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THE INCORPORATION OF SCIENTIFIC DISCOURSE IN
YAMAMURA BOCHŌ'S 'PRISMIST' POETRY (1914-1916)

Pierantonio Zanotti
Ca' Foscari University of Venice

Abstract

Yamamura Bochō (1884-1924) is mainly remembered as the author of *Seisanryōhari* (The Sacred Prism, 1915), a collection of *shi* (modern poetry in non-traditional forms) that represents the culmination of his experiments in diction and imagery. One of the most striking elements of his 'prismist' poetry is the presence of scientific language, coming from the domains of geology, botany, biology, and medicine. In this paper, I adopt a historical and textual perspective to attempt an analysis of the incorporation of scientific discourse in Bochō's poetry. Particular emphasis is placed on the European and Japanese debate on the 'new science' and on the similarities to the treatment of this topic by Bochō and the discourses of the historical European avant-garde (especially Italian Futurism).

Keywords

Yamamura Bochō, *Seisanryōhari*, Prismism, Futurism in Japan, Japanese poetry of the Taishō era

要旨

山村暮鳥は(1884~1924)主にその詩的実験の最高点を表す詩集『聖三稜玻璃』(大正4年)の著者として記憶されている。暮鳥の「プリズミスト」詩の中で最も印象的な特徴の一つは、地質学、植物学、生物学、医学などの範囲から、科学的な言語の挿入である。本稿では、歴史的観点から、暮鳥の詩における科学的言説の利用を分析してみる。特に、当時ヨーロッパ前衛運動(とりわけイタリアの未来派)や日本の文壇で起こっていた、所謂「新しい科学」をめぐる議論との関係に重点を置いて暮鳥の詩を再読してみる。

キーワード

山村暮鳥・聖三稜玻璃・プリズミズム・日本における未来派・大正時代の詩

Historical avant-gardes, particularly Italian Futurists, had a contradictory stance towards scientific knowledge. However, even though they proclaimed at times to be anti-intellectual, it would be incorrect to say that they were also absolutely anti-scientific. In 1911, Umberto Boccioni and his colleagues triumphantly declared: «We would at any price re-enter into life. Victorious science

has nowadays disowned its past in order the better to serve the material needs of our time» (*Manifesto of the Futurist Painters*)¹.

A reconfiguration of the statute of science is one of the most important themes of the twentieth century European avant-garde. Connected to it are such topics as the relationship between art and technology, the mechanization of life, the renegotiation of the boundaries between the organic and the inorganic, the medicalization of matter, and the de-humanization of art.

All these topics are typically foreshadowed in F.T. Marinetti's manifestos of 1912-1914. In them, the leader of Italian Futurism calls for the destruction of the 'I' in literature, brings forth the «lyrical obsession with matter» as the new key subject of art, declares that the mechanized syntax of the «control panels» of a «central electric station» are «our only models for writing poetry»². These statements imply a new conception of the relationship between art and science, intuition and reasoning, and fantasy and rationality. These realms are now complementary: by combining them, the poet can achieve a new «synthesis of life»:

We must abolish him [the "I"] in literature and replace him once and for all with matter, whose essence must be seized by strokes of intuition, something which physicists and chemists can never achieve. [...]

Through growing familiarity and friendship with matter, which scientists can know only in its physical and chemical reactions, we are preparing the creation of the mechanical man with interchangeable parts (*Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature*).

Let me explain: I want to introduce infinite molecular life into poetry not as a scientific document, but as an intuitive element (*Destruction of Syntax – Radio Imagination – Words-in-Freedom*).

At about the same time, an obscure Japanese poet was writing such verses as:

¹ Boccioni et al. 1912: 30, 32. A Japanese translation of this manifesto was available in Kimura Shōhachi 木村莊八's *Geijutsu no kakumei* 芸術の革命 (Revolution in Art, 1914) and *Miraiha oyobi rittaiha no geijutsu* 未来派及立体派の芸術 (The Art of Futurism and Cubism, 1915). Bochō owned a copy of the latter (Inoue 1988: 33; Tanaka 1988: 191), one of the most influential presentations of Cubism and Futurism to be published in Japan in the 1910s.

² Excerpts from *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* (1912), *Destruction of Syntax – Radio Imagination – Words-in-Freedom* (1913) and *Geometrical and Mechanical Splendor and the Numerical Sensibility* (1914). Here and after, I quote from the modern English translations in Rainey et al. 2009.

にくしんをつらぬく / いつぼんでんせん

One electric wire / goes through the body and soul

(*Yofuke*³, Late at night, ll. 2-3, *Shūsai bundan*⁴, May 1916, YBZ 1: 336)

ヒステリア
水銀歌私的利亜

mercury hysteria

(*Dansu*⁵, Dance, l. 6, *Takujō funsui*⁶, Apr. 1915, later included in *Seisanryōhari*⁷, YBZ 1: 69)

官能の金属的な中心にて

In the metallic center of the senses

(*Me no nai hito*⁸, The person with no eyes, l. 3, *Shiika*⁹, Sept. 1915, YBZ 2: 185)

He used the language of natural science within incoherent associations of images that anticipated Surrealism. In his prose writings of the same period, he declared: «My poems are religion, they are almost science (*kagaku*)»¹⁰, and he defined himself as a «scientist» (*kagakusha*)¹¹. That poet was Yamamura Bochō¹² (1884-1924), the author of *Seisanryōhari* (The Sacred Prism, 1915), a controversial collection that included many of his most daring poems.

In this paper, I will examine the similarities between the conception of the 'new' science articulated in the discourse of European historical avant-gardes (especially Italian Futurism, which is one of my fields of study) and the literary production of Bochō in the years 1914-1916, an interval corresponding to his 'prismist period', an ephemeral but historically relevant phase of thematic and stylistic experiments that induced his colleague Hagiwara Sakutarō¹³ (1886-1942) to label Bochō's poetry as 'futurist' in a well-known essay published in 1916¹⁴.

³ よふけ.

⁴ 秀才文壇.

⁵ だんす.

⁶ 卓上噴水.

⁷ 聖三稜玻璃.

⁸ めのないひと.

⁹ 詩歌.

¹⁰ 科学. *Shūjitsu aigo* 秋日愛語 (Love Words in an Autumn Day), *Fukushima nichinichi shinbun* 福島日日新聞, 9 Oct. 1914, YBZ 4: 325.

¹¹ 科学者. *Kono sonzai de aru* 此の存在である (This Existence of Mine), undated essay (ca. 1915-1916?), YBZ 4: 467.

¹² 山村暮鳥.

¹³ 萩原朔太郎.

¹⁴ In *Nihon ni okeru miraiha no shi to sono kaisetsu* 日本に於ける未来派の詩とその解説 (Futurist Poetry in Japan and Its Explanation), published in *Kanjō* 感情

1. *The Scientific Imagery in Bochō's Poetry*

Bochō is considered among the forerunners of literary Modernism (*modanizumu*)¹⁵ in his country¹⁶. As a cultural producer, he described an unusual trajectory: of peasant stock, he became a Christian in his youth and was able to study at the Anglican seminary in Tsukiji, Tōkyō, where he was eventually ordained as a minister. His years as a student before being dispatched as a missionary to different parishes in Eastern Japan coincided with his first steps in the poetry scene of Tōkyō. After his debut as a tankaist, he moved to *shi*¹⁷ (poetry in non-traditional forms); in the years between the end of Meiji and the beginning of Taishō, he fluctuated between Symbolism and Naturalism, coming also into contact with such personalities as Sōma Gyofū¹⁸, Kimura Shōhachi, and Hagiwara Sakutarō. In 1915, he published *Seisanryōhari*, which is commonly considered to be the culmination of his 'prismist period'. However, Bochō's experiments were met with indifference, if not with open criticism, by the rest of the poetry scene, which crushed his ambitions and self-confidence. Around 1917 he switched to his personal version of poetry inspired by the 'humanitarian' (*jindōshugi*)¹⁹ and 'democratic' (*minshūshugi*)²⁰ ideologies that had come into vogue in Japan after WWI.

It is possible to detect in Bochō's prismist poems a thematic vein that draws from the domains of natural sciences, chemistry, and physics. This vein includes a rather wide group of occurrences, to which secondary branches, such as optics, belong. Moreover, it appears to be often combined with the imagery coming from the sciences of living matter: biology, physiology,

(Sentiment) in November 1916, Sakutarō proclaimed, among other idiosyncrasies, that Bochō's poetry was the extreme development of Symbolism, which in Sakutarō's interpretation corresponded to Futurism. Original text in KSGS *shinbun zasshi hen*, 2: 24-29.

¹⁵ モダニズム.

¹⁶ Studies on Bochō in languages other than Japanese are very scarce, and his poetry, though sometimes included in English language anthologies, has never been translated in an independent volume. See Wilson and Atsumi 1972 and Keene 1999: 281-283. As for the Japanese side, book-length studies have been published by Wada Yoshiaki (1968, 1969, 1976), Sekigawa Sakio (1982), Tanaka Seikō (1988), Horie Nobuo (1994), and Nakamura Fujio (1995, 2006).

¹⁷ 詩.

¹⁸ 相馬御風.

¹⁹ 人道主義.

²⁰ 民衆主義.

medicine, etc., which are significantly represented in Bochō's poetic universe. From the lexical standpoint, this means that one can detect in Bochō's poems a proliferation of technical terms taken from these fields. This particular widening of the realm of poetry, especially as far as the realm of minerals and metals is concerned, had been already initiated by Kitahara Hakushū (1885-1942)²¹. However, in Hakushū's poetry, this new imagery tended to be exploited in order to express fresher sensorial reverberations, as it was typical of the glamorous exoticism of *Jashūmon*²² (Heretic Religion, 1909), or of the mystical brilliance of *Hakkin no koma*²³ (Platinum Top, 1914), two Hakushū collections that Bochō was certainly well-acquainted with. In addition to this aesthete vein, in Bochō's poems a new use of inorganic elements and of the denotative and detached language of science also contributes to conjure up the eclipse of the lyrical 'I'.

At first sight, Bochō's purpose may seem the same as the Naturalist poets of the *kōgo jiyūshi undō*²⁴ (movement for poetry in spoken language and free verse), who aimed at a realistic reproduction of daily life and ordinary reality, free from sentimentalism and subjectivism; but Bochō's poetry, though it keeps some connections to this movement²⁵, goes beyond the positivist rationalism that was at the core of Naturalism, and resorts to expressive methods that are basically irrational, intuitive, and maybe even subconscious, in order to establish unpredictable associations between images and words.

The most radical application of such method in his poetry, and the point where his research reached its limits, can be considered to be the infamous poem *Geigo*²⁶ (Delirium).

²¹ 北原白秋. When Bochō published *Seisanryōhari*, Hakushū was one of the most renowned poets of his generation. Bochō himself was connected to his coterie and had published some of his poems in Hakushū's magazines such as *Chijō junrei* 地上巡礼 (Pilgrimage on Earth) and *Ars*.

²² 邪宗門.

²³ 白金之独樂.

²⁴ 口語自由詩運動.

²⁵ Bochō's association with the Naturalist group of the magazine *Shizen to inshō* 自然と印象 (Nature and Impressions, 1909-1910) was short lived, and on the stylistic level, quite bland. Nevertheless, he retained from this experience a certain familiarity with the modes of Impressionist poetry practiced by such poets as Kawaji Ryūkō 川路柳虹 (1888-1959) and Maeda Ringai 前田林外 (1864-1946). See Nakamura 1995: 54-80.

²⁶ 癡語.

DELIRIUM²⁷

THEFT GOLDFISH
 ROBBERY TRUMPET
 BLACKMAIL VIOLIN
 GAMBLING CAT
 FRAUD SARAÇA
 BRIBERY VELUDO
 ADULTERY APPLE
 ASSAULT SKYLARK
 MURDER TULIP
 ABORTION SHADOW
 SEDITION SNOW
 ARSON MARMELO
 ABDUCTION CASTELLA

Apart from this most radical instantiation, which arguably delves in the same conceptual framework, I will examine a series of poems where the technical language of science is mingled with apparently absurd and arbitrary associations of images, producing an overall impression of estrangement and contradiction. As I will show, in such poems, a liberated usage of associative

²⁷ YBZ 1: 66. In terms of publication in a magazine (*Ars*, June 1915), *Geigo* is one of the most recent pieces in *Seisanryōhari*. According to Sekigawa Sakio (1982: 78-81), the term *geigo* may come from the Japanese translation of Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (*Entartung*, 1892), where it is used to mark the ideas of Ruskin and Swinburne: «ラスキンの思想はそれ自身に於て癡語に外ならざりしなり» («Ruskin's theory is in itself delirious», English ed. of 1895: 79); «彼の思想は真ならず、且、屢々癡語に類すれども» («His [Swinburne's] thought is false and frequently delirious», *ibid.*: 94). Nordau's controversial book was translated by Nakajima Moichi 中島茂一 as *Gendai no daraku* 現代の墮落 (March 1914). It appears to have been widely known and read in the Japanese intellectual milieu. It seems, therefore, extremely likely that Bochō had read it or that he was at least informed about its contents. The first terms of the nominal couples in *Geigo* come from the Japanese penal code (*Keihō* 刑法, 1880, 1907). Therefore, when possible, I translate them with the corresponding English technical terms. The second terms have, on the other hand, a more heterogeneous nature; many of them are loanwords reminiscent of the «Southern barbarian» exoticism of Hakushū's *Jashūmon*: *sarasa* (*saraça*, chintz), *birōdo* (*veludo*, velvet), *marumero* (*marmelo*, quince) and *kastēra* (*castella*, sponge cake) are all words of Portuguese origin. I resorted to capital letters in order to render the visual effect given by the concentration of *kanji* in the original, an expedient also used in Sas 1999: 19.

nexuses shares the stage with the debris of a denotative exactitude that is more promised than actually enacted. The language of science acts as a simulacrum: the rationality it is supposed to guarantee is, in fact, illusory. It can perhaps be said that Bochō's poetry, probably without its author's knowledge, conducted in this sense a critique of the language of nineteenth century science and of its claims to universal intelligibility.

One of the domains in which this contradictory use of scientific lexicon is prominently shown is in the interaction between the inorganic and the biological. Besides a number of poems in which the elements of the periodic table and the mineral world are well represented as original poetic images, such interaction renegotiates the boundaries between the world of the living and the non-living, the subjective and the objective, the human and the non-human: these spheres are no longer neatly separated, but mingled and confused. In the same way that it will be possible to capture the «magnetism of body and soul» (application of physical categories to the domain of the living), it will also be possible to sing the «hysteria of mercury» (application of medical categories to the non-living domain): something that can be compared to Marinetti's «lyrical obsession with matter».

Surely, Bochō's endeavor is not as radical and self-aware as that of Marinetti's or of other personalities of the European avant-garde (e.g., the Surrealists), and certainly a part of his inorganic imagery responds as a merely decorative function, to the quest for original and exotic words. Nevertheless, his poetry reveals a modernist potential that was absolutely new in Japan and, on a more general level, elucidates the possibilities of intersection between different discursive domains, such as those of literature, chemistry, physiology, botany, psychiatry, etc.

In my analysis, I single out three main motifs:

1) The **transmutation** of organic elements (plants, animals, man) into metals and minerals. This alchemic motif is clearly indebted to Hakushū's Symbolist poetry, especially when noble metals, such as gold, silver, and platinum, are involved. In this respect, Bochō is less exploring new uses of these images than, not unlike Sakutarō in the same years, following the steps of Hakushū (Kitagawa 1995: 20).

A «portrait» (*Shōzō*)²⁸ dedicated to Murō Saisei²⁹ (1889-1962) stands out as an example of such a process.

²⁸ 肖像.

²⁹ 室生犀星.

Portrait

The head is pure gold,
The heart glass,
The fingers silver,
The eyes pearls,
And the body marble.
(*Fūkei*³⁰, June 1914, YBZ 2: 159)

This portrait can also be considered as a less radical version of the associative method of *Geigo*: here the semantic and syntactical relationship among the two terms of each verse is made clearer by the positioning of the topic particle *wa* between them, and by a more consistent and conventional set of images.

Another example is the transformation into crystal (*kesshō*, *suishō*, *hari*, *shōgyoku*)³¹, which frequently affects parts of the body as one of the most common processes within the prismist world³². This motif too can be ascribed to the Symbolist tradition³³.

ぬつとつき出せ / 餓ゑた水晶のその手を...
Suddenly thrust out / these hungry hands of crystal...
(*Fuyū*³⁴, Winter, ll. 4-5, *Shiika*, Jan. 1915, later in *Seisanryōhari*, YBZ 1: 91)

手は結晶し、
Hands crystallize,
(*Genshin*³⁵, Actual body, l. 4, *Takujō fūnsui*, Mar. 1915, YBZ 2: 178)

二つの耳は結晶せり。
The two ears have crystallized.
(*Aru hito no onkyō no butteki sayō*³⁶, l. 18, Material process of the sound of a given thing, *Kitsune no su*³⁷, May 1916, YBZ 2: 195)

³⁰ 風景.

³¹ 結晶, 水晶, 玻璃, 晶玉.

³² The images of crystal were already quite common in Bochō's first collection, *Sannin no otome* 三人の処女 (Three Maidens, 1913), which proves their Symbolist lineage.

³³ *Shōgyoku* is a word not infrequently used in the poems of Kanbara Ariake 神原有明 (1875-1952), the father of Japanese Symbolism in poetry.

³⁴ 冬.

³⁵ 現身.

³⁶ 或る一の音響の物的作用.

³⁷ 狐ノ巢.

In other poems, Bochō presents even more radical and innovative chemical interactions, by resorting to elements that are not traditionally beautified in literature, and by coupling them with objects that are semantically remote from them. This is a way to describe a world where organic and inorganic domains are no longer impermeable:

金属的な蟋蟀
Metallic crickets
(*Chijō*³⁸, On earth, l. 2, *Maboroshi*³⁹, Sept. 1916, YBZ 2: 202)

金石の腫物に詩うづく [...] わが詩は金属胎盤なり
Poetry aches in the chalcolithic swellings [...] My poetry is a metallic placenta
(*Teichōshō*⁴⁰, Singing birds, *Chijō junrei*, Jan. 1915, YBZ 4: 179, 857)

Bochō declares his poetry to be a «metallic placenta», an obscure image that perhaps hints at the traditional claim of the creative power of verse, but with a fresher non-human nuance given by the metallic attribute.

2) The **reduction** of the organic to its bare physical and chemical mechanisms, an operation that can be linked to a positivist interpretation of human physiology. Magnetism, electricity, pressure, and force-fields are all called forth to describe living matter.

にくしんの磁気
Magnetism of body and soul
(*Eramaretaru hito ni*⁴¹, To the chosen ones, l. 7, *Chijō junrei*, Jan. 1915, YBZ 2: 175)

霊性磁気の乞食なり。 [...] 肉体晶玉
It's the beggar of spiritual magnetism. [...] Flesh crystal
(*Kokin shinjō*⁴², Creed in old coins, *Henro*⁴³, Jan. 1915, YBZ 4: 184)

³⁸ 地上.

³⁹ まぼろし.

⁴⁰ 啼鳥抄.

⁴¹ 撰まれたる人に.

⁴² 古金信条.

⁴³ 遍路.

我等の思想は燐素である。
Our thoughts are phosphor.
(*Shokkaku yoshō*⁴⁴, Addenda to *Antennae*, *Gunshū e*⁴⁵, Aug. 1915, YBZ 4: 183)

官能の高圧的なからくり
In the high pressure [or: 'high voltage'] mechanism of the senses
(*Jubirēshon*⁴⁶, Jubilation, l. 3, *Shūsai bundan*, Jan. 1916, YBZ 2: 190)

Acting as a scientist of living matter, Bochō is able to detect the manifestation of electric forces that may even appear to have been injected into this matter from the outside.

ふところに電流を仕掛け
It puts the electric current in the bosom
(*Fuyu*, cit., l. 1)

人造古代の愛 / あしうらに電気をし掛け。
Love of the artificial antiquity / It puts electricity in the soles of the feet.
(*Genshin*, cit., ll. 15-16)

とんぼはとんぼで電気に掛り
The dragonflies connect through electricity
(*Gogo sanji*⁴⁷, Three p.m., l. 7, *Kokumin bungaku*⁴⁸, Nov. 1915, YBZ 2: 186)

In some cases, the electric wires get to the point of literally penetrating and assaulting the living matter (perhaps the poet's body itself).

電線うなる / 電線目をつらぬき。
Electric wires buzz / Electric wires pierce (my) eyes.
(*Moyō*⁴⁹, Pattern, ll. 7-8, *Shiika*, Dec. 1914, later in *Seisanryōhari*, YBZ 1: 82)

In this portrayal of mechanized and metallicized living matter, the parts of the body move like automata.

⁴⁴ 触角余抄.

⁴⁵ 群衆へ.

⁴⁶ じゅびれえしよん.

⁴⁷ 午後三時.

⁴⁸ 国民文学.

⁴⁹ 模様.

手は機械的にま白く / 妬みより生れた薔薇を耳に植ゑ、
The hands mechanically purely white / Plant in the ears roses born out of envy,
(*Sōjō*⁵⁰, Sedition, ll. 3-4, *Shiika*, June 1915, YBZ 2: 182)

2a) An **over-determination** of the mechanical traits of inorganic phenomena. This process can be applied to traditional natural elements, such as meteorological phenomena, which can be interpreted as a way to criticize the nature-based lyricism of contemporary poetry.

金属的な驟雨の懺悔 / 化石した人生の絵のていたらく。
Confessions of metallic showers / state of the drawing of fossilized human life.
(*Jittai*⁵¹, Substance, ll. 5-6, *Shūsai bundan*, Jan. 1916, YBZ 2: 189)

機械的なそよかぜに / きえうせた蜻蛉のかげ
Shadows of vanished dragonflies / in the mechanical breeze
(*Shūi*⁵², Signs of autumn, ll. 2-3, *Shiika*, Sept. 1916, YBZ 2: 200)

3) A **pathological inflexion** of inanimate matter. Once the boundaries between organic and inorganic realms are loosened, in a reversal of what has been shown until now, the inanimate matter, too, can be affected by pathologies typical of living beings (namely, humans). This is not necessarily an instantiation of that anthropomorphization of the non-human against which Marinetti had taken a position in his manifestos. Man, in this case, is no more at the center, but some of his attributes survive, so to speak, without a human body on which they could insist, and these attributes can now be applied to inanimate matter. A passage from a famous Futurist text shows important similarities with Bochō's poetry:

Our renovated consciousness does not permit us to look upon man as the centre of universal life. The suffering of a man is of the same interest to us as the suffering of an electric lamp, which, with spasmodic starts [*keirenteki ni*⁵³, in Kimura's translation], shrieks out the most heartrending expressions of colour (*Manifesto of the Futurist Painters*).

Bochō seems to share with Futurism the refusal of anthropocentrism and a new interest in the phenomena that perturb inanimate matter. He does not con-

⁵⁰ 騒擾.

⁵¹ 実体.

⁵² 秋意.

⁵³ 痙攣的に.

fine himself to attributing to objects only feelings or moods (as in traditional personification), but, with a further step, he speaks of them also in terms of syndromes and pathological symptoms.

In one of his notebooks of this period, Sakutarō labels Bochō as the «psychologist of the mineral kingdom» (*kōbutsu shinrigakusha*)⁵⁴, Murō Saisei as that of the animal kingdom, and himself as the psychologist of the vegetal kingdom. This schematization appears to be an over-simplification⁵⁵. In fact, as the examples that I am presenting clearly show, Bochō tends, as the result of a progressive confusion between organic and inorganic matter, to focus his interest not only on the mineral world.

Electricity (*den*)⁵⁶ and spasms (*keiren*)⁵⁷ are two common images in prism poems, as well as their combination. A scenario in which some hints may have come from the Futurist passage quoted above cannot be easily discarded, considering the chronology of its circulation in Japan.

ひそかに天体脈管を走れ
Run secretly through the vessels of heavenly bodies
(*Eramaretaru hito ni*, cit., l. 8)

でんせんの儂麻質斯
Rheumatism of electric wires
(*Mozō shinju*⁵⁸, Counterfeit pearls, l. 9, *Shiika*, Feb. 1915, YBZ 1: 334)

ああくらいと
弧光燈の気管支加答児。
Bronchial catarrh of arc lights.
(*Tama*⁵⁹, Beads, l. 5, *Chijō junrei*, Mar. 1915, YBZ 2: 177)

喇叭は神経衰弱し
The trumpet has a nervous breakdown
(*Ishō ni tsuite*⁶⁰, On the design, l. 3, *Shiika*, Apr. 1915, YBZ 2: 179)

⁵⁴ 磁物心理学者。

⁵⁵ See Hashiura 1979: 25. The three poets had founded the short lived Ningyo Shisha 人魚詩社 (Poetry Society 'Siren', 1914-1916), and published an ephemeral *dōjin zasshi* 同人雑誌, *Takujō funsui* (Tabletop Fountain, 1915) that lasted only three issues.

⁵⁶ 電。

⁵⁷ 痙攣。

⁵⁸ 模造真珠。

⁵⁹ 玉。

⁶⁰ 意匠に就いて。

電線の心的曲折、/[...] / 自働車の痙攣、
Psychic meanderings of electric wires, / [...] / Convulsions of automobiles,
(*Yake*⁶¹, Night scenery, ll. 1, 3, *Shiika*, Aug. 1915, YBZ 2: 183)

でんせん^{ひまつ}痙攣れつ
The electric wires are convulsing
(*Shogen*⁶², Apparition, l. 2, *Shiika*, Sept. 1915, YBZ 2: 184)

生理的な月のひかりを
Physiologic moonlight
(*Atarashiki mono no mikata no shiteki setsumeri*⁶³, Poetic explanation of the new way of seeing things, l. 6, *Ibaraki*⁶⁴, Jan. 1916, YBZ 2: 191)

The vegetal realm is medicalized too:

百合の神経、
Nerves of lilies,
(*Hari mozaiku*⁶⁵, Glass mosaic, l. 10, *Shinchō*⁶⁶, Nov. 1915, YBZ 2: 185)

みどり松葉のしんけいの上にて
On the nerves of green pine leaves
(*Yuki*⁶⁷, Snow, l. 5, *Shūsai bundan*, Jan. 1916, YBZ 2: 189)

薔薇は肉的にして擬似ヒステリアの状態にあり
Roses, carnally, are in a state of para-hysteria
(*Nikutai no hansha*⁶⁸, Body reflex, l. 3, *Bunshō sekaï*⁶⁹, Nov. 1916, YBZ 2: 204)

It seems that the language of medicine, even more than that of chemistry or physics, is invested by Bochō with a particular function of linkage between the living and non-living spheres. This may be connected to another theme that is present in his poems, albeit not as one of the most prominent: that of disease

⁶¹ 夜景。

⁶² 所現。

⁶³ 新しき物のみかたの詩的説明。

⁶⁴ いばらき。

⁶⁵ 玻璃もざいく。

⁶⁶ 新潮。

⁶⁷ 雪。

⁶⁸ 肉体の反射。

⁶⁹ 文章世界。

(metaphoric as well as biological), which is often conceived as a moment of and condition for truth. The withdrawal of the lyrical self from Bochō's poetry – the result of a two-fold movement of prismatic diffraction of the apperception (hence the title of his collection) and of a shifting to matter of the thematic and scopic focus – is at times articulated by resorting to the language of medicine and pathology⁷⁰.

It may be conceded that one could explain the last series of images cited above as if they were analogies: the lamp light is all fits and starts, like the persistent cough of a person with an infection in the respiratory tract; the trumpeter is exhausted, and the music from her instrument fades away to silence; mercury (possibly inserted in a glass thermometer) goes 'hysterically' up and down because of sudden variations in temperature; the tangled electric wires may be compared to the tortuosity of the human heart; the motor of an automobile just gave a start, and so on.

But the point is: how could it be that such statements (apparently alien to the traditional poetic discourse) and not others were available to a Japanese poet in the 1910s, and how could it be that he himself felt legitimated in using them in his poems?

What kind of outlook on the world possesses a poetry that detects morbid elements in inanimate matter, a poetry that speaks the language of clinical pathology?

What conditions of possibility for knowledge (in the Foucauldian sense of *episteme*) are inscribed in Bochō's prismist poetry?

All the elements seen above hint perhaps at an epistemic apparatus produced and circulating at Bochō's time: that in which the language of science was configured, with a series of corrections coming from the incorporation of the so-called 'anti-positivist reaction', as a horizon of truth valid for all fields (human and non-human) of reality.

The purely provisional considerations that will follow cannot but restrain themselves to hint at the perspectives and contours of a wider research that

⁷⁰ The development within Japanese poetry that was to lead to the presentation of disease as a constitutive condition of individual singularity and as one of the modern places for the manifestation of the truth about man, came to completion with Sakutarō and with the critical discourse on *Tsuki ni hoeru* 月に吠える (Howling at the Moon, 1917). Sakutarō fully articulated the intersection between the discursive domain of literature and that of medicine, an intersection that was still too little developed or too confused in Bochō. This does not mean that in Bochō's poems one cannot detect a *clinical inflexion* of his poetical language. However, if compared to that articulated in *Tsuki ni hoeru*, it appears to be just too episodic in quantitative terms and non-systemic in qualitative terms.

may, someday, be able to globally approach the discursive dynamics operating in Taishō Japan as far as these topics are concerned.

2. Poetry and the New Science

Science has changed the world radically. The ancient poets, spurred by their extraordinary imaginative force, by borrowing the so-called arcane forces of the soul, used to dream a world outside of the world. The modern scientist has staged in the real world miracles even more arcane, even more amazing than these. He has disclosed a world inside of the world. He has brought the mysteries inside reality.

Sōma Gyofū, *The Central Life in Contemporary Art*⁷¹

The fluctuations between and intermingling of human and non-human, organic and inorganic, form a significant part (probably the most 'avant-garde' part) of Bochō's imagery. Certainly, in most cases, the obscurity of the texts makes it difficult to understand if the language is referential, hallucinatory, metaphorical, or allegorical, and if the objects presented in the poem are real or imaginary. This may be said of prismist poetry in its entirety.

Putting aside these interpretive issues, let us come back to the genetic preoccupation. What are the sources of these poetics of living and non-living matter, of the *scientifically spoken* matter, that appear in Bochō's poems?

The *direct* influence of Futurist writings must be reasonably downplayed. The research on this topic shows that when Bochō was writing these poems, only the first *Manifesto of Futurism* (1909) and the 1911 *Manifesto of the Futurist Painters* (where the image of the «suffering of an electric lamp» cited above is located) were available in Japanese translations; at the same time, their English versions were circulating among intellectuals interested in things Western (especially *yōga*⁷² painters and art critics)⁷³. Other manifestos had enjoyed far less visibility in Japan. The best known of them was probably the *Techni-*

⁷¹ *Gendai geijutsu no chūshin seimei*. 現代芸術の中心生命 *Waseda bungaku* 早稲田文学 (Mar. 1913): 2. At the time of this essay, Sōma was one of the most influential literary critics in Japan, and had recently moved from Naturalism to his personal version of Vitalism (*seimeishugi* 生命主義). In this article, he explicitly lauded the Italian Futurists as representatives of a truly contemporary «art of force».

⁷² 洋画.

⁷³ See, among others, Ōtani 1992, Omuka 2000, Hackner 2001, Tanaka 2002, Nishino 2009.

cal Manifesto of Futurist Literature: substantial excerpts of it were available in *Cubists and Post-Impressionism* (1914), by the American art connoisseur Arthur Jerome Eddy⁷⁴.

That does not mean that there is no connection at all between the Futurist manifestos and Bochō's poetry. Such a connection should be looked for less in textual correspondence than in a shared way of discursively constructing the modes of scientific knowledge (and of knowledge at all) that at that time was equally present in Japan and Europe.

Since the turn of the century, the debate on the so-called crisis of the positivist conception of science had spread in the Japanese intellectual field, too. In Japan, as well as in Europe and the United States, directly through the circulation of foreign texts, or indirectly through their translation and journalistic debate, the late-nineteenth century commonplace of the 'bankruptcy of science' gained some currency. The 'bankruptcy of science' (*banqueroute de la science*), which is to be understood first of all as a linguistic formula, was quite successful as a catchphrase in the *fin de siècle* cultural debate, its coinage (around 1895) being traditionally attributed to Ferdinand Brunetière. The term was literally echoed (*kagaku no hasan*)⁷⁵ in Kuriyagawa Hakuson's⁷⁶ influential *Kindai bungaku jikkō*⁷⁷ (Ten Lessons on Modern Literature, first ed. 1912) (1948: 221-222). As Pierre Bourdieu noted (1995: 125), the anti-positivist and anti-Naturalist reaction was in many respects a «symbolic coup d'état»; the circulation of formulas like 'bankruptcy of science' was part of the «set of symbolic strategies» of such a coup.

It goes beyond my capacity and the scope of this paper to trace here a complete doxographic reconstruction of the anti-positivist and anti-Naturalist reaction in Japan⁷⁸. What should be highlighted, however, is that even though within the process of substantial semantic correction of the status of science as it had been configured during the nineteenth century – a process where the new discoveries

⁷⁴ Eddy's book was certainly known to Bochō both indirectly (through some articles published in magazines and newspapers where Bochō was a contributor or a regular reader) and directly (he translated a passage from the chapter *Esoragoto* in the article *Kono geijutsu de aru* 此の芸術である (This Art of Mine), *Gunshū e*, Jan. 1916; YBZ 4: 359). There is, however, no conclusive evidence that he read (and when he read) the chapters on Futurism.

⁷⁵ 科学の破産.

⁷⁶ 厨川白村.

⁷⁷ 近代文学十講.

⁷⁸ See, especially for the literary field of the late Meiji period: Noda 1975, Sakagami 1987, Tanaka 1988: 110-120, Suzuki 1995, Itō 1997.

in the fields of thermodynamics, electromagnetism, quantum mechanics, non-Euclidean geometries, etc. were often called forth as *exempla* – a wholesale rejection of science as a tool of truth did not emerge. The discourses on art appropriated the latest discoveries of science, which were often perceived as revolutionary, in order to constantly reconfigure the status of their own objects, transferring some elements from the discursive domains of science to their own. This process paradoxically presents a stronger continuity with the poetics of the positivist age than is generally thought, because the assumption remains unquestioned that what is discovered and articulated in the scientific field (e.g., the relativity theory) not only can be transitively applied as well to the fields of painting, literature, philosophical thought, etc., but also that, once applied, it produces truth.

In a way, among some sectors of the Japanese intellectual classes, the anti-positivist and anti-enlightenment reaction had already taken place after the first decades of the Meiji period. When the momentum of *bunmei kaika*⁷⁹ and of the utilitarian, empiricist, and evolutionist theories that had guided it was exhausted, and the (neo)idealist doctrines had taken the lead, the reaction was often divulged by conservative thinkers as Inoue Tetsujirō⁸⁰ (1855-1944), and in literature, by authors as Mori Ōgai⁸¹ (1862-1922). At the beginning of the twentieth century, a rough polarization between the followers of pragmatism, especially in its Jamesian version, and those of a neo-idealism with important inserts of neo-Kantian thought got established. The first group had one of its strongholds in Waseda University, while the other was more typical of the Imperial University of Tōkyō and, at least in part, of Kyōto⁸². To what extent such a configuration may have influenced the literary scene, possibly through the literary magazines of such universities, *Waseda bungaku* and *Teikoku bungaku*⁸³, or through several semi-amateurish periodicals (*dōjin zasshi*) edited by their

⁷⁹ 文明開化.

⁸⁰ 井上哲次郎.

⁸¹ 森鷗外.

⁸² See Piovesana 1968: 1-85. For example, Kaneko Umaji 金子馬治 (1870-1937), who published the Japanese translation of Bergson's *L'évolution créatrice* owned by Bochō (Tanaka 1988: 143), was a Waseda professor. In his thought, which was basically eclectic, one can find some traces of pragmatism, as well as an evident sympathy towards neo-Kantianism. The magazine *Shinrisōshugi* 新理想主義 (New Idealism, 1915-1916), too, to which Bochō contributed on a rather regular basis, echoed neo-Kantian positions (YBZ 4: 863). Speaking of the connection between the configuration of the Japanese philosophical discourse and the reception of historical avant-gardes, Ijiri Raku (2006) has, for instance, noticed that the integration of neo-Kantian ideas within the intellectual circles in Kyōto somehow hindered the reception of Kandinsky's aesthetic theories.

⁸³ 帝国文学.

students or professors, is difficult to gauge. A factor to be taken into account is the action of those thinkers and writers who were not so involved in the factional logic of the academic establishment and who, like Takayama Chogyū⁸⁴ (1871-1902), were more reactive to less technical issues, such as the definition of the modern individual; in addition, there were also literary critics, like Kuriyagawa Hakuson, who popularized the topics of the Western philosophical debate. In the above-mentioned *Kindai bungaku jikkō*, Kuriyagawa gave a detailed survey of the latest trends in the works of Bergson, Eucken, Nietzsche, Poincaré, Dubois-Reymond, and even mentioned less famous thinkers, such as Giovanni Papini, an Italian writer who for some time supported Futurism⁸⁵. It is even more difficult to assess how much a marginal author and a representative of the provincial literary world (*chihō bundan*)⁸⁶ as Bochō could be permeable to a philosophical debate that, especially from the 1910s, with the maturation of the Kyōto School – *Zen no kenkyū*⁸⁷ (*An Inquiry into the Good*) by Nishida Kitarō⁸⁸, a text with strong Jamesian overtones, was published in 1911 – came to a nearly sectarian degree of academic specialization⁸⁹.

In any case, the Japanese cultural field of the 1910s had fully elaborated a critique of positivism. This made possible, in a neo-Kantian way, the safeguarding of the heuristic value of scientific knowledge, without elevating it to the position of an absolute paradigm, as had been the case with nineteenth cen-

⁸⁴ 高山樗牛.

⁸⁵ Kuriyagawa 1948, especially 218-225.

⁸⁶ 地方文壇.

⁸⁷ 善の研究.

⁸⁸ 西田幾多郎.

⁸⁹ In this sense, it would be of extreme interest to study the relationship that Bochō established with the Kyōto philosopher Tsuchida Kyōson 土田杏村 (1891-1934). Their contacts began with an article (in *Daisan teikoku* 第三帝国, The Third Empire, April 1917) where Kyōson attempted a belated re-evaluation of *Seisanryōhari* from the perspective of «symbolic [that is, neo-Kantian] philosophy». Tsuchida was in fact close to the positions of the Marburg school. He also wrote an afterword to *Kaze wa kusaki ni sasayaita* 風は草木にささやいた (The Wind Murmured to the Plants), Bochō's third collection, and they personally met when Bochō took a trip to Kansai in 1919. In a review of Sakutarō's *Tsuki ni hoeru* published in April 1917 in *Shiika* (YBZ 4: 386), Bochō states that he is currently influenced by Kyōson's ideas, which he has come to know better, thanks to their recent exchange of letters. It is possible that these contacts were instrumental in his interest toward neo-Kantian thought. In this respect, a later reference to Wilhelm Windelband is to be noticed in the essay *Ushikunuma no gasei ni okuru* 牛久沼の画聖におくる (To the Pictorial Genius of the Ushiku Lake [Ogawa Usen 小川芋銭], 1923, YBZ 4: 511).

tury positivism. This framework easily presents some points in common with the conception of scientific knowledge as it emerges from Bochō's writings.

Bochō's writings implicitly share with Futurism and with other intellectual movements of the early twentieth century the motif that, once it had left behind its more rigidly mechanistic and deterministic phase, science would have been able to renew itself by embracing in its domain those elements that were not traditionally considered as part of it, such as intuition, relativity, indeterminacy, fantasy, and vital force. The so-called 'anti-positivist reaction' was able, in this way, to profess the achievement of a synthesis between science and spirituality.

Such a narrative can already be detected in an 1889 essay by Paul Adam that is surprisingly close to the reflections and the images of Bochō's essays:

L'Époque à venir sera mystique. Et le plus étonnant du miracle c'est que la science elle-même, cette fameuse science positive et matérialiste qui renia l'orthodoxie, cette science elle-même viendra humblement annoncer la découverte du principe divin apparu au fond de ses creusets, dans les artifices de ses prismes, sous l'ondoiement de ses cordes acoustiques, dans les spasmes de son éther électrique⁹⁰.

The synthesis of science and spirituality, prophesized by Paul Adam, a novelist that Marinetti had listed among the forerunners of Futurism, corresponded in literature to the synthesis of Naturalism (claim to a literary truth of scientific nature) and Symbolism (use of anti-rational techniques such as revealing *correspondances*, synesthesia, free association of images, etc.) (Zellini 1990: 179). This is exactly what Bochō, and as Kubo Tadao argued, even more Sakutarō after him, tried to accomplish at a certain point in the twists and turns of the history of Japanese poetry (Sagiyama 1983: 86).

The aspiration to such a synthesis seems to be a common trait in the discourse of the European avant-garde:

Indeed, the avant-garde often adopts scientific ideas to reassert a metaphysical and cosmic perspective in modern literature and art. By providing a model of investigation and discovery of both cosmic and microscopic realms, science may cause a radical reorientation of human self-consciousness and position in the universe. For the avant-garde, science thus joins the inquiring imagination and the natural realm. [...] [S]upposedly grounded in the rationalism of scientific thought, the visionary and irrational dimension of avant-garde desire is once again revealed (Russell 1985: 28)⁹¹.

⁹⁰ Foreword to *L'art symboliste* by Georges Vanor. Quoted in Rapetti 1990: 69.

⁹¹ Russell traces back this attitude of 'rationalist irrationalism' to the oxymoronic program by Rimbaud of a «raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens».

In this sense, a cluster of declarations by the Futurists deserve quotation:

Our plastic-constructive idealism takes its laws from the new certainties given to us by science.
(Umberto Boccioni, *Pittura e scultura futuriste*, 1914)⁹².

La philosophie en général et la philosophie scientifique, la science en général et surtout cette dernière époque de la Science qui commence par la loi de constance originelle de [René] Quinton [French naturalist, 1866-1925], ont ouvert des horizons nouveaux à la perception des artistes modernes.

La philosophie scientifique et la méthode des découvertes scientifiques de Quinton nous apprennent à regarder les phénomènes dans leur finalité qui est la vie, et nous expliquent cette vie selon les lois cosmiques, physiques et chimiques qui règlent l'Univers (Gino Severini, *Symbolisme plastique et symbolisme littéraire*, 1916).

Accordingly, the discourse of the avant-garde could open itself to the incorporation and re-articulation of statements stemming from scientific and technological discourses: with them it shared, after all, a claim to truth and action on life and reality, which was a far cry from the *désengagement* of the aesthete and *décadent* school.

Neo-Impressionism was probably the first movement that manifested the possibility of going beyond the Romantic antagonism between the scientific method and artistic spontaneity (Rapetti 1990: 60)⁹³. And, as Giovanni Lista noted: «Pour les futuristes il s'agissait de prolonger dans une direction vitaliste et moderniste, le principe d'une "esthétique scientifique" qui avait inspiré le néoimpressionnisme» (1979: 28).

From Neo-Impressionism onwards, the discoveries of scholars such as Helmholtz, Faraday, Maxwell, Boltzmann, Van der Waals, Riemann, and so on had made their entrance into the theoretical writings of European painters and critics. This incorporation sanctioned the nexus between art writing and mathematical/scientific parlance, which was nothing but a way to reaffirm scientific discourse in its status as a source of truth. Though a good reader of English, Bochō was probably not endowed with the education and

⁹² Boccioni 1997: 79. My translation. It seems likely that Bochō did not know this book that, with the exception of few excerpts translated by Arishima Ikuma 有島生馬 in 1915, was at that time available only in Italian. The same can be said of Severini's article.

⁹³ Kimura Shōhachi too, in *Miraiha oyobi rittaiha no geijutsu*, sensed that the purpose of Neo-Impressionism was to «tie science to art» (KSGS *kanpon hen* 1: 433).

the preparation needed to nourish with such authorities his conception of the «new certainties given to us by science» (Boccioni). Nevertheless, it is likely that an echo of the new sensational discoveries in the fields of physics, bio-chemistry, mathematics, etc. might have gotten to him in one way or another, perhaps through the always up-to-date Japanese periodicals. However, with no explicit references available in his works of this period, a more cautious stance on his knowledge of specific discoveries and theories seems to be advisable.

The coexistence (which may appear at times to be unresolved, and at times as a harmonious synthesis) of old naturalist/positivist claims (confidence in science and in its certainties, if only the 'new' ones) with calls for a new idealism that must be established «through growing familiarity and friendship with matter, which scientists can know only in its physical and chemical reactions» (Marinetti) may be detected in Bochō's writings as well.

In some of his essays, Bochō elaborates, often aphoristically, on science (*kagaku*), poetry and religion, which he often mentions together in the same passage.

The less he is understood by *people*, the more the self becomes profound and excellent in the art, and his art becomes religion, his religion becomes science (*Mizu no ue ni*⁹⁴, Above the water, *Shiika*, Sept. 1914, YBZ 4: 181, 858).

True spirit is matter. In true matter there is spirit (*Kakusen*⁹⁵, Sharp line, *Takujō funsui*, May 1915, YBZ 4: 340).

Composing poetry is like a woman giving birth to a child, like a scientist kneading gold (*Chōshi senpyō*⁹⁶, Selection and criticism of long poems, *Shūsai bundan*, Sept. 1915, YBZ 4: 570).

Can scholars explain the spirit of the crystal? As for me, I just have the presentiment of a Renaissance of instinct (*Runessansu wo yokan suru*⁹⁷, I have a presentiment of a Renaissance, *Bunshō sekai*, Dec. 1915, YBZ 4: 177).

Poetry is intrinsic science (*Chōshi senpyō*, *Shūsai bundan*, Feb. 1916, YBZ 4: 579).

⁹⁴ 水のうへに.

⁹⁵ 劃線.

⁹⁶ 長詩選評.

⁹⁷ ルネツサンスを予感する.

I completely abandoned the old instinctive life and now stand in a new science (*Hisō naru genmetsusha*⁹⁸, The tragic disillusioned, *Shinrisōshugi*, Feb./Mar. 1916, YBZ 4: 361).

Religion despises science, but science truly gives religion its essence (*Kaku shōōsu*⁹⁹, Thus it corresponds, undated essay (ca. 1918?), YBZ 4: 471).

Poetry gets closer to «science». However, with this term Bochō seems to designate less the methods of experimental inquiry or theorematic demonstration, quantitative studies or empirical approaches to reality, than a certain attitude, not even necessarily intellectual, that produces truth, not unlike (he is a Christian, after all) religion. This attitude penetrates the darkest meanders of matter and life, leaving to poetic intuition the task of expressing its discoveries. Here an explanation of the collection title (*The Sacred Prism*) can be found: reality is analyzed and recomposed through that combination of rationality and intuition along which that particular epistemological tool that is the prismatic soul of a man operates. Such a conception parallels that of Marinetti in that it underscores the role of integration and completion that art plays in the respects of the scientific study of matter (notice the striking similarity to Marinetti's sentences: «[to seize the essence of matter] by strokes of intuition, something which physicists and chemists can never achieve»; «not as a scientific document, but as an intuitive element»).

In other words, poetic language shares with scientific language the same object (matter, organic or inorganic, sensorial or psychic) and the same purpose (to attain its truth or essence), even though it is configured along another method, the intuitive one. Putting aside some extreme and isolated cases (one of them is probably *Geigo*), both Marinetti and Bochō resort in their poetry to a combination of logic and intuition. This is derived from the need to articulate a language that, since not all of its conventional structures are challenged (something that was attempted by Dada, according to the official hagiography¹⁰⁰), maintains, however disputed, a logical formalization (for instance in its semantics and syntax).

In the poem *Watashi wa bunseki suru*¹⁰¹ (*Ars*, June 1915), characterized (as most typical of the prismist style) by a parade of incoherent images, this hybrid

⁹⁸ 悲壮なる幻滅者.

⁹⁹ 斯く照応す.

¹⁰⁰ See Van den Berg 2006 for a critical presentation of the mythology of Dada radicalism.

¹⁰¹ 私は分析する.

nature of Bochō's poetic language coagulates into a verb (*bunseki suru*, to analyze) that can be seen somehow as an ambiguous epistemological declaration:

I Analyze

I analyze, the spirit of the smoke of a cigarette,
The window has the rose-color of pure flesh,
There's an extremely pathetic spider
He meditates in my pores,
But, in fact, the value of this world
Is not God, it's the fool.
(YBZ 2: 182)¹⁰²

On a more abstract level, the specific content of Bochō's positions on art and science (which are typically confusing and contradictory) is not crucial in itself. Perhaps it is more important to notice that he did not perceive as improper to resort to linguistic tools taken from the discursive formations of scientific scholarship in order to talk about his poetry, or, as has been shown in the former paragraphs, to write it.

Therefore, in order to answer the questions concerning the origins of his inorganic poetics, I suggest that its conditions of possibility must be located in a particular configuration of the Japanese and European discourses on art and the new science. As far as the stylistic aspects are concerned, a combination of indigenous articulations of such discourses and of the most recent suggestions coming from the European avant-gardes played an important role. In the first domain, one may account for many different endogenous factors: the independent development of Bochō's reflections on the «negation of self» that he had begun to articulate in some essays of the pre-prismist period (Sugiura 1979), or the influence of Japanese Naturalist/Impressionist poetry and of Hakushū's alchemic Symbolism. In this paper, I feel content in having sketched a picture of the wider epistemic configuration that presided over Bochō's most innovative experiments.

Within a productive context where the *kōgo jiyūshi undō* and Hakushū's poems were important technical precedents, Bochō came to outline new possibilities for the development of Japanese *shi*. What I wanted to show was that

¹⁰² As the composition of *Seisanryōhari* reveals, Bochō was particularly prone to send to Hakushū's magazines what he considered his most accomplished and representative poems. *Bunseki suru* may perhaps be interpreted as a study on the function of the skin and body of man (the rose-colored «window») as a porous diaphragm to the external world.

Bochō's poetics and poetry can be placed in a larger framework that involved the discursive construction of the relationship between literature and science.

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Abbreviations

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