

Fashion as Metaphor—Kimono as a Barometer: Naomi's "Image" in Tanizaki's *Chijin no Ai* (*A Fool's Love*)

ファッションはメタファー、着物はバロメーター
— 谷崎潤一郎の『痴人の愛』に見るナオミのイメージ —

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Synopsis

In Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's novel Chijin no Ai (A Fool's Love) the descriptions of the female protagonist Naomi's kimono serve as a visual expression of social class and comportment. Much like how Bernard Shaw, in his play Pygmalion, used diction as a measure of class and progress, Naomi's attire serves a similar function in Chijin no ai. With each shift in character and conduct as Naomi evolves from hostess, to private student, to object of desire, to finally liberating herself through her sensuality, changes in her style of dress and kimono express the transformations of her image. The analysis of the kimono described in the text not only clarifies the changes in Naomi's image, but also serves to illuminate the highly complex visual codes of the kimono communicated through material, colors, patterns, and style of dressing.

Introduction

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Fig. 1 Naomi working as a hostess at the café

Chijin no Ai (*A Fool's Love*) was written by Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886-1965) from 1924 to 1925. The novel concerns Kawai Jōji's growing obsession with Naomi and self-humiliation at her hands, as he first attempts to remake her in his image of an ideal woman and gradually falls prey to her willful debasement of both herself and him.

Jōji first meets Naomi at a café, where Naomi is working as a hostess

(*jyokkyū* 女給), much like as at an hostess club or maid café in Japan today. Jōji feels sorry for the apparently shy Naomi and in a supercilious noblesse oblige manner, decides to rescue her from what he perceives as her deplorable condition and take her under his wing to educate her. However, his attempt to form her into an ideal woman after his own image fails miserably. Although Jōji does in due course marry Naomi legally, he avoids a formal wedding ceremony and all its trappings because he would rather play house than set-up a tiresome “proper household” (*seisiki-no-katei* 正式の家庭).¹ It becomes pretty clear that what he wants is not a formal wife, but rather a pet he may do with what he will. Naomi, though, turns the tables on him, and it is he who becomes the caged bird entrapped in the relationship, not her.²

As Naomi develops from hostess, to private student, to pretensions of a nice lady, to manipulator of men and decadent, changes in her style of dress and kimono express the transformations of her image. Much like how Bernard Shaw, in his play *Pygmalion*, used diction as a measure of class and progress, Naomi’s attire serves a similar function in *Chijin no ai*.³

Background: Literary Precedences

Chijin no Ai is at its core a Pygmalion story, albeit with a twist. The novel is evocative of a number of archetypal works—including of course the original Pygmalion myth—but the principal one that comes to mind in the context of Japan is the narrative of Genji and Murasaki from *The Tale of Genji* written by Murasaki Shikibu in the early eleventh century. In the novel, Genji abducts Murasaki when she is ten years old, because she reminds him of his adopted mother, and raises her to become an ideal woman in his image. Genji rears Murasaki in a fatherly manner until she is of marriageable age, after which she becomes a lady respected by all and remains Genji’s foremost love throughout the rest of his life.

The original Greek myth *Pygmalion* and its adoption into the stage play *Pygmalion* written by Bernard Shaw in 1912, is the predominate archetype in the West of a man creating his ideal woman and falling in love with her. Prior to Bernard Shaw’s play, W. S. Gilbert also created a play based on the story called *Pygmalion and Galatea* first performed in 1871, of which there

¹ Tanizaki Junichirō, *Chijin no ai*, Shinchōsha (Shinchō Bunko), 1947 (2009 edition): 11.

² Jōji muses that if she would agree to come to his home she could serve as both maid and bird at once; referencing his previous description of how he would like to decorate his home with “a birdcage hanging from the verandah” (ヴェランダに小鳥の籠を吊る), *Chijin no ai*: 10.

³ Rosy Aindow discusses the use of fashion as social class markers in late 19th century British literature in her essay “Clothing, Class Deception, and Identity in Late Nineteenth Century Fiction,” in *Fashion in Fiction: Text and Clothing in Literature, Film, and Television* (Peter McNeil, et. al. ed.) Oxford: Berg, 2009: 35-44.

was a burlesque version *Galatea, or Pygmalion Re-Versed* of 1883, wherein the tables are turned and it is Galatea who sculpts an ideal man of great vanity and no heart. Another burlesque of the story, *Pygmalion; or, The Statue Fair*, written by William Brough and first performed in 1867, has Pygmalion create a living sculpture who literally has no heart and cannot return his love. Whether Tanizaki was cognizant of the burlesque versions is hard to say, but *Chijin no Ai* was written from 1924-25, just a decade after Bernard Shaw's play.⁴

Tanizaki's *Chijin no Ai* is recognized as a social commentary on the modernization of Japan, its infatuation with the West, and the developing independence of Japanese women.⁵ Similarly, Shaw's *Pygmalion* served both as a lampoon of the British class system and an avowal of women's independence. Shaw himself, despite audience demands, resisted allowing the play to have a Higgins-Eliza "happy ending," insisting that Eliza maintain her independence to the end.⁶ Tanizaki takes his *A Fool's Love* a step further, not only does Naomi regain her independence, but she also turns the tables around, so that by the end of the novel Jōji is completely besotted with Naomi, succumbing to her every whim. While it is a matter of controversy whether Katherina was really tamed in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, or she was just using Petruchio for her own ends, in *Chijin no Ai* Naomi has clearly gained the upper hand.

The relationship between Jōji and Naomi does not remain chaste for long; their relationship becoming sexual while Naomi is still sixteen. Despite *Lolita* being excused for its literary merit—its forte in literary allusions and finesse in language involving word play and neologisms—it remains at its core a tale of an older man's lust for a twelve year old prepubescent girl. However, unlike Vladimir Nabokov's prepubescent *Lolita*, as Naomi devolves from Jōji's ideal into a wanton decadent, she becomes all the more desirable to him.⁷ Although initially attracted to Naomi's youth as unformed clay awaiting his molding, rather than being obsessed by her youth, Jōji is seduced by her transformation under the influence of adverse traits introduced from the West.

Much like *Chijin no Ai*, a *Lolita* has been similarly interpreted as a literary metaphor for the educated and cultured Old World Europe being seduced by the younger and vulgar US.

⁴ There was also a work titled *Le plaidoyer d'un fou* written by the Swedish novelist Johan August Strindberg (1849-1912) first published in French and later translated into German in 1893, in a diary-like mode about the protagonist's marriage and divorce from a venomous woman.

⁵ The protagonist Jōji states in the first paragraph of the book the influence of foreigners and internationalism introducing new ideologies and philosophies and how that will increasingly shape odd relationships such as he is about to narrate, *Chijin no ai*: 5.

⁶ Ann L. Ferguson, ed. "The Instinct of An Artist: Shaw and the Theatre" in *An Exhibition from The Bernard F. Burgunder Collection of George Bernard Shaw*, Ithaca: Cornell University Library, 1997: 34.

⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 376.

Lolita, written in English, was first published in Paris in 1955.⁸ However, Nabokov wrote a long poem in Russian titled “Lilith” in 1928, in which an older man is seduced by a young girl, only to find himself enmeshed in a situation of humiliation. Nabokov’s “Lilith,” published just three years after *Chijin no Ai*, is suggestive of more than just cursory influence from Tanizaki’s novel.⁹ In Tanizaki’s novel, Jōji finds himself continually embarrassed and humiliated, least of all by being cuckolded by Naomi’s many lovers, but more substantively by his perverse growing obsession with Naomi as she adopts the mores of a Western bohème. Jōji himself, under Naomi’s influence, deteriorates from a chaste and hardworking gentleman to a middle-aged conservative drudge with an unhealthy fixation.¹⁰

Kimono as Barometer of Image

It is significant that although *A Fool’s Love* was first published as a serial novel in the *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun* newspaper from March 1924 (Taishō 13.3.20) to June 1924 (Taishō 13.6.14), because of moral issues with its content the serial was stopped only to be picked up again by the woman’s magazine *Josei (Woman)*, in which it ran from October 1924 (Taishō 13.10) to July 1925 (Taishō 14.7).¹¹ The Japanese women’s magazine *an-an* described *Josei* as the ‘bible of the modern girl’ in a 1983 retrospective.¹² Aimed at an educated audience, *Josei* frequently contained articles about chastity (*teisō*), romantic love (*ren’ai*), and free love (*jiyū ren’ai*), often written by renowned authors.¹³

One of the first appearances of the neologism “Modern Girl” (*modān gāru*, later shortened to “Moga”) was in the August 1924 (Taishō 13.8) edition of *Josei*, and the December 1925 (Taishō

⁸ Interestingly, the musical *My Fair Lady*, based on Shaw’s *Pygmalion*, premiered on Broadway in 1956, a year after *Lolita* was published in Paris.

⁹ Tanizaki was interested in Russia and Russian immigrants in Japan, but when *Chijin no ai* first became available in Russia is unclear. Kakinuma Nobuaki, “Tanizaki Junichirō to Roshia” *Slavistika* 16/17 (2001-09-15): 234-283.

¹⁰ Before becoming involved with Naomi, Jōji was called a “gentleman” (*kunshi* 君子) by his colleagues at work, *Chijin no ai* 8.

¹¹ In addition, a section of *Chijin no Ai* (Naomi with the Keiō boys on the beach) was republished in April 1926 (Taishō 15.4) in *Kuraku* 苦楽: 322-349; and another section (Naomi returns to Jōji and rides around on his back) was republished in May 1950 (Shōwa 25.5) in *Riberaru* りべらる: 2nd frontispiece, both of which have illustrations by Iwata Sentarō.

¹² Elise Tipton “Sex in the City: Chastity vs Free Love in Interwar Japan” *Intersections: Gender, History and Culture in the Asian Context*, Issue 11, August 2005 (<http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue11/tipton.html#t7> accessed 2016-05-19)

¹³ *Ibid.*

14.12) edition of *Josei* was devoted to the subject of “Modern Girl.”¹⁴ The Moga were Japan’s equivalent to the flappers of the 1920s, with the knee-length, dropped-waistline loose dress, bobbed hair, and cloche hat or headband. The Moga were independent women, often employed with expendable income allowing for a new consumerism fueled by this new customer base.

Neither term, *modān gāru* or *moga*, appears in *Chijin no ai*. Moreover, it was still a rarity at the time for women to actually wear Western style dress in Japan. In a survey of 1925 (Taishō 14), only 4% of the women strolling in Ginza were in Western dress, and of them only 1% were in flapper-style Moga dress.¹⁵ Nevertheless, a number of features of Naomi’s attire resembles flapper dress, especially towards the end of the novel: the satin ribbon she wears as a band in her hair, her cloche hat, and her Cinderella shoes. However, Naomi is more art nouveau Gibson girl, than Coco Chanel gamine art deco. Naomi is a precursor of the Moga: she does not bob her hair, she remains financially dependent on Jōji, and even reverts back to kimono in the end after she has won her way with Jōji.¹⁶ Regardless of sartorial style, when *Chijin no ai* was first published, Naomi was celebrated by Japanese women as the embodiment of a newly emerging bohemian freedom for women, and the novel spawned the neologism “Naomi-ism” (*naomizumu*), for a reckless carefree lifestyle.

Every installment of *Chijin no ai* was illustrated by the artist Tanaka Ryō (1884-1974) while it was being serialized in the *Osaka Asahi Shinbun*, but the illustrations did not continue when the publication of the novel was moved over to *Josei*. The artist apparently worked independently of the novelist and seldom chose to illustrate the sections of the text describing Naomi’s kimono, with a few exceptions such as Naomi’s outings with Jōji while she was still a café hostess or her summer kimono with a grape design that Jōji had chosen for her. The artist also avoided illustrating the more risqué sections of the text. In addition to the illustrations, the photos included in this essay include Taishō—early Shōwa era kimono ensembles coordinated by a private collector to convey the type of kimono and ensemble described in the novel. The inclusion of some of the original illustrations supplemented with photos of actual kimono of the era is intended to lend a clearer visual understanding of the various sartorial expressions of Naomi’s “image” used to evoke the changes in her class and conduct over the course of the novel.

¹⁴ The first appearance of “*modān gāru*” was likely in the April 1923 (Taishō 12.4) edition of the magazine *Josei Kaizō* (女性改造), in the article “Modān gāri no hyōgen: Nihon no imōto ni okuru tegami” (モダン・ガールの表現：日本の妹に送る手紙) written by Kitazawa (北沢長梧). Toyoda Kaori, “Modanizumu bunka ni miru modan gāru” in *Journal of Bunka Gakuen University*, no. 22 (2014-01): 102-103.

¹⁵ Toyoda Kaori (2014): 102.

¹⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 375. Since the “kimono” is not described in detail, it is unclear whether it referred to traditional kimono or just clothes in general.

Naomi as Waif (Café Hostess Period)

The protagonist Jōji first meets Naomi when she is fifteen (fourteen by the Western count) at the Café Diamond near the Kaminari Gate at the Asakusa temple, recounting that she was hardly a

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Fig. 2 Naomi strolling with Jōji on a day off

full-adult woman yet—just an egg in the making. Jōji says he was first attracted by her name, which if written in the Roman alphabet could be a Westerner's. Under the influence of her modish (*haikara*) name, Naomi begins to look Western to him, and in addition more intelligent.¹⁷ He begins to think it would be a waste to leave her as a hostess at a place like that.¹⁸

While the clothes she wears at the café are not described, Jōji does describe Naomi as resembling Mary Pickford, and her body even more Western in form, one that he could only imagine at the time by the shape of her “kimono.”¹⁹ Jōji also describes what she wears when they meet on her days off:

多分姉さんのお譲りらしい古ぼけた銘仙の衣類を着て、めりんす友禅の帯を締めて、髪も日本風の桃割れに結び、うすく白粉を塗ってました。そしていつでも、継ぎはあたってましたけれど、小さい足のピッチリと笹まった、格好のいい白足袋を穿いてました。

She wore an old well-worn Meisen probably a hand-down from her sister, tied with a *merinsu* Yūzen-dyed obi, her hair done in the Japanese *momo-waré* style, with a light spread of white *oshiroi* make-up. She always wore attractive white *tabi* socks, even

¹⁷ Although neither *modan gāru* nor *moga* appear in *Chijin no ai*, the term *haikara* (modish), meaning stylish with a Western flavor, appears frequently. *Haikara* derives from “high collar,” the type of dress shirts worn by Japanese delegates when they returned from the West at the turn of the 20th century.

¹⁸ *Chijin no ai*: 5-6.

¹⁹ 「着物の着こなし具合から想像してただけでした」 *Chijin no ai*: 7.

though much patched, that snugly fit her small feet perfectly.²⁰

In the 1920s, Mary Pickford was probably the most famous actress in the world, well-known for her adorable curls until 1929 when she cut her hair into a bob for the movie *Coquette*, in which she played a scandalous socialite, marking her image change from virtuous young girl to sophisticate. Immediately following the quote above, Jōji asks Naomi why she wears her hair in the Japanese style only when she is off work, implying that Naomi did not wear her hair in the Japanese style while at work. The *momo-waré* hairstyle was worn by girls around sixteen or seventeen years of age. The hair is put up in a rather large bun in back forming a ring thought to resemble a peach seed, and of course is emblematic of Naomi as a young girl still innocent. However, upper and middle class women were already wearing their hair up in a Western style, so Naomi's Japanese style is also indicative of her birth and breeding being lower class and a bit common.

Meisen kimono were wildly popular in the 1920s and 30s, and probably nearly every Japanese woman owned at least one at that time. Meisen fabric was first produced circa 1868, and were the first inexpensive kimonos available in the department stores. Meisen kimono have a particular sheen to them and the fabric is a type of *ikat* the threads are resist-dyed by tying strings and then woven into the fabric. Different types of Meisen were—and still are, but less so—woven at various locales surrounding Tokyo, primarily Isesaki (Gunma), Chichibu (Saitama), and Ashikaga (Tochigi). They were considered appropriate for wearing about town, going out to lunch with friends, or to the movies as Naomi does with Jōji.

Likewise a *merinsu* Yūzen-dyed obi was an inexpensive obi. *Merinsu*, which ultimately derives from the Spanish *merino*, was a soft fabric made of fine-hair wool. *Merinsu* Yūzen was a stencil-dyed pattern made on a *merinsu* fabric. A bit later on in the novel, when Naomi and Jōji are searching for a house to rent, Jōji comments on how shabby (*misuborashii* 見すぼらしい) Naomi's attire is.²¹ The one aspect of her dress deemed attractive by Jōji was her nicely snug fitting *tabi* socks—loose *tabi* would appear a bit slovenly—but even these had their shortcoming of being patched.

Naomi's attire of staid kimono and Japanese hairstyle described here reflects her diffident behavior towards Jōji. Jōji narrates how she would always arrive on time when they met for their outings together, docilely waiting for him no matter how late he might be, and even

²⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 17.

²¹ *Chijin no ai*: 24.

if she had to wait in the rain.²² This reticent image is in contrast with the somewhat disreputable image as café hostess and her exotic features. This contrast both serves as a harbinger of Naomi developing into a bohème, as well as reflecting the two divergent goals Jōji has for Naomi, one as distinguished lady and the other as modish socialite.

Naomi as Pupil

Jōji convinces Naomi to quit her hostess job, promising to take full responsibility for her and to bring her up as a “splendid woman” (*rippana onna* 立派な女).²³ He also meets her parents and promises them that if they will agree to allow her to work for him as a live-in maid, he will take care of her education.²⁴ The two of them then move into a Western style house with an atelier where an artist had lived with his model.²⁵ There the relationship between the two becomes more informal, as Jōji asks her to now call him by his first name, Jōji-san rather than Kawai-san.²⁶ Jōji does indeed set her up with private lessons, studying English with an American woman in Meguro and music with a Tokyo Music School graduate in the Shiba ward. Jōji describes Naomi’s attire for her lessons, musing that Naomi seemed very happy with her status as pupil, and he could hardly believe that she had been a café hostess raised in Senzokuchō.

ナオミは銘仙の着物の上に紺のカシミヤの袴をつけ、黒い靴下に可愛い小さな半靴を穿き、すっかり女学生になりまして、〈後略〉

〈前略〉 髪もその後は桃割れに結ったことは一度もなく、リボンで結んで、その先を編んで、お下げにして乗らしていました。

Naomi—wearing a dark blue cashmere *hakama* over a *meisen* kimono, black socks with cute little ankle-length short boots—had thoroughly become a girl student...

... Her hair too, after that she never again wore it in the *momo-waré* style; she tied it with a ribbon and let it hang down in braids.²⁷

²² *Chijin no ai*: 16.

²³ *Chijin no ai*: 20.

²⁴ *Chijin no ai*: 22.

²⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 26.

²⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 28.

²⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 31.



Fig. 3 School girl's dress of *hakama* and Meisen kimono

This attire is of course the typical school-girl dress of the era. The origin of this school girl's dress of *hakama* over kimono is attributed to both Gakushūin Girl's School and Atomi Girl's School. Atomi received approval from the Empress in 1875 (Meiji 8) for the students to wear purple *hakama*, and the Atomi students were nicknamed Murasakiemon (Miss Purple 紫衛門). On the other hand, what would become the Gakushūin Girl's School was founded in 1885. Their students wore maroon *hakama*, and were nicknamed Ebicha Shikibu (Lady Maroon 葡萄茶式部). The *hakama* over kimono, worn with boots, and a large bow in the hair was pretty much the standard school-girl's attire in the Taishō era (1912-1926).²⁸

Just as Jōji had envisioned, Naomi becomes a vivacious bird flitting around the atelier as her enormous cage.

彼女はフランネルの単衣を着て、素足にスリッパを突っかけて、とんとん床を踏みながら習って来た唄を歌ったり、私を相手に眼隠しだの鬼ごっこをして遊んだり、そんな時にはアトリエ中をぐるぐると走り回ってテーブルの上を飛び越えたり、ソファの下にもぐり込んだり、椅子を引っ覆したり、まだ足らないで梯子段を駆け上がっては、例の棧敷のような屋根裏の廊下を、鼠の如くチョコチョコと往ったり来たりするのでした。

She would wear a flannel *hitoe*, with slippers on her bare feet, and rap the floor with her feet while singing the songs she had learned, or she would sometimes play blind-man's-bluff or tag with me, running around the atelier jumping over the table, crawling under the sofa, knocking over chairs, and if that wasn't enough, running up the ladder to the gallery under the roof, skittering hither and thither just like a mouse.²⁹

²⁸ 綺陽装束研究所「女子袴の歴史」<http://www.kariginu.jp/hakama/history.htm> (accessed 2106-05-22); 学校法人跡見学園「制服」http://www.atomi.ac.jp/progress/visual_identity/uniform.html (accessed 2106-05-22).

²⁹ *Chijin no ai*: 32.

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Fig. 4 Naomi lounging in flannel *hitoe* kimono

The two of them moved into the house at the beginning of May, and now at the end of May, Naomi has obviously become quite at home and is still quite childish at fifteen. At the very beginning of summer, when it is just starting to get warm, Naomi is wearing an unlined (*hitoe*) flannel kimono around the house with neither *tabi* nor socks. Somehow, the flannel kimono is more evocative of a child's dress, than the *meisen* Naomi wore outside in public.

By the height of summer Naomi is wearing a much cooler kimono, one that Jōji bought the fabric for at an Obon festival and Naomi had her mother sew it for her while Jōji was off visiting his parents for two weeks. He comes back early because he cannot stand to be away from her and finds

that she appears to have grown in his absence. He considers the kimono very becoming on her and asks what her mother thinks of it. Naomi replies that her mother said it was by far too modish (*haikara*), and she adds that everyone at home said she had changed, and had become frightfully modish (*haikara*). At home, they tried to convince to put her hair up in the Japanese style, but she refused, leaving her hair natural without ointment, and just dressing it with a fancy lavender-pink ribbon she had picked up in Asakusa.

ナオミは白っぽい、ふわふわした、薄紫の葡萄の模様のあるモスリンの単衣を纏って、幅のひろい、派手な鶉色のリボンで髪を結んでいました。

Naomi was dressed in a fluffy off-white muslin *hitoe* with a design of grapes in light purple, and had tied her hair with a showy, wide ribbon of lavender-pink.³⁰

Naomi is wearing this kimono on a sultry summer night, and the "*musurin*" (muslin) fabric is an

³⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 34.

appropriately light-weight cotton. It sounds very pretty, but a short time later at the beginning of August when they go to Kamakura together, Jōji finds that this kimono he at first thought to be attractive, now appeared shabby compared to the wealthier and more sophisticated women on the train.

<前略> ナオミの身なりがいかにも見すばらしく思えたものでした。

勿論夏のことですから、その夫人や令嬢達もそうゴテゴテと着飾っていた筈はありません、が、こうして彼等とナオミとを比べて見ると、社会の上層に生まれた者とそうでない者との間には、争われない品格の相違があるような気がしたのです。ナオミもカフェエにいた頃とは別人のようになりはしたものの、氏や育ちの悪いものは矢張どうしても駄目なのじゃないかと、私もそう思い、彼女自身も一層強くそれを感じたに違いありません。そうしていつもは彼女をハイカラに見せたところの、あのモスリンの葡萄の模様の単衣物が、まあその時はどんなに情なく見えたことでしょう。並居る婦人達の中にはあっさりとした浴衣がけの人もいましたけれど、指に宝石を光らしているとか、持ち物に贅を凝らしているとか、何かしら彼等の富貴を物語るものが表されているのにな<後略>

... I thought Naomi's attire truly looked shabby [in their midst].

Naturally, since it was summer, it's not like they were lavishly dressed up. But, in comparing them to Naomi, I felt there was no contest in refinement between those born to the upper crust, and those not. Naomi had become a different person from when she was working at the café, but I couldn't help thinking that it was hopeless for someone without birth and breeding. If I thought so, no doubt Naomi must have felt it all the more. What's more, that muslin *hitoe* with the grape design that had made her seem so modish (*haikara*) before, how pathetic it looked now. Among the ladies, there were those wearing a simple *yukata*, but either their fingers glittered with gems, or their possessions were of superior make, eloquently conveying their wealth and station...³¹

³¹ *Chijin no ai*: 40.



Fig. 5 Naomi in white muslin *hitoe* kimono



Fig. 6 Heisei era grape motif yukata



Fig. 7 Women on the train to Kamakura

Naomi was born in Sensokuchō, a low-class area of Tokyo at the time, and her parents were owners of a brothel in Asakusa.³² They had intended to make Naomi a *geisha*, but she did not seem to have the propensity, so they made her a café hostess instead. Her family seems to have

³² Sensokuchō was located between Asakusa and the Yoshiwara pleasure quarters; at the time of the novel, Sensokuchō was a place of drinking establishments and prostitution.

worried little over Naomi, and were happy to leave her in Jōji's hands. Jōji is just starting to get an inkling that Naomi may never become the educated "splendid woman" that he had envisioned.

Naomi, on her part, is just beginning to learn how to manipulate Jōji to get her way, so far just by pretty pouting and pleading. Naomi begged Jōji to take her to the beach at Kamakura and wanted to stay for at least a week, and Jōji only managed to mollify her by promising to buy her a Western dress to make up for it. Problems are on their way.

Naomi Caged (Married)

Jōji and Naomi first have conjugal relations in April of the following year, when Naomi is sixteen. Shortly thereafter, Naomi rather passively allows Jōji to marry her. Jōji wishes to register their marriage legally right away, but wait two or three years before making the marriage public. It was a poor decision on Jōji's part to tell Naomi he wished to continue as friends. While she agrees she does not need to be called wife, had Jōji treated Naomi as a proper wife, instead of as a plaything, perhaps he would not have gotten himself into such a mess.

Jōji still has lofty plans at this point for turning Naomi into an ideal woman. Jōji confesses at his marriage proposal that he had not thought she would come as close as she had to being his ideal woman, and he wishes her to continue studying and grow into a splendid woman.³³ Naomi promises to study hard and become that type of woman he wants her to be. Jōji tells Naomi she is his diamond, that he found and polished. When he offers to buy her anything to make her beautiful, she replies that her English and music lessons are more important.³⁴ However, a gradual shift is budding from the ideal of Naomi becoming an educated and cultured lady to Naomi becoming a beautiful object of desire.

Jōji is obsessed with Naomi's Western-like features, and decides regular Japanese kimono are not right for her: she either needs Western clothes or some unusual style of Japanese dress. When Naomi asks him what kind of style, he says women will be becoming more and more active, so the typical heavy, uncomfortable, confining clothes just won't do. Naomi suggests a tubular-sleeve kimono (*tsutsuppo no kimono* 筒っぼの着物), typically worn by laborers or children, with a *heko* obi (兵児帯), a type of soft-fabric obi usually worn only by men or children.³⁵ Jōji says anything is fine, they just have to come up with something original. They began by

³³ *Chijin no ai*: 52.

³⁴ *Chijin no ai*: 52-55.

³⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 56. Naomi: "Perhaps I could wear a tubular-sleeve kimono with a *heko* obi?" あたし筒っぼの着物を着て兵児帯をしめちやいけなから？

window-shopping at department stores, but when they did not find anything, they started looking at various types of stores that specialized in Western fabrics.

近頃でこそ一般の日本の婦人が、オルガンディーやジョウゼットや、コットン・ボイルや、ああ云うものを単衣に仕立てることがポツポツ流行って来ましたが、あれに初めて目をつけたものは私たちではなかったでしょうか。ナオミは奇妙にあんな地質が似合いました。それも真面目な着物ではいけないので、筒っぽにしたり、パジャマのような形にしたり、ナイト・ガウンのようにしたり、反物のまま身体に巻きつけてところどころをブローチで止めたり <後略>

<前略> 白や、薔薇色や、薄紫の、紗のように透き徹るそれらの衣に包まれた彼女の姿は、一箇の生きた大輪の花のように美しく、<後略>

Only just recently has it become fashionable little by little for ordinary Japanese ladies to make their *hitoe* (unlined-kimono) from fabrics such as organdy, georgette, and cotton voile, but we were probably the first ones to set our sights on doing so. Those fabrics were oddly becoming to Naomi. But we couldn't just conform to the standard kimono, rather we made them into the tubular-sleeve type, or something resembling pajamas, or something like a nightgown, or even sometimes Naomi just wrapped the fabric around herself and pinned it here and there with brooches...

... when wrapped in such semi-transparent garments resembling *sha* (silk-gauze) in white, or rose-color, or a pale lavender, she was beautiful like a large arranged blossom...³⁶

From the description above it is readily apparent that most of her garments were too outrageous to wear outside the house. Even so, what she did wear in public was still eccentric enough that people wondered if she was some exotic “mixed-blood,” due in part to her European-like features, or possibly an actress. Naomi also obviously enjoyed the attention garnered by her outlandish attire.

中でもナオミが非常に好きで、おりおり戸外へ着て歩いたのに、縹子の袴と対の羽織がありました。縹子と云っても綿入りの縹子でしたが、羽織も着物も全体が無地の蝦色で、草履の鼻緒や、羽織の紐にまで蝦色を使い、その他はすべて、半襟でも、帯でも、帯留でも、襦袢の裡でも、袖口でも、袴でも、一様に淡い水色を配しました。帯もやっぱり綿縹子で作って、

³⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 58.

心をうすく、幅を狭く拵えて思い切り固く胸高に締め、半襟の布には縹子に似たものが欲しいと云うので、リボンを買って来てつけてました。

Among them, the one that Naomi especially liked and frequently wore to stroll about outside was a satin *awase* (lined kimono) and *haori* set. The “satin” was actually only a cotton-silk blend satin, but the entire ensemble, both the *haori* and the kimono were a deep Tyrian purple *muji* (single-color fabric), with even the *hanao* strap of the *zōri* and the *himo* tie of the *haori* all being of the same Tyrian purple. Everything else—the *han’eri* under-collar, the obi, the *obidome* brooch, the lining of the *juban*, the lining of the sleeve-openings (*sode-guchi*), and the narrow trimming around the edges of the kimono (*fuki*)—was all in a light aqua blue color. The obi was of course also made of cotton-blend satin, using only a thin strengthener (*shin*), its width narrow, and she wore it tied tightly high up on her chest. Saying she wanted the fabric of the *han’eri* to resemble satin, she went out and bought a ribbon to use for it.³⁷

This ensemble is really quite an extraordinary costume; it is no wonder that people would turn to stare and assume she was either some exotic “mix-blood” or an actress. Even a cotton-blend satin is not all that strong, so to have an entire kimono made of it was really quite extravagant. The Tyrian purple would certainly have been eye-popping, especially when combined with the contrasting aqua-blue obi and other accessories. In addition, the whole ensemble, being satin, would have been bright and shiny in an extremely flamboyant manner. It was more of a costume that one would expect to see on stage than on the street, perhaps why she mostly wore it to the theater.

Actresses had just started to appear in Japan at the end of the Meiji era (1868-1912) under the influence of the West. During the period of this novel, they were still looked at askance by society; they often had patrons much in the same way as *geisha* or even not uncommonly were involved in the sex industry.³⁸ Likewise, “mixed-blood” (*ainoko* 混血児) was not really a complimentary term, and children of mixed marriages endured a fair amount of prejudice at the time.³⁹

When Jōji compliments Naomi on her European feature towards the beginning of the

³⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 59-60.

³⁸ *Chijin no ai*: note on page 392.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

novel, she replies that people often tell her she looks like a “mixed-blood.”⁴⁰ Besides his fetish-like obsession with Naomi’s European looks, it becomes increasingly apparent that Jōji had somewhat of an unreasonable goal in choosing such an extreme “diamond in the rough” of questionable background as his clay to mold into an ideal woman, and of course he only exacerbates the situation by the way he treats her.

Jōji reiterates that most of Naomi’s outrageous costumes were unfit to wear outside the house, and were merely packaging for her form, like different vases for a beautiful flower. He muses that while she was his wife, she was also a rare doll and ornamental object.⁴¹ Naomi remains caged in their “fairy-tale” house for three years, until presented as trophy by Jōji at the Café El Dorado dance hall.⁴²

Naomi as Objet

Jōji had still not as yet given up hope of educating Naomi into a cultured lady. However, he surmised that he really had not known what he had meant by “splendid” and “distinguished,” but rather what he had probably wanted was to be able to present her anywhere without embarrassment and have her be seen as an up-to-date modish (*haikara*) lady. He is now perplexed about how to reconcile the two contradictory goals of “making her distinguished” and “cherishing her like a doll.” Naomi on her part as well, probably not disingenuously at this point, assures Jōji that she will study and become distinguished.⁴³

However, Jōji shortly discovers that Naomi has no aptitude for study, and his hopes are dashed.⁴⁴ Naomi only attains a middle-school level of English at best, much to Jōji’s frustration. The irony of it is that her pronunciation is already not only by far superior to Jōji’s, but by the end of the novel she becomes far more fluent than he in English.⁴⁵

Jōji browbeats Naomi in her English studies to the extent that she pretty much gives up on her own education, and on trying to appease Jōji through her efforts at learning. Naomi gets so upset with Jōji’s bullying over her lessons, that she tears up her English notebook. Jōji threatens to throw her out, even though he had promised at the time of his marriage proposal

⁴⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 15.

⁴¹ *Chijin no ai*: 59-60.

⁴² *Chijin no ai*: 88.

⁴³ *Chijin no ai*: 61-62.

⁴⁴ *Chijin no ai*: 74.

⁴⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 377.

that he would never abandon her.⁴⁶ This time Naomi repents, and they make up, but it is a foreshadowing of a graver, more significant rupture to come.

This incident seems to be the turning point when control over Naomi begins to slip out of Jōji's hands. Even though Naomi bows her head in contrition, Jōji feels that she is still somehow mocking him.⁴⁷ Naomi also seems to be testing how to gain control over Jōji to get her way. Jōji, while oblivious of the significance of her actions, recounts how she would variously try sulking, sobbing, feigning innocence, or glaring back in insolence.⁴⁸

As Jōji's hopes for making Naomi into an educated splendid woman are shattered, he becomes more and more infatuated with her body, seeing her less as a person than an arrangement of beautiful parts: her skin, her teeth, her lips, her hair, her eyes. He gradually forgets his original intent of cultivating her, only to find that it is he who is being lead by the nose by her sensuality.⁴⁹

Indeed, Naomi becomes ever more adept at manipulating Jōji, as Jōji resigns himself to Naomi's lack of intelligence. Not only does he give up on correcting her lessons, but also humors her by letting her win their games of chess, until it becomes such a habit that he could no longer win even if he tried. Naomi has now gained a new weapon: playing chess or cards with Jōji for spending cash, as well as using other wiles, relying on Jōji's attraction to her body.⁵⁰

It is around this time, when Naomi turns eighteen, that she starts to have affairs with the Keiō students, although Jōji does not become fully aware of it until much later. Male attire, including Jōji's own clothes, are seldom described, and even in those cases, just in passing. It is then of some import that when the Keiō student Hamada first appears in the novel, his clothes are described in comparatively unusual detail.

白地緋の単衣を着て、ヤンキー好みの、派手なりボンの附いている麦藁帽子を被って、ステッキで自分の下駄の先を叩きながらしゃべっている、頬ら顔の、眉毛の濃い、目鼻立ちは悪くないが満面のにきびのある男。

He was wearing a white *kasuri* (*ikat*) *hitoe*, a straw hat decorated with a showy ribbon favored by Yankee types; he was tapping his *geta* clogs with his walking stick as he

⁴⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 70-71; proposal page 52.

⁴⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 73.

⁴⁸ *Chijin no ai*: 73.

⁴⁹ *Chijin no ai*: 75.

⁵⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 82-83.

chatted [with Naomi]; he had a ruddy complexion with thick eyebrows; his facial features weren't unattractive, but his entire face was covered in pimples.⁵¹

Jōji has returned home early from work on a hot day in early September, to find Hamada talking with Naomi in the garden at their home. As can be discerned from the kimono, most of the sexual incidents are introduced in the summer months, or at least evoked by thin light summer garments. For Jōji's and Naomi's first trip alone together, they go to Kamakura in the summer; Naomi's sexy clothes she wears in the house are compared to the silk-gauze *sha* fabric worn in summer; later on when Naomi is being promiscuous with the Keiō boys again at Kamakura in summer, she is wearing a black cape with nothing at all underneath.

Hamada's kimono is the standard kimono worn by men in summer. It is a white unlined ramie garment, with a *kasuri (ikat)* pattern likely of small crosses or similar in brown, blue or black. Keiō college students, still all male at this time, were known as sharp dressers; the Japanese equivalent of Yale students wearing Brooks Brothers. Hamada is of course all dandied out with his stylish Yankee straw hat and walking stick.

It is three years since Jōji and Naomi first went to Kamakura, and Jōji muses on how much Naomi has changed. He thinks that now, if he dressed her up and presented her in high society, she would not be found inferior. It is becoming quite clear now that what Jōji really wanted was a trophy, to turn Naomi into a beautiful woman he could put on display and have people praise him for having such a chic wife. The time has come to present her, and as Jōji says, he “did not want to keep her in the birdcage forever.”⁵²

To that end, on Jōji's part, they begin to take dance lessons together. However, Naomi also manipulated him into the dance lessons so she could spend more time with the Keiō students.⁵³ Social dance was still a bit of a novelty, and considered decadent by many, as Jōji himself mentions later on in the novel.⁵⁴ Jōji gets a chance to show Naomi off at the Café El Dorado dance hall in Ginza, but first she needs a kimono.

Naomi wheedles Jōji into a new kimono, insisting that she needs something flashy to go dancing.⁵⁵ Until they had married, Jōji continued to be an exemplary employee and had accumulated a fair amount of savings, but now he spends all his money on Naomi and is even on

⁵¹ *Chijin no ai*: 85.

⁵² *Chijin no ai*: 89.

⁵³ *Chijin no ai*: 86.

⁵⁴ *Chijin no ai*: 198.

⁵⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 111.

the verge of debt.⁵⁶ Far from being a maid, Naomi neither washes the dishes nor does the laundry, and orders all their food in from restaurants or caterers. Naomi would buy a new kimono every month; even though the *meisen* and *merinsu* fabrics were relatively inexpensive, with the extra fabric for the lining and the tailoring since she would not sew the kimono herself, it came to quite a bit of expense.

She was equally extravagant with her footwear, buying a new pair every ten days or so: formal sandals (*zōri* 草履), *koma-geta* (駒下駄), bad-weather geta (*ashida* 足駄), fine-weather geta (*hiyori-geta* 日和下駄), single-block geta (*ryōguri* 両ぐり), dressy geta (*yosoyuki-geta* 余所行きの下駄), casual geta (*fudan-no-geta* 普段の下駄). When Jōji complains that she used to be happy to wear her cute little boots with her student attire, she says that even if she does not bother to put on her *hakama*, as an Edoite, she is still particular about her footwear.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, Naomi manages with tears and pouts to cajole Jōji into asking for money from his mother.⁵⁸ Naomi sets off to the ritzy Mitsukoshi department store in Ginza alone to pick out the materials herself for her kimono.⁵⁹ When the rush-order arrives the day of the dance, Jōji thinks the formal kimono, unlike the more prosaic materials of *meisen* or *merinsu* so becoming on her, will look tawdry with her exotic features resembling a "mixed blood." Moreover, the flashy design of the pattern would make her look more like a trollop at one of those brothels catering to foreigners in Yokohama.⁶⁰

着物は口綿の這入っている比翼の袷で、金紗ちりめんと云うのでしょうか、黒みがかった朱のような地色には、花を黄色く葉を緑に、点々と散らした総模様があり、帯には銀糸で縫いを施した二たすじ三すじの波がゆらめき、ところどころに、御座船のような古風な船が浮かんでいます。

The kimono was an *awase* trimmed with padding at the hem and sleeve openings (*kuchi-wata*) with another layer of fabric to appear double (*hiyoku*). The fabric, I suppose it would be called *kinsha-chirimen* (a fine crepe), was a dark shade of cinnabar with an all-over pattern of scattered flowers in yellow with leaves in green. The [Maru-] obi had embroidery in silver of waves flowing in two or three lines, with traditional-style pleasure

⁵⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 112, 117.

⁵⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 116-117.

⁵⁸ *Chijin no ai*: 120-122.

⁵⁹ *Chijin no ai*: 124.

⁶⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 126.

boats floating here and there.

As it turns out, Naomi did indeed hold her own, and appeared inferior to almost none. Watching Naomi on the dance floor, Jōji decides there is nothing to be ashamed of; compared to the others, Naomi's gaudy kimono that he had been worried about was not so vulgar after all.

可愛いダンスの草履を穿いた白足袋の足を爪立てて、くるりくるりと身を翻すと、華やかな長い袂がひらひらと舞います。一步を踏み出す度毎に、着物の上ん前の裾が、蝶々おようにハタハタと跳ね上がります。芸者が撥を持つ時のような手つきで熊谷の肩を掴まんでいる真っ白な指、重くどっしり胴体を締めつけた絢爛な帯地、一茎の花のように、この群衆の中に目立っている項、横顔、正面、後ろの襟足——こうして見ると、為る程和服も捨てたものではありません。

Her long flowing sleeves waved prettily as she twirled about on her toes in white tabi and cute dance zōri. Each time she put a foot forward, the front flap of her hem would flutter up like a butterfly. Her white fingers clasping Kumagai's shoulder like a geisha holds a plectrum, her gorgeous obi enfolding her solid torso—she stood out like a solitary blossom in a crowd—her face, her profile, the nape of her neck. Seen this way, I realized the kimono was not something to be given up on just yet.⁶¹



Fig. 8 Jōji watching Naomi dance



Fig. 9 Kirako at the dance

⁶¹ *Chijin no ai*: 144.

Still, Naomi is a bit coarse when compared to the actress Kirako. Jōji finds the latter far more refined in speech, gesture, and dress.⁶²

きゃしゃな、象牙のような指を持った、ぎゅっと抱きしめたら壊って折れてしまいそうな小柄な綺羅子は、舞台で見るよりは遥かに美人で、その名の如く綺羅を極めたあでやかな衣裳に、緞子と云うのか繻珍と云うのか、黒地に金糸と濃い緑とで竜を描いた丸帯を締めているのでした。

With delicate fingers like ivory, and a slight built as if she would snap like a twig if held too hard, Kirako was far more beautiful than when seen on stage. She was gorgeously attired in fine raiment as befitting her name, with a black *maru-obi* made of *donsu* (damask) or *shuchin* (figured-satin) that had a dragon depicted in dark green and gold threads.⁶³

Indeed, Jōji feels that in every way it is Kirako, not Naomi, who is really the polished jewel he had hoped to attain with Naomi.

綺羅子の方は、物の言いよう、眼の使いよう、頸のひねりよう、手の挙げよう、総てが洗煉されていて、注目深く、神経質に、人工の極致を尽して、研きをかけられた貴重品の感じがありました。

Kirako, on her part, the way she spoke, the way she used her eyes, the way she inclined her head, the way she lifted her hands—she was refined in every way. One felt that she was the epitome of human craftsmanship, polished to a superb work of art with great detail and care.⁶⁴

Although Jōji did marry Naomi, she is really little more than a kept mistress, and Kirako, as an actress, is dangerously close to the sex trade. Neither of the two are the distinguished ladies of high society that Jōji originally purported was his goal for Naomi. By the end of the dance, Jōji despairs of his failure with Naomi, who while putting on the airs of a lady, spoke like a woman of

⁶² *Chijin no ai*: 147, 163.

⁶³ *Chijin no ai*: 134.

⁶⁴ *Chijin no ai*: 147.

the gutter.⁶⁵

Naomi as Bohème

Naomi has been sleeping with the Keiō students since she started to take piano lessons a year ago, first with Hamada and then with Kumagai, and later with several others.⁶⁶ Jōji remained in a state of denial for quite a while, although there had been hints along the way; finding Hamada talking to Naomi in the garden of their home, Naomi teasing Kumagai at the dance to give more details to Jōji about how they know each other.⁶⁷



Fig. 10 Naomi and Jōji encounter Kumagai at the beach



Fig. 11 Yukata and obi ensemble after Tanaka Ryō's illustration (fig. 10)

But Jōji's denial starts to erode by the hot and humid rainy season, first at the slumber party where Naomi flirts with both of the Keiō boys, then when he is questioned at a work party about his "mistress," and finally when he finds Hamada has entered his house with a key and Hamada confesses all. The emblematic scene of Naomi's decadence is her running on the beach with the Keiō boys, completely naked but for a cape draped over her.

Naomi had deceived Hamada into thinking that Jōji was only her cousin, Hamada only realizing that Naomi was married when he met Jōji at the dance party.⁶⁸ Hamada had genuinely

⁶⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 163-4. Naomi's rough language is due to the influence of the Keiō students.

⁶⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 241.

⁶⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 139.

⁶⁸ *Chijin no ai*: 242.

fallen in love with Naomi and had wanted to marry her, only to find out at the slumber party that she was also having an affair simultaneously with Kumagai.⁶⁹

At the slumber party in mid-June, under the mosquito net, Naomi in a rather sordid way flirts with all three men, Jōji, Hamada, and Kumagai, provoking them with licentious glimpses of her body.

蚊帳の外の、うす暗い所で、ぱっと寝間着に着換える時ナオミの白い背中が見えました。

Just outside the mosquito net, where it was somewhat dim, it was possible to see Naomi's white back while she cursorily changed into her sleeping gown.⁷⁰

While this may not seem all that erotic to a Western audience, the beautiful straight, long back of a Japanese woman glowing white in the night, glimpsed while she is changing into her nightgown would be provocative indeed. Furthermore, her nightgown is described as a semi-transparent peach *chijime* crepe gown.⁷¹

ナオミが熊谷の首を跨いで、自分の布団へ飛び降りた刹那の、寝間着の裾のさっとはだけた風の勢が私の鼻を騷りました。

As Naomi straddled over Kumagai's head to jump into her own *futon* bedding, the slight breeze from the lifted skirts of her gown teased my nose.⁷²

The eroticism of her open skirts as she steps over Kumagai's head and the provoking gust of air that Jōji feels should be readily apparent. Naomi's maneuvers only get more sordid. She sits facing the three reclining men, with her knees raised and her legs spread in a V, one foot at Jōji's face and the other at Hamada's face, with Kumagai's right in the center of the V.⁷³

夜目にも黒く、長々と解いた髪の毛の中の白い顔、……しどけないガウンの、ところどころに露われている胸や、腕や、膨らッ脛や、……この恰好は、ナオミがいつもこれで私を

⁶⁹ *Chijin no ai*: 243-4.

⁷⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 171.

⁷¹ *Chijin no ai*: 172.

⁷² *Chijin no ai*: 173.

⁷³ *Chijin no ai*: 175-6.

誘惑するポーズの一つで、こう云う姿を見せられると私はあたかも餌を投げられた獣のようにさせられるのです。

Her white face amidst the long loose strands of her hair, black even in the night, ……… her breasts, arms, and the back of her calves revealed here and there by her disheveled gown, ……… this guise was one of the poses she would use to seduce me, and displaying herself like this to me was like baiting a wild animal.⁷⁴

Despite this teasing with all of her three partners at once, Jōji still does not face-up to her cheating on him, not even when he finds her barely clothed on the beach at night in Kamakura with Hamada and Kumagai and the other Keiō boys.

Naomi convinces Jōji to rent a cottage for themselves in Kamakura for the summer, and Jōji commutes from it to work in Tokyo. He had been staying late at work every night for about a week to finish a project, but one day he is able to leave unexpectedly early and rushes home to their cottage in anticipation of a nice quiet meal with Naomi. When he gets there, not only is Naomi not home, but when he asks the landlady at the house next door, he finds that Naomi had been out romping around with the Keiō boys nearly every night, returning just before he got home. Worst yet, he finds out that the Keiō boys have been staying at a nearby villa owned by Kumagai's relatives. He goes there searching for Naomi, to find them heading for the beach, and Naomi completely naked except for high heels and a cape.

When Jōji shows up at the villa where the Keiō boys are staying, he finds them wandering towards the beach and follows them from behind. The four boys were all wearing casual yukata, surrounding Naomi who was leading the group.

黒いマントを引っかけて、踵の高い靴を穿いているのだけが分かりました。＜中略＞ 風が吹くのでマントの裾がぱたぱためくれそうのなる、それを内側から両手でしっかり体へ巻きつけているらしく、歩く度毎にマントの中で大きな臀が円くむっくりと動きます。

I could only tell that she was draped in a black cape and wearing high-heel shoes. ... The cape was flapping about in the breeze, and it appeared that she was clasping it with both hands from within to hold it around her body, and as she walked, her generous hips swayed

⁷⁴ *Chijin no ai*: 176.

with every step under the cape.⁷⁵

As they are all walking towards the beach, Jōji hears their discussion. Naomi wants to walk on a busy street in her get-up, and they imagine she will look like a female gangster leading her four henchmen, like in a Kabuki play. Tellingly, they decide she cannot be Mary Pickford, but rather Priscilla Dean, indicative of a significant image change for Naomi.⁷⁶ Mary Pickford was America's sweetheart, young and innocent, but Priscilla Dean played more risqué roles, and the movie *Outside the Law* had just come out in 1920, with Priscilla Dean playing the role of a female gangster. Priscilla Dean's most risqué role may have been as the outlaw Colette in the 1918 movie, *The Wildcat of Paris*.

Just after this discussion, Hamada spots Jōji and Naomi runs up to him and asks him to join their party.

ナオミはいきなりツカツカと私の前へやって来て、ぱっとマントを開くや否や、腕を伸ばして私の肩へ載せました。見ると彼女は、マントの下に一系をも纏っていませんでした。
「何だお前は！己に耻を搔かせたな！ばいた！淫売！じごく！

Naomi strutted right up to me, threw open her cape, and abruptly stretched out her arms to my shoulders. She had not even one stitch of clothes on under her cape.

“What's with you! You shame me! You slut! You harlot! You whore!”⁷⁷

Naomi Liberated

Jōji has yet to fully accept that Naomi has been sleeping around, and Naomi on her part still proclaims her innocence. Nevertheless, Jōji cannot avoid his suspicions and takes away all of Naomi's clothes and footwear, except for her gauzy semi-transparent gown, which is now described as red (*akai* 赤い), a wanton color, whereas in the twelfth chapter when they are all

⁷⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 226.

⁷⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 229-230.

⁷⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 231. While the illustration of this scene in the *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun* (1924.6.10) is rather staid, there is an absolutely stunning original illustration by Iwata Sentarō published slightly altered in the *Kuraku* 苦楽 magazine (April 1926), but permission for reproduction was unattainable due to the age of the artist. As an aside, it is interesting that *Kuraku* and *Josei* were published by the same company, Puranto (プラント).

sleeping under the mosquito net, it was described as a girlish peach color (*momo-iro* 桃色).⁷⁸ The serialization of *Chijin no ai* in the *Osaka Asahi* newspaper ends in June shortly into chapter sixteen, just when Jōji discovers Hamada lounging alone in their house at Ōmori.



Fig. 12 Final installment of *Chijin no ai* in the *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun* newspaper (Chpt. 16 pt. 2). *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-6-14

Hamada admits he was there for a clandestine meeting with Naomi. Now that the serialization has been picked up again in the woman's magazine *Josei*, we find out that Hamada and Naomi have been involved since Naomi started taking piano lessons. Hamada confesses that he had not known Naomi and Jōji were more than cousins until the dance party at El Dorado, and that he had wanted to marry Naomi, but she kept putting him off. Hamada himself did not realize that Naomi was cheating on him as well with Kumagai until the slumber party on a rainy night in June. Hamada worries that Naomi might show up, but Jōji tells him that he took away all her clothes but for the peach gown, leaving her with not even an obi to tie it shut. It may, or may not, be significant that the gown is described as peach in the context of the Keiō boys, but as a deeper red color in the context of just Jōji and Naomi.⁷⁹

After continuing their discussion over lunch, Jōji goes to his office only to find that he cannot concentrate, and so returns to the rented cottage in Kamakura to check up on Naomi. There he finds her sleeping bitten all over by mosquitoes with only his gabardine jacket as a cover.

⁷⁸ *Chijin no ai*: 172 and 236. The gown is again described as peach in color on page 246, when Jōji is talking with Hamada about her.

⁷⁹ Tanizaki did later translate the *Tale of Genji* into modern Japanese, in which, each of Genji's succeeding loves is named a deeper purple.

<前略> 紅いちぢみのガウンから真っ白い手足が、湯立ったキャベツの茎のように浮き出ているのが、そう云う時には又運悪く、変に蠱惑的に私の心を搔き撈りました。

... her arms and legs sticking out from her crimson *chijimi* gown like a stalk of boiled cabbage, perversely that now of all times, it should oddly chafe my heart with enticement.⁸⁰

Naomi awakes with bloodshot eyes and disheveled hair like a phantom. Jōji tells her to put on a kimono to cover herself, and gives back her clothes. Jōji tells her he ran into Hamada, who told him everything. He says he will not ask her to get down on her knees and beg for forgiveness, but just wants her to acknowledge her wrongdoing. Jōji now wants to have a normal marriage and children, but when he cannot convince Naomi, he decides to purchase a normal Japanese-style house for them to force a normal lifestyle. When Naomi finds out that he has received money for a house from his family, she demands a Western house and a maid of her own choosing.

However, the dénouement comes when Jōji follows her to the Daybreak Pavilion hotel, where he finds that Naomi has made a clandestine meeting with Kumagai. When confronted, this time Naomi does get down on her knees to beg for forgiveness, but when it only makes Jōji angrier, her quick change in expression shows it was only an act. As soon as he kicks her out, it is only an hour before he starts to regret letting her go. He then goes through a Dante-esque descent into hell, wandering psychologically lost seeking her, for a period of two months before she shows up again.

Naomi opens the door to their house with her key, trots up the stairs to the bedroom and changes her kimono with her back turned to him.

<前略> それは見覚えのない銘仙の衣類で、しかも毎日そればかり着ていたものか、襟垢が附いて、膝が出て、よれよれになっているのです。彼女は帯を解いてしまうと、その薄汚い銘仙を脱いで、これも汚いメリンスの長襦袢一つになりました。それから、今引き出した金紗縮緬の長襦袢を取って、それをふわりと肩に纏って、体中をもくもくさせながら、下に着ていたメリンスの方を、するすると殻を脱ぐように畳の上へ落します。そしてその上へ、好きな衣裳の一つであった亀甲緋の大島を着て、紅と白との市松格子の伊達巻を巻いてぎゅうっと胴がくびれるくらい固く締め上げ、今度は帯の番かと思うと、私の方を向き直って、そこにしゃがんで、足袋を穿

⁸⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 254.

き換えるのでした。

私は何より、彼女の素足を見せられるのが一番強い誘惑なので、〈後略〉

It was a *meisen* garment that I'd never seen before, moreover apparently she had been wearing it every day; it had become grubby with the collar soiled and the knees stretched out. She undid her obi, then took off her slightly soiled *meisen*, until she was down to only her *nagajuban*, also dirty. Next, she picked up the *kinsha-chirimen* nagajuban that she had just taken out, lightly draped it on her shoulders, and wiggling her whole body, let the *merinsu* she had been wearing underneath slide to the *tatami* floor like shedding a skin. Over that she dressed in one of her favorites a *kikkō-gasuri* Ōshima, then she tied a red-and-white *ichimatsu-gōshi* check-pattern *datemaki* so tightly as to cinch in her waist, now when I thought it was time for the obi, she turned in my direction and squatted down to change her *tabi*.

For me, there was nothing more alluring than to be given a glimpse of her nude feet...⁸¹

This is her first attempt at seducing Jōji into letting her come back. Naomi is obviously out of money and resources wearing a cheap kimono she picked up second-hand from who knows where, and soiled by heavy use no less, meaning she may well be without a change of ordinary clothes. She changes out of her cheap *meisen* kimono and *merinsu nagajuban* under-kimono into a far more luxurious and expensive *kinsha-chirimen* fine-weave crepe *nagajuban* and tortoise-shell *kasuri (ikat)* pattern Ōshima kimono. Her *datemaki* under-obi sash, now more commonly called a *datejime* 伊達締め, is pretty fancy too: not just a regular *datejime* with a typical *tokko* 独狐 pattern, the latter named after the single-prong *vajra* Buddhist ritual implement it resembles.

An Ōshima fabric is also a type of *kasuri* weave, in that the threads are resist-dyed by tying before being woven into the fabric. An Ōshima kimono proper is made of fabric from the Amami-Ōshima island in the Kagoshima prefecture. The fabric has a lustrous black-brown color and soft-as-butter texture. The lustrous color comes from the dyeing process of beating the *tsumugi* (pongee) fabric in mud indigenous to the island of Ōshima for that wonderful rich deep brown-nigh-onto-black color.⁸² The dyeing process also contributes to the softness of the fabric.

⁸¹ *Chijin no ai*: 327-8.

⁸² AubergineFleur™ (Karen Mack), “Which do you prefer? Ōshima or Yuuki Tsumugi? 大島か、結城か、どちらがお好き?” (2012-02-10) <http://blog.livedoor.jp/auberginefleur/archives/oshima-and-yuuki-tsumugi.html> (accessed 2016-08-09).

Nevertheless, it is far more likely that Naomi's Ōshima is a less-expensive Murayama Ōshima *tsumugi* widely produced in the Musashi Murayama City of Tokyo since around 1919 when a less laborious manner of dyeing was introduced.⁸³

Naomi is obviously trying to work her wiles on Jōji here. She could have changed downstairs, but chooses to change in front of Jōji with her back turned to give him just tantalizing glimpses. Most telling, of course, is when she turns around to display her bare feet to Jōji as she changes her *tabi* for clean ones. Meisen kimono are the type that Jōji feels is most becoming on her. It is not clear whether there is any significance of Naomi choosing to change into a more expensive Ōshima rather than another Meisen. Perhaps, if she was to remove a kimono bought for her by Jōji from his house, she wanted one of the more expensive ones. Or maybe she wanted to look wealthier in order to hook another patron.⁸⁴

In any case, Naomi returns just a few days later, this time in Western dress, so changed in appearance that Jōji mistakes her for a Western woman at first.

<前略> バタンと戸が開いて、黒い、大きな、熊のような物体が戸外の闇から部屋へ闖入して来ましたが、忽ちぱっとその黒い物を脱ぎ捨てると、今度は狐のように白い肩だの腕だのを露わにした、うすい水色の仏蘭西ちりめんのドレスを纏った、一人の見慣れない若い西洋お婦人でした。肉づきのいい項には虹のようにキラキラ光る水晶の頸飾りをして、眼深に被った黒天鷲絨の帽子の下には、一種神秘的な感じがするほど恐ろしく白い鼻の尖端と頤の先が見え、生々しい朱の色をした唇が際立っていました。

... the door opened with a bang, and a black, large shape like a bear came out of the dark beyond the door to invade the room. Instantly the black thing was flung away, now like a fox white shoulders and arms were revealed. Dressed in a pale aqua-blue French Crêpe de Chine dress was a young western lady like I had never seen before. Around a voluptuous neck, she wore a quartz necklace glittering like a rainbow, and beneath her black velvet hat, worn low all but covering her eyes, the tips of her nose and chin could be seen in almost an

⁸³ The Cultural Foundation for Promoting the National Costume of Japan, "Dyeing & Weaving → Murayama Ōshima Tsumugi" <http://www.kimono.or.jp/dictionary/eng/murayamaooshimatsumugi.html> (accessed 2016-08-09).

⁸⁴ The significance of color in wardrobe in the literature of Balzac and Goethe is addressed by Claire Hughes in "Dressing for Success" in *Fashion in Fiction: Text and Clothing in Literature, Film, and Television* (Peter McNeil, et. al. ed.) Oxford: Berg, 2009: 11-22. The darkening colors of Naomi's attire may well have symbolic import: Naomi's crepe gown is described as a darker red in the context of Jōji, but as a lighter peach in the context of the Keiō boys; an Ōshima kimono is darker and more subtle than a vibrant Meisen; and Naomi's black cape makes her look like a wild animal or spectre.

eerily frightening white, with vivid cinnabar-red lips standing out in contrast.⁸⁵

Naomi has become more phantasm than human; in her black cape appearing out of the darkness, Jōji compares the apparition to a black bear. Next she changes into a fox with glowing white skin. While a bear does not have magical powers in Japanese mythology, foxes can change their form, often taking the form of a beautiful woman to seduce men. Naomi has made a full transformation, to the extent of being almost unrecognizable in appearance, and become the very epitome of the latest Western style.

Jōji makes a detailed description of her shoes, her hairstyle, and her make-up, most obsessed with the whiteness of her skin.

<前略> 踵の高い、新ダイヤの石を飾ったパテントレザー靴の爪先でチョコチョコと歩いて、
—— ああ、これがこの浜田の話したシンデレラの靴なんだと、私はその時思いました。

... prancing over on the tips of her high heel, patent leather shoes decorated with rhinestones — Ah, these must be the Cinderella shoes that Hamada mentioned, I thought to myself then.⁸⁶

<前略> 彼女は生え際の髪の毛を、二三寸ぐらいに短く切って、一本々々毛の先を綺麗に揃えて、支那の少女がするように、額の方へ暖簾の如く垂れ下げているのです。そして残りの毛髪を一つの纏めて、円く、平に、顛頂部から耳朶の上へ被らせているのが、大黒様の帽子のようです。

... she had cut her hair about two or three inches from the hairline, trimmed each hair perfectly evenly, and in the manner of young Chinese girls, had them hang over her forehead like a shop curtain. The rest of her hair she had gathered up in a round, flat shape from the crown of her head to the earlobes resembling the god Daikoku's floppy béret.⁸⁷

彼女の眉毛は生まれつき太く、クッキリとして濃い方であるのに、それが今夜は、細長い、ぼうっと霞んだ瓜を描いて、その瓜の周囲は青々と剃ってあるのです。

⁸⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 330.

⁸⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 331.

⁸⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 332.

Her eyebrows were naturally thick, and conspicuously dark, but tonight, they were long and narrow, drawn in a hazy arc, with the arcs surrounded by the blue traces of having been shaved.⁸⁸

Hamada had earlier described this same outfit when he had come to Jōji's house to explain what he knew about Naomi's whereabouts after Jōji kicked her out. We find out that she spent her first night with a foreigner named William McConnell at his house in Yokohama, and it is he who supplied Naomi with this attire. Hamada describes the shoes in somewhat more detail as very high French-heel shoes with the tips decorated with glittering rhinestones.⁸⁹ A "French heel" is rather wide, and curved on both sides when seen in silhouette.

It is difficult to tell from the description, but it seems that Naomi's hair is in a bun, more like a modified version of a Gibson girl hairstyle with bangs, than the short bob of a flapper—more art nouveau than art deco. The shape of her dress is also not described, but it most likely predates the shorter skirt of the flapper—short enough to see the shoes, but still not mid-calf. The cloche hat that she appears to be wearing had been around since the first decade of the 1900s.

This Western garb is obviously the most dramatic transformation that Naomi has yet made. There are several intimations that Naomi is no longer simply an object of desire, but more of an apparition of Jōji's imagination. The two start out by living in a fairy-tale house (*otogibanashi no ie* お伽噺の家), but the first hint of Jōji seeing her as an other-worldly creature is when he describes her bloodshot eyes and disheveled hair as making her look like a phantom, while he has trapped her in the Kamakura cottage by taking away all her clothes after he discovered her on the beach with the Keiō boys.⁹⁰ Hamada describes Naomi as looking like Cinderella when he sees her in the Western outfit.⁹¹ Jōji too finds Naomi to be more of an apparition than reality when she shows up at his door in the same Western dress.

それはナオミであると云うよりも、ナオミの魂が何にかの作用で、或いは理想的な美しさを持つ幽霊になったのじゃないかしらん？

⁸⁸ *Chijin no ai*: 332-3.

⁸⁹ *Chijin no ai*: 307.

⁹⁰ *Chijin no ai*: 255, 267.

⁹¹ *Chijin no ai*: 307.

It seemed to be less Naomi, than some animation of Naomi's soul, or perhaps she had become a spirit of ideal beauty.⁹²

When Jōji found out that Naomi spent the night with a foreigner, he claimed to have given her up, and even called it an exorcism (*yaku-otoshi* 厄落し).⁹³

However, it is the same old coarse voice that gives Naomi away, when the apparition in Western clothes speaks.⁹⁴ The Western clothes do not only serve to represent Naomi as an apparition of ideal beauty, they also represent liberation—both the freedom from the constricting confines of Japanese dress and freedom from the traditional social and sexual mores the kimono represents.

After they start living together in their “fairy-tale house,” Jōji already early on decides that the ordinary kimono does not suit her with her exotic features, that either Western clothing or some unusual style of Japanese clothing would be more appropriate. He suggests they find something that allows more freedom of movement than the typical restrictive kimono. In the outcome, Naomi ends up wearing such extravagant garb that she cannot even wear it outside the house. This first attempt at exotic garb results in restricting Naomi even more than kimono during the period Jōji keeps her in the birdcage of their house. It is only with the fairytale-like Western dress that Naomi manages to escape from Jōji's control over her.

Naomi's first response to Jōji's attempt to normalize their lifestyle by buying a traditional Japanese house is to demand he use the money to buy her Western clothes instead.⁹⁵ However, she only manages to attain her Western clothes by staying with a foreign man in Yokohama. When Hamada describes to Jōji Naomi's Cinderella dress, Jōji first imagines how beautiful Naomi must look, then immediately feels mortified that Naomi is not just running around with the Keiō boys, but now with Western men as well. In the end, it is this image of Naomi, an apparition of beauty in Western clothes, that Jōji becomes most besotted with, buying her a Western house in Yokohama, and allowing her total freedom to see whomever and do whatever she pleases.

⁹² *Chijin no ai*: 333.

⁹³ *Chijin no ai*: 313.

⁹⁴ *Chijin no ai*: 333.

⁹⁵ *Chijin no ai*: 268.

Epilogue

What Naomi becomes and Jōji's woes are all of his own making. He found out too late in the game, as he confides to Hamada, that he should not have treated Naomi as a plaything in a fairy-tale house, but rather as a real wife.

ナオミも悪いが、僕も責任があるんですよ。僕は世間の所謂『夫婦』と云うものが面白くないんで、成るべく夫婦らしくない暮らそうと云う主義だったんです。そいつがどうも飛んで間違いになったんだから、もうこれからは改良しますよ。いや、ほんとうに懲り懲りました。

Certainly Naomi is to blame, but it is also my fault as well. The societal norm of "husband-and-wife" was of no interest to me. It was my principle to avoid living like a normal husband-and-wife. That was a grievous mistake, and now I will rectify it. I really learned a bitter lesson.⁹⁶

Of course, Jōji does not succeed in rectifying it, but rather concedes all power to Naomi.

Jōji cannot afford socially or economy a real Western wife, and settles for Naomi instead.

若しも私に十分な金があつて、気随気儘な事が出来たら、私は或いは西洋に行つて生活をし、西洋の女を妻にしたかも知れませんが、それは境遇が許さなかつたので、日本人のうちではとにかく西洋人くさいナオミを妻としたような訳です。

Had I had enough money, and could have done whatever I pleased, I probably would have gone to live in the West, and maybe taken a Western woman for a wife, but circumstances wouldn't allow, so I ended up making Naomi, a comparatively Western looking woman, my wife.⁹⁷

Jōji feels at a loss when meets the Russian dance-instructor, Madame Shlemskaya, reticent about even shaking her hand.⁹⁸ He is mesmerized by the extraordinary whiteness of her skin, and finds even Naomi's pale complexion dusky by comparison—Naomi always falling

⁹⁶ *Chijin no ai*: 249-50.

⁹⁷ *Chijin no ai*: 105.

⁹⁸ *Chijin no ai*: 106, 107.

slightly short of an authentic Western woman.⁹⁹ Jōji is in awe of Western culture, epitomized by the image of a Western woman. Jōji would have absorbed Western culture by marrying a Western woman had he could, but instead uses Naomi as his clay to create an imitation.

If Naomi represents an infatuation with Western culture, and Jōji the embodiment of humiliation in the face of that culture, nevertheless that Western culture is not a real one but an ethereal construct of Japanese imagination, and at best an imitation at that. Naomi manages to fully subjugate Jōji by adopting his fantasy and playing it out for him, even achieving the pure white skin he had so desired, with the help of her foreign maid applying make-up to her entire body.

Conversely, Naomi becomes a celebration of liberated womanhood, although a willful and self-absorbed one, through the adoption of the dress and mores of Western culture, as perceived through a surreal construct of the West. Perhaps Tanizaki's warning was less about the Japanese infatuation with the West, but rather the dangers of the Japanese constructed fantasy of the West. On the other hand, the novel may simply be a story of a man's manipulation by a woman, caused by his own hubris of trying to turn fantasy in reality, rather than a more profound statement on Western culture and Japanese perceptions of it. But, what a wonderful narrative it is, of clothes being the making of a woman.

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Fig. 2: *Naomi strolling with Jōji on a day off.* Tanaka Ryō 田中良. *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-3-27. Asahi Shinbun Photo Archive 朝日新聞フォトアーカイブ蔵.

Fig. 3: *School girl's dress of hakama trousers and meisen kimono.* Early-mid Shōwa era kimono; late Taishō – early Shōwa era *hakama*. Ponia-pon collection ポニアポン蔵. Kimono coordination by Ōno Rafu 大野らふ (着物コーディネーター).

Fig. 4: *Naomi lounging in flannel hitoe kimono.* Tanaka Ryō 田中良. *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-3-30. Asahi Shinbun Photo Archive 朝日新聞フォトアーカイブ蔵.

Fig. 5: *Naomi in white muslin hitoe kimono.* Tanaka Ryō 田中良. *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-4-1. Asahi Shinbun Photo Archive 朝日新聞フォトアーカイブ蔵.

Fig. 6: *Heisei era grape motif yukata (cotton-ramie blend).* Ktouto Kimonomachi 京都きもの町. Personal collection.

Fig. 7: *Women on the train to Kamakura.* Tanaka Ryō 田中良. *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-4-2. Asahi Shinbun Photo Archive 朝日新聞フォトアーカイブ蔵.

Fig. 8: *Jōji watching Naomi dance.* Tanaka Ryō 田中良. *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13)

1924-5-12. Asahi Shinbun Photo Archive 朝日新聞フォトアーカイブ蔵.

Fig. 9: *Kirako at the dance.* Tanaka Ryō 田中良. *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-5-13. Asahi Shinbun Photo Archive 朝日新聞フォトアーカイブ蔵.

Fig. 10: *Naomi and Jōji encounter Kumagai at the beach* (original illustration: "chijin-no-ai sōga No.78 痴人の愛 挿画 No.78). Tanaka Ryō 田中良. *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-6-5. Asahi Shinbunsha Shihenshū Center collection 朝日新聞社史編修センター所蔵.

Fig. 11: *Yukata and obi ensemble after Tanaka Ryō's illustration (fig. 10).* Late Taishō – early Shōwa era cotton-ramie blend yukata with *sha*-weave Nagoya obi. Ponia-pon collection ポニアポン蔵. Kimono coordination by Ōno Rafu 大野らふ (着物コーディネーター).

Fig. 12: *Final installment of Chijin no ai in the Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun newspaper (Chpt. 16 pt. 2).* *Ōsaka Asahi Shinbun*, (Taishō 13) 1924-6-14. Asahi Shinbun Photo Archive 朝日新聞フォトアーカイブ蔵.

Fig. 13: 1920's Pink Satin Shoes by DH Holmes Ltd., New Orleans. Rhinestone Studded Heels. Private collection.

