
DISSERTATION

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By

Kyoko Omori

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Dissertation Committee:

Professor William J. Tyler, Adviser

Professor Richard Torrance

Professor Mark Bender

Approved by

Adviser

Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures
ABSTRACT

The post-war discourse on modern Japanese literature has presented the binary opposition between “pure” versus “popular” literature as a historical fact, configuring popular literature as the disposable “other” of “pure” literature. Consequently, Japanese literary studies have paid relatively little attention to popular forms such as mystery fiction, samurai “period” fiction, the romance novel, and “nansensu” humor.

This dissertation examines the discursive formation of the Japanese modernist popular genre known as “tantei shôsetsu” or “detective fiction.” Focusing on the popular monthly magazine Shinseinen and several of its writers, it discusses the theoretical and practical dimensions of “tantei shôsetsu” as a vernacular form of modernist literary production. In doing so, it situates the genre within contemporaneous debates about the meaning of both modernity and literature in Japan during the 1920s.

Chapter One establishes the theoretical terms for “vernacular modernism” by illuminating the ways in which popular literary production engaged with the forces of commercialism and Westernization that also shaped the development of canonical Japanese literature during the early twentieth century. Chapter Two surveys established critical views of Modernism in Japan and shows that they fail to account for the significance of vernacular expression. Chapter Three discusses the history and growth of...
Shinseinen magazine and its promotion of tantei shōsetsu as important aspects of “modanizumu” culture during the 1920s-1930s. Chapter Four focuses on the principal theorist of tantei shōsetsu, the renowned socialist critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, who advocated the genre as the most appropriate means for cultivating the kind of critical intelligence necessary for young people to negotiate modernity. Chapter Five discusses the life of Hasegawa Kaitarô (known as Tani Jōji), the most commercially successful writer of the time, as emblematic of the generation of readers targeted by Shinseinen. Chapter Six examines selected popular literary works by Hasegawa. It traces his development from a more orthodox approach to tantei shōsetsu, exemplified in his short story, “The Shanghaied Man,” to a highly parodic use of the genre, as reflected in his famous “’Merican-Jap” stories. The concluding chapter summarizes the over-arching argument of the dissertation and lays out possible avenues of future research.
Dedicated to my parents in Japan,
Shirō Ōmori (大森史男) and Shunko Ōmori (大森俊子),
as one of the many ways to repay their unconditional love and faith in me throughout the journey.
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VITA

Autumn 2002-present . . . . . . . . . . Assistant Professor, East Asian Languages and Literatures Department, Hamilton College


Autumn 1999 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Visiting Instructor, East Asian Studies Program, Oberlin College

1996 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . M.A. Japanese Literature, The Ohio State University

1994-1999 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . Graduate Teaching Associate, East Asian Languages and Literatures Department, The Ohio State University

PUBLICATIONS


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NOTE TO THE READER

In this dissertation, Japanese names are generally given with the surname first, followed by the personal name, the order that is customary in Japan. I also followed another general practice in Japanese literature and used first names for writers employing pen names. For writers who wrote under their given names, I refer to them by surname. Hence, Edogawa Rampo is referred to as Rampo, while Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke is mentioned as Hirabayashi. Hasegawa Kaitarô is an exception to this rule. Although “Hasegawa Kaitarô is his legal name, I chose to refer to him with his first name, Kaitarô, in order to differentiate him from his father, Hasegawa Yoshio.

For long vowels in Japanese names and terms, I adopted the caret (^) instead of a macron, e.g., Kaitarô. In the case of such commonly used terms as Taisho, Showa and Tokyo, the caret is omitted, except when they appear in Japanese phrases or titles.

Japanese words and phrases are italicized, except in the case of personal names, names of associations, companies or literary schools, which remain unformatted.

When a series of collected works or complete works (zenshû) are quoted more than once, I use the following abbreviations:

- HHBHZ: Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke Bungei Hyōron Zenshû
- HKZ: Hirano Ken zenshû
- NSS: Nihon suiri shôsetsu-shi
- HSZ: Hitori sannin zenshû
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Literature as Art or/and Commercial Production Activity

In the first Japanese full-fledged “talkie” (トーキー) movie, Madamu to nyōbō (The Neighbor’s Wife and Mine: 1930), the director Gosho Heinosuke comically depicts a playwright’s struggle to meet the deadline for a play commissioned by a theater in Tokyo. The very first scene hints at the question explored in the movie: Whether a writer is an artist or merely a paid worker. In this opening scene, Shibano Shinsaku (tellingly the kanji for “Shinsaku” 新作 means “New Production”) is taking a walk in a suburban neighborhood and encounters a painter who is portraying nearby houses. It is a serene day, and live music by a chindon-ya (a Japanese street band playing music to advertise products for local stores) filters through the air. Shinsaku looks over the painter’s shoulder to see the houses on the canvas. Instead of appreciating the quality of the painting itself, however, he focuses on the value of the information he obtains from it. As soon as he notices that the houses in the painting appear nice, he looks up and gazes at the actual houses, saying it is a perfect
neighborhood to move into because its quiet environment will help him be productive as a writer. His comment upsets the painter because Shinsaku essentially regards the artist’s work as an advertisement for a commercial housing development.

This opening scene maps out two concerns pursued throughout the movie. The first is that of the status of art: Does art exist for art’s own sake, or does it function as a tool in commercial reality? In this sense, it is quite telling that the very first sounds presented in the movie are those of the chindon-ya’s commercial music. The second point, which is closely related to the first, is that the opening scene encapsulates how a writer tries to negotiate modernity, while still clinging to older values. For example, Shinsaku shows a consumerist attitude by interpreting the artwork of the painting in terms of economic transactions. More specifically, he extrapolates the necessary information from the painting (instead of looking directly at the actual houses) and concludes that he wants to live in this neighborhood, treating the painting as a means to obtain housing information. On the other hand, he is upset when the painter dismisses him as a scribbler or huckster. However, he refutes the insult by claiming that he writes for a famous and popular theater in the Ginza, thereby once again borrowing the aura of a popular brand name as a seal of approval for the quality of his work. Also, his decision to move to the neighborhood is firmly based on what the move will bring to him in a monetary sense. Rather than considering how good the environment is for his children, etc., he focuses on the point that the quiet neighborhood will enable him to write more. That will result in more money and enable him to live in a better house or
to purchase anything else that improves his and his family’s standard of living, which will also enable him to write more and make more money.\footnote{This does not mean that Shinsaku is portrayed as a selfish husband and father. Later scenes in which he interacts with his family show how hard he attempts to juggle his responsibilities as a father, husband, and writer.}

Surely enough, Shinsaku finds one of the houses on the block is available for rent, and he moves in with his wife and two young children. In the new residence, he posts a note to himself on the wall in front of his desk: “REMEMBER, THE PAY IS 500 YEN. JUST WRITE. NO EXCUSES.” Again, this clearly indicates that while he has some artistic desire presumably to produce artwork, he is also driven by the prospect of money. Despite the reminder, however, he seems to suffer from writer’s block (indicating that literary production is not simply a mechanical production of words). He procrastinates by playing mahjong with his friends, who came to help them move to the new house. It is only after his wife repeatedly urges him to finish the work in order to feed his family that he finally starts to scribble a few lines. His concentration in his tiny study is soon disturbed by various noises, however, ranging from mice scurrying in the attic and cat’s mewing outside, to his own children’s crying in the next room. There is also his wife’s nagging about his inefficiency.\footnote{The director is apparently having a good time in this first Japanese talkie, experimenting with a variety of sounds as effective factors to the story progression.} Feeling exhausted from lack of sleep the following morning, he pulls himself together and tries to write. This time, he is distracted by the cheery, quick-paced live Jazz music coming from a fashionable Western-style house that belongs to his neighbor. He rushes over to complain and meets the couple that owns the house. The husband is a producer (or
manager) of the band, and his wife is a voluptuous Jazz singer, whom Shinsaku later describes to his wife as \textquoteleft\textquoteleft The Madam,\textquoteright\textquoteright the popular term to refer to ladies adopting latest modes of Western dress and behavior. They are making music with several other band members. At first Shinsaku hesitates to stay because he thinks Jazz is merely noise. However, as the \textit{moga} wife/singer pours him whiskey and asks him to join in the music, he soon finds himself happily tapping in time with his folded fan to the band’s up-tempo Jazz song called \textquoteleft\textquoteleft The Age of Speed\textquoteright\textquoteright (\textit{Supîdo jidai}). After a while, thanking the band for a fun time and telling them that even his writings have to speed up, he goes home cheerful and drunk. By humming \textquoteleft\textquoteleft The Age of Speed,\textquoteright\textquoteright he effortlessly finishes the entire play at an amazing pace. In other words, while the process of writing is not completely mechanical and effortless, the traditional image of a writer waiting in seclusion for artistic inspiration is flatly rejected here.

The last scene depicts the results of his speedy production. It shows Shinsaku and his family happily walking under a clear sky in open fields in the neighborhood. They are dressed in brand-new clothes, clearly the result of his speedy and successful playwriting.\textsuperscript{3} Although everyone is dressed up, such a change in the family finances most obviously affects the wife’s attitude. For example, earlier in the movie, she was jealous of Shinsaku’s interaction with the neighbor’s sexy – or what she described as \textquoteleft\textquoteleft 100\% erotic (\textit{ero hyakupâsento})\textquoteright\textquoteright – Westernized wife, and she pestered him for a Western dress. In the end, she is still dressed in kimono and thus does not look as

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{3} Kawamoto Saburô points out that the manuscript fee of 500-yen was considerable. At the time, a college graduate’s average monthly salary was 50-yen. Kawamoto, \textquoteleft\textquoteleft Shô-shimin eiga no \textquoteleft tanoshii wagaya,\textquoteright\textquoteright \textit{Taishû-bunka to masu media}, Kindai Nihon bunka-ron Series 7 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999) 12.
\end{flushright}
fashionable as the modern girls who were in vogue in those days. But a nicer kimono and a new Western-style hairdo are apparently enough to make her feel her life has improved. Thus, the wife reproves her husband and little daughter for their “unsightly” (mittomo nai) manners and behavior, stopping them from chanting “en’yakora, en’yakora” like physical laborers working in the fields. In addition, she tells the daughter not to urinate outdoors, suggesting she feels her family needs to behave according to certain class standards now that they have more money, as revealed and embodied in their purchase of items symbolic of the middle class.

On one obvious level, this movie is about “tradition” versus the “modern” embodied by Shinsaku’s old-fashioned wife in kimono on the one hand and the super-modern neighbor’s wife (“madamu”) on the other. However, as indicated in the last scene where Shinsaku’s wife seems satisfied even while still dressed in kimono, the movie reveals that, in capitalist society, commodities (including paid services like hairdos) and their effects are having a powerful impact on people’s everyday life, even the lives of those engaged in artistic production. It should be stressed here that Shinsaku does not work to get out of poverty. Even when he is still struggling to write the play, he and his family never look too poor to purchase luxury items. For example,

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4 While walking in the field path, they notice that a group of farmers are threshing rice in the field, using a bulky old-fashioned wooden threshing facility. Shinsaku demonstrates to his daughter what those farmers are doing by chanting “en’yakora, en’yakora,” and the daughter starts to chant it with him.

5 In terms of her old-fashionedness, it is not only depicted and symbolized in her fashion (kimono) and hair-style but also in the song she sings in the movie. Feeling deserted by her husband who is apparently having a good time with the Jazz band next door, the wife sings A Bride Doll (Hanayome ningyô), a song about a bride in traditional bridal kimono on the day of her wedding. It became extremely popular in the mid-1920s, to the extent that a movie was made under the same title in 1929. (It should be noted that it was a silent film.) Although A Bride Doll was composed only a few years before The Neighbor’s Wife, its old-fashioned pentatonic scale is a clear contrast to the Jazz melodies in The Neighbor’s Wife.
he nonchalantly purchases a suspicious-looking “beauty cream” from a door-to-door salesman who flatters Shinsaku by calling him a very popular playwright. Thus, to finish the play does not affect the writer’s life in a fundamentally “live-or-die” manner, but he understands that speedy production of work will enable him to participate more successfully in the capitalist game. By having Shinsaku and his family look up at an airplane in the sky, the closing scene emphasizes once more that this is the age of speed. The wife suggests to Shinsaku that they should fly on the plane to Osaka, indicating her willingness to spend extra money in order to actively participate in the age of modern technology and speed. As they look up at the plane, they also hear a Jazz song, “Aozora” (My Blue Heaven), wafting out of their Jazz neighbors’ house. A variety of stimulations of high speed surround them, from the songs to the planes. As if they were expressing their active participation in such speedy production and consumption, Shinsaku and his wife smile at each other and hum along with the song.

While this dissertation does not discuss film per se, I find The Neighbor’s Wife a good representation of the theme I am about to explore: During the interwar years, how did writers negotiate the modernity they found in commercialist commodity society? When writers examined, analyzed and explored the socio-cultural and socio-economic changes understood and recognized as modernity, how was their literature produced and read? In The Neighbor’s Wife, a writer is depicted as a salaried worker who needs to

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6 “My Blue Heaven” was originally written by an American composer, Walter Donaldson, in 1925. It was introduced to Japanese audiences when the Japanese Jazz singer, Futamura Teiichi, sung the Japanese version in 1928. It became the first big hit in the Jazz category (ジャズソング) in Japan.

7 By the term “interwar years,” I refer to the period of the 1920s through the early 1930s. I use this designation to distinguish the period in Japanese history from the era in the West known as “modernism.”
meet a deadline in order to be compensated for his work not only to survive, but even enjoy the luxury provided by modern times. Socialists and Proletarians may have accused him of participating in the promotion of Capitalism; writers of Naturalist-influenced “pure literature” writers may have despised him for not writing sincerely about life; and avant-garde experimentalists may have criticized his lack of iconoclastic consciousness that went beyond tradition and the establishment. Nonetheless, as The Neighbor’s Wife clearly emphasizes, Shinsaku remains deeply engaged, as well as shaped, by the forces and trends of the period. Hence, the film also underscores the extent to which this type of popular commercial literature participates equally in modern capitalist society, precisely because it exists within the new socio-politico-economic system as an industry with its own particular mode of production and consumption. As a matter of fact, the relation between commercialism and the act of writing was one of the most heated and frequently debated topics in various newspapers and magazines of the interwar years, especially in a time of increasing attention to socialist ideology, as more writers began to realize the act of writing was not independent of technological and economic change.\(^8\) Whether one thought it positive or negative, it was an indisputable fact that literature was produced and disseminated to readers via commercial means.

Thus, while interwar Japanese literature has been discussed oftentimes in an ideological frame as the struggle of three contending literary camps (i.e., bundan pure

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\(^8\) I will further discuss this issue in subsequent chapters, especially in Chapter Four about the socialist thinker, literary critic and detective fiction writer, Hiyabayashi Hatsunosuke.
literature, avant-garde literature and proletarian literature), there is no denying that vernacular literary genres deserve equal attention, precisely because the drastic changes in the media such as the development of mass-printed and mass-distributed newspapers, books (enpon), magazines, records and radio (radio plays) affected the process of production for literature. For example, when the publishing industry dramatically expanded the quantity of available venues (as seen in the number of new magazines that sprouted up like mushrooms after a rain), it thereby provided writers with abundant opportunities to write for various types of magazines with different orientations and themes. Consequently, it no longer makes sense to exclude popular commercial periodicals from a discussion of Japanese literature. With Kingu – which sold as many as 760,000 copies per issue by targeting a wide range of generations – at the top of the list, many of the vast number of periodicals had circulation figures ranging from 10,000 to 100,000. In addition, during the famous “enpon” or “one-yen book” boom circa 1925 to 1930, more than three hundred “collected works” and “complete works” were published – some containing as many as one hundred volumes. They targeted the new urban middle class as its customers. Consequently, during the 1920s and 30s, commercial publication emerged on an entirely new scale as an arena within which writers and readers alike sought to address the challenges of an expanded print market. To ignore what stood outside the realm of “pure literary” (especially coterie) magazines is to ignore the larger portion of the literary activities occurring in the interwar period.

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9 I will discuss this in further detail in Chapter Two, the overview of the mainstream modern literary criticism and the definition of modernism.
Hence, this dissertation explores the vernacular aspects of modernist (modanizumu) literature, with its focus on the modanizumu magazine, Shinseinen (New Youth). My principle concern will be to examine the various ways in which Shinseinen created a venue for promoting opportunities for readers actively to participate in the act of writing, by offering a variety of reading materials and actual writing opportunities to readers. For example, it published educational, pragmatically informational or critical essays on science, technology and literature, providing its young-adult readers with the basic knowledge and ideological perspective needed to view society critically. It also published satirical cartoons, to which the magazine occasionally requested readers add blurbs by imagining the situation and inventing a clever punch line. Most importantly, it promoted the genre of tantei shôsetsu (detective fiction) as the genre most suitable to developing the skills necessary for negotiating modern society analytically and critically, and it called for readers’ active participation in the further development of the genre by holding prize contests on original tantei shôsetsu and publishing critiques on those contributions by established critics and writers. By supplying information on various fields ranging from criminology and Marxism to the latest fashions, Shinseinen sought to provide ideological, scientific and literary guidance to its readers. As I will further discuss in Chapter Three, the definition of the Japanese term, tantei, philologically referred to the individuals who probe, investigate and explore the unknown, not only as authorities such as the police or government but also as marginalized figures such as spies and anti-establishment activists. “Tantei” is an act of “tantei-ing” (tantei suru) rather than a fixed profession that solves criminal cases as
society’s representative of justice. That is because in modern society, with the advancement of science and technology, people are more aware, or paranoid, that every entity is imbued with the “double-sidedness” that problematizes simple dichotomies of good and evil or right and wrong. Such critical reflexivity was soon applied to the genre of *tantei shôsetsu* itself, which resulted in the production of “nansensu” (nonsensical) stories that even parodied the formulaic characteristics of the genre.

Up to this point, the term *modanizumu* (Modernism) has been applied in a fairly limited fashion to refer to High Modernism operating under the influence of Western writers such as Joyce and Proust, or occasionally to the types of literature that took up the sociological phenomenon of *moga* and *mobo* as its main topic. However, the vernacular approach to modernity seen in both *The Neighbor’s Wife* and *Shinseinen* remains largely unexplored. By presenting a writer as its protagonist and showing the secular impetus (i.e., the pragmatic reason to make money for a living) for the production of his artistic work, *The Neighbor’s Wife* assumes that literature is not a transparent description of the world. Rather, the act of writing is a form of labor that participates in the age of speedy and massive production, and it is also closely connected to the desire for speedy and massive consumption. Its last scene in particular presents the writer as a consumer interested in luxury items such as expensive-looking clothes, hats and toys for himself and his family. It also depicts the wife as newly apprehensive that her family should not behave in vulgar ways. The movie demonstrates how the act of writing is closely tied to capitalist commodity society, precisely because a writer is a *producer* of commodities as well as a *consumer* of them.
Such commodities enable people to differentiate themselves from the masses, although that difference may be an illusion created by capitalism. Likewise, I argue that *Shinseinen* un_masks this aspect of the act of literary production, as well as educates readers with a variety of information and discussion that can be used in literary constructions and scientific/logical inventions of tricks. In other words, by treating its readers as the consumers of the commercially distributed periodical, as well as the creators who participate in literary production of a formulaic genre for such commercial venue, *Shinseinen* reveals the double-identity of modern urbanites.

The film makes a strikingly effective visual statement about the link between production and consumption in modern capitalist society, from which artistic activities are not segregated but rather actively involved. In such a society, literary work may reflect both the writer’s artistic and creative aims and her/his consciousness as a consumer. Thus, to borrow Terry Eagleton’s words on the process of literature:

> Literature may be an artefact, a product of social consciousness, a world vision; but it is also an *industry*. Books are not just structures of meaning; they are also commodities produced by publishers and sold on the market at a profit. Drama is not just a collection of literary texts; it is a capitalist business which employs certain men (authors, directors, actors, stagehands) to produce a commodity to be consumed by an audience at a profit. . . . Writers are not just transposers of trans-individual mental structures, they are also workers hired by publishing houses to produce commodities which will sell.¹⁰

*Shinseinen* provides a fine example of such consumer-producer participation through literature in capitalist modern society.

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As a result of its promotion of *tantei shōsetsu* as a genre for readers who are sophisticated and curious about current times, the response to *Shinseinen*’s promotion of *tantei shōsetsu* in the 1920s was overwhelming. *Shinseinen* created a *tantei shōsetsu* boom, and other magazines followed suit. In addition to Edogawa Rampo, *Shinseinen* helped launch the careers of such mystery translators and writers as Tani Jōji, Yokomizo Seishi, Yumeno Kyūsaku, Kôga Saburô, Mizutani Jun, Oguri Mushitarô and Hisao Jûran. Already established writers in the *bundan* such as Tanizaki Jun’ichirô and Satô Haruo, as well as socialist and proletarians such as Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Kataoka Teppei, Hayashi Fusao, Hayama Yoshiki and Hirabayashi Taiko, also wrote detective fiction for *Shinseinen*. Far from being merely disposable and meaningless stories that simply allowed readers to escape temporarily from daily life, formula fiction participates deeply in the dialectic between culture and social environment. Regarded as a distinct genre with its own conventions, formulae and corresponding horizons of readerly expectations, detective fiction as a category provides insight into the ways in which culture functioned for a broad, popular audience as a means of negotiating the demands of modern life.
CHAPTER 2

JAPAN’S MODERNITY AND THE LITERATURE OF MODANIZUMU

2.1 Modernism in the West

In his review of the history of Western Modernism, Tony Pinkney notes that the term “modernism” is “the most frustratingly unspecific, the most recalcitrantly unp periodizing, of all the major art-historical ‘isms’ or concepts.” While scholars have undertaken numerous historical, social, ideological and cultural re-examinations of modernism from a variety of perspectives, no clear consensus has emerged about either a paradigmatic set of aesthetic strategies and practices or the temporal markers that define the term “modernist.” Within this ongoing and frequently contentious debate over the variety of “Modernisms,” the single element that stands out as definitive is an attitude or rhetorical stance that consciously employs the concept of the “modern” in an effort to represent human experience within the context of a world undergoing rapid and monumental change. Tracing the historical usage of the term, Raymond Williams notes that the idea of the “modern” first became established during the Renaissance as a concept in contrast to the “ancient.” During this early stage of its use, the “modern”

carried with it an unfavorable connotation that to change always meant change in a negative way. Williams explains that, in the course of the nineteenth century, and more markedly into the early twentieth, however, “modern” began to connote changes that were positive, to the extent that it was “virtually equivalent to improved, satisfactory or efficient.”

In other words, the early twentieth century marks the turning point when the concept of the “modern” came to be widely understood as a positive way of radically breaking with established modes of society and culture. In the case of literature, writers sought various means of distancing themselves from what they considered an old and outmoded tradition no longer suited to depicting the complexities of the “modern” world. Toward that end, writers developed and experimented with numerous techniques and aesthetic strategies. According to Matei Calinescu, this conscious effort on the part of the “modern” to break with tradition finds expression in art and literature as follows:

During the last one hundred and fifty years or so, such terms as “modern,” “modernity,” and more recently “modernism,” as well as a number of related notions, have been used in artistic or literary contexts to convey an increasingly sharp sense of historical relativism. This relativism is in itself a form of criticism of tradition. From the point of view of modernity, an artist – whether he likes it or not – is cut off from the normative past with its fixed criteria, and tradition has no legitimate claim to offer him examples to imitate or directions to follow. At best, he invents a private and essentially modifiable past. His own awareness of the present, seized in its immediacy and irresistible transitoriness, appears as his main source of inspiration and creativity. In this sense it may be said that for the modern artist the past imitates the present far more than the present imitates the past. What we have to deal with here

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12 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) 174-175.
is a major cultural shift from a time-honored aesthetics of permanence, based on a belief in an unchanging and transcendent ideal of beauty, to an aesthetics of transitoriness and immanence, whose central values are change and novelty.\textsuperscript{13}

To put this another way, artistic and literary “modernism” in the West is “associated with the avant-garde, bohemianism, experimentation with traditional genres and styles, and a conception of the artist as creator rather than preserver of culture.”\textsuperscript{14} Typically characterized as “a reaction to the stringent aesthetic formulas and moralism of the Victorian period,”\textsuperscript{15} as well as to World War I and the drastic changes in values arising from transformations in political and social systems, various “modernist” movements and practices such as Fauvism, Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism and “stream-of-consciousness” emerged. This dynamic view of Modernism as more attitude than a fixed group of aesthetic strategies offers a way of getting beyond a simplistic and unidirectional model of “influence” in thinking about the rise of “modernist” practices in other cultures and in different parts of the world. Most significant for my purposes here, such a fluid conceptualization helps to explain the complex literary debates during the 1920s and ’30s in Japan surrounding the idea of modanizumu, a transliteration of the English term “modernism,” that refers to both the broad social and cultural changes of the period and a loose-knit association of writers and movements actively engaged in various forms of literary experimentalism.

\textsuperscript{13} Matei Calinescu, \textit{Five Faces of Modernity} (Durham: Duke University, 1987) 5.
\textsuperscript{15} Childers and Hentzi, 192.
2.2 Amorphousness of Modanizumu in Japanese Literature

Just as Modernism in the West is a highly amorphous concept, the notion of modanizumu in the history of Japanese literature is equally varied and difficult to pin down. In the usage from the decades between the two World Wars, modanizumu bungaku refers to the various literary works by Rûtanji Yû and other contemporaries that appeared in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and which share a common thematic interest in depicting a hedonistic lifestyle common to young urbanites during those years. This usage comes from the fact that the terms, “modan” and “modanizumu” emerged as neologisms in those years as markers for the social and cultural phenomenon that was drawing more attention from intellectuals and the general public as a matter of both curiosity and concern. As Barbara Hamill Sato discusses, modan and modanizumu were “identified with pleasure seeking, entertainment, and decadence,” which “reflected comprehensive changes in everyday lifestyles, particularly in Tokyo.” In Japan, “modan” first entered the popular vocabulary as a transliteration of the English word “modern” in the early twenties, especially in the years following the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923, a period that experienced both

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16 Literally, “literature of modernism” or “modernist literature,” with the katakana word, モダニズム, as the transliteration of “modernism.” See footnote 17 for more detailed information on this point.
17 Modern is spelled as モダン, but also occasionally spelled out as “modân,” as モダーン or モダアン.
18 Modernism モダニズム; also modânizumu モダーニズム.
19 For example, this trend is seen in that, in 1930, “modan” became attached to the titles of various shingo jiten (neologism dictionaries), e.g., Modan jiten (1930), Modan yógo jiten (1930), Modan go jiten (1930), Chô-modan go jiten (1931), Urutora modan jiten (1931), Modan go manga jiten (1931), etc. See Matsui Eiichi, Sone Hiroyoshi and Ôya Sachiyo, Shingo jiten no kenkyû to kaidai for details.
economic depression and reconstruction of the modern city. Another term, "kindai," which derived from a semantic rendering of the English word "modern," also appeared in major dictionaries in the Taisho Period. However "modan" enjoyed greater popular currency due in part to its connection with the discourse surrounding the modan gāru (modern girl) craze, as seen in Kitazawa Shūichi’s essay of 1924 titled "Modan gāru no shutsugen" (The Appearance of Modern Girls). As a result of this cultural trend that focused on the fashion and behavior of young women and men in the cities as a specifically “modern” phenomenon, “modanizumu” became a popular term by the late 1920s. Heated discussions took place over whether “modanizumu” constituted merely a fad from the United States (“Americanism”) or whether it reflected more fundamental changes in Japanese society. As Ôya Sōichi argues in his 1930 essay “Modan-sô to modan-sô” (Modern Stratum and Modern Aspect), intellectuals were concerned that “Americanism’s world hegemony” operated in nearly all aspects of people’s everyday lives in the form of airplanes, automobiles, movies, radio, sports,

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22 One example is seen in a brief discussion of it in Chiba Sen’ichi’s “Geijutsuteki kindai-ha.” Nihon bungaku shin-shi, ed. by Hasegawa Izumi (Tokyo: Shibundô, 1991) 30.
23 For the transition of the definitions of “kindai,” see Yanabu Akira, “Sesô no kiwâdo: ‘kindai’ no baai.”
24 “Kindai” had been used as a translation of “modern” since the Meiji Period, but it did not become a more widely used word until the Taisho Period.
25 Kitazawa Shūichi, “Modân gāru no shutsugen,” Josei August. 1924.
26 During the Taisho Period, Japan’s interest in foreign cultures was directed more to the United States than other Western countries, and the Taisho Democracy was deeply influenced by the image of America as a democratic nation. However, by the early 1920s, especially as results of the WWI, it is generally observed that the American influence shifted from ideological and political concerns to social and cultural fashion.

Other essays on the issue of modanizumu include: “Modàn o kataru” by Uchida Roan in the March 1928 issue of Chûô kôron; “Modan êji to modan raifu” by Nii Itaru in Gendai ryôki sentan zukan of April 1931; Modan gâru no kenkyû by Kataoka Teppê in 1927; and “Modanizumu no shakai teki konkyô” by Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke in the March 1920 issue of Shinchô.
jazz, capitalism and journalism. Thus, “modan” life and “modanizumu” became the signifiers of materialist culture. It was in this sense that the literary critic Chiba Kameo (1878-1935) used the term “modanizumu bungaku” in his 1929 critique to identify the cult(ure) of the moga-mobo (“modern girls and modern boys”) in Ryûtanji Yû’s story “Apâto to onna-tachi to boku” (Apartments, Women, and Me) published in 1928.\(^{28}\) In other words, among Ryûtanji’s fellow writers and contemporary critics, “modanizumu bungaku” (hereafter, the “literature of modanizumu”) referred to literature describing the hedonistic life of “ultramodern” (sentan-teki)\(^{29}\) city dwellers who circulated along streets lined with neon signs, concrete buildings, cafés, dance halls, automobiles, department stores and movie theaters.\(^{30}\) It carried a negative connotation of being superficial, ephemeral and immoral, on account of its identification with the erotic, grotesque, and nonsensical aspects of city life.

In the mean time, in the post-WWII critical discourse addressing literary production of the interwar period, “modanizumu bungaku,” or the “literature of modanizumu,” has been employed in three separate, but interrelated ways. All three

\(^{28}\) In the chronological table concerning Shinkô-geijutsu-ha in Shinkô-geijutsu-ha bungaku shû (or the so-called enpon or “one-yen book series”), Ryûtanji explains that Chiba was the first to identify this story as the literature of modanizumu. As quoted in Shimada Atsushi, “Bungaku ni arawareta modanizumu,” 59-60. Chiba also coined the term “Shin-kankaku-ha” for Yokomitsu and other Bungei jidai coterie members in 1924.

Ryûtanji’s story appeared in the November 1928 issue of Kaizô. The story takes place in a modern apartment house of the sort that began appearing in Tokyo in the 1920s, and it depicts the lives of a male medical school student named UR (presumably “U, or ‘yû,’ Ryûtanji”) and the female residents of the apartment house. It is largely descriptive of “modern life” with such modern scenes as smoking cigarettes called “Airship,” eating bread and drinking cocoa, and flirtatious women who tease the young UR.

\(^{29}\) 尖端的

\(^{30}\) In response to the popular discourse that regarded modanizumu as a pleasure-seeking social phenomenon and the literary discourse that saw modanizumu bungaku as literary work of such life, the definition of “modanizumu bungaku” became a topic of heated debates among intellectuals in 1930. I will discuss this subject in details later in this chapter.
overlap, but each focuses on a relatively narrow body of writing based either on the thematic content of the works, the particular ideological commitments of individual writers, or the apparent influence of authors and narrative techniques identified with Western Modernism. The first follows the approach of Chiba Kameo, and it refers very specifically to the hedonistic urbanist literature represented by Ryūtanji and others writing about the excesses of so-called modan life. Meanwhile, “kindai-ha bungaku” (literature of the modern school), “kindai-shugi bungaku” (the literature of the “ism” of the modern), and “geijutsu-teki kindai-ha” (the artistic modern school) are used as substitute terms to describe other types of modernist literature, in order to avoid the pejorative connotations associated with the urban hedonism of the “ero, guro, nansensu” literature of modanizumu bungaku.

The second common definition of modanizumu bungaku designates those avant-garde and “art-for-art’s-sake” (geijutsu shijō-shugi) literary movements that emerged between 1924 and 1931 as the dominant force among a range of other experimentalist groups from the period. In this configuration, the “literature of modanizumu” refers specifically to the movements that began with Shin-kankaku-ha (New Sensationalist School; 1924-1927) and ended with Shinkō-geijutsu-ha (Rising Art School; 1930-1931). In his scholarly work from the 1940s-50s on Showa literature, Hirano Ken

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31 Its range also sometimes extends to the Shin shinrishugi-ha (New Psychologist School; 1931) and Shin shakai-ha (New Society School; 1931) both of which emerged from the split of Shinkō geijutsu-ha.

32 Chiba Kameo, who first named Ryūtanji Yū’s literary work as modanizumu bungaku in 1929, wrote in 1935, looking in retrospect that Shin-kankaku-ha was the birth of modanizumu (he uses “moderunizumu” in katakana) bungaku. It was not until Hirano’s study, however, that the definition of modanizumu bungaku as the movements that began with Shin-kankaku-ha and ended with Shinkō-geijutsu-ha, Shin-shinrishugi-ha and-shin Shakai bungaku that the definition described above was established. For Chiba’s essay, see the March 1935 issue of the Serupan magazine.
established this conception of *modanizumu bungaku*, and other mainstream critics such as Sasaki Kiichi and Takami Jun subsequently adopted it in the 1950s and 1960s. In fact, the majority of current historical surveys of Japanese literature follow this definition. For example, among the recent historical surveys of modern Japanese literature that are widely available, Hoshô Masao uses “*modanizumu*” in this fashion. Similarly, in an essay “Shin-kankaku-ha and Modanizumu,” Satô Kôichi names Shin-kankaku-ha, Shinkô-geijutsu-ha, Shuchi-shugi-ha (Intellectualist School) and Shin-shinrigaku-ha, which date from the latter half of the 1920s to the early 1930s, as movements connected with the “literature of *modanizumu*,” a category that emerged from the process of rapid urbanization during the post-earthquake era. According to this definition, the “literature of *modanizumu*” identifies a literary movement that arose out of writers’ desires to employ innovative narrative devices for portraying the life of the middle-class in the rapidly modernized cityscape of Tokyo after the devastation of the Great Kanto Earthquake of 1923. Equally important, Hirano argues that “*modanizumu bungaku*” also developed out of the art-for-art’s-sake schools’ desperate attempts to contend with another major literary movement at that time, namely, proletarian literature.

Finally, the third use of *modanizumu bungaku* derives from the work of the American scholar of Japanese literature, Donald Keene, who employs it as a blanket designation for all the various experimentalist and art-for-art’s-sake movements from the early part of the twentieth century. Although he does not explicitly state the range

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33 Hoshô Masao, “Taishô bungaku kara Shôwa bungaku e: Kantô dai-shinsai kara ‘bungei fukkô’ made.”
of movements covered by “modernism,” his selection of modernist writers – Yokomitsu Riichi, Satô Haruo, Itô Sei and Hori Tatsuo – suggests that he sees the literature of modanizumu as beginning with the importation of European modernist movements in the early 1910s and ending with the Shin-shinrishugi (New Psychologism) inspired by Proust and Joyce in the 1930s. Ryûtanji Yû and other Shinkô-geijutsu-ha works, for example, do not figure in his conception at all. His approach to Modernism in Japan focuses on such Japanese versions of Futurism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Dadaism, Constructivism, Surrealism, etc., and he questions whether they successfully, or unsuccessfully, adapted the techniques of European avant-garde movements. In the end, he sees Modernism as a temporary phase among Japanese writers who subsequently engaged in a return to “traditional” Japanese practices and values. Grounded in a metaphysics of cultural authenticity, Keene’s conception of Modernism tends to emphasize the influence of Western expressive practices and movements over indigenous strategies, modifications, and developments in Japanese literature during the period. Accordingly, Keene’s use differs slightly from other deployments of the term in that it treats modanizumu as a foreign cultural import

34 The Japanese translation of *Dawn to the West*, *Nihon bungaku no rekishi*, chooses modanizumu bungaku as the translation of Modernist literature in the original. Although Keene did not take on the translation work himself, from the fact that he was involved in the revisions of the content as it was being translated, it seems reasonable to regard that Keene chose to use “modanizumu bungaku.”

35 Thus, in his encyclopedia entry on ‘modanizumu’ from 1967, Sasaki Kiichi writes as one of the definitions of modanizumu as “a variety of isms and styles such as Futurism, Constructivism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Abstract Art, New Materialism, Functionalism were indiscriminately imported and copied as things modern” as the broader definition. Sasaki, “Modanizumu,” Sekai daihyakka jiten, vol. 21. As quoted in Satô Takeshi, “Modanizumu to Amerika-ka: 1920-nendai o chûshin to shite,” *Nihon modanizumu no kenkyû* ed. Minami Hiroshi (Tokyo: Burênssha, 1982) 3.
rather than as a particular response on the part of Japanese writers to the enormous social changes taking place throughout Japan during the 1920s and 30s.

In summary, the definitions given for modanizumu bungaku vary according to context. The first use of the term is its historical usage from the period when it was first coined; the second developed in the post WWII literary critical discourse on literary production from the 1920s and 30s; and the third stems from the model of European High Modernism through a direct translation of “Modernist literature” as modanizumu bungaku. As previously mentioned, these definitions are not always clearly separated. For example, in his recent historical survey of art-for-art’s-sake movements in the early twentieth century, Chiba Sen’ichi uses such terms as “Geijutsuteki-kindai-ha” and “modanizumu bungaku” interchangeably to refer to all the avant-garde movements from the early 1920s – from Surrealist poetic movement to the Shin-kankaku-ha in 1924 and Shinkô-geijutsu-ha in 1930.36

2.3 The Tripod View: Hirano Ken’s Three-legged Concept and Literature of Modanizumu

As the preceding suggests, the instability surrounding the term “modanizumu” both reflects and arises in part from differences among the prevailing critical approaches adopted toward Japanese literary production in the 1920s and 1930s. The most widely accepted of these approaches has been the one advanced by Hirano Ken (1907-1978) after World War II. His first critical survey of the history of Showa

literature was published in 1949. Continually revising and developing his view of Showa literature, he published other critical studies on Showa literature such as Gendai Nihon bungaku nyūmon (1953), Shōwa bungaku oboegaki (1954), Showa bungaku-shi (1963), and Shōwa bungaku no kanōsei (1972). Arguably the most influential critic of Showa literature, Hirano explains that “the literature of modanizumu” flourished in the 1920s and early 1930s as one of three literary movements contending for influence and control over the literary world. The other two were “proletarian literature” and what he calls “the existing realist literature.”

It is entitled “Shōwa shonen-dai no bungaku” (Literature in the First Decade of the Showa Era), and it was published as a chapter in Gaisetsu:gendai Nihon bungaku-shi (Outline of Modern Literary History). Gendai Nihon bungaku nyūmon was published in 1953 by Kaname Shobō. The first part is a revised and enlarged edition of the 1949 text. The second part is a history of proletarian literature. Later, in 1956, it was republished by Kawade Shobō as Showa bungaku nyūmon. Showa bungaku no kanōsei originally appeared in the periodical, Sekai, 1971-1972. It was published as a monograph in 1972 by Iwanami Shoten.

He uses the term, モダニズム文学. See, for example, Hirano, HKZ, 16-17, and HKZ, 123, for his usage of the term, “modanizumu bungaku.” Hirano considers that the literature of modanizumu began with Shin-kankaku-ha (1924), and developed into other movements such as Keishiki-shugi bungaku, Shinkō-geijutsu-ha, Shuchi-shugi and Shin-shakai-ha. It ended with Shin-shinri-shugi (1930). When he refers to the mainstream usage of the term in the 1920s-1930s (i.e., the term which specifically referred to the urbanist literary works represented by Ryūtanji Yū’s), he differentiates it by setting it off in quotes, as it were, referring to it as “the (so-called) literature of modanizumu” (iwayuru modanizumu bungaku).

“Puroretaria bungaku” (proletarian literature). Is described as follows: “Marxist literature that seeks the emancipation of the proletariat” (1963) and “the literary movement (bungaku undō) that evolved in the order of rōdō bungaku, dai-4 kaikyū no bungaku, proretaria bungaku, marukusu-shugi bungaku and kyōsan-shugi bungaku” (1951). Hirano, 15. (Shōwa bungakushi-ron oboegaki)

In 1963, he describes it as “the existing realist literature (kisei riarizumu bungaku) that is represented by I-novel.” Hirano, 123.

See, for example, Hirano, 10-11.
three schools” or the “rivalry of three competing forces”). This image of a Chinese-style kettle with three legs remained key to his thinking, and it was received with much esteem in Japan. 

Among various *modanizumu* literary movements in the 1920s and 1930s, Hirano privileges two. The first is the Shin-kankaku-ha (New Sensationalist School). He marks 1924 as the first significant date in the history of *modanizumu* because that was the year when Yokomitsu Riichi, Kawabata Yasunari, Kataoka Teppei and eleven other writers started the coterie magazine *Bungei jidai* (The Era of Literary Art; 1924-1927) and literary critic Chiba Kameo named the group the “Shin-kankaku-ha.” Hirano argues that 1924 was also when the proletarian literature established itself, alongside, but in opposition to *modanizumu*, because the proletarians published their first coterie magazine, *Bungei sensen* (Literary Front Line), in that year. Although *Bungei jidai* was short-lived, he explains that its experimentalist works led avant-garde movements forward. Moreover, he sees the Shinkô-geijutsu-ha (Rising Art School), which had its inaugural meeting on April 13, 1930, as the next high point in the development of *modanizumu*. Initiated by Ryûtanji Yû, the group called for the participation of the

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43 三派鼎立。鼎 (kanæ) is a tripod kettle originally imported from China and used as a cooking device in old days in Japan.


45 *Bungei sensen* was published after the first proletarian literary coterie magazine, *Tanemaku hito* (The Sewer), was discontinued in 1923 due to government suppression at the time of the Great Kanto Earthquake and subsequent implosion of the magazine. It was published from 1924 to 1932, and in its heyday, the circulation rose as high as 20,000 copies in the mid 1920s. For its first issue, Aono Suekichi, Komaki Ômi, Maedakô Hiroichirô, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke and nine other members were contributors.

46 The members attempted to create a revolutionary literary style for art’s sake, but they were also influenced more or less by socialist thought. They sought the ways both to realize revolution in literature and to produce literature that would bring revolution to society. However, they disbanded in May 1927 when they could not find unity in either artistic or political beliefs and several members moved further to the left.
newly emerging art-for-art’s-sake writers, and thirty individuals ultimately joined the
movement. Among them were Ryûtanji Yû, Narasaki Tsutomu, Yoshiyuki Eisuke and
Kamura Isota from the Kindai seikatsu group; Kon Hidemi and Funabashi Seiichi from
the theatrical company, Kômori-za; Kobayashi Hideo and Hori Tatsuo from the
Bungaku group; Ibuse Masuji and Abe Tomoji from the Bungei toshi group; three
members from Waseda bungaku and one from Mita bungaku. More established
experimentalist writers such as Yokomitsu Riichi and Kawabata Yasunari from the
Shin-kankaku-ha movement did not attend. According to Takami Jun, the club was
intended for “newly emerging and rising” writers (shinshin, chûken) to meet and form
an alliance against the proletarian movement. Hirano follows this view.

In “Shôwa bungaku no gaikan” (1950) and Shôwa bungaku-shi (1963), Hirano
argues that the Shin-kankaku-ha emerged from a combination of two elements: first, the
avant-garde, iconoclastic ideology brought to Japan by European movements such as
Expressionism and Dadaism in the post-WWI period; and second, contemporary trends
in “Americanist” (Amerikanizumu) machine civilization that came with the
reconstruction of Tokyo after the Great Kanto Earthquake. In other words, for Hirano,
Shin-kankaku-ha was the first key movement for Japanese modernist literature because
it emerged from, one, an artistic desire to create an innovative literary style that would
overcome the limits of realist literature, and two, the desire to produce literature in sync
with rapid changes in society. Moreover, he emphasizes the conscious steps taken by
members of Shin-kankaku-ha to use their “new senses brought on by the activity of the

intellect and the discovery of [scientific] reason,” in order to achieve a “revolution in style” (buntai no henkaku). By contrast, he asserts that the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha was merely an artificial movement created by an odd combination of two elements: one, an eroticism tinged with the influences of Americanism and modanizumu found in Ryûtanji’s writing; and two, an ideological opposition to Marxism in literature expressed in the form of creating an opposing group. In Shôwa bungaku-shi, he calls the Shinkō-geijutsu writers a “mixed bag” or “composite troop” (konsei butai) because it was formed by writers of different artistic approaches who merged solely with the objective of building a force against the Marxist literary “corps.” He notes they accomplished nothing as a group other than publish an anthology called Geijutsu-ha varaeti (Art School Variety) in June 1931. He concludes such frivolousness led the movement to split into the Shin-shakai-ha (New Society School) and the Shin-shinrishugi-ha (New Psychologist School) by the end of 1931, and that proletarian forces soon overpowered it. While he sees Shin-kankaku-ha and Shinkō-geijutsu-ha as both belonging to modanizumu, this is so only in the sense that they represented consumerist urban culture which was widely considered during the 1920s to be a form of garish Americanism.

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49 Hirano, “Shôwa bungakushi-ron oboegaki,” HKZ, 23. “shoki no Murou Saisei ni mirareta yôna, jôchoteki na kannon byôsha no atarashisa o tokuchô to suru koto naku, chisei no katsudô to richi no hakken ga motarasu “shinkankaku” ni tayorôto shita”


51 Hirano, “Showa bungaku-shi,” HKZ, 160. The attending members virtually equaled to almost all the leading writers outside of proletarian literary circle.

52 It was published as a coterie publication by a small publisher called Sekirokaku, indicating that it did not have a large circulation.
Like Hirano, Takami Jun’s 1958 critique of the initial Shinkō-geijutsu-ha meeting also argues that the reason “[Ryūtanji Yû] planned a grand meeting of the newly emerging and rising ‘geijutsu-ha’ [writers]”\textsuperscript{53} was “to compete with proletarian literature.”\textsuperscript{54} As a result of this picture presented by Hirano and Takami, it has been a widely shared view among recent scholars that the Shin-kankaku-ha attempted to bring innovation to literary style, but the founding of the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha was motivated primarily by a desire to form an anti-proletarian, anti-Marxist power.

At first glance, Hirano’s metaphorical “tripod” appears to be a formulaic and simplistic picture in which the literary world of early Showa was composed of three separate ideologies. In particular, he presents the 1920s-1930s as a series of power struggles fought largely by two factions, namely the proletarian and \textit{modanizumu} legs of the tripod. However, he also complicates the picture by stating that, from their earliest stages (i.e., the early 1920s), the proletarian and avant-garde groups largely overlapped in terms of their political stance vis-à-vis society. For example, the proletarian movement and the anarchistic poetry movement of \textit{Aka to kuro} (Red and Black) were very similar in their anti-authority position. The gap between the two started to widen, however, when the socialists began to prioritize the dissemination of Marxist theory over artistic expression. Although many writers faced the dilemma of having to choose between literary and political accomplishments in their writing, more switched from the avant-garde to the proletarian view than vice versa. For example, at the founding of the proletarian writers’ organization NAPF (\textit{Nippona Artista Proleta} \textsuperscript{55}


\textsuperscript{54} Takami, \textit{Shōwa bungaku seisui-shi}, 161.
Federacio) in 1928, many radically minded avant-garde writers such as Takami Jun, Fujisawa Tsuneo and Takeda Rintarô deserted the Shin-kankaku-ha and turned to Marxism and proletarian literature. Among other writers who “went left” was the Japanese Futurist leader, Kanbara Tai, who came to the conclusion that Futurism was nothing more than the expression of frustration among the petit bourgeois. The Japanese constructivists also turned leftist by the mid-1920s, employing artistic expression as a political weapon. According to Hirano, the entire literary world was under the strong influence of Marxist thought by 1929, and Kobayashi Takiji and Tokunaga Sunao, leading proletarian writers, were regarded as the central figures in the literary world. The proletarian influence became so great that the gathering of the Shinkô-geijutsu-ha forces had no effect. Because the Proletarian movement gained in such numbers and increasingly flirted with Communist thought, it came to pose a grave threat to the government and was suppressed in 1930.55

We see that Hirano’s “tripod” theory presents Japanese literature during the 1920s-1930s as a series of struggles between ideologies differently prioritizing the political and the aesthetic. Born in 1907 and spending the late 1920s to the 1930s as a young leftist, he himself belonged to the interwar petit-bourgeois intellectual population who experienced deep disappointment in the pre-war socialist movements, which failed both because of severe government repression and internal strife among their members over irreconcilable ideological differences in the pre-WWII era. In the immediate post WWII years, Hirano participated in the leftist Shin Nihon bungakukai (New Japanese

Literature Association), but he soon came to doubt the worth of reviving the pre-WWII proletarian/Marxist movement. Instead he helped to found the coterie magazine *Kindai bungaku* in 1946, and he continued to explore the possibilities for non-ideological, leftist-inspired literary expression in post-war democratic Japan by re-examining the interwar literary movements, with a particular focus on proletarian groups. Thus Hirano’s writing as a literary historian in the wake of WWII reflects his desire to map out the relationship between literature and political activity, and to reconstruct a picture of the interwar petit-bourgeois intellectual’s negotiation with modernity brought on by capitalism. Seen in that context, the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha was merely anti-proletarian and lacking in a political ideology of its own. Hence, he argues it was driven simply by capitalist desire, without any significant ideological underpinning. To support this assertion, he points out the involvement of the Shinchôsha publishing house in the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha movement, saying that “the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha was . . . manipulated by evil literary journalism [he seems to mean here “commercial mass media”] because it could not establish any artistic method unique to the group.” In particular, he attacked Nakamura Murao, the editor-in-chief of *Shinchô* magazine, and other *modanizumu* writers employed by the publisher for this crass commercialism. Intent on

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56 *Kindai bungaku* was published from 1946 to 1964. The founding coterie members were Hirano Ken, Ara Masahito, Honda Shûgo, Sasaki Kiichi, Odagiri Hideo, Yamamuro Shizuka and Haniya Yutaka.


defining the significance of Marxist movements during the interwar period, he simply dismisses popular commercial magazines as reflections of capitalist society.

By taking a limited and what might be termed purist focus on past coterie groups and their magazines, however, he fails to recognize the significance of the mass media as a product of modernity. He estimates only a small portion of interwar Japanese literary production, thereby missing the activity that occurred outside bundan circles. As mentioned earlier, he argues that modernity in the form of urbanization and commercialization greatly influenced writers of the period. He sees the Shinkankaku-ha arising out of the social changes of the 1920s brought on by the importation of Western technology, when writers realized that they needed innovative techniques to depict a new society. It needs to be pointed out, however, that Hirano focuses exclusively on modern society as a theme to be found in modernist works. Consequently, he fails to recognize the extent to which writers experienced major changes in their lives not only as urbanites and consumers but also as cultural producers and workers subject to the rapid development of the mass media. These changes included fundamental alteration in the ways their works were advertised and published, as well as terms of copyright regulations and standardized rates for manuscript fees due to the effects of mass-scale printing and sales. In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how the

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59 Of course, not everyone followed his “tripod” view. Over the course of three decades from the 1940s to 1970s, it was criticized either entirely or partially, and argued against by such critics as Ôkubo Norio, Sasaki Kiichi, Hashikawa Bunzô, Etô Jun and Isogai Hideo. Hirano himself continued to examine the adequacy of it. In Shôwa bungaku no kanôsei (The Possibilities of Showa Literature) in 1972, Hirano proposes a renewed view that I-Novel, Proletarian literature and “the twentieth century literature” pioneered by Dostoevskii were unified in a “socialized self” (shakai-ka shita watakushi) and sublated. (He used the German term, Aufheben.) See “Jiga no shakai-ka” in “Shôwa bungaku no kanôsei” published in Vol. 3 of HKZ. 412-437.
social changes associated with modernity influenced interwar Japanese literature, one must also give due consideration to the changes in the economy of literary production, which switched from largely individualistic action to a collective, assembly-line work. Indeed, young modernist writers themselves recognized that the act of writing was not as free from economic concerns as the established bundan writers claimed. As a matter of fact, in addition to the appearance of highly specialized coterie magazines, the 1920s and 30s saw the emergence of a large number of commercial magazines, some selling as many as a million copies per issue and finding their audience among a growing middle class. Increasingly, bundan writers also began to write for such popular magazines and to involve themselves in the formation of new, popular literary movements such as, for example, taishū bungaku, the literature of the masses, or tantei shōsetsu, detective fiction, etc.

2.4 Cultural Importations and the Return to Japan: Donald Keene’s View

In his chapter on “Modernism and Foreign Influences” in Dawn to the West, Donald Keene asserts that Japanese Modernist literature (or “modanizumu bungaku” in the Japanese translation of the book60) “is marked by the conscious attempts of the authors to impart an unmistakably nontraditional quality to their writings, usually by the use of experimental techniques.”61 Defining modanizumu strictly in terms of the stylistic influence of Western Modernism on Japanese works, he argues that “almost all

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61 Keene, Dawn to the West, 630.
the important Japanese writers of the twentieth century were at some stage Modernists.”62 In addition, he goes on to note that “translations of European modern literature (or, much less frequently, original texts) affected every writer seriously interested in his craft, and often led to direct imitations of the new stylistic methods.”63 Operating primarily within a model of European “originality” and Japanese “imitation,” he examines Modernist literature in Japan as a product of direct or indirect influence by such figures as Proust, Joyce, Wilde and Nietzsche. Thus, like Hirano, he excludes discussion of the impact of broader social and cultural phenomena during the interwar years on the writers whose works were categorized as modanizumu by their contemporaries. Moreover, he does not address the literature of modanizumu in its full range, narrowing his focus to only four writers, chosen because of their linkage or allegiance to particular European “predecessors.” For Keene, Satô Haruo (inspired by Wilde and Nietzsche), Yokomitsu Riichi (Paul Valéry),64 Ito Sei (Joyce) and Hori Tasuo (Proust) are representative of Japanese modernist writers because they were dissatisfied with the dominant naturalist literary approach and zealously turned to the works of Western thinkers and writers for new modes of artistic expressions.65 He goes on to say, however, that all except Hori eventually abandoned such Western techniques, thereby

62 Keene, Dawn to the West, 630.
63 Keene, Dawn to the West, 630.
64 As the Shin-kankaku-ha member, Keene also refers to Kawabata Yasunari and Tanizaki Jun’ichirô as modernist writers in the early years of their writing careers. However, he chooses not to include them in this chapter because, as he says, “Modernism was only a passing phase in careers devoted to more traditional literature.” Keene, Dawn to the West, 631.
65 Keene, Dawn to the West, 630. He also mentions that the Japanese modernism is generally traced back to the early 1920s when Italian Futurism was introduced to Japan and its influence precipitated “a flood of bewildering and often incomprehensible poetry, sometimes designated as Surrealist or Dadaist, although no one in Japan knew what these terms meant.” Ibid., 630. Keene also discusses the modernist poetry in his volume II of Dawn to the West on “Poetry, Drama, Criticism,” but I will not repeat his arguments here as this dissertation is focused on prose.
proving that *modanizumu* was merely a superficial and flirtatious experiment with foreign methods. This dalliance ultimately resulted in a return to “traditional” Japanese subjects and techniques.

On the whole, Keene’s narrow scope of the definition of Modernism appears to derive from the influence that he receives from the conventional and mainstream view originally presented by the intellectuals associated with *Kindai bungaku* after WWII. In their view, Japan’s modernization was never fully realized in the pre-WWII years because Japan tried to hastily adopt Western-style modernization while it never established a “modern self” (*kindaiteki jiga*) since Japan had never abandoned its feudalistic socio-cultural system. As a result, modernization had only a cursory, superficial effect. It did not put down real roots.

Because of their interests in coterie group movements and the stylistic experimentalism undertaken by a small body of writers, both Hirano and Keene focus their attention on literary works produced inside the *bundan* circle. However, considering that the period of 1920s and early 1930s was an era when the publishing industry dramatically expanded the quantity of available venues, providing writers with abundant opportunities to write for various types of magazines with different orientations and themes, it is clear that excluding popular commercial periodicals from the discussion of Japanese literature does not suffice.

**2.5 Recent Discourse on Modanizumu**
In short, consideration of a large number of works have been excluded from discussions of *modanizumu*, because they do not contain obvious elements of Western High Modernism or they were not the product of specific coterie groups emphasized in the post-WWII critical discourse.

In the last decade and a half, however, scholars such as Unno Hiroshi, Suzuki Sadami, Kawamoto Saburô and Sekii Mitsuo have contributed towards the re-imagining of the literature of *modanizumu* by moving beyond the limited scope of existing historical surveys of Japanese literature to discuss the relationship between literary production of 1920s and 1930s and various social and cultural phenomena associated with the period. In *Modan toshi Tôkyo* (1988), for example, the art historian and urbanologist Unno Hiroshi sees the 1920s as a crucial era because it marks the time when modern urban life emerged simultaneously in Japan and Europe.\(^6\) Thus, he does not see *modanizumu* as a unidirectional flow of influence from Europe to Japan. Instead he seeks to explore the parallel development of modernity (*kindai*) in Europe and Japan through his examination of social and cultural modernization and the urbanist literary works that reflect such modern life. This is what he calls the phenomenon of *dôjidaisei*, or contemporaneousness.\(^7\) He points out as follows the limitations of the view of the literature of *modanizumu* that has dominated until now.

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\(^7\) 同時代性, contemporaneousness or syncroneity.
The subject of Japanese modanizumu bungaku from the Shin-kankaku-ha to the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha – i.e., the Japanese literature of the 1920s – has been discussed far from comprehensively. The works that have been buried in obscurity need to be dug out. Also, limiting the focus of evaluation only to novels brings poor results [and should be changed]. A more comprehensive re-evaluation will be necessary by including various expressions such as the travel writings and reportage on cities from the era. The essence of Japanese modanizumu bungaku is hidden rather in reportage and essays. [Therefore] we should not limit [the subject of our study] to such coterie groups as Bungei jidai, Bungei toshi and Kindai seikatsu. Instead, we have to explore the expressions of modanizumu from a wider scope. For that, we need to go beyond the conventional definition of “literature” and we need to examine modanizumu [bungaku] in its interfaces with [different fields such as] theater, film, arts and so forth.

In his book, Unno examines eleven literary pieces by such writers as the mystery fiction writer Edogawa Rampo, the writer of “nonsensical” humorous urbanist stories, Gunji Jirōmasa, and the proletarian writer who addressed problems of modern capitalist society, Tokunaga Sunao. These writers have been neglected in academic study of the 1920s literature because they were considered outside the realm of highbrow bundan literature. Although Unno includes a discussion of the “bundan writer,” Kawabata Yasunari, the piece he chooses for discussion is, interestingly enough, Asakusa kurenai-dan, a work that has yet to receive much attention because it does not fall within Kawabata’s later canonical works famed for their “haiku-esque” quality. Its lack of reputation as a masterpiece notwithstanding, Unno claims that Asakusa kurenai-dan – a

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68 Unno uses 日本のモダニズム文学.
69 Unno, Modan toshi Tōkyo, 48.
70 Since he is looking at literature in the context of its relationship with urban space, his discussion does not limit itself to conventional modanizumu writers. He discusses Edogawa Rampo, Tokunaga Sunao and Gunji Jirōmasa, as well as writers more famous as modernists, Kawabata Yasunari, Hagiwara Kyōjirō, Ryūtani Yū, and Yoshiyuki Eisuke.
work of fiction about teen-age gangs in the Asakusa district in Tokyo – is a literary work that was scrupulously constructed through the use of documentary techniques and other strategies comparable to those employed by the European avant-garde. In other words, Unno presents it as a representative example of Kawabata’s experiments with narrative technique. It was inspired by the rapidly changing social and cultural phenomena that Kawabata encountered during his period of loitering about the Asakusa district in Tokyo. It is not merely derivative of techniques borrowed from European modernism.

In a similar way, Suzuki Sadami focuses on the social manners and customs of the 1920s-1930s in his Modan toshi no hyōgen. By examining such urban phenomena as cafés, street advertisements, career women, urban wanderers, modern girls and apartments, and by discussing the expressly “modern” experience of cosmopolitanism, as well as the boredom and loneliness felt by the middle class in their daily lives, etc., Suzuki also focuses on the world-wide parallel emergence (sekai-teki dōjisei) of modernity. Likewise, his view of the literature of modanizumu is not restricted by conventional definitions. Instead, he discusses various expressions of the cityscape in four different genres: poetry, detective fiction (tantei shōsetsu), proletarian artistic movements, and literature by female writers. For example, he discusses Edogawa Rampo and shows how the boredom, loneliness and alienation associated with urban life are reflected in his writing, as well as how scientific discoveries and developments function in his detective fiction. Or Hayashi Fumiko is discussed in relation to the economic and social independence of women. Similarly, Suzuki examines the work of
Maki Itsuma and Uchida Hyakken, focusing on their interests in the mysterious elements within “the concrete jungle” as a means of escape from quotidian life and old-fashioned morals and values. Meanwhile, in his analysis of Kajii Motojirō’s works, he explores the transformation of the expression of “self” in modern mass society. Suzuki has also contributed to the study of magazines representative of commercial modanizumu by leading the Shinseinen Research Group and conducting a meticulous examination of this important magazine from 1920-1950. The reexamination and rethinking of the significance of Shinseinen in early twentieth-century Japanese society has resulted in the publication of Shinseinen dokuhon and the Shinseinen soshô series.

Finally, in his introductory essay for Shihon bunka no modanizumu: Bungaku jidai no shosô, Sekii Mitsuo takes the same stance as both Unno and Suzuki in claiming that the Japanese literature of modanizumu in the 1920s was not merely a product of the influence of European avant-garde movements. He argues that Yokomitsu Riichi is an example of a writer who “did not acquire the ‘writing’ (bun) of ‘new sense’ (shin kankaku) from the [European] avant-garde art. Rather he discovered the [new] ‘writing’ via the process of finding a new landscape [in the 1920s as Tokyo underwent

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71 Shinseinen kenkyûkai, ed. Shinseinen dokuhon. Eighteen members contributed to the publication. The book divides its thirty years of history into five periods and traces the editorial shifts in accordance with the social, political, and cultural environment of each period. Although it does not include textual examinations of Shinseinen’s modernist stories, and each article is limited to three pages at most, it is the first and most encyclopedic publication available on Shinseinen.


73 He quotes Chiba Sen’ichi’s critical essay, “Geijutsu-teki kindai-ha” (quoted earlier in this chapter) to as an example of the prevailing critical view of the 1920s established after the WWII. “Shihon-shugi no bunka aruiwa Nihon no modanizumu.” 16.
Sekii asserts that *modanizumu* is not only a mere liking for new things. More importantly, modernist expressions stand in opposition to the traditional consciousness of the past. Not all of the Shin-kankaku-ha members were *modanizumu* writers because some did not consciously attempt to create works opposed to tradition. He argues that technological innovations and mass-consumerist capitalism are the two crucial factors that made consciousness about the *modan* emerge, creating the new middle class’ mass society. “Individuals [in the literary text after the 1920s] ceased to have distinct faces,” he notes, “because, in consumerist society, [even] humans were increasingly converted into mere commodities, signs and modes.” He asserts the need for more research that specifically examines how technology and capitalism are interwoven into the literary texts of *modanizumu*. In other words, he insists textual analysis alone is inadequate for understanding the complex significance of the literature of *modanizumu*.

Also key to the rethinking of modernist literature was publication of the ten-volume *Modan toshi bungaku*, co-edited by Unno, Suzuki and Kawamoto Saburō. It is a collection of both literary and nonfiction works from the 1920s-1930s that depict the social and cultural phenomena of the period. Introducing various themes such as megalopolis Tokyo, modern girls, transportation systems, technology, crime, cosmopolitanism, proletarian literature and poetry, the collection introduces works that have been long out-of-print because they were originally published in popular media

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75 Sekii, 17.
76 Sekii, 19-20.
and did not belong to the highbrow literary genres subsequently canonized by the critical establishment after WWII. Moreover, all issues of the commercial periodical, *Bungaku jidai* (published by Shinchôsha from 1929 to 1932) were reprinted in the 1990s, and as already mentioned, the reprinting of the *modanizumu* magazine, *Shinseinen* has been ongoing. However, as of this moment, Japanese popular modernist works remain practically unknown to Western audiences. Even in scholarship in Japan, the introductory work by the aforementioned scholars marks only a beginning, inasmuch as Sekii calls for further study of the actual works themselves. Precisely because modern developments affected writers not only as consumers but also as workers in the mass system of the publishing business, it is necessary that we examine what occurred outside the arena of the *bundan*, which employed a rhetoric that supposedly set writers apart from capitalist forces.

2.6 The Complexity of the Shinkô-geijutsu-ha Meeting – Commercial Publication

The Japanese economy during the 1920s was like a roller coaster, veering between periods of prosperity and hardship. Moreover, the publishing industry

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77 These efforts to break away from the politically engaged literary criticism in the postwar years (as seen in Hirano’s “tripod”) became a mainstream approach in the 1980s and 1990s. Accordingly, at the “Kindai bungaku 100-nen to Kanagawa” (Modern Literature and Kanagawa Prefecture) exhibition which commemorated the opening of Kanagawa Kindai Bungakukan in 1988, the exhibition committee grouped leftist literature and the literature of *modanizumu* (of art-for-art’s sake) together as “toshi-ka jidai no bungaku” (literature in the era of urbanization). For more detail of the content of the exhibition, see, for example, Isoda Kôichi’s essay, “Aru bungaku-shi no kôsô” (A Conception of One Literary History). Nevertheless, popular literature is still excluded from his discussion.

78 As James McClain states, “Japan’s accelerating pace of industrialization and the growth of trade during World War I made the island nation more vulnerable than ever to fluctuations in the world economy, and a particularly severe recession followed on the heels of the wartime boom as export demand for war-related capital goods dried up and Western traders reclaimed their markets in southern Asia. Then, just as businesses were making a tolerable recovery from the postwar downturn, the Great Kantô Earthquake
steadily grew throughout the decade.\(^7\) One sign of this phenomenal growth is to be found in the publication figures for periodicals. In 1920 the number of the periodicals registered under the Publication Law (shuppan hô) had already reached 22,412. By 1929, it rose as high as 37,402.\(^8\) An approximate ratio of non-periodicals (i.e., regular books) to periodicals remained 2:3 throughout the decade.\(^9\) In addition to a rise in the number of different periodicals, the number of copies sold also rapidly increased. For example, the total number of copies sold for the eighty major periodicals combined amounted to 48,600,000 in 1929.\(^10\) The major magazines included “established” magazines published since the Meiji Period such as Kaizô, Shinchô, Taiyô, Jitsugyô no Nihon, Fujin kôron, Shufu no tomo, Fujin kurabu, Shônen kurabu, as well as such newcomers as Shinseinen, Bungei shunjû, and the famous popular magazine, Kingû.\(^11\) They are said to have sold between 100,000 and 200,000-plus copies per month.\(^12\)

rocked Tokyo and surrounding cities on September 1, 1923. . . . To stimulate reconstruction of the nation’s industrial base, the Japanese government provided new sources of credit to banks, which then extended loans to businesses wishing to rebuild. Economic growth rates began to climb once again, but in the spring of 1927 rumors spread that banks holding the loans were in danger of collapse. In April panicky depositors began to withdraw their savings, and the government declared a three-week banking moratorium as dozens of lending institutions shuttered their doors. Over the following year the financial sector got its balance sheets back in order, only to see the Japanese economy engulfed in the worldwide depression that followed the 1929 crash of the U.S. stock market.” James L. McClain, Japan, A Modern History. \(^{359-361}\)


\(^8\) “Taisho-ki shoseki, zasshi hakkô tensû (Naimushô keihokyoku nôhon uketsuke sû) from Nihon shuppan 100-nenshi nenpyô. As quoted in Suzuki Toshio, Shuppan. 178 and 215.

\(^9\) Suzuki Toshio, Shuppan, 178 and 215.

\(^10\) This is according to a research conducted by Tokyo-dô and put together in Nihon shuppan hanbai-shi by Hashimoto Motome. It combines the sales of the seventy-eight to eighty-three major periodicals. (The number of the periodicals included varies depending upon the year.) The statistics do not specify which periodicals are included in the number. Hashimoto Motome, Nihon Shuppan hanbai-shi, 386.

\(^11\) Its inaugural issue in 1925 sold more than 740,000 copies, and circulation leaped up to 1,400,000 in 1928, bringing in great profit to its popular publisher, Kôdansha.

\(^12\) Nihon shuppan hanbaishi. Quoted in Suzuki Toshio, Shuppan, 183.
Periodicals were not immune to the effects of severe recession, however. With a large number of unsold books and periodicals being returned from bookstores in the mid-1920s, publishers sought various means to survive. In 1926, Kaizôsha Publishing House gambled its future on publication of a sixty-three volume series titled *Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshû* (Collected Works of Modern Japanese Literature). It put large advertisements in major newspapers, calling for subscriptions at the cost of one-yen per volume set. The set claimed to cover all the canonical Japanese literary works from Meiji to Taisho. Initially, other publishers regarded Kaizôsha’s plan as suicidal. Contrary to their expectations, however, Kaizôsha lined up 230,000 subscribers in its initial campaign. Later the number rose from 400,000 to 500,000.\(^8\) Kaizôsha’s success spurred great interest among other publishers in similar ventures, leading to the so-called *enpon* boom that lasted until around 1930.\(^6\) The success of Kaizôsha’s *enpon* ushered in a period of mass production, advertisement and consumption in the publishing industry, and urban, petit-bourgeois intellectuals emerged as the population bracket that could afford to purchase such subscriptions.\(^7\)

As an established commercial publisher, Shinchôsha publishing house (1904-present), participated in both the periodic economic and *enpon* booms in the 1920s and early 1930s. Its magazine, *Shinchô*, was a major commercial magazine for the literary arts, and its editor-in-chief was the critic Nakamura Murao (1886-1949), who had been

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\(^8\) For more details, see Senuma Shigeki, *Hon no 100-nenshi*, 171-175.
\(^6\) The themes of those series ranged from World Literature, *taishû bungaku*, World Art series, to Science and Economics. Incidentally, this boom brought technological improvements in the printing industry. Printing plants purchased the high-speed Albert printing machines with state of the art equipment. See Suzuki Toshio, 206, for more details.
\(^7\) Nagamine Shigetoshi discusses the details of this issue in “Enpon bûmu to dokusha.” See especially 188-197.
influential as an editor on the staff of Shinchô since the 1900s. It was primarily under Nakamura’s influence that the Shinchôsha became involved in the literature of modanizumu by the latter half of the 1920s.

The company’s first essay into the literature of modanizumu is to be found in the June 1928 issue of Shinchô. Nakamura issued his first statement in support of the art for art’s sake movements in a famous essay entitled “Dare da? Hanazono o arasu mono wa!” (The Destroyers of the Flower Garden! Who Are They?). In this essay, he raised a passionate call for recapturing the autonomy of the arts from overtly ideological concerns by criticizing the Marxist literary movement for emphasizing political issues over artistic ones. Moreover, in May 1929, the Shinchô Publishing House inaugurated a new magazine titled Bungaku jidai (The Literary Era) after discontinuing its youth magazine, Bunshô kurabu (Composition Club; 1916-1929). Bungaku jidai was published with the full support of Nakamura Murao, who helped Katô Takeo (1888-1956) work as its editor-in-chief at Nakamura’s recommendation. The design for the cover was by the avant-garde artist, Tôgô Seiji, and it published literary pieces by such writers as Ryûtanji Yû, Ibuse Matsuji and Kataoka Teppei, and essays by Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Tosaka Jun and Kurahara Korehito. Its content was focused on cosmopolitanism and modern aspects of the cityscape, as seen in the life of the young

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88 He first gained recognition as a journalist in 1908 by interviewing for Shinchô such leading writers as Natsume Sôseki, Shimamura Hôgetsu and Tayama Katai. He also edited the Shinchô special issue on Kunikida Doppo in 1908, which helped to establish Shinchô’s authority as a literary magazine.

89 Bunshô kurabu was popular among youngsters for the stories about writers’ lives and current topics in the Taisho bundan. By the late 1920s, it lost its popularity among youngsters.
middle-class. In December of 1929, Nakamura and Katô also participated in the inauguration of a coterie group called “Jûsannin kurabu” (The Club of Thirteen). The following June, Shinchôsha published their Jûsannin kurabu sôsaku-shû (A Collection of Original Works by the Club of Thirteen).

Earlier that year, Nakamura invited several leading intellectuals to discuss the meanings of modanizumu both in society and in literature. As already discussed in this chapter, modanizumu had come into vogue as a social term in the late 1920s, but Nakamura proposed to examine it in light of the literature of modanizumu, as well as modanizumu in society in general. The proceedings of the meeting were published as “Modânizumu bungaku oyobi seikatsu no hihan: dai 78-kai Shinchô gappyôkai” (Criticism on Modernist Literature and [Modernist] Life: the 78th Roundtable Discussion for Shinchô). In this article, Tokuda Shûsei, Nii Itaru, Okada Saburô, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Kawabata Yasunari, Asahara Rokurô, Ryûtanji Yû, Yoshiya Nobuko and Nakamura Murao debate the characteristics of modanizumu literature and its relation to contemporary society. The participants express a variety of opinions.

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91 Participants from Shinchô Company were Nakamura Murao, Katô Takeo, Kamura Isota, Narasaki Tsutomu, Sasaki Toshirô. The other “club” members were Ozaki Shirô, Asahara Rokurô, Iijima Tadashi, Kawabata Yasunari, Kuno Toyohiko, Ryûtanji Yû, Okada Saburô and Okina Kyûin.
93 Shinchô regularly carried roundtable discussions by inviting writers and literary critics to speak on various current topics.
95 Chiba Sen’ichi’s article is not accurate in listing Narasaki Tsutomu as a participant and excluding Sasaki, Shûsei, Asahara and Yoshiya in his mention about this roundtable discussion in “Geijutsuteki kindai-ha,” Nihon bungaku shinshi: gendai, 46.
about what they conceive as characteristic literary modanizumu, and whose and which works can be defined as such. While they never fully agree on the details of a “modanizumu ideology,” or on its defining techniques or style, they shared the basic point of view that “nonsense” (i.e., light and satirical works), “eroticism,” and “the machine” (“kikai”) are the three major terms that characterize the literature of modanizumu. Since, as they indicate, nonsense and eroticism are generally considered to be of inferior quality in literature, they debate whether nonsensical and surrealist works constitute no more than the literature of escape. Or are they radical enough to intellectually transcend the status quo? In the case of eroticism in particular, they discuss whether modernist eroticism is an attempt to pull issues of sexuality, which had been hidden as impermissible, into the public arena, or whether the erotic is introduced out of a scientific or sentimental spirit. Kawabata notes that he sees many more “purely nonsensical and erotic elements outside the bundan, for example in a column called ‘Toilet Room Marching Song’ in Modan Ûman (Modern Woman) and in columns and short essays carried in Shinseinen.”

He sees bundan literature as not having gone to such extremes in expressing the erotic, nonsensical or satirical humor because of inhibitions on the part of the writers’ “artistic conscience.” To this, Nakamura counters that Kawabata’s works are full of erotic elements. The speakers also discuss whether modern technology represents human will, or if humans are controlled by technology.

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96 For example, Ryûtanji summarizes that it is “a particular kind of life style that integrates Europiamism, Americanism, Oriental tastes that became popular in America and other foreign countries and is now reflected back in Japan, and it is characteristically light and nonsensical, with experiments with the rhythm and tempo in the writing.”

97 “Modanizumu bungaku oyobi seikatsu no hihan,” 136-137. Kawabata thinks that such magazines aim at more extreme nonsense and eroticism with short essays and columns.
Finally, they discuss if literature will become nihilistic, as machines and science become more deeply involved in literature. While they recognize that *modanizumu* is the literary form of modernity, they agree Hirabayashi is fundamentally correct when he argues that Japanese modernist literature is still in a transitional phase that anticipates further development. In their opinion, “real *modanizumu bungaku*” has yet to be realized. After the discussion of these three elements in literature, Nakamura leads the group to a discussion about modern social life as “the mother’s womb” for the literature of *modanizumu*, and how literature and society affect each other. What is important here is that this roundtable discussion demonstrates the participants’ belief that the literature of *modanizumu* is closely tied with the street phenomena of modern society. At the same time, they anticipate the advent of a true reform of modernist literature that probes the core mechanisms of modernity, especially technology.

In addition to supporting the *modanizumu* writers by providing *Bungaku jidai* as a venue to publish their works, Nakamura also wrote for mass media outlets other than *Shinchô* magazine. In March 1930, or less than a month before the roundtable discussion, he wrote an article in the *Asahi Shinbun* that advocated experimentalist movements. In it, he laments the current situation in which only erotic (*ero*) and nonsensical (*nansensu*) aspects of *modanizumu* literature, or what he called superficial elements, prevailed. Instead he calls for a kind of *modanizumu* literature that involves science and technology -- or what he considers the core of modern civilization. Such a literature has yet to appear. Some of the writers he lists in the essay as *modanizumu*

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98 Nii’s description. “*Modanizumu bungaku oyobi seikatsu no hihan,*” 142.
99 It was published in three installments.
writers were avant-garde writers who started out championing art-for-art’s-sake but soon leaned to the left in the late 1920s. Nakamura sees it as natural that leftist elements prevail in the works of many avant-garde writers. He describes writers who attempt to integrate a socialist agenda with an art-for-art’s-sake approach as modernists who possess an “understanding of Marxist ideology.”

Less than two months after the roundtable discussion, the inaugural meeting for the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha (Rising Art School) was held, with thirty writers and critics joining as members. Promoted under the names of Ryūtanji Yû and Kuno Toyohiko, it was actually arranged by Shinchôsha Company’s Nakamura and Katô. The name, “Shinkō-geijutsu-ha,” was suggested by the writer, Ozaki Shirô, and then approved by the president of Shinchôsha, Satô Yoshiaki. As already discussed in this chapter, Hirano Ken dismisses the significance of this meeting and the movement of Shinkō Geijutu-ha as merely anti-ideology (i.e., anti-proletarian, anti-Marxist) instead of pro-actively creative. One of his grounds for his charge is that the group produced only one publication, Geijutsu-ha VARAI TÉ (Art School Variety). However, if we look to other publications not necessarily edited and published by Shinkō-geijutsu-ha but written by its members, we see that the their movement did not disappear only with the publication of Geijutsu-ha Variety.

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100 For example, see Kaizôsha publishing company’s 28-volume set called Shin’ei bungaku sôsho (The Library of New and Powerful Literature) of 1930-1931. Several of the writers in this series were also published in Shinkô-geijutsu-ha sôsho, but the series included primarily the works by proletarian writers.
101 Nakamura Murao, “Modânizumu bungaku ni taisuru ichi-kôsatsu” (One Observation on Modernist Literature), Asahi Shinbun, March 17-19 (1930).
102 Edited by Shinkō-geijutsu-ha Kurabu and published in June 1930.
About the time of the assembly meeting, Shinchôsha announced that it would begin publication of a newly collected series of works to be called *Shinkô-geijutsu-ha sôsho* (Rising Art School Library). This was one of Shinchôsha’s versions of the “enpon” books. Twenty-four volumes were published from May to October, 1930. As was characteristic of all kinds of enpon, the series was advertised sensationally.

Although the series was entitled *Shinkô-geijutsu-ha sôsho*, it was not limited to participants in the Shinkô-geijutsu-ha Kurabu meeting, but included other famous experimentalists such as Yokomitsu Riichi and Kawabata Yasunari. At the same time, works by Kamura Isota, who did attend the meeting, were considered realist and not modernist; nonetheless he was included in this series because he had been an editor for the magazines, *Fudôchô* and *Kindai seikatsu*, both of which Nakamura patronized. In other words, while a breakdown of the participating writers shows that the major experimentalists of the time were included -- whether or not they claimed to be Shinkô-geijutsu-ha members, it also included writers associated with Shinchô. Nevertheless, just as other enpon sets contributed to the process of canonization in other genres, *Shinkô-geijutsu-ha sôsho* came to represent the literature of modanizumu. In relation to the meeting of Shinkô-geijutsu-ha, in June 1930, *Shinchô* magazine held a roundtable discussion and published it as “Shinkô-geijutsu-ha hihan-kai” (Critique of the Rising

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103 *Shinchô* was the first to follow Kaizôsha’s “enpon” series and published a 56-volume set of collected works titled *Sekai bungaku zenshû* (Collected Works of World Literature) in 1927. It achieved the amazing number of 580,000 subscriptions. This led to the “enpon boom” because other publishers attempted to make a fortune just as Kaizôsha and Shinchôsha had done. It is said that more than three hundred sets of zenshû and sôsho were sold in this period.

104 Many publishers used multimedia such as “chindon-ya” street musicians, *kami-shibai*, advertisements in newspapers and magazines, advertising balloons, handbills dropped from airplanes, advertising boards, posters and flags displayed at bookstores to promote enpon sales.
Art School) in its June 1930 issue. In it, the attendees critically examine the significance of the recent emergence of the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha, thereby abetting the discursive formation and development of the experimentalist and urban literature of modanizumu.  

This intimate connection between the formation of modanizumu discourse and the commercial publishing industry was readily apparent to writers and editors even in 1930. Indeed, critics of modanizumu literature recognized this interconnection. So, for example, the proletarian critic Kobori Jinji (1901-1959) saw it as the point at which to attack the apolitical literary group. In the June 1930 issue of the journal Puroretaria bungaku (Proletarian Literature), he criticized the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha meeting, arguing that Shinkō-geijutsu-ha meeting did not arise out of a desire for solidarity among writers subscribing to a coherent literary ideology. Rather, it was the case that the writers happened to be controlled by a commercial publishing concern named Shinchō. He called Shinkō-geijutsu-ha not a “school,” but a sort of collective writers’ labor union set up to secure their income. In other words, he saw the group as merely the result of the writers’ desire to advance their economic success by provoking an image of the group as influential at the same that Shinchōsha exploited the writers’ anxieties and labor. As a proletarian thinker, his intent was to criticize the commercial aspects of the art-for-art’s-sake movement.  

Yet, his argument underscores the interconnection of

105 However, the discussion is desultory and did little to advance or develop the significance of the modernist force in Japanese literature.

106 Other publishers and newspapers reported on the meeting and included major modanizumu writers in their new zenshū and sōsho. For example, The Yomiuri Newspaper Company hosted a public lecture titled “Shinkō-geijutsu-ha sengei narabi ni hihan kōenkai” (Lecture Meeting on the Proclamation and Criticism of the Rising Art School) on April 18, or only five days after the Shinkō-geijutsu-ha meeting. It
modanizumu with commerce, how modanizumu was thoroughly implicated in the commercial publishing industry. The point to be made here is not to follow Kobori’s dismissal of modanizumu, but rather to show the importance of popular mass media outlets in the discursive formulation of the idea of modanizumu.

Shinkô-geijutsu-ha group was officially dissolved in July 1931 when Ryûtanji announced the end of it. In the February 1932 issue of Shinchô, Asahara admitted that, in retrospect, the name “Shinkô-geijutsu” meant little more than “a group of newly arising writers who focused on art, as opposed to Marxist literature.” Although the lack of a unified literary ideology among Japanese modernists has been identified as a critical weakness, doubtless it was connected to the very nature of the desire on the part of individual modanizumu writers to produce a literature that differed from tradition or what had already been tried. The articles, essays, literary works and advertisements published by Shinchôsha promoted the formation of the idea of modernist literature, irrespective of disagreements concerning ideology. Shinkô-geijutsu-ha remains at the

invited Kobayashi Hideo, Kawabata, Yokomitsu, Aono Suekichi and Funabashi Seiichi. Yomiuri also invited Kobayashi Takiji, but Takiji refused to attend, claiming that a discussion on Shinkô-geijutu-ha was not worthy of his time. Kaizô Company’s Sin’ei bungaku sôsho (Library of New and Powerful Literature; 28 volumes, published 1930-31) included Ryûtanji, Nakamura, Ibuse, Kuno and Hori. Shun’yôdô’s Sekai daitokai sentan jazu sirizu (The Ultramodern Jazz Series from the World’s Megapolis) included several of the same writers from the Shinkô-geijutsu-ha sôsho in volume one entitled Modan TOKIO enbukyoku (Modern TOKIO Waltz). In 1931 Kaizô also added to their Gendai Nihon bungaku zenshû (Collected Works of Modern Japanese Literature, or the series that had started the enpon boom, volume 61 entitled Shinkô-geijutsu-ha zenshû.


Even though representatives of the six coterie groups (Waseda, Mita bungaku, Kômori-za, Bungaku, Bungei toshi and Kindai seikatsu) agreed to attend the meeting, with the exception of the members of Kindai seikatsu-ha (i.e., the group consisting mainly of Shinchô people) were dubious about the significance of it. See Takami Jun, Showa bungaku seisui-shi, vol. 1, 255-257.

center of the literary discourse surrounding *modanizumu* in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Although proletarians decried the commercialism of the literature of *modanizumu*, and further claimed that *modanizumu* writers had been taken advantage of by the mass media and quickly faded from the literary limelight, nonetheless it cannot be denied that the popular aspects of *modanizumu* were tied to socialist thought to which almost all writers of the 1920s were exposed.

The role of Shinchôsha publishing house in the Shinkô-geijutsu-ha movement shows how deeply Japan’s modernist movement came to be tied to the methods and values of the commercial publication industry in late 1920s Japan. In other words, it reveals the participation of commercial publications and popular literary production in the very formulation of the idea of *modanizumu* in Japan, indicating the importance of popular forms of *modanizumu*. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon us to revisit *modanizumu* with an eye to attending more closely to the discursive complexity of its early articulation within various literary debates taking place in popular commercial publications during the 1920s and 1930s. Among these publications, it is the assertion of this dissertation that *Shinseinen* was the magazine most thoroughly dedicated to and associated with exploring the ideas and potential of *modanizumu*. One of the principal ways in which the writers and editors of *Shinseinen* pursued these ideas was through the medium of a newly developed popular genre of fictional crime narrative, *tantei shosetsu*. We shall turn next to a discussion of *Shinseinen* and the role in the development of this genre in Japan.
CHAPTER 3

SHINSEIiKEN

3.1 Shinseinen as a Torchbearer of Modanizumu

In an article written in 1980 and entitled “Otoko-tachi o toriko ni shita Shinseinen” (Shinseinen That Captivated Men), mystery fiction writer and literary critic Nakai Hideo (1922-1993) describes Shinseinen as a torchbearer of Modanizumu culture.\(^\text{109}\) Published in the popular monthly variety magazine *Burūtasu* (Brutus), which is marketed to young males, the essay begins as follows:

Until recently, *Shinseinen* was regarded [only] as a mystery fiction magazine. Because we have looked back at it within that [limited] frame of reference, its character as a stylish magazine for male readers has only recently come into the spotlight. However, if we shift our perspective, [we see that] in the late Taisho to early Showa periods, *tantei shōsetsu*\(^\text{110}\) – an equivalent of what is now called *suiri shōsetsu*\(^\text{111}\) – was considered stylish literature precisely because it was so fresh and full of urbanity. Indeed the extent of its stylishness is hard for us to imagine now. Because the strengths of *tantei shōsetsu* [as a modern literary genre] were a perfect match for the Zeitgeist [of the late 1920s-early 1930s], *[Shinseinen]* was able to become the torchbearer of *Modanizumu* culture. It shone as the mainstay of such culture.\(^\text{112}\)


\(^{110}\) 探偵小説; literally, “detective fiction.”

\(^{111}\) 推理小説; literally, “fiction of ratiocination.”

\(^{112}\) Nakai, 101.
This passage appeared in *Burûtasu* as part of an article discussing how readers of *Shinseinen* fondly remembered the magazine, even a half century after its golden age, especially as a trailblazer for trends in the 1920s and 1930s. The attention that *Burûtasu* gives to one of its most notable predecessors is indicative of the new magazine’s aspirations to achieve long-lasting influence over its young adult readership, by promoting like *Shinseinen* its keen, modish outlook on the latest events and phenomena of the time.¹¹³ Revealingly, the article’s unsigned introduction written by the editorial staff of the magazine defines *Shinseinen* as a “stylish magazine for men” (*haikara na menzu magajin*)¹¹⁴ that had the “new sense” (*shin-kankaku*) to publish works in the emergent genre of mystery/detective fiction and to report on the latest socio-cultural trends for “modern boys” during the late Taisho to early Showa eras.

Although the introduction is only a quarter of a page in length, and it does not offer a detailed discussion of what constitutes being “stylish,” Nakai’s essay helps us to better understand the assertions made by the editorial staff. It explains that *Shinseinen*’s brand of *Modanizumu* – “chic and sophisticated” – is expressed by not only specific

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¹¹³ This second number of the magazine ran a quarter-page, unsigned introduction by the *Burûtasu* editorial staff, followed by photographs related to *Shinseinen*. There were a selection of fifty-two front cover designs from 1923 to 1944, illustrations, satirical cartoons, as well as the photos of *Shinseinen* translators, writers, and editors who promoted *Modanizumu* in *Shinseinen* with translations of Western stories, original mystery tales, satirical and witty short-short stories (or what are called *contes* in French), critical essays, reportage, and cartoons.

¹¹⁴ Although *Shinseinen*’s fiction, essays and articles especially in the late 1920s to the mid 1930s targeted both men and women (*mobo* and *moga*), it has generally been considered as more of a male magazine. Moreover, the magazine produced very few female writers, as opposed to the large number of male *tantei shôsetsu* writers who debuted in *Shinseinen* and received wide recognitions. Ironically, Hisayama Hideko -- the most famous female *tantei shôsetsu* writer to debut in *Shinseinen* -- later turned out to be a male writer using a female pseudonym. The issue of gender in the *tantei shôsetsu* genre is a topic worthy of being pursued in another context.
articles on popular fashion, music and movies, but also the fact that all writing in the magazine – from satirical cartoons, short-shorts, humorous tales, articles on sports, to *tantei shôsetsu* – “vividly reported the ‘colors of the time’ (*jidai-shoku*) comprehensively.” Even more important for our purposes here, note that when Nakai argues that *tantei shôsetsu* as a genre embodied *Modanizumu* to its contemporary readership, he is clearly arguing against the dominant critical discourse that, as a general rule, treated *tantei shôsetsu* and *Modanizumu* culture as separate phenomena.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Hirano Ken, Takami Jun and other mainstream literary critics in the post-WWII period developed the critical discourse that “*Modanizumu bungaku*” referred only to the avant-garde literary movements of coterie groups such as the New Sensationalist School and writers associated with the literary periodical, *Bungaku jidai*. In a more specific sense, their discussions defined *Modanizumu* as literature that focused on the themes of various socio-cultural phenomena connected to the late 1920s to 1930s. Hence, depictions of life at cafés and dance halls, where young urbanites dressed like characters out of Hollywood movies and danced to the accompaniment of Jazz were often regarded as the minimum condition for works of the literature of *Modanizumu*. In addition, this critical discourse covered only “highbrow” literature – or only a small part of what was actually available to readers in the interwar years when large numbers of popular books and periodicals reached mass audiences via a publishing boom made possible by newly imported technology enabling mass production, distribution and consumption. Because the

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115 Nakai, 102.
critical approach of Hirano et al. prevailed, what we may call “vernacular modernism” was largely excluded from mainstream criticism. By “vernacular modernism,” I mean a range of forms of expression, including but not limited to various forms of print, audio and visual media directed toward a popular or mass audience and arising from the same set of socio-historical forces and events that produced better-known achievements in the realm of high art, which heretofore have been identified under the rubric of modernism. By asserting a fundamental, even constitutive interconnection between Shinseinen magazine, the genre of tantei shōsetsu, and the larger field of Modanizumu culture, Nakai departed significantly from established views of both the significance and the dynamics of popular literary expression during the late Taisho and early Showa periods in Japan.

Moreover, the fact that he makes his relatively bold assertion about the fundamental modernity of tantei shōsetsu within the pages of a popular magazine suggests that, circa 1980, a general readership no longer identified tantei shōsetsu as being new or stylish. Even today, tantei shōsetsu has yet to gain broad recognition as a crucial instrument in the development and propagation of Modanizumu culture, and the genre continues to be freighted with decidedly old-fashioned or outmoded connotations. This view arose out of a variety of historical factors. Most importantly, the very term “tantei shōsetsu” had been almost completely replaced after World War II by “suiri shōsetsu” (lit., the fiction of ratiocination) and “misuteri” (lit., mystery). It has been said that the promulgation of the tōyō kanji (the set of 1850 kanji characters chosen by the Japanese government for public use) in 1946 contributed to this shift because the
exclusion of the kanji for the tei (偵) of tantei from the tôyô list forced the publishing industry to switch to suiri shôsetsu as a substitute in the late 1940s and then to misuteri in the late 1950s. Moreover, the use of “suiri shôsetsu” had the effect of distancing works of suiri shôsetsu or misuteri from the tantei shôsetsu of the pre-WWII era, suggesting the development of a more ratiocinative literature.\(^\text{116}\) By the time the character tei was returned to the tôyô list, the use of suiri shôsetsu and misuteri had become too widespread to be displaced again by tantei shôsetsu.\(^\text{117}\) In tandem with such shifts, in 1963, the authoritative association for mystery writers, Tantei Sakka Kurabu (The Detective [Fiction] Writers Club), changed its name to Suiri Sakka Kyôkai (the Association of [the Novel of] Ratiocination Writers). With this shift in genre names, tantei shôsetsu came to refer to a specifically historical genre of mystery fiction that existed from the 1880s to the 1940s.\(^\text{118}\)

\(^\text{116}\) “Suiri shôsetsu” is believed to be coined by Kigi Takatarô 木々高太郎 (1897-1969) in 1946. Kigi was a mystery fiction writer who debuted in Shinseinen in 1934. In 1947, he argued for the ratiocinative and reflective elements as prerequisites for the genre, thus he began to use suiri shôsetsu to include wide range of works such as the tales of mystery, ratiocination, science and psychology. Other writers and critics argued for their own definitions of the term. For example, Edogawa Ramo (in the September 1946 of Kaizô) argued that, in the situation where “tantei shôsetsu” had been used to cover too wide a range of literary works, “suiri shôsetsu” should be useful to differentiate the literature of puzzle-solving and sleuthing from other various types of work loosely grouped in tantei shôsetsu. See in Kobayashi Nobuhiko’s “‘Tantei shôsetsu’ kara ‘suiri shôsetsu’ e.”

Kigi Takatarô’s article in the January 1947 issue of Puromete also argues for the use of “suiri shôsetsu.”

\(^\text{117}\) See the entry for “suiri shôsetsu” in Nakajima Kawatarô’s Tantei shôsetsu jiten.

\(^\text{118}\) “Tantei shôsetsu” launched its first step in the 1880s when the influential tabloid reporter, translator and novelist, Kuroiwa Ruikô (1862-1920), translated several pieces by Western mystery writers and categorized them as tantei shôsetsu. The writers Ruikô translated include Fortuné Du Boisgobey, Emile Gaboriau and William Wilkie Collins. (Incidentally, since Ruikô’s specialty was limited to English-Japanese translation, his translation of Du Boisgobey and Gaboriau was done from an English translation of the French originals. The English translation had appeared in American dime magazines. Unlike tantei shôsetsu, the terms “suiri shôsetsu” and “misuteri” do not sound outmoded. Indeed, mystery fiction genre thrives as an extremely popular genre in current times, as seen in the fact that mystery stories by Miyabe Miyuki, Kitamura Kaoru, Akagawa Jirô, Kasai Kiyoshi, Ôsawa Arimasa,
3.2 Publications about *Shinseinen* and Its Writers: the 1960s to the Present

Nakai’s claim that *tantei shôsetsu* was the “torchbearer of *Modanizumu* culture, and it shone as the mainstay of such culture” in the interwar years corresponds with comments made by editors, translators, writers or illustrators who were involved with the publication of *Shinseinen* at the peak of its fame. One example of such attention being directed to *Shinseinen* appears in the transcript of a roundtable discussion published in a leading mystery magazine, *Hôseki* (Gem) in 1957 that gathered together writers and staff members involved with *Shinseinen* in the 1920s-1930s. The discussion was hosted by Edogawa Rampo, who debuted in *Shinseinen* in 1923. Eventually, he became one of the most popular mystery fiction writers in twentieth-century Japan. Other participants included the first four editors-in-chief who presided during the golden era of the magazine from 1920 to 1938, two editorial staff members who worked with them, as well as the illustrator, Matsuno Kazuo, whose front cover illustrations for *Shinseinen* famously depicted the cultural and political trends of the time. As I will discuss later in this chapter, this roundtable shows how the young people who were engaged in the production of *Shinseinen* actively sought to cultivate an expressly “*modan*” sensibility that, on the one hand, embraced the cultural

Norizuki Rintarô, Kyôgoku Natsuhiko, Kitakata Kenzô and Hanamura Mangetsu appear constantly on the best seller lists.  

120 Morishita Uson (1st editor-in-chief; 1920-1927), Yokomizo Seishi (2nd; 1927-1928), Nobuhara Ken (3rd; 1928-1929), and Mizutani Jun (4th, 1929-1938).
possibilities arising from the enormous changes taking place in Japan at the time, and on the other, maintained a critical, rational attitude toward those changes.

In addition to the people engaged in the production end, those involved with Shinseinen primarily as readers – many of whom sent their own stories to the editors to compete for prizes and publications – have also waxed nostalgic for the magazine as a venue for the cultivation of Modanizumu, especially through its advocacy of tantei shōsetsu as a literary genre. Take for example Kobayashi Nobuhiko’s autobiographical roman à clef which tells us about the days when he worked as a young editor in the 1960s. His Yume no toride (A Fortress of Dreams) depicts such nostalgia. In the mid-1960s, a young editor named Tatsuo becomes interested in learning the secrets of the magazine’s lasting fame after hearing older editors talk longingly about it. He reads old issues of Shinseinen stored at the publishing house where he works, gleaning specifically “modan” ideas from them and trying to recapture the spirit of the times in the pages of his general magazine.\textsuperscript{121} Tatsuo’s plan to publish a remake of Shinseinen as a special issue falls through, and nothing comes of it. However, in actual fact we see that the publication records from the late 1960s to early 1970s indicate a notable increase in the reissuing of works by, and publication of critical essays on, once extremely popular but subsequently forgotten Shinseinen writers such as Yumeno

\textsuperscript{121} Yume no toride was originally serialized in a weekly popular periodical, Heibon panchi from January 1981 to December 1982. It was revised and expanded when it was published as a book in 1983. In the story, the protagonist goes so far as to interview Yokomizo Seishi, the legendary editor-in-chief who promoted “Shinseinen Modanizumu.” (Incidentally, this story takes place before the revival of interest in Yokomizo’s works. He became extremely popular as the creator of the detective, Kindaichi Kôsuke, when Kadokawa Shoten publishing company promoted his works by making movies out of them and advertising them sensational in the 1970s. Kadokawa’s multimedia strategy generated best-seller novels, hit movies, idol actors, hit theme songs, etc.)
Kyûsaku, Tani Jôji (who also wrote under the pseudonyms of Maki Itsuma and Hayashi Fubô), Hisao Jûran, Kigi Takatarô, Oguri Mushitarô, as well as Edogawa Rampo who remained popular throughout his career. Indeed, Rampo himself wrote about Shinseinen in his Tantei shôsetsu shijûnen (Forty Years of Tantei shôsetsu), a history of tantei shôsetsu narrated in relation to his own writing career from the 1920s to the 1960s and presented in the form of behind-the-scene stories. The essays included in his book (published in 1961) were originally serialized in Shinseinen from 1949 to 1950 and subsequently in Hôseki from 1951 to 1960. In this retrospective, Rampo uses excerpts from newspapers, magazines and books, letters from various writers and critics, as well as his own memos, all of which he kept collecting and organizing throughout his career. Based on these “scraps” of information, he reconstructs a picture of the world of Shinseinen and the tantei shôsetsu. As a result, these memoirs are more than a personal autobiography, and they serve as great source material for reconstructing the history of the genre. Even so, Rampo tends to mention only the positive aspects about events and individuals. In addition, he discusses modernism only briefly, and the discussion is set strictly within the context of the French and British witty short-shorts that Yokomizo Seishi promoted while editor-in-chief of Shinseinen in the mid 1920s. Rampo offers no larger discussion of detective fiction as a modernist genre. Consequently, his book cannot provide us with a critical perspective on the role of Shinseinen in the formation of tantei shôsetsu as a genre.

122 Rampo was famous for collecting newspaper and other articles about him or tantei shôsetsu, as seen in his well-known scrapbook titled Harimaze-chô (lit., “paste and mix” book). Nakajima Kawatarô’s Nihon suiri shôsetsu-shi and other major writings on the history of tantei shôsetsu that cover the 1920s through 1960s owe largely to Rampo’s memoir for historical details.
In addition to nostalgic and experientially based accounts concerning *Shinseinen* magazine, materials on the *tantei shôsetsu* include those by critics who have given renewed attention to popular publications since the 1960s in an effort to redress the oversights of the dominant approaches to literary history. Most notably, Nakajima Kawatarô (1917-1999) edited a pioneering five-volume series titled *Shinseinen kessaku-sen* (An Anthology of *Shinseinen* Masterpieces) in 1970 that covers a range of works. It is divided into five categories and organized into separate volumes: (1) mystery fiction; (2) ghosts and fantasy; (3) horror and humor; (4) translations of Western mystery fiction; and (5) essays, reportage and short-shorts. Nakajima presented the magazine as having been a venue for various types of literary expression. Likewise, in the 1960s-1970s, another leading scholar of Japanese popular literature, Ozaki Hotsuki (1928-1999), anthologized and republished works by *Shinseinen* writers such as Edogawa Rampo, Yumeno Kyûsaku, Hisao Jûran, Tani Jôji, Kunieda Shirô and Shishi Bunroku. Ozaki affectionately called these figures “heretic writers” (*itan sakka*) because they went beyond the confinement of the “guild-like” *bundan* literary circle of the naturalist-influenced I-novel and Shirakaba school to produce literature that became popular with the new middle class living in modern metropolises. Consequently, Nakajima and

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123 Nakajima anthologized second *Shinseinen kessaku-sen* published by Kadokawa Shoten in 1977 because the Rippû Shobô version had gone out of print. Although the anthologies share the same title, the contents are different.

124 I argue that the revival of interest in *Shinseinen* and its writers as an anti-establishment and counter tradition also reflects the cultural and political circumstances of the 1960s-70s in Japan such as the campaigns against the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and other student movements directed against the Japanese government. A discussion of these social implications goes beyond the scope of the current study, however.

For some of Ozaki’s arguments on these “heretic” writers, see his *Igyô no sakka-tachi* (異形の作家たち), a collection of essays that he wrote from 1969 to 1975. Nakada Kôji also discusses
Ozaki helped to initiate and lend critical authority to the series of “Shinseinen booms” instigated by the commercial publishing industry over the last thirty years. Scholars of popular literature have tended, however, to focus on recovery and description rather than detailed analysis of, for example, the specific cultural function of *tantei shōsetsu* as a popular form.

More recently, a younger generation of scholars has begun to examine *Shinseinen* within the context of the development of the modern city. For example, in his pioneering study of 1988, *Modan toshi Tokyo*, Unno Hiroshi includes *Shinseinen* in his examination of various aesthetic expressions in art, theater, literature, film and music that emerged in the modern urban space of the 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, in *Shōwa bungaku no tame ni* written in 1989, Suzuki Sadami discusses the extensive changes that *Shinseinen* underwent during the 1920s by relating its numerous shifts in editorial policy to transformations in consumption practices that accompanied social modernization. He focuses attention specifically on *Shinseinen*’s transition from a didactic youth magazine with the objective of *shūyō*, or the cultivation of the mind – or, a motto associated with state-sanctioned ideology – to an intellectual entertainment magazine that promoted the notion of enjoying various entertainments as a form of amusement or recreation among young urbanites.¹²⁵ As already mentioned in Chapter

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¹²⁵ As mentioned previously, Suzuki chaired *Shinseinen* Research Group and published *Shinseinen dokuhon* in 1988. Several of the group members such as Eguchi Yūsuke and Kawasaki Kenko published monographs and articles on representative *Shinseinen* writers in the *Sōsho Shinseinen* series of 1992-1995, etc., but their main focus was on individual writers.
One, Unno and Suzuki, along with Kawamoto Saburô, collectively opened up new avenues for the study of early twentieth-century Japanese literature by establishing “the literature of urban space [of the 1920s-1930s]” as a thematic rubric. Their success in redefining the terms of previous approaches is seen in their grouping leftist literature and the literature of “Modanizumu” together as shared aspects of toshi-ka jidai no bungaku, or “Literature in the era of Urbanization,” at the inaugural exhibition of the new museum, Kanagawa Kindai Bungakukan (Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature) in 1988.

Finally, Ikeda Hiroshi has discussed the tantei shosetsu in Shinseinen as part of the emergence of a “populist” literature during this same period of intense social and cultural change. In Taishû shôsetsu no sekai to han-sekai (The World of Popular Literature and Its Anti-World), he examines the theorization and practice of tantei shosetsu as one of the most important avenues by which a genuinely populist literature was achieved and general readers come to have a meaningful engagement in the development of culture. For Ikeda, the very structure of the tantei shosetsu as a formulaic genre cultivates reader participation by confronting readers with a mystery to be solved. Furthermore, he argues for the importance of Shinseinen as a populist organ because it solicited and published submissions of original works from its readers, as well as relay serializations and collaborative versions of tantei shôsetsu. Ikeda bases

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126 They co-edited a ten-volume series, Modan toshi bungaku (Literature of Modern Cities), which introduced various works from the urban space of the interwar years (1920s-1930s) that ranges from proletarian to modernist prose to poetry to non-fiction works.

127 This exhibition was organized by another group of literary scholars; namely, Isoda Kôichi, Odagiri Susumu, Maeda Ai, Kôno Toshirô, Hoshô Masao and Ozaki Hotsuki.
much of his discussion on the work of the socialist leader and literary critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, who is discussed in Chapter Four of this study. He concludes:

As Hirabayashi’s theory and practice indicate, the field of *tantei shôsetsu* was an exceedingly important and fruitful sphere within which to problematize the relation between changes in social life style (such as urbanization, increasing stratification and friction between classes, spread of mechanization, reinforcement of police authority, the promotion of information manipulation, etc.) and reforms in expressive means; also to investigate the possibilities of the formation of autonomous readers who do not become mere subjects of manipulation [by their environment].

By attributing historical and social significance to the genre, Ikeda goes a long way toward advancing a critical discussion of the *tantei shôsetsu*, especially in the context of the proletarian movement’s search to find a suitable avenue for expressly social and ideological concepts in literature. His view is slightly idealistic and romantic, however; he follows Hirabayashi’s idealism with regard to the nature of the *tantei shôsetsu*, and he does not pursue approaches and characteristics taken up by other critics and writers. Thus, he fails to show how the genre was actually developed by editors, critics and writers as a discourse with mixed, and at times contradictory, approaches. While there is no disputing that Hirabayashi was a key figure in establishing the *tantei shôsetsu* as a modern genre, development of the genre was far from unified or internally consistent. Hirabayashi promoted the sleuthing whodunit of the British mainstream, but in actual fact, the genre of *tantei shosetsu* arose in a highly mixed fashion, drawing formal, narrative, thematic and artistic characteristics from

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128 Ikeda Hiroshi, *Taisei shôsetsu no sekai to han-sekai*. 110.
novels of ratiocination (e.g., works by Edgar Alan Poe), tales of irony (e.g., works by O. Henry; Victor Hugo’s Les Misérables), fantastic/horror tales (e.g., Western Gothic and Japanese folk tales), seventeenth-century Japanese trial narratives (e.g., works by Ihara Saikaku), tales based on real-life sensational crimes or famous criminals (e.g., stories and ballads based on the life of famous femmes fatales, or “poison women 毒婦,” such as those about Takahashi Oden), science fiction and adventure stories. Moreover, the variety and value of such approaches were pursued by writers advocating different ideologies, including socialism, art-for-art’s-sake, and nationalism. Thus, while the discourse on tantei shôsetsu as a genre that developed via Shinseinen’s publication of critical essays reveals the complexity of a modern genre which mirrors society, at the same time, the genre stands in a position of opposition to society and attempts to critique new social standards or norms. Shinseinen published in the same issues critiques and essays by the writers and critics who represented a variety of standpoints such as radical proletarian, art-for-art’s-sake, romanticism and the novel of ratiocination. Even more significant is the noticeable presence of a critical discourse that shows how this modern genre adopted a rigorously critical view towards just about everything, including self-reflexive attitudes toward the very act of literary production.

As I discuss later in this chapter, both what Ikeda has to say about the characteristics of the internal structure of tantei shôsetsu, as well as his assessment of Shinseinen’s various efforts to promote reader participation need to be complicated through examination of actual works, essays and other articles in Shinseinen. In doing so, we can see how such efforts functioned to demystify the belief, commonly held at the time,
that literature was a domain completely detached from and untouched by the mechanisms of capitalism.

### 3.3 Detective Fiction in the West and the *Tantei Shôsetsu*

By building on existing scholarship, we shall examine how, as the principal organ for the dissemination of *tantei shôsetsu* in Japan during the early part of the twentieth century, *Shinseinen* helped to create the entire field of discourse surrounding the genre at the same time that it attempted to deploy the *tantei shôsetsu* as an important instrument in the formation of an expressly modernist Japanese subjectivity. More specifically I will discuss the evolving cultural function and meaning of *tantei shôsetsu* as a popular literary genre. To do so, I will examine how writers and editors at *Shinseinen* sought to develop and employ the genre as a way to help a young reader view the world more analytically, thereby making the chaotic state of society seem more coherent and rational. Then, I will turn to a discussion of how they correspondingly attempted to present the genre as the one most ideally suited to a rapidly modernized society. Finally, I will examine how, by situating the artistic self in the context of capitalist economic relations, they called into question the values of mainstream styles of literary expression such as, on the one hand, the naturalist-influenced I-novel and, on the other, highly politicized proletarian literature.

In contrast to the situation in Japanese literary studies, detective fiction in the West has for sometime now received sustained attention from a variety of critical perspectives, including reader-response and reception theory, postcolonialism,
psychoanalysis, deconstruction, narratology, Marxism, feminism, and multiculturalism, as well as philosophical and other approaches. As part of this effort, scholars have addressed the relationship between detective fiction and the socio-historical conditions in the West out of which the genre emerged. In addition, they have begun to consider the spread of the genre to other cultural contexts and traditions. For example, as one of the first scholars to give critical attention to detective fiction and other popular formulaic genres, John G. Cawelti argues in his recent overview of English and American Detective fiction that early detective stories at once reflect and promote the generally conservative ethos of their times. In particular, in the case of The Sherlock Holmes series, the famous detective and Watson serve to embody the values of the British gentry in opposition to criminals, who are portrayed as “groups who threatened this traditional order.” Similarly, in America, detective fiction began as “an expression of conservative, bourgeois, ethnocentric Anglo-American values.” The picture of Western detective fiction in the context of modernity that he draws is as follows:

In essence the detective story constitutes a mythos or fable in which crime, as a distinctive problem of bourgeois, individualistic and quasi-democratic societies is handled without upsetting society’s fundamental

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institutions or its worldview. When he or she solves the crime, the detective reaffirms the fundamental soundness of the social order by revealing how the crime has resulted from the specific and understandable motives of particular individuals; the crime represents a situation that is possible but not fundamental nor endemic to the society. In other words, the detective reveals to us by his or her actions that, however corrupt or unjust society may be in some of its particulars, it yet contains the intelligence and the means to define and exorcise these evils as particular problems. Even in the more pessimistic vision of some of the hard-boiled detective stories, where the corrupt far outnumber the innocent, it is still possible for the detective to accomplish a significant act of justice or vengeance. Of course, it is precisely this optative and optimistic view of the world that many postmodernist writers are questioning, but because the detective story as a genre is so deeply pervaded by the bourgeois individualistic worldview, it is almost inevitable that such stories become inversions of the double structure of the detective story.”

Touching upon the spread and development of detective fiction in a global context, Cawelti also surmises that the increasing internationalization of the detective story genre from its Anglo-American roots is “related to a growing global influence of the ideologies of individualistic, bourgeois democracy.” While he may describe the history and dissemination of Western detective fiction in accurate and broad terms, his claims concerning the meaning of the genre in other parts of the world rest on far too narrow a sample to constitute a convincingly nuanced account for the entire range of pertinent historical and cultural contexts. Relevant to the concerns of this study, Cawelti mentions only Edogawa Rampo as the sole example of a detective fiction writer operating in a non-Western language and context. Moreover, his model is one of unidirectional influence from West to East, and it gives no consideration to possible

complications attendant upon indigenous deployments of the detective story. In particular, he defines detective fiction as a genre in which “the key point is that every mystery can be explained not only by human agency but also by reference to the actions and motives of particular individuals.”\(^{134}\) In the case of *tantei shôsetsu*, however, such reliance on the explanatory power of human agency and individual motivations and actions did not necessarily obtain. In addition, as we shall see, the structural characteristics of the genre were debated and developed through a critical discourse specific to early twentieth-century Japanese society. Consequently, his model needs to be rendered more complex by directing attention to the specificity of particular socio-cultural constellations.

In a related endeavor, Jon Thompson has sought to link detective fiction to more canonical forms of (Western) Modernist literary expression. Because (Western) Modernist writing is “organized around the desire to translate the incoherent into the coherent, the inarticulate into the articulate, the unsaid into the said,”\(^ {135}\) Thompson argues, Modernist literature “shares an analogous epistemological form with detective fiction”\(^ {136}\) because the two are both fascinated with “uncovering, revealing, decoding, sleuthing.”\(^ {137}\) While these Western theories are helpful for discussing the global spread of detective fiction in broad terms, when we turn our attention to Japanese *tantei shosetsu* in particular, their limitations as universal statements become apparent. That is

\(^{134}\) Cawelti, “Canonization,” 13.


\(^{136}\) Thompson, 112.

\(^{137}\) Thompson, 111.
because the development of *tantei shôsetsu* as a distinct form of popular literary expression inevitably reflects and participates in the socio-political and cultural circumstances particular to late 19\(^{th}\) and early 20\(^{th}\) century Japan out of which the genre arose. More specifically, when we look at the historical development of the genre in Japan, we see that the definition of “*tantei shôsetsu*” is much looser than the English term, “detective fiction.” Furthermore, the definition of the genre was itself the subject of heated debate in the pages of *Shinseinen*. Those who wrote *tantei shôsetsu* and/or critical essays for *Shinseinen* included established writers and critics from various camps such as the naturalist, art-for-art’s-sake, proletarian and the avant-garde. We need to examine such essays for their differing definitions of *tantei shôsetsu*.

**3.4 Philology of “Tantei” – An Action of Probing, Exploring and Investigation**

A small but significant indication of the difference between Western “detective fiction” and the Japanese tradition lies in the very term used to identify the genre. Although in the contemporary popular imagination *tantei* is readily identified with a “detective,” especially a “private eye,” when we look at the pre-WWII period, we find that the term, *tantei shôsetsu*, encompasses a surprisingly wider range of literary works than would be included in Western detective fiction. For example, in addition to publishing numerous translations of highly ratiocinative puzzle-solving works by Sir Conan Doyle and Edgar Allan Poe, *Shinseinen* also included in its *tantei shôsetsu* section adventure stories of the man with the dual identity by Baroness Emuska Orczy (1865-1947), ironical stories by O. Henry (1862-1910), humorous pieces by P.G.
Wodehouse (1881-1975), the “Thubway Tham” series about the rivalry and friendship between a detective and a pickpocket by Johnston McCulley (1883-?),\textsuperscript{138} works of satire and parody on detective fiction by Pierre Henri Cami (1884-1958) and so forth. In short, the works were categorized as \textit{tantei shôsetsu} as long as they involved some sort of mystery or surprise. For example, the table of contents of the second number of 1923 – one of the earliest special issues on \textit{tantei shôsetsu} published by \textit{Shinseinen} – categorizes the stories into six different subgenres, i.e., “pure” mystery (\textit{jun-tantei}), witty mystery (\textit{kichi-tantei}), bizarre mystery (\textit{kaiki-tantei}), adventure mystery (\textit{bôken-tantei}), sentimental mystery (\textit{jôshu-tantei}), and humor mystery (\textit{kokkei-tantei}).

Moreover, the latitude with which \textit{tantei shôsetsu} was viewed is revealed by the frequency of editorial debates about what proper detective fiction ought to be both within and without the \textit{Shinseinen} circle. Hence we see that the conceptualization of the genre was quite fluid. As a result, we need to reexamine the very term itself in order to avoid automatic conflation of \textit{tantei shôsetsu} with Western detective fiction. More importantly, this reexamination will help to illuminate the cultural and social function of “\textit{tantei}” in the Japanese modern period.

It remains unclear exactly when the term, \textit{tantei}, was coined, but one of its earliest usages appears in the 1878-1879 translation of a Western political novel by George Bulwer-Lytton.\textsuperscript{139} Here the term \textit{tantei} is used to describe the action of investigation by using the noun ‘\textit{tantei}’ plus the verb ‘\textit{suru}’ (to do). The passage reads:

\textsuperscript{138} In the West, McCulley is more famous as the creator of the double-identity hero, Zorro.
\textsuperscript{139} The Japanese title is \textit{Karyû shunwa} (A Springtime Tale of Blossoms and Willows); It is a Japanese translation of \textit{Ernest Maltravers} (1937) and its sequel, \textit{Alice} by the British politician and novelist, George Bulwer-Lytton (1803-1873).
“[I] investigated the two villains, but they have not been arrested yet” \((\text{futari no akuto o tantei suredomo, imada nawa ni tsukazu})\).\(^{140}\) \textit{Gensen}, a dictionary from 1921, gives a definition of \textit{tantei}, first as “[the action of] secretly probing into others’ [secret] situations” \((\text{hisoka ni ta no jijô o saguru koto})\), and second, “the individual [who takes such an action]” \((\text{mata, sono hito})\). As seen in the above-mentioned passage in the translation of Bulwer-Lytton’s novel and in a translation of Jules Verne’s \textit{Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours} done in the late 1870s,\(^{141}\) \textit{tantei} was used equally as a verb, as well as a noun. Also, the second definition in the \textit{Gensen} dictionary as “a spy; secret agent; inquirer; police detective” \((\text{mawashimono; onmitsu; tansaku; keiji-junsa})\) suggests that neither the person who investigates nor the action of investigation necessarily belongs on the side of justice. A tantei can be anyone involved in the action of checking into others’ secrets.\(^{142}\)

The literary critic, Kawasaki Kenko emphasizes the verbal usage of the term and the dubious nature of the individual who does “\textit{tantei}-ing” in terms of his/her stance toward society:

The Meiji “\textit{tantei shôsetsu}” and journalistic coverage of crimes that were written by Ruikô and others often identified the people who collected information under the direction of the police, as well as the police officers themselves, as \textit{tantei}. In that sense, “\textit{tantei}” was a concept of acting or doing as in a verb [rather than static like a noun] that refers to

\(^{140}\) \textit{Nihon kokugo dai-jiten} under the entry, “\textit{tantei}.

\(^{141}\) Kawashima Chûnosuke’s translation was published in two installments, the first in 1878 and the second in 1880. \textit{Daïjien} dictionary cites a passage with “\textit{tantei seyo}” as an example, but it is not clear in which installment the passage under discussion appears.

\(^{142}\) \textit{Daigenkai} (1932), another authoritative dictionary from the early twentieth century, lists definitions almost identical to the \textit{Gensen} definitions.
the act of solving and elucidating a puzzle. Everyone can be called *tantei*, whether they are criminals, police officers, agents who worked for the police officers, spies, professional or amateur detectives, newspaper reporters attempting to make a quick report on a [crime] case, or curiosity seekers whose hobby was to play detective. The air of impropriety and ambiguity that surrounds a person who plays at detecting [*tantei*-ing], and the fundamentally split personality that underlies it, is what gives a detective novel its deeper, breadth and dark shadows. It is what drives the tale and makes it complicated.143

Natsume Sôseki’s usage of the term in his novel, *Higan sugi made* (1912), a novel about a young man whose “private investigations” are set in motion by the appearance of a mysterious woman, also supports Kawasaki’s observation that the meaning of “*tantei*” is broader than an official title such as “a detective.” Rather, it is the action of inquiry and spying that qualifies as “*tantei*.”144 From these and other examples, we can draw a portrait of the individuals who typically perform the act of *tantei*. They are people interested in others’ secrets, regardless of whether their curiosity is directly linked to financial gain or other personal benefit. They can be

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144 In *Higan sugi made* (translated into English in 1985 as *To the Spring Equinox and Beyond*) the protagonist, Tagawa Keitarô, is described as someone with an interest in investigating unusual, especially psychological, questions. Asked what job he wants to do, he replies that he wants to be a police detective, but then he immediately denies the statement, explaining that a detective is a profession whose goal is to reveal that someone is guilty of a crime. He does not want to work towards tricking his suspect into being revealed as guilty. He says: “I just want to be a scholar of human kind; Or I just want to observe, with admiration, how a man’s abnormal (*ijô na*) mechanism works in the darkness.” I will not discuss here Sôseki’s neurotic aversion to others’ attention directed toward him, although he was paranoid to the extent of suspecting that his family was keeping watch on him. But in his novel and essays, he often mentions “*tantei*” to refer not only to professional detectives but anyone who is prying and therefore a threat to his privacy. However, while expressing aversion to people’s “*tantei*-ing,” like Tagawa Keitarô, Sôseki himself seems to have been fascinated by human psyche as seen in his highly psychological novels. When he has the painter protagonist of *Kusamakura* (The Three-Cornered World; 1906) disgustedly comment that “ordinary novels are all invented by detectives” (*futsû no shôsetsu wa minna tantei ga hatsumei shita mono desu yo*,” Sôseki seems to be satirically looking at his profession. For more on this, see Takeo Doi, *The Psychological World of Natsume Sôseki*. Doi discusses Sôseki’s paranoid, and the role of both the writer and reader as a “snoop” in his insightful discussion of *Higan sugi made*. 

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connected with judicial authority, or they can be villains who attempt to outwit it. Often, the opposition between good and evil is reversed, and the authorities are also found to be corrupt. People may be driven to the act of *tantei* by the boredom that they feel in their uneventful daily lives. Or they may openly embrace the excitement of being involved in a large, even global, espionage operation. Even in the same story, a person can be presented as both a good secret-seeker and/or evildoer depending on the perspectives of others. Or take the case of a good gumshoe who needs to operate illegally in order to detect others’ secrets. So much depends on the circumstances and the person to be pursued. Moreover, those who play detective also occasionally need to assume different identities because they can be spied on and investigated by their opponents. In short, the detective or *tantei* acquires a double consciousness, or a double-voicedness, by virtue of the fact that he or she travels constantly between two poles of dichotomies such as good and evil, law and criminality, civilization and anarchy. Thus identity is in perpetual flux. It is precisely this split consciousness, or split personality, inherent to the genre of detective fiction that explains the interests of the *Shinseinen* writers and critics in *tantei shôsetsu*. They saw the genre as a means for youths to confront the challenges of specifically modern life in Japan, a period characterized by a whirlwind of change in everyday life. The changes were brought by incredible cycles of economic growth and depression, as well as the technological advancements of a commodity society, which promoted a conception of modernites either as cogs in a mass production line or as faceless consumers of mass-produced products.
3.5 Advancing Detective Fiction as a Legitimate Genre

The process of the formation and dissemination of the *tantei shōsetsu* genre clearly reflected shifts in editorial policy in the history of *Shinseinen*. In 1920, Hakubunkan, a leading publishing house since the Meiji period, started the magazine to educate and inspire youngsters living in the countryside. Following the nation’s militaristic victories over China and Russia in 1895 and 1905 and geared to promoting nationalistic success on an individual level, Hakubunkan urged young people to consider the importance of *shûyô*, “the cultivation of the mind,” and to undertake *kaigai yûhi*, “launching abroad” to Manchuria, Sakhalin, the Americas and South Sea Islands, or what can be considered to be acts of colonialistic adventure on the individual level. Accordingly, the main features of the magazine in its earliest phase were adventure fiction that happened in foreign and often unknown lands. The fictional stories were accompanied by reportage and essays about actual militaristic or immigration experience. However, the progress of colonial expansionism and nationalistic militarism slowed in the early 1920s in response to rising anti-Japanese sentiment in Europe, Asia and the Americas. Due to the good economic times brought about by World War I, “Japan’s real gross national product jumped by 40 percent between 1914 and 1918, an average annual rate of nearly 9 percent; profits soared, often topping 50 percent of paid-up capital for leading companies; and the 1919-1920 edition of the

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145 See Kawamura Minato, “Imin to kimin,” *Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshô*, October, 1999, for related issues. Also see the almanacs entitled *Nihon teikoku tôkei nenkan* published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the data of “Kaigai kakuchi zairyû honpô naichi-jin shokugyôbetsu jinkô hyô.”
*Japan Year Book* noted that the number of *narikin* [get-rich-quick]‘millionaires’ had increased by 115 percent between 1915 and 1919.”\(^{146}\) Also during the 1920s, “manufacturing’s proportion of the gross domestic product approached and then surpassed that of the agricultural sector,”\(^{147}\) turning Japan into a full-fledged industrial and capitalist society. Advances in science and technology imported from the West also began to have a direct impact on the everyday life of the general public. As in the West, people came to know and understand both the advantages and disadvantages that modernity brought.

In response to such changes, Morishita Uson\(^ {148}\) (1890-1965; first editor-in-chief of *Shinseinen* from 1920 to 1927) began as early as 1922 to shift the magazine’s target audience from the youngsters living on farms in the countryside to what was called “the new middle class,” or the rapidly increasing numbers of young white-collar workers, which also included professional hopefuls living in big cities like Tokyo, Osaka and Nagoya. This new middle class was a product of the thriving domestic capitalist economy of World War I, the establishment of the public school system, and the growing desire for political and social reforms among the public during the period of “Taisho Democracy.” Although generally well-educated and well-off, those young urbanites differed from the elite in the Meiji Period in that they did not necessarily enter top elite universities nor find high-paying jobs. Rather, the “new middle class”


\(^{148}\) 森下雨村
included men of a wide range of professions typical of an urban space – “government officials, doctors, teachers, policemen, military officers, bankers, corporate managers, and even certain skilled blue-collar factory workers who made their living in large cities.” According to McClain in his discussion of the rise of the new middle class in Japan during the early twentieth century, it also included women as “teachers, telephone operators, typists, office workers, department store clerks, bus conductors, midwives, nurses and even doctors.” In addition, college students and unemployed graduates due to the waves of economic depression in the interwar years also fall into this category.\footnote{McClain, 345. He explains that most newspapers’ official statistical compilations included those professions among the new middle class.}

In his memoirs, Morishita comments on the role of detective fiction in \textit{Shinseinen}. Incidentally, he was only twenty-six when he was first assigned to the post of editor-in-chief. He himself belonged to the magazine’s target audience of “new youth” who sought an exciting literary form that would challenge the confessional I-novel mainstream and better respond to the Zeitgeist of the rapid changes taking place in various aspects of society. Although Morishita was excited about his position with a new magazine appearing at the height of the Taisho Democracy movement, he was disappointed that the executive editorial members of the Hakubunkan Publishing House lacked originality, or that they made little or no attempt to take the magazine in new literary directions. Hakubunkan had been a leading publisher during the Meiji period,\footnote{Hakubunkan published magazines such as \textit{Taiyō} (1895-1928), \textit{Shônen sekai} (1895-1933), \textit{Bungei kurabu} (1895-1933) and \textit{Bunshô sekai} (1906-1920).} but it was slow to respond to the various social and political changes associated with the
In order to make *Shinseinen* culturally relevant in contrast to the company’s other publications, Morishita proposed that detective fiction become the centerpiece of *Shinseinen* – something that other major periodicals had yet to feature. He also suggested that its brand of detective fiction should emphasize scientific, analytical, and logical approaches to narrative. During this transition period, he featured detective fiction that was chiefly romantic and adventurous in nature because it was already familiar to his audience. At the same time, he gradually increased the number of logical and analytical stories translated from Western languages, i.e., stories involving ratiocination and the action of solving a mystery. Soon *Shinseinen* began to have a special section in each issue devoted to *tantei shôsetsu*. It even published special issues on *tantei shôsetsu*, introducing this new formula genre via translation of popular western detective fiction. Works that were typically featured included stories by Edgar Allan Poe, Conan Doyle, Maurice Leblanc, Agatha Christie, G.K. Chesterton and O. Henry, as well as the Sexton Blake series written by several Western writers.

Whereas the journalist/translator Kuroiwa Ruikô had introduced Japanese literary audiences to Western detective fiction through his translations (or rather, loose adaptations) of Western detective tales as early as 1888, *tantei shôetsu* had yet to be

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151 The farming population in the countryside, which consisted over 50% of the domestic population (excluding emigrants to Manchuria and other places) suffered from severe economic conditions and started a series of tenant farmers’ labor disputes. The executives of Hakubunkan decided to target the youngsters in such areas, attempting to help them through the publication of rather outmoded *shûyô* (修養) articles.

152 Morishita was hired by Hakubunkan on the referral by his elder acquaintance, Hasegawa Tenkei (1876-1940). As is widely known, Hasegawa promoted the Naturalist movement. Although he often argued for the necessity of a scientific attitude in literature, he never proposed any specific approach to apply science to literary production. What he promoted was the confessional mode of I-novel.
widely accepted as a literary genre in the early 1920s. When Ruikô became popular, first, as a translator of Western works by Hugh Conway (also known as Frederick John Fargus), Fortuné Du Boisgobey, Emile Gaboriau and William Wilkie Collins, he labeled *tantei* tales as entertainment in tabloids. In 1893, he discussed the nature of detective tales as follows:

> In our country, many have named *tanteidan*¹⁵³ (detective tales) as *tantei shôsetsu* (detective novel), because they assume that [detective tales] observe [matters] from literary perspectives. In extreme cases, some people attempt to claim that *tantei shôsetsu* [is the kind of literature that] ruins the literary world. However, [I consider that] detective tales are detective tales, and they are not novels.¹⁵⁴

> . . . I have been a frequent translator of *tantei-dan*. However, it has not been for the sake of literature (*bungaku*). It has been for the sake of newspapers. Having witnessed that the works by such writers as [Kanagaki] Robun and his kind are increasingly losing readers’ interest, I have been translating [the Western detective tales] only with the intention of informing readers that such a serialized tales (*tsuzukimono*) also exists in the West. It is not a novel (*shôsetsu*), but it is serialization (*tsuzukimono*). It is not literature (*bungaku*). It is a news report (*hôdô*). [The other translators of] the detective tales that have been appearing nowadays must have been translating them with an intention similar to my own. Nevertheless, some critics consider that [the translators] translate [such detective tales] with the ambition to trample on the literary world, seeing that the sales of novels have slowed down as detective tales are thriving. I consider such critics the most narrow-minded of fellows.¹⁵⁵

Ruikô considers *bungaku* and *tsuzukimono* to be in different categories, and he draws a distinction between highbrow and lowbrow literature. The “serializations” he

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¹⁵³ 探偵談
discusses here are the serialized tales published in tabloid newspapers like his own works in *Miyako* and *Yorozu Chôhô* newspapers. He sees that the detective tales he has translated as falling into the same literary category as the works of the famous *gesaku* writer, Kanagaki Robun (1829-1894), who was popular among lay people and whose works had a disposable, entertainment quality. As the lowbrow literature represented by Robun became obsolete, according to Ruikô, Western detective tales are becoming popular among the same readers as a form of news reportage. He sharply criticizes what he sees as the ignorance and irrational panic of the highbrow literary camp for their accusing of detective tales to be invading and degrading the literary world. However, in doing so, he clearly situates detective tales as mere entertainment.156

Although he briefly discusses that “some detective tales improve (shinpo-suru) and enter into the category of novel” and that “among famous novels of human feelings (ninjô-teki shôsetsu), there are works that have the same structure as detective tales,” his view of detective genre remains one of entertaining story-telling that focuses on reporting a crime rather than the aesthetics of depicting the human psyche. Although he never identifies the names, the literary group that Ruikô tacitly criticizes here is clearly the Ken’yûsha writers who tended to indulge in an Edo-esque nostalgic and emotional literary world. They bitterly criticized detective tales as blasphemy to literature. While it seems ironic and contradictory, they collectively published a twenty-six volume set of

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156 Quoted in Nakajima, *Nihon suiri shôsetsu-shi*, vol. 1, 27-28. In another essay which he attached to his first original detective tale titled *Muzan* (Merciless) in 1889, he says the tanteidan is excluded both from the category of the novel and from logical literature (ronrisho) in the current literary world.

157 硫友社. The Ken’yûsha writers, together with a publisher Shun’yôdô (春陽堂), decided to publish the tantei shôsetsu set, for the ostensible purpose of “taitei shôsetsu taiji” (Extermination of tantei shôsetsu) as though they were the righteous heroes ridding society of injurious books.
Ken'yūsha versions of detective tales under the series name of “Tantei shōsetsu” – just to show how ridiculous tantei shōsetsu was. The incident reveals, however, the fact that “lowbrow” or “genre literature” was beginning to sweep aside the more established or conventional literary world.

Shinseinen began publication in 1920, or almost three decades after Ruikō’s comments, and coincidentally in the same year that he died. It adopted a new and different strategy towards tantei shōsetsu, however, defending detective fiction as a category of the novel, even if it continued to be regarded as lowbrow. Where Ruikō had been almost deprecatory in saying that detective fiction was not really literature and thus no threat to the status quo in mainstream literary genres, Shinseinen published various essays about tantei shōsetsu to create a venue for discussions on the significance of the genre. At this point, detective “novel” – instead of detective “tales” (shōsetsu versus tan or dan) – becomes the consciously preferred terminology. The magazine’s premise was that tantei shōsetsu deserves to be acknowledged as a legitimate literary “genre,” now that people faced different pleasures and problems characteristic of modern times. Thus, Shinseinen writers and editors believed a new type of literature was called for. After publishing light essays and columns on detective fiction by Hakubunkan Publishing House authorities such as Baba Kochō, Morishita Uson, etc., and reportage by Japanese police detectives on actual crime cases.

For example, “Aran Pō no kenkyū” (Study of Allan Poe) by Baba in no. 1 (New Year) issue in 1922. For example, “Tantei jijitsu monogatari” (Actual Stories of Detectives) in No. 10 (September) issue in 1921 included four essays by incumbent police detectives.
Shinseinen made the bold move in 1923 introducing a work of detective fiction by an unknown writer, Edogawa Rampo.

3.6 Shinseinen’s Critical Disourse on Tantei Shôsetsu – Rampo’s Debut

When Morishita Uson received two manuscripts from an amateur writer named Edogawa Rampo (b. Hirai Tarô; the pen name is a phonetic transliteration of “Edgar Allan Poe”) in 1923, he saw them as exhibiting great promise as a catalyst for a new type of Japanese detective fiction. The stories were not merely romantic or fantastic but they utilized scientific and logical techniques of detection in natural Japanese language and settings. Of the two manuscripts, “Nisen dôka” (“Two-sen Copper Coin”) was chosen as Rampo’s debut work, and it appeared in the April 1923 issue of Shinseinen.

It was accompanied by an essay by Kozakai Fuboku (1890-1929), a former medical school professor who became a critic, translator and writer of detective fiction. Since 1920, Kozakai had been writing informational and educational essays for Shinseinen on science and tantei shôsetsu such as “The Relation of Scientific Studies and Detective Fiction,” “On Immunity,” “The Secret of Blood,” “On Poison and Murder with Poison,” etc. He also played the role of a disseminator of medical knowledge to his lay audience, and he connected such technical data with the literary entertainment of Western

160 Kozakai Fuboku, “‘Nisen dôka’ o yomu” (Reading “Nisen dôka”). Shinseinen, Number 5 (April) issue, 1923. 264-265.

Kozakai earned his degree in physiology and serology at Tokyo Imperial University and became an assistant professor at Tohoku Imperial University in 1917. He resigned from the position when he contracted T.B. in 1920. From his retirement until his death at the age of forty, he devoted the last decade of his life to translating Western detective fiction and writing critical essays and his own tantei shôsetsu primarily for Shinseinen. He often utilized his medical knowledge in his stories. As a critic, he argued for the importance of scientific elements in the genre.
detective fiction. In his essay on “Nisen dōka,” Kozakai first praises Morishita’s discerning eye of discovering a work of Japanese detective fiction of a quality that was in no way inferior to Western works. He then argues that, unlike in a play or poetry that places importance on excellence on skills at literary description, a well-crafted plot should be regarded as the most important factor in tantei shōsetsu. He backs up his argument by citing the influential literary scholar, Baba Kochô for having the same view. In regards to the development of the plot and the solution of the crime case, Kozakai emphasizes that nothing should be coincidental, supernatural or artificial. He claims that the lack of artificiality reveals the author’s genius most clearly. In other words, however much the author is versed in science, there are limits to which an author can rely on scientific novelty or advancements. What makes the difference are the author’s skills in developing the plot and using scientific materials in the most effective way. After laying the critical foundation for what he believes is important in tantei shōsetsu, he proceeds to critique Rampo’s “Two-sen Copper Coin.” He praises the piece, especially the ingenuity of the cryptogram in the story. He is impressed with Rampo’s novel idea of combining Braille and the famous Buddhist prayer, namu-amida-butsu, to create an elaborate cryptogram. By listing such big names in Western mystery fiction as Poe, Doyle, Le Blanc and Wells, he claims that Rampo’s trick is in no way inferior to his predecessors’ great inventions of cryptograms. Moreover, by

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161 Although a scholar of more traditional English literature and a strong advocate of Romanticism, Baba praised the romantic beauty of detective fiction and was regarded as leading figure to support the genre.

162 Although Rampo would list H.G. Wells in later essays as one of the leading tantei shōsetsu (i.e., mystery and science fiction in this context) authors in the West, since both Carolyn Wells and H. G. Wells were introduced to Shinseinen readers through translation, it is not clear which Wells Rampo means here.
pointing to Rampo’s utilization of Japanese Braille and a prayer embedded in Japanese language and culture, Kozakai claims that Rampo’s work not only rivals the high quality of Western works, but it is also exceptionally original. He is impressed that the plot development and literary descriptions are superb, therefore fulfilling what he claims to be the conditions for a good *tantei shôsetsu*. He concludes by expressing his wish to see more fine works by Rampo, as well as wishing that other Japanese detective novelists will follow suit.

What follows Kozakai’s critique is an essay entitled “Tantei shôsetsu ni tsuite” (On Tantei Shôsetsu) by Rampo. ¹⁶³ He begins as follows: “I don’t think *tantei shôsetsu* is as vulgar as generally considered. Among the Japanese *bundan* [i.e., highbrow and mainstream] writers, for example, it seems there are many *tantei shôsetsu* fans. Moreover, Tanizaki Jun’ichirô, Satô Haruo, Akutagawa Ryûnosuke and many other writers have not only enjoyed *tantei shôsetsu*, but have also even written such type of works themselves.” He then turns his eye to the situation abroad and mentions a famous playwright in the West: “Among the writers abroad, Ibsen, for example, is said to have enjoyed collecting detective fiction from various countries.” He suggests that there is meaning in the fact that leading authors are interested in “pure [junsui na] *tantei shôsetsu*,” although the genre was yet to become widely popular among general readers. By “pure *tantei shôsetsu,*” he seems to refer to highly ratiocinative works as opposed to literary works that contain elements of *tantei shôsetsu* as a supplementary part of its plot. As an example of the latter, he mentions later in this essay *The Brothers*

Karamazov and Crime and Punishment by Dostoevski. To build up his argument for the significance of tantei shōsetsu, he also mentions the names of several Japanese intellectuals such as Kozakai Fuboku, Inoue Jūkichi and Baba Kochō as fans of the genre. Rampo once thought that detective fiction and science fiction occupied their own unique place as “intellectual literature [spelled in English in the original] which provided nourishment to intelligence” as opposed to “regular literature which mainly provided nourishment to the heart.” Now, however, he is disillusioned and realizes that such a distinction is too idealistic. In reality, it applies only to “high quality” pieces by “Poe, Doyle, J. Verne and Wells.” In other words, in contrast to his idealistic view of detective fiction, he observes that the current studies of detective fiction genre, especially in Japanese literature, of lesser quality and this is due to authors’ lack of ability in constructing stories that stimulate and inspire readers’ intellects. Surveying this less than satisfying situation, he proclaims that he has set his standards for the genre on the level of Poe, Doyle, Verne, Wells, and he seeks to maintain that level. In order to further bolster the significance of tantei shōsetsu, he cites an argument in Über den Witz: ein philosophischer Essay, or Theory of Wit, by German philosophy scholar, Kuno Fischer (1824-1907). Just as the essence of comedy exists in the audience’s action of shedding light on hidden meanings by using its discernment, tantei shōsetsu also depends on the reader’s curiosity to discover hidden meanings in the text through the use of ratiocination. Thus, he feels “it is unfair that humor and wit in comedy have been given a high status in art [as Fisher discusses], while tantei shōsetsu is denounced as vulgar.” Rampo believes that tantei shōsetsu stimulates one’s use of discernment
even more deeply than comedy. He also claims that there is no literary work that does not adopt a tantei shôsetsu-like element of curiosity. He cites as examples The Brothers Karamazov and Crime and Punishment by Dostoevski, and as well as works by Andreev, or Wilde, who was heavily influenced by Poe. At the same time, he criticizes the status quo of what is overtly labeled tantei shôsetsu in Japan. He recognizes that works currently available are inspired by a curiosity akin to the one found in good (or pure) detective fiction, but they are of “low quality” nonetheless. Lastly, he spends the final quarter of the essay discussing the important implications of translations of Western detective fiction, acknowledging that a large number of high quality detective novels from the West have been introduced to Japanese readers thanks to the work of Kuroiwa Ruikô, Mori Ôgai, Honma Kyûshirô, Mitsugi Shun’ei, Morita Shiken, Oshikawa Shunrô and Hoshino Tasuo. He acknowledges that quality tantei shôsetsu pieces from the West have been introduced to Japanese readers via translation – especially by publishers such as Hakubunkan, Kongôsha, Osaka Mainichi and Osaka Asahi, but he also considers original works of Japanese tantei shôsetsu as generally unsatisfactory. For him, tantei shôsetsu was not categorically of poor quality, as was generally believed as of 1923. Instead, he emphasizes its intellectual aspects as an essential ingredient in any type of literature. Like Kozakai, he declares that the development of quality tantei shôsetsu is overdue.

That the critical essays by Kozakai and Rampo were published in tandem with Rampo’s debut work indicates the significance Shinseinen attached to the power of critical discourse in forming and establishing the new genre. By having Kozakai’s essay
advocating Rampo’s work alongside Rampo’s own discussion of the genre, *Shinseinen* tacitly champions Rampo as a product of the magazine’s educational and critical program, which had been laid out in articles in previous issues. Moreover, the magazine implicitly asserted that Rampo was both aesthetically and intellectually sophisticated enough to back up his literary production with theory. Kozakai was versed in both Western detective fiction and science, especially in the field of medicine, with which he had direct experience as a doctor. In addition, he had been writing critical essays for *Shinseinen*. These essays situate Rampo within the global picture of detective fiction as an equal to Western star writers as well as a unique creator of plots and devices based on Japanese culture. In doing so, *Shinseinen* heralded the dawn of original Japanese detective fiction, setting the *tantei shōsetsu* apart from an earlier stage of adaptation, and later, translation of major Western works. It reinforced this image of Rampo as a great *tantei shōsetsu* writer by means of textual layout as well. For example, in the twelfth issue of 1924 (i.e., two issues after the special issue that introduced his maiden work), the table of contents lists Rampo’s work directly alongside three other detective stories written by British, French and American writers in a section titled “The Masterpiece Collection of Detective [Fiction].” The editors were not just emphasizing the international dimensions of detective fiction as a genre. They were implicitly declaring Rampo to be a Japanese equal to foreign masters.

In short, *Shinseinen* actively sought to create a new social/discursive space for detective fiction by regularly including essays from social critics and leaders of new intellectual movements touting both the positive aesthetic and social qualities of the
genre. Despite differences in details, what the Shinseinen essays share is an attitude of seeking to discern the true value of tantei shôsetsu by stressing its utility for negotiating the challenges of modernity. A modern mind attempts to discover what is behind the façade of an ephemeral and garish Jazz Age culture by using its logical and scientific intelligence. This desire to probe into secrets is directed not only toward others. A modern individual also wants to explore inward to the human psyche, probing the deeper levels of psychology, as seen in the fact that Freudian theory increasingly drew attention in Japan, especially among members of the younger generation. In other words, at the same time that people had scientific and theoretical tools to reveal what lies behind secrets, the more modern they become, the more paranoid they are. It is arguably the case that the expansion of knowledge of the mind leads to the discovery of “supernatural” aspects in the modern atmosphere. Shinseinen promoted its young urban readers to be better prepared for modernization by publishing educational essays on science, philosophy and politics. Yet it also provided stories by Rampo and others whose penetrating narratives created a venue for the readers to examine what lies behind familiar-looking everyday life. This includes the meaning of the body as an extension of one’s psyche or as merely an object when it is dead, and also what was deep in anyone’s mind, even by venturing into abnormal psychology and supernatural phenomena.
3.7 Shinseinen’s Bi-Annual Special Issues on the Tantei Shōsetsu Genre

In the summer of 1924, Shinseinen devoted an entire volume of 400 pages (Summer Special issue: Masterpieces of Tantei Shōsetsu”) to twenty-three translations of Western detective fiction and twelve essays about tantei shōsetsu written by leading Japanese intellectuals and writers. Since this special issue helps us understand how debates on tantei shōsetsu evolved at an early stage of the genre’s development, I will discuss the gist of the individual essays here. When we open the front cover of the Summer 1924 Special issue, a catchy advertising line jumps out: “[The essays included in this issue are] the criticism and thoughts on, and hopes for, tantei shōsetsu, [and they were contributed] by the leading bundan novelists and critics in Japan.” The contributors were critics, writers, playwrights and poets who were established in bundan circles: Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Katō Takeo, Kimura Ki, Sasaki Mitsuzō, Uchida Roan, Baba Kochō, Inoue Jūkichi, Satô Haruo, Kume Masao, Nanbu Shūtarō, Kozakai Fuboku and Nagata Mikihiko. Hirabayashi was a socialist intellectual leader and leading literary critic. Uchida was an established literary critic and novelist. Baba and Inoue were leading scholars in Anglo-American literature. Kozakai was known both inside and outside the Shinseinen circle as a leading theorist of tantei shōsetsu. The others were bundan novelists, though some switched to taishū bungaku or more

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164 Regular monthly issues would normally include various essays about how to successfully “launch abroad” (kaigai yûhi), articles on scientific knowledge such as forensic science, etc., and four or five detective stories in translation, which took up about a half of the volume. Shinseinen began publishing special issues other than monthly issues starting in 1921, and Kozakai Fuboku serialized educational essays on science and tantei. This Summer Special issue was the first volume to publish several essays by people outside of the Shinseinen regular circle, however. Incidentally, this same issue also contained a translation of an informational French article on cryptogram translated by Beppu Tarō.
popular literature in subsequent years. Although responding to Morishita’s request to write about *tantei shôsetsu*, they did not necessarily give it uncritical praise. Several contributors pointed out what they believed could be improved. This fact tells us that *Shinseinen* considered the presentation of pros and cons, or praise and criticism, as more productive in cultivating *tantei shôsetsu* and in making it emerge as a genre. In presenting *tantei shôsetsu* as a controversial genre that attracted considerable attention from influential people in the Japanese literary world, the magazine sought to create an image of the genre as one that would rise to be powerful enough to contend with such other camps as the pure literature *bundan* circle and the newly emerging proletarian fiction and literature of the masses (*taishû bungaku*) movements of the interwar era.

The essays vary in their focus, but common threads can be identified. For example, most agree that a good *tantei shôsetsu* is a superb narrative that provides both interesting plot development and skillful aesthetic qualities. In his essay, Katô Takeo asserts that *tantei shôsetsu* requires an intelligent writer whose “brain works accurately and promptly like a machine.” But he also states that the story must not be a police crime case report, the implication being that such reports may be interesting, but they lack a powerful narrative force that is exciting in terms of both plot and aesthetics. He also states that in-depth psychological depictions are essential. In this connection, he praises Edgar A. Poe’s works and Dostoevski’s *Crime and Punishment*. Kimura Ki’s essay claims that works by great writers as Dostoevski and Hugo would be of no appeal without the “detective interest [*tantei-teki kyômi*],” suggesting that masterpieces achieve a balance in the storyline driven by both constructing the plot of ratiocination and
literary mastery in depicting psychological drama. Similarly, Sasaki Mitsuzô argues that aesthetic elegance and detective-like curiosity should be balanced to establish a high-quality literary field. It is then that a detective tales become more properly called “tantei bungaku (detective literature).”

An acrimonious and influential literary critic for three decades, Uchida Roan displays his critical and skeptical attitude toward tantei shôsetsu. He does not think highly of the present state of tantei shôsetsu, and he makes sarcastic comments. While he admits that everyone experiences infatuation with tantei shôsetsu at some point in life, he adds that, as a reader’s tastes become more serious, she/he will become more interested in learning about actual issues such as experiments in physics, chemistry and psychology, or criminal court cases and criminology. It becomes clear, however, that he is condemning the kind of tantei shôsetsu represented by Ruikô in the introductory stage of detective fiction to Japanese readers in the 1880s and 1890s. First, he sharply criticizes Ruikô’s translations as too much like newspaper reports to be satisfactory as literature. For example, he censures Ruikô’s translation of Fortuné Boisgobey’s No Name for shortening it to half its original length, especially for omitting the first section in which Boisgobey develops the main character as a man of mysterious behavior. In skipping the first half of the story, Ruikô provides only the section in which the mystery man confesses the reason for his suspicious actions. Because the first half builds suspense by presenting the mysterious aspects of the man’s personality, Uchida finds that the omission of such psychological depiction damages the in-depth explorations of the character’s psyche and thereby spoils the excitement of the entire reading.
experience. As a translator of Dostoevski, Tolstoi, Zola, and Dickens, and also as someone who was deeply moved by *No Name* in the original,¹⁶⁵ Uchida views Ruikô’s cavalier treatment of Boisgobey’s exquisite psychological plot build-up as a clear failure.

Uchida’s criticism does not stop with Ruikô. He also criticizes his fans, looking down upon tabloid readers’ lack of cultivation in literature and easy seduction by a subgenre of little or no aesthetic merit as literature. Although he despises the kind of *tantei shôsetsu* that Ruikô produced, nonetheless he gives credit to detective fiction’s ratiocinative nature, recognizing that the dramatic structure of *tantei shôsetsu* exists in “all the [major] novels from older times” both East and West, be it the Chinese novel, *Water Margin*, Japanese tales about the legendary judge in the Edo Period, Ôoka, or the popular French novel, *The Count of Monté Cristo*. He states that all human beings are instinctively curious, and it is “human curiosity” that is typically depicted in *tantei shôsetsu*. In real life, he says, “complex human affairs are structured, painted and operated in a way similar to the *tantei shôsetsu*.” Thus, he argues, life would be “deadly boring” if a human being is deprived of the “inquisitiveness” – he uses the English word “inquisitive” in *katakana* – to “sniff out [others’] secret actions and various intrigues.” He thus sees that “psychological vicissitudes” in masterpieces like Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* or Dostoevski’s *Crime and Punishment*, as using inquisitiveness in a similar manner. Lacking a skillful narrative, however, the current

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¹⁶⁵ Although it is plausible that Uchida read the Boisgobey piece in the original (French), from the fact that he was known as a translator from English into Japanese, it seems reasonable to assume that Uchida read *No Name* in English translation.
crop of *tantei shōsetsu* both inside and outside Japan are shallow and “like merely a magic trick or bit of acrobatics, which intrigues people at first but is soon given up in favor of an interest in science and criminology.”

The essays by Baba Kochô and Satô Haruo share points in common with the essays already discussed. For example, they see canonical works by Victor Hugo, Dostoevski, Zola and Dickens as superb examples. They argue that what makes a *tantei shōsetsu* of lesser quality is not the topic and materials (i.e., immoral acts such as murder, theft and spying), but an imbalance between literary aesthetic factors and plot development. Baba fleshes out the point, arguing for a need to go beyond the simple dichotomy of *bundan* highbrow versus lowbrow literature and not hesitating to take up crime even if the material will be criticized as vulgar. He writes, “Crime is a dark shadow that has remained in our minds since the days before civilization. [However] the minds of modern men are more eagerly in search of stimuli. [On the one hand,] inwardly [i.e., within the existing literary world], modern minds have produced Impressionism and also have been reflected in Symbolism. On the other hand, one cannot help but think that the literary works of imagination by moderns such as Poe, London and Wells -- what is called [the literature of] detective, mystery or adventure – have appeared outside [of the highbrow literary circle with the same impetus.]” He points out that works of mystery and adventure have not been recognized as a legitimate literary genre because of the prevalence in Japan of “Realism that focuses on depicting everyday life.” In this, he is speaking of dominance of the Japanese naturalist and

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166 Uchida, “”Tantei shōsetsu no omoide,” 89-92. Quoted from 92.
realist mainstream within the literary world. He calls for finding literary approaches more suitable to modern times (kindai).

While perhaps best known for his Modernist-influenced novel, Den’en no yûutsu (Rural Melancholy, 1918), Satô Haruo was also a bundan writer who became interested in tantei shôsetsu and produced such short detective pieces in the 1910s and 1920s. For example, he published a short story titled “Shimon (Fingerprint)” in the Summer Special issue of Chûô kôron in 1918. This Chûô kôron issue was entitled “An Edition [Devoted to] Secret and Revelation (Himitsu to kaihô gô).” Because Chûô kôron was a major general magazine (sôgô zasshi) which published articles on various fields such as politics, economics, art, etc., as well as literature, it did not devote a single issue exclusively to detective novels. This special issue, however, contained various essays that discussed the importance of probing into secrets and seeking clarification in politics and family life for the general public. For example, it included “From Secret Diplomacy to Open Diplomacy” (Himitsu-gaikô yori kaihô gaikô e) by the politician and statesman Yoshino Sakuzô (1878-1933) who advocated the democratization of everything, ranging from politics and diplomacy to everyday life, and “Family Happiness with Having No Secrets” (Himitsu naki katei no kôfuku) by the influential socialist, Abe Isoo. For literature, it had two sections titled “Artistic New Detective Fiction” (Geijutsu-teki tantei shôsetsu) and “Plays and Novels That Handles Secrets (Himitsu o toriatsukaeru gikyoku to shôsetsu).” Satô, Tanizaki Jun’ichirô, 168

167 『秘密と開放』号
168 In the case of Tanizaki, it is widely known that Poe had a significant influence on his creating literature that goes beyond what naturalists called faithful depictions of life. He published tantei shôsetsu
Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Satomi Ton, Kume Masao, Tayama Katai, Masamune Hakuchô and Nakamura Kichizô all published original short stories and plays in this number.

Because “Fingerprint” was published in Chûô kôron as a piece of “Artistic New Detective Fiction,” Satô (a rising star of bundan in the late 1910s to the early 1920s) was frequently mentioned in Shinseinen’s discourse on tantei shôsetsu in the early 1920s, and so was Tanizaki. For that reason, it is not surprising that Shinseinen asked Satô to contribute an essay to this special issue dedicated to tantei shôsetsu. Although in the opening paragraphs he says he has not been following detective fiction of late, he argues that currently in Japan, there is no detective fiction worthy of discussion. Thus pieces such as “Himitsu” (Secret: 1911), “Jinmenso” (Human Face Tumor: 1918), Yanagiyu no jiken” (An Incident at Yanagi Public Bath: 1918), “Norowareta Gikyoku” (Cursed Play: 1919), “Tojô” (On the Way: 1920), and “Hakuchû kigo” (Demon Words in Broad Daylight: 1918), in which he adopts, among other techniques, a cryptogram from Poe’s work. The stories show his strong interest in crime, especially its psychological aspects.

Satô’s “Fingerprint” is a story about two old friends involved in a murder mystery at a secret opium den in Nagasaki. One of the main characters has wandered around Europe for ten years and has just returned to Japan as an opium addict. The other man is the narrator of the story – an old friend to whom the opium addict reveals his sleuthing on a murder case that took place at the opium den. One day, after seeing a newly released foreign film at a movie theater, the opium addict becomes interested in fingerprints and starts reading technical books in German on the science of fingerprints. Finally he confesses to the narrator that he might have found the perpetrator of the murder that took place at the opium den several years ago. For a long time, the addict thought he killed a stranger under the influence of opium, although he did not possess any recollection of his own actions. On the night of the murder, he saw a fingerprint on the back of a watch that he found at the opium den, and he claims that he saw the same fingerprint in the film. At first the narrator is dubious about his friend’s confession, suspecting it amounted nothing more than an opium-induced hallucination. However, a few years later when he reads a newspaper report about the discovery of a dead body reduced almost to a skeleton in a deserted house in Nagasaki, he realizes that the murder actually took place. He remembers that his friend had taken him to the opium den a while ago and explained how he saw a dead body lying next him when he regained consciousness after smoking opium. Satô ingeniously introduces mysterious and exotic elements such as the old opium den in the exotic port city of Nagasaki, where people of various nationalities gather, hiding their identities and indulges in the pleasure of secretly smoking opium. Or there is the Western movie that accidentally reveals a significant clue to the murderer when the camera focuses on a theater-screen-sized close-up of a fingerprint of one of the actors. Although this story is constructed as a story of sleuthing, and it uses fingerprints as scientific evidence in modern criminal investigation and trial, it appears that Satô does not want to limit his story to a straightforward tale of mystery solving. Instead, he depicts the opium addict’s consciousness slipping back and forth between states of insanity and sanity, and he adds a twist at the end by having the narrator say he is uncertain about his own sanity after experiencing a chain of strange phenomena. For the narrator, the divide between sanity and insanity, or the definition of reality versus illusion, is no longer clear.
he limits his discussion to Western writers with particular emphasis on his admiration for Poe. In his principal argument, he states that there are two types of *tantei shōsetsu*, one being the highly ratiocinative kind that requires a highly pragmatic and intelligent mind, and the other being based on hypersensitive and neurotic mental states. In both types, he believes that bloodcurdling ecstasy and mysterious beauty are far more important than the element of adventure or a plot about warm human relationships. He describes that *tantei shōsetsu* is “a branch of the tree called abundant romanticism; The fruit of curiosity hunting (the English phrase “curiosity hunting” being given in *katakana*, キューリオステイハンティング) for the Japanese phrase *ryôki tan’i* (lit., hunting for the novel/weird and indulging in the peculiar/different); it is a mysterious beam of light reflected by a facet of the gemstone called poetry.” He says it should also be based on the psychology of both “strange admiration for evil and bizarre curiosity for the terrible,” and “the healthy spirit of love for clarity.” In conclusion, he presents two final, important points – that the content of the story needs to be both romantic and intellectual, and that the narrative style should be in agreement with that content and thus both eccentric and lucid.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Ruikô placed detective stories as a genre that existed outside of “novels” (*shōsetsu*) and separate from “literature” (*bungaku*).  

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170 In the original, it goes as follows:

豊富なロマンチックスムという樹の一枝で、猟奇耽異（キューリオステイハンティング）の果実で、多面的な詩という宝石の一断面の怪しい光芒で、それは人間に共通な悪に対する妙な讃美、怖いもの見たさの奇異な心理の上に根ざして、一面また明快を愛するという健全な精神にも相い結びついて成り立っていると言えば大過はないだろう。

Satô, “*Tantei shōsetsu shôron*” (A Short Essay on *Tantei shōsetsu*).
For him, there was nothing about tantei shôsetsu threatening to contemporary mainstream literature, which was dominated by Ken’yûsha School. Contrary to Ruikô’s perhaps shrewd deprecation of detective fiction, Satô – and other contributors of essays to the Shinseinen special issue – shares the view that tantei shôsetsu is worthy of development. But they note that such development should be undertaken through a skillful balancing of aesthetic and intellectual aspects. In such a balancing act, Satô’s essay is highly neo-romantic in its heavy emphasis in a neo-Romanticist way on the significance of the romantic, mysterious, and almost horrific beauty. What we see here in his “diabolism” is an argument for a new literature that departs from the dominant naturalist-influenced I-novel or the katei shôsetsu.\footnote{Those essays inspired Rampo, who had been frustrated by the dominance of the naturalist bundan literary world, to leave a job with Osaka Mainichi Newspaper Company in order to become a full-time writer. See Rampo’s Tantei shôsetsu shijûnen, volume 1, Edogawa Rampo zenshû vol. 20, 37 and 42-44. Incidentally, Yumeno Kyûsaku also expressed a similar dissatisfaction against the mainstream bundan literature of the inter-war period. See pp. 30-33, vol. 2 of Yumeno kyusaku zenshu. Chikuma Shobo, 1991. It was originally published in the February 1931 issue of Shinseinen.}

These essays provide us with the examples of mystery/detective fiction that were produced in those days. Moreover, we see – arguably more importantly – the image of the “new and modern genre” that Shinseinen editors were attempting to create by providing the venue for a variety of debates on it. Amid this variety, however, a sort of consensus emerges among the contributors that tantei shôsetsu has not reached any satisfactory stage and still is worth exploring because it has the potentialities of departing from the bundan mainstream and creating a new literary style. Realizing the full potential of such a new genre, the various essays almost unanimously agree, requires balancing exploration into extreme literary aesthetics and the more scientific
and technological information that provide the epistemological foundations for action of the narrative.

3.8 *Tantei Shôsetsu*: Examination of the Genre Vis-a-vis Proletarian Literature

On the one hand *Shinseinen* developed a discourse that situated *tantei shôsetsu* as a representative of modern ways of transcending conventional *bundan* literature. At the same time, however, the magazine also questioned the values and strategies of another literary movement that developed around this time. The hard-core proletarian movement, which regarded literature primarily as means for disseminating socialist ideas and perspectives, also sought to challenge the dominance of *bundan* literary culture. *Shinseinen* critics and writers did not necessarily reject the political and ideological commitment of proletarian literature outright. Rather, as we shall see in the discussion in Chapter Four of the essays and original *tantei shôsetsu* stories by socialist leader Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, they advocated and sought to preserve the aesthetic dimensions of literary expression as a necessary component in the advancement of progressive political ideals.¹⁷² Rampo and the proletarian leader, Maedakô Hiroichirô, also conducted their own debate in issues six and seven of *Shinseinen* in 1925 over the relationship between *tantei shôsetsu* and proletarian literature. This chain of debates began when Maedakô criticized *tantei shôsetsu* in the December 1924 issue of *Shinchô* Magazine.¹⁷³ In this essay, he asserts that, with the rise in popularity of *tantei shôsetsu*, the Japanese literary world had descended to the same lowbrow level of American

¹⁷² Chapter four discusses the role of Hirabayashi in examining and analyzing this balance.
¹⁷³ “Psychology of Detective Fiction” (*Tantei-mono shinri*).
literature. He explains that the popularity of *tantei shōsetsu* is a manifestation of the bourgeoisie’s psychological terror in response to a society dominated by their own capitalist values. In other words, after examining the situation from his proletarian perspective, he concludes that the oppression of the working class by the dominant bourgeoisie’s legal system informs every single *tantei shōsetsu* piece, as if such oppression were an *a priori* condition for the genre.\footnote{As discussed earlier in this chapter, Cawelti holds this view about early stage of detective fiction.}

In a subsequent essay, we learn that Rampo had expressed his disagreement with Maidakô in a private conversation with another leading proletarian/socialist leader and brain trust member of *Shinseinen*, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke. Rampo’s argument was that *tantei shōsetsu* should be treated as an intellectual game. Having heard these remarks second-hand, Maedakô wrote in the March issue of *Shinchō* that no intellectual activity, even of the sort at work in detective fiction, was completely isolated from society. He went on to argue that even *tantei shōsetsu* needed to be written from the perspective of the masses, instead of simply reinforcing the values of the bourgeois social order by solving a crime. In response to this second essay by Maedakô, Rampo brought forth his counterargument in the number six issue of *Shinseinen* in 1925. It would be an unsatisfactory situation were literature to be reduced solely to the utilitarian function of promoting social progress, he argued. Moreover, he pointed out that Maedakô only mentioned *The Scarlet Pimpernel* as his basis for concluding that all *tantei shōsetsu* represent authority’s perspective on those who violate the peaceful
order. Arguing that such a view is much too simplistic, he notes that many *tantei shōsetsu* depict criminals and amateur detectives outwitting the police authorities.

Maedakô responded to Rampo in the next issue of *Shinseinen*. His refutation starts out with the sarcastic remark that the genre name, “*tantei shōsetsu*,” sounds cheap. He goes on to characterize the genre as the kind of literature that “we all become fascinated with during our adolescence, but only until our intelligence comes into use for real social action.” He admits that he too had spent his youth reading a variety of detective fiction during his stay in the United States, and that, as with an old shirt, he still feels nostalgic about the genre. However, any literary genre needs to be produced with “social values” and “social benefits” in mind. Once again he points out that the existing *tantei shōsetsu* are based on the premise of catching a destructive force in order to restore social order and peace. In addition, he asserts that the value judgments that underwrite the distinction between good and evil and the simplistic hatred of evil are far from objective or absolute. Instead they actually express the values of a given political and economic system. Basing his argument on a Marxist materialist view, he points out that the analysis of so-called “vice” will lead us to the realization of the social defects that are the source of evil deeds. In conclusion, he states he looks forward to the development of a *tantei shōsetsu* that does not merely find pleasure in tricking its readers, but rather examines the social environment and probes into what societal issues actually lead people to commit crimes in the first place.

All in all, *Shinseinen* took advantage of criticism of *tantei shōsetsu* appearing in a more prestigious literary magazine *Shinchô* that catered to highbrow audiences to
further its discussion of the important formal and thematic characteristics of the genre. It had used the same strategy in publishing Sato Haruo’s critical essay and borrowing the aura of the renowned omnibus magazine *Chuo koron*. This time, because the opponent in the discussion was an influential proletarian leader, and because his counterargument recognized the ultimately positive value of *tantei shôsetsu*, *Shinseinen*’s strategy arguably served to present a picture of *tantei shôsetsu* as a genre drawing attention from even the proletarian camp.\(^{175}\)

3.9 “Seinen” (Youth): Negotiating Modernity Through Economic Activity

Whereas proletarian writers conceived of and practiced literary expression as a didactic means for promoting socialist ideals and values, *Shinseinen* took a different approach to the task of providing readers with tools to negotiate the advent of modernity and the social and economic changes that the transformation brought. One particularly important aspect of *Shinseinen* as a commercial magazine lay in its sharply defined target audience. In contrast to other commercial publications that sought to appeal across generations, *Shinseinen* employed visual designs and featured articles intended to be of interest specifically to urban youths between their late teens through their twenties.\(^{176}\) The editors and staff of the magazine fell into this age bracket. They

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\(^{175}\) As well as such proletarian writers as Hirabayashi Taiko, Hayama Yoshiki, and Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Maedakô himself wrote *tantei shôsetsu* for *Shinseinen*. See, for example, “Jô Oburaien no shi” (The Death of Joe O’brien) in the number 11, 1931.

\(^{176}\) *Shinseinen* differentiated itself from other commercial magazines that targeted mass readership across a wide range of population brackets. Its circulation rates never exceeded 40,000 even during the late 1920s to mid-1930s and stayed around 30,000. On the other hand, we see that some commercial magazines sold ten to thirty times more than *Shinseinen*. For example, Kôdansha Company’s *Kingu* (King) sold 740,000 copies of its inaugural issue in 1925. During the late 1920s to early 1930s, it sold
themselves shared many of the economic and generational concerns of their readers. Consequently, the magazine was not produced simply as an attempt to profit through exploiting the anxieties of a different social, economic or generational set of readers. Rather, the editors sought to address problems and issues they themselves confronted as “new youth,” or the generation of young Japanese men and women who were born around the turn of the century and who came of age during the economic upheavals of the interwar period.

The generational similarity between the magazine’s editors and its target audience emphasizes the significance of *tantei shōsetsu* in *Shinseinen* as a means to address the problems accompanying the modernization of Japan. Moreover, oftentimes, the roles of editors, writers and readers overlapped as many editorial staff members also translated and wrote their original *tantei shōsetsu*, reportage and critical essays that dealt with the latest socio-cultural phenomena. Also, even though not officially hired by Hakubunkan Publishing Company as editors, a group of youngsters gathered together to form what they called an *ingaidan* or “brain trust.”

Edogawa Rampo was approximately a million copies of its monthly issues and 1,300,000 to 1,500,000 copies of special issues. (*Kingu* published monthly regular issues and occasional special issues like New Year’s Issue” and “Celebration of [Showa Emperor’s] Enthronement Issue.”) Its incredible sales were achieved by targeting a wide range of age brackets. An advertisement for the inauguration of the magazine is symbolic of its target audience. It had a large picture of a family reading the magazine together. Apparently in their thirties to forties, the father and mother are sitting down with two sons and a daughter who appear to be of pre-school to elementary school age. Everyone is smiling and looking at the pages of the *Kingu* magazine in the father’s hands. The catch phrases over the picture say: “[Among the magazines] In Japan, *Kingu* is the most interesting! The most beneficial! And the least expensive!” (*Nihon-ichi omoshiroi! tame ni naru! yasui!*) *Kingu* carried the average of 400 pages of stories that could be enjoyed by a wide age range of readers and articles of practical information in each issue for only 50-sen per issue. Contrary to such a popular approach of *Kingu*, *Shinseinen*’s target audience was always “new youth.”

177 院外. It should be noted that the majority of the youngsters involved with *Shinseinen* were male, although the magazine did attempt to attract female readers as well and was increasingly successful in
originally an enthusiastic reader of *Shinseinen* in the early 1920s, and his writing career began with *Shinseinen* in 1924 when Morishita recognized his talent as a writer. As an amateur, Yokomizo Seishi contributed translations and original stories, as well as providing ideas, before he officially became the second editor-in-chief in 1927. Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke was also actively involved in the creation of the magazine, offering advice about social science. Those unofficial brain trust members regularly brought attention to works that they read and found in imported Western popular magazines, whether they were mystery stories, reportage, critical essays, short-shorts, or cartoons. In other words, *Shinseinen* had the strong ties of a coterie group or *dôjin zasshi* focused on *tantei shôsetsu*; but it operated as a commercial popular magazine and so explicitly undertook an engagement with capitalist strategies of production and consumption. During the 1920s to the early 1930s, *Shinseinen* was also open to introducing miscellaneous information through a media mix of cartoons, photographs, puzzles and non-traditional literary genres such as *tantei shôsetsu*, satirical pieces, short-short stories, and “*nansensu*” (nonsensical) essays that were as short as half a page in length. In the roundtable discussion hosted by the magazine *Hôseki* in 1957, Morishita pointed out that *Shinseinen*’s sales went up under the editorship of Yokomizo and Mizutani because of the magazine’s sharp sensitivity to the times. This was expressed not only by the appearance of *tantei shôsetsu* stories (which were the
doing so in the late 1920s. The issue of gender in “new youth” cultural production is a topic for future research.

178 Yokomizo contributed translations and original works starting in 1921 and became involved in editorial work in October 1926. He was twenty-four when he became editor-in-chief.

179 See the footnote 11.
trendiest and modern feature of the magazine) but also in the “‘Merican-Jap” stories and other light, satirical and humorous “short-shorts” by Tani Jôji.¹⁸⁰ This comment supports Nakai’s argument that, for youngsters in the 1920s, tantei shôsetsu had the image of being a form of literature that was at the forefront of modern trends.

Consequently, the thematic concerns of the stories, as well as the content of the magazine as a whole, can be usefully understood as responses to such issues as the commodification of society in general and individual identity in particular. In his critique written in 1965 or some forty years later, the Marxist critic Ernst Bloch discusses detective fiction in the West in much the same terms. In “A Philosophical View of the Detective Novel,” he writes that

Brecht, for good reasons a student of this type [i.e., detective or mystery novel] of literature, closely approximated the interchangeability of all people who have become faceless; and it is not always the bad guys who wear masks. This increasingly alienated world of masks spells good times for the detective pursuit as such, as well as for a micrology that smacks of criminalistic provenance. . . . Therefore, even better literature deals more than ever with the process of unmasking.”¹⁸¹

But rather than simply lament or critique the commodification and alienation of identity that accompanied modernity, the editors of Shinseinen cagily employed capitalist strategies to involve readers in the development of tantei shôsetsu as a genre, thereby promoting their active engagement with negotiating the process of modernization.

¹⁸⁰ “Shinseinen’ rekidai henshûchô zadankai,” 117.
I will discuss Tani’s works in Chapter six.
Hence, in addition to the critical essays and articles designed to educate readers for critical and analytical thinking, *Shinseinen* employed a variety of strategies to elicit reader participation in ways that mirrored the conceptual operation inscribed within *tantei shōsetsu* itself. Calling for original *tantei shōsetsu* pieces from readers was the most notable and frequently employed method to involve consumers as producers. As various critics from both Japan and the West have long noted, *tantei shōsetsu* (as well as detective fiction more generally) operates through a structure that inherently promotes reader participation via vicarious identification with the detective in the story as the detective engages in the puzzle-solving process. *Shinseinen* featured various contests for readers to guess the criminal in a given story, to complete the dialogue in various cartoons, to provide endings to relay stories, and most importantly, to submit their own *tantei shōsetsu*. Contests for original *tantei shōsetsu* offered cash prizes ranging from 500 to 1000 yen, thereby emphasizing that what a young reader learned was directly tied to participation in commodity society. The point here is that *Shinseinen* not only provided literary work and articles for entertainment purposes, but

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As a general magazine, *Shinseinen* also published a variety of educational articles of a general nature as well. For example, “Shinseinen shumi kōza” (The Lecture Series: New Youth’s Interests) published twelve articles by experts in various fields. The topics ranged across social science, evolutionary theory, astronomy, theater, art, music, archaeology, physics, aesthetics, literature, architecture and forensic medicine (7, 1927 through 4, 1928).

183 As well as calling for original stories, *Shinseinen* also published a “relay” *tantei shōsetsu* in which several writers (e.g., Rampo, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, Kozakai, etc.) participated in contributing one installment of a serialization *tantei shōsetsu* respectively and called for the ending from the readers.
it connected the activity of reading and writing to the commercialist enterprise. In light of this use of expressly capitalist strategies, the critical essays on tantei shosetsu and educational articles on different aspects of science and technology functioned as a kind of conceptual infrastructure for readers as they participated in the development of the genre. Such strategies proved quite successful, as many prizewinners became regular Shinseinen contributors. Some became unofficial and even professional editorial staff members.

### 3.10 Probing Literature: Pushing the Limits of Genre into Parody

From the earliest stage of the formation of the tantei shōsetsu genre, various debates took place in the pages of Shinseinen over the question and extent to which aesthetical elements should be weighed against logical or analytical. The issues of art and science, as well as of art and social significance, were closely connected to the issue of how formulaic the new genre should be. As writer/critic Carolyn Wells mapped out as early as 1913, and a number of critics have since discussed, it was commonly held that detective fiction, in the early twentieth century at least, had the following narrative structure: first, the story begins with the presentation of a mystery; second, it presents descriptions of puzzle-solving with clues encoded within the story; and third, the truth is revealed when the mystery is resolved through logical conjecture. Considering that Western writers such as Doyle and Christie were frequently mentioned as creators of “orthodox” (honkaku) detective fiction, many Shinseinen writers in the 1920s-30s

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184 Carolyn Wells, *The Technique of the Mystery Story.*
seemed to have a very similar notion of the prototypical tantei shōsetsu. But, in the case of tantei shōsetsu, its early development took place hand in hand with the processes of modernization and urbanization, the rise of socialist movements, and the introduction of scientific and technological knowledge. As seen in the double-identity and double-voicedness contained within its definition, “to tantei” was an act of probing into mysteries and secrets, whether conducted by public authorities or private detectives. Thus, the inherent posture of probing, examining and analyzing one’s surroundings was directed simultaneously toward both individual works and the entire genre. During the famous “honkaku” (orthodox) versus “henkaku” (variant) debate that began in 1935, Kôga Saburô advocated the “purist” position in Hôseki Magazine that only “honkaku tantei shôsetsu” (orthodox detective fiction) qualified. However, Kigi Takatarô refuted Kôga’s assertion, claiming that the neo-romanticist aesthetics of tantei shôsetsu (i.e., the search for beauty within abnormal psychology and supernatural phenomena in the urban space) should be as important as the ratiocinative element. Whatever the case, as discussions from as early as the 1920s clearly show, the attitude of rejecting stable identity and continuing to examine and analyze the self had been an important, inherent staple in the development of the tantei shōsetsu genre from the very beginnings of its discursive history.

Moreover, as the discourse of tantei shōsetsu advanced and flourished throughout the 1920s and into the 1930s, other articles, stories and cartoons that

185 Honkaku (本格) versus henkaku (変格)
186 木々高太郎. Scientist and professor of cerebral physiology. He made his debut as a tantei shōsetsu writer in 1934 in Shinseinen.
Shinseinen published in the same issues for its modern youth\textsuperscript{187} audience assured an increasingly self-reflexive attitude toward the terms of their own creation. The types of works that Shinseinen published became increasingly satirical and parodic, as if its writers were probing the limits of the genre of *tantei shôsetsu*, both deconstructing and reconstructing stories in a self-consciously critical and dissonant fashion.\textsuperscript{188} One of the most revealing indicators of this new self-reflexivity and satirical sensibility is to be found in the appearance and ensuing popularity of Tani Jôji’s “‘Merican-Jap” short stories that started appearing in 1925 and which I will discuss in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six. Before turning to Tani, however, it is worthwhile to consider the importance of Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931). Because in many ways Hirabayashi laid the groundwork for Tani’s satirical and humorous stories, he stands out as the most important theorist and practitioner of “orthodox” *tantei shôsetsu* in the 1920s and thereafter. It is to his work that I now turn in Chapter Four.

\textsuperscript{187} While Morishita regarded the title, Shinseinen, as a term emerged out of shûyô didacticism and loathed it, Yokomizo re-interpreted it as “modern boys,” or *mobo*, a term in vogue during the mid-1920s to the early 1930s. This comment, which appeared in his editorial note to the first issue he presided over as editor-in-chief, signifies the increasingly cool eye and analytical attitude adopted by Shinseinen.

\textsuperscript{188} One good example is Tokugawa Musei’s “Obetai buruburu jiken” (The Case of *Obetai-buruburu*) published in number five, 1927 of Shinseinen. In this story, Tokugawa parodies the orthodox detective a represented by Sherlock Holmes the “unfavorable” influence of popular literature and film on youngsters, and highbrow literature.
CHAPTER 4

HIRABAYASHI HATSUNOSUKE

4.1 Hirabayashi and His Theory of Tantei Shôsetsu

In the previous chapter, I provided an historical account of the emergence of tantei shôsetsu as a distinct literary genre in the pages of Shinseinen Magazine during the 1920s and 1930s. In this one, I focus on the theorization of the genre by Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931), a leading socialist thinker, literary and social critic. He was also a translator and author of tantei shôsetsu. He wrote essays for the young adult readers of Shinseinen during the second half of the 1920s in which he argued tantei shôsetsu was the narrative form most appropriate to the conditions of modernity.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Edogawa Rampo describes Hirabayashi as “the most authoritative and most enthusiastic critic of the thirty years [from the 1920s to the 50s, since Rampo wrote this passage in the 1950s] of tantei shôsetsu history” (vol. 21 of Edogawa Rampo zenshû, 102) and “there was no one who guided me, encouraged me, pleased me, and made me fear more than Mr. Hirabayashi.” Edogawa Rampo, Tantei shôsetsu shijûnen Part 1, Edogawa Rampo zenshû, Volume 20 (Tokyo: Kôdansha, 1979) 132-133.

Hirabayashi’s untimely death at the age of thirty-eight interrupted his attempts to promote detective/mystery fiction as having both aesthetic and logical qualities capable of reaching a wide range of audiences and enabling them to participate in social and philosophical advancement.
A committed Marxist, Hirabayashi first directed his efforts as a literary critic from 1920-23 in support of proletarian literature. He wrote criticism for newspapers and magazines such as Yomiuri Newspaper, Shinchô and Waseda bungaku, in which he eloquently expressed his hopes for the birth of proletarian literature, passionately calling it a “literature of battle” (sentô bungaku), or a literature produced by “a force in which the spirit of rebellion is active, and is rich in destructive power [directed] toward the status quo” (hankô-teki seishin ga kappatsu de, genjô hakai-ryoku ga ousei na chikara).

In those early years, moreover, he refers to tantei shôsetsu as a potentially transformative, or revolutionary, literary development. Although he only mentions the fact briefly, he argues in “Tantei shôetsu ryûkô” (The Ubiquity of Tantei shôsetsu 1922) that Western detective fiction has begun to appear in Japan through translation as “quick entertainment reading.” He goes on to assert that, by comparison, the dominant literary approaches, such as I-novel naturalism and conventional realism, were simply boring because writers were either producing “old-fashioned novels of trivial matters” or were lacking in the skills to depict “the historical drama unfolding before their very eyes.” In other words, this essay shows Hirabayashi’s weariness

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190 It is generally regarded that Hirabayashi was the first seminal figure in the introduction and development of proletarian literary theory in Japan. See scholarly works by Hirano Ken and Ōwada Shigeru. He became interested in socialism and Marxism in 1920 when he studied Socialist and Communist writings together with Aono Suekichi and Ichikawa Shōichi. See Aono’s essay, “Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke-ron” in the August 1931 issue of Shinchô.


192 Originally published in December 1922 issue of a radical magazine, Kaihô. Volume 3 of HHBHZ. He concludes by warning that many of those works reflect the Western nations’ patriotism, international hatred and class conflicts. For himself, he personally favors the kind of detective fiction that makes the scientific aspects the main theme.
with mainstream literary genres, and it anticipates his belief that *tantei shōsetsu* represents a new means to address contemporary social issues.

Soon thereafter, Hirabayashi came to have increasing doubts about the hard-core proletarian view that literature should serve merely as a means for disseminating socialist ideology and enlightening the masses. He was not convinced that literature could exist solely for its political function, and on the basis of his belief in historical materialism, he continuously questioned where literature stood in relation to society during the 1920s. Eventually, he shifted his approach and sought a new form of expression in which literature’s artistic elements and ideological functions could merge. As part of this search, he began writing criticism on a wider range of topics. In 1924 he came to actively advocate and help to develop a new genre, *tantei shōsetsu* (detective fiction), as the literary form most appropriate for modernity, on the grounds that it employed “scientific” (*kagakuteki*) means to examine the reality of modern society. His new interest also led him to translate Western detective fiction and even to produce his own original stories.\(^{193}\)

Aono Suekichi and other of his contemporaries in the proletarian literature movement considered Hirabayashi’s changes during this period as representing an abandonment of his commitment to proletarian ideology,\(^{194}\) and that view has continued to maintain credibility even among recent scholars such as Asukai Masamichi.\(^{195}\) The

\(^{193}\) For *Shinseinen*, Hirabayashi wrote fourteen *tantei shōsetsu*, seventeen critical essays on the genre, and translated four Western mystery stories.

\(^{194}\) For more details, see Aono’s “Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke-ron” which he wrote in memory of his old friend.

\(^{195}\) See Asukai’s “Puroretaria bungaku undō no jidai kubun,” *Nihon puroretaria bungakushi-ron* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1982)
movement started in the late 1910s and it held the goals of transforming society, but government suppression of it dramatically worsened after the Great Kantô Earthquake in 1923. In fact, however, Hirabayashi came to view *tantei shôsetsu* as the ideal vehicle through which to appeal to a specifically modern audience and thereby effect positive changes in society. This attitude helps to explain the apparent split between the two major aspects of Hirabayashi’s career, which have been treated as completely distinct from each other until now. For example, such scholars as Hirano Ken, Ôwada Shigeru, Ban Etsu, Maeda Kakuzô, Sofue Shôji, Minami Hiroshi, Barbara Hamill and Harry Harootunian have all discussed Hirabayashi’s significance as a socialist thinker. In this capacity, he addressed such topics as women’s lives and everyday living for the general public from a socialist perspective. On the other hand, Suzuki Sadami and Ikeda Hiroshi have focused on Hirabayashi’s work for *Shinseinen*, especially his critical essays that advocate placing *tantei shôsetsu* in the context of new popular literary forms. For Hirabayashi, however, these two areas of concern remained fundamentally interconnected, and his promotion of detective fiction reflects his strategic attempt to develop a mode of literary production that would facilitate social change within an expressly modern context. Among scholars, the intellectual historian Watanabe Kazuyasu has gone the furthest in recognizing Hirabayashi’s unified approach to social and aesthetic issues. As Kazuyasu aptly notes, Hirabayashi not only wrote for the mass

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196 His fellow proletarians of the pioneering proletarian magazine, *The Sower*, thought he abandoned the movement when he argued that they should adopt a more moderate approach close to that of liberalist bourgeois democracy. This occurred at their meeting following the government’s increased suppression on socialists in the aftermath of the earthquake.
media, but he actively promoted a modern literature that sought to advance aesthetic and ideological concerns at the same time.\textsuperscript{197}

For example, in the 1929 essay “Tantei shôsetsu no sekai-teki ryûkô” (The World-Wide Popularity of Detective Fiction), Hirabayashi presents \textit{tantei shôsetsu} not only as a genre fundamentally connected to the condition of modernity, but also one that cultivates in its readers the ability to examine and negotiate the changes taking place in Japanese society:

\ldots detective fiction responds to the demands of modern life.

First, detective fiction provides strong stimuli to readers. The tempo of modern people’s lives is much faster than the lives of people before the World War. Elevators, taxis, radios, planes, and other similar elements that comprise machine civilization have been firmly inscribed into the life of modern man. The old romances with slow plot development, the edifying novel that preaches obvious morals, and the historical novel whose subject matter is taken from events that happened when there were no trains or telephones are all detached from the life of modern people;\textsuperscript{198} they are no longer enough/efficient to provide stimuli to modern people. In this respect, detective fiction best meets the tastes of modern people.

Second, detective fiction is extremely intellectual in comparison with other novels. Because the structure of the plot is complicated and elaborate, readers cannot read through it casually. In [reading] every single episode, on every single page, and in every single line, they have to think and sleuth along with the characters. Therefore, in general, there are many intellectual, highly educated people among the readers of mystery fiction. Also, in order for the desire for detective fiction to be born among the general public, the intellectual level of the people needs to be raised to a certain point. This explains why detective fiction did not become popular in Japan until ten to twenty years after it became popular in America and Europe.

Third, mystery fiction is extremely unyielding to authority. It completely defies sycophancy and moderationism. There is no boring preaching. There are no long and wordy descriptions of commonplace life, psychology, or

\textsuperscript{197} Watanabe Kazuyasu, \textit{Jiritsu to kyôdô} (Tokyol: Perikansha, 1987). See the chapter, “Bungaku no konkyo o motomete: Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke” 135-266.

\textsuperscript{198} 現代人 \textit{gendaijin}.
events. Everything is unusual, non-edifying, adventurous, and rebellious. It can be said that mystery fiction is a challenge against common practices and principles.199

For Hirabayshi, then, tantei shôsetsu not only arises from and reflects the mechanization and scientification of society attendant upon modernity, but even more importantly, its aesthetic/narrative structure promotes in its readers the capacity to view the process of modernization in critical ways. In other words, tantei shôsetsu’s complex plot and information, achieved by the employment of various scientific methods, encourage the development of readers’ rational faculties through the act of reading. And this, in turn, facilitates participation in the larger social sphere. Moreover, the very conventions of the new genre themselves embody a resistance or challenge to established social and cultural codes, including those of moral and civil authority.

Because Hirabayashi believed that Japan had yet to enter into the phase of bourgeois capitalism, he did not view didactic socialist realism as the best means for achieving proletarian ideals. Instead, he saw tantei shôsetsu as a way to cultivate directly the critical engagement of a broad population in the very process of modernity shaping Japan at the time. Such engagement, he believed, would at least help to prevent or challenge domination of society by the interests of the bourgeoisie. In this regard, the significance of Hirabayashi’s construction and deployment of tantei shôsetsu differs from that described by Cawelti (see discussion in Chapter Two) in his ruminations on

199 Hirabayashi, HHHBHZ, vol. 3, 652-654. Originally appeared in Osaka Asahi Newspaper on May 17, 1929. Although he wrote a similar essay titled “Nihon no kindaiteki tantei shôsetsu” (Japan’s Modern Detective Fiction) for the April 1925 issue of Shinseinen, I quote from the later publication for this discussion because “The World-Wide…” essay shows his argument in a more organized way.
the global meaning of detective fiction as a product of an individualistic bourgeois ideology. Instead, Hirabayshi saw tantei shôsetsu not just as a reflection, but as an instrument in the critical negotiation of modernity precisely through its potential effects on readers.

This view of tantei shôsetsu as a means for promoting the ability of readers to examine modern society critically and thereby participate in its improvement or positive development underlies his discussion of the six points essential to good detective fiction:

1) the story should be realistic and not involve supernatural events or superhuman abilities;
2) the method of sleuthing should be scientific and reasonable to the extent that readers can follow the act of ratiocination, although it can involve sleuthing using number, time, distance. Also, it can explain the case by using a knowledge of medicine, pharmaceutics, physics, chemistry, etc.;
3) it is preferable that the story take place in the capital or a major city of the country because unfamiliar place names will only confuse the readers. Writers should use lesser known places only when they have abundant knowledge so that the stories will not give incorrect information about the place;
4) the competition between the criminal and the detective should be a close game to make it interesting;
5) the story should be scientific and realistic, and neither should the characters be superhuman, nor should the work be commonplace or ordinary. It should be a showcase for the character(s)’ prodigious intelligence;
6) although it is fine that the story involves current topics or international issues as the backdrop for the crime, it should not lead to a cheap moral or a hyperbolic infusion of patriotism into the hearts of the readers.

Hirabayashi’s six points help to clarify how he envisioned the genre as a means to promote positive engagement with modernity. First, his insistence on a realistic, as opposed to supernatural, plot underscores his commitment to the representation of existing circumstances as a matter of pressing cultural concern. Second, in emphasizing the need for a scientific and rational solution that readers can follow, he not only assimilates specifically modern advancements in knowledge to the domain of *tantei shôsetsu*, but he also seeks to transmit that knowledge into readers themselves. This goal of conveying knowledge, or modeling a critical investigation, to a broad audience helps to explain his preference for urban settings, as well as his assertion of the need for factual accuracy in the depiction of place. Finally, his injunction against the use of “a cheap moral” or the “hyperbolic infusion of patriotism” reflects both his desire to achieve effects through participatory, rather than didactic, means, as well as his goal of promoting a critical examination of ongoing developments within Japan. In short, Hirabayashi saw advancements in science as having the additional benefit of providing readers with more precise tools to examine phenomena. Moreover, he believed that these tools could be deployed within the arena of literature as a way to cultivate readers’ capacity for positive engagement with social change. Unlike other leading social critics such as Ôya Sôichi, Hirabayashi welcomed modern changes.\(^{201}\) In other words, his keen interest in *tantei shôsetsu* was part of his attempt to negotiate the advent of modernity in Japan in a systematic and logical way, instead of sentimentally resenting the changes.

\(^{201}\) For example, in “Modanizumu no shakai-teki konkyo” (The Social Ground of Modernism) published in the March issue of the *Shinchô* magazine, Hirabayashi suggests that modernity is bringing new speed, action and perspectives. *HHBHIZ*, vol. 3. 836-849.
overtaking the country and longing for the good old days.\footnote{His critique for \textit{Shinseinen} extended from literature to cover a more general, introductory guide to social science. In other words, he not only argued for the importance of the scientific examination inscribed in \textit{tantei shōsetsu} but also attempted to educate the \textit{Shinseinen} readers, i.e., potential \textit{tantei shōsetsu} writers, with specific information.} This progressive attitude coincides with his advocacy of equal rights for women who were moving from the countryside to urban spaces in order to work and gain independence. Therefore, Hirabayahi’s promotion of \textit{tantei shōsetsu} reflects much more than either merely an idiosyncratic contradiction or a completely separate interest from his more renowned political efforts. Instead, he considered the two issues fundamentally interconnected and mutually reinforcing. His cultural and political writings must be seen as two sides of the same coin.

As discussed in the last chapter, \textit{Shinseinen} served as a venue for writers and critics to explore the raison d’être of \textit{tantei shōsetsu} and to help the concept of \textit{tantei shōsetsu} evolve as a genre particularly suited to modern times. It did so by not only publishing translations of Western detective tales but also by introducing critical essays both from inside and outside Japan. Those by Japanese writers and critics have been discussed in the previous chapter. Here, I will focus on two critical essays by Western writers, namely G.K. Chesterton and S.S. Van Dine, and specify their connection to Hirabayashi’s arguments.

The British writer, journalist, critic and poet G.K. Chesterton (1874-1936) was especially known for his “Father Brown” series of stories and novels. Among Japanese readers in the first half of the twentieth century, he was one of the most famous Western detective fiction writers. A total of twenty-six of his stories were translated and
published in *Shinseinen*\(^{203}\). In addition, the editors of *Shinseinen* decided to benefit from the famous writer’s theory about detective fiction in their efforts to develop and establish the new genre of *tantei shōsetsu* and to disseminate that theory to its readership. The Japanese translation of Chesterton’s essay, titled *Tantei shōsetsu yōgoron* (“Argument in Support of Detective Fiction”), was published in the special “New Year’s” edition for 1929.\(^{204}\) In this essay, Chesterton defends the genre, arguing that it is a mistake to flatly consider *tantei shōsetsu* as “bad” on the grounds that it is favored by the masses (*taishū*). From the context of the opening paragraph, it is clear that the term “bad” (*warui* in Japanese) refers to both inferior quality and vice or evil. He notes sarcastically that many people believe detective fiction to be “bad” simply because its chief subject is crime, calling them “dull” (*kanji no nibui hitobito*). In other words, he sees such critics as not keen enough to recognize the constant and rapid changes occurring in modern times. Moreover, by arguing that just as in other genres there are both well and poorly written detective tales, he implicitly establishes “detective fiction” as a new and valid genre. He discusses the “substantial value (*honshitsuteki na kachi*) of detective fiction”\(^{205}\) and argues that it is, “among popular literature, the first and only

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\(^{203}\) While Kuriyagawa Hakuson (1880-1923), a scholar of English literature, mentions Chesterton as early as 1909 in his essay, “Gendai eikoku bundan no kisai” (Geniuses in Contemporary British Literary Circles), his works had not yet been translated into Japanese. The first appeared in 1917. A translation of his work first appeared in *Shinseinen* in the January 1921 issue. Edogawa Rampo, famous for collecting various kinds of data and information on *tantei shōsetsu*, made a “top ten” list of the most frequently translated Western writers in the first half of the twentieth century. According to it, thirty-one of Chesterton’s works were translated. Twenty-six of them appeared in *Shinseinen*. Edogawa Rampo, “Hon’ yaku tanpen *tantei shōsetsu* mokuroku,” *Tantei shōsetsu* nenkan. Reference in Hasebe Fumichika, *Ôbei suiri shōsetsu hon’ yaku-shi*. 42-43 and 142-143.

\(^{204}\) *Shinseinen*, no 3 issue (Shinnen zōdai) 1929. This essay was translated by Ôta Michio. Biographical background of the translator is unknown.

\(^{205}\) Chesterton, “*Tantei shōsetsu yōgo-ron.*” 97.
[literary] form that expresses the poetic [elements] of “modern life” (written in the translation as モダン・ライフ in katakana).\textsuperscript{206}

His discussion here is remarkably similar to what Hirabayashi argues in his essay “Japan’s Modern Detective Fiction” published in Shinseinen in April 1925, or almost four years before Chesterton’s.\textsuperscript{207} Hirabayashi had argued that tantei shôsetsu should not be separated from other forms of literature as a form lacking in artistic quality merely because it deals with crime.\textsuperscript{208} To illustrate his point that the subject or theme of a literary work does not correlate directly with its artistic and literary values, Hirabayashi argued that, even if Conan Doyle was arguably a “second-tier” writer, this does not necessarily mean that all detective fiction possesses only “second-class” artistic/aesthetic values. The quality of tantei shôsetsu, just as in the other genres, varies among individual works. He then cites Edgar Allan Poe as an example of a writer of detective fiction with tremendous artistic/aesthetic talents. He goes on to discuss the significance of tantei shôsetsu in early twentieth-century Japan:

\[\ldots\] In order for mystery fiction to exist, it goes without saying that certain social conditions are essential . . . [They] are, in the broader sense, the advancements in scientific civilization, intellect, analytical thinking, and methodology. In a narrower sense, they are the scientification of both crime and its investigation, arrest and trial based on physical evidence, and establishment of statute law for maintaining national order . . . In the West, mystery fiction appeared in the nineteenth

\textsuperscript{206} Chesterton, “Tantei shôsetsu yôgo-ron.” 97.
\textsuperscript{207} It is not clear if Chesterton’s essay was published before 1924 and if Hirabayashi read it prior to writing his essay in 1924. However, there is no reference to it in Hirabayashi’s writing.
\textsuperscript{208} “Nihon no kindai-teki tantei shôsetsu: toku ni Edogawa Rampo shi ni tsuite” (Japan’s Modern Detective Fiction: Especially Regarding Mr. Edogawa Rampo), April 1925 issue of Shinseinen.
century and has gained popularity in recent years. In Japan, mystery fiction appeared only recently. The argument advanced here relates to that put forth in the other two essays that he wrote in later years, as discussed earlier in the chapter. He sees science, law, and technology, or what he considers “modern” elements, as differing from what has been conventionally considered artistic or aesthetic, and he sees them as becoming normalized within the picture of daily life. Thus he concludes that tantei shōsetsu is the most appropriate form of literature to depict modernity. In fact, it actively addresses new issues arising from the “modern” condition, in the sense that it depicts such modern elements.

It should be pointed out that it is not clear where Chesterton’s original essay first appeared because there is no mention in the translation about the source text. Curiously enough, The Collected Works of G.K. Chesterton does not include any essay either with a similar title or content. More extensive research on Chesterton’s essays published in periodicals and newspapers will be required to identify its possible source. Indeed, it is even possible that this essay is a bit of “detective fiction” itself that was “ghost-written” or “ventriloquized” by a Shinseinen writer, given the fact that the editors of Shinseinen were known to manipulate on various occasions the credentials of

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209 The essay, “Nihon no kindaiteki tantei shōsetsu: toku ni Edogawa Rampo-shi ni tsuite” (Japan’s Modern Mystery Fiction: Especially Regarding Mr. Edogawa Rampo) appeared in the April 1925 issue of Shinseinen. Another essay, “Watashi no yōkyū suru tantei shōsetsu (The Tantei Mystery Fiction that I Seek)” in August, 1924 issue asserts that mystery fiction should take place in domestic space – whether it is metropolis or any other large cities – rather than a far-away foreign lands such as India or the South Seas.

210 This set was not complete in its publication as of March 2003. According to the publisher of the Collected Works (Ignatius Press), among the thirty-five volumes, volumes 7, 9, 12, 13, 17, 19, and 22-26 are yet to be published, and there is no definite date for their publication.
some works, claiming, for example, that Japanese writers’ stories were translations of Western works, presumably on the grounds that such an authoritative cultural provenance would legitimize the pieces. Or Hirabayashi may have had the opportunity to read the essay in the original before he wrote in 1925 because Chesterton wrote essays on detective fiction as early as 1902. Whatever the case, this “Tantei shôsetsu yôgo-ron” reached Japanese readers as words from an authority among British detective novelists, and it attempted to set young readers’ conceptual formation of the new genre in a perspective larger than mere enjoyment or entertainment.

Arguing for the place of the “poetic” (shiteki) in detective fiction, Chesterton first states that what is considered poetic is in constant flux. More specifically, he argues that, just as people of pre-modern times came to recognize poetic elements in nature by being surrounded by mountains and trees across the centuries, people in modern times will begin to see urban objects, be they even chimneys and lampposts, as natural. Thus they will come to recognize poetic elements even in what are conventionally seen as non-poetic objects. It can be argued, according to Chesterton, that urban space is even more poetic than the countryside because the former consists of a chaotic mixture of “conscious forces” (ishiki seru chikara), while nature consists of “involuntary ones.” Thus, it is arbitrary to see meaning in what nature creates. On the other hand, what is man-made is always a sign that subtly implies human intention. Sherlock Holmes’ innovative way of probin, he goes on to say, is the most appropriate

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211 See, for example, “Detectives, Detective Fictions” in The Collected Works, vol. 27. 49-54. The essay originally appeared in November 4, 1905 issues of the American edition of Illustrated London News. The date for the essay’s appearance in the English edition is unclear, but it probably appeared two weeks earlier, as that was the normal practice.
basis for depicting romance (i.e., poetic elements) in today’s civilization. Moreover, he extends this idea to the act of probing into others on urban streets. He believes it is good for ordinary people to have the “habit of observing strangers in the street with fanciful eyes” (i.e., imagining their characteristics and thinking of them from what one can see as a third-party observer). Hence, romance can be found everywhere in an urban space such as London. He looks upon investigations into not only objects but also the psyche of human beings as extremely stimulating. Or, extrapolating from this, we can say Chesterton believes that the interpretation of signs in nature is no longer central to modern daily activity because modern man is now surrounded with signifiers imbued with human intentions and also by so many human beings. Thus a person inevitably begins his or her attempt to fathom strangers’ inner worlds by using the logical and scientific methods available in contemporary life.

In summary, then, we see considerable similarities between Hirabayashi’s and Chesterton’s essays, in the way they marshal arguments for the new genre of detective fiction as something indispensable to modern life, even though the genre was widely considered of inherently low quality, insignificant to the intellectual development of readers, or even morally injurious. Their essays make the counterargument that it is indispensable both as literature that depicts the poetic and the romantic, and also as a tool to help modern people learn about others’ psychology and even the man-made rules of law, which are intended to order society in certain ways and make survival possible in a time of modernization. Or, to look at the same phenomenon in a different light, their arguments share the belief that literature, as a reflection of life, needs to change in
accordance with developments in daily living, and that the *tantei shōsetsu*, which deals with the products of modern advancements, is the form of art most suitable to such a shifting era. In other words, their arguments share a fundamental view of modernity as composed of and reflecting human intentions. As the authoritative pronouncements of a Western “expert,” Chesterton’s essay serves to vindicate and underscore the points made in the essay by Hirabayashi four years earlier.

A second critical essay that appeared in translation in *Shinseinen* is by the popular American detective fiction writer, S. S. Van Dine. A member of the literary circle to which H.L. Mencken and Theodore Dreiser also belonged, Van Dine was interested in modern, avant-garde art as a means to revolutionize the American art and literary world. It was under his birth name, Willard Huntington Wright, that he first established his fame as a critic. However, his second career began in 1926 as a creator of the popular “Philo Vance” detective novels. According to John Loughery, “the result was a publishing phenomenon,” his books selling more than a million copies by 1930.212 Although the general perception of American detective fiction in interwar Japan was that it was inferior in quality to its British counterpart213 – and that was the opinion of Van Dine himself too214 – Van Dine nonetheless succeeded in capturing the enthusiastic attention of *Shinseinen* readers, and he was the only American writer to do so. Former editor-in-chief Morishita Uson wrote an essay titled “Shin sakka arawaru” (“A New Writer Appears”) in January 1929 introducing Van Dine as the most exciting new

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213 See, for example, Edogawa Rampo’s *Tantei shōsetsu shijūnen.* Edogawa Rampo zenshū, vol. 20. 204-207.
detective fiction writer to emerge on the scene. Although he was writing three years after Van Dine’s maiden work, *The Benson Murder Case*, had appeared in *Scribner’s*, Morishita wrote the essay in *Shinseinen* to praise Van Dine. Thereafter, *Shinseinen* published Van Dine’s works as soon as they appeared in *Scribner’s*. The translator was none other than Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, who undertook the very first Japanese rendering of Van Dine’s work. Originally titled in English *The Greene Murder Case* (1928), Hirabayashi’s translation was titled “*Gurîn-ke no sangeki*,” and it was serialized in five installments in the June through September 1929 issues of *Shinseinen*. Van Dine’s works were also gaining in popularity among Japanese through the movies. For example, the film version of *Canary Murder Case* (1927), produced by Paramount in 1929, was brought to Japanese audiences in April of the same year, or shortly before Hirabayashi’s translation of *The Greene Murder Case* was serialized in *Shinseinen*.

As a well-known practitioner of detective fiction from the United States, Van Dine spoke with authority when his essay appeared in translation in *Shinseinen* in the June 1930 issue under the title, “*Tantei sakka kokoroe 20-kajô*” (lit., “Twenty Credos for Writers of Detective Fiction”). *Shinseinen* explains that Van Dine wrote this essay exclusively for the magazine. To emphasize the point, a passage is quoted from

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215 June, July, August, Summer Special and September issues.
216 Hasebe Fumichika. 31.
217 It should be noted that S.S. Van Dine’s critiques of detective fiction had been introduced in *Shinseinen* as early as the number 2 issue of 1927, under the title “*Tantei shôsetsu to genjitsu-mi*” (Detective Fiction and the Sense of Reality) 211-217. A second essay appeared in the number 7 (i.e., June) in 1930. However, the first essay was attributed to W.H. Wright, and *Shinseinen* makes no comment on the fact that Wright was the same figure as Van Dine.
Van Dine’s letter that accompanied the manuscript when he submitted it to the magazine:

I heard that my works were translated [into Japanese], but I did not realize how widely they have been read in Japan. I remember having seen Shinseinen before. I am pleased to hear that serious (honkakuteki) detective fiction has been developing in Japan, although I am not familiar [with the details of the situation]. The fact that “pseudo-” detective fiction is becoming extinct, and the number of real writers is growing, indicate that the level of critical [discourse] in [your] country is reaching new heights. I send my sincere compliments (translated as kompurimento in katakana) to the editors and readers of Shinseinen.

At the end of Van Dine’s comment, the translator of the essay adds: “This is an excerpt from a letter that Van Dine sent to the translator of the essay. I shall be happy if [our] readers find it of interest (sankō tomo nareba kōjin).” This issue of Shinseinen also includes a frontispiece with Van Dine’s autographed portrait photograph. The caption reads: “Our (warera no) Van Dine specially contributed the autographed portrait and the manuscript of “Tantei sakka no kokoroeoku beki 20-kajō.” Shinseinen flies across the Pacific!” The magazine proudly declares that “our Van Dine” recognizes Shinseinen, its editorial staff and readers, and that he sent the essay as an “exclusive” for the magazine. It expresses its excitement over recognition from one of

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218 Among the essays that Van Dine wrote on detective fiction, perhaps the most famous one is the introduction to a book entitled The Great Detective Stories: An Anthology which he edited under his official name, Willard Huntington Wright, in 1909.


the most authoritative writers and critics on detective fiction, describing it as

“Shinseinen flies across the Pacific.”

It should be noted, however, that the very same essay (in English) actually appeared in The Writer’s 1930 Yearbook. Although the publisher of The Writer’s Yearbook series could not provide information concerning the specific month when the 1930 edition was published, given that the Yearbook is currently published every January of its eponymous year, there is considerable possibility that the Shinseinen translator may have worked from the book to render the essay, while making it look like Van Dine wrote the essay exclusively for Shinseinen. Whatever the case, what remains significant here is that Shinseinen deploys the authority of an American writer of detective fiction, as well as that of Chesterton as the British authority, to educate its readers not only to be sophisticated recipients of the expressly modern genre but also, by presenting “twenty credos,” to become writers themselves. Moreover, Shinseinen used Van Dine’s essay to paint a picture of an American authority recognizing the people involved in the promotion of detective fiction. In this essay Van Dine lists the twenty “credos” that detective fiction writers should keep in mind as both “dos and don’ts.” The original word is “credos,” which Hirabayashi translates as “shinkô kajô,” adding the furigana/katakana gloss of “kurêdo.” In the Introduction, Van Dine argues that detective fiction is “an intellectual game or a sort of sport,” and he

222 Shinseinen especially in the early decades has manipulated the credentials of some works, e.g., claiming Japanese writers’ stories as translation form Western works, etc.
223 The original essay entitled “How to Write Mystery Stories” is republished in The Writer’s Digest Guide to Good Writing. 34-37.
emphasizes the importance of “fairness” on the part of the writer (introduction). More specifically he argues that a writer “can no more resort to trickeries and deceptions and still retain his honesty than if he cheated at bridge.” Instead, he needs to construct logical, reasonable and clear structure for the mystery, and the mystery needs to be solved by logical deductive reasoning based on scientific and rational methods used by the detective-- and not by the powers of occultism such as “slate-writing, Ouija boards, mind-reading, spiritualistic séances, crystal-gazing and the like” or as a result of coincidence or suicide (See Rules 5, 8, 14, 15 and 18).\textsuperscript{224} All the “keys” or clues need to be completely described and explained in order to provide readers with opportunities for sleuthing equal to those available to the detective. In short, Van Dine underscores the need for a particular relationship or kind of contract between a mystery writer and his reader. The writer must never forget the existence of his or her readers and make sure that everything is described and explained as fairly as possible, so that the reader can participate in the process of logical sleuthing step by step. He also argues, in Rule 16 for example, that “a detective novel should contain no long descriptive passage, no literary dallying with side issues, no subtly worked-out-character analysis, no ‘atmospheric’ preoccupations” because “such matters have no vital place in a record of crime and deduction.” It is not surprising that Van Dine also recommends against inclusion of a romantic plot in the story (See Rule 3). He believes that everything in the story should have a connection with the crime, thus becoming clues to solving the case.

\textsuperscript{224} Van Dine, “\textit{Tantei sakka kokoroe 20-kajô},” 48-51. Since the translation is very faithful to the original, I am quoting from Van Dine’s original text, instead of translating the Japanese translation back into English.
Instead of such everyday topics as a love interest, he believes that a murder is essential for satisfying the reader (See Rule 7). In other words, there has to be an incident that demands satisfaction or resolution, calling for the action of investigation and ratiocination.

Hirabayashi published his comments on the essay in Shinchô magazine in the same month that his translation appeared in Shinseinen. Here he discusses Van Dine’s essay as not only interesting as a list of principles, or a practical guide for detective fiction writers, but also, and even more importantly, as Van Dine’s indication that detective fiction departs from a general category of novels (shôsetsu) and attempts to establish a new one. In other words, he points out Van Dine’s keen critical sense in seeing a certain set of formulae as constituting a new genre that liberates literary works from the conventions of writing in the past. He adds:

We have to note that tantei shôsetsu is gradually bringing revolutionary changes to the conventional concepts of novels. [Tantei shôsetsu] is, to say the least, a type of avant garde (vanguard) [i.e., sentan-teki; note that the term was itself one of the trendiest in the 1920s] and modern [gendaiteki] novel. At the same time, I do not mean to say that tantei shôsetsu is the finest [kind of] novel. I am only pointing out that it is becoming difficult nowadays to regulate all novels under a uniform conceptual frame and to view them from a single angle. Therein lies the problem with arguments for the absolute importance of art [in literature].

Hirabayashi is criticizing the “art-for-art’s-sake” line advanced by many Japanese writers at the time. He is particularly intrigued by the fact that romance,

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225 “Van Dine no tantei shôsetsu-ron” (Theory on Detective Fiction by Van Dine), HHBHZ. Volume 3, 377-379.
which has been considered “a subject of essential interest in novel,” is rejected by Van Dine as an unnecessary subject in detective novels.226

Hirabayashi’s “Theory on Detective Fiction by Van Dine” is in fact part of a longer essay composed of six parts, entitled respectively, (1) Does Literary Art Evolve?; (2) Literary Work and Advertisement; (3) Editorially Assigned Novels [Kadai shôsetsu]; (4) The Crisis of Novel; (5) Theory of Detective Fiction by Van Dine; and (6) An Era That Produces A Vast Number of New Writers. Although this essay was not published in Shinseinen, it is germane to our discussion here because it reveals that Hirabayashi’s interest in tantei shôsetsu was set within a larger context of literature. Moreover, it was written at time during which various groups of writers and critics argued for their own literary ideologies. More specifically, it was only two months after the first meeting of the Shinkô geijutsu-ha kurabu (Rising Art School Club) on April 13, 1930, whose participants included “modernist” writers from a cross-section of coterie magazines. Kawabata Yasunari, Kobayashi Hideo, Nakamura Murao, Ibuse Masuji, Abe Tomoji and Yoshiyuki Eisuke are but a few of the names of the participants. And a lecture meeting held on April 18 called “Shinkô geijutsu-ha sengen narabi ni hihan kôen-kai” (Rising Art School’s Manifesto and Critical Lecture Meeting) was sensationaly advertised and featured lectures by Yokomitsu Riichi, Kobayashi Hideo and Kawabata Yasunari, in order to make a display of unity among the self-acclaimed modanizumu movement, which argued in favor of “art for art’s sake” in opposition to

226 Hirabayashi did not agree to all the points that Van Dine made. For example, he once disagreed that detective fiction ought to have a murder case as a central topic. “Tantei shôsetsu-ka ni nozomu: Akumade genshuku na,” HBBHZ, vol. 3, 401-404. Originally appeared in the Shunki zôkan (Spring Special) issue of Shinseinen in 1931.
the Marxist and proletarian writers. In “Does Literary Art Evolve?,” Hirabayashi discusses Abe Tomoji’s essay, which appeared in the May 6 1930 issue of *Yomiuri Shinbun*. In this article, Abe expresses his doubts about the tendency to regard all literary works as contributing to a larger process of literary evolution. Abe says that what is currently happening may be merely fashion (*ryûkô*), whether in the form of the works of the Rising Art School or those by Proletarian writers. Hirabayashi rejects this argument about temporary fashion versus permanent evolution. Citing an example from Emile Durkheim’s *Rules de la methode sociologique*, Hirabayashi discusses the “driving power of society” (*shakai no kyôseiryoku*). We cannot live like cavemen today, for example, although there is no law to prohibit us from living in a cave or wearing fur skins. This social restriction, he says, was formed through progress in other aspects of society, and such developments are intimately tied to one another. Thus, it is impossible to regress in one aspect of life because of progress in others. “Those changes are inevitable, and we call such inevitable changes evolution. This also applies to literature, . . . literary techniques/skills that our ancestors acquired are all succeeded by the next era/generation.” Thus “as long as human creativity is not exhausted, the newer literature will have richer skills of expression, and that can be sufficiently considered as evolution. In addition, because the content of a literary work completely obeys the evolution of social life, there can be no doubt that there is evolution in that aspect of literature.”

He also mentions that everything in literature is variable, arguing against the “art-for-art’s-sake” ideology of the *Shinkô geijutsu* school. In other

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essays, he also argued against the White Birch School’s belief that there were eternal elements in the literary arts. I will turn to this point presently in my discussion of Hirabayashi’s views regarding I-Novels.

The fact that Shinseinen chose to publish these essays for its young readers in the 1920s and 30s indicates that it sought ways to show the legitimacy of the new genre as both artistically and ideologically significant at a time when, because detective fiction was conceived as popular, lowbrow, and deficient in quality, it was disposable and not even a category of literature with its own significance. Shinseinen’s publication of essays by leading critics and writers such as Morishita Uson, Hasegawa Tenkei, Kosakai Fuboku, Satô Haruo, Baba Kochô, Hagiwara Sakutarô, along with Hirabayashi shows that it was not only promoting tantei shôsetsu as a window to learn about the West, but also as a new development within Japan’s own socio-cultural and political environment.

Thus, in the global context of the ubiquity and legitimacy of detective fiction in the interwar period, Shinseinen attempted to benefit from the critical discourse of domestic writers and critics, while at the same time drawing upon a large portion of authoritative power from Western critics. In particular, it used the authority carried by G.K. Chesterton to support Hirabayashi’s theory, which was published prior to Chesterton’s esay. It also used S.S. Van Dine’s essay to show that the West, the authority of detective fiction as a modern literary genre, was paying attention to the development of Japan’s own expression of the genre, tantei shôsetsu.
4.2 Tantei Shôsetsu and Bundan Literature

In addition to his expressly political conception of the genre as a means for promoting a critically aware social engagement, Hirabayashi’s theorization and promotion of *tantei shôsetsu* also includes a critique of the dominant cultural ideologies of the period, one that challenged both the bundan literary establishment as well as other newly emergent and competing movements. In his efforts, he challenged both the *bundan* literary establishment as well as other newly emergent and competing movements. Most notably, he attacked the *Shirakaba-ha* (White Birch School) writers, who dominated the literary world and advanced their works the repository of transcendent, universal values. Hirabayashi also challenged the I-novelists’ narcissistic focus on the “self,” which he criticized for focusing on individual psychological, rather than social concerns. The *tantei shosetsu* was not opposed *per se* to issues of psychology, especially in its more abnormal aspects. As a matter of fact, abnormal psychology is one of its most frequent themes. On the whole, however, its focus differed from the *bundan* writers’ preoccupation with their characters’ psyches, primarily by examining psychology within the larger context of society through the critical eyes of others. By contrast, the I-novel clung to the rhetoric of offering “unmediated” and faithful descriptions of the authors’ own sinful, miserable and ugly lives. Similarly, in the 1910s and 1920s, the writers of *Shirakaba-ha* were another group that focused on depicting the trivia of their private lives, although they differed slightly from the Naturalist I-novelists in that they approached the self in a more affirmative way. The use of the self as a suitable subject for literature was a view
supported by the majority of Japanese critics and writers at the time as the foundation of “real” literature. Consequently, tantei shōsetsu was not taken seriously because it was considered merely “popular,” and being popular meant, by definition, less significant. Against this dominant conception of literature, Hirabayashi situated himself as a believer in historical materialism and rejected the mainstream writers’ so-called “metaphysical thinking” in which they conceived of literature as possessing some sort of abstract, everlasting values. He argued that any ideological movement was grounded in a particular time and place. Asserting the importance of journalistic or documentary expression because it depicts current social circumstances, especially in times of rapid change, he thus begins one of his essays by quoting the socialist playwright and critic, George Bernard Shaw, “journalism is the best literature.” Hirabaryashi then goes on in this essay to say, “the literature that tries to appeal to all eras and all humanity will, in the end, appeal to no eras and no one.” Later in the same essay, his criticism of Shirakaba-ha ideology is even more explicit: “the kind of literature that they call eternal literature, which is claimed to be rooted in the recently popular concept of ‘humanity,’ is a good example [of just such literature of no appeal to anyone].”

At the same time, Hirabayashi also differentiated tantei shōsetsu from other competing literary forces that were emerging as anti-bundan voices. The New Sensationalist writers such as Yokomitsu Riichi and Kawabata Yasunari produced experimental pieces by employing Western high-art Modernist techniques such as Futurism and stream-of-consciousness. Influenced by Dadaism, Takahashi Kenkichi and other avant-garde poets produced their modanizumu poetry. It was also the time
when Shirai Kyōji, influenced by socialist ideology, argued for a literature for the masses, or *taishū shōsetsu*, based on an adaptation of the indigenous *kōdan* tradition of oral narrative. While many of these new genre grew out of people’s increased interests in the realization of an individualistic and democratic society during the time of what is called “Taisho Democracy,” Hirabayashi saw *tantei shōsetsu* as the best medium for achieving that goal because it unified the political and artistic aspects of literary production through the cultivation of an expressly modern critical, rational intelligence among readers.

Even though he argued for the superiority of *tantei shōsetsu* over other genres, Hirabayashi did not entirely discount the importance of Naturalism within the development of modern Japanese culture. Moreover, his recognition of its significance as a literary tradition helps to explain the nature of his dispute with more hard-core proletarian thinkers and their efforts to limit progressive expression strictly to the category of *taishū shōsetsu*, or the literature of the masses. Hirabayashi’s 1926 essay “*Puroretaria no bungaku undo*” (Proletarian Literary Movements) showcases his complex thought about the relationship between politics and literature. The essay offers his reflections on what narrative form is needed in a time when democratic thought was spreading among the people and socialist movements were beginning to emerge, as Japan increasingly shows the signs of a high capitalist society.\(^{228}\) Building on the thought of Jean Gabriel Tarde and Hippolyte Taine, Hirabayashi asserts that “the ‘species’ [note that he is using a biological term here] of literature are closely related to

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\(^{228}\) Hirabayashi, “*Puroretaria no bungaku undo*” originally appeared in the January 1926 issue of *Taiyō. HHBHZ.* 241-251.
changes in the social class system.” He goes on to say that Naturalism came about as a bourgeois revolution in literature because of the rise of none other than petite bourgeois society. Yet when that society experiences disruption in the future, its literature will decline. With the advent of proletarian society, a new breed of literature [more appropriate to the society] will emerge out of the new social order.\textsuperscript{229}

Unlike radical proletarian thinkers, he acknowledges the significance of bourgeois literature, but now that it has served its cultural purpose, a new social organization is beginning to assert itself. Hence, later in the same year, at the end of 1926, he describes the contribution of bourgeois literary expression to Japanese culture in the following way:

\ldots In terms of introducing analytical method to art, credit indeed goes to Naturalism. However, it is a mistake to think one can see the truth of things by mere analyses. One has to grasp the relations that tie each analyzed part to the whole. It is incorrect to think that one can grasp the true aspects of a human being only by analyzing a person’s appearance, actions, psychology and so forth. Although analysis is an indispensable process in art as well, it is only half of the entire process. At the same time, without analysis, nothing will be found. Either in science or art, it is not allowed to omit analysis in the name of [a belief in] “instinct.” The conventional artistic view that only art is allowed to [follow the instinct] is incorrect. Therefore, what one needs to do with Naturalism is not ignore it but to go one step beyond it.\textsuperscript{230}

Because he viewed the current state of Japanese society as an era of class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat rather than one in which the

\textsuperscript{229} Hirabayashi, “Puroretaria no bungaku undo,” 245.
proletariat had emerged as dominant, Hirabayashi considered *tantei shôsetsu*, with its combination of both social and artistic concerns, as that next step in the evolution of Japanese letters. Recognizing the 1920s to be an age of transition, he believed in the importance of *tantei shôsetsu* for both marking and helping to bring about the transition from bourgeois Naturalist literature to a more strictly proletarian mode of expression.

As an indication of his underlying belief in Marxist thought, as well as his commitment to the value of literary production, however, Hirabayashi repeatedly argued for the importance of recognizing writers as “workers” within modern commodity society. In the essays entitled “On the Occupationalization of Art” (1924) and “On the Vocationalization of Literature and the Issue of the Minimum Wage for Manuscripts” (1929), for example, he points out that the act of writing constitutes a form of labor for which wages are paid as remuneration. Consequently, literary production embodies an expressly economic act, one that both obeys the laws of the marketplace and allows for direct social engagement. This view represented an iconoclastic stance adopted vis-a-vis the existing Naturalist *bundan* ideology, which had constructed the image of the writer as an entity completely isolated from economic and public concerns. Hirabayashi’s conception of the writer as an economic being connects with his promotion of *tantei shôsetsu* as an effective form of social engagement. In addition, it reflects a pervasive concern of the times, one that other figures such as Tani Joji would later take up and pursue in their own efforts to configure the dimensions of the genre.
4.3 Hirabayashi’s Literary Practice: His *Tantei Shôsetsu*

In contrast to hard-core proletarian writers such as Maedakô Hiroichirô and Aono Suekichi, who claimed that literature ought to function as a vehicle to disseminate political ideology, as a writer of *tantei shôsetsu* Hirabayashi took care not to feature overt ideological propaganda as the central theme of his stories when he practiced his theories. Among his seventeen *tantei shôsetsu*, four of them were published in *Shinseinen*. The first appeared in the January 1926 issue, or seven months after his first critical essay on *tantei shôsetsu* for *Shinseinen*, and he continued to write an average of two to three stories a year until his untimely death due to acute pancreatitis during his stay in France in 1931. While the themes vary, we can still observe the consistency with which Hirabayashi practiced his own ideas in the production of fiction.

Since none of these tales are available in translation, a summary of each story follows:

(1) “Yoshin chôsho” (The Minutes of the Preliminary Examination), January 1926.

The story begins with questions and answers at a preliminary hearing conducted by a judge with an old professor whose son is being tried for a murder that took place in an

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231 They are all short stories of less than twenty pages.
232 “Nihon no kindai teki *tantei shôsetsu*: toku ni Edogawa Rampo-shi ni tsuite.” I discussed this essay earlier in this chapter.
233 Incidentally, I will exclude his third work from this discussion because it was part of a story made up by six writers working on it in turn in six installments. *Shinseinen* chose six most popular and influential *tantei shôsetsu* writers at the time and requested them to relay the story to compose one piece of mystery fiction. Edogawa Rampo wrote the first installment in May of 1926, and Hirabayashi, Morishita Uson, Kôga Saburô, Kunieda Shirô and Kosakai Fuboku followed in successive issues. For the reason that he had to work within the outline set by Rampo, the story does not necessarily reflect Hirabayashi’s particular interests, although it still shows some common characteristics that is shared in his other works.
empty house owned by the professor. In order to save his son from having to face a trial, the professor lies to the judge, saying that he, and not his son, committed the crime. Meanwhile, it turns out that the son has confessed to the murder because he believes his father was the real killer. On the basis of other evidence, however, the judge suspects that neither father nor son is the murderer. He asks questions in such a skillful manner that, although the professor thinks he is fooling the judge, the father is actually manipulated to provide important clues to the truth. In the end, it turns that the judge conducted the hearing to prove the innocence of the father and the son, and to prove his hypothesis that a third party actually committed the crime.

(2) “Giseisha” (Victim), May 1926.

The protagonist, Imamura, is a company employee. He makes very little money, but he works hard and lives economically with his wife because he has a humble dream of purchasing a small house for his wife and their baby, who will be born in several months. One night, he is mistakenly arrested for murdering the janitor at the company, and the wrongful arrest destroys his entire life and the only dream that he had. It appears he will be in prison for the rest of his life. His wife suffers a miscarriage due to the shock of her husband’s arrest; and she is taken back to her old hometown by her family, which believes she should never return to Tokyo. In short, the “victim” in this story is not the murdered janitor, but ironically, Imamura because his life is jeopardized by coincidental factors: he happened to drop his glove at work in the spot where the janitor was dead; he had to walk home from work that night because heavy snow stopped the train service; as he was walking home, he was hit over the head by
something—perhaps a tree branch breaking under the heavy weight of the snow—and he lay unconscious on the ground for a couple of hours. All of this circumstantial evidence seems to point to him as the killer. Working under the preconception that Imamura is the criminal, the detective assigned to the case misinterprets every single answer that Imamura gives him. In other words, the detective reads all the information that Imamura provides as signs of guilt. Although detective strictly follows legal procedure in collecting evidence and asking questions to the suspect in order to perform its duty, and the police are honor-bound to “produce [seizō suru] a criminal” under the law, ironically enough they are victimizing an innocent man and his family. The story is narrated by Imamura’s attorney, who believes and has been hired to prove the innocence of Imamura, and he believes in Imamura’s innocence. His comment, however, is interesting: “[the fact that Imamura is innocent] and whether he will be proven not guilty from a legal point of view are two separate issues.” Hence, he does not think he can guarantee a fair trial because “the judicial system of our country – no, not only our country but any others in this world – insists on the formalities [keishiki-shugi].” Moreover, although Imamura might well deny what he was made to “confess” during his first interrogation, he will never do so because he believes that a man should stand by his word. The attorney fears Imamura will never have a chance to prove his innocence.

Shortly before the trial date, the narrator chats with his close friend and co-worker, Segawa, who tells him the president of the company where Imamura worked has just committed suicide. Drawing connections between the suicide and the murder
case, the attorney concludes that the president of the company is the actual killer and that he framed Imamura. To this theory, Segawa replies; “For someone like you who is engaged in law, all the phenomena in the human world may appear to be occurring within the realm of law, and everything may seem to be interconnected, and all those interconnected things may appear to be manipulated by human will to unfold as planned.” Is it possible that the janitor had a heart attack and then hit his head as he fell on the floor, instead of having a heart attack after being hit on the head? Meanwhile, the injury to Imamura’s head looks like it may have been caused by a fallen branch, because Segawa finds one at the spot the following morning. Finally, the fact that Imamura’s glove was found beside the janitor does not categorically connect him to the case. While the attorney speculates that the president may have committed suicide because of guilt over killing the janitor, it also comes to light that his company recently went bankrupt. The attorney feels helpless in the face of the fact that almost any explanation is possible in this case but, under the current law, he cannot prove Imamura’s innocence. He resigns himself to defending his client only because it is his job, and he dispels his doubts about the unfairness of the law by having a good time with Segawa over sake that evening.

(3) “Himitsu” (Secret), September 1926.

The protagonist/narrator is a translator at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. One day, he meets a woman with exactly the same koseki (family register record) as his wife. Their names, permanent addresses and alma maters are all identical. It turns out that his wife’s father was imprisoned after accidentally killing his colleague. He subsequently
escaped from prison during the chaos of the Great Kantô Earthquake of 1923. In order to protect his daughter from the stigma of having a criminal for a father, he falsely entered her name in his old employer’s family register because he heard the entire family was killed in the earthquake. No one, he thought, would ever suspect his daughter’s real identity. It was easy to perpetrate such a trick because the fires caused by the earthquake destroyed all of the family registers at the prefecture office. “The Secret” is a relatively simple story whose only dramatic part comes when the protagonist meets the woman of exactly the same record as his wife’s as he goes secretly to see his old lover.

(4) “Yamabuki-chô no satsujin” (Murder in Yamabuki Town), January 1927. The protagonist is Ōya Sanshirô, a college graduate who works for a government office in Tokyo. While still a law student, he met a woman named Mitsuko, a waitress at a café in Asakusa. They were never lovers, but as a “self-proclaimed feminist,” he decides to support her financially for “humanitarian reasons” so that he can save her from the “slavery” of working under poor conditions in a café. Meanwhile, Sanshirô’s fiancée, Yoshiko, grows suspicious of the relationship between Sanshirô and Mitsuko. One day, Mitsuko is found murdered, and Sanshirô believes Yoshiko is the killer. He worries over how to save her from being arrested. Yoshiko believes, on the other hand, that Sanshirô may be the culprit. A private eye named Ueno Yôtarô becomes involved in the case, and just as the police are ready to arrest Sanshirô, Ueno reaches the conclusion that one of Mitsuko’s old clients, a man named Kimi, is the criminal. Kimi
sent phony telegraphs to Mitsuko to create his alibi, but Ueno checks the timing of a train schedule, and sees through Kimi’s deception.

(5) “Dare ga naze kare o koroshita ka” (Who Killed Him for What Reason?), April 1927.
A murder case goes into a blind alley. The narrator/protagonist is a layperson who ratiocinates on the case by using mathematic skills to determine who is the real killer. Hirabayashi formulates the story in such a way that the narrator sends his conclusions to Shinseinen and asks its readers to give their responses.

(6) “Jinzô ningen” (A Man-made Man), April 1928.
This is a tale of a scientist who claims to be engaged in an experiment to create a “man-made man,” which the mass media sensationaly report as “a human being born in a test tube.” A feminist writes that “this will liberate women from pregnancy and childbirth.” A eugenicist exclaims, “it provides eugenics with a rational foundation!” A jurist comments, “It will upset current laws entirely.” The trick of the story, however, proves relatively crude. The experiment was a scheme devised by the married scientist who made his female lab assistant pregnant. He attempted to make her baby look like a “man-made baby.”

(7) “Dōbutsuen no ichiya” (A Night at the Zoo), October 1928.
This piece does not involve puzzle solving, but it is a well written tale about a young man who spends a night at Ueno Zoo in Tokyo. The protagonist lost his job six months earlier, and unable to find new work, has only a 10-sen coin remaining. His landlady’s attitude toward him changed drastically once she realized that he was penniless.
Because he has no family, relatives or close friends in town, he has nowhere to go. That day, he spends his last cent on visiting the zoo. He envies the animals because they live in a safe place and they never have to worry about food. Reluctant to return to his apartment where the landlady is ready to kick him out, he decides to stay at the zoo after closing hours. There, he contemplates his life. He is a college graduate, and he was regarded as an able worker at the company—a clear indication that he was fired only because of the long-term recession in Japan at the time. He understands there are thousands of unemployed people in Tokyo, yet he cannot understand why he must be one of them. He has no idea how to survive. Terribly depressed, he is about to lie down in the bushes of kumazasa plants when he unexpectedly hears a low but sharp voice behind his back. Suddenly, he realizes a man is pointing a gun at him. The stranger says, “Give me the bag.” But when the man with the gun realizes his victim is not the man he was looking for, he stops acting hostile to him. It turns out the stranger is a leader of a famous secret society, and the police are after him. A few days ago, he had put a “secret document” in a bag and hid it in the zoo, which he asked another member of the society to retrieve. However, he came back that night to get it because he found out that the other member was a spy. The “secret document” is a notebook, which contains a confidential list of the members of the secret society. The leader needed to protect the information from the spy so that his fellow members will not be arrested. When the spy comes to the place where the bag is hidden, the leader and the protagonist hide. The leader switches the notebook with a fake one without the spy having noticed it. But later, the spy realizes that the notebook was switched, and he
returns with the police. The leader and the protagonist escape by running in a waterway and through a long tunnel that leads them outside. At one point, the protagonist thinks about snatching the notebook and taking it to the police because he remembers that newspapers had described the leader as the prime suspect of a recent “serious case.” However, as he learns that the leader is a friendly, bright, and heroic person, the negative image fed to the newspapers by the police is transformed into a positive one. Meanwhile, the police are presented as totally incompetent. They do not even know there is the tunnel that connects the zoo to the outside.

(8) “Kamen no otoko” (Man with a Mask), March 1929.

The protagonist is a newspaper reporter who also has a secret identity as a “Man with a Mask.” He is a chivalrous robber who robs the rich and disseminates money to the poor. His robberies are motivated by his past experience. When he graduated from school, he could not find a job due to the recession. As a result, his fiancée’s family opposed his marrying their daughter. The target of the man’s grudge is the judicial authority. He feels the current laws are unfair, and in order to challenge the judicial authority, he commits crimes but is never caught. The outline of the story is a typical “chivalrous robber” story like England’s Robin Hood, France’s Arsene Lupin, or Japan’s Nezumi-kozô. However, the striking difference is that the protagonist is constantly embroiled in a dilemma over whether his crime will ever fundamentally solve the problems of social injustice in any fundamental way. In addition, de does not possess the emotional detachment of a super-hero. He agonizes whenever he commits a crime to help the poor.
The story is narrated from the perspective of a factory hand. A year ago, he became a candidate in the first general election since universal male suffrage was enacted in 1925. He ran as a candidate of a proletarian party, and the other two proletarian parties decided to support him. However, he suddenly withdrew his candidacy without any explanation. After maintaining silence for a year, he now explains in this note that it was because he “died a year ago.” During the campaign, he requested a copy of his family register record from his hometown office as a document necessary for filing his candidacy, only to discover that someone had reported him as dead a few days before. After some private investigation, he discovers that a rival conservative party tried to abort his election campaign. The protagonist does not correct the family register, however, imagining that he can now live freely without being controlled by the government. The issue of universal suffrage in the story is very timely, but the reason for the protagonist’s withdrawal from candidacy is weak, considering that he was in a crucial position to win the election as the sole candidate from the proletarian parties.

Because of a scandalous report that he wrote, a newspaper reporter gets a bonus. Because of the article, however, an innocent woman commits suicide. The story’s main theme is how merciless journalism can be in probing into people’s secrets. At the same time, the story also takes on as a secondary topic of contemporary interest, namely
“prenatal care of an unborn child” or “prenatal education” (taikyō). A gynecologist announces a highly questionable theory on prenatal education, claiming that a newborn baby will resemble whomever the mother has in mind during pregnancy. He advances it as a new theory that emphasizing the effects of psychology on physical traits. It turns out, however, that the doctor was using the theory to hide his rape of a patient. The newspaper reporter writes an exposé, and produces another scoop: the suicide of the woman who gave birth to the gynecologist’s baby.

(11) “Apâto no satsujin” (A Murder in an Apartment), July 1930.

A famous movie actress is murdered in her apartment, and visitors to her room the day of the murder are in court. The story follows the basic structure of a locked-room murder case, presenting the testimony of each suspect. The killer, it turns out, is none of the victim’s boyfriends but a girl involved in a same-sex relationship with her. Since no clue or foreshadowing of this relationship is presented earlier in the story, this ending is particularly forced and abrupt. As seen from the title, Hirabayashi was obviously attracted to the idea of using the modern space of an apâto (apartment) as the place that allowed the crime to be committed out without notice. While the first apartment building in Japan was built in Ueno in 1910, the concept of living in an apâto became increasingly popular as a symbol of modern life after many apartment buildings started appearing in Tokyo especially after the Great Kantô Earthquake in 1923. The Dôjunkai apartments (some of which are still standing as seen in the stylish neighborhood of Harajuku, Tokyo) were the most stylish and modern concrete apartment buildings, and many newly constructed residential buildings were named as
“Den’en apâto” and so forth, although the quality of the buildings were something more akin to tenement houses. In this short story, the residence of the actress is an apartment because of her modern living style. The apartment is an ideal place for the flirtatious actress. She can meet with several men on the same day without being caught because of the telephone in her room and the privacy afforded her by the concrete apartment. Ironically, however, that privacy also leads to her death.

(12) “Tetsu no kiritsu” (Iron Rules), August 1931.

This piece was published in *Shinseinen* two months after Hirabayashi’s untimely death.

At the end of the story, the editorial staff writes: “The greatest authority in Japan’s critical world, and our fondly-remembered tantei shôsetsu writer, Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, has passed away,” very briefly acknowledging Hirabayashi’s accomplishments both as a writer and critic.

This story concerns the dilemma facing a member of a highly radical secret society called Dai Nippon seigi-tô (Great Nippon Justice Party) faces. Rumor has it that membership in the party has reached 100,000, and members have secretly blended into every corner of society, working even as government officials. Meanwhile, the police have sent spies to infiltrate the party. One evening, two members are called upon to assassinate an official in charge of Tôa-kyoku, the government bureau that deals with East Asia. The top official has taken an aggressive stance on Japan’s diplomacy with nation X, even to the point of risking war. When the party saw no change in diplomatic

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policy, and after “advising” this top official to change his position, it decided to deliver the “punishment from Heaven” (tenchû). The two assassins are never allowed to know each other’s identity. They wear masks during their meetings, and they use only an identification number to address each other. Everything about the party is to be kept a secret, even if they are arrested. Such are the “iron rules” of the party. Later it is discovered that one of the assassins was the top official’s son. The son was committed to obeying all the orders from the party, but he could not kill his own father. In the end, he sacrifices himself for his father and dies in a fake car accident set up by the party.

(13) “Nazo no onna” (A Mysterious Woman), New Year’s Special, 1932.

This piece was begun just before Hirabayashi’s death and left unfinished. Shinseinen published it six months after his death and asked readers to provide a sequel. Shinseinen received fifty contributions, and in the March 1932 issue, Fuyuki Kônosuke’s piece was selected for publication. “Fuyuki Kônosuke” was actually a pen name for Inoue Yasushi who would become famous for his historical novels following World War II. But in 1932, he was an amateur. Considering that Shinseinen requested collaboration series (gassaku) and relay works (rensaku) from its leading writers, as pointed out in Rampo’s memoir, and also that it Shinseinen held regular prize contests to elicit original works from readers, it can be said the sequel of “Nazo no onna” was as yet another example of the magazine highlighting the act of writing as an intellectual activity open to anyone involved with the magazine. The prize winner, an

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amateur writer, picks up the setting as Hirabayashi had left it: A newspaper reporter meets a mysterious, beautiful woman at a resort hotel where he is staying to finish some writing; she asks the reporter to “act as a husband to her” for ten days without explaining why. However, the tone and plot that Fuyuki develops differs considerably from Hirabayashi’s other works. “Nazo no onna” develops into the story of a sadomasochistic relationship between the beautiful woman and her rich but ugly husband (whom she calls a “slug”). It is far more reminiscent of Edogawa Rampo’s *Imomushi* (Caterpillar), which appeared in *Shinseinen* in 1929.

While Hirabayashi did not oppose to Van Dine’s credo of “no love interest plots,” he did not consider romance the principal concern of *tantei shōsetsu*, either. As seen in stories six, ten and thirteen, love-hate relationships are used as necessary elements in emplotting crimes or some sort of wrong doing, but they never function as the main subject. The difference between Fuyuki’s sequel to Hirabayashi’s “Nazo no onna”reminds us of the distinction that Hirabayashi’s made in coining the term “*kenzen na tantei shōsetsu* (healthy detective fiction)”237 to describe such stories as those of as Masaki Fujokyû versus “*fu-kenzen na tantei shōsetsu* (unhealthy detective fiction)” such as those by Edogawa Rampo that deal with the themes of abnormal psychology in a sensationalistic manner, i.e., what has come to be called “*ero-guro-nansensu*” (the erotic, the grotesque and the nonsensical). As he discussed in his critique, *tantei shōsetsu* for Hirabayashi is what clear and rationally minded people read. It is also

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237 Hirabayashi, “*Tantei shōsetsu no shokeikō,*” *HHBHZ*, vol. 2. 340-347. Originally appeared in the March 1926 *Shinseinen*. I have already discussed the dispute among critics and writers over “healthy” and “unhealthy” kinds of *tantei shōsetsu* in the previous chapter.
what helps people to be more rational. Consequently, it should never end with inexplicable abnormal behaviors or a conclusion in which some monster commits a crime. For that reason, even when Hirabayashi takes up a rather sensational topic such as the “man-made human being,” the ending discloses that the baby was used to cover up the scientist’s secret.

While Hirabayashi’s stories emphasize the rational faculties of human being and the process of ratiocination, of the thirteen stories, only in numbers one and eleven does an individual connected with the police or judicial authorities solve the mystery. In story number five, it is a layperson, whose motivation for finding the murderer appears to arise purely out of personal curiosity, explains his version of the murder scenario and even invites the participation of the readers in the sleuthing process by asking for their feedback. Although not a professional detective, his reasoning is supported by statistical data and the theory of probability applied to the facts presented by the police. As a matter of fact, not only are the police frequently presented as incompetent, but they also often constitute a threat to, rather than protecting, the rights, freedom and peaceful lives of the general public.

In more extreme situations, Hirabayashi depicts the situation from the perspective of anti-government or proletarian activists who attempt to gain power in the political world (See summaries 7, 9, and 12). He also depicts the importance of unity among the members of the activist organizations (12), and the possibility of spies among the members (7). In short, the activists need to trust each other to realize their
ideological goals of unity, but they must also be careful not to get spied on or betrayed. More particularly, truth and justice are not singular, indisputable states, but they exist in as wide a variety as the number of different ideologies. This seems to reflect Hirabayashi’s own experience of being active in proletarian and communist organizations, and also as a literary critic of both highbrow and lowbrow literary genres.

Hirabayashi repeatedly criticizes the judicial system. In the October 1928 issue in which “A Night at the Zoo” appeared, he wrote an essay titled “Haja kenshô,” a Buddhist term that means “Defeating the Wrong View and Presenting the Right One”. The first section of the essay is entitled “keimushô shukushô-an” (A Proposal for Reducing the Number of Prisons), and it discusses the incompetence and unfairness of the (criminal) law. He sarcastically points out that the authorities are “producing” or “manufacturing” (seizô) criminals by arresting many more than they can properly convict, and therefore the prisons are filled with the people awaiting trial. He refers here to the Maintenance of the Public Order Act which went into effect in 1925 primarily to suppress Communist and fellow travelers by giving them the maximum sentences and repressing freedom of speech and thought. He criticizes the government for rounding up nearly 400 people under the new Act and incarcerating as long as possible, while not arresting politicians who received bribes or committed election offenses. As Hirano Ken has argued, “A Night at the Zoo” may have been inspired by the spy scandal within the Japan Communist Party that led to the infamous “3-15
Incident of March 15, 1928, only a few months before the publication of this story. Hirabayashi himself became a member of the Communist Party shortly after its founding in 1922. Although he was not one of the executive members arrested in June 1923, the police put him under surveillance and had him followed everywhere. He was also experiencing a gap between his moderate way of promoting leftist thought and more radical methods for disseminating the communist ideology.

Also relevant to our discussion here is knowledge of the relation that people had with the conservative concept of family, especially in the days when there was large influx population into large cities, the growth of the new middle class, and a breaking away from the traditional ties of the extended family. The importance of the family register system loomed much larger in people’s minds during Hirabayashi’s time. “This is How I Died!” is too short a piece to dig into the issue of the relation of the pre-modern and feudalistic family (ie) system to laws in modern Japan, but it is one example of Hirabayashi’s interest in depicting the legal problems that, ironically enough, does not protect law-abiding citizens. Instead, by the manipulation of information in official papers, one can free him/herself from human ties. At the same time, handling people’s lives merely as pieces of information and its attendant problems are highlighted in stories two, three, and nine. Story number ten can also be included in the sense that the information that a newspaper reporter desires as a source of extra income destroys the lives of several people.

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238 In the incident, 1600 people were arrested and tortured as Communists. This incident went unreported by the mass media for a month because of a government order to suppress it.
4.4 Conclusion

Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke’s theorization and promotion of *tantei shôsetsu* as the ideal narrative form for negotiating the advent of modernity in Japan argues that the genre was not disposable entertainment but a means to engage in the political and cultural debates of the period. He theorized the significance of the new form as “intellectual” literature that cultivated a reader’s logical and critical thought about the current social situation. He believed that *tanteishôsetsu* combined both ideological utility and artistic expression into a single literary mode. It should be stressed that his message about the need to cultivate critical minds was targeted at the newly emerging middle-class, a basically petit bourgeois group. It was educated, but it suffered from poor working conditions due to the serious economic depression that followed after WWI and the centralization of the workforce in large cities because of advancements in the system of production in urban spaces. In essence, he was calling upon this new middle class to use cool rationality in examining both radical socialist movements and the nationalist government’s oppression of socialists and anarchists in the 1920s. The readers of *Shinseinen* were an exact fit for this group in that they were educated young adults, many of whom experiencing directly or indirectly the insecurities of being either out of work or suffering from depressed labor conditions.

Despite Hirabayashi’s clarion call for highly rational mode of detective fiction, in actual fact the *tantei shôsetsu* that appeared in the pages of *Shinseinen* became steadily less so, moving instead in the direction of the sensationalism of abnormal psychology or even parody of every aspect of the formulae typical of the genre. For all
of Hirabayashi’s good intentions and critical insights, the evolution of detective fiction lay in the hands of the writers themselves. His own works indicate that his critical powers notwithstanding his stories pale in comparison with those of other writers. The effects of such writers as Tani Joji and Hisao Jûran who operated along side Hirabayashi, and those who followed in the wake of his death, attest to both the flexibility and the diverse meaning of the new genre in the context of interwar Japanese culture.
CHAPTER 5

HASEGAWA KAITARÔ: TWISTS OF SUBJECTIVITY

Introduction

As discussed in the previous chapter, Shinseinen constituted the primary venue for a variety of debates on tantei shōsetsu from 1920 to 1950. The magazine developed the discourse on detective fiction in Japan by welcoming heated discussions among various participants, ranging from high profile critics and literary figures to newly emerging, popular writers. Thus, while the genre name, tantei shōsetsu, remained in use from the 1890s through the 1950s, the definition of the genre continued to be multivalent and in flux.

Among those involved in the discursive formation of the genre, the proletarian leader and social/literary critic Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke stands out as the prominent and persistent advocate of a ratiocinative approach to tantei shōsetsu, or one that employed the structure of (1) the presentation of a mystery or crime; (2) the process of attempting to discover the source of the mystery (i.e., the culprit); and (3) a dénouement in which the mystery is resolved. As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, the magazine’s editorial staff and its advisors promoted tantei shōsetsu on the basis that the
ratiocination formula was perfect for cultivating the capacity to be critical of contemporary society in young minds. In broader terms, those involved with Shimin and the development of tantei shōsetsu sought to redefine the meaning of “seinen” within the context of the socio-political changes commonly referred to as modernity. Where Meiji and early Taisho conceptions of “seinen” generally involved a sincere commitment to self-cultivation as a reflection of national devotion informed by the ideology of shūyō, writers and critics involved with Shimin worked to recast the term to mean, in the words of the magazine’s second editor-in-chief Yokomizo Seishi, “modan bōi (“modern boys” or mobo).” In other words, they attempted to situate the idea of “youth” specifically within the development of modern commodity society.

Of the various features of this modern identity promoted by Shimin writers and critics, the most important was an attitude of critical investigation rather than any fixed or definitive set of traits or behaviors. It comes as no surprise, moreover, that this attitude of critical investigation came to be directed at the tantei shōsetsu itself. This led, in turn, to various interrogations of the genre. Although Hirabayashi remained influential enough to lead Shimin’s editorial decisions throughout the 1920s and until his premature death in 1931, by the mid-1920s, the highly logical, puzzle-solving type of detective fiction was being replaced increasingly by short-shorts that directed their critical and analytical attention to the formulaic aspects of tantei shōsetsu and adopted a satirical and parodic approach to the genre. Writers began to deconstruct

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239 In the editorial notes for the Number 4 (March) 1926 issue of Shimin, Yokomizo writes: “The English translation of the title, Shimin, is Modern Boy. Modern Boy may sound too modern to be a magazine title, but in any case, no other name sounds newer than this. In the same spirit, we will act modern.”
detective fiction by self-consciously, if never systematically on a large scale, challenging its governing rules. This process of deconstruction yielded a variety of new modes of expression that included, for example, single or multi-panel cartoons that incorporated dialogue humorously out of sync with the depicted scene, as well as extremely short, ironic narratives called “kontō” (after the French word “conte”).

As part of its commercial sales and marketing practice, Shinseinen solicited and published stories from readers of the magazine, and many of these consumer-producers were responsible for expanding against the established boundaries of tantei shōsetsu as a literary genre. The most important and popular of the writers who challenged the established orthodoxy of tantei shōsetsu during the 1920s was Hasegawa Kaitarō, who wrote under three separate pen names: Tani Jōji, Maki Itsuma, and Hayashi Fubō. Interestingly enough, by subverting the governing assumptions and practices of the tantei shōsetsu, Kaitarō not only earned for himself a devoted following among his readers, as well as financial success, but he also improved the fortunes of Shinseinen as a commercial publication. During a roundtable discussion on Shinseinen hosted by Edogawa Rampo in 1957 and published in the magazine, Hōseki, Morishita Uson, Mizutani Jun and Jô Masayuki – all former editors of the magazine – pointed out that Tani played a critical role in the changes that led to an increase in sales during the second half of the 1920s. Morishita cited specifically three innovations – Tani’s ’Merican-Jap short-shorts, his translations of Western comic stories, and his original pieces that were less than a page, or what Morishita called hitokuchi-banashi – as

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240 “Shinseinen rekidai hensuchô zadankai,” Hōseki (December 1982) 98-119. Also see the section titled “Publications about Shinseinen and Its Writers: the 1960s to the Present” in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.
having given *Shinseinen* a “contemporary feeling” (*jidai kankaku*) that it lacked when it had focused on *tantei shōsetsu* of a more serious nature prior to 1925. An examination of back numbers of *Shinseinen* from 1924 and 1925 helps us understand Morishita’s point. In comparison with the magazine’s earlier, heavy emphasis on the mystery fiction of ratiocination in translations or original works, Kaitarô’s short-shorts are much more concerned with satirically describing the socio-cultural aspects of news incidents from a journalistic perspective. They introduced new customs, fashions, technology, and ideology in everyday American life through the perspective of the Japanese living abroad. It was this “feel for the age” that caught the attention of Shimanaka Yûsaku, the editor at Chûô Kôron Company and legendary figure in the publishing world.  

Even when these stories appeared in the magazine’s special issues devoted to *tantei shōsetsu*, they focused on petty crimes, primarily swindling. The main theme was not the resolution of a puzzle but the depiction of how people of no stable social position, and hence no fixed identity, survived by using their wits. Kaitarô made his debut in *Shinseinen* in January 1925, contributing regularly until 1927. During those three years, his modernist style of writing speedy and snappy narratives and journalistic, tongue-in-cheek satires caught the attention of major newspapers and magazines. Subsequently he drifted away from *Shinseinen*.

Nevertheless, as the above comment makes clear, Kaitarô played a crucial role both in the success of *Shinseinen* as a commercial publication and in the development of new approaches and conceptions of *tantei shōsetsu* as a distinct literary genre.

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241 Shimanaka dispatched Kaitarô to Europe to serve as the magazine’s European correspondent from March 1928 to June 1929.
Accordingly, in the following two chapters I shall examine the life and work of Hasegawa Kaitarô, as well as the significance of his contributions to *Shinseinen*. This chapter focuses on the principal events of his life; the next examines his stories. We will consider examples of his more orthodox *tantei shôsetsu* narratives, such as “The Shanghaied Man,” which departs in important ways from established formulae. We will also discuss his more popular 'Merican-Jap stories. Through their constant undermining of the idea of a stable personal identity, they reveal not only his increasingly ironic approach to the genre, but also his growing disenchantment with the values that had informed the discursive articulation of *tantei shôsetsu* since its inception. In this way I shall seek to illuminate the significance of these two different types of stories.

### 5.2 Hasegawa Kaitarô and His Father

Hasegawa Kaitarô was born January 16, 1900 on Sado Island in Niigata Prefecture, the first son of Hasegawa Yoshio (1871–1942) and his wife, Yuki (1882-1971). The Hasegawa family had worked as government officials in the *kinza*, or mint, operated on Sado Island by the Tokugawa government, but they lost their hereditary position when the office was closed after the Meiji Restoration. The restoration also led to closing of the *Bakufu*-run school in Sado. In its place, Maruyama

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242 The *kanji* for Hasegawa Kaitarô is 長谷川海太郎. Kaitarô’s father’s given name was Kiyoshi, but in 1907 he changed it to Yoshio 淑夫. Yoshio also used the pen names Rakuten (楽天) and Seimin (世民) as journalist for the newspapers *Hakodate shinbun* and *Hokkai shinbun*. The dates for Yuki (由起) are from Kawasaki Kenko, *Karera no Shôwa*, Tokyo: Hakusuisha, 1994. But Kawasaki and Eguchi Yûsuke’s *Tani Jôji*, Sôsho Shinseinen series, Tokyo: Hakubunkan shinsha, 1995 gives Yuki’s year of birth as 1880.
Meihoku (dates unknown), a former teacher at the Bakufu-school and Confucian scholar, opened a private school, which became a center for anti-Meiji sentiment. Some students such as Hanyû Ikujirô became advocates of the Movement for Liberty and Popular Rights (jiyû minken undô), which called for the establishment of a national assembly.²⁴³ Hasegawa Yoshio (then Kiyoshi) graduated from a local elementary school, completed his education at Meihoku’s school in the early 1880s. He moved to Tokyo and eventually studied law at Tokyo Imperial University. It was an era when social reforms were the topic of heated debate, and political novels flourished. Yoshio never finished his university degree due to financial hardships which forced him to return to Sado Island at the time of his father’s death in 1891. After teaching at the local higher elementary school (kôtô shôgakkô) for several years, he became a teacher at the newly-founded, first middle school in Sado. He taught English using novels by Dickens, Marx’s theory of surplus value, and Benjamin Kidd’s writings on Social Darwinism. Yoshio also taught natural history following Oka Asajirô’s work on evolutionary theory. He was said to have influenced the ideological development of his students, including Kita Ikki who was later to become a prominent national socialist and major leader in the February 26 Incident of 1936.²⁴⁴ He also joined a local waka group, composing poetry under the pen name of Rakuten and publishing in the coterie’s magazine and in a local newspaper, Sado shinbun.

Yoshio married in 1899. Yuki had an abiding interest in waka and was from a family that produced Confucian scholar/medical doctors (jui) for generation after generation on Sado Island. The family had been closely connected with Maruyama Meihoku since before the Meiji Restoration.

In 1900, Yoshio began to write a series of essays for Sado shinbun, which argued for a new education system. He wrote in support of a democratic society. His principal argument was the importance of popular education in each local district and the promotion of decentralization of government power (chihô bunken). He believed in the necessity of educating not only the privileged classes in urban areas but also the general public and rural population. In 1901, he became a founding member of the political periodical, Ōdô, contributed articles on political and economic issues. He identified his political position as ichigen-shugi, or “monism,” a term suggesting the unity and integration of ideas. It appears, however, that his approach was eclectic and random. He absorbed ideas, old or new, and in the process, adopted different concepts in fragments. It was as though he preferred to be up-to-date with the current trends rather than stick to one ideology. For example, he learned the philosophy and politics of the ancient Chinese sages when he studied with Maruyama Meihoku; at Tokyo Imperial University, he was exposed to the ideas of constitutionalism, party politics and the decentralization of government power. His openness to new ideas made him an

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245 See Kawasaki Kenko, Karera no Shôwa, 17.
246 Ōdô (王道). A socialist monthly periodical. The first issue was published in November 1901, and Yoshio was the one who came up with the name of the magazine. The term ōdô, “kingly way” or “statesmanship,” is an ideal political ideology of virtue in the ancient Chinese Confucian thought, and it is the opposite of hadô (霸道), the way of governing a state with military power and wiles.
active journalist with romantic ambitions about social revolution. As a matter of fact, he left the Ōdō group after the appearance of only the first three issues -- an indication perhaps of the constantly shifting and evolving nature of his progressive ideas. In 1902, he became actively interested in the universal male suffrage movement after reading the writings of Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855-1932). When he was given a chance to become shuhitsu or chief columnist and editor for Hokkai shinbun, he moved to Hakodate with his wife and two-year-old son, Kaitarô, with the goal of spreading new ideas to the people of Hakodate. The position of shuhitsu was an important and prominent one in any newspaper, and as if to signal his emergence as a journalist, he changed his first name from Kiyoshi to Yoshio, and began using the new pen name, Seimin. While enthusiastically supporting the idea of an egalitarian society, he was also a strong believer in the concept that the Emperor was the core of the Japanese state. He argued for the idea of national polity (kokutai) by using the arguments of Social Darwinism and defining himself as a state socialist; he did not agree with leftwing reformists who contended that the entire structure of the nation needed to be altered and the emperor eliminated. He argued that the “natural evolution” was the best way to improve Japanese society.

Within hours of Kaitarô’s birth in 1900, Yoshio composed a tanka, using the image of the Japan Sea off of Sado Island as a metaphor. He was tying his first born son to the Hasegawa family roots in Sado; and the alliteration of the “ta” and “tada” in taotao (lapping), tadayoeru (floating), tadanaka (the very center) captures not only the sound of the sea but also the tarô of Kaitarô. The name also carries overtones of the
folk tale about the Peach Boy, Momotarô, a hero and slayer of demons, who was born from the lapping waters of a river.

Out of the lapping ocean waves, my baby child is born, his name is Kaitarô, Ocean Boy.

Yoshio and Yuki had three more boys. The second son, Rinjirô, studied art in France and became a painter in the western-style. The third, Shun, worked for The Manchuria Film Association (Manshû eiga kyôkai) under Amakasu Masahiko in the 1930s-40s. He was also involved in the publishing industry in Manchuria as a novelist, poet and translator of Russian to Japanese; he continued to write in the postwar years. The fourth, Shirô, worked for South Manchuria Railways (Minami Manshû tetsudô) and spent five years after the war as a detainee in Soviet camps in Siberia. He became a novelist, poet and translator of Rainer Maria Rilke, Federico García Lorca and Bertolt Brecht, and he was involved in the development of the major literary

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248 Shun worked closely with his boss, Amakasu Masahiko (1891-1945), who was notorious for the Ōsugi Sakae Incident. At the end of WWII, Amakasu committed suicide although Shun tried to prevent it.
249 Okawa Shûmei (1868-1957: 大川周明), national socialist and advocate of Japan’s mission to liberate Asia. He founded Yûzonsha with Kita Ikki in 1919, but they parted ways in 1925. In 1932, he was arrested for being involved in the May Fifteenth Incident. After being released, he was active as an ideologue for the Great Far East Co-prosperity, and was arrested as an A-class war criminal in the post-WWII trials. He was eventually released on grounds of insanity. In the 1920s, Okawa helped Shun and Shirô get positions in Manchuria because he had worked for Mantetsu (South Manchurian Railway) since 1918. As mentioned later in this chapter, Yoshio and Okawa became close in the early 1920s.
periodicals, *Kindai bungaku* and *Shin Nihon bungaku* after World War II. Tamae, the youngest, was the only daughter.250

In Hakodate, Yoshio sought to change society in two ways. The first was by being directly involved in politics: he successfully ran for the political office of *ku-kai giin*, a representative in the Hakodate Ward Assembly, in 1905. The second was by the power of his pen: he wrote essays and articles as editor-in-chief and chief columnist of *Hokkai shinbun* to inspire and enlighten the public. As a journalist, his writing resulted in two instances of imprisonment. Although it is impossible to fully reconstruct the details of the two court cases, a brief review of the available materials does provide insight into Hasegawa Yoshio’s liberal stance as a journalist and teacher. The first incident occurred as a result of the series “Mukashi no onna to ima no onna” (Women of Old, Women of Today) that he serialized in the newspaper from July 24 to August 20 of 1910. Because the relevant issues of the newspaper are no longer available, only the barest outline of the original essays can be gleaned from a report of the incident appeared in the September 7, 1910 issue of *Hakodate Mainichi Shinbun*.

The judgment in the trial of *Hokkai Shinbun* regarding their violation of the Press Law [on two counts] was delivered yesterday in Hakodate Local Court. Mr. Yoshio Hasegawa, publisher and editor, was sentenced to four months’ imprisonment and fined fifty yen on each count, or imprisonment for eight months and a fine of a hundred yen in total. Mr. Utarô Satô, printer, was sentenced to imprisonment for three months and fined forty yen. These verdicts of guilty were delivered on the grounds that the newspaper serialization, “Women of Old, Women of Today,” used vulgar letters and blasphemous terms, although it discussed the [historical] facts drawn from *Kojiki* and

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250 She did not had a public life like her brothers, but her interview in memory of Kaitarô is seen in *Kikigaki-shô* (Selected Interviews) in the “Shinseinen Sôsho” Series.
Nihon shoki. The sentence conforms to Article 42 of the Press Law. Furthermore, the court sentenced Mr. Hasegawa to fifty days of work service in prison and Mr. Satô to twenty days in the event they are unable to pay their fines in full. It is likely both men will appeal the verdict.

As the article indicates, Hasegawa Yoshio was charged with violation of The Press Law (Shinbunshi hô) for writing about the practice of polygamy in the Imperial household, a custom that continued even in the reign of Emperor Meiji. The Press Law had gone into effect on May 6 of the previous year, replacing the more liberal Press Regulations (shinbunshi jôrei) of 1887. Publications were so severely censored that “not even the most serious and patriotic publications were safe from the government. . . . The censors’ pace [picked] up considerably since the new Press Law [went] into effect, perhaps in part because it did make things more convenient for the police.”

Yoshio’s timing of the serialization may have been unfortunate, but it appears that he did not fully anticipate the larger historical implications of a newer, more stringent system of censorship. It did not make sense why he had been charged and imprisoned. He appealed his case. Not only was his appeal dismissed, however, but the courts imposed an additional charge: a complete ban on publishing the Hokkai shinbun. His appeal to a higher court was turned down a second time. A kindred spirit since Sado Island days, Hayashi Gisaku, supported Yoshio and started another newspaper (called simply the Hokkai) in which Hayashi attacked the authorities for their treatment of

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Yoshio.\textsuperscript{252} These well-intended efforts, however, put Yoshio in dire straits: the authorities added four additional months of imprisonment to the previous sentence. They also confiscated the printing facilities of the *Hokkai*, stating that the paper was virtually identical with *Hokkai Shinbun*. To make matters worse, Yoshio was removed from his position as a representative to the Hakodate Ward Assembly.

It is impossible to assess what “blasphemous terms” (*fukei no go o mochiitaru*) “Women of Old, Women of Today” contained.\textsuperscript{253} Yet, considering the fact that Yoshio was a self-proclaimed “state socialist” in other writings, it is reasonable to speculate that he did not intend to desecrate the Imperial family or question the legitimacy of the reigning Emperor by referring to the polygamous practices of the Imperial family, or to question indirectly the myth of an unbroken imperial bloodline. Instead, Yoshio’s emphasis was, as Kawasaki argues in *Karera no Shôwa*, on the status of women during the period of democratic movements. As we see in other essays by Yoshio, he attempted to inspire women to move forward and improve their social status.\textsuperscript{254}

The *lese majesty* incident speaks of government attempts to rein in the media and bring it forcibly under control. It also speaks of the confusion and resistance of writers and journalists. In his writing on criminal court cases that include famous examples of government prosecution, the scholar Morinaga Eizaburô lists Yoshio’s incident as typical of attempts by the authorities to deify the Emperor and fortify the

\textsuperscript{252} One interpretation of Hasegawa Kaitarô’s pseudonym, Hayashi Fubô, is that it means “do not forget Hayashi (Gisaku).”

\textsuperscript{253} The term, *fukei* means specifically lese majesty or blasphemous to the Imperial family, i.e., the divine existence. The charge was that the serialization contained *fukei no go* (不敬の謗), or blasphemous terms.

\textsuperscript{254} However, in the matter of universal suffrage, Yoshio’s idea was conservative. He argued for the male suffrage first.
notion of national polity – with The High Treason Incident involving Kôtoku Shûsui representing the apex of such efforts. The presiding judge, Tsuru Jôichirô, and the prosecutor, Itakura Matsutarô, in Yoshio’s trial also presided in the case of High Treason Incident that sentenced twenty-four “socialists and anarchists” to death and executed twelve of them, on the grounds that the rebels planned to assassinate the Emperor.

After being released from prison, Yoshio was hired in June 1912 as editor-in-chief of Hakodate shinbun, a newspaper newly founded by his friend, Hiraide Kisaburô. He wrote for the newspaper on topics ranging from poetry to editorial comments. In 1917, he was imprisoned once again. This time the sentence of two months was for commission of electoral irregularities during the April campaign for the House of Representatives, in which he supported Hiraide Kisaburô’s candidacy for reelection. Hiraide lost in spite of Yoshio’s aggressive support. Yoshio’s interpretation of the arrest was that it was due to the excessively slanderous articles that he wrote about a candidate associated with the Seiyû-kai, which endorsed the incumbent government. Meanwhile, Hiraide, a member of the Constitutionalist Party (Kensei-tô), had promoted constitutionalism and party government. Yoshio’s article for Hakodate shinbun of March 22, 1917 shows us how he used the media as a venue to promote his own political beliefs and support his political ally. He appealed to his readers claiming he was arrested because of his passion for justice. However, it is also clear his arguments

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255 Morinaga Eizaburô (森長英三郎: 1906-1983), Shidan saiban (史談裁判).
256 Of the twenty-four, only twelve including Kôtoku Shûsui, were sent to the scaffold in January 1911.
257 Seiyû-kai (政友会: Constitutional Society of Political Friends), Kensei-tô (憲政党: Constitutional Government Party)
once again infringed upon the Imperial system. The fact that he couched his appeal in
terms of the Russian Revolution as a “model of constitutionalist government” was seen
as incendiary. Doubtless it was viewed as an example of a “dangerous idea” (kiken
shisō) in which Communist liberalism was contrasted with hidebound and bureaucratic
Czarism. Little wonder the Japanese censors were sensitive to possible inference
directed toward the Japanese Imperial system.

The image that emerges from these two incidents is of a writer who was not
particularly careful or analytic in his pronouncements. In addition to failing to see the
contradiction inherent in aligning his support for the Emperor system with his notions
of an ideal society, he is often too eclectic: for example, his quoting ideas such as
Bergson’s élan vital in support of Constitutionalist Party. He appears to have been an
uncritical sampler of new ideas – a penchant that he would bequeath to his son – and he
wrote at the break-neck speed typical of many journalists of the period. Moreover, this
was an era when the government was especially sensitive about “dangerous ideas”
designed to weaken Imperial authority. Many writers and journalists were swept up in
governmental measures to control and censor the press.\(^{258}\)

In the 1920s, *Hakodate Shinbun* expanded, and as a member of a larger
organization, Yoshio wrote fewer articles that were an expression of his personal beliefs
and opinions.\(^{259}\) In 1929, he became the newspaper’s president while retaining his title

\(^{258}\) See Rubin’s *Injurious to Public Morals*, especially Part Three (145-224).
\(^{259}\) *Nihon shinbun hattatsu-shi*, published in 1922 by Osaka Mainichi and Tokyo Nichinichi Newspaper
Companies, lists *Hakodate shinbun* as the third largest newspaper in Hokkaido after *The Hokkai Times*
and *Otaru shinbun*.  

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as editor-in-chief. Still, he was charged again for violation of the Press Law. This time it was his review of works by Trotsky.

By the mid-1920s, however, Yoshio had begun to support the nationalistic rhetoric advanced by Okawa Shûmei and the members of Kôchisha, which called for Japan’s political and economic domination of Manchuria. In the 1930s, he envisioned Manchuria as a socialist utopia to be set up along Confucian notions of statesmanship, or ôdô (lit., the kingly way) as part of Japan’s domination of Asia. This utopia could be achieved only through the rule of the Imperial Army. Indeed his ideas reflect those of politicians and leaders who pragmatically applied the abstract and idealized concept of ôdô to the construction of Manchuria.

With the rise of militarism after 1938, and the Pacific War in 1941, the government ordered the merger of magazines and newspapers. Hakodate shinbun was forced to merge with two other local newspapers in Hakodate. Although Yoshio became Chair of the Board of the new company, Shin-Hakodate, he found that the organization was too large to permit him to express his personal opinions freely. He died in 1942 at the age of seventy-two. Shin-Hakodate newspaper held a company-sponsored funeral, eulogizing his life as “free speech in service to the nation” (genron

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260 Kôchisha (行地社).
261 To quote from Louise Young’s book which explains the development of the term’s usage in the early twentieth century when the Japanese government took the expansionistic pan-Asian attitude towards China: Ôdô shugi was “legitimated imperial rule by positing the ruler as the mediator between heaven and earth – an intermediary between god and the people.” “In the teens and twenties, Japanese began to play with the idea of ôdô as an alternative to European models of political leadership in China.” “The idea of ôdô had a long currency in Japanese political tradition but was appealing in this context because of its origins in Chinese philosophy.” Young, Japan’s Total Empire (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 285.
The combination of “free speech” (genron) in tandem with “service to the nation” or “patriotism” (hôkoku) strikes us today as ironic and contradictory not only in the usage of the terms but also in light of Yoshio’s early iconoclasm.

Hasegawa Kaitarô grew up witnessing his father’s enthusiasm for politics and attempts to bring about social change with his pen. At the time of Yoshio’s imprisonment in 1910, Kaitarô was proud of his father and was never embarrassed to appear at school as “the son of a criminal.” Although a quiet child in elementary school, he became well known during his middle school years at Hakodate Middle School (1912-1917) for making his classmates laugh with his impersonations of their teachers. While most of the faculty were annoyed by Kaitarô’s parodies, a British teacher named Langman praised the boy for his skill at impersonating him. Kaitarô’s classmate Watanabe Shi’ichirô (also known under the pseudonym, Ire Jigoro) recalls that Kaitarô began to study English passionately around this time, although he was not interested in other subjects. He became well known for his performance of English recitations at the school festivals. He also fell in love with Tokutomi Roka’s Junrei.

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262 Genron hôkoku no isshô (言論報国の一生)
263 The episode suggests he was interested in extracting people’s salient characteristics and representing them through his interpretation, mainly with its focus on linguistic elements. Yoshio mentions in a memoir that Kaitarô had a “talent for putting [various] things [from different contexts] together,” like producing a pastiche.
264 Watanabe Shin’ichirô (渡辺伸一郎). He worked for Tokyo Asahi Shinbunsha. In the post World War era, he became well known on such radio shows as “Hanashi no izumi” and “Watashi no himitsu.” This reference is from an article he wrote under the pen name, Ire Jigoro (伊禮次五郎: “Il est gigolo”), “Shônen-jidai no Maki Itsuma-shi,” Chûô kôron August 1935. Ire (also known by his real name, Watanabe Shin’ichirô) was Kaitarô’s classmate from elementary through higher schools in Hakodate.
He admired the main prose part written in bungo literary style as well as interpolated tanka poetry. He carried the book everywhere, reading it over and over until he had ruined the binding on several copies. As he watched foreign steamships traveling the waters off Hakodate, his dream was to wander the world. Ire describes the atmosphere in Hakodate this way:

[Kaitarô] composed waka poetry based on most of the poetic parts in *An Account of My Pilgrimage*. In those days, Hakodate was full of things that lent reality to the imaginary details in the book. [For example,] on the way to the high school, there was a Polish baker, Vladimir Shuritz, who had sought refuge in Japan, it was said, via Siberia. He was a very big fellow, and his face was covered with a beard. In addition, he only had one leg. There were Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches right next to his place, and every morning and evening, we would hear the bells play “Ave Maria.” In the suburbs, there was a Trappist Church; and the hills were covered in lily of the valley and white birches. Around the high school, there were large-scale agricultural and dairy farms. Away in Tsugaru Strait, which Kaitarô preferred to call “the Blakiston Line,” foreign line steam ships would vanish into the distance. On the street signboards were a lot of Russian characters that looked like L’s and R’s reversed or flipped on their backs. Once he finished reading *An Account of My Pilgrimage*, he wrote one poem after another about all the exotic things around him. They were in the form of the thirty-one syllables of tanka poetry.

Or Kôtoku Shûsui described it as follows:

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265 Tokutomi Roka (徳富蘇花). Novelist (1868-1927). *Junrei kikô* (1906) was a travelogue about Tokutomi’s trip to Jerusalem and his visit to Yasyana-Poliana to see Tolstoi. Roka was an avid fan of the Russian writer. In 1927, Kaitarô wrote his own version of a travelogue when he was sent to Europe for sixteen months by *Chûô kôron*. It was initially serialized under the title “Shin sekai junrei,” but was later published in book form as *Oodoru chiheisen* (Dancing Horizon).

266 From the line on a biological distribution map named after its discoverer, Thomas Wright Blakiston.

267 “Shônen-jidai no Maki Itsuma-shi” (Mr. Itsuma Maki in His Boyhood), *Chûô kôron*, August issue (1935): 335.

It is notable that even in childhood, Kaitarô was already interacting with the people who became refugees and broke away with their national origins. This apparently affected the development of his idea on the fluidity of identity and the relation between an individual and his/her nation.
While it felt like it was getting darker and darker as [I] approached the Tōhoku Region, once [I] crossed the Tsugaru Strait it looked like daybreak. The language, customs, and material developments such as electric lighting and the telephone – they were all so advanced as to put even Tokyo to shame.  

Ire Jigorō recollects that Kaitarō’s other favorite book was a translation of *Tom Brown at Rugby* (1888). Influenced by the book, he began to play pranks on his teachers and fellow students. Combining a love for rebelliousness and literature, he started to share his writings in an extroverted way. Making the most of his writing skills, he wrote and circulated, for example, a booklet of accusations against one teacher. The teacher scolded him, remarking, “You needn’t follow your father’s example.” By his fourth year in middle school, Kaitarō had grown to be six feet tall, an atypical height for a Japanese of the period. He started writing original essays and poetry, joined a local poetry coterie group, became involved in the school student council, and was known for his public speaking skills in both Japanese and English. Everyday he penned “nonsense songs” (*zare-uta*) and had his friends sing them. He also wrote stories under such pen names as Kate Hassy, his variation on “Kaitarō Hase”; “Hitomi” or “Pupil of the Eye;” and Oka Kusatarô, or “Grass-Boy Hill.” In his final year in middle school, he became the leader of the male cheerleading group for the school baseball team. Baseball games were the occasions for students to show their

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269 *Tom Brown at Rugby* was written by British writer, Thomas Hughes (1822-1896), and published in 1888.
270 Kaitarô was a regular participant in Hakodate Middle School’s speech contests. Examples of titles were, “Good for Evil (the original title was in English),” “A Man of Religion is the Greatest Politician,” “On Discussing Ambitions,” and “From My Leader.”
love for their school, and cheerleading was a suitable forum for displaying manliness.
Kaitarô wrote fight songs, and even when there were no games, he included himself in
fistfights with the students of his school’s rival, Hakodate Shôgyô (Hakodate
Commercial School). When the baseball team lost a game, he blamed the teachers and
the school authorities, criticizing them for not supporting athletics. When, at a school-
wide speech contest, he waxed large on teachers’ lack of enthusiasm for student
activities, the school authorities put a stop to his speech-making. He then wrote a
petition calling for firing the head of the sports department, which many other fifth
graders signed. He went on strike, leading a group of students to the site of a famous
battleground, Goryôkaku.\footnote{The Battle of Goryôkaku (五稜郭): In October, 1868, Enomoto Takeaki, vice commander-in-chief of
the naval forces of the recently overthrown Tokugawa shogunate, assembled more than 2,000 troops still
loyal to the shogunate, sailed in eight warships to Ezo (now Hokkaidô). In December he established his
headquarters in a Western-style fortress called Goryôkaku at the port city of Hakodate. In January 1869,
he declared Ezo a republic. But late in May 1869 imperial forces under Kuroda Kiyotaka arrived in Ezo,
quickly gained control of the hinterland of Hakodate and entered the harbor. They began their assault on
the city on June 20, 1869. Seven days later, they forced the surrender of Goryôkaku. It was the last
armed conflict between imperial forces and intransigent supporters of the Tokugawa regime. (See the
entry for “the battle of Goryôkaku” in \textit{Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan}.)}
At a symbolic site for resistance, and a perfect place for a
dramatic gesture, they confined themselves there for eleven days. The local newspapers
reported the incident in a sensational manner. They took the students’ side and blamed
the school, including even exposés of some teachers’ scandals. Eventually the school
and the students were reconciled through the mediation of the school alumni, and
everything seemed to return to normal. However, weeks before his graduation in 1917,

\footnote{Just as the father’s iconoclasm vis-à-vis the Meiji authorities has its roots in the Hasegawa
family’s historical loyalties to the \textit{bakufu}, Kaitarô appears to have taken a similar iconoclastic stance.
Although it assumes diverse forms – anti-Meiji, or more particularly anti-Satchô – is a fairly common and
identifiable streak in many Meiji journalists and writers such as Shiba Shirô, author of \textit{Kajin no kigû}, or
Nagai Kafû. Indeed, journalism and the literature would become a haven for those who felt
disenfranchised by the Meiji Restoration.}
Kaitarô realized his name had been excluded from the list of graduating students. Although the school attributed his failure to poor academic performance, his record did not show unsatisfactory grades. He was given the choice of staying for another year to finish his degree. Instead, he quit Hakodate Middle School and moved to Tokyo to enter the senmon-bu of Meiji University. This was the same year that his father was arrested for the election offenses. Kaitarô studied law at Meiji University from 1917 to 1920 and graduated in March 1920. It was during these three years in Tokyo that he attended meetings held by the famous anarchist leader, Ôsugi Sakae (1885-1923). He also initiated his plan to study abroad in the United States by going to a church to take English lessons. It was around this time he heard about Oberlin College in Ohio. His letter to Yoshio in 1919 mentions he is waiting for “a bulletin from Denver,” suggesting that he was investigating various schools in the U.S. They were not the typical ones in California, or the élite schools on the East Coast, generally favored by Japanese of the period.

After his graduation in 1920, and prior to his departure for America, Kaitarô returned to Hakodate to help his father with the campaign speeches for Hiraide Kisaburô, whom Yoshio was supporting again for the National Diet. Three years

272 Meiji University had hon-ka [the principal], yo-ka [preparatory], and senmon-bu [specialty] courses. In those days, “specialty” was a euphemism for the third tier, and less desirable, level of admission. Since Kaitarô never received a middle school degree, he could not enter a high school. Without a high school degree, it was impossible to enter a university. Therefore, admittance to the senmon-bu was the only way to receive higher education. Muro Kenji speculates that Yoshio used his network of friends and contacts in political circles in Tokyo to enroll Kaitarô.

273 According to Muro Kenji, Kaitarô finished the degree, but according to Yuasa Atsushi’s interview with his sister, Tamae, Kaitarô does not seem to have graduated from the senmon-bu. Details are unknown. Interview by Yuasa Atsushi, “Teikô no hito, jidai no sakka: Tani Jôji,” Yuasa Atsushi and Ôyama Satoshi, ed., Kikigaki-shô: Mada minu monogatari no tame ni (Tokyo: Hakubunkan Shinsha, 1993) 38.
earlier, the results had been disastrous, resulting in Yoshio’s arrest and Hiraide’s loss of the election. This time, however, due to the influence of Yoshino Sakuzō and the results of the rice riots in 1918, the general public’s desire for universal male suffrage had unprecedented support, and the situation was considerably more favorable for Hiraide. Kaitarō helped because Hiraide was his father’s close friend and a patron of *Hakodate shinbun*; moreover, it is said Hiraide financially supported Kaitarō’s plan to study abroad. On the campaign trail, Kaitarō’s enthusiastic speech on behalf of universal male suffrage, and Hiraide as the candidate who supported it, was interrupted by jeers such as “Hey you, young’n, we’ve heard enough out of you (*owakee no, oyamenasei*).” Kaitarō replied that “heckling is also one form of debate (*yaji mo genron de arimasu*).” In addition to Kaitarō’s tolerance for free expression, Muro Kenji sees the influence of the anarchist Ôsugi Sakae at work here. Ösugi went to others’ rallies and did what he called *enzetsukai morai*, or “stealing their speeches.” Specifically, he would attend as a member of the audience and then hoot the speaker down to get an opportunity to start his own speech. One of Ôsugi’s victims, the famous Christian Socialist leader Kagawa Toyohiko, put it this way. “Speech ought to be dialectic. It is despotic to have one speaker go on for hours. The genuinely democratic way is for the audience and the speaker to talk in the form of a consultation.”

Hiraide won the election, although his victory did not constitute a total loss for the conservatives. The Seiyûkai retained its majority in the Diet. As a result, no advancement was made toward the enactment of manhood suffrage. Meanwhile, that

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summer, Kaitarô sailed from Yokohama to the United States on the Katori-maru. He traveled with several American women, probably all missionaries. On August 5, 1920, he landed in Seattle. In a letter to his family dated the previous day, he states that his purpose in going to the United States is to study at Oberlin College: “A little after 10 o’clock tonight, the boat entered the Port of Seattle. I will land tomorrow morning. After staying [in the town of Seattle] overnight, I shall leave for Oberlin.”

About 9,000 Japanese immigrants were living in Seattle in 1920, and they had formed into associations such as the Nihonjin-kai (the Japanese Society of Japanese) and kenjin-kai (associations of immigrants from particular prefectures). Likewise, in larger cities on the West Coast like San Francisco and Los Angeles, they worked as unskilled laborers or ran businesses catering to Japanese customers. The businesses ranged from inns, grocery stores, souvenir shops, newspaper companies, employment agencies (kuchiire-ya), to those of a shady nature. It was common practice for

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275 Tamae remembers the name of one of the women, a kindergarten teacher from Hakodate named Laura Goodwin. Kikigakishô, Yuasa, “Teikô no hito, jidai no sakka: Tani Jôji,” 35.
276 Oberlin College was founded in 1833 and was known as a pioneer in egalitarian education. It was the first college in the United States to admit women to higher education, and one of the first to admit African-Americans. A nearby underground railroad station supported the emancipation of slaves. Fukuzawa Yukichi sent his two sons to the Department of Preparatory Instruction, English School, Oberlin College in 1883 to study English. The following year, the elder son entered Cornell, and the younger went to the Boston Institute of Technology (now MIT). In a letter of 1883 to a missionary and friend, Dr. Duane B. Simmons, Fukuzawa writes that Oberlin was the best choice for his sons because “it is in the countryside and will provide them with a simple life with no unhealthy temptations. The expenses are also affordable for me to send two boys at the same time.”
277 After the first immigration wave to Hawaii in the 1880s-90s, there was a constant flow of Japanese to the U.S., especially to California, until the Immigration Exclusion Act of 1924 prohibited Japanese immigration. A large number of Japanese immigrants also lived in New York City. However, as Mitziko Sawada discusses, Japanese in New York Japanese differed from those on the West Coast in that there were very few of whom the Japanese government defined as “imin” (unskilled laborers). Most were “hi-imin” (non-immigrants; educated people who moved for educational or commercial purposes).
278 A ’Merican-Jap series titled “Meriken Jappu shôbai ôrai” (’Merican-Jap’s Business Guide, or ’Merican-Jap, Business Is All right) was serialized from July to December of 1927 in six installments, introducing the variety of blue-collar work in which ’Merican-Jap were typically engaged and how local
Japanese students studying abroad to study English in a major city on the West Coast for several months before moving to a college or university on the East Coast. Kaitarō, however, stayed in Seattle only one night before heading for Ohio by way of Chicago the following day.

Kaitarō traveled from Seattle to Chicago, and from Chicago to Toledo, by train. He arrived in the small mid-western town of Oberlin and was admitted to the college as a sophomore possibly because of his degree from Meiji University senmon-bu.

However, within less than three months, he dropped out, leaving no trace of his performance in the five courses for which he was registered.

This was when his life on the road as a free-spirited vagabond began. He took odd jobs here and there, moving from town to town in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and possibly even Kentucky and North Dakota if we read his fictional stories as actual accounts of his experiences. During these years, he was an unskilled laborer living in American society, and he interacted with other immigrants arriving in the United States mostly from East Europe. He also encountered other wandering Japanese for whom he coined the term, “'Merican-Jap.” During his hobo days, he enjoyed reading
newspapers and periodicals, including pulp fiction, and he participated in the labor union meetings of the Industrial Workers of the World. IWW was already in decline by this time, and it was no longer considered as aggressive or dangerous as it had been. Still, Kaitarô’s letters to his family suggest his excitement at being a blue-collar worker participating in the socialist movement. Shirô, the youngest brother, recalls:

Under Tani Jōji, [my brother wrote] a piece titled “IWW and X and Me.” I no longer remember whether it was ever published. The “X” was “Agnes,” or some female name. Although I do not remember the specific details, it was about a girl Kaitarô met at some point when he was a member of the Industrial Workers of the World. He once sent home a photo of a girl and his letter referred to her as his “sweetheart.” That caused quite a stir at home. . . . I think it was perhaps during the same IWW days that he wrote and asked us to mail all the socialist books in English that he had left at home. He told us there should be no problem [in sending such political books] because the Japanese customs house was not strict about censoring the items that leave Japan, and there should be no trouble in the United States, either. He added, “I am going to read them until they make my head spin.”

of dictionaries categorized as shingo jiten (dictionary of neologisms). Those dictionaries of neologisms proliferated from the early 1910s through the early 1930s, and meriken-jappu first appears in these dictionaries in the late 1920s. More than a hundred such shingo jiten were published, and they refer to neologisms as shin-go (new terms), modan-go (modern terms), sentan-go (ultramodern terms), gendai-go (contemporary terms), ryûkô-go (fashionable terms), shinbun-go (newspaper terms) or shakai-go (social terms). Although they were titled “jiten” (辞典 or 事典; dictionary or compendium), many of them were simple booklets. Kaitarô published a booklet titled Modan-dokuhon (Modern Reader) in 1930. For details concerning the neologism dictionaries, see Shingo jiten no kenkyû to kaidai.


284 “Kaitarô nîsan” (My Brother Kaitarô), the monthly insert (geppô) number 18 of Taishû bungaku taikei (Tokyo: Kôdansha, October 1972).
After spending three years or so as a hobo in the Mid-West, Kaitarô moved to New York City. Once again, he tried his hand at various jobs but decided to return to Japan in 1924. He worked illegally as a boiler man on an American freighter operating out of New York. The ship sailed to the Pacific, traveling first to Oceania and then to Asia. When it arrived in Dalien, China, he jumped ship, and traveling down the Korean Peninsula by train, he returned to Japan via the ferry from Pusan. It was his plan to return to the United States shortly after getting back to Japan, but as a result of enactment of Immigration Exclusion Act of 1924, entering the U.S. a second time became extremely difficult. This was especially true in his case because he had come home as an illegal sailor. Moreover, he did not have specific reasons for returning to the U.S. on a non-immigrant, or “hi-imin” passport – a type of passport granted only to Japanese whom the Japanese government defined as belonging to the “intellectual class.” The idea of treading American soil again came to look more and more like a dream.

5.3 One Man as Three: Kaitarô’s Writing Career Begins

In July 1924, while he was seeking avenues for returning to the U.S., he began to write essays and poems for *Hakodate Shinbun*, where his father was the president.

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285 It is unclear when he moved to New York. His letters, which are currently in the possession of the Hasegawa family, may provide more specific dates.


287 It is not clear if Yoshio suggested his son write for the paper. Yoshio, who sent his son to the United States for education, was not pleased that Kaitarô had lived as a hobo for four years and wanted to return.
That summer he traveled frequently between Hakodate and Tokyo where his brother, Rinjirō, lived. From the fall to the following year, he rented a house in Tokyo owned by Matsumoto Tai, wrote stories and assisted Matsumoto in editorial work for Matsumoto’s coterie magazine *Tantei bungei* (Detective Literature). He also showed his short-short stories to Morishita Uson, editor in chief of *Shinseinen* magazine. As a result, his first work appeared in the January 1925 issue of *Shinseinen*. This was at the time when Morishita was enthusiastically promoting the genre of *tantei shōsetsu*.

Kaitarō was introduced as a new, multi-faceted talent. For example, in the January 1925 issue, he contributed six pieces. Four of them were written under the name of Tani Jōji, and two others were translations of Western detective stories under another pseudonym, Maki Itsuma. As Tani Jōji, he wrote a poem titled “Kaigai inshō-shi: tokoro-dokoro” (Impressionist Poem of Overseas: Here and There) and three short-shorts based on his experiences in the United States titled “Yangu Tōgō” (Young Tōgō), “Danna to sara” (Master and Plates) and “Jōji Washinton” (George Washington). They were not examples of the detective fiction called for by Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, but the stories served to inform young readers about the latest happenings in the United States. Anti-Japanese sentiment was rising in the United States, but many young people in Japan were still highly interested in the American culture that they experienced.

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288 Matsumoto Tai, “Mayu o yaburu mae” (Before Emerging from the Cocoon), August 1935 issue of *Fujin kōron*, 318-326. Matsumoto Tai (1887-1939) was a mystery novelist and translator of English mystery fiction.
through movies, music and fashion. Because emigration fever was still prevalent, people had to start looking for other countries than the United States. In addition, Kaitarō also translated two pieces of Western mystery fiction for the same issue: “Hakuyôki,” or “Beautiful White Devil” by the Australian writer Guy Newell Boothby, and “Nazo no kizoku” (original title unknown) by a British writer Baroness Orczy.

Historically, it has been common practice for Japanese writers to use pen names or pseudonyms. Some are conferred by their teachers; others are chosen by the author to describe a personal idiosyncrasy. In the case of Natsume Sôseki (1867-1914), for example, his pen name, “Sôseki” or “Gargle Stone,” is taken from an old Chinese expression referring to a stubborn nature. Some writers have used pseudonyms as a form of disguise. A recent example is the critic, Yamamoto Shichihei (1921-1991), who published Nihonjin to Yudaya-jin (The Japanese and the Jews, 1970). He claimed to be merely the publisher of a book written by Isaiah BenDasan, a fictitious Jewish writer, when he was, in fact, the author. It is said that his aim was to make the book look like an objective analysis by a non-Japanese on the subject of Japanese national characteristics and ethno-psychology – hence his ruse and use of a pseudonym. In the early stages of mystery fiction in Japan, several writers invented pen names modeled after mystery writers whom they respected, e.g., S. S. Van Dyne and Sir Conan Doyle.

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289 In the same issues that promoted Kaitarō’s 'Merican-Jap stories, we see also various essays, reportage, and advice columns provided by a Christian association called Nihon Rikkôkai (The Strenuous Action Club), which answered youngsters’ questions concerning emigration. For information about Nihon Rikkôkai (日本力行会), see Tokyo Life, New York Dreams, 121-124.

Poe was so popular a choice that there were two “Edogawa Rampos.” In the end it was Hirai Tarô, or the Rampo whom we now know as the “father of full-fledged detective novel (honkakuha tantei shôsetsu no soshi), who overshadowed his competitor.”

Hasegawa Kaitarô was one of many writers to use pseudonyms. He used multiple names, and historically speaking, such usage was not uncommon. Nonetheless, what sets Kaitarô apart is his systematic use of three pseudonyms simultaneously while writing in three respectively different genres— as well as his success in writing under all three names. As mentioned previously, he first experimented with pseudonyms in his middle school days. He also used another set of three pen names when he wrote for Hakodate shinbun in 1924. However, by the time he started using Maki, Hayashi and Tani, the intentionality of the multiple pseudonyms becomes systematic and clear. The three last names have parallelism in appearance and meaning, and they are unlike the random use of pen names in the earlier stages of his writing career. With regard to the unity among the last names, they are all single-

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291 As is discussed in Chapter Three, critics and writers argued over the question of how to define the genre. For example, Kôga Saburô categorizes it into two major types, which he calls honkaku-ha (mainstream) and henkaku-ha (alternative or variant). These refer, respectively, to works, one, that involve ratiocination, and two, mystery in daily life.

292 Among the Edo gesaku writers, it was the practice to have multiple gagô,” or “elegant names,” which functioned like nicknames and had a social function. Takizawa Bakin is said to have had thirty-four. This practice became less common in so-called pure literature circles as writers became famous for their “I-novels.” Since Kaitarô actively defended commercial aspects of writing and claimed that his work was yomimono (light and entertaining reading), it is arguably the case that he advertised his commercialist attitude, like gesaku writers, as something worthy of pursuit. For use of pseudonyms in the Edo Period, see Tanaka Yûko, Edo wa nettowâku (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1993).

293 For example, Atara Shoji (阿多羅緒児), Den’ya Rô (田野郎) or Umeki Maigo (注名気迷子). The readings of those names are not clear because Kaitarô did not supply furigana. Whether they all belong to Kaitarô is not completely confirmed. While Eguchi Yûsuke and Kawasaki Kenko speculate that is the case, Kudô Eitarô argues Umeki Maigo is a pseudonym used by the journalist, Taketomi Yasuo (武富安雄). For Kudô’s argument, see Kudô, “Tange Sazen” o yomu: Hasegawa Kaitarô no shigoto (Tokyo: Nishida Shoten, 1998).
charactered, and they refer to scenic features: Maki as Meadow, Hayashi as Woods, and Tani as Valley. The salient points on each pen name are as follows:

### 5.4 Maki Itsuma

The “Itsuma” in Maki Itsuma means “Swift/Superb Horse” on a Meadow (*maki*), and this stylish moniker was used primarily for translations of Western mystery fiction and a large group of chic and witty *contés* that he wrote for *Shinseinen*. Later, he would use the name’s flashy-sounding image for the type of narrative which “Maki” called “authentic accounts of bizarre criminal cases” (*kaiki jitsuwa*) from the West and his extremely popular romance novels serialized in *The Tokyo Nichinichi* and *Osaka Mainichi* newspapers and magazines such as *Asahi* and *Shufu no tomo*. Because of the immense popularity of his romance novels, Kaitarō became most widely known as Maki Itsuma in the 1930s. Movies were made based on his novels, and they made his works even more popular. This name stuck, and at the time of his death in 1935, he was referred to as “Maki Itsuma” in all the memorial writings in magazines and newspapers.

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294 Maki (牧), Hayashi (林) and Tani (谷).
295 Maki Itsuma (牧逸馬)
296 For example, “Kono taiyō” (published in 1930 and made into a movie that same year) and “Chijō no seiza” (serialized and filmed in 1932) made Maki one of the most popular writers among the female audience.
5.5 Hayashi Fubô

“Hayashi Fubô” combines the family name of “Hayashi/Woods” with a first name meaning “Do not forget.” Because the tone of Fubô is archaic and Sinified, and it sounds like the pen name of a gesaku writer from the Edo period, it was suitable for the period fiction or jidai shôsetsu. Kaitarô started writing period fiction with the appearance of the Kuginuki Tôkichi (“Nail Puller” Tôkichi) series for Matsumoto Tai’s coterie magazine, Tantei bungei (Detective Literature) in 1925. Hayashi Fubô became known to a larger audience when Kaitarô began to write for the newly published magazine, Tantei shumi (Taste for Detective Stories), a magazine that was started by Edogawa Rampo and several other tantei shôsetsu writers, critics and journalists. When Kaitarô produced another period series in 1927 titled Shinpan Ooka seidan (New Version of Cases Handled by Magistrate Ôoka Echizen) for Tokyo Nichinichi and Ôsaka Mainichi newspapers, its one-armed, one-eyed wandering samurai hero named Tange Sazen became extremely popular as an “anti-hero.” Movies were made

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297 Hayashi Fubô (林不忘). One theory holds that Kaitarô created “Hayashi Fubô” in honor of his father’s close friend/political comrade, Hayashi Gisaku, who supported Yoshio in the lése majesty incident of 1910. According to this interpretation, the name means, “do not forget Hayashi,” but no evidence has been produced to support this view. See also footnote 13 in this chapter.

298 Tantei shumi was started in August 1925 as a coterie magazine for Tantei Shumi no Kai (Association of a Taste of Detective Stories), which was founded in April of the same year. The first three numbers were published by Deirî nyûsu sha (Daily News Company). Number 4 and after were published by Shun’yôdô. Kaitarô became a coterie member and was in charge of editorial work for its Number 9. Since he limited the use of “Hayashi Fubô” to jidai shôsetsu, it never appeared in Shinseinen, a journal largely of modern mystery fiction.

299 丹下左膳

300 Although Tange Sazen appeared as a supporting character in the first installment of the series, his kaleidoscopic and absurd personality was received more favorably by readers than the main character, Magistrate Ôoka. It is often said that, in the late twenties, the general public turned to anti-heroic entertainment after being frustrated by the dismal economy and the oppressive atmosphere of the pre-war period. Kaitarô adroitly reflected such reactions from his readers in following installments. In no time, Tange Sazen became the principal character of the series.
based on this series by various film companies starting in 1928, but the ones directed by Ito Daisuke became the most popular. They brought success to the actor, Ōkōchi Denjirō. After Kaitarō’s death, the Tange Sazen stories were adapted many times to the stage, movies, and in the year following World War II, television.  

5.6 Tani Jôji

The last name “Tani” possibly derives from the second of the three characters in his real last name, Hasegawa (長谷川). Starting in 1925, he used “Tani Jôji” primarily for what were later categorized as the “’Merican-Jap” (American-Japanese) stories. During his wandering days in America, Kaitarō had an English nickname. In a letter to his family during his vagabond years in the United States, he wrote that he was selling hotdogs on a street corner and was called “Billy.” While his father was upset that his son took pride in such work instead of going to school, Kaitarō was happy to be able to blend in with the common lot of people, and the English name had a symbolic meaning for him as a sign of his assimilation into society. However, the pseudonym he chose when he began writing the ’Merican-Jap stories for Shinseinen was “Jôji.” It is not uncommon as a Japanese first name, yet the sound also evokes the name George in

301 To name but a few, the following actors have played the role of Tange Sazen: Arashi Kanjurô [then Chôzaburô], Dan Tokumaro, Okôchi Denjirô, Tsukigata Ryûnosuke, Bandô Tsumasaburô, Mizushima Michitarô, Otomo Ryûtarô, Tanba Tetsurô, and Yorozuya [then Nakamura] Kinnosuke.

302 He wrote over fifty stories that described the life of ’Merican-Japs, most of which were written for Shinseinen in 1925-1927. Under the same pen name, he also translated popular Western novels and novellas such as Lion Feichtwanger’s Jud Süß [The Jew Suss] (translated from its English translation) and Upton Sinclair’s They Call Me Carpenter. He also translated, under the name Maki Itsuma, Vicki Baum’s Grand Hotel and V. Delmar’s Bad Girl. During his trip to Europe mentioned in footnote #3, he visited bookstores, new and used, and libraries (both commercial and non-commercial) to update himself on the current best sellers such as the ones listed above.
Kaitarô never used the overtly English-sounding name “Billy” as a pen name, and though he never discussed the meaning of his pen names, his use of “Jôji/George Tani” suggests a fluid ethnic identity in which he is neither Japanese nor American. Instead he occupies the in-between or stateless status of being ’Merican-Jap.

5.7 Kaitarô’s Simultaneous Use of the Three Pen Names

Kaitarô’s three names seem more pregnant with meaning when we consider how he used them intentionally and simultaneously. The use of three similar yet different names is surely linked to the modernist orientation of his stories with their never-ending desire for redefinition of self-identity, as well as the pragmatic spirit of using an unstable identity as a means to economic success. The most straightforward example of such pragmatic success in Kaitarô’s every-day life stories is the case of the “confidence man” or “trickster.” These sharks look like everyone else in the crowd on the streets, but by assuming different identities, they trick people and make money. Kaitarô wrote several stories about such smart confidence men, in which he applauded them for using their wits as their sole means of survival in a highly competitive modern world. Through these stories, he not only challenged the notion of a stable identity, but in doing so he extended the established boundaries of orthodox tantei shôsetsu. As we shall see in the following chapter, the fiction that Kaitarô produced for Shinseinen not only reveals his individual development as a writer, but also the ways in which the

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303 Tani Jôji (谷譲次). In the short-short, “Kutsu,” the narrator says: “It’s my name, whether you spell it in katakana, kanji or English.”
genre itself continued to offer a means of interrogating the assumptions and values of
the literary establishment.
CHAPTER 6

TANI JÔJI'S TANTEI SHÔSETSU AND 'MERICAN-JAP STORIES

6.1 “The Shanghaied Man”

Among the fictional works that Kaitarô published in the pages of *Shinseinen*, “The Shanghaied Man” stands out as the most interesting in its use of the conventions of orthodox *tantei shôsetsu* to explore issues of identity and fluid subjectivity. First appearing as a work of “original detective fiction” (*sôsaku tantei shôsetsu*) in the Number 5 issue of April 1925, which was titled “Collection of Original Tantei Shôsetsu” (*sôsaku tantei shôsetsu-shû*), the story not only takes place in a contemporary setting, but it also explicitly utilizes the structure of mystery fiction as a means to negotiate the condition of modernity. Following the conventional structure of orthodox mystery fiction that proceeds from a murder, to the search for the killer and finally to the resolution of its case, this piece is consciously conceived of as a *tantei sôsetsu*. By this time Kaitarô had already contributed several translations of Western mystery fiction to *Shinseinen* under the pen name of Maki Itsuma. In addition, his “Kuginuki Tôkichi” (“Nail Puller” Tôkichi) series, which appeared in *Tantei bungei* magazine under Hayashi Fubô, was a mystery of the type known as *torimono-chô* or a *tantei shôsetsu* set in pre-modern Japan.
In this story, the protagonist, Mori Tamekichi, is a young Japanese who wanders around the world as a sailor whenever he gets the opportunity. He has been a sailor for twenty-some years, or since he was nine, and he has traveled the world on the ships sailing under different flags. Kaitarô never categorizes Tamekichi as ’Merican-Jap because Tamekichi does not belong to any specific country, although legally speaking he is a Japanese citizen. After two decades of mingling with the diverse peoples of the world, we can say that he has moved beyond a fixed identity or nationality.

Currently in the liminal state of being out of work, he checks all the seamen’s lodging houses in the cosmopolitan port town of Kobe to see if there are any jobs on long-distance lines. At the end of a long, fruitless day, he finds himself sharing a room with another unemployed sailor. The sailor’s name is Sakamoto Shintarô, and he and Tamekichi are staying at a lodging house run by an old woman named O-kin. Although sailors, the two men have little in common because Shintarô has just gotten off a transport ship that plies local waters, while Tamekichi specializes in international lines. Because of this lack of common interests, Tamekichi does not worry about Shintarô’s whereabouts when he wakes up the following morning and finds Shintarô’s bedding left empty. He goes to the assembly room where jobs are posted and the jobless “regulars” are gambling with dice. The sailors are known by the names of the boats that they once worked for. It is as though their identities are best described by their ships. Tamekichi gazes blankly at the gamblers, feeling strangely distant even from his own self. O-kin whispers to him that someone is waiting for him in the office.

304 The story explains that the seamen’s lodging houses, “in addition to being places to sleep, served as employment agencies for jobless sailors.” See p.1 of translation manuscript (appendix 1).
of the inn; it is a detective from the local police station. In a deep, booming voice, the
detective declares that Tamekichi is the prime suspect in the disappearance and murder of Sakamoto Shintarô. The only evidence needed to clinch the case is the most important of all, the physical object of Shintarô’s body. The authorities have sent divers to the bottom of the bay in vain. Another extensive search is planned for later in the day.

The story is narrated in the third-person, but Takemichi provides the guiding consciousness of the narrative. From the very beginning, the story repeatedly describes Tamekichi as being uncertain about his own identity or actions. He is not sure what he did in his sleep the previous night, or why he feels so calm as he is about to be arrested. As the detective walks him to the police station, he remains unperturbed, and he watches events unfold with a detached, cold and objective eye. There is even a smile playing about his lips, and he feels as if the man being led down the street is someone other than himself. However, he hears and smells the sea – his home – calling to him when he sees the old stone building of the police station looming at the end of the street. Being at sea is more important to him than proving his innocence, as “his long life as a vagabond taught him to adopt an devil-may-care attitude toward himself.” He sees a nearby Norwegian freighter hoisting its anchor and its sailors hurrying to get aboard.

Driven by a strong desire for the sea and foreign ports, and knowing that the police are

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305 The string of evidence that the detective follows is a large pool of blood found in front of the inn; Shintarô’s belongings scattered at the end of a fifty-meter row of drops of blood that continues from the inn to the nearby wharf; the fact that Shintarô has been missing since last night and that Tamekichi was Shintarô’s roommate; a fresh cut on Tamekichi’s finger; Shintarô’s knife discovered in Tamekichi’s pocket; and Tamekichi’s placidness, if not the smirk on his face that makes him look “like a real villain.”
about to prevent him from enjoying such a life again, he grabs the detective by the leg and knocks him over. He runs to the Norwegian ship, and shouts to the foreign sailors for help in “the brand of English understood the world over only by men who sail the sea.” They let him on board after learning he is an experienced sailor. Nothing else about him or his history matters. This communication between Tamekichi and the sailors is done smoothly and quickly because they speak a language that does not belong to any particular nation. Instead it belongs only to the world of international sailors. The ship is already under sail by the time when the detective gets to his feet and arrives at the wharf. He shouts that Tamekichi is a killer, and he repeats the Japanese word, “hitogoroshi” (killer), in an attempt to communicate with the sailors. The word is meaningless to the foreign sailors, who hear it merely as a string of funny sounds. The scene portrays the powerlessness of language outside of its own culture.

Language is used effectively in this story to depict the isolation, conflict and/or commingling of different cultures which all lead to Tamekichi’s multivalent identity and his being as a product and reflection of such a phenomenon. For example, in the scene where he first meets the detective, he does not answer questions verbally. Instead, he only nods because he senses something ominous. The two men share Japanese as their mother tongue, but when it is used as the language of interrogation between policeman and suspect, it is potentially incriminating, and it can frame the young sailor as a murderer. However, when the detective grabs Tamekichi by the arm to lead him away, suddenly Tamekichi shouts in English, “Damn you!” to express his resistance. As mentioned earlier, Tamekichi no longer feels that he belongs to Japan
after spending most of his life at sea. A culture can develop and be established even on a vessel that does not have any physically fixed location, so long as there is interaction among its participants. Individuals become connected to one another, and they form a sense of solidarity through the communal life of being on the ship together, even if they soon become separated and disconnected once the trip ends. English – or more specifically the hybrid English used among the sailors whose “identities have become unknown” during such a nomadic life – has become the best language for Tamekichi to express himself as a person without a singular identity. This invented or hybrid language is emphasized by the story’s constant reference to the special vocabulary of seamen, and to the multivalence of the terms by their being glossed with rubi or furigana.306

The ship leaves Kobe with the young fugitive on board. When Tamekichi signs a fake contract in front of the captain, he not only signs his name in English but also as Shintaro Sakamoto (written in シンタロ・サカモト in the text to indicate the foreignized pronunciation of the name) for “no particular reason.” He works happily on the ship all day long, and the other sailors find him to be helpful as an experienced deckhand. He repeats his new name and rank to himself: “Shin Saki [his nickname is a shortened version of Shintarô Sakamoto, given to him by his fellow sailors], second-class mate on the Victor Karenina,” and he cannot help grinning to himself. All other crewmembers are referred to only by their rank or position – the chief mate, boatswain,
cook, officers’ cabin boy and the “cockroaches,” a term for the engine boiler workers – or with a racial nickname such as Midnight Boston for a black worker. Such fluidity in nomenclature, therefore, reveals how little significance the identity of personal name such as Shintaro Sakamoto carries for Tamekichi and the community on the boat. It appears extremely easy for Tamekichi to assume a new identity as Shintaro. Only when he goes to bed that night does he contemplate the significance of the day’s events. He thinks of the crime that he was accused of committing, and he falls into “a perverse state of mind in which he truly believes he did commit the crime of which he was accused.” Still, he does not care, because by now he is completely cut off from Japan. He tells himself he will lead a new life under the assumed name of Sakamoto Shintarô. He will switch from one ship to another, and his “nationality will become more and more ambiguous. No one will know what it is.” This suggests Kaitarô’s belief that identity can be wiped clean like a tabula rasa and that it undergoes constant reassessment.

However, Tamekichi wakes up the next morning only to discover the ship is back in Kobe and the police are after him. The ship was called back to port; while he might have been physically cut off from Japan the previous night, his fate actually remained under the control of Japan because of the power of short wave radio – one of the new, popular technologies that fascinated youngsters of the time. The chief mate and the boatswain say the Japanese authorities will arrive soon to arrest Tamekichi. At the same time, they suggest he hide in the boiler room. They continue to be indifferent to the murder he has allegedly committed, so long as he contributes to the boat as a
skilled laborer. In other words, laws, which may be absolute on land, are suspended at sea. Guided by the black man named Midnight Boston, Tamekichi descends to the hold of the ship and hides in a narrow space by an unfired donkey boiler surrounded by water pipes. It is at that point that he hears a strange noise coming from the inside the boiler: “tap, tap, tap, scraaatch.” Eventually he realizes the sound is tapping out the telegraphic code of the wireless, “universal ABC code by which every nation communicated.” All sailors know it, because they often practice tapping out messages on a tabletop with their fingers. Tamekichi decodes the message as “S.O.S.” Using the penknife that he borrowed from Shintarô the previous night, he taps on a water pipe to send a reply. “What’s the matter?” The answer is “have been *shanghaied.*” On behalf of (the majority of?) the Japanese readers who were not familiar with the English term “to shanghai,” the writer decodes it for the reader as “kidnapping a man on the street by force and making him work on a boat until death.” Tamekichi hurriedly opens the door to the cold boiler, and out crawls Shintarô. Although the two men had little in common, and they did not communicate when they stayed at the inn, it is the sailors’ universal code language that saves Shintarô’s life. He explains how he left the inn late at night because his tooth was bleeding and aching from the poor treatment he received at an unlicensed dentist the previous day. As he was walking to the dentist office, he was shanghaied by the sailors of *Victor Karenina.* The people who saved Tamekichi’s life are, ironically enough, the actual criminals and the source of Tamekichi’s trouble with
the police. It is now Tamekichi’s turn to explain why he is on this ship. He explains how Shintarô’s penknife caused him no end of trouble – and on top of that, he cut his finger while pealing a pear with it. The narrative describes Tamekichi holding the knife in a backhand grip and starting to grin like a lunatic. At this point, the guiding consciousness of the narrative shifts to Shintarô. Tamekichi smiles not because Shintarô is alive and will prove his innocence, but because he hears the sea calling him. The auditory hallucination comes from his deep desire to stay on ship and remain at sea at any cost. The story states once more that Tamekichi would rather choose a life at sea than be given a chance to prove his innocence. The police will arrive on board at any moment and descend to the boiler room. He asks himself:

“Isn’t [Sakamoto] supposed to be dead, having been murdered by none other than myself? . . . That’s right. I killed him just like the detective said. How dare this pale ghost suddenly wander out of nowhere and ruin everything for me! . . . According to the evidence, I’m the lowly bastard who murdered him. . . . Yes, it was the detective’s idea. He’s the one who suggested it all. Everything is going to be just like he said it was.”

The detective’s bluffing has seeped into Tamekichi’s brain. It now has the power to influence him to commit the murder foretold at the beginning of the story. Finally, “The Shanghaied Man” ends on an expressly vague note:

Everything was just as the police said. Sakamoto Shintarô was dead. At the same time, a man named Mori Tamekichi had disappeared from the face of the earth. Gone. Lost forever. Shortly after the Norwegian ship Victor Karenina weighed anchor at Kobe and set out for the high seas, a big bundle wrapped in sailcloth, with a heavy weight attached, was thrown overboard into the surging waves. On deck, whistling and
smiling, Sakamoto Shintarô bid his final adieu to Japan. Following the
time-honored custom that is the unwritten code among seamen the world
over, neither Sakamoto Shintarô, who was the ‘shanghaied man,’ nor
Sakamoto Shintarô, who was ‘the man who shanghaied himself,’ ever
stepped on land again.

While it is true this story incorporates many of the distinctive formulaic features
of *tantei shôsetsu* in comparison with Kaitarô’s ‘Merican-Jap stories, which focus on
journalistic reportage of the jobs and lives of the Japanese hobos in American society,
nonetheless it is similarly focused on the issue of identity. The narrative subverts the
typical progression of a whodunit several times over the course of the story,
derminating the activity of the formulaic puzzle-solving in favor of the issue of the
facelessness of individuals in a modern space (e.g., the urban city of Kobe, the
international fleet). For example, Tamekichi is accused of a murder even before
Shintarô’s body is found, simply because he is atypically cool when in the face of a
detective who tells him Shintarô was killed. Secondly, the process in which both
Tamekichi and Shintarô “die” twice – first, when Tamekichi gets on board, and second,
when a large bundle is thrown from the ship at the end of the story – subverts the
common setting of ratiocination in which a murder takes place early in a story which
then concludes with the revelation of the killer. The actual killing in “The Shanghaied
Man” takes place only at the very end, and it is catalyzed by suggestions deriving from
the language of the detective. This theme of the suggestive power of language is
explored through the communication, or lack thereof, between individuals of various
backgrounds. In the encounters of different languages, such as Japanese versus English,
the language of the police versus the sailors, national languages versus a universal code,
and the slang belonging to the sailors on international lines versus domestic lines, the variety of languages embedded in different cultures forces the generation of a distinct identity articulated in opposition to the fact of other language systems. The psychological transformation that Tamekichi undergoes is also expressed in the descriptions of his use of, or relationship to, language. As seen in the detective’s opening question to Tamekichi, names are the first distinctive demarcation of identity of any individual in society although the sound itself has no substance: “Are you the one they call Tamé?” Moreover, instinctively aware of both the power and fluidity of names, Tamekichi chooses subsequently to call himself Shintarô Sakamoto when signing the dummy contract. In signing the contract, he assumes an entirely different identity, even the name of his nemesis Shintarô Sakamoto. To assume a new identity is easy in the world on board ship where everyone has fluid and multivalent identity, but Tamekichi’s adoption of Sakamoto’s name as an alias leads ironically to a murderous conclusion. Tamekichi becomes the victim of the power of language which manipulates subjectivity in two senses. First, he is accused falsely of a crime he never committed. Second, he falls victim to auto-suggestion. Long before he actually kills Sakamoto, he comes to believe he is the killer because the authoritative language of the detective creates the illusion that detective’s accusations are factual. Because he is psychologically manipulated by the detective into believing he is responsible for a crime he did not commit, Tamekichi reaches the conclusion that there cannot be two Sakamoto Shintarôs when he discovers Shintarô in the boiler.
A second important feature that we find in this story is the emphasis on survival skills. As a result of his life as a sailor sailing on international waters, Tamekichi is accustomed to assuming different identities depending on the person or situation. However, when he is out of work and off a ship, he has difficulty defining what identity he should assume, as indicated by the scene at the inn where he experiences feelings of depersonalization. In order to resolve such a schizophrenic state, Tamekichi is prepared to seize any opportunity to get back on ship. Viewed in this light, the detective’s incorrect ratiocination can be interpreted as the catalyst for Tamekichi’s deconstructing and reconstructing a new identity. After Tamekichi assumes a new identity as Sakamoto Shintarô on board the Victor Karenina, he goes as far as to conclude that he has to kill Shintarô. Killing “Shintarô” also means killing “Tamekichi” in a figurative sense because he is now “Shintarô.” – Or at least he is Shintarô insofar as the name Shin Saki enables him to stay on ship. The narrative concludes by saying that the “Shintarô” who shanghaied himself obeys the time-honored custom among the seamen and will never “step on land again.” Although highly ironic, the passage suggests he will not be able to go ashore anywhere. Yet he is happy because, according to the text, the sea is his home, or his mother. Identifying the ocean with the maternal is a commonly used psychological metaphor. However, in considering how Tamekichi repeatedly feels the urge to board ship, the sea functions as a metonymy for a world made up of people of different ethnic and national backgrounds. Finally, it is presented in the last scene as the symbol of death and silence for Shintarô and Tamekichi, as well as the birthplace of
a new Shintarô, because it swallows in Shintarô’s body and buries secret Tamekichi’s crime forever.

Because Tamekichi is a victim of the false police investigation, we can interpret the tale as a success story of a young man with no stable identity who nevertheless takes advantage of others’ stereotypical notions about him to gain freedom. Tamekichi is an easy target for the detective because he does not belong to any group in Japan. As a jobless and family-less young man, he is a primary suspect with no one to one to defend him. The people closest to him are also jobless hobos whose identities are defined by the previous jobs they held (i.e., the names of the ships on which they previously worked). However, in falling victim to the groundless accusations of the detective, Tamekichi does not submit tamely. Rather, he takes advantage of the situation to finally get a job on board a ship, which was the only important thing for him in life.

Another interpretation is possible about the ending, although it is less convincing. Shintarô is described as frail, or almost dead, but we can assume he was not as sick as Tamekichi thinks. It was only for a day that Shintarô had been confined to the donkey boiler. If Shintarô had wrested the knife from Tamekichi, the story would have a different ending, and the passage, “Sakamoto Shintarô was dead and at the same time, a man named Mori Tamekichi disappeared from the face of the earth” would come to have an entirely different meaning. Considering his interest in socialist movements, yet combined with his distrust in the hardcore approach of proletarian literature, this story exemplifies Kaitarô’s use of the formulaic characteristic of *tantei shōsetsu* in order to express his social critique in the form of allegory.
“The Shanghaied Man” is an excellent example of the new kind of _tantei_ shôsetsu promoted by _Shinseinen_ in the mid- to late-1920s. As discussed in Chapter 3 on the historical development of the genre, the word, _tantei_, was used as a verb (_tantei suru_) as well as a noun. In other words, the right to perform _tantei_ is not limited to professional detectives, but it also refers to the acts of critical observation, interrogation, investigation, and ratiocination by anyone who found aspects of daily life strange and inexplicable. In other words, _tantei suru_ is the action taken by those who attempt to clarify any mystery or manipulation of information, learn of other’s identities and bring order and logic to life. On the other hand, the act of _tantei_-ing can be used to save oneself from disintegration. In the case of Tamekichi, he regains his identity by making up a new one with the name of Shintarô. Rather than being protagonists like Sherlock Holmes, the main characters in these stories question, investigate and at times utilize the trick of identity to assume different masks are marginalized individuals whose marginality enables them to see the contradictions in society.

The thematic concern with wandering and the concomitant possibility, as well as need, of establishing a contingent identity arguably resonated with youths during the 1920s in Japan and helps to explain its broad popularity. Like the protagonist of the story, many of the readers of these stories were youths who, in leaving their native villages, wandered into the modern urban space of Tokyo, and even drifted to places outside Japan.
6.2 The Contrast Between Maedakô Hiro’ichirô and Hasegawa Kaitarô

To gain a better sense of the significance or distinctiveness of Kaitarô’s “Shanghaied Man,” it is useful to consider, for purposes of contrast, a representative example of a story by a proletarian writer that represents the lives of working-class people on a boat sailing between countries. In “Santô senkyaku” (The Third-Class Passengers; 1922) published in *Tane maku hito* (The Sower), the early proletarian writer, Maedakô Hiro’ichirô, depicts the languid atmosphere among the third-class passengers who once emigrated to the United States but are now returning to Japan on a ship sailing from San Francisco to Yokohama via Honolulu. For these emigrant returnees, “Japan has become something much more than what it meant to the people who spend their entire lives living in Japan.” As was the case with many Japanese emigrants in the early twentieth century, they left their homeland for the opportunities of “launching abroad” (*kaigai yûhi*), yet their final destination was not life in a foreign country, but Japan. After returning home, they would live comfortable lives with the money they made abroad. Japan was “the final place for repose after a lonely life and physical labor,” or the place that “they longed for with their eyes filled with tears of homesickness” while residing in a “foreign country where they had nothing to rely on and were often persecuted [for their home country’s nationalism and militarism]” by “progressive foreign free thinkers.” They put their hearts and souls into playing the role of complete losers and enduring mental and physical abuse by Americans without thinking about the meaning of international conflict in a larger context. Maedakô writes

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that “all because they wanted to go home richer, more powerful and famous,” the
emigrants “took on all sorts of challenges, endured harsh labor, and bore every
indignity.” They recklessly stuck to Japan’s imperialism because “their love for the
abstracted symbol called Japan was stronger than anything else.” Japan was the utopian
place where all their wishes would be granted. Maedakô focuses on depicting the
people’s diasporic desire for the idealized or utopianized homeland of their imagination.
For example, in the scene where a naniwa-bushi ballad performer recites a traditional
samurai tale of revenge filled with traditional Japanese sentiments, the passengers
become spellbound by their own imaginings of their perfect homeland. Also, in the last
scene where the passengers finally see Japan in the distance from the ship’s deck, the
subdued tone of the story dramatically lightens and is filled with hope.

This short story is one of the earliest proletarian literary works produced in
Japan. The author portrays the social situation of the nameless emigrants, e.g., A One-
eyed Man, Mother, Student, Red Face, Fat Man, etc., by describing their behavior and
conversations. They feel bored on ship because what they did on the farms was work
and more work and do not know anything else. The passengers’ attention is directed
toward basic cravings like food and sleep, and in the case of the male passengers,
women. Maedakô repeatedly uses the expression, “animal-like,” to depict these third-
class passengers, who are packed into a small, dirty, and poorly ventilated cabin.
The story is based on the writer’s own experience in the United States from 1907 to 1920, where he first worked as a day laborer in extreme poverty.\textsuperscript{309} He acquired knowledge of anti-capitalist and socialist ideas through acquaintance with writers such as Theodore Dreiser\textsuperscript{310} and Kaneko Kiichi.\textsuperscript{311} Maedakô, who was nicknamed “the Japanese Jack London,” or “the Japanese Upton Sinclair,” was one of the writers to whom Kaitarô paid attention. (Maedakô was also a pupil of Tokutomi Roka, whom Kaitarô idolized in his higher school days.) For example, soon after his return from the United States in July 1924, Kaitarô wrote an essay for \textit{Hakodate Shinbun} titled “Nôyôdai” (Summer Evening Veranda), in which he refers to Maedakô’s content of \textit{kokkyô no higeki}, “the tragedy of borders”, or the tragic fact that borders between two countries prevented people from traveling and interacting freely. He also translated Upton Sinclair’s \textit{They Call Me Carpenter} in 1930, following the appearance of Maedakô’s translation of Sinclair’s \textit{The Jungle} in 1924.

Both “The Third-Class Passengers” and Kaitarô’s “Shanhai sareta otoko” (The Shanghaied Man) use a ship as a significant space to portray the lives of Japanese working-class people who have spent many years outside of Japan. However, when it comes to the symbolic function of the ships, there are crucial differences between the two stories. In “The Third-Class Passengers,” the space symbolized by the third-class

\textsuperscript{309} Maedakô became a pupil of Tokutomi Roka’s in 1905, and Roka financially supported Maedakô in going to the United States to experience of the American society firsthand.

\textsuperscript{310} Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945). \textit{Sister Carrie} and \textit{An American Tragedy} critically portray common people’s lives in capitalist society.

\textsuperscript{311} Kaneko Kiichi (1875-1909) became a journalist with \textit{Saitama Keizai Shinpô} through the help of Tokutomi Sohô (Ino’ichirô) and was sent to the United States where he received a graduate degree from Harvard. He was strongly influenced by socialism and became a member of the Social Democratic Party in the U.S., but died at the age of thirty-three. He befriended Arishima Takeo in Cambridge and greatly influenced the development of Arishima’s liberalism.

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cabin of the ship is an extension of American society where the emigrants have been treated inhumanely as a group (and not as individuals) as the lowest-class. They aimlessly sit, chat, play poker, or lie about in the cabin until the crew feeds them. Simultaneously, the ship is a means of transportation that enables them to return to a comfortable life in their home country, according to their idealized view. In “The Shanghaied Man,” on the other hand, the ship assumes a different function. To a wanderer like Mori Tamekichi, it is the means of escaping from the closed world of Japan. Because he is willing to live in a world in perpetual flux, it is also the venue for free interaction with the people from different national, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, whether the crew on the ship or the people from ports of call. In such a space, people assess their identities in terms of those whom they encounter. As indicated by the end of the story in which Tamekichi decides to stay on the ship for life, the ship is not a cage or a prison. Nor is it merely a means of transportation. Instead, it is a life of endless interaction and possibilities.

6.3 ’Merican-Jap Stories

Among other things, “The Shanghaied Man” illustrates Kaitarô’s critical engagement with and deployment of the conventions of tantei shōsetsu as a strategy for exploring the complexities of an expressly modern and fluid subjectivity. In addition, the story argues for the discursive, rather than psychological, foundations of individual identity. In this way it functions as an allegory for the challenges and opportunities confronting Japanese youth moving into the modern urban space of metropolitan
locations such as Tokyo and Kobe. In the same year that “The Shanghaied Man” was published (1925), Kaitarô also began a journalistic series of reportage works known as his ’Merican-Jap stories. Though not classified as tantei shôsetsu within the pages of Shinseinen, nevertheless these stories employ what Cawelti calls a “double plot” structure characteristic of the genre, as well as depict the power of a fluid identity as a strategy for negotiating the challenges of the modern world.312 Furthermore, in celebrating the ability of disempowered and marginalized figures to exploit the capitalist system through deception, Kaitarô also advances a more radical claim that the writer himself amounts to a trickster or con man who makes a living by means of his wits. As a result, he asserts the fundamental imbrication of literary production with the processes of modern capitalist society. Particularly within the context of Shinseinen’s efforts to promote reader involvement in the actual creation of its contents, Kaitarô’s ’Merican-Jap stories attain greater significance as works that promote literary production as the most “modern” way to participate in commodity society.

Like Maedakô’s story, Kaitarô’s ’Merican-Jap stories attempt to give voice to the Japanese emigrant laborers who easily fall into oblivion as voiceless and faceless members of a crowd. The ’Merican-Jap stories run to no more than seven to ten

312 In regards to the “double-plot,” John G. Cawelti argues as follows: “The unique formal pattern of the detective story genre lies in its double and dublicitous plot. The plot is double because the story is first narrated as it appears to the bewildered bystanders who observe the crime and are to some extent frightened by it, but who cannot arrive at its solution. Finally, through the detective’s reconstruction of the crime, the true story of the events is given along with their explanation. This doubling is duplicitous because, in the first presentation of the story, the writer tries to tantalize and deceive the reader while, at the same time, inconspicuously planting the clues that will eventually make the detective’s solution plausible.” Cawelti, “Canonization, Modern Literature, and the Detective Story.” Theory and Practice of Classic Detective Fiction. Jerome H. Delamatier and Ruth Prigozy, ed. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997) 10-11.
and they are narrated from the perspective of a 'Merican-Jap, who is, apparently, none other than the writer himself. Kaitarô coined the term, 'Merican-Jap, by combining the Japanese phonetic transliteration of American as “meriken” and the English term, “Jap,” in order to designate a type of Japanese migrant or sojourner, “the cheerful and brazen yellow men for whom [the term] ‘Jap’ sounds appropriate.” He explains that “'Merican-Jap possesses a more specific meaning than a “Japanese in America.” The term specifically excludes, for example, the small population of elite Japanese expatriates and diplomats, as well as Japanese settlers in California.

According to Tani, 'Merican-Japs are mostly dropouts from American schools, or “the hobos who had dropped out of the highly established and exclusionist Japanese societies [on the West Coast].” While originally they may have traveled to America to study or get a job, they lost their stable backing as a result of some little twist in their lives.

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313 The size of a page in Shinseinen is roughly six by nine inches, and each page contains roughly 1,000 to 1,200 characters.

314 Nihon kokugo daijiten (Tokyo: Shôgakkan, 1976) lists an earlier example of the use of the term, “meriken” (メリケン) from 1872. A passage from the Number 45 issue of Shinbun zasshi in May 1872 says: “Washinton no shisuru ya, “Meriken” (with the kanji 米利堅) sono na o motte shuto ni meizu.” (“When Washington died, America designated a capital, naming it after him.”)

According to The Routledge Dictionary of Historical Slang compiled by Eric Partridge and abridged by Jacqueline Simpson, the first use of “Jap” as a derogatory term goes back to 1904, although the term itself had been used since the late nineteenth century. In Kaitarô’s stories like “Jappu” (Jap), “Henpô” (Requital) and “AMMA” (Amma Masseur), the term is used in scenes in which Americans refer to Japanese contemptuously or with hostility. Among many other examples, one sees that the poet Takamura Kôtarô (1883-1956) having a similar experience. He recollected to Sarashina Genzô, an Ainu culture researcher and poet, that a passer-by would hiss at him, saying “Jap!” (See geppô monthly insert in Volume 8 of Takamura Kôtarô zenshû.) “Jap” was used in official contexts such as newspapers and was not considered overtly disparaging as it is now. Still, by the 1920s, the context in which the term was used appears to be almost always with an anti-Japanese sentiment.

Among the large number of neologism handbooks published in the publishing boom of the interwar period, those published after 1925 listed ‘Merican-Jap as a trendy word. Uno Chiyo uses the term in her novella, Iro zange (Confessions of Love: 1935) to refer to Japanese hobos in America.


316 “Kyozetsu-hyô shûshû mania” (The Maniac Who Collects Rejection Slips), vol. 3 of HSZ, 159. It first appeared in the August 1927 Shinseinen.
They either were unable or simply chose not to return to their homeland. At the same time they did not belong to the society that consisted of the Anglo-Saxon ruling class or the second wave of impoverished immigrants primarily from Eastern Europe, who felt inferior to first-wave immigrants but superior to Asians. Protection and help were given to these dropouts by their own kind – namely, other ’Merican-Japs. In medium-sized cities across the U.S., where there were no established and official associations of Japanese, some ’Merican-Japs became managers or owners of employment agencies that helped ‘Merican-Japs to find work.\(^{317}\) Even when they were not in the employment agency business themselves, these ostracized Japanese would assist each other. Kaitarô explains that the most common greeting among them was “Have you eaten?”\(^{318}\) because Japanese hobos’ primary concern was how to get food for the next day. Out of that mundane urge, a sense of solidarity was formed among these loners who had dropped out of, first, Japan and now the Japanese communities in the United States. The ties among ’Merican-Japs were temporary, however, and the hobos felt free to leave anytime they wished.

Kaitarô considered these hobos more cosmopolitan than the settlers in California because the hobos actively attempted to assimilate into American society,\(^{319}\) at the same time they maintained a critical perspective on it. The snappy sound of “Jap,” as well as its derogatory socio-political connotation, was directly connected with the lowbrow,

\(^{317}\) The assembly places that Kaitarô depicts are all run by Japanese and exclusively for helping Japanese hobos.

\(^{318}\) “AMMA” (Amma Masseuse), vol. 3 of HSZ, 28–38.

\(^{319}\) For example, see “Kuni no nai hitobito no kuni” (A Country of Countryless People) in the series of ten episodes called “Modan Dekameron (Modern Decameron),” vol. 3 of HSZ, originally published in Chûô kôron in 1927.
“devil-may-care”\textsuperscript{320} attitude of the Japanese hobos and sojourners\textsuperscript{321} who survived in America without any establishment backing and who were seen as increasingly unwelcome guests by the 1920s. The term also evokes a Japanese perspective on Americans because it uses a Japanized version of the word, namely, \textit{meriken} rather than “American.” Therefore, Kaitarō’s hyphenated and slangy neologism signifies a middle ground between native origin and adopted home, from which the ‘Merican-Jap remains capable of criticizing both American and Japanese society by revealing what is concealed by mainstream cultural systems conceal. In other words, the ‘Merican-Jap has a perpetual outsider or marginalized person’s perspective at the same time that he remains close enough to both societies to have an insider’s keen insight. Through his constant travel between the poles of Japaneseness and Americanness, he acquires a double consciousness or double-voicedness. Such multivalent consciousness or identity not only marks Tani’s protagonists as expressly “modern” figures, but it also constitutes one of the strategies by which they negotiate the complex challenges of global modernity as a social, political and economic phenomenon.

Most of the ‘Merican-Jap stories were regularly published in the pages of \textit{Shinseinen} from 1925 to 1927. The subjects of the stories were taken from Tani’s own experience of living in the United States between 1920 and 1924.\textsuperscript{322} They often

\textsuperscript{320} “Jii hoizu” (Gee Whiz), vol. 3 of \textit{HSZ}, 184.
\textsuperscript{321} I am using the term “sojourners” because these ‘Merican-Japs did not settle in one place even after they immigrated to the United States. Instead, they continued to move to new places, wandering from one state to another, and not just immigrating but migrating in search of jobs.
\textsuperscript{322} The number of Japanese immigrants to the U.S. mainland in 1920 was as many as twelve thousand (Michael David Albert, “Japanese American Communities in Chicago and the Twin Cities,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1980), and the number of Japanese residents there amounted to 111,010 (\textit{Asian American Geneological Source Book}, 13). Yet, as the trial and execution of the Italian
exaggerate the heroic acts of ’Merican-Japs, but seen in comparison with other
contemporary materials on the topic, they appear to be accurate in depicting the living
conditions of Japanese in the Mid-Western and Eastern parts of the United States in the
1920s. Some of the stories are written from the perspective of a young Japanese who is
in the U.S. to study and who works in the home of Anglo-Saxon Americans. Others
describe the challenging but jovial life of hobos who have dropped out of school or a
stable job. Although the lives of these “wandering Japanese” have yet to be researched
to create a fuller picture of Japanese sojourners in the U.S., Kaitarô’s writings do
provide insight into the lives of Japanese who wandered around, taking advantage of the
advanced railroad system and living on the “open road.”

6.4 The Multivalent Voices in ’Merican-Jap Stories

In the ’Merican-Jap stories, skill at dissembling, or the presentation or
misrepresentation of oneself as someone else, is used by the central characters as a
multivalent strategy for economic gain and survival.

6.4.1. Play on Names in “ ‘The Master’ and the Plates”

Kaitarô played with his own pseudonyms, as well as the names of his characters
in “The Shanghaied Man,” in order to present the image of an individual with

immigrants Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti on robbery and murder charges clearly show, anti-
communist and anti-immigrant movements were intensifying.

People of various ethnic backgrounds became hobos and tramps because of the mobility created by the
trains. Many people were out of work once there was no longer a frontier to conquer and society was
controlled by industrial capital. They stole rides on trains to migrate to wherever there was work, and they
formed assembly places at cities to help each other. In general, hobos in America became a social issue
and object of journalistic and literary attention in the 1890s. For example, they inspired such writers as
Jack London and John Dos Passos. See Frederick Feied, No Pie in the Sky – The Hobo as American
Cultural Hero in the Works of Jack London, John Dos Passos, and Jack Kerouac (New York: The
multivalent identity. This theme of multivalence applies to the 'Merican-Jap series as well. Let us turn to a short-short story from the Number 1, January 1925 issue of Shinseinen titled “Danna to sara” (“The Master” and the Plates), one of Kaitaró’s debut pieces. It is narrated from the perspective of a young Japanese looking for domestic work in an upper-class American household. The story begins with the “situation-wanted” ad that he places in a local newspaper: “Young, neat Japanese. College graduate. Seeking position as butler in upper-class household. Experienced. Not asking for high salary. No laundry work or automobile washing. Prefer small family in the suburbs. To contact, dial Cherry 7029. Or write Democratic Daily P.O.B. #13.”

Needless to say, self-descriptions in advertisements are not always accurate or honest, and this one serves to remind us that we cannot always believe everything in print or what people write about themselves. Mrs. Barnum, wife of the General Manager of Federal Ventilation, hires the young Japanese in the belief that he is an experienced butler. The narrator, speaking in the first person, tells the family that his name is Danna, which means “Master” in Japanese. The role reversal of “a master going to work for a master” creates an ironic and humorous situation for both narrator and reader. Although contrary to all of their intentions and unbeknownst to them, the family members call the new butler “Master” even as they treat him like a servant. The narrator clearly enjoys the confusion. He does not feel humbled by his subservient position because he is called “Master.” That is why, when Mrs. Barnum shouts at him for breaking a plate given to her as wedding gift – “How could you break my precious china!?” – Danna coolly replies that he can do it “just like this” and drops the entire set
on the floor. What we see in this story is an example of a false – albeit innocent and prankish – presentation of self, used by a person without stable social status in order to survive in a society dominated by middle- to upper-class Anglo-Saxons. The name serves, first of all, to release the protagonist’s pent-up frustration over the fact that he works as a servant even though he is a college graduate. Although it is merely a name, the word “Danna” empowers him to secretly take revenge on his employers. In the end, the power of the name even gives him the courage to overtly disobey the employer by breaking the plates in front of her and quitting the job before he is fired.

6.4.2. “Marû Ship” – Writing is Telling Lies

The deception is trifling and used for comic effect in the case of “Danna to sara.” It basically functions as a means of ridding stress and frustration. In many other of Kaitarô’s ’Merican-Jap stories, however, tricking others becomes the chief and recurring subject in describing how Japanese find work and survive in America. As a survival strategy, the ’Merican-Japs lie to make themselves appear to be what they are not. They are like chameleons that change their appearance to avoid any danger. In “Maruu shippu” (Marû Ship), the narrator even describes his job as a writer as the art of “bluffing;” thereby drawing a connection between the strategies of a jobless Japanese hobo with the work of a man of literature:324

For a Japanese who has no work, there was one, and only one, job to cure him of such joblessness. It was the occupation of “excellent culinary artist.” There have been times when I have used this bluff and passed myself off in this way. It’s all a charade. A mere tooting

324 “Marû shippu,” vol. 3 of HSZ, 70-75. It originally appeared in the Number 5 (i.e., April) 1926 issue of Shinseinen.
of my own horn. In order to survive in American society, I had to bluff my way through. That’s just like [my] life as a writer in Japan – I beg yer puddin’ – to be able to bluff is absolutely essential. So, wait, don’t hush me. (The Italicized parts appear in English in the original.)

The narrator/protagonist of “Marû Ship” is a ’Merican-Jap working as a railway worker in Indiana. After the passage quoted above, the narrator begins to tell his experience of “bluffing” in Indiana one summer. One day, he hears a restaurant is looking for “an excellent culinary artist.” He has no experience at cooking, but he is determined to pretend because he wants to get away from railroad construction and return to a more urban atmosphere. He succeeds in getting himself hired, and he joins two other fully qualified cooks in the kitchen. On the first day, he avoids any difficult orders and keeps himself occupied with simple tasks like cooking eggs. When the waitress shouts, “Veal à la Holstein!,” he refuses to fill the order and shouts back at the waitress to not be so pushy. The manager thinks the protagonist is a true chef – one of those who are cranky and perfectionist. The manager then turns to the waitress, scolds her and asks another cook to fill the order. By losing his temper whenever he is asked to cook a dish that is unknown to him, the protagonist uses the opportunity to observe what the other cooks do. By the time he leaves the restaurant a couple of months later, he has learned enough to masquerade as an experienced cook. The story becomes a case of a lie coming true. By repeating the same tactic, the narrator becomes, quite literally, an “excellent culinary artist.” In the second half of the story, he is searching

325 Apparently a ’Merican-Jap version of “I beg your pardon.” Kaitarō often uses broken English and misspellings in both dialogue and narrative passages.
326 “Marû shippu,” HSZ, 72.
for a new job. A ’Merican-Jap friend tells him about a job as a steward aboard a rich man’s private yacht. Although he has no previous experience, the narrator still goes for the interview. The rich man approves of him and introduces him to his wife. The wife asks if he has been in the Japanese navy. He lies. Of course, he has. Then she asks why Japanese add the suffix “marû” to the names of ships. Being good at coming up with trumped-up stories for any occasion, the protagonist offers a convincing explanation. All the while, he is thinking to himself, “she must be surprised how well-educated Japanese are, and how eloquent we are. Even a waiter [is no exception].”

6.4.3. Alienation and Assimilation: “Pitiable Tuxedoes”

’Merican-Japs do not hesitate to assume false identities in order to get better jobs. However, they realize there is a limit to how far they can rise in social position. Kaitarô refers to various jobs typically held by Japanese college students and/or hobos: servant or handy man in the household of a middle to upper-middle class family; dishwasher, bus boy, or manager at a restaurant or college cafeteria; hotel bellboy; attendant at a game called “Japanese Rolling Ball” (tama-korogashi), or circus magician at state fairs and amusement parks; bouncer at a “blind pig” (i.e., illegal bars that emerged at the time of Prohibition); clerk selling oriental silk goods in a department store; hotdog vendor; professional gambler; professional confidence man; cook, butler, exotic amma masseur, or other jobs that ’Merican-Japs obtain via false identity, qualifications, or career. No matter how hard they work and use their wits, the kinds of work available are all physical. There are no intellectual opportunities, due perhaps to their ethnic background, the culture gap, or language barrier. The closest that Japanese
hobos come to “intellectual work” is their role in society as what Kaitarô calls “character actors” (seikaku haiyū). The narrator of “The Mania of Collecting Rejection Slips” explains it this way.

I was neither merely a traveler nor a member of the established and exclusionist Japanese societies in America. Indeed, I acted a variety of roles as if I were a character actor. Until I became bored with each job – it was usually the case that I became tired of it before it was tired of me – I expended great efforts at each of them. Or should I rather say that I exerted myself to make these jobs become my job.”

This restlessness, sense of alienation, misplacement and resignation at the upper limits to social advancement is the subject of “Kanashiki takishīdo” (Pitiable Tuxedoes) from the July 1927 issue of Shinseinen. The narrator is a Japanese young man who has just arrived in the United States and is travelling from Seattle to Chicago by train. In the dining car, he observes a black headwaiter in a tuxedo who very politely, if too stiffly, greets his customers. The waiter tilts his head and “tugs at the collar of his tux in a prim way – in the manner of a pointer or a setter rubbing its nose [against its master].” He is like a dog obeying his master, and the narrator feels there is something sad about this scene. A couple of pages later, the narrator juxtaposes the sad image of the black waiter with a ’Merican-Jap waiter in Chicago. When he gets off the train at Chicago, he goes downtown before taking the next train to Cleveland.

I had no particular place in mind when I headed for town. I just followed the flow of people. On the right-hand side, I noticed signboards

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327 “Kyozetsu-hyō shūshū kanja,” vol. 3 of HSZ, 159. Originally appeared in the Number 9 (i.e., August) 1927 issue of Shinseinen.
328 “Kanashiki Takishīdo,” vol. 3 of HSZ, 157.
with Chinese characters; it was a corner of Chinatown. . . . The gold letters, “FUJI,” in a show window to my right drew my attention. When I looked in, I saw a man, who looked Japanese, with a dark-complexion and a mustache. He was wearing a tuxedo and was slicing bread next to the cash register. I pushed open the door.

In the following conversation, he speaks a mixture of English and Japanese. The italicized lines that appear here are in English in Tani’s original text. They are reproduced as they are in the original, including the ungrammatical phrases and misspellings.

“Hello, hello, hello!”

The man was shouting, but there was a nice rhythm to his voice.


The tux continues his soliloquy.

“You do say so, but your plan must be to trick some ‘green’ ones [i.e., greenhorns]. No way, no way. You can’t make a big killing [i.e., gambling] at this time of year. Wait till the Alaskan boys come from the West in the Fall. They’ll be sitting ducks for you. Wait till then. Look. You work for me – dish wash. I was just looking for a boy about your size. You suit me. What say? Pay you good. Swell job. Wauna take it?”

He continued:

“A Chinese does some business in Tokyo. He works. However far he goes, he can melt into Japanese society only to a certain degree. Japanese society holds out its arms [and blocks him from going any further].”

He held out his arms.

“It’s the same here. In this country, Japs can’t go any further than this.”

He looked a little sad. At that very moment, a few female customers came in. Looking like a criminal caught in the act, he stopped his speech and went over to the women. Glowing with a sly-looking smile, just like the friendly black headwaiter, he said: “What would you like, Ma’am.”
As he said so, he tilted his head and pulled the collar of his tux in a prim way as if a pointer – or a setter or whatever – were rubbing its nose [against its master].

The first ’Merican-Jap that I met was wearing a sad tux like that. 

*Believe me, yes,* that faded tux.\(^{329}\)

Kaitarô equates the Japanese with the black headwaiter he met on the train. To him, they are both pitiable beings not only because they will never be able to ascend to more prestigious jobs thereby improve their social status, but they also seem to accept as inevitable their inequality based on the color of their skin. Kaitarô’s other ’Merican-Jap characters believe Japanese can never become “Americans.” According to Kaitarô, the Japanese hobos had their own places to gather. They usually assembled at the YMCA, the *seinen-kai* (young men’s associations) exclusively for Japanese, job agencies, and the houses of *oyabun* (bosses) or *motojime* (bosses/promoters). Since sources on the Japanese-American experience rarely include information on these Japanese hobos, the fifty pieces by Kaitarô are one of the few sources by which we can learn about their lives.\(^{330}\) American literature concerning Japanese characters and Japanese immigrant literature (including work by Japanese who settled in the U.S. or by Japanese who eventually returned to Japan) also provide fragments of similar lives.\(^{331}\)

\(^{329}\) “Kanashiki takishido” (Pitiable Tuxedoes), Number 8 (i.e., July) 1927 issue of *Shinseinen*.

\(^{330}\) Maedakô Hiro’ichirô and Taketomi Yasuo also wrote of their experiences working as laborers.

\(^{331}\) I have not been able to find writings by Japanese who led a hobo life and did not return to Japan. The list of works of literature illustrating the life of Japanese hobos includes those by people who came to the U.S. as students. A partial list includes: Nagai Kafû’s *Amerika monogatari* (Tales of America) written in 1903-1907; Maedakô Hiro’ichirô’s “Santô senkyaku” (Third Class Boat Passengers) in 1922; Kawaguchi Ichirô’s *26-bankan* (Hall Number Twenty-six); Taketomi Yasuo’s essays and reportage; and Wallace Irwin’s *Letters of A Japanese Schoolboy*.

Maedakô exerted a considerable influence on Kaitarô. He refers to Maedakô (although only briefly) in his writings, and he published a collection of short satirical stories under the title of *Ji de kaita manga* (Cartoon Drawn in Letters) named after Maedakô’s similar type of writing. Maedakô was a pupil of Tokutomi Roka.
For purposes of comparison, I will discuss one work by a Caucasian writer concerning a Japanese domestic servant and two by Japanese writers, before returning to a discussion of Kaitarô’s work.

6.5 Stories of Japanese Schoolboys

6.5.1. American Writer Uses a Japanese Perspective for Light Social Critique


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332 Wallace Irwin is a novelist, poet and writer of comic librettos.
333 As for the use of the term, “schoolboy,” there is a discrepancy between the definition in English dictionaries and the usage among Japanese in the early twentieth century. The only definition that I have located in English dictionaries from the 1920s and 1930s is “schoolboy: A boy attending a school (*New Century Dictionary*, 1927). On the other hand, among the Japanese who studied and worked in the United States, the term meant specifically “a student who also worked as domestic servant.” For example, on page 206 of *Shinseinen* January, 1925 issue, in the Q & A corner about immigration, the counselor from Nihon Rikkôkai says: “It is only on the West Coast of North America that you can study while doing a ‘schoolboy’ (sukûrubôi o suru). In the East, there is no such thing as a ‘schoolboy.’ In Columbia [in Sough America] where you want to immigrate, there is no way [of being a ‘schoolboy’].” Kaitatrô uses the term in a story titled “Kîroi mefisutoferesu” (Yellow Mephistopheles), but in other stories, he calls such a work “butler” (shitsuji) or “domestic laborer” (kanai rôdô) work. It is possible that “schoolboy” and “domestic servant” became synonyms for Japanese because many Japanese who came to the U.S. to study also worked as servants. Scholar Saeki Shôichi mentions that Takamura Kôtarô uses the term, “schoolboy” to refer to his work at his teacher sculptor’s house in New York. See Saeki’s article, “Jappu no ikidôri” (The Anger of a Jap) in Number 6, 1983 issue of *Bungakukai*. Incidentally, the use of the term “houseboy” for a live-in Asian male servant continues to have currency in American English.
Cleans Things.” Togo has a cousin whom he calls Cousin Nogi, and the names, Togo and Nogi, are clearly taken from the recent Russo-Japan War heroes, Togo Heihachirô and Nogi Maresuke. In the second book’s frontispiece illustration of Togo and his employer, Mrs. Quackmire, the protagonist is presented as a stereotypical Japanese male who is short, buck-toothed, slant-eyed, and wearing glasses, while Mrs. Quackmire is a towering figure who assumes the posture of training an inexperienced servant. In spite of the fact that the stories are narrated completely from the perspective of the Japanese, the reader is never provided any glimpse of serious distress or frustration in Togo’s inner world. The elements that come from Togo’s unfamiliarity with the American culture and society – the use of ungrammatical English, misspellings, Japanese-sounding usage of words such as the frequent repetition of “Honorable” – all contribute to the creation of a humorous and comical tone. For example, a short story titled “What The Well Dressed Man Will Wear” begins with the following passage:

To the Editor who keeps so stylish because he can use his Printing Press to creese Hon. Pants.

Dear Sir: –

When printing list of Axidents for Satdy night would you please to mention that my heart is broken? Thank you. I shall tell how that was.

A few days of yore I thought I would get married to Miss Kiku-san, Japanese manicure, so I took her to an actual Theater where I supposed that she would learn to love me by watching Hon. Actors

334 “Hashimura Togo” sounds like two family names combined together. This fact, and his imitation of ungrammatical English used by Japanese, indicates that Irwin was probably not very familiar with the Japanese names or Japanese language.
doing so. By every rule of education this should be so, Mr. Editor. But ladies are so vice-versa.

Name of that play were Romeo & Juliet by a famus bookmaker who is now dead. It was filled with moons, kiss-kiss ceremony, poison, murder and everything that persons should know about before getting married.  

In another story, “Off With the Dance,” Togo and his girlfriend, Kiku-san, are arrested for non-stop dancing of the trot-fox for six days. They keep dancing as they are taken to the court. In the court, the judge orders a guard be brought in who can play music for them during the trial.

“Do you mean say” he ask frownishly, “that these 2 poor are compelled to dance without the least music? We should not be cruel to prisoners. Send for Patrollman Shine & his Sacks O’ Phone!”

So Hon. Shine play tune to resemble Philadelphia Blues while Hon. Judge took extended look with his high-powered face. I faint twice, but Miss Kiku-san hold me by hair so I will not die before she does.

“Where did you find Those?” require Hon. Judge with Landis expression.

“In a fowl room where they been staggerer around to music for six days, Yonna,” report Hon. Police.

“Which is the man and which is the woman?” narrate His Courtship.

“The one with rubber boots are Female, they say,” renig Hon. Bluepants.

“Have she danced cantinuous for 6 days?”

“She only stopp once to pick up 2 teeth,” narrate Hon. Constibble.

What Togo talks about are his encounters with the latest cultural phenomena of early twentieth-century America such as dance, music, theater, movies, sports and even

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“moonshine,” as well as more traditional American customs, such as how to dress in the Western style, which are unfamiliar to him. The cultural gap that he experiences between everyday American culture and the newest fashions or technology (e.g., dishwasher, automobile and gramophone) provides him with an opportunity to talk about society from the fresh perspective of an outsider who never completely assimilates or establishes a permanent residence. Irwin utilizes this gap between the Japanese man and his American readers to create a highly comical social satire of Americans. Togo’s intention is not to write something funny, but because of the gaps between his understanding of the society and his broken English, the outcome is very humorous. Also, as the books’ illustrations show, the Japanese characters are depicted as coming from a backward nation of strange customs and having less than appealing looks. In short, the three books were not written to depict the inner life and growth of a Japanese man as an individual in a foreign culture. Rather it is the image of the Japanese as outsider, or as an unsophisticated man, that provides a convenient and unthreatening means for Irwin to write social satire about his and his readers’ country.

Kaitarô refers to Irwin’s books more than once in his ’Merican-Jap stories, but the references are too brief to indicate his opinion of them. However, the fact that one

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337 An comparison of the illustrations in the three books clearly reveals us that the image of Japanese is depicted in increasingly negative fashion in the last book (1923), reflecting the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment especially among Californians.

338 Kaitarô may have been introduced to the book while in Ohio. In “Renbo yatsure” [Worn Out from Romance] he briefly introduces The Letters of a Schoolboy and explains that Cousin Nogi, considers himself to be a poet because he is enrolled in a correspondence course in poetics offered by a school “in Akron or some other town in Ohio.” (The town actually referred to by Irwin is Marion, Ohio.) Incidentally, another Ohio-related book, Winesburg, Ohio by Sherwood Anderson, was published in 1919, one year prior to Kaitarô’s arrival in Ohio. Anderson wrote the book with the small town Clyde, Ohio in mind. Clyde is less than fifty miles from Oberlin. The narrative style of Winesburg, Ohio
of his debut stories for *Shinseinen* is titled “Yangu Tôgô” (Young Togo), and it is an episode about a heroic, middle-weight Japanese boxer who disciplines a racist middle-aged Caucasian man shows that he consciously chose the name in order to present a heroic, witty and physically attractive version of “Hashimura Togo.” “Young Togo” begins with the scene in which the ’Merican-Jap narrator is sitting on a train in downtown Cleveland, when a gallant and stylish young Asian man with a composed expression on his face gets on board. A Caucasian middle-aged gentleman looks displeased when the mysterious Asian sits next him. When a young lady gets on the train at the next stop, he tells the Asian to give his seat to her. The young man is reading a newspaper, and he ignores the man. When the gentleman becomes upset, the Asian answers in perfectly fluent English that the fare he paid for the ride as equal to what the gentleman paid. If anything, he should stand up instead of telling someone else. The gentleman gets up and starts a fight by grabbing the visor of the fashionable hunting cap worn by the Asian, who is coolly reading his newspaper. After ignoring the gentleman for a while, the Asian finally hits him with an uppercut (which he later describes as “a light touch”), which leaves the man lying unconscious on the floor. The police arrive, and they take the Asian and the Caucasian, as well as the young lady and the narrator, into custody as witnesses. The police finally conclude the gentleman is to blame because the lady testified in favor of the Asian. The incident appears in the next

appears to share similarities with Kaitarô’s ’Merican-Jap stories. For example, Anderson “claimed himself to be essentially a story-teller, and his narrative style gives us an impression that it belongs rather to an oral rather than a written tradition. (See Malcolm Cowley’s “Introduction” to *Winesburg, Ohio*, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1985.) Considering that *Winesburg, Ohio* became popular and the story was set in a town near Oberlin, it is likely that Kaitarô knew of it. I have been unable to locate evidence demonstrating that Kaitarô read the novel, however.
day’s newspaper, introducing the Asian man as a famous professional boxer, Mr. “Young Togo.”

6.5.2. Takamura Kôtarô’s Sense of Alienation and Victimization

The cultural gap in the experience of a Japanese schoolboy is described comically in Irwin’s work. On the other hand, the same gap was a source of frustration for a Japanese “schoolboy” named Takamura Kôtarô. In poems such as “Zô no ginkô” (An Elephant’s Bank) and “Shirokuma” (Polar Bear), Takamura expresses the feeling of alienation that he experienced during his life in New York from 1906 to 1908.339 In “Zô no ginkô,” he is at Central Park, watching as an elephant receives a coin from the spectators and puts it into a bank. Then he says the elephant also asks for a nickel from him, “whom they [karera] call a Jap.” He does not specify who at the zoo “they” are. It may be the Anglo-Saxon ruling class, or a more general “them” that includes the recent immigrants to New York such as Italians, Russians and Jews from East European countries. Still, it is clear he considers himself as the only outsider. The poem continues: “A dumb-looking elephant from India / A lonely young man from Japan / ‘They’ [karera], the crowd, ought to see / Why the two of us are so intimate.”

Takamura sees himself as outside the world “they” share, and he feels close only to the Indian elephant because the elephant is looked at by “them” as a silly animal that performs a trick for a mere pittance. Takamura often experienced conflicts with


Saeki Shôichi discusses Japanese writers in American society of the early twentieth century in his serialized articles for Bungakkai titled “Nichibei kankei no naka no bungaku.” See the 8th installment in the Number 6 issue of Bungakkai in 1983 for his discussion of Takamura Kôkatarô and Nagai Kafû. He also discusses Tani Jôji in the ninth installment in the Number 7 issue of Bungakkai in 1983.
Americans who noticed him as a stranger and make fun of him by calling him “Jap.”
Letters to his family in Japan show that, in addition to frustration over cultural
differences, he was embarrassed about the gap between what he expected of America
and the reality of life there; he worked as a servant and not as an official pupil at his
teacher sculptor’s house. “Zô no ginkô” tells us that, like the elephant, he felt he had
been transplanted to a completely foreign soil and given a false identity. According to
Sarashina Genzô, Takamura even resorted to fighting back with his fists when he felt
verbally abused. The fact that the poem was composed nearly twenty years later may
indicate that the rise of anti-Japanese sentiment in the United States in the 1920s was
the motive for his decision to compose a poem based on his own experiences from the
1900s. At least it tells us that the sense of alienation and frustration over the identity he
assumed in American society still smoldered deep within him. Nonetheless, contrary to
the real Takamura who physically fought back, the image of the Jap he creates in his
poem never expresses his frustration to the crowd verbally or physically. He maintains
a sober tone in which we detect only the flickering of deep-seated grudge. Irrespective
of the fact that he spent a year and a half in New York, there is little in his published
works that tells us of his experiences there, let alone stories about his interactions with
individual Americans. In the “Elephant” poem, he simply sees the picture as a matter of

340 See also footnote #11. As Takamura himself recollects, the anti-Japanese sentiment was not yet
running high when he lived in New York. He remembers that people would shout “Jap!” at him, but it
was generally innocent ridicule. Moreover, because of Japan’s victories in the Russo-Japan War the
previous year, people did not have a negative impression of Japanese, although California issued a law to
shut out Japanese children from local schools in the same year.
341 He was by no means a beginner at sculpture. His father was the leading sculptor and professor at
Tokyo Institution of Art, Takamura Kôun. Kôtarô himself had graduated from the prestigious art school
by the time he came to the United States.
342 Written February, 1926.
the “Jap” (or Asia) versus “them,” and the poem ends with the grudge of an oppressed man. We cannot extract from it complex sense of ethnicity and class issues that existed in American society.

6.5.3. Schoolboys at “Japanese Rolling Ball” – The case of Nagai Kafû’s “Daybreak”

Among the variety of temporary jobs mentioned earlier, “rolling ball,” or tama-korogashi, is a typical game run by hucksters at local festivals in Japan. Nagai Kafû refers to it in an episode written in 1907 titled “Akatsuki” (Daybreak), which is included in his Amerika monogatari (American Stories). The narrator says he was once numbered among the helpers in this gambling game at a summer resort. As a student, he worked as a scorer and lived with the other workers during the season. He describes one typical night at work by describing his co-workers. Some are middle-aged men who have done this work for quite sometime; others are college students who

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“Among the many games in this vast Coney Island is tamakorogashi, Japanese Rolling Ball, one of the most popular. It is nothing fancy, just like shooting or rolling games at Okuyama, where you win one of the prizes that adorn the whole store by rolling a number of balls. But because it is run by Japanese, and hence exotic, and also because it is like gambling, where you may win a valuable prize if you are lucky, it has become quite popular. No one knows since when; certainly it has been thriving even more since the Russo-Japanese war, and every summer there are more and more such rolling ball shops.

You can tell that most Japanese owners of these shops are over forty years of age, determined to make a killing from this popular enterprise. Their appearance and manners somehow suggest their situation in life as labor bosses, desperados, or hooligans. They have come to the United States after experiencing many hardships in their native Japan and, having tried just about everything in America, have reached the stage where they say it’s no big deal to live in this world, you won’t die even if you eat dirt. On the other hand, those working for them who, every day, count the number of balls rolled by customers and hand them their prizes, are either unemployed people who have not yet been hardened by failures in life but somehow hope to succeed their bosses or young men who have impetuously come to the United States to work their way through college.”
are trying to make living expenses. The men usually work from 5 p.m. to 2 a.m.; after work, the younger workers direct their attention to the girls in the street. After the group disperses, the narrator and another young Japanese worker start talking. The narrator learns the young man is from a prestigious family, and that he came to the United States five years ago to attend school in Massachusetts. He has never needed to work because of the financial support that he received from his father. However, after studying hard for two years, he quit school. He placed an ad in a newspaper and found work. An opportunity to work as a “live-in servant at a Westerner’s home” presented itself, and he began to feel how carefree such a life was. To free himself from the pressure of having to become as successful and noble as his father, he decided never to open another book. Indeed, he planned to hang around places like Coney Island for the rest of his life. The narrator, who listens to this story, is also a student who has been studying in the U.S. for two years. His father has been financially supporting his son’s education, but the young man is working and saving money out of a personal desire to go to Europe. In terms of the thematic structure of the story, we see that Kafû starts out to explain aspects of the manners and customs of American society, but his interest soon shifts to the traditional father-and-son relationship of the Japanese young man. The narrator is empathetic because he is in similar circumstances. In other words, the main concern of the story is not about the life of Japanese and their relation and interaction with American society, or about the way Japanese survive by adjusting to the new culture. Hence, the Americans at the fair are merely a backdrop for those Japanese who have come so far yet cannot be free from home. Although the
prominence given to the dialogue between the Japanese workers gives the work a
vulgar, casual yet lively tone, nonetheless the narrative still remains descriptively sober,
focusing on the inner world shared by the two young men.

6.5.4. Schoolboys at “Japanese Rolling Ball” – In the Case of Hasegawa Kaitarô’s
“The Town in the Sleet”

In contrast to other works published in Japan by Japanese about their
experiences in the West, Tani’s stories do not depict an elite brooding over its
existential dilemma of being transplanted to locations outside of Japan. Instead, the
’Merican-Jap stories represent the viewpoint of drifting, working-class men in spaces
where they must act/react on the spot in order to survive in what was seen as the most
advanced capitalist society in the world. In other words, the Japanese hobos
continuously strive to figure out what is best for them “here” and “now;” and sketchy as
their character development and interior descriptions may be, they present themselves
with the identity best fitted to each situation within a society of multiple layers of races
and economic classes. These stories also differ from the travel accounts seen in
Shinseinen or other magazines that describe foreign countries from the perspectives of
visitors or onlookers. Each narrative tells its story in a speedy and garrulous mix of
colloquial Japanese and American street lingo. Kaitarô addresses his audience directly
on occasion, and he constantly digresses from the main storyline into descriptions of
new political, economic, ethnic or cultural aspects of the American urban space and his

344 Shinseinen was known for introducing Western culture to youngsters through their Western mystery
fiction, travel accounts, critical essays, satirical cartoons and Q & A page by Rikkôkai 力行会. In the
early twenties, Rikkôkai gave advice to youngsters who had questions about working abroad in pursuit of
the dream of kaigai yûhi (“launching abroad”).

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critical comments about them. It is worth noting, moreover, that Kaitarô’s writing has been described as a “modernist style that traveled across modern customs and brought great innovation to Showa prose expressions.”\textsuperscript{345} Linguistic analysis of the transgressive use of language in Kaitarô’s stories goes beyond the scope of this chapter, however. Instead, I wish to focus on the cultural function served by the descriptions of ‘Merican-Japs as possessing or performing a flexible, multivalent identity in the harsh reality of capitalist America.

In “Mizore no machi” (The Town in the Sleet) in the December 1927 issue of Shinseinen, Kaitarô tells a story about Japanese Rolling Ball that reads more like a journalistic report of the Japanese and their jobs in America:

Among the ‘Merican-Japs, the voluble ones are in great demand at the summer resorts. They get hired as barkers for the shops like “Rolling Ball” or “The Thread-pulling Game.” [At work,] they take off their collars and jackets, roll up their sleeves, and lean toward the audience. Shaking their hair loose over their yellowish faces, and opening their mouths as wide as their eyes, they shout in broken English. These are the former schoolboys from the West [Coast] who strayed from the right path and became the wandering ‘Merican-Japs, the barkers at Japanese Rolling Ball.

“Aoo!” A barker bellows in order to startle passersby streaming past him.

Then he continues:

“Japanese rolling ball! -- Rolling all here, Gents – Step over and try your luck – Nobody knows how lucky your are – Don’t you want a nice Japanese teaser? -- Girls, come here and get your dolls! Japanese rolling ball! You get something everytime, and no blanks at all! --“

\textsuperscript{345} Hamada Yusuke, “Taishû bungaku no kindai.” 177. Chiba Kameo (1878-1935), influential critic on literary developments in the Taisho period, asserts that the “free-spirited, fresh . . . brilliant and sprightly writing style” that Tani employed in the ‘Merican-Jap stories “will likely be recorded in the history of modern Japanese literature.” “Taishû sakka to shite no Maki-shi,” Chûô kôron, August 1935: 328-333.
He shouts like this in a voice loud enough to give you a splitting headache. In most cases, the barkers are merely loud, and what they shout may not be understandable to the American passers-by because it is so monotonous. But maybe it’s because the passersby cannot make out what the barkers say, that the crowd gathers so quickly.

“What’s this?” “What happens when you roll the ball?”

The novices in the crowd ask all kinds of questions. In order to answer their questions, the ’Merican-Japs who go to universities in this country are hired while they are out of school during the summer break, and they explain things pretty fluently. . . . The clacking of the balls, the laughter of the women, the loud voice of the barker, the silk shirt of the owner, the brown eyes of the ’Merican-Japs – swirls of all kinds of garish colors cover them and move in lively, active ways. Imagine them all. Imagine the sounds of all the different foreign languages that fly about like arrows in every direction in the middle of this din. Another ’Merican-Jap is collecting the balls quietly, without moving his slit eyes in his yellow face. The barker shouts off and on: “Japanese rolling ball, here!”

. . . An amusement district in America.

Throughout the story, Kaitarô’s narrative jumps and twists, constantly digressing even in the opening of the story. Preceding the passage quoted above, he depicts the scene on a train headed to an amusement park at a summer resort where the Japanese Rolling Ball game is one of the attractions. He explains how to pay for the train-ride, portrays the typical appearance of the conductors, and describes a scene where passengers are scrambling to get off the train at the resort stop. He tells his readers about the city streets and the summer resort with the repeated use of the command, “sōzô shitamae (‘Imagine that for yourself!’)” to visualize every possible garish color and hear the pronunciations and accents of all kinds of foreign languages.

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346 To be more specific, “Mizore” is divided into four shorter stories, each depicting four typical kinds of ’Merican-Jap workers, namely, “Japanese Rolling Ball” workers, bellboys, dishwashers and jobless gamblers. Furthermore, it is one of six stories that Kaitarô serialized as “’Merican-Jap shōbai ôrai” (The ’Merican-Jap Business Guide). The main theme of this guide was to introduce the variety of jobs that Japanese hobos engaged in.
Using his unique mixture of Japanese and American slang, Kaitarô describes the cheerfulness of ordinary folks in a typical a summer resort in the United States. Although the scenes and topics constantly shift, Kaitarô continues to emphasize the high-spirits of the ’Merican-Japs who make the best use of their talents as barkers to talk people into trying the phony game: After the rolling ball scene, the story shifts abruptly to another in which an ’Merican-Jap is being interviewed for a position as a hotel bellboy. He gets the job but is soon fired because he naively reports to the manager that there is a prostitute in the hotel. The young man goes back to the local ’Merican-Jap head (oyabun)’s house where other jobless and homeless ’Merican-Japs are always gathered and gambling. Listening to his story, the oyabun grins and says, “You are green. . . . Well, now that you’ve been fired, you can hang around here in the meantime.” Typical of Kaitarô’s ’Merican-Jap stories, “The Town in the Sleet” has the structure of a practical job guide. Kaitarô explains practical things that Japanese need to know in finding a job in the United States. For example, he talks about the function of a letter of recommendation, what to do in job interviews, the need to ignore social vices such as prostitution to keep one’s job, and the existence of shelters for Japanese hobos when they are fired and have no place to stay.

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347 “Mizore no machi” (The Town in the Sleet) in the section titled “Meriken jappu shôbai ôrai” (The Job Guide of/for ’Merican-Japs”), vol. 3 of HSZ, 213-227.

In “Mizore no machi,” Kaitarô does not specify the name of the town. In another story where he refers to Japanese Rolling Ball, he says he is in Jackson, Michigan. He says he worked with the hucksters in Jackson, Michigan and Cedar Point, Ohio one summer.
6.6 Japanese Hobos and American Society

We have already seen how Kaitarô enjoyed producing stories, speeches and poetry in his middle school days. He wrote muckraking booklets about his teachers, petitions, songs and poetry as a student leader protesting against school officials; he enjoyed the role of dissident and buffoon. He was excited to learn how his command of language had the power to make changes in others’ lives. Second to his “salad days” in Hokkaido, his life in the United States was crucial for developing the idea of the centrality of language for switching identity as a strategy survival. In the previously mentioned “Danna to sara,” dissembling, or representing oneself as someone else is used by the central character to rid himself of the frustration that comes from being treated like a servant, when he is much better educated than his master – or more educated than the master imagines. The frustration that Danna felt was common to the many Japanese immigrants who had received an education in Japan and were financially able to travel abroad. The 1920s was a time when the Japanese government was searching for ways to expand its power outside Japan. For example, Kaitarô writes about these employees at a restaurant:

“The young men who are hanging around at this restaurant [run by an Irish man] from summer to autumn are almost all either college graduates, students, or graduate students of either Japan or this country. One of them was racking his brains last night over problems in analytical geometry. Even at this moment [of working in the restaurant], another is imagining the life of the French masses during the Reformation. Meanwhile, someone is trying to boil down Marx and Enrico Fermi in the same pot or oiling a pan to rework the [meaning] of love for mankind. If only I could
let these careless, darling and romantic American observers know all this, how surprised they’d be!“348

The cultural gap between Japanese sojourners and American society is the theme, or at least a tool, in all of the stories by Irwin, Takamura, Kafû and Kaitarô discussed previously. Nevertheless, Kaitarô’s stories are unique in that they have endings where the ‘Merican-Japs take action to improve their situation. We also see that Kaitarô’s portrayal of American society grow more complex as his characters become more aware of ethnic diversity in the United States. They learn that the gap is not simply between Japanese and others. American society is composed of a far more complicated mosaic. We can see this development in the perspective expressed by the ‘Merican-Jap in the following stories, “Dassô” (Running Away), “Mekishiko onna” (A Mexican Woman), “Sam Kagoshima” and “Kuni no nai hitobito no kuni,” (A Country of People Without a Comtry).

6.6.1. “Dassô” (Running Away) – Frustration over the Gap Between the Two Discrepant Images of Himself

In a piece called “Dassô” (Running Away) of June 1925, Kaitarô writes of the first occasion when he perceived the tangible gap between his own self image and the one being imposed on him. This is, namely, the disparity between the self-image of a man who has excellent literary skills in his own language, and that of an Asian with little ability to communicate in English – an image imposed by many Americans. In the opening two paragraphs, the narrator explains he does not like people who try to be

348 “Tekisasu mushuku” (Texan Wanderer), vol. 3 of HSZ, 40. Originally published in the Number 12, October 1926 issue of Shinseinen.
excessively nice. The scene is on an express train from Toledo to Cleveland, Ohio. The train stops, and the conductor asks the young Asian male passenger if the young man intends to get off at the next stop in the countryside. The young man responds only with a strange smile. Kaitarô describes the smile is “as though [the young man] were doing his best to move his ears by moving his facial muscles in order to bare his teeth.” (The original Japanese sentence employs uncommon, even strange, diction, as if to convey the artificiality of the expression). The other passengers look at the youth as though he were a rare and unusual beast. The conductor steps back. He is disturbed by the way the strange young Asian has looked at him. As soon as the young man gets off, the passengers burst into laughter as if they had been watching a comedy show. Up to this point, the story has been told in the third person, but in the third paragraph the narrative voice abruptly switches to the first-person of “watashi,” or I, who has traveled all the way from Japan to a rural college town in Ohio. Watashi explains that he has come to this small Mid-western town to go to college. He then goes on to say how he made his way to the house of Professor Sheridan. Sheridan welcomes him, and he arranges a place for the student to stay at the house of a dentist named Hughes. In return for lodging, the student begins to work as an assistant in Dr. Hughes’ dental office. Meanwhile, Professor Sheridan finds another household, the Wilsons, who are looking for a part-time “live-out” servant.  

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[349] After the first immigration wave to Hawaii in the 1880s-90s, there was a constant flow of Japanese immigrants to the U.S., especially to California. The majority of those immigrants became unskilled laborers at farms, but there was also a smaller population of students. They often worked as servants or handy men for American families in order to support themselves during their study, often called “school boys.” This pattern continued until the Immigration Exclusion Act of 1924 which prohibited further Japanese immigration to the U.S.
name for the first time when the dentist addresses him as “Jôji (or George).” When Jôji lists the names of the members of the Wilson family, however, another strange switch occurs. This time he introduces himself as though he were someone else. The text refers to him, following the order of names in English, and with (mis)pronunciation and a foreign accent, as “George Tany, a live-out Japanese waiter/student (kayoi kyûji-nin no Nihonjin gakusei, Jôji Tenî-san).” The narrative perspective is switched again, just as in the opening, and the reader can only guess from the context that “George Tany” is watashi. In any event, Jôji begins work at both places. But he is unable to get along with the female cook at the Wilsons, and he ends up quitting after a big fight with her. He even decides to quit school despite the kindness that Professor Sheridan extends to him. According to Jôji, the professor is a kind man, “being in cahoots with the college, God and the holy apostles,” but he tries to turn him into “a lamb [of God].” Unwilling to be proselytized to by Sheridan et.al., Jôji decides to leave town. In the final paragraph, the professor and the Wilsons’ daughter have gone to the train station to see him off. As they bid farewell, Jôji announces he plans to go to Alaska and Mexico. Meanwhile, to Jôji’s distress, Professor Sheridan starts praying. Throughout the story, he is frustrated by the kindness that he receives from religious-minded people. When Professor Sheridan tries to include him in church activities, the narrator comments, “I got baptized once in my adolescence. I did it on a whim, but neither blessings nor light have come to me. By now, I’m about ready to step on a fumie.”

350 Although Kaitarô spells the last name as “Tany” in English in the Japanese text, from the fact that he sometimes adds the rubi phonetic transcription “テネイ,” it is possible that he had the Western name, “Taney,” in mind.
This story appears to reflect Kaitarô’s actual experiences at Oberlin College, Ohio. Moreover, it claims that it was the proselytizing attitudes of the local people that became the reason for his departure. By contrast, archival records at Oberlin report only that Kaitarô left school because of “not enough English.” Kaitarô’s wife, Kazuko (1895-1984), also remembered Kaitarô telling her he did not understand a word of colloquial English when he arrived in the United States. To feel inept must have been a serious blow to his self-confidence because he had studied English at school and church, and he was famous at middle school for his speeches in English. Perhaps more shocking was the fact that an educated man like himself could not use his wit, and he found himself treated like a helpless youngster in need of guidance. From the perspective of the Americans on the train, he is a strange Asian with an “inscrutable” smile. He is an object of curiosity, humor and novelty. In addition, for Professor Sheridan, he is a foreign soul who needs Christianity as much as he needs a place to stay. The sentence, “I’m about ready to step on a fumie,” clearly shows Kaitarô’s irritation toward the charitable but persistent Christian, Professor Sheridan.

School records such as newspapers, letters, and essays by faculty, students and alumni stored in the College Archives, tell us that Oberlin emphasized Christian belief in the early

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351 His three months at Oberlin were probably his only experience as a college student in the U.S. With regard to the names of the people who appear in the story, the Archives at Oberlin College do not list any professor by the name of Sheridan teaching at the college during the early 1920s. The Oberlin City Directories of 1916 and 1929 also do not list any “Wilsons,” although there is an architect named “Williams.” Nor is there any dentist by the name of Hughes, only a H.G. Husted. My attempts to ascertain factual validity for Kaitarô’s story were unsuccessful. The college archives do list Kaitarô as a student from September to November 16, 1920. Oberlin College Archives. Information courtesy of Mr. Roland M. Baumann at the Archives Department.

352 The Hakodate Middle School intramural publication includes favorable comments on Kaitarô’s performance in the speech contests. See, for example, Kawasaki’s Karera no Shôwa, 50-51 and 54-55.
twentyeth century, and it adopted measures to provide equal education to students of different ethnic backgrounds even when racial discrimination prevailed.\textsuperscript{353} Considering the fact that the majority of the Japanese students who studied at Oberlin College in the early twentieth century were theology students, we can speculate that Kaitarô possibly felt either inferior to, or repelled by, these scholarship students most of whom had already graduated from Dôshisha University.\textsuperscript{354} Also, interaction both inside and outside college through his two jobs may have given Kaitarô the opportunity to see how Christian philanthropy was or was not put into practice.\textsuperscript{355}

In comparison with other stories where Kaitarô talks about his days after he became fluent in English, and especially his experiences interacting with what he calls the “second petit bourgeois” (\emph{dai-ni shôshimin kaikyû}; the second-class citizen – both with regards to their late arrival in the U.S. at the turn of the twentieth-century or their

\textsuperscript{353} In the 1930s, and during the World War II as well, the college declared that it would not discriminate against students of Japanese heritage. In 1944, when the college received information that the Navy was about to include it on a list of colleges that would be allowed to admit only the students who met certain conditions, e.g., certain ethnic backgrounds, the President of the College raised a strong opposition.

\textsuperscript{354} Oberlin College was historically Congregationalist. Although it was open to the students of all denominations, it had special ties with Dôshisha University, which is also Congregationalist. Doshisha sent the largest number of Japanese students to Oberlin. According to the research of Tsutsumi Toshiko at Ôbirin University in Tokyo, of 32 students who studied at Oberlin in the 1910s, 21 were theology students. Of 153 Japanese students who matriculated before WWII, 84 studied theology. Tsutsumi argues that, especially in the 1910s, many theology students at Dôshisha University wished to study at the Oberlin seminary when the College Dean was active in assisting Japanese to come to Oberlin. Tsutsumi also adds that theology majors were exempt from tuition; in addition, the school had a scholarship program that gave students $100-200 in return for work assisting at neighboring churches. The Reischauer brothers (Robert, from 1924; and Edwin, from 1926) studied at Oberlin because of their missionary connection to the school. In the Autumn of 1920, there were at least 15 Japanese students studying at Oberlin. Five were in the Theology Department, one double-majored in theology and music, one majored in music, and the rest were in the College of Humanities and Sciences.

\textsuperscript{355} Old “Japan hand” and U.S. ambassador, Edwin Reischauer notes that the student body at Oberlin in his day (1926-30) was predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. Moreover, in terms of racial issues, he did not feel the college was as liberal as it claimed to be. For example, he recalls that, when sport teams traveled to away game, the African-American teammates had to stay at separate lodging facilities. Edwin O. Reischauer, \textit{My Life Between Japan and America} (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986) 34.
low-class status as workers), the object of his frustration in “Dassô” is quite limited: i.e.,
well-educated and overly kind Christians. His understanding of the dynamics of
religion, race and politics is unsophisticated. Nor has he developed tactfulness in taking
advantage of “The Others’” conception of him. He is still inexperienced, and he is
annoyed by the guiding hand he receives. In this early stage of his American life, he
has no choice but to “run away” from the situation.

6.6.2. “Mekishiko onna” (The Mexican Woman) – Story-telling by Taking
Advantage of “The Other’s” Preconception of a Bellboy

A recurring theme in ’Merican-Jap stories is the story of Japanese who may not
be able to speak English fluently yet are witty enough to take advantage of the
“dumbness” – to borrow Kaitarô’s word – of the majority in American society.
Kaitarô’s characters are constantly exposed to situations that make them keenly aware
of the instability and precariousness of their identity. Through those awkward
situations, however, they become aware that they can take advantage of their dubious
identity. In a sense, they become actors who improvise and create the stage effects
most likely to set themselves off to good advantage. Through his stories, Kaitarô argues
that the performers should be entitled to monetary compensation from their
audience/customers for their great performances. Depending upon the occasion and the
audience, the theatrical image may shift from “a poor but hard working student” to “a
young man who supports his blind mother,” as Kaitarô’s story, “Mekishiko onna”
indicates:

I had brought myself up to the status of a real bellboy who could
easily come up with such lies like “I want to save money for college
tuition” whenever hotel guests asked me why I was working there. “Why are you doing this kind of job?” In order to answer this question, each bellboy had his own romantic bluff or so-called “sub-stuff” or tearjerker: “So that I can feed my blind mother,” Or “to let my little sister go to music school” . . . If they found out I was a bellboy for no particular reason, they would have thought I was a helpless juvenile delinquent. That meant I was unfit to serve gentlemen, and that would lead to a smaller tip. . . . “Are you Chinese, Filipino, or Japanese? Maybe Jewish?” These questions were cast upon my fellow Japanese bellboys and myself several times a day. I hated to let people think that Japanese were working in such a rural place. So I said, “It doesn’t matter where I was born. I just happened to be born there. I’m American while I’m in this country, but in Mexico, I’ll be Mexican. . . .”

6.6.3. “Sam Kagoshima” – Switching Identities by Using the Other’s Prejudice Concerning Ethnicity

Identity switches in the earlier ‘Merican-Jap stories were not always intentional. Sometimes they were the result of ironic misunderstandings that arise from others’ ignorance or racial prejudice. However, in later ‘Merican-Jap stories, it is increasingly the case that the skill at dissembling is used by the central characters as a multivalent strategy for economic gain and survival. Take, for example, the story of “Sam Kagoshima.” The narrator of the story is a Japanese man working as a waiter in an all-night restaurant managed by other Japanese. He is mistaken for Chinese by three Caucasian customers, who make fun of him, asking if he can serve Chinese food, if he has a pigtail, etc. Finally he declares he is Japanese, and calls for help from the cook, Sam Kagoshima, who is waiting in the kitchen. Sam is also a ‘Merican-Jap. A former acrobat in the circus, his muscular physique makes him look very imposing. When the narrator announces that Sam will demonstrate “the difference between Chinese and

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356 “Mekishiko onna” (The Mexican Woman), vol. 3 of HSZ, 104. Originally appeared in the Number 11 (i.e., September) 1926 issue of Shinseinen.
Japanese,” the customers fall silent at the prospect of having to defend themselves in a fight and soon change their tune. At this point, the narrator steps to their table and asks very courteously, “And what would you, sirs, like to order?”

Although “Sam Kagoshima” is a fairly simple story, the narrator and Sam can be interpreted as the writer’s attempt to depict Japanese intellectual and physical strength in two respective individuals. Perhaps even more important, however, Tani creates a scenario in which the suggestion of physical strength by a Japanese hobo is as effective as the actual use of force, thereby taking advantage of the simplistic image of Japanese ethnicity held by the Americans. As the three customers sit in cowed silence, the narrator imagines their thoughts.

“Mexicans, American Indians, and Japanese – one never knows what they are going to do.”
“Especially this one. He’s strange.”
“He might jump on our throats.”
“No – He’s going to snap at [our] noses before that.”
“Jujutsu!”
“That’s right. He will do something strange with his legs first, make us lick the floor, and insert his hand into our ears to injure our pinky toes so that they’ll be useless for the rest of our lives!”
“Jujutsu!”
“Although he looks like a stone, he is Japanese. So, he is going to use that sorcery called jujutsu . . .”

The narrator depicts the customers beginning to fear Sam as a “jujutsu sorcerer” because they combine their perception of the ethnic signifier, “Japanese,” with his appearance. In actuality, however, Sam has lived in the U.S. since he was nine, and knows absolutely nothing about Japanese martial arts. Moreover, the narrator does not characterize him as a prototypical hero. Sam enters the scene by scurrying out of the
kitchen (chokochoko to dete kita) in a decidedly “unheroic” manner, and when he stands in front of the customers, the narrator describes him as so short that the customers may mistake him for sitting down. On one level, Tani is clearly making fun of the ignorance of Americans about Japanese. On another level, however, through an ironic tone, he depicts how ’Merican-Jap’s self-image is created through contact with the foreign. The ’Merican-Jap narrator in “Sam Kagoshima” desires to present an inflated image of Japanese as masculine and heroic when pitted against a majority. In fact, however, the Japanese cannot live up to such an image in the story. The naïve judgment made by the Caucasian customers about Sam being a frightening jujutsu sorcerer is nothing more than an interior dialogue imagined by the ’Merican-Jap narrator/protagonist. In this way, Tani challenges the traditional notion of authentic Japaneseness through his satirical depiction of the ’Merican-Japs’ self-imposed ethnic image. Consequently, Tani makes the point that while stereotypical conceptions of ethnic identity stemming from others’ ignorance are sources of annoyance or pain, at the same time they can also be manipulated, even for financial gain. Once the narrator introduces Sam’s Houdini-like powers and teaches the customers that they should not belittle Japanese, he takes their order – now that he had made them obey and stay to eat.

“Sam Kagoshima” draws a fairly simplistic picture of Japanese pitted against whites. But we also find that Tani’s portrayals of American society become more complex as his characters gain greater awareness of the ethnic diversity and complexity of the United States. Because Japanese hobos interact with the wanderers of various other ethnic backgrounds, their identities as “Japanese male” (Nippon danji), or their
notions of pure Japanese-ness, are constantly challenged by the foreignness that they encounter. They learn that the gap is not simply between Japanese and all other peoples, but that American society is composed of a complicated mosaic of various ethnic and economic hierarchies.

6.6.4. “Kuni no nai hitobito no kuni” (Country of People Without a Country) – American Society as Mosaic of Ethnicity and Classes

Kaitarô also extends his depictions of strategic identity construction to people other than the Japanese hobos. One ‘Merican-Jap in “Kuni no nai hitobito no kuni” (The Country of People Without a Country; 1927), has an almost schizophrenic habit of talking to himself out of deep loneliness. He takes advantage of this idiosyncratic habit and becomes a professional ventriloquist. Eventually he becomes rich, as well as happily married to a gypsy woman, who also uses multiple identities.

Throughout 1925, most of Kaitarô’s works were written for Shinseinen under the two pen names, Tani Jôji and Maki Itsuma. The following year, he branched out and began writing for several magazines and newspapers including Tantei shumi, Chûô kôron, Bun'ei shunjû, Yomiuri shinbun and Tokyo Nichinichi shinbun (later renamed Mainichi). The editor-in-chief of Chûô kôron, Shimanaka Yûsaku (1887-1949) 359

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357 According to his family, Tani was once a member of Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). The majority of the IWW members were hobos and so-called floating workers. Tani seems to have been influenced by Jack London as seen from the fact that in the ‘Merican-Jap stories he mentions London and his book on hobos, presumably, The Road.

358 The ‘Merican-Jap main characters interact with Anglo-Saxons, African Americans, nisei Japanese, fellow ‘Merican Japs, and what Tani calls the “petit bourgeois second immigrants,” referring to the second wave of immigrants such as Jews and Greeks.

359 Shimanaka Yûsaku became a reporter for Chûô kôron in 1912. He took notice of women’s issues when the Seitô [Blue-Stocking] Group was gaining popularity, and he started Fujin kôron in 1916. In
thought highly of Kaitarô’s talent after reading the 'Merican-Jap stories. In 1927, Shimanaka had Kaitarô serialize ten stories as a series titled the “Modan Dekameron” (The Modern Decameron),\(^{360}\) in which Kaitarô spins stories about people’s lives in an urban space, although the time and place are no longer the medieval Rome of the \emph{Decameron} but twentieth-century New York. The main characters are 'Merican-Japs whose background and reasons of immigration and migration vary, but what is common to them is that they live in a poor, dark neighborhood in Manhattan. Living like hobos, they work as gamblers, acrobats, bootleggers, owners of illegal bars, poets, or assistants to tipsters. Of these stories of not only lonely Japanese but other low-class people of varying ethnicity struggling to survive in a very tough neighborhood, the last story exemplifies best what can be called the multivalent voices that emerge from the splitting of identity or personality. Moreover, the dichotomy is turned into something economically useful.

The story takes place in a neighborhood on Third Avenue, which Kaitarô calls “a country of people without a country.” Through his three-years in the Midwest and life in New York, Kaitarô’s horizons have broadened. Now he sees the struggles in urban settings as not limited to Japanese but as universal. The neighborhood is filled with people who had to leave their homelands: Bulgarians, Chinese, Jews, Greeks, Hawaiians, Spanish, Irish, French, and German. Regardless of their diversity in the

\(^{360}\) Kaitarô borrowed the structure and topics from Boccaccio’s \emph{Decameron}.  

1925, he became \emph{shukan} (editor-in-chief) of \emph{Chûô kôron}, and in July 1928, the president of Chûô kôron Corporation.
ethnic and national background, they are one because they share the same “somehow sad [or lonely] look in their eyes.” Kaitarō describes them this way:

It may be said they happily established a country – a country that exists even if it does not appear on a map of the world. They did this via a contract of shared sentiment generated from the fact that they all abandoned their countries somewhere on the globe. A Bulgarian marries a Turk and has an American baby girl. The American baby girl grows up and falls in love with a Chinese, and they have a family. An Armenian lodges at their house. This Armenian works at a store owned by Jews, dines at a Greek restaurant where he listens to Jazz played by Hawaiian musicians. He has Spanish polish on his shoes, says hello to an Irish policeman, buys meat at a German butcher and bread from a French bakery. And from an Armenian shop . . . At any rate, the best that I can say is that, before they knew it, these people of various nations have shaken themselves free from their original nationalities, and they created a strange trans-nation on their corner of the world in the neighborhood of Third Avenue in New York City.\footnote{“Kuni no nai hitobito no kuni” (Country of the People Without a Country), The tenth story in a series of ten titled “Modan Dekameron” (Modern Decameron), vol. 3 of HSZ, 368.}

The protagonist of this story is a ’Merican-Jap named Sir Willard Ota, who works as a handyman and does everything from scenery painting and carpentry to catering at a stage theater in this poor and lowly Third Avenue neighborhood. Ota has a strange habit of talking to himself. One night, after having returned late to his small apartment and crawling into bed, he begins his lonely monologue. He sighs and feels so lonely at having to sleep by himself. He fantasizes about marrying his next-door neighbor, a plump cleaning woman named Roxanne. He asks himself how he will propose to her. He gives full rein to his fantasy and imagines different scenes and phrases of his marriage proposal. He utters the phrases aloud and asks himself which
one will work best. It is as though he were still on stage even after returning home from work.

That night, Roxanne happened to have entered Ota’s room by mistake. It was dark, and all the rooms in the apartment building look exactly the same. They look exactly like “changing rooms at a swimming beach.” Roxanne does not realize she is sleeping in Ota’s bed until she hears him come home. She quickly hides under the bed. As a result, she hears his monologue with its variety of scenarios for proposing to a woman who is none other than herself. Excited by the discovery that he thinks of her as attractive, she smiles to herself. The next day, she sneaks back to her room. Thereafter, she begins to be nice to Sir Willard Ota, giving him opportunities to propose to her. When she grows impatient with his shyness, finally she takes the initiative and proposes to him. They marry, but they divorced within a week. They move back to their old rooms and return to being lonely neighbors in the lowly apartment building.

Kaitarō explains in the introductory passages how lonely people are in the “country for the countryless” and how their monologues derive from their loneliness, as though their spiritual hunger, and their creation of what he calls an “imaginary Other.”

Loneliness is a hunger of the soul. Both loneliness and hunger make people feel their mouths lack something. And loneliness drives sad monologues out of their mouths. As long as they [realize that they are talking to themselves and] are surprised by their own voices, it is curable. [But] if you assume there are many people [in the room], and, you are surprised to see only one person talking to him/herself, that is the end of it. Many of the Japanese in America are, especially on the days when it rains in the streets [parody of Paul Verlaine’s poem, “Il pleur donc mon coeur”], acting as though they were hosting a guest, asking questions, answering them, and laughing to
themselves. I would say what is even sadder is that they speak in heavily accented English [even when they are not talking to other English speakers].

They would use two different voices quite well: “Huh, where are my cigarettes? – What? Cigarettes? Here they are. – Oh, that’s right. Thanks. – By the way, what we were talking about. What on earth do you think I should do? – Me? I would say you should keep silent and wait for their [response] . . . – I agree with you, but . . . “

How tear-jerking it is, and what a typical story of urbanity!

Completely shattered by long periods of loneliness, they now end up talking joyfully to their own shadows on the wall of their rooms in the lodging house. However, the soliloquy is not a habit limited to the Japanese in America. The crowd of the sad-eyed prophets of the “Country of the People Without a Country” who surround Third Avenue, or the travelers who have abandoned their homelands, start talking aloud when they are left alone. Even when they are in a crowd, they imagine there are two conversants in their heads exchanging words. That is probably why they have such sad eyes.

Like prisoners kept in solitary cells, they talk to the foot of their beds, their hats, their pencils, their plants. – [It looks like] these people may be planning to carry their solitary confinement even to the grave.

– Whoever wants to be sentimental like that, they may do so. But in this commercialized world, every skill can become as a profession, if someone is good at it. Even a soliloquy can be a profession. If one can talk to himself and still make it sound like two people talking to each other, then it is a publicly recognized art, and it will have a tremendous exchange value in the market.

Soliloquy can be a profession by which one makes money.

This passage first employs a sentimental tone. In the last paragraph, however, it dramatically shifts to one of detachment and irony. In a commodity society, even idiosyncratic behavior can be a skill by which a person can make money. “Take ventriloquism, for example.” Kaitarô continues to explain in a journalistic manner how ventriloquism works, or when it can be used in comedy shows, the circus, or even channeling.
The protagonist Ota becomes a skilled and popular ventriloquist. One day he is asked by a gypsy actor to meet a young woman. The gypsy says he started dating the woman because she inherited a fortune from her mother, Rebecca, a fortune-teller famous for her use of the “smart or talking goldfish.” The mother tells customers’ fortunes by looking at the shape of their physiognomy. Then she ventriloquizes the answer by projecting it onto a goldfish swimming in a bowl by her side. The gypsy has just learned that the young Rebecca is not the rich fortune-teller’s daughter after all, and he no longer wishes to see her. He says that, because he and Ota look alike, Rebecca will mistake Ota for him, especially at night when they go out for a date. Out of curiosity, Ota agrees to play the role of the substitute. He and Rebecca date, and shortly thereafter they marry. It turns out the young Rebecca is, in fact, the daughter of the famous fortune-teller, except that her skills at projecting her voice are not good enough to use in the fortune-telling trick. Ota and Rebecca resume the mother’s famous fortune-telling business together. She lied to the actor and told him she was not the fortune-teller’s heiress because she knew the gypsy was after her money. Instead she dated Ota, even though she knew he was not the actor. In the end, Rebecca and Ota decide to combine her fortune-telling skills with his expertise as a ventriloquist. She whispers the customer’s fortune to him, and he throws his voice to make it look as if the “intellectual goldfish” is talking. The story is a long chain of switched and changing identities. One, Ota gets the nickname of “Sir Ota” because he once lied to his landlady that he was a fallen Japanese nobleman, so that he would be treated better. Two, due to his lonely life, Ota has the habit of talking to himself as if he had a split personality.
Eventually he turns the habit into a business as a ventriloquist. Three, out of curiosity, Ota becomes the gypsy actor to trick Rebecca. Four, Rebecca pretends she is not the rich daughter in order to protect her fortune. Five, Rebecca’s mother was a ventriloquist fortune-teller, who made fish look like they talked. And, six, Rebecca and Ota split her mother’s business into two roles, fortune-telling and ventriloquism.

In the end, Ota and Rebecca live and work happily together. Because the story constantly evolves and shifts direction, we cannot anticipate the ending. The scholar Eguchi Yûsuke points out how the theme of unpredictability is enunciated at the very beginning of the story in an episode that has no direct bearing on Ota’s story. The scene is of a cabaret located on the back streets of Manhattan. A dancer of unidentified ethnic background wears the heavy makeup of a seductive, young vamp. While dancing, she casts flirtatious glances at the pianist in the lounge, a man with a Russian last name from Indiana. Witnessing this flirtatious scene, a jealous Chinese man jumps in, wielding a knife. The customers are thrown into a panic and flee the room. In the end, we learn that the entire affair is a skit that has been staged as part of the entertainment provided by the cabaret. More importantly, however, we realize that the opening scene foreshadows the message of the entire story: what looks real may be actually fake; at the same time, even the most unrealistic and unpredictable events can happen on Third Avenue. Eguchi argues that, in Kaitarô’s discourse on the lives of people in an urban space, people are described as having no solid identity. Ironically, without a knowledge of their social positions or their job titles, they barely exist.

In addition to being a story about characters who play various roles like actors, “Kuni no nai hitobito no kuni” contains a second level of theatrical structure. The story can be seen as a stage production set up by the author to give the impression that it is not a documentary but a play. This theatricality is evident from the way that Kaitarô inserts lines that read like stage directions. Hence, the work can be performed like a play or told like a story.  

6.6.5 “The Maniac Who Collects Rejection Slips” – the Writer as Commercial Producer

Throughout his 'Merican-Jap stories, Kaitarô emphasizes the importance of storytelling and other forms of verbal bluff as strategies for negotiating modernity and even gaining economic advantage from a position of being disempowered. Implicit in this concept is a radical notion of the writer himself as a participant in commodity society, a view that directly contradicted the dominant bundan ideology, which regarded the writer as an almost spiritual figure who existed beyond or outside the constraints of economic necessity. In his 1927 'Merican-Jap story “Kyozetsuhô shûshû kanja” (The Maniac Who Collects Rejections Slips), Kaitaro offers a humorous narrative that explicitly mocks bundan conceptions of the author by valorizing a writer who focuses on the monetary reward received in exchange for a literary work.

363 It is evident in the terminology and language style common in screenplays.
The 'Merican-Jap narrator explains that in America every ordinary individual is trying to be a writer because of "success fever."\(^{364}\) He works in the kitchen of a cafeteria at "ON University" in Ohio.\(^{365}\) While working there, he also began to attend a course on English literature and became interested in writing movie scenarios after hearing about success stories. Inspired by the commercial success achieved by ordinary people, the 'Merican-Jap narrator writes scenarios and sends them to several movie studios, but they are all returned with rejection slips. "Please try other markets," they say. By going commercial, Kaitarô dissociates himself from \textit{bundan}\(^{366}\) and attempts to reveal how deeply the system of literary production is tied to capitalism.

Everybody was talking about success stories: even a housewife in Arizona – a good-natured and law-abiding one – wrote a 5-volume novel and won 30,000 dollars; a train conductor in Florida sold a wonderful idea for a comedy for 2,500 dollars, etc. "For the sake of the movie industry": amateur writers would put it that way, although the industry probably may feel annoyed [with such fantasies]. To supply a scenario has become as much a part of each individual's life as Colgate toothpaste or Palmolive soap. A policeman imagines a scenario while chasing a robber; the robber imagines a scenario while shooting a gun to kill a passer-by; the passer-by imagines a scenario while being killed; a nursemaid imagines a scenario while taking a nap on a bench in a park; a bum imagines a scenario while waiting for the opportunity to talk to the nurse; a baby imagines a scenario while lying in the baby carriage; a clergyman imagines a scenario while reciting Chapter 3, Verse 5 of the Book of Matthew, or Chapter 9, Verse 12 of the Book of Luke, or whatever; a banker imagines a

\(^{364}\) "Kyozetsuhyō shūshū kanja" (The Maniac Who Collects Rejections Slips), vol. 3 of \textit{HSZ}, 213-227. Originally published in the Number 9, August 1927 issue of \textit{Shinseinen}.

\(^{365}\) This is probably Ohio Northern University in Ida, Ohio. Some sources say Kaitarô told family and friends that he also studied there and/or worked at the school cafeteria when he was wandering through Ohio after leaving Oberlin.

\(^{366}\) Tani criticizes the \textit{bundan} as follows: "[In Japan,] there is a group of so-called literary young men. They turn the merely private associations of writers into what is called the \textit{bundan} [circle], and [by that] each writer strengthens his/her fortresses for self-defense." "Sojō Amerika mandan" (A Rambling Critique on America), vol. 3 of \textit{HSZ}. 86-87.
scenario while tracing his ball on the golf course; the President
imagines a scenario while signing a message; and I imagined a
scenario while chopping cabbage for coleslaw or listening to [a lecture
on] Emerson’s *Self Reliance*. There was a young grammar teacher
named W.W.W. at the high school on the university campus, and he
held a study group on scenarios every Wednesday at his house. About
ten students – both male and female, wearing round glasses that
looked like Harold Lloyd’s – would gather. I joined them a few
times. But soon I quit because I thought self-education was
essentially the best means to devote myself to literature. . . . I sent
out the first few of my weird and strange scenarios to all the different
movie companies and studios. . . . Because the people where I rented
a room said they were annoyed by the noise of my typewriter, I typed
my stories by shutting myself in the bathroom of my room. . . . I
would send out the scenarios, and they would be rejected. I heard that
patience was crucial, so I sent out my first two stories titled “For
Instance” and “The Mirror” to seven different places. But they were
all returned. Each time, they sent the scenarios back to me with a card
on red, yellow or blue paper printed with the words, “Rejection Slip.”
The slips began with . . . “It was an honor to have the opportunity to
read your precious scenario,” and ended with “please try other
markets.”

Kaitarô emphasizes that everyone, professional or amateur, is thinking about
producing stories, driven by the desire for money. Even an ordinary person has a
chance to hit the jackpot, as the narrator refers to the housewife in Arizona who
received $30,000 for her five-volumes, or the train conductor who sold his fabulous
comedy idea for $2,500. This seductive use of language is an extension of what
’Merican-Jap bellboys do in order to receive larger tips by making up hardship stories in
the episode from “Mekishiko onna.” In a letter to his family, Kaitarô tells us that he
actually attempted to sell his scenarios to film companies but none was accepted.
Although his attempts were not successful, the experience taught him that everyday life

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367 “Kyozetsuhyô shûshû kanja” (The Maniac Who Collects Rejection Slips), vol. 3 of *HSZ*, 170.
was a good source of interesting stories that might bring financial success. More importantly, to write for the movie industry is to realize that writing is merely a part of the production line for the final product. Once an idea for a comedy is bought from an amateur writer, it will be adjusted and changed to such an extent that the final product may resemble the original only in its basic framework. In addition, Kaitarō’s interest in Henry Ford’s success may also be a reflection of his belief that writing is part of a production line and a writer no different from any other types of workers. The Shinseinen editorship also backed up Kaitarō’s belief in the significance of writing as a means for youths to negotiate modernity by involving themselves in commercial activities. In the next issue (Number 10), Shinseinen called for readers’ original scenarios, and it published the best three in the Number 11, September issue titled “Special Issue on Film and Play.”

From the 1920s until his untimely death in 1935, Kaitaro would pursue the commercialist logic implicit in “The Maniac.” In an essay from 1926, “Rankyô gidan”\textsuperscript{368} (Capricious Talk on a Broken Bridge), he criticizes writers who attempt to set their works on a pedestal as geijutsu or “Art.” Likewise, he critiques people who draw a line between the “artistic” and “non-artistic.” Even tantei shôsetsu writers are no exception in this, and he laments that the recent production of tantei shôsetsu is directed solely toward winning approval among writers and critics, rather than among common readers. In other words, he is concerned that even a popular literary genre is following the path that the bundan of pure literature has taken. For example, many mystery

\textsuperscript{368} “Rankyô kidan,” Tantei shumi, April 1926. Kaitarô was a dōjin member of the magazine and at one point was involved in editorial work.
writers were interested in incorporating pathological and scientific findings into their stories, whether or not the material interested the general readership. This tendency reflected the attempt to differentiate *tantei shōsetsu* from other genres and establish it as a genre of significance in its own right. In the same essay, he also praises an essay in *Yomiuri shinbun* by the poet/critic Hashizume Ken (1900-1964), who argued for the significance of popular literature and importance of the general audience’s opinion of literary works. Kaitarō claims it is proper to judge the quality of a work of literature by taking into consideration both the opinion of the public (*taishū*) and the writer’s attitude toward writing.  

In another essay in 1932, Kaitarō declared a similar belief in asking his readers to see him as a fellow worker. For him, his readers were his peers. The masses, or the *taishū*, are not a faceless crowd to be enlightened; they are individuals who have their own will and beliefs. He speaks of his literary labor in terms of being a *bunkō*,³⁷⁰ “a worker in the factory of literature” ³⁷¹ – a neologism he created to convey his recognition that writers comprise merely part of a mass production line which produces literary works. In doing so, he put himself on a par with other workers such as type pickers and setters. He emphasizes that he does not want to be called a *bunshi* (lit., a literary gentleman) because it sounds “too pompous.”³⁷² The term also reminds him of a “pale,  

³⁶⁹ Hashizume Ken was first influenced by anarchism and the Dadaist movement. He wrote critical essays that bitterly attacked the *bundan* for its old-fashionedness. He also practiced his philosophy and wrote *tsūzoku shōsetsu* (通俗小説) low brow literature.


³⁷² 文士
skinny writer.” He does not pretend that writing is an ascetic practice in which all aspects of the self are revealed and one becomes enlightened. Writing is a profession or a means to make a living.

Kaitarô established himself as a popular writer with *Shinseinen* and then branched out to other magazines and newspapers. When he was working on a new plot, he derived ideas from his first-hand experiences, as well as printed matter such as other writers’ works or reportage of actual news incidents. He outlined his works according to formulae used in *kôdan* story-telling, mystery fiction and social satire from both Japan and the West.³⁷³ Chiba Kameo, chief editor of the arts and literature section of *Tokyo Nichinichi shinbun*, reports seeing the charts that Kaitarô, as Maki Itsuma, drew for his new stories. *Sôshi*, or illustrated stories for the general public in pre-modern times, were a good source for ideas for criminal and adventure stories. In the case of his romance novels (*katei shôsetsu*), it is said he adapted the key elements and settings from popular works by his predecessors such as Yanagawa Shun’yô’s *Ikasanu naka* (“Intimate Antagonism”; serialized 1912-1913), Tokutomi Roka’s *Hototogisu* (The Cuckoo; 1898-1899), and Ozaki Kôyô’s *Konjiki yasha* (The Golden Demon; 1897-1902). Also his *Shin gankutsuô* (New Count of Monte Cristo) was an adventure and mystery story adapted from Dumas’ *Comte de Monte-Cristo* (The Count of Monte-Cristo). Matsumoto Tai, the editor-in-chief of the coterie mystery periodical, *Tantei bungei*, remembers how Kaitarô showed him a work of Western mystery fiction. Kaitarô told him that he was making it into a Tokugawa-period *jidai shôsetsu*,

³⁷³ Chiba Kameo (1878-1935), critic and advocate of *taishû bungakui*. 

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“Kuginuki Tōkichi.” In order to glean a variety of sources – from newspapers and criminal trial records to other writers’ works both inside and outside of Japan – and also to advertise and sell his works, Kaitarō needed an assembly line in more than a merely figurative sense. He had his wife, Kazuko, help him look for popular stories in English and study their structures, character development and events. Utilizing her English abilities, he had her collect materials in English and summarize them as a source of ideas for his writing. His literary production system involved an even clearer division of labor when he moved to his new, extravagant mansion in Kamakura. Kazuko took notes, summarized stories in English, and put them in his office for him to pick and choose. Kazuko’s brother, Katori Ninpei, worked as Kaitarō’s manager. The mansion’s main gate was always closed, and the editors were let in from the side entrance. Ninpei’s office was located the closest to the entrance. He had a large office desk with a calendar for filling in Kaitarō’s writing deadlines. In the right desk drawer, Ninpei stored envelopes sorted according to publisher and pre-stamped for delivery to Tokyo Station. Every morning, he commuted to this office to pick up the finished manuscripts, put them in their proper envelopes, and give them to Kaitarō’s chauffeur to deliver to Kamakura Station. After checking the arrival time in Tokyo, Ninpei telephoned the publishers so that they could send deliverymen to the station. Editors did not have to commute to Kamakura to receive the manuscripts directly from the

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374 Kaitarō and Katori Kazuko met through the mediation of Matsumoto Tai in 1924 and married in January 1925. Kazuko had graduated from Aoyama Gakuin Women’s College with degree in English.


Wada Yoshie was editor for Hinode in the 1934. One of his tasks was to visit Kaitarō to request and receive stories for the magazine.
writer as in the traditional way. Even when they visited the mansion, they never met with Kaitarô in person because Ninpei took care of all negotiations. In this way, Kaitarô’s work was not interrupted. Wada recalls editors were happy with “this method of management based on modern rationalization” (kindai-teki gōri-sei ni rikkyaku shita un’ei).376

More than simply exposing the processes of modern capitalist society, however, Kaitarô went one step further to actively promote his own commodification through the use of three pen names for different genres, namely his ’Merican-Jap stories, his translation of Western mystery fiction, and his samurai “period” fiction. It was in this way that he simultaneously created multiple images of himself out of a single person. Indeed, one might go so far as to see his interest in the flexibility or multivalence of identity as part of a modernist attack on the I-Novel approach to realism, which advanced a single, unmediated view of reality and identity. In depicting identity as a series of ephemeral masks to be worn in accordance with various situations, he departs from the bundan Japanese writers of the early twentieth century.

Moreover, Kaitarô’s arguments on “the writer as a worker” correspond with what Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke had to say in his essays titled “Geijutsu no shokugyō-ka ni tsuite” (On Putting Art on a Commercial Basis; 1924) and “Bungaku no shokugyō-ka to saitei genkōryō mondai” (Putting Literature on a Commercial Basis and the Issue of the Minimum Wage for Manuscript Fees; 1929).377 As discussed in Chapter Four,

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Hirabayashi became the ideological pillar of the magazine in its support of the ratiocinating aspects of literature. There is a strong resonance between the ideas of these two men in this respect. Moreover, switching from Tani to Maki to Hayashi like a worker retooling, and moving down the assembly line, Kaitarô produced period to romance novels. At the same time, the mass media often used Kaitarô’s “three names” as a symbol of a mass production, “monster writer” (monsutâ sakka) who spits out an incredible volume of work. There was, for example, a rumor that he had three desks in his study, each designated by a different pseudonym. As he worked, it was said he moved from one desk to the next. His zenshû (complete works) contributed to the formation of this legend as the “monster writer with three names.” Published by Shinchôsha from 1933 to 1935 in sixteen volumes, it was titled Hitori sannin zenshû (Complete Works: One Man as Three) and subtitled “Complete Works of the Author Who has Three Names in One Person” to emphasize the writer’s multi-faceted talent. On the front cover of the zenshû, atop Kaitarô’s photograph, his three names are printed side by side in different typefaces, as if each typeface were the embodiment of respective authors.

Kaitarô’s modern way of dealing with modernity brought him fortune. He built a 100,000-yen mansion in Kamakura in 1935, and Shufu no tomo published an eleven-page article reporting its astonishing architectural detail.378 It was a three-story

appeared in the September 1924 issue of Zuihitsu, and “Bungaku no shokugyô-ka to saitei genkôryô mondai” appeared in the January 1929 issue of Shinchô.
378 Kaitarô had just finished his serialization of a romance novel titled “Chijô no seiza” (Constellations on Earth) for Shufu no tomo under the name of Maki Itsuma.
residence with 200 *tsubo* of floor space on 1,000 *tsubo* of land,\(^{379}\) and it was equipped with modern facilities like a boiler room, basement bar, and electric refrigerator. Kaitarô and Kazuko hired the best carpenters and artisans among the Ise Shrine carpenters to build the main gate and from Kyoto to do the roof. They also hired maids, a chauffeur, and even a cook from the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. Kaitarô played golf – a new sport in Japan, and he enjoyed driving one of the only two privately owned automobiles in Kanagawa prefecture. He told Wada Yoshie that he was planning to tunnel through a hill beside the house to make the drive to Tokyo easier.\(^{380}\) As this chapter discussed earlier, *Shinseinen* published six pieces of Kaitarô’s works in the January 1925 issue alone. While it was a rather minor periodical,\(^{381}\) major newspapers such as *Tokyo Nichinichi* and *Ôsaka Mainichi*, simultaneously serialized a Maki Itsuma romance in the morning edition and a Hayashi Fubô period novel in the evening edition.

Thus, Kaitarô used multiple names to simultaneously and effectively create multiple images of a single author. In short, a man might possess more than one identity because he understands identity as shifting and non-essentialist. Indeed the meaning of a name often resides in what others make of it. For Kaitarô, a name was like a hat to be exchanged and replaced depending upon the situation or the person with whom he was interacting.

\(^{379}\) Originally he planned to have it three times as large as the final plan, but his father made him decrease the size, being furious with his son’s overreaching vanity.


\(^{381}\) Even at its peak in the late 1920s, sources say that its greatest circulation was 400,000 copies. Youngsters in Tokyo were the primary customers.
6.7 The Ending

As a result of his success, Kaitarô ended up having to write many hours a day to satisfy publishers’ deadlines. Before he realized it, he was caught in the trap of the commercialism of a commodity society, and he met an untimely death at age thirty-five from a heart attack.382 Although his career was brief, and it was overshadowed later by writers who lived longer and produced more, nonetheless he played a significant role in challenging established conceptions about the dichotomy of high versus low-brow literature. When he died on June 29, 1935, the Japanese mass media reported the news sensationally.383 It was shocking news, not only because Kaitarô was young, but because his name had become a household word among the readers of major popular magazines and newspapers such as Chûô kôron, Yomiuri shinbun, Fujin kôron, Bungei shunjû and Kaizô.

At the time of his death, he was writing – under three pen names – for magazines with the biggest circulations in Japan. As Tani Jôji, he wrote for the popular magazine, Hinode; as Maki Itsuma, for Kôdan kurabu, Kîngu, Shufu no tomo, and the newspaper, Hôchi shinbun; and as Hayashi Fubô, for Kîngu, Fujî, and Shufu no tomo.384 His annual income reflects the fact that he was in high demand in the mass media. He had income from the sale of articles, short stories, serialized novels, and translations.

382 His Hitôri sannin zenshû (Complete Works of One Man as Three) was completed by Shînchôsha only twelve days before his death.
383 In addition to the reports of his death, several memorials appeared in such newspapers as Hôchi, Yomiuri, Chûgoku and periodicals such as Chûô kôron, Fujin kôron, Bungei, Shakai oyobi kokka, and Kôdan kurabu.
384 In a memorial in the Yomiuri shinbun, an unsigned columnist addresses Kaitarô as shijô bungaku-sha (市場文学者) (A Literary Man on the Market). Edogawa Ranpo also named him shôsetsu jitsugyô-ka (小説実業家) (Entrepreneur of the Novel) in Tantei shôsetsu shijûnen (Forty Years of Tantei shôsetsu).
There was also income from the republication of these works as monographs or as volumes of anthology sets such as *Nihon tantei shōsetsu zenshū* and *Sekai taishū bungaku zenshū*. According to the 1936 issue of *Asahi nenkan* (Asahi Almanac), Kaitarō’s annual income was 78,000 yen, an “unparalleled” amount for a writer.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^5\) In addition to the mansion in Kamakura, he also rebuilt the headquarters of *Hakodate shinbun* owned by his father, after the building burned in a fire in 1934. A story is also told that he financially supported the young military officers who later launched the February 26, 1936 Incident under the influence of Kita Ikki.\(^3\)\(^8\)\(^6\) Kita, it was said, regularly visited his mentor Yoshio after his graduation from Sado High School and was a fan of Kaitarō’s *Tange Sazen* series.

Kaitarō said he wrote the ’Merican-Jap stories in order to portray American society from the critical perspective of outsiders who exist on its edge. This marginality extends to Kaitarō’s presentation of his position in the literary world as well. He criticized the *bundan* establishment and kept his distance from, on the one hand, the artistic approach to literature of the Shin-kankaku-ha writers and, on the other, the political agenda of hard-core proletarian literature, which treated literature as a tool for...

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\(^3\) For purposes of comparison, note that he was earning approximately 100 times the starting annual salary for bank clerks. See *Nedanshi nenpyō: Meiji, Taisho, Showa* and *Bukka no sesō 100nen* for comparisons of prices and salaries. Tani’s sister recalls him holding a manuscript paper and declaring that he would surpass what Kikuchi Kan, his archrival, was making – namely, ten yen per page – to earn twelve yen per page. The issue of whether to regard writers as moneymakers began drawing the attention of writers and critics by the 1920s in the general context of a heightened interest in Marxist thought. See Satomi Ton’s “Bungei no shokugyō-ka ni tsuite” (On the Professionalization of Literary Art; 1924), as well as Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke’s “Geijutsu no shokugyō-ka ni tsuite” (On the Professionalization of Art; 1924) and “Bungaku no shokugyō-ka to saitei genkōryō mondai” (On the Professionalization of Literature and the Issue of the Minimum Wage for Manuscripts; 1929).

\(^3\)\(^8\) Muro Kenji argues this story is a legend concocted by Kaitarō’s brother Shirō. Also, concerning Kaitarō’s wife’s account of Kita Ikki visiting her to offer incense to Kaitarō’s mortuary tablet, Muro thinks it was not February 25, 1936, or the day before the 2.26 Incident, as she claimed. See *Muro Kenji, Odoru chiheisen: meriken jappu Hasegawa Kaitarō-den*. 287-288.
exposé and propaganda. Moreover, his presentation of his position as marginalized also resonated with his young readers, who often saw themselves as marginal in the new urban space of Japan. The position that Kaitarô took is a good example of what “the marginality that people choose as a venue of resistance.” When we stand in the midst of social issues, we do not have an eye to examine society critically. By staying at the periphery and inviting readers to experience marginality, we have the power to criticize the mainstream. The target readers of Shinseinen were youngsters in their late teens or twenties, who lived in the cities. For those who migrated from the countryside, their lives bore striking similarity to the life of immigrants going abroad with the hope of being successful yet who experienced loneliness and sense of alienation as marginalized persons.

Kaitarô believed that narrating stories from the perspective of ‘Merican-Japs provided a convenient modus operandi for critiquing society because this new and atypical or abnormal human group (hentai jinshu) is not assimilated completely into the “core of American life.” The resultant gap enables him to tell stories from a fresh perspective. This gap is evident in not only the content of the stories but also the language he uses. Frequently he uses dialogue, whether between two ‘Merican-Japs, ‘Merican-Japs and Anglo-Saxons, ‘Merican-Japs and lower-class European immigrants, or even an interior monologue between a man and himself, as in the case of the ‘Merican-Jap Sir Willard Ota. His narratives are also highly dialectic. In them the

387 bell hooks,
narrator often talks directly to his readers, asking for their opinions or agreement, and he replies as though he heard back. His language is not refined and elegant. Instead it is raw, colloquial, active and cheerful. His contemporaries compared his style to the new genre of popular music, Jazz. The noisy, garrulous image projected by his stories comes not only from the proliferation of words but also from the use of different languages in a sentence or a paragraph.

Conversations reflecting different cultural backgrounds produce a dissonance and a gap, but instead of smoothing over the differences by using one language, the author lets his different voices communicate by mixing languages whether English or Japanese, formal or vulgar, coded or decoded. This invented or hybrid language is emphasized by the constant reference to the special vocabularies of Japanese hobos (in the case of the ’Merican-Jap stories) and sailors (in “The Shanghaied Man”), as well by the pervasive use of rubi or furigana for glossing “foreign” terms or phrases.388

Speakers need to improvise on the spot when interacting with people of such different backgrounds on a daily basis. This was Kaitarô’s experience in America. Yet he also recognized this pattern emerging in urban space in Japan. The mixing of

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388 For example, “The Shanghaied Man” contains the verbalized place name, shanhai-suru (to shanghai), a slang term among seamen. In the ’Merican-Jap story titled “Bonsâ Jimî” (The Bouncer Jimmy), we can find such use of rubi as 熱い犬 (with the rubi in katanaka, ハトドッグ: referring to “hot dog”). 嘖嘖師 (with the rubi, ボンサ: “bouncer”), 無頼漢 (with the rubi, ごろつき: “hoodlum”) in HSZ, 16-17). “Kutsu” (Shoes) uses 駄目 (with the rubi, ウォン・ドウ: “Won’t do”) in HSZ, 22, and “Henpô” (Revenge) has such phrases as 「若い駄馬（ミュウル: mule）のように莫迦（ダム: dumb）な」(HSZ, 27), 「そりゃお知らないさ。You don’t tell me, now in Hell should I know?’ (HSZ, 30), 「俺（ミイ）は日本へ帰る」(HSZ, 32).
different languages – or of connecting dissimilar elements -- creates the “shock effect” that Walter Benjamin discusses as a character of popular literature.\footnote{Benjamin, “One-Way Street”}
CONCLUSION

The dominant narrative concerning modernism in Japan focuses on “high” literary expression, most notably poetry, fiction and drama by such writers as Yokomitsu Riichi, Kawabata Yasunari, Itô Sei, Ryûtanji Yû, Abe Tomoji and Hori Tasuo in the 1920s and early 1930s. Moreover, many critics adopt a conception of modernism as defined by Western precedents. Or to state the matter more precisely, perhaps, they approach Japanese texts through a hermeneutic of conformity to Western achievement. This approach has excluded considerable areas of Japanese literary production dating from the early part of the twentieth century and left them unexamined. As I have shown, the writers involved in the production of *tantei shôsetsu*, as well as the critical, commercial and cultural discourse about mystery fiction, saw themselves as deeply engaged with the forces of modernity. They championed the genre as a fundamentally superior means for addressing the complex of challenges facing young people in Japan during the 1920s and 30s, many of whom found themselves out of work upon graduating from higher education. In doing so, they demonstrated an awareness of, and a spirited disagreement with, the mainstream *bundan* figures of the naturalist lineage, the avant-garde high-art writers who are

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390 Of course, this does not mean these writers did not write vernacular literature. For example, Yokomitsu sought new expressions in popular literary style in the novel, *Shanghai*.
traditionally associated with modernism by the critical establishment, and the ideological orientation of proletarian literature. As this dissertation argues, the writers of *Shinseinen* were equally engaged in the same cultural processes as their fellow canonized modern writers were.

I have sought to reveal both the logic and the special orientation of the *Shinseinen* writers and critics as the means to advancing a larger argument about understanding the contours of “modanizumu” in Japanese literature and culture. More specifically, my attempt has been to challenge and complicate the established assumption of the unidirectional influence of Western practices on Japanese literature. I have done this by showing how the idea of “modernism” as a cultural notion is deeply rooted in the everyday life of youths in urban spaces in Japan. In other words, Japanese modernism should no longer be understood merely as an imitation or migration of Western literary inventions, but rather as a process of negotiation of historical and cultural concepts and circumstances specific to Japan. Indeed Japan held an intriguing status in world politics at the time: it was imperialist and industrialized, but not in the same way as Western powers because of its historical and cultural past. Examining vernacular expressions enables us to consider *modanizumu*, or Japanese modernism, as a process of negotiation with socio-historical forces. It asks us to examine how Japanese writers employed various strategies, both indigenous and foreign, to address social and political phenomena in their cultural specificity.

As a step toward that larger goal, Chapter One established the theoretical foundation for a conception of “vernacular modernism.” Through a discussion of the
popular film, *Madamu to nyōbô* (The Neighbor’s Wife and Mine: 1930), it illuminated ways in which popular literary production were engaged with the forces of commercialism and Westernization that had also shaped the development of canonical Japanese literature earlier in the twentieth century. While it is safe to say that all works by Japanese writers since the Meiji Restoration have been influenced by ideas, styles and techniques from the West, the relationship between writers and the phenomena of modernity in the 1920s-1930s clearly differed from the earlier period of 1860 to 1910, which featured a strong state-led and politically oriented approach to the process of Westernization/modernization.391 For the writers of the interwar years, modernity had begun to prevail in many aspects of everyday life. It was not merely the result of a unidirectional Western influence, but a consequence of changes wrought by the hastening pace of urbanization and the development of mass commodity society. Thus, the desire to move beyond the status quo of literary traditions and norms was driven less by artistic demands of following the West, but more importantly, by the need to find ways to survive as participants in a capitalist, commodity-oriented and consumerist society. Modernists felt the need to negotiate modernity not only in literature but also as individuals in modern times. Modern life put young writers in a situation where they were dealing with the capitalist world both as consumers and producers of literary art.

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391 By this, I do not mean that the early reaction to modernity was unreflective. Scholarship in the last two decades reveals that modernization during the Meiji Era was not so much a blind acceptance and imitation of Western achievements as presented in past scholarship. However, modernization was promoted by the government, and it had yet to mature to the point where it reached the level of everyday life.
The established picture of the interwar Japanese literary world has centered on the struggle between three contending literary camps – *bundan* pure literature, avant-garde literature and proletarian literature. However, when we consider the influence of capitalist society on people at large, together with the fact that writers were no exception to this influence, we cannot ignore “popular” and “commercial” literary works without seriously limiting our understanding of Japanese literary expression. Moreover, the revolutionary changes in the media such as the development of mass-printed and mass-distributed newspapers, books (*enpon*), magazines, records and radio plays, also vastly affected the processes of literary production.

After discussing the limitations of existing critical approaches to Japanese literature of the interwar years in Chapter Two, Chapter Three elaborated *Shinseinen*’s process of promoting and developing *tantei shôsetsu* as the most appropriate literary genre for negotiating modern urban living. In 1893, Kuroiwa Ruikô had made a modest claim for the genre as a kind of entertaining tale or low-brow literature that focused on reporting a crime rather than the aesthetics of depicting the human psyche. Consequently, he did not consider it a threat to the status quo of mainstream literary genres. By contrast, the *Shinseinen* critics and editors asserted the fundamental need and importance for the new and more modern genre. It should be emphasized once more that the magazine developed *tantei shôsetsu* as a modern genre not only through literary expressions (i.e., detective stories), but also by means of various other forms or cultural avenues such as critiques, printed discussions, informational articles on the most up-to-date science and technology, illustrations and photographs. Such a
multifaceted approach soon changed *Shinseinen* from a didactic *shūyō* magazine into a venue where the urban youth cult(ure) was invited to participate in the development of the genre itself both as readers and even as creators of the magazine.

Chapter Four examined the work of Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, a seminal intellectual leader of *Shinseinen* magazine who sought to provide information and guidance in cultivating critical and analytical thinking. Hirabayashi argued for the significance of the genre because it not only arose from and reflected the mechanization and scientification of society attendant upon modernity; even more importantly for Hirabayashi, its aesthetic/narrative structure promoted and cultivated readers’ capacity to view the process of modernization in critical ways. He even went so far as to claim that the high literature of the *bundan* of 1920 should be “completely exploded, rather than [merely] changed.”3 While he occasionally quoted from Western critics on detective fiction in his critical essays, he did so to advance his conviction that Japanese were now experiencing similar issues brought about by modernization. For that reason, he believed the formulae and styles argued for and supported by Western predecessors would be useful for the future generations of Japanese writers. At the same time, his own *tantei shōsetsu* stories embraced a socialist tone. For example, he was interested in depicting the ironic fate of ordinary citizens whose lives were manipulated by the judicial system or unfair police investigations.3 Nonetheless, he repeatedly expressed

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3 "Taishô 9-nen no bundan o hyōsu," *HHBHZ*, vol. 3, 482. Originally appeared in December 1920 issue of *Shinchô*. In 1920, Hirabayashi became the primary contributor to *Shinchô’s* column on literary criticism.

3 Consequently, Hirabayashi also disapproved of the prevalence of the light, satirical contés in the late 1920s to early 1930s that appeared in the pages of *Shinseinen*. See “Tantei shōsetsuka ni nozomu: 264
his doubt about a hard-core proletarian approach to literary expression. His attempt to find an ideal balance between art and politics was cut short due to his premature death.

While having started as a commercial magazine attempting to give didactic advice to youngsters (*seinen*), *Shinseinen* quickly transformed itself to a sleek magazine for modern boys (*mobo*) in search of increasingly individualistic pleasures, whether in the latest urban fashion, music or ideology. Interestingly enough, the critical and analytical young minds that *Shinseinen* sought to cultivate soon turned its attention back upon the *tantei shōsetsu* genre itself. As a result, the dominant approach shifted from a highly logical, puzzle-solving type of detective fiction to the deconstruction of formulae associated with the genre. Among those variants, Tokugawa Musei’s “Obetai buruburu jiken” (The Case of *Obetai-buruburu*; No. 5, 1927) stands as a successful example of such parody, wherein the story cleverly subverts what was claimed to be the essential structure, style and storyline of good detective fiction. The most commercially successful writer of the time, Hasegawa Kaitarô – who was discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 under his separate pseudonyms: Tani Jôji, Maki Itsuma and Hayashi Fubô – played a vital role in the shift from a classically orthodox approach to the more reflexive subversion of the *tantei shōsetsu* genre, and this led to an increase in the magazine’s sales during the latter half of the 1920s. Kaitarô contributed to *Shinseinen* three types of work: translations of Western mystery fiction (under the pen name, Maki Itsuma), short stories on ’Merican-Japs (under the name, Tani Jôji), and contés (also as Tani Jôji). He grew up in Hokkaidô, witnessing his journalist father, Yoshio get involved in

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akumade genshuku na” (What I Demand of *Tantei Shōsetsu* Writers: Maintaining the Seriousness), *HHBHZ*, vol. 3, 404.
the politics, first with his pen and then by successfully running for local political office. Eventually Kaitarô crossed the Pacific to study at an American college. He soon quit school, however. He wandered around different parts of the United States for four years, when he returned to Japan and began writing for commercial media. His experience in America taught him that a writer was deeply embedded in the era of high-speed, mass production and consumption, both as a producer and consumer of commodities. Chapter Five focused on his life as emblematic of the generation of readers targeted by *Shinseinen*.

Chapter Six examined selected popular literary works by Kaitarô written under the pen name, Tani Jôji. It traced his development from a more orthodox approach to *tantei shôsetsu*, as exemplified in his short story, “The Shanghaied Man,” to a highly parodic use of the genre, as seen in his famous “’Merican-Jap” stories. Although the ’Merican-Jap stories were never categorized as *tantei shôsetsu* and were organized under the section name, “*yomimono*” (light, entertaining reading) in the pages of *Shinseinen*, the stories can also be read as subverting the conventions of orthodox detective fiction. To adapt what Tony Hilfer has said of the “crime novel” to my own particular area of interest, the ’Merican-Jap stories and other “nansensu” crime tales that dominated the pages of *Shinseinen* in the late 1920s to early 1930s “extend[ed], invert[ed], and generally play[ed] off against the conventions of its better-known parental genre.”

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394 For extensive arguments on “crime novels” which Tony Hilfer argues to differ from detective fiction in many significant aspects, see Hilfer’s *The Crime Novel: A Deviant Genre* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990).
Over the course of this dissertation, I have sought to characterize a form of Japanese vernacular modernism through Shinseinen’s development and promotion of *tantei shōsetsu*. Such a focus entails a reappraisal of the dominant critical modes of understanding the phenomenon of *modanizumu* in Japan. Equally important, it opens up avenues of possible future research. For example, detailed analyses of Hirabayashi’s works, as well as study of *tantei shōsetsu* pieces contributed by proletarian writers, will be helpful in dissecting the interrelations between proletarian and commercial literary venues. Such considerations will enlarge our understanding of literary production during the interwar period by bringing attention to proletarian works published outside canonical venues and their coterie periodicals. Similarly, further discussion of both orthodox and variant/inverted *tantei shōsetsu* by other writers will demonstrate the range of approaches employed by the genre as strategies for negotiating modernity. Such writers include Edogawa Rampo (1894-1965) and Kōga Saburō (1893-1945), whose debut works from the early to mid-1920s were praised as orthodox *tantei shōsetsu* of the elaborate puzzle-solving type. Likewise, Tokugawa Musei (1894-1971)’s “Obetai buruburu jiken” (1927) constitutes an example of a *nansensu* piece. Finally, the mesmerizing play with the formulae of mystery fiction by Hisao Jūran (1902-1957) in *Mato* (Evil Metropolis: 1937-38), as well as his short psychological piece, “Hamuretto” (Hamlet: 1946), demonstrate the continued significance of *tantei shōsetsu* as a popular literary genre up to and during World War II.

Further analysis of Kaitaro’s ’Merican-Jap stories will also help delineate the importance of “borderline” fictions within the larger sphere of modern Japanese
literature. These texts, written from the perspective of the edge of (but not outside) Japanese society constitute a unique body of work that opens up new vistas for the study of modern Japanese cultural production. As Roger Bromley has argued with regard to “migrant” writing,

This is not just a matter of finding a voice or articulating new models of cultural literacy in a counter-hegemonic fashion, but of understanding the specific social and historical conditions within which narrative forms are both produced and consumed. “Migrant” writing, a product of flux, moving identities and sometimes conditions of near illegibility, works with what might be called ‘an archaeology of identity’ – culturally, temporally, and spatially multi-layered.395

Finally, let me note that Shinseinen’s significance also lies in introduction of Modernist Western cultural practices and ideals into Japan. This issue has been addressed in the scholarship of Minami Hiroshi, Honma Nagayo, Takita Yoshiko, Shinseinen Kenkyūkai (Shinseinen Research Group) and others.396 In my view, however, the significance of those stories, essays and journalistic articles stems not merely from their role in creating an awareness of the latest fads in Western countries. Consequently, it remains to consider the function of such writings as a means of providing young urbanites with the knowledge and analytical methods of thinking essential to assessing and accommodating the rapid social, political and cultural changes occurring in Japan during the interwar years. Only in this way can we gain a fuller

396 See Bibliography.
sense of both the contours and the larger meaning of modern Japanese literary production.
Hadn’t he gotten himself out of bed at least once in the middle of the night? Tossing and turning because of the moaning sounds made by the roommate sleeping next to him, he had stepped briefly into the back garden from the edge of the veranda, hadn’t he? “I’m sure I did,” Tamekichi told himself. It could not have been for long, however. Exhausted from a whole day’s search for work, he crawled back in bed almost immediately. Or so it seemed. He could not be sure. But he knew he heard the moans of the man with whom he shared the room. From the minute that Tamekichi met him, the man had been in misery. That was on account of a bad tooth, he said. He let an unlicensed dentist pull it the previous day.
Tamekichi drifted into the seamen’s inn nearest the wharf after looking at other lodging houses in Kobe. These inns, in addition to being places to sleep, served as employment agencies for jobless sailors. Rooms were shared, but when Tamekichi met his roommate for the first time, the man had nothing to say. He stared at Tamekichi. “You’re bothering me.” That was the look on his face.

Tamekichi heard the man was a third-rank engine oiler who was back in port after working on the S.S. Toyo’oka, a transport ship that plied local waters. The two men had nothing in common because Tamekichi was a deckhand who specialized in long distance voyages. Perhaps that explained why he decided not to worry when the man continued to groan through the night.

When Tamekichi woke up after the long, restless night, he found his futon reeked of oil and sweat. As he looked about the room, he saw the man’s bedding was still spread out, but it was empty. So what? Why should he care? For a man of the sea, he had been on land far too long. What mattered to him — indeed what he longed for more than anything in the world — was the deep, low roar of the vibration of a ship’s engines. That was what occupied his mind. It was always in the mornings, in the moments after he woke up, that he missed the sound most.

He was prepared to do anything, even if it meant apprenticing himself as a sailor on a boat headed for Australian waters or being a “gofer” on a ship bound for the United States. Anything would be okay, so long as he could get on board the ship today. After a hasty breakfast, he rushed to the room where jobs were posted. Alas, there was only one listing on the blackboard, and it was for a second-class cook on the Sakhalin
ferryboat named the *Blagoev*. The gang of “regulars” was already up. There was a huge table placed in front of the blackboard. They always sat on top of it, sitting barefoot and crosslegged in a circle. It was still early in the day, but a dice box was at the center of the table. The dice had been shaken, and the box turned over. The men were ready to gamble.

“Place your bets. Everybody, place your bets.” Sawaguchi appeared to have appointed himself as banker. Not very long ago he was fired for being a troublemaker aboard the *S.S. Chin’yô*.

“Place your bets, but don’t break your old man’s heart!” rambled one of them.

“How true!” echoed another. “A lantern maker doesn’t make any money ’til he goes to work, pulls out his ‘paper’ and slaps it on the frame…."

Tamekichi stood there, absent-mindedly watching the men gamble their money away. One sailor, nicknamed “the *S.S. Kenpuku*” after the name of his previous ship, was winning every hand.

“All right now, young fellows. Don’t let yourselves get carried away.” It was O-kin, the old woman who owned the lodging house. “We have a ‘visitor’,” she said, pointing her chin knowingly over her shoulder. “Don’t you boys have anything better to do in the morning? …. Anyway, Tamekichi, I want you to come with me.”

As they walked across the dirt floor toward the main entrance where she had an office, the old proprietress lowered her voice and whispered in Tamekichi’s ear. She kept repeating herself.
“Now, look honest. That’s the best. Anybody can do something silly on the spur of the moment. I’m sure it’s not serious. As I say, just be your honest self.”

Tamekichi had cut his finger. How had that happened? He felt glum without knowing why. He seemed to know what was going on; at the same time, he understood nothing at all. It was an odd feeling. The morning sunlight shining into O-kin’s office was so bright it almost made his eyes hurt.

“Are you the one they call Tamé?” The man spoke in a deep, booming voice. Tamekichi did not reply. He blinked and looked up. The man was in his forties. He was dressed in western-style clothes.

“You know a fellow named Sakamoto Shintarō, don’t you?”

The man fired one question after another. Sakamoto Shintarō was Tamekichi’s roommate last night. Tamekichi nodded in silent agreement. Something deep inside him told him there was something ominous about the man’s attitude. He thought it best to say as little as possible.

“I can see I’ve got a stubborn one,” said the man. He grabbed Tamekichi by the arm. The gamblers got up from the table. The door to the blackboard room was partially open. They looked terribly surprised as they vied to peek through the opening at the doorway.

“I’m with the Kannonzaki Police Station. I think you’d better come along with me.”

Tamekichi was cool, preternaturally cool. While the others were on their feet and making a great fuss, it all seemed curiously unrelated to him. He watched
everything with a cold, objective eye. A smile played about his lips. It was almost funny to watch them. But the smirk on his face made him look like a real pro of a villain. The detective, who liked to talk tough and use leading questions to intimidate his suspects, felt more confident that he had found the right man.

“Let’s get moving.”

Excited by his success, the detective was eager to get back to the police station. By now he was practically pulling Tamekichi to the door.

“Okay, I’ll go. All I have to do is go with you, right? You’ll have the answers to your questions soon enough.”

“Get a move on it!” The detective gave Tamekichi a shove.

Tamekichi brushed the detective’s hand aside. “What the hell do you think you’re doing! Damn you!” When he swore, he used English instead of Japanese.

The detective’s hand flew up and hit Tamekichi on the face. “Resist, and you’ll regret it.”

“Now, now, officer, let’s not get excited . . . .” The boss of the crew from the S.S. Africa saw what was happening. He rushed over to O-kin’s office. “The young fellow said he had no objections. He’s prepared to go along quietly. So what’s the problem?”

“Look, numbskull, what do you know?” By now the detective was breathing hard. He was almost out of breath. “Haven’t you boys figured it out? Sakamoto Shintarō was murdered last night.”
Everyone gasped. But most surprised of all --- or at least it seemed that way --- was Tamekichi.

“NO!?! That can’t be.”

“Don’t feign innocence with me!” the detective stormed at Tamekichi.

“Regulations require that I search you before I take you in. Step over here!”

With that he reached into the pocket of Tamekichi’s work pants and pulled out a penknife. The name “Sakamoto” was carved into it in roman letters.

“It doesn’t mean what you think it does!” Tamekichi’s face turned white.

“Keep your mouth shut!”

The place on Tamekichi’s finger suddenly caught the detective’s eye. “What’s the bandage for? It’s stained with blood, isn’t it? Never mind. Don’t explain it now, because you’re coming with me. Anything you have to say, you can tell to the detective in the duty room. Get moving!”

As he was led from the lodging house, Tamekichi turned and looked over his shoulder at the sailors standing behind him. They were in an uproar.

It was a gloriously warm autumn day. Little waves of heat rippled in the air. Along the waterfront, gangs of stevedores were shouting back and forth. Foreign sailors, in groups of two or three, were walking down the street that ran along the water. Tamekichi himself was surprised at how cool and unperturbed he felt at being escorted in public by the detective, who stuck close to his side. He was past caring now. The faces of the passersby struck him as silly. He felt as if the man being led down the street was someone other than himself. No, it was not Tamekichi that he knew who was
experiencing all this. His sole regret — and it was a strong one — was that, for the foreseeable future, it was clear that he would not be shipping out to sea.

A detective from the Kannonzaki Police Station patrolling the street along the waterfront at dawn this morning had been startled to find a large pool of blood on the sidewalk in front of the seamen’s lodging house run by O-Kin. The drops of blood ran in an unbroken line for another fifty meters to the south. There he found footprints in the mud. Pieces of torn clothing were scattered in the vicinity. One could easily surmise there had been a fight. No question about it. An oil tanker had been anchored at the wharf. It had set sail, leaving behind an empty dock --- and the dark, oily waters that stretched from the foot of the quay all the way out to sea. On top of the stone wall of the quay, the detective found a sailor’s passbook and a pawn ticket that belonged to Sakamoto. Sakamoto must have dropped them.

The authorities immediately launched an investigation. Because the motive for the crime was unclear, it was perfectly natural --- albeit too bad for Tamekichi --- that they considered Sakamoto’s roommate of the previous night as the prime suspect. Mori Tamekichi. He must be the murderer. But even after dropping nets over the side of the quay and sending down divers, they were unable to find any further trace of Sakamoto, let alone a body. They were waiting for high tide, when they would extend their search to the bottom of the bay by dragging it in cooperation with the harbor police.

When Tamekichi contemplated the fact that the police had the penknife as evidence against him, and there was the cut on his finger, he was sure he was fighting a
lost cause. He could see it all now. There he was, mounting the scaffold and standing before a hangman’s noose. His feet ground to a halt. He found it was impossible to make them move. More than anything else, he was loath to abandon the call of the sea. At the end of the street was the old stone building of the police station. It was waiting for him. A breeze carrying the exotic odors of life at sea grazed past his nose. The blue waters of the ocean spread to the left of him; clouds, swelling into great peaks, floated above them.

The sea was calling him. Tamekichi had left Naoetsu Bay in Niigata at the age of nine. He had sailed under flags from all over the world for twenty-some years. The sea was his home. It was like the bosom of a loving mother.

He heard an anchor being hoisted. He saw a black flag with a white rectangle in the center flutter as it was raised on a foreign ship along the quay. It meant the ship was about to sail. It only took one glance at the ship for him to recognize the freighter belonged to the Norwegian company PN. Three sailors with purchases tucked under their arms passed hurriedly by him. They did not want to miss getting back on board. The strong smell of pipe tobacco stung his nose. Images of harbors in foreign lands rose before his eyes. They floated in the air like phantoms that appear and then disappear. That was when he made up his mind.

“This shoe is pinching my foot.”

Dropping to the ground and pretending to untie his laces, Tamekichi seized the opportunity to grab the detective by the leg and knock him over.
Tamekichi was desperate. He thought he heard angry voices behind him. He must have bumped into people walking down the street. Summoning every ounce of strength in his body, he raced toward the foreign sailors who were about to climb the rope ladder to the Norwegian ship.

“Let me on!” he shouted. Dumbfounded, the sailors let him through.

“Get me aboard your ship! Somebody’s after me. I’ll go anywhere. I’ll do anything. I’ve sailed Norwegian ships before.”

It was Tamekichi’s fluent English that saved him. Moreover, he spoke the brand of English understood the world over only by men who sail the seas. He knew all the slang that sailors used.

“Aye, mate, you must be a sailor without a home!” The chief mate called to him from the ship’s side.

“I’m a second-class deckhand,” replied Tamekichi.

The chief mate thought for a moment. “All right, we’ll let you on.”

Tamekichi climbed the steep side of the ship like a monkey. Using the hatchway to the front of the galley, he ducked into the side bunker.

Seconds later, the detective was alongside the ship. He was shouting in Japanese. “He’s a killer! Don’t you understand? These damn Westerners! What do they think they’re doing? He’s killed someone!” he shouted. But he arrived a minute too late. He was out of breath.
“Don’t you understand, you idiots. He’s a KILLER! Hand him over! Bring him down here this instant!”

The sailors standing at the gunwale of the ship burst into laughter. They could not understand him, but they found his agitation hilarious.

“Ler-ler-ler!” shouted one of them, mimicking the detective.

The rope ladder --- the “jacob” --- was hoisted up.

“All aboard!” shouted the chief helmsman from the bridge.

“All’s in,” came the reply from the boatswain.

The signal bell to the engine-room was sounded. The “screw,” or propeller, of the ship began to rotate and churn the waters of the bay.

More bells sounded. “Scatter ’round!” The crew split up and moved in every direction, casting off “ropes” and pulling out “bitts.” The second mate was at the stern.

“All right. Here we go.”

The Victor Karenina, flying the flag of Norway, pulled from the quay as a winch cranked in the heavy chains of the anchor.

“Sah-yo-nah-ra!” one of the sailors shouted to the detective, who was left standing on the pier, furious because he was unable to reclaim his prisoner. Just then, a blast on the ship’s whistle rent the air. It drowned out the laughter of the sailors on the deck.

II.
The chief mate drew up a dummy contract. When it was time for Tamekichi to sign it in front of the captain, he wrote “Shintarô Sakamoto.” He really did not know why he had signed Sakamoto’s name instead of his own.

“Sakamoto” was assigned to cleaning the officer’s saloon once a day and to carrying meals to the sailors and stokers working below deck. He also was to help tar the steel plates, mend the covers on the lifeboats, and use wire to lash down bundles stored on deck.

Kobe began to fade into the mist. By now it looked more like a mirage than a city. Tamekichi felt free at last. He quickly settled into a routine that was familiar to him. He could not have been happier fitting a wrench to bolts. Or being under the beautiful sun and hearing the sea whisper to him from the broadsides of the boat. Moreover, he was happy to have escaped the clutches of the Japanese police with all of their ridiculous and unfounded accusations. But far, far more important was the joy that he experienced at finding himself in a place where he truly belonged.

Perhaps he was being irresponsible by not doing what was best for his own future --- and clearing his name --- but his long life as a vagabond had taught him to adopt an devil-may-care attitude toward himself.

The sailors called him “Saki,” and they found him to be helpful mate.

In the afternoon, the sky began to look threatening. Tamekichi joined the sailors in making the rounds of the ship to secure the seven hatches to the storage area below by inserting wedges between the door and the door bar. Tamekichi was the only one who could drive in a wedge with a single blow. The sailors were impressed, and they
asked where he worked before. He was only too happy to answer their questions in crisp “cockney” English. And nobody asked why he sought refuge on the ship. For sailors, whose nationality is very often unknown, the issue was immaterial. It was no problem at all. Only that once, when Tamekichi was called to the captain’s office to sign the contract, did he have to lie and explain that he “had run away from his uncle’s house for personal reasons.”

“Shin Saki, second-class mate on the Victor Karenina.” Tamekichi repeated his new name and rank to himself. He could not hide the grin that spread across his face from ear to ear.

It was arranged that the cook, the officers’ cabin boy, and Tamekichi would share a room facing the starboard passageway. Tamekichi was assigned to take meals to the lower-ranking sailors in the mess room at the stern of the ship before they came off duty. Because clearing the tables was the apprentice’s job, the only crewmembers that he had contact with were those with whom he worked on the deck. In other words, he had not seen any of the engine-room workers. It was the custom among deckhands to look down on these men who, their bodies smeared with coal, ashes and grease, writhed like insects “down below” in the hold of the ship. Ever since he started sailing as a lad, he too came to believe “the cockroaches” in the engine room belonged to a completely different class of sailor. They were never smartly dressed the way sailors ought to be. That was why he never gave them any special attention. But he did ask his roommate, the cabin boy, for details about the ship and its crew. There were seventeen deckhands and twenty-one engine-room workers. The ship was heading straight south to take on a
load of guano at Thursday Island. It would sail round to Hawaii, then head to Grace Harbor on the West Coast of North America to take on a supply of lumber; there, it would wait for the ice to thaw and then sail up the Yukon River to the Klondike. Kobe was the first stop in a long overseas voyage; after that, the ship’s destination would be decided by whomever chartered it next. The Victor Karenina was a tramp steamer. It was ready to go anywhere in the world — at the behest of even one telegram.

It was typical of men who worked on long distance runs to be deeply moved each time their ship entered or left port. On the surface, they looked coarse and tough, but underneath they were sentimental. Strange as it may seem, Tamekichi felt nothing but relief and joy as the ship sailed away from land. As his sighs of relief grew stronger, his mind became increasingly vulnerable to the powers of autosuggestion --- even if he himself did not understand what was happening.

It was not until he finally climbed into his box-like berth, wrapped himself in a blanket, and closed his eyes, that Mori Tamekichi had his first moment in which to stop and shudder in horror at the crime he was suspected of committing. He reached for Sakamoto’s penknife in his pocket. It was cold to the touch, and it unnerved him. He felt utterly powerless. Before he knew it, he found he was the victim of a perverse state of mind in which he truly believed he did commit the crime of which he was accused. How many people in the world with “clean hands” have confessed in a moment of weakness to groundless charges that were no more than the figment of someone else’s imagination? He was sure there were many. And once they confessed, what was done was done. As a result, they were cast into oblivion — all in the name of the Law! It was
in fainthearted moments such as the one that he experienced now that people allowed themselves to get carried away, and they were never heard from again.

In his case, he had neither the will nor the stubbornness to insist upon his innocence — if in fact he really was innocent. He felt there was no evidence to prove his lack of guilt. Still, he was filled with happiness at being back at sea. He tried to fathom the facts behind the murder case, but the effort was all in vain. The more he thought about the facts, the murkier they became. Did he really kill Sakamoto?

In any event, what did it matter now? He was completely cut off from Japan. Sakamoto was dead. And Mori Tamekichi, who was wanted by the Japanese Police as the murderer, also ceased to exist.

Tamekichi told himself he would lead a new life under the assumed name of Sakamoto Shintarô. “I won’t leave this ship for the time being. And then, as I switch from one ship to another, my nationality will become more and more ambiguous. No one will know what it is.”

As the youngest son he had no family responsibilities, and as a single man who lived a “bohemian” life, he had no abiding attachments in Japan. And look at a map --- Japan was just a string of islands scattered across the ocean. Running at a speed of eleven and a quarter knots, the ship would reach the open seas off the shoals of Tosa on Shikoku Island very soon. It was already dark, but he could see the foam of the waves break at eighteen degrees. They broke into a white spray that slashed against his porthole window. The low rotation noise of the engine was like a lullaby to his ears.
Mori Tamekichi, a.k.a. Sakamoto Shintarō, snored gently as he drifted into a peaceful sleep.

He did not know how long he slept.

When he woke up, the waters were calm, and dawn was breaking. The ship was anchored in port. He looked out the porthole. They must have put into Karatsu or some other harbor to escape the typhoon. But, wait, what were those towers in the morning mist? No, they weren’t waves --- they were the smokestacks of the Kawasaki Shipyards in Kobe.

“We’re back in Kobe!?! We must have turned around on account of the storm!”

Experience told him, however, that a huge 6,000-ton ship like the *Victor Karenina* never returned to the port it departed from --- even when there was a storm that made a barometer needle stand on end.

The chief mate and the boatswain entered the cabin.

“Saki, they say you are a murderer!” The boatswain barked.

“Keep your voice down,” said Tamekichi. As he reached for the knife in his pocket, he started to shake all over. Above all else he wanted to stay at sea. The desire was making a coward of him.

“Ha, ha, ha!” the chief mate laughed.

“We were told to return to Kobe in a wireless received from our agent and the maritime police. They say you were being escorted to the police station when you jumped aboard our ship. Is that right? Ha, ha, ha!”
Tamekichi was at a loss to know what to think. Suddenly he saw the hangman’s noose sway before his eyes. Images of his injured finger and Sakamoto’s penknife whirled round and round him as he stood on the scaffold. At the same time, he saw a free life at sea opening its arms to embrace him.

“The maritime police launch just left the pier. The police officers will be here any minute.”

Tamekichi’s face turned white. Collapsing across the bed, he buried it in the covers.

The chief mate and the boatswain were discussing something in a low voice. They turned to him. The boatswain wanted to know what he wanted to do.

“You wanna hide?” the chief mate asked him.

Tamekichi was wound as tight as a spring as he reached up and grabbed the chief mate’s shirt. He was so desperate that he could hardly talk.

“All right, then. We’ll hide you as best as we can. Somehow or other, I think it’s gonna be okay,” said the chief mate with a smile. Then he let out a roar. It was a big belly laugh.

“Shall we hand him over to one of the boys in the engine-room to help him out?” asked the boatswain.

“That’s a good idea. Get ‘Boston.’”

The boatswain was out of the room in a flash. He shouted down the “cylinder” to the engine room.

“Boston? Where’s ‘Midnight Bos-to-on’?”
Pretty soon a black man, who was nearly seven feet tall, came lumbering into the room with an oily rag in his hand.

“Hide this fellow. Get him out of here.” The chief mate motioned with his chin.

Boston took a quick glance at Tamekichi. He started to lead him out of the room. Just then, the cabin boy rushed in.

“Chief mate, sir, the police are here.”

They were voices coming from the starboard deck, and they were speaking in Japanese. Tamekichi ducked under Boston’s arm and flew as fast as he could down the steel stairway to the engine room. Since there was trouble on board, nobody was in the engine room stoking the furnaces. Tamekichi tried to hide by climbing into water filter, but he slipped on the greasy floor. Lying on his side, he tried to slide behind the Wier evaporator.

“That’s no good. They’ll find you right away!” cried the black man. “Get up on the donkey boiler and crawl down ’to the space by the watertight bulkhead. There’s no time to lose!”

Tamekichi climbed from the low tunnel to the top of the donkey boiler. It was covered in ashes that were an inch thick. Then, he climbed into a hole so small that he had to stick in one leg at a time. He squeezed into the space alongside the boiler, which was surrounded by water pipes. The sides of the unfired boiler were ice cold. He heard Boston shut the tunnel door and walk away. The air inside the boiler was so close it was as if it had solidified. He had to force his body into a very unnatural position, but as long as he continued to focus on the eerie but tranquil silence that emanated from below
the ship’s water level, he found he could forget the pain. No, he refused to even think about it. How in hell had he managed to end up like this? He no longer knew. What’s more, he had ceased to ask the question.

*Tap, tap, tap, scraaatch.*

From out of nowhere, there came a sound. It was like someone scratching a piece of metal. It took him by surprise.

There it was again.

*Tap, tap, tap, scraaatch.*

The sound seemed to come from inside the boiler. Or was it from the ventilator in the furnace down below?

*Tap, tap, tap, scraaatch, scratch.*

All of a sudden, Tamekichi understood what he was hearing. It had to be the telegraphic code of the wireless, universal ABC code by which every nation communicated. All sailors knew it, and they often tapped out messages on a tabletop with their fingers. No question about it! The tapping was coming from inside the donkey boiler!

Suddenly, there was the sound of feet in the boiler room. He could hear the chief mate say, “See, nobody’s here. Aha, ha, ha!”

After several verbal exchanges between the police and the chief mate, everyone left. Tamekichi pressed his ear to a water pipe and tried to be as still as he could. He might as well have been dead he was so quiet.

*Tap, tap, scraaatch ....*
The message was louder than before. Without even having to think, he decoded it.

“S.O.S!”

Wasn’t that the signal used by all ships in distress?!

He was startled. He took the penknife out of his pocket and tapped on the pipe.

“What is the matter...?”

Tap, scraaatch, tap, tap, tap, scraaatch.

“What is that...?” came the reply.

Shanghai?

“What is that...?” He tapped on the pipe again.

“Have been Shanghaied.”

Shanghaied?! To kidnap a man on the street by force. To cart him off to a ship. And once the ship left port, and there was no more contact with land, to make him work at hard labor. That was what was meant by the phrase “to shanghai.” It was a secret practice, but it was known to tramp steamers all over the world. As the kidnappers feared revelation of their crime, they never let shanghaied men back on land again. For the shanghaied, it meant a life in the hold of a ship. It meant a life forever without sunlight. It meant twenty-four hours a day of labor “down below.” It meant bad food and all manner of maltreatment. It was rare for anyone to survive more than six months. Only a very few did.
Tamekichi was almost crazy with fear as he slid along the walls of the boiler and reached the door where the noise came from. There was a handle on the outside. It made it easy to open the door.

The putrid smell of human excrement and piss and sweat assailed him. It was enough to make him sick. Deep within the darkness, Tamekichi heard a voice. It emanated from an old, frayed blanket. The blanket was covered in crumbs left from eating pieces of stale bread.

“Is that you, Tamé?”

“Keep your eyes covered! Don’t look at the light, whatever you do!” Tamekichi shouted at the figure.

More dead than alive, the man crawled into a place where Tamekichi could see him. He kept his eyes closed tightly, but Tamekichi knew who he was --- it was Sakamoto Shintarô! --- the man that he was supposed to have murdered.

“I can’t believe it. You’re alive?!”

“That’s right. I left the inn that night because my tooth was bleeding and my jaw hurt like hell. I was going to see if I could get that quack doctor out of bed. That’s when they caught me. They shanghaied me. Hey, the ship has stopped. Where are we? Port Arthur? Vladivostok? Where are we?”

“Kobe.”

“Kobe? How can that be? I thought the engines were running for four or five days at least . . . .”

“This is what happened . . . .”
Tamekichi began to explain. “I escaped to the ship because the police said I killed you. See? Then they sent a radio message from land, telling the ship to return to port. That penknife of yours --- you know, the one I borrowed to slice a pear --- it’s caused me no end of trouble. On top of everything else, I cut my finger with it.”

Holding the knife in a backhand grip as he sat on the steel steps in front of the closed bunker, Tamekichi started to grin like a lunatic. He had heard the call of the sea all right. In fact, it was almost as if he had boarded the ship and set sail in order to save Sakamoto, who had managed to stay alive, if only just barely. He was also happy he could prove his innocence at last. But it also meant they had no choice but to disembark and deal with the authorities. Here he had finally gotten out to sea, but he would have to take this golden opportunity and throw it away. He would have to abandon what would never come his way again no matter how hard he searched for it. He hated Sakamoto. Why was he obliged to help the bastard, especially after all the trouble he caused him? Wasn’t he supposed to be dead, having been murdered by none other than himself? Tamekichi’s mind kept turning the idea over and over. “That’s right. I killed him just like the detective said. How dare this pale ghost suddenly wander out of nowhere and ruin everything for me! Tamekichi was furious.

“What if he were to go and die just like he was supposed to? Wouldn’t it be a whole lot better? I’d be able to sail away to all the distant lands that I long for. --- Wait a second! It may not be too late. No, it’s not too late at all. There’s no problem. He’s as good as dead already. If not, he might as well be. --- As a matter of fact, he is dead. According to the evidence, I’m the lowly bastard who murdered him. --- And here we
are, standing in front of the furnace of this freighter, in a place where the arm of the law can never reach. — That’s right, now is my perfect chance. — But what kind of chance is it? — Mori Tamekichi is supposed to be the author of his own life. It was precisely because of the ‘murder’ that I was able to get aboard this ship. That’s right. To go abroad. To go to foreign lands. And, yes, even to wield this cursed penknife! ---Yes, everything has worked out like they told me it would. ---Yes, it was the detective’s idea. He’s the one who suggested it all. Everything is going to be just like he said it would.”

Tamekichi stood up.

“Before we try to get outa here, can you get me a drink of water? Water . . . I need a drink of water.” Sakamoto was groaning.

III.

Everything was just as the police said. Sakamoto Shintarô was dead. At the same time, a man named Mori Tamekichi had disappeared from the face of the earth. Gone. Lost forever.

Shortly after the Norwegian ship, Victor Karenina weighed anchor at Kobe and set out for the high seas, a big bundle wrapped in sailcloth, with a heavy weight attached, was thrown overboard into the surging waves.

On deck, whistling and smiling, Sakamoto Shintarô bid his final adieu to Japan.

Following the time-honored custom that is the unwritten code among seamen the world over, neither Sakamoto Shintarô, who was the “shanghaied man,” nor
Sakamoto Shintarô, who was “the man who shanghaied himself,” ever stepped on land again.

– Translated by Kyoko Omori
APPENDIX B

The Cover Illustration from *Hitōri san-nin zen-shū* (One Man as Three), Hasegawa Kaitarō’s 16-Volume Complete Works published in 1934-1935 by Shinchōsha.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Complete Works or Selected Works of Which Titles Are Abbreviated in Footnotes and the Body of the Text


(There are two versions of Hitori sannin zenshû: The first was published by Shinchôsha in 1934-1935 in sixteen volumes; and the second was published by Kawade Shobô in 1969-1970 in 6 volumes. This dissertation uses the Kawade Shobô version, and more specifically volume 3 which contains 'Merican-Jap stories.)

Others


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Mori Jôji. “Furottosamu karuchâ wandâ rando” (Flotsam Culture Wonderland).


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