

# **Avant-gardes in Japan**

Anniversary of Futurism and Butō:  
Performing Arts and Cultural Practices  
between Contemporariness and Tradition

edited by Katja Centonze

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*Avant-gardes in Japan. Anniversary of Futurism and Butō: Performing Arts and Cultural Practices between Contemporariness and Tradition*

Edited by Katja Centonze

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*Kamaitachi* #7 (1967) Photo: Hosoe Fikō



*Kamaitachi* # 8 (1965). Photo: Hosoe Eikō

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*In memory of*  
*Paola Cagnoni (1940-2004)*  
*and Ōno Kazuo (1906-2010)*



## SOME NOTES ON THE RECEPTION OF VALENTINE DE SAINT-POINT IN TAISHŌ JAPAN

Pierantonio Zanotti

The now nearly forgotten Valentine de Saint-Point (1875-1943) was an eclectic and versatile intellectual, who, defying any categorisation, traversed Belle Époque aestheticism as well as the Parisian avant-garde scene, providing both with contributions that are yet to be fully evaluated by modern scholarship. She was a painter, a dancer, a critic, a poet, a novelist, a dramatist; at the height of her involvement in the Parisian cultural world, she befriended many artists and intellectuals such as Auguste Rodin, Ricciotto Canudo and Erik Satie. She briefly associated her name with Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's Futurism, for which she published two manifestos: the *Manifeste de la femme futuriste* (March 25, 1912) and the *Manifeste futuriste de la luxure* (January 11, 1913). She experimented in performing arts and theorised new forms of theatre and synthetic dance (in particular, *métachorie*). According to the accounts of her later years, she eventually converted to Islam and moved to Egypt, where she became a supporter of the Arab decolonisation.

I will leave the task of introducing her to a Japanese writer, Yanagisawa Ken,<sup>1</sup> as he did to the Japanese reader in an article published in January 1915 in the literary magazine *Shiika* (Poetry, or *Shi* and *tanka*):

Miss Valentine de Saint-Point is worth the fame of an independent artist, as a Futurist poet, a Futurist *danseuse*, plus, as an *indépendante* painter. She is the niece of the religious poet Lamartine, and, beginning with *Poems of the Sea and the Sun* [*Poèmes de la mer e du soleil*] (1905), she has published about ten books until today. Many of them are collections of poetry, but there are also plays and novels; actually, her plays are staged at the Theatre of the Arts (Théâtre des Arts), and at

<sup>1</sup> Yanagisawa Ken (1889-1953) was then a young scholar of French literature from the Imperial University of Tōkyō and a poet in his own right. He must be remembered at least for his translation of Arthur Rimbaud's *Le bateau ivre* (February 1914; see Usami 1993) and for his collection *Kajuen* (The orchard, November 1914). As a poet, he was a follower of the symbolist Miki Rofū (1889-1964).

the Theatre of the Woman (Théâtre de la Femme).<sup>2</sup> In addition to this production, she also sculpts. In short, she is part of the French School of Life (L'École de la Vie) of today, and she competes in the vividness of her colours with Barrès, Bergson, Rolland, and so on. (Yanagisawa in Saint-Point 1915, 61)<sup>3</sup>

Almost completely ignored until a couple of decades ago, Saint-Point has recently become the object of renewed interest, partly spurred by the celebrations connected to the one hundredth anniversary of the foundation of Futurism (1909), and partly in relation to a general reconsideration of the role of women artists within the European historical avant-gardes.

It is not my duty here to give a detailed account of Saint-Point's life and works: the reader can find much useful information in many recent publications totally or partially devoted to her.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, I am not going to focus on her whole career, but solely on a relatively short period of her trajectory, corresponding to the section of her activities that became known to the Japanese reader before World War I. As a brief historical survey, this paper is therefore especially conceived for those specialists of Saint-Point who are interested in tracing her influence and reception outside of France.

#### Saint-Point in Japan: A Press Review (1913-1915)

As is well known, the Japanese artistic field, being part of the periphery of a Eurocentric "world republic of letters" (Casanova 1999), was particularly prone to follow and appropriate all the latest perturbations that were taking place in the richest (in terms of symbolic capital) place in the world: Paris. This process of critical incorporation was materially based on the massive mediation of secondary sources, both foreign and domestic. Accordingly, this paper is focused on the representations of the figure of Saint-Point as they emerge from a close examination of the Japanese journalistic sources that introduced her to the Japanese audience.

This journalistic discourse on Saint-Point tended to present its object along three main directions, which paralleled three current and often highly debated topics in the Japanese press of the 1910s. In compliance with these three categorising guidelines (what we should call a "tripartite taxonomy") Saint-Point was characterised as:

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Point presented her play *Le déchu* at the Théâtre des Arts (today's Théâtre Hébertot) in May 1909 as the first instalment of an unfinished trilogy *Le théâtre de la femme*. Yanagisawa may be confusing the title of the trilogy with the name of an actual theatre.

<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations from French, Italian and Japanese are my own.

<sup>4</sup> Lista 1973, 51-57; Satin 1990; Berghaus 1993; Moore 1997; Richard de la Fuente 2003; Re 2003; Gaden 2006; Ballardin 2007.

1. A thinker who wrote about the intrinsic nature and the social role of women. Issues such as the woman's emancipation and civil rights, or the development of the international suffragettes' movement were being regularly covered in the Japanese press. The appearance of a Japanese feminist movement was then attracting much attention from the public opinion.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, Saint-Point's Futurist manifestos were assimilated to feminist or para-feminist works, even if in fact they violently criticised feminism.<sup>6</sup>
2. A Futurist. Her collaboration with Marinetti's movement was brief and lasted only about two years, between 1912 and 1914. Moreover, Saint-Point, a sophisticated lover of traditional art, never accepted the anti-passéist dogma of Futurism (Richard de la Fuente 2003, 126-33). Nevertheless, because of her implication with the Italian movement, her works attracted the interest of the Japanese world of arts, engrossed with the latest developments of the European avant-garde.
3. A theorist and performer of new forms of dance. Mizusawa Tsutomu has illustrated how, among many Japanese artists of the Taishō era (1912-1926), a new interest in the dynamic nature of the inner self, and in dance as a way to express it, arose. This phenomenon was accompanied by a "radically changing image of the artist as a body" (2000, 22), and was possibly connected to the emergence of what Suzuki Sadami has famously defined as Taishō "life-centrism" (*seimeishugi*), a multilayered discourse on the centrality of life as a universal principle with manifold manifestations.

We will address these three points in the following review of the articles that presented Saint-Point to the Japanese readership in the years between 1913 and 1915. Many of them are taken from the collection of Japanese sources on the European avant-gardes edited by Omuka Toshiharu and Hidaka Shōji (hereafter cited as KSGS), while others are the result of my personal research.

I would not say that this list is complete: many other Japanese articles on Saint-Point are probably still to be located. Therefore, what I aim to present in this paper is more a tentative reconstruction, rather than the complete picture of her Japanese reception.

1. [Mori, Ōgai]. "Mukudori tsūshin" [Correspondence of the grey starling]. *Subaru* [Pleiades] 5, no. 5 (May 1913) [dated March 3, 1913]. (Mori 1971-75, 27:776)

<sup>5</sup> Among the many recent publications on the early history of Japanese feminism, see for instance Mackie 2003, chap. 2 and 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Feminism is a political error. Feminism is a cerebral error of the woman, an error that her instinct will recognize as such" (*Manifesto of the Futurist Woman*). On Saint-Point's paradoxical stance towards feminism, see Locke 1997, 83.

This nomination of Saint-Point in the Japanese press is likely to be the first of its kind. Edited under a pseudonym by Ōgai on one of the most important magazines of the Japanese anti-Naturalist movement, "Mukudori tsūshin" was a column devoted to the presentation of various events from the European press. Every month, Ōgai chose what he considered the most interesting news pieces from a wide range of foreign newspapers, and gave each an account of variable length. As is also remembered by Thomas Hackner in his contribution to this volume, it was in this same column that in May 1909 he presented the first Japanese translation of Marinetti's *Manifesto del Futurismo*, most likely from a German version published in the Berlin newspaper *Vossische Zeitung* (Omuka 2000, 245; Nishino 2006, 128).

*Futurisme* [French in the original glossed with the word *miraiishugi*], which was announced for the first time by F.T. Marinetti on *Figaro*, from poetry has entered into painting, and finally has entered into music. And that's not all. Madame de Saint-Point has started the woman Futurist movement [*miraiha joshi undō*]. Her article of faith is "La luxure est une force" [French in the original].

The French sentence quoted by Ōgai can be found in both of Saint-Point's Futurist manifestos, so it is difficult to say whether Ōgai knew both or just one of them. The term he uses to gloss the word *luxure* (lust), the rare compound *chōbi* 暢美, seems to not be entirely correct: it carries in fact a meaning similar to "carefree beauty". In any case, these elements point to an unidentified French source. No other comments were added by Ōgai: it is therefore impossible to appreciate from these short sentences his opinion on Saint-Point's theories.

2. Koiransukī. "Miraiha no bungaku to kaiga—san" [Futurist literature and painting—pt. 3]. *Jiji shinpō* [Journal of current events], November 30, 1913: 1.

The author of this article composed in three distinct parts (the first two were published on November 28-29) has not been identified. According to Omuka Toshiharu (2000, 260), he might be a Russian or an Eastern European correspondent who lived in Paris. I propose, as a starting point for further research, that he might be the same Aleksandr Koiranskij (Коиранский) who wrote about cinema in the Russian newspaper *Naš ponedel'nik* (Our Monday paper) in November 1907 (Tsivian 1994, 159-60). The original source of *Jiji shinpō*'s article was probably not in Japanese, yet it is not clear from which language it was translated: perhaps, as we will see, it was from Russian. No translator is credited, either.

The third part of the article contains a short summary of the *Manifeste de*

*la femme futuriste*. In this case, too, the presenter gives no personal comment at all, limiting himself to fulfilling his neutralised journalistic duties:

Interestingly enough, the Futurist women (there are quite many of them—Koiransukī<sup>7</sup>) have refused to follow the contempt of their sex. Valentina [*sic*] de Saint-Point, one of such Futurist women—great-granddaughter of the poet Lamartine—has released a manifesto of Feminine Futurism [*josei miraiha no sengen*] in response to Marinetti. She says: the men of today are to be despised no less than women. They try to turn towards animal cruelty, which must be defined as the supreme womanly characteristic. To prove that animal cruelty is the nature of woman, the poetess cites as examples Semiramida [*sic*], Joan of Arc, Messalina, Charlotte Corday, Cleopatra, etc.

One idea of the Futurist women painters is that they are already fed up with the naked body of the woman as a subject. They said they will not paint any naked woman for about the next ten years.

The *katakana* spellings *varenchina* and *semiramida* hint perhaps at a Russian source. Saint-Point is mistakenly presented as a great-granddaughter (*sōson*) of Lamartine, while in fact she claimed to be his grandniece. The author incorrectly attributes the vow made in the *Manifesto of the Futurist Painters* (April 11, 1910) to paint no more nudes for ten years to the "Futurist women painters" (*josei miraiha no gaka*).<sup>8</sup>

Again, Saint-Point is mainly portrayed as a pseudofeminist theorist. The "pseudo" prefix is mandatory, since she expressly declared, even in her Futurist manifestos, that she was against feminism. And yet, we can notice a tendency among her Japanese presenters to categorise her theories under the indistinct label of "women who write about woman's condition in modern society", and to therefore generically associate her ideas to feminism.

3. Saint-Point, Valentine de. "Miraiha fujin no fujinron" [The theory of woman of Futurist women]. Trans. Takamura Kōtarō. *Warera* [We] 2 (February 1914).
4. Saint-Point, Valentine de. "Miraiha fujin no gyōyokuron" [The theory of lust of Futurist women]. Trans. Takamura Kōtarō. *Warera* 3 (March 1914): 33-38. (KSGS *shinbun zasshi hen*, 1:157-62)

Takamura Kōtarō (1883-1956), a famed poet and sculptor, was at that time one of the most active and progressive art critics in the Japanese scene (Takumi

<sup>7</sup> The explicit attribution of this note to the author, made by the Japanese anonymous editor, proves that this text is a translation.

<sup>8</sup> This point provoked the interest of Takamura Kōtarō (see below) as well, who, in his article "Miraiha no zekkyō" (The cry of Futurism, *Yomiuri shinbun*, March 5, 1912) also mentioned this "strange pact".



1979, 303-15). In the first months of 1914, he published in *Warera*, a recently established general monthly (*sōgō zasshi*), his translations of both Saint-Point's Futurist manifestos.<sup>9</sup>

Both translations are surely from French, as can be inferred from some textual evidences, namely *katakana* and *furigana* reproducing French pronunciations. It is likely that the original texts, probably as leaflets, were part of the material sent to Kōtarō by Marinetti himself.<sup>10</sup>

The word *gyōyoku* 楽欲, used by Kōtarō to translate *luxure*, is a rare Buddhist compound. It seems noteworthy that both Ōgai and Kōtarō had problems in finding a suitable Japanese word corresponding to the French original. In Kōtarō's case, he tried perhaps to render the philosophical implications and positive connotations of Saint-Point's use of the word, which are not present in more common Japanese equivalents. The Nietzschean overtones of Saint-Point's discourse are also competently grasped by Kōtarō, who properly translates *surhomme* as *chōjin* 超人, a term that had entered the Japanese lexicon to render the concept of the "superman".

According to Chiba Sen'ichi (1966, 76-77; 1978, 105), Kōtarō's choice of these texts can be linked to his interest towards the Japanese movements for the emancipation of women. His attention to such issues was probably spurred by his romantic involvement with his future wife Naganuma Chieko (1886-1938), who had some links with the Hiratsuka Raichō's (1886-1971) group Seitōsha (Blue Stockings). Kōtarō himself had formerly written some articles on related topics (Takamura 1995-98, 17:467); these translations, therefore, were probably meant to be a further contribution to the Japanese debate on these subjects. However, in this case too, personal comments to the texts were completely omitted.

5. Matsuoka, Shoson. "Miraiha no buyō" [Futurist dance]. *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun*, March 11 and 16, 1914. (KSGS *shinbun zasshi hen*, 1:163-64)

Quite little is known about Matsuoka Shoson. As is reported in *Pari yori* (see 6), he met Yosano Hiroshi (1873-1935) and his wife Akiko (1878-1942) during their sojourn in France and accompanied them as an interpreter during

<sup>9</sup> Both translations can be read in Takamura 1994-98, 17:255-62. The first translation was summarised in "Nigatsu no zasshi yori: Miraiha fujin no fujinron (*Warera*)" (From February's magazines: "The theory of woman of Futurist women" in *We*), *Yomiuri shinbun*, February 10, 1914.

<sup>10</sup> These manifestos circulated mainly as "placards repliés". Their first appearance in a magazine was a German version of the first manifesto in *Der Sturm* (May 1912). See Lista 1973, 332-34. On the contacts between Kōtarō and Marinetti, see Takamura 1994-98, 8:401-2 and Tanaka 2002, 264-66.

their visit to Rodin in Paris in summer 1912.<sup>11</sup> I was unable to find his dates of birth and death, but it seems that he lived uninterruptedly in France from 1906 to 1914, which helped him in acquiring a good competence of the French language, even to the extent of being able to earn a living from it.<sup>12</sup>

Before focusing on Saint-Point's metachoric debut, the article first of all gives a rather detailed biography of the French artist.

Madame Valentine de Saint-Point, famous as a Futurist [*miraiha*, *fyutorisumu*] poet, has recently been provoking quite a turmoil in Paris by presenting, after several years of hard work, her Futurist dance. Madame de Saint-Point, who wrote *The Book of Arrogance* [this is probably a reference to her collection *Poèmes d'orgueil*, 1908], who has been called by D'Annunzio "the daughter of the sun",<sup>13</sup> who was compared by Rodin to Botticelli's *Youth* [*Primavera*?], and who was nicknamed "the young god" by her comrades,<sup>14</sup> being not by chance one who called herself the advocate of the cult of the flesh (*la prêtresse de la luxure*), is not at all an ordinary woman. She is that fierce kind of person that cannot be content if she does not shock the so-called "passéists" [*kinō no hito*] in one way or another.

This passage contains the only mention of the association of Saint-Point to Auguste Rodin's name that I found in the Japanese press. In fact, since the beginning of her career as (in Bourdieuvian terms) a "new entrant" in the intellectual field, together with her Lamartinian ancestry, Saint-Point heavily capitalised on her connections with the consecrated sculptor, for whom she posed in 1902 and with whom she corresponded from 1905 until his death (Richard de la Fuente 2003, 88-97). It is well known that Rodin was the object of particular devotion by many groups of Japanese intellectuals, like the contributors of the magazine *Shirakaba* (White birch): a stronger emphasis on the Rodinian connections of Saint-Point would probably have helped in attracting more interest in her works.

The rest of the article deals with the first Parisian performance of *métachorie* of December 1913, 20 (see 7 for more details). Matsuoka's source is probably a

<sup>11</sup> Yosano and Yosano 2001-, 10:115-21 (chapter "Rodan-ō", The venerable Rodin).

<sup>12</sup> Some sparse information on him can be found in Ishizuka 2002, 93-99 and 2003, 133. He was born in Amami Ōshima, in the Ryūkyū Archipelago. While in France, he lived in Provence from 1906 for about three years, during which he personally met Frédéric Mistral and learned some local language. He regularly contributed to *Tōkyō Asahi shinbun* from April 1913 to December 1915. Ishizuka identifies him with a Matsuoka Shin'ichirō (born ca. 1886) who made a career in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after World War I.

<sup>13</sup> This information is confirmed by the sources cited in Richard de la Fuente 2003, 43, 86, 150.

<sup>14</sup> This sentence seems to echo the caption for a series of photographs of Saint-Point performing her *métachorie* that were published in the *Sketch Supplement* of London ("Is the Sun Proud of His Daughter? Futurist Dancing", January 7, 1914: 5-7), as mentioned in Locke 1997, 90. Perhaps, the English writer and Matsuoka were quoting from the same French source.

reportage he found in some French newspaper: its author must have witnessed the show (which is chronicled in the second part of the article) or must have at least read the text of the conference, titled “La métachorie”, that preceded Saint-Point’s demonstration. The explanations given by Matsuoka (or by his source) about *métachorie* rephrase the contents of the conference and even add some vaguely comparative comments on Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, Jean d’Udine and Isadora Duncan. It is, however, noted that *métachorie* was not successful among critics as Duncan’s performances: “*Métachorie* was born too early”, is the conclusion of the article.<sup>15</sup>

The article also presents two drawings of Saint-Point dancing. The captions say that one is an image of the dance of “love” and the other an image of the dance of “war”.<sup>16</sup>

6. Yosano, Hiroshi, and Akiko Yosano. *Pari yori* [From Paris]. Tōkyō: Kaneo Bun’endō, May 1914. (Yosano and Yosano 2001-, vol. 10)

As is widely known, the poet Yosano Hiroshi lived in Paris from December 28, 1911, to December 13, 1912. His wife Akiko joined him from May to September of the same year (Nagaoka 2006, 327-51). *Pari yori* was a collection of their correspondences from Europe (mainly from France), and was published soon after their return to Japan. In the chapter “Fyuchurisuto no geijutsu” (Futurist art), Yosano gives one of the most complete accounts of Futurism available at that time in Japan (Yosano and Yosano 2001-, 10:207-11). In a very short passage, he also mentions Saint-Point’s involvement with the movement: “In Paris, Miss Valentine de Saint-Point is the woman poet that we should call his [Marinetti’s] best disciple” (210).

7. Saint-Point, Valentine de. “Miraiha joshijin no odori” [The dance of the Futurist poetess]. Trans. Yosano Hiroshi. *Mita bungaku* [Literature of Mita] 6, no. 7 (July 1914): 53-65. (KSGS *shinbun zasshi hen*, 1:199-211)

This translation of “La métachorie”, a transcript of the “conference read on December 20, 1913, at the Comédie des Champs-Élysées [Théâtre Léon-Poirer] by Georges Saillard as a prelude to the ‘ideist plays’, and published in [Ricciotto Canudo’s magazine] *Montjoie!*, n. 1/2, January 1914, pp. 5-7” (Saint-Point 2006, 67-68) was published by Yosano in one of the most influential anti-Naturalist magazines of that period.

<sup>15</sup> All these elements point to Georges Casella’s “Au théâtre Léon-Poirer: La Métachorie et Mme Valentine de Saint-Point”, featured in *Comœdia* (December 21, 1913), as one of the most likely sources for Matsuoka’s article.

<sup>16</sup> I was not able to locate their original source. One of them is signed, but I cannot decipher the signature. The article gives no clue about their correct attribution.

In actual fact, *Montjoie!* reported an incorrect date (December 29), which, together with the venue, is also indicated at the end of Yosano’s translation. Yosano gives no commentary. He improperly translates *danse idéiste* as *risōshugisha/ideisuto no odori* (idealist’s dance) and *métachorie* as *ryūdō bukyoku* 流動舞曲 (approximately, “fluid danced music”), a term that hints at a vitalist and vaguely Bergsonian reading of Saint-Point’s ideas. In general, Yosano’s overall translation appears to not be particularly accurate. Leaving aside certain idiosyncrasies that could interest an expert of dance studies (for instance, the *kabuki* term *shosagoto* is used to translate *danse de caractère*), I will simply note one fairly memorable mistake: Yosano renders the French word *Francs* (meaning the people) as *jiyūna* (free). There is also some confusion as to the rate of nudity of Saint-Point’s performance.

The *Montjoie!* issue in question, “consecrated to Contemporary Dance”, was a true mine for Yosano: he took from it the poems by Blaise Cendrars and Saint-Point that he translated in the anthology *Rira no hana* (see 8 and 9), and a sketch by Gino Baldo of Saint-Point dancing that he placed in the paratext of that same book.

8. Yosano, Hiroshi, ed. and trans. *Rira no hana* [Lilac flowers]. Tōkyō: Tōundō, November 1914. (Yosano and Yosano 2001-, vol. 13)  
9. Saint-Point, Valentine de. *Senketsu no keshi* [Blood poppies]. Trans. Yosano Hiroshi. *Bunshō sekai* [The world of letters] 9, no. 12 (November 1914).

Saint-Point appears in two different loci of *Rira no hana*, the ponderous anthology of contemporary French poetry selected by Yosano; that is, in the editor’s introduction, and in a translation of her poem *Les pavots de sang*. A heavily modified, probably revised, version of this translation was featured in that same month in the literary magazine *Bunshō sekai*, where many other poems of *Rira no hana* had also already been published.

In his introduction to *Rira no hana*, dated “October, Taishō 3 [1914]”, Yosano gives a survey of the contemporary French scene. He mentions Saint-Point in two different passages:

Marinetti and Palazzeschi are Italian Futurists [*miraiha*], Misses Valentine de Saint-Point and Blaise Cendrars are French Futurists. (Yosano and Yosano 2001-, 13:13)

The drawing printed at the beginning of the book was sketched by the Futurist painter Baldo<sup>17</sup> and it portrays the dancing figure of Miss Saint-Point, who is a

<sup>17</sup> Padua-born Gino Baldo (1884-1961) was a friend of Umberto Boccioni. In 1907 he moved to Paris where in 1914 he founded an interventionist journal called *L’antiboche*. In 1915 he fought in the Great War as an Italian soldier (Agnese 1996, 133).

Futurist poetess as well as the creator of Futurist dance. She dances while reciting her own poems, and the piece titled *Blood Poppies*, which is included in this collection, is a poem she loves to dance. (ibid., 14)

The inclusion of Saint-Point in the Futurist group was potentially motivated by her former activity as an author of Futurist manifestos, but it was no longer accurate in late 1914 as she had already begun to dissociate herself from Marinetti. On the other hand, the positing of “Miss [sic]” Cendrars in Yosano’s Futurist canon can be interpreted as an instance of a growing confusion in the use of the “futurist” label among Japanese intellectuals.<sup>18</sup>

*Les pavots de sang* was one of the poems collected in *La guerre, poème héroïque* (1912) (Ballardin 2007, 80), but we may suppose that Yosano chose it purely because it was featured in the same *Montjoie!* issue from which he took the original text of “La métachorie” (see 7). In his commentary, he correctly links this poem to Saint-Point’s dancing experiments. However, with its ambiguous representation of the aftermath of a battle, this is not necessarily a Futurist poem, in the same way that Saint-Point’s dances were not “Futurist dances”. As proof of this, we can quote Marinetti himself, who, in his *Manifesto della danza futurista* (July 8, 1917), was to disparagingly define Saint-Point’s metachoric poems as “passéist poems that navigate in the old Greek and medieval sensibility” (1968, 125).

#### LES PAVOTS DE SANG

(Poèmes de Guerre de Valentine de Saint-Point,  
musique de Maurice Droegehmans)

Ici ce fut un champ de bataille. La guerre, —  
Contre qui et pourquoi ? Pour un mot ? Une terre ?

Vérité ? Utopie ? Orgueil ? Quoi ? — Je ne sais  
De jeunes hommes ont jonché ce sol épais,

Brutalement fauchés par l’anonyme haine  
Et la fièvre était vaste, en rayons sur la plaine.

Ils avaient chaud. En eux, ils portaient un soleil  
Qui n’a pas cessé de féconder leur sommeil.

Ce ne sont pas des morts qui sont tombés sur l’herbe,  
C’est l’Ardeur. Et l’ardeur est toujours là qui germe.

Ce sang jeune a éclos; du sang jaillit partout.  
Voyez ces cœurs sanglants, voyez, haute et debout

<sup>18</sup> See, for a telling case of such confusion, Zanotti 2008.

Et brûlant sans baisser, cette flamme immobile !  
Toute cette jeunesse arde, encore fertile !

Fauchée et point éteinte; et au champ du combat  
Elle flambe et rayonne. Et ce champ incarnat

C’est le champ de son sang aux calices sans nombre.  
Rouge : gloire et lumière ! Et je n’y vois plus d’ombres !

Si je lève les yeux, il n’est rien de vermeil  
Qui vaille mon regard. Où donc est le soleil ?  
(*Montjoie!*, January/February 1914: 4)

#### 鮮血の罌粟

ブランティイヌ・ド・サンボワン女史

こ こ たたかひ せんさう  
此処は 戦 の野なりき。戦争よ、—  
誰に向つてか、何故にか、一語のためか、一境土のためか。

真理のためか、理想のためか、権威のためか、何ぞ。—我れは信ぜず、  
野の 光 の下に、名もなき 怨 と、漠たる熱情とに由り、

ざんにん たふ せま  
残忍にも刈り倒されて、この狭き地を  
若きますら男達の掩ひしとは。

ねつ も たが  
彼等は熱を有ちき。彼等は互ひに、  
彼等の夢を断えず生む太陽を有ちき。

うへ たふ しやくねつ  
草の上に倒れしは死ならず、そは赤熱なりき。  
しかも赤熱は永久ここに生ひつつあり。

ほとばし  
その若き血は花咲く。血は一めんに 迸 る。  
見よ、真赤なる心臓を。見よ、高く上向きて

たわ このがうがふばつ ほのほ  
撓むことなく燃えつつある此傲岸不拔の 焰 を、  
猶豊かなる此熱烈の 青春 を。



めつ たたかひ  
刈れども滅せずして、戦の野に  
かがや  
青春は燃え且つ輝けり。

たたかひ  
されば此赤き戦の野は無数の血の花の野なり。  
ひかり しんく かげ  
光栄と光との真紅。われはまた陰影を見ず。

あ いつべつ あたひ  
試みに目を挙げれど、わが一瞥に値する  
なんら あか いづこ  
何等の赤き物もなし。かの太陽は何処ぞ。

(Yosano and Yosano 2001-, 13:422-24; the *zenshū* text is annotated with the variants of the *Bunshō sekai* text)<sup>19</sup>

Yosano gave no specific commentary on this poem in *Rira no hana* nor in *Bunshō sekai*; the only exception is this “translator’s note” that appears in *Bunshō sekai*: “These two pieces [Cendrars’ and Saint-Point’s] are poems that are being danced in the Futurist dances of late” (ibid., 13:422).

It is difficult to say if Yosano had come to know other poems by Saint-Point: his anthological choice was clearly determined by the contact he had with one single source (*Montjoie!*), which led him to superimpose the performing side of Saint-Point’s poetry to what he knew about her Futurist connections. On the other hand, other stylistic or thematic aspects remained completely untouched.

Some scholars (Kōuchi 2008, 164-65) have made some conjectures about possible contacts between Yosano Akiko and Saint-Point’s texts presented by her husband. It is highly probable that Akiko may have read such translations as well as Kōtarō’s. Nevertheless, without any specific textual reference in her writings, their influence on her thought and literature remains undetectable.

10. Saint-Point, Valentine de. “Onna yori otoko he” [From woman to man].  
Trans. Yanagisawa Ken. *Shiika* 5, no. 1 (January 1915): 57-61.

This item represents quite a departure from what we have seen until now, because it is the translation of a piece of Saint-Point’s narrative prose. As can be inferred from the French subtitle given by Yanagisawa (“L’amante à l’amant”) this is a passage from her 1906 novel *Un amour*—a work still

<sup>19</sup> In this paper, *kanji* are given in their modern form, while I keep the historical orthography for *kana* syllabary.

imbued with highly stylised symbolism and the “prevailing emphatic accent” (Bentivoglio and Zoccoli 2008, 12) typical of her early writings—that she conceived as the first instalment of her novelistic *Trilogie de l’amour et de la mort* (Richard de la Fuente 2003, 77-81). It is not explained why Yanagisawa chose this novel (which did not equal the *succès de scandale* raised by its ideal sequel of 1907, *Un inceste*) and this specific passage, nor is it clear whether he had read the entire novel or not.<sup>20</sup>

As a final note to his translation, Yanagisawa gives the short portrait of Saint-Point with which I opened my paper. This passage is rich in new information about the French artist. A specific work of hers is mentioned, her first collection of poetry, *Poèmes de la mer e du soleil*. Interestingly enough, in what appears to be a meaningful departure from the taxonomy given by Yosano Hiroshi a few months before, Saint-Point’s contacts with the Futurist movement seem to be downplayed in favour of her inclusion in the so-called School of Life (*seimeisha*), to which Yosano had devoted most of the translations presented in *Rira no hana*.

## 11. After 1915

It seems that Saint-Point disappeared from the Japanese press after 1915. In 1916 she left France and in April 1917 she put up a “Festival de la Métachorie” in New York, where she gave the second and last performance of her *métachorie*. It seems unlikely that the Japanese press gave no account of such an event, which, as Leslie Satin has documented (1990), had a good resonance in the American press. Further research on the magazines and newspapers of that period is perhaps required.

## Some Conclusions: The Quiet Reception of a Progressive Saint-Point

From the data that I have amassed, we can convincingly suggest that Saint-Point was far better known among Taishō readers than today (Tanaka 1988, 190), while it seems that her aesthetic or political ideas failed to provoke anything more than a feeble (though noteworthy) interest among Japanese intellectuals.

This is clearly illustrated by the cases of Takamura Kōtarō and Yosano Hiroshi, who were probably the two single writers to show the most penetrating interest towards Saint-Point. Both were eminent poets and critics, cosmopolitan in culture and readings; both overtly sympathised with Futurism, which they perceived as an innovative and progressive force; both had partners

<sup>20</sup> This translation is also mentioned in Tanaka 1988, 190.

who were connected to the proto-feminist milieu of Japan. In other words, the perspective of their reception of Saint-Point was that expressed by the liberal and progressive sectors of the Japanese intellectual class. The same perspective shaped their appropriation of the images and rhetoric that informed Futurist discourse: being fierce opponents of Naturalism and of its Japanese version (*shizenshugi*), both Kōtarō and Yosano found in the Futurist set of paradoxical and provocative utterances on the destruction of the old artistic institutions an argument for their struggle for the emancipation of man and the self (*ningen kaihō*). Operating in a non-Marxist theoretical framework, both were prone to look with interest at that particular mixture of the many rivulets of early twentieth century irrationalist thought (Nietzschean individualism, anarchism, Sorelism, Bergsonian vitalism,<sup>21</sup> and so forth) that was at the core of both Saint-Point's and Marinetti's theories of those years (Locke 1997, 77-79; Re 2003, 43-45, 49-51). The cultivated Japanese reader could feel a sense of domesticity with such ideological platform (provided that it was cleansed of its more reactionary components, such as bellicism or nationalism, which were at odds with a Taishō intellectual field that privileged pacifism and cosmopolitanism), which probably captured the interest of Yosano and Kōtarō in the first place. A sentence like

in life or in art, to kill the instinct of a being, and leave him nothing but his cerebrality, that would not mean to aggrandise him. As superiorly as it might be, that would only mean to restrain him<sup>22</sup>

could perfectly fit in the Japanese anti-Naturalist discourse of those years. As partisans of the incommensurability of the "self" and of "life" as opposed to what in their dialectic narrative corresponded to the oppressive and deterministic rationalism of positivist thought, both Yosano and Kōtarō (as well as many other intellectuals in the Japanese 1910s) had much in common with the language of Saint-Point. What appeared mostly alien to them, at least on the aesthetic level, was Saint-Point's anticipation of the rationalist-but-still-avant-garde-savvy taste of the so-called *rappel à l'ordre*, which could already be sensed in the stress she posited on the geometrical and cerebral nature of her "ideist" dances. Such endorsements of a new formal discipline and rationality were generally perceived among the Japanese anti-Naturalist circles as a threat to individual freedom of expression.

However, as far as is shown in the above press review, no one of the commentators of Saint-Point's writings manifested feelings of outrage or

<sup>21</sup> See in particular Berghaus 1993, 31.

<sup>22</sup> "Chez un être, dans la vie ou dans l'art, tuer son instinct et ne lui laisser que sa cérébralité, ne serait pas le grandir. Si supérieurement que ce soit, ce serait le restreindre" (Saint-Point 1914, 6).

scandal towards her provocative theories. This may perhaps be interpreted as the effect of a "journalistic" presentation of her ideas. In other words, the attitude towards Saint-Point's views was the same reserved to other remote and eccentric events that were taking place in the distant Europe: something able to elicit curiosity, rather than reprobation or enthusiasm. To such an outcome was possibly added the association of Saint-Point to Futurism, an attribute that was neatly perceived by most Japanese presenters. Even if there were many important and authoritative exceptions, of Japanese intellectuals who recognised or even just sensed the importance of Marinetti's movement and sympathised with it, Futurism in itself was often understood as a nearly buffoonish outcry of the Italian youth, and so Saint-Point's excessive declarations must have seemed to fit well in such caricatured canvas.

What strikes the modern reader more is that, as far as is known, none of the Japanese presenters of Saint-Point ventured into confuting or supporting her views. A detached, nearly scientific attitude prevails, which is common in the descriptive, didactic approach to the most recent European cultural products that many Japanese intellectuals adopted in the early twentieth century. This journalistic, merely informative, attitude is paired with a sort of self-censorship of one's own opinions. It would be naïve to think that the authors who dealt with Saint-Point had not come to articulate some personal judgments on her work. Quite the opposite, their attitude can perhaps be interpreted as a sign of the fact that even a rhetorically controlled euphemisation of the commentator's positions was still perceived as insufficient to elaborate a valuable second-degree articulation of such European hypotexts. Far from being the symptom of an irreducible ideological difference, or of a general aphasia caused by the inability to reproduce a discourse that was too alien in content, this "operative silence" is more likely to be connected to a sense of axiological and aesthetical anomaly in front of the products of an overwhelmingly powerful intellectual field. In other words, this silence was the natural *public* manifestation (or non-manifestation) and correlative of a cautious process of *private*, individual, non-declared symbolic re-appropriation, which was taking place sheltered from any faux pas in the public sphere.

Being disposed to feel unprepared to handle some of the most radical products of the European artistic field, and perhaps even considering the mere task of conveniently talk about them too embarrassing, many early Taishō intellectuals seemingly resorted to a tactical retreat of sorts. I would argue that this embarrassment originated from the paucity and weakness of authoritative agencies able to locally consecrate or repel the newest cultural products imported in the Japanese intellectual field: a clear symptom of the dominated nature of this field, or, to use Thomas Hackner's words, of the "imbalance of power between the avant-gardes in Central Europe and the avant-garde movements in other parts of Europe and the world".



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performed together in 1998 in an experimental play, *Mu* (Void) composed and staged by the avant-garde dramatist, Okamoto Akira.

My paper offers an analysis of that particular performance and discusses the chances of such encounters between two distinct arts defined by diverging outlooks and stage techniques. Okamoto turns to that hazy space where Nothingness opens out onto the manifold phenomenal world, where the void may include an infinite fullness of existence. On this basic accord, his performance develops into a lyrical meditation on Time, decay and death, offering an open space for a drama rooted in *nō* chanting and engraved in the body of a *butō* dancer.

#### ***Nō* as a Dance Drama: About the Role of the Dance in *Nō* Theatre**

Takemoto Mikio

*Nō* is a style of theatre that proceeds through chanting and dance. In analysing the corporeality (*shintaisei*) of *nō*, it is therefore necessary to understand how these two elements come to embody the acting in *nō* theatre, and how they are unified within the structure of *nō* dramas. Taking this perspective as a presupposition, my paper reflects on the role that dance occupies in *nō* drama. Since Zeami's completion of the fundamentals of *nō* theatre in the fourteenth century, in contemporary *nō* many of Zeami's works, still enacted today, are performed without interruptions. Six hundred years have past since its origin, and the acting on stage is imagined to have greatly changed with respect to Zeami's day. However, its characteristic style as a dance drama has not changed with respect to certain fundamental aspects, and we have modern day examples guided by identical principles. Medieval *nō* and contemporary *nō* have several basic characteristics inherent to *nō* theatre in common, such as the types of *nō* acting, the types of costumes that express such acting, and the system of acting itself, which is regimented by the orchestra. In addition, the system of acting within *nō*, which has *monomane* (mimesis, i.e., realistic acting based on the text of the plays) as its substructure and chanting and dance as its superstructure, is still a determining factor in the style of this theatre today. This paper will discuss the above-mentioned theatrical features which sustain the *nō* corporeality, while also reflecting on such features with respect to concrete examples of *nō* acting.

#### **Some Notes on the Reception of Valentine de Saint-Point in Taishō Japan**

Pierantonio Zanotti

My paper is focused on the image of Valentine de Saint-Point—a French intellectual who was significantly involved in Futurism in the years 1912-1914—as it emerges from a series of contemporary Japanese materials taken from the specialised and generalist press of the Taishō period.

Saint-Point was mainly perceived along three different directions, corresponding to three current topics debated in the press of those days. She was thus characterised as a theorist of the role of women in modern society, as a member of the futurist avant-garde, and as an experimenter in dance and body expression.

However, even though she enjoyed a relative visibility in the Japanese media, the chronicles of their artistic exploits and the excerpts of her literary works that had been episodically translated into Japanese, seemingly provoked no explicit reactions, be them positive or negative, by the local intellectuals. I consequently reflect on the meaning of this "operative silence", which appears paradoxical if opposed to the wealth of information on the European avant-gardes available to Japanese intellectuals, and suggest interpreting it on the basis of the local strategies of appropriation of foreign symbolic capital.