Arima's wayward subjects and their works, so lacking in both social and historical consciousness from his point of view, is an opportunity for him to display that interest in fleshed out "images of man" which he professes at one point (p. viii), then sacrifices all too often to generalized half-truths and summary dismissals.

Disappointingly, he chooses to discuss the novel under the rubric of "Japanese Naturalism Examined: *Aru Onna*." He is unwilling, it appears, to do without these misleading labels, and once he has applied them, determined to make them stick. And so we are told of the heroine's "lustful desire for a mate" (p. 130) and her "tortured method for enslaving both herself and the man to their lustful drives" (p. 132). As if to prove Arishima's naturalistic designs in this work—lamentably unsociological and nonpolitical, perhaps, but at least psychologically "scientific"—it is pointed out that he once remarked he had learned a great deal from Havelock Ellis about "the sex psychology of the female" (p. 131).

Mr. Arima allows that Arishima is not so much concerned with simply representing scientifically determined facts as with the "various problems that lie behind them" (p. 131), that is, moral and social problems, some of which had been raised but "left unsolved" by the *shizenshugisha*. (These are the "naturalists" proper whom he has

¹⁸ Yet there is an intriguing, though vague, statement by Tsurumi Shunsuke to the effect that the communal farm established by Arishima's gift is still run "according to the principles of co-operative management" (*Gendai Nihon no shisō* 現代日本の思想 [Tokyo, 1956], p. 11).

taken to task in a previous chapter, lumping them all together in disregard of the unbridgeable gap between those who could write literature and those who mainly theorized about it.) But alas, it seems that the author of *Aru onna* has subjected his heroine to something called "libertine determinism" (a curious expression coined by our author in the section subtitled "From Society to Libido"), thereby denying us the edifying spectacle of a search for "meaningful independence"—which is, "after all . . . a social category" (p. 132). But Arishima is at least given credit for having recognized this "simple truth," if it is not presented in any positive fashion.

Unfortunately there is no translation of *Aru onna* to which the general reader of *The Failure of Freedom* could resort in order to correct the terribly distorted impression of Arishima's fine work that he has been given here, or to find a vital, composite figure—one of those "concrete images" of (in this case) a woman, which the author has failed even remotely to suggest.

Clearly written with two great novels of the European realist tradition in mind (*Madame Bovary* and, in particular, *Anna Karenina*), *Aru onna* does not fit into the orderly schemes of Japanese literary historians, although they sometimes make do with the questionable "naturalism"; and is likewise an anachronism from the historical perspective of Western literature. ("Reading Arishima," Akutagawa once commented, "is like listening to Western classical music on the gramophone.")¹⁹ Nor is it free from unaccountable lapses in the generally tight narrative control, and a certain awkwardness of style (far less awkward, though, than what might be suggested by the treatment it receives in *The Failure of Freedom*). And yet Mr. Arima could profitably have put aside his own orderly scheme for a few carefully written pages devoted to this work and its remarkable heroine: very "un-Japanese" on the face of it, perhaps, but at the same time quite evocative of what it must have been like to be a strong-willed woman in Meiji Japan. Had he done so, he would have given us some notion of the kind of minor triumphs Japanese writers were able to achieve while they were evading their duties to society and their historical role as liberal intellectuals.

In the penultimate chapter on Akutagawa the author warms to his subject still more than in the discussion of Arishima. It is as if the

¹⁹ Quoted in Yasukawa, 2.

closer he draws to the last reckoning of this long list of debits to be charged against various Taishō intellectuals, the less single-minded he becomes in the execution of his task. And perhaps he should have stopped here, with the vaguely hopeful observations he makes about Akutagawa's accomplishments and, taking his only pyrrhic victory as an example, about the possibility of some sort of detached literary creation in an age inflamed by ideology. (Presumably he could have found other examples, such as those offered by the works of the "hedonists" he has mentioned in passing: Nagai Kafū and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō; but it is no part of his purpose to be too optimistic, and certainly not on the grounds of what he refers to as "artistic excellence" alone.) For the final chapter, entitled "Proletarian Literature: The Tyranny of Politics," is largely given over to an unrewarding recital of the acronyms and slogans adopted by various groups of would-be writers who were too preoccupied with political theory to have written works that merit Mr. Arima's attention and analysis—with "a few brilliant exceptions," he adds, although he does not analyze them for us after all. In this case, then, "social relevance" has gone too far.

Ever since his widely discussed and debated suicide in 1927, Akutagawa has proved very useful to journalists and to social and intellectual historians alike. He has become the prototypical Taishō intellectual. His works are seen as both the last uninhibited expression of the individualistic and newly affluent "petty bourgeoisie" that emerged some time after the Russo-Japanese War and the most telling portrait of its inner weaknesses: the acute moral uncertainty, the shaky political and historical ambivalence, which are said to have characterized this class in the Taishō and early Shōwa periods.

Indeed much of Akutagawa's writings lend themselves well to such mythologizing. Not only in the pithy style of his impressionistic essays, but in the didactic approach of some of his historical fables and the aphoristic form of his late works, the ideas and "morals" lie very close to the surface, if not right on it. One need not delve too deeply for them nor go to the bother of disentangling them from complex, realistically created relationships among the characters, or between the characters and their author. In most cases they are either his puppets, fashioned out of old tales told by others and put through their paces to articulate some insight he has hit upon; or they are his

alter ego, acting as his mouthpiece in an even more limited and literal manner than one finds in certain fully realized *shishōsetsu* (so-called "I novels," which are, after all, still finished novels, however autobiographical the raw material may have been).²⁰ Yet one can never be sure if the ideas and insights set forth in the works are Akutagawa's own, and whether in any case they are there because he considers them important or mainly for decoration.

Mr. Arima states that "in his writings . . . one recognizes the presence of a highly complex mind" (p. 154). To "complex" I would add often superficial and, as are many modern minds, to be sure, cluttered with ideas only half grasped and myopic glimpses of the past. Kobayashi Hideo once wrote:

Critics frequently describe Akutagawa as the embodiment of the modern intellectual and his fate. I think this view mistaken. This singularly talented man left behind only delicate meditations. This essayist who failed to portray a single human being—it is doubtful whether he had keener perceptions than all those naturalists whose reputations failed to approach his.²¹

There is, of course, some truth in what is said about Akutagawa in *The Failure of Freedom* and in other, similar interpretations that describe him as a desperate intellectual who valiantly tried to cope with the conflicts in his society and within himself, until they became too much for him. But I would suggest that the large role he has played in survey studies of this period also says something about one particular way in which historians often approach ideas present in works of literature.

Understandably in a hurry as they ply these meandering, as yet (intellectually) uncharted waters, some history-minded readers tend to "skim," picking up whatever floats by close at hand. In the works of Akutagawa, where fragmentary concepts and *bons mots* bob up here and there on the surface like corks and twigs having filtered down from Christ, Nietzsche, Wilde, *et al.*, this method may bring in a big catch.

²⁰ Akutagawa's *Genkaku sambō* 玄鶴山房 (1927) is not, however, "an autobiographical description of his final days," as Mr. Arima states in a footnote (pp. 247-248); it represents a rare attempt by Akutagawa to write true fiction with a contemporary setting.

²¹ *Kobayashi Hideo zenshū* 小林秀雄 (Tokyo, 1957), II, 59. The translation of this passage is Edward Seidensticker's and will appear in his essay on Kobayashi in the forthcoming *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, edited by Donald Shively.

But how much weight can be attached to such intellectual flotsam within the context of a serious history of ideas?

Clearly literature has much to contribute to intellectual and general cultural history. And I think that most people primarily interested in literature for itself still consider the project worthwhile, in spite of the anti-intellectualist overstatements of some latter-day “new critics,” with all their intimidating “fallacies” (or more recently, the plain anti-intellectual put-ons of the sort Susan Sontag indulges in from time to time). But it seems rather perverse to seize on the works of a writer who did not succeed in one of fiction’s most basic undertakings—who “failed to portray a single human being,” and then to single them out as important literary corroboration for some preconceived historical zeitgeist.

Rather, it is precisely the surface qualities of Akutagawa’s prose that are “important”: the even rhythms of his style, the virtuosity of the diction, the montage-like formation of sharp visual images. Mr. Arima indirectly acknowledges some of these qualities. (He is right, I think, in pointing out that the penetrating “reason” which the literary historians often attribute to Akutagawa through the catchword *richi* 理智 is in fact an almost purely esthetic faculty; as such, it might better be called “taste”—not, after all, an inconsiderable virtue in itself.) But as usual there is something damning about his faint praise for them.

In an ambiguous, not to say baffling, statement, the author comments that like Arishima, Akutagawa was not “yet willing to accept the conclusion (which the Marxists then welcomed) that if there is ever to be another cosmos, individualism in the realm of art and speculation must be sacrificed” (p. 153). Whose “conclusion”? Does the apparently this-worldly Marxism really look for “another cosmos”? And what kind of “art and speculation” can be imagined to which some measure of individualism does not contribute? (With the exception of think tanks and the performing arts, these are both essentially solitary activities—a basic fact that may be obscured but not controverted by the heavy emphasis on schools and large trends in studies such as this one. Granted that it is individualism, not all individuality, which is to be sacrificed according to the author, it is still hard to conceive of compelling ideas or successful works of art that do not bear the stamp of both.)

The ambivalence of the author's own views, political, historical, and (roughly speaking) esthetic, is nowhere more evident than in his evaluation of Akutagawa. He admires the "complex mind," the "artistic excellence" of the works and, above all, "the sensitive commentaries he made on the life and society he could never escape, even through art" (p. 155). He even goes so far as to exonerate him from "irresponsible alienation from society"—although Akutagawa was nothing if not radically alienated from his society, and increasingly from himself, describing him rather as "a prime example of that literary phenomenon . . . 'disassociation [*sic*] of sensibility' "²² (p. 161).

Yet Akutagawa has been spared from a stern and sweeping judgment of the sort previously meted out to other writers only to be delivered up to Miyamoto Kenji: "a Marxist critic," as he is described here, who "shows no sympathy for those intellectuals who refuse to see 'truth' in history" (p. 171). Despite the author's attempt to dissociate his views from those of Miyamoto, through the inverted commas around "truth," he quotes at length from Miyamoto's doctrinaire essay entitled (as is this chapter itself) "The Literature of Defeatism," which he introduces as "the finest and most acute epitaph for Akutagawa" (p. 170).

We are assured that Miyamoto has made a "meticulous examination of Akutagawa's entire body of literary works" (in contrast, we may infer, to the cursory review which various writers receive in *The Failure of Freedom*) before concluding his essay:

Akutagawa expressed a feeling of hopelessness toward man's happiness in social life. Like all other pessimists he felt that he had to find the conclusive comment on *the eternal Weltschmerz* imposed on man. This is not a new idea. . . . It has its roots in the fatal logic of the petty bourgeoisie *to replace the despair of the self with that of the whole society*. (p. 170 [Mr. Arima's italics])

²² I do not think the term applies here, as expressions of apparently genuine feeling abound both in Akutagawa's stories and in his more intellectualized essays. It is one of the general strengths of modern Japanese literature that, rooted in a society where atrophy of the emotions has not been so endemic as in other rationalized cultures (and drawing, as it often does, on a literary tradition filled with unabashed sentiment), even its more cerebral writers have not lost the ability to write movingly from time to time. On the whole, Mr. Arima does not seem to approve of this "uninhibited expression of individual sentiment," as he calls it (p. 6), and makes only a partial exception for Akutagawa's more "human side" (pp. 163-164).

In reaching his own conclusion through this "acute epitaph" the author adds, "It is his [Miyamoto's] belief that history marches inevitably toward the revelation of its own truth, a classless society, and that Akutagawa's time was no time for being skeptical about the social ideal and being quiescently pained by one's social surroundings" (p. 171).

So much for the "complex mind," the "artistic excellence," the "sensitive commentaries." But there is one last twist in the tortuous argument the author has pursued in this chapter. At the end he remarks:

Even if the Marxist argument [of Miyamoto] . . . has its own logical consistency, it was not able to fulfill any of its own expectations. Presumably rectifying the sin committed by Akutagawa in his ignorance, proletarian art killed itself long before the war came to destroy art altogether. . . . What is most impressive in Akutagawa's life and art . . . is his refusal to turn to those easy outlets available at the time: the totalitarian solution of Marxism or an irresponsible alienation from society. (p. 172)

In the final chapter Mr. Arima manages to salvage two works from the literary desert of the proletarian movement (most of whose members were of "petty-bourgeois" origin): a novel by Tokunaga Sunao and a short story by Kobayashi Takiji, which we are to admire "not [for] their ideological consciousness but [for] the meticulous craftsmanship . . . and their social consciousness" (pp. 206-207). And in a discussion of Aono Suekichi's altogether conventional notion of the historical role of the intellectual vanguard, we are asked to give this man who never created a piece of literature due credit for "the importance he ascribed to intellect in art," in contrast to the naturalists who "had tried this and failed, confusing literary realism with the scientific method" (p. 185)—but who nevertheless wrote a fair amount of readable fiction, we should also remember, much of which had little to do with any scientific method.

An important distinction has apparently been made here about which the author is nowhere very explicit: the distinction between "ideological consciousness" and, more broadly, "social consciousness." But it is clearly too late for him to spell it out at this point—at the end of a study which, perhaps in part unwittingly, has been laid out along narrowly ideological lines. Starting from the premise of an indisputable, because extremely broad, "truth" about the nature of

freedom in a constitutionally governed society, the author has soon arrived at a very restricted view of the role played by supposedly free cultural creativity in such a society. Great emphasis is placed on the intellectual's responsiveness to immediate political "necessities" of the society at large, almost to the exclusion of his responsibility towards innermost yet nonetheless real and felt human needs.

How is it that this book's point of departure, the "simple fact" concerning the constitutional principle and its preservation, takes on such ideological force (or as I suggested earlier, turns into proto-ideology)?

Properly speaking, liberalism is not in itself an ideology, the "ism" notwithstanding. It may have respectable theoretical origins in Deistic pieties, rationalism, and "fixed" economic principles. Yet much of this groundwork did not long survive the eighteenth century. We know that, whether as a controlling or a moderating force, liberalism has been able to function intermittently in the political and economic affairs of certain Western nations during the past two hundred years or so precisely because it did not emerge suddenly as an abstract, totalistic, and therefore highly vulnerable scheme of things; but rather developed slowly, as an accretion of complex practices and shared assumptions that reflected piecemeal, limited compromises between growing numbers of individuals seeking freedom on the one hand and, on the other, the state and its controlling elites, with their tendency to require ever more thorough domination over the lives and livelihoods of the people.

Ideology proper, as Hannah Arendt has observed, is "a very recent phenomenon":

. . . It is quite literally what its name indicates: the logic of an idea. Its subject matter is history, to which the "idea" [a "single premise" from which "everything" can be deduced] is applied. . . . The ideology treats the course of events as though it followed the same law as the logical exposition of its idea. Ideologies pretend to know the mysteries of the whole historical process—the secrets of the past, the intricacies of the present, the uncertainties of the future—because of the logic inherent in their respective ideas. . . . *They are never interested in the miracle of being.*²³ (Italics mine)

²³ *Totalitarianism* (Part Three of *The Origins of Totalitarianism* [New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1966]), pp. 163–164.

Historically, of course, ideologies have proved to be not merely vulnerable in the world of practical politics but highly destructive, when perverted by totalitarian rulers whose minds have been closed to the humanist niceties present (in some cases) in the original formulations. Conversely, lacking any large ideas of compelling logic—beyond the general principles of representative government and negative strictures on its exercise of power—liberalism has proved to be equally weak, even indefensible, on purely theoretical grounds.

Insofar as the basic premise in *The Failure of Freedom* is indeed the vast middle ground called liberalism, we may conjecture that in order to defend this “weak” position the author has had to draw both on the Judeo-Christian tradition that precedes it historically in the West (with his frequent appeals to the notion of sin, for example, which still has an absolute connotation for many) and on some of the polemical tactics of Marxism, in one form or another, which of all modern totalist ideologies has posed the most lasting challenge to liberalism.

While the conventional use of religious rhetoric need not imply belief in any specific doctrine or a particular historical outlook tied to it (yet how much sense does “sin” make in a completely secular context?), selective borrowings from a Marxist view and vocabulary of history bring with them wider implications. If this is, then, also a partly “revisionist” version of Taishō intellectual history, what are these implications in respect to the general subject matter which it treats: metaphysics, religion, literature, etc.?

For some of us the important question about revisionism is no longer whether or not Marxism must be accepted whole, “like a solid granite block,” as Rosa Luxembourgh is said to have maintained;²⁴ it is where and how much to revise. Is Marxist methodology to be used as a tool of historical analysis, while the activist revolutionary core of Marx’s mature thought—its “eschatology” or “apocalyptic anticipation,” as Mr. Arima calls it (pp. 15, 175)—is rejected?²⁵ Does one apply it in the economic, political, and social spheres but suspend it

²⁴ Michael Curtis, ed., *Marxism* (New York, 1970), p. 47.

²⁵ The use of Judeo-Christian terminology in a discussion of various Marxist positions is of course a time honored academic fashion. But it clearly goes against the whole tenor of Marx’s original thought, e.g., in “On the Jewish Question”: “We do not turn secular questions into theological questions; we turn theological questions into secular ones” (*Karl Marx: Early Writings*, p. xiii).

in the realms of art, religion, and philosophical speculation? And if one “suspends,” does one do so because these activities are seen as merely superstructural and therefore largely irrelevant in any case?

It is, of course, also possible to consider philosophy, religion, and art as to an important extent substructural: deeply rooted in the history of human consciousness, even in the prehistory or the subconscious of the race, and in certain respects transcending lines of class and period. Seen in this light, they would compel special and unbiased attention, rather than rejection, on the part of serious social critics and intellectual historians. One of the central concerns of the modern humanities—a concern shared by the young Marx, as we have seen—has certainly been the widespread alienation of individual men from nature, the society en masse, and the determining economic and political processes of mankind’s collective history. It is clear from the expressions of acute alienation found in diverse cultures throughout the “developed” world and in the most varied forms, some of them inevitably sterile, others both vital and revitalizing, that it is not something to be dismissed as the regrettable aberration of a few dozen Japanese writers and intellectuals lacking in a properly modern social consciousness.

When the author criticizes the various alternatives followed by “the Japanese intellectual” in his attempt to achieve freedom as a failure to “come to grips with the realities of the *socialized self*” (pp. 5–6 [italics mine]), he surely means by this specifically Marx’s *vergesellschaftete Menschen*, and not the vague *shakaika shita watakushi* 社會化した私 invoked by Kobayashi Hideo (in his criticism of the narrow scope of much of modern Japanese literature).²⁶ But why should Mr. Arima even look for a thoroughgoing commitment to the finite world and to political action aimed at changing its social order and underlying economic structure—all of which is firmly imposed on Marx’s image of the “socialized man”—in the works of a metaphysician and a convinced Christian, both of whom start from a very different image of

²⁶ In “Watakushi shōsetsu ron” 私小説論, Kobayashi, III, 92–93. He uses the term with specific reference to Barrès, Proust, Gide, *et al.* He maintains that while they too made literature from the “self,” this self had already been thoroughly “socialized” through various trends in previous literature and thought (naturalism, *l’art pour l’art*, etc.). Elsewhere in this essay he speaks analogously of “the suppressed self” and the “laboratory of the self.”

man? Or does the author's notion of the socialized man itself differ importantly from that of Marx, whose designation he has, then, borrowed mainly for rhetorical effect in this case? It is hard to say.

The author's treatment of writers of fiction within this general conceptual framework, unclear though it may be, at least indirectly invites some brief consideration of the role allotted to art and literature in a Marxist or revisionist scheme of things. The mature Marx had next to nothing to say about these subjects; the famous doctrine of socialist realism is plainly a Leninist, or in any case a Soviet, development. (I am not suggesting here that there is any advocacy of socialist realism in *The Failure of Freedom*; but the recurring call for concrete "social relevance" in literature clearly tends toward a similar position, and the constant inveighing against "individualism" comes close to the familiar Marxist epithet of "subjectivism.") Rather, as George Lichtheim has remarked, Marx himself was quite pessimistic about the future of all art: "On occasion he envisaged the possibility of art simply coming to an end in a completely rationalized world" —in a world determined by what Marx described as "a social development which excludes any and every mythological, or mythologizing, relationship to nature, and thus demands from the artist an imagination independent of mythology."²⁷ A creative imagination of this sort is of course inconceivable. (Cf. Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*: "The structural principles of literature are as closely related to mythology . . . as those of painting are to geometry.")²⁸

Nothing, as Lichtheim comments, could be more remote from the "cheerful imbecility" of socialist realism than Marx's "stoical" acceptance of the conclusion to which his own logic led him: the demise of imaginative art and literature. In this respect the anarchist Ōsugi Sakae, whom Mr. Arima impugns for his "romantic flight from reality," is clearly more realistic than the author himself. Ōsugi is quoted as saying that he "would not at all regret it, if we could satisfy our life by sacrificing art" (p. 68), which is similarly a far cry from Mr. Arima's heavy stress on attention to what he calls "the realities" in literature.

Various Marxist or revisionist scholars of literature, and indeed

²⁷ *George Lukács* (New York, 1970), p. 114.

²⁸ Princeton, 1957, pp. 134-135.

social critics and intellectual historians who concern themselves with art in general, have often felt it necessary to provide at some point a theoretical justification for man's myth making and image making—partly, no doubt, by way of an explanation for their interest in an endeavor that is apparently so subordinate to their primary subjects (whether these are the means of production, the organization of society, or ideas about reality “as it is”). This need has no doubt been felt in the West ever since Plato put art and literature on the defensive when in *The Republic* he taxed them with being mere “imitation,” “conjuring and deceiving,” which have “an effect upon us like magic.”²⁹ And so Ernst Fischer, the Austrian revisionist, bravely takes on both Marx and Plato when he declares very simply: “Art is necessary in order that man should be able to recognize and change the world. But art is also necessary by virtue of the magic inherent in it.”³⁰

Perhaps because his approach is at least as much liberal and pragmatic as it is Marxist and dialectical, the author of *The Failure of Freedom* does not bother with theories of art or apologies for literature, although the greater part of his study is devoted to writers of fiction—makers of myths (and of “delicate meditations,” if we recall Kobayashi's remarks on Akutagawa). Had he done so, though, or at least suggested a few examples of works, whether Western or Japanese, in which proper cognizance is taken of the “social and political categories” (he does praise Zola, it is true, but as a theorist and a “moral activist,” without specific reference to any works), it might have helped to dispel the air of confusion and futility that hangs over these chapters.

Henry James, he of the mind “so fine that no idea could penetrate it,” once wrote:

It is so embarrassing to speak of the writers of one country to the readers of another that I sometimes wonder at the complacency with which the delicate task is entered upon. These are cases . . . which compel the critic to forfeit what I may call his natural advantages. The first of these natural advantages is that those who read him shall help him by taking a great many things for granted; shall allow him his general point of view and his terms. . . . Here he has in a manner to define his terms and establish his point of view.³¹

²⁹ Translated by B. Jowett (New York: Modern Library edition, n.d.), pp. 369–372.

³⁰ *The Necessity of Art: A Marxist Approach* (Baltimore: Pelican, 1963), p. 14.

³¹ In his introduction to Guy de Maupassant's *Odd Number* (New York, 1917), pp. vii–viii.

While the author makes his "general point of view" clear enough in this book, nowhere does he "define his terms" in any positive fashion, through a discussion of specific aspects of some works of literature which would serve as proof that what he is looking for is at least possible, if a rare find. Most evidently, there is a persistent reluctance to come to terms with what he refers to variously as "esthetic harmony," "artistic excellence," and "literary merits," although even given his ideological and historical focus, these are hardly inconsequential matters.

As Arnold Hauser, the social historian of art (whom Mr. Arima cites approvingly) has written, "all art is socially conditioned, but not everything in art is definable in sociological terms. Above all artistic excellence is not so definable; it has no sociological equivalent."³² (Cf. Fischer's requirement that we judge all art by the same standards: "by its social content and its quality.")³³ Yet if all art and literature are "socially conditioned," have some kind of "social content," the questions of esthetic quality and artistic excellence must take on special importance in one's initial choice of particular works for discussion—regardless of one's "general point of view."

In his choice of specific subjects the author of *The Failure of Freedom* has no doubt deferred to Japanese literary and intellectual historians, who have presumably already dealt with the basic questions of quality. But unfortunately their terms cannot be clear, even to most of his specialist audience; and in any case, he has embarked on a particularly "delicate task." He ought to give us better reasons than he does for concerning himself with these writers and their works, which on the whole he finds so deficient from his distant and general perspective. To the above James added: "The only excuse the critic has for braving the embarrassments I have mentioned is that he wishes to perform a work of recommendation. . . . One should never go out of one's way to differ."³⁴

If there is any complacency about this book, it does not come from the sort of literary parochialism that James alludes to in these remarks but from a more general kind of cultural provincialism, which is here unmistakably rooted in the postwar heyday of liberal American schol-

³² *The Philosophy of Art History* (New York, 1958), p. 8.

³³ Fischer, 66.

³⁴ Maupassant, xi.

arship. As noted earlier, *The Failure of Freedom* does reveal a certain smugness about "competent university scholars" and about how much they can be expected to know and to do (or at least to say) in "times of crisis," and in the face of threatened repression. This might be considered partially a form of resting on the collective laurels of the short-lived McCarthy era—although one need scarcely add that there is not much comparison in this case with the large-scale repressive machinery at the command of the prewar Japanese state, some of it inherited from the Tokugawa regime.

Concerning writers there is similarly an earnest optimism, the obverse of the author's impatience with the Japanese writers who failed to live up to his high standards: an expectation that, with certain unfortunate exceptions in unenlightened eras, novelists and the like will be committed to the progressive forces of history, and will deal in a serious, disinterested manner with important political and social ideas. One cannot be sure who the models might be for this view of the writer as the thoroughly engaged intellectual. Not, perhaps, E. M. Forster, who would give only "two cheers for democracy" and once remarked that, faced with the choice of betraying his country (for which we may read society) and betraying his friend, he hoped he would "have the guts" to betray his country.³⁵ Nor would Virginia Woolf, Forster's fellow liberal and Bloomsburyite, seem sufficiently committed. In a short story entitled *Solid Objects*—whose dialogue begins with the words "Politics be damned!"—she allegorically states the conflict between private experience, the basic stuff of most modern fiction, and public affairs, through the figure of a candidate for parliament who abandons his promising career after he finds a talismanic lump of glass buried in the sand.³⁶

Or one may think of the dozen or so writers who are treated by Irving Howe in his *Politics and the Novel*. But how carefully they are discussed to avoid any suggestion of dogmatism or simplistic didacticism on the author's part, and how disarmingly frank his confession that by "political novel" he means any novel he wishes to "treat as if it were a political novel, though clearly one would not wish to treat

³⁵ Quoted in *Aspects of E. M. Forster*, ed. by Oliver Stallybrass (New York, 1969), pp. 104-105.

³⁶ In *A Haunted House and Other Stories* (New York: Harvest Books, n.d.).

most novels in that way”!³⁷ He adds that there is “no reason” to do so; and after following his interesting analysis of these special cases he has singled out, we may more than agree with him. We may conclude that, not so very unlike some of Mr. Arima’s sensitive and intelligent men (who “took to the world of art,” he speculates, out of frustration at “being removed from the limelight of historical events” [p. 13]), many Western authors from Stendhal to Malraux have in their own ways subverted the raw reality of politics: through a romanticizing of history, subtly ironic frivolity and, most recently, the existentialist blind mystique of action.

More generally, there is an underlying assumption in Mr. Arima’s study about the integral, even decisive, place occupied by “the intellectual” in modern society and its political processes. This is a species of wishful thinking in which many of us no doubt share to some degree, but perhaps with a little less conviction than we may have had ten years or so ago. Of course one’s wishfulness and hopefulness in this regard will depend largely on the particular definition of intellectuals. The reader can only conjecture what the author’s sense of the term might be in *The Failure of Freedom*, from the figures he has chosen to include (also those he has elected to ignore) in his “portrait of modern Japanese intellectuals.”

Maruyama Masao’s definition of the “intelligentsia proper” in pre-war Japan (from which all high government bureaucrats, both civil and military, have been excluded as constituting a special ruling elite) would perhaps be too inclusive and too specifically sociological: “urban white collar workers, so-called *bunkajin* [lit. “men of culture”], journalists, the liberal professions (lawyers, professors, etc.), and university students as a general class” [i.e., there are exceptions, although at this point Maruyama assures his lecture audience, all of them students at Tokyo University, that most of them would probably qualify].³⁸ Likewise, the notion of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci, who declared that “every man, outside his own job, develops some intellectual activity . . . is, in other words, a ‘philosopher,’ ”³⁹

³⁷ *Politics and the Novel* (New York: Discus, 1970), p. 18.

³⁸ Maruyama Masao 丸山眞男, *Gendai seiji no shisō to kōdō 現代政治の思想と行動* (Tokyo, 1956), II, 59.

³⁹ *The Modern Prince and Other Writings* (New York, 1970), p. 121.

would presumably be too broad and, far from objective and scientific, too idealistic in this context.

The conception of the intellectual which has given shape to this book seems rather much closer to what Gramsci calls "the popularized traditional type of intellectual . . . represented by the literary man, the philosopher, the artist . . . [and only provisionally] journalists, who regard themselves also as 'true' intellectuals."⁴⁰ But it is precisely Japanese intellectuals of Gramsci's "traditional type," the sole focus of Mr. Arima's study, who on the whole were increasingly alienated from the sensibility-numbing realities of the industrial economy and the mass society which formed so rapidly in late Meiji and Taishō Japan (if we exempt many of the journalists and the journalizing sort of *bunkajin*, whose attitude toward the "real world" that is their subject has been an ambivalent mixture of cynicism and fascination, like that of their Western counterparts).

No doubt some modern writers—Nagai Kafū and Dazai Osamu, say—hark back to the traditional Japanese subtype of the partially estranged poet-recluse which Karaki Junzō has discussed in his *Muyōsha no keifu* 無用者の系譜,⁴¹ we may imagine that they would have felt alienated or "disused" by society no matter what age they had lived in. (Consequently, Kafū's dramatic renunciation of all concern for large social issues in his much-cited *Hanabi* [1919] is not quite convincing.) The crucial distinction between the voluntary literary exiles of the premodern period who figure centrally in Karaki's work and the substantially alienated writers prominent in the modern literature is that Narihira, Saigyō, or Bashō could most likely have remained in the midst of their society, even in its high places, and still have put an important part of themselves into their poetry (although, according to Karaki, they chose to dwell on the fringes for most of their careers);

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 122. The grudging mention of journalists here (and their inclusion in nearly all definitions of the modern intellectual) suggests the large area for research into attitudes toward politics and society that exists in the world of journalism, which had already emerged on a vast scale in Taishō Japan. While the size of the undertaking and the suspect status of journalism from a traditional outlook might discourage such research, it would seem indispensable to any balanced view of the intellectual activity that both reflected and influenced political "realities" in this period. Cf. *Taishō demokurashī no shisō* 大正デモクラシーの思想, ed. by Sumiya Etsuji 住谷悦治 (Tokyo, 1967), in which a chapter is devoted to the *Osaka Asahi shimbun* and its liberal editors.

⁴¹ Tokyo, 1960.

but this alternative was not open to Sōseki, Arishima, and Akutagawa—so long as they wanted to do some of the honest things good literature has always done—, nor even to such seemingly well-favored sons of the bureaucratic elite as Shiga Naoya.⁴²

One further definition of modern intellectuals, or rather of several specific tendencies of their chief attribute, intelligence, is that which Paul Valéry arrives at in the course of a lengthy discussion of the question:

Des intelligences vivantes, les unes se dépensent à servir la machine, les autres à la construire, les autres à prévoir ou à préparer une plus puissante; enfin, une dernière catégorie d'esprits se consument à essayer d'échapper à la dénomination de la machine. Ces intelligences rebelles sentent avec horreur se substituer à ce tout complet et autonome qu'était l'âme des anciens hommes je ne sais que daimôn inférieur qui ne veut que collaborer, s'agglomérer, trouver . . . son bonheur dans un système fermé qui se fermera d'autant mieux sur soi-même qu'il sera plus exactement créé par l'homme pour l'homme. Mais *c'est une définition nouvelle de l'homme.*⁴³ (Valéry's italics)

True, it is hard to picture many modern Japanese authors in the guise of lonely rebels, surrounded, as most of them have been, by admiring readers and "disciples" (the usual over-translation of *deshi*); supported by solicitous publishing houses and newspapers; and, as Mr. Arima wryly observes of several writers, often sustained by obedient wives and other eminently traditional family ties. Yet regardless of "school," ideological persuasion (if any) and class background, the most gifted of them from Futabatei Shimei to Oe Kenzaburo have been *intelligences rebelles*, in the sense that Valéry gives to this phrase. They have for the most part neither worked for nor helped to perfect the machine. They have rejected, or simply ignored, the new and

⁴² Sōseki's refusal of positions and honors offered by the government is well known, and his attitude toward the entrepreneurial elite may at least be inferred from his novels. Likewise, Arishima declined an invitation to become a kind of tutor and companion (*hosa* 輔佐) to the Crown Prince. The great exception is, of course, Mori Ōgai, whom Mr. Arima describes as "a representative thinker of the more articulate conservative groups in modern Japan" (p. 79)—and whom the Marxist writer Nakano Shigeharu has called "our most formidable adversary." Ōgai is mentioned admiringly at various points in *The Failure of Freedom*, but there is no attempt to discuss even briefly his multifarious and seemingly contradictory ventures into literary creation, medical science, and conservative political philosophy.

⁴³ *Oeuvres* (Paris, 1957), I, 1050.

dehumanizing "definition of man." And they have not only contrived more successfully than most to escape the machine's domination over the individual human spirit, but through their writings they have offered others encouragement to do likewise, if only temporarily and vicariously.

Prewar Japan's halting experiment in fundamental forms of democratic government, that is, political procedures which would respond to the needs of the people as well as ostensibly represent them, did indeed end in failure. The strenuous efforts in its behalf by a relatively small number of Meiji and Taishō intellectuals—mainly educators, journalists, professional men, and small entrepreneurs (and perhaps only a few progressive politicians and politically enlightened artists and writers)—all proved of no avail against the rising tide of ultranationalism, militarism, and fascism.

As respected, if not very widely read, intellectual figures, the philosopher, the cultural historian, and the religious leader who are discussed early in the book may bear somewhat more than the average citizen's responsibility for this failure. And the writers of "serious" fiction on whom the rest of this volume focuses—with their rather larger audience, they can perhaps be held still a little more responsible, though probably not so much as the many writers of truly "popular" literature who supplied a large reading public with tales of heroic warriors, submissive women, and blindly loyal retainers. These writers are not represented in *The Failure of Freedom*, maybe because they are not considered intellectually respectable enough. (Maruyama, however, does not hesitate in his analysis of Japanese fascism to stress the symbolic role of the *rōnin*, which they did so much to perpetuate.)⁴⁴

But how intellectually "respectable" is the literature which the author has chosen to treat here? With the reservations expressed earlier about assigning prime importance to the purely cerebral in modern fiction, one would certainly not cavil at including these writers in the general category of intellectuals. But what of their fictional characters? Mr. Arima has little to say about them, apparently on the assumption that the characters can be considered to speak more or less directly for their authors and vice versa. While this may be true enough for Katai and Mushakōji, it is by no means so in the case of all the varied works by the many different authors mentioned in this

⁴⁴ Maruyama, I, 123–124.

book. The central role frequently allotted in modern fiction to geisha and kept women, youths in their early adolescence and slightly disreputable old men—characters with whom the authors can seldom be identified in any literal fashion—would attest to this.

As they are presented in the literature, these recurring character types often reveal more positive aspects of the negatively conceived phenomenon of alienation. Both the women whose sole function in the social scheme is to please men, and the old men who have turned their backs on the world, preserve traditional styles of living and ways of looking at life that would otherwise have been lost in the modern scramble. The youths, who have not yet had to compromise with their society too much, remain closely in touch with the full possibilities of selfhood, many of which will have to be denied or forgotten. And all three lead lives that are often remarkably in harmony with the rhythms and forms of nature. Needless to say, none of this contributes greatly to the task of furthering political consciousness which has been arbitrarily imposed on the writer in this study.

Somewhat similar to Mr. Arima's approach is that of Kamei Katsui-chirō in his *Chishikijin no shōzō* ("Portraits of the Intellectual"), which focuses attention on the chief characters of ten modern novels. These have been carefully selected to give a representative view of the complex image of the intellectual as he (or she) appears in the literature from Futabatei Shimei's Utsumi Bunzō to Dazai Osamu's Oba Yōzō. (There is only one heroine included: Miyamoto Yuriko's Sasa Nobuko.)

As in Mr. Arima's treatment, the impression we get here of the lifelike microcosms from which these heroes (rather, non- and anti-heroes all) have been abstracted is quite incomplete, although Kamei at least grants the characters a life of their own. If there is any unifying theme in his analysis of the ten individual subjects, it is that of passive resistance, "opposition through defeat," in Kamei's phrase.⁴⁵ This is not so very different, then, from Mr. Arima's conclusion; except that Kamei has stressed the resistance and the opposition rather than the passivity and defeatism, and has taken the trouble to examine the "statements" of his representative figures with something like the care that both they and their authors deserve. Consequently he does

⁴⁵ Kamei Katsui-chirō 亀井勝一郎, *Chishikijin no shōzō* 智識人の肖像 (Tokyo, 1955), p. 230.

more justice to these manifold, created lives, even showing a certain compassion for them in his discussion.

But Kamei goes beyond merely making the best of a bad job. He finds much of value in the literature, for example, in the long, penetrating gaze at the "great void" of macrocosmic modern Japan (as Kamei calls it) to which we are treated by Sōseki's Nagai Daisuke, before he escapes defiantly into a desperate yet minimal love for a friend's wife; then in the "healthy" and "primitive" sensibility of Shiga's Tokitō Kensaku, who retreats from the world (which he feels neither the need nor the intellectual curiosity to comprehend) into a similarly unsentimental desire for a mate, and a partly mystical union with nature.

In both instances more ideologically or socially conscientious critics have been quick to point out that the solutions arrived at by these heroes could be of little use to the average man. Not without a tinge of envy, they observe that these characters, like their authors, were men of sufficient means and could afford to stand apart from the society in their self-centered search for a life with meaning.

Not that there is any point in responding to such pseudo-criticism, but to quote Ernst Fischer once again, "the permanent function of art is to re-create as every individual's experience the fulness of all that he is not, the fulness of humanity at large."⁴⁶

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⁴⁶ Fischer, 223.