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Walking through Texts: The Father-Daughter Plot in Kurahashi Yumiko's Fiction

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the father-daughter relationship in Kurahashi Yumiko's fiction, focusing on "The Long Passage of Dreams" and "To Die at the Estuary." Though these two novellas are not direct rewritings of Greek tragedies and Noh plays, nevertheless, through an analysis of references and allusions to previous texts, they can be read as rewritings of the "master plot of the father-daughter story." Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyze the meaning of rewriting this master plot, and the role of the reader in cooperating with texts replete with intertextual frames. I focus particularly on the links between Kurahashi's texts, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and the Noh plays (*Kagekiyo*, *Kurozuka*, *Nomori* and *Tamakazura*), and examine the textual strategies Kurahashi uses in order to challenge the master plot of the father-daughter story present in both Greek tragedies and Japanese classics.

Keywords: Kurahashi Yumiko, father-daughter relationship, Greek tragedy, Noh, intertextuality

Introduction

It has been often pointed out that a new phase of Kurahashi Yumiko's literary career began when she came back to Japan in 1967 after spending one year in the University of Iowa's creative writing program.¹ In 1968 she published "Virginia" (*Bājinia*) and "The Long Passage of Dreams" (*Nagai yumeji*), the former narrated in first person and set in Iowa, the latter narrated in third person and set in an unnamed town somewhere in Japan, presumably Kōchi, the author's hometown. As Kurahashi claimed in her "Notes to My Works" (*Sakuhin nōto* 1975, 284), some readers might have thought that "Virginia" was a "souvenir from the US," whereas "The Long Passage of Dreams" marked "her return to the Japanese classics," and a shift as a writer as well. However, as Atsuko Sakaki has pointed out, Kurahashi's main methodology of pastiche² has not changed: "she has continued to 'steal' other writers' styles and modify them" (1992, 182). During her stay in Iowa and once back in Japan, Kurahashi, whose earlier works mimicked or alluded to Kafka, Camus, and Sartre,³ to cite a few, started to read Greek tragedies and watch Noh plays, both of which became a new source of inspiration and material for her pastiche. "The Long Passage of Dreams" is the first of a long series of works which quote, more or less directly, these sources. To wit, from 1968 to 1971 Kurahashi published *Hanhigeki* (*Anti-tragedies*), a rewriting of tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, mixed with elements from Noh

plays. A similar pastiche can for instance be seen in *Otona no tame no zankoku dōwa* (Cruel Fairy Tales for Adults, 1984), *Kurahashi Yumiko no kaiki shōhen* (Horror Stories by Kurahashi Yumiko, 1985), and *Yume no kayoiji* (The Passage of Dreams, 1989).

In this paper I argue that the use Kurahashi makes of Greek tragedies and the Noh tradition in “The Long Passage of Dreams” and “To Die at the Estuary” (Kakō ni shisu, 1970) marks a difference in her literature in two respects. First, Kurahashi seems to be more concerned about her readers than in the past. She was conscious that using references to Greek tragedies and Noh plays without any explanation might make the text hard to understand for them, and invite charges of plagiarism; thus, she started to clarify the links between her literature and other literary texts.⁴ We might say she became much more conscious of the necessity, as an author, to foresee a model of the possible reader or, quoting Umberto Eco, the “Model Reader” (1979, 11). On the other hand, in “The Long Passage of Dreams” and “To Die at the Estuary” Kurahashi depicts the family relationships from a new point of view, focusing not only on the mother-daughter pair, but also on the father, his love for the daughter, and the repression of the father’s desire. In order to do so, Kurahashi directly quotes or alludes to Greek tragedies and Noh plays that depict the father-daughter pair.

In this paper, through an analysis of the links between “The Long Passage of Dreams,” *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Kagekiyo*, *Kurozuka*, *Nomori*, and *Tamakazura* on one hand, and their relationship with “To Die at the Estuary” on the other, I will examine the textual strategies Kurahashi uses in order to rewrite and challenge the “master plot of the father-daughter story”⁵ as it has been defined with reference to Greek tragedies and Japanese classics.

¹ The claim that Kurahashi’s novels changed after her return to Japan from the United States is usually made regarding the style of her works, their motifs, and their ambiances, which seem to have become “Japanized.” However, Atsuko Sakaki has questioned the consensus held by many Japanese critics that “Virginia” and “The Long Passage of Dreams” are direct expressions of the author’s life in the United States (1992, 182-86).

² Sakaki has noted that in the essay “Hiyō no kanashisa: Etō Jun san ni” (The Misery of Criticism: To Mr. Etō Jun, 1961) Kurahashi calls her method a “pastiche” (using the French term) of “forerunners’ styles.” Kurahashi has frequently stressed that pastiche, as opposed to plagiarism, does not value originality, but instead echoes anterior texts in a particular text (Sakaki 1998, 158).

³ After obtaining a dental hygienist certificate, Kurahashi entered the Department of French at Meiji University, where she devoted herself to reading modern French and German literature. Her graduation essay on *Being and Nothingness* by Sartre reveals her interest in French existentialist philosophy.

⁴ Kurahashi was harshly criticized for the use she made of Michel Butor’s text *La Modification* (A Change of Heart, 1957; trans. 1958) in her novel *Blue Journey* (Kurai tabi, 1961). As Sakaki has pointed out, in writing *Blue Journey*, Kurahashi mistakenly expected her readers to be able to recognize the sources and determine whether the novel was a parody or a forgery. In order to avoid further accusations of plagiarism, Kurahashi began to name her sources of inspiration within her texts. For a detailed analysis of the disputes regarding the critical acceptance of Kurahashi’s fiction see Sakaki 2001, 292-326.

⁵ By “master plot of the father-daughter story” I refer to the “substratum” shaped by countless literary works which reflect the roles of fathers and daughters as they are defined by the dominant father-daughter discourse. For a complete analysis of the characteristics of the “master plot of the father-daughter story” see Sheldon 1997, 23-40.

Intertextuality and the Role of the Model Reader in “The Long Passage of Dreams”

Although frequently accused of plagiarism by Japanese literary critics and the *bundan* or literary establishment, Kurahashi has always defended her art of pastiche, claiming that “the respect [a writer pays to another writer] is shown only in the way [the precursor’s ideas] are stolen” (1970a, 178). Thus, the use of intertextuality is not something new in Kurahashi’s literature: as Atsuko Sakaki has pointed out, Kurahashi is a parodist, and her method, comparable to “alchemy,” is a “conscious display of echoes of anterior texts in a particular text” (1992, 8). From her debut in 1960 with “Partei” (Parutai) until her stay in Iowa, most of those anterior texts were the works of Camus, Sartre, and Kafka. Then, during a year spent in the US, and once back in Japan, Kurahashi interacted with new sources of inspiration: Greek tragedies and Noh plays. Kurahashi wrote that her use of Noh and Greek tragedies and myths in “The Long Passage of Dreams” does not have a deep meaning, it is “like the brandy soaked raisins and berries you add to a fruit cake” (1975, 284). However, like a cake, the ingredients used are what give it a particular taste. Moreover, if we consider the fact that Kurahashi used the same ingredients again on several occasions, we cannot believe the choice was casual. As Model Readers, we have to ask ourselves what kind of taste Noh plays and Greek tragedies add to “The Long Passage of Dreams.” Before analyzing this point I shall examine the notion of the Model Reader and the role s/he has within Kurahashi’s text.

Umberto Eco, quoting Austin, has defined the Model Reader as a “textually established set of felicity conditions” (1979, 11) to be met in order to have a text fully actualized. These felicity conditions can be met as long as both the reader and the author cooperate within the text. In other words, the author not only has to foresee the Model Reader, but also to build the text so as to produce him/her, in other words, to create the competence of the Model Reader. After the *Blue Journey* debate, in which she had to defend herself from the accusations of plagiarism, Kurahashi began to name the sources of inspiration within her texts. As Sakaki has pointed out, Kurahashi is not directly revealing traces of the texts she used, but she has her characters refer to them and cite them: “rather than anticipating or parrying readers’ suspicions about the originality of her texts, Kurahashi actively highlights their intertextuality” (2001, 309). Furthermore, her “Notes to My Works,” filled with references to the literary sources cited in her novels, can be seen as an effort a posteriori to create that competence and give the Model Reader the tools necessary to interpret, not only use, her texts. Writing about “The Long Passage of Dreams,” Kurahashi seems to regret the fact that she did not explain clearly enough the use she made of Greek tragedies and Noh plays in the text (1975, 284). Probably as a consequence of this, when she published the volume *Anti-tragedies*, she listed the works she had cited in the postscript, and in “Note to My Works” she added a detailed explanation of the Greek myths she had rewritten.⁶ In other words, Kurahashi made clear that the key theme of her texts is “intertextuality” and, probably aware that the ensemble of (intertextual) codes she relied upon was not

⁶ See the postscript to *Hanbigeki* 1971, 341-44, and the “Notes to My Works” appended to *Kurahashi Yumiko zensakuhin*, 1975, 243-48.

necessarily the same as that possessed by her possible reader, she made efforts to fill that gap.

On the other hand, we have to examine the role of the Model Reader in “The Long Passage of Dreams.” Eco has argued that no text is read independently of the reader’s experience of other texts. Intertextual knowledge can be seen as a special case of overcoding,⁷ which establishes its own intertextual frames. According to Eco, while reading a text the reader is always making inferences about the *fabula*: Eco calls this formulation by the reader of certain predictions on the basis of intertextual frames “inferential walks.” However, this is only valid for readers who possess the intertextual knowledge necessary to formulate these expectations. Thus, the Model Reader of “The Long Passage of Dreams” needs to share with the author the knowledge of the pre-texts of Greek tragedies and Noh plays. Furthermore, s/he has to be familiar with the concept of “master discourse,” and the implication of women’s rewriting of myths. In the next section, based on the master plot of the father-daughter story, I shall analyze the relationship between Kurahashi’s novella and *Oedipus at Colonus* on one hand, and the Noh plays quoted or mentioned in the text on the other. Before looking at these connections between texts, I want to reflect on what the act of rewriting represents, focusing on the functions Greek myth and Noh have in “The Long Passage of Dreams.”

According to Marleen S. Barr, rewriting master narratives is an established postmodern literary trait for many feminist authors. Feminist fabulation, which, as the fantastic, is a supergenre which may include SF, satire, and utopian literature, is metafiction, or fiction about patriarchal fiction. In other words, by rewriting patriarchal master narratives, the authors reveal these to be patriarchal fictions which form the foundation of constructed reality (1992, 8-12). These patriarchal fictions can be seen in fairy tales, legends, and myths as well. Barbara H. Sheldon explains the effects of a conscious rewriting of these master plots:

Myths and well-known stories tend to underwrite the dominant ideology and are widely accepted. Going against a myth is paramount to an attack on the dominant culture... Looking at well-known stories that show women in subordinate positions from a different angle, finding endings other than death or marriage is a “protest again the master plot of romance”...

The problem with such well-known stories, which reflect the dominant patriarchal discourse and which have been deeply ingrained in our conscience, is that they can come across as representing a “natural” plot, which may then appear as an archetype and without alternatives. A conscious re-writing may show that such a master plot is a historically and socially grown convention and can be imagined differently. (1997, 18)

⁷ The term overcoding refers to a level of secondary importance in aesthetic works that is over and above the primary meanings expressed by them. It is achieved by the manipulation of expression and content levels by stylistic and rhetorical devices. See Eco 1976, 134.

According to Marina Warner, myth's "secret cunning" is its pretense to present things as they are and must always be; she has stressed that myths can function as a lens onto human culture's historical and social context, providing the starting point for new tellings (1994, 13). As Susan Sellers has pointed out:

Myths offer ways of making sense of our experience and give crucial insights into the ideologies that underlie our understanding. By scrutinizing myth we can work to loosen its negative strangleholds, sew new variations into its weave, and jettison those myths that cannot be satisfactorily altered. (2001, 7)

At this point the question arises as to whether it is possible for women, who only exist within the current patriarchal order as the negative other of men, to rewrite the myths that have caused their demise. Sellers has argued that a feminist rewriting is possible:

[It] could include ironic mimicry and clever twists as well as a whole gamut of tactics that would open the myth from inside as well as out, leaving in place enough of the known format to provide evocative points of reflection for its reader, but also encompassing different possibilities and other points of view. (2001, 29)⁸

As I shall analyze in detail below, in "The Long Passage of Dreams" Kurahashi used intertextuality as a strategy of dissidence: she rewrote, from a different angle, the story of Oedipus and Antigone, which, together with many other stories from Greek mythology, is a well-known example of the master plot of the father-daughter story. Sheldon has argued that these stories have similar structural patterns: the story usually begins with a maturing daughter who desires change for self-development within the context of patriarchal society. This desire leads the daughter to commit an act of transgression, but the plot usually evolves towards a "conflict-solving function," and the conflict is traditionally resolved in the interest of the father (1997, 24-25). This holds true for *Oedipus at Colonus*, where Antigone follows her father when he is banned from Thebes. In the next section I shall examine the way Kurahashi parodied Sophocles's tragedy and wrote a different ending for her Antigone. I shall also look at the way she used the Noh tradition within the text. According to Sakaki, "The Long Passage of Dreams" reflects the methodologies of Noh composition on different levels: first, through the pastiche of poetic phrases; second, by using the dialogic mode between the two major characters; and third, through the dual structure of dream and reality. Noh plays are often filled with allusions to *Genji Monogatari* (The Tale of Genji, ca. 1008) and other well-known works of Japanese literature. Sakaki has stressed that references to Noh plays in Kurahashi's novella are used in order to create a pastiche of pastiche (1992, 196-98): by quoting *Kagekiyo*, *Kurozuka*, *Nomori*, and *Tamakazura*, Kurahashi parodied Noh plays and *Genji Monogatari*, writing a different ending for fathers and daughters of Japanese classics.

⁸ For a complete analysis of the possibilities of a feminist rewriting of myth see Sellers 2001, 24-34.

The Father-Daughter Relationship in “The Long Passage of Dreams”: Inferential Walks within the Text

On several occasions Atsuko Sakaki has analyzed “The Long Passage of Dreams” and “Virginia” together, focusing on the mother-daughter relationship depicted in these novellas.⁹ Although the aim of this paper is to analyze the rewriting of the father-daughter relationship, we cannot ignore the role of the mother within the family. Thus, without brushing aside the mother, I shall look at the changes occurring in the family relationships as a whole, focusing on the different roles assigned to the father and the daughter within the rewriting of the master plot of the father-daughter story.

At the beginning of “The Long Passage of Dreams” Mariko, told that her father Keisaku is going to die soon, has just come back to Japan from the United States. As I mentioned before, the novella has a dialogic structure, and father and daughter take turns providing their viewpoints. Keisaku, as a consequence of being in a coma, cannot talk, thus his sections are made up of his dreams where he and Mariko, and at times his wife Fusa, talk with each other. In order to analyze the process through which Keisaku detaches himself from the role traditionally assigned to the father within patriarchal cultures, it is necessary to analyze his dreams. On the other hand, I shall look at the “reality” sections in order to focus on the changing attitude of the daughter toward the father and the mother, and her detachment from the role of Antigone, that is, the image attached to daughters within the master plot of the father-daughter story.

The first dream I will focus on is the one Keisaku has when Mariko is born and which he writes down in his diary:

Something had happened around the time Mariko was born. Keisaku had a nightmare in which his child was born in the form of a bird’s egg a foot across. But it was different from an egg with a shell; it was flesh, wrapped up in a kind of semitransparent membrane made of egg white. When this saclike thing was cut away, what emerged had neither head nor hands nor feet. There was only something shaped like the vaginal opening of a mature woman. Then the sky suddenly clouded over and an ominous bird flew down, grabbed the flesh egg, and flew away. (135)¹⁰

The repressed desire for the daughter becomes clear in Keisaku’s dream. Within the patriarchal society, the father is the one who controls the exchange of women in order to secure kin-group benefits. To Keisaku, who is aware of his role as a father, this exchange takes the form of abduction. Moreover, as will become clear from the next quotation, Keisaku tries to compel Mariko into Antigone’s role, that is, the motherly daughter who looks after the father until his death. While Mariko

⁹ For Sakaki’s analysis of the relation between “Virginia” and “The Long Passage of Dreams,” see *The Intertextual Novel and the Interrelational Self* 1992, 182-218, and “Kurahashi Yumiko no fikushon ni okeru haha musume kankei o megutte” (The mother-daughter relationship in Kurahashi Yumiko’s fiction) 1997, 337-48.

¹⁰ All translations of “The Long Passage of Dreams” are from Sakaki 1998, 105-55.

is looking after Keisaku with the rest of the family, awaiting his death, Keisaku dreams of calling Mariko back to Japan with his willpower. In Keisaku's dream, Mariko flies from the US to his bed in order to listen to the father's desire, namely, leaving for a trip with his daughter:

"I'm taking you on a trip with me."

"You can't do that in your condition."

"There's nothing to worry about. Actually, this is just a feigned illness. Are you mad?"

"Yes, I am," Mariko said, laughing. She yawned like a cat. Her fangs and rough tongue glistened. "If you want to go on a trip with me that badly, then carry me on your back."

Don't try that trick on me—before I've gone a mile this girl intends to change into a horrible demon and swallow me in one gulp, Keisaku thought to himself. "I'm not that strong," he said. "I'm a blind beggar. You take my hand and lead me."

"Like King Oedipus and Antigone..."

"No, I am Akushichi-byoe Kagekiyo"¹¹...

"King Oedipus was accompanied by Theseus when he trudged into the forest. Called by the god, they went to the underworld. But I don't want to go just to watch your death, Father.

You should go alone into the forest to look for a ravine, like a sick elephant." (141-42)

In Kurahashi's earlier works, family relationships are usually centered on the sister-brother pair. They are often depicted as twins involved in an incestuous relationship, view their parents, especially the mother, as antagonists, and are sometimes accomplices in murdering her. In these works Kurahashi depicted an authoritative father, whose word represents the Law of the Father within the patriarchal culture. On the other hand, in "The Long Passage of Dreams" Keisaku is depicted as a much more complex father, and his dreams show the ambivalent desire he feels toward his daughter Mariko. I argue that "The Long Passage of Dreams" depicts what Lynda Boose has called the "Oedipus-Antigone complex."

It is worth speculating about how incest might have been understood had Freud granted the last two plays of the Sophoclean trilogy the same weight he granted *Oedipus Rex*. Perhaps, had he done so, instead of essentially dropping the seduction theory in favor of infant sexual fantasy as the model he saw supplanting it, Freud might have recognized the way that *Oedipus at Colonus* dramatizes the father's seduction of his daughter as embedded within the attempt to reconstruct his lost union with the mother, an adult reversion to infantile dependency and a state of helplessness to which women—and, in particular, daughters—are expected to respond. (1989, 41)

¹¹ Akushichi-byoe Kagekiyo is the *shite* (main character) of the Noh play *Kagekiyo*. A member of the Taira clan, after the victory of the opposing Minamoto clan Kagekiyo has been banished and, grown old and blind, lives like a beggar in a hut. His daughter Hitomaru leaves her home to search for him, and, when she and her attendant come upon the hut, they question the beggar within. However Kagekiyo, ashamed to admit to his daughter that he has been brought so low, sends them away without revealing his identity. After that, Hitomaru meets a villager who tells her the truth and brings her back to the hut. Kagekiyo then responds to her requests and narrates the story of the battle at Yashima. Then, asking his daughter to console his soul after his death, Kagekiyo sends her away. For a translation of this play see Waley 1976, 89-99.

Keisaku tries to compel Mariko into Antigone's role. However, at the same time, by quoting the Noh play *Kagekiyo*, where the father, an old blind beggar, after a moving reunion with the daughter who has been looking for him, resolves that she must return home without him, Keisaku tries to perform the role of the benevolent father who does not force the daughter into the nursing role. In other words, while Keisaku cannot rid himself of his obsessive desire toward his daughter, his dreams reveal his ambivalent attitude.

Furthermore, Keisaku tries to exercise control over his daughter by the use of words. Keisaku wrote down in his diary the dream about Mariko in the form of a vagina, being born in an egg and abducted by a bird. He used to put the diary on his bookshelf, but since he sometimes left it open on the table he believes that Mariko has read it, and thus changed her attitude toward her father, looking at him with the kind of look a woman who loves and who knows she is loved in return directs at her lover. Keisaku believes that Mariko, having read his diary, traced the beginning of her existence to that dream, and thinks about Keisaku as the only one who had borne her. However, this is nothing more than Keisaku's representation of the father-daughter relationship, another way to express his repressed desire for his daughter. Moreover, while in the dream world Keisaku still has the power of words, in the real world he cannot talk, losing not only the chance to exercise control over his daughter, but his status as a member of the family and society overall. As Sakaki has pointed out, by losing the ability to use words, Keisaku has become nothing more than an object of observation (1997, 344-45).

It is worth underlining that it is Fusa, the mother, who makes clear Keisaku's loss of authority. In addition, it is because of the reinforced relationship with the mother that Mariko can free herself from the pseudo-incestuous relationship with the father and from Antigone's role. In her analysis of the mother-daughter relationship in Kurahashi Yumiko's works, Sakaki has emphasized that in "The Long Passage of Dreams" the roles of father and daughter as mutual accomplices diminish in importance, giving new space to the mother-daughter relationship. The daughter does not look at the mother as a rival anymore, but recognizes her power and can finally be reconciled with her (1997, 341). Mariko had been moving back and forth, divided between the love for the father and the fear of the mother. In the end of the novella, by alluding to a marriage with her fiancé Takatsu, she chooses to walk the same road as Fusa, that is, she decides to enter the world of logos (reason and language) here represented by her fiancé and her mother. However, at the same time, she keeps listening to Keisaku's voice even after his death, maintaining communication with her father. In other words, at the end of her long passage of dreams, Mariko does not have to take the side of the mother or the father. She can finally distance herself from both of them and find a well-balanced position in between them. According to Sakaki, the bridge at the beginning and the end of the novella symbolizes this "in-between-ness" (1992, 217).

The end of Keisaku's long passage of dreams coincides with his death. Sakaki has argued that he "passes through the stage of disorderly illusions, not en route to a state of logocentric order, but to a state of emptiness, of non-signification"

(1992, 215). I argue that the end of Keisaku's long passage of dreams is also the end of his role as a father within a patriarchal culture. This passage from the attachment to the mundane world to the state of freedom from all human desires, including the desire toward his daughter, is depicted in Keisaku's last dream through quotations from three Noh plays: *Kurozuka*, *Nomori*, and *Tamakazura*. Keisaku, who had expressed the desire to leave for a trip with Mariko in previous dreams is now on a solo journey, wandering in a wasteland covered with stones. In his dream he hears a voice from a hovel singing words from the Noh play *Kurozuka*,¹² and he expects a witch to be the owner of that humble residence. However, an old man comes out. It is worth pointing out that in Keisaku's dreams, through quotations from *Kayoi-Komachi*, *Kanawa*, and *Kurozuka*, the Noh mask of the witch (*kijo*) is always associated with Fusa, whose face is depicted by Keisaku as contorted with jealousy and a desire for vengeance. I argue that in Keisaku's last dream the father is depicted as distancing himself from both the daughter and the wife, freeing himself from the role traditionally assigned to the father in patriarchal cultures. However this process is not yet completed. As the dream goes on, Keisaku takes on himself the role of the demon in the play *Nomori*.¹³ In order to detach himself from the mundane world, and the desire for his daughter, he has to cast off his attachment to the flesh:

A demon, presumably, must be a creature that lives on the boundary between this world and the realm of spirits. It was the nature of the demon, while drawing its transformative powers from the realm of spirits, still to be unable to refrain from eating humans. Such an existence was due to nothing but a flawed peeling-off of flesh from spirit, Keisaku thought. To cast off the attachment to flesh was enough—once that was accomplished, even a deep-rooted delusion that had congealed and taken the form of a demon could escape... From *Tamakazura*, learned when he had first begun to study Noh chanting, the words "Turning away obsession, Tamakazura's soul has attained the jewel of Truth, Tamakazura's soul has attained the jewel of Truth, She has awakened from the long passage of dreams" sounded in his ears. Keisaku, awakening from his dream, entered the well. (152-53)

As Sakaki has pointed out, the "long passage of dreams" stands for the duration of obsessive human attachment to the secular world (1992, 193). In his last dream

¹² The Noh drama *Kurozuka*, known also as *Adachigahara*, is, together with *Dōjō-ji* and *Aoi no Ue*, a female ogre story. Priests in search of a night's lodging stop at the hut of a lone woman in the wilds of Adachi. As she leaves to gather firewood, she tells the priests not to look into her inner room. However, a servant looks in and finds piled up bones and rotting corpses. The priests realize this must be the demoness of Adachi, but just as they are about to flee, she returns in a rage, now in her demonic form. Finally the priests are able to quell her anger through Buddhist prayer. The *nochi-shite* (the second-half lead part) wears the Hannya mask, which embodies the resentment and fierce obsession of women.

¹³ *Nomori* is a Noh play attributed to Zeami. A mountain priest is traveling to Mount Kazuraki. On a mound, in front of which is a deep, clear pool of water, he comes across the watchman of the signal fires of the Kasuga plain, and asks him about the pool. The watchman says that it is called the watchman's mirror, and it takes that name from a mirror owned by a demon in ancient days. During the night the demon of Kasuga, called by the priest's prayer, appears out of the mound, and shows him the watchman's mirror: it is the mirror of King Emma, and it reveals the torments of the damned and the torture of lasting attachment. For a translation of the play see Tyler 1978, 188-89.

Keisaku, like Tamakazura,¹⁴ turns away from obsessions, casts off his attachment to the flesh, and thus reaches enlightenment. It is probably not by chance that the word for enlightenment in Japanese (*keihatsu*) shares a character with the name of Keisaku. At the same time, the reference to *Tamakazura* reveals that Keisaku has detached himself from the desire for his daughter too. The story of Tamakazura, narrated in *Genji Monogatari*'s ten chapters from "Tamakazura" to "Makibashira," is also an example of the master discourse of the father-daughter plot: when Genji discovers Tamakazura, the daughter of the deceased Yūgao and Tō no Chūjō, he does not return her to her real father, but instead presents her to the world as his long-lost daughter, "imprisons" her in the Rokujō-in, and privately attempts to seduce her. As Haruo Shirane has pointed out, Genji's relationship with Tamakazura reveals the tension between love and power, eros and fatherhood (1987, 97). Moreover, like in the Oedipus-Antigone complex, the father's seduction of his daughter is embedded within the attempt to reconstruct his lost union with the mother. In the *Genji Monogatari*, Tamakazura is able to resist the aggressive advances of her guardian, "forcing Genji to maintain the hitherto blurred line between paternal benefactor and lover" (Shirane 1987, 95). By alluding to the father-daughter relationship between Genji and Tamakazura, Kurahashi reveals again to the reader the nature of Keisaku's feelings for Mariko. Furthermore, in "The Long Passage of Dreams" she writes a new ending not only for the daughter, but also for the father. In his last dream Keisaku leaves for a trip, but this time neither Mariko nor Fusa appears. Keisaku realizes that on his last trip he has to be alone. In other words, we can argue that he has eventually turned away from his obsession for the daughter/mother and freed himself from the role of the father as fixed in the master discourse of the father-daughter plot.

On several occasions the connection between "The Long Passage of Dreams" and "Virginia" has been stressed, as both are works within Kurahashi Yumiko's literature that depict a shift in the mother-daughter relationship. However, by focusing on the father-daughter pair, we also are able to discover strong connections with other works by Kurahashi. As Eco has pointed out, in order to make forecasts concerning the course of the *fabula* and eventually interpret the text, the Model Reader "is supposed to resort to various intertextual frames, among which to take his *inferential walks*" (1979, 214). Kurahashi's use of references to other texts includes allusions to her own works as well. Thus, the Model Reader of "The Long Passage of Dreams" has to take his inferential walks not only among Greek tragedies and Noh plays, but also Kurahashi's other texts. This is the direction I will take in the next section, focusing on the connections between "The Long Passage of Dreams" and "To Die at the Estuary" (1970), the fourth novella included in *Anti-tragedies*.

¹⁴ The Noh play *Tamakazura* is based on the character Tamakazura ("jeweled chaplet") from *The Tale of Genji*. A travelling priest arrives at Hatsuse River and sees a woman alone in a boat near two cedars. The priest quotes a well-known poem about the cedars, to which the woman replies by telling the story of Tamakazura and her reunion with Ukon, her mother's waiting woman. Hinting that she is none other than Tamakazura, the woman disappears. The priest prays for Tamakazura's soul and her ghost returns. Filled with the burden of her obsession for this world, the ghost appeals to the priest for his prayers and she thus attains enlightenment. For a translation of this play see Goff 1991, 120-24.

Walking through Texts: The Father-Daughter Relationship in “To Die at the Estuary”

In the previous section I have stressed the links between “The Long Passage of Dreams,” the Greek tragedy, and Noh plays. Yet, we cannot ignore the similarities the novella shares with *Anti-tragedies*, especially with “To Die at the Estuary,” either. In that work, published two years after “The Long Passage of Dreams,” the author focuses again on the father-daughter relationship, challenging Greek myth. As Kleeman has pointed out, each of the five stories in *Anti-tragedies* should be read both as a Greek tragedy and as a Noh play (1998, 329).¹⁵ However, as we shall see, similarities between “The Long Passage of Dreams” and “To Die at the Estuary” go beyond that, and allow us to read the two novellas together. First, “To Die at the Estuary” is centered on the father-daughter relationship, and the attraction the father feels toward his daughter: similar to “The Long Passage of Dreams,” it echoes *Oedipus at Colonus*. However, Takayanagi, the protagonist of “To Die at the Estuary,” is aware of his role within the myth, the role of the father within the master plot of the father-daughter story, and he is able to detach himself from that role while still alive. Second, in “To Die at the Estuary” Kurahashi again uses a double structure: in the dream section the father remembers the encounter with a blind beggar who foresaw that Takayanagi would sleep with his stepmother, whereas in the reality section the daughter’s point of view is offered to the reader. Third, as in “The Long Passage of Dreams,” the father holds the power of words, and through it tries to exercise control over the daughter.

The novella starts with an old man, Takayanagi, going back to his hometown with his daughter Asako. Through allusions to *Hōjōki* (*An Account of My Hut*, by Kamo no Chōmei, 1212) and *Yama no oto* (*The Sound of the Mountain*, by Kawabata Yasunari, 1954),¹⁶ Takayanagi is depicted as a dying man, and Asako fears her father has decided to go back to his hometown to commit suicide. Thus, we can easily think of Takayanagi as a new Oedipus, who, looked after by his devoted daughter, approaches the realm of death. However, the family relationships depicted in “To Die at the Estuary” are much more complex. Takayanagi, under the effect of a spell by a blind beggar, slept with Aya, the beggar’s daughter and his step-mother. Since that moment, incestuous relationships have recurred in his family. From the relationship with Aya, Shūji and Masayo were born: they are actually Takayanagi’s children, but officially his brother and sister. Once grown up, Shūji has a relationship with Junko, Takayanagi’s wife, giving birth to Asako, who believes herself to be Takayanagi’s daughter, but is actually his granddaughter. Like Keisaku in “The Long Passage of Dreams,” Takayanagi also has an ambivalent

¹⁵ Kleeman has pointed out that, in order to maintain dramatic elements in her narrative, in *Anti-tragedies* Kurahashi observes the dramatic conventions of Greek tragedy and the Japanese Noh play, both in the limited number of characters, and in the presence of a chorus. Moreover, the *jo-ha-kyū* rhythm of Noh is also preserved.

¹⁶ Takayanagi is depicted as reading *Hōjōki*, a work which depicts the Buddhist concept of impermanence, and quotations from Kamo no Chōmei’s work recur in “To Die at the Estuary.” Moreover, the sound, heard by no one else, that Takayanagi claims to hear once back in his home town, is a clear reference to Kawabata’s work, where the protagonist Shingo takes it as an omen of his impending death.

attitude toward his daughter/granddaughter:

Takayanagi opened his eyes. Asako was rocking back and forth in the chair opposite him, her face hidden by the magazine she was holding, a woman's magazine with an actress on its cover. Her bare knees shone like two white peaches. As she sank deeper into the chair her short skirt revealed the inside of her thighs. She seemed absorbed in her magazine, unaware that he was looking at her. Finally she let one of her slippers drop and crossed her legs. As he watched her legs rising and falling with the movement of the chair he found that he was being aroused by the sight, and closed his eyes again.

He had lost his virility years ago and what he had come to desire in women was the same as when he was a virgin; his desire had again taken on an abstract form with no carnal purpose behind it. Even the powerful attraction he felt toward the thighs and calves of young girls was a kind of regression to his boyhood. Then he had been obsessed by the legs alone, as if cut off from the rest of the body, independent living things. The sight of attractive legs made him wish to possess only them, and because he knew that was impossible he would feel a deep, sorrowful pain. The blind man's daughter had legs that aroused that pain. (264-65)¹⁷

Although Takayanagi has lost his virility, and “his desire had taken on an abstract form with no carnal purpose behind it,” he is sexually attracted to Asako, who, in Takayanagi's eyes, is often conflated with Aya, the only motherly figure in this novella.¹⁸ We can thus argue that the father-daughter relationship in “To Die at the Estuary” is again based on the Oedipus-Antigone complex, that is, the “father's seduction of his daughter as embedded within the attempt to reconstruct his lost union with the mother” (Boose 1989, 41). However, as we shall see, Takayanagi escapes from the repetition of the incestuous relationship and is finally able to free himself from the role of the father as it is fixed in the master discourse of the father-daughter plot. Like Keisaku, Takayanagi also kept a diary, where he wrote down his will, as well as the blind beggar's words; moreover, like Keisaku, he left the diary unlocked and let his daughter read it:

[Asako] went upstairs and glanced over [Takayanagi's] Japanese writing desk, but there was only his tobacco tray and his tea things, all tidily arranged. A few books were piled on the small shelf at the side of the tokonoma, and on top of them lay a clothbound notebook. It bulged slightly since he had left his fountain pen between its pages, and she found herself opening it. The first words she read were:

My property. Two-thirds Asako. Rest disposed as law requires.

And then:

¹⁷ All translations of “To Die at the Estuary” are by Keene 1977, 247-81.

¹⁸ Asako's biological mother, Junko, driven mad by feelings of guilt because of her adultery, committed suicide, and Asako was brought up by Takayanagi and Aya.

Other things to write beside will.

What blind man said. Oracle. How fulfilled.

About Aya. Masayo, Shūji: my children, made brother and sister.

About Junko and Shūji. Asako: my grandchild, made child.

Dealing with Shūji.

Junko's illness, suicide. (262)

Like Keisaku, Takayanagi tries to exercise control over his family by the use of words. Keisaku, having lost the ability to speak because of his illness, has lost his authority as a member of the family and society. However, in contrast, Takayanagi's words still hold the power to control his daughter's thoughts and actions: after having read Takayanagi's diary Asako, who is dating Takashi, the son of her father's old friend, changes her attitude toward her father, behaving like "a puppet awaiting the return of its master" (263). Moreover, having taken on the role of Antigone, she kisses her father and declares she is ready to leave with him. In other words, she performs the role of the benevolent daughter who looks after the father until his death. However, in "To Die at the Estuary" Takayanagi is able to detach himself from the role of Oedipus: at the end of the novella he throws the diary in the sea, the only Arcadian element left in a post-industrial landscape. By throwing the diary away, Takayanagi frees himself from the beggar's prophecy and from Oedipus's role. As Ueto has pointed out, by doing so Takayanagi avoids the role of the representative of patriarchy, and frees himself from the role of the father as fixed in the myth, the master discourse of the father-daughter plot (2005, 811). It is interesting to note that in "To Die at the Estuary" it is not the daughter but the father who struggles to detach himself from traditional gender roles. As Lynda Boose has said, "the greatest menace to patriarchy would be the threat of fathers rebelling against the archetype they inherited" (1989, 37), exactly what Kurahashi depicts in "To Die at the Estuary."

As in "The Long Passage of Dreams," in *Anti-tragedies* Kurahashi borrows the plot of Greek myths, but she does not seek to add a new interpretation of the original stories: as Kleeman has pointed out, she uses the myth as a vehicle for her own narrative (1991, 344). Rewriting both the myth and fairy tales provides the opportunity to usurp the conventional narrative structure and subvert the vision of gendered difference as it is prescribed in these well-known stories.¹⁹ However, in *Anti-tragedies* the tension between text and pre-text is stressed much more than in "The Long Passage of Dreams." In "To Die at the Estuary" the young Takayanagi has his fate foretold by the blind old man; furthermore, Aya stresses that she had sexual intercourse with him only in order to fulfill her father's prophecy. Nevertheless, Takayanagi thought his actions were steered exclusively by his free will. However, once he becomes an old man he has to admit that his life, as well as the story of his family, is an instance of the ceaseless cycle of myth, prophecy, and realization of prophecy. In order to become liberated from this fate and exercise his free will, Takayanagi has to renounce his role as a father as it is prescribed

¹⁹ For an analysis of Kurahashi's rewriting of fairy tales see Kleeman 1996, 150-58.

in the patriarchal culture mirrored by the myth. As Kurahashi has made clear in the postscript to *Anti-tragedies*, in these five novellas she seeks to explore the relationship between man's free will and his predetermined fate in order to criticize the relationship between tragedy and fiction (1971, 344). In order to do so, she makes visible the connection between the text and pre-text, exposing the structure of Greek mythology embedded in her story and the tale structured around an ambiguous hero. Her role as an author within this strategy is that of a god who puts the characters in extreme situations and then observes their reactions.²⁰

Finally we should turn our attention to the role of the mother in "To Die at the Estuary." As I have pointed out before, although the aim of this paper is to analyze the rewriting of the father-daughter relationship, we cannot look at this pair while ignoring the role of the mother within the family. In her analysis of "The Long Passage of Dreams" Sakaki has argued that the mutual accomplice role of the father and the daughter recedes and gives new space to the mother-daughter relationship (1997, 341). A reconstruction of the mother-daughter relationship can also be seen in "To Die at the Estuary." As Sheldon has pointed out, one of the essential features of the father-daughter story is the literal or figurative absence of the mother (1997, 26). In "To Die at the Estuary," all motherly figures have been removed: Asako's mother committed suicide when Asako was five years old, and her grandmother Aya has been placed by Takayanagi in a nursing home a hundred miles away from Tokyo, where Asako and her father live. Furthermore, Asako's elder sister, Kyoko, has been married off by Takayanagi, who "cut off his relatives like a doctor amputating useless limbs" (258). Asako, as Antigone, is left alone with the father, controlled by his words and succumbing to his "law." However, by the end of the novella, Takayanagi has detached himself from the role of the father as it is fixed in the master plot of the father-daughter story, and relationships among women within the family can be restored: Kyoko will join Asako and Takayanagi with her children, and Asako, who had been visiting Aya in secret, will be free to form a relationship with her grandmother and learn more about herself. As Sakaki has pointed out in her analysis of the mother-daughter relationship in Kurahashi's fiction, we can see a shift in the way this pair is depicted, and especially the way the daughter regards the mother. In Kurahashi's earlier works the daughter often takes the father's side and thinks of the mother as a rival and a target of hate: examples of this negative relationship can be seen in *Blue Journey*, *Divine Maiden* (Seishōjo, 1965), and "The House of Sunflowers" (Himawari no ie, 1968). On the other hand, in novellas such as "Virginia" and "The Long Passage of Dreams" the daughter recognizes her mother's power, and thus relationships among women are seen in a positive light, and take the place of the male-female pair (both the father-daughter and brother-sister one).²¹ In "To Die at the Estuary" we can see a similar shift: the daughter can rebuild the relationship with other women within the family, but in doing so she does not need to take the side of the mother or the father. Like Mariko

²⁰ For an analysis of Kurahashi's *Anti-tragedies* see Kleeman 1991, 301-44, and Guarini 2014, 33-46.

²¹ For a complete analysis of the mother-daughter relationship in Kurahashi's fiction see Sakaki 1997, 337-48.

in "The Long Passage of Dreams," Asako finally manages to find a well-balanced position between the two of them.

Conclusion

In this paper I have analyzed "The Long Passage of Dreams" and "To Die at the Estuary" as rewritings of the master plot of the father-daughter story. Myths and fairy tales are often structured around this master plot: the story usually begins with a maturing daughter who desires change or self-development within the context of patriarchal society. The desire leads the daughter to commit an act of transgression, but the plot moves toward a solution of the conflict, which traditionally is solved in the interest of the father. "The Long Passage of Dreams" opens with a similar pattern: Mariko, who left Japan in order to distance herself from the control her parents exercised over her, comes back to her home town in Japan in order to look after her dying father. However, by the end of the novella, she is able to create a new relationship with her mother and free herself from the pseudo-incestuous relationship with her father. Furthermore, it must be stressed that in "The Long Passage of Dreams" Kurahashi also depicts a different ending for Keisaku, who can finally free himself from the role of the father as it is fixed in the patriarchal culture mirrored by myth. Keisaku's dreams reveal his ambivalent attitude toward his daughter: he tries to compel his daughter Mariko into Antigone's role, that is, the motherly daughter who looks after the father until his death. However, at the same time, he tries to perform the role of the benevolent father who does not force the daughter into the nursing role. Eventually he is able to cast off his attachment to the flesh and to the secular world and reaches enlightenment; in order to do so, he has to distance himself from his daughter and wife, and thus detach himself from the traditional role of the father within patriarchal society. In "The Long Passage of Dreams" Kurahashi parodied *Oedipus at Colonus*, and Noh plays (*Kagekiyo*, *Kurozuka*, *Nomori* and *Tamakazura*), using intertextuality as a strategy to challenge the master plot of the father-daughter story both in Greek tragedies and Japanese classics.

In "To Die at the Estuary" she again depicts an ambivalent father, who seems to be compelled to fulfill a prophecy and reiterate Oedipus' fate. In the same way as Keisaku, Takayanagi is attracted to his daughter/granddaughter Asako, whose image is often conflated with Aya, Takayanagi's stepmother with whom he has committed incest. Takayanagi, depicted as considering suicide, leaves for a trip with Asako, who accepts her role of the nurturing daughter who looks after her father until his death. However, Takayanagi is a father who rebels against the archetype he has inherited: he escapes the reiteration of the incestuous relationship and is thus able to free himself from the role of the father as it is fixed in the master discourse of the father-daughter plot. As Kleman has pointed out, *Anti-tragedies* is a good example of Kurahashi's process of turning the myth inside out and exploiting inconsistencies (1991, 353). By rewriting these patriarchal master narratives, she is able to expose them as patriarchal fictions which form the foundation of a constructed reality.

Kurahashi's method, often labeled as plagiarism, is based on the conscious

display of echoes of anterior texts. However, her references are not limited to other writers' texts, but include allusions to her own texts as well. Thus, the Model Reader of "The Long Passage of Dreams" has to take his/her inferential walks among Greek tragedies, Noh plays, and Kurahashi's other texts as well. In this paper we have focused on the connection between "The Long Passage of Dreams" and "To Die at the Estuary." However, Kurahashi's world is a web in which many others connections are possible. For instance "The Long Passage of Dreams" can be read together with "Virginia," as Atsuko Sakaki has done; or, focusing on the role of Noh masks and the rewriting of Medea, we could have pointed out connections with "The Girl with Silver Hair" (Shiroi kami no dōjo, 1969) and "The Passage of Dreams."²² Moreover, we can also read "The House of Sunflowers" and "Tales of the Days when Gods Existed" (Kamigami ga ita koro no hanashi, 1970), the first and the last of the *Anti-tragedies*, as rewritings of the master plot of the father-daughter story.²³ In these novellas Kurahashi again uses Greek myth mixed with elements from Noh tradition in order to create a parody of patriarchal fictions. All these inferential walks among Kurahashi's texts are possible since her texts are not representations of truth, but "fictions of fictions" (Sakaki 1998, 170). As long as the reader is able to understand the indications she has left within the texts, s/he can walk inside and outside of the text, and communicate with the author. As Kristeva has pointed out, through a mode of reading which involves the reader's active participation in the movements of the text, we are forced to consider our constructions and tenets; once the reading is over, the reader can restore the relationship with constructed reality, which is founded on the master narratives of patriarchal fictions, with a new awareness.²⁴ We can conclude that Kurahashi shows that through the cooperation between author and reader, both a feminist rewriting and a feminist reading of myth becomes possible.

GLOSSARY

Akushichi-byoe Kagekiyo		<i>Hōjōki</i>	方丈記
	悪七兵衛景清	<i>johakyū</i>	序破急
<i>bundan</i>	文壇	<i>Kakō ni shisu</i>	河口に死す
Emma	閻魔	Kasuga	春日
<i>Hanhigeki</i>	反悲劇	<i>keihatsu</i>	啓発
Hannya	般若	Keisaku	啓作
Hitomaru	人丸	<i>kijo</i>	鬼女

²² For an analysis of the relationship between "The Long Passage of Dreams" and "The Girl with Silver Hair" see Guarini 2015, 10-14.

²³ For a detailed analysis see Guarini 2014, 33-46.

²⁴ For an analysis of the feminine practice of reading myth see Sellers 2001, 32-34.

Kurozuka	黒塚	Taira	平
Minamoto	源	Tamakazura	玉鬘
Nagai yumeji	長い夢路	tokonoma	床の間
nochi-shite	後シテ	Yama no oto	山の音
Noh (Nō)	能	Yashima	屋島
Nomori	野守	Zeami	世阿弥
shite	シテ		

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