

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Philosophische Fakultät III

Institut für Japanologie

Hjikata Tatsumi's

From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein

Magisterarbeit

zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades
Magister Artium (M.A.) im Fach Japanologie

Vorgelegt von

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Geboren am 20. Mai 1978 in Friedrichshafen

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Berlin, 25. August 2004

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Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Diese Arbeit besteht aus zwei Teilen. Der erste Teil der Arbeit ist eine kurze Zusammenfassung vom Leben und Werk Hijikata Tatsumis. Hijikata Tatsumi, der gemeinhin als der wichtigste Begründer des Butoh gilt, wurde 1928 als Sohn eines Bauern und Nudelladenbesitzers in der Präfektur Akita, in der Tōhoku Gegend, geboren. Mit 19 Jahren zog er zum ersten Mal in die Großstadt nach Tokyo. 1959 zeigte Hijikata zusammen mit Ohno Kazuos Sohn, Ohno Yoshito, auf dem sechsten Tanzfestival des Vereins zur Pflege des modernen Tanzes, das kurze Stück *Kinjiki* [Verbotene Farben]. Das düstere Stück wurde zu einem Riesenskandal. Von 1965 bis 1968 entstand der Fotoband *Kamaitachi* [Sichel Wiesel] in Zusammenarbeit mit Hosoe Eikoh. 1968 war auch das Jahr seines sicherlich bekanntesten Stückes: *Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin - nikutai no hanran* [Hijikata Tatsumi und die Japaner – die Rebellion des Körpers]. Wenig später hörte Hijikata auf selber zu tanzen, und widmete sich nur noch der Choreographie. 1972 wurde die Reihe *Shiki no tame no nijū-nana ban* [Siebenundzwanzig Abende für vier Jahreszeiten] uraufgeführt, in der Hijikata vor allem begann, Erinnerungen an seine Heimat Tōhoku zu verarbeiten. Er starb 1986 im Alter von 57 Jahren am Leberkrebs.

Der zweite Teil ist eine annotierte Übersetzung von *Inu no jōmyaku ni shitto suru kara* [Aus Neid auf eine Hundevene], welches erstmals in dieser Fassung als eigenständig Veröffentlichung 1976 erschienen ist. Der Text ist eine Zusammenstellung von Exzerpten und Fragmenten aus einer Reihe anderer Schriften, ausgewählt und arrangiert von Tsuruoka Yoshihisa, nach Anweisungen von Hijikata. Die hier vorliegende Übersetzung ist die erste Übersetzung des gesamten Textes. Eine kürzere Fassung desselben Textes, ursprünglich 1960 erschienen, ist von Nanako Kurihara in der Frühling 2000 Ausgabe der Zeitschrift *The Drama Review* übersetzt worden.

Table of Contents

Preface: Notes to the reader	1
Acknowledgments.....	1
Introduction.....	2
What is butoh?	2
The founding father of butoh: Hijikata Tatsumi	3
Books on Butoh and Translations of Hijikata Tatsumi’s Writings.....	4
Hijikata Tatsumi’s Life and Work	9
Childhood in Akita.....	9
The Early Wild Years in Tokyo.....	12
Asbestos-kan and Nightclubs.....	16
The Transition Phase: <i>Anma</i> and <i>Bara-Iro no Dansu</i>	17
The Rebellion of the Flesh: <i>Nikutai no Hanran</i>	19
The Discovery of the Female Body	21
Tôhoku Kabuki	22
The Last Years	24
On this translation	26
Themes and motifs.....	26
The Background of “From Being Jealous of a Dog’s Vein”	28
Translation: From Being Jealous of a Dog’s Vein.....	30
Appendix: Images from Shimizu Akira’s <i>Menuma</i>	58
Bibliography	61
Index	66

Preface: Notes to the reader

In accordance with Japanese practice, Japanese names are given surname first. A circumflex is used to indicate long vowels, except for those Japanese names widely known by a different spelling, such as Ohno Kazuo. The same goes for Japanese words, such as *furôshiki*, with the exception of those standardized in the English language, such as Tokyo.

Butoh will be written throughout with an “h”, as has become common in almost all English language publications. In contemporary Japan, “*butô*” has the wider meaning of “Western dance”, “*buyô*” being the generic name for “dance”. The correct term for Hijikata Tatsumi’s *butoh* is therefore actually “*ankoku butô*”, literally the “dance of utter darkness”.¹ Although “*Butoh*” today encompasses a range of different styles and philosophies, this thesis focuses on the original *butoh* of Hijikata.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my family, friends and colleagues for their help and support in the translation of this difficult text, especially Yumiko Yoshioka, Kazue Ikeda, Eva Schönefeld and Janina Benduski. Thanks also to all who opened their personal archives and collections of material to me. I am grateful to have had the chance in May 2004 to work with Akira and Hisako Kasai, who gave me much inspiration by simply encouraging me to trust my judgement.

¹ More on the terminology of *butoh* see Lucia Schwellinger, *Die Entstehung des Butoh* (Munich: Iudicum, 1998), 14-15; Ichikawa Miyabi, “Butô Josetsu” [Preface to Butô] in Hanaga Mitsutoshi, ed., *Butô-Nikutai no Suriarisutotachi* [Butoh: Surrealists of the Flesh] (Tokyo: Gendai Shokan, 1983), unpaginated. Trans. in Susan Blakely Klein, *Ankoku buto: the premodern and postmodern influences on the dance of utter darkness* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1988), 75; Gunji Masakatsu, “Mai to odori,” *Kabuki ronsô* [Collected Articles on Kabuki] (Tokyo: Shibunkaku shuppan, 1979) originally publ. in *Minzoku bungaku kôza 3* (Tokyo: Kôbundô, 1960).

Introduction

What is butoh?

Butoh is a corpse standing upright in a desperate bid for life.

Hijikata Tatsumi

Butoh knocks down the door of all safely packaged, over-mediated art for complacent consumption. Butoh is an art that lives dangerously.

Mark Holborn

What is butoh? An exotic performance style based on spectacular effects, white body makeup, grotesquely distorted limbs and faces, and a grueling slow speed of motion? Or is it a form of physical training that releases and brings forth primordial memory in the body that has been suppressed by contemporary society? It is both and neither and something completely else all together. As a simple man from the street once tried to explain:

1. All movements and dances, whose origins are unknown, are butoh.
2. Butoh is that which knows no rules or taboos.
3. When one person says “no” and the others say “yes”, then it’s butoh.²

In contrast with other dance styles, butoh does not require learning a fixed vocabulary of dance movements. It draws its inspiration and power from internalized imagery: “Butô attempts to return the abstract, generalized body to its original place...”³

Over 100 butoh groups worldwide⁴ practice and perform butoh. The founding fathers of butoh were Hijikata Tatsumi, Ohno Kazuo and Kasai Akira.

² Anonymous from Tokyo in Michael Haerdter und Sumie Kawai, ed., *Butoh: die Rebellion des Körpers: ein Tanz aus Japan* (Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 1986), 187.

³ Gôda Nario, “Ankoku butô ni tsuite” [On Ankoku Butô] in Hanaga, 1983: unpaginated. Trans. in Klein, 87.

⁴ For a listing of butoh performers and groups see www.butoh.net.

Of these three, Hijikata is considered to have laid the stylistic and idealistic cornerstones of this radical dance form.

Tatsumi Hijikata was Butoh. He and his work were Butoh. Which means that - sad to say - in a way with his passing away the era of Butoh also ended.⁵

The founding father of butoh: Hijikata Tatsumi

Hijikata Tatsumi burst onto the Japanese dance scene with his radical understanding of the body and performance style in the late 1950s. His work was a scandal ... and an inspiration to the avant-garde of the time, among them author Mishima Yukio, artist Yokô Tadanori and actor/director Terayama Shûji. Hijikata became the focal point of a blossoming new group of writers, painters and actors. His performances were intensely emotional, almost spiritual experiences. Embedded in these performances was a powerful critique of the surrounding post-war modern Japanese society and of a modernity, in which there was no place for the darkness of the soul, the ghosts of the past or the irrational of humanity.

Hijikata's ritualistic dance style, which drew its inspiration from French literature, European modern art and Japanese folklore, appealed to those Japanese, and later also to Western audiences, who identified with the spiritual journey within. The concentrated emotional power of Hijikata's butoh reached Europe through the performances of Ashikawa Yôko in the Louvre at the Paris Festival d'Automne in October 1978.⁶

[...] a disturbing plunge into the metamorphoses and questionings of the human body, going to the very roots of anguish. Fascinating[...] In short, nothing like it has been seen before.⁷

⁵ Hijikata's widow Motofuji Akiko cited in Andreas Stuhlmann, "Married to butoh – an interview with Akiko Motofuji" in *Tokyo Journal* June 2000:8.

⁶ These performances received wide acclaim and were highly instrumental, along with the subsequent performances by Kazuo Ohno and Sankaijuku, in the ensuing enthusiastic reception of butoh in Europe and USA. The first documented butoh performance in Europe was in January 1978, when Butoh-ha Sebi and the Ariadone group appeared at the Nouveau Carre Theater in Paris.

⁷ *L'Express Magazine*. Cited in Kuniyoshi Kazuko, *Performing Arts in Japan Now. Butoh in the Late 1980s* (Tokyo: The Japan Foundation, 1991), 1.

By the 1980s, butoh had spread all over the world and many butoh dancers permanently settled in places where their work was better received than in Japan itself, where even today butoh is still considered a mainly “underground” theater phenomenon. Hijikata himself had already received invitations to festivals abroad in the early 1970s, but he was not very interested in the dissemination of his work outside of Japan.⁸ Butoh in the West has therefore not been as closely associated with his name as with that of Ohno Kazuo, Tanaka Min, Sankaijuku and Dairakudakan⁹, who either work in Europe and/or have toured extensively.

Books on Butoh and Translations of Hijikata Tatsumi’s Writings

In light of the popularity of butoh, it is surprising to see that material on butoh is rare. Most of the books on butoh are photo books with short introductory essays or documentations of the personal experience of butoh training. Scholarly research is scarce. In Japan, the most noteworthy in this area has been the work of Ichikawa Miyabi, Gôda Nario and Kuniyoshi Kazuko; three critics, who from the beginning have followed, documented and commented on the development of butoh. Tanemura Suehiro has published an insightful collection of articles discussing the mutual influences of butoh and other arts in *Hijikata Tatsumi no hô e –nikutai no 60 nendai* [Towards Hijikata Tatsumi – The 1960s of the Flesh]. Mikami Kayô, a former disciple of Hijikata has written an invaluable inside-view of his training methods and understanding of the body in *Utsuwa toshite no shintai* [The body as vessel]. The Hijikata Memorial Archives at the Keiô University in Tokyo publishes small monographs on individual topics or pieces on an irregular basis and have most recently brought out a catalogue and a DVD with short excerpts of film material on the occasion of a big exhibition in 2004 at the Taro Okamoto Museum of Art in Kawasaki City.

⁸ Schwellinger, 90.

⁹ Ohno Kazuo is also called the “great soul of butoh”. Tanaka Min developed his own form of improvisational butoh and has worked extensively in Germany. The group Dairakudakan was founded by Marô Akaji, a former disciple of Hijikata in 1972. Sankaijuku was founded in 1975 and is based in Paris.

The best-known writings on butoh in western languages are Jean Viala and Nourit Masson-Sekine's *Butoh: Shades of Darkness*, Ethan Hoffman and Mark Holborn's *Butoh Dance of the Dark Soul*, and Susan Blakeley Klein's concise *Ankoku Butô-The Premodern and Postmodern Influences on the Dance of Utter Darkness*. Klein's short text is an interesting examination of butoh as a postmodern art form with pre-modern influences. Attached in the appendix are translations of four short texts by Japanese critics. Although both Hoffman and Viala's publications consist mainly of photographs, the former gives a comprehensive overview of all the major butoh dancers and groups with notes and interviews by various dancers.

There are two well-known and excellent sources in German. The first and still most important is *Butoh-Die Rebellion des Körpers* edited by Michael Haerdter and Sumie Kawai. It was published during a butoh guest performance series at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien during the Berliner Theatertreffen 1986 and includes an impressive range of unusual photos of almost all major butoh dancers and companies, a wide selection of essays by such authors as Ichikawa Miyabi and Gunji Masakatsu as well as a much cited translation of Hijikata's lecture on the 9th of February 1985 in Tokyo the night before the beginning of the first Butoh-Festival in Japan.¹⁰

Lucia Schwellinger's *Die Entstehung des Butoh* examines the premises and techniques of movement development in the work of Hijikata and Ohno Kazuo. The book is a detailed historical overview of the lives and work of both men, an analysis of the basis of their movement patterns as documented in classes and during performances, and a comparative evaluation of butoh motorics. which includes a conclusive outlook on the relationship of eastern and western influences.

¹⁰ This lecture was the last public statement by Hijikata before his death on the 21st of January 1986. The original Japanese title is "Suijakutai no saishû" [Collection of Emancipated Bodies]. It was originally published as "Kaze daruma: butô zangeroku shûsei" [Wind Daruma: Collected Record of Butoh Confession] in *Gendaishi Techô* in May 1985. The same text transl. into English in Ethan Hoffman & Mark Holborn, *Butoh-Dance of the Dark Soul* (New York: Aperture, 1987), 124-127 and in *The Drama Review*, Nr. 1, vol. 44 (Spring 2000): 71-79.

More interesting for scholarly research, but more difficult to obtain are dissertations. Shannon Moore's excellent thesis *Ghosts of Premodernity - Butoh and the Avantgarde* takes a closer look at the 1960s Japanese avant-garde's fascination for its own pre-modernity and its search for Japanese authenticity by comparing Hijikata's Tōhoku¹¹ motif with pre-modern influences in the work of photographer Moriyama Daido and filmmaker Imamura Shohei. *Towards the Bowels of the Earth* is a manuscript by Paul Roquet¹². Roquet's thesis concentrates mainly on the training methodology of butoh and its dispersion in the West. An interesting addition is the closing chapter on "liminality" in butoh. The most comprehensive thesis, however, is that of Nanako Kurihara. *The Most Remote Thing in the Universe* is a highly complex analysis of Hijikata Tatsumi's butoh. It contains the most complete summary and commentary available on both Japanese and non-Japanese source materials on butoh.

Kurihara is also the author of the only collection of non-partial translations of the writings of Hijikata. The Spring 2000 edition of *The Drama Review* features a concise introductory essay by Kurihara, and translations of four texts, two interviews, and a page from Hijikata's choreographic scrapbooks. Apart from these translations and the German translations of Sumie Kawai¹³, we have only partial translations, single sentences and short paragraphs, scattered in a variety of publications. An English translation of Hijikata's *Yameru Maihime* [Ailing Dancer], his longest single coherent text, by Kazue Kobata was announced for 2000, but has not appeared yet.

This lack of translations is surprising considering the enormous influence and the literary proclivity of Hijikata. He was an avid reader. French literature, most notably Jean Genet and Antonin Artaud had an enormous influence on his work. Words were also extremely important for his method of training and choreographing.

[...] Hijikata tied the body up with words, turning it into a material object, an object that is like a corpse. Paradoxically, by this method,

¹¹ Tōhoku is the north-western region of Japan's main island Honshū. Hijikata was born in this region.

¹² Available at www.upsaid.com/proquet/butoh.php

¹³ Most recently also in *Butoh- Tanz der Dunkelheit*, exh. cat. (Berlin: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 2004), 94-111. Regrettably it is one of the texts already translated by Kurihara in *The Drama Review*: "Keimushō e" [To Prison].

Hijikata moved beyond words and presented something only a live body can express.¹⁴

His exercises and choreographies were written down by his disciples in short sequences that resemble surrealist poems. A number of these *butô-fu*¹⁵ have been compiled and translated into English on a CD-ROM by Waguri Yukio. The CD-ROM also includes video material of Waguri, who studied with Hijikata, demonstrating these exercises.

The biggest hurdle in translating Hijikata is surely his idiosyncratic use of Japanese. Nishitani Osamu, a French scholar, said at a 1998 symposium at the Theatre Tram in Tokyo: “Hijikata’s writing is neither prose nor poetry—something different - and his Japanese is twisted.”¹⁶ Hijikata coins his own phrases, making frequent use of the natural tendency of the Japanese language towards ambiguity and polysemy. His grammar is skewed and meaning seems to slip through the spaces between the words: “[Hijikata] created something persuasive by disconnecting the joints of sentences”.¹⁷

In spite of these difficulties, translations of his work help immensely in understanding Hijikata’s stage imagery. His writings are full of evocative, surreal observations and stories that found their physical embodiment in *butô* itself. They are therefore just as much part of Hijikata’s collected works as the documentation of his dance. Nanako Kurihara wrote: “For Hijikata the body is a metaphor for words and words are a metaphor for the body.”¹⁸

This thesis wants to add to the growing collection of primary source material on Hijikata for those dancers, scholars and interested readers who aren’t versed in Japanese. The first half gives a short overview of Hijikata’s life and work, with its main thematic focuses. The second half is a translation of *Inu no jômyaku no shitto suru koto kara* [From Being Jealous of a Dog’s Vein] as published in the 1986 anthology *Bibô no Aozora* [Handsome Blue Sky]. In May 1969, a portion of the text was published under the same name in the magazine

¹⁴ Kurihara Nanako, “Hijikata Tatsumi: The words of *butô*”, in *The Drama Review*, Nr. 1, vol. 44 (Spring 2000): 17.

¹⁵ 舞踏譜 “*butô*-scores”.

¹⁶ Kurihara in *The Drama Review*: 14.

¹⁷ Uno Kuniichi cited in *ibid.* 15.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* 16.

Bijutsu techô [Art Notebook]. A translation by Nanako Kurihara of this section of the text can be found in the aforementioned Spring 2000 issue of *The Drama Review*.¹⁹

¹⁹ Hijikata Tatsumi, “From Being Jealous of a Dog’s Vein”, transl. by Nanako Kurihara in *The Drama Review*, Nr. 1, vol. 44 (Spring 2000): 56-59.

Hijikata Tatsumi's Life and Work

Childhood in Akita

Hijikata Tatsumi was born on the 9th of March 1928 in the village Asahikawa²⁰ in the Prefecture Akita under the name of Yoneyama Kunio. He was the ninth and youngest child of a *soba*²¹ noodle shop owner. Both his younger brothers died shortly after their birth. His father gave him the name “Kunio” after the date of his birth, a name that Hijikata later resented.²² His father came from the same region and was prone to drinking and violence.²³ His mother was 46 years old when he was born. One of Hijikata's distinct memories is how his mother strapped him onto her back and walked through the snow with him to the doctor when he was 5 or 6 years old.²⁴

Motofuji Akiko, Hijikata's widow, recalls looking at a newspaper of his birthday and realizing that the ninth of March 1928 marked the death of the imperial princess, a day on which all Japan wore mourning, and that, by chance, the newspaper on this day also ran an article entitled “A German film: *Road of Darkness* by Josef von Sternberg”²⁵. These events retrospectively seemed to have been a fateful basis for the development of *ankoku butoh*, the “Dance of Utter Darkness”.²⁶

²⁰ 旭川. Now the city of Akita in the Tōhoku region, in the North-eastern corner of the main island of Japan, Honshū.

²¹ Buckwheat noodles.

²² The Chinese characters that make up the name “Kunio” stand for “nine” 九 “day” 日 and “birth” 生. On Hijikata's childhood and resentment of his name, see Motofuji Akiko, *Hijikata Tatsumi to tomo ni* [With Hijikata Tatsumi], (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1990), 22 ff.

²³ “My father used to recite *gidayu*, which he was lousy at, and beat my mother. To my child's eyes he seemed to be measuring the length of every step he took before hitting her.” Hijikata in *The Drama Review*: 50.

²⁴ Motofuji, *Hijikata tatsumi to tomo ni*, 22. Interestingly Hijikata himself writes that this happened when he was 3. See translation of “From Jealous of a Dog's Vein” in this thesis page 31.

²⁵ *Ankoku machi* 暗黒街. This is the translation of the Japanese title. Most likely the film was “Street of Sin”, which appeared 1928, but which wasn't originally credited to Josef von Sternberg.

²⁶ Motofuji, *Hijikata tatsumi to tomo ni*, 22.

The period around the 1930s was a time of famine, especially in the Tōhoku region where Hijikata grew up. Young women were sold off to the “flower districts” into prostitution. Two of Hijikata’s older sisters were married off and three of his older brothers went off to war and never came back.

All my brothers went into the army. Before they left, my father let them drink sake from special sake cups and sent them off saying, “Do a good job and come back!” After the sake, all their faces turned bright red...serious young men, my brothers were! But when they came back, they were ashes in mortuary urns. They turned bright red when they left, and turned to ashes when they came back.²⁷

Hijikata had a very close relationship with his sisters, who spoiled him extremely. He later spoke often of one of his sisters living in his body.²⁸ It is controversial as to whether one of his sisters was really sold off into prostitution or not²⁹, since Hijikata was notorious for embroidering and re-inventing parts of his own biography. What is clear, however, is that the disappearance of his sister and her later re-embodiment were experiences central to the development of Hijikata’s *butoh*.

One day, a casual glance around the house revealed that the furniture was all gone. Furniture and household utensils are something you can’t help but notice. And around that time my older sister, who always sat on the veranda, suddenly disappeared. I thought to myself, maybe this is something older sisters naturally do – disappear from the house.³⁰

Hijikata was considered a wild, unruly child. In 1947, he graduated from the Technical School in Akita one year later than was customary. The reason for this was that he had taken on a bet to urinate on a group of nurses during an outing and been suspended for his behavior. Motofuji notes that this form of erratic conduct would continue to be typical for Hijikata until his death.³¹

²⁷ Hijikata in Hoffmann & Holborn, 127.

²⁸ See translation in this thesis pg 35. For Kurihara, the “lost sister” symbolizes Hijikata’s lost childhood. Nanako Kurihara, “The Most Remote Thing in the Universe: Critical Analysis of Hijikata Tatsumi’s *Butoh* Dance” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1996), 75.

²⁹ There are several references to the “unhappy fate” of his sisters. See Schwellinger, 38 and Goda Nario, “*Ankoku butō ni tsuite*” (On *Ankoku Butō*), in *Hanaga*: unpaginated. Translated in Klein, 84.

³⁰ Hijikata Tatsumi, *Yameru Maihime* [Sick Dancer], (Tokyo: Hakuuisha, 1983), 89-90. Cited and translated in Klein, 6.

³¹ Motofuji, *Hijikata to tomo ni*, 30.

After graduating from school, Hijikata found work in a local steel factory and began daily dance training at the studio of Masumura Katsuko, a former student of Eguchi Takaya.³² An explosion at the factory left Hijikata alive, but in the hospital with serious burns for quite some time. Later, for the stage he would cover up the scars on his back with grease paint or white body makeup. During a trip to Tokyo in 1949, Hijikata saw the first solo performance by Ohno Kazuo, who was at that time still completely unknown although he was already over 40 years old. Ohno's performance deeply impressed Hijikata:

... this drug dance stayed in my memory. That dance has now been transformed into a deadly poison, and one spoonful of it contains all that is needed to paralyze me.³³

Modern dance, appealed to Hijikata because it was German: "I figured that since Germany was hard, its dance too would be hard."³⁴ His decision to study the German dance style was probably also influenced by the practical proximity of the studio, the performances that he had seen by Ishii Baku³⁵ and the mixture of fascination and dread he felt for a country he closely associated with dark violence and death.³⁶ In 1950, Hijikata toured local cities and villages in Akita with Masumura Katsuko's group; two years later he moved to Tokyo with his large collection of books.

³² Eguchi Takaya [1900-1977] and his partner Miya Misako were the first in Japan to introduce their own version of *Neue Tanz* from Germany. They both studied with Mary Wigman in Berlin from 1931 to 1933 and then on their return opened a studio in Japan. Schwelling, 32.

³³ Hijikata Tatsumi, "Naka no sozai/sozai" [Inner Material/Material] originally untitled and published in 1960 as a pamphlet for the performance *Hijikata DANCE EXPERIENCE no kai*. Republished in *Bibô no Aozôra* [Handsome Blue Sky], (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1987): 28-36 with the title added by the editor. English translation by Nanako Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000): 36.

³⁴ Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 36.

³⁵ Ishii Baku [1886-1962], the „father of Japanese modern dance“, was, like Hijikata, born in Akita Prefecture. Unhappy with the ballet training at the opera department of the Imperial Theater in Tokyo, he turned to Isadora Duncan's concept of "free and natural" dance and to the rhythmic gymnastics of Emile Jaques-Dalcroze. He toured Europe and the USA from 1922-1925 extensively with his Partner Ishii Konami and on his return to Tokyo, opened a school for modern dance. He had been especially impressed, during his tour, by Mary Wigman and her movement choirs, but in contrast to Wigman, Baku was less interested in portraying the individual in relation to the universal, than the situation of modern man in the big city. Schwelling, 32.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 41.

The Early Wild Years in Tokyo

In Tokyo, Hijikata lived very much the stereotypic life of a young, poor bohemian artist. He stayed in a flophouse, and had various side jobs as a warehouse keeper, a longshoreman and in a laundry. He visited and befriended the male prostitutes living in city district of Ueno³⁷, and, while trying to make a living on the margins of society, went to a wide range of dance classes: modern dance, jazz, ballet and flamenco.

After visiting various different classes and teachers, he began training with Andô Mitsuko in 1953. One year later, he made his debut on Tokyo's stage with Andô and K. Horiguchi's company, the "Unique Ballet Group". He continued dancing with the group until 1958, changing his name in the process to Kunio Hijikata.³⁸

After training seriously as a dancer for six years, he realized that he did not fit the cool, composed, elegant ideal of the ballet dancers, whom he admired. Although he was highly enthusiastic, he was also clumsy and not very physically suited to the work of a mainstream dancer. He was rather stiff, bow-legged and with one leg shorter than the other, due to a fight in his youth at school.³⁹ Dissatisfied with his own progress as a dancer, Hijikata left Andô's studio and switched to the Association for Contemporary Performing Arts⁴⁰, which especially endorsed the mutual exchange between artists of different genres. Hijikata remarked later in an interview how important this form of work was to him:

[...] people stick to their own little world, their own particular genre and lose sight of it. Lots of people are now calling for an end to genres, but if

³⁷ "My friendship with the male prostitutes at Ueno Kurumazaka is what strongly inclined me toward the art of imitation." Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 39.

³⁸ Jean Viala & Nourit Masson-Sekine, *Butoh- Shades of Darkness* (Tokyo: Shufunotomo, 1988), 62.

³⁹ Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 17 and Schwellinger, 40.

⁴⁰ The *Gendai butai geijutsu kyôkai* 現代舞台芸術協会 was founded in 1957 by Yoneyama Mamako and Kana'i Shigeyuki, with the aim of encouraging a new forum for artists interested in cross-genre collaboration. Schwellinger, 45.

they would just apply the idea of “butoh quality” to everything, the problem would be totally resolved.⁴¹

In December 1958, the Association presented a group performance project, in which Hijikata participated with a small solo. It was for this solo that he finally took on the stage name Hijikata Tatsumi. The project was also his first collaboration with Ohno Kazuo, whose performance he had so admired years before and with whom he would continue to work closely for many years to come.

In the 1950’s, childhood memories of Tōhoku and a nostalgic leaning towards pre-modern Japan were not yet central to Hijikata’s process, but thematically he had already started to turn to the peripheral and irrational, in both himself and society. Jean Genet’s autobiographical novels, *The Thief’s Journal* and *Our Lady of the Flowers*, had just been translated into Japanese. Hijikata read these and translations of other works by Arthur Rimbaud, Comte de Lautréamont, Marquis de Sade and later Antonin Artaud voraciously.⁴² He adored and identified strongly with the rebel Genet. Genet’s writings extoll the lives of the marginalized: the thief, the beggar, the prostitute and the homosexual. Genet turned the values of society upside down in an affirmation of his asocial self. In his world, the more he suffered, the closer he came to the sacred, where the ugly is beautiful and death is life.

Genet was so much a role model that for a time Hijikata performed under the name Hijikata Genet.⁴³ Hijikata’s world seemed quite similar to Genet’s. He met with men “who brought drugs into the toilet” and “who played with guns”.⁴⁴ And he sought the company of thieves and outsiders.⁴⁵

I am able to say that my dance shares a common basis with crime, male homosexuality, festivals, and rituals because it is behavior that explicitly

⁴¹ Hijikata in Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, “Plucking off the Darkness of the Flesh Interview with Tatsumi Hijikata”, transl. Nanako Kurihara, in *The Drama Review*, Nr. 1, vol. 44 (Spring 2000): 49.

⁴² Artaud’s most influential essay “The Theater and Its Double” wasn’t translated into Japanese until 1965.

⁴³ Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 18. Hijikata belonged for a while to a gang, in which anyone could join who loved Rimbaud. See Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 36.

⁴⁴ *ibid*: 38.

⁴⁵ “I grew up always sniffing out criminals, that is to say, such company as theirs.” Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 43. And in the translation in this thesis pg 49.

flaunts its aimlessness in the face of a production oriented society. In this sense my dance, based on human self-activation, including male homosexuality, crime, and a naïve battle with nature, can naturally be a protest against the “alienation of labor” in capitalist society.⁴⁶

What Hijikata found on these margins of society, this dark and suppressed side of humanity, would become the basis of his early work.

Kinjiki – Forbidden Colors⁴⁷

On the 24th of May 1959, Hijikata performed *Kinjiki* [Forbidden Colors], today considered the “first butoh piece”, at the All Japan Art Association’s⁴⁸ yearly dance recital for young dancers. Hijikata had been rehearsing for the piece in the studio of the former Eguchi pupil Tsuda Nobumasa and his wife Motofuji Akiko. Tsuda was very open to new experimental dance and incidentally the head of the press department of the dance association. *Kinjiki* was announced as a new and radical piece by a spectacular young choreographer. Expectations ran high, for what was usually shown at the recitals was far from revolutionary and even musically restricted itself mostly to music by Chopin or Liszt.⁴⁹

Kinjiki, based on a book of the same name by Mishima Yukio, was a complete scandal. Its blatant homosexual theme and technical “inferiority” shocked people into even leaving during the performance.

[...] the greatest significance of *Forbidden Colors* lay in its demonstration of the way in which the substance of Mishima’s novel could be clearly conveyed through a dance. The dance was performed by two males, a man and a boy; a white chicken was strangled to death over the boy’s crotch and then in the darkness there were footsteps, the sounds of the boy escaping and the man pursuing him.⁵⁰

Kinjiki’s complete disdain of given taboos and stage conventions, its challenge of the necessity of methods and systems of dance for performance, resulted in the

⁴⁶ Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 45.

⁴⁷ On the ambiguity of the title see Schwelling, 47.

⁴⁸ *Zen nihon geijutsu buyô kyôkai* 全日本芸術舞踊協会, which is now the *Gendai buyô kyôkai* [Contemporary Dance Association].

⁴⁹ Motofuji, *Hijikata to tomo ni*, 56.

⁵⁰ Gôda in Klein, 80.

exclusion of Hijikata and Ohno Yoshito, who had performed in the role of the boy, from the All Japan Art Association.

Some members of the audience however, hadn't been shocked, but rather inspired. Thirty other members of the association, among them Ohno Kazuo and Tsuda Nobumasa, proclaimed their solidarity with Hijikata and quit the All Japan Art Association. The photographer Hosoe Eikoh was so impressed that he went straight up and introduced himself right after the performance. Together, he and Hijikata later produced an important experimental film and several very famous photo series. Hosoe's membership in the Photographer's Association "VIVO" would also later enable Hijikata to reach a wider and more influential audience.

Although Mishima didn't actually see the performance, he was a regular guest at Tsuda's studio and became an avid admirer of the new dance movement.⁵¹ After *Kinjiki*, he often came to the studio, sometimes giving input during rehearsals.⁵² Mishima's fame gave Hijikata's own work a strong prominent speaker, to which he felt quite indebted:

I owe everything to the constant support of Mishima Yukio, our generation's shot with the magic bullet, who always sets an anxious, unchanging fuse to his own work and who made me create my maiden work, *Kinjiki*.⁵³

Mishima also introduced Hijikata to Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, an erudite scholar of French literature. Shibusawa reached dubious notoriety when his translation of the Marquis de Sade's 1792 *Les Prospérité du Vice Part II* was seized by the authorities under charges of obscenity. This led to a highly covered court case in 1960.⁵⁴ It was through Shibusawa that Hijikata acquired more insight into French literature, so much that he would dedicate a piece to him in 1965.⁵⁵

Kinjiki touched a nerve⁵⁶, a common sentiment shared by many of the artists and writers of that period: a gradually increasing sense of protest against

⁵¹ Cited in Motofuji, *Hijikata to tomo ni*, 62.

⁵² Ibid. 61.

⁵³ Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 42.

⁵⁴ Ibid: 18.

⁵⁵ *Bara-iro no dansu: shibusawasan no ie no hô e* [Rose-colored dance: A La Maison de M. Civeçawa]. See below page 18.

⁵⁶ Tadashi Suzuki in Senda Akihiko, mod., "Ketsujo to shite no gengo=shintai no kasetu" [Language as Lack and Temporary Construction of the Body] in *Gendaishi Techô* Tokyo, April 1977. Transl. Nanako Kurihara "Fragments of

the established art world and against a society, that after the trauma of losing the war, seemed powered by a foreign, an American ideal.

The artist's rebelliousness of the artists articulated itself in their belief in Japan, in the old, dirty, dark, irrational, obscene and penniless Japan that neither wanted to have anything to do with the modest prosperity of the middle-class nor with an establishment proud of its 'modern' achievements.⁵⁷

However, although butoh seemed to them to have the potential to become one of the most powerful embodiments of this feeling of protest, Hijikata's work would never be explicitly political.⁵⁸

Asbestos-kan and Nightclubs

After *Kinjiki*, Hijikata started concentrating solely on his own choreographic work. Motofuji Akiko left the financial security of her marriage with Tsuda to live and work with Hijikata. The building in which the Tsuda school had been housed and which had been mainly financed by Motofuji's father⁵⁹, developed over the next years into a central rehearsal and meeting space that would later be made into a studio stage and living quarters for Hijikata's disciples, who forsook their former lives to come and work with him.

To finance themselves the couple appeared in variety shows and night clubs, first as the show dance duo *Burû ekôzu* [Blue Echoes], later expanding the group to include more dancers from their butoh performances. The nightclub shows secured them an income and provided the experience of close contact to the audience. Some of the acrobatic techniques and tricks from the shows were integrated into the butoh work.⁶⁰

Glass: A Conversation between Hijikata Tatsumi and Suzuki Tadashi" in *The Drama Review*, Nr. 1, vol. 44 (Spring 2000): 62. "My first impression of Mr. Hijikata's work was that of a sense of crisis."

⁵⁷ Haerdter & Kawai, 21.

⁵⁸ Motofuji in Stuhlmann: 8-9

⁵⁹ Motofuji's father had worked in the asbestos business, therefore giving the studio its later name: Asbestos-kan アスベスト館. The Asbestos-kan was auctioned off by the Tokyo District Court in 2003.

⁶⁰The technique of hooking two dancers to the shoulders of another and twirling them around, for example, was used in *Bara iro no dansu*. Schwellinger, 76.

Since the shows were fairly simple and did not require advanced skills, participation in them later became more and more mandatory for the young dancers wanting to study butoh with Hijikata. He used them as teaching sessions to test their mettle and confront them with the harsh reality of insecurity and shame connected to the experience of having to appear naked on stage. From the 1970s onward, involving the students in the shows also served to fully cut them off from their former surroundings and foster the development of a concentrated close-knit group. With the days filled with chores and rehearsals and the nights with performances, little or no private time remained. In order to attend the erratic and normally unannounced rehearsal and instruction sessions, the students moved in or near the Asbestos-kan, finally forming an almost sectarian community.⁶¹

The Transition Phase: *Anma* and *Bara-Iro no Dansu*

In the four-year period between *Kinjiki* and the *Anma* [The Masseur], Hijikata's choreographies were mostly driven by the themes of violence and eroticism, homosexuality and transvestitism. The rigid, contained body that had surfaced in *Kinjiki* served as the prototype for the mainly male bodies in his work. *Anma* in 1963 was a turning point towards more Japanese themes. It featured the first use of white body makeup, which would become a butoh tradition⁶². It was also, of all his work, the piece most similar to the typical happenings so prevalent in the performing arts of the USA at that time. Motofuji describes the scenario:

Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Akasegawa Genpei, Kazekura Shô and other artists packed up the dancers and carried them onto the stage. [...] Hijikata got on a bicycle and rode all over the stage yelling and causing chinks between the faultily laid out tatami mats. The dancers had clothespins in their hair as well, played baseball or ran around eating cake, so that they kept falling over. Because the dancers, dressed only in pink and green underclothes, fell down while running, the hem opened up, every time revealing the ice-pack dangling between their thighs and the whole hall went into a frenzy.

⁶¹ More detailed description on the working conditions in Mikami Kayo, *Utsuwa toshiteshintai* (Tokyo: Hashôbô, 1993), 80 ff.

⁶² On white make-up's connotations of femininity see Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 215-216.

The old women playing the *shamisen*, who neither knew our intensions nor understand what was going on, tried several times to flee out of fear, but were apprehended by Hijikata, who grabbed their sleeves. Hijikata completely relished the role of “enfant terrible”.⁶³

Anma marked a tendency away from literary references towards more specifically Japanese elements, such as the old ladies, who embodied a nostalgic period before the Second World War.⁶⁴ Through the use of *kimono*, Hijikata also began to rediscover archetypical Japanese forms and gestures.

Anma was an experiment in the overstepping of genre boundaries for both the artists and the dancers involved. Painters became performers, dancers were more or less “degraded” to moving objects and the border between audience and performance became diffuse. The culmination of this form of intensive interaction between the visual arts and butoh was *Bara-iro no dansu: shibusawasan no ie no hô e* [Rose-colored dance: A La Maison de M. Civeçawa] in 1965. Hijikata was simultaneously its director, producer and main dancer. He was joined on stage by Ohno Kazuo, Kasai Akira and Ishii Mitsutaka. The stage art was by important avant-garde artists such as Nakanishi Natsuyuki, Akasegawa Gempei. The poster for the performance, a collage-like amalgamation of traditional Japanese symbols, pop icons and surrealism, was by Yokô Tadanori, who became quite famous for it.⁶⁵ In place of a program, the audience received a cedar box filled with three colorful sugar candy objects, a hand, lips and a penis shape, designed by Mitsuo Kano.

The scene was lighter and slightly less chaotic than *Anma*, but what still characterized the performance was the juxtaposition of completely disparate elements.

Sho Kazakura and Motoharu Jônouchi were sitting on the stage draped in naval flags. A nervous barber flooded by spotlights ran an electric razor over their heads in time to the music. Hijikata shouted, “ We

⁶³ Motofuji, *Hijikata to tomo ni*, 127. The *shamisen* is a three-stringed long neck guitar covered with cat skin. It was introduced to Japan around the end of the 16th century and is closely connected to a traditional image of *kabuki* and *geisha*.

⁶⁴ Hijikata had recruited the women in a traditional public bath, where they sung songs from the late 19th and early 20th century.

⁶⁵ For a closer look at the individual elements of the poster see Yoichi Sumi, Fujio Maeda, Takashi Morishita, Yasuhiro Yanai, ed., *The Iconology of Rose-colored Dance-Reconstructing Tasumi Hijikata* (Tokyo: Keio University, 2000), 32-33.

still have to perform tomorrow, so only cut off half of their hair.” Students who had come as part-time help to build the backdrop for Nakanishi’s stage art, which consisted of a framework of boards on which a white cloth was draped-also participated just as they were, as human *objets*. Victor dogs stolen from the front of record shops also participated here and there on the stage...Koichi Tamano had just entered the dance group, so he did not join the dancers. He had a beautiful and colorful vagina painted on his back and became a vaginal *objet*. [...] Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno danced a duet in white and pink dresses to the sounds of guitar solos and Taishō era nonsense music. The white and bright pink feeling gradually changed into a decadent atmosphere.⁶⁶

The performance was itself a collage of elements, emotions and creative input from a range of different sources. Although the light color theme and amusing antics seemed superficially like a contrast to Hijikata’s focus on darkness, in his own words, it was a continuation: “Audiences pay money to enjoy evil. We must make compensation for that. Both the “rose-colored dance” and the “dance of utter darkness” must spout blood in the name of the experience of evil.”⁶⁷

One year later, Hijikata was persuaded by Hosoe Eikoh to return to Akita Prefecture for a series of photos that were later to be published 1969 under the title *Kamaitachi* [Sickle Weasel]. After the death of his mother in 1954, Hijikata had not returned to the Tōhoku region. Now he recognized in the deformed bodies of the farmers, shaped by everyday labor, the same bent-over, cowering embryonic figures that he had developed in Tokyo in protest of the tall, elegant Western ballet body. The *Kamaitachi* laid a strong basis for the mystic concept of Tōhoku that would later become central to the butoh of the 70s and 80s.

The Rebellion of the Flesh: *Nikutai no Hanran*

In 1968, Hijikata confided in an interview with Shibusawa “ I strongly feel that I’ve reached the age where I must definitely do Hijikata Tatsumi by Hijikata Tatsumi.”⁶⁸ That June, he performed in *Ojune shō* [Excerpts from Genet], a recital by Ishii Mitsutaka. He then developed his parts in *Ojune shō* into scenes for a solo performance, which drastically marked a break and reorientation: *Hijikata*

⁶⁶ Motofuji, *Hijikata to tomo ni*, 138-140. The “Victor dogs” were the symbol of the British company EMI.

⁶⁷ Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 39.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*: 55.

Tatsumi to nihonjin - nikutai no hanran [Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese – Rebellion of the Body]. *Nikutai no hanran*, presented at the Japanese Youth Hall [*Nihon Seinen-kan*] in October 1968 signaled a definite turn in Hijikata's work away from Western influences towards thinking about Japanese identity. At the same time, it quite clearly included citations from Antonin Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*, which had been translated into Japanese three years before.⁶⁹

Hijikata prepared for the physically demanding performance with a strict training program:

A month before, Hijikata prepared his body with a strict diet. He drank just milk and a little weak *miso*, but no tea. He went running every day, even on the hottest days. He also exposed his skin to artificial lights in order to get a deep tan. He wore no makeup during the performance. The long-term preparation involved physical training, fasting and being alone and avoiding any association with other people. Only at the end of his preparation did he concern himself with the staging of the performance.⁷⁰

The result was a body in superb but frightening condition. The performance pulsed with uncontrolled savagery and destructive aggression. The critic Gôda Nario recalls his shock and “the confusion into which this spectator was plunged at simultaneously feeling that I was being held in contempt- I do not know a dancer who is as arrogant as Hijikata is on the stage- yet at the same time feeling absolutely compelled to watch his every move.”⁷¹

The performance began with the loud noise of a toy airplane crashing into the brass plates hanging on stage, followed by a mystic procession through the audience: Hijikata on a wooden carriage carried by several men, a pig in a baby crib and a frightened rabbit on top of a pole. Upon arrival on stage, Hijikata stripped off the white wedding kimono that he had been wearing backwards, to reveal nothing more than an oversize golden phallus underneath. He danced wildly, crashing into the gigantic metal plates and ending the first part of the performance by hanging himself from the neck of a rooster. In the second part, Hijikata appeared dressed in a gigantic stain dress and knee socks. He paraded around the stage in parody of flamenco and other Western styles of dance. The

⁶⁹ The golden phallus was reminiscent of Artaud's “Heliogabalus”. Johannes Meinhardt, “Hijikata Tatsumi” in *Butoh- Tanz der Dunkelheit*. exh. cat. (Berlin: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 2004), 61.

⁷⁰ Ashikawa Yoko cited in Hoffmann & Holborn, 16.

⁷¹ Gôda in Klein, 85.

evening came to a close with Hijikata spectacularly flying over the heads of the audience, spread-eagled with ropes around his hands and feet pulling him towards the rear of the theater in a grotesque image of Christ.⁷² As he had more or less announced in the interview, *Nikutai no hanran* “signaled a total immersion in his native roots, his memory, and the assertion of his own form of dance [...]”.⁷³

The Discovery of the Female Body

From the late 1960s, Hijikata had begun to grow his hair long, wear kimonos and speak in women’s language.⁷⁴ Until this period, butoh had been dominated by hard, aggressive male bodies and “male” themes such as violence. Now, however, parallel to his growing fascination for his own childhood memories, Hijikata began to speak of his sister, and sometimes his mother, living in his body and being a driving creative force.⁷⁵ Gôda Nario believes that this was a concrete starting point for the ultimate development of the canonized butoh style⁷⁶

[...] his work achieved a scale of exquisite gentleness, calm and even magnanimity enriched by Hijikata’s continuous inner dialogue with both his sister and his own youth.⁷⁷

In the 1970s female figures, old prostitutes, grotesque fairies began increasingly appearing in his work

In the four years following *Nikutai no Hanran*, Hijikata did not appear on stage. During this period there were about twenty students living in and near Asbestos-kan. More and more women entered the group, among them Ashikawa Yôko, Saga Kobayashi & Momoko Mimura, who would in the late 70s constitute the core of the female group *Hakutôbô*. Ashikawa especially became the epitome of Hijikata’s butoh, his central dancer and partner. None of these women had any

⁷² Viala, 70-71; Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000): 20.

⁷³ Hoffmann & Holborn, 8.

⁷⁴ Japanese language is gendered in terms of words, style and pronunciation.

⁷⁵ Hijikata cited in Viala, 84: “My sisters, who were sold so that my family might survive, are within me. I nourish them with my body.”

⁷⁶ Gôda in Klein, 85.

⁷⁷ Gôda in Klein, 84.

form of formal dance training; Ashikawa was a painter, before she began working with Hijikata.

To adapt to this influx of young, untrained bodies, Hijikata began focusing on techniques of metamorphosis, as well as slower and smaller movements with the center of gravity low in the pelvis. Although he had in 1976 articulated a strong disdain for the female body⁷⁸, he now began embracing it: “Women are born with the ability to experience the illogical part of reality and are consequently capable of incarnating the illogical side of dance. If we imagine that a man’s body gathers itself around a center, then a woman’s opens outward in an act of scattering of seeds.”⁷⁹ Women seemed to Hijikata more capable of embodying that which had not yet been conquered by rationality.

Man, removed from earthy and maternal forces, possesses a ‘poetical’ body- a body touched by the spirit and prisoner of the logical world. Only woman has retained the carnal body, as yet unarticulated in language.⁸⁰

However, not only was the female body more capable of embodying what Hijikata sought, in his eyes the male body had lost its strength of expression as a result of the growing Americanization of Japanese modern society: “Japanese men have been emasculated by the West.”⁸¹

Tôhoku Kabuki

In September 1972, Hijikata returned to the stage with a monumental performance series entitled *Shiki no tame no nijû-nana ban* [Twenty-seven nights for Four Seasons]. As the title implied, it consisted of five full-length evening-long pieces, symbolizing the four seasons, *Hôsôtan* [Story of Smallpox], *Susame dama*, *Gaishi-kô* [Study of an Insulator], *Nadare-Ame* [Dribbling Candy] and *Gibasan*.⁸² Each piece was shown five or six times over a period of twenty-seven

⁷⁸ See translation in this thesis page 36.

⁷⁹ Hijikata cited in Viala, 84.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Hoffmann & Holborn, 14 citing from Nario Gôda, “Tatsumi hijikata, Japan’s Avant-Garde Dancer,” NHK Broadcast, August 1976.

⁸² The titles of Hijikata’s works are often equivocal and untranslatable. *Susame dama* could possibly mean “a beautiful woman/prostitute who grew wild”, while

nights to a largely enthusiastic audience at the *Âto shiatâ Shinjuku bunka* [Shinjuku Cultural Art Theater]. This serial work was the largest of Hijikata's projects and it decisively established what is now considered the "classical" butoh style: the white body makeup, the grotesque grimaces, the bowlegged walk, and the turned-back white eyes.⁸³

The Tôhoku elements and movements in the pieces, such as the stamping of high wooden sandals, "snowstorms in early spring, rural animals, and the music, movement and costumes of a pre-modern time, all worked on the modern audience's nostalgia and feelings of disconnection from this time and loss."⁸⁴

In an enthusiastic article published shortly after the performance, Gunji Masakatsu, one of the top scholars on traditional Japanese performing arts, praised butoh's rediscovery of the primordial energy of the common people, which had been the creative power of the traditional *kabuki* theater at its zenith. He praised "the beauty of the vulgar and the obscene", which had marked *kabuki* at the end of the 19th century and, although lost in contemporary *kabuki*, had reemerged in butoh.⁸⁵ Or as Watanabe Moriaki noted in a different context: "at critical moments of Japanese theatre history, it seemed as if an archetype of our native imagination had surfaced from beneath the darkness."⁸⁶

Hijikata's leaning toward the Tôhoku influence fit in well into a period that was enthusiastically rediscovering the scholarly nativism of Yanagita Kunio⁸⁷

"dama" [actually "tama"] also implies a ball or something round. *Gibasan* is a regional name for a particular seaweed, which grows off the coast of Akita. See Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000): 26.

⁸³ On the development of white body paint in butoh, see Ichikawa in Klein, 69 and Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 111ff + 215ff; on the bow-legged stance and motion called *ganimata* see Gôda in Klein, 87 and Kuniyoshi, 11-12; on *beshimi*-the turning back of the eyes see Iwabuchi in Klein, 75,76; www.ne.jp/asahi/butoh/itto/kasait/k-note.htm; Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 217.

⁸⁴ Shannon Caitlin Moore, *Ghosts of Pre-Modernity: Butoh and the Avant-Garde* (Thesis, University of Texas, Austin, 2003), 45.

⁸⁵ Gunji Masakatsu, "Shi to iu koten butô" [The classic butoh by the name of death], originally publ. in *Bijutsu Techô.*, February 1973. Republ. in Research Center for the Arts and Arts Administration, Keio University., *Shiki no tame no njûschichiban* [Twenty-seven Evenings for Four Seasons] (Tokyo: Keio University, 1998), 39-41.

⁸⁶ Cited in Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 207.

⁸⁷ Yanagita Kunio [1875-1962] is the "father" of modern Japanese folklore studies. He is best known for his collections of rural fairy tales. Yanagita's

and following a national cultural fantasy of a historic “authentic” Japan.

Butoh among other post-war avant-garde arts, operated as an attempt to unleash the forces that industrial civilization was bent on controlling. Butoh not only helped to emotionally articulate the despair and pain after the war, but it sought to heal a wounded cultural memory [...]”⁸⁸

However, a small group of intellectuals and artists, among them Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, began to distance themselves from Hijikata’s work.⁸⁹ They felt that a “regionalization” of the body, an over-determination of Hijikata’s work by specific native images, would run the risk of drifting into a mere spectacle of exoticism and lose the capability of appealing to broader human experience.

Hijikata was not perturbed and insisted that Tōhoku was not simply a geographical location, but a territory of the imagination, a realm of the suppressed: “I come from Tōhoku, but there is Tōhoku in everybody. There is even Tōhoku in England.”⁹⁰

The Last Years

In 1973, Hijikata stopped dancing at age 45 for reasons that are not quite clear. For the next three years he concentrated mainly on choreographing the performances of *Hakutōbo* at the Asbestos-kan. After *Hakutōbō*’s last performance, *Geisen jō no Okugata* [Lady on the Whalestring] in 1976, Hijikata completely retreated into the background leaving the stage to other, younger choreographers. He focused on writing his autobiographical novel *Yameru Maihime* [Sick Dancer], which was published in March 1983, and on managing his nightclubs.⁹¹ Two exceptions were his direction of Ohno Kazuo’s

writings were Hijikata’s favorite reading in the 1970s and 80s. Kurihara *The Most Remote Thing*, 199. Susan Klein has analyzed Yanagita’s most important influences on butoh: Klein, 32ff.

⁸⁸ Moore, 57.

⁸⁹ Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000):21.

⁹⁰ Hijikata in a conversation with a English theater director cited in Hoffmann & Holborn, 9 and Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000):21. Originally in “Kyokutanna gōsha: Hijikata Tatsumi shi intabyū” [The extreme luxury: Interview with Mr. Hijikata Tatsumi] in *W-Notation*, July:2-27.

⁹¹ Viala, 88.

breakthrough solo piece *Ra Aruhenchîna-kô* [Admiring La Argentina] in 1977 and the choreography of Ashikawa Yoko's solo performance in Paris in 1978.

In 1983, after the publication of his book, Hijikata started a comeback with a film-and-slide program of his own work at the Asbestos-kan and began choreographing anew. His new pieces continued to focus on female images, mainly embodied by Ashikawa, and featured regional influences, but “the excellence of the new work consisted in the way that the space, in which bits and pieces were left scattered like objects set completely adrift, was transformed at a single stroke into a gorgeous mandala.”⁹²

Hijikata's final pieces, in which he wanted to bring the “return to Tôhoku” on stage, were the *Tôhoku kabuki keikaku 1-4* [Tôhoku Kabuki Plan 1-4] series, performed by Ashikawa and other dancers from *Hakutôbo* between March and December 1985. In the video material of *Tôhoku kabuki keikaku 4*, we can see that the general mood is much lighter. The costumes are of a glowing orange. There are still many typically Japanese elements, such as the wooden *geta* shoes, but the stage is not so cluttered with objects, as in earlier pieces. The movements have become softer and more humorous.

Hijikata was unable to see the performance of the final piece in the series on stage. He was diagnosed with liver cancer in November and died on the 21. January 1986, after a six-week hospital stay, at the age of 57. On his deathbed, Hijikata gave his final performance:

And then, with a “se...no”, grabbing everyone with both his hands, Hijikata righted himself up and danced a beautiful dance of death. Wing like movements like those of Anna Pavlova's dying swan. Hijikata's final dance in this life seemed to me also like a prologue of his journey to the everlasting life.

He grew tired, swallowed a bit of water, rested and then with a “se...no” and the embrace of a whole group of people, righted himself up again and, as if wanting to show the world-to-come his will to dance as the spirit of *butoh*, he again resumed dancing.⁹³

⁹² Gôda cited in Klein, 81.

⁹³ Motofuji, *Hijikata to tomo ni*, 12.

On this translation

Themes and motifs

Hijikata had a number of motifs and narratives that repeatedly cropped up in his stage performances and writings, such as that of his sister dwelling in his body and the *izume* baskets of his childhood.⁹⁴ Where such reoccurring motifs turn up in the following translation, they have been cross-referenced as well as possible. However, I would like to go into more detail on three of such motifs here: in-betweenness or *aimai*⁹⁵, the sickle and chickens.

The concept of *ma* [in-betweenness] has far-reaching implications in Japanese culture. It pervades social behavior, architecture, the performing arts, even the language itself. *Ma* expresses the middle ground between two things, states or concepts without being either or both. Motofuji Akiko explained very simply what this means for butoh:

In ballet, for example, there are positions, and when dancers change from position 1 to position 2 they move their arms and legs in a straight way, only thinking of the two positions but not about the area in between. What we are trying to teach is to do it the other way round, explore the area in between and fill it with various possible movements you wouldn't usually do to get from point A to point B.⁹⁶

Although Hijikata doesn't express such concepts explicitly in his texts, there are nonetheless many sections describing the encounter of oppositions and their in-between states, such as the meeting of wet and dry in steam.⁹⁷

Another more solid motif is that of the "sickle". In the following translation, Hijikata writes of a blood band that he perceives between himself and the work of the painter Fontana, who became known for cutting into his paintings, revealing the "reality" of the surface by giving it three-dimensionality.⁹⁸ The slashing and cutting through something, reminded him of his childhood games with a sickle and a jug of water.

⁹⁴ See Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 77, 79.

⁹⁵ *ma* 間: "in-betweenness" and *aimai* 曖昧: "ambiguity".

⁹⁶ Motofuji in Stuhlmann: 8.

⁹⁷ See translation below page 51.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

I'd take my sickle and cut the water in the jug. 'Separate into two,' I'd command. This act somehow seemed to make time stand still. I wonder if this experience is yet another blood relative to my dance. It can't be acquired through training; it's something that your body teaches itself. I always used to say about my dancing, 'I'm a dancer neither of experience nor of mastery through practice.' When you encounter such experiences, things will emerge from your body naturally. I've often said in the past that we don't have time to 'express' and 'represent.'⁹⁹

Mark Holborn has analyzed the cut of the sickle as synonymous to cutting through “the barrier between the external world and the other world of imagination. It was like slashing the curtain to reveal the stage.”¹⁰⁰

The sickle motif appeared again in Hosoe Eikoh's photo book of Hijikata *Kamaitachi* [Sickle Weasel]. The *kamaitachi* is a phenomenon in which skin rips spontaneously. People used to believe that an invisible weasel was responsible for splitting the skin, therefore the name “sickle weasel”. But in a text from 1985, Hijikata writes that it was not he, but Hosoe who was the weasel in this collaboration, “he who is pressing the shutter is the weasel. Ripping apart the space [...]”.¹⁰¹

In the same text, Hijikata describes the traumatic experience of a weasel entering the family hen house. Chickens also always played a prominent role in his work. They appeared frequently in both his performances and his writings. In both cases, they were strangled on stage. In *Kinjiki*, the chicken was smothered between the thighs of the boy and in *Nikutai no Hanran*, the rooster was suspended from the flies with its head down. At the end of the first act, Hijikata hung from its neck, breaking it in the process. Although the chicken was always quite brutally manhandled, Gôda Nario nevertheless reads this as another expression of love towards the chicken, a love fostered in the familiar proximity of this animal in rural life. Chickens were slaughtered for special occasions or festivities, so it is natural that they should also be associated with joy.

Although the boy in *Forbidden Colors* directed the release of his dark passion, which burst forth from the inner depths of his flesh, towards the

⁹⁹ See also Hijikata in *The Drama Review* (2000): 75.

¹⁰⁰ Hoffmann & Holborn, 9.

¹⁰¹ Hijikata Tatsumi, “Itachi no hanashi” [Story of a Weasel], in *Asubesto-kan tsûshin 9 go* [Correspondances from Asbestos-kan Nr.9] (Tokyo: Asbestos-kan, 1988): 36.

chicken, this passion might be regarded as a form of love, as part of a natural cycle that occurred occasionally in everyday farming life.¹⁰²

According to Motofuji, the chicken in *Kinjiki* did not die during the performance; it was happily sitting on Hijikata's arm when she came to see him in his dressing room after the performance. She also remembered the chicken occasionally laying eggs during rehearsals.¹⁰³

Mikami Kayô recalls that when she first came to Hijikata's studio in 1978, he said to her "This is where I am raising a chicken." and pointed at Ashikawa Yôko.¹⁰⁴ In the following translation, chickens appear as a "food, which frightened both [my] mind and body to death".¹⁰⁵ Here Hijikata mentions that he ate chicken excessively in his childhood, probably leading to this interesting obsession. Why he ate so much chicken is easily explained: chickens were the basis of the broth his father needed for the noodles he sold.

The Background of "From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein"

The following text is a translation of "From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein". It was originally published in 1976 by Yukawa Shobô as the fourth publication in the series *Sôsho tokeru sakana* [Melting Fish Series]. The fragments, their order of print and the layout with the inserted star symbols between the individual sections were chosen and arranged by Tsuruoka Yoshihisa, at Hijikata's bequest. Some of the sections are complete short essays, some only excerpts or fragments. The following is an overview of the origins of the individual sections, in the order of their appearance.

- 1) excerpt from *Yami no naka no denryû* [The electric current in the darkness], previously unpublished
- 2) full text of [*Haha to watashi*] *Kakumaki no haha* [(Mother and I) The Kakumaki¹⁰⁶ mother], previously unpublished
- 3) excerpt, origin and date of publication unclear

¹⁰² Gôda in Klein, 83.

¹⁰³ Motofuji, *Hijikata to tomo ni*, 55 ff.

¹⁰⁴ Mikami, 81-82.

¹⁰⁵ See translation below page 37.

¹⁰⁶ See page 32, footnote 123.

- 4) full text of *Inu no jômyaku ni shitto suru kara* [From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein]. Published in *Bijutsu Techô* [Art Notebook], Tokyo, May 1969, Bijutsu Shuppansha
- 5) excerpt from *Hito o nakaseru yô na karada no irekae ga, watashitachi no sensô kara tsutawatte iru* [Shifting into a body, that can make a person cry, is something handed down to us by our ancestors], previously unpublished
- 6) excerpt, see (5)
- 7) excerpt, see (5)
- 8) excerpt from *Nikutai ni nagamerareta nikutaigaku* [School of the Flesh Gazed at by the Flesh]
- 9) excerpt, see (8)
- 10) excerpt, origin and date of publication unclear
- 11) full text from the pamphlet for the recital of Ishii Mitsutaka *Butô jene* [Butoh Genet] at the Dai-ichi Seimei Hall on 28. August, 1967
- 12) excerpt, origin and date of publication unclear
- 13) full text of *Inazuma-tori no gakka* [The artist who captures lightning]. Published in 1971 as the commentary text in Shimizu Akira's collage catalog *Me-numa* [Eye Swamp], Daimon shuppan.¹⁰⁷
- 14) Excerpt from *Hikari to yami o kakenukeru (Kara Jurô to no taidan)* [Overtaking light and darkness (Diskussion with Kara Jurô)], published in *Umi* [Sea], May 1970, Chuô Kôronsha

The complete anthology as it appears here was also republished in a special Hijikata Tatsumi issue of *Daburu noteshion* [Double Notation] in July, 1985.

In accordance in common academic translation practices, square brackets in the following translation indicate words or phrases inserted by the translator. Unusual terms or expressions are noted in Japanese in the footnotes. Occasionally, notes on interpretation have also been included. Some sections have already been published in translation. Where this is the case, it has been noted for comparison and further reference. If the translation differs strongly from the version in this thesis, this has been commented on.

¹⁰⁷ For more on the relationship between Hijikata and Shimizu Akira, see Tanemura Suehiro, *Hijikata Tatsumi no hô e- nikuta no 60nendai* [Towards Hijikata Tatsumi – the 1960s of the Flesh] (Tokyo: Kawade shobô shinsha, 2001), 42-98.

Translation From Being Jealous of a Dog's Vein

He was biting into an insulator¹⁰⁸ when he rolled off the roof. [That] man was exiled from his hometown for that reason alone and if I think of that hand gripping the towel¹⁰⁹, [I am], in that very moment, scorched pitch black.

*

Even though [I] say it's the very first memory of my mother, it's not really the first, since I am the eleventh [child]. It was as the youngest, or rather, last child¹¹⁰ that [she] dropped me flap, flap and sensing that I was the eleventh one to have been dropped, I didn't, when it was time for it, raise my voice to cry out like newborns usually do. My mother was the kind of person who was back at her job, standing in the wash kitchen the day after she bore me¹¹¹.

She would get up at around three o'clock in the morning and step down to the earthen floor of the *doma*¹¹² with a hatchet in her hand. After she had split the water in the jug¹¹³, she would light the fire for breakfast¹¹⁴. Her hair wasn't tied up [in a bun], and so the fire burned furiously in her hair¹¹⁵. When she stood next to

¹⁰⁸ One of the pieces from Hijikata's 1972 performance series *Shiki no tame no nijûshichiban* [27 Evenings for 4 Seasons] was called *Gaishi-kô* [Study of an Insulator]. Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000): 20.

¹⁰⁹ *A furoshiki* 風呂敷: a small square of cloth mostly used for wrapping things in. Somewhat like an oversized handkerchief.

¹¹⁰ *suekko* 末っ子 and *masshi* 末子 are different readings of the same characters.

¹¹¹ For a similar section on his mother see "Kazedaruma" in Hoffmann & Holborn, 126.

¹¹² The *doma* 土間 is a stamped earthen floor, which precedes the actual living quarters in a traditional Japanese house. It is slightly lower than the rest of the house and serves as a transition space between inside and outside.

¹¹³ She had to split the water with a hatchet because it had frozen overnight.

¹¹⁴ *Meshi* 飯 is synonymous for both rice and meals in general.

¹¹⁵ Metaphorically.

the cooking stove, [I] wondered if mother¹¹⁶ wasn't burning along with the fire. If I looked at her from that angle it seemed to me as if some kind of frightful creature had stepped down onto the *doma*.

She weighed 79kilos¹¹⁷ and had high blood pressure (which is why she shaved the top of her head every day for better ventilation). She simply sat down next to the fireside¹¹⁸ with a thud and it wasn't clear if she was there or not. Once in a while, when [we] noticed her sitting there, [we] felt her to be such a strange person that everyone laughed. But it's not as if that wasn't meant affectionately.

I caught diphtheria when I was three. When evening came, I somehow had this strange cough. And then, without a word, she tied me onto her back and rapidly walked out into the night to the doctor. On that occasion on her back, I had this moment in which I thought "Now!" One of those things between mother and child, you see. But it was more the child, who was thinking "Now!" It seems that mother didn't feel it at all, and when we arrived at the hospital, she was still gasping for breath.

You see... 'my old man' was a scary father¹¹⁹. He threw things at the children, but the one he beat first was mother. Once, she ran out to the *doma*...tap, tap, tap¹²⁰... but he ran after her. The sound of hitting... slap, slap, slap. Just my mother silently being beaten¹²¹.

¹¹⁶ *Ofukuro* おふくろ. Literally „honorable bag“. An affectionate term for one's own mother. In the past, an honorific term. Counterpart to *oyaji*: see footnote 120.

¹¹⁷ Literally 21 *kan* 貫. A *kan* is an old Japanese unit of measurement equivalent to ca. 3,75 kg.

¹¹⁸ *Iroribatade* 囲炉裏端で. An *irori* is a hearth directly constructed into the floor over which the main cooking is done and which was traditionally one of the main sources of heat for the whole family.

¹¹⁹ *oyaji ga kowai oyaji de ne*. *Oyaji* 親父 is an affectionate term for „my old man/my own father“.

¹²⁰ Onomatopoeia is very important in the Japanese language in general and particularly for Hijikata, who often made up his own words and sounds. Whereas in English onomatopoeic words tend to be verbs or the noun forms of verbs, in Japanese onomatopoeic words are often used as adverbs. They capture a physical sense or atmosphere rather than simply mimicking a sound and are therefore difficult to translate in English. See Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000): 15 for a description in the use of onomatopoeic language in *butoh* training.

¹²¹ *Damate tatakareteiru* 黙って叩かれている.

One day, there clearly was a really big fight. In that moment it just suddenly flared up. This happened when I was really quite small, so they were still quite young, you see. [Mother] put on the *kakumaki*¹²², stuck about four heads under it and walked! In fact, we walked more than 8 km¹²³ to the neighboring village Tentokuji¹²⁴. Halfway there, I got tired, but hung on for dear life. If [she had been] a normal mother, she wouldn't have taken it so seriously¹²⁵, but [she wasn't and] I had this scary idea that she might pluck us off one by one, throw us aside and leave us sitting by the roadside. In the end, father came and made us come back home.

My family had a noodle shop and were part-time farmers. So in the busy farming season, they went to work in the fields from early in the morning. The children were put in round tubs made of rice straw called *izume*¹²⁶, used for rice, and were set down on the ridges between the rice fields. We were brought there at around seven o'clock in the morning and left to ourselves until the moon came out. But of course, at mealtimes, mother came and let me drink something.

Stuffed into an *izume*, with all kinds of things pressed in around me, tied in so that I can't get out, I wet myself, as children do. And so the nether regions of the body begin to itch. So I cry. Not just me; all over the fields plopped down here and there. Loud, pitiful crying... but it doesn't reach those working [in the fields]! Because the sky is much too wide in the rice fields, and then there's the wind. That's why, looking at the sky, I thought to myself "you damned idiot".¹²⁷

¹²² *Kakumaki* 角巻 is a large, four-cornered blanket, that can be laid over the shoulders. Mainly used by women. The term is specific to the Tōhoku region.

¹²³ Two *ri*. A *ri* 里 is an old Japanese unit for measuring distances and is approximately equal to 4 km.

¹²⁴ 天徳寺 literally „tempel of heavenly virtues“.

¹²⁵ *mō sukoshi taka wo kukureru* もう少しタカをくくれる. Literally „to underrate it a bit more“, i.e. not take it so seriously. In other words, she would have born the mishandling thorough her husband's beatings a bit longer.

¹²⁶ *Izume* 飯詰 are baskets made of rice straw used to keep food warm or cold or, in the northern farming regions, to carry children to the fields.

¹²⁷ In this text it is not quite clear if the „idiot“ is the sky or the parents or both. But this story of the *izume* and the crippled legs of the children is central to Hijikata's later work. It turns up in a number of other texts, for example in “Kazedaruma” in Hoffmann & Holborn, 127, where it is more clearly the sky who is the idiot.

When evening came and [I] was taken out, [I] couldn't stand. My legs were completely folded up. I had become a cripple¹²⁸! This child absolutely refused to look into its family's faces. The [basis for the] "folded joints"¹²⁹ lies therein. It is a comedy and [a] very serious [affair]; having one's wings trimmed¹³⁰. As if the legs have simply slipped away and fled the body. Where did the legs, that have gone away forever, go? I think, only the body of a child, bullied to the utmost by an *izume*, knows this.

There seems to have been no, so called, *mimai*¹³¹ when mother and father became a couple. There was a bridge somewhere and they came walking from one side and the other. He took her on his back and accompanied her home. That was that. Father's family was that of the village headman¹³², so there were many "older sisters"¹³³ there. Mother was, in fact, one of those. She had been entrusted to them from the time when she was small. That was to reduce the number of mouths to feed in her family.¹³⁴ Then [father] fell in love¹³⁵. Even though they

¹²⁸ An *izari* いざり is a cripple who can only move on his hands and knees.

¹²⁹ This concept of the *tatamareta kansetsu/ashi* 畳まれた関節/足 (folded joints/legs) was an important element of Hijikata's Butoh. A body that had alienated itself from the will to stand upright, a body that no longer made decisions by will alone, a body not manipulated by will. See Mikami Kayô, *Utsuwa to shiteshintai* [Body as Vessel] (Tokyo: Hashôbô, 1993), 88 ff.

¹³⁰ *seppa tsumatte iru* 切羽詰まっている: "be driven into a corner/be in a fix". This is a state that Hijikata tried induce in his students by inflicting extreme psychological and physical situations on them, for example by giving them conflicting instructions or forcing them to dance naked in his night clubs. He believed that when the body has been forced into a corner and can no longer make conscious decisions, the dancer will find the 'authentic' state of 'being' and will stop merely 'acting' the part. Ibid.

¹³¹ *mimai* 見合い are pre-marriage interview visits to formally meet the partner for the first time before a marriage, mostly with a matchmaker.

¹³² *murachô* 村長: the village "elder".

¹³³ *merashi* めらし are young unmarried women. In the northern Tohoku region, the term is used for grown-up daughters, both own and adopted. In this case, Hijikata is speaking of adopted "sisters".

¹³⁴ *kuchiberashi* 口減らし: poor families gave away some of their family members to more well-to-do families for them to raise. See footnote 134.

¹³⁵ *misomeru* 見染め. Literally "to see and be stained". An old and unusual term for "falling in love." Nowadays *misomeru* is written with the Chinese character for "to see for the first time" 見初める. The older term carries slightly different connotations, more "infatuation". Interestingly, traditionally a bride wore white on

were in love, they clearly needed a place somewhere to be with each other. Was it on the way home? He, grasping a towel¹³⁶ and walking quickly towards her as she came from the other direction, then took her on his back and after that, so the story goes, they were simply together. That's why there wasn't anything like a wedding ceremony, was there? That seems to have been the procedure.

Speaking of home, before my third oldest brother went to the army, we took my mother, of whom you never knew if she was there or not, to the movies. The film was “*Yuki no shô henka*”¹³⁷. And then, from the next day on, she stopped working. “Such handsome man out there....”, she said and more or less stopped standing in the kitchen, washing the dishes and so on. Something happened that day. She saw Hasegawa Kazuo¹³⁸ and she showed resistance, perhaps. “I'm a woman too...”.

*

She died around ten years ago. At the time of her death, she was sitting by the hearth. They said, her head fell into the hearth with a thud and she died. I heard later, that father had been washing mother's diapers in the river!¹³⁹ Mother died and, as you can imagine, Father's spirits sagged completely.

While he was alive, my father figured by far greater [in my life], but in these days, mother's existence has gradually been growing larger within me. It's simply, because there is no desire [involved]. Just love, right? Because, when

her wedding day because she had to accept a new family seal. This was called *ironaoshi* 色直し “correcting the color.”

¹³⁶ A *furoshiki*. See footnote 110.

¹³⁷ 雪之丞変化 [The Helping Change of Snow]. Black and white. 1935. Produced by Chikamatsu Kinema.

¹³⁸ Hasegawa Kazuo 長谷川一夫 [1908-?] entered the Shochiku studios in 1926. Until 1937, when he left for Shochiku for Tôho, he acted under the name of Hayashi Chojiro. His parting from Shichiku was marked by an attack on his person. See Joseph L. Anderson & Donald Richie, *The Japanese Film- Art and Industry*, expanded ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), 86. And for a more detailed description of his charm: *ibid.* 399.

¹³⁹ This probably means she was in bad health already for some time before she died and had had to use diapers.

there's desire, desire eats up love¹⁴⁰. You often hear, “Even without parents, children are raised.”¹⁴¹ But that is a one-sided truth.

*

I am letting a sister of mine dwell in my body. When I have to concentrate on producing a dance piece, she plucks at the darkness in my body¹⁴². She eats more than necessary. When she stands up in my body, I involuntarily sit down. When I fall down, she falls down. Yet there is something more [to it], than this simple correlation.¹⁴³

*

[+]¹⁴⁴ When despite having a healthy¹⁴⁵ body, you want to be disabled, or even think you might as well have been better off born a cripple, then you have finally made a first step in butoh.¹⁴⁶ In the same way, as wanting to become a cripple is within the domain of the child, so is there also this urgent kind of need part of the experience of being a butoh dancer.

¹⁴⁰ *yoku ga aru to yoku no hô de ai wo kucchau kara* 欲があると欲のほうで愛を食っちゃうから。

¹⁴¹ *oya ga nakutemo kodomo wa sodatsu* 親がなくても子供は育つ。

¹⁴² The rediscovery of the darkness of the body, symbolic of the irrational, marginalized, unknown, was not only for Hijikata, but also for a large number of French turn-of-the-century authors, a central theme of their work. See Meinhardt, 34 ff.

¹⁴³ *kakawariai* かわり合い. Compare translation of whole paragraph in Motofuji Akiko, Tanemura Suehiro, Tsuruoka Yoshihisa, *Hijikata Tatsumi butoh taikan: Kasabuta to kyarameru* [Hijikata Tatsumi Butoh Yearbook: Scabs and Caramel] (Tokyo: Yûshisha, 1993), 96 and in Viala, 73.

¹⁴⁴ The [+] mark both beginning and end of the section translated by Nanako Kurihara in *The Drama Review* (2000): 56-59. In contrast to the prior sections, this part is written in formal polite Japanese. The Japanese language differentiates between different levels of politeness grammatically, semantically and syntactically.

¹⁴⁵ *gotai ga mansoku* 五体が満足. Literally “the five bodies are sufficient”. The five [parts of] the body are: muscle, skin, flesh, bones and hair.

¹⁴⁶ Compare with Viala, 75 and with a similar section in Hoffmann & Holborn, 127.

When I see a crippled dog slink out of sight, children chasing it with sticks and stones, cornering it against a wall and beating it down, I feel a kind of jealousy towards the dog. Why? Because the dog is the one benefiting. The dog is [the one] tempting the children and exposing itself with every means possible, without considering its situation. Some kinds of dogs even do so, with red intestines and all else hanging out of their bellies.

With fish and birds, it's obviously different. First of all, fish don't have legs and all kinds of preparations are necessary before I can enter that dim world that fish see every day. In the bird's case, I can't get excited unless I crush the birds, their nesting box and all, before engaging them in battle¹⁴⁷. When I clear away heavy hardships and find something closely packed and incubating underneath, then for the first time, I shiver with joy¹⁴⁸.

I am able to look at a naked body ravaged by a dog. This is clearly an indispensable lesson in *butoh* and leads to the question of just what kind of ancestor a *butoh* dancer really is.

I adore rib cages¹⁴⁹ but, again, it seems to me that the dog's [rib cage] is [more likely] to win than mine. Maybe this is also an old mental picture. On rainy days, I see a dog's rib cage and taste the feeling of defeat. Besides, from the onset, my *butoh* has had no use for bothersome fat or an excess of curves. Skin and bones, and just a bare amount of necessary muscle are the ideal. If a dog's blue veins surface, then I think a woman's body or other becomes unnecessary. To begin with, I struggle to write something, as I am doing now, and women are not even a small help. Woman cannot even perform the role of an eraser. I have known that ever since I can remember, it has simply become something that has fallen with a thud to the very bottom of my heart.

I have more or less been unable to confirm during my living, the meaning of where to start yearning from. I have yearned for this meaning time and again, but it does not run lively within my talent. I treasure the bodies of old people like

¹⁴⁷ *issen majieru* 一戦交える.

¹⁴⁸ *zokuzoku suru* ぞくぞくする.

¹⁴⁹ Hijikata's preparations for performances involved many weeks of fasting. He often appeared on stage with rib bones clearly exposed. See Kurihara in *The Drama Review*: 12.

the withered trees¹⁵⁰ and wet animals, possibly, because I think it brings me closer to that kind of yearning. My body yearns to be cut up into pieces and hidden away in a cold place somewhere. That is surely the place¹⁵¹ I will return to. I will be frozen stiff¹⁵², even reaching a state of almost falling over. That which these eyes have seen there will surely accept the termination of [my] intimacy with those things called death, which continue towards death.¹⁵³

I have thought of trying to rear a dead corpse before. But cotton...spider webs...light bulbs...bread...things that require soft handling; they weary me. Undoubtedly, I also grew up melting my brain¹⁵⁴, drowning in futons in the wall closet¹⁵⁵ and eating soggy rice crackers¹⁵⁶, but the place where my emotions have gone, the existence of feeling has now lost itself somewhere in my body and has become unable to develop into anything like the terror of wondering where I had gone in the middle of the night.¹⁵⁷ If the whereabouts of food that have startled [us] disappear, I think that would be like humans half-dying. I have a childhood

¹⁵⁰ Compare Kurihara in *The Drama Review*: 56 “bodies of the old, like withered trees”.

¹⁵¹ Probably a reference to Tôhoku, where it is cold. See also Hoffmann & Holborn, 9 and *The Drama Review* (2000), 50: “I have this desire inside me to hide my body somewhere very cold. So when the weather gets really cold, that’s *butoh*. For example, when it’s cold, you rub your hands together. You can take any part of the action out and it becomes dance.”

¹⁵² *chikachika ni kôru* チカチカに凍る.

¹⁵³ Compare Kurihara, 57 “...what my eyes have seen there is simply an intimacy with things which continue to die their own deaths.” The alternative reading in the translation above seems to point to a state, in which Hijikata aims at ending (!) his fascination of the death motif.

¹⁵⁴ *Atama wo torokashinagara* 頭をとろかしなが. Alternatively „charming my head off“.

¹⁵⁵ One time, when Hijikata lost money that his father had received as a distinction for his deeds during the Russian-Japanese war, his mother locked him in a wall closet and beat him. See Schwelling, 39.

¹⁵⁶ See Hoffmann & Holborn, 125: “I also had a few eccentricities. I never ate crunchy *osenbe* [rice crackers]. You see, I felt that there was something unpleasant about the crunch against my teeth. I would soften them using the steam from a teakettle and eat them after they got good and soggy. Soft, soggy and willy-nilly – I’ve come to rely very much on such a physical state.”

¹⁵⁷ Kurihara translates „dead of the night“, which adds unnecessary meaning to *yonaka* 夜中.

memory of eating chicken¹⁵⁸, a food which frightened both [my] mind and body to death, so excessively, that I only nibbled at other foods without letting them slide down my throat. For just that reason, I have come to foster something [that is] important for my body, but I was also, on the other hand, often punished for it. Therefore, when I see children with their mouths standing agape¹⁵⁹ or drowning their hearts in the shoals, I feel they are only fluffy, lax things, there for the breeding¹⁶⁰. Salmon roe reminded me of the intestines of Christ and I didn't eat it. At present, I have this steadily growing fervent desire, this idea of somehow escaping food by just gnawing at air and simply holding a splinter of wood between my teeth. I think I will eventually stop letting food drop into my stomach, since I have come to believe that the things that go astray after having eaten them, at length settle down in the body. When that time comes, I believe there will be absolutely no need even for family members to worry or weep. When it happens, everything will inevitably become absolutely clear, but ever since my dead sister has begun living in my body, it no longer happens [that way]. My sister hasn't even complained once. She only makes inarticulate noises about twice a day. If my sister were to complain to me, she would no longer be my sister and anyhow, what's more, disaster would never again walk by my house. Then I would be in trouble. How could I speak of not having the time to dream of being a certain genius, although I search for things with monetary value?¹⁶¹ I think it is no longer necessary to speak with the economic science of romantic adults about how I was raised in my childhood.

I planned to erect various things along the long corridor of the school and to do so my body became completely empty and dim. I was attacked by the feeling of a single sperm that had already abandoned rhythm, staggering along and spreading laxative on everything.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ As commented on page 27-28, chickens are a reoccurring motif. See Gôda in Klein, 83.

¹⁵⁹ "...[I] would at times pretend to be an idiot with his mouth hanging open." in Hoffmann & Holborn, 126.

¹⁶⁰ *sodatsu tame ni soko ni aru* 育つためにそこにある.

¹⁶¹ Compare Kurihara: 58 "genius at finding things with monetary value".

¹⁶² *furafura shite iru* ふらふらしている. Compare similar section in Hoffmann & Holborn, 126 and *The Drama Review*: 77.

And then after 12, 13 years, I saw the butoh of a young woman¹⁶³, who had crawled under a porch on her hands and feet, stayed there with a wet hand towel over her face and hadn't come out. She wouldn't come out from under the porch no matter what. The young woman had a face like burnt charcoal. I have since then thought that probably no one would take the trouble to care about what that young woman and my sperm had really eaten that bound them together. At that time, I fixed a rabbit to a wet and splintered wooden board and was going to draw a picture on it with crayon, but the crayon slipped and the colors didn't go on well. The feelings between this young woman and my sperm seemed to rise up from this hidden place like smoke. I think I have after that never again had the experience of truly, moreover, directly hiding these kinds of feelings because of the relationship to a healthy¹⁶⁴ woman.

If I think of a spirit raised to physiology, my fancies remain calm, unforgivingly smashing even the shadow of a naked body sobbing at the precipice of the abyss. And so after that, I felt that I had left behind a difficult to conceive part of me in the subtle light: something ever so slight, something even almost indistinct. This is how it is. I am the one who rejoices when people die. It doesn't matter if they are teachers who defend writers or even colleagues. A little bell¹⁶⁵ is now resounding in my cursed head, and I believe I just want to sit down like a child, on the threshold of reaching wholeness, in an age of waiting for something to be distributed.¹⁶⁶ But, in three years, my hair has grown too heavy to flutter in the wind. I make the farmhands who come to my house in Meguro¹⁶⁷ eat like cows with their eyes closed and urinate standing with their heads hanging down¹⁶⁸. I have transformed myself innumerable times into an unfamiliar and violent musical instrument that doesn't even sweat and I make my livelihood turning

¹⁶³ *musume* 娘.

¹⁶⁴ *Gotai no sorotta* 五体の揃った. See footnote 146.

¹⁶⁵ *fuurin* 風鈴. Little bells that are hung in the wind.

¹⁶⁶ Ashikawa Yôko cited in Hoffmann & Holborn, 16 “[...] he decided not to think too much, but to be more like a child, with less concern for self-identification.”

¹⁶⁷ A district in western Tokyo.

¹⁶⁸ In *Bara-iro no dansu*, the students were urinating at least through part of the performance with their backs to the audience. Meinhardt, 60. For Hijikata, the back view of man urinating was a posture in crisis. See Mishima Yukio, “Kiki no Buyô” [Dance of Crisis] trans. in Hoffmann & Holborn, 123.

something like the hilt of silence beating silence into a shinbone.¹⁶⁹ I have also become a gasping wicker trunk¹⁷⁰ and an empty chest of drawers. I have watched the parlor room sumo of ghosts. I pick up those bones and create a baby, bleeding at the nose, as many times as I want.¹⁷¹ That day an ominous wind, like a beautiful woman, came moving along like a lump and when it stroked my head just there, I also tried to become a hard lump.

When I think of an old woman's first menarche, I believe I can go anywhere. But this phenomenon is an incident from within a world where sound has ceased. It seems to me that squishy things, like sleeping sweets, will soon come under the control of hard, frozen things. This nearby breathing "I" will make the faraway "me", who having become so, in other words, numbed with cold and who no longer knows whose ancestor I am, aware of myself as a single virgin body. What I dance there is not even the "becoming butoh" of experience¹⁷², much less the mastery of butoh. I want to become and be a body with eyes just opened wide, tensed to a snapping point¹⁷³ by the strained relationship with the dignified landscape around it. I don't [necessarily] think that it is better not to look at my own body in those moments, but my regret at having looked has also gone numb and therefore the bud of my miserable flesh is unable to sprout.

Where butoh is a means of expression, it usually becomes an appeal and prostrates itself and only prepares for a form of hot butoh based on the whole gamut of jealousy and obedience. This is not really important to me. While lack is still a lack, you can still call that lacking within one's own body a self-sufficiency

¹⁶⁹ *chinmoku wo naguru chinmoku no tsuka no yô na mono* 沈黙をなぐる沈黙の柄のようなもの. Kurihara: 58: "a stick of silence beating on silence". The meaning of this expression is not quite clear. The character for *tsuka* can also be read *gara*, which means "pattern" or "character/nature". However, in connection with the verb *naguru* なぐる "to beat", the former reading seems most probable.

¹⁷⁰ A *yanagi gôri* is sometimes made of willow branches, as implied by the name. See also Hoffmann & Holborn, 126: "I may also be a wicker trunk, crushed into the shape of bellows, with all my insides scattered all over the street, and having a great time of it."

¹⁷¹ Compare Kurihara's translation: 59 "to create a baby who picks up their bones and bleeds at the nose."

¹⁷² *taiken no butôka* 体験の舞踏化: the „butoh-fikation“ of experience.

¹⁷³ *bashitto oreru yo na* バシッと折れるような.

in itself. Although it is obscene, I think I will try to continue this face, fresh from just waking up, a little bit longer, because of the need to restore something to my cold body. In the past, many of my butoh¹⁷⁴ sat on the veneered *tatami* mats facing the garden. When the sun shone¹⁷⁵, I would rush outside in a hurry.

It seems almost a clear thing to me, what kind of help my butoh must borrow so as not to become hit or miss. [+]

*

Shifting into a body, that can make a person cry, is something handed down to us by our ancestors. The ancestors have four legs.¹⁷⁶ If you try to make someone put on clothes¹⁷⁷, that state¹⁷⁸ will become clear. At the soles of the feet, there is the earth¹⁷⁹ and above the earth a paddle is attached so as to prevent from slipping. Two supporting poles are attached around the kneecap. This form, carried along by the spatial poles and paddles that don't row, is [just] a shabby "body stamp"¹⁸⁰. It's lacking, but because it's a body thing, you can't just recklessly make it vanish. Because this body has no written contract, it just arises as a simple credo of faith. When such a "body stamp" approaches, children for some reason remember to cry. It is scary somehow, because a dead body that has

¹⁷⁴ What is meant here are probably Hijikata's butoh incarnations, figures such as those spoken of before: the baby, the ghost's sumo, the chest of drawers...

¹⁷⁵ *hi ga sasu* 日が射す. An unusual expression. The Chinese character used in *sasu* "shining" also implies "piercing" and "shooting through/into".

¹⁷⁶ Animals. Animals figure strongly in butoh training. See Mikami, 207; Schwelling, 105 ff.; Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 213.

¹⁷⁷ Literally a *hakama* 袴 a Japanese skirt for formal wear.

¹⁷⁸ The state of originally having four legs.

¹⁷⁹ "I'm well aware of the fact that my present movements are built upon that particular foundation- I was born from the mud and soil." in Hoffmann & Holborn, 125 and *The Drama Review*: 73.

¹⁸⁰ *Inkantai* 印鑑体: An *inkan* is a personal seal/stamp, which is used by most Japanese in place of a signature. Hijikata demanded of his students that they "throw away their social self, the body that has been registered with a stamp". See Mikami, 82 ff. There is an expression in Japanese: *hanko de oshita yô* 判子で押したよう [as if stamped] meaning something is all the same i.e. boring. Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 98: "Hijikata believed that the human body becomes domesticated-trained to function within specific patterns-beginning the moment we are born. [...] for his dance to be successful, these deeply imbedded patterns had to be destroyed."

changed places with a stamp presses forward, as if trying to give shape¹⁸¹ to the wind.

*

Standing on two legs, I am at a loss whether to go left or right. My bewilderment leads to a fight and my body ends up being left out in the rain¹⁸². Originally, there was one leg and therefore also just one pelvis riding on top of this leg.¹⁸³ When I bend my body all the way over, I seem to be able to understand the origin of the tongue just rolling within the mouth's cavity at the limits of the body. When I put one leg on top of the other, I seem to understand the origin of the legs. With difficulty I hold [this] position, while gazing reproachfully at movement.¹⁸⁴ [This is] the end of this paragraph, because it is written in bed.¹⁸⁵

*

When I stand watching the locomotives cut the rice fields sideways... a hoard of children clad in kimonos, like swarming pillars of mosquitoes, crowd together and rush forward or an old woman's speedy stone throwing battle¹⁸⁶ starts up with a crunching¹⁸⁷ sound, and after such a commotion, an atmosphere of not a single drop of blood¹⁸⁸ falling, unfolds.¹⁸⁹ Mr. Famine walked by my house. What

¹⁸¹ Eyes, nose, face.

¹⁸² *Nozarashi* 野ざらし “exposed in the field“.

¹⁸³ It is interesting to note that Japanese ghosts often have no legs or only one leg. Hijikata also spoke of floating like one-legged ghosts or columns of ash. See Mikami, 86 ff.

¹⁸⁴ This whole paragraph could also be meant as an imperative, an invitation to this physical experience by taking up the aforementioned poses. Compare also with translation in Motofuji, Tanemura, Tsuruoka, 40.

¹⁸⁵ “But what is certain to me is that your measure is properly taken only when you get in bed, and when you wake it all falls apart, even the furniture. That's why being in bed is reality and getting up from it is a dream.” in *The Drama Review*: 67.

¹⁸⁶ *ishigassen* 石合戦.

¹⁸⁷ *pariparito* パリパリと.

¹⁸⁸ Literally *chikyû hitotsu* 血球一 “a single blood cell”.

¹⁸⁹ This sentence is the best example for the beauty of Hijikata's images and his idiosyncratic use of grammar. Those “...” not in the original sentence have been added in an attempt to retain the contrast of the images in the same order as in the original.

is a bad harvest? [It is when] there is simply no point in heaping up complaints and grudges even as the body's thermometer rises and falls¹⁹⁰. When human being-like things come rolling in from the rice-fields¹⁹¹ and there is a sign of something confirming the cause of it in my bed.¹⁹² *

*

The baby seems to me like a flytrap¹⁹³ made of cheap, impure glass. I don't think this baby's voice is a voice at all. And its sour meat stuck to the clothing is flapping¹⁹⁴ in the wind. With its squeezed and bound up body, the baby seems to want to challenge¹⁹⁵ [the grown-ups] just by using its eyes¹⁹⁶. But in those eyes, the shapes of the grown-ups working in the muddy fields have already become something more than suspicious¹⁹⁷. A single eyeball floating in a receiving dish of tears has already dried up¹⁹⁸. The eyeball starts to itch, having woken itself up. In these circumstances, knowing where the toys for the crying child are is what is [really] important. Hands no longer grasping or letting go, but walking into the darkness of the body and plucking at it.¹⁹⁹ A baby plucking at the skin in its face is

¹⁹⁰ Extreme temperature changes were the main cause of famine in Tōhoku.

¹⁹¹ See also in *The Drama Review*: 73 the wind *daruma* rolling in from the rice fields.

¹⁹² “Around the 13th year of the Shōwa period, [1938], the one-crop areas of Tōhoku were stricken with anal blockages. Those tearful voices must be recorded anew in the culture of preservation. Although they are today becoming an important accompaniment to my dance, they were such ‘primitive cries’ that only now, 12 years since I have started to live in Tokyo, have I been able to handle them cleverly.” in *The Drama Review*: 48.

¹⁹³ *hai tori ki* 蠅取り器: a glass tube used for catching flies.

¹⁹⁴ *hatahatato* ハタハタと. *hatahata* is less strong than the more common onomopoetic word *batabata*. Incidentally, there is also a fish named *hatahata* [sandfish]. Fish are often also hung on a line and left to dry in the wind. See Motofuji, Tanemura, Tsuruoka, 82.

¹⁹⁵ *shōbu* 勝負 “a contest/match/game”.

¹⁹⁶ *megi hitotsu de* 目技一つで “with a single eye-technique”.

¹⁹⁷ *ayashisa wo toorikoshita mono* 妖しさを通りこしたものの “something that has passed beyond suspicion”.

¹⁹⁸ *itsu no aida ni ka* いつの間にか “before you know it/unnoticed”.

¹⁹⁹ See Interview with Shibusawa in *The Drama Review*: 51-52 “I think things eaten in the dark taste good. Even now I eat sweets in bed in the dark, I can't see

most likely plucking at the skin of its tears. Maybe the wisdom of swapping dried scabs for caramels originated from this point [in time]. When the thus hardened skin cracks open, it produces a pleasant feeling²⁰⁰. *²⁰¹

*

Even though there are no more memories to look after, [there is] coming to the garden and sitting down²⁰². [Must be summer...]. *

*

The expression “dreaming a dream” serves as the dream of life for a body no longer capable of dreaming.²⁰³ And so we long for that violent act of “doing nothing”. Even ignorance and misery are painful when they become belated expressions²⁰⁴. But so-called straightforward pain can also be equal to aimless, vacant flesh. Even if it is really so²⁰⁵, the body is a charred newt²⁰⁶, and in its pitch-black dreams there is not the stuff that can be named total joy or pain.²⁰⁷

what they look like but I know they taste twice as good. Light, in general, sometimes seems indecent to me.”

²⁰⁰ *kaikan* 快感.

²⁰¹ Compare Motofuji, Tanemura, Tsuruoka, 62. In the full version, this paragraph is preceded by a paragraph referring to the children in the fields stuffed in their *izume*. See Hijikata Tatsumi, *Bibô no aozora* [Handsome Blue Sky] (Tokyo: Chikuma shobô, 1987), 85.

²⁰² *niwa ni kite suwatte iru mono ga aru* 庭に来て座っているものがある.

²⁰³ “The dance, which is a medium between a spirit and an impulse to a secret ritual for the sake of pouring into the flesh and blood of young people, ends in finishing them as lethal weapons that dream.” in *The Drama Review*: 47.

²⁰⁴ “Dance for display must be totally abolished.” in *The Drama Review*: 40. This seems to be a section about the expression of emotions on stage. When emotion is not direct, immediate it is „painful“ for the audience to watch.

²⁰⁵ Even if it is “real“.

²⁰⁶ Charred newts are said to restore sexual vigor.

²⁰⁷ What Hijikata seems to be demanding here is authentic emotion and not imitation. See also footnote 131 and 260.

Even if you call it²⁰⁸ a “provisional terrain”, hasn’t it been strewn with sawdust²⁰⁹?

*²¹⁰

*

My mysterious smelling odor. The real mother of that odor is hidden in *nattô*²¹¹ and he, having accepted my recognition of this, tells me that this is precisely the reason why *nattô* should be eaten quickly; that makes it delicious. He also pointed out that in some book, *nattô* is [said to be] a food that must be eaten quickly.²¹² Although he was born just one year later than me²¹³, it feels natural [being around him] like air coming and going around my ribs. Nevertheless, there’s also the man who always comes demanding a crisis from me in his thick voice.

His words were, “The gaze when you’re aware of a woman coming up to the parlor²¹⁴, works well to swiftly detach [you] from a mouth eating *nattô*.”²¹⁵

²⁰⁸ The body.

²⁰⁹ Sawdust could be implying a circus ring, a stage.

²¹⁰ Compare this section in Motofuji, Tanemura, Tsuruoka, 112. In the full version of this fragment, there are two more sentences in this paragraph: “[For someone like] me, who likes the expressions of the earth of such flesh, what is just barely edible is something approximately [like a] watermelon. There is nothing called silence in my body.” *Bibô no Aozora*, 71.

²¹¹ *Nattô* 納豆 is a paste made of fermented soybeans, usually eaten over rice. Before eating it, it is usually stirred with chopsticks to make it softer and stickier. The more the “threads” have been pulled apart, the more delicious it is considered to be. *Nattô* is mainly eaten by Japanese in the Kansai region, around Tokyo and in the former Mito domain, currently Chiba prefecture. People from the Kantô region (around Osaka) rarely eat *nattô* and consider it unappetizing, because of its smell and consistency.

²¹² Kurihara writes of the following incident: “While sharing breakfast with a group of artists friends in classy summer resort, Hijikata suddenly started screaming in Tôhoku dialect for no reason, dumbfounding everyone. Later he told someone that he had been angry because if they ate their *nattô* slowly, ‘the butoh would get rotten’.” Kurihara, *The Most Remote Thing*, 176.

²¹³ It wasn’t possible to ascertain who this might be.

²¹⁴ *zashiki* 座敷. The *zashiki* is the reception room of traditional Japanese houses. It is floored with tatami mats. Visitors traditionally did not enter the house as deeply as in European culture. One usually entered the house at the *doma* (see footnote 113), the earthen entrance, sat down on the raised edge leading into the house, left one’s shoes there and then stepped up into the *zashiki*.

Here now, I am easily reminded of his admonitions towards me, his excessively close observation of the *nattô* “space”²¹⁶: a rough soul²¹⁷ eating *nattô* with all his might, a youth throwing clumps of salt into the *nattô* and churning it all around with cheap chopsticks²¹⁸, an old man eating with a sagging mouth. It’s a different affair, but the most recent thing [was] in Yakumochô²¹⁹, where he gave me a temporary burial²²⁰ as I [lay] dizzy and simply gasping for breath after having finally exorcised²²¹ a rooster’s cock.²²²

*

The most delicious kinds of pears are the *chôjûrô*²²³. When the bottom of a hard, normal²²⁴ pear is grafted onto a *chôjûrô* pear and the marks of the dried scabs are left in spots on the head, that kind of fellow [he is]. With a magic cranium, that makes you want to sink your teeth into it. He’s that [kind of] butoh dancer²²⁵.

²¹⁵ Eating *nattô* is not a very appetizing sight and smells quite strongly, so maybe this means that seeing a woman approaching, makes Hijikata refrain from eating *nattô*.

²¹⁶ *nattô kûkan* 納豆空間: the time and space/the spatiotemporal order in a philosophical sense/the circumstances.

²¹⁷ *aratamashii* 荒魂.

²¹⁸ *waribashi* 割り箸 chopsticks made of cheap wood, that have to be split apart from each other before use; equivalent to plastic throw-away cutlery in European culture.

²¹⁹ 八雲町 a sub-district of the Meguro district in Tokyo. See footnote 168.

²²⁰ *karimaisô* 仮埋葬. If a full burial is for some reason not possible, the body is temporarily buried.

²²¹ *opparatta ageku* 追っばらったあげく “expel/fight off/oust”.

²²² This possibly refers to a performance. Chickens/roosters had a central role in performances of *Kinjiki* and *Nikutai no Hanran*.

²²³ 長十郎. A dark brown-yellow, apple-shaped Japanese variety of pears.

²²⁴ *yônashi* 洋梨: a western pear.

²²⁵ Yumiko Yoshioka and Kasai Hisako have both indicted to me that the dancer mentioned here is most likely Tamano Koichi (b. 1946). Tamano moved to the USA in 1978. He teaches workshops near San Francisco and has a small sushi restaurant. Since this text fragment was written for the recital of Ishii Mitsutaka, the dancer described might also be Ishii. However Tamano also appeared in this recital.

Kagawa Prefecture Shôzu County Igisue.²²⁶ When a beggar stood under the eaves [of our house], my mother²²⁷ diligently gave rice or money. That's the womb from which I was born. A countryside²²⁸ with Japanese plums, summer mandarins, figs, mountain peaches, and kaki growing beside the fields²²⁹. It is exactly seven years ago that he wrote me a letter full of the names of fruits I didn't know, longan, papaya, mangos, bananas, Taiwanese sugar cane, passion fruit²³⁰ and others. He described how it was to eat them, get diarrhea from them and inserted a photo of himself, having what seemed like a cramp. In the photo, he is laughing, and looking like a parched, dried up beggar²³¹. A bit later after that, it came to my ears in tidings on a breeze, that he was being forced, by a show master with a razor backstage, to dance from morning to night at the Tengaiten²³², a shady theatre in Bangkok.²³³ When I went to see him off at Tokyo Station, this young butoh dancer's pear head, laughing and mingling with the "Human Pumps"²³⁴ Mr. and Mrs. Oilfield²³⁵ and Mr. Ruby²³⁶, who made paper cuttings²³⁷, seemed to me filled to the brim with charm.

²²⁶ 香川県小豆郡伊喜末. A small town with a population of ca. 1.000 people on the north-western coast of the island Shikoku.

²²⁷ *hahaoya yoshi* 母親ヨシ. It is not clear what the "yoshi" signifies. Yumiko Yoshioka claimed it was the name of Hijikata's mother, but in the Hijikata Tatsumi Chronology by Kurihara Nanako, his mother's name is given as "Suga". *The Drama Review*: 29.

²²⁸ *tochigara* 土地柄: the "pattern" of the earth.

²²⁹ *sumomo* スモモ, *natsumikan* 夏ミカン, *ichijiku* イチジク, *yamamomo* 山桃, *saijôgaki* 西条柿.

²³⁰ *ryûgan* 竜眼, *papaiya* パパイア, *mangô* マンゴー, *banana* バナナ, *daiwan satôkibi* 台湾砂糖黍, *tokeisô* トケイ草.

²³¹ *karakara ni kansô shita kojiki* カラカラに乾燥した乞食.

²³² 天外天 "heaven outside of heaven".

²³³ It was quite common for butoh dancers to earn money by dancing at nightclubs. Hijikata owned several nightclubs in Tokyo and his students acquired their first stage experience by appearing in these clubs. Schwelling, 75 ff.

²³⁴ *ningen ponpu* 人間ポンプ. See *The Drama Review*: 53: "I like the spectacle put on by Shôkonsha. Some, like their 'human pump' are in the category of implements. Theirs is a unique world that proves you don't need grand entertainment to enjoy yourself."

²³⁵ *aburayafûfu* 油野夫婦.

²³⁶ *kôgyokusan* 紅玉さん.

This young man's desire to eat durian and mangostin and nothing else, moreover his longing to go and visit his older sister, who sold galvanized iron in Bangkok; these were also once my desires. Just like me, this pear-headed young dancer found the darkness of *butoh* in the vicinity of his older sister stretching out her sluggish legs. Crossing the Malay Peninsula, a trip exposing him from beginning to end to throwing knives and razor blades, was new. Attacked by a swarm of mosquitoes right in the middle of walking through the jungle, his head went a bit funny. But they say the *Petruska*²³⁸ that he danced then at the *Kurumukasen*²³⁹ Great Theatre or at the *Tengaiten Theatre* was a series of excellent *butoh* [performances]. Later, I asked to see and was shown this *butoh* many times, and truly, it was the stuff of top quality spasms.

In the jungle, humans found him breathing strangely, crouched down smaller than the tip of the arrowhead plant²⁴⁰, just after having asked to be left to die in peace.

When Pear-head was young, the first time he captured *butoh* was on the edge of a sugar-cane field. The kind of sugar cane field that the child *Genet*²⁴¹ could be hiding in and if you throw in a body, you can briefly catch its human shape. He hadn't even a memory of masturbation²⁴² and when fainted right in the middle of doing nothing else than slurping sugar cane water, [*butoh*] was captured as a bit of virginity. The man, who had been dancing all along²⁴³, is something that materialized directly out of that.

²³⁷ *kamikiri* 紙切り. An old traditional Japanese art of paper cutting. Possibly “Mr. Ruby“ and the „Human Stomachs“ were stage names for cabaret or freak shows.

²³⁸ “*Petruska*” is a ballet by Igor Strawinsky featuring three puppets: the ugly *Petruska*, the ballerina and the Moor. *Petruska* loves the ballerina, but she only has eyes for the Moor. In the end, the Moor slays *Petruska*.

²³⁹ *クルムカセン*.

²⁴⁰ *クワイ* *sagittaria trifolia* L. var. *edulis* (Sieb.) Okwi. Arrowhead plant. It has very tiny leaves, shaped like arrowheads.

²⁴¹ Jean Genet (1920-1986). French author. For the influence of Genet's writings on Hijikata see Meinhardt, 46 ff.

²⁴² i.e. too young too have masturbated yet.

²⁴³ *motomoto odoru otoko* もともと踊る男.

The Tokyo spirit is wrong.²⁴⁴ Dancers there immediately go mad and crazy. Undoubtedly, the drinks circling around are so bad that you even [start to] cast flirtatious glances at babies. When I come home to my apartment on all fours²⁴⁵, into that ripened room²⁴⁶, I am oblivious even to the sound of the well pump²⁴⁷ grinding its teeth. Standing in the washroom, drinking water in the middle of the night, I can't even find a fragment of that pitch-black hope of being scolded for being a slacker²⁴⁸. But chasing a babysitter with only one nose hole in the middle and awakening the butoh eyes of Pear-head, who was arrested in Mitsudashi-koku-machi,²⁴⁹ wasn't simply a sickly fashion like scolding spineless²⁵⁰ adults. In the morning, he left the house in a white kimono and in the evening came back in a red kimono– blood running down the outside. He had just wanted to eat sponge cake²⁵¹ instead of chocolate. There is no doubt that this kind of enthusiasm will bring forth awesome²⁵² butoh. My teacher Ohno Kazuo²⁵³ guarantees so too, doesn't he? “A dead child playing with a dubious container – that's the kind of butoh that only exists because of you”, he says.

For tonight's celebration, let's invite my gentle sister and seat her in the special seats. Then let's both of us throw out the oil-stained pillars, the futons and the whole lot and start a powerful fire with them. Having done so, this pear-headed genius of a butoh dancer will surely without another thought improve.

²⁴⁴ „Tokyo is rotten with bodies. There is a lethargic generation arrogant with fat and I vomit on its lotioned and powered pale effeminate skin.“ In *The Drama Review*: 40.

²⁴⁵ Literally *yotsu ashi de* 四つ足で “on four legs”: i.e. on hands and feet/drunken or tired.

²⁴⁶ *ureta heya* 熟れた部屋.

²⁴⁷ *ido no kuruma* 井戸の車: “the car of the well”.

²⁴⁸ *sue osoroshii gaki* 末恐ろしいガキ: “a child that will come to no good”.

²⁴⁹ 三田四国町: a district in Tokyo.

²⁵⁰ Literally *kansetsu ga aru* 関節がある “having joints” versus *hone ga aru* 骨がある “having bones” equivalent to the English expression “a person with backbone”, i.e. integrity and courage. See also Hoffmann & Holborn, 124: “I try to measure men whether or not they are overly pliable and their lives too easy.”

²⁵¹ カステーラ. Comes from the Portuguese “castella”, a form of cake.

²⁵² *osoroshii* 恐ろしい.

²⁵³ 大野一雄 (b. 1906). It is interesting to note that Hijikata speaks here of “my teacher”. Hijikata was very impressed by Ohno's art the first time he saw him, but Ohno was never strictly speaking Hijikata's teacher.

*

I felt that Fontana's works of art²⁵⁴, which brought back memories of myself in my youth, playing at cutting the water in a water jar with a sickle,²⁵⁵ were other blood relatives of mine.

*

The painter says that if you tried to catch crabs in the rice fields back in the days when we still had salty dragonflies under our noses²⁵⁶, they were [just] empty shells like foam. The home of the heart²⁵⁷ portrayed by the transparent prerequisite of this despair. At first, my nostalgia for the painter and the painting fluttered in the wind. The capacity to differentiate phenomena and the aptitude for art²⁵⁸ seem stuck to the flapping to and fro of dried-up snot²⁵⁹ and to a thin illustration of the body's abyss that has been peeled off with a buzzing²⁶⁰ sound.²⁶¹

Shimizu Akira²⁶²'s birthplace²⁶³ was a barbershop. When he was small, all sorts of hygienic spirits were reflected in the big mirror with the white smocks²⁶⁴.

²⁵⁴ Probably Lucio Fontana, [1899-1968] Italian painter and sculptor. Best known for cutting slits into (mostly monochrome) canvases, ceramic and metal panels to bring forth the "emptiness" as a positive element. *The Thames and Hudson Dictionary of Art and Artists*, rev. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994), 196.

²⁵⁵ *kama* 鎌.

²⁵⁶ i.e. when we were young.

²⁵⁷ *Shinzô* 心臓. The organ heart. It is strange that Hijikata does not use the term *kokoro* 心, which implies the metaphorical „heart and soul“.

²⁵⁸ In Japanese these two things are nicely summed up in *monogokoro* 物心 “the heart/soul of things” and *egokoro* 絵心 “the heart/soul of painting”. *Monogokoro* is also used in the expression *monogokoro ga tsuite irai* 物心が付いて以来 “from one's earliest recollection on”.

²⁵⁹ A childhood state; a certain form of innocence or authenticity.

²⁶⁰ *bûn to natte iru* ブーンと鳴っている.

²⁶¹ A shedding of the skin or producing a rubbing or making a print of the body.

²⁶² Shimizu Akira. Artist. Born 1936 in Tôyama Prefecture by the Sea of Japan. Part of the Japanese „Anti-Art“ Movement in the 1960's. Won the first prize at the Shell Prize Exhibition in 1963 for his most famous painting *shikimo kesahyô* [Diagrams to Test Color Blindness]. See *Yami no kioku, kioku no yami – Shimizu Akira* [Memory of darkness, darkness of memory – Shimizu Akira]. exh. cat. (Ashikaga City Museum of Art, 2000).

The after-shave lay beside the scissors and hair clippers; there were fixed times for the people, who came to have their head trimmed²⁶⁵ and scattered hair. This barber shop, this painter's birthplace, where he was brought up watching out for such things and where his head was also trimmed, is supposedly still in business to this [very] day.

He told [me], that it was the food piled up in bowls of brass on the Buddhist altar, which the embryo, frothed up between lukewarm razorblades and white smocks, ate behind the big busy mirror, that it had turned to for help. This sort of talk of righteous meals must also be listened to obediently. For family business is family business. The connection between the contemporary painter, with this talk of rebirth laid on his tongue, and metal has become a sense of taste that has, so they say, sprouted patina. The origin of the first differentiation²⁶⁶ of metal is as old as hunger. It seems that before long, this painter started going to art school in Kanazawa²⁶⁷, where the snow was thick. Because the whiteness of Shimizu Akira's teeth, the very first thing chewed by those white teeth and the food from the Buddhist altar, over which the artist's eyes had flowed,²⁶⁸ were layered on top of each other, he maintained the expression [on his face] and had a way of sitting and dressing, that was difficult to comprehend.

What I admired the first time I came in contact with his work was the scheming to escape his amity with metal, [that existed] even before touching a harmonica²⁶⁹. That which was almost dangerously yelling out, "There's nothing else out there, nothing more than the bitterness of a dream of a life in which even a so-called moment is sluggish²⁷⁰".

²⁶³ *seika* 生家.

²⁶⁴ *hakui* 白衣.

²⁶⁵ *Atama no teire ni yatte kuru hito no kinitsu no jikan* 頭の手入れにやってくる人の均一の時間.

²⁶⁶ Again *monogokoro*. See footnote 259.

²⁶⁷ Kanazawa 金沢 is the capital city of Ishikawa Prefecture on the western coast by the Sea of Japan.

²⁶⁸ *Medama ga nagasareta butsudan no meshi* 目玉が流された仏壇のめし.

²⁶⁹ A possible interpretation of this side-remark is that a harmonica is often the first close friendly encounter of a child with metal, but Shimizu had already "befriended" metal objects before that, due to his growing up in a barber shop.

²⁷⁰ A moment should go by quickly and not "sluggishly". An untruthful life.

The painter was wearing his body like steam and running after frozen images. The desperate animation and embodiment of the various perforated²⁷¹ and squirming things that emerged from the paintings, mixed together with a multitude of others²⁷², was in fact this painter exchanging his dripping²⁷³ wet clothes for spare ones. The place where steam reveals a glimpse [of itself] is in the moment of switching dry things and wet things. He knows that his unknown *aragoto*²⁷⁴, shouldering the passive role for the animated things, is nothing other than the ground an artist cultivates. The eyes stuck to this painting fully grasp, like in a flash of lightning, what is beginning to mean [something] in regard to the artist, who is nothing other than the momentary earth.²⁷⁵

Light and darkness lose the distant eye²⁷⁶ for a moment, there it begins to emerge. Bare feet with squirming flashes under the soles, the appearance of the evening sky and the dark source of rain, shining out.

A doorway²⁷⁷ to the place of meeting²⁷⁸ the painter. Although there is something in the pictures that for that reason call up disaster²⁷⁹, Shimizu Akira's

²⁷¹ *gizatsuku mono* ぎざつくもの.

²⁷² *kodoku de nai mono* 孤独でないもの.

²⁷³ *boshanto* ボシヤンと. One of Hijikata's own onomatopoeia.

²⁷⁴ *aragoto* 荒事 “wild style”. This term from kabuki refers to a bravura style of acting created in the late 17th century by Ichikawa Danjûrô I. This exaggerated style is used to emphasize the super-human prowess of characters and often to portray strong ghosts and demons. It therefore calls forth magical associations in the viewer. The technique of crossing the eyes to show the whites, an *aragoto* technique meant to ward off evil, reappears in butoh. Kurihara *The Most Remote Thing*, 217.

²⁷⁵ *totan no tochi ni hoka naranai gakka* 途端の土地にほかならない画家. The artist is regionally formed and pre-determined ... and yet the viewer can find meaning in the painting. One of the prevalent concepts of the 70s was that artists are preformed by their places of origin. *Dochaku* 土着, “native”, was a catchword of those times. Its two characters mean “soil” and “attachment”. See *ibid.* 198.

²⁷⁶ *kyori no me* 距離の目. Possibly this does not mean “distant” as in “far-away” but “distant” as in “detached”. When you get closer, things reveal themselves.

²⁷⁷ *nigiri* 握り literally “a handle/grip”. Looking at the pictures is like initiating a conversation with the artist.

²⁷⁸ *kôkan* 交歓 “to exchange greetings/courtesies”.

²⁷⁹ *saigai wo ukeru* 災害を受ける. Interpretations could be: the disaster of receiving a bad critic or simply, that Shimizu's pictures are so frightening that they call up disaster.

works are exactly the pictures painted for strange “me”, who is looking at them. [It is in] the secret point of the painting that was painted as a space between²⁸⁰ Shimizu Akira and myself, looking at the painting, [wherein] lies precisely this painting’s technique. It is exactly this endless²⁸¹ calamity that should force the painter to materialize.

When snow falls, the road disappears, the river disappears, and there’s a shortcut to school. When this happens, you fall into the river. In that moment, the body is grasped²⁸². You fall in *zakura*...²⁸³, with a splash. Hands and feet are swallowed by the hardness of the water and in that same moment of cold, laughter gradually wells up. That’s the connection²⁸⁴. This old, old origin of the body became something serious and struck the painter in that sudden²⁸⁵ moment.²⁸⁶

This sort of fresh impurity²⁸⁷ sticks to the eyeballs a bit faster²⁸⁸ than a surprise or a prank. Not only unpleasant images connected to the thread of life, but also a set of twelve pictures pulled out of the doorway of an existence, in which many sleeps have left the eyes wide open. These are also [in some way] like religious pictures, not wretchedly growing thickly from branch to branch.

They say, when lots of snow falls under the gloomy sky of the northern coast of Japan²⁸⁹, the yellowtails²⁹⁰ swarm up in large numbers. If you consider [it]

²⁸⁰ *hazama* 狭間: “an interval/gap/space” but also “loophole/eyelet” or “crevice/ravine”.

²⁸¹ *shikiri no nai* 仕切りのない.

²⁸² Either grasped by someone to be pulled out of the water or grasped by the water.

²⁸³ *zakura- ザクラッ*. This is one of Hijikata’s typical “invented” words. It mixes together both the hard and soft feeling of the water. See Tanemura Suehiro in conversation with Shimizu Akira in Tanemura, *Hijikata no hô e*, 53.

²⁸⁴ *kankei* 関係.

²⁸⁵ *gasatto shita* ガサツとした.

²⁸⁶ Vatslav Nijinsky (1890-1950) recounted in his diary the experience of being thrown into the water by his father. His own leap out of the water drew on resources of which he had not before been aware of and which foreshadowed his art. Recounted in Hoffmann & Holborn, 9. Hijikata also recalls jumping into the river on purpose in order to be rescued and born again. In *ibid.* 126.

²⁸⁷ *shinsen na nigori* 新鮮な濁り. Referring to Shimizu’s pictures.

²⁸⁸ *hito ashi hayaku* 一足早く “one step quicker”.

²⁸⁹ *ura nihon* 裏日本 “backside of Japan” vs. Eastern Japan “the front”. This part of Japan is also considered the “backwaters” of Japan both culturally and socially.

the role of a painter to mediate²⁹¹ such things, taking even half a step [further] must be difficult. Surely, yellowtail won't swarm out of a picture by Chavanne.²⁹²

Shimizu Akira also spoke of the yellowtail. He was a painter who threw deep deprivation and tension at me. The infant painter's stomach was not given an apron²⁹³. He was raised, wrapped in many layers of white clothing. Under the white apron of the barbershop, he held a ceremony. If you go ahead and study the inferiority of the ceremony's flesh, you will tread on the path of a painter who loves yellowtail. The sexual excitement at the basis of the painter's love of the yellowtail, has however, already practiced slightly more violent intercourse²⁹⁴. "Why do the yellowtail swarm, when snow falls thickly?" this question is just the figure of Shimizu Akira walking past. But, when he has passed by the yellowtail with long strides, the world changes completely. The walk of the floating idea, fell into a space between what was there in that moment.²⁹⁵ The painter's stomach and the yellowtail's stomach. Because of these pictures, in which this cut-open, wet sexual excitement flaps and flutters, we can bring together scissors and a praying mantis.²⁹⁶ However the scissor's preference for something with a physiology going into a spiral dive, the unification of the handsome blue sky with those pierced points, and a landscape smoothing the asceticism of the more than shivering rusted waves washing the white sand... all that also got caught in between.²⁹⁷

The hard sea and the old cement of snow. On top of this scene's *sugoroku*²⁹⁸ [board], there is a gaping row²⁹⁹. This girl is a child, but because the painter's asceticism once again depicted the striding calves of the girl, the artillery

²⁹⁰ *huri* 鱒 *Seriola quinqueradiata*.

²⁹¹ *baikai* 媒介. A "go-between".

²⁹² Pierre Puvis de Chavanne (1824-1998). French Symbolist painter.

²⁹³ *haragake* 腹掛け.

²⁹⁴ *kôgô* 交合.

²⁹⁵ *sono toki aru hazama* その時或る狭間. See footnote 281.

²⁹⁶ See Appendix Images 3 and 9. *Yami no kioku, kioku no yami – Shimizu Akira* [Memory of darkness, darkness of memory – Shimizu Akira], exh. cat. (Ashikaga City Museum of Art, 2000), 55-59.

²⁹⁷ The images got caught in between the pages.

²⁹⁸ 双六. A Japanese game similar to backgammon.

²⁹⁹ *pakkuri gyô* ぱっくり行. See appendix image 2 and commentary.

shells and the *obi*³⁰⁰ and the *momowari*³⁰¹ can undo the vulgar relationship of relatives, [and then] grasp and attach the histories of base metal³⁰² and of untruthful accusations³⁰³. When brass artillery shells and army bases are set in such deeply cold surroundings, no matter how lewd a field marshal [may be], they would probably not hear the clattering sound of these *pokkuri*³⁰⁴, although it is a sound that reverberates to the core. Ignorance is howling on the tightly rolled-up, desperately twisting line of the horizon, pungent with salt. The spirit of red silk dyed with *shiso*³⁰⁵ is wearing eroticism like captured insect larvae.³⁰⁶ I see the fierce, cold determination of Japan's fledgling quality³⁰⁷ and I bow my head. Because this series is not bound up like a scroll, the atmosphere of a barber's shop emerges like a freshly severed head, if one page is removed. If the barbershop's son dreams a dream³⁰⁸, is awakened by fear in a late night piss and rushes out to the parking lot; the result is such a scene.³⁰⁹ This picture has also begun to resemble the things worn by the drenched painter. It is a series that finally touches through a quietly retreating pleasure. And then there is this picture of toads piled up on top of sea foam.³¹⁰ A strange picture.

Despite certain details that the painter's hand didn't carry [well], such as the paralysis of the toad at the very bottom or the relationship of the baby toad's eyeballs and the clouds, the artist's eye has clearly intervened and a glance doesn't keep [you] from looking. The strength has left the eyes of the mother and

³⁰⁰ 帯. The *obi* is the sash that binds together a kimono. It is tied together in the back in artful knots, which change depending on the season or age of the wearer.

³⁰¹ 桃割り. A traditional hairstyle for young women and girls.

³⁰² *jigane* 地金.

³⁰³ *uso no yô na kôgeki* 嘘のような攻撃.

³⁰⁴ ぽっくり. A type of *geta* (wooden Japanese shoes) made of a solid rounded piece of wood

³⁰⁵ 紫蘇 *perilla frutescens* "beefsteak plant". The *shiso* can be eaten and a red variety is also used to dye clothes red and purple.

³⁰⁶ The girl wrapped in her red kimono like a larvae in its cocoon. A fledgling eroticism.

³⁰⁷ A continuation of afore sentence and/or reference to the rebuilding of Japan after WWII.

³⁰⁸ *yume wo fukasu* 夢をふかす. An uncommon term for dreaming.

³⁰⁹ Possibly referring to image 4, appendix.

³¹⁰ See appendix, image 8.

sister toad; that is to be admired. Moving my eyes up and down is [making me] also gradually lose strength. The chilled foam of the toad, smelling of dimly lit plants, somehow finds its way to the shore and sits there. Familiar dark rays are drifting in the dark sea. When you can see things revealing their shape in precisely these special conditions, being able to see in this way is always frightening. A glance can't have small branches, because there would be no resistance, if the toads, trying to collapse, would probably stick [to each other]. And although it is only a family of toads, parents and children, playing around in the sea foam, the home of my eyeballs, that fled and strayed to this, sees the picture and wonders what it is that I could take from it. However many times I look at it, it is like a picture going to ruin³¹¹.

I notice the strange haste that my fingers have taken on at this point. The picture is gradually increasing the weight beyond the number of pages [in the series]. The sequence [of the pages] is being overhauled, and the explosion of artillery shells and the squealing line³¹² of the picture, which [I] laid a finger on, are again in the palm [of my hand]. What is the work's corpse holding [in its hands]? Where have the fingers gone that were manipulating it? Compared with the thoughtful look [pondering these questions], these two central paintings, like oil paintings of a rusty blue sky, somehow seem to be indicating a proper relationship towards nostalgia for life. A person who embraces doubt because of the so-called everyday madness of evaporation, will probably first of all notice, over there where the emotions are pushing in, the land under the supervision of the artist's eyeballs and if they compare it, something that looks like a post standing in a burnt-out ruin.

A riddle gradually touching until the explosion of a cock's comb³¹³, like rubbing an atom bomb the wrong way. Underneath it, wet snow and split houses. Our existences turn red, turn yellow, on the wisdom of a handful of chicken shit and it becomes necessary to return home to where the ovum is.

³¹¹ *horobite iru e no yô* 滅びている絵のよう。A pun on *horobiru* “go the ruin” is *horobi* 滅美 “the beauty of something going to ruin”.

³¹² *assen* 軋線. The title of image 9, see appendix.

³¹³ See appendix, image 10.

A finger drags a splash on the next page. Something like a rainbow reveals itself. The numbers of those rainbows. The painter used to make test-charts for color blindness.³¹⁴

A bone festival of rabbits crying out cock-a-doodle-doo. One page that I brought to bed and looked at. A castle of ghosts, the impudence of a hop, skip and a jump, the best clothes of a voice swallowed by a mountain pass like dizziness. The portrait of a flying mole, the place where the thoughts of Japan's girl child break away in an instant.

The dream of a person chewing cherry blossoms stands in front of the reality of a delicious looking pig's head caught by the side of the Sea of Japan.³¹⁵ But what really reveals itself in the nets into which these fisherwomen peep? Something, as expected, with a back and fins? The meticulous harvest grasped by the artist, the pig's head bumped by high boots, is also something like the embodiment of an opening, that has enriched and accompanies the work of those with the nets.

This series' so enticing journey pierced the dark snow and dark sky and the rain under the evening sky. Various signs are the home³¹⁶ of the painter, luring [me]. I walk to the artist's home, directly below the glider pilot's spinning flight, to shake his hand. I have visited [this] painter Shimizu Akira who paints waterfalls on the cut sections of an apple and who, pursued by that hand[shake], returns home. Finally the day comes to an end. But even now by the more or less twilight roadside, the lively art works continue piercing the night sea. A lightening bolt breaks into the very bottom of this series in which the author's seismic intensity³¹⁷ holds indispensable expressivity³¹⁸.

*

What does glass feed [on]? "Glass" doesn't eat! What are the dog's teeth chewing? *

³¹⁴ See footnote 263.

³¹⁵ See appendix, image 5.

³¹⁶ *urusato* 故里. Literally "one's former village". *urusato* is a very emotionally charged concept for most Japanese. One's spiritual home.

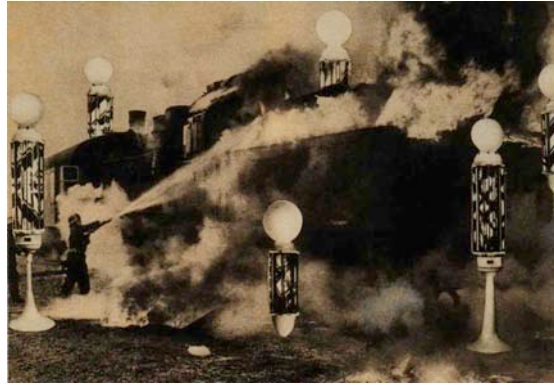
³¹⁷ *shindô* 震度.

³¹⁸ See appendix, image 3.

Appendix

Images from Shimizu Akira's *Menuma* [Eye-Swamp] 目沼

From *Yami no kioku, kioku no yami – Shimizu Akira* [Memory of darkness, darkness of memory – Shimizu Akira]. exh. cat. (Ashikaga City Museum of Art, 2000), 55-59.



(1) 煽夢燈

sen-mu-tô or *aor[i]-yume-hi*

[Inciting Dreamlamps]



(2) 双六行 *sugoroku-gyô*

[Sugoroku Walk]

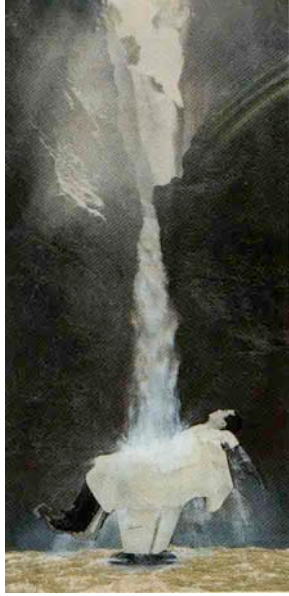
Sugoroku is a game similar to backgammon. The characters “sugo” and “roku” also stand for “twin/two” and “six”. “gyô” can mean both a row but also a “walk”.



(3) 稲妻捕り *Inazuma-tori*

[Capture of lightning]

The characters that make up “lightening” also stand for “rice plant” and “wife”.



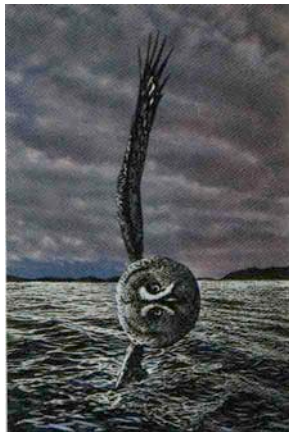
(4) 恍惚峡 *Kôkotsu-kyô* [Ravine of Ecstasy]



(5) 潮櫻 *Chô-ô* [Tide Cherries]



(6) 息盗み *Iki-nusumi* [Stealing Breath]



(7) 海柱 *Umi-bashira* [Ocean Column]



(8) 盲櫓 *Mô-ro* or *mekura-yagura* [Blind Tower]



(9) 軋線 *Atsu-sen* [Squealing Line]



(10) 鶏脈 *Kei-myaku* [Chicken Vein]



(11) 鐵面 *Tetsu-men* [Iron-Mask]
“men” is also face/aspect/side.

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Index

- Akasegawa Genpei 赤瀬川原平 (b. 1937), artist 17,18
- Andô Mitsuko 安藤三子, dancer 12,13
- Anma* あんま [The Masseur] 17ff
- Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), French author and theater director 6, 13, 20
- Ariadone アリアドネ, butoh group founded 1974 3
- Arthur Rimbaud (1854-91), author 13
- Asbestos-kan アスベスト館 17ff
- Ashikawa Yoko 芦川羊子 (b. 1947), dancer 3, 21, 22, 25, 28
- Âto shiatâ Shinjuku bunka* アートシアター新宿文化
[Shinjuku Cultural Art Theater] 23
- Bara-iro no dansu: shibusawasan no ie no hô e*
バラ色のダンスー渋澤産の家の方へ
[Rose-colored dance: A La Maison de M. Civeçawa] 17, 18ff
- Burû ekôzu* ブルーエコーズ [Blue Echoes] 16
- butô-fu* 舞踏譜, the “poems” used to choreograph butoh 7
- Butoh-ha Sebi 舞踏派セビ, butoh group surrounding Murobushi Kô 3
- Comte de Lautréamont (1846-1870), author 13
- Dairakudakan 大駱駝艦, butoh group founded in 1972 4
- Eguchi Takaya 江口隆哉 (1900-1977), dancer 11, 14
- Gaishi-kô* 碍子講 [Study of an Insulator] 22, 30
- Geisen jô no okugata* 鯨線上の奥方 [Lady on the Whalestring] 24
- Gendai butai geijutsu kyôkai* 現代舞台芸術協会
[Association for Contemporary Performing Arts] 12
- Gibasan* ギバサン 23
- Gôda Nario 合田成男, critic 4, 20, 21, 27
- Gunji Masakatsu 郡司正勝, scholar 23
- Hakutôbô* 白桃房, butoh group 22, 24, 25
- Keiô University Hijikata Memorial Archives 慶応大学土方巽アーカイヴ 4
- Hijikata Tatsumi to nihonjin - nikutai no hanran* 土方巽と日本人—肉体の反乱
[Hijikata Tatsumi and the Japanese – Rebellion of the Body] 19ff
- Hijikata Tatsumi 土方巽 (1928-1986), dancer
- Hosoe Eikoh 細江英公 (b. 1933), photographer 5, 27
- Hôsôtan* 疱瘡譚 [Story of Smallpox] 22
- Ichikawa Miyabi 市川雅, critic 4
- Ishii Baku 石井漠 (1886-1962), dancer 11
- Ishii Mitsutaka 石井満隆 (b. 1939), dancer 18
- Jean Genet (1910-1986), French author 6, 13, 19, 29
- Josef von Sternberg (1894-1969), German filmmaker 9
- Kamaitachi* 鎌鼬 [Sickle Weasel] 19, 27

- Kasai Akira 笠井晃 (b. 1943), dancer 2, 18
 Kazekura Shô 風倉匠 (b. 1936), artist 17
Kinjiki 禁色 [Forbidden Colors] 14ff, 28
 Kuniyoshi Kazuko 国吉和子, critic 4
 Marquis de Sade (1740-1814), libertine 13, 15
Me-numa 目沼 [Eye Swamp] 29, 58ff
 Mikami Kayô 三上賀代, dancer and scholar 4
 Mishima Yukio 三島由紀夫 (1925-1970), author 3, 14, 15, 39
 Motofuji Akiko 本藤あきこ (1928 -2003), dancer and Hijikata's wife 17, 26
 Murobushi Kô 室伏鴻, dancer
Nadare-Ame なだれ飴 [Dribbling Candy] 22
 Nakanishi Natsuyuki 中西夏之 (b. 1935), artist 11, 17, 19
Nihon Seinen-kan 日本青年館 [Japanese Youth Hall] 20
 Ohno Kazuo 大野一雄 (b. 1906), dancer 2, 4, 5, 11, 13, 15, 18, 25, 49
 Ohno Yoshito 大野慶人 (b. 1938), dancer 15
Ojune shô おジュネ抄 [Excerpts from Genet] 19
Ra Aruhenchîna-shô ラアルヘンチーナ頌 [Admiring La Argentina] 25
 Sankaijuku 山海塾, butoh group founded in 1975 3, 4
 Shibusawa Tatsuhiko 渋澤龍彦 (1928-87), scholar, translator, author 13, 15, 18, 43
Shiki no tame no nijû-nana ban 四季のための二十七晩
 [Twenty-Seven Nights for Four Seasons] 22ff, 30
 Shimizu Akira 清水晃 (b. 1936), artist 29, 50ff
Sôsho tokeru sakana 草書溶ける魚 [Melting Fish Series] 28
Susame dama すさめ玉 22
 Tamano Kôichi 玉野黄市 (b. 1946), dancer 46
 Tanaka Min 田中民 (b. 1945), dancer 4
 Tanemura Suehiro 種村季弘, critic 4
 Terayama Shûji 寺山修司 (1935-1985), theatre director and actor 3
Tôhoku kabuki keikaku 1-4 東北歌舞伎計画1-4
 [Tôhoku Kabuki Plan 1-4] 25ff
 Tsuda Nobumasa 津田信敏 14
 Tsuruoka Yoshihisa 鶴岡善久, scholar 28
 Unique Ballet Group ユニーク バレー グループ 13
 Waguri Yukio 和栗由紀夫, dancer 7
Yameru Maihime (Sick Dancer) 6, 24
 Yanagita Kunio 柳田国男 (1875-1962), folklorist 24
 Yokô Tadanori 横尾忠則 (b. 1936), graphic artist 4, 18
 Yoneyama Kunio 米山九日生, Hijikata's birth name 9
Zen nihon geijutsu buyô kyôkai 全日本芸術舞踊協会
 [All Japan Art Association] 14