

## ONNAGATA (On decadence)

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Summer of 2024

My obsession with youth knew nothing but self-hypnosis. handed over to me as the extra prize along the golden handcuffs that my family bestowed upon me. The hopes of a proud son bringing glory to their already estranged family lineage gave them much reason to excessively nest me, moving from one safe and alienating suburb to the next. Without explicitly recognizing it on my part, whether as a reaction or as part of a nature, i was already caught in the idea of a “dying revolution”. As such, i idealized and romanticized this certain concept which materialized itself in characters (such as Lelouch? or ouma shu from guilty crown?) . Of course, at the time i knew nothing about the substance of revolution(right now, i’m just starting to understand it *as a thing that exists*), but i adored much the purity in malice which dwelled in the acts of rebellion. To strive for a cause of enormous personal value, using love and the joker’s tricks to commit crimes in the name of rebellion, with bloodshed and the truth blowing up right in front of you but still pressing on to what seems futile. Then, in a turn of irony, after reaching a certain “mechanism” of the world, you would need to become the being which you initially opposed. Hopelessly, walking on the red carpet for a limited time, i would at last have to make an ultimate sacrifice in the name of that pure malice(rendering what i accomplished not futile once more).

I am not that much of a dunce i hope. This process that i thought, that i projected onto “youth”, it obviously seems overly theatrical and even delusional. But because i had grown up in estranged places, sheltered by superficial people, i had to invent my own romantics. However, that

youth i so longed for during my last years of elementary school never happened. The dreams of being able to stay up to catch anime on late night Canadian T.V was torn when the broadcasting company shut down the anime programming block during my 6th grade. The images in my head, pixelated and idealistic like videos of emo hair tutorials, of goofing around with the cute edgy scene circle in the dim hallways of secondary education never had the chance to materialize either...

Because of that, and the lukewarm shackling from my family –it was also the major fault of missing the era, of living youth during an era in which everything neutral ceased to be and where the happenings had started to trade the value in aesthetics for the omnipresent value in convenience and quick consumerism – i found my boyish mind entranced by the delusional self-hypnosis that i. myself, had concocted as a romantic escapism when faced in reality with the orphaned youth. That self-hypnosis was the red carpet in this case, rather, i was unwrapping them around this space of nothingness and throwing imaginary cherry blossom pedals over them. And each time i would be acquainted in friendly terms with a person that was to my liking ( weirdly enough i believe i did not have sexual desires towards these people, though i am a veteran of sexual frustration)even in the slightest way, i would repeat the process like inserting a coin in a vending machine, and watch as the internal workings do its thing. Indeed, affected by the fear of missing out on what's already been lost to the advancing storms of time and circumstance, my boyish mind stuck in this self-imposed fog viewed the girl as the key to obtaining the ideal, narrative-driven youth, as well as love and revolution.

A particular acquaintance during my 4th year of secondary school was remarkable to me, a schoolmate of a lower year who was vaguely into some same “alt” post-hardcore bands i mildly liked. Of course, that connection in question was as shallow as these quasi-friendships could get during

teenage years. And yet— because that was my first peek into what “womanly feelings” were, back then i held it with excessive importance. But— the fact remains that i did not truly feel for her. Then was it a sort of platonic love? The me who barely had any friendship at that point since early childhood wouldn’t be able to tell what it was anyway. But i can say this: without knowing i had mentally used the vague relatability i felt in this connection as battery for my own narrative. Because i felt i had none of my own, and that i was powerless to create any in that sheltered suburb and school, and especially in my own home where every facet of my life was to be determined by the violent and unstable magnetism of my parents’ complexes and projected aspirations.

I now briefly remember in my kindergarten days in the old country where i was born, there was a very endearing classmate, we and some other mates would play games of imagination and pretend together.

“I will protect you!—”

I shouted against the bad guys as i took on the role of His majesty on a white horse in spirit. Though physically my stance was probably more akin to the henshin heroes i adored, who transformed themselves corporeally and mentally into a transcendental being in the name of preserving love and revolution.

Then, during my adolescence i failed to realize the fact that, even though i was still yearning unconsciously to be the prince once more in my narrative-less life, i bestowed upon myself the sense of self-intoxication when it came to my feelings. A sense that is more often found in unsocialized boys, to my worldview. Thus, i was playing a role *aligned* with the era’s cultural and circumstantial divide which helped sever any opportunities of experiencing the futile and ephemeral beauty known as youth, however negligible these chances may have been otherwise.

I had no Aiko, and i was okay with it because i was my own prince in imagination. But then, the adolescence happened, but the revolution did not, so, i had to invent my own Sachi, through self-hypnosis.

Afterwards before i knew it, my state of adolescence would soon be dismantled and plundered through physically too, not by rebellion or malice or love, but by the further physical manifestation of what came with the gendered status of my birth. The becoming, the next step was hitting this body at full force; it was the male puberty. In those long years, i found myself extremely discomforted with the metamorphosis of my body. It was not one of beautiful nor grotesque nature. To simply put, it had no real characteristic underneath other than being destructive. On my legs the hair grew rapidly, which made gym class even more of a living purgatory, as one was not socially allowed to shave it if they were born male. I became overly avoidant of the mirrors in my school bathrooms, where the blinding neutral light would amplify the details of my face that has been vandalized by the authoritarianism known as *nature*, and i'd feel like an exposed ant burning under a magnifying glass. I was aware of my uneasiness, even though i knew i was obviously not the only one among my male schoolmates in this physical becoming, they who observed the growth of solid facial hairs with anticipation.

During that same year, i had a small and fleeting taste of what it felt like to have friends. It was the first in a few shallow friendship between neurotypical "default boys of the era", a concept which nowadays, as i understand, became entangled with this post-culture war culture war on top of the lack-of-aesthetic generational identity which gave me much displeasure in my times. The people in that group still kept me around because "i was there" and happened to meet them during a previous year, before my gap year in the old country due to family reasons. Regardless, they atleast gave me the pleasure of not treating me like a simple novelty, the weird reserved and polite, but quick

to blush/agitation mental punching bag. Although that punching bag was losing its freshness and growing mold in the form of rougher skin and facial hair.

Anyhow, they would sometime invite me to their hang outs, as an afterthought, when they felt like doing so. I remember there was a period where this group got invested in Yu-Gi-Oh, the trading card game, not because of being marveled by the technical aspects of the evolving game at the time or the competitive scene, but rather, it seems to me now, it appeared as the penultimate chance to do so as a lot of us at this age had won the semi-independence to spend money (of course, the money wasn't mine, but something allowed from the golden handcuffs) while not yet losing the youthful wonder found in possessing anime trading cards. To obtain these cards, we made trips to a flea market in the middle of an empty parking lot. Inside, one of them pointed it out that the middle aged lady in charge of the shop wasn't much attention at all to the chaotically organized goods. There were boxes upon boxes filled to the brim with cards, with different types separated by plastic or cardboard tiles. This remark of his was challenged by another schoolmate, scoffing and saying he could easily snatch away a few of the cards without catching a slight attention from the owner.

This, to me, was the last occurrence where I saw where people around the same age as me engage in such an act. I'm not talking about petty crime or theft by itself, although that did shock my sheltered worldview that only otherworldly criminals would steal for a reason other than necessity. Looking back at it, I did think that this mayhaps has been the lighter version of "committing a sin with a wholehearted sincerity" in the name of obtaining something, committing malice for it just because they could. But on my reflection, it may very well have been a case of the indecent pride of adolescence taking place in the hearts of youth.

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Shattered, it became clear to me, as seasons died one after another, that to become the prince was to combine dream and reality, and that the dream was embodied in the female nature and essence. Essence? Even now, i'm not sure if such things exists as some abstract idea you could describe with words– but it was somehow, clear in the *being*.

And if the female part was a dream to manifest her dream into reality or to base reality on the aesthetics of her dream, it was not enough to have a taste of it, one had to live it. But not “as a woman”, but rather, like the way of the Onnagata. If the beautiful actor, certainly with a beautiful face, would generally behave “like a man” in his ordinary days, his gross masculinity would suddenly show when it is time to act his role on the stage akin to a dream of blossoms, spoiling it with his lusterless performance.

To reach for that organic being that was the opposite of one's ordinary societal being, or his being forced upon him by “nature”, is to embody it like the Onnagata. Driven to a corner by the mechanism of mechanized reality, the suburbs, and my parents, my internal *self*, yearning to live as that which bridged the two extremes, i had my *own* natural self destroyed, resulting in my essence dwelling in discontinuity. Essence. Perhaps all this could be attributed to the fact that i longed for the essence above all abstractions as well as the material world imposed on me which fed this delusional imagination of mine, keeping me from ever reaching that essence in fleshly form.

The sword will smash the rotting fragments of the ignorant heart.

To taste what was opposite of my discontinuous nature– i had to transcend it, to transcend meant to destroy that shell which, at this time, still suffocated and tormented my heart day by day with seasons going by and trees dying and rebirthing all the same leaves. To find something

continuous, i needed to destroy the leftover fragmented shade that was known as the *interrupted me* –he who has only known one extreme– that of reality subjugated by abstractions. To do that, i would need to train and learn to destroy him. The prince cannot bring revolution if he does not smash a world that renders him fragmental and unable to die as himself and revive as himself.

The opposite of that material world of subjugation and abstractions is composed of the things which it rejects. And the things which my hearts longs for, to the point of spiritual self-immolation, also lies on that opposite. Therefore, the training path to embodying the perfected Onnagata, who is also the dying prince, is a path of constant self-destruction and decadence. What consists of *falling* in that false world would be defined by these things. Therefore, by engaging in things which makes you fall, you reach towards something farther away from that torturous discontinuous existence. To fall i had to throw away the way that which belonged to the male that belonged to my parents, in order to become the boyish prince. That indecent pride that was the engine of youth, how i should have learned earlier to do everything that pleases it! At the end of it lies the pure land.

Mayhaps this is the reason why people are attracted to evil characters in art and fiction, they break away from their self that has been fragmented by the status quo that seeks to kill any semblance of the authentic self. While i, held on to a sort of “sincere purity” that was a product of discontinuity, and rejected boyhood as a whole.

I then had realized that boyhood, for myself, was in fact made as a key to the engine that will turn against itself– to achieve the opposite of it. In the process of turning it against itself, it would need to fall absolutely; Once at the abyss’ bottom: the boy would need to die, while at the same time, he would rejoice and laugh as one with all things, for he would have achieved the eternal yearning that had choked his heart for five hundred years. Over and over, he will keep dying and restoring himself, replenishing his mana in the arms of the Goddess. Even at his destination, at the bottom relative to

the abstracted reality (but the absolute summit according to his own will and flesh) he will need to constantly damage himself and rejuvenate himself in order to keep the love of the Goddess.

Thus he is both eternally dying and revolutionizing. And so is the Goddess, for at the summit, they are one continuous *self*. On the stage of real life, his performance of *self* becomes one with the performance of the evanescent, aristocratic Yukihiime, the Snow Princess, gathering falling petals to call upon mice in order to break free from the ropes that tie her to the cherry tree.

Because they are a continuous being, their being does not tie itself to temporal aspects such as concepts of generational identity and this era's specific culture war dilemmas. The aristocratic revolutionaries are eternal, and they are the ones who are capable of grasping the desire to embrace in the hearts of the ones they long for. It is because they have won the freedom to fall, to fall away from the weaponized institutions we call suburbs and the nuclear family, and to fall continuously, towards the arms of someone else! They are all of action.

To not be able to taste any of the longed-for things before going back to suffering and spiritual hurting, it is only because you haven't fallen deeper enough! To fall is to strike the gong that shakes one senses awake from self-hypnosis, to fall is to live the youth you were robbed of, to fall is to steal and burn the books from the polished museums in the familial suburbs, to fall is the rehearsal that will teach you how to embrace your beloved when finally she enters your stage of cherry blossoms next to a canal with hints of blush and a trace of rouge, interruptible by no one, even nature itself. Through action, rather than words, they wield the blade of love and revolution. There are no words needed when there is the fall, and hopefully this text too one day will be useless and overgrown with moss.



To me, and to you— If we were to gather our resolve to fall, let's fall beautifully. *We must find our Selves, and save ourselves, by falling to the best of our ability. Salvation through politics is an absurdity the mere surface layer of things.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sakaguchi, Ango. *Discourse on Decadence*. Translated by Seiji M. Lippit, University of Hawai'i Press, 1986.