3. The Spirits of Abandoned Gardens: On Nagai Kafū’s “The Fox”

(Haten no seiei: "Kitsune")

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM F. SIBLEY

Maeda’s main text here is a short story by Nagai Kafū (1876-1956) entitled “Kitsune” (The fox). Written within months of Kafū’s return from five years in the United States and France, “The Fox” is cast in the form of a reminiscence about a small but momentous event in the narrator’s childhood. First published in the following year, 1905, in its evocation of a past set early in the Meiji era and so, with respect to various lingering customs and beliefs, continuous with the preceding Edo period, “The Fox” resembles in this general way such other Kafū texts of this particularly productive year as Sumidagawa (The river Sumida) and Fukagawa no uta (A song of Fukagawa), while it stands with these other works in sharp contrast to such other contemporary publications as Shinkichi nikki (The diary of a recent repatriate) and Reishō (Sneers).

The two last-named works, together with a number of others in a similar vein that followed over the next few years, have generally been considered “typical” of this phase of Kafū’s long career for their sharp contemptuous observations of the surfaces of frenetically modernizing Tokyo life: its architectural and sartorial pretensions and eclecticism; the boorish affectations in public manners that his narrators ascribe to, in particular, the burgeoning lower middle class. But amid Kafū’s prolific writings of this period, through his discussion of “The Fox” and a few related texts, Maeda has laid bare here contrary roots of a deeply elegiac, though by no means unemotional, evocation of certain kinds of Japanese pasts, a tone and vision that would come to inform Kafū’s finest works in the succeeding decades (chief among them, no doubt, his diary of six or so volumes, depending on the edition, which is one of the greatest achievements of modern Japanese literature).
Nagai Kači (1879–1959), having settled in at his father’s house in Ōkubo Yochō-machi after close to five years abroad, wrote about his reactions to being back in Japan in a card sent to his friend Inoue Aa: “As expected, there were no repercussions at home. When I came back I naturally thought about what happened last night. It has left me with a melancholy yearning, and the desire to amble across town tonight and every night. Surrounded by brothers and friends who have made their way in the world, I feel oppressed and ill at ease. Looking out from the veranda, I find the dark trees on this house’s grounds frightening, and fear that I am slipping into madness.” This postcard is dated 26 July 1908. Reading between the lines, we gather that the pleasant reunion with his old friend Inoue Aa had included a leisurely ramble through the city streets on this weekend night. Perhaps we may also see here a transferal to nocturnal Tokyo of the demeure habits Kači had acquired abroad, where he would happily lose himself in the slums of Lyon and the lively quarters of Paris. But from his wish to “amble across town” every night it is clear that what Isoda Kōkichi has called “the complex web of responsibility imposed upon the eldest son” weighed heavily on his heart. For Kači, who showed not the slightest sign of seeking to assume the bright public role expected in his era of Japanese recently returned from Europe and America, to while away his days as a kind of invited guest under his father’s roof can only have led to a state of irritable boredom. The dark, tangled summer grove contemplated from the veranda can be read, then, as an objective correlative of his state of mind.

Behold the fullness [Kangoku-shō no ura] has the same aura of deep resignation and innermost thoughts projected onto exterior objects as that which pervades the note to Inoue Aa. Here, too, we may glimpse an expression of Kači’s renewed astonishment at both the “humid climate” and the dark nights of Japan: “Oh, the darkness of the Japanese night defies description! Darker, colder, lonelier than death or the tomb. A bulwark of darkness, one might say, impenetrable alike to the sharpest sword of despairing anger, the hottest flames of malevolent resentment.” In such overwrought passages there is a sentimental undertone of nostalgia for his delicious years of wandering abroad. But they also provide a measure of the acuteness of Kači’s reaction after returning from the pelucid environment of the West to which he had grown so accustomed. It was a culture shock that this sojourner newly returned from abroad had to undergo for a time on leaving behind the lands of broad-leafed deciduous forests and reentering the zone of dark, moist, shiny-leaved evergreens.

What lay in wait for Kači after his five years as a free agent in America and France were exceedingly unpleasant, oppressive ties of blood. His actual surroundings as his thoughts took flight to the distant blue skies of France were those of the grove in the family garden, inductively ordered by the ominous powers of sheer reproducitiveness. The onerousness of Japanese family relations and the alien character of the nature around him cast a dark shadow over Kači’s spirit as he went on writing the remaining pieces contained in Tales from France [Faranasu monogatari, 1909]. The problem posed to him, as he put it in “Dentsū,” was this: “Whatever we may do, we are never able to forget the little corner of this everyday world into which we happen to have been born.” It was in response to this problem that “The Fox” (“Kitsune”) had to be written, seeking as it does to go back to the distant sources of his own life in the early years spent in Koishikawa Kanatomi-chō.

In 1886 Kači returned from his Washūzuru grandparents in Shitaya Takechō to his parents’ house in Kanatomi-chō and in the same year entered the Kuroda elementary school in Kobinata. The boy Kači appeared in class wearing a stylish sailor suit, though with short pants. This was the height of the “Rokumisenkan era,” when the middle-class intelligentsia, emulating the upper class, plunged into the fashion for the superficial trappings of a Western lifestyle, and Kači’s father, Nagai Kyōichirō, a high official in the Home Ministry who had studied abroad, was no exception. He had chairs and a table set up in a ten-mat-size sitting room where, on returning from his office and changing into a smoking jacket, he would puff away leisurely on his long English-style pipe and sink into his reading. Here, too, Kači’s mother would spread a white cloth over the table and present the family-style Western dishes she had learned at the church in Hongō Ikidōnozaka which she attended with her mother (the Washūzuru family now lived in Shitaya). All in all, they led a middle-class lifestyle typical of this high tide of Meiji Europeanization. But all traces of those Westernized trappings that we assume to have been systematically adopted into the Kači household have been thoroughly expunged from “The Fox,” except for the fleeting detail of the father’s changing into Western clothes before he goes out to subdue the fox.

The events told in the tale of “The Fox” are posited in the text as having taken place “at a time when the city water flowed openly to Kobinata-chō through dewy grass, like a river crossing a country field.” According to Illustrations of Famous Places in Tokyō, Koishikawa Section [Tokyō meisho sue, Koishikawa no bu], it was around 1876–79 that the Kanda aqueduct was reconcealed underground. In fact, then, by the time of Kači’s birth in 1879, the Kanda aqueduct no longer existed in the form described in “The Fox.” From references in the text we may deduce that the earliest possible time for the events
it relates would be "just at the end of the Seinan Rebellion" (1877), and the latest possible at the time when the horse-drawn railroad carriages were put into service, that is, 1882.

In Kafū’s strategy of putting the time of "The Fox" back far enough to eradicate the aura of "civilization and enlightenment" [humme kasa] domesticity, we may find proof that this narrative is intended as something beyond a simple reminiscence. The child’s gaze is summoned up from the past to serve as a lens for magnifying the experience that the 30-year-old Kafū now confronted in the gloomy summer grove of his father’s house. To discover the meaning of the darkness of the shiny foliage that so oppressed him on his return from abroad, he needed to recall the household in Kanatomi-chō as cloaked in an ominousness far removed from the world of civilization and enlightenment.

As described in "The Fox," the property in Kanatomi-chō is bifurcated into the newly built house atop high ground that shears off abruptly at a kind of precipice and, down below, the dark grove. The landscape at the base of the precipice is dominated by a dense growth of Cryptomeria, described as "standing there in silence, summer and winter, utterly black"; by an ancient, half-decayed willow with a hollow trunk; and by a bottomless, disused well in and around which swarmed small snakes and centipedes. It is in particular this old well with its attendant rotting willow that acts as the stagnant, compacted center of the whole grotesque landscape down below and "the object of terror on the part of the entire household, except for my father." The eerie darkness of night that enfolds this landscape inspired the greatest dread in the narrator as a child and set him to trembling, such that, as he reminisces, "for a long time afterward I could not rid myself of the feeling that the night itself came gushing up from the depths of the old well."9

"The Fox" tells of how a cruel punishment is carried out against a fox that emerges as the avatar of this ominous dark landscape. This main plot is set in motion when, early one morning before the chill has worn off, the narrator’s father, in the midst of vigorous archery practice—his daily exercise before work—decrees amidst the overgrown vegetation down below what appears to be a fox. On this day the hunt, for which the student-houseboy Tasaki and the coachman Kisuke are mobilized, comes to naught, and it is not until January of the next year that an occasion arises, with the killing of a chicken in the coop, for a major expedition to quell the fox. This is how the narrator presents his sighting of the foxhunters as, with his father in the lead, they return in triumph, "tramping across the snow":

When the orderly file first appeared trampling across the snow on the top of the precipice, my father in the lead, Tasaki and Kisuke shouldering the pole from which their trophy hung upside down, Seigoro and Yau bringing up the rear, my first reaction was to conjure up pictures of the loyal masterless samurai [ronin] in procession from my illustrated edition of Ōkuninushi (the tale of the forty-seven masterless samurai), and I thought, "How valiant!" But when they drew near and I looked at the fox that Tasaki thrust under my nose, with the remark, couched in his usual pedantic terms, "And so it goes, young master, 'Coarsely meshed though Heaven's net be, none can slip through,'" at the sight of its cranium that had been smashed by an axe and the warm blood dripping onto the snow from its clenched canine teeth, I involuntarily hid my face behind my mother's soft sleeve.10

Having initially found the procession of foxhunters led by his father to be valiant, the narrator cannot help retreating then behind his mother’s soft sleeve. His ambivalence toward the various attractions of the feminine and masculine worlds that tug him now this way, now that can, indeed, be seen as one approach to comprehending the structure of "The Fox" as a whole. The "I" who averts his face from the dead body of the fox is the child summoned up from the past who was filled with terror by the bottomless well and dark grove below. The refuges he seeks from his fear and trembling over the dark darkness of this world are the bosom of his nurse and the soft sleeves of his mother's robes. But on a deeper level, this very fear and the strength of his reaction against the repellent darkness convey as well the attractions it holds for him. We could of course chalk these up to the normal human curiosity about what horrifies us, but beyond this, there is unmistakably something latent in his mother's gentleness itself, which has encouraged him in his fear of the night. "I wanted to see something frightening," the narrator recalls. "And the fragile buds of knowledge of the world that I was able to acquire with my holding, tentative questions were constantly being cut back by the sharp edge of my nurse's endless superstitions."11 This role played by his nurse can certainly be ascribed, it would seem, to his mother as well. Although the terrors of the night and the gentleness of the mother appear to define polar opposites, in reality they are closely intermeshed in a manner not immediately apparent. For the narrator, the whole area at the base of the precipice is forbidden territory where he cannot freely set foot unless accompanied by the gardener Yau, the fireman Sekichirō, or some other adult. In particular, he has been forbidden to approach the area around the old well, where, after heavy rains, the ground will always sink a foot or two and the nearby willow
tree has been established through his father’s threats as a symbol of punishment. It is his mother, though, who denies the narrator his wish to join the fox-quelling expedition on the grounds that he will catch cold. And in general, his recent New Year’s reveling in kite-flying aside, he presents himself as a frail child who spends his time playing mother’s little helper around the house and poring over illustrated booklets for children. Cloistered as he is within the household on high ground, watched over by mother and nurse alike, it is no wonder that for him the world at the foot of the precipice remains terra incognita, the realm of an ominously dark, thoroughly repellent night.

The brooding landscape below recurs in the narrator’s dream: “Not only the old well, but the half-decayed willow standing right next to it appeared again and again, as a threatening presence in my dreams, a profound force of nature that was preordained.”

The invoking of this “force of nature” makes it clear that what the narrator sees in his dream is no simple reappearance of a scene viewed in a wakeful state; rather, it is something inextricably rooted in the substrata of his consciousness. The deep darkness that settles over the sunken ground below, the jet-black stand of cryptomeria, the bottomless well, the hollowed-out trunk of the willow—all of these images are closely interwoven and point us toward signifiers of a primordial eros defined by “the hollow” and “the abysmal.” They are symbols of “the maternal” that lie entangled in the depths of the narrator’s mind. Indeed, we can construe them as being closely associated with C. G. Jung’s maternal archetype, rooted in a collective unconscious memory. In Kawai Hayao’s encapsulation of Jung’s theory, he explains the dual nature of the “great mother,” the two faces of the “good mother” and “terrible mother,” as follows: “In a most fundamental way the maternal principle possesses the dual aspects of death and life: an affirmative aspect of giving birth and nurturing and a negative aspect of devouring all and inflicting death. Individual human mothers too have within them both tendencies. The affirmative aspect is self-evident. The negative can be apprehended as a form of psychically driving children to their death through an excessively strong embrace that stifles their autonomy. We may take both to be subsumed within a single common function but with two aspects, one tied to life, the other to death.”

So long as the narrator remains enfolded in his mother’s soft sleeves, he is truly a child whose autonomy is stifled. The various stern prohibitions that lurk behind his mother’s gentleness and protectiveness emerge within his unconscious as the signifiers of the forbidding dark grove and the eerie abandoned well. Although he is not, of course, aware that his mother’s kindness is stifling his natural inclinations toward a boyish vitality, he does harbor a secret desire to free himself from her protectiveness and to seek independence. According to Kawai, the traditional fund of images of the “great mother” remains more deeply entrenched in East Asia than in the West. It was necessary for Kafū, then, on his return from abroad as a free agent, to come to terms with the dual significance of the maternal archetype, with both the loving attachment and the revulsion it engenders, as he became enmeshed again in the dense web of the Japanese family.

In this particular context, it is altogether natural that the role of slaughtering the fox, the spirit incarnate of all that is signified by the realm at the base of the precipice, should fall to the father. Unlike the child heroes who appear in Western mythology, the narrator makes no attempt to participate directly in the quelling of the beast. Arrested as he is in the womb of the maternal, any advancement toward autonomy he achieves only vicariously through his father and surrogate, who pursues so tenaciously the killing of the fox.

The father in “The Fox” is in part portrayed as a hero who descends from the high ground to establish order once and for all amid the threatening chaos below. These exploits are foreshadowed as early as the narrator’s opening query, murmured with childlike simplicity, as to how it could have been that his “father had no fear of the old tree that howled in the wind, cried aloud in the rain, and wrapped itself around the night;” and then again in the scene where, right beside the old well that is the very core of the whole tangled landscape, the father practices archery as if reenacting the ancient ritual of execrizing evil spirits by twanging the string of a longbow. With the episode in which snakes and various arthropods that come wriggling out when the rotten well-curb is knocked down are thrown into a blazing fire, the final act where the fox is hunted down is directly foreshadowed.

How many are the memories, full of loathing and foreboding, that have clung to the realm at the foot of the precipice: musty funguses, the whirring white bellies of insects, the “filthy hand towel” left behind by the thief in the night. If we see in all of these images of dread recalled from the past an anticipation of the fox that is to arrive like a sacrificial beast, as if branded for all to see, then the cruel fate visited on this creature takes on the aura of a symbolic drama that enacts a purification of the chaotic space below and results in the establishment of order. The particular details of the ensuing foxhunt directed by the father assume almost comic proportions, with longbows, guns, axes, men shouldering poles, sulphur and riter acquired from an apothecary for smoking the fox out of its hole. This excess is required for the performance of a large festival drama, in which the participation of all males, except for the narrator, as hunters and killers takes precedence over any sensible balance between the quarry and the forces assembled against it. Likewise, there is effective staging in the blanket of snow over the garden which reminds the
narrator of Chūninigura, and throws into relief the symbolic meaning of the sacrificial blood.

After the curtain comes down on the scene of the foxhunt, a banquet takes place with fresh-killed chickens (fish being unavailable because of the snow along the river) to accompany the wine. The narrator lies in bed, listening to the uproar of the banquet and pondering the meaning of the grown-ups' slaughter of the fox. "Why did they hate the fox so much?" he wonders. "If it was because it killed a chicken, didn’t they themselves go and kill two of them after they'd killed the fox?"18 Stranger that he is as yet to the symbolic drama that surrounds the killing of the fox, the narrator cannot come to terms with its irrationality. But to us the meaning of his lamenting over the fox's death is clear. For all his superficial celebrating of his father's "heroic" triumph, on a deeper level he has not yet disengaged himself from the seductive attractions of the maternal.19

2

"Around that time, in a single series of transactions, my father had bought up three of the properties vacated by former Tokugawa banzai men and housemen which had come on the market and, leaving their woods and gardens intact, built a large new house."20 So begins "The Fox," with an account of the provenance of Kafū's first home, No. 45 Kanamori-chō, Koishikawa, which his father Kyūichirō had constructed around 1875–76 when, after returning from his studies in America, he first took a position with the Ministry of Education. On the illustrated small-scale map of Koishikawa published by Owarai, we can see that the three former samurai residences (occupied "on loan" from the bakufu) that Kyūichirō acquired all at once had belonged to Gorō Katsujirō, Ōta Heiuemon, and Tōyama Hikosaburō (figures 1, 2). Along with many other bureaucrats newly employed by the Meiji government, Kyūichirō was one of the "conquerors" who swept up large swatches of what had been the property of the Tokugawa retainers. But the windfall deals made available to new officials when the early Meiji government sold off bakufu properties—1,000 teiso at 10 to 25 yen—were already a thing of the past, and in order to raise the capital to buy his 415 teiso Kyūichirō had to appeal to his relatives.21

As far as may be determined by consulting the 5,000:1-scale map issued by the Army Surveying Section (General Staff Office), the new Nagai residence was situated on land that slopes downward from the Koishikawa ridge, on a site where the vertical drop from the high ground, on which the house stood, to the overgrown garden at the bottom of the slope would have been

as steep as 10 meters or so. In the immediate environs, beyond the sloping road to Koongōi, a considerable expanse of fields planted with vegetables and tea shrubs stretched southward in the direction of Takehaya-chō, with houses here and there surrounded by hedges.

On the low-lying land that abutted the Nagais' overgrown garden there was a cluster of small cottages, the vestiges of a residential district called Koishikawa Tomizaka-shincho, where chinins [townsmen] dwellings had been wedged into this predominantly samurai area.22 Arrayed still higher up on the ridge above their residence were the roofs of the Dentsūn compound, and they looked down at the precincts of Koongōi. Given this panorama surrounding the eerie realm at the foot of the precipice in "Kitsune," we need to explore further the meaning of the story's setting in the historical context of the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji.

Foreign visitors to bakumatsu Edo were unimpressed with the praise for the scenic beauties presented by the crosstree of rivers and canals in the low-lying Shitamachi quarters of the city, but they found equally arresting the contours of the Yamanote highlands, a capital amid the woods. The English botanist Robert Fortune, for example, describes the scenery of the Yamanote in this passage: "The views which are obtained from the hills . . . are such as may well challenge comparison with those of any other town in Europe or elsewhere . . . The beautiful valleys, wooded hills, and quiet lanes fringed with noble trees and evergreen hedges, would be difficult to match in any other part of the world."23 Yet once the Meiji government went about disposing of the samurai residences that encircled the Yamanote, and the whole "system" that was Edo was dissolved, the "Nature" in the midst of the city, which had hitherto been so prudently managed and tamed, abruptly started to regain its original untrammeled vitality. As such central areas of Shitamachi as Ginza and Nihonbashī were rapidly painted over with the new scenes of "civilization and enlightenment," the Yamanote became defined as an effaced urban space [fa no toshī kūkan] within which the earthly remains of Edo continued to be on display. Apart from some places refashioned into government offices and military stations, the former samurai residences with their imposing phalanxes of turreted gates and lacquered tile walls gave way to ruined gardens with dilapidated remnants of mansions standing amid a wilderness of grasses and weeds. Moreover, in accordance with a policy devised in 1859 by the governor of Tokyo, Ōkō Takatō, aimed at both increasing productivity and giving employment to the poor, many plots of land vacated on the demise of samurai residences were turned over to the cultivation of tea shrubs and mulberry trees, which soon came to blanket whole areas. It is recorded that in Aoyama 150,000 teiso were converted into farmland, in Koishikawa, 130,000, and in

99 TEXT AND THE CITY

NAGAI KAFU'S "THE FOX" 99
Azabu, 120,000. There is, then, nothing hyperbolic about Narushima Ryūhoku's lament (in the preface to the second edition of *Ryūhoku shinsho*) that "since the Tokugawa clan went into exile, within the confines of Tokyo many are the mansions with their proud vermilion gates and their powder-white walls, which have been transformed into gardens of tea and mulberry." There is this testimony from Kanbara Ariake (born in 1875):

Up until 1887 Tokyo continued to be deeply imbued with the atmosphere of late Tokugawa Edo, though with marked signs of decay; and yet the aftermath of the shock sustained at the moment of the Restoration also remained apparent, such that, in contrast with the various establishments of "civilization and enlightenment," there was a conspicuous aura of wilderness all around the city. This was especially true of the Yamanote, where plantations of mulberry had been laid out on the ruins of the residences of the Tokugawa bannermen and their ilk . . . Indeed, one could say that in this period Tokyo's Yamanote was no different from a stretch of countryside covered with tall grasses. The women and children of Shitamachi said that foxes showed up there all the time, and they would refuse to spend the night in those parts of the city.21

The landscape down below in "The Fox" that both enchants and frightens the narrator is not only the maternal archetype, then, but the brooding Nature that pullsulates from the remains of Edo space. We may find analogues for the profound darkness that surrounds the family's pursuit of their "enlightened" lifestyle in Kobayashi Kiyochika's (1847–1915) print series *Illustrations of Famous Places in Edo*, such as his rendering of *Shinkansen Station* [see figure 3 in ch. 2, this volume], in which the huge stone edifices of the new era are enveloped in nocturnal darkness, or his *Kasumihashi* [figure 1 in ch. 2], where the faux European architecture of the First National Bank is imprisoned under crepuscular, snow-laden clouds. In "The Fox," the memories of the old order latent in the dark remnants of Edo space encircling the seats of the new civilization are conjured up concretely in the form of various traditions centered on the belief that this animal is an emissary of the god Inari:

(Opposite, above) Figure 1. Kafū's childhood home. "One-Five-Thousandth Scale Map of Tokyo" by the General Staff Office of the Army Surveying Section, 1883. Courtesy Chikuma Shobo, 1982.

(Below) Figure 2. Kafū's childhood home (former samurai residences). Illustrated small-scale map of Koishikawa, 1957. Courtesy Chikuma Shobo, 1982.
O-Etsu the cook, who to begin with was on bad terms with Tasaki, was country-bred and full of superstitions. With a stricken look on her face she warned of the ill fortune that would befall the household if the fox, to which she referred in the most respectful terms, were to be killed. Tasaki rejoined dismissively that it was not for a cook to stick her nose into a matter on which the master had been pleased to issue a firm order. Puffing out her red cheeks, O-Etsu, in concert with the nurse, delivered for my benefit a detailed explanation of such things as fox possession, fox curses, foxes taking on human guise, the miracles wrought by the fox-god enshrined at the Takuzō Inari behind the Dentsuin. I associated all of this with "the marvelous kokkuri" [a device akin to a Ouija board] that was all the rage at that time, and part of me was on the side of the stalwart Tasaki, whom I wanted to join in the foxhunt, but part of me wondered if there might not after all be such fantastic things in this world.23

In this debate over the appearance of the fox in which they vied to demonstrate their loyalty to the family, the student houseboy Tasaki and the cook O-Etsu represent the opposing but complementary views on this subject held by men and women. All of the men who take part in the foxhunt, Tasaki first and foremost, readily submit to the father's lucid pronouncements. For the civilizing impulse that runs through early Meiji thought, which sought to banish as much as possible unwelcome baggage from the past all manner of popular beliefs, and chief among them those concerning the miraculous powers of the fox, has by now reached the level of the common people. (In Katō Yūichi’s “Bunmei kaika,” a work that was drawn on by educators as a kind of scriptural source for their sermons, it is set forth that ‘Henceforth we must all embrace civilization and expose for what they are such notions as those that hold that foxes change themselves into human form.’)23 At the same time, the nurse and the narrator's mother, not to mention the cook O-Etsu, nurture a belief in the fox's supernatural power as part of their philosophy of everyday life. They do so because the traditional fear and awe of the fox has most often been linked to the phenomenon of women's susceptibility to possession by foxes, whose main targets have always been said to be women.

According to the classification of Miyata Noboru, the Edo cult of fox can be divided into five types: fox as an agricultural fertility god; as enshrined within sacred space; as the manifestation of local spirits; as household god; and as a possessing spirit.24 In the late Edo it was the two last-named types that flourished with new vigor as particularly ambitious men from the lower ranks of samurai installed Inari as their household god in the hopes of securing superhuman intervention in their undertakings, and as small shrines were put up in various places out of gratitude for the dispelling of fox possessions. Had it been under the old order that the fox appeared on the narrator's property, which was after all made up of proper samurai residences, quite possibly it would have led to the installation of Inari as a household god, and indeed his mother and nurse do not neglect to put out the traditional offering of fried tofu after the first sighting. So long as the traditional belief in foxes as the emissaries of Inari held sway, whatever place they showed themselves in became defined as both sacred space and sacred ground and their appearance as a propitious moment for a new enshrinement of Inari. Even absent any adherence to such traditions rooted in the Inari cult per se, with its deterministic implications, the ubiquitous shrines to Inari throughout the city of Edo served to mark, in a fragmented, far-flung way, places rendered special by the presence of local spirits, whose protection over the surrounding spaces was deployed through this form of propitiation and hence the old Edo adage "Three things we never lack are shops named Iseya, Inari shrines, and dog shit." These shrines that sought to make palpable the presence of local spirits combined with a great variety of shrines to evil (though often mainly erotic) spirits to create a grid of countless nodes over the whole expanse of Edo. Naturally, with the spread of "civilization and enlightenment" rationalism, the meanings of this grid became ever more attenuated, and the places marked by it gradually changed to undifferentiated secular space.25

Formerly regarded as the messenger of local guardian deities, feared and held in awe for its miraculous powers, the fox has here been reduced to a pathetic scapegoat with only the power to mobilize the men who enjoy the father's patrimony. The fox's lowly estate is aptly summed up in a pithy comment made by Sei'goro of the fire brigade on hearing that a chicken has been devoured: "Lord man has lost his yearly stipend, too—can't get a whiff of that fried tofu anymore, so that's why he's come sniffing around here."26 The effect of this little sally clearly depends on a subtext involving the image of many former bakufu retainers who, with the loss of their hereditary stipends, have been driven into penury. It contributes to a recurring trope, other instances of which include news of the suicide of one of the slum dwellers down below who had once been a palanquin-bearer and gossip about a former caterer to the Mitō household who has gone bankrupt, that can be read in this context as portents of the impending extermination of the fox.

The final hunting down one snowy day in January by the men armed with sulphur and niter is presented as a direct response to, and just retribution for, the fox's devouring of a chicken snatched from the coop. The ambiguous polyvalence of the fox as a creature that inhabits the space below, while the chickens are kept on the high ground, seals its fate as an animal fit for sacrif...
fice. The opposition between domestic and wild animals can be inserted into an array of binarisms that include civilization and nature, Tokyo space and Edo space, masculine sphere and feminine sphere.

Modern techniques of poultry raising were incubated at the close of the Edo period in Owari-han, where there was a concerted movement to encourage the raising of chickens among samurai households. Around 1882–83, which coincides with the time of our story's events, this novel upper-class practice of one form of animal husbandry spread throughout much of the nation, and in Tokyo and Yokohama there was a great vogue for keeping coops of such exotic varieties as Brahma, Cochin, and Leghorn. It is recorded that the first exhibit of such hitherto unknown types of chicken took place in 1884, as part of the seventh annual livestock competition held by the Imperial Japanese Agricultural Society. The "modest chicken coop" that in "The Fox" is located out behind the kitchen next to the new well can be viewed as one of the small fruits of government policies devised by the Home Ministry for stimulating new agricultural productivity. Kafu's father Kyuichirō was, of course, both a native of Owari-han and currently a high official in the Nutrition Bureau of the Home Ministry. (Although not mentioned in "The Fox," next to this new well at the house in Kanatomi-chō there was also apparently a large ceramic water filter that had been imported from England.)

Having first seen in the final act of the foxhunt a ritual murder directed against the archetypal "maternal" lurking in the realm below the precipice, we can now view it in a historical perspective as also a symbolic drama in which brooding memories stowed up in an Edo space are eradicated by the utilitarianism and rationalism of "civilization and enlightenment." The role assigned to the narrator's father in this drama is to restore order in the world below the precipice, which has loomed up before the son's eyes as a realm of complete chaos enveloped in the dark grove, and in so doing to render one-dimensional what has been full of polyvalent ambiguity. Needless to say, the narrator, who in the story hides behind his mother's soft sleeve, signifies Kafu himself, who at the time he wrote "The Fox" had already begun to seek escape from the masculine world of "civilization and enlightenment" that encompassed his father. Here is a prelude to his life-long project of recovering concrete memories of an Edo space suffused with the maternal archetype.

Notes

1. Maeda's essay first appeared in Tohoku Seiso Kenkyu (1922). The text for this translation is from Maeda Ai, Torii kiku no naka no bugakusÜ (Shibõ, 1982), 125–140.
3. Isoda Kôichi, Nagai Kafu (Kôdansha, 1979), 67. (M)
4. Sakagami Hirokazu comments, "One could say that Kafu's brooding thoughts on his return to Japan, when the way before him failed to emerge with any clarity, elicited the dark, frightening images of childhood which are found in 'Kitsune.' See Sakagami Hirokazu, Nagai Kafu san'n, in Nihon hendo byakkoku tankai (Kadokawa Shoten, 1970), supplementary notes. (M)
10. Ibid., 4:100.
11. Ibid., 4:98.
12. Ibid.
13. Kawai Hayao, Masushikanohi no shinsa (Fukurikan Shoten, 1977). (M)
15. Ibid., 4:110.
16. According to Carl Jung's disciple Erich Neumann, the layers of awareness wherein "consciousness is identified with the figure of the male hero, while the devouring unconscious is identified with the figure of the female monster" can be discerned from analyses of symbolism in statuary and art. Erich Neumann, The Great Mother: An Analysis of the Archetype, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955). (M)
19. Koishikawa Kanatomi-chō resulted from the annexation of the formerly detached neighborhood of Koishikawa Suido-chō, and Koishikawa Tomisaka-shinchô. Kohnara Kongô-ji, the former estate of the bakufu officials and aboriginal retainers across from Tafukain, and temple property of the area. The current name was given to these lands in the early Meiji period, and the word kanatomi was the abbreviated form of the former name for the neighborhood, Kanamugi Tomisaka. From Tôkyô meisho zu, section on the Koishikawa district. (M)
20. Robert Fortune, Tôdo to Pêlin: A Narrative of a Journey to the Capitals of Japan and China (London: J. Murray, 1865), 202. (M)
21. Maeda gives no specific citations for his quotations from Narushima Ryôkô or Kanbara Arikå. But he does add in a footnote the following "impressionistic description of the earthly remains of Edo space" in Natsume Sôske's Goraiko no naka: "And yet when one climbed up the palisade slope, passed by the watchtower of the Sôki residence and arrived on the straight road that runs for some
six hundred meters until it reaches Teramachi, the area would be enshrouded in a
sylva dusk even in the middle of the day, and the skies appeared dark as if perma-
nently clouded over. Along the embankment there stood numerous large trees,
each as much as two or three arms in circumference, and into every open space
among them had grown a formidable thicker of bamboo, such that it seemed un-
likely there could be a single moment there when one could see the light of day.
See Natsume Sōseki zenshū (Iwanami Shoten, 1968), 8:1460. (M)
23 Katō Yūki, “Bunrei kaika,” in Meiji bunkei zenshū (Nihon Hyōronsha, 1967),
34:220.
24 Nishiya Matsunosuke, ed., Edo chōmin no kenkyū (Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1973),
2:254–255. (M)
25 Kafū’s father bought the empty lots at the foot of the bluff because it was not pos-
sible to build tenement houses for rental on that location. He kept hoping that
tract of slum housing in what was formerly Tomisaka shinchiō would get cleared
away. What we observe here is a very utilitarian and practical logic of containment
[kakotōkan]. (M)
27 According to the research of Sugaya Hiromi on the encyclopedia published by
the Ministry of Education in 1876, based on Chambers’s encyclopedia, Nagai
Kyū’ichirō was responsible for the section on “pigs, rabbits, and edible and pet
birds.” Shōgi oyobi kaban no kenkyū (Kyūkō Shuppan Sentā, 1978). (M)
28 Kafū zenshū (1972), 17:83.
29 Isoda Kōichi quotes this comment by the fireman Seigoro: “If we follow the fox’s
tracks in the snow, they’ll take us straight to his Shinoda Woods den.” and ob-
serves that one subspecies in “Kitsune” is the legend of “the white fox of Shinoda
Woods” with its maternal symbolism (Nagai Kafū, 27–28). If we accept this, it
follows that the narrator, with his sympathy for the dead fox, assumes the role
of Abe no Seimei (924–1005), who in the legend yearns for the fox. (M) In this
legend, usually referred to as “the legend of the Kudzu leaves,” his own mother
transformed herself into human guise and formed a temporary union of which
Abe was the issue.
Acknowledgments vii

Foreword: A Walker in the City: Maeda Ai and the Mapping of Urban Space  HARRY HAROOTUNIAN xi

Introduction: Refiguring the Modern: Maeda Ai and the City  JAMES A. FUJI I

LIGHT CITY, DARK CITY: VISUALIZING THE MODERN

1. Utopia of the Prisonhouse: A Reading of In Darkest Tokyo 21  
   TRANSLATION BY SEIJI M. LIPPI AND JAMES A. FUJI

2. The Panorama of Enlightenment 65
   TRANSLATION BY HENRY D. SMITH II

3. The Spirits of Abandoned Gardens: On Nagai Kafū’s “The Fox” 91  
   TRANSLATION BY WILLIAM F. SIBLEY

PLAY, SPACE, AND MASS CULTURE

4. Their Time as Children: A Study of Higuchi Ichiyō's Growing Up (TBrushlure) 109  
   TRANSLATION BY EDWARD FOWLER