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## From Nostalgia for the Present to the Unrememberable Future: How could F. Jameson discuss *Demon Slayer*, *Attack on Titan*, or *Jujutsu Kaisen*?<sup>1)</sup>

Eiichi NOJIRI\*

### Abstract

This paper applies Fredric Jameson's theory, particularly his concept of "nostalgia for the present," to analyze the political unconscious expressed in contemporary Japanese popular culture, including time-loop stories, otherworldly reincarnation (*isekai*), and narratives of external assault (*Demon Slayer*, *Attack on Titan*, *Jujutsu Kaisen*). The study argues that these genres function as imaginative solutions to the structural contradictions and historical blockage experienced in late-capitalist Japan, often referred to as the "lost 30 years."

The analysis begins by situating Japanese time-loop narratives (*STEINS;GATE*, *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*) as a variation of Jameson's "Dick stage," reflecting a stagnation of historical sense in post-bubble Japan. These narratives offer a fictional resolution that symbolically avoids grand historical narratives. This is followed by the rise of *isekai* stories (*That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime*), which represent a desire for spatial escape into a timeless world with clear, game-like ethics, a move prefiguring the "Demme/Lynch stage." This cultural shift reflects the "misery of happiness"—a closed, seemingly secure present—that became the default political unconscious. The paper emphasizes that the seeds for these motifs were sown around 1970, when Japan entered the late-capitalist stage. Specifically, it notes that Yamada Futaro's *Makai Tensho* (1964/1967), Mishima Yukio's *The Sea of Fertility* (1965–1971), and Tsutsui Yasutaka's *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time* (1965/1967)—all dealing with reincarnation or temporal loops—emerged simultaneously at this historical turning point.

The focus then shifts to works where an external enemy assaults and dismantles the closed everyday (*Demon Slayer*, *Attack on Titan*, *Jujutsu Kaisen*). These narratives directly fulfill the ethical and political desire to confront a historical crisis that flows back into the

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\* Graduate School of Human Sciences, The University of Osaka, 1-2, Yamadaoka, Suita, Osaka 565-0871, Japan. (nojiri.eiichi.hus@osaka-u.ac.jp)

present. Crucially, *Attack on Titan*'s revelation that the enemy is a product of human civilization suggests the "other" resides within one's own forgotten history and physical body. This internal enemy is theorized using habitus (Bourdieu), which acts as an unconscious, inherited "imaginative corporeality." The success of *Jujutsu Kaisen*, dealing with "curses," is interpreted as resonating with the contemporary issue of obsolete habitus inheritance inducing melancholy and a double bind in the subject.

Ultimately, the paper aims to complete the Jamesonian project by seeking a "historical future" that is non-representational. By contrasting "mourning" (representational) with "melancholy" (non-representational/historical, as per Traverso), the study advocates for a future derived not from utopian impulse/imagination but from the higher cognitive function of judgment. To derive this "future poetry" and break from the tyranny of the present, the paper proposes connecting post-Kantian philosophical theories of imagination and judgment with modern neuroscience (specifically Hebb's "phase sequences") to reverse-engineer the self-evident nature of the "body schema" and historicity itself.

This paper is intended only as a prelude to the comprehensive research scheduled to follow.

Key words: Fredric Jameson; the political unconscious; habitus; melancholy; unrememberable future

- The social revolution of today cannot take its poetry from the past but only from the future*  
(Marx 1985 [1852])<sup>2)</sup>
- The criterion for academic reality is whether or not it includes a vision of the future*  
(Kiyoshi Miki, 1966)

### 1. Jameson Seriously Discusses Philip K. Dick

Fredric Jameson is a world-renowned scholar of contemporary thought, and precious in how he directly discusses science fiction works. Certainly, philosophers and thinkers do sometimes discuss science fiction works. The genre of science fiction has boomed in movies, manga, anime, and so on since the 1980s. Once these settings and stories became enmeshed in our everyday lives, it became common to refer to science fiction as material for discussing the state of modern society and our current cultural and spiritual situation. In Japan, philosophers like Hiroki Azuma also engage in criticism of science fiction and other popular culture works. However, Jameson stands out because he considers discussions of science fiction novels as intrinsically important to the philosophical endeavor of reviewing our current age. Essentially, Jameson is “serious” about science fiction.

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, literary criticism theory developed significantly. For example, Terry Eagleton (1983) argued that it no longer makes sense to distinguish between pure and popular literature or between literary criticism, philosophy, social theory, and psychoanalytic theory. However, Eagleton did not discuss science fiction as a particularly important genre. Moreover, Slavoj Žižek, a prolific contemporary philosopher who may have been influenced by the works of Eagleton and Jameson, extensively focuses on cinema but demonstrates no special commitment to science fiction. Regardless, for Jameson, science fiction is particularly significant as a successor to utopian literature. In fact, even before I became a philosopher, I perceived science fiction as the most important literary form in the development of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature. Thus, it surprised me when I learned about Jameson, a pioneer who thought like me, and who poured his passion for philosophy, theory, and criticism into earnest engagement with science fiction and discussions on its works and sub-genres. His seriousness about the genre is unparalleled among philosophers and theorists worldwide.

The paper “Nostalgia for the Present” (Jameson 1991) contrasts Philip K. Dick’s science fiction novel *Time Out of Joint* (Dick 1959) with two films, *Something Wild* (Demme 1986) and *Blue Velvet* (Lynch 1986), highlighting the differences in the modes of time and history in these works. In his analytical comparison, Jameson distinguishes between Dick in the 1950s and Demme and Lynch in the late 1980s. The contrast is briefly summarized as follows. Dick’s science fiction narrative structure (which reveals that the “present” was a reality created by the inhabitants of a future world) seems to depict a disruption in the sense of time and history. It also exercises an alienation effect on the reader by showing the “present” from the perspective of the future. While it differs from the historical novels of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it lends us a sense of history, and is thus positioned at the edge of modernity. In the

cases of Lynch and Demme, that structure of modernity has collapsed, so that something else, which can only be called postmodernity, is expressed instead. In Demme, figures that symbolize individual time periods appear and start to interact on the screen. This method intercepts the audience's desire to symbolically capture the time periods and introduce linear order and relationships, and conjure up ethical judgments based on contrasts (e.g., that time period was good, pure, truly rebellious, etc.). In contrast, Lynch uses a method that implies the existence of "nature itself" that invades our seemingly peaceful everyday life, thereby bringing the audience to a self-awareness of the vulnerability of the "desires = narrative foundation" that constitutes our "everyday life."

As I am sure you are aware, the motif stemming from the Dickish sense that the safe, secure, beautiful, and cutting-edge "present" was actually a fictional reality reconstructed at the hands of a collapsed future society has become part of the global imagination since the success of movie *The Matrix* (The Wachowskis, 1999) in the late 1990s, permeating and spreading widely across contemporary culture. At that time, general society finally came to experience what Jameson calls the "Dick stage," namely the edge of modernity. Something similar happened in Japan, where I think the "time loop story" that became popular around the 2000s and peaked around 2010 (*STEINS;GATE*, *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*, etc.) is a variation of the "Dick stage." Of course, works on the "time loop" trend did not originate in Japan or end in 2010, and they are still created today (Reference: Asaba 2012, Osaka University Sci- Fi Club 2014). However, in particular, I think this cultural representation well expressed a kind of global isolation feeling that drifted in Japanese society around 2010. In the following discussion, I try to make sense of both cases and theories of popular motifs in contemporary Japanese subcultures since 2000, including "time loop stories," "otherworldly reincarnation," and "the collapse of daily life due to invasion by an other." To this end, I apply the theory presented by Jameson in "Nostalgia for the Present" as a referential framework. Based on that, I discuss the possibility of a politics by the future that is not subsumed into representation as a complement to Jameson's utopian project.

## 2. From Nostalgia for the Present to Loops and Reincarnation

The sense of temporal disruption of "isn't this reality being repeated?" which is a motif in time loop stories such as *STEINS;GATE* (Sato and Hamasaki 2011)<sup>3)</sup> and *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* (Shinbo 2011), can be regarded as expressing an *epoché* of historical sense and desire to reconstruct it amid the stagnant economic situation that followed the bursting of the bubble in Japan. This type of story inherently faces a formal constraint: its conclusion must inevitably be an "ethical" ending—pursuing the cause of the phenomenon (i.e., whose manipulation is responsible) and some form of response to it. However, in a time loop story, the cause of the phenomenon can also be attributed to some accident or random overlap of coincidences. This type of symbolic manipulation is compatible with the ideological structure of such stories. It skillfully constructs a circuit that avoids the composition of historical ethics (a grand narrative). Naturally, it suits the political unconscious of Japanese historical



Takuya Sato and Hiroshi Hamasaki (2011)  
*STEINS;GATE [anime version]*

moment in the 2010s, where *we all somehow and unawares* find ourselves trapped in a stagnant economy, with no way to counter or escape it, resulting in a sense of being blocked.

In the *STEINS;GATE* narrative, only the protagonist knows that time is looping. A so-called time machine appears in the story, and its mechanism is that it can compress memories and send them to past selves as information. As such, it is not your existence itself, the entity of body and soul, that travels through time. However, thinking about it, perhaps having your memory transferred means you have traveled back in time. Regardless, the sense of disruption of memory and time depicted here is interesting because it can be framed as a sense in-between modernity and postmodernity.

Insofar as the focus is on “time” as something experienced, time and memory are inextricably linked. For example, even if time loops, nobody will know that it happened unless they remember it. Even in the natural sciences such as physics, some scholars argued that time does not exist, so that the flow of time is created by the psychological mechanisms of human memory (Rovelli 2018). If we accept that human psychological mechanisms broadly operate under the influence of our social and historical environment, it should be no surprise that our experience and sense of time similarly transform when historical and social conditions change. Following Jameson’s formula for representational cultural works, namely that “symbolic expressions in cultural works are the imaginary solutions to the unresolvable contradictions we experience at the level of the real.” (Jameson 1981: 79–81) <sup>4)</sup>, then the images we express are created as functions of experiences of structural transformation amid changing historical and social conditions. Thus, what contradictory experiences do the images of time expressed in “time loop stories” represent?

In the *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* narrative, the protagonist does not know she is looping through



**Akiyuki Shinbo (2011)**  
***Puella Magi Madoka Magica***

time. Only one of her friends know that. Only one of the protagonist's friends travel back in time many times to save her from a catastrophic fate. She has that kind of magical power. For the first few episodes, the narrative advances as a conventional "magical girl" genre story that depicts the daily lives of cute characters. However, suddenly, it takes a characteristically surprising turn, transforming it into a cruel dark fantasy. The more times the loop is repeated, the more the universe heads toward destruction. The story finally climaxes with the destruction and salvation of the entire universe. Ultimately, the power to save the universe lies in the protagonist's kindness in a display of the power of "empathy." The world is saved by empathy for all the women sacrificed throughout history. Today, at the forefront of philosophy and psychology, attention is increasingly focused on so-called "empathy," which forms the foundation of social communication. Research also suggests that this capacity for imagination toward others is linked to the nature of memory and the sense of time (Nojiri & Takase 2023). This heightened attention and research progress likely have social underpinnings. From this perspective as well, the premise that the power of empathy transcending time and space enables time loops reveals a necessity as a "fictional resolution" in the modern era.

Following "time loop stories," "otherworldly reincarnation stories" have become popular in Japanese subcultures. One of the most well-known and typical works is *That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime* (Fuse 2015). One day, the protagonist is suddenly reincarnated from a stifling contemporary Japanese society into another world because of an unexplainable transcendent cause. Moreover, for some reason, this world resembles a sword-and-sorcery role-playing (RPG) game from the 1980s, where the protagonist uses his skills to fight, survive, and succeed. Of course, there are variations in



Yasuhito Kikuchi and Atsushi Nakayama (2018)  
*That Time I Got Reincarnated as a Slime [anime version]*

narrative progression even among works that are all of the “otherworldly reincarnation” genre, and similar to how difficult it is to define “*sekai-kei*,” things become more unclear when focusing on the extensions and details of otherworldly reincarnation stories. Nevertheless, the structure of the political unconscious reflected in the genre—where you escape the complex current situation of Japanese society, where causes and responsible subjects are unclear and obscured, and where the destination is uncertain and you are reincarnated into another world—is so easy to understand that it does not require special analysis. This is a spatial escape to a world whose laws and skills for survival are clear, and everything is explicitly assigned points, including what to do and how to fight to advance. In time loop stories, temporal repetition has the effect of gradually cutting you off from ethics by a single thin membrane, while also allowing you to bite into and savor the temporal disruption as the “misery of happiness” (Jameson 1991: 280). Thus, here, when that allowance is lost, otherworldly reincarnation stories emerge as a response to the desire for an explicit ethics system that tells you *what and how to fight* in the style of a game. It could also be said that this very format guides the formation of such desires<sup>5</sup>).

This “aesthetics” constitutes a circuit that responds to the ethical and political desire to approach the true causes and responsible subjects of the current situation, while blocking the subject from reaching concrete and historical “evils.” However, note that in accordance with Jameson, the political approach of denouncing certain others as responsible subjects is not superior to an aesthetic approach to problem-solving. The political approach likely tries to visualize the causes of the situation by making them conscious and personalized. However, the difficulty lies in how our contemporary society is already not driven by causes that are easy to make conscious and personalized. Causality is structural (Althusser). If it were possible to easily make conscious and personalized the driving forces and structures of our political and economic systems, in principle, no history of socialist countries succumbing to capitalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century would exist. Accordingly, Jameson’s idea of the “political unconscious” argues that we need both an aesthetic and a political approach (Jameson 1981).

### 3. A Dick Stage or Demme/Lynch Stage?

Arguably, do the aesthetics of modern Japanese culture fall between the “Dick stage” and subsequent “Demme/Lynch stage”? At the very least, works based on Dick’s historical imagination, where the everyday life of modern Japan was created at the hands of a future society or on a branch of a different time line, have not taken up much space in Japan since the 2000s. In fact, in Japan before the collapse of the bubble economy, or in the 1980s when the bubble economy was at its peak, stories like *Urusei Yatsura 2: Beautiful Dreamer* (Oshii 1984) and *Megazone 23* (Ishiguro et al. 1985) depicted everyday life in contemporary Japanese society as a “dream” or “manufactured reality.” Both works are prized parts of the history of anime. If these works were the Japanese version of the “Dick stage” expressed in a cutting-edge manner, then this era in Japan would correspond to the 1950s in the United States. Thus, possibly, the floating sense brought about by accelerated economic growth may give rise to a representation that belongs to the Dick stage. Therefore, when the speed reaches its maximum and the acceleration turns to zero, that is, when your sense of the time vector toward the future disappears, there will appear a political unconscious that supports representations such as time loops and otherworldly reincarnation. This is likely immediately preceding the “Demme/Lynch stage.” Perhaps entry into the Demme/Lynch stage requires an element (or awareness) of the coexistence of heterogeneous cultures, as experienced by American society.

Back in around 1970, time loops and reincarnation began to emerge as themes in works in the representational cultural space of postwar Japan. Futaro Yamada’s *Makai Tensho* (*Samurai Reincarnation*) began serialization in 1964 and was published in book form in 1967 (Yamada 2011). Subsequently, Yukio Mishima’s *The Sea of Fertility* tetralogy began serialization in 1965 and was concluded in 1971 (Mishima 1977). Yasutaka Tsutsui’s *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time* also began serialization in 1965 and was published in book form in 1967 (Tsutsui 2006). The period around 1970 is generally understood as a turning point in developed countries as they entered the stage of late capitalism and consumer society. It makes sense that these motifs emerged at a time when the acceleration of economic growth, centered on industrial production, became saturated and the linear sense of time oriented toward the future started to change. *The Sea of Fertility* was written by Yukio Mishima, a major figure in the literary world of postwar Japan. He chose as his motif the Asian idea of reincarnation to create a “novel of world interpretation” and “the ultimate novel,” which was unheard of among the work in Western literature. As Mishima explained, it is a story of dreams and reincarnation based on the Heian-period *Hamamatsu Chunagon Monogatari*, and the theme of reincarnation itself has existed around the globe since ancient times. However, when reproduced in the modern era, it needs to be reframed and understood as an imaginative solution that bridges historical circumstances and the individual. Mishima himself might have intended to write an absolutely transcendent work that was impossible to rival from a global and historical perspective. However, viewed from today’s perspective, the artist’s consciousness of pursuing isolation and transcendence represented nothing more than the political unconscious of that historical turning point. *Makai Tensho* and *The Girl Who Leapt Through Time* have repeatedly been

made into movies since the 1980s. They have also been reworked into various other media forms such as theater, manga, video, anime, and games, and related synopses and memes thereon have been inherited by numerous works in Japan and beyond. It seems clear that the seeds sown in the 1970s, when artists' sensibilities were keenly grasped, came to blossom in the soil supplied by the social and historical structures of the 1980s and later.

There are two types of reincarnation, namely temporal and spatial. Narratives about reincarnation and time loops can be viewed as motifs pertaining to temporal reincarnation. While otherworldly reincarnation stories differ from those of the temporal kind, they cannot be said to be examples of spatial reincarnation. Rather, they deal with reincarnation into the world of games and fiction that do not exist anywhere. Perhaps their essence lies in how they express the desire to reincarnate into a timeless world. Unable to have hope for the future, with no nostalgia for the past, and trying to escape the sense of stagnation of the present, the subject dreams of reincarnation into an "otherworld," a zero-state world where all debt has been reset. This is a "utopia" in the original sense of the word, a place that is nowhere. I think that the sense and consciousness of blockage and satisfaction in coexistence that assaulted Japanese society and characterized the "lost 30 years"—a period roughly equivalent to the Heisei period—overlaps with the safe, secure, happy, and normal "misery of happiness" of rural American towns in the 1950s, as highlighted by Jameson. We perhaps cannot say with certainty that a closed and stagnant space, which shares some features with the American 1950s, persisted for a full three decades during the Heisei period in Japan, but something close to that seems true. Of course, this happy misery and miserable happiness foreshadowed its collapse on an unconscious level, the perception of which would likely be represented as an other that suddenly launches its attack on everyday life.

The popularity of stories like *Demon Slayer* (Gotoge 2016) and *Attack on Titan* (Isayama 2009), where our closed but intimate and happy everyday lives are suddenly wrecked by alien beings and overwhelming shocks from the outside that have to be fought, can be explained by properties that fulfill our ethical and political desires even more directly than the "closure" of time loop stories or otherworldly reincarnation. The historical imagination, now liberated from the economic growth structure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century nation-state and freed from the linear structure of time oriented toward the future, flows back to the present of the physical body to become an element that threatens the present itself. That crisis is projected onto and embodied as an external enemy that destroys our present lives and shakes the identity formed by the bonds of our memories and emotions.

#### 4. Collective Memory, Habitus, and the Other's Assault

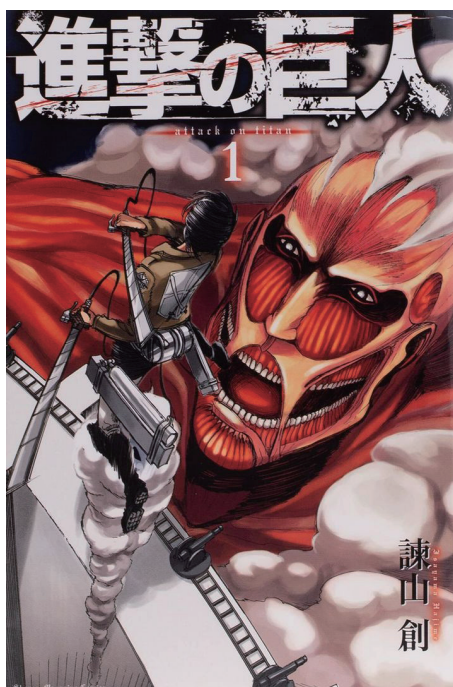
*Demon Slayer* is part of a lineage of vampire and zombie stories. Many works belonging to this lineage are subject to genre constraints in that they in some form must contain the traditional element of the "relativization of values" (the humans struggling to defeat the vampires were actually "evil") from Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend* (formerly titled *The Last Man on Earth*, 1954), which successfully modernized vampire literature and turned it into science fiction. Even in *Demon Slayer*, the subversion



**Haruo Sotozaki (2021)**  
*Demon Slayer—The Movie: Mugen Train*

of values is properly depicted through dialog from the demon leader Kibutsuji Muzan (“Demon hunters are a gathering of deviants”). However, the author transcends such constraints and creates a circuit that ethically vents our political unconscious by manifesting a protagonist, a boy yelling “I will never forgive [the demons]!” He fights to protect his family and friends regardless. Are the tastes and judgments of the author Koyoharu Gotoge perhaps not more inclined to Kibutsuji Muzan? However, she becomes a hitmaker by responding to the political unconscious of the readers and fulfilling their desires. “[T]he main character [...] must thus be read according to a negative and a positive hermeneutic simultaneously” (Jameson 1991: 282). The figure of Kamado Tanjiro, a protagonist who single-mindedly and without hesitation rushes to slay demons, is framed as what Jameson analyzes as a “complex term,” created through transferences between the author’s creativity and readers’ desires. Evidence of the safety- and health-promoting function of this circuit emerged in the 2020 anime movie version of *Mugen Train* (Sotozaki 2021), which became the biggest Japanese movie box office hit ever at a time when Japanese society was struggling with the blockage caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In *Attack on Titan*, human civilization is threatened by the assault of titans, a powerful threat. The identity of these titans is a mystery, but as the story progresses, the truth once concealed by the darkness of history is gradually revealed. The main characters had always considered the titans as enemies to be fought, but they find out that in reality, they themselves are a type of titan and titans are the product of human civilization. A subversion of values is embedded in this narrative, and we are told that the other who threatens our memories and physical safety and who disrupts our identity comes not from the outside but from the depths of our own memories and physical bodies. The narrative structure functions



Hajime Isayama (2009)  
*Attack on Titan*

to make conscious and neutralize the ethical judgment of the external other's assault. Furthermore, it suggests that the secrets of history can be reclaimed once we realize that we are the other<sup>6)</sup>.

In another paper on the issue of reconciliation in Asia, I discussed how the composition of “history” involves collective memory, which is formed by interactions between our memories and empathy, and that it functions as a medium to connect the individual and society in the form of our imaginative corporeality (Nojiri 2024b, 2025b). We must cut open our own “bodies” to reclaim the secrets of our forgotten history and stand on the stage of history once more. Here, what I call the imaginative corporeality overlaps with the sociologist Bourdieu's concept of “habitus.” Habitus is defined as a tendency that directs cognition, evaluation, and actions that accumulate and are performed unconsciously in people's everyday lives (Bourdieu 1977). In *Algérie 60*, Bourdieu depicts how farmers in Algeria in the 1960s, a period of rapidly progressing capitalism, had no choice but to become the lower proletariat, forced into a double bind of identity change and maintenance as they sustained traditional relational behaviors that had already been invalidated as economic habitus. Some interpretations view Bourdieu's concept of “habitus” as deterministic, emphasizing how actions become fixed through class differentiation—that is, social stratification—via the reproduction of culture (Crossley 2001). Nick Crossley uses the term “social body” to revert Bourdieu's concept of habitus to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological theory of the body and Mead's theory of self-consciousness. Crossley discusses habitus not as a one-to-one response to stimuli as premised on so-called behaviorist psychology, but as something that constitutes meaning and purpose relatively independent of the environment or stimuli. This is something that enables generalization through introspection and reflexivity through interactions

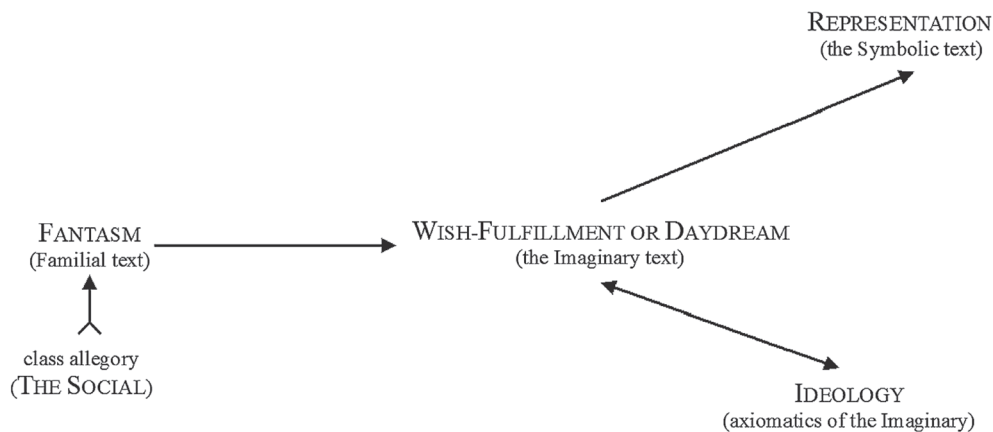


**Figure 1.**  
(Jameson, 1981, p. 184)

with the consciousness of others, and the reversibility and innovation of social structure through action.

Essentially, understood in this way, the habitus as spirit-body is the “clothing” people wear when they head into the world, or the “residence” people inhabit when they live in the world. It is a base of meaning for people’s lives that tends to be formed in the family and other intimate spheres. Because it is unconscious, it acts as an irreplaceable foundation of identity for us. For those blessed with the inheritance of habitus as rich social capital, it is loving family bonds, a foundation of class identity produced by memories and emotions, a guide giving direction in life, clothing that provides safety and security, and a boat of hope that brings economic stability and safe passage through society. However, for those who are not fortunate enough to inherit it, or for those who inherit an outdated version from previous generations at the dawn of a new era, the habitus can become an obstacle and, thus, become a “curse.”

Figure 1. is a figure in Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* (Jameson 1981: 184). It shows the relationship between daydreams, ideology, and representation (see Nojiri 2019 for a detailed explanation). In the leftmost part of the figure, Jameson shows that class contradictions and struggles give rise or have some relation to “familial fantasm” (or more precisely, “fantasm as familial text”). However, he does not elaborate on this part. What is “familial fantasm”? I offer an expanded interpretation of it as imaginative corporeality formed in the familial realm. I think linking fantasm with Bourdieu’s concept of habitus enables a more detailed discussion of its formation and function. As such, it should be possible to show that it possesses an inertial force and acts as a buffer between economic fluctuations and the individual fantasies on the self. Fantasm, existing in this fantasy realm as familial corporeality, is not just a daydream but has a certain persistence and inertia. Thus, we need to express that it is also possible as corporeality. It could be said to be a type of vehicle. It protects and carries us, but if it is no longer in step with the times, it risks becoming an obstacle that impedes our movements.

The work *Jujutsu Kaisen* (Akutami 2018) depicts the theme of “curses,” thought to have already become an anachronism in modern society. The animated film *Jujutsu Kaisen 0: The Movie* (directed by Sunghoo Park, 2022) reportedly showed momentum, achieving the second-highest opening three-

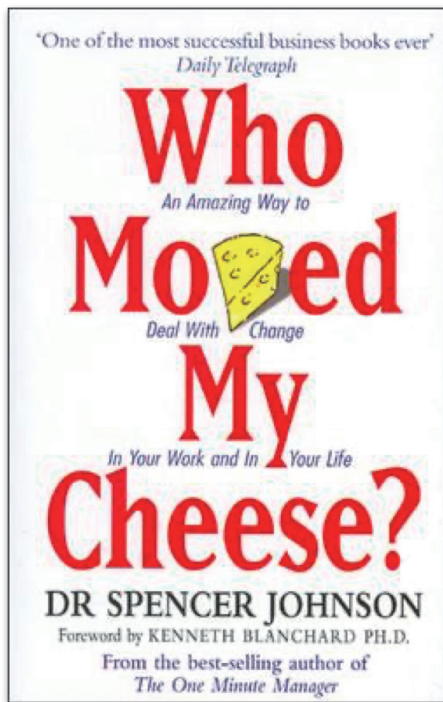


Gege Akutami (2018)  
*Jujutsu Kaisen* [26 volumes]

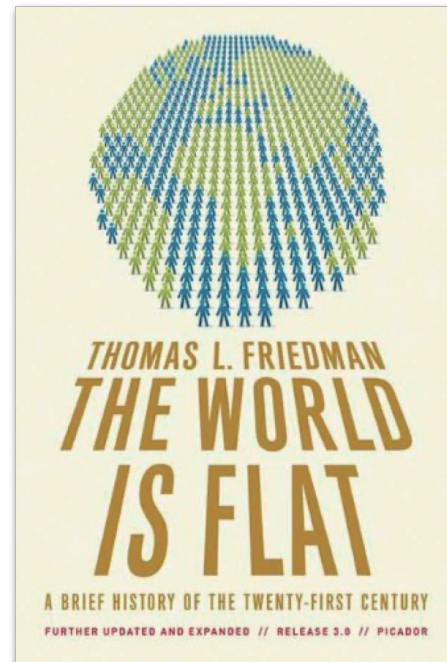
day box office revenue in history, following the aforementioned *Demon Slayer – The Movie: Mugen Train*. It seems that behind the success of this work on the anachronistic theme of “curses” lies the problem of habitus inheritance in modern times. The story explains that “curses” linger in places where people’s thoughts mingle, gather, and accumulate. For example, curses linger in schools. The story follows the protagonists—sorcerers—who use their magic skills to confront the “curses” accumulated in various parts of Japanese society.

## 5. Melancholy and the Future

I now consider a theory that habitus, which is inherited unconsciously, causes “depression” and “melancholy” to the subject who inherits it when its practical efficacy is lost and becomes obsolete. This is an application of Freud’s psychoanalytic formula for the mechanisms of “melancholy” and the theory of Judith Butler et al. (Butler 1990), who apply it to contemporary gender theory, to intergenerational relationships regarding the inheritance of habitus. Based on the economic success of its postwar nation-state system, Japanese society tends to exhibit relatively strong familial “habitus inertia” in terms of gender, family, and employment. In society today, where globalization is accelerating change, people may experience “melancholy” if they leave the formation of “corporeality = habitus” to the unconscious. Simply put, the structure of melancholy proposed by Freud is a state of loss of the object of grief through a process of prohibition, incorporation (internalization), and repression of real relationships. In other words, as a result of identifying with something that has lost the conditions for realistic



**Johnson (1998)**  
*Who Moved My Cheese?*



**Friedman (2006)**  
*The World Is Flat*

identification, people fall into a sense of self-loss (emptiness, depression) or a double-bind situation (anxiety).

The concept of a “double bind” was originally proposed by Gregory Bateson, who considered it a structure that causes schizophrenia (Bateson 1972). Fredric Jameson also uses the concept of a “double bind.” Jameson applies Greimas’ semiotic square, viewing it as a trap for the consciousness formed in a closed-concept map of ideologies that appear to offer a rich array of options but can never be transformed from within. For example, in rapidly changing late-capitalist society, workers are required to be subjects who promptly adapt to changes in the economy through their own efforts. You have to work, but the way of working has to be new. This order is delivered to the subject as a contradictory order to work, but not to work. This contradiction is formed by inertial habitus. The subject must notice the changes in the economic structure and the fact that their old imaginary body has become obsolete. Jameson, however, lacks insight into habitus.

The tendency for representational culture to function as an imaginative solution may be relatively conspicuous in Japan. Nonetheless, we can find examples of and discuss such imaginative solutions also in the United States in Hollywood movies and Disney animated films. We may also pay attention to the business of self-help books. American writers can be very adept in delivering moral messages in the form of self-help books. An example is Spencer Johnson’s *Who Moved My Cheese?* (Johnson 1998). In fact, when I read it, I could not help but feel touched by its sincere moral message. It is a kind of moral poetry, which is likely why it became an international bestseller. The message was as follows:



**Furuichi (2011)**  
*The Happy Youth of a Desperate Country*

You should not fixate on the place where the cheese once was, as you must move and discover a new way to live. I would say that the subject of this message is clear from the perspective of this paper. Capital is the source of this message. However, Johnson does not indicate this directly, and only speaks metaphorically. The book was translated and published in Japan, where it became a bestseller. The original English title is *Who Moved My Cheese?* The Japanese title can be translated as *Where Did the Cheese Disappear to?* This could be seen as a typically Japanese translation, as there is always a tendency to blur the responsible subject when it comes to moral issues in Japan.

Similarly, Thomas Friedman's *The World Is Flat* is another excellent example (Friedman 2006). This book functions as an exceedingly lucid documentary about the effects of global capitalism on workers. Thomas Friedman is a critically acclaimed author and recipient of four Pulitzer Prizes. Certainly, his book identifies the issue in an excellent way, is thoroughly researched, and has a great narrative structure. It argues that the majority of office work previously performed by the middle class will be outsourced and disappear due to the global economic networks accelerated by the Internet. As such, the book's message is that you need to be reborn. However, this "reincarnation" is not into another world, unlike otherworldly reincarnation. Rather, you must be reborn here and now.

You need to transform into a new middle class that is *untouchable* (invincible). Essentially, you must become a global worker with advanced knowledge and skills to survive in this world.

Let us return to the case of Japan. In 2011, then 26-year-old Noritoshi Furuichi published the book *The Happy Youth of a Desperate Country*, which garnered much attention (Furuichi 2011). This book

investigated the real circumstances and outlooks on life of young people in Japan. Furuichi concluded that the Japanese younger generation has despair for the future, values connections with close friends, and leads anxious but happy lives. This accords with Jameson's so-called "misery of happiness" of the American 1950s. It can be viewed as an epidemic of a mild, sweet melancholy.

I think the reason the seemingly outlandish setting of *Jujutsu Kaisen*, where the protagonists fight to exorcize curses that operate in the depths of our everyday lives, is convincing and became a hit in contemporary Japan is that it resonates with people's unconscious desire to fight and overcome the erstwhile socioeconomic structure and old habitus associated with it, by which I mean the political unconscious. I point out that the mediation of imaginative corporeality is not properly discussed by theorists like Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Slavoj Žižek, who develop contemporary philosophical cultural theories in a way that integrates them with social theory and psychoanalysis<sup>7)</sup>. The discussion in this paper on the transformation of Japanese anime and manga over the last three decades suggests the possibility of combining Jameson's theory with Bourdieu's habitus theory.

Historian Carol Gluck notes that since 1989 (after the fall of the Berlin Wall and end of the Cold War), the topic of collective memory has come to the fore and been placed at the center in parallel with the advance of hyper globalization (Gluck 2019). What we once knew as "history" is now referred to as "memory," and while modernity looked to the future, we now see only the past; thus, as François Hartog discussed, we are experiencing a loss of the future and the "tyranny of the present." Gluck, who sees the potential of Marxism as separate from existing socialism and communism, proposes that we should think more about the future than the past, as Marx did. Minoru Iwasaki, who once interviewed Gluck, cited Enzo Traverso's *Left-Wing Melancholia*, noting that after 1989, memory came into the limelight as Marxism retreated. Iwasaki further pointed out that while it was positive that the appearance of the problem of memory made audible previously obscured voices of victims, now, only memories of the victims objectified by psychopathological categories such as trauma and oppression are discussed in public, while those of struggles are no longer spoken of. Iwasaki worried that narratives of memory that solely rely on victimhood as their template cannot but be conformist (Iwasaki 2022).

Sublimation through memory/representation is only an imaginative and adaptive solution for realistic contradictions. We need it on an individual level. It is an ethical solution. However, we must not forget that economic fluctuations precede this. This is "The Buried Giant." If we try to achieve only a personal and ethical solution without the historical solution of reorganizing the organic composition of capital, it will become a desperate battle, like for the protagonists of the time loop narratives. Jameson finds the desire for a "no-place" in the utopian imagination of science fiction literature and tries to read into it a future orientation. According to Jameson's hypothesis, the success of the imaginative solution must be seen in how utopian representations in all utopian literature including science fiction are destined to fail in proposing an ideal society and a concrete plan for social change. This is "utopia as a necessary failure of imagination" (Jameson 2005: 178). In contrast to personal and existential time (memory), collective and historical time arrives as an other, meaning that the future is a stranger and should be sensed through the shielding membrane of utopian sketches. Our psychic structure, as revealed

by Lacanian psychoanalysis—perceiving existence through a membrane while avoiding direct gaze—forms a desire called utopia. From Jameson’s perspective, time loop stories, otherworldly reincarnation, and the disruption of everyday life through an attack by others are all produced through the cathexis of utopian impulses. Furthermore, their popularity can in itself be understood as evidence of ever-growing utopian impulses.

## 6. H + L = Loss of the Future?

The philosophical components comprising Jameson’s thought more or less stem from Hegel and Lacan, with the two simply having in common that they merge individual and existential time into collective and historical time. Jameson cites Olaf Stapledon’s *Star Maker* (1937) as a good example of the pattern by which a protagonist enters a state of fused mentality with alien beings and utopian impulses provisioned to temporality are transformed into a collectivity (Jameson 2005: 8). The Stapledon spirit, which is at once individual and collective, collective and individual can be regarded as a science fiction version of Hegel’s absolute knowledge/absolute spirit. Jameson suggests a political gamble to plunder the energies of the utopian impulses expressed thus and unleash them through consciousness through Freudian healing or a Lacanian reconstitution of desire (Jameson 2005: 8–9). Žižek builds on this Hegelian/Lacanian combined method as well. As seen in Žižek’s vast number of essays on contemporary capitalist society and cultural phenomena, this combined method is enormously productive. Furthermore, and I am still in the process of researching this, we need to consider whether the Hegelian/Lacanian method of *developing a sense of anxiety about losing the past, memory, and future* (Jameson) and *traversing the fantasy* (Žižek) has had the potential to effectively counter the adaptation to hyper-globalization and neoliberalism over the thirty years since 1989—that is, the psychological adaptation manifested as nationalism and *the tyranny of memory*.

The nullification of memory as representation, meaning its neutralization by recognizing it as nothing more than representation, illusion, and desire, is what Lacanian psychoanalysis calls “traversing the fantasy,” which includes the neutralization of the future memories, that is, the future as representation. This is the position of the “neutral term” proposed by Jameson (Jameson 2005: 180). This is something that is impossible to thematize (De Man) in a way that Louis Marin presented as a synthesis of the two negative terms at the bottom of Greimas’ square, and it cannot be presented as a positive representation. The “complex term,” located exactly opposite, provides an image that integrates two irreconcilable and opposing elements as a synthesis of the two positive terms at the top. Neutral terms do the opposite. For example, the complex term constitutes a representation/image of the garden city as a fusion of the natural environment of the countryside and the sophisticated culture and lifestyles of the city (like a Studio Ghibli work), functioning to invest our daily lives with utopian impulses. This image offers the pleasure of imaginative solution (to some types of people). It is the *object a* needed to love the world and to survive in everyday life. In contrast, the neutral term is aware that it is a convenient synthesis that ignores the shortcomings of both countryside and city, thus distancing itself from either affirmation. In

this way, the Hegelian/Lacanian combined method, as seen in Jameson, theoretically results in a loss of utopian representations and loss of the future (Jameson 2005: 233). In fact, this position of loss of the future, as per Jameson's theory, signifies a break with the present; however, the problem is that our utopian impulses quickly reinvest this present that has lost the future. As a result, the loss of the future is lost and the invested present becomes tyrannical. Insofar as a reconciliatory technique by way of memorization through imagination can be derived from Hegel's logic of negativity, while a healing and adaptive technique can be drawn from Lacan's ethics that traverse the fantasy, it will likely end up being a presentizing technique. Personally, I think it is possible to derive something that resists presentization from the ideas of Hegel and Lacan. However, when we unify Hegel and Lacan in a procedure like that of Žižek's, we near the danger of canceling out the resistance to presentization contained in each. Nevertheless, both Jameson and Žižek, as Marxists, need to derive the techniques of "poetry" for social revolution from the future, or so I think. How can we do so?<sup>8)</sup>

## 7. Toward Future Poetry

Therefore, the future that is canceled is, so to speak, a *representational future*, and it should be possible to say that there exists a *historical future* distinct from it. Jameson develops his theory from "neutralization" via "journey into fear" to arrive at "the future as disruption (Beunruhigung)" (Jameson 2005: 228). However, as seen in this paper, once freed from modern historical and social structures in our contemporary situation and saturated with the present, our imagination quickly fills the void of the slightly opened non-representational future with representation. The "crisis of representation" (Jameson 2005: 212) as a general situation brought about by postmodernity turns into a flood of representations of crisis.

According to Traverso, Paul Celan insisted on distinguishing "u-topie" and "utopie" (Traverso 2016: 102). "U-topie literally means 'no-place' or 'a place that is nowhere,' while utopie indicates hope, expectation, future vision, and something that does not yet exist" (Traverso 2016: 102–03). If we reformulate Traverso's attempt to distinguish "mourning" and "melancholy" by reverting to Freud's distinction, "mourning" signifies mourning of the loss of the historical vision and program for the future communist society promised by traditional Marxism and existing socialism as well as living in the memory of what has passed. "Melancholy" means not being aware of what the object of loss is. As such, "melancholy" leaves open the possibility of realizing that the image "mourning" portrays of what has been lost is in fact no more than a shielding membrane. Melancholy means perceiving the progress of historical and collective time but not being able to memorize the future to come. By proposing the paradox that the correct way to anticipate the future in our time is to be melancholic, Traverso attempts to reveal the core of the possibility of being Marxist. The basic framework of Hegel and Lacan's thought is a program that arrives at a presentizing technique, meaning reconciliation with past/present, through the steps of memorization by the imagination of personal experience and historicization by judgment, and that its essence lies in not transcending this framework (Nojiri 2024ab, 2025ab), it becomes

understandable that an inevitability arises: it must be said that Marx, who does not follow this path, is precisely at the center of another possibility. Here, “melancholy” likely signifies an attitude of holding on to an incongruity of not reconciling with the past trauma and the present self. However, no matter how much Traverso emphasizes the fertile potential of “melancholy,” I am sure that many must wonder how “future” can be derived from a *depressive* mood. For many, the future means hope. Thus, I would like to consider separating future from melancholy, assuming that “mourning” is *representational and memorial* while “melancholy” is *non-representational and historical*.

This means deriving a historical future that is not a representational future. If the issue is our ability to envision a future that is not representational, then I must go against Kiyoshi Miki’s phrasing; what we need is not the logic of “imagination” but of “meta-imagination” or “judgment.” Kant provides overlapping descriptions of the functions of imagination and judgment, but my preliminary definitions here are that imagination is the ability to form representations based on the senses, while judgment is the ability to integrate representations and grasp supersensory regularities. To borrow the terminology of modern neuropsychology, this is about the function of learning and its “generalization.” Significant about Kant’s insight is that he believed that these two types of ability have the same root and would work in a dualized manner *by some mechanism*. This switching between the two functions *by some mechanism* explains the distinction Jameson made between the Marcusean utopian impulse toward the past and Blochian utopian impulse toward the future (Jameson 2005: 6–7). Essentially, it may be possible to explore the continuity and disconnect between imagination and judgment<sup>9</sup>. Kiyoshi Miki and Hannah Arendt were trying to derive political philosophy from that continuity and disconnect. Miki and Arendt were convinced that “politics” was nothing more than visions of and plans for the future, but having fully experienced the three decades of the “rising undulations of the memory issue” as pointed out by Gluck and Iwasaki, we must now restructure Miki/Arendt’s project on “politics” according to the precise division of imagination and judgment. The transition to future poetry without representation coincides with the re-extraction of conscious political techniques from the political unconscious.

To depart from Jameson, or perhaps to complete the Jamesonian project, this paper includes the auxiliary lines that concretely support Jameson’s ideas regarding the unrepresentable from a completely different domain. This may sound unexpected, but in my opinion, one of the effective auxiliary lines should be to use modern neuroscience to reverse engineer the structure of the narrative, dependent on memorizing and historicizing experiences, while connecting the accumulation of philosophical theories to neuroscience and providing hypotheses about metacognitive functions. The key to this is to elucidate the aforementioned *mechanism* involved in the switching between imagination and judgment. Donald Hebb, the founder of neuropsychology, proposed the theory of neural networks and the concepts of “Hebb’s rule” and “cell assembly,” which are fundamental to learning theories in neuroscience today. It is a noteworthy fact that, in *Organization of Behavior* (1949), Hebb had already proposed the “phase sequence” as a theory of metacognition, which functions on a higher level than other learning effects (Hebb 1949). Perhaps to help create a neuroscientific foundation for a functional level of such “phase sequences” and then even “meta-phase sequences,” philosophers can apply hypotheses derived from

various post-Kantian philosophical theories about imagination and judgment as auxiliary lines. By obtaining feedback thereon from neuroscience, they can refine their theories about the switching between imagination and judgment. This is the type of project I am trying to advance.

As mentioned earlier, Nick Crossley reconstructs Bourdieu's concept of habitus by reverting it to Merleau-Ponty's concept of the body schema, but he devotes almost half his *The Social Body* to a forceful critique of what Crossley calls mind-body dualism or mechanism (Crossley 2001). Crossley argues that the concept of habitus as social body explains the antecedence of cognitive structures and purposefulness of action, which cannot be reduced to determinism by the social environment or a mechanism by neuroscience. The corporeal and intentional operations of meaning and purpose in human actions cannot be explained, according to Crossley, by what he calls "mind-brain identity theory" (Crossley 2001: 23). The paradigm of brain science (neuroscience) Crossley is discussing remains at the level of Pavlov's dogs as a stimulus-response model, and does not consider the level of Hebb's phase sequences, as described here. Crossley references Merleau-Ponty, Gilbert Ryle, and G. H. Mead as he proposes functions such as the resolution of dualism, emotion as a response to social situations rather than sensory stimuli, perception of behavior, self-observation as an internalization of intersubjectivity, corporeal ambivalence and reversibility, meaning and purpose as social constructs, internalization of the body schema, practical sense, knowing without knowing, structures transcending the sum of mechanical responses to stimuli, simulating the perspectives of others, recursive self-relationships, and shifting from the particular to the universal. All these can perhaps be linked to the neuroscientific foundation at the level of phase or meta-phase sequences.

This should open the domains of "neuropsychology" and "neuroethics." While I repeat myself, this is not to say that neuroscience unilaterally serves as the foundation for and determines philosophy or political science. In fact, neuroscience has yet to provide an experimental method that really addresses the basis of these meta-functions. Rather, philosophy and politics may provide theoretical models for experimental testing. For Bourdieu, "Research without theory is blind, and theory without research is empty" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 162). Neuroscience must take on the challenge of metacognition and meta-imagination, which philosophy and politics have uncovered in human nature since millennia, while philosophy and politics must reexamine concepts and theories based on findings in neuroscience. In this context, philosophy and politics can provide another auxiliary line to enrich and multiplex a neuroscience perspective, which tends to stay at the microscopic level. This is the metahistorical perspective obtained through interactions with insights from anthropology and psychopathology. This amounts to a historicization of history. Essentially, it means relativizing the historicity of modern linear time that flows through the past, present, and future, which we take for granted, by pointing to the existence of "regimes of historicity" that are otherwise (Hartog 2003) <sup>10</sup>. Regarding historicization, Jameson wrote *The Political Unconscious* while calling to "Always historicize!" (Jameson 1981: ix). Still, Jameson's "history" remains in the modern temporality, even if it progresses so as to be neutralized from within, as expressed in "nostalgia for the present." In this sense, Jameson's historicism is modernist. When we say historicization, we are talking about the historicization of that "history." The pathway to

get out of “history” involves a meeting of neuroscience, anthropology, and psychopathology at the current level. In the past, anthropology and psychopathology came into loose contact with the foundations of mathematics (mathematical philosophy), making it possible to convert insights about the plurality of logical systems brought about by the propositions of “paleologic” in the 20<sup>th</sup> century into the plurality of the frameworks of cognition, learning, and its generalization, returning to neuroscience. This trial line can be drawn with the paralogic of Lévy-Bruhl and von Domarus, the paleologic of Arieti that explained the former by linking it with schizophrenia, Bin Kimura’s “predicate identity,” Yujiro Nakamura’s “predicate world,” Matte-Blanco’s “principle of symmetry,” Bateson’s “confusion of logical types,” and Bruno Latour’s “symmetric anthropology.” In Japan, Tamaki Saito’s “context disease” and Shinichi Nakazawa’s “symmetric logic” follow this trend. Looking back today, Tamaki Saito’s *Context Disease* was prescient in extracting from Bateson the possibility of placing schizophrenia and autism on a spectrum of contextual responses (Saito 2001). In my opinion, the link between the generalization of cognition and learning and the pluralization of logical systems can be derived from Hegel’s theory of infinite judgment. Taken together, the distinction between the level of the stimulus-response model and of the body schema in Crossley can be correlated with the distinction between the levels of “Learning I,” and “Learning II” and “Learning III” in Bateson (Bateson 1972) and distinction between the aforementioned levels of imagination and judgement. This corresponds to Jameson’s distinction between “fancy” as a utopian impulse and “imagination” as a utopian form (Jameson 1981: 227). Most important, it explores the possibility of recombining the restructuring of the former and latter by clarifying the classification of relationships between the two as well as the types of structuring of the former by the latter.

Since 1989, the “rising undulations of the memory issue” have emerged in developed societies, and since the beginning of the 2000s, increasing attention has rapidly been paid to syndromes termed “developmental disorders” including autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). This likely means that in developed societies, the social and historical imaginations of individuals who have been freed from the cage of the symbolic that formed the “grand narratives” and have lost their connections have returned to their physical bodies. This has led to the emergence of the problem of imagination for others at the micro level, which we call social communication, so that differences in imagination among individuals, previously not considered an issue, have become apparent (Nojiri 2024b, 2025b). If the subject of “memory” in the historical-political phase is A-side of the “tyranny of the present” brought to us by hyper-globalization, then we need a sense of framing the problem of “developmental disorders” in the bio-political phase as B-side of it. Interestingly, we are finding that the differences between neurotypical persons and those with developmental disorders extend to how the senses, cognition, movement, memory, temporal perception, and social communication function [Nojiri and Takase 2023]. In short, there are differences at the level of Merleau-Ponty’s “body schema,” which renders them differences associated with those in historicity. Insights from neuroscientific research on developmental disorders regarding mechanisms at the level of phase and meta-phase sequences are used in reverse engineering that opens up the body schema and historicity the majority of

people (so-called “neurotypical persons”) call self-evident, deriving a historical rather than representational future. This work derives an unrememberable future from the tyranny of presentism. Alternatively, borrowing Jameson’s terminology, it can be thought of as the making of a technique that recursively derives utopian forms detached from utopian impulses. Through such procedures, we consider the possibility of deriving techniques for transforming nostalgia for the present into “future poetry.”

### Notes

- 1) This paper is based on a manuscript added as a “translator’s commentary” (Nojiri 2023a) to Fredric Jameson’s essay “Nostalgia for the Present” when it was translated in the bulletin of the Osaka University Sci- Fi Club in 2023 (Osaka University Sci- Fi Club 2023). In the same year, I expanded it and presented a lecture at the Center for East Asian Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in the United States (Nojiri 2023b). That was then considerably revised to produce this paper. “Nostalgia for the Present” is the ninth chapter of the book *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, falling under the category “Film.” It was originally published in Volume 88, Issue 2 (Spring 1989) of the Duke University journal *South Atlantic Quarterly*, after which it was revised for inclusion in the aforementioned book. *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* is an important early work by Jameson; thus, it is unfortunate that no commercial translation and publication of it currently exists in Japan.
- 2) Translations have been revised as appropriate. While Marx’s original text reads “of the nineteenth century,” his original intention has been preserved by using “of today” here.
- 3) *STEINS;GATE* is a constellation of multimedia works that originated from a computer game with the same title, but the example I use here is the first anime series from 2011.
- 4) This formula was derived and prepared by Nojiri from *The Political Unconscious* (Jameson 1981). There, Jameson uses the word “symbol” because he derives this formula from the cultural anthropological theories of people like Levi Strauss. However, this can be interpreted broadly as a description of products that include illusions/desires in psychoanalysis and their representations in symbolic texts.
- 5) I use the terms “desire” and “style” here, but in Jameson’s utopian essay *Archaeologies of the Future*, the terms “utopian impulse” and “utopian form” are used, respectively. Moreover, they seemingly correspond to “utopian fancy” and “utopian imagination,” and to “consciousness” and “the self” in subjectivity as well as “literary style” and “plot” in writing. These correspondences can be summarized as follows: “utopian impulse = utopian fancy = consciousness = existence = everyday life = literary style” and “utopian form = utopian imagination = the self = story = history = plot” (Jameson 2005: 213–214).
- 6) An important source of this narrative structure is the manga version of Hayao Miyazaki’s *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, which may be termed the Japanese popular culture version of the *Dialectic*

of *Enlightenment*. Thus, this can perhaps also be added Go Nagai's *Devilman*. Furthermore, *I Am Legend* exists as a classic source for all these. I would like to discuss this on another occasion.

- 7) The manga and anime works *Demon Slayer*, *Attack on Titan*, and *Jujutsu Kaisen* are all hits not only in Japan, but also worldwide. Here, I mainly discuss the structural relationship between globalization and the economic and social stagnation Japanese society lived through since the 1990s, applying Jameson's theory. However, I would also like to discuss the issue of the global transference of aesthetic desires for such works on another occasion.
- 8) Nonetheless, the amplitudes and transitions of thought on this matter appear observable also in Žižek, so there is a need for scrutiny in terms of Žižek studies. With this in mind, I initiated a research project titled "Elucidating the Foundations of Slavoj Žižek's Thought: With a Focus on His Interpretations of Hegel and Lacan" (JP23H00573). Wakagi Takahashi, one of the project members, analyzes changes in the political and ethical tendencies of Žižek's thought, concluding that we can see a development "from desire to drive" (Takahashi 2022). Yusuke Iizumi, another member, pointed out in the Žižek Workshop, which was organized with the help of the aforementioned Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research, that Žižek's understanding of Hegel's structure of history is intermixed (Iizumi 2024). On the one hand, according to Iizumi, some passages propose introducing the openness of the future into the past by superimposing the ahistorical time of "moments of stillness" and "pure repetition" in Benjamin's revolutionary thought on Hegel's dialectical retrospective "repetition" (*The Sublime Object of Ideology*, *The Parallax View*, *Less Than Nothing*). On the other, he criticizes Hegel's "repetition" as not being the "pure repetition" of Kierkegaard or Freud (*Less Than Nothing*). In my opinion, our aim should be what can be derived from both Hegel's memorization of history, meaning the transformation of "pure repetition/ahistorical time" into "memory/historical time," and Hegel's advocacy of a transition from representation to concept without talking about the future. From there, we should be able to derive an "unrememberable future." To do so, we need to advance beyond Žižek and delve into the workings of imagination and negativity in Hegel. I have personally begun to address this in Nojiri (2024ab, 2025ab) as well as in this paper.
- 9) Bourdieu gave *Distinction* the subtitle "A Social Critique of Judgement." While it is well-known that this comes from Kant's *Critique of Judgment*, Bourdieu's sole concern is the problem of aesthetic judgment, that is, the judgment of taste, in *Critique of Judgment*, along with the topics of its social class differentiation and reproduction. The two-tiered structure of judgment referred to in this paper has not been considered. In other words, there is potential to write a second half of the "*A Critique of Social Judgement*."
- 10) Yusuke Maki's *Comparative Sociology of Time* (1981) provides an outstanding study of the linear nature of time in modern historicity and its impact on spirituality and lifestyles from a global perspective. Toru Kashima also refers to Maki in comparison with Hartog and offers criticism (Kajima 2011). From a present-day perspective, the fulfillment of the present time, which Maki envisioned as a liberation from the temporality of modernity, could be thought of as having been

an optimistic foreshadowing of the presentism/tyranny of the present after 1989.

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