NATSUME SŌSEKI, PAUL CLAUDEL, AND THE COMPETITION OF TEMPORAL SCHEMES IN LITERATURES OF MODERNITY

by

JAMES CAMPBELL

(Under the direction of Masaki Mori)

ABSTRACT

The middle of the 19th century, with its revolutionary disruptions, could be said to represent the crowning of modernity. Modernity, which encompasses several separate movements in philosophy, has been exhaustively critiqued and has many facets, one of which could be said to be an overhaul in traditional temporal scheme – its shape, as well as its proper end. This overhaul had effects on societal self-understandings as far-reaching as in East Asia. In light of this particular consequence of modernity, this thesis will cover major works of two 19th-century authors: Japanese novelist Natsume Sōseki and poet-playwright Paul Claudel. The particular point of critique will be how these two authors self-consciously respond to the modernist influence on their respective societies' schemes of time, each influenced by the traditional value systems of Buddhism and Catholicism respectively, and then how their responses correspond to and conflict with one another.

INDEX WORDS: Modernity, Time, Genbun itchi, Catholicism, Karma, Theology

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, as well as to my wife Michelle and my parents, who have all been constant consolation throughout the completion of this degree.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The beginning of the nineteenth century, with its intense revolutionary frictions, saw the violent closing of a certain Western international order and the advent of new paradigms in politics, philosophy, and society, with consequences for nations and peoples as far-reaching as in East Asia. This period could rightly be called the crowning of modernity, a movement whose philosophical branch is commonly accepted to have begun with René Descartes' now-ubiquitous pronouncement of *cogito ergo sum*[1] two centuries prior.

In philosophy, this seventeenth-century pronouncement that "I am the principle of my thinking, no longer the tradition, or the authorities like in the middle ages [sic], or even the bible [sic]" (Cloots 7) did considerable and intentional damage to the prevailing medieval method of Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, and the other scholastic "doctors" or teacher-philosophers of the universities of the Middle Ages (Petrescu 25-26). Beyond its mere undermining of confidence in traditional sources of authority, Descartes' pronouncement and associated thinking destabilized the direct relationship of the thinking subject to the sensible object. Whereas the scholastics had considered the mental world of the human cognate with the external world, thus providing a comforting and ostensibly solid epistemological ground on which to conduct external inquiry, Descartes asserted to resounding effect that the mental and external worlds were totally

[1] "I Think, therefore I am." A French version of this phrase predates the Latin pronouncement from his 1641 *Principles of Philosophy*. In his 1637 *Discourse on Method*, he writes, "*je pense, donc je suis.*"

estranged, instigating a gradual slide into general distrust of metaphysics, compounding over the ensuing centuries of philosophical thought.

Equally consequential, although less known to the popular reader, is the Latin aphorism of Giambattista Vico first coined in the 1710 work *De antiquissima Italorum sapientia*, which reads "*Verum esse ipsum factum*," or "'True' is precisely what is made" (15). Whereas truth had been formerly approached through rigorous metaphysical analysis among scholastics, Vico's aphorism deprioritized entirely internal processes of mind and now forwarded that one can only know on the level of truth what oneself has made.

In his reading on modernity, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger synthesizes the thought of Vico and Descartes, showing how their intermingling set the stage for the quintessentially modern mindset to which we refer in this thesis. With Descartes having removed all possibility for the direct ascertainment of truth outside of pure abstractions like mathematics, Ratzinger presents Vico's *factum* as a means of restoring some sense of rigorous intellectual exercise in the form of history:

> The dominance of the fact[2] began ... man's complete devotion to his own work as the only certainty ... History, previously despised and regarded as unscientific, now remained, alongside mathematics, the only true science left. That which alone had hitherto seemed worthy of the free mind, thinking about the meaning of being, now seemed an idle and aimless enterprise

[2] This English word in itself has its root in the Latin word *factum* for "what is made."

> offering no hope of attaining genuine knowledge. (*Introduction to Christianity*[3] 62)

Ratzinger proceeds to link the emergence of history as truth to the latter-day philosophical works of G.F. Hegel and Auguste Comte, in whom philosophy becomes a "historical question" (62). It was not long, however, in the intellectual development of the West before this premise of history as the proper object of science became insufficient for some. Ratzinger proceeds to recapitulate this significant historical step from being-to-fact again with one final, terminal stage of modernity, embodied well in the work of Karl Marx. He quotes Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach* as asserting: "[t]he philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (xi). Ratzinger marks this as a transition to a distinct category of truth, not *verum quia factum*, but *verum quia faciendum*, explaining:

> The truth with which man is concerned is neither the truth of being, nor even in the last resort that of his accomplished deeds, but the truth of changing the world, molding the world -- a truth centered on future action. (*Introduction* 63)

Truth, in Marx and many of his modernist contemporaries, can no longer be measured for its correspondence to *esse*, or being, as it had throughout the scholastic period, nor even the *factum*, but instead the entirely new unit of *techne*.[4] Truth is measured by its forward drive rather than its backward resonance. What Ratzinger describes here is essentially the genealogy of the idea of Progress.

[3] Referred to hereafter, for brevity, as *Introduction*
[4] Τέχνη - Art, practice

For Marx and so many others, the crowning of modernity meant the dawn of a new scheme of truth now re-envisioned as a scheme of time, built on the incremental historical unveiling of truth through conflict and/or reinvention, the fine-tuning of reality as the infinitely moldable and infinitely ephemeral *techne*. The point of commonality between the diverse names mentioned above is, of course, not one of method nor of philosophical school. The intellectual proponents of modernity, as defined in Ratzinger, might vary widely among one another in these respects, betraying sympathies alternating between Hegel's German idealism, Comte's positivism, or Marx's materialist dialectic, each of which possesses its own unique and exclusive markers. The thread that binds these thinkers in spite of these irreconcilable differences is (1) a fatal lack of confidence in personal apperception of truth, and (2) a foundational view of "truth" as entelechy or, in other words, a view of reality as unfolding, either through an inevitable animating force or by human invention, over a linear scheme of time.

The effects of this shift in worldview have already been pointed out, mainly in its threat to the established authority of Christendom centered in the Roman Church. The threat was not only a philosophical one, but a temporal one. Globally, the rise of the modern scheme of time as unfolding truth can be tracked alongside the rise of the idea of progress and, ultimately, Western imperialism. The American Commodore Matthew C. Perry's forced re-opening of Japan in 1854 led to heightened interest in 蘭学 *rangaku*[5] or Western learning in a country that had kept careful control over this flow of information for the preceding two centuries. Although Japan had had

[5] This literally means "Dutch learning." Through their trade mission based out of the artificial island built off the coast of Nagasaki 出島 *Dejima*, the Dutch served as Japan's main facilitator of meaningful contact with the Western world for the duration of the Edo Period (1603-1867).

prior and rather thorough contact with the Europe of scholastic Christianity,[6] the country was now forced to reckon with a changed and changing West, and in the span of a few short decades, was required for the sake of keeping pace with its rapidly expanding empires to import and absorb the confusing bequest of the preceding two centuries of Western philosophy begun roughly in Descartes.

The effect on Japan by the end of the nineteenth century was twofold. First, as Karatani seeks to demonstrate in his *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, a new sense of interiority crept into its emerging modern literature as the nation's classical written language was phased out and replaced to increasing degrees by its vernacular, giving way to a self-conscious distinction principally among literate Japanese between self and nature as well as self and time. The second effect was that Japan's classical view of a cosmos guided by karma was increasingly supplanted with Western ideas of incremental temporal progress.

This thesis investigates how the experience of this new temporal scheme of modernity was felt in the particular cases of two authors at the tail-end of its philosophical development. Writing around the fall of the Papal States, as well as the revival of classical Thomism in the Roman Church, the French Catholic poet, playwright, and theorist Paul Claudel (1868-1955) sought to reassert a theistic worldview that, while not purely Thomist, was centered around a conception of time as the reconciliation of the created universe to a God of pure being. Writing on the other side of the world within a comparable period of time, the Japanese novelist and Imperial University Professor of English Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916) bemoaned the loss of the

[6] Abe Toshihiko records in *Japan's Hidden Face* that prior to its 17th-century expulsion from Japan, the Roman Catholic Church had succeeded in baptizing a conservative estimate of 86 out of the nation's 500 *daimyō* or feudal lords.

sublime as mystical experience from the increasingly materialist world of Japanese arts and letters, and while there is no evidence that he personally was religious at all, his works certainly show a sympathy for the Buddhist view of the diffuseness of the ego, as well as a longing for the integrity of its cosmos of nonlinear karmic cycles.

Chapter 1 examines Sōseki's novella 趣味の遺伝 *Shumi no iden* (*The Heredity of Taste*) in the context of the Meiji-era (1868-1912) reformations in government, language, and society. In some ways Sōseki detected the emergence of interiority which Karatani would only detail in theory much later. In addition to expressing his own reservations about the conclusions of this emerging tendency toward interiority on purely philosophical grounds, Sōseki made plain his separate concerns that the phenomenon was producing a new brand of modern Japanese writer who viewed his occupation as one not so different from that of a detective, subjugating artistic concepts of beauty, good, and the mystical to truth. I seek to argue that *The Heredity of Taste* depicts one modern Japanese man's mystical encounter with the fullness of the cyclical Buddhist cosmos through the medium of karma, and that through this encounter, the limits of the artificially modernized, Meiji-era lens are exposed.

Chapter 2 examines the writings of Paul Claudel in the context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century developments in the Roman Catholic Church, with special attention paid to his play *Le Soulier de Satin* (*The Satin Slipper*). *Soulier*, I maintain, is a demonstrative example of Paul Claudel's overall project to rebuke the voices of materialist progress of his time, and to reconcile the prevailing modern temporal scheme to its ultimate end in the Divine, or, in theological language, the Kingdom of God. Unlike Sōseki, his goal was not to supplant a vision of time as properly ordered or containing an inherent, linear direction, but to reassert its proper

order in a vertical direction toward greater identity with this Kingdom. For Claudel, this included a component of individual conversion as well as an overhaul in first philosophical principles.

As this is ultimately a work of comparative analysis, Chapter 3 contains a direct comparison of representations of time in the two highlighted authors along the lines. I show that while both take their strongest stand in the face of modernity along the lines of time, their prescribed schemes of time are ultimately irreconcilable to one another, and that this is partly attributable to differing theological understandings of the human being. I close by exploring the foundations that help to explain this difference, as well as making an opening for future discussion of a similar theme of traditional worldviews in conflict with modernity.

Chapter 2

Karma and Interiority: Sōseki Natsume in Resistance Against the Modern Subject in *The Heredity of Taste*

趣味の遺伝 *Shumi no iden* (*The Heredity of Taste*) shows significant narrative affinity with the major titles in Sōseki's[7] body of work. It follows an unnamed narrator, known merely as *Yo* 余, which is an old literary form of 'I,' a Japanese school teacher who is thoroughly educated in *modern*, meaning Western, modes of scientific perception and inquiry to the character's own detriment, Sōseki seems to suggest. The novella follows *Yo*'s investigation into the mysterious appearance of a beautiful woman at the graveside of his friend, *Kō-san* 浩さん, who was killed in the effort to seize a fort for Japanese forces in the Russo-Japanese War. As a consequence of his modern, scholarly disposition, *Yo* dispenses with, or perhaps represses, what he perceives to be the "ancient" (184) recourse to karma as a means of explaining the presence of this woman at his friend's grave, preferring instead the "enlightened" modern pursuits of "exposition" and "scholastic curiosity" (200, 201). Although there is evidence that he has some subconscious apprehension of the karmic dimension to the events recounted, he fails even at the novella's

[7] 夏目漱石, Natsume Sōseki. Sōseki is a pen-name which he used in place of his actual given name, *Kin'nosuk*e 金之助. The reader will note that it is this name, his would-be given name, that is used as his mononymous identifier throughout the rest of this thesis, while all other Japanese references use the family name. Even in his native language, Sōseki is most often identified in this manner, primarily due to the poetic and historical significance of the pen-name, coming from a Chinese moniker essentially signifying a stubborn man.

conclusion to understand the mystical elements of the story whose mere facts he narrates in diligent, if rambling, scholarly detail.

In this chapter, I show that while *The Heredity of Taste*, hereafter referred to as *Heredity*, is hardly unique among Sōseki's works in its incorporation of the above-mentioned investigative themes, its particular application of these themes speaks with notable scope on the reasons for Sōseki's antipathy toward the investigator as a figure of naturalist literature, especially Japanese naturalist literature. His antipathy stems from earnest human concerns over the emergence of interiority in the modern subject, largely a function of changes in language, and its consequences for the minds of the late-Meiji Japanese.

By the time the literary magazine *Teikoku Bungaku*[8] published *Heredity* in 1906, Sōseki had already thoroughly examined the figure of the detective (探偵 *tantei*)[9], as he operates both in fiction and in the world, in his immensely popular 吾輩は猫である *Wagahai wa neko dearu (I Am a Cat)*, which began serialization the year before. The following year, he would speak with considerable bile about detectives -- and writers who behave as detectives -- in his lecture 文芸の哲学的基礎 *Bungei no tetsugaku-teki kiso*, or "Philosophical Foundations of Literature." delivered to the Congress of the Tokyo Fine Arts School Literature Society. In the lecture, he lays out what could be described as a phenomenological ground for his belief in four fundamental ideals of art: Truth, Good, Beauty, and Sublimity. He argues that the detective

[8] 帝国文学 means "Imperial Literature"

[9] In "Philosophical Foundations," Sammy Tsunematsu translates 探偵 as 'secret policemen.' This is not a conventional translation, but may have been done to better reflect the period in which Sōseki is speaking. It is far more common to translate this term as 'detective.' I have retained the majority of Tsunematsu's translation, but for the sake of continuity with my own argument, I have replaced 'secret policeman' with my own translation of 'detective' inside brackets.

sacrifices three of these four ideals for the sake of an outsized and tasteless pursuit of brute Truth. He explains:

> Using the term in a basic sense, we can go as far as to say that a [detective] is searching for Truth. If we consider this individual purely in relation to the duties that he exercises, well, he does not seem like a normal human being. He has no morals or sense of Beauty. It goes without saying that the sense of the Sublime is also lacking in him. It is impossible to feel the least emotion towards him. I have no wish to become a [detective]. Such beings clearly cannot be human. ("Philosophical Foundations" 118)

Only a few lines later, he extends this argument to those writers who are detective-like in their slavish pursuit of truth:

> If we take contemporary men of letters and compare them to [detectives], if they are proud and publish in broad daylight works that profess the word "Truth," whose real purpose is to mock other ideals, these writers, who one will take as individuals, must in all probability be people who lack something ("Philosophical Foundations" 119).

Sōseki chooses the work of two French writers of the Naturalist tradition, Émile Zola and Guy de Maupassant, to help him demonstrate his strangely forceful point here. He bemoans the twisted endings of Maupassant's "*La Parure"* ("The Diamond Necklace") and Zola's "*Les Coquillages de Monsieur Chabre"* ("Shellfish for Monsieur Chabre"), both of which, he observes, conclude

just as some unsavory hidden truth is revealed either to the protagonist (in the case of Maupassant) or in the form of dramatic irony to the reader alone (in the case of Zola). Both revelations have the chance to produce some awe or pathos in the reader. Either author might take the revelation as an opportunity to compensate those characters who have been short-changed by the Truth with a morally satisfying conclusion. To do so might activate any one of the three other artistic ideals. Yet neither author seems interested in resolutions of such kinds. Both stories conclude, unsatisfactorily to the mind of Sōseki, as if such revelations of Truth are their precise and sole end. To this end, Sōseki states: "I do not know what Zola was thinking when he published this work. But in my opinion [...] if the ideal that progresses one step in a certain direction [Truth] were absent, the work would be completely unfinished" (117). This is to say that if truth were absent from Zola's work, it would be completely lacking in any and all features of art. This truth by itself then leaves the reader with an "impression of crudeness and baseness that recalls what one feels about the [detective]" (119).

This problematic tendency that Sōseki here identifies among the 'detective-like' writers of the modern age[10] could perhaps be alternately described as the fruits of the 19th-century European trend of positivism, by which all modes of inquiry, even the study of history, are reduced and subjugated to the scientific method. The pretense of Naturalism, the literary outcropping of this positivism, is to turn the work of literature into a laboratory no different than laboratories of natural sciences, where characters intended as subjects are placed into different settings and circumstances in order to be studied and observed for the yield of such informative

[10] It is worth noting, however, that while Sōseki does certainly treat this quality as a growing tendency of modernity, he does not attribute it exclusively to modern writers. To his mind, Shakespeare's *Othello,* too, shows the germs of this preoccupation with the unveiling of truth at the expense of art's other ideals. Sōseki expresses surprise in the same lecture that this has not been pointed out by any of the leading Shakespeare scholars ("Philosophical Foundations" 119).

material results that the title of 'author' might, in Zola's own ambitious words, come in time to be understood as no different from and perhaps even interchangeable with that of "doctor" ("The Experimental Novel" 2). Erased, then, from the literary work are such ideas as moral optimism or sentimentality, for the sake of real, scientific work in the study of human behavior.

Naturalism, indeed, had penetrated already into the Japanese literary world by the time of Sōseki's publication of *Heredity*, most directly precipitated by the first translation of Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*[11] into Japanese in the early 1890s (Saito 114). The Japanese *daigakusei* 大学生 (university students) of late-Meiji were already running a race of diminishing returns, as the immense and prestigious social and professional benefits promised by a university education, for which the students underwent intense grooming, were fast drying up with the growing number of university degrees. This emerging class of anxious Japanese *daigakusei* found a spiritual sibling in Raskolnikov. The impulse to project late-Meiji's problems onto the experience and misfortunes of school-aged Raskolnikov is not missed even by emerging critics of the same period, such as Kitamura Tōkoku, who notes that the most appealing feature of Dostoevsky's novel can be condensed to that of a "stubborn man" in futile struggle against the overwhelming "sanctions of society and power of nature" (Tōkoku 109, quoted in Saito 117; Saito 117-120). The swift, rave response among the Japanese literati to the translation of *Crime and Punishment* led quickly to Japanese experimental works such as Tayama Katai's 布団 *Futon* ("The Quilt") and Shimazaki Tōson's 破壊 *Hakai (The Broken Commandment)*, both of which Satoru Saito identifies as early efforts to reproduce *Crime and Punishment's* perceived naturalistic features (Saito 139).

[11] *Tsumi to Batsu* 罪と罰.

Saito observes that the surprising appeal in mid-to-late Meiji Japan of literary naturalism, its features of deterministic pessimism and its detective-like commitment to depicting reality and human behavior with austere fidelity to the sole ideal of Truth, must speak to some tendency that had already been percolating in the Japanese perception, finding external validation in the sudden appearance of this foreign work. In analyzing Tōkoku's reviews and private writings on *Crime and Punishment*, Saito identifies an emerging sense of "deep divide between the imaginary world of the thinking subject and the real world of the experiencing subject" (Saito 121), a splitting of the self into that component which experiences the outside world and that component within, which perceives and critically analyzes it. Sōseki himself attempts to characterize this phenomenon of splitting in "Philosophical Foundations":

> If I express what I call 'reality' by using another word, I can be designated by the term 'Ego' and you, in relation to me, are the 'non-Ego.' To put it in a more complicated way, this reality is the opposition between the Ego and the outside world. In other words, the world is comprised of reciprocal reactions between the Ego and the 'outside.' I assume you all perceive this in the same way I do [...] therefore when I give my lecture I am here and you are there; there is between us what we call 'distance'" ("Philosophical Foundations" 62).

A Western reader might find the above musings pedantic. For Karatani Kōjin, what Sōseki describes here is rather novel in the Japanese understanding of space in relation to the self and the other, and certainly an echo of the Cartesian language previously detailed. Karatani concurs with Saito that this phenomenon of splitting or "interiority" had been occurring in Japan likely

for decades prior to the Japanese translation and publication of *Crime and Punishment.* Sōseki goes on to say:

> [W]hatever the size of [this] room, expressed in *tsubos,*[12] I am standing here and you are sitting down over there. We call this expanse 'space'" ("Philosophical Foundations" 62).

Following Karatani, we can identify Sōseki's logic here as the "discovery of landscape," or the extension of the self and the other onto a continuum of arbitrary and measurable points in space defined by an observing and evaluating ego. For Karatani, this discovery of landscape feeds by nature into the emergence of this phenomenon of splitting, which he calls interiority. Interiority, in turn, feeds and fattens to some degree the phenomenon of landscape. In his *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Karatani compares the Japanese discovery of landscape and its consequence of interiority to the same process as it unfolded in the West. In the West, interiority served as a logical prerequisite to Descartes' *cogito.* Karatani claims that Descartes' "conception of 'extension,' by which he referred to the object of thought, similarly conceived of the 'landscape as alienated from the human'" (Karatani 62).

As it emerged in the West, interiority "was profoundly linked to modern science" (Karatani 62), departing from classical-medieval cosmologies and conceptions of space in that those cosmologies "assigned meaning in qualitative terms" (Karatani 62). Karatani uses the example of the medieval European peasant, who had a ready theological context by which to provide meaning to why he was where he was in society or even in space. Similarly, an

[12] This is a traditional Japanese unit of measurement expressing area, covering roughly $3^{1/3}$ square meters.

individual in the pre-Meiji Edo Period would not have thought to question his belonging to a samurai or farmer class, perceiving, instead, an internal coherence and complementarity to the social and even natural orders. The modern emergence of interiority, however, raised questions for scientists such as Blaise Pascal, who asked, beholding the "infinite silence of space" for the first time in human history, "Why am I here and not there?" (Karatani 62).

Karatani further tracks the development of an abstracted interiority in the West through its consequent rejection of the 'figure' -- the thing perceived directly by the senses -- in preference for the 'signifier,' the symbolic language of mathematical logic as a representative of the so-called "transcendent" realm of objectivity (Karatani 63). Other forms of perception that did not easily conform to the pattern of mathematical logic, such as what Sōseki might call the Good, the Beautiful, and the Sublime, were increasingly regarded as secondary or perhaps even invalid means of explaining identities and relationships. As a result, says Sōseki quite boldly, these ideals were growing increasingly absent from the work of literature, only then making the Naturalism of the 19th century possible.

This two-centuries-long philosophical process represented an increasing exaltation of the ideal of Truth, what Sōseki would have considered a degeneration of art. We thereby arrive at a narrator such as *Heredity*'s *Yo*. There is no subtlety in Sōseki's effort to paint our man as a quintessential Westernized, university-educated "subject of the Emperor" (*Heredity* 122), with his frequent allusions to French and English literature and his pet-projects on Mendel to trace the supernatural events in which he finds himself immersed. After a particularly beautiful and sublime scene in which *Yo* catches sight of the woman at *Kō-san*'s graveside near the haunted ginkgo tree, he feels the need to justify himself, making a fuss to caution the reader that he is "a scholar, I live on a street of scholars," and that his description of events, however eerie and

supernatural they may seem to the secondhand observer, is, as his duty demands, truth: "author or not, I have written down nothing but the facts" (*Heredity* 161).

One might begin to wonder why Sōseki insists on choosing a figure for whose type he confesses such antipathy and such inability to relate, first in *I Am a Cat* and then in *Heredity*. One might also wonder what aesthetic alternative Sōseki proposes not only in laying the landscape within his literature, but indeed in moving about the modern world. After his admittedly eloquent attempt to describe the phenomenon of interiority, Sōseki clarifies that this is not a position to which he, himself, holds:

> It follows that in this place, we must first recognize that I exist, then the fact that you exist, in what are called space and time. Similarly, as there are 'causality laws,' we must recognize that they govern us [...] *However, if we consider this position seriously, it seems very debatable* ("Philosophical Foundations" 63-64, emphasis mine).

In a lecture hall full of 'Men of Letters' this sudden turn in conventional logic, emphasized in the above quote, by the renowned successor to Lafcadio Hearn and the first Japanese Lecturer in English at Tokyo Imperial University, must have been surprising. Sōseki continues:

> Certainly, everyone normally thinks that way -- I do myself. But ... I have the impression that things are not as I have described. The true nature of this 'I' is eminently suspect. If I were asked whether this body whose hand or foot which I scratch when it itches or stroke when it hurts is really 'I,' well I would respond that no, it is

> no one. What we call 'itching' or 'pain' are sensations. Scratching or stroking oneself is a response to psychological desire ... In short, it is awareness. And rather than saying 'to be aware,' which implies a state, a more active rendering would be more appropriate ("Philosophical Foundations" 63-64).

Here Sōseki shows himself, again, to be surprisingly insightful about the forces by which the perceptions of Japanese versed in scripts mainly composed of Kanji were reshaped. Karatani, unlike Saito, is hesitant to attribute the sudden emergence of interiority in Japan reductively to mere *Western influence*. The above-described process of discovery of interiority took around 200 years to fully realize itself in Europe, from Descartes to Sōseki's present. Karatani traces the emergence of interiority in Japan to a comparatively punctuated span of a few decades from mid-Meiji onwards. For Karatani, the process of discovery in Japan was the product of a contrived political project facilitated through language, namely the project by Meiji authorities to phase out the classical Japanese writing style derived from the Chinese-derived *kanbun* (漢文) that had been the standard in most official Japanese writing since before the Heian Period,[13] and phase in a vernacular form of written Japanese more loyal to the spoken language of the time. This process was called *genbun-itchi* 言文一致.

This meant grafting onto a significant part of the written language of Japanese a bent toward dictation or a sense that writing was "a mere instrument for transcribing the voice" (Karatani 70) that Karatani would contend did not previously exist there. It required the import of what Jacques Derrida would call a "phonocentric" (*De la grammatologie* 23) or phonetics-

[13] The oldest extant history of Japan, the mythological 8th-century 古事記 *Kojiki (Account of Antiquities*), was mostly written in *kanbun*.

first sensibility onto a system where there had previously been far more potential for preverbal meaning. This can be easily demonstrated by the fact that a single given kanji might be read phonetically in multiple, completely distinct ways. For example, the character 大 might be read as *Ō*, *Dai*, or *Tai*, depending on context. Its meaning ('great' or 'big'), however, is usually unchanged by its pronunciation, and might accurately be described not as nonverbal, but as *pre*verbal: One sees the character and knows its meaning before ever uttering its contextual spoken reading.

Karatani, through Derrida, thus bemoans the inherent pitfalls of phonetic writing systems that privilege "voice as presence to consciousness." Karatani in turn considers them "the distinctive feature of Western metaphysics" (Karatani 70). A language that necessitates a voice thus implies the presence of an ego to pronounce the voice, giving the literature of such a language an innate expressive or confessional quality. Any such literature must always be a matter of externally representing or signifying what is primarily internal through narration, and is symbolic of the sense and not the sense in itself. This distancing means that what is narrated in a text will always be a lesser version of the sense. In contrast, systems like *kanbun* and its classical Japanese transcriptions, mediated as many of them were by the pure figures of kanji,[14] reserved the possibility of being a text unto themselves. Literature, if written purely in kanji, need not be literature as expression or as explicit narration. For this reason, it is unique even within the larger context of Japanese writing, which had since the Heian Period included the phonetic symbols of hiragana and katakana to reflect grammatical differences and particles. Karatani suggests that

[14] It is necessary to note that a Japanese text in the *kanbun* writing style still usually employed the aid of hiragana or katakana in one of two forms. First was 振り仮名 *furigana*, kana adjoined to the margin of the kanji, and second was 送り仮名 *okurigana*, kana affixed to the end of a kanji to form a suffix. Both of these additions were indeed intended to guide pronunciation of the text.

this is why Sōseki and his colleague Masaoka Shiki held such a reverence for the comparatively conservative, *kanbun* and *kanbun*-style poetic works in Japanese transcription as opposed to those Heian-court classics such as 源氏物語 *Genji Monogatari* (*Tale of* Genji) that had been written in the more expressive, phonetics-based hiragana. Regardless, a top-down initiative like *genbun-itchi* that sought to further consolidate the written and spoken and reduce reliance on the pure figure would have constituted a monumental shift in perception of the Japanese text for those educated elites versed in the *kanbun* and classical traditions of Japanese writing.

Karatani considers Futabatei Shimei's 浮雲 *Ukigumo (Drifting Clouds)* the quintessential *genbun-itchi* novel, and his reasoning is helpful in understanding not only Sōseki's preference for an 'active' mode of language, but also the philosophical underpinnings of this preference. After the vernacular, Futabatei ends his verbs in *Clouds* with *ta* た, denoting a tense roughly equivalent to the French preterite. Karataniquotes Roland Barthes as noting that "even from the depth of the most sombre realism, [the preterite] has a reassuring effect because, thanks to it, the verb expresses a closed, well-defined, substantival act…it escapes the terror of an expression without *laws*: reality comes slighter and more familiar, it fits within a style, it does not outrun language" (Barthes 32, quoted in *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* 73). In other words, extending this observation to the Japanese *ta*, it fits literary beats into measurable time, distanced from the reader/observer who can now set about a quasi-scientific critique of the text from the comfort of distance.

Karatani notes that in *Heredity*, Sōseki dispenses with *ta*-tensing, preferring instead the more rolling temporality of the dictionary *ru* る and *u* う forms and the present progressive. The effect is to produce in prose what Sōseki's colleague and close friend Masaoka Shiki had already

been producing through their poetic contributions to the haiku magazine ホトトギス *hototogisu* (Cuckoo), notes of a style called 写生文 *Shaseibun* (sketches from life). This style is aimed at a fluid and untamed but nonetheless modern way of responding to *genbun-itchi* from within its own conventions, seeking to avoid its preoccupation with placing a stale, utilitarian framework over language as seen in contemporaneous *genbun-itchi* works. Sōseki himself contributed *shaseibun* poetry to his friend's magazine. Although the overwhelming majority of his literary output was in prose, it is clear from both Sōseki's and Shiki's critical writings that their view of the value of haiku was less in its particular, "idiosyncratic" formal features and more in its artistic sensibility, i.e. in its economy of language, which was in their minds open to universalization across literary forms.[15] Interestingly, Karatani identifies features of *shaseibun* in Sōseki's *I Am a Cat* ("Rethinking Sōseki's Theory" 10), his other lampoon of the detective, even going so far as to imply that the whole novel is a work of *shaseibun.* This suggests that *shaseibun* and Sōseki's satirizing of modern literary sensibilities are closely related even beyond *Heredity*. At minimum, the open temporality of Sōseki's written language in *Heredity* and other prose works reflects his stated desire for a more 'active rendering' of life through literature, his "stubborn" effort to fracture the "linear, phonetic" interiority in which, by his own admission, his "whole being was submerged [to the point of] no exit" (Karatani 70).

Karatani thus argues, in other words, that the process that culminated in *Truth*-obsessed naturalism in modern Japanese literature can be tied reliably to an interiority of the type mediated by Meiji reforms in language. It is perhaps no coincidence that Futabatei, the

[15] See Shiki, *General Principles of Haikai* and Sōseki, *Theory of Literature* (Quoted in Karatani, "Rethinking Sōseki's Theory" 10).

quintessential *genbun-itchi* author, was himself a student in the Russian language department at the Tokyo Foreign Language School and a close reader of Dostoevsky.

Following this logic, *Yo* is a perfect specimen of the modern type of man of letters with a detective complex in which Sōseki finds so much fault. *Yo* shares Sōseki's submersion in interiority, although he is far more oblivious to it. *Heredity* may be properly understood as a story of karma testing the limits of the sterile, Western, Cartesian lens in which *Yo* finds himself trapped. Indeed, a problem of language is the first problem he runs up against in the plot of *Heredity* as he stands on a train platform awaiting the victorious return of a number of soldiers from the warfront of Manchuria. As the train rolls into the station, the crowd erupts with cheers of *Banzai,* and *Yo* himself is sent into a fit of emotion. He remarks that he has been "for quite some time determined, in celebration of this joyous day, to emit a '*Banzai*'" (*Heredity* 124). But when he himself attempts to join with the crowd in celebrating the triumph of the disembarking soldiers, although he had "expected blindly to join in," the phrase "wedge[s] itself deeply in my gut" (*Heredity* 124), and he is unable to pronounce it in spite of repeated attempts.

It is likely no coincidence that *Banzai* is the phrase Sōseki has chosen here to represent *Yo*'s problems with language. Although often thought of as an ancient coinage, *banzai* had in fact only been introduced for the first time into popular speech a few decades prior to the writing of *Heredity*. In an effort to impress nationalistic fervor into its peasantry in response to what had been their lukewarm feelings toward public appearances of previous emperors for at least several decades, the ascendant Meiji government pushed to reintroduce the phrase *banzai* to commemorate the inauguration of the new Imperial Constitution of 1889 in collaboration with newspapers nationwide. Detailed laudatory articles on common English and French crowd cheers of *vive la république* or *long live the king* were published suddenly and widely by national

periodicals like *Nihonjin* and *Nichinichi*. On the eve of the constitution's formal declaration, the latter newspaper published an article titled "How to Pay Reverence." After much conscious deliberation on alternatives like *hōga*,[16] followed by painstaking comparisons of the phrase's pronunciations such as *manzai* and the more ancient and *kanbun*-accurate *banzei*, a committee finally settled on the anachronistic and only half-historical reading of *banzai* (Makihara 242-245).

As a result, on the day of the commemoration, in awkward conjunction with the singing of a new setting of the ancient waka poem *Kimi ga yo*,[17] thousands of university students were led by a professor in cheers of *Ten'nō heika banzai* 天皇陛下万歳 ("May his majesty the emperor live ten-thousand years!") as the emperor himself passed very visibly through the streets in a horse-drawn carriage (Makihara 244). *Banzai* quickly became a signifier for public patriotic outpouring, and it is still in use on certain occasions.

In light of this historical reality that was only possible through the top-down engineering of language in mid-Meiji, it is probably no coincidence that Sōseki describes *Yo* as having 'for quite some time been determined' to participate in the train platform revelry. *Yo*'s plan to join in with the spontaneity of the crowd is as contrived and insincere as the real-life implementation of

[16] This means "respectful congratulations," which was eventually discarded for its inconvenient resemblance to the insulting *ahō ga* ("the idiot").
[17] This modern setting, which would become the national anthem, was itself inspired by an arrangement by John William Fenton, a visiting Irish sailor and bandleader, who first suggested to the early Meiji government that Japan select a national anthem. Makihara further describes how the idea of an anthem was a foreign one. The initial arrangement was by all accounts so odd as to be nearly unsingable, as much for the melody as for the fact that singing had never before been considered a group activity (Makihara 242).

the phrase. Our protagonist examines the matter of sincerity surrounding the cries of *banzai* in the following way:

> That sound is nothing less than an echo of the battle-cry heard in Manchuria. But a battle-cry is different in kind from ordinary verbalization. Any battle-cry says nothing more than 'Wah'; which, unlike *Banzai*, has no meaning whatsoever. But just because it has no meaning, the sound of 'Wah' is pregnant with *inexpressible* feeling (*Heredity* 126, emphasis mine).

For *Yo*, who finds himself suddenly in a moment of sincere, chest-swelling emotion, language seems to come up short. The language and its manufactured nature, if anything, turn out to be an obstacle to his access and communication of those sincere emotions. He even alludes to the *splitting* that overly-analytic and rational use of language produces in the psyche:

> When one cries 'Help!,' perhaps there is sincerity in that cry. It is not impossible that there might be sincerity in a shout that 'I will kill you.' But just because these voicings carry some semantic content, the degree of their sincerity is by that much the less. While one retains sufficient rationality to use words that have a meaning, one cannot be said to have reached the point of whole- or *single-heartedness.*[18] A battle-cry says 'Wah.' And in that 'Wah'...there is neither reality nor irreality. There is 'Wah' and nothing else (*Heredity* 127, emphasis mine).

[18] 一心不乱. "Undisturbed single-heartedness" is a literal translation of this phrase.

To this limited extent, Sōseki grants his protagonist the wisdom to detect the inadequacies of the spoken word for giving authentic voice to his internal sense of patriotic awe. There remains on *Yo*'s part, however, a shade of misunderstanding that is only totally clear in the original Japanese but is, to Sōseki's intent, entirely central.

The English translation renders *Yo*'s narration of his experience listening to the cheering crowd on the train platform as "sublimity in this our human world" (*Heredity* 128). While this at first might seem to contradict Sōseki's own observation that a sense of the 'sublime' is one of the key elements lacking in the modern author, the word here translated as sublime, *sūkō* 崇高, is different than the word used by Sōseki in "Philosophical Foundations" to bemoan the loss of the sublime. Still quite fairly translated as sublime, *sūkō* most often implies a merely aesthetic kind of sublimity. Given the context of *Yo*'s use of the word, the sublimity he has in mind is basically a Kantian one, the feeling of indefinitude and "boundlessness" that accompanies the experience of "*absolutely great*" (*Critique of Judgment* 41, 45, emphasis in original). *Yo* expresses it in such terms himself: "Only after one attunes one's ear and hears all at once the sincerity of tens, hundreds, thousands or tens-of-thousands of people will this *sublime* (*sūkō*) feeling attain the immense height of the realm of ideals"[19] (*Heredity* 6, translation mine). It is not at all a breakage from the Western philosophy on which Sōseki and his contemporaries were academically groomed. It is an apt expression of it. It represents the very presence of interiority that Karatani insists this Western philosophy fosters, and that troubles the whole work of *Heredity*.

[19] 無上絶大の玄境 - here translated as 'immense height of the realm of ideals.' That the kanji 無上 is present in the Japanese translation for Categorical Imperative (無上命法) only serves as further support that *Yo*'s phrasing is Kant-inspired.

The word Sōseki uses in his remarks about the detective in “Philosophical Foundations,” also fairly translated as sublime, is *sōgon* 荘厳. One possible translation of the Sanskrit word *vyūha*, it is a word historically intertwined with the aesthetics of Buddhism (Kubo 170). Temples, statues, and other Buddhist decor may be called *sōgon* or its alternate and more exclusively Buddhist reading, *shōgon*. Further, through its Sanskrit translation, it bears the implied meaning of the unveiling of a higher and explicitly "supernatural” or “magical” reality (*Edgerton Dictionary* 520).

What Sōseki suggests in “Philosophical Foundations” about the detective is that he lacks a mystical dimension, among other ideals. There is therefore no conflict in *Yo*’s use of *sūkō* in this passage and Sōseki’s own observation that “such a thing as the Sublime (*sōgon*) is obviously lacking in” the detective (荘厳の理想などは固よりない, “Philosophical Foundations” 33, translation mine).[20]

In fact, Sōseki’s precise point is that *Yo* mischaracterizes the subsequent events of the novella as *sūkō* rather than a clear manifestation of *sōgon* -- or, as we will call it from here on, the mystical. *Yo* becomes, for reasons he attributes to this Kantian sublimity, emotionally preoccupied by a disheveled general who resembles his old friend *Kō-san*. Inspired, he follows this feeling to *Kō-san*’s grave.

Not coincidentally, his next encounter with the mystical occurs under the haunted ginkgo tree on the grounds of an old Buddhist temple. The remains of *Kō-san* are buried in the attached graveyard. He will first encounter the unknown woman at *Kō-san*’s graveside. His preliminary

[20] The Japanese edition of “Philosophical Foundations” here quoted from the webpage does not use page numbers.

observations about the temple grounds are telling: “There is nothing more agreeable than to look at smooth red soil; earth of a creamy texture, neither parched nor muddy, but rich and heavy with the color of the sun” (*Heredity* 150).

The image of the wholesome earth that has swallowed or embraced into itself (含んだ) the red color of the sun is set at odds with the modern lot of *Yo* and his contemporaries with this description: “Nishikatamachi,[21] where I live, is reputed to be a ‘parish of scholars.’ Be that as it may, so many houses have recently been built there that now, quite apart from the absence of tasteful dwellings, one can hardly see the quiet gentle colors of its earth” (*Heredity* 150-151). These poignant observations, played off as Sōseki’s mere ironic commentary on the scenery, serve as a perfect preface for the experience that will incite the major investigation of the novella.

On meeting the woman, *Yo* embarks on a rambling description of her beauty and his feelings of indecision and inadequacy in its presence. He describes the color of her silk kimono, the beauty of the petals and leaves that hang around her in the clearing around the grave, and even touches on profundity in noting

> The skies of autumn, before it cedes to winter, look higher than at any other time. Had we wings, our flying up such skies could surely never end. A sky that shines with the feeling of infinity. Without even an acknowledgment, the haunted ginkgo disrupts this infinitely distant, infinitely vast, infinitely peaceful sky to appear

[21] 西片町 literally means “the Westhand town,” or the “Westerly one of a pair of towns.” This name in itself is obviously suggestive.

> as a golden cloud. In this dead-silent setting of old sky, old tree, ancient temple, and ancient tombs, she stands alone in her young beauty. It is an extraordinary contrast. (*Heredity* 158-159)

What follows is a several-page-long interpretation of the beauty of this scene through a strained comparison to Macbeth, as well as a recollection of a chance meeting *Yo* once had with a Western girl at the hot spring of Hakone.

There are two noteworthy aspects to this. The haunted ginkgo tree intrudes fleetingly on the eternity of the autumn sky, and in this lies the actual significance of this chance encounter at *Kō-san*'s graveside. Before embarking for war, the buried *Kō-san* had found himself drawn by inexplicable forces to this woman, and she to him. As *Yo* will uncover later, it is because they are descendants of a man and woman whose love for one another had never been actuated. *Kō-san*, the woman, and their love for each other are mere projections, like the stray ginkgo branch, onto a much larger continuum of karma that stretches generations backward and demands to be resolved.

Yo's attempt at explaining the beauty of the scene, really an exercise in pedantry drawing amply and unnecessarily from Western literary theory, shows a sensibility that is the exact opposite of the brevity and economy of the haiku for which Sōseki had so much respect, more specifically of Shiki's *shaseibun* from which he seems in *Heredity* to be lifting some inspiration. Haiku for Sōseki was a "literature which is unique to Japan and which is also a literature of the common people" (Karatani 74). To dispense so carelessly with such poetic tenderness in the treatment of a scene that should have been beautiful marks *Yo* yet again as an individual who, although thoroughly schooled, has little understanding of the aesthetic sensibilities of his own national heritage.

Furthermore, in his heavy-handed and long-winded explanation, *Yo* finds himself again missing the cosmic implications of his encounter. After departing from the graveyard, he resolves to "pursue this question of contrast on a purely scholastic basis" (*Heredity* 161). His interest lies neither in the pathos of what he has just seen, a beautiful, unknown woman mourning at his best friend's grave, nor with the uncanny apprehension of the mystical he feels beneath the haunted ginkgo. He must, instead, theorize with much bluster. As an accomplished man of science, he must dismiss his "unreason" and investigate (*Heredity* 164).

After finding the mention of a similarly-described woman and the description of a mysterious feeling of connection with her in *Kō-san*'s diary, *Yo* only grows in frustration and curiosity. He later stumbles upon an epiphany in a book on genetics by Mendel. "Of course," he remarks aloud to himself, "heredity's the answer" (*Heredity* 185). *Yo* tries to conclude that the mysterious affinity between *Kō-san* and the woman comes down to some buried family linkage. He compares it passingly to karma, but heredity (*iden* 遺伝) seems to *Yo* a much more agreeable term than the antiquated karma (*inga* 因果):

> In ancient times such phenomena of cause and effect, cause in an earlier incarnation having inevitable effect upon one's present life, were known as Karma. Men accepted it unquestioningly, recognizing that one had no choice but to bow before its authority as one gives in to the power of that god behind the crying of a child. But in the context of twentieth century civilization, it is no longer regarded as satisfactory to explain events by attribution to indeterminable pre-existent cause (*Heredity* 186).

Clearly, the correct path forward, "strictly, that is to say, scientifically speaking," is to "find the woman, confirm that she is the girl mentioned in the diary and then proceed to examine the operation in this particular case of the principles of heredity" (*Heredity* 186).

In doing exactly this and confirming his theory that the woman's attraction to *Kō-san* had been a matter of heredity, *Yo* is perfectly satisfied. It is enough to know that he is *right*. In the closing pages, he remarks that his project had always been to provide an "exposition of the case of the girl at" the temple (*Heredity* 200). All loose ends that have emerged as a result of his investigation are no longer of interest to him, "scholastic curiosity having been satisfied" (*Heredity* 201).

The difference of heredity as defined by *Yo* from traditional definitions of karma remains unaddressed. Obviously, however, heredity serves as a naturalistic and finite stand-in for the unnerving infinity of karmic forces. Much like Barthes' reading of the preterite and the taming, confessional effect of *genbun-itchi* on Japanese literature, *Yo*'s attribution of heredity is a comforting means of mapping and naming reality, a measurable signifier of the 'Truth' that otherwise defies explanation.

A Buddhist-karmic view of the world has little to do with the linear transmigration of souls. It does, however, have much to do with the concrete effects that one moral decision may have beyond the practical duration of that decision. There is no comforting 'here' or 'there,' but only an integral continuum wherein tensions and imbalances of one life may be satisfied through other, successive lives. It is the ultimate fulfillment of Sōseki's vision in "Philosophical Foundations" of a reality where ego and non-ego are illusory creations of the mind, and it is the only conclusion to the rolling temporality of his *shaseibun*-inspired literary grammar.

Clearly, Sōseki had been considering karma during this period of his career. Only two years after the publication of *Heredity*, he would publish 夢十夜 *Yume Jūya* (*Ten Nights of Dreams*), which contains multiple short vignettes centered around the looming but elusive presence of the supernatural in the modern world. Karma comes up specifically on the third night of dream: the narrator treks into the woods while carrying on his back a bald and blind boy whom he describes as "certainly my child" (Sōseki 5, translation mine). At the climax of the dream, the pair arrives at the foot of a cedar. The boy on his back reminds him, "it was exactly one hundred years ago [at this cedar] that you killed me, wasn't it?" (*Ten Nights* 7, translation mine). At these words, the burden of the boy becomes as heavy as a Jizō statue.[22] It speaks to the connectedness between the themes of *Ten Nights* and *Heredity* that their English translations are published together in one volume. This is not to say that Sōseki was himself religious. The question of Sōseki's personal belief is, for the purpose of this thesis, irrelevant. But the Buddhist connections in *Ten Nights* do not conclude after the third night. Questions of enlightenment (Night 2 31-34), reincarnation (Night 3 27-30), and most importantly, of the possibility or impossibility of creating spiritually resonant art in the modern world (Night 6 45-48), all emerge from its vignettes. Sōseki himself may have had his religious doubts, but he seemed, at minimum, to respect the relevance and impact of religious questions, particularly for their necessity in the realm of art.

The epilogue of *Heredity* depicts the so-called scholar *Yo* lulled by the satisfaction of his great scientific discovery into a kind of lazy stupor. As a consequence, it is narrated with great disinterest. The story closes with little more explicit dénouement than is found in Maupassant's

[22] The bodhisattva Jizō, or *Jizōbosatsu* 地蔵菩薩, has a connection to deceased children and aborted babies.

"*La Parure*" or Zola's "*Coquillages*." It amounts, as the narrator apparently believes, to a mere Naturalistic account of a mildly interesting series of events. For the reader, however, much of significance happens in these final pages.

Kō-san's elderly mother has always wished for a daughter-in-law to care for her in the wake of her son's death. She asks *Yo* about the girl. "Being a woman," comments *Yo*, she "wants to know everything down to the last detail" (*Heredity* 201). It happens that the two women, upon introduction, take to each other and become friends, bonding over the memory of the otherwise forgotten *Kō-san*. It may occur to the reader in these final lines that the sight of these two women together is the actual fulfillment of the karma swirling throughout the whole novella, and that all the plot's holes and knots are sealed and loosed in their uniting. Even *Yo*, who can see no further than his own modernist taste for the Truth, has one final apprehension of the mystical: "Every time I see them together looking so friendly, I shed tears: tears more clean, more fresh than those I shed when I saw the [returning soldiers]" (*Heredity* 203).

But it is only an apprehension. In a beautiful moment of irony, embodying a haiku's economy of language while summating all of the ill and unsettled feelings Sōseki harbored for the devastating intellectual effects of modernity, *Yo* utters a final, closing line. Speaking ostensibly of the girl's academic brother, he remarks that "[t]he professor seems not to have noticed anything" (*Heredity* 38, translation mine).

Chapter 3

Claudel and the Cross-Shape of Christian Time

In his 1866 polemical work *Atheism and the Social Peril* (*L'Athéisme et le péril social*), Bishop of Orléans Monseigneur Félix Dupanloup made the drastic observation that "There is, at present, one fixed point on the globe that has attracted all eyes, and from which no man, no matter who, can wrench his thoughts. That is Rome and the Pope" (Dupanloup 9, translation mine).

His Excellency had reason to say this. By the time of his writing, the decades-long process of attrition of Papal State holdings by revolutionary Italian nationalists, known as the *Risorgimento*, had nearly attained its final victory. Four years following Dupanloup's words, Victor Emmanuel II would breach the *Porta Pia* and seize Rome for the Kingdom of Italy, thus striking the death blow against the 1,000-year-old temporal kingdom of the Papaal States. For the ensuing sixty years, the occupant of the Throne of Peter, the spiritual head of roughly 15% of the world population of the period, would be referred to as *Captivus Vaticani* -- Prisoner of the Vatican.

Far from capitulating, the five reigning Popes of this period[23] reacted by redoubling to varying degrees the Church's militancy against what they termed broadly "modernism." By this,

[23] I specifically discuss three of these five Popes, Pius IX, Leo XIII, and Pius X who reigned in that order, along with their various encyclicals. Although all three contributed to varying degrees to the discussion, I treat the anti-modern efforts of the period as part of a whole, integral effort.

they referred mainly to those epistemological, ethical, and political doctrines emerging from Descartes through Immanuel Kant that they deemed responsible for obscuring and relativizing a solid view of unqualified truth, as well as escalating those material hostilities toward the Church of Rome herself that had resulted in the near-total loss of her direct temporal influence.

It is arguably Pius IX who initiated the Church's systematic push-back against modernism through his 1864 *Quanta Cura* and its adjunct *Syllabus of Errors,* which together list a total of eighty so-called heresies of modernism. Those heresies include absolute and moderate forms of rationalism, religious indifferentism,[24] Socialism, Communism, membership in secret societies such as the Freemasons,[25] and most forms of enlightenment-derived political liberalism.

Leo XIII's 1891 *Rerum Novarum*, subtitled "On Capital and Labor," examined how the incursion of these "new things"[26] influenced not only the philosophical and religious spheres but also the economic one. It condemned at once the "not a few who are imbued with evil principles and are eager for [socialist] revolutionary change" (Paragraph 38) while also criticizing the market capitalism that had "been able to lay upon the teeming masses of the laboring poor a yoke little better than that of slavery itself" (Paragraph 3). The encyclical attributed the emergence of this competition between economic paradigms also to the errors of modernity, in the wake of whose massive 19th-century industrialist expansion the "ancient workingmen's guilds were abolished ..., and no other protective organization took their place" (Paragraph 3). Eager to offer

[24] This term is grouped together with Latitudinarianism in the language of the *Syllabus*. A common 19th-century Catholic coinage denoting any agnostic or, worse, equivocating attitude toward the world's religions and their respective truth values.

[25] Masons are singled out primarily due to their advocacy for the above-mentioned indifferentism toward religion in the civil sphere.

[26] The Latin title of the encyclical translates into English as "On New Things" or "On Novelties."

an alternative to what the Church regarded as the resultant philosophies of extremism, he threw the full weight of Pontifical support behind the Thomist revival that was already under way within Catholic seminaries and ecclesial universities. He appointed Thomist commentator Cardinal Tommaso Zigliaria to write the first draft of *Rerum Novarum* after having enlisted him to help plan another encyclical, the 1879 *Aeterni Patris*, by which a revival of philosophical scholasticism had been formally inaugurated.

Although this adamantly anti-modern project would continue in various forms until the beginning of the Second Vatican Council in 1962, it was Leo XIII's immediate successor, Pius X, who crowned it with his 1907 *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*. In it, he implemented the Church's criticism of modernity within the very walls of the Vatican, condemning those theologians and biblical scholars who had begun to borrow from post-Kantian shades of subjectivity and the findings of 19th-century historical criticism in their own work on behalf of the Church. It is also in this encyclical where one finds the most helpful definition of modernism in those exact terms on which the Church found it so abhorrent. Pius X begins with a definition "in the negative":

> According to [modernist] teaching human reason is confined entirely within the field of *phenomena*, that is to say, to things that are perceptible to the senses ... Hence it is incapable of ... recognising [God's] existence, even by means of visible things. From this it is inferred that God can never be the direct object of science, and that … He must not be considered as an historical subject. Given these premises, all will readily perceive what becomes of *Natural Theology*, of the *motives of credibility*, of *external revelation*. The Modernists … include them in

> *Intellectualism*, which they call a ... long ago defunct system.
>
> (Paragraph 6)

Pius then proposes a parallel approach at definition, one in the positive which he calls "vital immanence":

> Religion ... must, like every other fact, admit of some explanation. But when Natural theology has been destroyed … it is clear that this explanation will be sought in vain outside man himself. It must, therefore, be looked for in man … Moreover, the first actuation ... of every vital phenomenon ... is due to a certain necessity or impulsion; but it has its origin … in *sentiment*. Therefore, since God is the object of religion, we must conclude that faith, which is the basis and the foundation of all religion, consists in a sentiment which originates from a need of the divine.
>
> (Paragraph 7)

What emerges is a twofold image of the Church's grievance with modernity: First, this loose collection of thinkers, not only atheists after the fashion of Ernest Renan or Auguste Comte, but even sympathetic voices for the supernatural such as Henri Bergson, have reduced religion in their worldview to a mere interior phenomenon of consciousness. In this view, religion arises not as a top-down function informed by necessary and credible observations about nature and history as well as revelation, but only as a bottom-up function out of the subconscious, as a convenient and conditional means of satisfying a sentimental urge of the heart.

Secondly, per Pius X, while this sentimental origin for religion makes all experiences of the spiritual in a sense *true*, it has the double-effect of leaving no room for a single one of them to be *Truth*. Truth, in this worldview, is confined to the world of the objective, here synonymous with *external*. The degree to which the external can be ascertained by pure human reason seems questionable to the modern mind after Kant. One then discards metaphysics in deference to the natural sciences, but without the guidance of any sense of the immaterial or moral, Pius X contends that one will almost inevitably fall into abuse of those same natural sciences.

It is by way of this definition that Claudel first arrives in the story of the modernist crisis. His personal witness is a substantiative complement to the concerns of the above-mentioned encyclicals, that is to say, that the intellectual developments of modernity would have a poisoning effect not only on institutions and high-flown intellectuals, but also on the laity in the provinces who, in the words of Dupanloup, were mere "serfs to their newspaper and do not have the means to guard the independence of their thoughts from these educated minds" (Dupanloup 35, translation mine).

Born and baptized in 1868 into a devout family of priests and farmers, Claudel drifted from the faith in his teens, later testifying of himself:

> Upon my entry into [Lycée Louis-le-Grand] I had lost faith, which seemed irreconcilable with the plurality of worlds.[27] I accepted the monistic and mechanistic hypothesis in all its rigor; I believed that

[27] Tilliette interrupts this narrative in his commentary on Claudel to "confess" his parenthetical "perplexity" at this line: "the plurality of inhabited worlds is an unverifiable hypothesis, and it is not quite clear how it contradicts faith; more plausible would be the materialism alleged further along, or the Will to Power as in *Tête d'or*, or the outdated character of the Church as in *La Ville*" (Tilliette, 707).

> everything was subject to 'laws,' and that this world was a sequence of causes and effects that science would at a future date have unraveled perfectly. I found all of this, moreover, highly sad and highly boring. (Claudel, quoted in Tilliette 707)[28]

Claudel would later superlatively curse those thinkers of modernity who had, by his own testimony, left him for so long in a "metaphysical prison" (quoted in Tilliette 706). In one of his Five Great Odes, the *Magnificat*, he prays,

> "Stay with me Lord, because evening approaches / and do not abandon me! / do not forsake me with the Voltaires, the Renans, the Michelets, the Hugos, and all their infamous lot! / Their souls are with the dead dogs, their books for the dunghill." (70, translation mine)[29]

Xavier Tilliette contends that for such young thinkers of the fin de siècle as Claudel, what was necessary for re-conversion was not any kind of sweet religious consolation or reaffirmation of mystery, but in fact a coherent and systematic doctrine of intelligent and informed philosophy with which to "riposte" against the "hideous world of Taine" (Tilliette 707; and Claudel 120, qtd in Tilliette, respectively) and to demonstrate the intellectual rigor at the base of the Catholic tradition. Claudel was, after all, not in the minority among baptized youths of the period in his

[28] All English translations of Tilliette are mine.
[29] Restez avec moi, Seigneur, parce que le soir approche / et ne m'abandonnez pas! / Ne me perdez point avec les Voltaire, et les Renan, et les Michelet, et les Hugo, et tous les autres infâmes! / Leur âme est avec les chiens morts, leurs livres sont joints au fumier.

doubts driven by the post-Falloux education system of France.[30] The language of re-evangelization would have to be intellectually driven.

Indeed, what is interesting about Pius X's *Pascendi* is that it reserves its most earnest warnings for ostensibly friendly thinkers: "That We make no delay in this matter," says His Holiness, "is rendered necessary especially by the fact that the partisans of error are to be sought not only among the Church's open enemies; they lie hid, a thing to be deeply deplored and feared, in her very bosom and heart, and are the more mischievous, the less conspicuously they appear" (2). Even those Catholic, Christian, or otherwise sympathetic intellectuals of the period such as Bergson or Maurice Blondel,[31] who would themselves seem to dispute one or more of the above premises of modernity, still fall victim to the fundamental premise that religion is formed from a purely internal emergence. This was rightly recognized by the Church as a major epistemological stumbling block for anyone attempting to approach its body of teachings even in good faith.

This "reformist" (Pius X 38) approach to religion and religiosity extends also to revelation among these thinkers. Pius X notes his predecessor's observation that even a considerable sect of Catholic clergy, inspired by the cutting-edge findings of historical critics, seemed to have drifted to the position that "[d]ivine revelation is imperfect, and therefore subject to continual and

[30] Loi Falloux was a series of education laws passed during the Second French Republic that promoted Catholic education across the country. The laws lasted through the pro-clerical French Empire and came to an end during the Third French Republic with the passage of the Ferry Laws.

[31] It must be noted that Blondel was never himself the object of Papal sanction or even explicit criticism. Pius XI even sent Blondel a "letter of august thanks" after reading his special contribution to *La Nouvelle Journée* (Blanchette, 324; qtd in Portier, 119).

indefinite progress, corresponding with the progress of human reason" (Pius IX, quoted in Pius X 28).

Such was the cardinal abomination of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in the view of the Catholic Church. It was a movement, even *within* the Church, away from a view of perennial truth as directly ascertained by the human senses and mediated by the graces dispensed by the Church toward an agnostic, human-centered, and contingent view of knowledge as continually unfolding through the hard-fought advances in the historical project of science and philosophy. This new course would inevitably leave a whole young generation of Catholics in the paralysis of Claudel's above-mentioned metaphysical prison.

As a first measure for beginning the Church's own *Risorgimento* on behalf of all its sojourners, Pius X discerned the need of an oath against modernism for all in some form of teaching capacity within the Church. This oath remained in place until 1967, after the 1965 closing of the Second Vatican Council. In the way of positive action as opposed to negative or defensive laying of boundaries, and more to the point to be later raised by Tilliette, Leo XIII quite presciently acted on the need for a competing and equally-rigorous worldview by which to combat the so-called errors of modernity and reaffirm the Church's worldview of potency, causality, and visible signs in a credible way.

By this, Leo did not intend to discard the best of the sciences. As *Aeterni Patris* states unequivocally, "Divine Providence itself requires that, in calling back the people to the paths of faith and salvation, advantage should be taken of human science also - an approved and wise practice which history testifies was observed by the most illustrious Fathers of the Church" (Pararaph 3). Étienne Gilson explains this by pointing out that Aquinas himself had undertaken a similar process in his incorporation of Aristotelian philosophy into Christianity during the larger

thirteenth-century "Averroist" controversy at the University of Paris (*Elements of Christian Philosophy* 11-14). Gilson contends in this exact spirit, that the "urgent task" of Neo-Scholasticism set out by Leo XIII would be "criticizing" the "enormous amount of material [that has] thus been accumulating since the time of Thomas Aquinas … interpreting it and ordering it in the light of permanently valid principles, that is to say, of the Thomistic metaphysics of being" (Gilson, *Spirit of Thomism* 96).[32]

Again, a look at Claudel's own intellectual biography shows us exactly how this effort to recover Aquinas' ontology at the seminaries eventually found its way into the personal lives of the wider lay population. Tilliette writes that Claudel, after four years of post-conversion "prevarications," took up the *Summa Theologiae* on the order of his Confessor (709). It was the discovery therein of Aquinas' metaphysics of being that finally fully snapped the doubting Paul Claudel from those prevarications and handed him in finished form his entire future literary project. Joyously and firmly, Claudel proclaims in his *Art poétique* that "God alone is that which is" (113, qtd in Tilliette 711).[33]

This old Thomist concept renewed, of God as that Thing whose very essence is to be, and Who thus serves as the sufficient ontological grounding of all other existent things, is latent if not present outright in much of Claudel's literary output. His aesthetic manifesto, *Art poétique*, establishes a basis for life and action as entirely relational between That which exists and that

[32] This project would be pursued not only by Gilson, but also over the decades following the initial revival of scholasticism by the likes of philosopher Jacques Maritain and so-called *"nouvelle théologie*" scholars like Henri de Lubac, whose scholarly works, in their own respective ways, would seek to reconcile the personal intuition of and motivation toward God with those objective realities of God which the Church contended were revealed and apprehensible via nature and revelation (Maritain 86-91; Parker 84-86).

[33] This idea is more familiar to the reader of Aquinas as the *Ipsum Esse subsistens*, 'self-subsistent being'

which It alone *causes* contingently to exist. In Thomistic language, these two would respectively be referred to as the Creator and the creature. Tilliette tells us that the defining feature of this relation between Creator and creature is *la différence*:

> Towards Being and Act [God], the essential difference of the creature manifests as deficit, repulsion, leakage, flight, discordance, and finally *fear*. The universe is composed of fear. (711-712)

This conception of fear speaks to Claudel's most fundamental argument through his literary corpus in two ways. First, that fear might better be understood *not* as a phenomenon of the human heart or mind, but as an intrinsic characteristic of the universe, which is in itself a creature of the Creator. Second, this fear is the natural result of the inherent feeling of being *different* from that Creator, the only thing which really Is.[34] In this vein he states, "The universe is, *in totum*, nothing but a manner of not being What Is" (*Art poétique* 52; qtd. in Tilliette 712). What frightens the creature in this difference is that it gives the creature a dual-apprehension of Pure Being, the God who created all creatures out of love, but also of complete non-being. It is finally this complete repulsion at non-being, a desperate movement away from it and toward God, that we rational creatures experience as time. Claudel puts this argument succinctly as "the source of time, the fear of God"[35] (*Art poétique* 33; qtd. in Tilliette 712). Time, in Claudel's argument, can be read intelligibly as the conversion of the universe. It is the universe-as-creature's flight away from non-being and, in the process, falling ever more deeply in love with

[34] This is an entirely biblical sentiment, as seen in John, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to myself" (John 12:32).

[35] La source du temps, la peur de Dieu

That which purely is. A helpful summary of this idea is offered in brief on the same page of Tilliette by citing Claudel's wry play on Petronius that "*Primus in orbe Deum* novit *timor* [Fear first *knew* God in the world]" (Quoted in Tilliette 712, emphasis mine).[36]

Tilliette hastens to point out that "one searches in vain" to find Claudel's meditation on difference, fear, and time in Saint Thomas, "save that it is inspired by the [Thomist] distinction between essence and existence" (711). Indeed, as already stated, Claudel shows through his work a lifelong discomfort at any philosophy that hints at a mechanistic view of the universe, even including that baptized Aristotelian view of the teleologically orderly cosmos adopted by Aquinas in his *Summa*. In *Un poète regarde la croix*, meditating on Christ's words as he hangs crucified, Claudel writes:

> What joy to be at the foot of the Logos and to listen with all of one's soul and intelligence to that speech! These are not the archives of the earth placed at our disposal to explore as well as possible ... with the chemist's test-tube ... We have not here before us … small incoherent objects which must be reduced to powder by obstinate labor, but vast synclinal areas ... and, upset by emersions, a huge school of testimonials worked upon by movements comparable only to geological crackings and recoveries: a limitless significance! (12)

[36] Tilliette mistakenly attributes this to Lucretius. The original epigrammatic quote is elsewhere attributed to a fragment from Petronius and reads "*Primus in orbe Deos* fecit *timor* [Fear first *made* gods in the world]." Even this proposed origin was considered dubious more than a century ago, however, as G.L. Kittredge called it "doubtful" ("Chauceriana," 16).

It would be a step too far, however, to derive from Claudel's apparent rejection of *some* Thomistic conclusions that he should be hastily categorized among those "Catholic Modernists" of the anti-modern Papal encyclicals. For them, he reserves no words of kindness. He says of Maurice Blondel, for example, "[He] is one of those fluid writers who but manages to darken the paper," explaining that "[His] pen is filled with water" (Claudel 697; qtd in Tilliette 708).[37] At all times, Claudel is, in fact, thoroughly embedded within Patristic tradition, perhaps at times even to his own surprise. What little he lacks in Thomism, one finds readily in Augustine, particularly on the matter of time. Claudel makes this clear by directly quoting from the Bishop of Hippo in the beginning of his *Art Poétique*:

> *Sicut creator, ita moderator. Donec universi seculi pulcritudo...*
> *velut magnum carmen ineffabilis modulatoris.*
>
> Unchangeable Creator of mutable things, ordering all events in His providence until the beauty of the completed course of time ... shall be finished, like the grand melody of some ineffably wise master of song. ("To Marcellinus")

Such is the mission upheld at all times by the poet-playwright, to lay bare the Church's picture of the divine plan of calling all things back to Itself, in spite of all human arrogations of progress and self-sufficiency, and even in spite of that ingratitude and forgetfulness that the Church has called sin. It is worth noting that from the very beginning of the prefatory verse of *Soulier de satin*, the play one will readily recognize has accomplished the furtherance of this project, he affirms the idea as true even of those civilizations that were until the time of Claudel

[37] Blondel est un de ces écrivains fluides qui n'arrivent pas à noircir le papier. Leur stylo est rempli avec de l'eau.

fundamentally alien to Christendom, affirming his view that the work of time is universal and, to increasingly-sure degrees, all-encompassing:

> "From Thames to Tiber is heard a great clatter of arms and of hammers in the shipyards. / The sea is at one stroke all covered with white poppies, the night is plastered all over with Greek letters and algebraic signs. / There's dark America yonder like a whale bubbling out of the Ocean! Hark! Howling Asia feels a new god leaping in her womb!" (vi)[38]

Claudel makes explicit his sympathy with the Augustinian way of thinking, beginning his play *Le Soulier de satin* with a mixed epigraph of the Portuguese proverb that God "writes straight with crooked lines," complemented quite briefly with the supposed response of Augustine, "Even sins" (quoted in Claudel, *Soulier* x).

That time and space are themselves one in God is further expressed by Claudel's note at the beginning of the first of the play's four days:

> The Scene of this play is the world, and more especially Spain at the close of the Sixteenth, unless it be the opening of the Seventeenth, Century. The author has taken the liberty of compendiating countries and periods, just as at a given distance several separate mountain chains make but one horizon. (xxvi)

[38] This is a translation to English by Claudel himself.

Yet rather than on land, a great deal of the most significant events of the play take place on the turbulent sea. It opens with the shocking image of a shipwreck tossed by violent waves, and on its deck a pile of dead nuns strewn over one another. Only one Jesuit Father is left alive, "fastened" to the mast of the ship amidst the tossing waves. In spite of the grisliness of the opening image, the audience finds the introductory lines of the play to contain words of thanksgiving.

> "Lord, I thank you," says the Father, "for having fastened me so …
> Today, it is not possible to be closer bound to You than I am, and,
> verify each limb as I will, there is not one that can withdraw from
> You ever so little." (1-2)

The audience finds quickly that there is no dread within the doomed priest. In his monologue to God, he compares the deck of the ship, covered in dead bodies, to a "narrow altar" (2), the sacrificial center of Catholic life where the body and blood of Christ are manifested daily by Catholic priests. There is likely still a deeper design behind such a reference. The bow-shaped ceiling that arches over and houses the altar of a Catholic church is referred to as a *nave*, a reference in part to the prototypical storm-swept ark of Genesis.

In other words, this harrowing opening scene is, in fact, an unusual form of a Mass. The Jesuit Father confirms this himself: "And now, behold the last prayer of this Mass which already in the midst of death I am celebrating by the means of my poor self" (3). But when one considers the sacrifice memorialized in every real-world Eucharistic prayer, it is not an altogether undue treatment of the idea. The Jesuit Father observes this himself, referring back to the Messianic

prophecies of Isaiah: "doubtless the vintage could not come to pass without some disorder" (2).[39] By the violence done on the sacrificial altar, this man of faith receives his final grace. He is brought into perfect obedience with the Divine just before death, "fastened" to the mast that stands in as the cross of Christ, and through his sacrificial suffering, he is sanctified.

That the priest meets his end on a boat ought not be read as a simple ship-of-state metaphor, nor even only as a dramatized Mass. What surrounds and encroaches on the ship, a sea of violent turning waves, is perhaps the most important signifier of the scene as well as the play. The Father refers to this crashing water as "[a]ll this past which with the future weaves one untearable web" (2). Here already, in the opening scene, is Claudel's thesis of time as a means of conversion. The conversion itself is depicted as a Mass, but the vehicle by which one arrives at this sacrificial rite is the waves of time, the convergence and conspiracy of past and future to bring its subject by painful blows into Divine obedience.

The final petition from the Father is for the soul of his brother Rodrigo, who is to find himself locked in an unsanctioned but consummated affair with the unhappily married Prouheze. The Father prays not for his well-being or comfort, but that he might experience a comparable sacrificial suffering, by which he might also be saved, entreating God to "[m]ake him a wounded man apart, for that once in this life he has seen the face of an angel!" (3).

Rodrigo's tryst with Prouheze is itself filled with the presence of water, indicating to us readers that this might very well be the dolorous path he must walk in order for the Father's opening prayer for mercy to be fulfilled. Possibly having taken the form of the constellation of Orion, Saint James watches the couple from heaven. He employs the oft-heard metaphor of *two*

[39] Song of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5:1-7)

ships passing in the night to bemoan the lots of Rodrigo, recently badly wounded in the defense of an image of the same saint, and Prouheze, recently condemned by her husband to travel to Africa:

> I see the white wake of two souls at once fleeing and pursuing:
> One ship drives straight towards America;
>
> The other, breasting unknown current and adverse swell, with
> labour hardly keeps its direction.
>
> A man, a woman, both look on me and weep.
>
> I will not fail you. (98)

It is not only the saint who is privileged with this bird's-eye view of the designs of the earth's tides. Prouheze herself, while praying the rosary, has the apprehension that all the earth is but a "Drop of water," reflecting on how frighteningly small she is as she holds the tiny blue bead in her hand.

> "But did I say that I held this drop of water? 'Tis I am held in it.
> Someone has put it into my hand, this pearl unmatched, this
> essential bead without which the whole rosary of the heavens
> would be undone!" (165)

Claudel directs between spoken lines that the "globe turns slightly and now nothing is seen but the ocean," providing the full meaning behind Prouheze's subsequent remark of "I am thirsty!" (165). By her clutching the rosary, she comes to realize that the whole world is nothing but a long prayer for homecoming. Again, one is led backward into scripture through Prouheze's

simple expression. One of Christ's final seven utterances from the Cross is to say, "I thirst." These words are spoken, according to John, so "that the scripture might be fulfilled" (*Douay-Rheims,* John. 19:28). The scripture Christ seeks to fulfill through his expression of thirst is the prophecy of Psalm 69, which bemoans the sufferings of an unnamed narrator complaining, "and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink" (*Douay-Rheims,* Ps. 69:21b*).* Prouheze is thus linked by way of her thirst to one of the final deeds of Christ, whose own unsatisfied thirst for water in his most vulnerable moment is the very key to fulfilling what Christianity has always viewed as the central Biblical promise of ages, the reconciliation of humanity to its God.

As confirmation, counter to the expectations built by Saint James' final spoken line above, Prouheze's situation does grow more dismal, and Rodrigo's grows more mired in sin as he becomes a wrathful viceroy in Brazil. All the while, saints flit in and out of the narrative. From James on to Nicholas, Boniface, and Denis of Athens, all casting what Claudel in one case refers to in his stage directions as an "atmosphere of winter peace" (xiv). Their levity and their constant thanksgiving provide a narrative foil to the suffering of the two lovesick main characters, illuminating more clearly where the waters only do so covertly that this suffering, too, is oriented toward a final act of joyous salvation.

The reader ought to keep in mind that within the Catholicism to which Claudel and all of his characters adhere, even the love between Rodrigo and Prouheze is itself to be regarded as a grave sin, although the reader is invited to openly sympathize with it. The characters themselves are aware of their trespasses. On meeting with her Guardian Angel and hearing his commendations, she asks with some confusion, "Love without the sacrament, is it not sin?" The Angel responds, "Sin also serves" (172). Yet again, after he tells her that she is to die without

ever seeing Rodrigo again, he admonishes her to "[y]ield to the persuasion of those waters gradually unbinding you" (168).

Claudel opens the argument of the fourth and final day with the observation that "[t]he sea is the chief actor in the whole drama. This Fourth Day leaves no doubt of it" (xvii). As confirmation, the whole day takes place at sea. Prouheze has died, but before she dies, she leaves a child to Rodrigo named Dona Sevenswords. This name is again a suggestive reference to a particular devotional tradition within Catholicism, invoking the seven most sorrowful moments referred to as 'swords of sorrow' that pierced the heart of the Virgin Mary over the course of the Gospel narrative. In the climax of the final scene, Sevenswords departs from Rodrigo's boat, swimming for a vessel belonging to Don John of Austria. She promises in a letter left behind that when she arrives at the boat, she will arrange for a signal to be sent off to confirm she is well.

In his final temptation, the long-suffering Rodrigo is temporarily made to believe by a mix-up that his daughter has died. When it becomes plain by the sounding of the guns from John of Austria that the suffering daughter has swum the length to salvation, he proclaims, "my child is safe!," and his own long and gloomy path to salvation, in retrospect, becomes clear. He begs the "rag-picker nun" to receive him into the slavery of Saint Theresa of Àvila, finally confessing that "God made me to be her poor servant" (307-308). Rodrigo and the Nun leave the vessel together to the fanfare of a trumpet. To close the loop of beginning and end, sealing the circuity of time, the final line of the play is pronounced by another priest, Brother Leo, "Deliverance to souls in prison!" (309).

The whole play points forward to Rodrigo's salvation, presaged by the prayers of his dying brother and then rehearsed by the seven sorrows that ensue between these two narrative poles. In fact, it is not unlike the narrative of the Bible itself in its constant prefigurative types of

the passion and death of Christ.[40] It is furthermore Claudel's manifest hope that time will continue to flow salvifically beyond Rodrigo, as shown through Prouheze's Guardian Angel offering her a foretaste of his future journeys eastward for the conversion of unbaptized souls (180).

In summary, what Claudel argues in this play is that time acts on all sides concurrently with the ultimate design of salvation not merely for one, but for many. Like the mast that fastens the Jesuit Father, a line extends vertically from the protagonist to God. A second line extends horizontally through time, connecting Rodrigo both to the past prayers of his brother and to the conversion of future souls. At the center of these two intersecting lines is Rodrigo himself, a figure now sitting at the center of a cross. Claudel's point is clear that what undergirds each local instance of suffering and redemption through the plot, and moreover the full span of real time, is nothing like a Positivist scheme of civilizational stages, but rather the suffering, death, and resurrection of the person of Jesus Christ repeated memorially until the end of the age.

It is likely surprising that such a play was only first presented on the stage in the year 1943.[41] One might rightly wonder whether Claudel could have seriously expected an explicitly religious presentation to have had much of an impact on a literary environment that had just received Camus' *L'Étranger* in all its disaffection only the year prior. Other Catholic writers of the same period were hard at work impressing upon their literature the growing sense of compromise and futility among educated members of the faith. Bernanos' *Journal d'un curé de*

[40] It is appropriate to stress that a "type-study" of the Old Testament, in which the lives and experiences of various prophets and other Biblical characters are read as anticipations of the pivotal moments of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, is a Christian exegetical method.

[41] It was first completed in 1929.

campagne, for example, follows the near-fruitless efforts of a young priest to minister to the lukewarm parishioners of a small Calaisien country town. A half-decade later, in the English-speaking world, Graham Greene's *The Heart of the Matter* would notably give voice to the modern Catholic's feeling of inextricable complicity with the evils of an imperial, militarized, liberalized Europe.

Among these works, Claudel's anachronistic *Soulier de satin,* set in Renaissance-era Spain and thus nodding to a premodern style of writing less preoccupied with self-consciousness or irony, becomes all the stranger. But its ambition is not to register losses or express angst like those of its contemporaries, nor was this the ambition of Claudel more widely. His *Soulier de satin* is not only a representation of this property of Christ acting in time to sum up all things in him, but is in itself an effort to begin the dramatized process of conversion within themselves.

Claudel's life, through his drama, his poetry, and even his nonfiction writing, was spent winning souls for the Church. This is evident from the sheer volume of correspondences he kept with non-Christian colleagues in the arts, all of whom, admiring him immensely on artistic and technical achievement alone, permitted him to minister to them at length. In this effort, he had some successes. The poet Francis Jammes, joined by mutual friend Gabriel Frizeau, were both converted to Catholicism by Claudel and his work. Frizeau's conversion, he commented, "made me think I had not written in vain" (quoted in Ryan 476).

In some other cases, Claudel was unsuccessful. He maintained a spirited correspondence with André Gide for thirty years, during which the two vacillated between expressing deep

mutual admiration, securing professional opportunities for one another,[42] and vigorously defending their own respective positions vis-à-vis faith. Gide on one occasion erupts on Claudel, asking "[i]n the name of what God, of what ideal, do you forbid me to live according to my nature?" (quoted in Ryan 475). Even in the face of these failures, however, Claudel's lifelong professional efforts to evangelize his audience persisted. After Gide's death, the correspondence was published, and Claudel explained in an Italian interview, "I should like the letters to do good today to young people whom Gide may have harmed: the good that I tried to do, unhappily in vain, to a great writer and friend" (quoted in Ryan 474).

Amidst capitulations to modernity both outside and inside of the Catholic Church, both in religious observance and in artistic expression, a final estimate of Claudel would have to conclude that he was a uniquely conservative figure among his Catholic literary cohort. He was an author who held fast to the teaching authority of the Magisterium and militated for the conversion of souls against a series of worldviews that, in his view and in the view of his Church, represented an extreme spiritual peril.

[42] Early in their correspondence, Gide offers recommendations on securing German translations of Claudel's theatrical work.

Chapter 4

Comparing and Contrasting the Times of Sōseki and Claudel

More parallels can be drawn between Claudel and Sōseki and their respective texts than their mere shared aesthetic veneer of *resistance to modernity*. Their resistances to modernity, in other words, run deeper in their similarity than simple, isolated moments of Ludditism or traditionally religious sympathies. What emerges from both of these authors, in their general literary projects but especially in the specified works, are careful efforts to reassert premodern schemes of time. Foundational to these schemes of time are a disdain and even a condescension toward the *history-as-creation* temporal schemes of the tradition of Vico, Hegel, Marx, and Comte that in the nineteenth century crowned the philosophy of history as a "sister of Utopia" (Freyer 75)[43] and, in the words of Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, had transformed the wider "program" of philosophy from "*verum quia factum*" to "*verum quia faciendum*" (*Introduction* 63-64).

As pointed out by Fan Shuwen, prior to Sōseki's own travels within the colony in September of 1909, Manchuria had represented for him exactly the hellish, bloody, rueful future that his narrator *Yo* experiences so vividly in the opening vision of *Heredity* just before joining the reverie on the platform (Fan 184). The reasoning is not difficult to understand. For Japanese of the turn of the century, the establishment of an overseas colony in Manchuria would have

[43] Although the above phrase from Freyer is not directly quoted in Ratzinger's text, it was a footnote from Ratzinger (*Introduction,* 65) that initially directed me to this section of Freyer.

been a visible sign of the new Japan that had emerged out of its rapid Meiji-era metamorphosis, having readopted through western external pressure the policy of empire-building which it had abandoned for two and a half centuries during the Pax Tokugawa.[44]

But there is obviously a difference between Sōseki and the characters he creates, and consequently, *Yo* and the crowd celebrate the arrival of the train to the station. This very victory that *Yo* and the crowd celebrate is an evocative symbol of the cessation suffered by the traditional Japanese cosmos, supplanted all at once by the influx of the temporal scheme of modernity. Sōseki places beside *Yo* on the platform a "hungry man," お腹の減った男, whom *Yo* observes to be "un-agitated" as he attempts to reassure the anxious crowd that the soldiers will arrive at their proper time:

> "Come now, if you're standing here, then there's no need to worry," says the hungry man, with an un-agitated air of self-possession. From this man emanates a sense that seems to say it will be fine whether they ever arrive or don't. Whatever it is, this composure seems to relate to that portion of him which is starved. (3, translation mine)

One might wonder why Sōseki chooses to associate this voice of reason among the crowd so drunk on enthusiasm with the sensation of hunger. For Sōseki, the stark distinction between this man, deprived of one of the basic necessities of life,[45] and the surrounding crowd, not split

[44] Japan's last efforts at overseas conquest, Toyotomi Hideyoshi's two invasions of Korea, had concluded with a bitter Japanese defeat in 1598, only after one million-plus Korean lives had been lost as well as several tens of thousands more Japanese and Chinese.

[45] Starvation is also evocative of Buddhist regimens of fasting and mortification.

between life and death but between whether the train will arrive *now* or *later,* is comparable to the distinction between the ancients and the moderns. In his later lecture titled 現代日本の開化 *Gendai Nihon no kaika* ("The Civilization of Modern-Day Japan"), Sōseki teases out this distinction, declaring that "today, we have by and large transcended the problem of life versus death," and that what occupies the modern subject "has become a contest between life and life" 生きるか生きるかと云う競争になってしまったのであります. This is to say that the question of "living in condition A or living in condition B" ("Civilization"),[46] which quickly turns to triviality when placed next to the prospect of starving, has become the operative predicament of modern civilization. The world of the ancients was quite different and much simpler than this:

> In bygone days, one strove to live and not to die. If one could not meet that mere standard of competence, one would die. One strove because one had no choice. ("Civilization")

What one sees clearly on the train platform, brushing for a moment with *Yo* before he is swept up in the excitement of the moment, is a voice from the past, finding greater patience and composure in his greater sensitivity to life and death. This hungry man's voice is soon "covered over" by the militaristic and anachronistic roar of *banzai* examined in Chapter 2, as the victorious soldiers arrive home from the battlefield, bringing new beards, suntanned skin, and the idea of progress with them. To signify this, Sōseki shows the troops arriving by means of the exciting new technology of the steam train that arrives whistling along with the cheering crowd

[46] The Japanese version here used of "Civilization," found on a webpage, is unpaginated. The translation from this Japanese text is mine.

in the register of an "asthmatic whale" 喘息病みの鯨のようだ (*Iden* 4). The whale simile, attributed by *Yo* to an anonymous French poet, may seem at first a strange one. In rural and coastal areas of Japan, however, the appearance of a whale is considered an auspicious and, in some historical opinions, literal sign of the presence of Ebisu, the Japanese *kami* 神 or god of fortune.[47] Time and again, Sōseki and his contemporaries use trains as a symbol for the widespread advent of modernity in Japan.[48] Sōseki uses it to this effect in *Kokoro, Sanshirō,* and some of his other works. Calling the arriving train a whale could be understood as an implicit and ironic statement on the changing fortunes of Japan both in degree and in type, and to further call it 'asthmatic' is an inversion of the omen of success typically associated with an appearance of a whale, and might very well indicate Sōseki's opinion of those changes. He states the proposition alternately in his "Civilization" with the observation that "[t]oday, there do not seem to be very many of those obsessed fools among us who would still point Mount Fuji out to foreigners, but one does seem to hear proud voices everywhere explaining how [winning the Russo-Japanese war] has made out of Japan a first-class nation" ("Civilization").

Sōseki again evades obvious understanding here through the technique of synecdoche. One could attempt in a few different ways to read his choice of Mount Fuji here as a representation of the more *outdated* sensibilities manifested in traditional Japanese sources of pride, but one plausible explanation lies in the name of the mountain itself. The *kanji* used both

[47] Mentioned in Naumann 3

[48] Sidney Brown shows, however, that only three decades after *Heredity*, by the time of the serialization of Kawabata Yasunari's 雪国 *Yukiguni* (*Snow Country*) between 1935-1937, the steam train had ironically become a symbol of the then-fading Meiji Japan in the face of a new generation of Shōwa military industry. She demonstrates this point by quoting the line from *Snow Country* depicting the train "mov[ing] off in the distance, its echo fading into a sound of the night wind" (44; quoted in Brown 376).

now and in Sōseki's time, which he uses to represent *Fuji*, are 富 and 士, meaning "wealth" and "scholar/man/soldier" respectively, but these characters are *ateji*, applied to this pre-kanji Japanese word based solely on the phonetics of their readings. A popular early etymology of the name suggests that it means "immortal" or "undying" (不死, *fushi*).[49] Keeping this in mind as a potential basis for the name Fuji, then one can more easily come to terms with Sōseki's intent here, even if this etymology is possibly not what he had in mind. There is a clear juxtaposition of the hungry man and the eager crowd. While the hungry man could be argued to represent a traditional Japanese worldview of timelessness and endurance, *Yo* and the surrounding crowd represent a frantic and self-conscious modern preoccupation with the passage of time by which those perennial sensibilities have been rudely superseded.

To summarize, in the very beginning of *Heredity*, Japan has bested a first-class power, and the future has arrived by train. With it for Japan arrives an essential change in cultural epistemology, the imposition of new linear time from the outside. Sōseki calls this the "stairway of all civilization" 開化のあらゆる階段 ("Civilization"). This is a reading of history consistent with the 19th-century positivists in which one could speak empirically of the past, present, and future as distinct but teleologically ordered events, one coming purposefully after the other like the ribs of a railroad track, all tending toward an inevitable destination. The Mendelian theory of heredity that *Yo* attributes ill-fittingly to the mystery surrounding *Kō-san* is only possible once one has accepted this linear and progressive conception of time as a functioning framework.

[49] One notable source-text for this etymology is the 9th-century 竹取物語 *Taketori Monogatari (Tale of the Bamboo Cutter*), in the section titled *Ama no hagoromo* 天の羽衣.

Yet as shown in Chapter 2, it is the exact errors in this conception of time, with its reductive use of preterite and its predilection toward spoken language, that inspired Sōseki to undertake a project informed by *shaseibun* to recover the supposed atemporality of some *kanbun*-inspired writing, if not for the mind of the modern subject then at least for the domain of his literature. He expresses this sentiment not only through the written language of *Heredity* but through its very plot, as this same conception of time proves so insufficient in explaining the matter of *Kō-san* and the woman.

Instead, it is the timeless and impersonal force of karma that is the master of affairs throughout *Heredity*. The unresolved tensions of past generations insist on themselves again in the novella's present. And as the close of the novella suggests, if a life's tensions can be reenacted through others for the sake of correction even after the originally wronged individuals are already dead, then the only conclusion is that there is a cosmic dimension to human affairs outside of the supposed forward flow of time at which satisfaction is actually being directed. From this cosmic vantage point, *Kō-san* and his similarly frustrated ancestor need not be seen as two discrete, successive moments in time or even two discrete persons, but as two contingent and temporary instances of a single potentiality with which *Yo* comes unwittingly into contact. This

potentiality is summed up within the Tendai[50] school of Buddhism as *Shin'nyo* 真如, translated as *suchness* or *thusness.*[51]

> If you think that suchness, which pervades the universe, is your own essence, you are at once the universe; do not think that there is anything apart from this. When one is awakened, the Buddhas in the worlds of the ten directions of the universe, and also all bodhisattvas each dwell within oneself. To seek a separate Buddha apart from oneself is [the action of] a time when one does not know that oneself is precisely suchness. (Genshin 205)

"Suchness" is just one term for expressing a concept that appears across several sects of Japanese and non-Japanese Buddhism under different names, but all point toward a definite central principle that binds reasoning creatures, animals, plants, abstract thoughts, and even empty space in a single identity. Its contemplation involves a basic acceptance that all of these things are only provisionally real in the sense that they are ontologically identical to this 'suchness,' which is, in Buddhist language, the Buddha Mind itself.

In the face of this inexpressible brush with the 'suchness' peeking out through the mirrored experiences of *Kō-san* and his ancestor, *Yo* attempts in futility to explain his feelings by

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[50] This is the Japanese adaptation of the Chinese *Tiantai* 天台 school that served as one of the most influential schools of Buddhism from the Heian Period (794-1185) forward. The school is notable for providing intellectual foundations for both Nichiren and certain Zen sects later on. It temporarily fell from prominence during the Warring States Period when Oda Nobunaga sieged and burned its mountain monastery *Enryaku-ji* 延暦寺 in 1571.

[51] This translation likely owes its origin to similar concepts in Western philosophy with its own scholastic concepts of quiddity and haecceity, but one should not assume any basic or foundational similarity between the concepts based on the similarity of the translation alone.

means of the word *sūkō*, the sublime, but Sōseki understood it rightly in his lectures to really be *sōgon*. When consulting Sōseki's other output of this period, one finds multiple instances of preoccupation with unmistakably Buddhist concepts. One can then reasonably relate Sōseki's use of *sōgon* to its historical usage denoting a kind of mystical presence of the Buddha. Here, Sōseki places the arrogance of the modern scheme of time in the larger context of its forerunner in Buddhism. In this alternative scheme, the ultimate end of time is not located in some finite, future date of measurably greater perfection. Sōseki is offering the reader an ultimate end that is, in fact, constantly refreshing itself, and an encompassing cosmic justice that can be attained in the minutiae of settling a dead friend's affairs.

As shown in Chapter 3, Claudel similarly makes his most effective charge against modernity through a difference in the scheme of time. In his *Soulier* it appears symbolically as a sea of flowing water, ferrying along its floating creatures, living and nonliving, in their conversion toward the Christian God. It is described more explicitly in *Art poétique* as this very redeeming force that he shows symbolically in *Soulier*.

Two points of interest are worth raising here. There is, of course, a necessary eschaton or final days in Christian theological discourse, and the existence of these final days, along with the intervening and anticipatory conversion of the creation, does imply a linearity and indeed purposefulness to time. It is obvious that the similarity here to the temporal scheme of modernity is no coincidence. Ratzinger's schema of the European modernist view of the forward march of history emerges out of this very theological outline, albeit repurposed in the modernist parlance as mere "poetic forms" (Naishtat 1) or an expedient means of discussing the struggle and eventual triumph of civilization on earth. The second point of interest lies in the irony that Claudel's treasured tradition of Christianity, offered up in preference to his own context within

modernity, is exactly the novelty that Sōseki, in his context, felt the need to resist through his own writing and his literary re-imposition of Buddhist cosmology onto time.

It is worth addressing the first of these points in greater depth. Admittedly, there are superficial similarities between Claudel's Catholic temporality and the temporality of modernity both in their shared linear shape as well as in the shared existence of final days, but there is yet a fundamental distinction. While Ratzinger, along with much of 19th and 20th-century theological discourse, works on the premise that the political programs of modernity aspire to perfecting the world for its own sake and by its own material means, the Catholic arrow of time, properly understood, contains an additional vertical dimension, the sanction of a heavenly power for whose sake and by whose grace the created world might hope to be glorified. As alluded to in Chapter 3, this is one reason why the shape of the Cross on which Christ was crucified is so symbolically rich, containing both temporal (horizontal) and spatial (vertical) implications for those who believe in it.

Ratzinger, as Pope Benedict XVI, explains this crucial distinction between the Catholic and modernist temporalities in the context of the Biblical episode of Christ's temptations in the desert. The fourth chapter of Matthew records Christ being led into the desert and tested in three ways by the devil. In the third of these trials, the devil takes him to the top of a mountain, displaying before him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them." The devil offers, "All these I will give to thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me" (Matt. 4.8-9). Christ responds strongly, rebuking Satan with a "begone" before rebutting that "for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and only him shalt thou serve" (Matt. 4.10).

Benedict XVI draws a parallel between this mountaintop moment and the later scene in which the resurrected Christ brings his disciples to the top of Mount Golgotha for his ascension.

There, Christ tells them that "all power is given to me *in heaven and in earth*" (Matt. 28.18, emphasis mine). The pope explains:

> Without heaven, earthly power is always ambiguous and fragile. Only when power submits to the measure and judgment of heaven -- of God, in other words -- can it become power for good … This temptation to use power to secure the faith has arisen again and again in varied forms throughout the centuries, and again and again faith has risked being suffocated in the embrace of power ... the struggle to avoid identifying Jesus' kingdom with any political structure is one that has to be fought century after century. (*Jesus of Nazareth* 38-40)

This is in harmony with the Catholic cosmology that Claudel advances through his scheme of time, which insists that the proper end of history is one that naturally draws one away from merely earthly considerations for their own earthly sake. It is for this reason that Claudel and his Church would argue that the philosophy of Marx, whom Benedict dubs a would-be "philosopher of theology" for his "Marxist doctrine of salvation," fails in his understanding of history, assuming the "primacy of politics and economics, which now become the real powers that can bring about salvation [and the] redemption of mankind" (*Introduction* 11, 15). In this error, according to the Catholic account of which Claudel claims to be a representative, Marx and other modernists come gravely close to accepting the terms of the third temptation in the desert.

On the merely material order, both the Jesuit Father and his brother Rodrigo are ruined by the events of *Soulier*. If we assess their fates purely along the lines of money, power, or short-term comfort and wellbeing, they have roundly failed. But their ostensibly lowest moments are

hailed within the narrative as victories, binding them ever more through their poverty and injury, and by the gradual but sure waves of time, to that heavenly Kingdom that, as Claudel insists throughout his oeuvre, counted and ordered the waves for that exact purpose of reclaiming them. Their suffering binds them not only to one another, but more typologically to the suffering of Christ on the cross, in whose very person one sees the point of intersection between history and heaven embodied. In his own analysis of *Soulier*, particularly of the opening scene on the mast, Ratzinger comments on this himself:

> "Fastened to the cross — with the cross fastened to nothing, drifting over the abyss … [o]nly a loose plank bobbing over the void seems to hold him up, and it looks as if he must eventually sink … though certainly [the plank] connects him inescapably, and in the last analysis he knows that this wood is stronger than the void that seethes beneath him." (*Introduction* 44)

Ratzinger finds a similar apprehension of the multi-dimensional to the one described above. He is firm in noting that beyond the obvious Christ-like parallels, there lies "yet another *dimension*," explaining that "This shipwrecked Jesuit is not alone: he foreshadows, as it were, the fate of his brother" (*Introduction* 44, emphasis mine).

We have seen the commonalities between these two authors, representing two alternate views of history in the face of a rising common historical rival. It is now important to highlight the differences between them and to trace the origins of those differences.

Heredity, written in a present-tense prose style, offers the reader a glimpse both in form and in content into a fictional representation of reality as integral and of time as ever-refreshing.

Claudel offers a reading of time as linear and in some sense inevitable but insists that the object of this linearity is not to perfect the world along political and economic lines, but to move the world vertically out of its fallen state and toward perfect obedience to God through the redemptive suffering of Christ and by the vehicle of time.

Although they share antipathy toward the aforementioned works of 19th-century novelty, essentially a kind of anxiety over whether they could produce anything good, the authors' suggested replacements are at first and every subsequent glance irreconcilable with one another. This is an obvious point, and an equally obvious explanation follows. They are drawing on completely different value systems. One difference of prime importance is that the two respective authors aim with their schemes of time toward fundamentally different understandings of the human being.

Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger explains Catholic anthropology[52] in the Buberian language of "I" and "thou," arguing in his book-length explication of the Apostle's Creed that there is no way to access the nature of God outside of this kind of relationship of mutuality even within itself, i.e. the distinct persons of the Son and the Father under one substance of God. Of Christ, in the role of "I," he explains as follows:

> The "I" is important, because it draws us completely into the dynamic of mission, because it leads to the surpassing of self and to union with him for whom we have been created. If the figure of

[52] *Catholic anthropology* is, like many Catholic notions, to be distinguished here from *Christian anthropology* in general, as Catholic and Protestant basic ideas of the human being differ drastically between themselves. Further, there exist any number of different anthropologies among the Protestant denominations centered, for example, around questions of the resistibility or irresistibility of the indwelling of grace.

> Jesus is taken out of this inevitably scandalous dimension, if it is separated from his Godhead, then it becomes self-contradictory. (*Introduction* 21).

In other words, the essence of God Himself is relational. This primordial relationship of reality, the one that in the Catholic view has existed pre-eternally and from which proceeds the Trinity's third person of the Spirit, is one of a distinct "I" and "thou" between God in the father and God in the son. We know Christ to be the "I" in this relationship because it is the only way to make sense of his mission. Were he not in some state of consubstantiality with God, this mission would merely resemble grave presumption, for instance, in his dual-claim that "*I* am the way, the truth, and the life" and that "[n]o man cometh to the Father, but by *me*" (John 14.6, emphasis mine). Here, Christ invites the sinner into relation with the Father by means of himself. The conversion of a human being, then, means to enter into the primordial "I" and "thou" relationship through uniting oneself to the mystical body of Christ. Extending this to Claudel's sense of time, one converts by means of entry into *I-thou* relation with God the Father. It is not the dissolution of the ego, but rather the subjugation of all nonetheless-distinct egos to their natural counterpart in their creator that is the ultimate goal of time.[53] One can hear this position through the final line of *Soulier*, once again uttered as "Deliverance to *souls* in prison!" (Claudel 310, emphasis mine). The plural form of the word *souls* implies that there is not one reality to which one must return in pure identity as in Sōseki, but there is one natural *other* with which many distinct and incorruptible souls must be delivered into relation. One might make sense through this anthropology of the whole ensuing Western tradition with respect to its view of humanity, even

[53] This is not to imply that within Catholic faith, Christ is subordinate in his divinity to God the Father. This belief that the Father is God in a way that Christ is not was deemed an Arian heresy by the Council of Nicaea in 325.

those positions of modernity that have dispensed with the theological but held fast to all of its conclusions on the irreducible individual and society.

Sōseki, meanwhile, nods to a religious tradition one of whose most basic tenets is to persuade its adherent of the fundamental emptiness of the ego. One sees this in Genshin's claim above that "[t]o seek a separate Buddha apart from oneself is [the action of] a time when one does not know that oneself is precisely suchness" (Genshin 205). The supposed error that *Yo* makes in his strained hereditary explanation of the novella's events is a conspicuously Western one, unmistakably informed by the same atomized view of the person one sees in another form in Claudel, but foremost among the modernists. It assumes that *Kō-san* and his ancestor are distinct persons, and that one has merely received through hereditary transmission secondary characteristics or fortunes involving disappointment in love from the other. What *Yo* fails to realize, although the reader may intuit it with some attention, is that the settling of karma at the novella's close secures satisfaction neither for *Kō-san* nor for his ancestor. Acknowledging this, *Yo* himself says as follows:

> *Kō-san* leapt right into the trench, and he did not rise to return. Not a one went out to greet him [on the train platform]. In the whole world, probably his mother and the young lady are the only ones who still think about him. (*Heredity* 38, translation mine)

Even fewer remember *Kō-san*'s ancestor, and both of their memories will fade further. But this novella is not about these, or any, people. To therefore speak of them as somehow separate from one another or ultimately from the ever-fresh and ever-urgently pressing Buddha-mind must be futile. According to the tradition to which Sōseki has alluded with some nostalgia, if not with complete credulity, it is actually a sign of ignorance.

In summary, one finds two authors stubbornly fixed in modes of viewing the world that, in their time, were growing to appear increasingly outdated. What links them is their discomfort with the emerging representations of time offered by the many iterations of modernity, namely their shared core qualities of materialism, progress, and determinism. But the basis of their complaints, as well as the traditions to which they hold, vary widely from one another.

Much academic work has been done to critique modernist conceits of history from the postmodern perspective, namely, to highlight power dynamics in narrative and language as well as to point out epistemological barriers of memory. Others have attempted to show the dire moral fruits of political and economic liberalism for so-called global *peripheries*.[54] These are endeavors deserving of sincere engagement. Less has been done, however, to critique modernity from the mirrored perspective of the pre-modern, what could informally be called the traditionalist. This critical vantage point offers different priorities, epistemological assumptions, and contexts that ought to be taken seriously on their own merits and whose closer study could also provide helpful genealogies in the shaping of modernist as well as postmodern discourses.

[54] Lowe's *Intimacies of Four Continents* is a representative text for this kind of discourse.

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