

11 Exhausted by their battles with the world

Neurasthenia and civilization critique in early twentieth-century Japan

Christopher Hill

The novelist Natsume Sōseki may be Japan's most famous neurasthenic, but in the early years of the twentieth century he was not alone in complaining of a nervous exhaustion whose origin seemed to be modern civilization itself. *Shinkei suijaku* or "nerve fatigue," as neurasthenia was translated, first appeared as a diagnostic category in Japan in the late 1870s, and by the turn of the century was recognized as a widespread affliction whose symptoms ranged from insomnia and loss of appetite to debilitating fatigue and melancholy. Debates on the causes of this modern malady and its implications for Japan reached well beyond the medical community. As a "disease of civilization" (*bunmei no yamai*), the plague of neurasthenia worried not just patients and their doctors but also a range of commentators reflecting on the changes in the economy, education, and daily life that followed the Meiji Restoration of 1868. From its beginnings in the USA this neurological diagnosis, based on the idea that somatic dysfunction of the nerves produced psychic symptoms such as melancholy, was susceptible to a variety of metaphorical appropriations that turned it into a social condition. In Japan after the Russo–Japanese War (1904–1905) a boom in writing about neurasthenia made *shinkei suijaku* a keyword for social critique as *shakai mondai*, "social problem," had been for the 1890s. The story of the rise and fall of neurasthenia is a medical history – of neurology, psychiatry, and psychology before Freud – but also a cultural history properly told in both international and national terms. An essential part of the period Yamazaki Masakazu called "The Grumpy Era," neurasthenia was an opportunity to question the transformations of the Meiji period and their ideological justification, from the pursuit of European models of civilization to the state's suppression of dissent.¹

Writers were prominent among those who in posing such questions turned the discourse on neurasthenia toward social critique. Japanese writers had been engaged with new views of mental disturbance as nervous illness since early in the Meiji period. In the preamble of a tale whose title punningly promises a "true scene of nerves," the storyteller San'yūtei Enchō observed that of late "there are no more ghosts, everything is said to be nervous illness [*shinkei byō*]," adding that the enlightened intellectuals who dismiss ghosts and possession by animals have much to learn about human misbehavior.² In contrast to Enchō's ambivalence, Tsubouchi Shōyō enthusiastically scattered nervous pathologies across *The Character of*

Today's Students (*Tōsei shosei katagi*, 1885–1886). The novel set out to practice the character description based on “psychological principles” (*shinrigaku no dōri*) that Shōyō advocated in his manifesto *The Essence of the Novel* (*Shōsetsu shinzui*, 1885–1886). Kawamura Kunimitsu points out that the novel reflected not only the popularization of the language of nerves but also its impact on the representation of sensation and perception.³

Neurasthenia, in the late nineteenth century the most prominent of nervous disorders, too entered the literary lexicon and shaped the representation of mental life. Nagayoshi, a character in Nagai Kafū's novel *The Flowers of Hell* (*Jigoku no hana*, 1902), suffers bouts of the illness as the consequence of social ostracization and inner torment over the crimes of his youth. (The heroine, a young teacher named Sonoko, develops melancholia [*in'utsushō*] through her involvement with Nagayoshi's family.⁴) After the Russo–Japanese War, novels featuring neurasthenic characters proliferated, particularly in the rising naturalist school, and writers more pointedly connected the condition to the society in which they wrote. The debates between Professor Sneez and friends in an early work by Sōseki, *I am a Cat* (*Wagahai wa neko de aru*, 1905), are a well known comic example, but more common were tormented figures like Yoshiko, the rebellious girl student in Tayama Katai's *The Quilt* (“*Futon*,” 1907), the suicidal poet Aoki in Shimazaki Tōson's *Spring* (*Haru*, 1908), Yoshio, the bitter protagonist of Iwano Hōmei's *Wandering* (*Hōrō*, 1910), and Ichirō, the truth-seeking academic in Sōseki's *The Wayfarer* (*Kōjin*, 1914), all of whom suffer neurasthenia.⁵ That many of these ailing figures were modeled after life, sometimes after the writer himself, suggests an emerging self-image of intellectuals as dysfunctional products of civilization. They take their place in a literary scene that critics and historians have observed turned frequently to images of disease to reflect on the consequences for individuals of the changes in daily life encouraged by the state since 1868. Among other “epochal maladies” like tuberculosis, whose depiction frequently dramatized the confrontation of individuals with social mores, neurasthenia was a particularly rich vehicle because as a nervous affliction with symptoms both somatic and psychological its metaphors entangled physical infirmities with subjective attitudes toward contemporary society.⁶ Two important novels of the late Meiji period, Sōseki's *The Wayfarer* and Tōson's *Spring*, show that as writers appropriated neurasthenia as such a means of reflection they transformed the complex etiology of the disease into an aesthetic that unexpectedly expresses an unhappy suspension of judgment on the era.

The view that melancholy was caused by a disorder of the nervous system emerged in European medical discourse in the seventeenth century, and the idea that wealth and civilization were fostering an “English Malady” of nervous ailments in the British elites became fashionable in the eighteenth century.⁷ Medical and popular discussion of nervous affliction and its relationship to society increased during the nineteenth century. Two physicians in the USA, George M. Beard and E. H. Van Deusen, proposed “neurasthenia” as a formal diagnosis for nervous disorders in separate journal articles in 1869. Beard's formulation, advanced in numerous publications including the widely read *American Nervousness* (1881), became the basis for the international discourse of neurasthenia. In the view of

Beard, a neurologist writing at a time when the field included aspects of physiology, psychiatry, and anatomy, the diverse symptoms of neurasthenia were caused by a deficiency of “nerve force” that could be traced to physiological changes in the nerves, although the specific pathology was yet unknown. Immediate causes could include business woes, sexual excess, and abuse of tobacco and alcohol, but the fundamental cause was modern civilization itself, distinguished from ancient civilization by five features: steam power, the periodical press, the telegraph, the sciences, and “the mental activity of women.” Beard argued that “When civilization, plus these five factors, invades any nation, it must carry nervousness and nervous diseases along with it.”⁸ Neurasthenia, which Beard described as a consequence of “progress and refinement,” thus was closely linked to the liberal ideas of social evolution propounded by Herbert Spencer and other social philosophers of the time. Neurasthenia was an acute and growing problem in the USA precisely because of the advanced state of its civilization.⁹ The peril, however, was selective: “Muscle workers” only rarely developed neurasthenia, according to Beard. It was the modern vanguard of “brain workers” – business leaders and members of the liberal professions – that risked contracting the “distinguished malady” of neurasthenia, through overwork and the burden of responsibility.¹⁰ Alongside such an elitism in matters of class one may observe in Beard’s focus on professions dominated at the time by men an exclusivity in matters of gender. The typical North American neurasthenic was a man of affairs well able to afford the “rest cures” in plush resorts usually prescribed as treatment.

Beard’s diagnosis gained attention abroad in the 1870s and during the following decade, aided by the publication of his *Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion* (1880), was incorporated into the theories of mental disturbance circulating in international medical circles.¹¹ The iterations of the diagnosis took diverse forms. German physicians and commentators highlighted industrial stress and “democratized” the disease by extending the diagnosis and treatment to members of the working class.¹² In France, in contrast, the emerging disciplines of psychiatry and sociology accepted the idea that modern civilization was the cause of neurasthenia, but linked it to atavistic degeneration as one feature of what Robert Nye calls a “medical model of cultural crisis” that explained the plague of crime, suicide, and moral decay thought to be undermining the country.¹³ In Japan, where physicians began to adopt Beard’s diagnosis in the late 1870s, neurasthenia was a disease of the civilized elite but the diagnosis contributed to campaigns by neurologists and psychiatrists to discredit popular conceptions of mental derangement, and thus to efforts to civilize the masses. (Beard said in *American Nervousness* that the fine physical constitution of people living in Japan would make them prone to neurasthenia if they developed civilization, and perhaps psychiatrists were out to prove him right.¹⁴)

Across the regions where neurasthenia boomed, the diagnosis seems to have appealed to physicians because it accommodated a wide range of symptoms short of insanity for which they knew no organic cause, at the same time unifying what by the 1880s was an extensive literature on nervous exhaustion.¹⁵ It also played a role in the economics and competition of medical specializations. Promoting the

diagnosis allowed neurologists to gain patients who might otherwise be treated by general practitioners, alienists (those specializing in the severely insane), or gynecologists, who wanted charge of female patients, often for surgery.¹⁶ Association with Beard and S. Weir Mitchell, the major proponent of the rest cure and like Beard a prestigious social commentator, meanwhile enhanced neurology's prestige.¹⁷ For their part, patients seemed drawn to neurasthenia because it spared them the label of insanity and was distinct from hysteria, hypochondria, and melancholia, which all carried a stigma.¹⁸ That patients, doctors, and social commentators used neurasthenia to so many different ends in so many different places attests to its *international* existence, as part of what Regenia Gagnier and Martin Delveaux call the "global ecology" – cultural, political, and economic – of the *fin de siècle*.¹⁹

As a psychosomatic illness in the original sense of the word – involving both mind and body – neurasthenia contributed both to the ongoing medicalization of the body and the disciplinary transformation of madness. Its roles are especially clear in the case of Japan, where nerves were not a part of the Chinese-derived system of medical thought that was dominant until the Meiji period. *Shinkei*, the word now used to refer to this part of the body, was coined in 1774 to translate the Dutch *Zenuw* in a translation via Dutch of Johann Kulmus' *Anatomische Tabellen* (1722). In the early nineteenth century compounds of *shinkei* appeared, including *shinkei suijaku* (later used to translate neurasthenia), but at the time these referred solely to physical conditions. In the 1880s *shinkei* gained connotations of feeling and mind, while a Japanese–English dictionary that is an important source for historical lexicography defined *shinkei byō* as "nervous or mental disease."²⁰ The establishment of this sense of *shinkei byō* was insured by the confrontation of the emerging field of psychiatry with popular explanations of unusual human behavior as the result of possession by animals, particularly foxes. To discredit such ideas and legitimate their field, pioneering psychiatrists such as Kure Shūzō classified the *belief* that one has been possessed by a fox as a nervous disease, of physiological origin, that was the charge of psychiatry.²¹ In such assertions that previous conceptions of mental disturbance were in themselves pathological and had to be overcome one glimpses the support that evolutionary social thought – already present in the idea of neurasthenia as a disease of civilization – lent to the medical disciplines that claimed responsibility for the diagnosis and treatment of nervous disorders.

These disciplines were increasingly at odds, however, and by the turn of the century they were dismantling neurasthenia and reapportioning its symptoms to form the twentieth-century fields of neurology, psychiatry, and psychology. The failure of Beard and his followers to find the physical pathology responsible for neurasthenia was a significant factor in the demise of the diagnosis, but the change was more fundamental. Beard's diagnosis encompassed both body and mind and had a strong social dimension, as seen in his assertions that the modern division of labor contributed to the development of the disease. In the early twentieth century, however, neurology as a discipline gravitated toward research on observable organic pathologies, in the process abandoning social commentary as unscientific.²²

Psychiatry, meanwhile, established its disciplinary *bona fides* by reorganizing diagnostic categories by cause rather than symptom and stressing quantitative research, two directions promoted by the German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin beginning in the 1880s, through which neurasthenia ultimately disappeared as a distinct diagnosis. (Kure introduced the revision of diagnoses that began in Germany to Japan in the 1890s.²³) In many parts of the world, the somatic aspect of the disease lingered in the idea of inherited neuropathic constitutions, which through their association with theories of degeneration offered a scientific basis for stigmatizing the mentally ill and their families.²⁴ The increasing tendency, however, was to attribute melancholy and malaise to purely psychogenic causes. Freudian psychoanalysis, which came to dominate psychology, notably offered a purely psychogenic conception of mental distress. What most obviously disappeared in such a turn were the material social factors that had been an important part of neurasthenia.²⁵ In international medical circles the diagnosis was fully obsolete by the 1920s. Treatment of mental distress was divided between psychology and psychiatry, with less debilitating manifestations of what had been considered neurasthenia treated by psychologists as functional neuroses.²⁶

Outside of medical circles, specialists' arguments were too arcane to diminish the metaphorical appeal of neurasthenia, letting it enjoy a different career. The affliction could express everything from individual discontent to the crises facing entire nations. (Beard appears to be the only commentator who took pride in a national tendency toward neurasthenia.) The great utility of neurasthenia came from the way its combination of physiological, psychological, and social causes could be juggled to support an enormous variety of opinions on the subject's relationship to changing social and economic conditions, from the daily routines of home, factory, and company office to the chronic competition for subsistence in capitalist economies. Critics who exploited neurasthenia to dissect the pathologies of modernity argued through rapid shifts between individual and social diagnoses, regardless of the positions they took. The feminist Charlotte Perkins Gilman charged in *Women and Economics* (1898) that primitive conditions in the home condemned women in the USA to a life of "nervous strain" and "waste of nervous force," the individual malady impeding overall social progress.²⁷ (During a miserable first marriage Gilman undertook a rest cure for her own neurasthenia, described in agonizing detail in the 1892 story "The Yellow Wallpaper.") The physician and journalist Max Nordau, in contrast, enlisted neurasthenia to condemn Symbolist poets, Nietzsche, and Wagner, among many others, as agents of moral and social disintegration in his acclaimed book *Degeneration* (*Entartung*, 1892). In Nordau's view technological innovation, industrialization, and urbanization were pitching people into neurasthenia and other nervous disorders at an unprecedented rate. Among artists and writers the result was a wave of "degenerate" art. Admirers transmitted the degeneracy they acquired as readers and spectators to their offspring, in Lamarckian fashion.²⁸ For Gilman, the epidemic of neurasthenia showed the need for social and economic reforms; for Nordau, moral and artistic vigilance. Their fundamental difference did not concern the nature of the malady but rather the proper response to the much greater forces believed to cause it.

In Japan, the novelty of the idea of nervous illness aided the use of neurasthenia to examine social problems only distantly related to its medical etiology. Initially, at least, terms such as nervous illness (*shinkei byō*) seem to have replaced fox possession (*kitsune tsuki*) and other common designations for mental disturbance without affecting many people's views of the causes.²⁹ San'yūtei Enchō's comic treatment of nervous illness, mentioned earlier, suggests the skepticism that physicians met as they promoted their theories. The connection of neurasthenia to the liberal theories of social evolution invoked by the Meiji government and civic reformers in their programs of "civilization and enlightenment," however, seems to have given neurasthenia an appeal in the social imagination that other nervous disorders did not enjoy. Neurasthenia made it possible to argue over the consequences of civilization in civilization's own language. Early on the affliction was associated with the vanguard of civilization. An 1890 article in the reformist magazine *Women's Education* (*Jogaku zasshi*) noted the danger neurasthenia posed to students, male and female alike, and warned against excessive study.³⁰ By the turn of the century writers in mass-circulation magazines such as *The Sun* (*Taiyō*) were warning that the increase in cases threatened the state and economy because of the special role that scholars, bureaucrats, financiers, and others who "labor the spirit" (*seishin o rō suru mono*) play in them.³¹ On this basis Kure and prominent figures such as the statesman Ōkuma Shigenobu proposed confining the nervously ill to prevent them from harming society, which by this logic was not sick *per se*.³² The view that neurasthenia was a disease of the age affecting all touched by the transformations of the period was increasingly common, however. One promoter of therapeutic hypnosis wrote in 1909: "Cerebro-neurasthenia [*nōshinkei suijaku shō*] may be considered the Meiji period's own endemic, intractable malady," the fierce struggle for existence and the complexity of modern learning increasing its incidence so much that "in a manner of speaking one should call it Meiji Disease [*Meiji byō*]." Nervous health is the key to thriving in an age where survival of the fittest is the rule.³³

Although written to promote a cure, such comments suggest growing unease and indeed weariness with Meiji-era ideologies of success and striving. Neurasthenia took its place alongside concrete economic and social dislocations such as government-induced deflation, the impoverishment of former samurai, and the growth of slums in major cities as a consequence of civilization. The surge in discussion of nervous fatigue in the late Meiji period, one might say, was the result of an endemic "ideology fatigue," with the strains of mobilization during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905 the immediate cause.³⁴ In Japan such appropriations of neurasthenia to express doubts about the rapid changes in social life since 1868 touched on both the relationship of the individual to new and transformed social institutions, but also the relationship of Japan, as a nation, to the European models of civilization against which Meiji ideology measured it.

Late Meiji writers such as Sōseki and Tōson offer particularly revealing examples of the possibilities and limits of neurasthenia as a vehicle for cultural critique. These writers were not only acutely aware of the changes that had occurred in Japanese society during their lifetimes, but also understood that their

own work – written in the *genbun itchi* “vernacular” style and serialized in newspapers – was an aspect of the Meiji transformation. Although in some ways their work differs markedly – Sōseki is known for psychological realism and Tōson for creating several of the most important novels of Japanese naturalism – their appropriations of neurasthenia reveal a tension typical of many writers at this time, between the mandate to pursue the new that had been a part of the literary field since the 1880s and their own doubts about progress. To writers eager to learn of the latest developments in Europe, the “degenerate,” neurasthenic literature they encountered through the work of detractors such as Nordau was the product of highly refined civilization *and*, perhaps, a symptom of social catastrophe.³⁵ Many late Meiji writers thus labored against the suspicion that their ambition to create a literature able to express their attitudes toward the society around them might be the sign of a sickness produced by that same society. Unlike Kure and Ōkuma, writers like Sōseki and Tōson rejected the idea that civilization could be insulated from its byproducts and questioned the clarity with which medical and political authorities distinguished the two. Perhaps because of the same self-doubt, however, their appropriations of neurasthenia tended to neutralize its political implications. Their position is reflected in both the characters and narrative form of *The Wayfarer* and *Spring*.

Sōseki diagnosed himself with neurasthenia in the early 1890s and described the condition in notes for his critical work *Theory of Literature* (*Bungakuron*, 1907) as a consequence of “self-consciousness.” As mentioned earlier neurasthenic characters appeared quickly after he began writing fiction.³⁶ Around 1911 he seems to have embarked on a more intensive examination of the place of neurasthenia in Japanese society, most notably in the essay “The Civilization of Contemporary Japan” (“Gendai Nihon no kaika,” 1911) and novels including *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond* (*Higan sugi made*, 1912) and *The Wayfarer*. The essay, which compares late Meiji civilization to the civilization of the “West,” establishes many of the arguments on neurasthenia that appear in Sōseki’s late work. Although the development of civilization is driven by efforts to diminish labor and increase pleasure, Sōseki says, competition increases with civilization’s advance. Paradoxically, the anxiety and strain of civilized societies are no less than in the past and possibly greater.³⁷ The “special circumstances” of the development of civilization in Japan – the external forces that recently impelled it to take a particular form – further complicated its impact there. Civilization in the West (which Sōseki glosses as “civilization in general”) is “intrinsic” (*naihatsu teki*), having developed “like a blossoming flower.” As the result of external forces Japan faced in the Meiji period, however – essentially the threat of European imperialism – the civilization of contemporary Japan is “extrinsic” (*gaihatsu teki*) and displays two contrary tendencies.³⁸ Although many people try to pretend their civilization is intrinsic, it is fundamentally “superficial and shallow” (*hisō uwasuberi*) and leaves those who live such a lie feeling empty, dissatisfied, and anxious. The few who defy superficiality and try to cultivate a truly intrinsic civilization, by retracing the scientific discoveries of Europe from theory to successive theory, for example, develop neurasthenia because of the immense effort required. Because the

circumstances of Japanese civilization force it to change merely mechanically, Sōseki says, “we either skim along its surface, or if we resolve not to slide and stand firm, we contract neurasthenia as a consequence.”³⁹ Thus in “The Civilization of Contemporary Japan” neurasthenia is a disease of Japanese civilization’s discontents, those cultivated dissenters who resist the dominant pathology of superficiality. Its appearance in Japan, moreover, does not indicate the advanced state of Japanese civilization, as neurasthenia does in North America and Europe (Sōseki predicted Britain would be the first country destroyed by neurasthenia), but rather the impact of semi-colonial domination.⁴⁰

A conflict between the two national maladies of superficiality and nervous exhaustion marks the characters and form of *The Wayfarer*. Sōseki’s treatment of neurasthenia in the novel dramatizes the critique of late Meiji society in “The Civilization of Contemporary Japan” and at the same time, curiously, reduces it to an emotional position in a way that suggests the limits of critique within the constraints Sōseki imposes on it. *The Wayfarer* centers on the relationship over roughly a year between the narrator, a recent college graduate, and his elder brother, a university professor prone to self-absorption. Early in the novel the brother asks that the narrator try to seduce his wife, whom he feels he cannot know or love. Refusing, the narrator nonetheless agrees to ask about her feelings toward her husband. She divulges little, but reveals that she muses frequently on the circumstances of her death. The narrator repeatedly postpones telling the brother what he has learned, seeding lasting resentment between them over the brother’s strange demand and the narrator’s negligence. Increasingly withdrawn, the brother spends more and more time alone in his study and begins to conduct research on telepathy and spiritualism. By this time a number of characters judge him to suffer neurasthenia. At the narrator’s request, a university colleague named H takes the brother away on a walking trip. In a long letter to the narrator that forms the final part of the novel, H explains the brother’s view of his spiritual struggles. Prior to the letter, important sections of the narrative are devoted to the narrator’s observation of his brother’s mental state and his speculation that the brother is moving from overwork through neurasthenia toward a state verging on madness, while H’s letter imparts his own reflections on the brother’s bizarre behavior and anguished state of mind.⁴¹

Through their actions the narrator and his brother personify the contrary tendencies discussed by Sōseki in “The Civilization of Contemporary Japan.” In contrast to the brother’s slide into neurasthenia Sōseki lets it be clear that the narrator is propelled by a shallow desire to avoid confrontation or recognition of human suffering, as when he avoids reporting his conversation with the brother’s wife.⁴² The two brothers’ exemplifications of these tendencies, however, are complicated by the fact that they also remark them in each other. An initial indication comes in a comment by the narrator that “My elder brother had sensitive nerves, while I was excitable and impatient.”⁴³ The brother, for his part, observes similarities between the narrator and their father, who had been a politically astute bureaucrat. “Isn’t there something oddly frivolous about our father?” he asks the narrator, who responds: “In Japanese society today if you aren’t that way you can’t get anywhere, so can he help it? In

the world there are people horribly more frivolous than father. You may not know that because you lead a highbrow life at school and in your study.” The brother, in fact, concurs: “I do know . . . There’s no getting around the fact that in Japanese society today – and maybe in the West too – it’s reached the point that only people good at being shallow [*uwasuberi no ojōzu mono*] can live.” He insists that in their father’s case, however, the tendency is innate. That the narrator tries to defend him is proof he takes after the father.⁴⁴ To the arguments that appear in “The Civilization of Contemporary Japan” the brother adds the suggestion that the plague of superficiality is hastened by the ability of the inherently superficial to thrive in such a world. Considering that the diagnosis is delivered by a man showing signs of debilitating neurasthenia, however, the brother is not a simple mouthpiece for Sōseki in such exchanges with the narrator. Through the brother Sōseki underscores the connection of neurasthenia to resistance to the superficiality of “extrinsic” civilization, yet the very fact of the brother’s nervous disturbance casts doubt on the veracity of his objections.

The brother’s major defense of himself comes via H’s account of their conversations in his letter to the narrator. On one occasion the brother describes his daily life as one of constant anxiety because nothing he does brings him closer to his goals. The anxiety ultimately stems from the advance of science, he says, frightening because its relentless progress gives humans no rest. Although H agrees with this view of science, the brother retorts that his friend’s fright is “just fright of the head,” whereas he experiences “fright of the heart . . . a fright that lives and beats a pulse.” He explains: “It’s frightening because I have to experience in my life, alone, the fate that all humanity will arrive at several centuries from now . . . I mean that I experience fright that gathers the anxiety of all mankind into me alone and condenses it to the span of an hour or minute.”⁴⁵ As Ochi Haruo observes, Sōseki’s depiction of the brother’s mental state shows an increasing stress in his late works on the psychological impact of civilization on his protagonists.⁴⁶ The physical aspect of his suffering is also strong, however: that the brother feels anxiety pulsing in his heart (Sōseki uses the anatomically specific *shinzō*) reflects the somatic character of neurasthenia. Neurasthenia thus comes to represent a spiritual and philosophical response to civilization. The brother explains that he aspires to a pure state of mind (*kokoro*) in which the world and everything in it would vanish, leaving only the self. Such a state, which he refers to as “the absolute” (*zettai*), would transcend not only the contemporary moment (*gendai*) but life and death. The ultimate cause of his unhappiness, he says, is that the more he understands his aspiration in abstract terms the more impossible it seems for him to accomplish it in practice.⁴⁷ What the narrator regards as near madness spawned by neurasthenia is in the brother’s view exhausted frustration caused by his inability to find a philosophical position unaffected by the social instability and individual anxiety of modernity. Although H professes to being dull-witted in philosophical matters, in the closing passages of his letter he stresses the sincerity of the brother’s aspirations, and implicitly the critical stance toward late Meiji society and civilization *per se* that inspires them, while warning of the gravity of the unhappiness that is their consequence.⁴⁸

The Wayfarer ends with H's warning, providing no indication of the narrator's reaction to the letter. Formally, the novel comprises two distinct personal examinations of the brother whose conclusions could not be more different: the narrator becomes only more convinced that the brother's problems are caused by nervous exhaustion, while H regards his peregrinations as a sincerely pursued philosophical project. The two views are reconciled neither in the novel's story, for example in a conversation between H and the narrator, nor in its form, as they might be by a more elaborate framing of H's letter in which the narrator indicates his reaction. The bifurcated form resembles the pairing of the narrator and his brother as characters, and their tendency to comment on each other, but with a significant shift. In a strictly parallel transposition the narrator's first-person observations on his brother would be matched with a similar narrative by the brother about his sibling, but the place of the brother's voice is taken by H's letter about him. The form of the novel casts further doubt on the brother's critique of late Meiji society, which becomes something on which to reflect rather than act. In formal terms *The Wayfarer* calls only for recognition of the sincerely expressed anguish of the neurasthenic – regardless of his views of its causes – while stripping the condition of any specific indications about what is to be done. If for the narrator neurasthenia names the consequences of needless ratiocination, for the brother a philosophical impasse, and for H the sincerity of discontent, for the novel neurasthenia seems to name a self-doubt that becomes more incapacitating as the forces reshaping society appear more unstoppable and impersonal.

Like *The Wayfarer*, Tōson's novel *Spring* pursues a critique of the civilization of the Meiji period by pairing two characters who struggle in a shallow, hostile social environment. *Spring* too has a dual, albeit rather different, narrative structure that supports the novel's examination of responses to Japanese modernity. Tōson, however, enlists neurasthenia and broad notions of nervous illness to criticize the here-and-now without the detour through "civilization in general" found in Sōseki's treatment of late Meiji Japan. The novel begins as a *roman à clef* whose characters are recognizable as the young writers who animated the journal *Literary World* (*Bungakukai*) in the 1890s, including the poet Kitamura Tōkoku and Tōson himself. As he examines the frustrations of his generation, which one observer in the novel calls "the youth of the new age, battling forward," Tōson also takes a sympathetic position in contemporary debates over the generation that came of age after the Russo-Japanese War, which commentators considered individualistic, materialistic, and apathetic to national concerns. In one of the novel's most famous lines the neurasthenic poet Aoki (modeled after Tōkoku) declares that "Japan today is nothing but a tomb for youth." In the novel's "double vision" – to use Miyoshi Yukio's phrase – Aoki's indictment applies to the postwar period as well as the 1890s, and ultimately to the Meiji civilizing project as a whole.⁴⁹ Such a critical attitude toward Japanese modernity does not waver but the novel's form gradually shifts from a generational *roman à clef* to what later critics would call an "I-novel" that is focused on the character modeled on Tōson, Kishimoto. As Kishimoto labors to carry on alone the literary battles once waged by the group, the broad social critique of the

early part of the novel narrows to a story of personal aesthetic struggles that are a markedly different response to the social changes of the Meiji period.

Spring is structured by a series of reunions of what the narrator refers to as “the group” (*renchū*), opening with Kishimoto’s meeting with three friends near Mt. Fuji after an extended journey to Kansai. Early in the novel the gatherings are dominated by literary debates and lamentations over the indifference of society toward the young men’s ambitions. At one gathering Aoki shouts of sepulchral Japan, “There’s no life! Or originality! Naïve drivel, that’s all the poetry you hear!”⁵⁰ Another member, Ichikawa, tells Kishimoto that the present age doesn’t tolerate the dreams of the young. He wonders if they all were born too early.⁵¹ Over three some years the gatherings’ energy wanes as the enthusiasm of some cools and others seek practical ways to support their work. The drift from aesthetic fraternity to nostalgic companionship is punctuated by two events, Aoki’s suicide and Kishimoto’s departure at the end of the novel for a teaching position in Sendai that will support his poetry. Up to Aoki’s suicide the narrative focus moves from character to character, supporting the novel’s depiction of “the group” as representative of a generation. Although the longest sections of this first part of the novel focus on Kishimoto and Aoki, the two appear as first among peers. After Aoki’s disappearance Kishimoto gradually becomes the novel’s sole narrative focus. His increasing distance from members of the group is highlighted by the fact that his meetings with them are staged from his perspective. Although some critics argue that even in the beginning of *Spring* the other characters only serve to reveal Kishimoto’s personality and state of mind, the narrowing of the narrative focus in the later part indisputably changes its thematics, from the anguish of a generation to that of an individual.⁵²

Tōson’s examination of the quandary of youth in the Meiji era pairs Aoki and Kishimoto from an early point. Aoki’s wife Misao remarks the similarity of their temperments, each imagines himself in a metaphorical prison, and Aoki first attempts suicide with a dagger (he succeeds with a noose), a method that Kishimoto considers himself.⁵³ Aoki is described at the beginning of *Spring* as having a “nervous disposition” (*shinkei shitsu*), and the more his aesthetic ambitions are frustrated the more his nerves deteriorate. (The attention *Spring* gives to the decay of Aoki’s nerves reflects the role that the degenerate body plays in naturalist mimesis.⁵⁴) Kishimoto remarks that Aoki’s recent work reveals “unfathomable anxiety” and may show him on the way to madness.⁵⁵ Struggling against intense fatigue and losing the will to write, Aoki meditates ceaselessly on his situation: “It became a habit, and even when there was no need, he thought,” the narrator explains. “He thought, he thought, even worn out he still thought. There was hardly a moment when his mind was at rest.”⁵⁶ The similarity to the brother’s descent through neurasthenia into madness in *The Wayfarer* is unmistakable. Like Sōseki, Tōson ties Aoki’s decline to larger trends. In an old letter that Misao finds after his death Aoki describes his condition in ways that entwine it with the history of Meiji Japan. According to the letter (drawn from a letter by Tōkoku), the first of many periods of “melancholia” (*kiutsubyō*) came when his teenage ambition for a career in politics was thwarted by the government’s suppression of the campaigns for liberal democracy in the 1880s.

His indignation and anger “as a youngster of nervous disposition” sent him to bed for several months. Entering the university he resolved to battle the philosophy of survival of the fittest spreading to Japan from Europe, then to fight through political fiction in the manner of Hugo, only to face continuing despair as a result of his “brain disease” (*nōbyō*) and a final fall from the ladder of worldly ambition.⁵⁷

In an unremarked aspect of *Spring*’s compound vision, Aoki’s story inserts nervous illness, the vocabulary of social critique in the postwar period, into the often observed passage of intellectuals in the 1890s from politics to a depoliticized literature. Although Aoki possesses a nervous disposition, his illness is precipitated by the collision of his idealism with the Meiji state and compounded by the indifference of society toward the poetry into which he transposes his aspirations. Tōson repeatedly underlines the connection between Aoki’s “exhausted” nerves and the fatigue of such “battles with the world.”⁵⁸ Or rather, Tōson uses nervous illness to indicate a fundamental conflict, greater than one poet’s nervous dysfunction, between individuals and the priorities of the Meiji state: order and material progress. This is not an argument on a “neurasthenic Japan” of the sort Sōseki makes in “The civilization of contemporary Japan” and *The Wayfarer*. Rather it is an argument on “neurasthenic youth” who are driven to mental decline by the Meiji state and the society it has created. In *Spring* it is not “civilization” in its universal or national versions but the specific society of the Meiji here-and-now that pushes Aoki into nervous exhaustion and despair so severe that the only respite he sees is death.

Although Aoki’s counterpart Kishimoto too contemplates suicide he arrives at an individualistic accommodation with the world. Noted early in the novel to have a “depressive temperament” (*ukutusu shita seishitsu*), Kishimoto suffers from both uncertainty about his artistic ambitions and the frustrations of love for a former student.⁵⁹ He retreats for a time to a monastery in Kamakura and then, after renouncing the girl by sleeping with a prostitute, begins a pilgrimage to nowhere. Arriving at the coast he contemplates the sea, “a cold, meaningless tomb” where he might “bury his hopes, his love, his young life.” Thinking it would be “pointless” (*tsumaranai*) to die when there is so much in the world that he does not know, however, he turns away.⁶⁰ It is not clear until after Aoki’s death that such a commitment to experience, periodically reiterated, ultimately is a commitment to artistic creation. In his dark moments Kishimoto repeats to himself, “create, create,” and as the life of the group becomes sterile he shuts himself up in pursuit of a “way” (*michi*) that would be his alone, a means to complete the work that Aoki left unfinished.⁶¹ During this period the obligation to support his mother and the family of his brother, who has been jailed on suspicion of fraud, emerges as the greatest obstacle to Kishimoto’s aspirations. He again considers suicide and emerges with a renewed commitment by reasoning that the obligation to “find his own way” is more important than the obligation to his family: “Everyone must find his own way. Not knowing even why one lives as one does, where would be the filial devotion in that?” As he departs for Sendai, where he will teach and write while sending money to Tokyo, he “dreams of a fantasy world not knowing when it would arrive,” and thinks to himself, “Even as I am I want to live.”⁶²

Kishimoto considers himself Aoki's successor, but the denouement of Kishimoto's story shows that their responses to Meiji society differ fundamentally. Where Aoki's art was connected to the common undertaking of political struggle, and in some ways memorialized its failure, Kishimoto's is a personal undertaking. Of the surviving members of the group only he remains true to its artistic aspirations but is little different from the other members in drifting off alone. If Aoki's nervous exhaustion indicates a conflict with a misshapen society, and the difficulty of maintaining a critical view of it, we can say that Kishimoto's struggle is to find a desire to live (a "way") that such a society will condone. In concrete terms, for Kishimoto the question of how to live becomes one of money rather than ideals. Significantly Kishimoto, regardless of his depressive tendencies and the toil of supporting his family, never is described in the novel with the vocabulary of nerves or nervous exhaustion. The figure of the neurasthenic and the critical position neurasthenia indicates is replaced by a merely struggling artist in search of a way to live in rather than change the society around him.

The shift in the form of *Spring* from *roman à clef* to I-novel is often attributed to the appearance of Katai's autobiographical story "*The Quilt*" while Tōson was working on his novel. The change of genres underscores the difference between Aoki's and Kishimoto's responses to the predicament of a generation, however, and through the narrowing of the narrative focus supports the elaboration of Kishimoto's individualistic solution. It thus seems far from coincidental.⁶³ The genre shift is curiously similar to the bifurcation of form in *The Wayfarer*, which divides the narrator's view of his brother's slide into neurasthenia from the philosophical defense related by H. The change of genres in *Spring* isolates Aoki's critique in formal as well as temporal terms: Aoki's rejection of the society created by the Meiji state belongs to another form and another time, both seemingly left behind in the advance toward Kishimoto's "mature" commitment to the self at the novel's end. The difficulty Aoki's friends have grasping his motives for suicide (his wife's comment "I don't understand either" expresses a common sentiment) further suggests that for the survivors Aoki's critique may be ineffective if not meaningless, as the brother's critique in *The Wayfarer* is a matter for puzzled reflection rather than action for the narrator and H.⁶⁴ Where the brother's objections to Meiji civilization never gain their own narrative voice in *The Wayfarer*, however, Aoki's position is supported by a distinct formal apparatus in *Spring*. The discontinuity of genres both isolates and preserves Aoki's critique because it blocks a reading of Kishimoto's response as a simple overcoming of Aoki's despair. That Kishimoto's response requires a crass selfishness, identified unstintingly in the later scenes of the novel, moreover underlines its limitations when compared to the example offered by Aoki. The ambivalence that the narrative discourse of *Spring* displays toward Kishimoto, and Kishimoto's acknowledgment of his flaws in the novel's last line, suggest an ambivalence toward the desertion of Aoki's uncompromising position. Although the view of Meiji society that *Spring* elaborates through Aoki's demise is more pointed than the critique of "civilization" that *The Wayfarer* pursues through the brother's crisis, an element of self-doubt thus also runs through Tōson's novelistic appropriation of neurasthenia. Both novels seem

unwilling to fully embrace or reject the critical view of late Meiji society that emerged from the debates over neurasthenia.

As the examples of *The Wayfarer* and *Spring* suggest, late Meiji appropriations of neurasthenia for social critique often arrive at an impasse whose traces can be found not only in overt arguments but also in aesthetic form. In literature, character pairings and bifurcations of narrative introduce conflicting responses to the Meiji-era reorganization of social, economic, and political life while insuring that they will remain unreconciled, as if the proposition of neurasthenia as a disease of civilization requires a suspension of judgment. The reasons for such a seeming failure of neurasthenia as a vehicle for critique reveal much about the reassessment of the Meiji civilizing project in the years after the Russo–Japanese War. Although neurasthenia disappeared from international medical discourse because the physical pathology of the nerves that Beard considered the cause could never be found, the collapse of the diagnosis among professionals meant little for those who used it in critical examinations of turn-of-the-century societies. Such appropriations of neurasthenia always exploited the medical etiology of the disease selectively. A more decisive factor was the entanglement of the condition, in both its medical and social variants, with liberal theories of social evolution. To argue that neurasthenia was a disease caused by the advance of civilization required recapitulating the underlying premise that societies by nature “advance,” incrementally but irreversibly, with only a minor variation on the results. “Neurasthenic critique” thus reiterated the premises of the ideologies of progress, such as the ideology of nation-building that legitimated the transformation of Japan in the Meiji period, that were its target. Because liberal theories of progress were both its foundation and limit, such criticism could not but stop short of imagining a fundamental transformation of social relations in the manner of Marxism or a radical psychiatry.

Few late Meiji writers, however, showed much interest in breaking with liberal notions of progress or destabilizing the ideologies based on them. One thus should ask if the seeming impasse in writers’ treatments of neurasthenia might have carried out positive ideological labor. The roles that neurasthenia plays in *The Wayfarer* and *Spring* suggest that the paired characters, bifurcated forms, and affect of self-doubt associated with novelistic treatments of the condition are ways of separating social critique from its application in practice. The complaints that the brother in Sōseki’s novel and Aoki in Tōson’s lodge against the hostile, shallow societies in which they live are utterly compelling and absolutely ineffectual. Action belongs to other characters, whose segments of the narrative tell stories of accommodation. The novels avoid measuring critique and practice against each other and question whether the two can ever meet. That such a separation of critique and practice becomes part of the novels’ forms suggests that as a metaphor for the consequences of progress neurasthenia lent itself easily to aesthetic legitimations of political quietism, in the guise of resignation or a sense of belatedness.⁶⁵ Put another way, in the late Meiji period neurasthenia lent itself to the quietist legitimization of a particular aesthetic – an aesthetic of disheartenment and fatigue that was not the disappearance of politics so much as the severing of critical consciousness from worldly action. The conspicuous presence of neurasthenia in many works of the

postwar period – with Tōson turning one of the most notable figures in the depoliticization of art, Tōkoku, into a neurasthenic and Sōseki presenting his many neurasthenic characters as epitomes of the dejected intellectual – shows that this disease of civilization played a crucial role in propagating such an aesthetic as the proper response to state-sponsored social dislocation. In the process the protean illness of neurasthenia, a confluence of psychological, somatic, and social forces, became the chronically unhappy consciousness that is such a durable theme of twentieth-century Japanese literature. And yet within this aesthetic the decaying body of the neurasthenic remains, an unbanishable reminder of such a turn from the world, at once a signifier of mourning for futures relinquished and of the possibility that they might be regained.

Notes

1. Yamazaki Masakazu (1986) *Fukigen no jidai*, Tokyo: Kōdansha, pp. 12–35.
2. Quoted in Kawamura Kunimitsu (1990) *Genshi suru kindai kukan – meishin, byōki, zashiki rō, ariui wa rekishi no kioku*, Tokyo: Seikyūsha, p. 104. The title of the piece, published in shorthand form in 1888, is *Shinkei kasane ga fuchi* (True Scene of Kasane Marsh). *Shinkei* is written in characters meaning “true scene” but whose pronunciation homophonically suggests “nerves,” as Enchō’s preamble attests. The story seems to have originated in a different form, with a different title, in 1859.
3. Kawamura, *Genshi suru kindai kukan*, pp. 108–9.
4. Nagai Kafū (1993) *Jigoku no hana*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, pp. 28, 104.
5. Natsume Sōseki (1965) *Wagahai wa neko de aru*, Sōseki zenshū 1, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, pp. 508–10, 522–3; Tayama Katai (1972) “Futon,” *Futon, Ippeisotsu*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, p. 15; Iwano Hōmei (1955) *Hōrō*, in *Hōmei gobusaku*, Tokyo: Shinchōsha, Vol. 2, pp. 53–4; see below for *Haru* and *Kōjin*.
6. On the turn to images of disease, see Iwasa Sōshirō (1986) *Seikimatsu no shizen shugi – Meiji yonjūendai bungaku kō*, Tokyo: Yūseidō, p. 141. On tuberculosis and dominant morality, see William Johnston (1995) *The Modern Epidemic: A History of Tuberculosis in Japan*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, pp. 131–2.
7. Roy Porter (2001) “Nervousness, eighteenth and nineteenth century style: from luxury to labour,” Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra and Roy Porter (eds) *Cultures of Neurasthenia from Beard to the First World War*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 31–3. The phrase “The English Malady” was coined by Scottish physician George Cheyne in 1733.
8. George M. Beard (1869) “Neurasthenia, or nervous exhaustion,” *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* 3(13): 217–18; *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences*, New York: Putnam, 1881, pp. 5, 9–13, 96. Van Deusen (1869) proposed his diagnosis in “Observations on a form of nervous prostration (neurasthenia), culminating in insanity,” *American Journal of Insanity* 25: 445–61.
9. Beard, “Neurasthenia,” p. 217; *American Nervousness*, pp. vii–viii; F. G. Gosling (1987) *Before Freud: Neurasthenia and the American Medical Community, 1870–1910*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 10–11.
10. Beard, *American Nervousness*, 22, pp. 96–8.
11. George M. Beard (1880) *A Practical Treatise on Nervous Exhaustion (Neurasthenia), Its Symptoms, Nature, Sequences, Treatment*, New York: William Wood and Co.
12. Doris Kaufmann (2001), “Neurasthenia in Wilhelmine Germany: culture, sexuality, and the demands of nature,” *Cultures of Neurasthenia*, p. 164.
13. Robert Nye (1984) *Crime, Madness and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 134–49.

14. Watarai Yoshiichi (2003) *Meiji no seishin isetsu – shinkei byō, shinkei suijaku, kamigakari*, Tokyo: Iwanami, p. 160; Kawamura, *Genshi suru kindai kukan*, pp. 82–6; Beard, *American Nervousness*, pp. 162–3.
15. Gosling, *Before Freud*, pp. 14–15; Janet Oppenheim (1991) “Shattered Nerves”: *Doctors, Patients, and Depression in Victorian England*, New York: Oxford University Press, p. 92.
16. Gosling, *Before Freud*, pp. 17, 19–25.
17. Tom Lutz (2001) “Varieties of medical experience: doctors and patients, psyche and soma in America,” *Cultures of Neurasthenia*, p. 58.
18. Gosling, *Before Freud*, pp. 9–10.
19. Regenia Gagnier and Martin Delveaux (2006) “Towards a global ecology of the Fin de Siècle,” *Literature Compass* 3(3): 572–87.
20. Arai Yoshihide (1983) “Shinkei,” *Kōza Nihongo no goi*, Vol. 10, Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, pp. 236–7. The definition of *shinkei byō* appears in the third edition (1886) of J. C. Hepburn’s *Japanese–English Dictionary*. The translation of neurasthenia did not stabilize until the 1890s; alternative translations included *shinkei kyosui* (lit. nervous debility) and *shinkei shishō* (nervous stimulation). Watarai, *Meiji no seishin isetsu*, pp. 159–60.
21. Kawamura, *Genshi suru kindai kukan*, pp. 82–6, 90–1, 99.
22. Lutz, “Varieties,” p. 58.
23. Volker Roelcke (2001), “Electrified nerves, degenerated bodies: medical discourses on neurasthenia in Germany, circa 1880–1914,” *Cultures of Neurasthenia*, pp. 187–8; Kin Yoshiharu (1998) “Nihon ni okeru seishin shitsugan gainen oyobi bunrui no jidai hensen,” *Rinshū seishin igaku kōza 1*, Tokyo: Nakayama Shoten, pp. 441–2.
24. Roelcke, “Electrified Nerves,” p. 184; Kawamura, *Genshi suru kindai kukan*, p. 89.
25. Kaufmann, “Neurasthenia,” pp. 165–6; Roelcke, “Electrified Nerves,” p. 188.
26. Lutz, “Varieties,” p. 64; Kaufmann, “Neurasthenia,” pp. 164–5.
27. Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1966) *Women and Economics: The Economic Factor Between Men and Women and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution*, New York: Harper, pp. 155–6.
28. Max Nordau (1993) *Degeneration*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 34–44, 556–7. Nordau, a Hungarian Jew, practiced medicine in Paris while writing for German and Austrian publications.
29. Kawamura, *Genshi suru kindai kukan*, pp. 105, 116.
30. Yabunaka Shun’an (Iwamoto Yoshiharu) (1890), “Danjo seito no shinkei suijaku,” *Jogaku zasshi* 204(March 15): 17.
31. XYZ (anon, 1902) “Shinkei suijaku shō – sōkoshu, bunshi, kanshi, gakusei shōkun no ichidoku o yō su,” *Taiyō* 8(7, June 5): 134.
32. Ōkuma Shigenobu (1906) “Seishin byō ni taisuru zakkan,” *Shinkeigaku zasshi* 4(12): 622–3; Kawamura, *Genshi suru kindai kukan*, p. 89.
33. Morishita Yūdō (1909) *Shinri ōyō nōshinkeisuijaku hitsujisaku*, Tokyo: Hakubunkan, pp. 3, 20.
34. On postwar fatigue, see Yamazaki, *Fukigen no jidai*, pp. 109–10.
35. Kamakura Yoshinobu (2002) examines the complex reception of Nordau’s work in “Shizen shugi bungaku to Makkusu Norudau – ‘Daraku ron’ no yomare kata,” *Kokubungaku gengo to bungei* 119: 68–73. Appraisals of Nordau, many by writers who contributed to the rise of a naturalist school, began to appear in Japan in 1901.
36. Natsume Sōseki (1986) “Danpen,” in Miyoshi Yukio (ed.) *Sōseki bunmeiron shū*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, p. 311. On Sōseki’s self-diagnoses, see Miyamoto Moritarō (1997) “Seishin suijaku to bunmei – Natsume Sōseki to Uiriamu Jeimuzu,” *Seiji keizai shigaku* 373(September): 2–6.
37. Natsume Sōseki, “Gendai Nihon no kaika,” *Sōseki bunmeiron shū*, pp. 14–17, 21–3. A translation is available as “The civilization of modern-day Japan,” Jay Rubin (trans.) in *Kokoro: A Novel and Selected Essays*, Latham, MD: Madison Books, 1992, pp. 257–83.
38. Sōseki, “Gendai Nihon no kaika,” pp. 25, 26.
39. Sōseki, “Gendai Nihon no kaika,” pp. 33–4, 35, 36.

40. Sōseki, "Danpen," p. 312.
41. Kawamura Kunimitsu (2002) "Sōseki to shinkei suijaku – 'Kōjin' to sono shūhen kara," *Sōseki kenkyū* 15: 86. For examples of the narrator's observations, see Natsume Sōseki (1966) *Kōjin*, in *Sōseki zenshū* 5, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, pp. 467, 470. *Kōjin* has been translated as *The Wayfarer* by Beongcheon Yu, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967.
42. For other examples, see Sōseki, *Kōjin*, pp. 578, 585.
43. Sōseki, *Kōjin*, p. 463.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 583–5.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 709–11.
46. Ochi Haruo (1985) *Sōseki to bunmei*, Tokyo: Sunagoya Shobō, p. 36.
47. Sōseki, *Kōjin*, pp. 738–9, 742. In the brother's aspiration to transcend contemporary times Sōseki refers to a well-known remark by the critic Takayama Chogyū. See Furukawa Hisashi's notes in *Kōjin*, p. 825, note to p. 739, line 14.
48. Sōseki, *Kōjin*, p. 759.
49. Shimazaki Tōson (2000) *Haru*, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, pp. 106, 107; on the novel's historical vision, see Miyoshi Yukio (1993) *Shimazaki Tōson ron*, Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, pp. 243–4, and Uryū Kiyoshi (1999) "Tōson no shinjidai ishiki to Haru," *Fukuoka kyōiku daigaku kiyō dai-ichi bu bunka hen* 48: 4; Oka Yoshitake (1982) examines the postwar debates on youth in "Generational Conflict after the Russo-Japanese War," *Conflict in Modern Japanese History: The Neglected Tradition*, Tetsuo Najita and Victor Koschmann (eds), Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 206–11.
50. Tōson, *Haru*, p. 107.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 186, 243.
52. On other characters as foils for Kishimoto, see Kōno Kensuke (1990) "'Seishun' to iu tekusuto: Shimazaki Tōson Haru o megutte," *Bungaku ni okeru nijūdai*, Satō Yasumasa (ed.) Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, pp. 126–32.
53. On their temperaments, see Tōson, *Haru*, pp. 61–2, 110; visions of prison, pp. 145, 269; suicide by dagger, pp. 153, 285.
54. Tōson, *Haru*, p. 6. On naturalist mimesis, see my essay "The body in naturalist literature and modern social imaginaries," in *Tradition and Modernity: Comparative Perspectives*, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2007, pp. 348–63.
55. Tōson, *Haru*, pp. 82, 85.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 136–7.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 209, 210–11.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 107, 132. That Aoki suffers physically as well as psychologically thus is an important aspect of both his life and art. On this point I differ with Michael Bourdaghs' view that Aoki's struggle is only spiritual, in contrast to the corporeal suffering of Katsuko, Kishimoto's former student, who dies in childbirth. One might say instead that because public indifference contributes to Aoki's nervous ailment his suffering is in the social domain, while Katsuko's is in the domestic sphere that Tōson asserts is her natural place. The same would be true of their respective writings. See Michael Bourdaghs (2003) *The Dawn that Never Comes: Shimazaki Tōson and Japanese Nationalism*, New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 126–9.
59. Tōson, *Haru*, p. 42.
60. *Ibid.*, pp. 100–1.
61. *Ibid.*, pp. 251, 253.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 285, 299.
63. On the impact of Katai's story, see for example Miyoshi, *Shimazaki Tōson ron*, pp. 166–7.
64. Tōson, *Haru*, p. 213.
65. On the expression of belatedness in late-Meiji narrative form, see Jonathan E. Zwicker (2006) *Practices of the Sentimental Imagination: Melodrama, the Novel, and the Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, pp. 201–5.