VISIONS AND NARRATIVES:
MODERNISM IN THE PROSE WORKS OF
YOSHIYUKI EISUKE, MURAYAMA TOMOYOSHI,
YUMENO KYUSAKU, AND OKAMOTO KANOKO

DISSERTATION

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This dissertation discusses Japanese modernism in prose literature in the 1920s and 1930s. Introducing the social, artistic, and literary milieu of Japan at the time, it examines different aspects of Japanese prose modernism through the works of the four following writers: Yoshiyuki Eisuke (1906-1940), Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977), Yumeno Kyusaku (1889-1936) and Okamoto Kanoko (1889-1939).

Yoshiyuki portrays the beautiful facade of urban life and its dark and corrupted nature in Dada-influenced narratives that are often bizarre and unconventional. Despite his fierce criticism of capitalism, he remained opposed to proletarian literature and supported the "art for art's sake" movement.

Murayama, who was originally an avant-garde visual artist, came to participate in the proletarian literature movement. Yet, his writing style is as experimental and metaphorical as that advocated by the "art for art's sake" movement, and it goes beyond the simple categorization of proletarian literature.
Yumeno, an ultra-nationalist writer, wrote a series of detective stories from a village in Kyushu. Through these works, Yumeno denounced urbanism and intellectualism and metaphorically warned that modern Japan, in its rush to Westernization, was losing its national identity.

Okamoto developed a highly personalized psycho-analytical framework and described reality constructed by human subjectivity. She also used abstracted images to portray landscapes; thus, her long and detailed descriptions of scenery establish what would seem to be visually unimaginable worlds that are made real through language.

In spite of the considerable political and artistic differences that distinguish these writers, they share a common "modernist" ground in their attempts to develop new and experimental images, visions, and narratives in their works. Inspired by both modern Western culture and Japanese traditional culture, Japanese prose modernism is a product of simultaneity in world culture and of a special generational focus on narrativity. Thus, in its conclusion, this dissertation seeks to define the Japanese literary modernist movement in the context of both Japanese literature and modernism in the universal sense.
Dedicated to

Jason

and

My Parents
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Introduction:

Japanese Modernism:

Its Background and Historical Perception

Social, Cultural, and Literary Milieu
from 1922 to 1939

This dissertation discusses aspects of Japanese modernism in prose. Because in literature, as in other artistic genres, modernist movements included a vast range of ideas, goals, and styles, it is not possible to cover all of the salient features of Japanese modernism. Although the first sign of a modernistic consciousness in Japanese literature emerged in the 1910s, it was during the 1920s and 1930s that Japanese prose modernism flourished. It is the period from the late Taishō and early Shōwa years, namely from 1922, when Yoshiyuki made his debut in literary circles, to 1939, or the publication date of Okamoto's posthumous work Shōjō ruten (The Wheel
of Life), that serves as the time frame for this dissertation. It was when Taishō democracy reached its high point and then faded gradually to militarism. There is no attempt here to exhaust the many names involved in the modernist movement in prose in Japan -- Inagaki Taruho (1900-1977), Funabashi Seiichi (1904-1976), Ryūtanji Yū (1901-1992), Makino Shin'ichi (1896-1936), Kuno Toyohiko (1896-1971), Hisao Jūran (1902-1957) -- but rather to focus on four writers only: Yoshiyuki Eisuke (1906-1938), Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977), Yumeno Kyūsaku (1889-1936) and Okamoto Kanoko (1889-1939).¹ As we learn of their works and careers, we shall come to understand them as four experimentalists who begin from an avant-garde position.²

Japan's evolution from a feudal to a modern society, which began after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, was late______________

¹ In this period, writers such as Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke wrote works that consisted of modernist themes and expressions even though they have not been considered modernist writers. This dissertation will refer to their works in the discussion of the characteristics of Japanese modernism.

² The art critic Peter Bürger distinguishes the avant-garde from modernism. He maintains that avant-garde art is politically driven while modernism is not (Theory of the Avant-Garde, trans. Michael Shaw [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984]). This dissertation uses these two terms as rough equivalents.
in comparison to European countries, and it has long been viewed by historians as a "top-down" model directed by government policies rather than the result of spontaneous changes. However, around the time of the First World War in Europe, Japan's industrial structure began to change, and it set in motion the unprecedented growth of cities, especially Tokyo. This urbanization was to profoundly alter the long-standing agrarian orientation of Japanese society. In response to these industrial and social changes, middle and higher school education greatly expanded.\(^3\)

The growth of industrial production increased the demand for electricity, animated the transportation business, and enlarged demand for educated manpower.... And the demand for education, 

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\(^3\) This structural change of industry is most obvious in exports and their components.

Japan's early export mix was heavily dominated by agricultural and processed goods, but textiles and more sophisticated manufactures eventually took over. Thus, in 1874-83 in current prices, 42.5 per cent of exports were primary products and 57.5 per cent manufactures. Of the latter, some 42 per cent were textiles, mainly silk, silk here means raw silk, often categorized as a primary rather than a secondary product.... By 1931-40 the share of primary products had fallen to 6.9 per cent with an increase in manufactures to over 93.1 per cent. Most striking is the rise in so-called 'heavy manufactures' as a percentage of exports, from 8.2 in 1874-83, to 28.7 in 1931-40.... (W.J. Macpherson, *The Economic Development of Japan 1868-1941* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995], p.10).
which mounted in this way, gradually spread to higher institutions of learning. As for entrance examination of secondary schools, the ratio of applicants to actual enrolment showed a general rise. For instance, the ratio at middle schools surged up from 1.9 times in 1912 to 2.6 times in 1920 or 10 years later..., the graduates of middle schools, which gave ordinary secondary education, were divided into those entering higher schools and those who became white-collar workers. The 1921-1924 period, it may be said, corresponded to the 'flowering time' of secondary education in Japan. That is, the ratio of students to the same age group in the Japanese population climbed from 6.2 per cent in 1915 to 13.4 per cent in 1925.\(^4\)

This tandem development of industry and education consequently created an urban-based middle class that was well-educated and willing to appreciate city life and its culture. At the same time, the development of heavy industries created a new social class, the urban proletariat. Although the new middle and working classes were often in conflict similar to the class struggle endemic to industrialization in many countries, they were also important driving forces in the creation of mass culture during the years between World War I and II.

Taishō culture was a complex superstructure of political parties, mass communication, consumer marketing, and special-interest groups. Labor unions rallied beneath towering billboards plastered with advertisements of Lion Toothpaste and Kirin Beer;

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suffragettes campaigned in kimono. The variegated culture offered the sons and daughters of the wealthy (and moderately wealthy) an unprecedented range of choices. There were movie theaters, cafes, dance halls for the Charleston, miniature golf courses, beauty parlors, department stores, and much more to suit the fleeting tastes and fancies of the "modern girls" (moga) and "modern boys" (mobo) of Taishō Japan.⁵

Film, in particular, was the champion of popular entertainment. From the 1920s to the 1930s, large movie companies such as Shōchiku built theaters which reflected the architectural and artistic trends of the time. Called "goraku no dendō," they were "entertainment palaces" in every sense of the term.⁶

In literature, the publication of magazines grew exponentially responding to the rise of literacy, increased numbers of students in higher education, and the development of a mass culture and media. In 1926, 

⁵ Donald Roden, Schooldays in Imperial Japan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp.194-195. Roden mentions the culture of the Taishō period (1912-1926), and these phenomena flourished during the late Taishō, or 1920s.

⁶ Geijutsu Shinchō (1988 April) 39, no.4, pp.58-59. The boom of the movie theater as artistic architecture was also common in the United States, and the whole movie culture in Japan was strongly influenced by that of the United States.

In 1919, the magazine Kinema junpō (Ten-day Report of Cinema), was published and created cinema journalism in Japan. Kinema junpō is published even today.
Kaizōsha, a literary publishing house since 1919, started publishing inexpensive anthologies of modern Japanese novels. They were called enpon (one-yen books), and their popularity resulted in what became known as the "enpon-boom." The popular entertainment magazine Kingu (King) reached a circulation of one million copies, and it became an important avenue for the introduction of Western fashions and entertainment. Shinseinen (New Youths), a monthly magazine directly initially toward young boys and men living in rural areas, and later to their urban brethren, became an innovator with its publication of Western detective fiction. Even publication figures for Bungei shūjū (Literary Chronicle), a bastion of so-called "pure literature," reached three-hundred thousand copies per month.  

Parallel to the development of mass publication magazines, large numbers of dōjin zasshi ("little" or "coterie" magazines) were published, and they enjoyed a boom as well. Historically, publication of such magazines had been common among students and teachers in universities and higher schools. For example, students and professors at Waseda University published Waseda

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bungaku (Waseda Literature), and it had played an important role in establishing the reputation of, and serving as a mouthpiece for, Japanese naturalism. Beginning in 1907, Tokyo Imperial University students published Shinshichō (New Currents of Thought), and it became the site for the debut or early representative works of such prominent writers as Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886-1965) and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892-1927). The new coterie magazines of the 1920s and 30s, however, attracted a wider range of new, amateur, and non-academic writers, and it was these magazines that frequently functioned as the chief promoters of avant-garde literature. One of the most significant examples of this phenomenon is seen in the example of the Dadaist magazines that will be discussed in Chapter 1. These magazines were published specifically to promote the Dada movement, and their coterie members were not from the same schools or regions.

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8 *Waka* (Japanese poetry) also has a tradition of coterie magazine publication which attracted a variety of contributors. However, *waka* coterie magazines were based on the mentor-disciple relation of poets, and the characteristic of these magazines therefore differed from the small prose magazines of the 1920s. For example, *Hotogisu* (Little Cuckoo) was published under the leadership of poet Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902), and he chose poetry to be published in the magazine. Yet, coterie magazines in the 1920s tended to be published by a group of new professional and amateur writers.
While university-affiliated magazines remained active, the new, "smart" magazines soon dominated the literary world of the 1920s.

Four Modernists

Stimulated by social, literary, and media shifts, a distinctly Japanese prose modernism emerged, and this dissertation will examine modernist ideas through the works of four writers: Yoshiyuki Eisuke, Murayama Tomoyoshi, Yumeno Kyūsaku, and Okamoto Kanoko.

Yoshiyuki Eisuke, who began his literary career as a Dadaist poet, uses prose to portray the scintillating facade of urban life and the essentially dark and corrupt nature that lies beneath its veneer. His works are filled with Dada-influenced bizarre and unconventional narratives that have aggressive, nonsensical, infantile, and erotic elements. While he was a fierce critic of the abuses and excesses of capitalist society, he also opposed the proletarian literature that was popular in leftist circles, and he supported the geijutsu shijōshugi ("art for art's sake") movement belonging to the coterie group called Kindai sekatsuha (Modern Life Group).
Meanwhile, Murayama Tomoyoshi, who debuted as an avant-garde visual artist in 1923, expanded his multiple artistic activities into the areas of performance art, theater and prose by the mid-1920s. Like Yoshiyuki, Murayama used experimentalist narrative to give expression to his critique of contemporary society. Yet, in time he would participate in the proletarian literature movement and adopt the proletarian movement's ideological positions on the nature of the Japanese political and economic establishment. He believed that the function of literature was to improve society, and he criticized the "art for art's sake" movement as bourgeois and apolitical. Nevertheless, his narrative style is as experimental and metaphorical as that advocated by artists of the "art for art's sake" movement, and despite his belief in proletarian realism, or social realism, his works go beyond the simple categorization of proletarian literature.⁹

Yumeno Kyūsaku stands apart from other modernist writers in that he did not relocate to Tokyo, the center

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⁹ This style of expression is generally known as social realism or socialist realism. Yet, in Japanese literature, the term "proletarian realism" is more widely accepted to describe this style of expression. This dissertation treats these terms as interchangeable.
of avant-garde ferment, but wrote from a village in Kyūshū. He endeavored to represent a rural viewpoint through a series of detective stories full of murder and mystery. Not only does he work in a genre preferred by Japanese modernists, but also his blurring of the real and unreal in his protagonists’ confessions reflects his modernist orientation. Moreover, although his brand of art and political activism differ from Yoshiyuki and Murayama, it is activist art, like theirs. Through his detective stories, Yumeno denounced urbanism and intellectualism, and he warned that modern Japan, in its rush to Westernization, was losing its national identity.

Finally, Okamoto Kanoko developed a highly personalized psychoanalytical framework in her stories in which reality is constructed by human subjectivity through the images of the Doppelgänger or double self. She also uses abstracted images to portray landscapes; and the language in her long and detailed settings either obscures the visual image or establishes a linguistically possible, but visually unimaginable, world.

The four writers reveal unique and frequently contradictory characteristics. Their political viewpoints range from right to left across the political spectrum, from Yumeno’s ultra-nationalism to Murayama’s Marxism. At
the same time, they were artistically modernists, yet even here, their avant-gardism reflects the contradictions inherent in European avant-gardism of Italian Futurism or Dada, two movements divided over issues of art, literature, and politics.

After examining the four writers' works, this dissertation will move toward a definition and analysis of the salient features of Japanese modernism. Their works present aspects of Japanese prose modernism that are both universal and local.

**Examination of Japanese Modernism in Literary History**

For the last fifty years of critical writing in Japan, Japanese literary modernism has tended to be considered solely as a movement within poetry. One reason for this state of affairs is that Western modernism in the form of Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism was introduced into Japan as a poetry and visual art movement.\(^\text{10}\) For example, Futurism was the first Western modernist movement to be introduced into Japan. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-

1944) published the Futurist Manifesto in *Le Figaro* in February of 1909, and Mori Ōgai (1862-1922), one of the literary giants since the Meiji period, published his translation of it in the May issue of the poetry magazine *Subaru* (*The Pleiades*) of the same year. Marinetti's manifesto refers to the characteristics of Futurism through the medium of poetry: therefore, from its initial reference in Japan, Futurism was recognized as a new style of poetry and limited to the writing of poetry.

**MANIFESTO OF FUTURISM**

1. We intend to sing the love of danger, the habit of energy and fearlessness.
2. Courage, audacity, and revolt will be essential elements of our poetry.
6. The poet must spend himself with ardour, splendor, and generosity, to swell the enthusiastic fervour of the primordial elements.
7. Except in struggle, there is no more beauty. No work without an aggressive character can be a masterpiece. Poetry must be conceived as a violent attack on unknown forces, to reduce and prostrate them before man.
11. We will sing of great crowds excited by work, by pleasure, and by riot; we will sing of the multicoloured, polyphonic tides of revolution in the modern capitalist; we will sing of the vibrant nightly fervour of arsenals and shipyards blazing with violent electric moons;....

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A decade later, this manifesto formed the basis for the poet Hirato Renkichi's (1893-1922) "Nihon miraiha sengen undō" ("Japanese Futurist Manifesto"), which he wrote and distributed to pedestrians in the busy Hibiya section of Tokyo by himself in 1921. Also, Dada and Surrealism which came to Japan in 1920s were also introduced as art and poetry movements.

Although prose did not develop under the name of specific movements such as Futurism or Surrealism, it emerged after poetry modernism, and in his famous survey of modern Japanese literature, *Dawn to the West*, Donald Keene discusses avant-garde prose literature from the Taishō period to the Shōwa period by examining four

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Although Futurism was initially introduced as a poetry movement, it also influenced the visual arts which responded more quickly to the new movement in Japan.

The influence of Marinetti's futurism could also be seen in the establishment of Miraiha bijutsu kyōkai (The Association of futurist artists) in 1920, as well as in a one-person show of the work of the poet/painter Kanbara Tai (b.1898) in 1921 and his manifesto "Dai ikkai Kanbara Tai sengen sho" ("The first manifesto of Kanbara Tai"), considered the first avant-garde manifesto in Japan (Ibid., p. 134).
Japanese prose writers. He explains briefly the background for the emergence of a new style of literature in Japan starting with the Futurist poetry movement of the early 1920s and introduces Satō Haruo (1892-1964), Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), Itō Sei (1905-1969), and Hori Tatsuo (1904-1953), as representatives of Japanese writers that he considers to be associated with modernism. Keene focuses on their careers and works under the influence of Western modernist writers, with Satō, being influenced by Oscar Wilde (1854-1900); Yokomitsu, by Paul Valéry (1871-1945); Itō, by James Joyce (1882-1941); and Hori, by Marcel Proust (1871-1922). The four writers were attracted to modernism in the West because of their dissatisfaction with Japanese Naturalism which dominated the literary world of Japan from 1906 to the 1930s. For instance, Satō, one of the earliest writers in this category, started his literary career as a waka poet, who then became a poet of free verse, translator, and prose writer. He encountered the works of Oscar Wilde as a translator, and he was deeply fascinated by the fin-de-siècle tone of Wilde's works. Inspired by Wilde, Satō

attempted to create a series of prose works that are written in a mysterious, lyrical, melancholic, and decadent tone, and according to Keene, some are interesting and some are "failures." Keene considers an early short story "Supein inu no is" ("A House of a Spanish Dog") published in 1917, to be not particularly "modern in the language or in the literary techniques but the combination of fantasy and poetry gave the work freshness and individuality."\(^{14}\)

In evaluating efforts on the part of Japanese writers to create a modernist literature, Keene writes that many of the writers' works did not achieve "maturity" in terms of language, narrative, and topic. In spite of the eagerness on the part of Yokomitsu and Itō to import the modernist style, their works show a conspicuous lack of literary sophistication. So that, for Keene, Yokomitsu's famous short story "Haru wa basha ni notte" ("Spring Riding on a Carriage") is skillful but "less affecting."\(^{15}\) He also treats Yokomitsu's full-length novel Shanghai as having weak characterization.\(^{16}\) In the case of Itō Sei's

\(^{14}\)Ibid., pp.634-635.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., p.653.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., p.655
works, Keene treats them as largely unsuccessful attempts to model themselves after works by James Joyce. Only Hori Tatsuo, who digested foreign literature more naturally and less eagerly than any other writer discussed here, is seen as an exception and is admired by Keene. Moreover, Keene focuses on Hori's interest in Japanese classical literature and suggests that his fascination with foreign literature was merely a transient adventure.

Keene's skepticism concerning modernism as having been no more than a passing phenomenon or having failed to put down real roots in Japanese literature is linked to the central thesis of *Dawn to the West*, namely that Japanese writers' careers are theme and variation on the so-called prototypical pattern of "*Nihon e no kaiki,*" or "return to Japan." For Keene, the fascination on the part of avant-garde experimenters with Western modernism fades, and eventually they all "returned to Japan." Even Hori abandons his early and successful literary experiments, and eventually all four writers resumed themes and styles reflective of traditional Japanese literature. This is the orientation that Keene also observes in Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, who later on becomes "known as a spokesman for

"Ibid., p.708."
traditional Japanese aesthetics." Early in his career, Tanizaki favored modernity represented by the entertainments and fashions of the 1920s, and he created a series of works full of references to contemporary, cutting-edge culture. For example, he wrote of the modern girl, or moga, Naomi in Chijin no ai (Naomi), published in 1924, and of dance halls, Western clothes and foreigners. He was also interested in Western film and in 1920 he wrote his film scenario Amachua kurabu (Club for Amateurs). Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972) too is a significant figure in early avant-garde prose. He was an important member of the Shinkankakuha, or Neo-Perceptionist Group, which tried to see reality anew or with an entirely new perception, and he pursued both the topic of modernity in culture and the styles of experimental literature. In addition, he was attracted

[8] Ibid., p. 741.

The group name Shinkankakuha was not created by the members but by the critic Chiba Kameo in his article, "Shinkankakuha no tanjō" ("The Birth of Shinkankakuha") published in 1924, the year the group started circulating their coterie magazine Bungei jidai (Literary Age). Chiba mentions that there were a group of writers called Shingikōha (New Technician Group), who were concerned with the presentation of the story and writing style. Compared to the Shingikōha writers, he states, the writers of Bungei jidai developed a newer and more vivid sense of perception and writing style; therefore, they can be called Shinkankakuha (Chiba Kameo, "Shinkankakuha no
to film. He participated in Shinkankakuha eiga renmei (Neo-Perceptionist Film League) and wrote a scenario for the avant-garde film Kurutta ippēji (A Page of Madness). Even after the group broke up, he continued to pursue avant-garde literature. He portrays Asakusa, a popular but lowlife district in Tokyo, in Asakusa kurenai dan (Asakusa Crimson Gang). As indicative of contemporary life, in the short story "Suishō gensō" ("Crystal Illusion"), he experiments with stream-of-consciousness.

Despite their early enthusiasm for modern culture and experimental literature, both writers later sought to express the beauty of Japan, especially through the depiction of Japanese women, architecture, and traditional customs such as the tea ceremony. As seen in his modern-language translation of Genji monogatari (The Tale of


A Crazy Page, which was directed by Kinugasa Teinosuke (1896-1982), was experimental in its story, movie sets, and cinematography. This film was so new and avant-garde that, at first, it was released in movie theaters that specialized in foreign films. The story is about a sailor and his insane wife who is put in the hospital, and a part of the story is told through her perspective and that of the other insane patients (Joseph Anderson and Donald Richie, The Japanese Film: Art and Industry [Rutland: Charles Tuttle Company, 1959], pp.54-55).
Genji) that he began in 1935, Tanizaki emphasized his inclination toward classical works. Likewise, Kawabata published novels that emphasized traditional Japanese aesthetics. It is probably not a misreading to say that Keene views Japanese modernist literature as a fundamentally imitative genre that was heavily influenced by Western modernism, and with few exceptions, failed to create works as significant as those produced in the West. Moreover, writers who initially flirted with the movement eventually abandoned their experimentation and returned to a fascination with classical texts and traditional notions of Japanese aesthetics. In Keene's estimation, modernism did not flourish in Japan as it did in Europe.

A far more in-depth study of a single Japanese modernist writer is provided by Yokomitsu Riichi: Modernist by Dennis Keene.\textsuperscript{21} Dennis Keene (not to be confused with Donald Keene) also analyzes the literary currents from naturalism to modernism in Japan, and he examines Western influences on Japanese literature. In addition, he pays attention to different art genres such

\textsuperscript{21} Dennis Keene, Yokomitsu Riichi: Modernist (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980).
as cinema and theater which influenced Yokomitsu Riichi and his coterie *Shinkankakuha*.

Ranked alongside Kawabata as one of the representatives of *Shinkankakuha*, Yokomitsu wrote several literary essays on the topic of avant-garde literature, and he attempted to create sensationally new works in the 1920s. He also witnessed the rise of proletarian literature in the late 1920s and championed the cause of art for art's sake. As a coterie and magazine, *Shinkankakuha* lasted only three years, and members such as Kon Tōko (1896-1977) and Kataoka Teppei (1894-1944), expressing their sympathy for proletarian literature, left the group. The sensation created by *Shinkankakuha* waned; Yokomitsu's popularity also declined in the 1930s.

Dennis Keene's observations on Yokomitsu's literature parallel those of Donald Keene in that he also entertains doubts concerning the literary quality of Yokomitsu's works. He argues that, in spite of Yokomitsu's considerable efforts, his writings did not match the level of his own clarion call for a new literature. For

\[22\] Comparing Yokomitsu with various modernists in the West such as Mallarmé (1842-1898), Yeats (1865-1939), and Woolf (1882-1941), Dennis Keene explains the nature and history of Japanese modernism and questions its quality in this book. His fundamental standpoint that is stated repeatedly is that Western modernist literature is,
example, when Yokomitsu mentions Bashō's haiku as an example of Neo-Perceptionism, Keene points out that although haiku may be considered a form of symbolistic literature, it cannot be rightly seen as synonymous with the prescriptions of what is called a "literature of the sensations" movement.23 Moreover, once the high point of
despite its rebellious nature, a part of the long and continuing history of Western literature and that it consists of great quality as a part of a literary tradition. By contrast, Japanese modernist literature is not. Japanese literature has its own long history, but it is not necessarily a part of modern Japanese literature. For example, he discusses Japanese Futurism as follows:

One has always to remember that the modernist poets writing in France at the same time where in a tradition at least fifty years old, that their ideological ambitions were never attained (i.e. they did not achieve an aesthetic image of spontaneous thought), and that what is memorable in their work consists mainly of souvenirs and echoes of Romantic and Post-Romantic poetry. A Japanese modernist poet could not be the culmination of a long tradition in that way, and he had no masters of revolt (certainly no masterpieces of revolt) to look to. The poems of Hirato Renkichi and Hagiwara Kyōjirō are connected to nothing and for this reason sound so empty (p.69).

Dennis Keene, Yokomitsu, pp. 82-83. Dennis Keene does not translate Shinkankakuha in English but instead uses the Japanese term. He explains the difficulty to translate the word in English.

... "Neo-Sensalist Group," is quite unsatisfactory since "Neo" gives the wrong association and "Sensualist" is a serious error, for the group (in theory certainly) were actually opposed to the "sensuality" of earlier writers,... "New Sensation Group" would be the literal translation but sounds much too odd for one to consider seriously
his career as a writer of new literature had peaked, Yokomitsu could no longer produce stories of comparable quality to Nichirin (The Sun in Heaven) and the essay "Kankaku to shinkankaku" ("Perception and New Perception"), the best works of his Shinkankakuha period. Hence in the analyses of both Donald and Dennis Keene, Japanese prose modernism is viewed as a temporary phenomenon based on a mere burst of enthusiasm for Western modernist models but that achieves no real vigor or legitimacy in Japan.

More recent scholarship, however, has sought to discuss Japanese modernism in the context of Japanese society and culture. Recent approaches to Japanese modernism analyze the distinguishing characteristics of Japanese modernism, and they do not concern themselves solely with whether Japanese accomplishments are greater or lesser than those of Western modernism. For example, the critic and scholar Suzuki Sadami has analyzed

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using, principally because the word "sensation" carries implications in English which the word kankaku does not have in Japanese.... Rather than worry over its meaning it will be better to regard it merely as a name and not as a descriptive definition, in the way that one does, or should do, with "Metaphysical Poetry," and so it is left untranslated here (Ibid., xi).
modernist novels and short stories from the late Taishō to the early Shōwa period. He first pays attention to the new literature that appeared at the same time as the "teito fukkō" ("reconstruction of the imperial city") which means the reconstruction of Tokyo after the Great Kantō Earthquake in 1923. The earthquake destroyed Tokyo, but after the earthquake, Tokyo was reconstructed in a modern style, and the new Tokyo and its modernity became literary sources for writers such as the Dadaists, writers of detective fiction, and members of the Shinkankakuha. The atmosphere of "teito fukkō" disappeared by the early 1930s, and in its place, a period of so-called "bungei fukkō," or "cultural renaissance" began in the mid-1930s. In this period, writers like Nagai Kafū (1879-1959), Ishikawa Jun (1899-1987) and Dazai Osamu (1909-1948) wrote various experimental novels based on the strong consciousness of fiction for fiction. For example, Suzuki argues that Ishikawa, in his story "Kajin" ("The Beauty"), uses the first-person pronoun watashi and develops a complicated narrative structure in which the protagonist, the narrator, and the writer are referred to as one word

Suzuki Sadami, Shōwa bungaku no tame ni (Tokyo Shichōsha, 1989) and Modan toshi no hyōgen, in Gyōsho resupuri nūbō (Tokyo: Hakujisha, 1992).
Ishikawa's "The Beauty" was inspired by André Gide's (1869-1951) *Les Faux-Monnayeurs* (The Counterfeiters), but his work is more complex than Gide's novel in that Gide's characters remain distinct from the narrator and Gide's narrator shares the same voice as that of the author.

Moreover, in reference to the controversial issue of modernist writers' "return to Japan," Suzuki states that in the event of "the return to Japan," it arises not out of nostalgia for things Japanese or a superficial or xenophobic reaction to things Western. Rather, he considers the "return to Japan" as something quite different from Keene and Keene as a movement that pursued the gesaku or lowbrow fiction of the Edo period with its emphasis on monogatari, a trait which modern literature since the time of Tsubouchi Shōyō and his call for realism attempted to suppress. Modernist writers in particular paid attention to the tradition of gesaku and monogatari as examples of fiction where narrative is valorized and prioritized. Since the late 1880s and the time of Tsubouchi Shōyō, modern Japanese literature had tended to

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26 Ibid., pp.16-20.
abandon farce and fabrication. As Edward Fowler argues in *The Rhetoric of Confessions*, the dominant form of the *shishōsetsu* (I-novel) attempted to make fiction, or its rhetoric, so transparent as to be invisible. Writers sought to present reality as unmediated, and the very act of unmediatedness constituted a special and "sincere" rhetoric all of its own. However, experimental writers in the 1920s and 1930s praised fabrication as an act of great creation. In introducing various works from Edogawa Ranpo's (1894-1965) detective stories to the works of literary giants like Tanizaki and Kafū, Suzuki gives entirely new meanings to the shopworn phrase "return to Japan."

The art critic Unno Hiroshi discusses the literature of the 1920s as a manifestation of a larger avant-garde art movement evolving from the 1910s. In his book *Modan toshi Tokyo* (*Modern City Tokyo*), he focuses on works which portray Tokyo from the 1910s to the 1930s, and he outlines the gradual development of avant-garde literature and art

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in Japan. Unno uses the term "avant-garde" rather than "modernism" in order to examine a variety of art and literary works not all of which, he feels, qualify as modernistic. For Unno, Japanese modernism means the literature of Shinkankakuha and Kindai seikatsuha, a literary group which will be discussed in Chapter 1. These groups advanced the idea of art for art’s sake and engaged in an intense debate with proletarian writers over the primary purpose of art and its political activist mission. Unno does not directly address a definition of modernism per se, but it appears that he recognizes modernist works as a combination of avant-gardism, cosmopolitanism, and art for art’s sake. These elements are found in both Japanese and Western modernism. In comparing the Western novels that are contemporary to Japanese literature, he finds these universal and authentic characteristics of modernism in Japanese literature.

In addition to Suzuki and Unno, other critics can be cited as having a high regard for Japanese modernism. The movie and literary critic Kawamoto Saburō, for example, approaches avant-garde literature through novels written

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during the Taishō period. His method of categorizing literature according to imperial reigns -- Meiji, Taishō, Shōwa -- is rather traditional in comparison with Suzuki and Unno who view literary periods in "decades."

Nevertheless, Kawamoto states that writers in the 1910s and 1920s aggressively incorporated the continuing modernization of Japan as the central theme and expression of their work. He argues, for example, that while many writers such as Satō, Tanizaki, and Akutagawa traveled to China and pursued what was then called Shina shumi (taste for things Chinese, Chinoiserie), this phenomenon has been erroneously treated in the past as being representative of their "return to tradition." China had long been recognized as the fountainhead of Asian high culture, and even during the Meiji period, Chinese studies, especially kanbun, were the mark of the Japanese high-intellectual. However, by the Taishō period, Chinese studies no longer retained the same intellectual prestige, and China was now considered an unknown and exotic country, or an object

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29 Kawamoto Saburō, Taishō gen'ei (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1997).

30 Ibid., pp.165-182.
which stimulated writers' romanticism at the time.\(^{31}\) The Taishō writers' real intent in admiring China was to express their opposition to Meiji period style of Japanese modernization and its relentless logicality and rationalization of everyday life. At the same time, an anti-modern posture toward established Meiji-style modernity was paradoxically conceived as being more modern. They rediscovered China as a way to reject modernization and logic, and even their anti-modern and anti-establishment stance is a sign of the modernistic. Kawamoto identifies modernism to be at the heart of Shina shumi, and he expresses the opinion that modernism can be seen even in phenomena that appear to be anti-modern.

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\(^{31}\) Kawamoto mentions some stories such as Tanizaki's short story "Kakurei" ("Voice of a Cane"), published in 1922, Akutagawa's "Nankin no Kirisuto" ("Jesus Christ in Nanjing"); in 1920, and "Toshishun," in 1920 and Satō's "Inago no dairyo" ("Locust's Long Journey"), in 1925. In addition, Edogawa Ranpo describes that Akechi Kogorō, a hero and private eye investigator in a series of his works, wears a Chinese clothes in "Issunbōshi" ("A Dwarf"), published in 1927. According to Kawamoto, Shina shumi also became fashionable outside of literature in the early Shōwa (Taishō gen'ei, pp.165-170).

While Kawamoto discusses Shina shumi as a literary phenomenon, he mentions that the perspective on China was different depending on the writers. When Tanizaki and Satō traveled in China, they were shocked to see the poverty of the Chinese; nevertheless, they romanticized even these elements and created an imaginary China as a utopia. On the other hand, Akutagawa's works squarely face the reality of China and, as a consequence, have a much more sober and bitter tone (pp.175-179).
What the work of these scholars, as well as this dissertation, advocates is that the locus of the modernistic need not be narrowly confined to the West, Europe or the experiments of Italian Futurists, the Dada and the Surrealists of Paris, Berlin, or Dublin. To the contrary, modernism lies in the construction/destruction/reconstruction of any potential narrative time or space, be it in Europe, Edo or China, and according to monogatari-sei, or the narrativity of the writer's manipulation of the text. This thesis argues for the dōjidai-sei, or simultaneity of art as well. The Japan from and to which Japanese writers may have departed or returned in the 1920s and 1930s is a far different Japan than we have thought heretofore.
CHAPTER 1

YOSHIYUKI EISUKE:
DADAIST, HEDONIST, SOCIAL CRITIC --
WHIRLWIND IN LITERARY CIRCLES

Yoshiyuki Eisuke -- A Forgotten Writer

This chapter analyzes the works of the poet/novelist
Yoshiyuki Eisuke (1906-1940), who was active as a writer
from the early 1920s to the early 1930s. He published
poems and novels, was editor-in-chief of several coterie
magazines, and acted as one of the leaders of the
modernist movement that inspired younger writers.
However, his busy literary life was relatively short. By
1934, he withdrew from the world of literature and became
a stockbroker in order, in his words, "to study capitalist
society."

1 Kamiya Tadataka ed., "Nenpu," in Yoshiyuki Eisuke
Yoshiyuki was deeply influenced by Dada, the art/literary avant-garde movement that originated in Zurich. Although Dada never enjoyed the prominence that movements like naturalism had in Japan, it flourished in the early 1920s, and it was Dada's deliberate posture of disregard for notions of beauty, logic, and order that influenced Yoshiyuki most. He started his literary life as a Dadaist poet and then wrote prose. Both his poetry and prose are filled with nonsensical, experimental, and erotic elements.

Yoshiyuki preferred to write about cosmopolitan life in big cities, and they were not limited in Tokyo. He frequently traveled to Osaka, Shanghai, and Singapore and depicted people's lives there. As he came to have detailed knowledge about city life, his works became increasingly critical of capitalist society. In particular, Yoshiyuki describes the dark side of society through stories about political corruption, prostitution, and poor industrial working conditions. This combination of an experimental writing style and strong political awareness is distinctive among Japanese writers in this

Yoshiyuki Eisuke sakuhinshū, the title of this two-volume anthology, is abbreviated in notes and bibliography as YES.

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period. Generally speaking, political consciousness was thought to be a characteristic of proletarian literature, which appeared on the literary scene at approximately the same time as Yoshiyuki. Compared to proletarian writers, the non-proletarian writers rarely incorporated politics into their works. This is particularly true of Kindai seikatsuha (the group that gathered together for the magazine Kindai seikatsu, or Modern Life), the literary group to which Yoshiyuki belonged. Kindai seikatsuha, which was also called Shinkō geijutsuha (New Artist Group), aggressively promoted the notion of art for art’s sake; as a result, it became the direct target of criticism by the proletarian writers. The proletarian writers denounced the Kindai seikatsuha as apolitical bourgeois writers pursuing only pleasure. This criticism evolved into intense disputes on the relationship between art and politics between the two groups. Yet, despite the fact that the dialogue in Japan was often polarized into an either-or proposition, in which priority was given either to politics or to art, Yoshiyuki cannot be seen as representing one position in opposition to the other. To the contrary, his literature juxtaposes an avant-garde writing style with a political critique, and it is
precisely this combination that makes his works interesting.

Today, Yoshiyuki is chiefly remembered as the father of well-known contemporary writer Yoshiyuki Junnosuke (1924-1994), and his position as a leader of modernism has been largely forgotten. Nevertheless, Yoshiyuki Eisuke's works still possess a unique charm that merits revisitation.

Dada in Europe, Dada in Japan

Yoshiyuki was born in Okayama prefecture in 1906. He was the first son of Yoshiyuki Sawatarō, a rich construction contractor, and his wife Morio. In 1922, at

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An autobiographical essay by Yoshiyuki Aguri (1907- ), the wife of Yoshiyuki Eisuke, was televised by NHK in 1997, and the drama was a major success in Japan. As public attention toward the Yoshiyuki family increased, some of Eisuke's works were republished in response to the drama's popularity.

Aguri opened a beauty parlor in Ichigaya, Tokyo in 1929 and has been working as a hairdresser ever since. She also published essays and poems in some coterie magazines with Yoshiyuki, and they were considered one of the most modern couples of the 1920s and 1930s. Besides Junnosuke, they had two daughters: Yoshiyuki Kazuko, a famous actress, and Rieko (pen name Rie), a poet and novelist who won the Akutagawa Prize in 1981 (Cf. Yoshiyuki Aguri, Yusuraume ga minoru toki [Tokyo: Bun'ensha, 1985]).
the age of sixteen, Yoshiyuki dropped out of the Okayama First Middle-School in his senior year and moved to Tokyo. Although he was expected to inherit the family business and live in Okayama as the first son, the magnetic attraction of Tokyo, the most sophisticated and modern city in Japan, drew him from home.

Yoshiyuki began his literary career as a poet right after the move to Tokyo. He joined a literary coterie called Dadaizumu (Dadaism) and published his first avant-garde free verse in its magazine. As one can guess from the title of the magazine, Yoshiyuki's strongest source of inspiration came from Dada, an avant-garde art and literary movement born in Zurich during World War I. The German poet and theater producer Hugo Ball (1886-1927) had opened a cafe/bar named Cabaret Voltaire in the old part of Zurich in 1916, and young artists and writers -- many of whom had fled from military service in their own countries -- began to produce poetry readings, dances, and plays.

These artists rejected the ideas of logic and progress which, they felt, had turned Europe into a vast and horrible battlefield littered with modern technological weapons and the corpses of millions of soldiers. Of course, Europeans had experienced colonial
wars in Asia and Africa, as well as war at home. But through introduction of gas warfare, tanks, and machine guns, World War I eclipsed all earlier wars in its brutality and mass carnage.

Thus, when artists and writers gathered and determined to form the art/literary group Dada, they published a Dadaist Manifesto clearly stating their opposition to the concepts of logic and progress. The "Dadaist Manifesto," written by Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), a Romanian poet, was published in the third issue of their magazine Dada in 1918. Tzara was a performer at Hugo Ball's Cabaret Voltaire, and he soon became a leader of the Dada movement. In his famous manifesto, Tzara declares Dada's concept of art and its critique of logic in the following passage:

We have thrown out the cry-baby in us. Any infiltration of this kind is candid diarrhea. To encourage this act is to digest it. What we need are works that are strong straight precise and forever beyond understanding. Logic is a complication. Logic is always wrong. It draws the threads of notions, words, in their formal exterior, toward illusory ends and centers. Its chains kill, it is an enormous centipede stifling independence. Married to logic, art would live in incest, swallowing, engulfing its own tail, still part of its own body, fornicating within itself, and passion would become a nightmare tarred with Protestantism, a monument, a
heap of ponderous gray entrails.³

According to the Dadaists, the negation of logic is directly linked to the negation of meaning, purpose, and aesthetics. Therefore, one method of creating art totally free of logic and order is to rely on accident. For example, the Dada painter Jean (Hans) Arp (1887-1966) created the work *Collage with Squares Arranged According to the Laws of Chance* in 1916-1917 and presented his technique as a means to create art in Dadaist fashion. Art historian George Heard Hamilton explains Arp's experiment:

He tore up coloured papers or his own drawings and let the fragments fall as they would [219]. When their positions had been fixed as abstract patterns arbitrarily arranged according to conditions over which the artist, theoretically at least, had no control, new designs were sometimes elaborated by additional lines and contours.⁴

Moreover, in the field of poetry composition, Tzara also applied the notion of accident as a method to create his works. He wrote free verse entitled "To Write a Dada


Poem" and suggests "a recipe" for what might create a Dada-style poem:

Take a newspaper.
Take some scissors.
Pick out an article which is as long as you wish your poem to be.
Cut out the article.
Then cut out carefully each of the words in the article and put them in a bag.
Shake gently.
Then take out each piece one after the other.
Copy them down conscientiously in the order in which they left the bag.
The poem will resemble you and you will find yourself to be an infinitely original writer with a charming sensibility even though you will not be understood by the vulgar. 5

Tzara gives expression to the Dadaist style in poetry writing in free verse and by ignoring any of the traditional methods used for poetry or prosody. He suggests that art created by chance is Dadaistic because it is absolutely unfettered by logical procedure and poetry concerns.

Dadaism was introduced in Japan in August 1920, two years after the appearance of Tzara's "Manifesto," by two journalists reporting in the newspaper Yorozu chôhô.

Their articles explained the principles of Dada, the names of prominent Dadaists, and their activities with a relatively high degree of accuracy. These two journalists, however, expressed a rather cynical view of Dada by describing it as a kind of hedonism, and they also questioned whether this art movement would endure. The first article, entitled "Kyōrakushugi no saishin geijutsu -- sengo ni kangei saretsutsu aru Dadaizumu" ("The Newest Art Created by Hedonism - Dadaism Coming to Be Welcomed After the War"), was written by Wakatsuki Yasuharu under his pen name "Shiran" ("Purple Orchid") and published on August 15, 1920. Wakatsuki states that Dada may look like a new and bizarre branch of futurism, but that this art/literary movement is different from futurism. He states that Dada artists see art as follows:

When seen from this point of view, Dadaism is a kind of Bolshevism or nihilism. Tzara, who is called the leader of the group, says in all honesty, "I may be crazy. I can accept it, and I would like to abandon everything like family, morality, common sense, memory, archaeology, prophecy, and the future." From this viewpoint, these artists look like futurists, but they are not. There are extreme hedonists, selfish-ists, complete individualists, anarchists, and realists.

Actually, there is no principle to their art, and it is said, "Their art has no art, and their art attempts to destroy ordinary art, even wisdom." Thus, they are willing to destroy all of love, philosophy, psychology, and literature. They are a type of crazy destroyers who have little appreciation or regard for feelings. We might be able to see
their art as a crater of modern art and life in Europe. Modern art is now thought to have reached an impasse, and Europeans seem very tired of postwar life. Yet, the Dadaists’ way of thinking— their no-direction and no-ism— may not be the ultimate route to life and art.

The second article, published on the same date and in the same paper, was "Dadaizumu ichimenkan" ("One Aspect of Dadaism") written by a journalist identified by the pen name "Yōtōsei" ("Sheep Head"). "Yōtōsei" explains Dada as "artistic anarchism," and he writes that the nature of Dada lies in its negation of everything valuable and meaningful.

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7 The critic and poet Kikuchi Yasuo later identified one of the writers of the two articles. He states that the real name of the "Shiran" journalist is Wakatsuki Yasuharu. Wakatsuki was born in Yamaguchi Prefecture in 1879. According to Kikuchi, after graduating from the English Department of Tokyo Imperial University, Wakatsuki first became a scholar of foreign literature. He then was hired as a journalist by Yorozu chōhō. Gradually he became more interested in Japanese classical theater than in the European modernist movement, and in 1923, he quit his job as a reporter. Wakatsuki eventually became a scholar of jōruri, Japanese classical puppet theater (Kikuchi Yasuo, Aoi kaidan o noboru shijintachi [Tokyo: Seidosha, 1965], p.224). Kikuchi did not identify, however, the other writer with the pen name of "Yōtōsei."

These two articles were the first to introduce Dada into Japan. As a result of reading the articles, Takahashi Shinkichi (1901-1978), a nineteen-year-old then living in Shikoku, was infused with the idea of Dada, and he began writing Dadaistic poetry. His free verse "Kentai" ("Boredom") was published in the first issue of the coterie magazine Shimôn (Simoon) in April 1922 and is considered to represent the first appearance of a Japanese Dadaist literary work. Takahashi was attracted by Dada's revulsion with the notion of the establishment. His poem deals with his boredom and frustration while working as a busboy in Tokyo, and under the influence of Dada, he expresses his emotion in non-poetic speech. At the same time, he was fascinated by the visual aspect of Dada poetry, in which words or letters were printed in reverse or diagonally. In fact, Takahashi actually had never seen an example of Dada poetry published in a European magazine when he wrote "Boredom." He had only read the two Yorozu chōhō newspaper articles and conjectured as to the form

"Kentai" ("21" in "1911-nen shishū"), in Takahashi Shinhichi, Takahashi Shinkichi zenshū, vol.1, pp.81-82. "Shimôn" ("Simoon") is an Arabic word which means "hot wind." The name of the magazine Shimôn was later changed from the Arabic word into Japanese word Noppū, which also means "hot wind."
Dadaist writing might assume. As a result, he created his own original style for Japanese modernism, and "Boredom" can be called a pathbreaking work in the history of the modernist movement in Japan. In "Boredom," Takahashi succeeds in creating a unique visual effect using the Chinese character "sara" ("plate"). In the first line, which is written vertically as is the basic style of Japanese writing, Takahashi gives physical shape to the stack of plates which he had to pile up and wash as a busboy by repeating the word "sara" twenty-two times.

As a result, his poetry reveals a different function for written language: in other words, a visual image directly creates written language. Hence, Takahashi's "Boredom" suggests to his readers that they not only read the poem but also see it through the visual image he creates. Later, Takahashi practiced arranging poetic lines in graphically irregular patterns in the manner of European Dada poets, but the impact of an initial line of twenty-two "plate" characters remained his most important demonstration of the different possibilities for written language.

In addition to publishing Dadaistic free verse, Takahashi wrote a very important free verse essay, "Dangen wa Dadasuto" ("I Declare: I am a Dadaist"). This
manifesto-like work originally appeared in the magazine Shūkan Nihon (Weekly Japan) in July 1922 and was later included in Takahashi’s celebrated 1923 collection of free verse Dadaisuto Shinkichi no uta (Poetry of Dadaist Shinkichi). Called the first Dada Manifesto in Japanese, "I Declare: I Am a Dadaist" is filled with unconventional juxtapositions of philosophical words with everyday objects or cheap foods.

DADA declares everything and denies everything. Infinity and nothingness, such words echo just like a CIGARETTE, a WAISTCLOTH, or a word. Everything we imagine, I declare, exists. Every past is included in the future of fermented soybeans.

If we can have the image which is beyond our imagination in depending on the head of the stone and the head of the sardine, everything imagines. DADA sees his own ego in everything. Even in the air vibrations, in hatred of virus, and in the smell of the word "ego."

Everything is never the same. Buddha’s resignation tells everything is everything.

We see everything in everything.

Declaration is everything.
The cosmos is the soap. The soap is the pants. Everything is possible.

Gelidium jelly wrote a love letter to Christ who was put on the "shōji" screen.

Everything is TRUE.

Is it possible that Mr. God, who does not smoke, imagines something he cannot declare?\(^{16}\)

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Since this is a rather long poem that is divided into nine parts, it cannot be reproduced here in its entirety. Its final section runs as follows:

    DADA gives birth to, breaks up, and unifies everything.
    Everything occupies behind DADA.
    No one can be DADA's ally.
    DADA is a woman, and at the same time, androgynous.
    Therefore, she has genitals, and at the same time, all kinds of weapons.
    There is nothing more servile than DADA.
    Because he hangs fierce combative spirits, he ceaselessly keeps exploring, crushing, and destroying.
    Everything is DADA's enemy.
    He moves his tongue - it curses and kills everything, bites and eats to the end, yet is still not satisfied. Like that of an eternal proletariat. (8.14)  

The poem alternates between long, garrulous lines filled with various bizarre images and objects, and short sentences which tend to be aphoristic, if not dogmatic, stating "Everything is ...." or ".... is everything." In repeating the term "everything" ("issai"), the whole poem assumes a very aggressive tone.

In contrast to "Boredom," Takahashi is clearly concerned with the content of ideas rather than visual images in this manifesto. Still, visual elements remain, for example, in his use of the roman letters "DADA" rather

\[11\] Ibid., p.52
than Japanese *katakana*. At the same time, he uses *katakana* for ordinary Japanese words such as "true" ("*hontou*"). By subverting typical usage, he adds to the chaotic air of the work. Moreover, the companion poems in *Poetry of Dadaist Shinkichi*, which accompany the manifesto, are often visually constructed through combining English letters with nonsensical onomatopoeia in Japanese.

When *Poetry of Dadaist Shinkichi* was published by Chūō-bijutsusha, the work was not compiled by Takahashi himself but by Tsuji Jun (1884-1944), an anarchist, critic of Western modernism, and translator of contemporary works of Western literature. Tsuji was a scholar of English, and he translated a wide range of works. Through the works of Oscar Wilde, Edgar Allan Poe, Baudelaire, and De Quincey, he sought to promote the notions of decadence, nihilism, and anarchism. Tsuji also wrote essays on these writers which attracted a considerable following.

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12 Tsuji Jun was the first husband of the anarchist writer/activist Itō Noe (1895-1923). She abandoned Tsuji and eloped with Ōsugi Sakae (1885-1923), one of the most famous Japanese anarchists in the 1910s and early 1920s. Both Ōsugi Sakae and Itō Noe were apprehended by the police and killed in their jail cells during the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. Tsuji did not express any anti-government statements at the time, but he did publish an elegy to her in November 1923.
Compared to Takahashi, who practiced Dadaistic writing in poetry and prose, Tsuji was largely a contributor to Dada theory. He had joined the literary circles much earlier than Takahashi, but he approached Dada only after being inspired by Takahashi's works. Tsuji's first essay on Dada, "Dada no hanashi" ("An Episode about Dada"), was written for the September 1921 issue of the magazine Kaizō (Reconstruction). The essay introduced readers to various Dadaists in the West and Japan, and to various essays and novels key to understanding Dada. Tsuji insisted that Dada was not just a movement in art and literature; it was a philosophy which advocated absolute liberation from all restrictions.

Yoshiyuki's Dadaistic Works:
From Poetry to Prose Poem

The works of Takahashi and Tsuji were highly influential in Yoshiyuki's case. Although it is not known how and when Yoshiyuki encountered Dadaism in either its Western or Japanese forms, when he entered the literary stage by joining the first issue of the coterie magazine Dadaizumu (Dadaism) in December of 1922, he was already very familiar with the works of Takahashi and Tsuji. In
miscellaneous notes, he mentioned his respect for them as the only two Japanese Dadaists, and he also contributed his own Dada Manifesto to this magazine.

In the first issue of Dadaizumu, Yoshiyuki published twenty-three works of free verse, three prose poems, and an editor's note, as well as miscellaneous notes. The following year, he became editor-in-chief of the magazine and published the second issue of Dadaizumu. He also published fifteen works of free verse in this issue.

His early works -- mainly poems -- suggest the strong influence of both western Dada and Japanese Dada, and he enjoyed practicing the new and experimental style of free verse. For instance, Yoshiyuki's poem "Taishō" ("Object of an Action"), which was published in the first issue of Dadaizumu, reads as follows:

You are
DADDDDDD
Namumyōhōrenbosatsu
From the eye in yawning
Copulation of the cats (koshikoki)
A spider with eight legs giving headaches a birth.
You are a Dadaist
A hair whorl of a tooth capped with gold - no
no desire
The head of love being cut
Namumyōhōrenbosatsu情

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Various non-poetic words like "from the eye in yawing" or "a tooth capped with gold" are enumerated at random in the poem. In addition, Yoshiyuki uses erotic and grotesque terms as one strategy in reproducing the "non-art" style of the European Dadaists. While such an approach was rather typical in Europe, in Japan Yoshiyuki represents the extreme end of the spectrum of writers who sought to expand the realm of Dada as "non-art" and "non-aesthetic" through eroticism and grotesqueness.

In the second issue of Dadaizumu, he develops his literary characteristics in an increasingly aggressive and garrulous manner. For instance, he writes the following first four long lines in "Hentai nikushoku" ("Pervert Carnivore"):

He was a Dadaist who twisted two animals aggressive kiss and made it co-activity
They were a man and a woman who stuck on each other bending their bodies in diagonal directions and revolving their bum tongues
He was a doctor who ordered to carve with the red ink on the stone grave when I died
He was a Dadaist who ate the corpse of a woman who raved herself to death by dancing like a snake\textsuperscript{14}

This poem is written in 13 lines, with long phrases like "who stuck on each other bending their bodies in diagonal

directions and revolving their bum tongues," written in order to modify "a man and woman." In addition, Yoshiyuki abandons punctuation between phases. As a result of these two characteristics, long agglutinative modifying phrases and no punctuation, the poem has a decidedly loquacious tone. Only later, when he started writing prose, did he use commas and periods. Still, garrulity remained a characteristic of all of his literature. It is also a source of confusion, if not excitement, to his readers.

The magazine *Dadaizumu* was discontinued after only one year, but Yoshiyuki started publishing another coterie magazine, *Baichi-shūbun* (*Selling Shame-Scandalous Prose*), in 1924 and then *Kyomushisō* (*Nihilist Thoughts*) the following year. Both *Baichi-shūbun* and *Kyomushisō* were minor, short-lived publications like *Dadaizumu*, but it was via these small magazines that Yoshiyuki's name became recognized. In particular, *Kyomushisō* was an important magazine for Yoshiyuki and his career. Unlike *Dadaizumu* and *Baichi-shūbun*, *Kyomushisō* welcomed young professional writers who did not necessarily identify themselves as Dadaists or even Nihilists, and it began to have influential voice in literary circles. The critic Ōhara Ryokuhō explains Yoshiyuki's intent in publishing *Kyomushisō* as follows:
It seems that Yoshiyuki in particular made every effort to give space to "writers with originality," or "new writers" including himself.

At the time, it was still believed that the dream of an "art revolution" was alive. Dada, Futurism, Constructivism, Expressionism, and proletarian literature were jumbled together, and engaging writers began to shake up the established literary circles. Yoshiyuki was quick to seize the opportunity, and he seemed to want things in this style in a big way.15

As Yoshiyuki intended, Kyomushisō was a compendium of works by various writers outside the Dada movement. For example, Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886-1942) and Muroo Saisei (1889-1962), both of whom were known for modern free verse, wrote essays and poetry for the magazine. Horiguchi Daigaku (1892-1981), a poet and translator of modern French poetry, also contributed his poems and critical essays to Kyomushisō. Moreover, members of the Shinkankakuha movement, such as Kon Tōkō, Inagaki Taruho, and Kataoka Teppei, also wrote short stories for the magazine. From the field of visual art, painter/poet Kanbara Tai introduced the latest trends in visual art in his essay, and Murayama Tomoyoshi, who was the leader of the avant-garde art/literary group known as Mayo and who

will be discussed in the next chapter, worked on the layout and design of this magazine, including the cover.

In hindsight, we see that Kyomushisō played a prominent and pivotal role as a Japanese modernist magazine. The contributors to Kyomushisō, regardless of their fame at the time, are considered important figures for their modernistic works and for their effort to create new literature. For example, Hagiwara Sakutarō, who was already a well-known poet, created illusionary and symbolic poetry that influenced young poets in the prewar period. Moreover, of course, he remains one of the most celebrated poets in modern Japanese poetry. For Kyomushisō, he contributed his critical essay "Senkusha to hantai no mono" ("Things Which Are the Opposite of a Pioneer") to the first issue and "Runmei no jōchosei" ("Sentimentality in Civilization") to the second.

Inagaki Taruho, another contributor, is well-known today for his modernistic prose. However, Inagaki had published his debut work in 1922, two years before Kyomushisō was published, and was still a new writer at that time. Later, he became a coterie member of Bungei jidai for the Shinkankakuha group, but when he published short stories for Kyomushisō, he was far from the center of the literary world. One of his works is a short story
titled "Gekkō mitsuyunin" ("Smugglers of Moonlight"), published in the first issue of Kyomushisō. The story was only four pages long, but the illusional imagery of generating alcohol from moonlight is fascinating. Inagaki uses "moonshine," a term for illegal alcohol borrowed from English, as the brand name for the spirits distilled from moonlight. It is an image doubtless inspired by the gangster movies imported into Japan from the United States during the 1920s. For instance, the owner of the distillery tells the narrator about gunfights between the government agents and his company.  

For Yoshiyuki, Kyomushisō represented a turning point in his career. As he encountered different avant-garde styles while editing Kyomushisō, Yoshiyuki's own literature developed in a new direction. Although he seems to have focused on editing, the small amount of writing that he did for Kyomushisō is highly indicative of his new literary aspirations. The most significant change is that he began to write more prose poetry than poems. Dazzling images still characterize his poetry, but it was

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in prose that Yoshiyuki formed his métier for story making.

His first work for Kyomushisō was the prose poem "An Dagurippa no kekkon" ("A Marriage of Ann Dagurippa"), published in the second issue of 1926. This prose poem, about the marriage of a girl named Ann Dagurippa and "watashi" ("I"), contains perplexing images like those seen in Yoshiyuki's poems, but its garrulous writing reaches new heights. In poetry, Yoshiyuki tended to write lines without any commas or spacing, but in "Ann Dagurippa," words and short phrases are now linked with spaces. As a result, whereas lines in Yoshiyuki's poetry looked long, the images created by words and phrases in his prose are more like a series of photographs emerging in front of the reader's eye one after another. "Ann Dagurippa" starts as follows:

Room painted in porcelain blue declining
eighteen women amuse themselves full bloom
eighteen decayed lips drinking crimson sweet liquor
illusion of woman student Ann Dagurippa destroying
her just now after several hours the dead body of
a woman is taken out from my room seventeen fat
bodies freeze.

Dead thing I throw the ball pink spots
appeared on the black skin of my lady Ann
Dagurippa. 17

These are the opening two lines, and the first stanza is very long. Yet, since the words and phrases are cut into smaller groups, the images are projected like flash cards.

In addition, Yoshiyuki demonstrates a new style for his literature in the construction of a story portraying Ann Dagurippa and "I." It is the story of love and sexuality between a man defined as "I" and a woman named Ann Dagurippa. In the first part, a sensualist "I" falls in love with and marries an innocent girl, Ann Dagurippa, who appears in the work without any indication of nationality, race, age, and background. However, the sound of her name may suggest the name of Yoshiyuki's wife Aguri, and it is possible that Yoshiyuki creates "I" as his own alter-ego. Yoshiyuki was notorious for his numerous love affairs among his friends and colleagues, and Aguri, who had been married to him at the age of fifteen, knew that he lived a hedonistic life. Although Aguri was not amorous like Ann Dagurippa, Yoshiyuki seemed to realize that his love life affected their marriage.18 In "Ann Dagurippa" Ann's innocence is destroyed through her marriage with "I." His amorality and love affairs promote in her the same lawlessness and desire. At the

18 Cf. Yoshiyuki Aguri, _Yusuraume ga minoru toki_.

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end of the work, she is described as a fallen angel who has turned into a lustful animal.

In terms of style, "Ann Dagurippa" is considered a transitional work in Yoshiyuki's evolution from poetry to prose poem, and then to prose. As Yoshiyuki's poetry evolves into prose, the startling images which belong to poetry are juxtaposed with the story, which tends to belong to prose. The scholar Kamiya Tadataka pays special attention to "Ann Dagurippa" as a pivotal work key to understanding Yoshiyuki's later writing.

"A Marriage of Ann Dagurippa" is more of a prose poem than a short story. If we compare it with works by Shinkankakuha writers which were very popular at the time, we can see how Yoshiyuki's original world was developed in the work. He had passed through Dadaism. The characteristics of Yoshiyuki's works had already emerged. These are ignorance of the temporal and spatial sequence, destruction of the form, liberation of sexuality, fin-de-siècle tone, and unidentifiable nationality. These characteristics are deeply related to his later works.\footnote{Kamiya Tadataka, "Kaisetsu," in YES, vol.2, p.226.}

As Kamiya explains, Yoshiyuki began to develop his own style, which was quite different from other avant-garde writers, as he had already gone beyond the practice of Dadaist literature. Also, his attempt to liberate his
writing from any literary boundaries makes him different from other writers of Shinkankakuha. The Shinkankakuha writers had also aimed at the creation of a new prose, but they did not question the importance of logical sequencing.

"Department Store" -- Between Social Criticism and Art for Art's Sake

Yoshiyuki's literature became more mature and interesting when he began writing short stories in 1927. He published three short stories in minor magazines in 1927, and then in 1929, his works began to appear in major literary magazines such as Shinchō (New Tides), Bungei shunjū, and Mita bungaku (Mita Literature). During this period, his works were highly regarded by writers who favored avant-garde literature. Yokomitsu Riichi particularly admired Yoshiyuki and encouraged him to develop his radical writing style. As a matter of fact, when Yoshiyuki joined the coterie magazine Kindai seisakushū (Modern Life) in 1930, Yokomitsu worried that Yoshiyuki's literature would be ruined by his being surrounded by other frivolous writers associated with the magazine, and he advised Yoshiyuki to drop out of the group.
Kindai seikatsu, the magazine that Yokomitsu considered "a fake avant-garde magazine," was one of the most prominent coterie journals for young, non-proletarian writers of the early 1930s. Kindai seikatsu was originally developed by the members of a group who called themselves "Jūsannin kurabu" ("The Club of Thirteen Members"). Established in 1929, this group was also called "Geijutsuha jūjigun" ("Crusaders of Art for Art's Sake"), and they insisted on the importance of artistic values in literature. Members ranged from unknown to young established writers; for example, Kawabata Yasunari was invited to join the group after Shinkankakuha broke up. Despite his friend Yokomitsu's opposition, Kawabata joined the group and wrote "Suishō gensō" ("Crystal Illusion") in 1931. In addition, the group included editors of major magazines. Since this group was established under the leadership of Nakamura Murao (1868-1949), well-known editor-in-chief of Shinchō, some members of the editorial staff of Shinchō magazine joined and wrote for Kindai Seikatsu.

Geijutsuha jūjigun published the coterie magazine Fudōchō (Inalienability), but it was short-lived because it could not attract a wide audience. The members then started the magazine Kindai seikatsu and invited more
coterie members to join them in April 1929, and the magazine grew by inviting many more writers to join the following year. In all, thirty writers became members of Shinkō geijutsuha kurabu (The Club of the New Artist Group), which grew out of Kindai seikatsu; the group is more widely known to literary history simply as Shinkō geijutsuha (New Artist Group). It was also called Modernizumuha (Modernist Group) at the time, but the word "modanizumu" ("modernism") does not refer to modernism as it is generally understood by contemporary scholars and critics. The critic Hirano Ken points out that, in case of Japanese culture and custom in the 1920s and the 1930s, the word "modanizumu" had connotations similar to the phrase "ero, guro, nansensu" ("erotic, grotesque, and nonsensical"), which was a popular term used to describe new and iconoclastic trends in the 1920s and the 1930s. Hirano argues that "modanizumu" here does not refer to modernism as the art and literary revolution in the early 20th century. Rather, it connotates urbanism and the celebration of urban culture. Moreover, urbanism is understood as the promotion of urban culture including the

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elements of "ero, guro, nansensu" and the reconstruction of Tokyo after the Great Kantō Earthquake with a more Westernized concept of architecture, restaurants, shops, and fashion. Shinkō geijutsu members liked to write about city life, and for this reason they were given the name Modanizumuha. Thus, Shinkō geijutsuha is recognized as a group that promoted frivolous consumption, crime, and erotic topics, although the group had writers and critics who published serious works in the Kindai seisakusha magazine. For instance, Hori Tatsuo, Funabashi Seiichi and critic Kobayashi Hideo (1902-1982) all published a series of works in the magazine; they are now considered prominent figures in modern Japanese literature. Yet, at the time, Kindai seisakusha was not recognized as a serious literary group.

Even though many of the Shinkō geijutsuha writers have been forgotten for several decades, they played an important role in literature of the early 1930s. Indeed, in debate with proletarian writers, the members of Shinkō geijutsuha promoted one of the quintessential ideas of modernist movement: art's for art's sake. Whereas the proletarian writers felt that their primary literary purpose was to denounce the viciousness of capitalist society in brutally realistic terms, Shinkō geijutsu
writers advocated that the creation of literature as a work of art.

Actually, the content of the argument was not new in either the West or in Japan. The debate over the purpose of art and its form was a fairly universal question among artists and writers in the 1920s and 1930s. The argument which shaped Japanese proletarian literature and realism can be traced to the art movement that emerged from Russia after the Russian Revolution. In the Soviet Union, Constructivists aggressively promoted communist Russia and its victory through their avant-garde art style. For instance, Vladmir Tatlin (1885-1953), one of the leaders of Constructivism, planned to build a huge avant-garde style monument to the Third Internationale after the success of the revolution, and Liubov Popova (1889-1924), a woman painter, designed uniforms for the military and public servants in a modernistic pattern. These artists assumed that avant-garde art would be the art form symbolizing the future of Russia.

However, during the 1920s, questions were raised with regard to whether avant-garde art could claim itself as a people's art. As art history scholar Paul Wood points out, regardless of each artist's intention, it became clear that the avant-garde art was often patronized by the
bourgeoisie, and it did not seem to be art for a wide audience.\textsuperscript{21} Although Wood mainly discusses art, his argument can also be applied to literature. Literature also was expected to exist for and educate the masses, who did not have an elite education. As a result, social realism or the primitive Socialist Realism supplanted avant-garde art as the preferred people's revolutionary literature. According to Lenin, social realism is:

\ldots[a] true and historical concrete depiction of reality in its revolutionary development. Moreover, this true and historically concrete depiction of reality must be combined with the task of educating the workers in the spirit of Communism.\textsuperscript{22}

Differing from realism, which was often associated with naturalism from the 19th century, social realism is more dogmatic in terms of its themes and expressions. According to the doctrine of social realism, art should reflect the reality of people in the context of the revolution, and art should also be understandable for the majority of the people. As the influence of avant-garde


art waned in the Soviet Union throughout the 1920s, many former avant-garde artists began to create works in a more representational style.

Following the new artistic and literary direction in the Soviet Union, Japanese proletarian writers insisted on the authenticity of social realism as the appropriate art style for the people. First, these proletarian writers criticized the avant-garde writers, especially the writers of *Shinkankakuha*, which took leadership of the avant-garde movement in the mid-1920s. Among *Shinkankakuha* writers, Yokomitsu in particular had promoted the superiority of the avant-garde style in a series of essays published in various journals. In 1928, Yokomitsu published "*Shinkankakuha to konminizumu bungaku*" ("Shinkankakuha and Communist Literature") in the journal *Shincho*. In this essay he clearly states that, although he accepts pro-communist writing as a legitimate literary genre, he cannot agree that communist literature is the ultimate direction for all literature. Yokomitsu indicates that regardless of the communist writers' hatred for and criticism of capitalism, capitalism exists, and so does

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non-communist literature. He continues with the idea that literature should encompass all kinds of ideology and style; therefore, he feels that proletarian writers should also accept Shinkankaku literature as a valid literary genre.

However, despite Yokomitsu's effort to advocate avant-garde literature, Shinkankakuha broke up in 1929 after some members joined the proletarian movement. Afterwards, Shinkō geijutsuha, which began to grow at that time, took up the cause of art for art's sake once advocated by Shinkankakuha. Shinkō geijutsu writers also took a similar position to that of Shinkankakuha, in that they could accept proletarian literature as one of many styles which could expand the boundaries of literature, but they did not share the beliefs of the proletarian writers, who maintained that their themes and literary styles represented the only correct direction for the future of literature. For the Shinkō geijutsuha writers, art existed primarily for art itself; thus, any purpose or theory of literature should serve literature.

After several exchanges of opinion in their own coterie magazines, the two groups -- proletarian writers and Shinkō geijutsuha writers -- finally had a round-table talk for the March issue of Shinchō in 1930. According to
Ryūtanji Yū, one of the leading novelists of Shinkō geijutsuha, this discussion was so important to Shinkō geijutsuha that the members had a preparatory meeting at the beauty parlor of Yoshiyuki Aguri. However, despite their preparation for the round-table talk with the proletarian writers, the actual debate turned out only to be a rather fussy, carping exchange on insubstantial details. The debate began with a discussion on whether Marxism was a branch of economics and continued without any agreement or conclusion. Then the discussion moved to the issue of whether there can be an exact proportional balance between ideology and artistic elements in proletarian literature, and both proletarian writers and Shinkō geijutsuha writers became embroiled in the details of their differing statements. For instance, when proletarian writer Hayashi Fusao (1903-1975) mentioned that he considered artistic values to be important in proletarian literature, Shinkō geijutsuha writer Kuno Toyohiko countered, stating that if Hayashi accepted the importance of artistic values in literature, he was, in

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24 Ryūtanji Yū, "Jinsei yūgiha," quoted by Unno Hiroshi, Modan toshi Tokyo, p.172.
essence, a follower of art for art's sake.\textsuperscript{25}

Although the actual round-table conference produced no consensus between the two factions, it became a catalyst for a series of essays by Shinkō geijutsuha members. Naruse Masakatsu (1906-1973), one of the Shinkō geijutsuha writers, published an essay called "Geijutsuha senpen" ("Manifesto of the Artists for Art's Sake") in the April issue of Shinchō in 1930 under the pen name of Tsunekawa Hiroshi. Although the work was originally intended as a personal statement, this manifesto and Naruse's (Tsunekawa's) advocacy of art for art's sake came to represent the central tenet of Shinkō geijutsuha.

According to Naruse, his group, which he simply called the Geijutsuha (Artistic Faction), accepted the premise of the proletarian writers that literature had to reflect society, and he mentions his admiration for the success that proletarian writers enjoyed in presenting new possibilities for literature. However, he condemns the proletarian authors for their beliefs that all literature had to serve a political purpose and that improving

\textsuperscript{25} Nakamura Murao, et al., "Geijutsuha to Puroha to no tōran kai," Shinchō 27, no.3 (March 1930): 118-145.
society was the sole goal of literature. He criticized them as narrow and even hegemonistic in not accepting any other aspect of art besides its propagandistic function.²⁶

Although Yoshiyuki was a relative newcomer to Shinkō geijutsuha and had not participated in the coterie in the Jūsannin kurabu period, he nevertheless had become one of its theoretical leaders by the time of the round-table talk. Yoshiyuki often opened his office for meetings of the Shinkō geijutsuha, and for the round-table conference, he planned the strategy for the debate with the other members.

While Yoshiyuki aggressively identified himself with the idea of art for art's sake, however, his literature developed in a new direction with regard to political themes. He began to express his critical views of capitalist society and urban life. At the same time, he wrote in a very experimental style, and these two elements of politics and art blended well in his works. This mixture made his literature more difficult and more perplexing, but at the same time more interesting as modernist work.

"Onna hyakkaten" ("A Department Store for a Woman"), a short story published in the February issue of Kindai seikatsu in 1930, is an example of Yoshiyuki's growing tendency toward social criticism in an experimental literary style. The protagonist is Ōta Misako, the manager of the boutique Paul & Co. (Pôru shôkai) in Ginza, at that time the most sophisticated part of Tokyo. The boutique is very popular, selling imported clothes and goods to the "bourgeoisie." Yet, Misako wants to expand her business, and she is willing to do almost anything, even including immoral deeds, to fulfill her ambitions. Although she is married and has a daughter, she has love affairs with any man rich enough either to give her money or to finance her business. For instance, she negotiates with a man from Barcelona to finance her boutique, and she offers him a one night stand as an "interest" payment on the money she wants to borrow. After succeeding in borrowing his money, however, she refuses to have any further contact with the man. When he calls her and begs her to return, she tells the man that she hates him, and then she listens on the line while he makes his suicidal leap from his hotel room window.

Misako is also ruthless in attempts to harm her competitors. She bribes a female news reporter in order
to uncover a scandal about her rivals and then sell it to the tabloid press. The reporter originally approaches Misako in order to blackmail her, but Misako then bribes her. At the same time, she threatens the reporter not to betray Misako. Next, Misako bankrupts a businessman and then buys his property for next to nothing. She cheats, manipulates, and threatens people in any way necessary to succeed in business. As a whole, she is portrayed as a woman who is prepared to do anything, however immoral, to accomplish her goals.

Of course, the people surrounding her are also presented as villains. Three boyfriends are introduced in the story, and just like Misako, each of them seems to love Misako only for money and sexual pleasure. Karita, the advertising manager of a fashion magazine called Ryūko (In Fashion), helps Misako to buy the land that she obtains by cheating the landowner. She tells Karita that she may be pregnant with his baby, but he takes no interest in assuming responsibility for the pregnancy and says, "Of course, it happened because you are married."

Yamaji Matsunosuke, a popular actor leading a theater group, is patronized by Misako, and he has sexual relations with her for money. Finally, a third man named Wilkins, an American magician, appears at the end of the
story. In contrast to Matsunosuke, Wilkins supplies Misako with money in order to keep their relationship going. When Misako goes to Osaka on a business trip, he appears with a bundle of cash and joins her on the train.

There is little plot development in the story, which focuses instead on Misako's shrewish dialogues and the nasty acts that she commits one after another. In this story about the vices and base desires that lurk behind the beautiful and chic facade of Misako's boutique, Misako becomes a metaphor for the double faces of urban life. She is a beautiful and successful modern businesswoman, as well as a villain and virago. Her character symbolizes the essence of Tokyo, which is the flower of sophistication and advanced culture with its dark side of bribery, corruption, crime, and prostitution.

The image of the double face is also used in the title of the work. Although "A Department Store for a Woman" is about a small boutique rather than a department store, Yoshiyuki uses the words "department store" in the title, and there is one passage in which he uses "department store" to suggest the nature of Tokyo.

The modern girls whose hair and clothes are cut extremely short -- the modern girls who wear the short skirts, have flat chests like men, and keep an independent spirit in their heart after studying the
new love from the textbook -- sally forth to the cabarets, bars, and the night department stores.\textsuperscript{27}

While Yoshiyuki never specifically calls the streets of Tokyo a kind of all-night department store, it is clear that the town implies the availability of all kinds of night-time pleasures, through cash transactions that range from dating services to prostitution.

Of course, the commercialism of the department store permeates the entire story regardless of the place and time of the day. Komata Yusuke argues that the department store appears to be a metaphor for Tokyo and city life, and that Yoshiyuki vilifies human greed and deception in a capitalist society. For Yoshiyuki, the department store is a place of excess-demand, excess-supply, and the illusion of the good life created by the spectacle of glamorous goods, bright lights, a sophisticated mood, and the smiles of the shop clerks. The dark and mercenary image of the department store represents Tokyo overlapped with Misako; Yoshiyuki hints at a comparison between the seductive power of capitalist society and the attraction

\textsuperscript{27} Yoshiyuki, "Onna hyakkaten," in \textit{YES}, vol. 2, p.56.
of the modern femme fatale.

The dark side of the city is also emphasized by the word "battleship," used as a metaphor for Misako, who fights in the merciless battlefield of Tokyo. Misako is frequently compared to the ship, for she struggles in the cruel sea of Tokyo in which there is no order and little generosity among fellow human beings. When Misako goes into town, it is as if she is being christened like a ship and launched into the harbor. For instance, in the scene in which Misako dresses up to see the actor Matsunosuke at the theater, Yoshiyuki writes,

Misako made her disciples puff a powdery foundation all over her body. She wore a gaudy dress which had been put in the show window during the day. It looked like a dress that belonged to an opera diva from Marseille. She wore the black hat with a white feather plume over her eyes. She put on an intense and coquettish perfume made from Neroli oil. Misako, who looked like a woman in the circus, sensed the night with a feeling of pride.

...Among these girls who were trained by the foreigners from the West, Misako launched herself decorated with the flags from every nation.  

Moreover, when Misako’s husband points out his wife has bits of dry food on her face, she turns pale and then launches into a furious tirade at a husband who could make fun of her. As Yoshiyuki describes it, "Her face turned

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28Ibid., p.56.
the color of an abandoned battleship, and her metallic and shrill scream was heard from one end to the other of Paul & Co."

The battleship as an image for a woman was not completely new to Yoshiyuki. Perhaps the best known work which refers to a battleship in relation to women is Surrealist poet Anzai Fuyue's (1898-1965) free verse "Gunkan Mari" ("Battleship Mary"). Originally published in 1926, the poem was compiled with other poems by Anzai in an anthology entitled Battleship Mary published in 1929, one year before the publication of "A Department Store for a Woman." Anzai writes of the dogmatic power and attraction of the battleship, surrealistically named Mary, as seen through the eyes of her captain. Having lost any power to command the sailors, the captain does nothing but smoke opium. The ship Mary seems to have assumed a life unto herself, and she allows the sailors to commit all manner of evil deeds inside her. Still, as seen through the opium-sodden eyes of the captain, everything aboard appears beautiful and dreamy.

Compared with the deluded image of the battleship in "Battleship Mary," its image in "A Department Store for a

29 Ibid., p.56.
Woman" is far more direct. In particular, Yoshiyuki uses the battleship for its intended purpose; it is an instrument of war engaged in fighting in a battle. By comparing Misako to a battleship, he intensifies the harshness of both Misako and Tokyo as a battleground.

Most importantly, however, Yoshiyuki does not describe Misako as a stereotypical villain, and it is this element of Misako's emotional complexity that makes this short story interesting. Although his vignettes of her are brief, Yoshiyuki adds a trace of fragility to Misako's portrayal in the episodes where she commits immoral deeds. For instance, no sooner does Misako threaten the woman reporter in order to learn the scandalous dirt on her rivals than she begins to lose her strength and confidence. Furthermore, she feels weary after she deceives and buys the property from the bankrupted businessman. After the businessman leaves, she is left alone in the room. She lies down as if she had suddenly fainted. When she awakens, she expresses her concern for her daughter Nanako by asking her husband whether she is "a good mother" to Nanako. Misako's weakness derives from not only her physical fatigue but also the mental energy needed to sustain her everlasting deceit.
Hence, Misako is not described as a woman of simple emotions, and her emotional complexity raises the question of what is the nature of society and human beings. It is clear that Misako desires materialistic success and fame, but at the same time, her desires seem to be created by the city which stretches before her and us like a store window display of luxurious clothes, culture, and money itself. The complicated codependency between human greed and the interest-driven motives of city in urging its inhabitants to be endless consumers is exactly illustrated in "A Department Store for a Woman." Through the metaphor of the department store, Yoshiyuki describes the city as a force which accelerates people’s desires through a combination of excess-demand and excess-supply.

Albeit a non-proletarian writer, Yoshiyuki was surprisingly critical of capitalist society. Moreover, his interest was not limited to criticism; he also attempted to analyze the structure of humans and society. Generally speaking, other Shinkō geijutsuha writers did not write about social problems. Instead, they favored depictions of decadence and immorality as the most fascinating aspect of modern society. Yoshiyuki too was fond of depicting the sordid elements of society in his
early years, but by his middle period, his works went beyond a fascination with corruption to an explanation of its roots and a portrayal of its social consequences.

At the same time, Yoshiyuki's experimental writing is probably representative of the very best writing done in the Shinkō geijutsuha. First, Yoshiyuki used many unconventional phrases to modify nouns. For instance, take the case of the opening paragraph of "A Department Store for a Woman:"

"Hello."
She is the woman wearing the skirt -- the skirt which is puffed by the cosmetics decorated by money -- and the skirt which has a jealous window. She is the woman walking sophisticatedly and affectedly in structuring the city of shoes on the sunset-colored pavement. Passing Izumo-chō, reflecting the shadow of the dress on the colorful show window of the store, the "working girl" winked at a man walking down the street.
When the sky covered night town with the sweetness of a liqueur, the whirlpools of bright light disappeared, and the heels of the woman's shoes knocked at the door of the man's heart -- his relaxed heart. In the next moment, just like a falling stock, a man and a woman leave the radioactive rays of the streets for the place where they apply the much needed mouth-to-mouth respiration.30

These elaborate paragraphs depict a street walker and her customer. For example, after the opening "Hello" in English, the first and second sentences describe the

30Ibid., p.40.
woman's dress and manners, and they imply the nature of her profession to the reader. The "radioactive rays of the streets" indicate that she and her customer use their eyes to communicate, and "the place where they apply the much needed mouth-to-mouth respiration" suggests a love hotel. Because Yoshiyuki tends to use modifying phrases without the simile of "like" or "as" ("no yōna"), the metaphorical effect is created by the juxtaposition of words. This high degree of compression makes his sentences perplexing and difficult; at the same time, they are refreshingly new and exciting.

Yoshiyuki again employs the dark metaphor of the department store in his short story "A Department Store for Hedonists" ("Kyōraku hyakkaten"), which was published three months after "A Department Store for a Woman." In this story, however, he focuses more on human avarice than on the emotional complexity of the principal characters. His criticisms of capitalist society are made explicit by direct reference to contemporary incidents of corruption in politics and finance such as the Tokyo Electric Scandal, which was exposed in 1924 during the reconstruction of Tokyo after the Great Kantō Earthquake.
In "A Department Store for a Woman" Yoshiyuki focused on Misako and followed her all over Tokyo. By contrast, here there are more than ten characters -- politicians, businessmen, their children, prostitutes, and mistresses. Instead of focusing on a single character, Yoshiyuki spotlights each person one after another. The story begins with a reportorial prologue announcing that homosexuality has become a fashionable trend in political and financial circles. A drag queen called Osumi, the narrator reports, loves to take care of politicians coming from the countryside. The story then shifts to a discussion of the relationship between businessmen and politicians.

After this opening section, the story turns to the episode of Matsushita Shintarō, a high official of a certain government ministry, and his German mistress, Luisa. Luisa asks Matsushita to let her participate in his son's wedding, but Matsushita ignores her repeated requests because Luisa is only a mistress. Then, the story moves to the episode of Kōtarō, Matsushita's son, and the actress Matsui Keiko, his girlfriend. Like his father, Kōtarō has a mistress in addition to his fiancée Yoko. The marriage was arranged by Matsushita and Yoko's father, Isezaki Seibe, the president of a major electric
power company called Tōyō Denryoku. Keiko attacks Kōtarō for marrying Yōko, but he promises to be loyal to her even after the marriage.

The story moves from one character to another, and all are engaged in various ruses or crimes, but it is the back-scratching alliance between Matsushita and Isezaki that Yoshiyuki highlights and condemns.

Matsushita and Isezaki succeed in having their children marry, and they invite many powerful figures from politics, finance, and journalism to the big wedding. After the ceremony, the two men drink and talk, not of their children, but of a secret plan to force the mayor of Tokyo to resign so that they can take control of both the politics and economy of Tokyo.

"Mr. Isezaki, as you know, the government cannot officially go through with its support for the new project. So, I have a plan."
"It is...?"
"Let's make Tokyo City do it."
"Oh, I see..."
"The problem is that the mayor is a stuffy sort, you know, and he does not listen to us. Probably you know about him. So, we decided to order XXX organization to kick him out of office. At the same time, we already have plans to make Mr. XXX the next mayor."

.... "Officially the new project is to be carried out by the city, and it will be sold to you."
"I am honored to accept."
.... "Mr. Isezaki, I expect to receive a large reward from you."
"Oh, yes, Mr. Matsushita, I swear I’ll make every effort to support you to be a cabinet minister soon."\(^{31}\)

This detailed exchange between Isezaki and Matsushita calls to the reader’s mind any such conversation likely to take place behind the closed doors of a first-class ryōtei, a Japanese style restaurant, between politicians or between politicians and captains of industry. Yet, unlike “A Department Store for a Woman,” which describes capitalism through individuals and their desires, this work criticizes politics and big business directly. To the extent that the criticism is actually stated, the complexity of the characters’ emotions is diminished. Compared to Misako in “A Department Store for a Woman,” Isezaki and Matsushita are described more stereotypically, in terms of reductive emotional simplicity.

At the same time, Yoshiyuki’s writing style assumed other new and interesting characteristics with this story. Unno Hiroshi analyzes Yoshiyuki’s “A Department Store for Hedonists” as follows:

\[\ldots\] [W]ith “A Department Store for Hedonists,” Yoshiyuki’s modernism was about to turn the corner, and another style is about to emerge. It is a


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tendency in which the description of political, economic, and social conditions occupies the work more than the part of the story. For example, stocks and the stock market, labor strikes, and the problems of slum neighbors are depicted in more pages.\(^{32}\)

As Unno explains, Yoshiyuki weaves quasi-journalistic reports on the economy and society into his fiction. For instance, after the episode of Matsushita and Luisa’s argument over her participation in the wedding ceremony, the story turns to an account of the National Diet and the intense exchanges between government officials and the representatives of the government parties versus the representatives of the opposition parties. The government aims at restraining government spending in order to ride out an economic recession. By contrast, the representatives of the opposition criticize government policy for failing to stimulate public consumption and bringing the economy out of the doldrums of recession.

The combination of fictional elements with quasi-journalistic reports represents an advance in Yoshiyuki’s attempts to commingle the issues of art and politics. This fusion is most fully developed at the end of the work, when Yoshiyuki incorporates stock market reports into the text of his prose fiction. A chart comparing the

price of stocks in March and October of the previous year shows quite graphically how the Japanese economy is in recession. These charts and quasi-newspaper articles stand in sharp contrast to the rest of the text, and it is through this gap or discrepancy that Yoshiyuki creates a unique effect combining frivolousness with seriousness and enthusiasm with sobriety.

After “A Department Store for Hedonists”

After the publication of “A Department Store for Hedonists,” Yoshiyuki became more and more interested in social criticism. His works became far more politicized than any of his Kindai seikatsu colleagues. Although he never abandoned experimental writing, the extravagant and shocking tone of his early works is replaced by a more somber and serious mood. Yoshiyuki realized that his interest was shifting more toward politics and away from creating stylistically avant-garde literature. After the magazine Kindai seikatsu ceased publication in 1932, Yoshiyuki formed a group called Shinshakaiha (New Social Consciousness Group) with Asahara Rokurō (1895-1977) and Kuno Toyohiko, both former Shinkō geijutsuha writers. Asahara and Kuno had also started out as enthusiastic
supporters of the idea of art for art's sake, but they too came to criticize a society in which members of the lower class suffered from poor working conditions and low wages.33

Yet, Yoshiyuki no longer seemed to be satisfied with just writing about problematic social conditions. By 1934, he stopped writing all together and entered a stock brokerage in order, in his words, "to understand lives of the mass and the function of contemporary society closely."34 He attempted to open a company of stock consultants with Asahara and Kuno. In the same year he started a brokerage firm on his own, and he faded from the literary world. Except for two essays that he published about the securities market in 1937 and 1938, Yoshiyuki never did return to literary circles.

However, in this, Yoshiyuki is no exception among the Shinkō geijutsuha writers. With the exception of Kawabata and others who had already established themselves as

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Despite their interest in social issues, Shinshakaiha still expressed their disagreement with proletarian writers for the promotion of specific themes and writing styles. Yet, they also declared to depart from Shinkō geijutsuha because, they wanted to pursue more socialistic topics more extensively (Kuno Toyohiko and Asahara Rokurō, Shinshakaiha bungaku [Tokyo: Yumani Shobō, 1995]).

professional writers, most of the Shinkō geijutsuha writers did not prevail in the literary world, and eventually they moved on to other fields. Kuno, who established Shinshakaiha, also left literature and became a professor of economics at Nagoya College of Commerce. Ryūtanji became a world-renowned scholar of cacti.

Narasaki Tsutomu (1901-1978), a member of Shinkō geijutsuha and also the editor of Shinchō, writes in his memoirs about the Shinkō geijutsuha period, referring to Yoshiyuki:

Later, Yoshiyuki became a man who worked in Kabuto-chō, [Japan’s version of Wall Street]. At the beginning, he had an office with Kuno Toyohiko and Asahara Rokurō, and the cartoonist Kawahara Kunio in an old, dark building located in Kakigara-chō. Then, he separated from them and went on his own. From that moment, he had left literature behind. I regretted his farewell to literature and suggested to him that he should come back to the literary world. Yet, he said, “I will not write another story.” It was as though he had no more attachment for his old lover. He abandoned his own literature like a man bulldozing a garden filled with the flowers of his art in full bloom.\(^{35}\)

But, according to Yoshiyuki’s own son Junnosuke, there was a rumor that Yoshiyuki began to consider the idea of writing about his life in a work which would be similar to

the reminiscences of Casanova.\textsuperscript{36} Although Junnosuke
doubts that Yoshiyuki had any real intention to write such
a novel, there had always been a presumption among friends
and critics that Yoshiyuki would return to literary
circles. Before that could happen, however, he died of a
heart attack in 1940, at the age of thirty-four.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Yoshiyuki's literary life was short, but his works
are an important mirror of both the social conditions and
artistic movements of the 1920s and the 1930s in Japan.
He started his career as a Dadaist poet in the early
1920s. His works were experimental, and he seems to have
enjoyed writing in the new forms in an innocent way.
However, his works became more critical as Japanese
politics grew more corrupt and problems such as recession,
poverty, and the rise of imperialism grew more intense.
It was not unusual in the West for avant-garde art to
carry a strong political message. One thinks, for
example, of the works of George Grosz and his Berlin

\textsuperscript{36}
Yoshiyuki Junnosuke, “\textit{Chichi Eisuke ni tsuite (1)},” in
Dadaist company as both avant-garde and political. Nonetheless, in the case of Japanese literature in the 1920s and 1930s, political subjects were considered to belong largely to the territory of proletarian literature, and the avant-garde style was associated with anti-proletarian literature regardless of its content. Yoshiyuki was one of the Japanese writers who broke this barrier and created interesting works combining artistic experimentation with political and social criticism.
CHAPTER 2

MURAYAMA TOMOYOSHI:
FROM COLLAGES CREATED BY LANGUAGE
TO ALLEGORY OF LITERARY CIRCLES

Beyond the Simple Categorization

As discussed in the previous chapter, Yoshiyuki Eisuke is an example of an artist who went beyond the simple dichotomy of proletarian versus non-proletarian that characterized Japanese literature in the 1920s and 1930s. In brief, proletarian literature was considered political and literature for art's sake, non-political. This distinction is also related to the literary style of the two groups, with the former being characterized as "realism" and the latter as experimental or avant-garde. More specifically, the writing style promoted by proletarian writers was called proletarian realism, and it was the dominant style of their literature in the late
Despite this general observation, proletarian literature is not stylistically monolithic. Looking in hindsight from the contemporary viewpoint, we see that brilliant works were created by this unique class of proletarian writers who succeeded in addressing political issues through a variety of artistic approaches.

Murayama Tomoyoshi (1901-1977) is one of these "unorthodox" proletarian artists and writers who sought to incorporate avant-gardism and a political message. Deeply inspired by various European modernist movements such as Constructivism and Dada, he started his career as a creator of multi-media art, literature, and theater. In addition to individual exhibitions of his abstract visual art, Murayama became a leading member of the art group Mayo and gave young avant-garde painters a place to exhibit their work. Furthermore, the Mayo group published a coterie magazine by the same name and made it their mission to introduce modernist movements: their paintings, architecture, and even poetry, from Europe and Japan. Murayama even performed extremely abstract forms of modern dance, and he also designed the stage for the Tsukiji Little Theater (Tsukiji Shōgekijō), which pioneered productions of modern drama in Japan in the 1920s.
Murayama's leftist inclinations and attraction to proletarian literature began, according to him, in the mid-1920s as a result of his experiences working in the theater. In the end, he officially joined the proletarian movement and declared his disregard for avant-garde art, disparaging his early works as the products of a bourgeois mentality.

In spite of his intentions, political criticism and an artistic style of expression are always fused in his works. In the first place, Murayama was inspired by German Dada and Russian Constructivism; the political content of both movements was communicated using avant-garde forms. Under the influence of these two modernist movements, Murayama presented his political critique in an unintentionally elaborate style of writing. For example, when he describes Berlin in the 1926 short story entitled "1922-nen" ("The Year 1922"), he portrays crippled veterans injured in the First World War, widows forced into prostitution, and Japanese who arrogantly take advantage of Germany's weak currency. This word picture of Berlin uses short sentences, creating a collage of words. In the later works in the 1930s, the elaborated narrative is less obvious than in the early works, but the satirical tone of the stories seems to reflect his deep
distrust of imperial Japan and writers who went along with the government's politics. Just like Yoshiyuki's works, the artistic complexity of Murayama's writing prevents us from applying the simple dichotomy of avant-garde art as non-political and proletarian realism as political.

Murayama in Visual Art: Conscious Constructivism and the Avant-garde Art Group 'Mavo'

Murayama Tomoyoshi was born in Tokyo in 1901 as the first son of Murayama Tomojirō, a physician in the Japanese navy. Motoko, Tomoyoshi's mother, was a disciple of Uchimura Kanzō (1861-1930), an important Christian leader and founder of the mukyōkai (non-church) movement. Murayama himself began to study with Uchimura as one of his disciples around the age of thirteen. However, his rather naive faith in Christianity was challenged as the family faced the reality of poverty after Tomojirō's death from tuberculosis in 1912. In addition, Murayama

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Around 1915, Motoko started working for the magazine Fujin no tomo (Women's Friend), managed by the woman editor-in-chief Hani Motoxo (1873-1957), who was also well-known for her establishment of Jiyū-gakuen, a famous school for liberal education, but her income was not enough to feed four children and her mother-in-law. In addition, Murayama's family was further impoverished by his mother's
encountered the works of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in the First Higher School (Ichikō), the most prestigious higher school in Tokyo and Japan at the time, and his world view was drastically changed by Nietzsche's atheistic existentialism. Murayama decided to abandon Christianity and to study more German philosophy, and when he entered Tokyo Imperial University in 1921, he chose German philosophy as his major course of study. He dropped out of the university in his first year, however, when he was presented with an opportunity to go to Berlin at the end of that same year.

Christian charity work for her neighbors. Murayama writes about his life in detail in the three-volume Engekiteki jijoden (A Theatrical Autobiography), in which he tells of a preacher and his family who did not earn any money because they were busy preaching, and the wife and the eldest daughter sang hymns while the small baby cried at dinner time for lack of food. Murayama's mother Motoko sold her own, and eventually her children's kimonos in order to give food to the preacher's family. Still, the family thanked God for food but not Motoko and the Murayamas who actually supported them. The young Murayama felt that Christianity had the effect of leading people to serve God rather than people, and he became disillusioned by Christianity.

His disillusionment made him turn to a more critical study of various Western and Japanese religions. Then he expanded his interest in theology and philosophy when he was still in middle-school. He finally abandoned his Christian faith when he read Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) in his first year at First Higher School (Murayama Tomoyoshi, Engekiteki jijoden, vol.1 [Tokyo: Tōkō Shuppansha, 1970]).
Murayama's study in Berlin was not supported by the government but by loans from two Japanese magazines. Studying abroad was still expensive in the early 1920s, but it was no longer limited to the very privileged elites who were sent by the government. According to Murayama's memoir, his close friends from middle school and higher school went to Europe using family money, and they left Japan without having to make any official arrangements with either the government or the foreign institution. For example, Mori Gorō (1901-1983), Murayama's good friend from the First Higher School, went to Heidelberg to study German history. Another close friend, Wadachi Tomoo (1900-1925), also went to Berlin right after he graduated from a higher school. Compared to these friends, Murayama was not wealthy, but he was able to borrow money from the publishers he had worked for.

In the Meiji period, people like Mori Ōgai and Natsume Sōseki were sent to Berlin and London for research in their specialities: Ōgai in medicine and Sōseki in English. Studying in Berlin or London was restricted, and there were few scholars who had an opportunity to go to Europe for their research. In contrast, Japanese were able to go abroad more easily in the Taishō period.

Later Mori married Hani Setsuko (1903- ), a daughter of Hani Motoko, and became Hani Gorō, the famous historian and politician.
since he was a higher school student. Although Murayama had never studied at an art school, his artistic talent had been praised since middle school. In the higher school, he started working as an illustrator for the women's magazine *Fujin no tomo* (*Women's Friend*). He also promised to work for another magazine, *Shufu no tomo* (*Housewives' Friend*), and he succeed in borrowing money from these two magazines.¹

Murayama arrived in Berlin in February of 1922 to find that the city was in social and economic chaos. The German economy was still reeling from the disaster of the First World War and the punitive reparations of the Versailles peace treaty of 1919. The Weimar Constitution, established in 1919, was called the most democratic constitution in the world at the time. Yet, the fragile economy and the bouts of hyper-inflation destroyed public confidence in the government, and the political order of the struggling republic was further destabilized by a

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¹ The magazine *Fujin no tomo* and Hani Motoko, the editor-in-chief, had already hired Murayama's mother Motoko. Through Motoko, Murayama was asked to draw some illustrations for the novels which were published in the magazine. He was introduced to *Shufu no tomo* (*Housewives' Friend*) by Hani Motoko. He borrowed money from the magazines by promising that he would send essays and sketches about his experiences in Berlin to these magazines every month.
savage conflict between the Social Democratic Party and the insurgent Communist group led by Karl Liebknecht (1871-1919). Liebknecht led the group named Spartakusbund in an attempted coup d'état, and although the coup failed, and Liebknecht was subsequently murdered, the Communist Party played a prominent role in shaping the government of the 1920s. Also, the assassination of Walter Rathenau (1867-1922), the Social Democrat foreign minister, profoundly disturbed Weimar Germany. At the same time, Berlin began to reestablish itself as the center of German economy and culture, and the mood of the "Golden Twenties" spread throughout the city. When Murayama arrived in Berlin, the atmosphere was one of post-war optimism, economic depressions, political discord, and democratic liberalism.

In the fields of art and literature, this complex social situation was a driving force in creating new modes of artistic expression. Expressionism, a German avant-garde movement formed at the end of the 19th century,

5 Rathenau's debt renegotiations with the victorious Allies brought a brief period of economic stability to Germany. Many historians feel that, had Rathenau lived, the Weimar Republic might have been able to withstand the social and economic instability that ushered in Naziism and the Third Reich.
still occupied a prominent position in Berlin. Yet, various new movements were also raising their voices, and some of these leaders began criticizing Expressionist artists because of their indifference to politics and society. One of the newer movements was Dada, which began in Zurich during the First World War. As discussed in the previous chapter, Dada spread all over Europe, adjusting its style and mode of operation to the local situations of artists and their countries. By the time Dada reached Berlin, it was no longer an art form which promoted nonsense: reflecting German society, it became overtly political, and it attacked the collusion between big business and government. Later the "Berlin Dada" movement became a fierce critic of Hitler and vainly protested the rise of Naziism, but in the early 1920s, the target of Berlin Dada was the corruption in capitalist society. In particular, artist George Grosz (1893-1958), a polemicist in the movement, was one of the most influential forces in the development of Berlin Dada. For instance, Grosz's *Germany, A Winter Tale*, created from 1917 to 1919, is actually oil on canvas, but it looks like a collage that expresses the fragility of an innocent middle-class person's life. At the center of the work, a middle-class man sits in front of good food and beer, but he feels
somewhat anxious about his surroundings. Nonetheless, the man does not appear to notice the reality about him -- an outside world which is filled with death, prostitution, and the destruction of war. Moreover, Grosz's painting symbolizes the corruption of the three authorities -- the schools, the military, and the church -- by including a teacher, a military officer, and a bishop, all of whom stand in front of the man with a cunning look on their faces.

By the early 1920s, Grosz had stopped painting, and when he leaned toward newspaper cartoons, his satirical, stark, and somewhat grotesque style of drawing became all the more pronounced. It was at this time that Murayama encountered Grosz's works, and Grosz became an important influence in the development of Murayama's art and literary life. In 1926, when Murayama wrote an article titled "George Grosz" ("George Grosz"), he stated that although he initially recognized Grosz as a "great character sketch artist," he did not realize the importance of the political content of Grosz's works. However, it is hard to believe that Murayama could have

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ignored or missed the political message expressed in Grosz's works, and regardless of his statements to the contrary, surely he learned to express political themes in an avant-garde style from Grosz.

In addition, Murayama absorbed the concept of expressing political and social messages in abstract form from German Dadaist Kurt Schwitters (1887-1948), who kept his distance from the Berlin circle of Dadaists and developed his own style which is called Hanover Dada. Unlike Grosz, who criticized the destructive side of society, Schwitters focused on the constructive and urged his audience to build a new ideal world. Coining words to describe his art, he called his series of works merz or merzbau. The merz pieces, which continued until his death in 1948, are basically abstract collages made from various bits of trash and scraps which Schwitters picked up in the streets. By putting waste paper, wood, and an

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7 Schwitters created the word "merz" by cutting that syllable from "a letterhead of a 'Kommerz und Privatbank'" (Hamilton, Painting and Sculpture. p.384). "Merz" itself does not have any specific meaning.

He [Schwitters] liked the sound and sight of the meaningless syllable so much that he used it as a generic title for his collages when they were first exhibited at the Strum Gallery in 1919 (Ibid., p.384).
iron net on canvas, Schwitters advocated that a new and positive society could be constructed out of the ruins of Germany just as he himself could create art from scraps. Murayama was particularly inspired by Schwitters' use of mixed media that were originally waste materials. According to art historian Omuka Toshiharu, Murayama exchanged letters with Schwitters after he returned to Japan, and Murayama once sought Schwitters' permission to translate and publish Schwitters' own writing on *merz* for the magazine *Mavo*.  

The third influential art movement which Murayama encountered in Berlin was Constructivism, which was born in Russia during the Russian Revolution and introduced to Berlin right after World War I. Like the German Dadaists, the Constructivist artists, who enthusiastically supported the revolution, expressed their political opinions in abstract art forms, but they did not limit themselves to the visual arts. Responding to the success of the Russian Revolution, the Constructivists expanded their efforts to architecture, clothing, posters, flags, and even

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children's books. Although Constructivism did not spread throughout western Europe as Dada did, with its message of strong support for the Russian Revolution, Constructivism blossomed in Berlin in the years following World War I because of the city's geographical proximity to Russia.

Moreover, Germany shared with Russia the shattering experience of wartime defeat, loss of empire, economic turmoil, and civil unrest. Like Moscow and St. Petersburg, Berlin had a dedicated communist party with widespread popular support. As a result, Berlin artists embraced Constructivism as a cultural harbinger of the communist revolution that many felt would inevitably sweep Germany.

Murayama admired the fact that the Constructivist artists translated the theory of abstract art into everyday objects such as uniforms and children's books. But the most attractive element of Constructivism was its linguistic implication of "kōsei" ("construction"), which Murayama adored for the sheer dynamism of the word itself. In a book entitled Genzai no geijutsu to mirai no geijutsu (Art in the Present Day and Art in the Future), published in 1924, Murayama repeatedly emphasized that "construction" is far superior to "kōzu" ("composition"). Quoting the article, which introduces Russian
Constructivist Vladimir Tatlin's (1885-1953) Monument to the Third International, Murayama explains that "composition" seems to indicate the past; the diverse elements of the past that are compiled into one in a process of "composition." He also argues that "composition" only refers to painting or abstract images concerning the creation of art, and art works which are "composed" do not have any relationship to reality. By contrast, "construction" refers not only to paintings but also to architecture and machines, and these "constructed" works present an image that operates on the outside world.

In fact, Murayama's views are a direct adaptation of the classical argument between artists who have addressed the notion of pure art and those who have pursued

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9 Murayama, Genzai no geijutsu to mirai no geijutsu (Tokyo: Chōryūsha Shoten, 1924), pp.240-246. Hamilton describes the Monument to the Third International as follows:

His [Tatlin's] most memorable achievement was his proposed Monument to the Third International (1920), an open spiral metal tower some 1,300 feet high containing on a slanting axis three geometrically-shaped chambers for legislative and scientific purposes which were to revolve once a year, once a month, and once a day respectively (Painting and Sculpture, p.316).

10 Murayama, Genzai no geijutsu to mirai no geijutsu, pp. 252-261.
utilitarian value in art. "Composition" was the key word for artists of pure art such as Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) and his De Stijl movement, targets of the Russian Constructivists who harshly criticized their "composition"-based art theory. It is important to see that Murayama favored "construction" in which art relates to the society at large. It may well be that he did not fully realize the political import of his statements in introducing these words to Japan in his book, but it is clear that, from early on, he leaned toward art that expresses political issues.

Murayama witnessed this political and artistic dynamism in Berlin when he arrived there. He first hoped to continue studying philosophy at the University of Berlin. However, he soon became more interested in the various art movements that were energizing the art scene, and he aggressively participated in the art world of Berlin.

Although his [Murayama's] stay lasted less than a year, he was extremely active during that time. He did not limit himself to making art. He made friends, travelled, and communicated effectively with the people around him. Through Herwarth Walden of the Sturm Gallery he met Archipenko and was also introduced to the Italian Futurists Marinetti and Vasari. He showed work in the international Futurist exhibition at the Neumann Gallery in March, participated in the international art exhibition and congress of the Union of International Progressive
Artists in Düsseldorf in May, and held a two-person show with Yoshimitsu Nagano in the Twardy bookstore and gallery across the street from the Sturm Gallery in September. With hardly time to take a breath, he threw himself into the vortex of advanced art movements swirling around the center of Berlin.\footnote{Omuka, "To Make All of Myself Boil Over," pp.19-20. Omuka also discusses Murayama’s life in Berlin in the other book. According to Omuka, Nagano (1902-1968) was a brother-in-law of Tōgō Seiji (1897-1978), a young rising Japanese painter at the time, and Nagano and Murayama had art exhibitions after their return from Germany. Omuka also reports in his book that Murayama, Wadachi, and Nagano called themselves the "Japanese Futurist Group" when they were in Berlin together for a short time (Taishō-ki shinkō bijutsu undō no kenkyū [Tokyo: Sukaidō, 1995], pp. 362-452).}

Murayama's experiences and portraits of Berlin were later compiled in one of his early representative stories, "The Year 1922," published in 1926. His encounter with Ruggero Vasari, an Italian Futurist poet active in Berlin as a promoter of Berlin Futurism, was particularly important because he became a fictionalized character essential to the plot development in "The Year 1922," which we will return to discuss later.

After a productive year, Murayama left Berlin in December 1922 and returned to Japan in January 1923. He immediately set to work preparing for a series of art exhibits. In May 1923, he held his first art exhibit,
entitled "Ishikiteki kōseishugiteki shōhin tenrankai" ("The Exhibition of Consciously Constructivist Small Paintings") at Yasuda Bunbōdō in Kanda, Tokyo. Since the paintings which Murayama created in Berlin had not yet arrived in Tokyo, he managed his first exhibit with only the works he had produced in the five months since his return to Tokyo. As expected, the shock that his art gave to the audience was profound enough to establish him as a rising artist.

As the title of his first exhibit indicates, Murayama attempted to establish his original theory of art within the global stream of the modernist art movement. He called it "Ishikiteki kōseishugi" ("Conscious Constructivism"). According to Murayama, Conscious Constructivism embraced not only abstract art but also art that was a mixture of abstraction and representation. Murayama thought abstract painting tended to be dull because of the repetitive combination of triangles, lines, or circle-like figures. Analyzing Russian Expressionist painter Vasily Kandinsky's (1866-1944) works as examples,

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12 He also referred to his art theory "Bewusster Konstruktionismus," the German words for "Conscious Constructivism." Murayama frequently used the German word "Konstruktion" ("Construction") in the titles of his art works rather than using the Japanese word "kōsei."
he explained that abstract paintings tended to end up being very monotonous and similar because they simply reproduced patterns. This observation led him to a conclusion which at first seems contradictory; he advocated the creation of abstract paintings which have an association with representational images.\(^\text{13}\) He practiced Conscious Constructivism using different materials such as pieces of newspaper, hair, or photographs and putting them on the canvas in a collage. This method seemed to be an adaptation of Schwitters’ merz, but the items used in Murayama’s works symbolize his personal memory and involvement with the representational images. When he created Construction (Konsutorakuchion written in katakana syllabaries), one of the most famous objet d’art in the history of pre-war Japanese avant-garde art, he used paper, wood, leather, metal, hair, and photographs with paint. The materials have specific references to his life, and it was on the basis of this personalization of the materials for art that Murayama claims that his art is different from other abstract works such as those of Kandinsky. For instance, the photographs are of Berlin,

\(^{13}\) Murayama, "Mavo no omoide," in the pamphlet for reprinted Mavo (Tokyo: Kindai Nihon bungakukan, 1990), pp.4-5.
and the hair is that of a German woman with whom he fell in love in Berlin. It was in this way that Murayama attempted to juxtapose presentations of representational images in an abstract manner.

Moreover, the work **Construction** is created based on Murayama's other important art theory -- namely, the subjective recognition of beauty in art. Ever since he had read Nietzsche, Murayama discerned that artists had to create a standard of value for themselves -- for the artist Murayama, it was the standard of beauty -- because there was no longer an absolute and eternal criterion for beauty in art. Thus, he decided to present his notion of beauty in his Conscious Constructivism. He himself explains the nature of his own nihilistic understanding of the notion of beauty and how it led him to create his early works.

I thought of this. If there was no objective, eternal, and comprehensible standard for the notion of beauty and ugliness, each artist had to depend on his own subjective standard. However, can the artist be satisfied only with creation of his own standard? If not, the artist constantly has to challenge his own standard of beauty and has to face the conflict. The artist has to pursue a higher unified standard and has to struggle to find it. If the artist makes an effort in the extreme, he must swing like a pendulum between his own standard and the standard of others who also pursue the notion of beauty. This is a very painful process; therefore, I have to have a strong will to create art and make an effort on its behalf. There is nothing else I can do.
This was what I thought, and why I named my art "Conscious Constructivism." Thus, my art was completely different from Constructivism in Russia.\textsuperscript{14}

Motoe Kunio, Chief Curator of the Japanese National Museum of Modern Art in Tokyo, discusses the quintessential nature of Construction and states that Murayama demonstrates harmony and order in the work.\textsuperscript{15} According to Motoe, the color of each material is a highly similar reddish brown or brownish red, and each material is arranged roughly along either horizontal or vertical lines.\textsuperscript{16} As Motoe points out, as a result of Murayama's intention of displaying his own standard of beauty, Construction gives the impression of rhythm and coordination despite the use of different materials. Murayama aimed at the creation of beauty with non-

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p.5.

\textsuperscript{15} Motoe Kunio, "Hakai to sōzō no ishi - 'Konsutorakuchion,'" in Zen'ei geijutsu no jikken, pp. 86-87, vol.7 of Nihon no kindai bijutsu (Tokyo: Ōtsuki Shoten, 1993).

\textsuperscript{16} Of course, Motoe recognizes that the observation of systematic elements in Construction is based on his own contemporary point of view. He explains that in the 1920s, this work was seen as a part of Dada or Futurism, and that these two movements were considered essentially the same for their negation of any conventional artistic values (Ibid., pp. 86-87).
aesthetic materials, and he attempted to present his own standard of beauty through this work.

Murayama's Construction works and a series of successful exhibitions attracted young artists, and in 1923, with these artists, Murayama established an art group called Mayo. According to Takamizawa Michinao (1899-1989), who was a Mayo member and later assumed the pen name Tagawa Suihō as the illustrator of a famous cartoon series called Norakuro, the strange name Mayo came from the combination of the initials of the members' names.¹⁷ Besides Murayama and Takamizawa, the other members were young avant-garde artists such as Yanase Masamu (1900-1945), Ōura Shūzō (1890-1928), and Sumiya Iwane (1902-).¹⁸ In addition to these artists, the

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¹⁸ According to the Manifesto of Mayo published in 1923, Mayo was established by five artists, Kadowaki Toshirō (?-?), Murayama, Ōura Shūzō, Ogata Kamenosuke (1900-1942), and Yanase Masamu. After this manifesto, other artists like Takamizawa (Tagawa) participated in the group.
Russian artist Varvara Bubnova (1886-1983), who came to Japan as a refugee and introduced post-Revolutionary Russian art to Murayama, was also considered a member of Mayo.\(^9\)

As soon as Mayo members realized that their art was too radical to be included in the established art galleries and exhibitions such as Nikakai, they displayed their paintings and objets d'art in coffeehouses.\(^{20}\)

Sumiya Iwane recalls the Mayo-style art exhibitions:

The art exhibition by Murayama, Sumiya, and Takamizawa was held in a coffeehouse which used to be called "Morisei" in the Sanseidō in the district of

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Bubnova was born in St. Petersburg in 1886 and studied art at the Imperial Academy of Art. She came to Japan in 1923 and participated in Japanese art competitions like Nika. She also participated in establishing Russian studies in Japan. She stayed in Japan even during World War II and returned to the Soviet Union in 1958 (Omuka, Taishō-ki shinkō bijutsu undō no kenkyū, pp. 872-873).

According to the Art Historian Lawrence Roberts, Nikakai, or Nika, is described as follows:


When Mayo was established, Nikakai had already gained its authority and did not evaluate the new and avant-garde works of Mayo members highly in their exhibitions.
Kanda, and many intellectuals came to see the exhibition. So, we did not lose face. After this, we had *Mavo* exhibitions scattered in more than ten coffeehouses throughout Tokyo. The members carried art works in pushcarts; moreover, we wrote "*Mavo*" on the side of the truck and we ran around Tokyo publicizing our exhibitions screaming through a megaphone, "*Mavo!* Real art! *Mavo!*".\textsuperscript{21}

In addition, parallel to these "guerrilla-style" art exhibitions, in 1924 *Mavo* members began publishing a coterie magazine of the same name. Each issue of *Mavo* had a special topic, and it featured not only art but also prose, poetry, architecture, and theater that reflected the interests of the *Mavo* members in these multiple fields. Furthermore, although *Mavo* was just a coterie magazine, it served to introduce its readers to the most advanced avant-garde movements in both Japan and the West. For instance, the seventh issue of *Mavo*, published in 1925, featured photographs and essays of avant-garde architecture and theater, and this issue introduced Japanese avant-garde architects such as Yamaguchi Bunzō (1902-1978), who used the pen name Okamoto Kashō in the *Mavo* magazine, and his Bauhaus-inspired house.\textsuperscript{22}

\textsuperscript{21} Sumiya Iwane, "*Omoide no *Mavo*," in the pamphlet for reprinted *Mavo*, p.3

\textsuperscript{22} Yamaguchi Bunzō (Bunshō) was one of the architects influenced by German Expressionist-style architecture in
Moreover, this edition also included photographs of buildings designed by Vladimir Tatlin and the other Russian Constructivists as exponents of the most advanced architectural design. The Mayo members, and especially Murayama, enthusiastically admired Tatlin and the Russian Constructivists because avant-garde architecture was seen as working to improve the lives of the common people.

Mayo also paid attention to editorial design and developed radical ideas to suit the content of the magazine. Once a different color of paper was used for each page. In another issue, articles were placed sideways or upside-down, so the readers had to turn the magazine to read them. Perhaps the most artistically interesting elaboration was the use of newsprint as a page border, as seen in the third issue. In this issue, newsprint was used as a border instead of white plain paper, and poems, photographs of abstract art works, and

the early 1920s. Yamaguchi eventually dropped out from the movement of Expressionist architecture and began to design in a more Bauhaus style. Yamaguchi was a socialist, and he was inspired by the idea of Bauhaus that promoted both artistic values and utilitarian values, especially for the masses. He also established the architect group Ōsuka and advocated modern architecture for working-class people. In 1929, he went to Berlin and studied at University of Berlin. After that, Yamaguchi worked under the famous Bauhaus instructor/architect Walter Gropius.
the editors' notes were attached to the newsprint. As a result, each page looked like a collage. The use of newspaper as an item in collage was popular in modernist movements such as Cubism and Dada, where it was treated as a symbol of mass culture, mass communication, and a banal, non-artistic element. Also, it could be interpreted as a demonstration that Mayo was concerned with the link between art and society, symbolized by newspaper articles.

Just as the Mayo members demonstrated interest in different art genres in the magazine, they did not hesitate to jump into various activities outside the visual arts. One of the showcases of Mayo art in different fields was what we would call today performance art. In 1924, Murayama and other two members, Takamizawa and Okada Tatsuo (1904-?), choreographed and danced a number of selections as a part of a series of Mayo exhibitions. Mizusawa Tsutomu, a scholar of Japanese avant-garde art, describes these butoh-like performances as follows:

As the arena of activity expanded, the membership also grew. With the addition of Tatsuo Okada (1904-?) and Michinao Takamizawa (1899- ), artists with wonderful performing talents, the theatrical performances and concerts mentioned in the manifesto became a reality. The first performance of the Cheruteru Association, aiming at the fusion of
all artists genres, was held on June 28, 1924. Murayama and Okada danced to the accompaniment of Takamizawa's "sound constructor," a noise-producing device made of an oil can, logs, and wire. This contraption was destroyed as a final "performance."

The performance was put on by the Mayo members, but officially it was by the group named the Cheruteru Association. According to the report of this first performance in the magazine Mayo, the Cheruteru Association also included the socialist novelist/critic Akita Ujaku (1883-1962) and Tsunekawa Yoshio (1904-1971), and this association would attempt to unify music, dance, poetry, and theater. In this first performance, Murayama bobbed his hair and wore a one-piece dress with high-heels. In the next performance, the Mayo members performed in the nude wearing head coverings which made them look bald. The Mayo members, especially Murayama, seemed to think that the notion of the new was equal to the notion of shock, and that the new art should be provocative for the audience in order to give this


sensation. Looking at his art works and guerilla-type exhibitions, we see that Murayama sought sensation as an artistic value. In the performance, Murayama's strange costumes were also parts of the demonstrations of artistic new-ness and shock. Moreover, the dance itself was sensational as well. Today, butoh is widely known as a performing art, but Mayo's butoh-like performances were refreshingly new for Japanese audiences in the mid-1920s. Although Murayama was not interested dance before he went to Berlin, he had witnessed the new dance movement called Neue Tanz (New Dance) in Berlin, and he was inspired by this dance movement, which advocated liberation from the established techniques and styles.\textsuperscript{25} Murayama found that dance was no longer restricted to professional performers with great physical ability and technique. Also, the Mayo members, like Zurich Dadaists and Italian Futurists, attempted to create new art by combining performance with different art forms such as visual art, dance, and music. In Mayo's performance, abstract objets d'art were put on

\textsuperscript{25} At the time, Diagilev's Russian Ballet also promoted the new style of ballet, but Neue Tanz was more radical than Russian Ballet for its negation of any ballet techniques. It attempted to create a new dance. According to Murayama, he saw both Diagilev's ballet and Neue Tanz, and he was more attracted to the latter (Murayama, Engekiteki jijoden, vol.2, pp. 86-87).
the stage, and a machine called the "sound constructor," which was operated by the members, made noises. The performance events did not become a permanent feature in Mayo exhibitions, but eventually these experiences with performance art hinted at Murayama's next artistic step in his post-Mayo period.

Although there were differing levels of involvement in politics among its members, Mayo was a tight-knit group due to the strong conscious awareness that they were the creators of truly new art. Eventually the group attracted more artists and evolved into Sanka, which was named to confront Nika in 1925. Sanka also performed avant-garde dance and poetry readings under the name Gekijō no Sanka (Theater Sanka). Nevertheless, Sanka eventually broke up over political differences among its members. As discussed in the previous chapter, the late 1920s saw the emerging conflict between proletarian literature and the "pure art" movement, which included almost all young non-proletarian writers. Sanka, which was established in the mid-1920s, exemplified the split of artists to one side or the other of this debate. Mayo dissolved, with some members aligning themselves with the "pure art" movement and others with "proletarian art;" the rest disappeared
from the art world altogether. For example, as mentioned before, Takamizawa dropped out of the avant-garde art movement and started concentrating on a career as the cartoonist Tagawa Suihō. Another member, Katō Masao (1898-1987), who had studied architecture before joining Mayō, eventually returned to the field of architecture. Around 1926, Murayama found himself leaning toward art which sought to present a political message. He joined the proletarian movement through his activities in theater, and he became one of its central figures in that movement beginning in the late 1920s.

Murayama in Theater: Proletarian Movement and Social Realism

Murayama's involvement in theater started with Tsukiji shōgekijō (Tsukiji Little Theater), which was one of the most fervent promoters of modernization in 20th-century Japanese theater. The Tsukiji Little Theater was established in 1924 by Hijikata Yoshi (1898-1959), a young aristocrat and socialist. Hijikata, who had studied experimental theater, especially expressionist plays, in Berlin and Moscow, aimed at developing an avant-garde theater in Japan. In addition, many theaters in Tokyo had
been destroyed by the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923, and Hijikata intended to build a new theater to provide an opportunity for Japanese to see modern plays again. Therefore, he spent his own fortune to build that theater in Tsukiji.

Hijikata also called upon Osanai Kaoru (1881-1928), who was already recognized as one of the pioneering directors and playwrights of the Japanese modern theater. Osanai had established Jiyū gekijō (Free Theater) in 1909 and advocated modernizing Japanese theater with a "realistic" approach, or realistic re-creation of human life and psychology, as opposed to the traditional Kabuki and Nō. Despite his effort, however, Jiyū gekijō disbanded for financial reasons in 1919, and Osanai did not have his own theater when Hijikata asked him to join his new theater. Of course, Hijikata and Osanai, a director of avant-garde drama and a director of realistic drama respectively, did not agree on the artistic direction of the Tsukiji Little Theater because their ideal theater was different.

Osanai preferred authors who were primarily interested in an artistic message, especially those in the psychological-naturalistic vein such as he had experienced during the time he spent with Stanislavsky. Hijikata, on the contrary, during his Russian trip had particularly admired Meyerhold's brilliant combination of vivid theatricalism, daring
stylization, and political message; hence his preference for expressionistic and politically involved plays.  

In fact, both Osanai and Hijikata had been to Europe and studied European drama, but Osanai saw the plays of Ibsen, Gorkij (Maxim Gorky), and Hauptmann as his ideal. In contrast, Hijikata favored an avant-garde style with a political message, and he frequently directed German expressionist dramas, especially the plays of George Kaiser (1878-1845).  

Nevertheless, they launched the new theater together in order to re-establish modern theater after the earthquake.


27 When Osanai lectured on his vision of Tsukiji shōgekijō at Keio University in May of 1924, one month before the theater opened, he announced in public that his new theater would perform only translated Western dramas for the first two years. Osanai explained that Japanese playwrights did not write what he wanted to direct. He included himself among the unsophisticated Japanese playwrights who still could not write dramas as great as those of Western playwrights.

This lecture was severely criticized by established Japanese playwrights like Kikuchi Kan (1888-1948), Kubota Mantarō (1889-1963), or Yamamoto Yūzō (1887-1977). According to them, Osanai naively believed that Western drama was ultimately superior to any Japanese drama; therefore, he denounced plays written by any Japanese playwrights without having read them. This argument between Osanai and these Japanese writers is called "Tsukiji shōgekijō ronsō" ("The Tsukiji Little Theater Debate").
Hijikata's *Asa kara yonaka made* (From Morning till Midnight), which was first performed in 1924, provided the opportunity for Murayama's debut as a stage designer. Written by Kaiser in 1916, the drama had been very popular in Germany and also in foreign countries like Japan since its first performance.

...*Von Morgens bis Mitternachts* (From Morning till Midnight, 1916) is probably Kaiser's most famous play, and incidentally, the one that made his name known outside Germany. It is a Stationen drama, depicting a man's evolution in a succession of stages. A bank cashier, acting on a sudden impulse, abandons his job and his family, absconds with a large sum of money and strives, within the space of a single day, to make up for a lifetime of frustration.²⁸

The play follows one day in the life of a bank cashier after he runs away with the money from a wealthy woman customer. He tries to do all the things which he always dreamed of doing. He places a large bet on a bicycle race, orders expensive food at a good restaurant, and even goes to a dance-hall to buy love. Finally he becomes disillusioned with the vanity of money. At the

²⁸ H.F. Garten, *Modern German Drama* (London: Methuen and Co Ltd., 1959), pp.150-151. "Stationen" means "stages" and *Stationen drama* is, as Garten briefly mentions, the dramatic style in which stages change quickly by following the sequence of the play.
end of the play, he goes to the station, scatters his remaining money on the train platform, and shoots himself.

For this drama, Murayama created stage settings in the manner in which he created his abstract art works. In one set, for example, Murayama deformed buildings and houses into abstract objets. Moreover, he separated the name of the drama "**Asa** (Morning) **kara** (from) **yonaka** (Midnight) **made** (till)" and arranged a phrase on each building. Mizusawa describes Murayama's stage settings as follows:

Fish and turtles were depicted in the manner of pictographs and arranged amid the construction with the same treatment as letters reading "asa (morning)," "made (to)," and "Bar." The bed on the second story on the right and the light fixture suggesting a skeleton towering up in the center are all made into signs. ²⁹

This stage set was sensationaly new compared to even modern Japanese theater, which generally attempted to recreate reality in its stage sets. In *From Morning till Midnight*, the set was no longer the portrait of reality, and it functioned to create an abstraction of reality, or reality which could exist only on the stage. In Europe, German Expressionist playwrights had already attempted to

present, on the stage, a reality based on their interpretation. Particularly, the German Expressionist movie The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari had been imported to Japan in 1921, and its settings had had a strong impact on Japanese audiences. Still, Murayama's stage set was one of the earliest, largest, and most experimental works that Japanese audiences had ever seen with their own eyes.\textsuperscript{30} In addition, the play itself received good reviews, and it became one of the strongest shows of Tsukiji Little Theater.

After the successful production of From Morning till Midnight, Murayama became more involved in theater through the Tsukiji Little Theater. In addition, parallel to his work in Tsukiji Little Theater, he established the theater group named Kokoroza (Group Heart) with Iketani Shinzaburō

\textsuperscript{30} The play itself is a German Expressionist play, but Murayama's style is rather that of Constructivism. Hijikata was impressed by Russian Constructivist stage sets, especially Alexander Venison's set for the play The Man Who Was Thursday by the British detective writer G. K. Chesterton. Hijikata saw Constructivist plays and the models of stage sets by Russian Constructivists in Berlin. Omuka presumes that Hijikata gave Murayama a pamphlet about The Man Who Was Thursday which included the stage design, and Murayama created the stage for From Morning till Midnight inspired by Venison's set (Omura, Taishō-ki shinkō bijutsu undō no kenkyū, pp. 530-533).
(1900-1933) in 1925. According to Murayama's memoirs, this was also the time when artists and writers began to move to one side or the other of the great debate: art for art's sake or support for the proletarian movement. Murayama did not participate in either group at the beginning but eventually leaned toward the proletarian movement through encounters with writers and playwrights of the movement. Mayo member Yanase Masamu had already joined Nihon puriretaria bungei renmei (Japan Proletarian Literary Arts League), and Murayama was inspired by Yanase's attempts to create art with a political message. Murayama also encountered the works of proletarian writers such as Hayashi Fusao (1903-1975) and also people in the proletarian theater movement such as director/playwright Sasaki Takamaru (1903-1986). In 1926, Murayama participated in the establishment of the proletarian theater named Zen'ei-za (Group Vanguard) with Hayashi, Akita, and Sasaki.

Iketani Shinzaburō was not a coterie member of Shinkankakuha (Neo-Perceptionist Group), which was an avant-garde literary group active from the mid-to-late 1920s, but he was considered an important writer for Shinkankakuha and its avant-garde literature.

Around the time when Murayama joined the proletarian movement, a formalized artistic aesthetic of what constituted proletarian realism had not yet been rigidly established. In fact, Russian Constructivists succeeded in blending their political message that both supported the communist revolution in Russia and advocated an art that was avant-garde, and the Japanese proletarian movement was not initially dogmatic about what was an appropriate style of expression. For example, when *Tane maku hito* (*The Sower*), which is considered the first magazine for proletarian literature, was published in 1921, its editorial policy was rather flexible regarding both contributors and their writing styles. The magazine published not only the works of writers who called themselves proletarian writers but also writers who expressed their sympathy with the Russian Revolution.

Political rather than literary activity was the chief function of *The Sower*, though from the first the masthead listed such distinguished literary figures as Arishima Takeo, Akita Ujaku, and Eguchi Kiyoshi, as well as Henri Barbusse, Anatole France, and Edward Carpenter. From the third issue Mushanokōji Saneatsu was also a contributor. No doubt sympathy for the Russian revolution was the bond uniting these disparate thinkers.  

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33 Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, pp. 595–596.
However, with the rise of Stalin, the Soviet Union began to advocate using realism to portray the ideology of the revolution and to consider avant-garde art as the art form for the bourgeoisie. Reflecting the new artistic direction of the Soviet Union, Japanese proletarian artists and writers also started promoting the notion of so-called social realism or later socialist realism, commonly called proletarian realism in Japan.34

One of the monumental declarations on proletarian realism as the preferred writing style is Kurahara Korehito's (1902-1991) essay entitled "Puroretarian rearizumu e no michi" ("The Road to Proletarian Realism") published in 1928. In this essay, Kurahara, a critic and theoretical leader of the movement, stated that the only acceptable style for proletarian art and literature was proletarian realism and that proletarian art should only be created within the framework of proletarian realism. In order to distinguish proletarian realism from established notions of realism, Kurahara defined naturalist realism as "bourgeois realism" and "anti-social

and individual realism."\textsuperscript{35} Contrasting with naturalist realism, he explained that proletarian realism was based on an awareness of social problems, and that character portrayal was not important. He continues:

As I stated before, bourgeois realism starts with an abstract "true nature of a human being." However, in reality, there is no abstract human being. There is neither a human being nor a human nature which is separated from the existing society. If you write a character without his environment in the work, that character is no longer realistic. This is the point that the bourgeois realist writers did not fully consider, and as a result, their perspective toward reality has not been fully developed. This is also the reason why their realism is limited. I mean that they can describe the character's personal and instinctive life, but they cannot describe that character's life as a part of a broader social life. Thus, these bourgeois realist writers repeatedly write about "He met her for the first time, and she met him for the first time - love between a man drinking at the bar and a woman working in the fancy goods store." When they write the same story again and again, their realism no longer has any value.

\ldots[w]e must resist the perspective in which any problems, even social problems, are treated as a part of an individual person's problem. We must emphasize that all personal problems are always observed from a social viewpoint.\textsuperscript{36}


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., pp.66-70.
Kurahara's essay was basically written under the influence of Russian communist writers. Reflecting the new direction of art and literature in the Soviet Union, proletarian realism became considered the only authentic mode of expression among the Japanese writers in the movement.

Murayama himself was ambivalent about proletarian realism. Although he expressed his support for Kurahara's ideological essay about the mode of expression, Murayama's approach to theater and literature did not seem to fit perfectly this authoritarian notion. For example, Murayama advocated that proletarian theater needed to include various theatrical genres such as a comic play, a revue, butoh dance, poetry reading, and chorus singing. In practice, however, his idea of proletarian theater

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G.T. Shea explains:

The point of course is, that what Kurahara wrote was not all original with himself, but, rather, another layer of transplanted theory he introduced into the Japanese proletarian movement. In short, it was the officially endorsed viewpoint on realism adopted by the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP) (\textit{Leftwing Literature in Japan}, p.240).

\[\text{\textsuperscript{38}}\]

seemed to get lost in the process of producing his plays for the stage, and his actual plays were very straightforward, addressing issues like the suppression of labor unions or the miserable lives of female factory workers. For example, his Rōryokudanki (Record of a Tough Gang), which was published first in the magazine Senki (Battle Flag) in 1929, reveals in graphic detail that yakuza gangs violently oppress laborers when asked to by government officials. Although the setting is moved to China, the whole play is realistic and propagandistic due to its accusations about violence committed by yakuza gangs and the government. Despite Murayama’s avant-garde ideas about the theater, this and other plays demonstrate that he largely accepted proletarian realism ideas in practice.

In contrast, Murayama's prose works from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, which we will examine next, maintain his artistic tendency to practice distinct experimental styles of narrative and vocabulary. It is obvious that the prose works written in the later period are less experimental than the earlier ones, but his novels and short stories are more interesting than his plays for their narratives and styles.
In Literature:
Critical Observation in Various Experiments

In the mid-1920s, Murayama began writing short stories that paralleled his approach to theater. Compared with his visual art works and his stage productions, Murayama's prose is frequently considered less important. But his literary works are as distinguished as his art works and more interesting than his plays for their themes and styles of expressions.

Murayama's first anthology, Ningen kikai (Human Machine), consisting of eight short stories, was published in December 1926, the year when he also began to show communist leanings. Of this collection, the short story "The Year 1922" is considered one of the most representative works of his early literary career because of its combination of a critical view of social conflict and an experimental style of expression. The story goes roughly as follows:

One day Marinetti, a well-known Futurist leader from Italy, visits Berlin. Vasari, who is an Italian active in the Berlin art world as a Futurist poet, plans to have two Japanese artists, one of whom is probably Murayama, meet Marinetti in order to receive monetary support from these
artists. Vasari makes his Russian mistress Bogusrasskaya pretend to be a stage painter for the famous Bat Theater. He wants to impress the two Japanese provincials, who are trying to find their way in the Berlin art world, with the range of his connections. The story then follows Vasari's day and portrays his busy life. He appears at a female wrestling match, a Berlin Futurists' Convention, the national opera theater, and a poetry reading at a German aristocrat's house. Nevertheless, despite his showy campaign and promotion of Marinetti's visit, Futurism and the sensation it created are already a waning force in the Berlin art world. Moreover, inflation and xenophobia are at their peak; thus, in the final scene, Vasari takes all the money he has collected in Berlin and is about to depart for a place yet unknown. The two Japanese artists who depend on Vasari rush into his room, but he just says he will give them his mistress as a souvenir instead of the promised connections.

This main character Vasari is, as mentioned in the section about Murayama in Berlin, Rugerro Vasari, an actual Italian Futurist poet. Vasari was very aggressive in promoting Futurism through his management of an art gallery and publication of the magazine *Der Futurismus* in Berlin. He also sponsored art exhibitions, and as
Murayama mentions in "The Year 1922," Vasari invited Filippo Marinetti (1876-1944), the leader of the Italian Futurist movement, to Berlin in 1922.³⁹ Murayama gained access to Vasari through Herwarth Walden, who ran the Sturm Gallery at the time when Vasari was attempting to revive Futurism's popularity, and he welcomed anybody who sympathized with Futurism. Thus, Murayama took advantage of the situation and participated in the international Futurist exhibition in March 1922 in order to gain acceptance in Berlin art circles.⁴⁰

One of Murayama's purposes in "The Year 1922" is to portray the atmosphere of the inner circle of the Berlin art world in a satirical tone. As a result, the characters described in the story are almost all vulgar, greedy, and decadent. Vasari is only superficially friendly at best, and his opening remarks read more like the pitch of a salesman or lobbyist than a poet. Of

³⁹ Günter Berghaus, **Futurism and Politics** (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1996), p.249. Vasari and the German Futurist struggled with the Expressionists for the Nazis' favor in the 1930s. However, the Nazis finally considered all avant-garde art as "degenerate," and both Futurism and Expressionism eventually faded as the Nazis rose to power.

⁴⁰ Murayama recollects that Marinetti took one glance at him and then proceeded to completely ignore him (Murayama, **Engekiteki jiten**, vol.2, p.29).
course, there is no question about Murayama's own pleasure in manipulating his readers. As Murayama confesses in his *Theatrical Autobiography*, even though he knew Vasari, he was not close enough to him to describe Vasari in detail. Thus, in "The Year 1922," Murayama plays the game of creating his own characters on the basis of real well-known artists. He manipulates the gap between reality and the concept of realism by using actual people in a work of fiction. This is a clear indication of his break with naturalism and of his modernist awareness of the fabricated nature of art and politics in a work of art.

This manipulation of character description is one of the more interesting elements in "The Year 1922." But Murayama's real intent lies in depicting the city of Berlin; Vasari, as well as other characters, are actually subordinate to the portrait of "Berlin," which is the real protagonist of the story. The characters are merely vehicles to transport readers from one location in the city to the next. For example, when Vasari visits the National Theater to see an opera, the readers are also taken to the theater. It is as if they sit down in the hall, look at the people there, and witness as the German writer Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946), who comes to the theater to see the opera, is enthusiastically applauded by
the audience. In this scene, Murayama portrays nationalism in Germany via a well-known novelist who won the Nobel Prize in literature. Against his will, Hauptmann is admired as a patriotic writer by people who embraced nationalism.

Murayama also takes his readers to the streets of Berlin and portrays a crippled World War I veteran as another symbol of the city. The veteran, who has lost both legs and his left arm, begs for money in front of a bar, and Murayama uses the phrase "a machine made from a human" to describe him. Developing the machine metaphor, Murayama writes:

It did not have both legs. The vehicle with the three wheels substituted for the legs. A broken joint of the right hand was made of rubber and a dirty grey thing. The left hand is just an iron hook. Only the top of the hook which was rubbed down glowed silver. His face was divided into five parts by wide wounds which looked like gutters in the street. The plaster which substituted for bones appeared from the gutters. There was a cross-shaped iron medal pinned to his chest - a chest which no one knew whether it was made of flesh or copper.41

The spectacle of the crippled veterans sitting on the streets begging for money was a very common sight in

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Berlin in 1922 when Murayama arrived there.\footnote{Compared to "Maihime" ("The Dancing Girl"), written by Mori Ōgai in 1890, "The Year 1922" shows how differently the same city is portrayed in these two short stories. For Ōgai, Berlin symbolized the magnificence of the West. In describing the scenery of Berlin, he writes:}

I had the vague hope of accomplishing great feats and was used to working hard under pressure. But suddenly here I was, standing in the middle of this most modern of European capitals. My eyes were dazzled by its brilliance, my mind was dazed by the riot of color. To translate Under den Linden as 'under the Bodhi tree' would suggest a quiet secluded spot. But just come and see the groups of men and women sauntering along the pavements that line each side of that great thoroughfare as it runs, straight as a die, through the city. It was still in the days when Wilhelm I would come to his window and gaze down upon his capital. The tall, broad-shouldered officers in their colorful dress uniform, and the attractive girls, their hair made up in the Parisian style, were everywhere a delight to the eye. Carriages ran silently on asphalt roads. Just visible in the clear sky between the towering buildings were fountains cascading with the sound of heavy rain. Looking into the distance, one could see the statue of the goddess on the victory column. She seemed to be floating halfway to heaven from the midst on the green trees on the other side of the Brandenburg Gate ("Maihime," trans. Richard Bowring, \textit{Monumenta Nipponica} 30, no.2 [1975], p.152).

Ōgai's portrait of Berlin is represented by Kaiser Wilhelm I, the uniformed police officers, and the statue of the goddess atop the Brandenburg Gate. For young protagonist Ōta Toyotarō, all of these works of art are seen as symbols of an advanced and sophisticated civilization.
Dadaists of Berlin did not forget these veterans in their art, and among them, the painter Otto Dix (1891-1969) in particular created a series of oil paintings and collages on the subject. One of his well-known works is Match-seller I, an oil on collage from 1920. In Match-seller I, Dix depicts an armless, legless, and blind veteran selling matches as he sits on the street. A dog, mistaking the veteran for a fire hydrant, urinates on him. Moreover, the legs of three well-dressed people symbolize the bourgeoisie who are in a hurry and ignore the match-seller. Berlin Dadaists like Dix aggressively pursued these breathless images in order to express their opposition to the Weimar Republic and a society that chose to ignore the hapless plight of the disadvantaged.

Additionally, the image of the crippled veteran in both Dix's work and Murayama's story is a sharp critique of those in the upper and upper-middle classes who profited by exploiting the lower class but who abandoned them after the war. Although Murayama did not explicitly mention whether he was inspired by the Dadaist paintings of wounded veterans when he wrote "The Year 1922," the image of the crippled veteran serves as his symbol for the reality of life in Berlin, and it seems to derive in part
from the Dadaist's works and their political critique of the Weimar government and society.

Murayama also depicts another Weimar-era Berlin archetype: the high-living young foreigner whose over-valued currency allows him to take advantage of Germany's weak economy. Murayama is especially cynical about well-heeled foreigners who are Japanese. For instance, in the beginning of Chapter 4, Murayama describes a triumphant, loud-talking Japanese man who sits in the National Bank of Germany. The German mark has crashed, and as soon as the bank opens on a Monday morning, the foreigners are rushing the foreign exchange counters with their now stronger dollars, francs, pounds, and yen in order to buy the German currency at a steep discount. Murayama's narrative moves from the entrance of the bank to the service window and then reaches to the hall where the foreign customers wait for service. There, one of the Japanese customers boasts about his experience to other Japanese. According to his story, he and four other Japanese friends demanded that an orchestra play Kimigayo, the Japanese national anthem, at a dance hall. As they shouted for the orchestra to play the song, the five Japanese scattered bills over the musicians' heads. But when the orchestra started Kimigayo, some angry Americans walked up on the
stage and demanded the orchestra to stop. A fight erupted between the Japanese and the Americans, and the Japanese won because they fought using judo techniques against the big, stout Americans. Eventually all of the Japanese and American customers were arrested, but the Japanese laughed out loud, saying that they could beat Americans. The conversation suggests that foreigners can now impose themselves on Berlin with their monetary power; the vanquished city has surrendered to their economic strength. Murayama pays particular attention to the Japanese as a new economic and social phenomenon. When they scatter money and demand to hear the national anthem, the orchestra immediately starts playing the tune. Murayama writes quite cynically about the vulgarity of these monied Japanese and about the residents of Berlin who respond to them.

Murayama attempts to depict the city of Berlin through people, incidents, and the landscape, and he often uses a narrative style which seems like a collage of language. When he describes a street scene, he sometimes limits each sentence to a single object, but then piles up sentence after sentence. As a result, the imagery created by the layers of short sentences is like a series of
photographs or illustrations on canvas. For example, he describes the various phenomena found in Berlin as follows:

In the woods of the zoo, the worst serial rapist in history was arrested. When his coat was removed, his pants hung only from the knee to the ankle, and these pants-like things were held only by two long straps from the shoulder!

Rathenau, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, was assassinated on the asphalt street.

A Japanese, accompanied by a prostitute, was observed taking the best seats at the national Opera Theater.

The sports were promoted to the young for "their future." That was wise. The bourgeoisie announced a race in which the participants would swim in all the canals in Berlin. The marathon race which started at Gruenwald was held repeatedly, and people never tired of it.

The most stupid people bet reward money for the race -- a race in which people ride on pigs, it started under the bronze statue of Bismarck and ran up the steps in front of the main entrance of the Reichstag.


These random descriptions of trends, phenomena, and crimes tinged with dark humor are characteristic of "The Year 1922," and the juxtaposition of the short sentences has the effect of portraying the intense chaos of Berlin. The rapist and the assassination of Walter Rathenau were actual events which shook Berlin. In addition, Berliners had a zeal for sports, and Murayama felt that leaders used

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4Murayama, "1922-nen," pp.12-13

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sports as a political strategy to direct people's attention away from underlying social and political tensions. Unno Hiroshi analyzes Murayama's "The Year 1922" and gives Murayama's view on sports:

The 1920s was the period of sports. In the modern city, sports do not appear only as a symbol of health but also as something oppressive. Murayama learned this fact in Berlin.44

In 1926, when Murayama wrote this story, he had already analyzed the political use of sports and leisure diversions as a means to hide rising tensions. Murayama seemed to understand that the mass hysteria directed toward sports was universal, and he continued to point out this phenomenon in his later stories set in Tokyo, such as "Dokomademo" ("To the End of the World"), which will be discussed next.

Murayama's collage-like narrative with a political message also makes reference to the status of women in post-war Berlin. In the sixth fragment, Murayama writes:

One man for ten women!
The father and the brother were torn apart from home everywhere by the iron arms at the state border. Flood of women.
Strangely, the price of a pet dog became more expensive....
.... There are dance halls and bars appearing - for reaction against or desperation for the fact that

44Unno Hiroshi, Modan toshi Tokyo, p.77.
there are not many men. Advertisements looking for women who could play male roles increased suddenly.

Too many models, we should say over-supply, were strolling from one painter's atelier and another sculptor's atelier like beggars, and they slept in any beds - beds with lice or beds without lice.

The foreigner had four mistresses. He learned German from one, danced with the other, went to the theater with the third, and shared a bed with the fourth.

One man for ten women!45

Although the passage has a humorous tone, it is also satirical. Murayama did not hesitate in revealing that the war killed men and forced women to prostitute themselves. Also, he does not forget to mention the irony that this situation presented a great advantage for male foreigners who aggressively used the authority of money to procure mistresses.

Despite its short length of thirty-two pages, "The Year 1922" is a complicated work filled with different scenes. Murayama succeeds in describing enormous social, political, and economic incidents in this work by layering short sentences in a collage of words. His visually-oriented narratives describe one of the most chaotic yet fascinating cities of the 1920s.

4"Murayama, "1922-nen," pp.16-17.
As we discussed in the section on Murayama and theater, as the doctrine of the proletarian movement inclined toward proletarian realism, Murayama increasingly came to restrain his conspicuous pursuit of an avant-garde writing style. Still, his literature cannot be fully categorized as proletarian realism for its avant-gardian experimentation.

"To The End of The World," a short story written in 1930, is an example of a work in which Murayama continues to develop his visually-oriented narrative. This strange essay-like story is divided into two brief chapters, and the first part begins with a scene of the Sumida River. Then, the narrative moves from the description of the main river channel to its small tributaries, an abandoned ship, factories, and the police station on the bank. Finally it reaches a man named Eto, who is one of the union leaders for an unidentified automobile factory. Identified as "darakan," or an abbreviation of "darakushita kanbu" ("corrupting leader of the labor union"), Eto secretly betrays the union and informs management of the union's plan to sabotage production. He also works on the city council, owns property, and secretly gets along with Togiken, a right-wing yakuza. Nonetheless, he manages to
head the labor union, even as he is accused of embezzling its funds.

After describing Etô's character, the story moves to the laborers who are talking about the May Day demonstration. Some of these laborers are frustrated because they are not sure whether the company union will join the big May Day parade. While they are talking about the demonstration, two men suddenly appear and begin to hand out fliers. One of the men returns the next day and hands out more fliers, but this time he is arrested by the police and Etô's men.

The second part of the story is the monologue of the man who was arrested. He refers to himself only in the first-person pronoun ore (an informal male pronoun of "I") and does not mention his background, but it is easy to guess from his story and his diction that he is a veteran union organizer. Ore describes how the police tortured him in jail, yet he never recanted. He also contrasts the cases of two famous activists he met in jail: Minakami, a famous proletarian activist, and Ishimoto, a "corrupting leader" who was at one time also a famous activist. Ore tells us that when Minakami was tortured by a police officer, Ishimoto begged the officer to stop the violence. Of course, ore scolds Ishimoto by shouting that servile
people like him end up helping to oppress rather than advance the laborers' struggle. Moreover, after being released from jail, ore found out that the automobile labor union succeeded in sabotaging the plant for only one day because of Etō's manipulation. However, he also tells the readers that now two men who were impressed by ore's efforts have since become great leaders, and that he can assume that the labor movement will never die.

"To the End of the World" is a work which seems to follow the theoretical or ideological lines laid down by proletarian realism. The story describes the struggle of laborers to fight the oppression of the ruling class. Moreover, the protagonist is anonymous, and his name is carefully hidden. Other people described in the story are also nameless, except for three characters: Etō, Ishimoto, and Minakami. Kurahara's doctrine that proletarian realism should present the masses as the protagonist appears to be put into practice here. However, the most interesting element of "To the End of the World" is actually the first part of the story: namely, the portrait of the landscape around the Sumida River and Murayama's style of describing the city in metaphors and symbols. For example, the beginning of the story has a distinctively wide and long perspective which portrays the
Sumida River. Then, suddenly the narrative describes each object in the landscape in rapid succession.

The Sumida River is completely cloudy and gray, and it flows under the Senju bridge and reaches to the factory -- the factory built of concrete. The river has a lot of funnels. At the point where the Black Sumida bounces off the factory, it bends widely and goes in the direction of the Shirahige bridge. When you look at the river, probably for no reason, you feel from the heart that it is somehow creepy to see that the gray river moves without any sound. At the corner of the bend, the river becomes narrower for a reedy shoal. Are you the son of a rich man? And are you the university student who belongs to the boat club and rows a boat? If so, as you know, that is the curve where you have difficulty. At the very corner of the bend, there is a dark-colored forest stretching out along the river. It is "the forest of the Water Deity," and its dark color matches the color of the water. I have heard that is the Water Deity or something like that. Do you know exactly what it is or anything about it?

All right, the big concrete factory that bounces off the Sumida River is, as you know, the spinning mill of the Kanegafuchi Company. In Yodo and Hyōgo, the west side of Japan, even the hunger strikes are carried out in the branch factories of the company. But here is still a virgin land devoid of any labor acts, and anything -- even the small fire of the struggle -- could not have been made here.46

As seen in the first paragraphs, Murayama uses the narrative as if it were a movie camera panning the wide spectacle around the Sumida River and then zooming into each object. At the same time, his voice remains in the

narrative, and the narrative voice is similar to that of a **benshi** (silent-movie narrator) in a movie theater. The **benshi** was very popular in the early history of Japanese film. Essentially the **benshi** explained the story and recited the dialogues of the characters on the screen. At the same time, he often added his view or interpretation of the story and the characters. The **benshi** played the role of the "lecturer-explainer-commentator," and he was not just a narrator of the film.\(^{47}\) In fact, Murayama's narrative functions as if a **benshi** were describing the scenery in "To the End of the World," and thus the readers witness the different social classes in the spectacle of the Sumida River. Murayama contrasts the bourgeoisie and working class in describing the various scenic objects around the Sumida River in the first two paragraphs. First, he compares the lower and upper or upper-middle classes in referring to the bend in the river. For the

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\(^{47}\) Joseph Anderson and Donald Richie, *The Japanese Film* (Rutland: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1959), p. 25. The custom of having a **benshi** narrator comes from Japanese traditional performance arts such as **Kabuki** and **Nô**, in which chan ters sit on the stage and explain the story. (Cf. Satô Tadao, "**Nihon eiga no seiritsu shîta jidai,**" in **Imamura Shôhei** and others ed., **Nihon eiga no tanjô**, p.5, in **Kôza Nihon eiga**, vol.1 [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten], 1985). In fact, **benshi** were sometimes more popular than the films themselves and often drew audiences in their own right (Cf. Anderson and Richie, *The Japanese Film*, p.25).
lower class, the bend is linked to the spinning mill factory standing by the river, but for the comfortable upper and middle classes, it is linked to the pleasure of rowing a boat. Indeed, the Sumida River became well-known in the 1920s as the sight of university rowing tournaments, particularly the Tokyo Six University League Regatta held each spring. Of course, just as in Berlin in the 1920s, Japan had also entered the age of sports, and university baseball, boating, and other sports were very popular. Murayama's implication of the collusion between politics and sports evolves more as a matter of class differences between the middle class who enjoy sports, and the lower class who cannot afford them.

Moreover, Murayama emphasizes the landscape around the factory and later calls it "our Sumida River," expressing the idea that "our Sumida River" surpasses the Sumida River which has been associated with history and tradition. The Sumida River is well-known as the subject of classical poetry and Nō, but Murayama declares that the Sumida River is also a place which symbolizes the working class. He refers to the monument of Bashō and the old shrine, famous in the Nō play The Sumida River. Yet, in "To the End of the World," these monuments are merely mentioned as the sign of a factory entrance. By
reclaiming the river as "our Sumida," he salvages it for the working class from classical literary tradition. In addition, this description also indicates that the contemporary world surpasses the past, and that the problematic life of the working class is more important than refined literature. Murayama states his social view by explicitly playing the role of the benshi, the lecturer-explainer-commentator.

In addition, his narrative voice has its unique characteristics in the prose work. His narrative voice is neither first-person nor third-person, but is still in the story. "To the End of the World" consists of ore as the first-person narrator, and Murayama's voice is independent of from the voice of the character ore. Of course, the attempt to create the voice of the author as the independent narrative has been examined by several writers. For example, one of the most-renowned modernist works which has the author's narrative voice is André Gide's novel Les Faux-Monnayeurs (The Counterfeiters), published in 1926. Gide's primary purpose in writing The Counterfeiters was to experiment with ideas in order to write a "pure novel," and he is particularly aware of the relationship between the omniscience of the author and the narrative style. Gide was opposed to the idea of the
omniscient author and according to his journal, he conceived of the author as follows:

The poor novelist constructs his characters: he controls them and makes them speak. The true novelist listens to them and watches them function; he eavesdrops on them even before he knows them. It is only according to what he hears them say that he begins to understand who they are.48

To prove his statement about the omniscience of the author, Gide titles one chapter "The Author Reviewed His Characters" at the end of Part Two of The Counterfeiters. He appears in the work as the author and comments on his characters in his own narrative voice which does not belong to that of any other character.

Yet, Gide's narrative voice appears in one particular chapter which is basically outside of the sequence of the story, and it is not totally integrated with the story itself. In the case of "To the End of the World," Murayama's voice is a part of the story. Modern Japanese literature has tended to avoid the author's narrative voice, but Murayama uses the technique just as the benshi speaks for his audience.

From 1930 to 1934, Murayama's novels and plays caused

him to be arrested repeatedly for violating the Regulation of Public Order. He was sentenced to jail, served two years, and was on parole for three years, and finally recanted in 1934. He returned to his work in the theater and literature, but he no longer expressed his political views directly. Donald Keene introduces Murayama as one of the *tenkō* (recant) authors who tended to write autobiographical novels after recanting.\(^49\) Keene chooses Murayama's story entitled *Byakuya* (*White Night*), published in 1934, and points out that the work is not proletarian literature.\(^50\) According to Keene, although this work deals with his recantation through the protagonist Kano, the theme of *White Night* is the breakup of a marriage, and Kano is not depicted only from the aspect of recanting. Keene states that Kano is thought to be an alter ego of Murayama, and that Murayama's portrayal of Kano reveals Murayama's self-rencrimination.

Keene discusses only one of Murayama's works, but other prose works Murayama wrote after recanting are also interesting. Some works even seem to consist of political

\(^{49}\)Keene, *Dawn to the West*, pp.879-884. 

criticism expressed by means of allegory. "Waga hakuchi" ("My Idiot"), written in 1935, retains the skepticism and humor of Murayama's early works. It is written in a first-person narrative of confessional style in which the protagonist addresses his inner self on issues of love and family. The protagonist Mutsugasa is the main playwright for Ōkii mitsubachi-za (the Big Honeybee Theater). His wife is Mamiko, the main actress in the troupe, and they are considered to be the ideal artist couple. Of course, "I," Mutsugasa also believes that he and Mamiko work for the goal of creating a truly artistic theater; therefore, their relationship is ideal and sublime. According to "I," Mamiko devotes herself to theater as an artist, and they constantly discuss theater and plays. However, their relationship is broken up by Kasuga, another playwright for the Big Honeybee Theater. Kasuga is a younger and newer playwright and an admirer of Mutsugasa. Whenever the plays written by "I" are criticized, Kasuga defends "I," insisting that the critics do not understand Mutsugasa's artistic sensibility. However, Kasuga gradually wins the trust and respect of the manager and

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the actors who belong to the theater, and things begin to change. First, he asks "I" to let Mamiko play the heroine for a play that he has written. Until then, there has been an unwritten rule that Mamiko would perform only for "I's" productions. In addition, Kasuga suddenly begins to criticize "I's" plays harshly, saying that they are banal because they always include the same kind of good characters. Finally, Kasuga is offered an opportunity to be the playwright for the K Theater, which has been established with substantial investment capital, and he moves to the new job. "I" is jealous of Kasuga; yet, at the same time, he is relieved of the anxiety that Kasuga would steal his role of primary playwright of the Big Honeybee Theater. Yet catastrophe strikes again when Kasuga headhunts Mamiko for K Theater, and she accepts. After Mamiko leaves the Big Honeybee Theater, Mutsugasa can no longer write plays on time, and eventually he is fired by the manager. When the Big Honeybee Theater actors give a farewell party for "I," Kasuga appears and makes a speech stating he respects "I" and will never forget him.

As a story, "My Idiot" contains a love triangle similar to that seen in White Night. In White Night, Kano is abandoned by his wife Noriko who chooses to follow
Kimura, Kano's activist friend. In "My Idiot," "I" is abandoned by his wife Mamiko because she is attracted to Kasuga and decides to work with him in a well-established theater. However, the difference between the two works lies in the depiction of the personality of four men. Kano is described as a egotistic figure, and "I's" weakness and idiocy are fundamentally different from Kano's character. Also, Kimura is a high-spirited, admirable activist, but Kasuga is a cunning and egotistical playwright.

Even though "My Idiot" describes a love triangle and the agony caused by personal conflict, it is difficult to see this story as an autobiographical novel like White Night. Instead, "My Idiot" should be analyzed in the context of the period and Murayama's situation and should be understood more broadly than in White Night. In other words, the use of "I" as a metaphor is more complex. First, Murayama's original perspective about idiocy as the ideal human condition comprises one layer of interpretation of this work. Murayama frequently mentioned that he was influenced by Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881) and his novel The Idiot, and thus, "My Idiot" may be seen as Murayama's version of The Idiot. Murayama wrote that Dostoyevsky taught him that, "In this world, to
be the idiot is to be the closest to God."\textsuperscript{52} As Murayama understood, Dostoyevsky's purpose in writing \textit{The Idiot}, published in 1868, was to create his Prince Myshkin, a perfectly ideal character.\textsuperscript{53}

When compared with \textit{The Idiot}, "My Idiot" exhibits several parallels. "I" is a credulous person who believes that all the people around him are good-natured and trusting. When he loses his wife and his precious job as a playwright, he cannot fight back and regain either his wife or his job. He is stupefied and resigned. In this sense, the protagonist "I" could be Murayama's version of Myshkin, and Mamiko is similar to Nastasya. If so, "I's" defeat by Kasuga and his loss of Mamiko can be compared to Myshkin's defeat by Rogozhin and loss of Nastasya.

\textsuperscript{52} Murayama, \textit{Engekiteki jijoden}, vol.1, p.267.

\textsuperscript{53} Constance Garnett, the translator of \textit{The Idiot}, analyzes the protagonist Myshkin in this way:

While writing \textit{The Idiot}, Fyodor Dostoyevsky said to the niece to whom he dedicated the novel: "My intention is to portray a truly beautiful soul." He had secretly cherished, since the writing of \textit{Crime and Punishment} in 1866, the idea of embodying in a single fictional character and image of moral perfection, and was forced to realize how much his hero's divine possibilities were subject to human limitations ("Fyodor Dostoyevsky (1821-1881): A Note on the Author of \textit{The Idiot}," in Fyodor Dostoyevsky, \textit{The Idiot} [New York: Random House, Inc., 1935], unpaginated).
Therefore, Murayama projects his view of the ideal human through "I" and advocates that a human should be like "I" even if emulating him is painful.

Nevertheless, seen from today's viewpoint, Murayama's "My Idiot" is not just an imitation of The Idiot. Rather, Murayama almost seems to turn over the connotation of the characters and makes the story allegorical in order to imply his critique of Japanese literary men of the 1930s. Unlike Myshkin, "I" is a playwright who devotes himself to the development of the theater, and it appears that "I" is almost blind to what is happening around him because of his devotion. Although "I" does not realize it, the readers immediately notice that he absolutely ignores any signs of destruction around him, and he interprets all the bad occurrences as good. For example, when he has a serious argument over the artistic value of his plays with Kasuga, "I" resents Kasuga for criticizing his production. Recall that Kasuga pointed out that "I's" plays only had good characters, and "I" felt betrayed by Kasuga. He responded to Kasuga's attack by stating that Kasuga's plays were basically the same as the stereotypical "giri ninjō geki" ("the plays on the conflict between social obligation and true feeling"), and that Kasuga had retreated from modernizing theater. Yet, after this
intense argument, when Kasuga changes his attitude and flatters "I" once more, "I" concludes that Kasuga criticized him in order to make him write better plays, and it does not occur to him that Kasuga plans to become the first playwright of the Big Honeybee Theater.

The argument concerning the modernization of theater as a high art form has been repeated within the modern Japanese literary/art field since the Meiji period, but the important implication here is that "I's" seriousness about theater as high art makes him ignore his real circumstances. Thus, when the actors get better offers and begin to move to the very big theater, "I" visits them at home and persuades them to stay with the Big Honeybee Theater for the sublimity of art. Eventually the actors begin to suspect that "I" is a spy for the theater manager and that he intends to interfere with their lucrative offers from the big theater. Still, "I" does not realize this until Mamiko points it out to him.

If we interpret "I" as the idiot who cannot understand reality, "I" can serve as a metaphor for all Japanese artists and writers who sought to ignore the political and social situation of the 1930s. In the rush of recantation and censorship, many writers including Murayama gave up addressing political issues and began to
narrow their focus to autobiographical fiction that carried no political message. Murayama's work can be read as indirectly criticizing all writers who closed their eyes to the rising tide of imperialism and its severe exploitation of freedom of expression. The protagonists' loss of his wife and his single-minded pursuit of writing plays reflects the situation of Japanese writers in the 1930s. This parody of the proverbial Japanese intellectual revealed a tragic situation in which progressive writers working in the mid-1930s turned to non-political work, as we see, for example, in Ishikawa Jun's novel of 1936, Fugen (The Bodhisattva). Even though Murayama claims to have depoliticized his writing completely, we see that through the use of farce and parody he manages to maintain to some degree the artist's struggle to attain art that runs throughout his work.

Conclusion

Murayama was one of the most influential modernist figures of the pre-war period, and his extended activities

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in visual art, theater, and literature fascinated a wide variety of people across many different genres. He launched his career as a visual artist who introduced the newest art forms from Berlin and attempted to develop his own theory. He called his art "Conscious Constructivism," seeking to mix the representational and the abstract. Propagandizing his theory in art exhibitions and in books, Murayama participated in the establishment of the art group Mayo and became a polemicist for Japan's most avant-gardist art. He also expanded his interests to include theater, the performing arts, and magazine publishing with support from Mayo members. However, as he became attracted to the proletarian art movement, his style changed to reflect the current taste for social realism. As a result, he renounced his avant-garde past and stated that he would create more political works using more realistic expressions. Nevertheless, Murayama's works cannot be fully categorized by simply polarizing them as non-political abstraction versus political realism. In particular, his novels which were supposed to be proletarian went well beyond the realm of social realism. Characters in his novels have distinct personalities rather than merely existing as part of the nameless mass. Moreover, as demonstrated by "The Year 1922," his
narratives are a collage of images depicting the urban street scene. In "To the End of the World," he shows that one landscape indicates different social classes and explains the interpretation of the view through the author's voice, which is quite different from the common notion of modernist thought about the omniscience of the author.

Murayama's literary works became less obviously experimental after he declared his participation in the proletarian movement, and in particular, the mixture of a political message and an avant-garde style of writing seemed to disappear after he was forced to recant. However, through their satirical tone, his stories like "My Idiot" seemed to criticize the writers who avoided reality in the 1930s. His works are beyond the realm of proletarian realism, and like Yoshiyuki's literature, they prove that the general categorical distinction between proletarian realism for proletarian literature and avant-garde style for non-political writers is a dichotomy that is far too simplistic to embrace the meaning of Japanese modernism.
CHAPTER 3

YUMENO KYŪSAKU:
MODERNIST IN MASS CULTURE, MODERNIST IN THE VANGUARD OF
QUESTIONING THE MODERN WORLD

Mass Magazines and Coterie Magazines

The 1920s was a decade that witnessed a surge in the
publication of both coterie and popular magazines in
Japan. As discussed in previous chapters, Yoshiyuki
Eisuke and Murayama Tomoyoshi entered the field of
literature via their avant-garde coterie magazines, which
were an important bastion of Japanese modernism. Both men
published in small magazines as either a major contributor
or an editor-in-chief. It was these dōjin zasshi (coterie
magazines) that established their careers.

The phenomenon of coterie magazines published by
modernist groups was also common in Europe. Some European
modernist movements, such as Dada and Futurism, published
coterie or coterie-type magazines to create a niche for the new art and literary movements that they advocated.

Yumeno Kyūsaku (1889-1936) came to literature via a very different route, however. His first major work was published in a popular commercial magazine, Shinseinen (New Youths), where he began his career as a writer of detective fiction. The magazine was not known as a "jun-bungaku" ("pure literature") magazine, nor were Yumeno's works. As the 1920s saw the emergence of a mass culture, Shinseinen introduced fashion, gossip, and detective stories as new and popular literature to the readers. Yumeno won second place in the prize competition sponsored by Hakubunkan, the publishing house that created and published Shinseinen, for his novel Ayakashi no tsuzumi (The Eerie Hand Drum); thereafter, Yumeno became one of the magazine's star contributors.

Yumeno's works are not, however, merely detective stories which only feature murders and the pursuit of murderers. Rather, he presents a perspective toward reality that is neither solid nor objective, but is instead ambiguous, bizarre, and somehow fearful. The main characters, who are often pursued as prime suspects of violent crimes, cannot judge whether the crimes are real or nightmares.
Moreover, Yumeno's works suggest a non-essential concept of the self through his mystery stories. Characters in Yumeno's works are destined to seek their own selves as well as to solve the crimes. For instance, in his longest novel *Dogura magura*, a young protagonist who does not remember his identity at all is forced to find it because, according to the two psychiatrists, it is the key to solving a string of murders. The protagonist is not able to know his own identity except for one suggested by the Other, namely by the two psychiatrists, and the story presents the absence of the self through the protagonist's desperate struggle.

Yumeno's perspective regarding reality and the self is similar to that of other modernist writers like Yoshiyuki and Murayama, but Yumeno's political viewpoint is diametrically opposed to theirs. Yumeno lived on his farm in Kyūshū, far from Tokyo. His political and social view is ultra-nationalist, provincialist, anti-West, and anti-intellectual. His works often take place in rural towns and reflect the author's fascination with a primitive state of mind characterized by superstition and violence. Indeed, for Yumeno, urbanism, advanced technology, and cosmopolitan culture represented in particular by Tokyo are symbols the Other's menace and the
source of corruption in society. His fundamental concern was that Japan's modernization constituted de facto westernization, a process that he saw as eroding Japan's distinctive characteristics. Through his stories, in which the characters are tortured in the name of science and modern technology, Yumeno protested against Japan's efforts to become a westernized nation.

**Yumeno's Life Before His Major Early Work**

Yumeno, whose real name is Sugiyama Naoki, was born in 1889, the first son of Sugiyama Shigemaru and his first wife Kotori. Because of Shigemaru's busy life as a political activist in Tokyo, Yumeno was raised by his grandparents. He was especially influenced by his grandfather Saburobei, a former samurai scholar of Neo-Confucianism and of the Mito School of Japanese classical literature. In addition to teaching the young Yumeno the Chinese and Japanese classics, Saburobei also had Yumeno learn **No** chanting (**yōkyoku**), the hand drum (**tsuzumi**), and the flute. Although these studies were no longer necessary for life in the modern period, they later became important artistic inspirations for Yumeno. Yumeno's major debut work *The Eerie Hand Drum*, for example, is a
mystery about an old hand-drum used in musical
accompaniment for Nō and the people who are fascinated yet
also haunted by it. Yumeno's knowledge of Nō chanting and
musical instruments allows him to describe in intricate
detail the sounds of the drum and the chants, both of
which serve as important clues for unlocking a series of
murders.

Yumeno was doted on by Saburobei as the first
grandson of his oldest son. In contrast to this close
relationship with his grandfather, Yumeno rarely saw his
father, who lived in Tokyo. Shigemaru began his career as
a political activist by participating in the ultra-
nationalist group called Genyōsha (Dark Ocean Society).¹
During Yumeno's childhood and adolescence, Shigemaru
worked for Itō Hirobumi (1841-1909), the first Prime
Minister of Japan and later the Governor-General of Korea.
Genyōsha was officially opposed to the Japanese

¹ At the time, Genyōsha was led by Tōyama Mitsuru (1855-
1944), one of the most powerful ultra-nationalists from
the Meiji period until the end of World War II. Genyōsha
was established before the Meiji Restoration in 1868, but
Tōyama developed it into a well-known organization in the
mid-Meiji period. The principal thought of early Genyōsha
was the Great Asian Principle, and Tōyama invited Asian
nationalists to his home in order to assist them in their
efforts to expel Western colonial powers from Asia [J.
Kennedy, Asian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century
government's policy of accommodation with Western powers, and Shigemaru, on the surface, pretended to distance himself from the group when he worked for the Itō government.

For Yumeno, his father was both a great mentor and an obstacle to an artistic and literary career. Indeed, Shigemaru prohibited Yumeno from pursuing studies of music and art at school despite his interests. At the age of nineteen, having graduated from Shūyūkan Middle School in Kyūshū, Yumeno volunteered for military service. After completing his service and leaving the military with an honorable discharge as a reserve officer, Yumeno was allowed by his father to enter the Department of Literature at Keio University in 1911 at the age of twenty-two.

In 1913, however, Yumeno was again forced to quit the university on orders from his father. Shigemaru became concerned that Yumeno's study of literature would turn him into a liberal intellectual. It was during this time that Yumeno began wandering throughout Japan. During this period, he took tonsure and became a Zen monk under the assumed name Sugiyma Taidō. The reason for this rather radical and abrupt change of direction was to avoid a
family dispute over the inheritance of the family name. Shigemaru remarried, and Yumeno had two half-brothers; his stepmother attempted to make Yumeno's younger brother Gorō the principal heir of the family property. Thus, Yumeno became a monk in order to convey the message that he had absolutely no intention of claiming the Sugiyama inheritance.

After more than three years, Yumeno returned home in 1913 to take over family farm. Despite having renounced the family name and inheritance, he nevertheless returned to secular life and, while keeping his monastic name of Taidō, he married Kurata Kura and settled down in Kasuya in Fukuoka Prefecture. He also became a vōkyoku teacher of the Kita School and started taking students. Because the farm failed to bring in a steady income, however, he had to find other jobs in order to feed his family and keep the farm. Finally, in 1920, he became a newspaper


3 According to Sugiyama Ryūmaru, Yumeno's oldest son, Yumeno's half-brother Gorō, who was supposed to inherit the Sugiyama family, died of illness, and Yumeno assumed the inheritance instead of his late brother (Sugiyama Ryūmaru, "Yumeno Kyūsaku no shōgai," in *Yumeno Kyūsaku no sekai*, ed. Nishihara Kazumi [Tokyo Chûsekisha, 1991], pp. 223-226).
reporter for Kyūshū nippō (Kyūshū Daily Newspaper), a small regional newspaper in Fukuoka. Although his work as a reporter did not guarantee an adequate income, the experience was good for Yumeno's literary life. In addition to news reports, Yumeno had opportunities to publish children's stories in Kyūshū nippō under different pen names. Although his works were still unknown in literary circles, he was able to initiate a career as a writer.

Yumeno's Prize Winning Work: The Eerie Hand Drum

In 1926, Yumeno won second prize in the Hakubunkan Prize Competition for his novel Ayakashi no tsuzumi (The

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Kyūshū nippō was originally published by the father Shigemaru under the name of Fukuryō nippō (Fukuryō Daily Newspaper). The newspaper became Genyōsha's organizational paper then called Kyūshū nippō. Later Kyūshū nippō was merged with the another paper to become the present-day Nishi Nihon shinbun (Western Japan Newspaper), one of the biggest newspapers in Kyūshū. It appears that Yumeno seized a job as a reporter through his father's connections (Cf. Sugiyama Ryūmaru, "Sugiyama Shigemaru no shōgai," in Yumeno Kyūsaku no sekai, p.455).

He published the long novel Shiraga kōzō (A Kid of Gray Hair) on his own account through a small publisher in Tokyo in 1922. Yet, the work did not receive attention from the literary circles.
Eerie Hand Drum), which gave his writing national prominence. This is also the first work for which Yumeno used the pen name "Yumeno Kyūsaku." Hakubunkan was well-known for its publication of Shinseinen (New Youths), which specialized in detective stories. After winning the prize, Yumeno became one of the major contributors to Shinseinen, and he published novels, short stories, and essays on the detective story. He was also invited to write novels for various publications ranging from minor coterie to major literary magazines such as Kaizō, Shinchō, and Bungei shunjū.

Shinseinen was started in 1920 as a magazine to educate young farmers about the doctrines of Taishō Democracy and democratic nationalist ideas, which were also being promoted by the government at the time. However, Shinseinen changed direction in 1923, after the Great Kantō Earthquake. This editorial change reflected the social and cultural milieu of the mid-to-late 1920s.

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6 His pen name "Yumeno Kyūsaku" comes from a Kyūshū dialect expression which is used as an epithet that means "airhead" and/or "absent-minded." Yumeno took the pen name from a comment that his father made to him. When Shigemaru read Yumeno's works, he said that they seemed like stories written by "Mr. Yumeno Kyūsaku" ("Mr. Airhead") (Sugiyama Ryūmaru, Waga chichi Yumeno Kyūsaku, quoted by Tsurumi, Yumeno Kyūsaku, p.160).
As discussed in the Introduction, this was a time when Japan's heavy industry was gaining prominence, and following industrial changes, a growing number of urban dwellers began to shape a distinctive culture. Although the Great Kantō Earthquake destroyed Tokyo, it also accelerated the flowering of the city culture symbolized by the mobo and moga (abbreviation of "modern boy" and "modern girl" in Japanized English). Tokyo was rebuilt along Western lines using brick buildings, neon signs, paved sidewalks, and modern-style apartments. Along with the reconstruction of Tokyo, movies and fashion were

Yokomizo Seishi (1902-1981), later well-known for his occult mysteries, was editor-in-chief of Shinseinen from 1927. He aggressively transformed Shinseinen into a more urbane but also more frivolous magazine. In the editorial notes of the March issue of Shinseinen, Yokomizo translated the name Shinseinen into English as "Modern Boy."

When we translate the name Shinseinen into English, it is "Modern Boy." It might be a little embarrassing because "Modern Boy" sounds too new and modern for the name of the magazine.... The editorial staff boasted that we are also new and modern (Yokomizo Seishi, "Henshūkyoku kara," quoted by Suzuki, Shōwa bungaku no tame ni, p. 88).

Suzuki Sadami mentions that the official change of editorial policy of Shinseinen was done by Yokomizo in 1927, but he also states that the shift to the magazine for urban readers gradually happened after 1923 ("Shōwa modanizumu to Shinseinen," Yuririka 19, no. 10 [September 1987]: 108-109).
rapidly imported from the West, and the commingling of the reconstruction and Western culture changed the appearance of the city.

By the mid-1920s, a mass market for popular magazines had emerged in Japan, especially in large cities like Tokyo. For example, one-yen books (enpon), new and inexpensive anthologies of Japanese literary works, became so popular that the boom was called the "one-yen book boom" ("enpon bōmu"), a boom that in turn stimulated popular interest in reading. Among the new books and magazines for popular audiences, Shinseinen was not the champion in terms of sheer circulation, but by publishing detective stories, it sought to appeal to the increasing number of bachelor city dwellers such as young businessmen and university students. This new editorial policy made Shinseinen appear more sophisticated and unique than other popular magazines.

The detective story was still a new genre in Japanese literature, and Shinseinen adopted as its mission to establish this new literature within the canon of Japanese literature. As a matter of fact, there were letters to the editor from Shinseinen readers that challenged the editorial staff over whether the detective story was a work of literature or mere leisure entertainment. Editor-
in-chief Morishita Uson (1890-1965) responded by stating his belief that the detective story belonged to "pure literature."

Shinseinen initially published mainly foreign detective stories due to the scarcity of good detective stories by Japanese authors. However, it eventually found a talented young Japanese writer who happened to send his first work to the magazine. Edogawa Ranpo (1894-1965), whose pen name was taken from the American writer Edgar Allan Poe, wrote a work entitled "Nisen dōka" ("Two-sen Copper Coin"). "Two-sen Copper Coin" appealed to

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Morishita Uson, who in 1923 took editorial leadership of Shinseinen, was basically a student of Naturalism, and he considered the detective story to be a type of Naturalist novel. Suzuki Sadami mentions the interpretation of mysteries and detective stories as Naturalist works among the Shinseinen editors from the early to mid-1920s, and he points out that the new editorial policy of Shinseinen toward the detective story from 1923 was determined by Morishita Uson and his mentor-like editorial executive, Hasegawa Tenkei (1876-1940) (Suzuki, Shōwa bungaku no tame ni, p.46).

Morishita found the objectivity of the description and scientific analysis of the human mind is characteristic of the detective story, and he thought that it is very similar to naturalism. It is difficult to conceive of the detective story as comparable to representative Naturalist works such as Tayama Katai's (1871-193) Futon (Quilt) or Shimazaki Tōson's (1872-1943) Hakai (Broken Commandment) in today's perspective, but this view was not unusual in the 1920s in which scientific determinism after the manner of the French Naturalists was seem as the hallmark of the Naturalist novel.
Morishita as a brilliant example of the use of scientific objectivity and logic, and he set to promoting it as the first Japanese detective story. The story is about a young man named Matsumura Takeshi, who attempts to locate money hidden by a group of thieves. 9 Although he succeeds in decoding the message concealed in a two-sen copper coin, it turns out to be a joke created by "I," the narrator and friend of Matsumura. The money that Matsumura finds based on the message is also counterfeit.

Ranpo's "Two-sen Copper Coin" was recognized as the first truly authentic detective story created by a Japanese writer. After Ranpo's success, Hakubunkan established a prize for detective fiction in order to discover new writers of detective fiction. Yumeno emerged as the new Ranpo with his novel The Eerie Hand Drum.

The story is about a series of deaths that befalls anyone fascinated by an old hand drum used for yōkyoku, or No chants. The protagonist, Otomaru Kyūya, is the yōkyoku chanter and hand drum player who is fated to destroy the drum in order to break its evil spell. Kyūya's great-grandfather Kunō had made the drum in the Edo period in

order to curse the beautiful princess Ayahime. Kunō had fallen in love with the princess, but she abandoned him to marry Tsuruhara, a wealthy aristocrat. When she married, Kunō gave her the drum as a wedding present. The drum came to be called "Ayakashi no tsuzumi" because of its wooden frame of red oak (kashi) with a distinctive grain that resembled a twill weave (Aya). Because yōkyoku drum frames are usually made of cherry or azalea wood, the fact that red oak was used in this particular drum serves as a symbol of its uniqueness. "Ayakashi" also means "strange" or "eerie" in the context of Nō theater, and the name reinforces the bizarre nature of this drum.

A number of mysterious deaths are linked to "The Eerie Hand Drum." Ayahime committed suicide for no apparent reason. Then Kunō was killed by a young samurai who served as a guard at the Tsuruhara residence when Kunō attempted to retrieve the drum. He regretted having given his love the drum, but the samurai cut him down with his sword. Thereafter, all of the great drummers who played the drum died by murder or suicide. Finally, by contemporary times, or the Taishō period, Kyūya encounters the drum and finds that it still curses people who play it. First, his older brother Kyūroku falls victim to the drum. Kyūroku had been adopted by Takabayashi, a famous
drum teacher, when Kyūya was still small. Kyūroku was raised as Takabayashi Yasujirō and became a promising player. However, he falls prey to the curse of "The Eerie Hand Drum" when he visits the Tsuruhara residence and became so enraptured by its sound. He also falls victim to Tsuruko, the widow of the last head of Tsuruhara. Tsuruko is the descendent of Ayahime through her maiden family, and she captures Kyūroku and sadistically enslaves him as a sexual object. According to Tsuruko, her family had been ruined by the drum created by Kunō, and she had to marry Tsuruhara to save her maiden family financially; thus, Kyūroku must atone for his great-grandfather's sin. Kyūroku is forced to change his identity to Tsumaki Toshirō and to live with her as a nephew.

After Kyūroku/Yasujirō is reported as missing, Kyūya is also adopted by Takabayashi. Kyūya, however, is unaware that his brother was adopted by Takabayashi and became Yasujirō, because Takabayashi keeps the secret of Yasujirō away from Kyūya. He also believes that Kyūroku was adopted by somebody whom he did not know because the Otomaru family were too poor to raise his brother when his brother was born. Thus, Kyūya grows up happily in the family that has adopted him. However, drawn by the strange power of the drum, Kyūya also visits the Tsuruhara
residence and plays it. Here he finally understands why people have died after playing the drum.

I heard that Kunō created the drum in order to make the sound of the drum mirror his emotion, and it was as if the sound of death..., for its weakness..., and its gloominess. The core of the sound had the echo of hatred which would not disappear forever. It had the tone as if it consisted in tragic persistence, and it was the tone which no one, no human was able to conquer or change. I thought that even Kunō himself did not realize his own emotion. It sounded like the sorrow of the ghost who fell into hell and who wanted to disappear but was not able to do so.... It was like the voice of the ghost who wandered at the bottom of hell. He wanted to be saved and go to heaven, but he could not. If this sound were not the voice of the man whose heart was torn for love and tried to haunt people, what could it be? If this sound did not reflect Kunō’s resentment, what else could it be?\(^\text{10}\)

After playing the drum, Kyūya decides to destroy the drum, but he is restrained by Tsuruko. She demands that he serve her like a slave just as Kyūroku does. Instead, Kyūroku kills Tsuruko to let Kyūya escape, sets the house on fire, and commits suicide.

Having escaped from the house, Kyūya wanders throughout Kyoto and the Kansai area for three years. He

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finally returns to Tokyo to see his mentor/step-father Takabayashi and discerns that Takabayashi is also cursed by the drum. After playing "The Eerie Hand Drum," Takabayashi writes a final will and testament to Kyūya, and then hangs himself in order to express his apology for the Otomaru brothers. Takabayashi has felt that he has indirectly destroyed the brothers' lives by having sent them to the Tsuruhara residence.

Grief-stricken for his great mentor, Kyūya leaves the Takabayashi house with the hand drum. He learns the following day that the police are seeking him as the prime suspect in three "murders;" namely, the deaths of Tsumaki, Tsuruko, and Takabayashi. Realizing that there is no logical explanation for the curse of the drum, Kyūya writes a suicide note and decides to destroy the drum and then himself.

The plot is very complicated given its spatio-temporal dimension, which stretches from the Edo period to the Taishō period, Kyoto to Tokyo, and the considerable cast of characters who appear one after another. Moreover, each character possesses a secret created by the curse of the drum, and the secrets are revealed to the reader through the characters' confessions. The secrets thus revealed define the different identities of each
character, and as each character reveals his/her identity, the mystery of the drum is progressively solved. The most significant example of layered identities is that of Kyūya's brother Kyūroku/Yasujirō/Tsumaki. He first appears as Tsumaki, telling Kyūya about the curse of "The Eerie Hand Drum." Then, once he ascertains that Kyūya is the person who really knows the story of the drum, he discloses his identity as Yasujirō. Finally when Tsumaki/Yasujirō kills Tsuruko in order to save Kyūya, he reveals that he is Kyūroku, Kyūya's elder brother. As the story evolves, Tsumaki becomes Yasujirō, and then Yasujirō throws off his identity to become Kyūroku. As a result of these three metamorphoses, each identity looks valid, yet there seems to be no core to the character. In particular, the multiple identities in the story, such as those of Tsumaki, are presented via a series of confessions, and the confessions serve as the driving force for the revelation of the secret of the curse.

At the same time, Yumeno manipulates the common perspective of confessions in order to create a surrealistic story. As a general rule, the function of confession is to disclose the truth, and the truth of the confession is the fundamental premise of the whole act. Yet, Yumeno subverts this premise by presenting characters
whose identity is so insubstantial that all truth must be considered as subjective and even potentially fictional. The author is demonstrating the idea that a confession is merely a hypothetical truth that may not rest upon any substantial reality at all.

Of course, Yumeno was not the first writer to focus on the "true" nature of confession: the ambiguities of confession have been explored by writers in both East and West. Among writers of detective or ratiocinative fiction, Edgar Allan Poe, who tremendously influenced modernist writers, especially the symbolists, is well-known for his distinctive use of the confession. In works such as "A Black Cat" or "William Wilson," the entire story is often told in the form of a confession by a first-person narrator, and by "I's" hand the story of a bizarre incident unfolds. For instance, in Poe's "A Black Cat," "I" is a young man who kills his wife and walls her corpse up in the cellar. He had wanted to kill his black cat, but instead he takes an axe to his wife when she stops him from killing the cat. The murder is uncovered because the black cat roars from inside the cellar wall. When the police uncover the wall, the cat sits atop the dead wife's head. Poe's "Black Cat" blurs the distinction between real and unreal, and the blurred distinction is
created by both the peculiar content of the story and the confessional mode of its narration. Thus, although "I" describes the sequence of the murder and his own emotions in detail, the fundamental question of whether his story is real or unreal remains because the story became known only through "I's" confession.

Yumeno, who was deeply fascinated by Poe, described the powerful influence of Poe's "The Black Cat" on his subsequent writing in the following observation:

And then, when I was in the third year or fourth year of middle school, reading in Shônen-kai or Shônen sekai, I was very moved by the translation of Poe's "Black Cat," and my tastes in detective stories dramatically changed and became bizarre from then on. I mean, I felt that the series of works by [Kuroiwa] Ruikô now seemed shallow, and I explored the world of mysterious stories like the Arabian Nights. I wrote a lot of peculiar stories and showed or read them to people, but nobody took me seriously.11

Another important influence on Yumeno's confessional style is yûkyoku. In particular, a Nô style called mugen

11 Yumeno, "Ruikô, Poe, sore kara," in YKZ, vol.11, pp.31-32. Ruikô, or Kuroiwa Ruikô (1862-1920) is one of the earliest Japanese writers of detective stories. He came to be known as a translator of English literature, especially of detective stories, and then started writing his own detective fiction in 1889. He championed the publication of this new genre as a serious form of literature. In 1892, he established the newspaper Yorozu chôhô with his own financial resources. As discussed in Chapter 1, Yorozu chôhô was the first newspaper to introduce Dada to Japan in 1920.
No employs confession as the central feature of the play; this rhetoric of confession can be seen in *The Eerie Hand Drum*. For instance, *Higaki (Cypress Fence)*, a play attributed to Zeami (1363?-1443?), takes the style of the confession of an old woman who is actually a ghost. In the first act, a monk encounters an old woman who offers water to a statue of the Buddha everyday. When the monk asks about her, she replies that she will tell him about her life if he will visit her place. In the second act, when he goes to visit her, she confesses that she is a ghost. According to her confession, she cannot ascend to heaven because she is too obsessed with the memories of her youth. She was once very beautiful and so talented at *waka (Japanese poetry)* that her poem was included in the imperial *waka* anthology the *Gosen wakashū*. As she grew older, her beauty waned. After death, her spirit is still condemned to remain in this world because of her deep attachment to life and youthful beauty. After listening to her confession, the monk prays for the old woman/ghost, who is at last liberated from her obsession and goes to heaven. In *Higaki*, the revelation that the woman is a

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ghost is made in her confession, and it is the only
evidence that she is not a human. As a teacher of
yōkyoku, Yumeno was familiar with the concept of ambiguous
reality and nonreality through the confessional narration
which is a characteristic of the Nō. Although Yumeno did
not create a story in which a dead person narrates his/her
story, his work uses confession and the ambiguous
distinction between the real and unreal as does mugen Nō.
Yumeno exploits the supposition that a confessor tells the
truth in order to develop a surrealistic story. The
manipulation of this supposition commingles with the
complex relationships among the characters and their
multiple identities, ultimately producing a sense of
hallucination in the reader.

The Eerie Hand Drum consists of another literary
structure -- the layering of the narrative. The story is
told in the form of the confessional revelation of Kyūya's
farewell letter, and within the framing of his narrative,
different characters tell their stories in the first-
person voice as well. For instance, Kyūya records
Tsumaki's confession that he is Yasujirō by writing
Tsumaki's real dialogue faithfully. Before he reveals his
series of identities, Tsumaki tells Kyūya that he heard of
Kyūya from Yasujirō. According to Tsumaki, Yasujirō, who
was haunted by the drum, predicted that Kyūya would be the next leader of the Takabayashi school before he disappeared. Yasujirō's statement is told in the first-person narrative as well, and, as a result, the layers of the narrative are constructed through Yasujirō -- Tsumaki -- Kyūya and then the whole story reaches the reader.

Yumeno's experimentation with narrative has parallels in works such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, with its narrative constructed through a similar layering technique. The scholar Bertil Romberg explains that in the construction of *Wuthering Heights* there is a first narrator and a second narrator. In the second narrator's narrative, various third narrators speak in their own voice.\(^\text{13}\) Both *Wuthering Heights* and *The Eerie Hand Drum* consist of a narrative within the narrative; still, compared with *The Eerie Hand Drum*, *Wuthering Heights* tends to distance the narrator from involvement with the central

\(^{13}\) Bertil Romberg, *Studies in the Narrative Technique of the First-Person Novel* (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1962), pp. 58-68. According to Romberg's explanation, the first narrator is Mr. Lockwood and the second, Mrs. Dean, and Mrs. Dean narrates the other characters' narratives through letters or re-creation of the dialogues based on her memory. Therefore, sometimes, the reader sees, "minds of the following persons: Heathcliff - Isabella - Nelly - Dean - Mr. Lockwood - the reader." (p. 65)
action. As Romberg explains, there are two principal styles of first-person narration: one, telling his/her own story and, two, telling another character's story as the observer. In *Wuthering Heights*, characters still follow the basic role as either the narrator of the story (or actor of the story) or the listener of the story despite the layers of the confessions. On the other hand, Kyūya plays both roles in *The Eerie Hand Drum*: the narrator involved in the incidents and the listener to other confessors. Kyūya's farewell note functions to compile all those whose lives have been affected by the drum in addition to his own. The whole story *The Eerie Hand Drum* is framed as Kyūya's note to the readers in which he tells the story of his life and experience; it is also the record that Kyūya has heard from other characters.

Despite some interesting literary devices, Yumeno's *Eerie Hand Drum* was not universally admired by the prize committee members, and, as a result, although almost all of the committee members felt Yumeno was a promising writer, it was decided to award him second prize. As a matter of fact, it was Edogawa Ranpo, the pioneer of the Japanese detective story, who wrote the most severe critique of Yumeno's work by questioning the
inconsistencies of the sequence of the story. The complicated confessions of Tsumaki/Yasujirō/Kyōroku did not satisfy Ranpo, who argued that there was an illogical gap between Tsumaki's confession and his own actions. Tsumaki is Yasujirō or "Waka sensei" (the "Young Teacher") of Takabayashi, but he does not readily admit that he is also Kyōroku. Ranpo cites this fact as evidence of Yumeno's immaturity as a writer. He also states that The Earie Hand Drum lies somewhere between a detective and an occult story without satisfying either genre.\textsuperscript{14} Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke (1892-1931), another committee member, expressed mixed feelings about the story as well. Like Ranpo, Hirabayashi complains that the story mixes characteristics of both genres, concluding that Yumeno should have pursued only one genre to create a better work. Interestingly enough, however, Hirabayashi does remark upon Yumeno's layering of the narrative; still, he thinks it is, "not believable at all. It is as if we hear the silly local tale from an old grandma in the countryside."\textsuperscript{15} As discussed above, the narrative within

\textsuperscript{14} Edogawa Ranpo, "Tōsenaku shōkan." in Yumeno Kyūsaku no sekai, pp.11-14.

\textsuperscript{15} Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke, "Tōsenaku shōkan," in Yumeno Kyūsaku no sekai, p.15.
the narrative destabilizes the narrative, and Hirabayashi does not consider it to be an appropriate characteristic for detective fiction.

As seen in the comments of two committee members, although Yumeno's first major work was not received enthusiastically by professional writers, the work launched his career as a serious writer. It was after *The Eerie Hand Drum* appeared that Yumeno started publishing his works regularly in *Shinseinen*.

**Limbo in the Modern World:**
*Incidents, in, the Countryside*

As he continued to publish mystery and detective stories in *Shinseinen*, Yumeno's reputation grew. In particular, the publication of the novel *Oshie no kiseki* (*Mysteries of a Picture of Fabric Dolls*) in 1929 established him as a great mystery writer. The fundamental motif that traditional arts are related to mysterious murders and deaths repeats that of *The Eerie Hand Drum*. The confessional style of the narrative made by the protagonist, although a girl this time, is also the same. Unlike *The Eerie Hand Drum*, however, in *Mysteries of a Picture of Fabric Dolls* Yumeno dispenses with the
multi-layered, multi-character confessional to focus on the girl's perspective, resulting in a simpler and more readily comprehensible plot. As a consequence, this work attracted a wider audience, including professional writers such as Ranpo, who had criticized Yumeno's Eerie Hand Drum but applauded the new work. Indeed, Ranpo was so influenced by the story that he created a short story titled "Oshie to tabi suru otoko" ("A Man Travelling with a Picture of Fabric Dolls") in the same year.

At the same time that Yumeno published Mysteries of a Picture, he also published from 1927 to 1929 twenty short stories in succession under the title of Inaka, no, jiken (Incidents, in, the Countryside). Each phrase in the title is separated by a comma suggesting that Yumeno wants readers to read with a rhythm dictated by his punctuation. Each short story has an independent title and introduces a separate episode. It is not considered a major work like Mysteries of a Picture, which was admired even by professional writers. However, Yumeno presents Incident, in the Countryside based on the myths, superstitions, and nonsensical rumors of country folk, ultimately succeeding in creating a bizarre world through them. For instance, "Hanayome no shitakui" ("Eating the Bride's Tongue") is the story of a middle-aged man who suddenly claims during
dinner that he is a reincarnation of \textit{Pudō-myōō} (The
Buddhisattva Acala). Hearing the news, the whole village
rushes to his house and stays all day in an attempt to
receive his divine assistance. Then, one day the Acala
man calls upon a young, beautiful bride who moved to the
village a few days earlier. He tells her to open her
mouth and put out her tongue, which he holds between his
teeth and then bites off, swallowing it. After the woman
dies, he is arrested for the murder, and the police and
the doctors find that he has been affected with syphilis-
induced dementia for quite some time. At the end of the
story, Yumeno adds a punch line-like coda to the effect
that after this incident, nobody prays to Acala any more
because the villagers now believe they will get syphilis
if they do.\textsuperscript{16}

The primitive beliefs of country folk are distorted
into a new kind of superstition, and the new superstition
quickly takes root in the village. Of course, there are
characters such as the doctor, the police officer, and the
student of higher education who introduce modern ideas to
the village, but their knowledge confuses people;

\textsuperscript{16} Yumeno, "Hanayome no shitakui," in \textit{Inaka, no, jiken} in
\textit{YKZ}, vol.4, pp.15-16.
sometimes it makes them even more superstitious. For instance, in the episode entitled "Ari to hae" ("Ants and Flies") a modern concept is changed into a strange belief. 17 One day a villager finds the remains of a six-month old, aborted fetus in a mulberry field, and a young police officer searches for the mother. It turns out that the daughter of the landlord is the most likely suspect. She lives in the city and goes to the girl's higher school, but when the baby was found, she was staying at home in the village. When the police officer visits her house, she declares that she has an "alibi" (aribai in Japanese). Her uneducated mother mistakes the foreign word "alibi" as something like "ari" ("ant") and "hae" ("fly") and shakes with fear. But the daughter laughs out loud and says that her alibi is that she is still a virgin, and that the policeman should investigate her maidenhead if he doubts her. The rumor of the policeman's visit spreads throughout the village, and the word "alibi" becomes very popular. Yet, for people who do not know the real meaning of "alibi," the word, as used by the villagers, comes to be synonymous with virginity.

Such peasant beliefs and myths, portrayed in *Incidents, in, the Countryside*, represent those aspects of traditional Japanese society that modernization sought to eliminate. In other words, the urban-based perspective of modernization in Japan sought to ignore almost all of its traditional and regional roots when this perspective became predominant by the 1920s. Yumeno's work attempts to present the continued existence of these cultural roots to the new and growing class of urban readers.

There existed a Japan that still lay outside of urban modernization, and Yumeno paradoxically showed it to the cosmopolitan urban readers who sought out city life and mass culture. When Yumeno published the first episode of *Incidents, in, the Countryside*, he emphasized the factual elements of his work as follows:

> These are all incidents which actually happened in an area of Kyūshū, which is my hometown. All of them are what I heard and saw. Some were reported as five or six short lines in newspaper articles, but I think that the stupidity of these stories might interest those of you living in the city. So, I wrote about the stories that I remembered. Please forgive me for not mentioning real names and places. My concern is for the place where I now live. ¹⁸

¹⁸ Yumeno, "Inaka, no iiken - bikū." quoted by Nishihara Kazumi, "Kaidai," in *YKZ*, vol. 4, p. 427
Yumeno states that his stories reflected the reality of life in provincial Japan, and he wants people in the city to know this world. He adds a tone of nonsense and dark humor in describing rustic country folks, but as a whole, *Incidents, in, the Countryside* highlights the primitiveness that persisted in Japan at the age of the modern regardless of the recognition or ignorance of the urban perspective.

Ever since Baudelaire, one of the earliest modernist writers, used Paris as the symbol of the Modern, modernism is frequently linked to cosmopolitanism. By contrast, Yumeno clings to themes that reflect rural Japan, placing his work somewhat outside of the main currents of modernist literature. In fact, according to the critic Nishihara Kazumi, Yumeno's works based on rural Japan were given the oxymoronic name "*inaka modanizumu*" ("rural modernism") in order to establish a clear contrast with the major current of the modernist movement that developed in tandem with urban culture.\(^{19}\) Despite the tone of dark

\(^{19}\) Ibid., p.425. According to Nishihara, the term "rural modernism" was used to refer to Yumeno's works among literary circles in the 1960s, not in the 1920s and 1930s. According to Nishihara's explanation, "rural modernism" is cited as the exchangeable term with "*nōhonshugiteki sakufū*" ("writing style which is similar to that of agrarianism") or "*dochaku-ha shiki*" ("inclination toward
humor toward people in the country, *Incidents, in, the Countryside* indicates Yumeno's strong attachment to provincial Japan.

Of course, Yumeno's adoration of primitiveness is different from the primitivism represented in the works of Paul Gauguin or Pablo Picasso. Primitivism in the West has its own rather complex history, but in terms of the period of pre-modernism and modernism, "primitiveness" refers to culture of the Other:

... [by] the turn of the century, its scope was extended to refer to ancient Egyptian, Persian, Indian, Javanese, Peruvian and Japanese cultures, to the products of societies thought to be 'closer to nature,' and to what many art historian have called the 'tribal' art of Africa and Oceania (the islands of the Pacific Ocean). The label 'primitivism,' on the other hand, has generally been used to describe a Western interest in, and/or reconstruction of, societies designated 'primitive' and their artifacts. Primitivism, then, is generally used to refer to the discourses on the 'primitive.'

Yumeno's adoration for primitiveness is also constructed under the notion of the Other in terms of the contrast between the urban and the rural, or the pastoral. His primitivism also incorporates violence as a part of

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localism"). (p.425).

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primitive culture, a trait analyzed in the work of Georges Bataille (1897-1962). Bataille examines ancient cultures, such as that of the Aztecs, and points out that Aztec civilization historically praised violence as the nature of the sacred. For Bataille, primitive culture did not consider violence and the sacred to be polar opposites, as they are considered by contemporary society.

Still, despite some important similarities, Yumeno's adoration of primitiveness differs from Western primitivism such as that of Picasso. First of all, unlike Western artists who presented primitivism, Yumeno's adoration is not directly associated with a particular style of expression. For example, in the case of Picasso, he incorporated African masks into his paintings by adopting an asymmetry that such masks inspired. For Picasso, primitivism was not only the issue of emotional adoration but also that of artistic expression. On the other hand, Yumeno presents primitiveness as the existence which cannot be exterminated by the urban, and his adoration for primitiveness expresses his political and

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social standpoint rather than his artistic standpoint.\textsuperscript{22}

In fact, Yumeno's fundamental ideology is more accurately regarded as provincialism rather than primitivism. His father Shigemaru was a well-known ultra-nationalist activist, and despite Yumeno's difficult relationship with his father, it is easily imagined that Shigemaru influenced him. Yumeno worshiped the emperor and imperial sovereignty, and his provincialism is clearly ultra-nationalistic. Although Yumeno did not actively participate in politics, \textit{Incidents, in, the Countryside} is a work in which his provincialist viewpoint is wrapped in

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\textsuperscript{22} Japan's ultra-nationalism was not monolithic and was fundamentally divided into two factions: one group advocated a strong, centralized state which devoted itself to creating a technologically advanced, militarily powerful state. The other faction categorically rejected the modern, industrial state and wanted Japan to preserve and reinforce its agrarian and provincial traditions.
\end{flushright}

...['primitivism'] is seen as a complex network of sociological, ideological, aesthetic, scientific, anthropological, political and legal interests (that is 'discourses'), which feed into and determine a culture. As a discourse, it involves, according to Foucault, a relationship of power; he means, for example, that those within Western society who analyze, teach, paint or reproduce a view of the 'primitive' would, by this activity, be dominating, restructuring and having authority over that which they define as 'primitive' (Perry, "Primitivism and the 'Modern,'" p.4).
dark humor and implicitly developed.23

Yumeno subsequently developed this provincialist tendency further in his works and was critical of even other ultra-nationalist activists who supported urbanism and internationalism at the expense of the provinces. Yumeno is an example of a modernist writer who was well to the right politically of most other modernists.

Absence of the Self: 
The Monumental Work Dogura Magura

In January of 1935, Yumeno published the vast novel Dogura magura, the most difficult and bizarre work among

Japan's ultra-nationalism consists of two standpoints: the strong conscious for State sovereignty, which focuses on development of technology and military, and agrarianism, which focuses on the importance of farm and province.

On the one hand, there is a tendency towards an ever-greater strengthening of absolute State sovereignty focused on the Emperor; on the other, a tendency to centre the conception of Japan on provincial rather than on State affairs. In this respect the right wing may be divided into two sections: those who advocated an intensive development on industry and who wished to increase State control for this end, and those who flatly rejected the idea and thought in terms of agrarianism centered on the villages (Maruyama Masao, Thought and Behavior in Modern Japanese Politics, expanded ed., ed. and trans. Ivan Morris [London: Oxford University Press, 1963, Oxford University Press Paperback, 1969], p.38).
his many novels. The story deals with murders and the secret of the protagonist, but it almost defies comprehension because the story is filled with confusing images and illogical sequences.

The protagonist "I" is a young man who wakes up in a mental hospital hearing a strange noise. He then notices that he has completely lost his memory, and his task in the novel is to rediscover his identity through conversations, written materials, and objects that he happens to notice. The two professionals who treat "I" are Dr. Wakabayashi Kyōtarō, whose speciality is forensic medicine, and Dr. Masaki Keishi, a psychiatrist who is also a friend of Wakabayashi.

The two professors give the first-person narrator hints, and, from these hints, "I" realizes that he might be related to a young man named Kure Ichirō, a serial

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24 The title Dogura magura is, according to Yumeno's explanation in the story, old Nagasaki dialect which had been obsolete when the novel was published. It consists of several meanings such as "phantasmal magic," "hallucination," and "bewilderment" (Yumeno, Dogura magura, vol.1 [Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1977], pp. 87-88). The word itself has an interesting sound and vague meanings; thus, this dissertation keeps the Japanese title in discussing the work.
murderer who was also hospitalized at the institution. Kure Ichirō had killed his mother two years earlier and recently attempted to kill Kure Moyoko, his cousin and fiancée, as well as four patients and a security guard in the mental hospital. The motive behind Ichirō's murders, according to Drs. Masaki and Wakabayashi, is related to his ancestry. The Kure family came from the Go family in China in the period of the T'ang Dynasty, and the great painter Go Seishū is at the origin of the bloody and grotesque history of the Kures. When Emperor Xuanzong's love for Princess Yang Kuei-fei destroyed T'ang China, Go Seishū decided to remonstrate with the emperor. He convinced his wife to let him kill her and then created six paintings of her steadily decaying corpse. It was a kind of meditative painting that was used in Buddhism with the purpose of liberating the viewer from attachment to the life of the flesh. The message of the paintings was to teach the emperor the Buddhist lesson that attachment

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25 Yumeno took the name Kure from the famous psychiatrist Kure Shūzō (1876-1932), who was a pioneer of psychiatry in Japan. While teaching at university of Tokyo, Kure worked as the director of Sugamo Hospital which specialized in psychiatric treatment. Sugamo Hospital was considered the symbol of psychiatry of Japan in the 1910s and 1920s. (Matsuyama Iwao, "Shōki ka kyōki ka, yarusenai Taishō." Geijutsu Shinchō. 38, no.4 [April 1987]: 19-21)
is vain and it would lead to the destruction of China as well. However, the experience of killing his wife and looking daily at her dead body turned Go into a necrophiliac who then began to search for the corpses of young females in order to create more paintings. Eventually the T'ang Dynasty collapsed, and Go escaped from the capital with his six paintings and a second wife, Funko, who was the twin sister of his first wife Taiko. During his escape, across the sea, Go drowned, but Funko reached Japan with her son by Go. In Japan, Go's son was given the Japanese name Kure (the Japanese reading of Go) Kazuo, settling in Kyūshū. The six paintings which came to Japan with Funko and Kazuo were hidden inside a Buddhist statue in the temple that the Kure family had built.

According to the hypothesis advocated by Drs. Masaki and Wakabayashi, the men in the Kure family have inherited the desire to kill women whom they love whenever they see the six paintings, and the most recent - Kure Ichirō - was a victim of this curse. A psychiatrist well-known for his radical theories, Dr. Masaki advances his theory titled the "Dreams of a Fetus" theory, a theory that he practices on Kure Ichirō. According to Dr. Masaki, the human brain can chemically imprint the long history of human evolution.
and family history. Even as an embryo, the unborn baby starts to dream of seeing and recapitulating evolution from its earliest stages. Next, the fetus visualizes his/her own family's history. According to the theory, this dreaming is the reason why a baby sometimes moves in the mother's womb or cries without reason after having been born. The vision in these dreams either excites or terrorizes the child. However, as he/she grows, the baby no longer remembers the dreams, but genetic strands form the unconscious memories in the adult. In the case of Kure Ichirō, the peculiar history of the Go family has imprinted itself in his brain, and according to the two doctors, this is why Kure kills his mother and attempts to kill his fiancée.

Although the doctors gradually explain their hints and theory, "I" still cannot connect himself with Kure Ichirō because he cannot recall his past. As the first step of the experiment, "I" is taken to an adjoining room to see a beautiful young girl. According to Dr. Wakabayashi, who appears first, she is the fiancée of Ichirō. But he has no memory of having seen her. Then he is told to look in the mirror; still, he has no idea who he is. In fact, he is surprised that he is so young-looking at the age of twenty. Wakabayashi then takes him
to Dr. Masaki's office and shows him many documents: 
newspaper articles, medical reports, and the story which 
is titled "Dogura magura." "Dogura magura" was written by 
a young psychiatric patient well-known for his 
intelligence. According to Dr. Wakabayashi, the patient 
was fascinated by detective stories, and he planned a 
tragic event based on his reading of detective stories. 
While not explaining the patient's actual plan, Dr. 
Wakabayashi tells "I" that the patient was eventually 
hospitalized. He wrote the story in order to prove that 
he was sane and also to denounce Drs. Wakabayashi and 
Masaki, who were responsible for the torture of modern 
psychiatry. The story mentions real people, specifically 
Drs. Wakabayashi and Masaki, and the tone of writing is 
abnormal as if the author is completely insane. Yet, some 
of the descriptions of the mental hospital are true and 
scientifically logical, and psychiatrists cannot judge 
whether this patient is sane or insane even after reading 
the story. Without detailed explanation, Dr. Wakabayashi 
implicitly forces "I" to read "Dogura magura," but "I" 
glances at the bound book and refuses to read it because 
he feels uneasy about reading the book.

In addition to "Dogura magura," written by a mental 
patient, there is even a suicide note written in Dr.
Masaki's own hand. According to Dr. Wakabayashi and news reports that "I" reads, Masaki committed suicide exactly one month before the day when "I" read his note. The suicide was the result of Kure Ichirō's sudden murder rampage and collapse, which resulted in the deaths of four patients and one security guard. Masaki took responsibility for the failed medical treatment of his patient and committed suicide. However, when "I" reads these materials closely, Masaki suddenly appears in his room in place of Wakabayashi. He explains to "I" that Wakabayashi has lied in order to make "I" believe that he is Kure Ichirō.

The date and incidents indicated by each doctor are different, and "I" cannot determine which one is telling the truth. According to Dr. Wakabayashi, today is November 15th, 1926, exactly one month after Dr. Masaki's suicide. However, Dr. Masaki explains that the day is actually October 15th, and that he has not died. In this chaotic situation, eventually "I" finds out that Drs. Masaki and Wakabayashi have been rivals since their youth, and although pretending to be the closest of friends, each has acted immorally in order to advance his own scholarly career. When the two doctors first heard about Kure's six paintings twenty years ago, they attempted to steal them
from the temple in order to use them to test their hypothesis. When they found that Kure Chiyoko, the mother of Kure Ichirō, had the six paintings in her possession, they approached her and had sex with her in order to steal her paintings. At the same time, they intended to create a human guinea pig to test their theory. They needed a man genetically related to the Kures in order to make him look at the six paintings and watch his reaction. They did not succeed in stealing the paintings from Chiyoko, but they did manage to produce a son by her although neither of them knew who Ichirō's father was.

The secrets of Dr. Wakabayashi, Dr. Masaki, and the Kure family are disclosed one after another to "I," but the secrets contradict each other. Moreover, "I" is still in agony over not knowing his own identity. When "I" finally starts to think that all of the stories he has heard and seen are parts of his dream as a fetus, and that just as in Dr. Masaki's "Dreams of a Fetus" theory, he is the son of Kure Ichirō, and he is still in his mother's womb following the Kure family's long and cursed history that is imprinted on his brain. As he reflects on this, he hears the strange noise he heard at the beginning of the story, but he can no longer tell whether he is about to awaken to reality or to have a dream.
Even though amplified by occult and mystery elements, it may be argued that *Dogura magura* is a metaphorical novel that suggests the non-essential or absence of the self through "I's" story. From beginning to end, "I" cannot identify himself even though he makes every effort to discover his true self. Even when he looks at the mirror, it reflects the man "I" who does not know who he is. The only way to identify himself is not to find out for himself but to accept the suggestion of others that he is Kure Ichirō. His identity is not his property, but is the property of others, namely of Drs. Masaki and Wakabayashi, and his search for himself is merely an issue of whether to accept what the Other defines him to be. Of course, "I" cannot assume that Masaki and Wakabayashi, both of whom provide many hints, can be trusted to tell the truth. They do not tell him directly that he is Kure Ichirō because, according to them, they want "I" to find his identity through his own efforts. The two psychiatrists manipulate the fact that they give him his identity by making "I" believe that he finds it for himself.

After great confusion and agony, "I" is at least brave enough to reject at face value that he is Kure Ichirō. He tells Dr. Masaki that he does not want to
believe he is Ichirō merely because he is told so. Yet, at the same time, by rejecting the identity that professors would like him to accept, "I" is trapped in an endless cycle of nightmares from which he can never awaken, or more precisely, he can never truly know who he is. The strange noise of the clock that sounds at the beginning and the end implies that the story has come full circle and he may be in the same circumstances in which he began his narrative.

Yumeno's exploration of the absence of the self presages the examination of the non-essentialist self advanced by contemporary scholars such as Karatani Kōjin. In his *Origins of Japanese Literature*, which analyzes the system of confession in modern Japanese literature, Karatani questions the premise of the establishment of the self.

In the foregoing chapter I have proposed that the self or interiority which the novelistic "I" was supposed to express did not exist a priori but was constituted through the mediation of a material form, through the establishment of *genbun itchi*. The same can be said of modern Japanese literary confession. It was the literary form of the confession—confession as a system—that produced the interiority that confessed, the "true self." Rather than examine how or what was confessed, we should examine this institution. For it is not the existence of hidden secrets that necessitates
confession but the compulsion to confess that produces an "interior" which must be hidden.\textsuperscript{26}

Karatani explains that the self is created in the process of confession, not that the established self makes a person confess. In the case of "I," he has nothing to confess; thus, he lacks any self.

As Karatani states, "the theme of the exploration of the modern self, however diverse its articulation, dominates discussion of modern Japanese literature," the modern self (\textit{kindai jiga}) has been the most important proposition in the history of modern Japanese literature.\textsuperscript{27} Since the Meiji period, writers and critics have pursued the modern self and its establishment in their works. In particular, the issue of the self has been discussed at great length in the linkage of the I-novel. From literary critic Kobayashi Hideo to political scientist Maruyama Masao, the I-novel in Japanese literature is considered to be the product of the undeveloped self. Although this kind of discussion no longer dominates contemporary Japanese literary criticism, discussion of the weak self is still a subject of critical


\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., p.61.
analysis in modern Japanese literature. In contrast, with what now appears to be great foresight, Yumeno presented the absence of the self through the tragedy of "I." Yumeno's belief that the Other is the only key to defining the self is surprisingly different from that of many Japanese writers who were contemporary to him.

Moreover, a part of Yumeno's non-essential view seems to be inspired by Buddhism. At one time a Zen monk, he studied Buddhist teachings extensively. According to Yumeno, Buddhism and the detective story share elements in presenting mysterious and often horrible human nature, and he started writing mysteries to exercise his Buddhist-inspired idea for the novel. Furthermore, in describing the condition of "I" as a psychiatric patient, Yumeno refers to what, for example, Michel Foucault argues is a phenomenon of modern society. Indeed, the relationship between "I" and the two psychiatrists in this novel is precisely the same as that of humanity and science outlined by Foucault in *Madness and Civilization*. Modern science is the new and absolute power which controls humanity in the modern world.

He[Foucault] seeks to show how, in the modern world, since the "Classical" period of the

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seventeenth centuries, varieties of human behaviour which previously were simply accepted as such, and controlled if need be by the naked apparatus of State power, have come to be subjected to control by "experts," acting in the name of "science." Madness, for instance, has been redescribed as "mental" illness," and so subjected to medical control; many forms of crime have been reclassified as the expression of a "sick personality," similarly in need of expert management by "scientifically" trained people. 29

In Western culture, Foucault believes that this phenomenon is the result of the Enlightenment, but, it can also be applied to Japan. For example, we can compare the treatment of madness in Dogura magura and a work written in a different period. Shimazaki Tōson's (1872-1943) novel Yokkemae (Before the Dawn), which takes place from the very end of the Edo period to early Meiji period deals with the decline of Tōson's family and his father's madness. 30 In Before the Dawn, Aoyama Hanzō is captured when he tries to set fire to the local temple, and, without any good medical treatment, his family places him in a cage built at his own house. He is imprisoned until he dies. By contrast, the mental institution in which Kure Ichirō and "I" are placed seems to be much more open


and comfortable, and they are given adequate care. At the same time, they are forced to obey treatment plans designed by Drs. Masaki and Wakabayashi in the name of science. Regardless of whether "I" is Kure Ichirō or not, the serial killer Kure Ichirō was the subject of the two doctors' experiment, and so is "I." In the case of Ichirō, he was even born in order to be the subject of their scientific inquiry.

In fact, Yumeno implies the cruelty of modern science from an early conversation between Dr. Wakabayashi and "I." When he is taken to Dr. Masaki's office, he finds a painting in which three people are burned to death. Dr. Wakabayashi explains that it is a painting which, according to him, could be attributed to Rembrandt. The painting depicts the execution of these people, and Dr. Wakabayashi continues that people who are now treated as mental patients today were once burned at the stake during the Middle Ages, as the painting reveals, because they were considered to be possessed by the Devil. Replying to "I's" comment that today's mental patients are much more fortunate, Dr. Wakabayashi murmurs that present-day psychiatric treatments may be more cruel than being burned at the stake. After this statement, Dr. Wakabayashi tells "I" that Dr. Masaki created a completely new treatment in
order to save mental patients from current psychiatric treatment practices. However, later "I" strongly protests his treatment by Drs. Wakabayashi and Masaki, accusing them of practicing torture. The treatment which Drs. Masaki and Wakabayashi practice on Kure Ichirō and "I" are forms of psychological torture, but the medical experiments are justified in the name of science in precisely the same manner that Dr. Wakabayashi indicated early on.

Yumeno's ultra-nationalist perspective clearly causes him to view modern Japanese psychiatry as the product of imported Western medical theories, and he criticizes the reckless adoration of the West among medical doctors in Dogura magura. In fact, Yumeno went to Kyūshū University several times to observe the medical treatments performed at the university hospital, and it seems that he questioned the most advanced medicine that seemed dependent solely on knowledge from the West. In Dogura magura, the controlling force is not only science but also the West, which stands behind science. Arguably, Yumeno's skepticism toward science as a part of the West underlies "I's" refusal to cooperate with Drs. Masaki and Wakabayashi's study. Masaki persuades "I" that if "I" marries the girl who is supposed to be Ichirō's fiancée,
"I" will be able to recall his past, and Dr. Masaki's theory will be proven. However, "I" states that he can no longer support science-based theories.

What's the importance of science? What's the importance of research? What's the importance of hairy foreigners' science? I may be crazy, but I know I am Japanese. At least, I am aware that I inherited the blood of a Japanese. Even if I have to die, I don't want to have any relationship with hairy foreigners... and their cruel,... shameless,... science and study. If the study of science forces me to be complicit to such dirty and shameless acts, and if I am the person who must participate in this study, I would rather smash my head and my memory of the past,... now,... right now....

It is obvious that Foucault's observation of science as power can be seen in "I's" fear and loathing in **Dogura magura**. In addition, Yumeno also states that the West controls Japan not by militaristic or political supremacy, but through science, and he strongly criticizes Japan's blind adoration of science and the West.

In matters of style as well as form, the difficulty of Yumeno's **Dogura magura** also arises from the use of different languages. At the beginning, the story is written in the "modern unified language." However, it suddenly shifts to other styles when "I" begins reading

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31Yumeno, **Dogura magura**, vol.2, p.301.
the materials which Dr. Masaki leaves behind. The first material is a long song called "uta-zaimon" ("an address to the deities"), written by Dr. Masaki twenty years ago. Dr. Masaki had written the song in order to criticize the current medical treatment of mental patients and to promote his new treatment program. The day when Masaki graduated with highest honors from the Fukuoka Medical School, he skipped the ceremony and started wandering throughout Japan singing his song. Dr. Masaki sang the song and asked for donations in the same way that wandering monks chant sutras and receive alms at individuals' houses. The song has a singsong quality, and its prose structure is very loose.

Ohh - oh -ohohoh. This is the age of civilization and enlightenment. This is the age when scientific knowledge is everything. But in this age, there is only mental illness, it is still in the dark ages. If you say you cannot give treatment. If you say without thinking, it is like farting. That kind of fellow must be crazy. There might be somebody saying it. I love that kind of person. Intelligence and common sense. The knowledge of science. Such things the great person never forgets. I will ask time. Mental hospitals here and there. Or at school or the library. Why don't you open the books on mental illness and glance over them. Doctors and scholars in the world. Start studying. Tons of names of diseases. Round Western words, and square Chinese words. Hundreds and thousands are hustling and jostling. Hard to count. Oh yes, now psychiatric patients are just like patients of internal medicine and external medicine. They are spotlighted which can see even to the bottom of a problem. Right and reasonable nursing and care.
There are only innocent amateurs who appreciate. To believe they get the best care.... Clip-clop, clip-clop....

This passage is only one segment of the third song, and there are ten songs in total. This special type of song is called a saimon in Japanese, and originally it was a written address to the deities. Saimon later it became a style of popular song accompanied by the shamisen, a conch-shell horn, and a drum. Masaki's song is filled with intense criticism of existing medical practice and the promotion of his theory, but its tone is cynical, funny, and even nonsensical at times. The language is also very casual and vulgar as is the nature of the popular song directed toward an unlettered audience.

The next materials that "I" reads are the two newspaper articles on Dr. Masaki's theory and his new psychiatric treatment. Dr. Masaki, who had been just appointed as a professor of psychiatry when the articles were written, explains his new treatment to a reporter. In the first article, he gives a interview in which he speaks in a very official tone. In the second article, however, he speaks casually, as if engaged in a conversation with a close friend.

\[32\]Ibid., vol.1, pp.138-139.
The third set of materials is Dr. Masaki's paper entitled "Dreams of a Fetus", written in the formal style seen in academic papers. The fourth and final document is Dr. Masaki's testament, which is again written in a strange style. First, it is written in a very casual spoken language as though the doctor were talking to a friend. In addition, although this is Dr. Masaki's suicide note, he writes it as if he were creating lines in a play. For example, Masaki describes his lighting a cigar, coughing, and laughing which he includes in the letter.

By the way, ---- ahhhn. Excuse me, but I would like to light the cigar I put out, is it OK? --- To tell you the truth, I really love this. Even when I was very poor, I had this lovely fellow and alcohol by my side. --- There are a few more of these fellows I can enjoy until I die. You don't' mind, please. Ha ha ha ha ---. 33

This part is written not as dialogue but as narrative, yet it resembles a conversation. Interestingly enough, Masaki, who is alone in his office when he writes it, repeats this dialogue-like suicide note talking to "you" ("kimi") in the story. "You" is not Dr. Wakabayashi, who is referred to in the third-person in the letter. In the note, Dr. Masaki accuses Dr. Wakabayashi of abusing his

33Ibid., vol.1, p.255.
privileges as a doctor of forensic medicine. When Kure Ichirō's fiancée Moyoko is almost murdered, Dr. Wakabayashi takes her to the hospital and signs her death certificate even when she is still alive. Then Dr. Wakabayashi presents another corpse as Moyoko's so that he can hide Moyoko and use her for testing the theory of "Dreams of a Fetus." Meanwhile, Dr. Masaki has secretly witnessed the entire event, and he describes in detail how Dr. Wakabayashi cut and defaced the corpse of the other woman in order to conceal the fact that it was not the body of Kure Moyoko.

Even if we exclude Dr. Wakabayashi as a possible candidate for being addressed as "you," we cannot consider Kure Ichirō or possibly "I" as "you" either because Dr. Masaki refers to either or both as "Anpontan pokan-kun" ("Mr. Stupid Air Head"). In discussing Kure Ichirō or "I" as stupid air head, Dr. Masaki explains how his treatment which he calls "Liberation of Mental Patient" is effective for this type of patient.

In addition, "you" ("kimi") as singular becomes "you" (kimitachi) in the plural form and then changes into other plural forms of "you" ("shokun") when the note takes on the style of motion picture narration. In this section, Dr. Masaki's suicide note is written in yet another style.
In talking to "you" ("shokun") in the plural form, Dr. Masaki explains that he would like to show the film that portrays Dr. Wakabayashi's hiding Moyoko. Then the narrative advances as though a movie narrator ("benshi") were explaining the sequence of the story to an audience. We find, of course, that it is simply a part of Dr. Masaki's suicide note.

The suicide note even includes a historical record of the origin of the Nyogetsu Temple, which was established by Kure Kötei, the forty-ninth head of the Kure family. Kötei built the temple and put the scroll of the six paintings in the Buddhist statue in order to seal off the curse of the paintings for all time. In this section, the history of the temple is written in classical Japanese because the record was written in 1679, the seventh year of the Empō era. This document is a relatively faithful reconstruction of the language for Edo documents because as noted at the beginning of this chapter, Yumeno was familiar with the study of Neo-Confucianism in Classical Chinese and national studies (kokugaku) in Classical Japanese, which had been taught to him by his grandfather.

Yumeno is also conscious of not only official languages but also of dialect, which he uses in Dogura magura. When Dr. Masaki records the witness's statement
on the Kure Ichirō murder, the witness Tokura Sengorō's speech is translated into standard Japanese because his dialogue is too colloquial to be understood as an official document. Still, Yumeno tries to write using a colloquial vocabulary and has the character Sengorō give his testimony in a Fukuoka dialect. By demonstrating various languages from classical to contemporary, or standard to dialectic, Yumeno resists the dominance of the unified language and its marginalization of earlier or non-standard forms of the Japanese language.

**Conclusion**

Yumeno's peculiarity as a modernist writer is that he appeared in literary circles through detective fiction. The detective story was a new literary genre that was deeply linked to emergent urban-based, mass culture. Paradoxically, though, he kept his distance from the city and its culture by residing in a small village in Kyūshū. In addition, as an ultra-nationalist, provincialist, he directly and indirectly expressed his disagreement with urban-oriented intellectuals and their thoughts regardless

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34Cf. Ibid., vol.2, pp. 78-96.
of whether they were right-wing or left-wing. For example, "primitiveness" is rediscovered and validated in his works as highly sophisticated. His admiration of the primitiveness of rural Japan is based on provincialism, and through the stories based on rural Japan, he implies his political and social messages.

Yumeno's ultra-nationalist philosophy nevertheless does not occupy a major position in the Japanese modernist movement. In particular, his ultra-nationalism was based in a belief that provincialism stands in sharp contrast to the topic of many modernist writers who lived in the city and wrote about cosmopolitan life. Yumeno's works and thoughts indicate another aspect of Japanese modernism.

At the same time, Yumeno's literature shares significant characteristics with other modernist works. Like other modernist writers, he questions the simple distinction between real and unreal. Through the genre of mystery fiction, Yumeno asserts that reality is no longer a solid notion, and he presents that the unreal is also a part of reality. He is particularly interested in deconstructing the first-person narrative in the style of confession. By using confession, he challenges the premise of the rhetoric of confession in which people sincerely tell the truth; and in his story confession and
its truths become surreal. By giving confession a multi-layered construction, he reveals its shifting and elusive effect.

Moreover, by quoting different languages, he celebrates the stylistic richness of Japanese language, culture, and history. Since the Meiji period, different written languages had come to be considered symbols of what was feudal and pre-modern. However, Yumeno reasserts the value of the different styles of Japanese via the textual qualities of his works and the virtuoso dialogue that he creates.
CHAPTER 4

OKAMOTO KANOKO:

SUBJECTIVITY OF REALITY

A Woman Writer in Modernism

As discussed in the Introduction, the 1920s witnessed the emergence of a new mass culture that came to dominate urban culture as the product of political and social forces that coalesced in the 1920s. At the same time, the forces that created a mass culture were also propelling women to a more prominent role in Japanese society. The presence of women in Japanese society grew particularly conspicuous in literature. The first appearance of this phenomenon can be traced to the publication of the prominent women's magazine Seito (Bluestocking) in 1911. Women writers who participated in Seito came to publish their works in more prominent literary magazines during
the late 1910s and early 1920s. Also, the magazine was published only by women editors; in fact, many well-known women writers started their literary career in this magazine as contributors, editors, or both. Today, Seitō is generally considered to be a political magazine that advanced the cause of feminist issues, yet, it was originally a purely literary magazine which featured poetry and prose written by women.

Okamoto Kanoko (1889-1939) belonged to the new wave of women writers. She first entered the world of literature through writing tanka poetry. In 1906, she joined the tanka group Shinshisha (New Poetry Society), which was known for the passionate tone in its treatment of love and for the sexuality in its verse. She then published poetry in Seitō in the magazine's first year. Yet, Kanoko's ultimate goal was always to write prose, and her literary life as a prose writer finally began in the mid-1930s.\(^1\) Having returned from living in Europe, from 1929 to 1932, she published, in a flurry of creative energy, a steady stream of long novels and short stories. On average, she published two anthologies a year between

\(^1\) Her first name, Kanoko, is more widely used to refer to her than her last name, Okamoto; thus, this dissertation also calls her Kanoko.
1936 and 1939. The frenetic pace ended abruptly with her
death in 1939, although a number of her works were
published posthumously by her husband Okamoto Ippei (1886-
1948).²

The distinctive characteristics of Kanoko’s prose lie
in the interesting adventurousness of its choice of topics
and writing styles. She presents the subjectivity of
reality, which can be seen in her frequent use of the
doppelgänger, which means the double vision or the double
self. In her works, the characters often have the
experience of seeing a beloved person, who should not
exist, standing in front of them. The characters’ reality

² Okamoto Tarō (1911–1996), the son of Kanoko and Ippei and
well-known avant-garde artist, refers to his father as his
mother’s co-author. According to Tarō, even while Kanoko
was alive and active as a writer, her works often included
descriptions which Kanoko dared not write because they
were vulgar and did not match Kanoko’s aesthetics (Okamoto
Tarō and Ariyoshi Sawako, "'Haha' naru Kanoko," in Okamoto
Kanoko zenshū, bessatsu, vol. 2 [Tokyo: Tōkisha, 1977],
pp. 267–268). In addition, Setouchi Jakushō (a.k.a.
Harumi), a novelist who wrote a biographical novel on
Kanoko, quotes Ippei’s letter to Tarō after Kanoko’s death
and concludes that Ippei’s work was not limited to re-
writing and re-organizing her posthumous works. Setouchi
pays particular attention to the long sentences in the
posthumous novel Shōjō ruten (The Wheel of Life),
discussed in this chapter. She compares The Wheel of Life
to Kanoko’s short stories and Ippei’s letters and points
out that the long sentences in the novel are Ippei’s
writing style rather than Kanoko’s (Setouchi Harumi,
is constructed by their emotional and psychological state, and reality no longer corresponds to the objective world. An important element of the Doppelgänger demonstrated in Kanoko's works is that she clearly states how the human mind creates reality. The Doppelgänger was one of the popular literary topics among Japanese writers in the 1920s and 1930s, and writers such as Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke created surrealistic stories based on this concept. Compared to their works, however, Kanoko's novels are much more sedate and less bizarre in tone and, instead, are more psychoanalytical.

Moreover, her characters frequently exhibit a non-essential view of the self and personal identity. The notion of the non-essential self is a theme which appears in the works of various modernist artists and writers like André Gide or Marcel Duchamp (1877–1968). In Kanoko's works, in addition to Western influences, Buddhist thoughts on the non-essentialistic view toward humanity play an important role as a motif. In particular, her later works discuss the non-essentialistic view about humans through the metamorphoses of various characters. For instance, in the posthumous work The Wheel of Life, the protagonist Chōko, a sixteen-year school girl, changes
her identity into a beggar and wanders from one place to another.

Moreover, Kanoko challenges the notion of vision through her descriptions of scenery. She frequently depicts the scenery around the characters, but the landscape in her works moves beyond simple representational images to an abstraction of images. She also succeeds in presenting a landscape that can be created only through language because, although it is depicted in detail, it cannot be visualized.

**Before Prose**

Okamoto Kanoko, whose maiden name was Ōnuki Kanoko (in the family registry, her first name is given as Kano), was born into an old, wealthy family in 1889. The Ōnikis had been purveyors to the Tokugawa Shoguns and prominent landlords based in what is now the industrial city Kawasaki. After the Meiji Restoration, however, the family fortunes gradually declined, but Kanoko was still raised as a daughter in an upper-class family.

Kanoko was taught Japanese classics like The Tale of Genji and waka poetry from Kokinshū by her wet nurse. In addition, her brother Yukinosuke, who was two years her
senior, was very active as a promising writer under the pen name of Ōnuki Shōsen. He had started publishing poems, novels, and translations of Western novels when he was a student at the First Higher-School in Tokyo. Shōsen was also a friend of the novelist Tanizaki Jun'ichirō and the philosopher Watsuji Tetsurō (1889-1960). These three were the main contributors to and editors of the second editorial reconstruction of the coterie magazine *Shinshichō*, which was well-known for its anti-naturalist editorial policy.3

Shōsen was particularly close to Tanizaki, and Kanoko sometimes met Tanizaki when Shōsen invited him to the Ōnuki's house. Witnessing her brother's praise, Kanoko also admired Tanizaki and his novels. In 1939 Kanoko wrote a short story *"Aru jidai no seinen sakka"* ("A Young Writer in a Certain Period") based on her recollection of young Tanizaki.

*Shinshichō* was published off and on from 1907 to 1970. In its long history, *Shinshichō* provided many writers with their first opportunity to be published; many of these writers were also involved with *Shinshichō* as editors. During its life, *Shinshichō* went through 18 different editorial reconstructions. Osanai Kaoru, an advocate for modern theater, was the first editor-in-chief, and he set an editorial policy which sought to introduce Western novels and plays. In the second reconstruction of *Shinshichō*, in which Tanizaki, Watsuji, and Shōsen participated, the magazine focused on Japanese literature. Tanizaki in particular won fame as a rising anti-naturalist through the magazine, and *Shinshichō* came to be known as an anti-naturalist magazine. Akutagawa Ryūnosuke participated in the fourth reconstruction of *Shinshichō* and published his debut work "Hana" ("Nose"), which was enthusiastically acclaimed by Natsume Sōseki (1867-1916).
Shōsen was also known in the field of *tanka* poetry, and he aided Kanoko's entry into the world of *tanka* composition. Under his instruction, Kanoko started contributing *tanka* poems to magazines such as *Shinsei* (*New Voice*) and *Shinchō* even before she entered the Atomi Women's Middle School at the age of thirteen. In particular, Shōsen introduced Kanoko to what was considered the cutting edge in the Meiji *tanka* revival, poems written by Yosano Tekkan (1873–1935) and Yosano Akiko (1878–1942). Kanoko participated in *Shinshisha* (*New Poetry Society*) and published poetry in their magazine, *Myōtō* (*Morning Star*). *Shinshisha*, which was officially known as *Tokyo shinshisha*, was a *tanka* group originally

The Atomi Women's Middle School was established in 1875, and Kanoko went to the school from 1902 to 1907. The school has been described as follows:

Established in 1875 by a renowned painter, calligrapher and Confucian scholar, it was one of the oldest schools for women in Japan. Its goal was to give Japanese women a new education in line with the changing currents of the time while not neglecting traditional female virtues. Some three hundred young women from aristocratic and wealthy families attended the school and were known for their luxuriant and elegant attire (Sugisaki Kazuko, "A Writer's Life: Kanoko Okamoto," in Okamoto Kanoko, *The House Spirit and Other Stories*, trans. Sugisaki Kazuko [Santa Barbara: Capra Press, 1995], p.11).
established by Tekkan in 1899 in order to pursue a more romantic and dynamic style of tanka. Tekkan believed that poets should express their emotions directly rather than concentrating on traditional waka techniques, which emphasized nonverbality.

Tekkan also promoted a creative liberation from the traditional conventions of tanka. Thus, reflecting Tekkan's theoretical guidance, Shinshisha attracted young poets, and many of them, like Ishikawa Takuboku (1886-1912), Sōma Gyofū (1883-1950), and Tekkan's wife Akiko, became renowned poets of modern tanka in today's literary studies. As a result, Myōjō, the coterie magazine of Shinshisha, also became an eminent place for many rising poets to publish their work. Yet, although Tekkan was the leader of Shinshisha, also called Myōjōha (Myōjō Group), the most influential poet was his wife, Yosano Akiko. Akiko's sensational debut tanka collection Midaregami (Tangled Hair), published in 1901, was filled with poetry with an emotional and sensual vocabulary. The work was so new and controversial that it divided literary circles into either enthusiastic admirers or harsh critics.

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Midaregami was published one year before she married Tekkan. Therefore, it was published in her maiden name, Hō Akiko.
Akiko's *tanka* and her writing style strongly attracted Kanoko. After joining *Shinshisha*, Kanoko began creating emotional poems in the style of Akiko and *Shinshisha*.

My soft skin is a white candle -- it is burning because your breath like a fire is close to me

(Yawa hada wa/ hakurō nare ba/ moe ni keru/
  kimi ga miiki no/ hi no utsuri kite)\(^7\)

I would like to be coral or lapis for you and I must build a holy fence in order to be with you and protect you

(Sango to mo/ ruri to mo nari te/ kimi ga tame/
mizugaki tsukuri/ mamori inu beki)\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Okamoto Kanoko, "Shinshisha eisō (1)," in "Myōjō" ka, in Karoki netami shūi, in Okamoto Kanoko zenshū, vol. 9 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1993), p. 41. Kanoko's *zenshū* (Complete Works) have been published by two publishers: Tōkisha in 1977 and Chikuma Shobō in 1993. In this dissertation, the *zenshū* published by Chikuma Shobō in 1993 is abbreviated in notes and bibliography as OKZ.

\(^8\) Kanoko, "Shinshisha eisō (2)," in "Myōjō" ka, p. 42. Despite her devotion to *tanka*, Kanoko's poems were not as well as received as those of Akiko because her vocabulary and poetic images were less fresh. Kanoko's works are, "[compared to those of the professional poets of *Shinshisha,* more confessional, and their nostalgia is based on emotional instability. Therefore, Kanoko's *tanka* tended to be enjoyed among her sympathizers, but they were not received well in established literary circles" (Kumasaka Atsuko, "Hyōden Okamoto Kanoko," in Shinchō Nihon bungaku arubamu: Okamoto Kanoko [Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1994], p. 20."
Furthermore, participation of *Shinshisha* gave Kanoko access to a wider circle of writers. Through her connection to *Shinshisha*, she met the critic and translator of English literature Baba Kochō (1869-1940); through Kochō, she was introduced to Hiratsuka Raichō (1886-1971), a poet, novelist, and feminist.

In 1911, when Raichō established *Seitōsha*, (Bluestocking Society) and started circulating the magazine *Seitō* (Bluestocking), Kanoko was invited to contribute her works to the magazine. *Seitō* was the first major coterie magazine in Japan to be published solely by women. At the beginning, Raichō and her company considered it to be a vehicle that would give new women writers an opportunity to publish literary works.

Initially, as Raichō had pointed out, *Bluestocking* magazine was not a vehicle for advocating the economic and political liberation of women: it was designed to encourage and advertise the creative talents of women, many of whom were relatively unknown in Japanese literary circles. Creative freedom and the development of women's genius were the major issues; everything else was peripheral.9

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Kanoko participated in Seito in order to get her tanka before the public and to make herself better known in the literary circles. At the same time, the romanticization of female supremacy by Raichō and other Seito members inspired her just as Akiko had.10 Kanoko especially adored Raichō, who wrote the monumental epigraph, “Ganso josei wa taiyō de atta” (“In the Beginning, Woman was the Sun”), in the first issue.

Yet, although the political and social issues related to women became increasingly important for the other women contributors and editors, these issues did not seem to interest Kanoko.11 In fact, in her essays and novels, she frequently affirmed conventional distinctions between men and women: men were logical and women were emotional. For example, in mentioning Schopenhauer’s famous critique of women, she agrees with his chauvinistic perspective and states that women cannot have great humanity and

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10 Akiko was not a member of Seito, but she contributed her poem entitled “Sozorogoto” (“Miscellaneous Things”) to the first issue celebrating women’s independence.

11 Gradually Seito became more politicized. It was when Itō Noe, an anarchist activist and a writer briefly discussed in the Chapter 1, became editor-in-chief in 1915 that Seito changed into an aggressive and more opinionated magazine on women's issues. Despite this conflict between the liberal and the more extreme editors, Seito grew increasingly more political.
creativity, cannot understand the concept of eternity, and
cannot be truly generous. In addition, she came to
worship her son Tarō as the ideal man of intelligence and
reason; in comparing him to herself, she did not hesitate
to express her lack of logic. In her novel Boshi jojō
(Mother and Son, a Lyric), she writes the following
exchange between the protagonist and her son Ichirō:

“I didn't realize you are such a considerable
man who thinks logically. I cannot beat you on that
point.”...

“Oh, well. I have the same character as you.
And I don't think you are not thoughtful. But you
are a woman, and you need to think only in the realm
of emotion. Yet, I am a man, and that's not enough
for me. I have to have a strong will and restrain
myself based on realistic issues. That may be the
difference.”

She began to respect her son, and her respect
mixed with different sentiments that fixated in her
mind one after another. She wanted to let her
emotions rush and rush to their peak; otherwise, she
could not be satisfied. She could not restrain her
admiration as she talked to the son. She let her
black eyes open wide. She was almost in tears.

“I understand. Ichirō, you are the man, that's
right. How hard to be a man! And a man is truly
great, I think.”

Even if one makes allowances for the mixture of affection
and pride that goes with being a mother, Kanoko clearly

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Perfectly Good Nature Is Impossible in Women.”

comments on the greatness of the male and by contrast views herself as an inferior.

Kanoko's rather conventional approach to the issue of gender was not admired among women writers who agitated for women's rights.14 In addition, she was given to expressions of patriotic support for Japan in the late 1930s that revealed her complicity with imperialism; for this, Kanoko's former Seiō colleagues detested her. While it is true that Kanoko's patriotic views seem to have originated mainly from her love of classical literature, she did not hesitate to raise her voice in

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14 Maryellen Mori discusses Kanoko's standpoint toward social and political issues. She defines Kanoko as a feminist who sought to liberate women from conventional roles and perspectives. However, Kanoko was not interested in politics.

Yet, her feminist sympathies never seriously affected her apolitical, individualistic orientation. There are many feminisms, as the saying goes, and Kanoko's particular version was grounded in her identification with a quasi-mystical image of "archetypal femininity"; this was the nucleus of her private mythology and the source of her creativity. She could not sacrifice her sense of personal autonomy for the sake of group solidarity and social change. Although she was undoubtedly influenced by the Taishō zeitgeist, the confidence in woman's superior power and vitality that her stories exude seem more instinctive than ideological ("The Splendor of Self-Exaltation: The Life and Fiction of Okamoto Kanoko," Monumenta Nipponica 50, no.1 [Spring 1997]: 76).
support of Japan’s national sovereignty. For example, Kanoko wrote an essay, “Jihen no aki” (“The Autumn After the Incident”), in which she called for her audience to support the Japanese army in attacking and occupying China in 1937. She states that the soldiers’ safety is her main concern; at the same time, she hopes her writings will encourage people to fight bravely for the imperial cause. In contrast, many of Kanoko’s former Seițō colleagues, such as Chûjô Yuriko (a.k.a. Miyamoto Yuriko [1899-1951]) and Hirabayashi Taiko (1905-1972), moved in the opposite direction from Kanoko -- from liberalism in the 1920s to leftism in the 1930s -- and they experienced the full wrath of government oppression as a result of their publications and political activities. To them, Kanoko was no favorite.

The difference between Kanoko and the other former Seițō writers became noticeably apparent throughout the 1930s. However, when Seițō was first circulated in 1911, Kanoko was welcomed at the magazine. As a regular contributor, she published a series of tanka until 1913,

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and then a marital crisis caused a hiatus in her contributions between 1913 and 1915.

Kanoko married Okamoto Ippei in 1910. Ippei, who had met Kanoko at her brother Shōsen’s boardinghouse the year before her marriage, was a student at the prominent Ueno Art School. After graduation, he worked as a stage set painter for the Imperial Theater, and for Kanoko, their marriage seemed to be an ideal union of art and poetry. In 1911, they had their first son Tarō, who later became a world-renowned avant-garde artist. In 1912, Ippei became a highly-paid political cartoonist with the Asahi shinbun (Asahi Newspaper). Well-to-do and much lionized, he began to neglect his family and squander his money on prostitutes and alcohol. In addition to her husband’s infidelity, Kanoko was faced with the bankruptcy of the Ōnuki family; the death of her beloved brother Shōsen due to erysipelas, which is an infectious disease; her love affair with Horikiri Shigeo, a university student; a love triangle between Horikiri and her sister; and the death of two infant children.\(^{16}\) She finally had a nervous

\(^{16}\) In addition, she was bitterly disappointed with Ippei because he became a hack cartoonist and thereby ended her dream of a union between two artists. Sobered by this realization, she sent a letter to her brother Shōsen and complained, “Ippei cannot be beyond a layman” (Kanoko,
breakdown and was admitted to a mental hospital. The series of crises eventually ended after the collapse of her love affair with Horikiri and Ippei’s decision to devote himself to life with Kanoko.

In her search for a spiritual refuge, she turned to both Christianity and Buddhism, but it was Buddhism that gave her the emotional peace she sought. At first, with Ippei, she visited the Fujimichō Christian Church, which her brother Shōsen had attended several times. Inspired by Christian teachings, Kanoko and Ippei agreed to create a new relationship and save their marriage. They decided that they would no longer have any physical relationship and build a spiritual bond instead. From then on Ippei became Kanoko’s mentor and supported her literary endeavors. Christianity, however, did not answer Kanoko’s questions, and she turned to the teachings of the Buddhist monk Shinran and his book Tan’nishō to learn the Buddhist perspective on good and evil in a chaotic world.  

“Shokan: Ōnuki Yukinosuke ate,” in OKZ, vol. 12, p.309). She called this difficult time her "Ma no jidai" ("Evil Period") and referred repeatedly to it as a motif in her novels.

Kanoko verbalized her questions about Christianity: "Although God is mighty, why are humans sinful? Why did not God create humans a little more perfect?" ("Kirisutokyō no gimon," in "Shinran kose kokoro no kate,"
was especially inspired by Shinran’s statement that the bad can be as enlightened as the good. She was also attracted to Zen Buddhism, and she then expanded her study to the Tendai Sect (one from which Shinran and his Jōdō Sect evolved). In addition to the publication of three poetry anthologies, from the late 1920s to the mid-1930s, Kanoko published essays on Buddhist teachings.

In December 1929, Kanoko, Ippei, Tarō, and Kanoko’s two lovers, Nitta and Tsunematsu, departed for Europe. Ippei had been dispatched to London by the Asahi shinbun to draw sketches of the London Disarmament Conference. Using his own money, he decided to take his family and Kanoko’s two lovers, both of whom lived with the Okamoto family. A trip to Europe had long been a dream for Kanoko. In particular, she longed to see Paris and had expressed this longing in her essays and novels. For example, in the autobiographical novel Mother and Son, a Lyric, she refers to the difficult period in her life in the early 1910s and writes that Paris signified heaven for her. The protagonist whose name is "O.K." often talks to her baby son, saying things like "Oh, well. Let’s go to

Paris together someday. Let's ride in a carriage on the Champs-Elysée," even though she knows that her baby does not understand a word that she says.\footnote{Kanoko, \textit{Roshi Joe}, in \textit{OKZ}, vol. 3, p. 73.}

The Okamotos stayed in Europe for three years. Except Tarō, who stayed in Paris to study art, the rest of the party traveled in Great Britain, France, and Germany. During this time, Kanoko aggressively absorbed culture and literature in Europe and prepared to enter the world of prose.

It was in Europe that she began formulating her ideas on the direction that her fiction writing would take. Her lavish tastes and longing for 'other worlds' made her scorn the Japanese 'confessional novel' as petty and humdrum. She studied more feverishly than ever, scouring the local bookshops for anything exotic and esoteric.\footnote{Mori, "The Splendor of Self-Exaltation." p. 94.}

In January 1932, they left Paris for the United States. They traveled from New York to San Francisco and arrived in Japan in March of the same year.

After the trip to Europe, Kanoko published several travel essays as her first step in making the transformation from poetry to prose, and her Buddhist essays were also preparatory to her writing of novels.
Nineteen thirty-four was the twenty-five-hundredth anniversary of Buddha's birth and eleven-hundredth anniversary of Kūkai's death, and the notion of a "Buddhist Renaissance" became popular. Kanoko, who repeatedly expressed her admiration of Buddhism, was urged to write about Buddhism. In a letter to her son Tarō in 1934, she speaks of her busy life as a promoter of Buddhism:

Tarō, Japan has become very cold. I have been very busy because I have been writing since the end of summer. I had a gallstone once. I went to Kanazawa in Kaga for a lecture. I published three books, and one more book will be published at the end of the month. And yet another in the month following. I am a big star in the field of Buddhism. The world pays attention to me, and I am admired. I am also booed and abused by gossip generated by evil fellows. Anyway, I have become a popular figure.20

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20 Okamoto Tarō, Haha no tegami (Tokyo: Chikuma Shūhansha, 1993), p.154. According to Tarō's supplementary notes, all the books which Kanoko mentions in the letter are books on Buddhism. These were all written in 1934. Kanoko was a popular figure in the field of Buddhism, but her essays were sometimes questioned by professional scholars and monk-scholars. For instance, one of her books, Bukkyō dokuhon (A Reader of Buddhism), received a mixed review from Tomomatsu Entei, a well-known Buddhist monk and scholar. He praises Kanoko's effort to discuss Buddhism in the context of everyday life. At the same time, he feels that her writing looks at Buddhist teachings too simply, so that the readers do not understand Buddhism deeply (Hara Yūko, "Kaidai," in OKZ, vol.10, p.501).
As Kanoko indicates, 1934 was the year when she concentrated on writing about Buddhism. She also traveled throughout Japan and gave presentations on Buddhist philosophy. Although initially she was not enthusiastic about offers to write on Buddhism, the attention to her lectures and publications became the chief source of her satisfaction.

The Doppelgänger: Illusion as Reality

Having established herself as a *tanka* poet and Buddhist scholar, Kanoko pursued prose as a new career goal. She had long been eager to enter the world of the novel and in fact, described herself as a "camel with three humps -- *tanka*, religion, and novels." She had already published short stories; in 1936, she finally published her first novel, *Tsuru wa yamiki* (*The Crane Fell Sick*).

The protagonist is Yōko, a *tanka* poet who begins to write prose, and she is Kanoko's alter-ego. Through Yōko's perspective, the novel describes the well-known writer Akutagawa Ryūnosuke through the character of the thinly disguised protagonist, Asakawa Shōnosuke. In addition to Yōko and Asakawa, many other characters are

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modeled after real people. For instance, Ippei is portrayed as Yōko's husband Sakamoto, a popular cartoonist; the well-known novelist Ōkawa Sōzaburō is Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and Kakuko is based on Ōkawa's sister-in-law and actress Hayama Michiko. The third-person narrative tells of Yōko's encounter with Asakawa, the dialogue between them, and deep shock and sorrow with which she received the news of his suicide.

*The Crane Fell Sick* was well received by most readers, but critics and other writers were critical of its concluding lines. Kanoko writes on the very last page that Yōko believed she could have saved Asakawa had she been closer to him. Many felt that Yōko's statement was only an expression of Kanoko's vanity and narcissism. For instance, Muramatsu Shōfū (1889-1961), a well-known novelist in the 1920s and 1930s, complains that Yōko's statement is simply a boast on Kanoko's part.21 However, he also praises the depiction of Asakawa as a re-creation of Akutagawa.

Despite its generally favorable acclaim, *The Crane Fell Sick* is not a novel in which Kanoko fully employs

modernist themes and writing styles. It is a novel in which, she seemed to pursue the re-creation of the real people around her rather than to develop characters based on them. At the same time, the rhetoric of its confession is too transparent and self-serving; hence, the work fails to convince its audience of its sincerity. Kanoko has not yet begun to explore modernistic techniques. Her depictions of Asakawa are bizarre and surrealistic, but the narrative and expressions in The Crane Fell Sick are not experimental compared to those seen in her later works. At the same time, she succeeds in clearly portraying Asakawa's descent to suicide.

The following year, Kanoko published the autobiographical novel entitled Mother and Son, a Lyric, and this work begins to exhibit the modernistic topics and style of her subsequent prose. The novel is based on Kanoko's strong attachment to her son Tarō, who remained in Paris to study art, and it portrays Kanoko, Ippei, and Tarō.

The third-person protagonist "kanojo" ("she"), who is identified only as "O.K.," and her husband Okazaki Issaku have a son Ichirō, who has graduated from Ueno Art
School. When Issaku takes a business trip to Europe, he takes his family to Paris and leaves his son behind to study art. Everyone praises the mother for working hard and sacrificing herself to help her son achieve social success. But "O.K." knows that she is obsessed by Paris. Rather than being altruistic, she longs to tie herself to these romantic dreams through her son. When she was young and poor -- and miserable because of her husband's refusal to care for her -- she had longed for Paris not only as a city of the most advanced and sophisticated art and culture but also as a paradise where she would be free of pain and neglect. Only through talking to her baby Ichirô and telling him, "Let's go to Paris someday," she does survive this misery and loneliness in her life. Thus, even though she herself cannot live in Paris, she hopes that she can fulfill her obsession though Ichirô. At the same time, Ichirô's absence makes her sad, and she finds

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22 Although "kanojo" is typically translated by the third-person pronoun in English as "she," English fails to convey the peculiar aura that accompanies this pronominal. The terms "kanojo" (she, "that woman") and "kare" (he, "that man") came into Japan during the Meiji period to translate she/he from European languages. Simultaneously they came to have an aura of romantic love. Referring to herself as "kanojo" rather than "haha" or mother suggests the high degree of romantic attachment she experiences vis-à-vis her son.
herself paying attention to every young boy whom she encounters on the bus, on the streets, or in restaurants. When she sees a young man wearing the uniform of the school that Ichirō attended, she is almost reduced to tears by the realization of how much she misses her son.

One day in Ginza she sees a young man who resembles her son from the back. Surprised at the resemblance, she cannot resist secretly following and stalking him. She even asks Issaku to join her, and both pursue the young man through the crowds on the busy streets of Ginza. In the middle of the chase, however, she begins to realize that the man does not resemble her son, but, she cannot bring herself to stop following him. The chase finally ends when the person suddenly turns and demands to know why he is being followed. She runs away, but later the young man sends her a letter asking her to meet him again. When he approaches her in order to talk to her, he realizes that she is the well-known novelist "O.K." whose works he has read.

She and the young man, Kasuga Kikuo, meet frequently. She visits him in Musashino where he lives, and as they walk they discuss literature, her son Ichirō, Kikuo's fiancée, and his mother. Although neither Kikuo nor she ever reveals their true emotions toward each other, both
of them recognize that their relationship has been established by a complex chain of feelings: mentor-student, mother-son, friends, and lovers. Finally they break off the relationship when both fear that their quasi-friendship is really based on the affection between a man and a woman. After they part, Kikuo writes a letter to her confessing his love. Like Kikuo, she also regrets that she had allowed herself to pretend that he was a son-like figure for her. She decides never to see him again.

Nonetheless, they meet again four or five years later when they exchange a brief and furtive glance at an art exhibit. K.S., a French artist and friend of Ichirō, has come to visit Japan. While he is in Japan, he has an art exhibit in a department store in Ginza. One of Ichirō's paintings is put on display as well. At the end of the first day of the exhibit, Ichirō's work is sold by accident, and she finds out that it was Kikuo who has bought it. She sees Kikuo as he leaves the gallery, but she does not try to approach him. Several days later, a letter comes from Kikuo. He tells her that he has been studying physics at Tōhoku University and now works as a laboratory assistant. Then he explains why he decided to buy Ichirō's painting, "I thought that here was such a miraculously happy son in the world. The painting done by
such a son is a novelty; so, I will hang it on the wall in my room." She does not reply but feels that she cannot forget Kikuo even though they have not seen each other for a long time.

The story develops around her complicated feelings for Kikuo. In the first encounter, Kikuo had appeared in front of her because she longed for her son Ichirō, and he is found on the crowded streets of Ginza in much the same way that a movie camera focuses on a person. Suddenly Kikuo comes into view:

Without noticing, she was caught in the flow of people who walked along the shops on the left hand side of the street. Then, suddenly the back of a student appeared in front of her eye across five or six people walking on the sidewalk to the opposite stream whenever she tried to move closer.

"Oh! That is Ichirō!"

She almost screamed. She quickly braced herself, but she felt that all her nerves were stimulated as if vinegar had been poured on them. Then, her face turned red from the bottom of her cheeks to the end of her chin.

What a young man and how he resembles my son! He was short in height, but he had a solid back, and walking quickly he raised the left shoulder a little. Looking down, he let his slender face stick out to reveal a small chin. He wore his student uniform hat casually, and his hair on the back of his neck looked like that of a child. What a resemblance he has to

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my son! Even in the smallest details. As she thought about it, she soon believed that, had she touched the young man's distinctively soft and warm wool uniform, she would have felt the warmth of not him but her son.24

In this scene, Kikuo appears as Ichirō's double, and this vision of the double, or the Doppelgänger, assumes considerable structural importance in the novel.

The notion of the Doppelgänger, translated as split vision, double vision, or the double self, has been an important motif in Western literature. Andrew Webber, a scholar of German literature, analyzes the structural elements of the Doppelgänger with different principles. According to him, the Doppelgänger suggests repetition, division, or contradiction by double vision, double language, or double self in terms of identity, or knowledge and sexuality in a power-play between ego and alter ego.25 Additionally, the concept fundamentally challenges the dichotomies of reality and fantasy, of objectivity and subjectivity.

The Doppelgänger as a motif in literature has been common since the period of Classicism in the West, but

24 Ibid., p.114.

works created in the late 19th century were of particular interest to Japanese writers at the time when Kanoko published her works. For example, Robert Louis Stevenson's (1850-1894) *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and works by Oscar Wilde and Edgar Allan Poe were introduced in Japan one after another. In response to this massive introduction, the Doppelgänger became one of the common themes for many emerging writers of the Taishō period. Of course, the Doppelgänger concept had been used in Japanese classics like *The Tale of Genji* or in Nō plays. Yet, considering the currents of literature in the 1920s, we can see the inspiration of Western works for Japanese writers at the time.

In fact, Kanoko's use of Doppelgänger in *Mother and Son, a Lyric* occurs rather late in the introduction of the concept of the Doppelgänger to modern Japanese literature.

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26 Webber also suggests that the popularity of the Doppelgänger in the late 19th century was "against the prevailing aesthetics of Naturalism." (p.317). Japanese literature follows a pattern similar to Western literature, and the notion of the Doppelgänger was in particular popular among anti-Naturalist writers. Also, some of these works such as those of Poe, who was very popular at the time, dealt with the Doppelgänger as a key motif of murders; therefore, the Doppelgänger stories were popular as detective stories or mysteries in the 1920s.
Indeed, Kanoko’s presentation of the Doppelgänger is more logical and analytical and less occult. The protagonist experiences the Doppelgänger, but the readers are told that it is an illusion created by her emotions toward her son. As "she" follows Kikuo and looks at him carefully, "she" gradually realizes that Kikuo does not resemble Ichirō at all. Ichirō is not a good-looking man, but he looks much more masculine, mature, and strong-willed. Meanwhile, Kikuo is beautiful, and he looks more obedient and feminine than Ichirō.

Kanoko describes the process of the character’s growing awareness logically and clearly through her psychoanalytical view of the vision. By writing about it in detail, Kanoko indicates that human subjectivity intervenes in the relationship between the vision and reality. In stories by Tanizaki and Akutagawa, for example, the Doppelgänger functions to make the distinction between reality and fantasy ambiguous. Tanizaki’s Tomoda to Matsunaga no hanashi (The Tale of Tomoda and Matsunaga), published in 1926, is about an actual double self created by one person’s metamorphosis, and Akutagawa’s "Haguruma" ("Cogwheels"), published in
1927, is concerned with both double self and double vision. The narrator's double self is witnessed by other people who do not have any particular attachment to him. In contrast, in Mother and Son, a Lyric, the Doppelgänger is clearly suggested as a illusionary vision created by the protagonist's strong love, and it vanishes eventually.

Moreover, we must understand that the use of the Doppelgänger in Kanoko's work is not her sole literary motif; rather it is only one of the motifs which makes the story more complicated. The disappearance of the Doppelgänger is the beginning of "O.K's" genuine fascination with Kikuo. At this stage, the Doppelgänger as a double vision of Ichirō and Kikuo is transformed into an emotional double view of Kikuo as an object of mother's affection and romantic love. This emotional double vision

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28 Kanoko's psychoanalytical view of humans is also seen in her different works. We will come back this issue in the discussion of her novel The Wheel of Life later in this chapter.
is much more self-conscious and self-revealing in terms of
the protagonist's psychological complexity.

At the same time, Kanoko blends romantic, emotional,
and often narcissistic expressions in the sober
presentation of human psychology, and the mixture of those
elements creates distinctive effects. For instance, in
one scene where the protagonist receives a letter from
Kikuo and thinks of him. He describes his recent life and
the reason why he bought Ichirō's painting. After reading
the letter, she feels strongly that she still has a deep
attachment to Kikuo even four or five years after their
last meeting.

She did not intend to write a letter to him this
time. Yet, it was Kikuo. Her Kikuo. Even if she
had said farewell to him, she did not forget him.
Quite apart from the core of her strict and clean
motherhood, a visage of Kikuo, and it was still
inside her mind. His visage is there as if it wanted
to let her smell a scent, penetrate her, and hurt
her.

Now, should she take his visage into the core of
herself? -- Now, she led her son to maturity. Her
motherhood that had experienced all the suffering and
farewell welcomed Kikuo's visage peacefully. And as
her husband said, "When you were young, you went
through hardship. I think it is good for you to look
after the remains of the dreams you could not
finish."

Why did he say such a thing and sound so
sensible in doing it?\(^\text{29}\)

\(^{29}\text{Kanoko, Boshi jojō, p. 190.}\)
Kanoko describes "O.K." in an affirmative tone -- she has been a great mother, and her motherhood is "strict and clean." Now, she can end her role as a mother and fall in love with a young man who admires her. She is married, but a love affair with Kikuo is justified by herself and her husband, because it is "looking after dreams which she could not finish." "O.K.'s" idealization and self-affirmation form romantic expressions depicting her emotional swings. In addition, they are well-mixed with psychoanalytical observations on reality and vision, and both elements become Kanoko's important literary characteristics.

Moreover, these different approaches to expression in one novel are the result of her careful effort in creating a work. In a 1938 essay titled "Motifs to hyōgen" ("Motifs and Expressions"), Kanoko distinguishes novel writing from other genres of writing and insists that novelists should develop only novel writing in their works. Kanoko states that the motif of the novel is "like a seed of a plant," which has potential to become a "magnificent tree."

However, sometimes the seed is too tiny, and only the writer's eagerness and effort to write a good work can locate it in everyday life. Then she refers to her philosophy on expression as follows:
From the start, the novel is neither a scientific report nor a pictorial representation. It is a literary expression of nature and human affairs written through the observations and emotions of the writer. Now if you look at the facts and enumerate them in writing one after another, they will never be great or vivid. The reason for your failure is that you ignore some rules to create the artistic expressions you have to follow.

The style of a writer's sentences and expressions is born of a writer's personality and character. Thus, it should be different for each and everyone. Still, you have to make an effort to study the styles of expression in detail — such as the choice of diction, the rise and fall of the rhythm, the density of phrasing, and the lightness or heaviness of the tone.30

Kanoko's articulation of her methodology is not elaborate, like those of Yoshiyuki or Murayama early in their careers, when both of them were engaged in a dramatic attempt to break conventions governing Japanese literature. Still, she was strongly aware that the novel should have its own language, and that a writer should concentrate on creating his or her own literary style. Kanoko's experiments are more subtle, but her *Mother and Son, a Lyric* is as complicated as the works by the other modernists discussed in this dissertation due to her use of psychoanalytical themes and emotional expressions.

30 Kanoko, "Motifu to hyōgen," in *OKZ*, vol.12, p.182.
The Doppelgänger: Wrapped in the Layers of the Double

Kanoko developed the idea of the psychoanalytical Doppelgänger in *Mother and Son, Lyric*. In addition, she also wrote works in which an actual physical double was involved. One of these works is "Kakoze" ("Previous Life"), which was published in the July issue of the magazine *Bungaku* in 1937.

This short story deals with the sadism and masochism of two brothers and a woman who witnesses the relationship, and Kanoko creates a different layer of the double through the characters.

The story begins with a scene in which the first-person narrator, a middle-aged woman novelist, visits her old friend Yukiko. Yukiko and "I" were good friends in middle school. After graduation, however, they had not talked to each other for many years, except for once when the narrator was traveling in Europe and accidentally encountered Yukiko in Naples. Although Yukiko and "I" promise to see each other again in Japan, Yukiko again becomes a missing person, and "I" loses all contact with her. One day, however, Yukiko phones the narrator and

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"Kakoze" ("Previous Life") was part of the anthology book *Bosh jojō* and published in 1937.
invites her to her house in a Tokyo suburb. Serving a Western-style dinner, Yukiko tells the narrator the story of a family who used to own the house. Yukiko confesses to her old classmate that she had invited "I" in order to talk to her about the secret of the house.

When Yukiko was young, she lived in the same house. At the time, it was owned by Y, a retired government official. Y had a huge collection of antiques; some were treasures, others junk. Yukiko's father was a friend of Y, and he sent her to live in Y's house to help take care of Y's collection. He thought that his daughter could benefit from associating with an upper-class intellectual; meanwhile, Y thought that Yukiko, as the daughter of a wealthy merchant, was accustomed to taking care of antiques and collectibles. Y was a widower with two sons, Tomonosuke and Umemaro; both sons also stayed at home to help their father with his hobby. Both Tomonosuke and Umemaro are young, but their appearance and personality noticeably differ. The younger brother Umemaro is handsome and loved by Y. In fact, Y loves Umemaro's cunning personality so much that he never requires him to perform any tiring, difficult, or dirty chores. Umemaro knows how to control Y's eccentric and rigid personality, and Y never gets upset with him. In contrast, the elder
brother Tomonosuke is the perennial target of Y's anger. Tomonosuke tends to be gloomy and nervous, and he is not as handsome as Umemaro. As a result, Tomonosuke is treated like a cross between a son and a servant by Y and Umemaro, but he dares not resist their orders.

The two brothers' attitude toward Yukiko also stands in contrast. Tomonosuke is always friendly to her. For him, Yukiko remains outside the family and its tensions, and she bears no hostility toward him. She is also a young woman, and it is a new experience for Tomonosuke to live with her and talk to her. On the other hand, Umemaro is completely aloof, and he shows no interest in Yukiko. She is irritated by Umemaro's neglect of her; still, she is attracted to his beauty.

One day, the tension between the two brothers reaches a breaking point when Umemaro orders Tomonosuke to sew a rip in his kimono in Yukiko's presence. Ignoring Yukiko's offer to mend it, Umemaro tells Tomonosuke to do it. Although Tomonosuke insists that he cannot do such womanly work, Umemaro presses him so forcefully that Yukiko cannot get a word in edgewise. She holds her breath as she witnesses this incident, and she realizes that the relationship between the brothers is sadistic and masochistic. Umemaro, made confident by his beauty and
privileged love from his father, abuses Tomonosuke. Unlike Umemaro, Tomonosuke is not beautiful, and he knows his father's feelings toward him are far less positive. The father's emotions are directly reflected in the two brothers' actions. Furthermore, the sadism in Umemaro and masochism in Tomonosuke have broader origins: the complex set of inhibitions on the part of people from an old family who cannot go forth and adapt themselves to modern society. Frustration, sadness, and pride intermingle and are shared by the two brothers, and in this hothouse environment they play the roles of sadist and masochist.

As the argument between the brothers grows more serious and tense, Umemaro takes off his kimono and makes Tomonosuke mend it. Yukiko is also fascinated by Umemaro's naked body because it strikes her as something beyond the ordinary beauty of a young man. Eventually the argument ends with Umemaro defeating his brother and making him mend the kimono. Yukiko is both horrified and intoxicated by the sight of the brothers' tug-of-war because she recognizes that she too, as a member of an old family, has sadistic/masochistic tendencies herself. In Y's family, masochism and sadism are represented separately by the two brothers; in herself, they are embodied in the same person.
At the end of the story, Yukiko murmurs to "I" as though talking to herself that after the father passed away, the two brothers committed double suicide, and the old family line has died out.

"Previous Life" is filled with a decadent and dark tone, and according to Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, it was written under the influence of Tanizaki's theme of the relationship between sadism and masochism.32 Particularly, Shibusawa points out the influence of Tanizaki's novel Shōnen (Boys), published in 1911.33 In this novel, the first-person, unidentified narrator recalls the sadistic and masochistic relationship among the narrator, a rich boy Shin'ichi, his half-sister Mutsuko, and Senkichi, the son of a servant at Shin'ichi's parents' house in the Nihonbashi district. Shin'ichi is a weak and timid boy at elementary school, and Senkichi is the leader of gang of bullies. However, at home Shin'ichi becomes aggressive and sadistic when he teases Senkichi. He ties him up and rubs snot on Senkichi's face. Senkichi

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accepts all of the punishment meted out by Shin'ichi and even hazes Mutsuko when ordered to by Shin'ichi. The narrator also derives pleasure from following Shin'ichi's orders. He joins Senkichi in licking Shin'ichi's toes or pretending to be a dog toadying to his master in order to get fed. Shin'ichi's sadistic acts are, nevertheless, eventually suppressed by Mutsuko. Although she had once enjoyed playing the masochistic role with Senkichi and the narrator, she becomes the sadistic queen of the three boys and orders Senkichi and "I" to haze Shin'ichi.

Tanizaki depicts sadism and masochism as a secret pleasure among young people, and it is the combination of innocent youth and sadism/masochism that gives the story its contradictory and bizarre atmosphere. By contrast, the world of sadism and masochism in "Previous Life" seems rather calm, even sedate. But Kanoko's story is still rich in complexity and sophistication due to its convoluted narrative and the concept of the double.

In Mother and Son, a Lyric, Kanoko employs two types of the double: the double vision and the protagonist's psychological double as reputed "mother" and lover of Kikuo. "Previous Life" goes a step further to a more intense and decadent double in which the two brothers both confront and reflect each other. They seem to be
opposites in appearance and personality, but the source of their dissimilarity is the same: the despair and frustration of being born in an declining old family. In addition, their father's stubborn and narrow-minded personality aggravates the mirroring and contrasting aspects of his sons' personalities. Y was from an upper-class samurai family that had served the Shogunate. Nonetheless, Y was hired by the new Meiji government, and he was promoted to a high position until one day he quit as a result of an argument with his supervisor. Staying at home every day, he doted on his beautiful younger son at the expense of the older brother. Meanwhile, he made his sons drop out of school to take care of his antiques. Boxed in the house and separated from society, the two brothers establish their peculiar relationship.

Moreover, Kanoko describes the doubled-sided characteristics of sadism and masochism through the perspective of Yukiko, and Yukiko's psychology adds an additional layer to the doubling effect. She plays the role of witness and narrator in recounting the incident to the real narrator of the story, the woman novelist "I." At the same time, the sadism/masochism of the two brothers is also a reflection of Yukiko's consciousness, and
observing them brings her own split psychology into full relief.

Yukiko could not stand to see them any more. She was uncomfortable, and her heart was shaken from the very bottom. She was so irritated that she no longer wanted to worry about their destinies or be concerned with the reason for their distorted personalities. Why did they have to be stubborn over this issue of the tear? It was because, otherwise, they could not find any outlet for their pent-up love for each other. Besides, as she thought of it now she might have been jealous of them. When they fought, it was as if stones were rubbed against each other and gave off sparks. Yet, there was love and sweetness, and it was as if water dripped from the crack in the stones. Yukiko was fascinated by this sweetness. Both sadism and masochism were printed on her brain cells. These are what people from an old family frequently had and envied, and she too had both tendencies as a person who grew up in an old family.  

As the passage indicates, the heated argument between the two brothers indicates that their sadism/masochism is based on love -- a mixture of brotherly love and homosexual love. In addition, their argument is witnessed by Yukiko, and her narcissistic self-observation also emerges in her portrayal of the two young men's sadistic/masochistic relationship. Furthermore, "I" is the actual narrator of the story, and her confident tone in writing about the brothers' argument and Yukiko's

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thoughts about it suggests that the narrator understands Yukiko's emotions as her own. Although "I" disappears from the story after the first few pages and the narrative switches to the third-person voice, the structure of the story shows that "I" is also an important character. Kanoko constructs three layers of the consciousness; the two brothers are the first layer, the second is Yukiko, and the third layer is "I. Furthermore, the brothers' psychological relationship also reflects their father's personality and emotions, and he indirectly creates yet another psychological layer. Y does not participate in the brothers' argument; still, it is apparent that his frustration and irritation ends up heavily influencing the relationship between the brothers. Y's despair is expressed through his extremely unbalanced love for his sons and his strong attachment for his antiques.

"Previous Life" is a short story of fifteen pages, and there are only five characters and one important dramatic episode in it. Nevertheless, Kanoko presents complicated psychological layers through this simple structure. Y's emotions and psychology are reflected in the those of the two brothers, and through the argument over the kimono, Yukiko understands their psychology and also her own by observing them. Moreover, by describing
Yukiko's experience, the narrator, although not as explicit as Yukiko, adds her psychology as one more layer. At the beginning of the story, Kanoko states that Yukiko and the narrator come from the same type of family, and she implies that Yukiko and the narrator share the same emotions.

Existential Self: Buddhism and Modernism in The Wheel of Life

Mother and Son, a Lyric received good reviews, and according to Ippei, "She [Kanoko] was recognized and respected as a first-rate writer by the literary circles, and it was like she was allowed to sit in the best seat in the theater." While she also kept creating tanka and giving lectures on Buddhism, Kanoko also began to be recognized as a short story writer and novelist. However, in 1939, she suddenly died of a heart attack at the age of forty-nine. The year before, Kanoko had gone to Aburatsubo secretly with a young boyfriend and suffered an attack. After being taken home, she seemed to recover

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but then died in March of the following year.

Kanoko's unfinished works were, however, published posthumously by Ippei. Tarō and writers like Setouchi assume that Ippei finished, re-wrote, and re-edited Kanoko's manuscripts prior their publication. Although his role has never been examined in any scholarly fashion, attribution of editorial work and even authorship to Ippei is a widely accepted view of her posthumous novels.

_Shōjō ruten_ (The Wheel of Life) is one of the earliest of the posthumous novels. It appeared serially in _Bungakkai_ (The World of Literature) two months after her death and continued to be published until December of 1939. Close to 500 pages, it is one of Kanoko's longest novels, and the story consists of complicated images and episodes about the protagonist and her destiny.

Chōko, a girl of sixteen, is the daughter of a university professor, but her mother is the professor's mistress and Chōko their illegitimate child. The father, Chōzō, was the son of a vagabond, and he wandered into Tokyo with his father when he was young. They went door-to-door begging for money, and Toshima, one of their regular patrons, adopted Chōzō when he discovered the boy's great intelligence. Toshima was a rich man who succeeded in business during Japan's modernization, and he
predicted that the boy would be a man like him. Just as Toshima expected, Chōzō became a university professor, and he was married to Toshima's daughter.

Chōzō had died when Chōko was eight. The last time she saw her father, he told her the reason that he was going to die. According to him, all people should return to their roots after the age of forty or whenever they faced adversity; otherwise, they will perish. Chōzō had many obligations as a professor, husband, and father, and he could not abandon them and return to his roots as a beggar. After his death, Chōko worries and becomes afraid whenever she recalls her father's last statement that one day she too will become a beggar because she is the daughter of a vagabond.

Chōko starts going to F-school in Tokyo, a private school renowned for its liberal education. She falls in love with Katsuoka, the gardener at the school, but Adaka, a female teacher of physical education, also secretly loves Katsuoka. In fact, Adaka had found him when he was only a boy, and she had supported him financially while he studied at a school for professional gardeners. Moreover, after getting his degree, Katsuoka was hired by the school because Adaka had recommended him to the school principal. For Adaka, generosity is supposed to be based on spiritual
love, and she had believed her patronage of Katsuoka had been without selfish motivation until the day she noticed that Katsuoka loved Chōko. Adaka cannot restrain her love for Katsuoka and she proposes to him. Katsuoka, who wants to believe that Adaka's support for him was spiritual and pure, rejects Adaka's proposal and tells her of his love for Chōko. As a result, Adaka leaves the school and flees to her hometown in the Akagi Mountains. At Chōko's urging, she and Katsuoka go to Akagi to see Adaka to persuade her to come back to the school. When they succeed in meeting Adaka, she starts her long confessions: her declining family, hatred from people in her hometown, her hatred at them, and her agony in knowing that she loves Katsuoka as a man. After the long talk, Adaka commits suicide by jumping on a floating wedge of ice on the lake in front of Chōko and Katsuoka. She drifts away and disappears on the wedge of floating ice, and Chōko, Katsuoka, and the police cannot find her.

Parallel to her involvement with Katsuoka, Chōko is also pursued by Iketami, the son of an old merchant family, and she begins to live with him. Iketami is fascinated by Chōko's vitality as the symbol of health and strength. Growing up in an old family, Iketami is surrounded by convention and tradition, and he fears that
he has no connection to anything realistic and contemporary because his family environment has not changed with the times. Ikegami proposes to Chōko in order to feel alive, and he takes her into his house even before the marriage takes place. Yet, his love for Chōko turns into a deep-seated jealousy and obsession, and he attempts to keep her by virtually imprisoning her in the house.

The relationship ends when Chōko escapes from Ikegami's house and goes with Katsuoka to search for Adaka. Chōko and Katsuoka eventually break up as well after they return to Tokyo. They have a physical relationship following Adaka's suicide, but their passion dissipates as they wander through the Akagi Mountains and rural post towns. Moreover, after Chōko's return from Akagi, Chōko's mother, who had insisted on her daughter's marrying Ikegami, dies of pyelitis. Her mother leaves a letter for Chōko and reveals her regret at having become a mistress. She hopes that Chōko will have a happy marriage to a respectable man. Chōko is now an orphan, and she feels that she has yet another burden in life, namely her mother's despair and lost hopes.

As her father foresaw, Chōko leaves home and wanders as a beggar in an attempt to return to her roots and seek
her true life. Pretending to be deaf and mute, Chōko conceals her real name and background wherever she roams. At first, she wanders through a town outside Tokyo called T, known for its red-light district. T is situated alongside of the Tana River, and she then follows the Tana River downstream from T to Sagi-machi. In Sagi-machi, however, her true identity is revealed by Hanada, a fellow beggar, and Kenji, a young, influential man in the town. Hanada once studied at an agricultural college, and it is he who asks Kenji to check on Chōko’s past, doubting that she is really a vulgar, uneducated vagabond.

After her identity is revealed, Chōko is hired as the manager of the club hall built by the town of Sagi-machi. Chōko’s job promises her a settled life in Sagi-machi; however, she leaves again and goes to sea. At the end of the story, she decides to stay at sea after she exchanges the following cryptic conversation with her beggar friend Bunkichi.

After a while, Bunkichi said,
"Are there many creatures in the sea?"
"Yes, a lot."
"Where do they go when they die?"
The words stuck in my throat, and I could say only, "Well, I don't know." Yet, Bunkichi did not seem to care for my answer; instead he seemed to find the answer for himself and said,
"Oh, yes. There is no need for graves for creatures of the sea."
A world without graves. I liked the oceans
better than rivers, and I became a woman sailor from then.  

The Wheel of Life is generally thought of as representing a Buddhist world view. Chōko's metamorphosis from a comfortable schoolgirl to a wandering beggar is a metaphor based on the concept of karma and reincarnation, and it is described as a law beyond her control. At the very end, she has reached the seashore and decides to be a sailor. Of course, this ending implies that Chōko keeps roaming from one port to another. Even though she has a job as a sailor, she is still a wanderer loyal to her roots. In actual fact, a beggar is a rootless wanderer, and Chōko’s oxymoronic identity is not to have any identity after all. She adores the sea as the place with no grave because, in Japan, graves and tombstones are strongly linked to the concept of family, ancestors, and the roots of the self.

Moreover, her metamorphosis is not only related to her roots as a vagabond but also to her notion of the non-essential self. The novel suggests that her self does not have a fixed existence but continually evolves. The critic Takada Hiroshi points out Chōko's lack of a strong

sense of identity or self:

The young girl Chōko, the protagonist, is a subtle character. Other characters like Ikegami, Katsuoka, Adaka, and Bunkichi, who appear at the end of the story, have some relationship with her, and they have distinguishable personalities. However, Chōko is depicted as a person whose personality is vague and incoherent. 37

As Takada states, Chōko herself confesses that she does not have a distinctive self. She explains that her self changes depending on her "kannō" ("sensibility" or "sensuality").

I am a child born and raised in the city, and I am also a child of sensibility. My mood changes according to the feeling of the surroundings that my sensibility responds to. It is as if I am a different person. I do not have any ideology which is rooted in myself. I may be like a chameleon that lives in the stream of life and changes its thoughts one after another. This is because the chameleon changes color in response to the environment. 38

The non-essentialist notion of a kaleidoscopic, ever-changing self suggests postmodernist existentialism, but the idea was already being developed during the age of modernism. The issue of the ambiguity of defining the self had been raised as a modernist theme from the very


38 Kanoko, Shōjo ruten, pp. 187-188.
beginning of the modernist period. For instance, André Gide's *L'imoraliste*, published in 1902, already demonstrated the idea of the non-self. Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) and Franz Kafka (1883-1924) also developed the non-essential self in the nihilistic themes of their novels. Kancko mentions André Gide as one of her favorite writers, and we can easily imagine that the concept of the non-essential self in *The Wheel of Life* is inspired by Buddhism and Western philosophy.³⁹

**Tanka Elements**

**Developed into Modernist Writings**

Kanoko sets nature in opposition to civilization through her characters in *The Wheel of Life*. Chōko is strongly attracted to Katsuoka, the gardener at F-school,

³⁹ Kanoko, "Jisaku annai: kōtei no botai," in OKZ, vol. 12, pp. 186-187. In the West, Buddhism also played an interesting role for modernist works. One of the most distinguished examples of this fusion is the connection between Dada and Zen Buddhism. One of Tzara's interests in Buddhism is:

The Buddhist principle of nonattachment, which is to lead up to the point of mindlessness, or willlessness, comprises the quality of indifference and coldness, a state of great composure which, in turn, demands a crucial destruction of ego (Ko Won, *Buddhist Elements in Dada* [New York: New York University Press, 1977], pp. 84-85).
because he symbolizes nature. Since the school is built outside of the yamanote (High City) area, it includes a hill, a forest, an orchard, and a flower garden. Katsuoka manages it all by himself, and he also hunts birds and small animals on the school property. He finds pleasure in living close to nature and, reflecting his life, he is a quiet and mysterious man.

Chōko grows up in Tokyo's shitamachi (Low City) and she dislikes men who were born in the same area. According to her, men in shitamachi are neither brisk nor active, and "they seem young, but they also seem like retired old men."\(^{10}\) They often come to Chōko's house and spend much time telling jokes and gossiping without accomplishing anything. Ikekami is representative of the shitamachi man. He is fashionable and sophisticated, but also dull and lifeless. Ikekami himself feels that he is half-dead, without the vitality of life. He believes that Chōko is the means by which he can stay in this world and feel alive.

The love triangle of Katsuoka, Chōko, and Ikekami is

\(^{40}\)Kanoko, Shōjo ruten, p.37.
Kanoko's version of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Katsuoka is comparable to Mellors, and his earthy nature fascinates Chōko. Ikegami, who persists in pursuing Chōko, can be seen as Clifford. As Clifford, Ikegami tries to restrain Chōko, but she leaves him behind to travel with Katsuoka. In fact, Kanoko was influenced by D. H. Lawrence (1885-1930), and she frequently expressed her admiration for him. When she wrote in an essay that Lawrence, Joyce, and Gide were her three favorite Western modern writers, she stated that Lawrence captured the intensity of the relationship between man and nature in a way no one had ever done before.

Kanoko also expresses her view that nature is easily conquered by civilization in *The Wheel of Life*. Although Chōko and Katsuoka have the potential to be


43 The critic Komiya Tadahiko compares the relationship between Katsuoka and Adaka to that of Mellors and Connie. Connie is liberated from convention through her relationship with Mellors, but Adaka is not saved by Katsuoka in spite of her desperate hope and love ("Kaidai," in *OKZ*, vol.7, pp. 505-506).

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Connie and Mellors, their relationship fades when Katsuoka loses his earthiness and becomes concerned with his job and the future. He has to quit his job at the school as a result of the scandal involving Adaka. He is also deeply shocked by Adaka's suicide, and he begins to lose his innocence. For Chôko, Katsuoka is no longer a man of nature but just an immature male who worries about his future. As a result, their physical bond turns away from physical and emotional liberation.

... , we had fallen into a relationship the way some husbands and wives sometimes do. People do not fall in these relationships only when they are in love, or they are passionate. When the spirit of youth is spoiled, and when the feeling of boredom fills them all, both men and women are in danger.44

As Katsuoka and Chôko travel from one town to the next in the Akagi Mountains, they stop making love. After they return to Tokyo, he becomes literally a man of civilization. He is hired by Ikegami and subsequently marries a woman in an arranged marriage. Whereas the end of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* implies a bright future for both Mellors and Connie, Chôko and Katsuoka as a couple cannot typify the victory of nature over civilization.

As seen above, Lawrence's perspective on nature and civilization also compares the liberation of sexuality to

44*Kanoko, Shôjô ruten*, pp.279-280.
the convention to oppress it. Kanoko pays attention to Lawrence's thoughts on sexuality and refers to him as a writer who interpreted sexuality in new ways.

The instinct of sexuality does not indicate either physical desire or spirit. It is the great driving force that moves human beings toward a deeper layer of the human mind. Until Lawrence, even great writers had a very old-fashioned and infantile recognition about sexuality.45

The contrast between nature and civilization suggests the contrast between "passion and reason" in Lawrence's literature, and passion includes the liberation of sexuality.46

Kanoko once belonged to the Myōjōha of tanka, which promoted the discussion of sexuality in emotional tones, and she did not hesitate to express her sexual desire toward a man whom she loved. However, compared to her poetry, sexual liberation in her essays is described in a much more logical and analytical tone. She interprets sexuality as fundamental to human nature, and she uses a psychoanalytical approach to sexuality in reading Lawrence.


46 "Brief Biographies," in Modernism, p.627.
As seen in Kanoko's psychoanalytical view about sexuality, Sigmund Freud's theories of psychoanalysis were becoming known in the fields of art and literature in the 1920s, and artists and writers began to see the self as more ambiguous and uncentered.\textsuperscript{47} Important concepts and terms from Freud's new discourse on the mind were the unconscious, dreams, blurred distinctions between the normal and pathological personalities, hidden sexuality and childhood sexuality.\textsuperscript{48} Yet, in a broader sense, psychoanalysis suggests a new and common perspective about humankind.

Freud was very aware of what he referred to as the ambiguities of everyday life. The ambiguity is owing to the fact that things are not what they seem to be. The formal, immediately visible level of behavior conceals actual deep meaning.\textsuperscript{49}

\textsuperscript{47} As critic Alan Bullock explains, "No single man, probably, has exercised a greater influence on the ideas, literature, and art of the twentieth century than Freud," Freudian thought was enthusiastically embraced by different art and literary forms including modernism ("The Double Image," in Malcom Bradbury and James McFarlane eds., \textit{Modernism}, p.67).


\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., p.143. The best known art and literary movement advocating the artistic potential of tapping the realm of the dreams, irrationality and sexuality is Surrealism. Writers like André Breton (1896-1966), painters such as
In comparison with the West, the influence of psychoanalysis in Japan was rather limited. Still, by 1929, it exercised influence in significant ways. In the same year, the Tokyo seishinbunseki kenkyūjo (Tokyo Research Center for Psychoanalysis) was established; in the following year, two publishing houses began to publish the complete works of Freud in translation. Kawabata Yasunari predicted in 1929 that Japanese novelists would

Max Ernst (1891-1976) and Salvador Dali (1904-1989) created works based on Freudian psychoanalysis and the symptoms described in Freud's books and medical journals. For example, Max Ernst, originally a member of Cologne Dada in his early career, was at one time a medical student, and he studied one of Freud's diagnosis and used it in his collage The Hat Makes the Man (1920). This collage was based on one of Freud's most famous case studies in which a woman became obsessed with men's hats because for her, "the hat was a male genital organ, with its middle-piece sticking up and its two side-pieces hanging down" (Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, trans. and ed., James Strachey [New York: Avon Books, 1965], p.396). Ernst's collage used men's hats that were cut, pasted and arranged to look like human figures. Freudian thought had been introduced in the late Meiji period.

In 1929, Shun'yōdō published Furido seishinbunseki kagaku zenshū (Complete Works of Freudian Psychoanalysis), and Arusu published Furido seishinbunseki taikei (The Outline of Freud's Psychoanalysis). In particular, psychoanalysis was welcomed by non-proletarian writers, who used psychoanalysis as a counter-argument to the proletarian insistence on social realism.
henceforth create a new type of psychological novel inspired by psychoanalysis; and as he notes, writers like Kanoko used psychoanalytical approaches in describing human consciousness and reality.\textsuperscript{52} Although Kanoko did not declare that she would write a psychoanalytical novel, she expressed her strong interest in Freud and Jung and wrote in an essay that she studied Freudian psychology.\textsuperscript{53} As seen in \textit{Mother and Son, a Lyric}, she presents a psychoanalytical idea about the relationship between human vision and consciousness. In \textit{The Wheel of Life}, her approach to the issue of human sexuality is also

\textsuperscript{52} Of course, psychoanalysis itself is not a literary theory, and it did not suggest themes for the novel or literary techniques. Thus, the writers who favored psychoanalysis tried to find examples in Western works. One of these efforts was a discussion of psychoanalysis and James Joyce's \textit{Ulysses}, which began to circulate in Japan one year after the publication of the complete works of Freud. In particular, Itô Sei, who was one of the translators of \textit{Ulysses}, published a series of articles about Freud's influence on Joyce, and both Freud and Joyce enjoyed significant popularity.

At the same time, the Joyce and Freud boom had elements of hypocrisy. For instance, writers often mentioned the name of Freud in their works because they thought that references to his name was a convenient symbol for new literature (Wada Keiko, "Furoido, Joise no inyū to Itô Sei," Kokubungaku kaishaku to kanshō 60, no. 11 [November, 1995]: 39-44).

In "Kōsho shushu," Kanoko expresses her strong interest in both psychoanalysis and the ideas of Freud and Jung. (in \textit{OKZ}, vol. 12, pp.40-41)

psychoanalytical. Sexuality had been an important theme for Kanoko since the early *tanka* period. Yet, she pursued it by a more analytical approach in her prose work.

Another *tanka* technique which Kanoko developed in a more modernistic direction in her prose is the depiction of scenery. Her portrayal of the scenery, especially landscapes, is very abstract despite its detailed explanation. In *tanka*, an object which the poet depicts often symbolizes human emotion. For example, the following *tanka* from Kanoko's *Myōjō* period includes this description:

> Is a sorrow of Tokyo drifting along? The stream of the Sumida River goes on in gray color.

>(Tokyo no/ machi no urei no nagaruru ya/ Sumida no kawa wa haiiro ni iku)

In this *tanka*, she uses the color and the stream of the Sumida River as a symbol of people's sorrow. The gray is not just the color of the river but also the residents' state of mind living in a big city. Problems with things like money, jobs, or human relationships are implied by

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54 Kanoko, "Mizu no kokoro," in *Karoki netami*, in *OKZ*, vol. 9, p.36. *Karoki netami* (Slight Jealousy) was Kancko's first *tanka* anthology published in 1912.
the color and the slow and wide stream.

This characteristic of Kanoko’s tanka is also seen in her prose works. Yet, it produces a far more interesting and complicated effect in longer and detailed sentences. In particular, her depiction of landscape is unique. An example is the opening passage in *The Wheel of Life*, in which the scene is described for the reader from Chōko's viewpoint.

I escaped from the city. I passed under the railroad girders, and I crossed the bridge. I was still feeling that the two men's heavy arms were tugging at my kimono sleeves. I got away and came here in order to parry them off. But when I stepped under the girders and suddenly faced a watery darkness -- darkness as if it smelled of river mud -- my sleeves gradually became lighter and lighter. I began feeling a strange tiredness that I had to sustain my body until I came here. Does it generally mean that I became sober or calm?

The road ran from east to west in the dark. Both sides of the road seemed to be rice paddies because they smelled of something green, and its smell mixed with the smell of mud. The frogs made much noise. Hearing the sound of my zōri sandals as they kept touching the ground, I kept walking as my feet advanced. The darkness became lighter as my eyes gradually became used to it, and I was able to see vaguely that the telegraph poles stood in a regular pattern along both sides of the road. I could also see there were ponds filled with lotus flowers. The ponds were in the middle of the greenish rice paddies. The more my eyes adjusted, the more I could see the water gleaming among the rice shoots. Yes, I could tell, I could vaguely discern the surface of the road and the telegraph poles up ahead of me. That was because they reflected the sky that mirrored the lights to my rear. The lights. They reached all the way from the
city to so remote a place. Oh, the lights of the city!\textsuperscript{55}

The entire landscape is depicted with objects commonly seen in the countryside. Kanoko spotlights water, rice shoots, ponds, and a road, and she presents them in a lyrical sequence of photographic frames just as Chôko notices them one after another. Each object appears in front of her eyes as her eyes adjust to the darkness.

However, a closer reading reveals that the scene is constructed of unrealistic images, and the images are made real by the language she uses. The object around Chôko shine by reflecting the dim lights; yet, there is no light around her. There are telegraph poles in the scene, but Kanoko does not mention any electric lights. Only the lights emitted by the city far from her are mentioned, and the sky mirrors them, as does the water in between the

\textsuperscript{55} Kanoko, \textit{Shôjô ruten}, p.8. These are the very first two paragraphs in the story, and from page 330 to 332, Kanoko repeats exactly the same paragraphs, translated in part above. From page 8 to page 10, these paragraphs lead the story to the past and Chôko's memoir up to the time when she becomes a beggar. In contrast, after the same paragraphs on pages 330 to 332, the story describes her life after she becomes a beggar. Kanoko emphasizes Chôko's drastic metamorphosis by repeating the same paragraphs in different parts of the story. After exactly the same paragraphs, the story takes very different directions in terms of Chôko's life.
rice shoots and the tracks in the road. It is visually
difficult to recreate the scenery in which the city lights
far from the countryside shine on objects there, even if
it is possible to explain in words, but Kanoko evokes it
quite beautifully.

The scholar Kokubo Minoru explains that Kanoko uses
unconventional combinations of words in order to depict
landscape, and in her works the image of the place is
often strange and bizarre. He quotes a paragraph from
the short story titled "Tōkaidō gojūsantsugi" ("Fifty-
three Stages on Tōkaidō") and points to Kanoko's
distinctive diction in the depiction of a landscape. For
instance, the adjective "daraku" ("wearily") is used to
describe the place where the rice paddies encounter a

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56 Kokubo Minoru, "Enkei no naka no Kanoko," in Kindai jōryū
bungaku, in Nihon bungaku kenkyū shiryō gyōsho (Tokyo:

It was a field which looked a swampland, and the
rice paddies wearily encountered a valley which had
undulations slight. A small river flowed between the
paddies, and there was a bridge made of a single
board over its dirty water. Almost sadly, there was
nothing to check the view around here (Kanoko,
valley.\textsuperscript{57} Or, when she portrays the panorama that spreads before the protagonist, she uses the word "kanashii kurai" ("almost sadly") in order to convey that there is nothing to check the view. Despite the use of many adjectives and adverbs, the sketch is vague in mood and far from real.

Kanoko was trained to portray landscape in abstract images by the world of \textit{tanka}. Moreover, the emergence of abstraction was also seen as a major theme in modernist art. In particular, the visual art of the late Impressionists, Cubists, and Surrealists used various techniques to make landscape abstract. Kanoko's son Tarō was an artist who worked in abstract painting, and it is altogether possible that she absorbed ideas of modernist pictorial art through him. Yet, even given this background of \textit{tanka} and modern art, Kanoko pursues abstractions that only novels can create. There are landscapes which only language for prose can portray. Only in the written work can rice paddies and the valleys meet wearily, and it is almost sad that there is a panorama which spreads before us without interruption. A landscape which is impossible to visualize is a defining

\textsuperscript{57} She uses the verb "irimajiru" ("mix") to describe how the rice paddies encounter a valley.
element of this kind of literature, and Kanoko uses it to the furthest possible extent in her prose.

**Conclusion**

Despite a literary career spanning more than twenty years, Kanoko wrote prose exclusively only in her last four years. Nonetheless, the novel was her love, and it is for her prose that she is known today. Her prose works are a mixture of modernist and Buddhist ideas on reality and the self. She repeatedly explored the concept of the Doppelgänger and its variations to question the notion of reality. Her characters experience the Doppelgänger because their emotional state creates a realistic vision, and Kanoko develops the complicated codependency among vision, human psychology, and reality through her novels.

Moreover, her Buddhist and modernist thoughts are reflected in the non-essential nature of human self in her later works. In her long novel *The Wheel of Life*, she describes the way the self changes in different circumstances because it has no core.

In addition, Kanoko develops two ideas from *tanka* in her modernist prose: expression of sexuality and abstraction of the scenery. Her *tanka* group *Myōjōha*
advocated the expression of sexuality in an emotional and liberated tone. Also, she was familiar with depicting landscape and objects in abstract, non-representational images because *tanka* describes objects and scenery as a symbol of the author's feelings. Thus, the images described in the work are frequently difficult to visualize.

At the same time, these two elements of *tanka* style became more complicated and sophisticated in Kanoko's prose works. Sexuality is described through a psychoanalytical perspective, and her writing is no longer a simple admiration of it. Also, compared to *tanka*, prose tends to allow more sentences and longer descriptions for the portrayal of landscape; therefore, Kanoko's depiction of landscape has more complicated characteristics -- long and detailed explanations without many real visual images. Her landscapes are often based on illusionary images and are not visually paintable, and her depiction of landscape is filled with unconventional and illogical combinations of words. She succeeds in proving that an image which is impossible to visualize can be created by language and function as a vital element of the story.
Conclusion:

Toward a Definition of Japanese Prose Modernism

Summary Review of Vision and Narrative in Four Modernists

The preceding examination of the four writers and their works reveals that Japanese prose modernism represents a diversity of political, social, and cultural aspects.

Yoshiyuki Eisuke began his literary career as a Dadaist poet in the early 1920s and developed into a writer of prose by the late 1920s. Although Japanese Dada was neither as prominent nor as widespread a movement as in Europe, nonetheless, it was a significant source of inspiration for Japanese writers. Moreover, Dadaist experimentation resulted in highlighting the linguistic and visual effects that were especially characteristic of written Japanese text. The pictographic aspect of a
language such as Japanese was especially amenable to Dadaist type rearrangements and realignments. For example, Yoshiyuki's colleague and fellow poet Takahashi Shinkichi used characters for their uniquely visual effect, Yoshiyuki wrote long sentences without punctuation to indicate his theory that written language can exist without oral reproduction.

Dada eventually faded from literary circles, and Yoshiyuki's poetry evolved into prose poetry and then prose. Still, he developed his own experimental style based on his Dada-inspired poetry. In particular, the short stories written in the early 1930s express his political criticism in an experimental way. In the short story "A Department Store for a Woman," for example, he writes long sentences which pile modifying phrases upon modifying adjectives without the use of similes of "like" or "as" ("no yōna") and make the utmost of the agglutinative nature of the Japanese language. In "A Department Store for Hedonists," he even adds a chart from the stock exchange to illustrate and make graphic the fall of the Japanese economy. The story refers to the corruption of the political and financial world, and his work seeks to both employ literary experimentation and reflect the political situation of the times.
Parallel to his prose publications, Yoshiyuki participated in Shinkō geijutsuha, which was the largest and most significant non-proletarian coterie group from the early 1930s. This group promoted the notion of art for art's sake and challenged the claims of proletarian writers who prioritized politics over art and fiercely advocated social realism. As a member of Shinkō geijutsuha, Yoshiyuki advanced the idea that art not be limited to one mode of expression or ideology.

At the same time, as his short stories make clear, he is a social critic, and he expressed his political critique through his prose works. Eventually his activism vis-à-vis capitalist society caused him to depart the world of literature by the mid-1930s. He stopped writing, and interestingly enough, entered the stock brokerage business in order to, in his own words, "know the monetary system of capitalism." From then and until his sudden death in 1940 at the age of thirty-four, he did not return to literature except to publish a few essays on the stock market and life as a stock broker.

Activism in the case of Murayama Tomoyoshi, whose initial involvement in the modernist movement came via the

visual arts, resulted in his participation in the proletarian literature movement, however. At first, Murayama was inspired by German Dada and Constructivism in Berlin, where he stayed in 1922. Upon his return to Japan, he attempted to create his own theory of art, which he called Conscious Constructivism, and through which he sought to express specific and concrete emotions in abstract form through the use of personal objects. His art and theory were welcomed by other young artists who sought to create new and original art in Japan, and together with Murayama they established the innovative art group called Mavo. Mavo expanded its activities and became a multi-art media using the visual arts, literature, performance arts and theater. Along with his activities in Mavo, Murayama designed avant-garde stage sets for Asa kara yonaka made (Von Morgens bis Mitternachts), a translation of the German Expressionist play by Georg Kaiser. The play was a huge success, and Murayama, a national sensation. Thereafter, he made theater his major field of endeavor. Avant-garde theater was also the beginnings of his interest in the proletarian movement, and it led to his ultimately abandoning avant-garde art styles in order to pursue social realism, the principle doctrine of proletarian art and literature circa
1930.

Murayama’s early prose indicates his strong consciousness of the visuality created by language. In the short story "The Year 1922," which portrays the chaos underlying life in Berlin, he evokes the city through layers of short sentences. Each sentence consists of a visual image or picture, and taken as a whole, his portrait constitutes what one might call a "collage of language." Once Murayama embraced the proletarian cause, however, his writing style became increasingly less experimental to meet the demands of social realism. Yet, despite his allegiance to social realism, his works in the 1930s cannot be considered purely authentic works of social realism on account of his use of metaphor and the cynical tone that predominates. Metaphor and cynicism remained in his works through his career regardless of shifts in his modes of artistic expression. For example, My Idiot, which was written after he recanted in 1934, has elements of both tragedy and comedy despite its confessional sobriety. The protagonist is a playwright who pursues only purely artistic achievements in the theater, and he does not look to the world around him. His innocence and idealistic perspective on theater blinds him, and as a result he ends up losing both his job and
wife. Written in a humorous vein, the work suggests metaphorically and implicitly that art will be crushed if it is pursued solely for artistic satisfaction and it ignores its broader social circumstances. The shifts that Murayama's works undergo run the gamut of the different approaches to modernism adopted by Japanese experimentalists from the 1920s to the late 1930s.

Yumeno Kyūsaku is markedly different from both Yoshiyuki and Murayama. While the latter became well-known through coterie groups and their magazines, Yumeno came to be recognized through the popular magazine Shinseinen. Never having participated in coterie groups, Yumeno emerged in the literary world by winning a literary prize. Significantly, his first major work was a detective story, which was still a new and undeveloped genre in Japanese literature. The detective story became the subject of much debate and interest, and many questioned whether this genre, with its interest in entertaining its audience, could possibly qualify as "pure literature." As a result of this debate, Yumeno's works were not treated with the degree of seriousness accorded to Yoshiyuki and Murayama.

Yumeno's stories are full of murders and unbelievable incidents. Yet, it would be an oversimplification to
treat them as stories simply about crime and the exploits of murderers. Rather, it is via these incidents that Yumeno challenges the notion of reality as monolithic and objective. For example, in his prize-winning work The Ferie Hand Drum, the sound of the hand drum attracts people, and it becomes the cause of a series of murders. In addition, the characters change identity one after another before the eyes of the protagonist, who is a young drum player, and no identity seems real. The reality that the protagonist believes in is revealed as one layer covered by another.

The ambiguity of reality is deeply related to the question of the nature of the self in Yumeno's works. His long novel Dogura magura in particular takes the question of the self to extremes in arguing for the absence of the self. The protagonist cannot find his own identity, and the only option open to him is to acquiesce to the two psychiatrists' suggestions. He refuses nonetheless, but his refusal means he is trapped in the endless nightmare of life in the lunatic asylum from which he may not be able to awaken.

Moreover, the concept of "the Other" is important in Yumeno's later works. For Yumeno, the other constitutes authority, which is usually taken as the supremacy of the
West. In particular, he sees this supremacy as manifesting itself or residing in science, and he criticizes Japan's eagerness to follow the West in its unquestioning adoration of advanced science. In *Dogura magura*, for example, the authority of the psychiatrists derives from modern science, and the triumph of modern Western science is presented as a living hell or psychological torture for the protagonist patient. There is no question that Yumeno espouses ultra-nationalism, and he is warning Japan against the threat to its own national integrity by letting science advance in Japan.\(^2\) In addition, he also opposed urbanism and intellectualism which he associates with Western civilization and liberalism. He also describes them as a threat that suppresses Japan's national identity.

While Yumeno's political perspective is radically different and reactionary in comparison with those of Yoshiyuki and Murayama, he is as equally aggressive in his experimentation with narratives and language. He breaks down the sequencing of time by convoluted narratives and

\(^2\) Yumeno's anxiety about the encroachment of science and technology has been a source of angst both in the East and the West although it is doubtful whether he recognized the degree to which many Western artists and intellectuals reviled science, technology, and "progress."
envelops his readers in his protagonists' hallucinations. In addition, by telling a bizarre tale in the first-person, he distorted the general premise widely advocated by writers of naturalistic fiction and *shishōsetsu* in particular that the author/confessor tells the unmediated truth. Yumeno's stories are often constructed by multiple layers of first-person narration, and lacking any objective elements, the reader is led to an unstable world of uncertain realities.

Finally, he switches between different styles of written language. For example, he changes from classical Japanese to dialect in order to underline the indeterminacy and fluidity of language and to resist or deconstruct the power of modern unified or standardized Japanese. Doubtless the use of classical Japanese is related to his resistance against modern Japan since he was a descendant of the old samurai ruling class. Similarly, his use of dialect is also related to his belief in provincialism and his resistance against the hegemony of Tokyo and the Tokyo *bundan* as the sole transmitter and arbiter of language, culture, and literature. Thus, despite his ultra-nationalism and anti-urbanism, Yumeno shares a strong sense of linguistic adventure with both Yoshiyuki and Murayama.
Okamoto Kanoko, who first came to be well-known as a *waka* poet in the early 1910s, started writing prose in the mid-1930s. Her long literary career notwithstanding, it was only at the very end of her life that she attempted prose, and since her prose dates from the mid- to late 1930s, it ranks among the last modernist works to appear in the Japanese literary world before their eclipse by the rise of militarism and the suppression of creative activity.

By comparison, her prose is the least aggressive in terms of literary experimentation. Kanoko did not use a blatantly experimental style in order to either dazzle or confuse her readers. Still, it is distinctive enough that it deserves consideration in formulating and understanding Japanese prose modernism.

She elaborated her self-styled psychoanalytical views through creating stories centered on the concept of the Doppelgänger. That her characters discover repeatedly the illusion of their loving others suggests that, for Kanoko, reality is clearly a construct of human subjectivity. For example, the woman writer whose name appears as O.K. in the novel *A Mother and Son, a Lyric* knows the meaning of the illusionary self. Her longing for the son who lives in Paris makes her see his
Doppelgänger on a street in Tokyo, but eventually the mother comes to realize that the student who resembles her son really is a totally different person altogether. Yet, through this incident, she and the student named Kikuo develop a psychologically complex relationship. The whole story is permeated with a lyricism that reflects her romantic emotions, but her recognition of reality as the product of subjectivity is logical. Indeed, it is even scientific.

Another modernist characteristic of Kanoko's prose is her penchant for the creation of abstract images. Kanoko is given to describing the surroundings of her characters in lengthy passages of detailed description, yet the images are clearly linguistic constructions and are far removed from actual visualization. An abstracted image of nature is common to waka poetry as a means to give metaphorical expression to a poet's emotions. Kanoko, who had written waka, is familiar with this style, and it goes without saying that waka became the direct source of inspiration for her prose creations. Yet, curiously she uses this waka technique to portray a setting without the

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direct use of metaphor, and her depiction of nature in the abstract gives a vivifying and unconventional impact to her prose and makes it an experiment in the handling of language.

Japanese Modernism and Its Internal Motivation

The experimentation that characterizes Japanese modernism was intended, in part, to counter established notions of reality and realism. The direct target of the modernists was Naturalism, which became established in Japan in the early 20th century. As Fowler argues, it strongly advocated producing the semblance of unmediated realism and rhetoric. However, the entire realist movement had its origins in shajitsu (versimulitude) which emerged during the Meiji period when Japanese literature moved in the direction of genbun itchi, or unification of written and spoken languages, or the colloquialization of written texts. Indeed, the recognition of vernacular speech as the basis for narrative had already begun at the end of the Edo period. Yet, the movement only gained momentum when Tsubouchi Shōyō (1859-1935) advocated the

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notion of shajitsu in his essay Shōsetsu shinzui (The Essence of the Novel) of 1886. According to Tsubouchi, Japanese literature at the end of premodern feudal period had been represented by unrealistic ghost stories, fairy tales, thinly disguised pornography, or stories of the so-called kanzen chōaku tradition of "Punishing Vice and Promoting Virtue." In his view, these works had neither artistic depth nor value. He insisted that Japanese literature ought to attempt portrayal of modern human lives, psychology, and surroundings in a more realistic manner. In his pursuit of realism, Tsubouchi also sought to use the language which was used in everyday society in order to faithfully reflect natural dialogue and the narrative of mental consciousness. In response to his clarion call for a reformation and modernizing of Japanese letters, writers began to abandon the traditional written language to create works in new and colloquial language. The idea of realism and colloquialization of written discourse went hand and hand, and this combination was a more advanced form of literature. Of course, there remained pockets of resistance to this movement. During the late 1880s and the decade of the 1890s, writers such as Ozaki Kōyō (1867-1903) or those belonging to the Kenyūsha ("the Society of Friends of the Inkstone"),
disagreed with the notion of unification in written and spoken discourse. Instead, they struck a compromise between the older written bungotai style and new kōgotai unified language, although they too would eventually switch to colloquialized language. Moreover, the rise of Naturalism, which originally came from France, dovetailed with the thrust toward genbun itchi and shajitsu in the more modern and universal sense of those terms. One of the important tenets of Naturalism was the scientific and objective observation and description of reality. Eventually the notion of realism and colloquialized

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5 Even Tsubouchi confessed his failure to achieve shajitsu and genbun itchi, and he especially felt it after reading his young friend Futabatei Shimei's (1864-1909) work Ukigumo (The Drifting Cloud), published from 1887. As Tsubouchi himself remarked, his "Tōsei shosei katagi" (The Characters of Modern Students) retained the traditional 5-7-5 rhyme scheme and gesaku-type phrasing. Futabatei also felt that he had borrowed his writing style from gesaku, and he could not write a truly modern work. Eventually he despaired of writing fiction and, ceasing to write novels altogether, he became a government translator of Russian.

6 The critic Etō Jun states that shasei (sketch), a new movement in waka advocated at the end of the 19th century, is crucial for understanding the evolution of realism in Japanese literature. It aimed to describe the nature of objects just as the poet sees and sketches them. The shasei movement neglects conventional expressions and notions to create new perceptions and expressions. The central figures in this movement are Masaoka Shiki and Takahama Kyoshi (1874-1959) (Riarizumu no genryū [Tokyo: Kawade Shobō Shinsha, 1989], pp.7-43).
written language ceased to be particular to any specific movement in Japan but became part of the general outlook of the Japanese literary establishment. It is important to note here that the use of shajitsu and genbun itchi was not simply an issue of literary style. They were predicated upon a drastic change in the new concept of perception and expression in literature; therefore, vision, narrative, and language became inseparable from these concepts.

As realism and the colloquialized written language became commonplace, the writers, whom we shall call here "the modernists," emerged to question these now-established literary concepts. Japanese literary modernism is, in its goals and implementation, related to fundamental issues of perception and expression as well, and it ought not to be treated as simply an experimentalist movement borrowed from the West. In order to challenge established concepts in Japan, modernist writers felt compelled to present a new perception and expression of literature through a radically different vision, narrative and language. Although it is true that their attempts have been associated frequently with Western modernism and culture as models or inspirational sources, the movement is too complex, too universal, and
too locally rooted to be dismissed as a passing flirtation with European avant-gardism.

Vision and the Ambiguity of Reality

One of the key questions raised by modernism is the issue of vision and its depiction. P. Adams Sitney emphasizes vision as one of the chief characteristics of modernism.

Modernist literary and cinematic works stress vision as a privileged mode of perception, even of revelation, while at the same time cultivating opacity and questioning the primacy of the visible world. Furthermore, the quest for autonomously generated, medium specific works results inversely in a serial pattern of acknowledgements of (a) the ineluctable traces of the picturing process in language and of (b) both the tendency to respond with linguistic and representational reflexes to visual abstraction."

Sitney refers to the various and sundry interpretations of vision in the modernist movement as the "antinomy of vision." At the same time, Irving Howe describes one of the salient features of modernism as simply "subjectivity." While Howe does not discuss vision as

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Sitney does, we can combine both scholars' observations to understand and reformulate modernism as related to vision based on subjectivity. Reality is no longer perceived as a stable world that surrounds human life, rather, writers present reality through their own visual perception, albeit unstable and shifting as it may be, or as it is openly acknowledged.

In modernism, the instability or uncertainty of capturing reality is an important theme. This was the topic taken up at the turn of the century as a revolt of experiments in the visual and plastic arts. Painters and sculptors were quick to grasp the implications of the fracturing or deconstruction of painting and sculpture. Picasso's Cubist paintings reached Japan in the 1910s, and Italian Futurism followed in their wake. Yet, above all, it was the celluloid media of the motion picture that more than any other innovation in the arts, came to shape and inspire Japanese modernism.

While initially it is true that film championed the reproduction of representational figures as its art form, and its impact was strong, nevertheless, as movie

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technology developed, film quickly moved beyond portrayal of representational figures and began to adopt an abstract and complicated visual style. For instance, the film scholar Iijima Tadashi recalls what, in his youth as a cinema enthusiast, stirred him were foreign movies which employed advanced cinematography. By the mid-1910s, films began using such novel and exciting techniques as cutback, montage, and zooming; according to Iijima, one of the most shocking and innovative films was D.W. Griffith’s *Intolerance*, first shown in Japan in 1919. The film consisted of four unrelated stories that all explored the theme of intolerance. Griffith’s use of shots presented in rapid succession or taken from various places or at various distances still seems avant-garde even eighty years later. Another sensational and influential foreign film was originally imported to Kobe and first shown to the public in 1896. It was called "Kinetoscope" (Kinetoscope), which was invented by Thomas Edison three years earlier. This was a device with a small peep hole, and people looked at the moving figures through the hole. The following year, a movie imported from France was shown on a screen in a theater in Osaka. After that, films became popular entertainment and many film companies toured Japan. The first Japanese-made films were shown in public in 1904. They also played a vital role in promoting the popularity of the new media genre.

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film was the German expressionist movie *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, first shown in Japan in 1921. The set for the film was obviously not the interior of a house or a depiction of a town, and the make-up used by the actors emphasized the bizarreness, even insanity, of their appearance. As Donald Keene notes, "*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* intrigued a whole generation of Japanese Modernist writers."\(^{11}\) As he goes on to suggest, it had its strongest impact on modernist writers and Japanese film makers such as Kinugasa Teinosuke who filmed Kawabata Yasunari’s *Kurutta ippêji*. In the period of the rise of Japanese modernism, film moved away from championing representation to advocating abstraction.

Tanizaki Jun’ichirō, who published modernistic works in the 1920s, is one of the writers who admired film as the art of the future. In fact, as discussed in the introduction, he was so interested in film that he wrote a film scenario titled *Club for Amateurs* and had his sister-in-law, Seiko, star as the leading actress Hayama Michiko. That Tanizaki praised film is due to the fact that the medium could reveal two contradictory elements, i.e.,

\(^{11}\) Donald Keene, *Dawn to the West*, p. 641.
realistic representation and the illusion. He states that film can achieve a more realistic representation than any other art genre and that, at the same time, it can make even an illusion seem real. Admittedly, film, especially foreign films, chronicled the most advanced fashion and introduced the most popular actors and actresses in Europe and the United States, and it was a textbook or manual for the latest trends in foreign culture. Yet, Tanizaki understood that it represented something far more potent than the influence of Western fashion. He understood it as a distinctively new medium that had the potential to alter the meaning of vision and narrative.

Of course, the entire experience of going to the movie theater and watching a moving picture in the dark was also recognized as a shift from reality to nonreality by writers of the period. Film functioned as if an audience were witnessing a dream: when the frames begin to roll, the audience has the illusion of seeing a dream;


when the film ends, and the lights are turned on, people feel as if they have awakened from a dream. In his analysis of Muroo Saisei's short story "Sakana to køen" ("Fish and a Garden") that compares a dream to a film, the film critic Kawamoto elaborates on the meaning of film for audiences in the 1920s.

From the end of the Taishō to early Shōwa periods, film was not simply "a high-collor stuff." It came to be recognized as "a medium of illusion" which was associated with the deep unconscious and profound emotion.11

For writers associated with modernism in the 1920s, film was perhaps the most important medium enabling them to revisit the concept of representation, and to evoke vision and its illusionary elements. Japanese modernist writers created works in which the distinction of reality and nonreality is ambiguous, and film, especially avant-garde films using advanced cinematography, were an important artistic inspiration for these writers.

**Questioning the Self: The Concept Inspired by Western Philosophy and Buddhism**

The ambiguity of vision is one of the most important themes among modernist writers, and film is a crucial

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11Ibid., p.107. Muroo's story was written in 1920.
inspiration for these writers. In addition, as we have seen, Sigmund Freud's theories of psychoanalysis also inspired Japanese modernist writers. One of the writers who explicitly employ a psychoanalytical approach to exploring the characters' mind is Kanoko. She writes through the Doppelgänger motif that human vision is constructed by the consciousness via her characters who see the illusion as reality. Moreover, the idea of the Doppelgänger also inspired modernist writers. The Doppelgänger was a popular theme in 1920s and the 1930s, and writers such as Akutagawa and Tanizaki also used it as a motif to express that reality no longer makes sense in a common-sensical way.

Just as the term Doppelgänger implies a double vision and a double self, Doppelgänger stories call into question whether the self is the solid core of human experience. Issues of the essentiality or non-essentiality of identity have evolved into the idea of the ambiguity of the self, and they have formed the core of the theory of the non-essential self.

This non-essentialistic view on the self was presaged by philosophers such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Nietzsche, who would heavily influence twentieth-century
writers. For instance, Franz Kafka was influenced by Nietzsche whose presence can be seen in both *Metamorphoses* and the *Trial*. Or, Marcel Duchamp's ideas concerning art appear to be influenced by non-essential thought as well. When Duchamp created a series of works called "ready-mades," he declared that the only element in common between his work and Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* was "the name of art." His intent was to contest an academic definition of art, but it also suggests that the essence or essential nature of art no longer exists. Only the name of art remains. Likewise, in Japan, Murayama Tomoyoshi recalls that his worldview was completely altered by Nietzsche and other German philosophers, and he too acknowledges their strong influence on his art. When, for example, he began to create his visual art works, he believed that an objective standard of beauty no longer existed and that beauty, as a matter of subjectivity, was to be decided only by each artist.

In addition to the influence of Western philosophy, Buddhism is another major influence in the concept of the non-essential self in Japanese modernism. Kanoko, for example, expresses Buddhist elements of her non-essentialistic view through the character Chōko, the
protagonist of _The Wheel of Life_, who changes herself from a student to a beggar, and finally into a sailor. As seen in her psychoanalytical approaches in describing the characters, part of Kanoko's idea of the non-essentialist self derives from Western philosophy. At the same time, as a scholar of Buddhism, she blends the ideas of karma and reincarnation with the Western ideas.

Yumeno, on the other hand, did not explicitly write that he was influenced by Buddhist ideas. Nevertheless, his works, more than any other work of the other three writers examined in this dissertation, wrestle with the issue of the non-essentialistic self and are profoundly influenced by Buddhist philosophy. As discussed in Chapter 3, Yumeno had a deep interest in the mystery fiction of Edgar Allan Poe and was, for a time, a Zen monk. Through these experiences, Yumeno saw a link between the non-essentialistic self seen in Western mystery fiction and similar Buddhist teachings on humanity seen in Buddhist sutras. Like Kanoko's literature, his work is also a mixture of the East and West in the conception of the non-essential self. The difference is that Yumeno describes the idea of the non-essential self more extensively than does Kanoko. For instance, he presents the non-essential self through the characters'
identical metamorphoses in *The Ferie Hand Drum*. The characters such as Kyōya's brother Kyūroku and the widow Tsuruko change or reveal different identities in succession, and with the ambiguity of the system of confessions, Yumeno's characters paradoxically seem to have no identities. Moreover, his last work *Dogura magura* depicts the complete lack of the self in the face of the protagonist's hopeless search for selfhood. Given Yumeno's taste for the dark and the bizarre, his tales of the non-essential self are described in almost desperate tones, but he advances his belief that the human identity is non-essential, along with the issue of the ambiguity of reality, as two of his major literary themes.

In addition to Kanoko and Yumeno, Japanese Dada is often discussed in association with Buddhism. Takahashi Shinkichi states in his essay that his involvement in Zen turned him into a Dadaist poet.\(^{15}\) It was after reading

Tristan Tzara's 1918 "Dadaist Manifesto" that Takahashi thought that even though Tzara did not mention it, he knew Zen Buddhism very well. Yoshiyuki, who was a Dadaist poet in his early literary career, is not philosophical in his use of Buddhist elements, yet he also quotes from sutras in his verse. These phrases, such as "namumyo hōren bosatsu" from the Lotus Sutra are used without any meaningful connection to the content, and they add a nonsensical tone to the works.\textsuperscript{16} Despite the different degree of influence, Buddhist concepts occupy an interesting position in Japanese modernist works.

Japanese modernist works are often created in the context where Western influences ranging from film to philosophy and Japanese existing ideas or motifs are blended together. For these modernists, the Japanese traditional ideas and arts are inspirational sources to create a new literature. As Suzuki and Kawamoto suggest, "the return to Japan" or "return to tradition" comes from a part of the modernist consciousness, and it is not simply a retrogressive phenomenon to withdraw from avant-gardism. The mixture of Western concepts and Japanese or

traditional concepts is an archetype of Japanese modernist perception, and this mixture is also seen in the realm of expression that we will discuss next.

**The Narratives of Modernism**

It has been postulated that the modern narrative was established to depict modern people or people in modern social classes.¹⁷ For example, Yoshiyuki portrays a successful modern businesswoman as revealing the Janus-like face of modern life. Women who advanced in the workplace became symbols of the 1920s, and Yoshiyuki superimposes an image of this symbolic woman over the conspicuously greedy capitalist society of the period. As mentioned in the introduction, World War I had the effect of turning Japan into an emergent industrial power, and during the 1920s Japan's industrial sector grew unabated. As Japan's industry matured, a service economy began to emerge, and it helped to create a mass culture in publications, fashion, and commodities. Yoshiyuki's nasty protagonist Misako narrates the toughness of Japanese

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urban life in the Twenties. Similarly, Murayama, Yumeno, and Okamoto also chose characters who symbolize the new, modern age. From a successful businesswoman to a patient in a psychiatric ward, these characters reflect the modernity of Japan of the 1920s and 1930s.

Modernity does not reside solely in themes and characters but is also to be found in the very concept of narration as authorial expression of a text. Yoshiyuki writes long sentences and uses unconventional modifiers and nouns; Murayama describes objects as if he is creating a collage through language; Kanoko constructs nature and scenery with unconventional adjectives and adverbs, with the landscape being often unimaginable; and Yumeno is perhaps the most radical. In the dialogue passages in Masaki's testament in *Dogura magura*, Yumeno suddenly shifts second-person pronouns from the singular to the plural to imply that Masaki can talk to different people in different places. Yumeno also alternates repeatedly between classical Japanese and modern Japanese, from official standard written discourse to dialect, and he intentionally ignores or breaks the premises underlying the standard uses of narrative and language.
It is significant to note that, however much the approaches of these individual writers may differ, all four produced experimental narratives that can only be conceived as written discourse, and a heightened consciousness of written language being an important tenet of modernist writers.¹⁸ The struggle against the delimiting and confining “prison house of language” is a particularly modernist concern, and modernist writers attempted to present a language which only literature could use.¹⁹

Although the keen awareness of the independence of the written language was not established without a domestic linguistic reformation based on shajitsu and genbun itchi in Japan, it is quite Modernistic (with a capital M) in the universal sense. Among the numerous

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¹⁹ Actually, even today, the Japanese written language is not absolutely the same as the spoken language, and modernist writers probably realized this as well. Modernist writers had more disagreement with the notion of a unified language than they did with using the spoken language in their works.
competing definitions of modernism, the critic Clement Greenberg defines modernism as art which focuses on the development of its specific art form. He calls Immanuel Kant the first modernist because of his self-criticism toward philosophy. Greenberg considers the self-critical nature of one's work as essential to Modernist work. He analyzes modernism through painting in which the flat surface or two dimensionality is key.

The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the specific effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thus, would each art be rendered "pure," and in its "purity" find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence. "Purity" meant self-definition, and the enterprise of self-criticism in the arts became one of self-definition with a vengeance.

Realistic, naturalistic art had disassembled the medium, using art to conceal art; Modernism used art to call attention to art. The limitations that constitute the medium of painting -- the flat surface, the shape of the support, the properties of the pigment -- were treated by the Old Masters as negative factors that could be acknowledged only implicitly or indirectly. Under Modernism these same limitations came to be regarded as positive factors, and were acknowledged openly. Manet's became the first Modernist pictures by virtue of the frankness with which they declared the flat surfaces on which they were painted.²⁰

This redefinition of art was derived from monumental

technological changes in art, especially the invention of photographs and film that took the place of representational figures. Painting was no longer the champion of the representational vision, and it is out of this realization that the beginnings of Modernism arise.

In the case of Japanese prose modernism, this modernist characteristic to pursue its own distinctive elements is seen in the strong consciousness of written language as a medium of literature. Various attempts to distinguish written language arose in order to distance writing from unified speech. As we have already discussed, Realism and fusion of spoken and written discourse have been developed parallel to the history of modern Japanese literature, and prose modernism stood against their hegemony. As a result, the characteristics of written Japanese from its narrative to its visual effects were to be rediscovered and explored by modernist writers in Japan of the 1920s and 1930s.

**Historical Recognition of Four Writers of Prose Modernism**

In spite of their notably modernist characteristics, these four writers have not been discussed frequently as
modernists. One of the chief reasons for this neglect is that Japanese modernism has been considered only a minor movement, and little attention has been directed to writers who lay outside the "canon." Moreover, literary modernism tended to be identified with poetry because of its association with Futurism, Dada, and Surrealism. There is no question that Japanese Futurist, Dada, and Surrealist groups were active in the field of poetry, and by comparison, prose modernism was not readily identifiable into distinct groups, schools or influences. Shinkankakuha was the major exception, and it became well-known for its aggressive advocacy of avant-garde literature. Yet, of this readily identifiable school, only Yokomitsu and sometimes Kawabata have been studied with the other members largely dismissed as minor figures. For example, Inagaki Taruho, who joined Shinkankakuha in 1926, or two years after the establishment of the group, is far more modernistic than Yokomitsu in both his visions and narratives. In fact, the critic Senuma Shigeki ironically writes that Inagaki is "too genuine as a Shinkankakuha writer to be in the mainstream of Shinkankakuha" thereby suggesting the limits of Shinkankakuha as a modernist group, or at least, conversely, the limits of understanding modernism through
the two principal voices of the Shinkankakuha. Nonetheless, Shinkankakuha is characterized mainly through Yokomitsu, and its other members are almost automatically less well-regarded. Likewise, the problem of simple categorization can applied to other groups such as Shinkō geijutsuha. Shinkō geijutsuha has been treated largely as the group that, more than any other, pursued the topics of ero, guro, nansensu (the erotic, the grotesque, and the nonsensical) literature, and generally speaking, its writers have been dismissed as unimportant. This has been true, although the group consisted of members such as Yoshiyuki, the critic Kobayashi Hideo, and the novelists Ibuse Masuji (1898-1993) and Funabashi Seiichi. Their arguments in favor of art for art's sake in opposition to the proletarian notion of art is, moreover, a phenomenon universal to the modernist period, yet their stereotypical categorization has prevented this group from being adequately studied.

Finally, in the face of the rise of ultra-nationalism in Japan by the late 1930s, modernism, regardless of its various genres, gradually disappeared from the face of the

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art and literary worlds. In comparison with the history of Western modernism, the flowering of Japanese modernism was comparatively brief. The phenomenon of Japanese writers' so-called "return to Japan" has also been the basis for observations that Japanese modernism was merely a transitory infatuation with Western modernism and not a true, indigenous movement in Japan.

Such views on the nature of the canon began to change rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s. Scholars who have already been cited in this dissertation, have analyzed prose modernism based on Japan's social and cultural milieu, and they have looked at individual writer's works rather than specific literary groups. Their studies have provided a broader context in which to understand Japanese prose modernism. Still, the works of modernist writers have not been fully introduced to Western audiences because their works are difficult to translate into English. As this dissertation notes, representative works of Japanese modernism are constructed from complicated narratives and

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Even in the early 1930s, Yoshiyuki's works became the target of censors. Murayama and his fellow proletarian writers were continually persecuted by the authorities, and their works were constantly subject to government censorship. Murayama recanted in 1934. Even his Until the End of the World, published in 1930, shows a series of unprintable words in the description of his first-person narration of ore's experience in prison.
expressions, and the linguistic differences between Japanese and English make their translation more demanding. Nonetheless, as the accomplishments of the four writers presented here suggest, we are just now seeing some aspects of Japanese prose modernism. Japanese prose modernism is an important twentieth-century movement that created powerful, even significant works. This dissertation aspires to introduce a few modernists, who have been placed outside of the canon of modern Japanese literature, in order to contribute to a broader and deeper understanding of modernism in Japanese literature.
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