In the Eye of the Beholder: Crisis and Fukuzawa Yukichi
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Contents

Image on title page: Uemura Shōen, *Mother and Child,* 1934

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Introduction

Already in 1988, the relation between "crisis"[1] and critique was explored by the German historian Reinhart Koselleck, and it is this connection that forms the basis of more recent scholarship that engages with the concept of "crisis" and its many contemporary guises. In addition, over the course of the last 15 years the concept of "crisis" has been unavoidable in most public discourses; its uses range from the 2008 financial crisis to the 2020 corona crisis, but also cover the refugee crisis and the environmental crisis. "Crises," in other words, are all around us and fulfill an import role in how we understand and shape the world around us. Although there are many times and places associated with the term "crisis," the research that deals with the critical analysis of "crisis" focusses on Europe, on refugees' crises, or on modern crises related to mass mobilization and migration. Given the newness of the field and the particularly pressing nature of the problems crisis studies today is addressing, this is an observation and not a critique. It is an observation, however, that begs some further questions: is the study of "crisis" applicable to other times and places? And, more specifically, can the insights of crisis studies be applied to cultural and linguistic contexts in which crisis and critique are not cognates? This thesis seeks to address these questions by exploring the theoretical framework of "crisis" in the study of Meiji (1868–1912) Japan in the first half of this thesis, and by applying these insights to an analysis of the newspaper articles of one of this period's most prolific writers, Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835–1901), in the second.

In the first half of this thesis, I will introduce the theoretical framework and introduce the concept of "crisis." Then, I will elaborate on the context of Meiji Japan, and in chapter 3 I will analyze how "crisis" was (not) used in the Meiji period and compare this to how it is used in translations of texts from this period. The second half of this thesis will focus on newspaper articles Fukuzawa Yukichi wrote on the plight of Japanese women. First, I will analyze how "crisis" is constructed in his theoretical *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (An outline of a theory of civilization, 1875), then, in chapter 5, I will analyze how Fukuzawa's articles on

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[1] Throughout this thesis, when crisis is placed between quotation marks it indicates that the definition of crisis, as outlined in Chapter 1, is referred to. Without quotation marks it refers to its uncritical use.

women have been understood in English and Japanese scholarship and uncover the assumption that forms the basis of the evaluation that Fukuzawa was driven by a deep concern for the plight of Japanese women and of his portrayal as an advocate of women's rights. In this last chapter, I will analyze a group of articles that have until now been taken as "evidence" for this portrayal, and connect these articles to the "crisis" proclaimed in Fukuzawa's more theoretical work. This thesis then will deconstruct Fukuzawa's argument and the historical narrative that forms the basis both of the "crisis" he portrays and of its subsequent portrayal in later scholarly evaluations. On the one hand, I aim to answer the question: how should we understand Fukuzawa's newspaper articles if not primarily as a concern for the plight of Japanese women? In answering this question, I also seek to explore the pitfalls and benefits of applying the theoretical framework of "crisis" to a context to which it is foreign. Moreover, by showing that the use of "crisis" in translation and in modern scholarship on the Meiji period is often not reflected in sources from the Meiji period, I will consider how "crisis" is also deeply implicated in questions of representation: who gets to claim crisis, about what, and for whose benefit?

Thus, this thesis is written on the intersection of two fields. On the one hand, it aims to broaden the discussion of "crisis" to include translation from one language to another as well as from one cultural and temporal context to another. On the other hand, this thesis introduces to Japan studies the framework to critically engage with a period that is usually considered as one of crisis. In doing so this thesis aims to bridge the divide between area studies and the disciplines, and to show how mutual engagement, rather than artificial separation, has the potential to yield new perspectives on old materials, and that these in turn might provide insights that are valuable beyond the context that produced them.

1. Theoretical Framework

The historian Reinhart Koselleck traces the concept of "crisis" from its first use in Ancient Greek to its present-day usage in European context. In doing so he shows that "a 'subjective critique' and an 'objective crisis'" were originally "covered by the same term" (Koselleck 2006, 359). In the case of illness this meant, according to Koselleck, that "crisis refers both to the observable condition and to the judgment (judicium) about the course of the illness" (359). He further explains that through the course of its history, "the concept of crisis has become the fundamental mode of interpreting historical time" (361). Calling a crisis was a way to diagnose the present and prescribe a new course of action that would direct the course of history to its desired future. In addition, "crisis," according to Koselleck, came to be understood as an "epochal threshold which at the same time anticipated a final reckoning of universal significance" and as "fundamental and inescapable moral challenge that will decide finally whether virtue, or vice, natural democracy or corrupt despotism would prevail" (374). In this meaning of epochal change, moreover, "crisis" came to be tied to revolution, and as such became a "signature structure of modernity" (372) in which "crisis" became an integral part of progress (398). Thus, "crisis" became a way to locate the present in time, and a way of relating it to present and past. This means that "crisis" is also a rhetorical structure that dictates that something in the past has gone wrong which has as a consequence that the present will not lead to a/the desired future. So, in this usage, too, "crisis" is a pretext for critique and as such is closely tied to authority. For, whoever calls a crisis also has the power to prescribe a new, better, course of action. This should be seen as an indication that something is at stake when a crisis is called.

The anthropologist Janet Roitman was the first to call the epistemological status of crisis into question. In *Anti-Crisis* (2014), she points to a blind spot in Koselleck's theory by pointing out that crisis (through critique) is a way of producing knowledge in which

crisis is posited as an a priori; the grounds for knowledge of crisis are neither questioned nor made explicit. And hence contemporary narratives of crisis elude two questions: How can one know crisis in history? And how can one know crisis itself? (10)

For this reason, Roitman suggests that we should think of "crisis," not as an "object of first-order knowledge" (12), but as "a second-order observation" (12): a judgement, or distinction, that in this specific case allows one to think "otherwise" (9). This means that "crisis" is not an observable state, but a mechanism to produce a certain kind of knowledge. Because the mechanism of crisis itself is not questioned in this production, she terms crisis a "blind spot," or "a point of view, or an observation, which itself is not viewed or observed" (13). This means specifically, that "crisis signifies a purportedly observable chasm between the 'real,' on the one hand, and what is variously portrayed … as fictitious, erroneous, or an illogical departure from the real, on the other" (11). Therefore, Roitman states that crisis-claims "all proceed from the question what went wrong" (11), and "engender certain forms of critique, which politicize interest groups" (12). The judgment of crisis, in other words, is not neutral, but is intimately connected to stakeholders and to their notion of how things should be. Compared to Koselleck's definition, Roitman's has the benefit that it moves the focus from the various parties struggling for authority to the calling of a crisis itself.

In *The Crisis Paradigm* (2019), however, the sociologist Andrew Gilbert takes issue with Roitman's definition of "crisis" as second-order observation. Although he agrees with Roitman that "crisis is presupposed as an object, ready to be understood" (3), he states that "crisis" is a conceptual paradigm and that as such "for crisis observers a 'crisis' is an objective state of affairs, and therefore a first-order observation *for them*" (20, emphasis added). Gilbert takes only the observation and analysis of this paradigm as second-order observation. Although both Roitman and Gilbert treat "crisis" as a knowledge-producing structure, Gilbert's concept of "crisis" fails to do justice to the implications of the calling of a crisis. While it is indeed true that for the observer crisis might be an objectively observable state, it should be noted that I do not understand Roitman to claim otherwise. Roitman's notion of "crisis" as a second-order observation brings back to view that all crisis-claims spring from an

idea of normativity (and the departure thereof), and, as such, are moral or ethical judgements, rather than "a priori object or state" ready to be understood. Furthermore, in denying this, Gilbert is reinstating wat Roitman aptly described as a "blind spot." Because this thesis seeks to reinstate the idea of "crisis" as judgment in the evaluation of Fukuzawa Yukichi's articles on the plight of Japanese women and argue that for too long the crisis he described has been taken as objective fact, this thesis will continue to refer to "crisis" as a second-order observation.

Even more recently, the topic op "crisis" has been taken up in *Languages of Resistance, Transformation, and Futurity in Mediterranean Crisis-Scapes* (ed. Maria Boletsi, Janna Houwen, and Liesbeth Minnaard, 2020). Here the editors state that "in line with Roitman's critique, this volume studies contemporary crisis-scapes by approaching crisis as a performative, meaning-making concept rather than an empirically observable phenomenon" (4). Following this line of thought, in this thesis I will move the focus from the relationship between "crisis" and the one calling a crisis, to that of performer and audience. For, based on the definition of crisis as performance it becomes possible to ask: why is crisis performed in this manner and for whom, i.e., who is its audience? Furthermore, it points to the fact that a crisis never occurs in a vacuum, but that it is performed in a certain context giving voice to certain stakes. In addition, this thesis aims to connect "crisis" to questions of power and representation in (cultural) translation: what is at stake, who/what is represented as (in) crisis, and for what audience? Answering these questions about the crisis portrayed in Fukuzawa's essays is a way in which on the one hand the question of audience is put back in the frame, and which on the other allows me to ask what was at stake in his *representation* of crisis. Both these questions exceed previous scholarship on Fukuzawa's essays that merely observed that there was a crisis. Before analyzing his essays in more detail, however, I will analyze more thoroughly the context in which these texts were written in the next chapter, and in the relation between the Meiji period and "crisis" in the chapter following that.

2. From Tokugawa to Meiji: Facts and Fables

On the 8th of July in 1853 Commodore Matthew Perry (1794–1858) sailed with his black ships to Edo Bay (modern Tokyo) and issued an ultimatum to the Japanese shogun—the leader of the military order—to open Japan to the West, or else... The shock of the difference in power, and the unprecedentedness of the situation plunged Japan in a crisis of international relations and a crisis of domestic politics. Between 1853 and the fall of the old military order in 1868 fierce debates and fighting ensued between the conservatives who wanted to restore imperial rule and expel the Western barbarians, and the Tokugawa loyalists who wanted to maintain, where possible, the status quo, while at the same time giving in to the demands of the foreigners to prevent an all-out war. In 1868 the loyalists won, and the last shogun handed in his resignation to the emperor. However, the government that was formed in the emperor's name realized that they were no match for the powerful civilized West and decided to see whether they could learn from them instead. Thus began a period of rapid modernization and westernization in which Japan came to realize its own backwardness. Through the rejection of its past Japan, in contrast to its neighbors China and Korea, was able to modernize and catch up with the West with miraculous speed.

For many years this has been the conventional account of the transition from the feudal Tokugawa order to the modern Meiji nation state. However, since the 1980s modern scholarship has been refuting the assumptions that form the foundation of the narrative in which modernity was equated with Westernization and achieved through a radical break with the past.[2] Unfortunately, a full discussion of the myths concerning the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji and the subsequent development of Meiji Japan is beyond the scope of this thesis.[3] Instead, this chapter will focus on areas that are vital for an understanding of how "crisis" was constructed *in* the Meiji period and for the construction of the Meiji period *as* "crisis," and for the contextualization of Fukuzawa's newspaper articles and of the worldview on which they are based.

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[2] See for example, Gluck 1985, Morris-Suzuki 1998, and Jansen 1986.
[3] For a more detailed account see Jansen 2000.

In the first part of this chapter, I will address some aspects of the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji. Although most of what will be discussed in this section happened years before Fukuzawa wrote his articles, the politics of the early and middle Meiji period inspired huge movements in (popular) culture that are vital to understanding the context Fukuzawa was writing in and might help to account for some of Fukuzawa's topics. In the last part, I will discuss the various uses of the past in the Meiji period. As this section will make clear, the historical narrative Fukuzawa constructed in his articles did not stand on its own, but rather, was part of a larger concern of how to deal with the direct past and how to relate it to the present. This chapter will also serve as introduction to the analysis of "crisis" in the Meiji period in the next chapter. Therefore, special attention will be paid both to narratives and notions of rupture, and to Orientalism and its influence both in the Meiji period and to its subsequent evaluation. Orientalism, according to Edward Said, is

> a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience. The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other. In addition, the Orient has helped to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience (Said 2003, 1-2).

In other words, by being the West's negative foil, the Orient plays a constitutive part in the formation of Western identity. It is of particular relevance in the case of Japan that, while it was not colonized, it did actively try to become modern and civilized. Both of which were closely associated with Western identity, and only with the Orient in a negative sense. Wherever possible this thesis will address what the implications were of a non-Western country trying to make its way in a world that was decidedly Orientalist, with the aim of connecting the impact of Orientalism with Fukuzawa's articles on women in the case study.

2.1 Rupture and Continuity

In Japanese history, the transition from Tokugawa to Meiji is usually presented as a rupture. In line with this, the Meiji Restoration (i.e., the transfer of power from the shogun to the

emperor) is commonly perceived as a dividing line between the feudal past and the modern present. For example, Carol Gluck, one of the leading historians specializing in the Meiji period, described the Restoration as "epochal dividing mark between past and present" (23). However, as attractive as this narrative may sound, it is more the product of a western attitude towards modernity than it is rooted in reality. For, according to Karube Tadashi—a specialist in Japanese political thought—many of the "social currents" that enabled the swift transition from the Tokugawa to the Meiji regime "already manifest[ed] themselves during the Tokugawa period, which was why the government leading the 'New Japan' initially undertook reforms that furthered this social revolution" (51). These social currents refer to various aspects of Tokugawa society, but mostly center around the place and status of the merchant class. Tokugawa society consisted of distinct status groups into which one was born, and in which one, theoretically at least, died. In descending order, these were: the samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants (Jansen 2002, 97). However, although the merchant class was the lowest, by the end of the Tokugawa period they also controlled most of Japan's economic capital. Therefore, the Japanese historian Mark Ravina notes that "formal notions of the social order were increasingly at odds with daily experience" and the "samurai, the highest estate, became increasingly dependent on merchants, the lowest estate, for credit and market services" (48). Further problematizing the status of the samurai was, according to Ravina, the long peace achieved under Tokugawa rule which had as a consequence that "there were no battles in which the samurai could distinguish themselves from mere commoners" (46). This all contributed to the relative ease with which reform was accepted.

> In addition, on the topic of the Tokugawa economy, Karube states that
>
> the seventeenth century saw the formation of a nationwide commodity distribution network centered on Osaka, and as this grew, it encouraged the development and production of a greater variety of commodities. Japan was thus transformed into an economic society: one in which the economic value of trying to secure the greatest gain for the least expenditure would shape the behavior of many people. This mentality would eventually pave the way for the

relatively smooth acceptance of the introduction of modern industrial technology from the West (85-6).

Thus, contrary to the popular belief that Tokugawa Japan was "economically stagnant," its economy was booming (Karube 2019, 85). This idea of the Tokugawa period as stagnancy is decidedly modern and is closely related to the idea that of Tokugawa Japan as "closed," and will be further explored in the next section. The point here is that far from borrowed from the West, materialism and consumerism were already developing in Japan. These social tendencies might have been accelerated by industrialization, but they certainly were not the result of more contact with the West.

Relatedly, Igor Fedyukin argues in his article "'Westernizations' from Peter I to Meiji: War, Political Competition, and Institutional Change," that "westernization," and modernity by extension, is almost always viewed as the outcome of a conflict with the West and presented "as a necessary, adaptive response to encounters with the military and technologically superior Western powers" (208). According to Fedyukin, however, this narrative cannot do justice to the various outcomes of such a conflict (207). Instead Fedyukin proposes to look at the political situation of the countries in which "Westernization" was proposed. Here he uncovers that in all cases there was a "regime breakdown … making the destruction of traditional institutions possible and desirable" (226). He also states that in the case of Tokugawa Japan, "it was the competition between rival lords that drove them to experiment with modernity" and that "to some extent, this was already the case in the early decades of the nineteenth century, well before Perry's arrival" (222).

So, in Fedyukin's narrative, too, the boundary between the feudal past and modern industrial society is not as clear cut as is often assumed. This move away from narratives of rupture was hugely influenced by the postcolonial recognition that narratives of rupture are built on the assumption that modernity is Western and as such can only be achieved through a radical break with the native barbaric past. The case of Japan is of interest here because Japan was the first non-Western, uncolonized nation to become "modern." Although the

question of how this was achieved is too extensive for this thesis, I do aim to contribute new insights into this question in my case study.

2.2 The Closed Country

Assumptions of rupture have also shaped the narrative of Japan as a closed country prior to its opening by the West. For, while it is true that to avoid international conflict, the Tokugawa restricted "Japanese contacts with the outside world" (Ravina 2017, p. 26), this by no means meant "the end of Japanese exports" and, through contact with Dutch, Chinese, and Korean traders, products and knowledge from outside continued to seep in (Ravina 2017, 28). So why, if the image of Japan as cut-off and cloistered is so far from the truth has it persisted for so long? This has everything to do with the number of sources that support this narrative, and with the worldview from which it sprang. In this section I will discuss four examples to illustrate the variety of sources and agenda's that utilize this narrative.

First, there is *The History of Japan Together with a Description of the Kingdom of Siam 1690–1692* by Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716) which was first published in English in 1727. In his history of Japan Kaempfer depicted Japan as "being cloistered from the corruption of change and [as] retaining an unsullied, child-like innocence," which to the English readers of the 1852–3 reprint "paralleled the protective Victorian patriarchal response, and placed Japan in the same category as women and children" (Sterry 2009, 46). Needless to say, the portrayal of Japan as both feminine and childlike was in line with an Orientalist worldview.

Complicating this Orientalist narrative, however, is the fact that Japan itself on multiple occasions claimed that Tokugawa Japan was closed off from the rest of the world. According to Ravina,

> when Tokugawa officials rebuffed Western requests for trade, they explained that Japan had
> an ancient policy of national isolation, a 'closed country' (*sakoku*) policy. Itō Hirobumi
> referred to such an 'an ancient' policy when speaking in Washington, DC, in 1871. But there

was nothing ancient about Tokugawa isolationism. On the contrary, the policy emerged only in the 1790s and because Westerners could not understand Tokugawa diplomacy (56).

In other words, the *sakoku* policy was only invented because Western countries did not accept the Japanese practice of "commerce divorced from state authority" (Ravina 2017, p. 57) and wanted to force direct trade relations between the shogunate and their respective governments. The creation of an "ancient custom" should thus be seen as a last resort to avoid conflict.

Why then was this same custom referred to by Itō Hirobumi (1841–1909), a Japanese politician who as a member of the 1871–3 Iwakura Mission went on a tour of Europe and the United States? One of the primary aims of the mission was to establish Meiji Japan as a modern civilized nation, distinct from feudal Tokugawa order. By establishing their equality and proving their level of civilization the members of the Iwakura Mission hoped to negotiate new treaties. For, while the Japan was not colonized by the West, the treaties from the 1850s "symbolically marked Japan as subjugated nation" (Ravina 2017, 136). This meant that Japan could not "set its own import and export tariffs," and that foreigners who committed a crime in Japan were tried in their own countries (Ravina 2017, 136-7). So, in this case, Itō's portrayal of Tokugawa Japan as closed was meant to contrast it with the present, in which Japan was ready to take its place among the civilized nations of the world. In other words, the rupture between Tokugawa and Meiji Japan suited the purposes of Japanese politicians.

According to Karube, Fukuzawa Yukichi employed the phrase *bunmei kaika* (civilization and enlightenment) in a similar manner. This is interesting in relation to the above because according to Jason Karlin, a specialist in gender and media studies,

> the very concept of civilization (*kaika*) was metaphorically structured in terms of 'openness' … This metaphor of 'openness' cohered within a system of metaphorical concepts and corresponding metaphorical expressions, which included the characterization of the Tokugawa period as *sakoku* [closed country]. The corresponding metaphor of 'closure' … was thus part of

this conceptual system, which oriented meaning towards the understanding of 'closure' as a

negative experience (138-9)

So, one of the slogans most closely associated with the new order, was premised on the Tokugawa period being closed, and by extension backward and stagnant. Thus, these examples make clear that rather than the product of later scholars projecting their assumptions about modernity on texts and other material from Japan, Japanese thinkers and politicians actively shaped this view of Japan to effect a sense of rupture and epochal change between the Tokugawa and Meiji regimes. As was noted above, the dominant Western worldview was Orientalist, so, no other narrative would have allowed Japan to rank itself among the civilized nations of the world. Only by distancing themselves from a past that had only recently, with the conclusion of the treaties between Japan and the West, been judged barbaric, could the Japanese officials present themselves as civilized. So, because of the unbridgeable gap in power between Japan and the West, the West forced upon Japan a worldview in which they were inferior, and to be able to climb in the order that was built on this worldview, Japan was implicitly forced to distance itself from its own recent past. Therefore, we should always take the gap in power between Japan and the West into account when dealing with these kinds of writing.

2.3 Modernity

The fact that Japanese intellectuals actively helped shape an image of Japan that conformed to an Orientalist worldview, however, does not mean that they consciously subscribed to the idea of civilization as distinctly Western. For, as both Karube and Ravina point out, the idea that there was an ideal society worthy of emulation was not new; Tokugawa intellectuals judged that "Western nations had achieved something much closer to an ideal society" based on "values they already embraced" (Karube 2019, 21). In addition, as "diffusion of knowledge of the West was widening" so was the idea "that it was the Western nations that were actually achieving the Confucian ideal of 'benevolent government' (*jinsei*)" because "providing assistance to orphans, disabled, the elderly, and others in need was seen as a hallmark of benevolent rule" (Karube 2019, 201). This means, according to Karube, that civilization was

not equated with Westernization (215). Mark Ravina also stresses that civilization was not understood as Westernization, but rather was put in service of a nationalist agenda

> because terms such as 'civilization' were culturally and temporally non-specific, [and] late Tokugawa and Meiji-era reformers could combine their admiration for the ancient Japanese past with an eagerness for radical change and foreign models. The revival of ancient Japanese custom was part of a rush toward a cosmopolitan future (9).

Similarly, David Mervart in "Meiji Japan's Solution to Tokugawa Japan's China Problem" describes the Meiji Restoration as the "Chinese revolution" (545). With this he means that Western learning was a way of once and for all dissociating the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) from the notion of *chūgoku* (middle kingdom). *Chūgoku* refers to the center of human civilization, which was not connected to any notion of territory or clan/race, but to the closeness to the ideal civilization. Combined with China's defeat in the opium war, Japan's own experiences with Western military might, and their growing knowledge of the West, the West came to embody *chūgoku*, and China, the original *chūgoku* came to be referred to as *Shina* (Mervart 2015, 555). However, because *chūgoku* was a normative ideal and not an actual territory, there was no reason why Japan could not develop itself to reclaim this title, and it was with this aim in mind that Western technology and institutions were adapted and implemented (545). These reforms and innovations, according to Ravina, were always presented as a return to norms and institutions associated with periods before Japan began to borrow extensively from China, and to things believed to be distinctly Japanese. Hence, westernization and modernity were presented as a return to tradition and Japaneseness (10-1). Japanese modernity, in other words, was presented as Western and traditional at the same time.

While Ravina's argument deals insightfully with the prejudice that Japanese modernity was the product of mindless borrowing from the West, it fails to raise an important question. For, while Western civilization may have been treated as universal by Japanese reformers and politicians, it most definitely was not. As explained above,

Orientalism entails that the West could only define itself as modern because it posited itself vis-à-vis an Oriental Other that was set up as its negative foil. So, the question that should be asked is: what was the impact on Japanese modernity of treating western civilization as universal? While dealing with this question in full is beyond the scope of this thesis, I will try to answer this question in relation to Fukuzawa's newspaper articles on women.

2.4 Modernity and the 1973 Political Upheaval

A few years after the Meiji Restoration

> the Meiji leadership made a remarkable decision: it would split in half. Key officials would leave Japan and travel to the United States and Europe, explaining the Restoration to foreign leaders, learning about the West, and laying groundwork for treaty revision. Meanwhile, a 'caretaker government' (*rusu seifu*) would remain in Japan and carry on the domestic revolution (Ravina 2017, 137).

So, from 1871 until 1873 the Japanese government consisted of two parties, each with their own formative experiences. Because of their experiences in the West, the members of the Iwakura mission—named after its leader, the court noble Iwakura Tomomi (1825–1883)—concluded that to reach a position of equality with the West would take years of painstaking reform (Ravina 2017, 164-5). However, according to Ravina, the caretaker government was "blissfully unaware of Western Europe's technological and material superiority, [and] anticipated Japan's swift rise to world power status" (147). These different perceptions of the status of Japan in global politics also led to different approaches to foreign relations. While, according to Ravina, the caretaker government believed that invasions of both Korea and Taiwan "would unleash the greatness of the Japanese people," the members of the Iwakura Mission saw a potential diplomatic disaster (147). Not only did the different experiences of the respective governments lead to different stances on foreign policy, but it also led to competing visions of the past.

As stated earlier in this chapter, Itō, as member of the Iwakura Mission, tried to create as much distance as possible between the Meiji government and their samurai predecessors.

This was a deliberate strategy to present the delegation as different from the regime that was found uncivilized. The caretaker government, on the other hand, "sought to create a Japanese nation state that embodied the best of samurai tradition" (Ravina 2017, 147). So, while the Iwakura Mission renounced their samurai past, the caretaker government valorized it. When they came to blows upon the Iwakura Mission premature return in 1873 to prevent the invasion of Korea, this led to a large-scale conflict about Japanese identity, its relation to the past, and its conceptions of masculinity and modernity.

This shows that in Fukuzawa's time the past was by no means a done deal. Moreover, this chapter has indicated that many versions of these pasts were colored by an Orientalist worldview. In the next chapter, I will further explore this notion of rupture by connecting it to "crisis," by analyzing "crisis" from the perspective of present-day scholarship, and by comparing this to its uses in the Meiji period.

3. "Crisis" and the Meiji Period

It is easy to imagine that "crisis" in a period of such change and unrest as the Meiji period was an often-used word. This association, moreover, is strengthened by modern characterizations of the period both in scholarly research and in translation of texts produced in the period. On closer inspection, however, it turns out that the term that in modern Japanese is used for crisis, *kiki*,[4] is absent from early Meiji sources. Moreover, because the connection between "crisis" and critique can be retraced to the specific Ancient Greek etymology of the word, this equivalence should not be assumed in another context. Therefore, the first order of business in this chapter is to analyze how "crisis" was (not) used in the Meiji period by looking at its Japanese dictionary entries, and by looking at "crisis" in the digital archive of the period's bestselling newspaper. By subsequently comparing this to how "crisis" is used in texts about the Meiji period and in translations from this period, this chapter will lastly connect "crisis" to the question of representation.

3.1 Crisis in the Japanese Dictionary

In order to get an impression of how "crisis" is used in Japanese now and has been used in the past I consulted several dictionaries:[5]

1. From the *Digital Dai-ji-sen Japanese Dictionary*: "Dangerous times and circumstances from which bad results are expected. Uncertain situation"[6] ("Kiki").[7]

2. From the *Shogakukan Unabridged Dictionary of the Japanese Language*: "Dangerous and uncertain times that might have bad consequences. Dangerous times" ("Kiki").[8] In addition, this entry is accompanied by an example of its use in the 14th

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[4] jp. 危機

[5] All these dictionaries were accessed through *JapanKnowledge*. I choose to use this database because its entries are up-to-date, and because it was easy to access online.

[6] Translations in this chapter are my own, unless indicated otherwise. All other translations in the next chapters, however, have been taken from other sources. I did, as this chapter indicates as well, check the translations against the original Japanese. On the one hand, this is an aesthetic choice: the existing translations are good, and I could not have produced better ones. On the other, it is an issue of time: it was impossible for me to read all texts and produce translations in the time that was allotted for this thesis.

[7] jp. 悪い結果が予測される危険な時・状況。あやうい状態 warui kekka ga yosokusareru kiken na toki/jōkyō. Ayaui jōtai.

century chronicle *Taiheiki (*Chronicle of great peace). Here it is used to refer to the times of uncertainty following a change of mandate.

3. The entry in the *Encyclopedia Nipponica* states the Ancient Greek etymology of the word, as also described be Koselleck above, and clearly linking it to *krinein* in its meaning of separation, and to its original use in illness ("Kiki").

Of course, this is only an initial inquiry into "crisis" in Japanese. However, from even this small amount of data it is possible to extrapolate several things. Namely, that although *kiki* is a Japanese word dating to at least the 14th century, its modern meaning has become intertwined with the Ancient Greek. In other words, the modern Japanese word for "crisis" can best be understood as <u>a kind of</u> loan word that was attached to an existing word that referred to uncertain times, but lacked the specific connection to critique and to certain rhetorical structures. Based on this observation the next logical step is to see if it is possible to estimate when this loan began to take place.

3.2 *Kiki* in the *Asahi Shinbun*

In this section I will explore how *kiki* was used in the digital archive of the newspaper the *Asahi Shinbun*.[9] I will focus on two examples.[10]

The digital archive goes back to 1879, and it contains 93 entries for *kiki* between this year and 1899, the year the latest articles Fukuzawa wrote were published. However, on closer inspection it becomes apparent that for the 15 entrees between 1879 and 1887 the term *kiki* is in the keyword section added at an unspecified later time, but not in the actual article. For example, what is described as the "crisis of the soaring rice prices"[11] in the subject line, is

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[8] jp. 悪い結果をもたらすかもしれない、危険で不安な時。あぶない状態 warui kekka o motarasukamoshirenai, kiken de fuan na toki. Abunai jōtai.

[9] According to the historian James Huffman, the Asahi had 32,000 daily readers in 1885 making it the largest newspaper by a landslide (142). This data can indicate how *kiki* was commonly used and understood. In addition, because of the limit access to Japanese digital source outside of Japan, it was the only newspaper archive available to me.

[10] Another reason for this choice is that the digital material is extremely difficult to read. The photocopies are sometimes extremely faded an/or blotted.

[11] jp.米価沸騰の危機 beika futtō no kiki.

described as "great suffering"[12] in the article itself (Asahi Shinbun 5 October 1879). Although the term "crisis" itself is not used, a similar sense of urgency is conveyed by referring to the possibility of "a revolt by the poor."[13] The author of the article, however, stresses that people revolt to find a way out of their poverty and praises the local authorities for helping the suffering poor through these hard times (ibid.). So, although this example does not literally use the concept of "crisis," it is interesting that in this case a similar sense of urgency is created to generate a ground for critique and value judgement. What this means for this thesis is that it will not do to fixate only on the use or disuse of the term "crisis," but that the existence of structures that serve the same rhetorical purpose should also be taken into account.

As figure 1 in appendix 1 shows, from 1888 onward, *kiki* as "crisis" slowly came into use in Japanese. And as figure 2 shows, it had a variety of uses, ranging from Japanese domestic and foreign politics to the description of situation's elsewhere in the world (appendix 1). What figure 2 also makes clear is that the majority of the crises covered in the *Asahi* were understood as crises related to the West. The second largest group concerns the relation between Japan and its neighbors China, Korea, and Russia. Most instances focus on the question of national security in relation to the perceived weakness of Korea and the consequences for Japan if either China, Russia, or a Western country were to conquer it. For example, in the article "Kokubō shiron" (On national defense) in the *Asahi* of 3 October 1890 it is stated that "Korea is the center of this crisis."[14] So here the question of whether to invade Korea—that was first posed in the 1870s—is perfomed as a "crisis of national security," a theme that would continue until the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–5, where Japan defeated China, and took control of Korea. In other words, urgency, threat, and a situation that is divergent from the ideal safe state, are united as a "crisis."

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[12] jp. 困窮 konkyū.

[13] jp. 窮民蜂起 kyūmin hōki .

[14] jp. 朝鮮は此危機的要た chōsen wa kono kikiteki kanametaru.

In the *Asahi* of 17 September 1892, Tendai Michishi, the pen name of the educator Sugiura Jūgō (1855–1924), opened his article "Koku un no kiki" (Crisis of the destiny of our country) with the statement that he will discuss an "annoying problem."[15] Especially for the purposes of this thesis the author's problem is an interesting one: he argues against the various "crises" called by the government, and states that this "needlessly frightens"[16] the population (Koku un no kiki). Furthermore, he argues that relying on crisis to change the spirit of the age or government policy is pointless (Koku un no kiki). This means that, the author noticed a relation between the calling of crisis, and the prescription of certain measure, and seemed to have been resistant to "crisis" as way to produce knowledge. Thus, at least in these two cases, *kiki* is used in line with the concept of "crisis." Based on these examples I tentatively conclude that by the 1890s the Japanese *kiki* had the connotations of judgment and critique that are associated with the term "crisis." It goes without saying, however, that more research is needed to substantiate this claim.

3.3 Meiji in Crisis, Meiji as Crisis

"Crisis" is an often-used concept in studies related to the Meiji period. As stated in the first chapter, "crisis" as performance is not neutral, and its use as narrative structure implies audiences and stakeholders. Koselleck, moreover, explicitly connects "crisis" to rupture and to modernity. This is especially interesting in relation to Meiji Japan because of the Orientalist idea of civilization it was adopting as universal, which meant that to be able to rank itself among the civilized nations of the world, Japan had to break with its past. Rupture, in other words, can be associated both with "crisis" and Orientalism. In this section I will explore this connection by analyzing two examples.

The first is in the reimagining of the political turmoil caused by the arrival of Perry's black ships as a "crisis." Ravina, for example, refers to this event alternately as "the crisis of imperialism" (56) and a "diplomatic crisis" (69). And the historian Anne Walthall refers to this same period as the "1850s foreign crisis" in her article "The Meiji Restoration Seen from

[15] jp. 忌々しき問題 imaimashiki mondai.
[16] jp. 杞憂 kiyū.

English-speaking Countries" (364). Specifically, Ravina refers to the fact that Western imperialism destroyed the way Japan, Korea, and China had been conducting foreign diplomacy by demanding direct communication and clearly demarcated borders (56). So, while Ravina refutes the rupture of Tokugawa as closed, and Meiji as open, his use of the term "crisis" implies precisely this kind of demarcation: Tokugawa as the era of Asian diplomacy, and Meiji as the start of Western style foreign relations. This means that although he does not label these as premodern and modern, the same divide is maintained through the use of "crisis."

The second is the case of the *Meiji rokunen seihen* (the political disturbance/upheaval of 1873). The upheaval refers to the governmental conflict over the decision to go to war with Korea, discussed in the previous chapter. Although nothing in the Japanese term for this event implies "crisis," this event has been referred to alternatively as "the 1973 Korean crisis" (Mayo 1972, 793) and the "1973 Political Crisis" (Ravina 2017, 139; capitalization in original). Because the term "crisis" is not used to describe the event in Japanese, the use of the term "crisis" in English secondary literature clearly indicates the performative nature of the restyling of this upheaval as a "crisis." In both Ravina's and Marlene Mayo's narratives, moreover, this historical event marks the end of an epoch. In both their narratives, the faction losing this conflict is associated with "samurai populism" of the caretaker government (Ravina 2017, 147), and as such represents a route not taken in Japanese history. So here, too, "crisis" signifies a rupture between on the one hand the faction of the government that represented Tokugawa-period-inspired samurai values, and on the other the winning faction which had just come home from an extensive trip abroad and as such represented the adherents of Western style modernity. To use the term "crisis" for the 1873 political upheaval, in other words, imposes on the event a notion of rupture between Tokugawa and Meiji and between the premodern and the modern.

The instances of linking Meiji and "crisis" in secondary literature discussed here are by no means exhaustive. Some other examples include the Meiji period as "social crisis" as

discussed by Gluck (Gluck 1985, 32), and the Meiji period as "long term crisis" by the historian Hiroshi Mitani (42). With this term Gluck refers to the initial development of Japan's modern industrial capitalism which changed not only people's economic relations, but had an immense influence on the very structure of society (31). This again suggests rupture between old and new. Mitani, interestingly, describes the entire Meiji period as crisis and therefore only specifies the direct cause as the "West" (41). The aim of Mitani's article is to analyze "how to cope with long-term crisis" for which the Meiji period serves as a case study (51). Thus, interpretation of the past is openly oriented towards its use for the present, and, as such, is clearly performative. Especially so since crisis in the Meiji period, in the examples treated above (see figure 2 in appendix 1), always referred to specific cases and by no means to something as vague as a long-term or permanent "crisis."

Moreover, both the use of the term "crisis" and its absence generate specific narratives. For example, Carol Gluck refers to what was on several occasions called an "economic crisis" in the *Asahi* (see appendix 1) as Japan's "first 'modern' recession" (30). Especially in a narrative that stresses "social crisis," why is this characterized as a recession and not a crisis? I can only speculate that this has to do with the prefixes "first" and "modern." As the previous examples have shown, even though secondary literature might refute the idea of a break between Tokugawa and Meiji period, the usage of "crisis" in these texts can still be retraced to the notion of rupture and, in one way or another, implies a break between past and present. The 1890 recession is placed at the head of a long line of modern recessions, and as such implies continuity rather than rupture. So, curiously, the absence of the term "crisis" can still imply the rupture between Tokugawa and Meiji.

Not only in secondary scholarly literature is the Meiji period referred to as "crisis." On the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration, the then-prime minister Abe Shinzō (1954–), for example, referred to the Meiji period as "a time of national crisis and compare[d] it to today's twin crises of a declining birth rate and an aging society" (Phipps 2018, 444). So, similar to Itō Hirobumi 150 years before him, Abe referred to Meiji as a kind of rupture on a

public occasion. While Itō needed to differentiate himself from the "uncivilized" feudal regime, Abe utilized the Meiji period to suggest that Japan was going to rise to the challenge like it did a 150 years ago. In other words, Abe's performance of the Meiji period as crisis had little to do with the actual happenings of that period but was designed to give a message of hope to his domestic audience and one of toughness to his foreign audience.

This section has shown that the usage of "crisis" in relation to Meiji Japan serves two purposes. On the one hand, it is performed with a certain modern audience and modern problem in mind. On the other, it refers to a sense of rupture between Tokugawa and Meiji, which although this might be refuted in the main text, is still implied by the usage or absence of "crisis."

3.4 Translation

In this section I will briefly deal with five examples where a Japanese word other than *kiki* was translated as "crisis," because here, just as in modern scholarship, it makes a frequent appearance. This, on the one hand, to get an idea of the vocabulary used before *kiki* came into use, but also to illustrate what is at stake in translation. It should be noted, however, that this section serves as an opening to a new discussion and does not seek to provide clear-cut answers or conclusions to the problems of translation.

First, there is the case of David Noble translating a passage cited in Karube from the January 3rd 1868 edict restoring imperial rule (ōsei fukko no daigōrei) as: "As everyone knows, from 1853 [the year of Commodore Perry's first mission to Japan] onward, the nation has faced an unprecedented crisis" (35). On closer inspection, however, the term used in Japanese is much more ambiguous, namely *kokunan*,[17] which can indeed be translated as national crisis, but which in a broader sense can also mean national disaster, difficulties, or calamity. I have tentatively established in the above that "crisis" is a loanword that had not established itself in Japanese prior to 1888. Therefore, it would seem that the translation of *kokunan* as national crisis, likewise, is the combination of an existing concept, namely one

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[17] jp. 國難.

expressing national difficulty and disaster, with the concept of "crisis." The implications in this case are that through the act of translation a sense of rupture is imposed on the text that was not necessarily there in the original. The original, in fact, stressed continuity by referring to Japan's legendary first emperor Jinmu (660–585 BC), and presented the Meiji reforms as in line with this earliest of imperial rules (35). Thus, the translation of *kokunan* as crisis stresses the restoration of imperial rule as a rupture with the direct past, while the rest of the text seeks to establish a sense of continuity. In this case, therefore, the translation unwittingly refashions the arrival of Commodore Perry as a breaking point between the feudal shogun and the new government formed in the emperor's name. My point is not, however, to argue whether or not the translation is "wrong," but to point out that the uncritical use of "crisis" in translation might impose on a text connotations of rupture and epochal change that might have been, and most probably were, absent from the source text.

In the remainder of this section, I will analyze all instances in the translation of Fukuzawa's *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (An outline of a theory of civilization, 1875) where "crisis" is used. First, in chapter ten, the historian and philosopher David Dilworth and the historian Cameron Hurst III translate "our nation is facing a critical period" (236), which, when more literally translated, would rather be "even though Japan is in a difficult situation."[18] So here, the phrase *jijō konnan*, or "difficult" or "troublesome" "situation" or "circumstances," is translated as a "critical period." Thus, temporizing the circumstances that Fukuzawa refers to (which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter) and creating a greater sense of urgency where "critical" implies a now-or-never rhetoric.

Another example from *Bunmeiron* is translated by Dilworth and Hurst as foreign relations in our country are a critical problem" (249), which in a more literal translation would read: "the nature of diplomatic relations in Japan … is a very severe and troublesome

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[18] jp. 今我邦の事情困難なりといえども ima wagakuni no jijō konnan nari to iedomo (Fukuzawa 2019, 276).

situation."[19] So, here again a variation of *konnan*[20] is translated as "critical." In this case, however, *konnan* is accompanied by superlatives such as *shi* (exceedingly, extremely)[21] and *dai* (greatly).[22] Therefore, the translation of "critical" seems to reflect the sense of urgency that the Japanese tried to convey through its use of these superlatives.

Next Dilworth and Hurst translate "this is a time of crisis for our country. Moreover, this crisis is more troublesome than in years past" (251), which without assuming "crisis," can be translated as "there are no peaceful/safe days in our country, moreover, compared to the past, the situation has become more difficult/troublesome."[23] So here, the use of "crisis" in the first case is an interpretation of the unsafety mentioned in the original, and in the second case it is, again, a translation of *konnan*.

The last translation from Dilworth and Hurst is "we realize more and more the urgent crisis before us" (254), which also translates as "we realize more and more that the situation is becoming urgent."[24] So, the only difference between Dilworth and Hurst's translation and my own is that they term "the situation" a "crisis." Which, again, given the stress on urgency, is an understandable and legitimate choice. So, what do all these examples tell us?

First, they have indicated that the use of "crisis" is not always supported by the source text. For example, the use of "crisis" for *kokunan* (national trouble/disaster/difficulty) in the first example might have been influenced by a later use of the term. In this specific case, moreover, the use of "crisis" recasts the Imperial Restoration as a break with the past, which in turn unwittingly reaffirms an Orientalist worldview that separates the Japanese history in categories such as modern and civilized, and past and feudal. Thus, the use of the term "crisis"

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[19] jp. 我日本に於ける外交際の性質は…至困至難の大事件にして ware no nihon ni okeru gaikōsai no seishitsu wa shikon shinan no daijiken ni shite (Fukuzawa 2019, 291).

[20] jp. 困難.

[21] jp. 至.

[22] jp. 大.

[23] 我国は無事の日にあらず、然もそのことは昔年に比して更に困難なり wagakuni wa buji no hi ni arazu, shika moso no koto wa sekinen ni hishite sarani konnan nari (Fukuzawa 2019, 294).

[24] 益事の急なるを覚え masumasu koto no kyū naru to oboe (Fukuzawa 2019. 298).

in this case inadvertently leads the reader away from the continuity stressed by the rest of the text, running the risk of overshadowing it. Second, the translation of Dilworth and Hurst has shown that, in some cases, there are indications beyond the direct word-to-word translation—such as the stress on urgency and the need for change—that do imply a state we today would term a "crisis." From both these examples, however, it becomes apparent how closely crisis is connected to representation.

3.5 Crisis and Representation

What has become clear from the examples in this chapter is that although the epochal break between the Tokugawa and Meiji periods is highly contested, the use of the term "crisis" still evokes precisely the kind of narrative structure in which the old and feudal loses to the modern and civilized. Therefore, "crisis" should be seen as a key structure in Orientalist narratives of modernity, as it stresses the unsustainability of the old regime, and provides a way out in the form of what Koselleck described as a "fundamental and inescapable moral challenge that will decide finally whether virtue, or vice, natural democracy or corrupt despotism would prevail" (374).

What this chapter has also made clear is that the limited use of the term "crisis" in the Meiji period itself seems to have differed from the way it was applied in secondary sources. In addition, what are termed crises in Meiji Japan, for example the state of affairs concerning national security and the eventual Sino-Japanese War, are not described as such in modern scholarship. This in particular illustrates the connection of "crisis" to representation, and reaffirms the idea of "crisis" as a second-order observation. Thus, the questions that should be asked are: what kind of knowledge is produced through the calling of crisis, about what, and for whom? And what are the effects of performing a certain event as "crisis" in translation and modern scholarship? This also makes a case for moving the focus from the object of "crisis," to the producers and consumers of "crisis," as I will be doing in the next two chapters. What this chapter has also laid bare (but will not explore further for stated reasons)

is the need to find alternative narrative structures to relate the events of the Meiji period, or at the very least, a careful scrutinization of the use of "crisis" in modern scholarship.

4. "Crisis" in *Bunmeiron*

Fukuzawa Yukichi produced many texts for many different media. In this section, however, I will focus on the text for which he is best known: *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* (An outline for a theory of civilization, 1875). First, I will analyze the main points of this text, and then I will turn to how "crisis" is constructed in it.

4.1 *Bunmeiron no gairyaku*

According to the historian Nishikawa Sunsaku, "unlike the other works by Fukuzawa, which were mainly for public consumption, [*Bunmeiron no gairyaku*] was intended for Japanese intellectuals" (Dilworth 2012, xxiii). This is reflected in Fukuzawa's extended discourse on "the masses" and "public opinion." Where he addresses this audience in his newspaper articles, he writes *about* them in *Bunmeiron*. Thus, I take his popular texts as application of the more theoretical *Bunmeiron*. This is also reflected in Fukuzawa's statement in *Bunmeiron* that "the reason why government policies fail is that the feeble few are hindered by the mighty many" (Dilworth and Hurst 2008, 77). In addition, the core of his argument is aimed at convincing those feeble few that it was not enough to have civilization imposed by the government, but that "the level of civilization of a country is measured by the knowledge and virtue of the people as a whole" (Dilworth and Hurst 2008, 81). Therefore, Fukuzawa considered it "the most urgent national task … to rectify the ills of public opinion" (Dilworth and Hurst 2008, 77). A hint at how this might be achieved is that, according to Fukuzawa, "it is the view that prevails in newspapers and the lecture halls that is much discussed by the people at large" (Dilworth and Hurst 2008, 83). For this reason, I do not think it an accident that Fukuzawa started his own newspaper in 1882 and published most of his subsequent writing, including the articles discussed below, in this medium. Moreover, I think it is in this light that we should see the articles discussed in the next chapter, and that the questions to be asked are: what ills was Fukuzawa trying to rectify? And how was he going about this? It is here that I believe that "crisis" comes into play.

4.2 "Crisis" and *Bunmeiron*

However, before analyzing how this crisis is constructed, first a word on why I propose to impose a "crisis" framework on texts that make no specific mention of "crisis." First, it must be noted that both Fukuzawa's conceptions of history and of civilization facilitate the rhetoric of "crisis." According to Fukuzawa, civilization is an "open-ended process" (20) in which a given society progresses through the "ages of civilization," with which he means the "primitive, semi-developed, and developed" stages (17-8). Fukuzawa's evaluation is that Japan is currently in the semi-developed stage and should look to the West for improvement. This, however, does not mean that he equated the West with civilization, just that he considered the countries of the West the most advanced at that moment in time (20). In addition, Fukuzawa stated that "the development of human intelligence over the course of history is like that of a child growing into adulthood" (158), and he describes history as an "incessant process of trial and error" (59). Thus, history is set up as a route to maturity and civilization, from which proper course can be diverged. This is exactly how he related the present to the past. According to Fukuzawa, the Tokugawa regime and the Confucian worldview which underlay it are the direct cause of Japan's present problems: the stagnation of the Tokugawa economy and the lack of knowledge and independence of the masses, and, by extension of the nation, are attributed to this doctrine (199). These were wrongs that, according to Fukuzawa, needed to be righted if Japan were to become a civilized nation. So here we can clearly see several of the elements that Koselleck identified as characteristic of "crisis." First, there is the idea that society has diverged from its proper course and needs to be set straight. Second, and in relation to this, is the idea of "crisis" as epochal change and a way to progress. Both structures, furthermore, rely on the Orientalist portrayal of the Tokugawa period as stagnant and backwards. So together with Fukuzawa's definitions of history and civilization which are clearly Western, this text also introduces Japanese history from a Western and Orientalist perspective to an intellectual Japanese audience. Third, and most importantly, Fukuzawa's narrative relies strongly on the metaphor of illness and diagnosis, one of the original contexts in which "crisis" was used in Ancient Greek. So,

without recourse to a term in which "crisis" and critique are clearly linked, Fukuzawa manages to convey the same effect through the mechanism of diagnosis, prognosis, and a proposed medicine, or course of action. Thus, it is because of the convergence of these three structures in Fukuzawa's texts that I propose to interpret them as "crisis."

4.3 Illness in *Bunmeiron*

In *Bunmeiron* Fukuzawa diagnoses several problems, though only one particularly in terms of illness. In the last chapter of *Bunmeiron* he states that:

> It seems to me this 'trouble' is not something that has come down to us from our ancestors but a sickness suddenly contracted in recent times, a sickness that is already a vital of Japanese life. … I name it 'foreign relations' (237).

The problem, according to Fukuzawa, is that although equal rights have been universally accepted in Japan, in relations with foreigners "in actual practice things have been different" (240). With this Fukuzawa refers to the unequal treaties that make it "impossible to obtain justice" (241), causing the "conduct of our citizens … [to] deteriorate day by day" (242). In addition, he states that foreign relations are

> a deep-seated disease afflicting vital areas of the nation's life. The spread of the disease is the concern of everyone, as should be its confinement. … Short-sighted men foolishly rejoice, seeing that social conditions have changed in recent times, and call this civilization. They think that, since our civilization is a gift bestowed on us by foreign relations, the more foreign relations flourish the more the more our civilization can advance apace. But what they call civilization is merely its outward appearance, in which I have no interest. Even if such civilization were refined to a very high degree, if our people had not even a shred of independent spirit, civilization would be of no use to us (249).

In other words, the illness refers to the fact that in their increasing contact with foreigners the Japanese are made to feel their inferiority and for that reason they start to act accordingly, thus making them drift even further away from the ideal of equality and independence. Furthermore, Fukuzawa suggests that this disease is an impediment to the advancement of

Japanese civilization because it equates Japan's present dealings with the West with civilization, and, thus, accepts inferiority as the status quo. Given the language of urgency and the metaphor of illness repeatedly used here, I would conclude that this is Fukuzawa's most pressing concern.

In order to remedy this, Fukuzawa states that "there is only one thing: namely, to establish our goal and advance toward civilization. What is that goal? It is to be clear about the distinction between domestic and foreign, and thereby to preserve the independence of our country" (254). This because, according to Fukuzawa, "a country's independence equals civilization" (257). All the rest of the text leads up to the discussion of this illness. He explains that a "spirit of independence has never existed" in Japan (211) because the feudal regime was based on servitude and loyalty, and identifies what is at stake: that "when some countries are more advanced than others it is natural for the advanced to control the less advanced and the less advanced to be controlled by the advanced" (225). In other words, if Japan does not become more civilized and independent, it runs the risk of losing its independence altogether. Although he does not name colonization explicitly, this is what is being implied, and, moreover, what was actually happening in the case of other non-Western nations. This means that I have now identified foreign relations as the object of Fukuzawa's "crisis" and national independence as its stake, so now only the question of audience remains. As already noted above, *Bunmeiron* was aimed at intellectuals. This is further reflected in the fact that Fukuzawa stated that

> under such distressing circumstances, it is imperative that scholars who are concerned about the state of the country advocate a theory of civilization, try to rescue all men, both in government and in private circles, who are subject to credulity to false ideas, and correct the flow of public opinion (77).

In this way, the "feeble few" will no longer be hindered by the "mighty many" (77). Thus, this is a call on intellectuals to lead the way to civilization. If they do, Fukuzawa claims, "the majority will just follow behind like sheep" (85). By disempowering the masses and by

portraying them as subservient and unenlightened, Fukuzawa thus makes it the moral duty of Japanese intellectuals to educate the masses and to save them—and, by implication, the country as a whole—from domination and the definitive loss of national independence. The articles that will be discussed in chapter 6, by contrast, were written for a newspaper. What is interesting is that although the plight of Japanese women is a recurrent concern of his articles, they are of no special concern in *Bunmeiron*. In the chapter 6, I will provide an explanation for this absence by comparing Fukuzawa's discussion of women to his "sickness" of foreign relations.

5 Fukuzawa Yukichi and Japanese Women

In this chapter, I will discuss previous scholarship on Fukuzawa's articles and relate this to scholarship on gender in the Tokugawa and Meiji period. The aim of this chapter is to uncover why Fukuzawa has so long been celebrated as an advocate of women's rights, and what biases and assumptions underlie this evaluation. In doing so, this chapter will lay the basis for my own analysis in the next chapter.

5.1 State of the Field

5.1.1 English Scholarship[25]

In English language scholarship Peter Kornicki—a historian specializing in the history of the book in Japan—is the only one to have questioned Fukuzawa's critique of *Onna daigaku* (The Greater Learning for Women), a didactic text for women treated in more detail below. In the introduction to *The Female as Subject*, Kornicki stated that

> When we recall that later editions of *Onna daigaku* contained any amount of illustrations, practical information, and even amusement, we might conclude that Fukuzawa was attacking a straw man and that this notorious text may have been appreciated by female readers for reasons other than its moral message (3).

Although he does not pursue this further, nor ask what, if not *Onna daigaku*, it is that Fukuzawa is attacking in his "Critique of *Onna daigaku*" this short statement lays bare the main issues of English-language scholarship: it is based on a literal reading of the text of *Onna daigaku* without consideration of its uses, contexts, and transmissions.

The only two articles in English that, to my knowledge, deal directly with Fukuzawa's newspaper articles about Japanese women are the historian Carmen Blacker's "Fukuzawa Yukichi on Family Relationships" from 1958 and Atsushi Shirai's "Nationalism and Feminism in Yukichi Fukuzawa, the Most Influential Leader of Enlightenment in Modern Japan" from 1992. Despite the considerable amount of time that separates these two articles, there are

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[25] I have decided to separate the scholarship on Fukuzawa's articles into these two categories, because English language scholarship does not refer to Japanese scholarship, and because the arguments made in English language scholarship all share the same structure and assumptions. As such, the same critique applies to all of them.

noticeable similarities between them. Blacker, for example, elaborates elsewhere on "Fukuzawa's championship of women" (48) as the

> call for respect for the rights of women, for a more reasonable treatment of their position in society than that accorded them for so long by the odious *Onna Daigaku*, is now accepted without cavil in all civilized countries (Kiyooka and Blacker 1966, xiii).

And Shirai states that

> only Fukuzawa, among male philosophers, continued to advocate women's rights until the very end of his life, and kept the principle of monogamy in spite of the general atmosphere of neglecting problems of women and being unchaste in their real lives (Shirai 1992, 690).

Furthermore, Shirai explicitly labels these texts as expressing "feminist ideas" (691), and both he and Blacker connect Fukuzawa's concern for the plight of Japanese women to his desire to civilize Japan.

In addition, in the foreword to the translation of Fukuzawa's newspaper articles *Fukuzawa Yukichi on Japanese Women*, the historians Keiko Fujiwara and Eiichi Kiyooka state that Fukuzawa "wrote on women with particular enthusiasm, and that they were possibly one of his main concerns throughout his life" (x-xi). This they connect to "Fukuzawa's childhood" in which "the responsibility of the whole household fell on his mother, who planned and devised ways to make ends meet" and through which "observing his hardworking mother, Fukuzawa grew up with a great respect for women" (xiii). In this statement there can be observed some general tendencies in the evaluation of Fukuzawa's articles. The first is to take Fukuzawa's autobiography as evidence for the "facts" of his life. The second is the assumption that because these texts were *about* women, their aims and purposes were necessarily *for* women. What gets lost from view in such assumptions is that Fukuzawa's autobiography is a performance as well with an implicit audience and agenda, and that talking about women might have been a strategy to address other problems. In other words, such analyses take what the texts state about themselves for granted, and as such have not penetrated beneath the surface level of these texts.

Other works in which Fukuzawa's texts on the plight of women are frequently commented upon are *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, in which Fukuzawa is described as "an early outspoken advocate of women's rights" (Craig 2006, 45). Similarly, Sandra Buckley includes his article "Onna daigaku hyōron" (Critique of the greater learning for women, 1899) in a genealogy of Japanese feminism (306), and in the historian Barbara Sato's *The New Japanese Woman* he is portrayed as "a major contributor to the narratives addressing the awakening of women" (19). So, these statements all corroborate the narrative constructed in Fukuzawa's articles. Namely, that through didactic texts such as *Onna daigaku* women had become the victims of violent suppression, and that one of the most urgent goals of the modern Japanese nation state was to do away with these vestiges of the feudal past. Already the use of dichotomy feudal and civilized should signal the constructedness of this narrative, but it should also alert us to the worldview from which such narratives sprang: an Orientalist one. In addition, it begs the questions: what does it mean that a narrative with such a clear Orientalist structure has remained unquestioned in modern scholarship? And, thinking past an agenda that clearly had stakes in representing women in the Tokugawa period as victims of violent oppression: how repressed were Japanese women? Before turning to these questions, however, first a word on Japanese scholarship.

5.1.2 Japanese Scholarship

There are noticeable differences between the treatment of Fukuzawa's articles on the plight of Japanese women in Japanese and English scholarship. The difference that stands out the most is that English scholarship all stresses the extraordinariness of Fukuzawa's articles and present him as the only one to make these kinds of arguments. As such, this is very much a great man narrative, which is further illustrated by a lack of contextualization. In Japanese scholarship, on the other hand, Fukuzawa is contextualized within debates concerning eugenics (Kageki 2020) and, more generally, that of the "women's problem" (Ota 2004). From these articles it become clear that far from isolated, Fukuzawa's articles were part of a large-scale debate on societal issues that were addressed through the topic of Japanese women (Ota 2004, 117). Already in 1956, moreover, Aoyama Nao, a specialist in Japanese

women's history, argued that rather than written for the benefit of Japanese women, these essays were a critique of Japanese men (119). However, in Japanese scholarship too, there are texts that rely more on Fukuzawa's autobiography than on contextualization. The historian Nishizawa Naoko, for example, in *Fukuzawa Yukichi to josei* (Fukuzawa Yukichi and women) focusses on the women in Fukuzawa's life and on how they influenced his idea of womanhood (48-55). However, Nishizawa does accompany this autobiographical reading with an analysis of the other aims Fukuzawa might have had with his articles on Japanese women, most notably "treaty revision" (197), but also the observation that women's independence is an extension of his more general argument that independence equals civilization, also noted above (84). So, although this narrative is most in line with English scholarship, it does not lose sight of the context. What is interesting, is that although treatment of Fukuzawa is more complex than the English great man accounts, in Japanese scholarship, too, no one has asked questions about Fukuzawa's vilification of Confucianism or his victimization of women. So, before proceeding to the analysis of Fukuzawa's articles the question of women in the Tokugawa period should first be addressed.

5.2 Gender

Many different views of the gender relations and the circumstances in which women lived in the Tokugawa as well as the Meiji period are going around. Some focus on the Confucian ideology to suggest that women were completely repressed by men, and others argue that women had ample opportunity to develop themselves and indeed had relative freedom. Thus, the main area of contestation seems to be ideology versus the life as it was lived. These two narratives, moreover, are at times so divergent from each other that it seems difficult to divest a bigger picture from this. Dealing with this problem in another area, Carol Gluck has commented that ideology is often "deprived of its social environment, over-isolated and over-dramatized" (14). She advises, therefore, to "some sense of the fuller canvas" and to "look to sources that are not, properly speaking, 'ideological' in content" to "reduce the disproportionate importance it has for its creators, and, inevitably, for its analysists as well" (14). Therefore, in this section I will look at both Tokugawa and Meiji ideology and to some

examples from the lived reality. The aim of this section is to give the necessary context to understand Fukuzawa's claim that women were repressed by Confucianism and its evaluation in modern scholarship.

5.2.1 Confucianism and *Onna Daigaku*

According to the historians Dorothy Ko, Joan Piggott, JaHyun Kim Haboush, "to Euro-American and Asian critics alike, the failure of Confucianism was manifested most blatantly in its oppression of women. Confucianism became synonymous with patriarchy, and 'victim' became the universal name for East Asian women" (4). In addition, they state that the reason that "Confucianism had to be vilified in modern East Asia is in part because the modern nation state is an artificial community that is extremely difficult to conceive" (4). So, Confucianism is deeply implicated in the construction of East Asian modernity and the victimization of women is one of its main manifestations. Although it is beyond the scope of this thesis to treat Confucianism in great detail, the main critique against it is that women first have to obey their father, then their husband, and then their son, that a man could divorce a woman with hardly any reason, but a woman could not, that under this system a man was allowed to keep concubines, and that in order to keep a woman as docile and subservient as possible her educational and artistic opportunities were limited. Although this is indeed supported by several didactic texts from the Tokugawa period, this does not, however, always conform to the lived reality. In addition, just looking at the mere content of the text tells us nothing about how it was transmitted.

The text *Onna daigaku* (Greater Learning for Women, oldest version 1729), which was attributed to (but not written by) the Confucian scholar Kaibara Ekiken (1630–1714), is often treated as the pinnacle of Confucian oppression in Japan. However, recent scholarship has indicated that the case is not as straightforward as has long been assumed. Most importantly, concerning the evaluation of *Onna daigaku* as "a textbook of women's repression," Kornicki has argued that it has been lost from sight that "*Onna daigaku* takes women's literacy for granted" (3). In addition, the historian Martha Tocco argues that

because these texts were usually accompanied by selections of classical Japanese literature "as well as advice on beauty, etiquette, and proper letter writing … the impact of Neo-Confucian moralizing [was] diffused" and that "repeated exposure diluted it further" (201). Building on this, Kornicki states that

> the question posed by [Robert] Carlitz with respect to China ('[D]id the packaging of women's virtue as a commodity result in ethics as entertainment?') is equally applicable to Japan, as lavish editions packed with entertainment and information reduced the ethical content to a fraction of the whole (28-9).

Another interpretation is that these texts were given by concerned parents upon marriage as a keepsake to their daughters as means to help them rise to the challenges of life in a new household (Gramlich-Oka 2010, 139). Therefore, the content of a text clearly does not dictate how it was read or transmitted. Moreover, all these examples indicate a more nuanced picture than the stereotype of victimization and calls for caution when coming across such a narrative. One last point of importance is made by Tocco. She states that "exhortational tomes written for men were similar to those written for women" (200-1). And that "whether they were written for women or for men, subordination was clearly one element in Tokugawa moral guides, and the proliferation of moral texts for women suggests that women were expected to inhabit the same moral world as men" (201). In other words, what has been refigured as a suppressive female ideal in the modern period, was in fact the standard for both men and women.

5.2.2 The Tokugawa Period

In the edited volume *Recreating Japanese Women, 1600–1945*, Gail Lee Bernstein, a historian specializing in Japanese women's history, is among the first in English-language scholarship to take up the issue of ideology verses lived reality. She states in her introduction that

> it makes little sense … to talk about Japanese women as though they formed a monolithic, unchanging group. Even within one historical time period, the lives of an upper-class woman,

a merchant woman, and a female servant in a wealthy farm family were worlds apart in terms of work, clothing, norms of behavior, and the countless other indicators of standard of living, status, position—in short, life experience (1).

The fact that there was no perception of "Japanese women" as a single category in the Tokugawa period, but instead that women identified themselves in terms of class and geography further complicated the notion of *women* being the victims of Confucianism. In addition, Bernstein states that

> What women did (and what they got away with) was very different from socially prescribed norms, which usually were observed, if at all, by the small minority of women in the upper classes. ... Depending on their economic circumstances, family composition, and myriad other factors, they might go to school, travel, work for wages, choose their own marriage partners, enter into matrilocal marriages, marry men who were not heir to existing households and so help to found new households, divorce, remarry, engage in adulterous affairs, and serve as household heads. (4).

Social norms only, thus, do not tell us anything about their interpretation or negotiation.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will analyze some points that make a frequent appearance in Fukuzawa's articles. The first is education. As I will analyze in the next chapter, one of Fukuzawa's main criticisms of Confucians is that it promoted uneducated women as ideal. This is also what is accepted as the scholarly consensus in the research cited in the previous two sections. Over the past thirty years, however, this notion has increasingly been treated with suspicion, and especially in the field of gender studies a different picture is painted. In *Women and Public Life in Early Meiji Japan: The Development of the Feminist Movement*, for example, the historian Mara Patessio states that "it is nevertheless arguable that the ratio of women 'obtaining an education' during the end of the Edo period [26]was not much lower than that of the early Meiji period" (36). In addition, Walthall states regarding the Tokugawa period that "wealthy families ... devoted a surprising amount of income and

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[26] The Tokugawa period, named after the ruling clan, is alternatively referred to as the Edo period, named after the city that through the course of Tokugawa rule became Japan's cultural center.

energy to the upbringing of their daughters" (Walthall 1991, 47), and "although people in the Edo period distinguished between appropriate texts for girls and boys, between what was suitably masculine and feminine, they often had to make do with whatever was available" (Walthall 2010, 219). Furthermore, according to Kornicki, the Tokugawa shogunate proclaimed that "teachers who run schools both within the city of Edo and without should instruct children enthusiastically and treat them equally. Everyone–boys and girls, high and low–should be able to read and write appropriate to their station" (23). Thus, education was highly dependent on financial means and access. In addition, an educated daughter was considered an asset by her family (Walthall 1991, 49), and, especially in the higher classes, education was a prerequisite for marriage. All of this goes against the notions that women were uneducated or that parents did not care about their daughters.

Second is the question of freedom. How much agency did women in the Tokugawa period have? This is also an important question when discussing Fukuzawa because, as I will analyze in the next chapter, he stated that women had none and were tied to the house and their domestic responsibilities and, therefore, had little pleasure in life. Had they lived solely with the norms prescribed in Confucian text this might indeed have been the case. However, as Walthall shows, rural women traveled for educational purposes when they were young (Walthall 1991, 48), and were encouraged to travel when a daughter in-law took over her direct domestic responsibilities (ibid., 66). So, after and before their duties as wives, rural women seem to have enjoyed the freedom to travel. Moreover, according to Jennifer Robertson, an anthropologist specializing in gender in Japan, women who wanted to escape these familial responsibilities altogether had the option of taking the tonsure and live a life with less gendered restrictions (100). Furthermore, the art historian Patricia Fister discusses the example of the poet and painter Ema Saikō, who asked her father not to marry her so she could cultivate her artistic talents (128). Fister's research further indicates that "women artists like Saikō were able to develop their skills in an atmosphere of equal relations with men" (120). In addition, Kornicki takes note of the many woodblock print illustrations of women reading leisurely as opposed to the study of didactic texts (31). And, on the topic of

the highborn women serving in the shogunal palace, Sekiguchi Sumiko, a historian specializing in gender, has even asserted that they enjoyed considerable power, and part of the Meiji Restoration was aimed at eliminating "in the diction of the times, 'the power of the women' (joken) from the deep recesses of the government's power structure, and to reaffirm the power (of men) which alone was considered legitimate" (201), which would mean a complete reversal of Fukuzawa's narrative. Taken together, the sources discussed here by no means represent a full picture of the period, however, as this research indicates, although women's place was first of all in the household, women did find ways to work with these socially prescribed norms and express their own subjectivities. So, it can be concluded that the main premise of Fukuzawa's narrative—that women in the Tokugawa period were violently oppressed—was false, and that something other than the state of Japanese womanhood was at stake.

5.2.3 The Meiji Period

Did much change with the start of the Meiji period? Looking only at texts with an ideological content the answer to this question is "yes." For example, according to Sato, "the enactment of the Meiji Civil Code legalized women's social status and place within the patriarchal family system" (5). And according to the historian Kathleen Uno,

> by 1900, women had been barred from politics, virtually stripped of property rights and the right to serve as family heads, and [were] nearly excluded from universities, the gateways to leading corporate and bureaucratic positions. The emerging division of labor assigned work in the household strictly to women; the new legal system made their access to commanding positions outside the home more difficult (40-1).

Thus, legally and socially speaking, the Meiji period did not bring about any radical improvement in the rights of women. On the contrary, many of the things that had been possible in some areas and circumstances in the Tokugawa period now had been regulated by the law. Change, in other words, did not necessarily mean progress.

Apart from legal changes, there were several other factors that greatly impacted the lives of people in the Meiji period. Because in the Tokugawa period both productive and reproductive labor took place in and around the home, labor was not strongly gendered (Uno 1991, 26). This changed in the Meiji period with industrialization, compulsory education, and the institution of a more elaborate bureaucracy, and the activities of men and children moved to outside the home, leaving women behind and "transform[ing] the upper-middle-class urban woman into a private domestic laborer" (Uno 1991, 38). In addition, to appropriate the labors of these women for the new nation state, the ideology of the *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife and wise mother) was created (Uno 1991, 37). In line with this ideal, women were to be educated to "prepare their children to be good subjects of the emperor by instilling in them diligence, loyalty, and patriotism" (Uno 1991, 38).

Similar to the Tokugawa period, the Meiji period has long been considered as a period of oppression. However, in the Meiji period, too, there are abundant examples of women appropriating the government-approved discourse for their own ends. What most clearly distinguished the Meiji period from the Tokugawa period, however, was the formation of a mass press and creation of female communities through schooling and the periodical press (Patessio 2011, 169). And, her role in the creation of a "powerful nation" made it easier for her "to start making claims over social customs and political matters" (ibid., 14). In other words, it was through the *ryōsai kenbo* ideal that educated women found their voice and made themselves heard in public discussion. According to Patessio, however,

> in response to the perceived threat that women's presence in public society posed to the status quo, by the late 1880s the term was reconceptualized and came more and more to designate an education for women based on feminine qualities and duties centered around the home" (20).

So, in addition to the struggle of how to understand the Tokugawa period in relation to the present, Fukuzawa's articles should also be read against the background of the discussion on what constituted the ideal Japanese woman. While conservatives wanted to keep women at home, more progressive voices argued that women's responsibilities in the home also

warranted a voice in the public debate. One of the reasons that there was so much interest in the woman's question was that, according to Sharon Nolte and Sally Ann Hastings, "the treatment accorded women was a measure of the level of civilization of a given society" (153). This makes the debates on Japanese womanhood not just the product of social change, but also deeply connected to the question of Japanese modernity, and, therefore, also to the way past and future were related to the present. As I will show in the next chapter, it is both these contexts and the relation between them that have been overlooked in the evaluation of Fukuzawa's articles.

6. Analysis

In this chapter, I will deconstruct "Nihon fujinron" (On Japanese women, 1885), "Onna daigaku hyōron" (Critique of the greater learning for women, 1899), and "Shin onna daigaku" (New greater learning for women, 1899) to uncover how crisis is performed in these texts and to what purpose. The questions guiding my deconstruction are: who are constructed as the agents of Fukuzawa's crisis, who as its objects, and what is at stake, or, in other words, what is the moral challenge Fukuzawa's presents his readers with, who is he addressing, and how do women figure in it.[27]

6.1 Illness

6.1.1 The Female Body

Several aspects Fukuzawa mentioned in *Bunmeiron* return, albeit in different guise, in Fukuzawa's articles on Japanese women. Of these the most elaborate example is that in "Nihon fujinron" Fukuzawa observed that "men and women in [the olden days] were all active and robust, which should be a source of envy for modern men" (27). He further elaborated on this in the citation in appendix 2.a. comparing men and women to dogs. In this comparison he uses the idea that if there is something wrong with the bitch, there will be something wrong with the pup, as a metaphor for the weakening of the Japanese race. Thus, he transposes the commonsensical manner in which he talks about dogs into the situation of Japanese women and their children; effectively turning it into an axiom. In addition, throughout this text and the texts that followed there are several references to this state of affairs, and women are repeatedly described as "feeble" (11), "frail" (18), "retarded" (18) "useless" (36), having a "dampened spirit" (60), and "dumb" (63); as a result of which their children will be "sickly" (239) and both "physically and mentally [weak]" (233). According to

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[27] I have chosen the above three essays because they are most often referred to in other sources that discuss Fukuzawa and his concern for Japanese women, because they have been reprinted several times, and in order to slightly narrow my focus. However, these will be supplemented with passages from other essays as called for. I am aware that grouping together these texts is arbitrary. To avoid the pitfalls of treating these texts in isolation as discussed in the previous chapter, this thesis contextualizes these essays within Fukuzawa's oeuvre by placing them in dialogue with *Bunmeiron*, and by analyzing them within the specific debates on which these articles comment. In doing so, this thesis aims to show that rather than a special concern apart from his larger oeuvre, these texts were an integral part of Fukuzawa's discourse on civilization.

Fukuzawa, the fact that women were weak was caused by their lack of "responsibility" and "freedom" (27). This in turn led to their inferior "pups," and the continuation of this cycle was treated by Fukuzawa as the cause of "the small size and weak constitution of today's Japanese" (27). In other words, there is a causal relation between the perceived weakening of the Japanese race and the lack of freedom and independence of Japanese women.

As discussed in chapter 4, Fukuzawa took freedom and independence as the premises of civilization, and the lack thereof as the direct cause of his sickness of foreign relations. This means that there is a parallel between the sickness of foreign relations and the state of Japanese womanhood. In addition, the claim made in *Bunmeiron* that the situation "deteriorate[d] day by day" (242), is echoed in an 1898 essay on "Men, Women, and Society" as his observation that Japanese men have accepted this situation; they are neither aware of the problem, nor particularly eager to change the status quo, causing the situation "[to grow] worse" (139). In other words, in both cases there is a lack of independence, and a deteriorating situation calling for action. However, whereas in *Bunmeiron* the illness concerned the relation of Japanese men with Westerners, in his newspaper articles it projected on the female body, both literally as the producers of the next generation of citizens, and metaphorically as women have come to stand in for the health and civilization of the nation as a whole.

6.1.2 The Remedy

It should be noted at this point that Fukuzawa does not literally called women "ill," but that this is my interpretation of his recurrent use of terms such as "feeble" and "weak," and that only in the case of their children terms such as "sickly" and "not healthy" are used. A reason why I consider the term "illness" as appropriate is the fact that Fukuzawa does explicitly discuss a remedy, stating that "in this remedy, we must not think of depending on governmental influence. The only reliable source of power will be the attitude of social leaders" (99). So similar to *Bunmeiron*, Fukuzawa refers to men setting an example. Thus, whereas in *Bunmeiron* specifically intellectuals were being addressed, here Fukuzawa

adapted his message to suite a broader, though—as I will also analyze below—not less specific,
audience. And, interestingly, continuing the parallel with *Bunmeiron*, in place of the masses,
women are the object of Fukuzawa's crisis. It also echoes the claim in *Bunmeiron* that
civilization cannot be imposed from above, but that it reflects the level of intelligence and
virtue of the people as a whole; a civilization that is imposed, but not internalized, cannot be
anything but superficial.

6.2 History

In "Nihon fujinron" and "Onna daigaku hyōron" Fukuzawa narrates the history from the
Tokugawa period to the present. In "Shin onna daigaku" he makes less mention of the past,
and primarily treats the topic from the perspective of the present and future. From this I
conclude that in "Nihon fujinron" and "Onna daigaku hyōron" Fukuzawa deals mainly with
how the present has come to diverge from what Fukuzawa considers the ideal. By contrast,
"Shin onna daigaku" narrates mainly a state in which this divergence has been taken care of.
In this section I will first deal with Fukuzawa's past and present, then relate this to the
alternatives mentioned in chapter 2, and last to Fukuzawa's envisioned future.

6.2.1 Fukuzawa's Past and Present

Fukuzawa's historical narrative and the way he connects past and present are intimately tied
to the perception of illness treated above. This is most clearly illustrated in the narrative
constructed in appendix 2.b through 2.d. First, a comparison is made between Japan and the
West. Whereas the West has developed and become more robust throughout its history,
Japan has been growing "smaller and weaker." However, contrary to the present, in the
ancient past there was a time when Japan was "active" and "vigorous," meaning that Japan is
not inherently inferior, but has become so. Looking at this narrative from the perspective of
Fukuzawa's understanding of history as treated in section 4.2, this means that whereas the
West progressed normally through the stages of civilization, Japan has gone off course.
According to Fukuzawa, the reason for this deviation was the implementation of

Confucianism in the Tokugawa period and the deterioration of Japanese women that it caused over the course of its more than 200 years of rule.

Several things stand out here. First, that contrary to what was discussed in the previous chapter, women alone are presented as having to adhere to a strict moral code. Second, that Fukuzawa presents ancient Japan as a period in which women were free, while, in fact, according to the classical scholar Ivan Morris, high-born women (the only ones that left enough traces of themselves to make claims about their lives) lived "indoors … in a condition of semi-obscurity, in which day was barely distinguishable from night" (222). Third, that here too, the physical body is treated as a metaphor for the nation state. And last, that the cause of Japan's deterioration is marked as foreign, namely an unfortunate effect of the adoption of Confucianism, which throughout the text is used interchangeably with China.

In the second part of "Nihon fujinron," Fukuzawa narrates how these rules came into being and throughout his newspaper articles he elaborated on what their effect were on Japanese society on the one hand, and on Japan's place in the world on the other (see appendix 2.e through 2.j). It should be noted that of all the moral tracts written during the Tokugawa period, *Onna daigaku* is singled out as the object of Fukuzawa's critique. Probably this has to do with the fact that it was popular in the Tokugawa as well as the Meiji period and as such familiar to his reading public, but also for the rhetorical purpose of creating a concrete target. The main gist of his critique was that men knowingly restricted the freedom of women to create a double standard whereby men had the liberty to do as they pleased, while women were subordinated to the needs of men and denied the position and voice from which to protest. However, it cannot be stressed enough that men, too, had a moral code imposed on them, and that Fukuzawa's division into freedom and repression is a modern construct. The construction of this past, moreover, should be seen in the light of the problems Fukuzawa diagnoses in the present. Namely, that in Japan there developed no civilized interactions between men and women, and more importantly, he sets Confucianism up as the enabler of polygamy; the social construct that most obviously sets Japan apart form the West.

In other words, Fukuzawa's crisis follows the following structure: in ancient times Japanese men and women were free and independent and described in the same language (i.e., healthy and vigorous) as modern Westerners. Through Confucianism, however, the advancement of Japanese civilization became obstructed and through the further development that kept men and women apart, no new forms of socialization, or a critique of polygamy, developed, leaving Japan in its present condition of weakness.

Through the portrayal of Confucianism, moreover, Fukuzawa creates a clear break between the Tokugawa past and the Meiji present. Throughout these texts three distinct strategies to create this rupture can be identified. First, parallel to the construction of the Tokugawa period as feudal and closed and the Meiji period as civilized and open, Fukuzawa characterizes specific aspects of the present as belonging to the past. This is reflected in such simple statements as "we are no longer in the age of feudalism" (52), and:

> especially when the old customs, developed while the country was closed, are exposed to modern civilization, what we had regarded as symbols of strength may not appear to others to be so, and those items that have been neglected as of little value may come to appear truly valuable (70-1).

Second, a kind of moral judgement is passed on Confucianism that places it firmly within the past and as out of touch with modern civilization. For example, on many occasions Fukuzawa labels Confucianism as "advertising the paradise of animal instinct" (92), its adherents as "greedy beasts" (92) and "savages, all naked, striding along in broad daylight" (95), and its customs as "beastly" (193). He further states that

> being governed by centuries-old customs from the warrior days, our society has preserved an appearance of peace, but these barbaric customs cannot remain with us much longer in the future (212).

Thus, its adherents are presented as lewd barbarians who are made the object of open scorn. Third, Confucianism is implicitly set up as the negative foil of Western civilization, the vestiges of which are reasonableness and science. Fukuzawa presents Confucianism as

"strange and unreasonable" (175) and "lack[ing] in plausible reasoning"; questions whether its customs are "practical or appropriate" (177); and presents the Confucian scholar as partial (176).

Together these three tactics create a basis to break with the past and to enter the realm of civilization, which, as was noted above, was constructed on the premise that the Other was barbaric and inferior. However, the intricacy of Fukuzawa's argument is that he locates the cause of Japan's inferiority to the West outside of Japan (namely, in China). Thus, he frees Japanese men from inherent inferiority, creating a narrative by which they can become truly civilized. As was noted in chapter 2, in the early Meiji period, the West came to embody *chūgoku* (or the ideal society). Subsequently, Western technology and institutions were borrowed for Japan to catch up to and eventually overtake the West as *chūgoku*. Fukuzawa's argument is that in order to truly come to embody *chūgoku*, mere material and institutional innovation is not enough, social customs and morality need to change with it. By presenting Japan's customs as Confucian, and thus as feudal, Fukuzawa presents it as what Koselleck described as a "moral challenge" (374). The victimization of women in this narrative is similarly structured. I will further elaborate on this point in the section on audience, however it should already be noted here that because women in the Meiji period are represented as still suffering from barbaric, feudal Confucianism, men are saddled with the moral obligation to change their ways. Seen from the perspective of the rhetorical structure of Fukuzawa's crisis, it already becomes apparent that the fact that women are the object of Fukuzawa's newspaper articles might not necessarily mean that the texts are written solely with their benefits in mind.

6.2.2 Alternative Pasts and Presents

As mentioned in chapter two, Fukuzawa's historical narrative did not take place in isolation, but in a polarized field, in which one side valorized the past, while the other was ostensibly more in line with Fukuzawa's side because it aimed to create a break between the Meiji and Tokugawa periods. In his articles Fukuzawa addressed both sides of the story. As illustrated

in the citations in appendix 2k through 2m, he criticizes on the one hand the "truly masculine hero" who had his roots in the pleasure quarter culture of the Tokugawa period and was defined by his know-how of the *floating world*,[28] and on the other the government official who, despite his schooling in Western civilization, has let himself go and reverted to being a "worldly playboy." The first is presented as the kind of man who knows no other relation with women than that of the flesh, who reaps the fruit of the Confucian morality, and who blindly follows the example of the men around him. The second is a man who represents Western culture in Japan, either through visits or extensive study, who should know better, but who gives in to temptation. Both sides, however, are defined by the kind of relationship they have with women, and both are found wanting. Furthermore, through the way they interact with women, both types, histories, and the civilizations that they imply, root these men and their behavior in the past. Fukuzawa's masculine hero, in contrast, is defined by restraint and monogamy. Interestingly, it is implied that through this act of self-restraint the hero saves the women who have been the victims of this unrestrained sexuality. So here, too, a moral challenge comes into play.

However, the fact that Fukuzawa was openly critical of the alternative masculinity envisioned by the critics of government did not mean that he sided with the government, and on many occasions Fukuzawa spoke out in his newspaper articles against men who considered themselves as "civilized." Thus he, too, presents the government as merely "a simulation of Western ways on the surface" (177-8). By implying faultiness in the running of governments, moreover, Fukuzawa presents the changes he envisions as a moral challenge as well: will virtue or vice prevail in the government and the running of the country? Moreover, here too, men's relations to women play a part. Because men and women have never learned to socialize platonically, men can only be in the company of women in this kind of setting (i.e., at a party accompanied by *geisha* who according to Fukuzawa also worked as prostitutes (84)). Moreover, the situation has deteriorated to such an extent that it interferes with the

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[28] A status system created parallel to the official fixed samurai, farmers, artisans, and merchants' groupings, in which not birth, but knowledge of the workings and etiquette of the pleasure quarters defined one's status. For more on this topic see, Nelson Davis 2020.

day-to-day running of government. He stresses this by stating that "all gatherings, whether conferences or just parties, are like this. Their immorality, unhealthiness, untidiness, and roughness are evil practices inherited from feudal times. We must by all means reform them" (154). Thus, he again emphasizes how these practices have no place in a civilized world and makes an appeal to his readers to change them. So, in this case, too, Fukuzawa's critique of the present is placed in a specific relation with the past: in the past something has gone wrong causing a problem in the present which, if something is not done soon, will not lead to a desired future. As this section has indicated, moreover, women perform a very specific function in this narrative: they are victims needing to be saved. In addition, in Fukuzawa's narrative, they serve as a scale on which the level of civilization of Japanese men can be measured. In other words, this is yet another example of the utilitarian use of women in Fukuzawa's texts. A function, moreover, that does not directly reflect on the actual lives of women, but on their metaphorical use to refer to the level of civilization of the nation state.

6.2.3 The Future

Especially in "Shin onna daigaku," Fukuzawa outlines how he envisions the ideal woman. In the citations in appendix 2.n and 2.o, Fukuzawa argues that although women in theory could study almost the same subjects and to the same extent as men, their physiology and the responsibilities that sprang from them prevented them from doing so. While the first citation shows some reserve on whether women could or should aspire to the same kind of education as men, the second excerpt firmly argues against this. For, where in the first passage Fukuzawa argues that if a woman has the means she could hire someone to do her housework so she herself could study, the second passage makes clear that this would not be advisable. Moreover, when he states that "in the very act of giving, motherly virtue and the mother's intangible influence will manifest themselves a hundred or a thousand times more than the material object" he makes it morally objectionable for a good mother to let someone else take care of her children. In other words, a woman could study only at the cost of being a good mother, and, by extension, wife. This, however, also means that Fukuzawa firmly ties the identities of women to the roles of wives and mothers. If this is indeed the case, how did their

situation differ from the dog chained to the doghouse so firmly argued against by Fukuzawa? In other words, if not the plight of Japanese women, what is at stake in these articles?

6.3 The Stakes

6.3.1 Foreign Relations and Treaty Revision

In his work Fukuzawa pays considerable attention to foreign relations and treaty revision. According to the historian Pär Cassel, the foreign minister "Inoue Kaoru carried out extensive preparations and consultations with the Western powers for the partial recovery of Japanese jurisdiction over foreigners between 1882 and 1887 (154). However, it was not until 1898 that the treaty revision was finally negotiated, of which Fukuzawa, too, reminds his readers in "Onna daigaku hyōron" when he states that "the revision of treaties and the freedom of foreigners to live among the Japanese is to come within a few months' time" (200). However, apart from this overt statement, there are many covert expressions of this concern throughout the body of newspaper articles under discussion here. Indeed, the figure of the foreigner looms large in Fukuzawa's oeuvre. In this section I will trace the gaze of this figure with the aim of putting one of the stakes of Fukuzawa's articles into focus.

Fukuzawa's starting point is that "the whole world is dominated by Western civilization today" and that "anyone who opposes it will be ostracized from the human society; a nation, too, will find itself outside the circle of nations" (79), and that

> now that our country has opened its doors and is enjoying a friendly relationship with the civilized peoples of the world, it is as if we are exhibiting our values to have them weighed on the common scale of the world (70).

In other words, because Japan has increased its official contact with the West it has increased its vulnerability to its judgement. In appendix 2.p, 2.q, and 2.r Fukuzawa imposes the gaze of the Westerner on Japan and Japanese customs. Whereas the old instances in which he performs this gaze are general, the anecdotes from 1898 (appendix 2.p and 2.r), take the form of personal anecdotes. Whether or not these scenes actually happened is beside the point, because they provide Fukuzawa with the means to express his personal outrage and

experience of shame at the fact that Japan's customs have been weighed and found wanting, and that therefore in the eyes of the West a Japanese man did not warrant equal treatment. Also of interest is that in almost 15 years Fukuzawa's main argument did not change much, but that his examples, dejection, and desperation seem to have intensified. This can be attributed to the fact that treaty revision while a theoretical possibility in the 1880s was rapidly becoming reality in 1898, and so the need for change was becoming increasingly urgent.

The function of these passages is that they ask the reader to view social customs, such as polygamy, the practice of taking concubines, visiting the pleasure quarters, and the easy divorce customs from the perspective of a foreigner. In these anecdotes the workings of Orientalism and the consequences of taking Western norms as universal as discussed in chapter 2 can very clearly be observed. For, the foreigner in Fukuzawa's text serves as an embodiment of these values, and by tracing his gaze, the reader is forced to look at himself through his eyes. By confronting the reader with an imaginary foreigner looking at his private customs, Fukuzawa tried to instill in the reader a distance between himself and his social reality. Moreover, by repeatedly stating his own bitter shame and dejection over Japan's present state, Fukuzawa tried to achieve in his readers a kind of awakening in the form of an internalization of the Westerner's gaze. Thus, to provide an answer—based on this case study—to the question posed in relation to Ravina in section 2.3, these texts illustrate that through the internalization of these supposed "universal" norms, Fukuzawa employed the foreigner to create a temporal gap between the reader and his social reality in order to entice him to view certain customs as vestiges of a feudal past and to adopt the ways of modern Western civilization.

6.3.2 Construction of the Nation State

Concerns about foreign relations were not the only stakes in these articles, and were often paired with domestic considerations. As can be seen in appendix 2.s, 2.t, 2.u, and 2.v, one of Fukuzawa's main concerns was that women were oppressed to the extent that they could not

perform their duties for the nation state, and in line with the monogamy/polygamy divide, he sets this up as one of the major differences between Japan and the West. Furthermore, he states in "Shin onna daigaku" (appendix 2.v), that keeping house and bringing up children were tasks of vital importance to the nation state. In other words, by keeping the customs as they are, Japanese men were tying one arm behind their back. Based on this narrative one could ask if women were not already performing these functions. According to the historian Mark A. Jones, the main difference between Tokugawa and Meiji is that "the Meiji ideal of womanhood exalted one particular female duty for which Tokugawa women lacked supreme authority: childrearing" (117). This he connects to several concerns that developed during the Meiji period, and that on closer inspection are also reflected in Fukuzawa's texts.

The fall of the Tokugawa regime set in motion a fundamental rethinking of the concept of family and its relation to the nation state. According to Uno, the *ie* can best be understood as a "stem family: only one child remained in the household with the parents after marriage" with as its aim "preservation of household property, occupation, name, and status in the local community" and of which the "fundamental goal was household continuity, not the well-being of individual members" (23). With changes in the mode of production and the structure of the labor market, this ideal of the family underwent some radical reforms, until what Jones labels a "negative foil to the Japanese *ie*" came into being which had as its defining characteristics "love, equality, and individualism" (28). This anti-*ie*, or *katei*, thus presented a fundamentally different way of perceiving the family and family life, and in "Onna daigaku hyōron" and "Shin onna daigaku" it is this term that Fukuzawa uses to describe his ideal family.

In the Meiji period the family came to be known as "character cultivation centers" (Jones 2010, 38), and "was to be the counterweight to the individual, its moral gravity the countervail to the materialist quest" (43). According to Jones, several factors caused an increase of the debate on this topic in the late Meiji period. First of all, it was a reaction to the *risshin shusse* (rising in the world) ideal of the beginning of the period (Jones 2010, 41),

which "establish[ed] meritocratic society" that on the one hand "was deemed necessary in order to increase the number of citizens committed to creating a modern society," but on the other "also threatened to open avenues of advancement to all who sought upward mobility and augured the crumbling of stable (and inherited) social hierarchies" (14). The ideal of the *katei*, which was mainly associated with being middle class, was promoted "in order to manage the social turmoil" (Jones 2010, 68). Another aspect that shaped the discourse on the family was the Sino-Japanese war. This, according to Jones, "awakened the highest levels of government to educated motherhood as a prerequisite to the birth of future soldiers and citizens" (117). And it is this idea that subsequently evolved in the *ryōsai kenbo* ideal. Women, thus, were mobilized by the nation to rear the next generation of citizens, and as such they were doing a job of vital importance. A job, moreover, that in most cases only they could do, because men went away to work.

Seen from this perspective, it becomes apparent that Fukuzawa was an early advocate of this line of thinking: his "crisis" seems constructed towards curbing threats such as materialism and unpatriotic behavior in favor of a morality centered on family life, which in turn is presented as benefitting the nation. Fukuzawa, however, goes one step further than the narrative presented above by stating that "the most powerful influence on a person is the home atmosphere where he or she grows up" (203), which does not only refer to the morality of the mother, but also to that of the father: if a child is to see his father openly keeping concubines and visiting sex workers, it will severely impact the child's development. In other words, his domestic and foreign concerns were two sides of the same coin.

This section has shown that the topic of women in Fukuzawa's articles served as a way to address problems concerning social unrest, the nation state, and foreign relations. In addition, it has shown that the debate concerning Japanese womanhood was held in service of larger questions and concerns, and it is becoming more and more apparent that in many of Fukuzawa's articles women are but a pretext to discuss something else. In order to fully

understand what is at stake, however, one last question needs to be answered: who is being addressed?

6.4 Audience

6.4.1 Women?

In this section I will first analyze the instances that Fukuzawa addresses women, and then the instances where he speaks *about* women. Then, I will compare these to the discussion on gender in the previous chapter, and with the stakes discussed in the previous section.

In all his articles there is only one topic on which Fukuzawa can be said to actually address women. In both "Onna daigaku hyōron" and "Shin onna daigaku" Fukuzawa calls on women to stand up for themselves and rebuke their husbands for immoral behavior. In "Onna daigaku hyōron" he states that "a wife must argue and fight if necessary, and at times, even if it may result in shocking the public, she should not hesitate over going through with it" (201). And in "Shin onna daigaku" he makes it a woman's moral duty to prevent her husband from philandering (appendix 2.w). This because, as shown in appendix 2.x, promiscuity is not a private affair, but intimately connected to the strength of the nation state, because such a marriage will not produce a healthy and strong next generation of citizens. Thus, Fukuzawa clearly calls on women to protect their families, and by extension the nation state, from growing sick. The "crisis" is, thus, refigured to give women a moral incentive to act. This example indicates that there still remains the possibility that women were being empowered to act through these texts. However, as this is only one case in several long series of articles, other possibilities and audiences need to be considered as well. As it is this evidence is too meagre to support or deny the claim that women were the target audiences of these texts.

Although this is the only instance where women are addressed directly, there are many instances in which they are written about. In "Nihon fujinron," for example, Fukuzawa states that "the physique of women is frail and very much inferior to men's. … In addition, their mental capacity, too, is very clearly retarded because of the lack of facilities for their training" (18), "I have described women as having no responsibility or freedom, and it is therefore

impossible to expect them to improve their health or develop as human beings" (27), and "women today are exactly as their parents invariably describe them at their daughters' wedding: awkward, inexperienced, and incapable. Therefore, the present-day husband has to help his wife and always lead her" (61). So, Fukuzawa is saying that women are too weak to help themselves, and therefore need to be led by men. In other words, especially in his early articles the representation of women as victims is related to his call to *men* to step up and break the chains of suppression. But were women indeed so downtrodden? The discussion of gender in the previous chapter suggests that they were not. Or at least not beyond helping themselves. Quite the reverse. For, as also stated above, according to Patessio,

> in response to the perceived threat that women's presence in public society posed to the status quo, by the late 1880s the term was reconceptualized and came more and more to designate an education for women based on feminine qualities and duties centered around the home (20).

In English-language scholarship "Nihon fujinron" has been considered as a text aimed at empowering women. If this were the case, however, why was no mention made of women who could serve as role models? Where are the women such as Kishida Toshiko (1863–1901)—a writer and activist—who in 1882 and 1883 "toured Japan to deliver a series of public speeches" and who was a huge source of inspiration for many women (Patessio 2011, 150)? It is curious, to say the least, that an article ostensibly aimed at empowering women fails to mention all women who were fighting for their rights, and instead presents women as if they all were so weak that they were beyond helping themselves. The only narrative that would warrant such a depiction is a narrative aimed to empower men to step up and save these hopeless creatures. So, at least the "crisis" in his early articles seems to be written not for the benefit of women, but in an effort to entice men to act on women's behalf. In other words, whomever these articles were targeting, it was not women. So, what about his later articles?

In both "Onna daigaku hyōron" and "Shin onna daigaku" there are numerous instances in which Fukuzawa writes *about* women, and in this section I will discuss the most revealing. In "Onna daigaku hyōron," for example, Fukuzawa states that "for women,

particularly, quietness and gentility are desirable. The noisy tomboy is always an object of my contempt" (196). In addition, in "Shin onna daigaku" he states that "sometimes, in our present society, women students push themselves forward with an argument, forgetting their own shallow and limited knowledge, making laughingstocks of themselves" (224). So it would seem that rather than stick up for the women who did not conform to the downtrodden picture Fukuzawa paints of them, he actually seemed to judge such women negatively. This means that all of Fukuzawa's depictions, with the exception of those set in ancient times, were negative. By portraying women as weak and "unable to express themselves clearly" (appendix 2.y), Fukuzawa, thus, disempowers them from setting their own course towards civilization and puts civilized intellectuals in charge of aiding them (196). Moreover, the lack of a positive role model together with Fukuzawa's own assertion that he does "not like talkative women" leaves the extent to which women could appropriately express themselves vague, almost as a kind of caution not to speak beyond the functional in public.

Thus, on all but one occasion, Fukuzawa takes away women's agency and firmly represents them as the objects of his narrative. This objecthood, moreover, is presented to men as a moral challenge to act. In other words, Fukuzawa's "crisis" reduces women to objects on whose behalf men are posited as subjects. As such I cannot but conclude that the intended audience of these text were not women at all, and that the claim that Fukuzawa was an "outspoken advocate of women's rights" is blatantly wrong. Rather, setting this narrative against Patessio's assertion that women entering the public sphere were considered a threat, Fukuzawa's narrative seems a way of managing that treat by setting women up as mothers who ensure the nation's morality from the home. Equality in Fukuzawa case, thus, meant equal rights in marriage and recognition for the fact that a woman's job was of equal importance to the nation state. The freedom he argued for, however, was not the kind to be and do as she pleased, but the freedom to develop into a moral wife and mother, and to carry the sole responsibility for home and children.

6.4.2 Men

If not women, who was Fukuzawa addressing? As already briefly mentioned in chapter 5, the construction of the *ryōsai kenbo* ideal was intimately related to the creation of a middle class. So, as Fukuzawa's narrative is closely connected to the *ryōsai kenbo* this would sideline the lower classes—who although they might have access to the paper, would probably not have the means to put into practice either the behavior Fukuzawa finds so appalling (i.e., keeping concubines and visiting prostitutes) or set up their wives as stay-at-home housewives. In this section, I will further explore the relation between the *ryōsai kenbo* and the creation of a middle class, and in doing so I will answer the question of what audience Fukuzawa was addressing in his articles about Japanese women.

As stated above, because the fixed status groups of the Tokugawa period were abolished, social classes had become unstable. Moreover, according to Jones, the old elite who still profited from their position in the old regime needed to justify their position in the new regime and "morality, including virtues like hard work and self-reliance, provided the necessary veneer to their privilege, transforming them from inheritors of the old to pioneers of the new" (40). Furthermore, Jones argues that "making childhood into a moral training ground was a symbolic act intended to explain the social position of the present generation through publicizing the socialization of its future" (51), with the explicit goal of "awakening the elites of the day to their role as social models" which was "on overlooked yet crucial part of the effort to build a middle class" (126). In addition, "moralists and scientists urged society's wealthy, above all else, to avoid acting like aristocrats" (Jones 2010, 126). The construction of the *ryōsai kenbo* was deeply implicated in this project. According to Jones, "the educated woman symbolized everything that established elites wanted a middle class to be—highly moral, highly educated and highly elite" (85). Jones argues, moreover, that it served

> to enable a reform-minded elite to further reinvent themselves as the heralds of the new and as the open-minded proponents of progressive femininity; to allow those same elites to attempt

to brake social change …. to incarnate a new representation of woman appropriate for the highly nationalistic yet socially unstable times (118).

However, although Jones argues that the *ryōsai kenbo*—as a form of "subordinated empowerment" (94)—has too often been "imagined as caged within walls of the home" (128), I would argue by referring to the example of Fukuzawa that this "empowerment" came at the cost of an almost complete loss of agency, and a very limited notion of what a good wife and mother could and should do.

Having said that, it is remarkable how much of Jones's text is applicable to Fukuzawa. For now it finally begins to make sense why Fukuzawa tirelessly wrote *about* women, but not *for* them. And, finally, it is becoming clear who he was addressing: the men who were to become Japan's middle class. For example, on the topic of illicit affairs and the marrying of concubines and *geisha* Fukuzawa remarked that "men at the top are leading lives of sin and creating an atmosphere tolerant of such behavior among men" (150). To remedy this situation, as cited in appendix 2.z, he calls on the social elites to lead more moral lives and to lead by example, and by strongly disproving the behavior, which in the old days caused "children of clan lords and noble families [to grow] up weak" (233). In other words, he wants to stop educated and civilized people from copying the customs of the old aristocrats and set an example for the rest of the population to follow. Rectifying these customs is the core of Fukuzawa's "crisis," and it is reconfigured as a moral challenge in which men are called upon to rescue women from the barbarous treatment of Confucianism, which had weakened them to the point that they could not save themselves, for "the consequences of the sins are real and it is the duty of men today to atone for them by doing their best to raise women to a level equal to themselves" (61). Doing so would not only ensure his status in society, but also posit him as an "open-minded proponent of progressive femininity" in the bargain, which as stated above, was a mark of his civilization and made him rank on an international level.

6.5 Crisis?

This section has shown that the objects of Fukuzawa's crisis were women, and that its subjects were the men who he envisioned as the leaders of Japan's new middle class. The creation of this middle class, moreover, was intimately connected to what is at stake in Fukuzawa's articles. Not only was this envisioned class supposed to bring social stability and impede rapid and almost uncontrollable social change. In addition, it was meant to ensure Japan's place as a member of the international order of civilized nations. Thus, the vilification of Confucianism on the one hand served to create a break with the past, and on the other, by labelling all customs in the present that were not part of Fukuzawa's envisioned future, as remainders of this past, to create a moral challenge—namely, the need for social leaders to reform, lead the way to a civilized future, and stop living in the barbaric past. Now just one question remains: could this have been analyzed without a special reference to "crisis?"

The simple answer is that both the stakes and the audience could have been analyzed without any special reference to crisis. However, "crisis" has provided the focus through which certain questions could be asked, that proved to be a very fruitful starting point of analysis. Furthermore, by performing Fukuzawa's texts as "crisis" I have been able to connect the above two questions with the question of representation. By comparing Fukuzawa's texts with other accounts of women in the Meiji period, this thesis has laid bare that women in Fukuzawa's "crisis" are disempowered through their repeated representation as powerless victims, and the complete disregard for women who embodied something different. In other words, the "crisis" of Japanese womanhood was clearly in the eye of the beholder.

Conclusion

By applying the framework of "crisis" to Fukuzawa's newspaper articles, this thesis has been able to provide a more focused and contextualized analysis of the function of women in these articles. In addition, through this historical case study, several insights have come to light that could benefit the larger fields of Japan studies and crisis studies.

The first is in reference to the question stated in the introduction: can the insights of crisis studies be applied to a context were crisis and critiques are not cognates? This thesis has shown that this indeed is the case. Furthermore, it has shown that "crisis" as a rhetoric is not exclusively tied to the use of "crisis" as a concept, but that the specific characteristics of this rhetoric, namely the observation that a situation has deviated from what is considered normative, the creation of a sense of urgency, and the formulation of a moral incentive for change, can be constructed without reference to "crisis." Moreover, Fukuzawa's crisis narrative is an indication that this might even be quite easily accomplished through the metaphor of illness. This raises questions about the present reliance on the concept of "crisis." Although this is a topic for further research, it could be argued that a move away from "crisis" as a concept, to "crisis" as a rhetoric, would open the sphere of crisis studies to those contexts that have no ties to the Ancient Greek. To put it differently, it might make the field more inclusive.

The second insight is that it has made a connection between "crisis" and Orientalist narratives. This thesis has shown that there is an overlap between the use of "crisis" in modern scholarship and the vestiges of Orientalist assumptions. Questions that have yet to be answered are: what does it mean that a "crisis" rhetoric is employed in non-Western history to break with the past in the creation of modernity? And what does the apparent persistence of this structure indicate? In addition, this thesis has taken notice of the fact that, although the authors of Meiji histories often state that we need to do away with narratives of rupture, "crisis" is still a frequently used concept. This seems to indicate that although we might have a conscious desire to break away from Orientalist, Eurocentric narratives; the ways in which

we produce knowledge—the structures through which we make sense of the world around us—are more difficult to shed.

And third, by moving the focus to the relation between the person calling the crisis and his audience, and connecting this to issues of representation, this thesis has provided an interesting parallel between modernity narratives and migrant crises. Citing the New Keywords Collective, Boletsi et al. state that "in the ongoing 'migrant crisis,' migrants are either seen as the 'disease' that Europe is called to extricate from its 'body,' or cast as passive victims without agency that need to be helped and saved by Europeans (New Keywords Collective 2016, 20)" (7). A similar case can be observed in Fukuzawa's representation of women. On the one hand, Confucianism is represented as the infection that needs to be repelled for Japan to become a healthy modern nation state. And, on the other, this thesis has shown that Japanese women were actively disempowered and denied a voice to entice certain members of the audience to internalize a certain gaze and to act in a certain way. While women themselves might have agreed that the situation was not as it should be, would they have condoned a narrative in which all agency was taken from them? That is another question that deserves further attention. For, while I have analyzed Fukuzawa's articles, I did not look at their reception, or their afterlives. It should be mentioned, however, that several feminists in later years have referred to these texts. In connection, it should also be stated that Fukuzawa was a person enjoying a very special status in Meiji Japan, and where other men would have been censored or even fined or imprisoned, allowances were made for Fukuzawa. Citing Fukuzawa, therefore, might have granted legitimacy and protection. It should not, however, without further analysis, be taken as evidence for his "advocacy of women's rights" as has until now been the case.

Finally, this thesis has connected "crisis" to issues of translation, both in the literal sense and in the translation of events from one cultural and temporal context to another. For, while I argue on the one hand that "crisis" might be more broadly applied as a means of focusing the analysis of a certain discourse, on the other this thesis has shown that when this

is not done critically, the use of "crisis" in translation and the use of "crisis" in representing certain events in modern scholarship might also inadvertently impose the values of the scholar/translator on the material under discussion. In both cases the use of "crisis" might severely taint the kind of knowledge produced by and about certain events and materials. Thus, in these cases, too, I would propose further research in the ethical dimension of crisis claims: who can call crisis, in whose name, and for what audience? "Crisis," as this thesis has shown on many points, is an important structure in the way we produce knowledge, understand the world around us, and place ourselves and others in history. Therefore, it is of vital importance that the ethical side of this production is also connected to issues of translation and the representation of historical events in modern scholarship, and that an awareness is raised that crisis is always first and foremost in the eye of the beholder.

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Appendix 1 "Crisis" in the Asahi Shinbun

Figure 1

Kiki in the Asahi Shinbun

Figure 2

Categories of Crisis
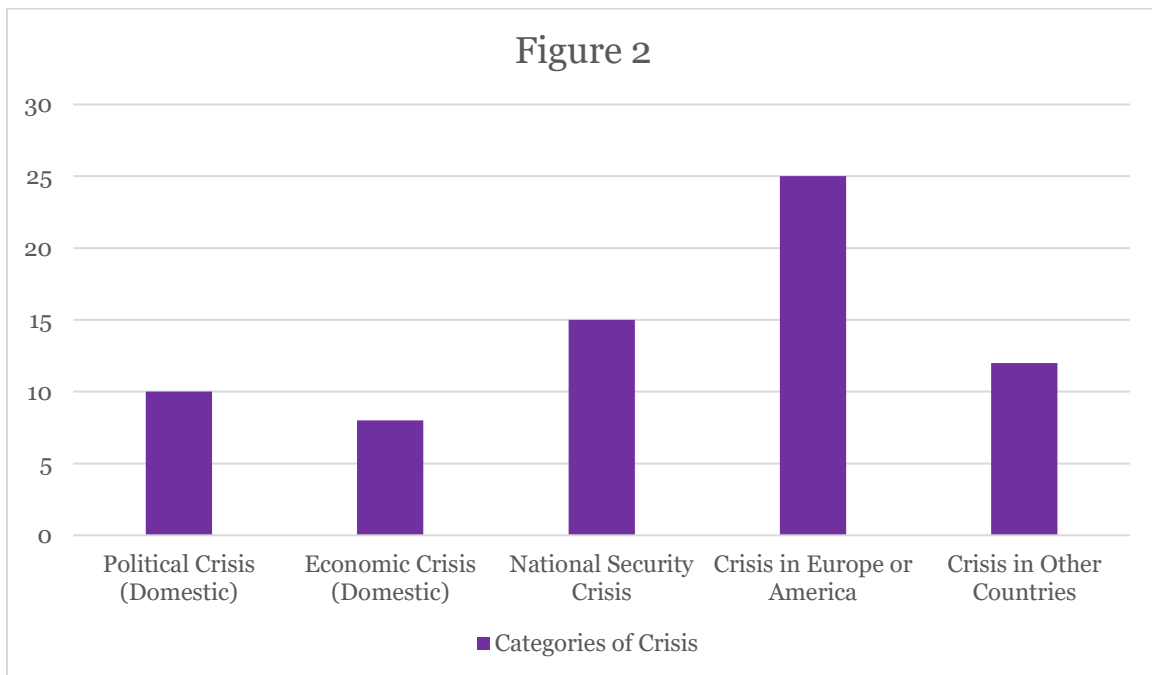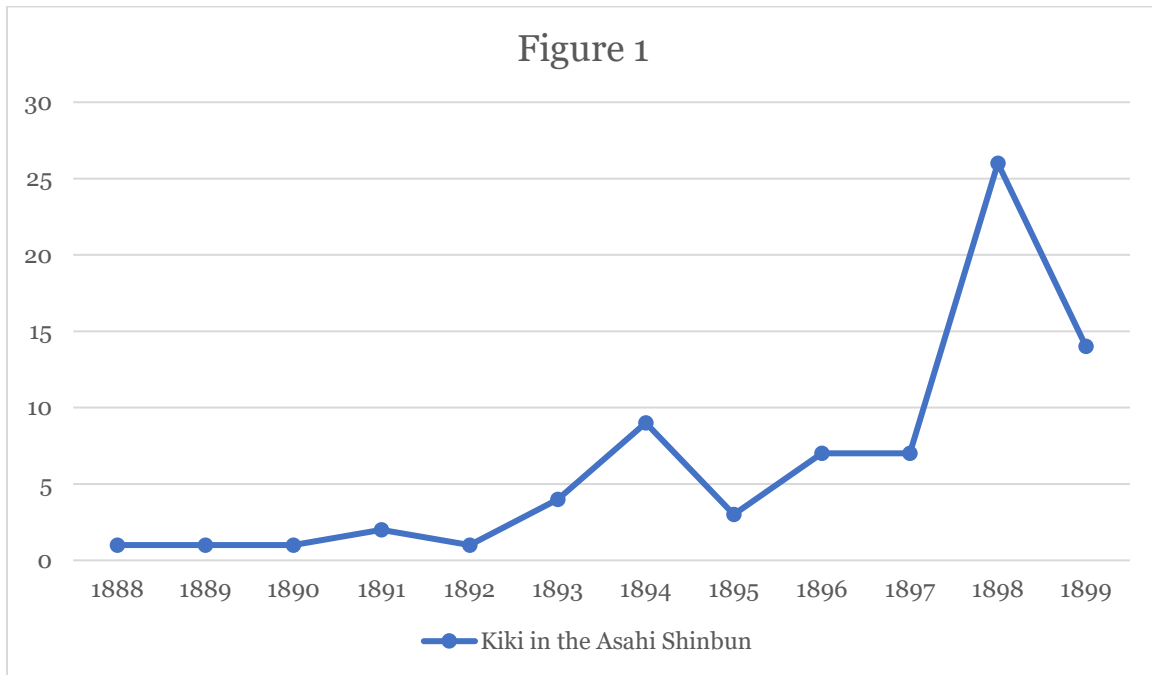
Both figures were adapted from data from the search of the term *kiki* between 1888–1899 in the *Asashi Shinbun Kiji Database*:
http://database.asahi.com.ezproxy.leidenuniv.nl:2048/library2e/main/top.php

Appendix 2 Excerpts from Fukuzawa's Essays[29]

a.

Suppose there is one male and one female dog, and the male dog is left free to play and roam about while the female dog is chained to the dog-house. Though she is given sufficient food, she is not allowed to play with other dogs or to run on the grass or romp about on the snow. Furthermore, when the mating season comes, she is still tied to the dog-house with the least freedom. The result is an aggravation of her nerves and a weakening of her body. Suppose this female dog, after all her trials, happens to bear a pup—what kind of pup will it be? Even to me, a person entirely ignorant about the care of dogs, it is clear that the pup will not be a very healthy one. If it is so with a dog, why should it be any different with human beings (36)?

b.

In the Western countries, the present human physique has grown taller heavier, and stronger compare with former times. For instance, the suits of armor which the knights of old wore are too small for the present man. On the contrary, Japanese men must be growing smaller and weaker, because the suits of armor which the samurai of former times wore seem to large and heavy for the modern Japanese (24).

c.

In ancient times, whether in the imperial court or among warriors, women were all active in learning and in enjoying poetry or playing under the moon or under the cherry blossoms. Their association with society was as free as that of men. … When examined, it will be discovered that in that apparent licentiousness, there existed a vigorous spirit which was healthier and stronger than that of the delicate and helpless women of later years, confined to the inner quarters of their houses (24-5).

d.

In my own thoughts, I suspect that the restrictions on women's behavior is something that began in the prolonged peace of the Tokugawa period. When all armed conflict in the country ended and the society became settled in the years of Genna [1615–23], Confucianism gradually rose to advocate what it called the great doctrine to clarify the social ranks of high and low,

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[29] For the same reasons as noted above, all translations in this section have been taken from Kiyooka and Fujiwara 1988.

noble and mean. At the same time the position of women was strictly defined. Along with it, the rules regulating personal morality and rectifying personal behavior were emphasized. And the main force of the moral drive was directed towards women. Though physical abuses and other such barbaric behavior ceased and improvement in food, clothing, and dwelling was attained, on the point of personal pleasure, women's interests were totally neglected. Outward comforts were assured, but inner emotions were suppressed, which was like strangling one with the soft floss of silk, as the popular saying goes—the harm was worse than injury inflicted by brutal force—and women deteriorated into what they are today (26).

e.

From the very beginning, all moral teachings have been written by men. The original Confucian doctrine and even its interpretations, such as *The Greater Learning for Women*, are all works by men. And those men always devised ways to ensure the comfort and convenience of their fellow men, but they apparently did not give consideration at all to the inconveniences of women (43-4).

f.

The secret is that men wanted to monopolize freedom of indulging in promiscuous behavior, and, simply to suppress women's objections, established rules against women's promiscuity and their jealousy. It was very clever of the men to have devised the precepts for insuring their own liberty (45).

g. [Confucianism's] style of teaching was simple and clear, very appropriate to childlike and primitive people. But it is now thousands of years since the sages passed away and the world has been continuously progressing. Yet, the scholars of each generation since have never attempted to renovate the old teachings. Not only did they guard them faithfully, they added to them, often towards extremes, causing confusion in human advancement (109-110).

h.

In any nation, such socialization develops as the civilization advances. But unfortunately in Japan, customs and the basic morality of the people have obstructed this normal development and even now when modern civilization is here with us, people still think of relations between men and women as relations of the flesh. Their frantic efforts to prevent disorder in physical

relation and obstruct freer association between the two sides is very much like holding on to guidelines for feeding children and applying them to adults (122).

i.

When we say that our women have no power, and that the rights of men and of women are unequal, they have in mind the conditions of women in the West in contrast to those in Japan. Women in the West have education in contrast to Japanese women, who are ignorant and uneducated. This is true, but isn't there something else that requires closer scrutiny? The other point of great difference when one compares Japan and the West, our Japanese advocates seem to pass over nonchalantly with no sign of recognition. Why? For me, their indifference is difficult to understand. What, then, could this point of difference be? The West is made up of countries, in all of which monogamy—one wife and one husband—is the law, while Japan is a country where one husband may have many wives simultaneously. Could there be any contrast greater and more serious than this? (139).

j.

from the first to the seventh, though the wording is different in each, the ultimate purpose of every rule is clearly to restrict women's rights and their activities so as to allow men the liberty to abandon their wives (183).

k.

By popular saying the truly masculine hero is always fond of sexual diversion, and all men of vigorous body and mind are bound to fall to sexual temptation. Such is a theory nicely contrived for popular appeal. But I am of the opposite opinion. I see those who fall to such temptations as weak, for unless a man possesses a truly firm and robust spirit, he cannot control himself. Those who fall to temptation are, in truth, weaklings. Of course, for a man in his vigorous youth, it requires much self-restraint to preserve moral integrity. That self-restraint requires the courage to face an enemy force of a million men without flinching. No laggard can bear it. Only the courage who are intimidated by no man can dismiss such an encumbrance with a laugh (151).

l.

serious men who are interested in Western civilization and those who know that culture, or have been to the West and have observed the workings of that society—such people should absorb and digest the ways of the people of the West. … Yet these men, when they come home and become immersed in the Japanese atmosphere for a while, somehow turn back into the original, carefree, worldly playboys (85).

m.

All the work done in the government or in companies is more like a side job done between the heavier duties performed at drinking parties. What can one expect from such work? … in proportion to their numbers not much is being accomplished" (153).

n.

No subject is useless for women except military strategy. But there is much to be considered about the extent of their studies. First, women have the duty to manage the household, and they are not privileged with much time for scholarly work. … If a woman has means, she may hire someone to take care of the house to put herself exclusively to scholarship. However, a woman's physical makeup is different from that of a man. She is denied total freedom of body and mind every month, then pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, and care of the child will follow. All these duties are imposed solely on her, and she loses much time in fulfilling them. Therefore, one may almost admit that women are not destined to vie with men on the same footing (222).

o.

Because the bringing up of children is the special domain of women, even those in wealthy or noble position should follow nature's way and nurse them with their own milk. … Fulfillment of women's natural duties cannot be done by anyone else. … But it must be remembered that in the very act of giving, motherly virtue and the mother's intangible influence will manifest themselves a hundred or a thousand times more than the material object. …. That it is wrong to entrust a child to hired hands is clear and needs no further comment. Some women in society are probably ignorant of this. They might have many children, but they complain that mending their clothes is bothersome and that feeding them so many times a day is worse, and they delegate such tasks to the maids. … What is the result likely to be? It is easy for anyone to guess. In the days of old, many of the children of clan lords and noble families grew up weak,

both physically and mentally. The cause of this said phenomenon was that ladies of those aristocratic families knew how to bring forth children but neglected to learn how to raise them. This is something which calls for deep reflection (232-3).

p.

I asked him [a certain Dutchman] why people did not respect him [dr. Hendrick: another Dutchman]. His answer was 'Yes, he is well trained in medicine, and he has brains. But he is really an incorrigible fellow. His wife was a woman of a shameful profession. He will never be able to join the society of respectable men. And so, because you are from Japan, he is trying to have an ordinary association with you. And he forces his way into your hotel'" (150).

q.

It is our great fortune that the foreigners still do not know our social customs well. But when the truth becomes known and the ladies of the West see the actual conditions with their own eyes, they are liable to condemn Japan as a hell and inferno for women (57).

r.

In the spring of this year, a certain American lady came on a visit to Japan and while observing the customs of our society, she heard about wives and concubines living together. She was very skeptical about it, but when she was finally convinced, she exclaimed, 'I have obtained proof of the matter, but when I tell my friends about it upon my return home, no one will believe me. They would probably think I was a liar and consequently cease to take my reports on other matters seriously.' 'The Japanese women are miserable, their lives are truly not worth living. I am sorry for them. I pity them. We Americans would not tolerate such a situation … She said with tears falling and gritted her teeth. When I heard the above story, I could not take it merely as a report. I felt that one grave stain on our new Japan had been exposed and my shame was similar to that of being subjected to a public whipping in the open marketplace. … I am stunned beyond words at the brazen shamelessness of our people (199-200).

s.

When a man arrogantly wields his power and places women beneath his feet, it causes suffering not only to those oppressed but it robs him of what might have been his own 'right

arm.' The loss is his as well as that of his house and the whole country. It only increases the gloom and discontent among the general populace, weakening himself and the nation (57).

t.

One must recognize the fact that, in carrying out the business of the nation, in the West both men and women divide the burden between them, while in Japan only half of them, the men only, carry the burden. If the abilities of the Japanese and Western people are the same, the labor force that performs the national business in Japan is only half of that of the West (117).

u.

When it is proven that difference in customs, of those of Japan from those of the West, are what make our women incapable, we should change our customs and adopt those of the West as quickly as possible so that our women will also become capable of contributing their fair share (38-9).

v.

It is the custom in Japan today for men to have official positions or engage in business usually outside the house. And all the duties within the house fall on the wife. Taking care of the clothing and food, keeping the house in a clean, sanitary condition, bringing up children and all such vital and important duties in the house are not any different in importance and difficulties from men's work outside (207).

w.

as the mistress of a household, if she is unable to restrain her husband from philandering, it will be as if she had abandoned her own rights and neglected her heaven-granted duty, and she will have no excuses. To hesitate and to back off in fear of being called jealous—that will become the very cause of the lifelong shame of a woman (239).

x.

When promiscuity is allowed it does not stop at the sinning of the man himself; it causes disharmony in the family, estrangement of brothers and sisters, and even after his death, the evil inherited from him not only causes his children to grow sickly but depravity will also be inherited, and a happy home becomes unattainable (239).

y.

there are women, already past adult age, who are simply unable to express themselves clearly; not only in business matters but even in greetings, their low mumblings leave any guest perplexed. ... So mumbled and inconsistent is she that she wastes much time, causing the doctor to wonder what diagnosis to make. ... I personally do not like talkative women, but I do not think that sealing their mouths is the only training appropriate for them (196).

z.

It is indeed a miserable state of affairs, but if men of conscience, who retain the least sense of responsibility toward the country, would rise and correct themselves to demonstrate a moral lifestyle, future progress will not meet with too many difficulties. After all, this situation has been brought about by the custom of marriage being disfigured by human transgression; it should be possible to mend it by human efforts (151).